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A Systematic Literature Review of Slow Fashion as a Potential Alternative to Fast Fashion.

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Abstract

The planned obsolescence of Fast fashion leads to environmental damage and labour exploitation. Slow fashion could be an attractive alternative, but due to its niche positioning, it is unable to reach broader segments of the population. For Slow fashion to function as a genuine alternative, it must simultaneously ensure visibility, accessibility, and affordability - in short, inclusivity. This systematic literature review examines whether the academic literature discusses the expectations of non-privileged consumers. Using the PRISMA methodology, we reviewed 156 articles in the Scopus, Web of Science, EBSCO, and ScienceDirect databases. NVivo cluster analysis did not reveal automatically emerging characteristics of inclusivity (accessibility, visibility, affordability); manual review confirmed their marginal presence, indicating the production-centred, undemocratic nature of Slow fashion. Our findings confirmed that consumer expectations are not discussed in detail in the literature. This clearly contributes to the fact that the Slow fashion movement is not thriving in the mainstream market and has failed to scale up. Our practical recommendations emphasise the adoption of certain fast fashion marketing strategies (e.g., social media, e-commerce platforms, and targeted promotions), improving delivery options, and expanding sharing or circular resale models (including sharing and consumer-to-consumer platforms). This is necessary for Slow fashion to become mainstream, thereby pushing back Fast fashion.

Keywords: slow fashion, inclusivity, sustainable fashion, systematic literature review

1. Introduction

The decline in product longevity and quality stems from planned obsolescence, a characteristic of current production and consumption patterns. Companies prioritise profit, leading to the production of non-durable goods and a consumer trend for cheap items [1]. This trend mirrors the Fast fashion industry, which contributes significantly to environmental damage through greenhouse gas emissions, water use, and pollution from toxic dyes. A key factor is the complex supply chain, which involves production, textile manufacturing, raw material sourcing, garment assembly, transportation, retail, consumption, and the eventual disposal of garments [2, 3]. Another issue in the textile and fashion sectors is the lack of social responsibility, primarily due to outsourcing to countries with lower labour costs. Poor working conditions, excessive working hours, low wages, and child labour remain significant challenges in these areas [4, 5]. This sector's business strategy promotes rapidly changing trends that encourage the early disposal of clothing, generating significant waste in pursuit of quick profits [6, 7].

Consumer purchasing volumes have increased significantly in recent years [8] due to increased availability of clothing and economies of scale, making goods more affordable for many consumers. The mainstream business strategy prioritises high-volume production, short lead times, and standardised materials, perpetuating rapid consumption [8, 9, 10]. These dynamics reflect a model that prioritises efficiency over sufficiency, an approach that is increasingly regarded as essential for achieving sustainability [11, 12].

To address these issues, an alternative approach has emerged, or re-emerged, through the Slow fashion paradigm. This concept promotes low consumption, fair trade, and a sharing economy while emphasising social principles. It challenges the traditional linear economic model by incorporating cultural and socio-economic macro-trends and calls for sustainability to be integrated into processes rather than treated as an add-on, as proposed in the degrowth paradigm [13, 14]. In this context, sufficiency, modal shifts such as degrowth, minimal consumption, and the reassessment of consumer needs are increasingly recognised as responses to environmental and social crises driven by overproduction and overconsumption [14, 15, 16, 17, 18]. In this sense, Slow fashion may serve as a foundation for addressing complex issues in the garment industry. While it may seem new, the practice and

tradition of wearing clothes for longevity originates from a necessity driven by scarcity [19]. Thus, Slow fashion is a modern interpretation of a long-established concept, resembling contemporary economic models such as sufficiency, voluntary simplicity, and minimalonomics, which promote minimal consumption practices in response to planetary limits [20].

As the popularity of Slow fashion has increased in recent decades, many scholars have engaged in ideation and dialogue, incorporating Slow fashion elements based on their individual perceptions. Despite its positive impact, interpretations of Slow fashion vary widely among different scholars.

Moreover, many scholars note that Slow fashion lacks a clear global understanding, which may lead to misunderstandings about its characteristics, particularly in relation to social inclusivity. Addressing this issue is important for improving both academic understanding and sustainability-related discussions [21, 22].

Although Slow fashion is widely described as ethical and sustainable, it remains unclear whether it is socially inclusive or primarily a niche, privileged consumption model. Systematic evidence on how inclusivity is addressed in Slow fashion scholarship is limited. This paper, therefore, examines whether Slow fashion fosters inclusivity by identifying its key characteristics and evaluating them against concepts such as accessibility, affordability, and visibility through a systematic literature review.

Most systematic reviews focus on Sustainable fashion and examine areas such as consumer behavior [23], practices in the apparel industry [24], future research directions [25], and sustainable options across the product lifecycle [26]. However, only a limited number of reviews specifically address Slow fashion, as most studies consider Sustainable fashion more broadly.

Domingos et al. [27] analyse Slow fashion and related consumer behaviors through a literature review of 25 papers. Similarly, Jung et al. [28] examine consumer orientations toward Slow fashion using a brief literature review combined with survey methods. Patra et al. [29] also focus on Slow fashion, exploring its bibliometric characteristics, research trends, and existing gaps.

In contrast, the present study investigates Slow fashion using NVivo-based content analysis of 156 articles. It seeks to identify key attributes through hierarchical cluster analysis and coding similarity, applying Sørensen's coefficient. The study further evaluates Slow fashion's potential as an alternative to fast fashion from a consumer inclusivity perspective, with particular attention to visibility, accessibility, and affordability across different socio-economic groups.

A key research gap concerns whether Slow fashion, while widely regarded as ethical and sustainable, is genuinely socially inclusive or predominantly reflects a niche, privileged consumption pattern. This article addresses this gap by carrying out a systematic literature review.

The research questions are as follows:

RQ: Is the present academic understanding of Slow fashion inclusive?

RQ1: Which attributes of Slow fashion are emphasised in academic literature?

RQ2: How do these attributes relate to inclusivity (e.g., accessibility, affordability, visibility)?

The originality of this study lies in its conceptual focus on inclusivity within Slow fashion scholarship, supported by a systematic literature review conducted across multiple databases following PRISMA guidelines. Open and axial coding of the selected articles identify key themes related to Slow fashion. Building on these themes, the study examines the often-overlooked issues of inclusivity and consumer perspectives. The findings provide insights into the academic discourse and suggest future directions for researchers, practitioners, and policymakers.

2. Theoretical background

2.1. *Fast fashion versus Slow fashion*

The fashion industry reached a point where rapid consumption patterns and mass manufacturing became the norm. This mode of operation - Fast fashion - drives low prices and large, rapidly changing collections that imitate luxury fashion while following rapid trend turnover [30]. To meet rapid and growing demand, Fast fashion companies focus on quickly identifying trends and turning them into products, while also prioritising fast delivery [31]. To improve efficiency, such companies outsource parts of their supply chains to lower-wage countries in order to keep costs as low as possible [32]. Fast fashion businesses use e-commerce and globalisation to analyse purchasing behaviour, forecast trends, identify buying patterns, and source global suppliers in order to increase growth and profits [31]. Their quick response strategy - fast design, production, and short lead times - allows for weekly new collections, helping such companies stay ahead of their competitors. This model has changed consumption patterns, creating a feedback loop in which consumers are encouraged to make impulse purchases and develop a habit of continuous buying [31]. Even though it has negative effects, some studies highlight that Fast fashion can democratised fashion through affordability, making a wide range of styles and clothing options accessible to different social groups [33]. In an article from Williams [34], the author states that the aim of these companies is to enable consumers to purchase trendy clothing quickly and as cheaply as possible. The paper states that, despite its negative effects, Fast fashion can reduce social and economic inequalities by producing and marketing products for all income levels, encouraging use across different social classes. Additionally, due to the COVID-19 pandemic in 2019, Fast fashion gained a key advantage that has since become crucial, emerging out of necessity. Fast fashion companies have increased their investment in information technology, becoming major e-commerce players. They aim to simplify shopping for consumers and have adopted an omnichannel communication strategy to reach their audiences [35]. In addition, their delivery options (accessibility), including often ultra-fast delivery, also make them more attractive to a wide range of consumers [31, 36].

To address the negative impacts of the fast-paced fashion industry, Slow fashion emerged. It involves small-scale production with timeless designs, utilising local resources and traditional skills for creation, as stated by Bläse et al. [32]. According to Abbate et al. [30] Slow fashion is a growing movement in the fashion industry that promotes locally produced and environmentally friendly clothing, designed according to the principles of the circular economy, while emphasising the importance of community. Its main aim is to improve the sustainability of fashion products from both ethical and environmental perspectives [30]. In another paper, Selitto et al. [31] describes Slow fashion as a model that emphasises high-quality, expensive, often luxury products with two to four collections released annually. The authors also point out that, due to long lead times, these businesses adapt slowly to consumer trends, which can also be attributed to their generally slower operations. Based on the work of Yang et al. [37], Slow fashion consumption is driven by an emotional and cultural connection to garments rather than a focus on low prices. In another article, Ronda [38] equates Slow fashion with sustainable fashion and highlights the main barriers to the model. These include high prices (affordability), lack of knowledge and misconceptions (visibility), limited availability (accessibility), and low awareness of the effects of Fast fashion, along with scepticism towards sustainability claims [33, 38]. In Yang et al.'s [37] work, the issue of accessibility is explained by noting that many SMEs avoid e-retailing, even though it could benefit them, and when they do engage, they use their websites mainly for information sharing. Didi et al. [39] further explain that sustainable or slow products are often not widely advertised, causing them to go unnoticed by consumers (visibility). In another example, a consumer noted that if sustainable or slow products were more readily available (accessibility), it would be easier to act more sustainably [39]. Based on this, it can be assumed that most SMEs that lack an e-commerce presence and use their websites only for information purposes also do not offer delivery services, which may be due to their local focus and community-oriented approach.

Overall, the two models show clear differences, however, Fast fashion's current dominance in terms of inclusivity (visibility, accessibility, and affordability) presents more challenges than opportunities for Slow fashion.

To summarise both business models, a comparison table has been created:

Table 1. Comparison of Slow and Fast fashion business models, Source: Own work

Aspect	Fast Fashion	Slow Fashion
Core Model	Mass manufacturing, rapid trend turnover, and weekly collections	Small-scale production, timeless designs, 2-4 collections/year
Pricing Strategy	Low or lower prices	High prices
Supply Chain	Outsourced, long and complicated, fragmented (global suppliers, outsourced work), quick response, and fast by fast design, production, and short lead times	Local resources, often transparent, traditional crafting techniques, and long lead time, and slow consumer need adaptation
Consumer Driver	Impulse buying, trend-driven consumption, rapid need to renew	Deeper value, quality, cultural/community experience, buying a few pieces

For better understanding, a table comparing the advantages of Fast fashion and the barriers of Slow fashion regarding inclusivity has also been created:

Table 2. Comparison of Fast fashion advantages and Slow fashion barriers of inclusivity, Source: Own work

Dimension	Fast fashion Advantages regarding inclusivity	Slow fashion Barriers regarding inclusivity
Visibility	Omnichannel communication reaching mass audiences, heavy e-commerce advertising and marketing	Not advertised, low awareness, misconceptions; websites for info only – no or limited e-commerce presence

Accessibility	Ultra-fast delivery options, simplified e-commerce shopping	Limited availability (no e-commerce, no delivery system), SMEs avoid e-retailing; "hard to find."
Affordability	Cheap trendy clothes for all socioeconomic classes	High prices – only serve a niche consumer segment/market

2.2. *The understanding of inclusivity*

To clarify the concept of inclusivity, a brief overview of its definition was compiled. Inclusivity is a broad concept that encompasses various socio-economic ideas. In contemporary discourse, it emphasises diversity, equality, and fairness, although its interpretation can vary depending on context. Some authors use the term within specific frameworks, while others group related themes under broader initiatives and development theories.

According to Virtanen et al. [40], sustainability should incorporate greater inclusivity by valuing indigenous knowledge, philosophies, and local languages. This helps to foster a deeper understanding of local communities, traditions, and heritage. In their study on inclusive development, Dörffel and Schuhmann [41] adopted Scott and Talmage's definition of inclusivity, which views inclusion in a community as the result of approaches that treat diversity as an asset. This refers to the inclusion of all individuals and groups that were previously excluded. The term "inclusive" refers to equal access to the social, political, and economic mainstream, along with the opportunity to express personal preferences [41].

Following the narrative of inclusive development, Gupta and Vegelin [42] also highlight their understanding of inclusion. For them, social inclusiveness involves empowering the most vulnerable through investment in human capital and by expanding

opportunities for participation, regardless of gender, age, caste, or religion. Gupta et al. [43] proposed a comprehensive framework for inclusive development, encompassing psychological, social, and material well-being; human security; local factors; civic amenities; infrastructure; participatory governance; and support for the poorest and most vulnerable. Similarly, Rauniyar and Kanbur [44] referencing the Asian Development Bank, also emphasises the importance of these concepts.

2.3. *Inclusivity in the context of the fashion sector*

Discussing inclusivity in fashion can be complex, as fashion is often understood as a form of social behaviour through which individuals or groups express their identity or affiliations. Although this perspective is valid, some authors debate whether true inclusiveness exists in fashion. In such debates, inclusivity is often understood as the democratisation of fashion, serving to project an image of inclusiveness.

Von Busch [45] advocates a democratic approach to fashion, drawing on the ideas of philosopher Roberto Ungher. Similar to democracy, this approach emphasises radical experimentation and challenges the status quo, while remaining open to diverse forms of social engagement with fashion. This perspective promotes the inclusion of all socio-economic groups, in line with democratic principles.

The ongoing discussion on democratic or, in other words, inclusive fashion and inclusivity generally aims to broaden access to fashion among wider consumer groups and to encourage the participation of diverse socio-economic populations [46]. Von Busch [47] describes democratic, or inclusive fashion, as affordable and accessible clothing, often associated with Fast fashion. This aligns

with the work of Gupta et al. [43], who emphasise social, material, and affordability-related aspects of well-being, with a focus on including the poorest, most vulnerable, and disadvantaged individuals. Overall, discussions on inclusivity in fashion primarily focus on broader socio-economic groups, highlighting efforts to increase the participation and opportunities of those who have been excluded.

Here, we argue that accessibility is inherently linked to visibility, as something must first be visible in order to become accessible. While visibility is well researched in consumer studies, it remains relevant here for understanding inclusivity in Slow fashion. Several studies highlight the role of promotion and social media in making sustainable brands visible [38, 39, 40], yet low visibility and limited accessibility continue to pose barriers across sustainable fashion, including Slow fashion [41, 42, 43, 44, 45].

A summary table has been created for a better overview of the concepts of inclusivity:

Table 3. The comparison of general inclusivity and fashion inclusivity, Source: Own work

Aspect	General Inclusivity	Fashion Inclusivity
Core value	Equal participation for all, valuing diversity	Democratising fashion for all socio-economic groups
Focus	Vulnerable groups (gender, age, caste, impoverished)	Wider consumer groups (other than elite class)
Main Elements	Access, influence, well-being, security	Affordability, accessibility, visibility
Method (<i>how to reach</i>)	Empower through opportunities and governance	Radical experimentation (fashion status quo questioning), diverse forms of social engagement
Main goals	Include those previously excluded from society	Expand fashion access beyond elite/niche

Realisation (<i>what we get</i>)	Human capital investment, participatory governance	Affordable clothing, social media promotion, the possibility of delivery, and e-commerce platform use
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Based on these insights, the following model illustrates how Slow fashion operates at the level of consumption, aiming to clarify its connection to inclusivity:

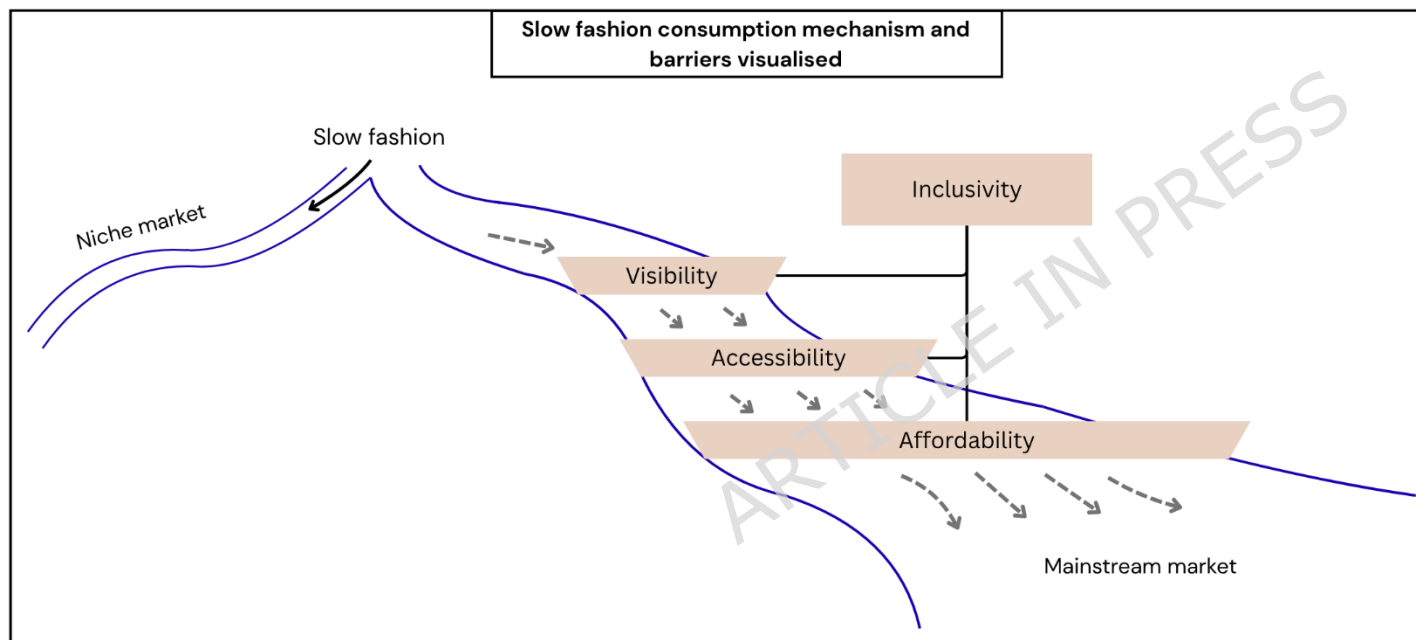


Figure 1. Breaking down the barriers of inclusivity is the precondition of making Slow fashion mainstream, Source: Own work

Figure 1 illustrates the relationships between Slow fashion, visibility, accessibility, and affordability at the consumption level. It shows that Slow fashion remains a niche, reaching only a limited segment of consumers. The first constraint is the visibility barrier,

which refers to the lack of presence in e-commerce spaces, limited marketing campaigns, and insufficient advertising [24, 48, 49]. These limit its reach to a broader audience. If this barrier is overcome, the next challenge is the accessibility barrier, which refers to how easily products can be obtained, including their online availability, ordering process, and delivery [50]. The final constraint is the affordability barrier, which determines whether prices are within reach of a wider consumer base [48]. This barrier is particularly important, as consumers often prioritise price over sustainability, highlighting the need to reduce cost-related constraints [51, 52, 53]. Each step taken to remove a barrier creates an opportunity to reach an increasingly larger audience.

Overall, the model highlights not only barriers but also opportunities to expand the reach of Slow fashion: as visibility, accessibility, and affordability improve, it can gradually engage a larger audience and increase its impact. This perspective aligns with Chi et al. [54], who also note potential market gains from reducing these barriers.

3. Methodology

3.1. Methodology of gap validation

To explore Slow fashion gaps more thoroughly, the researchers conducted a Scopus screening to identify and deepen the understanding of potential gaps in inclusivity.

The Boolean query for the additional search can be seen in the table below:

Table 4. Used Boolean search strings and their main aspects, Source: Own work

Main aspects	Boolean strings
--------------	-----------------

Slow fashion in recent years	TITLE-ABS-KEY("slow fashion") AND PUBYEAR > 2022 AND PUBYEAR < 2027
Slow fashion and e-commerce	TITLE-ABS-KEY("slow fashion" AND "e-commerce")
Slow fashion and consumer behaviour	TITLE-ABS-KEY("slow fashion" AND "consumer behavior")
Consumer, Slow fashion, delivery	TITLE-ABS-KEY("consumer" AND "slow fashion" AND "delivery")
Consumption, slow fashion, online, purchasing	("consumption" AND "slow fashion" AND "online" AND "purchasing")
Consumption, Slow fashion, online	("consumption" AND "slow fashion" AND "online")
Consumption, Slow fashion, delivery	("consumption" AND "slow fashion" AND "delivery")
Slow fashion AND logistics	TITLE-ABS-KEY("slow fashion" AND "logistics")
Fast fashion and delivery	TITLE-ABS-KEY("fast fashion" AND "delivery")
Slow fashion, Fast fashion, consumer behaviour, inclusive consumption	("slow fashion" AND "fast fashion" AND "consumer behaviour" AND "inclusive consumption")
Inclusive consumption and fashion	TITLE-ABS-KEY("inclusive consumption" AND "fashion")

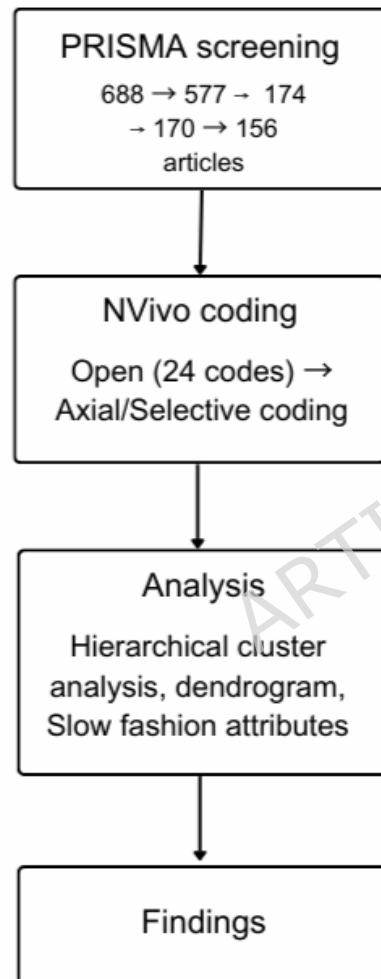
Most articles primarily focus on the current behaviour of Slow fashion consumers and on strategies to engage those in the upper-middle class through various marketing approaches. Only a few articles, which were already included in the study through the literature review, address issues related to inclusivity (or inclusive consumption). In these cases, visibility, accessibility, and affordability are generally discussed separately rather than as combined barriers to adopting Slow fashion as a model.

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3.2. *The step-by-step logical background of the systematic literature review*

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The systematic literature review follows the PRISMA methodology. This is followed by open coding in NVivo and hierarchical cluster analysis (Sørensen's coefficient) to identify the attributes of Slow fashion. Finally, the paper examines Slow fashion and its



main elements, and whether the concept of inclusivity is included within it.

Figure 2. Summary of methodological steps, Source: Own work

3.3. *The PRISMA methodology*

The focus of the systematic literature analysis is on identifying the main elements of Slow fashion. The Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) is a reporting guideline that includes a 27-item checklist. The reporting system supports more comprehensive and consistent reporting of systematic reviews. Due to its applicability across various fields, PRISMA is also relevant for mixed-method systematic reviews, where attention to qualitative data is necessary. It also facilitates a clear understanding and presentation of the process, making the result transparent and easily comprehensible [55]. The completed PRISMA 2020 checklist is provided in the Appendix as supplementary material.

3.4. *Coding methodology*

The paper adopts Strauss and Corbin's grounded theory approach, which involves a systematic coding process comprising open coding, axial coding, and selective coding. This methodology supports the categorisation and analysis of qualitative data in order to develop theoretical frameworks [56].

Open coding is the initial phase, which involves labelling concepts. It is commonly used to identify recurring themes and patterns, thereby extracting significant information [57]. Open coding assists in understanding and categorising collected data [56]. The methodology also includes comparing the similarities and differences between the codes, which are then conceptualised and

grouped [58]. It is frequently applied to identify recurring themes and patterns, thereby extracting significant information from the studied field [57]. Hence, the primary objective of open coding is to create codes that accurately represent the data, allowing researchers to explore and question assumptions and generate new insights [58]. Axial coding follows open coding and focuses on identifying relationships and patterns among codes. It helps reorganise data into broader categories to form a coherent structure. The final phase, selective coding, identifies the core themes and systematically relates all other categories to them, with the aim of developing a comprehensive and coherent narrative that explains the main phenomenon under study [56].

3.5. *Data processing methodology*

The research employed NVivo, a qualitative data analysis software, to organise and code the selected articles, enhancing transparency and supporting the integrated processing and analysis of the literature. The reviewed articles, which served as data, were first interpreted and then organised into codes or child codes. In this context, “codes” are conceptual labels assigned to recurring themes in the articles, while “child codes” are more specific sub-codes grouped under broader parent categories.

With the main methodology in place, the first step was to import the relevant papers into NVivo. The primary objective of the coding frameworks was to identify closely related concepts and recurring descriptions of Slow fashion.

In total, 156 articles were analysed, resulting in the identification of 24 child codes or Slow fashion attributes. These codes were referenced 2,747 times, averaging 17.6 references per article. The high number of references is due to the frequent listing of multiple attributes within a single sentence, often generating several references per sentence. The coding process took two months and was coordinated by an independent researcher to ensure quality and accuracy. A cluster analysis was then conducted to assess similarity between codes and identify broader themes. NVivo’s hierarchical cluster analysis function was used to visualise

relationships between codes, grouping them based on similarity. This helped in identifying patterns and clusters of items that share common characteristics.

The hierarchical cluster analysis in NVivo focuses on coding similarity using Sørensen's coefficient for all codes. This metric assesses how similar two variables are, with clustering conducted via the Weighted Iterative X-means method. The similarity coefficient ranges from 0 to 1, where 0 indicates high dissimilarity between the two weights, and 1 indicates complete similarity [59].

Clusters address *RQ1* by identifying the attributes of Slow fashion using the aforementioned Sørensen's coefficient applied to codes and child codes. *RQ2* is addressed by comparing codes related to Slow fashion attributes with the attributes of inclusivity.

4. Results

For data collection, the study followed the PRISMA process, focusing on identifying relevant academic literature from the Scopus, Web of Science, EBSCO, and ScienceDirect databases. In this context, "data" refers to published academic articles. In every instance, the Searches were carried out in the titles, abstracts, and keywords of the articles, using the term "*Slow fashion*", along with related synonyms such as "*Lowsumerism*", "*Durable fashion*", "*Timeless fashion*", "*Craft fashion*", and "*Sufficiency AND fashion*". The same search logic was consistently applied, beginning with the keyword input, followed by several rounds of filtering that limited the results to academic journal articles only. To ensure relevance, the search was limited to specific subject areas, excluding fields such as medicine, natural sciences, pharmacology, and some engineering disciplines, and focusing instead on business, management, social sciences, environmental science, economics, humanities, and decision sciences.

Additionally, the initial Boolean query looked like the following: "*slow fashion*" OR "*lowsumerism*" OR "*durable fashion*" OR "*timeless fashion*" OR "*craft fashion*" OR ("*sufficiency*" AND "*fashion*").

The initial query returned only some aspects of the search terms; therefore, an additional approach was used, which identified a broader range of articles. The strings in *Table 2* were entered into each database (title, abstract, and keywords). “Simple search” refers to the initial number of results, while “filtered” refers to results after applying the Boolean limits described above. No combined Boolean “OR” searches were used, as the review focused on specific synonyms searched separately to ensure comprehensive coverage. In this context, “*Sufficiency*” AND “*fashion*” was treated as a combined search term that also functions as a synonym.

“*Slow fashion*” produced the most relevant articles among keywords, while “*lowsumerism*,” “*durable*,” “*timeless*,” and “*craft fashion*” returned fewer relevant results. “*Sufficiency*” AND “*fashion*” produced broader results, which were then narrowed through filtering. Expanding the range of journal sources could further enrich future literature.

For a better overview, a table (*Table 5*) has been made to collect all the results in one place for easier data comprehension:

Table 5. The searched keywords and their database search results (simple vs. filtered), Source: Own work

Keywords/Databases	Scopus		Web of Science		EBSCO		ScienceDirect		Date of database and article collection
	Simple search	Filtered	Simple search	Filtered	Simple search	Filtered	Simple search	Filtered	9.29.2024
<i>Slow fashion</i>	244	84	50	38	203	83	633	156	

To
clearer
the detailed
search string, please refer to *Table 6*.

<i>Lowsumerism</i>	2	2	1	1	2	2	3	2	
<i>Durable fashion</i>	11	0	7	1	12	8	95	21	
<i>Timeless fashion</i>	4	1	6	2	38	5	16	11	
<i>Craft fashion</i>	12	5	7	1	6	2	33	13	
<i>Sufficiency AND fashion</i>	116	51	92	18	94	68	10372	113	
Eligibility criteria:	Article	Subject area							

provide a
overview of
Boolean

Table 6. The detailed Boolean strings used for all keywords in four databases, Source: Own work

Database	Keyword	Keyword Search sting	Document Type string	Subject Filter sting	Filtered Results
Scopus	Slow fashion	TITLE-ABS-KEY("slow fashion")	PUBTYPE("article")	AND (SUBJAREA("business, management and accounting") OR SUBJAREA("social sciences") OR SUBJAREA("engineering") OR SUBJAREA("environmental science") OR SUBJAREA("arts and humanities") OR SUBJAREA ("economics, econometrics and finance") OR SUBJAREA("chemical engineering") OR SUBJAREA("decision sciences"))	84
Scopus	Lowsumerism	TITLE-ABS-KEY("lowsumerism")	PUBTYPE("article")	AND (SUBJAREA("business, management and accounting") OR SUBJAREA("social sciences") OR SUBJAREA("engineering") OR SUBJAREA("environmental science") OR SUBJAREA("arts and humanities") OR SUBJAREA("economics, econometrics and finance") OR SUBJAREA("chemical engineering") OR SUBJAREA("decision sciences"))	2
Scopus	Durable fashion	TITLE-ABS-KEY("durable fashion")	PUBTYPE("article")	NOT (SUBJAREA("medicine") OR SUBJAREA("materials science") OR SUBJAREA("biochemistry, genetics and molecular biology") OR SUBJAREA("nursing") OR SUBJAREA("physics and astronomy") OR SUBJAREA("neuroscience") OR SUBJAREA("immunology and microbiology") OR SUBJAREA("agricultural and biological sciences"))	0
Scopus	Timeless fashion	TITLE-ABS-KEY("timeless fashion")	PUBTYPE("article") AND ("knitted fabrics" OR "woven fabrics")		1

Scopus	Craft fashion	TITLE-ABS-KEY("craft fashion")	PUBTYPE("article")	AND (SUBJAREA("business, management and accounting") OR SUBJAREA("social sciences") OR SUBJAREA("engineering") OR SUBJAREA("economics, econometrics and finance") OR SUBJAREA("chemical engineering") OR SUBJAREA("decision sciences"))	5
Scopus	Sufficiency AND fashion	TITLE-ABS-KEY("sufficiency" AND "fashion")	PUBTYPE("article")	AND (SUBJAREA("social sciences") OR SUBJAREA("arts and humanities") OR SUBJAREA("environmental science") OR SUBJAREA("engineering") OR SUBJAREA("business, management and accounting") OR SUBJAREA("multidisciplinary") OR SUBJAREA("economics, econometrics and finance") OR SUBJAREA("decision sciences") OR SUBJAREA("chemical engineering"))	51
Web of Science	Slow fashion	TS=("slow fashion")	DT="Article"	WC=("business" OR "green sustainable science technology" OR "humanities multidisciplinary" OR "environmental sciences" OR "environmental studies" OR "management" OR "engineering environmental" OR "economics" OR "social sciences interdisciplinary" OR "development studies")	38
Web of Science	Lowsumerism	TS=("lowsumerism")	DT="Article"		1
Web of Science	Durable fashion	TS=("durable fashion")	DT="Article"	WC=("materials science multidisciplinary")	1
Web of Science	Timeless fashion	TS=("timeless fashion")	DT="Article"	WC=("environmental studies" OR "business" OR "management")	2
Web of Science	Craft fashion	TS=("craft fashion")	DT="Article"	WC=("business")	1
Web of Science	Sufficiency AND fashion	TS=("sufficiency" AND "fashion")	DT="Article"	WC=("environmental sciences" OR "environmental studies" OR "business" OR "engineering environmental" OR "ecology" OR "economics")	18
EBSCO	Slow fashion	TI_AB ("slow fashion")	IT="Academic Journal"		83
EBSCO	Lowsumerism	TI_AB ("lowsumerism")	IT="Academic Journal"		2

EBSCO	Durable fashion	TI_AB ("durable fashion")	IT="Academic Journal"		8
EBSCO	Timeless fashion	TI_AB ("timeless fashion")	IT="Academic Journal"		5
EBSCO	Craft fashion	TI_AB ("craft fashion")	IT="Academic Journal"		2
EBSCO	Sufficiency AND fashion	TI_AB ("sufficiency" AND "fashion")	IT="Academic Journal"		68
ScienceDirect	Slow fashion	TITLE-ABS-KEY("slow fashion")	SRC="research-article"	SUBJAREA("environmental science") OR SUBJAREA("business, management and accounting") OR SUBJAREA("engineering")	156
ScienceDirect	Lowsumerism	TITLE-ABS-KEY("lowsumerism")	SRC="research-article"		2
ScienceDirect	Durable fashion	TITLE-ABS-KEY("durable fashion")	SRC="research-article"	SUBJAREA("environmental science") OR SUBJAREA("social sciences") OR SUBJAREA("economics, econometrics and finance") OR SUBJAREA("engineering") OR SUBJAREA("arts and humanities")	21
ScienceDirect	Timeless fashion	TITLE-ABS-KEY("timeless fashion")	SRC="research-article"	SUBJAREA("social sciences") OR SUBJAREA("business, management and accounting") OR SUBJAREA("engineering") OR SUBJAREA("economics, econometrics and finance") OR SUBJAREA("environmental science") OR SUBJAREA("arts and humanities")	11
ScienceDirect	Craft fashion	TITLE-ABS-KEY("craft fashion")	SRC="research-article"	SUBJAREA("social sciences") OR SUBJAREA("business, management and accounting") OR SUBJAREA("economics, econometrics and finance") OR SUBJAREA("arts and humanities") OR SUBJAREA("environmental science") OR SUBJAREA("engineering")	13
ScienceDirect	Sufficiency AND fashion	TITLE-ABS-KEY("sufficiency" AND "fashion")	SRC="research-article"	SUBJAREA("environmental science") OR SUBJAREA("social sciences") OR SUBJAREA("economics, econometrics and finance") OR SUBJAREA("engineering") OR SUBJAREA("business, management and accounting") OR SUBJAREA("decision sciences") AND SRCTITLE("Journal of Cleaner Production")	133

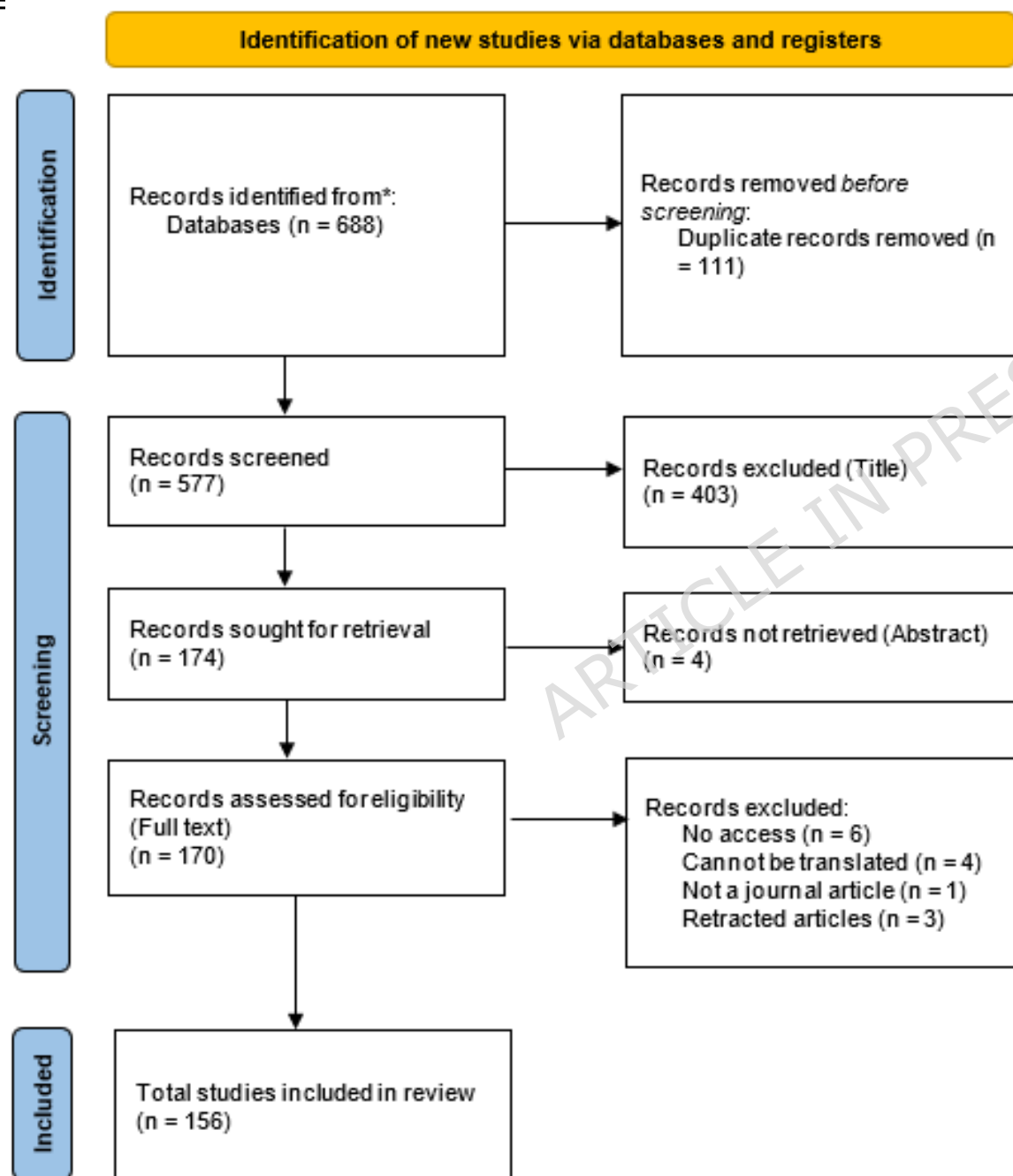
Next, the collected data were compiled, resulting in 688 articles. The database was then checked and duplicate records were removed, reducing the total to 577 articles. The dataset was further refined by excluding articles that were not relevant to the topic. This screening process began with reviewing titles, followed by abstracts. Any article whose title was not related to Slow fashion or its associated terms was removed, leaving 174 articles. The abstracts of these papers were then examined, which reduced the sample to 170 articles likely to discuss Slow fashion, related concepts, or synonyms. A full-text review was then conducted, during which the papers were assessed in

detail. Finally, 156 articles were selected as they described attributes of Slow fashion or provided in-depth discussions of the concept. Excluded materials included retracted articles, irrelevant studies, non-journal articles, inaccessible papers despite requests, and untranslated articles. The entire selection process was presented using the PRISMA Flow Diagram for Databases and Registers, providing a clear and transparent overview of the review process.

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PRISMA [55, 60] 2024, Own work



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4.1. Statistics on the most cited authors

To better understand the most influential authors in the collected data, the study created a table of those with the highest number of citations. This helps to identify current trends and main discussions in the academic field. The table also includes relevant keywords, showing which search terms led to each article and its author.

Table 7. Most cited authors within the collected database, Source: Own work

Keyword	Author(s)	Article name	Year	Citation number
Slow fashion	Todeschini B.V.; Cortimiglia M.N.; Callegaro-de-Menezes D.; Ghezzi A.	Innovative and sustainable business models in the fashion industry: Entrepreneurial drivers, opportunities, and challenges	2017	335
Sufficiency and fashion	Bocken N.M.P.; Short S.W.	Towards a sufficiency-driven business model: Experiences and opportunities	2016	333
Slow fashion	Clark H.	Slow + Fashion - an oxymoron - or a promise for the future ...?	2008	239
Slow fashion	Pookulangara S.; Shephard A.	Slow fashion movement: Understanding consumer perceptions-An exploratory study	2013	204
Slow fashion	Ozdamar Ertekin Z.; Atik D.	Sustainable Markets: Motivating Factors, Barriers, and Remedies for Mobilization of Slow Fashion	2015	189

Slow fashion	Barnes L.; Lea-Greenwood G.; Zarley Watson M.; Yan R.-N.	An exploratory study of the decision processes of fast versus slow fashion consumers	2013	119
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As shown in (Table 7), most of the articles were identified using the keyword "*Slow fashion*", with Todeschini et al. (2017) receiving the highest number of citations. The second most cited article was by Bocken et al. (2016), which is the only highly cited publication not using "*Slow fashion*" as a keyword, but instead "*Sufficiency AND fashion*".

In summary, the most frequently cited articles mainly focus on business models and operational themes, with a smaller number of studies addressing consumer behaviour. The table also includes only one entry with a social and philosophical perspective, namely Clark H. (2008), who explores the deeper connections associated with Slow fashion.

4.2. Trends in the Literature

To provide an overview of publication trends related to Slow fashion, this paper collected and visualised the articles included in the literature review published between 1998 and 2026. A summary of the data is presented in the table and figure below.

Table 8 Table of publication years and the number of published articles used in the literature review, Source: Own work

Publication Year	Published Articles
1998	1
2008	1
2011	1
2013	3

2014	3
2015	5
2016	5
2017	9
2018	6
2019	13
2020	16
2021	18
2022	23
2023	27
2024	22
2025	3
Grand Total	156

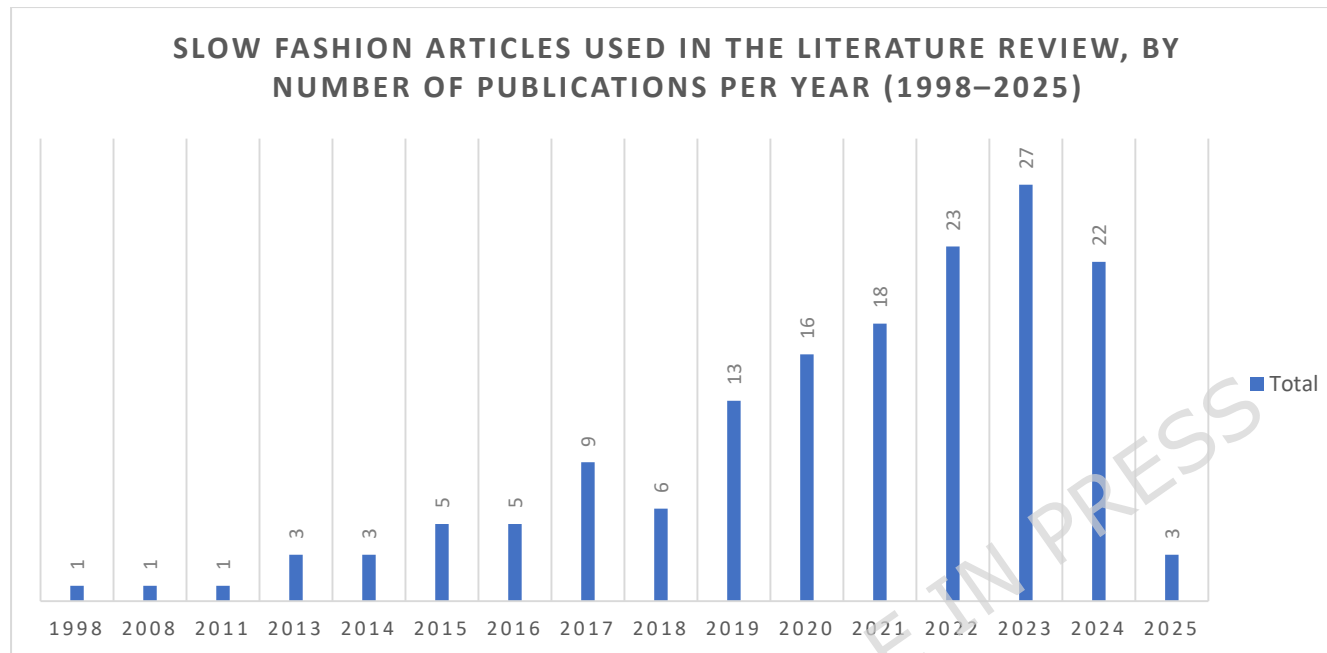


Figure 4. Slow fashion articles used in the literature review, by number of publications per year (1998–2025), Source: Own work

According to *Figure 4*, publication trends related to slow fashion show a gradual increase from 2011, followed by a slight decline in 2018. After this period, the number of publications continued to rise and reached a peak in 2023, which recorded the highest number of publications. This was followed by a small decrease. It should also be noted that the data for 2025 cannot be fully interpreted, as the study was conducted during that year and therefore does not include the complete publication data for 2025.

In addition to publication years, the study also examined the journal types in which the selected articles were published. This helps to show the relevance and academic importance of the topic. A summary table showing the distribution of the literature review articles across major journal types is provided below.

Table 9 Table of significant journal types based on the number of literature review articles (three or more), Source: Own work

Journal Names	Number of articles published
Cleaner and Responsible Consumption	6
Fashion Practice	9
Fashion Theory	4
International Journal of Consumer Studies	3
International Journal of Fashion Design, Technology and Education	3
Journal of Business Research	5
Journal of Cleaner Production	13
Journal of Fashion Marketing and Management: An International Journal	8
Journal of Macromarketing	4
Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services	4
Sustainability	7
Sustainable Production and Consumption	4
Grand Total	70

As shown in the table, the main journal types focus on topics related to consumption, management, consumer studies and services, production, sustainability, and fashion theory and practice. Among these journals, the “*Journal of Cleaner Production*” has the highest number of published articles on the topic, which further highlights the focus on production within Slow fashion research.

4.3. Dominant concepts and their relationships in Slow fashion

This section provides an overview of the child codes related to the main code, *Slow fashion*. A total of 24 child codes were identified and classified. As noted earlier, in this context, “codes” are conceptual labels used for recurring themes within articles, where “child codes” are specific sub-codes grouped under broader parent (or code) categories such as *Sustainability* or *Slow production*.

In the chart, the size and position of each section are important. Each section represents a code. Embedded sections indicate the parent-child hierarchy, while larger sections represent a higher number of references. Sections placed side by side show that they are at the same hierarchical level. Overall, this provides a visual representation of the coding hierarchy, including the key codes shown in the table. The diagram illustrates the total number of references for each code, showing how frequently they appear in the reviewed articles (*Figure 5*).

Within *Slow fashion*, *Sustainability* emerged as a central cluster, alongside *Slow production*, *Slow consumption*, and *Services*. Another important category is *Social & Intangible values*. Recognising these classifications is essential for understanding Slow fashion in an academic context. The below table (*Table 10*) summarises the code names, descriptions, and reference counts.

Table 10 The hierarchical outcome and description of Slow fashion attributes in NVivo, Source: Own work

Code name	Description	Number of references (with accumulated numbers on the main nodes)
<i>Sustainability</i>	Environmentally and socially sustainable operations	1559

<i>Slow production</i>	Ways of production which support ecologically and socially sustainable operation	1108
Longevity	Producing items for a long lifetime by design	133
Quality	Producing items for durability: appropriate material usage	193
Ethical	Worker conditions, fair trade and transparency	212
Craftsmanship	High-level garment creation competence with appropriate utilization and sometimes with a traditional approach	132
Long lead-time	Taking a longer time to reflect on the clothing creation process	59
Small item batches	Only a few items are made at a given production time	68
Locality	Locally sourced materials, local production	177
Slow design	Design aspects that align with main Slow fashion principles; sustainable and natural materials and fibres, zero waste and according to design patterns etc.	56
<i>Slow consumption</i>	Ways of consumption which support an ecologically and socially sustainable use of items	293
Sufficiency	Sufficiency is about consuming less and responsible purchasing	15
Utilitarianism	Utilitarianism is about making choices that maximize overall well-being or functionality	61
<i>Functionality</i>	Wide variety in usage	54

	Voluntary simplicity	Voluntary simplicity may encompass choosing items that are meaningful, artisanal, or locally sourced if they add value to one's life, even if they're not strictly essential.	16
		Service qualities which contribute to	

Slow fashion

The hierarchy chart for Slow Fashion is structured as follows:

- Slow fashion** (Root)
 - Sustainability**
 - Slow production**
 - Ethical**
 - Quality**
 - Locality**
 - Longevity**
 - Craftsmanship**
 - Long lead-time**
 - Slow design**
 - Small item batches**
 - Slow consumption**
 - Services**
 - Utilitarianism**
 - Voluntarism**
 - Sustainability**
 - Social & intangible value**
 - Timelessness**
 - Community & Culture**
 - Exclusivity**
 - Authenticity**
 - Relationships**
 - Sustainable Business Models**

Figure 5 Hierarchy chart by the

Models

reach environmental and social sustainability.

Figure 5 Hierarchy chart by the Slow fashion, Source: Own

number of coding references for
work from NVivo

By analysing the code table and the hierarchical diagram, the paper produced a classification that simplifies data exploration and organisation. The next step involved evaluating and visualising the code table as a dendrogram, which made it easier to analyse the relationships between the codes.

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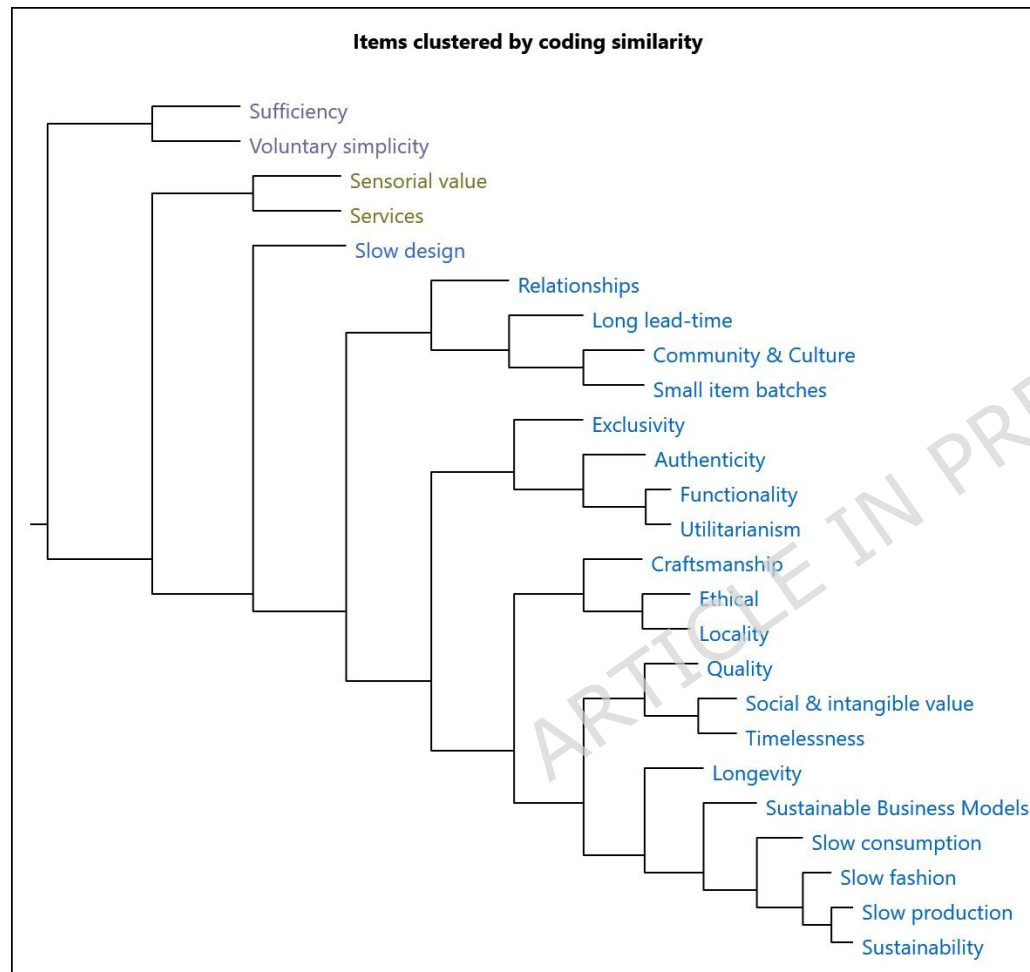


Figure 6 Dendrogram of Slow fashion cluster analysis clustered by coding similarity, Source: Own work from NVivo

The dendrogram was generated based on coding similarity, with *Slow fashion* included but not as a parent category. Its aim was to identify the attributes most closely linked to the definition of Slow fashion. *Figure 6* displays four clusters: three smaller clusters and one larger cluster, where the attributes within each cluster share common features.

The first small cluster includes *Sufficiency* and *Voluntary simplicity*; the second, *Sensorial value* and *Services*; and the third consists of *Slow design* only. The largest cluster includes all remaining attributes, including *Slow fashion*, which is central to this group. This main cluster is the focus of the paper, as it contains the main code, *Slow fashion*.

The difference between the hierarchy chart and the dendrogram lies in their underlying measures. The hierarchy chart is based on coding frequency, while the dendrogram reflects the strength of relationships between attributes. As both methods produced similar results despite using different analytical approaches, they support each other and strengthen the overall reliability of the findings.

The initial analysis and dendrogram include all connections between elements, which produces a broader result than intended. To focus more specifically on *Slow fashion*, a table was created from the NVivo analysis showing only its direct connections and similarity coefficients. In addition, comparisons can be reversed, as the coefficient remains the same under Sørensen's formula. *Table 11* presents the codes related to *Slow fashion*, making it easier to compare their similarities, and also includes reference frequency for a more complete overview. This study focuses on Sørensen's similarity coefficients (>0.5), distinguishing moderate relationships (0.5-0.79) from significant relationships (0.8-1.0).

Table 11 Table of reference number compared to relationship strength by Sørensen's coefficient, Source: Own work from NVivo

Code name	Description	Number of references (with accumulated numbers on the main nodes)	Sørensen's coefficient
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<i>Sustainability</i>	Environmentally and socially sustainable operations	1559	0.956522
<i>Slow production</i>	Ways of production which support ecologically and socially sustainable operation	1108	0.931507
<i>Social & Intangible Value</i>	The added value of given items, identity, authenticity, tradition, community, relationships and other intangible values	532	0.795367
<i>Sustainable Business Models</i>	Sustainable business models within the fashion industry which makes it possible to reach environmental and social sustainability.	373	0.831461
<i>Slow consumption</i>	Ways of consumption which support an ecologically and socially sustainable use of items	293	0.804598
Ethical	Worker conditions, fair trade and transparency	212	0.721311
Quality	Producing items for durability: appropriate material usage	193	0.771654
Locality	Locally sourced materials, local production	177	0.660944

Timelessness	The ability to keep value for a given person, seasonless and versatile pieces - "ideological value"/ seasonless	155	0.666667
Longevity	Producing items for a long lifetime by design	133	0.7
Craftsmanship	High-level garment creation competence with appropriate utilization and sometimes with a traditional approach	132	0.594595

Sustainability ranks highest in both measures (1,559 references; 0.96), followed by *Slow Production* (1,108 references; 0.93), with both showing strong relationships that confirm ecological and social production as key elements. *Sustainable Business Models* (0.83) and *Slow Consumption* (0.80) also show strong similarity to Slow fashion, while *Social & Intangible values* (0.80) account for 19% of codes despite their moderate to strong association.

Moderate relationships include *Ethical* (0.72), *Quality* (0.77), *Locality* (0.66), *Timelessness* (0.67), *Longevity* (0.70), and *Craftsmanship* (0.59), all of which consistently emphasise production-related and ethical characteristics (Table 11). This dual validation, based on reference frequency and similarity, solidifies Slow fashion's core focus on eco-ethical production, emphasising durability, locality, and quality craftsmanship rather than consumer-focused factors such as visibility, accessibility, and affordability.

Overall, although both the hierarchy chart (Figure 5) and the dendrogram (Figure 6) provide detailed insights into Slow fashion and the relationships between its main features, they do not explicitly include aspects of inclusivity (visibility, accessibility, affordability). This suggests that inclusivity is a missing element in the field.

4.4. Inclusivity-related attributes in the reviewed literature articles

The review used manual/text-based searches in NVivo to identify inclusivity-related elements in the selected literature. The search focused on the terms of inclusivity, visibility, accessibility, and affordability, which were defined as key concepts. To ensure broader coverage, synonyms were also included, such as “*Inclusivity*”, “*Inclusive*”, “*Diversity*”; “*Accessibility*”, “*Accessible*”, “*Democratic*”; “*Affordability*”, “*Affordable*”; “*Visibility*”, “*Visible*”.

For a clear overview of the coding, the paper includes *Table 12*, which gathers all references related to inclusivity.

Table 12. Table of inclusivity and its related references identified in the reviewed literature, Source: Own work from NVivo

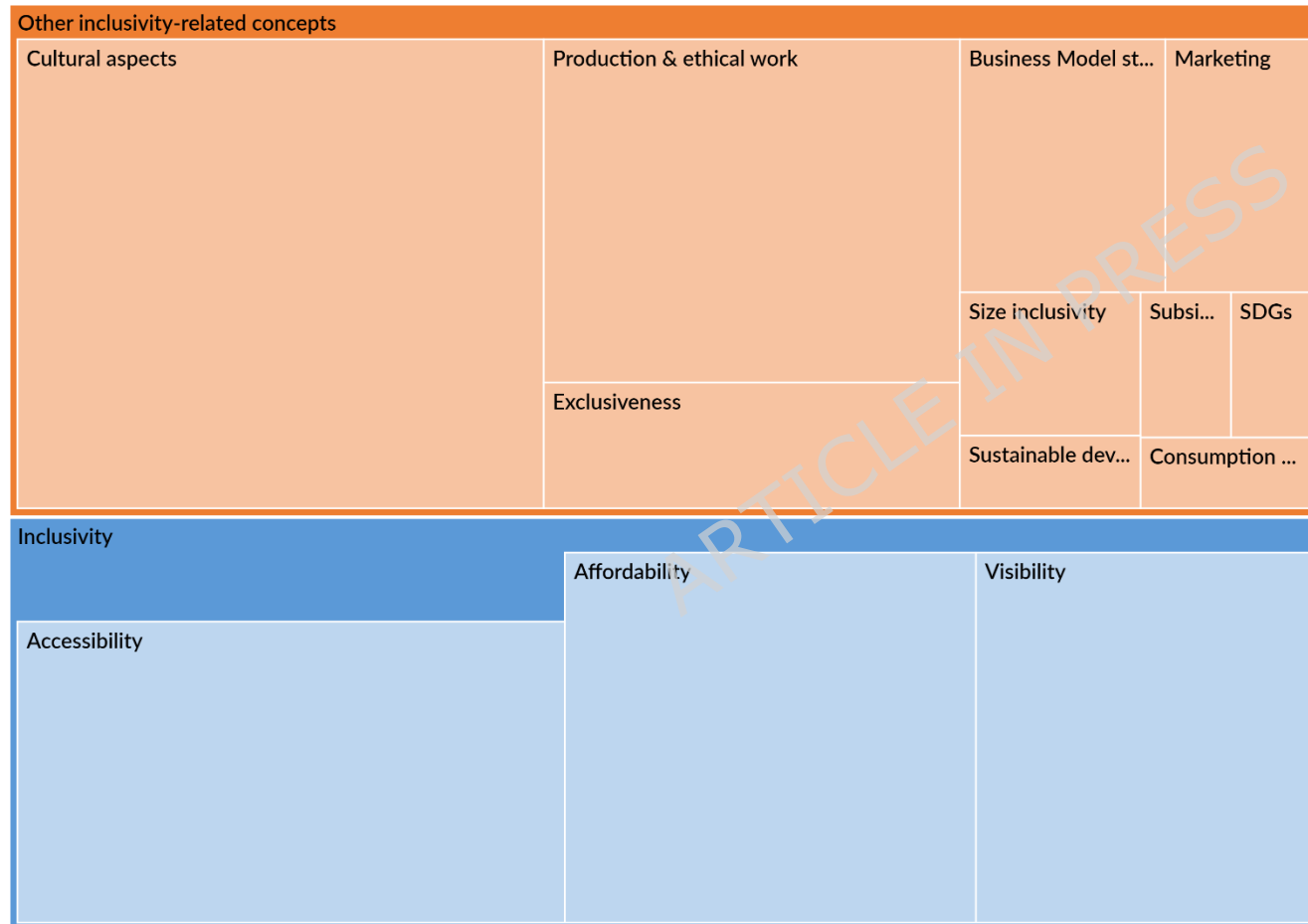
Code Name	Articles	References	Sources
Inclusivity	2	3	Skinner et al. (2021), Costanza (2022)
Inclusivity\Accessibility	8	13	Skinner et al. (2021), Švajdová (2024), Seock et al. (2024), Chhabra et al. (2022), Ronda (2023), Yang et al. (2024), Magnuson et al. (2017), Liu et al. (2022)
Inclusivity\Affordability	10	12	Adialita et al. (2024), Seock et al. (2024), Chhabra et al. (2022), De Araújo et al. (2022), Štefko and Steffek (2018), McNeill and Snowdon (2019), Moodly et al. (2023), Ertekin and Atik (2014), Bocken and Short (2015), Abdelmeguid et al. (2024)

Inclusivity\Visibility	5	10	Sinha et al. (2022), Aboytes et al. (2022), Chhabra et al. (2022), Gornostaeva (2022), Abdelmeguid et al. (2024)
Other inclusivity-related concepts			
Other inclusivity-related concepts\Business Model strategies	4	4	Sinha et al. (2022), Trejo and Lewis (2020), Abbate et al. (2023), Trejo et al. (2019)
Other inclusivity-related concepts\Consumption Corridors	1	1	Vladimirova (2021)
Other inclusivity-related concepts\Cultural aspects	15	19	Berlim (2021), Leslie et al. (2014), Trejo and Lewis (2020), Keith and Silies (2015), Yang et al. (2024), Clark (2008), Liu et al. (2022), Pookulangara and Shephard (2013), Castagna et al. (2022), Aprianingsih et al. (2022), Jung and Jin (2016), Matušovičová (2020), Ertekin and Atik (2014), De Lira and Da Costa (2022), Onay and Arslan (2023)
Other inclusivity-related concepts\Exclusiveness (fashion diversity)	3	4	Jung and Jin (2014), Nagano (2021), Gossen and Kropfeld (2022)
Other inclusivity-related concepts\Marketing (brand positioning)	3	3	Chi et al. (2021), Sobreira et al. (2020), Ermini et al. (2024)

Other inclusivity-related concepts\Production & ethical work	9	11	Nagano (2021), Núñez-Tabales et al. (2021), Gornostaeva (2024), Trejo and Lewis (2020), Štefko and Steffek (2018), García-Huguet (2021), Trejo and Lewis (2016), Sinha et al. (2022), Aprianingsih et al. (2022)
Other inclusivity-related concepts\SDGs	1	1	Chhabra et al. (2022)
Other inclusivity-related concepts\Size inclusivity	2	2	Skinner et al. (2021), Laing (2024)
Other inclusivity-related concepts\Subsidies	1	1	Khan et al. (2024)
Other inclusivity-related concepts\Sustainable development	1	1	Seock et al. (2024)

To visualise the findings, a hierarchy chart was created based on coding frequency.

Figure 7 Hierarchy chart of inclusivity and related concepts identified in the reviewed literature articles, Source: Own work from NVivo



The text search showed that *inclusivity* is addressed across a wide range of topics in the reviewed literature. The largest group concerns *Cultural aspects*, including themes such as gender, ethnicity, cultural diversity, community, and cultural heritage. The second largest group relates to *Production & ethical work*, where themes of workforce diversity and material diversity are discussed [24, 28, 49, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72].

Smaller clusters include *Business model strategies* (e.g., business diversity and collaboration), *Exclusiveness* (e.g., fashion diversity), and *Marketing* (e.g., brand positioning). Additionally, less frequently mentioned aspects include *Size inclusivity*, *Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)*, *Subsidies*, *Consumption corridors*, and *Sustainable development* [24, 30, 33, 48, 54, 67, 69, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80].

The reviewed papers show a limited understanding of inclusivity, based on the definition used in this study, and its related aspects of *visibility*, *accessibility*, and *affordability*. These attributes are discussed separately, and in some cases, they are used interchangeably.

The largest number of search results relates to *accessibility*. Eight articles (13 references) discuss issues such as limited availability and difficulties in ordering products. In several cases, these discussions are framed more broadly around sustainable fashion rather than specifically focusing on Slow fashion [33, 38, 48, 50, 80, 81, 82, 83].

The second most frequently referenced aspect was *affordability*. A total of ten articles (12 references) highlighted the challenges posed by high prices in Slow fashion, which can limit consumers' ability to purchase such products. These discussions also often generalise the issue to sustainable fashion rather than focusing specifically on Slow fashion [48, 64, 70, 80, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89].

Regarding visibility, five articles (10 references) addressed issues such as promotion, advertising, lack of exposure, and awareness-raising for businesses [24, 48, 89, 90, 91].

Finally, *inclusivity* itself was the least explicitly defined concept. Only two articles (3 references) discussed socio-economic diversification and the inclusion of non-elite groups, with one of these focusing more generally on sustainable or circular fashion rather than specifically on Slow fashion [33, 92].

Although some studies mention key elements of *inclusivity*, these aspects are often addressed in isolation rather than as part of a broader, integrated concept. As a result, understanding of the needs of non-elite consumers remains fragmented.

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5. Discussion

5.1. *Slow fashion's academic understanding*

While NVivo's coding and hierarchical cluster analysis (Sørensen's coefficient) effectively identified core Slow fashion attributes – primarily production-oriented themes such as *Sustainability* (1,559 references, 0.96 significant), *Slow production* (1,108 references, 0.93 significant), *Quality*, *Ethical*, *Craftsmanship* moderate (0.77, 0.72, 0.59) (*Table 10*) - no inclusivity-related concepts (accessibility, visibility, affordability) emerged directly from the clusters (*RQ1*).

As of now, Slow fashion's current understanding is an economically sustainable business model concept, which strongly focuses on ecological sustainability and ethical attitude towards all garment workers, with a focus on highly skilled local labour, that creates durable, quality, and personal value-holding clothing pieces that have the ability to be utilised for a long time period.

5.2. *Implications for inclusivity*

The absence described above also remained in manual/text-based searches conducted after clustering across the 156 articles, where these terms appeared only marginally and without links to other identified attributes (*RQ2*). This confirms that scholarly work on Slow fashion remains largely focused on production processes rather than consumer inclusivity.

To summarise the implications, the following table has been created:

Table 13. The comparison of production-oriented sustainability in fashion and socio-economic inclusivity in fashion, Source: Own work

Aspect	Production-oriented sustainability business models in fashion	Socio-economic inclusive fashion business models
--------	---	--

Core value	Ecologically and ethically sustainable production operation	Democratising production for diverse socio-economic groups
Focus	Preservation of the environment and an active focus on worker rights	All consumers, not only the elite
Main Elements	Quality, Ethical, Locality, Timelessness, Longevity, and Craftsmanship	Visibility, accessibility, affordability
Method (<i>how to reach</i>)	Through strong slow fashion values in the business model	Hybrid (sharing, second-hand) business models, viral promotion methods, and the option of distribution/delivery
Main goals	Create highly valuable products (emotionally and craft-wise)	Enable consumption access for wider socio-economic groups
Realisation (<i>what we get</i>)	Unique, often handmade quality pieces that are durable, timeless, and long-lasting	Affordable and easily available fashion items

In one instance of the analysis, social and intangible values were identified as significant (*Table 11*). However, these values are mainly discussed in philosophical terms, such as identity and tradition, and are treated as additional benefits rather than core elements. Moreover, they do not form part of a framework that addresses or promotes socio-economic inclusivity. Therefore, closer attention to consumer needs is important for the viability of Slow fashion. Engaging diverse socio-economic groups is key to a sustainable and fair garment sector. Overall, these findings show limited discussion of inclusivity and highlight the need for greater social inclusion from a consumer perspective within the Slow fashion paradigm.

5.3. Implications for Theory

The conducted systematic literature review and NVivo analysis reveal the dominant production-centric conceptualisation of Slow fashion, where consumer barriers (visibility, accessibility, affordability aka inclusivity) currently remain undiscussed and peripheral [37, 38, 39]. The current framework requires critical reassessment, and academic attention should shift towards a hybrid model that maintains the core principles of Slow fashion while incorporating selected elements of Fast fashion (or other business models) to engage a wider range of social groups. In this context, the value system of Slow fashion should move beyond a mainly production-focused approach and place greater emphasis on consumer values.

5.4. *Implications for Practice*

Slow fashion businesses need to learn from alternative business models, even those not usually considered sustainable, to address issues of *visibility*, *accessibility*, and *affordability*. This is necessary to serve more than only high-income socio-economic groups. Slow fashion brands should adopt marketing strategies, such as a strong social media presence (entertaining content, marketing [93] and campaigns [38, 39] maintaining a website, and using it for e-commerce as well as improving communication and advertising. For SMEs, these strategies may be costly, so business collaboration may be required to address this issue.

For accessibility, brands need online ordering systems that are convenient and transparent, supported by reliable delivery services, as many currently lack these options [37, 38]. Finally, *affordability* - the most challenging aspect - requires integrating other business models such as sharing or circular systems (including second-hand markets). For example, managing second-hand clothing markets, possibly by operating a dedicated sub-page within their C2C platforms [68], could increase revenue opportunities and provide wider consumer groups with access to their products.

5.5. *Implications for Policy*

While policy often focuses on environmental standards and ethical labour, discussions of market access barriers appear to be limited. Governments can support the adoption of Slow fashion or broader sustainable fashion through subsidies for locally operating SMEs with a strong sustainability focus, tax reductions or credits for circular, second-hand, or similar sustainability-driven models, and funding for local production, which also supports more transparent life-cycle practices. In addition, grants or financial support for digital development in fashion SMEs, or free business development programmes, could directly improve how these companies operate. Addressing the prevalence of low-quality Fast fashion products is also important for Slow fashion businesses to gain traction.

Overall, these approaches could improve competitiveness while also addressing issues of *visibility* (through funding for digital development and operational tools), *accessibility* (through free business development programmes supporting expansion and delivery systems), and *affordability* (through tax reductions and subsidies, as well as value creation through circular or sharing models).

6. Conclusion

Fast fashion's planned obsolescence and labour exploitation highlight the need for alternatives. Slow fashion started as a promising alternative movement against Fast fashion. However, Slow fashion academic literature remains largely production-focused, with emphasis on ecological sustainability and ethical production practices. Key consumer inclusivity dimensions - visibility, accessibility, and affordability - did not emerge in the analysis and were also not prominent in manual or text-based searches, despite their importance for achieving genuine sustainability.

This production-centric orientation limits the inclusion of broader consumer segments, creating a tension between upstream sustainability objectives and downstream socio-economic exclusion. As a result, Slow fashion currently operates mainly as a niche model rather than a broadly accessible alternative to Fast fashion. Hybrid approaches that combine the marketing and distribution strengths of Fast fashion with the ethical principles of Slow fashion are therefore necessary.

Practitioners should focus on improving visibility through digital channels, enhancing accessibility through better logistics systems, and increasing affordability through circular economy or other sharing models. Policy support for the digital transformation of small and medium-sized enterprises would help enable these changes. Future research should address the imbalance between production and consumption perspectives in order to strengthen the potential of Slow fashion across diverse socio-economic groups.

7. Limitations and further research

7.1. *Limitations*

This study has several limitations. First, limited access may have excluded relevant articles, including non-academic or paywalled sources, despite the PRISMA-guided review identifying 156 articles from Scopus, Web of Science, EBSCO, and ScienceDirect. Second, interpreting these articles through NVivo cluster analysis may be affected by variations in keyword usage and phrasing. To reduce bias, screening was thoroughly documented, and coding definitions were clearly established. Finally, focusing on peer-reviewed academic papers may underrepresent practitioner insights from industry reports, trade magazines, or social media, which often capture current consumer trends and market innovations.

7.2. *Future research directions*

Future research should extend beyond academic literature to include industry reports and consumer-generated content that seek visibility, accessibility, and affordability within Slow fashion. In case of long time frame studies after 2025 could track whether research increasingly emphasises inclusivity narratives.

Empirical studies are also needed to test hybrid models that integrate socio-economic inclusivity with ecological and ethical principles, particularly through circular resale, sharing models, and digital accessibility for wider income groups. Comparative research across regions could reveal whether production-focused approaches are universal or market-specific.

Finally, policy studies should evaluate how combined measures - subsidies, grants, business development programs, tax incentives, and SME digital funding - alongside mixed business models influence the adoption of Slow or sustainable fashion among wider consumer groups.

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Clinical trial number

The authors declare that this study did not involve any clinical trial, and no clinical trial registration number applies.

Conflict of interest

The authors declare that they have no competing interests.

Data availability

Not applicable.

Ethical approval

Not applicable.

Consent to participate

The authors declare that this research did not involve human participants, human materials, or identifiable human data. As such, no informed consent was required.

Consent to publish

The authors declare that this study did not involve human participants, human materials, or identifiable human data. Therefore, participant consent for publication was not required, and all authors have approved the manuscript for publication.

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