Microensayo

Where are your clothes from?

¿De dónde es tu ropa?

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Abstract

The fashion industry faces challenges like resource depletion due to mass "fast fashion" production. Textile manufacturing consumes water and chemicals, contributing to pollution. However, the trade in used clothing offers a sustainable solution, reducing demand for new materials and creating employment opportunities, particularly in developing countries. Addressing these issues necessitates a holistic approach to sustainable production and consumption.

Keywords: fast fashion, sustainable production, clothing, textile manufacturing.

Resumen

La industria de la moda enfrenta desafíos como la reducción de recursos debido a la producción masiva de "fast fashion". La fabricación textil consume grandes cantidades de agua y productos químicos, lo que contribuye a la contaminación. Sin embargo, el comercio de ropa usada ofrece una solución sostenible, reduciendo la demanda de nuevos materiales y creando empleo, especialmente en países en desarrollo. Abordar estos problemas requiere un enfoque integral hacia la producción y consumo sostenibles.

Palabras clave: fast fashion, producción sustentable, ropa, manufactura textil.

Recibido: 21 de marzo de 2024
Aceptado: 14 de mayo de 2024

The manufacturing of clothing involves a myriad of natural resources, each playing a crucial role in the complex process of turning raw materials into wearable garments. From the cultivation of fibers to the dyeing and finishing stages, the fashion industry relies heavily on resources like water, land, energy, wood, and various other raw materials. However, this reliance comes with a significant environmental cost, and within it is also a deep connection between the social aspect of clothing production and the overexploitation of resources.

Fast fashion is a part of the fashion industry and its focuses on massive and rapid production of clothing. It relies on recurring consumption and impulse buying, instilling a sense of urgency when purchasing. The average

consumer in the USA purchases, according to Niinimak (2020), one item of clothing every 5.5. days. While consumerism increases, the quality of garments decreases. In 2005, the average garment-use time decreased by 36%.

This rapid manufacturing process involves many natural resources, the main one being water. Large amounts are used, totaling 79 billion cubic meters in 2015, and averring an estimated 200 tones of water usage during the production of one ton of textile (Niinimak*,* 2020). Most of the water usage is associated with cotton cultivation and the wet process of textile manufacturing. Recent reports use scarcity-based weighting to emphasize the impact of water use in arid regions, demonstrating that textiles and fashion sector is associated with 7% of local groundwater and drinking water losses caused by water use globally.

Another resource used in the fashion industry is land. Due to there being both natural and synthetic fibers, it is necessary to use chemicals for assuring the manufacturing process. The industry uses over 15,000 different chemicals during the manufacturing process, beginning during fiber production. Estimates suggest that 6% of global pesticide production is applied to cotton crops, including 16% of insecticide use, 4% of herbicides, growth regulators, desiccants, and defoliants, and 1% of fungicides. Heavy use of agrochemicals can use nausea, diarrhea, cancer and respiratory diseases, and acute pesticide poisoning is responsible for nearly 1,000 deaths a day and afflicts neurological and reproductive problems (Niinimak*,* 2020). There are many other natural resources involved in clothes manufacturing, but it is important to also talk about the environment effects within the clothing use.

Due to the quality decreasing and the fact that they just go with the trends, the process that pollutes the most is the limited life-cycle clothes have. We usually don’t consider all the resources used for washing clothes and when we get rid of them. Some clothes get burned, which expulses more greenhouse gas emissions into the atmosphere, while others are given a second chance. This is not only good for the environment, but it also impacts other factors such as society and economics (Dissanayake and Pal, 2023).

The used clothing trade brings positive environmental impacts in terms of pollution reduction and resource conservation. Extending garment life by

reusing them is the best way to minimize virgin material requirements and the energy used in the extraction and processing of raw materials. This trade also plays an important role generating new employments opportunities. The types of jobs include collection, sorting, transportation, repair, washing, reconstruction, packaging, and trading. In Rwanda, were $10,000 spent by consumers on used clothing supports 4.8 full-time workers annually. The used clothing trade is also recognized as an important sector for poverty alleviation in developing countries (Dissanayake and Pal, 2023).

References

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How to cite this article

Rodríguez Tun, L.G. and Deverge Talavera, C. A. (2024). Where are your clothes from? *Tsaloa - Revista Multidisciplinaria de Educación Media Superior, 1*, 65–69.
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