

## Sustainable fashion



<https://doi.org/10.56238/sevened2023.006-072>

### María Del Lourdes Arias Gómez

Doctor in Private International Law  
Institution: Universidad Autónoma de Tamaulipas  
E-mail: [derecholni@gmail.com](mailto:derecholni@gmail.com)

### Jesús Arias Gómez

Master of Business Administration  
Institution: Universidad Autónoma de Tamaulipas  
E-mail: [jarias@docentes.uat.edu.mx](mailto:jarias@docentes.uat.edu.mx)

### Azalea María Peña Blanco

Master of Business Administration  
Institution: Universidad Autónoma de Tamaulipas  
E-mail: [azpena@docentes.uat.edu.mx](mailto:azpena@docentes.uat.edu.mx)

### Lorena Gabriela Hernández Arteaga

Master of Business Administration  
Institution: Universidad Autónoma de Tamaulipas  
E-mail: [lorena.artega@uat.edu.mx](mailto:lorena.artega@uat.edu.mx)

### Lilian Esperanza Rodríguez Torres

Doctor of Business Administration  
Institution: Universidad Autónoma de Tamaulipas  
E-mail: [lerodrig@docentes.uat.edu.mx](mailto:lerodrig@docentes.uat.edu.mx)

### Lourdes Leticia Cárdenas Segovia

Master of Business Administration  
Institution: Universidad Autónoma de Tamaulipas  
E-mail: [lcardenas@docentes.uat.edu.mx](mailto:lcardenas@docentes.uat.edu.mx)

### Simón Armando Rincón Aguilar

Master of Business Administration  
Institution: Universidad Autónoma de Tamaulipas  
E-mail: [arincon@docentes.uat.edu.mx](mailto:arincon@docentes.uat.edu.mx)

### ABSTRACT

The constant change of trends, we see it in the fashion week shows of Paris, New York, Madrid, Milan, etc., each show is more extravagant than the other. Internationally recognized brands work with haute couture dresses, which aggravate environmental pollution because they cannot be sold at a lower price or in discount stores, therefore, clothing factories make clothes for different social classes, obviously, with sales for haute couture dresses, they do not pay the production costs. Committing to responsible consumption means knowing the manufacturing process and the employment situation of the workers who make them, because in many countries (Mexico, China, Italy, among others) seamstresses and tailors have undignified salaries, working hours and benefits. General objective: To explain the relationship between clothing consumption and environmental damage. In addition, we emphasize sustainability in all aspects of life, for the sake of our students, their families, and the environment.

**Keywords:** Fashion, Sustainability, Fast fashion, Responsible consumption.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

The Faculty of Commerce and Administration of Tampico, part of the Autonomous University of Tamaulipas, fulfills a social function, therefore, our working group is committed to sustainability and social responsibility, therefore, we consider the study on the consumption of clothing to be of interest due to the damage it causes to the environment.

The preparation and manufacture of textiles consumes excess water and pollutes the environment, in addition, it causes allergies, poisoning and skin damage to the people who work with them.



Regardless of the damage that manufacturing causes to the environment, the disintegration of clothing is highly polluting, more than one hundred tons of clothing are thrown into landfill annually and its degradation depends on the materials that compose it, cotton (between six months and five years), wool (one to five years), spandex and nylon (between twenty to two hundred years) and polyester (five hundred years).

Environmentalists promote the production of sustainable clothing and reduce the production of it, due to the damage caused by the manufacture, use and disuse of clothing. According to the United Nations, the production of clothing and footwear is responsible for 10% of greenhouse gases as it pollutes more than all international flights and shipping combined.

For this reason, fast fashion and elegant fashion are highly polluting fashions because women use haute couture clothes in a single event and young people constantly buy clothes because they like to dress fashionably, whether they are branded (Chanel, Dior, Dolce-Gabana, etc.) or commercial brands accessible to the pockets of the middle class and lower class. so that the majority of the young population can start for the first time according to their economic possibilities.

For the reasons stated above, we consider it important to raise awareness among the general population regarding the pollution generated by the production of clothing.

Studies carried out by the National Institute of Industrial Technology (INTI) reveal that most people are unaware of the pollution generated by the production of clothing and the amount that is thrown into the landfill each year.

It is impressive, the excess of clothes that are bought and thrown away without having been used or at most after a wear, therefore, it is essential to teach young people, in particular, the students of the Faculty of Commerce and Administration of Tampico (hereinafter FCAT) of the Bachelor of International Business (hereinafter LNI) career, not to dress fast fashion and opt for sustainable brands so that tons of clothes are thrown away every year.

Annually, Mexicans buy an average of 18 garments (dresses, pants, blouses, skirts, etc.), that is, 2.322 million garments annually. For this reason, it is urgent to teach young people to recycle and sell what they do not use, before acquiring a garment, thinking about whether they are going to use it regularly and if they will use it more than one season, is a way to reduce supply and demand.

## **2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

Factories began to create garments for each social stratum, so that young people would dress fashionably, which gave rise to the so-called fast fashion, which increased environmental damage (Fuenmayor, 2021).



Gómez (2015), conducted a study in the Atacama Desert (Chile), because it is one of the largest clothing dumps in the world, receives clothes from Europe and the United States (BBC News Mundo, 2022, 58s).

The textile and clothing industry is constantly innovating, every season new models of dresses, shoes and accessories are presented to wear during the spring-summer or autumn-winter season. The materials used in the textile industry depend on each designer and the customers they are targeting

The constant change of trends, we see it in the fashion shows of the fashion weeks of Paris, New York, Madrid, Milan, etc., each show is more extravagant than the other, the models they present are sophisticated with new materials, in addition, every year there are new designers, which is why the offer of garments and accessories increases.

Internationally recognized brands work with haute couture dresses only for distinguished clients. Haute couture garments aggravate environmental pollution because they cannot be sold at a lower price or in discount stores, therefore, clothing factories make clothes for the different social classes, obviously, with sales for haute couture dresses, they do not pay the production costs.

Designers who are working with sustainable materials, in particular, present them at gala shows to an exclusive market. The problem is that millionaires want their designs to be unique and high-quality, even if they are not sustainable.

Committing to responsible consumption means knowing the manufacturing process and the employment situation of the workers who make them, because in many countries (Mexico, China, Italy, among others) seamstresses and tailors have undignified salaries, working hours and benefits.

In recent years, the royals are reusing their dresses, shoes and accessories, Queen Máxima of the Netherlands, Queen Letizia of Spain, Princess Kate of England, among others, to express their empathy with the subjects who have been economically affected by losing their job, company or home, as a result of the COVID 19 pandemic.

## 2.1 OVERALL OBJECTIVE

Explain the relationship between clothing consumption and environmental damage.

## 2.2 SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

1. Explain the relationship between clothing consumerism and fast fashion.
2. Determine what percentage of the clothing used is sustainable.
3. State the reasons why clothing manufacturers are responsible for harm to the population they recruit to perform the work.



### 3 JUSTIFICATION

Since ancient times, the textile industry has been one of the most productive activities due to the need of human beings to cover their bodies due to low temperatures.

The term textile industry refers to "the weaving of fabrics from fibers; subsequently, the spinning of synthetic and natural fibers." (Lee, 2012)

Currently, it is necessary to balance the need to fully dress the world's population and reduce the pollution generated by the production of each garment.

According to the data provided by INEGI, of the total Of the expenditure made by families, consumption on clothing was 1.9%, which represents the size of the national market for the clothing industry.

Expenditure on Of all households, 66.3% went to clothing for people aged 18 and over, 23.7% for people aged 5 to 17, and 10.0% for children aged 0 to 4 years.

The textile industry is one of the industries that generates the most income for a country, therefore, the different brands must think about the good of humanity and not only about profits, because profits can be generated without affecting the environment or the workers who participate in both the textile industry and the clothing industry.

Apparel owners should work on ways to turn their industries into sustainable businesses that contribute to society, without affecting their profits.

It is essential that the materials used pollute as little as possible and instead of throwing the clothes that were not sold into the landfill, they are donated to civil associations that have children and the elderly under their care or to the remote communities of the city, where the population in extreme poverty lives, in addition to delivering lots of useful clothes to public schools where low-income students attend from preschool to high school, ranging in age from 3 to 15 years old.

#### 3.1 RELEVANCE OF THE RESEARCH

The research will focus on explaining the issue of sustainable fashion and its relationship with the environment, for this reason, students of Bachelors in International Business of the Faculty of Commerce and Administration of Tampico will be surveyed.

It is important to analyze if students when buying clothes, shoes, sneakers and other accessories are based on the sustainability of these goods or on their taste, regardless of whether their purchases are superfluous or pollute the environment, because between 20% or 30% of the garments do not use them or only use them once and keep them in the closet and are not used again. That is why it is important to give lectures and show videos so that they become aware of sustainable, responsible and fair consumption for the good of humanity.

Unfortunately, we have become a consumerist society, which harms the environment, however,



we have not learned to relate our purchases with environmental damage, although we have stopped using aerosols, straws or straws, plastic bags among other products, but we consume clothes and other accessories without thinking about the damage that textiles cause to the environment as well as their disintegration.

For the Faculty of Commerce and Administration of Tampico, it is important to train directors, teachers and students, so that a significant change is seen when buying sustainable clothing.

#### 4 TYPE OF STUDY

The study is a group study by the same number of students who were selected for the sample through simple probabilistics.

It is transversal because it was carried out on a single occasion and time.

It is explanatory, because it tries to explain why people are indifferent to the fact that the garments are highly polluting when buying their clothes and accessories.

#### 5 HYPOTHESIS

*Hi.* "The perception that the students of the International Business career of the Faculty of Commerce and Administration of Tampico have regarding the relationship between sustainable fashion and the environment".

*Ho.* "The perception that the students of the International Business career of the Faculty of Commerce and Administration of Tampico have regarding the fact that there is no relationship between sustainable fashion and the environment".

*Has.* The students of the International Business career of the Faculty of Commerce and Administration of Tampico know how the cleanliness of the beaches influences the temperature of the seas.

#### 6 STUDY SUBJECTS

The research was carried out on 97 students of the Faculty of Commerce and Administration of Tampico, specifically, 65 women and 55 men of the Bachelor's Degree in International Business, The period of this study was from June to September 2023.

#### 7 INSTRUMENTS

In this research, an instrument was used to collect information, through which the perception of the students of the Faculty of Commerce and Administration of Tampico about the consumption of sustainable fashion due to its relationship with their environment was verified.

The instrument was developed by the person in charge of the research, it contains yes, no



questions sometimes.

## 8 THEME DEVELOPMENT

Dress from the Latin *vestitus*, "is a garment (or set of garments) that is used to cover the body." The concept is used as a synonym for clothing, clothing, apparel or attire. Clothing: "A dress is a garment that covers the body." Pérez Porto, J., Gardey, A. (2010).

Fashion: "use, mode or custom that is in vogue for some time, or in a certain country, with a specialty in costumes, fabrics and ornaments, mainly those recently introduced" (RAE, 2012). Fashion "is the possibility of dressing for pleasure and not for necessity" (Gabarrón, 1989). "Fashion is the subtle and changeable expression of each era. It would be foolish for our social mirror to always return the same image. The important thing, ultimately, is to check whether that image really corresponds to what we feel it is" (Beaton, 1990).

### 8.1 SUSTAINABLE FASHION

In the 1980s, the world began to focus on the environmental damage caused by a set of goods used by society, however, there were no significant changes in the behavior of families or companies. Scientists have failed to convince people of the relationship between the consumption of goods and global warming. For Gardetti, 2018, sustainable fashion is that "during the development and use of a garment no harm was done to people or the planet".

The term sustainability was also not understood, so if the necessary measures had been taken four decades ago, the world would be different.

Today, we are seeing the effects of global warming (global heat waves, warming of the oceans and seas, forest fires, heavy rains, and droughts, among other natural phenomena).

### 8.2 RECYCLING & USE

The recycling process damages the textile fibres, which reduces their uses (they are used for insulation rather than for new garments, etc.); It's cheaper to make new clothes from new fibers than it is to recycle old clothes.

It would take 12 years to recycle 48 hours of fast fashion production. 1% of textiles are recycled. 73% of the clothes received by the world's charities and textile pickers are burned or buried.

The concept of sustainable development is "development that, without compromising the capacity of future generations, meets the needs of today". Its goal is to have a global reach ( Doppelt, 2012 ).

Sustainability "is much more than our relationship with the environment; it's about our relationship with ourselves, our communities, and our institutions" (Seidman, 2007).



However, when it comes to sustainable fashion, there is still a long way to go to convince people to reduce consumption. Although the purchase of clothes has decreased worldwide, the cause and reason is the family economy, because countless families were affected by COVID-19, since, worldwide, thousands of companies closed, millions of jobs and lives were lost, therefore, families reduced superfluous expenses (clothing, amusements, vacations, etc.), to be able to continue paying (food, health, education, mortgage or rent).

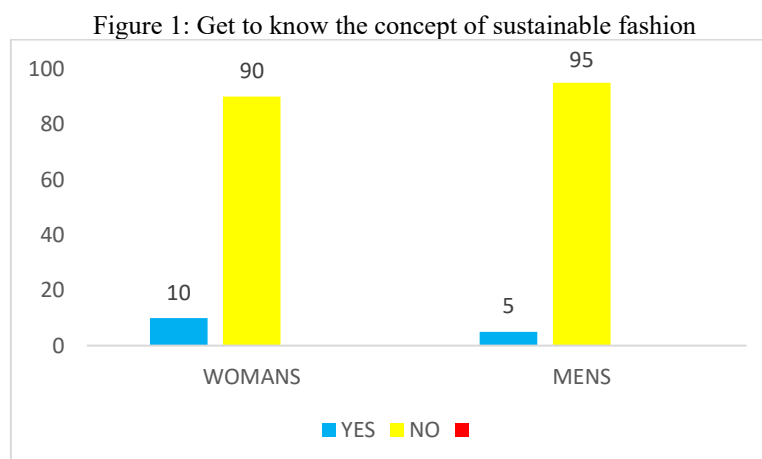
The opposite of sustainable fashion is "fast fashion" because it promotes changes every 7 days of low-cost garments, so that most people can buy them.

We interviewed 15 mothers with 4 children each, regarding the amount of clothes they buy for the family, they agreed that for their daughters they buy at least two garments for each one monthly, not so for their sons, they buy three or four sets of t-shirts and shorts in the summer.

Obviously, the clothes for the family diary are of lower quality than the clothes they wear to "go out" or go to parties, movies, walks or vacations and they buy them 5 or 6 items of clothing annually. Although they recycle the clothes, the clothes left by the older children are passed on to the younger ones. However, they have problems with adolescent and young children because they want designer clothes, whose prices are three or four times higher than "fast fashion".

The family problem is aggravated when teenagers do not accept "fast fashion" and want to use only clothes, sneakers and branded accessories, obviously, quality is distinguished and makes them look "elegant", which is why they prefer quality over quantity, although they are not satisfied with three or four outfits a year, they want to wear for the first time at parties, concerts or social events they attend.

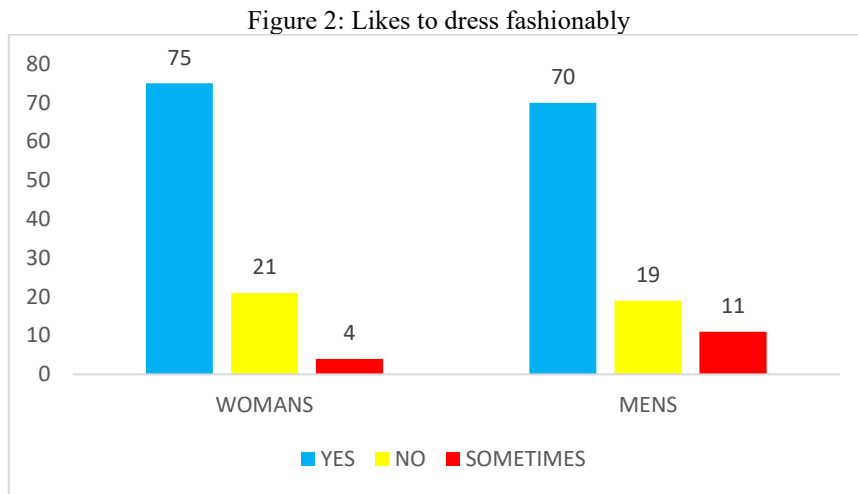
It is well known that young people are influenced by marketing and they want to look like the models they see in commercials, on television or friends who dress fashionably, so they prefer to buy high-class brand items (dresses, pants, sneakers, shoes, perfumes, etc.) if they do not have money. They work and save to buy what they like.



The authors

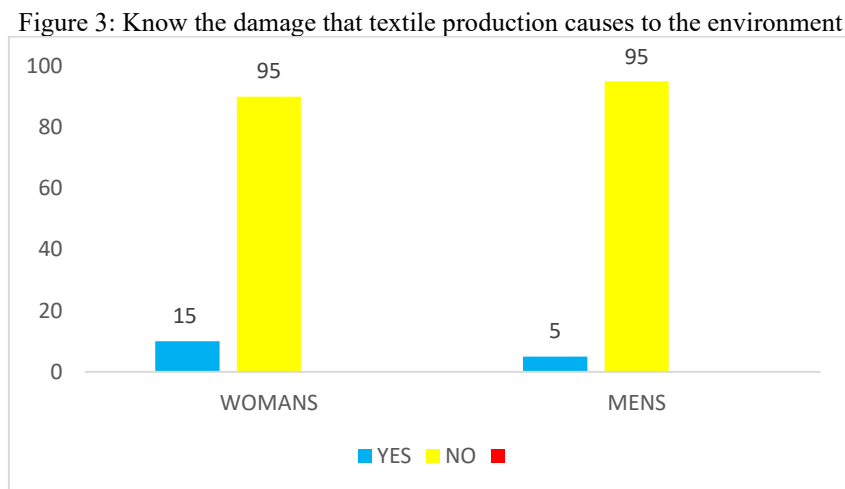


Most international business students are unfamiliar with the term sustainable fashion. That is why it is important to give lectures so that they know the importance of sustainability in fashion.



The authors

It is obvious that both women and men like to dress fashionably, especially because marketing influences young people, by showing models attractive for wearing certain clothes, perfumes, accessories.



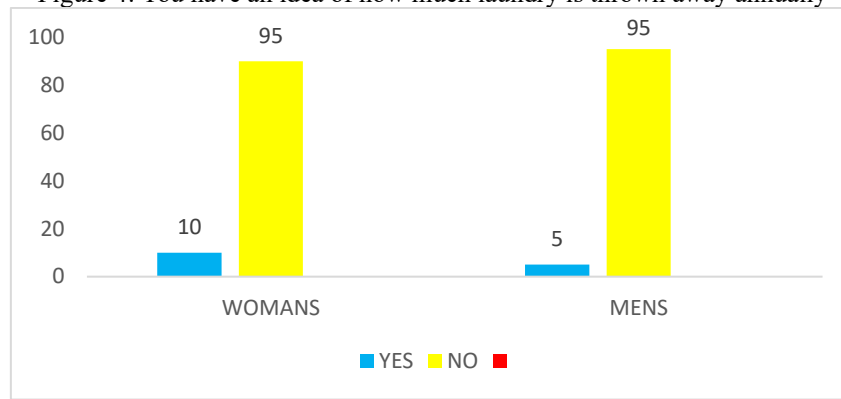
The authors

The interviewees are not aware of the environmental damage caused by the textile industry or the damage caused by the consumerism of clothing. They buy what's trendy.





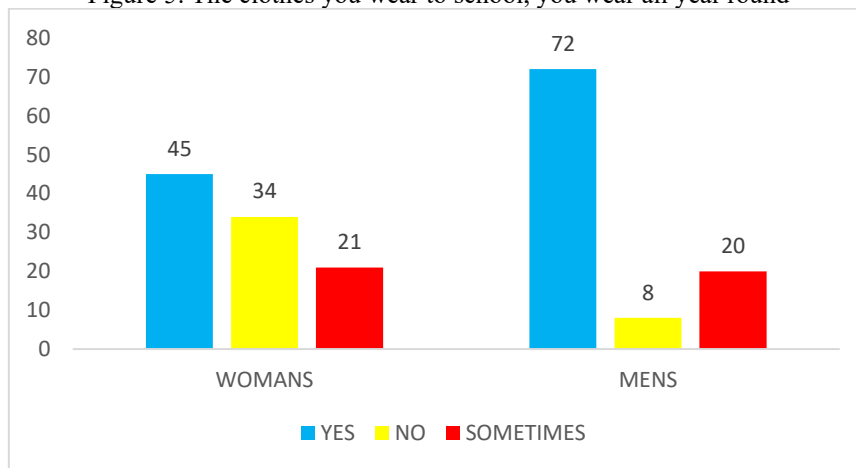
Figure 4: You have an idea of how much laundry is thrown away annually



The authors

FCAT students do not know how much clothing is thrown into the landfill each year, so they do not know how long it takes for clothes to decompose.

Figure 5: The clothes you wear to school, you wear all year round

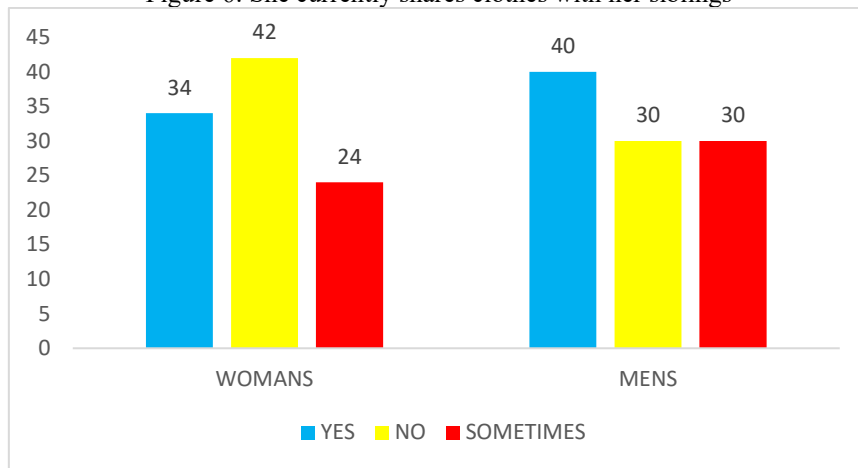


The authors

Boys mostly wear their clothes throughout the school year, but not women, they prefer to buy clothes, even if they are fast fashion, to try to dress the same as their classmates.



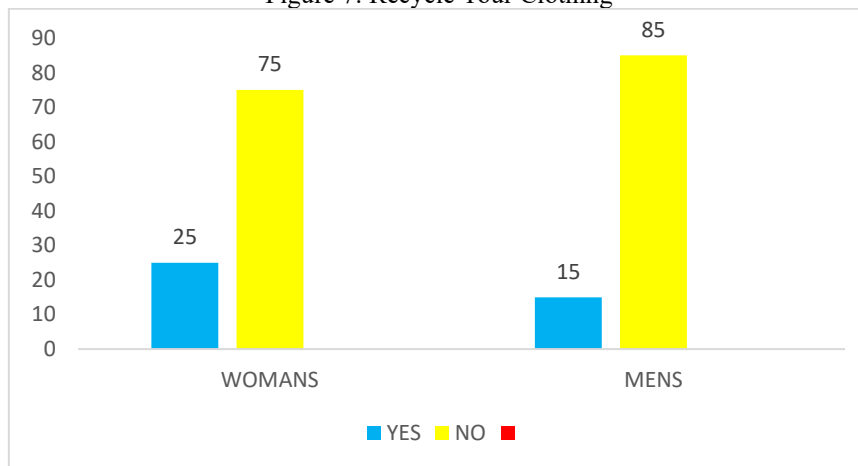
Figure 6: She currently shares clothes with her siblings



The authors

Students still share clothes with their siblings, although they ask for or give permission to wear or lend them.

Figure 7: Recycle Your Clothing

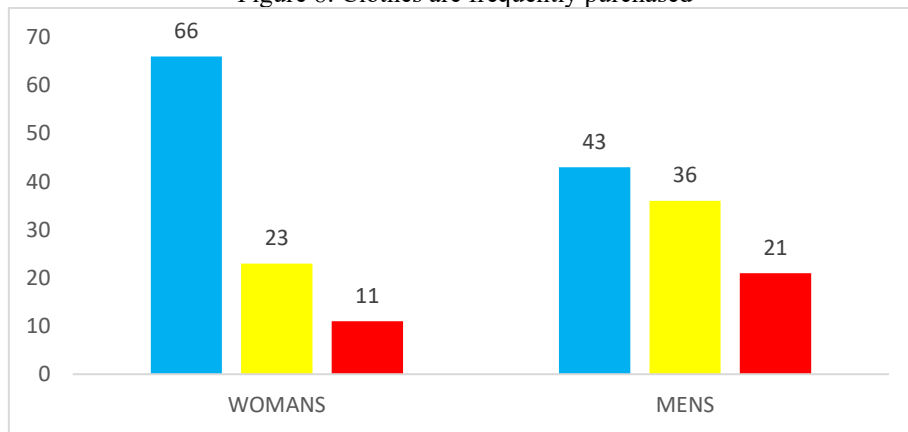


The authors

People in general do not recycle clothes, except when children are children who pass clothes from the eldest to the youngest. But, the teenager does not accept to wear his brothers' clothes. What most families do is give the clothes they don't use to low-income families.



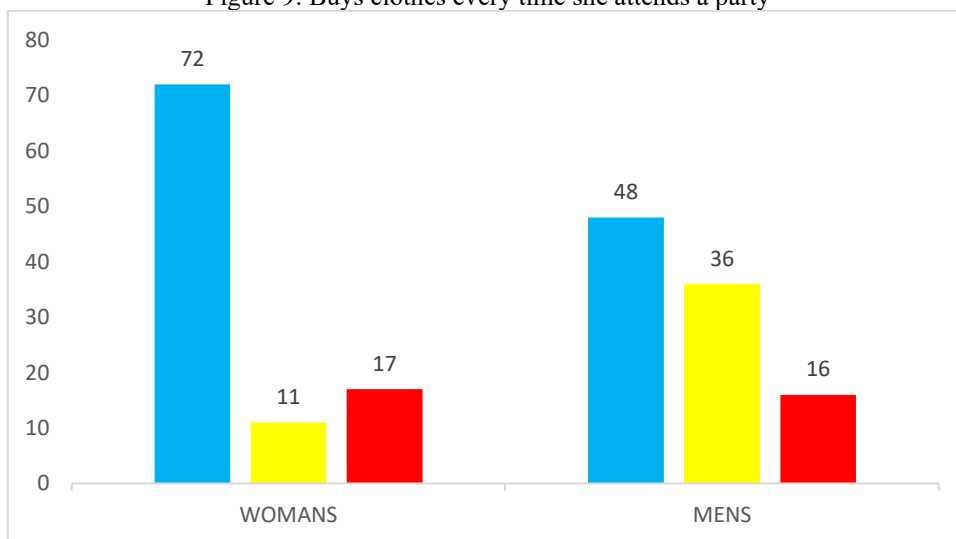
Figure 8: Clothes are frequently purchased



The authors

The students of our faculty have the habit of wearing new clothes frequently because they like to be fashionable. Men are divided between yes and no, they invest in buying branded sneakers.

Figure 9: Buys clothes every time she attends a party

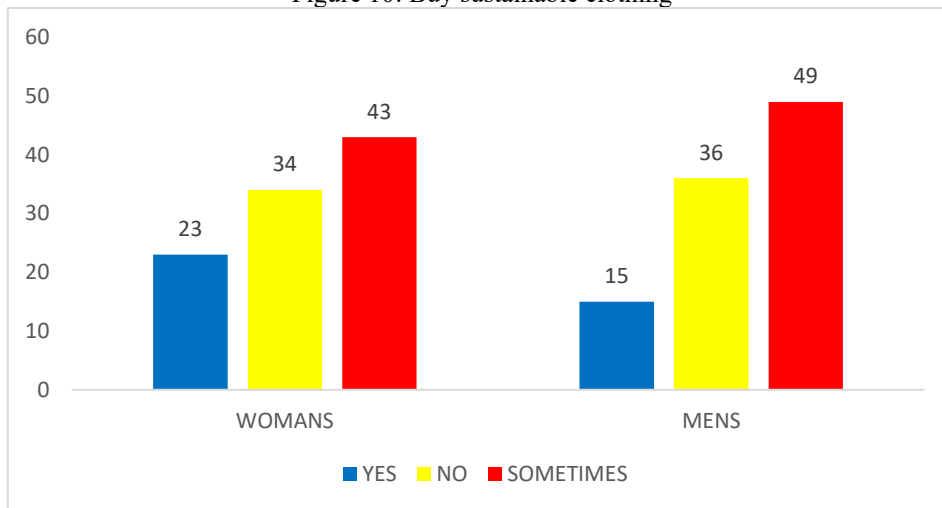


The authors

As expected, women like to wear new clothes and other accessories every time they attend a party, most girls don't like to repeat their clothes. Men gradually prefer to buy their outfits every time they attend a party.



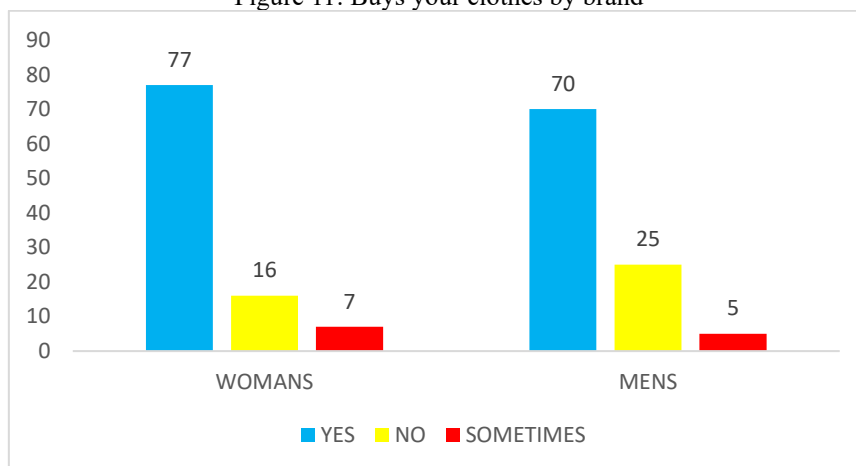
Figure 10: Buy sustainable clothing



The authors

Young people do not know if their clothes are considered sustainable, therefore, it is important to give them lectures and videos so that they learn to distinguish sustainable clothing.

Figure 11: Buys your clothes by brand

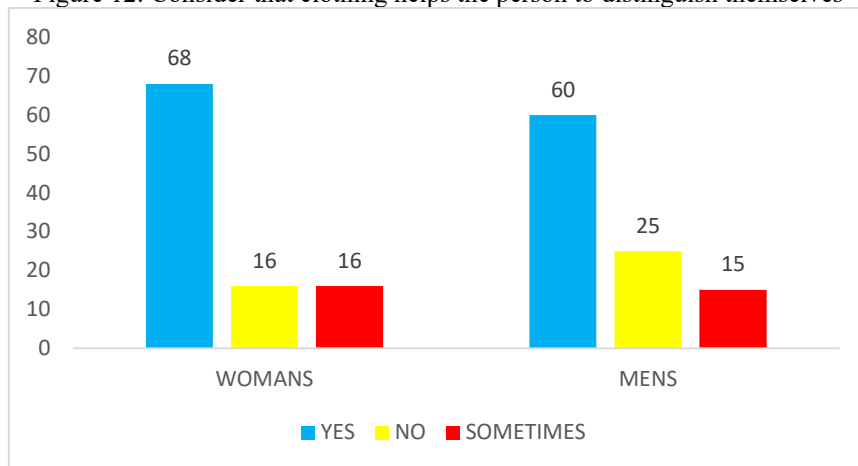


The authors

Both men and women make their decision to buy their clothes, accessories, shoes, and sneakers, according to the brand they like. No matter the price.



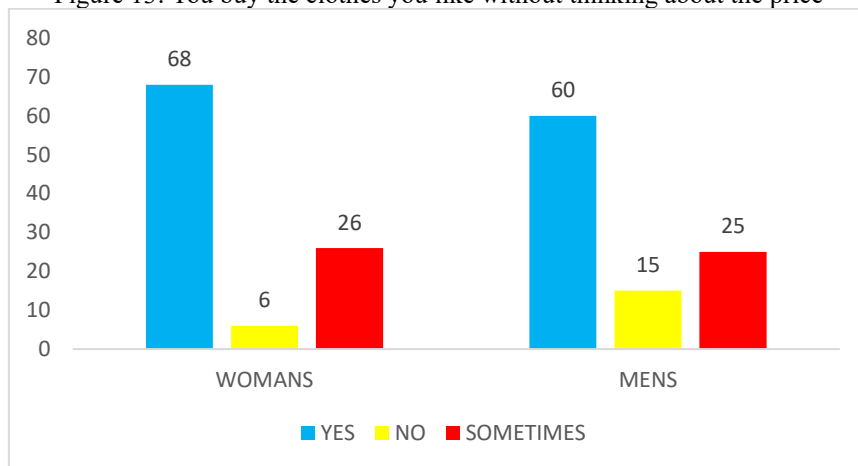
Figure 12: Consider that clothing helps the person to distinguish themselves



The authors

Both men and women agree that quality clothing makes them look distinguished, elegant, so they buy fewer garments, but of quality.

Figure 13: You buy the clothes you like without thinking about the price

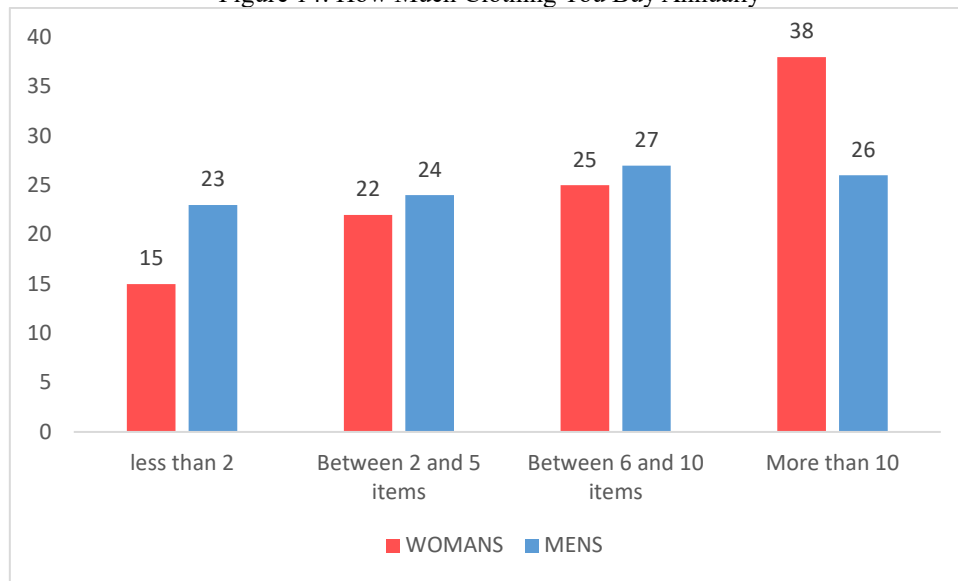


Own elaboration

Students like quality clothes and other accessories, they don't think so much about the price, but when it exceeds their budget, they buy something lower priced but that doesn't look "ordinary".



Figure 14: How Much Clothing You Buy Annually



The authors

Most female students buy more than 10 garments annually, likewise, boys buy more than 6 garments per year.

## 9 DISCUSSION

The present study analysed what students rely on when buying clothes, shoes, tennis shoes and other accessories.

The results have shown that most of the students of the Faculty of Commerce do not have knowledge of sustainable fashion, although they are willing to change, because they care about the environment, since last summer, the heat waves that affected Tampico, Madero and Altamira reached temperatures above 45° C. The area is also experiencing the worst drought in 30 years.

According to what was expressed by the students surveyed, they say they are people who do not recycle their clothes, although they still share clothes with their siblings, in the same way, the vast majority of students use their clothes throughout the school year, not the students who prefer to wear them for the first time.

Likewise, the students like to wear new frequently and especially when they attend a party, on the other hand, boys begin to like to wear new clothes to attend parties.

In addition, they prefer to buy quality clothes, women spend on clothes and men on branded sneakers whose prices range between two thousand five hundred and five thousand pesos. The jeans are priced between five hundred and two thousand pesos.

Women buy jeans for between 800 and 2,500 pesos, dresses for 800 to 1,500 pesos, shoes for 1,000 pesos, and tennis shoes for between 2,000 and 5,000 pesos. Although students like to wear designer clothes or shoes, they also like fast fashion, because it is inexpensive and allows them to buy



fashionable clothes at affordable prices. Some of the students said that they buy 30 blouses and 10 pants a year, clothes that they use to go to school and sometimes use them from the newspaper. Likewise, they buy dresses, shoes, and accessories when they go to a party or to go out to dinner, the movies, nightclub, or anywhere else.

The men said they buy about 10 better quality pants a year, as well as T-shirts and sneakers. They also like to be fashionable and buy fast fashion clothes when they go out to the movies, dinner, nightclub, birthdays, etc., however, they are not willing to buy second-hand clothes.

All students save up to buy what they like, although they prefer quality clothes they are aware of their income and limit themselves to it.

## 10 CONCLUSION

With this work we try to make a significant change in the personal and family life of the students of the Bachelor's Degree in International Business, therefore, we give them lectures on sustainability, the topic in question, "sustainable fashion, in addition, we emphasize sustainability in all aspects of life, for the good of our students, of their families and the environment.

According to the results of the survey, the negative hypothesis is verified: "The majority of the students of the Faculty of Commerce and Administration of Tampico". The general objective "To explain the relationship between clothing consumption and environmental damage" is achieved.

Some observations that can be made about the relationship between discarded clothing and environmental pollution.

FIRST. – International Business students are unaware of the relationship between the clothes they buy and damage to the environment. They don't know that sustainable clothing exists.

SECOND, - Fashion houses that design haute couture garments are not willing to offer their buyers lower quality products for the benefit of the environment.

THIRD. – Clothing landfills will continue to pollute every year, due to the commitment they have with fashion houses, without caring that it harms the health of the "pickers" and the people who live nearby.

FOURTH. – It is essential to give lectures to International Business students on the subject of sustainable fashion, considering it necessary to invite students from the other degrees offered at FCAT.

FIFTH. – Most International Business students like to dress fast fashion because of the affordable prices and it allows them to wear for the first time frequently.

SIXTH. – Despite the fact that students buy fast fashion, to go to parties, clubs, vacations they prefer branded clothes, they put quality before quantity, even if the price is high, they save until they gather the necessary money.



SEVENTH. – Raise awareness among young people so that they recycle their clothes, sell them or give them away so that each garment can be worn until it is worn out in its entirety.

OCTAVE. - Teach young people to buy the clothes they need and not just because they like them at the time of acquiring them so they never wear them.





## REFERENCES

- Barrios, M. C. (2012). El impacto ambiental del fast fashion pronto moda Arquetipo(4), 73. <https://revistas.ucp.edu.co/index.php/arquetipo/article/view/1088/1065>
- Doppelt, B. (2012). El poder del pensamiento sostenible. Londres, Reino Unido: Routledge. doi: 10.4324/9781849773232
- Entwistle, J. (2002). El cuerpo y la moda. En El cuerpo y la moda. Barcelona.
- Gardetti, M. (2018). *Textiles y moda. ¿Qué es la sostenibilidad?* Madrid, España: editorial Tapa
- Gómez, G. C. (2015) El desarrollo sostenible: conceptos básicos, alcance y criterios para su evaluación, cap 3. Cuba.
- Estas son las marcas de lujo que apuestan por la moda sostenible en el mundo  
López Álvarez, Carolina. (2013). La moda sostenible, se pone de moda. <http://www.profesiones.org/var/plain/storage/original/application/9fe1dc9f5b8128a731860809b140fea5.pdf>
- Medallas Rivas, E. (2009). Los caminos hacia la moda sustentable. ([http://www.culturaemedellin.gov.co/sites/CulturaE/MiEmpresa/Noticias/Paginas/evamedalla\\_090731](http://www.culturaemedellin.gov.co/sites/CulturaE/MiEmpresa/Noticias/Paginas/evamedalla_090731))
- Pérez Porto Julián y Gardey Ana. Publicado: 2008. Actualizado: 2012.
- Seidman, D. (2007). How, Why How. We Do Anything Means Everything. Nueva Jersey, Estados Unidos: John Wiley & Son
- REAL ACADEMIA ESPAÑOLA: *Diccionario de la lengua española*, 23.<sup>a</sup> ed., [versión 23.7 en línea]. <<https://dle.rae.es>>