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### ► To cite this version:

María D De-Juan-Vigaray, Nora Bezaz. Slow fashion for children: parents' dilemma regarding sustainability, price, ethics and children's upbringing. *Consumo, marcas e intangibles en el público infantil y joven.*, 1, Dykinson, pp.101-116, 2023, 10.2307/jj.5076223.10 . hal-04404437

**HAL Id: hal-04404437**

**<https://hal.science/hal-04404437v1>**

Submitted on 18 Jan 2024

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# **SLOW FASHION FOR CHILDREN: PARENTS' DILEMMA REGARDING SUSTAINABILITY, PRICE, ETHICS AND CHILDREN'S UPBRINGING**

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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

In parallel with food, from fast food to slow food concepts (Pietrykowski, 2004), for some years now, the fashion sector has been inspired by these avant-gardist movements and applying this evolving system to their very own industry and issues. In fact, Kate Fletcher coined the term slow fashion in 2007 as the transposition of the well-known slow food movement which emerged in Italy (Fletcher, 2018) into the world of fashion. In general terms, the slow movement promotes a consumption of quality products, valuing both the product and the production process and its relationship with the environment (Jung and Jin, 2016). Furthermore, sustainable fashion can cover many terms and concepts such as slow fashion itself, green fashion, ethical fashion, and some brands use them separately and take advantage of this fact to claim themselves as a brand adhering to the slow fashion concept (Bly et al., 2015; Stefko and Steffek, 2018).

The sustainable or slow way of consuming fashion is growing among all consumers, and also among parents and children (Korhonen & Lappalainen, 2004). Slow fashion can be considered as being even more important and “useful” for children. Not just because wearing clothes made of material treated with pesticides and dyed with chemicals is very harmful for their skin and growth (Todeschini et al, 2017; Brigden et al. 2010; Greenpeace, 2022a), but also to protect them and contribute to a better world: protecting the environment and the workforce, and the craftsmanship know-how. However, there is little knowledge in marketing literature regarding parents' perceptions of slow fashion for children (Darian, 1998; Gam et al., 2010). In addition, studies show that children have a huge power and influence on parents and their household consumption behaviour, which could be used in a better and more sustainable way (Ebster et al. 2009; Basu & Sondhi, 2014; De-Juan-Vigaray and Hota, 2019).

Then the objective of this research is to evaluate how far parents want to be sustainable consumers regarding their children's clothing, and how this purchasing behaviour can be influenced by their personal beliefs, determining what can influence parents' behaviour to consume sustainable and ethical brands for their children, and their willingness to pay a premium price for these brands adhering to the slow fashion movement. As such, to highlight and to look at parents' consumption variables on children's clothing in depth. Two important current issues are analysed: the environment and ethics, linked to the education of the future generation in terms of consumption and their well-being, and the possible dilemma parents could face in choosing slow fashion *vs* fast fashion clothing brands for their children.

More precisely, the research questions are as follows:

1. *Purchasing intention for children's clothes.* What motivates parents to buy sustainable and ethical clothes for their children and to what extent do they do so?
2. *Sustainable and ethical concern.* What are parents' concerns towards sustainability and ethical issues in general, and how far are parents sensitive to tradition and craftsmanship in the fashion industry?
3. *Issues.* What are the issues facing parents wanting to consume as part of the slow fashion movement for their children?

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1. Sustainable fashion

According to Khandual and Pradhan (2019) the parameters of sustainable fashion are various (collaborative consumption; custom-made or made to order; sustainable design techniques and production methods; fair and ethically made; waste management; thrifting, vintage buying; charity), and many consumers, brands and retailers consider themselves as sustainable fashion actors because they respect one or several of these. But to be properly part of the slow fashion movement, consumers or retailers should respect all the parameters and, above all, do it intentionally to respect the environment and ethics. It is said, thanks to the elements of sustainable fashion, the concept of slow fashion emerged, for many reasons, as an alternative to fast fashion, to change fashion for better world and society, in the same way as the slow food movement (Fletcher, 2007).

In addition, Jung and Jin (2016) proposed the "Consumer Orientation to Slow Fashion (COSF)" model, creating a scale trying to identify five aspects of slow fashion. They based their study on five aspects and used a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree), asking respondents to rate their level of agreement with the statement towards slow fashion aspects. This scale allows the measurement of the dimensions of slow fashion, not just defined as sustainable:

- Equity: "equally accessible to everyone through fair trade, and producers should be respected and compensated accordingly"

- Authenticity: between “highly skilled and craft- based production”, the concept of slow production: the importance of hand craftsmanship and traditional technique
- Functionality: “maximizing utility of the product, the functionality dimension involved longevity and versatility of the clothing”
- Localism: “supporting local businesses and using local resources”
- Exclusivity: “heterogeneous and rare fashion items from small quantity production”

Jung and Jin (2016) also revealed that these five criteria indicate that slow fashion is not only associated with environmental sustainability but also with social sustainability. It was relevant both for the student and non-student samples.

Finally, the slow fashion concept is simultaneously: ethical (Joergens, 2006), sustainable (Fletcher, 2018, de Brito et al., 2008), fair trade (Song et al., 2017), eco-friendly (Gam, 2011) and responsible fashion (Rinaldi and Testa, 2017), which could be also upcycled (Han et al., 2017) in its process.

## **2.2. Parents’ consumption behaviour towards slow fashion**

In past research, authors found that price was the most important factor regarding consumption behavior for children’s clothing, before quality or even style (Darian, 1998). Price was paramount because it is well-known that children grow fast and thus their clothes have to be replaced almost twice a year. Nevertheless, more recent studies stated that price was no longer such a critical element in the purchasing decision (Chen et al., 2004, Koksall, 2007).

Furthermore, the price of green fashion outfits and products for children has always been a huge barrier for parents. As people are starting to become aware of the environmental issues, and try to act accordingly, parents seem to be more and more attracted by slow fashion brands for their children, the motivation being their well-being and the environment. Few studies have been done since the beginning of this century on this particular dilemma. Many parameters are taken into account such as: the socio-demographic background, the number of children, the age of the parents, the situation of the mother, their basic environmental and ethical concerns, etc. According to Prendergast and Wong (2003), most parents now have their first child in their thirties, when they have already achieved a more stable career and earning more money. Families also tend to have fewer children than before, meaning their budget for children’s clothing is increasing. Regarding environmental concerns, another study conducted by Laroche, Bergeron, and Barbaro-Forleo (2001) revealed that having children can also motivate parents to consume more sustainably and behave responsibly due to their parental obligations. Fashion can be full of contradictions, because although people are aware of the bad effects of consuming fast fashion, they continue to do so. Whereas, on the other hand, they feel concerned about sustainability and ethics in their everyday life.

### 2.3. The emergence of slow fashion for children

The emergence of brands and products adhering to the slow fashion movement is mostly due to the awareness of people towards the situation (Khandual and Pradhan, 2019). There were several scandals that occurred regarding the materials, being harmful for children and, therefore, the environment (e.g. Brigden, 2010 through Greenpeace Research Laboratories, 2010). The most important and common ones being:

*Transgenic cotton:* Scientific research demonstrated that the cotton plant is remarkably vulnerable to insect attack. Indeed, in the fields, the use of a massive quantity of pesticides is very common, we are talking about an application of 10% of all synthetics and between 20% and 25% of insecticides applied world-wide (Mancini et al., 2008). It has also many negative impacts on the environment (at different levels, not only when producing); on the plants, the water, and even the workers. Moreover, cotton plants need a lot of water to grow, even if not chemically treated, impacting water resources. In addition, this kind of material is very harmful for babies and young children in terms of their skin health (Flachs, 2019).

*Chemicals:* The NPEs (NonylPhenol Ethoxylates) are chemicals widely used in the clothing industry to wash, rinse, and dye the textiles in the manufacturing process. This group of chemicals are very destructive for both the environment and people (Cobbing, Wohlgenuth and Panhuber, 2022). On the one hand, when used in the manufacturing process, water residues are not treated, therefore the seas become polluted, as well as the land, including the wildlife (especially the marine one). On the other hand, it has been found that it also contaminates the workers when manipulating these chemicals for any reason. Moreover, residues of these chemicals are unfortunately present in the final product, which will be in contact with the skin, that can lead to growth, hormone and fertility troubles (Cobbing et al., 2022). Not to mention that when the clothes will be washed several times in the washing machine, the water residues will once again contaminate and pollute the ecosystem on different levels. Greenpeace (2011), in its famous report at the beginning of the Detox campaign, tested adult and child clothing revealing that in the EU two-thirds of the products were NPE positive at a higher concentration than permissible.

Furthermore, according to Greenpeace (2004), numerous chemicals were also analyzed in Disneyland clothes, designed for, advertised at, and desired by children, but harmful for them. This is an issue that has alarmed many parents and NGOs for years, particularly in terms of children's growth and health development, since all these chemicals can be capable, when in contact with the skin, of causing reproductive, hormone, and immune system disorders, or even cancer in a variety of living organisms. Not all of these substances are mentioned in the textile composition, nor are warnings of their dangers for children's health and growth indicated on the garments. Greenpeace succeeded in reducing the amount of chemicals contained in clothes and, particularly in children's clothes, with brands joining the movement "detoxing" brands as well as being more transparent (Greenpeace, 2004; Greenpeace, 2016; Greenpeace, 2018; Ortega-Egea and García-de-Frutos, 2019).

### 3. THE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

To understand mothers' basic motivations better when buying their children's wardrobe, we have considered not only parent's environmental awareness, attitudes and concerns, but also ethics and, finally, the general consumption behaviour for children's clothing.

#### **3.1. Parent's environmental awareness, attitudes and concerns**

Gam et al., (2010) showed that mothers' environmental concerns and shopping habits had a substantial impact on how involved they were in organic cotton consumption, which in turn had a big impact on their willingness to buy sustainable clothes. However, they were unwilling to pay more to buy this type of cotton for their children instead of a cheaper one. This result corresponded with Lin's (2009) discovery that consumers were more likely to buy organic cotton items if they actively participated in environmental protection and ate organic food.

Environmental awareness development was based on Palmer et al., (1998) and environmental attitudes, which refers to the set of beliefs, and behavioural intentions a person holds regarding environmentally related activities or issues (Schultz et al., 2004), on Le Hebel et al., (2014).

#### **3.2. Ethics as a pillar of slow fashion**

The equity, authenticity, functionality, localism and exclusivity dimensions were based on Jung and Jin (2016). It has been stated in the literature that price is the main motivation (Darian, 1998), but also quality and design are important (Chen et al., 2004, Koksai, 2007). Therefore, we will analyze if those have an effect on parent's consumption behaviour regarding slow fashion brands when purchasing their children's clothing. Interviewees were asked questions such as "How would you define an ethical product? Do you have any idea of what is ethical fashion?" "Are you more sensitive to clothes "made in France", or Spain, Portugal, England?"; "Do you value craftsmanship when you desire to buy an apparel"; "Now, imagine you are out to buy a new t-shirt, you have a thirty-euro budget. You are faced with two options: you can afford to buy four cheap disposable t-shirts for your child or one ethically produced and sustainable t-shirt. Which option would you choose? and why?"

#### **3.3. The general consumption behaviour for children's clothing**

Parent's slow fashion consumption behaviour for their children's clothing will be analysed from two points of view: 1) the acknowledgement and purchase intention regarding slow fashion; 2) their willingness to pay a premium price for such products. Questions asked were, for example: "Have you already heard about slow fashion?"; "How would you define slow fashion?"; "Do you have any experience of slow fashion?" "For you or your child?" and,

finally, the Jung and Jin (2016) COSF related questions. Research done on children's clothes demonstrated the presence of hazardous chemicals, affecting their growth and health development (Greenpeace, 2004). Thus, we can assume that parents care for their children's health and well-being, and this could be a reason why they start purchasing slow fashion brands. Moreover, clothing brands adhering to the slow fashion movement are considered as being of more quality due to their noble, organic, and artisanal materials, but also as timeless clothes.

These two reasons can also be seen as a motivation for parents to purchase children's slow fashion brands so that they can reuse clothes for their other children or pass them on to others. Therefore, the first set of propositions related to the first research question is dedicated to the parent's purchase intention for childrenswear.

P1a. The health and well-being of their children motivates parents to consume sustainable and ethical clothes adhering to the slow fashion movement, in order to protect them.

P1b. A better quality and timeless clothing motivate parents to buy sustainable and ethical products for their children.

P1c. Buying slow fashion brands for their children will start their "slow and green" education.

In order to change future generations' environmental concerns, buying slow fashion brands for their children can be an instrument for parents wanting to raise their children in a "greener" way. As already stated, and based on the literature review, parents who have environmental concerns are more willing to buy organic cotton products for their children (Gam et al., 2010). In order to close the gap on this topic, we can expect that parents who appreciate fair-trade will be more willing to buy slow fashion brands for their children.

Craftsmanship and the environment are somehow related to each other, and we could predict that parents who are environmentally friendly will tend to value craftsmanship for their children, being one of the pillars of slow fashion. The awareness of ethics can be illustrated by two variables: fair-trade and artisanal values. The second set of propositions are focused on parents' general concerns regarding sustainability and ethics, and are stated as follows:

P2.a Parents who are environmentally friendly are more willing to buy slow fashion brands for their children.

P2.b Parents who value fair-trade are more willing to buy slow fashion brands for their children.

P2.c Parents who value craftsmanship are more willing to buy slow fashion brands for their children.

Finally, the third set of propositions associated with the last research question, answers the possible issues facing parents when wanting to purchase slow fashion brands for their

children. As Darian (1998) stated in his research, price was the most important factor for their childrenswear purchase decision. We can assume that for the issues parents are facing, price is more important than both environmental and ethical concerns when they are buying their children's clothes. Moreover, as slow fashion is still a recent movement, the lack of information and communication can also be an issue. The set of propositions concerning this theoretical framework are:

P3a. Price is more important for parents than environmental concerns when buying clothing for their children.

P3b. Price is more important for parents than ethical concerns when buying clothing their children.

P3c. Parents are confronted by a lack of information with reference to slow fashion children's brands.

## 4. METHODOLOGY

### 4.1. Sample

Based on the qualitative analysis that Gam et al. (2010) did in their research, the goal of this study is to interview those with at least one child (Laroche et al., 2001). According to the literature, we have decided to focus on the mother's purchasing behaviour rather than fathers, or parents as a couple since the literature proves that clothing is most often purchased by mothers Gam et al. (2010). Therefore, the sampling objective is targeting mothers with children up to a maximum of twelve years old. The reason is that we can consider that teenagers have almost the entire power to decide what they want to purchase, in terms of style, price, quality, parameters, etc. Moreover, as slow fashion habits can also be part of the education from parents, we can consider that until adolescence, these issues would be essential.

### 4.2. Data collection and analysis

Faced with the lack in the literature, we conducted an exploratory qualitative study to understand the general motivations of parents to consume better for their children. Indeed, according to Minichiello et al. (1990) a qualitative analysis allows us to understand human behaviour from the respondent's perspective. From qualitative research methods, the data was collected by conducting one-to-one semi-structured interviews in order to drive respondents in their answers, while giving them a certain freedom of response and reflection (Morrow, 2007).

14 semi-structured one-to-one interviews were conducted. The interviews of an average duration of 45 minutes to 1 hour were conducted from an interview guide composed of 4 themes based on the literature (Gam et al., 2010; Le Hebel et al., 2014) and Jung and Jin,



2016). This was followed by questions about environmental awareness (ENV) and ethical concerns (ETH), general purchasing behaviour for their children and the slow fashion consideration (SF), and, finally, three different buying scenarios (BS). The aim of this part was to understand mothers' shopping habits for their children: how often they shop and how much they spend on clothing. There were also questions about mothers' motivations for buying clothes from a specific origin. BS1: The first scenario showed for the first option, a body from a slow fashion brand (*La Queue du Chat*) and all the information was provided, and the second one presented a body from *Primark*, a famous low-cost fast fashion brand. BS2: Two fast fashion options were faced, but one was more sustainable, the article from the *H&M Conscious Collection* made of organic cotton versus the *Primark* one. BS3: The last dilemma was between the slow fashion article and the *H&M Conscious Collection* one (fast fashion "sustainable"). These dilemmas allowed us to evaluate what could be the motivations or obstacles for mothers to consume particular childrenswear, see Table 1.

Finally, the participant was asked socio-demographic questions in order to evaluate the target background: mothers were asked questions about the age, education level and average salary in order to determine if it had an impact, or not, on their environmental, ethical, or shopping behaviour. Next, it was necessary to know how many children they had and their ages, as this could have had an impact on their purchase intention, and manner of consumption.

Table 1. Buying scenario (BS) choices and degrees

INT	ETH5: FF vs SF	BS1: SF vs FF	BS2: FFC vs FF	BS3: SF vs FFC
1	SF	SF	FFC	FFC Value for money
2	SF Environment and ethics	Dilemma, SF for the values but FF for price sensitivity	FFC Juste in the middle	FFC
3	SF Provide green education	SF	FFC	FFC price sensitive for organic cotton
4	SF Fewer chemicals	SF	FFC	SF Environment - ethics
5	SF Longevity	SF	FFC	FFC Quantity/Quality
6	Dilemma SF for exclusivity FF for quantity	SF	FFC	FFC Quantity
7	Dilemma! FF for daily life SF for a present or pleasure	SF But price sensitive	FFC	No opinion; No FFC for quality; No SF for the price
8	FF Price sensitive with 3 children	SF But price sensitive (no Primark)	FFC	FFC Quality/price
9	FF Price because growing fast	FF Price sensitive	FF Quantity sensitive	FFC Price sensitive
10	2nd-hand tee shirt	SF Sustainable product	FFC The most sustainable	SF

INT	ETH5: FF vs SF	BS1: SF vs FF	BS2: FFC vs FF	BS3: SF vs FFC
11	SF Need sensitive	SF Need sensitive	FFC Least bad option	SF Environment sensitive
12	SF Avoid over-consumption	SF Product information sensitive	FFC The most sustainable	SF The most sustainable
13	FF Price because of the damage	FF Quantity sensitive	FFC Organic cotton	FFC Price and quantity sensitive
14	SF Quality sensitive	SF Quality first	FFC Organic cotton	FFC Price sensitive while organic

Sources: SF: Slow Fashion option; FF: Fast Fashion option; FFC: Fast Fast Conscious option (H&M Conscious).

### 4.3. Type of analysis

After full transcription of the interviews, a thematic analysis was carried out. A first vertical thematic analysis was performed in order to better understand how each respondent's motivations and behaviour are. In a second step, a thematic analysis was conducted to test the robustness of our proposals.

## 5. RESULTS

### 5.1. Sample

The mothers' profile is described below to have an overview of the sample interviewed. Fourteen interviews were conducted with mothers between 18 and 50 years old. A majority of them are between 31 and 40 years old (71,4%). They have children between 6 months to 12 years old, as we wanted to target mothers with children younger than or equal to 12 years of age. The mothers interviewed have 2 children on average, and the majority of them have girls (78,6% have at least one girl, as opposed to 35,7% who have a least one boy). None of them are living alone, nor raising their children by themselves. In terms of education, the majority have reached a Master's level (n=8), some a first degree (n=3), other training (n=2), or even a PhD (n=1). Over three quarters (85,7%) earn a sum equal to or above the French average salary (€26,000 per year). In fact, half of them earn between €40,001 and €60,000 per year.

Concerning their shopping habits for children's clothes, a large majority buy new clothes for them at least every two months (64,3%), spending up to €100 per month. Half of the sample spend less than €50 per month, and 43% between €50 and €100 per month. Finally, their awareness of the slow fashion movement is very mixed, eight of them have already heard about it (57,1%), against six who never had (42,9%). Similar brands were mentioned when asking which brands, they are used to buying, such as those more slow-fashion oriented (e.g.

Petit Bateau, Du Pareil Au Meme DPAM, Okaidi) as well as fast fashion brands (e.g. Zara, H&M, Sergent Major).

## 5.2. Purchase intention for children’s clothes

The basic motivations found when buying children’s clothes were quality and design, price, and origin (see Table 2). The main reason for a mother to start buying slow fashion products is the better quality of the clothing along with better functionality for a longer time. Green education, well-being and health ideas are only stated by one young mum who declared that she would buy slow fashion apparel for her children in order to instill in them good habits from an early age. Compared to the other respondents, she comes from the provinces (Lyon), and is the only one between 26 and 30 years of age, a generation that is maybe more affected by our current issues. In this case, we can say that the socio-demographic could be a moderator when considering clothing consumption and slow fashion consumption behaviour. For instance, interviewees 8 and 13 feel concerned about the environment, but would not *“choose to buy slow fashion clothes for their children, because they first see the price, the number needed knowing that the children will damage them”* (INT13) and not their awareness towards the environment.

Table 2. Purchase intention’s category

Purchase intention	Main ideas
Mothers’ general motivation for children’s clothes purchase	The quality; the design; the price; information on production origin; organic cotton clothes; good value for money; from ethical brands; the benefits; the need; the comfort for the child.
Mothers’ general motivation when buying slow fashion children’s clothes	The material quality, better for the skin; prefer to have one good, instead of four bad and waste them afterwards; to teach my child good habits from an early age; fewer chemical products; better item, with better longevity; avoid overconsumption; respect the environment; more sustainable.

Source: own elaboration

## 5.3. Sustainable and ethical concerns: Environmental/Ethical awareness correlated to a willingness to consume slow fashion brands

In general, the sample seems to be environmentally friendly and such mothers are not necessarily more willing to buy slow fashion brands for their children; *“Buying fast fashion clothes is more economical”* (INT 9). However, mothers who value craftsmanship are more willing to buy slow fashion brands for their children. Mothers are confronted with a lack of information with reference to slow fashion children’s brands.

Regarding their willingness to start buying a slow fashion wardrobe for their children, we reject the proposition that states that mothers who are environmentally friendly are more

disposed to consume in this manner. Currently, the French population is sensitive to reducing their carbon footprint in their everyday life, indeed almost all of the sample were shown to be relatively eco-friendly, whereas their behaviour towards sustainable and ethical fashion differed. For respondent 10 “*it is better to buy an item from a slow fashion brand because it is eco-friendly*”, as the first motivation. For respondent 11, she said “*because this kind of product is better for the environment*”, whereas they are not considered as the most environmentally friendly people in our sample, but average.

Nevertheless, we can suggest that mothers who are willing to consume slow fashion clothes for their children are strongly environmentally friendly. Moreover, the results showed that mothers who value fair-trade and craftsmanship are more willing to adopt the slow fashion way of consumption for their children’s clothes.

#### **5.4. Issues facing parents towards slow fashion**

Price is a more important purchasing criterion for mothers than environmental, and ethical concerns, when buying apparel for their children, adding that the family situation can act as a moderator. Mothers are confronted by a lack of information with reference to slow fashion children’s brands. Focusing on the respondents’ profile of those who did not chose the slow fashion option in the business scenario, the answers indicate that price is important for them; they prioritize quantity and price over other characteristics, and even more so for babies. They did not know about the slow fashion concept. Most fast fashion-oriented respondents did not seem to have any idea about slow fashion movements or brands.

Almost all the mothers interviewed stated they knew that bad quality clothing can be harmful for children’s health and well-being (85,8%; FASH6). Nevertheless, only a few mentioned that they would purchase a slow fashion item for the transparency about the products used, an absence of chemicals, being better for the children’s skin (INT 1, 4, 13).

*“Due to the chemical products, pesticides used in the cultivation of cotton, the dyes, and synthetic products”  
(INT1)*

*“I would choose a t-shirt produced ethically and ecologically, hoping that there were fewer chemicals”  
(INT4)*

*“Prioritize quantity and price, even more so for babies” (INT13)*

Indeed, we cannot strongly state that it is one of the main reasons for a mother to buy more sustainable and ethical apparel. We can say that it starts to be a motivation, but not very standardized in consumers’ mind. This can be justified also as a lack of information on how the clothes they are used to buying can be treated and, as a result, harmful for their children.

Lastly, there is evidence that, as a barrier, price is more important for some mothers than environmental and ethical concerns when buying clothing for their children. The reason for this can be explained by their family situation, as the number of children they have to dress can influence their decision, whereas socio-demographic variables such as purchasing power

did not seem relevant. Moreover, we have found some mothers who had never heard about this model of consumption, explaining why they were consuming fast fashion brands. As a matter of fact, we can say that mothers are confronted by a lack of information on the slow fashion concept which prefers quality rather than quantity, as well as supporting more sustainable and ethical practices: “*I have never heard about the slow fashion movement*” (INT 9).

In summary, from the research questions, and the three associated propositions, we have been able to find different answers. Concerning the mothers’ purchase intention, the qualitative study revealed that mothers are motivated to buy slow fashion products for their children regarding the better quality and atemporal nature of the clothes. Even if not all the mothers would purchase slow fashion brands, they recognize its quality and hardwearing nature. Then, due to too little evidence from the testimonies, we cannot entirely support the proposition that mothers would be motivated to consume slow fashion clothing to protect their children’s health and to give them a greener education. Nevertheless, we cannot fully reject it since it was mentioned by two different respondents.

## 6. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 6.1. Conclusion

Our results contribute to enriching the literature in this scarcely studied field, and raise managerial implications. The fashion industry is nowadays considered as one of the most toxic industries with global clothing production having more than doubled since the beginning of our century. As people started to be quite aware of the environmental issues, consumers are now progressively questioning the link between slow fashion prices and unethical processes in the Eastern factories. Consumers realize that they had to become friendlier with Mother Nature and humanity, in particular by changing their different consumption habits. It first appeared with the food industry and the slow food movement. Then, the fashion industry followed and introduced the slow fashion movement. In parallel, several studies were conducted on the brands’ clothing quality, especially for children, denouncing the presence of chemicals, being at the same time harmful for children, the workers, and biodiversity. In order to build marketing techniques, clothing firms will benefit from studies like this in relation to children’s clothing behaviour.

It is well-known that having a child implies a real investment, both in time and money. That is why the child consumer market has always been an interesting area of study, and of consumption, to explore for marketers, as parents will invest a lot in their education and for their well-being. Moreover, it has been proved that children have a huge influence on the parents’ behaviour. Every parent wants the best for their babies to grow well, in a healthy environment, thus for several years now they have been consuming more organic food, and should now also think about better consumption in terms of clothing. In 2010, one of the

first studies (Gam et al., 2010) was done on the subject of organic cotton and revealed that mothers who are environmentally friendly were more willing to buy this kind of cotton clothing. Children should be more sensitized by school and parents to become used to consuming less in a better way.

Parents are motivated to buy slow fashion clothes for their children because of their renowned quality and atemporal nature, although some parents were not clearly ready to buy this type of clothing for their children's well-being, and "green" education. Furthermore, the French parents sample revealed them as being somewhat environmentally concerned, whatever their background. We could not support that mothers who are eco-friendly are more willing to buy slow fashion for their children. On the other hand, we were able to confirm that mothers who value fair-trade and craftsmanship are more willing to buy clothes adhering to the slow fashion movement. For the mothers who are not willing to, the main barrier was confirmed to be the price, being a criterion more important than environmental and ethical concerns, determined by the family situation. Last but not least, the qualitative analysis indicated that the slow fashion movement was still not well-known, as almost half of the sample had never heard of it. Finally, there is a lack of information on the mothers' side to consume slow fashion for their children, and all the benefits associated with it.

## **6.2. Limitations and future research**

Firstly, we have purposely decided to limit our target sample to mothers only, because it was suggested in the literature that they are the main actors in the purchase of children's clothes most of the time. It would also be interesting to interview fathers, who could be more sensitive to slow fashion attributes for their children's apparel and well-being.

Additionally, since our target sample seems to have a reasonable standard of living, we were not able to draw conclusions on their socio-demographic background that could act as a moderator. In the buying scenarios, asking which of the options mothers were the most willing to purchase, we have chosen basic and neutral products, not a special one for boys or girls, for example. Maybe their sensitivity towards the clothing's design could have changed mothers' choice, and similarly with the brands chosen and their parameters. Maybe the slow fashion brand *La Queue du Chat* price was a little bit too high, mothers were focusing on the price and not especially on the attributes the product offered such as saving resources or fair-trade certifications. Mothers could also focus on the design of the article of clothing (e.g. the body), whether or not it was to their taste, and not especially on its parameters.

This study could be completed by analyzing mothers' attitudes towards other slow fashion alternatives such as the secondhand market, or the renting wardrobe concept, with the objective of reducing consumption and clothing production. It must be remembered that this area of study, slow fashion consumption for children, is quite a new subject and needs to be investigated more, as such type of consumption can have a huge positive impact on the future generation, being currently the children of today. For instance, we have on purpose

absolutely not explored the different way mothers are used to shopping, in terms of places, if they prefer to buy on the internet or in shops, to what customer experience they are more sensitive to, etc. As stated earlier, a larger sample and/or fathers could be targeted for future research.

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