

ECOSILKY'S TARGET SOCIAL ISSUE

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Abstract:

Fast fashion has had detrimental effects on the environment and social inequalities. The rapid production and consumption of inexpensive clothing following the latest trends have contributed to pollution, with the garment industry generating massive amounts of textile waste and water pollution. In contrast, ECOSILKY, a brand that follows slow fashion, specializes in producing sustainable fabrics sourced from natural materials made in craft villages across Vietnam. This paper explores the challenges faced by craft villages in Vietnam and the negative impacts of fast fashion. The limited availability of sustainable fabrics and the lack of customer awareness and diversity in sustainable design and production are identified as root causes. To address these issues, ECOSILKY aims to promote sustainable practices, support economic growth, foster innovation, and empower craft villages. The study employs the 5 Whys problem-solving technique to delve into the underlying causes of fast fashion. Solutions proposed by ECOSILKY include the use of 100% natural and sustainable fabrics, the creation of ecosystems among craft villages and firms, collaboration with recycling firms, providing job opportunities, and adopting technology advancements. These initiatives align with several sustainable development goals, ensuring a more sustainable and equitable fashion industry

Keywords: fast fashion, slow fashion, environmental degradation, social inequalities, pollution, textile waste, water pollution, sustainable fabrics, craft villages, Vietnam, challenges, limited availability, customer awareness, diversity, root causes, 5 Whys, solutions, natural materials, economic growth, innovation, empowerment, sustainable development goals.

1. Current situation

Fast fashion, characterized by its rapid production and consumption of inexpensive clothing following the latest trends, has significantly contributed to environmental degradation and social inequalities. The garment industry is the second-largest contributor to pollution, generating a staggering 100 million tons of textile waste annually (earth.org, 2022). The dyeing and finishing processes in the industry are responsible for over 20% of global water pollution (earth.org, 2022). Moreover, since 2000, fast fashion brands have doubled their size, exacerbating the impact of the industry on global warming.

ECOSILKY is a brand that follows slow fashion, specializing in producing sustainable fabrics sourced from natural materials made in craft villages across Vietnam. Through our collaborations and partnerships, we have gained deep insights into the challenges faced by these craft villages. Contrary to the development of fast fashion, craft villages in some developing countries like Vietnam have been struggling to deal with the social issues associated with fast fashion. These craft villages known for their traditional craftsmanship and handmade products have encountered specific challenges that hinder their survival and prosperity.

Due to their small-scale operations, craft villages in Vietnam face difficulties capitalizing on economies of scale, resulting in higher product prices. This limitation is evident in the research conducted by Le Dang Trung and Nguyen Duy Lam (2018), who explore the competitiveness of Vietnamese handicraft villages and highlight the impact of small-scale operations on pricing.

Furthermore, craft village products often struggle to meet consumer tastes due to a lack of innovation in design and diversity. This challenge is mentioned by various sources, including case studies such as Bui Thi Hien's (2017) research on the restructuring of craft villages in Vietnam, which discusses the obstacles faced by Ha Thai Lacquerware Village in meeting market demands and innovation.

Figure 01: Pros and cons of Fast Fashion and Slow Fashion

	FAST FASHION	SLOW FASHION
PROS	Stylish Inexpensive Easy to find	Long-lasting Sustainable High quality Fair production
CONS	Not climate-friendly No fair production Not long-lasting	A bit more expensive Basis and classic, lack of diversity in design

Having identified the negative impacts of fast fashion, ECOSILKY aims to provide sustainable solutions with the view to empowering these Vietnamese craft villages. By promoting sustainable practices, supporting economic growth, and fostering innovation in design and diversity, we strive to create a more sustainable and equitable fashion industry while ensuring the survival and prosperity of craft villages.

2. The root cause of fast fashion

We decide to use the “5WHY” technique to find the reasons behind the trend of fast fashion. To be more specific, "5WHY" is a problem-solving technique that involves asking "why" five times to get to the root cause of a problem. It is commonly used in the Toyota Production System and other Lean manufacturing environments. The technique was developed by Sakichi Toyoda and Taiichi Ohno of the Toyota Motor Corporation in the 1950s. The method is based on the belief that to solve a problem effectively, it is necessary to understand its root cause, rather than just treating the symptoms. In this case, we, ECOSILKY not only aim at solving the surface problem but also to address the situation in depth. The 5 Whys technique encourages a deeper analysis of problems by asking "why" multiple times to get to the underlying cause. The technique has been widely adopted in many industries and can be an effective tool for improving processes and quality control.

In this study, having identified the problem we want to solve, we continued to reflect deeper to differentiate the symptoms from the root causes. ECOSILKY has employed the 5-WHY Model to identify the root causes of Fast Fashion.

The first question we ask is why fast fashion is on the increase. The answer can be that the increasing popularity of fast fashion can be attributed to the rising demand for beauty products and clothing. Factors such as the desire for constantly changing fashion trends, affordability, and accessibility have contributed to its growth.

Diving in further, we wonder what pulls the trigger for the increasing beauty products and clothing demand. With many possibilities happening, we narrow down to the cause of customers having higher living standards and leading fast-paced lives that are subject to daily changes.

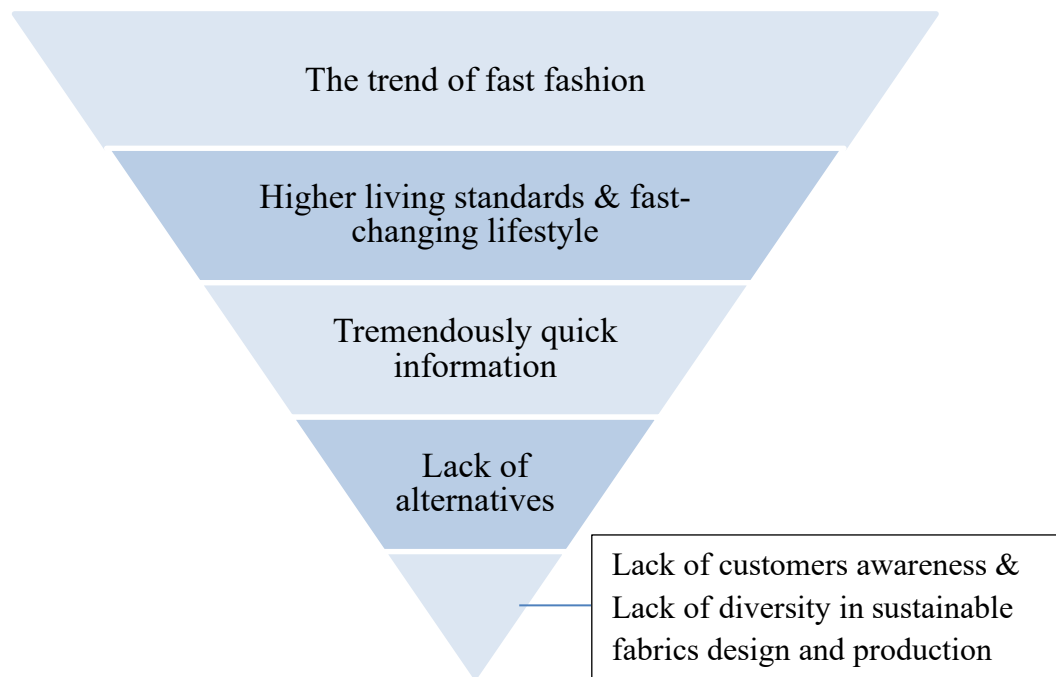
What exactly causes people to live a fast life with continuous daily changes? This can be attributed to the fact that customers are bombarded with an overwhelming amount of quick information from various sources. Rapid information dissemination through social media, advertising, and online platforms has created a sense of urgency and a desire for immediate gratification.

Why are customers bombarded with quick information and not aware enough of the tremendous impacts of fast fashion? The root cause of this issue is the limited availability of sustainable fabrics as an alternative to fast fashion. As a result, customers do not have enough options to make informed decisions about their clothing purchases.

The final question would be why there is a lack of alternatives to fast fashion. With the answer to this question, we find the root cause, which is the lack of customer awareness and lack of diversity in sustainable design and production. The two abovementioned are what ECOSILKY is aiming at and desirable to achieve. At the moment, ECOSILKY can proudly say we are working on the two aims well.

To sum it up, we come up with Figure 2. 5WHY to analyze the root cause of environmental problems in the field of fashion.

Figure 02. 5-WHY Method



3. Our solution

3.1. Brief summary of ECOSILKY

ECOSILKY is a brand that follows slow fashion, specializing in producing sustainable fabrics sourced from natural materials made in craft villages across Vietnam. Its mantra is “ECOSILKY – natural fabrics made in Vietnam for a sustainable future”. Established in 2020, ECOSILKY has achieved several certificates to prove the reliable sources of fabrics and materials being used in our products.

3.2. ECOSILKY’s vision

ECOSILKY aspires to be a sign of absolute trust to domestic and worldwide clients on the importance of natural fiber textiles in caring for people’s health at any time and from any location.

With our uniqueness and mantra, ECOSILKY’s vision is well-aligned with 06 sustainable development goals: SDG 01 (No poverty), SDG 03 (Good health and well-being), SDG 08 (Decent work and economic growth), SDG 12 (Responsible consumption and production), SDG 13 (Actions against climate change), SDG 15 (Sustainable life on land).

3.3. ECOSILKY's mission

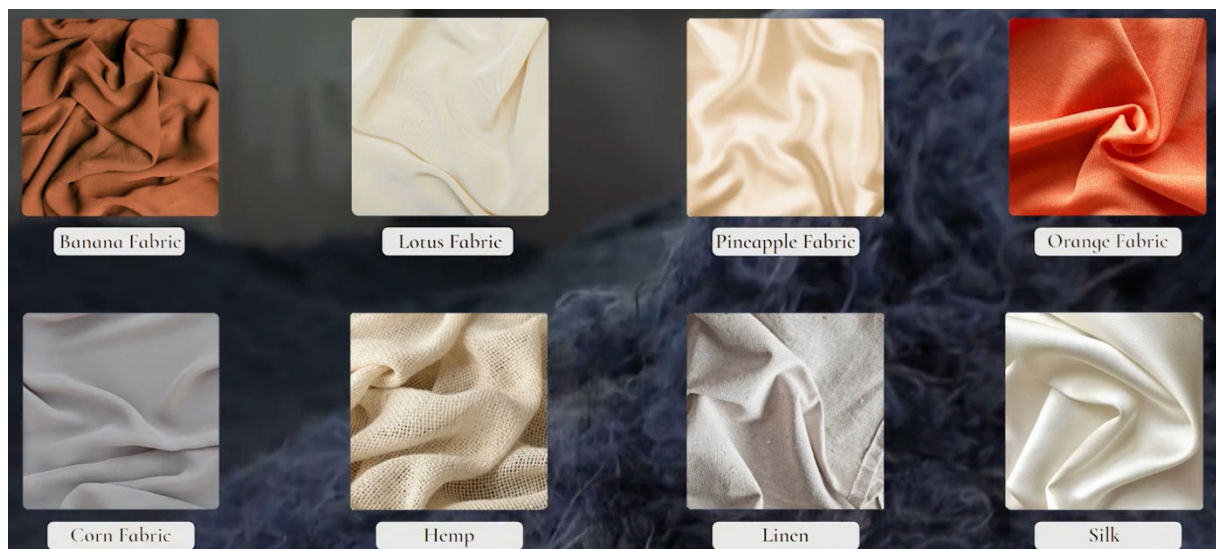
ECOSILKY is dedicated to researching and analyzing the properties of natural fibers from various natural material regions, as well as optimizing manufacturing and service to ensure that clients all over the world receive the best possible care. Making certain that the valued client has obtained not just eco-friendly quality items, but also a devoted consulting and delivery experience.

3.4. ECOSILKY's value

The value of ECOSILKY is the total respect for natural fibers with their fascinating qualities, empathy in the customer experience, and a commitment to sustainable development.

We focus on improving product quality, enhancing users' sleep quality, and following the eco-friendly principle. ECOSILKY's organic cotton filler is imported and certified by GOTS – Global Organic Textile Standard. The GOTS certificate is the internationally recognized standard for organic textiles. Since its introduction in 2006, GOTS has proven its practical feasibility as it contributes to a remarkable growth in organic fiber consumption and the need for uniform processing criteria, on which the industry, retailers, and consumers can rely.

Figure 03. ECOSILKY's natural and sustainable fabrics



3.5. ECOSILKY's aims

ECOSILKY aims to gain all related GOTS certificates to ensure the certified organic status of textiles, from the harvesting of the raw fiber, through environmentally and socially responsible manufacturing up to labelling in order to provide credible assurance to the end consumer.

Besides, we aim and promise to follow the standard covers the processing, manufacturing, packaging, labelling, trading and distribution of all textiles made from at least 70% certified organic fibers.

3.6. ECOSILKY's uniqueness

Having known the root causes of fast fashion is the lack of customer awareness and lack of diversity in sustainable design and production. ECOSILKY is dedicated to addressing this problem by taking actions including:

Firstly, our products are made from 100% natural and sustainable fabrics sourced from Banana; Lotus; Pineapple; Orange; Corn; Hemp; Linen; Silk; Oyster Shell; and Coffee. Right now, with the focus on making the most out of plant wastage like using banana trunks; pineapple leaves, we will not use any extra water to grow crops to get fabrics at all.

Secondly, ECOSILKY is the connector of sustainability. We create ecosystems among craft villages and firms all around Vietnam, from the North - Phung Xa craft village to the Mid - Nghe An craft village to the South - Dinh Yen craft village.

Thirdly, ECOSILKY is heading toward a future where no scrap of cloth is wasted through cooperation with recycled firms.

Fourthly, we can provide jobs to people in rural areas in Vietnam and even worldwide.

Last but not least, we are ahead in technology with a vision of applying AI in our products to diversify designs, effectively control inventory and so much more.

Figure 3. ECOSILKY’s problems and solutions

Problems	Current Solutions	Imperfections	ECOSILKY's solutions
Lack of customer awareness	Campaigns to promote eco-consciousness	Limited impact on behavior	Provide education on the benefits of sustainable fashion through various channels
Demand for low-cost clothing	Recycle and reuse programs	Limited participation and 80% of donated clothes still end up in landfills	Offer affordable sustainable fashion options and promote the value of quality over quantity
Lack of diversity in design and production	Collaborations with sustainable designers and use of ecofriendly materials	Limited mainstream appeal and high production cost	Create innovative designs that are both sustainable and fashionable and use local materials to reduce transportation emissions
Environmental impact of natural fabrics	Use of organic cotton and linen	Harmful pesticides and water usage	Develop and promote the use of innovative, sustainable materials like lotus, pineapple, and banana fibers
Labor exploitation	Monitoring and improving working conditions	Limited enforcement and inadequate pay	Prioritize fair trade practices and work with suppliers that share the same interests

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