

ECO-FRIENDLY FASHION: A GREEN PATH TO STYLISH AND SUSTAINABLE CLOTHING

А.Д. КЛЕВКО, В.С. ПРИБЫЛЬСКАЯ

*Научный руководитель – Е.О. Машкарева
Белорусский государственный экономический университет
Минск, Беларусь*

In the ever-changing landscape of the fashion industry, a significant change which embraces environmental consciousness without compromising on style has emerged. This shift is encapsulated by the expanding movement of eco-friendly fashion, representing a green path towards stylish and sustainable clothing. In recent years, the fashion industry has undergone a transformation, with an increasing emphasis on sustainability and environmental consciousness. As global awareness of ecological issues continues to grow, consumers are seeking alternatives that align with their values, giving rise to the concept of eco-friendly fashion. This study explores the intersection of style and sustainability in the realm of clothing, looking at the emergence of eco-friendly fashion as a green path towards more responsible and environmentally conscious clothing choices. By examining the key principles, challenges, and innovations in eco-friendly fashion, it aims at showing the potential of adopting a sustainable approach to clothing design, production, and consumption.

At the heart of eco-friendly fashion lies a commitment to environmental responsibility. Traditional fashion production has long been associated with environmental degradation, from the excessive use of water in the production of cotton to the pollution caused by chemical dyes. Eco-friendly fashion seeks to solve this by adopting sustainable materials and production processes. Innovations in fabric development, such as organic cotton, bamboo, and recycled polyester, provide alternatives that reduce the environmental footprint of clothing. These materials not only minimize resource consumption but also often boast superior durability and quality, challenging the idea that sustainability comes at the expense of style.

Ethical and transparent production practices are central to the ethos of eco-friendly fashion. From fair labour practices to supply chain

transparency, the movement encourages a move towards accountability and responsibility. Fashion brands embracing eco-friendly principles prioritize the welfare of workers and aim to minimize the social impact of their operations. By promoting a more balanced and humane industry, eco-friendly fashion goes beyond aesthetics, weaving a narrative of social responsibility into the fabric of each garment.

Clothing designers became interested in solving the problem of green production practices. One of the methods that Belarusian designers use is to create clothes from eco-friendly materials. At the same time, not only natural materials are called eco-friendly – cotton, linen, silk, wool, but also artificial fur (eco-fur) and artificial leather (eco-leather). They are considered eco-friendly, since their production is more ethical, which makes it possible to do less harm to the environment.

There are some examples of ecological products produced in Belarus which have become popular not only on the domestic but also on global markets.

One of the examples is the upcycled clothes brand «Iriskin» which uses recycled raw materials such as worn banners. The store offers ready-made accessories, such as wallets, hand bags and shopping bags, but one can order an individual product. The customer personally chooses the material and decides, if a plastic bag or a trampoline mesh goes to his or her order, and also the design is created according to one's wishes. The result is a unique design that also does not harm the environment.

Another example is the local brand called «Godgavekudos», which is engaged in the customization of clothes. The founder and designer in one person looks for things in second-hand stores, which are then hand-painted with psychedelic patterns. The results are jeans, sweatshirts and even jackets that will certainly attract attention of connoisseurs of modern fashion.

A third example is the ecological brand «Jamido» which originally appeared as a linen fabric painting workshop. The creator of the brand, worked a lot with various techniques of applying prints, and eventually started her own – silkscreen printing. There are natural motifs in the designer's collections: flowers, herbs, leaves, berries and birds have found their place on linen canvases. Jamido products are unique: it is impossible to repeat each individual pattern or shade. Jamido workshop is engaged in the design of not only women's clothing – the catalogue also presents a line of home textiles (tablecloths, curtains, bed linen).

The activity of Belarusian designers introduces society to the ideas of reasonable consumption. Such an approach in the long term can lead to the

development of a responsible attitude to nature in all spheres of people's lives. The work of these brands and trademarks in Belarus can serve as an example of an eco-friendly direction in the production of clothing: the production of clothes in small batches; the use of eco-friendly materials; the use of recycled materials to create new ones or process them into fillers for furniture, and industrial textiles for household needs.

Circular fashion concepts further amplify the sustainability of eco-friendly fashion. The traditional linear model of «take, make, dispose» is replaced by a circular approach that encourages recycling, and the extension of a garment's life. This not only reduces the burden on landfills but also encourages a mindset shift among consumers – from fast fashion's disposability to a more thoughtful and sustainable approach to clothing consumption.

However, the journey towards eco-friendly fashion is not without its challenges. The industry must deal with the problems of transitioning from conventional practices to sustainable alternatives. Balancing affordability, scalability, and style while adhering to eco-friendly principles requires a deliberate effort from designers, manufacturers, and consumers alike. Additionally, raising awareness and altering consumer beliefs about sustainable fashion is a crucial aspect of the movement. Education also plays an important role in promoting a demand for eco-friendly options and encouraging a shift in consumer behavior.

In conclusion, the exploration of eco-friendly fashion as a green path to stylish and sustainable clothing reveals a promising landscape for the future of the industry. As consumers increasingly prioritize environmental considerations in their purchasing decisions, the fashion world is compelled to embrace more responsible practices. This study has highlighted the challenges and opportunities inherent in the pursuit of eco-friendly fashion, emphasizing the importance of collaboration between designers, manufacturers and consumers. By integrating sustainable materials, ethical production methods, and circular fashion concepts, the industry can evolve towards a more environmentally friendly and socially responsible model. Ultimately, adopting a green path in fashion not only enhances the appeal of clothing but also contributes to the broader global effort towards a more sustainable and eco-conscious future.