

NEWS

# Fast Fashion's hidden costs: environmental and ethical concerns. UGA professor weighs in



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Fast fashion brands such as Shein, Temu, Zara, etc., have revolutionized the fashion industry by offering trendy clothing at low prices, however, there are many environmental concerns.

The fast fashion business relies on a high turnover rate, leading to rapid production and significant waste. However, the impact goes beyond just waste.

## Are the customers the problem?

Production often involves the use of harmful chemicals and large amounts of water and the working conditions and wages are questionable.

"The major problem is with consumers who decide to buy a low-quality product," said Sergiy Minko, Professor of Polymers, Fibers and Textiles Science at the University of Georgia.

Minko also added that this is a "cultural problem" and that education about caring about the environment should be necessary.

## What you can do to help

By reading labels on clothing items before purchasing unsustainable materials like polyester and nylon. Instead, find natural and more environmentally sound products like:

Cotton

Linen

Silk

## **How to declutter fast fashion items**

"The most straightforward answer – do not buy it," said Minko. But, here are some of his recommendations to dispose unsustainable clothing items.

Read the label and find out the material.

If it is a synthetic fabric, it should go to a recycling container if your waste service allows for it. Waste sorting is not advanced in Athens.

Natural textiles can go to landfill. They will slowly find their way to degrade.

## **What materials should you buy?**

Although garments made of natural fibers and natural dyes (e.g. indigo) are more expensive, Minko recommends that they are the most comfortable, reasonably durable, and pleasant.

For more information about sustainability, please visit [sustainability.uga.edu](http://sustainability.uga.edu)