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MARKETING IN EMERGING ECONOMIES

Fashion Marketing in Emerging Economies Volume I

Brand, Consumer and Sustainability Perspectives

Edited by Frederica Brooksworth
Emmanuel Mogaji · Genevieve Bosah



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Frederica Brooksworth
Emmanuel Mogaji • Genevieve Bosah
Editors

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Part I

Introduction



1

Fashion Marketing in Emerging Economies: An Introduction

Frederica Brooksworth, Emmanuel Mogaji,
and Genevieve Bosah

Introduction

In the past decade, we have seen a rise in emerging markets acquiring an increased share of the global manufacturing service sector (Guercini & Runfola, 2019). Traditional industrialised powers (the United States and Europe) are no longer a company's first choice when searching for service providers. The rise of emerging economic powers such as Brazil, Mexico, Russia, Indonesia, India and China has provided new and varied business

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opportunities. Fundamentally, this comes down to corporations being able to cut costs. In his 1998 book titled, *Global Shift: Transforming the World Economy*, Peter Dicken coined the term “Manufacturing Shift” to describe this new world order.

Previously, the International Fashion Market was primarily categorised into three divisions: the Global Fashion Hubs (UK, USA, Italy and France) where the main fashion weeks take place, Growing Markets (Brazil, Russia, Mexico and Singapore) and Emerging Fashion Markets (India, Middle East and South Africa) (Busnaina, 2014).

Within the emerging markets, specific cities are growing rapidly, becoming targets for the fashion industry as growth centres (BOF, 2020). According to McKinsey, emerging markets are responsible for 37% of the women’s mid-market apparel market (BOF, 2020). It is also anticipated that there will be an upwards growth to 50% in 2025. McKinsey also reports that emerging markets will account for 25% of the luxury apparel market by 2025.

For corporations entering these new markets, it is crucial for them to understand the current state of the industry but also be mindful of macro-environmental factors, traditions and religious beliefs. This will determine the correct marketing practises to use when engaging their potential targeted audience. The speed at which the fashion industry is moving is redefining the fashion system. Leading corporations invest their resources into data analytics to better understand consumer behaviour, ensure they meet their audience’s needs and, most importantly, find the best communication and marketing tools to reach them (BOF, 2020).

It is not only companies who are interested in exploring emerging markets. There has been an increase in marketing scholars researching this field (Dawar & Chattopadhyay, 2000; Burgees & Steenkamp, 2006; Sheth, 2011), even though many of these studies are focused on individual countries. Several recommendations point out that marketing activities practised in developed markets are not suitable for emerging markets. Soetan et al. (2021) also concur by emphasising that marketing in an emerging market requires a new approach.

Although studies have recognised marketing in emerging markets, research has yet to explore fashion marketing strategies, theories and

activities systematically. Alpat and Aksu (2014) emphasise that fashion is ambivalent; therefore, marketing should not be monotonous. Fashion is a unique industry, and for this very reason, its marketing strategies differ from those of other sectors.

Defining Emerging Markets

In the last twenty years, capital market history has witnessed a dramatic expansion of opportunity for global investors, led primarily by emerging markets in Asia, South America, Africa, the Middle East and Eastern Europe. Emerging markets are becoming more popular than developed markets. The rapid growth and progress in these countries have made them essential locations for production and consumer markets, thus making them major players globally, providing new and exciting opportunities.

Although there is no precise definition for emerging markets, Wilson et al., (2006) defines them as developing countries with high growth expectations and increasing influence that have become more attractive to investors because of their high return potential. Czinkota and Ronkainen (1997) named three characteristics associated with emerging markets: economic development, economic growth and market governance. Emerging economies are home to approximately 80% of the world's population (Alon & Welsh, 2001) and constitute the primary destinations for exports and direct investment. More and more equity investors are seeking opportunities in these economies. According to Cavusgil, (2002), emerging markets will be responsible for a high share of the world's growth in the next two decades as they rapidly transform their economies. Cities within emerging markets also provide the most dynamic opportunities and varied market potential for companies in developed countries to extend their markets.

According to the Financial Times and Stock Exchange (FTSE), the countries identified as emerging markets propelling consistent economic growth and activity across all economic sectors are Brazil, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Mexico, Malaysia, Poland, South Africa, Turkey and Taiwan. The secondary emerging countries are Chile, China, Columbia,

Egypt, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Morocco, Pakistan, Peru, the Philippines, Russia, Thailand and the UAE (Sharma et al., 2020). Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa (BRICS) are the most popular of these countries. Their capacity to provide investors with higher profits and boost the world economy cannot be underestimated (Khattak et al., 2021). Mexico, Indonesia, South Korea and Turkey (MIST) follow the second tier. According to Goldman Sachs' projections, within the next 20 years, BRICS will add to their populations some 225 million "middle class" consumers who earn at least US \$15,000 a year. The economy of BRICS will overtake the US, Japan, Germany, France, the UK, Italy and Canada by 2040 (BISHOP, 2022). According to Hanlon Investment Management, the market capitalisation of emerging markets is as follows: China 38%, India 10.9%, South Korea 8.7%, Taiwan 6.3%, Brazil 5.0%, Russia 3.2%, South Africa 2.8%, Thailand 2.8%, Saudi Arabia 2.5%, Indonesia 2.5%, Malaysia 2.3%, Mexico 1.9% and all other emerging markets represent 13.0%.

Emerging markets offer several advantages to equity investors. They include, but are not limited to, an expanding middle class necessary for e-commerce and retail to excel, relatively unsaturated markets, urbanised and highly populated cities, for the most part a growing youth market, free trade zones, relatively friendly business laws, liberalised markets and transitioning economies and a huge pent-up demand for Western-style goods and services.

Fashion in Emerging Markets

What does fashion look like in emerging markets? It is estimated that by 2035, the gross domestic product of emerging markets will permanently surpass that of all developed markets (Wilson & Purushothaman, 2003). Emerging markets have enormous production advantages ranging from human capital (China, India), industrial raw materials (Brazil, Central America), energy (Russia, Nigeria) and other natural resources (Peru, Africa). Many of these markets boast strong agricultural (Brazil) and animal-based resources (India). With developing markets becoming saturated, equity investors have emerging markets for future growth.

In emerging markets, the multinational fashion industries have been widely acknowledged as important global players and have initiated unique strategies that aid these industries' development. Since the term "BRICS" was coined, much has been learned about mature and developed markets (Wilson & Purushothaman, 2003). However, our knowledge is incomplete on several significant issues happening in emerging markets that offer a variety of opportunities, whether it is sourcing, producing, selling, disposing or engaging in other relevant activities and conversations along the fashion value chain and some of the world's most important issues (Cavusgil, 2002). The paucity of historical literature on emerging economies is part of the reason researchers interested in the field have come together with the ultimate goal of shaping the agenda for research work on fashion marketing in emerging economies by identifying multinational fashion corporations; interesting research topics; and collaborating, exploring and sharing insights and findings from the field of fashion marketing strategies in emerging economies (Kaur et al., 2022; Malhotra & Uslay, 2018).

Fashion is one of the most important and competitive industries globally, and emerging markets are employing the right tools and strategies to keep up with the competition. It is one of the most progressive industries globally, worth billions (Brooksworth et al., 2022b). The multinational fashion apparel industries in emerging markets have undergone profound transformation due to various changes in the business environment. Efforts have been made to improve technology, design, business management and service delivery, which has resulted in intensified global competition in the emerging markets' fashion businesses. The industrial sectors in emerging markets have seen rapid growth and play a vital role in the global economy by shaping international standards (Allwood et al., 2008).

With the rise of fashion consumption and industrial upgrading, fashion in emerging economies has come to the fore as a lucrative business model, successfully attracting global equity investors and offering arguably the most comprehensive array of market opportunities (Gereffi, 2016). The fusion of digital technologies, where technologies mean knowledge, methods, tools, devices that mediate communication, including Internet-enabled technologies (Chemma et al., 2022, Abdulquadri

et al., 2021), such as computer-aided design (CAD), computer-aided manufacturing (CAM) and enterprise resource planning (ERP) into clothing production and manufacturing, has pushed these economies into becoming leading fashion manufacturing and production hubs and the cornerstone for global fashion exports. These have seen a significant internal change in the labour process, impressive employment growths and expanding consumption, rising wages and income, accumulating wealth and reducing poverty (Cavusgil, 2002).

Strong players in emerging markets have dominated the global fashion apparel procurement industry. With a considerable amount of expertise in the industry, along with decades of experience, modern infrastructure, efficient supply chain management and high productivity, apparel manufacturers and retailers, primarily from the developed markets, have developed interests in doing business in emerging markets as they present plentiful business opportunities for them (Cavusgil, 2002). The Chinese textile and apparel industry has rapidly developed within the global apparel and textile supply chain. It has become the largest producer and supplier of fibres, yarns, fabrics and apparel (Gereffi & Memedovic, 2003). There is an emergence of a unique and local apparel chain in Brazil (Pinto & Souza 2013; 2016). The textile and clothing production chain is present in all 27 Brazilian states, with more than 32,000 companies, located mainly in Brazil's South and Southeast regions, especially in the State of São Paulo, which concentrates 27% of production units (Gomes et al., 2021). There are approximately 15 million direct jobs, representing 17% of the total number of workers engaged in the manufacturing industry, distributed in all segments of the production chain, from the production of the natural and synthetic fibre, spinning, weaving, knitting, finishing and sewing (Gomes et al., 2021). The Indian clothing industry is labour-intensive, and it employs those with simple skills, including women. Some countries, such as Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Vietnam and Mauritius, have also experienced high output growth in this sector (Chakrabarty, 2017). Bangladesh is an emerging market, and its most vital export industry is the fashion industry (Khan & Ullah, 2017). According to Barua and Ansary, more than 4 million employees work in Bangladesh's fashion industry (Ansary & Barua, 2015). It has been identified as the second biggest exporter of fashion products after

China (Khan & Ullah, 2017). The country has joint ventures with different companies in developed countries and exports clothes worldwide. The apparel industry in India is one of the leading apparel industries globally by adopting new production and technological techniques (Cavusgil, 2002).

The growing markets of Asia, especially in the Koreas, Japan, India and China (Kang et al., 2015; Ahmed et al., 2022), have proven to be a vital sourcing and control centre for the global garment industry, and several equity investors have dedicated their attention even more than before to the potential beckoning in these markets, with production plants mainly in China, Indonesia, Thailand and India (Athukorala, 2019). Global value chains in the fashion industry have been motivated by the emergence of these new markets (Madsen, 2019; Camargo et al., 2020). Any discussion on this substantial growth would not be complete without understanding the positive and favourable impact of fashion marketing strategies and factors attributing to this global competitiveness in emerging markets.

The dominant patterns in the fashion industry that have contributed to the negative reputation the sector is now suffering from include polluting the environment, producing enormous amounts of waste and exploiting people. Fortunately, changes are slowly beginning to occur, highlighting the many considerable hurdles to overcome in the fashion networks (Lacy & Hayward, 2011). There is increasing pressure for multinational fashion corporations to take a more significant role in addressing global social issues such as eradicating poverty and ensuring environmental protection. Emerging economies are beginning to contribute to environmentally sustainable challenges. There are several allocations and relocation of resources of production activities to cities within emerging economies, thereby putting pressure on the world's resources (Barba-Navaretti & Venables, 2006; Pennings & Sleuwaegen, 2000). Fashion sustainability has gained considerable attention and has become one of the crucial conversations in the fashion industry (Nguyen & Mogaji, 2021a). An essential element identified in emerging markets is customers' growing expectations and preferences to shift towards a more transparent, sustainable, less negative but positive social impact brand

because fashion brands are responsible for addressing environmental and social issues (Marchand & Walker, 2008).

The Objective of the Book

To date, there have been no published books on the topic of fashion marketing and emerging markets; there is very little academic and contemporary research on the subject. The fashion industry is growing rapidly in emerging markets. In addition to this, marketing strategies, tools and technologies have also evolved. There is a growing demand for additional research, information, recommendations, insight from practitioners, entrepreneurs, students and academics. This book aims to provide and shed light on insights, barriers and opportunities to support fashion industries' development and economic growth within emerging markets.

Target Audience

This book will aim to satisfy the needs of our audience by providing timely information on growing areas such as sustainability, luxury, digital, trends and psychology.

The book could be implemented as a manual to help with a firm's activities.

This book will be relevant for policymakers as it can contribute to their decisions and strategic planning.

The book will also satisfy the needs of scholars by filling in a research gap for research papers, case studies, journal articles and pursuing their projects.

This book will also be very useful for undergraduate and postgraduate students to research their thesis and assignments. Additionally, it will give them insight into various job roles within the industry and educate them on opportunities within the emerging market.

Outline of the Book

This book is Volume 1 of fashion marketing, and Volume 2 explores the South American, Asian and African perspectives of fashion marketing (Brooksworth et al., 2021b). Volume 1 contains ten chapters, including this introductory chapter and a concluding one. Many authors from different emerging markets across the globe, including Brazil, Nigeria, South Africa and India, have inspired theories and discussions around fashion marketing within emerging economies. Drawing from their contributions, the chapters in this book explain effective marketing strategies employed by multinational fashion corporations within emerging markets.

The authors have made significant contributions to their host literature. However, it should be noted that the portfolio of these eight papers is a meticulous selection from a far wider corpus of research findings, conducted over a period of one year. While excluded from the core portfolio, presentations, collaborations and other published outputs provide relevant evidence along the research journey and are referenced accordingly. The individual portfolio papers are distinguished throughout by writing style. This academic research bridges the gap between the relatively neglected areas of marketing activities in emerging markets and the general growth of emerging economies.

The contents of this book are divided into two themes. The first theme has four chapters and explores consumer and brand-building perspectives, while the second theme presents four chapters on sustainability and social responsibility perspectives. Chapter 2 is a literature review by Sestino et al. (2022), which explores the consumer behaviour perspective of fashion brands and emerging markets' opportunities. The chapter reports on a systematic literature review conducted within the past decade (2010–2020) on academic research in the marketing field, carried out to identify the most prominent topics, highlighting the main findings of extensive research and implications for marketers from a consumer behaviour perspective. Results have mainly shed light on four topics: fashion consumption in emerging markets, luxury consumption, perception of fashion products in the emerging markets and African inspiration.

The current study highlights the need to consider emerging countries as new markets for the most influential fashion brands, as in the case of the emerging new middle class made by their specific characteristics.

Chapter 3, based widely on the work of Jacob (2021), presents insights into fashion weeks and customer experiences in emerging markets. The author posited that fashion weeks have long been a platform of choice for designers and labels to showcase their interpretations of seasonal trends and styles. The presence and development of fashion houses and fashion week organisations that originated from emerging markets will be explored in this chapter and the endeavours they implemented to encourage growth within their respective nations and externally, beyond their home borders. The chapter also presents recommendations that can be implemented on micro- and macro-economic levels to facilitate further growth. An increased presence and a greater awareness of fashion week present the creative abilities and skill sets of design houses based in emerging markets.

Kharuhayothin and Patarapongsant (2021) explored consumer perceptions towards fast fashion influencers on Instagram in their study, which is presented in Chap. 4. An existential-phenomenological interview with sixteen consumers was conducted to collect qualitative data for the study. The findings revealed that consumers view social media influencers as trendsetters and experts in fast fashion. They consciously follow influencers who reflect their ideal self, which is the crucial persuading factor for consumers to buy fast fashion brands they have seen on influencers' Instagram accounts. Moreover, consumers have reportedly increased their positive attitude towards the featured fast fashion brands and still opt-in for fashion items regardless of sponsorship. This research contributes to our understanding of the influence of fast fashion social media influencers from consumer perspectives.

Nguyen and Mogaji (2021b) focused on emerging economies fashion brand positioning within the global value chains (GVC) in fashion. This brand position strategy and its practical implications are presented in Chap. 5. Looking at the fashion GVC, there is little vertical integration in the overall industry; most production processes are outsourced to large factories in developing countries. However, beyond production, there leaves a gap in the market for independent fashion brands in the

emerging countries that can take responsibility for the design, production and marketing of their brands, albeit on a small scale, not competing with global fashion brands. This chapter theoretically examines fashion marketing in emerging economies, recognising the inherent challenges within these economies and how they can influence fashion marketing. This study extends the Smile Curve of high-value activities in global value chains, focusing on independent fashion brands in developing countries. The study also provides theoretical contributions relevant for academic researchers, scholars and students. In addition, there are pertinent managerial implications for business owners, fashion tech developers and policymakers.

Adapa and Yarram (2021), in Chap. 6, present how the apparel industry players in India are communicating their corporate social responsibility (CSR) activities and empowering their customers. The authors explore CSR practices in India's apparel industry through the dual lens of companies and customers. CSR activities have important implications for improving consumer behaviours towards a particular brand (Mogaji et al., 2021; Kaur et al., 2022). During the COVID-19 pandemic, CSR activities have met some unforeseen challenges (Mogaji & Nguyen, 2021), yet others were developing more diligent and innovative CSR activities in emerging markets (BOE, 2020). For some brands in the emerging markets, recycling textile waste to produce face masks and personal protective equipment (PPE) for free distribution to hospitals and needy people formed part of a strategic marketing plan explored in this chapter. To improve their corporate image and performance, fashion brands in emerging markets are getting involved in political and social issues by creating awareness on such issues on their social media platforms. Popular amongst these public sensitisation methods is the use of hashtags to speak up against societal ills: #EndSARS, #RapeNationalEmergency, #ChildTrafficking, #BlackLivesMatter, #StopGBV, #AmINext and so forth.

Chapter 7 by Mackie and Campbell (2021) is the first chapter under the second thematic area. The chapter theoretically examines sustainability in the fashion supply chain. The authors look through the fashion chain across global emerging economies, exploring the contradictory language and behaviours of green marketing and the increasing prevalence

of greenwashing. The chapter includes case studies from industry; interviews with brands working out of new emerging economies, including Nigeria; and industry examples from across the supply chain of global brands. The study suggests how traditional supply chains in emerging markets can adopt models towards a more sustainable future and how the value chain needs to adapt to take onboard sustainable practice and NGOs and stakeholders involved in improving production and protecting workers' rights.

Adjabeng (2021), in Chap. 8, provides an exploratory study of fashion designers' knowledge, practices and challenges in Ghana. Being the second most polluting industry in the world, the fashion industry owes the environment the responsibility of acting right and protecting it by reducing the amount of waste and environmental harm resulting from the production and consumption of fashion goods. The study investigates the knowledge, practices and challenges of fashion designers in Ghana regarding fashion sustainability.

Following the exploratory study from Ghana, Camacho (2021), in Chap. 9, provides insight into sustainable fashion in Mexico by examining the BCorp certification. This chapter presents the case of *Someone Somewhere*—a Certified B Corporation located in Mexico, a digital brand targeted to millennials with social consciousness. *Someone Somewhere* works with Mexican artisans from the country's poorest regions and offers their products to consumers through fair trade. This case illustrates the implementation of sustainable fashion in emerging markets. It shows how a BCorp promotes social quality, ecological integrity and human flourishing and contributes to Sustainable Development Goals.

Brooksworth et al. (2021a) present the conclusion in Chap. 10. Research agenda for *Fashion Marketing in Emerging Economies* will also be presented.

Conclusion

The main intention of *Fashion Marketing in Emerging Economies* is to focus on how the fashion apparel industries in emerging markets have significantly expanded their boundaries (Djelic & Ainamo, 1999). The

book develops a classification of the significant impacts of emerging markets around the globe. *Fashion Marketing in Emerging Economies* is a timely contribution to highlighting the most significant economic growth and rapid transformations in emerging markets (Chemma et al., 2022) that are undervalued and under-researched yet embody and offer an enormous opportunity to investors and entrepreneurs (BOF, 2020).

The book describes the influence and power of emerging markets and some effective fashion marketing growth strategies adopted by multinational fashion corporations in these markets while highlighting things that have noticeably improved, thus persuading investors to venture into the sector (Aakko & Niinimäki, 2018). The book provides a detailed analysis of numerous indisputable strengths and attractive attributes of multinational fashion corporations within emerging markets and some exciting challenges.

Highlighting the unique characteristics of various emerging markets and the differences between them, the authors strongly advocate using varied marketing approaches by investors in emerging markets (Aakko & Niinimäki 2018). By highlighting the developments of multinational fashion corporations in emerging markets, the chapters in this book respond to the call that emerging markets are a distinct cluster rather than a set of discrete regional stories and must be treated as such (Mukonza et al., 2021). The chapters further identify, profile and evaluate the performance of some emerging markets in Africa with compelling growth stories that not a lot of investors are aware of, thereby tilting their resources towards what is familiar, resulting in them missing out on a world of potential opportunities (Mogaji et al., 2021). These contributions will serve as a road map to encourage corporations and investors looking for investment opportunities in emerging markets to be strategic and establish localised and more tailor-made approaches that promote suitable actions/solutions (Bespoke) instead of standardised market models for each market (Aaker & Shansby, 1982).

With the sluggish growth in developed markets, equity investors, fashion marketers and retailers are increasingly becoming aware of the benefits in these markets. They are forced to seek their future growth potentials in emerging economies. Although billions of dollars worth of apparel business are conducted in emerging markets, relatively little knowledge

about the management of supply chains is reported in published research. Given this data limitation, all the authors use multiple methods and theories to uncover, analyse, demonstrate and present the facts in their chapters and provide integrated guideposts for future research. This book posited the unique characteristics of emerging markets. The authors further offer integrated indicators for future research.

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Part II

Fashion Marketing in Emerging Economies: Consumer and Brand Building Perspectives



2

Fashion Brands and Emerging Markets' Opportunities: A Literature Review from a Consumer Behaviour and Marketing Perspective

Andrea Sestino, Serena Di Matteo,
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Introduction

In the past decades, the fashion industry's growth exceeded world GDP by several percentage points, claiming its centrality among other industries (Amed et al., 2016). To be more precise, in the last five years (2015–2020), revenues continued to grow by about +3.4%, confirming fashion brands' centrality in the world economy (Amed et al., 2019). Interestingly, this growth has been mainly driven by emerging markets (EMs) such as Asia, Africa, Latin America and Eastern Europe. In contrast, mature markets, such as North America and Europe, showed growth between 1% and 3% (McKinsey, 2019). Therefore, such data underline how emerging markets represent a relevant opportunity for

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fashion brands. Consequently, fashion brands cannot fail to consider such marketers' particularities, which are, indeed, made up of consumers usually characterised by a system of cultures, values and beliefs different from those of Western countries (Kaur et al., 2022).

To illustrate, the successful traditional marketing strategies applied in mature fashion markets, such as in the United Kingdom, the United States, Italy or France, could be ineffective when used in emerging markets (Bang et al., 2016). Moreover, geopolitical instability and the inflammation of trade tensions also represent a potential barrier in entering such emerging markets (Cheng & Chiu, 2018). However, despite valuable scientific contributions in fashion marketing in emerging economies (e.g., Burgess & Steenkamp, 2006; Dawar & Chattopadhyay, 2002; Sheth, 2011), no studies have been carried out to underline the scientific knowledge regarding fashion consumption in emerging markets.

Therefore, the purpose of this chapter is to fill this gap through a systematic review of scientific insights related to fashion marketing in emerging markets. We examined relevant academic research related to consumer behaviour in fashion published in the last decade (2010–2020).

The present chapter provides a comprehensive overview of the literature related to consumer behaviour in emerging markets from a theoretical perspective. It synthesises prior studies to strengthen the foundation of knowledge in this field. The chapter identifies potential marketing strategies that fashion brands could successfully apply to enter such markets from a managerial perspective.

Methodology

We began our search by defining a list of 13 keywords about fashion (alphabetically: beauty, clothing, costume, design, fashion, furniture, glamour, luxury, materials, shopping, style, runway, trendy) and a list of five major emerging countries (alphabetically: Africa, Brazil, China, India, Russia). These words were particularly recurrent in scholarly articles on fashion marketing published in prevalent marketing and management journals. In addition to using these keywords, we searched for articles published in journals that contained the following words:

marketing, consumer, advertising, fashion and shopping, into their titles, abstracts or keywords. To illustrate, a sample query was “TITLE-ABS” ((“fashion” or “shopping”) and (“design” or “marketing”)) AND PUBYEAR > 2010 AND (LIMIT-TO (DOCTYPE, “ar”) OR LIMIT-TO (DOCTYPE, “cp”)) AND (LIMIT-TO (LANGUAGE, “English”)).

Moreover, articles were also sourced from three central business databases (i.e., Business Source Premier and EconLit, hosted by EBSCO; and ABI/INFORM Complete from ProQuest). We also considered other pertinent management journals that featured research areas related to emerging marketing and consumption (i.e., retailing, communication, market research, services, economics); the detailed list of consulted journals is provided in Appendix A. To provide a critical review of theoretical and experimental academic studies in fashion marketing in the emerging markets, we only examined peer-reviewed scholarly marketing articles published within the last decade, from January 1, 2010, to December 31, 2019. Upon probing the listed databases, we downloaded a list of 212 published contributions and carefully read each abstract to evaluate its possible contribution to our purpose.

After identifying articles according to these criteria, we read each manuscript to verify its congruity with the research objectives. We also manually reviewed each article's reference list to find other relevant articles considered by their contents (i.e., seminal contributions, milestones for literature) and then subjected them to the same screening process. Thus, we narrowed the list to 68 articles. Subsequently, we reviewed and synthesised each article's results in a coherent and integrated manner (Bal & Nijkamp, 2001) to identify the most prominent and notable topics about fashion marketing in the emerging markets (EMs). Finally, we shed light on four major issues underlined in Table 2.1: fashion consumption in EMs, luxury consumption, fashion product perception in the EMs and African inspiration.

Table 2.1 Results from our systematic literature review: the four main topics and related trends

Most prominent topics	Insights
Fashion consumption in emerging markets (EMs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – <i>The New Middle Class</i> – <i>Approach to fashion and purchase motivations</i>
Luxury consumption	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – <i>Luxury as a status signal in EMs</i> – <i>Luxury experience: the new consumer generation</i>
Fashion products' perception in emerging markets (EMs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – <i>The impact of country-related cues</i> – <i>Counterfeit issue</i>
African inspiration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – <i>North Africa as a new market</i> – <i>South Africa as a new inspiring culture for fashion brands</i>

Results and Discussions

Fashion Consumption in Emerging Markets (EMs)

The New Middle Class

To outline the behavioural model of fashion consumers in EMs, it is essential to define these consumers' economic, social and cultural backgrounds. Over the years, EMs have become increasingly crucial for fashion luxury brands. Indeed, a large body of research indicates that “consumers in EMs are one of the most important target markets for luxury firms across the world” (Shukla, 2012, p. 577). Scholars seek to investigate the impact of social and cultural differences on consumers' behaviour and purchase motivation. This review aims to highlight the reasons behind the consumption of fashion products in developed and developing countries. Since the 1980s, privatisation and economic transformations associated with neoliberal reforms have led to social changes. The result is the formation of a New Middle Class (NMC). In EMs, the typical member of the NMC is an educated person employed in the service sector of an urban area (Kravets & Sandikci, 2014). The novel aspect of this new social group refers to job mobility, sharing values and identifying models (Kravets & Sandikci, 2014). Due to economic

restructuring, access to goods is more feasible than before. The nature and degree of neoliberal reform in EMs differ profoundly from the West (Brenner et al., 2010): this has mainly contributed to the birth of a new segment—New Middle Class—that serves as the social basis to maintain both current and future growth and consumption trends (Dobbs et al., 2012). The political and economic restructuring aims to remove market barriers to facilitate privatisation and accumulation of wealth. In this scenario, managers and entrepreneurs become the image of success with reforms.

The NMC accounts for most consumers. With the NMC's tastes and preferences, the demand for goods is profiled to the point of defining the "must-haves" for the rest of the population (Fadaee, 2014). The consumption patterns of the New Middle Class are characterised by consumerism and subjectivism. Those with subjective expectations aspire to achieve autonomy, personal accomplishment and global integration (Ren, 2013). According to neoliberal subjectivism, the approach to life is managerial and rational to optimise efficiency and reduce the misuse of time and resources (Gershon et al., 2011). The dominant mentality involves rules and orders, and the self is almost considered an enterprise (Kravets & Sandikci, 2014). NMC members feel the need to model themselves to adhere to the standards of competency required by the market, and the right consumer choices seem to be the way to happiness. Although individualism is predominant, New Middle-Class consumers are still influenced by the norms of pre-reform institutions (Säävälä, 2010). The need to show one's qualities and the best is linked to a past economic austerity. Conforming to specific standards means unity with one's peers and harmony with a more prominent global middle class. In a time of rapid and continuous social transformation, feeling "normal", "ordinary" and "appropriate" is a way to face the changing society and develop a sense of belonging (Fehérváry, 2013). The idea of global integration lies at the heart of the development model of neoliberal reform. The appeal of "global" originates from a cosmopolitan view of the world; it is an abstract entity that does not refer to a specific country (Brosius, 2012; Üstüner & Holt, 2010).

Approach to Fashion and Purchasing Intentions

Scholars explained that “fashion constitutes a critical field in which social class is both expressed and experienced” (Kravets & Sandikci, 2014, p. 129). Fashion practices are a crucial element in the creation of an NMC. Through style choices, consumers communicate status and belonging to a social group.

Wearing fashionable clothes means being adaptive and updated with a constantly changing society. The NMC’s approach to fashion is managerial. Given their administrative skills, consumers plan what to wear based on the weather or the occasion to increase efficiency.

Despite a prosperous economic situation, the goal is to optimise time, money and resources. In line with that premise, “combining” is a common practice and seems to result from this entrepreneurial view of fashion rather than a way to express oneself (Kravets & Sandikci, 2014). Confirming Simmel’s theories (Simmel, 1957), if on the one hand fashion has an identifying function, then, on the other, it tries to stand out. “Being proper” is a regular expression among consumers, and members of one’s social group validate appreciation. Sharing one’s photos on social media is a fast and easy way to seek peer approval worldwide (McQuarrie et al., 2013; Gökerik et al., 2018). Some scholars (Sheth & Solomon, 2014) have defined this new level as “digital self”, a “shared view of self... emerged from the democratisation of luxury with the focus on consumers’ aspirations, lifestyle, and social networks” (Schultz & Jain, 2018, p.3) and the increasing presence of omnichannel shopping opportunities in terms of perfect hybridisation between online (e.g., e-commerce) and offline (e.g., in-store) shopping (Amatulli et al., 2021). Conforming takes priority over making distinctive style choices (Arsel & Bean, 2013).

Besides friends and peers, celebrities are also role models. Consumers imitate their idol’s tastes to be more confident in their fashion choices and increase their self-esteem (Hung et al., 2011). In fashion practices, an imaginary global middle class validates the acceptability and the standard of “proper” (Kravets & Sandikci, 2014). Inclusion in this “middle” seems to be achieved through consumption. The mode of consumption of the NMCs consists of working with a set of standard products combined

according to established rules “to achieve individualised and competent, yet ordinary outcomes” (Kravets & Sandikci, 2014, p. 133). Researchers have found that consumers rationally organise their wardrobe, combining items in collections and dividing them into two blocks: *essential/classic* and *trendy/exclusive* products (Kravets & Sandikci, 2014). In this way, everything acquires a functional value. Their “fashion” is not unconventional, and consumers prefer not to be “subversive” in their mode of creating looks. The intent to show wealth and social status has led to growing consumer interest in luxury products. The willingness to buy high-end products varies according to the economic maturity of markets and cultures (Üstüner & Holt, 2010). Consumers can be guided by other-oriented motivations (i.e., showing their status disassociating from others) or by self-oriented reasons (i.e., pleasure, emotions, desire to express oneself) (Amatulli & Guido, 2011). On this basis, it is possible to distinguish between two consumption levels: luxury as a status signal and luxury as experience (Schultz & Jain, 2018).

Luxury Consumption

Luxury as a Status Signal in EMs

Affluent consumers who wish to show their social standing are more inclined to purchase branded items as symbols of prestige and wealth (Pino et al., 2019). However, status consumption may not be overtly displayed (Shukla, 2010). Those of high social status are not inclined to prominently branded luxury purchases and prefer branded items that can only be recognised by a small circle (Han et al., 2010). In contrast, consumers in EMs seem to like logos that are much more visible and recognisable as a hierarchical symbol (Yang & Mattila, 2014).

Conspicuous consumption is a means of manifesting and maintaining social status and social power (O’Cass & McEwen, 2004). Increasing incomes and democratisation attempts implemented by some brands have led to the observation of this phenomenon in EMs. In addition to reflecting social status, a conspicuous product impresses others and increases self-esteem (O’Cass & McEwen, 2004). Consumers gain

pleasure from others' reactions to the product rather than the form itself. They are willing to buy expensive and quality products, as economic value and price are more important than functional value (Schultz & Jain, 2018). The possession of luxury products brings status and image and generates visibility and acceptance in one's social group. Several pieces of research have highlighted the connection between personal image and brand image. Consumers buy branded products that are most closely congruent with their personality (Thrassou & Vrontis, 2009). This implies that conspicuous consumption is a way to express oneself and inform others about one's image (O'Shaughnessy & O'Shaughnessy, 2002). It has also been found that people with lower self-esteem are more inclined to buy branded items (Souiden & M'saad, 2011). Moreover, scholars suggest that social status dramatically impacts individuals' self-image (Kenny et al., 2005). Social class is closely linked to conspicuous consumption because consumers tend to purchase branded products that align with their self-image to promote social belonging (O'Cass & McEwen, 2004). Some findings suggest that "the impact of social status on conspicuousness is stronger in high power distance cultures than in low power distance cultures" (Souiden et al., 2011, p. 339). In particular, consumers in materialistic and individualistic societies are more concerned about displaying their image.

Luxury Experience: The New Consumer's Generation

As disposable incomes increase, consumer profiles in EMs are also changing. Consumers are expanding their fashion knowledge and becoming more competent and experienced. As a result, their view of luxury products is also evolving (Jain et al., 2012). Thus, a new connotation of luxury purchase intentions is emerging, in addition to the status consumptions orientation: the focus shifts from the product to the experience and emotions related to the consumption of the product itself (Eng & Bogaert, 2010; Jain et al., 2015).

Moreover, a new category of luxury products, "affordable products", has contributed to creating a new market segment due to the rapid growth of the middle class (Daswani & Jain, 2011). Aged between 20 and 40

years, these consumers contribute substantially to economic growth and are characterised by an individualistic approach to fashion (Atwal & Williams, 2017). This new generation of consumers has high incomes and is willing to spend more on luxury products that make them look their best. Fashion consumption has much to do with emotions and pleasure (Eng & Bogaert, 2010; Jain et al., 2015). In addition to perceiving the functional aspect of luxury products, new consumers appreciate the brand's hedonistic and aesthetic side associated with sensory pleasure (Berthon et al., 2009). The impulse behind the purchase is geared towards gaining experience. Thus, it is a way of consumption based on a consumer-centric view and guided strictly by personal motivations (Daswani & Jain, 2011; Nguyen & Mogaji, 2022).

Research emphasises that these consumers buy for themselves and are fascinated by the style, "self-expression potential" and the uniqueness of high-end products. The focus on aesthetics and quality rather than price contributes to the democratisation of fashion. Consumers buy to satisfy their desires, feel independent and make their own choices (Schultz & Jain, 2018). Accordingly, new research streams could profitably focus on such experiences to sustain luxury consumption and consider consumers' status consumption orientation by projecting such experiences to increase consumers' status.

Fashion Products' Perception in Emerging Markets (EMs)

The Impact of Country-Related Cues

The increased knowledge of foreign fashion brands by consumers has highlighted the importance of the country of origin as an influencing factor for purchasing behaviours. Again, perception varies from market to market (Marchi et al., 2014). The study suggests they consider the country of origin based on three meanings: country image, product image and product-specific country of origin. The first meaning is related only to the country's perception; the second refers to how consumers perceive a specific country's product; the third considers a particular

product from a specific country. The literature shows that the impact of a country's image on purchase decisions varies depending on the consumers' culture (Chand & Tung, 2011) and the product category. Thus, consumer ethnocentrism appears to be an essential variable to consider while studying the country of origin's influence on purchasing behaviour (Pucci et al., 2017).

The country of origin is related to quality and symbolic value (Wilcox, 2015). Several studies have confirmed that consumers in EMs are more inclined to buy foreign products (Shukla, 2010, 2012). This preference relies on the attributes associated with the countries of origin of those products. It has also been shown that some countries dominate others about specific product categories (Diamantopoulos et al., 2011). Although consumers generally prefer domestic products, recent research has shed light on a kind of reverse ethnocentrism in EMs (Üstüner & Holt, 2010; Mogaji et al., 2021). Exposure of those markets to Western culture, global marketing campaigns and digital communication has contributed to changing consumers' choices (Touzani et al., 2015), and the "made abroad" is considered a signal of product quality (Phau, 2014). The imported product acquires a symbolic value and thus becomes a social and status signal. The rarer and more expensive the item is, the higher the consumer's purchasing power. Wealthier consumers are willing to pay more for the prestige associated with foreign products. Participation in the Western lifestyle, desire to differentiate from the mass market, willingness to imitate developed countries' consumption patterns and self-esteem enhancement explain consumers' attitudes (Üstüner & Holt, 2010; Gbadegeshin et al., 2021). It has also been noted that the consumer positively evaluates a product that reflects their self-image, and purchasing becomes an expression. Thus, the self-image congruence analysis is appropriate to study and predict consumers' behaviour as they will be more likely to purchase products with an image consistent with their own (Kastanakis & Balabanis, 2014; Abimbola et al., 2012).

Counterfeit Issues

As a result of the increasing interest in luxury items, counterfeiting of high-value branding is becoming widespread. Consumers who cannot afford the elevated prices of high-fashion brands fulfil their desire to own luxury products by purchasing counterfeit items in a global crisis. Counterfeiting consists of making a copy of a high brand value product already on the market (Chaudhry & Stumpf, 2011). Excluding cases of deceptive counterfeiting (where there is no awareness of buying an imitation), there's a willingness in many cases to purchase fakes "in luxury brand markets, where consumers are often able to distinguish counterfeits from genuine brands based on differences in price, the distribution channels, and the inferior quality of the product itself" (Jiang & Cova, 2012, p. 2).

The demand for counterfeit products results from the consumers' need to align themselves with their social group, as the fake product is a prestige symbol and satisfies their social needs. The attitude and buying intentions underlying the purchase of an imitation are similar to those of an original luxury product: conformity with a social group (social conformity), improvement of one's standing through conspicuous consumption (conspicuousness and status consumption) and willingness to maintain a favourable social self-image ("saving face") (Wan, 2013). Consumers passionate about fashion trends also tend to buy an imitation; thus, they can enjoy the same lifestyle at a lower price, saving money to invest in the counterfeit collections of the following season or buying more items.

The short life cycle of fashion items and copies increasingly similar to the original seems an incentive to purchase non-genuine products. However, consumers' motivations can also be linked to the shopping experience itself, such as with the act of buying an illegal counterfeited product, which generates a sense of adventure and fun if counterfeiting is not discovered (Jiang & Cova, 2012). The counterfeit product allows consumers to have a brand experience that will enable them to participate in the sensations and emotions without paying exorbitant amounts.

African Inspiration

Upon reading literature to discover the most prominent topics, we revealed how Africa is considered the next fast-growing market (Taylor, 2014). The mix of culture and influences differs significantly in the northern and southern continents. Indeed, some African countries have embarked on profound transformations by leveraging their unique values and cultures (Eze, 2014) and supporting new concept development. It has been shown that an essential share of foreign investments has been diverted to Africa; for instance, China has long-term projects to create fundamental infrastructures for the relaunch of the continent, such as through the “One Belt, One Road” initiative (Du & Zhang, 2018). In addition, countries like Brazil and Germany have also started investing in emerging African countries (Scoones et al., 2016). A recent report by World Finance (2019) shows explicitly five major countries as drivers of the emerging economy: Ethiopia (8.5% of GDP), Ivory Coast (7.4% of GDP), Senegal (7% of GDP), Tanzania (6.4% of GDP) and Ghana (6.3% of GDP). In Ethiopia, the economic restructuring programme has given its benefits through a series of privatisations that have relaunched the country’s economy; these measures have involved numerous companies that have been sold or shared in concession to China for developments in infrastructure, manufacturing and sustainable economic practices (Du & Zhang, 2018). In this scenario, African countries represent a dual reality and an exciting market for fashion brands, simultaneously influencing Western cultures and being a new market for Western fashion brands. To clarify, given the wealth concentrated in some areas of the continent (e.g., Egypt, Morocco), the arrival of luxury brands including Cartier, Burberry, Louis Vuitton, Fendi, Gucci and Salvatore Ferragamo in luxury stores such as V&A Waterfront in Cape Town or Sandton Mall and Hyde Park Corner in Johannesburg, South Africa, has evolved into a luxury market destination (Crosswaite, 2014).

Interestingly, the uniqueness of the African tradition is due to its values, cultures and religions (Eze, 2014; Soetan et al., 2021). For instance, one of the critical drivers of fashion consumption in the African continent is religiosity. Research shows that religion and luxury consumption

are interdependent. Muslim influence seems to negatively affect the purchase of branded products (Dekhil et al., 2017). Indeed, all forms of materialistic interest are discouraged (Arli et al., 2016). Religion also prohibits believers from wearing specific garments (such as pants for women) and correlates to negative attitudes towards counterfeit products. It discourages purchasing imitations for ethical reasons (Budiman, 2012; Mukonza et al., 2021). Moving across the continent to the countries of the centre-south, the situation is much more promising. Fashion brands and stylists have widely recognised the particularities of such African styles and cultures. For instance, Africa's new centrality has been confirmed by the Dior's Cruise 2020 show, for which stylists used wax prints produced in collaboration with the Ivorian brand Uniwax (Sbordone, 2020).

The fashion industry has seen a growing interest in African artists and creatives in recent seasons. The "afro", "ethnic", "exotic", culture has begun to spread, providing stylists and designers with new colours, fabrics and cuts typical of this continent (Lewis, 2012). In this sense, Africa no longer represents only a continent inclined to welcome fashion and luxury products from Western cultures (i.e., in Northern Africa) or a mere place to invest in manufacturing due to the low labour costs (i.e., Southern Africa). Still, it is becoming a melting pot of culture, values, styles and uses from which stylists can draw inspiration. Therefore, new multiform, eclectic and unique fashion is rapidly conquering Western runways, such as Dior, Milan Fashion Week and even the specifically dedicated Africa Fashion Week in London (Business of Fashion, 2020). Thus, alongside the glamorous imprint of European fashion and the legendary hegemony of American sportswear, there is also the African matrix that substantially affects the fashion universe, as a new mix of cultures that pours between weft and warp of fabrics and the patterns that evoke the colourful batik, or wax textures through the commodification of the ethnicity (Delhaye & Woets, 2015).

These precious fabrics look like actual artworks, and stylists are currently combining these influences with light and soft materials along with traits of transparencies, proposing wide and fluffy pants and skirts and linen or cotton long-sleeved blouses. These fabrics are permeated by typical colours such as yellow, orange, brown and black that recall the

clothes of the local African populations (Farber, 2010). Thus, the African style begins to be recognised worldwide for its precise identity and aesthetic connotation and is equipped with its language capable of mixing tradition with originality, refreshing the Western style (Business of Fashion, 2020). Moreover, from a macro-economic perspective, the South African fashion design contributes to the reorganisation of this continent's socio-cultural and economic life, highlighting the contemporary cultural heterogeneity of South Africa and marketing a range of creatively "African" fashion garments (Farber, 2010).

Conclusions

This chapter aimed to investigate the fashion consumers' behaviour in EMs, which seems to be an increasingly important target for fashion luxury brands. The New Middle Class, formed due to the neoliberal reforms, is recognised by literature as including the most significant percentage of fashion consumers. The lifestyle observed in the NMC community assumes a key player role for fashion brands. Their likes and preferences influence the consumption choices of the rest of the population. However, autonomy, personal accomplishment and global integration were weak in consuming luxury fashion goods. These consumer behaviours aim to reduce the waste of time and resources, favouring efficiency in their dynamic lifestyle. Their goal is to show the best of themselves to others, adhering to the standards emphasised by the markets, and avoid being behind the times. Although individualism is predominant, research shows that consumers orient their consumption according to shared rules and conventions. "Being normal" is a way to keep up with their dynamic society and develop a sense of belonging to a larger global middle class.

The pursuit of social acceptance, emphasised by sharing photos on social media or imitating friends and celebrities, was positively related to intention to consume. The current study's findings reflected that the intent to show wealth and social status is the most significant predictor of purchase behaviour, and conspicuous products sustain them to impress others and increase self-esteem. Findings also suggested that consumers

buy branded products that are most closely congruent with their personality and self-image to promote social belonging.

Consumers in EMs seem to prefer brands that are much more visible and recognisable as status symbols. Moreover, results show that luxury consumption is becoming more of “an experience” for a new generation of young consumers, and not only a way to signal one’s social status. As competent and experienced, the consumers in question appreciate the aesthetic and stylistic side of the products. Based on a consumer-centric view, the fashion-buying intention has much to do with emotions and sensory pleasure. Furthermore, we have highlighted that the concept of country of origin is an essential motive of purchasing behaviours: consumers in EMs seem to be more inclined to buy foreign products as the phrase “made abroad” is considered an indicator of product quality. Their choice relies on the attributes associated with the product’s country of origin. Owning foreign products means participating in Western consumption patterns and differentiating from the mass markets, thus enhancing self-esteem. Consumers who cannot afford the elevated prices buy luxury counterfeit products to fulfil their desires, given the increasing interest in luxury items. This attitude stems from the consumers’ need to align themselves with their desired social group since the counterfeit product maintains a symbol of prestige and satisfies their social needs. Our findings also suggest that, if, on the one hand, buying an imitation allows fashion consumers to have a brand experience at a lower price, then, on the other hand, the act of buying an illegal product generates a sense of adventure and fun if counterfeiting is not discovered.

However, this work also has some limitations. Indeed, we acknowledge that to get our research goal, this review encompasses articles from different cultural contexts. Although the results are pretty consistent, our data analysis may have ignored some cultural differences. Moreover, our study considered a large time span during which the social and economic environment has changed many times in emerging markets, especially from a cultural, social, economic and political point of view. Thus, future studies could explore how consumers attribute different relevance to the considered factors in emerging markets. Scholars may also focus on each specific emerging market to analyse it from a phenomenological and sociological perspective.

Finally, to the best of the authors' knowledge and consideration, light has been shed on one of the most prominent topics regarding future challenges and opportunities for luxury fashion brand managers by recognising Africa's central role as an EM. The African continent has embarked on profound processes of evolution, and a significant share of foreign investments has been diverted to those countries. The novel centrality of Africa is attributable to a double meaning: Africa (and particularly Northern Africa) represents an exciting market for fashion brands (i.e., Morocco and Egypt, where the attention of several luxury and fashion brands has been focused), as well as a new objective for marketing managers. Indeed, the African cultures, values, styles and traditions could influence Western cultures, bringing new life to the world's runways. African creatives and unique fabrics, colours and typical cuts attract the fashion industry's attention. Thus, consumers, and individuals in general, assume a central key role for future fashion marketing strategies.

On the one hand, since fashion consumers in EMs are becoming more competitive to feel part of a global community, marketers should encourage consumers' involvement through marketing campaigns that stimulate participation among consumers from different countries (Brooksworth et al., 2022a, 2022b). Indeed, since research has shown that consumer attitudes can also be linked to the desire to have a brand experience, stores could offer additional services to customers: interactive activities, workshops for product customisation or competitions to visit the brand's country of origin the factory. Furthermore, consumers in EMs—as individuals—with their values and particularities, become a source of inspiration for designers and stylists, and thus for marketing managers in proposing new collections aimed at spreading the culture of these countries in the Western countries, emphasising their uniqueness and authenticity. In all, EMs are increasingly assuming a central role in modern fashion marketing strategies and must be considered sides of the same coin; they represent potential markets for fashion luxury and the source that stylists and marketers can draw on to renew their value propositions in the markets.

Appendix: Alphabetical List of the Journals Considered for the Literature Review

List of academic journals

Asia Pacific Business Review
California Management Review
China Economic Review
Current Anthropology
European Journal of Marketing
Global Networks
International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management
International Journal of Fashion Studies
International Journal of Management, Economics and Social Sciences
International Journal of Marketing Studies
International Journal of Research in Marketing
International Marketing Review
Journal of Consumer Marketing
Journal of Adolescence
Journal of Advertising Research
Journal of Business Research
Journal of Consumer Behaviour: An International Research Review
Journal of Consumer Research
Journal of Customer Behaviour
Journal of Developing Societies
Journal of Fashion Marketing and Management: An International Journal
Journal of Global Fashion Marketing
Journal of International Consumer Marketing
Journal of Islamic Marketing
Journal of Marketing
Journal of Marketing Communications
Journal of Marketing Theory and Practice
Journal of Product & Brand Management
Journal of Promotion Management
Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services
Journal of South-North Cultural Studies
Journal of Strategic Marketing
Marketing Intelligence & Planning
Metamorphosis
Psychology & Marketing
Qualitative Market Research: An International Journal
World Development

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3

Fashion Weeks and Customer Experiences in Emerging Markets

Ruth Jacob

Introduction

Fashion designers implement an array of events and practices and fashion labels, which are used to promote the latest designer collections and trends, whilst engaging new, existing and potential customer bases. Customer-faced events such as national and city-based fashion weeks have played a fundamental role in shaping how fashion designers showcase their collections and themselves to their customer bases and overall to a broader audience. Once only synonymous with four international capitals—New York, London, Milan and Paris—an increasingly wider collective of cities worldwide are becoming bases for fashion week activities. Emerging markets have made fashion weeks in their own regions spectacles that are now admired, appreciated and keenly followed by many parts of the world, including established and developed markets.

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This chapter will investigate selected cities situated in emerging markets around the world. A focus will be placed on how these specific nations implement events and experiences relative to fashion weeks. Where applicable, other customer experience-based events complementary to fashion weeks will also be analysed. Economic considerations for the present and future growth of countries will be presented. Kühl (2015), cited by Bug and Windhab (2020), describes the fashion show as “a marketing tool” Thus, the chapter will consider how fashion weeks are used to promote fashion. Detailed theoretical models will be used to support this consideration. Factors that have been shown to play a part in how fashion week activities take place, such as culture, climate, technological advancements and the COVID-19 pandemic, will also be presented, as will the direct insight from organisers and organisations that create fashion week shows in emerging markets. The chapter will conclude with considerations on how further developments for fashion weeks and customer experiences can be enhanced in emerging markets.

According to Okonkwo (2007), fashion shows offer brands the chance to showcase their new design concepts, values and brand personality. “The brand concept is simply the birth of a brand, in other words, the overall idea behind the creation of the brand” (Okonkwo, 2007). This statement points to shows that highlight nations’ creative and cultural representation. A distinguishing factor of fashion week shows involves providing a collective indication of cultural and social trends within respective countries.

Hosting and publishing fashion week shows via media platforms such as audiovisuals on social media platforms can create awareness around them. To create brand awareness, the brand has to be visible. “*This means achieving a high level of exposure for the brand among its target consumer audience*” (Okonkwo, 2007, p. 114). By placing the shows, and thus the brands on media platforms, such as owned websites and social media, it can be reached by the masses. In light of the global COVID-19 pandemic, such practices proved vital for fashion brands that wanted to show themselves to the world.

The purpose of this chapter is to highlight the presence of fashion week shows and related activities present in emerging economies, such as the design and promotion of domestic fashion labels. Additionally, highlights

of the practice of designers from developed markets, such as the United Kingdom, the United States (Bunyeshulli, 2020), Spain, Italy and France (Dias, 2020), and the presentation of their seasonal collections in emerging markets during fashion week will also be included in the chapter. This practice helps to indicate that emerging economies are proving to be valuable and lucrative platforms for promoting designers from developed nations on a global scale. Additionally, the chapter will highlight the responsive nature of fashion week organisations and organisers, their desire for greater awareness of the designers represented within their showcases and the creative and cultural components involved in designing their collections.

Research Methodology

As the subject area of fashion shows in emerging markets is relatively untapped in literature, the researcher has chosen to interact directly with fashion designers and labels based in emerging markets. The chapter author used both primary research to gain direct insight from fashion week organisations and organisers and secondary research to provide a broader range of understanding about existing fashion week practices in the emerging markets, and comprehensive insight into the countries themselves, including economic and demographic data. Additionally, secondary research was implemented to support the representation of theoretical considerations related to elements of fashion week presentations within emerging markets. Two models have been selected, the *Two-Step Model of Communication* and the *Interaction Model of Communication*, both of which support the concept of interactions between media as marketing tools and customers as target audiences.

As a sampling method, the author used convenience sampling to select fashion week organisers to contact for semi-structured interviews, which formed the primary research method used in the chapter. This form of sampling involved working with accessibility as the means of choice for reaching and selecting the sample group (Bryman, 2012, Pg. 201). Internet-based research was initiated with the Europa Regina website (Europa Regina, 2021a) to select fashion week organisers based in

emerging economies. Additionally, the chapter author contacted fashion-related organisations such as public relations organisations associated with international fashion weeks and the Commonwealth Fashion Council, which led to contact and communication with four fashion week organisations. Each organisation or respective personnel contacted provided responses and information that have been used to conduct the primary research interviews or questionnaires, which helped develop the research that has been used to show the production the domestic fashion week showcases.

A total of 132 fashion week organisations were contacted. However, only 23 designers or organisations provided direct initial responses. Of those 23, a total of 10 provided immediate answers that have been used for the development and presentation of research in this chapter. Founders, organisers and personnel of respective fashion week organisations were contacted, and interviews were completed via email or mobile communication platforms. Their responses have been used to develop the research represented within the chapter. Where possible, contact names of the respondents and organisers of the responding fashion week organisations have been included in this chapter to further highlight the presence and endeavours of their works to enhance the presence of designers in the domestic economies and the fashion practices that exist.

Some hindrances occurred when reaching out to international fashion week organisations and organisers, notably language barriers (English was not a spoken language). This also factored into the research for the literature review, making it impossible to translate due to submission formats of written work (i.e., PDF formats). Additionally, some website platforms presenting fashion weeks included outdated or inaccurate contact details and—as will be noted later on—in some places, websites were non-existent, making it impossible to interact with the shows or their organisers. Furthermore, a significantly smaller proportion of the group responded to provide the initial correspondences. Using only the number of respondents who did follow through in giving answers to represent the broader geographic regions of emerging markets will not offer as in-depth or accurately informed detail as is needed. Hence, where possible, secondary research sources have been used to present the details for the designated international emerging market regions, such as fashion week

websites and digital articles. There was no standardised procedure in the classification of fashion week organisations. Shows that showcase menswear, womenswear, childrenswear and other fashion apparel and clothing categories, such as bridal wear, were all taken into consideration. In addition to this, in cases where more than one fashion week show existed in an emerging market, the more prominent shows—based on the presence of a designated website, social media credentials (social media presence and the number of followers), the number of online articles based on the show and (where available) the involvement with regards to their respective organisations—were included.

The research instrument chosen by this chapter's author for the primary research element involves the quantitative research method, which comprised ten questions. Depending on the respondents' preferences, the questions were sent out and answered either in the form of a structured audio interview or as a self-completion questionnaire, completed via email (Bryman, 2012, Pg. 186). The research method tools' questions were formed to collate qualitative responses stemming from exclusively open-ended questions. The choice of only open-ended questions allowed each organisation or organiser to include greater detail that could be used to analyse respective fashion weeks and understand directly from the organisation or the critical components of their shows and their concerns and ideas for recommendations. The email questionnaires or audio interviews were disseminated to each contributing fashion week organisation or organiser via email in written form or sent as individual audio questions through WhatsApp—the mobile messaging application. The respondents could provide their responses through the respective medium. The benefits of using the audio interview for receiving responses provided an opportunity to reiterate or give clarity to respondents if required and vice versa in relatively quick response times (minutes as opposed to hours or days), and for the chapter author to ask for clarity from a response if needed. Further benefits included allowing the respondents to answer at their own pace (Bryman, 2012, Pg. 234), thus limiting the premise of providing a rushed response, which may give inaccurate responses. With the responses sent via email, respondents provided their answers in a matter of days, and their answers could be seen visually and used directly within the chapter content. In places where further clarity

or details were required, follow-up emails could be sent and responses received. However, the time frame for responses took more time than the audio WhatsApp-based interviews. Despite the benefits and positive aspects of involving audio interviews and email questionnaires, issues such as inaccuracies stemming from the responses could factor into interpreting the provided answers. This was considered, and steps to counteract such occurrences were duly considered and, where possible, implemented. Respondents could contact the researcher via email, and for audio interviews, clarity or rephrasing of questions could be requested and vice versa if the need for such actions arose.

Literature Review

With the existence of direct research based on the presence of fashion week celebrations in emerging markets, even though limited in number, readings based on smaller components of the overall topic were collected to develop a holistic view of the general subject matter, such as defining the term emerging markets, which can also be described as a developing country. Researching into the term “*developing country*” presented several meanings, including the definition found in the *Cambridge Dictionary*, which described it as “*a country with little industrial and economic activity and where people generally have low incomes*” (Cambridge Dictionary, 2020). An article published in *Forbes* provided a further indication of the term by presenting distinctive factors that differentiate emerging markets from developing and underdeveloped nations: “*Unlike emerging markets, developing and underdeveloped countries still need special attention from international aid agencies to prevent starvation, mass disease and political instability*” (Kvint, 2008). Thus, economic factors, such as being a recipient of support from international aid agencies, are key factors used in determining the state of a nation and whether it can be defined as an emerging market. During the initial research process, academic literature related to fashion weeks in developing nations was evident, albeit in limited proportions. Additionally, some scholarly articles were written in native languages, which made translation a bit difficult and in some cases an impossible task to complete.

Further research considered the opportunities for growth in fashion in emerging markets. According to an article in *Vogue*, the African continent's fashion industry is valued at more than \$31 billion (Owoh, 2020). In South Africa alone, fashion houses' total value of designer work equates to over \$52 million annually (Tischhauser, 2018). There are clear indications that fashion across developing nations shows significant economic value to the region. The chapter will further present the growth potential of fashion markets in selected emerging countries.

Overall, with limited detail of fashion weeks and fashion shows in emerging markets, this study will work to support the development of insight into the practices and progresses being made by fashion designers and labels based in emerging economies. Further research into the subject area can include analysing a more comprehensive range of fashion week shows in those countries included within this chapter, as well as with a broader range of emerging markets. The analysis should tackle the differing ways in which fashion week shows are represented and supported across different continents, the number of shows within each designated region and the actions that can be taken to support further development of fashion week shows in emerging markets.

History and Development of Fashion Weeks Shows

As described by Everett and Swanson, “*A fashion show is “an event where the latest fashion, fabric, and colour trends in apparel and accessories are presented, using live models, to an audience”* (Everett & Swanson, 2013, p. 5). The events known today as “fashion week” stem back to Paris in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (Jana, 2020). Charles Worth and Paul Poiret, renowned designers of the time, envisioned grand occasions where their opulent designs could be seen in motion on physical beings. By this latter time frame, the added elements of staging and music were introduced (Cohen, 2014), reminiscent of modern-day runway shows. A shift in a pattern followed in the 1920s and 1930s sets the framework for fashion runway shows for a significant period of time.

Rather than having a party atmosphere, shows became more exclusive and tailored towards a specific clientele and were held behind closed doors or only seen by selected invitees, ranging initially from people who were part of the high fashion and celebrity circles but later extending to fashion buyers and media personnel.

Fashion week events were then transferred to New York due to the effects of World War II in order to provide fashion buyers with an alternative source of insight and access to the latest fashion trends, and travel to different locations—such as Paris—was understandably severely impacted. Following the end of World War II, more definitive factors were introduced in order to determine what events could be classed as fashion week shows. The *Chambre Syndicale de la Haute Couture* specified that a minimum of 35 day and night pieces were needed to present a fashion week show (Jana, 2020).

Milan Fashion Week was introduced in 1975, followed by London Fashion Week in 1984, (Jana, 2020). However, some reports indicate that events synonymous with a fashion week celebration were present in London from 1900 by the British fashion designer, Lady Duff Gordon (Abrams, 2011; National Portrait Gallery, n.d.). From this time through to the present day, an expansion of fashion week regions around the globe has been evident in both developed and developing nations. Additionally, in the case of many nations, more than one fashion week showcase exists, such as collections that cater specifically to haute couture as opposed to prêt-à-porter or ready-to-wear, children's wear, swimwear and bridal wear. Fashion week shows tend to present collections for the forthcoming seasons of Spring/Summer in September of the previous year and Autumn/Winter seasons in February of the same year. However, several factors can determine the choices for when, or even if, such shows take place: geographic region, financial implications and the buying seasons of key clientele. Additional collections have been introduced to intersect the initial fashion week showcases since the mid-2000s. Collections under the titles of *Resort*, *Cruise*, *Holiday* or *Pre-Spring* collections, before the Spring/Summer shows, and also *Pre-Fall* collections, which feature in the key selling points between the Spring collections (when reductions in retail prices are yet to take place) and the Fall collection, are yet to reach the stores—the aim is to increase and maintain customer interest with the

increased speed of fashion shows. Fashion week shows have also become more than just a presentation of clothing, as previously alluded. With the inclusion of creative elements such as dance and music performances, as well as intricate set designs and locations, the spaces themselves have become a spectacle where the ambiance and audiences are evermore eclectic in comparison to the initial days of fashion week runway shows. The adaptation to fashion weeks involves the diversification of audience members that the shows are presented to. Once exclusively the space for fashion buyers and members of high society, fashion week shows began to open their doors and audiences were extended to include public figures in the areas of film, media and music. Now audiences have extended even more broadly due to the development of digital platforms to include not only social media influencers but also members of the public who can gain access to shows via social media platforms on the Internet, smart devices, laptops or even in retail spaces, where runway shows are streamed in real time. As described by Andersson and Jandér (2016, p. 2), “[T]he fashion industry is experiencing a change as a result of the explosion of social media”—a practice well documented by designers based in both developed and emerging economies.

Fashion Weeks and Customer Experiences in Emerging Markets

Components of research conducted on fashion week shows have been presented in the tables. The details stem from answers provided by fashion week organisations or organisers. As of April 2021, the chapter author received responses from ten international fashion week organisations or organisers situated in emerging markets. As stated earlier, only a selection of emerging economies provided responses, so the details will be evidence of the presence of fashion week shows in the responding countries (Tables 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 3.5, 3.6, 3.7, 3.8, 3.9, 3.10, and 3.11).

Although responses could not be reached, details related to further fashion week organisations within emerging markets have been

Table 3.1 Algeria

Name of the show	L'Alger Fashion Week
Location	Algeria, Africa
Organiser/founder	Nawal Nedjari
Founded	2011
Website	Yes
Social media presence	Yes
Most recent show	October 2019
Number of shows each year	One

Source: Nedjari (2020)

Table 3.2 Dubai

Name of the show	International Fashion Week Dubai
Organiser/founder	Cheryle Dias
Location(s)	Dubai, UAE/Milan/ Paris/New York
Founded	2015
Website	Yes
Social media presence	Yes
Most recent show	March 2021
Number of shows each year	Once

Source: Dias (2020)

Table 3.3 Ethiopia

Name of the show	Hub of Africa Fashion Week
Organiser/founder	Mahlet Teklemariam
Location	Ethiopia, Africa
Founded	2010
Website	Yes
Social media presence	Yes
Most recent show	October 2019
Number of shows each year	One

Source: Teklemariam (2020)

Table 3.4 Rwanda

Name of the show	Kigali Fashion Week
Organiser/founder	John Bunyeshulli
Location	Rwanda, Africa
Founded	2011
Website	Yes
Social media presence	Yes
Most recent show	January 2020
Number of shows each year	Once

Source: Bunyeshulli (2020)

Table 3.5 South Africa

Name of the show	South Africa Fashion Week
Organiser/founder	Lucilla Booyzen
Location	South Africa
Founded	1997
Website	Yes
Social media presence	Yes
Most recent show	March/April 2021
Number of shows each year	Two

Source: Booyzen (2020)

Table 3.6 Colombo

Name of the show	Colombo Fashion Week
Organiser/founder	Ajai Vir Singh
Location	Colombo, Sri Lanka
Founded	2003
Website	Yes
Social media presence	Yes
Most recent show	September/October 2020
Number of shows each year	Twice

Source: Singh (2021)

Table 3.7 Georgia

Name of the show	Mercedes Benz Fashion Week Tbilisi
Organiser/founder	Sofia Tchkonია
Location	Tbilisi
Founded	2015
Website	Yes
Social media presence	Yes
Most recent show	November 2020
Number of shows each year	Two

Source: Tchkonია (2020)

Table 3.8 Russia

Name of the show	Mercedes Benz Fashion Week Russia
Organiser/founder	Alexander Shumsky
Location	Moscow, Russia
Founded	2000
Website	Yes
Social media presence	Yes
Most recent show	April 2021
Number of shows each year	Two

Source: Mercedes Benz Fashion Week Russia (2020)

Table 3.9 Ukraine

Name of the show	Ukrainian Fashion Week
Organiser/founder	Iryna Danylevska and Volodymyr Nechyporuk
Location	Kyiv
Founded	1997
Website	Yes
Social media presence	Yes
Most recent show	February 2020
Number of shows each year	Two

Source: Danylevska (2021)

Table 3.10 Belarus

Name of the show	Belarus Fashion Week
Organiser/founder	Yanina Goncharova
Location	Belarus
Founded	2010
Website	Yes
Social media presence	Yes
Most recent show	April 2021
Number of shows each year	Two

Source: Goncharova (2020)

Table 3.11 Fiji

Name of show	Fiji Fashion Week
Organiser/founder	Donna Whippy
Location	Suva, Fiji
Founded	2008
Website	Yes
Social media presence	Yes
Most recent show	May 2021
Number of shows each year	One

Source: Fiji Fashion Week (n.d.)

Table 3.12 Brazil

Name of the show	São Paulo Fashion Week
Organiser/founder	Paulo Borges
Location	São Paulo
Founded	1995
Website	Yes
Social media presence	Yes
Most recent show	November 2020
Number of shows each year	Two

Source: São Paulo Fashion Week (n.d.)

Table 3.13 India

Name of show	Lakme India Fashion Week
Organiser/founder	Fashion Design Council of India
Location	Lakme
Founded	2000
Website	Yes
Social media presence	Yes
Most recent show	March 2021
Number of shows each year	Once

Sources: Strand of Silk ([n.d.](#)), FDCI X LFW ([n.d.](#))

Table 3.14 China

Name of the show	Shanghai Fashion Week
Organiser/founder	
Location	Shanghai
Founded	2003
Website	Yes
Social media presence	Yes
Most recent show	April 2021
Number of shows each year	Twice

Source: Shanghai Fashion Week ([n.d.](#))

Table 3.15 Nigeria

Name of the show(s)	Lagos Fashion Week
Organiser/founder	Omoyemi Akerele
Location	Lagos, Nigeria
Founded	2011
Website	Yes
Social media presence	Yes
Most recent show	August 2020
Number of shows each year	Two

Source: Lagos Fashion Week ([n.d.](#))

considered to be of significant economic interest within the remaining BRICS nations (i.e., all apart from Russia and South Africa, which include selected economies such as Brazil, India, China and Nigeria) (Tables 3.12, 3.13, 3.14, and 3.15).

Consumer Experiences

In addition to the fashion week shows and productions, the experiences of customers are paramount in promoting the work of fashion labels and highlighting the presence of creative work within domestic economies. *South Africa Fashion Week* involves additional activities specifically purposed to promote designers. These activities include the introduction of exhibitions and pop-up shows as part of their fashion week events, which began in 2001 and 2010, respectively. Further elements to promote fashion across the country include a buyers' lounge since the summer of 2010 and trade events since 2016 (Tischhauser, 2018).

Customer experiences in relation to *Mercedes Benz Fashion Week Russia* have involved adding musical concerts and open lectures to their shows in order to make the guests' experience more vivid and interactive. There is also support for socially oriented projects and developments that aim to encourage sustainable practices among consumer audiences (Kaur et al., 2022). The creative project *Fashion Generation* was launched in 2017 for children between the ages of 11 and 18 years, with the aim of nurturing future talent (Mercedes Benz Fashion Week Russia, 2020).

In Georgia, a collaboration between *Mercedes Benz Fashion Week Tbilisi* and *The Art & Culture Center Factory* has led to the establishment of the Georgian Fashion Foundation. Situated in the Georgian capital Tbilisi, a designated industrial space is made available to local designers, photographers and artists where they are able to showcase their work. The space also incorporates an educational centre, giving opportunities to younger creatives (Tchkonია, 2020). As part of the month-long *Shanghai Fashion Week* launched in April 2021, events for customers included talks related to sustainability, a Shanghai Fashion and Lifestyle Carnival, a GQ Connects event, a fashion school's graduate showcase and an art exhibition called "*Her Shining Power*" promoting the work of mothers (Shanghai Fashion Week Activities, n.d.).

Analysis of Research and Findings

Based on the evidence collected through the primary and secondary research tools, the growing presence and potential of fashion week shows is evident in the emerging markets. Distinctive factors such as culture—a means of inspiring design—inspired the creation of distinctive designs and fashion week productions. Traditional craft and techniques form a significant basis for designing runway collections as described by *L'Alger's Fashion Week* founder, Nedjari. She pertained to 20 signature styles attributed to Algerian cultural dress, with one such item being the *karako* (Nedjari, 2020). Additionally, the use of natural and national locations within home countries provided unique surroundings that have been used by designers, such as the Spring/Summer 2021 Ishuri collection, created by the Rwandan fashion house, Moshion. The runway show was set in the great plains of Rwanda, where both the styles on show and the external stage highlighted cultures and visuals of the country (Moshion, 2020).

The establishment of fashion week shows has also been a factor to consider. The oldest of international fashion week shows include the four main capitals around the world: New York starting in 1943, Paris in 1973 and its other European counterparts in the early 1970s through to the late 1980s, Milan in 1975 and London in 1984. For many emerging markets, their fashion week shows came into existence in the early to mid-twenty-first century or at the earliest the very late twentieth century (i.e., South Africa and Ukraine, both of which launched their respective Fashion Weeks in 1997).

Economic factors also appear to be higher in value for the developed nations; however, their rates of growth are lower in comparison with those in the emerging markets (Soetan et al., 2021). According to the findings on Statista, the apparel and footwear market in the UK has grown steadily over the last seven years, with the market value expected to reach £62.2 billion by 2021 (Shahbandeh, 2021). The apparel market in the USA is expected to grow to \$102.5 billion in 2021 (Statista, n.d.-a). France is expected to experience a growth of £14,478 million (Statista, n.d.-b). While in Italy, revenue in the fashion segment is projected to

reach over £5 billion in 2021, along with a growth of 12.2% (Statista, [n.d.-c](#)).

A further range of emerging markets was selected and analysed in order to present the predicted values of their respective fashion markets including China (£256.7bn) (Statista, [n.d.-d](#)) and India (£12.4bn) (Statista, [n.d.-e](#)) in Asia; Turkey (£4.8bn) (Statista, [n.d.-f](#)) and Russia (£5.2bn) (Statista, [n.d.-g](#)) in Europe; and South Africa (£1.1bn) (Statista, [n.d.-h](#)) and Nigeria (£1.7bn) (Statista, [n.d.-i](#)) in Africa. The nations have been determined in accordance with economic findings from Bloomberg (Jamrisco & Flint, [2020](#)); PwC Global ([n.d.](#)) and IG (Cattlin, [2019](#)) are showing signs of economic growth for the foreseeable future. With such growth it can be believed that there are opportunities and interests for fashion consumption. However, what is harder to determine is whether this growth will stem from domestic fashion designers or from Western and more established brands that can be imported to emerging markets. Additionally, according to data from Statista, growth value of the fashion markets is greatest in Asian economies.

Growth in international markets is still expected despite the global consequences of COVID-19 and its related occurrences, such as lockdowns, lesser purchasing activities, decreased manufacturing levels, delayed imports and job losses (Adeyanju et al., [2022](#)). Speaking on the impact of COVID-19 and the bounceback, Daoud ([2020](#)) stated that the nations which implemented more effective procedures to manage and ultimately minimise the spread of the pandemic and its effects, along with stimulating consistent economic activities, would be better prepared for forthcoming development in the post-COVID-19 era (Mogaji et al., [2022](#)).

It has been evident that COVID-19 has had significant impacts on the presence of fashion week shows on an international scale with postponements and closures affecting shows as well as bricks and mortar retail stores (Business of Fashion, [2020](#)). Of the fashion week organisations and organisers who responded, all stated that they had had to postpone or cancel shows that were scheduled for parts of the 2020 runway seasons when global lockdowns were in place due to the pandemic. In hindsight, in developed nations, fashion weeks were amongst the high-profile events

that were initially held behind closed doors and then eventually cancelled and moved to digital platforms (Business of Fashion, 2020).

Theoretical Considerations

Two-Step Model of Communication and Interaction Model of Communication

When considering the theoretical implementations of Oonk (2015), the benefits in the progression of fashion shows moving from the physical space into the digital realm are expressed. Such a move shows an implementation of transforming the passive brand–client relationship into an interactive, two-way communication. Such considerations are supported by the two-step model of communication (Baines et al., 2017, pg. 224).

Both fashion week shows and customer experiences presented by designer labels can be presented via mass media platforms (such as magazines and other media publications, television and digital media such as websites and social media platforms). The model illustrates the movement of information between media and target groups or audiences. One such group is described as *Opinion Leaders*, which, according to the model, represents people such as bloggers and influencers or those who can be classed as being within the target audiences that interact with the media. Promotion methods for several fashion week productions involve presentations and social media interactions by social media influencers, both of which work together to enhance the awareness of and interest in the collections and the brands themselves (Mogaji, 2021; Gökerik et al., 2018).

As referred to by Oonk (2015), a significant benefit of presenting fashion shows through video- or film-based platforms, such as social media or the Internet, is that audiences are more likely to share content on their social media channels when they can be part of a big experience. Having the chance to connect with digital content, through viewing, liking, commenting and sharing, audiences have the chance to experience the shows. As expressed by the Interaction Model of Communication, interactions

between target groups or customers are interlinked by communications with multiple platforms and/or groups such as peer groups, bloggers and influencers, opinion leaders/formers (e.g., specialist personnel, such as skilled sale associates, academics and/or journalists) and electronic sources, of which digital platforms including the Internet, websites and social media form a part of (Baines et al., 2017; Mogaji, 2021). Interactions from and between customers and audiences, and their personal communities on respective social media platforms, allow for greater levels of awareness of fashion brands' collections. The brands' customer and audience base can choose to interact with and promote their online content, through likes, shares and comments, which can be viewed and interacted with by their connections, thus growing the awareness of product ranges and fashion. Although not represented within the Interaction Model of Communication, a further benefit of utilising online platforms relates to gaining insight from data analytics, particularly from electronic sources such as websites and social media platforms. Fashion brands can gain insight into their customers' and viewers' demographics, such as location, gender, age and dwell time, and develop further content in light of the insight gained from audiences' preferences in order to generate more interest and interaction.

Conclusion and Recommendation

When considering the presence of fashion weeks across emerging markets, it was apparent that many have only been recently established. Many, for example, have only been established after the mid-2010s (e.g., Hub of Africa Addis Fashion Week, Mercedes Benz Fashion Week Tbilisi and International Fashion Week Dubai), making them roughly five years old at the time of publication of this chapter. Based on the responses from the fashion week organisations and organisers, the following points can act as recommendations, which aim to support the growing presence of fashion weeks and their respective designers within emerging markets.

Political Stability and Support

A significant factor for any prevalent and consistent presence of economic sustainment in any country, the fashion industry inclusive, is political stability. Nations that have a greater presence of democratic political structures are able to showcase and also promote more consistent fashion shows. Although not solely assigned to emerging markets, the presence of political and social unrest in emerging markets has become dominant in recent times. In the autumn months of 2020, citizen unrest and civil wars affected the African countries, such as Ethiopia, as well conflicts from the End SARS demonstrations in Nigeria and wars between Armenia and Azerbaijan.

In addition, receiving support from government departments such as Culture, Arts and Tourism Ministries can help to highlight domestic creative practices present in countries, a step that has been highlighted by Teklemariam in relation to the Hub of Africa Fashion Week (2020).

Organisations related to politics and international relations, such as the Africa Union, could be involved in the creation of a body specifically mandated to promote the fashion industry throughout the continent. The European Union established the European Fashion Council in 2007 to support fashion industries in member nations including Bulgaria, Ukraine, Estonia and Romania (Europa Regina, 2021b). Additionally, the Commonwealth Fashion Council, based in the UK, has international connections with fashion week organisers and with organisers in many emerging markets that are situated across Europe, the Americas and the Caribbean, Africa, Asia and the Pacific (Commonwealth Fashion Council, 2021).

Supporting Domestic Manufacture

According to Yanina Goncharova, founder of Belarus Fashion Week, “*there are more than 2,000 manufacturers of clothing, footwear and accessories in Belarus*” (Goncharova, 2020). Providing means for manufacturing fashion items within domestic economies can eventually lead to a sustained creation of a wider range of fashion items within the nation. This relates to both machine-based products and handcraft items. Raw

material goods manufactured in emerging markets, such as leathers made in Nigeria and used by Western fashion labels such as Louis Vuitton, give light to the quality and success of this process, exporting manufactured goods for fashion (Adeniji, 2021; Mukonza et al., 2021). Thus, creating a greater proportion of items within emerging markets will help to create awareness and also revenue, which can help the home economies and in turn be used to support further investment and growth in fashion manufacture.

Supporting Fashion Education

Besides supporting the production of fashion goods such as raw materials and finished products, providing services and facilities for education and training in the area of fashion will be a beneficial step for growing the presence of fashion weeks, as such practices are already present through customer experiences in places such as Georgia and Russia. Additionally, the related creative practices involved in organising fashion week productions such as set design and construction, make-up and hair design, modelling and filming can also be encouraged in developing economies. Professional and academic subjects and careers are much more celebrated in comparison to creative practices. However, the presence of fashion qualifications in Africa is an area in need of development (Satiya, 2017; Gbadegeshin et al., 2021) together with the creative industries having a positive reputation within the emerging markets.

Partnerships and Sponsorships

Developing opportunities for partnerships and support can be seen as an outstanding prerequisite. GT Bank Fashion Weekend is a Lagos-based event sponsored by the financial organisation that works to highlight the presence of fashion in Nigeria. The event involves promoting local labels as well as providing a platform for guest designers and masterclasses. The focus is not predominantly directed towards generating sales and

financial incentives but rather to promote the work of local designers as well as the overall fashion industry in Nigeria.

National Design Councils and Organisations

Design councils can be established by collective of emerging markets to support the existence and awareness of fashion week events. Examples include the Rwanda Cultural Fashion Show and the Russian Fashion Council. Additionally, international councils such as the Commonwealth Fashion Council, a London-based organisation supporting a wide range of fashion organisations, is an establishment that has worked to support some of those presented in this chapter. Founded in 2011, the organisation focuses on promoting and developing the fashion industries present within the Commonwealth, including Nigeria, Mozambique, Sri Lanka, Fiji and Malaysia. Furthermore, in Egypt, there are plans to introduce an Egyptian Council for Design and Fashion (Nile FM, 2018).

Implementing Technologies and Stronger Digital Presence

Technology has many uses, some of which support the presence of fashion houses which choose to use it as a marketing tool. One issue found through researching and working to initiate contact with fashion weeks in emerging markets is that many of these events from a broad range of regions did not have dedicated websites that showcase their work or present their collections. This in turn has made it difficult for fashion brands to present themselves to wider audiences around the world, let alone be found in the first place. Although, in some cases, social media channels (predominantly Facebook and Instagram) have acted as quasi-websites or supportive digital platforms for fashion weeks and been used as a medium to present content for many of the fashion week events mentioned in this chapter.

The ongoing consequences of COVID-19—transferring customer interactions to online platforms—show the necessity of having online

presence not only as a platform for showcasing fashion weeks but also as a conduit through which buyers can become aware of brands and make informed choices before purchasing. Additionally, a broader range of potential customers from around the world can be made aware of designers and also be able to purchase items should they choose to.

In Russia, TikTok has been used as an international hybrid fashion project, where designers presented their new digital and real collections, demonstrated by both virtual and human models. In its totality, the show included fifty designers from twenty countries, eight virtual shows with thirty-eight collections, eight digital artists and six digital models who joined the Global Talents Digital—the off-season online project by the Russian Fashion Council, which was powered by Mercedes-Benz Fashion Week Russia (Mercedes-Benz Fashion Week Russia, 2020).

Augmented reality (AR) became a part of the live stream. Using smartphones, viewers are able to move fashion looks to private bedrooms, for example. A digital artistic team in collaboration with graphic designers has made some digital versions of participating designers' collections, which were also available in AR.

As described by Lange (2012), fashion labels are able to benefit by involving online-based platforms for presenting runway collections. Fashion labels are able to benefit from free distribution due to the moving image on the Internet and also lower production costs attributed with presenting filmed content online through social media channels such as Facebook, Instagram and YouTube.

Collaborative Events

The combination of creative practices has been both considered and exemplified by existing fashion week events. The Hub of Africa Addis Fashion week was initially set to showcase both music and fashion talent before focusing on the latter alone. The Sarajevo Fashion Film Festival celebrates the creativity of both respective practices within the country. Established in 2015, it set out to provide recognition and awards on an international scale for films, documentaries, adverts and even music videos that represent the fashion industry; the nominations and categories

include Best Film, Best Director, Best Cinematography and Best Creative Concept, all of which cater to fashion-related productions (Sarajevo Fashion Film Festival, 2020).

Cultural Events

Several economies in emerging nations commemorate cultural events, such as carnivals and annual celebrations that take place in South America and across the Caribbean islands in Central America, and the Holi Festival in Asia which can allow for cultural activities and also customer experiences to be incorporated into the Fashion Week shows. Similar to how some fashion week organisers have linked their fashion shows to create counterparts, linking the events to cultural occasions, such as the Sarajevo Film Festival (Sarajevo Fashion Film Festival, 2020), they can also support the presence and awareness of fashion weeks to a wider audience.

Consistency of Shows

Inconsistencies with some fashion week shows are evident, with some not being present since 2011 or 2014, such as Egypt Fashion Week, which presented its last show in 2015 (Cairo Fashion Week). Where possible, maintaining consistent fashion week shows can help create greater awareness and a productive representation. With the increasing usage of digital platforms as a means of presenting work, fashion week organisations can make use of these platforms to present their fashion weeks as listed in the early parts of the chapter.

Promoting Domestic Fashion

With the value of growth expected in respective fashion industries, there is no indication of whether this growth will stem from domestic designers or imported fashion brands from developed economies. Providing greater awareness of the fashion brands that exist within home nations can

support the growth and interest within both the home countries and external markets on an international scale. Platforms such as Style Base Africa present a range of fashion labels and fashion weeks that are based within the continent, from Accra Fashion Week through to Zimbabwe Fashion Week. Although some of the shows highlighted can date back to 2014, visual details, such as individual runway looks, are presented along with details of each fashion house (Style Base Africa, n.d.). Although Shanghai has a larger counterpart for presenting the work of domestic designers in Shanghai Fashion Week, there exists an organisation which completes complementary activities. Labelhood, founded in 2009, works to support grassroots designers in China and provides a platform for showcasing their collections (Lau, 2018; Business of Fashion, n.d.).

In summary, the details presented in this chapter show the existing presence and strengths, the potential for growth and the accessibility of fashion week organisations and organisers. The growth potential, much like the overall countries represented, demonstrates that where economic growth is larger, the opportunities for increases in fashion markets are also high (Brooksworth et al., 2022a, 2022b).

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4

Will I Follow My Ideal Self Everywhere? Exploring Consumers' Perceptions Towards Fast Fashion Influencers on Instagram

Tanyatip Kharuhayothin and Yupin Patarapongsant

Introduction

The fashion industry has accounted for a substantial part of the global economy, making it one of the most important sectors (McKinsey & Company, 2019). Thailand is one of the most promising emerging markets within Southeast Asia for the fashion industry. The market value of

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the fashion industry within the Asia Pacific was USD 665,485 million in 2019. In the same year, the market value for fashion in Thailand was THB 681,359 million, approximately USD 22,700 million (Euromonitor International, 2020). According to Euromonitor International (2020), the Thai fashion market remains highly fragmented. This is partly because of the abundant amount of unbranded clothes (i.e., street fashion) from China and overseas and the increase in many domestic clothing brands. However, global fast fashion players (such as H&M and Uniqlo, with Uniqlo earning the most vital fast fashion position in Thai's fashion market) still held double-digit value shares in 2019.

Although most sales come from store-based retailing, the influence of e-commerce remains strong in the Thai fashion market, with LINE, Facebook, and Instagram becoming the most crucial social commerce platforms in 2019 (Euromonitor International, 2020). With the fast-growing mobile technology equipped with high-technology cameras, social media has become the driving force for the Thai market ecosystem. In 2019, there were 47.5 million internet users in Thailand, where the e-payment value (i.e., transactions for products/services made online) accounted for THB 949,965.41 billion (Electronic Transactions Development Agency, 2019). Content on social media has become a source of inspiration for clothing fashion for consumers; such technology tremendously affects consumers' clothing shopping habits (Aragoncillo & Orús, 2018). In Thailand, social media plays a significant role in generating more interest in fashion among consumers. With the increasing use of celebrity influencers to promote fashion brands on social media platforms, its contribution to the rise of online shopping culture among Thai consumers is robust (Euromonitor International, 2020).

In Thailand, social media influencers (e.g., social media bloggers) have become a source of advice/information on which consumers have relied when it comes to making purchase decisions, especially for fashion (Casaló et al., 2020). Social media platforms allow users to interact

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through the combination of both peer and influencer content. Consumers exchange ideas on new trends and styles in fashion (i.e., the diffusion of fashion trends; Casaló et al., 2020). Given the rise in popularity of social media among Thai consumers, social media influencers, including traditional celebrities and digital celebrities (ordinary individuals who become famous through the stories they have posted on social media), have gained a significant number of followers. Thai followers regularly view the branded fashion clothing those celebrities promote on social media platforms, particularly Instagram, daily encouraging their followers to purchase similar items for themselves (Marroncelli & Braithwaite, 2020). Active users have increasingly adopted Instagram for fashion consumption, where fashion brands have gained more followers than any other type of brand (Socialbakers, 2016). The image-sharing focus on Instagram content has made Instagram a popular social media platform for the fashion industry, especially Thai consumers, showcasing clothing products to consumers in the most attractive ways. Moreover, Instagram appears to be the most used social media platform by influencers (Casaló et al., 2020).

Although previous studies have suggested that consumers' engagement tends to be higher on Instagram and they tend to purchase more often after viewing posts (Locowise, 2017), studies on fashion that look into this platform seem to be somewhat limited (Casaló et al., 2020). Moreover, studies that look into social media influencers from the followers' perspectives tend to be limited, posing a direction for further studies (Bhardwaj & Fairhurst, 2010; Ki et al., 2020). Therefore, this research project aims to bridge the gap in the existing literature by exploring the influences of social media influencers on social media platforms (i.e., Instagram) among Thai consumers in terms of fast fashion consumption. We conducted an exploratory study on Thai consumers' perspectives regarding quick fashion consumption by looking at how social media influencers on Instagram are perceived. Sixteen existential-phenomenological interviews were conducted with Thai fast fashion consumers. Three themes emerged from this study: fashion leadership and trends, self-concept and fit, and sponsorship effect.

Literature Review

The Growing Popularity of “Fast Fashion”

Gannaway (1999) noted that the growing popularity of fast fashion among UK consumers comes from the ability to shop for clothing at lower prices during their weekly grocery shopping. In the fast fashion industry, timing is the key. It is necessary to get the latest runway fashionable items available in the store in the shortest time. Cachon and Swinney (2011) characterised the fast fashion phenomenon as affordable fashion items based on quickly changing trends. It is necessary to have fashion items available on the retail floor with the shortest lead time from design to production possible. Zara is one of the leading fast fashion retailers (Bruce & Daly, 2006). Bhardwaj and Fairhurst (2010) defined fast fashion as low-cost clothing collections available in response to the latest fashion trends from fashion shows or runways (Barnes & Lea-Greenwood, 2006). Due to the low-priced and fast-changing merchandise within stores, consumers are encouraged to buy new fast fashion items every few weeks, creating a high consumption level (Cachon & Swinney, 2011). Fast fashion has moved away from suppliers’ “push” demand process to consumers’ “pull” demand process (Sull & Turconi, 2008).

Social media influencers play an essential role to persuade young consumers to shop for fast fashion items. The selected fast fashion items that young consumers have seen in celebrities’ daily lives, personal experience, and opinions on social media platforms (i.e., Instagram and TikTok) have significantly impacted their (the followers’) attitudes and buying choices. However, research on consumer aspects for fast fashion is limited (Bhardwaj & Fairhurst, 2010).

The Rise of Social Media Influencers

In the past, the interaction between celebrity endorsers and consumers would occur face-to-face at specific events organised by the endorsed brands, aiming to create brand awareness (Childers et al., 2019; Mogaji, 2021). However, social media has shifted the realm of endorsements and

influence. Social media allows consumers to network, connect, create relationships, share information, power, and influence (Solis, 2017). Social media tends to be a crucial source of information for consumers when making product decisions and an essential tool for marketers to build relationships with consumers (Pentina et al., 2018). Social media users tend to view social media influencers as experts in a particular domain of interest (e.g., fashion, photography, lifestyle, and travel; Tafesse & Wood, 2021). These social media influencers often create captivating stories surrounding such domains of interest through their daily posts (Ki et al., 2020). Social media influencers portray their powerful identity through combinations of photos, videos, and activities to narrate their stories on social media platforms (Childers et al., 2019). Such actions of social media influencers are believed to attract many followers and engage those followers on an ongoing basis (Ki et al., 2020). Thus, social media influencers tend to generate many followers who listen to the influencers' opinions through their posts. Although followers tend to neglect and avoid marketing advertising messages on social media platforms, they are highly responsive to social media influencers (Kim & Kim, 2020).

On the other hand, the followers are the ones who support and advocate for social media influencers, confirming and legitimising such influencers' status, as well as extending the reach of influencers' messages to prospective followers (Jin et al., 2019). Social media influencers are often early adopters of new products suitable to their lifestyle, gaining early insights and reviews or recommendations into how such products fit into their portrayed lifestyle, which gives them expert credibility in the eyes of their followers (Casaló et al., 2020). Kim and Kim (2020) explained that influencers "take advantage of their editorial content to justify their endorsement. Specifically, they can promote a commercial entity by providing a reasonable relation to their identity and making it a plausible extension of their pre-existing organic contents" (p. 2). Interestingly, compared to traditional celebrities, followers can more intensely identify with social media influencers (Jin et al., 2019). This is because social media influencers are more relatable to their followers (Tafesse & Wood, 2021). However, studies on how social media influencers successfully persuade their followers are somewhat limited (Kim & Kim, 2020).

Recent studies have shown that the presence of social media influencers (e.g., social media celebrity endorsement) increased social media popularity (Danniswara et al., 2017), followers' need for affiliation regarding self-identity and increased positive self-perception (Um & Kim, 2016), and followers' purchase intention (Laila & Sjabadhyni, 2017). Djafarova and Rushworth (2017) stated that studies regarding marketing influencers on social media are limited. Although the credibility of social media influencers (i.e., relevant knowledge, expertise, and consumption experience of the brand) could enhance the trustworthiness of the promoted clothing brand (Herjanto et al., 2020), there is a lack of research on the credibility of social media influencers (Marroncelli & Braithwaite, 2020).

Opinion Leaders

The concept of opinion leadership has been closely associated with the idea of influence (Flynn et al., 1996). Opinion leaders were initially defined as individuals who exert an unequal impact on others' decisions (Rogers & Cartano, 1962). Opinion leaders are also regarded as individuals with expertise and knowledge whom people consider asking for information or advice in a particular area (Bertrandias & Goldsmith, 2006). They tend to be viewed as having good taste in attitudes and purchasing decisions. They are regarded as models with persuasive information (Casaló et al., 2020). Thus, opinion leadership plays a crucial role in new product adoption (Chan & Misra, 1990).

Opinion leaders tend to be more prevalent through the proliferation of internet usage (Turcotte et al., 2015). Various studies have been undertaken to investigate the role of online opinion leaders—virtual communities (Li et al., 2013), blogs (Li & Du, 2011), and Twitter (Park & Kaye, 2017). Studies regarding opinion leadership on social media platforms such as Instagram are, however, limited, even though Instagram celebrities are thought to have a significant impact on followers' purchasing behaviour due to their higher perceived credibility than traditional celebrities (Casaló et al., 2020).

Fashion is a prime example to explain the phenomenon of opinion leadership. Fashion leaders (or influencers) have been recognised as those

able to persuade others (or followers) to wear new fashion trends due to others' perception of them as expert and reliable sources of information. These fashion leaders are essential to marketers because they could be the change agents leading consumers to adopt new fashion items (Goldsmith et al., 1993).

Social Influence Theory

Followers accept influencers according to the extent to which they believe the influencers are credible, relatable, and popular (Tafesse & Wood, 2021). Social influence theory seeks to understand the relationship between influencers and their followers (Sokolova & Kefi, 2020). Kelman (1961, 1974, 2006) outlined three social influence processes: compliance, identification, and internalisation. *Compliance* occurs when followers accept the power of influencers either to gain influencers' approval or to avoid disapproval. Such compliance would only be superficial. That is, such behaviour would occur in a public setting or in the presence of the influencers. *Identification* happens when followers want to maintain their self-defining relationship with influencers by imitating the influencers. Such a process is considered part of the followers' portrayed self-image. The influence of identification is believed to occur when followers feel they lack the attractive qualities that the influencers possess (e.g., popularity or desired roles), making an ongoing relationship with the influencers desirable. *Internalisation* occurs when followers feel that the influence corresponds with their value system, finding it rewarding to adopt the result because it could solve their problems or is amiable to their orientation. The credibility and expertise of the influencers are believed to be essential at this stage as they directly link to the influence itself. These three processes of social impact are widely used to explain the social media influence process (Kapitan & Silvera, 2016; Sokolova & Kefi, 2020).

Para-Social Relationships and Wishful Identification

Para-social relationships (Horton & Wohl, 1956) refer to audiences' emotional bonds with media personas. Such a relationship is not mutual but rather unidirectional. The concept of para-social connection is an appropriate theoretical lens for understanding the formation of the virtual social relationship between influencers and followers (Hu et al., 2020). The para-social relationship between social media influencers and followers has been found to enhance the influence of the influencers (Rasmussen, 2018). Previous studies suggested that the para-social relationship between social media influencers and followers affects followers' purchase intentions (Hwang & Zhang, 2018), luxury brand perceptions (Lee & Watkins, 2016), and self-brand connections (Escalas & Bettman, 2017).

Wishful identification is formed when individuals seek to conform to the perceived identity of others to reinforce and expand their own identities (Brown, 2015). It is the desire to be liked by or behave similarly to others (Shoenberger & Kim, 2017). Wishful identification plays a vital role in the modelling process. Individuals wish to identify themselves with the models that fit their perceptions of how they would like to see themselves (Bandura, 2001).

Self-Concept and Perceived Congruence

Congruence occurs when there is some similarity between two entities (Kim & Kim, 2020). The agreement is usually applied to assess the endorsed brand's and its celebrity endorser (Till & Busler, 2000). Congruent information is believed to assist people in creating a stronger association between two objects than it could with incongruent details. A high association level can be achieved through a celebrity endorser whose characteristics are highly coherent with the endorsed brand (Till & Busler, 2000). Hunt (1998) explained that the effectiveness of celebrity endorsement could be determined by congruence. Celebrity endorsers who are highly coherent with the endorsed brand enhance significant

product evaluation and positively affect consumers' attitudes (Fleck et al., 2012).

Self-concept represents the collection of values and attitudes, including thoughts and feelings, that people hold towards themselves (Phau & Lo, 2004). In other words, self-concept constitutes the perception of what one prefers to be. Consumers tend to select brands offering products that match their self-image or the image they would like to portray to others (Goldsmith et al., 1999). According to Malhotra (1988), self-concept or self-perception plays an essential role in motivating one's behaviour by controlling and directing the human performance. One learns about their self-concept through interactions with other people (i.e., external environment; Onkvisit & Shaw, 1987). Early studies defined self-concept in two ways: ideal self (i.e., how one would like to perceive themselves) and actual self (i.e., how one perceives themselves; Sirgy, 1982). However, other studies have proposed that the self can be represented in multiple dimensions (Blackwell et al., 2001), such as social self (Schiffman & Kanuk, 1997), possible selves (Markus & Nurius, 1986), and extended self (Belk, 1988).

Consumers often purchase clothing that represents their actual or ideal self-concepts (Malhotra, 1988; Onkvisit & Shaw, 1987). Self-concept and self-image have been suggested to play an essential role in fashion behaviour due to the nature of clothing in portraying oneself (Goldsmith et al., 1999). Consumers tend to behave by their self-concept to maintain their self-esteem. Thus, consumers would purchase clothing items that enhance, confirm, or extend their self-image to communicate to others about themselves (Phau & Lo, 2004).

To bridge the existing gap within the literature on the credibility of social media influencers (Marroncelli & Braithwaite, 2020) and consumer aspects of fast fashion consumption (Bhardwaj & Fairhurst, 2010; Ki et al., 2020), this study set out to explore the fast fashion consumption experiences of Thai consumers through social media influencers.

The Research Objective

Although the engagement and purchase frequency among consumers tend to be higher after they look at posts on Instagram (Locowise, 2017), studies investigating fashion on this platform seem to be somewhat limited (Casaló et al., 2020). Moreover, only a few studies have looked into social media influencers from consumers' perspectives (Bhardwaj & Fairhurst, 2010; Ki et al., 2020). Therefore, this research aimed to explore the fast fashion consumption experience through the influence of social media influencers on a visually appealing social media platform (i.e., Instagram) among Thai fast fashion consumers.

The results demonstrated consumers' insights on fast fashion consumption through social media influencers. The findings contribute to social influencers' strategies for fast fashion brands in emerging economies such as Thailand.

Research Methodology

To gain insights and a better understanding of Thai consumers' approach to fast fashion consumption through the influence of social media influencers, we conducted in-depth existential-phenomenological interviews (Thompson et al., 1990) in this study. We interviewed 16 male and female Thai fast fashion consumers aged 20–45 years about their experience shopping for fast fashion items through the influence of social media influencers on a visually appealing social media platform (i.e., Instagram). The participants currently reside in Bangkok, Thailand. To reach the consumers shopping for fast fashion items on social media platforms, participants were invited to participate in the study through personal contacts. Purposive sampling was employed to select the participants. The following are the criteria for choosing the participants.

- They had followed at least one social media influencer (i.e., most of them are micro-celebrities), viewed as an expert on any fast fashion item, in the previous 12 months.

- They had considered purchasing at least one fast fashion item in the previous 12 months through a visually appealing social media platform (i.e., Facebook, Instagram, or TikTok).

The inclusion criteria for choosing social media influencers are as follows.

- They can be either traditional celebrities or micro-celebrities (i.e., ordinary individuals who become famous through the stories or photos they have posted on social media) (Casaló et al., 2020).
- They can be Thai or international social media influencers.
- The participants have viewed them as the expert on choosing clothing styles.
- The participants have looked up to their accounts when it comes to finding ideas for dressing upon any occasion.

Pseudonyms are identified in English names alone from the point of transcription onwards. Table 4.1 provides the list of the participants by name (pseudonym), age, occupation, and the social media platform used when browsing for fast fashion items.

To ensure that participation was entirely voluntary, the contacted participants could choose whether to participate in the study. The participants were informed of the data collection process, the study's aim, and the measures taken to ensure anonymity to protect confidentiality before the interviews took place. They were informed that they could opt out of the study at any time if they wished to do so. The interview questions were formulated according to the participants' answers in a conversational interviewing style. We aimed to pose questions that generated dialogue that brought out the descriptive phenomenon as it was lived from the participants' point of view (Thompson et al., 1990; Farinloye et al., 2019). The main interview questions revolved around social media users regarding fast fashion consumption, criteria for selecting social media influencers to follow, and factors affecting consumers' decisions to purchase quick fashion items on social media platforms.

The existential-phenomenological interview records were transcribed verbatim. The transcripts were coded and contextualised using

Table 4.1 List of participants

No.	Name (pseudonym)	Age	Occupation	Social media platform used for fast fashion items
1	Sandy	28	Administration officer	Instagram, YouTube
2	Byron	25	Business owner/Credit analyst	Instagram, Facebook
3	Olivia	39	Administration officer	Facebook
4	Brooklyn	23	Business owner/ Marketing officer	Instagram
5	Nathan	43	Lecturer	Instagram
6	Priscilla	23	Graduate student	Instagram
7	John	23	Business owner/ Graduate student	Instagram
8	Miles	22	Graduate student	Instagram, Facebook
9	Megan	24	PR officer	Instagram, Facebook
10	Naomi	27	Financial officer	Instagram, Facebook
11	Taylor	35	Graduate student	Instagram
12	Grace	25	Marketing officer	Instagram
13	Gigi	33	Administration officer	Instagram
14	Philip	27	Creative director	Instagram
15	Beatrix	35	Business owner/ Graduate student	Instagram
16	Aiden	36	Senior marketing officer	Instagram

interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA). IPA allows researchers to interpret and understand the meaning of one's experience in a given phenomenon (i.e., fast fashion consumption context from consumers' perspectives; Palmer et al., 2010). Furthermore, IPA enables researchers to code from one's insights, offered from the interview transcripts, rather than predefined theories (Larkin et al., 2006). Two levels of IPA analysis were employed in this study: the idiographic (individual) level and across-cases (whole-group) level. The analysis was completed with each participant before moving on to the next participant. Such an approach to data analysis is similar to the stages employed by Fournier (1998) and Thompson et al. (1989, 1990).

The findings that emerged from this study are presented in the following section. The results enhance our understanding of the fast fashion consumption experience among Thai consumers, which helps to address the study's aim of exploring the influence of fast fashion social media influencers from consumers' perspectives.

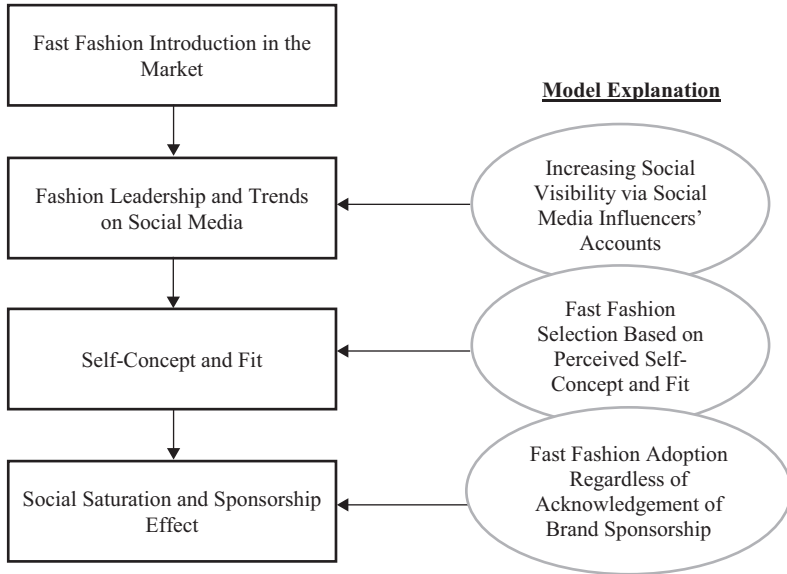


Fig. 4.1 Thai consumers' perspectives on the fast fashion consumption process via social media influencers

Findings

Our findings captured Thai consumers' insights on fast fashion consumption through the influence of social media influencers. Three emergent themes (fashion leadership and trends, self-concept and fit, and sponsorship effect) predominated our findings. The framework depicting the emergent themes is illustrated in Fig. 4.1.

The findings suggest that Thai consumers follow social media influencers to update fast fashion trends. They look up to them as experts in quick fashion. Most consumers would typically find and purchase what they had seen social media influencers wear on Instagram. However, the consumers would choose to follow the influencers' path in fashion only if they perceived that the influencers matched their ideal personality or lifestyle. Surprisingly, although the consumers were aware that fast fashion brands sponsored the fashion items those influencers wore, they would

purchase it or become interested in the fashion brand or object regardless of the sponsorship effect.

Fashion Leadership and Trends

Outfit Inspiration

Thai consumers reportedly picked fashion items after seeing influencers wear them on their Instagram accounts. Byron, for example, mentioned that he was mainly interested in the influencers as people—what he has seen them wear would come second, and he would be drawn to what those influencers were wearing afterwards. He looks up to them as inspiration for his outfit and clothing style.

BYRON: I would look upon their [influencers'] account whenever I want some *outfit inspiration*. If I see one person [the influencer] wearing this piece of cloth[ing] on his account, I would automatically see which technology these shoes are having or what kind of information regarding the new items I should know. I would absorb the data from those influencers.

Surprisingly, consumers would become very interested in the clothing brands or sponsored brands after learning about the brands from the influencers' Instagram accounts. Again, consider Byron's description of learning about the brands after he had seen influencers wear new fashion items.

BYRON: Let's say I [am] particularly interested in the football players, and we would discuss among our circle of friends which brands are sponsoring these football players. I would never really look at New Balance before. But after I followed those football players and their sponsored brand has changed from Nike to New Balance due to the new contract, I have started to look into New Balance's products. Once in a while, if I entered the shopping mall, I would go to the New Balance shop and check out things. All of these come from the influencers, I guess. In the past, Under Armour would not be in the same branding position as Nike and Adidas for basket-

ball shoes, but Stephen Curry did make this happen with his basketball performance and signing the contract with Under Armour. People would notice Under Armour more since then.

The above quote also reflects the thought of another participant, Philip, who went in for Under Armour fitness clothing after he saw a fitness trainer (i.e., the influencer) wear them. It is most likely that when consumers have seen fashion items on social media accounts, they will try to find the same things to wear. Beatrix, for example, reported that she ended up buying the same bag as an influencer she followed.

BEATRIX: I recently [bought] the same bag as Sukhwan [a Thai actress]. Yeah, I followed her. I think it's okay to buy this bag. I would like to support the brand too.

One cannot underestimate the power of social media influencers. Some fast fashion items have even sold out within a day after followers saw social media influencers wear them.

NATHAN: Once, the suit set from Zara was sold out in a day after Win [an influencer] wore [it] on a photo shooting set and posted [ed] on his Instagram on that very same day. Can you believe that?

Followers would try to get the fast fashion items influencers were wearing as soon as they saw them on their accounts. Nathan explained further that there was one time when he was browsing on Instagram out of boredom and saw an influencer wearing a plain T-shirt from Uniqlo. He went to get one of his own afterwards. Similarly, Aiden, Priscilla, and Philip described how they look at influencers' accounts for outfit references and where to find those fast fashion items.

PRISCILLA: I've followed many people. I would look at their accounts and see which brands they are wearing. If they tagged the brands, they are wearing too, that's great. How does this affects my perception? I followed them because I like how they wear their clothes in the first place. And I feel that it is interesting to see which brands they are wearing. It's captivating to browse their profiles sometimes.

- AIDEN: The persons I mainly follow would be the ones that endorse the brands I usually wear. I look at how they are wearing them and matching them. You can say I like their clothing style. For example, I could see this person matching H&M shoes with Uniqlo trousers. Then, I would think, ‘oh, this brand has this clothing style, and I can pair these with what I already have in my closet. I look for clothing idea[s].
- PHILIP: I follow this one cool guy, and he has an excellent clothing taste that I think it’s super lit. He has this sort of earth tone but dirty colour sort of clothing and wore them with his friends and posted them on his Instagram account. I would then think, ‘Wow, I might need to get this [clothing] shade soon’. What a fabulous idea! I think that colour would be in trend for this season.

Browsing for New Fashion Trends

People reportedly browsed influencers’ accounts to keep themselves updated on fashion trends. Most of the participants understand the nature of fast fashion—that fashion items would typically be updated quickly (i.e., some even mentioned every 2–6 weeks). Thus, they need to use the social media platform, especially influencers’ accounts, to keep themselves informed on the new trends.

- BROOKLYN: I usually use Instagram to update on the clothing style that I like. It’s kind of like Pinterest. So, the feed on Instagram will give you things depending on what you have been searching for and what you’ve been engaging with. Since I have a lot of fashion stuff, it will have the day’s outfit that suits my interest. You know all those influencers I’m following. Like this [scrolling on her smartphone]; I like a lot of like workout post[s], so stuff relating to workout outfit[s] will come up.

- NATHAN: I feel like sometimes it is necessary to have these influencers update us on new fashion stuff. I know they are selling things. But it keeps me informed, I guess. Because some items will be sold out pretty fast, and I won't be able to find them afterwards. It's a matter of timing. You need to rely on these influencers to get updated.
- TAYLOR: I want to know 'what's new?' 'What's in for this season?' Honestly, influencers to me are like persons who create awareness for new fast fashion brands and new items for the season.
- BEATRIX: I have followed quite a few people until I notice that this is trendy for the season. When we follow them, we automatically opt in to follow the trends. Everybody [influencers] will start wearing similar things. Then, I know which fast fashion brand to choose depending on quality and price and so on. I'm having fun. It's quite addictive. I feel that [a] fast fashion brand like Zara is reachable—not that expensive to buy.

Nathan added that players in the fast fashion industry are forced to use influence due to the fierce market competition.

- NATHAN: It's essential to have these influencers wearing the new items. There are a lot of market players out there, especially in the Thai market. I don't even know that some things do exist. It's not a 'wow' item; you know what I mean. But it looks good on the influencers. I was like fine ... this looks interesting. I will have one too.

Interestingly, participants compared Instagram to a catalogue in a fashion magazine. Thus, the participants feel they can browse and choose whatever items they want to have in their wardrobe.

- TAYLOR: Instagram is like [a] 'fashion catalogue' to me. Browsing on Instagram is like flipping [through a] fashion magazine. Once we have chosen the influencers to follow, new influencers with similar clothing style will come up on my feed. Then, I can choose which catalogue [i.e., influencer] to track and update with fashion trends.

PHILIP: Just to follow the trend, I think. Fashion gets updated very quick anyway. I believe this is the cult for updating on fashion—to get on Instagram. It’s a new way to keep browsing on fashion that we are interested in.

When comparing which social media platforms are best for looking for clothing items, most of the participants stated that Instagram is the best platform to browse for fashion.

AIDEN: The purpose of influencers to me is to update on the trends. The operation of Instagram allows us to do so with the news feed.

SANDY: I prefer Instagram because it’s quick. I don’t have the patience to read the text or see the video for longer than 15 seconds anyway. I like pictures on fashion—more comfortable to sink in and digest.

The first theme suggests that people choose to follow influencers to find outfit inspiration, as well as to keep themselves updated on trends. The findings show that influencers could create awareness for brand or fashion items with their followers. It is most likely that followers would try to get the fashion items that they see the influencers wear on social media. Such a phenomenon, thus, suits the purpose of influencers in fashion marketing, which is to create social visibility for fast fashion items.

Self-Concept and Fit

Ideal Personality and Lifestyle

The idea of following influencers who match the ideal self is predominant in our findings. The similarity between influencers’ personality or lifestyle and followers’ ideal personality or lifestyle is the prominent reason people choose to follow influencers.

- SANDY: What [an] influencer wear[s] will pop up on my feed, and I will go, ‘oh this is cute,’ ‘it looks nice’. I was then [thinking] it should look good on me. I really like this one guy I’m following. His clothing style matches my taste. He started as a fashion YouTuber—giving the audiences tips on how to dress. Then, Uniqlo would send him stuff. I found him on Instagram and [have been] following him since. I even installed TikTok just to see his profile on TikTok.
- GRACE: It mostly depends on personality. If they post entertaining IG story and the post[s] on their profiles are artistically creative, I will engage with them. There are a lot of gorgeous influencers out there. But I’m not interested unless they have an exciting lifestyle. If their lifestyle and clothing style is similar to mine, I will go for them.
- PHILIP: His fashion gives me a checkmark. I like his fashion sense. I’ve followed different influencers for wearing clothing in other occasions, like I would follow this guy [scrolling on smartphone] for street fashion and this fitness trainer [scrolling on smartphone] for sports fashion. Do you get what I mean?

What Philip illustrated is similar to Taylor’s report that she would generally know which influencers to look at when browsing for clothing on different occasions. She mentioned that she would have her own ‘favourite list’ of influencers and would go to their profiles whenever she needed inspiration.

- TAYLOR: If I want to shop for relaxing, chill out clothing kind of style, I will go to this influencer’s profile. Or, if I want something new, like for working outfit or fashionable stuff, I would go to other influencers. Say if I wanted to go to the beach, and I checked out this influencer’s profile for the outfit, and there’s no update, I will go to her old posts or IG story.

People reportedly focus on the influencers’ fashion style rather than on their faces. Some participants even mentioned that the influencers’ strong personality and attitudes are what make them choose to follow them.

BROOKLYN: I follow the person with a strong sense of fashion style. My style matches with Revolve. So, I'm following this person who is the ambassador of Revolve. She would tag Revolve on her posts—whatever she's wearing. I would instead follow Western influencers who are entitled to what they believe is the right things to do—like a robust feminist movement—than Thai influencers who often go to coffee shops and take photos to post on the Instagram accounts.

BEATRIX: I'm not following influencers [for their] faces. I would typically follow people with [a] great thinking process—like this woman has a good heart and [is] smart. These things show what they're posting as well. Once I start following them, I become easily convinced and buy things they are wearing.

People reportedly choose to follow influencers who have a similar lifestyle and personality to that of their ideal self. If the participants perceive that these influencers have a dull lifestyle or a lifestyle that does not fit with their own or ideal lifestyle, they will not follow them in the first place. Such a perception of matching lifestyle and personality comes before fashion items.

Relatable Influencers

Relatability is another factor participants said that they look for when they follow influencers. Some participants even indicated that they find influencers who relate to themselves rather than their close friends.

BEATRIX: I really like one mother influencer. I feel that I can identify with her thinking process and attitudes. She [would] become my best friend if we [knew] each other. I feel connected to her more than I did with some of my best friends.

Beatrix explained further that she would choose to follow influencers of a similar age and who have a similar fashion sense to her generation.

BEATRIX: I'm not a girl in [her] 20s anymore. My fashion sense and items to buy have changed. I would instead follow [a] person [in] the same life stage and buy whatever according to them. I do feel [a] connection between me and these influencers. They are more relatable to me.

Relatability also applies to the sizing for fashion items. Olivia, for example, reportedly looks at influencers who have a similar figure (height and shape) to her when it comes to buying clothing items.

OLIVIA: I would imagine myself [in] that dress. How [would] I look like [in] the dress that she has on? So, I would choose the influencers with a similar figure to mine in the first place for fashion purposes.

Regarding the high perceived relatability, people are likely to shop the same brand as influencers who are highly relatable to them. Take the following examples of Brooklyn, Nathan, and Philip below.

BROOKLYN: Because we [the influencer and her] dress similarly, she also shops the same brand [as] me. When she tagged something, I will be like, oh okay cute I will buy those too.

NATHAN: My friend told me to follow this guy because he has a similar style to me. Once I started following him, I began to buy the same things he has on his profiles.

PHILIP: I follow this one guy—he is LesMills presenter—Dan. Whatever he wears, I will follow him. I try to get the same tank and shorts or shoes that he has on. I'm exercising almost every day, especially with LesMills workout programs, and I want to be like him. I could relate to him.

Relatability was found to be the factor that affects which influencers people choose to follow and their selection of fashion items.

Perceived Unrelatability

Interestingly, participants reportedly unfollow influencers once they find them unrelated to themselves. Brooklyn, for example, mentioned that she started to unfollow people once she noticed them change their clothing style.

BROOKLYN: If I find someone [i.e., influencer] started to change their clothing style, I will unfollow. I feel that this is the downfall of us following the influencers. Sometimes it's not their style anymore. It's just they will wear these items because they get them for free. I don't believe them anymore. Don't get me wrong, I mean, I think using influencer[s] does work, but I think you just need to be quite selective—with the person who has a strong personality.

Brooklyn further gave us an example of a Thai celebrity, Nitta, who she used to follow but unfollowed because she does not have her style anymore.

BROOKLYN: Nitta used to have like a pleasant personality. She used to be known for her personality and her smile and like cute pretty. And there was a time when everyone wanted to use her as influencer or ambassador. So, I was like, who are you? I don't know you anymore. So, nobody believes her.

Brooklyn's example is similar to those of Priscilla, Taylor, and Grace below. They tend to unfollow influencers when they perceive that these influencers do not have a believable personality anymore.

PRISCILLA: I feel that it's fake. I think it's too much. You are not your natural self anymore. I tend to follow people who look natural in their way—not like wearing brand names from head to toe.

TAYLOR: I followed them because I want to learn about new brands and new trends. But when they get endorsed with different brands, their styles are not my style anymore, like these items are too exposed for me. So, I unfollow them.

GRACE: I used to follow this celebrity—Maprang. At first, I found her cute and she [had a] nice clothing style. But [as] the time passes, I feel that she is annoying. I don't like the stuff she posts. They are fake. There's nothing to follow anymore. I don't find them attractive—just nice photo[s] only. So, I don't want to follow her anymore. Her life is not interesting to me. Social media [is supposed] to entertain us. When I find the content not entertaining, I take it out.

Perceived unrelatability is considered a critical factor that makes participants unfollow influencers.

Sponsorship Effect

No Effect

Although most participants are aware that the influencers are sponsored by fast fashion brands, they still follow them and want to purchase the items that the influencers wear. The following example shows that the acknowledgement of brand sponsorship does not affect followers.

BYRON: I don't particularly follow the brands. I follow the influencers. And once I [have] started to follow the influencers, I will absorb what they are wearing. I don't mind this. On the other [hand], what they wear will attract me more. I become interested in the brands that influencers are wearing more. For instance, I've never really had an eye on New Balance. I mean comparing to Adidas, but once the influencers are wearing them, it gets my attention.

BROOKLYN: I mean, a lot of time the influencers will contact the shops and ask for freebies, like, 'Hi my name is x. This is the number of my followers'. And these fast fashion brands tend to focus on being seen. Therefore, they are likely to give away these items for the influencers to endorse for free. If they suit their [i.e., influencers'] style, I'm okay with that.

TAYLOR: I don't care if they get them [clothing items] for free. If they look good on them [influencers], they are good.

Some participants even mentioned that they like how the influencers tag the brands sponsoring them. Take Nathan and Priscilla's examples below.

NATHAN: I even like how these influencers tagged their sponsored brands because I don't have to find out which brand he is wearing. It's more convenient for me to follow. I know they are selling stuff, but it gets me informed. And if they are my style, I don't mind that.

PRISCILLA: I know they have been paid. I don't care as long as it's not a clear product shot like in [an] advertisement. I even like how they shoot the photo with the items more. I get the sense of the product with their style—my style. If they keep it minimal, I'm okay with them.

Perceived Loss of Sense of Style

Although people said they are fine with the influencers being sponsored by fast fashion brands, they tend to unfollow them if they push too hard to sell the fashion items. As discussed earlier in terms of unrelatability, when the participants perceive those influencers have lost their sense of style and push hard to sell the items they are endorsing, people started to unfollow or ignore them. Nathan, for example, gets annoyed with influencers who are selling everything from head to toe and selling too much. He thinks they are losing their sense of style and becoming a “salesman”.

NATHAN: I know they are selling stuff. But if the influencers are selling stuff all the time, it's getting boring. I'm browsing on Instagram for entertainment, not for seeing you selling things to me. I don't want to see [a] salesman on my feed. I'm buying what I want on my own. You don't have to tell me what to buy. If I like what you are wearing, I will get [it] myself—no direct sale, please.

This is true with the examples of Priscilla, Taylor, and Grace regarding unrelatability. They will unfollow influencers if they feel that they are selling too much (e.g., a product shot in Priscilla's case and too many sponsorships in Brooklyn's story) and losing their sense of style.

Conclusion and Implications

Instagram has become a popular social media platform among Thai social media influencers and followers for fashion due to its image-sharing focus. Thus, Instagram appears to be the leading social media platform to showcase clothing products in the most attractive ways to consumers. Although previous studies have examined the role of social media influencers and how they attract followers, what followers desire to see from social media influencers has not been studied thoroughly in marketing (Ki et al., 2020). This research contributes to our understanding of the influence of fast fashion social media influencers from consumers' perspectives.

First, little research has been done on fast fashion consumption from consumers' perspectives (Bhardwaj & Fairhurst, 2010; Kaur et al., 2022). This study offers a detailed description of how consumers engage with the social media influencers from their perspectives—how consumers view influencers as trendsetters and look at their posts to find outfit inspiration and new fashion trends. The findings showed that consumers tend to accept messages regarding the latest fashion trends more from social media influencers than the advertising messages alone. Such results align with a recent study indicating that the presence of social media influencers has encouraged a higher engagement rate than advertising messages on social media platforms (Kim & Kim, 2020). The study showed that social media influencers could generate a considerable volume of followers, as well as reach prospective followers who listen to their opinions, as suggested in previous studies (Jin et al., 2019; Ki et al., 2020). Furthermore, this study provided insights into how consumers browse on Instagram for fast fashion items. Consumers use social media influencers' profiles as a fashion catalogue. Consumers view social media influencers as early fast fashion adopters who show them how new fashion items suit

the revealed lifestyle, which can give them recommendations on how such things would fit into consumers' lifestyles (Nguyen & Mogaji, 2022).

Second, the study showed that consumers follow social media influencers they perceive to reflect their ideal selves. The findings indicated that fast fashion buying is highly concerned with how buyers (i.e., followers) see themselves or would like to project themselves to others. Interestingly, the findings confirm that social media influencers are highly relatable to their followers, as suggested in recent studies (Tafesse & Wood, 2021; Gökerik et al., 2018). Due to social media influencers' high relatability and fitness with the ideal self, the findings offer insight into how they successfully persuade their followers to buy fashion items, which is lacking in the literature (Kim & Kim, 2020). Moreover, the study illustrated that those social media influencers increased the need for consumers' affiliation regarding self-identity, extending to positive feelings about themselves. Additionally, firms need to find social media influencers who are genuinely and authentically passionate about fashion. The findings indicated that participants could tell if social media influencers have lost their sense of style due to sponsorship and unfollow them (Brooksworth et al., 2022a, 2022b).

Third, interestingly, the findings provide insight into how brands could enhance consumers' attitudes towards them through social media influencers. Although consumers realise that fast fashion brands sponsor social media influencers, they still opt in for fashion items they have seen on social media influencers' accounts. Moreover, some participants (e.g., Byron and Philip) have even become interested in or noticed brands more after seeing them on social media influencers' accounts.

Finally, this research is limited by the cultural factor, which might play an essential role in consumer behaviour in terms of fast fashion consumption via social media platforms, especially in emerging markets (Brooksworth et al., 2022a, 2022b). Thus, future research focusing on the cultural context of fast fashion consumption would be beneficial and contribute to the existing literature on social media and fast fashion studies.

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5

Emerging Economies in Fashion Global Value Chains: Brand Positioning and Managerial Implications

Nguyen Phong Nguyen and Emmanuel Mogaji

Introduction

Fashion has often been considered from the perspective of the large global retailers based in either the European Union (EU) or the United States (US). Producing apparel and importing apparel is very concentrated in companies within a few countries (Fernandez-Stark et al., 2011). These are countries and their brands often responsible for dictating trends in

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the industry, and for the design, developing and marketing (Nayak et al., 2019). The European Union (EU28) was the leading importer of textiles worldwide, with textile imports valuing approximately US \$67 billion in 2019. This was followed by the United States importing textiles worth US \$31 billion (Statista, 2020). Regarding international textile trade, exporting to the EU and the US, China is considered a key player. It was the leading supplier of clothing imported to the European Union (EU28), with imports valued at almost double of the second-placed Bangladesh (Statista, 2020).

Despite these concentrations of production and importation in selected countries, there are growing trends in the industry from many emerging economies (Nayak et al., 2019). In addition, the changing consumer behaviour (Varshneya et al., 2017; Nash, 2019) and recently the impact of the global pandemic on how we shop and buy fashion (McMaster et al., 2020; Zhao & Kim, 2021) have shaped the international manufacturing service as many of the developing countries around the world are seeing an increase in their share of the fashion industry (Guercini & Runfola, 2019). These developing countries are often in South America, Asia and Africa (Sharma et al., 2020), presenting a global shift in the fashion economy (Fernandez-Stark et al., 2011). According to the McKinsey Global Fashion Index, there is anticipated growth in fashion demands from Latin America, the Middle East and Africa due to the rapidly expanding middle classes (McKinsey, 2020).

Looking at the fashion global value chain (GVC), there is not much vertical integration in the overall industry; most of the production process is outsourced to large factories in the developing countries in Asia, which are China, the South-East Asia Region Benchmark (SEAB) countries including Vietnam, Indonesia and Cambodia and the South Asia Region (SAR) (Fernandez-Stark et al., 2011). Beyond production, there leaves a gap in the market for independent fashion brands in the emerging countries that can take responsibilities for the design, production and marketing of their brands, albeit on a small scale, not competing with global fashion brands (Zarantonello et al., 2020).

These prospects for independent fashion brands in emerging countries have necessitated developing effective marketing strategies to present the

brands to the local markets in their countries and possibly to global audiences (Jain et al., 2021). This study thus aims to fill this gap in knowledge and business practice. Specifically, this study aims, firstly, to theoretically examine fashion marketing in emerging economies, recognising the inherent challenges with these economies and how it can influence fashion marketing, and, secondly, to offer recommendations for independent fashion brands, marketing practitioners and agencies working on fashion brands in emerging economies. The study also provides theoretical contributions relevant for academic researchers, scholars and students. In addition, there are pertinent managerial implications for business owners, fashion tech developers and policymakers.

A subsequent section of this paper presents fashion in emerging economies. The following section expands on the emerging economies in the fashion global value chain, highlighting the position of emerging economies as predominant producers of apparels. Two different strands that have emerged from the market were presented in this section. This is followed by a recommendation section, highlighting five recommendations relevant for fashion business owners in emerging countries. The last section offers a conclusion that includes the theoretical, managerial implications and future research agenda.

Fashion in Emerging Economies

What defines an emerging economy? These can be considered as countries and regions with their inherent challenges. Some may refer to these countries as developing countries or as countries in the Global South (Sharma et al., 2021). These are often considered not developed enough, with economic struggles and insufficient infrastructures to meet the basic needs of its citizens. Using income classifications to group countries, the World Bank defines developing countries as those associated with low- and middle-threshold levels of gross national income (GNI) per capita (World Bank, 2021). However, the IMF classifies 37 countries as advanced economies against the remaining countries globally, categorised as emerging or developing economies (IMF, 2021). Statistically organised data support this classification.

Nevertheless, the United Nations (UN) has no formal definition for developing countries, but it still characterises 159 countries as “developing”. These countries are categorised based on GNI, human capital and economic positioning (Sharma et al., 2020). Furthermore, according to the Economic Analysis and Policy Division (EAPD) of the United Nations (2020), the world is divided into three categories: developed economies, economies in transition and developing economies (UN, 2018). In all these classifications, developing countries are being measured on their economic capabilities, development prospects and social integration Mogaji et al., (2022).

Developing nations still face a dilemma about their production infrastructure, consumer consumption and international trades (Yang et al., 2017; Nayak et al., 2019). These have a considerable impact on fashion marketing. The cost of labour is significantly cheap. Factories can employ many people to make the apparels, but access to materials can be costly, especially when it has to be imported (Frick et al., 2019; Fernandez-Stark et al., 2011). Economic troubles, bad policy and government negligence have severely stifled the textile industry in many emerging economies (Chugunov & Markuts, 2019; Kaur et al., 2022). Salau (2018) noted reducing the number of textile factories in Nigeria from 125 in the early 1990s to fewer than 40 in 2010. This limited access to locally made materials poses additional challenges for fashion designers who may need to source their materials overseas. These additional costs on raw materials impact the cost of production and the cost of selling the finished material (Todeschini et al., 2017; Fernandez-Stark et al., 2011).

In addition, there are concerns about the buying power of customers within these emerging economies (Cavusgil et al., 2019). Often food is considered the basis of all basic needs, and buying fashion may be regarded as a luxury in some cases (Ortega & Tschirley, 2017). It is not surprising to see there is an increasing market for second-hand imported clothes for those who cannot afford new fashion. Salau (2018) reported on how the second-hand market sector in Nigeria has expanded over the last couple of decades to cities across the country, and the market is growing by a burgeoning target market dominated by low-income earners and part of the shrinking middle class that can no longer afford brand new clothing.

In all that may appear doom, a growing number of upper-class and more affluent customers are attracted and willing to buy luxury goods (Young, 2017). Karla Martinez of Vogue Mexico and Latin America was quoted to have said, “I think historically [Latin America] has been overlooked and slightly underestimated [by the international fashion industry]. The top consumers in this region might be a small percentage compared to a region like Asia, but they're spending a lot of money on fashion and accessories” (Young, 2017). Gibreel et al. (2018) also found that social enterprise proliferates and evolves across many emerging economies. This underlying economic activity increases the prospects of fashion business in this part of the world where there is a boost in disposable income and people are more willing to spend on fashion.

The fashion talents in these parts of the world are also being recognised and are making considerable progress on the world scene. ConnectAmericas (2021) noted that a new generation of designers has begun showering its creations on the most demanding runways of the United States and Europe. African designers—Kenneth Ize from Nigeria and Thebe Magugu from South Africa—made the final round of the 2019 LVMH Competition (Oguzie, 2019). Fashion shows in the Latin American region have been growing and improving their offering, and they are viewed by thousands of people and make the headlines of the most relevant fashion publications such as *Vogue*, *In Style* and *Elle* (Young, 2017). Bii and Rosales (2020) noted that more brands from emerging economies expand beyond the South of the American continent to the United States and Europe. They cited the Colombian company Studio F and Cueros Vélez commencing their expansion outside of Latin America to Spain. Fashion brands in emerging economies are beginning to break away from local brands' stereotype and make the business effort to expand.

Emerging Economies in Fashion Global Value Chain

To better contextualise the essence of this chapter, it is essential to understand the place of developing countries in the fashion GVC; this understanding will better position business owners' expectations and what they

can afford to take. Fernandez-Stark et al. (2011) identified six distinct value-adding activities in fashion: (1) research and new product development (R&D), (2) design, (3) production, (4) logistics (purchasing and distribution), (5) marketing and branding and (6) services. However, within these value-adding activities in fashion, production is often reserved for the developing countries. As illustrated in Fig. 5.1, the Smile Curve of high-value activities in GVCs (Gereffi & Fernandez-Stark, 2016) highlighted how fashion designers from developing countries are seldom involved in the R&D and the design of apparel; these roles are for fashion designers in the developed countries that have the resources to invest in research and design apparels that will be manufactured in the developing countries. The developing countries are only expected to provide the factory for producing the apparels that will be exported. In addition, the apparels manufactured in the developing countries are exported for post-sales, retail and marketing in the developed countries (Shen & Mikschovsky, 2019), leaving behind customers in many of the developing countries not being able to afford the apparels they have helped produced (Kuma et al., 2020).

In addition, the manufacturing segment of the apparel industry is very concentrated with some companies in some countries, making it very difficult for new businesses to penetrate (Fernandez-Stark et al., 2011).

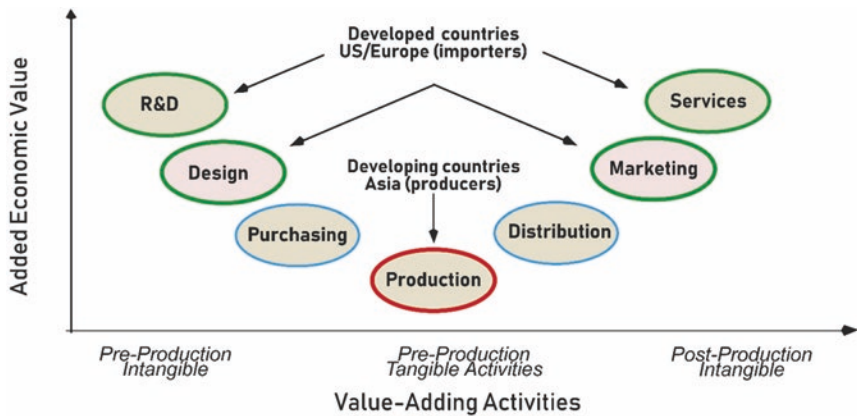


Fig. 5.1 Smile curve of high-value activities in global value chains. (Adapted from Gereffi and Fernandez-Stark (2016))

The apparel manufacturers are mainly concentrated in three central regions: (1) China, Asia (2) the South-East Asia Region Benchmark Countries (SEAB) and (3) the South Asia Region (SAR). The SEAB region includes Vietnam, Indonesia and Cambodia, whereas the SAR region includes Bangladesh, India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. These regions can be considered developing countries providing cheap labour for the industry (Alamgir & Banerjee, 2019). Although the biggest apparel importers are concentrated in the United States and Europe (Fernandez-Stark et al., 2011), they have significantly established retail chains that generate demand that cannot be met domestically in a cost-competitive manner due to higher wages. As illustrated in Fig. 5.2, with both importers and producers, this gap exists for many developing countries in South America and Africa. As a result, they are not benefitting much from the GVC.

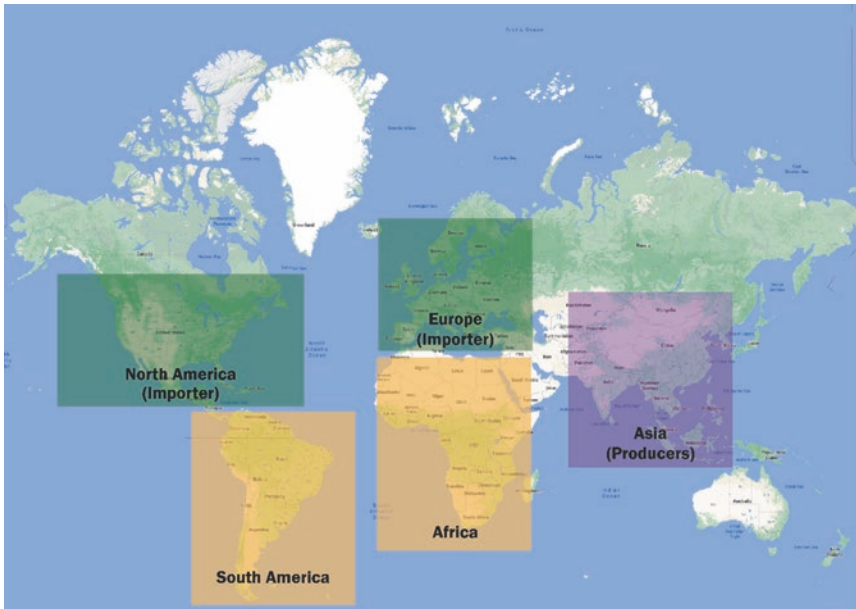


Fig. 5.2 Graphical illustrations of the importers and producers with gaps in South America and Africa. (Source: Author)

This lack of coverage in South America and Africa has presented an opportunity for small-scale fashion designers and creative individuals to explore different fashion business lines within the fashion GVC. Drawing on a multi-sited study of Ghanaian, Ugandan and Zambian female designers, Langevang (2017) found that a vibrant fashion scene is emerging in Africa, spearheaded by a new generation of young fashion entrepreneurs. These individual designers are often involved in design, production and marketing, with little involvement in retail services because of their small scale (Muhwati & Salisbury, 2017). As a result, they have carved a niche for themselves by showcasing their unique design, albeit on a small scale. Often, they do not need a tech pack to give to any factory or manufacturer. Instead, these individuals design the apparel, source the material, make the dress (or work with a dressmakers/tailor to make it) often in limited small scales and sell it to individuals, usually online (Gazzola et al., 2020).

Two growing trends have been observed within these unexplored development countries and emerging economies region. First, the ready-to-wear apparels, while not being produced at the large scale within the three central regions for apparel manufacturing, are not considered fast fashion and are not made through offshore manufacturing where labour is the cheapest; fashion designers in many of these emerging economies are making cloths for many customers, albeit in small scales but available in different sizes (Morsiani, 2020). These ready-to-wear outfits are urban and contemporary dresses for daily use. Although they are usually made with local materials from these countries, they are often designed within the bounds of standardised sizing (Fischer, 2017). They are designed to be functional pieces that fit into one of the many events around the cities (Ugwuede, 2020). In some cases, the designs are showcased at fashion shows and available on designers' websites to be ordered.

Second is the couture dresses made to measure for a single customer, often made upon order. Though they might not have been approved by *Chambre Syndicale de la Haute Couture*, getting the designate haute couture by the French Law, they share similar characteristics regarding the uniqueness of style and size. Designers make these apparels for special occasions like weddings or birthday parties (Aziz et al., 2019). Although they are often not available on the website to be ordered, the designer

Table 5.1 Features and differences between the ready-to-wear and couture dresses

Features	Ready-to-wear	Couture dresses
Design	Entry-level design for independent fashion brand owner. Often design is not complicated or intricate. A team can easily make it following a template or tech pack. Creative fashion designer may not necessarily be involved in subsequent production.	Share similar characteristics regarding the uniqueness of style and size but cannot be categorically classified as haute couture. Design can be detailed and intricate. Requires the involvement of the creative fashion designer and may be involved in making the apparel.
Uniqueness	Not unique, considerably mass-produced, though not like fast fashion.	It can be unique. The designer can amend an initial design (picked from the catalogue) to make a different design.
Measurement	Standardised measurement but available in different sizes.	Made to measure and fit one single customer.
Order	Easily ordered online on e-commerce marketplace like Jumia in Africa or designers' website.	They are not ordered online. Customer to contact the designer and get measured.
Frequency	Daily occasion, urban and contemporary dresses, often worn to work and less formal occasions.	Usually made for the glamour—awards and red carpets, wedding party and other high-profile social events.
Cost	Considerably cheap and affordable to the middle class.	Considering these are not worn often, they have an intricate design, require the creative fashion designer and are substantially more expensive.

makes the piece to measure for a single client, even though they may have picked the design from a catalogue. Designers who produce these couture dresses can also create a ready-to-wear line. Table 5.1 presents key features and differences between the ready-to-wear and couture dresses.

Subsequently, in this chapter, marketing fashion in emerging economies will be considered in these two strands and the emerging economies where they operate. At the same time, we have many established brands

like *Tiffany Amber*, a Nigerian fashion brand founded in 1998 by Creative Director Folake Folarin-Coker; *Deola Sagoe*, another leading specialist fashion company in Africa; *Atto Tetteh*, a menswear brand founded in October 2014 and based in Accra, Ghana; *Hazza*, a unisex brand and independently owned design house led by Hassan Alfaziz Idriss based in Ghana; and *Tongoro*, a Dakar-based ready-to-wear fashion brand created by Sarah Diouf in 2016. In addition, there are many other small- and medium-scale independent fashion brands that need to integrate their marketing and have a deeper engagement with their customers.

As illustrated earlier, we identified the unique characteristics of developing countries with regards to its labour force, insufficient infrastructure, economic policies and designers taking pride in their material, telling cultural stories and ownership about where they are making the apparels (Alamgir & Banerjee, 2019; Frick et al., 2019; Kuma et al., 2020), the subsequent section presents strategic marketing direction and managerial recommendations relevant to fashion business owners in emerging economies.

Recommendations for Fashion Marketing in Emerging Economies

Marketing is essential for these fashion brands in emerging economies to remain commercially viable (Jain & Mishra, 2020). Ihtiyar et al. (2019) noted that marketing strategies should be strengthened, requiring alteration in the existing business atmosphere in emerging economies, suggesting a need to understand the market and its unique features better. These recommendations are presented as part of a tool kit to assist business owners in positioning their brand. These business owners are considered small and medium fashion enterprise owners—creative fashion designers responsible for ready-to-wear and couture dresses (Aziz et al., 2019). In addition, these recommendations will be relevant for marketing practitioners and agencies working for fashion brands.

Positioning the Brand

Fashion business owners need to understand and establish the proper positioning for the brand (Mogaji, 2021). With different business ventures within the fashion supply chain, individual business owners need to know and present where they stand. This positioning involves recognising the niche to be covered: be it ready-to-wear or couture, be it for children, men or unisex (Jelinek, 2018). Creating this identity will allow other strategies to be synchronised and adequately integrated. Having the correct brand identity is also essential. Would you want to use your name (like *Deola Sagoe*) or use a different brand identity (like *Tiffany Amber* from Folake Folarin-Coker)? How about your mission and vision? Social media, websites and other digital communications strategies cannot be ignored at this stage, and they are essential in positioning the brand effectively through content creation strategies (Martín-Consuegra et al., 2018).

Brand owners should reflect on what they need to do differently to appeal to their customers (Mogaji, 2021). Could it be the choice of material, finishing touches or style? *Lola Faturoti Loves*, a Nigerian brand, used denim and adorned it with bright colours and designs. Tongoro, the Senegalese brand, takes pride in being a “Made in Africa” brand, designing and producing the apparels in Dakar, Senegal; Hazza, the Ghanaian unisex independent brand, is inspired by its founder’s heritage and consistently tries to portray African culture. Fashion owners need to consider the differentiating factors and what sets them apart from global and local brands (Lourenção & Giraldi, 2017).

Indeed, brands in emerging countries are not exempted from ethical fashion production and sustainability (Nayak et al., 2019); as part of the brand positioning, brands should declare their stance on ethical production and sustainability (Mogaji, 2021). Is it something they present as a brand, or do you not make a fuss about it (Jung et al., 2020)? Bandyopadhyay and Ray (2020) suggested brands should find a balance between ethics and aesthetics. Ethics and sustainability are questions that the business owners should answer to position their brand. This stage can be deemed as the role of the business owner, to document and present these positioning strategies to the team and other stakeholders they may

want to work with, setting some ground rule for the business (Arrigo, 2020). For a bigger company, there is always room for rebranding and repositioning the brand; it all takes conscious effort to identify a stance and consistently work towards it (Mogaji, 2021).

Communicating the Brand

Customers, suppliers and even competitors must be made aware of the brand positioning (Bandyopadhyay & Ray, 2020). This moves beyond what the business owners have decided during the positioning development stages, and it must come out for people to see and recognise (Alamgir & Banerjee, 2019). Customers must recognise your ethical stances, creativity and how you stand out from others (Mogaji, 2021). Here advertising comes into places—using images that reflect your brand, targeted towards your customers and inclusive (Mogaji, 2015). The role of emotional appeals in advertising and content creation cannot be over-emphasised—creating contents that appeal to people’s heart, telling a story about the brand and inviting customers on a journey with your brand (Romo et al., 2017; Czarnecka & Mogaji, 2020). Here you can show images of your process, the troubles you are going through and your success stories.

Brand owners should be willing to share their stories, talk to people and let people put a name and face to your brand. This aligns with the idea of CEO branding (Cottan-Nir & Lehman-Wilzig, 2018), where a strong CEO brand reputation, built on its human reputation and aligned with managerial reputation, can present a congruence to the company’s brand. Fashion brand owners need to create a strong social media presence for themselves as a brand owner. For the brands, the embedded meaning transfer from the personality of the brand owner can be transferred to the brand. It is essential to acknowledge that this may not be easy for all brand owners to maintain a strong social presence. Still, consistency and engaging contents are important (Nguyen & Mogaji, 2021b). In communicating with the brand, you can use your WhatsApp status, Instagram stories and reels to showcase your new product (Testa et al., 2021), but be mindful of how your target audience uses social

media, identify the frequently used social media and engage with your customer on that level.

Public relations and every possible effort to showcase and integrate the brand into the world are essential. Attending fashion shows can also be considered another form of communicating the brand. Still, it is necessary to evaluate if that is right for the brand (Geissinger & Laurell, 2018). For example, a brand making ready-to-wear may instead prefer to invest those resources in working with celebrities, using social media and selling on e-commerce websites. You may also want to explore an opportunity for a pop-up store where you move the brands from online spaces to physical spaces where customers can engage with the apparel (Alexander et al., 2018).

Engaging the Stakeholders

Moving beyond communicating the brand, it is essential to engage with stakeholders in positioning the brand and enhancing the financial viability of the brands (Jung et al., 2020). Stakeholders here include suppliers, customers, government parastatal, retail stores and even other fashion brand owners (Li et al., 2020). It is essential to be a part of the loop and engage to know what each stakeholder wants and how they can be supported to enhance your business (Mogaji, 2021). For example, engaging with your suppliers will ensure we have a good supply of raw materials needed, thus improving the quality-of-service delivery. In addition, you get to understand how they are sourcing their materials and how they affect your brand's ethical stance (Han et al., 2017).

There are vast prospects for engaging with the customers, creating a community and building a loyal fan base (Kim & Sullivan, 2019). Their loyalty can be rewarded with referral programmes and by offering exclusive design and apparel for loyal customers. Do not forget to do give-aways, competition and opportunity to win prizes for engaging with your brand (Mamodu et al., 2019). There is also the opportunity for ethical collection of emails where you provide them with relevant information. There is also room for educating customers about sustainability and upcycling. Your customers may benefit from additional information

about how to manage their apparels properly. Guedes et al. (2020) have suggested the need to engage with stakeholders, improving advertising to promote sustainable fashion. Your customer service is also essential; do not take customers for granted in answering queries, processing orders or dealing with their concerns.

Attending fashion week and other industry events also present additional means of engaging with stakeholders and putting your brand out there for people to see (Geissing & Laurell, 2018). While there are financial implications in attending these events, the brand owners need to evaluate if it's right for their business at this point. Engaging with other independent brands is also important, as you get to share ideas, create support systems and provide mentorship. Though you are all competitors, there are still many things to learn (Mogaji, 2021). You can explore their content to understand their content creation strategy, evaluate what they are doing right that you can adopt and how you may need to tweak your brand to stand out in the competition (Jelinek, 2018).

Engaging with Experts

Often fashion business owners might want to do everything for themselves as bootstrapping and managing resources. Still, it is essential to consider when to reach out and work with experts to move the business forward (Bandyopadhyay & Ray, 2020). It is okay to seek professional assistance. This may involve digital marketing strategies, working with web analytics to better understand the customers and target them effectively. You may need an expert to help you gain these analytical insights while you focus on running the business (Mogaji, 2021). You may need to work with experts to know what your competitors are doing and what to do to improve your business. They should not be an expensive adventure depending on the stage of the brand, and you can work with freelancers on Fiverr or Upwork to get an affordable rate for the services.

Advertising agencies and public relations teams are also crucial in creating awareness about the brand and getting the right coverage that can enhance the company's reputation (Gibreel et al., 2018). You can even work with other fashion brands in expanding your business in a new

direction. Attending masterclasses and additional training are also means of engaging with experts. As a result, you can acquire more knowledge and improve your skills, enhancing your efforts in positioning your brand (Frick et al., 2019). This does not necessarily mean travelling abroad to fashion school, and it could simply mean attending a business school in your country, working with a business mentor or a consultancy firm where they can advise, provide business and research insights and analyse trends that can influence your business success (Mogaji, Mogaji, 2021).

Exploring Creative Options

In expanding the business, fashion brands should explore creative options (Jelinek, 2018). There are growing prospects of adopting technology in fashion marketing, albeit on a manageable scale (Colombi et al., 2018). Congolese brand *Hanifa* digitally debuts the Pink Label Congo Fashion Collection using 3D models in a virtual show on Instagram Live to showcase its latest fashion collection (Hitti, 2020). There are digital influencers, computer-generated, artificially intelligent models like Shudu, Lil Miquela, Blawko and Bermuda blurring the line between digital life and reality (Tietjen, 2018). Consumers are spending time on social media. There could be an opportunity for a brand to adopt these digital models, nurture connections with online customers and be used to market ready-to-wear and couture wears with African prints and designs. Many companies like Reactive Reality are offering technology products like PICTOFiT, which provide shoppers with the opportunity to create photo-realistic avatars—accurately reflecting their body shapes and giving them a chance to get accurate size recommendations—and help them find the perfect fit and buy with confidence (ReactiveReality, 2021). This is that something that you might want to consider on your website given the way the global pandemic has changed how we shop. Is that something you can afford at this point in your business? (Colombi et al., 2018). Do you think your customers will be more interested in this type of fashion technology? There are many options for fashion business owners to bring their products closer to the customers and set their brands apart (Mogaji, 2015).

Beyond technology, other creative options can be adopted for marketing fashion in emerging economies. This often will recognise the customer base in many developing countries, especially regarding how they engage with style (Jain & Mishra, 2020). There are possibilities for partnership and collaboration, making dresses for celebrities, tagging people on social media and creating videos about your products (Chetioui et al., 2020); in Nigeria, having giveaways and competitions on social media has been found to build engagement and create awareness about products and services (Mamodu et al., 2019); these approaches recognise the online consumer behaviour of the target audience. You can offer discount for user-generated content, ask customers to share your images and tag you on social media using your hashtag (Testa et al., 2021). How about doing some print magazine to showcase your apparels since everyone is going digital? This could bring a different appeal to your brand (Mogaji, 2015).

Do not hesitate to wear your brand and tell people about it. Attend events, parties and other social gathering wearing your brand and flaunting your creative designers (Cottan-Nir & Lehman-Wilzig, 2018). This can get people talking, and you become a credible ambassador for your brand. You should understand Hofstede's cultural dimensions theory which places most of the developing countries as a collectivistic society, where there is a degree of interdependence that society maintains among its members (Hofstede & Bond, 1984; Bissessar, 2018). People like to engage and know about what you are wearing. In striking such conversations, you can create awareness about your brand. Moreover, you can share designs with family members and friends; let them be your first customer and ambassador for your brands. This is another good way to showcase your brand and market your apparels (Mogaji, 2021).

Conclusion

You might be asking the following question: How can I market my apparels in these emerging economies? This is an essential question that many fashion designers are asking (Aziz et al., 2019; Frick et al., 2019). The fashion market in this part of the world is growing, and there are still

some inherent challenges; so even amidst positivity, there are hindrances (Fernandez-Stark et al., 2011). This coupled with the way the global pandemic has changed how we engage with fashion brands (McMaster et al., 2020; Zhao & Kim, 2021); it is important to explore different marketing strategies that take into consideration the context of an emerging economy (Jain & Mishra, 2020).

This chapter has tried to synthesise key marketing strategies into five recommendations for fashion marketing in emerging economies. It is targeted towards small and medium fashion brand owners and independent fashion brands who want to expand their brands and increase their market share (Aziz et al., 2019; Todeschini et al., 2017). These recommendations, though practical, have been bolstered with relevant theoretical underpinning, providing a holistic and relevant managerial implication. It is essential to recognise that different brands will be at various stages of development, but, notwithstanding, it is anticipated that these recommendations will be relevant for most business owners.

Theoretical contributions have also emerged from this study which is relevant for academic researchers, scholars and students. Firstly, it recognises the unique position of South America and Africa as unexplored continents in term of the global fashion market (Aziz et al., 2019; Jain & Mishra, 2020). As illustrated in Fig. 5.1, these continents are seldom known as manufacturers and importers, but they provide a unique business environment which can be explored by creative fashion designers within the continents. It offers policy implications for these countries to develop their fashion industry. Secondly, this study extends the fashion GVC construct by Fernandez-Stark et al. (2011) beyond the usual dichotomy between developing countries working on production and developed countries working on research and design and marketing. As illustrated in Fig. 5.3, we present creative fashion designers and independent fashion brands in developing countries responsible for the design, production and marketing of their apparel. They take responsibility for designing the clothes, sourcing the material, making the apparel and selling it off. This arrangement presents a different understanding of the fashion GVC. In addition, as illustrated in Table 5.1, we identify the growing trends of fashion business in these developing countries—the ever-increasing market for ready-to-wear (which is not fast fashion) and

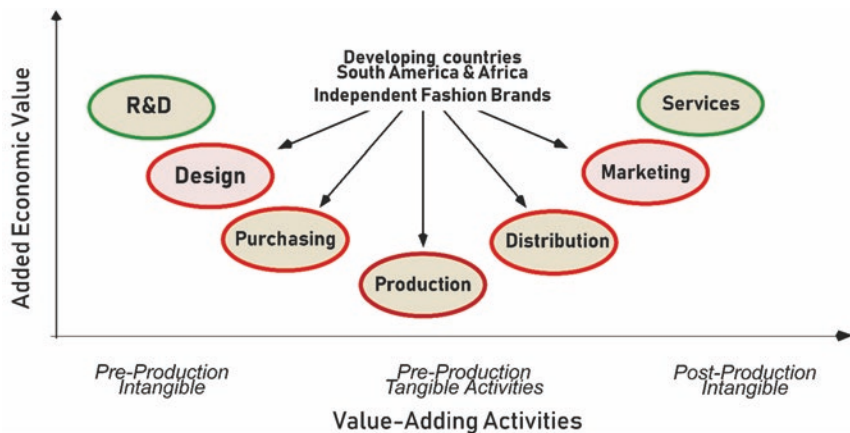


Fig. 5.3 Updated Smile Curve of high-value activities in global value chains, focusing on independent fashion brands in developing countries. (Adapted from Gereffi and Fernandez-Stark (2016))

couture dresses (which are not haute couture) but still customised and unique to the client's size and style. The study presented key features and differences between the ready-to-wear and couture dresses.

There are practical implications relevant for stakeholders, including fashion designers, fashion tech developers and policymakers. Fashion business owners need to recognise the need to develop a marketing strategy to compete in the ever-changing fashion industry (Ong, 2021). While this can be challenging, we have presented five recommendations that can be adopted. In addition, there are implications for fashion tech companies in developing customised, country-context resources to assist the fashion developers (Colombi et al., 2018); these could be in the form of virtual reality application that will require low bandwidth and data that customers can use even in times of low internet connection. There are opportunities for digital marketing, e-commerce and analytics to understand the customers and provide opportunities for selling (Testa et al., 2021). Fashion tech developers should engage with fashion brands with practical examples and minimum viable product (MVP) that meet their needs. Policymakers, government organisations and corporate organisations like banks can also support policy that eases access to raw material and provides financial support in loans and grants to expand the

business and awareness around sustainability in fashion and the fashion industry (Arrigo, 2020).

Though this is a theoretical paper, certain limitations need to be considered, thus creating scope for future research. This paper has not been contextualised to a particular country, and therefore the unique features of many of the emerging economies may not have been adequately captured. The fashion market in Nigeria cannot necessarily be generalised for all other African states. Future studies should endeavour to understand how fashion is being marketed in different parts of these emerging economies, possibly cross-cultural research to understand the market and empirically establish their marketing strategies (Aziz et al., 2019). Future studies can also examine adopting these recommended strategies in this chapter to empirically establish which is working and if any amendments can be made. Fashion designers can also be surveyed or interviewed to share their experiences of marketing in emerging economies and their challenges and opportunities for growth. Ethical manufacturing and sustainability in fashion is also an area worth exploring, especially in the context of the new strand of fashion market that has emerged from these studies (Nayak et al., 2019), to understand how fashion designers designing, making and selling their clothes are integrating sustainability in their business practice (Brooksworth et al., 2022a, 2022b). Future studies can also seek to understand the adoption of sustainability certifications (like B Corps) (Nguyen & Mogaji, 2021a) within the fashion sector of emerging economies.

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Part III

Fashion Marketing in Emerging Economies: Sustainability and Social Responsibility Perspectives



6

Communication of CSR Practices and Apparel Industry in India— Perspectives of Companies and Consumers

Sujana Adapa and Subba Reddy Yarram

Introduction

In simple terms fashion represents the style followed by the individuals at a particular point in time (Stone, 2012). Fashion industry represents textiles and apparel and includes fashion clothing and garments (Dickson & Eckman, 2006). The global fashion industry is the largest and generates billions of dollars, creates employment opportunities and adds to the national economies in many countries (Chan & Wong, 2012). Despite its significance, the fashion industry is riddled with negative reportage, which encompasses poor labour conditions, wastefulness, resource plunder, production inefficiencies, dysfunctional supply chain practices,

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unsustainable models and environmental pollution (Dickson & Eckman, 2006; Lo et al., 2012; Lee, 2010). Furthermore, the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Agenda 21 raise significant concerns about sustainability which has spurred companies across the globe to produce sustainable fashion collections (Shen et al., 2012). For example, reports indicate that the fashion industry is the second-greatest polluter and the second-highest user of water (McKinsey Report, 2019). In addition to that, it has also been reported that the fashion industry generates 10 per cent of global carbon emissions and 85 per cent of textile landfills (McKinsey Report, 2019). Sustainability in fashion is of significant concern to manufacturers and consumers alike (Jang et al., 2012; Yang et al., 2010; Mu et al., 2012). Sustainable fashion relates to the production of fabric, clothing and apparel in an eco-friendly manner by employing environmentally safe techniques with an emphasis on recycling, organic certification and efficient production processes (Morrow & Rondinelli, 2002; Yoon & Yoon, 2013).

Although sustainable apparel gained traction in the recent past, the problem is associated with fast fashion and overconsumption practices exhibited by consumers (Fletcher, 2008). For example, fashion becomes obsolete quickly and available statistics indicate that consumer fashion changes too quickly resulting in excessive demand and overproduction. Therefore, to meet the ever-increasing demand and to align with the environmental regulations, developed countries identified offshore manufacturing as the possible solution (Siegle, 2011). As a result, manufacturing activities are undertaken in developing and emerging nations with numerous socio-economic and ecological ramifications (Welters, 2008). In comparison to developed countries, developing nations have weaker environmental protection (Dietz, 2016) and labour legislative policies (Siegle, 2011). Hence, the problems in the apparel industry in the developing nations are further intensified due to mismanagement of social, environmental, health and employment aspects (Fletcher, 2008). Furthermore, the extent and intensity of the problems in the developing nations and emerging markets relate to context specificity. The terms 'fashion industry' and 'apparel industry' are used interchangeably in this chapter.

Contextually, the apparel industry in India is the oldest and is also identified to be unique not only due to design attractiveness and brand value but also due to close alignment to culture and traditions (Apparel Export Promotion Council, 2020). Available statistics from *Fashion United India* indicates that the current apparel industry in India accounts for \$108 million and is recorded growth worth \$223 million in 2021. Moreover, the apparel industry in India directly employs 45 million people and 60 million indirectly and contributes 5 per cent to the gross domestic product (GDP) (Fashion United India, 2020). Furthermore, the contribution from the apparel industry to the export market is the largest in India, accounting for 14 per cent of exports at an estimated \$42.2 billion (Ministry of Textiles, 2020). Within the emerging context, India has been the key focus in this book chapter mainly because of two reasons: (1) 'Make in India' campaign by India's current Prime Minister Mr Narendra Modi has attracted significant attention as a national programme supported by the Government of India to reinforce the manufacturing sector and (2) the largest class in India—the middle class—is expected to grow by 1.4 per cent by next year. The growth of the middle-class sector will then place the emerging status of India well ahead of China, Brazil and Russia and is expected to have an impact on the consumption and purchasing power parity of consumers in India.

One way to address the aforementioned problems in the fashion and apparel industry is to strengthen the focus on the concept of corporate social responsibility (CSR). The application of the concept of CSR in controversial (gambling/alcohol/mining) and non-fashion (food/tourism/banking) industries attracted greater attention (Cai et al., 2012). The benefits derived from the incorporation of CSR are manifold. Yet, CSR in the fashion and apparel industry received less traction (Dickson et al., 2009). For example, companies gain competitive advantage and adequate differentiation by embracing the concept of CSR and sustainable production (Yang et al., 2010). Consumers can be assured of fair-trade practices, sustainable business operations and environmental initiatives. Although the conceptualisations of CSR are confined to business literature (Carroll, 1999), within the fashion context, sustainably produced/sourced apparel is referred as ethical/eco-friendly/green fashion or sustainable apparel (Yoon & Yoon, 2013).

The concept of CSR attained attention within the Indian context as both companies and consumers started to appreciate the real value and ultimate benefit obtained from incorporating CSR practices (Carroll & Shabana, 2010). As a result, consumers are willing to pay more for sustainable, responsibly produced and ethically sourced apparel (Gaskill-Fox et al., 2014). While there has been a general increase in the awareness of CSR practices by both companies and consumers, its implications for the apparel industry in India is under research (Öberseder et al., 2013; Golodner, 2016; Kaur et al., 2022). CSR practices followed by apparel companies cannot be overlooked given their sheer volume and absolute numbers alongside the impacts of globalisation. Across the world, many countries benefitted from the process of globalisation and India is not an exception. However, globalisation also brought negative consequences in India with the increase in sweatshop conditions, outsourcing of production, manufacturing inefficiencies and dehumanising work conditions (Gupta & Hodges, 2012; Grimmer & Bingham, 2013). Moreover, extant academic studies provide mixed evidence in terms of outlining the impact of CSR on the consumption of sustainable apparel products (Arlı & Lasmono, 2010; Chang & Jai, 2015; Ramasamy & Yeung, 2008).

The overarching aims covered in this book chapter are threefold: (1) to explore the CSR practices followed by top 15 Indian apparel companies, (2) to identify the reasons that allow consumers to purchase sustainable apparel and (3) to draw synergies between the themes that emerged from companies and consumers to enhance the overall value of CSR practices amongst various stakeholders in India's fashion industry. The next section presents literature syntheses followed by justification and rationale for selecting specific types of analyses to understand CSR practices and the uptake of sustainable apparel production by companies and consumption by consumers. Then, the results from the website analysis and netnographic analysis are presented. The findings obtained from this study are critiqued and explained in light of available extant literature. Important theoretical, methodological, practical, social and societal implications of the study are explained and finally conclusions of the study are presented.

Literature Review

The concept of corporate social responsibility (CSR) has been extensively researched in the business area (Blowfield & Murray, 2008). Academic scholars use the concept of CSR interchangeably with corporate sustainability, corporate governance, social responsibility and social performance to name a few (White et al., 2017). The CSR concept encompasses economic, legal, ethical and philanthropic dimensions as represented in the CSR pyramid (Carroll & Shabana, 2010; Carroll, 1991; Carroll, 1999). The economic dimension of CSR not only outlines the basic purpose for which the business exists but also elicits the need to innovate and generate profits. Similarly, businesses need to comply with the laws enforced by the governments. Business operations need to adhere to the societal expectations and align with the ethical perceptions of the society. The philanthropic dimension of CSR relates to the voluntary engagement of businesses in promoting activities that benefit the society at large. The importance of CSR communication has also been widely documented (Türkel et al., 2015). However, within the fashion and apparel industry, the application of CSR is limited due to economic reasons and furthermore the communication of CSR is understudied. Nevertheless, CSR reporting by companies is important to provide adequate information to various stakeholders and also to enhance the reputation of the companies (Crane & Glozer, 2016).

CSR communication can be viewed as instrumental, relational and constitutive. Companies take the instrumental approach when they perceive CSR communication more as a strategic tool; companies engage in relational type of CSR communication to increase trust amongst various stakeholders (Chaudhri, 2014); and companies engage in the constitutive type of CSR communication that allows for negotiation and debates (Fairhurst & Putnam, 2004). For companies, CSR communication enhances reputation and value amongst stakeholders and the society at large. In particular, consumers value companies that embrace and follow CSR practices as they perceive these companies to be more trustworthy and reputable (Stanaland et al., 2011; Tian et al., 2011; Mogaji et al., 2021). However, CSR communication presents social, organisation and

communication complexities (Polonsky & Jevons, 2009). Social complexity relates to the variability exhibited by different individuals and groups towards the same social issue; organisational complexity aligns with the difficulty in implementing CSR practices; and communication complexity associates with the organisation's ability to communicate about the CSR practices (Rim & Song, 2013).

The consumer decision-making process consists of five steps: problem recognition, information search, evaluation of alternatives, purchase and post-purchase evaluation (Kotler & Keller, 2012). These five steps are divided into three stages: pre-purchase, purchase and post-purchase. The pre-purchase stage involves the first three steps in the decision-making process: problem recognition, information search and evaluation of alternatives (Hawkins et al., 2007). The secondary data gathered for the purpose of this study aligns with the purchase and post-purchase stages/steps. The value-attitude-behaviour hierarchy approach neatly fits with the decision-making process. Consumers' value orientations trigger favourable and/or unfavourable attitudes towards a product/service under consideration that results in a specific type of behaviour (Mukonza et al., 2021). Value orientations motivate consumers to develop attitudes mainly exhibited through sentiments in the form of emotions (Hinson & Mogaji, 2020). Attitudes lead to the development of intentions that further translate into a specific type of behaviour. Consumers have certain expectations towards the performance of products/services under consideration. When consumers' expectations match the performance of the products/services, it results in consumer satisfaction. On the other hand, the mismatch of consumer expectations with the performance of the products/services results in consumer dissatisfaction (Stankevich, 2017). Consumer satisfaction with the purchase and use of the product/service triggers repeat purchase intentions and commitment towards the product/service or even to the company. Consumer dissatisfaction with the purchase and use of product/service may result in the consumer switching to a different brand or company, thus exhibiting disloyalty and non-commitment.

With regards to fashion and apparel purchases, it is anticipated that consumers mainly showcase the strength of hedonic and utilitarian value orientations like with any other purchases (Kang & Park-Poaps, 2010).

However, consumers' inclination towards sustainable product/service consumption (Aertsens et al., 2011) and their willingness to pay premium price may be associated to knowledge, awareness and interest levels of consumers. The attention paid by apparel companies in the Indian context towards reporting of CSR and sustainable apparels and consumers' course of action after the purchase and use of sustainable apparel and their orientations towards CSR practices is underexplored. The present study's juxtaposition is envisaged to reveal interesting findings that could be readily applicable to apparel industry in other emerging nations in a broader sense. Furthermore, a deep dive into the specific context-related factors at the macro environmental level would elicit development of actions that companies can embrace to trigger consumers' favourable orientations towards sustainable apparel consumption and repeat consumption.

Methods

In order to provide responses to the stated objectives of the book chapter, the authors sourced secondary data using the principles of website analysis and netnography.

The website analysis technique was used to source information from the top apparel companies ($n = 15$) in India. The authors attained information about CSR from the apparel companies' websites main landing pages. If the information was not readily available from the apparel companies' main web pages, the authors searched for the CSR reports and/or sustainability reports. In situations where the CSR or sustainability reports of the apparel companies were not available, authors sourced information on CSR practices from the apparel companies' corporate governance reports. Furthermore, the authors also explored the apparel companies' mission, vision and values published on their main web pages in order to critically understand the companies' involvement in CSR-related practices. CSR communication is an important tool for apparel companies not only to enhance the company's image and reputation but also to generate good will amongst internal and external stakeholders (Giau, 2016).

Content analysis was performed by the authors and relevant themes that align with the CSR literature were identified. Content analysis is a qualitative research method that is widely used by researchers to understand CSR reporting and communication (Turker & Altuntas, 2014; Mogaji, 2015). Extant scholarly research indicates that websites present first-hand information to various stakeholders on the company that creates an image for the company under consideration within the minds of the customers and/or consumers (Gaskill-Fox et al., 2014). The purposive sampling method was used by the authors to identify the top 15 apparel companies in India from publicly available information through reputable sources. Therefore, the authors envisage that the website content analysis provides valuable information about the way that companies decide to disclose to the public about their CSR practices, which then eventually allow consumers to develop sentiments, opinions and attitudes (Gökerik et al., 2018; Farinloye & Aririguzoh, 2016)

The netnography technique was used to source information from online consumer reviews ($n = 250$). Netnography is a popular ethnography technique in an online/digital space, increasingly used by several researchers in multiple disciplinary areas to deeply investigate various market research topics (Kozinets, 2015; Heinonen & Medberg, 2018). The benefits associated with the application of the netnography technique relate to flexibility of the method, applicability to a wide variety of research contexts and ability to offer rich and naturalistic data (Kozinets, 2015). Further, the data obtained from netnography is less expensive and provides information on consumers' lived experiences (Rokka, 2010). The methodological limitations include the authenticity related to the netnography data particularly in sourcing demographic details of the online consumers who provide reviews (Mkono, 2013) and the generalisability of the findings obtained from online communities to other contexts (Kozinets, 2002). Nevertheless, popular market research areas in which netnography has been extensively used include branding (Rosenthal & Brito, 2017), tourism (Rageh et al., 2013), health (Keeling & Laing, 2015), environment (Rokka & Moisander, 2009) and so forth to critically understand the consumer dialogue and insights.

Authors followed the guidelines outlined by Bartl et al. (2016), Caliandro (2014), Kozinets (2015) and Costello et al. (2017) in the

application of the netnography technique in order to source information from online consumer reviews. The steps followed by the authors included (1) use of key search terms (such as CSR and sustainability), (2) identification of context- and subject-specific search sites (such as India, fashion industry, apparels, online reviews), (3) application of inclusion criteria (review focus expansion to green initiatives, organic, eco-friendly etc.) and (4) repetition of the filtering process (until the identification of themes of importance) (Heinonen & Medberg, 2018). Authors' preference to use the term consumer instead of customer in this book chapter relates to the information sourced from online consumer reviews that most commonly were related to post-consumption experiences. The purposive sampling method was followed by the authors initially following netnography guidelines and then the online consumer reviews that fit the inclusion criteria were analysed following the random sampling approach. Online consumer reviews were sourced from mouthshut.com, sitejabber.com and trustpilot.com. Approximately 250 online consumer reviews were analysed to understand the relative importance that consumers place on CSR practices followed by the apparel companies that influence their purchase, use and repeat purchase of apparels.

Data obtained from the website analysis of the apparel companies and the netnographic analysis of the online consumer reviews was analysed using qualitative data analysis software *NVivo12*. The content retrieved from top apparel companies' websites and the content that was sourced from online consumer reviews that align with the CSR practices from *NVivo12* analyses resulted in the identification of themes, sentiments and attitudes of consumers towards apparel companies. The macro and micro themes of importance were identified on the basis of conceptual coherence; consumer sentiments towards apparel companies and CSR practices were categorised into positive, neutral and negative; and consumer attitudes towards apparel companies were classified as favourable and unfavourable on the basis of their repeat purchase intentions and recommendations to others.

Results and Discussion

The results section is broadly organised as CSR practices as publicised by the apparel companies on their websites and CSR practices as elicited by the online consumer reviews. From the CSR practices elicited from the apparel companies, macro thematic categories of social and environmental dimensions and several micro thematic categories of importance under each macro theme were identified. Similarly, the CSR practices revealed from the online consumer reviews included macro thematic categories of consumer orientations, consumer sentiments and consumer intentions. Several micro themes were identified to be related to each of the macro thematic categories identified from the online consumer reviews. Results obtained were compared and contrasted with the extant literature and important theoretical, social and practical implications useful for academic scholars, apparel companies and policymakers in the country were outlined.

CSR Practices—Apparel Companies Websites

A total of 15 apparel companies' websites were reviewed extensively by the authors to source information on CSR practices. Most apparel companies ($n = 12$) practised CSR in some way or the other. The apparel companies' CSR orientation was to address the social and environmental dimensions. Few apparel companies ($n = 3$) touched upon legal and economic dimensions of CSR but in a negligible way. The type and extent of social and environmental dimensions addressed by apparel companies as part of their CSR practices are presented in detail in the following section.

(1) *Social Practices*

Apparel companies ($n = 12$) largely outlined ways to manage various social issues encountered during manufacturing, production and supply chain management. The main components of the social dimension of CSR practice included addressing the 'education', 'health' and 'community' needs of both internal and external stakeholders. Apparel companies

created education opportunities to empower particularly women and children of their employees and the communities in which they operate. These educational initiatives also focused upon skill-building activities and training facilities. Some apparel companies ($n = 6$) organised tailoring hubs to upskill and reskill tribal communities and further create employment opportunities. Many apparel companies ($n = 10$) extensively cared about the health and safety of their employees and the communities. For example, apparel companies organised medical camps, mother and child projects, immunisation programmes, care for differently abled and preventive healthcare initiatives. Also, these companies offered subsidised healthcare for their employees. Almost all apparel companies ($n = 12$) showcased deep involvement in community activities. For example, apparel companies created employee volunteering programmes, worked upon slum areas, conducted charity-based activities, offered scholarships and sponsorships and promoted ways to reduce social inequalities. Overall, apparel companies also substantially enhanced the labour conditions. The social practices also showcase the apparel companies' internal and external engagement with various stakeholders such as employees, shareholders, government, public, consumers and community.

(2) *Environmental Practices*

Many apparel companies ($n = 12$) also focused on addressing environmental issues. For example, some apparel companies ($n = 8$) in their CSR and/or sustainability reports and on their websites widely publicised their intentions towards 'zero waste', 'organic production and sourcing of cotton and/or fibre', 'use of 100% cotton and natural dyes', 'environmentally friendly wearable fashion', 'sustainable production', 'eco-conscious production', 'leather free', 'vegan line' and so forth. In doing so, apparel companies showcased their awareness towards the most prominent issues in the sustainable manufacturing and production of eco-friendly apparels. Some apparel companies ($n = 3$) embraced environmental philosophy in their sustainability reports predominantly outlining the effective management of energy, water, forests, emissions and chemicals. Few apparel companies ($n = 4$) installed advanced technologies to enhance heat recovery and introduced recycling mechanisms as a way to contribute to

environmental sustainability. At least three companies from the sample included in this book chapter took a step further and paved ways to build a sense of environmental responsibility amongst their employees. For example, employees contributing towards energy conservation were identified as green champions. A few companies used environmental and sustainable initiatives undertaken in effective branding by publishing the organic certifications and alignment to the international standards.

Three apparel companies out of the 15 included in the sample ignored telling stories of CSR, environmental awareness and sustainable philosophy through their websites to various stakeholders. Whilst the apparel companies' widely publicised information related to the companies' annual performance, product innovation and production efficiencies, the sourcing of CSR-related information from the companies' websites was not an easy task. Apparel companies followed a mechanistic approach in communicating about their CSR practices. In doing so, the companies took into consideration the interests of stakeholders and engaged only in one-way communication (Du et al., 2010). CSR reporting and communication helps stakeholders to understand the legitimacy and transparency aspects associated with the company (Castelló & Galang, 2014; Castelló & Lozano, 2011). Apparel companies should focus upon communicating about their CSR practices and sustainability initiatives in a proactive manner rather than taking a reactive stance. For example, allowing for dialogue and debates with various stakeholders and establishing bidirectional type of communication would enhance the reputation and image of the apparel companies. Further, companies should focus on translating policy statements on sustainability into action with measurable impact to establish a legitimate impression of best practice amongst consumers.

CSR Practices—Online Consumer Reviews

Online consumer reviews ($n = 250$) revealed consumer orientations, consumer sentiments and consumer intentions as the predominant macro thematic categories on the basis of review text and review content. Consumer orientations captured discussions related to the value that

consumers placed on during the purchase and use of specific apparel from a particular apparel company. Consumer sentiments largely aligned with the polarity and strength of the review and consumer intentions linked to the discussion in the reviews pertaining to repurchase and commitment towards apparel companies.

(1) *Consumer Orientations*

The text from online consumer reviews ($n = 250$) revealed value orientations that consumers assign to apparel companies and apparel while making purchase and use decisions. Three types of value orientations were identified from online consumer reviews which are attributed to the purchase and use of apparel by consumers. A large number of consumers ($n = 124$) expressed hedonic type of value orientation followed by consumers ($n = 83$) with utilitarian type of value orientations and then by consumers ($n = 43$) with sustainable orientations. For consumers with hedonic type of value orientations, purchase of apparel was associated with fun, impulse buying and pleasure (Kang & Park-Poaps, 2010). Consumer online review texts that exhibited hedonic value orientations associate consumer cohort with ad hoc apparel purchases. On the other hand, consumer reviews that expressed utilitarian value orientations associated their purchases to price sensitivity, quality and value attributes (Kang & Park-Poaps, 2010). Further, these consumers carefully planned their purchases and relied on the recommendations from reference groups like friends, family and brand communities. For consumers with sustainable orientations towards apparel, the quality, type and extent of sustainable practice embedded in the production of apparel (Aertsens et al., 2011) influenced their decision to purchase and use the apparel (Jacobs et al., 2018). In contrast, the perceptions of the consumers towards non-fair-trade practices, lack of sustainable sourcing of the fabric and the use of chemicals in the production of apparel hindered their purchase and usability (Gleim & Lawson, 2014). Further, consumers also placed low value on apparel companies keen to publish economic performance and ignore ecological and environmental concerns (Niinimäki & Hassi, 2011).

(2) *Consumer Sentiments*

Online consumer reviews sourced also presented sentiments expressed by consumers towards fashion in general and top apparel companies in particular. The sentiments of the consumers related to after purchase and use of apparels. Extant research posited that consumer reviews influence purchase and repurchase intentions. The depth and the extent of review affect the information quality and quantity (Chevalier & Mayzlin, 2006), which in turn influence the spread of electronic word-of-mouth communication. For example, Mudambi and Schuff (2010) identified that longer reviews presented by consumers in an online environment provide more details about the product/service and their experience. Sentiments refer to attitudes that consumers develop and express as positive, negative and/or neutral towards product/service (Li & Wu, 2010). A three-step approach was followed by the authors as a sense-making approach to deeply understand the online consumer reviews. In the first step, sentences in the reviews were analysed from the qualitative data analysis software NVivo12 to identify key attributes that consumers mentioned over and over in their reviews (Pang & Lee, 2004). These attributes align with the depth and direction of the review. Then, in order to determine the polarity of the sentiment in the review, sentiment lexicons with words were used. The identified words from the reviews were then rated as positive five and negative five, an approach followed by academic scholars (Gan et al., 2016). In the third step, the strength of the review is determined by the star ratings provided by others to the review.

The text analysis of the consumer reviews carried out revealed the emergence of five important attributes such as quality, price, value, product and experience. The sentiments expressed by consumers in their online reviews with regards to the quality attribute ($n = 101$) included the quality of the product, the quality of apparel company and the quality of the service rendered. In unpacking the price attribute ($n = 63$), consumer reviews were oriented towards apparel company's adoption of skimming and/or penetration pricing strategies, competitive pricing and the price paid for eco-friendly/sustainable apparel. The value attribute ($n = 41$) was linked to value for money, value in obtaining sustainable apparel and personal value that consumers place in the apparel company's approaches towards ethical sourcing of apparels. The product attribute ($n = 28$) was

associated with differentiation, availability and awareness. The last attribute, experience ($n = 17$), was linked to the purchase and use of apparel, overall experience with the apparel company and experience with the repurchase of sustainable apparel. From the attributed, positive sentiments ($n = 58$) were mainly associated with the ethical sourcing of the fabric in making the final product (apparel) and the eco-friendly nature of the company and the apparel. Very few reviews that expressed positive sentiments ($n = 7$) were oriented towards the community initiatives undertaken by the apparel company. Negative sentiments ($n = 103$) in the reviews were associated with the lack of information on the sourcing of fabric, and the apparel company's ability to redirect profits to engage in more ethical practices and improving the labour conditions. Some reviews exhibited neutral sentiments ($n = 89$) that were neither positive nor negative but rather mentioned the name of the apparel company and the purchase of the apparel.

The top five positive words linked to the sentiment lexicons sourced from a majority of the reviews include excellent, good, positive, recommendation and amazing. The top five negative words linked to the sentiment lexicons include poor, bad, unethical, pathetic and appalling. The star ratings provided to the review indicate the strength of the review. Negative sentiments expressed in the reviews received more five-star ratings ($n = 88$), whereby consumers in an online environment expressed their distress towards the quality of the product and the lack of information from the apparel company on ethical sourcing of the apparel. Four-star ratings ($n = 63$) were provided by consumers to a mix of positive, negative and neutral reviews that aligned with sustainable and eco-friendly apparel, community initiatives undertaken by the apparel company and prevailing labour practices. Consumers provided three-star ratings ($n = 30$) to positive sentiments that related to the apparel company's overall performance and quality of the apparel. The two star ($n = 27$) and one-star ratings ($n = 42$) assigned to the online consumer reviews related to a mixture of quality, price and product attributes. Apart from the ratings, consumers also used emoticons to express their satisfaction or dissatisfaction towards the purchase and use of apparel and also towards the apparel company. Consumers ($n = 44$) used emoticons with a smiley or happy face and thumbs up symbols to express their positive experience and many consumers ($n = 97$) used emoticons with a frown or

sad or angry face that represented their negative experience with the apparel and/or apparel company.

(3) *Consumer Intentions*

Consumer satisfaction and the subsequent outcomes are extensively investigated in the existing literature. Consumers with outstanding satisfaction derived from the purchase and use of products/services showcase repurchase intentions that lead to repeat purchase behaviour (Chiu et al., 2013). Consumers' expectations when matched with the product/service performance lead to satisfaction and when the product/service performance falls below consumers' expectations it will lead to consumer dissatisfaction (Orel & Kara, 2014). The online consumer reviews showcased consumers' willingness and/or non-willingness to purchase apparel from specific companies. Further, the text in the reviews depicted commitment that consumers expressed towards apparel and the company. For example, some consumers ($n = 46$) showcased affective commitment to the apparel brand and the company due to genuine attachment (Mbango & Belso-Martinez, 2018); others ($n = 23$) showed normative commitment to the apparel brand and/or company that was influenced by the external social environment (Shukla, 2012), and yet others depicted a calculative commitment ($n = 17$) that balanced costs versus benefits of switching to a different apparel brand or company (Li & Petrick, 2008).

The variability exhibited by online consumer reviews towards apparel companies CSR practices relates to the CSR communication approach undertaken by the companies. For example, all apparel companies included in the sample took a reactive instrumental approach whereby the CSR communication was oriented towards one-way dissemination of information to stakeholders. Relational and constitutive types of CSR communication by the apparel companies would enhance the transparency of the companies amongst consumers. Further, consumers' perceived understanding of social issues faced by apparel companies was different and resulted in variance in the development of orientations, sentiments and intentions towards sustainable apparel consumption. We also envisage that apparel companies also face organisational and communication complexities in publishing information about their CSR

practices and CSR engagement that result in CSR risks. Particularly, in the emerging markets, the quality of auditing and monitoring limits transparency and legitimacy (Turker & Altuntas, 2014; Nguyen & Mogaji, 2022b). Similarly, apparel companies show variability with regards to the relative importance attributed to publicise about their CSR practices that further trickle down to influence consumers' perceptions.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study presents important theoretical, methodological, practical, social and societal implications. Apparel companies face different types of issues, and in case of emerging markets, the problem is intensified due to outsourcing of manufacturing, shorter life cycles associated with the apparel and costs associated with the supply chain management. Further, the perceptions, knowledge and awareness of consumers towards CSR practices of apparel companies are varied. Therefore, the theoretical implication of the study is to develop an integrated model that combines the decision-making approach with the value orientations and with CSR communication complexity. The development of an integrated theoretical framework will allow for a better understanding of the value apparel companies place on legitimacy and transparency (Brooksworth et al., 2022a, 2022b). Methodologically, the study used publicly available secondary data that limits the generalisability of the findings obtained from this study to other contexts. Therefore, future studies need to focus upon gathering the primary data and the use of mixed methods to deeply understand the relevance of variables of importance.

The apparel companies in India need to take a proactive stance rather than a reactive approach with regards to their CSR communication. Also, apparel companies should encourage two-way communication to encourage discourse and debates with consumers and other stakeholders. The moral legitimacy of the apparel companies can be enhanced, if the apparel company representatives work in cohesion with the government and non-government stakeholders to suggest solutions to the identified problems. The auditing and monitoring quality of the corporate communications in general and CSR reporting in particular needs to be enhanced for

encouraging better governance (Nguyen & Mogaji, 2022a). The social implications of the study include the limitations and restrictions that apparel companies face in the reporting of labour standards, wage suppressions and supplier costs. State and central governments in the country need to work in collaboration to devise effective formulation of strategies to reduce these restrictions. The societal implications of the study relate to environmental protection mechanisms. Apparel companies need to collaborate with government and non-government officials to publicise information on environmental sustainability in order to enhance the knowledge and awareness levels of consumers.

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7

Sustainability and the Supply Chain

Linda Mackie and Deborah Campbell

Introduction

The development of the global manufacturing supply chain in the fashion industry has had significant impact on the people and the planet with powerful brands, retailers and designers driving impactful marketing campaigns and pushing consumption to unprecedented levels. This chapter will explore and analyse the complex flow of fabric and material sourcing and garment production. In a world that is using resources, almost to depletion, for the pursuit of fashion newness, and with consumers on a mission to obtain absolute value, many countries are still being exploited and left in poverty with obsolete business contracts due to demand forecasting. Net sales for many top brands, such as Adidas, are rising substantially in 'New Emerging Markets'. The questions, however, remain; what is the impact on these economies, who are the wider stakeholders and

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how far in the fashion chain is this profit felt? What does value mean in the supply chain?

We will consider the impact on garment workers from ethical trade initiatives, lack of legislation and the complex structures of new government policies in emerging markets that impact workers' rights. Furthermore, we will better examine the implications of those involved in the process of producing raw materials and garments, and the implications on global value chains. The authors will explore the contradictory behaviours of green marketing and the increasing prevalence of green-washing, the notion of 'net green', the rebound effect and the concept of responsible marketing as opposed to green marketing (Kaur et al., 2022).

Whilst highlighting the challenges of pursuing sustainable business models such as triple bottom line and circularity, it seeks to present to readers new innovations in business strategies identifying the power of collaboration and stakeholder accountability, particularly in the cotton value chain in India. It takes a perspective from how new ways can disrupt the current status, reviewing cases in industry from NGOs, SMEs and manufacturers working out of economies such as India, Nigeria and Bangladesh. Also considering viewpoints from industry collaborations, and the emergence of small brands developing heritage and artisan crafts in those emerging economies, as well as from large manufacturers actively working to reduce the resources utilised in order for a sustainable framework.

Exploring how fashion companies identify challenges such as the lack of frameworks for data collection and measurement for GHG carbon reporting with particular reference to Indian cotton farming will be elaborated upon in this chapter. It will also include case studies from the textile and clothing sector, as well as interviews with brands working out of new emerging economies such as Nigeria, and industry examples from India and across the supply chain.

The Rise of Emerging Economies

As a result of rising consumption patterns, increased wages, pressures of downward retail prices and the need for continual product replacement, the search for new fashion manufacturing sources escalated dramatically in the 1990s, shifting much of the UK garment and fabric manufacturing offshore. Rapid resourcing manufacturing projects from large- and medium-sized corporations in the Western economy swept through the globe, particularly focusing on emerging economies such as China, India, Bangladesh and Pakistan. Brands and retailers took advantage of low labour costs and quickly developed large-scale production units, exploiting local resources and utilising extensive expertise and accessibility. Where it was once commonplace to use a value chain to map activities while considering competitor prices and shifts, this quickly became an extensive global value chain (GVC) (Nguyen & Mogaji, 2022a). China now exports more clothing than the whole of European Union (Fig. 7.1). However, there is still a lack of knowledge on how this global value chain is connected. Complex multilayered chains are now created, using

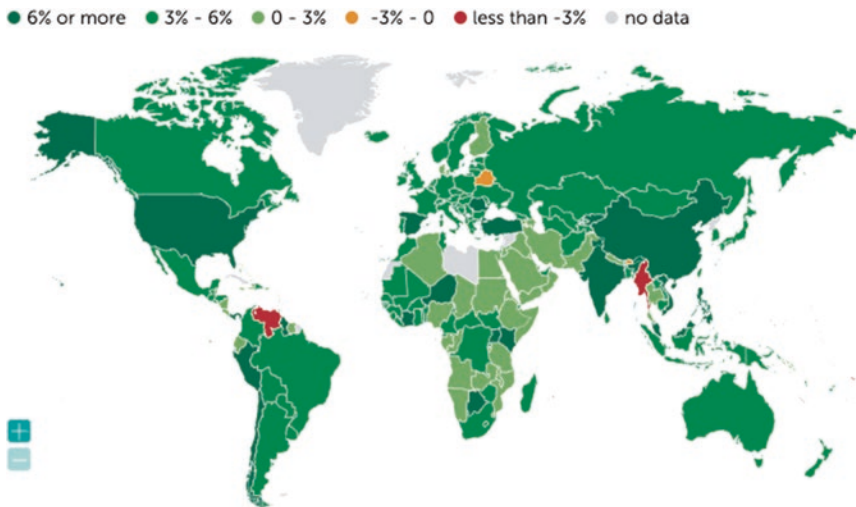


Fig. 7.1 Textile export growth rates. (Source: International Monetary Fund: World Trade Growth of Textile Exports, 2019. <https://www.imf.org/external/datamapper>)

extensive transnational supply chains across world resources and activities, through production process, crossing borders and maximising capacity.

However, little is considered of the impact to the economies, people or planet, as the rising consumer demand governs all practices and our craving for fashion continues to grow.

Exploring the Issues: Fast-Paced Growth Leading to Shifting Power

Many of the emerging economies, such as China, grew beyond their own capacity. After years of state control, this enabled privatisation and to a degree liberalisation of trade, contributing to growth. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) reported China's continual annual GDP increases of 10% and more recently 15%, and per capita income quadrupling in the past 15 years. Most of this progress was attributed to the sustained growth in its manufacturing base and worker efficiency, with the US as its number one customer. China has proven that increased investment in technology and machinery, along with increased worker productivity, led to the overall increases in its economy. Once an agrarian economy, workers from China quickly changed to become employed in the higher value-added manufacturing areas, particularly fashion and technology. It also highlights emerging economies and shows the highest growth rates at 6.7% against advanced economies at 5.1% GDP as of 2019 (Fig. 7.2) (IMF, 2021).

From this sustained growth, companies in China were left free to set their own rules in employment and productivity. They were also given the chance to roll out highly competitive pricing strategies, with little government intervention, contributing positively to the already growing economy. Although other emerging markets can learn lessons from this impactful productivity, the Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD) envisages a more united global reform to 'build better policies for better lives', providing evidence-based material with the aim to improve global standards with a focus on worker rights, ethical practice and sustainable development for inclusive approaches to

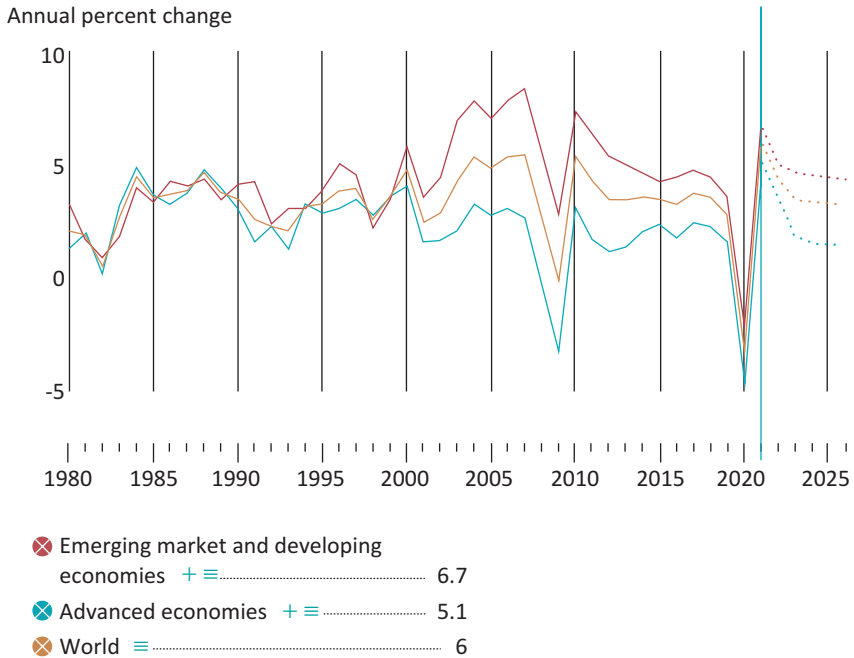


Fig. 7.2 GDP growth rates to 2021. (Source: International Monetary Fund: Statistics Data Mapper GDP World Economic Outlook, 2021. <https://www.imf.org/external/datamapper>)

form the sustainable strategies of the future. The OECD works towards building societies that are more sustainable, inclusive and resilient.

Challenges in Cost and Rising Inflation

For most emerging economies though, as they grew, demand, cost and inflation also rose, and devastating human impact occurred, escalating in 2013 to the human disaster at the Rana Plaza in Bangladesh, where 1135 people were killed in substandard manufacturing units, hidden from the glamorous world of retailing. Textile unions called it a ‘mass industrial homicide where employees have the lowest living wages in the world’. This was publicly called out by powerful social media campaigns such as

‘Who Made My Clothes’ from the Fashion Revolution, demanding answers and transparency in the supply chain on their manufacturing standards. These issues continue, and have become even more aggravated in recent times due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Many emerging economies have been hard hit by the virus, but because of pressure from the fashion manufacturing industry to continue to work and meet production orders despite health and safety restrictions, workers’ lives have been put at risk.

In the same breath, brutal cancellation of manufacturing orders has been commonplace due to the unforeseen slowdown in consumption as a result of lockdowns attributed to the coronavirus. The media have highlighted the impact on human poverty, leaving thousands of workers short of food supply. The Workers’ Rights Consortium (WRC) found that workers’ income had fallen drastically or they had permanently lost their jobs without any severance pay, leading to growing hunger and insecurity being experienced by many workers in those affected emerging economies (2020). It seems that resource-poor governments were unable to protect the supply chain workers who were directly impacted by this devastation. The WRC also highlighted that global retailers have chronic failure here and have responsibility to address the issues on hand. They recommend that they should pay in full, ensure severance pay is delivered and end irresponsible sourcing practice.

Trade and Tariff Uncertainty

The reduction of trade tariffs in the 1990s from China, creating an open market, meant that the Chinese economy grew beyond recognition in just a matter of years. But the shifting need to sustain their own growing economies meant rising costs and a shift of buying power towards China.

There is now growing uncertainty in emerging economies due to trade deals between the US and China and the impact of new trade measures. Some markets may be impacted more, for example Mexico, but some emerging markets have shown some growth, with India being the fastest growing economy in terms of economic confidence. More recently, post-COVID-19, India has also suffered from a period of high rising costs

without wages or economic growth corresponding accordingly. The *Financial Times* warned of being ‘dragged into a cycle of “stagflation”’ (Harding et al., 2020).

Trade uncertainties and conflicts between China and the US will have a global impact, as new increased tariffs from the global value chain could negatively impact fashion sourcing activities. Although China will still be dominant in exporting textiles and apparel, rising prices and hard trade deals might make it challenging for importers in the long term. Many corporations expect fashion apparel sourcing costs to drastically rise, with predictions of an approximate rise of 4%. Even though there has been a shift away from production in China, it is still the largest exporter of textiles (Statista, 2021) (Fig. 7.3). For other emerging economies, this could serve as another opportunity to take up the available capacity from the reductions of the US and place emphasis on their efficiency to respond to demand.

New opportunities will become apparent as a result of new trade agreements between the EU and new emerging economies in the Asia-Pacific regions such as Singapore, Vietnam and Mexico, as well as Eastern Europe once these markets begin to develop (IMF, 2020). Bangladesh is still seen as the strongest competitor, with Vietnam close behind. However, there is growing interest in new economies such as Ethiopia.

Exporting Textile Country	Billions £
China	119.6
Europe	66.3
India	17.2
US	13.4
Turkey	11.8
South Korea	9.1
Vietnam	8.8
Taiwan	8.5
Pakistan	7.1
China, Hong Kong	6.4
Total	268.2

Fig. 7.3 Leading exporting countries of textiles worldwide, 2019. (Source: Shahbandeh, M [2021]). <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1054452/textile-apparel-goods-leading-exporters-worldwide>

The Impact of Governing Bodies and Stakeholders

The role of the governing bodies has been influential in ensuring brands and retailers work with due diligence in emerging economies (Mogaji, 2021). Brands and retailers working in isolation with global manufacturers will not be effective without governing bodies or government intervention, and the OECD has mapped out a programme for ‘responsible business conduct’, particularly along with G20 leaders, to implement labour, social and environmental standards. These are built along the following principles coupled with practices in the supply chain of those businesses:

1. Concepts and principles (e.g., obeying domestic law is the first obligation of enterprises)
2. General policies including implementing, engaging and addressing issues of concern.
3. Disclosure—to give open, honest transparency in their operations.
4. Human Rights—to protect, respect and remedy basic human rights meeting their responsibilities.
5. Employment and Industrial Relations—to promote fundamental rights for workers.
6. The Environment—to raise their environmental performance and maximise contribution.

Source: [OECD.org](https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264236882-en)

Due Diligence Guidance for Responsible Supply Chains in the Garment and Sector 2021/Based on data from ‘OECD (2015), G20/OECD Principles of Corporate Governance, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264236882-en>.’

The intention of these principles is not to shift responsibility from the government but to further get companies to be held accountable for the impact of their operations.

Part of the due diligence process would be to collaborate to enhance knowledge. Also, there is a growing need from fashion consumers to have transparency, honesty and values towards this framework. Otherwise, those companies risk being called out and publicly questioned through

powerful social media campaigns such as *Fashion Revolution* with 521 k followers on the social media platform Instagram and a global network of localised teams, which would render little to no results.

In a similar manner, the G20 Summit has been created to bring global leaders together with a commitment and solidarity to build a more resilient, inclusive and sustainable future for all and to support the most fragile communities, aiming for climate neutrality. Together, they account for 80% of the world's GDP and 60% of the population (G20, 2021). The UN Climate Action has also initiated some goals for unified climate action. As the fashion industry is a major contributor to global climate change, it has been one of the first industries to respond to these goals. Part of G7 enlisted companies, now known as the *Fashion Pact*, participate in the UN agenda. The basis of the framework is centred around three pillars: biodiversity, climate and oceans. This also includes existing initiatives from the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)'s Fashion Charter, with targets of reaching 100% renewable energy in their own operations by 2030. *Fashion Revolution* claims, however, that this is too late and that these changes in policy must happen now.

Likewise, as consumer awareness increases, as coverage of human exploitation is more prevalent in the media and as powerful campaigns such as *The Fashion Revolution* manifesto lead in advocating positive change, a successful brand must implement sustainable practice across its value chain as a priority. There will, however, be a price to pay. With costs for sustainable fibres and production likely to increase, it is crucial to work long term with partners, improve efficiency and transparency and create agile lean chains to gain back the margin advantages. Alongside this, addressing the living wage factor is crucial, which can often account for over 30% of a garment's direct costs according to labour rights. Globally, unions, such as *Unison*, also come together in support of powerful campaigns such as *Labour behind the Label* to fight for living wage standards, which many fashion companies still have not signed.

The challenges are complex, unique and far-reaching but with continued research, collaboration and redefined values across the supply chain, we are seeing change for positive impact, and emerging economies with the connections are taking full advantage of this.

Green Marketing and Greenwashing

The business of green marketing products is increasingly problematic for brands and consumers, with greenwashing allegations rife across the global fashion industry (Nguyen & Mogaji, 2022b). There is also so much confusion as to what qualifies a product to be labelled or marketed as 'green', from fashion companies grappling to keep up with consumer demand and getting caught up in the process to consumers feeling increasingly concerned with disingenuous or misguided green marketing claims (Mukonza et al., 2021).

It is important to consider the concept that there is no such thing as a green product. Where the reality of the so-called green product is an illusion, claims can lead to increased consumption or behaviour that results in *increased usage rather than efficient usage*; this is known as the *direct rebound effect* (Zink & Geyer, 2016). Furthermore, if the product is the focus, what is the benchmark that product is being measured against to render it 'green'? Moreover, should efforts be given to increase environmental sustainability of corporations that lead to an overall reduction in environmental impact or be *net green*, where *net green* is a *business activity* if and only if it reduces overall environmental impact? This poses an important question: if there is no such thing as a green product, is the pursuit of corporate environmental sustainability futile? Not at all, but the goal should not be as simplistic as trying to sell as many green products as possible (Zink & Geyer, 2016).

Is it therefore irresponsible of fashion companies to encourage consumers to buy 'green products' with the risk of consumers continuing the massification we have seen in the last twenty-five years? A product that reduces environmental impact per unit service but increases the total environmental impact should not be called green despite its apparent eco-efficiency (Zink & Geyer, 2016). Furthermore, does this put greenwashing in a new light, in that, all green marketing could be deemed as greenwashing based on the rebound effect where, for example, consumption and the rate of product usage are increased because the product is greener? Or where business models that claim to improve environmental

impact without considering citizen behaviour are, in part, responsible for overconsumption?

In recent years, greenwashing has come to mean the practice of making an organisation look more environmentally friendly than it is. When we consider the rebound effect and the concept of *net green* (Zink and Geyer, 2016), the up-to-date meaning of greenwashing could evolve to the following:

A business who markets products as green, sustainable or circular to gain market share, increase volume of sales without full assessment of the value chain activity, and while knowing there is considerable evidence or likelihood of increased consumption through the rebound effect. (Campbell, 2021)

This adaption is close to the origins of the word ‘*greenwashing*’, a term coined by environmentalist Jay Westerveld in a 1986 essay, in which he claimed the hotel industry falsely promoted the reuse of towels as part of a broader environmental strategy, when in fact the act was designed as a cost-saving measure (Becker-Olsen, K. & Potucek, S., 2013) (Fig. 7.4).



Fig. 7.4 The rebound effect—mitigating the effect with the concept of responsible marketing. (Source: Authors Own Campbell [2021])

The purpose of this chapter is to understand how emerging economies can be instrumental to the future of green marketing. In this regard, the emerging market is discussed from the context of the manufacturing value chain. In the following case study, we explore the concept of *net green* applied by looking at an activity, not a product (Zink & Geyer, 2016). The question that fashion companies who work within emerging economies need to consider and seek answers for is ‘how green and sustainable is the activity?’—the activity being the entire production of the fibre, fabric or garment, and delivery of the product to the fashion business. Fashion businesses must measure the impact of activities in partnership with their emerging economy value chain stakeholders through the use of a tool like the *GHG Scope 3 Standard*, which is discussed later in this chapter.

In summary, fashion businesses must seek to be accountable through meaningful partnership, collaboration and stewardship of the value chains in emerging economies for net green activity to be realised and for the possibility of net green marketing to be realised as well.

Green Marketing Where ‘Net Green’ Is Explored in the Emerging Market of India

India, an emerging market, is the world’s largest cotton producer (US Department of Agriculture, 2020). The Better Cotton Initiative (BCI) provides a good example of cotton farmers engaging in green marketing through business-to-business (B2B) communication via the BCI. Videos and case studies are provided via the BCI web platform that outlines farmers like Balubhai Parmer’s experience of belonging to the BCI programme and the environmental and prosperous value it brings his business and the community of farmers who belong to the programme.

Case Study

Farmer Balubhai Parmer discusses in a marketing film case study how BCI and the bulk buying committee have improved his livelihood.

A small group of BCI farmers in Kanakya, India, entrusted Balubhai and the BCI farmer committee to start buying bio-pesticides like neem oil (made from the fruits and seeds of the neem tree) and *Beauveria bassiana* (a fungus used as a biological insecticide) on their behalf from a trader in nearby Una. By purchasing these inputs collectively, Balubhai and the other farmers saved approximately 25% compared to buying individually; building on this initial success, a further ten committees were established in local villages, enabling farmers to obtain healthier, plant-based natural pesticides at prices they could afford.

(Better Cotton Initiative 2021)

Field stories, as BCI calls them, are powerful communication messages aimed at fashion businesses wanting to be or are already part of an authentic sustainable value chain structure that BCI claims to offer.

Because BCI cotton works on a mass balance system, it means the cotton is not traceable to the actual source; meaning brands and the consumer cannot identify and trace products made with BCI cotton directly back to a farmer like Balubhai Parmer, or indeed know if the product they have bought with a BCI label on it is made with BCI cotton or that of regular cotton.

We can see, in part, the concept of *net green* (Zink & Geyer, 2016) in practice with this BCI case study, where the activity and system that the cotton is part of are being green marketed via B2B. However, being only one segment of a value chain and not the whole activity, fashion businesses would need to look deeper into the value chain using, for example, the GHG scope 3 protocol (explained later in the chapter). Furthermore, consumer facing green claims made by fashion business about BCI could result in greenwashing, particularly due to the lack of traceability that the mass balance system has.

The Lack of Regulation and Possible Solutions

Green marketing, if left unregulated, will perpetuate misleading messages. This can confuse consumers, and potentially allow businesses to avoid the major goal of reducing carbon emissions, which we are on course to reduce, based on the UNFCCC February 2021 assessments. According to the UNFCCC, the world is falling ‘far short’ of alignment with the Paris Agreement, even though many nations have updated their climate targets. The assessment analysed 48 national emission reduction goals and revealed that collectively the emission goals will put the world on course to produce 1% less greenhouse gases in 2030 than it did in 2010. The target is 25% reduction to meet Paris Agreement’s 2C

trajectory and 45% reduction to achieve alignment with 1.5C by 2030. The report stated the only way to reach net 1.5C was the complete net-decarbonisation of the global economy by 2050 (Edie, 2021).

Faced with the grim reality of being way off the target, it is time fashion businesses shift mindsets and financial investment to fully engage with emerging economy fashion value chains in order to approach green marketing with a 'net green' mindset, which may mean, in the short term, reducing green claims in order to focus on investing in systems thinking frameworks and life cycle analysis that prioritise value chain stakeholders' human rights and include a seat at the decision table. An equity and inclusion approach may be the only chance we will have of achieving the 45% reduction in GHG emissions we need by 2030 to keep to the 1.5C pathway.

The good news is that regulation is stepping up, given the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA), UK, new guidelines that cover accuracy, the avoidance of ambiguity, not hiding or omitting essential information, enabling comparison between products, covering impacts across the product life cycle and ensuring claims can be substantiated (CMA, 2021).

In summary, successful green marketing is reliant on, but not limited to, fashion business understanding the rebound effect, the concept of net green and that overconsumption and production are the biggest barriers to creating responsible sustainable business models that can give us the carbon reduction to have a chance of aligning with 1.5C. Is the future for the term 'green marketing' the adoption of the term 'responsible marketing', where companies seek to educate consumers for responsible consumption with net green responsible production?

Sourcing—Sustainable Supply Chains in Emerging Economies

The Barriers and Potential Solution of Reducing Carbon Emissions in Indian Cotton Production

With a lack of robust legislation across global value chains, the responsibility of building sustainable measurable practice in the fibre-to-fabric stage has, in some part, fallen to non-governmental and non-profit

organisations like Laudes Foundation, Textile Exchange and ISEAL. According to the Fashion on Climate Report (2020, p. 05), it is estimated that more than 70% of the fashion industry's GHG emission comes from upstream activities, more specifically *from the fibre-to-fabric stage*. It is imperative that fashion businesses focus on this aspect of the value chain with accountability and responsibility.

For example, assessing the process of manufacturing a product and its raw material are activities which can be measured with tools like the GHG Scope 3 Standard (GHG Protocol, 2021) which allows fashion companies to measure GHG emissions at every stage of the upstream and downstream activity in the value chain. This is by no means a straightforward task, as Scope 3 emissions are often accounted for by several different companies, which leads to the question of who is responsible for reducing them. Indirect emissions are also often double or triple counted, with many companies' value chains significantly overlapping, which could be used as an excuse for inaction (Science Based Targets, 2021).

However, inaction will no longer be an option, especially given the changes expected from EU legislation in 2021 with the *Sustainable Product Policy Initiative*. The initiative is set to transform every aspect of designing, producing and selling products in the EU market. The initiative will overhaul traditional business models by incentivising businesses to adapt:

- Sustainable product design,
- New circular business models like product-as-a-service and
- Tracing products across the life cycle

It will also encourage businesses to ban the destruction of unsold durable goods including overstock

- Waste and circular resource flows

Source: (Ohana.net, 2021)

What does this mean for fashion businesses working with emerging economies like India? Here the author explores some of the complexities of tracing products across the life cycle using the Indian cotton supply chain as an example.

Having visibility of the source of the raw material will support fashion companies create a baseline for proactive planning and sustainable target setting. However, the infrastructure for data collection is inconsistent according to the latest report from the *Fashion Industry Charter for Climate Action* (FICCA), particularly for cotton and polyester. Improving fibre and material data, where the information on cotton has long been riddled with misconception due to outdated life cycle analysis (LCA) and extrapolations based on generalisations and the lack of regional- or farm-level impact data at scale, is imperative (UNFCCC, 2021).

Such complexities due to the lack of consistent frameworks that enable data measurement further highlight the need for investment and joined up accountability and stewardship from several actors including fashion businesses (FICCA, 2021, pp. 15–19). Furthermore, it is important to note that LCA is only one method of looking at environmental impacts and does have some limitations. Using a diverse approach where the results are triangulated to improve data quality is essential. For example, taking a longitudinal design, to measure impact over time, rather than impacts measured in one single time (Chester, 2021).

The cotton industry, like many others, is unprepared for the changes that the growing climate crisis is bringing (Cotton2040, 2021). It may be essential for fashion businesses to understand how upstream activities can be measured by first understanding the nature of upstream activity for cotton, a basic example of which can be seen in Fig. 7.5. However, LCA data gathering may further be affected by implications of climate, which will profoundly impact Indian cotton farmers and other actors across the value chain (Cotton2040, 2021, pp. 3–4).

These impacts will require a response that goes beyond incremental solutions to fundamental changes. What is required is a radical rethink of where, how and why cotton is produced and traded and what the future holds for this economically and culturally important fibre (Cotton2040, 2021, pp. 3–4).

The need for collective intervention from all stakeholders into the fibre-to-fabric value chain is ever more apparent. Exploring Indian cotton farming, this case study seeks to highlight the complexities and considerations for next steps.

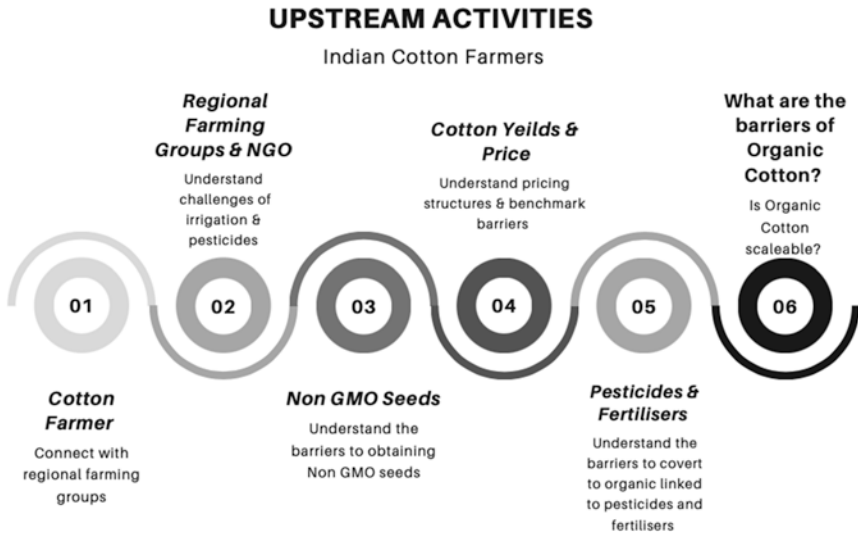


Fig. 7.5 An example of upstream activities that fashion companies can engage with Indian cotton farming groups. (Source: Authors own Campbell [2021])

Case Study

Indian Cotton Farming—The Need for Collective Intervention

Emerging economies such as India, one of the world's fastest growing economies, face numerous challenges as brands and retailers consider alternative production origins and methods of sourcing. Impacted by increased focus on sustainable and regenerative best practice, India faces barriers such as lack of legislation, monetary constraints, poor digital infrastructure and lack of standards (Luthra et al., 2019). India has some leverage as the world's largest cotton producer (Statista, 2021), and with cotton being the second largest textile fibre consumed globally (Textile Exchange, 2020) with a share of approximately 23% to the total volume of the fibre market produced globally (UNFCCC, 2021), the demand for cotton is likely to continue.

In India, cotton fibres are grown by 90% of farmers who have small holdings of a maximum of 2 hectares (Laudes Foundation, Chester A, 2020), and with a lack of legislation in place, farmers can be misled by marketing agents of chemical companies into using a cocktail of pesticides with promises of securing them a better yield (Laudes Foundation, Chester, A, 2020). This can prevent farmers from adopting organic farming methods. India is

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one of the largest organic cotton producers globally, supported through initiatives and non-profit organisations like *Laudes Foundation* who provide grant funding for capacity building of farmers, supporting the development of farmer collectives and work on non-GMO seed supply. *Laudes Foundation* partners also work to connect the farm collectives to the supply chain of large brands and retailers with the idea of securing more lucrative terms (Laudes Foundation, Chester A, 2021). As reported by Textile Exchange data, less than 1% of the global cotton production is organic.

Organic farming faces numerous challenges such as

- Non-GMO seed availability
- It takes at least 3 years for a farm to transition to organic.
- Financial support for farmers to transition.

Laudes Foundation, Chester, A (2020)

That said, the biggest challenge India faces is the climate crisis, and with demands to grow sustainable and organic cotton increasing, India is still hindered by numerous barriers even though it is best positioned to meet the demand.

According to the report *Physical Climate Risk and Vulnerability Assessment: India*, the assumptions on which current cotton supply chains are based cannot be regarded as viable or a predictable part of the future. This is supported by the fifth assessment report of the International Governmental Panel on Climate Change (IPPC) which states that for India (Cotton2040, 2021, p. 5),

- Temperatures may increase significantly by the 2030s as compared to the 1970s, with increase in maximum temperatures, especially in coastal regions,
- Floods and droughts will become more frequent due to shifts in monsoon patterns,
- Extreme events such as cyclones will increase in intensity and
- Yields of major crops such as rice and sorghum are projected to decline.

Source: Cotton2040 (2021, p. 5)

This will have cascading impacts on human and natural systems. Heat waves and sea-level rises will affect ecosystems and people across coastlines. Climate change could reduce annual agricultural incomes by 15–18% on average, and up to 20–25% for unirrigated areas. The Climate Risk Explorer Tool created by *Cotton2040* can support understanding of the physical climate risk and vulnerability assessment of Indian cotton.

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Solutions

Cotton2040

'The cotton system will need significant, and in cases radical change to become resilient in an increasingly climate-disrupted world. This can only be achieved by a systemic, collaborative approach involving actors across the supply chain.'

(*Forum for the Future*, 2021)

Cotton2040 is a pre-competitive multi-stakeholder initiative which exists to support the shift to a sustainable global cotton industry.

- It is resilient in a changing climate,
- It uses business models that support sustainable production and livelihoods and
- It promotes sustainably produced cotton is the norm.

Through Cotton2040 the range of sustainable cotton standards has come together to collaborate for the first time on increasing awareness and uptake of sustainably produced cotton. (*Forum for the Future*, 2021).

The Organic Cotton Accelerator

The Organic Cotton Accelerator (OCA) is the only multi-stakeholder organisation fully dedicated to organic cotton. OCA unites the sector to unleash the potential of organic cotton and deliver positive change for people and the planet. Every dollar invested in OCA programmes improves farmer profitability and prosperity, contributes to environmental sustainability and bolsters the integrity of the cotton sector.

'We support farmers because they're the catalysts for this change—the stewards of the land. Support the farmer, you strengthen the sector, and you safeguard the planet.'

(*Organic Cotton Accelerator* (2021))

The Delta Framework

The Delta Framework, an initiative of Better Cotton Initiative and Global coffee platform with support from the ISEAL Innovation Fund, was established to drive alignment in sustainability standards' data collection and measurement approaches, with a view to credibly reporting on collective impact in the cotton and coffee sectors. A pan-sector and cross-sector framework has immense potential to drive alignment on how organisations view and address the key sustainability challenges. Standards systems have a critical role to play in this process: when standards align and collaborate, they form a united front to bring clarity and attention to complex issues and reach a broad segment of the industry. Through a series of pilot tests in five regions in India and complementary shared learning activities with Cotton2040 working group members, ISEAL proposes to catalyse the

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journey towards standards' wide-scale adoption of the Delta Framework, so that companies and financial actors can follow.

The Delta Framework stakeholder signatories are:

- Better Cotton Initiative
- Cotton Australia
- Cotton Connect
- Cotton Made in Africa
- CRDC
- Fairtrade
- Organic Cotton Accelerator
- Textile Exchange

(*Delta Framework 2021*)

Following a systemic interdependence framework may be a way for fashion businesses to achieve systemic change. An example of it is seen here, which illustrates the example of the cotton sector (Fig. 7.6).

In summary, it is essential that joined-up thinking becomes the default norm, in order for the cotton industry to collectively adapt to the changing climate while simultaneously building from within a robust infrastructure that can produce sustainable cotton within planetary boundaries where farmers can prosper and value chain stakeholders are environmentally and financially accountable for the cotton value chain.

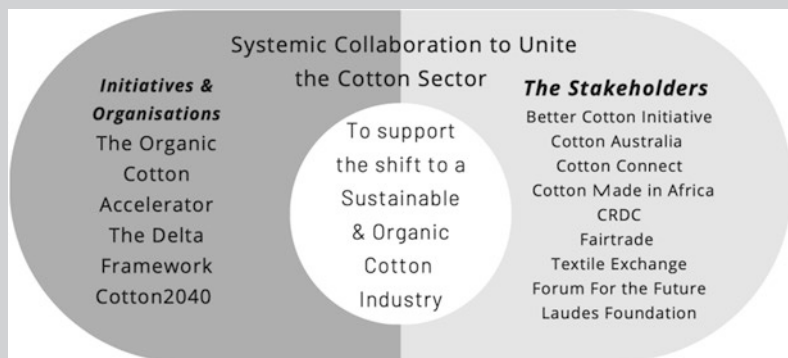


Fig. 7.6 Systemic interdependence framework. (Source: Authors Own, Campbell[2021])

Garment Manufacturing in Emerging Economies

Developing an agile manufacturing chain that is trustworthy, robust and efficient requires years of relationship development but is crucial as part of the flow of product through the value chain (Nguyen & Mogaji, 2021a). From a manufacturing perspective, it appears that most active sustainable practices and changes have been towards adopting sustainable fibres and fabrics, reducing harmful chemicals, increasing the commitment to recycled fabrics and more widespread use of organic fabrics such as cotton. H & M, for example, state that 64.5% of their materials will be from recycled or sustainable sources with a plan to reach a KPI of 100% by 2030 in their annual Sustainable Performance Report. This is a remarkable improvement from 2017 at 35.5% (H & M, 2020). Likewise, the greatest amount of research revolves around this area with the greatest number of publications.

However, garment manufacturing covers the design, sampling, cutting, making and delivery of a product, and it is this process of manufacturing that comes under the biggest scrutiny in emerging economies from the media, consumers, stakeholders and governing bodies with regards to ethical standards, health and safety, living standards and modern slavery issues, among others.

Workers' Rights and the Pay Gap

A challenge regularly reported relates to living wage, with *Labour Behind The Label* (LBTL) fighting for action in relation to workers' rights. It would appear, that companies pose resistance to adopting a unilateral wage agreement, and the cost and time management of efficient and transparent auditing is complex (Nguyen & Mogaji, 2021b).

This poses continual pressure on the manufacturer to follow guidelines, rules and policy as well as on brands to take ownership and responsibility. LBTL (2020) reports that brands and manufacturers say that sustainability is complex, and as yet many fashion companies have not signed up the Living Wage Petition. Their campaign dubbed '#payyourworkers' demands that companies such as *Nike*, *Next* and

Amazon sign up to pay workers during the pandemic and protect workers' rights.

The 'Going for Growth Report' (OECD, 2021) advises how to achieve strong sustainable growth across the globe comparing advanced economies to emerging economies. Sturdy global growth after the 2008 recession was recorded but productivity has been slowing, particularly in emerging economies, since the pandemic. Although employment has not reached pre-crisis levels from 2008, not enough people are employed in good-quality jobs and there is potentially a shortage in skilled areas. In emerging economies, job recovery has also been much slower than in advanced economies. More generally, over the past two decades, many OECD countries' average wage growth has not kept up with productivity growth, and low to medium wages have lagged even further behind, contributing to rising wage inequality across advanced and emerging economies.

This all points to considerable evidence that although poverty levels have dropped in emerging economies (OECD), they remain high in comparison globally. Also, levels of pay, opportunities, inclusive practice and job security remain significantly behind that of advanced economies. There is still a need to improve skills, consider ageing populations and drive more security in employment contracts, where short-term contracts and zero contract hours have become the norm to balance inequalities prevalent across the globe. Reforms are still essential to provide equal opportunity and pay for workers. The outlook, post-COVID-19 and beyond 2021, forecasts a further deeper recession with lower levels in emerging economies than in the general global outlook.

Auditing Garment Manufacturers

Social audits have been a barrier to the success of responsibly sourced fashion, as a variety of inconsistent and ineffective audit methodologies have not improved global working conditions in the supply chains. As a result, resources are wasted in duplicative yet incomparable efforts without addressing the root causes of poor working conditions. Audits, traditionally, have been either top-down brand-owned or bottom-up

self-defined or self-assessed (with no verification) by the factories that make the product. This means that there has been no standardised audit methodology applied by external stakeholders to define clear progress in sustainable garment manufacturing.

Social Labour and Convergence Programme (SLCP) is a multi-stakeholder initiative to reduce audit fatigue and reallocate resources. SLCP is supported by more than 200 signatories from different stakeholder groups that publicly commit to SLCP's mission and vision which are

1. Converged assessment,
2. Collaborative action and
3. Improved working conditions.

Through a multi-stakeholder process, SLCP developed and implemented a Converged Assessment Framework (CAF). The CAF is designed to eliminate audit fatigue and duplicate efforts. Having SLCP verify data by monitoring progress over the year, SLCP will provide opportunities to hold industry accountable for improved working conditions. It is split into three steps as seen in Fig. 7.7.

Step 1: Essentially focuses on key social and labour compliance questions, mostly connected to International Labour Standards (ILS) and National Labour Law (NLL), making it suitable for majority of the stakeholders.

Step 2: Progressively focuses on management systems and questions that are supportive to social and labour compliance questions but less critical. These questions are often found in social industry and certification standards.

Step 3: Advanced questions that go above and beyond social responsibility industry standards, which are not required by international or national law, and seek to elevate workplace well-being and community impact.

By structuring the manufacturing processes into three tiers, they are able to identify where the issues are (Fig. 7.8).

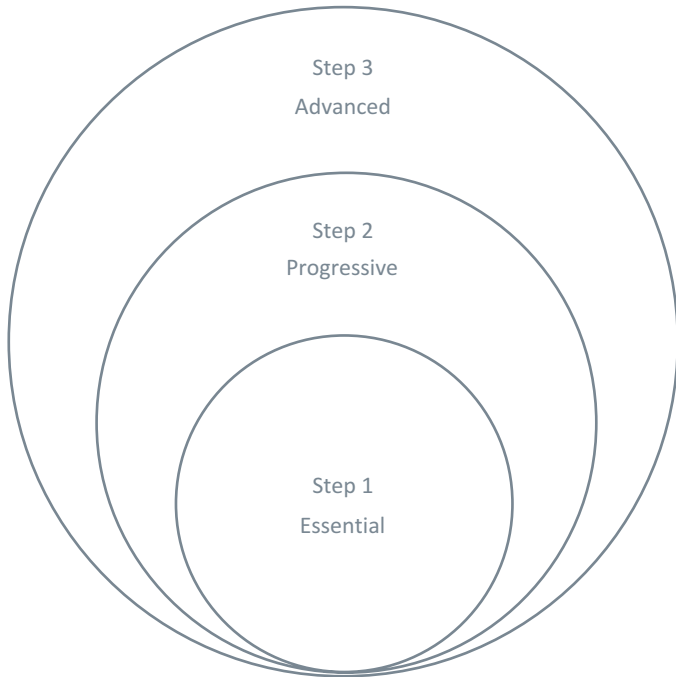


Fig. 7.7 Converged assessment framework. (Source: Social and Labour Convergence Programme). <https://slconvergence.org/manufacturers-using-slcp>

TIER 1	All processes related to finished product assembly such as, cutting, panel screen printing, embroidery, sewing, pressing, garment dyeing, washing & finishing, packing etc
TIER 2	Includes all processes related to material production such as weaving, knitting, fabric dyeing/printing tanning etc
TIER 3	Includes all processes related to raw material production such as stock dyeing yarn spinning,/dyeing, fleshing, liming etc

Fig. 7.8 Tiers of processes in manufacturing supply chain. (Source: Social and Labour Convergence Programme). <https://slconvergence.org/manufacturers-using-slcp>

Case Study: Adidas 'Fair Play'

Taking ownership in manufacturing units and setting new standards is the way forward. As a leading sportswear brand in a sector that is notorious for poor practice and working standards, Adidas has developed what they call 'Workplace Standards'. These include Labour Rights Charter and Fair Play Code of Conduct, which draw from standards set by the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights and International Labour Law (ILO). As with a complex multilayered relationship with suppliers, it was important to them to create new policies and a chain of conduct, recognising that workers in the factories are as important as their own employees. However, setting the standards needs careful monitoring across the supply chain to ensure compliance. This requires training and investment, which then impacts the suppliers' rating and can affect long-term development of business. Therefore, it is in both parties' interests to improve working standards. This would include risk assessments of current and future potential suppliers by mapping capabilities and developing those that fall outside of the standards. By setting a 'zero-tolerance' for serious health working conditions, prison labour and repeated systematic abuse, Adidas set a new level of working standards. Despite continuous monitoring they recognise openly that they have more to do.

Further, by focusing on tier 2 suppliers, where it is notorious for multilayered outsourcing and unregulated agencies, Adidas has placed focus on identifying and remedying modern slavery within production units, providing guidance on poor practice and addressing the issues head-on rather than avoiding them. It is this level of transparency within the value chain that is much needed to take ownership and responsibility within the business partnerships.

Global Commitment on Living Wages

The definition of a living wage according to Act on Living Wages (2020) is the minimum income necessary for a worker to meet the basic needs of himself/herself and his/her family, including some discretionary income. This should be earned during legal working hour limits (i.e., without overtime).

In most fashion producing countries, workers' wages are currently set well below what could be considered a living wage, and the Action, Collaboration and Transformation (ACT) initiative is the first global commitment on living wages which works towards a standard audit format so that relevant stakeholders can develop their role in taking

responsibility in providing a living wage. Companies such as *ASOS*, *H & M*, *Next*, *Primark* and the *Inditex Group* are *ACT members and abide by the principle that employers and trade unions should reach agreement on a living wage through collective bargaining at industry level*. Each wage will depend on the country needs and is individually negotiated to achieve a legal and social standard. By making the initiative legally binding, each stakeholder has responsibility towards the employees' pay, so a brand or retailer must ensure that their practices facilitate the successful implementation. The Sustainable Apparel Coalition has worked towards a standard audit and measurement targets, but this is not an industry-wide standard.

Sustainable Futures in Garment Manufacturing

Supply chain management mainly covers manufacturers, producers, distributors, suppliers and customers, often with interchangeable language where value is added at each touch point, so in-depth skills sharing, transparent approaches as well as re-educating investors are priority.

Moving towards more sustainable approaches in emerging economies in the supply chain means brands, retailers, buyers, designers and manufacturers must work together to collaborate and focus in the following key areas.

Future Focus on New Areas for Development in Emerging Economies

By development of direct outsourcing and seeking new and progressive thinking in emerging economies, new ways of working can be developed. As one of the oldest African countries, Ethiopia has been overlooked by Western economies due to political and economic unrest. *Fibre2Fibre* is a business organisation offering market news and global intelligence in the textile industry; Ethiopia is quoted as one of the new economies to focus on as an alternative sourcing base, with countries such as China already working to shift production for its own economy. The pay gap

here is large and poses threats to exploitation as workers here are paid the lowest in country-wide comparisons; however, with the right training, strategic planning and building relationship, there is potential to develop new routes of production for positive impact.

Development of Artisan Craftsmanship as a Partnership or Collaboration

Because of the pressure of static, if not decreasing, retail prices, this leaves more opportunity to work ethically and responsibly in emerging economies to achieve sustainable production. Developing long-term relationships with smaller sourcing partners poses a huge opportunity for designers seeking uniqueness and value-driven designs while skill sharing opens out the opportunity to preserve heritage craft processes in the textile and manufacturing process.

Case Study: In Discussion with Seyi Sokoya (Founder, Kamso Kids)

Kamso Kids works closely with artisans in Africa, mainly in Nigeria, and recently in collaboration with Designer Adjoa, bringing together 'the spirit of West Africa' by embracing and incorporating the ancient practice of Adinkra into clothing products.

Kamso Kids is an example of best practice towards a more sustainable future by working directly with manufacturing units and artisan crafts in Nigeria. The vision of the company developed out of a necessity to work in a more sustainable way and to support an emerging economy. From Nigerian heritage Seyi, the founder of Kamso, formed relationships and channels to fulfil production of her high-quality childrenswear brand. The ethos of the company is built on African culture, working with skills from African artisans whilst promoting well-being in the communities that they work with. Recognising that although the skill and the labour force were there, many manufacturing units are known to be exploited, so it was important that strong connections were made, and trust was developed from both sides.

By working closely with a community of makers, she was able to work in a more dynamic and progressive way, sharing skills and enabling manufacturers to be involved in the production and design process. She also recognised the gap in the market to work with more artisan-based weavers, thus developing the value chain on both fabrics and garment production. The

(continued)

(continued)

result is a unique, high-quality product that stands out in the market. By having long-term sustainable goals in the supply chain and not shifting production from changing trends, she is able to build relationships and business that foster good practice and support an emerging economy to grow.

Knowledge Partnership and Collaboration

Another main opportunity for retailers and sourcing teams to develop are long-term strategies with garment manufacturers, sharing knowledge, shifting from harsh negotiations to working together for sustainable business. However, the fickle arm of fashion currently forces away from these, as seasonal designs shift from one capability to another, and with retailers often keeping commitments to a short time frame and low investment. This does not encourage longer-term commitments. The trend to move away from vertical integration to disintegration has left little opportunity to foster more positive long-term goals across economies.

However, against all odds *People Tree* has a long history of working with manufacturers in emerging economies to develop product ranges. The brand mission centres around developing communities and skills with over 90% of their products sourced from Fair Trade groups (PeopleTree.com). The product is made to the highest ethical and environmental standard, collaborating with the V & A and Tencel and meeting global organic textile standards. By partnering early on in their business model, they have been able to lead the way, gathering accreditations and certifications along the way with an annual turnover of £2.5 million.

Supply Management Technological Innovations

The challenge of demand volatility in the fashion industry and the upwards pressure from consumers mean that sustainable sourcing and supply management are priority for businesses to address and to implement sustainable practice across the whole value chain from fibre production to garment construction. The increase issue of demand volatility

from consumers is still conflicting with actual sustainable values and consumption, with the value of fast cheap imports still growing and easily accessible for many consumers.

As more brands fight to improve their competitive advantage in a commoditised market, the need to redefine current value propositions across the whole chain of processes is ever evident. Continual resourcing across borders for cheaper prices, the direction of many companies now is to redefine the response to consumer demand and improve end-to-end efficiency using technology and improving product life management systems.

By creating new business models and including sustainable practice across all the activities, processes and locations in connection to the human interactivity, brands can start to build stronger sustainable futures.

Sustainable Business Models in the Supply Chain

Fashion organisations have typically mapped their supply chain activities based on adding value to a product or service. In China, the seismic shift from the farming land was all diverted to the ‘added-value’ manufacturing sector process. By creating clear marketing plans, identifying consumers and target markets and presenting dynamic and enticing value propositions, Chinese companies grew their profits and volume output. This was a widespread practice across the industry during the 1990s.

Sustainable business development is ‘development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of the future generations to meet their own needs’ (Bruntland, 1987). This became a mantra used by many advocates of sustainable practice, consumers, the media, investors and pressure organisations aimed at encouraging more meaningful approaches and new ways of working towards development. By using a ‘value mapping tool’, companies were then able to create a structured approach to a ‘sustainable’ business (i.e., strong business growth), which is an approach still prevalent today.

Applying a sustainable business model though does come without its challenges, and so to consider the environmental, economics and people

impact has become frequent practice (i.e., the ‘triple bottom line’ coined by Peter Elkington in 1994). By considering what Peter Drucker would say ‘for purpose and profit’, brands started to reconsider the traditional value mapping of product to profit.

The Value Chain

When Michael Porter introduced the value chain in 1956 the aim was to create a strategic framework for examining the internal processes and activities a company undertook. It was used as a tool for creating and improving value for the consumer by identifying activities that affect value and cost in a business.

Although there are nine core activities, including support services in technology, human resource, infrastructure and procurement, the primary activities are

1. Inbound logistics,
2. Operations,
3. Outbound logistics,
4. Marketing and sales and
5. Service.

Procurement, or more commonly known as purchasing in fashion though, was seen as a support activity and not integral to the primary objectives. The model has been used for decades across the fashion chain and helped companies set a strategy and framework for analysing costs and performance, with measurable KPIs to assess effectiveness. These might include reduced costs, increased margin and quality-driven statistics. These factors and measures would have been considered as improvements in the value chain on yearly indicators.

Now, with the growing pressure from consumers and media for companies to present a transparent and sustainable strategy, all layers and links in the value chain should be evaluated including the intangible assets, or improvements gained by a company through those external

activities in sustainable practice. A much wider perspective on the global key macro drivers and their subsequent impact, particularly on emerging economies, should be considered. By considering big macro shifts of consumer mindsets, human disasters and climate emergency, as well as building in measures and allowances for inclusive practice, sustainable goals and resilient growth further improve value created in the eyes of the consumer.

These new ways of working, with an enhanced added-value chain model (McPhee & Wheeler, 2006), are essential in the fashion industry. There is a need for brands to evaluate their full business practice and to analyse on a much broader level the entire supply chain and its practices, therefore creating more opportunities to improve practices in emerging economies based on people, planet and profits and not just profitability. The OECD calls for large systemic change so that the poorest people in the globe can be included and considered in this chain.

Collaborative Business Strategies in Emerging Economies

Collaboration is one of the routes to changing existing linear supply chain models which often work in silos, into holistic value chains that serve all stakeholders, and build robust systems that create equity for the most vulnerable upstream stakeholders. Globally the fashion industry has limited government legislation in place, which has resulted in an unregulated practice that supports exploitation of workers' rights and drives down costs.

An unregulated industry has paved the way for non-profit organisations like the Laudes Foundation to step up and offer measurement tools, frameworks and collaboration through standardisation and accreditation.

This case study, which is an interview with Anita Chester (head of Sustainable Raw Materials at the Laudes Foundation), explores how collaboration is serving the cotton-growing communities of India.

Case Study—Laudes Foundation

Laudes Foundation is an independent foundation joining the growing movement to accelerate the transition to a climate positive and inclusive global economy. Responding to the dual crises of climate breakdown and inequality, Laudes supports brave action that inspires and challenges the industry to harness its power for good. Laudes Foundation focuses on initiatives that aim for systems change while enabling impact, learning continuously along the journey. The focus is also on impacting the flow of capital in a way that supports businesses to be responsible and engage in interconnected action.

Anita Chester makes the case for why collaborative systems are the way to achieve the biggest impact at the heart of upstream cotton value chains.

Systems are driven by the power of the markets and supply chains are expected to comply. Factories, workers and farmers have little input into the system and no seat at the table. Investments are often made in the wrong area, assurance and audits do not support inside-out change and the focus is on top-down thinking and does not support equity, building of resilient communities and regenerative practices.

Part of our work at Laudes is creating an environment where interconnected thinking underpins the strategy, allows for system change to include farmers 'having a seat at the table' and redresses the power balance. We must look at a sustainably managed landscape, comprising a multi-stakeholder approach. An 'everyone has a seat at the table' coalition of sorts, to see what is possible to heal the earth. Healing the earth must be the mission—it is about helping farmers create a regenerative ecosystem and build incentives that support the change. This requires the private sector to understand the supply chain as part of their best practice rather than as 'other'.

Among the many initiatives of the Laudes Foundation, one is supporting Cotton2040 to create a common impact measurement framework for the standards such as BCI and organic cotton, so that they speak the same language about sustainable cotton farming. And while evidence suggests technology tools such as the Higg Index, Blockchain and other standards may have a place in measuring impact or building future provenance, the route to producing a sustainable cotton industry, for example, is to take an 'inside-out change' approach which ensures farmers are supported at grass-roots level with training tools, finance and cotton seed access for growing sustainable cotton and have a lucrative market for their produce (Chester A, 2020).

Circularity and the Value Chain

According to WRAP, (2020) an estimated £140 million worth (around 350,000 tonnes) of used clothing goes to landfill in the UK every year. As consumers discard product much quicker than a decade ago waste mountains are growing. Initiatives to break up clothes to repurpose have grown, creating new processes for garment production and supply. For emerging economies this poses a huge opportunity to investigate circular models in recycling or upcycling clothes and their components to create waste streams. Social media campaigns such as *Loved Clothes Last* (Fashion Revolution), *Second-hand September* (Oxfam) and *Love your Clothes* (WRAP, 2020) have grown in reach and awareness, so consumers' growing appetite for the second clothes market has fuelled a new economy of fashion. The market is further predicted to grow as currently only 1% of textile waste is recycled.

This circularity of supply is the aim of a closed loop value chain, to reverse into the value system before and after the end of a garment life. The 'take-make-dispose' linear model is therefore being replaced with a circular model principle with brands such as Nike and H & M taking back product for recycling and repair. The main elements of closed loop are direct reuse, repair, recycling and upcycling, otherwise they then go to landfill (Paksoy et al., 2011). By disassembling, sorting and repurposing existing garments brands, retailers can reoffer products to the consumers that are more sustainable.

Waste management, however, is also a growing concern in emerging economies as they struggle to manage and organise the excesses that are sent their way and the cost of the recycling is stretching communities to the limit. Waste streams can become income streams, but they need investment and infrastructure. Regulations and brand ownership are recommended by government, but as yet the responsibility is still not taken up and neither have any policies been defined. Proposals by Ellen MacArthur Foundation propose to 'radically increase recycling and increase clothing utilisation'.

It is only a matter of time before legislation like the EU Sustainable Product Initiative will hold fashion companies accountable. The main principle of the Sustainable Product Initiative is to only allow sustainable products to be produced, advertised and sold in the EU market. It sets out concrete product requirements that span all dimensions of

sustainability, with circular product design at its core. The idea is to intervene *before* products become waste, but the initiative will also include waste and recycling policy.

Legislation for the Sustainable Product Initiative draws on several other legislative proposals as part of the Circular Economy Action Plan. These include policies for empowering consumers and for substantiating green claims. (Ohana, 2021).

Corporate Social Responsibility

Corporate objectives are set by company to define the direction of a company, often expressed in financial terms for future sales, growth and investment purposes, and different levels of objectives are then escalated through the structures for employees, suppliers, stakeholders, the community and NGOs. The corporate objectives then cascade to company objectives, statements of financial targets, translated for each department to work towards and directing the operations of the organisation. Over the past 20 years it has been questioned how an organisation affects the community, its value in society and its role; so increasingly now, companies will accompany this with statements on values, missions and philosophy to develop the purpose around the business activities (Mogaji et al., 2021).

This could be seen as the standards set and often is accompanied by an ethics policy or corporate social responsibility standard. A code of conduct leads the way for the employees to follow and implement, as well as continually acknowledging changes and shifts towards better practice. Once seen as an add-on to the company, strategy corporate social responsibility (CSR) is now incorporated from the outset.

The fashion industry coming under such scrutiny has had to redefine its activities from the outset and show its consumers its responsibility. Companies have had pressure to show their commitment and how it has made a difference. From employment to working conditions, from child labour and discrimination to sustainable practice in action, consumers are pressuring companies to have open and honest transparency in their activities. They need to feel assured that brands are taking responsibility when working in emerging economies and are not exploiting the workers

and resources. Often times, the triple bottom line of *people, planet* and *profit* is a minimal expectation now.

H & M has worked towards three pillars:

1. 100% leading the change,
2. 100% fair and equal pay and
3. 100% circular and climate positive

At H & M Group, we consider the needs of present and future generations, and are aware that our entire business must be conducted in a way that is economically, socially and environmentally sustainable. This is why we set clear ambitions and bold goals. (H & M, 2020)

As society has developed, so has the phenomenal growth of NGOs or non-governing organisations offering accreditation, partnership and membership towards the UN Sustainable Goals. These can include charities, cooperatives, businesses and consumer organisations. It is a reflection on both societal shifts and growing needs in Third World countries for change to address complex issues. By working in partnership, or as members, these third parties offer bespoke services towards sustainable practice that enforce rights of workers, safety and promote well-being.

Figure 7.9 outlines some key organisations addressing societal issues and bridging the gap between an organisation's capabilities and the progressive needs of workers, individuals, safety and sustainable practice to improve working conditions.

These NGOs and organisations are often evidenced on a brand's website, highlighted in the corporate social responsibility charter but the question remains on who owns the accountability and where does the responsibility lie.

New standards also being set can have a global impact across the supply chain. For example, developed from [ISO.org](https://www.iso.org), a globally recognised company has developed ISO26000 Social Responsibility, used in many factories and companies to continue towards 'sustained development'. The core subjects and issues revolve around the UN goals set, recognising two main goals:

Organisation	Objective	Partner
ACT on Living Wages		Asos, Primark, H&M, Inditex, C&A, GStar, Next, New Look, Tesco, Zalando
Accord	Fire and Building Safety in Bangladesh supporting ready-Made Garment factories in Bangladesh become safe	Country Road, Target, C&A, Monoprix, Adidas, Puma, Esprit, Mango, Inditex, H&M, John Lewis, River Island, ASOS, M&S
Business Fights Poverty	Building relationships to recover business post covid19 with long lasting aspects of well-being	Primark, Walmart
Canopy	Protecting Frontier Forestry from large scale destruction	Ted Baker, Inditex, Vivienne Westwood, Kering Group, M&S, VF corp
GOTS Global Organic Textile Standard	Membership of the Partnership for Sustainable Textiles and aiming to increase the share of organic cotton	
Cotton Connect	Transforming the cotton industry for a more robust supply chain	Kerring, John Lewis, Primark
Delivering Good	Bringing together retailers, manufacturers, foundations and individuals to provide people impacted by poverty and tragedy	CFDA, Home Fashion Products Associations
Ellen MacArthur Foundation	Make Fashion Circular	H&M, Gap, Burberry, Inditex, Stella McCartney, PVH Group
Waste Aid	WasteAid shares waste management and recycling skills in the world's poorest places	Lush Cosmetics
Impactt	ethical trade consultancy delivering practical, innovative, change-focused solutions across global supply chains.	DR Martens, Decathlon, M&S, Gap Inc
Sustainable Apparel Coalition	Aiming for the fashion industry to produce no unnecessary environmental harm and has a positive impact on the people and communities associated with its activities.	Inditex, Allbirds, GymShark, H&M Abercrombie, Boohoo, Camper, FarFetched, Eileen Fischer,

Fig. 7.9 Fashion brands' commitments to workers' rights. (Source: Adapted by Linda Mackie [2021])

Organisation	Objective	Partner
Women Win	Globally advancing women and girls rights	
BSR + Her project	strives to empower low-income women working in global supply chains	Nordstrum, Primark , Chanel, Boden, Burberry, Levis, VF Corporation

Fig. 7.9 (continued)

1. recognising its social responsibility within its sphere of influence and
2. identifying and engaging with its stakeholders

These global collaborations linking across the supply chain mean brands have a better chance of working responsibly.

Conclusion

To be successful in emerging economies, new business strategies and relationships in the global context need to be planned and implemented as long-term strategic partnerships. Deeper human understanding of those communities and economies is a necessity for long-term success (Brooksworth et al., 2022a, 2022b). By working with relevant stakeholders and NGOs, as well as building collaborative relationships, a more sustainable future can be created. A renewed consideration of the consumer demands is needed, because as consumer awareness increases, as human exploitation is more prevalent in the media and as powerful campaigns such as *The Fashion Revolution* grow, a successful brand must implement these approaches as a priority (Mogaji et al., 2022).

As more and more brands fight to improve their competitive advantage in a commoditised market, the need to redefine current value propositions across the whole chain of processes is ever evident. There is a need for a revised progressive vision on how these economies and relationships can develop in manufacturing and a shift of knowledge for transparency and traceability.

Appendix



What is the Social & Labor Convergence Program (SLCP)?

SLCP is a multi-stakeholder initiative to reduce audit fatigue and improve working conditions.



VISION:

*Converged Assessment.
Collaborative Action. Improved Working Conditions.*

MISSION:

To implement a **converged assessment framework** that supports stakeholders' efforts to improve working conditions in global supply chains.



SLCP Signatories – 246

July 2021

Brands/Retailers (51): adidas Group | Aldo Group | Amer Sports (Arc'teryx, Peak Performance) | Ann Inc. | Arena Italia SpA | Asics Corporation | BESTSELLER | Brooks Sports | C&A | Camelbak | Charles Komar & Sons | Columbia Sportswear (PAnza Living) | De Bijenkorf | Deckers Brands | Eileen Fisher | Esprit | Fanatics | Fastretailing/Uniqlo | Fenix Outdoor International AG | G-Star RAW | Gap Inc. | Hennes & Mauritz (H&M) | INDIGENOUS | Inditex | KappAhl | Kathmandu | Kering | Levi Strauss & Co. | LL Bean Inc. | Lojas Renner | Loomstate | lululemon Athletica | Macy's | Mountain Equipment Co-op (MEC) | Mud Jeans | New Balance | Nike | Outerknown | Patagonia | Pentland Brands | Puma | PVH Corporation | REI | Sanmar Corporation | SewEasy | Target Corporation | The Children's Place | VF Corporation | Williams-Sonoma Inc. | Zalando | Zephyr Graf-X.

Manufacturers (42): 1888 Mills | Artistic Milliners | Arvind Mills | Avery Dennison Corp. | Ceres Dis Ticaret Textile Agency Ltd. | Ciel Textile | Chenfeng Group Co. | Classic Fashion | Comfit Composite Ltd. | Crescent Bahuman Ltd | Crystal Group | DBL Group | Décor Co Ltd. | Delta Gall | Denim Expert | Eren Socks | Esquel Group | Hanbo Enterprises Holdings Ltd. | Hansae | Hirdaramani Enterprises | Hop Lun | ISKO | L&E Int. Ltd. | MAS Holdings | Milteks Group | Prabhata Syntex Ltd. | Ramatex Group | SAE - A Dominicana S.R.L. | Sapphire Textile Mills | SaTex | Shaafi Exports | SLN Tekstil | Soory Enterprises | TAL Apparel Group | Thread International | W. L. Gore & Associates | Visigma Apparel Group | World Knits Ltd. | Yesim | Youstex | Youngone | Yunus Textile Mills.

Agents (6): Ethical Apparel Africa | G-III Apparel Group Ltd. | Haddad Group | Li&Fung (Trading) Ltd. | MGF Sourcing | Randa Accessories

Audit Firms & Service Providers (86): 3D Audits & Advisory Ltd. | ABS Quality Evaluations Inc. | Accordia Global Compliance Group | ACT Testing Certification Technology Service Co. Ltd. | Advance Compliance Co. Ltd. | AJA Bangladesh Ltd. | ALGI API | ASCP Services | AS International | Assent Compliance | Asya CC&C | BCI Compliance Group Ltd. | Benchmarks Company Ltd. | Best Compliance Ltd | Big Cove Consulting | AP Cert Technical Services Co. Ltd. | BSI Group | Bureau Veritas | Bronco Technology | Business Link Consulting Co. Ltd. | Centre Testing International Group Co. Ltd. | Control Union Certifications | CSER Solutions Limited | DNWGL EasyDone Social Compliance Consulting Institute | Ekoteks Tekstil Laboratory | ELEVATE Hong Kong Holdings Ltd. | ESG360 Ltd. | Eurocert SA | Extensive Standard Technical Services Co. Ltd. | EST5 | Eurofins AOM HK | Fairland Ltd. | Footprints | GCL International Ltd. | GLOBE Group Certification Ltd. | Greenhubs Services Ltd | GSCS International Ltd. | Guardian Independent Certification Ltd. | Hong Kong Quality Assurance Agency (HKQAA) | HXC (Beijing) Certification Center Co. Ltd. | Link Development Services | Impact Ltd. | Intergroup Certification Limited | International Associates Ltd. | International Compliance Group | Intertek | Kaxin Certification (Beijing) Co. Ltd. | Key of Sustainable Improvements Ltd. | Leadership & Sustainability | Leverage Ltd. | Madedown International Testing Certification Inc. | NEWAsia Solutions Ltd. | Novi Group | NITL | Omega Compliance | OneStep Viet Co. Ltd. | Onsite Compliance & Technical Service Co. Ltd. | Openview Service Ltd. | Ozone Sustainability Management Systems (OSMS) | Partner Africa | QIMA Ltd. | Rina Services SpA | RST Co. Ltd. | SCSA Group | SGS | SMT Global | Standard Testing and Verification Jiansu Company Ltd. | Stantec SpA | Sumatsons GmbH | Sumerra | Sundar | Sustainable Compliance Management Ltd. | Sustainable Management System Inc. | SMS | Taos Network | Teks Tech Inspection India Private Ltd. | TOTALIKA Vertical Solutions | Trans Pacific Solutions | TÜV Rheinland | TÜV SÜD | U.L. Responsible Sourcing | URS Verification Pvt. Ltd. | VJN Global Solutions Ltd. | Trust Inspection Service | We-Tek Ltd.

Consultancies & Service Providers (19): &Wider | AMRA Limited | ARCHE Advisors | CSR Solutions Ltd. | FITI Testing & Research Institute | FutureMade | Huping Education | iMentor Development Services Pvt. Ltd. | InnoVatus | Matrix Sourcing/Triple Tree Solution | Micro Benefits | Otex Solutions Limited | Quizr | SupplyShift Inc. | Sustainable Alliance | The Sento Advisory Group | Timeline Consultancy | UJulia | Workplace Options

Industry Association (11): AIMA-Progress | American Apparel & Footwear Association (AAFA) | EURATEX | European Outdoor Group (EOG) | Istanbul Apparel Exporters' Association (IHKIB) | International Apparel Federation (IAF) | International Textile Manufacturers Federation (ITMF) | Joint Apparel Association Forum (JAAF) | Outdoor Industry Association (OIA) | Turkish Textile Employers Association (TTEA)

Multi-Stakeholder Initiatives, Standard Holders & Civil Society (29): Better Buying Institute | Cradle to Cradle Products Innovation Institute | Dutch Agreement on Sustainable Garments & Textile | EcoVadis | Enviu | Ethical Trading Initiative Norway (EIH) | Fair Factories Clearinghouse | Fair Trade USA | Fair Wear Foundation | Fair Working Conditions | Fairtrade Foundation | Freedom Fund | Global Fashion Agenda | Higg | ILO | Inspectorio Inc. | MVO Nederland | New Earth | Norges Bank Investment Management (NBIM) | Oeko-Tex Service GmbH | Proudly Made in Africa | Responsible Sourcing Network | Sustainable Apparel Coalition (SAC) | Sedex | SIM Supply Chain Information Management | Solidaridad | Textile Exchange | The Mekong Club | Verité

National Governments (2): Denmark - Ministry of Foreign Affairs | Netherlands Government

Intergovernmental organizations – observer status (1): Better Than Cash Alliance





History of SLCP



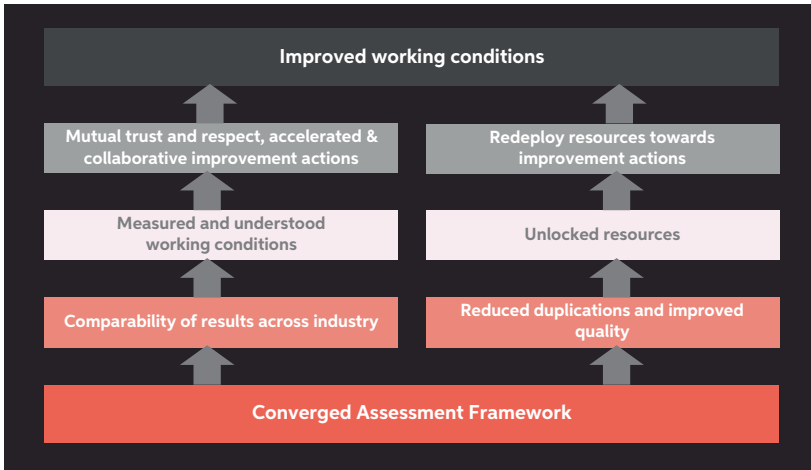
Why was SLCP created?

Proliferation of social audits led to:

- ! Audit fatigue
- ! Duplication and repetition
- ! Drain on resources
- ! Lack of collaboration
- ! Lack of facility ownership

In 2015, SLCP began convening stakeholders from across the industry to harmonize social audits and align around one common tool.

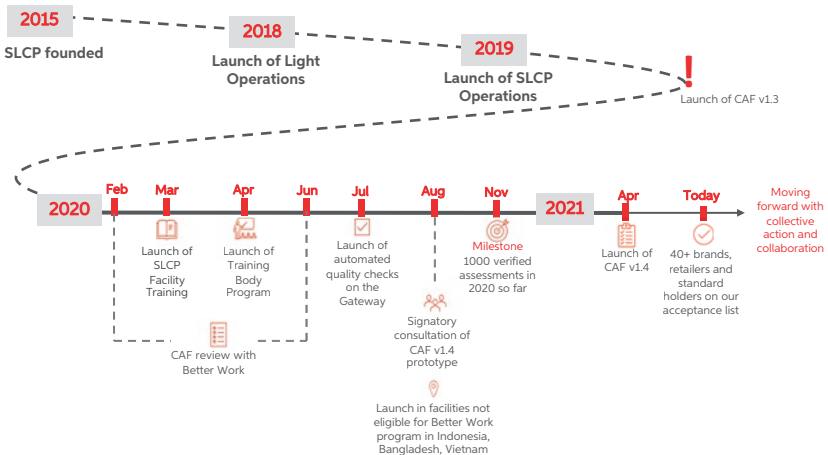
Program Goal and Overall Objective



Contribution to Sustainable Development Goals:

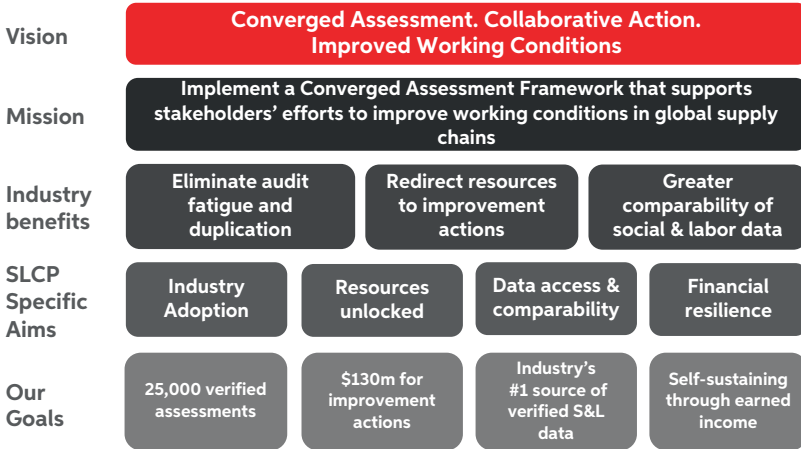


Timeline of SLCP Development

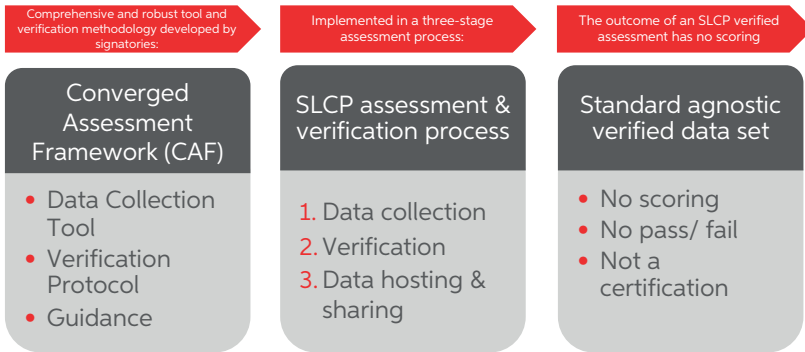


Core Strategy

SLCP Year Strategic plan approved 1 Nov 2018, 94% signatory support vote



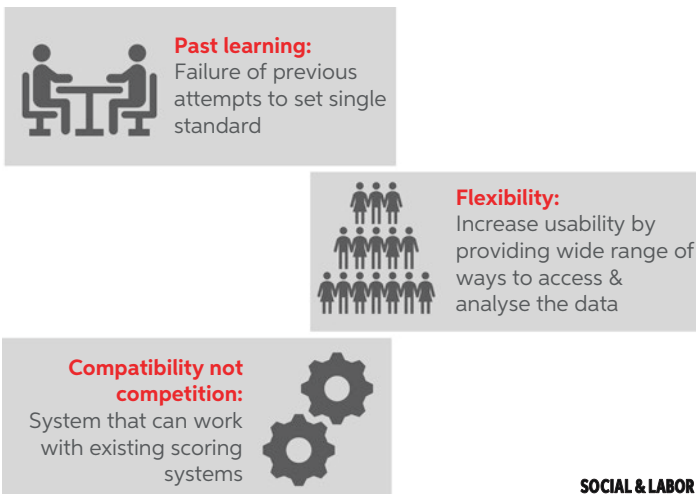
How does SLCP work?



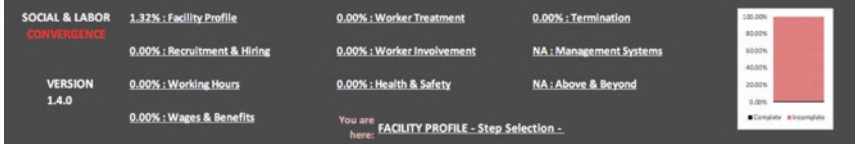
Visit the [SLCP Gateway](#) for more information



Why doesn't SLCP provide scoring?



What type of data does SLCP collect & verify?



- ✓ The Data Collection Tool is used to **self-assess working conditions**
- ✓ It helps a facility **understand their data**
- ✓ Facility can choose to do a **self-assessment** (on their own) or **joint- assessment** (with external support)
- ✓ The Tool is accessed via one of the **Accredited Hosts** & can be completed **online** or downloaded and completed **offline**
- ✓ Split into three Steps: Essential, Progressive & Advanced

Stage 1: Data Collection



What is included in the data points? Themes in each SLCP Step

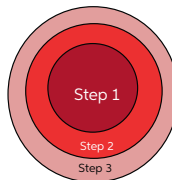
Step 1 Themes	Step 2 Themes	Step 3 Themes
FACILITY PROFILE	FACILITY PROFILE	FACILITY PROFILE
RECRUITMENT & HIRING	RECRUITMENT & HIRING	RECRUITMENT & HIRING
WORKING HOURS	WORKING HOURS	WORKING HOURS
WAGE & BENEFITS	WAGE & BENEFITS	WAGE & BENEFITS
WORKER TREATMENT	WORKER TREATMENT	WORKER TREATMENT
WORKER INVOLVEMENT	WORKER INVOLVEMENT	WORKER INVOLVEMENT
HEALTH & SAFETY	HEALTH & SAFETY	HEALTH & SAFETY
TERMINATION	TERMINATION	TERMINATION
	MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS	MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS
	ABOVE AND BEYOND	ABOVE AND BEYOND

Step 1 = Essential focuses on *key* social & labor compliance questions, mostly connected to International Labor Standards (ILS) and National Labor Law (NLL), making it well suited for the majority of stakeholders.

Step 2 = Progressive focuses on management systems and questions that are additional/supportive social & labor compliance questions but less critical. These questions are often found in social industry and certification standards.

Step 3 = Advanced questions that go above and beyond social responsibility industry standards, are not required by national or international law, and seek to elevate workplace well-being and community impact.

Selection Step 1, Step 2 or Step 3 (where Step 2 includes Step 1 scope, Step 3 includes Step 1 and 2 scopes)

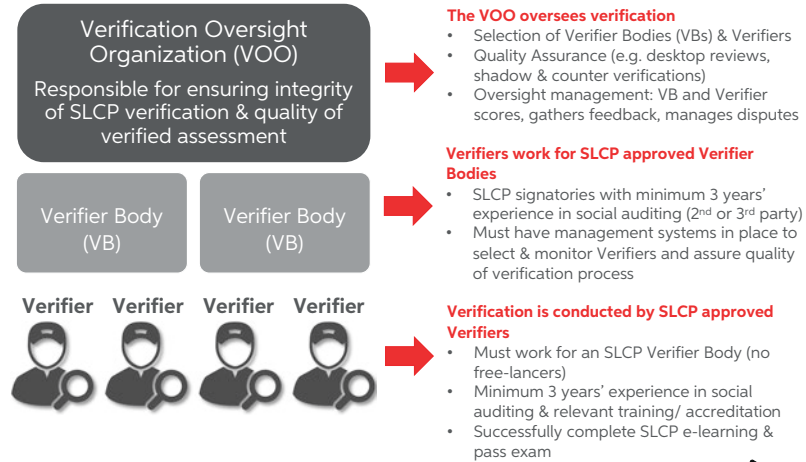


Stage 1: Data Collection



Robust Verification and Oversight

Verification methodology & Verification Oversight ensure quality



Stage 2: Verification



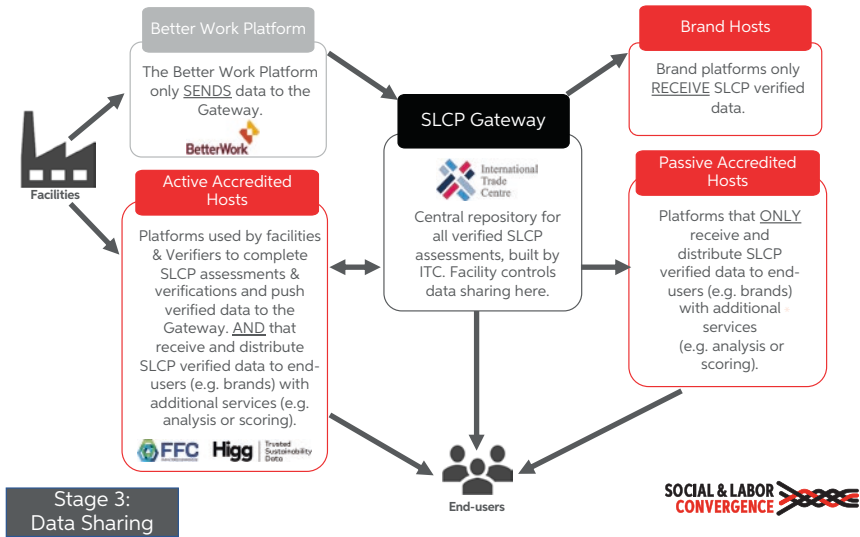
How does SLCP ensure data quality?



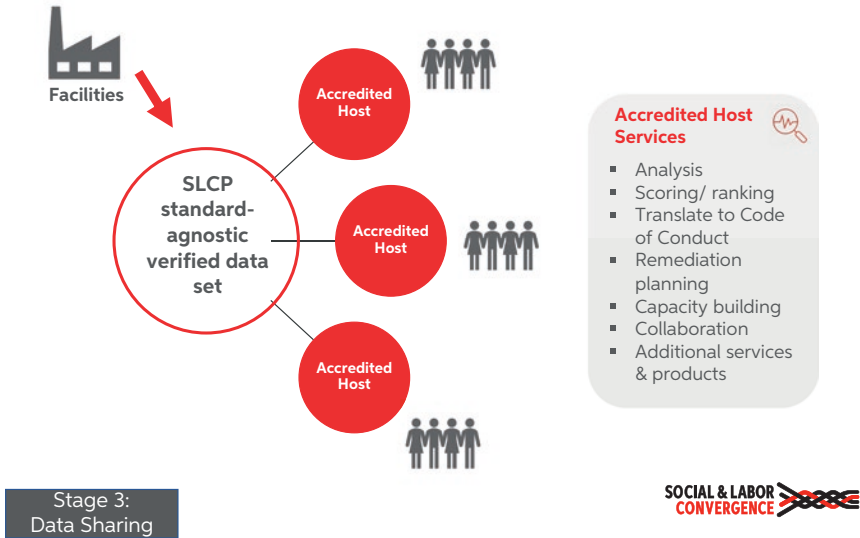
Stage 2: Verification



How does the SLCP sharing system work?



One Data Set for All Customers





Where is SLCP available?

SLCP is already available in **55** countries/regions.



- Already available
- Countries/regions added with the launch of CAF v1.4. Pakistan launched in May 2021
- Full launch in Summer 2021; soft launch in April 2021

By the end of 2021, SLCP will be available in 56 countries/regions. For the full roll-out schedule, please visit the [Gateway](#).

Manufacturers using SLCP

For more details, including which countries and tiers each manufacturer has implemented SLCP in, please see the full list on our [website](#).



The manufacturer list contains parent company manufacturers only. For an overview of individual facilities that have created an account on the SLCP Gateway and started their SLCP assessment process, please go to SLCP's [public list](#) of facilities.



Brands & Standard Holders that accept SLCP Data

For more details, including which countries and tiers brands & standard holders accept SLCP data from, please see the full list on our [website](#).



SLCP: Leading Sustainability Program

SLCP named in Sourcing Journal's "Sustainability 2020" report

THE 5 LEADING SUSTAINABILITY PROGRAMS YOU SHOULD JOIN NOW AND WHY

/ SOCIAL & LABOR CONVERGENCE PROGRAM

A broader (and often preferred) definition of sustainability includes the promotion of a safe and equitable workplace. Based in Amsterdam, the multi-stakeholder Social & Labor Convergence Program (SLCP) seeks to spur this on by implementing the first industry-wide framework to assess social and labor conditions. Brands, retailers and suppliers can become signatories of the SLCP, supplying it with objective data that can help identify opportunities for improvement and track progress.

"The SAC's verified Higg Facility Social & Labor Module has adopted the SLCP converged assessment as the industry-wide assessment for social labor impacts," Razvi said. "The implementation of a single social and labor assessment in the apparel industry will align metrics and free up resources that have traditionally been spent on auditing, enabling companies to focus on industry improvements instead of compliance."

Download the report:

<https://sourcingjournal.com/report/sustainability-2020/>

SOCIAL & LABOR CONVERGENCE 



What's next for SLCP?

SOCIAL & LABOR CONVERGENCE 

SLCP & Better Work Collaboration

Better Work and SLCP have found common ground in promoting credible and actionable data to be shared between a broad range of industry actors to act upon, including governments and workers' and employers' organizations.



Joint launch CAF v1.4:

Indonesia, Bangladesh & Vietnam

Coming Soon: Law Overlay for National Labour Law in Indonesia, Bangladesh and Vietnam on Accredited Host platforms



www.betterwork.org

SOCIAL & LABOR CONVERGENCE

www.slconvergence.org

For detailed FAQs on the collaboration, please visit the [Helpdesk](#).



Working Towards Industry Convergence



Joined SLCP as a signatory at end of 2020.

Aim is for closer engagement in 2021.



Collaboration agreement with three-year roadmap started in 2020.



SLCP signatory. Progressing towards recognition of SLCP verified assessments in 2021.



Became an SLCP signatory in 2020. Exploring recognising SLCP in STeP certification.



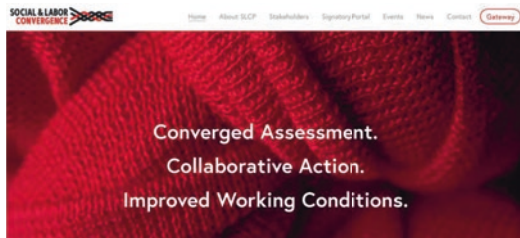


Get Started with SLCP!

Where to Go for More Information

SLCP Website

- List of SLCP signatories - [click here](#)
- 2020 Annual Report - [click here](#)
- Upcoming SLCP events - [click here](#)
- The SLCP Story - [watch here](#)
- SLCP Accredited Hosts - [click here](#)
- Case Studies - [click here](#)
- Current Collaborations : [click here](#)



SLCP Gateway



slcpgateway.sustainabilitymap.org

SLCP Gateway

- Converged Assessment Framework – [click here](#)
- FAQs & Helpdesk Support – [click here](#)
- Quality Assurance Manual – [click here](#)
- Account creation (facilities only) – [click here](#)
- Public list of facilities – [click here](#)
- List of available Verifier Bodies – [click here](#)
- Costs related to SLCP - [click here](#)



Join SLCP as a Signatory!

How to become a signatory

- Senior management approval on public commitment to the principles of SLCP ([see charter](#))
- Payment of one-time signatory fee
- Email info@slconvergence.org to initiate sign-up process

What you can expect in return

- Direct access to SLCP material
- Regular updates on developments and progress
- Influence in operational direction program
- Vote on strategic decisions in SLCP



Signatory Fees (one-time only):

	Turnover	Fee (\$)
Brands, Retailers, Agents		
- L, XL	> 1 B USD	10,000
- S, M	< 1 B USD	2,000
Manufacturers		
- L, XL	> 1 B USD	2,000
- S, M	< 1 B USD	1,000
Other	N/A	1,000



Benefits of Being an SLCP Signatory

- ✓ **Voting rights** in all strategic decisions and influence on the future direction of the Program
- ✓ Option to join the **Technical Advisory Committees (TAC)** or to stand for election in the SLCP Council
- ✓ **Privileged access** to SLCP events & webinars (including annual General Assembly)
- ✓ **Access to range of SLCP communications materials** to support you to promote SLCP within your supply chain
- ✓ **Opportunity to collaborate** and share best practice with other SLCP signatories
- ✓ **Listed as signatory on SLCP website** and opportunity to promote this through your own comms channels
- ✓ Eligibility to apply to **become an SLCP Verifier Body** (if other conditions also met)



SLCP Signatory Charter

Vision	Mission	Specific Aims 2023
 <p>Converged Assessment. Collaborative Action. Improved Working Conditions.</p>	<p>To implement common assessment framework that supports stakeholders' efforts to improve working conditions in global supply chains.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 25,000 verified assessments • 130 M USD unlocked for improvement actions • Industry's #1 verified source S&L data • Self-sustaining through earned income

Commitment Manufacturers, Brands & Retailers, Agents

As a signatory to this SLCP Charter, we commit to:

- support the mission of the Program and contribute to the delivery of its aims;
- encourage supply chain partners to become SLCP signatories and contribute to the mission of the Program;
- adopt the Converged Assessment Framework and share verified assessments among business partners;
- accept SLCP verified assessments in place of third party or proprietary social audits;
- implement SLCP's Converged Assessment Framework (CAF) (the assessment tool and verification methodology) and share verified assessments among business partners;
- develop adoption plans for the CAF to replace proprietary social audit tools within our organization;
- respect the principle of true data in SLCP verified assessments by recording and accepting honest data, and by prioritizing remediation over punishment;
- redirect resources freed by the savings generated by converged assessment into activities which directly benefit workers and their communities;
- embrace the principles of inclusiveness, collaboration on equal terms, and collective ownership of the SLCP CAF and mission among signatories to this Charter;
- support SLCP's multi-stakeholder governance as laid out in the SLCP Governance document.

Undertaking

Within 12 months of signing, we will produce an Action Plan to implement SLCP Converged Assessments in our apparel and footwear businesses, setting clear targets and timelines.

Each calendar year, we will share our plans with SLCP (via facility nominations) and we will report progress against our internal targets to SLCP, including: our levels of adoption of the SLCP Converged Assessment Framework, and our contributions to the specific aims of the SLCP.

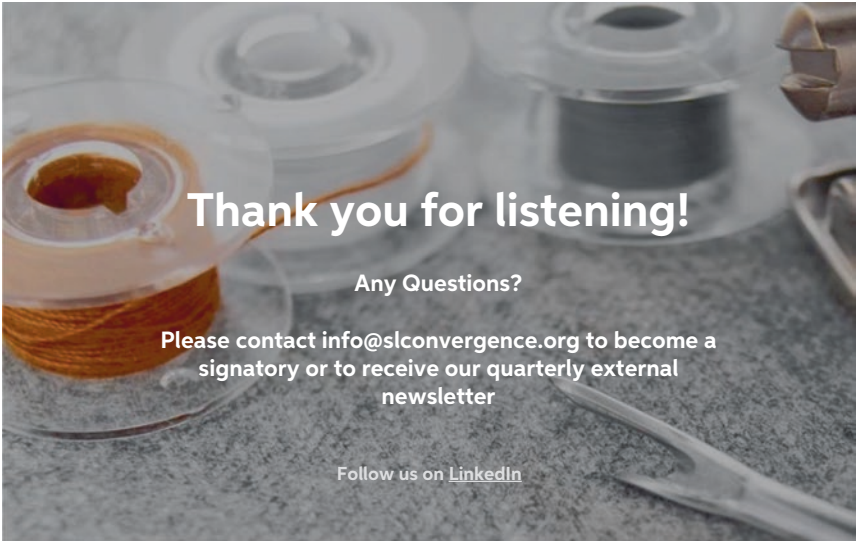
We will engage with other signatories to enable collaborative pre-competitive approaches, joint ownership and accountability to address issues revealed by SLCP assessments.





What are the benefits of SLCP?

- **Efficiency:** reduction in time and money spent on audits; reduction in audit fatigue
- **Comprehensive tool:** SLCP covers all the data points / questions collected in nearly all other audits
- **Multi-stakeholder:** SLCP has been developed collaboratively by brands, manufacturers and other stakeholders
- **Credibility:** high quality, reliable verified social & labor data
- **Flexibility:** brands can score the data according to their own code of conduct
- **Facility ownership:** facilities own their data & control how it is shared



Thank you for listening!

Any Questions?

Please contact info@slconvergence.org to become a signatory or to receive our quarterly external newsletter

Follow us on [LinkedIn](#)



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8

Sustainable Fashion in Ghana: An Exploratory Study of Fashion Designers' Knowledge, Practices and Challenges

Harriet Ann Adjabeng

Introduction

There is a growing concern about the hazardous impact fashion has on the environment (Aidt, 2005). The global fashion industry accounts for 10% of the world's carbon emissions, with significant emissions emanating from production and supply, making it one of the largest polluters globally (Conca, 2015). Conversations about fashion's responsibility to protect the environment sprung up as a result of the amount of waste the industry generates (Watch, 2015; Mukonza et al., 2021; Mogaji et al., 2022). The shift towards a more sustainable and slow fashion model is to reduce the negative environmental impacts and consequences our fashion decisions leave on the environment. The fashion industry according to Ozdamar Ertekin and Atik (2015) is tasked to adopt a more sustainable supply chain by encouraging environmentally friendly business

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models that will include product longevity, fairer wages, non-labour exploitation and better working conditions.

Fletcher (2010) argued that the fast fashion model is the major contributor to wastage in the fashion industry; they take up valuable space in landfills and put a perilous strain on the planet. The model focuses more on encouraging consumers to buy more cheap and disposable clothes whose production puts pressure on the already dwindling resources that exist (Cachon & Swinney, 2011; Nguyen & Mogaji, 2022a). Garment producers who adopt the fast fashion model prioritise profit-making and keep producing garments that mostly end up in landfills, to meet the demands of consumers who want to keep up with new trends and have no idea about the environmental impact of their purchasing decisions (Morgan & Birtwistle, 2009; Mogaji et al., 2021).

The concept of sustainability or slow fashion model focuses on transparency in the supply chain and requires brands to consider the environmental and social impacts their business operations have on the supply chain, which in turn leads to economic sustainability (Edwards, 2005; Nguyen & Mogaji, 2021). The environmental responsibility of fashion brands is to modify models to save the environment and everything in it. Models could be based on reuse, recycling and longevity of products (Sheth et al., 2011). Social sustainability on the other hand encourages fashion brands to be ethical and, as such, embark on positive initiatives and introduce policies that reduce harm to human beings at the bottom of the supply chain (Edwards, 2005). Sustainable fashion therefore encourages and empowers brands to look beyond their primary reason of existence, which is profit-making (Cooper et al., 2015; Kaur et al., 2022). The 'cradle-to-cradle' sustainability principle highlights the fact that durability and sustainability go hand in hand. The principle encourages brands to prioritise building a more resilient value chain centred on longevity in garment design and production while respecting human values (Moorhouse & Moorhouse, 2018).

Sustainability is an emerging trend in the fashion landscape (Mogaji, 2021; Mittelstaedt et al., 2014) whereby sustainable fashion becomes increasingly mainstream (Watson & Yan, 2013; Mora et al., 2014). This is in line with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 12 and 13, which task the fashion industry to take urgent actions to combat activities that

cause climate and environmental change (Bick et al., 2018; Nguyen & Mogaji, 2022b). That notwithstanding, there appears to be a paucity in the literature in respect of approaches taken by Ghanaian fashion brands to ensure a more ethical and sustainable supply chain. It is therefore imperative for this study to explore sustainable fashion in Ghana. Findings from this study will help formulate useful interventions and strategies in ensuring a more sustainable fashion industry in Ghana.

Materials and Methods

The study relied on the interpretivist paradigm on the backdrop that this provides a better way of exploring sustainable fashion in Ghana regarding the knowledge and practices of fashion designers. The data collection was done in Accra, Ghana's capital, and Kumasi, one of the largest metropolitan areas and business hubs in Ghana.

Fashion designers who were residing and running their businesses in Accra or Kumasi were purposefully selected for this study. These designers were included in the study to help ascertain their knowledge and practices of sustainable fashion. Designers who were willing to partake in the study were provided with consent forms to fill/thumbprint. To prevent interrupting their busy work schedules, designers were at liberty to select the venue and time of convenience for the interview to be carried out. The interviews were recorded and transcribed. An interview lasted for about 35 minutes. A sample size of nine designers, made up of six and three designers who reside in Kumasi and Accra, respectively, was achieved through the principle of saturation. Guest et al. (2006) opine that a sample size of six interviews could be enough for the development of meaningful themes and useful interpretations. This study therefore deemed responses to be saturated when no new themes were emerging.

The interview was conducted with an in-depth interview guide. The guide had four sections (A, B, C and D). Section A focused on the background characteristics of the participants, while sections B, C and D focused on knowledge on sustainable fashion, sustainable fashion practices and challenges in implementing sustainable fashion, respectively. Respondents were asked to describe sustainable fashion. These formed

the knowledge and understanding of fashion designers in sustainable fashion. Respondents were probed further on how they practice sustainable fashion in their businesses and the challenges they faced.

Data were analysed manually using a qualitative thematic analysis technique. A qualitatively oriented text analysis based on the principles of the consolidated criteria for reporting qualitative research (COREQ) was adopted. To ensure the findings of the study were credible and unbiased, interview data were transcribed by an experienced researcher and compared to the tape interviews by another experienced researcher. The data was coded independently by an expert qualitative data coder and the author. To ensure intercoder concordance, the author and the expert qualitative data coder met afterwards and reviewed the coding outcomes. Themes and emerging issues were then developed to mirror the narratives and interpret the data. Quotes from the participants were then used to corroborate the issues discussed.

Results

Demographic Background Characteristics of Respondents

Table 8.1 presents the socio-demographic background characteristics of the respondents. Six of the respondents reside in Kumasi and three in Accra. Seven provided bespoke services and two provided ready-to-wear services. All the respondents doubled as the chief executive officers (CEOs) and creative directors of their brands. Eight have tertiary education and seven were males.

Knowledge of Sustainable Fashion

The results revealed that five out of the nine respondents know what sustainable fashion is. Their basic understanding of sustainable fashion was to meet the demands of their customers without impacting negatively on

Table 8.1 Demographic background characteristics of respondents

Background characteristics	Frequency ($N = 9$)	Percentage (%)
<i>Place of residence</i>		
Kumasi	6	67
Accra	3	33
<i>Type of service</i>		
Ready-to-wear	2	22
Bespoke	7	78
<i>Years of working</i>		
1–5	5	56
6–10	3	33
11+	1	11
<i>Position</i>		
CEO/creative director	9	100
<i>Level of education</i>		
No education	1	11
Tertiary	8	89
<i>Sex</i>		
Male	7	78
Female	2	22

Source: Fieldwork (2020)

the environment and other stakeholders in the fashion industry. A fashion designer with five years of working experience had this to say:

Sustainability in fashion, I would say in my opinion, the impact or the effects of fashion on the globe. I would really like to say on the environment but people. So, let's just say the atmosphere, everything concerning the globe. You know clothes are made from natural products and then from maybe the materials being used and then the humans being used to actually make the clothes. I mean it counts. So, I would say sustainability in fashion is just seeing fashion as in terms of its effects and impact on the environment and all its stakeholders. (Ama)

To buttress this, another respondent who has been in the industry for the past 12 years had this to say:

Sustainable fashion where you consider the environment and the source of raw materials especially and how to go about handling your fashion products, with-

out having an adverse effect on the environment. Basically, that is what sustainable fashion is. Making maximum ... and then when you get your fabric too, make sure you use it to the limit as I've said so that you cut waste. Yeah, you cut waste from your cut-offs or what tailors will usually say pieces. (Kofi)

The study also revealed that four out of the nine respondents do not understand what sustainable fashion is. Generally, they were of the view that sustainable fashion is about sustaining or the continuity of your business. For instance, Kojo who has been in the fashion industry for five years had this to say:

I will say for the betterment of the work and also good living; will you be able to sustain what you do? That's when you want to achieve consistency in what you are doing. Because we are working for money and also working for people. So, you are able to put these in place for your business to last long, that's where you are also going to get a lot of money. (Kojo)

To corroborate this, another respondent indicated:

Well hmmm, the word 'sustain' simply means to hold, the ability to hold for a certain period. So, let me relate it to this situation. It's simply the ability to maintain a certain kind of status in our industry where we find ourselves. Yeah, basically that's the meaning. (Kweku)

These views indicate the level of knowledge these fashion designers have on sustainable fashion. This could be attributed to the high level of education among the fashion designers, with eight out of the nine respondents having a tertiary level of education. This notwithstanding, the study shows that the knowledge of fashion designers on sustainable fashion was limited to fabric works that impact the environment. The respondents did not seem to know about the social dimension of sustainable fashion. A few of the respondents were also unaware of the concept of sustainable fashion. They misunderstood the sustainable fashion concept as a concept that has to do with business sustainability.

Importance of Slow Fashion

The study observed that fashion designers in Ghana acknowledge the importance of slow fashion. They were of the view that slow fashion will help protect the environment and also save production costs. To buttress this, some respondents had this to say:

Slow fashion is sustainable and we know how sustainable fashion is important because it helps the environment. It helps keep the environment safe. Because we know health-wise, the monies that go into producing these fabrics that it used in this mass production is harmful. The chemicals and all the other stuff that goes into it. So, when you practice slow fashion, it helps the environment. (Abena)

One other respondent who also indicated slow fashion affects the environment had this to say:

We should care about it because if we want to care about the environment, about the future, about our children then our children's children and all that, I think we should really consider slow fashion. I really think so. (Ama)

Nonetheless, one of the respondents was of the view that slow fashion will enable fashion designers to be more creative and bring out other interesting designs for consumers. This was what the respondent had to say:

When we have slow fashion, when we practice slow fashion, we try as much as possible to know, explore our sense of designing. Yeah, we explore it and then we try to always, you know, hit the market with something exciting sometimes. (Kweku)

Practices of Sustainable Fashion in Ghana

Based on the understanding of the fashion designers on sustainable fashion, the study also sought to explore how fashion designers practise sustainable fashion in Ghana. From the analysis, it was observed that

Ghanaian fashion designers undertake various sustainable fashion practices such as making use of used clothing or leftover pieces from materials used for sewing; providing better working conditions for their garment makers and every person in their supply chain; and also encouraging the discussion of issues like sexual harassment that directly affect women in the supply chain. Others also engage in social interventions that seek to help natives of the communities they find themselves. For instance, a respondent who makes use of used clothing to prevent wastage and environmental pollution had this to say:

I go to the flea market to look out for 'cut-offs' from foreign companies and used clothing. So sometimes when I use them it will be difficult for you to identify that these are coming from the flea market. It helps me cut down production cost sometimes. And then aside from that, I also give indirect employment to people who I source these things. (Kofi)

To corroborate this, another respondent had this to say:

We make very good use of our scraps. The pieces that are left are used for the bracelets and, even these nose masks that came. Why should we be going out to buy new fabrics when we have plenty or bulk? And instead of burning it too, we use them for stuff like that. (Abena)

With regards to sustainable fashion practices that focus on social interventions, it was observed that the fashion designers produce strictly based on orders or make the clothes in small quantity. The following extractions explain the above.

We try to manage our production so we do not overproduce. We make five of three styles for our boutique ... once it's sold out, it is sold out ... we also give people the opportunity to rent our runway pieces and samples for special occasions, free of charge ... they just have to give us credit on every platform they find themselves. (Asante)

The results also showed that fashion designers unanimously try to employ or train people within the communities they find themselves, create platforms for members in their supply chain to channel their

grievances and also provide favourable and decent working conditions, so no one in their supply chain experiences poverty. Below are some of the views of the participants to support this:

I picked up guys and girls from the locality in which I worked. Usually, I go to the parents, I look out for them, those go up and about not really doing something then I try to introduce the business to them. If they are interested, I train them ... for free ... to a point where they get paid for what they are doing and with that, I always have a constant supply of workers with me. So, after a couple of years, if you feel you want to move on and go and set up your own, I bless you then you leave. (Kofi)

We introduce something called the less fortunate ... in the people. So, we started like with that last year. What we do is like once we go on a walk to promote the show, we have people that we are approaching us like 'oh we have interest in fashion'. But these people are less fortunate. And they don't have resources to pay for the training or like the necessities. (Yaw)

At least with students that we have we teach them these kinds of stuff so that when they go out and they are also, they have a brand in the future, they also start practising what they are doing so try and recycle because it actually saves money sometimes. Because if you throw these things that you can recycle away, in the long run too, it goes to affect the environment. (Abena)

The results further show that fashion designers have inbuilt mechanisms that seek the welfare of their employees. For instance, some have created a loan structure to cater for the needs of their employees during the COVID-19 pandemic when business was affected. Others have also created avenues to allow employees to channel their grievances to management. To buttress this, some respondents had this to say:

We pay their insurance for them every month, so when they grow old and leave here and are unable to work, they can have something to fall on. We have a loan structure with a flexible payment structure that enables workers to take loans to sort out personal issues, even during the covid-19 pandemic, though things were a bit slow for us, we gave the workers some incentives to take home while we waited for things to pick up. (Kweku)

Over here, we employ our garment workers as contract workers, we pay them according to the number of clothes they make ... even when pricing the garments, we call the machinists who are sample makers to help price the garments since they worked on them and are in the right position to know the amount of work that goes into it ... you know, after six months, based on your work output and overall attitude towards work, you get promoted from a contract worker to a sample maker where you are placed on full salary ... you know what? Most of them prefer contract because they get the opportunity to do more so they can earn more ... we also pay for overtime, per garment ... the workers are always rushing to do overtime ... everyone likes money. (Sheena)

A respondent who organises forums for employees to channel their grievances to management had this to say:

We organize open forums twice in a year to give workers the platform to speak directly to us the bosses ... they channel their grievances through the corporate social responsibility officer who reports to us, the management and organizes these open forums ... you know, we are like a family and that's what we do for family, we have encouraged them to speak up. (Larry)

These findings show that although not all the fashion designers were knowledgeable about sustainable fashion, they were unconsciously practising sustainable fashion. Fashion designers were all finding an alternative use for cut-off fabrics rather than burning them. In addition, the designers seek to create employment by equipping natives with fashion designing skills and also providing a safe environment for every single person working within their supply chain.

Challenges

The study observed that although sustainable fashion is being practised in Ghana, it comes with some financial challenges. The financial challenges mostly boil down to social interventions. For instance, some of the natives that are being trained for free are not able to afford some basic materials that will aid in their training, and thus some end up quitting. One respondent facing such a challenge had this to say:

It's expensive ... I can give the training, but most times getting the necessities like the tools and materials for the person becomes a problem. ... I'm willing to help the person but the person needs some petty things. Most importantly it's even from home because if the person is coming from home but is not being given the support of food, definitely, they give up. (Yaw)

To affirm this, Kwesi who has been in fashion designing for 3 years had this to say:

Finance is one of the general problems that we face.

The study also observed that securing loans from financial institutions is a major challenge for fashion designers in Ghana. This makes it difficult for brands to carry out projects that fall under sustainable fashion. A respondent noted:

Basically, challenges ..., first of all, it got to do with finances. Yes, banking institutions still see fashion as a vocational 'something'. They don't see it as a strictly business venture even if you present your audited accounts to them or your sales book to them. I have quite a lot of them here, you present it to them they still think 'Chale' it's a risky business'. Yeah, so when you want a certain amount or finances to push your business, they look at things and things around them and then they really cut it down to sometimes the amount that you can virtually not use. Which is so sad. (Kofi, 12 years)

Discussion

The study explored the knowledge of fashion designers in Ghana on sustainable fashion, their sustainable fashion practices and the challenges they face in implementing sustainable fashion in Ghana. The study observed that although most of the fashion designers were knowledgeable of sustainable fashion, a number of them have no idea of it. The level of knowledge of the fashion designers also appears to be limited to maximising the output from fabrics to reduce polluting the environment with cut-off fabrics. This affirms the findings of Karell & Niinimäki, 2020

who discovered that the discussion on sustainable fashion is steered by materials/fabric. Fashion designers were primarily focused on material longevity and reusability. The current study also showed that some fashion designers do not have a clear understanding of the concept of sustainable fashion. The concept was misconceived as to the longevity of a business and not necessarily the protection of the environment.

With regards to sustainable fashion practices, it was observed that most of the fashion designers were practising sustainable fashion. Although some of the respondents were oblivious of sustainable fashion, their practices were in line with sustainable fashion. One of the key sustainable fashion practices was the reuse of cut-off fabrics for bracelets and nose masks rather than its incineration. This is in line with the argument of Lo et al. (2012) and Cataldi et al. (2017) that to help protect the environment, fashion designers are encouraged to find an alternative use for cut-off fabrics (Cataldi et al., 2017). Finding alternative use for cut-off fabrics will therein decrease the number of fabrics used, which in the long run help protect the environment by reducing the number of natural resources that would be used in producing more fabrics.

Sustainable fashion goes beyond what happens with the fabric but also extends to social integration/interventions which enable indigenes to also get some economic and environmental benefits from the fashion industry (Lo et al., 2012; Nguyen & Mogaji, 2021). The current study shows that fashion designers in Ghana also engaged in social interventions such as recruiting and training indigenes of the towns/cities their businesses are located in. This corroborates the findings of Lo et al. (2012), who also observed that majority of businesses in the textile and clothing supply chain engage in social interventions as a form of promoting sustainable fashion.

Contrary to the study of Hur and Cassidy (2019), who observed that the highest challenge of fashion designers was integrating sustainability into design practice, the current study observed financial challenges as the major hindrance for fashion designers. A possible explanation for the difference in key challenges of fashion designers in implementing

sustainable fashion could be the economic development of the study areas. Whereas Hur and Cassidy (2019) conducted their study among fashion designers in the UK (a developed country), the current study was conducted in Ghana (a low- and middle-income country [LMIC]). Fashion designers located in the developed countries have a higher likelihood of securing loans and financial services to invest in their businesses as compared to their counterparts in developing countries (Boateng & Poku, 2019). There is therefore a variation in the key challenges faced by fashion designers (Brooksworth et al., 2022a, 2022b). While fashion designers in Ghana and other LMICs are focused on breaking the financial barrier to be able to implement sustainable fashion methods, their counterparts in developed countries have other pressing challenges.

Conclusion

The study concludes that fashion designers have some level of knowledge on sustainable fashion. Although not all fashion designers have knowledge of sustainable fashion, all of them were carrying out practices that constitute sustainable fashion. The major challenge facing fashion designers to implement sustainable fashion in Ghana is finance. Flowing from the above, it is therefore imperative for the Government and the Ministry of Trade and Industry to take pragmatic steps to create awareness on sustainable fashion among the stakeholders of the fashion industry. The Government and the Ministry of Trade and Industry should also take steps to make it possible for the fashion industry to be able to apply for loans from financial institutions to invest in their businesses.

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9

Sustainable Fashion: The Case of a Mexican BCorp

Gloria Camacho

Introduction

The fashion industry contributes \$2.4 trillion to global manufacturing and employs about 60 million people worldwide, mostly women (UN Alliance for Sustainable Fashion, 2020). In Latin America, the industry represents around 10% of the worldwide market (Hecho x Nosotros, 2020). In this region, there is environmental degradation (ECLAC, 2018), about 30% of the population is living in poverty (ECLAC, 2019).

Latin America is formed by diverse countries, such as Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Mexico, and Peru, which are considered emerging markets (MSCI, 2020). For these markets, Brazil and Mexico represent the biggest markets for the fashion industry (Hecho x Nosotros, 2020). Sustainability has been an important issue for consumers, especially for the new generations, who are socially and environmentally conscious and

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expect that fashion brands to be more ethical, transparent, and sustainable (Gazzola et al., 2020; Kaur et al., 2022), and the Latin American market is not the exception. There is a potential for sustainable fashion through high-quality raw materials, connection with nature, culture, textile traditions, the use of technology, and the local economy's reinforcement (Hecho x Nosotros, 2020). Thus, this chapter aims to explore the adoption of sustainability initiatives in the fashion industry in Mexico through the case of a Mexican BCorp, *Someone Somewhere*, which is a native digital firm targeting millennials with social consciousness (Google Ads, 2021).

This chapter is structured as follows. The use of social media within the fashion industry will be presented. It is followed by an exposition of methodology and the case of *Someone Somewhere*, after which there will be a discussion on the firm balances purpose and profit (B Lab, 2020a) and uses of social media and e-commerce to increase the impact of sustainable fashion. All this shall be rounded up by a conclusion.

Social Media in the Fashion Industry

Marketing focuses on creating, communicating, delivering, and exchanging offers that have value for customers, clients, partners, and society at large (AMA, 2020). To satisfy consumers' needs, fashion firms need to use new social media channels: "Attention-grabbing content will be key, deployed on the right platform for each market, using persuasive calls-to-action and, wherever possible, a seamless link to checkout" (BOF and McKinsey & Company, 2020a, p. 16). According to Damian (2017), a business involved in social media would understand its consumers by finding out people's interests and insights to give them helpful information and content. "*Content in the form of a constant stream of up-to-date material on a website, Twitter feed, Facebook, Instagram ... is now essential marketing currency*" (Posner, 2015, p. 29).

Social media platforms are useful marketing tools to get engagement with consumers, nurture a positive attitude towards the firm's brands (Damian, 2017), and gain traffic and brand exposure (Dodson, 2016).

Digitization continues in the fashion industry (BOF and McKinsey & Company, 2020a). Digital platforms and digital marketing strategies are present in the fashion market. New brands emerge through e-commerce platforms while consumers continue buying online fashion-related products. One of the trends in e-commerce is the use of social media platforms (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, YouTube) for social interactions and to assist in the sale and purchase of online products (Gazzola et al., 2020). “*Social media allows the creation of brand awareness faster than by traditional channels*” (Ahmad et al., 2015, p. 2). Also, social media fosters fashion marketing through customer service and creative advertising (Kim & Kim, 2020). Fashion firms need to improve their customer experience through marketing and digital promotion (Gazzola et al., 2020; Mogaji et al., 2022; Mukonza et al., 2021).

With the introduction of new technologies and the use of social media, it became necessary to have a real integration between the different marketing channels (Piotrowicz & Cuthbertson, 2014) to promote and deliver positive consumer experiences (Gundlach et al., 2006) and to be competitive in the marketplace (Salmani et al., 2018). The borders of the different channels begin to disappear; thus, an omnichannel emerges by integrating customer, brand, and retail channel interactions to create a seamless retail experience. Under this omnichannel context, firms need to manage the store, website, direct marketing, mobile channels (i.e., tablets, apps, smartphones), social media, and other customer touchpoints such as mass communication channels (i.e., TV, radio) (Verhoef et al., 2015).

Strong brands that are able to compete successfully in the market today are characterised by rapid growth, social media influence, and e-commerce focused distribution. (Gazzola et al., 2020, p. 4)

Sustainability in the Fashion Industry

Sustainability is an essential issue in the academic and business arena. On the one hand, scholars have established that although it comes from sustainable development, “development that meets the needs of the present

without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (WCED, 1987, p. 43, cited in Bansal, 2005, p. 197) is a macro concept. On the other hand, firms have a crucial role in the sustainable development of countries (Elkington, 1994; Bansal, 2002), as such corporate sustainability is a concept used at the organizational level.

For this chapter, corporate sustainability is understood as meeting the needs of the stakeholders in the short term without compromising the needs of the stakeholders in the long term (Dyllick & Hockerts, 2002), considering economic, social, and environmental issues (Elkington, 1998; Hart & Milstein, 2003). Corporate sustainability has moved to create shared value, which leads to consumer engagement in positive behaviour change (Kim & Kim, 2020).

In 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic necessitated a new business mindset: “[B]rands that are able to reorient their missions and business models in more sustainable ways will be able to cater for a more captive audience than ever before” (BOF and McKinsey & Company, 2020b, p. 19). When firms implement sustainability initiatives, they incorporate ethics in business activities and create value for their stakeholders (Székely & Knirsch, 2005). They are also making efforts to improve social conditions (e.g., creating jobs) and environmental welfare (Sharma 2003, cited in Linnenluecke & Griffiths, 2010).

Consumers are more conscious about sustainability as well as businesses (BzRitch, 2015). For example, Gen Z and millennial shoppers are more concerned with sustainability (BOF and McKinsey & Company 2020b; Gazzola et al., 2020). In 2020, during the pandemic, consumers looked for purpose-driven brands and sustainable fashion (Bianchi et al., 2020). Thus, firms need to make changes to move towards sustainability (BOF and McKinsey & Company, 2020a): “*Sustainability will become a minimum requirement. Brands must ensure that they operate in ways that are environmentally and socially responsible*” (Bianchi et al., 2020, para. 11).

Sustainable Fashion

Fast fashion has increased consumption, negative social impacts, and adverse environmental effects (Todeschini et al., 2017). For example, there is a lack of better working conditions in supply chains, high water usage, the use of incineration to dispose of unsold clothes (Pal & Gander, 2018), and the absence of using raw materials considering its full recycling (ECAP, 2019, cited in Claxton & Kent, 2020). Thus, sustainable fashion emerged to deal with these negative issues (Mukendi et al., 2019). However, there is no industry standard, so it is impossible to find a single definition. Different terms have been used to refer to sustainable fashion, such as *ethical*, *eco*, *green*, and *slow fashion* (Mukendi et al., 2019; Lundblad & Davies, 2016).

Sustainable fashion represents “*the variety of means by which a fashion item or behaviour could be perceived to be more sustainable, including (but not limited to) environmental and social impact, as well as, slow fashion, reuse, recycling, cruelty-free, anti-consumption and production practices*” (Mukendi et al., 2019, para. 3).

Slow fashion focuses on diversity, small- to medium-scale production, local materials, traditional techniques, pricing relative to social and ecological costs, mutual trust, and a connection with its impacts (Fletcher & Grose, 2012).

Fletcher and Grose (2012) suggest opportunity areas in the fashion industry towards sustainable fashion, for example, a design that looks to solve social and environmental issues, collaborative work, use of local materials, accessible and eco-friendly processes, and working together with others for positive social changes. The scale of fashion production in sustainable fashion is related to the community’s capacity to monitor its impacts (i.e., social and environmental) and its cultural benefits. “*Commerce will still act as the driver, but success will be measured in social, cultural and environmental value*” (p. 174).

BCorps and Sustainable Fashion

The B Corporation (BCorp) model is a new business model for sustainability, integrating social and environmental aspects (or just one of them) into the core business (Stubbs, 2019; Nguyen & Mogaji, 2021a). It makes profits considering social and ecological impacts (Hiller, 2013), and it contributes to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (Schaltegger et al., 2016; Nguyen & Mogaji, 2021b). The SDGs on the other hand are the latest framework created to end poverty and hunger, protect the environment against climate change, preserve all individuals' human dignity, and promote peace (United Nations General Assembly, 2015).

BLab certifies BCorps (Honeyman & Jana, 2019). BLab is a non-profit organization from the United States (Tabares, n.d.), which acts as a certifying body and gives access to a global community of BCorps. BCorp certification creates the distinction between “*good companies and just good marketing*” (Honeyman & Jana, 2019, p. 25). This certification evaluates the entire firm and its practices, such as worker engagement, community involvement, the environmental footprint, the governance structure, and customer relationships (Honeyman & Jana, 2019).

The BCorp movement emerged in the United States, but it spread worldwide. For example, a BLab global partner, Sistema B, is located in Latin America. Sistema B was established in 2012 and included Argentina, Brazil, Chile, and Colombia (Honeyman & Jana, 2019). In 2016, Sistema B had presence in Mexico, and in 2018, it was in ten Latin American countries (Najera, 2018). There are around 624 BCorps in Latin America, and 64 are from Mexico (Garcia, 2020). Two of them focus on apparel, footwear, and the accessories industry. This chapter focuses on one of them and illustrates how BCorps can be part of sustainable fashion industry.

Methodology

This chapter follows a case study research strategy (Eisenhardt, 1989). The case focuses on a Mexican-certified BCorp, because it provides the context to explore an innovative sustainable business model that looks for social change and uses marketing tools (i.e., social media) to increase the impact of sustainable fashion (Mukendi et al., 2019) in an emerging economy. Secondary data support the present analysis (Godoy, 1995). Information was gathered between September and November 2020 from online sources such as newspapers (online versions), press releases, publications from different organizations, the firm's website and reports available online, and social media. *Someone Somewhere* was chosen through purposeful sampling (Marshall, 1996), considering it is an example of a Mexican BCorp which focuses on sustainable fashion. This case provides insights into the development of an innovative social business model which includes digital channels and e-commerce to target millennials with social consciousness.

Someone Somewhere: The Mexican Case of a BCorp

Mexico and Sustainable Fashion

Mexico is in the Americas, in the North America region. It shares a northern border with the United States and a southern border with Belize and Guatemala. It is surrounded by the Pacific Ocean and the Mexican Gulf (Nationsonline, 1998–2020). According to the World Bank, Mexico has a land area of 1,943,950 square kilometres (Trading Economics, 2020a), with a population of about 125.3 million (OECD, n.d.) and a GDP of US \$10,275.63 per capita (Trading Economics, 2020b). Poverty and inequalities are prevalent in the country. There is a need for greater equality of opportunities for women and indigenous people to address high well-being disparities (OECD, 2019).

Mexico's strategic location, its emerging market status, the 7% average annual growth of the fashion market, the young consumers, and the e-commerce boom which made about 17.6 billion in sales by 2020, make the country attractive for the fashion industry (Peretto & Sadlak, 2019).

In Mexico, fashion is the tenth most important industry for the economy (ProMexico, 2020). In 2019, the textile and clothing industry contributed to 3.2% of the manufacturing industries' GDP. The textile industry is concentrated in Mexico State, Puebla, Hidalgo, Mexico City, and Guanajuato, while the clothing industry is concentrated in Mexico City, Mexico State, Puebla, Jalisco, and Guanajuato (INEGI, 2020). In 2018, it employed around 500,000 people, mostly women (Fashion Revolution, n.d.). In 2020, this suffered a considerable reduction in the pandemic context (CANAINTEX, 2020).

Sustainable fashion is a growing niche, and it is positioning in Mexico through the development of innovative initiatives towards sustainability (Dannemann, 2020). For example, there are efforts to expose and value the artisans' work with textiles developed by indigenous people. There are platforms, such as *Ethical Fashion Space*, whose purpose is to create connections between consumers, academia, and government. Others, such as the *Fashion Revolution*, work to develop conscious consumers, support local producers, and make decent working conditions (Dannemann, 2020).

National designers and national firms move to sustainable fashion to have a fair, transparent, human, and eco-friendly industry. For example, *Bamboo Life* manufactures sunglasses made of wood and bamboo. *CANCINO*, *Lydia Lavín*, *Eilean Brand*, and *Armando Takeda* use organic fibres and eco-friendly materials in their creations; *Caralarga* manufactures jewellery with cotton and other natural materials. *Carla Fernandez* uses cotton, leather, and natural fibres in her designs. *Someone Somewhere* works with 150 artisans who obtained 30% of T-shirts' sales, backpacks, and other products (Aguilar, 2020).

There are 10 million artisans in Mexico; 54.5% are poor, and 17.7% are extremely poor. Also, there is a lack of value in their production processes and their cultural value. In some cases, they have difficulties in accessing materials of good quality. They are not aligned with fashion trends, and their distribution channels are not efficient. Some Mexican

artisans have informal jobs, and there is a lack of connection between the new generations and their indigenous roots (Someone Somewhere, 2018).

Someone Somewhere's Profile

Someone Somewhere combines artisanal handcrafts with innovative products and distribution channels to reach the millennial market in Mexico and the United States (B Lab, 2020b). Between 2008 and 2010, a group of friends—José Antonio Nuño, Enrique Rodríguez, Fátima Álvarez, and José Miguel Cruz y Celis—used to work with marginalized Mexican communities as part of their mission group's activities. At that time, they began their bachelor's at Tecnológico de Monterrey, a private university in Mexico. They agreed that they wanted to do something for Mexico (Resnik, 2016).

In 2011, *Flor the Mayo* emerged as a combination of artisan handcrafts and shirts. *Flor de Mayo* started operations with its relationship with five artisans from Naucalpan and Puebla. This group of friends, under *Flor de Mayo*, started to sell shirts to their friends. In 2014, they changed the product from shirts to T-shirts to reach the millennial market. They began to work with 25 artisans from Maseual Siamej, a cooperative in Cuetzalan, Puebla (Resnik, 2016). In 2015, *Flor de Mayo* received support from the National Entrepreneur Institute, which was closed down by the current Mexican government. *Flor de Mayo* worked to connect 7 million Mexican artisans with millennials (Resnik, 2016). A year later, the firm received support from *Promotora Social Mexico*, which is an organization that makes social impact investments in initiatives that seek an improvement in the quality of life of marginal communities in society (Promotora Social Mexico, 2020). In 2016, *Flor the Mayo* started to work with communities from Puebla, Oaxaca, and Chiapas. Based on their knowledge, each community focuses on different fabrics and embroidery for the firm's products. *Flor de Mayo* designed its first product line and changed it to enter in the United States. As a result, *Someone Somewhere* emerged in April 2016 (Resnik, 2016).

Someone Somewhere launched a campaign on the Kickstarter online platform. The purpose was twofold: to create brand awareness and get

economical support for the project to encourage consumers to pre-order *Someone Somewhere* products, and to showcase its product line in a pop-up showroom in its offices in Mexico City (Resnik, 2016). According to Enrique Rodríguez (co-founder of *Someone Somewhere*), he and his partners understood that they need to develop a social business model to work together with artisans and to develop scalable production. This social business model considers artisan production integrated with contemporary design, supply chain, the ability to own digital channels to connect with consumers, data-driven strategies, e-commerce platforms, and social impact aligned with business growth so “*that it strengthens our values, so that our customers can remain engaged and proud to wear our products every day*” (Rodríguez, 2020).

Someone Somewhere became a BCorp in 2017 (B Lab, 2020b), “*becoming a BCorp certified company was the first step forward in assuring our commitment to track and improve our social and environmental impact*” (Rodríguez, 2020). *Someone Somewhere* presents itself as a BCorp on its website. Accordingly, there is the certified BCorp logo at the bottom of the home page, as well as its actual impact report. In 2021, a Facebook post to share its commitment to zero emissions in 2030 served as another way of communicating its BCorp status to consumers who purchase its products. *Someone Somewhere* includes a card where it mentions that it is a BCorp, which guarantees that your purchase contributes to the development and economic well-being of artisans, designers, and producers.

In 2018, it received the Best for the World honour in the community impact area by BLab. This annual recognition is for top-performing certified BCorps in each impact area (B Lab, 2020b). It works with 180 artisans from five of the poorest states in Mexico: Puebla, Oaxaca, Chiapas, Hidalgo, and Mexico. Ninety-eight per cent of the artisans are women (Someone Somewhere, 2019a).

Someone Somewhere's mission is to “*contribute to the well-being of artisan communities through the generation of fair and constant employment besides promoting the preservation of millenary traditions through durable goods*” (Someone Somewhere, 2018, p. 4). Its objectives are threefold: local brand awareness and global presence, value-added creation and integration of handcrafts in new markets, and access to millennial market through digital marketing (Google, 2018).

The Marketing Mix

Product

Someone Somewhere offers backpacks and accessories such as cases, tote bags, caps, masks, mini-wallets, and laptop cases. Also, it sells products for men, such as T-shirts, hoodies, and jackets. For women, it sells the same products as those offered for men, but adds a dress (Someone Somewhere, 2019a).

The type of handcraft developed by artisans is dependent on the product. For example, Puebla's artisans work with embroidery for T-shirts. Chiapas' artisans produce embroidery for caps, while Oaxaca's artisans focus on travel products (Resnik, 2016). Label extraordinarily communicates the artisanal handcraft. The name of the brand is represented in the label. In *Someone Somewhere*, the product has the name of the artisan who developed the product. In *Someone Somewhere*, the artisan who created the embroidery for each specific product writes the name of the community where he or she belongs to (Someone Somewhere, 2019b; Resnik, 2016).

Price

The price of the products varies according to the type of products. For example, hoodies are around \$50, T-shirts are \$24.50, and backpacks are between \$44.50 and \$64.50. Also, the firm offers sales promotions and free shipping over \$44.50 for the Mexican market (Someone Somewhere, 2020). In addition, it provides discounts for the US market (Someone Somewhere, 2020).

Supply Chain and Distribution Channels

Someone Somewhere's design team visits indigenous artisan communities in which it wants to work. The purpose is to create together with local artisans the products for the Mexican and foreign markets. The artisans

develop samples of their design proposals for the *Someone Somewhere* team to approve. Then, the artisans' community organizes to produce the agreed number of pieces in a specific time. *Someone Somewhere's* founders choose a leader for the artisans' community. She must have particular characteristics, such as decision-making and literacy skills (Resnik, 2016). Artisans send their embroideries to *Someone Somewhere's* workshops, where they are assembled into the final products. Later, the final products are sent to different sales points (Resnik, 2016).

Artisans' payment is by hour and by square centimetre (Resnik, 2016). However, *Someone Somewhere* worked during 2019 to develop a model for fair wages across its value chain, which estimates the payment per hour according to her/his regional and familial situation to contribute to the family income (Someone Somewhere, 2018).

This work with the artisans has impacted them by increasing average income per artisan by 36% and an economic spill of around \$37,500 in the different communities where *Someone Somewhere* works. Also, artisans receive a constant income, financial independence, empowerment, the building of support networks, and the revalue of their culture due to their relationship with Mexican BCorp (Someone Somewhere, 2018).

Someone Somewhere, together with the Public Entrepreneur Community for Artisan Impulse, developed a tax proposal that wants to promote, together with the actual government, the incorporation of artisans in a formal economy in a fairer scheme. Furthermore, this BCorp offers workshops for artisans and work in research projects aligned with Mexican artisans' communities' growth (Someone Somewhere, 2018).

Someone Somewhere has three physical stores in Mexico City: Condesa, Santa Fe, and Roma Norte (Someone Somewhere, 2019c). Also, it has its e-commerce platform for the Mexican market (Someone Somewhere, 2019b) and the US market (Someone Somewhere, 2020). E-commerce offers a better experience to its customers while contributing to the development of a more conscious society regarding its consumption behaviour and its impacts on the planet (Someone Somewhere, 2018).

***Someone Somewhere* and Its Online Presence**

When fashion brands combine traditional channels with online channels, their online presence facilitates the connection with millennials, the exchange of content between brands and consumers, and the development of online fashion communities (Halel et al., 2018).

Website

In online context, consumers evaluate products through design elements (i.e., website) (Cachero-Martínez & Vázquez-Casielles, 2021; Bleier et al., 2019). Thus, retailers need to offer a shopping experience through aspects that they can control, such as web design (Cachero-Martínez & Vázquez-Casielles, 2021), to provide consumers with helpful information (Lim and Ting 2012, cited in Bleier et al., 2019), such as product features and description, return policy information, pictures, videos, expert endorsement, and customer reviews (Bleier et al., 2019). The Mexican website includes different menus such as backpacks, men, women, accessories, for business, in stores, and the shopping cart. The first four menus show the product lines of the BCorp and the prices for each product. The business menu invites firms to buy their corporate gifts with *Someone Somewhere*. In stores menu, consumers find the location of the three physical stores in Mexico City (Someone Somewhere, 2019c). At the bottom of the website, visitors find the return policy, frequently asked questions, the B Impact report of 2018, contact, WhatsApp, and the different social media in which *Someone Somewhere* has presence, such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube. Also, there is the certified BCorp logo as well as Made in Mexico label (Someone Somewhere, 2019b), which represent expert endorsement according to Bleier et al. (2019). *Someone Somewhere* does not have product videos, customer star ratings, and recommendations.

Social Media Presence

Digital presence is crucial to gain loyalty, allow customers to connect with the brand, and maintain customer engagement. That notwithstanding, it is useful to keep the updated operation of stores on the firm's website (APPICAPS, 2020).

Facebook

Someone Somewhere created its Facebook page in 2012, and it has around 91,000 likes and about 92,000 followers. Every day, the firm posts a message regarding its products and its new innovations, the role of artisans in co-design, sales promotions, artisans' day, and news related with the firm such as stories of some of the artisans through pictures or short videos. Posted images, which include products and artisans' work, are the same as those published on Instagram; however, they add information about the firm and its purpose. It is possible to redirect Facebook users to *Someone Somewhere's* website for online purchases (Someone Somewhere Mx, 2020a). Some posts are shared by followers. There are positive comments regarding how consumers' love *Someone Somewhere's* designs, some questions regarding prices, and some negative comments which include complaints, such as (a) the quality of the products, for example: "*It is awful that you do not include reviews just because you don't get 5 stars. Your hoddie needs more embroidery and it not good for cold weather*" (Tania Fernanda, 2020); (b) some followers mention that the firm takes advantage of Mexican artisans; and (c) some followers disagree with the name in English rather than in Spanish.

It is important to mention that *Someone Somewhere* always answers in a very polite way to its followers and invites them to know the brand better in order to understand its purpose and its commitment with Mexican artisans. Also, it aims to consider all customers' suggestions to improve its designs and operations. Looking in Facebook for posts regarding the fact that *Someone Somewhere* is a BCorp, there is just one post on January 2021 that mentions that the firm is part of B system and focuses on its commitment to achieve zero emissions in 2030 (Someone Somewhere

Mx, 2020b). This is the only one found to mention that the firm is a BCorp indirectly.

Twitter

Someone Somewhere joined Twitter on May 2018. It has 499 followers. It makes weekly publications promoting its products and sharing news about the firm and its productions processes developed by artisans (Someone Somewhere, n.d.-a). It retweeted news regarding the firm published in Google Ads (2021) and other tweets posted by Mexican social enterprises. It launched surveys in order to know if its followers know the conditions of poverty of Mexican artisans. These surveys allow the firm to have interaction with their followers. Also, there are a few tweets and comments of consumers who share their experience buying products from *Someone Somewhere*. A customer expressed her disappointment because she did not receive her products, and the firm answered that it is working to solve this situation. The majority of the posts published on Twitter do not have any comments. This represents an opportunity area for the firm in order to establish more engagement and connections with its followers in this platform.

Instagram

On Instagram, *Someone Somewhere* has about 782 publications and 58,200 followers as on November 28, 2020. Its page mentions that it is a BCorp and also includes *its mission* “to lift millions of rural artisans out of poverty” (Someone somewhere.mx, n.d.). Its posts are about artisans elaborating clothes, Mexican traditions such as Day of the Dead, and promoting its products. It includes a link to the firm’s website for online shopping (Someonesomewhere.mx, n.d.). Some of the comments of the followers are related to their like of the collections, questions regarding prices, and some reviews regarding the new product launched during the pandemic, such as facemasks: “We bought some facemasks. They are

nice, but they are extremely uncomfortable” (diego.mma, September 3, 2021).

YouTube

Someone Somewhere has 812 subscribers and about 28 videos which show the firm and some news related to it, its mission, artisan techniques, and its products (Someone Somewhere, n.d.-b).

Having its own digital channels is part of the social business model developed by the founders of *Someone Somewhere*, because they understood that by using social media they would reach and engage its target: millennials with a social consciousness.

Discussion

Fashion connects people (i.e., designers, producers, retailers, and consumers) and disseminates culture associated with clothes (Fletcher & Grose, 2012; Nguyen & Mogaji, 2022b). It is showed by *Someone Somewhere*, which seeks to connect Mexican artisans and their culture to the millennial market. In fashion experience, there are little extras that make a difference. The physical evidence (i.e., packaging, business cards, carrier bags, in-store décor, content and usage of digital media, e-commerce platforms) is crucial for differentiation (Posner, 2015). *Someone Somewhere* understands this issue and uses its label with the artisan’s name and community embroidered by her as a persuasive element that adds value to the firm, enhances customer perception of the *Someone Somewhere* brand, and positions the firm in the hearts and minds of its consumers.

The crisis originated by the COVID-19 pandemic has changed people’s behaviour: “*bifurcated spending, accelerated adoption of e-commerce, and increased demand for purpose-driven brands and sustainable fashion*” (Bianchi et al., 2020, para. 2). As a result, digital commerce could increase from 35% to 55% of total sales, but online and digital purchases are

influenced by digital means, such as mobile and social media (Bianchi et al., 2020; Gökerik et al., 2018).

The new normal calls for a reshaping of the fashion industry. Fashion firms need to shift to digital presence (Mogaji, 2021). *Someone Somewhere* adopted e-commerce and digital tools to offer value-added services to its customers. This BCorp uses multiple marketing channels such as brick and mortar stores and online sales. However, it needs to move towards a more integrated experience through omnichannel strategy, because, currently, customers expect more: intuitive online shopping experience, fast deliveries, and individualized forms of communication (Bianchi et al., 2020).

Consumers demand purpose-driven firms and sustainable fashion (Bianchi et al., 2020; Nguyen & Mogaji, 2022a). *Someone Somewhere* fulfils this requirement, because it is working with artisans from the poorest states in Mexico and uses fair trade to allow them to improve their well-being. This process produces economic and social impacts because the lives of artisans are enriched through the satisfaction of economic needs in their marginal communities (Fletcher & Grose, 2012). Also, it rescues local production and promotes responsible consumption (Dannemann, 2020). *Someone Somewhere* co-designs its products together with the artisans. This collaboration favours the human touch, “*where knowing the effect of trade on producer, region, and community is integral into decisions made in the development of the products*” (Fletcher & Grose, 2012, p. 110).

Corporate sustainability has three dimensions. For example, economic sustainability could be achieved by buying from local suppliers to support local economic development. Environmental sustainability looks for minimizing adverse environmental impacts, and the social dimension includes decent working conditions (Camacho & Vázquez-Maguirre, 2016). Based on these dimensions of sustainability, *Someone Somewhere* achieved economic sustainability through the creation of job opportunities in the artisanal communities. Also, it focuses on the social dimension of sustainability because its mission is to contribute to the well-being of artisan communities through the creation of fair employment. After analysing *Someone Somewhere*'s B impact report, environmental impact is the one with the lowest score (B Lab, 2020b). This score suggests that the

environmental dimension of sustainability could be an opportunity area for this BCorp.

Being a certified BCorp, social and environmental impacts are part of the core business of *Someone Somewhere*. It contributes to SDG 1 (no poverty) through its work with artisans, which helps them to improve their quality of life; SDG 5 (gender equality) because *Someone Somewhere* promotes the participation of women in economic activities that will improve their well-being and their community, as well as SDG 8 (decent work and economic growth) through the payment of a fair wage to the artisans for their creations. *Someone Somewhere* also contributes to SDG 10 (reduced inequalities) with its work with artisans' communities from the poorest states in Mexico. In addition to this, and as a result of its collaboration with Cubo and Bitácora Social to understand the needs of its stakeholders in its value chain, and its alliances with Promotora Social Mexico, GBM, Unreasonable, We Work, Sistema B, Somos Via, Universidad Iberoamericana Ciudad de México, Tecnológico de Monterrey, Universidad LaSalle, Malacate and Amarella, *Someone Somewhere* contributes to SDG 17 (partnerships for the goals) (Someone Somewhere, 2018, 2019b).

Conclusion

In Mexico, there are innovative initiatives in the fashion industry that show the presence and development of sustainable fashion. The *Someone Somewhere* case exemplifies the connection with culture and textile traditions, as well as the improvement of the local economy of the artisans' communities in the poorest states of Mexico.

This case illustrates the combination of the BCorp and the use of marketing to increase the impact of sustainable fashion (Mukendi et al., 2019). On the one hand, the BCorp model is an innovative sustainable business model which introduces sustainability in its core business and processes (Stubbs, 2019). Also, it captures economic value by delivering social/environmental benefits and superior customer value (Stubbs, 2017). *Someone Somewhere* focuses on economic and social sustainability dimensions through its efforts to improve artisans' communities'

well-being with the payment of fair wages for their embroideries. It will be interesting to see how this BCorp introduces innovations to improve its environmental performance, such as the agreement made with B system to achieve zero emissions in 2030. Furthermore, *Someone Somewhere* contributes to the following Sustainable Development Goals (n.d.): 1, 5, 8, 10, and 17.

On the other hand, *Someone Somewhere* uses its label as physical evidence to differentiate its brand. Its target market is the millennials. Thus, it uses digital tools, such as social media (i.e., Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and YouTube), to reach them. Through its multiple channels (i.e., brick and mortar and e-commerce), this BCorp connects with millennials in Mexico and the US market. One opportunity area is omnichannel marketing to create consistent and seamless customer experience by the integration of its multiple channels (Kotler et al., 2017).

This chapter contributes to the extension of fashion marketing literature from a sustainability perspective in emerging markets (Brooksworth et al., 2022a, 2022b), exploring the combination of an innovative sustainable business model, such as the BCorp model, which is used as an assurance of the commitment of *Someone Somewhere* to artisans and their development, with the use of e-commerce and social media to increase the impact of the brand in the fashion industry.

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Part IV

Conclusion



10

Brand, Consumer and Sustainability Perspectives in Fashion Marketing: Conclusion and Research Agenda

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and Genevieve Bosah

Introduction

The fashion marketing strategies contributing to emerging economies' rapid growth and importance are well documented in the book *Fashion Marketing in Emerging Economies*. It remains an open question if this thorough research work will set the pace for other researchers to pick up interest in exploring research areas in emerging markets and fashion marketing strategies they adopt to survive, considering how they are

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growing in scale and power within the global supply chain and have also become incredibly competitive. In an era where literature is widely dispersed and challenging to access, Cavusgil et al. (2002) state that in the next two decades, emerging markets are going to be responsible for most of the world's growth. This argument warrants some discussion. This implies that it is necessary to expand our focus on emerging markets, understanding the marketing theories and practices that account for the rapidly changing marketplace. To understand the future of emerging markets, it is essential to consider how it has evolved by providing exciting research papers to broaden people's knowledge on different sectors within emerging markets.

The chapters suggest a few conclusions, but overall, they suggest an understanding of the incredible transformations taking place in markets within emerging economies and the importance of the top marketing strategies considered to aid the fast rise. The rapid growth of emerging markets has provided a new impetus to the internationalisation of business. As large emerging economies have provided new markets and low-cost sites for international companies (Cavusgil et al., 2012; Burgess & Steenkamp, 2006; Welsh et al., 2006; Fornes & Butt-Philipp, 2011; Nkamnebe, 2011; Bang et al., 2016; Sinha & Sheth, 2018; Paul & Benito, 2018), marketing intelligence and planning has become more international than ever before; international investors are being intentional about understanding customers, regulators and competitors among others to create new opportunities and forecast changes in the quest for sustainable competitive advantage in emerging markets. Thirusen (2011) asserted that globalisation and technological advancement had altered traditional business dynamics and, more importantly, the marketing approach. Much of the literature studied emphasise the great importance of developing relationships in a new market from both a business-to-business (B2B) and a business-to-consumer (B2C) perspective (Flambard-Ruaud, 2005; Wood, 2004).

While marketing research topics attract the most academic attention, emerging markets' marketing strategies and activities are less developed. The global marketing landscape is undergoing rapid developments (Samiee & Chabowski, 2012; Dahlquist & Griffith, 2015) at a time when emerging markets have never been more desirable to firms

interested in maximising profitability and securing a robust competitive advantage. Lately, emerging markets' growth and innovation potential have become impossible to ignore. Wilson and Purushothaman (2003) estimate that by 2035, the gross domestic product of emerging markets will permanently surpass that of all developed markets, yet not a lot of research work has been done on emerging markets.

The rapid growth and industrialisation of emerging economies (Gu et al. 2008; Hitt et al. 2000; Hoskisson et al., 2000) is attracting a new generation of fashion marketing researchers, manifesting themselves as new centres of expertise, whose research findings are influencing multinational top management teams to employ integrative strategies while entering emerging markets. There have been several general assertions that suggest that emerging markets are becoming increasingly important in strategy formulation. Yet, the topic of how the rise of emerging markets influences strategic business decisions has not been explored. Some chapters revealed that entering emerging markets will require a different strategic approach (Ghauri et al., 2003; Mei, 2013; Sakarya et al., 2007; Meyer et al., 2009; Elg et al., 2015; Brenes et al., 2014). International investors rushing into emerging markets ought to desist from transplanting older technology and product offerings from developed markets into markets within emerging economies. Their business success in emerging markets is hugely dependent on careful market research done over time to expose them to a detailed understanding of the suitable strategies. It will effectively work for a particular need in emerging economies.

It has become clear that BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa), with China and India being the most studied (Sheth, 2011; Paul & Mas, 2016; Walters & Samiee, n.d.), and MIST (Mexico, Indonesia, South Korea and Turkey) are the largest and hold the greatest power as emerging economies, but they are not the only emerging market nations. There are other emerging market nations that have proliferated from tiny, fledging markets to important manufacturing and sourcing centres, and are not only attractive but provide considerable opportunities for manufacturing and marketing of goods and services; they carry high hopes for investors (Fiske & Silverstein, 2003; Nueno & Quelch, 1998). Most emerging markets also have access to capital and technology to add to the natural resources they are blessed with rather than export

them as raw materials. Investing in emerging markets gives international investors access to raw materials for activities within their fashion value chain and provides ample manufacturing and sourcing opportunities. The limited research could be attributed to the fact that growth in emerging markets is overlooked and underwritten (Peterson & Ekici, 2007). It is widely recognised that emerging markets offer enormous long-term opportunities for fashion and luxury investors (Kaynak & Zhou, 2010) and familiarising themselves with the various needs will increase their ability to tap into the potentials in these markets entirely. Conditions in emerging markets differ significantly from those in developed markets, and international investors must consider these differing contingencies when developing their strategies for expansion.

Thirushen (2011) asserted that globalisation and technological advancement had altered traditional business dynamics and, more importantly, the marketing approach. Social media marketing is gaining more prominence because of personalised engagement between brands and customers (Edwards, 2011; Resident al., 2013). Social media marketing is gaining traction in emerging markets. Since social media is the synthesis of media and communication, it has become imperative that firms interested in penetrating emerging markets must employ proven communication strategies to reach their target audience. Fashion retailers and marketers can exploit various social media platforms to connect their firms to their target markets when tapping into emerging markets.

According to other contributions, a further implication of increased involvement with emerging markets is the need to study consumers in consumption and service marketing within these markets. Emerging markets have millions of affluent consumers (Blackwell et al., 2001). The consumers' interpretations and attitudes towards marketing efforts serve as an indicator of a firm's ability to improve the consumers' satisfaction (Peterson & Ekici 2007). There is a growing importance and relevance of luxury brands in emerging markets, which are planning to make more efforts to stay in the competition, to study the characteristics of various customers as they are critical in a firm's marketing efforts and to develop and launch new products that suit their needs. With prosperity and wealth accompanying the growth of emerging markets, understanding the consumers' behaviours is essential for several fashion business

activities, ranging from product development and branding strategies to communications management. Fashion marketers and retailers need to understand to benefit from the market growth trend because the benefits of doing business in emerging markets are generally positive (Alon et al., 2010; Paul, 2019). This necessitates proactive investigation of the purchase behaviour of target consumers in emerging markets to produce findings with significant implications for marketers currently operating in or planning to enter emerging markets.

The growing confidence and capacity evident in emerging markets are encouraging (Sheth, 2011); they are not only attractive for investment, but also the increasing income, availability of human capital and low-cost wages within these countries also make them strong markets for the manufacturing and distribution of goods and services. We can also expect organisational changes to occur as international businesses realise the growing importance of emerging markets. Witowski (2005) notes that implementing marketing activities can reduce poverty and social and environmental harm. International business investors have been exposed to emerging markets' opportunities and threats. Some chapters raise issues of corporate social responsibility and the ethical value of serving these relatively impoverished emerging market nations and improving the quality of life for the average lower-income customer within emerging markets.

As the growing trend in businesses worldwide has globalised, firms established in developed economies such as the USA, the European Union and Japan would benefit from entering emerging markets to expand their operations and maintain global competitiveness (Sheth, 2011; Merchant, 2016; Sinha & Sheth, 2018). Given that emerging markets have become increasingly attractive to multinational corporations and other developed market fashion firms, several opportunities for future research aligned with the topic spring from the results of this academic research (Samuel Craig & Douglas, 2001; Sharma et al., 2018). Fashion firms are overdue for new guidance to help them successfully transition to these less stable yet rapidly growing economies. On that account, the results of this academic study will provide valuable information to fashion marketers and retailers in the industry. The study documents the landscape and potential of fashion marketing activities and

strategies in emerging markets, but the results yield insights into the general overview of the markets' strengths and capture positive emerging market phenomena (Arslan & Larimo, 2016; Appiah-Adu, 1998). The study helps advance the literature concerning under-researched emerging markets by distinguishing between various emerging market nations (Dekimpe, 2009).

There are still many uncovered grounds about fashion marketing. While this book has made significant contributions, further research is still needed to better understand the market and marketing strategies for fashion brands and recognise the inherent challenges and opportunities in these emerging markets. In addressing these research agendas, it is essential to realise that one cap does not fit all; however, the focus is on emerging markets. Different countries and regions will still have unique features that shape fashion brands' marketing. Irrespective of this vast demography across these emerging markets, these seven strands of research are the presented agendas for future research:

1. *Fashion and Sustainability*: Fashion marketing is becoming a crucial topic. It is essential to examine it further in the context of the emerging markets to understand fashion brands' effort towards sustainability, their challenges and how these challenges can be addressed (Kaur et al., 2022). This can perhaps be done by building on the work of Adjabeng (2021), who provided an exploratory study of fashion designers' knowledge, practices and challenges in Ghana to understand better the fashion designers' awareness about issues around sustainability and how they can be addressed. Fashion contribution towards the Sustainable Development Goals is also significant and worth exploring. Future research can explore fashion brands' efforts towards getting sustainability certifications. Camacho (2021) provided insight into sustainable fashion in Mexico by examining the BCorp certification, while Nguyen and Mogaji (2021b) explored BCorps in Vietnam. It is essential to understand the adoption of this certification across the market and its impact on their brand.
2. *Fashion and Technology*: It is essential now for brands to understand their customers deeply, and therefore, technology in fashion is necessary. Having a deep understanding of data science and analytics is

critical in making an informed business decision. Griffin (2021) presented strategies and tools for fashion analytics in Africa and the Middle East, identifying the effectiveness of advanced data-driven marketing practices and fashion consumer analytics in emerging markets. These technologies' prospects, challenges and opportunities can also be explored in different contexts. Social media cannot be ignored. Kharuhayothin and Patarapongsant (2021) explored consumers' perceptions of fast fashion influencers on Instagram, and consumers' understanding of social media will remain highly important for brands (Mogaji, 2021).

3. *Fashion and Consumer Behaviour*: As stated earlier, there are different layers to a typical fashion consumer in an emerging market. Therefore, it is essential to understand their behaviour better as it will shape all the fashion business practices. Joseph (2021) presented a study on how Nigerian fashion brands influence customer purchasing behaviour; Bardey and Nessim (2021) explored fashion psychology behind the attire and armour of Egyptian women; and Bardey et al. (2021) provided insights into Generation Z Indian consumers' attitudes towards Western and Indian fashion; these studies highlight the unique features of the customers and how best to target them. Brands also need to understand the existing perception and change it or build on it in targeting these customers. Sestino (2021) presented a literature review on the perception of fashion products in emerging markets, which suggests how intricate this can be. But beyond the basic understanding of their behaviour, neuromarketing can play a crucial role; it will be necessary to extend the theoretical insight into the power of neuromarketing provided by Ala et al. (2021).
4. *Fashion and Supply Chain Management*: Developing nations still face a dilemma about their production infrastructure, consumer consumption and international trades (Yang et al., 2017; Nayak et al., 2019). These have a considerable impact on fashion marketing. The cost of labour is significantly cheap. Factories can employ many people to make apparel, but access to materials can be costly. Future research should endeavour to understand this intricate nature of the supply chain as it affects the emerging market and endeavours to provide both managerial and policy implications. They were perhaps extend-

ing the works of Nguyen and Mogaji (2021b), which focused on emerging economies fashion brand positioning within the fashion global value chain. Brands in emerging markets need to know their supply chain strength and improve their weaknesses. Transportation policies and infrastructure need to be examined to support this supply chain (Mogaji, 2020; Mogaji et al., 2022). Ethical manufacturing and sustainability in fashion is also an area worth exploring, especially in the context of the new strand of fashion market that has emerged from these studies (Nayak et al., 2019), to understand how fashion designers design, make and sell their clothes and are integrating sustainability in their business practice.

5. *Fashion and Public Relations, Advertising and Communications*: When all the products have been made, marketing communication becomes essential to communicate to stakeholders about the new design, either through fashion weeks as Jacob (2021) explored or via social media (Gökerik et al., 2018; Kharuhayothin & Patarapongsant, 2021). Future research needs to understand how fashion brands in emerging markets communicate and improve their communication strategies, perhaps sharing some good practices that can be adopted across the market. Kay and Young (2021) identified the prospects of building the brand through storytelling, even in challenging times, which can be a start of future research to understand storytelling as a communication strategy. A prospective study can also explore the green marketing strategies of fashion brands in emerging markets. Mackie and Campbell (2021) have started this strand of research by identifying the increasing prevalence of greenwashing and green marketing in emerging markets. Another notable contribution in this strand of research on green marketing is the theoretical framework for the influence of green marketing communication on consumer behaviour in emerging economies by Nguyen and Mogaji (2021c). Communicating good deeds about the brand is also essential. This serves as an extension of Adapa and Yarram's (2021) work on how the apparel industry in India is communicating its CSR activities. This can further be expanded into other areas to understand the CSR activities of fashion brands and how they are being displayed.

6. *Fashion and Strategic Business Planning*: Starting a business is not very easy, and it can be more challenging for a start-up fashion brand in an emerging market (Brooksworth et al., 2021). It is anticipated that future research will investigate the barriers and challenges of starting a business and provide ideas around strategic business planning. This may build around entrepreneur strands of research (Lang & Liu, 2019), but, ultimately, the idea is to make starting a business easier based on empirical research and insight.
7. *Fashion Events and Experiences*: The ambience and the experiences of fashion marketing are worth exploring further within the emerging market context, creating an understanding around brand experiences on brand resonance in multichannel retailing (Huang et al., 2015). Appiah-Nimo (2021) presents a snapshot of contemporary retail in South Africa, and Sandes (2021) discusses fashion's menswear market characteristics in Brazil. There are gaps in knowledge about how the experiences within the retail environment can be improved.

In summary, many emerging markets are in a state of rapid economic development (Gu et al., 2008; Hitt et al., 2000; Hoskisson et al., 2000) and liberalisation, which is favourable to new international investors and fashion retailers and marketers who can be very innovative in establishing strategic marketing activities and tools needed to survive in emerging markets (Varadarajan & Kaul, 2018). Expanding to an emerging market can help firms gain an immense competitive advantage in today's global marketplace. The most significant impact of emerging markets will be on marketing practice, as discussed in the chapters in the book. This academic work provides a surfeit of long-overdue managerial guidance. Such guidance will encourage more and more firms to undertake dynamic innovation strategies in emerging markets. Emerging markets are poised for significant changes in the coming years. The results and insights provided by the chapters in this academic work will equip firms with the required knowledge to prepare and assist them in tapping into the innovation potential of this rapidly expanding marketplace. It is hoped that this academic research on fashion marketing in emerging economies will help stir up the debate around emerging markets and encourage more research contributions to the topic.

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