

The Role of the Retailer in Socially Responsible Fashion Purchasing

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Abstract In recent years there have been a number of dramatic changes in the fashion retail arena, not only have consumer needs changed but also the way they purchase fashion products. The emergence of the fast fashion business model allowed consumers access to new collections every few weeks, with some retailers now moving to up to 12 collections per year. Whilst this approach reflects the very antithesis of *fashion*; constantly renewing itself and offering new trends every season, the pace of the supply chain has also had to increase to meet demand. This constant access to new fashion products has adapted the wants and needs of the consumer, with quantity rather than quality being preferred. However, it is this acceleration of the supply chain that has led to a number of social and environmental issues occurring. Opposing this speed of consumption is socially responsible purchasing, where ethical considerations are taken into account during the design and production of fashion. Both consumers and retailers alike are beginning to adopt this approach evidenced in both corporate social responsibility strategies and ethical purchasing behaviour. However, there are key issues currently preventing a fundamental change in the industry such as a lack of incentives for responsible purchasing behaviour and poor aesthetics. It is these issues that need addressing in order to push the industry towards a more socially responsible future. The positioning of the responsibility for the future of the industry is a highly debated topic, with both consumers and retailers often being assumed as leaders. This chapter explores the role of the retailer in this debate and the powerful position they are in as the middleman between the purchasing consumers and the manufacturing suppliers. In order to influence consumer behaviour towards a more socially responsible approach, retailers need to engage their consumers in an innovative way. Their

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unique role is to inspire their consumers, using fashion as the communication vehicle for a drive towards future change.

Keywords Ethical fashion · Consumer purchasing behaviour · Fashion purchasing process

1 Background and Context

The fashion industry is one of the largest consumers of natural resources in the world. In order for the industry to operate, it requires large quantities of many of these resources such as water, for example, which is needed in order to grow and produce cotton based clothing. To produce a basic cotton t-shirt, for example, requires 2700 L of water throughout the manufacturing process (WWF 2015). Another heavily utilised natural resource in the fashion industry is oil, which is used to produce man-made fibres such as polyester. The draining of many natural resources and the consequential damage to the environment is in some cases irrevocable. Factory operation and transportation of goods causes toxic carbon emissions to be emitted, polluting the air and contributing to the long list of negative environmental consequences, which are as a result of the production of garments. In addition to the impact on the environment, there are also social issues to be considered.

Retail historically has tended to focus on the operational functions of primary importance to retail such as the brick and mortar stores, warehouses and distribution centres and stakeholder engagement. Latterly, however, retail is having to become more conscious of making the garment supply chain transparent and consider for the first time integrating its sustainability agenda throughout the business and on to the consumer.

Within the long and complex process of the fashion supply chain, dozens of factory workers, dyers and processors contribute to the production of fashion products. All of these human beings require a safe working environment and to be paid a fair living wage, however this is not always the case. In April 2013, the deadliest accidental structure failure in modern human history occurred (BBC 2013). Rana Plaza was a commercial building in the Savar region of Dhaka, Bangladesh and housed many clothing factories employing thousands of workers. Despite warnings regarding the safety of the eight-storey extension on the top of the building, 1130 workers were killed when the building collapsed. In the days leading up to the collapse, factory owners were advised to vacate the building due to cracks appearing the walls, however, due to pressure to complete orders, factory workers were told a months wages would be docked if they did not turn up for work the following day (Devnath and Srivastava 2013). Ignoring this advice caused the fatalities and injuries to a further 2515 people (Butler 2013). Within the factories in the Rana Plaza complex clothing for high-street brands such as Zara, Mango and Primark were being produced at the time of the collapse (Nelson and Bergman 2013). What all these

brands have in common is that they are fast fashion retailers who aim to bring catwalk-inspired fashion to the high street, as quickly and as cheaply as possible. The pressures being placed on the factories to complete the orders on time will have come directly from the brands in question. However Rana Plaza is far from the only social disaster of recent times, from late 1990 to the present day there have been 28 reported incidents in garment factories with 22 of these having fatalities. During this time, almost 2000 factory workers have lost their lives due to various social compromises being placed on the manufacturing supply chain (Bhuiyan 2012).

The need for social responsibility in the supply chain has never been more prominent. Social responsibility can be defined as when all human interaction in the clothing supply chain work in good working conditions and are paid a fair living wage. This term, however, is often misunderstood and frequently interchanged with other terms such as ethical or sustainability. Whilst social responsibility and sustainability often come hand-in-hand, the definition between the two can be quite clear. Social responsibility and ethical refer to the human interaction within the garment supply chain, while sustainability is the long-term durability of the environment. A further issue when attempting to define this term is the lack of industry standard, leaving the meaning to be very subjective and interpreted very differently from company to company. As previously discussed, social aspects of the supply chain are not limited to just one stage of the process and can affect different people in many different ways. Social responsibility can refer to working hours, working conditions, health and safety of the working environment and worker's pay. It has been suggested that when discussing ethics the term is far too broad in its definition, too loose in its operations and too moral in any other stance (Devinney et al. 2010).

Despite the difficulties surrounding the terminology there are many examples of engagement from the perspective of the retailer. This again comes in many different forms from retailer to retailer, with many setting goals or targets to aim for in the near future. The use of more organic cotton, further engagement in Fairtrade and the use on non-toxic dyes are all generic examples of such engagement. Marks and Spencer can be provided as an industry example, where in their Plan A commitments they aim to work closely with their manufacturers, setting up educational training schemes for their workers to help them gain basic literacy skills and knowledge regarding health issues in order to better support their families. In addition to this, Marks and Spencer also works closely with manufacturing locations, contributing to town resources such as educational institutions and sanitary facilities. They have also worked on the development of several *green model factories*, the first of which was in Sri Lanka where huge quantities of trees were planted in the factory vicinity. This not only provides further jobs for local people, but also offsets the carbon emissions produced when manufacturing the fashion goods. Another example of retailer engagement would be where the retailer has engaged their customers in initiatives in the context of social responsibility. Recycling schemes based on the premise of consumers returning goods to store when they no longer want them has been launched by both H&M and Marks and

Spencer. Rewards in the form of money-off vouchers are helping to incentivise the initiatives. This consumer engagement will be discussed further later in the chapter.

This chapter will further explore the relationship between the consumer and the retailer in the context of the fashion industry. The exploration of this vital relationship will aid the reader in understanding the purchasing process and how the retailer has a great deal of power to influence the consumer in their choices. This is achieved through the utilisation of marketing methods and techniques and can often occur during what has been labelled in this chapter as the *window of opportunity* in retail. This is where the consumer has the intentions to buy a specific item but may be persuaded to change their mind, resulting in a different or increased purchasing behaviour. Recent changes in society can be held responsible for many changes in both consumer attitudes and the development of the value, lower end of the fashion market. The development of the fast fashion business model has increased pressure on the already long and complex supply chain, the consequences of which have been highlighted already. In addition to these pressures, several further challenges for the industry and in specific retailers will be discussed and the chapter concluding with how these challenges can be potentially addressed with recommendations for the future.

The chapter will begin by providing context and background surrounding social responsibility in fashion. This will guide the reader through the rationale for taking a more responsible approach to the production of fashion in the manufacturing supply chain. The purchasing process will be discussed in length in Sect. 2, highlighting the journey a consumer goes on in the lead up to purchasing a fashion product. This includes the internal decision making process undertaken alongside the influential factors which can adapt and change the final purchasing outcome. A case study conducted by the authors in 2013 has been included which explores the purchasing criteria of consumers looking in detail to the factors, which they consider to be most important when purchasing a product. The chapter continues in Sect. 3.1 and provides an insight into recent changes in the fashion market, discussing how economic and retail adaptations have a profound effect on the needs and wants of consumers in their fashion choices. The challenges facing social responsibility are outlined in Sect. 4.1, detailing the key factors currently preventing further change in the industry. The challenges are then addressed in Sect. 5.1, where potential solution and integral steps towards change are discussed. The chapter concludes with highlighting the innovative and powerful position of the retailer and how their role within this field can be the catalyst to moving the industry to a more socially responsible future.

2 The Purchasing Process

The purchasing process can be defined as a predetermined model which attempts to describe the actions of an individual on the lead up to and including the act of purchasing goods. A lot of models developed by authors are based heavily of the work of Ajzen (1985) in the development of the theory of planned behaviour. This

Fig. 1 Schiffman et al. (2008) purchasing process



is where the act of behaviour is said to be a direct consequence of the theory of attitudes and where behavioural relationships are rationalised. Attitudes are developed within the context of subjective norms, perceived behavioural control, or intentions and behaviour in a casual fixed sequence. The initial development of Ajzen's model has led authors to adapt and modify this process within the context of their own work, resulting in the inclusion of other considerations such as implementation intentions, situational context and actual behaviour control.

The purchasing process as developed by Schiffman et al. (2008) can be described as a three-stage process, and occurs whenever a consumer interacts with a retailer to purchase goods. This process includes input, process and output (Fig. 1).

The first stage of this process is where consumers consider factors effecting the purchasing decision such as price, quality and item specification. The second stage is *process* which can be broken down into several sub-stages, the first of which is need recognition. This is where the consumer acknowledges that there is an internal need or want to purchase a specific item. Next, there is a competitor analysis, where the consumer carries out a search of the market in order to understand the scope of products that are available, which will fulfill the need previously recognised. Once the market has been analysed to a degree that the consumer is satisfied with (varying significantly from consumer to consumer), an informed purchasing decision will be made. The breadth of this competitor search will vary from person to person. Some will be satisfied with the first product found that matches the need criteria and is within budget and accessibility. Others will conduct a thorough search where a full range of possibilities will be explored, spanning an array of budgets and retailers. Some more savvy consumers will explore an even wider range of options, turning to online retailers such as Amazon and Ebay to try and find the best available product (often second-hand) for the best available price. The use of the Internet has increasingly made this competitor search easier and more accessible to the masses as consumers no longer have to physically visit retailers in stores to see the full product range available. This adaptation to retailer access has had a significant effect on the purchasing process in general as the behaviour of consumers is rapidly adapting to accommodate developments in technology such as advanced application of the internet. Once the purchasing decision has been reached, the final stage of this process concludes the product purchase. *Output* includes the consumer following on from their decision and both the act of physically purchasing the product decided on, and also the evaluation of that product once the consumer has received and utilised the product sufficiently.

The purchasing process has also been considered within a wider context, which has developed the purchasing process to move to that of a four-stage process. The first stage assesses the need for the product and could be compared to the input stage of the previous model discussed. Following this, the gathering of information must occur, which again can be compared to that of the first initial sub-category of

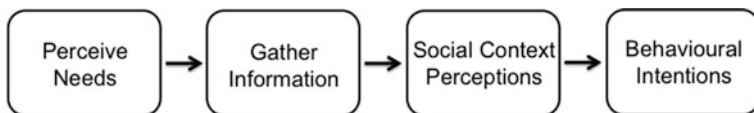


Fig. 2 Newholm and Shaw (2007) purchasing process

stage two of the process. The third stage referred to would be utilisation of perceptions of social context. This is where several authors believe the consideration for ethics and sustainability would come, an increasing consideration for the purchasing of many consumer goods. The final stage of the process which again is comparable to that of Schiffman et al. (2008) would be the act of developing behavioural intentions (Fig. 2).

This four-stage process as developed by Newholm and Shaw (2007) also believes that the large majority of decision making in purchasing occurs prior to the act of behavioural intentions, meaning that a consumer has made a decision before the physical action of purchasing.

2.1 Influencing Purchasing Behaviour

When considering the purchasing process as a three or four-stage model, there is an intervening period where retailers have the power to influence decisions made by consumers. This would be applicable in both an online and in-store situation where advertising, special offers and price promotions could influence the predetermined decisions made by consumers. This *window of opportunity* allows for the consumer’s mind to be changed in preference for something cheaper or of a different specification. This point-of-sale marketing opportunity is usually utilised by retailers to upsell goods or to encourage consumers to over-consume and purchase additional goods, which were not included in their initial intentions. Retailers use marketing tools in order to do this, influencing the purchasing behaviour of their customers (Fig. 3).

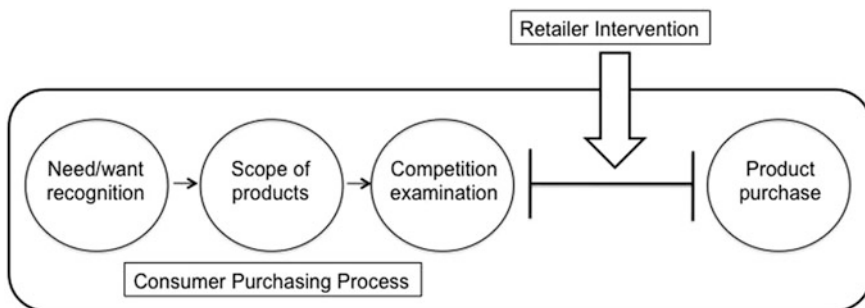


Fig. 3 Consumer purchasing process with retailer intervention (Source Authors)

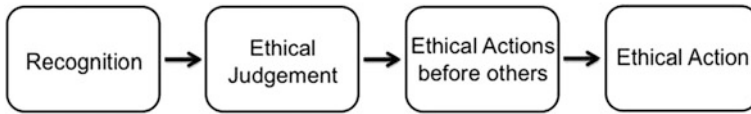


Fig. 4 Rest (1986) consumer purchasing process

This *window of opportunity* or retailer intervention has multiple applications on the part of the retailer, moving away from the upsell or over consumption element, to more of a social marketing approach. This is where retailers could use this window of power within the purchasing process to encourage consumers to purchase more responsibly, with the consideration of ethics and sustainability during the purchasing process. This period of time prior to the act of purchasing could be used to inform consumers further of ethical and sustainable issues pertinent to the field of consumer goods being purchased. This approach could not only help consumers to make more responsible choices, but to also become more informed and educated for future purchases made. When consumers apply such knowledge, it has been labelled as socially responsible purchasing as consumers are taking these factors into consideration prior to purchasing their choice of goods. This inclusion of ethical and sustainable considerations is said to be where the consumer morals and values regarding such issues will eventually have an effect on their final purchasing behaviour. The four stages are said to include recognition, application of ethical judgement, putting ethical actions before that of others and family and finally ethical action (Rest 1986). This model, (Fig. 4), implies that the utilisation of ethical actions occurs at a particular point of the purchasing process; however, it is also to be recognised that this can occur at many different stages. In particular at the end of use of the product, where the method of disposal may be considered taking into consideration recycling, up-cycling and biodegradable options.

When considering the purchasing process, there are a large number of possible factors that at many stages could influence the behaviour of consumers. These can be divided into two, by those that can be controlled by the consumer, called situational factors, and fixed factors which are out with the control of the consumer but still have the potential to influence behaviour. Situational factors encompass elements such as weather, personal finances and even mood of the consumer themselves. Fixed elements include factors such as price points, availability, store layout and design. All these elements have the potential to influence a consumer's purchasing behaviour during the purchasing process. Again many of these occur during the retailer's *window of opportunity*, especially the fixed influential factors that the consumer cannot control.

The influence of the price of a product is a heavily debated topic in literature when it comes to the discussion of purchasing behaviour. Ethics and sustainability acts as a catalyst to this discussion, as many consumers have to forsake responsible purchasing behaviour in favour of more affordable products. Cowe and Williams (2001) believe that price dominates the majority of decisions made by consumers and that there is regularly a trade off of ethics for improved price points. In addition

to price it is believed that there are a number of other factors that consumers consider prior to buying an ethical brand, including; brand awareness, the product criteria and the convenience of purchasing an ethical product (Davies 2007). The prioritised list of considered elements on the part of a consumer has been named the purchasing hierarchy, with many authors again developing differing models of these influential factors. Price is thought to be the most important purchasing criteria, closely followed by value, quality and brand familiarity (Carrigan and Attalla 2001). Considering ethics and sustainability are not mentioned here, it can be assumed that consumers do not prioritise these factors.

Many attempts have been previously made to increase consumer awareness and knowledge of social responsibility through the application of initiatives and labelling campaigns (Bray et al. 2010). However, the development of too many labelling initiatives has consequently resulted in scepticism of the true meaning behind these labels on the part of the consumer. In addition to the meaning, the effectiveness has also been questioned, providing a certain amount of doubt on how useful, if at all, social labelling can be. This negativity is also thought to have spread towards the retailers and the brands behind the labels, with consumers holding them responsible for their initial scepticism. This common approach from consumers is thought to be having a negative affect on the ethical market, with Cowe and Williams (2001) believing that a generation of disinterested consumers could kill off the ethical movement.

The influence of the scepticism of ethical product labelling, however, does assume there to be two very distinct markets; that of socially responsible goods and one that is not. Again this assumes that these two markets are available to the consumer rather than just the one morally correct option (Niinimaki 2010). Whilst there remains to be two distinct markets, consumers will continue to have a choice to make during the purchasing process, whilst taking the more integrated approach as previously mentioned by Arnold (2009) would eliminate a choice situation. This scenario would see brand and retailers incorporate socially responsible values into their core business, resulting in a more ethical and sustainable offering to consumers. This approach, however, would very much rely on retailers and brands building trust with their consumers, where communication of their shared values would need to be clear and accessible to their customers. In an interview conducted with the head of responsible business from a leading UK high-street retailer, it was discussed that this was the ideal situation. Consumers could build relationships with retailers who share their moral values and trust them as a business to make the correct decisions for them. This was said to see the consumers leaving their worries at the store doorway, and consequently shopping without a choice or trade-off needed (James 2015).

A heavily debated issue within literature is the accessibility of socially responsible clothing to the mass market (Bray et al. 2010; Niinimaki 2010; Arnold 2009; Carrigan and Attalla 2001). This is thought to be one of the largest influences impeding the growth of the ethical and sustainable market. This lack of availability

of such goods is further hindered with a lack of choice, meaning that not only are these goods in most cases unavailable, but when they are available the choice is very limited. This is particularly pertinent to the fashion market as consumer purchasing choices are predominantly based on aesthetics. Authors have gone as far as to believe that consumers have a limited interest in ethical and sustainable issues due to this lack of choice and availability (Niinimäki 2010). This again results in consumers having to make choices and often trade-offs between aesthetics and ethical or sustainable products, which mirrors the idea previously discussed where price can also result in an either-or situation (Cowe and Williams 2001). As a result debates surrounding this topic have moved on, suggesting that in order to be successful the fashion market needs to bring together trend-led collections and responsible values (Arnold 2009).

Socially responsible purchasing has often been related to compromise or trade-off situations, where consumers have to make a choice of one factor over another. The term *flexibility* has been used in the context of such purchasing behaviour, implying that socially responsible behaviour has to be balanced with everyday life practicalities. There is said to be a need for a balance between this practical approach and the application of ethical values (Szmigin et al. 2009). However, due to many conflicting influences as previously discussed, these balances often cannot be reached and the consumer develops a justification strategy. This is where consumers attempt to justify (with themselves and others) why their non-responsible behaviour is acceptable. This form of rationalisation compromises a consumer's own moral values yet permits the opposite behaviour despite them knowing otherwise. Consumers attach logic and meaning to their decision making at this point to allow them to conduct behaviour to compromise their knowledge and awareness of ethical and sustainable issues (Auger and Devinney 2007). This series of justifications has also been referred to as neutralisation, where consumers dilute their responsible behaviour through justification strategies and later deny all negative consequential impacts (Chatzidakis et al. 2007). This point is supported by Niinimäki (2010) who believes that consumers subconsciously make decisions based on their own individual needs. These decisions can affect and benefit those needs. This approach when taken by consumers can result in them feeling very unconnected with where their clothing comes from, having no awareness, knowledge or empathy of the manufacturing supply chain, let alone the knowledge of the ethical or sustainable issues that can occur.

A further issue which is having an impact on socially responsible behaviour is the feeling that a consumer's contribution is not enough to make a difference. This phenomenon entitled *perceived consumer effectiveness* (PCE) (Ellen 1994) refers to the level of affect that a consumer believes their contribution to be making. When a consumer believes their actions have little or no effect, this is termed low perceived effectiveness (LPCE). When a consumer feels this way it is believed to have a negative impact on their socially responsible intentions overall, which again when referring to Ajzen's Theory of Planned Behaviour, is said to be indicative of behaviour.

Culture is also thought to play a role within the consumer purchasing behaviour, especially within the context of ethics and sustainability (Belk et al. 2005).

Case Study—Consumer Purchasing Hierarchy

The authors conducted a study in October 2013 of 35 consumers who were asked to provide their purchasing hierarchy criteria. A controlled group of participants were targeted through an ethical fashion symposium organised by Fashioning an Ethical Industry organisation that aids students and tutors in fashion related courses. These participants were selected due to their existing interest in ethics in fashion, where their purchasing criteria could then be assessed. The participants were predominantly academics and students who had an interest in ethical issues surrounding the fashion industry. The majority of participants were enrolled on undergraduate courses from various universities and colleges in the UK. Consequently a large proportion of participants were aged between 15 and 24. However, there were a number of academics and tutors that participated who fell within the age bracket of 35–44 or 45+. This wide range of participants posed several interesting areas of inquiry, including if age and salary influenced the type of garments purchased and the retailer those items were bought from.

This study aimed to gain an insight into the most important considerations to consumers when purchasing fashion items. The study saw participants providing information of their top five considerations during their fashion purchasing process. They were provided with eight choices, being asked to rank their five top important factors in descending order from most important to least important. This approach along with the example choice answers were established from a previous preliminary piece of work conducted with a major high-street retailer. These included: handmade, organic, Fairtrade, price, aesthetics, locally sourced, material and washing instructions.

The results were discussed as a group but then recorded using a pre-prepared template, which included visual representation in sticker format (Fig. 5). This approach was taken to make the exercise less formal, prompting further discussion in the group.

In addition to ranking the most important purchasing criterion elements, participants were also asked to provide rationale for these choices. This allowed the author to begin to understand the reasoning for participant's decisions and how this ultimately influenced their purchasing behaviour.

The results from this study were analysed as a whole before this was then further broken down into each of the top five choices provided. For the overall summary of the study, the top three choices (in descending order) from the participants were aesthetics, materials and price (see Fig. 6). Locally sourced, Fairtrade and Organic all scored fairly low, indicating that these factors were not a priority to participants when purchasing fashion. Handmade was the lowest scoring factor, again indicating that this is of the lowest importance to participants, however this may be due to the participant being more familiar with mass produced garments.

When breaking this data down into more specific hierarchical choices made by the participants, there appeared to be patterns emerging in the data with a clear









Fig. 5 Recording template
(Source Authors)

Task 2
Garment Requirements

From the stickers attached to the sheet, select the most 5 important factors when purchasing a garment and prioritise them 1 -5. Briefly Explain your choice.

Most Important	Why is this important?
Least Important	

Logo Key:

							
Hand made	Organic	Fairtrade	Price	Aesthetics	Locally Sourced	Material	Washing Instructions

divide indicating factors that were necessities and those which were just desirable. The top four choices which were described by participants as necessities were aesthetics, material, price and washing instructions in comparison to those much lower scoring elements which were described as desirable but not necessary; locally sourced, Fairtrade, Organic and handmade. The qualitative rational provided by the participants allowed this conclusion to be reached (refer to appendix for full data set).

Choice No. 1

The first hierarchical choice from the study was aesthetics, with 87 % of participants at this point indicating that this was the first thing they looked for when purchasing a garment. The remaining answers indicated that material was also a consideration at this point.

Choice No. 2

The second choice indicated that the material of a garment was the most popular answer at this stage with 53 % of participants indicating that this was the second

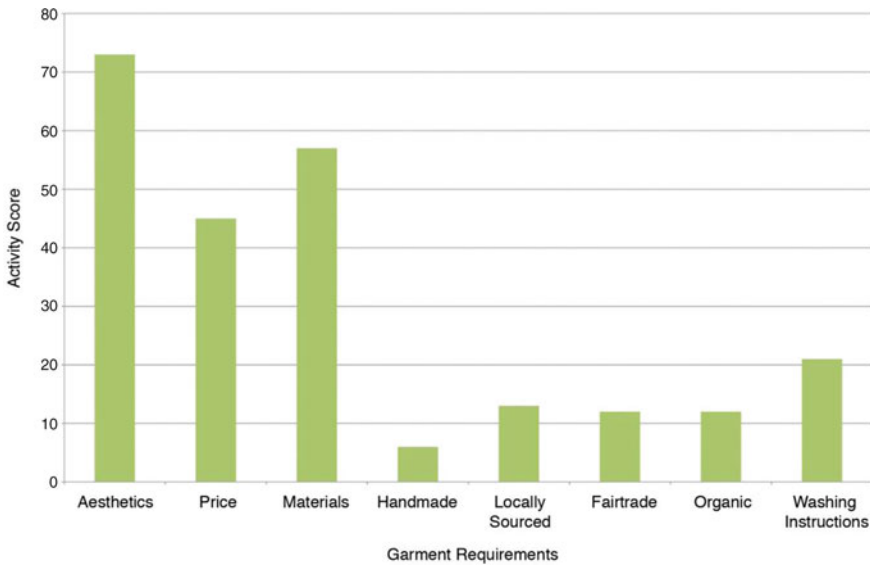


Fig. 6 Consumer purchasing hierarchy results (*Source* Authors)

factor they considered during their purchasing process. The rationale for this answer predominantly focused on material being an indication of quality and that participants were looking for a reflection of quality in their clothing purchasing decisions. Other answers at this stage were price with 33 % of the participants indicating this.

Choice No. 3

The third choice made by participants was price with 46 % of participants indicating this. However during this hierarchical choice, material was also mentioned, with 40 % of the votes. This small differential percentage indicates that these two elements are both essential choices during their initial decision making process.

Choice No. 4

The fourth choice in the study begins to really show where the divide between necessity and desirable begins. The majority of participants at this stage had indicated that price, aesthetics and material were in some order within their top three choices, with this now being the stage where people may start moving towards considering non-essential criterion within their purchasing process. This choice saw the widest spread of votes, however there was one answer that dominated the category, which was washing instructions. During the participant rationale this appeared as again an important factor to consumers during the purchasing process, with many indicating the importance of looking after the clothing they buy.

Choice No. 5

The final choice within the study, choice five saw a plethora of desirable choices being made, again highlighting this clear divide of necessary and desirable factors.

Fairtrade received the most attention at this stage with 27 % of participants indicating this. However there was again a wide scope of answers, with the focus being very much on hand made, locally sourced, Fairtrade and Organic.

This study showed the purchasing criteria of the participants, indicating the five most important criteria to them when making fashion choices. The results indicate this clear divide between necessary and desirable which shows that ethical and sustainable issues are rarely a consideration until after the essential criteria have been met. This reflects Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, where consumers must have reached the previous stages of the pyramid prior to self-actualisation (at the top of the pyramid) where at that point social responsibility may be included in their purchasing hierarchy. The rationale behind participant choices were interesting and aided in conclusions being reached regarding their purchasing hierarchy.

2.2 The Intention-Behaviour Gap

In recent years, research in the area of socially responsible attitudes and behaviours has led to the identification of a distinct disparity in consumer ethical intentions translating into actual behaviour. This has been labelled the intention-behaviour gap and has been the focus of many studies in the past 10 years (Ozcaglar-Toulouse et al. 2006; Bray et al. 2010; Cowe and Williams 2001; Worcester and Dawkins 2005; Belk et al. 2005; Auger and Devinney 2007; Carrington et al. 2010). This gap has also been 30:3 syndrome (Cowe and Williams 2001), which refers to the numeric figures that initially lead to the identification of the intention-behaviour gap. The statistics supporting this phenomenon indicate that 30 % of consumers have the initial intention to purchase responsibly. However when this is to translate into behavior, only 3 % of the original group of consumers actually purchase responsibly. This indicates that intentions cannot be relied upon when it comes to socially responsible purchasing behaviour, going against theory developed by Ajzen (1985), which states that intentions translate into behaviour (Fig. 7).

This disparity from intention to behaviour has been rationalised by many authors who believe that societal issues such as social desirability may be accountable (Worcester and Dawkins 2005). This is said to be one of the reasons why consumer intentions far outreach that of their consequential behaviour and occurs during the execution of the research methods utilised to collect the statistical consumer data. It is thought that consumers are offering answers more socially acceptable during these data collection exercises, which has been found to be a reoccurring issue within socially responsible research conducted with consumers. Researchers in the field are working to overcome such issues that in time should result in more accurate data for the relationship between ethical intentions and behaviour (Auger and Devinney 2007; Dickson 2013). Further statistical research conducted in the field does confirm there to be an intention-behaviour gap (Worcester and Dawkins 2005), however when considering the purchasing process the *window of*

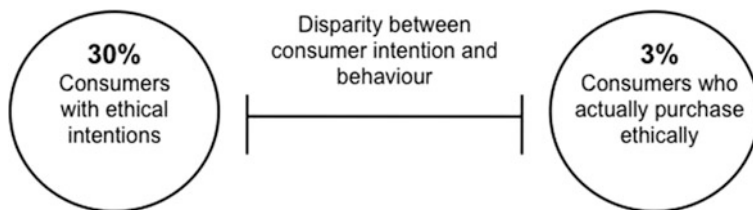


Fig. 7 The intention-behaviour gap (Source Authors)

opportunity, as previously discussed, must also be considered. This is where consumers may maintain their socially responsible purchasing intentions up until the point where they physically go shopping, where other factors such as price, aesthetics and availability may cause a choice or trade-off to be made.

Researchers have continued their work in this field to investigate why the intention-behaviour gap occurs with some suggestions including that social responsibility is not considered by consumers during their purchasing decision criteria (Carrigan and Attalla 2001) and others including the consumer not being knowledgeable of such issues in order to make an informed decision. It has also been suggested that the lack of obligation to engage with ethical and environmental issues is also accountable for the gap between intentions and behaviours (Ozcaglar-Toulouse et al. 2006). Other authors, however, blame issues previously discussed such as the lack of goods provision and that available product is not trend orientated or desirable.

3 Changes in Purchasing Behaviour

3.1 Market Development

When the recession hit the UK in 2008, significant changes in not only the way people purchase fashion but also the provision in the fashion sector were seen. Consumers were used to having the option to purchase fashion, however, with financial changes in society came with it cuts in people's disposable income. Fashion for many people is a hobby or a pastime, where recreational spare time will be spent perusing stores on a Saturday afternoon with friends. For a lot of people it is more about the physical act of shopping rather than the outcome of their shopping trip. This downtime is utilised by consumers to relax, see friends and enjoy themselves, and if they purchase fashion goods this is seen as a bonus. Retailers are also responding to this, applying more money, time and effort into the experience of shopping for their customers. The fashion brand Hollister is a great example of this. This retailer heavily controls the shopping experience that their customers have, influencing key experiential factors such as light, sound and even smell. The lighting is kept minimal and could even be described as dark, with clothing often

being highlighted by spot lamps. The music reflects heavily of the brand and is chosen very carefully. The smell experienced during shopping is also very unique; the same scent is pumped out in all stores to begin to build brand recognition with their customers. The consistency through their stores is also carefully monitored, with the experience in each store being identically replicated. This is extended as far as similar looking staff, a carefully created brand that heavily controls the retail experience of consumers. This store has a cult following of consumers who want to buy into the brand and often visit knowing full well they will not purchase but simply window shop and absorb the carefully crafted brand marketing.

As a result of the recession, consumers felt they could no longer shop as they used to prior to the economic downturn, which saw a dramatic fall in sales and consequently profits for the vast majority of the fashion high street. This resulted in an adapted model emerging that allowed for consumers to still be able to shop in the way they had become accustomed but without the same price tags. This resulted in the emergence of the value market sector, which as a direct response to the change in consumer purchasing habits, grew exponentially in a short space of time. At the time, sales for the value end of the market saw a growth of 6 % taking its value up to £8.1 billion with research showing that 36 % of consumers then favouring the value end of the market (Mintel 2009). This growth also saw consumer preference for quantity over quality, with not only purchasing habits moving towards the value market sector but also the quantity of value goods being purchased increasing, again as a reflection of price. This saw the high-end, luxury end of the fashion market suffer with purchasing behaviour indicating a preference to fashion retailers who could deliver regular up to date trends, whilst still remaining competitive on price.

The high street in general began to change the type of goods being offered to consumers with the emergence of many more value stores and pound stores becoming a new phenomenon. Consumer preference to these types of stores continued to grow with many people favouring pound stores in preference to special offers offered by the more traditional stores (Portas 2011). Many consumers are now favouring the value end of the market (Ritch and Schroder 2009) with a large increase in the provision of pound stores and value retailers. It is this bargain-hunting hunger that allowed consumers to feel they were still purchasing goods (often larger quantities of cheaper goods) despite the effect the recession was having on their financial situation (James 2015). The increase of cheaper priced goods, however, has had a very negative impact when it comes to the value a person places on a purchased item. This has been heavily evidenced with fashion, with consumers buying fashion items sometimes to only be worn once, seeing them engaging in a throwaway society. Another result of the popularity of the value end of the market is more traditional stores began to offer a wide range of special offers and value buys. However, an increase in these offers such as BOGOF (buy-one-get-one-free) are said to have encouraged inflation in original prices and encourage over consumption purchasing activities (Arnold 2009). The recession also saw an increase in the use of everyday credit, which again facilitated consumers to continue their purchasing habits, utilising credit and store cards to help

facilitate this. This use of credit has also had a negative impact on the way people value products they buy with this being due to no longer having to patiently save money in order to buy their desired goods. However it is stores which offer brands at a reduced price, such as *TkMaxx*, which are said to be offering consumers the most value, in terms of quality, for their money. This approach to retail is possible due to the retailer purchasing unsold stock from other brands very cheaply that allows them to offer an appealing price point to consumers.

Since the recession, studies have shown that there has been a direct influence on the purchasing of ethical and sustainable products (Worcester and Dawkins 2005), with consumers replacing ethical consideration with those closer to home. Arnold (2009) believes that consumers start with considerations in their immediate family circle, progressing to that of friends and others close to them. Again this directly reflects Maslow's theory, where consumers start basic in their behaviours, progressing gradually and eventually considering additional factors such as ethics and sustainability. It has been shown that a small sector of better educated individuals are moving towards the top of Maslow's pyramid and incorporating responsible criteria into their decision making process (Soloman and Rabolt 2004). This sees consumers wanting something additional to consider, something outside of themselves and their immediate circle, something precious and almost spiritual (James 2015). This sector of people begin to start trying to be the best version of themselves they can be and some achieve this through the consideration of ethical and sustainable issues within their purchasing behaviour.

In addition to the growth of the value sector, there have been many more changes identified on the generic shopping high street. For example the value sector has extended beyond the high street to supermarkets now offering a wide range of womens, mens and childrens wear. The three leading supermarkets (*Tesco*, *Sainsbury's* and *Asda*) offer clothing to their consumers out of convenience, appealing to the needs and wants of their consumer profile. With every £1 spent on shopping, 50 pence of that is being spent of food and groceries in supermarkets (Portas 2011). Convenience is a real driving force for supermarkets, as they begin to continuously extend their services and concessional stores to accommodate the growing busy lifestyle of their customers. These services include hairdressers, cobblers, bureau de change, banks, cafes and sunbeds. Supermarkets however are not the only stores, which have adapted and emerged to facilitate shopping convenience. The market has also seen a large growth in the development of out-of-town retail parks, which again facilitate an element of convenience for consumers. The parks offer a wide range of shop types, from furniture to fashion and food to beauty. In addition to stores other services are also available such as cinemas and restaurants which again goes towards building a shopping experience based on convenience for their customers. Out-of-town retail parks also offer free parking and due to geographical location often facilitate consumers avoiding city centre traffic and congestion charges. This approach has been named need-based retailing and only highlights further that in-town shopping high streets are not keeping up with this development (Portas 2011).

The number of high-street stores has fallen dramatically, with a decline of almost 15,000 stores in the period 2000–2009. With an additional 10,000 losses predicted for the coming years, approximately one in six shops stands empty (Genecon LLP and Partners 2011). Retailers have recognised these changes and downturn of the traditional shopping high street with some brands such as Topshop, now deciding to expand overseas markets in preference to the UK (Portas 2011).

The change in consumer needs has also been reflected in the seasonal fashion cycle, seeing this tradition cycle increase in speed and ultimately speed and quantity of the goods being on offer to consumers. Moving away from the traditional two-season approach, the fashion market is accustomed to a constant drip-feed effect of 14 rolling collections in any one year. This constant delivery approach will ensure consumers stay up to trend on their fashion purchases, however, has hugely negative impacts in the increased level of consumption for example. This vast increase in the volume of goods delivered to store and available to consumers each year is not exclusive to the lower end of the fashion market. There has been an increase of pressure on the high-end, luxury sector of the market, with designers intensifying their offering through the addition of pre-collections, again doubling their traditional offering. This move has incorporated the development of transitional seasons and has seen designers such as Stella McCartney incorporate Pure Summer and Pure Winter to her collection each year. This adapted approach, however, has been defended with it being described as one collection, with only the delivery changing, adopting this constant drip-feed of trend-led fashion available to the market (WGSN 2010).

The series of changes identified and discussed indicates not only a change in consumer purchasing behaviour, but as a direct consequence, a change in the offering provided by brands and retailers. This constant need for new and better things has been acknowledged and reflected in a constant drip-feed effect of new designs being delivered to store. With the recession as a catalyst for this change in behaviour, the high street needs to keep up with the volume and dexterity of the changes, adapting with their consumers in order to remain a key feature of the fashion market.

3.1.1 Fast Fashion

These changes in purchasing behaviour and the increased demand for constant new designs and product offerings have facilitated the emergence of the fast fashion business model. Fast fashion can be defined as bringing catwalk-inspired fashion to the masses, as quickly and as cheaply as possible. Fletcher (2008) described this as resulting in a change in fabric and manufacturing quality of clothing, with social or environmental compromise in the supply chain. A fast fashion garment is made to the standard of quality to be worn only 10 times before being disposed of, which again is indicative of the speed of consumption as a reflection of the speed of new designs being delivered to store.

The garment manufacturing supply chain is often a long and complex process, with more often than not several different countries in the world being involved from fibre to garment. Despite the length and complexity of the supply chain, the speed as a result of the fast fashion business model has significantly picked up pace, with the speed from start to finish dramatically increasing. This increased speed of delivery, however, has not been acknowledged in the supply chain, with no innovative adaptations being applied to facilitate this change. In order to meet the demanding lead times of the fast fashion supply chain, compromise of this kind is often required (Fletcher 2008). This can often result in social disasters such as the Rana Plaza disaster previously discussed in the chapter. However, social compromise comes in many forms and does not have to result in such a disaster in order to constitute social pressures. Long working hours, unpaid overtime, non freedom of association, forced labour, poor working conditions and not being paid a living wage are but a few examples which are regularly witnessed when social compromise occurs in the manufacturing supply chain. Stuart Rose, former Chief-Executive of Marks and Spencer highlights the importance of retail price in the context of the supply chain; 'how can you sell a t-shirt for £2, and pay the rents and pay the rates and pay the buyer and pay the poor girl or boy who is making a living wage, you cant'. This pertinent point summarises the crux of social compromise that can occur during the manufacturing of fashion. Heightened media coverage has led to the development of the term sweatshop, which is now widely used to describe the unsatisfactory working conditions endured by over 100 million garment workers worldwide (Lee 2007). This unsustainable business model has been summarised by Hawkins (2006) who reflects on the current consumption level in the context of the environment stating that if the consumption levels are to continue in the developed world, the output (natural resources) of three planet earths are needed.

In addition to social issues, environmental impacts are also rife in the fashion business model. The most prominent example of this as a direct consequence of the fashion industry would be the disappearance of the Aral Sea. Geographically located in Uzbekistan, a region which is rich in cotton growing, utilised the Aral Sea for many years in order to grow this water intensive crop. However, an increase in farming increased the need for water and has led to the disappearance of the water source all together, leaving dry, desert land where the sea once was. Between 1960 and 1989, its area decreased by 40 % demonstrating the rapid decline of one of the worlds four large lakes (Giesen 2008). Other sustainable issues occurring in the fashion supply chain are carbon emissions, overuse of natural resources (water and oil.), water contamination and also post-consumer issues such as non-biodegradable fibres being sent to landfill.

The current high-street leaders of fast fashion are Primark who have in the past been related to the production of garments in the Rana Plaza factory prior to its collapse (Nelson and Bergman 2013). Whilst this disaster, happening in 2013, was expected to have negative impacts on their sales and profits due to the media attention received by Rana Plaza, reported profits in November 2013 were up by 44 % on the previous year. This saw profits soar to £514 billion for that year alone

(Hawkes 2013). Whilst this could have been a consequence of increased press coverage, albeit negative, the fast fashion model adapts itself to the retailer collecting a higher net margin of the overall retail sale value. This is heavily due to fewer pieces being delivered to market at a higher speed, promoting increased consumption (Tokatli 2007). Ritch and Schroeder (2009) compare this fast fashion model of consumption to McDonalds; cheap, fast, mass produced, hassle free and reliant on social and or environmental compromise.

3.1.2 Purchasing Motivations

As previously discussed, the purchasing process begins with the need or want of recognition of a new product or service. Whether this is a want or a need, something prior to this decision motivates consumers to acknowledge they need something new. This motivation remains with the consumer throughout the purchasing process helping them to make decisions at every stage. As mentioned previously, Maslow who was an economist formalised consumer motivations in his Hierarchy of Needs theory. Pyramid shaped, the premise that consumers move from the bottom to the top, only progressing to the next stage when the previous has been achieved. The five levels of the pyramid include; *physiological*; referring to the most basic level of requirements including food, water, and sleep, *safety*; taking the requirements to the next level including the security of family, finances and employment, *love/belonging*; expressing the need for others including friendship and intimacy, *esteem*; which sees the need for interaction and respect from others and *self-actualisation*; including morality, creativity and problem solving (Fig. 8).

This basic theory can also be applied to the requirements of clothing for consumers, taking the principals originally developed by Maslow and recontextualising these for the fashion market. In ascending order:

- *Physiological*; the basic need for clothing in its simplest form, the need for clothing to cover the human body for modesty.
- *Safety*; the functional need from clothing including security and protection from the elements—warmth, cool, etc.
- *Love/belonging*; the purchasing of a certain type of clothing in order to fit within the desired consumer tribe
- *Esteem*; the acknowledged respect from peers in reference to appearance, mutual forms of respect amongst peer groups
- *Self-Actualisation*; the need to progress to the next level and problem solve within fashion, to give something back to society.

It is only when reaching the peak of the pyramid that ethics and sustainability are considered, meaning that prior to this stage, this is not a consideration in consumer requirements from fashion. This pyramid type approach can also be adapted to the purchasing process, where consumers move through the stages in the steps leading to the act of purchasing a product.

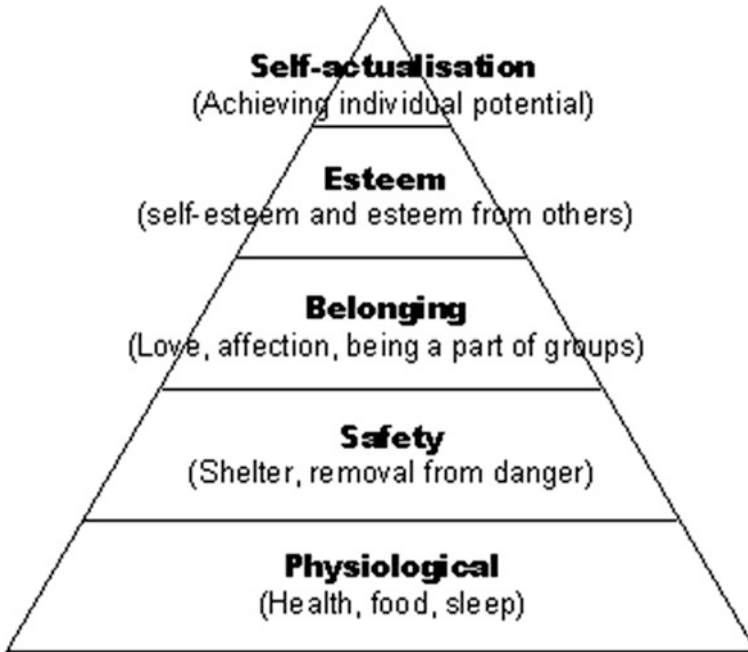


Fig. 8 Maslow's hierarchy of needs

As previously discussed, the purchasing process is a basic three-step process: input, process and output. However, when considering existing literature and the development of the process in the context of changing consumer behaviour, this can be progressed to the following five stages leading to purchasing behaviour. The first stage of the process (in ascending order) would be need *recognition*; identifying the need or want for a product or service, *information search*; the analysis of the product market, identifying products which will satisfy the need or want, *competition evaluation*; the scope of the competition to find the best product available at the best price, *ethical and moral values*; the opportunity for consumers nearing the peak of the pyramid to consider social responsibility in their purchasing decisions made, *situational attributes*; taking into consideration the precise situation in the context of marketing strategies (fixed influential factors) and situational elements such as weather and mood.

This comparison between the requirements of fashion and the process leading up to the point of socially responsible fashion purchasing has been demonstrated in the ethical purchasing hour glass, as developed by the author in 2012 (Fig. 9). This demonstrates both the purchasing behaviour hierarchy of consumers and also the product to purchase selection process, both of which, once all stages have been achieved, can lead to socially responsible fashion purchasing.



Fig. 9 The ethical purchasing hourglass (Source Authors)

3.1.3 Socially Responsible Purchasing

Socially responsible fashion refers to the social or human side of the supply chain, and can be defined as when all social interactions in the clothing supply chain are paid a fair living wage under good working conditions. Often referred to as ethical fashion, this terminology brings with it complexities due to a lack of industry standard, meaning the term to be very subjective and interpretive. This irregularity and often confusion over terminology results in the term being interpreted very differently from person to person. The execution of these ill-defined morals also results in retailers and brands interpreting such values in different ways, often utilised to facilitate good publicity or increase profit.

Socially responsible purchasing can be described as the consideration of ethical or social values and morals when undertaking the purchasing process. These values can be considered at various points of this process, whether it is prior to the product search and applied after initial intentions but prior to the purchasing behaviour. Again referring back to the window of opportunity in the purchasing process, as previously discussed earlier in the chapter, this is where retailer and brand could ultimately influence consumers purchasing behaviour through the application of social marketing tools. Social marketing can be defined as utilising the common tools of marketing, being utilised to influence behaviour for the good of society or the environment (Kotler and Lee 2005).

Consumers who engage in socially responsible fashion purchasing can be described as ethical consumers or consumers with a conscience. It has been widely recognised, however, that consumers are fickle in their purchasing behaviour, which may change each time they engage with the purchasing process. Consequently, this means that a consumer may purchase socially responsible clothing one day and not the next. This unpredictable nature of purchasing means that a predication of behaviour or the discussion of habitual behaviour is very difficult. This has again been widely discussed in literature, with Devinney et al. (2010) expressing the need for the term ethical consumer to be approached with caution, going as far as to believe that these consumer criteria may in fact be a myth. This is due to an idealistic consumer profile being created, where the perfect ethical consumer is put forward as a role model for consumers to be compared to. When doing so, certain elements of this ideal consumer may be identified but again due to the unpredictable nature of behaviour, this again cannot be relied upon.

The term ethical consumer has been labelled as dated, with more recent developments in the field preferring to use the term *consumer social responsibility*, which refers to consumers in a more individual sense. This approach acknowledges that all consumers are different and that a more tailor-made approach to influencing consumer behaviour is necessary. Industry experts have expressed the need for individualism and believe that this is the key to not only understanding consumer purchasing behaviour but to also then know how to influence it (Barrie 2009). Despite this individual approach appearing to be the most logical due to the unpredictable nature of purchasing behaviour, the use of consumer typologies or tribes are widely acknowledged by academia and industry alike (Clouder and

Harrison 2005; Cowe and Williams 2001; Szmigin et al. 2009; Carrigan and Attalla 2001; Morgan and Birtwhistle 2009; Mintel 2007). However when analysing these consumer typologies further, the relationship between socially responsible fashion purchasing and demographics is inconsistent and not indicative of any future behaviour (Devinney et al. 2010). Just as with the purchasing process, consumer typologies are also reflected differently according to different research, brands or retailers. For example, Clouder and Harrison (2005) believe there to be three segments of consumers within the context of ethics and sustainability; distancing, integrated and rationalising.

Another example of this methodology is British high-street clothing brand who believe that there are five different consumer categories within a social responsibility arena. During an interview with the head of sustainable business, it was detailed that there are three initial categories of consumers; 70 % of which could be described as *average*, 20 % who are said to have *no care of consideration* for ethical and sustainable issues and the remaining 10 % could be described as *green consumers*. Through further conversation, there were two further categories discussed which were; *don't believe they can help* and *willing but don't know how*. The interviewee went on to discuss that it would be small steps to progress, moving towards the small percentage of *green consumers* that would aid the industry in moving to a more sustainable future (James 2015).

This approach considers the broad spectrum of consumers and their attitudes towards the engagement with social responsibility. Several sections as described by this brand can be related back to previous points made earlier in the chapter. For example, *don't believe they can help* relates back to the theory of perceived consumer effectiveness developed by Ellen (1994) where consumers consider the level to which their contribution to socially responsible purchasing contributes to the wider cause. *Low perceived effectiveness* describes when consumers feel that their contribution will help very little, the very notion that is acknowledged by the British, high-street clothing retailer previously discussed. Another example of this would be *willing but don't know how* which has a direct relationship with the impact consumer knowledge and awareness has on their socially responsible purchasing behaviour. Non-ethical behaviour has on many occasions been related to a consumer lack of knowledge of ethics and sustainability in the context of fashion.

The idea of an informed decision making process is again a heavily debated topic, again relating to the relationship between knowledge and behaviour. An informed consumer could be described as someone who possess' an adequate amount of knowledge in order to make an informed decision regarding their purchasing behaviour. However, again the subjective nature of social responsibility means that levels of knowledge will vary considerably and again this will have an impact on decisions made. The definition alone of social responsibility is interpreted by people very differently, let alone the way they relate this topic to their fashion purchasing decisions made. It is also to be acknowledged that due to the complexities with consumer knowledge and awareness levels that again the ideal informed consumer may be unattainable. This does not, however, discredit the

importance of purchasing fashion consumers having a good level of knowledge of ethical and sustainable issues pertinent to the fashion industry.

Knowledge and awareness levels of such issues do, however, rely on consumers implementing this during their purchasing behaviour which is often seen not to be the case. This again questions the relationship between a consumer's knowledge of social responsibility and their actual behaviour. Relating back to the intention-behaviour gap, not only external factors can intervene in the initial intentions translating into behaviour. This gap could also be contributed to by consumers themselves and be affected by internal decisions they make when purchasing fashion. For example, they may be fully aware of social and environmental issues relating to the clothing supply chain, however, they may choose not to use this knowledge in their purchasing decisions. This refers to what have been labelled *justification strategies*, where consumers consciously rationalise their unethical behaviour for one reason or another. For example 52 % of consumers in the UK claim to be ethically aware, but admit to not purchasing as a reflection of this knowledge (Worcester and Dawkins 2005). This statistic alone confirms that it could be the consumers themselves causing the intention-behaviour gap to exist. However, to consider this from a different perspective, there could also be consumers that do not intend initially to purchase responsibly but, however, end up doing so. This could be due to a variety of subjective reasons just as with the generic consumer purchasing hierarchy; however, it could also be due to the implementation of social marketing strategies on the part of the retailers. This again could see an influence of purchasing behaviour during the *window of opportunity* as seen in the purchasing process. As discussed earlier, whilst this is currently being utilised to encourage further sales and higher profits, retailers also have the opportunity to influence purchasing behaviour for the better. Through the utilisation of social marketing strategies, retailers could influence a consumer to follow up their non-socially responsible intentions with socially responsible behaviour. This could create a further intention-behaviour gap, however this time it would be a development of non-responsible intentions to responsible behaviour.

4 The Challenges Facing Social Responsibility

4.1 Key Issues Preventing Change

Throughout this chapter, there have been many issues raised as having a potential negative impact on the development of social responsibility in fashion. Marketing and situational attributes have been discussed in the context of influencing purchasing behaviour, however a period of retailer intervention as identified during this process is where behaviour can potentially be changed for the better. Referring back to Fig. 3, which demonstrates the opportunity during the purchasing process where the retailer can influence a consumer's behaviour was discussed in terms of the

purchasing choice moving from that of ethical intentions to non-ethical behaviour. This also relates back to the intention-behaviour gap which states that 30 % of consumers intend to purchase with the consideration of social responsibility, however when translating this initial intention into behaviour, only 3 % of consumers follow up their intentions (Bray et al. 2010). However this theory can also work in reverse, where the consumer may be influenced by the retailer during the window of opportunity in the purchasing process to consider social responsibility where they have not previously. This window of opportunity could be utilised by retailers to not only drive up sales and consequently profit through clever marketing strategies, but to also inform and educate the consumer in socially responsible issues affecting the products they are about to purchase. There are multiple benefits identified for taking this approach, which include;

- The increase of knowledge and awareness on the part of the consumer
- Improved levels of socially responsible purchasing
- Improved brand trust as the consumers are seeing the retailer to be responsible and active in the execution of their corporate social responsibility values
- The consumer will be further informed in order to make an informed decision regarding their purchasing choices
- The promotion of further repeat behaviour

Whilst approaches such as this could help improve the development of social responsibility in fashion, there remain many further issues, which are currently preventing change.

Consumer knowledge and awareness of ethical and sustainable issues remains one of the biggest issues currently affecting the sector, with many mass market consumers still very unaware of the negative implications of fashion production. Without this initial knowledge or awareness of these issues, consumers cannot choose if to engage or to implement this knowledge during their decision making process. If consumers do possess this knowledge they can then use it to inform their purchasing behaviour making adapted decisions in light of being informed. However the issue of implementation is also a significant one, with some consumers already possessing such knowledge but choosing not to use it to inform their purchasing process. This is where many trade-offs are made for either price or aesthetics, with the consumer implementing justification strategies to rationalise their non-responsible behaviour.

Despite there being many positive drivers to encourage positive behaviour, there remains very little incentives for consumers to engage in such behaviour. This again can be identified as an issue inhibiting further socially responsible fashion purchasing. The rationale behind a consumer engaging with ethics and sustainability in their fashion choices remains an issue with philanthropy being said to be the key driver to encourage this. Philanthropy can be defined as the love of humanity, in the sense of caring, developing and enhancing what it means to be human. This again relates back Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, where people progress to the peak of the pyramid and seek to give something back to society in an almost spiritual way.

However this need alone cannot be the only incentive for a consumer to engage in social responsibility, and therefore further initiatives need to be implemented. An example of a retailer who currently recognises this would be Marks and Spencer who utilise 'thank you' campaigns to reward customers for their engagement. This usually involves an email campaign, social media coverage and promotional information on their Plan A website. The content for this campaign usually includes bold statistics that indicates to the customer the impact their contribution has helped towards. This again is related to the theory of perceived effectiveness (Ellen 1994) previously discussed where consumers think that their contribution is insignificant in the wider picture. In addition to thanking the customers that have engaged in the specific scheme, the campaign also sets out to highlight the impact of their contribution to others, encouraging not only repeat behaviour next time, but also new responsible behaviour in other customers.

In addition to the thank you campaigns, Marks and Spencer also utilise other initiatives to further engage their consumers in sharing their ethical and sustainable goals. The *Swhopped* scheme first trialed in-store in 2012 is where customers are encouraged to return their unwanted clothes back to store in order to be resold or recycled by Oxfam. This collaboration with a charity is a value set out by the retailer to help raise money and facilitate international demand and need for certain types of clothing. To date, 7.8 million garments have been *Swhopped*, worth an estimated £5.5 million, which has been donated to Oxfam (Marks and Spencer 2015). Encouragement for engagement in this initiative is the exchange of these clothes for a voucher to be spent in-store. This is naturally a favourable incentive for customers, however, in terms of social responsibility it could be criticised that this approach promotes further consumption of clothing.

Another challenge facing the sector would be the offering of additional ranges of more responsible clothing alongside main collections. This approach taken by many retailers does highlight the ethical or sustainable credentials to the customer, which could be seen as a positive. However when positioned alongside the core product offered by the retailer, it does reinforce that this is the exception and not the normal values utilised to produce all garments. An example of this would be a range of basics, which utilises Fairtrade cotton, being positioned next to those, which use non-Fairtrade cotton. This presents the consumer with a choice to make and encourages trade-offs and justification strategies to be implemented. When presented with a choice, the customer will turn to important factors such as cost, aesthetics and quality in preference to the ethical and sustainable values of the product. An example retailer who utilises this approach would be H&M who offer a small collection entitled *Eco-conscious*, which uses a percentage of recycled polyester in the production of materials for the collection. Another negative aspect of this approach is that it also promotes the segregation of social responsibility and encourages a separate market. The existence of two markets will not only continue to offer consumers the element of choice but also discourage retailers from embedding social responsibility into their core business values. As a result this approach also discourages the industry from moving towards a more socially

responsible future, where the negative implications of fashion production can be developed.

During many studies with consumers regarding their engagement with social responsibility in their fashion purchasing behaviour, the implications of accessibility is highlighted, with many consumers not knowing where to buy products with such values. This is again a significant issue in the implementation of social responsibility with consumers feeling that they do not have the choice to buy these types of products even if their intentions are to do so. The high street facilitates the mass market access to fashion products and is also the lowest provider of ethical or sustainable products. Although these should not be offered as alternatives, the consumer remains unaware of what options are available to them if they wish to purchase responsibly. Retailers should be taking an integrated business approach to social and environmental values, which should again be communicated effectively to consumers who can then make their choice of retailer in preference to the compliant or non-compliant product.

A further issue frequently raised by consumers regarding the provision of ethical and sustainable goods is poor aesthetics. Ethics and sustainability has a historical association with being unfashionable and not on-trend, which again has implications when it comes to consumer's decision making process. The long-associated stigmas of ethical and sustainable fashion remain an issue with the quality, comfort and fit of such products also being questioned. Ninnimaki (2010) reiterates that ethical clothing is often not trend focused enough which could be putting people off engaging with such issues and ultimately affecting their purchasing behaviour. This again relates back to consumers providing justification strategies to rationalise their potential non-responsible purchasing decisions, with reasons such as not being on-trend being provided. In reality whilst ethical and sustainable products may not be widely available on the UK high street, there are plenty of interesting and on-trend boutiques and smaller brands engaging in social responsibility. This variation in business model, however, may have price implications, which could again put the average consumer off. A lack of desirable aesthetics could also cause consumers to again make trade-off decisions when purchasing fashion. This relates back to an earlier discussion regarding compromises having to be made in order for socially responsible purchasing to take place.

To summarise, there are several key elements as discussed that are currently preventing the fashion industry moving to a more socially responsible future, these are as follows:

- A distinct lack of consumer knowledge and awareness of ethical and sustainable issues in the context of the manufacture of fashion products
- The lack of implementation of existing knowledge of ethical and sustainable issues when engaging in the fashion purchasing process
- A lack of incentive or rationale for consumers to engage in socially responsible fashion purchasing behaviour

- Mixed messages being communicated by designers and retailers when offering separate/alternative collections that are more responsible than main line collections
- A lack of mass market accessibility to socially responsible fashion products
- A lack of availability of socially responsible fashion products that remain on-trend and fashionable

In addition to challenges facing the industry in the face of change, there have been several research issues found to be weakening, and in some cases invalidating data supporting several key arguments. For example, when assessing the market over-inflated research results indicating that more consumers are concerned with social responsibility than actually are. Weak research methods have been left accountable for this over-inflation of results. This methodological weakness has also been held accountable for creating inflated intentions in consumers, resulting in data that is inaccurate and not reflective of real consumer opinion. This relates back to the intention-behaviour gap where an over-inflated consumer intention could also be responsible for the disparity in behaviour translation.

4.1.1 Why Is Change Needed?

As discussed at the beginning of this chapter, there have been many recent events that have witnessed social and environmental compromise in the production of fashion products. The varying significance of these can be noted, however, the continuation of such consequential actions cannot carry on. The need for change within the industry has never been more relevant, with both consumer and retailer awareness on the rise, the time for the industry to start making positive changes is imminent.

The development of the fast fashion business model has played a key role in the negative consequences of the social and environmental compromise in the fashion supply chain. Intense pressure has been placed on the garment supply chain to deliver huge quantities of garments at a very quick speed. It is the negative consequences of this required speed that makes the fast fashion business model an unsustainable option in the future. The need to slow the pace of manufacture down is of huge importance for the industry with several high-designers recently acknowledging this. Sir Paul Smith for example has recently in the press expressed his concerns about the pace the industry is moving at; 'The world has gone mad. There's this absolute horrendous disease of greed and over-expansion and unnecessary, massive over-supply of product' (Barker 2016). Smith continues to discuss two key changes his brand will be making going forward; the paring down of the amount of collections offered across the brand changing to only two, and the amount of drops offered per year decreasing to four. Whilst this is still double the amount of the traditional fashion cycle of only two collections showing per year, it remains a step in a positive direction for the industry. Following the same strategy are Marc Jacobs and Burberry with nearly all brands and designers now constantly

reinventing themselves in order to remain competitive. This reverse of strategies will see the industry moving back to the more traditional seasonal production, with spring/summer and autumn/winter collections being produced.

With this movement at the higher end of the fashion market, it has the potential to influence the lower, mass market end of the industry also. It is at the lower end however where the biggest positive changes can be made due to scale of production. The hope that this will filter into the fast fashion market is where real impact could be made, promoting a slower approach to fashion. This movement however would also require a change in mindset from consumers, who have been previously used to purchasing large quantities of cheaper clothing often. A move from wanting quantity to quality would be required with consumers purchasing fewer, higher quality products for longevity. This would naturally have price implications on garments which again would require a change in attitudes from consumers; however, fewer pieces which can be brought out season-after-season would have potential better price-per-wear qualities.

The consequences of this speed on the quality of design have also been acknowledged, with designers in industry being given as little as 25 min to come up with new collections. The implications of this time scale on the design process is irrevocable, with only copycat design work being achieved in this short timeframe (Rissanen 2016). The negative consequences on quality throughout the fashion process can be acknowledged, with a slower approach as suggested by Paul Smith having the potential to improve the innovation of fashion both in terms of design and production.

In addition to the fast fashion business model, it is the level of consumption of fashion, which also needs to be addressed. The continuous supply of new fashion items to high-street stores only encourages consumers to continue to purchase new products on even a weekly basis. This need to keep up with new, on-trend product is a reflection of the very nature of fashion, which continuously changes and at the high-end market level, should push boundaries in terms of innovation. This bi-seasonal approach has been abused, however, through the development of the fast fashion business model, turning the excitement of what the new season has to offer into a mundane drip-feed of average fashion goods. This change in the industry has only intensified the consumer need for more products continuously reinventing themselves and leading to a huge overconsumption issue.

The levels of consumption we refer to have not only huge negative implications on the sourcing and supply chain of the fashion process, but also causes issues at the post-consumer, end-of-life disposal of fashion. An estimated £100 million worth (based on 2015 prices) or around 350,000 tonnes of used clothing goes to landfill in the UK every year. In response to this, there are a large number of schemes being developed including that by WRAP who put forward the sustainable clothing action plan (SCAP), a 2020 commitment to encourage the fashion industry to be more eco-friendly. By 2013, 30 top high-street brands had registered which has now grown to 83 across a range or market sectors (WRAP 2015). The environmental impact of such large volumes of clothing being disposed of in landfill has huge negative implications, with many garments now being produced from

non-biodegradable materials such as polyester. Due to the cheaper nature of fibres such as polyester, the fast fashion market level favours these fibres, which again tends to be the garments that are more readily disposed of. This disposable culture associated with the fast fashion market has caused the value of clothing to diminish with consumers having no attachment or tendency to care for such products. This loss of value on the part of the consumer again needs to be addressed and could be created through the slowing of the industry. Whilst it is not only price that can create value in clothing, if consumers were to pay a higher price for fashion items they purchased, their tendency to value and care for a product would increase. This would be again another reason that a more traditional two-season approach to the fashion industry would create a more sustainable future.

5 Recommendations for the Future

5.1 Addressing the Key Issues Preventing Change

There is a strong incentive for change in the fashion industry leading it to a more socially responsible and sustainable future. However as highlighted, there are several key factors that are currently preventing change which needs to be addressed in order to move things forward. Change in the industry will require cooperation from all stakeholders including retailers, consumers and manufacturers involved in the provision of the fashion product. Collaboratively, these parties can work together to change attitudes and approaches to fashion with the aim of slowing the industry down. As a consequence of this collaboration a shared vision of a more responsible future for fashion can be achieved.

When considering the issues preventing change, a number of recommendations can be made, yet it is to be acknowledged that these changes cannot be instant and that small developments over time will aid in this progression of the industry.

The first key issue discussed to be currently preventing change is the lack of consumer knowledge and awareness of ethical and sustainable issues in fashion. The absence of this knowledge not only has a negative impact on the choices that consumers make during the purchasing process but also means that the consumer has no comprehension of the negative implications of the manufacture of fashion products. This uninformed consumer can also not have any empathy or connectivity with the social element of the supply chain, or the understanding of the negative consequences this production has on the environment. In order to address this lack of consumer knowledge, fashion retailers need to begin to communicate their responsible intentions and actions. Despite the negative factors discussed with regards to the social and environmental compromise that occurs in the fashion supply chain, recent years have seen companies slowly changing their approach towards social responsibility. Many brands and retailers can now be seen to acknowledge these negative consequences and have begun to implement goals and

responsible actions as a result. As previously discussed, retailers have opportunities during the purchasing process to influence consumer behaviour for the better. The sharing of these goals and actions could help increase consumer knowledge and raise awareness of the steps the industry is taking to address the problems found. Increased communication could also help improve the consumer to retailer relationship and aid in development of this shared goal for a more responsible future. The improvement of this relationship has multiple benefits including the creation of brand trust and the power that consumer demand could have on moving the industry forward.

This increase of communication has began to slowly develop over the past few years with companies beginning to create communication channels such as annual reports to demonstrate their responsible intentions and actions. To help increase the effectiveness of these methods, the use of storytelling and narrative can be a powerful tool. The nature of this tool allows consumers to engage to a degree that suits them at the time, being able to dip in and out of the story to obtain pertinent details. It also helps to draw consumers in and aids engagement due to the structure of the text being used. This relates directly to another recommendation that can help in the increase of consumer knowledge and awareness, which is to ensure that when retailers do communicate with their customers regarding ethics and sustainability that they do so at the correct level. If the communication tool utilised uses heavy business language and jargon then a consumer will disengage with the message. Likewise if the method is too text heavy, consumers want to be visually interested and stimulated by the materials in order to successfully engage with the underlying messages.

The second key issue said to be preventing change is consumers not implementing their knowledge during the purchasing process. This relies on consumers who already have existing and pre-requisite knowledge of ethics and sustainability and the fact that they may use justification strategies to ignore what they know. Whether it be conscious or unconscious, the lack of connection between knowledge and the products being purchased is seen as a common issue when it comes to ethics and sustainability. Consumers often do not put the two together due to a lack of a relationship between products and their manufacturing supply chain. Therefore, it can often be overlooked to how a product has been made and the social and environmental consequences. In order to target this issue, fashion brands and retailers could increase the visibility of this relationship between a product and its responsibility. Commonly seen across the industry is the distinct separation between the products the company is retailing and their social responsibility goals and actions. Online, these are often positioned on a micro-site on their website provision taking customers away from their product purchasing site. This again indicates to the customer that these are two separate elements, failing to show the connection between them. In-store there is little communication to consumers other than retailers who provide separate ranges and collections, highlighting certain ethical and sustainable issues. As discussed previously, this can be seen as a negative approach to responsible business as again segregation away from mainline collections shows disparity between the responsible credentials. By increasing both

the visibility in-store and online and emphasising the relationship between ethics and sustainability and the products, consumers will begin to create connections. This increase in connectivity should influence consumers during the purchasing process, making them think about the responsibility of a product prior to purchase.

The third key issue currently preventing the industry moving to a more responsible future is a lack of incentive for consumers in the engagement of responsible purchasing. As discussed earlier in this chapter, initiatives have been set up by some retailers in order to aid in addressing this. For example, Marks and Spencer carry out 'thank you' campaigns to encourage repeat good behaviour and engagement in responsible initiatives. In addition to these types of campaigns, retailers such as H&M and Marks and Spencer offer consumers vouchers of £5 to encourage them to bring old, unwanted clothes back to store for recycling purposes. Whilst money incentives will be effective, the underlying message behind these could be questioned due to the promotion of further consumption. Over and above these campaigns consumers have very little incentive to engage in responsible purchasing behaviour other than philanthropy. This relates directly back to a point previously made regarding Maslow's hierarchy of needs, where people move into to the final category of the pyramid. This is where people can begin to look past themselves and begin to seek out giving something back to society, which can be related to the premise of philanthropy. Relying on this as an incentive for responsible behaviour however is limiting, as only a small percentage of society will reach the final stage of Maslow's pyramid. Again in order to address this issue, the retailers are in a powerful position. Just as with the existing campaigns seen by Marks and Spencer and H&M, retailers need to be pro-active in their approach to engaging consumers in ethics and sustainability. Utilising social marketing techniques and engaging communication methods could aid in the promotion of these campaigns, whilst helping to inform consumers and raise their awareness. This again could have multiple benefits not only through increased engagement but also through increased knowledge promoting a more informed consumer, which in turn could influence more positive purchasing behaviour.

The fourth issue raised to be challenging the development of responsibility in the fashion industry is the segregation of certain collections or ranges which are more ethically or sustainably compliant than others offered in-store. As discussed earlier, whilst this approach has positive implications through the raising of awareness of certain issues, but it does send out mixed messages to consumers. The more switched-on consumers will begin to question this approach as to why only a small collection complies with certain responsibility standards and not others. This segregation could have very negative effects on a consumer's opinion and trust of a brand. In order to avoid this potential negativity, retailers need to implement an integrated business strategy in which they begin to build ethical and sustainable values into the way they do business. By incorporating this into their core underlying values, retailers will be able to offer their full product provision that satisfies certain responsible standards. This will prevent the segregation of products and promote brand trust. Consumers will no longer be presented with a choice and trade-off decision in preference to the choice of which retailers they choose to trust.

The adoption of an integrated business approach could also aid in addressing the lack of accessibility to socially responsible and sustainable products and also address the issue of the current provision being seen as not on-trend or fashionable. Through the elimination of two markets; responsible and non-responsible, the industry could begin to successfully move forward in addressing the key issues preventing change.

5.1.1 The Role of the Retailer

Throughout this chapter the role of the retailer has been heavily discussed, with reference made to their powerful position to influence change within the industry. As one of the three key stakeholders in the fashion process (manufacturers, retailers and consumers), they hold a unique position in which they have the ability to implement many strategies, techniques and approaches in the pursuit of a more sustainable future. However in order for this change to occur, brands and retailers need to utilise this powerful position and fully take advantage of the influence they can have over purchasing consumers and manufacturing producers. The relationship seen between the consumer and the retailer is varied and can change from company to company, however, in order to move things forward this relationship needs to be strong and be lead by the retailer. When successful this relationship has the power to heavily influence the products a consumer purchases, including the brand values they choose to buy into. Through the utilisation of social marketing techniques, retailers have the power to educate and inform the consumer about ethical and sustainable issues in fashion and help them to make informed decisions. This approach however needs to be handled with care and attention, as consumers do not want to feel they are subject to preaching regarding certain issues. This was highlighted by Catarina Midby, Head of Sustainable Communications for H&M; 'consumers go shopping to be inspired, not educated' (James 2015). This method of informing consumers also runs the risk of green washing, which is the use of marketing and PR to wrongly promote a companies products to being sustainable when they are not.

To avoid green washing as well as to ensure communication is effective, when retailers communicate with consumers they need to ensure that they pitch their information at the right level. This is to ensure engagement and interest in the consumer otherwise the communication is a pointless exercise. It is the role of the retailer here to know and understand their consumers, what they want from fashion and how much information they would like to know about the responsibility of the products they buy. The retailer needs to take responsibility for this and ensure that market research fully informs them of their target market. As well as the level the information is pitched at, the retailer needs to ensure that the methods of communication are correct for their target audience. Again through the detailed knowledge of their consumer's wants and needs, companies should be able to implement successful communication techniques.

In addition to the informant, the retailer also needs to adopt the role of providing a sound rationale for the engagement in ethics and sustainability. As seen with many companies, it is the responsibility of the retailer to not only provide engaging campaigns and initiatives for the consumer to engage in but also to provide incentives to do so. Philanthropy alone is not enough for successful engagement and it is the job of the retailer to ensure that again their incentives are appealing and pitched at the correct level for their target market. If successful, the retailer could not only get their consumers to engage but they could further inform them of ethical and sustainable issues in the process, providing multiple benefits to this approach being utilised.

Above all however it is the role of the retailer to successfully engage in ethical and sustainable pursuits, whilst remaining profitable and desirable to the market. The Global Ethical Trading Manager for Monsoon and Accessorize reiterated this point; ‘whilst profit might be a dirty word, if we do not have a commercially successful business then we cannot put pressure on our suppliers to make changes and its trying to create that necessary balance and harmony’ (James 2015).

6 Conclusion

6.1 Summary

As this chapter has demonstrated the fashion supply chain is a long and complex process that does not come without its issues, the complexities of this process leave it wide open to both environmental and social compromise adopting many forms. Rana plaza is just one of the many social disasters to have occurred in recent years, with significant consequences to the many humans who engage in the production of fashion. However the social compromise is just half the story, with the supply chain rapidly eating away at natural resources such as water and oil in the production and maintenance of fashion textiles. Evidence such as that provided earlier in the chapter regarding the Aral Sea demonstrates the vast water usage that the production of natural fibre cotton garments requires. The manufacture of a single pair of denim jeans accounts for 11,000 L of water in the growth of the cotton fibre, garment processing and dying of the denim fabric itself (WWF 2015). This statistic of water usage however does not account for the maintenance and washing of his product, which can be seen as the most accountable stage in the fashion life cycle.

The need for change has never been more prominent. As the fast fashion business model continues to flourish, the time pressures on the fashion supply chain only intensify. For example, when the Rana Plaza disaster occurred in April 2013 it was thought that it would have a negative impact on sales of fast fashion goods due to extensive media coverage. This however was quite the opposite, with Primark boasting a 44 % increase in like-for-like sales on the previous year (Hawkes 2013). Social compromise in the supply chain along with the vast consumption issues in

social fashion cannot continue with urgent developments needing to be implemented to bring about this change.

With the fashion production cycle there are three key stakeholders; the manufacturers, the retailers and the consumers. In the context of the purchasing process, both the consumer and the retailer engage and interact with each other through a mutual relationship. Despite this relationship being two-way to a certain degree, the retailer ultimately has the power to have a degree of influence over the products being purchased by the consumers. Traditionally this influence relates to maximising profitability and increasing sales through the utilisation of marketing techniques. However when recontextualised this power has the potential to influence purchasing behaviour for the good. As demonstrated in Fig. 3, this influence is most effective during the designated window of opportunity. This lies between the consumer having formulated their initial intent and this initial intent translating into behaviour. However as previously identified, it is also at this stage where a fundamental difference between intentions and behaviour can occur. The intention-behaviour gap, as shown in Fig. 6, is where a consumer has the intention to purchase responsibly but where in this intervening period their decision is changed and consequently their behaviour is different from that initially intended. When developing this intent, first the need recognition has to be identified; this is followed by the consumer conducting an initial scoping exercise where products that will fulfill this need are to be found. The final stage in developing a purchasing intention is the examination of competition, trying to find the best product for the best price. It is at this stage that the retailer has the power to intervene and influence purchasing behaviour before the final product/s are bought. When considering social responsibility and sustainability, this stage in the purchasing process allows for retailer intervention to utilise more social marketing tools, where behavior could be influenced for the good. Executed correctly, this could help the industry begin to move forward to a more socially responsible future through consumers making more informed choices in the products they choose to buy.

In order for this influence of behaviour to be effective, the relationship between the retailer and consumer is vital for success. Communication needs to be carefully considered on the part of the retailer in order to determine the best methods to be utilised in influencing consumer behaviour for the good. As previously discussed, in the past retailers have been accused of green washing in their approach to marketing, which falsely sees companies using green marketing to promote products responsible criteria. The balance of informing and preaching is also an issue, which retailers have to be wary of, with this approach also said to be putting consumers off. The careful utilisation of social marketing methods could aid this relationship and help inform consumers of ethical and sustainable issues in fashion, leading to more informed decisions being able to be made. Again however in order for this approach to be successful, the retailer must be seen in being pro-active in their communication and marketing actions. This engagement of the consumer is again a vital factor for moving the industry forward, as all stakeholders in the fashion process must buy into the values, in a shared vision approach.

The retailer is in a unique and powerful position and must be the driving force behind this change and encourage both consumers and manufacturers to engage in their responsible values. The role of the retailer is not only to inspire but also to inform and engage their customers in their goals for a more socially responsible fashion industry moving forward.

Appendix

Consumer Purchasing Hierarchy

During the analysis process, patterns were identified where it became apparent there was a top/bottom divide between the eight choices provided. The top four choices, aesthetics, material, price and washing instructions, could be described as necessities when purchasing clothing, in comparison to the bottom 4 choices; handmade, locally sourced, Fairtrade and organic, which could be described as desirable factors, however, not necessary when deciding to purchase an item.

The following results have been divided by the number of choice to provide greater details and insights.

First Choice

13 of the 15 participants voted *aesthetics* as their priority choice when purchasing garments, showing that the look and image of garments was the most important factor to the participants when buying fashion items. Whilst one participant detailed their first choice as *material*, the final participant chose *locally sourced*; however, this individual did differ in personal details in comparison to the majority of the group. This answer could therefore be classified as an irregularity (Table 1).

Second Choice

The second choice for a large proportion of participants was *material* with eight out of 16 people voting this way. From the qualitative reasoning provided, participants saw material as very important due to it being an indication of quality. There were also two votes for *organic*, whilst again these participants did differ in age and salary range to the large part of participants. The remainder of votes was dedicated to *price* (Table 2).

Table 1 Garment requirements—1st choice results

Choice factors	Aesthetics	Price	Material	Hand made	Locally sourced	Fairtrade	Organic	Washing instructions
Participant votes	13	0	1	0	1	0	0	0

Table 2 Garment requirements—2nd choice results

Choice factors	Aesthetics	Price	Material	Hand made	Locally sourced	Fairtrade	Organic	Washing instructions
Participant votes	1	5	8	0	0	0	2	0

Third Choice

The third choice shared the votes between *material* and *price*; however at this point of the participant, hierarchical choice was the first votes for *Fairtrade* and *washing instructions*. This indicates that by the third choice, consumers are beginning to incorporate ethical attributes into their purchasing rationale. By this third hierarchical choice, all participants had voted for *aesthetics*, meaning that it was in the top three priority choices by all the participants in the activity (Table 3).

Fourth Choice

8 of the 16 participants chose *washing instructions* as their fourth priority choice in the garment requirements activity. This category also saw the first votes for *handmade* which provided evidence for the top/bottom divide beginning to emerge. This choice also saw the final vote for *materials*, which meant that this was in the top four choices for all participants (Table 4).

Fifth Choice

The final choice saw *Fairtrade* and *handmade* as the most popular choices, illustrating that people saw these factors as desirable but not vital when considering their purchasing criteria. As shown in Table 5, the votes have shifted to the choices

Table 3 Garment requirements—3rd choice results

Choice factors	Aesthetics	Price	Material	Hand made	Locally sourced	Fairtrade	Organic	Washing instructions
Participant votes	1	7	6	0	0	1	0	1

Table 4 Garment requirements—4th choice results

Choice factors	Aesthetics	Price	Material	Hand made	Locally sourced	Fairtrade	Organic	Washing instructions
Participant votes	0	1	1	1	2	2	1	8

Table 5 Garment requirements—5th choice results

Choice factors	Aesthetics	Price	Material	Hand made	Locally sourced	Fairtrade	Organic	Washing instructions
Participant votes	0	2	0	3	2	4	2	2

to the right hand side of the table, where the ethical and sustainable attributes were more apparent. When compared the table of results in first choice, the majority of votes was positioned at the left-hand side of the table, indicating again this divide between necessity and desirable factors when purchasing garments.

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