

## **FAST FASHION: MARKETING, RECYCLING AND ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES**

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**Abstract:** Fast fashion is the much talked issue in the fashion arena in fashion world. The clothing which are stylish, low cost and reproduce the present luxurious fashion trend, that reflect the desire of the young people are the elements of fast fashion. This paper attempts the marketing, recycling and environment issues of fast fashion as per the requirement of the globalised situation. As fast fashion changes fast by the fast response, it makes huge dumps in the market and to finds out the new products. The rate of disposability affects the second hand market for the recycling of the product by reuse of other group of people. On the other hand, disposability of fashion products and it recycling process has a positive impact for the global environment for its sustainability. Fast fashion has created a second hand fashion industry by its disposability, recycling and marketing where it has a huge yearly turnover for capital investment. In has a great contribution to the global economy as well. The research is on the basis of the thoroughly study with the reading materials from different sources, mainly academic literature, research articles, conference and seminar articles, Master's and Doctoral thesis, dissertations. A qualitative research method approach has been adopted for this research. For the convenience of the reader and future researchers, Analysis and Findings have done in the same time.

**Key words:** Apparel, Australia, Brand avoidance, Clothing, Consumer, Corporate social responsibility, Distribution, Disposal, Environmental values, Eco-friendly fashion products, Environmental impacts, Fashion, Fast fashion, Fashion industry, Fashion season, Fast fashion avoidance, Korea, Life-cycle assessment, Negative beliefs, Operations management, Purchase satisfaction, Qualitative research, Quick response, Repurchase intention, Sustainability, Social contents, Supplier, Supply chain governance, Supply chain management, Stakeholder analysis, Scotland, Warehouse, Young consumers.

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### **I. Introduction**

Fashion is defined as an expression that is widely accepted by a group of people over time and has been characterized by several marketing factors such as low predictability, high impulse purchase, shorter life cycle, and high volatility of market demand (Sparks, 1998). Fast fashion is a contemporary term used by fashion retailers to express that designs move from catwalk quickly in order to capture current fashion trends (Wikipedia, entering date: 25.7.15). Looking at history, fashion runways and fashion shows were the biggest inspiration for the fashion industry. Along with this, these trend shows were primarily restricted to designers, buyers and other fashion managers. However, from 1999 onwards, fashion shows and catwalks became a public phenomenon, where photographs of the recent fashion shows could be seen in magazines and on the web leading to demystification of the fashion process (Sydney, 2008). As a result, fashion-conscious consumers were exposed to restricted designs and styles inspired from runways. Retailers such as Zara, H&M, Mango, New Look, and Top Shop were adopting such designs rapidly to attract consumers and introduce interpretations of the runway designs to the stores in a minimum of three to five weeks (Lea-Greenwood, 2006). Fast fashion refers to the clothing's which are low cost and imitate the present luxuriousness fashion trends. It reflects the desire of young people (Annamma, *et al* 2012), which symbolizes instability. Sustainability and fashion have mingled together in the base of ethical conduct over the past decade (Emberley 1998; Moisander and Personen 2002); as it is highly profitable and trends sensitive it has a question of ethical issue. However, today's young consumers are very much conscious for green values. It has basic social responsibility and involves complex and changing environmental dynamics that affects human livelihoods with inter sectioning of ecological, economical

even socio-political dimensions (Annamma *et al.*, 2012). Fast fashion as it changes fast by the fast response, increases disposability, it flourishes on fast cycles, rapid prototyping, small batches combined with large variety, more prudent transfer and delivery and 'floor ready' merchandising (Skov, 2002). On the other hand, to keep customer flow on, high street retailers, routinely find new trends in the field and purchase weekly basis to introduce new items and refill stocks. Generally, fast fashion companies have in house designers, more eye catching designs lead to trendier, must have fashion which make to customers to pay full price now, rather than differing indulgence until the year-end sales arrive. In case of swift delivery fast fashion companies use higher cost local labor and accelerate shipping methods. As it has the lower manufacturing and labor cost, means lower prices, which ultimately makes higher volume. Zara, which used to make all the goods of Europe, in a better quality control, now outsourcing at least thirteen percent of its total manufacturing to China and Turkey. Fast fashion, which took more than six months from catwalk to consumer, is now only needs few weeks as like the company Zara and H&M. Fashion is less transparent than agribusiness (Mihm 2010; Pattridge 2011). Most of the fast fashion consumers are now busy to search to new styles in the fast fashion stores in every three weeks (Barnes and Lea-Greenwood, 2006) Former Topshop brand director made a comment that, 'Girls see something and want it immediately.' There is a common phenomenon of fast fashion and other technology industry that has a tendency to produce ever-improved, more appealing, products. Fashion, more than any other industry in the world has the obsolescence as a primary destination. The wish young consumers, the key factors, of fast fashion, are coupled with significant disposable income, or availability of money which exploits of-the-moment design and immediate gratification. On the contrary, fast fashion has there been termed as 'McFashion' because of its speed.

## **II. Literature Review**

In 2012, Junghyun Jang, Eunju Ko, Eunha Chun & Euntaik Lee in their article, 'A Study of a Social Content Model for Sustainable Development in the Fast Fashion Industry', stated that due to an increase in clothes use and a decrease in the trend cycle, middle-class consumers generally prefer clothes that are contemptible and fashionable. The share of global SPA (Specialty store retailer of Private label Apparel) brands in the world fashion market is gradually increasing. However, SPA clothes highlight trends, resulting in disposal after a season in spite of the quality. Today, the development of fashion waste raises serious environmental concerns. This study develops sustainable social content for fast fashion. Fast fashion industry has not yet made suitable efforts to achieve sustainability, even though serious environmental pollution is produced by fast fashion. This study explores the opportunity that fashion social content can focus on eco- friendly products, customer service, fair employment opportunities, and fair allocation of profits, diversity of quality and design, and ecosystem promotion. The study provides data to execute a new marketing strategy for sustainable development of global a SPA brand. The qualitative research of the present study was conducted via one-on-one in-depth interviews (Junghyun Jang, 2012).

Sarah Scaturro (2008) said that during the mid-twentieth century, there was also an acknowledgment of the sociological impact of amalgamation fashion with technology, as an evidenced through the 1968 exhibition 'Body Covering' at the Museum of Contemporary Crafts (now called the Museum of Arts and Design) in New York City. Besides, showing garments by fashion designers like Dew and Rabanne, the exhibition contained conceptual drawings of a dress that could expand into a portable seat for the wearer and an environmental garment structure that fully enclosed the wearer's nude body, delivering meditational vibrations or warning notifications of approaching unpleasantness (Museum of Contemporary Crafts 1968). Thus, fashion in the mid-twentieth century emphasized a positive view of technology as a promising solution to primary physical and social needs. Mediocre products combined with suspect and possibly harmful methodologies and materials are all hallmarks of a 'fast fashion' system containing the ideals of novelty and profit. Technology is in part to blame for the environmental and ethical fallout of fast fashion consumption; there is now biotechnological interference with the environment, a profusion of detrimental textile manufacturing byproducts and waste entering the ecosystem, and of course, a vast amount of energy needed both to make and to take care of all the clothing produced. (Scaturro, 2008)

In the year 2014, Bin Shen has conducted a research on H&M. He notified that the global textile consumption is estimated to more than 30 million tons a year, which causes seriously social and environmental impact within supply chain. Sustainability issues are crucial to the fashion industry. In the pursuit of low production costs, apparel firms took advantage of lower environmental awareness and looser environmental regulatory system in developing countries. Fashion brands such as Benetton, Adidas, and C&A are blamed to develop their supply chain unsustainably. Many fashion companies recognize the importance of sustainability in business and incorporate green practices into their supply chain. Examples of this kind of fashion companies include H&M, Uniqlo, The North Face, and New Balance. Fashion industry has huge impacts on global environment. From the fashion consumers' perspective, consumers are growing to have social and

environmental awareness. Consumers' environmental attitudes directly influence their eco-fashion consumption. They understand that if supply chain is more sustainable, more natural resources are used and less CO<sub>2</sub> are emitted, in return, retail prices might be also increased. H&M is a Swedish multinational fashion company with about 3100 stores across 53 markets. H&M launched the sustainability program, which is called as 'Conscious Action'. In this program, broadly speaking, more job opportunities in less developed countries are created, more recyclable resources are used in production and consumers are educated to be more ethical. As a result, market and supply chain are turning to be more economically, environmentally, and socially sustainable. However, H&M also faces a number of challenges throughout the sustainable supply chain. Challenges and conflicts of being more sustainable and profitable are present at each stage of supply chain, including material production, garment manufacturing, transportation/distribution, consumer education, and retailing. As a famous global brand, H&M is sufficiently representative to examine the sustainable fashion supply chain (Shen, 2014). In the conference titled, 'Australian and New Zealand Communication Association Conference', authors said that the intersection of fashion, communication technology and environmental sustainability is dynamic, sensitive and powerful. As reflected in the project proposals above, this interaction offers numerous opportunities for information collection, communication, and social interaction. Rather than offer fully determined and immutable projects, these ideas seek to open perspectives and discussion on the areas involved. Technology's move towards increasing miniaturization and sensitivity, the demand for increased performance in clothing and textiles, and the growing global eco consciousness suggest great promise in this area for further research and development (Monika Holgar, 2009)

In the study (The motivational drivers of fast fashion avoidance), authors try to investigate the conceptual structure of fast fashion avoidance among young consumers in Korea. The effects of negative beliefs on the behavioral intention regarding fast fashion avoidance are empirically examined. A conceptual model of fast fashion avoidance is proposed and tested based on the literature and blog analyses. (Hyunsook Kim, 2013) Vertica Bhardwaj and Ann Fairhurst mentioned in their research that the fashion apparel industry has appreciably developed, mainly over the last 20 years. The changing dynamics of the fashion industry have forced retailers to desire low cost and suppleness in design, quality, and speed to market, key strategies to maintain a profitable position in the increasingly demanding market. This article reviews the literature on changes that have happened in the fashion apparel industry since the 1990s, highlighting the materialization of a concept of 'throwaway' or fast fashion. It describes fast fashion from a supplier as well as a consumer's perspective, and draws attention to several potential research issues. The dramatic change in the fashion apparel industry, coupled with environmental concerns giving rise to conscious consumers in terms of fair trade, the green market and organic clothing, implies that researchers will need to broaden, redesign and align their research to match the fashion markets in the twenty-first century. Here researchers said that further research can also examine the pricing strategy used for fast fashion apparel along with analysis of consumers' willingness to pay more for environmentally friendly and sustainable fast fashion apparel (for example, organic and green cotton apparel used by Zara and H&M). Fast fashion is a concept that will continue to affect the fashion apparel industry over the next decade and will have a direct effect on the way consumers purchase and react to trends. Although continued research relative to the supply-side of fast fashion is important, emphasis should be placed on examining consumers' perception of fast fashion (Fairhurst, 2010).

Fast fashion helps to sate deeply held desires amongst young consumers in the industrialized world for luxury fashion, even as it exemplifies no sustainability. Tendency run their course with lightning speed, with today's latest styles swiftly trumping yesterday's, which have already been pack off to the waste tub. An article addresses the inherent disagreement among fast fashion consumers, who often share a concern for environmental issues even as they indulge in consumer patterns antithetical to ecological best practices. Apparently skilled at compartmentalize, and free of disagreement guilt, such consumers see no challenge in their Janus-faced desires. Since entity identity repeatedly evolves, and requires a materially referential re-imagining of self to do so, they hypothesize that actual rather than fake luxury brands can, paradoxically, unite the ideals of fashion with those of environmental sustainability. In that article, the researchers have explored the awareness that consumers from Hong Kong and Canada have of sustainability, fast fashion, and luxury fashion, and have shown that sustainable fashion is not a priority for them. The mass of the data propose that juvenile people divide fashion from sustainability. They definitely support the idea of sustainability, but do not apply such ethics when it comes to sustainable fashion (Annamma Joy *et al*, 2012).

In the article (2013), 'Corporate responsibility management in fast fashion companies: the Gap Inc. case', the described the tactical role of corporate social responsibility (CSR) in global fast fashion companies. The main output of corporate responsibility management is solid stakeholder relationships resulting in: employee attraction and motivation, powerful brand, enhanced consumer perceptions, profitability. Through the corporate responsibility management process, fast fashion companies can obtain a sustainable development.

Illustrating on the management literature on CSR, corporate social recital and the benefits of a socially responsible behavior, a theoretical framework of corporate responsibility management is explored. The Gap Inc. case is investigated to prove how CSR pledged to create Stakeholder Corporation and pick up corporate brand image (Arrigo, 2013)

In the year 2014, Yongjian Li, Xiukun Zhao, Dan Shi and Xiang Li examined the impact of corporate social responsibility behavior on the sustainability performance of focal companies and their partners in fast fashion supply chains. They explore the application of the governance mechanisms via a case study based on H&M's seven sustainability commitments. The findings of the research suggest that the hub influence and centrality of a corporation should be reinforced from the perspective of internal governance; stakeholders as well should collaborate to achieve sustainability governance throughout the entire fast fashion supply chain from the standpoint of external governance. More exclusively, the researchers described the positive relationships between CSR and fast fashion supply chains. From the point of view of products, they found seven competitive sustainable characteristics related to fast fashion products –‘TCQSERP’, i.e., time (T), cost (C), quality (Q), service (S), environment (E), resource (R), and people (P). They established the seven SSCG influential factors, i.e., the characteristics of consumer demand, the regulatory capacity of governments, the capability of revelation by NGOs, the density of a supply chain, the difficulty of dealings, the centrality of the important company; the capabilities of suppliers as well. They come from three dimensions, the characteristics of external stakeholders, the characteristics of transactions, and the characteristics of internal subjects (Yongjian Li, 2014).

In the Journal, ‘Journal of the Korean Society for Clothing Industry’, authors investigated how the environmental values of fashion consumers effect the purchase satisfaction and repurchase intention of environment friendly fashion products. The statistical analysis methods were different analyses like, frequency analysis, factor analysis, reliability analysis, and multiple regression analysis. The results show that the environmental values are classified by environment conservative value, economical value, social altruistic value, and self-centered value. The social altruistic value of fashion consumers affects procures satisfaction of eco-friendly fashion products. The social humane value, environment conservative value, and egocentric value affect the repurchase intention of eco-friendly fashion products which in fact plays an important role (Byung-Sook Hong, 2010).

Anika Kozlowski, Michal Bardecki and Cory Searcy (2012) noticed that the fashion industry has been gradually more under the limelight as a significant contributor to global environmental and social issues. Life-cycle appraisal is a typical tool used to look into the environmental impacts of all stages of a product's life. Life-cycle evaluation is therefore generally not extended to the consideration of social issues. On the other hand, stakeholder analysis is a systematic process of identifying individuals and groups whose interests should be taken into account when developing a policy or a program. This paper provides a conceptual and analytical framework by conflating life-cycle and stakeholder analyses to develop responses for the fashion industry. The paper illustrates that identification of stakeholders and their interests, responsibilities and accountability can provide a basis for the development and implementation of appropriate policies and programmes to respond to environmental and social concerns within the circumstances of corporate social responsibility (Anika Kozlowski *et al*, 2012)

A study for the investigation of the background to clothing disposal methods in two countries: Scotland and Australia. Findings show differences between the countries regarding clothing disposal actions. However, general recycling behavior was found to be the strongest predictor for donating to charities in both countries. Augmented textile waste is being created throughout the world owing to the interaction between augmented consumer disposable income and fast-fashion retailers' strategy of launching frequent new lines at low prices. This results in a large amount of textiles being disposed of or destroyed. The textile disposal stage is often overlooked in consumer and retailing research and our findings have specific implications for consumers and charity organizations. This study attempted to make an important contribution to the scant literature on consumer disposal of fashion textile. (Birtwishtle, 2010)

### **III. Analysis and Findings**

This research paper attempts to identify the selected points of fast fashion based on current trend as per the discussion above. Here, we will broadly make the analysis to find out the utmost scope of Marketing, Recycling and Environment issues of Fast fashion in the renowned brands of the fashion world.

As its name, it is responded quickly than other fashions. In the market, these items are hot cakes to the young consumers to fulfill the rapid current demand with the trends. Previously, it took more than six months from design to catwalk a garment, while it takes only five to six weeks to fulfill the demand of the current market (Annamma, 2012). It involves 'floor-ready' merchandising (Skov, 2002). On the other hand, it ensures the quick customer flow, high street retailers and new trend in the field. It increases disposability and rapid prototyping, small batches combined with large varieties for the consumers in the market (Annamma, *et al*, 2012). As fast fashion has in house designers, it can conduct the market survey at any time as per the requirement of the organization for the product development and marketing purposes. Furthermore, it can develop more eye catching designs lead to trendier and have fashion to pay full price in the particular time. However, there is a scope to make huge profit by the hot marketing products (products which have huge demand in the market). For the rapid demand, the turnover of the money is more which gives the maximum utilization of the capital and there is least scope for the idle money for the investors. Seemingly, in case of the bank interest, will there be lower comparatively for the maximum turnover of the capital which will ensure the entrepreneurship of the fashion related organization. Finally, there will be more expansion of employment in the market.

Fast fashion products can be reused by the common people of the society for the necessity of clothing or retailers can sell them in the second hand clothing market in cheaper prices (which is being on practices in the third world, least developed counties like Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, etc.). These types of products are basically used by the marginal people of the society where cheaper price is the only factor to choose the product by the customers. From the recycled products, customers sometimes make the redesign, reshape as per the requirement. For this, local techniques and local labor are used which is another chance of increasing the scope of employment in the market and to fulfill the market demand. On the contrary, hot marketing fashion products are reused by the common person; that is the ultimate saving of the new garments, required from the fashion market. Not only that, it also saves the use of thousand tons of raw materials for the manufacturing of new garments that is increasing the market demand of raw material for increasing the price of the products.

Global Textile demand is more than 30 million tons per year (Bin Shen, 2014) and it causes very harmful impact in the social and ecological environment of the world. In pursuit of low production cost, fast fashion industries generally take less awareness to protect the ecological balance of the environment.

Bin Shen (2014) found that, even more the famous fashion brands Benetton, H&M, Zara, Adidas and C&A were blamed for the non sustainability of the environment. Nonetheless, many companies are very much conscious for the conservation of the environment and green practice. As fashion industry has huge impacts on global environment, conscious consumers are growing social and environmental awareness which has a direct influence in the co-fashion consumption. The consumers understand if the supply chain is sustainable than more natural resources will be used with least Carbon-di-Oxide emission in the environment. The 'Conscious Action' launched by the Swedish organization H & M, which has more than 3100 store in the 53 markets has created more job opportunities in the less developed countries, more recycled resources are used in the production and the consumers are learned to more ethical which ultimately made the market economically, socially and environmentally sustainable. Nevertheless, the changing dynamics of the fashion industry have forced the retailers to cut the cost in the design, production and even in the profit margin which ultimately added speed in the market (Vertica Bhardwaj *et al*, 2010). After 1990s, fashion market in the world has a dramatic change which coupled with the environmental concern, in term of fair trade and green market for the future. It also indicates that consumers are ready to pay more for the eco-friendly products in the market. The result for the eco consciousness suggests great promise in the area of further research and development of the fashion brands like H & M and it make the globalised campaign to work for the favor of fashion and environment in future. In a research regarding fast fashion that young consumers from Hong Kong and Canada have shown major concern for the sustainability of the environment (Annamma Joy *et al*, 2012). However, company has social responsibility (CSR) where to produce eco-friendly products in the eco-friendly production or manufacturing process which ultimately attracts the consumers and works towards their motivation. By the research of a journal of Korean Society for Clothing Industry found that, company's environmental values positively affect the purchasing behavior of the consumers (Byung-Sook Hong, 2010). On the contrary, another research shows that company social responsibility is different from place to place, which affects the socio-economic culture of a country.

#### IV. Conclusion

Fast fashion has the noteworthy role for the conservation of environment through its research, production of fashion products in the global marketing environment. The implications for fast fashion firms that care about the ecological consumers are discussed, as are opportunities for further research. Nowadays, the outstanding growth of the fast fashion industry has set an inference in the fashion world that company has a major role for the ecology of the production place as well as for the market. As it responds fast, produces in the short span of time and ensures the maximum turnover of the investment, it makes more profit for an organization. There is a general concept that fast fashion's products are cheaper in price and consumed by the young consumers. On the other hand, globally, the recycling issue has come forward for the conservation of the environment which ensures less use of land, water, less emission of Carbon-di-Oxide and other hazardous chemicals and gases in the atmosphere and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) of the Company is the key factor for that. Sustainability of fashion is well accepted in the name of Green fashion which has an ethical value. Incorporation the green fashion in fast fashion has a new dimension of morality aspects to the consumers.

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