

SUSTAINABLE AND ETHICAL PRACTICES FOR THE FAST FASHION INDUSTRY

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Abstract

This research considers the fast fashion industry which is a system where trendy clothes are created cheaply and frequently in large quantities. The research explores different issues with fast fashion such as increased pollution, waste, and mistreatment of workers. The goal is to recommend more sustainable and ethical practices in the manufacturing of garments. In addition, research is done on the relationship between fast fashion, globalization, and company and consumer awareness and responsibility. Interviews are conducted with five employees of various clothing companies: H&M, Forever 21, Abercrombie & Fitch, SiiZu, and Symbol. These interviews give insight into the practices of these companies and the steps they have or haven't taken in being more sustainable. The results of these interviews and research reveal that companies need more transparency in their production and new models for business to become more sustainable. Practices such as releasing sustainability reports, minimizing the turnover rate of clothing, adding more information to clothing tags, reducing environmentally damaging production methods, using sustainable packaging, analyzing the factories where the garments are produced, and recycling help lead companies to a more sustainable and ethical future.

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“In truth, the entire apparel industry was one continuing and under-reported scandal.”—Bob Ortega in 1998 book *In Sam We Trust*

Intro

Clothes these days have become extremely cheap, trendy, and easily disposable. This trend united a new system of clothing production, “fast fashion”, where clothes are not meant to last but are meant to be bought in large quantities and worn for only a short period before being replaced with the next big trend. The cheaper quality of clothing and the large quantities produced have led to much cheaper clothes that can be bought in large quantities. The quality of clothing, resources used to make clothing, and the waste produced will be explored in this research and more sustainable methods will be recommended. This research will consider the sustainable practices of these clothing companies and what steps can be taken to make clothing more sustainable and ethical in the production process of clothing, the disposal of clothing, and the role that globalization plays in the future of fashion. Through multiple interviews with employees within the clothing industry, comparisons are made between the ethical and sustainable practices of major and minor clothing companies. These interviews have shown that there are various sustainable advances taking place within the garment industry in order to combat fast fashion, but more needs to be done. Finally, this research will delve into how companies can take more responsibility to negate the negative social and environmental consequences of fast fashion.

Background

A. Fast Fashion

Today the widespread process of creating garments for mass consumption has led to a concept deemed, “fast fashion.” Fast fashion is defined by its fast-turnover speed, high order fulfillment rates, cheap prices, and trendy items created for mass consumption.¹ Retailers now sell massive volumes of clothing for cheap prices to make a profit, rather than selling smaller amounts of higher quality clothing.² Today large brand companies hire manufacturers who in turn hire subcontractors to produce their products. This process moves the risk of unsafe workplaces and ethical treatment down the manufacturing chain to the low-paid workers who are the ones actually creating the clothing.³ By hiring subcontractors, companies are able to disassociate themselves from any human rights or environmental violations that often occur during production.⁴ These factories with poor working conditions are often called “sweatshops,” which was a concept created to draw attention to the factories that work employees for long hours, poor pay, and poor working conditions.⁵ Companies need to implement more sustainable and ethical practices that are good for their employees and for the environment. The overarching influence that large clothing companies have internationally makes it easier to diffuse blame for unethical practices.

There are two different types of markets in fashion. There are standard markets where the commodity is in social construction, and status markets where the status and brand of the item is in social construction.⁶ Design and marketing is what gives items symbolic value and in fast fashion designers profit off of trends and take from luxury brands in order to appeal to the mass market.⁷ These markets tie producers, commodities, and consumers together and brands are used to differentiate different social classes.⁸ Fast fashion is different from higher standard fashion

because of its appeal to mass consumption versus small production and consumption.⁹ The standards for fast fashion rely on the fashion conscious mass market, larger volume orders, and larger department stores.¹⁰

B. Environmental Impacts of Fast Fashion

There are many environmental consequences that come from fast fashion, both on the manufacturing end and the consumption end. The environment suffers from the production of fast fashion clothing due to pollution from the increased number of chemicals used in synthetic fibers and dyes.¹¹ On the consumption end, when cheap clothing is thrown away the high volume of textiles in landfills leads to off-gassing, which is when the materials give off toxic chemicals while decomposing.¹² Fast fashion is characterized by its rapid turnover rate in new garments ready for retail. This process has led to an increase in the speed and quantity of items being transported through air which leads to more air pollution.¹³ Consumers themselves have a larger volume of clothes and when those items are washed, dried, or disposed of more rapidly, it can add up and lead to a large detrimental effect on the environment.¹⁴

C. Sustainability Supply Chain Management

There have been attempts to transform the garment production and supply system into a sustainable supply chain management (SSCM).¹⁵ The analysis done by Turker and Altuntas looks at how various fast fashion companies have attempted to change their inefficient and unsustainable garment production system to a sustainable supply chain management system.¹⁶ These companies attempted to integrate aspects of SSM into the economy, environment, and society.¹⁷ This study emphasizes the stress that comes from the local government, federal government, outside organizations, and consumers for more sustainable change in the garment production industry.¹⁸ Turker and Altuntas also comment on how the globalization of the

garment industry caused the relocation of manufacturing which destroyed many jobs in Europe, and increased environmental damages due to the increase in transportation mileage that comes from the rapid turnover of clothes. Companies now try to “green the supply process” and lean towards “product-based green supply.”¹⁹ These terms allude to the process of reducing waste during the production process by taking measures such as reducing packaging waste, recycling, minimalizing excess resources and seeking the most energy efficient materials.²⁰

D. Policies and the Garment Industry

Historically, textile manufacturing was done at home. Over time, the increased amount of immigrants and global trade led to immigrant workers or guest workers in the apparel industry.²¹ Global trade has led to competition among workers on an international level as factories compete with each other for business from the large retail companies.²² New policies and ideas such as neo liberalism has led to a fragmented garment industry today.²³ One important policy is the Multifibre Arrangement (MFA) which was created by the World Trade Organization (WTO). This act was enacted in 1974 and set quotas on the amount of fiber goods (yarn, textiles, clothing, etc.) that could be imported into various countries, including the United States.²⁴ This act was meant to protect the domestic industry from competition abroad and allowed industrialized countries to keep more control over global trade. In 2005, the MFA was phased out and replaced by the new Agreement on Textiles and Clothing (ATC).²⁵ The ATC was decided to be used and end the quotas on the garment and textile trade at the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade of the Uruguay Round. The ATC got rid of the quotas that were set by the MFA.²⁶

E. Social Effects of Fast Fashion

The social dynamics of fast fashion changed with changes in technology and the way in which consumers purchase goods. The price of necessary goods such as homes and tuition for school has gone up, while the cost of clothing has gone down.²⁷ Consumers spend more on buying cheap clothes that make them feel like they are wealthy because they now have the ability to buy large quantities for little cost.²⁸ In reality, the cost is simply moved down the supply chain to the workers who suffer unsafe conditions and inhumane wages, and to the water sources and air that is being polluted from clothing factories.²⁹ Although it has become normalized for people to overconsume in general, the fast fashion industry in particular has made it easier for people to do so more frequently.³⁰

There have been various attempts to change the garment industry. There has been a rise in anti-sweatshop movements, clothing unions, consumer awareness and activism, and a backlash of the fast fashion industry in general with the idea of “slow fashion”.³¹ Due to more awareness of the issues with fast fashion, many large brands have created sustainability boards and have made new goals and sustainability reports to fix their image. More large clothing brand companies have created sustainability reports where they outline their policies on their ethical and sustainable efforts in their garment manufacturing process. However, it is argued that this practice is a form of “sweatwashing,” like the idea of “greenwashing,” where companies simply state that they will implement change while forgoing any real changes in practice.³²

A. Sustainable Practices of Companies

1. H&M

H&M has a thorough sustainability report from 2015 that includes an interview with their CEO Karl-Johan Persson.³³ Persson states that the company is pushing for a strong hand in

efficiency and long-term sustainability, while still functioning as a capitalistic company. H&M believes that buying products made in developing countries helps the economy in those countries and helps bring people out of poverty, and that international markets are an opportunity.³⁴

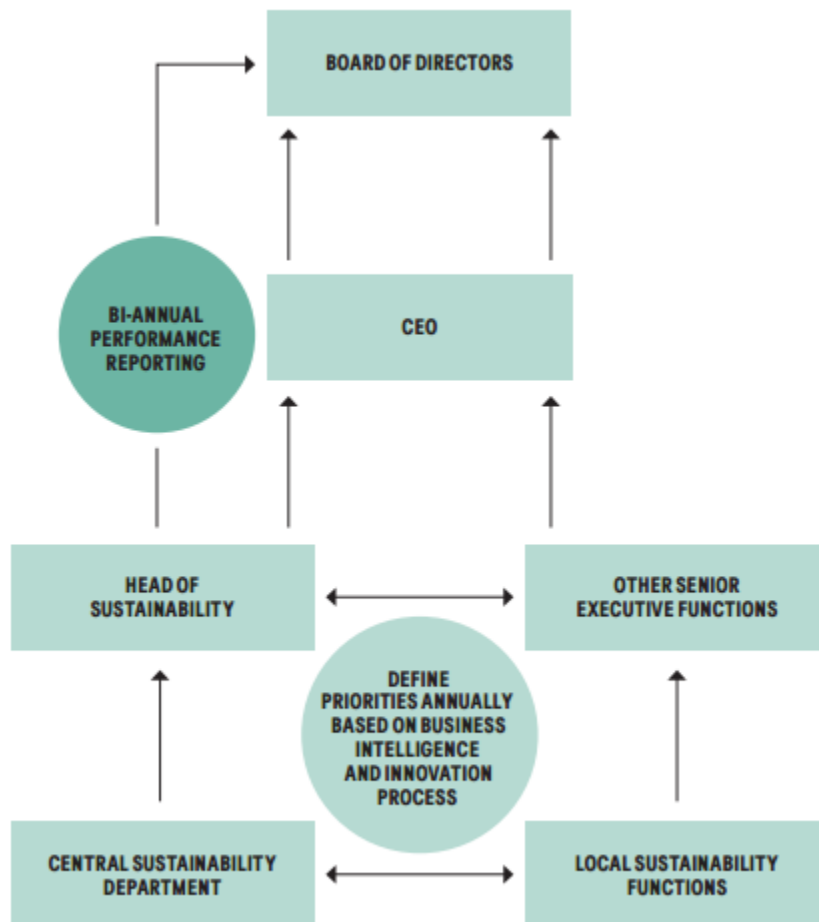
Countries like Bangladesh and Cambodia are used as a main labor force, and Persson believes that "...wages should be negotiated between the parties on the labour market."³⁵ H&M also receives recommendations and advice from global trade unions, the ILO, and the Fair Wage Network, NGOs, and unions. H&M has allied itself with various organizations, and has signed a global framework agreement with IndustriALL, which is a global trade union. In addition, H&M has also signed with IF Metall which is a Swedish trade union.³⁶

On H&M's website, there are detailed maps and links to the various ways that H&M is trying to reduce their environmental impact, and it goes as far as to rank their influence in different areas: our influence, climate impact, water impact, and social impact.³⁷ They rank their different processes by design, raw materials, fabric production, garment production, transport, sales and use. H&M has seven commitments for sustainability which are:

1. Provide fashion for conscious customers
2. Choose and reward responsible partners
3. Be ethical
4. Be climate smart
5. Reduce, reuse, recycle
6. Use natural resources responsibly
7. Strengthen communities

Their sustainability report goes into greater detail about their supply chain management, fair living wages, industrial relations, anti-corruption, human rights management, diversity and

equality, and so forth.³⁸ These subjects come with colorful and simple graphs that further state their points. The graph from H&M’s sustainability report for their sustainability chain of command is included below. This graph clearly shows how the sustainability department interacts with the leadership at H&M, and how the Head of Sustainability has access to both the CEO and Board of Directors directly.



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Figure 1: H&M’s sustainability chain of command.

2. SiiZu

Sustainability is at the center of SiiZu’s company. SiiZu wishes, “To design and deliver **beautiful, high-quality** apparel made with **sustainable** manufacturing practices directly to you

at an **affordable** price.”⁴⁰ SiiZu sources their fabrics internationally, but they keep their “fabric manufacturers and garment factories close to each other in order to minimize the carbon footprint from shipping our materials.”⁴¹



SiiZu also has a section of their website that lists all the factories that they use. They list a sweater factory in Inner Mongolia, a clothing factory in New York, a garment factory in Beijing, a Fabric Supplier in Tokyo, and a fabric supplier in Suzhou.⁴² Each link takes you on a tour through their factories and details the history of the factory as well as the materials used. Each factory is either certified through OEKO-TEX Standard 100 (“an independent testing and certification system for textile raw materials, intermediate and end products at all stages of production”) or has an explanation for why SiiZu has chosen to work with them.⁴³ These explanations often come with a description of the facilities and the methods that the factories use. For example, the sweater factory in Mongolia was chosen because of their long-standing reputation of providing premium cashmere and wool to a variety of high profile companies.⁴⁴ This particular factory also raises their cashmere goats in a traditional way.⁴⁵

3. Reformation

Reformation is a small company created in 2009 that designs and manufactures most of their clothing in Los Angeles.⁴⁶ They are a sustainable practice based company and keep detailed track of the amount of waste and pollution they reduce, and the amount of water and recyclable goods they create.⁴⁷

Reformation states that they track the environmental costs of their goods through a scale called RefScale which calculates the amount of carbon dioxide emitted, gallons of water used, and pounds of waste created.⁴⁸ This information is all put on their website so that consumers can

have access to the environmental impact of their clothing. One example of this chart is shown below for a dress. This chart shows that the Sterling Dress and its environmental costs at Reformation, the cost it would have been at an average industry setting (comparative product), and the difference in the form of savings.

RefScale	Sterling Dress	Industry standard	Savings
 Carbon dioxide	10 lbs	30 lbs	20 lbs
 Water	379 gal	4557 gal	4178 gal
 Waste	2 lbs	3 lbs	1 lb

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Figure 2: A chart from Reformation breaking down the quantifiable environmental cost of the Sterling Dress.

Reformation has pricier clothing and less choices than H&M, and only sell their clothing online or in their own boutiques to avoid any retail markups. Their website states that sourcing materials locally and domestically first creates a more sustainable practice by reducing environmental damage and by making sure that there are ethical labor practices.⁵⁰ Reformation even puts a list on their website of the supplies used in their offices and operations. They list environmentally friendly supplies such as pens, paper, furniture, cleaning products, and even snacks.⁵¹

4. Forever 21

Forever 21 has a basic webpage with written text that mostly goes over different charity programs that the company is involved in.⁵² The short section on environmental policy is largely about the functionality of their stores, for example it listed that their “new stores are using energy

efficient lighting systems....”. There is a paragraph about the intention to strive for more environmentally friendly methods; however, there are no concrete examples.

5. Abercrombie & Fitch

Abercrombie & Fitch has a sustainability website with the heading “A&F Cares”.⁵³ This site lists strategies that revolve around, “The Three Rs Concept: Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle.”⁵⁴ Initiatives have included water conservation efforts in irrigation, efforts to have no discharge of all hazardous chemicals, reducing the amount of energy used with new lights and recycling measure, and other efforts. A section in the website describes their carbon disclosure project which mostly goes over the amount of emissions that were released in the year 2011. Similarly, they have a corporate responsibility report with a sustainability section from 2010/2011, but no new reports since then. The sustainability section of the report discusses reduced water usage by changes in flush valves, irrigation, and more energy efficient air conditioners. An article is included that mentions the efforts to reduce pollution in runoff water before it can enter streams and ponds.⁵⁵ There are statistics on reduced energy consumption as well, but it seems to be limited to the stores and distribution centers.⁵⁶ They partner with AEP of Ohio and Energy Curtailment Specialists, Inc., a company that assists in installing energy efficient products.⁵⁷ There seems to be a lot of management within the company’s buildings to save energy and recycle, but not in regards to production.

Literature Review

A. History of Fast Fashion

In "Freedom for Whom? Globalization and Trade from the Standpoint of Garment Workers, Roxanna Ng states that, "It is clear that globalization, through the negotiation of trade agreements, has led to increasing competition among workers across national borders."⁵⁸ Roxanna Ng also states that globalization should instead be addressed as "economic globalization" because of the way that national economies around the world have become integrated.⁵⁹ This author argues that the increased monopoly of corporations from takeovers and mergers have led to a very fragmented and sub contractual garment industry.⁶⁰ This system is based off of networks called "jobbers" which are similar to wholesalers in the garment industry.⁶¹ As explained in the reading, "Today's jobber develops and markets styles, purchases materials, finances and overseas production."⁶² In addition, increased neo liberalism has allowed the market to function more on its own, as the government has deregulated services and industries.⁶³ Therefore, "[fast fashion] is a result of competition in the consumer market that forces those who actually produce garments to work faster. More efficient and faster chains of logistics become crucial means of competition for the branded retailers who sell garments to consumers in stores."⁶⁴ Below is a figure explaining the position of jobbers in the garment market of New York City. It reveals how many areas of production jobbers oversee in the clothing manufacturing system.

figure 3

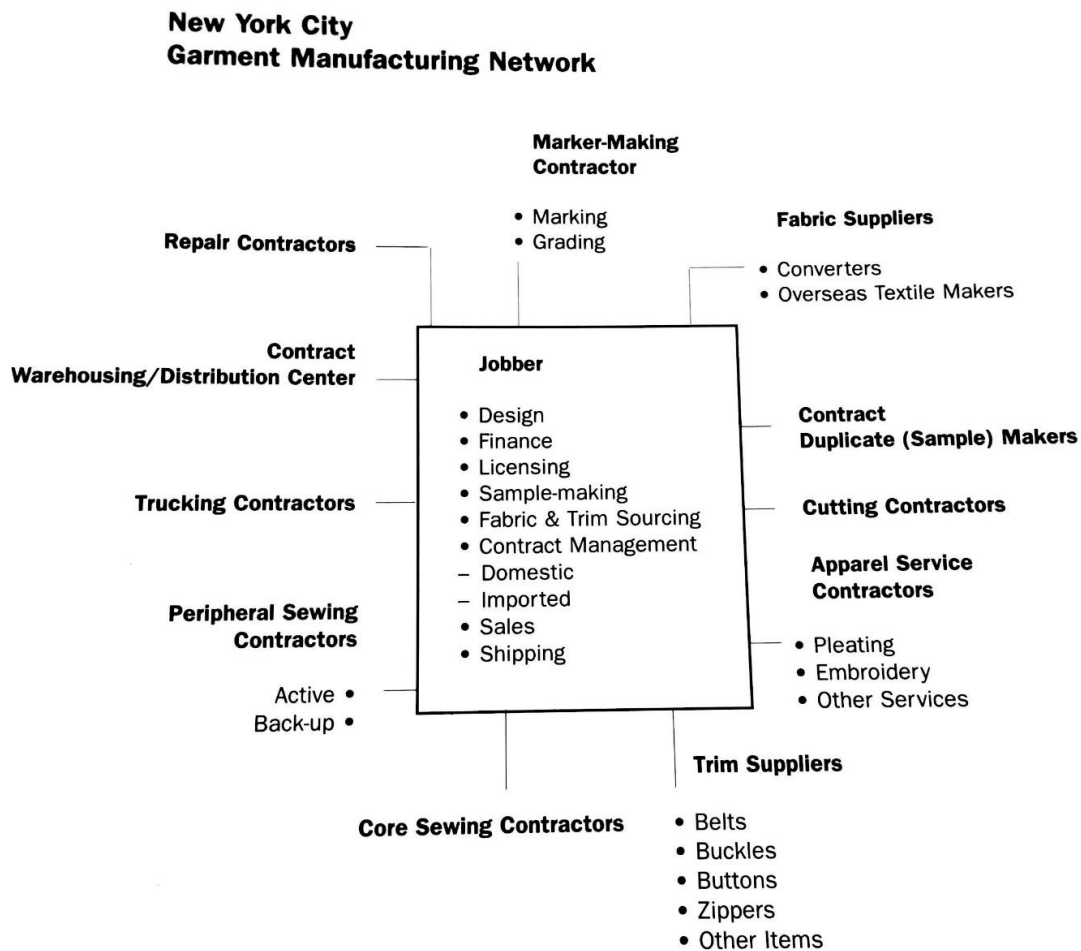


Figure 3: The relationship between jobbers and other groups in the garment manufacturing network in New York City.

In *The Global Clothing Production System: Commodity Chains and Business Networks*, Hassler argues that various policies and regulations, or lack thereof, have affected the garment industry and has led to what it is today.⁶⁶ He argues that, “In general, every clothing commodity chain consists of a set of production stages and processes that are not related to the fashion segment and brand name ownership of the garment. These production stages can be broadly divided into (a) product development, (b) production and (c) distribution.”⁶⁷ Hassler discusses this concept in depth and articulates that on the supply side, the globalization of the clothing commodity chain has been pushed forward by the changes in industrialization and in trade regulatory policies. Many of these policies favor exportation and global trade and make it easier for industries to export manufacturing. Meanwhile, the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) has made it easier for developed countries to import these finished goods to sell. This change in the production chain has led to a shift of power from manufacturers to retailers, and stronger conglomerates of retailers who dominate the garment market and produce for mass consumption. Hassler states this concept clearly when he says that, “The consolidation of the market power of retailers and brand name companies in developed countries created a shift of power from the production, supply side to the consumption, demand side of the chain. Thus, the global clothing commodity chain is driven by the demand side of the market and governed by buyers rather than producers (Gereffi 1994, 1999).”⁶⁸

After the MFA was phased out in 2005 there was a more open global trade market as the quotas that previously existed regarding textiles ended.⁶⁹ After this change more labor was predicted to move overseas, due to changes in the cost of skilled labor and the flexibility in regulations that existed in other countries.⁷⁰ *Trade Liberalism in the Garment Industry* predicted that cheap labor would be more important to companies than the transit costs of producing so far

away from the retailing shops.⁷¹ In addition, the globalization of production would mean that those who profit from industrial change would be very removed from the point of production.⁷² This phenomenon is seen today in the modern garment production chain, which is made up of subcontractors and overseas factory labor.⁷³ Businesses would also come to understand that it would be more profitable to expand than to protect local businesses, and while countries may benefit from the open market, the workers themselves do not.⁷⁴ Hale states that, “With fewer trade barriers, companies will be even freer to seek out greater financial advantages wherever they can find them; cheap raw materials, low wages, lack of trade union rights, government.”⁷⁵ Low wages and poor working conditions have consistently been a part of the garment industry. However, trade liberalization pushes these negative aspects to the limit. While the garment industry has always been characterized by low wages and poor working conditions, trade liberalization pushes this to the limit.⁷⁶ Even though the MFA has now ended, the ATC may become another way in which companies will be able to use the, “...free trade agenda to maximize their profits at the expense of workers.”⁷⁷ Rather than seeing the conflict being between developed and undeveloped countries, the conflict is between workers on an international level and the transnational companies that control the garment industry.⁷⁸

The current subcontractor system in the garment industry leads to dangerous working conditions and often takes advantage of undocumented immigrants when applied domestically.⁷⁹ However, with the increased globalization in the manufacturing process of clothing, many of the jobs have been pushed overseas. In *Order of Garment Markets*, Aspers articulates that, “...garment production is a global market, and is a result of the historical shift from local production (organized within a single firm) to market coordination and outsourcing. Outsourcing of production is prevalent, and a large share of production takes place in countries because they

can offer low wages.”⁸⁰ *Trade Liberalism in the Garment Industry: Who is Really Benefitting?* explains how, “The skill level and flexibility of the workforce, nature of the country’s financial systems and sources of capital, and flexible production processes are some of the factors that make moving labor overseas so appealing to garment manufacturers.”⁸¹ Unfortunately, “Workers who work in garment factories are often vulnerable populations, such as women...Factories offshore often have problems with extended workhours (20 hours workdays), sexual harassment, coercive birth control, and more.”⁸² This type of low-wage labor in countries where workers’ rights are often lacking is seen as “pitting first world against third world workers.”⁸³ Power has shifted, “pushing risk down through the production chain: from the retailer to manufacturer to contractor and subcontractor and ultimately into the worker’s home...”⁸⁴ Instead of the manufacturers being able to have leverage in the garment production process “the retailer functions as a manufacturer, creating the design, providing the fabric and other raw materials, and setting the price.”⁸⁵ Ultimately the workers suffer the most as they lack any real power. This leads to poverty, lack of unionization, and a dismal regulatory system. Even if good regulations exist domestically, it means nothing if companies are simply able to move their work overseas where those regulations do not apply. To this day human labor is an important part of the garment industry, because although new technology has advanced the industry there are tasks that humans handle better than machines can.⁸⁶

B. Sustainability Supply Chain Model

Turker and Altuntas emphasize that companies use three different strategies to minimize the impacts of treats and risks in the countries that they work in:

The first one is networking activities through collaborating with other organizations in the same sector, joining international or national campaigns and projects, or generally

following an accepted set of standards. Secondly, the companies try to reduce the negative impacts of such social, environmental or economic risks through corporate social responsibility (CSR) projects. The third important tool is to convince stakeholders and legitimate current activities in developed countries through emphasizing how the companies' presence in these countries can be beneficial for the local community.⁸⁷

The graphs below explain the SSCM process more clearly. Figure 4 shows the framework for a large manufacturing company that has applied SSCM methods into their business. The main goals of this system are to minimize environmental and economic impact, while striving for improved environmental and social quality.⁸⁸ Figure 5 shows the same framework, but with added categories that were created due to the research into nine clothing companies' practices. Specific examples of codes of conduct were added to the accountability area, new ways to improve and train workers were added to the communications area, and other examples of practices were added.⁸⁹ All the new additions are in the darker boxes.

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D. Turker, C. Altuntas / European Management Journal 32 (2014) 837–849

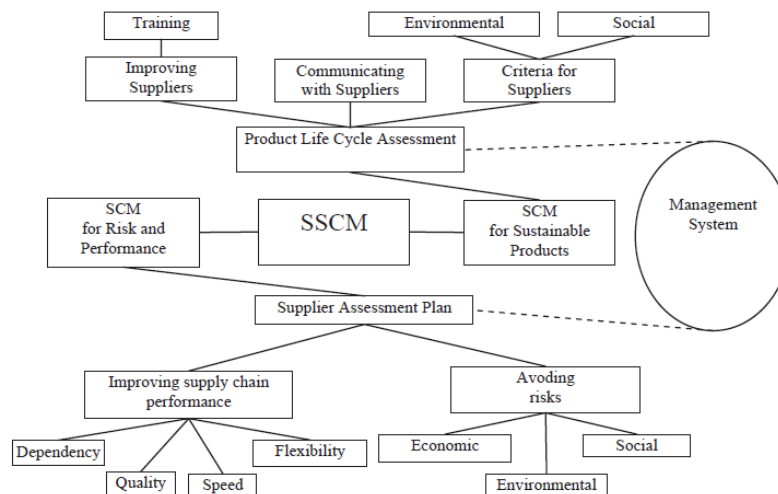


Fig. 1. The theoretical framework. Note: Supply chain management (SCM); sustainable supply chain management (SSCM). Source: Altuntas and Turker (2012) adapted from the study of Seuring and Müller (2008).

Figure 4: This is the theoretical framework of the supply chain management (SCM) and the sustainable supply chain management (SSCM).

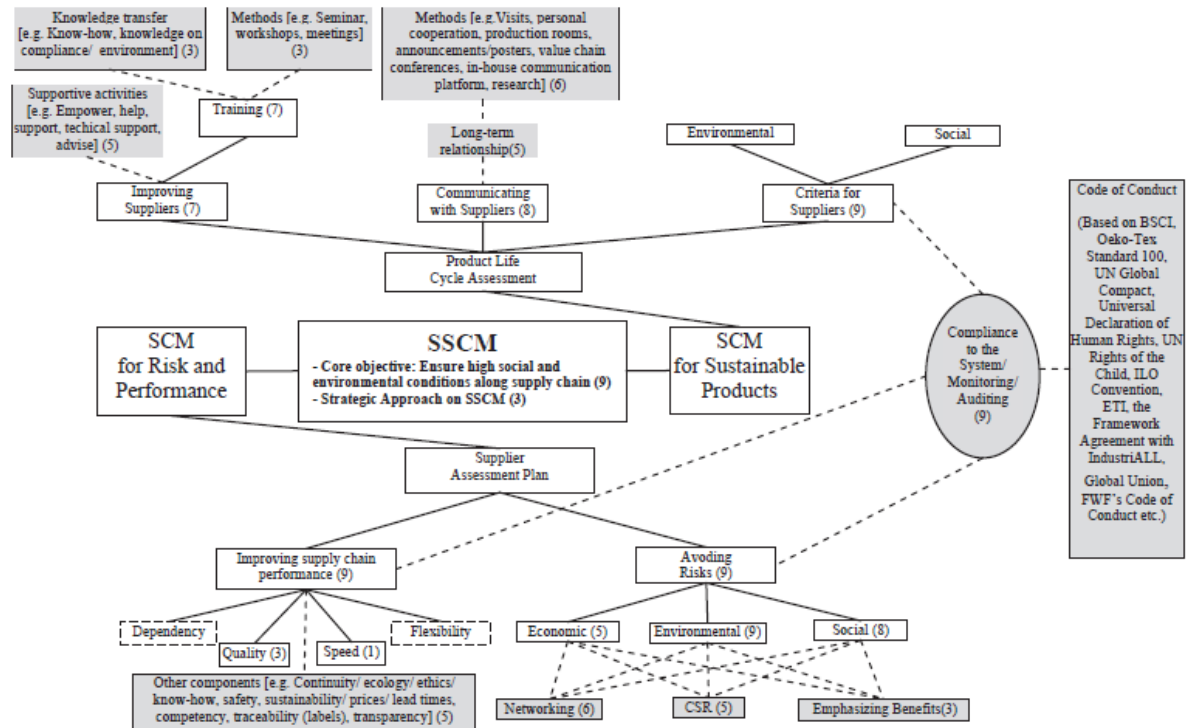


Fig. 2. A Map of sustainable supply chain management in textile and apparel sector. *Note 1:* The new categories that are proposed as a result of this analysis are shown in dark shapes and their links to the original theoretical model are shown by dashed lines; the numbers assigned to each shape indicate the number of companies that are actively doing this activity; the categories that are not observed during the analysis (e.g. Dependency, Flexibility) are exhibited with a dashed box on the figure *Note 2:* Business Social Compliance Initiative (BSCI); corporate social responsibility (CSR); Ethical Trading Initiative (ETI); Fair Wear Foundation (FWF); International Labour Organization (ILO); supply chain management (SCM); sustainable supply chain management (SSCM).

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Figure 5: This is a graph showing the sustainable supply chain management (SSCM) in a textile and apparel sector.

C. Movements Against Injustices in the Garment Industry

Micheletti and Stolle’s article does a thorough job of explaining the growth and history of the anti-sweatshop movement and its relationship to corporate responsibility in the garment industry. In particular, Micheletti and Stolle claim that, “The rise of global corporate capitalism has taken a toll on political responsibility.”⁹² They discuss that in response to this rise of global capitalism, there have been four major players in the social justice movement: “unions, antisweatshop associations, international humanitarian organizations, and Internet spin doctors...”⁹³ Starting as early as 1891, there have been activists and concerned consumers who have questioned and

fought against the exploitative practices of the garment industry in sweatshops at home and overseas.⁹⁴ In the 1950's the alternative trade movement began, which really changed trade as developing countries began to consistently sell goods to developed countries.⁹⁵ This led to unions that encouraged global solidarity, and developing world groups that wanted to encourage global solidarity.⁹⁶ In the 1990's the creation of UNITE! (Union of Needle, Industrial, and Technical Employees), and the establishment of more awareness in fighting against sweatshops as seen in campaigns such as the Clean Clothes Campaign (CCC) in Europe, sparked a new era of activism in the garment industry.⁹⁷ Unions are important in the garment industry because there has been a long history of unsafe working conditions, unfair wages, wage theft, minimal workers' rights, and harassment in garment factory workers.⁹⁸ Through community organization, protests, and negotiations; unions have been able to force the enactment of many workers rights' laws. Organizing gives workers a voice, and puts power back into their hands that is usually in the hands of their employers. Better terms and conditions are negotiated and job security is better, many laws now were created through the protests of unions. UNITE! has had a long history of unionization, starting in 1891.⁹⁹ In the United States, various scandals and media attention on the horrors of sweatshops led to CEO's of clothing companies to come under scrutiny and were targets of activists.¹⁰⁰ This period was an important time where consumers came together and used their collective power to fight for social justice.¹⁰¹

Below is a chart from this reading that shows many of the different types of organizations that fight against sweatshops and for workers' rights. There is a notable dichotomy in the type of focus that different groups have. Some groups concentrate on the idea of "clean clothes" and want to completely change the way that the garment supply chain is made, while other groups concentrate on helping to improve the working conditions in the garment industry.¹⁰² Ross states

in *No Sweat: Fashion, Free Trade, and the Rights of Garment Workers* that, “Unless we are prepared to accept the notion that corporate profits have now become the final authority of right and wrong, then there must be limits placed on the enormous powers of transnational corporations- limits that direct economic activity toward the values and vision of social justice and political equality.”¹⁰³ Many other readings also state the underlying need to change regulations in the garment industry in order to limit corporate power in order to gain social justice for their workers.

FIGURE 1
CONTEMPORARY ANTISWEATSHOP MOVEMENT'S MAIN GROUPS,
ORGANIZATIONS, AND NETWORKS

Academic Consortium on International Trade	Fair Trade Center	MaisonInternationaal Huis (MINTH)	SA 8000 (Social AccountabilityInt'l.)
Adbusters	Fair Wear	Maquiladora Health and Safety Support Network	Scholars Against SweatshopLabor
Alberta Nike Campaign	FLO-International (Fairtrade Labelling Organizations Int'l.)	Maquila Solidarity Network	Smithsonian Sweatshop Exhibition
American Center for International Labor Solidarity	Gapsucks.org	Multinational Resource Center	Stichting Onderzoek Multinationale Ondernemingen (SOMO, Centre for Research on Multinational Corporations)
American Apparel	Garment Worker Center	National Interfaith Committee for Worker Justice	Students Against Sweatshops, Canada
Asia Monitor Resource Center	Get Ethical	National Labor Committee for Worker and Human Rights	Sweatshop Journal
Asian Network for the Rights of Occupational Accident Victims	Global Alliance for Workers and Communities	National Mobilization Against Sweatshops	Sweatshop Watch
Attac	Global Exchange	Nike Wages Campaign	SweatX (union cut and sew shop)
Behind The Label (UNITE)	Globalise Resistance	Nike Watch (Oxfam, AUS)	TCFU Australia
Boycott Nike	Global Solidarity, Irish Congress of Trade Unions	NorthSouth Institute	Thai Labor Campaign
Campaign for the Abolition of Sweatshops and Child Labor	Global Solidarity Dialogue	No Sweat: The UK Campaign Against Sweatshops	Transnational Information Exchange-Asia (TIE-Asia)
Campaign for Labor Rights	Global Unions	No Sweat Shop Labeling Campaign	Transnationale Organization
Carnegie Council on Ethics and International Affairs	HomeNet	Olympic Living Wage Project: Starving for the Swoosh (2001)	Union Label and Service Trades (part of AFOIO)
Catholic Institute for International Relations	Hong Kong Christian Industrial Committee	Oxfam's campaign "Make Trade Fair" -involved in Fair Play at the Olympics	Union Mail
Child Labor Coalition	Human Rights for Workers: The Crusade Against Global Sweatshops	Peace Through Interamerican Community Action	Union Wear
Child Labor Bulletin	Human Rights First	People-Centered Development Forum	Unite! Union of Needle trades, Industrial and Textile Employees
Christian Aid	International Committee for Trade Union Rights	People's Global Action	United Students Against Sweatshops
Clean Clothes Campaign	International Confederation of FreeTrade Unions	Play Fair at the Olympics	US/Labor Education in the Americas Project (US Leap)
Community Aid Abroad	International Federation for Alternative Trade	Press for Change	Verite (non-profitsocial auditing)
"Just Stop It"	International Labor Organization	Responsible Shopper, Co-Op America	Vietnam Labor Watch
Coop America	International Labor Rights Fund	Resource Center of the Americas	Witness for Peace
CorpWatch	Just Act: Youth ACTION for Global JUSTice		Women in Informal Employment Globalizing and Organizing
Development and Peace	Just Do It! Boycott Nike!		Women Working Worldwide
Diamond Cut Jeans	Just Shoppers' Guide to Sport Shoes		Workers Rights Consortium
Educating for Justice	Labour Behind the Label		World Development Movement
Ethical Consumer	LINK Etc.		Worldwide Responsible Apparel Production
Ethicalshopper.net	LINK-label		
Ethical Threads			
Ethical Trading Initiative			
European Association of National Organisation of TextileRetailers			
European Fair Trade Association			
Fair Labor Association			
Fairtrade Foundation			

SOURCES: Individual websites; <http://depts.washington.edu/ccce/polcommcampaigns/nikecampaignsites.htm>

NOTE: The snowball method was used to collect information from Internet searches, information from individual Websites and their linking functions, and previous research. Many of the movement actors were accessed over a period of four years. The figure does not include actors with corporate social responsibility as their main theme, e.g., Amnesty Business, the United Nation's Global Compact, and European Commission's Social Agenda. Neither does it include personal blogs, individuals' Websites nor European country-specific groups affiliated with pan-European ones as the Clean Clothes Campaign. It includes all movement actors focusing on social justice responsibility-taking in the global garment sector, though many of the groups have goals as well.

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Figure 6: This is a chart listing different organizations and groups that are against sweatshops and for workers' rights.

D. Environmental Issues

Fast fashion is problematic because the entire life cycle of clothing that comes from fast fashion production is harmful to the environment. The production of fast fashion clothing is made in factories that produces may pollutants and waste. In Britain, the "clothing industry

produces two million tonnes of waste; emits more than three million tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent; and generates seventy million tonnes of waste water.”¹⁰⁵ Other countries such as Cambodia, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, and Nepal all suffer from environmental damage as well, as their economies and incomes rely on the clothing industry.¹⁰⁶ Massey states in *What Not to Wear* that “There are estimates that we would need three planets to maintain the levels of resource use to support our levels of consumption in [Britain].”¹⁰⁷

The materials of garments created for fast fashion themselves are unsustainable and damaging to the environment. Massey states that,

Different fibres have different impacts and there are trade-offs between them. Cotton in particular requires longer drying times compared to synthetics such as polyester. And there is significant water use, toxicity from fertiliser, pesticide and herbicide use from conventional cotton growing. Whereas for synthetic fibres there are big impacts from the use of fossil fuels in their production. There are also effects from effluent and hazardous waste in dyes and finishes and other stages in manufacturing producing clothes and from their final disposal.¹⁰⁸

At the end of the life cycle of garments, consumers need to decide if they will reuse, recycle, or discard their garments.¹⁰⁹ This choice is made more difficult as consumers now live in a “throwaway culture” where the cheap prices and quality of the clothes that they buy, make it easier for them to simply discard their old garments and buy new ones.¹¹⁰ In fact, “fast fashion retailers, such as H&M, Zara, Primark, Topshop and New Look sell garments at very competitive prices. Furthermore, their designs are made to be worn less than 10 times.”¹¹¹ This planned obsolescence of clothing makes it easier for consumers to throw away clothes that they don’t want and replace them with new ones.

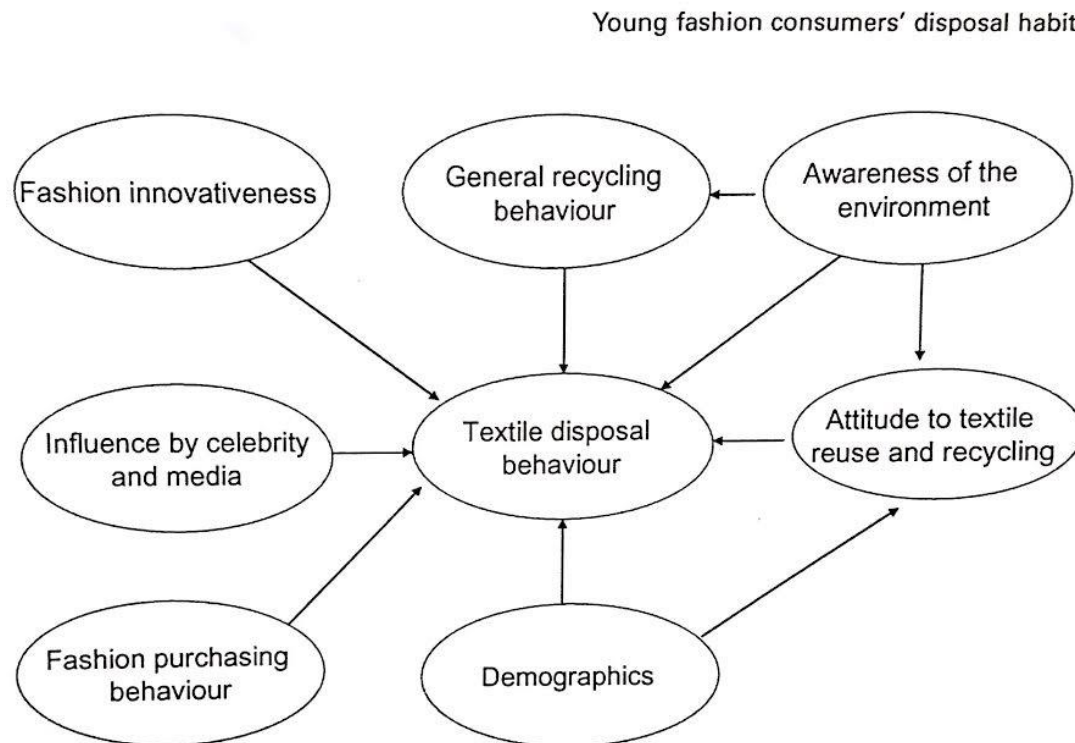
Sustainable disposal of clothing made in the fast fashion industry is also difficult since the materials that garments are made of in the fast fashion industry are often create from synthetic fibers. The material of these clothes makes it harder to recycle or reuse the textiles.¹¹² When

studying consumers' knowledge of fast fashion, studies have shown that consumers are more aware of the unethical working conditions than they are about the "impact of the disposition of high volumes of textile waste".¹¹³ For example, Morgan and Birtwistle discusses the little-known importance of reducing the number of textiles sent to landfills. The high quantity of textiles thrown away takes up a lot of space and, "In particular they are damaging because many synthetic products do not decompose, and woolen garments in particular produce methane when decomposing."¹¹⁴ This off gassing contributes to global warming. These authors argue that to have more sustainable garment operations there needs to be higher margins of profit, lower volumes of product, and garments that are built to last longer.¹¹⁵

E. Social Issues

The social effects of fast fashion are mainly seen in the developing countries where the garments are made. Issues such as child labor, poor working conditions, low wages, and health and safety risks are found in both the fields where fibers are grown, and in the factories where clothes are produced.¹¹⁶ However, the social effects of fast fashion reach out far beyond the manufacturing stage. In fact, Aspers states in *Encounters in the Global Fashion* that the, "fashion industry is a complex structure with a blend of economic, material and cultural flows, all of which ultimately are social."¹¹⁷ He ultimately argues that fashion is a merge between economy and aesthetics.¹¹⁸ Trends are ultimately social, as aesthetically it is typically observed that fashion trends trickle down the various social classes.¹¹⁹ Aspers states that, "Seen from different perspectives, current patterns of clothing trade and consumption are the operation of comparative advantage, or exploitation of the poor by the rich; they are opportunities for development, or spreading the disease of an unsustainable throwaway society."¹²⁰ Below is a graph explaining consumer behavior when purchasing garments. There is a different between the awareness of the

consumer and the behavior of the consumer. Consumers may have certain attitudes towards how and where they purchase their clothing, and what they feel is the acceptable way to dispose or recycle their clothing. However, their actual behavior is often influenced by factors that the consumer is not aware of, and there are social pressures that may alter their clothing consumption behavior.



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Figure 7: This graph explains consumer behavior while purchasing clothing.

Consumers can also be affected by the knowledge of the production of the garments that they purchase. *Mobilizing Consumers to Take Responsibility for Global Social Justice* discusses the different roles consumers play in the “antisweatshop struggle”, and identify the four types of roles consumers can play as, “(1) support group for a broader cause, (2) critical mass of fair trade shoppers, (3) ‘spearhead force’ of corporate change, and (4) ontological agent of societal change”.¹²² Consumers often attempt to damage the brand name of the companies they are

targeting because that can cause widespread attention and damage to the reputation of the company, spurring them to take action more quickly.¹²³ This reading also highlights the importance of recognizing that people are trapped in the mindset of “corporate globalization and overconsumption” which leads to many of the problems that exist with fast fashion.¹²⁴ In the end it is argued that it is difficult to measure the effects of consumer activism in tangible ways because changes in policies and regulations often take time and are not immediately visible. With this challenge in mind, it is important for activists to make sure that companies are not simply “sweatwashing” their production by stating that they will make change while staying the same or while diverting attention away from their issues.¹²⁵ Ultimately Micheletti and Stolle argue that instead of new policies or regulations, there needs to be complete change in corporate policy and a change in the way that consumers view “consumption as a society as a whole.”¹²⁶ They argue that corporations alone will be unable to create any real and lasting change as, “Time and time again, corporate conduct has been shown to be harmful and morally dubious but not necessarily illegal and, therefore, not really solvable through national and international law (ICHRP 2002).”¹²⁷

Many of these readings comment on the need to change the overall structure of the garment industry to make it more sustainable for the environment and more ethical for its workers. However, in *Labelling Fashion Markets*, Aspers argues that it is better to have consumers pay an additional amount of money when they purchase clothes that goes directly to the workers who make the garments. This operation puts the idea of sustainability within the context of capitalism and adds itself to the fast fashion industry without making any large changes in production. This author discusses the information gap that consumers have when they look at the price tag of the garments they buy because consumers do not have the capacity to be certain of where their

clothing has come from or how it has been made. As consumers are so overwhelmed with decisions and choices, Asper argues that labeling clothing as ethical or creating code of conducts is not enough. He argues that, “markets are a social construct within society and [that] people need to make their voice heard with money.”¹²⁸ This method contrasts with the idea of changing the entire system of fast fashion through activism and the SSCM.

Methods

Participants

Participants in this study included five current or now retired employees in the fashion industry. Participants included a manager of the sustainability relations department for H&M, a productions assistant manager for a company called Symbol that produced clothes for American Eagle and Dickies, a marketing manager for a sustainability based clothing company called SiiZu, a sales associate from Forever 21, and a sales associate from Abercrombie & Fitch. All participants in this study were volunteers. Interviews were conducted through emails or skype.

Materials

Informed consent forms were used that outlined the interviewing procedures, risk, voluntary participation, availability of counseling services, and the contact information of the researches. The purpose of the study was included in the consent form. The survey questions were open ended and are included in the appendix.¹²⁹ Secondary articles, reports, and papers were used as secondary research.

Design and Procedure

The interviews conducted were semi-structured and with five people who are working or who had worked in the clothing industry on different levels of management. This was a qualitative survey and interviewees were free to elaborate on questions or refuse to answer if

they did not feel comfortable. After each survey participants were asked if they had any questions and thanked for their cooperation in the study.

Findings

Interview Identifiers

Forever 21 Sales Associate	Participant A
Abercrombie & Fitch Sales Associate	Participant B
H&M Sustainability Relations Manager	Participant C
Symbol Productions Assistant Manager	Participant D
SiiZu Marketing Manager	Participant E

A. Production

The two sales associates who had worked at two different clothing outlets, known for their trendy and rapid clothing turnover rate, said similar things to back up research on what exactly characterizes fast fashion. Both Participant A and Participant B spoke of the rapid turnover rate of clothing in their stores. Both participants stated that items in the store would change every two weeks and that their brand had tried to become trendier while they had worked there.

Both participants stated that the shipments would arrive about once every two weeks. Participant B reported that the company had tried to change their brand image and shed their “preppy” style for a collection that had more of a variety of styles.

Participant A stated that their stores never had any back stock of clothes or new sizes when items ran out. They stated that the mannequins and displays were changed every few

weeks and that their company was trying to branch out to men's and plus size sections. Clothing quality was observed as being so poor that when people tried on items the items would often be found with tears in the dressing room because the material "never felt like it was built to last." They stated that while they worked for this clothing company, the quality never seemed to improve and that even "cotton tee shirts felt like holes could be made in a few washes." Participant A emphasized that most people shopping at the company knew that the brand was characterized by its cheap and poorly made clothing so they did not complain when clothes fell apart or easily broke down. This shoddy work is expected, and many customers simply come back to buy more clothes when theirs become unwearable or unpopular. Participant A felt that globalization seems to increase that spread of fashion, however they compared the easy accessibility to clothes now, to clothing that their "parents' generation would keep and keep mending". Clothing seems to have become a commodity with planned obsolescence. There didn't seem to be any push for sustainable practices in either store, and both had been embroiled in a series of scandals over the years.^{130 131}

Participant D oversaw production through checking ordered fabrics, embroidery, overseeing workers, and quality inspections in Symbol, a factory that produces garments (mostly shirts), for two large clothing companies. Symbol got big orders from clothing brands and was responsible for the entire production of the garment. They would order fabrics, check the fabrics for quality, work with sub-contractors, and send clothing out to cutting companies.

Symbol went through many changes due to globalization and the increased practices that define fast fashion. While Participant D worked there, the company became quite big on the production scale and had more than 100-200 pieces for certain designs that later became much larger in quantity. Symbol managed to own a separate cutting and sewing factory due to the large

amount of clothes they were producing. The workers were mostly immigrants (Mexicans and Koreans), and there were no health benefits, a lot of overtime without pay, work on Saturdays without pay, and a “cutthroat environment”.

Participant E stated that they did a lot of planning before the inception of SiiZu. The team from the company spent a year traveling around the world to source for the best fabrics, factories, and suppliers before they became established.

B. Sustainability Programs

Participant C gave very detailed information on programs that have been implemented to have H&M become a more sustainable company, a fact which is further backed by its thorough sustainability report for 2015. Participant C explained many of the innovative and sustainable practices that H&M practiced and how the company had a long history of sustainability. H&M has policies based around the protection of water, energy, and against chemical harm. They also believe in social wages where workers can negotiate a wage that is fair to them, even if it is above the minimum wage. Two initiatives started by H&M were:

1. Garment collection initiative where every store has a recycling box. Customers can bring clothes from any brand and drop them off and the garments are recycled, reused, repurposed, or broken down to different garments.
2. Involving designers to be a part of the sustainability movement from the drawing board. For example, earrings were made of an old denim collection.

In addition, H&M rates its manufacturers so that the factories have approved labor and environmental laws before business can be done with them. Factories have ratings ranging from platinum, gold, silver, etc. Factories receive contracts if they meet high standards and this process encourages factories to try and improve their working conditions. Higher scores mean

more business and the production factories may share 5 year plans to produce clothing for H&M. This method was a good example reiterating how the company worked to try and be mindful of the entire process of their garment manufacturing.

Participant E suggested that their company did their best to minimize their carbon footprint throughout the entire production process. They closely monitor their effects on the environment from the design, choices of fabric, manufacturing factories, and packaging. SiiZu changed their packaging from recyclable polybag to paper packaging to be more environmentally friendly. In addition, SiiZu also donates a portion of their profits to the American Forest to help restore wildlife habitat.

C. Globalization and the Future

Participant C predicted that the garment industry would change due to the push back of consumers and increased garment recycling. With recycling there would be less use of raw materials, such as water and cotton. Instead, there would be more innovation around automation, innovated materials, new or natural chemicals, and more limits on pollutants. They emphasized biodiversity and planetary limits regarding the resources that could be used to make clothing.

Participant B stated that they believed that technology will change the way that clothing is made as less people will want to go to physical stores and will prefer others shop for them or shop online.

Participant A said that change in the garment industry seem to be characterized by the rise of vintage clothing and thrifting. However, they stated that better concepts need to be created so that clothing can be reused more easily.

Symbol eventually went bankrupt and the Participant D stated that a part of the company going out of business had to do with the changes in where they ordered their fabric from. Instead

of ordering fabrics in the USA, the company decided to import fabrics from China which were apparently of poor quality, but much cheaper. In addition, the cutting and sewing process was moved to China as well so most of the production had been changed to overseas.

Participant D felt that the workers were pushed too hard and if the quotas or deadlines were not met they were replaced with someone else. They felt that globalization is increasing because even though shipping costs are high, the cost to pay workers is much cheaper overseas.

Participant E stated that globalization helps SiiZu become more sustainable because they can choose the best source globally while also cutting out the middle man. For a business starting up, instead of being limited to resources nearby they can find the best for their business by searching worldwide. By going directly to the source for their fabrics they can create a stronger relationship with their suppliers. SiiZu obtains their silk fabrics from suppliers in Suzhou which is famous for their silk and they source their organic cotton from a supplier in Japan. They can get reasonable prices from these companies and feel that it is better for their business costs.

Analysis

A. Production

The interviews allowed deeper insight into the sustainable practices of clothing companies and what steps they take into order to become more ethical and sustainable. There are companies that already have strong sustainable and ethical practices in place. However, participants also revealed how much further many of the companies had to go in improving their practice. These interviews seemed to mirror the information provided by the companies themselves. Initial research from outside sources seemed to have pegged H&M as a fast fashion company. However, the interview with the representative and research into their company's webpage provided contradictory information. It is difficult to know how much of a company's

claims are used to cover up other potential problems, but efforts into the direction of a more sustainable and ethical business is an important first step.

The production of the garments of these various companies was similar when looking at similarly sized companies. Outsourcing is a major strength of these large fashion companies such as H&M and Dickies and the information for exactly where resources are obtained from are not made as clear as the smaller companies. The large companies had much higher turnover rates and higher quantities of clothing which is an unsustainable practice even if the clothes are made sustainably simply because of the sheer quantity of textiles.

Participant A observed that the poor clothing quality at Forever 21 was to be expected by customers. Participant A even noted that they would often find ripped or damaged clothing left in the dressing room because of weak material construction. If customers understand that the clothing they buy is cheaply priced because it does not last then they are becoming acclimated to poorly constructed clothing. Consumers then become caught up in a system that continues to push them to buy clothes constantly. This cycle continues to push companies to produce trendy clothes faster than their competitors leading to even faster turnover rates.

B. Sustainability Programs

Only H&M and SiiZu had comprehensive sustainability practices to discuss in the interviews, and they were matched by the information provided on their sustainability report or website. The ideas of recycling and sourcing organically was important because they could talk in depth about the production of their clothing and the efforts that their companies take to minimize their waste and pollution. It is interesting to note that H&M believes that globalization and outsourcing help to bring people out of poverty in other countries where their clothes are made. In contrast, SiiZu holds the belief that sourcing locally is more sustainable. Both have

their merits and their pros and cons. Outsourcing production does allow for a larger variety of resources and labor forces, however the transportation costs and the “out of sight out of mind” mentality that many companies have regarding their sub contracted factories can lead to more costs and unethical treatment of workers. Sourcing locally may limit the amount of choices that a company can make regarding their fabrics and labor force, however it retains jobs within the community and allows for closer relationships between the company and its workers.

C. Globalization and the Future

The ideas that each company’s subject had on globalization varied and personal as well as business suggestions were given. Recycling, reusing, and using biodegradable and organic materials seemed to be the main concepts for a more sustainable future. They were all suggestions that seemed to go against fast fashion, as only good quality garments would be able to be repurposed and reused for a long period. In addition, organic materials that are biodegradable do not cause a buildup of toxins in landfills. The idea of using technology to change the way that garments are created and transported is an important concept that arose, and it is important to note that even with increased technology, the resources that we have are still finite. Therefore, even if we find ways to create new fibers from organic materials the amount of resources used, and not only the amount of waste avoided, would have to be taken into consideration.

Recommendations

A. Production Transparency

Make Sustainability Reports Mandatory

Out of all the methods enacted by the various clothing companies researched, it seemed like transparency and active participation in implementing more sustainable and ethical policies were needed. Without transparency, there is no push to do better, inspiration, or trust between the consumers and the companies. Transparency needs to be more commonplace in the clothing industry so that customers can understand where their clothes are made, how their clothes are made, and the sources and resources that helped to create their clothing. Transparency can be achieved through requiring clothing companies to produce annual sustainability reports with detailed information regarding workers, factory conditions, materials used, suppliers and more. Public reports let the consumer understand what they are buying and helps them become more informed citizens. This information creates more moral consumers who can have a relationship with the brand and the brand in turn will be able to respond more readily to the needs of their customers. In addition, transparency leads to more drive for companies to continue to improve their productions system to become more eco-friendly. Active implementation of various sustainable policies creates new ideas and inventions that can help reduce waste and pollution in this finite world.

Require Manufacturing Information on Tags

Tags can also be put on clothing that not only reveal what country the garment was made in and its materials, but it can also list the amount of energy used to make the garment so people can have a better understanding of the effects of their clothing on the environment. Regulation for these reports can be done by the Federal Trade Commission (FTC), as they already enforce

the Care Labeling Rule “which requires manufacturers and importers to attach care instructions to garments.”¹³² Additionally, the FTC enforces that these tags also reveal, “fiber content, country of origin and manufacturer identity.”¹³³ People are informed about how to care for their clothing, but they should also be more informed about how exactly their clothing was made. If tags could add information on the name of the factory/factories it was produced in, or if the tag could include information on the estimated timeline of the garment, it would drastically change the clothing industry. People would be able to have a closer connection with their clothing and be able to hold companies more responsible for the plight of their factory employees. If these connections were made public, it makes it harder for clothing companies to shift blame away from themselves when workers become involved in accidents that stem from unsafe workplaces, or are mistreated in the workplace. Since the United States of America is such a large consumer of clothing goods, they would inspire other countries to implement the same tag policies and eventually have it become an international policy.

Breakdown the Cost of Clothing

There are already examples of this transparency in clothing manufacturing as seen in companies such as Reformation and SiiZu. Reformation does a very good job of breaking down their environmental costs for each item of their clothing as seen in *Fig. 2*. SiiZu has links on their website that detail who their suppliers are and why SiiZu chose them to work with. These thorough explanations help the consumer feel more connected to their clothing. More information about their clothes means that consumers will be able to compare the sustainability practices of different companies, and pressure them to improve on their methods. Textile waste would be reduced in landfills and overseas and less resources would be wasted on cheap clothing.

B. Global Sustainability Programs

Require Companies to Regulate Their Production Overseas

Globalization plays a large role in the future of fashion and its affects are easily seen in the dispersal of the different areas of production in clothing companies. Clothing companies can search the world for their labor force, facilities, materials, and other resources. Companies can become global as H&M has with its outsourcing of materials. The fact that H&M is a huge global conglomerate compared to the relatively new, small startup SiiZu also plays a role in the means that the companies implement sustainable practices. The larger the company, the more sense it makes for them to be able to outsource their materials as they use such large quantities and produce many items. Companies like Forever 21 and Abercrombie & Fitch who have the money and means to implement more sustainable policies, but do not, are put in sharp contrast against other similar companies such as H&M. Policies could be put into place that limit the amount of pollutants that a company produces even if the pollution is done overseas. These policies would be difficult to implement and regulate, however moving the cost of production in the form of environmental damage to other countries is just a way to keep the problems out of sight. H&M does this in an efficient manner by ranking their factories before doing business with them. This ranking system encourages the factories themselves to work toward safer and more ethical workplaces.

Implement the Sustainability Supply Chain Model

Pollution does not acknowledge political boundaries, and sustainability should be worked into the business models for clothing companies. The sustainability supply chain model is a good example of reducing waste throughout the entire process of garment production. If larger companies have limits on the amount of pollution that they can release, it would push them to

invent more efficient pathways of production and stop some of the more unsustainable manufacturing practices. Companies can implement sustainability practices in their manufacturing process by using less water intensive methods, using nontoxic dyes and other chemicals, and using biodegradable packaging. Companies can also promise to adhere to a code of conduct and agree to be graded by an independent entity, thus ensuring their commitment to ethical practices.

Shorten the Turnover Rate

Another way to eliminate waste in the production of clothing would be to shorten the turnover rate of new clothes. Instead of having new clothes come out every two weeks, new clothing lines can be created every month, or two months, or perhaps every season as they used to. Simply having such a rapid turnover rate of clothing leads to trendy items that may not be something that a consumer will ever wear again after a month or so. Consumers then dispose of their clothing and purchase more, adding to the high levels of textile waste rotting in landfills. Having a slower production rate of clothing would also cut down the cost of transportation that it takes to continually transport clothing to stores. In addition, consumers would be able to take the time to invest in pieces that they plan to wear for a long time instead of going shopping every two weeks simply because new items are in store. Reducing the turnover rate of clothes would slow down globalization regarding the rapid influx of new trends in the clothing industry.

C. Management in the Industry

Create an Independent Regulation System for Garments

Some type of independent regulation system like the FTC should be created for global regulation of garment items and the suggestion that clothing companies have an environmental sector. H&M's strategy of placing the Head of Sustainability right underneath the CEO helps to

make it easier for sustainable practices to be put into place and for suggestions to be heard. In addition, collaborating with various environmental groups and trade unions helps to keep their company more accountable. Changes in management can help to create clothing companies that are more sustainable and ethical in production and disposal of clothing. All garment companies should be recommended to have a sustainability sector in their management or have environmental expert within their decision-making committee. This advisory board would allow the companies to have information on the environmental effects of their manufacturing and allow somebody who knows how the company works to give advice on improving sustainability. Integrating a sustainability board of some kind would lead to more sustainable and ethical practices in the entire lifecycle of clothing. Recommendations could be made involving the production of clothing, but also in the disposal and recycling of garments as well. Companies would be able to see that it can be more beneficial to have better quality clothing that lasts longer and is better for the environment.

Conclusion

The brands researched and interviewed here are a snapshot of the garment industry today and reveal that while companies are trying to become more sustainable, the process is slow going. Many of the companies are becoming more sustainable as consumers are realizing the effects that garment production can have on the environment whether it be through the production, usage, or disposal. Fast fashion is a very convenient and dangerous trend that encourages a wastefulness that we cannot afford in the long run. Companies who only want to make a profit do so very well on cheap production of goods, but such a process needs to be slowed down and the costs for production cannot keep being moved down the production chain to those most vulnerable. The recommended sustainable and ethical suggestions such as grading

factories for safety and workers' rights, reducing harmful production practices, lessening the turnover rate of clothing, requiring sustainability reports, adding more information to clothing tags, using more sustainable packaging, sourcing sustainably, and adding an environmental sector to management all lead toward a garment industry that is more efficient and less wasteful. Globalization has led to a much smaller world in terms of resources and trade. It is important to establish international practices that reduce the waste of resources and the pollution produced by clothing manufacturers. The future seems to be leading in two directions, one where we use all the resources we can to make large sums of money, or one where we slow down and become more connected with the items that we make, wear, and waste.

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¹²⁰ Massey, "What Not to Wear."
¹²¹ Morgan and Birtwistle, "An Investigation of Young Fashion Consumers' Disposal Habits."
¹²² Micheletti and Stolle, "Mobilizing Consumers to Take Responsibility for Global Social Justice."
¹²³ Ibid.
¹²⁴ Ibid.
¹²⁵ Ibid.
¹²⁶ Ibid.
¹²⁷ Ibid.
¹²⁸ Aspers, "Labelling Fashion Markets."
¹²⁹ See Appendix 1.
¹³⁰ Grochala, Kelly, "Intellectual Property Law: Failing the Fashion Industry and Why the "Innovative Design Protection Act" Should be Passed" (2014). Law School Student Scholarship. Paper 133.
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Appendices

1) Interview Questions

1. What is your name?
2. How long have you worked at X company?
3. What is your job?
4. Does your company have any sustainability policies or campaigns?
5. Have there been any changes in your company's sustainability policies?
6. What have been the biggest changes in your company in the last 10 years?
7. What is your opinion on the globalization of the garment industry?
8. What changes do you see happening currently or in the future within the garment industry?