The Sustainable Future of the Fashion Industry

Zhanna Kutsenkova
Dominican University of California

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Do you know who made your clothes?
How were they made?
Where they were made?
Probably not.
What is wrong with our fashion industry?

I. Rabid consumerism and globalization -- the obsession with having the latest trends
II. Suppliers and consumers have become more reliant on speed and low-cost

III. Exploitation of workers
IV. A damaged ecosystem
V. Depletion of natural resources
VI. Increasing textile waste
R1: What exactly is sustainable fashion and what role does it play in the sustainability movement?

R2: What are the main differences between mainstream, “fast fashion” and sustainable fashion?

R3: What are the key benefits of sustainable fashion?

R4: What are the facets of a sustainable fashion company from a corporate standpoint?

R5: What marketing techniques do companies use to attract new customers?

R6: Is there a connection between consumers who subscribe to environmental activism and those who support and purchase sustainable fashion?
Connected Subjects

Environmental activism
Poverty alleviation
Worker’s rights
Women’s rights
Globalization
“Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of current generations without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”
Sustainable fashion implies ethics, durability and the reuse of products.

A single definition of sustainable fashion is difficult to pinpoint as there is no current industry standard.
The concept of sustainable fashion encompasses a variety of terms such as:

**Organic**

**Green**

**Fair trade**

**Sustainable**

**Slow**

**Eco**
The goal of the sustainable fashion movement is to massively **slow down production** and **consumption of garments** on the global scale.

- **Replacement** of harmful chemicals with environmentally friendly materials
- **Reduction** of waste and resource consumption through apparel recycling
How can we encourage the growth of sustainable fashion?
1. Shift consumers' mindsets from quantity to quality by encouraging people to buy high-quality items less often.
2. Facilitate production that does not exploit natural and human resources to expedite manufacturing speed.
3. Use consumption to entail a longer product lifespan from manufacturing to discarding.
How are designers and companies responding?
● Emergence of media campaigns & sustainable fashion companies
● Sustainable fashion weeks
● Stella McCartney & Louis Vuitton
● H&M, Levi’s & Muji
Attracting Consumers
Consumers have become concerned with the social consequences of their purchases.

I. Human rights in factories

II. Sweatshop labor
Interviews of Sustainable Fashion Consumers

- The need for self-esteem was fulfilled through two chains: comfort and looking good.
- Sustainable clothing needed to last multiple seasons in both durability and style.
- Value in use in sustainable fashion therefore has both physical and psychological benefits that help the consumers feel better about themselves.
Self-Expression & Purchasing Values

- The participants referred to self-expression as being able to voice their personality, values and opinions through their clothing. Buying clothes made from natural materials was considered as one of the smallest things that they can do to help the environment.
Sustainable Marketing

- There has been little research pertaining to sustainable fashion marketing.
- Brand transparency is crucial so that consumers understand where their clothes are being made and what materials are being used to create them.
- Explicit information about environmentally friendly products must be available.
Gaps in Research

- Understanding of sustainable vs. non-sustainable fashion consumers
- Sustainable fashion’s role in the fashion industry
- How can a company become “sustainable?”
Is change realistic?

91% of millennial consumers are willing to give an ethical brand a try, or change their brand loyalty if their sustainability, price, and quality are comparable (1-3% more if it meant the difference between extreme poverty & a living wage)

Technology is available (communication, accountability, & transparency down the supply chain)

Governments (have the ability to enforce change, but need demand)

Consumers are most important stakeholders
How can we become more sustainable?

- Take care of your clothes (repair & wash well)
- Minimize your wardrobe (recycle always, textiles are typically 100% recyclable)
- Recycle, reuse, thrift
- Purchase well-made, durable clothing
- Support (vote!) with your $