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Ritch, Elaine L.

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Sustainable fashion marketing: Green or Greenwash?

Elaine L Ritch
School *for* Business and Society
Glasgow Caledonian University

Abstract

The marketing of fashion increasingly acknowledges the currency of sustainability as providing a competitive advantage. Arguably, sustainability is increasingly important and has become a mainstay of societal discourse; however, oftentimes fashion-retailers and brands are accused of superficially addressing sustainability rather than integrating sustainable principles into all operational aspects. This chapter will examine critical perspectives of marketing fashion sustainability, including authenticity and the perceived appropriateness of sustainable activity, to question whether fast-fashion can ever be considered sustainable, given the premise of this model is of accelerated fashion-production, consumption and ultimately disposal. This chapter examines the above themes, beginning with the role of fashion-marketing as enticing unsustainability and the current stagnation of locked-in practice that stifles the progression of fashion sustainability, before concluding with examples of authentic sustainable fashion marketing.

Introduction

The topicality for sustainability is ever present within societal discourse, and with fears that there remains limited time to halt and reverse the climate-crisis (Lucas, 2021), sustainability is a concept being addressed by fashion-retailers, as well as fashion-consumers. As fashion is the second largest global polluting industry (United Nations, 2020), current fashion brands and retailers face criticism for significant contributions to carbon-emissions, as well as encouraging notions of disposability (Davis, 2020). Simply put: the fast-fashion business-model has led to decreasing fashion-production costs, by allegedly exploiting workers in the supply-chain and poor environmental stewardship (Summer, 2020), culminating in encouraging planned obsolescence through adopting manipulative marketing tactics (Davis, 2020; Ritch, 2020; Ritch, 2016). This very premise excludes concern for the climate-crisis which sits at odds with consumers growing concern for sustainability, especially for younger consumers who are adapting their lifestyles accordingly (Cairns, Ritch and Bereziat, 2021).

Research has exposed the complexity of younger consumers in aligning fashion-consumption with their climate-crisis concerns (Cairns et al., 2019), and this represents an area where fashion-marketing intersects with creativity, with opportunities to innovate with new models that are responsive to the climate-crisis, yet still provide fashion satisfaction. Currently, fashion brands and retailers address sustainability superficially, passing responsibility onto consumers with advice for responsible disposal, rather than implementing sustainability within sourcing or production (Bromley, 2016). This lack of responsiveness has been found to lead younger consumers to believe that they must choose to either follow fashion or be sustainable, as the fast-fashion industry does not provide a pathway to enable both (Cairns et al., 2021; McLean, Ritch and Dodd, 2021). Kale (2021) refers to a '*dichotomy within Generation-Z'* that, on the one hand represents the frequent impulsive consumption of fast-fashion, and on the other a socially conscious cohort who prioritise and vocalise their concern for sustainability. Consequently, the fashion industry is failing to take responsibly to advance the sustainable-fashion agenda and provide accountable transparency for the consequences of fashion fashion-production and consumption.

This chapter will examine critical perspectives of marketing fashion sustainability, including authenticity and the perceived appropriateness of sustainable activity, to question whether fast-fashion can ever be considered sustainable, given the premise of this model is of accelerated fashion-production, consumption and ultimately disposal. The chapter questions whether fashion-marketing has misjudged current commodity discourse by exploring the trajectory of marketing purpose to better understand the

evolution of fast-fashion marketing practice, particularly as this is where blame is purported. However, with growing sustainability discourse and concern for the climate crisis, increasingly consumers are challenging these messages and calling out practice that is considered greenwashing. Digital marketing platforms may offer instant and targeted opportunities to encourage consumption, yet consumers can interject to alter this discourse. This chapter examines the above themes, beginning with the role of fashion-marketing as enticing unsustainability and the current stagnation of locked-in practice that stifles the progression of fashion sustainability, before concluding with examples of authentic sustainable fashion marketing.

Well, the blame lies with fashion-marketing…..

The purpose of fashion-marketing is to ignite desire through exposure of the garment, styled to portray a lifestyle that will capture consumer attention (Easey, 2009). Fashion brands and retailers identify and respond to consumers' desires, needs and wants, by constructing a cohesive message that aligns with the mission and purpose of the organisation (Easey, 2009). Within competitive commercial markets, the priority is for businesses to generate profits and increase market-share (Easey, 2009). As a consumption commodity, fashion is imbued with emotive aspects, and unlike other commodity contexts, consumption is a consequence of desire rather than utilitarian need (Workman and Studak, 2006). Fashion signifies self and status (Bannister and Hogg 2007), depicting lifestyle (Atik and Firat, 2013), and provides a sense of belonging in wider society (Piamphongsant and Mandhachitara, 2008). Brand image is communicated through fashion-marketing, enabling image transfer from brand to the consumer (Gutman and Mills, 1982), often resulting in hedonic and pleasure inducing experiences (Di Benedetto, 2017). What all of this indicates, is that fashion-consumption is intrinsic: self-focused, and used to communicate self to others. Fashion marketing, therefore, focuses on consumer-centric attributes that are emotionally bound: how the consumer will look, how others will evaluate them, and how they will feel wearing fashion, all of which signifies lifestyle and belonging. Consequently, fashion-consumption emulates high involvement to actively seek styles that are aesthetically pleasing (Wagner, 1999) and provide personal satisfaction (O'Cass and Choy, 2008). In contrast, sustainability becomes a secondary extrinsic consideration, less personal, requiring a collective rather than individual response, and presents as less immediate, particularly as sustainability goals often project into the future and are not focal to everyday experiences in developed countries. This abstraction of sustainability as a concept removes individual agency to assume responsibility to mitigate unsustainable behaviours (Cairns et al., 2021; Ritch and Brownlie, 2016), as the consequences are not as acutely experienced in western lifeworlds. Also, as consumers are not involved in production decisions, there is uncertainty as to how fashion impacts sustainability, especially when this is not addressed in marketing.

While fashion-marketing as inducing hedonism has not changed, the acceleration of fashion-production, and marketing to encourage impulse consumption, undermines sustainability. Fashion-marketing seeks to encourage repeat purchases, through appealing to consumer sentiment and utilising a variety of techniques and activities through branding, pricing, distribution, and publicity (Keegan, Ritch and Siddiqui, 2021). Fashion retailing is highly competitive on a global platform and the expansion to online retailing has intensified rivalry (Nagar, 2016). In particular, fashion-retailers' presence on social media and expanding retailing activities through mobile applications has been found to use a number of tactics that encourage frequent impulse consumption (Keegan et al., 2021). These tactics combine branding, desire, and emotive elements: internal cues that stimulate hedonism (Keegan et al., 2021), along with practical elements: external cues, such as free delivery and promotions (Keegan et al., 2021). The ability to constantly notify consumers through mobile applications increases consciousness for the brand (Keegan et al., 2021) and instantly communicates marketing messages, from the availability of new fashion with limited stock or promotions that are often time bound (Niinimäki et al., 2020); collectively this instigates a sense of urgency through passive actions of scrolling, adding to the basket, and even payment can be deferred or 'sliced' into affordable segments with interest free credit options more easily available (Keegan et al., 2021). These activities activate immediacy at a personal level, encouraging frequent compulsive consumption, that leads to planned obsolescence. Sustainability becomes an afterthought, if considered at all; research has shown that consumers separate their

responsibility for sustainability from their consumption practice as they feel overwhelmed by the scale of the issues (Cairns et al., 2021; McLean et al., 2021).

Influencing fashion practice

Harnessing technology to accentuate fashion-marketing also manipulates engagement through hedonistic and emotive tactics related to lifestyle and belonging, creating multi-sensory fantasy driven lifestyles that depict 'the good life' to encourage consumption (Hirschman and Holbrook, 1982). Social media offers celebrities and influencers a platform to connect with an audience (Kishiya, 2018;) and brands have noted their ability to engage consumers with effective persuasion abilities (McCormick, 2016). Statista (2021) valued the global Instagram influencer market at 2.3 billion USD in 2020, and brands have recognised social media as an avenue for cultivating a desirable lifestyle that promotes fashion as an integral aspect of status and self-worth, advocating image transfer from brand to consumer (Gutman and Mills, 1982). This is an attractive marketing message, particularly for evoking fashion involvement, which has led to 'micro trends' being promoted on social media through influencers and celebrities (Bain, 2021). Attractive fashion-marketing is illustrated within the communication the fast-fashion online retailer 'Shein'. By July 2021, the Shein mobile application was downloaded by 17.5 million users (de Ferrer, 2021). Shein demonstrate an abundance of choice and accelerated fashion-production with around 6000,000 products available for purchase on their website, and with a turnaround of 25 days, only six per cent remains available for more than 90 days. This exacerbates a level of urgency to purchase fashion while it remains available (Niinimäki et al., 2020). Consumption is encouraged though utilising social media for fashion marketing, particularly Instagram and TikTok, mainly through reality TV personalities (Jones, 2021). What this means is that there is constant stream of new imagery promoting new styles to consumers, coupled with other manipulative marketing tactics of push notifications and promotional incentives. A feature of social media fashion-marketing are the #SHEINHAUL videos, where the influencers unpack and try on large quantities of fashion garments and accessories, either purchased from, or gifted by, Shein (Bain, 2021; de Ferrer, 2021). It could be argued that this encourages more frequent wardrobe turnovers as consumers emulate the lifestyles of influencers, keen to participate in 'the good life'. This could also have led to generation-Z consumers' reluctance to be seen twice in the same outfit, a phenomenon that has been noted in recent research (Cairns et al., 2021; Kale, 2021; McLean et al., 2021). This sets the tone for socially normalised fashion-consumption behaviours, whereby sustainability practice becomes a niche position.

Advocating consumer demand: The fast-fashion conundrum

All of the above reduces cognitive processing to encourage impulsive behaviours (Keegan et al., 2021). Underpinning frequent impulsive fashion-consumption is low pricing. From this emerges a conundrum: inexpensive pricing and marketing tactics encourage frequent impulsive consumption, and therefore fashion-retailers compete to appeal through those factors. Subsequently, consumers pricing threshold has reduced how much they are willing to pay for fashion (Ritch, 2020). Arguably, consumers do not have access to free choice within this market (Adger, Arnell and Tompkins, 2005), which is framed within preferential assumptions of low pricing and rapid new fashion that do not enable space for sustainable-fashion models (Di Benedetto, 2017). As described above, young consumers feel that they have to choose between following fashion and being sustainable because they are aware of the impact fast-fashion-production has on the environment, along with allegations of garment-worker exploitation (Cairns et al., 2021; McLean et al., 2021), yet are locked-in by socially constructed fashion-practice, including being seen in the latest styles as directed by fast-fashion-retailers (Di Benedetto, 2017). It is not clear if this self-perpetuating cycle is a response of consumer demand for new fashion or perpetual fashion-marketing enticing consumer engagement. However, what is clear is that consumers are locked into a conundrum that sits at odds with their concern for the climate-crisis and are looking to the fashion industry for support on how to avoid contributing to the climate-crisis.

In with the new, out with the old

Decreasing pricing leads to lowering the involvement of fashion-consumption (Faber, O'Guinn and Krych, 1987), despite fashion pertaining to a higher involvement. This means that inexpensive fashion incurs notions of disposability: it is easily accessible, reducing expectations for longevity and constantly encouraging new consumption (Jones, 2021). Moreover, in order to cut fashion-production costs, materials are thinner, and construction is less careful, and garments are not made to be worn more than ten times (Morgan and Birtwistle, 2009), limiting wearability and making disposal to landfill more likely. The desire to repair clothing to increase the lifespan is dismissed when new consumption is readily available and affordable. It is this very process that contributes to the climate-crisis, the overabundance of fashion-production with a limited lifespan is often disposed to landfill. It is this aspect of fashion-practice that is overlooked by fashion producers, retailers, and marketers in their efforts to be sustainable; change is unlikely as rapid product obsolescence is highly profitable (Use.Space, 2020). While landfill may push garments no longer wanted out of sight, they continue to exist on the planet, emitting carbon that contributes to the climate-crisis. Everything that has ever been disposed of globally, that does not decompose, still exists. A BBC TV programme in 2020 examined three landfill sites, from the 1900's, the 1960's and the current day, illustrating the growth of what society sends to landfill over the last century. Within the 1960's landfill, clothing was found, still in perfect condition, despite laying for fifty decades in the landfill site. Current landfill included a significant volume of fast-fashion: easily accessed, replaced and no longer desired. This illustrates that fashion does not decompose in landfill; it may be out of sight, but the consequences will continue to threaten humanity for future generations. It does not have to be this way, and while fashion-marketing has been blamed for encouraging frequent consumption as characterised within planned obsolescence, fashion-marketing can fashion new sustainable attributes. As Prothero and Fitchett (2000: 49) advocate '*commodities are not defined by their material or utilitarian qualities but by the very act of representing this material in a manner consistent with a commodity discourse'*. Given this societal construction, fashion and fashion-marketing could therefore reconstruct this discourse to encompass sustainability (Prothero and Fitchett, 2000). Arguably, if the fashion industry continues to neglect consumer concern for the climate-crisis, reputational damage is likely.

Marketing sustainability

To address this, understanding the progression of marketing must be considered. Table 1 below replicates Kotler, Hermawan, and Setiawan's (2010) conceptualisation of marketing as advancing from being product centric to addressing consumer sentiments and now focussing on wider social and environmental concerns. While Marketing 1.0 represents fashion-marketing as focusing on the design and style, Marketing 2.0 focuses on consumer centricity, anticipating and encouraging desire, as perpetrated by fast-fashion marketing, but this does not reflect social advances, including discourse around sustainability. The seminal conceptualisation of sustainability was proposed by the World Commission on Environment and Development in 1987 within the Brundtland Report 'Our Common Future as '*development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs'*. This framework recognises that the economy, the environment and the welfare of society are interwoven, each mutually dependent on providing for '*the needs of the present'* as well as '*future generations'* needs. Consequently, sustainability could enable the fashion industry to address both the environmental impact and responsibility to those working in the supply-chain to create new tenets of value. Kotler harnesses the seminal conceptualisation of sustainability to define sustainability marketing as organisations '*meeting the needs of its present consumers without compromising the ability of future generations to fulfil their own needs'.* Thus, the objective to '*make the world a better place'* as captured within marketing 3.0 has the potential to engage with consumers '*mind heart and spirit'* and should be integral to "*corporate mission, vison and values'*.

<Insert Tabe 1 here>

Table 1: Marketing progression in response to consumer society

	Marketing 1.0 Product centric marketing	Marketing 2.0 Consumer orientated marketing	Marketing 3.0 Values-driven marketing
Objective	Sell product	Satisfy and retain consumers	Make the world a better place
Enabling forces	Industrial revolution	Information technology	New wave technology
How companies see the market	Mass buyers with physical needs	Smarter consumers with mind and heart	Whole consumers with mind, heart, and spirit
Key marketing concept	Product development	Differentiation	Values
Company marketing guidelines	Product specification	Corporate and product positioning	Corporate mission, vision, and values
Value propositions	Functional	Functional and emotional	Functional, emotional, and spiritual
Interaction with consumers	One-to-many transaction	One-to-one relationship	Many-to-many collaboration

(Kotler, Hermawan and Setiawan, 2010: 6)

Kotler et al. (2021) have since acknowledged technological advances as progressing marketing with Marketing 4.0 acknowledging hybrids or the physical and digital marketplace and Marketing 5.0: '*Technology for humanity'* recognising social media, omnichannel communications, artificial intelligence, and augmented reality. This reflects changes in market structures, technological development, and the proliferation of information in wider society, including awareness of the climate-crisis. Kotler et al. (2021) recognise that technologies can successfully replicate the objectives, key marketing concepts and interactions with consumers of Marketing 1.0; 2.0 and 3.0; arguably Marketing 4.0 has encouraged frequent impulsive consumption by collecting data to understand and predict consumer behaviour. Yet Marketing 5.0 is shaping discourse around sustainability as being the responsibility of brands, retailers and consumers, and consumers are increasingly calling out those who fail to recognise the severity of the climate-crisis. As will be examined next, fashion-marketing can communicate responsively by educating and assuring consumers of sustainability in fashion production and consumption. It can also, however, provide a platform for consumer discontent, as increased awareness and frustration at the lack of response from the fashion industry is leading to consumers bypassing fashion-retailers to control their responsibility for sustainability.

Implementing sustainability: a green filter

The response of fast-fashion-retailers in addressing sustainability neglects the impact of fashion-production. Most fast-fashion-retailers pass responsibility for sustainability to the consumer by providing information on how to redistribute clothes in second-hand markets and advocating donations to charity shops. To support this, some fast-fashion-retailers encourage consumers to return unwanted garments to the store, rewarding consumers with a voucher for further consumption. There are assumptions these donated garments are recycled into new fashion, as illustrated by H&M's marketing messages below:

"Shred it into fibres and stitch into something new"

"Let's tear your jeans into pieces and make new jeans out of them."

(Matteis and Argo, 2018)

While this approach enables consumers to prioritise consumer centric desires and maintain socially normalised modes of consumption, it is problematic on two accounts: firstly, it does not address over-consumption, it fuels planned obsolescence, albeit with a caveat of virtuousness as the disposal act has been framed as sustainable and responsible. Compounding concern, are reports that H&M only downcycle approximately 35 per cent of garments for industrial padding, as opposed to developing new garments (Changing Markets Foundation, 2021). Within H&M's sustainability report, it was acknowledged that only 0.7 per cent of garments on sale were made from recycled fibres (Matteis and Argo, 2018), challenging the integrity of the marketing messages presented above. Consequently, H&M are misrepresenting what constitutes sustainable-fashion-production and continuing to encourage frequent impulsive consumption.

Along with the increased volume of consumption is an escalation of fashion donated to charity shops in the UK which is not matched by the number of consumers participating in purchasing from redistribution markets (Siddiqui, Ritch and Canning, 2021). To manage this abundance of donated garments, UK charities send clothing overseas: the volume was captured when Brexit border delays prevented exports (Partington, 2019). While this volume of unwanted clothing alleviates the problem of over-consumption in the UK, it displaces local markets overseas; oftentimes sellers in African markets who buy second-hand garments from western countries have found the quality poorer, and as they are unable to sell the clothes, the garments are dumped and set alight (Matteis and Argo, 2018), an act that western brands have also been accused of to manage unwanted stock (Seigle, 2018). Consumer waste is also sent overseas, another act of indignation towards developing countries, which facilitate the low fashion-production costs through alleged exploitation of garment-workers and where poor environmental stewardship is experienced, polluting water and soil resources. The inability of western countries, such as the UK, to manage post-consumption, especially fashion, illustrates that consumption is out of control. While his represents an area where sustainable-fashion marketing can provide support, the focus must be on transparency and authenticity; additionally, production practices require acknowledgment, yet this is often concealed to consumers to avoid condemnation. What is revealed can be described as greenwashing, as discussed next.

Greenwashing

Although some fast-fashion-retailers have addressed sustainable-fashion-production, this has been limited. Over a decade ago H&M developed a conscious collection made from materials which are at least fifty per cent sustainable, such as organic cotton or recycled polyester (H&M); yet, there are another 12-16 collections that do not address sustainability (Remy, Spellman and Swartz, 2016). Similarly, Primark, who have led on reducing price points over the last two decades, recently issued a statement outlining their ambitious approach (Morgan and Fish, 2021). 'Primark Cares' pledges, over the next ten-years, to extend the durability of garments made from recycled materials, reduce single-use-plastic packaging and cut carbon-emissions. While this is applaudable from many perspectives, particularly as Primark as working with the Ellen MacArthur Foundation and WRAP (UK Waste & Resources Action Programme) for guidance, a ten-year programme does not respond to the immediacy of halting irreversible damage to the planet (Lucas, 2021); especially when it is expected that over 92 million tonnes of garments are expected to be purchased by 2030 (UK Parliament, 2019). Other fast-fashion-retailers, such a Boohoo are also examining how to make fashion '*as sustainable as possible'* but acknowledge the complexities of implementing sustainability into production will take time to determine (Lyttle, CEO Boohoo, cited in BBC News 2021).

However, those claims also appear lacking in substance. A number of Non-Government Organisations collectively examined the authenticity of sustainability claims made by fashion brands within the '*Synthetics Anonymous: Fashion Brands' Addiction to Fossil Fuels'* report (Changing Markets Foundation, 2021). Of the 4,000 garments labelled as addressing sustainability (recycled materials; eco-friendly; low-impact; sustainable) that were submitted by 46 brands, 59 per cent failed to meet the Competition and Markets Authority's guidelines for avoiding greenwashing (Changing Markets Foundation, 2021). Greenwashing refers to unsubstantiated claims that mislead consumers of sustainable credentials (Hitti, 2019). In particular, H&M failed on 96 per cent of their sustainability claims (Changing Markets Foundation, 2021) and this is not the first time that H&M have been challenged over misleading consumers: in 2019 the Norwegian Consumer Authority claimed that H&M breached marketing laws with insufficient information to support their sustainability claims (Remington, 2019). While addressing aspects of sustainability may offer fashion consumers an opportunity to include aspects of sustainability (de Brito et al. 2008), this does not acknowledge over-consumption as the main problem: we cannot buy our way out of the climate-crisis (Kemper and Ballantine, 2019), even if our consumption consists of sustainably produced fashion. The rapid production of fast-fashion production still encourages the consumption of garments that have limited wearability and are disposed to landfill, despite the potential for reclaiming fibres for recycling and downcycling. This is not addressed by the fast-fashion industry, who continue to encourage planned obsolescence through fashion marketing; rather it continues to hold a veil over sustainability implications when there are opportunities to create new sustainable values.

Consumer condemnation

The fashion industry has avoided uncomfortable conversations over the last few decades, especially with accusations of exploiting garment-workers in factories in developing countries to reduce fashion-production costs (Bramley, 2021); despite consumer discomfort, this has not impeded on sales (Kale, 2021), and fashion brands and retailers have not implemented transparency in production that would illustrate accountability. Younger consumers are beginning to question authenticity and the accuracy of sustainability claims, which could be a consequence of a cohort more educated in issues around sustainability and more concerned for the future of the planet. This has led to consumers utilising social media platforms to call into question what is perceived as unsustainable behaviour. For example, Pretty Little Thing (UK online fast-fashion retailer) experienced a backlash on social media when garments were reduced to eight pence (UK Sterling), with users expressing condemnation of the fast-fashion business model (Blackhall, 2020). Similarly, social media influencers have been criticised on YouTube for showing fashion hauls from online fast-fashion-retailers (YouTube a and b), with comments calling for them take more responsibility for the influence they have; for example, one comment stated:

> '*Hope you take this as constructive criticism rather than hate - buying countless amounts of clothes you will 'wear for the season' is so damaging for the planet and so out of touch in our current climate. Please take a sec [sic] and think about what supporting these brands is doing to their staff and take some moral responsibility'. (YouTube b)*

Research has found that intrinsic hedonistic emotions are prioritised over extrinsic concern for sustainability (Cairns et al., 2021; Ritch and Brownlie, 2016), and with marketing tactics encouraging frequent impulsive consumption, along with influencers promoting large fashion-consumption hauls, current practice is endorsed by the fashion industry and wider society. This is unsurprising, as fashion-marketing portrays intrinsic consumer-centric attributes of desire, lifestyle and hedonism that embody the 'good life'. For fast-fashion to be sustainable requires an overhaul of the fashion-production model; the current model of acerated fashion-production made from scarce resources and marketed through manipulative tactics cannot be sustainable, and any effort to portray this as sustainable is simply greenwashing (Bain, 2021; Bromley, 2021). Research illustrates that while consumer perception of brands increases when acknowledging sustainability, there is also awareness that this constitutes marketing that could be considered opportunistic (Kim and Wha Oh, 2020), as evidenced above. McColl and Ritch (2019) found that Generation-Z were sceptical of sustainability messages and

inauthentic marketing. This is not surprising when Marketing 5.0 indicates the role of social media, and omnichannel communications as platforms for information exchange, co-created by a myriad of users harnessing 'Technology for humanity', as evident in the YouTube quote above, where a user is commenting on the overconsumption as perpetrating sustainability. It could be argued that fashion-marketers are falling behind marketing trends with outdated communications and the '*dichotomy within Generation-Z'* may reconvene to reject fast-fashion. Passing responsibility onto consumers has already resulted in consumers seeking alternative fashion consumption models, as evident in younger consumers driving redistribution markets, such as Depop and Vinted (online platforms for consumers to buy and sell used fashion) (Kale, 2021; Ritch, 2021). Commercial fashion markets need to reconfigure their business models and lead with authentic fashion marketing that is underpinned by transparency and accountability.

Sustainable Fashion-marketing

While discourse around sustainable marketing is gaining traction, particularly as blame is purported to marketing as stimulating over-consumption, academic research examining sustainable-fashion marketing has not received much attention (Kemper and Ballantine, 2019), as research focuses more on consumer behaviours. Sustainable marketing considers impact more broadly for society rather than focusing on product attributes and commerciality (Kemper and Ballantine, 2019). As such, sustainability includes acknowledgment for society (equal distributions of wealth and reducing poverty), the environment (protection and conservation of natural resources) and the economy (ensuring business remain operational to ensure employment and prosperity) (Kemper and Ballantine, 2019). While sustainable marketing still focuses on engagement and expansion, this does not necessarily mean the consumption of newly produced fashion, it can encourage sustainable lifestyles by endorsing alternative fashion acquisition and practice (Kemper and Ballantine, 2019). This could include redistribution markets, collaborative consumption (i.e. renting or borrowing), repairing and upcycling business models. McColl and Ritch (2019) found that Lush (UK cosmetics retailer) was considered as being socially and environmentally authentic. Lush follows from The Body Shop, which addressed social and environmental concerns in all aspects of the business model and production (Peattie, cited in Kemper and Ballantine, 2019). Both exemplify the potential to address sustainability in production, which can be effectively communicated through marketing.

The fashion lifestyle brand Paragonia addresses production within marketing, such as who made the garments. Marketing leads on style and garment functionality as well as addressing how production is sustainable and what this means for the sustainability agenda. Patagonia's has business model illustrates accountability, transparency and responsibility which can then be communicated in marketing. As an outdoor clothing and equipment company, Patagonia may not represent fast-fashion that provides hedonistic experiences, however, it does promote lifestyle and is synonymous with authentic sustainable marketing. When entering the online store - the brand asks consumers to 'Give a damn' about consumption practice, 'Give again' by passing along products, 'Give back' by donating to a good cause and 'Give knowledge', by passing on information. This is a compelling message that engages with humanity and illustrates the collective responsibility of retailers and consumers for sustainability, as underpinned within Marketing 5.0. Patagonia also captured 'functional, emotional and spiritual' values in a recent advertisement in the New York Times (Figure 3), suggesting consumers "*Don't Buy This Jacket*" as a means to draw attention to over-consumption during the Black Friday sale period and to promote their 'Common Threads' sustainability campaign. In a statement, Patagonia explained their stance:

> *It would be hypocritical for us to work for environmental change without encouraging customers to think before they buy. To reduce environmental damage, we all have to reduce consumption as well as make products in more environmentally sensitive, less harmful ways. It's not hypocrisy for us to address the need to reduce consumption. On the other hand, it's folly to assume that a healthy economy can be based on buying and selling more and more*

> *things people don't need – and it's time for people who believe that's folly to say so.* (Patagonia, 2021).

This approach from Patagonia is in direct contrast to the manipulative marketing applied by fast-fashion brands, which centre upon functional and consumer-centric emotions, such as hedonism. This exemplifies an effort to create a marketing dialogue that is underpinned by authenticity and accountability. That does not mean that the brand does not incorporate hedonism, but through encouraging sustainable behaviours, marketing does not separate sustainability from experiences that represent the good life. For example, marketing focuses on hedonistic experiences of lifestyle sports, such as surfing and snowboarding, and uses imagery of the pleasure gained from the outdoors. This is supported by marketing that encourages consumers to consider environmental protection for this 'playground' of sea and land. Patagonia also has marketing that highlights donations made to grassroots sustainability groups, especially during 'Black Friday' a time synonymous with discounting. Collectively this has a compelling message that has not been diluted by sustainability.

<Insert Figure 1 here>

Figure 1: Patagonia 'Don't buy this jacket'

DON'T BUY THIS JACKET

It's Black Friday, the day in the year retail turns from red to black and starts to make real money. But Black Friday, and the culture of consumption it reflects, puts the economy of natural systems that support all life firmly in the red. We're now using the resources of one-and-a-half planets on our one and only planet.

Because Patagonia wants to be in business for a good long time – and leave a world inhabitable for our kids – we want to do the opposite of every other business today. We ask you to buy less and to reflect before you spend a dime on this jacket or anything else.

Environmental bankruptcy, as with corporate bankruptcy, can happen very slowly, then all of a sudden. This is what we face unless we slow down, then reverse the damage. We're running short on fresh water, topsoil, fisheries, wetlands – all our planet's natural systems and resources that support business, and life, including our own.

The environmental cost of everything we make is astonishing. Consider the R2® Jacket shown, one of our best sellers. To make it required 135 liters of water, enough to meet the daily needs (three glasses a day) of 45 people. Its journey from its origin as 60% recycled polyester to our Reno warehouse generated nearly 20 pounds of carbon dioxide, 24 times the weight of the finished product. This jacket left behind, on its way to Reno, two-thirds its weight in waste.

And this is a 60% recycled polyester jacket, knit and sewn to a high standard; it is exceptionally durable, so you won't have to replace it as often. And when it comes to the end of its useful life we'll take it back to recycle into a product of equal value. But, as is true of all the things we can make and you can buy, this jacket comes with an environmental cost higher than its price.

There is much to be done and plenty for us all to do. Don't buy what you don't need. Think twice before you buy anything. Go to patagonia.com/CommonThreads or scan the QR code below. Take the Common Threads Initiative pledge, and join us in the fifth "R," to reimagine a world where we take only what nature can replace.

COMMON THREADS INITIATIVE

REDUCE
WE make useful gear that lasts a long time
YOU don't buy what you don't need

REPAIR
WE help you repair your Patagonia gear
YOU pledge to fix what's broken

REUSE
WE help find a home for Patagonia gear you no longer need
YOU sell or pass it on*

RECYCLE
WE will take back your Patagonia gear that is worn out
YOU pledge to keep your stuff out of the landfill and incinerator

REIMAGINE
TOGETHER we reimagine a world where we take only what nature can replace

patagonia®
patagonia.com

TAKE THE PLEDGE

*If you sell your used Patagonia product on eBay® and take the Common Threads Initiative pledge, we will co-list your product on patagonia.com for no additional charge.

(Patagonia, 2021)

Conclusion

This chapter has examined fashion-marketing, as a means to communicate a cohesive message of branding. Marketing tactics induce hedonism and encourage impulse consumption of micro-trends, to appeal to desires and needs and provide fashion satisfaction. Growing discourse around sustainability has been recognised by fashion brands and retailers, and marketing has been repositioned to address consumer concerns. This reflects acknowledging societal awareness for the climate-crisis and recognising the requirement to maintain competitiveness and protect profit generation. For fashion brands to remain relevant, responsiveness for the 'fashionabilty' for sustainability is important, especially as younger consumers are increasingly versed in sustainability mechanisms. Yet, this climate aware cohort beginning to question the accuracy of sustainability claims. The same media platforms that promote consumption have been harnessed by consumers to challenge superficial responses from fashion-marketing and recognising that marketing tactics encourage unsustainable consumption practice. With knowledge of the climate-crisis escalating, along with how the fashion-industry perpetrates unsustainability, it is no surprise that consumers are 'calling out' to condemn fashion brands who apply greenwash marketing. What this illustrates is a paradigm shift in consumer perceptions, whereby hedonistic emotions have been replaced by concern for the climate-crisis. The image transfer of marketing to align with consumer value and provide a sense of belonging does not align with current commodity discourse and consumers are co-creating alternative sustainable modules for fashion acquisition. Fashion marketing is regurgitating Marketing 2.0 rather than advancing to Marketing 5.0 which recognises discourse around sustainability as being the responsibility of brands, retailers and consumers. Marketing for humanity recognises that the promotion of a 'good life' focuses on protecting the health of the planet, for current and future generations. We see this in more authentic and transparent marketing from brands such as Patagonia, where examples of recognising the importance of commerciality are intertwined with sustainability, to provide alternative sustainable options. Another phenomenon that is prominent within social media discourse is 'cancel culture': fast-fashion brands should recognise that consumers seek transparency and accountability and utilise marketing to avoid damaging brand reputation; otherwise, fashion brands may find themselves cancelled by social media users.

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