

Secondhand Clothing and the Future of Fashion

Authors : Marike Venter de Villiers, Jessica Ramoshaba

Abstract : In recent years, the fashion industry has been associated with the exploitation of both people and resources. This is largely due to the emergence of the fast fashion concept, which entails rapid and continual style changes where clothes quickly lose their appeal, become out-of-fashion, and are then disposed of. This cycle often entails appalling working conditions in sweatshops with low wages, child labor, and a significant amount of textile waste that ends up in landfills. Although the awareness of the negative implications of 'mindless fashion production and consumption' is growing, fast fashion remains to be a popular choice among the youth. This is especially prevalent in South Africa, a poverty-stricken country where a vast number of young adults are unemployed and living in poverty. Despite being in poverty, the celebrity conscious culture and fashion products frequently portrayed on the growing intrusive social media platforms in South Africa pressurizes the consumers to purchase fashion and luxury products. Young adults are therefore more vulnerable to the temptation to purchase fast fashion products. A possible solution to the detrimental effects that the fast fashion industry has on the environment is the revival of the secondhand clothing trend. Although the popularity of secondhand clothing has gained momentum among selected consumer segments, the adoption rate of such remains slow. The main purpose of this study was to explore consumers' perceptions of the secondhand clothing trend and to gain insight into factors that inhibit the adoption of secondhand clothing. This study also aimed to investigate whether consumers are aware of the negative implications of the fast fashion industry and their likelihood to shift their clothing purchases to that of secondhand clothing. By means of a quantitative study, fifty young females were asked to complete a semi-structured questionnaire. The researcher approached females between the ages of 18 and 35 in a face-to-face setting. The results indicated that although they had an awareness of the negative consequences of fast fashion, they lacked detailed insight into the pertinent effects of fast fashion on the environment. Further, a number of factors inhibit their decision to buy from secondhand stores: firstly, the accessibility to the latest trends was not always available in secondhand stores; secondly, the convenience of shopping from a chain store outweighs the inconvenience of searching for and finding a secondhand store; and lastly, they perceived secondhand clothing to pose a hygiene risk. The findings of this study provide fashion marketers, and secondhand clothing stores, with insight into how they can incorporate the secondhand clothing trend into their strategies and marketing campaigns in an attempt to make the fashion industry more sustainable.

Keywords : eco-friendly fashion, fast fashion, secondhand clothing, eco-friendly fashion

Conference Title : ICSRD 2020 : International Conference on Scientific Research and Development

Conference Location : Chicago, United States

Conference Dates : December 12-13, 2020