

The Methods Fast Fashion Retailers Can Use to Adapt to a Changing Consumer Environment - An Analysis

WORDS: 11,202

Abstract

Growing concern around how fast fashion businesses operate, perpetuated by the ongoing climate crisis, means that retailers are now being examined for how well they adapt to sustainable operations. The purpose of this dissertation is to understand how fast fashion retailers can adapt to a changing consumer marketplace where ethical consumption and sustainability is growing in popularity. From previous academic research it can be understood that consumers lack information on ethically produced clothing and footwear, and information provided by fast fashion retailers is often confusing due to greenwashing. This dissertation will examine the main methods used by fast fashion retailers in the processes and sale of fast fashion clothing and footwear. An analysis of haul videos from the UK, taken from the online social media platform YouTube, was conducted to collect data on how social media influencers were promoting clothing and footwear and how consumers were interacting with them. This was supported by open interviews with participants on their views on social media influencers and online shopping behaviors. Surveys on the same subjects were conducted to support the participant interviews. The findings from the research helped to fill the gap in the literature surrounding haul videos. Secondly, it found that social media influencers have a substantial impact over their followers, in terms of spreading information and in purchasing behaviors. This outcome provided evidence for this dissertation to suggest how fast fashion retailers can adapt to the changing consumer environment through the use of social media influencers, using their platforms and fast fashion retailer connections to encourage the change to more sustainable ways of selling.

Research Question

In 2015 the Paris Climate Agreement was signed by the 55 participating nations who produced 55% of the world's greenhouse gas emissions. The agreement stated that the developed countries taking part had to lead the way by setting "economy-wide absolute emissions targets" (United Nations, 2015, p4). This was hoped would hold the increase of global temperatures to 1.5° and would play a part in slowing down the effects of climate change (2015). The fashion industry has played its part in the climate crisis. Europe's clothing accounts for between 2%-10% of the EU's total consumption (Claudio, L. 2007) with only 1% of clothing being recycled into new items (European Parliament Research Service. 2019).

This dissertation aims to understand and analyse how fast fashion businesses can adapt to the changing consumer environment and what measures should be taken to reduce emissions and climate impact. Fast fashion is popular and has grown quickly, especially in the UK fashion market. Many rely on fast fashion clothing and footwear because of the low cost and accessibility, meaning changing how it operates is not a simple task. To help to understand the role fast fashion plays and how it is consumers engage with it, an analysis of UK haul videos on YouTube will be conducted, supported by open participant interviews and surveys. This research will help to understand how consumers connect with fast fashion and how social media influencers (SMIs) act as a communication tool for fast fashion businesses and also help in the spread of information and influencing buying behaviour. This dissertation is important as it provided empirical evidence to understand how SMIs can be used to spread awareness for sustainable and ethical ideas, and how this access to information will allow consumers and businesses to adapt their behaviours.

HOLLY THORP

h.thorp@hotmail.co.uk
07808726702

15 Abbey Walk, HX3 0AJ, West Yorkshire, United Kingdom

PROFILE

I am finishing my final year of my degree studying fashion brand marketing at the University of Huddersfield. For the last four years I have been self employed running my own online clothing and accessories business which I did alongside my degree.

I have recently been nominated for an award for my degree final major project in ethical and considered fashion.

Later this year I will begin my Masters, studying Strategic Communication, Leadership and Sustainability.

EDUCATION

2016 - The University of Huddersfield studying fashion brand marketing BA (hons).

2015-2016 - Bradford College studying Art and Design Access course.
*Completed with full marks and distinction

2012-2014 - Huddersfield New College
A-Levels: Law, Medieval History, English combined language and literature and sociology.

2007-2012 - Brighouse High School
* 11 GCSE's A* - C including maths, English and science.

REFERENCES

The University of Huddersfield

Course Leader: Charlotte Goldthorpe
Email: c.m.goldthorpe@hud.ac.uk

SKILLS

INDESIGN



PREMIER PRO



PHOTOSHOP



SOCIAL MEDIA



TIME MANAGEMENT



I have vast experience in using Adobe software such as inDesign which I am highly proficient using. I understand how to use all social media platforms and how to advertise on those. From working for myself and doing a degree alongside I am excellent at managing my own time. I work better alone than in a group but I am more than happy to work with others.

EXPERIENCE

2015-2019 - Self Employed

I created and run an online clothing and jewellery website for 4 years. Amassing 100k following on social media platforms, being stocked in 5 retail stores around the U.K. and have had products featured in Elle Magazine and Tatler Magazine. I understand how to create a website using any website hosting service, how to gain followers online using a mixture of marketing techniques. I am interested in sustainable business and have taken measures in my own business to implement these measures. Further study from my masters course will help me to understand further.