

A STUDY ON LIMITATIONS AND CHALLENGES IN GARMENT INDUSTRY IN MP

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Abstract-

The textile industry is one of the important industry which contributes to the employment and growth of an economy. It is the second largest employment provider industry after agriculture. The ‘Make in India’ initiative of the Government of India which was launched in 2014, aimed at supporting the industry by accelerating the investment, encouraging innovation, enhancing skill development and protecting intellectual property rights. Apart from taking this initiative the government also has to work upon the challenges that the industry is facing which is obstructing the industry's export earnings, output and ultimately the growth of the economy. The sustainable fashion literature is fragmented across the management discipline, leaving the path to a sustainable fashion future unclear. As of yet, there has been no attempt to bring these insights together, or to more generally explore the question of “what do we know about sustainable fashion and where do we go from here?” The aim of this review paper is to bring together the sustainable fashion field, identifying opportunities for societal impact and further research. What is known about sustainable fashion is constantly evolving with a variety of contributions from multiple fields. The paper aims to provide a representative sample of the state of sustainable fashion in management literature to date, but space limitations make a full exploration of all contributions impossible.

Key Words- Sustainable Fashion, Fragmentation, Limitations, Challenges, Garment Industry in MP.

INTRODUCTION

In the last year, the media spotlight has been firmly cast on the fashion industry. Far from celebrating an industry that represents two percent of the world’s Gross Domestic Product (GDP), and is valued at three trillion US Dollars (Fashion-United, 2018), a critical spotlight has brought into focus a whole host of fashion sustainability ills. Be it unwanted clothes going up in smoke at Burberry, or documentaries such as ‘Fashion’s Dirty Secrets’ the devastating social impact of the world’s fashion industry has been brought into the mainstream, calling into question traditional fashion consumption and production practices. To deal with these issues, sustainable fashion (SF) has emerged as a broad term for clothing and behaviours that are in some way less damaging to people and/or the planet. SF and related practices of ethical fashion, eco-fashion, and slow fashion highlights alternative approaches to fashion and presents a challenge to the rest of the industry by suggesting that ‘fast fashion needs to slow down’ (Dory, 2018). Yet, while the practical climate for SF develops at a rapid pace through an increasing number of start-up accelerators, clothes swapping events, consumer-facing scoring and measurement tools, and civil society organisations, the academic literature has been slow to define and conceptualise SF, despite some notable developments (e.g. Fletcher, 2008; Henninger et al., 2016). It is against this backdrop that this review paper is situated. At present, a limited body of research explores the phenomena of SF beyond the micro-institutional or individual consumer level (Ekström

and Salomonson, 2014; Ertekin and Atik, 2015). Previous literature reviews that have made headway, have focussed on only specific aspects of SF: e.g. supply chains (Karaosman et al., 2016; Köksal et al., 2017; Strähle and Müller, 2017), consumers (Tey et al., 2018) and retailing (Yang et al., 2017). As of yet, these insights have not been systematically brought together and the question of “what do we know about sustainable fashion and where do we go from here?” remains unanswered. At a time when interest in SF as a research domain of vital societal interest is mounting (Johnson et al., 2013; Strähle and Müller, 2017), this paper provides a review which is intentionally provocative and designed to promote further development of the field, both academically and practically. It encourages researchers to connect theory to practice, to ask relevant questions, and to engage with the public to drive a more sustainable future for fashion. This paper makes two important contributions. First, this paper is the first to systematically draw together the different aspects of SF in a cross-disciplinary, holistic and coherent way, building on key scholarship (e.g. Karaosman et al., 2016; Köksal et al., 2017; Yang et al., 2017). Our analysis is not limited to a particular discipline or practice but instead identifies what is known and what is yet to be known about SF across the management discipline. As a result, the paper offers a working definition of SF: the variety of means by which a fashion item or behaviour could be perceived to be more sustainable, including (but not limited to) environmental, social, slow fashion, reuse, recycling, cruelty-free and anti-consumption and production practices. It also offers a conceptual model to aid the reader in integrating SF across different domains. Second, this review serves as a foundation for identifying knowledge gaps and informing managerial decision making in the field. In this respect it considers both the research challenges of sustainable consumption (McDonagh et al., 2011), as well as the incorporation of production into this discourse and what this means for the emergence of ‘Sustainable Consumption & Production (SC&P)’ as a research field (McDonagh et al., 2011).

LITERATURE REVIEW

This paper makes two important contributions. First, this paper is the first to systematically draw together the different aspects of SF in a cross-disciplinary, holistic and coherent way, building on key scholarship (e.g. Karaosman et al., 2016; Köksal et al., 2017; Yang et al., 2017). Our analysis is not limited to a particular discipline or practice but instead identifies what is known and what is yet to be known about SF across the management discipline. As a result, the paper offers a working definition of SF: the variety of means by which a fashion item or behavior could be perceived to be more sustainable, including (but not limited to) environmental, social, slow fashion, reuse, recycling, cruelty-free and anti-consumption and production practices. It also offers a conceptual model to aid the reader in integrating SF across different domains. Second, this review serves as a foundation for identifying knowledge gaps and informing managerial decision making in the field. In this respect it considers both the research challenges of sustainable consumption (McDonagh et al., 2011), as well as the incorporation of production into this discourse and what this means for the emergence of ‘Sustainable Consumption & Production (SC&P)’ as a research field (McDonagh et al., 2011). This paper first discusses the systematic literature review methodology, before defining SF and conceptualizing SF. It then moves on to unpacking two approaches to understanding SF: pragmatic and radical change. The paper concludes with a discussion and future research agenda, before providing concluding remarks and managerial implications. It is against this backdrop that this review paper is situated. At present, a limited body of research explores the phenomena of SF beyond the micro-institutional or individual consumer level (Ekström and Salomonson, 2014; Ertekin and Atik, 2015). Previous literature reviews that have made headway, have focussed on only specific aspects of SF: e.g. supply chains (Karaosman et al., 2016; Köksal et al., 2017; Strähle and Müller, 2017), consumers (Tey et al., 2018) and retailing (Yang et al., 2017). As of yet, these insights have not been systematically brought together and the question of “what do we know about sustainable fashion and where do we go from here?” remains unanswered. At a time when interest in SF as a research domain of vital societal interest is mounting (Johnson et al., 2013; Strähle and Müller, 2017), this paper provides a review which is intentionally provocative and designed to promote further development of

the field, both academically and practically. It encourages researchers to connect theory to practice, to ask relevant questions, and to engage with the public to drive a more sustainable future for fashion.

SUSTAINABLE FASHION: A PRAGMATIC VIEW ON PRODUCTION AND CONSUMPTION

Pragmatic change approaches operate within the DSP around consumption and production (Prothero et al., 2010; McDonagh and Prothero, 2015). In this tradition, there are contributions clustered into supply chain, social retail marketing, and consumer behaviour research streams, which are discussed below.

(i) Supply Chain- Supply chain refers to the movement of raw materials through design, fabrication, and manufacturing to produce a SF product. The supply chain is an integral part of making a product more sustainable (Henninger et al., 2015; Lee, 2017), and thus is a vital field for SF practice, both within small (and micro) firms, as well as large, global multinationals. In this section we look first at the emergent literature on micro-organisations, followed by an exploration of brand owners, finishing with a review of the very limited research into garment manufacturers themselves. The supply chains of micro-organisations, such as the Danish fashion company Noir (Black and Anderson, 2010), are the most common context in this domain as they occupy a unique position; they have sustainability at their core but implement it with considerably fewer resources and structure than more established brands (Caniato et al., 2012; Henninger et al., 2015; Di Benedetto, 2017). Their size has enabled them to develop a culture around sustainability and make more attempts to ensure transparency throughout their supply chains (Caniato et al., 2012; Goworek, 2011; Bouzon and Govindan, 2015; Henninger et al., 2015; Joy and Peña, 2017). Although the size of smaller brands can be advantageous, micro-organisations often lack power and influence in the market (Kogg, 2003; Black and Anderson, 2010; Caniato et al., 2012).

(ii) Social Retail Marketing- The primary question for social retail marketing (SRM) papers is: how can SF be mainstreamed by using traditional retail marketing methods? Some say make it ‘trendy’ (Beard, 2008; Haug and Busch, 2016; Blanchet 2017), while others question if this is the best approach (Winge, 2008). SRM focuses on the actions of the retailers, promoting the idea that SF is achievable through business as usual practices. The key aspects of SRM research fall into four areas: branding, communications, marketing materials, and barriers to brand adoption of SF. First, although important, the advice on SF branding is, at best, conflicted. On the one hand, consumer brand schemas are incredibly important in influencing how consumers perceive the fit between sustainability and the brand (Phau and Ong, 2007; Dabija, 2018; Lee et al., 2012; Kim and Hall, 2015). On the other hand, consumers may be more open to SF by fast fashion brands than previously conceptualised (Hill and Lee, 2015). It follows that different segments need to be approached using different marketing methods to speak to heterogeneous consumer needs (Kim et al., 2013; Bhaduri and Ha-Brookshire, 2015; Lee et al., 2015; Di Benedetto, 2017; Dabija, 2018).

(iii) Consumer Behaviour- A large proportion of the consumer behaviour literature evaluates SF on a micro-level to explore consumer perceptions of SF products and concepts. This section explores these consumer characteristics, as well as drivers and barriers of SF in the context of consumer markets. Focussing first on the characteristics of consumers, a number of studies have found several drivers of SF consumption. It is argued that self-identified sustainable consumers are becoming tired of mindless consumption and desire freedom from the monotony of trends and pressures to consume (Bly et al., 2015; Armstrong et al., 2016b). Some consumers are even beginning to avoid fast fashion entirely for reasons including poor product quality, the desire to support local brands, and the lack of creativity and originality in clothing choices (Kim et al., 2013). The desire to express oneself through cultivating personal style and generally being ‘different’ from others is a recurring theme in the literature (Gam, 2011; Kim et al., 2013; Han and Chung, 2014; Bly et al., 2015; Cho et al., 2015; Lundblad and Davies, 2015). Moreover, recent work suggests that consumers are becoming more aware of issues in the fashion industry and a desire to ‘vote’ with their dollars (Ertekin and Atik, 2015; Moon et al., 2015).

CHALLENGES IN GARMENT INDUSTRY IN MP

India has grown rapidly in the recent years, driven by the development of new-age Industries. The rise in the purchasing power has also led to increase in the demand for a new level of quality of service. With the changing economic environment, it has become the need of an hour to focus on imparting and promoting the skills of the young population of India as there, there is still a shortage of skilled manpower to meet the increasing demands of the economy which is one of the challenge that the industry is facing. This study attempts to come up with the suggestions to minimize the existing challenges and propose solutions which could help to resolve the above mentioned problem. It is explained as follows:

(i) Outdated Technology- Due to the lack of domestic manufacturers of the machinery of the textile industry there has been inability of the cloth manufacturers to replace old and worn out machinery for production. Moreover there is a waiting period of 2 to 3 years and by th3 time it is imported the machinery becomes outdated which affects the quality and productivity. Apart from this, due to lack of investment and research in the area of textile machinery, the industry is forced to import machinery to compete with other textile producing countries which increases the costs and productive efficiency. Although there have been schemes such as the Soft Loan Scheme for modernization of textile industry equipment, the problem has not been completely addressed.

(ii) Power Shortage- Textile mills face acute power shortage. Frequent electricity cuts and staggering affect the industry tremendously, leading to loss of man hours and low production in the mills. According to a report by research firm Fibre2fashion, states like Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh have lower textile production than their capability. The industry in Tamil Nadu faces daily losses worth 300 crores due to power shortages or irregular power supply. Small and medium scale textile enterprises are severely affected by power shortage and are forced to use manual machines, which produce lower quality products and are more costly to maintain which leads to longer working hours and also affects the health of workers. In addition, the continuous rise in oil prices made alternate arrangements costlier with the same consequences.

(iii) Labour Related Problems- India has an extensive youthful populace holding on to join the workforce. The textile industry has a lot to offer to these activity searchers attributable to its work serious nature and ability to retain work into little units. However, as different ventures, the textile industry in India additionally faces a few problems identified with work, which are examined in the accompanying sections. First of all the textile industry is highly fragmented which includes various processes from spinning to garmenting. It is very much essential to see the safety and health concerns of the workers working in this industry. child labour is another problem associated with this industry. According to a report by the India Committee of the Netherlands (ICN),in 2007, more than 400,000 children under the age of 18 were found to be employed in cotton seed farms in the states of Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Karnataka. More than half of these children were younger than fourteen.

(iv) Poor Working Environment- The type of work environment in which employees operate determines the way in which such enterprises prosper. The basic facilities such as toilets, drinking water, ventilation and fans are not available, working areas are engulfed in darkness and layers of grease lay underfoot. According to a Fibre2fashion study in most textiles units in India workers face a number of problems such as unsuitable furniture, improper ventilation and lighting, and lack of efficient safety measures in case of emergencies. Workers in such units are at risk of developing various diseases such as musculoskeletal disorders, osteoarthritis of the knees etc.

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a meta-narrative systematic literature review approach to synthesise SF literature across the management discipline. Meta-narrative syntheses integrate qualitative and quantitative works while maintaining the integrity of the original work (Denyer and Tranfield, 2006; Thomas and Harden, 2008; Barnett-Page and Thomas, 2009). It is a useful approach for understanding complex issues, especially in emerging fields like SF, where the literature is still developing (Denyer and

Tranfield, 2006). Utilising Denyer's eight-step process to conducting a systematic review (see Denyer and Pilbeam, 2013, drawing on Denyer and Tranfield 2009), the methodology is structured around the key steps of: 1) developing a protocol, 2) conducting a comprehensive search, 3) screening titles and abstracts, 4) developing explicit selection criteria, 5) evaluating results, 6) extracting and synthesising information, 7) reporting results, and 8) informing research and policy. Denyer and Tranfield's (2009) process has been specifically designed for management studies and emphasises informing theory and practice; key goals of this paper.

(i) Review protocol to sample selection- A preliminary research protocol was developed as a guideline for conducting the review based around the question, "what is SF?". A scoping study revealed ambiguity around what constitutes SF, with conversations fragmented across disciplines (Johnson et al., 2013). Systematic reviews in management are an iterative process (Tranfield et al., 2003), especially when applying meta-narrative synthesis (Denyer and Tranfield, 2006). Considering this, the protocol was adjusted to answer, "what do we know about SF in management?". In step 2, to ensure that a wide variety of sources would be represented in the review, a time limit was not imposed. The comprehensive literature search included research from the first studies on SF, and related terms, in management in 2000 until June 2019 (Tranfield et al., 2003, Denyer and Tranfield, 2009). Because research relevant to management is published in a variety of journals, nine of the major databases were selected. In each database the keywords: 'sustainable fashion', 'ethical fashion,' 'slow fashion,' 'eco fashion,' and 'green fashion' were searched because these terms are used synonymously with SF (Thomas, 2008; Bly et al., 2015; Henninger et al., 2016). Databases such as Researchgate and Google Scholar were used as secondary databases if a document could not be found in full-text in the first instance.

(ii) Conducting the review- In next step selected articles were imported into Mendeley while in step, details of the selected studies were extracted into a standardised database. Following the meta-narrative synthesis process, each article was primarily assessed for its internal validity (Barnett-Page and Thomas, 2009) and the database was regularly discussed amongst the co-authors. Studies were broadly assessed using Denyer and Pilbeam's (2013) criteria, however, all works were assessed through methods appropriate for the publication (i.e. journal article, book chapter, etc.) and its research design. An interpretative approach was taken to synthesise the various sources of data into a narrative of what is known about SF today.

(iii) Defining Sustainable Fashion- SF really started to appear in the management literature around 2008 with pioneering works such as Fletcher (2008), Beard (2008), De Brito (2008), and Clark (2008). However, more than 10 years on, an agreed upon definition of SF is still elusive (Henninger et al., 2016; Reimers et al., 2016). Offering a precise definition is beyond the scope of this paper, particularly given the fluid and evolving nature of sustainability in fashion, and also the recognition of limitations in identifying an 'absolute' SF item or practice. This is largely due to the subjectivity that surrounds sustainability as being, "intuitively understood, yet has no coherent definition" (Henninger et al., 2016, p.402). This section does, however, offer a working definition that pertains to the parameters of SF; what it is, and what it is not. This paper forwards the view that SF includes the variety of means by which a fashion item or behavior could be perceived to be more sustainable, including (but not limited to) environmental, social, slow fashion, reuse, recycling, cruelty free and anti-consumption and production practices.

(iv) Conceptualising Sustainable Fashion- The SF literature can be segmented into two broad approaches: pragmatic change and radical change (see Burrell and Morgan, 1979). Building on Doherty et al.'s (2013) definition of pragmatic consumption, pragmatic change relates to the use of mainstream retail and marketing methods to grow SF impact. Pragmatic change approaches work within the system, using the dominant social paradigm (DSP) around consumption and production to encourage stakeholders to "do better", adopting familiar language and practices (Prothero et al., 2010; McDonagh and Prothero, 2015). For example, brands such as People Tree and Patagonia utilise physical stores, e-retailing, advertising and social media marketing just as their non-sustainable counterparts do, despite their goals being markedly different. Radical change, on the other hand, relates

to more transformative practices that work outside of, or counter and challenge the system and mainstream consumerist culture (Doherty et al., 2013). Such examples include anti-consumption, pioneering innovative business models, and investing in individuals (such as through educational programmes around clothing repair) to encourage social change

CONCLUSION

This review aimed to answer the question, “what do we know about SF in management and where do we go from here?” This review paper finds that pragmatic change is facilitated within the existing SF market (Doherty et al., 2013), whereas radical change adopts a more nuanced view of what SF might become through innovative business models, empowering change makers, and better understanding SF consumer lifestyles. Although academic research into SF has shown a dip from 2018, pragmatic interest is advancing more than more radical research, especially research into future leaders and social marketing interventions. However, while this paper advocates that both approaches are necessary to translate SF ideals into a mainstream practice, there remain to be significant gaps in knowledge, particularly in habit formation both individually and corporately. Much SF research is undertaken in silos, however by crossing disciplinary lines, exciting new ideas may be introduced into the field. This review of SF contributes to the literature by mapping out what we know and how we know it as well as outlining ways that as researchers and practitioners can co-create a SF future.

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