IFFTI 2020

KENT STATE UNIVERSITY.

Fashion

Between Individual and Society: Social Justice Through Fashion
Paper and Creative Practice Presentations

The theme of the 22nd Annual International Foundation of Fashion Technology Institutes (IFFTI) planned conference of Social Justice has become all the more poignant as the world comes to grips with the 2020 global pandemic. It was our pleasure to organize a conference, "Between Individual and Society: Social Justice Through Fashion" to be held at Kent State University in Kent, Ohio, USA. Unfortunately, due to the threat of the COVID19 virus, the conference was cancelled only three weeks before it was set to open. Our conference team at Kent State University's School of Fashion was of course saddened to not be able to share our home of Kent, Ohio with everyone from around the world. However, the ensuing announcement brought scores of messages from potential research participants, keynote speakers, and IFFTI representatives who expressed heartfelt disappointment and a renewed sense of community and comradery. The sense of connection brought about by this vastly disruptive global experience reinforced our motivation to take what is best about an international conference- sharing research and inspiring collaboration- to create an online journal that we hope will become a permanent part of the IFFTI experience.

We are pleased to announce the award winners in each of the three categories of senior researcher, early career researcher and research student. All awards are made after an independent, 'blind-review' process by the reviewers and research committee members. We congratulate them on their achievements.

Senior Researcher Award
- Kirstin C. Loos and Karen M. Bosch, 'Teaching Sustainability: How Educators Can Impact the Industry'.
- Justine Davidson and Cathy Chase, 'Breaking Boundaries of the Traditional Curriculum to Develop Collaboration and Cognitive Diversity'
- Elisa Palomino-Perez, Edwin Phiri, and Katrin Maria Káradóttir 'Indigenous Fish-Skin Craft Revived Through Contemporary Fashion.'

Early Career Award
- Chanjuan Chen and Kendra Lapolla 'Stitched Together: Community Engagement for Undergraduate Student Learning in Supporting Refugee Women'
- Magnum Lam, Eric Li, Man-yin Chung and Wing-sun Liu, 'Examination of Fashion Practicality and Sociality Among Acculturating Indonesian Domestic Workers in Hong Kong'

Graduate Student Award
- Rose Marroncelli, Naomi Brathwaite, Anthony Kent, and Vanessa Brown in the paper 'The T-Shirt: From Protest to Environmental Activism'

Presented below are all of the accepted papers and creative practice-based research that was scheduled to be presented at the 2020 IFFTI conference. The international academic fashion community has long known of the potential of fashion as a powerful tool of change for good. Fashion is an essential conduit of communication about who we are as individuals, what we believe in as a group, and is often emblematic of changes in social policy. The papers of this conference publication are therefore generally categorized under the subthemes of the Individual, the Community, and the Global.

THE INDIVIDUAL

As researchers, practitioners, artists, and academics, we have an opportunity and responsibility to inspire positive change in our global, national, and local communities and most notably perhaps, our students. It is not surprising then that so many of the papers focus on how to teach social justice, sustainable practice, empathy, and action through fashion. A case in point is the award-winning paper from **Kirstin C. Loos and Karen M. Bosch** entitled **'Teaching Sustainability: How Educators Can Impact the Industry'**. It is a comprehensive study suggesting broad applications of a sustainable focus in education leads to a greater advocacy and involvement with fashion students and subsequent fashion industry professionals. **Buddy Penfold and Carolyn Hardaker** in **'Developing a Responsible Culture: Aligning Fashion and Textile Education with the UN's Sustainable Development Goals'** offer a broad perspective of sustainable practices and methodology within undergraduate curriculum. Perhaps most importantly, the students themselves were incorporated into the process of building the curriculum, enabling a sense of self efficacy and long-term adoption by future industry professionals. **Hui Tao and Ying Ying Wang** in **How Do Educators and Students Work for the Sustainable Development of China's Fashion Industry** examines the need of sustainability focused education in China as an acknowledgement of the incredible impact the fashion industry has had on the country's environment, economy and worker populations and the desperate need to ameliorate those issues.

There are several papers which demonstrate teaching fashion students' compassion and respect for diversity and inclusion. The paper by **Justine Davidson and Cathy Chase, 'Breaking Boundaries of the Traditional Curriculum to Develop Collaboration and Cognitive Diversity'** offer two case studies in which class projects using technology encouraged empathy, respect and understanding as a result of collaborative problem-solving activities. **Chanjuan Chen and Kendra Lapolla** report in **'Stitched Together: Community Engagement for Undergraduate Student Learning in Supporting Refugee Women'** about pairing undergraduates and female refugees in a project which focused on empathy, self-efficacy, and empowerment in both groups that participated. **Liz McClafferty** writes in **Working Towards Meaningful Change: A Student-Centered Approach Towards Diversity and Inclusivity within the Fashion Curriculum** about the process of creating curriculum focused on inclusivity and diversity by modeling that very inclusivity and diversity of thought in the act of teaching. These new pedagogical practices offer essential steps in helping the next generation of leaders achieve their goals.

An expansion of education for the greater good can be seen in the example of '**Resurgence of Hope through Fashion Education in Prisons of India'** by **Bela Gupta and Antonio Maurizio Grioli.** The authors describe a project in which the teaching of fashion related skillsets were used to bring self-empowerment to female prisoners within the Indian prison system and highlights the positive impacts that promote a reduction of recidivism. The authors **Lipsa Mohapatra, Goutam Saha, Sheetal Agrawal** in **'Design Intervention Through Permaculture and Social Change: Case Studies from Selected Indian Farming Sectors'** focused on the epidemic of cotton farmer suicides in India and the ability of permaculture design-based practice to support a sustainable future.

Corneliu Dinu Tudor Bodiciu discusses the pathways of engaging undergraduates in reexaminations of fit as it pertains to gender in **'Dissolving Gender in Fashion Design Education'**. In a slight turn of focus, **Lily Lei Ye in Lines of Flight: a Deleuzo-Guattarian Exploration of Style as Resistance'** brings a rich discussion of students in Hong Kong who subvert traditional ideas of gender and consumption. These are fundamental steps in reimagining the status quo of who the fashion industry sells to and influences.

THE COMMUNITY

So much of consumption and the pursuit of a fashioned identity center on the formation of communities either by proximity or within the digital space. The study of consumption and consumer perceptions are an incredibly important part of the fashion industry's ability to shape a socially just and environmentally protected future. **Rose Marroncelli, Naomi Brathwaite, Anthony Kent, and Vanessa Brown** in the paper '**The T-Shirt: From Protest to Environmental Activism**' focuses on the relationship of consumption and the representation of identity. The use of the ubiquitous T-shirt provides a platform of subtext beyond the graphic displayed on the shirt to messages of authenticity to where and how the T-shirt was produced or purchased.

The paper '**Examination of Fashion Practicality and Sociality Among Acculturating Indonesian Domestic Workers in Hong Kong**' by **Magnum Lam, Eric Li, Man-yin Chung and Wing-sun Liu** interview migrant workers who struggle to negotiate acculturation in their dress as a representation of their personal and cultural identity. They found a renewed sense of self due to the closeness of their micro-community within the larger society. **Karen Cross** in '**Womenswear Well-Being Warriors: A Content Analysis of Female-Targeted Activewear Brands on Instagram**' examines the fashion industry's use of branding to communicate a sense of female bonding, self-empowerment, and self-efficacy through athleisure clothing. **Milan Shahani** and **Vladimira Steffek** in '**Refashioning Adaptive Clothing for Persons Living with Hemiparesis**' call for attention paid to the community of women who struggle with a lack of affordable and stylish clothing that particularly caters to their needs. In all three of these examples of micro-communities, the research suggests the essential components of support, communication, and collaboration allow for self-expression and individuality.

Craft practice and community are being focused on by researchers who see a reemergence of traditions which have often become marginalized in the global economy due to the emphasis on mechanization and fast profit. **Elisa Palomino-Perez, Edwin Phiri,** and **Katrin Maria Káradóttir** examine the use of traditional fish leather tanning practices in Iceland in the paper '**Indigenous Fish-Skin Craft Revived Through Contemporary Fashion**.' Here the authors focus on sustainable fashion companies' use of a traditional craft practice which brings important monetary opportunities to the community. The use of craft has become a powerful opportunity for women who find themselves limited by their status in society. **Sreenanda Palit** explains in '**Indigenous Practices and Activism: Challenging the Social Algorithm of India**' that while craft has been used as a traditional political symbol, it has been largely defined by a patriarchal and colonial definition. Here it is suggested that craft can be a tool for independence and autonomy for women in India. Similarly, **Pragya Sharma** in '**Untapped: Exploring Craft Potential of Urban Women Through Technology Intervention**' explores how technology can

enable groups of talented Indian women, who are confined by marriage, to create a monetized community and individual independence. Alternatively, **Ekta Gupta** and **Vandana Bhandari** examine what happens when women are no longer allowed to participate in their own craft traditions and social customs in the '**Dowries of Kutch: Rabari Tradition.**'

THE GLOBAL

As craft is considered as a foundational symbol of a community, the expansion of craft into the global marketplace presents particular issues to negotiate. **Roxana-Claudia Tompea** uses a community to examine the relationship between cultural narrative appreciation and the concern of cultural appropriation in the paper '**The #Give Credit Campaign and Why it Matters: A Case Study of La blouse Roumaine.**'

Rajkishore Nayak, Long T.V. Nguyen, Tarun Panwar, and **Thanh Huynh Pham** discuss in **'Corporate Social Responsibility and Environmental Sustainability: Practices and Challenges Faced by the Local Luxury Fashion Brands in Vietnam'** the approaches of local brands to incorporate sustainable and socially beneficial practices into their brands. They report the shortcomings and problems faced by these brands which are so similar to the global fashion community. Indeed, **Joanna Watson** cites several existing examples of socially and environmentally sensitive supply chain practices which point to a reimagined global supply and value chain in the paper '**Future Proof Sustainability.**' Negotiating the global supply chain to be environmentally and socially beneficial is easily one of the most essential questions we must answer in the immediate future.

Practice Based Research

Fashion scholarship, in the form of creative art practice, provides a unique chance for researchers to express abstracted ideas as they relate to the body and identity, or the community and identity, in clothing and appearance. Not surprisingly, the role of the educator and advocate for change, features prominently in many of the creative researcher's work. **Katherine Townsend, Emma Prince, Alison Escott, Gill Barker and Tim Bassford** contributed the outcomes of student work focused on expanding the design experience in support of social good in **Emanuel House X NTU: Be Protected; Be Visible; Be Functional; Be Secure; Be Transformable**. The project brought groups of students to work with members of a homeless shelter to create up-cycled clothing that solved specific requirements through a user centered design focus. **Polly Kenny** in **Using Digital Resources to Develop Responsible Design: ART-CHERIE Project** reports on a project with students that utilizes digital archives aimed at negotiating the importance of cultural and social responsibility while considering inclusivity and diversity.

Jennifer Whitty expands the scope of her role as teacher beyond the immediate classroom to encompass the general public in her proposed flash-mob performance **Throwaway**. The flash-mob was aimed at engaging the public encouraging consideration of the intricate relationship with clothing, the meaning that we instill in our dress, and our shared responsibility of the disposal of that clothing. Similarly, **Shweta Rangekar, Patricia Sumod and Kundlata Mishra** in **#NoStitchSeptember- A Surreal Journey Towards Sustainable Fashion** engaged the larger community via social media to conduct an experiment utilizing both historical

precedent and contemporary zero-waste methodology for possible solutions to sustainable practice.

Other academics were inspired by their students and the inherent negotiations of inclusivity, diversity, social justice and environmental concerns that youth must encounter as their world view expands upon entry into adulthood. **Anne Porterfield** created work which engaged students as subjects in a discussion of body image and inclusivity in **Every Body Fits Here**. Porterfield reminds us that as subjective and objective participants in the fashion system, educators must consistently navigate increasingly outdated notions of beauty and acceptance. **Sue Hershberger Yoder** and **Melissa Campbell** were inspired by the similarities of student protests stemming from the Vietnam War in the 1970s and the 2018 protests of students inspired by inaction of the government to combat gun violence in **Kindred Bloom Collaboration**. In both cases craft practice is an important element conveying intimacy of personal creation and self-representation.

Continuing in this examination of personal statements within a larger context of society, the following artists used their work to suggest the importance of clothing as a form of protest. **Travis W Li, Elita YN Lam**, and **Eddy S.Lui** show what happens when designers and environmental activists come together in **Fashion Activism with Community: Co-Design Project Between Fashion Designers and Bike Commuters in Hong Kong.** Here designers support bike-commuters desire to utilize carbon neutral transportation by co- designing biking-friendly clothing that also calls attention to environmentalism. **Krissi Riewe** in **Sewn at $0.13/hour** presents a visual representation of elapsed time, pointing out the unappreciated and underpaid makers of clothing. A singular dress, with the handprints of all that have touched it in the process of making it, reminds the viewer of the labor involved in making clothing that we all take for granted. Finally, **Anahita Suri** utilizes the controversial Muslim 'burqa' to call attention to the misunderstandings that Muslims and non-Muslims have attached to this piece of women's clothing in her installation **Wrap Me Up…Or Not….**

Throughout these papers and presentations, a viewer will undoubtedly see the thoughtful and considered approach of global fashion researchers and academics seeking to affect positive change in the fashion industry and in our global community. IFFTI researchers have advanced several interesting and compelling case studies, creative projects, and qualitative or quantitative studies which add to the breadth of knowledge we share in the hopes that we can make a difference for the environment, for society and the greater good.

Teaching Sustainability: How Educators Can Impact the Industry

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Abstract

This research investigates to what extent integration of the topic sustainability in education at a fashion and textiles course at the undergraduate level is related to students' choice for graduation topics related to sustainability. A mixed method approach was applied, analyzing a total of 463 graduation reports from the last four years; secondary data on course materials; and interviewing lecturers, course supervisors, and program managers. Furthermore, a questionnaire for students was administered. Data was gathered in order to determine integration of the topic of sustainability in education, the number of graduation topics related to sustainability, and the student views on and knowledge of the topic. Results show that the integration of the topic sustainability in the curriculum has steadily increased since 2015, when the program started actively working toward receiving a DHO (Sustainable Higher Education) certificate. The inclusion of sustainability in the curriculum has been paired with an increase in the amount of graduation assignments related to sustainability. Although causal relations cannot yet be drawn, results do indicate that we as educators can impact the fashion and textile industry in a meaningful way.

Keywords: change-makers, educators, sustainability, impact, curriculum

Introduction

Sustainability is a topic receiving intense interest. Fast-paced consumption has led to some major global challenges, such that the United Nations (UN) has recently developed concrete Sustainable Development Goals that, through a partnership of governments, private sector, civil society, and citizens, it hopes to achieve by 2030 (Sustainable Development Goals, n.d.). The growth model currently used for industrial development is incompatible with sustainability, and it is apparent that great change is necessary, especially in the textiles and clothing industry, which alone accounts for nearly 10% of global greenhouse gas emissions (Zaffalon, 2010). Globally, 17-20% of industrial water pollution is generated from textile dyeing and finishing processes alone (Simlai, 2013). Beyond environmental issues, the clothing and textiles industry also has been criticized for the many social issues that have been pushed to the forefront of public debate in recent years, including forced labor, low wages, excessive work hours, dismal working conditions, and even abuse (Dicksonet al., 2009).

Professionals in the fashion and textiles industry are aptly named the gatekeepers of marketing messages, product designs, material choices, sourcing practices, and more by Armstrong et al. (2016), all of which have the ability to influence consumer choice and decision making. If we want to influence consumer behavior and stimulate sustainable consumption, these gatekeepers must be prepared to take the lead. Consequently, many fashion and apparel educators have pledged to prepare future professionals to move away from simply profit- and

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performance-centered approaches, and balance economic, environmental, and societal considerations in decision making (Landgren & Pasricha, 2011).

This paper focuses on the integration of sustainability in the curriculum of a fashion and textiles course at a university in the Netherlands, and the effect of this integration on students' focus on the topic in graduation assignments. The study seeks to prove that a holistic integration of the topic throughout a curriculum can lead to an increase in students who are intrinsically motivated to be the agents of change the industry needs.

The Current Generation of Students and Sustainability

The current generation of students mostly consist of "Gen Z," the generation born between 1995 and 2010, and millennials, born between 1980 and 1995. Contemporary society is defined as a post-industrial society in which the focus has shifted from an exploitation and profit ethic to social responsibility and professional commitment (Morgado, 1996). This rings true when referencing research that profiles millennials and Gen Z, who make up the population of students today.

Millennials and Gen Z have relatively great economic power compared to previous generations (Grant & Stephen, 2005), and form the majority of working professionals today. Research by Demeritt from 2008 (as cited in Pasricha & Kadolph, 2009) that profiles millennials indicates that this generation is tired and bored with consuming, has global tastes, and views the world as a social construction. Sustainability to this generation is about being community-oriented, supporting socially conscious and small local businesses. Millennials are extremely aware of local and global environments.

There is a substantial amount of evidence that students have the drive to be agents of change. Students have undertaken several initiatives related to sustainability (Ruben, 1993, Boekeloo 2008). For instance, in the Netherlands, Studenten voor Morgen, a national network for sustainability in Dutch higher education set up by students for students, now has more than 35 member organizations spread out over the country (Morgen, n.d.). Universities all over the world are fostering these initiatives as well, by introducing their own student sustainability initiative centers, where students can get the support they need when setting up initiatives (Erasmus University, 2018; University of Michigan, 2019; Keele University, n.d.) or where local sustainability initiatives can unite (University of Warwick, 2019; University of Plymouth, n.d.). In some instances, students even function as watchdogs for sustainability, enquiring about campus sustainability during admissions (Lipka, 2006). An example of a student-driven initiative is United Students against Sweatshop (USAS), a national network of students in North America working against sweatshops. In September 2005, student affiliates of the organization from 40 colleges and universities started a campaign to end sweatshop production of collegiate apparel ("Student demand," 2005, as cited in Pasricha & Kadolph, 2014). The campaign affected production factories and the licensees who make college-logo garments, such as Nike, Reebok, Adidas, and Champion, to ensure improved human rights. An unintended consequence was the shift of production to other facilities, which ultimately resulted in the closure of the "sweat-free" facilities.

Despite evidence of growing consumer, and in particular student, concern for the environment and sustainability issues, engagement in sustainable clothing consumption remains low (Butler and Francis, 1997; Hiller Connell & Kozar, 2012; Koszewska, 2013). In a study by Butler and Francis (1997) only 10% of the respondents reported considering environment and sustainability when purchasing clothing. Hiller Connell and Kozar (2012) report that only 25%

of the respondents in their research consciously purchase less clothing. And finally, Koszewska (2013) found that only 16.3% of the participants consider social and environmental aspects when buying clothing. Young generations are generally more involved in fashion trends (Birtwistle & Moore, 2007). Research further shows that these young consumers are particularly drawn to purchasing high volumes of clothing at a low cost, exhibiting a quantity-over-quality approach to clothing purchases (Bhardwaj & Fairhurst, 2010). This is evidenced by the rise of fast-fashion chains like Primark, H&M, and Zara, which have taken control of the market.

Armstrong et al. (2016), in their research on application of experiential learning in sustainability education for fashion students, challenged a group of students to refrain from purchasing clothing for a period of 10 weeks. They found that even fashion students who are confronted with the consequences of unsustainable choices still experience barriers originating from individual, social, and cultural realms of experience when taking part in a no-buy challenge.

It is clear that there is a gap between attitudes and behaviors within the generation of young consumers that we are educating. It is challenging to teach about sustainability when it is in direct opposition to the consumer culture surrounding of these students (Armstrong et al., 2016). However, research does show that educational activities and university promotion of sustainable initiatives are factors that can influence student participation in sustainability programs (Figueredo & Tsarenko, 2013). The premise underlying this study, is that integration of this topic in education leads to students consciously focusing on introducing sustainability into the industry, through a graduation assignment for a company.

Methods

This research is, in essence, an analysis of the effect of educating fashion students about taking sustainability into account in the fashion industry. The Fashion & Textile Technologies (F&TT) program in Enschede was taken as a first case study. A mixed method was used. Nine interviews were held with lecturers, coordinators, department chairs, and managers, who have a substantial role in the program. Topics included the definition of sustainability, both general and specific to the fashion industry; integration of sustainability in the four years of the educational program; and the influence on the student and his or her attitude toward the topic in year four of the program.

In addition to these interviews, 463 graduation assignments by graduate students from 2016 until 2019 were analyzed in order to determine which of these focused on the topic of sustainability. Students are free to choose a graduation assigment topic, which in most cases they perform for a company in the Fashion and Textiles industry. These results will indicate to what extent the students at F&TT have selected sustainability as a topic. It is also expected these results will indicate the importance felt by students to act as change makers in the industry.

Furthermore, a secondary analysis was done on earlier gathered data regarding the integration of the topic of sustainabilty throughout the entire curriculum, and compared with data from the interviews with lecturers, coordinators, department chairs, and managers in order to discover how and to what extent the topic has been integrated into the curriculum.

Finally, a survey was conducted among students in the current program, in order to investigate to what extent students are aware of the topic of sustainability and what importance they ascribe to the topic. Results from this survey were compared with results from a secondary analysis of data from the same survey conducted five years ago.

Results

Results can be divided into sustainability as part of the educational program, and the attitudes and behavior of students toward sustainability in the fashion industry.

Sustainability as Part of the Educational Program

During the first two years of the curriculum, in each quarter students follow a project in which they complete multiple assignments, mostly in a group format, that together result in a grade. These projects are accompanied through three modules in the first year and two modules in the second year that focus on foundational theory. Students are assigned the most credits for the work they deliver in the projects. During the third and fourth year of their education, students are free to determine in what order they follow a semester of interning, a minor, and a semester of Smart Solutions (an interdisciplinary university-wide research project). Students end their four-year program with a graduation assignment. Systematic integration of the topic of sustainability in the curriculum is mainly focused in the first two years of study.

In 2016 a goal was set to obtain a DHO (Sustainable Higher Education) certificate through an audit done with the Audit Instrument for Sustainability in Higher Education (AISHE). This audit consists of a self-reflection, document analysis, and audit meetings with management, faculty, students, and staff (Hobeon, n.d.). In order to obtain the certificate, sustainability was consciously and systematically integrated as a topic in the curriculum from 2015 onward, when F&TT made a switch to project-based education. One module on sustainability was taught in the fourth quarter of the first year during the academic years 2015-2016 and 2016-2017, and in the following academic year the module was scrapped due to integration of sustainability in the entire curriculum. Before conscious integration, the topic of sustainability was already the subject of frequent discussion among colleagues. Some lecturers integrated the topic into their curriculum even before it was consciously integrated systematically throughout the curriculum, but this was mostly out of their own interest.

Figure 1 shows an inventory of sustainability integration in the first and second year of the curriculum that resulted from the self-reflection report written in academic year 2017-2018 (Hullegie et al., 2018), the first year in which the topic was integrated in the entire curriculum. F&TT was awarded a three-star certificate on June 9, 2018.
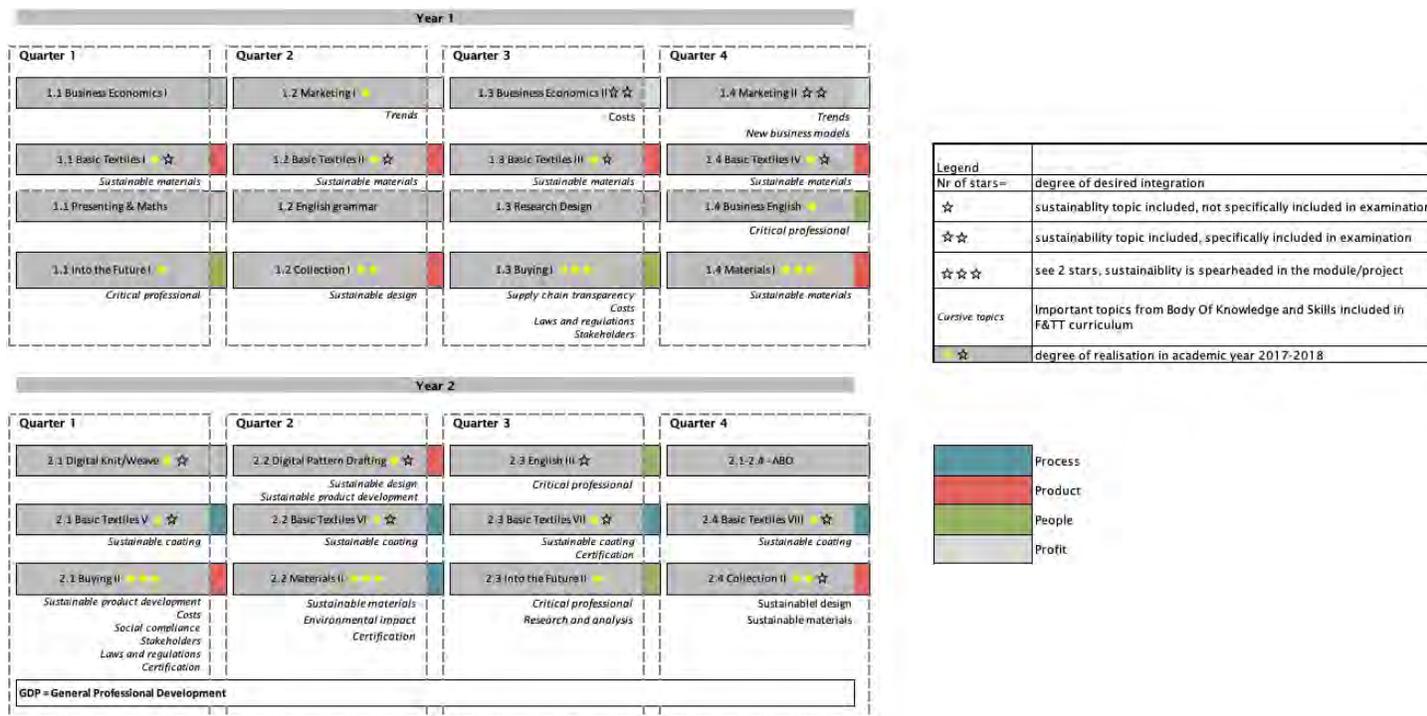
Figure 1. Integration of sustainability in first and second year of the F&TT curriculum; adapted from Hullegie et al., 2018.

Today, sustainability is integrated throughout all three pillars of the program; commerce, materials, and collection. Every quarter, a specific lecture about sustainability is given within a project, and the contents linked to that specific project. Furthermore, all the lecturers mention sustainability in their lessons where applicable. This could be within class discussions, or in providing sustainable options for production processes or designing processes, or teaching about alternative materials. In the majority of assignments, sustainability is integrated as a criterion in the assessment, and a few projects even revolve completely around sustainability.

Attitude and Behavior toward Sustainability in the Fashion Industry

A survey was conducted in order to determine whether interest among students in the topic of sustainability has increased while studying at F&TT (N=122). As can be seen in figure 2, results from the student survey indicate a growth in interest in the topic. Students who are in their fourth year mostly indicate that sustainability is very important to them, while a relatively larger number of first year students are neutral on the topic. The same question has been asked in the survey since 2016, as can been seen in figure 3. In 2016 the percentage of fourth-year students who indicated that sustainability is totally important, is not much larger than first-year students.
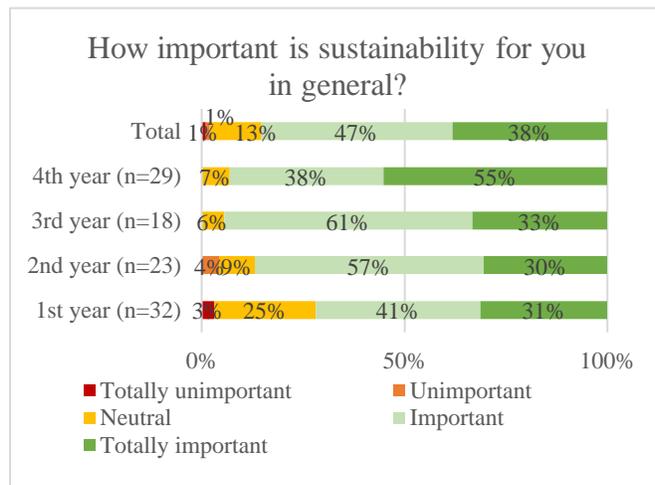
Figure 2. Indication of importance of sustainability to students in the 2019 survey.
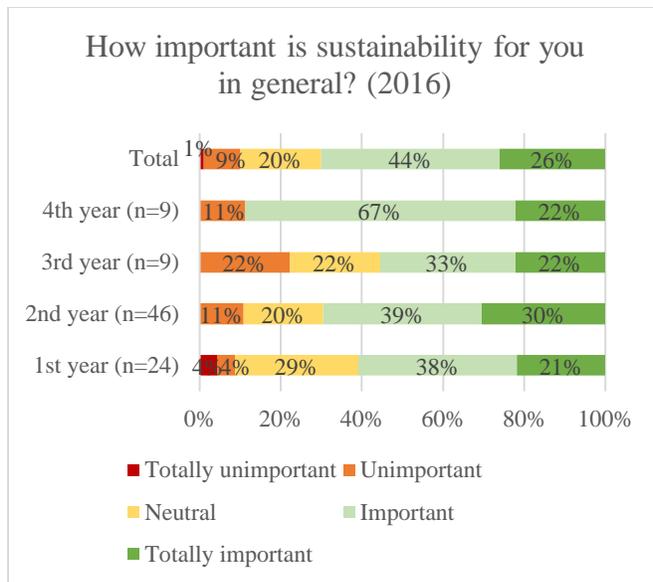
Figure 3. Indication of the importance of sustainability to students in the 2016 survey.

Results from the survey conducted this year were compared to the survey results from 2016 (N=100), and it is apparent that in general there is increased student interest in the topic (figure 4). What immediately jumps out is that there were more students in 2016 who found the topic unimportant or were neutral toward the topic. In comparison, a larger percentage now finds the topic important.

An interesting result observable in figure 5 is that first-year students in 2016 found sustainability less important compared to current first-year students in 2019. While it was considered important then, a larger percentage of students indicated that they were neutral on the topic. In contrast, a much larger percentage of students consider the topic very important in 2019. This result indicates that there is a shift not only in our curriculum, but also in students' mindset related to the topic outside of the influence of our education.

Results from the interviews mirror the results from the survey. Multiple respondents mentioned noticing a general societal shift toward more sustainability-conscious students entering the program. This is a sentiment that is evident in literature as well, which indicates that Gen Z and millennials are far more aware of their social responsibilities.
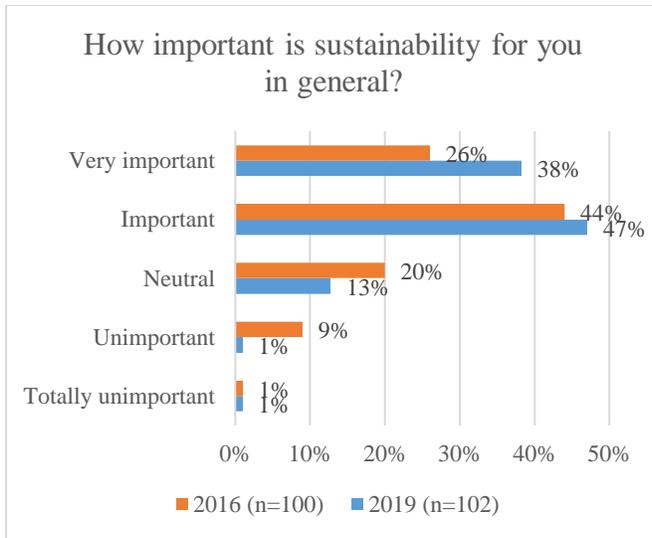
Figure 4. Comparison of indications of the importance of sustainability to students in 2016 versus 2019.
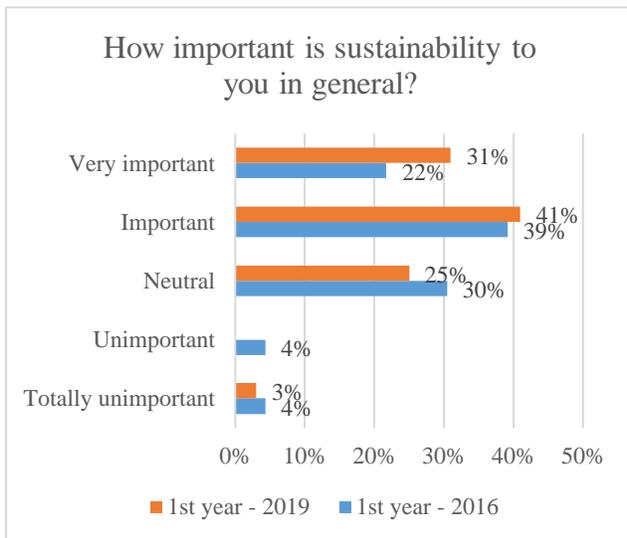
Figure 5. Comparison of the importance of sustainability to first-year students in 2016 versus 2019.

When analyzing graduation assignment topics, a significant increase in sustainability as a substantial component of the assignment can be observed (figure 6). Whereas in 2016 just under one-fifth (18%) of the graduates focused their graduation assignments on sustainability as a topic, in 2019 more than half (55%) of the topics were related to sustainability. Students who graduated in 2019 are mostly students who started their studies four years prior, in 2015. From 2015 onward there has been a conscious, observable integration of the topic of sustainability in the curriculum.
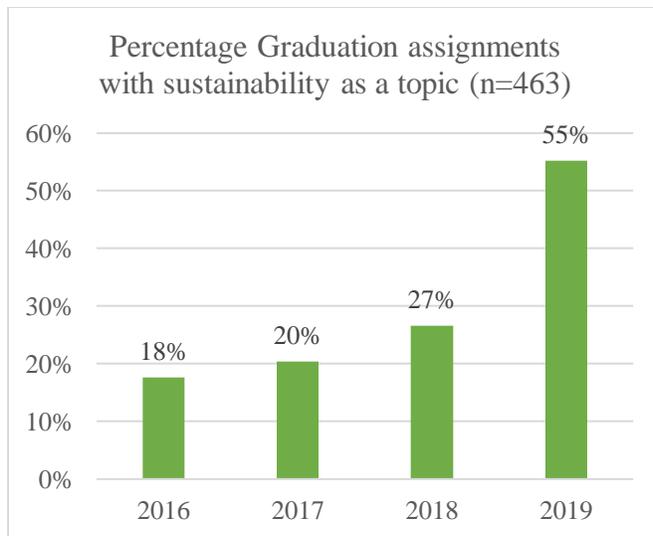
Figure 6. Percentage of graduation assignments with sustainability as a topic.

Graduation assignments are assignments mostly performed for companies. According to the internship coordinator, there is not only an increase in students wanting to focus on sustainability during their internship, but also an observable increase in companies interested in exploring opportunities relating to sustainability through student assignments. The idea that there is not only a shift in the student mindset, but in the entire industry, was mentioned by most of the respondents who took part in the interviews, although most agreed that our students are much further along with regard to sustainability than the industry currently is. In fact, it was mentioned in the interviews that respondents personally know of students who were hired after graduation to spearhead sustainability in large firms in the fashion and textiles industry in the Netherlands.

Conclusion

The results show a significant increase in sustainable topics in graduation assignments. Furthermore, proof was found that after integration of the topic into the curriculum, a growing number of students began to recognize the importance of sustainability as they are further along in their studies. Although conclusions on causality cannot be drawn based on this research, we assume that the large increase in graduation assignments related to the topic is directly related to the increased focus on sustainability in the curriculum.

It looks as though educators at F&TT have had a substantial impact by integrating sustainability. One should, however, take into account that companies, for whom students perform their graduation assignments, could also be more aware of the importance of sustainability and therefore come up with these topics. Furthermore, there is an observable increase in awareness among students entering the course, which could also lead to more focus on the topic during the program that is intrinsically motivated. In order to confirm any causal effects between integration of sustainability in the curriculum and change in the industry, more research is necessary.

Limitations of this study that should be considered are the fact that not all bachelor assignments were available for analysis. Furthermore, it should be mentioned that this research is based on one case study. Further research among other fashion education program is recommended.

Acknowledgments

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Developing a Responsible Culture: Aligning Fashion and Textiles Education with the UN's Sustainable Development Goals

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Abstract

It is a pivotal time for fashion and textiles education. Concerns about ethical production and climate change, with the effect the industry has on the planet, is receiving intense media coverage. There are environmental consequences at each stage of a garment's life cycle. These, combined with the rise of fast fashion over recent years, should make every citizen examine what positive changes they can make to reduce their environmental impact.

De Montfort University (DMU) is in the top 50 world universities for impact as assessed by the UN sustainable development goals (SDG). This paper presents initiatives taken by the School of Fashion and Textiles to consider how responsible design has been integrated into teaching. A baseline review of the current curricula compared to the 17 UN SDGs was undertaken. A funded innovation and sustainability project highlighted the different approaches students had taken to sustainable design. Joint initiatives with international partners consider the global perspective. This work continues with a review of key environmental activists and considers how the curriculum can be further co-created with students to address industry needs. Student engagement will be evaluated by reviewing the influence of sustainable development within final year major project proposals.

Keywords: design, global, sustainable, fashion, textiles

Introduction

The fashion industry and its relationship with climate change is increasingly a matter of popular and political concern. Recently, the British government has become more involved in the fashion industry. The fashion and textiles industry has evolved as a global industry, and the production of consumer goods affects many aspects of society and the environment. In 2018, the UK government ordered an inquiry, "Fixing Fashion" (Environmental Audit Committee, 2019). This inquiry investigated whether the UK fashion industry was sustainable, and what policies would be necessary to reduce its environmental impact.

Universities are uniquely placed to influence change through encouraging a sustainable approach into mainstream society and engagement of the next generation. It is vital that fashion and textiles education rises to these challenges with a responsible design ethos to reflect values and respond to the concerns of the government, consumers, and the next generation of students.

This paper considers the changing landscape of fashion and textiles education at De Montfort University (DMU). It proposes changes to the curriculum that would reflect the growing concern over climate change and the environmental, ethical, and social impact of the global textile industry.

Context

A recent National Union of Students (NUS) survey shows the concern among students regarding the fashion industry's environmental impact. According to the survey, 91% of students thought that their university should actively incorporate and promote sustainable development (NUS, 2018). This has implications for the industry as a whole, because a growing proportion of students are unwilling to work for companies with low environmental standards. The same survey showed that 61% of students would accept a salary 15% lower than average to work in a company with a good social and environmental record.

In order to improve sustainability, the creative industries launched the Creative Industries Federation's manifesto (Creative Industries Federation, 2019). This manifesto outlined goals creative industries should pursue to improve their environmental record. Point 10 of the manifesto is of particular relevance to this paper. It introduced the Sustainability Innovation Challenge, which encourages creative industries to comply with the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and to address problems relating to climate change, mental health, and inequality in their respective fields.

In 2015, the UN set out 17 Sustainable Development Goals (figure 1) to protect the planet, end poverty, and improve the lives of people everywhere (United Nations, n.d.). The 17 SDGs are at the heart of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (United Nations, 2015) which all United Nations member states adopted in 2015. The agenda lists objectives that are needed to improve global living standards and correct the negative effects of climate change.

Goal 16 of the SDG is the creation of "peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development." As part of DMU's strategic plan for 2018–2023 (De Montfort University, 2018), DMU launched a review in 2018 into its curriculum. It sought to promote sustainability, and subsequently embedded the SDGs into the university curriculum. DMU also took part in the UN program, Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), an initiative that recognizes that university education should equip students with the skills and knowledge necessary to create a more equal and environmentally sustainable environment. In keeping with Goal 16 and in response to DMU's proactive efforts to promote environmental sustainability, the United Nations chose DMU to be a global hub for sustainable development. De Montfort University was the first university in the world to be given such an honor.

Figure 1. United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals (United Nations, n.d.).

Concerns about ethical production and how the industry affects climate change have received intense media coverage. There are environmental consequences at each stage of a garment's production cycle. These, combined with the rise of fast fashion over recent years, should make every consumer ask what positive changes they can make to reduce their environmental impact.

Fashion and textiles education at DMU is evolving to address the need for environmental sustainable fashion. Responsible design and sustainable development are an increasingly prominent part of our curriculum, especially on our undergraduate courses. The De Montfort Department of Textiles Engineering and Materials continues to deliver consultancy and research, but this review was to instill a sustainable ethos at the undergraduate level.

Promoting sustainable development through educational context is critical. It produces graduates who are well-informed about the global and environmental changes affecting their respective industries, and equips them with the theoretical and practical skills necessary to confront the big questions of today and tomorrow. This paper outlines the work within the School of Fashion and Textiles at De Montfort University, where changes within the undergraduate program have encouraged students to consider sustainability at the start of their design process.

Having discussed the wider sociopolitical context, this paper will assess the three main ways the School of Fashion and Textiles at DMU has sought to promote sustainable design. These areas are:

- Curriculum review
- Subject-specific areas of change to encourage change in practice through use of materials, technology and education
- Cross school initiative funded through a benefactor's donation.

Curriculum Review

The School of Fashion and Textiles promoted sustainable projects before the 2018 curriculum review. Practice-based programs considered upcycling projects, sustainable yarns and fabrics, and how to minimize waste and plastic use. Retail and management students study ethical sourcing and supply chain management.

These programs provided high-quality education and promoted environmental sustainability interventions and curriculum developments; although excellent, these were individual to each program and from a school perspective were being introduced with little strategic oversight. Given the importance of ensuring that sustainable development is a key part of the educational experience offered at DMU, a school-wide curriculum review was undertaken in the 2018-2019 academic session, using the UN's SDGs as a framework.

DMU adheres to the Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications of UK Degree-Awarding Bodies (Quality Assurance Agency, 2014). Each year is assigned a level. Year one of an undergraduate degree is FHEQ level 4, year two FHEQ level 5, and year three FHEQ level 6. As part of the 2018 curriculum review, a program team from the School of Fashion and Textiles considered whether modules at levels 4, 5 and 6 complied with each SDG. A matrix was used to record evidence of reference to each SDG. This was then mapped as a pie chart for each level, (figures 2 through 4).

School of Design:
Level 4 engagement with SDGs 2019-18

Legend

Current contribution
Potential contribution
N/A
TEXT — Areas of operation

SDG 1
SDG 2
SDG 3
SDG 4
SDG 5
SDG 6
SDG 7
SDG 8
SDG 9
SDG 10
SDG 11
SDG 12
SDG 13
SDG 14
SDG 15
SDG 16
SDG 17

Contour Fashion
Design Crafts
Design Cultures
Design Products
Fashion Buying
Fashion Communication and Styling
Fashion Design
Fashion Textile Design
Footwear Design
Interior Design
Textile Design

Figure 2. Level 4 curriculum alignment to SDGs.

School of Design:
Level 5 engagement with SDGs 2019-18

Legend
Current contribution
Potential contribution
N/A
TEXT Areas of operation

SDG 1
SDG 2
SDG 3
SDG 4
SDG 5
SDG 6
SDG 7
SDG 8
SDG 9
SDG 10
SDG 11
SDG 12
SDG 13
SDG 14
SDG 15
SDG 16
SDG 17

Contour Fashion
Design Crafts
Design Cultures
Design Products
Fashion Buying
Fashion Communication and Styling
Fashion Design
Fashion Textile Design
Footwear Design
Interior Design
Textile Design

Figure 3. Level 5 curriculum alignment to SDGs.

Figure 4. Level 6 curriculum alignment to SDGs.

Review results suggest that each FHEQ level complies with most of the SDGs. All three years of the undergraduate curriculum complied with goal 12, which relates to responsible production and consumption. One notable finding was a greater focus on sustainable development at level 4 than at levels 5 and 6.

As a result of this review, program teams have gained a fuller insight into how the DMU undergraduate course addresses environmental sustainability, and what steps DMU needs to take to ensure that the entire undergraduate course complies with the SDGs. Being able to see the gaps in the curriculum has been beneficial to program teams as they continue their curriculum development activities, the SDGs providing a framework for strategic development.

As a result of the 2018 curriculum review, DMU revised its modules to promote sustainable approaches to fashion and textiles.

Subject-Specific Areas of Change to Encourage Change in Practice through Use of Materials, Technology, and Education

Use of Materials: Case Studies

Within textiles, a lecture series on the impact of fashion and textiles on the environment ran alongside the practical design modules, encouraging the ethos of circularity and repurposing yarns. This prompted a third-year textiles student to base her pre-collection project on not spending any money on new materials, but to rely on donated fabrics from local manufacturers. A range of fabrics was created for high-end evening wear through use of technology such as digital embroidery and laser cutting to re-purpose fabrics. Any inconsistencies provided a unique selling point, as no two textiles would be the same. The creation of luxury fabrics was chosen to remove the stigma that recycling led to plain, dull, or even a "hippy" look. Discarded plastic nets provided bright accents of color.

Whereas before 2018, students had an unlimited supply of pattern paper and calico for toileing, students now have a limited supply. Throughout the school there is an emphasis on using, repurposing, or donating fabrics, leathers, and yarns collected at recycling points. Students have been innovative in their approach, and in 2019 Mariah Esa, winner of the Graduate Fashion Week People's Award, repurposed labels thrown away in the fast fashion industry to create her garments (Graduate Fashion Week, 2019).

Students in Fashion and Textile Design learn to consider how to use upcycling within design, reducing the need for use of new fabrics through a reverse engineered garment project.

Each week, Fashion Buying students hold a lunchtime workshop drop-in session for any student from any course to use the equipment to repurpose and upcycle donated garments. This is a social event, but with the purpose of encouraging students to rethink clothing as a disposable item, worn only once or twice.

De Montfort University has committed to delivering a sustainable campus (DMU, 2018) and ranks high in the "People and Planet Green League" for universities (People and Planet, 2019). The campus has cut use of plastics. As an example of each department's contribution, the fashion students have reduced use of plastic bags to hand in work by making their own portfolios out of recycled fabric for their paperwork and garments.

Use of Technology: Case Study

Within the subject areas of footwear, contour, fashion, and textiles, small but effective changes have taken place to influence student behaver through considering the use of CAD to reduce sampling. This is developing skills that can be directly transferred into industry, and feeds into the creative federations sustainability challenge.

The Fashion course introduced a new optional module at level 5 for Lectra Modaris 3D software. At level 4, the students are taught manual methods of pattern cutting and altering patterns on the flat, using paper. Year 2 students have the option to develop these skills, but through use of the Lectra Modaris software to create the pattern and make any changes. Once the correct pattern has been created, students can move into 3D visualizing. The pattern pieces are "virtually" stitched together and then placed on an avatar as a virtual garment. The student can evaluate the toile on the body of the avatar before using any paper or fabric . The garment can be adjusted on screen as a "virtual fitting," and any print placement or change of scale of pattern added. Attributes such as a pocket or belt and further design detail can also be added. Once satisfied, the student can print a paper pattern and create a sample.

The advantage of this process to the student is understanding the cost to industry and the environment of the production of samples, both in materials and transport. By using CAD and 3D visualization, the student is also adding to skills for employability, such as willingness to view samples online rather than produced, thus reducing waste.

Education: Case Studies

The curriculum in sustainability has been re-enforced through increased ethical sourcing content delivered through practical experience and in lectures. In November 2019, students were given the opportunity to visit Tencel to understand the manufacturing processes to create the fiber.

Academics with expertise in sustainable development have given lectures across disciplines in order to share expertise across the whole school. This interdisciplinary approach led to product design academics working with contour fashion faculty to introduce sustainability into an area heavily influenced by synthetic fabrics.

The contour students held a workshop to create their own principles of sustainable design. The students used the UN SDGs to prompt the students' thinking before designing but also to apply the principles in everyday life. Students were encouraged to investigate their own industry and the fabrics and fibers that were used in the contour products. The students learned about the challenges of recycling mixed fibers of the combinations of laces and polyesters plus elastane used in lingerie collections. The global production of polyester is now estimated at 52% of textiles, which is greater than cotton (Black, 2008). Although retailers have started to use a small percentage of recycled polyester within their products, such as the H&M collaboration with Pringle knitwear, there is no recycling scheme for polyester available in the UK for the public.

The students then created their own rules for design. The rules included considering designing for longevity, and considering biodegradability and recyclability. Materials should be sourced locally, without toxic waste. Good ethics should be considered when choosing the source and producer of the materials used; could recycled materials be used? The students also considered the aftercare of the garment, aware of the carbon footprint created through over- and unnecessary cleaning of fashion garments. Overall, when considering their own purchases, the students discussed the impact of fast fashion and resolved to buy quality over quantity when they shopped.

Industry values the input and opinions of the current student body. H&M have set an external client project for Contour Fashion students to create a range with little waste as possible. The results will be evaluated against their own alternatives to "sense test" their own in-house research.

Cross-school initiatives continue to prompt creative thinking, and all students have been challenged with a T-extinction competition to determine what will be extinct from a fashion and textiles perspective in 2090. The results of the competition will be showcased in the university gallery, launched talks, and workshops to prompt further debate.

The Roadley Awards: A Cross-School Initiative

In conjunction with specific curriculum developments, DMU launched the Roadley Awards in 2018. This award is funded by a university benefactor, Sydney Marcus Roadley, and it is presented to candidates who deliver innovative approaches to sustainability in an open competition. Particular emphasis is placed on advanced or experimental approaches. If successful, the recipients receive a bursary of between £100 and £500.

This funding opportunity encouraged students across all fashion and textiles disciplines to consider the impact of their work as compared to the SDGs. The call was advertized to practice-based design students at the undergraduate and post-graduate levels.

An academic panel assessed applications from across the School of Fashion and Textiles and selected 37 projects. These projects represented a range of approaches to environmental sustainability. At an undergraduate level, successful projects included zero-waste pattern cutting methods, upcycling secondhand garments, and local sourcing. PhD students studying bio-technology and the use of enzymes in the coloration process also received funding (Netithammakorn et al., 2018).

These approaches broadly fell into three categories:

- Sustainable process
- Sustainable alternatives
- External engagement.

The Roadley Awards successfully promoted research into sustainable development within the School of Fashion and Textiles. Providing some funding made the project goals more accessible to students, and it was encouraging to see the breadth of projects and the range of SDGs students addressed. The Award will run again in 2019-2020, and\\ is expected to build on the success and enthusiasm it generated in 2018-2019.

Conclusion

The School of Fashion and Textiles within the Faculty of Arts, Design, and Humanities has instigated changes to current design practices and the need to problem-solve as opposed to a singular desire to create aesthetically beautiful product. interdisciplinary working and research and innovation will be key to this.

Utilizing the UN SDGs as a framework for a curriculum review proved an effective method of highlighting engagement with the goals, across different levels. Raising awareness of the SDGs enabled the academic teams to emphasize that sustainable development has already been taught. This review also provides an effective way of highlighting areas on which to focus curriculum development. Academics are now sharing good practice across subject areas. The aim is to make students aware of how decisions made at the start of the design process can influence the effective, long-term sustainability of their designs. This is part of a strategic drive.

It is clear that the wider environmental context and ethical concerns have had an impact on the students and are influencing their design decisions. The work to develop the curriculum can support and enhance this sustainable approach. Further work will continue with a review of key environmental activists to consider how the curriculum can be further co-created with students, to address industry needs.

Student engagement will be evaluated by reviewing the sustainable development articulated in final-year major project proposals. Although evaluation of student engagement is anecdotal at this stage of the academic year, student interest and pursuit of sustainable development is heightened by a shift to a problem-solving culture. Many tutors involved in project supervision have commented that the vast majority have some reference to sustainability. This will be further supported by the expected increase in applications for this year's Roadley Award.

DMU pedagogic practice is committed to developing students as critical thinkers, understanding the need to problem-solve through the lens of responsible design. The ultimate goal is to create curricula that will equip the next generation of designers, communicators, and buyers with the knowledge to be able to address the sustainability and ethical challenges and drive change in the industry.

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How Do Educators and Students Work for the Sustainable Development of China's Fashion Industry?

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Abstract

Sustainable development is an important issue in the global fashion industry. As the largest clothing consumer and producer in the world, China has an unmistakable responsibility to promote the sustainable development of fashion industry. Due to a shift in Chinese consumers, the younger generation of consumers pays more attention to brand environmental protection and social responsibility, but the sustainable development process of the Chinese fashion industry is still relatively slow and there are some obstacles. The reason lies in the lack of sustainable fashion education, so for this study researchers conducted questionnaires and interviews with educators, students, and designers of some fashion universities in China. Taking colleges and universities as units, this paper probes the present situation of sustainable fashion education in China from cognition to existing problems and development trends and puts forward some measures and ideas for educators and students to practice sustainable fashion development. And this study combined with the regional development of China's clothing industry imbalance, industrial clusters prominent characteristics of regional research, to explore the future of education to promote the sustainable development of a regional clothing industry.

Keywords: educators; students; designers; Chinese fashion industry; sustainable development

Introduction

Education regarding sustainable development in China began in the 1980s. China's Agenda 21, which was promulgated in 1994, proposed to rebuild education for sustainable development, which set off a wave of reform in the field of education. Tian Qingput forward a fine vision: "the future education of our country is definitely a sustainable development education with Chinese characteristics which fully embodies the harmony of environment, society and economy" (Qing, 2004, p. 10). But the effect of sustainable development education has not been significant; education has not become a strong force in promoting China's sustainable development. The key reason lies in not implementing higher education on sustainable development. Colleges and universities do not combine sustainable development education with professional learning, resulting in a lack of awareness and action on the part of students and graduates regarding sustainable development. The fashion industry is an important part of sustainable development and implementing the concept of sustainable development in the training of garment

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professionals is conducive to the transformation of fashion industry thinking and decision-making. Therefore, this research group issued an Internet questionnaire survey about the understanding of fashion sustainable development, will to practice, hindering factors, and potential trends and other aspects of study, for China's fashion university educators. The researchers received 442 valid questionnaires in response and conducted one-on-one in-depth interviews with more than 100 students and designers.

The survey covers a wide range of regions in China, including comprehensive universities, fashion universities, and vocational colleges. Among the surveyed teachers, 36.8% were under 30 years old, 34.2% were 31-40 years old, 23.8% were 41-50 years old and 5.2% were over 50 years old. 76.0% of them are professional garment teachers. Their research interests include garment design, garment culture, garment technology, and garment brands. The researchers, using SPSS data analysis software, utilized descriptive statistical analysis, cross-sectional analysis and correlation analysis methods to study this subject.

Investigation on Sustainable Fashion Development among Chinese Fashion Universities
Analysis of Educators' Knowlege of Sustainable Development

The awareness and knowledge of educators can directly reflect the reality of sustainable development education in colleges and universities. According to the questionnaire survey, 85.3% of the educators believe that it is necessary for the fashion industry to practice sustainable development based on their research direction, and 71.5% of the educators believe that education plays a vital role in promoting the sustainable fashion. In terms of gender, the study also found finds that there is no significant difference between the understanding and practice of sustainable fashion, which indicates that gender has little influence on sustainable fashion in China. From the perspective of research direction, educators have different ways of understanding the sustainable development of the fashion industry (figure 1). Non-professional educators generally have a lower understanding of fashion sustainable development than do professional educators, and fashion brand research educators generally have a higher understanding of fashion sustainable development than those pursuing other directions, which indicates that fashion brand research educators realized the importance of fashion sustainable development earlier.
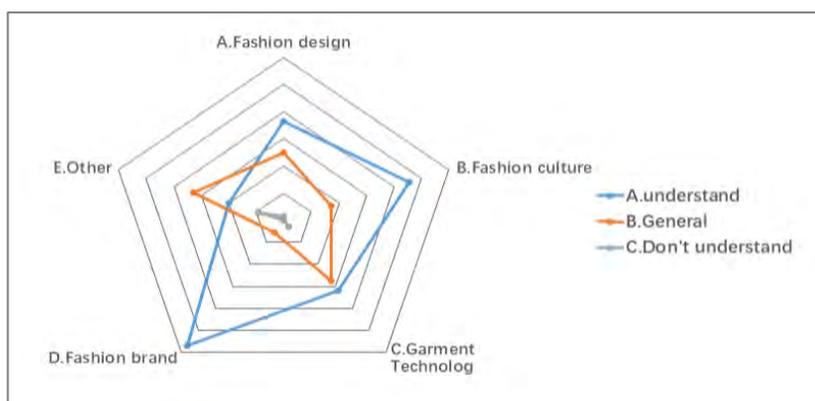
Figure 1. Educators' understanding of the sustainability of the fashion industry

The study also found that educators of different ages have different types of influence

on the development of sustainable fashion; for example, the number of papers published on sustainable fashion are greater with the increase in age. However, overall survey results show that the proportion of participants in sustainable fashion research is much smaller than the proportion of non-participants (figure 2), which indicates that theoretical research on sustainable fashion in China is still in its infancy, and that researchers are mainly concentrated in the 41-50 years age group. A survey of willingness to practice sustainable fashion found that the willingness to practice decreased with age (figure 3). This shows that young educators have a high degree of recognition of and action for the concept of sustainable development, which is the potential driving force of sustainable fashion curriculum construction.
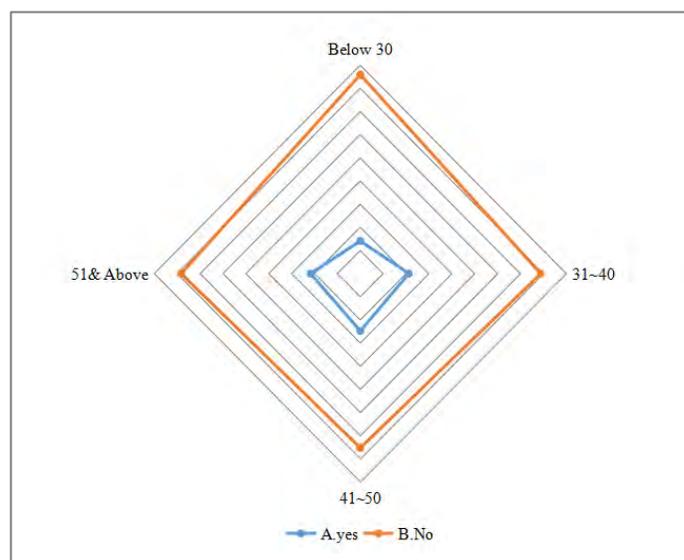
Figure 2. Age comparison of theoretical studies on sustainable fashion of educators.
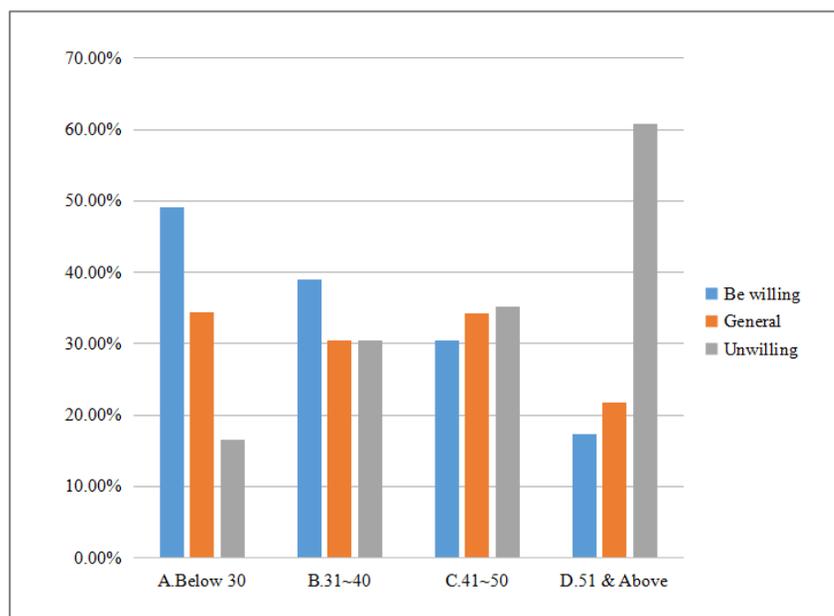
Figure 3. Willingness of different ages to practice fashion sustainable development.

In addition, survey analysis shows that there is a significant correlation between the age of the educator and the degree of acceptance of the view that it is the responsibility of the

educated to be aware of the negative impact of the fashion industry (table 1). The correlation shows that with increased age, educators' sense of responsibility to reveal the negative impact of the fashion industry to students is gradually enhanced, and the enhancement of this sense comes from in-depth theoretical research and the accumulation of teaching experience.

Table 1. Correlation analysis between age and educators' responsibility to teach students the negative impact of fashion industry

		What's your age?	How much do you agree with the view that it is the responsibility of clothing teachers to make students aware of the negative effects of the fashion industry?
What's your age?	Pearson correlation	1	.118*
	Significant (two tails)		.013
	Number of cases	442	442
How much do you agree with the view that it is the responsibility of clothing teachers to make students aware of the negative effects of the fashion industry?	Pearson correlation	.118*	1
	Significant (two tails)	.013	
	Number of cases	442	442

*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

First, when analyzing the ways to inspire educators to practice sustainable fashion education, two paths for sustainable fashion design, competition and cooperation between local enterprises and university projects, have the highest mean value (figure 4). Compared with the exchange of theoretical knowledge, educators can get more ideas from practical activities. Second, according to the analysis of factors promoting sustainable fashion education development, educators generally believe that the new era of youth awareness of social and environmental responsibility, and national policies to promote the development of sustainable fashion education are the two main factors. Finally, according to the analysis of the status quo of educators with regard to sustainable fashion theory, only 19.5% of the interviewees said that they had published relevant papers on sustainable fashion development, and the proportion of the educators in fashion design research was as high as 59.3%. This shows that the attention of educators toward issues of sustainable fashion is not high, leading to the lack of domestic sustainable fashion theory research and the simplification of research results. Based on this status quo with regard to sustainable development of China's fashion industry, further analysis of theoretical research shows that educators generally believe that the demand for theoretical research on the inheritance and development of Chinese traditional culture is the highest, while demand for theoretical

research on the status quo and measures toward the sustainable development of fashion is the lowest (figure 5). It shows that educators' understanding of sustainable fashion is limited to the inheritance of traditional culture, and lack of analysis and understanding of the reality of the current fashion industry.
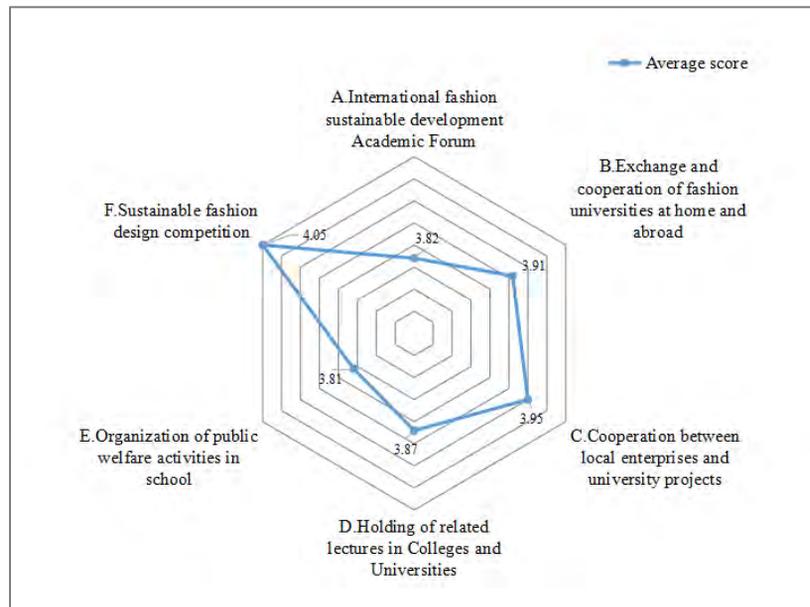
Figure 4. Average score of ways to inspire educators to practice sustainable fashion education.
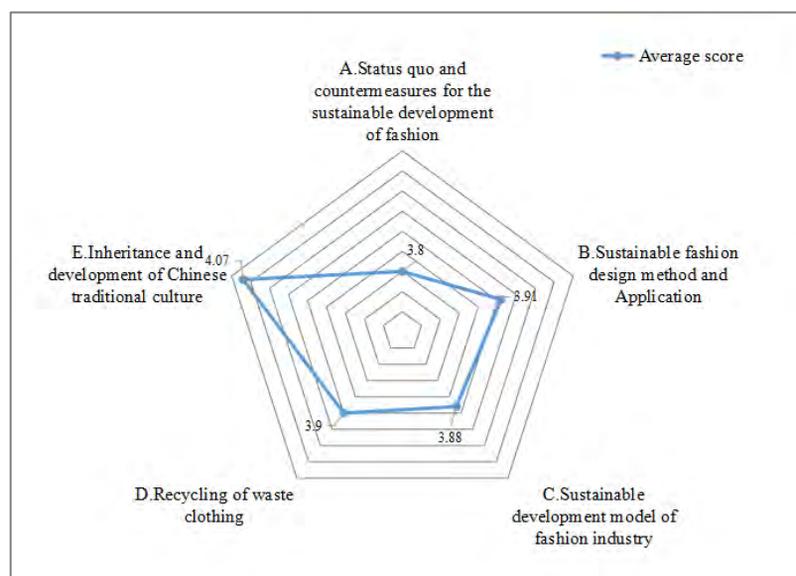
Figure 5. Average score of theoretical research required by Chinese fashion industry.

Analysis of Student Knowledge of Sustainable Fashion

According to research on the students, the researchers used questionnaire interviews to investigate the education of fashion design majors, garment engineering majors, and students pursuing other professional directions. The study found that students' level of knowledge about sustainable fashion development was average. Only 39.7% of the students said they had a certain understanding of sustainable fashion development, and most of the

respondents said they lacked understanding of sustainable fashion concepts. As many as 60.3% of students said they were unaware of the collapse of a garment factory in Dhaka, Bangladesh, in 2013, reflecting the low level of attention paid by Chinese students to the development status and problems of the fashion industry. When fashion students and non-professional students were asked to evaluate the fashion industry's negative impacts, fashion design student's evaluations were higher in all dimensions compared to other professional students. Garment engineering students believe that the fashion industry has a major impact on resource consumption and water pollution (figure 6).This shows that clothing design students have a greater understanding of the environmental and social impacts of the fashion industry than other majors, and clothing design students generally believe that fashion industry unavoidably responsible for global resource consumption and water pollution. In response to the negative impact of the fashion industry, 87.7% of the students expressed they are willing to practice fashion sustainable development if they understand the negative environmental impacts of the fashion industry.
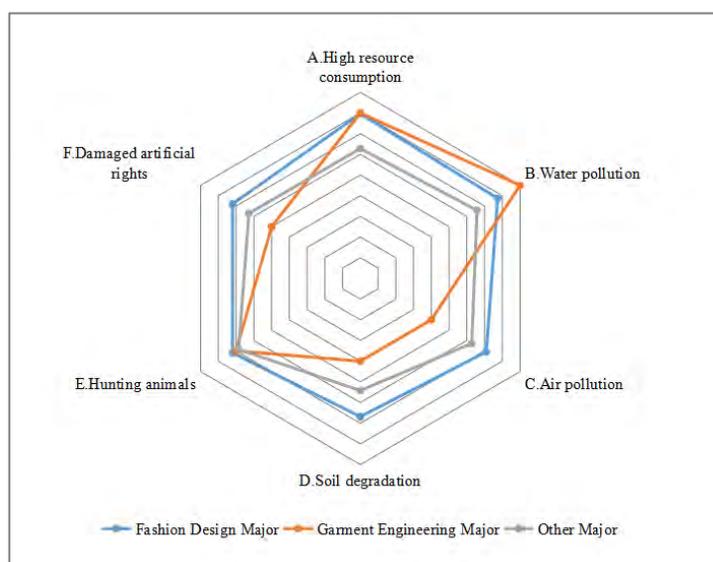
Figure 6. Comparison of student cognition of the negative effects of the fashion industry

According to the survey of the students' willingness to study a sustainable fashion course, up to 81% expressed that they were interested in the sustainable fashion course. Among them, 48% of students who have received fashion sustainable development courses think that the study of fashion sustainable development has a greater impact on individuals, and 32% think that the impact is very great. This shows that studetns have a high degree of recognition of the sustainable fashion curriculum, and students also expressed a strong desire to study sustainable fashion theory. As to whether students who have received training in sustainable fashion courses understand and use methods of sustainable clothing design, with the exception of slow design, it was higher than that of untrained students (figure 7), and there was a significant positive correlation between the learning in sustainable fashion courses and the level of understanding of sustainable fashion (table 2). The two sets of data discussed fully show that the construction of sustainable fashion curriculum plays a vital role

in the practice of sustainable fashion.
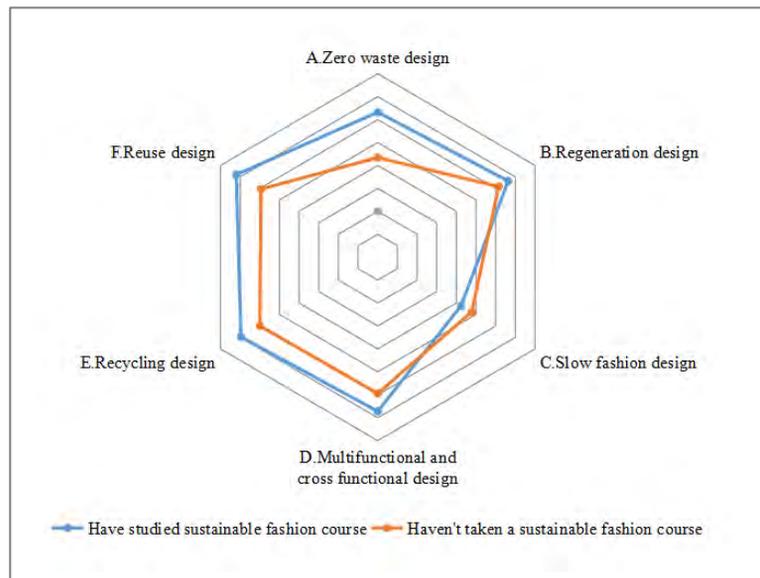
Figure 7. Comparison of design method in terms of whether students took a sustainable fashion course

Table 2. Correlation Analysis of Whether to Study Relevant Courses and Level of Understanding of Sustainable Fashion

		Have you taken any courses related to fashion sustainability?	What do you know about fashion sustainability?
Have you taken any courses related to fashion sustainability?	Pearson correlation	1	.310*
	Significant (two tails)		.013
	Number of cases	63	63
What do you know about fashion sustainability?	Pearson correlation	.310*	1
	Significant (two tails)	.013	
	Number of cases	63	63

*Correlation is signifiicant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Problems and Suggestions Based on Investigation and Analysis

Based on the questionnaire survey results regarding fashion sustainable development in Chinese fashion universities, the researchers adopted cross-analysis and correlation analysis. This study combs the problems and obstacles of sustainable fashion education from the subjective consciousness and objective condition and puts forward some suggestions in order to provide direction for sustainable fashion education in China.

Subjective Consciousness

From the investigation and analysis, college educators have a strong understanding of fashion sustainable development, but they lack effective methods and measures to practice sustainable fashion education. Middle-aged educators rate higher than young educators in theoretical research and awareness of educational responsibility, but they are less willing to practice sustainable fashion than young educators. The active young educators lack the sense of responsibility and theoretical support, while the middle-aged educators who have both theoretical knowledge and sense of responsibility lack the ability to act. The difference between this concept and action leads to the lack of sustainable fashion education in China. This difference is also reflected in the phenomenon of college educators "neglecting teaching, emphasizing research." According to a survey, 67.27% of educators believed that university teachers neglect teaching and emphasize research, and 60.23% of the students think that university teachers neglect teaching and emphasize research. (Aiping & Dongliang, 2017, p. 33) The researchers concluded that there is a problem with coordinating the educators' consciousness of a problem and practical action. In view of the above problems, the researchers believe that we should strengthen the cultivation of young educators' scientific research ability and sense of responsibility, and we should encourage middle-aged educators to implement scientific research achievements and a sense of responsibility into teaching practice or project cooperation, so as to promote the development of sustainable fashion education in China and lay a solid educational foundation for the practice of sustainable development of the Chinese fashion industry.

Objective Conditions

From an objective point of view, the conditions for realization of sustainable fashion education in China show that educators believe that the cooperation and exchange between universities and social organizations plays an important role in inspiring the awareness of sustainable fashion education. But following the exchange of activities inside and outside the university, educators cannot effectively apply the accepted ideas and practical experience to the construction of sustainable fashion-related courses and activities. Therefore, social activities, such as international fashion sustainable development academic forums, and local enterprises and university cooperative projects, cannot have an impact and role in sustainable fashion education in China. In the analysis of the objective factors that hinder the development of sustainable fashion education, 33.94% of the educators think that the fashion industry has a low demand for sustainable design talents, which leads to the insufficient implementation of sustainable fashion education in colleges and universities. Second, 31.9% of the educators think that inadequate teaching facilities is one of the reasons why a sustainable fashion curriculum is difficult to promote. Therefore, the researchers believe that the state should vigorously support the concept of sustainable development of independent designer brands, encourage clothing enterprises to explore the sustainable consumption market, and set up corresponding jobs. The state should increase investment in the construction of teaching facilities in colleges and universities and introduce high-tech production equipment to turn the concept of sustainable fashion into practice. At the same time, college educators should encourage students to take a long-term view of the future potential of the sustainable fashion industry and enhance the confidence and motivation of

educated fashion students to participate in the sustainable fashion industry.

Measures for Educators and Students to Carry Out Sustainable Fashion

Education is the ideological source for the fashion industry and the experimental base for cultivating talent and solving professional problems. It plays a subtle role in the fashion industry, but it is also the most easily ignored side of sustainable fashion issues. Unsustainable fashion education not only encourages the fashion industry to develop at the cost of the environment, but also increases the difficulty of sustainable development for people with insights on the fashion industry. In the past, both in education and society, we build the "same old ways" of thinking into our behavior and in so doing, radically limit the potential effects of our actions (Meadows, 2009). Therefore, reforming fashion education is the primary goal for the sustainable development of China's fashion industry.

Based on Ideology, We Should Strengthen the Guiding Role of Educators

Fashion sustainable development education can be the ideological basis for students, designers, and a fashion industry development model. Therefore, university educators should be the ideological source to shoulder the responsibility of sustainable development education for students and even for all the people in the society. Educators should play different roles in a sustainable fashion industry. First, as communicators, educators should set an example to actively learn the relevant theoretical knowledge about sustainable fashion based on their own research direction. They can absorb advanced ideas and practical experience at home and abroad and combine this with their own ideas to give the fashion industry the best development ideas. Second, as practitioners, educators have a certain theoretical base. They can make the university as a means to launch the student to carry on small-scale experiments. In the process of continuous practice and trial and error, educators find a way to solve the problems and explore the blind spots of theoretical research. Enriching theoretical research and accumulating practical experience will lay a solid foundation for the fashion industry to practice sustainable development. Third, as feedback providers, educators give insight into social changes to determine the direction of industrial development. They can go deep into every part of the fashion industry supply chain to inspect and analyze the current situation, and they can give feedback to students and to society for further study on existing problems, development trends and practical effects.

Based on Sustainable Development, We Should Establish a Curriculum System

Education is the construction of people's ideology. All human behavior is driven by thought. Therefore, in order to promote the development of sustainable fashion, fashion colleges and universities have the obligation to establish a new education system based on the concept of sustainable development. First, depending on the characteristics of a course, the content of sustainable development should be integrated into a major course. For example, the concept of "zero waste design" could be introduced into a course on garment structure design. The current situation and measures toward sustainable development could be introduced into a course on clothing brand management. In order to cultivate professional

talent who can concentrate on solving problems in the field, design methods such as regenerative design and the training of design thinking could be introduced in a course on clothing design. Second, educators should break the "snail-house" type of education and instead open and set up interdisciplinary classrooms. Variability and universality are the characteristics of industrial clothing, while the sustainable development of clothing involves intelligent technology, biotechnology, textile dying, labor security, and even animal rights and other issues. The traditional education mode, which is limited to artistic design and practical technology training, is not enough to promote the sustainable clothing. For example, the combination of textile materials research and fabric rebuilding courses, or the combination of textile dyes and folk printing and dyeing processes, could cultivate an effective solution to the industrial problems through comprehensive talent.

Based on Regional Characteristics, We Should Adopt Regional Cooperation

China has a vast territory. Because of its different geographical situations, each province has its own natural resources, resulting in the unbalanced development of the garment industry and the prominent characteristics of the industrial clusters. In order to promote the development of a regional garment industry, the Ministry of Education established regional textile colleges based on prominent industrial clusters and regional characteristics, such as Donghua University in East China, Beijing Institute of Fashion Technology in North China, Wuhan Textile University in Central China, and so on. Different regional development characteristics of the fashion industry lead to different regional environmental problems. Therefore, the sustainable development of China's fashion industry should first focus on solving regional problems, and then gradually promote the national transformation of fashion industry.

The first step is to adopt modular coordination and cooperation for the production and operation processes of enterprises. The life cycle of garment production is divided into design, production, transportation, storage, sales and after-sale, and other modules; the current traditional production model leads to each module having problems with unsustainability. With the help of the theoretical knowledge of educators, the innovative consciousness of students, and the practical experience of an enterprise's staff, the development problems of specific modules could be solved.

Second, regarding the development of a regional fashion industry, university educators, students, enterprise designers and leaders should be mobilized to cooperate on solving regional environmental problems, and at the same time seek a sustainable development path for the regional fashion industry. For example, the garment industry in Northwest China is mainly based on the processing of wool and textile products, and the herdsmen overgraze to improve their economic income, resulting in ecological imbalance. Relevant enterprises can cooperate with teachers and students majoring in textile materials and knitting design in colleges and universities to develop sustainable alternatives to solve environmental problems caused by material resources. At the same time, fashion colleges and universities could take the regional characteristics of sustainable clothing design to disseminate regional culture, and produce design works with emotional resonance. If we give full play to the positive role of educators and students in the fashion industry and in society

as a whole, it would promote the development of China's sustainable fashion industry and greatly contribute to global sustainable development.

Acknowledgements

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Breaking the Boundaries of the Traditional Curriculum to Develop Collaboration and Cognitive Diversity

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Abstract

Research predicts a growing demand for future skills that are difficult to automate. This paper argues that the situation is threatened by reduced emphasis on design and technology education, accentuated by the lack of inclusivity. To address this shortfall, UK educational institutions are recognizing the value of collaboration to enable innovation and creativity.

A case study methodology is used, with cases from two universities, where collaborative opportunities are embedded into the curriculum in recognition of the current industry requirement for cognitive diversity. However, the disruption to the curriculum poses a challenge and provocation to both staff and students through the mindset and culture shift to make a successful transition to new ways of thinking and working.

The paper explores the interdisciplinary educational experience at Nottingham Trent University, which involved collaboration between mobile app development students from the School of Science & Technology and fashion management students from the School of Art & Design to co-develop a mobile app proposal. The second case study involves students from the Manchester Fashion Institute investigating new initiatives within fashion and collaborating with industry professionals to develop sustainable products.

The shared findings were that students gained more strategic cross-industry knowledge, with an emphasis on self-critique and a greater understanding of inclusivity and cultural awareness. The conclusion discusses the positive impact of collaboration and cognitive diversity on the student learning experience and points to future directions for research and educational practice through the creation of a thinking space for participants to implement in their own discipline.

Keywords: inclusivity, technology, collaboration, interdisciplinary, cognitive diversity

Introduction

Research from the Design Council predicts a growing demand for future skills that are difficult to automate with "an emerging risk of growing inequality between . . . people who have such skills and those who don't" (Design Council, 2018,p. 6). Skills identified as idea generation, innovation, and originality, alongside the emphasis on digital technology, are predicted to continue to grow. A "fourth industrial revolution" places greater emphasis on knowledge spanning different subject areas, challenging the traditional boundaries of the curriculum to prepare future employees to meet these cognitive requirements (Bakhshi et al., 2017). The Design Council has also argued that lack of inclusivity is also a barrier, as this does not adequately reflect the global environment and requirements (Design Council, 2018). Fashion educators need to set the pace of the future, ensuring that practice is contemporary in design and output, evolving to meet the needs of this constantly changing fashion landscape. To address this shortfall, UK educational institutions recognize the value of collaboration as an enabler for innovation and creativity. Collaboration within an interdisciplinary team has the advantage of providing experiences and resources beyond the capabilities of a single student, and adds brainpower to problem-solving processes (Lowman, 2000 as cited by Carroll, 2010).

Educators have access to a wealth of knowledge that can build confidence and allow students to evaluate numerous possibilities to build their future (Soini et al., 2019).

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Additionally, assessment should not dictate or shape the future in isolation, nor without reflection. It is imperative that we critique the past, learning from mistakes in order to build and work together to improve in the future. The best practices of the past may not apply to today's society, and may not be effective in the future environment. Cognitive diversity is the inclusion of people with different styles of problem-solving who can offer unique perspectives because they think differently. Scientists, teachers, and methodologists around the world are working to improve the process of obtaining and absorbing information, and then transferring this knowledge to the student (Gurevych & Kademiya, 2017).

Aim of the Study

This study aims to analyze different communities of fashion students, examining how, through innovative curriculum design and exploring cognitive diversity, they are prepared for a future within the fashion industry. Two case studies will investigate blended learning strategies, and propose best practices and future collaborative opportunities.
Objectives include:
- Examining future skills and demanding requirements for employability within the fashion industry
- Exploring cognitive diversity within the current curriculum
- Evaluating collaboration and inclusivity, focusing on case studies within fashion undergraduate communities
- Recommending best practices for implementation within learning and teaching to enhance graduate attributes

Rationale for the Project

Our rationale was to review empirical projects within two universities in the United Kingdom in the context of collaboration in a fashion business environment. In each case study, students explore solutions through problem-based learning and/or experiential learning, to research and formulate solutions to real-life problems that replicate industry practice. The purpose of the project was to examine contemporary learning and collaboration opportunities to meet the needs of the future structure of the fashion industry.

Literature Review

Society is faced with significant and increasing amounts of information to build competence and evaluate the possibilities of application under different conditions. Miller and colleagues (1998) highlighted strategic decision processes and planning as important factors within the curriculum. These skills and learning are still relevant today, allowing the student to develop their understanding in academia and build knowledge to ensure their employability skills are equipped for industry.

Trought (2012, p. 125) suggests "The changes in the higher education sector will continually increase the importance of employability not only for students but will also place the onus on universities to ensure they are producing graduates who can 'hit the ground running.'" He elaborates by suggesting "A degree allows you to enter the arena, but it is students' ability to develop employability skills that will differentiate them from the competition and help secure a graduate position" (Trought, 2012, p. 125). Bakhshi et al. (2017) concur that educators and policymakers need to invest in higher-level thinking and interpersonal skills, to allow students to be ready for the new structural changes in the job market caused by the progression of technology, with an emphasis on broadening knowledge.

Innovative technology is a key driver in the development of the global fashion industry. To identify diverse factors in this fluid and developing global economy, the fashion curriculum requires theoretical underpinnings and practical application. Shaping the future of fashion requires innovation, while maintaining positive sustainable solutions that influence educational development.

Collaboration is defined as "a style for direct interaction between at least two coequal parties voluntarily engaged in shared decision making as they work toward a common goal" (Friend & Cook, cited in Swain et al., 2016, p. 6). Research shows that the industry demands graduates with diverse skill sets, who are effective team players with the agility to respond and adapt to change (Jacob, 2015). In recent years, there has been a significant shift in the industry selection strategy; the emergent theme is that employers are selecting students based on their ability to fit within an existing team. The industry perspective indicates that it is imperative that students understand group work; therefore, team dynamics are of paramount importance. Moreover, producing students who work as effective team members and can employ problem-solving methods would enhance their employability profile (Mello & Rentsch, 2015). Working collaboratively ensures that students broaden their knowledge and opinions, and they are actively encouraged to foster relationships, not only with their peers but also including industry and collaborative institutions worldwide.

Research by Mello and Rentsch (2015) discusses conceptual viewpoints regarding different definitions of cognitive diversity, with common variables encompassing backgrounds, abilities, ways of processing information and problem-solving, attitudes, beliefs, values, preferences, and knowledge linking these variables to outcomes. Mello and Rentsch further comment that diversity characteristics provide a positive correlation with innovation. Wong et al. (2016) believe that it is this simultaneous scope of diversity that leads to creativity dependent on intrinsic motivation which, arguably for the students, is the shared goal of resolving the project brief and achieving higher grades.

Jacob (2015) argues that interdisciplinary approaches within higher education are recognized to be essential in providing the required graduate skill sets such as innovation and problem-solving, but the siloed mentality and cultural inhibitors within the institution itself provide the challenge. In addition to institutional restrictions such as time-tabling or different learning outcomes, additional barriers include the expectations and cultural norms of both the staff and students (Consorte-McCrea and Newing, 2015). Research by Lans et al. (2013) found that student learning styles from different discipline levels varied widely, from types of communication to attitudes to conflict, prior knowledge, assumptions and perspectives on group work, and whether goals are shared or individual.

Educators must review, disseminate, and present available information to ensure that students develop their understanding and knowledge. In 1984, Kolb produced a learning model indicating further steps necessary to close the cycle, suggesting once a student can experience, reflect, conceptualize, and test, then a greater understanding is developed. He believed learning only occurs when all stages of the process are effective, stating "Learning is the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience" (Kolb, 1984, p. 38).

Methodology

This paper examines two case studies conducted at two universities in the United Kingdom. Data was collected from several sources including interviews and participant observation. The study will discuss the values, expectations, perceptions, behaviors and the processes of the two institutions (Stake, 2005; Swinborn, 2010).

Case Study 1: Nottingham Trent University

This study involved a nine-week collaboration between 92 final year Fashion Management students from the School of Art and Design and 78 Mobile Platform Development students from the School of Science and Technology. This interdisciplinary collaboration was initiated as a direct response to discussion in the fashion industry of the required skill set. At the annual Retail Week Live conference in March 2018, the continued theme throughout the conference was a workforce possessing both creative and technological skills; the focus again in 2019 was the future of the industry, highlighting cognitive diversity to be a desired graduate attribute. This was consistently echoed by industry experts partnered with the university, students returning from placement, and actual jobs that were being offered.

Students were given the task to research market opportunities and provide a solution for a fashion app. A decision was made to develop this group work to mirror industry roles, with the Fashion Management students assuming the role of the client and the Mobile Platform Development students assuming the role of the developer. The students were briefed separately, partly to fit this purpose and partly because they were based in two different schools in different campuses five miles apart. The idea was to use Microsoft Teams, a real-time collaborative tool. This technological enabler was proposed for the students to meet online, use the chat rooms, share documentation, and advance the project without geographical boundaries. It was proposed that technology would drive the project, with only three joint sessions timetabled.

The students were asked to produce a report within specific guidelines and a five-minute "elevator pitch" via video. The resulting pitches would then be screened by both ASOS, a key online fashion e-tailer, and Microsoft from the technical perspective. The industry collaborators were directed to select the top five pitches to present at a "dragon's den" for further questioning and input from the brands. The Fashion Management students were expected to provide the initial idea, the market knowledge, and the finances, and the Mobile Platform Development students would provide the technical knowledge, design methodology, and development costs.

The first challenge was to formulate the groups. The Fashion Management students participated in a scale-up session where they were asked to contribute to the teaching session following pre-work, presenting information from a variety of selected videos and research about successful collaboration and group working methods. The results of the discussion around these attributes were posted to a Mentimeter wordle to pull out key strengths, values, and attitudes. The analysis of this found patience, listening, communication, empathy, respect, and trust to be the consistently repeating words. The students then brainstormed what processes, methods, and actions would contribute to meeting these objectives, loading these to a Padlet throughout the session. Suggestions included concepts related to organization: "allocate roles," "prepare for meetings," "create action plans," "active listening," "share the workload," and "time management"; and concepts around diversity and inclusivity: "appreciate each other's personal schedules, strengths and weaknesses," "respect that both courses might have different ways of working and different objectives," "create a culture of openness," "discuss everyone's skills," "give everyone the chance to speak," and "avoid negativity." It was agreed that the tutor would then take these ideas to generate a group protocol for the students from both courses to commit to, as they would in a professional working environment. This covered organization and planning, contributions, meetings and roles, communication, absenteeism, and conflict. The students were then expected to sign to the core principles and then add further specific tailored agreements. The students were required to submit these agreements at the end of the project, alongside a peer and self-assessment form with reflections, aligning to the assessment structure.

The Fashion Management course itself attracts students from diverse backgrounds: 20% from an international route and within this, 73% pursuing a year-long sandwich route and 35% committed to the full-time option. As the group project was placed at the start of the final year, the straight-through students had not met or worked with the cohort of returning students from the placements, adding further complexity to the collaboration creation. To address this, students were asked to self-reflect and complete a skills audit regarding how their experience and knowledge could benefit the team, equally focusing on their least confident areas. Within the seminar sessions the students then networked to find a compatible group based on this information, and the resulting groups contain a diverse mix of cultural backgrounds and abilities.

The Mobile Platform Development module, in addition to replicating this diverse student cohort, had the additional richness of the makeup of students from a variety of different course backgrounds. This option allowed students to personalise their learning, attracting students from six different courses (Computing, Information Systems, ICT, Digital Media Technology, Computer Systems [Networks], and Computer Systems [Forensics & Security]). These inclusive groups were created in a less structured way, in that they were allowed to select who to work with based solely on personal choice; however, the idea was that student strengths and weaknesses would be key in selecting which "clients" to collaborate with on the app project, based on their previous knowledge and attraction to the identified opportunity.

The first meeting was tutor facilitated, as this was at the Mobile Platform Development student university site. Only one of the "clients" attended in person, due to room resources and the intention for a "Teams" video meeting to lay the foundations for future work: real-time communication and planning, underpinning the group protocol for successful professional practice. The students were then required to self-manage the completion of the project, outside of their joint or individual teaching sessions.

At the end of the project, students were asked to complete an online survey constructed of both open-ended and closed questions, with six further students participating in a focus group to formulate lessons learned.

Findings

Although 71.2% of the students agreed that they were excited about the project, tutors observed that the students initially found it difficult to collaborate; evidence show 54.8% of the students were anxious about the project, and 63% concerned about the group working aspect.

Students voiced preconceived ideas around their perception of the differing student cohorts rather than considering inclusivity and individual aptitude: the "developers" believing the "clients" to be interested in just fashion with no business knowledge or understanding, and the "clients" assuming "developers" to be introverted, without any group working skills. It proved quite difficult to shift these mindsets, and although the groups had been instructed to adhere to the protocol, they did not always show empathy for different ways of working, with questionnaire results showing issues ranging from different work ethics, lack of engagement or clarity of understanding of what was expected, co-operation, communication, division of work, time management, and awkward group dynamics, although 61.6% and 57.5% of the students respectively were happy with the way the groups had been formulated within the modules and across the courses.

Collaborating across campuses was also problematic, with students citing timetabling clashes making meetings difficult to arrange, with cost and time lost traveling between the two campuses counterproductive. Although 49.3% agreed that technology made collaboration

easier, the "lack of meetings meant the group did not form a strong relationship as it would have if we saw each other regularly," possibly impacting performance. Findings also indicated 75.3% of the students would have preferred more timetabled sessions together, with joint briefings to set clear expectations of responsibilities.

Aligning to industry requirements was easier to acknowledge, with students recording that it gave them the experience of working in a real-world scenario, combining different fields of expertise in design and technology, "which is happening 24/7 in the industry," allowing them to closely match the needs of the current market environment. The diversity of the group had positive effects on the cognitive outcomes with results showing 56.2% of the cohort agreeing the combined group worked well together, 54.8% stating their communication skills had improved, and 63% and 49.3% sharing that their understanding of business and technology had increased.

Positive comments centered around differing knowledge, perspectives, and opinions; making the project more exciting and enjoyable; learning from each other as a key component; and reflections enabling action points to be fed forward into future learning. The real win was findings showing that students believed the project allowed creative freedom, innovation, and originality, with the differing viewpoints allowing unlimited creativity, a positive outcome toward meeting the identified skills shortage. Feedback from Microsoft and ASOS also echoed this: "It's super hard to get creative yet stay grounded, to come up with one idea between five people, and to work together to create harmony and high quality outputs; [it] is a real testimony to everyone who took part . . . there were some incredibly interesting and unique ideas, some really well thought through and detailed considerations, and we'd encourage you all to continue to maintain these relationships and keep pursuing your ideas."

Case Study 2: Manchester Metropolitan University

This study was developed by the BA (Hons) Fashion Buying and Merchandising course, the largest program within the suite of courses offered within the Manchester Fashion Institute portfolio. The course accounts for approximately 600 students, of which 150-200 students are involved in this project each year. Within the cohort, there is a growing variety of specific learning requirements to be met and addressed.

Students studying BA Hons Fashion Buying and Merchandising at Manchester Metropolitan University initially studied a product development module that culminated in an assessed event in the form of a trade fair. The assessment progressively expanded to incorporate buying and later merchandising modules. This framework provided opportunities for students to explore and evaluate a broad and complex topic to prepare them for current industry practice. The trade fair event was successful, and became a best practice within the department for its ability to replicate and mimic a fashion industry event. This allowed students to fully appreciate industry practice while developing flair and skill without any constraints, and to push the boundaries of their learning and realize their potential.

Students undertaking this project are in their second year of study, with a significant number within the cohort seeking to secure an industry placement at the end of this year. Industry practice through guest lectures, conferences, study trips, and collaborative projects is embedded throughout the curriculum. Curriculum design is key in order to provide advantages within a hugely competitive placement and graduate market. It is essential that student knowledge is maximized prior to undertaking a role within industry, and therefore students must have a commercial understanding of industry practice and the challenges faced.

The project allows students to benefit from knowledge transfer, alternative teaching methods, blended learning, and peer learning to produce new and innovative approaches to the global fashion industry realized through a live brief.

This best practice was initiated seven years ago with second-year students. The initial collaboration involved 220 students designing and developing a new product range and providing rationale to bring this to their specific market. The project has evolved with new cohorts to include and collaborate with different disciplines in line with current industry practices. The project was developed within a product development unit, then evolved to combine buying and merchandising. The redesign of the course in 2017 facilitated a new unit, allowing for greater collaboration.

Changes include theoretical content delivered in the first term to academically underpin student knowledge regarding business strategy, people management, marketing, and supply chain theories. Kolb's learning cycle (1984) suggests that student knowledge is developed through application and then reflection; therefore, in the second term, students collaborate to develop a brand, apply their knowledge, and develop a deeper understanding in their learning. Industry professionals provide additional knowledge to support the unit through guest presentations and, this year, through the sponsorship of specific awards.

The students produce a group portfolio of research to inform, provide credibility, and underpin their brand. Students are assessed through a range of criteria including a marketing video, a business outline, and specific technical buying specifications to bring a product to market. The research culminates with a Trade Fair presentation where student groups are interviewed by industry and staff.

The fashion buying and merchandising students form a diverse cohort. The logistics of teaching in large numbers and with varied attainment levels requires detailed planning and scaffolded learning throughout the project. The requirement of soft skill development is imperative to enable students to prepare for their future employment within the industry. Therefore, as teamwork is an important skill to develop and build group rapport, students identify their personality traits, social learning, and behavioral styles and, as such, interact with tests and exercises within workshops to facilitate best group work practices. Students are mentored through the brand development process by personal tutors. In addition, industry experts provide additional knowledge and support to the project.

Findings

The selection of group formulation can be problematic. In the past seven years, group selection has been determined using a range of criteria, including random selection, alphabetical selection, attendance selection, academic attainment selection, and through to students selecting their own groups. Each choice highlighted issues and raised concerns. Student feedback suggests the main factor that affects group dynamics is lack of engagement. This can be broken down further: (a) Students who fail to attend sessions: this applies to low-attending students and adds pressure to the group dynamics. (b) Group communication: this applies where communication is poor, has broken down in part, or failed within the groups; in some cases personality clashes are evident. (c) Apportioning workload (uneven workload): this can be best defined as strong or more capable members taking on more responsibility, either through choice or failings of team members. (d) Different standards and work ethics: this is defined as students working to different standards and with different expectations.

In general, students enjoyed learning from each other and applying their knowledge. Industry feedback was extremely positive, and several industry professionals have offered their time in the future in the form of awards, providing another strand to the project. The founder of design company Both Barrels, Mat Booth, stated that "this is an excellent

approach to solving the issues of the future." Rob Warner concurred, adding "this will help to develop strong leaders, with excellent problem-solving skills and a robust knowledge of the industry." These points were both echoed by the external examiner.

Joint Outcomes

There are many similarities between these projects. For initial discussion, both projects experienced challenges for students in terms of the group dynamics, with a tendency for groups to split into homogenous groups formed of like cognitive traits (Mello & Rentsch, 2015).

Students want to collaborate and mimic industry practice, but they also want parity across the team, ensuring equality in workload, effort, and performance. In order to facilitate this, students within each institution are asked to keep a record of their meetings' discussion points appointing members to each task. This process highlights absences, missed deadlines, and concerns; therefore, staff can negotiate with the group, and the group can resolve conflict in an informed manner. Poor performance can be managed effectively and discussed professionally. Additionally, projects have now evolved to have elements of individual and group work assessment; this addition increases fairness within the groups and allows each member to excel.

Research by Swain et al. (2016, p. 28) argue that, although students are asked to collaborate and recognize this as a positive learning experience, there may be barriers to the effectiveness of this process, in the assumptions surrounding "direct and explicit training."

Both case studies identify a clear outline reflecting current industry practice in the form of joint briefings to facilitate the process. Students must feel empowered and interested in their selection of a project; therefore, the element of choice allows them to focus on a specific area of interest. With a clear focus, students can identify their preference and form groups with like-minded individuals or complementary skill sets.

Tutors are employed as mentors and facilitators, or to reflect industry by acting as a managing director. The hierarchy ensures that students have a line manager to support them, challenge them, and direct them where necessary, increasing the level of motivation (Wong et al., 2016). This is especially important in higher education, as students can understand, reflect on, and overcome the challenges in a safe environment for their future applied experiences (Swain et al., 2016).

McLeod (2017), in discussing Kolb's learning styles, believes that the cognitive structure of the group influences student learning; therefore, reflective practice is an excellent way for students to manage their student journey. All students can "action plan" their strategies for continued improvement, raising points of concern that can be addressed, allowing them to focus their minds and adopt the appropriate attitude. This process again reflects current industry practice in the form of a professional review process.

Best Practices

The shared findings were that students gained more strategic cross-industry knowledge, developing "the complex problem solving, critical and creative thinking abilities that are essential to innovation" (Design Council, 2017, p. 78), with an emphasis on self-critique and a greater understanding of inclusivity and cultural awareness. Both case studies indicate that collaboration has a positive effect within the teaching environment, producing a cross-pollination of ideas intrinsic to problem solving and facilitating life learning for all students.

Lans et al. (2013) argue that culturally diverse teams, by interacting across traditional disciplinary boundaries, generate innovation through opportunity-based learning by creating the entrepreneurs and intrapreneurs of the future, thus indicating the importance of inclusion within the curriculum. It is crucial, however, that time is taken to plan and implement, using a mixture of relevant technology and traditional face-to-face interaction, to encourage group cohesion and community action.

The observed biases of the groups linked to cognitive diversity variables initially provided negative outcomes and a challenging process for the students. When using Kolb's (1984) framework, the students could reflectively recognize the benefits, narrowing the gap between dissatisfaction with the process and the obvious benefits.

Conclusion

The aim of this paper was to explore cognitive diversity and examine how students are prepared for employability in the fashion Industry. The two case studies show how collaborative partnering has worked, both within and across courses. The case studies demonstrated the range of cognitive diversity within the cohorts and made suggestions to support the range of students. This allows students to thrive in an environment that builds the skills necessary for employability through assessments that reflect industry practice.

There are limitations with all studies; one cohort may have different requirements than another, but reflection and discussion should reduce the barriers of cognitive diversity. Both universities will continue to develop their case studies, with the hope of fostering cross-university collaborations by 2022.

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Stitched Together: Community Engagement for Undergraduate Student Learning in Supporting Refugee Women

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Abstract

Refugees coming to the United States often find themselves isolated from their new community and struggle to feel at home. By overcoming language barriers and adjusting to a new culture, they slowly become accustomed to a new place. The purpose of this project was to help change the narrative for female refugees by welcoming them into a collaborative fashion workshop with undergraduate students. The project also aimed to build empathy in students and help them understand the women's plight and circumstances. Once the students understood the refugees' circumstances, they could become change agents in shifting public perception toward refugees. Students partnered with a nonprofit organization that offered support to refugee women to create sustainable fashion products in a workshop. The goal of the workshop was to provide them with community resources, increased self-confidence, and earning capacity. The qualitative research uses open-ended survey and focus group interviews for understanding the refugee and student participants' experiences regarding the community-engaged learning project. Our research findings supported the community engagement objective with mutually beneficial exchanges of knowledge and resources, by providing refugee women hope for future livelihood and the students the opportunity to view and understand different perspectives.

Keywords: Community-engaged learning (CEL), refugee, upcycle, design

Introduction

Refugees coming to the United States often find themselves isolated from their new community and struggle to feel at home. By overcoming language barriers and adjusting to a new culture, they slowly become accustomed to a new place. One way to help refugees re-establish their livelihood in a new place is to develop their sense of self-reliance and provide them appropriate skills for potential work opportunities (Legrain, 2017). The purpose of this project was to help change the narrative for female refugees through a community-engaged learning activity. In this case, the refugees were welcomed into a collaborative fashion workshop with undergraduate students. The project also aimed to build empathy in students and help them understand the women's plight and circumstances. Once the students understood the refugees' circumstances, they could become change agents in shifting public perception toward refugees by providing them with entry-level sewing skills. During the fashion workshop, students designed upcycled products from donated fabrics and garments and shared their skills with refugee women from a nonprofit organization. The organization and local refugee women were then able to learn construction techniques to create fashion products. The process was mutually beneficial to all participants through the exchange of design, construction knowledge, and resources. Students had to be creative in finding approachable ways to teach the women how to make the upcycled products. This workshop became a dynamic opportunity for community building through the lens of fashion.

Once the project was complete, both students and refugee women were invited to share their experiences in a qualitative, open-ended survey and focus group interviews. All students

responded positively and appreciated collaborating with the refugee women. The refugee women also appreciated the workshop and were grateful to learn new skills that prepared them for future employment. The women not only commented that the students were friendly and easy to work with, but some also expressed that working with students gave them hope for their own futures.

Literature Review

Empowerment of Refugees

More than 65 million people around the world have been displaced from their homes by war, persecution, extreme violence, and similar factors (Blessinger & Sengupta, 2017). As defined by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (USA for UNHCR, 2019), "A refugee is someone who has been forced to flee his or her country because of persecution, war, or violence." There are many difficulties involved when people are trying to relocate to a new home, include learning the local languages, getting an education, raising children, securing work, accessing services, and other cultural barriers (Nuñez, 2014). In fact, only 1% of all adult refugees receive an education, making the prospect of a better life even harder (Blessinger & Sengupta, 2017).

Moreover, the barrier for refugee women becoming employed is greater than for refugee men. A study (Bloch, 2004) revealed that a disparity existed between the employment levels of refugee men and women in ethnic minorities as a whole, suggesting there is an extra "gender penalty" for women refugees. To support women refugees looking for work, governments, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), and businesses provide many different services to help them obtain appropriate skills, job opportunities, as well as the right to work (Legrain, 2017). For example, the organization Refugee Sewing Society offers lessons in sewing, crocheting, knitting, and the English language. These classes are meant to aid in the refugees' transition to life in the United States (Wiggins, 2018).

In the mission to empower refugee women, the nonprofit organization involved in this research study aims to support refugee women from Bhutan, Pakistan, and Afghanistan by offering bi-weekly sewing classes at a local community center. The nonprofit's mission is to help refugee women nurture and enhance their talents so that they can earn extra income and develop marketable skills in sewing.

Community-Engaged Learning (CEL)

Community-engaged learning may be defined as "the combination of service activities and academic learning objectives, with the intent that the activity will benefit both the recipient and the provider (Hou, 2014, p. 2)." This style of learning benefits students by using their own community as the source and focus of learning, giving them opportunities to apply new skills and practice these skills in novel settings (Melaville et al., 2006). In fact, universities should be open to community needs and to society as a whole. Additionally, faculty members should be reflective researchers in the education process (Hou, 2014). Universities and colleges can find ways to better interact with their surrounding communities and form positive relationships.

Making the connection between learning and the real world is imperative for student success. Through community-engaged practices, students are able to apply abstract ideas to real-world problems while gaining theoretical insights from practice (O'Meara & Jaeger, 2006). Narsavage et al. (2003) conducted a community-based learning exercise in graduate nursing education. The results of their investigation showed that students expanded their comprehension

of their job as an asset to the community. Therefore, CEL can be a useful tool to provide a real-world experience for students and allow them to engage with significant local and global issues through hands-on practice.

While there has not been much research on community engagement related to sustainability for fashion students, the few findings show that these strategies can help students gain knowledge in sustainable fashion. This is helpful, as educating students about sustainability in the fashion industry has increased in importance. For example, Clarke-Sather (2016) developed a study regarding community engagement in motivating fashion merchandising and apparel design students to learn about sustainability. By working with a local Goodwill thrift store, both fashion merchandising and apparel design students showed mastery of sustainability concepts through their coursework.

Mutually Beneficial Relationships

As defined by the Carnegie Classification (2018), "Community engagement describes collaboration between institutions of higher education and their larger communities for the mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge and resources in a context of partnership and reciprocity." Mutually beneficial outcomes can include enhanced student learning while simultaneously addressing a community-identified need.

The knowledge exchange should go both ways. Community engagement may be utilized by universities and refugee groups through a variety of format experiences. Studies focus on the mutual benefits enjoyed by universities and refugees when working together. Dicklitch-Nelson (2013) stated that relationships between universities and communities can be mutually beneficial by empowering all parties, including students and community members, all while encouraging sustainability in the community. Butler (2005) challenged the notion that refugees are a "burden" on their host country's resources by highlighting the mutually beneficial relationships between refugees and students in the United Kingdom. These relationships build on the power of refugee communities and demonstrate substantial advances for both students and refugees.

Method

Our goal was to use community engagement methods, such as community meetings, to support refugee women through a fashion workshop and learn from college students on how to reuse apparel and sew profitable products. All student participants in the study were interviewed during the process of creating workshop plans, designing upcycled products, and teaching refugee women. The refugee women were interviewed in a focus group regarding their experience of working with the students during the workshops. Pseudonyms were used in the article for each participant to protect their identities.

Sample

After approval from the university's institutional review board, the community engagement project was introduced to college juniors and seniors in a sustainable apparel design studio course. Additionally, 12 refugee women from a local nonprofit organization were invited to collaborate with the students to create upcycled products to exhibit and sell to the public at a later date. This nonprofit organization supports refugee women by offering bi-weekly sewing classes at a local community center and aims to provide them with community resources, increase self-confidence, and boost their earning capacity.

For this study, the two groups for this target population were: 1) 12 refugee women from the local nonprofit organization who attended this collaborative fashion workshop; 2) 3 junior and 11 senior fashion design students enrolled in a sustainable apparel design studio course at a Midwest university who participated in the project. The 12 refugee women were from Bhutan, Pakistan, and Afghanistan and between the ages of 30 and 68. The 14 students ranged in age from 19 to 24 years old, and the group included 1 man and 13 women.

Project Outline

The motivation for using community-engaged learning was to teach refugee women skills that could be used in the future. The workshop was integrated into an existing course project for a sustainable apparel design studio course. This studio course was a three-credit elective course for fashion design students with basic fashion construction and illustration skills as well as an interest in sustainable design. All 14 students enrolled in this course agreed to participate in the study. The project lasted a total of four weeks, and the workshop was scheduled during the third week of the project period. Before the project started, lectures about the overall fashion industry and sustainable practices were given to students by the course instructor. Therefore, the students already had basic knowledge of sustainable practices in the fashion industry.

The students and women refugees met at the local community center where the organization provides their bi-weekly workshops. During the two-and-a-half-hour workshop, students taught the women how to construct garments or accessories. Students communicated their product ideas to the women with the aid of visuals, including design drawings and notes in a step-by-step process. At the end of the workshop, the women had not only learned how to create the specific product from the students, but they also had the opportunity to pick their fabrics and design the surface of their products. At the end of the workshop, student groups worked on the branding for the products by creating tags and logos while the women prepared to sell the products on the organization's website and during local events. The documentation of all research, inspiration, sketches, teaching plans, tag designs, and on-site teaching were collected by the instructor for the project evaluation (figure 1).

Figure 1. Examples of students' and refugee women' work from the project activities include the students' initial design sketches (fig. 1a), a crossbody bag created from one refugee woman from the workshop (fig. 1b), and a tag design created by a student group (fig. 1c).

Designing

The project was divided into three steps: designing, preparation, and workshop. To begin the project, a concentrated lecture regarding upcycling was given to the students by the course instructor. In the first week of the project, students did market research, sketching, and sampling to come up with designs for garments and accessories. These designs were made from donated denim jeans and saree garments based on the skill sets of the refugee women, as well as to provide culturally acceptable materials. The students worked in groups of three or four to come up with design ideas. Designs needed to be simple to sew and sellable to local markets. Some design examples included aprons, handbags, bracelets, and kimonos made from secondhand denim jeans and sarees. The instructor and a group of representatives for the refugee women then selected one design from each student group.

Preparation

On the second week of the project, the students prepared a teaching plan based on the design selections from the instructor and the refugee representatives. Wagner and Gansemer-Topf (2005) found that students who learn by teaching others enhanced their knowledge of the subject matter and inspired them to take initiative. In order to better communicate the design ideas and provide clear instruction, student groups adopted different methods to prepare their demonstrations. All students were required by the instructor to test their ideas as a finished product. Then, they took different directions based on their teaching plan. For example, one group prepared step-by-step instructions while another group video recorded their cutting and sewing process. By the end of the class, all student groups completed their teaching plans as well as prepared all materials needed for the workshop.

Workshop

During the third week of the project, the students attended the workshop to work with the refugee women and teach them how to construct their products. Because the date of the workshop was set on a weekend, some students were unable to attend due to their personal schedules. Therefore, the available students and refugee women were divided into five groups by the researchers with two to three students and one refugee woman in each group.

Data Collection and Analysis

Once the project was completed, students who agreed to participate in this study were asked about their learning experience in a qualitative, open-ended survey. Responses from 12 of the 14 students were received and analyzed for learning outcomes and effectiveness of the project. The survey was also tailored to the students who attended the workshop on the third week, as well as those who were not able to attend the workshop but participated in the project during the first two weeks. A sample of the questions asked include, "How do you feel about teaching those in the community?" and "What have you learned from this upcycling exercise and workshop?" In order to more fully understand the impact of a community-engaged learning approaches for refugees, the women who took the workshop were invited to participate in a focus group interview to share their experiences. Seven of the 12 women participated in the focus group with audio recording used by the researchers.

All participants' responses to the questions as well as comments made during the process of working with each other were transcribed and analyzed using generative data analysis as outlined by Sleeswijk Visser et al. (2005). This three-phase approach suggests (a) fixating on the

data, (b) searching and being surprised, and (c) finding patterns to create an overall view. First, the researchers fixated on the data by transcribing all audio data recorded from the interviews with the refugee women. Second, the researchers found emerging themes by looking through the transcripts and the student surveys, and similar themes were noted on Post-it Notes. Finally, the researchers discovered patterns in the data by defining reoccurring themes. While using this three-phase approach, Sleeswijk Visser et al. (2005) suggest laying out all information in a physical space using a large wall or board to illustrate emerging themes visually. Printed transcripts from the interviews and survey, as well as the Post-it Notes, were all displayed on a large table during the analysis process. The study did not focus on measuring the quality of each upcycled product; rather, it explored the effectiveness of community-engaged learning for both refugee and student participants.

Findings

The survey and interview data, which included transcripts and field notes, were organized into three main themes: (a) learning new skills benefits refugees, (b) the importance of working in a group for students, and (c) establishing new perspectives for both refugee women and students.

Learning New Skills Benefits Refugees

Analysis of the audio recording indicated that overall, the refugee women responded positively to the workshop. They were grateful to learn new skills to better prepare them for future employment. One woman said, "It helped us to be independent." Another commented, "I like what I made, it's a lovely bag and it will be a good thing to sell." As indicated by Legrain (2017), refugees would benefit from working, and they also desire work as they want to start restoring their lives and become independent again. Maya (35 years old, from Bhutan) explained how participating in the sewing workshop helped her to learn new skills and therefore to be self-sufficient:

> I'm very happy with this work. You have taught us good skills. It helped us to be independent. We can make this bracelets and other designs again. You have different groups with different designs, and we can learn about them. This helps us to stay independent. We can sell them, or we can give these as gifts to our family.

Some refugee participants discussed that practice is essential after learning the skill from the workshop. Atiya (40 years old, from Pakistan) commented, "It was a new way to learn about making things. I need to practice a little more before I can sell the bags." Similarly, Tika, a 45-year-old refugee from Bhutan, explained further:

> I was not expecting it to be so wonderful. I was thinking it would be stressful, the students are all very friendly and very young, I cannot believe it. It was a lovely bag. I will have to practice but it will be a nice thing to sell. It was not any mistake from the instruction, it is me. I need to have more confidence.

The Importance of Working in a Group for Students

As part of the project guidelines, students worked in groups throughout the project period. They not only worked in groups with their peers to come up with design ideas and

prepare for the workshop, but they also worked in groups with refugee women to construct their upcycled products. The analysis of the student survey revealed that the student participants valued working with other students as an essential skill to prepare for a future career. Teamwork has become standard procedure in most professional design environments. Professionals in the fashion industry have to work together to solve complicated problems that require multiple viewpoints and knowledge to provide better solutions (Hirsch & McKenna, 2008). For instance, one student said, "Group work is essential in the industry, so this was a good practice. My group worked well together." It also instilled the value of teamwork and promoted clear communication. Another student said, "Working with other students gave me a different insight."

Analysis of the data also revealed that students appreciated and learned from each other when working in a group with the refugee women during the workshop. Many commented that this was a new experience to design an upcycled product and teach others to construct them. For example, one student said, "I learned there are so many ways to upcycle and make new beautiful things and also how I can benefit others in the community from my design background." Another commented, "I learned that upcycling is pretty difficult, but helped us understand how important design can really contribute to creating something that someone else really wants to make and sell," and "Working with people with different background and level of English proficiency was a great experience." As suggested by Stark and Lattuca (1997), the curriculum must encourage integration of students' own thoughts about knowledge, behaviors, and attitudes included in the curriculum plan. Encouraging students to create designs for refugee women to create exemplified the integration of student knowledge and attitudes while also respecting group problem-solving methods and the cultural sensitivities of the refugee women.

Establishing New Perspectives for both Refugee Women and Students

Analysis of the data revealed that the student participants developed empathy through working with the refugee women. As noted by McDonagh and Thomas (2010), empathy can help designers gain insight and shared understanding of their target users. When asked how the students feel about teaching the workshop, a common theme was that the students realized the importance of creating easy and understandable construction processes for well-designed products. One student expressed her eagerness for making the product better by saying "I wished we could have made our design a little less complicated so the women could have finished sewing them." Similarly, others commented, "If I did it again, I would simplify the group's design so that it is easier for the women to make," and "My favorite part was sewing the product and creating the presentation to be easy to understand."

Other student participants also expressed that the project changed their perspective. One student said, "I learned that it's not easy to be a teacher." Another student stated that "I enjoyed this exercise; it allowed us to not only worry about our own work but benefit others as well." Lastly, a student said, "I taught two women how to use the serger machine and they were so excited to use it."

When asked about working with the students, the women commented that the students were friendly and easy to work with. A few women expressed that working with students from college gave them hope for the future. Bishnu, a 68-year-old refugee from Bhutan, commented, "Because the students are like my daughters, that's why it was not hard to learn. They are little girls, that's why we don't feel scared or nothing, they are approachable." As pointed out by Yohani & Larsen (2009), finding hope amidst the barriers and challenges of working with

refugee families is integral to community-based practice. A focus on hope could serve as a basis to begin exploring solutions.

Conclusion

For this research project, students designed upcycled products with donated fabrics and garments from a nonprofit organization and shared their skills with the local community. The nonprofit and local refugee women were able to learn construction techniques that enabled them to create local fashion products. This project culminated in an approach that was mutually beneficial to all parties through the exchange of design, construction knowledge, and resources. Findings indicated the project gave students experience in teamwork as well as new cultures. By interacting with refugee women, the experience increased the students' level of empathy for the women and their difficult circumstances. Additionally, the project afforded refugee women the opportunity to learn skills that enabled them to create local fashion products and gain hope for the future. The collaboration brought together educators, students, and refugee women through fashion and making.

This collaboration also promoted sustainability by creating products locally with secondhand garments to meet the needs of the community, which "cut transportation of goods, create jobs near markets and enable closer control of environmental standards (Fletcher & Grose, 2012)." Future work could be done to explore the growth in teamwork, students' performance in upcycled designs, and market research, as well as further investigate refugee needs in vocational training and well-being.

Acknowledgments

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Working Toward Meaningful Change: A Student-Centered Approach Towards Diversity and Inclusivity within the Fashion Curriculum

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Abstract

Fashion often looks towards marginalized communities for inspiration, using exotic historical tropes for financial gain. However, there is a concerted effort within the fashion industry to re-evaluate this position and make positive steps toward equality. black, Asian, and minority ethnic (BAME) voices are being heard, with key industry members taking steps toward a more diverse workforce at executive level to educate and impact fashion content and production processes. So how can the fashion educator take action toward inclusivity and diversity to initiate progressive change?

Student cohorts noted that aspects of existing educational systems render students as other, and voiceless. This paper takes a position of responding through pedagogic practice in working toward an inclusive curriculum with students operating as active participants. New strategies encouraged students to engage in and challenge curriculum design, resulting in positive outcomes. Student commentary noted insightful and bespoke teaching and learning methods to de-colonize the curriculum, and to specifically respond to concerns on issues of diversity. The actions taken, and qualitative research methods utilized, re-evaluate existing pedagogic and industry practice in response to Student Union requests and sector-wide policy in promoting equality. Academics and students provided meaningful examples to learn from, and greater collective awareness and knowledge is gained. By building capability through intercultural competencies an exciting paradigm shift is taking place.

Keywords: challenge, diversity, ethnicity, inclusivity, value

Introduction

Social justice is a hot topic for fashion students, with equality at the root of many issues students experience on their educational journey. The focus of this paper is on diversity and inclusion in creative pedagogic practice. The Equality and Human Rights Commission (2019) report *Tackling Racial Harassment: Universities Challenged*, highlights the differentials in UK student attainment alongside many underlying factors that suggest learning environments must improve approaches to diversity and inclusivity. The aim here is not to place an overarching focus on what may be considered negative institutional issues and behaviors in relation to diversity and inclusion (although it is important to note that sector-wide and local institutional systemic issues are being addressed), but rather to understand how students and staff feel their local experiences can be improved, and the progressive steps they are initiating to generate change.

In line with an institutional initiative, Decolonising the Curriculum, two case studies are outlined using a qualitative approach to select and act on reoccurring themes to progressively move forward. The first case study demonstrates how students were engaged to improve inclusive curriculum design and delivery. The second is a student-led visual activity that tried to capture an inclusive moment in fashion that aligned with their ideas of social justice. Students and alumni from a variety of fashion interdisciplinary courses offered reflective perspectives on their experiences, and more specifically, what further action was

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required to place their concerns at the forefront of the learning experience. A "word of mouth" approach using student online portals assisted in creating a rich mix of voices from which to gather poignant comments from which to learn. Also included are academic staff thoughts and ideas in response to a questionnaire on taking tangible further steps toward creating inclusive learning environments. Therefore, this paper uses a range of voices, academics, students, and alumni who are active in promoting equality through collaboration.

Context

The University of the Arts London (UAL) is a collegiate university comprising of six colleges spread across the city. Each college delivers a wide range of creative arts subjects. The university's Strategy (2015-2022) sets the challenge to ensure that university arts practice is diverse and inclusive for its students. A key driver in this approach is the overarching aim to reduce the attainment gap between black, Asian, and minority ethnic (BAME), -international, and white students (see figure 1 and table 1). According to Patel & Panesar (2019), "issues of inequality persist, and are indicated by gaps in attainment . . . particularly wide in Art and Design. There are many factors known to be causing these gaps, and one factor is the narrow nature of the curricula offered at most UK universities, and of particularly exclusive practices in arts pedagogy."

Table 1. University of the Arts London Student Population 2019/2020

College	HOME STUDENTS				EU	Overseas	Total
	Home Total	BAME	White	Unknown			
CCI	18	6	12	0	12	13	43
CCW	2382	541	1795	46	514	1787	4683
CSM	2188	528	1624	36	713	1885	4786
LCC	2040	781	1216	43	894	1799	4733
LCF	2098	628	1445	25	939	2896	5933
UAL TOTAL	8726	2484	6092	150	3072	8380	20178

Improvements are ongoing to promote equality, social responsibility, and to enact change through a range of inclusive teaching and learning practices, more recently through the introduction of UAL's Decolonising Arts Institute which, it states, seeks to challenge colonial and imperial legacies, and drive social, cultural, and institutional change. Included here are some examples of the methods and actions that are taking place. UAL's transparent approach aims to provide the space to ensure diversity and social justice is at the core of creative practice. Strategic themes on diversity include:
- Ensuring diversity is at the core of creativity
- Making sure our course content and delivery reflects diverse perspectives and experiences
- Continuing to work toward our staff being as diverse as our students, by setting ambitious recruitment targets

- Allowing students to be themselves in the university and use their experiences and identities to inform their work

Pedagogic Approach

Case Study 1: Ensuring Diversity Is at the Core of Creativity

Working directly from the Decolonising Arts Institute theme, a group of fashion students and alumni were encouraged to participate in a set of creative tasks to consider how inclusion and the approach to diversity could be improved. The aim of the tasks was to give voice to student thoughts and feelings and enable them to share their lived experiences as creative opportunities in acknowledgement of difference.

The workshop focus was placed on students taking creative ownership of their learning. The phrase "inclusion through collaborative creativity" was emphasized at each session. Gurhnam Singh notes that, "the project of decolonisation is less about seeking out authentic culture as such but more about the opening up of creative spaces to facilitate the production of culture informed by indigenous thinking and doing" (Singh, 2018, p. 1). In this respect students were prompted to capture and reflect on their own spontaneous thinking and doing through taking ownership of the session. The theme and task was "fashion, diversity and inclusion: In your voice, what does it mean to you?"

The focus group was student-led. Students were divided into five groups of between – seven and ten students, with an additional small group of alumni who were operating as student ambassadors for the course/s. Students initially wanted to further understand what the intentions were around diversity and did not always understand the position on diversity and inclusion.

A zine produced in collaboration with the UAL Student Union and UAL Teaching and Learning Exchange (figure 2) was distributed so students had a clearer understanding of the UAL approach to decolonizing the curriculum.
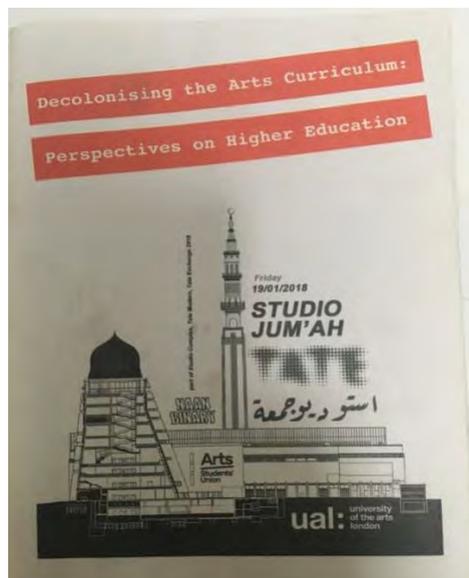
Figure 2. Decolonising the Arts Curriculum:
UAL Zine front cover.

The students cited a number of different points from the zine (figures 3 through 8) and shared and discussed their ideas in a collaborative session. The group demographic consisted of students and alumni (international, international BAME, home BAME). Commentaries

and notes picked up some interesting themes. Some students celebrated the encouragement they received from academics and visiting lecturers on their courses to explore a range of cultures to inform research processes, assessment outcomes, and personal development. In contrast, comments also suggested a narrow range of content examples within the curriculum materials and style of the delivery. Students suggested that some behaviors pertained to forms of inequality in their learning journeys. Particularly notable were the reoccurring comments on the way learning environments made them feel undervalued, at times invisible, and the approach and tone of sessions questionable.

An interpretative space, inviting stories, experiences and ideas about decolonisation, rather than a didactic 'how to decolonise' guide.

… responses were plenty and much more diverse than we had imagined, in content and in form.
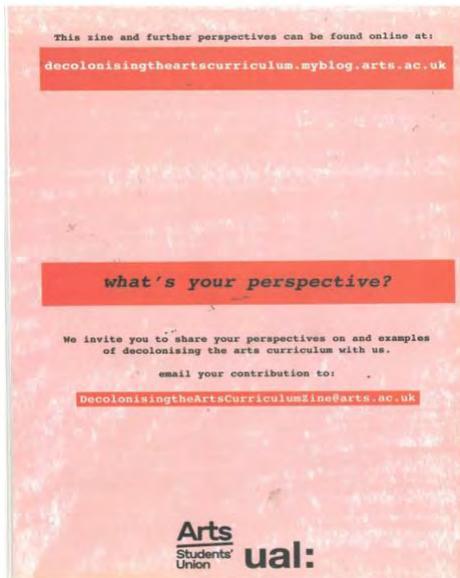
Figure 3. What's Your Perspective?   Figure 4. UAL Zine: Decolonising the Curriculum.
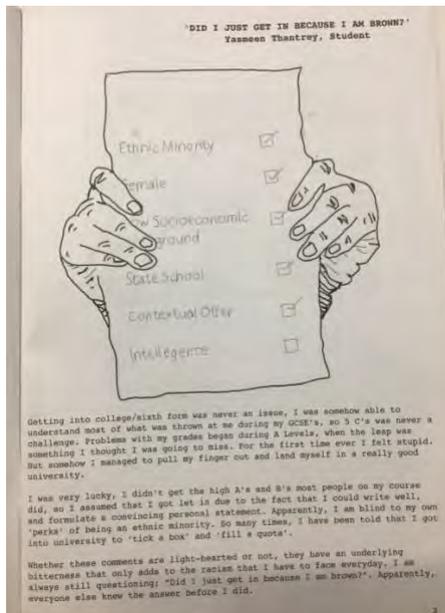
Figure 5. Did I get in because I am Brown?   Figure 6. Student Union: Twitter post
UAL Zine 2018 Student contribution   UAL So White Twitter account screenshot

Figure 7. UAL Zine: Staff contribution
Example: Zac Chaudhri 2018 (p. 49)

Figure 8. UAL Zine: Staff contribution
Example: Zac Chaudhri 2018 (p. 50)

Despite being placed in a neutral setting, students appeared concerned about potential repercussions, and this initially affected their contribution to the focus group. The student/alumni-led approach appeared to increase confidence and generate the ability to capture the feelings that are usually hidden or saved for external student surveys where anonymity is guaranteed. Furthermore, students were assured the session environment and objective should be approached with confidence. The intention was to "emphasize the need for courage . . . to position [y]ourselves . . . and more accurately reflect the nature of genuine dialogue regarding these challenging and controversial topics" (Arao and Clemens, 2013, p. 143).

Palfrey (2018) argues that safe spaces afford students the ability to explore and express opinions without feeling marginalized. Campus lecture halls, classrooms, or public space, should all operate as fertile territories for students, where engaging and searching for knowledge is fundamental despite any challenging subject matter. It is in these brave and safe spaces that Arao and Clemens (2013) and Palfrey (2018) assert students gain the opportunity to engage with diversity and purposeful free expression. Students did note the irony in that safe spaces are generally protective and avert risk. Opening up about personal experience places individuals in vulnerable positions, which is inconsistent with any notion of safety; "this dilemma looms large for target group members in any social justice-related learning activity; reflecting on, and sharing, their direct experiences with oppression . . . will likely result in heightened discomfort" (Arao and Clemens, 2013, p. 143). The suggestions students made regarding inclusive improvements had as much to do with improving learning spaces and behaviors in relation to inclusivity as the curriculum. In a Student Union-led survey 87% of respondents answered "No" to the question, "Do you think your curriculum represents people from diverse backgrounds and identities?"

The reoccurring themes and key words stated by students were value, visibility, and experiencing odd feelings during session/tutorial. Students noted these as "small things," yet stated they had significant impact, and while this did not affect session participation or engagement; learning experiences were not as inclusive as expected. A 2019 report echoes this position further: "research unearthed a strong theme of international students feeling unwelcome, isolated and vulnerable" (Equality and Human Rights Commission, 2019, p. 8).

Student feedback identified pedagogic approaches to diversity inclusion that could be positively responded to, with teaching and learning altered to ensure learning spaces were welcoming. Despite a call for more diversity and visibility of academics and support staff, it was felt this would not necessarily guarantee a change in behaviors. Students noted the focus group session activity offered further opportunities to consider the way course material and behaviors could be reframed and repositioned throughout the duration of the student experience. Students welcomed opportunities to be included in potential change and valued the fact that their opinions, life experiences, and being actively involved with aspects of decision making could impact future teaching and learning practice.

Case Study 2: Making Sure Our Course Content and Delivery Reflects Diverse Perspectives and Experiences

In this session, students were asked, " Bring something in current fashion you think is diverse/is inclusive/is relevant/relates to you." Students were invited to bring —or use online resources/social media/other—related to their subject specialization or the wider fashion industry. This was to gain a sense of what the student groups were thinking about in the moment. A range of imagery was sourced. The most popular theme from the session was student positivity on the appointment of Edward Enniful as editor in chief of *British Vogue*. Students felt very strongly about this, and suggested it was a landmark shift within UK fashion.

The student groups worked with images and statements from Enniful which they felt captured their thoughts on inclusivity and diversity. It is worth noting that, prior to Enniful's appointment, "Vogue was criticised for its lack of diversity: . . . there was no solo black model on the cover between Naomi Campbell in 2002 and Jourdan Dunn in 2014" (Cartner-Morley, 2017).

Discussion around the appointment generated passionate responses from students, and demonstrated that students had not imagined a traditional commercial fashion bible would have a BAME male leading the magazine, or that the magazine would employ a diverse leadership team to generate content. This was seen as making bold statement on many levels regarding the important issues to which students could relate.

The December 2017 cover (figure 9) was heralded as highly significant by the students, as the image on the cover was of model Adwoa Aboah, a role model to many students on her "Gurls Talk" platform. With Aboah's increasingly high-profile stance on issues of well-being and mental health, students referred to the cover as "a double dose of inclusivity." Students also felt that the *British Vogue* cover for May 2018 (figure 10) titled "New Frontiers" with its image of women from different ethnicities appeared to break new ground in its representation of ethnicities to which they could relate, particularly in terms of social justice and equality; these are diverse women at the pinnacle of British fashion.

The September 2019 cover (figure11) students selected was noted as groundbreaking. For students, the message "Forces for Change" was testament that a magazine not known as a favorite among fashion students had shifted in perception. It captured the attention of a younger, diverse market for its contemporary focus and representation of diversity, and its inclusion and promotion of topics with which they could identify. Several students in the group had purchased print copies of the magazine, which they had not done previously. Students understood the intercultural approach of the content and wanted to discuss the range of connections that could be utilized to make stronger statements on inclusivity in their courses.

Figure 9 Student selection   Figure 10. Student selection   Figure 11. Student selection

British Vogue December 2017   *British Vogue* May 2018   *British Vogue* September 2019

During the session, students used straplines and statements from Enniful and contrasted these with their own words and quotes prior to making a montage (figure 12). This related to their own experiences of what was important, celebrated, or needed changing while studying for their courses. Students collectively felt there was change taking place socially, and appreciated the workshop focus on diversity and working toward inclusive practices in arts education during their course of study. Students made reference to Enniful's use of "normal life" to inspire the content and how 'what he sees outside the corridors of fashion informs his view' (Cartner-Moreley, 2017).

"I want to see the marginalized normalized. I want the new generation to look at an image and think,

'It's very important that I show images that make the world think it is normal to be who you are."

Figure 12. Edward Enniful quote (focus group student selection).

In the workshop plenary session summary, students were keen to explain they selected material that they "could see themselves in," that "something new was happening in industry," but they could not always "see themselves here," referring to the college environment, or in course staff leadership and representation. Student rarely stated their concerns on course; to quote Arao and Clemens (2013, p. 143), "They are aware that authentic expression of . . . oppression is likely to result in . . . dismissal and condemnation as hypersensitive or unduly aggressive." It was apparent that students felt there was further work to do within the institution that could really effect change.

Students also noted the positives: the workshops and focus groups were "more interesting than just talking or answering questions," and reviewing the zine, which included similar feelings to their own, also offered them knowledge of the theme of diversity, and actions to improve inclusive practices were happening across the institution. Statements were

captured and utilized for teaching and learning development, with the most obvious change highlighted as "a change of culture." The students noted working in small groups and having alumni alongside to bounce off was seen as "a good thing." By attempting to create a safe and brave space that Arao and Clemens (2013) and Palfrey (2018) refer to as the necessary prerequisite to enable any cultural shift, students took ownership of the session and found their own way to exploit, capitalize on, and share what are often difficult subjects to discuss, and did so through a simple creative process.

Tangible Shift: Continuing to Work Toward Our Staff Being as Diverse as Our Students

In relation to students "seeing themselves here," staff are also committed to seeing a wider narrative on diversity employed. Despite being low in numbers over the years, long-standing BAME academic staff have worked tirelessly with colleagues to put diversity at the forefront of the strategic agenda. At the London College of Fashion, Shades of Noir has been a strong force in working to generate equality of experience for both students and academic staff. Social responsibility has been a pivotal axis in raising profile and shaping the steps the College has taken in recognizing "difference" and "otherness" through a wide range of internal and external projects. "Better Lives" describes the work the College does that uses fashion as a discipline to drive change. Staff voices are vocal, active, and insist on consistent measures to increase diversity and inclusion:

> In the context of UAL, the infinite and depressing debate on poor attainment levels still persists, even with marginal improvements; the lack of racial diversity in our academic staff (only 10.32%—106 out of a population of 1,027 (excluding the 50 academics recently hired); senior management figures on individual contracts (8.12%—16 from a population of 197); the disproportionate number of student appeals by black students and staff, for that matter. I could go on. (Drisdale-Gordon, 2019)

> Some hard facts point to the need for further action and the Equality and Human Rights Commission report titled; *Tackling Racial Harassment: Universities Challenged* (2019) sets recommendations for the education sector to address. The inquiry states that 24% of ethnic minority students acknowledge experiencing harassment in relation to race on campus. The report also noted that two-thirds of student survey respondents who had experienced racial harassment had reported the incident to their university, and less than half of all staff who responded to the same survey said they had reported incidents to the university:

> Half of the international students who responded to our call for evidence because they had experienced racial harassment, said that they had been made to feel excluded, over half said they had experienced racial micro-aggressions, and 44% said they had experienced racist abuse, but 77% of respondents did not report it to the university. (Equality and Human Rights Commission, 2019)

> The report also noted that systemic issues with internal culture/s are prevalent across the UK higher education sector, indicating the need for institutional scrutiny to unpack how life on campus and teaching can be better understood to actively change existing cultures.

Diverse Perspectives and Value: Making Sure Our Course Content and Delivery Reflects Diverse Perspectives and Experiences

While the UK education sector reports that much work is required to improve equality measures, staff and students are keen to go on the journey. International and BAME student groups have identified the need for improvement to ensure the student experience is a good one. In another step to consider how arts academics can effect the required change, 28

academic staff responded to a questionnaire (figure 13) on required sector actions, outlining their thoughts on working toward a more inclusive teaching and learning approach. In a small selection here, they suggest the following.
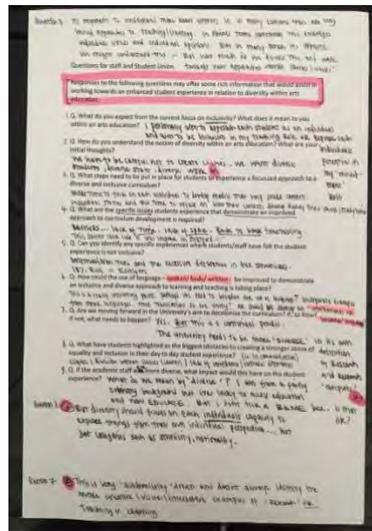
Figure 13. Sample questionnaire example: Academic response

Q. What do you expect from the current focus on inclusivity? What does it mean to you within arts education?

A. *Arts education has for a very long time had a problem with diversity, but this is not due to any singular failing, most subjects have this problem. The change has come about because access to education has become fairer and there is a demand to ensure inclusive practices to meet the current student population—a move that is personally welcomed.*
A. *Continued focus on inclusivity and a broadening of focus to encourage support and exploration of, for example, things like physical disability and class, and fashion practices. Also, the critical evaluation of the construction of whiteness, rather than it being a norm or invisible ideology. It would be good to recognise that there is also huge diversity within white staff and students, who come from such a range of countries, backgrounds, circumstances also. Critically reflecting on this would help, for example, BAME students to not feel "picked out." Sometimes it may seem obvious when we often put them forwards first for exposure/comms etc.*

Q. What are the specific issues students experience that demonstrate an improved approach to curriculum development is required?
A. *With a high number of students from countries with Confucian philosophies as a background to their thinking, it might be interesting to explore this perspective alongside the more constructivist approach used in the UK. Perhaps a student-led knowledge exchange activity.*

Q. What have students highlighted as the biggest obstacles to creating a stronger sense of equality and inclusion on their day-to-day student experience?
A. *Not enough diverse staff, and industry practitioners don't have the same "understanding" of diversity and inclusion.*

Q. How can the use of language—spoken/ body/ written—be improved to demonstrate that an inclusive and diverse approach to learning and teaching is taking place?

A. *Deliver with empathy and awareness, deliver examples from a wide range of practices across the world, through business, design, and make. Include the issues that young people are concerned with, things that affect them and others close to them.*

A. *We could consider using them/they pronouns on the whole.*

Q. What steps need to be put in place for students to experience a focused approach to a diverse and inclusive curriculum?

A. *According to my own observation, a lot of lecturers and topics have been very Eurocentric and there is not enough encouragement from academics for students to explore a more global focus on research. When students bringing in their "research" it's very much sourced from a British or American aspect.*

A. *Some students this academic year have mentioned to their personal tutors their preferred gender pronouns, however many tutors feel unfamiliar in referring to individuals in gender-neutral terms and, through habit without meaning any offense, revert to using gendered language.*

Q. If the academic staff was more diverse, what impact would this have on the student experience?

A. *The students would experience an interaction with someone who may have an understanding of their own life experience, although this may not always be the case. How do we define and represent diversity through, social class, race, age, and gender? Social class is not always evident, multiculturalism can be evidenced in many guises, but as long as the subjects, thoughts, teaching, and themes reflect a world that we are all living in today, then surely there must be a place for our students to connect and feel comfortable to express themselves in. Empathy, expression, and voice alongside nurturing talent and ideas in within an inclusive and collaborative approach.*

A. *Positive, I noticed a new Japanese student was very happy to see 2 x Japanese Associate and Special Guest Lecturers this term. We have one black female Senior Lecturer and one black male Associate Lecturer on the course currently— and I think this visibility must really contribute continually— more than occasional lectures and presentations on the topic of diversity.*

One of the reasons cited for attainment gaps is student engagement, whether that is absence monitoring or noting that students are attending regularly but are not actively participating in sessions or experiencing the collaborative relationships, which can often be a crucial indicator for working toward successful student outcomes at formative and summative assessments. However, this is refuted in a report from Advance HE (2019), as research suggests positive student engagement despite students receiving lower grades. University's UK (UUK) spokesperson said: "Equality of opportunity in higher education is of the most importance . . . we have provided specific recommendations on how to ensure BAME students are given the best chances of success" (Busby, 2019). Moreover, Orr and Shreeve (2017) prefer to focus on an awarding, rather than an attainment gap, by acknowledging that issues are systemic institutionally. By addressing issues publicly through visual artefacts, curriculum changes, and collaborative approaches, power is realigned to work for rather than against students.

Conclusion

The research activities described above were intended to be simple yet effective. They unpack the proactive nature of UAL students and staff who suggest that a variety of voices and experiences work for and, at times, against them. This study also acknowledged that improvements are being addressed locally to engender change, particularly in relation to addressing the culture of learning environments through using a range of verbal, visual, and text-based feedback. Commented one student, "The Decolonising the Curriculum series have been incredible. But all in all, having more tutors from different background could support the students better" (UAL Attainment Gap Report Arts SU, 2019). A questionnaire response makes a valuable point: "The focus on inclusivity will open the curriculum to new areas of research by staff who are informed by the broader spectrum of students. The teaching profession will also become more attractive to those who are deemed to be from a 'diverse background' and this will favour students enormously because topics and subjects raised in classes are relatable to them" (Lau, 2019). A notable shift toward equality is taking place where academic staff and students work in collaboration locally, with internal institutional efforts and interactions having a positive effect externally (Gertz et al., 2018). Student feedback "responses were plenty and much more diverse than we had imagined, in content and in form" (Patel & Panesar, 2019).

The summary from students and staff identified a greater need to maintain fashion education that is continuous, fluid, and relevant, with an ability to evolve with the student body. To do this, the approach toward greater inclusivity must continue to be visible; "As academics, we are reminded to reflect on our positions, to take the steps needed to consider our own bias that may affect teaching and learning as it offers a space to consider and confront any limitations" (Sabri, 2018, p. 12). In this sense, the reflective process and responding actions undertaken at UAL offer what might be understood as an open and transparent form of pedagogic introspection, where process and practice is aimed at improving approaches toward equality and social justice to generate and build confidence and trust through meaningful dialogue and action via a cohesive amalgamation of student and staff interactions.

Consistent scrutiny of institutional limitations is necessary for students to overcome the challenges and celebrate successes of diverse and inclusive experiences: "What I would like to see . . . this could be simply in the development of a curriculum that recognises the diversity of talent within our sector—every day . . . that different voices can be heard—every day; this could be in creating an environment where minorities feel like they belong—every day" (Drisdale-Gordon, 2019).

Students do want to make greater connections to diverse lived experiences so that all engaged in the learning journey can understand the twists and turns of the distance traveled. For many, the curriculum is a complex set of "lived" experiences that they can align with. The learning journey is part of "a movement of people, moving together for a common purpose, across challenging territories and borders" (Patel & Panesar, 2019). As the Decolonising Arts Institute advocates, allowing students to be themselves in the University and use their experiences and identities to inform their work is one of its core aims. At UAL, sharing peer-to-peer knowledge and experiences of inclusive pedagogic practice will hopefully encourage and nurture the students to do just that.

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Resurgence of Hope through Fashion Education in Prisons of India

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Abstract

This research project was conducted in the women's jail 6, Tihar Complex, as a planned intervention for a need-based program for skill development. A fashion education program was identified and implemented over a period of six months with certain basic modules in Indian wear. India has 141 central prisons with capacity of 200,000 inmates. Major reasons for committing crime include illiteracy, lack of appropriate skills to earn a livelihood, deprived backgrounds, physical and sexual abuse, and alcohol and drug dependence. Therefore, an initiative was undertaken to establish a Fashion and Textiles Training Centre in women's central Jail 6 in Tihar, Asia's biggest prison complex, in February 2017. The program was designed and implemented with several planned outcomes: economic and social empowerment, which would inculcate feelings of self-worth and self-esteem, rehabilitation in society, and reducing the chance of returning to a life of crime post-release.

The present paper focuses on (a) Setting up infrastructure, design of course curriculum and assessment, mentoring and counseling of inmates undergoing training, industry projects, and presentations in the form of fashion shows; (b) Fashion education as a means of correctional behavior, and the challenges and issues faced during training in prisons; (c) Case studies highlighting the impact of training, including increased income, measurable skill enhancement, reduction in stress levels, revival of hope in inmates, a holistic life within and outside prison, and reduction in return cases; (d) Impact of fashion education on other beneficiaries.

Keywords: correctional behavior, empowerment, fashion education, prison as a community, skill development

Introduction

The wheel is the biggest symbol of Industrial Revolution. Mahatma Gandhi, hailed as "Father of the Nation," revolutionized India's freedom movement with his spinning whee—the Charkha! The wheel of a sewing machine is now set to bring a social and economic revolution among one part of India, prisoners languishing in its prisons. They can be seen in a different light: prisoners as India's talented workforce, and prisons as incubators of some of India's talent. One resource that is abundant in prison is time. Given the right vocation and training, time can be best utilized for positive reform and may provide hope to prisoners for a dignified and independent life post-release.

This reality is also illustrated in a scene from the film *The Shawshank Redemption*. When entering the prison, Andy Dufresne remarks, "I guess it comes down to a simple choice, really. Get busy living or get busy dying."

According to the Indian Ministry of Home Affairs' *Handbook on Government Schemes and Programs for Prison Officers* (2018, p. 1), it is imperative that prison staff understand their roles and responsibilities vis-a-vis the process of restoration and rehabilitation. For this, one must recognize and understand the needs of different groups within prisons. Prisoners are not a

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homogenous population; they come from diverse backgrounds with different requirements, vulnerabilities, and skill sets. Heterogeneity among prisoners include the disabled, people with mental illness, those suffering from addictions, women, children, the elderly, as well as those predominantly from the marginalized classes and at the lowest rungs of economical social and political hierarchies. It is therefore imperative to identify their needs and work toward a holistic rehabilitative framework for them. Prison authorities are helping to reform prisoners rather than punish them. Social reform can be initiated when criminals are given opportunities for improvement through custodial care, correctional programs, and post-release support mechanisms.

With the same goal, Delhi Prisons approached Pearl Academy in 2016 to facilitate vocational education for women prisoners of central jail 6, Tihar. The proposal explored all possible aspects, including challenges and opportunities for learning in this complex environment. First, a survey was conducted at the women's jail to understand the needs, interests, and expectations regarding skill-based education of prisoners and jail staff. It was found that clothing, being a basic need, was of an interest to many. There were just two inmates with basic skills doing alteration work for their fellow prisoners, and sewing was a much-needed skill to be learned in a women's jail with capacity of 550 prisoners.

Based on the needs of the prisoners and the requirement of skilled labor in the fashion industry, it was decided to establish a fashion laboratory equipped with state-of-art facilities and complete industrial standards for sewing machines, overlock machines, pattern tables, dress forms, and various tools and equipment. The aim of this project was to establish and develop a training program in the field of fashion and textiles for the rehabilitation and empowerment of prisoners in India.

Objectives

- To identify need and areas of training for the prisoners in the field of fashion and textiles
- To standardize the lab and equipment in prisons per the needs of fashion industry
- To prepare training modules and select a number of women inmates
- To assess the vocational skills of trained women inmates
- To study the impact of training on the beneficiaries
- To identify challenges and issues of training in the prisons

Methodology

Visits were made several times in the women's, men's and boys' prisons to identify the need for fashion education among prisoners. After conducting interview with prison authorities and inmates, the women's prison was selected to start with and then take forward to boys' and men's prisons respectively, primarily due to enthusiasm toward fashion education and less vulnerability among the inmates.

Launch of Fashion Education in Women's Jail 6

A fashion lab was established and a fashion program was launched in February 2017 for the first time in central jail 6, Tihar (figure 1). Professor Nandita Abraham, CEO, Pearl Academy, stated during press conference, "Pearl Academy is committed to skill development,

and this is a one-of-a-kind initiative which will help the women inmates of Tihar Jail to build a new life after prison."

Figure 1. Clips from newspapers on launch of the fashion program by the Director General of Prisons, Mr. Sudhir Yadav; Designer Rina Dhaka; and Prof. Nandita Abraham.

Students of the School of Fashion, Business and inmates jointly performed a fashion show, musical show, and a dance performance during the inauguration ceremony. The attainment of sense of acceptance, community, togetherness, social responsibility, and positivity was the main aim of this cultural evening organized by students and inmates ,and is still cherished by both groups.

Figure 2. Music and dance performance by students and inmates at the inauguration ceremony.

Students and faculties also painted the walls outside the fashion lab with impactful visuals and messages about liberation, self- confidence, self- esteem, and a sustainable life through fashion education.

Figure 3. Walls outside the fashion lab, painted by Professor Prasanna Baruah, Darshan, Mehndi, and students of the School of Fashion.

Infrastructural Facilities in Fashion and Textile Labs

Labs equipped with standardized machines, tools, and equipment were set up. They are well lit and ventilated (figures 4 and 5). Training started with 10 each of Juki machines, tables, dress forms, and tool kits. Spurred by the enthusiasm and outcomes of inmates, India's Oil and Natural Gas Corporation Limited (ONGC) opened more pathways to expand the training infrastructure and improve the interiors of the two labs by funding the project. The project has further enabled the installation of following machines:

- 17 single-lock stitch machines
- 2 four-thread overlock machines
- Flat-lock machines
- Chain-stitch machines
- Fusing machines
- Pattern-making tables
- Toolboxes
- Ironing machine boilers
- Dress forms
- Rotary screen-printing machine
- Photographic and foil printing machines

Every inmate undergoing training has a complete tool kit, independent machine, and a locker to store their work. They are also provided with fabric and other raw materials needed for their assignments.

Figure 4. Glimpses of the infrastructural facilities of the fashion labs.

Figure 5. Textile lab inside women's jail 6.

Course Curriculum Design

Research was conducted to understand the minimum and maximum period of stay for the women inmates. It was understood that the population is rotates and depends on the decision of their legal hearing. Inmates could stay as short as three months to as long as life imprisonment depending on the crime committed. We hoped to benefit the maximum number of prisoners

through this unique skill development program. Hence, to meet the need of this large and heterogeneous group, a short program of three months was begun in the basics of design elements, illustration, pattern making, and construction of Indian wear. Initially, women enrolling in the program were of Indian origin, so a curriculum focusing on Indian wear was designed. The main aim of the program always has been to make the women skilled and easily employable so that they can earn their livelihood with respect post-release rather than committing a crime and returning to jail.

Over time, we observed a shift in enrollment. Inmates of different nationalities also started enrolling in the course. They expressed a need to learn pattern making and construction of school uniforms, western wear, and knitwear, for which there is a larger market in their respective countries with good earning potential. To fulfill the demands of a larger number of inmates, the course was extended to six months and the women learn all categories of women's wear. They are also given training in embroidery, tie-dye, hand block printing, foil printing, and screen printing, which add value to fabric surfaces.

There are two full time trainers conducting face to face classes on pattern making, construction and textile techniques. Regular workshops and mentoring on Design, Illustration, Presentation and industry projects are conducted by senior faculties and alumni of Pearl Academy (figure 6).

Figure 6. Founders of the program: Professor Antonio Maurizio Grioli, Centre Associate Professor Bela Gupta.

During training, inmates were given an industry project to develop a collection for Khadi Gram Udyog, one of the biggest retail stores in India. They were mentored to develop a range of 30 garments using *khadi* fabrics (organic handspun and handwoven) and screen printing by the faculty and students of Pearl Academy. During the process, students understood the need for raw materials and accessories and sourced these from the market for the prison. This enhanced the sense of social responsibility and empathy among students, and self-esteem and confidence among inmates. The collection theme of "freedom" used bird motifs in interesting silhouettes, colors, and layouts, signifying the demand for freedom and justice. Figures 7 through 9 show some of the processes involved while developing the collection.

<

Figure 7. Design mentoring by Assistant Professor Varun Goel to develop the collection "freedom."

Figure 8. Associate Professor Bela Gupta giving her insights on measurements and body proportions.

Figure 9. Toiles checked for fit by Associate Professor Mr. Bhaskar, Pearl Academy.

For the first time in Indian prison history, inmates walked the runway in a public place to showcase their "freedom" collection (figure 10). The trust of prison authorities, and the sense of

responsibility and resurgence of hope regarding the inmates' own freedom made impossible become possible.

Another industry project was given to the next batch of inmates who had to develop a collection for handicapped children of Tamana School. Measurements and photographs of these children were provided to inmates in prison to understand body types and make designs accordingly (figure 11). Fabrics and other raw material was sourced and brought to the prison by students.

Figure 10. Collection showcased on the runway by inmates.
https://indianexpress.com/article/india/citys-latest-fashion-show-with-designs-from-tihar-4836447/

Figure 11. Left: handicapped children in garments made by inmates. Right: Inmates walking the runway after the show.

Another industry project involved giving trained inmates an opportunity to design and construct costumes for a Bollywood movie, M*ark Sheet*, under the mentorship of designer Rinki Singh.

Another strategy that motivated and was appreciated by the inmates was the sale of garments produced by inmates during training. Inmates felt happy and confident when they saw jail staff and other inmates buying and wearing garments made by them. It further motivates

them to begin working in the production unit within the prison and earn daily wages, and inculcates a sense of empowerment and resurgence of hope. The sales process makes the program sustainable as well as reduces of the need to keeping the stock.

Current Mechanisms

This education project is derived from major schemes as given in Section IV of the *Handbook on Government Schemes and Programs for Prison Officers* (2018, pp. 16 & 35) which clearly states that large numbers of Indian youth/women should take up industry-relevant skill training that will make them employed/entrepreneurs. The scheme is intended to benefit youth/women above the age of 16 across the country. In order to implement the scheme, Pearl Academy signed a five-year agreement with women's central jail 6 in February 2017. The model for the ongoing training is shown in figure 12.

Inmates receive six months certified training to acquire fashion-related skills and critical life skills through regular counseling and team projects. They are also undergo a two-level assessment:

- Proficiency assessment to build professional credentials
- Character assessment and certificate issued by prison authorities for better acceptance in industry
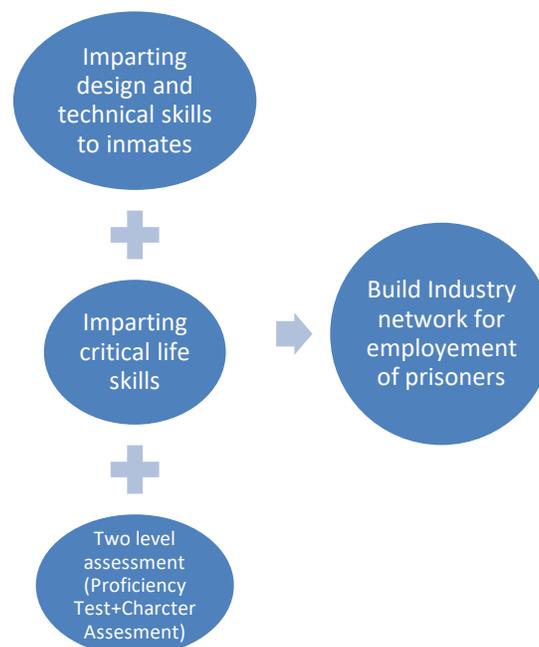
Figure 12. Model of the ongoing fashion education in the women's prison

Employment opportunities are built up within the prison as an extension of the training program. A production lab next to the training lab is set up, where trained inmates start to work soon after completing the course; they are given jobs by jail staff, other inmates, and designers. The average earnings that a graduate of this program may draw is INR 2,500 – 8,000 per month, with rates per the prison wage scheme.

Results and Discussion

Learning Outcomes of the Program

Through the fashion program, the inmates are able to:
- Develop a basic understanding of elements of design
- Develop basic drawing skills for fashion presentations
- Become familiar with various fashion terminologies and trends
- Demonstrate appropriate skills of pattern making, construction, and finishes utilized in Indian wear , western wear, and knitwear
- Demonstrate appropriate understanding of techniques to enhance surfaces such as embroidery, tie-dye, hand block printing, screen and foil printing
- Work cooperatively and collaboratively in a team and display work ethic and values associated with a garment-making professional
- Demonstrate skills for professional presentations, reflection, and use of appropriate format
- Display an understanding of unconventional approaches to cut proportion and silhouette through explorations and industry-led projects.

Interpersonal Outcomes

By kick-starting the production work, the trained inmates are able to earn their livelihood and gain confidence needed to increase their production output. This helps many inmates to sustain their families outside the prison by sending them monetary aid.

Inmates are interviewed twice during the course to evaluate the impact of skills-based fashion education. More than 93% of inmates say that fashion education has helped them to release stress and depression, as they continue in the creative process involving mind and hands. They want to spend all their time exploring new ideas in the fashion lab.

Some outcomes of the textile training are shown in figure 13. Inmates are given full freedom to express themselves while embroidering, printing, and tie- dyeing. It was observed that inmates prefer to use more colors to bring excitement and happiness to their work. It is a way to express themselves through creative and artistic work.

Figure13. Some of the outcomes of textile training done by inmates.

Inmates are awarded a Certificate of Completion of the six-month course in "basics of design, pattern making and garment construction'' by Pearl Academy. The course is mapped to six months of the certificate program in Fashion Design by Indira Gandhi Open University. By the end of program, inmates are awarded the Certificate of Completion during the convocation ceremony held in the prison, and there is much pride in attaining it.

The data in table 1 shows that 164 female inmates have been trained in fashion education in women's jail 6, Tihar in last three years. Of these, 57 have gained employment post- release or inside the jail. Many released prisoners do not keep in touch or are not willing to inform the prison of their involvement due to personal reasons.

Table 1: Number of Enrolled and Released Prisoners Along with Their Employment Data.

Batch	Year	Enrolled	Released	Return cases to prison	Present In prison	Working in production lab in prison	Released cases working outside
1	2017	18	13	0	5	2	6
2	2017	28	16	0	12	5	8
3	2018	26	8	0	18	6	4
4	2018	26	12	0	14	6	10
5	2019	32	4	2	28	8	2
6	2019 ongoing	34	2	0	32	-	No available data

Fashion Education: A Means of Correctional Behavior in Prisons

The former Director General of Delhi Prisons, Mr. Sudhir Yadav, says, "A criminal is brought to prison for three reasons after he commits a crime, first to seek punishment, second to isolate him from society as people around him may get scared of him, and third to correct. We consider prisons as correction centers." Fashion education has brought positive change in the behavior of inmates in their rehabilitation. The use of hands, mind, and creativity works as a correctional tool and has a therapeutic effect. Inmates worked on industry projects in a team, which resulted not only in a positive change in thinking, but also healthy relationships among each other. The inmates started to appreciate each other. In addition, the positive feedback from outsiders is invaluable and boosts inmates' self-esteem and confidence.

Scholarly educational programs in prisons have helped inmates increase their knowledge, but case studies suggest that vocational training programs like the fashion project are more helpful, allowing inmates to earn a living inside prison as well as post-release, and to rebuild a meaningful life.

Rina, a mother of four children, was convicted for murdering her husband. Growing up, she always saw her mother sewing clothes to support her family. Rina enrolled in the very first group and learned with keen interest (figure 14). Soon she involved herself in the industry projects and stitched well finished garments for various fashion shows, as well as for the Bollywood movie *Mark Sheet*. She was convicted for a minimum of 10 years and had been in prison for the last four years, always worried about her children, who were at the mercy of relatives. Based on her attitude, behavior, and dedication to work, an assurance was given to the Delhi High Court that Rina could earn enough for herself and her children. She was released after a few hearings on these grounds and today owns a Juki industrial machine. She undertakes freelance work from designers and is earning enough to take care of her children. There are many similar success stories of empowerment of women inmates who have earned their freedom and livelihood via this venture, both inside and outside Tihar.

Figure 14. Associate Professor Bela Gupta giving special classes on pattern manipulation. Rina, in turquoise blue, was very enthusiastic to learn.

During the feedback meeting with the Fashion School Dean, Professor Antonio Maurizio Grioli, and Associate Professor Bela Gupta, expressed their desire to increase training time as they want to learn much more. They feel at ease during training, and arguments, fights, and other unacceptable behavior has been reduced as their involvement in the creative work in lab has progressed (figures 15 and 16). The inmates tend to spend much less time in wards where fights generally took place, said one inmate. They are regularly counselled during classes to help and care for their peer in the learning process so that once they are out of prison they are more sensitive to people around them.

<figures 14, 15, and 16 here>

Figure 15. Some fun and celebration during sketching classes with Assistant Professor Mehndi.
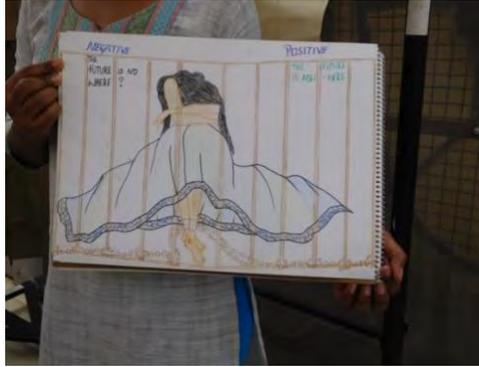
Figure16. Sketching became a favorite evening hobby for inmate Ruby.

Fashion Education as a Way to Build Holistic Life Experiences for Prisoners
        Responding to inmates, Professor Antonio Maurizio Grioli explained that they are not in prison for their whole lives (figure 17). Rather, it is just a phase that would pass and they need to prepare themselves for a better life outside prison. They should take it as an opportunity to develop skills.

Figure17. Professor Antonio Maurizio Grioli, responding to inmates on how fashion would help create a meaningful life post-release.

        Two inmates have responded : "We wanted to be fashion designers but fashion education was very expensive in our country and we couldn't afford it. It is an opportunity for us to do it now." The women are regularly counseled to lead their lives with a positive attitude and cut the cords of their past.
        Fashion education has also enhanced the awareness of inmates toward social and ethical practices, which motivates them to become responsible citizens and in fact shape their futures. On the skills front, fashion faculty have been offering special workshops to teach artwork and products out of waste fabrics (figure 18). They are exposed to the concept of sustainability through these workshops. Superintendent Anju Mangla explained that "such training involving ethical practices have actually changed their perspective toward life and reduced the return cases to prison to less than half." Inmates re thinking about a new life and not even a day back in prison.

Figure 18. Best Out of the Waste workshop gives inmates the freedom to think and be more sustainable.

Tina, a homemaker, was imprisoned in July 2019. She suffered from severe depression. Tina underwent counseling and joined the fashion program in August 2019. This led to personal changes for her. She shared her happiness and enthusiasm about learning new techniques on a daily basis during fashion training and is no longer depressed. Today a confident and ambitious Tina hopes to move out of the prison soon and start her own boutique someday. Life has begun on a new note for her.

Rita, an inmate whose daughter studies in Pearl Academy in a regular four-year undergraduate program, shared her concern of not being able to pay school fees, as both husband and wife are in prison and their daughter is dependent on her uncle. Under special circumstances, the student was given a scholarship and counseled to maintain her confidence, enthusiasm, and

motivation to learn. The mother, at ease now, joined the fashion program in prison and is happy to start a clothing label post-release.

Fashion education in women's prisons would continue to open many new horizons to build holistic life experience for prisoners.

Impact of Fashion Education on Beneficiaries

Fashion education in prison has been transforming lives. It has not only empowered and boosted the morale, confidence, and positivity of the inmates, but has also impacted other organizations and people connected with inmates. A few are described below:

Prisons: Tihar has always been in the news for not being an ordinary prison but a reformation center focusing on the rehabilitation and acceptance of inmates by imparting skills for a dignified life outside prison. Fashion education is being looked at as a successful model for replication in other prisons. A similar program is moving toward a start in a boys' prison (ages 18-21 years) in 2020. The boys would be trained for menswear, and same model of training and production would be followed. Haryana and Uttrakhand prison authorities have also expressed the need for skill-based training and is likely to begin in 2020 (figure 19).

Woman Inmates and Their Families: "Educate a girl, empower a nation." This initiative has not only proved to be an incubator of the inmates' talent, equipping them with a new skill to get a new livelihood, but has also helped stop the vicious cycle of these inmates falling into the rut of criminal activities after release. It is acting as the perfect navigator in finding the right means of livelihood in society, and their families can express pride in the women. The earnings of trained prisoners have increased from 2500-8000 INR as shown in figure 20.

<figures 19 and 20 here>
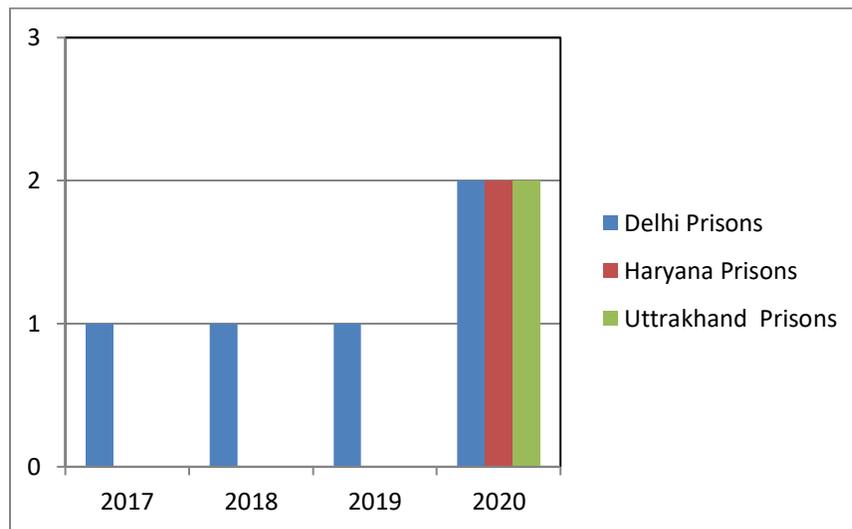
Figure 19. Coverage of prisons in India.
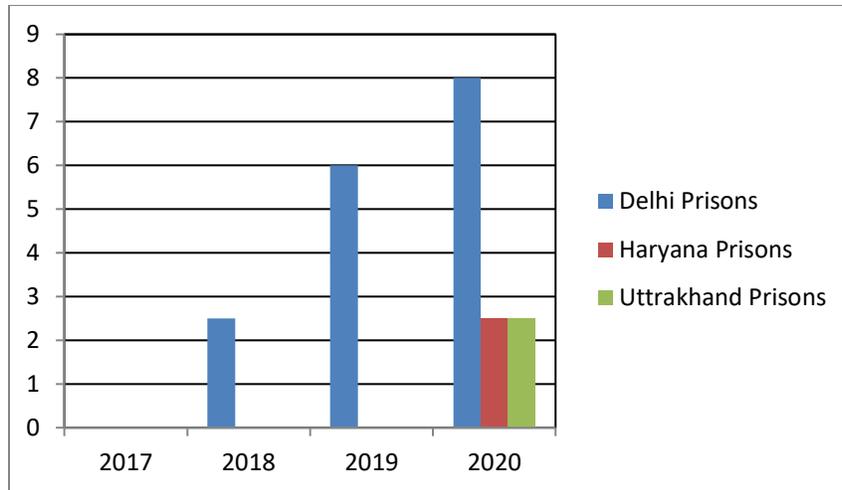
Figure 20. Salary /Earnings per month in INR (1=1000INR)

Nation Building: The "Skill India Mission" is an important Indian government program under which focused initiatives work to convert India's workforce into a skilled workforce. While the government is running various schemes to provide skills to India's poor and underprivileged, the Tihar Fashion Laboratory has gone a step further by making this mission more "inclusive." Inmates who might not have a place on any government agenda in the context of skill-building have found a place here (figure 21).
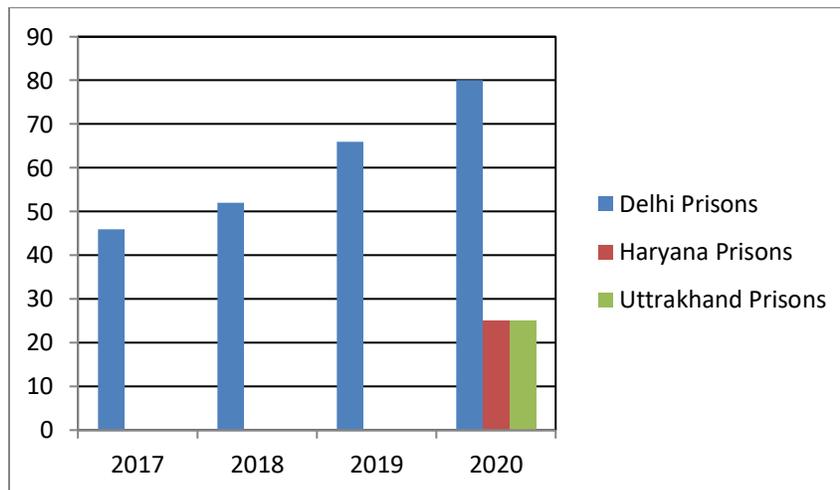
Figure 21. Number of prisoners trained.

Education with a Humane Aspect: The benefits of the program are not limited to prisoners, but has extended to the students and faculty of Pearl Academy, who closely collaborate with the inmates for cultural performances and various fashion shows without any inhibitions. This goes a long way in inculcating acceptance and appreciation for these inmates in the hearts and minds of youth and of society in general. Students selflessly come forward for this initiative and are always keen to partner with inmates. This partnership explains that fashion education can be used to bring hope to many, and that fashion designers can have careers in which they can rebuild society as well.

Challenges and Issues

Inmates are allowed to meet their relatives twice a week and, depending on how their meeting with family members goes, can affect class attendance. Court visits have also limited class attendance several times. Regular counseling and communication with inmates is a must to run the course successfully.

Sometimes inmates are released in the middle of the program, and there has been no provision for completing their training. There have been instances in the past, though, when only the final assessment was left for released inmates, who then. receivedspecial permission from jail staff to complete the final assessment. This proves that inmates value their learning and completion certificate.

Per prison rules, there is a limited exposure to print and online media, which limits the teaching of the design process and latest trends.

Over the last three years, 35% of trained inmates are recorded to be employed. They are enthusiastic and 100% wish to work in the fashion industry, while they are training, but for various reasons released inmates do not join production units or are not willing to keep in touch.

Conclusion

Fashion education has played a very powerful and distinctive role in helping this class of women build a new belief in self, and to recreate a future free of crime.

To quote inmate Rachna, "The program helped in every aspect of my life. I have visited jail three times in last five years because of prostitution and use of drugs. I hope this is the last time as I never got fashion education before in prison. It is a rebirth for me. I hope to get a job in an export house and work day and night to lead a glamorous life full of respect, happiness, and honesty. I want to go up on the runway again one day and not be called as inmate but a designer walking a runway after the show."

"I am happy that I am getting to learn stitching and embroidery. I plan to make clothes for my grandchildren and prove to them that their grandma is not a bad woman," says 58-year-old inmate Raminder Kaur.

"I plan to open a small boutique or a shop where I will make semi-stitched clothes for fat women since it is difficult for them to get the right sizes. I will also make matching accessories," says a beaming Puja.

In its own unique way, the team at Pearl Academy established the Fashion Laboratory at Tihar, and fashion education has become a source of hope for many. More than anythingthe initiative has contributed to bridging the gap between skill, a dignified life, and a talent pool identified only as criminals!

While consoling Red, his fellow inmate in the movie *The Shawshank Redemption*, Andy Dufresne says, "Remember Red, hope is a good thing, maybe the best of things, and no good thing ever dies."

Acknowledgements

project. We are thankful to faculty and students of the School of Fashion, Pearl Academy for mentoring and supporting inmates by sourcing the fabrics and raw material needed to run the project successfully. We are thankful to students of the fashion society for choreographing the fashion shows with inmates, provide backstage help, and styling students. Last but not least this program would be impossible to run in prisons without the consistent support of prison staff. *Note:* All the names in the case studies are fictional to protect privacy.

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Design Intervention Through Permaculture and Social Change: Case Studies from Selected Indian Farming Sectors

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Abstract

More than 270,000 Indian cotton farmers have committed suicide since 1995, and India's agricultural sector, which directly or indirectly employs more than 70 million Indians, faces severe crises in terms of air, water, and soil degradation, pervasive chemical-led farming, debts, and lack of a profitable and sustainable livelihood system. In addition, India is losing traditional knowledge of farming and other craftsmanship, which was more nature- and community-friendly. This has led to a loss of community identity, severe malnutrition, and loss of livelihood, leading to displacement of indigenous people. Despite governmental support, the situation has not changed significantly.

In this paper, we analyzed design and social interventions in the Indian farming sector via permaculture, which mimics relationships found in natural ecology. This design approach has a very successful history of solving the food crisis in different ecosystems across the world. Our study looks at Indian designers engaged in farming cotton and food crops in an attempt to contribute to design literature through the application of permaculture.

We measure successes in terms of three ethical parameters: care for the earth, care for the people, and return of surplus to the ecosystem. Our observational variables are design and social interventions in three Odisha communities, through interviews with designers, experts, and farmers.

We applied conceptual and relational content analysis to understand commonalities among the selected design processes and social interventions that led to better livelihoods and income for the farmers. The findings may help replicate, modify and build other thriving farming communities in India and other countries, and also invite further research in permaculture design to address social issues and influence design research and education.

Keywords: permaculture, design interventions, seed sovereignty, cotton farming

Introduction

India, the world's fastest-growing democracy has a skewed and unequal growth path. More than 50% of the people depend on agriculture, but the farming sector is under tremendous distress (Rangarajan & Dev, 2019). The National Crime Records Bureau (2016) announced that farmer suicides in India totaled 11,379 in 2016, 12,602 in 2015, and 12,360 in 2014. About 948 Indian farmers commit suicide every month. In the area of development research and policy debates, farmers' suicides and agrarian crises took center stage (NCRB Report- Farmers Suicides, 2016). The research indicates that most framers who commit suicide are small and marginal farmers and tenants. (Rangarajan & Dev, 2019) Researchers attribute these suicides to loss of farm income and indebtedness. Mohanty and Lenka, (2019) argue that a decline in farm income was due to rising cost of cultivation, crop loss, lack of skill and knowledge on farming, and price risks associated with agricultural markets. Land ownership by farmers, efficient cropping patterns and input use, and managing crop loss may help the farmers manage their distress. Among all types of farmers, the distress of cotton farmers is highly significant (Flachs, 2019).

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Data show that the monthly income of agricultural households from cultivation remained almost constant during the last four to five years (Rs 3,081 in 2012-2013 and Rs 3,140 in 2016-2017). As per a recent All India Rural Financial Inclusion Survey, the main sources of income for farmers are cultivation, wages (as laborers), and other allied activities (NABARD, 2018).

Cotton Production in India

India is the second-largest producer of cotton after China. About 8.9 million hectares of India's agricultural land (5%) is under cotton cultivation, unexpectedly consuming more than 50% of total pesticide input. More than 90% of India's cotton is genetically modified, pest-resistant, high-yield Bt (Bacillus thuringiensis) cotton (Vithal, 2019). Bt seeds require more input costs compared to traditional varieties, which puts additional pressure on farmers. Although it guarantees high yield, the farms lack proper irrigation facilities and mostly depend on annual rains, which increases the chances of crop failure (Dhawan, 2017).

Moreover, because cash crops earn more than food crops, the small farmers invest more in cotton farming (a cash crop) than in food crops. This leads to food scarcity for the farmers' families and leaves no alternate source of income. Thus, when crops fail, the small farmer is left with nothing but huge debts, and then committing suicide (Mohapatra & Saha, 2019; Gruère, 2011).

India is primarily a rain-fed country and small farmers mostly depend on annual rainfalls. A study revealed that micro-irrigation techniques could be used, but initial investment costs are high. Hence, very few, privileged farmers use the technique (Narayanamoorthy, 2008). While the northern states of Punjab, Haryana, and Rajasthan are almost entirely irrigated, other parts of central and south and east India like Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Odisha, West Bengal, and Bihar are mostly rain-fed (Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare, 2016).

India is also one of the most water-challenged nations as it has vast acres of agricultural lands, industries, and an ever-growing urban population, all competing for the limited surface water and groundwater resources. Also, much of India's cotton-growing lands coincide with these high water stress areas (Vithal, 2019).

Solutions offered by the Government of India include:

- the government purchase of excess farm produce (Department of Agriculture and Farmers' Empowerment, 2019)
- Government subsidy for chemical fertilizers and high-yield seeds. (Department of Fertilizers, 2019)
- Government-fixed pricing; however, this is lower than the market price (Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices, 2019)
- Loans waived by government (Sud, 2009)
- Government livelihood assistance or farm support schemes like Rythu Bandhu Scheme in Telangana and Krushak Assistance for Livelihood and Income Augmentation scheme in Odisha (Rangarajan & Dev, 2019)
- Other government livelihood opportunities through the MNREGA Act 2005 (Ministry of Rural Development, 2005)
  However, even after all such efforts, the problem persists due to:
- Small landholdings
- Tenant farmers not eligible for such benefit
- Water crises due to sporadic rainfall, inadequate irrigation facilities, depleting groundwater resources, and mismanagement of available water for irrigation

- Poor farm planning and excessive use of Bt varieties or high yielding varieties (HYV) that require vast acreage, excessive use of fertilizers, and proper irrigation (Mohapatra & Saha, 2019; Rangarajan & Dev, 2019).

With this backdrop, we looked at organic farming and identified that it requires third-party certification to sell products as organic in the market. This cannot help the majority of farmers classified as small or marginal, or tenants. Moreover, these farmers have lower access to food crops due to the focus on cash crops. Monocropping and producing nonseasonal products also create unfortunate circumstances for marginal and small farmers (Mohapatra & Saha, 2019).

Therefore, we identified design-based solutions that could provide food security, add to income or livelihood generation, and take care of people and the environment as well. From the literature, we focused on permaculture design (Jeffrey, 2015), a nature-based design approach developed by Mollison and Holmgren in Australia almost three decades ago (Mollison, 1988; Holmgren, 2002). We also identified practitioners in Odisha who have developed food forests and agricultural designs by successfully implementing permaculture theories into practice.

This study's research objectives are to understand the concept of permaculture design, and to study how permaculture design interventions have helped to reduce Indian agri-based crises and farmer suicides.

Research Framework and Methodology

The research is based on three permaculture designers in Odisha who have been practicing the methodologies for more than a decade. Case studies were developed for each designer by studying their websites, Facebook posts, related articles, personal interviews, and farm visits to analyze their designs and social interventions in the Indian farming sector. In our study, we considered Indian designers with at least seven years of intervention and engagement in the farming of cotton and other food crops. We measured their successes in terms of three ethical parameters: (a) care for the earth, (b) care for the people, and (c) return of surplus to the ecosystem. Our observational variables are design interventions and social interventions made by the designers in their respective communities. Apart from the observational method, we collected primary data through in-depth interviews of the designers and experts.

We collected secondary data from research papers, articles, blogs and videos, and applied conceptual and relational content analysis to understand the commonalities among the design processes and social interventions and their outcomes (Krippendorff, 2004).

Permaculture

Permaculture design is a system of assembling conceptual, material, and strategic components in a pattern that functions to benefit life in all its forms. It seeks to provide a sustainable and secure place for living things on this earth (figure 1).

Principle/Ethics		
Care of the Earth		
Care of people		
Redistribute Surplus		
Set of Ethics on Natural Systems		Set of Ethics on Resource Management
Ethics		
1. Principle of Energy Inputs	2. Principle of Energy Cycling	3. Principle of Energy Efficiency
Energy Principles		
4. Principle of Stability 5. Principle of Multi-functionality		6. Principle of Support 7. Principle of Relative Location
Functional Design Principles		
8. Principle of Biological Resource Use 9. Diversity Principle	10. Principle of Edge Effects	11. Principle of Intensification 12. Principle of Accelerated Succession
Principles from Nature		
13. Principle on Natural Forces 14. Principle on Yield	15. Principle of Co-operation 16. Positivity Principle	17. Proximity Principle 18. Demonstration Principle
Attitudinal principles		

Figure 1. Mollison's Permaculture Ethics and Design Principles. From Pritchard, "Principals Pyramid," 2016. https://www.permaculturefundamentals.com/?p=72.

Permaculture is the art and science of systems thinking about people, nature, flora and fauna, and their interconnectedness. It exists all around us (Pluta, 2012). It is not agriculture or organic farming or gardening, but an etic approach to understanding how various elements in nature are interconnected and dependent on each other for survival, and growth. Bill Mollison brought out the concept of permaculture after observing that agriculture depleted natural sources of energy like soil, biodiversity, food quality, water and air (Mollison, 1988). According to David Holmgren (2002), "Permaculture is consciously designed landscapes which mimic the patterns and relationships found in nature while yielding an abundance of food, fiber and energy for provision of local needs."

Permaculture researchers have constructed the ethics of the system as three core values

- Care for earth (soil, forests, water and natural diversity)
- Care for people (self, kin and community)
- Fair share (of consumption and reproduction and redistribution of surplus)
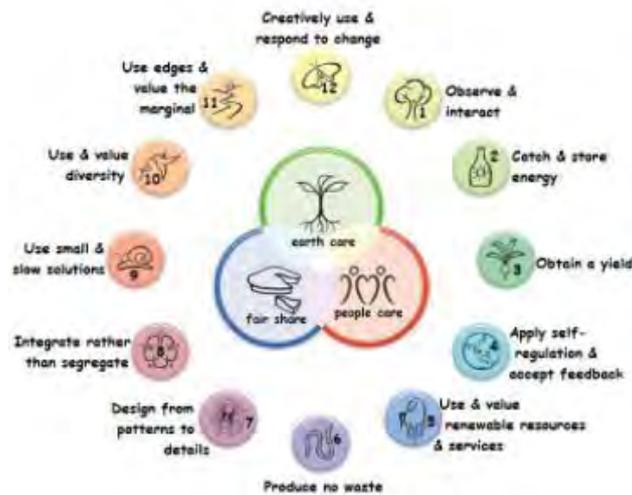
Figure 2. Core Values of Permaculture (Holmgren, 2002).
https://permacultureprinciples.com/principles/

The ethical values and design principles of permaculture extends beyond landscape designing, encompassing the following domains (Mackall & Gabriel, 2012):
- Built environment
- Tools and technology
- Culture and education
- Health and spiritual well-being
- Finance and economics
- Land tenure and community governance
- Nature and stewardship

Permaculture design is based on natural ecosystems. Mollison and Slay (1991) developed a design concept based on 12 fundamental principles:-
- Observe and interact
- Catch and store energy
- Obtain a yield
- Apply self-regulation and accept feedback
- Use and value renewable resources and services
- Produce no waste
- Design from patterns to details
- Integrate rather than segregate
- Use small and slow solutions
- Use and value diversity
- Use edges and value the marginal
- Creatively use and respond to change

Mollison and Slay (1991) consider these as axioms, which are self-evident truths or established principles.

In permaculture, it is essential to observe and understand the natural ecosystem and thus draw inferences to develop new ecosystems that are productive and non-polluting. By observing natural occurrences, patterns can be developed to design a holistic system. Nature absorba and assimilatea energy from one form to the other. It is the designer's observations that help mimic nature to suit a particular situation (Holmgren, 2002).

Concrete permaculture design involves dividing landscapes into zones (of daily life: people, machines, animals, houses, and food products) and sectors (present and future energy sources, wilderness, temperature, light sources, etc.). These zones and sectors are investigated for patterns. In the end, the area used is designed to fit a few underlying patterns. (Mollison & Slay, 1991).

The designer thus observes data (patterns) and then works from the data. Mollison (1988)describe the process of permaculture design as one of assembling components to form a pattern. Permaculture focuses on learning from indigenous cultures and tribes, traditional knowledge of farming and cultivation, protection of land, water, and soil and respecting nature in its pure form.

Good design depends on a free and harmonious relationship between nature and people, and careful observation and thoughtful interaction provide the design inspiration, repertoire, and patterns. It cannot be generated in isolation, but through continuous and reciprocal interaction with the subject (Holmgren, 2002).

A pioneer of permaculture, Holmgren argues that permaculture can solve various problems of modern society. It can be applied to fields such as housing, transport, economics, or basic food growing (Ballarat, 2018).

Some important design features of permaculture are shown in figures 3 through 10.

Figures 3. Landscaping using the mandala design.
https://www.interdependentweb.com/articles/rethinking-circular-keyhole-beds-and-mandala-gardens
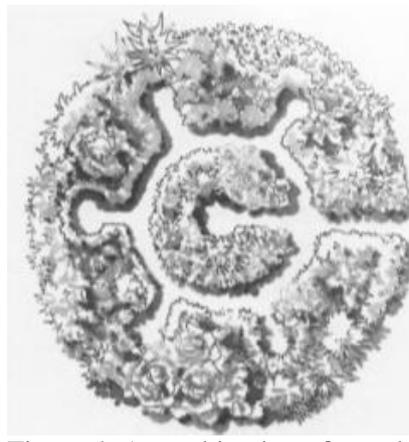
Figure 4. A combination of mandala and keyhole design.
https://www.interdependentweb.com/articles/rethinking-circular-keyhole-beds-and-mandala-gardens

Figure .5 Spiral bed design used for growing small plants and herbs.
https://permaculturenews.org/2017/03/06/garden-needs-herb-spiral-design-solution/

Figure 6. Raised beds.
http://www.ecologiadesign.com/raised-beds-on-contour-with-wood-chip-paths/

Figure 7. Raised beds capture run-off water and nutrients.
http://www.ecologiadesign.com/raised-beds-on-contour-with-wood-chip-paths/

Figure 8. Plants in single beds waste space.
http://frichettewinery.com/sweet-tips-red-mountain-wine-gardening/

Figure 9. Planting in spiral/curved beds can maximize space and soil.
https://busy.org/@luzcypher/permaculture-principles-the-edge-effect
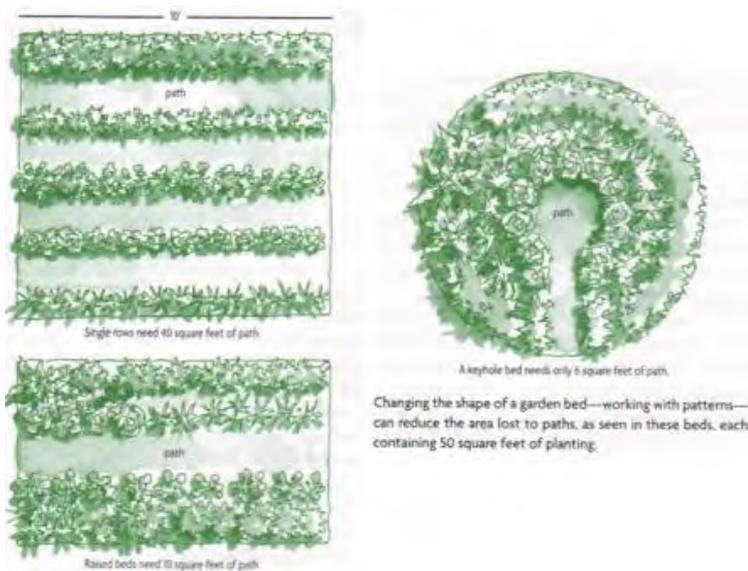
Figure 10. Keyhole bed vs. single rows and raised beds.
https://www.interdependentweb.com/articles/rethinking-circular-keyhole-beds-and-mandala-gardens

<h1 style="text-align:center">Permaculture in India</h1>

This study is based in the Odisha state of India. The state houses 13 primitive tribes and 62 tribal communities. Odisha is in the eastern part of the country near the Bay of Bengal and has bountiful natural resources, including minerals, rivers and seas, mountains, springs, cultivable lands, and diverse forests, flora, and fauna. The main occupation of the people is agriculture with a few industries, mines, and a handloom and handicraft sector. Hence, the state has a rich traditional knowledge of farming using various techniques, tools, and methods. Despite the rich biodiversity, Odisha has also witnessed a rising number in farmer suicides in the last five years, mostly due to the inflated cost of fertilizers and pesticides, lack of indigenous seeds, low/loss of production due to natural calamities, financial losses and burdens, and poverty (Mohanty & Lenka, 2019). To counter such incidents and provide a different approach to farmers' well-being, we discussed the following case studies, which focus on three geographically and socioeconomically different areas where permaculture is practiced.

Living Farms

Living Farms is a Bhubaneswar-based nongovernmental organization managed by Debjit Sarangi, a trained permaculturist and a sustainability fellow at the University of California. His firm works toward mobilizing more than 7000 people in 2500 Indian villages to reclaim their local food system and food sovereignty. He has been successful in designing and developing sustainable agricultural frameworks to generate appropriate solutions to address malnutrition (Terra Madre Foundation, n.d.).

Their work is based on the following four pillars:
- Cultural ethos of the community
- Existing and changing agricultural patterns and use of the forest
- Symbiotic relationship of the community with the forest
- Accessibility and availability of public health services

Living farms identified that the Kondh tribes in Odisha's Rayagada district face significant challenges in accessing food crops and forest products, mainly due to timber mafias and top-down government policies.

Kondhs are one of the indigenous tribes found in Odisha, for whom the land and forests, rivers, streams, and seeds are an integral part of their identity (SCSTRTI, 2013). They practice mixed cropping and cultivate different varieties of cereals (millet, sorghum, corn, and rice), pulses, oilseeds, vegetables, and spices. But the aggressive push of intensive chemical farming and hybrid cotton farming has resulted in a rice monoculture(Choudhury & Aga, 2019; Moudgil, 2016). Other problems such as mining and industrial development have led to the decline of cultural diversity and have also increased the risk to human health (Bera, 2015).

Timber mafias were depleting the forest, and women had to walk long distances to fetch fuelwood, fruits, tubers, leaves, and other forest essentials. As a result, their children were deprived of nutritious food. Forests were vanishing, and food crops and vegetables available in local markets were full of chemical fertilizers and pesticides. Forest products played a vital role in meeting their food needs and made the local communities independent of the market (Lahangir, 2014).

Living Farms taught the tribal women about the impact of such activities and after repeated persuasion, created a team of women who took charge to protect the forests from further depletion (figures 11 and 12). They also stood against the government's decision to plant eucalyptus as a part of a livelihood generation scheme under the MNREGA Act. The

women demanded that the government provide fruit-bearing plants that could meet the nutritional requirements of their children. Government officials finally agreed and supplied fruit-bearing plants. (Lahangir, 2014).

Figure 11. Forest foods available in Rayagada (Langahir, 2014).

Figure 12. The forest protection group of Patangpadar village in Muniguda, Rayagada. (Langahir, 2014)

Rayagada is also known for cotton farming. Farmers from the indigenous communities were given the water-intensive Bt cotton seeds and other HYV seeds (figure 13). According to Sarangi, due to the erratic rainfall in these areas since 2000, cotton farming has put the farmers under huge debts due to the loss of production (Swain et al., 2019). Cotton is not only chemical-intensive and water-intensive but also promotes a culture of monocropping that deprives people of food crops and harms their health. Such incidences have led to massive debts, farmer distress, food scarcity, depletion of traditional farming knowledge, and climate crises leading to ecological shifts (Choudhury & Aga, 2019).Given the situation that prevailed in Rayagada, Living Farms took the initiative to address food crises and poverty in this area and created landscapes for paddy rice, millet, and many varieties of vegetables and fruits for the overall development of the indigenous communities (Moudgil, 2016).

To empower farmers, Living Farms created a consumer-producer group. The members were both farmers who produced organic and desi variety crops and vegetables, and consumers in the same area. To facilitate the sales and marketing of locally produced organic products, the group established a weekly market (figure 14). A unique feature of this market is fixed pricing of products that remain unchangeable for a month. The prices are based on input costs, labor, delivery and transportation charges, along with some earning over and above costs. In the weekly market, the sellers are farmers from area villages who bring their produce in baskets and sacks on bicycles or motorcycles. They offer freshly harvested vegetables, pulses, herbs, and greens, and food items central to Adivasi agriculture and diets such as nutritious millets, roots, and tubers. Consumers are strictly advised to come with bags and containers to eliminate the use of plastics (Mishra, 2019).

Figure 13 Advertisements for Bt cotton seeds plastered on temple walls, Rayagada (Choudhury & Aga, 2019).

Figure 14. Local market for organic products at Rayagada (Mishra, 2019).

Welt Hunger Hilfe, a German organization working on food and nutrition security, supports the initiative. Action for Sustainable Development with support from Living Farms is executing a Green College Project meant for attracting rural youth in culture and agriculture in Rayagada. The objective is to check the migration and develop a sustainable agricultural system based on traditional knowledge of the area. It is funded by Welt Hunger Hilfe and Tata Trusts, India. The green education project trains the youths by using existing natural resources (Action for Sustainable Development, n.d.).

Other projects include designing community gardens. For a farmer or a family with a small patch of land, Living Farms helps design a nutrition garden of locally grown seasonal fruits and vegetables. Such crops have a short production and consumption cycle, allowing for multiple cropping throughout the year to ensure an adequate volume of vegetables for household consumption. These gardens are crucial for improving the dietary diversity of the communities by growing a wide variety of vegetables with minimum labor, no chemicals, negligible out-of-pocket costs at a level (individual households or a group of households) appropriate for rural communities (Living Farms, 2018).

Basudha

Basudha started with 1.5 acres of land near a forest in the Bankura district of West Bengal. Basudha was established in 2002 by Dr. Debal Deb, a former officer in the government of West Bengal. His main aims were to conserve Bengal's vanishing rice varieties, encourage and demonstrate support for organic farming and traditional methods of multiple cropping, and preserve and develop local knowledge of biodiversity and its uses. After operating for two decades in West Bengal, Deb shifted his base to Odisha.

Through Vrihi, an open-access seed bank of indigenous seeds, Basudha aims to protect India's indigenous varieties of seeds. Since the 1990s, Deb has collected more than 1,420 native rice varieties from 12 states across India. He also collected varieties from countries like Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Thailand, Korea, the Philippines, and Italy. He cultivates each of the 1,420 rice varieties on a 1.7-acre model farm, set up in the foothills of Niyamgiri hills in Odisha (Shiva et al, 2012). In the first three years of Basudha's Odisha operation 350 varieties of indigenous paddy seeds have been distributed to more than 2000 farmers (figure 15) (Vidal, 2014).

Figure 15. Dr. Debal Deb in action (Vidal, 2014).

After field experiments are conducted with local farmers who are volunteer researchers, new methods of pest control, soil management, and yield enhancement are taught to the farmers. Scientists, research scholars, students, activists, and farmers from around the world visit Basudha each year to teach, learn, and share ideas with local farmers. After six years of field testing, Deb has devised a method that allows him to plant every variety next to each other within the 1.7 acres of land while maintaining the genetic purity of each.

According to Deb, permaculture is a part of the agro-ecological movement and is the only option left for the farmers to have a safe and sustainable farming system. Basudha also focuses on the human ecology of uncultivated foods, researches and documents eco-forestry practices, preserves and develops local knowledge of bio-diversity and its usage. It is a model of ecological agriculture, with zero external inputs, not even groundwater. The farm promotes eecological architecture as well, with no kiln bricks, cement, plastics, or timber (Deb, n.d.).

Sambhav

An agricultural scientist, Sabarmatee, and her economist father, Prof. Radhamohan, , bought about 1.5 acres of wasteland in Rohitank village, Nayagarh in Odisha. The land had no topsoil. The villagers believed that it was "asambhav" (impossible) to cultivate such lands, and thus Sambhav came into existence in 1989. Organic farming through permaculture was not widespread in India then. Starting was difficult, but through continuous experimentation, after three decades the Sambhav project has successfully cultivated 90 acres of lush green forest cover. (figures 16-18). The hilly tracts of land were under repair for about 11 years before yielding any produce. Sambahv conserves indigenous seeds (more than 493 varieties of rice seeds) and practices climate-resilient agriculture. Seeds are given to the farmers for free as long as they sow the seeds and pass them on to other farmers. Sambhav also focus on gender equality for farmworkers.

Figure 16. Food forest in Rohitank, Nayagarh (Down to Earth, 2018).

Figure 17. Vegetable farming using a permaculture design (Down to Earth, 2018).

Figure 18 Indigenous rice seed varieties preserved at Sabmbhav, Nayagarh, Odisha (Down to Earth, 2018).

To conserve water throughout the year, Sabarmatee designed three ponds of different sizes and at different elevations. Rainwater is collected in the first pond and as it overflows, the water runs into the second pond. The third pond receives the excess water and forms a freshwater reservoir used throughout the year.

Prof. Radhamohan has stated that they do not stick to any particular design system like permaculture in Sambhav, but believe in ecologically sustainable agriculture. Along with his daughter, Radhamohan has successfully use the best techniques and design principles found in permaculture, and Indian traditional knowledge. Natural ecosystems are used as models to fight climate change and prepare for the unfolding climate crisis.

The farm has been able to disprove the widespread belief that indigenous varieties and organic farming reduce production. Sambhav has successfully developed a self-sustaining system that has not only established food sovereignty but converted a barren land to a lush green forest (Patnaik, Jongerden, & Ruivenkamp, 2016). Sambhav has emerged as a center of excellence in Odisha for training and research in organic farming and watershed development. Sabarmatee was awarded the Shambhavi Puraskar by the Bansidhar and Ila Panda Foundation (BIPF) (Pioneer, 2016).

Findings and Conclusion

Through conceptual content analysis, we found some commonalities embedded in the data collected from all the three permaculturist designers (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). These elements include increasing biodiversity, achieving seed sovereignty, protecting indigenous seed varieties, reducing vulnerability of farmers facing natural calamities, increasing food security, bringing more land under forest cover, developing ecological balance through social interventions, improving the living conditions of marginal and/or landless farmers, and reducing dependence on external supplies. When we take into consideration the agrarian crisis and farmer suicides with data on the three permaculturists in relational content analysis (Mills, 2010), we find all these concepts are related to probable solutions to the farmers' crises in India. From the conceptual and relational content analysis, we may conclude design interventions of these three permaculturists can successfully address food security, access to clean food, income generation, and local diversification and reduce the chance of suicide in farm communities.

The concept of permaculture design has proved successful in the face of various adversities and provides a regular, continuous source of food and livelihood. However, this design concept has not yet been included in design education in India. Hence, we argue that it is high time that design schools focus on a holistic approach toward permaculture design education, research, and practice in different fields that include farming, rural and urban

landscaping, healthcare, and product design. This nature-based design process may significantly add value to current design education and its impact on society, as well as help in creating new job opportunities for designers in this era of climate crisis. Our paper is a pioneer attempt in this direction.

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Dissolving Gender in Fashion Design Education

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Abstract

As a creative practice and production process, fashion design follows a mainly traditional perspective of a binary gendered body. Likewise, the education sector catering to this industry takes a similar approach, establishing programs that offer specializations in womenswear and menswear.

This research advocates for a more diverse and accessible understanding of gender, sizing, and prerequisite notions of dress codes in undergraduate education for fashion. This approach is addressing a shift of attention to a more heterogeneous perspective of the body in relation to new questions of body politics, ethics, social justice, and trans-species communications. Based on this premise, this paper proposes a new perspective on how curriculum could be structured for fashion design education.

This structure has been evaluated based on data gathered over a two-year period, with focus on the second and third level of study in a Bachelors in Fashion Design and Textiles Program in Singapore. Findings from this research aim to prove that this paradigm shift for fashion design education is applicable and allows an expanded area for experimentation and play for students while opening up new horizons for criticality and reflection about what gender represents for society and culture today and in the future.

Keywords: fashion education, gender, curriculum structure, gender dilution, design directions

Introduction

F ashioning the human body has always been influenced and somewhat dependent on our identities and individualities, opening up dialogues and interactions between societies and cultures while allowing us to communicate non-verbally about who we are or what we want to represent (Goffman, 1959).

As society and culture bestow our bodies with gender, this is the manner we represent ourselves in the communities we live in. Our engendered bodies have constantly been instigating, bolstering, or reuniting discourses of power and desire as driving forces in every culture. Consequently, the garments dressing our bodies, also defined by fashion theoreticians as extensions of the body (Roach-Higgins et al., 1995), are allowing all these forces to manifest in a visible manner in the way we dress and fashion ourselves.

The Western-oriented, binary nature of the human being as split between the two genders of male and female has prevailed for centuries as the main driver of anthropocentric discourses that stood at the forefront of most human societies. This anthropocentric paradigm has been the subject of various debates and reconsiderations during the past century, when new critical perspectives started to emerge through various philosophical frameworks (feminism, ecofeminism, posthumanism, etc.). These paradigms aim to destabilize the identification of the body with the iconic figure of the Vitruvian man as reference for the entire human species (Braidotti, 2013). This shift is implicitly challenging existing notions of gender binary.

This shift in thinking invites a strong reconsideration of how the anatomical body and the expressed gender identity of individuals interrelate in the formation of one's body language and the expression of identity. Subsequently, for fashion discourse, this paradigm

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shift has direct implications given that contemporary expressions of fashion are influenced by historical costume (Lehman, 2000) and constantly referenced elements of dress from various decades or cultures (Lynch & Strauss, 2007). As Barthes (1967/2010) has notably argued, the fashion language is subjected to interpretation and is situated in a constant state of change, where active agents such as designers, stylists, photographers, and editors are strongly influencing how discourses are generated and shared to the audience and, lately, by audience itself (Rocamora, 2011; Findlay, 2015), these discourses are shaping in conspicuous or imperceptible ways how we build wardrobes or perceive and express our own bodies.

With the rise of digital communication platforms that facilitate the public expression of the individual, the way identity is shaped these days (Fuery, 2009) follows more complex mechanisms. The public body on these platforms seems not to conform anymore in terms of the sartorial rigor of the gendered body. Established ways of expressing gender through garments becomes increasingly blurred, not only in digital platforms but also during the runways of official fashion events. However, discourses around gender still remain open to be addressed, from everyday life to academic studies.

In fashion education, a blurred view about addressing gender when teaching design and garment making remains an area underexplored, particularly for subjects like tailoring and draping. In this paper I will address a pedagogic approach in which subjects like those mentioned above could be delivered without any restrictions imposed by body features or established views inherent in these methods of designing and making garments where the gendered body is the instigator of the practice.

Premise

Although as a fashion design educator I have been working in both Western and Asian fashion environments, this research will refer to my pedagogic practice developed in Singapore, where this case study was conducted.

While investigating some of the current fashion design programs in the global market for fashion design education, next to the various specializations in textiles, drafting, design development, sportswear, children's wear, and many others, fashion design still remains circumscribed into two distinct gender-related pathways: womenswear and menswear. These two pathways represent the contemporary interpretations of the historically ingrained practices of tailoring and couture. This dichotomic vision when teaching design should be questioned and redefined from a wider view that considers the body from a broader perspective and in response to how contemporary societies and individuals are utilizing, revisiting, and readdressing notions of gender.

The scope of this research is to investigate and propose a new paradigm for teaching fashion design that takes the body as an instigator from a more versatile attitude: one of a non-binary and amorphous entity. From this perspective, the body and particularly the gendered features of the body are no longer the key drivers in terms of silhouette, details, construction, and drape. This perspective, when conceptualizing garments, is released of any restraints, benchmarks, or standardization, allowing new strands for creative approaches to take shape. This research investigates how a consideration of details and features of the body beyond gender could instigate a design practice and shift the student's understanding and approach toward the body.

Methodology

Responding to the above-mentioned premise, under my direction while in charge of the Bachelors in Fashion Design and Textiles program, a restructuring of the curriculum has

been investigated and formulated for a three-year degree. After validation, the curriculum has been implemented within a higher education institution in Singapore and closely documented in order to assess its effectiveness. This new curriculum structure addresses particularly the second and the third years of study, a time when students were previously specializing in their design practice, as illustrated in figure 1. At the time this paper was written, implementation of the new curriculum was in its second iteration, allowing a cohort of students to explore the full cycle of the new education framework.
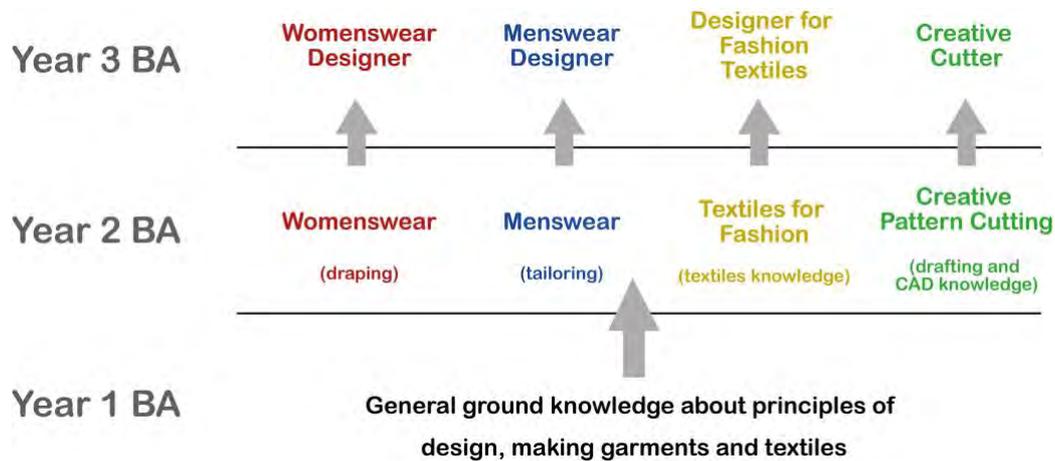
Figure 1. Schematic illustration of the former curriculum structure for the Fashion Design and Textiles Program at Lasalle College of the Arts in Singapore, 2012-2017.

This research aims to investigate to what extent this new design education structure influences students' perception and expression of the gendered body when established methods of making garments such as tailoring and draping are taught, regardless of gender constraints.

The Fashion Design and Textiles program at Lasalle College of the Arts in Singapore, where the study was conducted, has a 20 year history. During this time, it has shaped the various profiles of designers in Singapore and Southeast Asia. Before the new framework was implemented, this Fashion Design and Textiles program was offering four fashion design specializations, namely Womenswear, Menswear, Textiles for Fashion, and Creative Pattern Cutting.

After building the ground knowledge about fashion design, garment construction, and garment making, together with basic textile knowledge during the first year of study, the program offered specialization in the four directions starting from the second year of study, and continuing until graduation. At the commencement of the second year, the students could opt for one of the four specializations, subsequently undertaking the technical classes catering to the chosen specialization as illustrated in figure 1.

After running the programme under this structure for a five-year period, the fashion academic team identified that each of the four specializations would only equip the students with niche knowledge about fashion design, while keeping the binary notion of the gendered body as the ultimate instigator of the design outcome.

In order to attune the vision of the program to current and future fashion design perspectives, I have revised and restructured the way in which specialization is delivered throughout the curriculum. The new structure (figure 2) considers the articulation of both Textiles for Fashion and Creative Fashion Cutting as main design directions instead of the independent pathways. This allows students to foreground their practice on either the exploration of garment construction (the form) or the investigation of the materiality of the

garments (the content). Scaffolded by this new binary relation between construction and material delivered from the second year of study, the approaches and techniques of making garments through tailoring and draping were delivered in the second semester of the second year, but without any direct relation to the gendered body as before.
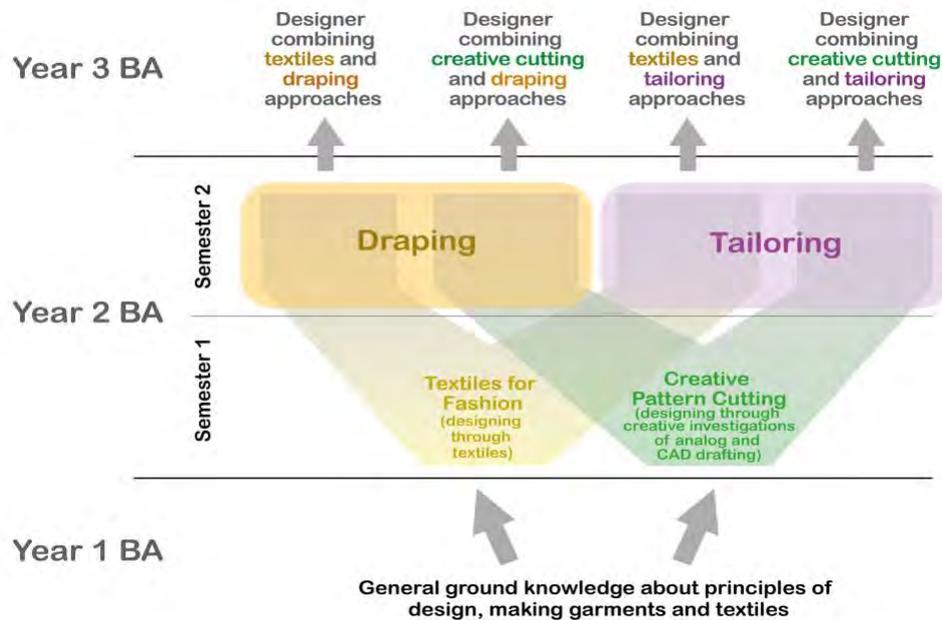

Figure 2. Schematic illustration of the new curriculum structure for the BA Fashion Design and Textiles Program at Lasalle College of the Arts in Singapore, after 2017.

This amalgamation of the creative design process with technical workshops happens under the umbrella of a "technical studio" where the conceptualization of the work is investigated, reflected on, questioned, and challenged from a substantiated angle. The two design directions are articulated as Textiles for Fashion Studio and Creative Cutting for Fashion Studio.

The Textiles for Fashion Studio is a space for rethinking the making of textiles and textiles processes as core knowledge for developing a design language that involves a mix of established textile techniques from weaving, knitting, felting, crochet, macramé, dyeing, screen printing, pleating, and embroidery to contemporary processes such as laser-cutting, digital printing, and 3D printing.

For the Creative Cutting for Fashion Studio, a wide range of perspectives and approaches for constructing and developing garments are at the heart of the design practice. In order to shift the students' perceptions of garments as archetypal elements of dress, a series of workshops that bring forth reflexivity and criticality have been implemented. Such workshops are as follows: (a) Transformational Reconstruction, introduced by Shingo Sato, which proposes the elimination of darts or inclusion of new volumes in the silhouette of the garment through style lines (Sato, 2011); (b) Subtraction Method, introduced by Julian Roberts, which considers the use of negative spaces cut from the surface of the fabric as instigators of creative draping (Roberts, 2013); (c) Zero Waste Cutting, a designing method that proposes the use of the full length of a fabric piece in the construction and making of the garment without the production of any waste (Rissanen & McQuillan, 2016); and (d) Shadowear, a method introduced by Dinu Bodiciu that shifts the focus of the designer from the body to its flat shadow as the instigator of the design process (Bodiciu, 2019). These workshops were provided together with exercises such as Changing the Body/Challenging

the Body, Writing a Garment, Deconstruction-Reconstruction, and those based on existing literature from the field such as *Pattern Magic* or *Creating With Shapes*.

In the second semester of the second year of the program, the students opt to undertake one of the garment making techniques, Draping and Tailoring, without any restrictions regarding which market they aim to design for—womenswear or menswear. This flexibility allows critical thinking around the ways in which social and cultural values have been historically shaped, subsequently inviting students to challenge norms.

The new design education framework bestows students with the ability to amalgamate a wider range of skills and knowledge about design, construction, and textile making, which overall diversifies the profile of the future designer as a versatile practitioner, able to propose designs for a wider audience. The impact of this new curriculum structure will be further qualitatively investigated based on four samples of work produced by students enrolled in the program in both second and third year of study. The students who developed the work investigated in this study have given their consent for the use of the visual documentation and the references to their projects.

Project Analysis

As illustrated in figure 2, after the first year of study in which students gain basic knowledge about drafting and making garments and about textile production and manipulation, the curriculum intertwines the design studio classes with the technical classes. This intertwine aims to help students articulate a creative process underpinned and influenced by technical knowledge. Through this approach, the students have the opportunity to identify and investigate in depth a specific area of knowledge, which allows them to develop expertise in that specific area toward graduation. The next four case studies will investigate how the development of a design practice focusing in one of the two design directions without an emphasis on the gender of the end user allows students to expand fashion design as a territory where gender binary relations are blurred. Each of the four projects outlines one of our possible combinations of design direction (Creative Fashion Cutting or Textiles for Fashion) with making techniques (Draping or Tailoring).

Case Study 1: Student Combining Creative Cutting with Textiles and Draping Knowledge

In the first case study, illustrated in figure 3, I investigate how the combination of creative fashion cutting, draping, and textiles has helped the student to articulate a collection catering to both genders. Strongly inspired by military wear with a particular focus on the jumpsuit as the central element for design investigation (figure 3a & 3b), the collection was cleverly tailored to allow both female and male bodies to fit the garments. Next to construction considerations, the collection also features utilitarian details (pockets, zips) and embellishments that amplify the gender neutrality of the work. Textile manipulations like embroidery and macramé were approached by the student as motif placements with a strong consideration of reducing any intrinsic textile-gendered language in order to achieve a neutral yet fashionable aesthetic. Macramé knotted belts (figure 3c) and shoulder panels together with *lorem ipsum* embroidered lines decorating lapels, chest panels, and sleeve cuffs were strategically used in order to amplify the alienated nature of the collection and increase the genderless perception.

Fig. 3a   Fig. 3b   Fig. 3c

Figure 3a-c. Xue Xinfang, 2019, *Inxintute*: military-inspired unisex collection. Photography: Giselle Wong Qi Yuan.

This collection is a speculative proposition for a possible future. This speculation imagines a society where fashion as practice and concept will not exist anymore, following the ecological disasters brought up by the current fast-fashion industry. As proposed by the student, the body is seen as a non-binary entity, diminished of gender features and dressed in utilitarian garments, as in this society, the individuals have no interest in developing fashion, trends, or any other styles of adornment.

Case Study 2: Student Combining Creative Cutting with Draping Knowledge

The second case study investigates a unique approach of the body in motion that shifts the static nature of established drafting and draping approaches. As documented in figure 4a-4c, the student developed body shells with masking tape by enveloping a selection of poses from a dancers' body in motion. These body shells have been transformed in pattern drafts for garments, some being kept at the same size, some being graded to an oversized fit.

Fig. 4a   Fig. 4b   Fig. 4c

Figure 4a-c. Innovative draping approach from the development process of the graduation collection by student Sesilia Katerina Depari, 2019.

Although this approach relies on a very systematic and somewhat dry method, the final outcome appears playful, conversational, and overall genderless (figure 5), given that no darts or other gendered details of construction or fit were considered and most importantly, the gender of the body for which these garments have been drafted becomes irrelevant.

Fig. 5a   Fig. 5b   Fig. 5c

Figure 5a-c. Sesilia Katerina Depari, 2019, *SOMA*: a non-binary innovative creative cutting approach from graduation collection designed and produced by student. Photography: Silvia Sanusi

As illustrated in figures 6a and 6b, the technical content of the design process was also affected by this creative approach, challenging the ways in which construction data is translated into technical drawings and subsequently in the entire range of product specification documents.
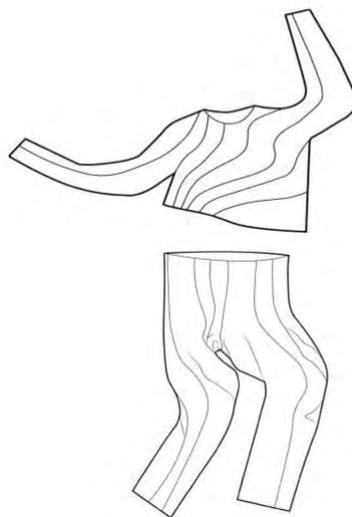
Fig. 6a   Fig. 6b

Fig. 6a-b. Sesilia Katerina Depari, 2019, *SOMA*: Unusual illustration of working drawing (6a) and technical drawing (6b) showcasing a look from the graduation collection.

By using this case study as an example, I would like to argue that the shift of attention from gendered body features (which usually a designer has to consider when conceiving a fashion collection and the end user of the designs) to a body in motion, allows more spaces for critical reflection about the role of garments when dressing a body. In this approach, the human body is perceived as an amorphous and complex entity. This perspective has encouraged the designer to consider impalpable features like motion as relevant as the body itself in instigating creative expression.

Case Study 3: Student Combining Textiles with Tailoring Knowledge

While inspired by the Singaporean Peranakan culture (resulting from intermarriage between Chinese migrants and natives of the Malay Archipelago, see Lee, 2014), this student project juxtaposes tailoring knowledge with a mix of textile manipulation techniques in order to propose a versatile unisex fashion collection with a soft ethnic vibe. The unique angle from which textile materials have been developed by the student based on a thorough investigation of Peranakan culture, particularly the ceramic tiles used in house decoration, has allowed the student to develop a new type of material based on the grid repetition of a laser-cut printed motif. By utilizing snap buttons as connectors (figure 7a), a multitude of variations and combinations developed with this motif invites the wearer to interact with the garments in a creatively engaging manner. Together with this textile approach, tailored separates in soft fabrics referencing the ethnic Peranakan dress complement the range and contribute to the overall unisex appeal (Figure 7a & 7b).

Fig. 7a   Fig. 7b

Fig. 7a-b Ng Wai Yarn, 2019, *Hui*: combination of textile manipulations paired with tailoring in the development of a gender-fluid collection. Photography: Lim Ming Liang

Case Study 4: Student Combining Creative Cutting with Tailoring Knowledge

The fourth case study investigates the work developed by a student currently in the second year of study. The student's aim was to propose a creative pattern cutting approach that intentionally works against the gender-binary perspective of the human body. The project rejects gendered features as source for technical data. In order to intensify the overall angle of the non-binary direction, a sense of absence is also clearly reflected by the line-up

illustrations submitted at the conclusion of the project (figures 8 and 9), where the garments appear like floating on an inexistent body.

Figure 8. Ng Yu Qi Joshua, 2019: Genderless collection proposal.
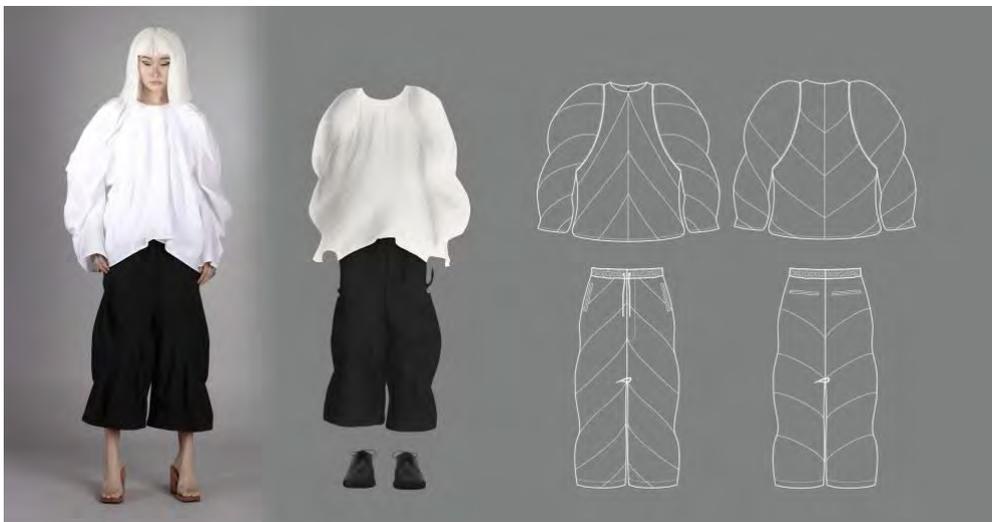
Figure 9. Ng Yu Qi Joshua, 2019: final look from the genderless collection, photographed on a female model presented next to the respective illustration and technical drawing. Photography: Charles Rezandi

While employing a small gesture of cutting in spiral the panels of archetypal garments, followed by adding volume on one side of each panel through slashing (figure 10), the final silhouettes appear to be shivering. This investigation is clearly influenced by workshops such as Shadowear Design, Transformational Reconstruction, and Changing the Body/Challenging the body that are delivered as part of the curriculum, which aim to challenge existing knowledge and understanding about garments construction and making while opening up a wide area for reflection and criticality.
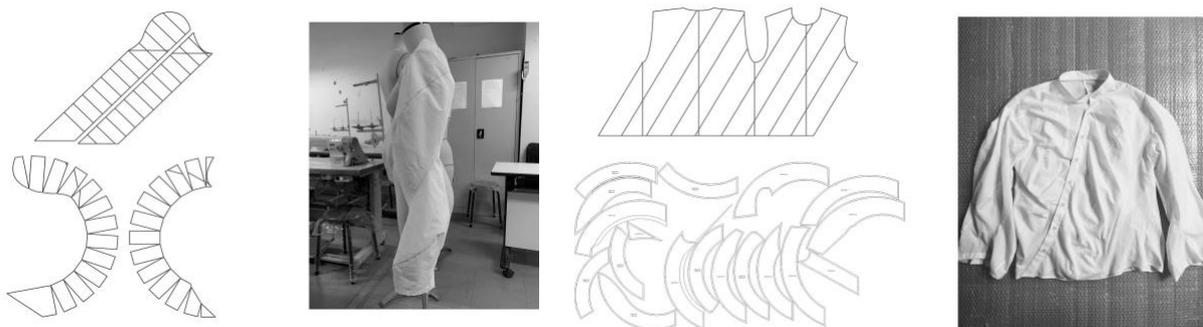
Figure 10. Ng Yu Qi Joshua, 2019: Unique creative cutting approach generating spiral silhouettes with the

aim of generating genderless silhouettes.

To complement the overall reception of the work, the student opted for a very neutral aesthetic for the portfolio, considering mid-gray (50% black) as the background for the proposed collection. The illustration of the collection on absent bodies intensifies the genderless perspective of the range, inviting the viewer to fill in these missing details according to his/her own imagination.

This project is a good example illustrating the relevance of consideration of the body and gender at earlier stages of design education, when students are more likely to develop highly creative approaches, inquisitive investigation, and practice-led research.

Conclusion

As exposed above, this pedagogical research has investigated the restructuring of the Fashion Design and Textiles curriculum in a Bachelors-level program in a Singaporean educational institution. The study also discusses the outcomes of this teaching structure by investigating the works produced by four fashion design students.

First and foremost, disposing both tailoring and draping from the classically charged gendered perspectives allows students to openly investigate the body and implicitly the design and garment-making processes while critically redefining notions of fashion, sartorial codes, style, and identity. Tailoring and draping remain approaches to thinking about and making garments each with its own technical benefits and restrictions.

It is visible that by introducing creative cutting approaches and rethinking textile manipulations in the curriculum as grounding design directions delivered in conjunction with main studio work will strongly influence students' creative development while opening potential avenues for practice-led research.

As a relevant branch of design with an increased pace of production and consumption, fashion has reached the level of oversaturation in terms of garment production. While responding to this restless demand for novelty, the high street fashion market has reached a level of creative flatness wherein garments have lost most of their role as nonverbal engines that help us communicate and shape identities. In this melting pot of cultural debilitation of the current fashion context, design education should be prepared to train designers capable of triggering change and opening new perspectives, redefining fashion design itself as practice.

Ultimately, this framework invites both students and educators to develop a playful, creative dialogue, challenging each other to push the boundaries of bodies, genders, and cultural prerequisites, and widening the spectrum of options for possible futures.

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Lines of Flight: a Deleuzo-Guattarian Exploration of Style as Resistance

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Abstract

Expanding critical scholarship on fashion, gender, and identity, this study aims to explore how dress and style can be used in a strategy of resistance through analyzing Chinese youths' narratives about their appearance, personal style, gender, culture, and self. The study mainly draws on the philosophical ideas of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari to engage with a research agenda, which disrupts the transcendent logic and challenges binarism and essentialism as the guiding approach to fashion studies. Inspired by Deleuze and Guatarri's concepts of rhizomatic thought and becoming, this exploration works within the realm of post-qualitative research. The study develops its argument through tracing two lines of creative "becoming" or lines of flight emerging from the "molecular mapping," pointing to the moments of rupture and deterritorialization: *gender and style; the ethics of consumption and style*. The findings demonstrate the subversive potential in dress which challenges normalcy and regularity as well as consumerism, highlighting the complexity, multiplicity, and heterogeneity of gender, fashion, and subjectivity. It advocates the creation of more inclusive spaces and potential socially just territories through fashion and clothing.

Keywords: gender, style, identity, Deleuzo-Guattarian inquiry, social justice

Introduction

Current research in culture and fashion studies has focused on the extraordinary fashionable dress (Buckley & Clark, 2012), as well as "spectacular" subculture styles. However, the ordinary and everyday style has attracted less attention. While studies have investigated how subculture groups use dress and clothing as a strategy of resistance against the mainstream culture (e.g., Bennett & Kahn-Harris, 2004), they have been criticized for lack of women's experiences in the research (e.g., McRobbie, 2000), and the tendency to ignore individual stylists' subjectivity (Clarke, 1990). Moreover, much of the existing literature on gender, identity, and style is situated in the Western context (e.g., Kaiser, 2012), but the "style narratives" (Tulloch, 2010) of Chinese individuals are sparse. This study seeks to fill the research lacuna in this field by exploring how everyday dress style can be a site of resistance, difference, creation, and personal expression through analyzing Chinese youths' narratives about their appearance, personal style, gender, consumption, and self.

Theoretical framework

This study draws mainly on Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari's (1987) philosophy of immanence and concepts such as *becoming* and *line of flight* to engage with a research agenda, opening up possibilities of theoretical triangulation. Deleuze and Guattari's philosophy of immanence is grounded in the situated bodily practice and the lived experience of everyday life, critiques the application of singular explanations or accounts, and rejects unitary and coherence, emphasizing difference, individuality, heterogeneity, and multiplicity of fashion, style, gender, and identity. It encourages different, pluralistic, and rhizomatic way of thinking.

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Becoming is one of the key concepts in Deleuze-Guattarian analysis, which suggests creation (rather than reaction), difference (from the norm), and multiplicity. "All *becoming* is a *becoming-minoritarian*" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p.291), which is a continuing process of challenging and destabilizing an established system, order, or norm. The process of *becoming* is driven by desire that is a positive and generative force from within rather than a negative lack, which allows possibilities for thinking differently and moving away from normative or expected ways of being as well as binary categorization and essentialism associated with traditional understandings of gender and identity (such as femininity/masculinity, or normal/abnormal). The concept of *becoming* also rejects the pre-established starting point and end point, as well as the linear or straight progress. As Deleuze & Parnet (1987, p. 20) argue:

> To become is never to imitate, not to "do like," nor to conform to a model and "there is no terminus from which you set out, none which you arrive at or which you ought to arrive at. Nor are there two terms which are exchanged. . . . For as someone becomes, what he is becoming changes as much as he does himself. Becomings are not phenomena of imitation or assimilation, but of a double capture, or non-parallel evolution, of nuptials between two reigns.

As developed in the work of Deleuze and Guattari (1987), the concept of line of flight (or *deterritorialization*) refers to "a movement by which we leave the territory, or move away from spaces regulated by dominant systems of signification that keep us confined to old patterns, in order to make new connections" (Roy, 2003, p. 21). Following such lines of flight enables us to break down rigid boundaries and clear-cut categorization, move away from the norm, and create new connections and relations on a plane of immanence, disrupting hierarchies, dominant norms, and power structures and opening up opportunities for *becoming-other* or *becoming-minoritarian*. Methodological issues are briefly discussed in the next section.

Methodology

Inspired by Deleuze and Guatarri's (1987) concepts of rhizomatic thought and becoming, this study works within the realm of post-qualitative research, interrupting the "clarity-seeking and closure seeking tendencies" (MacLure, 2006, p. 6) in data collection and analysis. Post-qualitative research allows me to move beyond "essentialist identities, brute data, and fixed categorization of phenomena and processes" (Martin & Kamberelis, 2013, p. 669), provide more dynamic understandings of the research agenda, and open up new possibilities and becoming, foregrounding individuals' subjectivity as well as the materiality and vitality of non-human materials (such as clothing).

This exploratory study discusses the experiential and situated accounts of individuals' reflection on their embodied dress style, fashion, gender, and clothing choice, accessed through face-to-face dialogues with 10 participants, informal friendly conversations, participant observations, and WeChat messages for clarification and depth, using existing literature and published narratives as supporting data sources. Informed consents were obtained, and participants are de-identified to ensure privacy and confidentiality. It is worth noting that this study sees research data as agentic matter, which has agency and the capacity to affect the researcher, rather than as passive things waiting to be collected, coded, and analyzed by the researcher (MacLure, 2013). As such, data analysis involves working intensively with data that can stimulate my thoughts, spark my interests, capture my attention, or "speak" to me (MacLure, 2013), allowing the "lines of flight" to emerge from analysis.

The inductive analysis (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005) was guided by the research

questions, the theoretical framework, and the existing literature. The findings of the study are open to "the interpretation of interpretation" (Alvesson & Skoldberg, 2000) by readers who not only can engage with the "audience validation" (Kvale, 2007), but also take part in the discussion around meanings individuals make in terms of style, gender, clothing choice, and sense of self. The *lines of flight* emerging from the analysis of research data are presented in the next section.

Lines of Flight

The study develops its argument on style as a site of resistance and transgression through tracing two lines of flight or lines of creative "becoming" that "dismantles social stratifications, opening onto an unknown field of differentiation" (Hickey-Moody & Malins, 2007, p. 6), challenging discursive determinism and pointing to the moments of rupture and deterritorialization: *gender and style*, and the *ethics of consumption and style*. We look at each of these in turn.

Gender and Style

Concerns about the relationship between dress and gender are not new. Current literature not only demonstrates the important role fashion and cloth play in terms of establishing the differences between two ascribed and essentialized gender categories, "masculinity" and "femininity" (e.g., Hollander, 1995), but also highlights the subversive potential in dress that challenges essentialism and binary gender discourse (Butler, 1990; Crane, 2000). Following this line of inquiry, this section looks into how individuals challenge hegemonic (or "molar") gender norms through everyday style that includes both dress and body modification such as tattoos and piercing (e.g., Kaiser, 2012). In this study, *becoming-other* or *becoming-minoritarian* along lines of flight is another way of thinking about resistance that is driven by participants' desire for authenticity, becoming and difference, not just a passive reaction to the "coercive powers of social structures" (Allfred & Fox, 2017, p. 2). Here, gender subversion or resistance emphasizes an action that "denaturalizes, destabilizes, and defamiliarizes sex and gender signs" (Garber, 1992, p. 147), rather than simply reversing binary sex and gender distinctions.

All participants in this research had a strong sense of challenging gender stereotypes in clothing, identifying themselves as those who are reluctant to conform to the mainstream style of dress and gendered clothing norms. PA1, a young man who was passionate about fashion, is introduced here as an exemplar of such a norm deviator who sometimes dresses up as a Lolita in everyday life. In his conversation with me, PA1 narrated his engagement with Lolita style, highlighting that he was not a cosplayer and that he was attracted to this effeminate and "fabulous" (Moore, 2012; see also Berry, 2017) style simply because "it is more beautiful and exquisite than other clothes." Furthermore, his transgressive sartorial choice allowed him to express an "imaged self" that is a part of his authentic self or the true self: "When I wear the Lolita dress, I feel that I am different from others. It allows me to express the imaged self. . . . It is not cosplay, and I am not pretending to be someone else. It is me."

Wearing the hyper-feminine Lolita style enabled PA1 to take a line of flight from the rigid territory of heterosexual matrix (Butler, 1990), and construct his appearance in a way that disrupted the traditional and essentialized masculinity and the notion of being normal.

3

His account of *becoming-other* provided an immanent disruption to the transcendental ideals of masculine norms of appearance. Echoing PA1's account, another young man, PA2 created a line of flight away from gendered clothing norm:

> Speaking of personal style, I have my own style. My daily clothing choices often have some female elements or feminine characteristics. For example, the silk, striped dress I'm wearing today is actually a woman's dress. In fact, I think that you should have your own aesthetic, and you can wear whatever style of clothes you think is suitable for you. There is really no need for men to wear masculine clothes and women to wear feminine clothes.

In a similar vein, female participants in this study also challenged conventional gender stereotypes through their personal style and appearance. Their "molecular" challenges to feminine norms were driven by desires for difference and creative self-expression. They were reluctant to conform to feminine clothing that represents an ideal image of conventional "girly" femininity, describing their personal dress style as "not that feminine," "gender neutral," and "a bit rebellious." For instance, PA3 reflected on her style and the gender norm:

> I am a bit rebellious, you know. Basically, I wear whatever I want. I'm not bound by rules or traditional ideas of beauty and femininity. Who says that women should wear long hair, skirt, or high heels? I often wear boys' T-shirts or pullovers. I prefer sneakers. I feel comfortable wearing them. I think that's who I am. Generally speaking, I think my style is quite gender neutral.

Here, PA3 refused to internalize dominant feminine clothing norms, and demonstrated a capacity to cultivating a sense of self that is not keyed upon the ways the self is typically subjunctivized by others—an authentic self. *Becoming-minoritarian* in this instance is an active resistance to the fixed, transcendent ideals prescribing what a woman should be and what she should wear, which forms a line of flight over the dichotomous thought and majoritarian ways of being, breaking down gender stereotypes through clothing.

Such an account of non-conformity was reinforced by other participants. such as PA4, PA5. and PA6. who wore individualized clothing with tattoos and piercings, further deterritorializing the striated territory of feminine norms of appearance. It could be understood that by bearing a "formerly masculine sign" (Mifflin, 2001) on their bodies, they had destabilized and challenged the transcendental ideals of femininity and the standards of feminine beauty. However, although this explanation may still stand, it is important to note that for PA4, PA5, and PA6, having tattoos and piercings is more about authenticity, artistic and self-expression, as well as the mnemonic quality of tattoo, thinking beyond the transcendent value of whether it is "right" or "wrong" to have tattoos and piercings on the female body:

> Each of my tattoos has its own meaning, and it is an inspiration for my life. It's something I think is worth keeping. It's all part of me. For example, this tattoo, this figure is a Buddhist palm, and it symbolizes creation. And the graphics are also very artistic. I think they are very good and can reflect myself, so I got this tattoo done.

(PA4)

It is a kind of self-expression. I think it is very artistic, it is beautiful, and it can accompany me for the rest of my life. (PA5)

I am aware of the social stigma associated with tattoos. And I know there is prejudice against women with tattoos in society, but I just like tattoos. I'm attracted to tattoos because I like visual art and symbolic things. I just think tattoos are cool . . . the tattoos on my body are physical memories of the important events of my life. (PA6)

Data such as the above also highlight a key theoretical point: that resistance could be viewed as a process of *becoming-other*, driven by desires for authenticity and personal expression, and not so much about the traditional and dichotomized understanding of resistance (against an external power such as gender norm).

To sum up, in many ways, everyday dress style is a site of creation, difference, and resistance. Each of the participants engaged with a process of *becoming-other* or *becoming-minoritarian* along lines of flight, indicating a desire to overlook or think beyond the rigid boundaries of gender norms imposed on them.

The Ethics of Consumption and Style

Most of the participants' data have suggested that they were engaged with some sort of sustainable consumption that "broadly denotes the use of goods and services that respond to basic needs and foster a certain quality of life, while minimizing environmental harm to ourselves and future generations" (Hobson, 2013, p. 1). The second line of flight, therefore, concerns clothing consumption and sustainability, along which participants *became conscious consumers* who provide an immanent resistance against mass-production and postmodern consumerism. For instance, PA7 explained to me her clothing choices and personal style:

I mean I'm not really into the mainstream fashion. They are all the same. Currently I'm really interested in vintage style and recycled fashion, because they are all unique and it is hard to find an exactly same one in the world, plus they're environmentally friendly.

Due to its homogeneity or lack of distinctiveness, mass-produced mainstream fashion failed to form a productive encounter with PA7, evoking her desire for difference and *becoming-other*. As a result, she was attracted to secondhand clothing such as "vintage style and recycled fashion" that was unique and environmentally sustainable. PA7's account demonstrated that her molecular resistance against the hegemonic or molar ways of consuming was not only about the need for self-expression and individuality, but also related to ethical concerns about the environment. Secondhand and vintage clothes not only offered PA7 the opportunity to participate in sustainable clothing consumption, but also opened space for her to conduct molecular search for uniqueness, individuality, and creativity in a *becoming-conscious consumer*. Emphasizing "currently", PA7 highlighted the momentary-ness and eventfulness of the processes of *becoming-minoritarian* as well as the nomadic nature of deterritorializations. This detail was also found in other participants' narratives.

Similarly, drawing a line of flight toward human and environment well-being, another participant, PA8, challenged dominant consumption norms and disrupted fashion's cycle through using secondhand clothes (Bly et al., 2015) and purchasing fewer garments (Niinimäki, 2013); her relationship to clothing was informed by her concern for ecological well-being:

> There is too much fashion waste caused by poor quality clothing . . . I think we should enhance the awareness of environmental protection. I also like the idea of recycling. For example, I have donated and recycled used clothes through Alipay or Xianyu app. I buy a lot less clothes now than before, and am really into secondhand clothes.

Furthermore, participants including PA9 were engaged with sustainable fashion consumption by purchasing items made of natural fiber or "eco-friendly" material as well as "durable and good-quality garments." This strongly resonates with the findings of Connell (2011) on consumers' eco-conscious clothing purchasing behaviors. Other participants, such as PA10, also expressed her concern for sustainability:

> Making cloth is not just about making money or expressing a design idea, you need to think about nature, sustainability. . . . Fashion has a huge waste problem . . . I care about sustainability and do not mind wearing secondhand or recycled cloth.

To sum up, this section traces the line of flight away from the dominant and rigid territory of the traditional fashion system, concerning the process of *becoming-conscious consumers* as minoritarian subversion or resistance against unsustainable clothing consumption. More specifically, it uncovers that participants' non-conformity to the "molar" ways of consuming was felt by them as a means to express difference, uniqueness, and individuality as well as care for environmental well-being. By engaging with secondhand or vintage clothing, participants not only disrupt the norm of fashion consumption, but also "question the notion of fashion being concerned exclusively with the new" (Clark, 2008, p. 428). Analytically, participants' accounts resonate with the findings of Bly et al. (2015) on sustainable fashion consumption pioneers.

Final Thoughts

This post-qualitative study sets out to explore how everyday dress style can be used in a strategy of resistance through analyzing Chinese youths' narratives about their appearance, personal style, gender, clothing choice, and self. By offering participants a chance to "speak" to us we are able to better appreciate the nuances and complexities of everyday dress and style. It draws on the philosophical ideas of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari to engage with a research agenda, which disrupts the transcendent logic and challenges of binarism and essentialism as the guiding approach to fashion studies. The study develops its argument through tracing two lines of creative "becoming" or lines of flight emerged from "molecular mapping," pointing to the moments of rupture and deterritorialization: *gender and style*, and the *ethics of consumption and style*.

The study demonstrates various ways in which individuals are negotiating expected gender and fashion consumption norms. The findings demonstrate the subversive potential in dress and style that challenge normalcy and regularity as well as consumerism, highlighting the complexity, multiplicity, and heterogeneity of gender, fashion, and subjectivity. Moving away from the dichotomized understanding of resistance which is a passive reaction to an active and external power, this study indicates that resistance is a process of *becoming* instigated by individuals' desires of difference, creation, uniqueness, authenticity, and care for sustainability. It is important to note that resistance is processual and transitory, and involves continually exploring different new concepts, forms, and modes of knowledge beyond the confines of the rigid boundaries, clear demarcations, and binary oppositions. It calls for the creation of more inclusive space and potential socially just territories through fashion and clothing, advocating heterogeneity and uniqueness in fashion design which allows for personal expression, avoids gender stereotypes, and supports conscious consumption.

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The T-Shirt: From Protest to Environmental Activism

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Abstract

Since the mid-twentieth century, the T-shirt has been regarded as one of the most iconic symbols in fashion and culture. Indeed, it is cheap, classless and globally recognized, and is a key item in many people's wardrobes. Low price points attributed to the fast fashion T-shirt make it an item available to all. However, this in itself raises questions regarding sustainability. This paper considers how, through its iconic status, the T-shirt can create opportunities for a more sustainable future by exploring the role that the T-shirt plays in encouraging individuals to become activists on a personal level. One of the ways they can do this is by wearing shirts displaying meaningful messages. This prompts the research question, 'how effective is the T-shirt as a sign vehicle to promote environmental activism?"
Using research drawn from FashionMap, a garment archive housed in NTU's School of Art and Design, the paper details how the T-shirt has evolved from a protest garment to a tool used by environmental activists. T-shirts which convey messages and signs through their design and typography were examined as communication tools, with a particular focus on protests and brand activism. Primary research using a focus group and wardrobe studies explore how participants respond to the T-shirt as personal expressions of courage, protest, and change. Findings demonstrate how social justice can impact on a personal level through the wearing of T-shirts.

Keywords: T-shirt, activism, design responsibility, sign vehicle, identity

Introduction

Despite a wealth of research into both activism (Klein, 2010; Dauvergne & LeBaron, 2014) and the semiotics of T-shirts (Manning & Cullum-Swan, 1994), research that considers these fields together is lacking. Our objective is to address the knowledge gap by specifically focusing on T-shirts, which communicate messages of protest and change.

We first address issues of inequality, consumption, and social justice, and raise the question, "Does fast fashion offer equality?" We then discuss links between T-shirts and identity, and the significance of the public and private self in relation to identity. We then turn to activism, exploring what activism is, and how it is realized. Links between activism and identity are explored, followed by a discussion of activist T-shirts. Findings from primary research are analyzed, and we conclude by revealing the efficacy of the T-shirt as a sign vehicle to promote environmental activism, thereby contributing to the field of material culture by investigating how the T-shirt can communicate messages relating to social justice and environmental activism on a personal level. This builds on Miller and Kuchler's *Clothing and Material Culture* (2005).

Literature Review

Inequality and Consumption

By the early twentieth century, a consumption-driven lifestyle had become linked to the achievement of social identity (Kozinets & Handelman, 2004). Obsessive shopping has become a means to achieve emotional satisfaction (Wilkinson & Pickett, 2010). The rise of

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mass production and consumption has triggered a rise in inequality. Brooks (2015) notes that growing demand for consumer products, symptomatic of capitalism, aids economic growth. However, consumption naturally leads to waste as fashion trends dictate that good used clothing is more disposable, principally for the sake of appearance. Inequality is produced through patterns of commodity exchange, and it is extremely difficult to solve the problem of the relationships between production of clothing and the persistence of poverty (Brooks, 2015).

A list of factors that have led to increased inequality in the United Kingdom have been compiled by The Equality Trust. Technology and globalization have supported increased mass production (Equality Trust, n.d.). Placing inequality in the context of fashion raises the question, "Does fast fashion offer equality?" Fast fashion can be described as inexpensive clothing at low prices, driven by cheap and low-quality production (Niinimäki & Armstrong, 2013). This phenomenon feeds consumers' desire for novelty by producing copies of high-end designs at affordable prices (Hirscher et al., 2018). The lower prices associated with fast fashion arguably offer equality to consumers, as this means that garments are readily available to all. However, the question is whether particularly low selling points are sustainable and ethical. If garments can be produced at an incredibly low cost, what effect is this having on the environment, and are all workers involved in the production process receiving a fair wage? Hirscher et al. (2018:4544) argue that "the externalities of the low-price game are becoming more costly."

Equality for consumers in the form of affordable prices does not necessarily mean equality across the whole supply chain. Furthermore, low cost is often comparible to low quality (Hirscher et al., 2018). This means that garments must be replaced more frequently as they lack longevity and durability. Fast fashion thrives on changing trends and built-in design obsolescence, and therefore appears to be incompatible with keeping items for long periods of time (Goworek et al., 2018). Marginalized members of society have difficulty obtaining good quality clothing, creating a global division in consumption (Brooks, 2015). The rise of consumerism has been in part attributed to an increased interest in the body (Grimstad Klepp & Bjerck, 2014). This can be linked to a heightened awareness of identity, and perceptions of the self.

Identity

"Identity is the construct that defines who or what a particular person is" (Cheek & Briggs, 1982, p. 401), and clothes clearly reference who we are and how we wish to be observed by others. "We seek identity in the body, and clothes are an immediate continuation of the body. That is also why clothes are so important to us: they are closest to our body" (Svendsen, 2004, p. 77). Clothing communicates our social identity, which is framed by cultural values. While cultural values were traditionally defined by "gender, sexuality, social status and age" (Davis, 1994, p. 191), a postmodern era has challenged these fixed boundaries. Postmodernism recognizes identity as fluid and fragmented, a state that can be achieved through fast fashion (Furlong, 2016).

Ward (2010) notes the significance of the public and private self in relation to identity, and that public identity is not always an accurate reflection of what an individual is truly like. Moreover, it may be impossible to ever access this truth. The effect of postmodernism means that there may not be a true or "deep-down" identity because an individual can adopt many different images, and there may not be a single "true self" that resides beneath them all (Ward, 2010). Svendsen (2004) also argues that there is no such thing as a true nature, as this is heavily influenced by different cultural interpretations. Goffman (2016) questions the idea of a fixed identity; rather than being, identity is realized through actions. It can be argued that the public and private self are intrinsically linked.

Identity and Activism

According to Fielding et al. (2008), the identity of an individual who affiliates with activism will motivate the decision to take specific action and classify oneself as an activist. The stronger the feeling of identity, the greater the probability that the individual will take some form of action; not taking any form of action, may result in internal tension (Fielding et al., 2008). Furthermore, the ideology of a social movement will always be identified by the activists' self-definition and collective identity (Kozinets & Handelman, 2004). There is an important relationship between social identity and environmental behavior (Dono et al., 2010), which is linked to growing consumer awareness of environmental issues and subsequent environmental activism.

Activism has been described as a "leech-like attachment which takes many forms, from the socially respectable to the near terrorist" (Klein, 2010, p. 325). Many western countries have seen a rise in the number of protests since the 1960s (Dauvergne & LeBaron, 2014). Klein (2010) argues that economic globalization has inspired a wave of techno-savvy investigative activists, and Moore (2008) sees the rise of modernity and consequent globalization as having had a significant impact on symbolic behavior. Most "protestors" are also activists and support social movements including civil rights, global justice human rights, sustainability, animal rights, gender equality, and LGBT rights (Dauvergne & LeBaron, 2014). Activism can take many forms, including protesting, rallying, petitioning, educating the public, and lobbying government and corporations (Fielding et al., 2008). Klein (2010) believes that one of the reasons activists take action is to make a stand against multinational corporations. The success of these companies also exposes vulnerabilities, and when they do wrong their crimes are not simply dismissed as misdemeanours. Consumers feel both guilty and connected, and there is a lack of loyalty between multinationals and consumers.

Dauvergne & LeBaron (2014) take an opposing view and believe that many activists now see it in their interests to partner with multinational corporations rather than campaign against them, calling this the "corporatization of activism.". Moreover, Dauvergne and LeBaron (2014) believe that separating corporatism from activism is becoming progressively harder. Multinational corporations wish to join forces with charities and activist groups as a way to foster authenticity and legitimacy, and to seize potential marketing opportunities, while activists can enhance the influence of their advocacy groups by partnering with corporations and raising funds for their causes (Dauvergne & LeBaron, 2014). Many charities have become commercialized (Moore, 2008). One of the ways activists can spread their message and beliefs is to wear T-shirts that affiliate them with a particular brand or cause.

T-shirts and Signs

The T-shirt is a powerful advertising medium. The inexpensive white cotton surface is easy to decorate, and a blank canvas that can offer freedom of expression (Brunel, 2002). Candidates for the 1960 U.S. presidential elections were the first recorded group to use the T-shirt as a campaign medium. The simplicity of design means that T-shirts bypass language barriers and display universal messages (Brunel, 2002), and thinkers and designers have capitalized on the T-shirt's ability to transcend boundaries and carry subversive or controversial messages (Mathieson, 2008). Furthermore, the T-shirt has become a piece of "independent media" that can infiltrate a range of different spaces.

Manning and Cullum-Swan (1994) propose seven codes that aim to define the T-shirt in terms of semiotics, encoding the clothing item as an object (Table 1). This shifts attention away from the T-shirt as an object and toward its perception and use. When discussing protest T-shirts, code four is particularly relevant, as it proposes it to be a representational

sign vehicle. Manning and Cullum-Swan (1994) describe how the T-shirt has become an assemblage of signs, which has the ability to convey and contain a range of messages.

Code 1:	The T-shirt as a utilitarian undergarment
Code 2:	The T-shirt as a manufactured item
Code 3:	The T-shirt as a visible outer garment
Code 4:	The T-shirt as a representational sign vehicle
Code 5:	TheT-shirt as a problematic icon
Code 6:	The T-shirt as a walking pun
Code 7:	Copies and real copies

Table 1. What is a T-shirt?: Seven codes. Adapted from Manning and Cullum-Swan, 1994.

Post-1960s, different T-shirts appeared on the market to communicate a variety of messages about the wearers, their experiences, attitudes, and social status. Code six is also relevant when discussing protest T-shirts: "the T-shirt as a walking pun." references how the T-shirt is now a mass-produced, postmodern commodity that can be used to display status as a "desirable consumable." This could, for example, be used to describe a T-shirt displaying a political slogan relating to ideology, but also difference, myth, race, gender and leisure (Crane, 2000). The variety of slogans and logos that appear on the T-shirt is vast and can indicate an individual's ideologies. This paper aims to bridge the gap in knowledge by addressing identity, activism, and the T-shirt as a combined focus of study.

Methodology

Our methodology uses an ethnographic approach (Skinner, 2012) to explore the relationships between consumers and their T-shirts. Ethnography with its focus on deep description (Geertz, 1973) allowed us to observe participants' key values, and how these values may be realized by wearing T-shirts. A focus group, followed by two in-depth wardrobe studies, were selected as the primary research methods. Snowball sampling was used to find participants.

The focus group comprised seven participants in Nottingham, a regional UK city. Although the study targeted both males and females, six of the seven participants were female. Females have typically been known to own more clothes than males (Cox & Dittmar, 1995). Furthermore, females attach greater importance to identity variables associated with clothing than their male counterparts (Alice et al., 2005).

The aim of the focus group was to explore how the T-shirt fulfills communicative and self-expressive purposes. Prior to joining the focus group, participants were asked to complete a T-shirt inventory, noting the quantity and type of T-shirts in their wardrobes. Participants were also asked to bring T-shirts that symbolized an affiliation to a particular brand or cause, or said something about their identity.

Nottingham Trent University holds an archive of UK high street clothing and accessories called FashionMap containing an estimated 119 T-shirts from 2000 to 2017. Eleven T-shirts with distinctive graphics and logos were selected to initiate focus group discussions around identity, authenticity, sustainability, and perceived meaning. This selection included three French Connection T-shirts from 2001, all of which displayed "FCUK" typography, including "FCUK football" and "FCUK for England." These T-shirts represent a form of political activism, and highlighted an idea prominent in the early 2000s—that men were rebelling against the notion that they shouldn't be sexist. Other T-shirts included a replica of Vivienne Westwood's "God Save the Queen" Sex Pistols T-shirt, and

one displaying the Union Jack. There was, however, a general absence of activist T-shirts in the FashionMap, and this may reflect a lack of politics in high street fashion from 2000 to 2017. Participants were also asked to describe the T-shirts they had brought from their own wardrobes. Finally, a discussion was initiated around the environmental activist group, Extinction Rebellion, and feelings toward wearing a T-shirt printed with the group's logo.

We conducted two wardrobe studies with a female and a male, in Nottingham and Cambridge respectively. Analyzing the clothes in an individual's wardrobe is a key method in understanding more sustainable consumption practices (Woodward, 2014). Wardrobe studies have the ability to stimulate rich descriptions and stories (Grimstad Klepp & Bjerck, 2014). The wardrobe studies allowed for key themes and ideas identified through the focus group to be explored in greater depth. Following transcription from the focus group and wardrobe studies, we conducted a thematic analysis. This is a method for identifying, analysing, and reporting themes within data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Key themes coded from the qualitative research include "commercialization," "disruption," "authenticity," and the importance of "context," and are discussed throughout the following section.

Findings and Discussion

The T-shirt inventory completed by focus group participants revealed that they owned between 5 and 40 T-shirts. Participants were asked to select from their wardrobes certain T-shirts symbolizing affiliation to a particular brand or cause, or saying something about their identity, and bring them to the focus group. Participant B brought a T-shirt (figure 1) and described being motivated to buy it because it reminded him of zen art, and the circles often seen in zen paintings. As a member of a zen group, this T-shirt had an important link to his cultural identity. Therefore, by wearing this T-shirt, Participant B is displaying a "form of symbolic behaviour that enables the articulation of a particular identity" (Moore, 2008, p. 12). This shows that Participant B's social identity is framed by his cultural values (Davis, 1994).

Figure 1. Zen T-shirt. NTU. ©.

Participant F brought the T-shirt shown in figure 2 from a John and Yoko exhibition at the Museum of Liverpool. Similar to Participant B, she bought the T-shirt because she liked the message it carried. However, Participant F stated, "When I wear it, I notice that people look at it, as if I am protesting, which I am not! I tend to hide it a bit, to take away some of the impact." This implies that there may be a conflict between the participant's public and private self-identity. It also shows that outside of the context of the exhibition, the T-shirt can take on a different meaning. Davis (1994) notes that clothing is highly context dependent.

Figure 2. Imagine Peace Tshirt. NTU. ©.

The wardrobe study with Participant 1 uncovered a T-shirt with direct links between the wearer and her personal identity. The T-shirt in figure 3 was bought as a memento from a visit to the Hard Rock Café in Krakow: "I wear it to represent me as a person, I like that it says where I have been on the T-shirt, and I love traveling and adventure. Also, I like music and gigs, so I bought it because it reflects my interests—I want this to come through in my style." This reflects Davis's (1994) earlier point that clothes clearly reference who we are and how we wish to be received by others.

Figure 3. Hard Rock Cafe T-shirt. NTU. ©.

In order to explore Davis's (1994) theory further, focus group participants were asked their opinions of the activist group, Extinction Rebellion, and if they would be prepared to wear a T-shirt in support of this group. Extinction Rebellion describe themselves as "an international movement that uses non-civil violent civil disobedience in an attempt to halt mass extinction and minimise the risk of social collapse" (Extinction Rebellion, n.d.). focus group members were largely in support of Extinction Rebellion; however, issues arose surrounding wearing a shirt with the groups logo. According to Participant D, "I would not buy anything to showcase Extinction Rebellion as that goes against what they are about— their cause is the opposite of consumerism." Participant D's comment highlights the theme of commercialization of activism, as here the cause conflicts with commercialism. Participant D went onto state that she would buy the T-shirt if it were proven to be ethically produced. Participant G had an alternative approach: "I may draw the logo on a T-shirt or paint it on something that I already own or that I had bought from a charity shop."

Participant B stated: "Is the message about the message, or it is about you? You can't really separate the two. With the Extinction Rebellion T-shirt you are bringing people's attention towards that form of activism, but you are also saying something about who you are." This reflects Moore's (2008) argument that it is difficult to separate two identities—the public and private self. Wardrobe study Participant 2 believes that showing his affiliation to a brand or cause through the wearing of a T-shirt is highly context dependent:

> 'I would wear T-shirts with a political message, or which supported certain groups, but it depends on the circumstance, location, and social situation. If I was going to an LGBT event, I would wear an LGBT T-shirt, to fit in. But I probably would not wear this T-shirt every day. I would wear a T-shirt that supports the Conservative party if I was out campaigning, but I wouldn't just wear it without a reason. I would have to be prepared to support the said group in the first place, I wouldn't wear something that I didn't have an affiliation to.'

This is once again reflective of Davis's view that "the clothing fashion code is highly context-dependent" (Davis, 1994, p. 8). The meaning of clothing will vary depending on the identity of the wearer, the occasion, the place, the company, and even the wearer's and the viewers' moods. Simmel (1957, p. 543) states that fashion represents "the tendency toward social equalization." This further illustrates Participant 2's sentiment about "fit in." Furthermore, Rocamora & Smelik (2016) note that clothes are used as a key tool in the process of self-construction and can be seen as props to help individuals to negotiate different social situations.

As previously mentioned, members of the focus group unanimously supported the environmental activist group, Extinction Rebellion, and their methods, which have included protests in central London, halting commuter traffic. However, wardrobe study Participant 2 held an opposing viewpoint:

> 'I think that the methods that they use are disruptive, and climate change isn't really top of the list on my priorities personally. Well, actually I suppose it is but the way that they bring London to a halt, and they choose to attack rail networks—people who take the train are actually helping to reduce emissions, so I think their approach is flawed. . . . I would never wear an Extinction Rebellion T-shirt, because I don't support the group, and also I would be scared of being attacked, especially if I was in London.'

This quote suggests that the theme of context is particularly important. Participant 2 would be "scared of being attacked" wearing an Extinction Rebellion T-shirt in London. Similarly, Participant B is reluctant to wear her "Imagine Peace" in public, worried that people will think she is protesting. This can also be linked to the idea of disruption, which is often associated with activism. Participant 2 describes Extinction Rebellion's methods as "disruptive," and Participant B is worried that her T-shirt might signal the wrong message, stating, "I tend to hide it a bit, to take away some of the impact." This implies that she does not want her shirt to draw attention to herself, causing disruption.

The FashionMap archive has a number of T-shirts conveying messages and signs through their design and typography. Figure 4 shows a T-shirt from the British high street retailer H&M's 2010/2011 Spring/Summer collection. The garment displays artwork from the British punk rock band The Sex Pistols for their second single, "God Save The Queen," released in 1977. This now infamous image, designed by Jamie Reid, was originally featured on a Vivienne Westwood T-shirt that Vogue have described as "the ultimate in protest

fashion" (Yaeger, 2017). We selected this T-shirt as a discussion point within the focus group as it is a particularly good example of activism in the archive.

The song was a controversial rant about the British monarchy: "God Save The Queen, she's not a human being, and there's no future, and England's dreaming," lead singer Johnny Rotten sings (Hall, 2017). The song was released to coincide with the Queen's Silver Jubilee in the summer of 1977. Despite being banned by the BBC, the song was incredibly successful. Reid's image is described as "one of the most iconic record sleeves of all time," and "announced the mainstream arrival of punk" (Hall, 2017). As shown in figure 4, Reid's imagery now appears on the high street T-shirt as a fashion trend item. The implications of this can be linked to trickle-down theory, in which "innovation takes place at a higher level and then spreads downwards, because the lower social classes strive to move upwards, which results in them always being one step behind" (Svendsen, 2004, p. 39). Ted Polhemus (1994) notes, "The authenticity and sense of subcultural identity which is symbolized in streetstyle is lost when it becomes 'this year's fashion'—something which can be purchased and worn without reference to its original subcultural meaning" (Polhemus, 1994 quoted in Steele, 1997, p. 285).

Figure 4. – H&M 2010/2011. FashionMap at NTU. ©.

This idea was reflected through the focus group. Participants were not in favor of the above shirt, and no one in the group said they would wear it today. "I would probably wear it if it was more like the original Sex Pistols album cover—it has been made too girly," noted Participant G. This demonstrates that the T-shirt has lost its original message, as the design and intended impact have become diluted through reproduction of the image. It reflects the corporatization and commercialization of activism (Dauvergne & LeBaron, 2014), and shows that authenticity is also an emerging theme. The activist T-shirt has to be original and must not be reproduced in any way. This can be linked to the focus group's attitude toward wearing an Extinction Rebellion T-shirt. It was crucial for the group to be authentic to the cause of Extinction Rebellion, and not wear a T-shirt supporting consumerism.

Potentially utilizing activist ideas for commercial purposes, in 2016 Dior released a white cotton T-shirt printed with the slogan, "We should all be feminists." Maria Grazia Chiuri, creative director at Dior, commented on the choice of a T-shirt to communicate her design philosophy: "The slogan 'We Should All Be Feminists' takes over this blank space and plays with the political value of appearances. . . For me, the white T-shirt was a simple, direct and immediate means to say something loud and clear" (Fashion Museum Bath, 2017).

Dior's "We should all be feminists" T-shirt sparked a discussion during the focus group about the price of activist T-shirts. Dior's shirt retails at £580 (Dior, n.d.). The focus group questioned the credibility of this price: "I would pay £580 for a T-shirt that did good,

but wouldn't put £580 into the pocket of Dior,'" said Participant G. This once again highlights the theme of commercialization. Some designer protest and activism T-shirts have been criticized; one Business of Fashion user critiqued Balenciaga, whose CEO believes that brands need to integrate social commitments into their strategies: "Purchasing a t-shirt that costs hundreds of dollars is in no way shape or form anti-poverty activism, and a world food programme logo doesn't miraculously make your habit for spending obscene amounts of money a more ethical form of consumption" (#BofFMySay, 2019). This demonstrates that credibility and authenticity are important aspects of a successful activist T-shirt. Participant G brought a T-shirt to the focus group containing a similar message to Dior's 'We should all be feminists' T-shirt, which stated, "The future is female" (figure 5)

Figure 5. The future is female T-shirt.
NTU.

This T-shirt was purchased from a high street store and cost a fraction of Dior's £580 price point. This raised questions about the T-shirt's message alongside its method of production, and reflects previously mentioned discussions surrounding equality and consumption; Participant C pointed out, "Who made this 'the future is female' t-shirt? Because the vast majority of garment workers on low wages are female, they probably wouldn't support the message or cause."

This T-shirt example evidences how activism has been adopted by the fashion system, diluting political ideologies as they become submersed in consumer culture. Young, impressionable consumers have become more concerned and aware about social and environmental causes, and brands have responded by incorporating activism into their strategies. This can, however, cause controversy and debate, as buying into these ideas doesn't necessarily mean that the consumer has made an ethical choice, as questioned through the T-shirt in figure 5. Often brands use activism in their design strategies as a form of differentiation, but this can backfire if it comes across as superficial or self-righteous (Young, 2018).

Several key themes have emerged from these findings. First, the context in which a T-shirt is worn is incredibly important (Davis, 1994). Time, place, and social situation can affect the meaning of activist T-shirts. An individual's understanding of personal identity is also a significant aspect to consider, as is the relationship between public and private identity (Fielding et al., 2008). The desire to "fit in" and not cause a "disruption" are issues that have been identified regarding activist T-shirts. The commercialization of activism (Dauvergne & LeBaron, 2014) can lead to a lack of authenticity, which can in turn affect a brands credibility.

Conclusion

The T-shirt is a powerful advertising medium. It is a blank canvas that can communicate opinions and offer freedom of expression (Brunel, 2002). The protest T-shirt has become widely recognized as a medium on which brands and individuals can share their opinions and create lasting statements. Sustainability within the fast fashion industry is a growing concern for both brands and consumers. This paper has addressed the question, "How effective is the T-shirt as a sign vehicle to promote environmental activism?"

In its role as a cultural icon, the T-shirt has become more accessible and disposable. Activism has been adopted by the fashion system, diluting political ideologies as these become submersed in consumer culture. However, as a symbol of activism, protest, individuality and identity, the T-shirt surely has a key place in securing a more conscious and sustainable future. Focusing on the T-shirt as a representation or sign vehicle of sustainability issues could be integral to spreading the message of the need for a more environmentally friendly future for the fashion industry.

However, for an environmental activist T-shirt to be effective, it must be produced in an ethically responsible way. This became apparent through focus group discussions surrounding Extinction Rebellion—supply chain transparency is required in order for consumers to buy into T-shirts displaying environmental messages. Otherwise, the T-shirt itself becomes a contradiction. There will always be an environmental impact in producing a T-shirt, but perhaps the need to convey a particular message about the environment takes precedent over this impact by contributing to secure a more sustainable future.

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Examination of Fashion Practicality and Sociality Among Acculturating Indonesian Domestic Workers in Hong Kong

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Abstract

This study examines the symbolic fashion practices among Indonesian domestic helpers to resolve acculturative stress and identity conflicts in Hong Kong. We adopted a qualitative research approach and conducted 15 in-depth interviews. Our findings revealed that the domestic helpers developed different fashion practices to a) liberate from home culture, b) reconnect to home and religious identity, c) manage private and public identities at work, and d) relieve from stress at work. This study contributes to offer a cross-cultural perspective of how migrant workers experienced and negotiated their conflicting identities with their fashion choices, drawing new insights into fashion acculturation experiences and market segmentation.

Keywords: consumer behavior, ethnic minorities, clothing acculturation, qualitative research, identity conflicts

Introduction

In a globalizing world where people from different cultures are more interconnected than ever, consumer identity conflicts and social consequences for consumption are central to the discussion of consumer acculturation theory (Askegaard et al., 2005; Chytkova, 2011; Desphande et al., 1986; Dion et al., 2011; Jafari & Goulding, 2008). When people socialized in one (migrant) culture come into continuous first-hand contact with another (mainstream) culture, migrants may experience different levels of uncertainty, instability, and pressure to change for the sake of their survival (Levy & Zaltman, 1975). The confrontation with "otherness" may engender consumer agency (Ger & Belk, 1996). This may result in (a) identity conflicts and new identity projects, (b) social and physical adjustment of values, attitudes, and behaviors, (c) psychological stress and culture shock, (d) struggles in sociocultural conditioning, and (e) adapting to asymmetrical power relationships (Li, 2012). Thus, consumption is a vehicle for resolving conflicting identity positions and preventing negative outcomes like discrimination, exploitation, and group conflict. This study examines how a group of Indonesian domestic helpers in Hong Kong exercise agency through different fashion-clothing choices to overcome acculturative stress and identity conflicts.

Since foreign domestic helpers (hereafter FDH) were admitted in 1973, demand has grown for live-in domestic housework and care helpers in Hong Kong (Hong Kong Legislative Council, 2017; Siu, 2017). At present, there are more than 380,000 FDHs working in Hong Kong (10% of the total working population), comprised of around 42% (160,000) female domestic workers from Indonesia (Hong Kong Government, 2018). As the second largest FHD group in Hong Kong, many Indonesian domestic helpers live under limited-term employment contracts. The Chinese University of Hong Kong survey reported that over 70% FDHs worked 13-16 hours a day, and 20% did not get all 12 days of statutory holidays (Sum, 2019). Average pay for live-in helpers was HK$4,277 (US$545), which was

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lower than the current minimum wage for FDHs by law (HK$4,410/US$561) and far below the average monthly income of local citizens (HK$17,215/US$2,194) (Trading Economics, 2019). Indonesian domestic helpers also reported feeling isolated and exploited at work as well as in everyday life (Vetter, 2018). Some were even associated with Islamic State because of their Muslim beliefs and religious clothing—*jilbab* (Carvalho, 2017).

If clothing reflects one's identity and values with respect to social groups and norms (Khare, 2014), the daily wear of domestic helpers in Hong Kong serves as a fashion narrative that contributes to understanding how marginalized groups ascribe new cultural meanings to their clothing choice in order to cope with identity politics and tensions at work and in everyday life. The purpose of this study is to understand the symbolic consumption practices of fashion among a group of Indonesian domestic helpers to resolve acculturative stress and identity conflicts in Hong Kong. The study sheds light on the role and practices of the consumer in clothing acculturation among ethnic minorities and marginalized communities. Specific research questions of the study include:

1. What struggles and challenges do Indonesian domestic helpers experience in their everyday life in Hong Kong?
2. How do Indonesian domestic helpers learn and adapt different clothing choices to resolve identity conflicts and social tensions?
3. How do Indonesian domestic helpers balance their authentic ethnic identity and their adaptive cultural identity with their fashion choices?

Theoretical Framework: Consumer Acculturation Theory

Consumer acculturation is a subset of acculturation theory, studying the complexities and dynamics of acculturative forces in shaping consumer behavior and marketplace structure (Peñaloza, 1989; 1994; Üstüner & Holt, 2007). Acculturation is defined as "those phenomena which result when groups of individuals having different cultures come into continuous first-hand contact, with subsequent changes in the original cultural patterns of either or both groups" (Redfield et al., 1936, p. 149). Acculturation is often conceived as a temporally and spatially bounded process rather than a result of cultural interaction between groups. It focuses on how individuals experience identity conflicts when they confront people from other cultures, and adapt reactively (i.e., resisting change but assimilating into the dominant group), selectively (i.e., involved in intergroup contact and deciding which elements of their culture to surrender or to incorporate from the new culture), or creatively (i.e., simulating new cultural forms not found in either culture) to the presence of "Otherness" in negotiating identity formation, psychological adjustment in value and attitudes, as well as other behavioral changes (Bhatia, 2002; Berry, 1997; Ger & Østergaard, 1998; Maldonado and Tansuhaj, 1999; Padilla and Perez, 2003).

The Assimilationist Approach

Early studies of consumer acculturation follow an assimilationist approach, better known as the melting-pot theory. Acculturation is conceived as a linear, progressive process through which consumers from migrant cultures can only dissociate themselves from their groups of origin and subsequently assimilate to the mainstream culture (O'Guinn et al., 1985). This process-oriented approach conceptualizes acculturation as a continuum, with varying levels of acculturation in each subculture. At one end of the continuum is the unacculturated extreme, where the consumer's heritage and homeland culture are the strongest influencing factors. At the other end is the acculturated extreme, where the consumer is fully assimilated into the host culture by adopting prevailing consumer attitudes,

behaviors, and knowledge of the host population (Hair & Anderson, 1972). This approach was later challenged by interpretive consumer researchers who offered a multidirectional and multidimensional understanding of acculturation lived experience (Askegaard et al., 2005; Bhatia, 2002; Chytkova, 2011; Li, 2012; Skuza, 2007). Peñaloza's (1989; 1994) influential ethnography of Mexican immigrants in the United States views acculturation as a socialization process through which consumers acquire new consumption knowledge, skills, and behaviors from the host culture in order to gain social acceptance from the local community. Peñaloza found that immigrant consumers selectively draw cultural meanings from consumption objects in relation to the home culture versus the host culture, leading to four acculturation outcomes. Migrant consumers may choose to (1) *resist* the host culture, (2) *adopt* both cultures, (3) fully *assimilate* to the host culture, or (4) physically *segregate* from both cultures through symbolic consumption.

Hybrid Identities and Consumer Agency: The Post-Assimilationist Turn

Recent studies have identified the challenges consumers face in developing and maintaining a coherent sense of self during acculturation (Ahuvia, 2005; Sandikci & Ger, 2010; Schouten, 1991). Migrant consumers may experience different levels of uncertainty and challenges to their original values, dogma, and ideologies (Hermans & Dimaggio, 2007). Post-assimilationist researchers argue that acculturation facilitates identity evolution and role transition. Migrant consumers can use brands and consumption choices to "(re)discover, preserve, (re)construct, and dispose of a part of identity" in order to negotiate and articulate a diversified cultural identity in a new sociocultural setting (Kipnis et al., 2014, p. 231). In resolving conflicting or even competing self-identity positions, consumers assign both private and public meanings to their possessions to forge an authentic sense of identity. This results in inconsistent consumption preferences and brand choices (Bahl & Milne, 2009; Richins, 1994).

While consumer identity is partly shaped by sociocultural context and different global, local, or even glocal ideological discourses, individuals express a sense of consumer agency in interpreting, appropriating, or even alternating cultural meanings in their consumption strategies (choices and practices) for self-expression and to cope with the conflicting demands of identity negotiation (Sobh et al., 2012; Tinson & Nuttall, 2010). Consumer agency refers to the ability of individuals and groups to transform and play with meanings (Arnould & Thompson, 2005). For example, consumer acculturation studies found that consumers (re)interpret and innovate new symbolic consumption practices to resist immigration myths (Hu et al., 2013), to enact a double resistance to both original and Western cultures (Sobh et al., 2012), to innovate new consumption practices that reconcile traditional practices with the Western myth of modernity (Chytkova, 2011; Jafari & Goulding, 2008; Sandikci and Ger, 2010; Sobh et al., 2014), to rework a local version of the Western lifestyle myth with limited socioeconomic and cultural capital (Üstüner and Holt, 2007), and to appropriate global cultural rituals in a local context (Tinson & Nuttall, 2010).

The Symbolic Role of Fashion in Acculturation

Baudrillard (1981) argues that fashion discourses enshroud the profound nature of social relationships. Consumers negotiate and deploy "countervailing meanings" in everyday fashion discourses to resolve "the tensions and paradoxes that exist between consumers' sense of individual agency (autonomy issues) and consumers' sensitivity to sources of social prescription in their everyday lives (conformity issues)" (Thompson & Haytko, 1997, pp. 15-16). Previous literatures also sheds light on the symbolic function of fashion-clothing consumption practices during acculturation. For example, Gbadamosi's (2012) study reported that African migrants in London were influenced by climate, religious beliefs, and

demographic and social factors in their fashion choices, and that migrant consumers often use clothing to represent and promote their native culture on special occasions. Sobh et al. (2014) found that young Arab women adopt the strategies of "cloak of invisibility" and "mimetic excess" to reconcile the opposing fashion discourses of Islamic conservatism and Western modernity. By choosing to wear Western clothing and accessories underneath the loose-fitting *abaya*, these consumers display a layered fashion discourse that can be interpreted as "intentional resistance" (Ger & Belk, 1996) to local hegemony. Their fashion choices affirm their power in managing their appearance as well as enacting their identities in a patriarchal society. In an extreme case, Jafari and Goulding's (2008) research on Iranian immigrants in the United Kingdom introduces the notion of the "torn self" to describe the impact of politicized ideologies on the identities of young consumers. In the throes of a moral dilemma over whether to adopt Western dress or maintain Islamic dress, these young Iranians live and negotiate their cultural identity between contradictory ideologies as revealed in their symbolic consumption Islamization, which opposes individuality, vs. Western market-based liberal ideology, which emphasizes individual life-projects and obligatory freedom). While previous literature sheds light on identity politics and consumption adaptation among migrant consumers in general, little attention has been paid to acculturation of "workers" on which aspects of self-belong to the work domain (Tian & Belk, 2005). This study of FDHs in Hong Kong extends our discussion to how the interplay of consumer and worker identities shapes symbolic consumption of fashion during acculturation.

Methodology

This qualitative study adopted ethnographic methods to examine the acculturation experiences of a group of Indonesian domestic workers in Hong Kong. The research aim is to reveal the domestic workers' subjective experiences as well as their consumption practices in resolving identity conflicts and social tension during acculturation. Hammersley and Atkinson (2007) suggested that in-depth interviews, observation, context analysis, and visual recording are common techniques in ethnographical research. Mixed interpretive methods allow in-depth understanding of consumer behavior and experiences, and provide explanations for the multiplicity and complexity of sociocultural, experiential, symbolic, and ideological aspects of consumption (Arnould & Thompson, 2005).

The purpose of the in-depth interviews was to reveal how the domestic workers appropriated meanings to their clothing choices as part of their everyday identity narratives. Phenomenological interviewing techniques provided an in-depth understanding of the first-person, subjective lived experiences from a cultural perspective of consumption (Askegaard & Linnet, 2011). The purposive sampling technique and snowball sampling method were adopted in the study. A total of 15 participants were recruited for in-depth interviews (table 1), Participants were 21-40 years old, and all were female Indonesian domestic helpers who have been working in Hong Kong for at least a year. Only four were single; the others were married. All interviews were conducted in a natural setting during days off where the participants could feel relaxed. Each interview lasted 50-70 minutes and were audio-recorded. Rather than a question-and-answer session, all interviews were semi-structured and open-ended, using non-direct questioning to engage informants in a dialogue (Atkinson, 1998). Questions were asked only to encourage more extended, detailed, and comprehensive descriptions of the participants' experiences, thoughts, and feelings regarding their acculturation experiences as well as their aesthetic judgement and attitudes toward fashion tastes and preferences (Lam et al., 2016). Interviews were conducted in Mandarin, Cantonese, or English depending on their language proficiency, while all interviews were transcribed and excerpted in English by the researcher for analysis.

Table 1. Participants in In-Depth Interviews

Participants	Age	Work experience abroad (years)	Marital status/ no. of children (age)
Yesiga	27	Taiwan (6)/ Hong Kong (2)	Married/ no child
Lita	26	Hong Kong (6)	Single
Meta	27	Hong Kong (5)/ Singapore (2)	Married/ no child
Tutik	33	Hong Kong (3)	Married/ 1 daughter (6)
Siti	32	Hong Kong (3)	Married/ 1 son (7)
Tari	34	Hong Kong (1)	Married/ 2 daughters (5&12)
Lila	32	Dubai (4)/ Singapore (4)/ Hong Kong (4)	Married/ 1 son (5)/1 daughter (15)
Site	40	Taiwan (4)/ Hong Kong (9)	Married/ 1 son (6)/1 daughter (21)
Tamati	26	Hong Kong (3)	Married/1 son (4)
Matika	35	Singapore (2)/ Hong Kong (10)	Married/ 1 son (10)/ 1 daughter (4)
Vendi	21	Hong Kong (2)	Single
Nari	23	Hong Kong (3)	Single
Tali	22	Hong Kong (2)	Single
City	29	Hong Kong (9)	Married/ 1 son (6)
Masila	30	Taiwan (4)/ Hong Kong(3)	Married/ 2 daughters (3&7)
Kalita	32	Taiwan (4)/ Hong Kong (6)	Married/ 2 sons (4&8)

According to Marshall and Rossman (1989), observation means a systematic account of behaviors, events, and artifacts in the social setting. In this study, participant observation was used for data collection. According to Agar (1996), participant observation means involvement in community life, observing and talking with people. To better understand Hong Kong's Indonesian community, fieldwork and participant observation were conducted to systematically account for consumption behaviors, events, and artifacts in the social setting (Marshall & Rossman, 1989). The research team joined some of the activities organized by the Indonesian domestic helper associations (Asosiaso Buruh Migran Indonesia di Hong Kong and Indonesian Migrant Workers). This allowed researchers to observe sociocultural activities in a natural setting where the participants can lead the discussion as well (Agar, 1996). The researchers were immersed in the community, chatting, sharing food and stories with the participants. Since religion was an important aspect of their lives, one researcher also visited the mosque and enrolled in a course about the Quran where he interviewed a teacher of the Quran who helped to support Indonesian domestic helpers in Hong Kong. Field notes, photos, and videos were taken whenever possible (Arnould & Wallendorf, 1994) to illustrate the temporal flows of consumption activities (Belk et al., 2013). This allowed researchers to interpret the data, and contrast the etic perspective with the emic verbal claims obtained from the interviews.

All interviews were taped, transcribed, and analyzed using iterative interpretive and hermeneutic methods, and all went through the triangulation processes (Kozinets, 2008; Thompson et al., 1989). Analysis involved close reading of the transcripts, identifying central and meaningful themes as they emerged. Triangulation achieved more accurate results through comprehensive reviewing and cross-checking of data collected from interviews, observations, field notes, media, and other documents (Belk et al., 1988). Themes were refined until researchers were satisfied that these were captured in quotes (Spiggle, 1994).

<div align="center">**Findings and Discussion**</div>

Everyday fashion-clothing consumption narratives of the Indonesian migrant workers revealed the identity conflicts and social tensions they experienced in Hong Kong. Four major themes emerged from this study to explain how these domestic workers negotiated their conflicting identities by ascribing new meanings to their clothing choices and practices.

From Culture Shock to Liberation from Home Culture

Moving to Hong Kong to live and work was an exotic experience for many of the Indonesian domestic workers. They had to keep learning, reflecting, and adapting to new practices in a different sociocultural environment. Many participants said they had been adopting new practices of what to wear (clothing), how to speak (language), and even changing religious practices. For example, they started wearing pants instead of a maxi skirt, cooked and ate Chinese cuisine, and spoke Cantonese and English to communicate . In regard to fashion-clothing choices, many informants encountered culture shock when they first arrived and saw the scantily dressed local Chinese women. Due to their Islamic beliefs, it was difficult to accept girls wearing shorts and vests in the street.

> City (29, married): *I was a bit shocked by the way they dress. They look really confident and comfortable to show off their bodies, legs, waist, and even the boobs. I first found it embarrassing. But now, I know it is something normal. Everyone dresses like this.*
> Masila (30, married): *I can go without jilbab but I can't dress like other girls in Hong Kong. . . . They show their skin and legs, even waist and boobs. It never bothers me, but I won't accept showing off my body. I am still conservative about showing off my body.*

Croucher and Kramer (2016) argued that migrants experience culture shock and difficulties when they first arrive in a new place, but would transform toward a more intercultural existence after dealing with stress, learning skills, and fusing into the new culture. All participants admitted they changed the way they dressed after living in Hong Kong a short time. While some still wore long dresses and the traditional Muslim *jilbab*, they started wearing pants, T-shirts, and cotton garments. The participants allowed for the hot and humid Hong Kong weather even though they would never wear T-shirts and shorts at home in Indonesia. It was undeniable that these women felt liberated from their home country's cultural and religious restrictions but were still keeping many practices in respect for their cultural identity.

> Vendi (21, single): *I feel like summer in Hong Kong is much hotter than my home country. Muslims have to dress in long sleeves, and I used to dress in long sleeves whether at home or outside when I was in Indonesia. I can't do this in Hong Kong . . . I have to dress in short sleeves to make myself comfortable , , , However, when I go outside I still cover my arms with long sleeves as we (Muslim) have to do this.*
> Tari (34, married): *I changed my way of dressing eventually after coming to Hong Kong, but still keep some of my traditional style . . . I still wear jilbab, long sleeves and sometimes wear my long dresses at home . . . it is no longer a must for me to dress like Hong Kong people. Yet, we still need to compromise a little and make ourselves comfortable.*
> Masila (30, married): *When I go back to Indonesia, I definitely wouldn't wear pants and T-shirts like now. It would be super weird for me to wear jeans in my home*

country! In my village, everyone is Muslim and they wear ankle-length dresses. Also, my husband can only accept me wearing pants in Hong Kong as part of the job requirement. However it won't be happening in Indonesia. We are pious Muslims and I should always listen to my husband.

It was interesting to note that many married female workers cared about their husband's views. Although they were now working in Hong Kong and distanced from their family, these women were still negotiating their conflicting identities as authentic Muslim wives and as workers in Hong Kong through explaining and selecting what and how to wear.

Matika (35, married): *My husband is very upset that I am wearing pants in Hong Kong as he thinks it is inappropriate for women. He is a pious Muslim. After so many years of explanation, he can now understand my situation and not be reluctant to see me wearing pants even though I know he is still a bit annoyed.*
Kalita (32, married): *I feel comfortable to not wear jilbab. . . I seldom wear it when I am in Hong Kong. My husband is very angry with me because I am only allowed to show my hair to him and the family. So, I only send him selfies with jilbab.*
Yesiga (27, married): [my husband] *is working as a factory worker in South Korea. . . . He used to be a bit angry with me when I wear skinny jeans or not wearing jilbab outside. However, he showed some understanding after working in Seoul.*

A Creative Reconnection to Religious and Home Identities

Practicing Muslim beliefs in Hong Kong was an important part of life among the participants to connect with their heritage and culture while away from home. Most participants kept practicing their religious rituals (e.g., praying five times and going to mosque) and wearing the *jilbab* to cover their hair and bodies. Moreover, some still wore traditional Indonesian costume to express and promote their cultural identity in Hong Kong. However, this did not imply that they chose to isolate themselves from the local culture (Berry, 1997); It was observed that these Indonesians innovated new practices to creatively adapt to the local culture and reconnect to the home culture.

For those who had stayed in Hong Kong for years, they shared that there had been a lot of changes in the way they dressed in *jilbab*. They used to be excited about wearing Islamic long dresses and colorful, decorated *jilbab* during the first years in Hong Kong because it was a way to connect to the home culture. However, after staying in Hong Kong for more than five years, they found themselves much more comfortable with casualwear in plain colors and *jilbab* with simple cuts, comfortable fabrics, and plain colors.

Matika (35, married): *In the first two to three years, I was happy to dress in Muslim dresses and red chiffon jilbab with flowers during holidays . . . it makes me feel relieved from the stress at work . . . I am not alone in this foreign land. But after nine years* [in Hong Kong] *I always wears pants, and cotton jilbab which are more comfortable . . . . Perhaps the way the locals dress have an impact on me . . . they love simple clothes in plain colors.*

Some participants, especially those younger and single, did not perceive wearing *jilbab* as a must. They also reported that they would wear leggings and nylon stockings that show body shape. While they still wore full-length clothing to cover their bodies as a basic principle, the young women's clothing practices was similar to the "cloak of invisibility" concept (Sobh et al,. 2014) that reconciled the opposing fashion discourses of Islamic

conservatism and Western interpretations of body beauty. It also added a practical and functional layer in the way they dress.

> Lila (32, married): *I feel comfortable not covering my hair with jilbab in Hong Kong . . . people here are not wearing it, so I don't think I am weird not to wear it. Quran says that women's hair can only be exposed to husband and family . . . however, my husband doesn't care about my hair. So, I am okay with that.*
> Tari (34, married): *I feel more comfortable and secure when wearing jilbab . . . I am a pious Muslim and don't want to break the rules. But it is ok to change from long dresses to long pants as it is one of the job requirements.*

Managing Private and Public Identities at Work

Unlike previous acculturation literature focusing on consumer identity, the identity as "worker/employee" heavily shaped participants' acculturation experiences as well as their consumption practices.

For domestic helpers, the line between public space (workplace) and private space (private time) is blurred and hard to define. The place they work is the place they live. Many participants described it as a "home" with bosses instead of family. The employer has a crucial role in the acculturation experience since many domestic workers must negotiate with employers on how to dress in workplace/home. While some employers were uncomfortable with Islamic clothing, some welcomed the Muslim dress.

> Siti (32, married): *It is very common for the bosses not to allow us to wear jilbab at home or when we are outside, picking up their children and grocery shopping. Many of my friends are not allowed to wear jilbab. For me, my boss is an old conservative guy . . . he prefers me to wear jilbab, long sleeves, and long pants. He agrees it is more decent and he thinks Muslim jilbab is really beautiful. I am happy that he allows me to wear jilbab and respect my religion since I know he doesn't need to approve that. However, he doesn't like me to wear makeup even on days off. He thinks it is not appropriate for me to do too much makeup. It is acceptable for me . . . I don't feel it is too demanding as I am here to work but not to play . . . it is good that we can respect each other.*
> Tari (34, married): *My boss doesn't want me to wear jilbab as he thinks it is quite scary. Perhaps because Muslim are often stereotyped as terrorists in media. Some Hong Kong people don't have much understanding about Muslims and may have a negative impression of jilbab. My boss said I will scare his guests when they come to visit . . .So, I seldom wear jilbab. I only wear it during days off.*
> Meta (27, married): *I want to wear mukena when I pray at home but my boss didn't like it . . . my friends taught me how to negotiate with my boss. I finally realize that Hong Kong people don't like white mukena. . . so I changed it to a darker color.*

Relief from Stress at Work: Hedonic Consumption in Hong Kong

While it was difficult to differentiate the workplace and private space as discussed in the previous section, the domestic helpers were all excited to hang out with friends on days off. Many participants shared that they treasured the time with their friends and spent time and money dressing up. Many view wearing beautiful clothes and makeup as enjoyable relief from their stressful working lives.

As primping is not allowed on workdays, many of them grasp every chance to dress up in their traditional Islamic and to wear makeup on days off. They also expressed happiness to be looking pretty. An example is buying more than ten bright-colored *jilbab* at one time even though these clothes can only be worn during their one day off per week.

Yesiga (27, married): *On weekdays, I have to work and can't wear makeup because it is inappropriate to dress up as a domestic helper. It is not professional and I'm actually too busy to do my makeup . . . I really enjoy my holiday as I can spend time doing my makeup and dressing up. You know, girls always love to be pretty and sparkling . . . I do my base which is pale . . . . I also do my eyebrows, eyeliner, shadows and fake lashes to make my eyes flare and look bigger. It often takes me 45 minutes before going out.*

Meta (27, married): *I know I actually don't need so many jilbab . . . and I am not allowed to wear it at work. But I just want to have different colors and different styles. They are not expensive, it's about HK$20 each. Clothes in Hong Kong are too expensive for me, but these are affordable... . . . I feel so happy owning them and it is a way relax from work.*

Impulsive consumption within the Indonesian domestic helper community was another interesting finding. Even though many participants were breadwinners for their families in Indonesia, they sometimes failed to balance income and expenses. Some young and single domestic helpers shared that they have fewer family burdens and were more likely to have financial problems due to excessive clothes and cosmetic purchases.

Tali (22, single): *I spent my whole month's salary on buying clothes because there were sales everywhere. At first I just planned to buy a jacket for winter but spent more than HK$3000 on clothes, shoes, and cosmetic products . . . I don't often do this, just a few times, so it is ok for me.*

Tari (34, married): *I didn't have financial problems due to buying too much. But a lot of young girls did. They were spending too much money on fashion, makeup, and some went to salons and spent nearly HK$1000 on hair. Many like doing this because they have less burdens and no children to raise yet.*

Conclusion

Encounters with difference fill our everyday life experiences (Beckstead, 2010). When people come into contact with others from different sociocultural backgrounds, they may experience uncertainty and pressure to adapt to conflicting identity negotiations and (re)configuration of social relationships. This study investigated the acculturation experiences in consuming fashion clothing among a group of Indonesian domestic workers in Hong Kong, and identified four emergent themes on how these migrant workers experienced and negotiated their conflicting identities with their fashion choices. This study offered both theoretical and practical implications for marketing strategies. Theoretically speaking, this study offers new insights into acculturation experiences in fashion choices among an ethnic minority working in Hong Kong, and also offers marketers some understanding of the consumer behaviors of Indonesian domestic workers for the purpose of market segmentation purposes.

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Womenswear Well-being Warriors: A Content Analysis of Female-Targeted Activewear Brands on Instagram

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Abstract

In contemporary Western society, people are increasingly focused on well-being, with national well-being statistics reported by numerous developed economies. Wellness is now a consumer mindset, which has gone beyond a trend and become a lifestyle, described as individual, multi-dimensional and influenced by community and environment. Fashion is recognized as a powerful social force, capable of enhancing both physical and emotional well-being. The cultural shift toward prioritizing comfortable clothing and more casual dress has led to the rapid development of female sportswear as fashionwear, described as athleisurewear. This category has seen high levels of growth compared to slowing growth in the overall clothing market.

Existing studies on activewear focus on positivist paradigms and scientific testing, with few examining the sociological or fashion perspective, therefore this research adopts an interpretive, qualitative methodology. An exploratory literature review established several well-being categories related to fashion; safety, time, the body, community, confidence and colour, as well as hedonic and eudaimonic well-being. Qualitative content analysis on four female-targeted activewear brands was completed, utilizing posts from each brand's Instagram feed over a six-month period. Results were coded to the well-being categories established in the literature and critiqued using a Baumanian sociological lens. The findings reveal high levels of positivity, a strong sense of community, messages of female empowerment, and inclusivity, underpinning the value of female-targeted activewear brands to the well-being of the women who wear them, and the role of both activewear brands and social media in facilitating community.

Key words: well-being, community, Instagram, activewear, womenswear

Introduction

This research is underpinned by Zygmunt Bauman's (2012) social theory of *Liquid Modernity*. In contemporary society, people are increasingly anxious, linked by Bauman (2012) to the demise of community, the rise of individuality, and the anxiety of choice. In tandem, consumers increasingly spend their disposable income on products, experiences, and activities that improve their lives, described as health creep or the consumerization of health (Krom, 2014). Wellness is now a consumer mindset, going beyond a trend and becoming a lifestyle (Krom, 2014). Worth Global Style Network's (WGSN, 2015) "Wellthness" consumer insight report confirms wellness is a desired status symbol, with many sportwear and fashion brands developing associated clothing products and experiences. Thus, this research explores links between fashion and well-being, using a Baumanian lens.

Literature Review

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Well-Being

Interest in well-being is not new; in 2010, the Office for National Statistics commenced the Measuring National Well-Being program, facilitating the monitoring and understanding of well-being in the United Kingdom (Evans et al., 2015). The report discusses well-being in relation to time, work, leisure, safety and income. The 2019 Global Happiness and Wellbeing Policy Report (Global Council for Happiness and Wellbeing, 2019, p. 4) states that the "'pursuit of happiness' should no longer be left to the individual," arguing that it is a societal (macro-level) concern. However, Davies (2015) suggests that policies related to happiness and well-being seek to alter the behavior of individuals toward goals selected by those in power. This is described as a form of paternalism which Davies acknowledges can relieve the individual from the responsibility of decision-making. In agreement, Bauman notes that freedom from societal constraint does not bring automatic happiness, as human agents find taking responsibility, without norms to follow, stressful. Time spent on leisure activities is said to increase psychological well-being by releasing the stress of everyday life (Evans et al., 2015). Getting active is one of the five evidence-based steps advocated by the UK's National Health Service (NHS) to improve psychological well-being (NHS, 2015). Similarly, Lomas et al. (2014) stress the value of exercise in promoting well-being.

Well-Being and Community

Bauman defined society as an "imagined being," replacing God in the supervision of human affairs (2011, p. 57). Where orthodox sociology was concerned with obedience and conformity, sociology in modern times is more concerned with freedom, autonomy, and responsibility (Bauman, 2012). In *Liquid Modernity*, Bauman acknowledged a move toward individualization, with diverse and deregulated opportunities for people's progress and improvement. Solidity, in the form of societal rules, routines, and norms, once provided stability and collective well-being to *the citizen*, who was committed to the common interests of society. The move toward individualization has led to a lack of solidarity, a more fragmented society, with the citizen now replaced by *the person*, who shows less commitment to society and is more concerned with individual problems. Unpredictability and "uncertainty of prospects" makes community a struggle and strains the individual's self-confidence (Bauman, 2011, p. 66). Bauman alludes to the false or forced nature of contemporary community, requiring spectacle to bring normally disparate individuals together in a more communitarian perspective. Those individuals temporarily conform, for example by adhering to a sartorial dress code specific to the occasion. These spectacles allow the individual to gain respite from the anxiety of solitary choice.

Social media has been identified as both an inhibitor and a facilitator of community (Casalo et al., 2018; Laroche et al., 2012). The Instagram platform has been widely adopted by both the fashion industry and a variety of niche communities, with hashtags such as #fitspiration bringing together well-being and athleisurewear, facilitating communities of like-minded individuals and brands. Casalo et al. (2018) note that consumers increasingly use platforms like Instagram as a source of advice, and Cukul (2015) notes brands' use of Instagram to engender loyalty. Laroche et al. found that social media–based brand communities can create value and have positive effects on community markers such as shared consciousness and rituals, stating that "[i]n joining social media, people fulfil their need for belongingness and their need for cognition with those who have shared norms, values and interests" (2012, p. 1756).

Well-Being and Clothing

Davies notes that "as an incredibly powerful social and economic force, fashion is capable of bringing health and well-being to those it touches physically and emotionally' (2015, p. 217). Hefferon (cited in Arts, 2015) states that, "clothes have the ability to influence our confidence, performance, posture and attitude," recognizing the psychosocial importance of clothing in human interactions and social settings. Masuch and Hefferon (2014) posit two types of psychological well-being gained from fashion and dress. Hedonic well-being involves feelings of pleasure, whereby clothing makes the wearer *feel good*. Eudaimonic well-being is gained through dress practice providing a source of *fulfillment or meaning*. Well-being from clothing and dress practice is also influenced by self-presentation or appearance management (Baron, 2013), color (Solomon and Rabolt, 2009; Eisman, 2006), community (Bauman, 2012; Craik, 1994) and confidence (Arts, 2015).

Sports clothing was traditionally associated with the male consumer as a form of casual wear, rather than for functional purposes (Keynote, 2015). In recent years, women have prioritized comfortable clothing and a more casual look, resulting in the rapid development of female sportswear as fashionwear (Keynote, 2015). Smith (2015) uses the term "athleisure," described as a "mass movement, not a trend"; a cultural shift over the preceding 5-10 years caused by the prioritization of health and well-being. Petrarca (2017) identifies the proliferation of athleisure as a trend, but one with longevity. Linked to athleisure wear, the term activewear is also described as a lifestyle choice rather than a fashion category, with high levels of growth in the sales of activewear seen in the United States and United Kingdom (WGSN, 2015). Activewear is described as evoking "a sense of athleticism and wellbeing" (WGSN, 2015, p. 6). Concurrently, sports brands have evolved from merely selling sports clothing to providing experiences and personal transformation opportunities that enhance their consumers' well-being (Sherman, 2016). Keynote (2015) highlights the evolution of female-targeted activewear brands such as Lululemon and Sweaty Betty, and sportswear/designer collaborations such as Stella McCartney with Adidas, as a measure of the importance of sports and leisure wear to the fashion industry. Bauman describes the actions of consumers in pursuit of health and fitness as expensive, with costly fitness clothing and health foods being readily and proactively consumed in the pursuit of confidence and escape from insecurity, positing the body as "a besieged fortress" (2012, p. 81). Similarly, Corner asserts that "the fashion industry is often viewed as the main culprit in undermining women's self-esteem" (2014: 92). Orbach's (1978) *Fat is a Feminist Issue* book states that female identity is linked to body image and that limited representation of women in mainstream media pressures women to conform to one standard (tall, thin, white, young). As this is unattainable for the majority to achieve, it results in widespread loss of self-esteem, leading to vulnerability, depression, eating disorders, and cosmetic surgery, all of which can be linked to well-being (or lack of). Several researchers (Masuch and Hefferon, 2014; Pine, 2014) note studies that prove wearing certain items can improve or impede feelings of confidence. Pine (2014) concludes that "it seems indisputable that simply putting on a piece of clothing which carries symbolic meaning can change a person's self-perception and even their thought processes. It can make them feel more or less attractive, confident, powerful or clever."

Method

Existing studies on activewear focus on positivist paradigms and the scientific testing of comfort and performance factors (Kamalha et al., 2013), with few examining the sociological or fashion perspective; therefore, this research adopts an interpretive, qualitative methodology to address this gap. The literature established the growth and fashion for athleisurewear clothing, the zeitgeist for well-being, and the role of social media in both, thus

the following key research question for this study emerged: How do female-targeted activewear brands use Instagram to encourage well-being in their consumers?

Instagram was chosen as it has a 51% female demographic (Chen, 2020), is a growth platform for fashion and clothing brands (Moatti & Abecassis-Moedas, 2018; Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017), and for its provision of rich media messages, incorporating image and text. Instagram also has a social, community element, often involving user-generated as well as firm-generated content (Daugherty et al., 2008; Laroche et al., 2012), and the option for sharing and two-way communication (Guidry et al., 2015). Four female-targeted activewear brands were selected for the study (figure 1), based on their active Instagram feeds and focus on female activewear.

Figure 1. Female-targeted activewear brands and number of posts analyzed.

A qualitative content analysis of each brand's Instagram feed was conducted; 775 posts (comprising images, text and hashtags) from April to September 2019 were analyzed for content associated with the key well-being categories identified in the literature review: community, confidence, safety, eudaimonic well-being, hedonic well-being and time. These well-being categories were used as topic codes (Richards, 2009), providing a first stage to analysis of the primary data, which was then developed thematically and critiqued using a Baumanian sociological lens. Bauman (2012, p. ix) uses the notion of liquidity as a metaphor for postmodern society, with those living in liquid modernity facing "an infinity of improvement." Bauman developed this notion to illustrate the constant state of change in contemporary society, and its associated anxieties. Thus, Bauman's *Liquid Modernity* was considered an appropriate theory to provide a critical lens for this research. As Bauman has not been widely applied to fashion, this study contributes to knowledge from a sociological perspective. The four brands chosen, although important in terms of their size and brand recognition, are a limitation of the study, and cannot be deemed representative of the wider athleisurewear industry. The study also focuses on a female-targeted sample, making it ungeneralizable to the wider concept of well-being.

Analysis and Discussion

Sweaty Betty

Posts from Sweaty Betty's Instagram feed fall into the community, safety, confidence, eudaimonic well-being, and hedonic well-being categories. The community category was the most prominent. In a community-building move, the brand canvassed its consumers to establish what they were most interested in (April 9). These posts received a high level of engagement, with 199 user-generated posts, some with detailed responses. Sweaty Betty's consumers indicated they wanted to see "more real women, diversity, wellness, design inspiration, technical details, styling tips and workout videos" (11 April). These were evident in subsequent posts, demonstrating that the brand has listened to its community. Other examples of Sweaty Betty's community-building customer interaction activities include

"Share your #SweatySelfie" posts, competitions, and simulated conversation using *us* and *you*. The community aspect is further strengthened by the "Meet Our Customers" campaign, with an inclusive "all ages and all sizes" message (14 June). The campaign features diverse Sweaty Betty customers filmed dancing in Sweaty Betty clothing. Inclusivity is further shown in a "Happy Pride London, we'll be celebrating with you" post (6 July) featuring the first woman to wear a hijab in a competitive horserace (1 August) and a body positivity post celebrating real bodies by showing an unretouched image featuring stretch marks (figure 2).
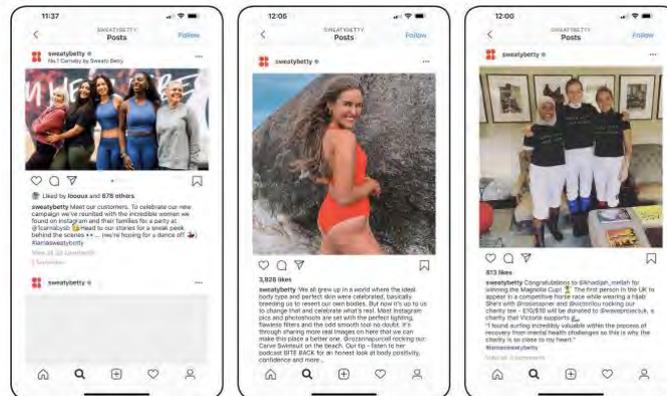
Fig. 2: An inclusive community

There is a strong focus on friendship in some of the posts. These mainly occurred around #nationalbestfriendsday and #nationalfriendshipday, and elicited engagement through activities including a "Tag your best friend" competition (20 July) and calls to action such as "Tag your workout buddy" (20 May) and "Our tip? Grab a friend and try something new" (4 August).

The word *community* appears in one post: "Sweaty Betty is about community, empowering women to support one another" (22 May), and is inherent in several others: "part of a tribe" (9 May), "sharing an adventurous experience, it's the ultimate human bond' (7 May) and "Sweaty Betty is about an experience of togetherness, connection and supporting each other" (18 June). The female perspective is emphasized (figure 3), using words such as "sisterhood" (10 May) and "like Mother, like daughter" (5 May). Indeed, Sweaty Betty has created a wholly female community on Instagram, using only female influencers and fitness instructors, introducing female head office staff, and using female directors for photo shoots and advertising campaigns.
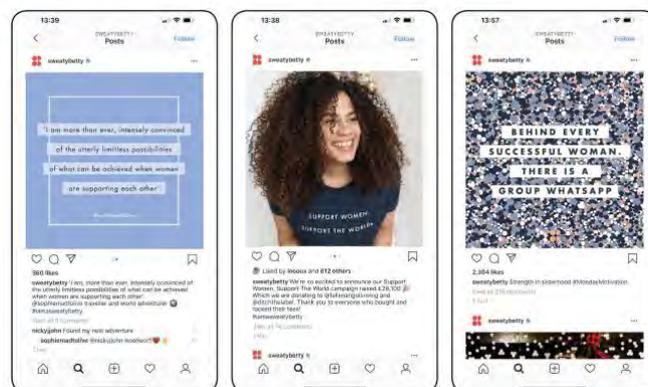
Figure 3. A female community

Thus, this space where women empower women is a safe space, which is significant as feeling safe is an aspect of well-being (Evans et al., 2015). Consumer reaction to the posts is overwhelmingly positive, encouraged by Sweaty Betty's ethos of being kind, evidenced by posts such as, "in a world where you can be anything, be kind to yourself and others around you" (28 September), which received 18,958 views and lots of heart emoji reactions. Another post states, "powerful things happen when we are nice to each other" (26 August), supporting #womensequalityday, and tips on "how to be kinder to yourself" are provided (24 July). In addition to psychological safety, a utilitarian approach to safety is evident, with posts describing a bag "for all your valuables" (9 August) and a "safety first" post showing a swimsuit offering UV sun protection (13 June).

Confidence is important to well-being (NHS, 2015), and several posts encourage women to "be confident in yourself" (9 September) and advising how to conquer anxiety with "tips on becoming a more calm and confident person" (14 May). This links with feeling good, or hedonic well-being (Masuch and Hefferon, 2014), evident in posts such as "leggings that make you feel good" (25 July) and several posts mentioning happiness. Several of these posts provide inclusive body positivity messages. Another example of hedonic well-being is seen in posts related to self-care, such as "self-care isn't selfish" (9 June). Eudaimonic well-being (Masuch and Hefferon, 2014) is evident in posts related to environmental sustainability, suggesting a sense of fulfillment can be gained from sustainable Sweaty Betty purchases (figure 4), spreading the community ethos to include the planet.
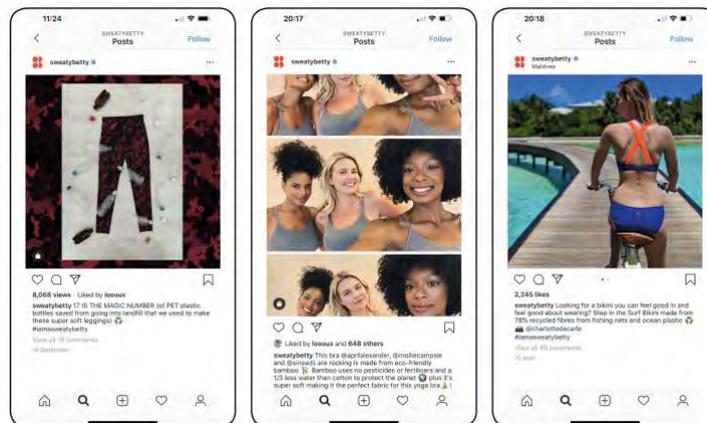
Fig. 4: The wider community

In summary, analysis of the Sweaty Betty Instagram feed suggests that Sweaty Betty can be classed as a Womenswear Well-being Warrior brand. Posts evidence aspects of well-being identified in the literature, including a strong sense of community (Casalo et al., 2018; Bauman, 2012; Laroche et al., 2012) and safety (Evans et al., 2015) within an all-female, supportive, and confidence-building space based on friendship, kindness, and inclusion.

Lorna Jane

Posts from Lorna Jane's Instagram feed fall into the community, safety, time, confidence, eudaimonic well-being and hedonic well-being categories. The eudaimonic well-being category (Masuch and Hefferon, 2014) was the most prominent, with Lorna Jane focusing on personal growth, a positive mindset, and progress, encouraging a sense of fulfillment. Linked to this sense of fulfillment is the notion of self-care (figure 5), categorized as hedonic well-being (Masuch and Hefferon, 2014). Lorna Jane urges followers to "release the things in life that don't bring you joy" (21 September) and instructs that "self-care is not

selfish. You owe yourself one hour a day of time devoted to you" (19 June), emphasizing the need to feel good. Several mentions of happiness are evident in the posts reviewed. There are also several mentions of time, an important aspect of well-being (Evans et al., 2015). The focus is on leisure time, with posts featuring a "weekend uniform" (10 May) and urging followers to "take time to do what makes your soul happy" (21 May).
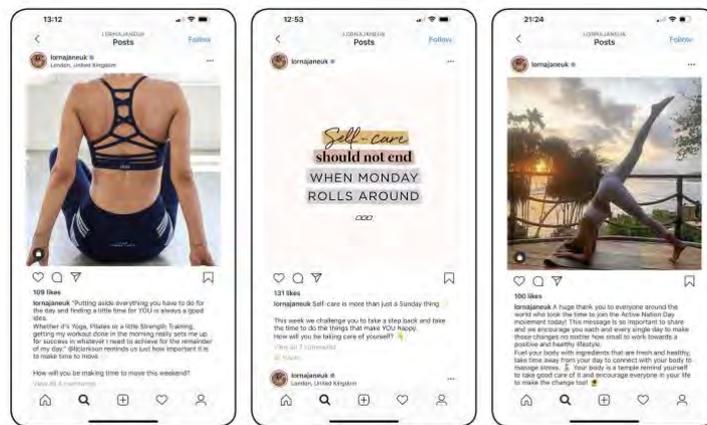
Figure 5. Hedonic well-being

Community is suggested in some self-care posts, with one encouraging followers to take care of themselves and to "encourage everyone in your life to make the change too" (29 September). Although community was not quite as prominent as in the Sweaty Betty posts, it is a reasonably significant theme in the Lorna Jane posts (figure 6). Community-themed posts relate to friendship, relationships, and family, encouraging followers to tag their "no.1 supporter" (2 April), "sweatsister" (6 June), "tribe" (17 Sept) and their "fellow yogi" (15 July). Impacts on the wider community are evident through phrases such as, "when we move together, we can change the world" (29 September) and mention of Active Nation Day. The word *community* appears in one post: "see how our Active Community all over the world are celebrating this special [International Yoga] day" (21 June).
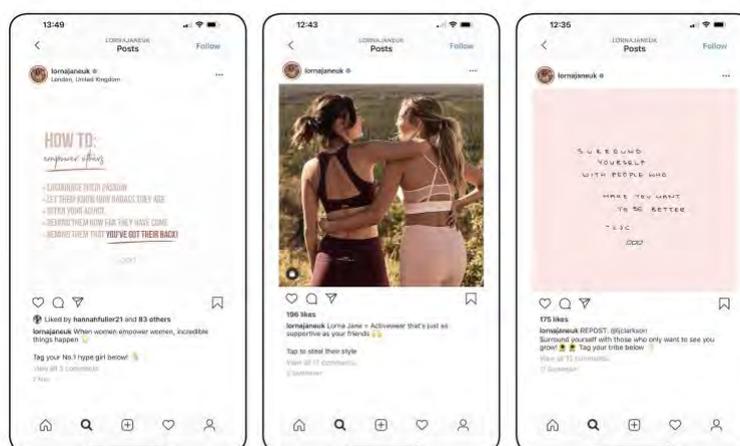
Figure 6. Community

Aligning with Sweaty Betty, Lorna Jane's posts utilize a female theme, evidenced by phrases such as, "when women empower women, incredible things happen" (2 May) and "behind every great woman is a crowd of women cheering her on" (2 April). There are also posts featuring a "girls do it better" t-shirt (3 June) and a sweatshirt featuring 'girlgang' text

7

(12 May). A point of difference compared to Sweaty Betty is that the women featured in Lorna Jane's posts are generally slim, fit, and toned. There is diversity in terms of ethnicity, but little diversity in terms of size or age.

Lorna Jane encourage a fearless attitude among their followers (figure 7), addressing the safety category of well-being (Evans et al., 2015), but focuses on overcoming fears rather than the more utilitarian safety concerns shown in the Sweaty Betty posts. Followers are told that "everything you want is on the other side of fear" (4 April), to "stop being afraid of what could go wrong and think about what could go right" (9 April). This links with the eudaimonic posts, with a strong sense that the Lorna Jane brand seeks to empower their female followers to overcome any fears to achieve a sense of fulfillment, leading to well-being. The word *courage* is mentioned often, along with being *brave*; "you are braver than you think" (17 June) and "the bravest thing you can be is yourself" (28 May). This links to confidence, explicitly mentioned in a post urging followers to "move with confidence in our Nothing 2 C here fabric" (7 April), addressing body-confidence issues.

Figure 7. Fearless

In summary, analysis of the UK Lorna Jane Instagram feed suggests that Lorna Jane can be classed as a Womenswear Well-being Warrior brand. Posts evidence aspects of well-being identified in the literature, including a commitment to female empowerment and personal growth. Although there is some emphasis on friendship and community (Casalo et al., 2018; Bauman, 2012; Laroche et al., 2012), personal fulfillment or eudaimonic well-being (Masuch and Hefferon, 2014) is the key focus, and posts target a specific customer rather than a diverse range of women.

Lucas Hugh

In line with the brand's tagline, "Driven to advance the future of activewear," Lucas Hugh's posts focus on the technical aspects of fabric and garment construction and emphasize design elements such as color and style. Although color is linked with well-being (Solomon and Rabolt, 2009; Eisman, 2006), the posts do not use the psychology of color; they are purely functional posts detailing availability of new colors. Lucas Hugh's posts have a luxurious high-culture focus, featuring fabulous locations and architecture. Aligning with Lorna Jane, the women featured in the posts are generally of a slim, fit, and toned physique. There is diversity in terms of ethnicity, but little diversity in terms of size or age; most are clearly models in brand-generated photography. Compared to the other brands, Lucas Hugh's posts feature far fewer people; posts featuring architecture or locations are often people-free, and posts with a person tend to have just one female. Some Lucas Hugh Instagram posts

could be categorized into the community and confidence well-being categories. Very few posts relate to a sense of wider community, although one post mentions, "a team of inspiring women" (16 April), and another asserts "we love our neighborhood" (9 July). Community for the Lucas Hugh brand focuses on the relationship between the brand and its customers; posts frequently address followers using the word *you*, for example, "where would you like to be?" (17 April). Another post uses the hashtag #whatmovesyou (18 April). Several posts invite the customer to interact with the brand, both virtually and in person (figure 8) by visiting the shop or personalizing their purchase. There were no specific mentions of community in the posts analyzed.
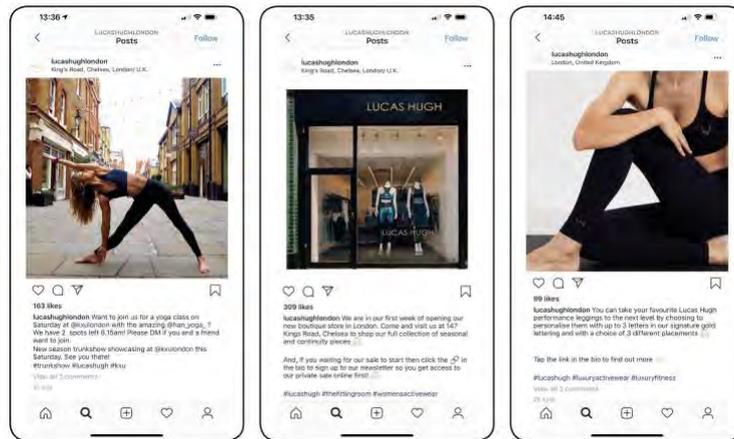
Figure 8. A brand-customer community

Confidence is a key aspect of well-being (NHS, 2015) and this is a feature of Lucas Hugh's Instagram posts, with several posts explicitly mentioning confidence: "your summer workout wardrobe that will keep you feeling and looking confident" (3 June) and "take on Monday with our strong, vibrant and confident Azure set" (9 June). Body confidence is inherent in several posts (see figure 9), featuring phrases such as "to flatter your figure" (3 April) and "cut to complement" (19 April).
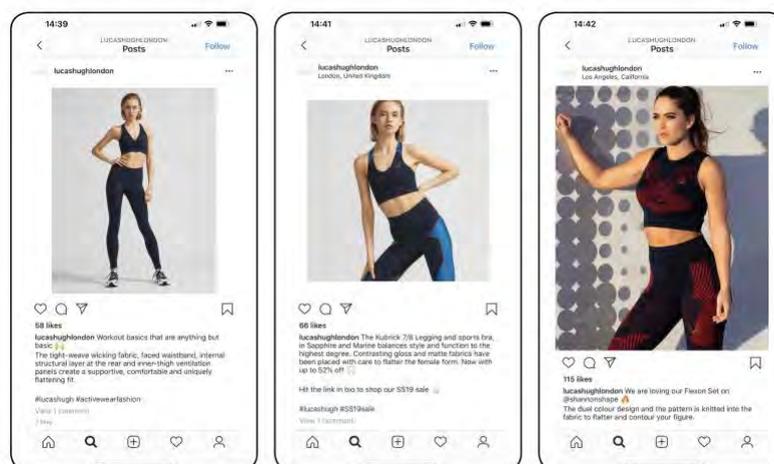
Figure 9. Body confidence

Overall, Lucas Hugh focuses on function and fashion. Posts focus on a combination of performance and look, with personal appearance categorized as a form of hedonic well-being (Masuch and Hefferon, 2014), where feelings of pleasure and of feeling good are

deemed to engender a sense of well-being. Hedonic well-being is also hinted at in terms of self-care, with one post stating take some time for yourself," using the hashtag #yogaselfcare (24 June). This aligns with findings from both Sweaty Betty and Lorna Jane related to self-care, and to literature that suggests time is an aspect of well-being (Evans et al., 2015). Indeed, several of Lucas Hugh's posts related to time, specifically the weekend, linking with Lorna Jane's weekend-focused posts.

In summary, analysis of the Lucas Hugh Instagram feed suggests that Lucas Hugh cannot be classed as a Womenswear Well-being Warrior brand. Some posts do evidence aspects of well-being identified in the literature, including hedonic well-being (Masuch and Hefferon, 2014) gained from looking good and feeling confident, as well as community-building through interaction with the brand (Laroche et al. 2012). However, technology-enabled performance and individual appearance is the key focus, and posts are aspirational, targeted at a very specific luxury customer.

Lululemon

Although a global brand, Lululemon's UK Instagram feed had fewer posts but lots of followers. Lululemon also make menswear, so only posts that included females were reviewed; most posts had a mix of males and females, with very few female-only. There is diversity in terms of ethnicity, size, age, and gender, with one post featuring a transgender model (24 September). Compared to the other brands, Lululemon's posts feature fewer single person shots, favoring groups. The posts are a mix of community events, real people, brand ambassadors in action, and carefully posed model shots, again demonstrating inclusivity.

Lululemon's Instagram posts could be categorized into the community, confidence, eudaimonic well-being and hedonic well-being categories, with community by far the most prominent. The posts show real commitment to the development of community; the word community is explicitly mentioned in many posts. Run communities are a feature, either set up by Lululemon or featuring other established run communities, evidencing collaboration. Collaboration is also featured in brand collaboration posts. Positive images of people smiling, high-fiving, and hugging suggest the feel-good factor, or hedonic well-being (Masuch and Hefferon, 2014) of community (figure 10).
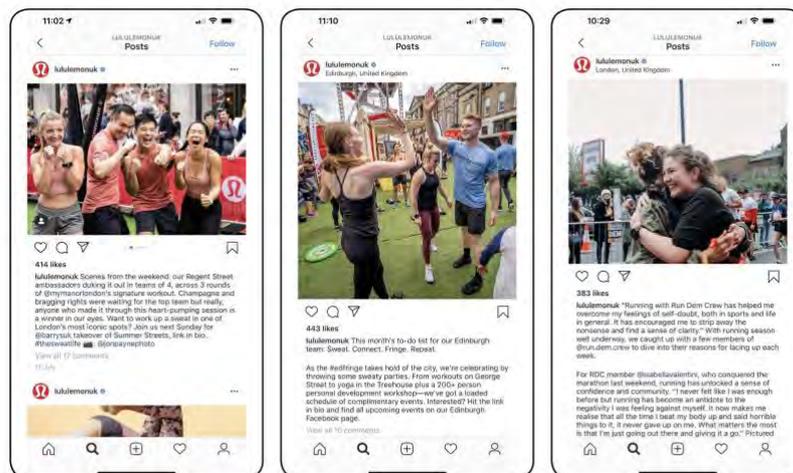
Figure 10: The hedonic well-being of community

A video post about "one of London's most inspiring run communities" (4 May received over 14,000 views, suggesting impact. Yoga communities are also a feature, as are communities of Lululemon staff and brand ambassadors. Posts about brand festivals feature

events from various parts of the UK and refer to 'our community' (20 July) and 'our local UK community' (17 Sept). This evokes a sense of togetherness, which Bauman (2012), Laroche et al. (2012) and Casalo et al. (2018) all link with the concept of community. In addition to discipline-specific and wider communities, family and friends are a recurring theme within Lululemon's posts.

Only one explicit mention of confidence was evident, from a runner stating "running has unlocked a sense of confidence and community" (2 May). Only a few posts fall into the hedonic well-being category (Masuch and Hefferon, 2014). These use phrases such as "looks good on you" (2 April) and "if it feels good, you are doing it right" (29 August). Aligning with the other brands reviewed, there is an element of self-care to some posts, evidenced by phrases such as "take time for yourself today" (22 April) and "take a break from your work week and just move" (29 August). Endorphins are mentioned, widely referred to as happy hormones that trigger positive feelings. In terms of eudaimonic well-being (Masuch and Hefferon, 2014), words and phrases such as "conquered," "crush your goals," and "major kudos" (19 May) all suggesting a sense of achievement. Affirmation of achievement is evident in a sign prepared for a cheer squad at a running event that states 'Warning: awesome sense of accomplishment ahead' (30 Sept). Lululemon also posts about involvement in personal development workshops to engender a positive mind-set; "uncover what's possible and how you can create your ideal future" (20 August). Personal connections are further engendered by call-to-action posts, such as "Your run. Your reason. What's yours? Tell us below" (10 April), where the brand elicits interaction as a community-building activity.

In summary, analysis of the Lululemon UK Instagram feed suggests that Lululemon can be classed as a Womenswear Well-being Warrior brand. Posts evidence aspects of well-being identified in the literature, including eudaimonic well-being (Masuch and Hefferon, 2014) gained from a sense of accomplishment and a very strong sense of community (Casalo et al., 2018; Bauman, 2012; Laroche et al., 2012), based on friendship, collaboration and inclusion.

Conclusion

The data collected and analyzed demonstrates the contribution of women's activewear brands to several categories of well-being, summarized in figure 11 and providing an answer to the research question: How do female-targeted activewear brands use Instagram to encourage well-being in their consumers?
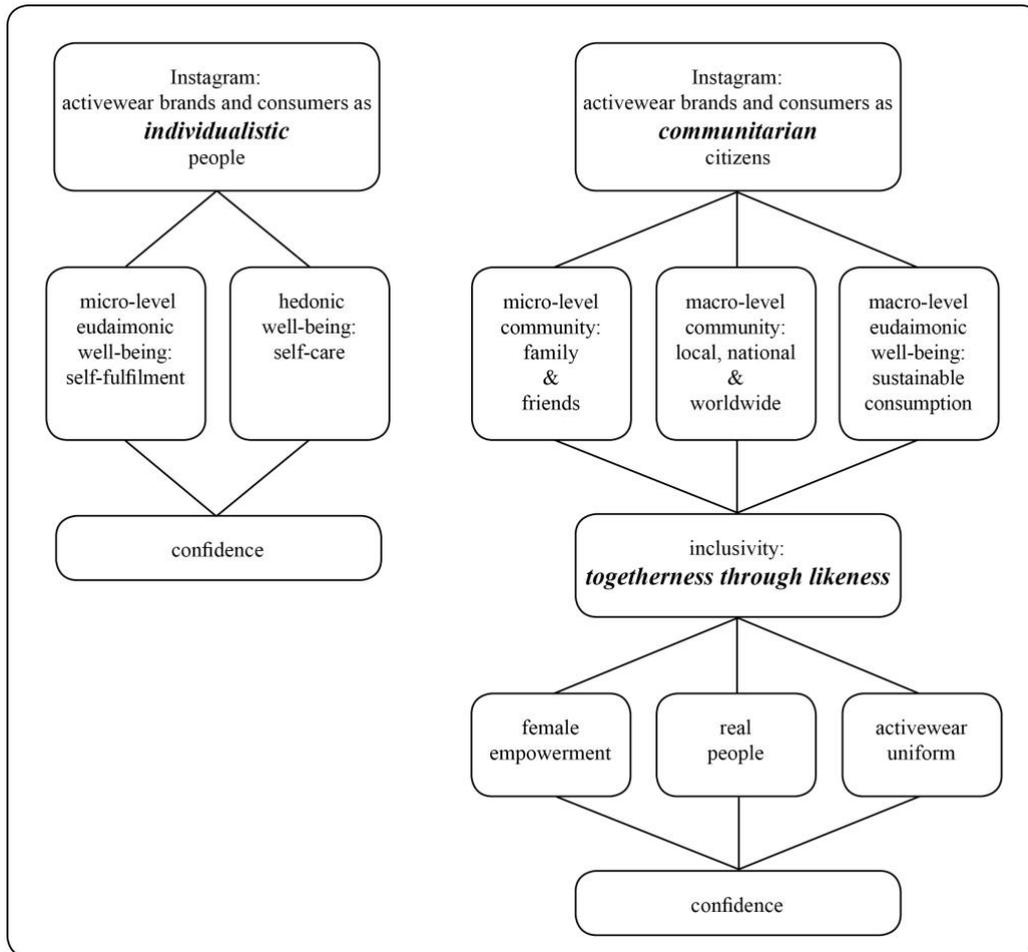
Figure 11. Well-being engendered by female-targeted activewear brands on Instagram

Of the four brands reviewed, Lululemon and Sweaty Betty were the most inclusive, showing content that included a range of sizes, lifestyles, ages and ethnicities. Both real people and models were featured. These brands were also strongest in terms of community. Bauman (2012) describes community as having a sense of togetherness engendered by likeness or being of the same mind, and this is seen in Lululemon's communities, which are both local and worldwide, supportive, collaborative, and focused on friendship and family. User-generated content in the form of follower comments showed strong support for inclusive, real-people posts. Sweaty Betty's campaign to recruit real people for an advertising campaign engendered a lot of positive feedback, demonstrating the influence of two-way communication on Instagram (Guidry et al., 2015) and the community-building power of seeing likeness, aligning with Bauman's assertions. Body confidence emerged as a contentious issue, with some followers making negative comments about the use of very slim and toned models. This is especially noted in Lucas Hugh, the least inclusive of the brands reviewed in terms of firm-generated image.

Sweaty Betty and Lorna Jane have a strong focus on female community and empowerment, with an undercurrent of activism and social justice that suggests females need to stick together, support one another, and be fearless. There is a sense that an all-female environment is a safe space, which aligns with Evans et al.'s (2015) assertions that safety is important to well-being. Lululemon was the only brand to explicitly mention activism in relation to pride and gender fluidity, evidencing expression of social justice themes. Lorna Jane's focus on compassion and Sweaty Betty's focus on kindness suggest the importance of

individual contributions to collective well-being. This suggests a *citizen* ethos, identified by Bauman (2012) as someone committed to the common interests of society, rather than Bauman's individualistic *person.* This in turn links with Lululemon's and Sweaty Betty's emphasis on friendship, aligning with Bauman's assertion that the solution to "life problems of the contemporary world is friendship" (2011, p. 85).

Hedonic well-being was a feature across all four brands. The focus was on feeling good through self-care for Sweaty Betty, Lorna Jane and Lululemon, with Lucas Hugh instead prioritizing feeling good through looking good and being body confident, which could be described as appearance management (Baron, 2013). Eudaimonic well-being at micro level was evident in both Lorna Jane's and Lululemon's posts, focused on self-fulfillment and individual accomplishment. A sense of fulfillment was also evident in Sweaty Betty's posts, but with a macro environment focus encouraging sustainable and ethical clothing consumption to benefit the planet. Thus, Bauman's (2012) sociological construct of *Liquid Modernity* and its focus on individual responsibility is evident, albeit with these women's activewear brands acting in a solidifying manner, providing direction and encouragement to the individual and harking back to the orthodox sociological construct of conformity. As Bauman asserts, community, also an orthodox narrative of the human condition, is "the last relic of the old-time utopias of the good society" (2012, p. 92). In fragmented, liquid modern times, it seems that the women's activewear brands in this study use Instagram to bring people together, physically (at events) and virtually (online). There is an element of spectacle (Bauman, 2012), bringing normally disparate individuals (customers, ambassadors, staff) together in a more communitarian perspective, perhaps recognizing the anxiety of the individual. Taking part in events and interacting on Instagram enables individuals to temporarily conform, using activewear sartorial dress codes or brand uniforms specific to the fitness occasion. Thus, these spectacles allow the individual to ease the anxiety of solitary choice, gaining a sense of psychosocial well-being.

In summary, the sampled female-targeted activewear brands use Instagram to encourage well-being in their consumers mainly through Bauman's *communitarian* ethos, with community at micro and macro levels combining to engender inclusivity and a sense of *togetherness through likeness,* using themes of female empowerment, real people, and an activewear clothing uniform to inspire confidence, a key aspect of well-being. To a lesser extent, Bauman's *individualistic* person is also evident, gaining confidence and well-being from self-fulfillment and self-care.

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Refashioning Adaptive Clothing for Persons Living with Hemiparesis

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Abstract

Hemiparesis, or partial paralysis on one side of the body, can be a result of stroke. Persons with hemiparesis often have difficulties with significant movements in their limbs, which restrict their clothing choices. The selections available to this population are limited to either ready to wear (RTW) clothing, adaptive clothing, or custom-made, locally designed apparel. Although there is currently a dearth commercially in fashionable and stylish adaptive clothing, the area has been analyzed only through the lens of functional and symbolic values while omitting the affordability criteria.

This paper aims to map the current challenges and explores the need for readily available, stylish and aesthetically pleasing and reasonably priced adaptive garments in the mass market that can contribute to improving the customers' social experience and their self-esteem.

Thirteen female stroke survivor participants were recruited using advertisements through community agencies and support networks. The study used a mixed methods research design consisting of a quantitative questionnaire rating the ease of donning and doffing the garment and semi-structured interviews and qualitative questionnaires. All sessions were video and audio recorded for post-analysis.

The authors suggest that there is an urgent need for the unique lines (or capsule collections) to be designed, manufactured, and marketed by the mainstream retailers specifically for the person with a disability on a fixed income.

Keywords: adaptive clothing, cost, retail, stylish, hemiparesis

Introduction

Hemiparesis is partial paralysis on one side of the body. This is one of the most common effects of stroke. Persons with hemiparesis often have decreased precision with gross and fine movements in their arms and hands. Physical changes in the body and posture may result over time. In addition, those with hemiparesis may need to wear an assistive device like an arm or hand support daily. These factors can affect the process of dressing and considerably restrict clothing choices. The selection of apparel merchandise available to this population is presently limited to either ready-to-wear (RTW) clothing (Gallucci 2018), custom-designed clothing, or adaptive clothing. For a prolonged period, the adaptive clothing market has been overlooked and underserved. The RTW and adaptive clothing options provide limited choices in style, fit, and design. It is expected that this market will grow from $47.3 billion in 2019 to $54.8 billion in four years in the United States (Market Research, 2019; Hall, 2019).

The authors are exploring the availability of mass-manufactured adaptive clothing in contemporary styles at a competitive price in retail stores. The objectives of this paper are: (a) Investigate the need for readily available, stylish and aesthetically pleasing adaptive garments that are affordable and can contribute to improving stroke survivors' social experiences and self-esteem; and (b) Map the current challenges for aesthetically pleasing, reasonably priced adaptive garments in the mass market.

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Review of the Literature

Ready-to-Wear Clothing (RTW)

RTW clothing centers on a specific consumer, one who is able-bodied and physically attractive according to the norms of society. The fashion retail market tends to concentrate on and cater to this customer. There is a fierce competition for this customer's support and disposable income. This would then assure the success of the supply chain in the retail market (Carroll, 2014).

RTW clothing is often the garment of choice for the person with hemiparesis. It is stylish, aesthetically pleasing, and of contemporary design. RTW clothing is deemed to be socially acceptable and easily available. For the fashion-conscious person with hemiparesis, this clothing strengthens their acceptance in society. According to Cassill & Drake (1987), how one perceives one's self will influence how one shops and makes clothing selections. MacDonald et al. (1994) say most people who have disabilities will shop for clothing at the same places as people without disabilities. In fact, persons with a disability frequently are on a limited income, which can restrict their purchasing power (Reich & Shannon 1978; 1980). RTW clothing may be fashionable, but it creates difficulties for the consumer with a disability. Tasks that are simple for able-bodied consumers such as manipulation of zippers, buttoning or unbuttoning a garment, unclasping a bra, or rolling up a sleeve can be difficult for a person with limited upper body mobility. Miller (1980) observed there were difficulties with accessibility in the preferred shopping locations for RTW clothing, such as malls and self-standing brick-and-mortar stores. She also noted that customers with disabilities encountered difficulties with the sales staff, as they could be unhelpful or lack knowledge. Equally important to note are barriers to purchasing RTW clothing—informational, architectural, or attitudinal (Koester & Leber, 1984; O'Bannon et al., 1988). Hence, it would be helpful to create a more constructive shopping experience by educating and training employees about the needs of customers with disabilities (MacDonald et al., 1994).

Adaptive Clothing

Black and Stokes (2012) found that if the clothes are not stylish or did not help camouflage physical disability, consumers would not wear them. This highlights that persons with disabilities have feelings and expectations similar to able-bodied people with regard to aesthetics, modesty, and the social importance of appearance and identity. Many persons with disabilities experience an adverse response to their appearance and feel distanced from existing fashion (Freeman et al., 1985-1986). The shortage of fashionable adaptive clothing is especially difficult for young adults with limited mobility who wish to partake in social occasions where they may be judged by their clothing and appearance (Kidd, 2006). The adaptive clothing currently available is primarily designed with function in mind, with considerably less concern for fashion, and the garments tend to favor a casual look (Carroll & Gross, 2010). Adaptive clothing available to stroke survivors is mainly promoted to consumers in long-term care facilities (Banks, 2001). For instance, a well-known adaptive clothing store, Silvert's, caters to older consumers and offers a limited choice of style and fashion options. The garments are designed mainly with the needs of the elderly or their caregivers in mind. Consumers with disabilities have difficulties accessing and purchasing adaptive garments in the mass-manufactured clothing market.

Few designers offer custom-made adaptive, yet fashionable garments. As cost is an important factor for most consumers, this option is limited to a handful of customers. On the other hand, reduced price is a motive to frequent certain stores (Jung et al.. 2010). There is a notable lack of readily available, fashionable, adaptive clothing in the market. There are few

brick-and-mortar adaptive clothing stores. Tommy Hilfiger and Target serve customers with disabilities through their Tommy Adaptive line and Target Adaptive line for Men, Women and Kids. Online stores like Amazon, Zappos, IZ Adaptive Line, and JBS Clothing (which also has a brick-and-mortar store) have allowed easy access to functional adaptive clothing; however, very little thought is given to fashion, which consequently limits consumer choice.

Adaptive Clothing Market Research

Adaptive garments have been frequently associated with an underlying stigma of market inefficiency, and unattractiveness. Nowadays, in many instances, functionality dominates over eye-appealing and chic merchandise design and aesthetics (Target, n.d). The adaptive clothing market is growing faster than the stagnating women's clothing market (Canadian Apparel Insights, 2019). Rapid growth of this market is forecasted in Europe and the Asia-Pacific region, while the North American market shows only moderate growth (Market Research, 2019). The researchers speculate that societal changes, such as a need for inclusivity, diversity, and drive for a physically and psychologically barrier-free world, may have contributed to the proliferation and acceptance of adaptive collections and the growth in revenue.

Methodology

Women stroke survivors were recruited using advertisements through community agencies and support networks. Inclusion criteria consisted of:

- Women stroke survivors 18 years of age and older;
- At least one year post-stroke;
- Experiencing restrictions in the use of one upper extremity following stroke;
- Able to understand and communicate in English.

Informed Consent letters were provided by the researchers following review of the study's risks/benefits and voluntary participation and confidentiality procedures. A concurrent triangulation mixed methods design was used. Qualitative descriptive methodology captured the experience of dressing as described by participants, while an observational descriptive and quantitative approach to data collection provided objective measures of the clothing donning and removal.

The project had three phases:

Phase 1: *Interviews*, based on sensations, shopping, satisfaction with appearance, effects on self, price points, fashion, and observations on successes and challenges with dressing.

Phase 2: *Prototype Design*

Phase 3: *Fittings and Field Testing*

Phase 1: Data Collection of Primary Data

The researchers examined the interviews based on shopping habits, price points and fashion in Phase 1 of the research study. Thirteen female stroke survivors were screened and recruited using advertisements through community agencies and support networks. The recruited participants experienced restrictions in the use of one of their upper extremities following stroke. The study used a mixed methods research design consisting of semi-structured interviews, and quantitative and qualitative questionnaires. All sessions were audio- and videorecorded for post-analysis. Data were transcribed and thematically analyzed.

Following informed consent in Phase 1 of the study, demographic information was collected by the researchers to create a consumer profile that included age, living arrangements, number of years post-stroke, affected side, employment, and the cost of a recently purchased bra, winter jacket, and top. The questioning route administered through

the personal interview questions related to the participants' shopping behavior; factors important when shopping; what amount they would spend on the purchase of a bra, winter jacket, and top; whether they are satisfied with the ease of donning the RTW clothing selection available to them; where they shop; and whether they shop online.

Data Collection of Secondary Data

Data was gathered on selected garments (bra, winter jacket, top) sold as adaptive garments and RTW garments from three major adaptive clothing stores: Tommy Hilfiger and Silvert's, which have online and retail outlets; Zappos only retails online. Researchers compared the cost of adaptive clothing available in stores and online to RTW clothing in the same store.

Data Analysis

Demographic data was tabulated, and audio and video data from interviews were transcribed verbatim and analyzed using thematic analysis. Quantitative and qualitative data were merged for participants within each category, identifying complementarity, concordance, and discordance in the data.

Results of Primary Data Analysis

Age Group: Most of the respondents (n=4) were in the 56-60 age group, followed by the 46-50 age group (n=3). There were (n=2) respondents each in the age groups 51-55 and 61-65. There was (n=1) respondent in the age group of 31-35 and (n=1) in the age group of 76-80.

Living Situation: Most of the respondents (n=10) lived with family. Less than half (n=3) lived alone.

Years Post-Stroke: Less than half (n=5) of the respondents reported having had a stroke 6-10 years ago, (n=3) reported having had a stroke between 16-20 years ago. There were (n=2) respondents who were 21+ years post-stroke, and (n=2) respondents who were 1-5 years post-stroke. Only (n=1) respondent was 11-15 years post-stroke.

Employment: More than half (n=9) of the respondents were not employed. Currently, only (n=4) of the respondents had employment.

Affected Side of the Body: The right side of the body had limited mobility for (n=6) respondents whereas (n=7) respondents had their mobility affected on the left side of their body.

The respondents also indicated the amount they were willing to pay for a bra, a winter jacket and a top:

Spent on Bra: The greatest number of respondents (n=8) were willing to spend $21-$40 on a bra. Less than half the respondents (n=3) would pay $0-$20, and even less (n=1) would pay $61-80 and (n=1) $81-$100 on a bra. A comment from a respondent on purchasing bras: "my braziers [*sic*] I try to get them on a sale because I think they are expensive." Another respondent's comment: "I could go to a specialty store, because I am sure they are out there somewhere especially stores where I could pay 300 dollars for a bra. And it would be some wonderful weird contraption. Okay? But you know what I don't have 300 dollars for a bra."

Spent on Winter Jacket: Less than half the respondents (n=4) were ready to spend an amount $201 or more on a winter jacket. Some of the respondents (n=3) were willing to spend $101-$150 on a winter jacket. A nearly equal number of respondents (n=2) said they would spend $61-$80 on a winter jacket. One respondent (n=1) was willing to spend $151-$200 on a winter jacket, and one respondent (n=1) was willing to spend $41-$60; another

(n=1) would spend $0-$20 on a winter jacket. A respondent's comment on how much she would currently spend on a winter jacket: "If I were to purchase a coat right now, I'd probably pay $100."

Spent on Top: A majority of the respondents (n=6) would spend $21-$40 on a top. Half of this number (n=3) would spend 0-$20 on a top. Some respondents (n=2) said they would spend $61-$80, and an even smaller number of respondents (n=1) said she would spend $81-$100; similarly, another respondent (n=1) said she was willing to spend over $101+ on a top. A respondent's comment on shopping mainly during sales: "I would typically spend on a top, I like sales."

Online Shopping: Most of the respondents (n=9) preferred shopping at brick-and-mortar stores like H&M, Variety Village, Suzy Shier, Classico, Lululemon, LOFT, Old Navy, Ardene, Forever 21, Marshall's, Winners, Mark's Work Warehouse, Northern Reflections, Reitman's, Urban Outfitters, Walmart, Sears, Target, Giant Tiger, Joe Fresh "because it is cheap and current," Alia, Tan Jay, Discovery, Town's End, Calvin Klein, Zara, The Bay, Zellers, and Eddie Bauer. When asked why she shops at a particular store, a respondent said: "I like them, I don't know. I can find my size there, I can, and I like the style." When asked whether she found the shopping experience challenging: "uh, yes, because um, some clothes have the zipper at the back, and the one side so I don't, I think is the problem may be coming [*sic*] with everyone, but I remember before a stroke, I could do zippers."

Only (n=2) of the respondents shopped online and on eBay. There was no response from (n=2) of the participants. Table 1 fully describes the demographics and purchasing habits of the respondents.

Ease of Donning with Current RTW Bra: 23% (n=3) found an RTW bra somewhat difficult to put on, 16% (n=2) found putting on the bra neither easy nor difficult. 15% (n=2) of the respondents found the RTW bra somewhat easy to put on. 15 % (n=2) of the respondents found the bra very easy to wear. 31% (n=4) of the respondents did not respond (see figure 1). A respondent's comment on donning a bra after a stroke: "Bras, bras were a nightmare in the beginning, there are very few things that are more humiliating then telling your husband that he has to do your bra up for you." A second respondent does not wear a bra due to the following reason: "Because, I cannot button the bra. It's too tiring and it takes too long to figure out how to put it on." And on donning a RTW bra: "You know what else I have to do to put on the bra? If it's not absolutely necessary that I put on a bra when I am going somewhere and there is nobody there, I just have to pull it down and button it, put it through my foot, pull it up, put in the left arm first, pull it up and then put my right arm in, pull it up and then the chances are it is not straight in the back anymore. It's all twisted up and it's kinda hurting me."
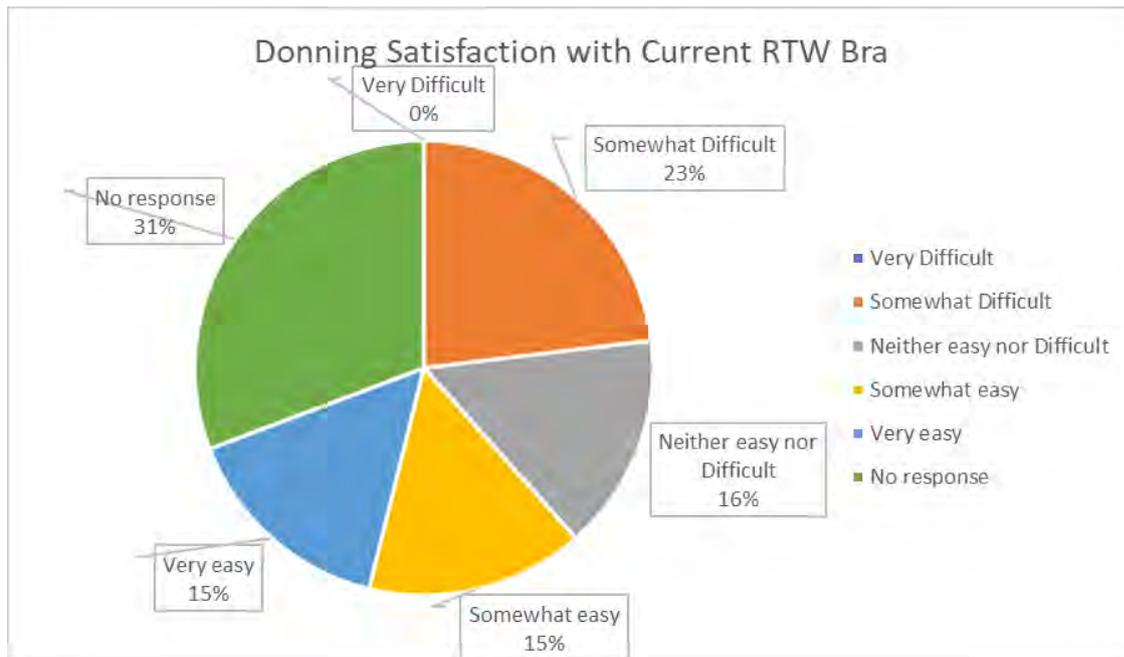
Figure 1. Donning satisfaction with current RTW bra.

Ease of Donning with Current RTW Winter Jacket: 8% (n=1) found an RTW winter jacket somewhat difficult to put on, 15% (n=2) found putting on the winter jacket neither easy nor difficult. 15% (n=2) of the respondents found the RTW winter jacket somewhat easy to put on. 23 % (n=3) of the respondents found the winter jacket very easy to wear. 39% (n=5) of the respondents did not respond (see figure 2). A respondent's comments on donning a winter jacket: "For the first year after my stroke, somebody would always help me put on my winter coat because it took a long time for me to wear it. Buttons and zippers are a problem with my current coat. I've given up on buttons and it is hard to align the zippers. I have a really heavy coat and I need help zipping it."
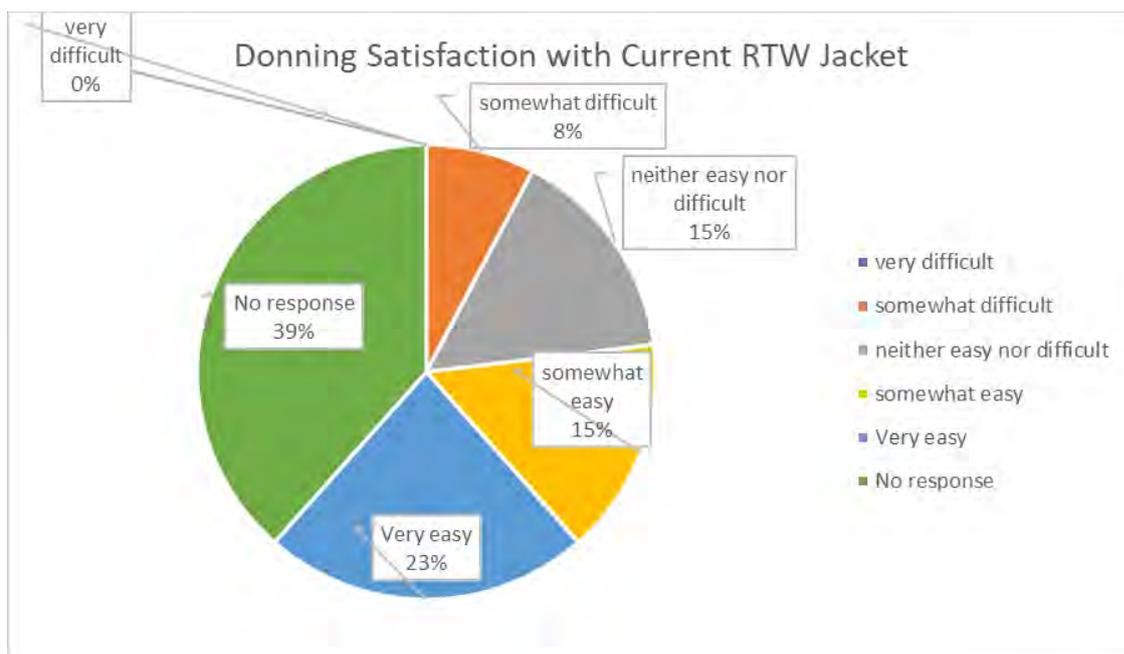
Figure 2. Donning satisfaction with current RTW winter jacket.

Ease of Donning with Current RTW Top: 7% (n=1) found an RTW top somewhat difficult to put on, 14% (n=2) found putting on the RTW top neither easy nor difficult. 29% (n=4) of the respondents found the RTW top somewhat easy to put on. 14 % (n=2) of the respondents found the RTW top very easy to wear. 36% (n=4) of the respondents did not respond (see figure 3). A respondent's comments on donning an RTW top: "I can't do buttons. I try, I have to use all my teeth kinda thing but by the time I finish the whole blouse went up." Another respondent's comment on donning a top: "To make it easier for me. So, the shirt, I button it up and put it over."
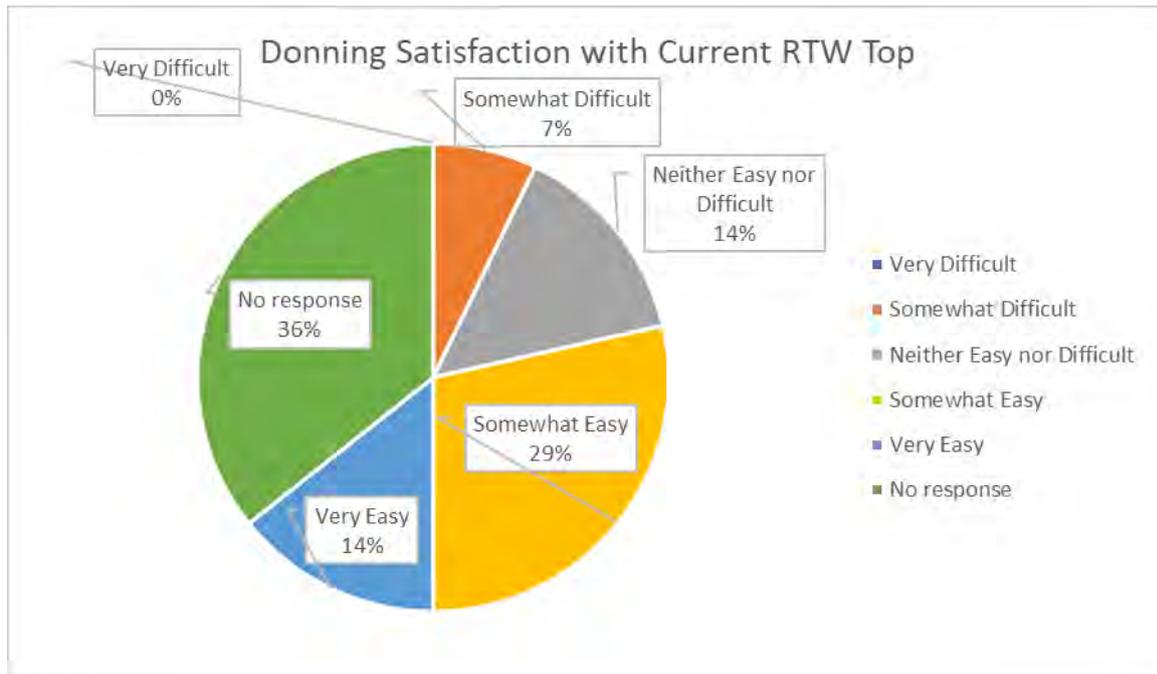
Figure 3. Donning satisfaction with current RTW top.

Results of Secondary Data Analysis

Secondary data was analyzed evaluating the price and availability of adaptive clothing in three major adaptive clothing stores: Tommy Hilfiger and Silvert's, which have online and retail outlets, and Zappos, which only retails online. Three key findings stem from our analysis: affordability, the lack of stylish merchandise, and the limited choices within adaptive market.

Affordability: First, the high price point of available styles appears to be the most prevalent challenge for post-stroke patients. Some of our respondents with limited financial options were willing to spend only up to $20 on bras (n=3), up to $40 on tops (n=6). However, a typical price range for the non-sale items is $37-$70 for tops and $35-$70 for bras (table 2). Tommy Adaptive (the adaptive line by Tommy Hilfiger) offers the most stylish merchandise; however, its aesthetics goes hand in hand with the brand's higher prices. In addition, the brand has not tapped into the adaptive intimates. For many retailers, the prices of RTW and adaptive collections are comparable if the adaptive garment is not marketed as "elegant, dressy or embroidered"; in such a case, a retailer would charge a premium for the look (Silvert's, n.d.). Being on a fixed income with a tight budget (n=9), and difficulty in navigating through aisles (in a wheelchair) when shopping in brick-and-mortar stores seem to be the biggest obstacles to buying a garment at a mall, which is the preferred shopping destination for our sample. The lack of user-friendliness, accessibility (Kabel et al., 2016),

and fashion-forward and professional styles (Gaffney 2019) have prevented them from making the optimal and desired choices.

Table 2. Price Analysis of the Selected Adaptive Garments Retailers

	Tommy Hilfiger		Silvert's		Zappos	
	RTW	Adaptive	RTW	Adaptive	RTW	Adaptive
BRA	$35-$60	N/A	$17-$20	$35-$70	$22+	$25-$62
TOP	$60-$120	$21-$160	$37-$49	$37-$70	varies	$40-$70
COAT	$270-$500	$130-$200	$190*	$190*	varies	$120-$170
			*only 1 style offered			

Source: Zappos (n.d.); Tommy Hilfiger (n.d.); Silvert's (n.d.).

Lack of Stylish Merchandise: Second, the lack of the fashionable styles is the most visible challenge. According to our analysis, the above listed retailers complied with the need for additional functionality; however, they failed to see fashion within the context of differentiation and social identity (Liskey-Fitzwater et al., 1993). Their clothes serve the purpose, but they are neither designed with passion nor consumed with joy. One of the respondents has foregone the advantages of adaptive clothing and typically shops at H&M, Calvin Klein, and Zara, which do not offer such garments at all.

Limited Choice: Third, in addition to the hard-to-swallow price point and lack of aesthetics, there is a significant gap in the selection of intimates and winter coats. We can speculate that results from the fact that adaptive outerwear is offered at a higher price point and bought less frequently. In order to optimize offerings, and according to a well-known Pareto distribution, an outlier can be either further eliminated or not offered at all. The underwear is not offered in trendy colors of the season either; fit, functionality, comfort, and fabric used are among the current challenges.

Future Directions: For people with hemiparesis and other disabilities, there is a need for the development of RTW adaptive clothing which combines style and function. Designers and manufacturers of adaptive clothing should take into consideration the different body shapes of persons with disabilities when creating adaptive garments. Furthermore, attention should be given to such details as the fit of the garment without compromising on style for those persons using assistive aids, such as a hand brace. Designers need to address and understand the requirements of this target market. The fashion industry must respond to their functional needs with an emphasis on style and choice. Additionally, it is vital that the styles echo the current fashion trends of the season. In fact, it is essential for the adaptive clothing to be integrated on the shop floor along with clothing for able-bodied persons as part of a collection. Just as there are options for petites, plus sizes, maternity wear, and athletic wear, there could be a category among these garments for fashionable adaptive wear. Clothing that combines the easy availability, style, and cost of RTW garments with the functions of adaptive garments, should be available in the mainstream garment market and be part of the norm. Having the choice of fashionable adaptive clothing with varying styles, colors, and fabrics that is also functional, will eliminate the feeling of being "special" or different. As cost is also important to the consumer, adaptive clothing should not be priced higher than clothing for the general population. The challenge for the garment industry is to keep the cost low, as typically the target customer is on a limited income; at the same time, the industry should keep the clothing current with the ever-changing fashion seasons. Having clothing available commercially will make the apparel inclusive, and increase the consumer's social

experience through tasks such as shopping and interacting with salespeople and the general public. As appearance is of importance, this will boost the self-esteem of those who wear adaptive clothing, allowing them to express facets of their personalities and help them integrate back into the community. Hence, the needs of the person with a disability will be better understood by the general population. This clothing would not only be used by those with hemiparesis, but it will also be the clothing of choice for persons with varying upper limb disabilities. As Chang et al. (2014) note, clothing can advance feelings of self-worth through self-esteem, as well as embody positive life encounters and achievements.

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Indigenous Fish-Skin Craft Revived Through Contemporary Fashion

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Abstract

The use of fish skin for the construction of garments and accessories is an ancient tradition shared by Arctic societies in coastal areas. Arctic peoples have maintained a strong relationship with the environment, developing a subsistence lifestyle depending on the marine environment's animal resources for food and clothing. Arctic fish-skin craft has become a way to communicate ecological change and traditional knowledge— effectively enhancing cultural resilience for the Arctic people. During the broad transformation occurring over the last century, Arctic indigenous peoples have demonstrated resilience to systematic colonization and repression of their language, culture and native fishing rights as well as dramatic ecological changes in seafood security. This paper looks at the role of fish skin in the Arctic as a way to bridge knowledge and social justice between generations and cultures and to nurture resilience during times of change and transformation.

Meanwhile, the use of fish skin by Arctic indigenous peoples has recently been assimilated as a fashion sustainable material alternative to exotic leather, due to its lower environmental impact. The Atlantic Leather tannery, located on the north coast of Iceland, has been one of the main agents in the renaissance of the fish-skin craft. Processing fish leather since 1994, based on the ancient Icelandic tradition of making shoes from the skins of wolffish, revived ancestral tanning techniques. The tannery has brought this historic eco-luxury material back into fashion, providing blue jobs for coastal dwellers in remote rural areas, maintaining the viability of the fisheries sector, and attracting young people to work in them. This paper looks at Atlantic Leather's role in preserving the rich cultural traditions that have been developed within the Icelandic fishing industry while processing fish leather, promoting social justice through inclusive jobs.

Keywords: fish skin, arctic traditional knowledge, sustainable material, inclusive jobs

Historical Context

Specific groups with historical evidence of fish leather production are the Inuit, Yup'ik, and Athabascan of Alaska and Canada; the Nivkh and Nanai Siberian peoples; the Ainu from the island of Hokkaido in Japan and Sakhalin Island, Russia; the Hezhe from northeast China; Icelanders; and the Saami of northern Scandinavia.

Arctic indigenous peoples depended for centuries on hunting wildlife, fishing for salmon, and gathering berries and roots for their livelihood (Ichikawa, 2003). Their history is closely linked to the issue of aboriginal hunting and fishing rights. Salmon has been of great importance to the local economies and to the aboriginal cultures of the North Atlantic in the United States and Canada, Northeast China, Japan, and Russia, but national governments similarly mistreated the local populations by, among other things, limiting or restricting their access to traditional fishing, and forcing them to adopt nontraditional ways of life such as farming through cultural assimilation (Roche, 1998). Today, much of the Arctic traditional subsistence way of life has been lost due to long-standing assimilation policies, and the subsequent impact has been extremely damaging for Arctic indigenous peoples (Ichikawa, 2003).

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The Ainu from Hokkaido in Japan, the Hezhe from northeast China, and the Nanai from Russian Siberia were forced into mass agricultural and industrial labor during the late nineteenth century (Jiao, 2012). All these indigenous groups were soon working and living as second-class minority groups among the Japanese, Chinese, or Russian labor force. These collectives irrevocably altered the traditional hunter-gatherer lifestyle of the Arctic indigenous people.

Despite the importance of salmon to the Ainu way of life, the Japanese government has prohibited the Ainu from taking salmon since the 1870s, when the Meiji regime enforced assimilation policies. Today, the Ainu are engaged in a movement to re-establish their rights as indigenous people and to restore important elements of their traditional culture like their fishing rights (Ichikawa, 2003).

Arctic indigenous peoples, like many indigenous communities across the world, are still dealing with the effects of deep historic trauma from centuries of colonization, exploitation, and misrepresentation. During this broad transformation occurring over the last century, they have demonstrated resilience and adaptability to systematic colonization and repression of their language and culture as well as dramatic ecological changes in seafood security (Watterson, 2019).

Arctic fish-skin craft has become a way to communicate ecological change and traditional knowledge—effectively enhancing cultural resilience for Arctic peoples. The protection of the cultures and rights of native Arctic peoples is a prerequisite to saving the fish-skin craft. But there are still some unresolved problems, especially in the field of native fishing rights for Ainu people in Hokkaido and Scandinavian Saami. Governments need to formally recognize Arctic indigenous fishing rights.

Ancient Icelandic Tradition of Making Shoes from Wolffish Skin

Icelandic history since the settlement of Iceland in the ninth century has been interwoven with marine resources; fish have been the main source of food and income (Sigfusson and Arnason, 2017). Icelanders are known for reusing everything, and they still have their ancestors' spirit of finding the useful in everything. Icelanders through history had great respect for the skins of fish, and to waste them was therefore frowned upon. If not eaten, it was dried or tanned, used to make shoes and, occasionally, to bind books.

Icelanders wore shoes made of fish skins processed using traditional tanning methods. They were soft, supple, flat-soled traditional footwear (Mould, 2018). Mostly wolffish skin was used as it was considered both beautiful and durable. Shoes made of fish skin were most common in the western fjords of Iceland and was the skin of the leopard fish, a close relative of the wolffish, most sought after as the skin was sometimes large enough to provide pairs of shoes, one for a grownup and one for a child. The bigger shoes were made from the wider part of the skin and were considered both more beautiful and less likely to break. Two kinds of shoes were made: one that had a seam at the toe and the heal, and another that only had a seam at the toe but was pulled together and sewn with a string to a strip of fish skin or sometimes lambskin.

Qualities of fish-skin shoes include light in weight, warm, flexible, and good in frost and soft snow, as they fit close to the foot and very little snow made its way into them. The downsides were that they did not last very long and were not suitable for wet snow. Women used these shoes mostly indoors, but men wore them mostly outdoors during winter when the ground was covered with snow.

Contemporary accounts of travels around Iceland in the mid- to late-eighteenth century describe and illustrate men wearing traditional fish-skin shoes (Hald, 1972),

suggesting that the working man wore them on a daily basis. Icelanders measured distances by how many pairs of fish-skin shoes would be worn out by walking over the path.

Around 1910 fish-skin shoes started to disappear, but some Icelanders still made shoes from skate skin and sometimes gloves worn over wool gloves for protection. Fish skin was not considered suitable for clothes used for fishing, as the skin was better dry and it was widely thought that the fish skin would disappear and become a part of the ocean once again (Kristjánsson, 1980)

Contemporary Context

Atlantic Leather's Role in Preserving Icelandic Fishing Industry Cultural Traditions

The Atlantic Leather tannery, located on the north coast of Iceland, has been one of the main agents in the renaissance of the fish-skin craft. Processing fish leather since 1994, based on the ancient Icelandic tradition of making shoes from the skins of wolffish (Rahme & Hartman, 2006).

With the arrival of new materials, the use of fish skins as leather was almost lost in Iceland within a generation. The founder of Atlantic Leather, Gunnsteinn Björnsson, had been working for a few years already tanning sheepskins. He remembered the Icelandic tradition of fish-skin shoes and was curious to try and develop fish skin as a fully tanned leather and did so with great success. The product is today a part of Icelandic cultural tradition and fits with a national identity of a nation that still considers fishing extremely important. It is also a great example of the growing desire to waste less and to reduce the national carbon footprint per capita.

The Atlantic Leather tannery has brought this historic eco-luxury material back into fashion, simultaneously reviving ancestral tanning techniques and providing jobs for the local community. Their fish leather is a by-product of the fishing industry and uses fish not bred specifically for their skin, that would otherwise be discarded (Gestsson, 2012, Jacobs, 2018). By recycling waste, fish skin minimizes landfill, and keeps resources in use longer.

Atlantic Leather skins are sourced locally from nearby Nordic-regulated farms that provide a sustainable source of food while maintaining fish stocks (Sigfusson, 2017). "Nearshoring" the fish skin production has provided new job opportunities for the coastal dwelling communities while minimizing environmental impacts, both locally and globally.

Special attention is given to new technologies used for their fish skin production and to address the challenges of energy, environment, and climate change. The entire process of producing fish skin at Atlantic Leather requires less energy to produce than conventional leather. It relies on the power of nature, using geothermal energy from Icelandic volcanos to power the production processes (Logadóttir, 2015), which does not impact the environment.

Fish leather does not use endangered species that could threaten biodiversity (Rahme & Hartman, 2006) but is produced instead from four different non-endangered species of fish—salmon, perch, wolffish, and cod—in a diverse range of colors, textures, and finishes, all tested by the European Chemical Agency.

Fish leather is a highly biodegradable natural by-product and has outstanding longevity, one of the most important elements in sustainability (Sigfusson, 2017). Fish leather is stronger than other leather types, if the same thickness are compared. The fiber structure of fish skin runs crosswise rather than parallel as in cowhide. The tensile strength of fish leather reaches up to 90 Newtons (Leather Dictionary, 2019).

The manufacturing of fish-skin leather works with three aspects of sustainability: the economic benefit of creating value from waste; the social benefit of reconciling sustainability with fashionably exotic fish skin; and the environmental benefit of producing skins without damaging endangered animals.

Creating New Job Opportunities

Atlantic Leather creates "blue tech" and blue jobs in a remote coastal area that contributes to the promotion of a sustainable ocean industry. A key challenge for these coastal areas is to maintain the viability of the fisheries sector and to attract young people to work in it. Atlantic Leather aims to preserve the rich cultural traditions that were developed within the Icelandic fishing industry when processing their fish leather. In recent years, fisheries and fish processing jobs have been in decline in Iceland.

The tannery remains among the few that is holding its own in that respect. Atlantic Leather is stationed in Sauðárkrókur, a small but vibrant community of roughly 3000 inhabitants, located in the heart of Skagafjörður, Iceland. Its location in the northeast part of the island, with fishing grounds located just offshore, puts it within reach of the fish-rich resource that provides its mainstay commercial activity. Additionally, such proximity to the source of the raw materials means that transportation to the point of manufacture is significantly reduced.

In terms of promoting employment opportunities, the tannery is also key for providing blue-collar jobs for coastal dwellers in the remote rural fishing communities whose subsistence existence benefits from the tannery's activities. Aside from tapping in to what these rural communities have to offer, the company contributes to the country's economy as it has become an important ways in which businesses improve livelihoods and add value within the supply chain system, including the benefits of job creation, especially in remote and rural areas where such opportunities are not taken for granted (Sigfusson, 2016).

Atlantic Leather's products were voted the best luxury leather at the Asia Pacific Leather Fair (APLF) exhibition in Hong Kong in 2013, and the company won Tannery of the Year—Europe Territory 2016, presented by *World Leather* magazine, enhancing the company's reputation abroad. The award took into consideration how the tanning process was executed, how the staff was treated, the factory's surroundings, and how the small community around the factory is benefitting from it.

Another unique strength of the company is that, as its international reputation grows and as it makes a name for itself as one of the key players in the fish leather industry—not least because of the demand for its products by important international fashion brands—it has led to a growth in its network of distributors and agents. Atlantic Leather products have been sold in European countries like Italy, France, Germany, England, Finland, and the Scandinavian countries, as well as India Atlantic Leather, 2019). They have been supplying fish-skin leather to fashion and accessories brands such as Nike, Jimmy Choo, Galliano, Dior, Prada, and Ferragamo.

The company's vision and mission are to run a firm that is well organized in order to have a safe workplace to keep the its staff happy, and thus produce quality leather and good service around it. At the heart of its strategy is the desire to be a worthy part of the community of Skagafjörður as well as to keep the company as a leader in the fish leather industry. Having such a business philosophy results not only in loyal and dedicated staff, but is in line with the company's values of promoting social equity through inclusive jobs.

The network of raw material suppliers from the rural coastal communities are treated with the same respect and consideration as the company's various local and international agents, driven by the firm's commitment to offer unique and innovative products for the apparel industry, continue researching and developing new methodologies in energy management, continue developing and promoting a trustworthy reputation and image, and maintaining a financially reliable, profitable, and growing business. As part of its corporate

social responsibility (CSR), Atlantic Leather has been involved in philanthropic projects, including aiding Syrian refugees in the community.

Another feature of Atlantic Leather's business portfolio is vertical integration in the form of running a gift shop. Located in the front of the tannery, the fish leather outlet is on one of the official tourist routes of Iceland. The store, which doubles as a touristic museum, opened its doors in 2014 and recreates the traditional and contemporary tanning process of fish leather and displays historical photos and implements (Deliso, 2015). In this way fish leather is creating employment as well as value for the benefit of other sectors such as tourism.

However, like many other countries, Iceland must be mindful not to overfish. With stock sustainability and the ecological effects of fishing and management systems as core concerns, Iceland has realized that becoming even more competitive in the global marketplace by using fish by-products calls for rethinking the way it has to manage its resources much more sustainably. To this effect, a number of initiatives and innovations are being launched to enhance sustainable fishing and overall use of the abundant fishing and fisheries resource.

An environment in which private enterprises, government-led initiatives, and government-supported projects are undertaking research continues to develop. In one example the government of Iceland provides information, advice, and support to ensure that the country makes responsible use of its living marine resources by pursuing sustainable harvesting strategies that are science-based and in accordance with international commitments (Government of Iceland, 2018). One other example is the emergence of institutes like the Innovation Centre Iceland that wishes to promote the advancement of new ideas in the Icelandic economy by supporting entrepreneurs and businesses that undertake projects including the fishing industry, resulting in the creation of direct jobs for business owners and staff and indirect employment opportunities in the supporting businesses and supply chain.

Conclusions

This paper has explored the use of fish skin for the construction of garments and accessories as an ancient tradition shared by coastal arctic societies. During the last century, Arctic indigenous peoples resisted both colonization and repression by humans and dramatic ecological changes in seafood security. Fish-skin craft became a way to communicate traditional knowledge where practical benefits combined with cultural resilience.

This paper has equally examined how the use of fish skin by Arctic indigenous people has been assimilated since the 1990s as an innovative sustainable material for fashion due to its low environmental impact. Fish skins are sourced from the food industry, using waste. Alternative materials like fish skin are increasingly seeing a resurgence as they require less energy and resources to cultivate than conventional materials (Global Fashion Agenda, 2017). Improved usage of so-called waste and other by-products could help meet increasing demand for seafood without further stress to the ecosystem. Some "waste" products can have a very high value if they are used. A more efficient use of resources will benefit society, the environment, and the industry's bottom line (Bechtel, 2003).

Developing processes to transform post-consumer and industrial waste into new materials takes the pressure off overconsumed materials. Recycling waste minimizes landfill and keeps resources in use longer. Growing, sourcing, and processing raw materials close to home shortens transport routes, reduces the carbon footprint, and increases transparency across the supply chain (Texcycle, 2019).. Using local fish industry waste and nearshoring production can provide new, sustainable opportunities for the community. Before fashion

started using fish skin to produce leather, the skins used to be thrown away. Now, they are not only a source of income to the local people, but no longer contribute to biological waste.

The Icelandic fish leather model has proved reliable and sustainable over 20 years, and this model could be duplicated in seafood industries around the world (Sigfusson, 2017). This would create new opportunities in coastal areas with a big demand for fish and countries with a history of fish-skin leather use. Thus, indigenous fishing communities which used to subsist and dress themselves with fish-skin leather items, like the Ainu in Hokkaido, the Nanai in Siberia, and Alaska's Inuit will be able to reach agreements with nearby fishing plants to supply fish skins for their ancient craft of fish skin tanning and to develop new products that will positively impact their economies.

Glossary of Terms

Ainu: An indigenous people of Japan (Hokkaidō and formerly northeastern Honshū) and Russia (Sakhalin, the Kuril Islands, Khabarovsk Krai and the Kamchatka Peninsula) The Ainu economy was based on hunting, fishing, and gathering. Ainu people made clothes by sewing together fish skins such as those of salmon and trout.

Blue Economy: The sustainable use of ocean resources for economic growth, improved livelihoods, and jobs while preserving the health of ocean ecosystem.

Hezhe: People who settled in the drainage areas of Songhua River, Heilongjiang River, and Wusuli River in Northeast China. The Hezhe's ancestry can be traced to the Xizhens, nomadic Tartar horsemen living in northern China in the ancient times. Hezhe people made their clothing of fish skin or animal skin.

Indigenous Arctic Peoples: Indigenous Arctic peoples are closely linked to nature and subsistence resources. Their material knowledge is rooted in centuries of keen observation and direct experience with the environment. Their ability to adapt and accumulated knowledge built upon direct interaction with the environment over long periods of time have enabled Arctic peoples to thrive in these northern lands. Traditionally, they moved seasonally to hunting and fishing grounds to support their subsistence ways of life. (Dorantes, 2012) Indigenous Arctic peoples developed over centuries formidable skills, including a highly evolved design aesthetic, creation and mastery of specialized tools, deep knowledge of the natural world, a nimble ability to problem-solve and adapt, the development of powerful support networks, and a keen awareness of resources required to thrive in demanding ecosystems. (CIRI, 2015)

Inuit: Indigenous peoples inhabiting the Arctic regions of Greenland, Canada, and Alaska. Inuit are the descendants of the Thule people, who emerged from western Alaska around 1000 CE. The semi-nomadic Inuit were fishers and hunters harvesting lakes, seas, ice platforms, and tundra. Inuit women made clothes and footwear from skins of marine and land animals.

Saami: A Finno-Ugric people inhabiting Sápmi, which today encompasses large parts of northern Norway and Sweden, parts of northern Finland, and the Murmansk Oblast of Russia. Traditionally, the Saami have pursued a variety of livelihoods including coastal fishing, fur trapping, and sheepherding. In southern Lapland eel and burbot skins have been used in the production of purses and bracelets.

Yup'ik: A group of indigenous or aboriginal peoples of western, southwestern, and southcentral Alaska and the Russian Far East. They are related to the Inuit and Iñupiat peoples. Yup'ik women made clothes and footwear from skins of marine and land animals including fish.

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"Untapped": Exploring Craft Potential of Urban Women Through Technology Intervention

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Abstract

In the past decade, India's metropolitan areas have seen a huge surge in job opportunities in the craft and design sector, yet women remain largely unrecognized and undervalued. This research focuses on urban women, largely in the 30-70 age group, who are stuck in the conventional setup of their nuclear or joint families. A good number of these women were found to be seasoned in craft skills like knitting, crocheting, darning, mending, embroidery, etc. They make products for family members but fail to make substantial earnings or get any recognition for their skill. Despite a huge market for people who practice such skills, there is no platform for them to connect with individuals, designers, or retail companies.

Untapped, a skill-sourcing app model, can connect these home-based makers to designers and buyers. Through the app, makers can build a profile highlighting their skills and subsequently connect with prospective customers. The app provides better recognition to local communities and their unrecognized skills, as well as help sustain their craft and associated skill. The aim of this paper is to define the needs of these women, explore the nuances of their craft, and propose how the intervention of technology through an app model can help them procure more clients and generate sufficient revenue in return. Through research methodologies such as personal interviews, as well as a review of existing apps, the paper seeks to build the context further by recording and analyzing varied narratives of home-based makers.

Keywords: home-based makers, technology intervention, women empowerment, Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), gender equality

Introduction

While observing India in its developing phase, a direct result of rapid urbanization has been the inclusion of several villages around a city's periphery. The capital city of Delhi consists of approximately 300 such villages (Shah, 2012) which are gradually blending in and forming part of the National Capital Region (NCR) (Rao et al., 2018). The city's population saw a significant upsurge post-independence due to economic expansion and increased job opportunities that led to a heavy inflow of people from nearby states and adjacent countries (Rao et al., 2018). As White (2015) points out, women in particular have been excluded from some of these economic improvements. The "urban villages" within a city consist of a considerable number of women, typically in the age group of 30-70 years, and seasoned in craft skills like knitting, crocheting, darning, mending, and tatting, to name a few. The fashion industry employs a large number of such women who work informally from their homes (Kara, 2019).

Unni et al. (1999, p, 21) define these home-based workers as the:
types of workers who carry out remunerative work within their homes. They form the bottom most layer of this industry. This segment of the garment industry operates mainly through contractors. These contractors take the material from the large merchants or shops and supply it to home based workers in the city. They then collect the finished product and return it to the supplier for final sale in the market. The home-based workers are almost 100 per cent women.

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These women garment home-based workers are also likely to work through a chain of contractors and subcontractors. This is particularly true since the women are located at a distance and are spread out over vast areas in the city and even in some semi-urban locations.

The rapid rise of fast fashion in India saw an increase in subcontracting, where medium-sized factories outsource work to several production units, under working conditions with almost negligible adherence to regulations, often at the risk of workers' health (SgT Group, 2017). In their research, Unni et al. (1999) note that often this form of subcontracting happens in an unauthorized manner. These women can earn a fixed income through subcontracting, but they largely remain invisible across the entire supply chain, leaving their work and skill unrecognized. Most of the crafts practiced by hand are often taken for granted. For example, in case of knitting, Turney (2009, p. 1) observes, "Knitting, of course, is something everyone is very familiar with: it is everywhere. Often this kind of familiarity means that it defies discussion or contemplation—and tends to be ignored."

Additionally, an alarmingly large number of skilled women live within fragile environments defined by specific limitations at home, from a patriarchal household, to raising children, to conventional attitudes of the family. These environments do not allow these women to work outside their homes. But they can still work, they have the required skills, and they know their tools and techniques very well. They have always been the makers, creating products for family members, but as Anam (2016) highlighted "it remained unseen, invisible and unrecognized in conventional terms, yielding no economic benefits." These are the women (hereafter referred to as the "target market") that this paper focuses on—home-based makers skilled in the different craft techniques pertaining to the fashion design industry, but currently unable to generate enough revenue from their skill due to lack of proper platform(s) to connect with potential customers. Throughout this paper, the names of persons and places have been changed to preserve the identities of these home-based workers.

Mrs. Devki Bharadwaj is a 62-year-old woman hailing from Chandil, a small town in present-day Jharkhand. She and her family moved to the NCR 10 years ago for better job prospects for their children. She lives with her husband, three children, and two daughters-in-law in a two-bedroom apartment in Jacobpura, a suburb of Gurugram. Due to old age, she finds it difficult to walk around the house and perform her daily chores. She is confined to her two-seat sofa in the living room, spending time leisurely knitting and crocheting and making a meager side income to supplement her family's earnings (figure 1). When asked how she obtains regular orders, she responds with great perplexity. The process is completely organic, usually by word of mouth and overall quite unorganized and erratic. She could earn more from the skill set she possesses but unfortunately has no means to reach out to potential customers. Therefore, she is invisible to prospective clients and *untapped*.

Figure 1. Crochet purse, created by Mrs. Devki in mid-1980s. Copyright 2019 by Pragya Sharma

Many women like Mrs. Devki go unnoticed behind many layers in an urban setting. There exists a staggering gap between makers and clients. Although many app-based models have emerged in recent years, they are more product-centric. Untapped, a skill-sourcing app model, can connect these home-based makers to designers and buyers (hereafter termed "maker" and "client" respectively). Untapped forms an important bridge that can open earning opportunities for many such women. As a platform, it can connect these people to the right consumer market and let them earn more without any alterations to their environments since they continue to work from their homes.

These women will become more visible; for artisans, this makes a lot of difference, as echoed by Sennett (2008, p. 130): "The maker leaves a personal mark of his or her presence on the object . . . 'I made this,' 'I am here, in this work,' which is to say, 'I exist.'"

Based on primary research findings, this paper explores the above demographic of women within the context of the capital city of New Delhi, but can be applied to other cities in developing nations. Personal narratives provide insight into the nuances of the craft these women practice and how technology can play a significant role in generating more employment opportunities. These opportunities also lead to meeting the UN Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5, Gender Equality, "promoting empowerment of women through technology" (Global Goals, 2015). Currently, the Untapped app is in its infant stage, but the research conducted as part of this paper, can help app development in the near future. The research also provides avenues to explore further and propose other solutions.

Case Study 1

Mrs. Sharmila Kaushik is a 53-year-old homemaker currently residing in Gurugram. Hailing from the city of Korba in Chattisgarh, she started knitting at the age of eight. She learned the skill from her elder sister, who was taught by their mother, predominantly through observation. This act is very similar to what Sennett (2008, p. 154) terms prehension: "Prehension gives a particular cast to mental understanding as well as physical action; you don't wait until all the information is in hand, you anticipate the meaning . . . it signals alertness, engagement, and risk-taking all in the act of looking ahead". Prehension plays an important role for this target market, where skills are being passed from one generation onto the next. Due to unavailability of knitting needles, Mrs. Kaushik used to practice handknitting with her sister on worn-out broom straws to make scalloped lace edgings for their handkerchiefs and chemises. Four years later, she learned crochet and tatting, an advanced skill compared to handknitting.

In the 1980s women used to make embroidered or crocheted home decor pieces like table-fan covers, coffee table covers, or elaborate bedcovers to bring with them to their husband's house as part of their dowry. The handmade products demonstrated that the girl was skilled in handwork, an important consideration in those times for a good homemaker. Embroidery or crochet was not merely a technique for the women; it formed an extension of them, intimately linked to their expression and subtly defining their persona.

Mrs. Kaushik made a sunburst-patterned coffee table cover (figure 2) as part of her wedding trousseau. As a young bride she was welcomed in her husband's house, but the craft she carried with her was not (figure 3). Crochet, knitting, and mending were regarded as a vision-impairment craft by her husband and other family members who did not appreciate the details of the skill she practiced, and she was forced to believe the same. She tried working outside her home, but household responsibilities proved to be a huge barrier and she was restricted to homemaking. Over the years, she knitted sweaters, caps, and other winter garments for her two children as a means of supporting her husband. This was her quiet way of sustaining her skill.

Figure 2. Sunburst-patterned crochet coffee table cover created by Mrs. Kaushik for her wedding trousseau in 1991.

Figure 3. Page from Mrs. Kaushik's stitching journal from 1988.
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Twenty-five years later, with the craft sector gaining momentum, she realized that she could extract some monetary value from her skill by knitting and crocheting in her spare time. She had been knitting intermittently for years, but she crocheted after 25 years with improved finesse. That she was able to retain knowledge of her skill was a surprise; it had always been a part of her existence, but she had not acknowledged it. As Sennett (2008, p. 8) reckons, "people can learn more about themselves through the things they make, that material culture matters." Mrs. Kaushik is more confident about her skill because of its market value; she has regular customers now.

The untapped women discussed here comprise a wide demographic in terms of origins, current occupation, and economic background. Some identified home-based makers in the NCR were personally interviewed and their narratives recorded (table 1). Originally belonging to different parts of the country, they currently reside in urban dwellings of Delhi and Gurugram. The table shows that the profile of the makers is diverse, but their skill and craft unite them.

Table 1: Untapped Rubric of Identified Home-Based Women Makers in Delhi NCR

S.No	Name	Age	Region/Origins	Education	Occupation	Economic Background	Skill Set
1	Chandni*	25	Palam Vihar, Gurugram	VII Standard	Librarian in a local school	Lower income	Knitting (beginner level)
2	Pragya Sharma	27	Gurugram	Post Graduate	Teacher	Middle income	Knitting (beginner level)
3	Devki Bharadwaj*	62	Chandil, Jharkhand	IV Standard	Grandmother	Lower middle income	Knitting & crocheting (beginner level)
4	Deepa Arora*	72	Lahore, Pakistan	Uneducated	Homemaker	Lower middle income	Advanced knitting & crocheting
5	Sharmila Kaushik*	53	Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh	Post Graduate	Homemaker	Middle income	Advanced knitting & crocheting

6	Lipika Sharma	57	Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh	Undergraduate	Homemaker	Middle income	Advanced knitting & crocheting
7	Reshma Arora*	67	Lahore, Pakistan	Uneducated	Homemaker	Lower middle income	Knitting & crocheting (beginner level)

*Names of persons and places have been changed to preserve the identity of the home-based makers.

This author manages a small business enterprise that works with home-based women makers in creating crochet accessories, jewelry, and home-decor products. There were many instances to observe how these women work in an urban context. Initiating research from my immediate surroundings and asking household help about family or friends who know crochet, I was soon connected to two women who knew the technique and had the spare time to work at home. These are the untapped women who are limited with regard to stepping out of their homes and finding jobs. These women became involved with my enterprise, providing them with a side income that they can spend on their children's education and household expenditures. Unni et al. (1999, p. 52) explains, "An aspect of empowerment is the capacity to spend one's own earnings and undertake the household expenditure."

These women and their craft are inextricably intertwined. They are very dexterous and refined in their work. For some women and girls who were somewhat new to knitting, intuition drove their work; they got the gist of the technique in a few minutes by careful observation alone. Their mothers and grandmothers have been knitting and crocheting for years and they have always observed them, being their knitting companions as children, seeing those needles click-clack. Their inherent skills just required rousing. As Sennett notes (2008, p. 9), there is "an intimate connection between hand and head." This line of thought was echoed by another home-based maker as elaborated next.

Case Study 2

Mrs. Deepa Arora is a refugee from Pakistan whose family came to the other side of undivided India during partition. Along with her three sisters, she learned knitting on discarded spokes of her bicycle tire. She is 72 years old and lives in one of the quarters of B. K. Dutt Colony, a settlement along the fringes of the famed Lodhi Art District in South Delhi. She lost her husband 10 years ago and her only son and daughter-in-law abandoned the house soon thereafter. Mrs. Arora used to make a living by hand-knitting for neighbors in her spare time. In the past few years, eye strain due to old age means that she rarely knits or crochets. But somehow she has retained her small set of clients, and as the sole breadwinner, she has products knitted or crocheted by one of the two women in a nearby settlement and earns a small commission in the process.

Mrs. Reshma is one of the women who makes products for Mrs. Arora. Mrs. Reshma does not own a phone and Mrs. Arora can only contact her in person, whenever she sees Mrs. Reshma going past her house in the evenings. It is then that Mrs. Arora gives Mrs. Reshma the work and a promise is made to meet a deadline. The products are returned to Mrs. Arora on another evening. As discussed during the Crafting Futures roundtable held in New Delhi in October 2019, Kapur (2019) writes, "Digital technology (like Instagram and WhatsApp) is helping to bring higher outreach for, and better promotion of, crafts. When a craftsperson gets the hang of it, he or she can use it to take good photographs and set proper prices. Selling online can be quite whimsical and demand is generally erratic." Mrs. Reshma's example illustrates how big a difference a technology intervention, like a phone, can make to the growth of her craft business. Reshma can regularly interact with clients, approve designs, and inform clients of a delay in delivery.

Literature Review: A Study of Existing Models

The crafts sector in India has received huge government impetus pushing to bring digitization and an online presence to India's arts and crafts industry (Shanthi, 2019). This resulted in the birth of several portals showcasing crafts and artforms sourced directly from artisans and craftspeople. Marketplaces like CraftsBazaar and Amazon Karigar are largely focused on selling products made by artisans in different, often remote parts of the country and, unlike Etsy, these aim at tapping the rural handloom and handicrafts market. CraftsBazaar was launched to benefit the rural crafts sector through globalization, enabling skilled artisans to sell directly to Indian and global consumers and earn more (Kashyaap, 2020). Amazon Karigar through its platform wants to empower local sellers and small and medium businesses (SMBs) by helping them sell their products on the website or app (Shanthi, 2019).

Another example is Bengaluru-based Uthhan, a web platform dedicated to uplifting financially weaker skilled artisans across India. Unlike other apps, Uthhan enables the artisans to sell their products directly to the customer without the involvement of any middlemen (Suter, 2019). The artisan becomes the main stakeholder in this scenario. This type of format also helps build more transparent and sustained relationships.

When Etsy, a New York-based online marketplace for handcrafted goods, entered the Indian market in 2018, it managed to tap into and make a huge impact on creative entrepreneurs, individual makers, and small businesses. Etsy aimed to help local entrepreneurs sell their unique and handcrafted goods across the world (Nair, 2018). Etsy Local, a feature on the Etsy app, can show a customer the nearest Etsy sellers and at the same time recommend retailers or events based on taste (Dove, 2015). Unlike the other portals discussed, Etsy largely aims at the creative economy instead of solely focusing on the rural economy.

Initial Prototype for Untapped

Unlike existing product-centric models discussed above, Untapped aims at tapping the skills and services of home-based makers. As a connecting platform, the app enables home-based makers to find work, connect with potential clients, and regulate their work from home based on their individual context. Based on findings, an initial user interface design for Untapped was developed (figure 4). The design is simple and user-friendly, respecting the fact that many of its users could be first-time users of a smartphone, as the target market is quite varied (table 1).

Figure 4. Initial User Interface (UI)
design for the app. Copyright 2019 by
Pragya Sharma

Once the maker is registered (at no extra cost), she creates a profile consisting of images of sample work along with the cost (as decided by the maker) and expected delivery time. When a prospective client opens the app, it automatically detects the user's location and based on the skill search, shows makers nearest the user. After browsing through the maker's profile, the user can express interest and put in a request to connect, with the added option of sending a text message. The maker is immediately notified of the request and can approve it based on availability of time and other factors. Once both parties are in agreement, the maker's contact details are shared with the client and a dialogue opens between the two. Hence, Untapped helps both the maker and the client. The app, on one hand, makes the home-based makers visible and helps them generate revenue while on the other, helps the client realize a design by sourcing the relevant skill required through the app. Initially, volunteers will assist the makers in creating their profiles and explaining how to use the app.

The app acts as a bridge to help customers connect with makers, and the relationship can build outside of the digital world. The maker-client relationship is valuable, leading to better understanding of the person behind the craft: the skill and technique and the way of working. The Untapped app model is building focus on the skills of makers through videos, pattern charts, and intensive workshops conducted by volunteers. These could be selected using the app or from people from outside—craft experts, hobbyists, recent textile graduates, and artisans.

Untapped and Sustainability

With the advent of fast-fashion culture and a significant rise in average middle-class income, discarding garments has become more convenient. According to Carbon Trust (2011, cited in Greenpeace, 2018), "doubling the useful life of clothing from one year to two years reduces emissions over the year by 24%."

As a skill-sourcing app model, one of the key skills Untapped aims to source is mending through hand stitching, darning, and other methods (figures 5 and 6). Locally known as *rafugari*, mending has largely been defined as a household activity in the Indian context. Walia (2020) describes the practice of *rafugari* as an age-old practice of repairing clothes, especially antique shawls, with careful attention. She further explains that *rafugars* (people who practice *rafugari*) study antique patterns closely to repair clothes, at times pulling threads from the damaged cloth that needs repairing. The process demonstrates the gentle care and precision of the *rafugar*. For centuries, *rafugari* was considered economical, a way to save clothes from being discarded as well as rendering them fit to be handed down to future generations, binding generations together (Walia, 2020).

Figure 5. Visible Darning. Adapted from *Deccan Herald* (Khanna, D. & Mehra, P, 2017), https://www.deccanherald.co/content/637813/healing-damaged-cloth.html

Figure 6. A pair of jeans repaired through darning. Adapted from *Popular Science* (Urry, A., 2019). https://www.popsci.com/reweave-jeans-repair-denim/

Mending is a quiet movement against fast-fashion culture, and one of the important target skills that currently has a huge consumer market. Berthon (2017) notes, "This artisanal practice may also be considered as a reaction against the throwaway culture that has become so insidiously prevalent. Repairing our damaged garments and textiles is an opportunity to rethink our relationship to our everyday objects." Francisco Martínez, an ethnographer at University of Helsinki, believes that repairing things establishes continuity, endurance, and material sensitivity (Martínez, cited in Walia, 2020).

The act of performing a skill by hand has always been considered meditative. Becky (n.d.) notes that hand-knitting in particular "offers the perfect training ground for cultivating a mental state that is less distracted, more present, and peaceful. The rhythm of working the same stitch over and over again calms the heart rate and breathing, creating a feeling of stability and inner quiet." This act of repetition in hand-knitting and crochet lends these techniques a meditative quality. Skills performed by hand aim for more slowness, which is immensely valued in today's fast-paced world. Fusaro (2015) writes, "Many studies show that human health, innovation and success in business are enhanced when people of all ages spend time engaged in the artistic process, using their hands and building repetitive neural links with the spatial parts of their brain." Untapped can bring home-based artisans together, building a sense of community for these home-based makers, a sense of belonging that instills confidence and is rewarding, too.

Selim Jahan notes, "Earnings make for economic independence, a critical factor towards individual autonomy, voice, and agency in households and the community" (Jahan, cited in White, 2015). When the socioeconomic status of women is enhanced, it results in the growth of the entire family and the community at large. It is only when the women take the first step toward reworking their latent skills that they realize the potential of their craft, and instinctively fathom how they can improve their skill and procure more clients. Coles Johnson (2016) further reinforces this thought: "When you make something, you leave a part of yourself in it. When you are finished creating, you take pride in the work partly because you see yourself in it. When you buy something someone else made, you yourself are reflected in that purchase." There is a face behind every handmade product—the subtle inconsistencies in the craft bear testimony to this.

When all stakeholders and the associated systems and processes operate within the same locality, it forms a highly efficient model from a sustainability point of view. Producing and selling locally is not just convenient and economically feasible, but good for the environment in the long run. Michael H. Shuman, author of *Going Local*, writes, "[Going Local] means nurturing locally owned businesses which use local resources sustainably, employ local workers at decent wages and serve primarily local consumers" (Shuman, 2000, cited in Robinson, 2010). Locally sourced materials generate less waste since unnecessary packaging, transportation, and delivery is minimized.

Untapped and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

By empowering home-based makers and enhancing their socioeconomic status and building a local economy, the Untapped app contributes not only to the sustainable development of a city, but to an important part of society—women. In 2015, world leaders came together and agreed on 17 Global Goals (officially known as Sustainable Development Goals or SDGs) aimed at creating a better world by 2030 by ending poverty, fighting inequality, and addressing the urgency of climate change (Global Goals, 2015) (figure 7). SDG 5, Gender Equality, aims at "promoting empowerment of women through technology." Through appropriate technology, Untapped is giving recognition to local communities and

their skills, helping sustain craft. Another aspect of this SDG, "Value unpaid care and promote shared domestic responsibilities," is also being indirectly supported by the app model. And app developers strive to include other genders who identify as home-based makers.

Figure 7. United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (Global Goals, 2015), https://www.globalgoals.org/resources/

Gender inequality in the context of India has been a strong social issue for centuries (CRY, n.d.). Khosla (2009) says that urban development is generally assumed to be gender neutral, that is, providing equal access to men and women, but according to Amutha (2017), gender differences created by society and blocking women from participation in social, political and economic activity can adversely affect development goals and economic growth. According to the UN India Business Forum (n.d.), "Women in India represent 29% of the labor force, down from 35% in 2004. More than half of the work done by women in India is unpaid, and almost all of it is informal and unprotected."

Other SDGs that the app model aims to address include SDG 8.2, "Diversify, innovate and upgrade for economic productivity" ; SDG 9B, "Support domestic technology development and industrial diversification"; SDG 10.3, "Ensure equal opportunities and diversification"; and SDG 11.3, "Inclusive and sustainable organization." One advantage of this model is that it is inclusive of all women in the local-urban context irrespective of age, economic background, religion, or ethnicity. Their craft and skill unites them, and the app aims to embrace this diversity of people.

Potential Challenges

Many stereotypes related to skills like knitting, embroidery, and darning pose a huge barrier. Handwork is often considered low-paid work, a waste of time, or just a recreational pursuit. To help break these stereotypes, the women must step up, and build confidence in their abilities and talent. Many women receive negative reactions if they become financially independent and confident, no matter how progressive the city. Sennett (2008, p. 11) argues

that "motivation matters more than talent, and for a particular reason." Untapped can help to encourage more women to find confidence in their abilities and skills, but breaking rigid stereotypes can be a challenge. Appropriate counseling may be required to pierce through fixed notions and mindsets.

Other challenges the app model must overcome include the investment involved in building and developing the model, pitching to potential investors, marketing to potential end users, and skill training for makers. One scenario is providing smartphones to the makers, especially lower-income women. Another challenge is the degree of technology acceptance by home-based makers. As Sennett (2008, p. 3) notes, "Technology itself can seem the enemy rather than simply a risk." This is especially true for first-time phone users. Will the makers be open to technology helping them get work and generate income? Will they want to become the new freelancers? It is not simply the hesitation to use a new technology, but gender stereotypes. In many families, owning a phone signifies freedom and independence. As Ganito (2010, p. 79) explains, "The archetype in Western thought is that women's use of technology is mostly presented or viewed as dystopic. Women are considered culturally the guardians of nature. It is they who become pregnant; it is they who raise children. Their usage of technology is viewed as a corruption of nature."

Conclusion

Recognizing and understanding the target market of home-based makers, as well as their associated context, was crucial. Setting up a small business enterprise in an urban setting, involving women from varied backgrounds, has been an insightful experience for the author. Although the makers were within the local context, it was very difficult to identify and connect with them. Available and appropriate technology at that stage would have helped immensely. This emphasizes the feasibility of the model, benefiting both the maker as well as the client. Initiating from the city of Gurugram, the 'Untapped' model appears to be highly scalable to other regions of the country. Different cities in India share similar geographic and demographic features along with their distinct local context.

The women discussed in this paper are quite varied but similar in many ways. Knitting, crocheting, and mending have never been full-time activities for these women but still formed an important part of their daily pursuits. There are interesting parallels with the embroiderers of Lucknow, who are the wives of farmers, or the back-strap loom weavers of Chizami, Nagaland, who are grass basket weavers. This implies that an artisan resides in every woman, irrespective of the role she performs in the society.

More people are appreciating products made by hand. It is time to take out the needles again. Hand-knitting and crocheting should no longer be considered grandma's job and it would be fair to say that conventional notions need to change. We should not set limits on women's empowerment. When we have the maker and the client operating in the same environment, why not form a bridge and connect the two through appropriate use of technology?

Acknowledgments

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Dowries of Kutch: Rabari Tradition

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Abstract

Moti Bharat is a craft being practised by the various communities, residing in the western part of India, i.e. Kutch, Gujarat. Crafting among them is seen as more than producing personal and household articles; it is a celebration of skill and tradition passed down through generations.

The paper aims to analyse the dowry tradition practiced for generations which has now been discontinued within the Rabari community. Products created using craft skills form a major part of the dowry tradition which was a reflection of the skills and social status of the woman and the community. The craft which was once the pride of the community, drastically affected the life of the community, which led to the abolishment of the tradition and the decline in moti bharat craft in the Rabari community.

Both Primary and secondary data are used for this research. The tools used for the data collection included field observation, immersion, interviews, etc. Secondary research also included data available with government, non-government bodies, literature survey of libraries and studies that have been undertaken in the area and related subjects.

The paper presents the moti bharat embroidery tradition and adversities faced by the Rabari women and the community which led to the abolishment of the dowry tradition by the community. The present status of the Moti bharat craft, factors which led to the abolishment of dowry in reference to the Rabari community is also reflected in the study.

Keywords: Rabari, craft practices; traditions; social changes, Moti bharat; dowry

Introduction

Kutch –the barren land of Gujarat is home of exclusive textiles. These textiles are woven, dyed, printed and embroidered beautifully by the communities of Kutch and narrate their legacy and history. The rich and diverse creative traditions of Kutch live at the intersection of cultures and communities. Kutch was once a trade destination by land and sea for people from Africa, the Middle East, and the Swat Valley. Kutch has a rich tradition of sea trade from Mandvi, Mundra port, Kandla port which served as a global connection. A river system was shared between Kutch, Sindh and Rajasthan. The tribal groups, communities who migrated from Rajasthan, Maharashtra surrounding Kutch, across borders Sindh, Pakistan; pastoralists have vested the vibrancy of their clothes, animal trappings and house decorations. Kutch in the past as well as in the present has constantly absorbing cultures from the north, west, and east. Kutch tells the world that the opposites are not to be feared but understood and celebrated.

The arid climates has pushed communities to evolve an ingenious balance of meeting their needs by converting diverse resources available into products for daily living and are examples of sustainability. While embroidery has become a craft synonymous with Kutch, textile crafts along with other crafts have given this land colour and identity. Craft is inextricable from the numerous communities, connected by trade, agriculture and pastoralism in Kutch.

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Kutch is world renowned for its unique crafts. These crafts are the bond which connects the people to the traditions. Most of the textile crafts were traditionally created by village women, for themselves and their families, to create festivity, honour deities, and generate wealth. While embroideries textiles and other crafts contributed to the substantial economic exchange required for marriage and fulfilled other social obligations which required gifts, unlike most crafts was the tradition of Dowry which was prevalent in every community of Kutch.

History of Rabari Community

Rabari community is a pastoral community of Kutch, Gujarat which has migrated from Sindh, Pakistan. One of the Rabari myths of origin is that lord Shiva put them on earth to tend to the camels owned by Goddess Parvati. According to the tradition, Shiva gave three of his apsaras in marriage to Sambal. He had four daughters and a son from a polygamous marriage. The daughters were married to Rathor, Padiar, Parmar and Yadav Rajputs. Their descendants became the Rabari. (Jain, 1980) The Rabari community have three sub-groups: Dhebariya ,Vaghadiya ,Kachhi. The Dhebariya Rabari follows the Hindu religion but they sacrifice a goat to their Goddess Ravechi Mata and Vachhara Dada.

Women of Rabari community are dressed in skirts, blouses and odhani. They shirred their own woollen thread and but the cloth was woven by Harijan and was dyed by Khatri's, later embroidered by Rabari women. The skirts of unmarried girls were made of cotton and were fastened with a draw string but married women wore tube skirts which were pleated and tucked at the waist. Tie-dying was sometimes used to create a pattern of red dots or pure black which was a background, for plethora of colours in surface ornamentation. (Elson, 1979)

Embroidery also communicates self and status. Differences in style create and maintain distinctions that identify community, sub-community, and social status within community. The crafts of Kutch are really a myriad of styles, which present a richly textured map of regions and ethnic groups. Each style, a distinct combination of stitches, patterns and colours, and rules for using them, was shaped by historical, socio-economic and cultural factors. Traditional but never static, styles evolved over time, responding to prevailing trends. (London, 2000)

Embroidery is unique to the nomadic Rabari. They are practiced by pastoralists whose heritage is rooted in community rather than land, and considered cultural property. Essential to Rabari embroidery is the use of mirrors in a variety of shapes. Rabari outline patterns in chain stitch, then decorate them with a regular sequence of mirrors and accent stitches, in a regular sequence of colours. Rabari also use decorative back stitching, called bakhiya, to decorate the seams of women's blouses and men's kediya/ jackets. The style, like Rabari, is ever evolving, and in abstract motifs Rabari women depict their changing world. Contemporary bold mirrored stitching nearly replaced a repertoire of delicate stitches. (Frater, 1995)

The Rabari use beadwork to edge the small bags they make as a part of the bride's dowry. Among some sub groups of Rabari, beadwork is used extensively to decorate bags and belts for the bridegroom, and the indhoni (women's head ring), which is used during the wedding ceremony as a stand of ceremonial vessel. Rabari beadwork is quite distinctive in style and predominantly uses white and primary colours in Kathi-style beadwork. Rabari beadwork is easy to recognize and small white shells and white buttons are often included. Traditional-style beadwork is made in many places in Gujarat, especially around Rajkot and Bhavnagar. (Crabtree & Stallebrass, 2002)

Dhebar Rabari community are especially proficient in beadwork embroidery. They are very fond of beadwork ornaments with which they fully decorate their bridegrooms and

brides, children and houses. Before this traditional rich art could be noted and recorded in our national folk art records, the tradition is disturbed. Since last two years ban to use and prepare beadwork has been imposed by Dhebar Natpatels. (Rathod, 1992)

Review of Literature - Dowry Tradition

Rabari concept of marriage is quite different from that of the modern world. Child marriage is a custom prevalent even today in several states of India. When a girl of less than eighteen years get married it is deemed a child marriage. Child marriage is part of the traditional structure; it is not salacious but focused on family stability to avoid teenage pregnancy. First the marriage proposal is arranged along with negotiations of dowry. Ceremonies are conducted to affirm the wedding while the bride to be continues to live with her parents, until she attains child-bearing age. The dowry may also contain heirloom items that are passed from generation to generation. Only when the dowry is completed, the grooms' family comes to take brides to her in laws. This event is practiced in all communities that practice child marriage in its pure traditional form. (Howe & Mishra, 2016)

A dowry is a transfer of parental property, gifts, or money at the marriage of a daughter (bride). Dowry is an ancient custom, and its existence may well predate records of it. Dowries continue to be expected and demanded as a condition to accept a marriage proposal in some parts of the world, mainly in parts of Asia. (Goody, 1976)

Dowry has been a prevalent practice in India in the form of a payment of cash or gifts from the bride's family to the bridegroom's family upon marriage. There are variations on dowry prevalence based on geography and class. States in the north are more likely to participate in the dowry system among all classes, and dowry is more likely to be in the form of material and movable goods. (Dalmia & Lawrence, 2005)

Traditionally, in the villages of the Thar Parkar and Kutch regions many types of embroidery were associated with weddings. Girls were required to produce a set of embroidered items specified by the community, to be exchanged with the future in-laws at the prescribed ceremonies of the marriage. Today, with changes in lifestyle the requirements have changed. Nonetheless, the embroidered products are still necessary before the ceremony can take place. In traditional societies, in which a bride is not seen until after the marriage, embroidered pieces sent after engagement introduces the bride to her husband and in-laws. The precious embroideries inform the family of her skill. (London, 2000)

Bead Jewelleries and embroidery art is traditionally done by Rabari women in Kutch. These are made from colourful glass beads in combination with colourful threads and are aesthetically pleasing. Rabari women in their leisure time, elaborately embellish garments, bags, jewellery and animal trappings, that are used for decorative and functional purposes. The jewelleries are created by women for themselves and their families and are used extensively during community marriages and festivals. The symbolic interpretation of these items is its association to generate wealth. It is a contribution to the dowry. The bride makes decorative garments, bags and jewellery for the groom that is worn by the groom during the ceremony.

Originally the articles of embroidery, Moti bharat, silver jewellery along with a certain amount of utensils, according to wealth and status of the father of bride together combined of the dowry. The embroidered textile including ornaments and clothing for the bride, gifts for the close relatives of bridegroom, the articles for home furnishing and décor, and embroidered coverings for the cattle's were mandatory in the dowry. It was when the articles for dowry were finished, that the girl could finally go to her in-laws house and live with her husband. The amount of time required, the cost of the raw material including the

workmanship along with the household course like agriculture, cattle farming, turned the tradition of dowry into a liability. (Patel, 2018)

Craft of Moti Bharat

Bead embroidery on textiles is done to embellish the fabric in different regions across India. Unlike in Gujarat state, where the bead embroidery shows only beads as the beads become the fabric, as it were, else here mostly flowing or geometrical designs are worked with beads on fine fabrics, usually sarees and blouse pieces, setting off the background material to better advantage. (Chattopadhyay, 1995)

Beadwork is a counter part of embroidery in Kutch and Saurashtra. In India, Beadwork is favored particularly in Kutch and Saurashtra. Steatite micro-beads have been recently recovered from the Harappan levels at Prabhas, Rajodi, Rangpur and Lothal in Saurashtra. The oldest examples have been knitted by using imported Venetian beads delimits indigenous sources near the middle of nineteenth century. The history of Murano beads of Italy goes back to fourteenth century; its regular export to India , through Zanzibar where Bhatia and Bania traders of Kutch and Saurashtra has already established their commercial concerns by the first half of nineteenth century. (Nanavati, Vora, & Dhaky, 1966)

Moti bharat as it is traditionally recognized is utilized in diverse products creating graphical effects on textiles. Gujarat is well known for its exclusive technique of embroidery or weaving beads without a fabric base. This imitable style has found home in the Kutch and Saurashtra region of Gujarat. In Gujarat, beads cast in terracotta date back to the Indus Valley Civilization; beadwork came into its own in urban culture with the advent of European colonization. Terracotta, glass, stone, metal and even plastic forms the raw elements from which beads are produced. (Gillow & Barnard, 2014)

Natural elements like seeds, cowrie shells, clay, agate, wood and ivory have given way to beads made with glass and plastic. Just like many other crafts of the state, evidence of the historicity been traded to far flung places since historic times. The Naga tribe of the jungles of north-eastern India have used beads from Khambhat since generations. The rule of the British brought new influences to bead craft in Gujarat. Maritime trade brought Venetian beads from Europe. Glass and ceramic glazed beads made their way to the region, through Saurashtra ports like Pipa Vav, Mundra and Ghoghabunder. (Mallya & Mirza, 2012)

Moti bharat is significantly used in Rabari clothing, the centre bottom part of Kapadu / Kapada (upper garment of Rabari women), Dhadi /pet which covers the stomach is adorned by a panel of moti bharat. The drawstring used for fastening their kapadu at the back, is predominantly crafted through moti bharat known as "kah", can be done in three variations. Moti bharat is seen in various accessories like batwa (purse), baghchi (coin purse), toplo (cap for the young boys), myan (sword covering, ornament for bridegroom), countless articles of home décor in 3-Dimensional design are created.

Dhebar Rabari community creates almost all the articles is three-bead netting or tri-bead netting known as "tran moti no tanko". The articles created by the Rabari included items of personal adornment, decor for home, items for auspicious occasions, ornaments for Bride and groom. Few of these products are Toran , Pangra , Popat , Nariyal , Thali , Batua , Bansuri , Kalash , Mukut , Jhummar ,Mobile cover , Shisha , Jhule ki bel , Vatka , Joda na panja, Chotlo, Dhabak , Hindoni, Myan.

The background is white which allows motifs (floral, human figurine,animals and birds) like Butti, Full (flower), Patti (petals), Dil (heart), Beel (floral creeper), Ardh Chandra (half-moon), Char-patti no dill valo full (4-petalled heart shaped flower) Kawariya, Mangal Kalash with mango leafs , Bullion rose to be evident from a distance. (Nanavati, Vora, & Dhaky, 1966)

The Rabari believes that the glass beads are very auspicious; they ward off the evil eye and are used as beads during the marriage ceremonies. According to custom when groom arrives with the guest and family at the brides house, the mother and sisters of bride welcomes him with the arti and aankhein (akshat) gently heave glass beads instead of rice (as in northern India) to give their blessing and well-wishes to him.

Abolishment of Dowry Tradition

The traditional knowledge of sewing the Rabari bharat is passed on from mother to daughter. Whether in the village or while migrating in a dang (pastoral group), the women gather in a common place to embroider after finishing their daily chores. The Rabari women express their aesthetic sense through the portrayal of their myths, culture, beliefs, and life experiences in their craft.

Over the course of time, crafts became a medium of dowry in the Rabari community. According to Rabari custom, the family of the groom pays a bridal price to the girl's family, and in return the bride brings pieces of crafts and embroidered textile as dowry. Mothers would start training their daughters as soon as they reach maturity. As the custom developed, it came to be a cause for concern for the community. One condition was that the bride could not enter the home of her in-laws until she had completed the pieces of dowry demanded. Embroidering bharat is an intense, time-consuming activity, and, given also their migrant lifestyle, Rabari girls would find it very difficult to complete the embroidery before their marriage. This meant they could not join their husbands until they were between 30 and 40 years old. This had a huge impact on their matrimonial lives and eventually bharat as a form of dowry became socially taboo. This issue largely affected the Dhebariya Rabari community. (Patel, 2018)

Dowry Prohibition in response to the criticism of the dowry system the Indian government acted in 1961 by legislating the Dowry Prohibition Act in 1961. The Dowry Prohibition Act outlawed the practice of the dowry system; however, it is realized in India the practice still exists. Dowries are accepted directly but more commonly through indirect means. The law can also be circumvented as gifts given without precondition are still considered legal. The Dowry Prohibition Act does not outline punishments for participating in the dowry system; these punishments include imprisonment or a fine. (Ministry of Women & Child Development, 1961)

The nomadic Rabari, marriage is an alliance of two families critical for survival of the community. It is a union celebrated with lavishly embellished with the wealth of women's creativity and effort: traditional embroidery. Wedding decoration thus expresses exchange as well as dazzling beauty. Wedding decoration thus expresses exchange as well as dazzling beauty. Above all, it expresses identity. Women embroider their own and their son's and brothers' wedding garments. Fashion is very important in ceremonial dress, and, as all over the world, fashion has changed over time. (Museum of Applied Arts & Sciences, 2004)

Data and Methodology

The paper aims to analyse the dowry tradition practiced since generations which has now been discontinued with reference to the Dhebariya Rabari community. Products produced using craft skills form a major part of the dowry traditionally and this was a reflection of the skills and social status of the woman and the community. The craft which was once the pride of the community, drastically affected the life of the community, which led to the abolishment of the tradition and the decline in moti bharat craft in the Rabari community.

The research is descriptive and exploratory in design. Both Primary and secondary data are used for this research. Snowball sampling is followed since, women creating Moti bharat of one cluster knows the women in another village practicing Moti bharat, they might be in blood relations, a part of extended family or friends since both are creating same craft hence, acknowledge each other. The Dhebariya Rabari community are found in clusters, several dangs (groups) residing in Chandrani, Mindiyala, Morgar, Tapar, Anjar village. The Vaghadiyas of the community are found in Morvada, Harudi, Ambaliyara and Rapar region of Kutch. Kachhi Rabarai are found in Bhuj, Mundra, Nakhatrana and Bhujodi village.

To procure the data LLDC Museum, Ajrakhpur, Shrujan Archives, Bhartiya Sanskuti Darshan Museum, Prag Mahal- Library and Archives, Aiyna Mahal and Kala Raksha Research centre, Sumrasar(sheikh) and Kutch Museum museums to perceive the artefacts and specimen. Village fairs : Amavas no medo at Madhapar village, Nagpanchmi no medo at Bhujia Dhungar(hill), Janamashtmi no medo, Satham Ashtmi no medo at Amisar Pond , Bhuj and Rabari no medo , at Chandrani village were also visited to have group discussion with the community.

The tools used for the data collection included field observation, immersion, interviews, etc. An Interview schedule was developed for the experts of craft society, private collectors, Self-Helping Groups, organisations, master artisans and artisans. While the elders of the Rabari community provided the root history, migration, techniques of moti bharat; the Experts gave key insights into relevant history and context.

Observing the Rabari community, their daily life-style, understanding the connection of craft with the tradition and culture brought insights to the research. Participatory observation also followed during the leisure activity of crafting articles of dowry. Non-Participatory observations during rituals and ceremonies performed. Photography also aided in creating data bank of the textile dowry while capturing the sentiments regarding craft. The aesthetic, sincere and egregious love towards the culture through craft skills was captured through lens.

Secondary research also included data available with government, non-government bodies, literature survey of libraries and studies that have been undertaken in the area and related subjects. The documentation, editorials done till date by the authors of craft society and efforts done by the Government of India, Department of Archaeology, Ministry of Textile to preserve and showcase the antiques and age old craft of Moti bharat through museums, craft parks and books has laid a strong foundation for the further research.

The data was analysed to acquire the authentic, requisite data which can be evaluated and analysed.

Results and Discussion

It is noted that the dowry tradition is banned. The Rabari brides are free of their social obligation of making their dowry and they could now join their husbands at the appropriate age. The research also revealed the factors which resulted in the abolishment of the dowry tradition. The time consumed in creating the dowry articles, including the workmanship along with the household course, agriculture, cattle farming; Rabari girls find it very difficult to complete the embroidery before their marriage. They were could not join their husbands until they were between 30 and 40 years old because of unfinished dowry, which turned the dowry tradition into a liability.

Before this ban young Girls and women of the community in order to be viewed of higher status within their society started using their ornaments of Moti bharat as a piece of showcasing their wealth and status in their society despite the dwindling financial situation of their homes. The capital along with labour invested in the Moti Bharat, was essential for basic necessities, farming and other household chores.

The wise older men and the women of the community decided to ban the tradition of dowry. The Dhebar Rabari Panchayat led the initiative to tackle this rising issue by undertaking a survey and making public pronouncements in several villages. A community gathering was summoned at the Rabari Samajwadi in Anjar taluka. In April 1995, the Dhebariya Rabari council issued an edict to impose a permanent ban on the making and wearing of embroidered textiles by any member of their community. Any contravention would result in the imposition of a fine and the individual who defied this decision would be a criminal before the community and its gods. (Patel, 2018)

The ban however resulted in the decline of the craft skill which had been a reflection of their legacy and history. This is essentially true since the traditional method of surface ornamentation of textiles through various skills is threatened with extinction. The current scenario in respect to craft skills and the craft itself is dwindling. These concerns are being addressed by NGO's such as Kala Raksha and Shrujan through their conservational initiatives.

Shrujan (meaning creativity in Sanskrit) is a not-for-profit organization, set up in1969 by Chanda Ben Shroff working with craftswomen in Kutch to revitalize the ancient craft of hand embroidery. Over the years, Shrujan work has expanded to include research into and documentation of the diverse embroideries of Kutch, and the communities that practise these embroideries. The Living and Learning Design Centre is a museum complex, pioneering new effort of the Shrujan Trust to preserve, revitalize and promote the glorious craft heritage of Kutch. (Shrujan Trust, 2019)

Kala Raksha Trust, a grassroots social enterprise, officially established in 1993, as a registered society and trust by co-founders Judy Frater and Prakash Bhanani in the desert region Kutch, in India. Kala Raksha is dedicated to preservation of traditional arts. The trust envisions this broadly, as holistic encouraging of the creative capacity of the artist. Comprising artisans, community members, and experts in the fields of art, design and museums, Kala Raksha was founded on artisan initiatives. (Kala Raksha Trust, 2011)

The community in their pursuit of modernity has surrendered a substantial portion of their heritage. The elders believe that ever since they have tasted sedentary lives they have lost the innate endurance that was essential to carry on their hereditary occupation. The loss of intent of the next generation to take forward the inheritance, combined with the increase in financial burdens at both ends is driving this way of life towards extinction. Before the ban, kapdu (upper garment for women) would usually have some form of embroidery but in recent times readymade embroidery patches are common. In their words, "We are illiterate, but not lacking in knowledge. Our entire knowledge is that of nature and animals. We cannot progress in any profession other than keeping maal (cattle and livestock), and living free in the wild."

The research concluded that, the community and its leader realised the growing threat of the textile dowry system which was adversely affecting the community. The community came together to tackle the rising issue by undertaking surveys, public pronouncements and discussed various solutions. The only feasible solution was to impose a ban on making and wearing the articles of embroidered textiles. The community might be illiterate but insightful, traditional but have a modern mind-set. The community was deeply concerned about their circumstances, which led them to make strong reforms for the abolishment of their dowry tradition.

Rabari community attained social justice for the mental and physical wellness of their women and restored social harmony which has positively affected the community. This study would be useful for the social anthropologists and social science studies. It would also be helpful in the documentation of culture and the textiles of the Rabari community.

Research limitation

The field research was carried out with in a specific time period (August 2018 –Jan 2019).The researcher did not speak the local language and this was overcome with the assistance of interpreter, google translator and by learning to read and speak Gujrati dialect.

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Indigenous Practices and Activism: Challenging the Social Algorithm in India

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Abstract

Handcrafting in India was indigenous and intuitive. In due course, it became an effective tool for political and much later social justice. Mahatma Gandhi instilled the doctrines of *Swadeshi*, as part of his visionary path towards non-violence. This inspired the use of native products and empowered the rural masses. An immediate response to this was an enormous resistance towards foreign produces, fuelling the historic 'Quit India Movement', an incredible milestone in India's struggle for freedom. A propel was witnessed post-independence in the Indian handloom and handicraft sectors, in the early 1950s. This, supported by the strategies of the new government, turned everyday objects (like the humble clothing) into agents of social change. Similarly, *Khadi* was not just an initiative to generate employment for the huge rural populace; it was a prelude to the gradual shift towards sustainable fashion, championed by fair trade and eco-friendly processes.

The research at hand uses 'narrative enquiry' both as a method and methodology. As the central idea of the paper follows "co-creation", a participatory research approach becomes the natural course. Within the participatory model, the researcher conducted workshops with artisans and designers and exchanged dialogues with NGOs. It includes secondary data on 'craftivism' that stirs up debate around 'social justice' by deconstructing prevalent global discourses. These in India are inherently colonial, gendered and point towards the absence of social mobility for craft communities. The secondary data in the form of 'case studies' provides the much needed theoretical framework to study the contemporary practices in craft and how they could be applied in an India context. The study uses a multi-method approach comprising of in-depth interviews and 'co-creation' practices (with artisans and designers). The human stories of ground-breaking achievements by rural artisans provide an alternative insight in challenging the societal clichés while shaping the shifting ideas.

Keywords: Co-creation, indigenous, craftivism, social justice

Introduction

According to Mahatma Gandhi (1931, para. 11), "A country remains poor in wealth, both materially and intellectually, if it does not develop its handicrafts and its industries and lives a lazy parasitic life by importing all the manufactured articles from outside." It is a recognized fact that handcrafting in India was indigenous and intuitive. In due course, it became an effective tool for political and, much later, social justice. Mahatma Gandhi instilled the doctrine of *Swadeshi* as part of his visionary path toward nonviolence. This inspired the use of native products and empowered the rural masses. An immediate response to this was enormous resistance to foreign products, fuelling the historic "Quit India Movement," an incredible milestone in India's struggle for freedom. Along with *Khadi*, the intricate needlecraft of Bengal, *Kantha*, was used as an instrument for refugee rehabilitation by Sushen Mukherjee, a freedom fighter who was supported by Nobel laureate Rabindranath Tagore (Palit, 2019).

There was a post-independence promotion of the Indian handloom and handicraft sectors in the early 1950s. Supported by the strategies of the new government, everyday objects (like humble clothing) were turned into agents of social change. Similarly, *Khadi* was not just an initiative to generate employment for the huge rural populace; it was a prelude to the gradual shift toward sustainable fashion, championed by fair trade and eco-friendly processes. This upsurge inspired men and women activists equally. Therefore, activism through craft in India met feminism at various crossroads, where craft crusaders including Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay, Pratima Devi and, later, Ruby Palchoudhuri used handicraft as a means for social justice for the marginalized masses. Presently, craft is being used globally as an instrument of gentle protest.

"Craftivism," a term coined in 2003 by American writer Betsy Greer, is rooted in history. Some might consider it to be a relatively western concept; yet in India, it was used to overthrow

200 years of British political domination. The country remains a representative example of exemplary indigenous processes used as forms of nonviolent protest. Here I focus on the narratives of craft activists committed to local practices that challenge India's social algorithm.

Craftivism: Craft as a Tool for Placid Activism

Betsy Greer considered craftivism as a type of activism, generally combining constituents of women's liberation and unreceptive to private enterprise. Greer furthermore composed a book on the same, *Craftivism: The Art and Craft of Activism* (2014), which includes prison craft programs and yarn bombing. In the context of "contemporary urban craftivism" in post-industrial America, Kristen A. Williams opines that individuals involved in such movements are not just artists but view themselves as activists of a social reform often termed as craftivism, which unequivocally connects this iconographic practice of self-sufficiency to contemporary directives toward sustainability, predominantly in American urban life (Williams, 2011). However, this form of subtle activism has found its place in various forums and has taken a widespread global perspective.

Sarah Corbett, founder of the Craftivist Collective, explains that often our collective wounds can be healed by art, particularly by embroidery (Vaughan, 2017). Here the needle and thread have become essential implements for revolution—used for peaceful protest, but not as weapons of war on which to spike the establishment. This echoes a similar emotional connection with political victims of the Partition of Bengal in 1905. The destitute immigrants, which included war widows, were rehabilitated through the *Kantha* embroidery of Bengal. It was not a tool for protest, but a means to overcome the immediate economic crisis that was an aftermath of undesired political propaganda. Sarah Corbett's approach is to use handicrafts and embroidery as a placid form of activism: "It allows the creator to stop and think about what they're doing and

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the message they're trying to convey" (Vaughan, 2017). The collective sends gifts as reminders to people in positions of power to inspire them to make a positive change or to remind the masses to be responsible citizens. There are similarities to the concept of *Kanthas*, the embroidered quilts given as a token of love and often bearing visual artistry of the sociocultural events of the time—stories stitched for loved ones as blessings. Sometimes they bore the story of the maker, her sorrow and pain, her unrequited dreams and a world of her vivid imagination. Were they not her tools of gentle protest?

Elizabeth Garber (2013) mentions Marianne Jørgensen's "Pink Tank," a visual symbol against the war in Iraq supported by thousands of knitters from the United States, United Kingdom, and Europe. Diverse designs and yarns in various shades of pink were used to knit over 4,000 square pieces to cover a World War II–era tank, representing a widespread protest from a heterogeneous group who found solidarityin the art of hand knitting. Garber (2013, p. 55) explains the practice: "Craft activists work outside the mainstream of consumer society, in grass-roots efforts, to create social change that positions individuals and groups of people as reflective contributors who occupy a participatory democracy". She finds crafts to be a way to unite communities.

Alyce McGovern, in her chapter from the *Craftivism and Yarn Bombing*, draws from both historic and contemporary examples from around the globe to explain "the personal, community, and the political logic that characterize craftivist practices" (McGovern, 2019, p.12). Drawing from similar instances of exemplary human stories, this paper advances the personal, community, and political logic of this type of activism in India.

Methodology

This research uses "narrative inquiry" both as a method and methodology. Narrative inquiry is a means of being empathetic and inquiring into understanding and knowledge through "collaboration between researcher and participants, over time, in a place or series of places, and in social interaction with milieus" (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 20). According to Clandinin and Huber (2010), it is a new qualitative research methodology, where the investigation of experience is understood narratively. It is a perspective about, and contemplating, experience.

As the central idea of this paper follows "co-creation", a participatory research approach becomes the natural course. Within the participatory model, I conducted workshops with 30 artisans and 7 designers, and exchanged dialogues with non-governmental organizations (NGO)s. Most of the primary data were collected during these workshops in the form of narrative inquiry involving personal interviews in the Birbhum District of West Bengal from 2017 to 2019.

The research includes secondary data on craftivism that stirs up debate around "social justice" by deconstructing prevalent global discourses. These in India are inherently colonial, gendered, and point to the absence of social mobility for craft communities. The secondary data in the form of case studies provides the much-needed theoretical framework to study the contemporary practices in craft and how they could be applied in an Indian context. The etymology of craftivism is studied using comparative analysis of the Indian crafts communities. "Craftivism" as an academic metaphor is relatively unused in India even though native artisans have practiced it as an active tool of protest against the colonial and capitalistic narrative.

The study uses a multi-method approach comprising in-depth interviews (with women activists) and "co-creation" practices (with artisans and designers). The human stories of

groundbreaking achievements by rural artisans provide an alternative insight in challenging societal clichés while shaping the shifting ideas.

Findings, and Discussions around Them

In a country with an abundance of raw materials and natural resources, most indigenous craft processes were a response to man's need. As craft has typically connected communities and has passed on from one generation to another, it became a tool for uniting the subaltern population to achieve social justice. Artisans, weavers, and designers have found solidarity through creative outburst in India as well. From precolonial to recent times, the country witnessed a series of iconic influencers who provoked the masses to use their hand skills against strategists who disregarded them while making the policies.

Anti-Colonial Craftivism: Use of *Khadi* by Mahatma Gandhi

According to Alyce McGovern, for some even the ability to hold and pass on customary traditions all by themselves are a method of opposition, an apparatus through which "more explicit acts of defiance can be practised" (McGovern, 2019, p.18). Therefore, invoking the use of indigenous practices was a purposeful provocation by Mahatma Gandhi that propelled a strong anticolonial wave across the country (figure 1). McGovern explains this provocation as "an act of defiance against 'the exploitive and controlling economic and political system' of textile manufacturing that came with British colonial rule" (McGovern, 2019, p.18).

By the late seventeenth century, Indian handwoven textiles became popular in the European market to the extent of causing a threat to local mills in France and England. To harness the monopoly of Indian textiles, France and England imposed a ban on imports of chintz in 1686 and 1720 respectively. Further, they flooded the Indian market with mill-made, low-cost European fabrics. Soon machine-made fabrics from Manchester replaced the handwoven *Khadi*

in India. The worst blow came when the British established textile mills in Bombay. The decline

continued until *Khadi* became an effective tool for political and, much later, social justice.

Figure 1. Mahatma Gandhi advocated the use of *Khadi* and encouraged handspun and handwoven textiles made in handlooms.
Source: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Gandhi_spinning.jpg

Mahatma Gandhi championed the use of handcrafted processes as a means to achieve

self-reliance and economic independence for the rural masses in particular. His master stroke

was inclusive of the rural population, who had not been active participants in the struggle to

overthrow the British. *Khadi* stood as a symbol of *Swadeshi*. We may look at this historic

movement in light of what McGovern mentions as "the personal, community, and the political

logic that characterizes craftivist practices" (McGovern, 2019, p.12). Hence the use of

homegrown cotton to make handspun and handwoven textiles was not limited to a personal

choice by Gandhi, who advocated nonviolent modes of protest. It became an expression of the

entire nation who set foreign clothes on fire and reclaimed indigenous practices as a form of

activism. This stimulated the political diaspora of the Quit India Movement and *Swadeshi* against the British rule. The movement was successful in engaging the rural population and encouraging activists to rally side by side while overlooking the rigid caste system. It disrupted the social algorithm while unifying the entire country for the cause of freedom through *Swadeshi*.

<insert Figure 1 here>

The essence of *Khadi* is presently reflected through government policies like the "Make in India" and #IWearHandloom movements made popular through social media. These awareness programs are opposed to the capitalist ventures that are killing the country's own artisanal produce. Several contemporary designers are consciously giving *Khadi* a fashionable makeover and advocating its popularity among youth who are the biggest consumer of fashion in India.

Economic Regeneration through Crafts: The Role of Women

Economic regeneration was a concern even before independence. It was a path toward self-reliance. Though initially spearheaded by men, in West Bengal women soon became the promoters. *Kantha* embroidery of Bengal was used by Sushen Mukherjee, a freedom fighter who in 1922 made the first cooperative, *Amar Kutir* ("my hut") to support some 20-odd war widows in Birbhum. He made them self-reliant, and for the first time *Kantha* (initially made in leisure time and given as a gift) was traded commercially as diversified products. Mukherjee's vision was strengthened by Rabindranath Tagore, who founded the Institute of Rural Reconstruction in 1922, later renamed Sriniketan. The all-inclusive course of this institute concentrated on handmade skills directed by his youngest daughter-in-law, Pratima Devi. She helped bring many of the household arts and crafts of Bengal such as *Alpana*, *Kantha*, Batik, and mat-making under the same creative umbrella, thus training women who already had the creative genius toward

commercial refinement. Tagore established the Kala Bhavana Institute of Fine Arts, a wing of the Visva-Bharati University in West Bengal, in the 1940s. Art-inclined students took these crafts to new heights; Sreelata Sarkar, for instance, found her niche in using *Kantha* to express artwork (Palit, 2019).

Post-independence, the craft movement in India ran parallel to its economic development, with each generation producing its own radical leader. After Mahatma Gandhi, the baton was seamlessly carried by Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay. She was the first woman to contest for a seat in the parliament and was actively involved with politics. Richa Thakur, in her essay on #IndianWomenInHistory, writes, "Her concerns included mass-mobilization for the cause of independence from the British. She understood the quotient of home-produced arts and craft" (Thakur, 2017, March 20). Kamaladevi founded the Crafts Council of India (CCI) in 1964, which was a revolutionary step toward protecting and improvising handcrafted processes in India. It branched into many craft-centric states and infiltrated local and regional clusters to bring about economic regeneration.

Presently CCI has nine such operational branches with their headquarters in Chennai. *Kantha* had a prominent place among the crafts within the various activities of the council. The main purpose of the council was to bring weavers and artisans under a common umbrella and work to improve their living conditions. Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay urged the government to include several reforms and generated funds for craft revival. Her focus was on the social well-being of artisans.

Ruby Palchoudhuri, another dynamic woman, heads the West Bengal wing. She championed the cause of *Kantha*, the popular quilt and hand embroidery of West Bengal. Under her guidance Preetikana Goswami, an excellent *Kantha* artisan, started to train 20 destitute

women. Soon the training program gained impetus and popularity. The products made during the training found retail access through exhibitions. It helped the women to make a decent living and earn respect from their families. Both Palchoudhuri and Goswami continue to use craft as a weapon for economic reinforcement among *Kantha* artisans and have touched the lives of more than 2000 women (Palit, 2019).

Breaking the Patriarchal Grid

According to a few scholars, craftivism was a repercussion of third-wave feminism, but most scholars opine that they were unified beforehand (Bratich & Bush, 2011). Garber (2013, p. 56) remarks, "Craft activism's roots are also in feminism and struggles for civil rights." In *The Subversive Stitch*, Rozsika Parker (2010) observes how craft and feminism entwine in the form of a medium of self-expression. There lies a unique bond between craftivism and feminism. A close analogy is found in the *Kanthas* of Bengal. Women used them as visual diaries to stitch what they held dear. Often the base of the *Kantha* would be the ground for expressing unrequited dreams, social values, aspirations and, much later, socio-political protest (figure 2). It is interesting to note in one such *Kanthas* kept in the Gurusaday Dutt Museum in Joka, the maker, Manadasundari, expresses her concern regarding the role of women in the *Andormahal* (the inner space of the house) and *Bahirmahal* (exterior of the house). Her *Kantha* also visualized a vivid difference between a British and Indian soldier, demarking the racial bias. Though not identified for the inner strength of the exquisite quilt, it is no less than an example of craftivism for feminism and social justice.

<insert figure 2 here>

Figure 2. *Kantha* artisans showing their intricate depiction of a village market scene in a contemporary *Kantha.*
Source: Photograph by the author at Nanoor, Birbhum, November 16, 2018

The social intricacies related to craft practice in western countries include feminism, as most craft practices are woman-dominated, particularly needlecraft and knitting. In India, however, handcrafted processes are robust and more masculine, to the extent that hand embroideries like *Aari, Zardosi,* and *Kashida* are done by men. Most of the printing and painting processes such as *Aajrakh, Gondh, and Kalamkari* are the forte of men. Almost all handwoven techniques are dominated by men as well. For some weaving techniques, like the *Patola*, daughters are discouraged from learning the technique to maintain family secret which might get revealed when they are married off to other families. However, amid such a patriarchal grid, *Kantha* of West Bengal celebrates the supremacy of women. Unlike other parts of the country, some states in the Northeast are matriarchal societies. For example, the back-strap looms in Nagaland are predominantly used by the tribal women of the hills.

Economic and Anti-Capitalist Concerns

Revolutionary Knitting Circle (RKC) in Calgary, Canada, was founded in 2000 with an inclusive and organic approach to group membership. Its strategy encourages communities to

safeguard their futures and be liberated from "the shackles of global capitalism" (Revolutionary Knitting Circle, 2017). RKC uses hand processes like knitting, quilting, and other handcrafts as an intermediate for the establishment of "a globalization of justice" and "constructive revolution" (Revolutionary Knitting Circle, 2017). Consumer culture is not exclusive to challenging capitalism and economic concerns. In 1970, the United Kingdom's first Do-It-Yourself (DIY) movement, inspired by a Punk counterculture, witnessed working-class youth taking up the cause while they adopted "the opportunity to make a simple garment, inexpensively, regardless of skill level" (Turney, 2009, p. 94).

The advent of industrialization had its deterrent effect on the growth of the craft sector in India within a decade of independence. Indian crafts and handmade products were appreciated and played a pivotal role in merging with Gandhian principles during India's struggle for independence. Post-independence, development in this sector was in accord with the vision policy of the new government. However within a few decades, craft lost its relevance in the wake of industrialization. Handmade products within India are quite looked down upon in the domestic market and bear the stigma of inferiority and backwardness. Before the determined intervention of the recent government, this sector was almost considered as a sunset industry, resulting from a lack of policies for strengthening the ecosystem for artisans. Indigenous crafts still entice overseas buyers, and inclusive policies and initiatives over the past five years resulted in a 13.26% increase in terms of rupees and a 4.47% increase in exports over a similar period in 2017–2018 (Palit, 2019,pp. 136–137).

The present government has taken numerous initiatives through various programs to create craft clusters and aid artisans through training aimed at improved design skills and technology. During the participatory interaction, *Kantha* artisans in both Birbhum and Barasat

(prominent craft clusters in West Bengal) mentioned that most of them have attended at least one such training sessioin organized by the government through institutes or NGOs. Banglanatok.com and AIM, for instance, have been reaching out to artisans through government-sponsored training programs.

Figure 3. *Solapith* gateway at the Edinburgh Festival, conceptualized by Nandita Palchoudhari in 2011. Source: http://www.nanditapalchoudhuri.in/sholapith/SHOLA-PITH.pdf

Individuals and organizations have engaged with craftivism to protest economic issues and capitalism. Nandita Palchoudhuri, a social entrepreneur who is curating and consulting internationally in the field of Indian folk art craft, looks at craftivism with a different perspective. During a personal interview conducted for this research, she mentions, "My intention and practice is designed purely to support fair play and inclusivity." Nandita works as an independent partner to an artisanal cluster. She creates new contemporary products using her understanding of traditional skills and materials. She trains artisans to price, pack, and label, along with billing and

transportation. For 15 years, Nandita has been presenting handcrafted work all over the world at museums and festivals. She involved a group of *Solapith* artisans to make an entrance gateway at the Edinburgh Festival in 2011 (figure 3) and a window display in San Francisco to create a sustainable alternative to capitalist construction ideas for western countries. In addition, she presents artisanal products at high-end stores alongside mainstream products. "Thereafter the artisan is expected to be self-sufficient and me redundant," explains Nandita. She also believes in inclusivity, and in 2007 engaged *Patachitra* artisans to create awareness campaigns for HIV/AIDS which otherwise is a much-forbidden topic of discussion in rural India. She is happy to be able to replace the middleman who makes the maximum profit in the craft sector, and opines, "The enabler cannot remain a permanent part of the equation if they are serious about empowerment" (N. Palchoudhuri, personal communication, November 18, 2019).

<insert figure 3 here>

Social Justice through Co-Creation

"Social justice is one of the fastest emerging motivating factors for the development of craftivist projects" notes McGovern (2019, p. 32). Taking on issues such as political violence, race and gender discrimination, the missing and murdered, craft enthusiasts are using handmade processes as a mechanism through which they can create around advocating social justice. For example, Shannon Downey's Badass Cross Stitch project that drew attention in 2016, just before the U.S. presidential election, was in response to Donald Trump's *Access Hollywood* tape; Downey embroidered "boys will be ~~boys~~ held accountable for their fucking actions" (Duncan, 2017). Further, she instigated the #EndGunViolence project, engaging people from around the globe to represent guns from a pattern made available via her website using weaving, knitting, embroidery, crochet, felting, and other techniques.

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The Knit Your Revolt collective, founded in 2013 and based in Australia, has led a series of peaceful protests including gifting the government a pink yarn-bombed, signature solitary confinement cell placed on the doorstep of Parliament House, made of knitted pieces donated from across Australia and North America. This was to protest the Queensland state's "anti-bikie law" which was a Criminal Law (Criminal Organisations Disruption) Amendment Bill "which proposed to make it a criminal offence for individuals to associate with members of certain organizations as identified by law enforcement" (McGovern, 2019, p.33).

Figure 4. Inmates of the Presidency Correctional Home as models for 'Parole'- by Abhishek Dutta
Source: https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/kolkata/when-inmates-turn-models-for-their-own-clothing-label/articleshow/70115846.cms

Crime and its effects have become essential to the efforts of fashion designer Abhishek Dutta, who aims to change the lives of the convicted. Abhishek was engaged in training about 40

prisoners in the Presidency Correctional Home to create a fashion line in collaboration with

Tantuja in 2017. It is indeed a groundbreaking achievement and first of its kind in India, where

designers co-create with convicts to start a fashion brand named Parole. Dutta trained them in

making designer jackets, *kurtas*, shirts, and pants along with bags, belts, and shoes. He used

inmates to model for the brand (figure 4). Prices were kept lower than designer wear to make the

items affordable. Dutta celebrated the success with a fashion show with clothing donned by

celebrities endorsing the collection. The success of using fashion as a tool to achieve social

justice was further replicated in the Tihar Jail of India. Dutta is now collaborating with other jails

in West Bengal to run similar projects in association with the state government (Guha, 2017).

<insert figure 4 here.>

Figure 5. Lovely Bibi Sheik with her daughter and grandchild.
Source: Photographed by the author at Nanoor, Birbhum on November 16, 2018

Lovely Bibi Sheikh belongs to an orthodox Muslim family from Nanoor, in the Birbhum district of West Bengal. She was married at 14 and abandoned by her in-laws with three little daughters after her husband lost his mental balance. Circumstances forced her to return to her poverty-stricken mother's family. Lovely once considered ending her unfortunate life along with those of her three little daughters. However, her mother, a *Kantha* maker inspired her to start making *Kanthas* for a living. There has been no turning back since as Lovely used this craft to break the patriarchal grid and earn both respect and money for her family. Interestingly, she has passed on her legacy to her daughters, who along with 200 artisans work under her (figure 5). As a master artisan she not only ensures that the girls get decent pay for their hard work, but checks the quality of the work to confirm repeat orders (L. B. Sheikh, personal communication, March 5, 2018).

Lovely's youngest daughter, Lutfa Sultana, has carved a niche path of her own in association with Banglanatok.com, an NGO working with craft clusters for economic enhancement and social justice in West Bengal since 2000. Under its guidance, the mother-daughter duo has participated in international exhibitions in Oman and Denmark, a dream that most artisans cannot even imagine. Their personal story is an inspiration for hundreds of women in the district who find craft as a major tool for economic regeneration. Lovely mentions, "Craft helped me to earn respect and reverse gender roles of being the provider for the family despite being a woman" (personal communication). Along with the NGO, she has been making the slow process of *Kantha* popular in the niche market to contest machine-made alternatives or printed versions of the craft.

<insert Figure 5 here>

Ananya Bhattacharyya of Banglanatok.com believes in collaborative methods to take their cause forward. According to her, "We are a social enterprise working across India with a mission to foster inclusive and sustainable development using culture-based approaches. We work for the welfare of the rights of natives including women and children". Ananya, along with her youth team, works in solidarity with craft clusters, tapping funds from UNESCO. Similarly, Gopal Poddar, an artist, and his spouse Sonali Chakraborty, a social reformer, run AIM—Art Illuminates Mankind, an NGO that works for the holistic development of tribal women using batik, block print, tie-dye and *Kantha* as a means of self-reliance. They sell from their own outlet, Deshaj in Kolkata, and participate in craft exhibitions across the country. AIM is aided by the West Bengal Scheduled Castes & Scheduled Tribes Development & Finance. AIM boasts a network of almost 50,000 artisans all over India, occupied in various art and craft forms including *Kantha* (Palit, 2019).

At the young age of 15, Kana Mondal had to support six siblings after the sudden demise of her father, a tailor. During a personal interview, she unraveled her story. Born to a Muslim family, she had no skills or means. A six-month training program in *Kantha* organized by the Directorate of Industrial Centre (DIC) came to her rescue. Kana was the youngest of 40 trainees selected by the Deganga Block DIC of Barasat District in West Bengal. She earned 200 rupees per month and simultaneously took small household chores to support her family. Not only did she use *Kantha* as a tool to support her family, but to change the life of several destitute women in and around her district. A microloan of 55,000 rupees helped initiate her own *Kantha* business. She gave free training to several women who joined her in the trade. She recalls how it was challenging to convince the orthodox Muslim women to become self-reliant. Kana Mondal helped create market linkages for first-generation artisans who had never practiced this craft. By

challenging religious and societal taboos using craft as her means of sustenance, Kana won the

Jankidevi Bajaj Puraskar National Award in 2015 for her exemplary service in rural

entrepreneurship (K. Mondal, personal communication, October 10, 2019).

Conclusion

Craftsmanship can't change the world; however, it can change the world we live in. We

may, therefore, ascertain that social justice is one of the most conspicuous stimuli for many

craftivist projects. Building on an extensive history, many of the aforementioned examples attest

to craft being used to advance causes of social justice. In the Indian context, Nandita

Palchoudhuri explains, "The artisans are the principal workforce after agriculture in rural India.

Facilitating sustainable income for them is generating prosperity for an abundant section of India

without urban migration. With earnings and disclosure come education and awareness of

privileges regarding health and education. Then there's no looking back" (personal

communication, November 18, 2019).

Indian activists were in action long before the word "craftivism" was coined. They laid

the foundation for groundbreaking nonviolent protest through indigenous processes. The political

diaspora spanning *Khadi* to *Kantha* includes personal narratives of achievers like Lovely Bibi,

her daughter Lutfa Sultana, and Kana Mondal from marginalized segments who have carved a

niche for themselves and their immediate associates. The contribution of influencers like

Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay, Ruby Palchoudhuri, Shamlu Dudeja, and Nandita Palchoudhuri in

defining the present language of the handicrafts embraces the context of gender issues and social

perspective.

There exists a distinct variance between activism in India and in other parts of the world.

Most of the craftivist in the United Kingdom and the United States focus on concerns affecting

people at large, like the Pink Tank or the Badass Cross Stitch projects. However in India, craftivism is attentive to economic issues and the well-being of marginalized communities. It excludes global impending concerns and is rural in form and content. We may conclude that the stakeholders here are looking at humanizing the activism more toward the challenging role of women and their rights. Therefore, handicrafts in India, from being a leisure activity or need-based practice, eventually became commercialized to create economic regeneration. There is an upsurge in consciousness among consumers who support the cause of fair play and inclusion. New-age designers are collaborating with artisans and including their stories along with the merchandise. Neo-consumers are keen to know about the hands that made what they buy. Brands like Upasana, Ka-Sha, Runaway Bicycle, Doodlage, No Nasties, Red Sister Blue and 11:11 are visible game-changers in India's sustainable business and are advocating fair trade and co-creation.

Indigenous practices thus not only preserve traditions but allow the native masses to live a life of dignity. The slow hand processes involved in its manifold benefits, the seeds of anti-capitalism and feminism, often strengthen the cause of social justice while disrupting existing clichés. Women in particular find sustenance through craft to change their social and economic environment. The indigenous practices are in reality changing the vocabulary of handicrafts while converting them into mediators that challenge the social algorithm in India.

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The #GiveCredit Campaign and Why It Matters: A Case Study of La blouse Roumaine

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Abstract

Fashion has always played a vital role in how individuals present themselves and integrate into society. From individual emblems to globally recognized trademarks, fashion has proven that it does not only survive the pressure of time but elegantly flourishes because of it. As such, when local folklore becomes an internationally recognized symbol, campaigns that raise awareness and give credit to local craftsmen have the potential to develop a meaningful basis for establishing new brands and fighting cultural appropriation.

This paper aims to address the role of campaigns in promoting folklore and ethical fashion by using the case study *La blouse Roumaine*. The first part is a historical synopsis, depicting the role of folklore in symbolism and tradition. The second part focuses on theory, arguing that fashion can be used as an instrument for both cultural diplomacy and the promotion of narratives. The third part covers the case study of *La blouse Roumaine*. From the expansion of globalized capitalism to marketing and public relations strategies, the case of the Romanian blouse stands out because of its impact on the fashion industry and Romanian society. It is interesting to observe how the #GiveCredit campaign emerged, and if it truly mattered. From Matisse to YSL and the creation of Bihor Couture, the paper presents the story of the Romanian blouse as an international label associated with fighting cultural appropriation.

Keywords: folklore, Romania, campaign, activism, haute couture

Introduction

What gives fashion the impetus to redefine itself? What are the rules that govern it, and if broken, who makes sure that consequences are applied, and how? Fashion is always in need of original, credible designs, and folklore is one of the most versatile sources of inventiveness. However, when copyright rules are amorphous and shallowly implemented, folkloric pieces can be easily plagiarized and patented as new works. In such circumstances, it is civil society that actively engages in maintaining traditions, and ensuring brands #GiveCredit to their sources of inspiration.

Clothing is essential for basic needs (such as protection and warmth), but fashion goes far beyond. Ever-changing, increasingly demanding, and highly competitive, the fashion industry remains hungry for new designs and original pieces. It is no surprise why, in order to look forward, fashion must first take a few steps back, delving into history and folklore.

Blended with the concepts of identity, culture, and shared history, folklore is part of one's social heritage, acquired customs and traditions, and character. Therefore, when fashion and folklore intertwine, it is interesting to observe which one influences the other and how the outcome product tells the story of its creation. The #GiveCredit campaigns are of incontestable importance, ensuring that anthropological elements maintain their ties with

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folklore, while still being current and relevant in the fashion industry. In this sense, the question does not revolve around what role #GiveCredit campaigns play in mode, but around how they challenge it, and why these campaigns matter in the first place.

Historical Overview

As fashion has become indispensable to everyday life, anything can be a source of inspiration. Fashion drives the economy, influences people's perception of others, and defines individuals and groups. It touches upon the *zeitgeist*, the spirit of the times, a reflection of current norms and an invisible agent of change in modern society (Bartleby, 2018).

However, nothing expresses the passage of time more vocally than folklore. More than a means to depict history, folklore encompasses collective beliefs, fears, and ways of living. Its facets are vibrant and versatile, possessing ever-changing functions, depending on how they record customs and traditions. Such facets include but are not restricted to the narrative voice (the person telling a story), the targeted audience (whether it addresses a public or a private crowd), and the message depicted (what it wants to present). These details have been recorded throughout history, in decorative art, garments, pottery, or accessories, to name a few (Bascom, 1954).

Folklore is also used to express collective attitudes and social approval. Only messages conforming to a group's norms and vision are allowed to survive the passage of time. In many societies, powerful groups use folklore to exert control or direct collective activities. But perhaps one of the most important and simultaneously forgotten folkloric feature is education. Through semiotics, myth, and imagination, folklore educates the masses, teaching the public not only the story of ancestors and how they envisaged the world, but also methods of learning new traits and customs that keep their culture alive (Bascom, 1954).

The hallmark of this concept can also be traced to the shared environment, history, and language, all facets contributing to the collective consciousness, the *volksgeist*. Besides syntax, language and meaning are also subject to distortion; thus, language was steadily conceptualized into symbols, to make all messages *universal*. As such, allegories became the privileged tools of expression, fostering the common belief that a natural state is the result of one collective thought, and one national character for all people (Fox, 1987).

Notwithstanding, scholarly literature faces numerous shortcomings in analyzing and describing folkloric features because at its core, folklore is all about *suggestion* and *gradation*, depending on location, history, and cultural interactions. The nuances imposed by classifications are subtle, and what is significant to one group might be redundant to others. Distinguishing between narratives is also difficult, as the interpretation of folklore can change a story almost completely. Archaic features, myths, esoteric symbols, cultural elements, attitudes, and values all participate in the living stream of folklore. Perhaps this is why opinion is divided on the livelihood of folklore because it is something alive and consciously active (Bascom, 1954).

In Europe, the origins of *folk* can be traced to two distinct points: the French romantic perception of the nation, and the German approach over consciousness. In the French case, identification came during the rise of nationalism and the romantic movement, where it portrayed the predominantly rural and illiterate communities. In this sense, during the later Enlightenment movement, the term *folk* was used pejoratively to describe populations that survived hardship but nevertheless were subject to superstitions and customs. In the case of Germany, the call for unity among all German provinces was done by Friedrich Wilhelm III under the form of *volksgeist*, or the spirit of the people. The term became fundamental to the unification and, later, the expansion of the German state (Kyriakidou-Nestoros, 1986).

Theoretical Framework

Par excellence, folk entails people's perception and sense of belonging to a community. Appealing to shared religion, culture, traditions, history, and language, the concept pivots around acceptance and association, primarily regarding the poor, illiterate, or marginalized members of a community. Hence, it is no surprise that folklore is based on *orality*, or word of mouth. Because many people were illiterate, the oral tradition became the prominent instrument for communities to voice their predicaments. Everything important was thus cyphered into epics, myths, riddles, legends, ballads or anecdotes, and also into clothing, pottery, decorative art, and theater (Jayalaxmi, 2010).

Orality gives an edge to folklore to preserve its content over time. Folklore remains all-round and all-inclusive, shifting from *the material to the spiritual*, from *the profane to the sacred* (Mircea Eliade's *hierophany*). This is how people learn about the rich traditions of their ancestors, and the meaning of rituals and customs still current today. Folkloric theories include *polygenesis*, where there is no single explanation for a custom, but a myriad of possible and plausible definitions. What the different versions do, in turn, is travel across physical barriers and spread universal messages (of unity, faith, love, misfortune, courage, or fear). Such emotions act as subconscious catalysts for understanding and experiencing human force and agony. As a leitmotif, suffering and pain are the most common sentiments in folkloric narratives. From ancient Egypt to Greek civilization, stories of adversity render pain and torment as catharsis, not destroying communities, but making them stronger and richer (Jayalaxmi, 2010).

This is also true of Romanian folklore. Exposed to traumatic changes of environment and community structure, Romanian peasants developed a culture of telling a narrative through their garments, presenting not only their history but also their creed. The traditional blouse, named *IA*, is their multidimensional garment and symbol. From the smallest sewing icons to the white spaces, purposely left in a specific array on the shirts, the Romanian blouse carries ample segments of the history of peasant culture (Corduneanu & Drăgan, 2016). Elliott and Leonard (2004) distinguish patterns and leitmotifs used as warnings in clothing. This is essential to understanding the importance of *giving credit* to folklore. Whereas inspiration is normal, if not understood completely, designers can unconsciously depict in their garments messages that are insulting or even abusive to the communities they mimic.

An alluring method of deciphering folklore is suggested by Vladimir Propp and Lévi-Strauss. Based on structural analysis, they categorize traditions by storytelling functions. The accent is put on semantics, and myths. The relationship among elements is the narrative voice that maps the whole tale and reveals hidden meanings. The elements cannot be individually interpreted, because separated, they lose their value (Jayalaxmi, 2010). For example, in the case of the Romanian blouse, the white spaces on the *IA* places the person wearing the blouse in a defined region and community. The arrangement of the white spaces also depicts the wearer's age, ethnic minorities living in the community, and the fears or superstitions of the place. Insecurities are also revealed through the use of talismans (such as the evil eye) and the display of warnings (the shores of dangerous rivers) on the edge of the sleeves. The exciting part is then to decipher the narrative of a piece, all as one story (Corduneanu and Drăgan, 2016).

Juri Lotman makes use of the concepts proposed by Lévi-Strauss, where the rules of structure govern the semiotic realm. To his mind, as societies develop entropy, the individual becomes anonymized. Hence, as stories and myths are lured into the collective, the only means to create order is via *patterns* and structural *rules*. By cutting, sewing, spinning, or

cropping, narrative configurations are added to the garments, changing the storyline as the tailor sees fit (Corduneanu and Drăgan, 2016).

On its own, *La blouse Roumaine* is a self-defined language, composed of discrete vocabulary (natural symbols), textual symbols (iconic and spatial), and narrative (perspective and dynamics). The rules leading to its creation are vast, yet hierarchically established. When wearing an *IA*, a woman carries the sky on her shoulders, the story of her past (origins and rituals) on the back of the garment, and the stories of the future (collective fears and beliefs) on the front. And through a cord crossing the back to the front of the blouse, via the sleeves, Spinoza's *natura naturata* (the created nature) unites with *natura naturans* (the creative nature) (Corduneanu and Drăgan, 2016). The Romanian IA embodies an exclusively feminine blouse, defined by motifs and lush embroidery. It is handmade, designed to be worn for sacred ceremonies or celebrations. Traditionally, the art of sewing and the composition rules are passed from generation to generation. This also adds value to the semiotic structure of the blouse, creating coding markers for the wearer's character, social status, and personality traits. Garments are also composed of two sections, the *semiotic character* (interpretation) and the *objective one* (tangible features such as fabrics or colors) (Corduneanu and Drăgan, 2016).

As shown in figure 1, the chronicles contain symbols such as the snake (epitomizing renewal or continuity, depending on its linear course), the wheel (embodying the peaceful character of a community or village), the eye (used to protect against curses), or the galaxy (symbolizing the religious aspects of a group and how it perceives life and death). Certain symbols can also recur on skirts, cords, and kerchiefs (shawls) (Claessens, 2016).
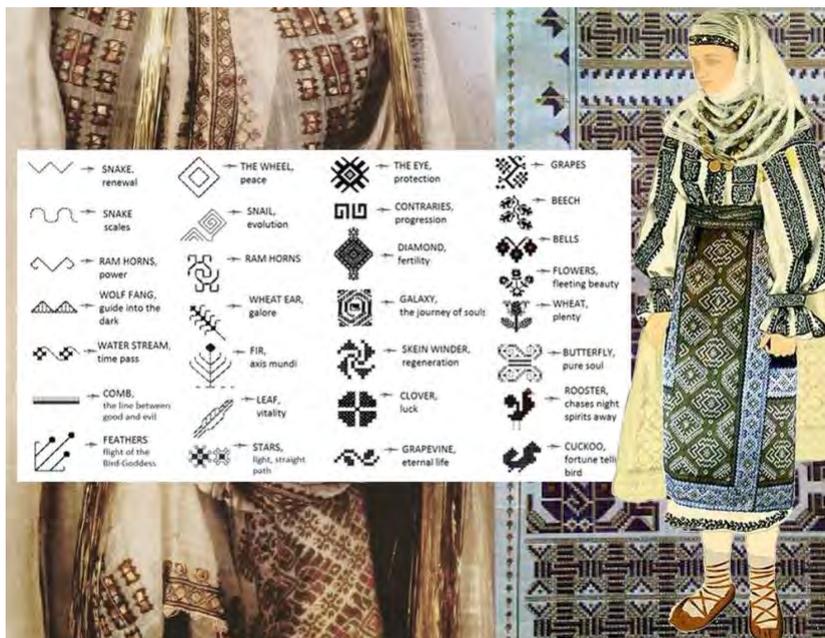
Figure 1. Examples of symbols found on peasant garments (Claessens, 2016).

The Earth is depicted in relation to the sky. The *axis mundi*, hence, is on the *altiță*, or the blouse shoulders, carrying a specific geometry that contrasts with the Earth, named *încreț*. Colors are also vital in reading the story, and *inter alia*, they are comprehended as cultural units. From shades of dark brown, to yellow, and white, tints are used to reference the main agricultural activities in the wearer's region, as well as climate and soil fertility. Rivers are also found on the blouses' sleeves; angled, dynamic, smooth, or abrupt, they represent region's borders. Energy is also a leitmotif. Represented by spirals and deep-seated

diamonds, energy is classified either as a *pure force* (masculine) or a *profound seduction* (feminine) (Corduneanu and Drăgan, 2016).

From theory to practice, the road to success in fashion can be ambiguous. When vital steps are skipped, issues such as cultural appropriation materialize. Cultural appropriation is described as the adoption of elements of one culture by members of another. This can become problematic and controversial depending on the way dominant cultures copy or reinterpret minorities. Without fully understanding or respecting ethnic identity, dominant cultures violate collective intellectual property rights and redesign original pieces. Li Edelkoort, Dutch designer and trend forecaster, explains that today's folkloric undercurrents occurring precisely because of the lack of vision and unpunishable cultural appropriation. From haute-couture to prêt-à-porter and streetwear, these undercurrents are flourishing in all seasons because they can be altered and interpreted in fresh ways. As folklore is highly malleable and keeps reinventing itself, each generation of designers sees new purposes and perspectives in the traditional clothing. Edelkoort points out that the problem is that no steps are taken to *give credit* for the sources of inspiration (Feitelberg, 2018).

Despite being easily tracked to the original designs, folkloric pieces are falsely cataloged as new and cutting-edge. They dominate the retail sector, especially high street stores. From T-shirts to windbreakers or hoodies, nowadays companies race to produce quickly and in high quantity, bypassing creative or consultation departments, and disregarding the origins of the pieces they plagiarize. What is more, most of the work is done digitally, with computers assembling patterns and colors, and then printing them on clothes or accessories. Busy with creating variations and adaptations of traditional symbols, brands oftentimes disregard the origin or the meaning of such pieces, and the traditions die without receiving any credit (Feitelberg, 2018).

The same goes for emblematic pieces of national history. The peasantry aprons of Tyrol are now sold in greater number in Japan, but the spotted patterns are replaced with folk flowers or expensive sequins or stones. The traditional kimono, African animistic adornments, and even the rich Central Asian embroideries are reinvented to fit current trends. And as demand increases, new issues emerge. Deadlines are pushing brands to invest in technology more than in fabric quality or manual labor. As a consequence, designers use algorithms and artificial intelligence (AI) to create new collections. Not only will more and more people in this field lose their jobs, but traditional garments will be impossible to recognize or pinpoint, as AI will combine and alter original such that it will be futile to trace the authentic pieces (Feitelberg, 2018).

There are only a few names that have worked to be culturally responsible when presenting folkloric designs. One emblematic icon was Yves Saint Laurent. Strong promoter of traditional apparel, Saint Laurent dedicated his entire 1981 Autumn-Winter collection to Matisse, Léger, and the Romanian peasant blouse, *La blouse Roumaine*. The universal tunic became an emblem of elegance and simplicity, with interpretations varying from a white garment with delicate laces, wearable during the daytime, to stiff voiles and dark colours suggesting an alluring tint. Other important figures throughout history were Garavani Valentino's homage to Frida Kahlo, Rene Magritte for Manolo Blahnik, Gustav Klimt for John Galliano at Alexander McQueen, Piet Mondrian for Chanel, Moschino, and Vivienne Westwood, Kazimir Malevich for Comme des Garçons, or Oscar-Claude Monet for the Louis Vuitton collaboration with Jeff Koon (Feitelberg, 2018).

Although many elements of European fashion design can be traced to the early fifteenth century, the protection of intellectual property has yet to develop. Fashion creations do not enjoy the same copyright protection as other forms of art (such as film, literature, sculpture) simply because apparel (clothes, handbags, shoes, accessories) is mostly classified as functional, not artistic. This is one reason why knockoff businesses sometimes succeed to

the detriment of well-established brands. Copyright law differs from state to state, and usually only covers creative elements of fashion designs (patterns or drawings) and not the product *per se*. Trademark law is also problematic because it is restricted to visibly displayed logos. This, in turn, limits intellectual property effectiveness. Intellectual property rights law can protect trade products, but these products must be uniquely identifiable and linked to their source to enjoy a trademark. Unequivocally, this leads to fast-fashion industries, which copy trends and sell products at a fraction of the price of the original pieces. As the garments look alike, people choose to buy cheaper, and most often inferior quality products. As a reaction to this, #GiveCredit campaigns can raise awareness about the internal practices in the fashion industry and boycott unreasonable products (Brandstock, 2019).

Within the EU, there are unique legal frameworks that designers can use to protect their rights. The Council Regulation (EC) No. 6/2002 established a very broad definition of a design, which can be protected either as registered design (for 25 years) or unregistered one (3 years only). Patents can also be protected if a logo or name accompany them. Despite helping all EU designers, pursuing the legal framework is usually arduous, especially in the case of small communities (villages or family trades) that cannot afford to patent any creation. The global fashion industry is valued at around US$3 trillion, so the legal structure and potential problems emerging from it are very sensitive. Many times, small labels lose their property rights, not because of lack of originality, but financial and educational restraints (Kasperkiewicz, 2017).

The Case Study of *La Blouse Roumaine*

The example of the Romanian blouse is particularly interesting because to a certain degree, it took shape without any clear direction or purpose. The birth of this emblem goes back to French painter Henri Matisse and his love for the Romanian culture and lifestyle. Matisse received some traditional blouses from his friend, Romanian painter Theodor Pallady, and immediately appreciated their rich embroidery and fine fabrics. Hundreds of trials and sketches later, in 1940 Matisse painted *La Blouse Roumaine*, an oil-on-canvas dedication to the beauty of the Romanian peasant blouse (Bogdan, 2018).

Within 50 years, Saint Laurent became the first designer to introduce the Romanian IA to the world of fashion, inspired by the painting (figure 2). Stating that the blouse is timeless, Saint Laurent claimed it would never be considered out of trend. He put Matisse's *La blouse Roumaine* at the center of his collection, making it the pinnacle of a highly successful haute-couture vision (Bogdan, 2015).
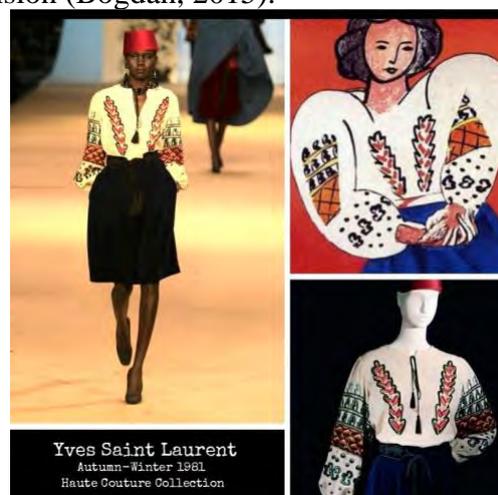

Figure 2. YSL, *La blouse Roumaine* collection (left and bottom right; Matisse's *La blouse Roumaine* oil-on-canvas painting (top right) (Bogdan, 2015).

Saint Laurent's 1981-1982 collections were dedicated to the work of Matisse and Fernand Léger, whose colors and arrangements deeply touched him. Sculptor Constantin Brâncuși and painter Pablo Picasso also held a high place in the couturier's heart, and the Autumn-Winter collection of 1981 was animated by the portrayal of folk tales within modern society (Musée Yves Saint Laurent, 2019). An innovator full of charm and an eclectic critic of beauty, Saint Laurent wanted to promote the vivacious Romanian women, focusing on the hair of the peasant girls and on the display of layers in the folk skirts, named *fota*. The designer saw fashion as pure art, and was the first to have a museum show at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in 1983. His Romanian collection revealed peculiar moments in his career and vision. Pieces included tunics with lush embroidery and silk ribbons, satin appliqués, and potent color combinations. More than a genuine representation of Romanian folklore, the clothes illustrate Saint Laurent's poetic talent.

Other couturiers also rendered the traditional Romanian into their collections: Jean Paul Gaultier, Oscar de la Renta for his 2008 Spring-Summer collection, Tom Ford's 2012 Spring-Summer collection, Philippe Guilet, and Agatha Ruiz de la Prada. Gaultier's proclivity toward the ethnic Romanian lifestyle was evoked during his Autumn-Winter collection of 2006, while de la Renta concentrated on the traditional costume and the folkloric peasant embroidery. A unique blend of clothes full of royal grace and lavish motifs, de la Renta brought attention to the natural materials, handmade stitches, and subtle details of Romanian folklore. The same approach was found in Guilet's work for his 2011 collection. The French designer took his personal experiences in Romania as a semiotic matrix to depict the country's cultural richness (Association Douce Occitanie Roumanie, 2017).

Fashion houses possess incredible resources when it comes to setting trends and creating haute-couture pieces. As inspiration is a highly debated and deeply convoluted notion, oftentimes designs are copied from local communities and adapted to fit within a theme or concept. Names like Valentino, Tory Burch, or Dior are famous for receiving their epiphanies from traditional folklore. But while inspiration is universal, plagiarism is theft. And if the sources of inspiration go unrecognized, the traditional practices slowly disappear (Bihor Couture, 2019). Houses like Valentino and Louis Vuitton are known for plagiarizing traditional clothing without giving reference to the source. The most compelling example in this context remains, however, house Dior, which presented in its collection a traditional vest from Bihor. More specifically, the copied vest was from the city of Beiuș, made there since the early nineteenth century. The original vest is designed to be worn exclusively by men, and the ensemble (circular fringes, two-sided four-leaf clovers and deep-seated diamonds; figure 3) depicts the story of a young man searching for a wife (Notorious, 2018).

Creating such a laborious handmade piece takes craftsmen up to three months. But for big design houses, such aspects are mere details. Dior enjoys both the labor force and the technology to produce pieces quickly and accurately, and as seen in figure 3, the final product is a highly successful copy of the original. The Romanian vest alone was sold by Dior for 30,000 euros, yet nothing went back to the craftsmen who created the original garment (Notorious, 2018).

Figure 3. The first #GiveCredit campaign on Facebook (Notorious, 2018).

Encouraged by the global success of the Romanian blouse, and motivated to fight cultural appropriation in the name of the fashion minorities struggling to keep traditions alive, members of the Romanian civic society established *La blouse Roumaine*, an online community that promotes the Romanian blouse. Their first project, the #GiveCredit campaign (a strictly online project), focused on reaching out to Dior to address the plagiarized garments. The initiative included an open letter to Maria Grazia Chiuri, online campaigns on Facebook and Instagram, and public accounts of the making and origins of the copied garments. Other examples of plagiarized pieces include feminine wedding vests and shepherd's woollen coats. As presented in figure 4, such articles were taken out of context and copied to fit Dior's collection. The numerous similarities between pieces include details such as size and length, choice of color, distribution of layers, and patterns (Demilked, 2019).

Figure 4. Pieces of the Dior collection (on the left) compared to the original pieces from Bihor (Demilked, 2019).

The Romanian civic society was the one bringing the case before the public. After the success of the #GiveCredit campaign, *Beau Monde* magazine created the first online shop for the craftsmen and tailors from Bihor (from which the Dior vest was copied). In cooperation with local designers, the magazine launched Bihor Couture, an authentic Romanian brand that helps tailors sell their garments and keep their family traditions ongoing (Bihor Couture, 2019).

The Bihor clothing line is all about folklore-inspired designs; the most popular one remains the Dior-plagiarized Beiuș vest. On their website, the piece sells for 500 euros. Even though it is 60 times cheaper than the Dior copy, craftsmen state the high price is due to the laborious production. Composed of leather and natural fabrics and handsewn, the vest can take up to three months to create (Branding, 2018). Bihor Couture was explicitly created to give Romanian craftsmen a chance to continue producing and promoting authentic creations.

From chokers, to embroidered jackets and shirts, to aprons, scarfs, long dresses and deux-pieces, interested parties can buy handmade creations online, easily, and cheaply (Notorious, 2018). And because technology offers incredible opportunities to promote products online, as shown in figure 5, the Bihor Couture marketing department was highly creative presentation strategy. Some of the campaigns included slogans such as the pre-Fall Collection *1918* (when Romania became independent)-*2018*, Don't let traditions go *out of stock*, or Haute *Culture*. The images became *Beau Monde* magazine covers and made the *Bihor versus Dior* campaign well-recognized online (Branding, 2018).

Figure 5. The Bihor Couture marketing campaign (Branding, 2018).

Advertisements also included videos of Romanian tailors and craftsmen inviting customers to buy the original pieces, while explaining why the Dior copies were contextually wrong. Short films also portray some of the tailors attending the 2018 Paris Fashion Week, wearing their traditional costumes and posing with celebrities at venues. Another aspect important to mention is the call-to-action message. While Bihor Couture encourages viewers to buy authentic Romanian clothing, the campaigns are not restricted to Bihor county or the village of Beiuș. Instead, viewers are asked to give a chance to all local communities struggling to keep traditions alive. The Bihor Couture earnings go to the handful of people who dedicate their time and talent into crafting the unique pieces. Within a month of its establishment, three other local artists joined the initiative, and orders are in place over several years. Bihor Couture is also a business model for other local communities in Romania to take action and protect their cultural property. By investing in provincial commerce, future generations can also benefit from having access to traditions and retain old practices in a form that is still current and relevant in modern society (Branding, 2018).

The #GiveCredit campaign also continued online. In 2017, the Facebook community La Blouse Roumaine successfully reached out to Tory Burch after the designer plagiarized a traditional Romanian coat from the early twentieth century. The wool coat was worn by Queen Maria during one of her official visits abroad, and was later donated to the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. The Tory Burch copy was initially marketed as African-inspired, but in June 2017, the brand admitted its mistake in missing a reference to the Romanian coat in its 2018 Resort collection. As seen in figure 6, the two garments are identical, presenting the same embroidery, length, choice of fabrics, and overall symmetry (Romania-Insider, 2017).

Figure 6. #GiveCredit campaign raising awareness against Tory Burch plagiarism (Romania-Insider, 2017).

Such campaigns matter today because they link current trends to the history of communities, helping the very people who carry on traditions to survive and present their craft. And while no money went back to the Romanian communities in the case of Dior and Tory Burch, , the very publicity of the #GiveCredit campaign, and the fact that well-known designers took inspiration from Romania, proved to be great marketing strategies for traditional Romanian clothes. Another milestone for *La blouse Roumaine* and their #GiveCredit campaign was the official establishment of June 24 as the Universal Day of the Romanian Blouse. The date marks Midsummer Day or *Sânzienele* in Romanian folklore. Conferred by the District of Columbia's mayor, Muriel Bowser, the celebration started in Washington, DC and quickly spread across six continents, 48 countries, and 109 cities in its first year (Embassy of Romania to the United States of America, 2019).

Furthermore, in 2019 Bihor Couture launched a local crafts school to help enthusiastic members learn the traditional skill sets needed to craft peasant clothing. The brand was quickly followed by Tamay & Me, another name inspired by the #GiveCredit campaign and the success behind Bihor Couture. This brand also endeavors to support authentic heritage, but in Vietnam, not Europe. Aiming to celebrate the talented women of Taphin while maintaining their local craft and earning a living, creator Hannah Cowie stated that the Romanian example motivated the company (Fashion Roundtable, 2018).

Conclusion

Fashion plays an important role in how individuals distinguish themselves and live in society, and the fashion industry continually aims for new, original pieces, sometimes at the expense of century-old traditions. In such cases, it is up to society to raise awareness in fighting cultural appropriation. The establishment of *La blouse Roumaine* community, the #GiveCredit campaign, and the Bihor Couture brand are success stories that can serve as examples for communities fighting to keep their craft alive.

Nevertheless, these are individual cases that cannot be generalized to the public as a whole. In the case of *Bihor versus Dior* and the rise of #GiveCredit campaigns, the designers too contributed to making folkloric garments popular and known to the broader public. Up to a point, it can be argued that because of names like Dior, brands like Bihor Couture emerged

in the first place. Still, the fashion industry should tolerate no deviation from their core maxim and ban plagiarism of other craftsmen's work. Due to the fine line between theory and practice in fashion, #GiveCredit campaigns remain vital in keeping brands accountable and making sure the mode industry recognizes its sources of inspiration.

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Corporate Social Responsibility and Environmental Sustainability: Practices and Challenges Faced by the Local Luxury Fashion Brands in Vietnam

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Abstract

Sustainability in fashion manufacturing is a recent trend in many countries. Due to increased global pressure, strict legislation and consumer awareness, many global fashion brands are adopting sustainable practices in manufacturing and distribution. Adoption of sustainability into business development helps the brands enhance their performance in the competitive global market. For established global luxury fashion brands, the implementation of sustainability is much easier compared to the local luxury fashion brands. The adoption of sustainable practices in corporate social responsibility and eco-friendly manufacturing among local luxury fashion brands are very limited, due to several challenges they face in adopting the concept of sustainability. This research investigated the practices and challenges faced by luxury fashion brands in Vietnam to implement the concept of sustainability in manufacturing. Our findings are based on a series of in-depth interviews with the leading local luxury fashion business owners in Vietnam. We found that the concept of sustainable fashion has been evidenced through the improvement of ethnic cultures, the heavy usage of local resources, sustainable lifestyle promotion and management and thereby contributions to local environmental, economic, and social development. Local luxury fashion brands follow approaches such as implementation of corporate social responsibility, a safe working culture, and basic amenities and skill enhancement as a part of their corporate social responsibility. Several challenges that local luxury fashion brands are facing include limited funding for installing sustainable technologies, lack of skilled people, and the high cost of sustainable materials and certificates.

Keywords: *Sustainability, luxury fashion brand, Vietnamese fashion, corporate social responsibility*

Introduction

In many manufacturing sectors, including fashion, the concept of sustainability is a major concern. Sustainable practice means taking care of the community and environment, which are vital for any business to survive. The concept of sustainability is being given increased attention in fashion manufacturing due to increased global pressure (Fletcher, 2013; Nayak, Akbari, & Far, 2019). The term sustainability, as described in the Brundtland report, suggests "Sustainability is satisfying the current needs without compromising the future generation's needs" (Keeble et al., 2003, p3). The concept of sustainability is based on three pillars, environmental, economic, and social sustainability, which are known as the "Triple Bottom Line (TBL)" of sustainability (Hacking & Guthrie, 2008). In fashion history, there are several examples where all three TBL are neglected (Nayak, 2019; Nayak, Nguyen, et al., 2019). Therefore, this research focuses on sustainability in the fashion manufacturing sector. In the last two decades or so, the majority of publications on fashion sustainability focus on the practices of large fashion brands. However, there is a dearth of literature on the status of sustainability in local luxury fashion brands. Therefore, this research focuses on the status of

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sustainability in local luxury fashion brands in Vietnam and the challenges faced by them (Nayak et al., 2020.

There is tremendous growth in luxury fashion brands worldwide to cater to the remarkably increasing consumers of luxury fashion in emerging markets such as India, China, Vietnam, and the Middle East (Kim & Ko, 2012). A luxury fashion brand has a brand image in the market of producing a high-quality product with authentic value and charging premium price for the product (Ko et al., 2019). With a presence in many capital cities and airports, the luxury market is growing 10% per year since 2009 despite the economic crisis. The downside of luxury brands is its vulnerability to criticism, in many instances, for not being sustainable. Therefore, irrespective of the size, sustainable development has become a vital issue for many local luxury fashion brands, which is crucial for their brand reputation (Gardetti & Torres, 2017). While traditional fashion sustainability has received significant research attention, the luxury fashion sector is still in its infancy.

Building strong luxury brand equity is more challenging for local fashion brands compared to large, high-profile brands (Jiang et al., 2014; Okonkwo, 2016). Although both types of luxury brands have a number of common characteristics, large high-profile businesses have strong brand visibility and well-established products/services and distribution channels (Gudergan et al., 2008). Thus, the local luxury brands need to find some angles for their survival, growth, and profitability. Scholars have found that the application of sustainability in business operations and marketing activities could help a brand differentiate its product/services and have more competitive advantages in the marketplace (Di Benedetto, 2017; Lim, 2016; McDonagh & Prothero, 2014). The lack of sustainability concepts in a luxury fashion brand has led to reputational risk, which is high for the luxury brands. Therefore, luxury fashion brands are very careful to avoid a bad reputation for their brand through social media.

Customers have become more concerned about whether the brands they purchase follow sustainable practices (Park et al., 2017). Thus, local luxury brands should address this concern by integrating sustainability concepts into their business strategy and operations (Di Benedetto, 2017). However, recent fashion studies about sustainability largely focus on the large, high-profile luxury brands (Kapferer & Michaut-Denizeau, 2014; Masè & Cedrola, 2017), for which the generalization of findings to include small local luxury fashion brands is lacking. There are a limited number of attempts to develop the theoretical model of sustainability for small- and medium-sized businesses, but most are conceptual studies (Becker-Leifhold & Iran, 2018; Okonkwo, 2016), which lack empirical pieces of evidence to describe this phenomenon. Accordingly, this study aims to address the following two research questions:

> **RQ1**: *What is the status of sustainable practices in local luxury fashion brands?*
> **RQ2**: *What are the challenges that the local luxury fashion brands are facing while adopting the concept of sustainable fashion?*

Methodology

To address the research questions, we selected Vietnam because the Vietnamese luxury fashion market has been on the rise for the last few years (Keim & Wagner, 2018). In addition, Vietnam is also one of the major destinations for the manufacturing of many global luxury fashion brands. We conducted qualitative in-depth interviews with 15 business owners and managers of some well-known local luxury fashion businesses in Vietnam. The selections of luxury fashion businesses were based on matching their product lines and prices in comparison with the large, high-profile luxury brands in the marketplace. Further, these

businesses' products and services address the luxury authentic Vietnamese fashion culture of handicraft and embroidery, which is aligned with the concept of sustainability.

The interviews were organized within the manufacturing facilities of the luxury fashion brands to better understand the organizations and ensure the credibility of the findings (Eisenhardt, 1989). The date and time of the interviews were fixed by telephone calls and the interviewees were sent the objectives and interview questions via email. Each interview lasted for about one hour, and care was taken to accurately address the research questions and propositions. Data was collected in the form of audio recordings, which were later transcribed for analysis. We also took intensive notes to ensure the exact representation of the research findings. The interviews were then transcribed and coded by using the qualitative data analysis software NVivo. Data were analysed by case study protocol (Yin, 2003) and cross-case analysis, which involved in-depth identification of the similarities and differences among the interviewees to support empirical generalizability and theoretical predictions. NVivo was also used for the first stage of within-case and cross-case analysis using a conceptually clustered matrix, followed by in-depth analysis. The important findings are discussed in the following section.

Results and Discussions

The Current Practices of Sustainable Fashion

Four dominant themes were identified, namely: (a) the promotion of ethnic cultures, (b) enhanced usage of local community resources, (c) the creation of a sustainable lifestyle, and (d) the transformation of sustainable management. Vietnamese ethnic minorities have a strong cultural background, which is reflected through their traditional elegant clothes, expressive garments, costume, and other accessories. As such, boutique fashion businesses preserve and promote the cultural traditions of ethnic minority groups to the public through the fashion product designs. Further, local resources are used in the process of manufacturing, such as employing talented artisans, and using local silk, fabrics, and traditional handicrafts. This builds up the reputation for Vietnamese ethnic eco-friendly products to attract attention from potential foreign investors and visitors to the ethnic minority travel destinations.

> *Extract 1:* The limited collections are made by (local) designers for instance and, then, offered to local artisans to make the handmade craft. So, I can either support designers or the artisans in those villages.

Moreover, luxury fashion boutique businesses try to produce high-quality products that can reduce "wear and tear" in order to decrease the number of new purchases. Furthermore, these enterprises encourage their consumers to reuse and recycle their clothes by organizing swap events or reward consumers with vouchers for the next purchase. This helps to raise awareness of sustainable consumption. In addition, there are operational changes in business structure and management to ensure it produces sustainable fashion (see extract 2a). The luxury fashion brands also mentioned that they implement the concepts of craftsmanship into their product line. As Vietnam reaches toward its traditional clothes and fashion design, the luxury brands implement traditional design concepts into the product line, which helps them to gain competitive advantage and increase sales (extract 2b).

> *Extract 2a:* We choose to convey the message of a green lifestyle to customers in various tactful and indirect ways such as clothing exchange reward programs, usage

of the fabric shopping bags, and decoration of our retails stores following the eco-friendly concepts.

Extract 2b: One more thing about handmade craftsmanship in Vietnam. In Vietnam, you know that we are known for traditional craftsmanship and traditional Vietnamese clothes. I apply it a lot in my design, which entices the customers in Asia and Europe. So, among my manufacturers, there is a team called the "embroidery team" to do all of the work related to the craftmanship.

In addition to these findings, other corporate social responsibility practices were also found among the local luxury fashion brands in Vietnam. The luxury fashion brands were aware of the environmental pollution caused by the fashion manufacturing. The luxury fashion brands used sustainable raw materials such as organic cotton, which heals the planet. However, they spoke of the lack of market for organic cotton and the unwillingness of consumers to pay high prices for garments manufactured from organic cotton.

Extract 3: We are very interested in saving the environment and bringing organic products to the consumers. We want to spread the sustainability concept not only in Vietnam but also all around the world. I think using organic products currently is an emerging trend in Vietnam. Although consumers are not much aware of it, not strongly, but they are becoming gradually aware.

In many developing countries, ethical work practices are lacking in manufacturing industries that work for global fashion brands. In several cases, manufacturers neglect the safety of the workers and do not pay the proper amount for the work done. On the contrary, the local luxury fashion brands surveyed follow ethical and safe working conditions on the manufacturing floor.

Extract 4: We have a comfortable working environment. As you see here, it is like you are in your house but not in the manufacturing industry with lots of noise and smells, something like that. We provide our staff with food, drinks, and a daily allowance apart from their salary. They also have one and a half days off during the weekend. Also, the pregnant women are allowed to take days off and we are always ready to provide them with the fullest support whenever they need it.

The local luxury fashion brands enhance the skills of the employees through regular training by experts or by employees from their organization. They take care of their employees, pay the proper amount, and provide other allowances to their workers. In addition, they also motivate the staff by rewarding the best-performing workers.

Extract 5: We invited the experts in different areas to come and train our staff sometimes. Also, we have a lot of skilful staff who are capable of training each other, they are nominated to become team leaders who are responsible for keeping track of the performance of individuals and motivate them to improve their work.
Extract 6: We have some awards for the best performing staff at the end of each month based on their efficiency, attitude, and contributions.

The Challenges of Sustainable Fashion
We identified three dominant challenges that local luxury fashion brands are facing, namely: (a) limited funding for installing sustainable technologies, (b) lack of skilled people, (c) the high cost of sustainable materials and certificates, and (iv) lack of consumer

awareness. Firstly, financial limitations are faced by almost all local luxury fashion brands in Vietnam. Due to the limited amount of funding, the brands are not able to procure new technologies that consume less electricity and are more efficient. This, in turn, limits their opportunities to follow changes in the industry and to apply the latest eco-tech fashion in fiber, yarn, fabric, and garment production. A limited amount of funding also prevents them from receiving any certification for eco-friendly products or processes. Hence, it reduces the competitiveness and healthy development of Vietnamese luxury brands to achieve sustainability.

> **Extract 7:** Last year, I lost my certifications because they said that my printer could not use uncertified organic materials commercial off the shelf. They should have a rule for specific organic materials. We could not reach to a specific certifying agency due to high cost. My impact is not good enough compared to H&M, for example. For me, it is important to invest in product quality, but I lost my certifications. Getting the certification is rather a difficult task and quite expensive. The renowned fashion brands do 100% of their products ethically, from A to Z, but we cannot. There is less chance to get certifications for SMEs like my business due to complications in the process.

Secondly, Vietnamese luxury fashion brands lack skilled people who understand the concept of sustainability. The lack of proper understanding of sustainable fashion sometimes creates difficulties in implementation. Although some skilled people who completely understand the concept of sustainability are available in Vietnam, they are sometimes expensive to hire. Hence, local luxury fashion brands lack comprehensive implementation of sustainable fashion.

> *Extract 8:* How to communicate about sustainable fashion is not clear. It is difficult for me. I have been talking to different agencies and I cannot find more information. I do not know how to do it in a subtle way. We also lack skilled people who understand the concept of sustainable fashion. Some of them are very costly to hire. Although we understand the need to be sustainable, we can't become sustainable.

Thirdly, as outlined in extract 7, the cost involved in manufacturing the products from sustainable raw materials is also high, and the costs involved in the certification of sustainability are also substantially higher. Therefore, local luxury fashion brands find it difficult to implement the concept of sustainability in the manufacturing of luxury fashion.

Finally, the implementation of the concepts of sustainability and consumer adoption of sustainable luxury fashion is still very limited. Due to Vietnam's large young population, cheap fast fashion with trendy fashion designs and affordable prices is very attractive to Vietnamese customers. Therefore, the luxury brands are facing the challenges due to this preference. Furthermore, social media continues to claim that many small luxury brands are selling poor quality products, which leads to subjective norms indicating that local luxury fashion brands are unreliable, unethical, and inconsistent in quality. As a result, the low brand credibility of eco-labels and inadequate information about sustainability applications are the main reasons preventing consumers from selecting local luxury fashion brands.

> *Extract 9:* Consumers do not care about the ethical part; they only buy clothes that are beautiful and wearable, not because they can donate these to any charity, or the clothing is good for the environment.

> *Extract 10:* I think education is very much lacking in Vietnam. People are not aware of what they are doing. So, the concept must be clear and understandable because of the

large ratio of educated people in Vietnam to uneducated people. Many people are not getting a proper education, and they do not know what is happening in the world. First, we need to fix the education and second, we must put forward a solid concept of why we need sustainability and communicate it into the mass community.

Conclusion and Future Directions

It is evident from this research that local luxury fashion brands in Vietnam are aware of the importance of implementing the concept of sustainability in manufacturing. There are several ethical practices already being implemented by some luxury fashion brands. Approaches such as the promotion of ethnic cultures, enhanced engagement of the local community resources, the creation of a sustainable lifestyle, and the transformation of sustainable management are adopted by some local luxury fashion brands. In addition, implementation of corporate social responsibility, a safe working culture, basic amenities, and skill enhancement are some of the areas of focus among the local luxury brands.

While Vietnamese local luxury fashion businesses try their best to apply the sustainability concept, there are challenges that limit the efforts of the businesses to enhance this practice. The challenges include limited funding for installing sustainable technologies, lack of skilled people, the high cost of sustainable materials and certificates, and lack of consumer awareness. This research would be of interest to governments, fashion business owners, marketers, and social activists toward the development of a green strategy for their business. Also, it opens a path toward further research and discussion to find solutions for the highlighted challenges.

The global drive in fashion and textiles is to reduce the environmental impacts caused by the manufacturing and distribution processes. Luxury fashion brands are aware of the demand for new sustainable products and have expressed their difficulties in achieving sustainability targets. They need to work continuously to become sustainable luxury brands, which will help them to compete with global brands. The other important aspect to consider is the local handcrafts of Vietnam, which will distinguish their products from global luxury brands.

This study was limited to local luxury fashion brands in Vietnam. Due to a lack of time and funding, it was not possible to collect data from the established global luxury fashion brands. Hence, future studies can focus on global luxury fashion brands and make comparisons between the local and global brands. Furthermore, this study is based on qualitative methods of data collection and analysis; future studies can focus on quantitative methods of data collection and analysis to address these issues.

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Future-Proof Sustainability

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Abstract

In 2019, 181 CEOs from leading U.S. companies signed a Statement of Purpose proposing to lead their companies toward achieving Sustainable Development Goals. However, their aims still assume that markets will evolve over time to resolve socioeconomic and environmental challenges while still making a profit. Drawing on my past research, I show how sustainably-driven entrepreneurism can be used to review specific case studies (e.g., Nike). Through semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders in sustainable development, I clarify the relationships between environmental, social, and economic development.

Research suggests that standardized measurements across the fashion industry are actually narrowing business goals, by choosing key performance indicators that show eco-efficiency gains only in terms of environmental profit and loss accounting. My interviews with stakeholders confirmed that larger businesses and members of the Sustainable Apparel Coalition will have the most to gain from these measurement tools, namely the Higg Index, which seeks to bring about consumer-facing transparency by ranking apparel and footwear companies with simple aggregated scores. These potentially high-scoring corporations, such as Nike, fail to tackle the escalating problems of economic equity, such as a fair distribution between the hemispheres and the intergenerational inheritance of natural capital. They also ignore the need to curb demand for the consumption of goods.

Using Young and Tilley's (2006) framework, I make recommendations for the future of international supply chains, production, and manufacturing. This concept paper investigates alliances, decentralized supply chains and co-operative economics as ways to create more profound change in the fashion industry.

Keywords: sustainability-driven entrepreneurship, economic equity, Higg Index, supply chains

Introduction: The Moonshot Challenge

T he fashion industry, with its dependence on raw materials and labor-intensive production, is particularly vulnerable to environmental and social problems in a fragmented global supply chain. Faced with mounting pressure from government legislation and nonprofit NGOs (non-governmental organizations), small incremental changes will not be enough, because today the development of sustainability in business is seen to be "innovation's new frontier and the key to progress" (Nidumolu et al., 2009). In August 2019, a new "Statement of Purpose for the Corporation" was signed by 181 CEOs from leading U.S. companies committing to lead their firms for the benefit of all stakeholders as well as shareholders (Gelles & Yaffe Bellany, 2019). The lofty pursuit of United Nations Sustainable Development Goals is one of the greatest market challenges today. This has led to a renewed interest in research on sustainable entrepreneurship that pulls together the often-separate fields of environmental and social development. But this objective still endorses the widely held assumption that: (a) markets will evolve over time

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to respond to socioeconomic and environmental challenges, and (b) that profit can be made in doing so.

The most recent "Pulse of the Fashion Industry," published by the Global Fashion Agenda (GFA) and Boston Consulting Group (BCG), reports that fashion companies have made some progress toward better sustainable performance in the past year. Nevertheless, it is not sufficient to counterbalance the negative environmental and social impacts of a rapidly growing industry. If the pace of progress remains as it is today, the gap between industry output and sustainable improvement will widen. Even if the entire fashion industry could catch up with best practices, the report warns that it simply would not be enough to address its environmental and social footprint, and there are limits to what the most advanced brands can achieve in isolation ("Pulse of the Fashion Industry," 2019). This said, the report's recommendations were formulated around a continuing growth trajectory.

With this in mind, the report recognized that large sportswear brands such as Nike have the highest scores in sustainable performance. "Nike's sustainability reports are noteworthy for their strategic significance," states Lynn Paine, John G. McLean Professor of business administration at Harvard Business School. "Nike is one of relatively few large, public companies making investments in potentially game-changing innovations for the sake of sustainability" (Abnett, 2016). And Nike, one of the most prominent apparel firms to integrate the circular economy concept into their business model, has set the most ambitious goals for their supply chain. According to Hannah Jones, NIKE, Inc. Chief Sustainability Officer and VP, Innovation Accelerator,

> We've set a moonshot challenge to double our business with half the impact. It's a bold ambition that's going to take much more than incremental efficiency—it's going to take innovation on a scale we've never seen before. It's a challenge we are setting for ourselves, our collaborators and our partners as we move toward a circular economy future. (Nike, 2015)

There is, however, a more radical interpretation of sustainable entrepreneurship that puts the environment and social needs first, and views profit as a means to achieve these goals. Young & Tilley's (2006) framework for sustainable entrepreneurship details the relationships that must operate in unison in order to achieve the true goal of what they call being a "sustainable entrepreneur." This model has been expanded to include social justice and the equal distribution of resources, and it makes clear that being an environmental or social entrepreneur is not the same as being a sustainable entrepreneur. Such a long-term goal may appear utopian to business leaders, but it exposes just how far the industry is from reaching the goal of sustainable entrepreneurship. In fact, the industry is still struggling to move beyond environmental efficiency fixes. In 2009, Tilley and Young wrote that they prefer to use the term "sustainability-driven entrepreneurship" for their first sustainable entrepreneurship framework (see figure 1), in order to reflect the real process of development "as opposed to sustaining anything" (Tilley & Young, 2009).
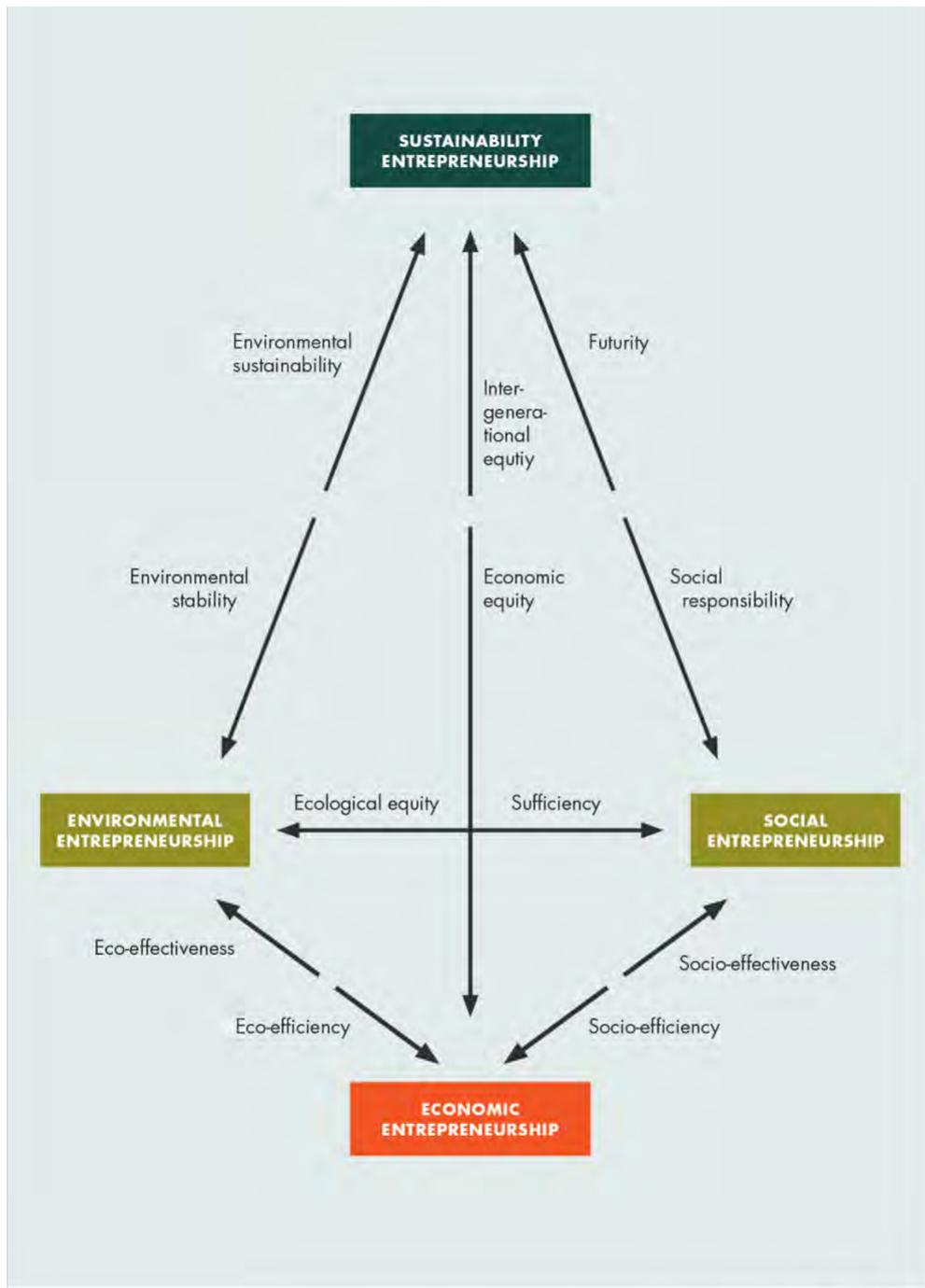
Figure 3.1

The Sustainbility-Driven Entrepreneurship Model (Young & Tilley, 2006, 2009)

Figure 1.

Question: Sustainable Development and Wealth Accumulation

A major question in sustainability is whether now is the time to challenge the industry's conventional ideas about sustainable entrepreneurship. Specifically, can

sustainability ever be achieved by big business? And is it possible to use stringent models of sustainable entrepreneurship, such as Young and Tilley's (2006) framework, to review companies' sustainability reports? Using Nike as a case study, I explored the company's efforts to transform manufacturing and minimize their footprint. These findings form the starting point for further qualitative research. Employing a semi-structured interview approach with key stakeholders who support sustainable development from environmental, social and economic poles, I gathered information to ascertain their opinions on and their practices related to how the fashion business might move beyond efficiency. The final question is, Can industry ever reconcile the twin goals of sustainable development and wealth accumulation?

The research suggests that corporations will tend to fail to meet the requirements of Young and Tilley's (2006; Tilley & Young, 2009) framework for sustainably-driven entrepreneurship, because their objectives are at odds with the current market requirement for growth. Nike leads the industry in best practices, but it is important to note that the company is still not an eco-entrepreneur or a social entrepreneur. The results of my case study highlighted four key relationships that big business fails to meet, and some challenges that businesses will need to address for the future. The initial interviewees were asked: How do they perceive these relationships, and how can fashion operate beyond mere efficiency? Other questions include:

- Economic equity: Can the distribution of wealth ever be fair if all employees don't have the right to living wage?
- Intergenerational equity: What do advances in technology/automation mean for future workforces?
- Ecological equity: How can we ensure environmental justice for regions that bear a disproportionate share of the harmful effects of pollution or climate change?
- Lastly, the ultimate conundrum: How should business promote responsible consumption and curb demand?

Finally, interviewees were asked: What are their recommendations for how to advance further toward effectiveness and equity?

Findings: A Fashion Supply Chain Unable to Move Beyond Efficiency

Practices in sustainable reporting do not quite fit with the majority of Young and Tilley's (2006; Tilley & Young, 2009) requirements because these same requirements are difficult to measure. The current desire to standardize measurements across the industry is narrowing business goals to KPIs (key performance indicators), to show eco-efficiency gains only in terms of environmental profit and loss accounting. Environmental factors are easier to quantify because human rights issues require far more sensitivity as can be seen, for example, in the lack of agreement in the industry on how to measure a living wage. The danger of taking this managerial approach to sustainability is that its gains fail to address the escalating problems of economic equity, a fair distribution between the hemispheres, or the intergenerational inheritance of natural capital. Furthermore, the industry's current trajectory completely ignores the need for sufficiency in business to curb demand for the consumption of goods.

In the near future, large companies will have to become adept at acting on conventional risks that can be managed and measured. The most recognized of these

measurement tools in the fashion industry, namely the Sustainable Apparel Coalition's (SAC) Higg Index (Sustainable Apparel Coalition, n.d.), will be used to bring about consumer-facing transparency by ranking apparel and footwear companies with simple aggregated scores, similar to the white goods industry. The first pilots could be in place between 2020 and 2025, according to Johan van Breda, Business Development & Member Manager EMEA, Sustainable Apparel Coalition, in a January 17, 2017 research interview. This will benefit larger organizations, members of the SAC who invested early in mapping their supply chain and who have more resources and leverage than smaller brands. The majority of the fashion industry, however, is unable to move beyond efficiency, and for the foreseeable future they will be busy mapping and assessing their supply chains. The corporations will bring new technologies and innovations to scale, but the next generation of fashion brands will need to find new models of working that tackle the more complex and unmeasurable relationships of sustainability. The most prominent advice to new fashion brands from stakeholders working in sustainable development include: (a) collaborate and co-invest on all levels, (b) distinguish yourself on the market through fully transparent supply chains, and (c) use the advantage you have against corporations to pilot innovations not yet ready to scale. Drawing on this advice, and using Young and Tilley's (2006) sustainable relationships of economic equity, ecological equity, inter-generational equity, and sufficiency, I make recommendations for the future of international fashion supply chains.

The Future of International Supply Chains, Production, and Manufacturing

The following discussion offers three examples of what future-proof strategies might yet emerge for fashion international supply chains, production and manufacturing.

Change the Competitive Playing Field: Form New Alliances

In Europe, the Alliance for Responsible Denim (ARD) is an initiative with a range of organizations including conventional denim brands and mills and the partner organizations Made-By, Circle Economy, and the Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences (Alliance for Responsible Denim, n.d.). Together the brands and the fabric mills have made a joint commitment to develop and integrate more recycled denim fabric into the market, whereas in the past, each brand sought distinction through their own weave of denim. A sustainable alliance of organizations could also use their shared voices to speak out on the importance of economic equity and sufficiency. If these brands collectively share the same message, it adds up, cutting through the marketing noise of individual brand messages to be one loud and powerful voice. The High Street fashion brands are failing to address the issue of how low pricing creates exploitation and undeclared subcontracting in the supply chain. Sustainable brands should make their costs transparent and share the message of responsible pricing in order to influence the consumer. Equally, the promotion of heavy discounting and sales is antagonistic to sufficiency, and an alliance should take a stance similar to that of the outdoor brand REI and their campaign #optoutside, which served as a platform to encourage both individuals and other businesses to opt out of Black Friday sales.

Alliances of the future need to come from within and outside the fashion sector, driven by entrepreneurs, research institutes, and government organizations for the sharing

of tremendous knowledge. One such alliance, in early-stage development, is the collaborative efforts of fashion entrepreneur Victor Sandberg, Duijvestijn tomato farmers, and Wageningen University & Research (WUR) in the Netherlands. Collectively these partners are tackling the ecological exploitation of natural resources in cotton production, the main problems being salinization, desertification, and poisoning of the environment, including human health (Kooistra et al., 2006). Duijvestijn Tomaten has won numerous awards for the sustainable farming of tomatoes using innovations such as geothermal heat, water conservation, and organic pest control. Sandberg, in a November 14, 2019 research interview, recalled asking the question: If tomatoes can be cultivated this way then why not cotton? This path led him to a joint initiative called the "Greenhouse Pharmacy" together with Wageningen University & Research. The program aims at the development of new business models and a new generation of cross-sector consortia, primarily with a focus on plant ingredients and exotic fruits. However, the collaborators are currently investigating whether the intelligent cultivation of cotton in greenhouses can increase the percentage of a high-value and naturally regenerative yield with minimal use of water and zero harmful pesticides.

Cover All Bases: Decentralizing the Supply Chain

In the United States, Rebecca Burgess's vision to have a wardrobe grown and designed within 150 miles of her home has spread to a movement around the globe (Fibershed, n.d.). A network of farmers, designers, ecologists, mills, fiber makers, and natural dyers in her home state of California was enough to provide all the fibers and dyes necessary to create her wardrobe. She named this network a "fibershed," and today there are similar communities self-organizing across the globe. While the "buy local" effort would be unlikely to move toward a large scale anytime soon, efforts like these reduce the pressure the fashion industry places on China, of one of the most heavily polluted regions of the world. China produces over half the world's textiles, and this industry was the third-largest wastewater emitter in 2015 (Ministry of Environmental Protection, 2016). Brands such as Patagonia and The North Face are already starting to take responsibility for their local supply chains as far back as the soil. In 2017, Patagonia began working with researchers from the Rodale Institute to implement regenerative organic farming (Feloni, 2019). And, the North Face's Backyard line was a collaboration with Fibershed on a locally produced t-shirt and hat that, even as a seemingly small micro-line, still "moved thousands of pounds of fiber through domestic systems" (Cernansky, 2019). In developing countries, more extreme climates have always been a challenge; global warming has already exacerbated economic inequality and will continue to increase poverty, social tensions and migration (Diffenbaugh & Burke, 2019). Greenhouses could help mitigate the worst of such effects by regulating the temperature, water, and nutritional needs of crops in a closed agricultural system (Cantieri, 2018). The future could promise geographically distributed, home-grown, and "climate beneficial" clothing, whether it be from age-old soil carbon-enhancing practices, or through artificial intelligence–powered greenhouses. With such advances, these geographic regions could still, as before, provide all the resources to make one article of clothing while creating economic and social equity as well.

The aggregated sustainable score that the Higg Index proposes can only ever be a selective disclosure of the supply chain with one single party controlling it. Equally, the

certification (e.g., Fair Trade) or memberships in NGO foundations (e.g., Fair Wear Foundation) are essential to guide conscientious consumption yet, in the end, the actual meaning of these labels or certifications is challenging to understand and hard to verify. The Norwegian Consumer Authority called out SAC member H&M in 2019 for misleading the consumer by "failing to provide adequate detail about what makes their Conscious Collection sustainable" (Hitti, 2019). The future potential of blockchain to certify, track, and trace the origin of goods without one single party controlling the information could lead to unapparelled transparency throughout the entire supply chain. Rather than have data stored in silos, blockchain is a shared public database, a decentralized digital ledger, that ensures neutrality, reliability and security (Provenance, 2015). It is an auditable record that can be shared digitally at the point-of-sale with the customer. Blockchain would provide a method for comprehensive tracking of the sources of raw materials (from raw ingredient to finished product), or verifying the working conditions for smaller sustainable entrepreneurs, such as full transparency of audit reports that few brands share today. Looking further ahead, by recording and making visible to consumers every micro-transaction, this full life cycle record could be significant in aiding the recycling or remanufacturing of post-consumer garments. An incorruptible record of a garment's full life would combat the issue of false labeling, absence of information, and contradictory or lack of qualification of fabric compositions. Despite strict penalties for noncompliance with Federal Trade Commission regulations in textiles and clothing, there are numerous cases of deceptive or misleading labeling (Bhaduri & Goswami, 2014).

Move the Goal Posts: Rethinking Growth

The International Labor Organization (ILO) estimates about 56% of employment in Southeast Asia is at high risk of being automated over the next two decades, with clothing and footwear manufacturing jobs among the hardest hit (Chang & Huynh, 2016). Until policies are in place to protect the human worker, truly sustainable brands will have to think about how to redistribute wealth. The think tank New Economics Foundation proposes a radical turnaround from top-down corporations to democratically run cooperatives, and they see this as a way of increasing economic democracy for all stakeholders. The NEF published a report advocating an increase in the number of British co-operatives, and argued that the idea is "only as radical as John Lewis's Inclusive Ownership Fund" (Lawrence et al., 2018). The John Lewis's shared ownership structure began in 1929 when the son of the founder signed away his rights as an experiment in "industrial democracy" and remains today one of the most successful examples of wealth sharing while also involving employee stakeholders in decision making (Wood, 2012).

The idea is also slowly gaining momentum in the United States. Nathan Schneider, a professor of media studies at the University of Colorado, Boulder, writes in his book *Everything for Everyone* that these traditional models from the past should be the business model of the future and the heart of the economy (Schneider, 2018). This cooperative model can work for producers and manufacturing-based industries such as fashion, inspired by Spain's Mondragon Corporation model, which is the world's biggest and most successful worker cooperative with 260 businesses manufacturing everything from bicycles to washing machines and employing 80,000 people. This model may be one of the most persuasive examples of rethinking market capitalism and a systematic

change toward responsible growth. Schneider also believes that blockchain can be a form of cooperative, echoing a concept called platform-cooperativism that originated with Trebor Scholz. These new ideas champion how digital platforms, such as blockchain, could help to create different ownership models and a more humane alternative to the free market model (Scholz, 2014). This open digital ecosystem could help to increase transparency in traditionally closed supply chains to facilitate a circular economy of textiles to reduce waste and combat overproduction.

A smaller, but no less admirable, step in rethinking growth is Huit Denim Company, based in Cardigan, a small town in Wales, where for three decades 10% of the population was employed making jeans. When the brands moved their production overseas to cheaper manufacturing countries, the factories were forced to shut down, and 400 people lost their jobs. Huit Denim's brand purpose is simple: "Our town is going to make jeans again" (Huit Denim, n.d.). Currently, only a fraction of the town residents are employed, but apprentices are trained for three years in the whole process of making a pair of jeans, ensuring their skills are more transferable for the future. Naturally, the brand's costs are higher, so at first, they could not afford the minimum quantities for organic cotton. In a future of consumer-facing sustainability scores, how will brands like Huit score if their social mission cannot be measured?

Conclusion: The Real Moonshot Challenge

Without rethinking the blunt profit-making models of sustainable entrepreneurism, there is a danger that these inequalities and the interconnected relationships between them could, in the words of the World Economic Forum (2018), cause "runaway collapse." Thus, the more "utopian" vision of sustainable entrepreneurship may have real value to businesses today by setting the level of ambition for which firms should aim. This model can lay out a holistic and balanced sustainable development path, whether it be for a disruptive new sustainable startup, or for a traditional corporation attempting to realign its organization. The following key points suggest why this model can have an immediate and practical value for the fashion industry today: (a) It will avoid the current trend of focusing on only one of the sustainable entrepreneurship framework's poles—economic, environmental or social. It will ensure that a sustainability agenda is not only viewed from the vantage point of "efficiency" in supply chains alone. And finally, it understands the importance of aiming for a long-term goal to truly achieve Sustainable Development Goals

Future-proof sustainable strategies must distinguish themselves from those of high performing "efficient" organizations such as Nike, and address the more complex and unmeasurable relationships of sustainability. Ecological equity will never come without challenging current growth strategies and sufficient measures to stop overconsumption. Likewise, rising inequality in future generations will not be stopped without redistributing wealth and tackling wage inequality. Current patterns of consumer-facing transparency may indeed drive the industry to improved environmental and ethical behaviors, but they will not encourage the systematic change needed, in Young and Tilley's (2009) words, to "sustain anything." It will be up to a new generation of fashion brands who will have to distinguish themselves in a playing field tipped toward eco-efficiency to innovate in new ways. The struggle to become a true sustainable

entrepreneur is the real "moonshot challenge," if we are ever to achieve the systematic change that both the industry and the world demands.

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Emmanuel House X NTU: Be Protected; Be Visible; Be Functional; Be Secure; Be Transformable

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Tim Bassford, Independent film maker, UK

Emmanuel House X NTU is a practice research collaboration between a homeless charity in Nottingham and Year One, Level 4 BA Fashion Design students from Nottingham Trent University. The resulting garments and film highlight and seek to mitigate the disparity between clothing waste and clothing poverty, through a participatory, human-centred, upcycled design approach.

Keywords: Fashion education; clothing waste; participatory research; human-centred; upcycled design

Introduction

Emmanuel House X NTU is a social design/innovation collaboration, between a homeless charity in Nottingham and Year One, Level 4 BA Fashion Design at students. Clothing and household items donated to the charity are sorted into three waste streams for: service users to wear/ use; resale in the charity shop to raise funds and to sell by the kilo (as textile waste) to the 'rag man'. The prevalence of fast fashion garments within donations has created issues relating to storing, sorting, reallocating and reselling second-hand clothing. This sustainable fashion project seeks to highlight and mitigate and the disparity between clothing waste and clothing poverty, by adopting a circular design approach (Ellen Macarthur Foundation 2019).

This human centred empirical investigation was coordinated by the authors; a multidisciplinary team with expertise in fashion and textile design, marketing, fundraising and film making. The research practice was undertaken between February and May 2019 as Project 2, a mandatory module within the BA (Hons) Fashion Design curriculum, whereby students were asked to develop speculative garment solutions in response to nine 'Be words' that captured the clothing needs of the homeless and vulnerable, as expressed by service users of Emmanuel House:

• Be protected
• Be secure
• Be warm
• Be dry
• Be comfortable
• Be visible
• Be transformable
• Be detachable
• Be functional

The sourcing of textile waste as a new material to work on designs for an overlooked market sector, required the students to shift their mindset towards a more holistic view of

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what constitutes the materials and wearers of fashion. The hands-on sorting of donated clothing was framed by the team as a contemporary form of 'rag picking', as practiced by various designers whose innovative work relies on repurposing existing fashion products (Townsend et al 2019). Using 80% of donated clothing/ found textiles the students created garments that were tested and worn by the service users and their peers in a community fashion event and celebration at Emmanuel House. Following the project, most of the 60 completed garments were donated to the charity for use and/ or sale.

The success of the Emmanuel House X NTU engagement in terms of student learning/outcomes and overwhelming positive feedback, from the users of the charity to the Vice Chancellor of NTU, has resulted in it being integrated as a core Level 4 module within the Fashion Design curriculum. The module provides students with invaluable tacit knowledge of how:

- donating unwanted clothing to charities creates problematic waste streams;
- clothing is designed, constructed and finished;
- there are differences in the quality of materials/ manufacture of established and ad hoc brands, particularly those producing fast fashion;
- homeless individuals with limited possessions/ wardrobes and transient lifestyles require functional and aesthetic clothing;
- user-centered design can enhance individual/ group agency and self-esteem.

Exhibits

The five 'Be' garments in this installation illustrate some of the different upcycled design strategies and outcomes adopted by the young designers. and communal impact created through this action-based initiative.

In this installation we showcase some of the students' creative work in the form of five garments/ outfits (from 60 submissions), as described below, representing some of the nine different 'Be' design themes informed by the needs of the service users of Emmanuel House. These artefacts are further contextualised by a film made by Author 5 which captures snapshots of the research and development process and significantly, the communal impact of the initiative. This was made particularly evident at the Emmanuel House X NTU fashion event, where 34 outerwear looks were modelled by a group of 17 service users and student designers to an audience of over 150 members of the public.

The following five garments and supporting film are described in the makers own words:

Be Protected by Eloise Smart

This jumpsuit was inspired by Lucy Orta's 'Refuge wear' (1992-98) exploring temporary shelters and architecture. The garment is designed to provide both protection and warmth with a high neck for comfort, added padding on the elbows and knees. A waterproof oversized hood with padded facing and fleece lining. The large hood enables the wearer to cover their face when sleeping. The faux fur-lined body with double-sided pockets have been integrated to hold (and hide) personal items. Hand covers with thumbholes help to keep the sleeves in place and to aid dressing and undressing in layers.
Upcycled materials: waterproof trousers, car seat cover, duvet padding and an old jacket.

Be Visible by Nicole Kozlov

This jacket was designed as 'a garment to treasure' inspired by the service users at Emmanuel House who discussed their need 'to look presentable, have good self-esteem and ultimately feel more positive while facing homelessness'. My aim was to create an outerwear garment that is practical, eye catching and stylish as shown in Figure 3.

Upcycled materials: three damaged coats, scrap fabrics of fleece and reflective trims.

Figure 1: Be Visible by Nicole Koslov

Be Functional by May Illingworth

Inspired by the design of RAF uniforms and military equipment the focus was to create a functional, warm garment. This outerwear piece has two layers (padded all-in-one and quilted sleeveless jacket) that can be worn together or separately; made detachable through long ribbon ties. The integration of decorative quilted details reflects the panelling found in RAF parachutes, as explored in the sketchbook pages in Figure 2.

Upcycled materials: waterproof trousers, ski jumpsuit, a pair of shorts, a second-hand jacket and found military surplus.
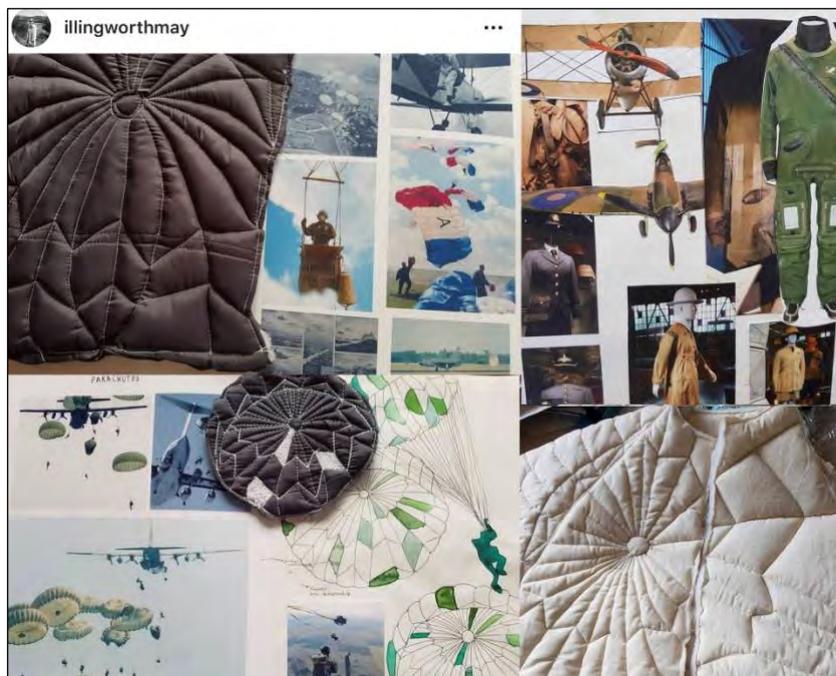
Figure 2: Research and development pages from May Illingworth's sketchbook.

Be Secure by Kirsty Lenihan

The jacket is influenced by British council estates: the behaviours and attitudes of the youth; the 'spirit' of community and sense of belonging. With a mixture of secure pockets keeping personal belongings safe. This jacket offers a lightweight durability and is easy to fold, carry and transport.
Upcycled materials: discarded tarpaulin, a fleece top, hi-vis and waterproof jacket, portfolio and gym bag.

Be Transformable by Liberty Green

Inspired by the concept of 'Abode' a place of residence, a house or home, I looked at how animals make and use shelter to create portable habitats. As illustrated in Figure 2, the transformable design allows the wearer comfort and protection from the elements day and night, when sleeping outdoors; this outerwear piece transforms into a shelter.
Upcycled materials: boat canvas, gazebo tent, backpack components and an old jacket.

Figure 2: Be Transformable by Liberty Green

Figure 4: Composite image of all five garments: Top (left to right) Be Protected by Eloise Smart; Be Transformable by Liberty Green; Be Functional (sleeveless jacket) by May Illingworth. Bottom: Be Protected/ Transformable; Be Visible by Nicol Koslov; Be Secure by Kirsty Leniham.

Emmanuel House X NTU film (20 mins) by Tim Bassford

Having the opportunity to film the Emmanuel House X NTU project provided a unique insight to the different stakeholders' points of view; each party bringing their own personal understanding and appreciation of this collaborative project.

By capturing certain moments in the project's process, and with the subjects knowing they were being filmed, brought a sense of clarity for them and an opportunity to verbalise what they were experiencing. On camera, students admitted their previous ignorance on the subject of 'homelessness'. Service users of Emmanuel House shared how encouraged they had been to be part of this creative endeavour. Lecturers also shared some of the wider impact this project has had within the academic/professional world, moreover the strength of community it has forged amongst and beyond the student group.

It was interesting to document the whole process from clothes sorting (rag picking) at Emmanuel House through to the deconstruction of the fabrics and the subsequent new garment creations. It was rewarding to hear such positivity from all students involved. This did not feel like an academic assignment, it was much more far-reaching. This project has clearly challenged and enlightened students in equal measure. I believe creating this short documentary helped crystallise the experience for all involved. This film also draws attention

to the project's success in raising awareness for supporting homeless charities, the importance of buying clothes from charity stores. Whilst also raising a worthy challenge to our fast-fashion, disposable clothes culture.

Figure 5: Two film stills from the Emmanuel House X NTU film 2019. See: https://vimeo.com/352901660/16e95ff7aa

The Design Problem

The Emmanuel House X NTU project explores the problems faced by charities and society in dealing with textile waste. While donating unwanted clothes to charity is viewed as preferable to sending them to landfill, according to Emmanuel House, mass produced high (fast) fashion garments now account for more than 80% of their donations. As stated in the Environmental Audit Committee's 'Fixing Fashion': "We buy more clothes per person in the UK than any other country in Europe. A glut of second-hand clothing swamping the market is depressing prices for used textiles." (Publications.parliament.uk. 2019) Emmanuel House uses second-hand clothing donations to support their service users and raise funds to run their services. Rough sleepers require warm, waterproof clothing, which form an increasingly small percentage of donations, which are sorted into clothing/ accessories for: service users; resale in the charity shop; 'rag' or waste textiles, sold by the kilo. The problem was therefore

conceptualised as how to turn garments for re-sale, and particularly 'textile waste' into wearable (and desirable) garments for use by the charity's users.

Human-centred design

Addressing the individual circumstances of the EH service users, required a sensitive, human centred approach, involving ethnographic research to inform the design of garment systems that were responsive to the physical and emotional needs of the users (Giacomin, 2014). As new undergraduates, this was the first time some had considered a consumer's needs and aspirations directly. Whilst working through the brief students were supported with opportunities for reflective learning through encouragement question themselves about the processes they were undertaking, and how they might act upon this learning to inform their future practice. (Grace and Gravestock 2009) The project united students from all over the world with contrasting abilities and perceptions about sustainability. The project aims were aligned with NTU's strategic research themes of Sustainable Futures and Creative Community and the United Nations Sustainable Development goals of:

1. No poverty,
8. Decent work and economic growth,
9. Repurposing old material,
11. Sustainable cities and communities,
12. Responsible consumption and production
13. Educate young people - climate action

Alternative, slow and craft-based models of practice by design practitioners were used to exemplify Goal 12, including: Christopher Raeburn's (2019) RÆMADE brand ethos; involving Atelier and Repairs' (2019) circular approach to "fostering each item's existence at the highest value possible - for as long as possible" and Amy Twigger-Holroyd's (2018) exploration of the "domestic circular economy" through the repair and reuse of damaged knitwear using a process of skilled unravelling and re-knitting.

Developing the brief

The needs of the service users formed the most significant aspect of the project brief. In a presentation at NTU, Author 4 provided a potted history of Emmanuel House (2019) explaining how the growing number of service users (making over 2000 visits a month) are supported by staff and volunteers and the paradox of the homeless having very few clothes amid the plethora of fast fashion donations. The core aim was to address both these challenges through a human-centred approach to fashion design. In a group discussion with EH service users who had, or were sleeping rough, they were asked about what they would want/need in an outer garment, expressed as:

- A onesie sleeping bag with fur inside of it/thermal in one colour e.g. red, blue, black
- A sleeping bag that you can walk in with pockets A panic button / alarm A light in the hood
- Inside pockets
- A specific logo – to be decided
- A long zip – to be able to go to the toilet! Packable
- Washable
- Can be turned inside out

These specific requirements were reflected upon by the research team articulated as the nine 'Be words' by Author 2, in the module briefing, illustrated through diverse clothing concepts. For example, 'Be protected', referenced: defence, shelter, preservation, safeguarding, sanctuary, refuge, visualised via Orta's Refuge Wear (1992-98), Massimo Osti's poncho for CP Company and the Kevlar 'stab-proof' vest.

To help them conceptualize their ideas, students met with a panel of service users at EH, where they learnt how changing circumstances had led them to destitution, and to further explain what kind of outer garments they needed or would like to own. Individuals disclosed their interests, hobbies, vulnerabilities and values associated with clothing and textiles – touching on emotional as well as product durability (Townsend and Sadkowska 2018). One ex-service user and volunteer mentioned how he had been a hairdresser and had continued to cut hair (when homeless and housed) to raise the self-esteem of the different people he met. He stated that the inclusion of discreet, lined pockets inside a jacket would be useful to carry (and hide) his scissors.

Significant learning

The students were asked to design a range of six garments in response to a body of personal research; to develop, pattern cut and manufacture an outerwear piece based on one of their designs, which could be menswear, womenswear (or both) and produce a final portfolio. The BA Fashion course acknowledges that active or 'significant learning' is more likely to take place when students are engaged experientially, supported by reflective dialogue, doing something besides listening. (Fink, 2013)

The project coincided with The Community Live in Nottingham, at Bonington Gallery (2019). One of the group, Tenant of Culture, described as a "rag-picker of mass-media or media-industrial production" (Pristauz 2018 online) invited the fashion students and service users to take part in a 3-day workshops (13-15 March), facilitating further collaboration and opportunities for experiential learning.

The sorting/ sourcing process

During the months leading up to the start of the project, EH staff selected clothes and fabric donations to put aside for the students to use. Additionally, a clothing/textile bank was set up in the School, where staff were encouraged to donate unwanted clothing and household textiles. Students were encouraged to volunteer regularly at the EH centre to help select premium pieces for the shop and their own future use, paying special attention to:

1. Warm, waterproof, comfortable garments suitable for outdoor conditions.
2. Good quality, fashionable and desirable items selected for re-sale in the charity shop.
3. Clothing suitable for its textile waste set aside for up-cycling with worn out, unfashionable, soiled items collated to be collected by the rag man.

By handling and categorizing the plethora of clothing waste hidden from public view in the cramped EH storeroom, students gained tacit knowledge of garment/textile design longevity. Staff and students were surprised by how many of the donations were classified as 'rag'. This involves two categories of (good and bad) rag as Barker stated, "to avoid getting the lowest price (for shredding), items have to be wearable, as they are sold on to be shipped abroad". The western practice of exporting unwanted clothing to other countries with emerging economies presents an unsustainable model of recycling resulting from "a linear model of 'make, use, dispose'." (Publications.parliament.uk., 2019). Experiencing these

consequences first-hand influenced the students to consider how they might design better quality, more long-lasting products.

The deconstruction/ reconstruction process

The core aim of the brief was to use 'up-cycling' to create products that were of higher quality/ value than the original. By sorting clothing waste students creatively analysed garment design, construction and details for future end-use. The copious pairs of jeans, too worn at the knees for re-use were set aside so that the less worn areas could be reused. Students were quick to capitalise on woven cotton denim's durability and capacity to carry aesthetic narratives within the fabric; collating similar and contrasting indigo, ice blue, black and grey shades in various dyed and washed treatments, to re-assemble later.

Other identified groups of materials selected included: sportswear (fleece, sweat shirting) outdoor clothing (water/showerproof fabric); camping products (tents, sleeping bags); household textiles (shower/curtains, carrying bags) and traditional clothing (woven/wool). Students deconstructed their garments to use their constituent materials in various ways, including:

- Details and parts to re-use. e.g. zips, buttons, pockets
- Fabrics to patch together or use as panels.
- Over-dye, bleach or tie dye.
- Quilt and pad.
- Bond together and laser-cut
- Embellish - embroidered, appliqued, printed

Figure 6: Students modelling outerwear garments, including Be Secure by Kirsty Lenihan (2nd from left) at the Emmanuel House fashion event on 30th May 2029.

This idea of 'working in reverse' by starting with a garment/material is quite unique to this NTU project. Usually fabrics are sourced after a concept has been derived, not in tandem with its development. Students learnt how having fabrics already selected directs the design development process. Emphasis was placed on challenging and pushing their pattern cutting

and manufacturing skills, to make outer garments that were both comfortable, durable and ideally transformable, to allow for changing weather conditions. These were not occasion wear, but like the refuge-style wear made by organizations like Sheltersuit (2009) which may be worn repeatedly, or literally inhabited. Exhibiting and modelling the upcycled outerwear concepts alongside current and ex-service users at the Emmanuel House salon event provided the students with another valuable opportunity for accruing feedback and testing the designs themselves, as shown in Figure 6.

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Using Digital Resources to Develop Responsible Design: ART-CHERIE Project

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Textile designers have the opportunity to select and use archival collections to develop contemporary designs. The Design Library in New York is an example of a such a company offering source material that professional designers or brands might choose to pay to make use of. Student designers need to be encouraged to exercise responsibility when exploring global cultures in the appropriate appreciation and use of historical textile resources. As in many universities, designers within the BA (Hons) Fashion Textiles course are introduced to the responsibilities of social design at the beginning of their course. Through such study students consider inclusivity and diversity, social responsibility and sustainability as fundamental to developing their designer identity. This alternative poster/ installation will introduce the Art Cherie project, (Achieving and Retrieving Creativity through European Fashion Cultural Heritage Inspiration), a pilot online course aimed at professional/ student designers, that draws on digital archives as a design resource. The resource applies a mixed method research approach based on a methodology outlined by Jules Prown (1982) and Ingrid Mida and Alexandra Kim (2015) explored through demonstrations, case study examples and self-directed activities. Trend forecasting is introduced within the resource as a process of looking at wider social, cultural, political and economic factors occurring internationally at any given time and how these are applied to areas of the fashion industry. Consideration of cultural context as part of the research process seeks to avoid a Eurocentric approach. The alternative poster/ installation will include textile samples and research source data to illustrate how such a resource might be used within the curriculum to develop deeper understanding of appreciating and sharing cultural responsibility and support the development of responsible designers.

Keywords: Design, digital, archive, embroidery, global, inclusivity

Introduction

Achieving and Retrieving Creativity through European fashion Cultural Heritage Inspiration (ART-CHERIE) was a 30-month collaborative project[i], funded through ERASMUS+ with participating countries: Belgium, Greece, Italy, and the UK. This was a collaborative project with Professor Jose Teunissen as the University of the Arts London (UAL) lead with contributions from UAL and London College of Fashion (LCF) staff and the project's European partners including Prato Museum of Textiles. Full details of contributors to the project is available from ART-CHERIE website (www.artcherie.eu).

The project proposal identified that the "Fashion industry is characterised by a high level of creativity and innovation and quick changes in trends. This industry is constantly reinventing itself, responding to consumer needs. Inspiration comes from culture, societal changes and from old designs and garments."[ii]

A member of the project, Meletis Karabinis, General Director of the Hellenic Clothing Industry Association identified of the project that:

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"ICT-based vocational and educational training tools on fashion cultural heritage are still missing. The European fashion industry needs inspiration and learning from a glorious past in order to add value to its products and boost its competitiveness internationally. ART-CHERIE will improve and extend the provision of high-quality learning opportunities tailored to the needs of fashion designers. This project, [ART-CHERIE], enables us to better anticipate current and future skills needed in the textile, clothing and fashion sector." iii

ART-CHERIE Project: background

"The purpose of the online ART-CHERIE course was to offer EU designers and students in fashion schools, the chance to participate in an innovative fashion design training scheme. The aim is to improve the competitive advantage of the fashion sector by encouraging a new contemporary reinterpretation of the fashion cultural heritage, which in turns supports innovation and research into product design and hones the skills, know-how and creative inspiration of the designers of tomorrow." iv

In 2017, Professor Jose Teunissen attended the Fashion Digital Memories EUROPEANA Fashion symposium where she delivered a paper on the ART-CHERIE project and talked about the new challenges fashion designers have to face at a time where there is an abundance of images on the internet and a variety of consumers' data captured.

The main objective of the project was how best to make use of digital archive sources for inspiring creative innovative fashion and textile design.
This submission focuses on examples from the project and how, although being European focused and industry based, responsible design is fostered through the opportunity of using non-Eurocentric exemplars and potential linking to supporting curriculum units.

Considerations were that the identified audience was varied and that the course was aimed primarily at training for industry professionals, who may or may not have studied at a Higher-Level Institution (HEI). However, the project was also intended for potential implementation as an innovative blended learning tool for HEI fashion students in the final stages of their study.v In terms of subject knowledge the resource was to include beginners as well as the more experienced designer and also non-subject specialists; for example a fashion designer might work through the unit *Fashion Embroidery* to learn about possible embellishment processes to then outsource designs, or alternatively, an experienced embroidery designer may simply wish to refresh their approach.

Student projects using museum-based and archive resources are described in existing literature (Britt & Stephen-Cran, 2014)vi. Pierce (2017) notes that

"Examples of new artefacts produced by art and design practitioners working from archives exist, but minimal insight is provided into the rationale behind item selection or utilisation of this type of source material in the creative process."vii

Pierce's research practice focuses on the use of textile archives. In her paper *The Fabric of the City, Archive textiles inspire a collaborative project in contemporary design and innovation,* Pierce identifies the theme of "reinterpretation rather than appropriation" as being key."viii

The underlying objective therefore for the collaborating team was to provide research materials and to introduce and demonstrate research approaches using these resources for a variety of users; encouraging through exemplars interpretation rather than appropriation whilst fostering the development of responsible design practice.

ART-CHERIE Project Methodology

The UAL-LCF project team discussed a range of research methods and identified Visual Research, Contextual Research and Object Analysis as most relevant to the design disciplines for the course to focus on. These three different approaches are explained in the first unit by an introductory lecture followed by a set of workshops that include a combination of taught material and self-learning activities.

The first unit, Unit 1, explores the research process in design, incorporating context (social, historical, theoretical processes) and focuses on womenswear. Further proposed units would focus on colour, pattern, fashion print, menswear (with a focus on deepening and applying the exploration of object analysis incorporating social, historical and theoretical contexts) and fashion knitwear with consolidation of the learning from the course to produce a creative portfolio.

Two units, Womenswear and Fashion Embroidery were selected to embrace the specific strength of both London College of Fashion, for contents related to education and industrial experience, as well as the Prato museum archive for its impressive garment and textile collection. Prato Textile Museum provided advice on the selection of appropriate items and in-depth contextual information on the garments and textiles used from their collection.ix

Unit 1: Womenswear overview:
Three examples of women's fashion items were selected that would offer a breadth of scope for exploring the selected research methods. The research approaches, Visual research, Contextual Research and Object Analysisx, based on a methodology outlined by Jules Prown (1982) and Ingrid Mida and Alexandra Kim (2015)xi, are introduced in depth in *Unit 1: Womenswear,* and revisited throughout the course. Research approaches are explored through demonstrations, case study examples and self-directed activities. This unit also includes an example of applying research and analysis from one of the garments studied towards the design of contemporary womenswear xii.

Unit 5 Fashion Embroidery overview:
In close discussion with Prato Museum collection, objects were selected that would offer scope to explore both the research approaches and a range of embroidery techniques to provide inspiration. The objects were selected for their particular style of detail being colour, pattern, or surface texture. The techniques: stitch; beading; appliqué; cutwork and quilting were selected as most appropriate to textiles and fashion for inclusion within the project's timeframe limitations plus the related technique of laser cutting xiii.

In addition, objects were deliberately selected to add diversity by drawing significantly on both western and non-western sources from the Prato Textile museum

collection rather than textiles of perceived European origin or manufacture. Samples are selected from global locations to avoid eurocentricity: India, Proto-Nazca Culture, Peru, 200-100BC and 1200-1476AD; the Sephari Jewish Community, Morocco (Azemmour), ca.17th century; the Kuba Culture, Congo, Central Africa, 20th century; and Prato and Como (20 Century), Italy. The selected museum pieces are not all embroidered and, as such, also demonstrate how diverse objects within the museum can be used to inspire contemporary fashion embroidery. Emphasis was also placed on the global context for pattern development.

The Trends section (LCF) and contextual information texts (Prato Textile Museum) allow further opportunities for the encouragement of responsible design through these research approaches.

Fashion and textile designers find inspiration from a range of sources, amongst which, influences from historical costume and textiles are often identifiable. For example, the work of iconic designer Vivienne Westwood has regularly referenced historical dress, informed by a focused study of the structure of historical costume in museum archives (Wilcox, 2004)[xiv].

> "By referencing historical dress, designers do not simply copy the designs; instead they learn about the garment and the context in which it was created, extracting elements which form the inspiration for contemporary interpretation."(Gaimster, 2011)[xv]

Textile designers may make use of archive sources as inspiration for contemporary textiles in different ways. These different approaches in using archives for textile design vary from a commercial approach, where professional designers or brands may pay fees to use archives as a reference for reproducing historical collections, applying some change such as recolouring to current trend predictions, to designers using the archive for a more in-depth investigation as inspiration with a more creative focus or intent. The Design Library, New York, is an example of a company offering source material which professional designers or brands might choose to pay to make use of (Koepke, 2018)[xvi].

Cultural significance: linking to the curriculum
Students are introduced to consideration of the cultural significance of research through a variety of units and opportunities at LCF. The *Textiles Research checklist* within Unit 5, Fashion Embroidery, based on Prown (1982), Mida & Kim (2015), focuses on direct observation to support recording through drawing to initiate design development. Library inductions at LCF however use the more in depth Institute of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education (ILTHE) *How to read an object* exercise sheet (2018) within their student inductions in Stage 1 to explore and encourage responsible use of research sources by student designers.

The following extract is from the ILTHE document for student reading of an object:

> You are about to do an activity that will assist you in reading an object. The questions are based on a methodology outlined by Jules Prown (1982) and Ingrid Mida and Alexandra Kim (2015).
> Prown (1982) believed that objects were the raw data for the study of material culture and suggested approaching the object in three stages – description, deduction and hypothesis. Mida and Kim (2015) took this further by applying Prown's ideas to fashion garments.

If this ART-CHERIE unit is used within the curricula further considerations/ discussions could be added within lessons as suggested by Prown (1982), Mida & Kim (2015) to include: personal reactions to purpose and function; context and history; cultural significance and spiritual and artistic significance, to question if the object conforms to dominant ideas of taste and cultural value and/or if these ideas are Eurocentricxvii. Such observations would allow for the development of consideration of fashion contexts such as gender expression, heteronormativity, or engagement with inclusivity or exclusion.xviii

This approach to research is reinforced at LCF through Cultural and Historical Studies units underpinning undergraduate courses: *Introduction to Cultural and Historical Studies*, Stage 1, *Cultural Studies Options*, Stage 2, and *Contextualising your practice,* Stage 3. The unit *Better Lives*, Stage 1, additionally engages students with consideration of diversity, sustainability and social engagement.

Responsible design: diversity and inclusivity, sustainability and environment

The *Introduction to Trend Forecasting* section, written by Jenny Leikes, previously Assistant Academic Support Librarian LCF, further develops consideration of sustainability and cultural significance. The unit's *Introduction* defines the difference between trends and trend forecasting with activities to identify initial research areas in embellishment and textiles design looking at trend research stages of environment, market and product. Opportunity is taken within the introductory lessons with the activity *Creating a Mind Map*, to provide an Ethnic-African textiles example and image.

The *Environment trends* section that follows considers how socio-economic, cultural and political trends impact design, in terms of short-term trends (triggers) and long term trends (shifts).xix Activities focus on identifying 1 global trend that will be big in two years-time and the related trigger and shift that have made this trend emerge.xx *Social responsibility* is introduced as an example of an environment trend with the trigger of increased power and influence of global companies and the shift of ethical implications of new technologies.xxi

Product design development is considered through focus on *Color*, *Design* and *Materials* as parts of the Product Development process. *Materials trends* deconstructs what materials forecasting is and the impact on design practice, introducing information resources to find a selection of materials that best represents the designer's environment trend and target consumer.

Information resources (i.e. journals and magazines, trend forecasts, websites, trade shows), designed to be an entry point into the topic areas are discussed, whilst designers are expected to find their own information resources that meet their information needs. Within reference examples presented are journals and websites that encourage consideration of the use of sustainable materials, for example the journals *Ecotextile News* and *IoTex*. Activities encourage responsible design through the task of exploring these or their own resources to find 1 new or innovative material and 1 sustainable material that their target audience will like.

Color trends are situated and influenced by the same macro and micro sociocultural, economic, political, environmental and technological influences affecting society as a whole.xxii

Resources such as *Pantone View Color Planner* xxiii as well as websites such as *Intercolor* xxiv and *Color Hive* xxv are introduced. Activities for the *Color Trends* lesson ask the designer to use the resources discussed to select 3 colours that best

represent the designer's environment trend and chosen consumer, and to create a title for the palette and a sentence descriptor.

The example color palette xxvi presented is based on an environment trend *social responsibility,* discussed earlier within the ART-CHERIE trends section, continuing the responsible design focus.

Figure 1. Name: *Wild Frontiers*
Description: '*Wild frontiers'* energises and inspires connected communities to push their creative boundaries to the limit

Further opportunities to respect cultural significance and support inclusivity and diversity were presented through the contextual information provided by Prato Textile museum. Some examples of this consideration of the global nature of textile design are discussed below. Prato Textile Museum provided critical and historical essays on selected topics as part of contextual background information to the unit. Within the essay '*Stylised Florals, Notes on Floral Textile Patterns. Nature on Display'*, Sara Paci Piccolo discusses "the representation of Nature, flowers, trees, leaves and fruits, [as] of the utmost antiquity, being already present in ancient Mesopotamian, Egyptian, and Chinese art" and references "The art of embroidery [as] one of the oldest performed all over the earth… developed also in conjunction with geographical, social and technical knowledge."xxvii

Piccolo references current environmental concerns when discussing that "Nature, and all its expressions, was seen as a reassuring constant in any period, especially during times of social, political and psychological tensions. It might not be[en] casual that today we are so much concerned about the effect of global warming and pollution: Nature is still strongly present in our deep imaginary as a personification of our own survivance on Earthxxviii, and our reciprocal bonds are becoming more and more evident as times pass by."xxix

The essay emphasizes the archetypal nature of motifs of flowers, fruits and vegetation and their omnipresence across different cultures where "Every culture, from different places and different eras, developed their peculiar use of flower ornament, in connection with the evolution of artistic styles and technologies."xxx

Piccolo uses the sample of beetle wing embroidery produced in India for the English market as an opportunity to reference growing contemporary ethical concerns in fashion. "Luxury can be expressed through the application of golden threads or egalitarian materials – like the beetle wings – but also by a careful planning of which materials to use in fashion, which is nowadays one of our rising concern[s]."

In '*Critical and Historical Notes on Geometric Textile Pattern. Symbolic Geometry'*, Piccolo notes that we may use geometric pattern to represent the world referencing similar concepts in different cultures. She cites Dhamija Jasleen (2014), in *Global Textile Encounters*, who considers textiles as an expressive non-verbal language playing a fundamental role in rituals in many cultures, from India to West Africa.[xxxi]
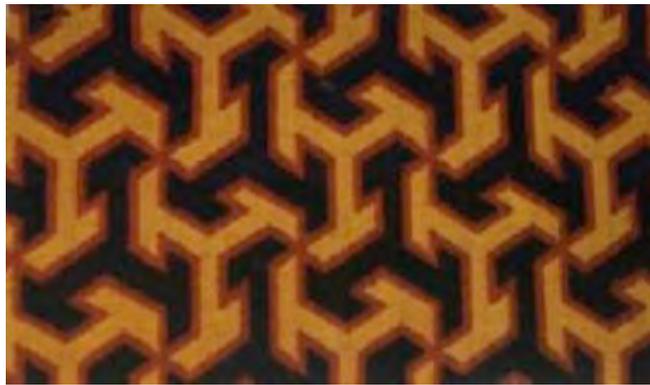
Figure 2: Teaching aid regarding sample tests Prato, 1928. Image Prato Textile museum

Figure 3. Shoowa (panel; Kasai velvet), woven raffia with velvet effect embroidery, Kuba Culture, Congo, Central Africa, 20th century. Prato Textile museum image and caption.

Students from the Technical Textile Institute in Prato were required to learn the theory of plain weave, and then to analyze and reproduce by drawing the textile scheme of different types of fabric samples, this one relating to Art Deco style

between 1920s and 1930s. Piccolo identifies that the motif, although apparently very modern for its highly dynamic tensions emphasized by the use of dramatic and contra posed colors - yellow, dark blue and red - is actually referring to an ancient dynamic pattern, called Triskele, which we may find in the Mediterranean area since Classic Greece time. The Triskele, of probable Indo-Arian origins, is thought to be connected with the Sun or the Moon symbolism, and spread from Asia Minor to Greece, to Italy (Sicily), to the Celtic area (Isle of Man), leaving many tracks of itself on monuments, and later transferring even into heraldic symbolism.xxxii

This panel is obtained by a mixed technique of weaving and embroidering raffia threads. The warps and wefts of the fabric are interwoven with other raffia fibers, which are later cut to obtain a 'hairy' effect, like in velvet.

Piccolo's information again here continues to emphasize the inter-related global nature of textile design origins:
"The motif, highly geometric, is here imitating a 'never-ending' knot, a very ancient and well-known ornamental pattern which we may find in many traditionsxxxiii, usually expressing the mystic relationship between humans and gods."xxxiv

Conclusion

The unit includes consideration of the designer's process. Selecting objects from varied global locations by itself encourages inclusivity and diversity. The unit's supporting text, identifies attributes within the selected object that are valued by the designer and have informed their design development, further focusing awareness towards respecting different cultural textile traditions whilst demonstrating reinterpretation not approbation. Below is the summary for one of the designer's lessons on cutwork design from the unit:
Summary: this sample uses these influences from a mixed method research approach:
- The design remains geometric although not an exact copy of the original.
- The irregularity of hand worked woven process.
- The appearance of cutwork is used to suggest technique development.
- The velvet effect of the African textile is referenced through the use of dense Cornely moss stitch (looped stitch).
- The emphasis on materials in the sample is related to artists with a materials focus to their practice.
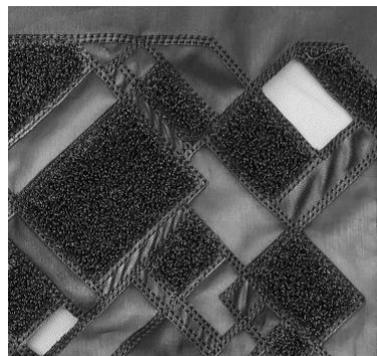

Figure 4: Andy Kenny, London Embroidery Studio, 2018.
Cutwork, appliqué and devoré sample detail.

The resulting sample illustrates the application of a mixed methods research approach using an African textile object as research source, producing a richly layered and

textured, contemporary fashion embroidery design reflecting the richness of the original piece.

This text supporting the alternative poster/ installation of textile images and research sources from the ART-CHERIE project references how opportunities may be introduced into training/ learning resources to foster responsible design. This through not only developing awareness of sustainability and sustainable materials, but also appreciation of cultural responsibility, the responsible use of the archive, to encourage 'reinterpretation not approbation'xxxv and how such a resource might be used within the curriculum towards the development of responsible designers.

Further examples of applying such research approaches can be seen within the ART CHERIE online resource as well as the essays, supporting texts and case studies. Image credits, references and bibliography can be accessed for each lesson and unit from within the online resource.

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x **Visual research** involving extracting observed details from a textile or object in response to colour, texture, pattern or materials and demonstrating how these might become potential design influences. **Contextual research** exploring the wider influences relating to the object - related historical, social and industrial details that could become further design influences. **Object analysis** is the physical study of an object through observation and handling. Within this context object analysis is introduced as a potential research approach to understand for example how studying the reverse of samples may inform design influences.

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xxviii Piccolo, S.P. (2018).www.artcherie.eu (accessed 4/11/19). See, f.e., the 2016 movie "Moana" where Vaiana, the young protagonist, has to work hard to set peace again between a raged and inflamed Nature (*Te Ka/Te Fiti*) and Mankind. Only when the "heart" is returned, Nature returns to her loving and caring nature, and – needless to say – the world is save.

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Throwaway

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Key words: flashmob, design-activism, social protest campaign, raising awareness, worker's rights, textile and clothing waste

Fashion has long been used as a vehicle of protest. Its ability to influence the social and environmental justice issues of our time is more evident and palpable now, than ever before. As global tensions have amplified, clothing is a potent tool to signal our solidarity with the causes we align with. This premise underpins the establishment of the practice-based fashion research project, Space Between. A form of design-activism and protest as described by Alastair Fuad –Luke (2009) and Von Busch (2012). Oriented towards addressing issues such as resource depletion, overconsumption and unethical production. The Space Between project asks can we find a sustainable balance for the fashion system, transforming negative consumption and production patterns, by disrupting the product-service system? Its aim is to literally and figuratively explore the 'space between' the linear 'take, make and waste' system, to create a less wasteful, inclusive, and just fashion system.

Recent global social and political movements have capitalized on the power of fashion as a vehicle for protest and change. Clothing has been used to show alliance and opposition to societal situations such as Trump's election (Zweiman, J. and Suh, K. 2016) the #MeToo movement (2018) and the Black Lives Matter protests (2018). The fashion industry has noticeably abstained on the whole, from exercising this authority and leadership. It has yet to leverage its full socio-political potential to address and reveal the issues of our time. If we begin to unpack the structural barriers within the fashion industry, that prevents it from exercising this power, this prompts us to question the industry's reliance on the fashion show or catwalk, as the primary method for publishing and sharing fashion innovation.

Developed during the First Industrial Revolution, the fashion show was inextricably linked to the innovations of this time - industrialization, mass production and the emergence of the modern capitalist economy. This mode of showing and understanding fashion has increasingly become a questionable practice in the 21st century. The catwalk's reliance on spectacle over substance, loaded with baggage of exploitation and excess, passive voyeurism, and heavy carbon consumption, is patently out of synch with the societal and environmental needs of these times. The shows' format centered upon a swift display of new commodities, on a model; predominantly a white, size zero, very young woman; occurring on site, usually far removed from the garment's context of origin, is no longer innovative or relevant.

The recent pandemic has provided the impetus for a wave of change for the fashion industry. Many Fashion Weeks across the globe have been cancelled in light of social distancing restrictions. Independent designers led by Dries Van Noten (BBC, 2020) in an open letter have called for a radical overhaul of this industry, with fewer shows and less product. It is clear that future focused fashion initiatives, have a responsibility to be more sustainable, and socially engaged. They need to be pro-active in exploring alternative methods, of sharing their research and development in a manner that is compatible with our times.

Social and environmental protest, and creating awareness has been central to the research objective of Space Between. Inspired by the mission of the global campaign, Fashion Revolution a coalition across 93 countries to transform the negative impact of the current fashion industry. Space Between launched in

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tandem with Fashion Revolution Week with a designed and choreographed public protest event – a 'flash mob' in a public square, Midland Park, in Wellington city during a busy mid-week lunch hour.

According to the Merriam Webster dictionary a flashmob is a "group of people summoned (as by e-mail or text message) to a designated location at a specified time to perform an indicated action before dispersing". The Space Between flashmob event was co-designed by members of Space Between team (Whitty, J, Given, T, Laine, M et al. 2015) and enacted as a mass collaboration event with apex 30 flashmobbers in a park New Zealand's capital city at lunchtime. The flashmob took 'fashion' to the street, away from the elite corridors of fashion publications and 'industry-only' events such as Fashion Week in an attempt to disrupt the conventional manner of showing fashion, Leveraging upon the ubiquity and power of our lived reality - we all wear clothes and every time we purchase, use and dispose of clothing it is a social and environmental political act. It either helps or hinders a person, or a place. The flashmob aimed to raise awareness of the complexity of the fashion system – the impacts of our consumption habits, and the interdependencies between makers, and wearers of clothing. It sought to demonstrate the low regard for clothing in contemporary society, and the harmful effects of the fashion/textile industry, by utilizing a combination of three interconnected and mutually reinforcing factors: i) clothing, ii) performance, both on and offline and iii) sound.

i)The visual solidarity created through clothing is potent. A uniform, worn en mass, makes a powerful collective statement that communicates effectively and vividly. The central component of the 'uniform' for the flash mob participants was the slogan t-shirt. In this case a black vest top, made of post-consumer waste, informed by the legacy of sartorial protest both past and present through this medium by fashion activists like Katherine Hamnett in the 1980's and Vivienne Westwood et al. However rather than have a full reveal from the outset of the event, this medium was concealed until a critical moment. The event uniform was upcycled from the end of life supply of NZ Post/Kiwibank corporate uniforms destined for landfill. Staying true to the ethos of Space Between, committed to rethinking fashion and textile waste streams, and applying circular economy principles (Ellen MacArthur Foundation, 2015). The Space Between team designed and used screen-printing methods to create a slogan which was applied to the waste t-shirts prior to the event. The front of the t-shirt cited 3 versions of relatable statistics about the environmental impacts of clothing, in particular relating to the t-shirt itself, from the Fashion Revolution resources:
1."It takes 2720 liters of water to make a t-shirt. That's how much we normally drink over a 3-year period"
2. "95% of discarded clothing can be recycled or upcycled."
3. "$235 million worth of clothing winds up in landfill each year after its worn just once".

The back of the t-shirt wanted to capitalize on this increased awareness. It contained the Space Between logo, website and hashtags. Allowing interested parties to deepen their awareness, connect digitally and learn from the Space Between website, and corresponding social media about how to join the movement for change.

The central message of the flashmob was to draw attention to the waste created by our excessive clothing consumption. Waste is inherent in the current system, as one third of all clothing produced for retail is never sold and is often incinerated. (Eco textile 2016). The lifespan of garments is decreasing, as we now buy about five times more clothing than we did twenty years ago. Elizabeth Cline, author of 2013's "Overdressed: The Shockingly High Cost of Cheap Fashion," calls this the "clothing deficit myth." Donation centers are not equipped to deal with our surplus as only approx. 20% of donations in USA are resold. In order to embody this overconsumption participants started the event wearing approximately 5-6 layers of post-consumer clothing waste, that Whitty and Given collected in The Red Cross charity shop in Kilbirnie, Wellington New Zealand. Participants proceeded to remove their layers of waste clothing and cast them off in all directions across the square, on the cue of a soundtrack which emulated the sounds of

consumption, cash registers pings. Simulating our casual attitude to waste, causing a flurry of activity and clothes flying in all directions in a public space. The participants stripped to the final layer, the slogan t-shirt, assembling into a line, so the statistics about the impact of the fashion and textile industry could be viewed on the slogan t-shirt. The flash mobbers then proceeded to pick up the discarded clothing, scattered around the square and put them in a large pile, a strong visual reminder of the amount of textile waste, before leaving Midland Square.

ii) The performance was devised and choreographed by the Space Between team in advance of the fashmob date. In this age of digital media, both the online and offline aspects of the flashmob were deemed of equal importance. Both mediums impact and shareability were factored into all design considerations as it was noted that a potent visual or video can go viral and have global impact. Videographers Nathan Moon Foon and Kenneth Chapman were recruited as part of the team to document the event and create a short video to be shared after the live event on social media, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube and Vimeo.

The flashmob was a surprise event in a public space, a city center park, at lunchtime, where people congregate to eat their lunch and relax. The actions of the flashmob participants were unexpected in this environment, as slightly overstepped the 'rules' of social conduct in a public space. It caused a range of reactions from shock, to curiosity, as people were caught off guard and were surprised to witness something so unorthodox. The live event had a certain power and authority, but it was even more of a surprise how much the 'event' took on an extended life beyond the local live action in its ability to be disseminated as video on social media channels. The protest went viral globally with over 10,000 views, shared by the public and other like-minded organizations, People Tree UK, a highly respected sustainable fashion brand. It was selected as one of 6 representative events featured in Fashion Revolution's published Impact Report (2016) from the pool of 800 events across the globe. The global media coverage of the entire campaign had a reach of 22 billion. This manner of social protest has developed each year to contribute to the growing momentum for positive change igniting an even bigger global conversation about what we wear and the stories behind our clothes.

An inclusive accessible approach was central to the flashmob exercise. Fashion was brought to the street to engage with the public as the researchers Whitty and McQuillan strongly believe that fashion happens everywhere, and everyone has the right to be involved. The Space Between team recruited approx. 30 people a cross section of society—all ages (babies to grandmothers) all genders, all body types. They brought together the people who were instrumental to their initiative. This included the makers and wearers of their clothing range of upcycled clothes, the Fundamental range (Space Between, 2015). They organized practice runs of choreography of the flashmob with the participants to allow for their input. Participants were given a loss framework to work to- to enter into the public square from different vantage points of the square. To remove clothing for a period to the rhythm of the soundtrack, casting them off in all directions across the square causing a flurry of activity and clothes flying in all directions in a public space. To congregate in a line- up displaying the slogan t-shirts and finally gather the discarded garments in a pile before leaving the square. The performance created an opportunity for designers, makers and consumers to create communities of courage to protest or change behaviors.

iii) The designers of the event decided that sound was a key element to unite the action, and draw attention to the activity in a busy public space. A soundtrack was created in collaboration by Whitty and Manahi Ngaia, a sound designer. It aimed to emulate the sounds of consumption – cash registers and tills, which increased in momentum to fever pitch, mimicking the fast pace of our consumer culture. The final line up was accompanied by a corresponding voiceover listing the damaging effects of industry.

This action contributes to the growing momentum for social and environmental positive change in the fashion industry. Opening up a dialogue and provocation for fashion beyond the treadmill of consumption

and the point of purchase, through the medium of social protest. The event asks questions of us all, the wearers, consumers and makers of fashion around the personal and shared responsibility of this broken system. It forms part of the multi-strategy work of the Space Between initiative's long-term goal, to ignite an even bigger global conversation about what we wear and the stories behind our clothes.

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Credits:

Space Between flashmob team: Whitty, J, Given, T, Laine, M, McQuillan, H, Lockhart, R, Spicer, Banks, L.

Flashmobbers: Alana Cooper, Ana Trenwith- Haberfield, Barend De la Beer, Gerrie de la Beer, Carrie Ní Loinsigh, Chris Montgomerie, Greta Œgor, Julie Fitzgerald, Julie Lintern, Jeannette Troon, Jennifer Whitty, Kate Chalmers, Natalie Ilan, Sarai Beckmann, baby Greta, Scotty Laing, Tasha Maree Dangerfield Smith, Tony Kennedy, Rebecca Lockhart, Shaun Seebaluck Laura Deans, Larissa Banks, Cathal Lennon, Shirley Cressy,Sheena Tanoa, Julie Lintern, Metu Teitiga, Jane Street.

Figures:

Figure 1: Promotional material for fashmob, Whitty, J and Street, Jane (2015)
Figure 2: Fashmob line up 2015
Figure 3: Flash mob in action, picking up discarded items to form the pile of unwanted waste clothes.
Figure 4: Flash mob lineup
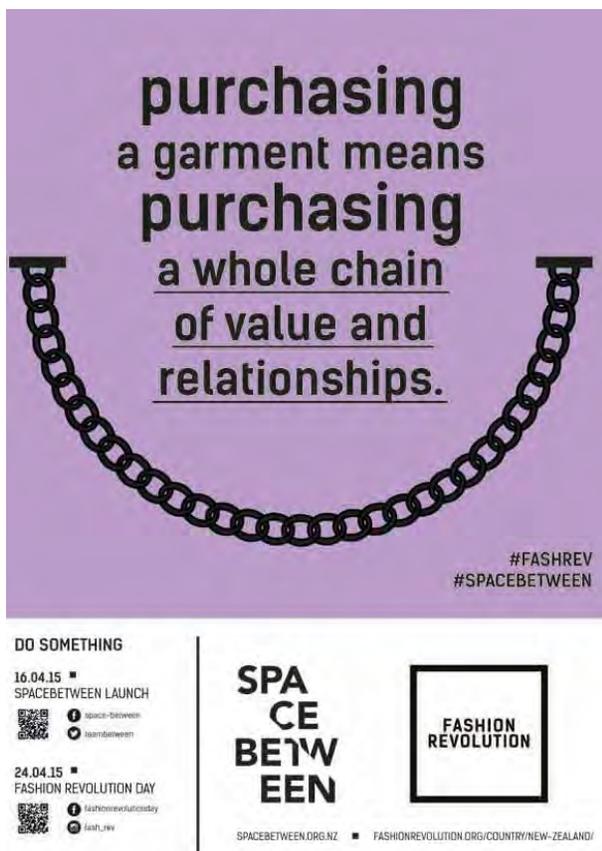
Figure 1: Promotional material for fashmob

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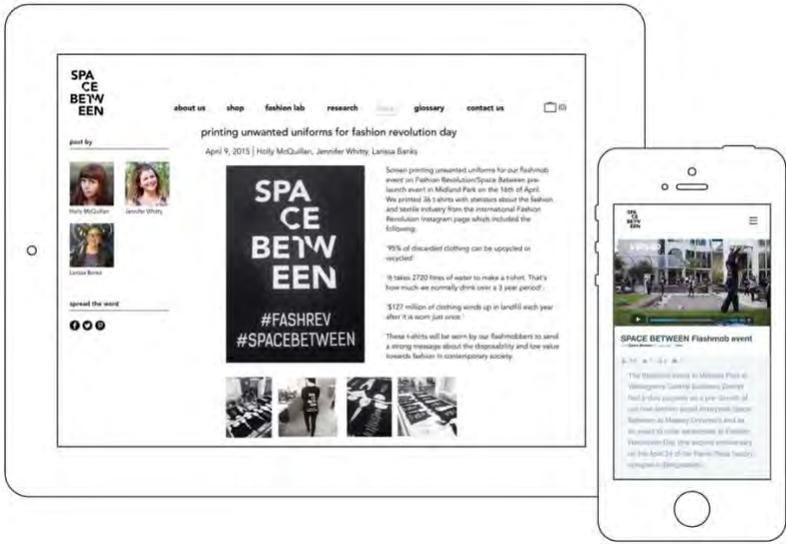
Figure 5: Space between website and social media linked to flash mob

#NoStitchSeptember – A Surreal Journey Towards Sustainable Fashion

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Abstract

Fashion - an aesthetic and popular expression is contributing heavily in generating carbon footprint and polluting environment. Sadly, in the present times of climate emergency we cannot let our sense of aesthetics endanger the planet and our existence in turn.

It is the need of the hour to explore sustainable fashion and aim for zero waste. Timo Risannen in his investigation about creating fashion without generating fabric waste explored 5 main techniques for zero/minimal waste namely – cut & sew, fully fashioned, jigsaw puzzle, cradle to cradle and A-POC. But like Olympics medalist, Peter Westbrook said "so much of our future lies in preserving our past!", there is scope for an alternative by reviving from our ancestors, the art of fashion - a draped cloth. It was seen in history (Indus valley/Egyptian/Greek/Roman) of clothing. A rectangular piece of cloth provides infinite possibilities, 'one size fits all', easy maintenance, easy storage and zero waste. It can be styled in numerous ways providing scope for personalization.

With aim at exploring the potential of draped clothing to be a wardrobe staple, an experiment was conducted inviting volunteers from social media to see if they could pull off a month with use of draped clothing in their everyday lifestyle. The participants were asked to use rectangular pieces of fabric styled as clothing. They could layer and use fasteners/belts/accessories. It was observed that the first challenge was to overcome fear of malfunction and ease for daily use. Overall feedback was positive and shows scope for consideration as a sustainable fashion option. The participant with prior knowledge of draping were better at coping. However, it was difficult to stay warm in cold weather. Thus, results have been compiled as a short film to see if the future of fashion can take a tangential turn towards draped clothing.

Key Words: Sustainable fashion, zero waste, draped clothing, styling, personalization

Introduction

"Call it 'eco-fashion' if you like, but I think it's just common sense." –-Livia Firth,

Fashion is a personal expression, popular at a certain context and time. It covers clothing, cosmetics, hairstyles, accessories, footwear, lifestyle and body proportions. Dress and adornment is an essential part of human experience. Perhaps because of its closeness to the body, dress has a richness of meaning that is an expression of the individual as well as groups, organizations, and the large society in which the person lives. (Damhorst, Miller and Michelman, 1999). However, overconsumption of clothing at present is leading to generating large carbon footprints and waste. A recent Pulse of The Fashion Industry report stated that fashion generates 4% of the world's waste each year, 92 million tons, which is more than toxic e-waste. (Committee, 2019)

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Thus, there clearly is a need to rethink the way we make, use and dispose our clothes, as all of these have an environmental impact. Fashion Revolution founder and creative director Orsola de Castro told Fashion United that "we need to stop calling it waste and start seeing it for what it is—a resource." (Parent, 2019). The fashion industry is currently witnessing the stirrings of a shift to zero-waste and a circular economy. In this ideal situation the products are not just used once but re-used and re-purposed multiple times. The fashion industry, which has been a major culprit, can lead the way.

Objective of the Study

The search for various design solutions to meet the sustainability needs, leads to handful of existing alternatives. Timo Risannen, suggests, there are five main possibilities for managing textile waste referred to as waste hierarchy (citation). The two most preferred solutions to handling the waste is prevention and reuse. The study aims at exploring these techniques by taking inspiration from history of clothing to understand the scope for draped clothing to be a staple part of wardrobe.

Methodology

An experiment was conducted with two respondents and social media influencers that believe in sustainable lifestyle choices. Ms. Nikaytaa, a saree researcher and enthusiast, has mastered the art of draping 6 and 9 yards of sarees. She promotes the use of Indian handlooms and fabrics through her draping for gender fluid fashion identities. Ms. Mridula Joshi, is a sustainable lifestyle consultant who is an activist for climate change emergency. The emotional drive of the subjects towards draped clothes and sustainability helped the subjects come up with creative interpretations for draped clothing as part of wardrobe staple. The subjects explored the first two most preferred alternatives of prevention (making use of existing pieces of fabrics) and reusing the same to create various ensemble options through permutations and combinations and innovative draping styles. They explored using textile fabrics (rectangular pieces) to be draped in multiple ways to suffice their clothing needs for a month. Their experiences have been recorded and analyzed.

Draped Clothing – a sustainable fashion solution

Throughout the ages, clothing was categorized as either "tailored" or "draped". A tailored garment would be sewn together and worn closely to body, in contrast to a "draped" garment, such as toga that doesn't require sewing. Draping is the process of transforming a cloth into a three-dimensional form. The art of draping dates back to 3500 BCE, beginning with the Mesopotamians and Ancient Egyptians. Greek fashion followed with the invention of draped silhouettes like the chiton, peplos, chlamys and himations. The Etruscan and Ancient Romans invented the toga, a length of fabric that wraps and drapes around the body. Tailored garments were first developed by the Northern European cultures: the Celts, Britons, Gaels and Normans. Tailored garments helped these ancient people survive the extremely cold weather conditions. These costumes were cut into shaped pieces and sewn together to fit the body more closely. On the other hand, draped clothing is made from lengths of fabric that are wrapped around the body and require little or no sewing and predominates in the warm climates. With few exceptions, ancient world garments were draped.

Whether in Rome, Greece, Egypt or Mesopotamia, draping was considered the most civilized way to dress (Pendergast,S. and Pendergast,T. 2004) It was the art of the elite to gracefully arrange the folds of elegant togas and other draped garments. Chantal Boulanger's research into Indian draped clothes has revealed a fascinating insight into ethnic origins and perceptions of the body, and above all, a multidimensional craft, which remains basically, unexplored (Boulanger, 1997). Despite a rich history, the art of draping has been totally ignored or even disparaged (Tortora and Eubank, 1989).

It is believed that only six primary "hearths of civilization"-areas in which combinations of sophisticated technological innovations and social institutions flourished – have occurred relatively independently on our planet (Trigger, 2007). Two of these were in the Ancient Near East- Mesopotamia and Egypt; two further to the east: Indus Valley and China; and two in America: Andes and Mesoamerica. For the subsequent cultures of the Western European world, the Ancient Near East represents a direct heritage, just as the descendants of the other civilization reflect aspects of their own earliest beginnings. Throughout Ancient Egypt's long history, all women – as well as men and children – wore a triangular loincloth secured to the body with cord ties. The variety of ways in which Egyptian female costumes could be draped was enormous. The garments remained simple, accentuating the squareness of the shoulders, the narrowness of the waist and hips, and elongation of the figure. The Minoan Dress for men consisted of short, wrapped loincloths/kilts – often with decorated borders – secured at the waist by tight, cinched belts. The dress for the women was even more elaborate, consisting of bell-shaped skirts. The Greeks were cultural exporters, setting standards that included a manner of dressing where the sleeveless, draped tunic was the basic attire. All civilian Greek clothing reflected various ways of draping rectangles of linen or wool that, after wearing, could be smoothed, folded and efficiently stored flat. The simple linen chiton – usually worn belted – was the primary garment for Greek men and women of all periods. The women also wore a main outer attire – peplos, a rather heavy woolen rectangle folded vertically and then wrapped around the body with an over fold at the top that allowed for adjusting the length of the garment to fit the wearer. The beautifully draped clothing of Classical Greece emphasized the contours of the human body. From the Greeks the Etruscans adopted the use of flat cloth for clothing, as well as the way in which they wore these woven rectangles. Though the difference in their drapes was with the way they tend to express their respect for an individual by fully dressing the figure unlike the Greek's clothing philosophy of "less is more". In case of the Roman dress, they made a distinction between garments that were "put on – indutus" and the garments that were "wrapped around – amictus". Men, women and children all dressed in the same basic garment, the tunic. These chitons were attached at the shoulder by brooches or by buttons and were mostly belted. They had various ways of wearing these tunics, peplos, palla. (Anawalt, 2007)

Among the varieties of Indian garments, scholars Moti Chandra and G. S. Ghurye have identified three separate pieces of draped clothing – uttariya, antariya, and kayabandh – as components of ancient Indian feminine attire. Woven as independent garment units, each of the three components of the draped ensemble is evident in a myriad range of
wearing styles and names corresponding to the provenance and period of historical analysis. (BHOWC, 2006)

In an age of commercialized global monoculture, many people are working to preserve our vulnerable cultural heritage of ancient arts and crafts (UNESCO,2009) Of these, the beautiful art of draped clothing is especially at risk. Draping is ephemeral as each time the draped garment is taken off from the wearer's body, it will lose its unique form. It is almost entirely unrecorded,

and the techniques exist in the hands and minds of skilled individuals. Draped clothes are not stitched or cut to fit, but wrapped around the body, using simple panels of cloth arranged according to the sensibilities and needs of the individual.

Results and Discussions

As part of the experiment, the subjects explored the possibility of using rectangular pieces of fabrics to be worn as regular day-to-day clothing. They documented the process of draping and their experience through the day on daily basis for the month of September as part of a challenge - #NoStitchSeptember.

Subject 1:
A member of the Millennial generation, Ms. Mridula Joshi, took a non-conventional take on the draping explorations. She did not want to restrict herself to the traditional draped attire and explored the clothing with a modern touch. She challenged the possibility of using draped clothing to her postgraduate classes, to attending religious functions, to even going for treks in draped clothing. She documented the process of draping as part of her IGTV channel (Instagram TV) as well as on her Instagram page to encourage more people to take up these alternative clothing options.
It was interesting to see a fresh take on a clothing pieces that have a historical reference. Some of the looks from her #NoStitchSeptember are as follows:
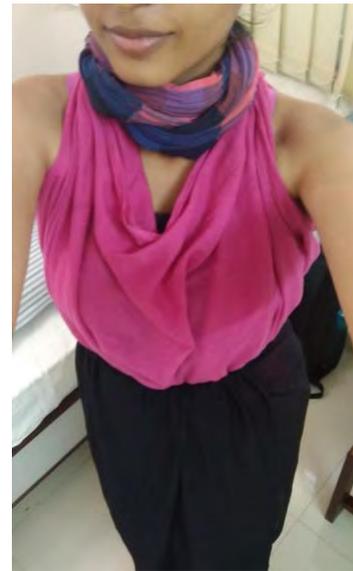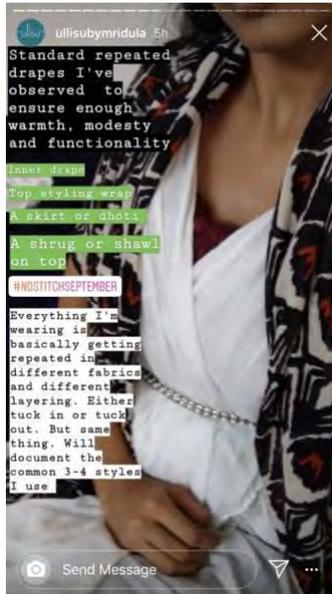
These images depict her journey through the month of September by using varied draped styles to create daily wear clothing.

Subject 2:

As a member of the Gen- X generational cohort, Ms. Nikaytaa explored the Saree and its rich history and celebrated the same in multiple drape options. From running a marathon in draped clothing to conducting sessions to promote the Saree as clothing. Some of the recorded images from her account are as follows:

Both the subjects were able to also motivate their followers to join on the #NoStitchSeptember project, and some creative depictions of the challenge were seen as follows:

Conclusion

The Ellen MacArthur Foundation, which works to inspire a generation to rethink, redesign and build a circular economy, suggests we "redesign [the fashion system] so there are only good choices for customers". Based on this thought, this study aims at rethinking the clothing consumption on daily basis and creating wider opportunities for the customer today. #NoStitchSeptember proved as an eye opener for many, for they did not anticipate the possibilities of a humble piece of rectangular piece of cloth. It did have challenges, such as significantly breaking the stereotype and the fear of facing a wardrobe malfunction, however overcoming this fear led the subjects to embrace sustainability with a fresher perspective. These experiences, process followed, and feedback of the challenge are culminated into a short video film, to present to the world, the endless possibilities that can be created with rectangular pieces of fabrics, thus minimizing waste generation while catering to the human need of wanting more options. #NoStitchSeptember thus provides more opportunities with less resources. This video emphasizes that it is time for fashion system to look at fully draped clothing as an alternative to the mass produced ready to wear clothing.

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Every Body Fits Here

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This project was built around celebrating body diversity. Images of people were translated into a work of textile art through digital printing and embroidery. Bodies and body positive messages were represented in a stylized manner and subjects were engaged in the design process to promote community engagement in the message.

Keywords: body image, body diversity, textile art, embroidery

This project was built around the goal of celebrating body diversity. Emphasis on body type and the marginalization of bodies (e.g. size, ability, gender, etc.) is of particular concern on college campuses. College students are navigating societal messages associated with the idea that there exists an ideal body type that everyone should be striving to achieve. These messages and this emphasis on perfection can be harmful to self-identity, self-compassion, and self-esteem. As an educator I am able to monitor my own messaging around issues of body image in the classroom, however I am also aware that how I dedicate my time outside of the classroom in research and creative scholarship sends a message to students about what I view as important. I elected to focus this work of creative scholarship on creating a platform for normalizing differences in body type and supporting body positivity. Three devices were employed to support the objectives of the project. First, body types were represented in a stylized manner to focus the viewer on the message of the piece. Second, written body positive messages were included and third, subjects were engaged in selecting some of the features of how they would be represented. The project involved recruiting and photographing subjects and translating those images into a work of textile art through digital printing and embroidery.

Process/Method

The composition and style of presenting bodies in this piece was based in part on the convention of representing groups of people in graphic art through flattening or silhouetting images. A typical version of this, found through a web search for "clip art group of people" shows several people standing in a row. No features are discernible as the entire image is one solid color. This type of image is commonly used in presentations to illustrate the idea of a crowd or group. What is uncommon in this stylized form is to see different types of bodies. With this in mind, this textile art piece was built around the idea of flattened silhouettes but shows a more realistic group of individuals. Flattening the image focuses the viewer on the body itself, and on the written messages, in the form of signs held by subjects as they were photographed, which support the theme of celebrating body diversity. The second level of stylization was the addition of embroidery to each body image in the piece. The intention here was to elevate and celebrate each individual by decorating the images with stitching in geometric patterns. Inspiration for this came from the technique of visible mending, which elevates common or worn items of clothing through the addition of patterned stitching.

To help subjects to feel they were a part of the project, each individual was invited to select the

background color of their silhouetted body, the thread color and stitch pattern for their embroidery, and the message on and color of their sign. Subjects had a choice of four background colors, 15 thread colors, seven sign colors, and seven stitch patterns. Background colors were red, blue, green, or gray. The color selections were presented with the idea that some subjects would want their image to stand out, while others would want to recede. The background color options were red, green, blue, and gray. Similarly, individuals might choose a thread color that contrasted or blended with their background. Stitch patterns were based on nested or concentric geometric shapes (triangle, hexagon, ellipse, and circle) as well as spirals. Blank signs were available for subjects to write their own message, and some pre-written signs were provided. Subjects were given the option to not hold a sign if preferred.

With IRB approval, subjects were recruited from among students, faculty, and staff. A total of 22 individuals participated. Each subject was photographed against a neutral wall. Camera distance was kept consistent throughout so that relative heights of individuals could be preserved when images were combined. After photographing, subjects were shown samples of print colors, thread, and stitch patterns and their choices were recorded. Next, images were flattened in Adobe Photoshop and combined and arranged into three rows. The finished dimensions of each row would be 49"x18", and the three separate pieces could be displayed singly or together. The images were printed on 100% linen cloth using a HP Latex 335 printer. Stitching was done using DMC #5 Pearl Cotton thread.

Conclusions/Findings

Subject responses to the process of being photographed and selecting their image details were not recorded to avoid self-consciousness, however the preferences they expressed did become a form of data that I analyzed and reacted to as I produced the final piece. In the preparation phase, I focused primarily on how to engage them in the process. I took care to create visually pleasing stitch samples, and in compiling neat and professional looking color swatches. I developed a flyer inviting participation and stating the purpose of the piece. At this stage I was thinking about the project in the context of the community and the impact it would have. I made a commitment to honoring the individuals who volunteered to participate through preserving their stated preferences in how they would be represented. This focus on the individual could have been somewhat at odds with the conventions of design as expressed through textile art. In that regard, there was a certain amount of risk involved in leaving details up to the subjects. What if all but one subject had selected the same background color? As it happens there was more or less of a balance in the choices that subjects made. Some of the stitching is less prominent because the thread colors blend rather than contrasting with the background, however this contributes to the truth of the piece, as it represents differences not only in how people look but in how they wish to be seen.

The idea of engaging a community in how to create community-centered artwork seems quite natural, and this project has inspired ideas about how future work might be conducted along similar lines. When this artwork is displayed, viewers will have an opportunity to respond to a survey about how this and other issues might be addressed through textile art. The enthusiastic response to this project from the university community has also suggested a more interactive version in which subjects could use a digital platform to make themselves a part of the message.

Community-engaged art that involves the community in its creation has great potential to make an impact and promote a positive message.

Kindred Bloom Collaboration

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"Folk art is of, by, and for the people; all people, inclusive of class, status, culture, community, ethnicity, gender, and religion" - The International Folk-Art Museum

Abstract

The Kindred Bloom project was created for the 'Wearing Justice' exhibit on view at the Kent State University Museum 2019-20. As we acknowledge the 50th Anniversary of the May 4th Kent State shootings, we find the parallels between the student activists in 1970 and contemporary youth activists pronounced. In the 1970's young passionate students demonstrated against the American war in Vietnam and Korea by holding rallies and demonstrations. At the time of Kindred Bloom's conception, we were again witnessing the mobilization of youth activists, this time urging leaders to address gun safety legislation. Immediately following the Marjory Stoneman Douglas school shooting on February 14th, 2018, the media outlets were publishing images of children responding angrily to the lack of gun laws. Some images featured children with friendship bracelets which were inherently made in the innocence of youth, displayed on the wrists of these children. Currently, youth are holding rallies to gain the attention of those in power and working on digital platforms such as Facebook and Twitter to grow a community of support. Our collaborative response to Kent State University's commemoration of the May 4th event is a conceptual installation in which we imagine the youth activists of today utilizing folk-art-inspired art previously employed by their youth activist counterparts in the 1970's to embellished their clothing to both communicate support and create/reinforce community.

Key words: May 4th shootings, social protest, folk-art, youth activism, creative practice

Introduction

The use of digitally generated images are the primary communication vehicles for today's activist youth: in much the same way that activists of the past used craft work, folk and rock music to communicate and gather support around their fight to be heard and desire to form connections with their community. Today's youth activists were born out of a violent and sudden first-hand experience of gun violence. They have been ripped from the activities of childhood into the activist realm of the adult. While they engage in actions of the adult-world, they are often still seen wearing symbols or identifiers of their childhood such as friendship bracelets. The presence of the bracelets creates a striking visual contrast with the experience of violence and loss that these youth have been exposed to. Compelled to demand common sense gun legislation from their legislators through participation in the "March for Our Lives" rallies in cities across the United States, and through the creation of other gun legislation rallies, these youth, like the demonstrators in Kent in 1970, demonstrate their desire to be agents of

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collaborative change. With the installation "Kindred Bloom" we collaborated on two outfits using machine embroidery, screen print, hand knotted (macramé) bracelets, and created folk art inspired designs that could be shared across digital platforms. We used the traditional folk art motifs to reflect shared cultural aesthetics and social issues.

Folk Art

       Folk art is both an act of personal expression and an identifier as part of a group. It's use often expresses empowering stories of everyday life (International Folk Art Museum, 2019). Under repressive economic and cultural oppression minority groups have managed to maintain their group identities through continued folk art practices. The history of Poland, by way of example, exhibits the use of folk art to maintain identity in the face of multiple invasions. "The importance of[...]folk creativeness in the preservation of national culture has extorted range of activities of scientific, economic and popularizing character. Their apogee falls on the nineteenth century, when the elements of folk art have become an important aspect of the policy in the fight against the invader. "(Czerwińska. page 2) (Czerwinksa, 2013)

       In the United States folk art appears, among many other places and times, at the time of the anti-war demonstrations in the 1970's through hand embellished clothing and signs to form an identity around a resistance to war. (https://www.kent.edu/may4visitorscenter, 2019). More recently folk art is seen in the decorative fashion upcycling, the re-introduction of traditional textile techniques via the slow fashion movement (Betsy Greer, 2014) and in the case of Alabama Chanin a lifestyle company founded by Craft Activist Natalie Chanin, sharing and teaching these techniques to heal communities (Chanin, 2019). Educators see the act of introducing children to folk craft and art during school and camp activities as building ties and identities, fostering connections between the children as they learn and work side by side. Donalyn Heiss writes in her essay *Folk Art in the Urban Art Room* about bringing folk art into the classroom that, "through folk art, stories told visually and verbally using quilting, needlepoint, painting, basket weaving, carving, sculpting, singing, storytelling, cooking, and games, reveal what we treasure. The skills necessary for these art forms are often taught in homes, parks, or on the streets, acquired informally from generations of family extended family and friends in the community. With this acquisition, members of our community learn who we are and gain a sense of belonging." (Heiss, 2010). The focus on embroidery, screen printing, and traditional craft techniques, symbolized contemporary youth activists. Many of these activists have been seen creating sharable folk art patterns and prints as a visual connector to each other and to past generations who shared their search for social justice. A beneficial attribute to working with open source files, like that of a print, is that they can be editioned, shared and sent around the world digitally which provides more access and can reach more people. Designers often construct narratives when they conceive of a garment (Carreno, 2014) and our garment designs are no exception. We incorporated friendship bracelets, once a token of youth, now a representation of loss due to gun violence. Our designs also take into consideration the resilience of youth. This led to our collaborative intention to utilize upcycled garments in our installation. It is now globally and formally agreed that the environment has reached an alarming state of degradation, and that human activities drive earth systems off balance...The textile and fashion sectors' disturbance to social systems became a global media topic in 2013 (Jeffries, 2018). With the advent of this new awareness in the value of upcycling clothing we sourced and only utilized previously owned clothing. Cloth and fiber are being rediscovered by a new generation of

creative practitioners' visual artists re-interpreting textile craft practices, curators and cultural critics using textiles as a route towards contemplation, as a way of opening up an argument or narrative. (Jefferies, 2018). Art comes from the process—we propose that the process of the study and exploration of materials enlightens and informs. The educating of oneself helps to build a voice for change. Our collaboration attempts to piece together a lived experience and act as a potential catalyst for future activists.

Methodology

Printmaking has long been a medium of choice for social activism. The print medium works well for creating multiples thus the shareability of an image is an extremely powerful communication tool—however, according to Robert Blackburn, "The Medium is not the thing in and of itself. It's what the artist does with it that matters...It's merely an extension of the idea." (Jemison, 1992). Additionally, ideas for imagery evolve and grow from the materials used. (Blackburn, 1992) Collaborative printmaking studios have historically involved artists working with social justice imagery. Robert Blackburn, printmaker and founder of The Robert Blackburn Printmaking Workshop in New York City believed that "Artists must view themselves in the context of the great whole. They must see their connectiveness to the historical past, the present, and the promised future." (Jemison, 1992). At The Printmaking Workshop, artists from all over the world worked alongside one another. Through this workshop Blackburn inspired many international printmakers of all skill levels to print which naturally created a rich ground for learning and collaborating.

The stitched lines of the embroidery threads in the Kindred Bloom project, simulates the etching lines in a print. Embroidery was used to lay down the color as a means to convey print through a digital file. Because it is an embroidery machine that was used, much like pulling a print off of a printing press, there is an element of surprise in the process, the overlap of the color through the process is where the most exciting interchange happens creating a dynamic depth and movement between the colors. This brings the viewer into the work in a way that is almost architectural, described as "phenomenal transparency" (Rowe and Slutzky, 1963). The remarkable color mixing can happen both through the printing and embroidery process. Supporting this is Blackburn's thoughts on the use of color in print, "Color has to function within the creative process and not be just an accessory." (Jemison, 1992). It is through this craft of the process that we achieve great results of integrated color in the final image. The threads are fine which provides an opportunity to blend colors while achieving varying layers and textures. The light hits the embroidery in variation as well. It is through the image making process (and in the case of Kindred Bloom, the machine embroidery process) that we gain a better understanding of the materials themselves. As Krishna Reddy recounts, "In the hands of the artist-printmaker, the intaglio plate, the materials, and the techniques form a web of dynamic, continuous patterns in which the artist is an active participant. In this way, printmaking becomes a living art—a path of learning and discovery through which to express oneself." (Reddy, 1988).

Our installation utilizes folk art inspired processes and images and techniques both from the past (through floral motifs and embroidery) and present (QR codes and digital embroidery). This was in support of earlier generations but also in the belief that folk art belongs to the youth of today as much as it belongs to the past. "The integration of folk art can provide a safe, nurturing expression of art in the community. It can prepare students for participation in a

democratic society by recognizing the richness of multiple perspectives found in individual and community creations... Folk art can empower formally marginalized students to have a voice in the community conversation. It can help students become active members of the community as they interact with local masters of a living museum, artists rooted in local culture. Students begin to form individual and collective identity. (Heise, 2010). We included the use of upcycled garments embellished through screen printing, digital embroidery and heat transfer techniques to create two distinct outfits conceived as expressions of clothing for politically active youth of today. Much of the imagery in our installation is taken directly from floral folk art motifs and then digitized. With the inclusion of digital technology, we are acknowledging the changing times and the current way in which youths communicate. Our designs are in digital format and are instantly and pervasively shareable. The open source folk-art inspired embroidery and print image files creates, in a sense, a global collaboration. These can be printed/embroidered and worn to show solidarity in social justice issues. This idea arrived to us out of another collaborative process/craft—friendship bracelets. This shared youthful pastime of creating these bracelets is something we saw on the wrists of many youth protesting gun violence in response to the many recent school shootings. It is shocking to see this youthful symbol on young students who are leading the gun control marches. It is a reminder that it is, once again, the youth that are standing up as an active voice. We aimed to connect the digital, often the primary communication vehicles for today's youth, with the hand work and crafts- making of the activists of the past. Included in the embellishment as a motif in the imagery are QR codes. The QR codes act included both as design elements that reference contemporary culture but also as access to community resource websites that link the wearer and the garment to a larger movement, in the same way that donning a handmade pink hat in January of 2016 signaled the intentional support and participation in the worldwide movement of the "Women's March". The pink hats also acted as a unifying element to the wearers building a sense of community and an agreement in unity of purpose. With our installation we imagined a scenario where folk-art-embellished garments functioned in the same way for the youth activists.

Our work took the form of embroidery and print through digital file preparation. Working digitally provides the opportunity to repeat and share images and can also provide a way to build upon an image already started. This can serve almost like in the form of an international conversation. Through the file prep, implementing the designs, and wearing the images we see the connecting of different people through marches or gatherings. Once people are assembled with the unifying elements on their garments the photographing becomes another outlet for the designs. Photography of these events can unify people--through social media there is another layer of communication that happens.

We prepared our files digitally for the embroidery machine. Through this process, it was exciting to see our designs finally appear on our upcycled jackets. Suddenly the designs that we had been working on were transpiring transforming from concept to and fact. At that point, more design collaboration took place since we were then able to picture the placement and layout of the actual embroidery. There are some limitations to working on upcycled garments as the location of buttons, zippers, and seams are, in many cases already in place, so we needed to work around these areas. This can help to inform the design in the same way that working with a printing plate can also end up directing the path of a design.

Through the shared experience of collectively living current events, commemorating past events and global collaboration from concept to execution we are put in mind of a quote from art educator Tim Rollins when he said of his KOS group (Kids of Survival), "It's like a community choir and people get together. Some sing like Aretha Franklin and some do not, but everyone is allowed to be in the choir and everyone's voices are raised in unison in one common song. That's the spirit of this group." We suggest that the collaborative process combined with exploration of something larger than oneself can be used to promote global peace and justice.

Images

Image A shows the mannequin on the left is wearing shorts, t-shirt with a hand screened image and denim jacket with machine embroidery. The mannequin on the right is wearing a t-shirt dress with hand screened images and a distressed denim jacket that has machine embroidered and heat set imagery. All of the clothing originated from locally sourced thrift stores and have been upcycled for the purposes of the exhibit. The machine embroidery took place at the Case Western Reserve Think Box and the Kent State University TechStyle Lab. The screen printing and heat set printing were done at the TechStyle Lab.

The detail photos showcase the embroidery on the upcycled jackets, including the QR code (Image C) which takes the viewer directly to the Everytown for Gun Safety site. Also, detail photos of our machine embroidered, folk-art inspired flowers (Images C, D and F) and a detail (Image E) of the macramé bracelets (friendship bracelets) with the words "Never Again", "March for Our Lives", and "Everytown" knotted into the bracelet design.

Summary

"Wearing Justice", is an exhibition commemorating the Kent State University May 4th, 1970 shootings while also addressing social issues that parallel history and current events happening today. Some designers directly addressed visuals from the 1970's era while other designers used imagery from today's issues. For our Kindred Bloom installation, we used both components that conjure up the past while addressing issues of the present.

Image A

Image B

Image C

Image D

Image F

Image E

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Fashion Activism with Community: Co-Design Project Between Fashion Designers & Bike Commuters in Hong Kong

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Elita Y.N. Lam , Hong Kong Design Institute, China
Eddy S. Hui. Hong Kong Designer Association

A dynamic range of new denimwear including Qipao jumpsuit, Modern Cycling Dress, Biker Set, Engineered Denim Gear were co-created by 4 matchup of fashion designers and bike commuters in Hong Kong. This collaboration serves as a practice-based example of fashion activism giving rise to innovation over ordinary products for specific community group.

Keywords: Co-design, Fashion Activism, Cycling Lifestyle, Bicycle Commuting, Design for Community in Hong Kong

Introduction

Bicycle commuting is regarded as a healthy and sustainable movement embraced in many major cities. Unfortunately, there are limitations to the popularity of the movement due to the dense population and unfriendly road design in Hong Kong. Bike commuters in Hong Kong become a minority group resulting in expectations and demands that are often disregarded, such as the particular clothing needs. In this project, bike commuter representatives from a community group called Tin Kwong Ride, were invited to participate in a co-design project with professional fashion designers, to design a range of fashion products. This collaboration serves as a practice-based example of fashion activism that gives rise to innovation over ordinary line of products for specific community group. (i.e. denim fashion products for city bikers)

In contemporary design practice, designers address the need for a proactive design approach towards a move from user-centered design to co-design. Under the scope of co-design, fashion activism was regarded as a suggestion that designers utilise design in its active or activist form to express by enabling the user with a better product understanding (Hirscher & Niinimäki, 2013). Adopting the co-creation framework proposed by (Frow et al., 2015), three phases were carried out. Designers who pursue different fashion styles and co-designers (end- user) were invited by the initiator (authors), to cooperate and fulfil the co-creation motive i.e. innovate city-biking style with fashionable denim clothing. They demonstrated an effective co-design experience with cognitive and behavioural engagement, employing personal group discussion and test fittings (see Figure 1 regarding co-design progress).

A dynamic range of prototypes included a Qipao jumpsuit, utility jacket, engineered jeans which were all co-created. The result suggested that collaborative influences informed fashion activism between fashion designers and the community during the co-design process, creating new value of products, and an elimination of the discrepancy between community group's expectation and product performance.

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Figure 1. Activities & objectives throughout the co-design progress

ACTIVITIES	OBJECTIVES
1. INITIATION A co-design fashion topic: **innovate citybiking style in denim styles**	designers who pursue different fashion styles and co-designers (end-user) were invited by the initiator (authors), to cooperate and fulfil the co-creation motive *Involved parties: initiator*
2. INTERACTION Group discussion between all designers & end-users	an exchange of design idea and solution based on designers' and co-designers' cognitive and behavioural expectation. *Involved parties: designers, end-users*
PAIRING UP DESIGNERS & CO-DESIGNERS	initiator perform a pairing-up action according to the attributes of designers and end-users
3. IDEA & SOLUTION IDENTIFICATION Designers initiate specific fashion concept; Co-designers engage in specific project according to their attributes and expectation	created a space of inter-enabling influences in form of fashion activism between fashion designers & end-users *Involved parties: initiators, designers, end-users*
4. WEARING TRIAL & REVIEW A in-depth feedback session based on end-users' physical and performance experience on the prototypes	generate new and accurate value of products, that eliminate the discrepancy between community group's expectation and product performance on new products *Involved parties: designers, end-users*

Background of the Collaboration Project

About Hong Kong Denim Festival

The Hong Kong Denim Festival is an annual design and cultural event held in Hong Kong which aims to celebrate the denim fashion and local cultural aspirations in Hong Kong. In 2019, the Hong Kong Denim Festival launched a Co-Design project, which engaged a match-up collaboration between Hong Kong professional fashion designers and a group of bike commuters from a community group called Tin Kwong Ride. This is a innovative project that aimed to discuss and explore the future of denim and its application on bicycle commuting lifestyle. It also researches co-design philosophy in specialised fashion styles through co-design experience with cognitive and behavioural engagement, by employing personnel group discussion and wearing trial meeting.

Four professional fashion designers from Hong Kong who had extensive experience in denimwear design were invited to co-design a range of innovative denim items with four bike commuter representatives from Tin Kwong Ride. This collaboration serves as a practice-based example of fashion activism that gives rise to innovation over ordinary line of products for specific community group. (i.e. denim fashion products for citybikers)

Background of Tin Kwong Ride
Bicycle commuting is a significant trend worldwide for better urban development in transportation and energy consumption. A steadily growing number of citizens in Europe, America, Japan, Taiwan, and Southeast Asia engage social activities by commuting on a bicycle, i.e. to school, work, or meeting up friends. A wide variety of major metropolitan cities, promote and advocate the importance of bicycles commuting for healthy and sustainable city development in recent years. However, similar environmentally friendly and healthy progress in urban areas is not popular in Hong Kong. To a certain degree, the bicycling commuting movement is being discouraged by a lack of adequate support in city infrastructure. The enclosure of a cycle lane is limited to specific areas, often there is no track on the road within designed transportation and road systems and while most drivers are not well educated to cope with bikes on the street.

Tin Kwong Ride is therefore a growing community group in Hong Kong, aiming to promote the culture of bike commuting. Members are pioneers who pursue bike commuting as an excellent means to improve community in all aspects such as physical and mental health, energy consumption and urban planning. Tin Kwong Ride believe that the growing number of bike commuters would become a significant motivation to interest the governments' response to improving infrastructure for better urban life in the future.

Figure 2. Members of Tin Kwong Ride, a cycling commuter group in Hong Kong who ride to work daily

(Facebook Fanpage: https://www.facebook.com/groups/tinkwongrid
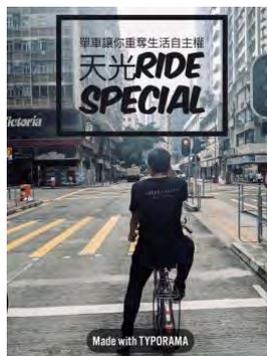
Figure 3. A special campaign activity call in Facebook stated that "Cycling bring you back autonomy in life"

Results

An interesting and constructive collaborative influence was created between fashion designers and commuters throughout the design process. The four invited designers were unique in background and design philosophy, ranging from traditional feminist celebrity Janko Lam, technical-based crafter like Bleu Kobo, contemporary style innovator FromClothingOf and revolutionary streetwear designer YMDH which are all based in Hong Kong.

In this project, the four designers experienced the collaborative design process enabling them to rely on their own aesthetic as well as understand the needs of particular customers beyond their normal scope. It allowed the designers to provide inspiring solutions and to enrich the co-designers' appreciation of fashion aesthetics in denimwear. Fusing designers' original aesthetics and co-designers' individual needs, a dynamic range of prototypes including Qipao jumpsuit, utility jacket, and engineered jeans. The result suggested that co-creating influenced comprehension of fashion activism between fashion designers and the community during the co-design process, creating new values within the products, that eliminated the discrepancy between community group's expectation and product performance.

1. Cheongsam hybrid jumpsuit by Janko Lam (designer) and Laura Yeung (co-designer)

Concept: Janko Lam is a contemporary womenswear designer who inspired by traditional Chinese clothing. Her label, Classics Anew is a hybrid fashion label merging the Chinese traditional aesthetics with contemporary elements, which aims to bring the Chinese traditional clothing to the modern age. Cheongsam is the icon of Chinese traditional clothing, suggests a feeling of femininity. In the conversation between Janko and the co-designer, Laura, Janko learned that Laura is an ordinary office worker who enjoys bike commuting. Janko felt that Laura might be a traditional Chinese female who loves to receive compliments from people who admire her lifestyle. Janko designed a modified Cheongsam into a daily cycling wear. She mentioned that this is a challenge to her, yet it allowed her to explore the possibility of Cheongsam and to tackle aspects of functionality in the cheongsam design. Through prototype testing, rows of buttons were added to the side seams, so the wearer can adjust the length of hem to fit their cycling needs. Inspired by the metal buttons of denim jacket and the metal parts of a bicycle, metal buttons were applied and used in this Cheongsam jumpsuit.

2. Engineered Denim Gear for Day and Night by Bleu Kobo (designer) and Eddy Hui (co-designer)

Bleu Kobo is a technical denim craft driven brand that is focused on denimwear collections which feature innovative denim techniques, fine craftsmanship, with the use of high quality denim material. Founders, Osmond Lee and Ming Fan had a solid experience in denim design and production, and share a philosophy of innovating denim wear and exploring its potential by fusing traditional crafts and new technology in denim garment. Lee and Fan met Eddy Hui, who is a designer and design educator who joined Tin Kwong Ride two years ago. Hui believes in focusing on alternative environmentally friendly options and the importance of autonomy in transportation in Hong Kong. Eddy claimed that "what makes me planned Tin Kwong Ride? I was impressed that a daddy told his daughter that we chose bicycle as the mean of transportation in the morning. It was remarkable as I really want our next generation can think of cycling as an transportation option in their life." Eddy, who is a multi-disciplinary designer, looks for fashionable clothing that can function during day and night and does not need to dress formally for business. In view of this, Osmond from Bleu Kobo designed an 'Engineered Jacket for Day & Night' made of denim fabric of an original laser printed monogram pattern. Eddy suggested that he prefers details in contrasting colors to standout from the crowd. Osmond therefor designed a reversible jacket for day and night. In terms of functionality, stretchable fabric was used on the back and shoulder parts giving more room to the wearer to perform all day activities without compromising the shape of the jacket. During the co-design process, Eddy mentioned the need of revisiting position of a pocket for the cycling jacket for daily convenience. Osmond provided a solution and designed a new back pocket on the hem of the jacket allowing cyclists to access their belongings easily. To coordinate with the jacket, Osmond and Eddy worked on a new engineered 3D cut on denim jeans for cycling. The iconic design of the hidden elastic back yoke was installed to give extra comfort to cyclists. Reflective prints on both jacket and jeans keep the cyclists visible during night cycling.

3. DD Biker Set by YMDH (designer) and Kelvin Kwan (co-designer)

Jason Lee Kui Kei, the founder of YMDH. Studio is known for a playful and innovative design style who's signature is combining the local street culture with historical references. YMDH is dedicated to reflecting the specific youth culture and nurture the new form of street fashion. This project allowed Jason to meet co-designer, Kelvin, who is a hard-core bike commuter who has persisted in bike commuting for 5 years in the Hong Kong Island, for most of the days to and from work. Kelvin believes and claimed that "geologically and environmentally, it makes perfect sense to consider bicycling as a viable option for commuting both on Hong Kong island and Kowloon side." He aims to share his experience and knowledge on riding on open roads, and hopefully can inspire others to do so as well. Kelvin enjoys making the short journey commuting on a bicycle as much as possible and in Hong Kong, the place he was born and loves. Kelvin also shared collective memories with Jason, inspiring them to design the biker wear themed "DD Biker". The design represents a fusion of Denim and Bicycle. The first "D" represents Denim and the second "D" represents the D in YMDH. YMDH as a designer brand tried to give a new interpretation to the connection between denim and cycling wear. The design pays tribute to the motorcycle biker wear of the 80s and 90s, with inspiration of the style of Andy Lau (one of the most iconic movie stars in Hong Kong) in a famous Hong Kong movie called "A Moment of Romance".

The ensemble is a biker jacket and motorcycle jeans, to complete the look of the 80s reference. Different types of washed denim fabrics were used to give a vintage touch to the design, which suggest memorabilia.

4. Modern Female Daily Cycling Dress by Fromclothingof (designer) and Chloe Ho (co-designer)

FromClothingOf is founded in 2015 with the aim of breaking away from conventional ideas about women's fashion and aesthetics. The name "FromClothingOf" comes from "Exlibris", meaning "from library of", i.e. my book. This refers to women claiming the right to how they dress. While minimalist and monotone at first glance, the pieces are meticulously tailored and structured, characterised by layering and fine details that possess a powerful yet feminine style. In this project, Shirley Wong, the founder of FromClothingOf met another lady, Chloe Ho, who is out-going and enjoys trying new things suggested to Shirley to create a new concept of cycling dress, serving as both casual cycling wear and stylish day- wear. The inspiration of this design was from the old photos of female cyclists. Shirley claimed that this project was an interesting experience, as she has never focused on functional cycling wear in her previous designs. This co-design experience enabled Shirley, as a designer to think about her process in designing an outfit for daily life of a modern female. There were a few design details Shirley and Chloe co-created, such as the application of draw string and buckles, for adjusting the length of the dress according to daily need. There is a back pocket on the waistline which serves as an accommodation for small belongings and water bottle during cycling.

Figure 5. Pictures of wearing trial meeting

Figure 6. Pictures of Designers (Left: **Janko Lam (designer) and Laura Yeung (co-designer); second from the left: Osmond Lee (designer) and Eddy Hui (co-designer); third from the left: Shirley Wong (designer) and Chloe Ho (co-designer); Right: Barbie Fong from YMDH (designer) and Kelvin Kwan (co-designer)**

Figure 7. Picture of Prototypes Details

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Sewn at $0.13/hour

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This piece visually illustrates how inexpensive fashion garments are made using sweatshop laborers who are often underserved peoples with little opportunity to demand better working conditions. By sewing a garment with paint-covered hands on transparent fabric, the marks left behind illuminate the skill and dexterity required of a garment industry worker and the need for transparency to hold the industry accountable for unethical labor practices.

Keywords: sweatshop labor, design process, social protest, garment, reflective practice

Introduction

Inexpensively priced, constantly changing, trendy clothing dominates much of the physical and virtual spaces in which consumers purchase garments, but these appealing qualities mask the consequences of the harmful manufacturing supply chain used to produce them. The fashion industry is slowly taking steps to change un-sustainable and polluting processes; still, use of cheap labor to support the speed and cost of fashionable clothing lags behind in visibility and brand accountability. Garment manufacturing employees are often underserved, poorly educated, and un-represented people with little access or opportunity to demand fairer wages or safer working environments. This kind of working condition would be unacceptable to many consumers, but the reality of the manufacturing process is easily forgotten when the cute blouse, edgy pair of jeans, or branded tee shirt is presented in the shiny retail environment.

While effective means of ensuring garment workers in the factories producing our clothes earn a living wage are complex, an important step in the process remains to educate the consumer about how harmfully inexpensive clothing prices are achieved. Consumers have potential to use their purchasing power to avoid negligent brands and support responsible brands, but without sufficient information harmful practices are easily ignored or impossible to "see." Much of the supply chain for fashion garments is now overseas, making tracking the production of garments more difficult. Clothing brands may contract with known manufacturers, while these firms may in turn subcontract parts of the production process to vendors using unethical labor, unbeknownst to the clothing brand. (Chil & Lu, 2020) This practice was placed on full display when the Rena Plaza collapsed in Bangladesh in 2013, when investigators searched through the rubble to find the brand names on the clothing being produced in the factory. Brands whose labels were found claimed to be unaware their products were being produced in the facility. (Stauffer, 2018) However, with greater visibility comes the opportunity to easily identify problem areas, and while transparency and clear language to consumers is not the solution, it becomes a critical tool to evaluate the fashion industry's actions and hold brands accountable for their business practices. (Fashion Transparency Index 2020)

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Calls for greater transparency as a tool for change come from many human rights organizations. In the Ethical Fashion Report (2019), an in-depth evaluation of 130 fashion companies representing 480 brands, the median grade was a C+. This study takes into account both transparency and actions; while transparency in supplier and supply chain contractors has improved since the annual report was started in 2013, the living wage section of the report remains the lowest-scoring category for the researched companies – only 5% of brands could demonstrate all workers in their supply chain were earning a livable wage. The Fashion Revolution Transparency Index (2020) report highlights similar concerns, noting that brands are more likely to communicate policies supporting ethical labor practices rather than information about executing those policies, making accountability challenging. In the area of living wages, the index reports only 2% share a strategy for improving and documenting the wages of their workers, and only 2% publish data on providing wages above the minimum. The Index finds that manufacturer and worker accessibility to company policy is limited, as many suppliers are not located in English-speaking companies and only 30% of supplier Codes of Conduct are provided in translations from English to local languages. This is a significant point, highlighting that avenues for garment workers to report unfair or abusive wage or hiring practices in their workplace are limited or non-existent. (Stauffer, 2018)

Improving the situation is a complex problem, because reporting wages and enforcing fair labor laws in a global industry involves brands, stakeholders, manufacturers, countries, and consumers. Adding to these logistics challenges is, quite simply, clear language and terminology to communicate information. Fashion Revolution coins the term "Information dumping" when brands repeat similar yet inconsistent, vague messaging that reads pleasantly yet contains few details and may share different statistics and data. This makes it time-consuming and sometimes impossible to truly evaluate the company's efforts. (Fashion Transparency Index 2020) The term sweatshop has been common for many years, and while the landscape of workers manufacturing clothing has included piece work completed by immigrants at home to sewers cramped into large industrial spaces, the common denominator of low wages and little worker representation or voice remains the same. (Ross, 2011). Other terms used include "Fair Trade," which refers to providing living wage compensation but can be misleading when only once segment of production lives up to the term. (Veridiano and Barenblat, 2018) Another term, "conscious," is conspicuously used by brands desiring the appearance of ethical, sustainable, or eco fashion practices but often lacks substance. (Barber, 2019) The term used in

this article, "ethical," is described by the Victoria and Albert Museum as "an umbrella term to describe ethical fashion design, production, retail, and purchasing." These vague, non-specific terms reveal how transparent data reporting is critical, as it enables consumers and stakeholders to accurately evaluate the brands they support.

These words and the information above contain some of the most basic facts outlining the reality that few garment workers earn a living wage, and visibility and voice for these workers limited. But once these words are read, they are easily disconnected from the rewarding, fun fashion shopping and purchasing environment. Whether shopping brick and mortar or e-commerce, feeling positive about one's appearance while standing in front of the dressing-room mirror or scrolling through online images of trendy clothing in the comfort of one's own home provides tangible, visual satisfaction with little space for reflection on the livelihood of the hands sewing them. Seeking to create a link between fashionable clothing and the hands behind their production, a visual map of the human hand's movement while sewing a garment serves to illuminate the time, skill, and dexterity required of a garment industry worker. A woven shirt dress, easily recognizable and relatable by its classic design and silhouette has been sewn in a solid, transparent fabric with paint-covered hands that mark the fabric each time it was touched, manipulated, and fed through the machine. The transparent fabric represents the need for transparency to fully understand the challenges and spaces where garment workers are not provided living wages or given a voice, while the handprint paint marks the value of the hands that make the fashion industry's clothes. The title of the garment refers to the average hourly wage of sweatshop workers in Bangladesh. Together, the garment and title visually illustrate the disparity in work and compensation that is required to produce popular clothes, and the transparency needed in the supply chain to begin holding brands accountable.

As noted, there are an increasingly larger number of brands participating in reports and studies to be graded or evaluated in terms of their manufacturing processes, which is a positive step forward. The more educated the consumer becomes, the more important the grades on these reports will become to the consumer. Still, the need for easily understood, clear messaging connected to the excitement of fashionable clothing exists, and projecting this through a powerful visual is the purpose of this garment. The greater the consumer can connect their clothing with real people, the makers, the more human the fashion industry can become. In an independent study by BetterWork (Peschka 2016), thoughtful actions that both improve garment worker's wages and support a thriving business can be found. To become truly responsible consumers, we must demand greater transparency not only in the environmental impact of our clothes but also the human impact, and support this with our purchasing power.[1]

[1]This article was written amid the 2020 Coronavirus pandemic, which has drastically disrupted the fashion industry and the garment supply chain. The industry is currently being forced by this event to rethink the fashion calendar, volume of goods produced, and consumer purchasing power as goods sit in warehouses and sewing rooms with no demand for shipping, stocking, or purchase of current or new inventory by retailers and consumers. The full effect these events will have on the fashion industry and the issue of living wages for garment workers remains to be seen. The need for responsible practices to be adopted in all areas of the fashion industry is now made even more immediate.

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Wrap Me Up…Or Not…

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The burqa is a controversial garment that evokes contradicting views from the Muslims and non-Muslims based on their socio-cultural and religious views. This installation aims to create awareness of the different perspectives on the burqa and have an amicable dialogue on this highly debatable subject.
Keywords: Burqa, belief system, cultural identity, cultural appropriation, socio-cultural context.

Introduction

Different belief and social systems affect the perceptions of individuals (McCaw, 2007) and religion has often been fundamental in shaping those perceptions. The burqa is a good example as it evokes contradicting views from the Muslims and non-Muslims based on their socio-cultural and religious views. Growing up in India, I was exposed to people of different religions who wore different kinds of clothes and accessories. This cultural and religious influence on a person's visual identity became an area of interest for me. Later, as I got an opportunity to travel the world to places like Hong Kong, Philippines, Malaysia, New Zealand, Australia, and London, and had friends from across the globe, including Arabs from Iraq, Palestine, the United Arab Emirates, this interest and migration in clothing cultures grew. I seized the opportunity to speak to a varied cross-section of people who understand their own culture, as well as a foreign culture and the effects of socio-cultural and religious knowledge systems. Politics plays a big role in shaping opinions as well. The burqa is often viewed as a controversial garment, evoking debate in the context of religion, women's rights, human rights, society, financial status and more recently, as a fashion statement.

This installation aims to create awareness of the different perspectives on the burqa, based on our different knowledge and belief systems. Through this work, I wish to start a dialogue whether the burqa is a mark of cultural identity or a mark of an Islamic fundamentalist which should be feared. Secondly, is it humane to force a person to wear or not to wear a burqa?

Context of the Burqa in Muslim Countries

Islam requires women to dress modestly based on the assumption that it is easy for women to arouse the sexual feelings of a man (Kuchler and Miller, 2005).

> "Say to the believing women that they should lower their gaze and guard their modesty; they should draw their veils over their bosoms and should not display their beauty to any but their husbands, their fathers and certain other members of the household. Let them not stamp their feet to reveal what they hide of their adornments." Qur'an 24:30,31 (Kuchler and Miller, 2005).

The Qur'an dictates modest clothing for women. However, the words- burqa, hijab, niqab or abaya are not mentioned anywhere. The degree to which women's dress is restricted varies in different countries for instance in Algeria, the government passed a law banning the wearing of

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full-face veils for women at work. In Lebanon, wearing of hijab is not enforced, though conservative garb predominates among the Muslim women. Pakistan has no laws banning or enforcing the hijab. In Indonesia, female head covering is entirely optional and not obligatory. On the other hand, countries like Iran have made the hijab compulsory along with loose fitting clothing for women. In Saudi Arabia, women, local and foreign, are forced to wear an abaya to cover their entire body, including their face and hands, in front of unrelated men. In Yemen, although there is no law enforcing veiling for women, the abaya and niqab are considered social norms and imposed on girls at a young age.

Punishment like public flogging, fine and imprisonment enforce these strict laws, where applicable. Muslim men and women today have different views on the burqa, even within their own community. Women, in countries like Saudi Arabia and Iran, adopt the burqa as it is mandated by the law, whether they like it or not. This is often accompanied by adherence to laws and its strict enforcement by the family. Many women wear the burqa for fear of punishment like public flogging or imprisonment.

It is also important to understand that Muslim women do not necessarily view the hijab as an oppressive garment that is forced upon them as many non-Muslims believe. In a social setting, the burqa communicates social status & serves as an expression of association with a rich tradition & religion. Some women voluntarily remove themselves from the male gaze to preserve their sexual identity and affirm their cultural identity. There is growing number of young women who choose to veil themselves of their own will to celebrate their religion and protect themselves from stalking and even teasing by unpleasant males. Often these girls hail from families where nobody wears the hijab/ burqa so they face some disapproval from their family as well. But in most cases, the family is supportive of their choice (Latif, 2019). One of the young girls I interviewed, who has adopted the hijab out of choice, said that she looks at her hijab as a fashion statement and styles it in different ways, so it never feels like an oppressive garment. She also models in a hijab. (Pothiyawala, 2019). A Muslim male I interviewed said that none of the women in his family wear a burqa / hijab as it is considered a sign of poverty and backwardness but he met a friend's wife in Dubai who is highly educated, hails from a well to do family and has adopted the burqa out of choice. This changed his opinion and he now believes every woman's body and her wardrobe is her prerogative and it should be her choice whether or not to veil it (Khan, 2019).

The conservative Taliban forced women in Afghanistan to wear the all-enveloping burqa called chador/ chadri, but even after the hardline Islamists were ousted, many women still choose to wear burqa out of fear, security concerns or as a cultural practice. The non-Muslims are ignorant of the historical, social and religious significance of the burqa. So, to them it is synonymous with female oppression and seclusion and is trivialized on grounds of feminism and human rights. A hostility has developed against it, especially after the Taliban regime, the Iraq war and the 9/11 attacks in the United States. Non-muslims always talk of the burqa as a restriction that limits sight and hearing, is suffocating in the heat and forces the wearer to communicate without expression. The former Muslim, Ayaan Hirsi Ali, wrote in her book Nomad that the veil "deliberately marks women as private and restricted property, non-persons. The veil sets women apart from men and apart from the world; it restrains them, confines them, and grooms them for docility. It is the mark of a kind of apartheid, not the domination of a race but of a sex" (Ali, 2010).

This brings us to the burqa ban in various countries in Europe and world over. France, Denmark, Germany, Switzerland, Belgium, Netherlands, Italy and Congo are some countries that

have full or partial ban on the burqa and impose a fine for veiling. Muslim majority countries like Tunisia, Kosovo, Azerbaijan, Syria, Morocco and Turkey have banned the hijab in schools and universities and/ or government buildings. Authorities cite security concerns and an aim to guarantee equality between the sexes. Most Muslims in Europe are members of immigrant communities, Islamic dress is linked with tensions associated with immigration. Islamic dress, notably the headscarf, has become a prominent symbol of the presence of Islam in Europe and has led to political controversies and proposals for a legal ban. There is discrimination against women who wear a hijab as it is seen as a sign of fundamentalism against a secular government. Proponents of the ban argue that terrorists may use the burqa (and other veils) to carry out suicide attacks. The burqa ban debate has also been used by political pressure groups to encourage Islamophobia (India Today, 2019). Sri Lanka, Cameroon and Chad imposed the burqa ban after suicide attacks, endangering Muslims to hate crimes and discrimination. By politicizing the veil, they are fueling a fire of hate crimes and social discord. The fact that it is constantly debated is politicizing the lives and basic rights of those who wish to observe the hijab, turning them into a target of ridicule and harassment (Letters, 2018).

The Burqa in Sports

Nike introduced the Pro Hijab- a product allowing Muslim women to participate in sports while minimizing the practical challenges of wearing a religious item of clothing (Dawling, 2018). Made in collaboration with Muslim female sports persons like champion fencer Ibtihaj Muhammad from U.S.A., weightlifter Amna Al Haddad from UAE, boxer Zeina Nassar from Germany, and figure skater Zahra Lari from UAE. This performance hijab helps advance the conversation around hijabs, Muslim women in sports, and further creates an inclusive space and inspire Muslim girls worldwide to follow their passion for sport (Nike, 2017).However, the product was also criticized for 'catering to the market for modest wear and modest fashion and normalizing, even supporting female oppression' (Dawling, 2018). These new pieces of modest wear reflects both consumer demand and the growing number of elite female Muslim athletes who can practice any sport without feeling a conflict between their sport and their beliefs (Ghazal, 2017). Inspirational Muslim Australian ballerina Stephanie Kurlow, who wears a hijab and undergone considerable pressure from the Muslim community as well as the Australian community, says that "having different beliefs or clothes shouldn't be a deciding factor as to whether you pursue your dreams or not" (Wood, 2017).

The Burqa in Fashion and Culture

The British- Japanese designer Hana Tajima collaborated with Uniqlo to create its first hijab and has grown to include dresses, separates and daywear. Her clothes are not just about modesty for Muslim women- it's about cute clothes for everyone. (Yotka, 2019). She says that fashion conscious Muslims are proving that you can be cool and modest, stylish and individual without compromising faith. Shirin Neshat, a contemporary Iranian visual artist, explores the relationship between women and the religious and cultural value systems of Islam through her photograph series titled Women of Allah in mid- 1990s and video installations like Turbulent, Rapture and Fervor (Guggenheim).

Popular Bollywood movies like 'Bombay', and 'Dil Se, Raaz, show the female protagonist wearing a burqa in an uncontroversial way. The Hollywood movie 'Arranged' explores the friendship of a Muslim woman and a Jewish woman, both who feel like an outsider in today's America because of their conservatism in their faith. The Muslim woman in a hijab, is

portrayed as a modern working woman who is not oppressed, as Western stereotypes usually suggest. Films like these helps to suggest alternatives to negative images of Muslim women and opens this topic up for discussion and debate.

However, the popular Hollywood movie, Sex and the City II is crude and racist in its portrayal of Arab women in Abu Dhabi. As critic James Macintyre of New Statesman writes: "In the movie, some women reveal that they too wear fashion items underneath and they are all reading the same trashy beauty books as one of the stars, as if Muslim women are actually OK because they can lower themselves to superficial western standards" (Macintyre, 2010).

The Burqa as a Fashion Inspiration

With the growth of the fashion industry, there has been an increasing demand for innovative and individual fashion. Exhausted by local influences, designers take inspiration from migrant cultures which they can exploit creatively. This often leads to cultural appropriation and can imply a negative view towards acculturation from a minority culture by a dominant culture. The tendency to appropriate is grounded in an assumption that history does not impact the present and that the world is an equitable, multicultural setting where everyone's culture exists to be shared. There is a racist history of Muslim immigrants being mistreated and ridiculed for wearing their cultural clothing and not assimilating into colonial culture quick enough (Suri, 2014).. Alexander McQueen's enthusiasm in depicting models in burqa clad shrouds in his Spring 2000 RTW collection, was not shared by all (Vogue, year). British- Turkish designer Hussein Chalayan engaged with issues of gender, religion and culture such as the iconic 1997 collection of niqabs of varying lengths, from one conventionally long to just a headscarf that left the naked body uncovered. Then again in 2015 Chalayan featured a burqa-clad woman integrated into the print of the full-length gowns in his Spring Summer 2015 show at Paris.

When celebrities like Lady Gaga wear the burqa inspired costume or it becomes a common sight at Halloween or costume parties, it reflects a lack of respect and sensitivity towards another person's culture.

Conclusion

Fashion, as an art medium, is a powerful conduit for cultural diplomacy, translating the aesthetics of one culture to people in far- away places who wouldn't necessarily have had the occasion to think about that other culture. The fact that fashion design elements can be sampled quite freely makes it even more likely that cross-cultural communication can occur in the form of fashion trends.

This essay and installation explores the complex, multi-layered subject of Islamic dress for women - burqa, hijab and niqab – and aims to provoke debate through the diverse thoughts expressed on the subject. Suspending different styles of burqa and hijab in the middle of the room sets the tone for the subject. Portraits of women in conservative Islamic clothing from various parts of the Muslim world, across rural and urban areas and in a wide array of professions, have been hand embroidered in techniques of applique, reverse applique, back stitch and satin stitch to add a 3 dimensional aesthetic and resonate with the idea of veiling where you have layers and do not know what lies beneath each layer. Excerpts from personal interviews have also been blown up and displayed as texts to put forth some of the views towards the burqa.

As artist Shirin Neshat suggests, I too hope that "the viewer's take away with them not some heavy political statement, but something that really touches them on the most emotional level" (Artnet). I personally believe that every woman should have a choice of dress, without any force or fear.

Glossary

1. Burqa: a long loose piece of clothing that covers the whole body, including the head and face, worn in public by some Muslim women.
2. Hijab: a head covering worn in public by some Muslim women.
3. Niqab: a piece of cloth that covers the face but not usually the eyes, worn in public by some Muslim women
4. Abaya: a full-length piece of clothing worn over other clothes by Arab men or women

5. Chador/ Chadri: a large piece of cloth that covers a woman's head and upper body so that only the face can be seen, worn by some Muslim women
6. Burkini: A woman's swimsuit that covers the entire body, leaving only the hands, feet, and face exposed

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Social Empowerment through Green Fashion

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Abstract

Clothes reflect the personality of individuals and can be used as an identity of a group, community, family, region and even country. *Khadi* is one such cloth that had played a key role in the freedom struggle of India and thus, has been referred to as the 'Fabric of Indian Independence'. *Khadi* fabric has historical significance for bringing about extensive rural empowerment. *Khadi* has become the invaluable asset of heritage providing respectable means of livelihood to huge human resource especially rural women.

In this paper an attempt is made to focus on various environment friendly methods and processes involved in the manufacturing, production and other developments taking place in *khadi* fabric. Purposive sampling technique was used for collecting the data. Semi-structured interview and observation techniques were used for data collection. Detailed information about raw material manufacturing processes, utilization of energy and water during manufacturing of cotton *khadi* from yarn to fabric was sought. Information was obtained with respect to waste management, by-products of the manufacturing process, nature of air pollutants and toxic substances if any produced during manufacturing process.

Results of the study confirms that *khadi* is handspun and handwoven in the natural environment using natural fibers and it is considered 100% natural. It does not rely on electric units and the manufacturing processes do not generate toxic waste products. Production of *khadi* consumes less water and energy as compared to water and energy consumed in a conventional textile mill. In the rural India *khadi* production meets the twin objectives of green production and employment creation. Total employment in khadi sector during 2018-19 has registered at 5 lakh persons.

Keywords: *Khadi*, Natural, Developments**,** Eco-friendly**,** Rural Empowerment

Introduction

There are two broad segments within the Indian textile industry, namely the traditional hand-woven and hand-spun textile segment and the modernized mill segment (Nair & Dhanuraj, 2016). *Khadi* is part of Indian traditional heritage which is a hand-spun and hand-woven fabric and produced under the aegis of *Khadi* and Village Industries Commission (KVIC) which is a statutory body established by an Act of Parliament (No. 61 of 1956, as amended by act no. 12 of 1987 and Act No.10 of 2006). *Khadi* sector is considered a potential

tool for employment for artisans with a domestic setting and requiring a very low capital investment. The initiatives of KVIC have helped the khadi institutions to build up significant development in the *khadi* sector and rural economy.

Khadi is natural, hand crafted, eco-friendly, bio-degradable and non-exploitative, niche product. '*Khadi*' fabric is originated from Hindi word '*Khad*' or pit in which the handloom is fixed. The weaver is seated at ground level and operates the loom with his feet. It is also probable that Mahatma Gandhi derived the name *khadi* from khaddar, a traditional native word for homespun and handwoven cloth. It is primarily made of natural fibre cotton, and the other raw materials include silk or wool. *Khadi* is spun by hand into yarn on a spinning instrument known as '*charkha'* and weaving is done on handloom.

All *khadi* is handloom, but not all handloom is *khadi*. The basic difference between *khadi* and handloom is the method of spinning the yarn. In *khadi*, the yarn is hand spun (Figure 1) and in handloom, the yarn is mill spun (Figure 2). In both cases, the cloth is woven by handloom.

Figure 1: Hand spinning of yarn used for khadi

Figure 2: Mill spinning of yarn used for handloom and powerloom

Khadi was introduced as a political weapon and as the best instrument for giving concrete expression to the Swadeshi spirit to boycott foreign goods. *Khadi* rendered an opportunity to

every man, woman and child to cultivate self – discipline and self – sacrifice as a part of the non-cooperation movement. It became a symbol of nationalism, equality and self-reliance during India's freedom struggle.

In the current scenario, *khadi* represents a sustainable way of life. According to veteran fashion designer Ritu Kumar, "*Khadi* is humble because of the very reasons that it is also very elitist in the world of international and Indian fashion. It is India's bedrock fabric because the yarn itself is hand-spun and then handwoven on handlooms. Both processes are extinct. It is non-violent in its procurement as well as in its execution and that makes it a very ecologically safe fabric."

Significance of the Study

With the increase in demand of natural products that are eco-friendly and environment friendly, the position of *khadi* is strong as it is eco-friendly and made without the use of harmful chemicals. This fabric is extremely versatile in product creation and also in terms of seasonal usage. Since *khadi* is made on handloom, the woven designs are distinct. It meets the twin objectives of green production and employment creation.

To boost the rural economy through employment generation constant developments are taking place by *Khadi* and Village Industries in the production of *khadi*. Initiative are being taken to promote the use of *khadi* products in various government departments including police forces, government hospitals, railways, airlines and schools.

The world is becoming more environment friendly and ecologically aware. In view of the above, the focus of the paper is to explain various environment friendly methods and processes involved in the manufacturing of *khadi* fabric. The goal is to keep artisanal roots, sustainability, low carbon footprint and providing respectable means of livelihood to huge human resource especially rural people.

Methodology

The present study is a combination of exploratory field work and experimental research work. Mix method approach was followed and an extensive review of literature was done.

SECONDARY DATA on cotton *khadi* industry was collected through various publications such as, books, articles, government publications, brochures etc. by visiting different institutes, museum and libraries of New Delhi like:

- Gandhi Smiriti and Darshan Samiti
- National Gandhi Museum
- National Institute of Fashion Technology Library
- National Museum Library
- National Museum Institute Library
- Crafts Museum Library
- Lady Irwin College Library
- Indira Gandhi National Center for Arts Library

COLLECTION OF PRIMARY DATA

According to review of literature, it was found that the most popular variety of *khadi* is cotton *khadi* and the major centres of cotton khadi production in north India are Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan and Haryana. Hence, these states were selected **as locale for data collection** with respect to khadi production. Further, on contacting Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC), it was found that the centres of cotton khadi manufacturing are in Dausa in Rajasthan, Jind and Kurukshetra in Haryana and Moradabad in Uttar Pradesh. The head quarter of KVIC is in Mumbai and thus, permission was sought from KVIC Mumbai to visit these four manufacturing centres for the study.

SAMPLE SELECTION: Purposive sampling technique was used for data collection. Information was collected from following in each of the four centres mentioned above.

- Production managers: 1 (Total-4)
- Spinners: 4-5 (Total 15-20)
- Weavers : 4-5 (Total 15-20)
- Dyers : 2 -3
- Finishing incharge : 2-3

- Quality checkers : 2-3

TOOLS OF DATA COLLECTION: Semi-structured interview and observation technique was used for data collection. Detailed information about raw material manufacturing processes, utilization of energy and water during manufacturing of cotton *khadi* from fibre to fabric was sought. Information was obtained with respect to waste management, by-products of the manufacturing process, nature of air pollutants and toxic substances if any produced during manufacturing process.

CARBON FOOTPRINT was calculated using CO_2 equivalent formula which appeared to be more suitable method for the calculation of carbon footprint (Table 1). While calculating the carbon footprint, data under following heads were collected:

- Consumption of fuels – for machinery and transportation
- Electricity consumption
- Waste generation
- Water consumed in the processing
- Maintenance of machinery
- Reuse of waste generated

Table 1: Indian Equivalent values of CO_2

Source	Amount	CO_2 equivalent (kg)	Source of information
Diesel	1 Liter	2.6500	http://www.cea.nic.in/reports
Electricity (India)	1KWh	0.8600	http://www.cea.nic.in
Mobil oil	1 Liter	3.0000	http://www.cea.nic.in

It was found from the secondary sources that among the various textile industries, the mechanised spinning industry takes the major share of electricity with 41%, followed by weaving and wet processing units (Rana- Fangueiro, 2015). Therefore, in this study carbon

footprint of spinning and weaving stage was calculated and wet processing units were not considered as they were found common for both *khadi* and powerloom fabrics.

AWARENESS WORKSHOPS on *khadi* were conducted in schools for promotion of use of *khadi*.

Results and Discussion

The significant findings from the study on various aspects were analysed and the present status of *khadi* manufacturing was studied in the manufacturing units.

PROFILE OF THE UNITS

The detailed profile of the manufacturing units visited for the study such as year of establishment, demographic profile, monthly income, recent trainings provided and occupational health hazard/diseases linked with profession of workers have been discussed in detail below:

Year of Establishment of manufacturing units

It was found that the work was going on in the manufacturing units from more than 25 years (Table 2). The visit revealed that there were total 1744 people employed in Dausa, 780 in Jind, 650 in Kurukshetra and 724 in Moradabad comprising of spinners, weavers and other miscellaneous jobs like tailors, accounts, salesmen, computer operators etc.

Table 2: Details of Establishment of manufacturing units

Unit details	Year of Establishment of manufacturing units
Dausa	Established on 1st April, 1967 (more than 50 years)
Jind	Established in 1988, work started from 1989 (more than 30 years)
Kurukshetra	Established in 1990-91 (more than 25 years)
Moradabad	Established in 9th October 1992 (more than 25 years)

Demographic profile of worker

In all the manufacturing units, the worker's were educated only till primary school levels and they were associated with spinning, weaving and other miscellaneous jobs. Spinning was done

as per convenience of the spinners in the villages and the average working hours per day for the weavers are 8-10 hours. It was observed that mostly females do spinning and males were involved in weaving operation in all the manufacturing units. Out of total spinners in all the manufacturing units only 6% spinners are males and 94% spinners are females. Weavers comprised of 15% females and 85% males (Table 3).

Table 3: Details of worker's in manufacturing units

Unit details	Workers sex ratio in manufacturing units					
	Spinners			**Weavers**		
	Male	**Female**	**Total**	**Male**	**Female**	**Total**
Dausa	167	1000	1167	326	40	366
Jind	-	700	700	35	15	50
Kurukshetra	-	685	685	45	15	60
Moradabad	10	558	568	131	25	156
Total	**177**	**2943**	**3120**	**537**	**95**	**632**

Current monthly income of the workers

It was seen that in all the manufacturing units the average monthly income of spinners was minimum Rs.500/month and maximum Rs.900/month for working on traditional charkha and minimum Rs.1500/month and maximum Rs.6000/month for working on NMC charkha. The average monthly income of the weavers was minimum Rs.7000/month and maximum Rs.10,000/month (Table 4) .

Table 4: Details of monthly income of the workers in manufacturing units

Unit details	Workers monthly income in manufacturing units	
	Spinners	**Weavers**
Dausa	Traditional charkha Rs. 700-900/month NMC charkha:Rs.2500-5000/month	Rs. 7500-10,000/Month
Jind	Traditional charkha Rs. 500-800/month NMC charkha: Rs.1500-2000/month	Rs. 7000-8000/Month

Kurukshetra	Traditional charkha: Rs. 600-900/month	Rs. 9000-10,000/Month
	NMC charkha: Rs.2000-3000/month	
Moradabad	Traditional charkha: Rs. 500-600/month	Rs. 8000-10,000/Month
	NMC charkha: Rs. 3000-6000/month	

Recent trainings for upgrading their skills:

Periodically, new spinners and weavers have been given trainings on traditional and new model *charkhas* for spinning and on loom for weaving. These kind of trainings are good for their work opportunities.

Occupational health hazard/diseases linked with profession:

It was found that cotton dirt can cause asthma and T.B., therefore, masks were provided to the workers. All the manufacturing units had health/ life insurance policy such as Jan shri Bima, Group health insurance, Atal Pension Yojna, Mudra Yojna, PPF, Aam Admi Bima Yojna etc.

MANUFACTURING PROCESS

The raw material was sourced and used in various stages for *khadi* manufacturing process such as carding, spinning, warping and sizing, weaving, dyeing, washing, finishing, folding and packing that are explained below in detail (Figure 3):

**Figure 3: Flow chart of *khadi* manufacturing stages**

Sourcing of raw material for manufacturing of *khadi* fabric

The raw material cotton fibre was procured from nearby markets and agents while slivers were procured from *Khadi* Commission Centre Sliver Plants (CSP), which are located in Etah and Rai Bareilly in Uttar Pradesh, Hajipur in Bihar, Sehore in Madhya Pradesh, Chitradurga in Karnataka

and Thrichur in Kerala (Table 5). The carded slivers are the raw material which were used to produce yarns.

Table 5: Details of Sourcing of raw material in manufacturing units

Manufacturing units/CSP	Dausa	Jind	Kurukshetra	Moradabad
	Chitradurga, Trhichur, Rai Bareilly Sehore and Etah	Sehore, Etah, and Rai Bareilly	Sehore and Etah	Rai Bareilly Sehore and Etah

*C*otton fibres procured from local market were cleaned in order to remove remaining impurities by **carding** process. The working process of carding machine was only seen in Moradabad *khadi* manufacturing unit. In this process, cotton was placed on the top of carding machine (Figure 4) and it passes through rollers after which a lap of cotton is formed (Figure 5). This process was repeated twice to get smooth lap of cotton. During carding process, there was a wastage of 15% cotton during processing e.g., if we take 100kgs (one quintal) of raw cotton, after carding process we will get 85kgs of cotton.
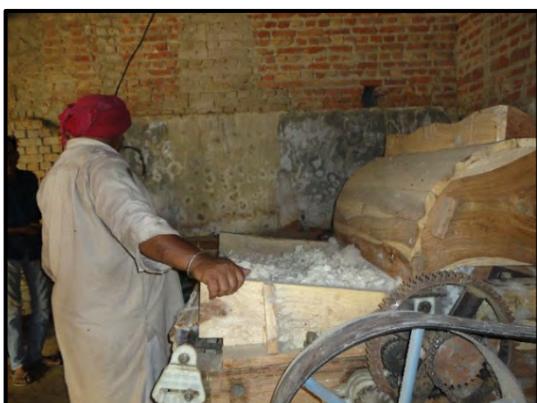
Figure 4: Cotton placed on the top of carding machine

Figure 5: Carding Process –formation of cotton lap

Avadh Yuva Kalyan Gramodhyog Sansthan, Moradabad (Uttar Pradesh), June 2018

After formation of cotton lap, slivers (also known as cotton tapes or *pooni*) of 1 inch to 1 ½ inch wide were cut from the lap and were put on roving machine (*belni or* roving frame) to prepare rovings (Figure 6). This *belni* or roving machine was hand driven having 4 –spindles, the handle was rotated and the slivers were converted into rovings (Figure 7).

Figure 6 and 7: Working of *belni* machine by rotating handle-Avadh Yuva Kalyan Gramodhyog Sansthan, Moradabad (Uttar Pradesh), June 2018

Spinning was done using traditional *charkhas* in the villages, NMC (new model *charkha*) Ambar *charkha,* which usually has 8, 10, 12 and 16 spindles and nowadays, solar charkha are being used in all the four manufacturing centres (Figure 8, 9, 10 and 11).

Figure 8 and 9: Spinning done by women using traditional charkha (Dausa and Jind)

Figure 10: Spinning using NMC charkha with 8 spindles in the unit (Moradabad and Jind)

Figure 11: Spinning using solar *charkha* (Jind)

Various counts and qualities were produced of cotton *khadi* yarns such as 8s to 18s (using traditional *charkha*), 26s-35s (using NMC *charkha*), and 35s-50s (using solar *charkha*). In all types of charkhas spinning was done by hand and the spinning cost of the material differs according to quality e.g., cost of spinning 30s cotton yarn is Rs. 206/kg. A spinner can spin approximately 250-300gms/day or 7.5kg-9kg/month on traditional charkha and 1.25kgs-3 kgs /day or 38kg-90kg/month on NMC charkha. The spinning cost also depends on type of *charkha* used for spinning purpose.

Sizing and Warping

Warp ends needs to be sized for weaving in order to make it stronger. Yarn hanks were soaked in water for 5 days as it helps in strengthening of yarns and prevent them from breakage. Then the yarn hanks were kept for 1 or 2 days till it dries and after drying the yarn hanks were prepared for sizing.

Starch solution was prepared by mixing flour (refined flour, wheat) with water. 25kgs of yarn hanks requires 5 kgs of starch and was mixed in 10 litre water It was then heated till thickened form of the mixture was achieved and kept for cooling for 1 hour. Starch was then applied on the yarn hanks for 10 minutes and squeezed (Figure 12). The yarn hanks were air dried for one day and then cone winding was done (Figure 13).

Figure 12: Starch was applied on yarn hanks

Figure 13: Hanks were air dried in hanging position

Weaving

Yarns in the hank form cannot be used for weaving therefore, bobbins for warping process were needed. The bobbins according to the required number of end in the fabric were arranged in the creel and the free ends were condensed to form a warp sheet that were supported with the help of two wooden supports (Figure 14). The warp sheet were converted to a beam form that was fitted on to the loom (Figure 15). The ready warp beam was further used for weaving (Figure 16).
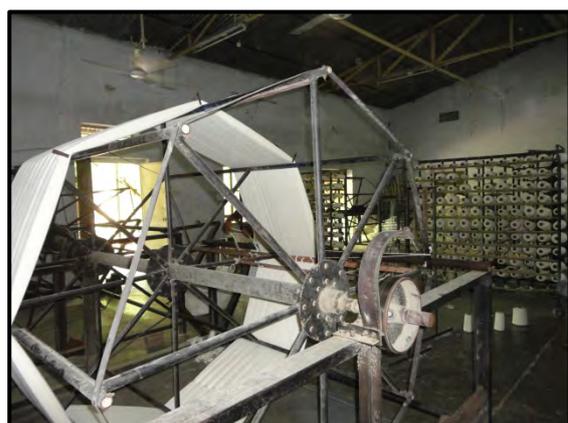
Figure 14 and 15: Creel with warp preparation

Figure 16: Ready warp beam

Weaving was done on handloom, the weaver fits the ready warp beam on loom and weaving was done. Same loom was used for different counts and qualities and weaving was done according to product requirement. The fabrics were available in different designs and patterns like stripes, checks, waved effect (*Jharna*) prepared using various weaves like plain, 2x2 twill, drill etc. Different varieties of fabric like lining material, shirting material etc. were also available. One weaver operates one loom and the weaving was done on hand operated traditional frame loom (Figure 17), semi-automatic peddle looms (Figure18) and pitlooms (Figure 19 and 20). In frame loom, it takes approximately 4 hours to make 8 meters of fabric while in peddle loom it takes 4 hours to prepare 10 meters of fabric which makes it more efficient. The usual width of fabric ranges from 36" to 60". 4 inch extra loom width is required for the fabric width (e.g., 60" loom for 56" fabric, 72" loom for 68" fabric, 44" loom for 36" fabric and 48" loom for 44" fabric). Generally, it takes one hour to weave 1-2 meter of fabric, depending upon the count, construction and design of fabric the time varies. On an average a weaver weaves 6-7 metres/day or 180-210 metres/month.

Figure 17: Weaving done on traditional (frame loom)

Figure 17: Weaving done on semi-automatic peddle loom

Figure 19 and 20: Weaving done on pit loom

Dyeing:

Different kinds of dyes were used for *khadi* fabrics such as natural, synthetic, vat and direct dyes. Yarns were taken out using wooden sticks, dried and put in cold water. To make waved (*Jharna*) pattern the yarns were resist dyed (Figure 21). After this, straightening was done. Jigger was used for washing fabric, squeezing of fabric was done on a machine. Blueing agent (neel) and tinapol was applied in dyer machine and then padding mangle was used for pressing.

Figure 21: Resist dyed yarns

Washing and Finishing: Finishing of fabric was done after fabric was made. Fabric was soaked in normal water for 24hrs and then caustic was applied for 2 to 3 days. It was then rinsed with cold water (Figure 22), beating was done to make the fabric soft (Figure 23). Fabric was then dried on wooden structures (Figure 24).

Figure 22: Washing of fabric in tank

Figure 23: Beating of fabric for better absorption

Folding and Packaging

In all the manufacturing units the quality control process which was done visual at each stage. After checking, folded and packaging of fabric was done. One bundle of fabric was of 15.5 meters. Some water was sprinkled and pressing was done (Figure 25). Three or four folds of fabric was made and stamp of *Khadi* Gramodhyog Samiti, Dausa was put on fabric bundles through screen printing using gold paste (Figure 26).

Figure 25: Pressing and folding of fabric   **Figure 26: Screen of stamp**

CALCULATION OF THE CARBON FOOTPRINT

Carbon footprint is the measurement of the amount of GHG (greenhouse gas) produced through burning of fossil fuels for electricity, heating, transportation, etc., and it is expressed in terms of tons or kg CO_2 equivalent. The textile industry is identified as one of the largest producers of GHG all over the world and has been reported to generate the highest GHG emission per unit of material. Electrical energy is one of the major energy consumption sectors in the textile industry. However, energy used and CO_2 emitted to manufacture 1 ton of natural fiber are much lower as compared to synthetics fibers. In case of cotton textiles, 50% of CO_2 emissions occur during fibre production, manufacture, trade, transport and the remaining 50% are caused by daily usage, that is, washing and drying.

Various calculators are available for the purpose of determining the carbon footprint, in the present study Indian equivalent values of carbon dioxide generated by the total consumption of energy, water, electricity and transportation was considered.

Table 6: Calculation of carbon footprint of spinning process of *khadi* fabric

Fuel	Khadi manufacturing units	Purpose	CO2 equivalent/ litre or unit	Consumption per month	Total amount of CO2 equivalent generated per month
Electricity consumed	Dausa	No	0.86/Kwh	Procured from CSP	64.5
	Jind	No	0.86/Kwh	Procured from CSP	64.5
	Kurukshetra	No	0.86/Kwh	Procured from CSP	64.5
	Moradabad	Carding	0.86/Kwh	75 Kwh	64.5
Machine Oil	Dausa	Maintenance	3.0000	0.25	0.75
	Jind	Maintenance	3.0000	0.25	0.75
	Kurukshetra	Maintenance	3.0000	0.25	0.75
	Moradabad	Maintenance	3.0000	0.25	0.75
Diesel (Tempo/Truck /Tractor/Trolly)	Dausa	Transportation	2.65/litre	Not used	Nil
	Jind	Transportation	2.65/litre	Not used	Nil
	Kurukshetra	Transportation	2.65/litre	Not used	Nil
	Moradabad	Transportation	2.65/litre	50 litres	132.5
Total					**393.5 (A)**
Total production per month					**16,500 kgs (B)**

Table 7: Calculation of carbon footprint of weaving process of *khadi* fabric

Fuel	Khadi manufacturing units	Purpose	CO2 equivalent/litre or unit	Consumption per month	Total amount of CO2 equivalent generated per month
Machine Oil	Dausa	Maintenance	3.0000	0.75	2.25
	Jind	Maintenance	3.0000	0.75	2.25

	Kurukshetra	Maintenance	3.0000	0.75	2.25
	Moradabad	Maintenance	3.0000	0.75	2.25
Diesel (Tempo/Truck /Tractor/Trolly)	Dausa	Transportation	2.65/litre	40 litres	106
	Jind	Transportation	2.65/litre	Not used	Nil
	Kurukshetra	Transportation	2.65/litre	Not used	Nil
	Moradabad	Transportation	2.65/litre	50 litres	132.5
Total					**247.5 (C)**
Total production per month					**21,000 meters (D)**

The components discussed above in Table 6 and 7 were converted into the amount of carbon dioxide generated by the means of using equivalent values of carbon dioxide. The sum total (A for spinning) and (C for weaving) of each of these values was taken and divided by average production per month (B for spinning) and (D for weaving) i.e., A/B and C/D to arrive at a value of carbon footprint generated per kg/meter of fabric.

Carbon footprint per kg of spinning process=A/B, therefore,

Carbon footprint =393.5/16,500=0.02 Kg of CO_2 equivalent/kg of fabric.

Carbon footprint per kg of weaving process=C/D, therefore,

Carbon footprint =247.5/21,000=0.01 meter of CO_2 equivalent/meter of fabric.

Thus, the carbon footprint of one kg of khadi spun yarn was found to be 0.02 kg and one meter of khadi fabric was found to be 0.01 meter of carbon dioxide equivalent per month.

Consumption of fuels – for machinery and transportation

Diesel was used as a fuel only for transportation and no fuel was used for spinning and weaving on machines which was used approximately maximum 50 litres/month. Tempo/Truck/Tractor/Trolly was used for transportation of spinning material weekly or twice a month to villages which was around 15 kms away from main manufacturing unit.

Electricity consumption

It was seen that there was little electricity was used in the carding process for making cotton lap.

Waste generation

Spinning: The by-products of the spinning process is cotton. During carding process, there was 0.15% wastage of cotton during processing 15gms in 1 kg cotton fibre.

Weaving: During weaving process 50 gms cotton yarns on every 1 kg yarn was wasted.

Water consumed in the processing

In the manufacturing units no water waste was observed, water was used for starching which was reused if required.

Maintenance of machinery

Once in a week oiling for charkhas and weaving looms was done for their maintenance. Machine oil/mobil oil was used for oiling. **A**pproximately, half litre to one litre machine oil was used in a month for charkha and weaving looms. Sand Paper (80 number) was used for rubbing iron loom in Jind.

Reuse of waste generated

The solid waste, cotton fibres and yarns left after spinning and weaving process were used to fill cushion and pillow covers. It was observed that there were no known air pollutants and toxic substances involved during the production of the material and in the material itself. Workers were provided with the masks in the manufacturing units.

Awareness workshops to promote use of *khadi* fabric was conducted in government and public schools using power point presentation (Figure 27, 28, 29 and 30). The main objective of the workshop was to make the young students aware about green manufacturing process of

khadi and its properties. Workshop was supplemented with promotional material like brochures, bookmarks and calendars.

Figure 27: Navyug Peshwa Road, New Delhi

Figure 28: Navyug Mandir Marg, New Delhi

Figure 29: Vidya Mandir Public School, Faridabad

Figure 30: A.V.N. School, Faridabad

Conclusion

Khadi is handspun and handwoven in the natural environment using natural fibers and it is considered 100% natural. It does not rely on electric units and the manufacturing processes do not generate toxic waste products. Production of *khadi* consumes less water and energy as compared to water and energy consumed in a conventional textile mill. In the rural India *khadi* production meets the twin objectives of green production and employment creation. *Khadi* sector is considered to be the potential tool for employment creation for artisans with a very low capital investment. The above data revealed that from more than 25 years the work is going on in the manufacturing units providing respectable means of livelihood to huge human resource especially rural women. Total employment in *khadi* sector during 2018-19 has registered at 5 lakh persons.

New products in recent years with better quality have been made according to market demand such as double dye shirting, striped shirting, ladies saree, fine variety of cloth, bed sheets, pillows, quilts, home decoration items, designer kurta, pyjama, shirt, pant, plajo, coat, khesh and towel.

As the number of fashion seasons have increased from two a year, spring/summer and fall/winter to as many as 50-100 micro seasons, it is important that production of garments should be done in environment friendly conditions. *Khadi* has emerged as the fabric of the people keeping its artisanal roots, sustainability and low carbon footprint.

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