

Preface

Sustainability is a global issue. A sustainable supply chain is one that is environmentally friendly, socially responsible, and economically sustainable. In the fashion industry, disposable fashion under the fast fashion concept has become a trend. In this trend, fashion supply chains must be highly responsive to market changes and able to produce fashion products in very small quantities to satisfy changing consumer needs. As a result, new styles will appear in the market within a very short time and fashion brands such as Zara can reduce the whole process cycle from conceptual design to a final ready-to-sell “well-produced and packaged” product on the retail sales floor within 15 days. Interestingly, in this trend, debates relating to sustainability arise. For example, is this kind of disposable fashion under the fast fashion concept environmentally unfriendly? From the consumer’s perspective, the answer seems to be definitely “yes” because consumers only use the fashion items for a short period before replacing them with new ones. The disposal of fashion products because they are “fashion-obsolete” creates waste and causes environmental problems. However, from the supply chain’s perspective, the fast fashion concept helps to better match supply and demand and lower inventory. Moreover, since many fast fashion companies, e.g., Zara, H&M, and Topshop, adopt a local sourcing approach and obtain supply from local manufacturers (to cut lead time), the corresponding carbon footprint is more reduced. Thus, this local sourcing scheme under fast fashion would enhance the level of environmental friendliness compared with the more traditional offshore sourcing. Furthermore, since the fashion supply chain is notorious for generating high volumes of pollutants, involving hazardous materials in the production processes, and producing products by companies with low social responsibility, new management principles and theories, especially the ones that take into account consumer behaviors and preferences, need to be developed to address many of these issues in order to achieve the goal of sustainable fashion supply chain management. Despite being an important and timely topic, there is currently an absence of a comprehensive reference source that provides state-of-the-art findings on related research in sustainable fashion supply chain management.

In view of the above, upon the invitation by the Series Editor Professor Christopher Tang, we have co-edited this Springer research handbook. This handbook contains three parts, organized under the headings of “Reviews and Discussions,” “Analytical

Research,” and “Empirical Research,” and features peer-reviewed papers contributed by researchers from Asia, Europe, and the USA. The specific topics covered include the following:

1. Reverse logistics of US carpet recycling
2. Green brand strategies in the fashion industry
3. Impacts of social media on consumers’ disposals of apparel
4. Fashion supply chain network competition with ecolabeling
5. Reverse logistics as a sustainable supply chain practice for the fashion industry
6. Apparel manufacturers’ path to world class corporate social responsibility
7. Sustainable supply chain management in the slow-fashion industry
8. Mass market second-hand clothing retail operations in Hong Kong
9. Constraints and drivers of growth in the ethical fashion sector: The case of France
10. Effects of used garment collection programs in fast fashion brands

We are very pleased to see that this handbook contains many new findings with valuable implications for sustainable supply chain management. We believe that the findings reported in this handbook not only provide important insights to academic researchers and practitioners, but also help lay the foundation for further research on sustainable fashion supply chain management. To the best of our knowledge, this book is a pioneering book that specifically explores sustainable fashion supply chain management in literature.

We would like to take this opportunity to sincerely thank Professor Christopher Tang for inviting us to develop this important book project and Mr. Matthew Amboy for his helpful advice along the course of carrying out this project. We are also very grateful to all the authors who have contributed their research to this handbook. We are indebted to the reviewers who reviewed the submitted papers and provided us with constructive comments. In particular, we thank Christy Cagle, Linda Chow, Kannan Govindan, Claire Hau, and Jerry Shen for their insightful comments on this book, and Hau-Ling Chan and Wing-Yan Li for their helpful assistance. We also acknowledge the funding support of The Hong Kong Polytechnic University. Last but not least, we thank our families, colleagues, and students, who have been supporting us during the development of this important handbook.

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