

Preface

The fashion industry is amongst the largest industries in the world. The global fashion market contributes a huge amount of GDP and employs a majority of people in many countries; thus it has pivotal impacts on the global economy. Apart from the volatile demand and fast-moving fashion trends, the dynamics of the industry is constantly affected by the advancement in technology and the ever-changing concerns from the consumers such as sustainability. Whereas continuous investigation and theory development advances the knowledge to tackle the up and coming issues in such a dynamic business environment, the study and reporting of real-world cases help illustrate the application aspect of those theories and generate further insights. A number of real cases in the fashion industry, such as the business model of the fast fashion brand Zara, and the innovative social media marketing approach of the traditional luxury brand Burberry, have even become benchmark textbook examples in the respective disciplines.

In the existing pool of literature, case studies in fashion business are usually documented according to some specific topics. Apparently, there is a lack of a comprehensive collection of examples that relates to the various contemporary issues encountered by the fashion industry. In light of this, we have edited this volume which features a number of case studies to illustrate the different challenges pertinent to the sector nowadays and to showcase the respective state-of-the-art solutions.

This edited volume includes thirteen chapters with diversified topics and geographical contexts (Table 1). According to the nature of the topics, they are organized in four parts, namely: (I) Fashion Production, (II) Fashion Branding and Marketing, (III) Fashion Operations, and (IV) Sustainability and the Fashion Industry. We briefly describe individual chapters as follows:

Table 1 List of chapters and details

Chapter	Topic	Segment	Case(s)	
			Geographical context	Name(s)
Part I: Case Studies on Fashion Production				
1	Domestic manufacturing	Apparel manufacturing firms	US	Tydale, 3fe Apparel, Lela Rose, Trina Turk, and Green 3 Apparel
2	Product development	Apparel trading and manufacturing	Hong Kong	An anonymous international luxury brand
3	Laser application	General	–	Miscellaneous
Part II: Case Studies on Fashion Branding and Marketing				
4	Brand positioning	Vintage retail brands	UK	Minted, City Retro, and an anonymous vintage retail brand
5	Internationalization	Family-owned luxury brands	Italy	Missoni
6	Rebranding and digitalization	Luxury brands	China	Three anonymous European luxury brands
7	Practices and considerations for email customer survey	–	Hong Kong	Local company of an international fashion accessories brand
Part III: Case Studies on Fashion Operations				
8	Role of retail stores	Fast fashion	Global	H&M
9	Click-and-collect process in omnichannel fashion retailing	–	Germany	Decathlon, Galeria Kaufhof, Hunkemoller, and Massimo Dutti
10	Supply chain strategy	Fashion renting companies	US and China	Rent-the-Runway, and Meilizu
Part IV: Case Studies on Sustainability and the Fashion Industry				
11	Sustainable innovation	Apparel supply chains	Hong Kong	TAL
12	Social responsibility programs	Fashion retailers	Brazil	An anonymous Brazilian fashion retailer
13	Used apparel collection programs	–	Global	Eileen Fisher, H&M, Patagonia, and Uniqlo

Part I: Case Studies on Fashion Production

Fashion production has always been facing different challenges owing to the very nature of the fashion products. Quick response is critical to the ever-changing preferences of the end-consumer market. Stringent cost control is necessary for profitability. Use of technology for product innovation and process efficiency offers competitive advantages.

Over the decades, it has been a common practice for fashion brands to outsource the manufacturing process to overseas suppliers (e.g. those in China, Bangladesh, and Mexico) for cheaper production of garments in large volume. Recently, there has been advocates for domestic production in light of the demand for quicker response and sustainability concern. In Chap. 1, Harris presents a study on domestic manufacturing and sourcing in the US apparel industry. Based on the findings of five case studies, the author discusses the niche of domestic apparel manufacturing. A “domestic and balanced sourcing model” is proposed that summarizes the various factors of competitiveness for domestic apparel production.

In Chap. 2, Fung and Choi examine the product development process in the fashion industry with reference to a case study of an international luxury fashion brand. Comparing its approach to product development with that commonly adopted by fashion trading companies in Hong Kong, the authors discuss the implications and provide suggestions to improve the practices of the latter.

In Chap. 3, Yuan, Chen and Luzzi presents a comprehensive review of the use of laser in different areas throughout the apparel production process, from fabric cutting, engraving, to fault detection and inventory management. Illustrated with examples the authors discuss the merits of the application of laser and highlight its potential to enhance environmental sustainability and innovations in apparel production.

Part II: Case Studies on Fashion Branding and Marketing

Branding and marketing play a paramount role to the success of a fashion brand. Proper branding and marketing strategies help a brand to stand out from the competitors and reach the target end-consumers. In Chap. 4, McColl, Canning, Shearer, and McBride explores the branding issue of vintage fashion retail brands. Based on the case studies of three vintage retailers in Glasgow, UK, the authors discuss the various elements that help enhance the positioning and operations of vintage fashion retail brands, including brand story creation, online communications with customers, and personalized customer services.

In Chap. 5, Runfola, Ranfagni and Guercini examine internationalization of Italian family-owned luxury brands. Through the case study on Missoni, one of the internationally reputed luxury brands, the authors discuss the challenges faced by the Italian small-medium-sized family-owned luxury fashion companies nowadays.

They conclude four key assets in managing the internationalization process of this type of luxury family business.

With the booming economy and improved living standard of the people, China has emerged as a very promising market for many western luxury brands. Yet socio-cultural factors may significantly affect the successful entrance of these brands in China. In Chap. 6, Rovai investigates the different branding and digitalization strategies adopted by three European luxury brands to enter into the Chinese market. Observed from these cases, the author emphasizes appropriate “luxury digitalization” strategy as the key to successful market positioning in China.

Working in a market-driven industry, it is crucial for fashion companies to keep updated with the consumers’ needs and preferences. With the ease of access to mobile technology, email survey has become a convenient way to collect consumers’ opinions. In Chap. 7, Wu and Tso presents an email survey project by a mass market fashion retailer to solicit consumers’ perception towards the brand. The authors identify several good practices and discuss various considerations in conducting email survey for fashion retailers.

Part III: Case Studies on Fashion Operations

Fast fashion comprises a considerable segment in the fashion sector. In Chap. 8, Arrigo scrutinizes the roles of directly operated stores in the fast fashion business model. With reference to the case of H&M, one of the largest fast fashion retailers, the author asserts the significance of directly controlled retail network on the fast fashion business model. In particular, the ability to capture timely and extensive market information is paramount to the success of fast fashion business.

With the advance in and the tremendous use of mobile technology, the distribution channels are no longer confined to the traditional brick-and-mortar shops. In fact, an increasing number of fashion companies have been using different online portals to reach their customers. In Chap. 9, Bug, Gordon, and Staudenmaier study the click and collect service, one of the emerging omnichannel retailing services. By comparing the different aspects of the click and collect services offered by four German fashion retailers, the authors assess the current development in omnichannel retailing in Germany and provide recommendations to achieve seamless omnichannel customer experience.

Apart from omnichannel retailing, the concept of sharing economy has started drawing attention in the fashion business domain. With the increasing concern of sustainability, a new business model of fashion renting has emerged recently. In Chap. 10, Lai, Song, Xu and Chiu investigate the supply chain strategies adopted by two fashion-renting companies, namely: Rent-the-Runway in the US and Meilizu in China. Focusing on the delivery and laundry services, the authors compare the outsourcing strategies of the two companies and demonstrate the importance of the fit in the supply chain strategy with the business environment.

Part IV: Case Studies on Sustainability and Fashion Industry

Fashion industry has always been blamed as one of the industries that are most hazardous to the environment. Pollution during the production process and the landfill problem owing to the huge amount of used/unwanted clothing are few examples of the environmental issues rooted from the industry. Apart from the environmental concern, employee welfare and the relationship with other stakeholders lie on the core of corporate social responsibility (CSR) that had drawn attention for business nowadays. With the increased awareness and concern for environmental and social sustainability amongst consumers, fashion companies have been imposing stringent measures in their supply chains to minimize their impact on the environment and enhance social sustainability. Such measures include adoption of sustainability programs to evaluate and monitor supply chain activities, as well as the launching of used apparel collection initiatives to manage post-consumer wastes. The three chapters in this section look into the different sustainability approaches adopted by the industry.

In Chap. 11, Kim and Zorola report the case of TAL, an established apparel manufacturer for numerous famous global brands, with respect to their proactive approaches to sustainability. Based on the findings, the authors propose a “sustainable supply network innovation” model that emphasizes on network of support and co-creation within the apparel supply chain.

In Chap. 12, Moro, Mendes and Amato Neto explore the corporate social responsibility (CSR) program employed by a Brazilian fashion retailer, with a focus on the supplier selection process. With reference to Zadek’s five stages of organizational learning (2004), the authors evaluate the merits and drawbacks, and afterwards suggest improvements for implementation of CSR programs.

In Chap. 13, Chow and Li study the used apparel collection (UAC) programs implemented by four fashion retailers. The authors discuss and compare the different features of these UAC programs, and suggest that the type of UAC programs a fashion retailer adopt should fit with its business model.

We are delighted that this book depicts many interesting case studies that complement theories and provide concrete illustrations of the real-world practices in the fashion business sector. We believe readers from both the academia and the private sector will find this edited volume a useful reference that could help them tackle the rising challenges in the fashion industry.

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