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Do circular economy strategies effectively address closed-loop systems, sustainability tensions, and consumer expectations in contemporary fast fashion?

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Abstract:

Despite holding a commanding market share over the last twenty years, the fashion industry still struggles to address the social and environmental consequences of its production processes. The present research seeks to understand how fashion businesses incorporate rental models, recycling, and the production of upcycled collections into their offerings as an attempt to foster a circular economy. Drawing on two case studies, the research zeroes in on the primary concern of the growing fast fashion industry on environmental degradation. This document discusses the proliferation of greenwashing and the paradox of consumer expectations concerning sustainability in the fashion sector. A review of the existing literature indicates that, due to the linear configuration of fast fashion, the industry finds it exceedingly difficult to adopt a true circular economy. The evidence suggests that, while harmful, the environmental consequences of circular-economy initiatives outweigh their benefits. The fast fashion industry is built on rapid fire production, planned obsolescence, and globalized supply chains. These are alien to the principles of circularity. This shows how the major players in the industry counter the circular economy critique by establishing environmentally damaging production processes, and in doing so, present the illusion of addressing the harms.

Keywords: Circular economy, fast fashion, sustainability, greenwashing, rental programs, recycling, upcycling, consumer behavior, environmental impact, textile waste

1. Introduction

1.1 Background and Rationale

Recent estimations have shown that the fashion world will have grown to an estimated value of $880.09 Billion by 2025 (Statista 2025). Much of this is due to the business model of fast fashion that is comprised of cheap, rapidly constructed disposable garments that are constructed at an alarming rate (Chan et al 2024). Companies such as H&M, Zara have taken advantage of this phenomenon and are able to produce top-tier garments at a fraction of the speed and price. However, the social, and especially environmental, impacts are dire. Being one of the lowest tiers, the fashion industry is one of the greatest contributors to wastewater and carbon emissions (Stallard 2022). The social impacts of the industry are even more alarming as global fashion is synonymous with extremely low working wages, abysmal working conditions, and a flagrant abuse of labor rights. One of the factors that contributed to the growing acceptance of the notion of circular economy are the growing environmental issues (Haleem et al., 2021). Convenience of consumers in understanding the sustainability of the fashion industry has also contributed positively in moving away from the traditional linear model (Kandpal et al., 2024). In the fashion industry, the principles of circular economy are now being adapted into diverse management practices.

Some of these strategies comprise clothing rental and sharing programs, textile recycling and fibre-to-fibre technologies. Upcycling and redesign initiatives are also part of these strategies, along with product-service prioritization systems over ownership. So far, the circular economy is gaining traction gradually. Leading fashion companies have begun implementing it. Nonetheless, most are implementing it with varying degrees of commitment and effectiveness.

H&M is one of the fashion companies implementing circular economy principles. Its garment collection program was launched in 2013 to close the loop on textile waste (Rana & Tajuddin, 2021; H&M Group, 2025). Besides H&M, Zara, another fashion company, has introduced a circular economy initiative in its operations through its program “Join Life” collections.

For one, this program has sustainable materials and design principles. It is also piloting rental clothing services in some select markets (McMillan Doolittle, 2021). All these are changing the paradigm of ownership. On the other hand, the fundamental qualities of fast fashion and the circular economy will always counter each other. This is a major downside.

The fast fashion business model is founded on planned obsolescence. Also, trend-based consumption and high-volume production are other conflicting elements with the circular economy principle of durability (Arimany Serrat et al., 2025). This then raises the concerns of greenwashing. It is the case, especially in fashion companies where they put in place low-effort sustainable initiatives, mostly for marketing. Studies illustrate that consumers are more than willing to pay increased prices for products that are sustainable. The issue, however, is that consumers are not always in sync with this trend (Chiambaretto et al., 2024).

The purpose of this research is to analyze and evaluate thoroughly the use of circular economy strategies by fashion companies. The focus is on the criticisms of the business models of fast fashion and the initiatives undertaken (McMillan Doolittle, 2021). This research also addresses issues on the greenwashing, the criticism of business models of fast fashion, and the business models of fast fashion, as well as the business models of fast fashion as they pertain to be legit and effective in the implementation of circular economy (Arimany Serrat et al., 2025). This includes greenwashing and the fulfillment of consumer demands in the marketplace. This research does an eloquent job of addressing the paradox of purpose vs profit and the paradox of purpose vs profit. This research also addresses the question of whether the frameworks of fast fashion incorporate the circular economy. The paradox of profit vs sustainability is the question of whether the frameworks of fast fashion incorporate the circular economy. There is a need to educate consumers on distinguishing genuine sustainability from Greenwashing (Chiambaretto et al., 2024). This is the paradox of profit vs sustainability in the frameworks of fast fashion. Industry practitioners have to balance the paradox of sustainability and the sustainability of business. There is no need to stress the need to incorporate circular economy practices in a documented fashion and the need to incorporate circular economy practices in a documented fashion.

The research questions are as follows: To what extent have fast fashion companies implemented genuine circular economy strategies? What are the key challenges to the implementation of a genuine circular economy in fast fashion? How do consumer attitudes and behaviors affect sustainability initiatives within an industry? To what extent is the current circular economy initiative a genuine step forward, or is it simply an example of Greenwashing? What changes in legislation and business practices are required in order for the fashion industry to bring about a genuine circular economy?

2. Literature Review

2.1 Understanding Circular Economy Principles in Fashion

2.1.1 Theoretical Framework of Circular Economy

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Wijkman & Skånberg (2015) assert that the circular economy promotes economic development that benefits companies, the community & the ecosystem by ensuring that all products, their parts & the underlying materials are utilized to their fullest potential. It differs from the orthodox "take-make-dispose" model in that it is based on three principles: waste & pollution are to be avoided, products & materials are to be kept in circulation, and ecosystems are to be revitalized (Elisha, 2020). The circular economy model offers several pathways to achieving circularity. It enhances the the efficiency of resource use in production, prolonging the life of products, & it lowers the barriers to product repairs & upgrades. The "close the loop" paradigm of circularity focuses on recycling & material recovery whereby output (waste) from one process becomes the input to another (Stella et al., 2024). As for circularity, the waste hierarchy focuses on the greater challenge of not generating waste, then lesser challenges of reducing, reusing, recycling, recovering & ultimately safe disposal of the waste.

2.1.2 Application to Fashion Industry Context

Circular economy ideas are not easily applied to the fashion industry because it has complex supply chains, a diverse range of materials, and clothing serves both functional and expressive purposes (Mahanty & Domenech, 2024). l. At the design stage, circularity focuses on creating durable clothes, composed of modular parts, and are either recyclable or biodegradable. Including circularity while designing leads to significant changes in creative processes, the materials picked, and the way items are manufactured. The production stage of the circular strategies reduce waste, utilise recycled materials effectively, and maintains a closed-loop system for recycling waste throughout the production process (Nikolakis et al., 2024). Strategies for recycling textiles at the end of their life include mechanical and chemical recycling, composting for biodegradable materials, and energy recovery systems for non-recyclable items. Even so, recycling textiles is challenging when they are blended fabrics, which significantly hinders the implementation of circular strategies.

2.2 Fast Fashion Business Model and Environmental Impact

2.2.1 Characteristics of Fast Fashion

In the 1990s, fast fashion emerged as a model where designers quickly copied designs seen on the catwalk and sold them in stores shortly after, unlike traditional fashion, which typically took around six months from design to store shelves. Globalized supply chains, advanced ways to transport goods, and flexible factories spread in countries with lower wages made it possible for the pace of production to rise (Chabowski et al., 2025). How this kind of retail differs from traditional fashion is through incorporating specific key characteristics of this industry? Because of the fact that fast fashion retailers release new items all the time, customers get to experience something new a week.

By utilizing economies of scale and reducing costs throughout the supply chain, many individuals previously unable to participate in fashion can now afford trendy clothing (Tsironis et al., 2024). Fast fashion companies value trend responsiveness by closely following trends, prototyping quickly, and producing in flexible ways, enabling them to deliver new fashions to buyers before they become very popular. Such a process requires close collaboration within the global supply chain and frequent updates among designers, manufacturers, and those managing retail operations.

2.2.2 Environmental Consequences

The environmental effects of fast fashion are evident at every stage of production, use, and disposal of the products. The fashion industry faces significant water challenges due to its annual demand for billions of cubic meters of water (Ragab et al., 2025). The world's main cotton supply uses a lot of water and large amounts of chemicals (Khan et al., 2020). Out of all types of fiber, the largest quantity is polyester, and its production process uses a lot of energy and raw materials from petrochemicals, which causes vast amounts of carbon emissions (Tekin et al., 2024). It also causes more environmental issues because chemicals are used in the textile industry.

2.3 Circular Economy Strategies Implementation

2.3.1 Rental and Sharing Programs

Many companies in the fashion industry are choosing rental and sharing services, as these concepts align with the principles of the circular economy. Since the clothes are available to borrow, fewer may be produced in the future. Due to luxury fashion rental programs, people can experience high-end clothes for less money, thereby delaying the time it takes for such garments to be discarded. It is demonstrated that rental programs benefit the environment when each item is used more than once, as this reduces the need for additional resources for shipping, washing, and packing (Dissanayake & Weerasinghe, 2022). Still, there are some issues with rental programs that may prevent them from becoming widespread and making a significant difference for the environment. Issues connected to cleanliness and hygiene may be complex for the company and may cause problems for the environment that can counterbalance the positive effects of sharing (Clube & Tennant, 2020).

2.3.2 Recycling Initiatives and Material Recovery

Making fashion circular largely depends on recycling textiles. Because of recycling, we do not have to produce as much new fiber. At the same time, there are several difficulties that prevent textile recycling from being carried out in large numbers. The fiber used to create new fabrics can be made by mechanically recycling textiles and chopping them into small pieces (Zhao et al., 2023). As a result, they often become shorter and weaker. Moreover, it remains challenging to scale these processes due to their high costs and technical complexity. Problems with collecting and sorting textiles make it difficult to recycle them, since contamination, different fiber types, and poor infrastructure stop a lot of materials from being recycled.
Larger fashion companies have tried recycling projects with success in some cases but not in others (Dhir, 2020). Since its establishment in 2013, H&M has collected over 29,000 tons of textiles; however, it faces challenges in building genuine closed-loop recycling systems due to the complexity of processing such a diverse range of materials (H&M Group, 2025). Nike recycles many athletic shoes to create new products, but this effort is still limited compared to the company's overall production (Nike, 2021).

2.3.3 Upcycling and Redesign Collections

Upcycling helps put the circular economy into practice by transforming products from waste or secondhand clothes through redesign and reconstruction (Stanescu, 2021). Unlike recycling, upcycling does not break down things; it simply makes them useful in other ways. Designer brands have adopted upcycling as a means to be environmentally friendly and creative, with Gabriela Hearst, Christopher Raeburn, and Marine Serre among those who have successfully achieved this. They demonstrate that upcycling can help create expensive products while also reducing waste. Upcycling is challenging to scale in the market because it is labour-intensive and difficult to create uniform production systems when dealing with unusual products. Because every upcycling project needs to be considered and handled differently, it is hard to sell them at the same prices as mass-produced items.

2.4 Greenwashing and Authenticity Concerns

2.4.1 Definition and Manifestations of Greenwashing

With each passing day, people feel more worried about sustainability, and the fashion world is taking advantage of that concern with the phenomenon of greenwashing. When it comes to fashion, greenwashing is when companies publicize minor environmental accomplishments and ignore the major negative impacts, talk about their products being "eco-friendly" or "sustainable" and not actually show any proof, and make small changes that focus on the real unsustainability of their business practices.
It is an obvious fact that many companies do create green collections and at the same time, carry on with their business as usual, which is highly destructive to the environment. These obvious greenwashing practices, coupled with environmental destruction, are being hugely over marketed. They are self-marketed as being eco-friendly, when in fact, for the most part, they do have many non-eco-friendly practices that they just do not disclose to the public. Moreover, the fashion industry is highly opaque, and because of that, many brands can self-claim to be eco-friendly and to have eco-friendly practices when in fact they do not. in most cases, they are just taking an easy out by taking the smallest step and calling it something it is not. In some cases, this leads to more of an environmental impact rather than the opposite.

2.4.2 Consumer Awareness and Skepticism

Due to prior research, we understand why people adore fashion brand products but have limited belief in their green marketing strategies (Adamkiewicz et al., 2022). While consumers can evaluate the green claims on their products, due to the access of technology, and the use of social media, many consumers can evaluate the green claims of the marketing strategies and assess the green practices of the company (Do Paço & Reis, 2016). Many consumers acknowledge green practices but give priorities to other issues and are concerned about more other issues than the issues of sustainable consumption (environmental issues). This demonstrates that there are gaps which give consumers the opportunity to green wash when selling their products (environmental issues). Due to the lack of trust of the consumers, independent accreditation (verification systems of green claims) have come into place (Copeland & Bhaduri, 2020). However, with the wide variety of systems available which are not all very credible, there arises confusion for the public.

3. Discussion

As stated in the literature review, it is clear that fast fashion is having circularity breakdowns due to technological gaps and human skepticism. This review investigates how these gaps show in reality by providing instances of the paradox that exists between the environment and the corporates' survival actions.

3.1 Tension Between Fast Fashion and Sustainability

There are these tensions in time, money, and ideas that would make a completely integrated circular economy in fast fashion virtually impossible. One of the major challenges in integrating the circular economy is the time it takes to make a circular economy work. Fast Fashion is built on the rapid production and reproduction of new styles, and has little concern for the deep environmental

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consequences of production. The time it would take to fashion a set of effective environmental controls, build a durable good design, and construct a recycling and service system in alignment with the fast fashion production cycle would make a significantly broader ecology of fast fashion Sisyphean.

The circular economy operates not to maximize a siloed unit of profit, just as fast fashion is not to maximize a unit of profit, sold and resold at will. The purchasing behavior it is designed to optimize is at constant profit, in direct contradiction of the circular economy. (de Oliveira & Oliveira, 2023). Due to high-tech trend forecasting and rapid production, fast fashion companies can quickly replace products and utilise them to generate profits. This model leads companies to avoid circular strategies, as they may decrease their sales and profits. The need to please investors often causes companies to focus on economic growth rather than adhering to circular economy principles regarding materials and consumption.

3.2 Case Study Analysis of Industry Leaders

3.2.1 H&M Group Circular Initiatives

H&M Group, a major fast fashion retailer, has been utilising the circular economy and the "Let's Close the Loop" initiative, with its programs serving as examples of how the company incorporates circular ways of working into fast fashion (Nauwelaerts & Vingerhoets, 2023). Customers have been able to participate in H&M's garment collecting program since 2013 by bringing any items, regardless of their condition or brand, and receive discount vouchers to use on future purchases. Although downcycling is better than throwing things away, it doesn't fully achieve the closed-loop systems that are a central part of the circular economy. The discount voucher system encourages people to buy more, allowing customers to use their vouchers on new items after returning textiles. Despite garnering considerable attention, the "Conscious" collection from H&M accounts for less than 5% of the company's production and has a limited environmental impact (H&M Group, 2025).

3.2.2 Zara's Circular Collection Programs

Zara's parent company, Inditex, has introduced circular economy measures by offering "Join Life" collections, allowing customers to return their clothing, and making sustainable promises that outline the luxury fast fashion brand's approach to circularity. Zara's emphasis on the more sustainable approach to climate change is more focused on its unique design and high-quality materials as opposed to H&M (Esbeih et al., 2021). Because of the volume of production, Zara is also able to maintain a below-average environmental impact among the fast-fashion brands. The "Join Life" collection uses Tencel, organic cotton, recycled polyester, and deadstock which are more sustainable than virgin options.

Still, the positive impact these materials have on the environment is frequently compromised by the production of more goods and the continued use of global supply routes. The clothing take-back program by Zara operates in only a few places and primarily involves donating and reselling clothes, rather than remaking them into new Zara items. Most Join Life products are priced higher than Zara's standard goods, which may make them inaccessible to some individuals who prioritise the environment but are on a budget. For its "Join Life" products, Inditex utilises both digital passports and blockchain technology to ensure the transparency of materials and their production processes. Nevertheless, the process is only used in a small part of production because it is costly and complicated. It is clear from its operations that Zara's circular efforts are not very comprehensive. Zara produces a new Join Life collection every six months, and they sell them so fast that the collections only represent 10-15% of the company's total stock (Esbeih et al., 2021). Zara's garment take-back program is now present in more than 2,000 of its stores worldwide, yet most collected clothes are donated and do not become part of the next Zara product, missing the main idea of a circular economy.

3.2.3 Emerging Rental Platform Models

Rental services show a new way for customers to enjoy fashion without buying it, and at the same time, help the environment by adopting circular economy approaches. Understanding the strengths and weaknesses of the leading platforms provides insights into how rental models can achieve sustainability in the fashion industry. This way, the value from every garment is better used, which benefits the environment. There are challenges in operations, such as high logistics fees for delivery, maintaining cleanliness, and managing inventory, which can cause environmental harm that may offset the positive effects of shared spaces.

3.3 Barriers to Genuine Circular Implementation

It is challenging to apply circular economy principles to the fashion industry because existing recycling methods are not well-suited to the diverse range of materials and chemicals found in today's clothing. Mechanical processes used in recycling often damage the quality of fibers, and the chemical methods are much more expensive, so fiber-to-fiber recycling makes up only a small portion of textile recycling. The problem is that there are not enough methods to collect used textiles, as most areas lack easy and accessible programs for recovering them, and the sorting and processing facilities are inadequate to handle the large and complex waste from fast fashion. The loca-

tion of most recycling centres in certain areas causes high transportation and environmental costs that sometimes cancel out the good things recycling provides. Economic problems arise with circular systems since recycled materials tend to cost much more than new, untreated ones. This is because it is costly to collect, sort, and process recycled goods, making them less competitive without policy or consumer support. Circular economy methods that include all life cycle costs are less attractive to the economy than linear ways that let nature bear some of the costs.

Most countries have not established clear rules for textile recycling, extended producer responsibility, or circular design, which gives companies following linear approaches a competitive advantage. On the other hand, those with circular practices incur more costs. There are no international regulations in place, so companies can move their production to places with more lenient environmental regulations. The fragmented nature of the global fashion supply chain makes the implementation of full circular strategies more difficult, as there are many suppliers, subcontractors, and logistics providers, making it difficult to monitor, control and set up take-back systems. There is a consumer expectation for lower costs, rapid turnover of styles, and immediate availability, all of which are difficult to achieve in genuine circular systems due to consumer habits. Companies find it difficult to promote and support new consumption practices as these companies have new consumption models that depend on immediate, reliable, and sustained profitability.

H&M claims that the circular activities done by companies is a very small fraction with most of their activities being unpromise. (H&M Group, 2025). This indicates that the circular activities being done, if any, are more pr of advertising and less of actually making an impact. More demand is circularity and for positive environmental impact, which is why it is most challenging being that consumers are accepting in purchasing out of their recyclable material is being made. Trying to demand and being the purpose more environmental out of their recyclable material is being made. Trying to demand and being the purpose the environment making more technical advances and investments but the market has no potentials. More consumers are likely the most important barrier in the implementation of the circular economy as their purchasing habits make the most impact on what is valuable in the market. More focus shifted in the purchasing habits being costly and the convenience of their purchase being more prioritized. Because of this reason companies make efforts for promotional circular marketing. More of the reason is that the market for the circular economy is limited because of the reason why it is labeled fast fashion; being more protective of the environment is costlier in less time.

3.4 Future Pathways and Recommendations

3.4.1 Technology and Innovation Solutions

Technological advancements represent a critical pathway for overcoming current barriers to implementing the circular economy in fashion, with emerging innovations offering potential solutions to many technical and economic challenges that currently limit the effectiveness of circularity. Chemical recycling technologies require continued development and scaling to achieve commercial viability, demonstrating promising approaches to fibre-to-fibre recycling that maintain material quality through multiple cycles. Government and industry investment in chemical recycling infrastructure could achieve the scale necessary to reduce costs and improve accessibility. Using digital technology, such as blockchain and AI, to monitor products and manage the supply chain can boost how transparent and efficient circular systems become.

Innovations such as bio-based fibers, recyclable synthetic materials, and one-component textiles could solve the main issues with recycling clothes and provide the expected quality to buyers. The interaction between material science experts and fashion developers may speed up the introduction and use of these innovations. Sorting, disassembly, and processing tasks done by automation or robots can reduce labor expenses and boost efficiency in the circular economy, so recycling and refurbishment will cost less than making products from new materials. Automated technologies built for the textile industry could overcome the problems of manual handling.

3.4.2 Policy and Regulatory Frameworks

It is necessary to make laws in fashion to promote the circular economy, since few people will adopt such practices without government support. EPR law ought to direct fashion companies to address the waste of their products and try to lessen the damage they cause to the environment. It is possible that these policies will lead to the creation of recycling facilities and motivate businesses to make products that can be used again. Implementing minimum recycled content rules for textiles would help establish markets for recycled goods, thereby boosting the economy and encouraging the development of additional recycling infrastructure. The new rules should be introduced over time to help industry become circular while making sure there are clear objectives for using more recycled materials.

Policy changes in public procurement can promote circular products and services, increase demand for them, and demonstrate the government's commitment to a circular economy by supporting businesses in developing circular products. If governments buy more circular products, companies can produce on a larger scale and reduce their costs. Funding the development of circular economy ideas

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and systems could speed up both innovation and the introduction of solutions for today's challenges.

3.4.3 Industry Collaboration and Standards

For the fashion industry to transition to a circular economy and address its environmental impact, everyone needs to collaborate and adopt the same standards, because one company's efforts alone will not overcome the significant problems and failures that underpin linear business approaches. It is essential to ensure that material standards and certification systems are consistent to facilitate the implementation of circular systems and facilitate the efficient trade of materials. Using the same standard for materials could increase the efficiency of recycling and save money. If companies join supply chain collaboration platforms, they may be able to collaborate on recycling, adjust their material flows, and generate circular efforts that are too difficult for individual firms to achieve.

Teamwork might be a solution for the expensive infrastructure that discourages investment in the circular economy. Research and development consortia may unite their funds to create circular technologies and business models, accelerating innovation and mitigating risks and expenses. Working together on research that is not directly linked to their products allows companies to share solutions while still maintaining their unique approaches to implementing the research.

Transparency could be enhanced and circular flows within the industry could be improved by allowing companies to share anonymized data about what materials they use, what waste is produced, and their overall results, to find areas for improvement. Sharing data among companies could make circular system design and control more successful. Sharing and utilising best practices in a circular economy enables companies to learn from the successes of others and avoid incurring expenses on failures. Such organizations and projects might help industry members learn from each other while preserving the competition.

4. Conclusion

The study focused on examining how fast fashion utilises circular strategies. Although H&M and Zara are making improvements, their efforts cover only a small portion. Their focus on profit has been their main priority because consumer behavior and lacking policies are roadblocks to progress. To obtain true circularity, the system has to change. The application of circular economy (CE) principles to fast fashion highlights the paradoxes. Brands are providing recycling and rental and upcycled collections, but these efforts typically result in very little positive change. The key attributes of fast fashion - overshooting production, scheduled obsolescence, and accelerated turnover - are still in full effect, which prevents authentically sustainable outcomes. There are also notable technical constraints, most notably in textile recycling. Most recycling practices result in downcycling, and less than 1% of old clothes are recycled into closed-loop new garments.

Chemical recycling is a somewhat new and novel idea, but has little real opportunity because of the prohibitive cost. As it stands now, circular and recycled materials are extremely expensive. Fast fashion companies are most likely to be frustrated when circular designs yield little profit and sales territory is lost. Part of the problem is people's shopping habits and their loss of control. Although the majority has been predisposed to selecting low-cost, visually appealing, and convenience products, the new paradigm of shopping centers around environmental awareness.

Their actions have little significance. H&M and Zara have minor positive initiatives like garment collecting and Join Life respectively but are also highly impactful. There are outdated regulations resulting in little to no enforcement on producer responsibility, use of recycled content, and design for circularity. As a result, there are no incentives for brands to adopt environmental responsibility. However, there are opportunities. With the latest recycling technologies, managed waste tracking and shared infrastructure, costs and circular economy activities can be enhanced. New policies like the EU Textile Strategy and changing consumer values will drive change. We see hope in rental and sharing businesses. For the CE to be truly effective, the fashion industry must change its from the ground up. Limited technological investment, customer education, inter-company collaboration and regulatory frameworks will see fast fashion's negative environmental impact persist. Other fast-moving consumer industries will benefit from the insights gained in this sector when adopting CE.

Future Research Directions

Future studies might analyze the difference between circular economy (CE) practices in different consumer interacting sectors and seek knowledge across industries. Further studies might analyze the role of various digital tools like blockchain and AI in achieving scalable CE. Studies on consumer behavior might explain the underlying reasons the disengagement in recycling and rental models. There is also scope for extending the study on the CE in various countries and diverse cultural backgrounds especially in the Global South. It would also be very interesting to analyze the CE of companies over time especially their practices related to labor. Finally, it would be good to conduct simulations to predict how the policies might increase the movement toward genuine circularity in the fast fashion industry.

Review

The research developed a thorough understanding of the circular economy within the field of fast fashion and was able to analyze the primary reason of inner contradictions

of the fashion industry, whi\ch is the conflict between the aspirational goals of sustainability and the operational goals of the industry. The research was able to identify the discrepancies of the marketing claims vs the operational realities, and the consequences of that, and was able to analyze the potential and the constraints of the workings of true circular economy. The primary challenge was the lack of operational information from the fashion industry where the bulk of the sustainability reports, if any, contained detail of the outcomes which were the positive ones and presented a gain. As a result, this was done through the prism of impact assessments and the reliance of some circular economy operational gaps to industry reports where academic research and other documented evidence had to be used to complete the picture. Also, the fact that the bulk of these circular actions are in the early stages of their development, impact the possibility of being able to make a long term impact and potential of success.

My research fostered my skills in evaluating companies' sustainability practices, examining intricate supply chain problems, and addressing the disparity between theory and practice. The research underscored the value of systems thinking in resolving the environmental issues and addressing the diverse views of the contributors to sustainability. Through the research, I saw that the issues that arise in sustainability are interdisciplinary and that there is a need to integrate environmental science, business policy, behavioral science, and public policy to more deeply understand the challenges of the circular economy. The research also showed me the value of critical thinking in tackling the problems to understand the real versus the facade of sustainability.

The research could be deepened to understand better how specific circular technologies function, consumer habits transformations, and the adjustment of statutes to sustainable fashion. Understanding the fashion industry better could come from the assessment of the sustainability of the industry and the exploration of different business models. The research conducted demonstrated the importance of empirical analysis while also indicating the necessity of ongoing scrutiny of corporate environmental public relations. The difficulties of instituting circular economies have better prepared me for work and for further academic pursuits in the field of sustainability. The assistance and guidance I was provided during the project helped me to examine in detail the areas of fashion sustainability. This project made me realize the importance of using research for solving the environmental degradation problem, and the need for more fundamental changes.

All in all, I understand circular economy strategies in fast fashion even better now, and I am better equipped to analyze sustainability claims with more knowledge and skepticism. It made clear that in order to solve problems in the fashion industry, transparency, accountability, and interdisciplinary collaboration are essential. When the structure of the organization is changed, and people are genuinely engaged, real change happens. I intend to join initiatives that are proven to be helpful and sustainable for different businesses and communities as I succeed in my career.

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