

Sophie Maley
1802588
Research in context ADAD5003
BA Surface Pattern Design
Julia Lockheart
Word count: 2276

Outline a current environmental, political, or social issue that requires redesign. Explain how you will solve this issue over the duration of your future design career. Underline the tools and approaches will you use and discuss how and why.

In the design industry, there is a massive amount of issues that need addressing, as they'll often lead to redesign and the need for change. Sadly, they do not tend to have a quick fix and will need constant research in order to make a positive change further down the line. In this essay, I am going to be talking about some of these issues and the effects they have on people in their day to day lives as well as the impacts on me, a designer. In my opinion, the biggest issue for the design industry is global warming. The fast fashion industry and their use of cheap non environmentally friendly materials to make fast and easy sales, sadly have a massive impact on the environment. (Preuss, 2019) To these companies, sales are considered more important than the environment and this needs to change. I will be talking about ways in which change has started to come into the fast fashion industry, and how I will ensure redesign happens in my own design career, so I do not to add to this issue also. However, not only does fast fashion have a massive impact on the environment, it also has staggering social impacts which have only increased dramatically in the past few years. As a result of social media, these issues will need careful consideration in the coming years, as well as the need for redesign. As I branch into my career as a designer, I will have to ensure I am addressing these issues and responding adequately, all of which will be evaluated in detail.

'Fast fashion' is currently a major topic within the fashion industry, having both positive and negative impacts on the environment, as well as its consumers. Fashion companies design cheap, affordable clothing, to mimic catwalk fashion (Stanton, 2018). This ensures consumers continuously have on trend clothing, available immediately, at an affordable price. Although this appears advantageous to the consumer and the design companies, there is an enormous impact on the environment. Currently, we are in a major environmental crisis, where we only have twelve years to reverse the impacts of global warming, before irreversible effects are observed (McGrath, 2019). Some of the most prevalent causes of global warming is the amount of energy that we are wasting; as well as too much waste going into land fill sites, opposed to being recycled, or disposed appropriately if non-recyclable. These are only a few of the impacts the fashion industry, or specifically 'fast fashion', have on the environment, resulting in a major negative outcome. In order to make these clothes at an affordable price, they are made from cheap, unrecyclable materials, increasing the need for these raw materials to be made in the first place. As fashion trends change, the higher the demand on companies to produce more clothes; therefore, more materials are going to be used, resulting in an increased demand energy. The outcome of this would result in clothes going into land fill sites due to the short life span on clothes. This cycle will continue to repeat itself until change is brought about. The World we live in is highly focused around money, where consumer products are getting increasingly expensive, yet, wages are not proportional to this increase. To a consumer, it is far more appealing to buy cheaper clothes, in comparison to previous years, where you would invest your money into clothing, designed by companies ensuring that product quality is maintained, to last a long time. However, these companies are slowly going out of business, especially those on the high street, a direct impact from the lack of trade. These companies are unable to compete with their prices, due to increased building costs, and the ever-growing

online industry. To be able to compete within this market, companies need to redesign clothes and find an alternative method to combat this issue, or risk going into bankruptcy. Another issue associated with the 'fast fashion' industry, in conjunction with growing online brands, is that there is an increased demand on energy usage, primarily from air miles and couriers, through the delivery of online orders. This is having a big effect on global warming, which is not set to change anytime soon. Consumers would preferably use online stores as an alternative to going to shopping locations to buy clothes, because, why would you rather shop online from the comfort of your home, where prices are often reduced or even cheaper than in-store, and the majority of these stores offer free next day delivery. Unfortunately, this will not be changing in the near future, with the ever-growing use of social media, 'fast fashion' has become the careers of many, the trade is growing regardless of the impacts it is having. Companies outsource to social media "influencers" using their platform to post and advertise clothing to reach an even bigger target audience; therefore, increase sales. This has become one of the best forms of advertisement for these 'fast fashion' companies. This adds to the cause, meaning this is something that will unlikely change within the near future. The use of social media boosts the sales and demand for these 'fast fashion' pieces, but it also has a massive social impact.

'Fast fashion' is a great industry but has become overly developed. Look at it this way, you can have stylish, on trend clothing, at an affordable price, sent to you the very next day, all for a fraction of the in-store price. Not only does it have benefits to the consumers, but it has also created a vast quantity of jobs that never would have existed before; for example, the influencer, a job in which more and more people are perusing with the growth of social media. Companies and brands often approach people who have a larger following on their social media accounts, and will offer them payment in return of an 'Instagram' post of the influencer wearing their clothing with a caption bound to make their followers want to then buy the items, due to being heavily influenced by them, much like the way people used to want to look like the celebrities on the covers of magazines or on TV adverts, but on an even bigger. One person can follow up to 7,500 people on 'Instagram' (Anon., 2018), imagine seeing and being influenced by that amount of people daily. Although this is an amazing advertisement opportunity for fashion companies, as well as bringing about a lot of customers enabling the company to continue and grow as a business. For the consumer, there are a lot of negatives, having a massive social impact. Being heavily influenced and pressured to look like these well-known influencers puts a lot of stress on the consumer, as their clothing may be at an affordable price, but this does not mean everyone can still afford to be 'on trend', the industry is constantly updating and changing, and influencers appear to be able to catch up with the change; whereas, a normal person would be able to afford to have a new wardrobe of clothes every week, and only ever wear one outfit once, you are made to believe that you are almost instantly out dated. Another overlooked impact is on the parents of children, where the demand to keep up to date with fashion is emphasised even greater. Children are always demanding new clothes in order to keep up with the fashion industry. This stigma will continue to increase, especially with social media users joining the fashion trend at a younger age, being influenced at a much younger age, being brought up to want to be like these people they see. The constant change in fashion means people in the long run are probably spending more money on clothing that is of poor quality and extremely bad

Sophie Maley
1802588
Research in context ADAD5003
BA Surface Pattern Design
Julia Lockheart
Word count: 2276

for to the environment rather than buying a more expensive item which is not 'fast fashion' and will last them a whole lot longer, and will not be out of fashion as quick. This has a negative effect on people's mental wellbeing as well, encouraging judgment on people who cannot afford to constantly be up to date with fashion. This is something that is in massive need of redesign and consideration, if they want to carry on being successful.

Thankfully, there is now a growing market for influencers who are more environmentally conscious, and it is slowly becoming more fashionable to be environmentally friendly. Influencers such as Zara McDermott have gone the extra mile, and has designed something highly impactful, by working with Little mistress to create a fully recycled fashion range, this is the future (LEAPER, 2019). 'Fast fashion' will be trendy for the foreseeable future, therefore, as a designer you will need to be more conscious. Creating fashion items using recyclable materials such as 100% reused plastic bottle fabrics, not only does this mean less material going into landfill, but more plastic is being repurposed and lowers the demand for non-recycled materials to be made to start with. Over the future of my career, I will be making a big effort to do research into the materials I use, and if repurposed materials can be used instead. Companies such as H&M have already done this, when they released a collection using recycled cashmere and velvet made from recycled polyester. As a designer or company selling fashion clothing, we all have to come together to adjust our industry and put an end to our global warming contributions. There are now recycling providers for fashion, one being reGAIN (Hendriksz, 2018), the first app to be developed in the UK, a company who has teamed up with big brands such as Superdry, New Balance, Boohoo, Miss guided and other well know brands in helping to divert them from sending tonnes of clothing being taken to landfill and instead being recycled and repurposed. These companies are now offering drop off points where you take your unwanted clothes in exchange for exclusive discount vouchers to use with the retailers. As fast fashion is a big deal not changing anytime soon they understand that they can't stop people from buying clothes instead getting people to change their habits and ensure the clothes are recycled instead of ending up in landfill. They also have a feature where an individual can send their clothing free of charge directly to them, but they've also considered their carbon footprint so only allow one post a week per consumer and must be a minimum of 10 items. The whole app is a highly considered service, covering all aspects of the problem to do their best to lower the impact the fashion industry has on global warming and doing a good job at it to.

In my future career, the materials I will be using will be very important to me, and I am very fond of the idea of using completely recycled fabrics, not only will this be putting an end to the impact fast fashion has but will also give you a better selling advantage point in the future of the industry, yes, consumers are loving everything cheap and cheerful, and it does have its positives, but we are becoming more and more conscious of our environment, how we are impacting it and what we can do to help and like I said thankfully its starting to become a trend to be more careful, and to share with others how we are going about doing that and influencing other people to do the same. I will also be approaching influencers in a different way, not only would I be asking them to advertise my environmentally friendly fashion, using recyclable fabrics, but also to encourage them to wear the same outfit more than once, increasing their life span and reducing the need to buy more clothes, by showing this on their platform and creating a hashtag, this will normalise wearing outfits over and

Sophie Maley
1802588
Research in context ADAD5003
BA Surface Pattern Design
Julia Lockheart
Word count: 2276

over and lowering the need to change your wardrobe all the time, this will have a great impact on the environment, reducing waste but also impact peoples mentality, there will be less social pressure to be wearing new clothes all the time, to be spending money all the time. I will enforce this by offering rewards and incentives such as discount vouchers to people who post more than one photo on different occasions wearing the same outfit, with social media growing and growing, this will not be a difficult trend to start, everyone likes to post what they're doing and what they're wearing so this is a perfect platform to use. This will hopefully solve the environmental issues with fast fashion as well as the social issues that come with fast fashion without destroying the industry as a whole. Clothes will last longer, less will go to landfill, social pressures will decrease, and the fashion industry will still continue.

Overall, these issues have a very big impact having its fair share of negatives and positives, its not impossible to reverse the effects and change the way they work. The fashion industry, especially online and fast fashion will not be going anywhere. Thankfully, there are lots of ways consumers and suppliers can do their part to change the negative impacts they have. It will not be a quick and easy fix but there are so many ways to predict the future, the future being an inevitable growth in the fashion industry as well as social media continuing to grow, therefore giving us the opportunity to use these to our advantage to redesign the way we do things and to solve the issues that come with the industries.

References

- Anon., 2018. *The Truth behind the Follow/Unfollow Method on Instagram*. [Online]
Available at: <https://workmacro.com/instagram/truth-behind-follow-unfollow-method-instagram/>
[Accessed 9 December 2019].
- Anon., n.d. [Online]
Available at: <https://fashionunited.uk/news/business/15-recycling-efforts-that-are-reshaping-the-fashion-industry/2019051443162>
- Hendriksz, V., 2018. *reGAIN: The UK's first app for recycling unwanted clothing launches*. [Online]
Available at: <https://fashionunited.uk/news/fashion/regain-the-uk-s-first-app-for-recycling-unwanted-clothing-launches/2018041729156>
[Accessed 9 December 2019].
- LEAPER, C., 2019. *Are recyclable party dresses really the solution to the fast fashion problem?*. [Online]
Available at: <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/fashion/style/recyclable-party-dresses-really-solution-fast-fashion-problem1/>
[Accessed 9 December 2019].
- McGrath, M., 2019. *Climate change: 12 years to save the planet? Make that 18 months*. [Online]
Available at: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-48964736>
[Accessed 9 December 2019].

Sophie Maley
1802588
Research in context ADAD5003
BA Surface Pattern Design
Julia Lockheart
Word count: 2276

Preuss, S., 2019. *15 recycling efforts that are reshaping the fashion industry*. [Online]
Available at: <https://fashionunited.uk/news/business/15-recycling-efforts-that-are-reshaping-the-fashion-industry/2019051443162>
[Accessed 9 December 2019].

Stanton, A., 2018. *What Is Fast Fashion, Anyway?*. [Online]
Available at: <https://www.thegoodtrade.com/features/what-is-fast-fashion>
[Accessed 9 December 2019].