

## Chapter 5

# Navigating the Landscape of Green Marketing Trends and Identifying Greenwashing Red Flags

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### **ABSTRACT**

*Through this chapter, the authors intend to provide information to the fashion and retail industry about the latest trends and their drawbacks, further increasing the awareness of environmentally conscious consumers. The objective of the study is first to examine the prevalent green marketing strategies adopted by fashion and retail businesses. Further, it also evaluates the actual reality and effectiveness behind the strategies used by brands to understand if they are creating an illusion of sustainability or are genuinely committed through case studies of various retail brands. Lastly it investigates consumer attitudes and perceptions of green marketing in fashion and retail. This research employs an approach to explore driving factors for green marketing in the fashion and retail industry. Utilizing secondary data, a comprehensive review of existing literature on sustainable practices, consumer behaviour, and industry trends was done.*

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## **I. INTRODUCTION**

Clothing production and consumption have increased steadily over the last few decades because of rising global incomes, rapid population expansion, and living standards. Clothing is made and designed to quickly change trends through early obsolescence and disposal (Shirvanimoghaddam et al., 2020).

The fashion industry has recently experienced a notable shift due to the surge in consumer consciousness regarding environmental concerns and sustainability. The fashion industry is gradually embracing a green revolution in response to the escalating concerns over climate change, resource depletion, and ethical sourcing. This paradigm shift is encapsulated in the concept of “green marketing,” which seeks to integrate sustainability into the core of fashion business practices (Alexa et al., 2022). With the rise of environmental consciousness and worries about the ecological impact of different industries, the 1970s were a watershed year. As a result, there was a paradigm shift in the fashion and retail industries toward more environmentally friendly and sustainable practices. Ottman, J. (1998) demand for fashion products made sustainably and ethically increased along with customer awareness. Companies began using eco-friendly procedures in all aspects of their business, from procurement of raw materials to production and delivery. The 21st century has witnessed a rise in environmentally conscious fashion initiatives, with businesses using green marketing techniques more frequently to highlight their dedication to sustainability.

Given that a company’s standing has a big influence on customers’ perceptions and propensity to purchase, the idea of “Greenwashing,” first introduced by Jay Westerveld in 1986, emerged in tandem with green marketing. Greenwashing is defined as “a phenomenon that includes poor environmental performance and positive communication about it,” (de Freitas Netto et al). For instance, the greenwashing case of Patagonia urged consumers to buy fewer things and choose more sustainably by running an anti-consumerist campaign but “At the same time they are supporting customers in improving their behavior by urging them to make more thoughtful purchases (Allchin, 2014) Still, the reality is that only less than 1% of it can be recycled and in Europe, leftover textiles account for 15–25% of the total, of which half are recycled. The other half is utilized to make used apparel in underdeveloped nations. The remaining 80–85% of textiles made in Europe are burned or dumped in landfills if they are not recovered (Sandin & Peters, 2018).

## **II. GREEN MARKETING TRENDS IN RETAIL**

### **SHIEN**

The most downloaded app in the US in 2021 (even surpassing Amazon), Shein is a well-known Chinese brand with competitive prices and \$10 billion in revenue that obliterates everything in its way. Chinese retailer SHEIN recently appointed a Chief Governance, Social, and Environmental Officer (also known as an Industry ESG Director) as part of its most recent effort to meet rising business and fashion standards (Srauturier, 2024). Customers can return leftover products to Shein for coupons, according to the brand’s website. Shein advertises itself as a vegan company that doesn’t use any fur or leather on its website (Kenk, 2022). Shein introduced its “Our Products/Our Planet” campaign in response to mounting negative publicity. The campaign states that Shein produces 50–100 pieces for each product and will only make big quantities of a product when there is a great demand for it. (Lai, 2024)

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