The Impact of Slow Fashion Orientation (SFO) on Socially Responsible Apparel Consumption (SRC): Moderating Effects of Industry Irresponsibility and Consumer Irresponsibility

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Abstract

This research seeks to uncover inconsistencies in consumers' awareness of irresponsibility by separately examining the moderating effects of company and consumer irresponsibility on the relationship between consumers' slow fashion orientation (SFO) and their socially responsible apparel consumption (SRC) motivation. The survey instrument for this research was a self-administered online questionnaire. Scale items were adapted and expanded from the extant literature. Data were collected from a convenience sample of retailing students at two U.S. universities, yielding 405 usable responses. The partial least squares method was employed for data analysis to explore the relationship between SFO and SRC and to test the moderating effect of irresponsibility on the original relationship. The five hypotheses are discussed, and confirm that consumers still do not recognize the impacts of industry irresponsibility (i.e., environmental, social), yet they do recognize the impact of their own irresponsible consumption behaviors (i.e., purchase, use, disposal) to some extent. Using fast fashion as the focus, two measures of irresponsibility (i.e., industry, consumer) are introduced and investigated. To the author's knowledge, no research has yet investigated awareness of industry irresponsibility and awareness of consumer irresponsibility as separate influences. The discussion highlights implications for slow fashion companies and other institutional actors (e.g., NGOs) who seek to further engage consumers in the slow fashion movement, a necessary step to transition to a collective sustainability-oriented identity within the fashion system.

Keywords: Socially responsible consumption (SRC), slow fashion, slow consumption, industry irresponsibility, consumer irresponsibility

1. Introduction

Over the past three decades, the trend toward fast fashion (FF) has exploded, upending the traditional fashion calendar and resulting in a fundamental shift in consumer shopping behavior toward overconsumption and disposal. FF's success factors, including quick response to continuously changing fashion trends and low prices, perpetuate overproduction,

waste and resource exploitation across its supply chains (Fletcher, 2010; Ghemawat & Nueno, 2003; Sull & Turconi, 2008). In recent years, coinciding with a larger push in the apparel sector toward sustainable development, FF companies, to varying extents, have ramped up their commitments to sustainability within their supply chains, invested in R&D for sustainable product innovation, and created internal compliance and reporting standards related to sustainability.

Many companies in the FF industry (e.g., H&M, Zara) have also positioned themselves as sustainable consumer choices through consumer-facing initiatives such as garment recycling programs and collections produced partially from recycled materials (e.g., H&M's Conscious Collection). Although commendable, these initiatives do not address the fact that the FF business model (i.e., continuous change, low cost, low quality, high volume) is inherently at odds with sustainable consumption (Kim et al., 2013).

This practice, called greenwashing, creates confusion among consumers about which companies actually employ socially responsible business strategies (Ertekin & Atik, 2015; Hill & Lee, 2012; McNeill & Moore, 2015).Greenwashing also facilitates a false sense of social responsibility among shoppers, when in actuality companies are using this technique to sell more merchandise. For example, many shoppers donate used clothing to FF companies' in-store recycling programs in order to earn discounts toward future purchases. This behavior underscores the most harmful impact of greenwashing. That is, corporate greenwashing shapes consumer perceptions of sustainability by positioning it as a responsibility managed by the company (e.g., ethical labor practices, efforts toward more sustainable supply chains). This approach downplays the impact of unsustainable consumption behaviors and does not acknowledge how "the consumer has a specific social responsibility, which goes hand-in-hand with the social responsibility of the enterprise" (LaRocca, 2014, p. 8).

As fashion's role in the climate crisis has become more apparent in the mainstream, so has the need for an industry-wide commitment to sustainable development and offsetting its ecological and social impacts. In January 2020, executives from global apparel companies attended the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland for the first time to discuss the need for transparency, circular fashion innovation, and collaboration at scale (BOF Team, 2020). However, sustainable fashion advocacy groups in attendance (e.g., Global Fashion Agenda) observed the 'role of the consumer' to be noticeably absent from discussions. The *Business of Fashion* surmised that the industry still "doesn't seem ready to face the elephant in the room: The fundamental tension between greater sustainability and a fashion business model that is rooted in overconsumption and obsolescence" (BOF Team, 2020, para. 8). For years, as companies have avoided ascribing responsibility to consumers, scholars have reiterated the need for a macro institutional approach to address the breadth of sustainability challenges facing the sector (Ertekin & Atik, 2015; Ingenbleek et al., 2015; McDonagh & Prothero, 2014; Prothero et al., 2011). This approach will require a joint commitment by all institutional actors (e.g., organizations, fashion media, consumers) to fully achieve the impending paradigm shift to a more sustainable apparel system (Armstrong-Soule & Reich, 2015; Janssen et al., 2014; Kotler, 2011; Scaraboto & Fischer, 2013).

This research seeks to uncover inconsistencies in consumers' *awareness of irresponsibility* by separately examining the moderating effects of company and consumer irresponsibility on the relationship between consumers' slow fashion orientation (SFO) and their socially responsible apparel consumption (SRC) motivation. The researchers first explore consumers' slow fashion orientation (SFO), proposing that consumers have a positive orientation to the slow fashion dimensions and are considering them to some extent in their apparel purchase, use, and disposal behaviors. Next, the researchers determine the relationship between respondents' SFO and their motivation for socially responsible apparel consumption (SRC), proposing that consumers will exhibit a positive motivation for SRC and that SFO positively influences SRC. Finally, the researchers introduce two measures of *irresponsibility* (i.e., industry, consumer). These constructs utilize *fast fashion* as the focus, as both practitioners (e.g., Bain, 2016; 2017; Wicker, 2016) and academics (Joy, 2015; Joy et al., 2012; McNeill & Moore, 2015) identify this sector of the apparel industry as the source of the most irresponsible company and consumer behaviors. The researchers propose that consumers are cognizant of social responsibility, or the lack thereof, within the FF industry (i.e., industry irresponsibility), butthey are less conscious of how their own FF consumption behaviors are irresponsible. To test this assumption, hypotheses are developed to determine whether respondents' awareness of industry and consumer irresponsibility influence the relationship between their SFO and SRC.

2. Relevant Literature and Hypothesis Development

2.1 Socially Responsible Apparel Consumption: Proposed Construct

The present study adopts Schlaile et al.'s (2018) holistic definition of SRC. The authors avoided paradigmatic boundaries by considering seminal definitions of SRC from a range of disciplines, while accounting for the social, moral, and evolutionary aspects of individuals' consumption behavior (Devinney et al., 2006; Mohr et al., 2001; Roberts, 1993; Webster, 1975). Schlaile et al.'s (2018) approach aligns with existing studies (McDonald et al., 2012; Peattie, 2001) that position each apparel purchase as context and product dependent, and supports the proposition that "identifying a homogenous group of green or ethical consumers with uniform intentions is not feasible because no individual's habits are entirely sustainable or unsustainable" (Cavender, 2018b, p. 3). McDonald et al. (2012) explained that all consumers exhibit both 'green' and 'grey' characteristics in their apparel consumption, use, and disposal.
Further, all consumers approach the 'greening' of their lifestyles and consumption practices in distinct ways as they navigate contextual influences at the micro (e.g., consumer decision-making process) and macro (e.g., evolving societal norms, increased sustainability-related media coverage) levels.

In this context, Schlaile et al. (2018) define SRC as a "social action that involves the act of consuming and simultaneously entails (i) taking into account, (ii) gathering information about, and ultimately (iii) avoiding the (foreseeable) negative consequences the current action engenders with regard to past, present, and future behavior of others" (p. 569). Unlike many other approaches to conceptualizing SRC (Barnett et al., 2011; Brinkman & Peattie, 2008; Devinney et al., 2010), Schlaile et al.'s (2018) definition solely focuses on the act of sustainably obtaining, using, and disposing of a product. It does not include the broader concept of consumer social responsibility, which encompasses both SRC and the shared responsibility of all societal actors (e.g., social action, influencing others). Instead, Schlaile et al.'s (2018) SRC consists of four individual consumer responsibilities. First, consumers are responsible for procuring accurate information about existing apparel product choices in the market. Second, they bear the 'demand-side responsibilities' of 'voting' through their choices and critically reflecting on the extent to which each purchase decision is socially responsible. Third, consumers must use their products responsibly (e.g., minimize laundering, mend worn garments), andfinally, they must identify options for responsible disposal (e.g., identifying second-life alternatives, recycling vs. landfills). These responsibilities are not only applicable to material commodities (e.g., apparel, consumer product goods), but also to consumption decisions pertaining to resources, energy, and services (Schlaile et al., 2018). However, the present study focuses only on apparel consumption.

Distinguishing between SRC and the broader concept of consumer social responsibility is also useful for addressing one of the barriers to consumer social responsibility on a larger scale. That is, the extent to which consumers believe their actions will make a difference influences their motivation to adopt more sustainable behaviors (Leary et al., 2017). A number of efficacy-based motivational beliefs are documented in the literature, including perceived consumer effectiveness, perceived marketplace influence and collective efficacy, to name a few (Schunk& Usher, 2012). Perceived consumer effectiveness, the most basic efficacy-based motivational belief, suggests that consumers are more inclined to change their behaviors when they believe their actions will make a difference in solving a problem (Leary et al., 2014; 2017; 2019). Because Schlaile et al.'s (2018) responsibilities for SRC are within the consumer's direct control, they are reasonable first steps for individuals to assume more accountability for the impact of their consumption behaviors. As consumers gain an awareness of their own responsibility for sustainable consumption, and accounting for a number of influences (e.g., perceived consumer effectiveness, informational complexity, moral intensity), their apparel consumption patterns become more socially responsible over time (McDonald et al., 2012; Schlaile et al., 2018).Although consumer social responsibility is beyond the scope of the present study, it is important to note that Schlaile et al. (2018) position SRC as an important antecedent to consumer social responsibility. This suggests that as individuals become more socially responsible consumers, they may eventually adopt a more agentic role (i.e., consumer social responsibility) as purposive actors in the paradigm shift to a more sustainable apparel system (Luchs et al., 2015; Scaraboto & Fischer, 2013).

2.2 Slow Fashion Orientation: Proposed Constructs

The prevailing culture of overconsumption, spearheaded by the fast fashion (FF) industry, has given rise to movements such as slow fashion, a counter movement to the consumption practices that support the FF industry. Slow fashion constitutes slow production (e.g., quality, craftsmanship) at the company level, and slow (or conscious) consumption and disposal at the consumer level (Ertekin and Atik, 2015; Jung & Jin, 2016; McNeill & Moore, 2015). The slow fashion concept encourages consumers to consider the responsibility (or irresponsibility) of their purchase, use, and disposal behaviors. For consumers, engaging in the slow fashion movement through slow consumption necessitates a shift from quantity to quality-focused consumption, a willingness to engage in alternative retail formats (e.g., second-hand market), and a commitment to conscientiously dispose of used clothing (Jung & Jin, 2014; 2016).

Although slow production and consumption cycles may increase production costs, this approach increases the quality of products. Slow production also creates opportunities for the co-creation of garments with consumers. Cataldi et al. (2010) identified this collaboration as a key characteristic of slow fashion. Inviting consumers into the design process helps meet their desire for creative and unique items, while fostering the producer/consumer connection that is instrumental for facilitating awareness of production processes and encouraging consumers to responsibly consider how their garments are made (Jung & Jin, 2014). Unlike disposable clothing (i.e., FF), slow fashion items can remain in use longer, which in turn, allows consumers to practice conscious disposal by identifying second-life alternatives for their garments (e.g., donation, resale platforms). As a result, consumers perceive more value in what they buy and care for their clothing in a more responsible manner (Fletcher, 2010).

Jung and Jin (2014; 2016) conceptualized, tested, and validated five dimensions of slow fashion, including social equity, localism, authenticity, functionality and exclusivity. These dimensions were adapted to form the variable, “slow fashion orientation,” in the present study. The researchers propose that each of the five dimensions positively influence SRC (see Figure 1).

2.2.1. Social Equity

When the Rana Plaza disaster in Dhaka, Bangladesh on April 23, 2013 became the deadliest garment factory accident in history, it laid bare the extent to which many apparel, and particularly FF companies, are prioritizing profits over the value of human safety and life in many parts of the world where they operate (Webster, 2019). The event resulted in increased mainstream awareness of the human-based ethical issues perpetuated by the apparel industry (Magnuson et al., 2017).The social equity aspect of slow fashion is a company-facing responsibility, with slow production improving “the quality of life of all workers [and] guaranteeing their fundamental rights by taking the time pressure off” (Jung & Jin, 2014, p. 512). However, research on motivations for sustainable consumption suggests that when considering the impact of the apparel industry, humans often demonstrate higher levels of concern for other humans than they do for either the environment or animals (Carrington et al., 2010; Loewenstein & Small, 2007). In other words, social sustainability issues influence consumers’ attitudes toward alternate consumption paradigms (e.g., slow fashion) more than environmental sustainability issues (Jung & Jin, 2014). This finding is important for institutional actors (e.g., sustainable apparel companies, NGOs) that are working to mobilize and fuel diffusion of the slow fashion agenda among apparel consumers (Scaraboto & Fischer, 2013).

To that end, Jung and Jin’s (2014) introduced a distinct dimension, social equity, to measure the extent to which consumers consider fair trade important, and specifically, just compensation, safe working conditions and balanced workloads for employees at all stages of the apparel production process. Jung and Jin (2014; 2016) suggest that social equity adds value to consumer purchases in the form of increased quality, longer lifespans, and the knowledge that their preferred retailers employ ethical production practices. Interestingly, of the five slow fashion dimensions, four are conventional attributes. Although the other dimensions have ethical undertones (e.g., buying local minimizing environmental impact of shipping, etc.), only social equity can be directly described as an ethical dimension. This underscores the importance of the human connection for influencing consumers to make more ethical purchase decisions. This research proposes that respondents who demonstrate a positive orientation to social equity will also demonstrate a high level of SRC.

H1: Social equity positively influences SRC

2.2.2. Authenticity

The second slow fashion dimension, authenticity, concerns the value added to products through highly skilled and craft-based production methods, the time spent on each piece, and the story behind a product’s journey to the end consumer (Jung & Jin, 2014; 2016). Many slow fashion companies (e.g., Everlane, Jessie Kamm) are meeting consumers’ desire for authenticity through engaging content on their websites, and by providing transparent product information that allows consumers to understand where their clothes come from, along with the social and environmental costs associated with producing each garment. Consumers who value authenticity are becoming aware of the stark contrast between brands that voluntarily provide this information to consumers and brands that do not (Dach & Allmendinger, 2014). Respondents who exhibit a positive orientation to authenticity also acknowledge the value of the slow production process compared to mass-production (i.e., FF) and ascribe value to these techniques when making purchase decisions. What’s more, consumers who value authenticity are more likely to form emotional attachments to their clothes. These attachments increase the likelihood that consumers will mindfully use, care for, and dispose of their

garments (e.g., second-life alternatives), which are all environmentally sustainable consumptions behaviors (Watson & Yan, 2013). This research proposes that respondents who demonstrate a positive orientation to authenticity will also demonstrate a high level of SRC.

H2: Authenticity positively influences SRC

2.2.3. Functionality

Jung and Jin (2014; 2016) define slow fashion as a quality over quantity approach. Because they characterize quality as an intrinsic attribute to slow production, it is not included as a measure of one's slow fashion orientation. Instead, the third dimension, functionality, measures how consumers use their clothing post-purchase. Consumers who shop slow fashion are able to keep their garments in use longer, enjoy wearing clothes in multiple ways, and prefer classic and simple designs to trend items. It is reasonable to propose that respondents who score low on the functionality dimension may be purchasing from more FF brands, may be fashion consumers who prefer to wear the latest trends, or a combination of both behaviors (Joy et al., 2012; Morgan& Birtwistle, 2009).

Although functionality does not directly measure consumers' motivation for keeping their products in use, respondents who exhibit a positive orientation to functionality are acting ethically by buying high-quality garments that can stay in use and out of landfills for as long as possible (Cavender & Lee, 2018b). Regardless of whether consumers are motivated to extend their products' lifespans because of environmental concerns, or other factors (e.g., clothing budgets), the environmental sustainability undertone is evident in this dimension. This research proposes that respondents who demonstrate a positive orientation to functionality will also demonstrate a high level of SRC.

H3: Functionality positively influences SRC

2.2.4. Localism

The fourth dimension, localism, denotes a preference for domestic over global apparel brands, including businesses that source local resources for apparel production, and includes both social and environmental undertones (Jung & Jin, 2014; 2016). Respondents who score high on localism may be aware of the added environmental (e.g., shipping) and social costs (e.g., cheap labor, impact on local communities) of overseas production. Another explanation is that they prefer to support small businesses in their local communities, U.S.-based businesses, or both. Jung and Jin (2014) suggest that the slow fashion business model provides an opportunity for the revival of domestic apparel manufacturing and opportunities for retail entrepreneurship while mass fashion brands continue to rely on overseas production. Respondents who value localism may be identifying the impact of these businesses on local economies, and thus, favor supporting local artisans and entrepreneurs who utilize resources and suppliers in their surrounding areas. Consumers often have an increased emotional attachment to locally sourced and produced products, especially when businesses utilize local traditions and/or production techniques. This,in turn, encourages consumers to keep their garments in use for longer periods (Cavender & Lee, 2018a; Watson & Yan, 2013). This research proposes that respondents who demonstrate a positive orientation to localism will also demonstrate a high level of SRC.

H4: Localism positively influences SRC

2.2.5. Exclusivity. The fifth dimension, exclusivity, underscores the value that small batch production in slow fashion creates for consumers. While FF produces regular cycles of on-trend merchandise, many consumers have suggested that overly trendy styles go in and out of fashion too rapidly to be practical for long-term use (Kim et al., 2013). The mass production of trend merchandise means that these styles quickly saturate the market, which results in deindividuation, or the perception that FF hinders the creation of a unique personal style (Cavender & Lee, 2018a). Jung and Jin (2014) refer to this phenomenon as "poverty midst plenty"(p. 517). Consumers who exhibit a positive orientation to exclusivity may perceive slow fashion as a means of being fashionable. These individuals are able to express their own style aesthetics by curating wardrobes consisting of high quality, versatile garments thatthey can wear in multiple ways and for longer periods (Cavender & Lee, 2018b). Increasing consumers' understanding of how slow fashion can be fashionable is an important step in encouraging them to buyfewer, higher quality products, thereby increasing the environmental sustainability of their consumption (Ertekin & Atik, 2015). This research proposes that respondents who demonstrate a positive orientation to exclusivity will also demonstrate a high level of SRC.

H5: Exclusivity positively influences SRC

2.3 Awareness of Industry and Consumer Irresponsibility: Proposed Constructs

Kim at al. (2013) identified and confirmed eight motivational drivers of fast fashion avoidance. Four drivers (i.e., poor performance, overly trendy styles, big store discomfort, lack of personal help) highlight unmet consumer expectations in the FF shopping and consumption experience. Two drivers (i.e., deindividuation, inauthenticity) underscore the saturation of similar styles in the market, akin to Jung and Jin's (2014) concept of "poverty midst plenty" (p. 517). The final two drivers (i.e., irresponsibility, foreignness) relate to the ideological incompatibility of the FF business model with consumers' own beliefs. The present study utilized Kim et al.'s (2013) conceptualization of *irresponsibility*, or the belief that FF fosters overconsumption, exploits labor in developing countries, and causes environmental harm and resource depletion. Notably, Kim et al. (2013) and Lee et al. (2009) both identified irresponsibility as a key trigger for eliciting anti-fast-fashion attitudes and brand avoidance behaviors among consumers. The concept of irresponsibility in Kim et al.'s (2013) research stemmed from industry-produced irresponsibility, but no findings emerged related to consumers' irresponsibility in FF consumption (e.g., quantity of purchases, frequency of purchases).

Research on the concepts of fast and slow fashion has confirmed that consumers are not exclusively shopping within either retail format and may even consider fast and slow fashion to have a complementary relationship since they often fill different needs (Joy et al., 2012; Joy, 2015; Jung & Jin, 2014; 2016; McNeill & Moore, 2015; Park & Kim, 2016). However, an overlap of fast and slow fashion consumers' perceptions exists in that both groups agree about the wasteful nature of disposable clothing (Watson & Yan, 2013). Despite this finding, the pro-environmental attitude-behavior gap is documented widely in the literature and provides one explanation for consumers' inability to assume responsibility for their own purchase, use, and disposal within the apparel supply chain (Gam, 2011; Ertekin & Atik, 2015; Sadachar et al., 2016).

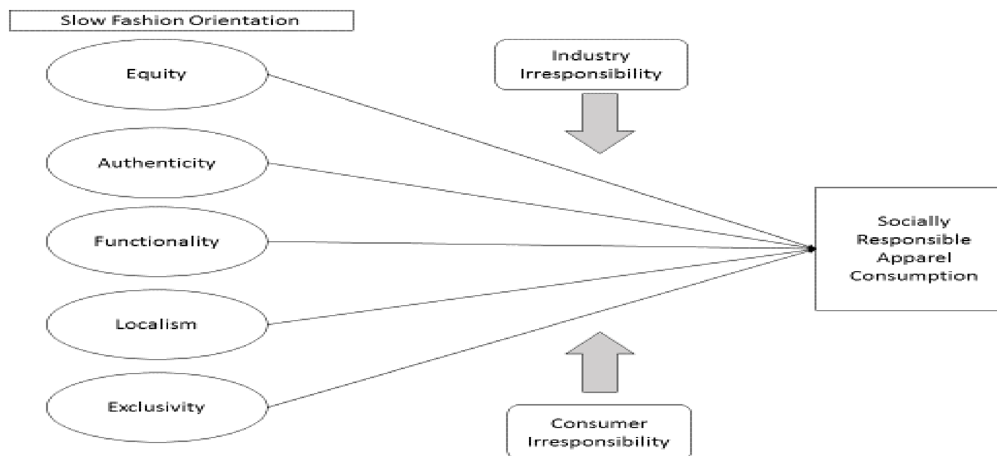
An additional explanation is that FF companies continue to promote "greenwashed" messaging. This fact, coupled with the absence of messaging from slow fashion brands and the media about what sustainable apparel business models actually entail and about consumers' role in slow fashion (i.e., slow consumption), has cultivated an information barrier with a two-fold effect (Cavender, 2018a; Ertekin & Atik, 2015). First, consumers' ability to determine which companies are truly employing sustainable strategies is limited. Second, many consumers demonstrate a lack of awareness about their own accountability for sustainable consumption and disposition (Hopkinson & Cronin, 2015; Ivan et al., 2016; Phipps et al., 2013). Third, and most important, this information barrier deters "the longitudinal processes that turn collective social issues into issues of personal responsibility" (Luchs et al., 2015, p. 13). This process of responsibilization, as Luchs et al. (2015) describes it, or greening, as it is referred to by Peattie (2001) and McDonald et al. (2012), could facilitate the widespread adoption of slow fashion at the consumer level (McDonald et al., 2012; Peattie, 2001). This finding aligns with the belief of academics who support a macro-institutional approach for addressing sustainability-related issues. That is, the concept of responsibility is integral to the legitimation of slow fashion in the mainstream market, and without shared responsibility among all institutional actors, a shift to a more sustainable apparel system cannot be achieved (Ertekin & Atik, 2015; Ingenbleek et al., 2015; McDonagh & Prothero, 2014; McDonald et al., 2012; Prothero et al., 2011).

Cavender and Lee (2018a; 2018b) proposed that industry irresponsibility and consumer irresponsibility are two distinct aspects of irresponsibility. Similar to Kim at el. (2013), apparel production relates to industry irresponsibility, while apparel consumption and disposal attaches to consumer irresponsibility (Cavender et al., 2018a; 2018b). On the industry side, high levels of production have exacerbated the negative environmental (e.g., natural resource depletion) and social (e.g., working conditions) impacts of the clothing industry. At the consumer level, overconsumption has resulted in drastic increases in post-consumer waste and landfills that are quickly reaching their capacities (Hill & Lee, 2012). Cavender and Lee (2018a; 2018b) suggested that future research scrutinize the irresponsibility constructs separately to determine where consumers are ascribing responsibility for sustainability in the apparel industry (the industry, themselves, or both), and further, to determine how consumers' awareness of irresponsibility influences their motivation for socially apparel responsible consumption (SRC). A review of the extant literature revealed that, to the author's knowledge, no research has yet investigated *awareness of industry irresponsibility* and *awareness of consumer irresponsibility* as separate influences. The present study addresses this gap in the literature by examining the relationship between consumers' SFO and SRC motivation while considering the moderating effect of industry irresponsibility and consumer irresponsibility on the original relationship (see Figure 1). The following hypotheses guided this exploration.

H6: Awareness of industry irresponsibility moderates the relationship between SFO and SRC.

H7: Awareness of consumer irresponsibility moderates the relationship between SFO and SRC

Figure 1. Research Model



3. Research Methods

The survey instrument for this research was a self-administered online questionnaire consisting of 8 demographic questions and 24 closed-ended interrogative questions on a 7-point Likert scale. The scales used to measure SFO were adapted from Jung and Jin (2014; 2016). The scale used to measure SRC was adapted from Schlaile et al.'s (2018) individual responsibilities for socially responsible consumption. These responsibilities also align with the theoretical underpinning of the present study— that consumers demonstrate both sustainable (i.e., 'green') and unsustainable (i.e., 'grey') consumption behaviors and are continuously 'greening' their lifestyles (McDonald et al., 2012; Peattie, 2001). In other words, as they gain awareness of issues that were previously unknown to them, consumers adjust their purchase, use, and disposal behaviors to account for their increased understanding of sustainability as a joint responsibility of the apparel industry and its consumers (LaRocca, 2014). The researchers also consider the SRC scale to be a reasonable initial indicator of consumers' potential for slow fashion, as knowledge-seeking behaviors are an antecedent to behavioral change (Sadachar et al., 2016).

To the author's knowledge, no prior study has investigated irresponsibility as two distinct dimensions, consumer irresponsibility and industry irresponsibility. In this study, the variables industry and consumer irresponsibility focus on FF, as both practitioners (e.g., Bain, 2016; 2017; Wicker, 2016) and academics (Joy, 2015; Joy et al., 2012; McNeill & Moore, 2015) identify this sector of the apparel industry as the source of the most irresponsible company and consumer behaviors. To that end, in order to qualify to participate in the study, students had to identify as FF consumers.

Kim et al.'s (2013) concept of irresponsibility in fast fashion was adapted to form the industry irresponsibility scale in the present study. In the case of consumer irresponsibility, it was necessary to develop a new scale to measure the two most irresponsible consumer behaviors in FF— frequency and quantity of consumption (Morgan &Birtwistle, 2009; Jung & Jin, 2016; Kim et al., 2013). As this was an exploratory study, the researchers perceive these newly developed measures to be acceptable initial indicators of respondents' awareness of their own irresponsible consumption behaviors.

Data were collected from a convenience sample of retailing students at two U.S. universities, yielding 405 usable responses. The sample was 85 percent female (n = 344) and 15 percent male (n = 61). Ninety-nine percent of respondents were 18-25 years old, with the majority being Caucasian (82%) followed by African-American (8.9%). Sixty-three percent (n = 255) of respondents reported that they shop for apparel more than 3 times per month and eighty-five percent (n=361) reported spending less than $100 per shopping trip.In addition to identifying as FF consumers, respondents also acknowledged a preference for other retail formats, including high-end retailers (73.6%), second-hand marketplaces that sell/rent luxury merchandise (73.6%), and second-hand marketplaces that sell/rent luxury mass merchandise (47.7%).

4. Results and Discussion

The researchers employed the partial least squares method for data analysis, as Ringle et al. (2005) identified it as being most appropriate for small sample sizes. Individual principle component analyses were employed to examine the

dimensions of the constructs. All the constructs were one-dimensional and explained more than 67% of their respective average variances. All item loadings were above 0.70. Reliability values of each construct ranged from 0.78 to 0.95. The PLS path model analysis showed that all measures met the commonly accepted threshold for assessing reliability and validity of the constructs (See Table 1). All of the Stone Geisser's Q^2 values of the exogenous latent variables were significantly above zero ($Q^2 = 0.340$), providing satisfactory evidence of the model's predictive relevance.

Discriminant validity measures whether two factors are statistically different or not. Table 2 demonstrated the discriminant validity of the data in the measurement model. As shown in the table, the measurement model demonstrates good discriminant validity since the square root of the AVE for each construct was higher than its correlation with other factors. The R^2 value for SRC was 0.485 that indicates 48.5% variances in SRC were caused by exogenous variables in the model.

Table 1. Factor Loadings and Construct Reliability

Constructs	Loadings	CR	AVE
Slow Fashion Orientation (SFO)			
Social Equity		0.909	0.769
I am concerned about the working conditions of employees throughout the apparel supply chain when I buy clothes	0.871		
Fair compensation for employees throughout the apparel supply chain is important to me when I buy clothes	0.903		
I am concerned about fair trade when I buy clothes	0.857		
Authenticity		0.854	0.662
Handcrafted clothing is more valuable than mass-produced clothing	0.809		
Craftsmanship is important to me when buying apparel	0.869		
I value clothes made by traditional techniques	0.759		
Functionality		0.779	0.542
I tend to keep clothes as long as possible rather than discarding quickly	0.776		
I prefer simple and classic designs	0.651		
I enjoy wearing the same clothes in multiple ways	0.775		
Localism		0.861	0.674
Consumers need to support U.S. apparel brands	0.817		
I prefer buying clothing made in the U.S. to clothes manufactured overseas	0.773		
I believe clothing made from locally produced materials is more valuable than clothing made from materials sourced from overseas	0.870		
Exclusivity		0.887	0.798
I am attracted to rare apparel items	0.944		
Limited editions hold special appeal for me	0.839		
Socially Responsible Apparel Consumption (SRC)		0.905	0.761
Having knowledge of whether apparel companies have sustainability initiatives (e.g., environmental, social) in place affects my purchase decisions	0.868		
I want to be a more socially responsible consumer (i.e., purchase, use, disposal) of apparel and apparel-related products	0.898		
I know what I need to do to become a more socially responsible consumer (i.e., purchase, use, disposal) of apparel and apparel-related products	0.850		
Awareness of Industry Irresponsibility		0.923	0.801
The fast fashion industry pollutes the environment	0.927		
The fast fashion industry is one of the top polluting industries in the world	0.894		

Fast fashion exploits labor in less developed countries	0.863		
Awareness of Consumer Irresponsibility		0.906	0.708
The availability of continuously changing styles at fast fashion retailers encourages me to purchase clothing more frequently	0.784		
The low prices at fast fashion retailers encourage me purchase clothing more frequently	0.868		
The availability of continuously changing styles at fast fashion retailers encourage me to purchase larger quantities of clothing	0.852		
The low prices at fast fashion retailers encourage me purchase larger quantities of clothing	0.860		

Table 2. Discriminant Validity

	Equity	Authen.	Function.	Local.	Exclusiv.	Ind. Irr.	Con. Irr.	SRC
Equity	0.877							
Authenticity	0.381	0.814						
Functionality	0.137	0.365	0.736					
Localism	0.336	0.350	0.310	0.821				
Exclusivity	0.147	0.339	0.236	0.264	0.893			
Industry Irr.	0.419	0.368	0.197	0.361	0.251	0.895		
Consumer Irr.	0.029	0.044	0.057	0.151	0.225	0.139	0.841	
SRC	0.534	0.433	0.298	0.433	0.286	0.507	0.257	0.872

4. 1. Direct Effects: Slow Fashion Orientation and Socially Responsible Apparel Consumption

The relationship between SFO and SRC was tested utilizing a nonparametric bootstrap analysis. T-statistics can be found through the bootstrapping process in PLS analysis. The significance level for two-tailedt-test was 5% and the path coefficient will be significant if the t-Statistic is larger than 1.96.The five hypotheses are discussed, along with implications for slow fashion companies and other institutional actors (e.g., NGOs) who seek to further engage consumers in the slow fashion movement, a necessary step to transition to a collective sustainability-oriented identity within the fashion system(Ertekin & Atik, 2015; Henninger et al., 2016; Luchs et al., 2015; Scaraboto & Fischer, 2013).

Hypothesis 1 posited that social equity positively and significantly influences SRC. Table 3 shows a path coefficient of 0.325 between social equity and SRC. The t-statistic for the variable is 6.997 and the p-value is less than 0.001, indicating that fair working conditions and fair trade practices are closely related to socially responsible apparel consumption ($\beta = 0.325$, $p < 0.001$). Thus, Hypothesis 1 was accepted, as the findings showed a positive and significant relationship between social equity and SRC motivation. This finding was expected and provides additional support for consumers having favorable attitudes toward social sustainability, as this concept relates to human-based ethical issues in the apparel industry (Carrington et al., 2010; Loewenstein & Small, 2007; Magnuson et al., 2017). This research adopts the position of McDonald et al. (2012) that all consumers have the potential to implement more sustainable consumption behaviors, with knowledge serving as a catalyst for their evolving personal orientations to SRC over time. However, the “detachment between production and consumption, and disconnection from resource origins and environmental consequences of consumption practices often act as barriers to sustainable consumption” (Ertekin & Atik, 2015, p. 61).

Therefore, slow fashion companies, NGOs, and governments should emphasize the human-based impacts of the apparel industry in their messaging. This communication can increase consumers’ awareness of the human cost of their consumption, and further, can encourage them to practice SRC by shopping from businesses that provide clear information about how they ensure ethical treatment of workers throughout their supply chains. One barrier to mobilization of the slow fashion system is a lack of transparency by companies, and until consumers refuse to support companies that are not transparent about their commitment to environmental and social sustainability, companies that are not already doing so are unlikely to volunteer this information (Ertekin & Atik, 2015).

Hypothesis 2 received support from the findings since the path coefficient was 0.121, which is sufficient to be a significant path (Lohmöller, 1989). The t-statistic for this variable is 2.483, which is significant with a p-value of 0.013. Therefore, Hypothesis 2, which posited that authenticity is an important driver of SRC motivation, was accepted. Similar to the social equity variable, authenticity also underscores the human component of apparel consumption. Whereas social equity relates to the ethical treatment of workers, authenticity highlights the value added to products when companies employ a slow over a mass production model. This finding suggests that authenticity can be an important driver of SRC if consumers become aware of the human rights violations (e.g., forced overtime) that are often associated with mass production. FF retailers, in particular, require their suppliers to produce batches quickly, which puts pressure on factory workers to meet this demand (Webster, 2019). Conversely, slow fashion workersutilize environmentally sustainable production processes and materials to produce small batches of high quality garments. Many slow fashion companies (e.g., Everlane, Jessie Kamm) provide transparent product information on their websites that allows consumers to understand where their clothes come from and the social and environmental costs associated with producing each garment. Hypothesis 2 suggests that sharing such information with consumers may increase their SRC motivation. For years, luxury brands, many of whom cite environmental and social responsibility as core values, have utilized storytelling to strengthen consumers' emotional attachment to the products they purchase and to the brands themselves (Kapferer & Michaut, 2015). Similarly, slow fashion companies should use storytelling to incorporate sustainability-oriented narratives into their brand communication. Narratives that highlight a product's journey to the end consumer often emphasize the human component of this process and may increase the likelihood that consumers will form emotional attachments to their purchases (Cavender & Lee, 2018a). This connection encourages consumers to mindfully use, care for, and dispose of their garments (e.g., second-life alternatives), which are behaviors associated with SRC (Morgan & Birtwistle, 2009; Watson & Yan, 2013; Schlaile et al., 2018).

Hypothesis 3 was also supported by the findings. The path coefficient of functionality with SRC is 0.105, which exceeds the limit of a significant path (Lohmöller, 1989). This t-statistic for this variable is 2.210 and the corresponding p-value is 0.028, indicating that the functionality dimension of SFO is a significant driver of SRC motivation. The functionality dimension of SFO encourages consumers to consider their post-purchase behaviors. All respondents self-identified as FF consumers to qualify to participate in the study. The researchers proposed that respondents who score low on this dimension might be purchasing FF garments whose quality hinders them from keeping their purchases long-term, favor wearing the latest trends instead of wearing classic designs in multiple ways, or a combination of both behaviors (Joy et al., 2012; Moore & Birtwistle, 2009).However, the findings demonstrate that 72.4% of respondents prefer classic and simple designs, 86.6% of respondents enjoy wearing the same clothes in multiple ways, and 85.2% of respondents keep clothes as long as possible rather than discarding them quickly. Thus, consumers who shop from FF brands still value quality, demonstrate a willingness to keep their clothing for longer periods, and to wear garments in multiple ways to create their own unique styles. All of these behaviors align with SRC. This finding is encouraging and suggests that slow fashion companies that emphasize their quality commitment in brand communications, and develop versatile product lines consisting of mix and match separates, may appeal to consumers who have a positive orientation to the functionality aspect of slow fashion.

Hypothesis 4, which posited that localism is a significant driver of SRC, has a positive and significant path coefficient value of 0.131. The t-statistic and p-value for this variable are 2.850 and 0.005, respectively. Hence, Hypothesis 4 was supported. The researchers proposed that respondents who scored high on the localism dimension of SFO may be aware of the added environmental (e.g., shipping) and social costs (e.g., cheap labor, impact on local communities) of overseas production. Another explanation is that they prefer to support small businesses in their local communities, U.S.-based businesses, or both. Closer examination of the localism variable reveals that respondents do believe it is important to support U.S. apparel brands (M= 5.45). However, they score much lower on their preference for clothing produced in the U.S. rather than abroad (M= 4.65) and the belief that using locally sourced materials adds value to their apparel purchases (M= 4.81). Therefore, an opportunity exists for U.S.-based slow fashion companies to communicate the environmental and social costs that accrue to products that are mass-produced overseas (Webster, 2019).

Although, consumers should not be expected to purchase solely from U.S.-based businesses, increased awareness of all the factors that influence the social responsibility of apparel purchases may help consumers increase their SRC. This information may also help consumers justify slow fashion's higher price point. Henninger et al. (2016) found that consumers' opinions about the price of sustainably produced garments often center on assumptions, rather than on actual purchase experiences. In the context of localism, consumers are often unaware of the hidden costs that increase slow fashion prices, such as compensation for skilled artisans, increased costs for small batch sizes, and sustainable materials and production methods, to name a few (Henninger et al., 2016). Slow fashion companies that present transparent information allow consumers to weigh trade-offs of purchasing from one brand over another and make

informed purchase decisions as they continue the ‘greening’ process (McDonald et al., 2012). NGOs, governments, and small business associations can also disseminate this information, as researchers suggest that the slow fashion movement will be integral to the revival of the U.S. apparel manufacturing industry (Jung & Jin, 2014; 2016).

On the other hand, Hypothesis 5, which posited that exclusivity is a significant driver for enhancing SRC, was not supported from the findings. The t-statistic for the variable is 0.968 and p-value is 0.334, indicating an insignificant effect. The exclusivity dimension of SFO distinguishes between small batch production in slow fashion and the mass production of trend merchandise in FF, which floods the market with similar styles and has given rise to the “poverty midst plenty” phenomenon (Jung & Jin, 2014, p. 517). The relationship between exclusivity and SRC merits further investigation in future research. However, one explanation for this insignificant relationship is that because consumers in the sample identified as FF shoppers and also cited other preferred retail formats (e.g., high-end retailers, second-hand marketplaces), they may not be experiencing deindividuation, or the perception that FF hinders the creation of a unique personal style (Cavender & Lee, 2018a; Kim et al., 2013). Similar to previous studies, consumers in the sample may also perceive fast and slow fashion to have a complementary relationship (Joy et al., 2012; Joy, 2015). The finding that 86.6% of respondents enjoy wearing the same clothes in multiple ways(i.e., functionality dimension), coupled with the finding that these consumers shop from a diverse mix of retail categories, may indicate that they are already curatingwardrobes consisting of products from their favorite brands that express their personal style. This would explain why they are not attributing the exclusivity dimension of SFO to SRC.

Table 3. Results of Direct Effects of SFO to SRC

Hypotheses	Path Coefficient	t-Value	Supported (Yes/No)
H1: Equity --> SRC	0.325	6.997	Yes***
H2: Authenticity--> SRC	0.121	2.483	Yes*
H3: Functionality--> SRC	0.105	2.210	Yes*
H4: Localism --> SRC	0.131	2.850	Yes**
H5: Exclusivity --> SRC	0.042	0.968	No

*p<0.05, **p<0.01, *** p<0.001

4.2. Moderating Effects: Awareness of Industry and Consumer Irresponsibility

Moderating effects were tested to determine whether industry irresponsibility or consumer irresponsibilitycould strengthen or weaken the relationship between slow fashion orientation (SFO) and socially responsible apparel consumption (SRC). In order to test the moderating effects of industry irresponsibility and consumer irresponsibility, the researchers employed the Smart PLS moderating effect tool, which uses the product indicator approach recommended by Chin et al. (2003). In the PLS analysis, a moderating effect exists if the path coefficient of the interaction effect is significant. Table 4 summarizes the results of the moderating effect test.

The industry and consumer irresponsibility constructs utilize *fast fashion* as the focus, since both practitioners (e.g., Bain, 2016; 2017; Wicker, 2016) and academics (Joy, 2015; Joy et al., 2012; McNeill & Moore, 2015) identify this sector of the apparel industry as the source of the most irresponsible company and consumer behaviors. For this initial investigation of the two irresponsibility constructs, the researchers also proposed that if respondents were aware of irresponsibility related to the apparel industry (i.e., overproduction at the company-level, overconsumption at the consumer level), it would be most apparent in the FF sector.

The first variable, industry irresponsibility, gauged respondents’ awareness of the negative environmental (e.g., natural resource depletion, environmental degradation) and social (e.g., working conditions) impacts of the FF industry. As shown in Table 4, there are no moderating effects of industry irresponsibility between the variables in SFO and SRC. The path coefficient of the interaction effect (SFO*Industry Irresponsibility) on SRC was insignificant at the 5% level. The findings indicate that industry irresponsibility does not affect the relationship between SFO and SRC so Hypothesis 6 is not supported. Therefore, consumers’ current orientation to slow fashion and motivation to become more socially responsible consumers exist independent from their awareness of irresponsibility within the FF industry. Further investigation of the industry irresponsibility variable confirms that respondents only somewhat agreed that the FF industry is irresponsible (M = 4.86).However, respondents’ did rate the item, *fast fashion exploits labor in less developed countries*, higher than the items that probed their awareness of FF’s environmental impact. This is consistent

with previous research findings that consumers are more concerned about social sustainability issues than environmental issues (Carrington et al., 2010; Jung & Jin, 2014; Loewenstein & Small, 2007). Another possible explanation for the insignificant effect of irresponsibility is the existence of the pro-environmental attitude-behavior gap. Previous research has consistently found that, despite their level of awareness about the unsustainability of FF, consumers still shop from these brands because their desire to regularly purchase affordable, on-trend merchandise outweighs their social and environmental sustainability concerns (Gam, 2011; Ertekin & Atik, 2015; Sadachar et al., 2016). Because participants in the present study were retail majors, it is reasonable to assume that they are at least nominally interested in following fashion trends, and the attitude behavior gap is particularly evident for highly fashion-involved consumers. (Joy et al., 2012; Joy et al., 2015; Morgan & Birtwistle, 2009).

Respondents' rating on industry irresponsibility suggests that consumers are still not fully aware of the negative impacts of the FF industry. Alternatively, misinformation in the market (i.e., greenwashing), such as FF companies positioning themselves as sustainable consumer choices, may be influencing their perceptions. For example, The Sustainable Apparel Coalition, which deems itself the leading alliance for sustainable apparel production, counts many FF organizations (e.g., Inditex, Fast Retailing, Mango, H&M, Boohoo, Primark) among its members. Although these FF companies are investing in sustainability initiatives throughout their supply chains, should they be able to tout themselves as sustainability-driven on their websites and in stores without overhauling their inherently unsustainable business models that fuel overconsumption through obsolescence? This positioning may be leading consumers to believe that FF companies are just as ethical choices as other retailers (e.g., Eileen Fisher, Patagonia, The RealReal) that are engaged in the corporate sustainability movement (e.g., Sustainable Apparel Coalition, Ellen Macarthur Foundation). If this is the case, NGOs and sustainability alliances themselves are limiting consumers' awareness of industry irresponsibility, and in turn, may be hindering the legitimization of the slow fashion movement at the consumer level.

The second variable, consumer irresponsibility, gauged respondents' awareness of the two most irresponsible consumer behaviors in FF— frequency and quantity of consumption, which are prompted by FF's low price point and its continuously changing product assortments (Morgan & Birtwistle, 2009; Jung & Jin, 2016; Kim et al., 2013). The findings indicate that there are moderating effects of consumer irresponsibility between some SFO dimensions and SRC. Both equity and functionality moderate the relationship between SFO and SRC. Table 4 shows that the t-values of equity and functionality were 3.558 and 2.216, respectively, which are enough to be significant paths.

The path coefficient of equity was negative, which means that consumer irresponsibility weakens the relationship between equity and SRC (β= -0.100, $p <0.001$). The path coefficient of functionality was also negative, indicating that consumer irresponsibility weakens the relationship between functionality and SRC (β= -0.035, $p = 0.027$). However, consumer irresponsibility does not affect the relationships with other three variables (i.e., authenticity, localism, exclusivity) in SFO. Therefore, Hypothesis 7 is partially supported. Further examination of the consumer irresponsibility variable revealed that respondents only somewhat agreed (M = 4.956) that FF prompts unsustainable consumption behaviors. Interestingly, this rating was slightly higher than the mean score for industry irresponsibility, indicating that consumers are actually more aware of their own irresponsibility than that of the industry. This finding merits further investigation but suggests that FF consumers are beginning to consider their own accountability for the negative impacts of FF.

The finding that consumer irresponsibility moderates the relationship between functionality and SRC underscores the "co-existing contrasting values" that exist within each consumer (Jung & Jin, 2016, p. 417). Respondents scored moderately high on functionality (M = 5.466), indicating a preference for simple and classic designs, wearing garments in multiple ways, and keeping clothing for as long as possible rather than discarding it quickly. Therefore, it is not surprising that their irresponsible FF consumption behaviors weaken the relationship between functionality and SRC since FF garments are low quality, on-trend items that cannot be worn long-term.

In the consumer irresponsibility scale, price was one of the drivers of FF consumption. Thus, a practical implication exists for budget-friendly slow fashion brands (e.g., Pact, EcoVibe Apparel, Threads 4 Thought) to utilize marketing messages to convey that, like all other apparel product categories, slow fashion companies represent a range of price points that are suitable for many budgets. These brands can further position themselves as viable alternatives to FF by emphasizing that they do offer trend-driven merchandise in addition to more classic design styles. The researchers propose that increasing consumers' awareness of FF alternatives in the slow fashion market may be a meaningful step in increasing consumers' SRC motivation.

One barrier to mainstreaming the slow fashion movement at the consumer level is that many consumers are not in close proximity to the issue, and they do not care about what they cannot see (Ertekin & Atik, 2015). Another barrier is a low level of perceived influence in the market (i.e., perceived consumer effectiveness, perceived marketplace effectiveness; Schunk & Usher, 2012). However, the finding that consumer irresponsibility moderates the relationship between equity and SRC again highlights the value of leveraging human concern as a motivating factor for SRC (Carrington et al., 2010; Jung & Jin, 2014; Loewenstein & Small, 2007). Consumers should not only be educated on the social sustainability impacts of FF, but also on how shopping frequently and in large quantities from these businesses makes them complicit in the human rights violations (e.g., forced overtime) that characterize the sector. Emphasizing social sustainability issues may prove to be the tipping point for mobilization of slow fashion at the consumer level. In addition, both the consumer irresponsibility variables and responsibilities for SRC are within the consumer's direct control, and when consumers believe that their sustainable actions can make a meaningful impact in the market, they are more likely to adopt sustainable behaviors (Leary et al., 2014; 2017; 2019). Educating consumers on their specific responsibilities (i.e., slow consumption) that coincide with those of the industry (i.e., slow production) can encourage them to assume more accountability for changing, or 'greening,' their consumption behaviors to be more socially responsible.

Table 4. Results of Moderating Effects

Relationship	Path Coefficient	t-Value	P-Value	Comments
Equity*IIR --> SRC	-0.044	1.133	0.258	Insignificant
Authenticity*IIR--> SRC	0.025	0.716	0.475	Insignificant
Functionality*IIR--> SRC	0.054	1.603	0.110	Insignificant
Localism*IIR --> SRC	0.011	0.292	0.770	Insignificant
Exclusivity*IIR --> SRC	-0.017	0.496	0.620	Insignificant
Equity*CIR --> SRC	-0.100	3.558	0.000	Significant
Authenticity*CIR--> SRC	-0.058	1.780	0.076	Insignificant
Functionality*CIR--> SRC	-0.084	2.216	0.027	Significant
Localism*CIR --> SRC	-0.035	0.949	0.343	Insignificant
Exclusivity*CIR --> SRC	0.029	0.786	0.432	Insignificant

IIR: Industry Irresponsibility, CIR: Consumer Irresponsibility

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

Many consumer social responsibility and apparel sustainability scholars have suggested a macro institutional approach that "incorporates the buyer's contribution to the solution of the social issue, rather than putting responsibility for the issue exclusively with the company" (Ingenbleek et al., 2015, p. 1430). However, the slow fashion movement at the consumer level has been hindered by a lack of active communication from the array of retailers whose operations support the sustainability mission (e.g., luxury, born-sustainable brands, secondhand marketplaces), NGOs, and governments that are poised to ascribe shared responsibility to consumers. The apparel industry and its retailers should accept that the paradigm shift to a more sustainable apparel system hinges on both industry and consumer involvement. While traditional marketing fueled the current consumption ideology with a push approach, marketing in the era of sustainability, must adopt a more authentic, transparent, and legitimate approach to creating customer value (Armstrong-Soule & Reich, 2015; Janssen et al., 2012; Kotler, 2011; McDonagh & Prothero, 2014).

Although research on social responsibility continues to increase, to the authors' knowledge, no study has yet scrutinized consumers' awareness of industry irresponsibility and consumer irresponsibility separately. Distinguishing between the two forms of irresponsibility can help researchers understand the extent to which consumers assume responsibility within the slow fashion movement, and explicate steps for positioning responsibility as a joint commitment between the consumer and the enterprise. This study aimed to address this gap in the literature by first examining the effect of consumers' SFO on their SRC motivation, and then exploring the moderating effects of their awareness of both types of irresponsibility (i.e., consumer, industry). The findings confirm that consumers still do not recognize the impacts of industry irresponsibility (i.e., environmental, social), yet they do recognize the impact of their own irresponsible consumption behaviors to some extent. This finding is encouraging and merits further investigation in future research.

Because this was an exploratory study, initial indicators were employed to measure the irresponsibility constructs. Additional measures should be developed to gain more insight into how consumers' awareness of irresponsibility affects their motivation to become more socially responsible consumers. This research utilized a convenience sample of retailing students. Although this approach did provide insight into how more trend conscious consumers reconcile their conflicting desires to consume and limit consumption, the researchers acknowledge the study's sample as a limitation. A larger and more diverse sample of consumers would be desirable in future inquiries.

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