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Traceability Information to Inform Consumer in Total Transparency

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Abstract

The textile industry is facing ecological and economic crises. Since the rise of fast fashion, the textile industry is one of the major and ever-increasing contributors to pollution and waste. Fashion brands are now producing twice the amount of clothing today compared with before the year 2000 (Ellen MacArthur Foundation, 2017). In the meantime, more consumers become aware of both social and ecological risks in the textile industry and do not want to encourage such practices. In 2018, 44% of consumers bought less clothing and for 40% of them, it was a chosen de-consumption. Among them, more than a third of young people (18-25 years old) (Ditty, n.d.).

This phenomenon reveals a growing consumer awareness and a growing distrust of the industry's companies. A survey conducted in April 2020 across 2035 British and German consumers reveals that 64% of them would spend less on fashion during the crisis, and half of them expect that trend to continue after the crisis passes. As well, consumers are open to purchasing more durable fashion items, as well as repairing and keeping them longer. This survey reveals a shift in purchasing behavior, customers want to make informed purchases (Granskog et al., n.d.). The globalized and fragmented textile supply chain requires different laws and regulations (Fletcher and Grose, 2012) to improve its transparency.

The paper is structured as follow: The first part presents the current situation regarding the transparency of information communicated by brands in store and online, and in the second part, we will describe what

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information could be shared with informed consumers, after an experiment with a product from a French luxury brand.

The first part is the result of a study both in store and online about legal requirements and recommendations about traceability information related to products and environmental displays. We compare these requirements with actual data gathered in store and in online-shop. From our initial observations: The consumer survey by Fashion Revolution in 2018 and 2020 suggests that fashion labels should be transparent with the disclosure of information to consumers: Manufacturer's address, the origin of fabric, and raw material(Fashion Revolution, 2018) (Fashion Revolution, 2020).

In the second part of the article, we focus on the importance of traceability for gathering the information necessary for a full transparency. We leverage how information technology could be used to gather, collect, sort, and select information to render to the consumer.