

Mistra Future Fashion – Project 7

Project description

Project title	Project 7: Sustainable consumption and consumer behaviour
Duration	June 2011 – May 2015
Project participants	Wencke Gwozdz, assistant professor, project leader, CBS Lucia Reisch, full professor, CBS Sarah Netter, research assistant, CBS Sarah Bly, student assistant, CBS Tom Nilsson, assistant professor, Malmö University Susanne Sweet, associate professor, Stockholm School of Economics
Background	Consumers' lifestyles are less sustainable than desired by their own collective long-term interest and by society. Three main actors influence private fashion consumption: businesses, governments, and consumers themselves. Altogether, they form the "fashion system of provision"; yet, their respective impact and room for manoeuvre along the chain of production and consumption are different. As part of this fashion system of provision, consumers increasingly discover their own responsibility for a more sustainable development, also in fashion consumption. Strategies to enhance sustainable consumption include efficiency, sufficiency and consistency. While prior research has identified internal and external barriers and drivers for sustainable consumption in many consumption domains (in particular: food, housing, transport), there is a surprising paucity in research as regards sustainable consumption of fashion.
Theoretical approach	Theoretically, we draw from recent insights from Behavioural Economics (BE) in combination with the Motivation-Opportunity-Ability-Behaviour Model (MOAB). Conceptually, the MOAB model (including BE) will be embedded in a wider human ecological model to denote the social and cultural consumption context which is of utmost importance for fashion consumption.
Project content	Objective 1: <i>Internal drivers and barriers</i> include the whole range of consumer knowledge, attitudes, habits and practical competences, shaped by consumer socialization and education as well as by everyday lifestyles and social norms. To determine the impact of internal barriers and drivers on actual consumption, we will develop a survey on knowledge, habits, cognitive capacities and other resources as well as lifestyles influencing fashion consumption. This questionnaire will be combined with information on so-called "lead users" in sustainable fashion consumption. Objective 2: <i>External barriers and drivers</i> are best described by the "triple A" (i.e. availability, affordability and accessibility) of sustainable fashion provided by producers and retail within the regulatory frame created by government. We will compare the effectiveness of different choice architectures to simplify and promote sustainable choices via virtual and real in-store experiments. Objective 3: <i>Changing consumers' lifestyles</i> towards more sustainable choices and behaviours in the fashion domain can be approached by both: removing barriers at the individual and infrastructural level as well as by proving incentives for more sustainable choices. We will develop tailored toolboxes of successful communication strategies and instruments for one selected target group that support and enhance sustainable lifestyles.
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