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The Importance of Sustainability within the Fashion Industry

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THE IMPORTANCE OF SUSTAINABILITY WITHIN THE FASHION INDUSTRY

by

Ashlee Hernandez

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Master of Science in Fashion Business and Entrepreneurship
at
Lindenwood University

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Ashlee Hernandez, *Ashlee Hernandez*, May 3, 2023

Author

(Type name here) (Sign here) (date here)

Dr. Chajuana Trawick, *Dr. Chajuana Trawick*, May 4, 2023

Committee chair

(Type name here) (Sign here) (date here) Caira Butler, *Caira Butler*, May 4, 2023

Committee member

(Type name here) (Sign here) (date here) Wendy Young, *Wendy Young*, May 4, 2023

Committee member

THE IMPORTANCE OF SUSTAINABILITY WITHIN THE FASHION INDUSTRY

A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of the College of Arts and Humanities
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the
Degree of Master of Science in Fashion Business and Entrepreneurship
at
Lindenwood University

By

Ashlee S Hernandez

Saint Charles, Missouri

[May 2023]

ABSTRACT

Title of Thesis: The Importance of Sustainability within the Fashion Industry

Ashlee Hernandez, Master of Fashion Business and Entrepreneurship, 2023

Thesis Directed by: Dr. Chajuana Trawick, Endowed Chair, Fashion Business and Design

Blogging made its debut in 1993 and from that point on the internet would change forever.

This project is a lifestyle blog that will highlight the diversity of the word sustainability, focus on the final product and the sustainable methods or practices to get to that final product and dive into the history of blogging and the history of fashion sustainability. This entire project will showcase specific items of women's clothing (the final product) and the sustainable methods or processes involved in creating those final products. This project specifically defines the similarities and differences between the terms eco-friendly, sustainable, green, and greenwashing. Throughout this project, the author highlights important dates in the history of blogging and the history of fashion sustainability. The first term for a blog was called 'weblog' meaning a documentation or log on the World Wide Web. This blog is an extension of the author's personality and style in an online platform and thus took extensive behind-the-scenes research to make everything right. The behind-the-scenes qualitative data collected was comparing and contrasting specific details among 10 to 15 different blogs. This blog is an extension of the author's personality and style in an online platform and thus took extensive behind-the-scenes research to make everything right. The author's innovative contribution to this industry will be to educate her readers so they can make more sustainable choices in their daily life. All of the data collected for this project was

from qualitative sources. I used a document analysis method to collect and compare data from my favorite fashion and lifestyle blogs. This project is a continuation of the author's lifestyle blog focusing on sustainable brands, women's fashions and beauty, and lifestyle finds. From graduate seminars I and II, the author discussed both the history of blogging and the history of sustainability. The author's main focus is on sustainability items and clothing pieces (the final product) and methods and practices used to reach that final product.

Dedication and Acknowledgements

A huge thank you to my Thesis Committee. Dr. Chajuana Trawick, Professor Wendy Young, and Professor Caira Butler, I greatly appreciate the time and the outstanding knowledge you have given me throughout my time here at Lindenwood University.

To my Thesis Committee Chair, Dr. Chajuana Trawick, you have given me such great insight and knowledge throughout this whole journey together, and I do not know what I would have done without your guidance and praising remarks. Thank you for all of your help. I appreciate you more than you will ever know. I hope to remain great friends in the future.

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Introduction

The author's area of interest is women's fashion, particularly women's sustainable fashion. She first became interested in sustainable fashion when she started following more fashion influencers and bloggers on social media and she always saw a common theme among all of them: the amount of merchandise including clothing, makeup, jewelry, skincare, etc. that each had in their closet and the amount of merchandise they were continuing to purchase to show their viewers through their social platforms and blog platforms. The author understands the fact that influencers buy into the new trends to keep their platforms up to date; however, the amount of product and merchandise waste is incredible. Once she started reading different blogs and looking at other social media posts, she started to wonder if any of these bloggers thought about the after effect their shopping habits had on the planet and environment and that is why she wanted to start her own sustainable fashion blog.

The author is very passionate about sustainability in general, particularly sustainability within the fashion industry. There is only one Earth so everyone must do their part to protect it. This blog will teach those who read it to swap out daily used unsustainable products for sustainable and (possibly) reusable products. This blog will also highlight sustainable products from different companies and discuss different companies' sustainable policies and procedures.

The author's innovative contribution to the fashion industry is educating her readers on the importance of sustainability so they can make more sustainable choices within their daily lives. Her blog platform is combines the more scientific, less exciting, information with the fun, whimsical look of miniature stories into one easy to read and easy to comprehend platform. She wants to show her readers that fashion and sustainability can go hand-in-hand without having to

compromise one for the other. She wants this platform to be the go-to spot for her readers to shop sustainably made merchandise that is also fashionable.

The value of this project is making sustainable choices every day to extend the life of the planet. The author wants to teach people to understand the difference between the 'green' and 'sustainable' labels, packaging, and marketing strategies used by companies to promote products and actual green and sustainable products. She also wants her blog platform to be a space full of knowledge and authority for sustainable products and merchandise that are sold within the fashion industry.

Blogging has been around for over 20 years; it started in the early 1990s. A blog is an online platform that can feature a wide range of topics. Blogs are a creative way to express oneself and a place for people to document their lives and thoughts. A lifestyle blog focuses on the blogger or influencer's daily life. Lifestyle is an all-encompassing term to cover fashion, beauty, fitness routines, hair care, food and drink recipes, travel tips, etc. In 1993, the early stages of blogging began. By 1994, a student named Justin Hall started sharing the details about his life on his personal website. *The New York Times* called Justin Hall the "founding father of personal bloggers."¹

In 1997, the term "weblog" is coined. "A weblog is a log - or written documentation - that's published on the World Wide Web."² Between 1997 and 2002, other online blogs started to surface on the internet as more people began their blogging careers. In 2003, WordPress and TypePad were launched, and by 2004, "blog" was the most searched word on the internet,

¹ Ryan Robinson, "History of Blogging: How Blogging Has Evolved (1993 - 2023)," *RyRob.com*, January 20, 2023, <https://www.ryrob.com/history-of-blogging/#1994-justin-hall-personal-blogging>.

² Robinson, "History of Blogging."

making it the word of the year. In 2005, YouTube was launched. This platform was the birth of the modern vlog, a video log that features beauty, fashion, lifestyle, fitness, etc. In 2007, when Twitter became extremely popular, the term microblogging was created because people were able to express themselves in 140 characters or less. The state of blogging currently stands at over 30 million bloggers in the United States alone. Fashion, food, beauty, travel, lifestyle, business, and sports are all blog categories for one to read, write, or video about.

Blogs will always remain a part of people's lives in the future. Since the world has reopened after the pandemic, people are getting back to their normal lives. They might turn to blogs to help with travel plans, outfit ideas, restaurant choices, etc. Most people start with microblogging. They create mini or microblogs on Instagram or Twitter. By starting on Instagram or Twitter, they can create a small amount of content for people to read and shop in a short amount of time (i.e., a lunch or work break). People who start a microblog might move to a blog platform as shown by the growing number of blogs in the United States today.

The reason the author chose to create her blog for this thesis project is that it is a creative way to discuss a sensitive issue within the fashion industry that not many people think about daily. She created this blog site because she always wanted to start her own blog and she figured when this graduate seminar course was started, it would be the perfect time to start this blog. Blogging is the most creative and efficient way to showcase her knowledge of fashion and to teach others about the efforts the fashion industry is taking toward a more sustainable future. This blog focuses on how individuals can make more sustainable choices throughout their everyday lives. This blog showcases different companies and their sustainable efforts and easy tips and tricks individuals can implement to make the items they already have last longer. Being sustainable or going green does not mean people have to make drastic changes in their lifestyle;

by making small changes every day, those changes will equal a substantial change in the long run. The reason she chose a blog platform as her deliverable is because she was wanting to fill a niche market within the blogging community. Almost every blog she follows did not talk about the sustainability aspect of the business. Discussing sustainability seemed to be an off-limits topic within the blogging community. She created her own sustainable fashion blog so sustainability can become more widely accepted within the blogging community. It seems like an oxymoron to discuss sustainability on a lifestyle and fashion blog because the purpose of a fashion blog is to showcase the latest fashions and urge followers to purchase these trendy items. However, her goal is to show readers clothing and other products that are good for the planet. When shopping for the items the author talked about, she wants her followers to know that the products they are buying are great for the environment. The author is not telling her followers or readers to not buy anything ever again, but when buying something new to do research about that particular product or merchandise so the consumer can shop sustainably and responsibly.

State of the Field

The history of blogging started in 1993 but came to people's attention in 1994 when a student, Justin Hall started sharing details about his life on his personal website. A decade later, *The New York Times* had called him the "founding father of personal bloggers."³ In 1997, the term "weblog" was used to describe the online blogs that began to surface on the internet between 1997 and 2002. "A weblog is a log – or written documentation – that's published on the World Wide Web."⁴ In 2003, websites such as WordPress and TypePad were launched. By 2004, the most searched word of the year was "blog." In 2005, YouTube launched and that was the birth of the video blog known as the vlog. A web development site called Wix.com was started in 2006, and when the author was doing her undergraduate website she started out with a Wix.com platform. Twitter became popular in 2007. This platform allowed people to express their thoughts in 140 characters or less. These thoughts are known as tweets. The term microblogging was started because of the Twitter platform and format in which to express oneself to the public. Applications, known as apps, such as Instagram, Snapchat, and TikTok are considered the new form of microblogging with allowing its members to express themselves in the format they find most appealing. Microblogging is easier for people in today's society to follow and understand because the long attention span has now been replaced with a shorter attention span. This means that people are only able to handle choppy, one-minute videos when scrolling through social media. YouTube tutorial videos are starting to make a comeback within the blogging community. Although today people are starting to turn to longer tutorial videos on YouTube and Instagram. These video tutorials are starting to make a comeback within the beauty

³ Robinson, 2023.

⁴ Robinson, 2023.

community. These tutorial videos cover makeup and skincare routines, daily getting ready videos and how-to videos.

Once this author started working on this graduate project, she decided her website needed an update so she began researching other platforms that could help her build her perfect blog site. She eventually selected WordPress as the new platform for her blog site. While researching new platforms for her blog, she also wanted to update the theme and branding of her blog, so she decided to explore a few of her favorite blogs. Some of her favorites at the time included *Rachel Parcell*, *Atlantic - Pacific* created by Blair Eadie, *The Sweetest Thing* created by Emily Ann Gemma, and *Dani Austin*. When creating a blog site, the blogging is creating an extension of themselves in an online format. There are a lot of little, behind the scenes details that contribute to the overall look of the blog. These little details include color palette, font style and size, homepage layout, the layout of the entire blog, how the navigation is setup, the ease of use, and many other details. The author used these blog sites listed above to gather inspiration for her own blog site. She paid attention to the layouts, font styles and sizes and to the number of different fonts that were on the site itself, colors, navigation, and other details when designing her own blog. To see where her inspiration came from, click each blog link above.

As mentioned in the previous section, this author decided to focus her blog on fashion sustainability because she wanted to fill a niche market within the blogging and fashion community. When she was doing her research, the numerous blogs she found did not talk about sustainable products or merchandise and she wanted to change that. The history of fashion sustainability started back in the 17th century when the wealthy would save and repurpose

clothing or sell their clothing at markets.⁵ In 1840, Isaac Singer invented the sewing machine, but it was not until the 1920s that it became a popular household item. The sewing machine made it possible for new fabrics and materials to be turned into clothing at a faster rate during this time. During the Great Depression era (1929-1933), the slogan “Use it up, Wear it out, Make it do, or Do without!”⁶ brought sustainability back as a way of life. This sustainable way of life continued into the 1940s with World War II because materials were being used for the war effort by the military. In the 1940s and 1950s, increased production of synthetic fabrics and clothing started the making of inexpensive, “fast fashions” known today. Manufacturers in the 1970s chose synthetic fibers over natural ones because synthetics required less care including drying time and ironing. Synthetics have a long shelf life and typically end up in a landfill. Today, consumers have a range of brands and companies to shop with when looking for sustainable merchandise and clothing.

The fashion industry, with a value of over a \$1 trillion worldwide market, is a major global business. The United States alone makes up \$250 billion worth of business in sales and manufacturing.⁷ What the world knows today as Fashion Week had humble beginnings in the 1850s in Paris “when Charles Frederick Worth showed clients a prepared selection of his designs.”⁸ Department stores in New York City started mimicking the shows that were held in Paris, and by the 1940s, shows in Paris started hosting what was known as “Press Week” because

⁵ Linda Welters, “The Fashion of Sustainability” in *Sustainable Fashion: What’s next? A Conversation about Issues, Practices and Possibilities*, New York, NY: Fairchild Books, 2015.

⁶ “Use It up, Wear It out, Make It Do, or Do Without,” FDR Presidential Library & Museum, 2016, <https://www.fdrlibrary.org/use-it-up-wear-it-out-make-it-do-or-do-without>.

⁷ Cassandra Elrod, “The Domino Effect: How Inadequate Intellectual Property Rights in the Fashion Industry Affect Global Sustainability,” *Indiana Journal of Global Legal Studies* 24, no. 2 (2017): 576, <https://doi.org/10.2979/indjglolegstu.24.2.0575>.

⁸ Elrod, “The Domino Effect,” 576.

of the limits on traveling during the second World War. During the 1970s, designer's collections were shown twice a year, once during February and the other during September. This gave way to the classic and expected fashion weeks held in New York City, Milan, Berlin, and London.⁹

The fashion industry is always full of ups and downs, but the years during and even after the pandemic have been very difficult. Most companies started seeing growth in 2021 and in the early months of 2022. Then in February of 2022, Russia waged war on Ukraine. This event triggered a string of other events including an energy crisis, inflation, hikes in interest rates, and production being halted around the world.¹⁰ "In the BoF-McKinsey State of Fashion 2023 Survey, 85 percent of fashion executives predict inflation will continue to challenge the market next year."¹¹ This inflation may impact the fashion industry and the consumer buying behaviors by forcing consumers to shop fast fashion or possibly inferior brands. These inferior brands are typically fast fashion brands which tend to be less sustainable for the environment. This rest of 2023 will still prove to be a challenge for brands and companies. The brands and companies that navigate through the difficulties well enough will have a better chance to be leading the market in consumer trends. Globally, the fashion industry rebounded in 2021 and 2022, but 2023 is proving to be a challenge for nations across the globe. "In the BoF-McKinsey State of Fashion 2023 Survey, 84 percent of industry leaders said they expect market conditions to decline or stay the same in 2023."¹² In regards of the Ukrainian war, the United States is less affected than other nations around the world therefore the fashion industry outlook is better than other nations more

⁹ Elrod, 577.

¹⁰ Imran Amed and Achim Berg, "The State of Fashion 2023: Resilience in the Face of Uncertainty," *The Business of Fashion*, last modified, December 1, 2022),10, <https://www.businessoffashion.com/reports/news-analysis/the-state-of-fashion-2023-industry-report-bof-mckinsey/>.

¹¹ Amed and Berg, "The State of Fashion 2023, 10.

¹² Amed and Berg, 12.

seriously affected by the effects of the war in Ukraine. Since the United States is less affected by the war in Ukraine, fashion executives are anticipating a better outlook in 2023.¹³

Fast fashion has been a menace to the planet ever since the invention of synthetic fabrics during the 1950s. With the public's obsession with shopping for look-alike designer wear, fast fashion has become the more dangerous solution. This kind of fashion has given the general public access to purchase knockoffs of higher end, couture items. The general public now has instant gratification with getting these mimicked designer looks. Along with granting instant gratification, these pieces are likely to be made at the expense of those manufacturing these cheap garments. The blockbuster movie *The Devil Wears Prada*, stars Meryl Streep, Anne Hathaway, Stanley Tucci and Emily Blunt. This following scene where Miranda Priestly, portrayed by Meryl Streep, is deciding between two different turquoise belts to use for a fashion shoot, sums up the fast fashion process best:

...But what you don't know is that that sweater is not just blue, it's not turquoise. It's not lapis. It's actually cerulean. And you're also blithely unaware of the fact that in 2002, Oscar de la Renta did a collection of cerulean gowns. And then I think it was Yves Saint Laurent...wasn't it who showed cerulean military jackets?...And then cerulean quickly showed up in the collections of eight different designers. And then it, uh, filtered down through the department stores and then trickled on down into some tragic Casual Corner where you, no doubt, fished it out of some clearance bin.¹⁴

Miranda Priestly goes on to say that that one color "represents millions of dollars and countless jobs"¹⁵ within the fashion industry. This scene and statement show how even one aspect, like a certain color blue, can initiate the process of mimicking designer's designs to create knock off copies to sell to the masses.

¹³ Amed and Berg, 12.

¹⁴ Elrod, 579.

¹⁵ Elrod, 579.

While the fashion industry is still unstable, some consumers are feeling uncertain about income levels. Some consumers might wait on buying bigger purchases, they may shop second-hand stores, or rent more extravagant pieces. The industry has been responding to the shifts in spending from the younger generations by heavily leaning on discounting. Bargain-hunters are looking for lower price points on big-name brands. Resale is starting to play a huge role in the sustainability efforts of the fashion industry. “Resale revenue is expected to grow to \$47 billion by 2025, from \$15 billion in 2022....”¹⁶ A survey from the well-known online resell platform, ThredUp, found that 63 percent shop resale because of the lower price points and to save money.¹⁷ Big name brands such as Patagonia and Lululemon have started offering resale options either through the store or through a third party. What Goes Around Comes Around and Amazon have partnered to resell pre-owned luxury handbags.¹⁸ Rental, like resale, is looking to capture the attention of consumers and brands and “as consumers look for value for money,”¹⁹ they may turn to rental services to find the goods they want or need. By 2025, the rental market is expected to reach \$2.1 billion. Companies such as Uniqlo and H&M are boosting their repair services and providing customers with other affordable alternatives.

With sustainability efforts being at the forefront of the industry, consumers and other industry professionals are looking closely at how companies advertise their environmental practices. The term greenwashing has been an overused term within the industry. Companies have used “greenwashing” terms to hide behind for years. Using words like “eco-friendly,” “clean,” or “green” in companies and commercials and on packaging allows companies to make

¹⁶ Amed and Berg, 44.

¹⁷ Amed and Berg, 45.

¹⁸ Amed and Berg, 45.

¹⁹ Amed and Berg, 45.

false claims about their environmental status. The policymakers in the European commission came up with a plan that by 2030, textiles would be recyclable and durable.²⁰ A review by Competition and Markets Authority in 2022, claimed “fashion was one of the worst-offending industries when it came to greenwashing.”²¹ This year, France is expecting its fashion companies to print carbon labels for textiles and clothing. This label will show an environmental score to help shoppers make an informed decision when shopping.²² In a 2021 survey conducted by Genomatica, “42 percent of teenagers and adults polled said they were unsure what makes clothing sustainable, while 88 percent said they did not trust brands’ claims.”²³ Many consumers are beginning to care more about where their clothes come from and are starting to become more aware of how things are manufactured.

There are numerous trends currently happening within the fashion industry. The two trends that stood out to the author the most are fluid fashion and the reinvention of formalwear. Fluid fashion is becoming more popular among consumers with the changing attitudes towards identities and expressions.²⁴ Fluid fashion encompasses gender neutral fashions, clothing and merchandise that has no boundaries and can be worn by both men and women. Many luxury brands have adapted and embraced this fluid fashion trend and are even showing feminine looks on masculine models. The idea of men dressing more masculine and women dressing more feminine is slowly starting to change with each fashion season. The second trend that really caught the author’s eye was the reinvention of formalwear. “Formal attire is taking on new definitions as shoppers rethink how they dress for work, weddings and other special

²⁰ Amed and Berg, 78.

²¹ Amed and Berg, 78.

²² Amed and Berg, 78.

²³ Amed and Berg, 78.

²⁴ Amed and Berg, 50.

occasions.”²⁵ Since the pandemic, the industry has seen a drastic change in office wear. The dress code for many things overall has become very casual. Special occasion events are more likely to be dominated by bold, statement-making pieces and outfits. In the past, many people had their wardrobes segmented or categorized for work, casual, leisure, and celebrations. Now, with the reinvention of formalwear, the lines have been blurred between casual and formal wear. Today, the office look is ““smart” or “power casual.””²⁶ These looks are classified as such because they can be dressed up or down, which shows the versatility of the clothing. Clothing that is versatile also shows its sustainability. Customers that are looking for formalwear pieces will begin to venture outside of their comfort zone choosing bold patterns and colors, and different fabrics. Services such as Rent the Runway and The Trunk Club by Nordstrom will be some of the ways to attain these bold and different pieces for those special occasions. These services are membership based and allow its members to borrow designer or luxury pieces for as long as the members want, then they are able to send back the pieces and pick something different for their next rental. These types of services are a great way to keep higher end, designer, and luxury pieces in circulation within the industry, this process allows these clothing pieces a chance to be used again without ending up in a landfill. Fluid fashion and formalwear reinvention are two creative ways the fashion industry handles sustainability.

²⁵ Amed and Berg, 59.

²⁶ Amed and Berg, 60.

Methodology

The methodology for this project is qualitative. The author's innovative contribution to this industry will be to educate her readers on the importance of sustainability so consumers are able to make more sustainable choices in their daily lives. When searching for sources, the author was looking for quality sources. The author wants her readers to be able to trust the information they are reading and receiving from her and the sources she has chosen. When discussing this topic with her committee, it was suggested that she use a document analysis or an observation approach for collecting data to help with her project. Document analysis is a form of qualitative research. Documents are analyzed and interpreted to give meaning and understanding a topic. Observation is also a qualitative method in which behaviors and situations are observed and documented. For this particular project the author chose to use the document analysis approach for the qualitative method.

The author's project is a lifestyle blog which discusses several different topics ranging from fashion and beauty to travel and fitness or daily activities. Every part of this blog represents who the author is, even down to the colors and fonts she chose. As stated earlier, this blog site is an extension of the author and her personality. Most blog sites should showcase its owner's personality and personal style. When researching and learning how to start a blog, the author went back to some of her favorite bloggers for inspiration. At the time these favorites included *The Sweetest Thing* created by Emily Ann Gemma, *Rachel Parcell*, *Atlantic-Pacific* created by Blair Eadie, and *Dani Austin*. The inspiration she received from these blog sites were colors and color palettes, font styles and sizes, graphics, photo layouts and site layout. All of these details are just as important as what the blog posts will be written about. As bloggers, the goal is to be as authentic as possible while still maintaining some privacy and boundaries with the readers.

Readers and followers expect to see the same theme used throughout all social platforms. It is so important to create a platform and a space that reflects its owner's personality, style, and values. The author's blog site has changed since she started this project back in March 2021. See Figure 1 and 2 on the Illustrations Page to see the progress made. Changes to the blog are expected because her tastes and preferences have changed over the months and years.

When the author was an undergraduate studying fashion merchandising at the University of Central Missouri, one of the assignments was to create a personal website. The platform she chose then was Wix.com. The theme was basic black and white, and the layout was very simple. When learning one of the non-thesis, applied project options was to create a personal blog, she decided to turn her personal website into a lifestyle blog. Once the author had decided on her project, she started looking at different platforms other than Wix.com. After doing some research, she found WordPress, and decided to switch over her platform from Wix.com to WordPress. Once she decided to switch platforms, she also had to decide whether to transfer over her original personal website or start fresh with a new theme and layout on WordPress. Since this new site was for her non-thesis, applied project she wanted a fresh start, so she made the decision to start with a completely new site. The author was glad she decided to start fresh because the topic of her new blog was going to be lifestyle but also wanted to incorporate sustainability and fashion into her topic. The next step was looking for a committee chair and after reading biographies of Lindenwood's professors on Lindenwood's website, the author found Dr. Chajuana Trawick had the same interest in fashion and sustainability. After emailing back and forth with Dr. Trawick, the author realized she and Dr. Trawick shared similar stances when it comes to sustainable fashion. Fashion sustainability now became the new topic to showcase on her lifestyle blog. The main focus was placed on sustainable brands, women's

fashion, beauty, and lifestyle finds. The author also wanted readers to know how easy it is to be sustainable throughout their everyday lives.

Once the author had her topic planned out, it was time to personalize her blog site. The author found setting up a blog and picking the theme and layout the most enjoyable part. The author's original theme was a very basic layout and color palette than what she had at the beginning of 2023. Her color palette was a three-story color palette of white, black, and light pink. The layout she chose came from a basic template on the WordPress website. Her entire website was simple and clean, as the author was still getting used to working with the WordPress site. During the summer of 2021, the author had reworked her layout and changed her color palette again to closely match the main theme of the blog, sustainability. With the blog focusing on sustainability, the author wanted the color palette to complement the chosen project topic. Instead of a basic three-story color palette, she expanded it to a five-story color palette. The new color palette consisted of cream, light tan, baby pink, steel grey, and black. The cream, light tan, and steel grey are all neutral colors that are reflected in nature. These colors were very fitting to be displayed on the blog because the focus is around the environment and the planet. The reworked layout came from a preset blog theme that was found on WordPress. When looking for other themes and layouts, WordPress has several templates to browse through and select the one that best fits the personality of the author and the theme of the blog. Each template theme has its own pre-selected color palette, and these palettes can be customized to fit with the branding of the site. Since sustainability is at the forefront of the author's blog, she wanted to give it a more prominent spot on her blog. With that decision made, it was once again time to update the blog site. The author looked through the newly updated templates WordPress had and selected the one that best matched the look she had envisioned. See Figure 3 on the Illustrations page. With

sustainability being the main focus, it became a featured section at the top of the home page of her blog. The current color palette is a four-story palette consisting of light grey, white, purple, and red. These colors were the colors attached to the new theme the author chose. Although the new colors have no correlation with sustainability, they are high contrast and easy to read colors. The colors make the information being presented easier to read and comprehend.

Of the four original blog sites the author used for inspiration, two of those sites she still uses for inspiration from time to time. Over the last couple of years, her tastes had changed and therefore she had started following other bloggers and influencers. These influencers include *Kathleen Post*, *Lauren Kay Sims*, *Fashion Jackson* created by Amy Jackson, *Sassy Red Lipstick* created by Sarah Tripp, and *Susie Was Like* created by Susie Evans. Like the sites the author used when originally setting up her site, these blog sites were used as inspiration. Inspiration from these sites listed above came from the color palettes, layouts of blog posts, navigation and ease of use, the categories to write about, and font styles and sizes.

Production/Discussion of Results

The author's interest in fashion stemmed from when her mother would dress her in frilly dresses when she was a toddler. After 20 years, the author still finds joy in dressing up from time to time. When she was a little girl she always loved playing dress up with the clothes in her closet and her mother's closet. The author has always tried to recycle and reuse whatever items she could before getting rid of them. It was not until 2021, when the pandemic hit that the author was really involved in finding ways to reduce her carbon footprint. When growing up, the author never fully grasped the concept of the phrase "reduce, reuse, recycle," and it was not until she started doing more research about sustainability that she understood the full concept of that phrase. The author wants to leave this world a better place for future generations. She does not want her children or grandchildren to have to clean up after those who came before them.

This blog site was started because the author wanted to fill a niche within the blogging community. Her innovative contribution to the fashion industry is to educate her readers on the importance of sustainability so they too can make more sustainable choices in their daily lives. This blog combines the knowledge needed to make more sustainable choices and the fun of reading miniature stories into one fun and whimsical platform. The value of this work is teaching those who read it valuable lessons in extending the life of their clothing and other merchandise they have. The author is teaching her readers the importance of educating oneself about sustainability terms used in commercials and on packaging in the industry. The author wants her blog site to be known for having the knowledge and authority about sustainable topics and sustainable fashion items. This project is moving the industry forward because when doing research, the author did not come across another blog site like this one. As stated earlier, the author's interest in fashion stemmed from when she was just a little girl running around wearing

frilly dresses. As she grew older, her interest in fashion expanded. While in college, she was working towards a degree in fashion and became more and more interested in fashion sustainability. The author started finding and following Instagram accounts focused on fashion, beauty, travel, and lifestyle. While searching for new bloggers and influencers to follow, she realized that sustainability was taking a back seat to everything else. She wanted to change that narrative within the industry.

During the pandemic, the author decided to obtain a master's degree. When the time came to pick a topic to write about and do her project report on, she chose fashion sustainability. She wants to show her readers that she's doing her part for the environment while also educating others how easy it is to do their part. The author wanted to change the future of blogging by creating a blog site focused on a topic not widely talked about among the fashion industry. As stated earlier, the author wants to make sustainability, particularly within the fashion industry, a priority topic to be discussed. The author wants to show her readers that making sustainable choices does not have to entail making significant changes to your lifestyle, but making small changes such as bringing your own grocery bags to the store instead of using plastic ones or befriending a tailor to help you repurpose old or damaged clothing are all ways to help the environment.

The document analysis approach is a form of qualitative methodology used throughout this project. Document analysis was used to compare common elements between other fashion and lifestyle blogs. Common elements can be layouts of the blog pages and posts, color palettes, font styles, composition of the entire blog site, and topic categories. When starting her research, the author kept a written list of these common elements, she wrote what she liked and disliked about each site. As stated in an earlier section, these blogs became an inspiration, a starting point

for her when she began designing her own blog site. By showing all of the information in a blog platform, it is easier to read and comprehend the information being presented. The main purpose of this project is to fill a niche market within the industry. Many of the bloggers and influencers the author follows do not cover any sustainability topics on their blogs or social media accounts. The author wanted to share her knowledge and expertise with those around her and those wanting fashion advice.

Conclusions

The implications of success for this project are the readers of the blog following the sustainable tips the author is giving them to help them make a difference in their carbon footprint. This project report being published in Lindenwood's Library would be a huge success and a great honor as well. Another success will come from moving the industry forward with this report and innovative blog project to make a lasting impact on the environment. The last success for this project will be gaining respect and authority through the use of partnerships and collaborations.

The failures of this project will be this blog not reaching a wide enough audience to help the environment. The negatives of writing and publishing blog posts is not enough reader or follower engagement. Another failure of this project is having to always keep up with and blog about the current trends and technology that is changing within the industry. The last big failure is having to compete with other sustainability blogs and other fashion blogs.

The fruitful directions of this project of this field are moving the fashion industry towards sustainable practices and more sustainable clothing. Creating and writing enough creative content to keep readers and followers interested so they keep coming back to read the author's blog. The third fruitful direction will be collaborating and cultivating partnerships with brands and posting about those collaborations and partnerships on the blog site. The fourth fruitful direction will be promoting the blog to gain a solid follower and reader base. The final fruitful direction will be showing the readers how easy it is to be more sustainable throughout their everyday lives.

Illustrations

[one per page]

The screenshot shows a WordPress blog interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the WordPress logo, a plus sign, and several icons (pencil, undo, redo, eye, list). On the right side of the bar, there is an 'Update' button. Below the bar, the word 'Blog' is centered in a large, serif font, with a green circular icon to its right. Underneath, the text 'Latest Posts' is displayed. Three post cards are shown in a row. Each card features a square image at the top, a category label in a small, underlined font, a title in a larger, bold font, and a short text excerpt. The first post is categorized as 'Uncategorized' and has a title 'New Post'. The second is 'Fashion' with the title 'My favorite sustainable sweatshirt'. The third is also 'Fashion' with the title 'Welcome, all!'. At the bottom left of the page, the word 'Document' is visible.

WordPress logo + icons (pencil, undo, redo, eye, list) Update

Blog

Latest Posts

Uncategorized

New Post

My planner is one of those simple ring binder journals you can pick up from any stationery supplies store. White paper. No ruled lines to cage my venturesome handwriting and [...]

Fashion

My favorite sustainable sweatshirt

There are millions of tips out there on how to fly with kids, what to bring on camping vacations, which suitcase to buy, where to go and what to see [...]

Fashion

Welcome, all!

Hi! Welcome to my lifestyle blog! I am so excited to share this journey with you all. This blog features content relating to fashion, beauty, home, and travel. This blog [...]

Document

Figure 1. Former “latest posts” on the author’s original blog, January 2021.

Illustrations

[one per page]

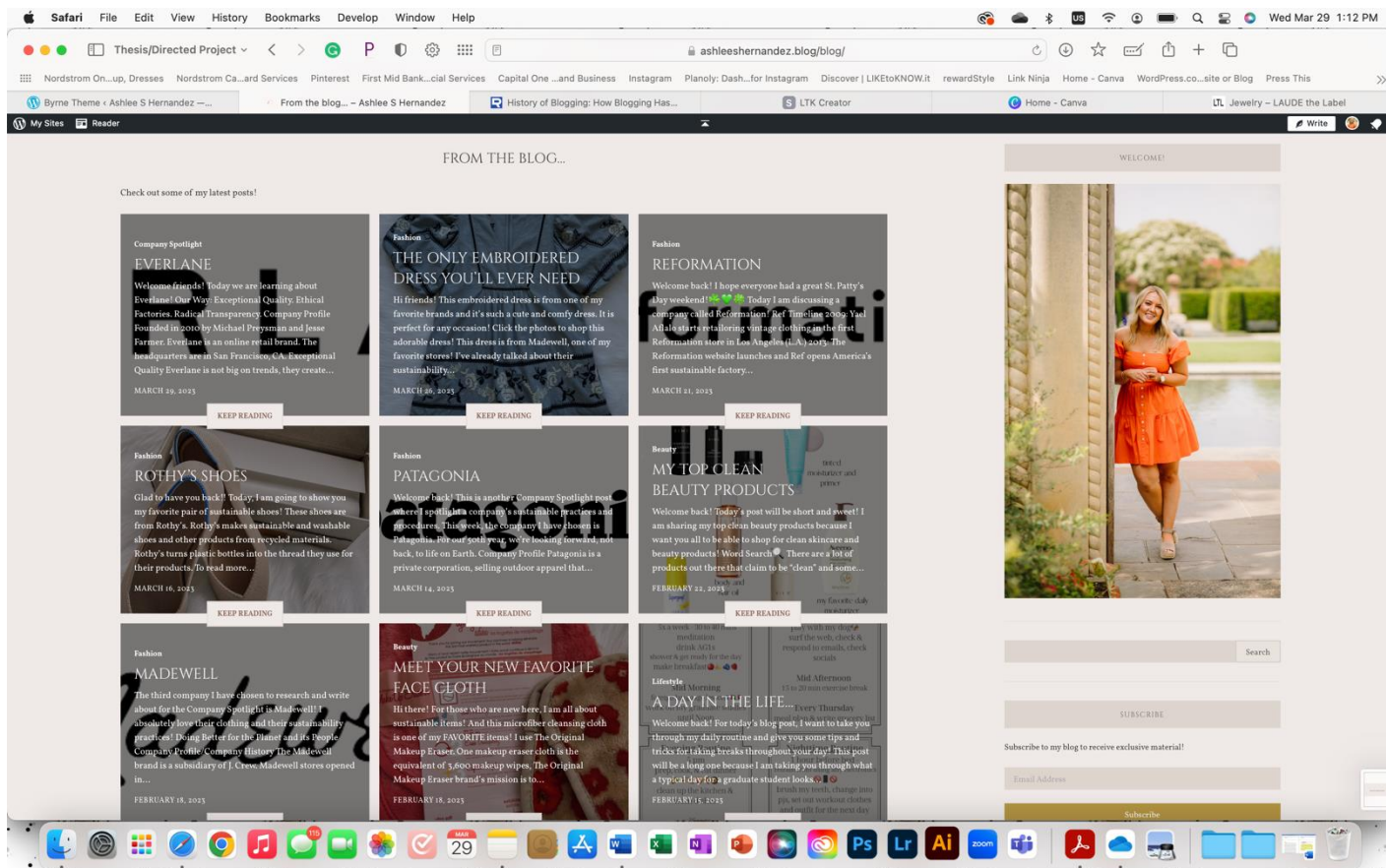


Figure 2. Former “latest posts” on the author’s updated blog, June 2021.

Illustrations

[one per page]


ASHLEE S HERNANDEZ fashion to make you and the planet look good

FEASURED

SUSTAINABLE FASHION AT YOUR FINGERTIPS

Welcome to your new favorite series! This series highlights some major fashion and beauty companies' sustainable practices, and wanna know the best part?! I did all of the hard work for you, all you have to do is read the post and shop for your favorite pieces! Happy Reading!

READ MORE



Photos credit to Barbara I Gongini

from the blog...

Edit Site Edit Stats ...

Figure 3. Current “home” page on the author’s blog site, April 2023.

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Appendices