ATTITUDE-BEHAVIOUR GAP IN SUSTAINABLE FASHION CONSUMPTION: THE ROLE OF FACILITATING CONDITIONS

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Abstract- The literature on sustainable fashion consumption tends to concentrate on the motivational factors which encourage consumers to behave sustainability from the lens of personal and social factors. This paper seeks to extend the sustainable fashion consumption study by conceptualising the aspects of socio-technical factor as a means of understanding the consumer's sustainable fashion consumption behaviour, noting the existence of attitude-behaviour gap. In addition, this paper considers how sustainable fashion consumption come into existence from the lens of personal factors and how the various interventions of facilitating conditions involved in these dynamics. An action oriented research which involved the technical aspects is needed to examine the distinctive challenges of understanding transitions in sustainable practice and to engender a more sustainable way of fashion consumption.

Keywords- Attitude-Behaviour Gap, Facilitating Conditions, Socio-Technical, Sustainable Fashion Consumption

I. INTRODUCTION

In this 21st century of progressive urbanization and globalization, the force of fast fashion concept is driving the unprecedented changes with the increasing fashion production and consumption rate. Fast fashion is defined as "latest fashion trends by frequently products updating with a short renewal cycle and turning the inventory at a rapid rate" (pg. 135) [1]. Following the fast fashion concept of "here today, gone tomorrow" and to maximize profit through impulse buying, some fast fashion retailers are updating their new fashion design every 2-3 weeks at low price [2].

The fast fashion trend has eventually leading consumers to excessive clothing purchasing and consumption. According to literature, excessive clothing consumption is a sign of status, identity seeking and desire to feel fulfilled [3]. The expressive nature of consumerism mind set encourages consumers to purchase and consume more in order to picking up the significance of society status. Therefore, clothing purchasing and consumption rate heighten when the new fashion design is introduced. As a consequence, wasteful consumption problem arises.

To tangle wasteful consumption problem, the world is working on its way to a better sustainable development and it has been defined in various ways. The most frequently cited definition is from [4]'s Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development, which emphasize the humanity values in succeeding sustainability for the goods of future generation. A revision of all the definition stated that all definitions required us to view sustainable development as a system that connects space and time [5]. Hence, it is said that sustainable development is a difficult task as in [6] where it contains a wide range of scales and indicators.

Consumer behaviour is a main key in sustainable development studies. This is because consumer behaviour and their consumption pattern are the main influential factors driving the success of sustainability in fashion industry. Therefore, in order to achieve the full state of sustainable development, consumer behaviour has to be studied to understand about their sustainable consumption pattern.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Sustainable Consumption

The meanings of consumption are varying among disciplines, as physicists, economists, ecologists and sociologists are applying different concept to consumption which align in their respective disciplines [7]. Economists defines consumption as the total spending on consumer goods and services, while in sociology, consumption described as the consumers purchasing behaviour to increase their social status. In fact, the later definition of consumption is no longer revolve around spending, but a broader area which included patterns of life and product life cycle as in [7] and consumption is discussed popularly linking to environmental issue [8].

In addition, sustainable fashion consumption is defined as:

> "a sub-set of the sustainable fashion system which includes consumer attitudes and behaviours that lead to reductions in the triple-bottom line (economic, environment and social) impacts of buying, wearing, caring for, repairing and recycling fashion goods. It includes demanding sustainable alternatives, caring for garments in less impact intensive ways (e.g. cold wash and line drying clothes) and responsible disposal or recycling of obsolete goods" (pg.14) [8].

The term of sustainable fashion has becoming more widespread in national and international discourse. Due to the serious environmental impacts brought by excessive clothing purchases and consumption,

consumer's sustainable fashion consumption pattern is starting to gain more attention in the fashion supply chain [10], [11]. Government and manufacturers have started to concern about sustainability issue in their operation and the issue have been set as a major agenda to be discussed [12], [13] and [14]. However, the effort to manage the environmental problems should not rely solely on the authorities or manufacturer, but the responsibility to protect the environment should be bear by partners of the whole supply chain, including the final consumers.

2.2 Attitude- Behaviour Gap

Attitude-behaviour gap of pro-environmental behaviour is a vital issue to be concerned in the efforts to increase sustainable consumption behaviour [15], [16] and [17]. Attitude-behaviour gap explained where most of the people hold pro-sustainability attitudes but these rarely translate into sustainable actions. Scholars had elucidated the attitude-behaviour gap in sustainable consumption practice, where the public's positive attitude towards sustainability is not match with the public's actual sustainable consumption practices. Therefore, it is pertinent to consider the individual differences of perceived barriers in performing sustainable fashion consumption behaviour when trying to understand the reasons on the low pro-environmental participation rate. In the similar vein, as mentioned in [18], the main thing in promoting sustainable consumption is to understand the consumer's understanding level about sustainability.

In addition, ABC framework indicates the extent to which responsibility for a sustainable living is depends on individuals whose their behavioural choices will make the difference [19]. The ABC framework established from three main elements, which are "A" stands for attitude, "B" for behaviour and "C" for choice. The framework is conceptualized that social change is depending upon consumer's personal values and attitude (the A), which their choice (the C) will potentially motivates a behavior (the B). The ABC framework provides a clear agenda and template for effectively investigate the determinants of sustainable behaviour. In this framework, the consumers play a major role in controlling their own behaviour by making their choices whether to behave in a certain way. The conceptualization is supported by various literatures and theories that an individual's behaviour is determined by the consumer's perceived behavioral control [20]. The ABC framework is not just a theoretical position in that indicating the consumer's attitude and behaviour to sustain sustainable behaviour, but to the extent which consumers have a role in structuring their possibilities and choices in their own sustainable behaviour. The behaviour and action is in the consumer's hand.

2.3 Facilitating Conditions

Fashion consumption and sustainability issue are always contradictory, where fashion consumption is a highly resource-intensive, the excessive consumption is definitely a wasteful practice, whereas, sustainability is a different idea. Sustainability in the fashion industry is still a relatively new idea, establishing after the increasing awareness of green growth. Hence, it is utmost important to examine how sustainability could be achieved [13] and [17]. Action- oriented studies should be carry out as most of the previous studies did not investigated the factors which eliminate consumers from practicing sustainable acts. Many previous literatures only studied about the motivational factors of sustainable consumption behaviour, but not into the factors that deter consumers from acting such behaviour.

Due to the problem of attitude-behaviour gap, it is suggested the need to future investigation on the combining factors of socio-psychological and technical aspects in sustainable consumption studies. The relationship between the two elements are important as socio-psychological factors, such as personal factors and norms are insufficient to determine whether an individual willing to perform a certain action. Therefore, there is a need to also evaluate the technical aspects in pro-environmental behaviours, such as convenience factors, distance and ease of use, in order to provide a practical and feasible solution to solve the current environmental problem brought by excessive and unsustainable consumption. It is therefore adequately reasoned that personal factors and technical factors would be an important element to investigate in sustainable consumption study, which offering a realistic possibility to improve the sustainable consumption practices.

2.4 Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework of this study is based on the notion that there is a need to combine socio-psychological and technical aspects into study, in order to provide effective and holistic means to understand consumer's sustainable behaviour. The previous studies have indicated the attitude-behaviour gap in sustainable behaviour, however, only a few studies have examined the simultaneous impact of both personal factors and facilitating condutions. Through close observation of previous literatures, this study has conceptualized a practice-based and action-oriented view of sustainable behavioural changes initiative as an attempt to intervene the sustainable consumption behaviour and practice.

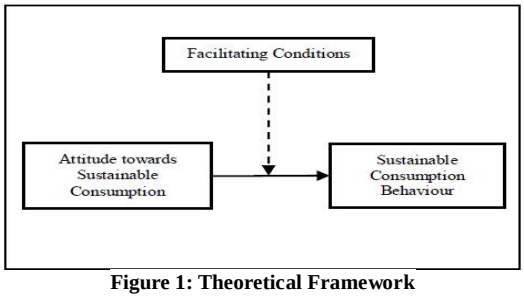


Figure 1: Theoretical Framework

CONCLUSION

This study calls for future research of proposed framework by underlining the need for a combination of socio-psychological and technical aspects into sustainable or pro-environmental studies, in understanding the attitude-behaviour gap. The proposed model could help practitioners and scholars in understanding of the mechanism through facilitating conditions which potentially interfere the consumer's sustainable behaviour. This study also contributes to the literature by shedding light on the factors which caused attitude-behavior gap in pro-environmental practices, which has been under-researched. The findings of this study could reveals the profound difficulties encountered by consumers in the attempts to act sustainably, which are far beyond the superficial understanding of the intervention of personal values, attitude to encourage changes. The underlying notion of the model is to suggest practitioners and government about the need to consider particular domains of the factors which impede sustainable attitude to behave in a sustainable way.

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