

A study of modular sustainable clothing marketing strategies

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Abstract:

This paper studies a new digital marketing strategy for modular sustainable fashion brands using the literature review method. Unlike other sustainable fashion brands' marketing, this work explores family customers as research samples instead of individual consumers. Based on discussing the concept and market potential, the paper proposes a marketing strategy for the product. The brand positioning is high sustainability and high DIY; the target group is young or middle-aged family customers with high income, high education, and living in developed countries; the price strategy it used is second-degree price discrimination and cost-based pricing. Developing sustainable workshops, cooperative retail, and pop-up stores as offline marketing, as well as focusing on interactive online websites, building community through social media, and collaborating with influencers in online marketing. From product design innovation to a new marketing strategy, this study will bring special perspectives and ideas to the marketing of sustainable clothing brands.

Keywords: Marketing Strategy, Modular Sustainable Clothing, Marketing Analysis.

1. Introduction

This paper studies the marketing strategy of a new sustainable fashion brand. The fashion industry is the world's second most polluting industry after the oil industry. The idea of sustainable fashion involves crafting items that minimize environmental effects and foster social accountability during the entire manufacturing cycle. However, most of the current sustainable fashion brands focus on sustainable fabrics or clothing recycling and recycling, and sustainable brands that extend the service cycle of clothing

through design innovation are blank in the market. On the other hand, marketing methods for sustainable brands mainly rely on customers' environmental awareness, lack of humanistic care and emotional connection, resulting in low customer loyalty.

To address these issues, this paper proposes a modular patchable sustainable garment with DIY design elements. It explores the marketing strategies suitable for sustainable fashion products, taking family customers as research samples while using online and offline marketing strategies, such as interactive sales websites and handmade workshops so that sus-

tainable fashion products can enter people's lives more. This paper is mainly divided into three aspects. First, it analyzes the features of modular sustainable fashion products, and then analyzes the market characteristics. Last, on this basis, it puts forward the marketing strategy suitable for this brand.

The research results of this paper will provide new marketing ideas for sustainable fashion brands seeking breakthroughs and innovation, and also provide a new perspective for the digital marketing field to think from family, emotion and culture.

2. Literature Review

This paper is an interdisciplinary study of sustainable fashion products and their marketing strategies. In the research process, the article referred to the research reports and cutting-edge research on the development of the sustainable fashion industry in recent years and also investigated the latest academic articles on digital marketing, as well as the practical application cases of digital marketing in the fashion field.

Through the investigation, it is found that the current research on sustainable fashion is mainly focused on environmentally friendly fabrics. For example, Stella McCartney's collaboration with Parley for the Oceans incorporates ocean-recovered plastics into their fabrics, demonstrating a commitment to reducing marine pollution and promoting sustainability [1]. Other majority sustainable clothing brands focus on the recycling of clothing. Patagonia, for instance, has a program called Worn Wear which encourages customers to restore and recycle their old clothing from their brand.

However, this paper studies a brand-new fashion field sustainably, and there are no authoritative cases of similar research. In terms of research objects, the research object of this paper is new products and new markets, design-oriented sustainable clothing. In terms of marketing strategy, different from the traditional marketing theory that focuses on individuals, this paper takes family customers as the main research object, combines sustainability with cultural implantation and emotional connection, and puts forward a brand-new marketing strategy.

3. Modular Sustainable Clothing Overview

The product is a modular sustainable fashion garment that consists of several small pieces of fabric that can be cleverly designed to fit together like a jigsaw puzzle to create different styles of clothing. With flexibility, innovation and adaptability as the main principles, modular design en-

ables consumers to adapt their clothing to their individual needs, ensuring a personalized fit and lasting usability: for example, as a child grows up, clothing sizes can become too small, which requires buying several pieces of fabric separately and stitching them onto the original clothing to fit the new body shape.

The capability to modify and renew garments enhances their resilience and prolongs their lifespan. The versatility of modular design lies in its ability to modify both body form and style, allowing clothing to adapt to the wearer's preferences and preferences. Featuring adaptability to varying stages of life and trends in fashion, this particular design minimizes the regularity of replacements and fosters extended usage.

People are looking for diversity and innovation in fabric combinations, so this modular sustainable clothing caters to this need. There is a lot of room for fabric selection, and the prices of different fabrics are also different, resulting in a lot of room for the price elasticity of this garment. Different from common modular clothing, the connection mode of this garment uses the traditional Chinese mortise and tenon structure, which is similar to the disc buckle on the Chinese cheongsam. Each connection mechanism has been carefully designed to ensure firmness, ease of use and aesthetics, enabling clothing to adapt to a variety of configurations and preferences. At the same time, this connection method without sewing tools is very suitable for the brand to carry out marketing activities such as parent-child DIY, and increase the appeal of family customers. At the same time, adding cultural implantation is also a plus for family customers who pay attention to education.

The modular design allows consumers to DIY and adjust according to their personal preferences, such as replacing other fabrics on top of the original clothing according to body shape changes. What's more, this flexibility can not only change the size but also highlight the personalized style. By splicing fabrics of different colors, styles, and materials together to change the appearance of clothing, each consumer has a different customized fashion experience, providing a variety of options for interactive sales models.

Last but not least, this clothing can create emotional connections, from just a piece of clothing to a memento of life. It extends the life cycle of clothes through design. Especially for teenagers, a piece of clothing may accompany a child from childhood to adulthood through continuous stitching, becoming an important growth witness. The brand also offers services to make clothes into souvenirs or DIY activities. As an attribute of emotional connection, products can help brands carry out customer care activities in the long term after sales and increase customer loyalty.

4. Market Analysis

4.1 Market Size and Trends

Sustainable and DIY preferences are two-wheel drives in sustainable markets, contributing to the growing development of sustainable fashion.

Sustainable preference is one of the wheels in the market. As of 2024, the global sustainable fashion market was valued at approximately USD 1.35 trillion. The market is expected to grow at a compound annual growth rate of around 9.7% from 2024 to 2030. In response to growing environmental concerns and growing consumer demand for environmentally friendly products, the fashion industry is increasingly turning to sustainability. As Niinimäki et al. note, “The fashion industry is undergoing a major transformation as sustainability becomes a key factor in consumers’ purchasing decisions. With increased awareness of environmental issues, consumers are increasingly prioritizing brands that are committed to sustainable practices and ethical production methods”[2]. Today, sustainability is no longer a niche issue, but a mainstream expectation that influences the way brands are designed, produced and marketed.

DIY preference is another one. Modular and bespoke fashion is gaining traction as consumers look for more adaptable clothing solutions. Miller and Lewis emphasize that “modular fashion represents a growing market share as consumers increasingly crave versatile and customized clothing options. The demand for fashion that allows for personal expression and functional flexibility is driving interest in modular designs, which offer the ability to modify and reconfigure garments to meet individual preferences and needs”[3]. The appeal of modular fashion is shown in its ability to provide a variety of looks and functions from a single garment to meet the needs of different consumers; by extending the life cycle of clothing and reducing waste, it aligns with the wider sustainability movement; and it also helps avoid frequent replacement and contributes because of its easy adjustment, to meet a more sustainable fashion system. This innovative approach not only satisfies consumer demand for DIY, but also supports environmental goals by promoting longer clothing use and reducing textile waste, so it’s gradually becoming another new mainstream trend.

4.2 Competition in Market

Certain brands pioneer the provision of eco-friendly and sustainable fashion options. Illustrations of this are Patagonia, recognized for its dedication to ecological sustainability, recycling, and advocating for ethical manufacturing practices [4]; Stella McCartney, emphasizing the

adoption of cutting-edge materials with a focus on ethical production and transparency, appeals to those seeking eco-friendly luxury choices [5]. Contemporary eco-friendly labels primarily emphasize sustainable and sustainable textiles, whereas the merchandise not only addresses this aspect but also embraces the concept of whole clothing splicing as a sustainable approach.

Modular fashion is an emerging trend, with several brands offering customized and adaptable clothing, such as Tada & Toy: known for its modular approach to fashion, offering clothing with detachable parts and adjustable features[6]; OpenWear: Focuses on modular and interchangeable clothing pieces that can be mixed and matched to create a variety of looks [7]. Modular fashion has its customization, but there are fewer modular fashion on the market that contain environmental protection concepts, focusing on the sustainable aspect is likely to make the product stand out.

Though some parts of the fashion industry are slowly moving toward sustainability, traditional fast fashion brands are still the majority. As environmental concerns have been raised in recent years, fast-fashion brands have been found to contribute significantly to textile waste, and the need for sustainable solutions has been recognized, this competitive relationship may gradually weaken in the future.

4.3 Market Challenges

The survey found that most of the current sustainable fashion brands conduct sustainable innovation research from both ends of the clothing life cycle. Some brands focus on fabric sustainability research, for example, Patagonia. Some brands focus on clothing recycling, for instance, Stella McCartney. However, sustainable brands that improve the use frequency and extend the use cycle of clothing through design innovation are very rare and have little market influence, which is a market gap worth exploring. Its marketing focuses on the degradable, recyclable and recycling of clothing, mainly relying on accurate customer positioning and their environmental awareness.

From the marketing point of view, due to the high cost of sustainable product fabric, product premium is high, and marketing mainly relies on accurate customer positioning and the customer’s environmental awareness. Once the positioning is inaccurate, conventional marketing means is difficult to produce results. The existing sustainable commodities lack cultural implantation and emotional connection, which leads to low customer loyalty and difficulty in retaining sticky customer groups. Finally, the lack of multiple matching elements in these products leads to aesthetic fatigue among customers who pursue fashion

and high customer turnover.

5. Marketing Strategy

5.1 Brand Positioning

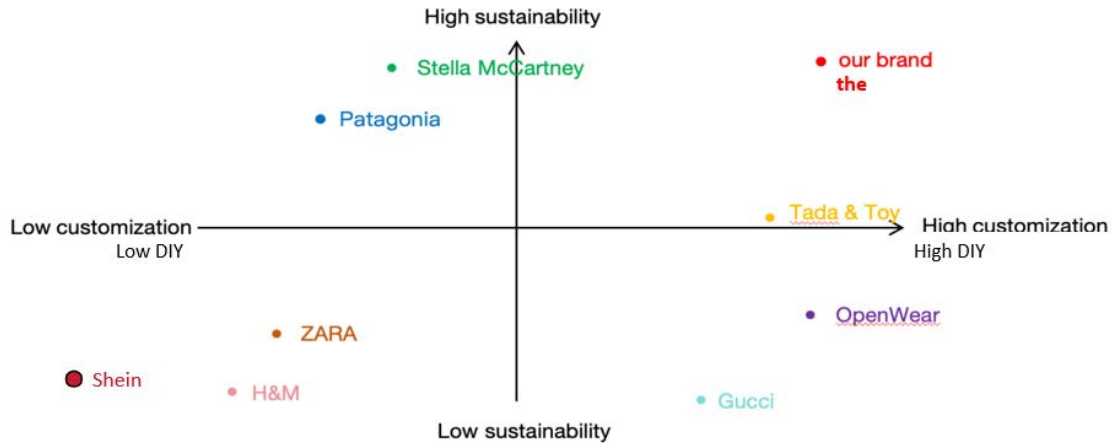


Fig.1 The position map of sustainable and DIY(do it yourself)

The market is segmented by two dimensions—sustainability and DIY (Figure 1), and the brand is positioned in high sustainability and high DIY. High sustainability is reflected in that the style, size and function of clothing can be re-changed through splicing, thus extending the frequency and service life of clothing and reducing clothing waste. Highly customized can be customized according to the needs of different families, DIY personalized clothing combinations, thereby reducing the total amount of family clothing purchased. Compared with low sustainability and low DIY brands, the clothing of this brand can not only meet the personalized DIY needs, but also make the utilization rate higher and the use cycle longer.

5.2 Target Market Segmentation

5.2.1 Demographics Analysis

The target market is mainly high-income, educated, young or middle-aged families living in developed countries who care about environmental protection and attach importance to education. The parents in the family are usually between 20 and 45 years old, who have good educational backgrounds and income levels, as well as a strong recognition of sustainable development, and hope to provide a good sustainable living environment for their children from an early age. These people are open-minded and generally interested in fashion and open to emerging trends. They are willing to try new products and pay higher prices for goods that align with their values. In addition, adults tend to have a stable financial situation, so people who focus on sustainable clothing can also become the main

potential consumers of the products. Family customers are the especially focused group.

5.2.2 Geographical Position

The market is mainly focused on urban areas or cities. Consumers are usually more motivated to understand emerging fashion trends, advocate environmentally friendly product concepts, and consume environmentally friendly products, and most people have a sense of fashion. By promoting the products in these regions, consumers who are most likely to buy sustainable modular clothing can effectively be targeted. Urban high-income and educated families are also groups that attach importance to education, and sustainable modular clothing is also a sustainable education case for family education.

5.2.3 Psychographics Analysis

Potential customers typically exhibit these three psychological traits: First, consumers with a strong sense of environmental protection and sustainability generally prioritize the environmental impact of products when purchasing and actively seek out options that reduce waste. The products meet their high standards of sustainable fashion and may attract these environmentally minded consumers, for they achieve minimum environmental hazards. According to market research, in a 2020 McKinsey US consumer sentiment survey, more than 60 per cent of respondents said they'd pay more for a product with sustainable packaging [8]. Another kind of customers who have a keen interest in a distinct, tailor-made fashion. These shoppers aspire to distinguish themselves from conventional fashion trends and eagerly try out garments that offer a

customized experience. The modular architecture enables individuals to tailor their apparel to their individual tastes and requirements, aligning precisely with their preferences. Last, people who care about the long-term value of a product are more willing to invest in sustainable products, and they believe that high-quality products that can be used continuously are worth a higher price.

5.3 Pricing Strategy

The following two dimensions of price strategy will be mainly considered: Second-degree price discrimination and cost-based pricing.

5.3.1 Second-degree Price Discrimination

Because the products are new to the market and relatively unfamiliar to the public, the brand needs to find a way to attract their consumption. For example, according to the number of customer purchases, divided into three price lines. First-time buyers can enjoy a lower experience price; Ordinary customers who re-purchase enjoy the regular price and re-purchase can accumulate points to bring discounts to the next purchase; Member customers can also enjoy lower prices, and ordinary customers can become members if their points are accumulated to a certain extent.

5.3.2 Cost-based Pricing

As the product cost control flexibility is large, the brand can launch different fabrics and different prices of product lines, at the same time, with different combinations of packages in order to meet the budgets and needs of different consumers. According to one study, 47% of consumers prefer tiered pricing, which they believe better meets their individual needs[9]. For example, different suits can be introduced: the basic suit provides a regular version of the garment, including the most basic fabrics and functions; Thanks to modular clothing, additional accessories can be retailed separately so that consumers can expand according to their preferences; Or design a package that includes an add-on panel - one survey showed that about 55% of consumers showed a higher willingness to buy when faced with a bundled pricing strategy, so a package sale is also a beneficial strategy[10].

5.4 Sales Channels

The brand creates a combination of online and offline channel marketing strategies: online to interactive website sales and offline to parent-child manual experience.

5.4.1 Offline Marketing

Sustainable Workshop: Children's wear is the brand's key promotion area. The DIY workshop of sustainable

modular clothing with children's participation is not only conducive to the promotion of the brand but also meets the sustainable education needs of Kochi families for their children. Such gatherings offer practical learning and demonstrations, as well as aiding buyers in grasping the advantages and uses of modular apparel. A Fashion Revolution survey revealed that 65% of respondents gained more insight into the brand and its offerings after participating in a sustainable fashion workshop, leading to a greater propensity to buy [11]. After the workshop, brands generally experience a rise in their customer conversion rates ranging from 10% to 20% [12].

Cooperative Retail: Partnering with retail stores that focus on sustainable fashion is also a great communication and sales channel that can significantly increase brand awareness and credibility. Some activities can be co-organized with retail partners to emphasize the sustainability and innovation of the product and promote sales. For a newly created brand, it is also a good choice to cooperate with existing related retail stores to increase brand awareness, such as children's clothing brand stores or handmade toy stores. A study illustrates that brands that collaborate with sustainability-focused retailers see a 70% increase in brand awareness, with market coverage expanding by 50% [13].

Pop-up shop: Consumers can engage directly with the product, explore modular design, and grasp its ecological benefits through assorted activities. A substantial 80% of shoppers hold a favorable opinion of pop-up shops, and there's a 65% higher probability of them buying items post-pop-up retail[14]. Different research indicates that the conversion rate at pop-up stores may hit 30%, in contrast to the usual 10-15% in conventional retail outlets[15].

5.4.2 Online Marketing

Interactive Online Website: the tool allows potential customers to design and visualize their modular clothing online, providing a personalized and fun shopping experience. It's a great marketing strategy to attract and tap potential customers, and the survey shows that companies using interactive online tools have seen a 74% increase in user engagement, highlighting the effectiveness of these tools in attracting and retaining customers [16]. At the same time, online stores can also use the above tools to visualize and design their modular configuration of clothing, thereby improving the shopping experience. Another study also showed that 68% of consumers prefer to buy directly from a brand's website because of enhanced customization and interactive options [17].

Building community through social media: effective promotion of fashion items necessitates the utilization of social media networks to build community. Crafting vid-

eo guides can assist viewers in tailoring and constructing modular clothing, while also disseminating authentic customer feedback and suggestions to foster trust and trust. Three-quarters of brands indicate a substantial influence of social media on their brand's prominence, with Instagram and TikTok leading 60% as their preferred channels [18].

Influencer Collaboration: a common marketing strategy for most brands involves partnering with fashion influencers and sustainability advocates to expand the brand's reach. Therefore, the top 10 bloggers can be invited to cooperate in the sub-fields of environmental protection and sustainability, family education, handicraft lovers, fashion wear and so on. The vast majority of marketers (91%) say that partnering with influencers significantly improves brand conversion rates, and 84% of consumers are more likely to buy products endorsed by influencers [19].

5.5 Preventing Customer Churn

5.5.1 Loyalty Program

Creating an incentive system can encourage consumers to make repeat purchases and maintain long-term relationships with customers. Because the products are mainly targeted at family customers, the brand wants to develop a family incentive strategy to increase the stickiness of family customers. For example, if they consume a certain amount, they can get a gift reward; You can also get a discount if they recommend the brand to others or establish a family customer profile, regular return visits and interactions. The data shows that brands with effective loyalty programs have a 25% increase in customer retention, and 40% of customers cite loyalty programs as a major factor in repeat purchases [20].

5.5.2 Feedback Recovery

Brands can also implement a robust system to collect and analyze customer feedback. For example, after collecting customers' evaluations of the product after purchase, the brand can then integrate customer feedback, analyze data, and finally try to adjust the shortcomings of the product. Companies that implement feedback mechanisms see a 30% improvement in customer satisfaction, as reported by 68% of companies [21].

5.5.3 Trade-in Service

Taking into account the replaceable nature of the product, it is very appropriate to carry out recycling and trade-in services, and the brand will conduct regular online visits to understand the experience of use, and provide trade-in and souvenir production services.

6. Conclusion

Aiming at the current market gap, this paper proposes modular sustainable clothing that can be stitched together. This paper adopts the literature research method and takes household consumers as research samples to explore the marketing strategies suitable for the brand. However, unlike the current traditional sustainable clothing, which focuses on sustainable fabrics and clothing recycling, the brand highlights design innovation and personalized DIY, while taking into account humanistic feelings, filling the current market gap in sustainable fashion from product design innovation to new marketing strategy. This brand is positioned at high sustainability and high DIY, and consumers are targeted as high-income, educated, young or middle-aged families living in developed countries who care about environmental protection. It also uses second-degree price discrimination and cost-based pricing to attract customers. To prevent customer churn, this paper offers three recommendations such as developing a family incentive strategy, valuing customer feedback, and adopting trade-in services. Although this paper has made some new exploration from product design innovation to marketing strategy, more in-depth exploration is needed in the aspects of technology integration and AI empowerment. This will help attract more consumer attention and affection. And more and more technology companies would also explore the potential of connecting sustainable fashion with technology.

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