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BUF 1101: Introduction to the Fashion Industry (Spring 2021)

Fashion Industry Research Paper

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The fashion industry lacks diversity and inclusivity for the plus-size community. The fashion industry should and could include all people across different body sizes. The fashion industry mostly considers and makes clothes for average women to skinny women. For instance; the average body size in the United Kingdom is size 16 for women and size 30 for men. This means that only the people within that size range are able to access the clothes in fashion. Growing up in my country there would be separate stores for plus size clothing which always made me question why that was a thing and even though I wasn't aware of the significance of inclusivity and diversity it simply seemed unfair. This paper explains the lack of inclusion in the fashion industry and how this issue affects the customers and members of society.

Fashion is something all people consider in their lives since each person has their own style and a certain way they view dressing up/down . Besides, all people love to dress well because dressing influences our self-esteem (Lewis, 2019). However, when a person is not in the average category, they are considered plus-size or petite. This group of people are usually left out while developing and creating new fashion. This issue leads to many bigger issues for example body shaming women who are not within what society has deemed to be “beautiful” or “the norm” and that escalates to women having serious body image issues . Through my research paper, I want to

mention simple solutions and recommendations made for the people who feel left out and the fashion industry and their lack of inclusion. Firstly, the fashion industry has to develop more clothing lines for women from size zero to forty, it shouldn't take you to a different website/process when you choose to shop for plus-size/ petite because these are all ways consumers feel left out and I believe that the little details are crucial when it comes to these things. It should feel like all women are celebrated and they can all come in this one place and feel like they belong. This would ensure that all women are included, besides this would give women the assurance that once they are in these stores or shopping online that they'll find clothes that fit them, because they go all their lives worrying about that.

Size inclusivity remains an issue in the fashion industry because the categories of people who are left out and body shamed cannot speak for themselves because they aren't insiders of the industry but in the past few years more and more models have noticed the lack of diversity and started speaking about how there should be more body sizes and shapes included on the runway, photoshoots and campaigns . Recently, the Chromat clothing collection introduced the Becca McCharen-Tran design which includes clothing sizes for all sizes for women (Thompsons et al, 2020). Chromate also introduced clothing lines that would fit all women and men across different body sizes, abilities and body shapes in addition to including different ethnicities. This is the first time a clothing brand designs a collection with a particular cloth that would suit the needs of all women. This event was all over the news because in the history of America, fashionable clothes are mostly designed for average size women or what society has made "average" but this event would launch new clothes that include all body sizes. Fashion models in the Chromat designer company report that they felt the forthcoming plus-size clothes would make them more

comfortable because their audience would expand to all people with different shapes. That was also a smart business move because they would get more exposure and their target market would expand, the important thing however, is to ensure consistency in the fashion industry.

The impact of lack of inclusivity in fashion industry

Before understanding the impact of lack of inclusivity in the fashion industry for plus-size people, it is important to understand why the issue exists. Firstly, lack of inclusivity in the fashion industry is present because designers usually design clothes for models that are size 0 to 4. Therefore, the audience interprets that the clothes are meant for small or average sized people. Therefore most stores are designed to body shame plus size women and men, even though it wasn't said directly it is still body shaming. Secondly, plus size people rarely speak out on their needs. For instance, the American fashion industry is driven by the wants of the customers rather than the needs of the customer. Therefore, when one plus size person goes out shopping, they are likely to feel left out and because they can't find their sizes. Lastly, the world entertains the idea that plus size people cannot wear designer clothes, thus they are rarely considered.

A brand that has come under fire is YSL. Yves Saint Laurent has always used unhealthily thin models for his campaigns and on the runway and not only do they simply look too skinny they seem dangerously malnourished, I'll include pictures for some of the models who have participated in that show. A big scandal was his campaign in the spring of 2015 where the theme was dark, rock and roll chic with the inspiration of youth and rebellion in mind. When that campaign came out featuring an 18 years old and came to Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) in the UK, they felt strongly about YSL using models that are unhealthily skinny and promoting an unrealistic standard to their audience and the youth that they decided to ban it in

the UK claiming that the model's rib cage was visible and very prominent. I fully support and respect the UK decision to ban this campaign as it sets an unrealistic standard for the youth and "mistakes" that skyrocketed the eating disorders.

The impact of lack of inclusivity in the fashion industry on the customers

Lack of inclusivity affects customers' self-esteem and confidence (Peters, 2017). Most of the plus size women do not feel included in the trending clothes because they cannot get the clothes that fit them. Sometimes, the fashion industry and certain clothing lines earn less revenue than it should because of lack of inclusion. If all people are included there could be better sales and higher revenue.

Recommendations

The industry should make it their mission to go out of their way with every collection and any release to make sure it's diverse and inclusive as much as they possibly can. Other brands and companies should take notes from Savage x Fenty by Rihanna in their inclusion skills for all body shapes, complexions and races. This company has reached a new level of inclusivity and representation and set a new standard for other brands launching any new collection. Rihanna made national news when she came out with Savage x Fenty and Fenty Beauty (her beauty/makeup line). Rihanna's collections are the definition of diversity and diversity done right. In her last collection not only did she include women of all races, shapes and sizes she also included diverse male models

## References

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