Preface

GLOBAL FASHION MANAGEMENT AND MERCHANDISING

This handbook stems from our interest in the emergence of exciting research in diverse topics that both document and shape the study and practice of fashion management and merchandising in a global context. By capturing the sheer diversity of substantive research in subjects from creativity, innovation and strategic management to technology in fashion and international business practices, our aim is to demonstrate the need for a multi-faceted perspective on global fashion management. Until now, these topics have been explored as independent fields in fashion management research, which effectively contradicts the interrelatedness of real world practice in international markets. Our motivation for taking this approach was driven by our determination to illuminate the inherent complexity of fashion management and merchandising practice in an era of globalisation. As co-editors of this handbook, we were inspired by the breadth of emerging topics in fashion management research and by the complex challenges faced by current and upcoming generations of fashion managers competing in a globalised market.

The themes explored in the research handbook provide a comprehensive overview of the key aspects that impact competitiveness, development and growth of fashion companies in international markets. Each theme is examined either from a distinct international viewpoint, a specific segment of the fashion industry or through the lens of opportunity development and emerging business practices. A number of chapters are grouped under the following themes in this order: Creativity and Innovation, Strategic Fashion Management, Technology in Fashion Businesses, Fashion Retail, CSR and Sustainable Supply Chain Management and lastly Emerging Business Practices in International contexts. The chapters contributed by researchers from far-reaching parts of the world represent the multiplicity of fashion management research and they provide valuable insights into the common concerns that underpin decision-making for global fashion businesses.

The purpose of this handbook is twofold. Firstly, to introduce the notion that global fashion management and merchandising should be considered from a multi-faceted standpoint. Secondly, the purpose of this book is to educate researchers and practitioners about the opportunities, challenges and practices of fashion businesses and markets in an era of globalisation. Readers can hope to learn about the market drivers (creativity and innovation), the macro-trends (technology and sustainability) and the innovative strategies and tactics that fashion businesses employ to compete and expand across distinct geographic contexts. Readers will also learn that in addition to the challenges of distinctiveness, global markets also offer opportunities for fashion businesses to scale and build brand equity. As the book is divided into six complementary sections, each containing several chapters, we suggest that the reader dips in and out of each section as they see fit, rather than feeling constrained to complete an entire section.
As co-editors of this research handbook, we have learnt a great deal about different aspects of global fashion management from the process of collating the initial proposals, selecting the key themes and subsequently reviewing the full papers with the help of peers and contributors to the volume. We were delighted with the response from fellow researchers to the call for chapters in January 2015. The initial proposals submitted exceeded our expectations in terms of the number of proposals received and the array of topics that were put forward for review. However, it soon became clear to us that the research was clustered into the key areas of reflection, which have subsequently formed the structure of this volume. Due to the response from researchers worldwide, we quickly realised that the quality and quantity of papers received provided more than sufficient research for one book. Certainly, the process of co-editing this handbook has opened our eyes to the assortment of topics and methodologies used to investigate fashion management practices, which equally have increased our enthusiasm and determination to encourage research in this field. Consequently, we believe that further work in global fashion management with a multi-faceted approach will follow this first volume of research.

During the process of collating and editing the chapters, we were inevitably faced with the challenge of redrafting our own work and also asking colleagues to rewrite, restructure or tighten up certain sections of their chapters. Occasionally, revisions were requested with short deadlines, particularly when the final submission date was imminent. However, the authors responded promptly and with great willingness, and we were able to complete the editing process without delay and deliver the entire volume to the publisher on time.

In terms of methodologies and research processes, the chapters offer a wide array of distinct approaches. The distinctiveness of each approach reflects the chapter topic, the body of knowledge as well as the cultural context in which the research and the author is embedded. This diversity contributes to the richness of the volume whilst offering insights into the similarities and differences in business practice across a range of international markets. The breadth of sources, methodologies and topics included here provides a unique anthology of global fashion management and merchandising research. These collectively present the interrelated nature of this complex subject. To date, there are no other research handbooks that examine this subject using a multi-faceted approach; hence we believe that this work is both timely and essential to extend our knowledge of the field and of its business practices.

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