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Fashion Weeks and Customer Experiences in Emerging Markets

Ruth Jacob

Introduction

Fashion designers implement an array of events and practices and fashion labels, which are used to promote the latest designer collections and trends, whilst engaging new, existing and potential customer bases. Customer-faced events such as national and city-based fashion weeks have played a fundamental role in shaping how fashion designers showcase their collections and themselves to their customer bases and overall to a broader audience. Once only synonymous with four international capitals—New York, London, Milan and Paris—an increasingly wider collective of cities worldwide are becoming bases for fashion week activities. Emerging markets have made fashion weeks in their own regions spectacles that are now admired, appreciated and keenly followed by many parts of the world, including established and developed markets.

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This chapter will investigate selected cities situated in emerging markets around the world. A focus will be placed on how these specific nations implement events and experiences relative to fashion weeks. Where applicable, other customer experience-based events complementary to fashion weeks will also be analysed. Economic considerations for the present and future growth of countries will be presented. Kühl (2015), cited by Bug and Windhab (2020), describes the fashion show as “a marketing tool” Thus, the chapter will consider how fashion weeks are used to promote fashion. Detailed theoretical models will be used to support this consideration. Factors that have been shown to play a part in how fashion week activities take place, such as culture, climate, technological advancements and the COVID-19 pandemic, will also be presented, as will the direct insight from organisers and organisations that create fashion week shows in emerging markets. The chapter will conclude with considerations on how further developments for fashion weeks and customer experiences can be enhanced in emerging markets.

According to Okonkwo (2007), fashion shows offer brands the chance to showcase their new design concepts, values and brand personality. “The brand concept is simply the birth of a brand, in other words, the overall idea behind the creation of the brand” (Okonkwo, 2007). This statement points to shows that highlight nations’ creative and cultural representation. A distinguishing factor of fashion week shows involves providing a collective indication of cultural and social trends within respective countries.

Hosting and publishing fashion week shows via media platforms such as audiovisuals on social media platforms can create awareness around them. To create brand awareness, the brand has to be visible. “*This means achieving a high level of exposure for the brand among its target consumer audience*” (Okonkwo, 2007, p. 114). By placing the shows, and thus the brands on media platforms, such as owned websites and social media, it can be reached by the masses. In light of the global COVID-19 pandemic, such practices proved vital for fashion brands that wanted to show themselves to the world.

The purpose of this chapter is to highlight the presence of fashion week shows and related activities present in emerging economies, such as the design and promotion of domestic fashion labels. Additionally, highlights

of the practice of designers from developed markets, such as the United Kingdom, the United States (Bunyeshulli, 2020), Spain, Italy and France (Dias, 2020), and the presentation of their seasonal collections in emerging markets during fashion week will also be included in the chapter. This practice helps to indicate that emerging economies are proving to be valuable and lucrative platforms for promoting designers from developed nations on a global scale. Additionally, the chapter will highlight the responsive nature of fashion week organisations and organisers, their desire for greater awareness of the designers represented within their showcases and the creative and cultural components involved in designing their collections.

Research Methodology

As the subject area of fashion shows in emerging markets is relatively untapped in literature, the researcher has chosen to interact directly with fashion designers and labels based in emerging markets. The chapter author used both primary research to gain direct insight from fashion week organisations and organisers and secondary research to provide a broader range of understanding about existing fashion week practices in the emerging markets, and comprehensive insight into the countries themselves, including economic and demographic data. Additionally, secondary research was implemented to support the representation of theoretical considerations related to elements of fashion week presentations within emerging markets. Two models have been selected, the *Two-Step Model of Communication* and the *Interaction Model of Communication*, both of which support the concept of interactions between media as marketing tools and customers as target audiences.

As a sampling method, the author used convenience sampling to select fashion week organisers to contact for semi-structured interviews, which formed the primary research method used in the chapter. This form of sampling involved working with accessibility as the means of choice for reaching and selecting the sample group (Bryman, 2012, Pg. 201). Internet-based research was initiated with the Europa Regina website (Europa Regina, 2021a) to select fashion week organisers based in

emerging economies. Additionally, the chapter author contacted fashion-related organisations such as public relations organisations associated with international fashion weeks and the Commonwealth Fashion Council, which led to contact and communication with four fashion week organisations. Each organisation or respective personnel contacted provided responses and information that have been used to conduct the primary research interviews or questionnaires, which helped develop the research that has been used to show the production the domestic fashion week showcases.

A total of 132 fashion week organisations were contacted. However, only 23 designers or organisations provided direct initial responses. Of those 23, a total of 10 provided immediate answers that have been used for the development and presentation of research in this chapter. Founders, organisers and personnel of respective fashion week organisations were contacted, and interviews were completed via email or mobile communication platforms. Their responses have been used to develop the research represented within the chapter. Where possible, contact names of the respondents and organisers of the responding fashion week organisations have been included in this chapter to further highlight the presence and endeavours of their works to enhance the presence of designers in the domestic economies and the fashion practices that exist.

Some hindrances occurred when reaching out to international fashion week organisations and organisers, notably language barriers (English was not a spoken language). This also factored into the research for the literature review, making it impossible to translate due to submission formats of written work (i.e., PDF formats). Additionally, some website platforms presenting fashion weeks included outdated or inaccurate contact details and—as will be noted later on—in some places, websites were non-existent, making it impossible to interact with the shows or their organisers. Furthermore, a significantly smaller proportion of the group responded to provide the initial correspondences. Using only the number of respondents who did follow through in giving answers to represent the broader geographic regions of emerging markets will not offer as in-depth or accurately informed detail as is needed. Hence, where possible, secondary research sources have been used to present the details for the designated international emerging market regions, such as fashion week

websites and digital articles. There was no standardised procedure in the classification of fashion week organisations. Shows that showcase menswear, womenswear, childrenswear and other fashion apparel and clothing categories, such as bridal wear, were all taken into consideration. In addition to this, in cases where more than one fashion week show existed in an emerging market, the more prominent shows—based on the presence of a designated website, social media credentials (social media presence and the number of followers), the number of online articles based on the show and (where available) the involvement with regards to their respective organisations—were included.

The research instrument chosen by this chapter's author for the primary research element involves the quantitative research method, which comprised ten questions. Depending on the respondents' preferences, the questions were sent out and answered either in the form of a structured audio interview or as a self-completion questionnaire, completed via email (Bryman, 2012, Pg. 186). The research method tools' questions were formed to collate qualitative responses stemming from exclusively open-ended questions. The choice of only open-ended questions allowed each organisation or organiser to include greater detail that could be used to analyse respective fashion weeks and understand directly from the organisation or the critical components of their shows and their concerns and ideas for recommendations. The email questionnaires or audio interviews were disseminated to each contributing fashion week organisation or organiser via email in written form or sent as individual audio questions through WhatsApp—the mobile messaging application. The respondents could provide their responses through the respective medium. The benefits of using the audio interview for receiving responses provided an opportunity to reiterate or give clarity to respondents if required and vice versa in relatively quick response times (minutes as opposed to hours or days), and for the chapter author to ask for clarity from a response if needed. Further benefits included allowing the respondents to answer at their own pace (Bryman, 2012, Pg. 234), thus limiting the premise of providing a rushed response, which may give inaccurate responses. With the responses sent via email, respondents provided their answers in a matter of days, and their answers could be seen visually and used directly within the chapter content. In places where further clarity

or details were required, follow-up emails could be sent and responses received. However, the time frame for responses took more time than the audio WhatsApp-based interviews. Despite the benefits and positive aspects of involving audio interviews and email questionnaires, issues such as inaccuracies stemming from the responses could factor into interpreting the provided answers. This was considered, and steps to counteract such occurrences were duly considered and, where possible, implemented. Respondents could contact the researcher via email, and for audio interviews, clarity or rephrasing of questions could be requested and vice versa if the need for such actions arose.

Literature Review

With the existence of direct research based on the presence of fashion week celebrations in emerging markets, even though limited in number, readings based on smaller components of the overall topic were collected to develop a holistic view of the general subject matter, such as defining the term emerging markets, which can also be described as a developing country. Researching into the term “*developing country*” presented several meanings, including the definition found in the *Cambridge Dictionary*, which described it as “*a country with little industrial and economic activity and where people generally have low incomes*” (Cambridge Dictionary, 2020). An article published in *Forbes* provided a further indication of the term by presenting distinctive factors that differentiate emerging markets from developing and underdeveloped nations: “*Unlike emerging markets, developing and underdeveloped countries still need special attention from international aid agencies to prevent starvation, mass disease and political instability*” (Kvint, 2008). Thus, economic factors, such as being a recipient of support from international aid agencies, are key factors used in determining the state of a nation and whether it can be defined as an emerging market. During the initial research process, academic literature related to fashion weeks in developing nations was evident, albeit in limited proportions. Additionally, some scholarly articles were written in native languages, which made translation a bit difficult and in some cases an impossible task to complete.

Further research considered the opportunities for growth in fashion in emerging markets. According to an article in *Vogue*, the African continent's fashion industry is valued at more than \$31 billion (Owoh, 2020). In South Africa alone, fashion houses' total value of designer work equates to over \$52 million annually (Tischhauser, 2018). There are clear indications that fashion across developing nations shows significant economic value to the region. The chapter will further present the growth potential of fashion markets in selected emerging countries.

Overall, with limited detail of fashion weeks and fashion shows in emerging markets, this study will work to support the development of insight into the practices and progresses being made by fashion designers and labels based in emerging economies. Further research into the subject area can include analysing a more comprehensive range of fashion week shows in those countries included within this chapter, as well as with a broader range of emerging markets. The analysis should tackle the differing ways in which fashion week shows are represented and supported across different continents, the number of shows within each designated region and the actions that can be taken to support further development of fashion week shows in emerging markets.

History and Development of Fashion Weeks Shows

As described by Everett and Swanson, “*A fashion show is “an event where the latest fashion, fabric, and colour trends in apparel and accessories are presented, using live models, to an audience”* (Everett & Swanson, 2013, p. 5). The events known today as “fashion week” stem back to Paris in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (Jana, 2020). Charles Worth and Paul Poiret, renowned designers of the time, envisioned grand occasions where their opulent designs could be seen in motion on physical beings. By this latter time frame, the added elements of staging and music were introduced (Cohen, 2014), reminiscent of modern-day runway shows. A shift in a pattern followed in the 1920s and 1930s sets the framework for fashion runway shows for a significant period of time.

Rather than having a party atmosphere, shows became more exclusive and tailored towards a specific clientele and were held behind closed doors or only seen by selected invitees, ranging initially from people who were part of the high fashion and celebrity circles but later extending to fashion buyers and media personnel.

Fashion week events were then transferred to New York due to the effects of World War II in order to provide fashion buyers with an alternative source of insight and access to the latest fashion trends, and travel to different locations—such as Paris—was understandably severely impacted. Following the end of World War II, more definitive factors were introduced in order to determine what events could be classed as fashion week shows. The *Chambre Syndicale de la Haute Couture* specified that a minimum of 35 day and night pieces were needed to present a fashion week show (Jana, 2020).

Milan Fashion Week was introduced in 1975, followed by London Fashion Week in 1984, (Jana, 2020). However, some reports indicate that events synonymous with a fashion week celebration were present in London from 1900 by the British fashion designer, Lady Duff Gordon (Abrams, 2011; National Portrait Gallery, n.d.). From this time through to the present day, an expansion of fashion week regions around the globe has been evident in both developed and developing nations. Additionally, in the case of many nations, more than one fashion week showcase exists, such as collections that cater specifically to haute couture as opposed to prêt-à-porter or ready-to-wear, children's wear, swimwear and bridal wear. Fashion week shows tend to present collections for the forthcoming seasons of Spring/Summer in September of the previous year and Autumn/Winter seasons in February of the same year. However, several factors can determine the choices for when, or even if, such shows take place: geographic region, financial implications and the buying seasons of key clientele. Additional collections have been introduced to intersect the initial fashion week showcases since the mid-2000s. Collections under the titles of *Resort*, *Cruise*, *Holiday* or *Pre-Spring* collections, before the Spring/Summer shows, and also *Pre-Fall* collections, which feature in the key selling points between the Spring collections (when reductions in retail prices are yet to take place) and the Fall collection, are yet to reach the stores—the aim is to increase and maintain customer interest with the

increased speed of fashion shows. Fashion week shows have also become more than just a presentation of clothing, as previously alluded. With the inclusion of creative elements such as dance and music performances, as well as intricate set designs and locations, the spaces themselves have become a spectacle where the ambiance and audiences are evermore eclectic in comparison to the initial days of fashion week runway shows. The adaptation to fashion weeks involves the diversification of audience members that the shows are presented to. Once exclusively the space for fashion buyers and members of high society, fashion week shows began to open their doors and audiences were extended to include public figures in the areas of film, media and music. Now audiences have extended even more broadly due to the development of digital platforms to include not only social media influencers but also members of the public who can gain access to shows via social media platforms on the Internet, smart devices, laptops or even in retail spaces, where runway shows are streamed in real time. As described by Andersson and Jandér (2016, p. 2), “[T]he fashion industry is experiencing a change as a result of the explosion of social media”—a practice well documented by designers based in both developed and emerging economies.

Fashion Weeks and Customer Experiences in Emerging Markets

Components of research conducted on fashion week shows have been presented in the tables. The details stem from answers provided by fashion week organisations or organisers. As of April 2021, the chapter author received responses from ten international fashion week organisations or organisers situated in emerging markets. As stated earlier, only a selection of emerging economies provided responses, so the details will be evidence of the presence of fashion week shows in the responding countries (Tables 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 3.5, 3.6, 3.7, 3.8, 3.9, 3.10, and 3.11).

Although responses could not be reached, details related to further fashion week organisations within emerging markets have been

Table 3.1 Algeria

Name of the show	L'Alger Fashion Week
Location	Algeria, Africa
Organiser/founder	Nawal Nedjari
Founded	2011
Website	Yes
Social media presence	Yes
Most recent show	October 2019
Number of shows each year	One

Source: Nedjari (2020)

Table 3.2 Dubai

Name of the show	International Fashion Week Dubai
Organiser/founder	Cheryle Dias
Location(s)	Dubai, UAE/Milan/Paris/New York
Founded	2015
Website	Yes
Social media presence	Yes
Most recent show	March 2021
Number of shows each year	Once

Source: Dias (2020)

Table 3.3 Ethiopia

Name of the show	Hub of Africa Fashion Week
Organiser/founder	Mahlet Teklemariam
Location	Ethiopia, Africa
Founded	2010
Website	Yes
Social media presence	Yes
Most recent show	October 2019
Number of shows each year	One

Source: Teklemariam (2020)

Table 3.4 Rwanda

Name of the show	Kigali Fashion Week
Organiser/founder	John Bunyeshulli
Location	Rwanda, Africa
Founded	2011
Website	Yes
Social media presence	Yes
Most recent show	January 2020
Number of shows each year	Once

Source: Bunyeshulli (2020)

Table 3.5 South Africa

Name of the show	South Africa Fashion Week
Organiser/founder	Lucilla Booyzen
Location	South Africa
Founded	1997
Website	Yes
Social media presence	Yes
Most recent show	March/April 2021
Number of shows each year	Two

Source: Booyzen (2020)

Table 3.6 Colombo

Name of the show	Colombo Fashion Week
Organiser/founder	Ajai Vir Singh
Location	Colombo, Sri Lanka
Founded	2003
Website	Yes
Social media presence	Yes
Most recent show	September/October 2020
Number of shows each year	Twice

Source: Singh (2021)

Table 3.7 Georgia

Name of the show	Mercedes Benz Fashion Week Tbilisi
Organiser/founder	Sofia Tchkonია
Location	Tbilisi
Founded	2015
Website	Yes
Social media presence	Yes
Most recent show	November 2020
Number of shows each year	Two

Source: Tchkonია (2020)

Table 3.8 Russia

Name of the show	Mercedes Benz Fashion Week Russia
Organiser/founder	Alexander Shumsky
Location	Moscow, Russia
Founded	2000
Website	Yes
Social media presence	Yes
Most recent show	April 2021
Number of shows each year	Two

Source: Mercedes Benz Fashion Week Russia (2020)

Table 3.9 Ukraine

Name of the show	Ukrainian Fashion Week
Organiser/founder	Iryna Danyilevska and Volodymyr Nechyporuk
Location	Kyiv
Founded	1997
Website	Yes
Social media presence	Yes
Most recent show	February 2020
Number of shows each year	Two

Source: Danyilevska (2021)

Table 3.10 Belarus

Name of the show	Belarus Fashion Week
Organiser/founder	Yanina Goncharova
Location	Belarus
Founded	2010
Website	Yes
Social media presence	Yes
Most recent show	April 2021
Number of shows each year	Two

Source: Goncharova (2020)

Table 3.11 Fiji

Name of show	Fiji Fashion Week
Organiser/founder	Donna Whippy
Location	Suva, Fiji
Founded	2008
Website	Yes
Social media presence	Yes
Most recent show	May 2021
Number of shows each year	One

Source: Fiji Fashion Week (n.d.)

Table 3.12 Brazil

Name of the show	São Paulo Fashion Week
Organiser/founder	Paulo Borges
Location	São Paulo
Founded	1995
Website	Yes
Social media presence	Yes
Most recent show	November 2020
Number of shows each year	Two

Source: São Paulo Fashion Week (n.d.)

Table 3.13 India

Name of show	Lakme India Fashion Week
Organiser/founder	Fashion Design Council of India
Location	Lakme
Founded	2000
Website	Yes
Social media presence	Yes
Most recent show	March 2021
Number of shows each year	Once

Sources: Strand of Silk ([n.d.](#)), FDCI X LFW ([n.d.](#))

Table 3.14 China

Name of the show	Shanghai Fashion Week
Organiser/founder	
Location	Shanghai
Founded	2003
Website	Yes
Social media presence	Yes
Most recent show	April 2021
Number of shows each year	Twice

Source: Shanghai Fashion Week ([n.d.](#))

Table 3.15 Nigeria

Name of the show(s)	Lagos Fashion Week
Organiser/founder	Omoyemi Akerele
Location	Lagos, Nigeria
Founded	2011
Website	Yes
Social media presence	Yes
Most recent show	August 2020
Number of shows each year	Two

Source: Lagos Fashion Week ([n.d.](#))

considered to be of significant economic interest within the remaining BRICS nations (i.e., all apart from Russia and South Africa, which include selected economies such as Brazil, India, China and Nigeria) (Tables [3.12](#), [3.13](#), [3.14](#), and [3.15](#)).

Consumer Experiences

In addition to the fashion week shows and productions, the experiences of customers are paramount in promoting the work of fashion labels and highlighting the presence of creative work within domestic economies. *South Africa Fashion Week* involves additional activities specifically purposed to promote designers. These activities include the introduction of exhibitions and pop-up shows as part of their fashion week events, which began in 2001 and 2010, respectively. Further elements to promote fashion across the country include a buyers' lounge since the summer of 2010 and trade events since 2016 (Tischhauser, 2018).

Customer experiences in relation to *Mercedes Benz Fashion Week Russia* have involved adding musical concerts and open lectures to their shows in order to make the guests' experience more vivid and interactive. There is also support for socially oriented projects and developments that aim to encourage sustainable practices among consumer audiences (Kaur et al., 2022). The creative project *Fashion Generation* was launched in 2017 for children between the ages of 11 and 18 years, with the aim of nurturing future talent (Mercedes Benz Fashion Week Russia, 2020).

In Georgia, a collaboration between *Mercedes Benz Fashion Week Tbilisi* and *The Art & Culture Center Factory* has led to the establishment of the Georgian Fashion Foundation. Situated in the Georgian capital Tbilisi, a designated industrial space is made available to local designers, photographers and artists where they are able to showcase their work. The space also incorporates an educational centre, giving opportunities to younger creatives (Tchkonina, 2020). As part of the month-long *Shanghai Fashion Week* launched in April 2021, events for customers included talks related to sustainability, a Shanghai Fashion and Lifestyle Carnival, a GQ Connects event, a fashion school's graduate showcase and an art exhibition called "*Her Shining Power*" promoting the work of mothers (Shanghai Fashion Week Activities, n.d.).

Analysis of Research and Findings

Based on the evidence collected through the primary and secondary research tools, the growing presence and potential of fashion week shows is evident in the emerging markets. Distinctive factors such as culture—a means of inspiring design—inspired the creation of distinctive designs and fashion week productions. Traditional craft and techniques form a significant basis for designing runway collections as described by *L'Alger's Fashion Week* founder, Nedjari. She pertained to 20 signature styles attributed to Algerian cultural dress, with one such item being the *karako* (Nedjari, 2020). Additionally, the use of natural and national locations within home countries provided unique surroundings that have been used by designers, such as the Spring/Summer 2021 Ishuri collection, created by the Rwandan fashion house, Moshion. The runway show was set in the great plains of Rwanda, where both the styles on show and the external stage highlighted cultures and visuals of the country (Moshion, 2020).

The establishment of fashion week shows has also been a factor to consider. The oldest of international fashion week shows include the four main capitals around the world: New York starting in 1943, Paris in 1973 and its other European counterparts in the early 1970s through to the late 1980s, Milan in 1975 and London in 1984. For many emerging markets, their fashion week shows came into existence in the early to mid-twenty-first century or at the earliest the very late twentieth century (i.e., South Africa and Ukraine, both of which launched their respective Fashion Weeks in 1997).

Economic factors also appear to be higher in value for the developed nations; however, their rates of growth are lower in comparison with those in the emerging markets (Soetan et al., 2021). According to the findings on Statista, the apparel and footwear market in the UK has grown steadily over the last seven years, with the market value expected to reach £62.2 billion by 2021 (Shahbandeh, 2021). The apparel market in the USA is expected to grow to \$102.5 billion in 2021 (Statista, n.d.-a). France is expected to experience a growth of £14,478 million (Statista, n.d.-b). While in Italy, revenue in the fashion segment is projected to

reach over £5 billion in 2021, along with a growth of 12.2% (Statista, [n.d.-c](#)).

A further range of emerging markets was selected and analysed in order to present the predicted values of their respective fashion markets including China (£256.7bn) (Statista, [n.d.-d](#)) and India (£12.4bn) (Statista, [n.d.-e](#)) in Asia; Turkey (£4.8bn) (Statista, [n.d.-f](#)) and Russia (£5.2bn) (Statista, [n.d.-g](#)) in Europe; and South Africa (£1.1bn) (Statista, [n.d.-h](#)) and Nigeria (£1.7bn) (Statista, [n.d.-i](#)) in Africa. The nations have been determined in accordance with economic findings from Bloomberg (Jamrisko & Flint, [2020](#)); PwC Global ([n.d.](#)) and IG (Cattlin, [2019](#)) are showing signs of economic growth for the foreseeable future. With such growth it can be believed that there are opportunities and interests for fashion consumption. However, what is harder to determine is whether this growth will stem from domestic fashion designers or from Western and more established brands that can be imported to emerging markets. Additionally, according to data from Statista, growth value of the fashion markets is greatest in Asian economies.

Growth in international markets is still expected despite the global consequences of COVID-19 and its related occurrences, such as lockdowns, lesser purchasing activities, decreased manufacturing levels, delayed imports and job losses (Adeyanju et al., [2022](#)). Speaking on the impact of COVID-19 and the bounceback, Daoud ([2020](#)) stated that the nations which implemented more effective procedures to manage and ultimately minimise the spread of the pandemic and its effects, along with stimulating consistent economic activities, would be better prepared for forthcoming development in the post-COVID-19 era (Mogaji et al., [2022](#)).

It has been evident that COVID-19 has had significant impacts on the presence of fashion week shows on an international scale with postponements and closures affecting shows as well as bricks and mortar retail stores (Business of Fashion, [2020](#)). Of the fashion week organisations and organisers who responded, all stated that they had had to postpone or cancel shows that were scheduled for parts of the 2020 runway seasons when global lockdowns were in place due to the pandemic. In hindsight, in developed nations, fashion weeks were amongst the high-profile events

that were initially held behind closed doors and then eventually cancelled and moved to digital platforms (Business of Fashion, 2020).

Theoretical Considerations

Two-Step Model of Communication and Interaction Model of Communication

When considering the theoretical implementations of Oonk (2015), the benefits in the progression of fashion shows moving from the physical space into the digital realm are expressed. Such a move shows an implementation of transforming the passive brand–client relationship into an interactive, two-way communication. Such considerations are supported by the two-step model of communication (Baines et al., 2017, pg. 224).

Both fashion week shows and customer experiences presented by designer labels can be presented via mass media platforms (such as magazines and other media publications, television and digital media such as websites and social media platforms). The model illustrates the movement of information between media and target groups or audiences. One such group is described as *Opinion Leaders*, which, according to the model, represents people such as bloggers and influencers or those who can be classed as being within the target audiences that interact with the media. Promotion methods for several fashion week productions involve presentations and social media interactions by social media influencers, both of which work together to enhance the awareness of and interest in the collections and the brands themselves (Mogaji, 2021; Gökerik et al., 2018).

As referred to by Oonk (2015), a significant benefit of presenting fashion shows through video- or film-based platforms, such as social media or the Internet, is that audiences are more likely to share content on their social media channels when they can be part of a big experience. Having the chance to connect with digital content, through viewing, liking, commenting and sharing, audiences have the chance to experience the shows. As expressed by the Interaction Model of Communication, interactions

between target groups or customers are interlinked by communications with multiple platforms and/or groups such as peer groups, bloggers and influencers, opinion leaders/formers (e.g., specialist personnel, such as skilled sale associates, academics and/or journalists) and electronic sources, of which digital platforms including the Internet, websites and social media form a part of (Baines et al., 2017; Mogaji, 2021). Interactions from and between customers and audiences, and their personal communities on respective social media platforms, allow for greater levels of awareness of fashion brands' collections. The brands' customer and audience base can choose to interact with and promote their online content, through likes, shares and comments, which can be viewed and interacted with by their connections, thus growing the awareness of product ranges and fashion. Although not represented within the Interaction Model of Communication, a further benefit of utilising online platforms relates to gaining insight from data analytics, particularly from electronic sources such as websites and social media platforms. Fashion brands can gain insight into their customers' and viewers' demographics, such as location, gender, age and dwell time, and develop further content in light of the insight gained from audiences' preferences in order to generate more interest and interaction.

Conclusion and Recommendation

When considering the presence of fashion weeks across emerging markets, it was apparent that many have only been recently established. Many, for example, have only been established after the mid-2010s (e.g., Hub of Africa Addis Fashion Week, Mercedes Benz Fashion Week Tbilisi and International Fashion Week Dubai), making them roughly five years old at the time of publication of this chapter. Based on the responses from the fashion week organisations and organisers, the following points can act as recommendations, which aim to support the growing presence of fashion weeks and their respective designers within emerging markets.

Political Stability and Support

A significant factor for any prevalent and consistent presence of economic sustainment in any country, the fashion industry inclusive, is political stability. Nations that have a greater presence of democratic political structures are able to showcase and also promote more consistent fashion shows. Although not solely assigned to emerging markets, the presence of political and social unrest in emerging markets has become dominant in recent times. In the autumn months of 2020, citizen unrest and civil wars affected the African countries, such as Ethiopia, as well conflicts from the End SARS demonstrations in Nigeria and wars between Armenia and Azerbaijan.

In addition, receiving support from government departments such as Culture, Arts and Tourism Ministries can help to highlight domestic creative practices present in countries, a step that has been highlighted by Teklemariam in relation to the Hub of Africa Fashion Week (2020).

Organisations related to politics and international relations, such as the Africa Union, could be involved in the creation of a body specifically mandated to promote the fashion industry throughout the continent. The European Union established the European Fashion Council in 2007 to support fashion industries in member nations including Bulgaria, Ukraine, Estonia and Romania (Europa Regina, 2021b). Additionally, the Commonwealth Fashion Council, based in the UK, has international connections with fashion week organisers and with organisers in many emerging markets that are situated across Europe, the Americas and the Caribbean, Africa, Asia and the Pacific (Commonwealth Fashion Council, 2021).

Supporting Domestic Manufacture

According to Yanina Goncharova, founder of Belarus Fashion Week, “*there are more than 2,000 manufacturers of clothing, footwear and accessories in Belarus*” (Goncharova, 2020). Providing means for manufacturing fashion items within domestic economies can eventually lead to a sustained creation of a wider range of fashion items within the nation. This relates to both machine-based products and handcraft items. Raw

material goods manufactured in emerging markets, such as leathers made in Nigeria and used by Western fashion labels such as Louis Vuitton, give light to the quality and success of this process, exporting manufactured goods for fashion (Adeniji, 2021; Mukonza et al., 2021). Thus, creating a greater proportion of items within emerging markets will help to create awareness and also revenue, which can help the home economies and in turn be used to support further investment and growth in fashion manufacture.

Supporting Fashion Education

Besides supporting the production of fashion goods such as raw materials and finished products, providing services and facilities for education and training in the area of fashion will be a beneficial step for growing the presence of fashion weeks, as such practices are already present through customer experiences in places such as Georgia and Russia. Additionally, the related creative practices involved in organising fashion week productions such as set design and construction, make-up and hair design, modelling and filming can also be encouraged in developing economies. Professional and academic subjects and careers are much more celebrated in comparison to creative practices. However, the presence of fashion qualifications in Africa is an area in need of development (Satiya, 2017; Gbadegeshin et al., 2021) together with the creative industries having a positive reputation within the emerging markets.

Partnerships and Sponsorships

Developing opportunities for partnerships and support can be seen as an outstanding prerequisite. GT Bank Fashion Weekend is a Lagos-based event sponsored by the financial organisation that works to highlight the presence of fashion in Nigeria. The event involves promoting local labels as well as providing a platform for guest designers and masterclasses. The focus is not predominantly directed towards generating sales and

financial incentives but rather to promote the work of local designers as well as the overall fashion industry in Nigeria.

National Design Councils and Organisations

Design councils can be established by collective of emerging markets to support the existence and awareness of fashion week events. Examples include the Rwanda Cultural Fashion Show and the Russian Fashion Council. Additionally, international councils such as the Commonwealth Fashion Council, a London-based organisation supporting a wide range of fashion organisations, is an establishment that has worked to support some of those presented in this chapter. Founded in 2011, the organisation focuses on promoting and developing the fashion industries present within the Commonwealth, including Nigeria, Mozambique, Sri Lanka, Fiji and Malaysia. Furthermore, in Egypt, there are plans to introduce an Egyptian Council for Design and Fashion (Nile FM, 2018).

Implementing Technologies and Stronger Digital Presence

Technology has many uses, some of which support the presence of fashion houses which choose to use it as a marketing tool. One issue found through researching and working to initiate contact with fashion weeks in emerging markets is that many of these events from a broad range of regions did not have dedicated websites that showcase their work or present their collections. This in turn has made it difficult for fashion brands to present themselves to wider audiences around the world, let alone be found in the first place. Although, in some cases, social media channels (predominantly Facebook and Instagram) have acted as quasi-websites or supportive digital platforms for fashion weeks and been used as a medium to present content for many of the fashion week events mentioned in this chapter.

The ongoing consequences of COVID-19—transferring customer interactions to online platforms—show the necessity of having online

presence not only as a platform for showcasing fashion weeks but also as a conduit through which buyers can become aware of brands and make informed choices before purchasing. Additionally, a broader range of potential customers from around the world can be made aware of designers and also be able to purchase items should they choose to.

In Russia, TikTok has been used as an international hybrid fashion project, where designers presented their new digital and real collections, demonstrated by both virtual and human models. In its totality, the show included fifty designers from twenty countries, eight virtual shows with thirty-eight collections, eight digital artists and six digital models who joined the Global Talents Digital—the off-season online project by the Russian Fashion Council, which was powered by Mercedes-Benz Fashion Week Russia (Mercedes-Benz Fashion Week Russia, 2020).

Augmented reality (AR) became a part of the live stream. Using smartphones, viewers are able to move fashion looks to private bedrooms, for example. A digital artistic team in collaboration with graphic designers has made some digital versions of participating designers' collections, which were also available in AR.

As described by Lange (2012), fashion labels are able to benefit by involving online-based platforms for presenting runway collections. Fashion labels are able to benefit from free distribution due to the moving image on the Internet and also lower production costs attributed with presenting filmed content online through social media channels such as Facebook, Instagram and YouTube.

Collaborative Events

The combination of creative practices has been both considered and exemplified by existing fashion week events. The Hub of Africa Addis Fashion week was initially set to showcase both music and fashion talent before focusing on the latter alone. The Sarajevo Fashion Film Festival celebrates the creativity of both respective practices within the country. Established in 2015, it set out to provide recognition and awards on an international scale for films, documentaries, adverts and even music videos that represent the fashion industry; the nominations and categories

include Best Film, Best Director, Best Cinematography and Best Creative Concept, all of which cater to fashion-related productions (Sarajevo Fashion Film Festival, [2020](#)).

Cultural Events

Several economies in emerging nations commemorate cultural events, such as carnivals and annual celebrations that take place in South America and across the Caribbean islands in Central America, and the Holi Festival in Asia which can allow for cultural activities and also customer experiences to be incorporated into the Fashion Week shows. Similar to how some fashion week organisers have linked their fashion shows to create counterparts, linking the events to cultural occasions, such as the Sarajevo Film Festival (Sarajevo Fashion Film Festival, [2020](#)), they can also support the presence and awareness of fashion weeks to a wider audience.

Consistency of Shows

Inconsistencies with some fashion week shows are evident, with some not being present since 2011 or 2014, such as Egypt Fashion Week, which presented its last show in 2015 (Cairo Fashion Week). Where possible, maintaining consistent fashion week shows can help create greater awareness and a productive representation. With the increasing usage of digital platforms as a means of presenting work, fashion week organisations can make use of these platforms to present their fashion weeks as listed in the early parts of the chapter.

Promoting Domestic Fashion

With the value of growth expected in respective fashion industries, there is no indication of whether this growth will stem from domestic designers or imported fashion brands from developed economies. Providing greater awareness of the fashion brands that exist within home nations can

support the growth and interest within both the home countries and external markets on an international scale. Platforms such as Style Base Africa present a range of fashion labels and fashion weeks that are based within the continent, from Accra Fashion Week through to Zimbabwe Fashion Week. Although some of the shows highlighted can date back to 2014, visual details, such as individual runway looks, are presented along with details of each fashion house (Style Base Africa, [n.d.](#)). Although Shanghai has a larger counterpart for presenting the work of domestic designers in Shanghai Fashion Week, there exists an organisation which completes complementary activities. Labelhood, founded in 2009, works to support grassroots designers in China and provides a platform for showcasing their collections (Lau, [2018](#); Business of Fashion, [n.d.](#)).

In summary, the details presented in this chapter show the existing presence and strengths, the potential for growth and the accessibility of fashion week organisations and organisers. The growth potential, much like the overall countries represented, demonstrates that where economic growth is larger, the opportunities for increases in fashion markets are also high (Brooksworth et al., [2022a](#), [2022b](#)).

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