

Fair trade practices in the U.S. textile and apparel brands: an exploratory case study

Nimet Degirmencioglu, North Carolina State University

The purpose of this research is to explore the path of adoption of fair trade practices among a select group of textile and apparel U.S. brands that have recently initiated these practices in their brand strategies. The primary motivation for this research is to understand the challenges that U.S. apparel and textile brands confront when engage fair trade practices. The development of apparel industry has been significantly slower and fair trade apparel holds a smaller market share than other fair trade product categories such as agriculture. The slow adoption of the fair trade practices in the apparel industry maybe due to the complexities of establishing reliable suppliers and the standards of apparel production (Doherty et. Al.,2013).

This research will be composed of two case studies of a U.S. textile brand and a U.S. apparel brand who have recently initiated fair trade practices. The case studies will be based on in-depth interviews conducted with key decision makers and their teams at the companies and their consumers, with secondary data analysis from publicly available information on each of the companies. The data will be used to explore the history, the key participants, influences and company perspectives of these initiatives, the challenges and motivations in adopting fair trade practices. The findings of these case studies will contribute to the understanding of what the drivers and barriers are for the implementation the fair trade practices in the U.S. textile and apparel industry.

Doherty, B., Davies, I. A., & Tranchell, S. (2013). Where now for fair trade? *Business History*, 55(1-2), 161-189. doi:10.1080/00076791.2012.692083