

Student learning about social responsibility in the global textile and apparel industry: the use of video as an instructional tool

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Abstract:

The purpose of this study was to explore the effectiveness of a documentary video in enhancing student understanding of social responsibility (SR) concept in the context of the textile and apparel industry. A total of 61 college students majoring in apparel design and management participated in the study. The students provided open-ended written responses to a set of questions before, during, and after watching the video. The data were analysed using a content analysis. Word frequency analysis using NVivo software was used to corroborate the findings. The results showed that the video was effective in increasing students' understanding of SR. Further, after watching the video, students demonstrated the willingness to proactively address the SR issues from personal and collective perspectives. The results highlight the effectiveness of video as an instructional tool to help students understand the complex SR concept in the context of the global textile and apparel industry.

Keywords: social responsibility | video | student learning

Article:

With an increasing attention to justice and equity across the world, social responsibility (SR) issues in the textile and apparel industry receive greater scrutiny from businesses, consumers, and educators. SR can be defined as 'an incorporation of an orientation encompassing the environment and its people, a philosophy balancing ethics and morality with profit, and an emphasis on the business actions and strategies resulting in positive outcomes for people and the environment' (Dickson & Eckman, Citation2006, p. 178). Identifying effective instructional strategies to enhance student understanding of complex and multifaceted concepts such as SR is a continuous challenge for educators (Murzyn-Kupisz & Holuj, Citation2021).

To address this challenge, a digital video might be an effective educational tool that may increase student understanding of SR. Digital instructional tools became even more important during the coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic, which created significant barriers for

engaging students through online learning platforms (Crawford et al., Citation2020). In the past, Baytar and Ashdown (Citation2014) found that students viewing a short educational video clip resulted in a significant increase in knowledge about the apparel industry's environmental impact. However, the study focused on environmental issues only. Overall, no study examined the effectiveness of a video on student understanding of SR in the textile and apparel industry, including SR of businesses as well as consumers and focusing on a broad range of issues from human rights and working conditions to environmental pollution over the entire apparel product lifecycle.

Therefore, the purpose of this study was to explore the effectiveness of a documentary video in enhancing student understanding of social responsibility in the global textile and apparel industry from a broad perspective. The two research questions guided this study: (1) How does a documentary video impact students' knowledge of SR issues in the textile and apparel industry? and (2) How might students' attitudes toward SR be impacted as a result of watching the video?

To address the research questions, we selected a qualitative research method to allow students to express their understanding of the complex SR concept in their own words and not to impose on them predetermined concepts through close-ended, scale-based questions. As a digital video, we selected *The True Cost*, a documentary that is praised by critics as an eye-opening story scrutinising issues in the fashion industry (Gustafson, Citation2015). This particular video was chosen because it has a storytelling strategy which helps make complicated content more accessible and relatable by using dynamic visualisation and sounds (Pounsford, Citation2007). To explore student understanding of SR in the textile and apparel context, we collected their written responses to broad, open-ended questions before, during, and after watching the video. The responses were combined in a narrative and content analysed for common themes. Word frequency analysis using NVivo software was used to corroborate the findings of the qualitative analysis. Understanding how effective documentary videos in enhancing student knowledge about and changing their attitudes toward a complex ethical concept such as SR in the textile and apparel context might be important not only for preparing future industry professionals but also for promoting responsible apparel consumption to the public.

Literature review

Social responsibility in the textile and apparel industry

In general, social responsibility (SR) is a means of achieving sustainability. The term corporate social responsibility (CSR) is used to describe SR practices of a business. Specifically, within the textile and apparel industry, CSR is the obligation of an entity (e.g. business) to 'act for the benefit of society at large' (p. 79, emphasis in the original), including fair treatment of people, resources, and the law. More than any other industry, the textile and apparel sector has been linked to SR issues such as human rights violations (e.g. Rana Plaza collapse in 2013 with a death toll of 1134 and over 2500 casualties) because of the labour-intensive manufacturing processes and the complex and highly fragmented nature of the global supply chain (Pedersen & Gwozdz, Citation2014). With respect to the environmental aspect of SR, the apparel industry's continuously increasing production and consumption rates resulted in an alarming impact on the world's ecosystems through agricultural and manufacturing pollution and a huge amount of waste (Karpova, Kunz, & Garner, Citation2021). Examples of CSR practices in the apparel industry include using renewable and safe materials (Chen & Burns, Citation2006), employing low-impact

manufacturing processes (Poole, Church, & Huson, Citation2009), reducing waste through reuse and recycling (Fletcher, Citation2008; Poole et al., Citation2009), and ensuring worker's rights and safety (Dargusch & Ward, Citation2010; Pedersen & Gwozdz, Citation2014). Although apparel companies develop SR principles and codes of conduct to guide business decisions and practices, the complexity of the global apparel supply chain presents a tremendous challenge in implementing these, as it typically involves language differences, varying cultural norms and ethical and regulatory standards, resource and infrastructure limitations, and other factors (Karpova et al., Citation2021).

In recent years, another facet of SR, consumer social responsibility, has been emphasised as the apparel industry needs informed and committed consumers who reward responsible businesses when exercising their purchasing power (Caruana & Chatzidakis, Citation2014; Dickson & Eckman, Citation2006). Responsible consumption behaviour is the consideration of purchase decisions based on the interests of society and the environment along with personal interests (Jobber, Citation2006, p. 217). Ethical consumer decision-making is driven by a sense of moral obligation related to society as a whole (Shaw, Hogg, Wilson, Shiu, & Hassan, Citation2006), including future generations. Without consumer buy-in and support for socially responsible businesses, the undertakings of CSR will not be sustainable and dissolve like some other movements (Dickson & Eckman, Citation2006).

It is critical for consumers and businesses alike to recognise the social and environmental impact of clothing production and consumption and then take proactive actions to minimise the negative effects at each stage of the entire apparel lifecycle, from raw materials through consumer use and disposal. Thus, in this paper, we refer to SR in the textile and apparel context as the individual, organisational, or societal obligations to recognise various negative impacts of the apparel market and to take proactive actions to ensure the welfare of all people, communities, and ecosystems at each stage of the apparel lifecycle.

Learning about SR in the textile and apparel curriculum

Learning is imperative in developing SR knowledge and related attitudes (Arbuthnott, Citation2009), thus higher education is expected to holistically integrate SR in the curriculum and to actively promote student understanding of this concept (Arbuthnott, Citation2009; Armstrong & LeHew, Citation2014). Pedagogical innovations related to SR learning across higher education have been advocated by the United Nations' Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) committee and the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (UNESCO, Citation2005). For the textile and apparel discipline, this educational effort is reflected in the International Textile and Apparel Association's meta goals focused on preparing competent and principled industry professionals: one of the seven meta goals is devoted solely to ethics, social responsibility, and sustainability (ITAA Four-Year ... , Citation2008). Yet, the efforts have not been sufficient, and scholars continue to advocate for a greater inclusion of SR in the textile and apparel curriculum (Armstrong & LeHew, Citation2014; Dickson & Eckman, Citation2006; O'Rourke, Citation2014).

The textile and apparel curriculum related to SR concentrates on increasing students' knowledge of SR issues and encouraging sustainable consumer behaviour. Educators have developed various learning activities that extend beyond traditional instructional strategies (e.g. lectures or readings) to promote SR behavioural change (e.g. Connell & Kozar, Citation2012; Dissen & Crowell, Citation2020). Some examples include project-based learning to explore real-

world industry challenges, promoting SR issues and sustainable garment design (e.g. Cao, Carper, Cobb, Silverman, & Jelenewicz, Citation2017; Hwang, Liu, & Salusso, Citation2019), and using journal reflections to evoke group discussions about the readings to help students link the learning to activities outside of the classroom (e.g. Yurchisin, Chang, & Childs, Citation2015). Other SR teaching strategies documented in extant research are: promoting environmentalism through efficiency and the reuse of materials, use of innovative technologies, and increasing the durability and longevity of fashion goods via repair and multifunction (Chuma, Muza, & Chipambwa, Citation2019; Gam & Banning, Citation2020). However, there is still limited scholarship examining the methods and effectiveness of educating students about SR issues (Connell & Kozar, Citation2012) and assessing student-learning outcomes. SR learning in the curriculum is often segmented by specialisation, such as design, marketing, merchandising, or textile science. Ensuring students' holistic SR knowledge is an important foundation upon which students can build and apply specific knowledge as well as critical and creative thinking skills to propose solutions to various SR issues throughout the curriculum and beyond classroom.

Learning about social responsibility through video

Video-based learning is used as an educational content-delivery tool to assist in classroom teaching because it combines images and sound to create an engaging and influential medium for the explanation of multifaceted concepts through multiple senses (Brame, Citation2016; Vural, Citation2013). One powerful form of video is documentary video, which is a type of digital storytelling based on real-life facts. Digital storytelling incorporates imagery, narrative stories, and data to present complex content in an approachable way (Dreon, Kerper, & Landis, Citation2011; Lambert, Citation2013; Robin, Citation2006). This strategy helps make abstract content more accessible and relatable by using dynamic visualisations and sounds and by facilitating discussions about the topics in the story to engage a large group of students (Pounsford, Citation2007). There is a wealth of anecdotal evidence supporting the effectiveness of documentary video as an instructional tool but very limited research-based evidence supporting this belief. Kay (Citation2012) showed that students had positive attitudes toward videos and perceived the instructional method to be useful, enjoyable, and motivating when learning about new content. Scholars have found that assignments that include watching videos enhance students' learning as it relates to SR issues in the apparel industry. For instance, Baytar and Ashdown (Citation2014) reported that a short video with a storytelling strategy increased student knowledge of the textile and clothing industry's environmental impact and promoted sustainable purchase behaviour.

One example of a documentary video about SR in the context of the textile and apparel industry is *The True Cost* by Ross and Morgan (Citation2015). The video employs a storytelling strategy – the film starts by stating, 'This is a story about clothing'. The video then introduces the viewers to the lives of the many people and places behind our clothes and focuses on the social and environmental impacts of the industry, with experts' interviews from multiple countries and diverse expertise areas. Based on extant research, our study explored if a video with storytelling strategies, accompanied by students reflecting on its content, can provide a broader context and visual illustrations to help develop a deeper understanding of the complex concept of SR.

Method

Sample and data collection

To address the research questions, a qualitative research method was used to allow participants to express and explain their understanding of the SR concept in their own words (Creswell, Citation2009). The research participants included upper-level undergraduate students enrolled in a Midwestern university apparel programme in the United States. Students enrolled in a required global sourcing course were recruited to participate in the study. The course was selected to show *The True Cost* documentary, which was praised by critics as an eye-opening story scrutinising issues in the fashion industry (Gustafson, Citation2015), because it was a good fit with the topic of social responsibility (SR) and sustainability covered in one of the course modules.

After receiving approval from the university's Institutional Review Board, we collected students' written responses that were administered as an in-class learning activity. The in-class learning activity included writing individual responses to a series of open-ended questions before, during, and after watching the video. The reason for choosing individual written responses as a method for data collection was to ensure student answers were not influenced by the opinion of their peers. Additionally, interpolated open-ended questions (answered while watching a video) can strengthen students' memory of and ability to apply the information (Brame & Biel, Citation2015).

Before watching the documentary, students were asked to write down a definition of SR in their own words and provide examples illustrating SR issues in the context of textile and apparel. Next, while watching the video, students were asked to list all SR issues presented and discussed in the video. Finally, immediately after watching the documentary, students were asked again to write down a definition of SR and provide examples to illustrate the definition with examples. A total of 61 students completed the three sets of the data collection – they responded in a written format to open-ended questions before, during, and after watching the documentary. The responses were combined and analysed to understand how participant knowledge about and attitudes toward SR issues were affected as a result of watching the documentary and reflecting on it.

Data analysis and procedure

As shown in Figure 1, the qualitative data were analysed as follows: (1) categories and themes were identified using the content analysis, specifically constant comparison method and (2) word frequency and tag clouds of participants' responses to define SR (before and after watching the video) were examined using NVivo to corroborate the findings of the content analysis. For the NVivo analysis, a stop list was created that excluded words such as conjunctions (e.g. and, but) and prepositions (e.g. to, at) when analysing the text. Constant comparative analysis (Corbin & Strauss, Citation2008) was conducted for the qualitative data – student written responses. To start the coding process and to establish trustworthiness, the four authors coded one-third of the data and established a preliminary coding guide through the constant comparison analysis. Based on the discussions and comparison of the four sets of codes, the final codes were developed by the authors. Using the guide, the authors then independently coded the entire qualitative data. The data was read line-by-line and emerging codes were classified and recorded based on the coding guide. Main themes and subthemes emerged from the coding process (Creswell, Citation2009). At the next stage, the authors discussed and interpreted all the codes and themes. If there were any

disagreements and differences, a discussion occurred until an agreement was reached. To increase trustworthiness, the results are reported using ‘thick description’ – participants’ quotes to illustrate the themes and sub-themes (Creswell, Citation2009). To maintain confidentiality, each participant response was assigned a number, e.g. P1 and P2, which are used to label student quotes included in the paper.

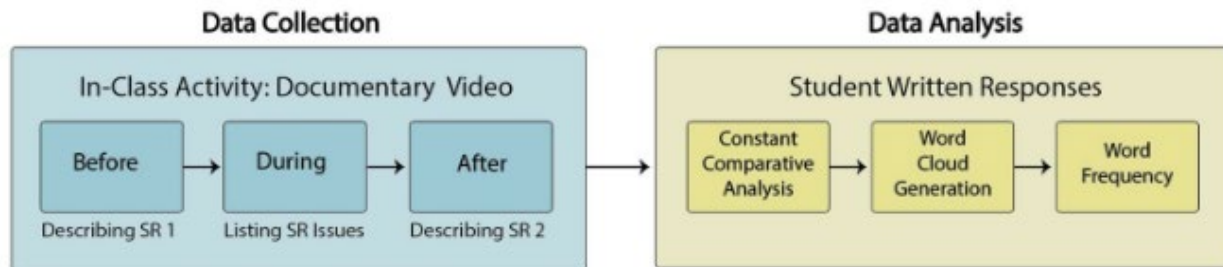


Figure 1. An overview of the data collection and analysis in the study.

Results

SR knowledge

Identifying SR issues

While watching the documentary, students identified a wide range of issues that they perceived as SR problems (Table 1). The major problems identified were classified into four categories: (1) disregard for people; (2) environmental impact; (3) cheap clothing prices for high profits; and (4) materialistic and disposable culture. Most of the students recognised SR issues related to the impact on both, people and environment. In addition, roughly a third of students recognised economic and cultural aspects contributing to SR issues, such as overconsumption and the role of industry advertising in driving consumerism. About 49% of all the listed issues were related to the disregard for people, followed by the environmental impact (24%), cheap clothing prices for high profits (18%), and materialistic and disposable culture (9%).

Table 1. SR Issues Perceived by Students in the Documentary.

Students' perceived SR Issues	Frequency	%
Disregard for people	245	49%
Environmental impact	116	24%
Cheap prices of clothing for high profits	90	18%
Materialistic and disposable culture	45	9%
Total number of SR issues identified by students	496	100%

Disregard for people. Most frequently, students mentioned SR issues related to the disregard for people within the apparel supply chain. They discussed the neglect of basic human rights and safety. Participants stated that ‘companies cut safety measures and manufacturers ignore safety orders’ (P4) and ‘a recurring problem in all the third world countries is the lack of safety in factories with no respect’ (P23). Other students have described the ‘ignoring the livelihood of workers’ (P60), which in extreme cases can result in the loss of human life and ‘cutting corners and ignoring health and safety measures causes disastrous consequences’ (P8). Examples of social injustice

discussed by students were inequality, human exploitation, sweatshops, a disregard for human health, and the cycle of losses for farmers, as Participant 5 and Participant 35 stated, respectively, ‘Bangladesh factory collapse Monsanto and health effects of the Punjab people in India’ and ‘farmers suicides are the highest they’ve ever been’. Another issue frequently mentioned was low wages, for instance,

Low wages and poor working condition for factory workers, (P13)

Unfair and extremely low wages in factories, (P26)

Low wages and children being forced to labor. (P40)

A student also described that Bangladeshi women are ‘among lowest paid garment workers in the world @ \$3 a day’ (P51)

Consumer indifference and a ‘lack of knowledge of where clothing comes from’ (P35) and the direct impact of one’s actions, locally and globally, were issues included under the disregard for people.

It’s a problem that people (US citizens) think there’s nothing wrong with the sweatshops. (P36)

It makes me feel beyond terrible after watching this documentary and seeing how truly careless Americans are when we buy things. (P61)

The students blamed consumer indifference in the disregard for people and emphasised the importance of being aware of the current issues in the industry, ‘Bangladesh factory collapse-safety is huge concern (more than 1,000 died). Be conscious of what is right and what is wrong in terms of producing clothing’ (P37).

Environmental impact. Next most frequently identified SR issue was the environmental impact, such as cotton farming; wide scale use of herbicides, pesticides, and fertilisers; pollution from chemical flow to water sources, soil, and agricultural products; and landfill waste: ‘cue at landfills and the rise of clothing pollution over the past 10 years’ (P5). Examples of a disregard for the environment included industrialisation; intensification of the land; nonnatural cycles, which are not in tune with nature; and reengineering of plants. In addition, students also listed unwanted secondhand clothing and charity clothing dumped in the third-world countries as negatively affecting the environment and local clothing industries.

Cheap clothing prices for high profits. Cheap clothing prices for high profits is the third theme of the student identified SR issues. This theme describes outsourcing and globalised production in low-wage countries, factories pressured for cheap prices to get orders to make fast fashion.

Outsourcing to low-cost countries where wages are low—race to the bottom. (P5)

Always looking to produce cheaper to sell cheaper. (P21)

Cheaply produced clothing that can be made overnight, called fast fashion. Constantly justifying costs because of the economic benefits. (P43)

Other examples include ruthless movement toward big business interests and profits, profit at all costs throughout the lifecycle management, and pushing the products on consumers. Students have noted it as ‘Cutting corners to produce clothing at cheap prices’ (P12), and ‘[companies] generating enormous profits but can’t even pay for its workers’ (P55). This results in fierce retail competition leading to lower and lower prices, brands pushing for cheaper production prices, and doing business using the fast-fashion model.

Materialistic and disposable culture. The last theme, materialistic and disposable culture describes materialistic values, the culture ‘consumerism’, ‘greed’, and disposable fashion.

Advertising shows that you need things to fill voids in your life. (P10)

The way advertising affects society and the way people think and feel about themselves. The notion that your problem will be saved if you consume. (P5)

Students have also listed that ‘the way we buy new clothes’ (P7) and ‘thinking of clothing as a disposable product’ (P35) are part of the SR issues. In terms of consumption, examples include consumer demand and an insatiable appetite for low-cost and fast-fashion apparel, unprecedented increase in consumption, and advertising as propaganda leading to such consumption.

Increased SR knowledge

Analysing students’ definitions of SR before and after watching the video showed that participants’ knowledge of SR issues increased as they were able to provide detailed and specific definitions supported by illustrative examples instead of presenting a vague description. Before watching the video, many students included ambiguous responses of ‘doing the right thing’, ‘doing things/business responsibly’, or ‘being good’. After watching the video, student responses became more specific and detailed. For instance, before watching the video, a student describes SR as ‘thinking beyond an immediate want or desire and thinking about the impact the garment you are about to buy has on the environment, the type of labor it took to create it, and the effect the garment has’ (P60). After watching the video, the student’s response has specific terms and examples supporting the previous comments on ‘the type of labor’ or the ‘impact ... on the environment’, stating,

Making educated purchases, making sure factory workers have a comfortable living wage. Unions rights, and time with their families, allowing the Earth to take care of the crops instead of pesticides, GMO seeds, chemicals, buying what we need, consuming far less, and investing in products that having a longer lifetime. (P60)

Another student (P11) initially described SR as ‘Being good to the environment. Being good to their workers. Company is fair to the world’, and later was able to provide specific examples stating, ‘Companies taking ethical responsibilities through all aspects of production including living wages of workers, safe working conditions for workers, fair hours for workers, safe textile and agricultural growth in farms, safe production for the plant, using replenish able resources’.

Student ability to provide specific examples of social and environmental impacts (e.g. union rights, GMO seeds, working conditions) when describing SR issues shows that the documentary video has enhanced students' SR knowledge.

Transforming student attitudes

The shift from 'Them' to 'Us'

The analysis of the before and after definitions of SR showed that students started attributing more responsibility to themselves and consumers in general as a result of watching the video. Before the exposure to the video, roughly half of the students related SR to companies and industries only, and about 11 (18%) students related SR to companies and industries and themselves or consumers in general. For instance, before watching the video, a student stated that 'A&T [apparel and textiles] companies need to be environmentally conscious and ethically aware of how products are created' (P2) and further emphasised that these companies need to be responsible for their actions. This attitude changed after watching the video, and the same student stated that 'people can become socially responsible, and it is all their choice'. Similarly, the second SR definition of a student (P23) was 'how we treat our world, the people in it and the environment', in comparison to their first definition, which only mentioned the industry. Below is another student's before and after definitions, showing the change in the SR perspective from 'them (companies)' to 'everybody' and 'us as consumers' and the issues related to it. Key words from the quotes are italicised to illustrate the point.

SR to me is the company caring about the rights and lives of the individuals making garments. This could be a company paying employees a living wage and making sure that employees are able to go to the restroom when they need to or at least getting a break. I also think that SR can mean how a company cares for the environment and trying to reduce waste for ALL people. (P52 before watching the video)

SR is a part of every single part of the fashion industry. From the employees and people working in the factories to the farmers working in the fields. Even the chemical companies play a part. Us as consumers are responsible for how much we buy and what we buy. We have the choice to change the companies we buy from and where the clothes come from. We also get to decide what we do with our clothing after we do not need or want them anymore. (P52 after watching the video)

As illustrated by the student quotes, SR was often described as a personal and/or collective responsibility after watching the video. It is also illustrated in one student's description,

SR to me is how we all need to know where our clothes are coming from ... It makes me feel beyond terrible after watching this documentary and seeing how truly careless Americans are when we buy things. I personally want to become more knowledgeable.. (P61)

Quotes such as ‘I as a consumer’ or ‘we as a society’ were often used after watching the video. Several students further emphasised their role as future industry professionals in addressing the SR issues. Therefore, watching the video helped students understand the important role of consumers, and society as a whole, in improving many SR issues associated with apparel production and consumption, instead of simply blaming the companies or ‘faceless’ industry.

‘Taking Action’: the use of active verbs

Analysing the two sets of SR definitions demonstrated that before watching the video students primarily used ‘passive’ verbs that involved thinking (e.g. aware, understand) but not taking actions. Watching the video resulted in a substantial change in the language, specifically, a far greater use of ‘active’ verbs that called for or demanded action (e.g. do, make, need). For instance, a student (P37) described SR before watching the video as a ‘to be conscious of the environment and acknowledging and practicing sustainability. I think SR is all about being aware and thoughtful about the environment and knowing how the T&A industry affects the environment’. After watching the video, the response changed to:

SR is the act of doing the right thing regardless of money. Whether the right thing is better working conditions and wages for garment workers or using different chemicals to produce cotton plants. We have the responsibility to help each other out and help our planet. We have one planet and one life, we need to do the right thing that benefits everyone, not just a portion of people. (P37)

These passive verbs of ‘be conscious’, ‘being aware’, and ‘knowing’ have changed to ‘doing the right thing’, ‘have responsibility’, ‘need to do’, and ‘help out’. Another example of student describing SR with active verbs after watching the documentary:

SR is taking action in the decisions and clothing you are buying. It is to stop needing and wanting things that are unnecessary and taking a minute to think about all the people and factors went behind that sweater that you have one already similar in your closet that is still wearable. It’s taking action and owning up to your choices you are making. We need to support companies who are working to push forward this industry and stop supporting the fast fashion companies. (P35)

The student initially used passive words such as ‘being aware and conscious’ (P35) but then adopted active verbs with specific actions such as ‘owning up to your choices’, ‘stop supporting’, and ‘need to support companies’.

The tag clouds generated by NVivo visually support the students’ changes in attitudes related to SR issues by comparing the word usage of students before and after watching the video (Figure 2). After watching the video, passive verbs, such as ‘think’ and ‘aware’, have been reduced, and active words like ‘making’, ‘taking’, ‘working’, and ‘change’ have noticeably increased. In addition, ‘company’ and ‘industry’ are at the centre of the ‘before’ cloud, whereas in the ‘after’ cloud, these are replaced by ‘workers’, ‘people’ and ‘world’.



Figure 2. Tag clouds using NVivo: SR definitions before and after watching the video.

Discussion and conclusions

A limited number of academic studies have examined textile and apparel students' understanding of SR and, specifically, how learning about this complex concept can be enhanced by completing an assignment that includes watching a video. Responding to the identified need to educate next generations of industry professionals about the multifaceted concept of SR (Policies and Procedures Handbook, Citation2020), this research examined the effectiveness of a single learning assignment using a documentary video, *The True Cost* (2015), in enhancing student knowledge of SR. Specifically, this study examined what issues students perceived as relevant to SR in the textile and apparel industry and explored their attitudes toward the concept.

The results showed that the documentary video was very effective in increasing student understanding of the complex SR concept in the context of textile and apparel industry, supporting previous studies that video-based learning is a helpful content-delivery tool to explain complex topics (Brame, Citation2016; Lambert, Citation2013). Our results support the finding of Baytar and Ashdown (Citation2014) that video is a useful instructional tool for improving student knowledge about SR. In our study, students identified all areas of SR in the apparel industry, thus it is important to invest in creating documentary films with storytelling strategies that showcase various stages of apparel lifecycle to educate not only students but also general public. Additionally, a visualisation of concepts and digital work are particularly important as we face the challenge of the COVID-19 pandemic. A majority of college instruction had to transition to online delivery, and using documentary as virtual in-class learning activities may be helpful to introduce the students to the critically important concept of SR, or other complex topics. As previous studies have suggested (Hwang, Lee, & Diddi, Citation2015; Kozar & Connell, Citation2010), students initially lacked in their ability to clearly and precisely define SR as their initial definitions were vague and mostly limited to corporate responsibility. This documentary video intervention deepened and broadened student understanding of SR and expanded their knowledge to include consumer social responsibility. Watching and reflecting on the documentary helped them define SR using specific and accurate terms instead of ambiguous descriptions like 'doing the right thing'.

This study demonstrates the effectiveness of a documentary video in not only increasing student understanding of complex concepts, such as SR, but also in shifting their attitudes toward this issue. Watching the video resulted in student greater willingness to proactively address the SR issue. This result indicates that understanding, or knowledge, shapes individual's beliefs and

attitudes, supporting the findings reported in previous research (Te'eni-Harari & Hornik, Citation2010). In our study, we showed how a gain in student knowledge led to a shift in their attitudes. After watching the documentary and reflecting on it, student use of words changed from primarily passive (e.g. aware, think, care) to active verbs (e.g. do, make, need, stop). Further, the use of pronouns changed indicating that students assumed greater personal responsibility: after watching the video they more frequently used words 'we' and 'I'. In contrast, before watching the documentary, students tended to blame 'others' (i.e. industry, companies) for the SR issues and used pronounce 'they'. This finding indicates that after watching the video students expressed willingness to take action and saw SR as a personal (e.g. 'I as consumer') and collective (e.g. 'we as a society') responsibility.

The results of this study demonstrate that documentary video is a powerful and effective instructional tool to increase student understanding of complex concepts, such as SR, and can even lead to a change in student attitudes from passive to proactive. It is important for textile and apparel students to build a foundational SR knowledge early in their college careers so they can effectively practice and apply their SR skills as they grow throughout the curriculum and apply their knowledge in the industry. The results may serve educators by encouraging them using documentary videos more broadly as an engaging and effective instructional tool. YouTube platform offers a wealth of documentaries on textile and apparel production and consumption, covering a variety of topics and perspectives. In the case when free resources are not available, the research results can be used as a justification to request funding for acquiring such resources. Digital documentaries similar to *The True Cost* should be created to keep up with the fast-changing environment of the apparel industry and to inform students and consumers of the holistic SR issues.

This study has certain limitations that suggest opportunities for future research. Generalisation of the research findings is limited because of the use of a convenience sample: apparel students from one programme. Future research may use a sample that is more heterogeneous in terms of institutional and geographic location as well as extend it beyond future textile and apparel industry professionals to the general population. This study can also be applied to an online course to compare the results and to verify the effectiveness of a documentary on student learning. Future research may also examine the significance of knowledge and attitude relationship using quantitative data. Different documentary videos can be used to see the effectiveness of the video, and future research may be conducted to identify the key factors of storytelling strategies (e.g. visuals, narratives, length of video) in contributing to the effectiveness of a documentary video as an educational tool. In the context of marketing to promote sustainable consumption, scholars may examine the effectiveness of short videos to educate the public and encourage conscious apparel acquisition, use, and disposal decisions.

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