



What's That? Communicating Veganism through Absurd Fashion

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ABSTRACT

This research explores the communication dynamics in absurd fashion, focusing on the sender-receiver model through Instagram captions and designs. Findings reveal that absurd fashion predominantly communicates through the sender-receiver model, where designers convey messages or critiques through their creations, and consumers interpret them accordingly. The axis of communication in absurd fashion revolves around issues such as, vegetables, and health, reflecting critiques, awareness campaigns, and shifts towards sustainability. Innovative material use, such as vegetables, fruits, and eco-friendly alternatives, displays the industry's commitment to sustainability and environmental awareness. Absurd fashion is a venue for societal analysis and action, in addition to being a means of self-expression. By embracing absurdity in fashion, designers and customers participate in a conversation that goes beyond aesthetics to address important societal and environmental issues. This research focuses light on fashion's transformational power as a communication medium, emphasizing the significance of understanding the ethical and social ramifications of design decisions in the modern fashion world.

Keywords: Absurdity, Fashion, Communication Model, Sender Receiver, Instagram Account

PENDAHULUAN

Fashion is one of the reasons why humans create a form of art representation poured by designers who produce ideas between fashion and art. In the early 20th century, historian James Laver has a definition of fashion as "the furniture of the mind made visible" (Lurie 1981:3). It can be understood that visible fashion is something attached to the body, such as clothing, jewellery, or other fashion modifications. The creativity of these designers produces quite diverse fashion modifications. This is where an interesting fashion emerges from the diversity of a fashion, namely a strange fashion model. The fashion assessment does not stop here; unfashionable and strange items are also included in the mention of fashion models. In general, absurd fashion is more familiar with the culture of Western countries that dare to display different fashion from other countries. Their works are poured into several social media, including the Instagram platform. The fashion images are captioned to convey certain messages. The following Instagram caption images might help us understand the absurdity of the fashion displayed :

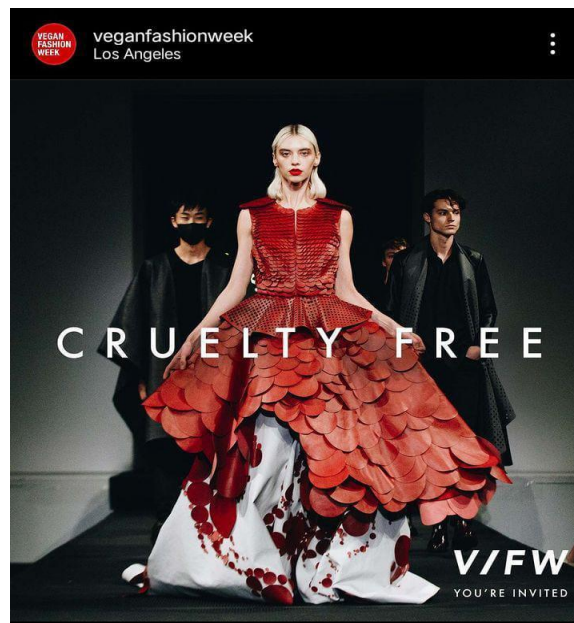


Figure 1. Instagram @veganfashionweek

In fashion, absurdity is a popular theme expressed by designers. Besides being visible in the fashion design details, absurdity can also be communicated through captions written on social media such as Instagram. A caption explains and conveys messages through pictures or videos of the fashion displayed. One event, Veganfashionweek, holds fashion week activities on its Instagram account, which displays many unique and creative fashion designs. The fashion shown in this event has a sender-and-receiver communication model. Designers have a message to convey a form of protest behind the fashion they have designed. An example is the fashion design by Matea Benedetti, seen on Vegan Fashion Week's Instagram post. It is a unique fashion that presents a magnificent dragon scale-shaped, blood-red dress made of apple skin. They took the Cruelty-Free design concept, which aims to oppose and protest the use of animal-derived materials. The communication model used by Vegan Fashion Week is usually found in every post caption on its Instagram account. An example of a caption from one of Veganfashionweek's Instagram account posts is as follows :

"Cruelty-free seems like the least we can pay for as a society. Taking a minute or so to check the cruelty-free status of a pair of shoes or a brand of scarf seems like no time at all to ensure that money does not fall into the hands of animal abusers. The vegan fashion market is expected to reach new highs that continue to rise each year, and the vegan leather market alone is expected to reach \$85 billion by 2025 (let's work towards making that market sustainable). Cruelty-free is fast becoming the most sought-after label on a shampoo bottle, and designers worldwide are pledging to go fur-free. We live in very exciting times where big changes are happening, but this also means that we as individuals and consumers hold power, and everyone knows that great power comes great responsibility."

From the caption, it can be analysed that the designers who joined the Vegan Fashion Week event were against exploiting animals used as materials in designing fashion. The idea of fashion as a sender and receiver of messages can be seen through the clothes displayed and also supported by captions that describe the intention of the clothes. In this outfit, the attraction for the audience was the detail of the scales that filled the top of the outfit, shaped like dragon scales but using natural materials. This is a message from the designer that other alternatives can still be used as raw materials for making clothes without exploiting animals.

In fashion, absurdity is a captivating phenomenon that often involves deliberately breaking conventional norms and expectations embracing unconventional and avant-garde ideas (Halay, 2016). Fashion is a prominent form of communication (Barnard, 2020), precisely non-verbal communication (Wiana, 2016), allowing individuals to express their style. Moreover, clothing is a semiotic symbol because it communicates much about an individual's personality (Sanni & Okocha, 2022). The semiotic significance was also highlighted in Sari's study (2015). Wenwen (2019) also disclosed that fashion and clothing can be used as meaning-making systems through semiotics.

The gap of this research is absurd fashion communication by including fashion using the sender or receiver communication model caption. This contrasts previous studies, most of which discuss fashion communication models in general and are well-studied using semiotics and message communication models. To prove that the absurd form of fashion communication uses the sender or receiver model, researchers collect data sources in the form of absurd fashion images taken from the Instagram platform where in each different fashion image, the designer as a sender shows a fashion model designed with the aim that individuals or groups can receive the message stored through the absurd form of fashion as the recipient object.

The theories we employed in this study are Charles Antaki's (2003) theory of the uses of absurdity. According to Charles, absurdity can have various uses in communication. Whether used to challenge norms, generate humour, critique society, or provide comfort, the intentional use of absurdity can significantly shape meaning and foster understanding. We also used the theory from Malcolm (Barnard, 2014). Barnard argues that fashion is not merely a means of self-expression but a form of communication in its own right. He emphasises that fashion encompasses more than clothing, accessories, hairstyles, and body modifications.

Fashion not only functions as a means to cover the outer body but also can become a form that represents the social values of a particular regional community, either individually or in groups. Based on (Saravanan & Nithyaprakash, 2015), fashion is not an ambitious projected reflection of a proper reinterpretation of old values to fulfill a function or agenda, but rather something evocative and refreshing concept that is worthy enough to be described as conveying the appreciation of society to make us balanced. The phenomenon of fashion is an interactive process through which individuals in societal groups consciously project their body shapes in different ways in each form of fashion (Barnard, 2013). As implied by (Susanti, 2016), every fashion must contain a certain message that the wearer wants to convey, which is considered true by many people. Therefore, with the clothes worn, it is expected to be able to assess the signs displayed through the clothes worn.

Fashion can be considered a language that individuals use to convey various messages, ranging from personal identity to worldview. Clothing choices can serve as a means of self-expression, allowing individuals to create a style that reflects who they are and how they want to be perceived by others. Apart from that, fashion acts as a platform for creative expression. Individuals can create vibrant and expressive works of art through colour, texture, and design. Cultural messages are often embedded in fashion, with clothing choices reflecting affiliation and appreciation for a particular cultural heritage. Messages in fashion can include changing perceptions of societal norms, breaking down traditional boundaries, and stimulating critical thinking (Barnard, 2017). As a fashion wearer, each individual can convey a personal message through the choice of style, colour, and accessories, proving that fashion is not only about physical appearance but also about how we communicate with the world around us. Fashion is not just a way to cover the body, but also a powerful communication tool. Every element in fashion, from clothing to accessories, can be thought of as words in a visual language that form a message that can be received by other people. According to (Barnard, 2020), modes of communication

in fashion are not just the clothes someone wears, but are also forms of expression and body language that can convey messages without words.

Fashion serves as a powerful mode of communication, conveying messages and expressing identity through various models. Models of communication, as conveyed by (Barnard, 2020), enclose the semiological model of communication and the sender or receiver model. These models provide different perspectives on how fashion communicates, emphasising various aspects such as symbolism and expressing personal and culturally influenced messages. The dynamics of fashion communication extend beyond the garments themselves. It involves complex interactions between designers, wearers, and societal influences, shaping a rich tapestry of messages woven into the fabric of personal and collective expression. In the communication model which aims to explore the dynamics of fashion above, (Halay, 2016).

The research findings show that through the data studied in an absurd fashion, the dominant form of communication delivery is the sender or receiver rather than semiotics and messages. This is because fashion models are mostly used as a form of opinion or support or rejection of an activity between one community and another. The findings of this research show that the issues of butchering, vegetables, and health are the axis of communication carried out in an absurd fashion. Butchering is conveyed by vegan activists to criticise meat lovers, while vegetables and health are used to raise awareness of the importance of consuming non-meat foods.

The researcher found that data concerning health are fashion categorised as absurd in the context of man-made materials. Within the health element, the researcher noticed a clear dominance. It is clear that fashion categorised as absurd often uses ordinary materials that are used within common norms. This shows that the main focus is on the expressive and communicative aspects, using fashion as a medium to convey sentiments rather than relying on traditional semiotic symbols or explicit messages. The conventional materials used in absurd fashion seem to play an important role in shaping its identity and strengthening its communicative function. It should be noted that although the dominance of health elements is highlighted, this does not negate the potential presence and importance of semiotic elements and messages in an absurd fashion. There are still nuances and meanings conveyed through explicit symbols or messages embedded in this conventional form of fashion. Therefore, even with the dominance of sender or receiver dynamics, other elements still contribute to the multifaceted communication within the unique world of absurd fashion.

METODE

This research uses a qualitative descriptive design. The research data consists of textual and visual elements, analyzed from the perspective of the fashion communication model and absurdity in the research source. The data was collected from a social media platform, namely Instagram. The table below provides a detailed explanation of how the fashion communication model research data was assessed in the fashion absurdity category. Furthermore, the use of visual communication design in the form of a sender-receiver model was used to analyze the shape, colour, and non-operational elements of the image model.

<p>Textual Data</p>		<p>This absurd fashion design conveys that fashion in the context of leopards can be made with materials that do not hurt animals. Such as foam, resin, wool, and silk faux fur with the most realistic sculpture possible for a smart alternative. This message aims to flick someone's greed using some parts of the leopard's body as a fashion interest.</p>
<p>Visual Data</p>		<p>This design is unique and absurd because it adds a white leopard head on the front, and also the design of the dress uses a detailed pattern like a real tiger skin, and of course this dress is dominated by cream colour. Usually this dress is worn when there is a fashion show or can also be worn when there is an animal-themed carnival event. meaning The use of the leopard head is intended to create a dramatic and provocative impression. the leopard head can also be interpreted as a symbol of strength and elegance.</p>

Figure 2. Instagram @schiaparelli

The table above shows absurd fashion images with captions that provide an explanation of the form of the communication model. Spradley's (2016) data analysis technique was used in this research. There are four stages of analysis, namely domain, taxonomy, componential, and finding cultural themes. The first is dominant analysis. According to (Barnard, 2020), modes of communication in fashion include not only wearable clothing but also the form and language of body expression to convey messages. Communication models, as stated by (Barnard, 2020), include semiological communication models, message, and sender or receiver models. After categorizing the semiotic, message, and sender receiver communication models, taxonomic analysis is an analysis collected after all the data has been collected and found the research answers. This analysis categorizes the sender or receiver model of fashion communication according to (Barnard, 2020) and (Halay, 2016) theories of absurd fashion. Next is the componential analysis. At this stage, researchers create a table that will make it easier to find the dominant data and researchers can find the relationship between absurd fashion and communication models so that they can also find cultural themes. The last phase is the culture theme.

The researcher found the cultural theme by looking at the componential table and summarised this absurd fashion into the sender or receiver communication model.

HASIL DAN PEMBAHASAN

Vegetables and Health

Vegetables

Research and exploration of materials such as vegetables and fruits not only discover their aesthetic value, but through creative designers, these natural materials can also become one of the breakthroughs in the world of eco-friendly fashion. The importance of using natural materials is not only to encourage environmental conservation, but also to give fashion a new face. The use of plant-based materials in the fashion industry not only creates an opportunity to change the usual way of consumption, but also allows designers to produce clothes that are not only environmentally friendly, but also respectful of nature's diversity. By incorporating the unique textures and colors of vegetables and fruits, they not only create style, but also raise awareness of environmental issues. These innovative measures turn fashion into more than just self-expression and a means to raise awareness of environmental challenges. Through the promotion of these sustainable trends, the fashion industry can be a positive force to change consumer behavior and inspire other sectors to adopt eco-friendly practices.

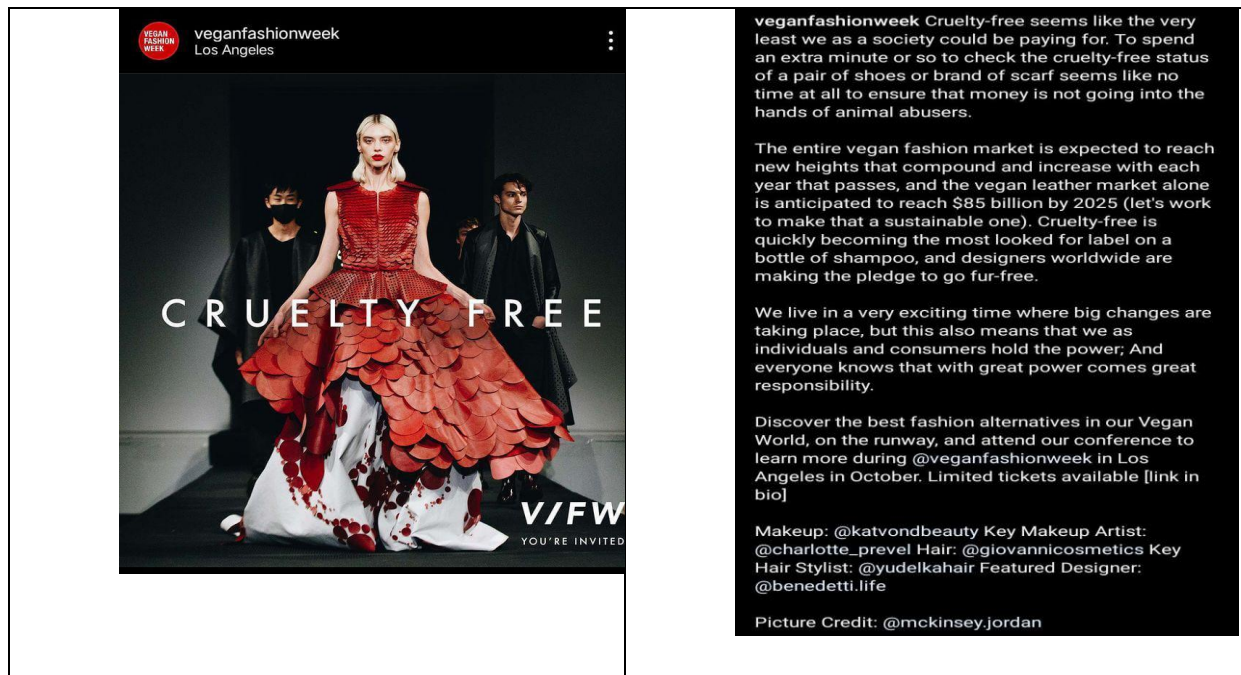


Figure 5. Instagram @veganfashionweek

One of the unique fashion innovations that has recently become a new breakthrough for designers is the design of imitating animal scales from apple skins. This design can give an aesthetically pleasing and unique look. It combines the elegance of nature with a modern touch. This can be a smart idea in utilizing apple skin waste. In addition to aesthetics and uniqueness, the apple skin fashion trend with animal scale designs also inspires changes in consumer attitudes. Environmentally conscious

consumers can create new fashion values according to their fashion sense, but also support environmental conservation efforts. This is an opportunity for fashion to be a pioneer in driving sustainable consumption trends and practices. Creating a positive impact is not only about style but also about connection with the environment.



Figure 6. Instagram @veganfashionweek

Another unique model innovation is the outfit above, which is a long, pure white blouse with splotches that depict blood. However, here, the designer used a more eco-friendly alternative and utilised natural materials like vegetable dyes. This speaks to the audience about issues surrounding animal exploitation, unfair animal trade, the environment, and animal rights. These can all be addressed with the use of natural materials as mentioned above, so that animals are preserved in their habitats.

Health

Healthy materials in fashion refer to materials that are not harmful to the health of the wearer or the environment. These materials are usually made from renewable natural resources, produced using sustainable methods, and do not contain harmful chemicals. In fashion, the choice of materials has a huge impact on the well-being of individuals and the environment. Among the materials that can be used as fashion alternatives are cotton, linen, wool, and hemp, which can have a good effect on the body, as the material is soft on the skin, does not cause allergies, and is also biodegradable. Meanwhile, recycled materials can have a positive impact and be environmentally friendly. Utilising textile waste that can be processed into new materials can certainly ease the use of natural resources. Next is using organic materials made from plants without pesticides and chemical fertilisers, which provide a safe space for health and the environment. Using the above materials can provide significant benefits by maintaining the body's health by avoiding harmful materials, protecting the environment by using materials that can be used sustainably, and supporting the fashion industry, which is also sustainably oriented. As a consumer, choosing healthy materials can be a positive step in creating a positive impact on health and a sustainable environment.

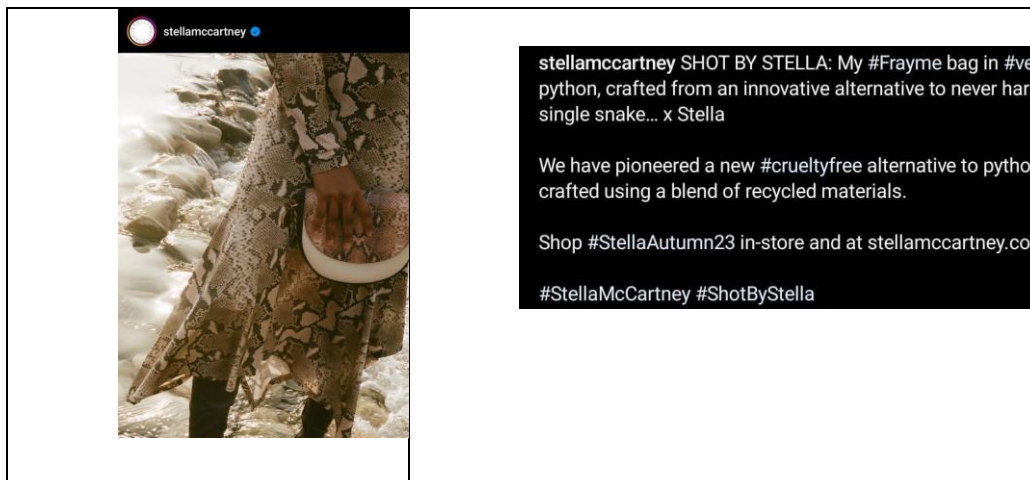


Figure 7. Instagram @stellamccartney

Another fashion innovation is found in one of the bag accessories designers, Stella McCartney. She is one of the designers who is famous for her anti-animal stance. She creates her work using natural materials. Some of her bags are made using materials such as mushroom skin. The designer also boasts that each piece can mimic animal skin without relying on plastic. One of them is the bag above that looks like the skin of a Python snake. The bag was made through innovation and creativity, not to hurt a single snake. Hence, bags like the one above are made with some natural materials and recycling of used items.

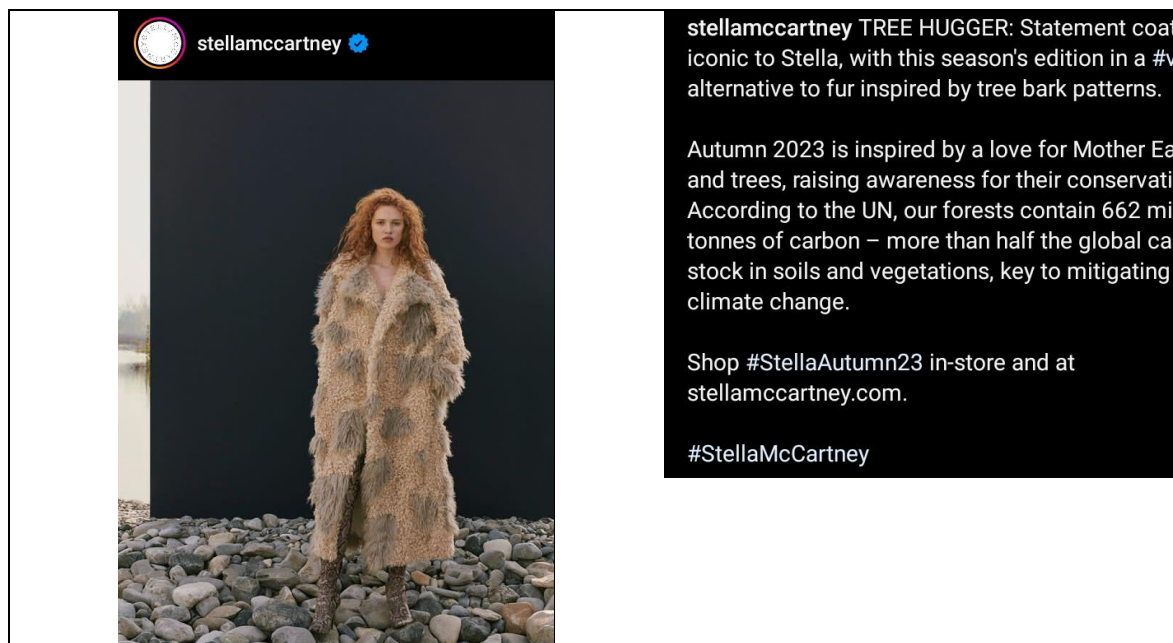


Figure 8. Instagram @stellamccartney

The unique fashion innovation in the picture above is the coat used by Stella, whose caption explains that she poured innovations by using synthetic materials that have patterns inspired by tree

bark. The philosophy embedded in Stella's idea is that she sees that tree bark, which is part of a tree, contains millions of tons of global carbon stored in it. She used vegan materials to replace the fleece. This is an effort to preserve and maintain the balance of animals in fashion.

The previous research presented the findings that emerged from communicating absurdity in fashion and captions. Absurdity is not only related to eccentric clothing designs but also involves the communication process between fashion actors as senders and consumers as receivers. Absurdity communication uses the sender and receiver method, where fashion designed by designers has an implied message for fashion consumers. In the context of sender-receiver communication, fashion designers act as senders. Their fashion designs become a medium to convey ideas, concepts, or even criticism of trends and social norms. (Mavruk & Weller, 2017) defines lifestyle or trend as a collective consumption pattern where fashion has a cultural framework along with the social system. As receivers, consumers interpret the design's meaning according to their context and understanding. Absurdity in fashion not only creates a unique piece but also involves a dialogue between the designer and the consumer.

The fashion world is now not only promoted through conventional media such as magazines and newspapers but also by holding certain events. However, in today's modern era, designers and fashion companies are starting to penetrate the digital world. One of the digital media used in promoting fashion design is by using the Instagram platform which is now popular in the community. The Instagram platform is an option for conveying the message or meaning of fashion. Shuqair, S., & Cragg (2016) argue that Instagram content effectively changes viewer perceptions and influences purchasing behavior for a promoted product or service. In addition to using photos to promote their designs, designers also use short writings or captions that describe the purpose and purpose of the uploaded post. The caption displayed contains information from the promoted shirt design, such as size, material, colour, or meaning about the idea of making the fashion. Nevertheless, sometimes the caption is also written implicitly using words that allude to something.

One of the techniques used to obtain materials for making absurd fashion is butchering. The technique of "butchering" in fashion refers to cutting or transforming elements of animal origin into clothing designs. Reed (2013) describes butchering as combining boldness and innovation with ethical considerations in the fashion design process. Butchering can be a form of criticism, satire, and protest by vegetarians against meat lovers in the fashion world. Butchering encourages designers to create pieces of clothing that are not only visually appealing, but also consider the materials used (Reed, 2013). Absurdity in fashion and butchering techniques are intertwined through the sender-receiver communication process. Designers use absurdity to express their ideas, while butchering becomes a means to change existing norms in fashion. Consumers, as receivers, have an important role in interpreting and responding to the messages conveyed through the absurd designs of butchering. Butchering in fashion has become a controversial topic, but it is also an opportunity for the fashion industry to reflect and be more responsible with innovation and ethics in fashion design practices.

One of these absurdities is the "Vegetables" element. In the world of fashion, professional designers have prepared ideas that are simple, extreme, and even unique. One of them is by using environmentally friendly natural materials such as "Vegetables". The use of vegetables and fruits is an effort to replace animal materials which have become a popular choice among designers. When talking about fashion, it is about model guidelines that are constantly changing (Entwistle 2002; Mears 2011). With the continuous changes in fashion model guidelines, "Vegetables" elements have become quite a popular trend. Materials made from vegetables and fruits are considered more ethical because they do not involve animal exploitation. Designers who embrace this concept not only create attractive clothes,

but also help protect animals from the risk of extinction. Through this trend, the fashion industry can present itself as an agent of change that supports sustainability and maintains ecological balance. By introducing trends such as "Vegetables" into the fashion world, designers aim to convey that we can create a more eco-friendly lifestyle without sacrificing creativity and innovation. There is also a need to continuously raise awareness of the fashion industry's impact on the environment and animals. Innovations like this also contribute positively to the movement towards more sustainable practices.

Continuing this very popular research, the focus now turns to the element of "health". Health is one of the elements included in the concept of vegan fashion. Vegan fashion generally refers to products or clothing that do not contain animal ingredients. In other words, vegan fashion implies a message that a garment is free from fur, leather, wool, silk, horns, or animal teeth (some accessories also use animal teeth) (Sascha, 2019). This concept is not just a dress style, but also a message of awareness for animal protection and ecological balance. Several ideas to support animal conservation have emerged in the minds of fashion model activists. The preservation of animal life is a fundamental principle embraced by vegan fashion advocates, who recognise its importance in upholding the balance and sustainability of our world. In particular, their influential role extends to the advancement of inventive creations. However, there are concerns regarding incorporating animals as primary or secondary elements in fashion, which may upset the balance of animal existence. In response to this concern, the vegan community has been actively generating new ideas using eco-friendly materials. As a testament to their commitment to eco-friendly initiatives, certain designers have started using green fibres and green fibres, which shows the dedication of the Vegan community in pushing for sustainable solutions. Not only do we want 100 per cent vegan products, but we also want vegan products made with healthy ingredients that certainly do not harm our bodies (Sascha, 2019). Vegan fashion is more than just clothing and encompasses a holistic movement that includes health awareness, animal preservation, and environmental care. Therefore, its impact is not limited to the field of fashion, but is recognised as an important component in realising a sustainable future and achieving a harmonious lifestyle.

SIMPULAN

Fashion is one of the reasons humans create a form of art representation poured by designers who gave birth to the idea of combining fashion and art. In the early 20th century, historian James Laver has a definition of fashion, that fashion is "the furniture of the mind made visible". Fashion serves as a prominent form of communication, specifically non-verbal communication (Wiana, 2016), which allows individuals to express their personal style. In fashion, absurdity is a popular theme expressed by designers. Besides being seen in the details of fashion designs, absurdity can also be communicated through captions written on social media such as Instagram. Captions are used to explain and convey messages through pictures or videos of the fashion displayed. There is one event that organizes fashion week activities, Veganfashionweek, in its Instagram account which displays many unique and creative fashion designs

The form of communication in absurd fashion is sender-receiver rather than semiotic or message. This is because fashion models are more widely used as a form of opinion, support, or rejection of an activity between one community and another. The findings of this research show that the issues of butchering, vegetables, and health are the axis of communication that is carried out absurdly. Butchering is a form of activity by meat lovers in the process of obtaining materials for making clothes. Butchering tanning refers to cutting and preparing animal skins for use in fashion. Clothing made by Meat lovers following the concept has a form of communication about how they view making real animals as fashion materials, be it clothes, bags, or other accessories. Through the sender-

receiver communication type, they express their ideal concept of the fashion world to other groups who reject animal body parts in fashion. As stated by sani, fashion presentation allows individuals to express their personal style. The use of vegetable and health ingredients in the fashion industry not only creates an opportunity to change the usual way of consumption, but also allows designers to produce clothes that are not only environmentally friendly, but also respect the diversity of nature. By incorporating the unique textures and colours of vegetables and fruits, they not only create style, but also raise awareness of environmental issues. These innovative measures turn fashion into more than just self-expression and a means to raise awareness of environmental challenges.

Absurd fashion design can be a medium to convey ideas and concepts, or even criticize social trends and norms and define a lifestyle or trend within a community, by using the sender-receiver method as a form of communication in fashion design that is then shown through fashion shows or posts on popular media accounts. Designers and fashion users are the senders of messages expressed through fashion design, and consumers are the receivers of messages who then interpret the meaning of the design according to their context and understanding. Absurdity in fashion creates a unique piece and involves a dialogue between the designer and the consumer. In addition to getting unique fashion designs, appreciation from the public, it can also help convey solutions to social problems, either in the form of campaigns or overt demonstrations

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