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The collaborative buyer and supplier relationship (BSR) applied to the product development stage in the contemporary UK fast fashion and rapid fashion market.

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A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements of Manchester Metropolitan University for the degree of Master of Arts (by Research)

Manchester Fashion Institute
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Thank you to my supervisory team Dr. Zhimin, Dr. Joanna and Dr. Tas, who have guided me through a chapter at a time. Dr. Joanna, I can still remember the chat we had in the work’s car park late one night at the start of this journey, when I informed you how scared I was, but you reassured me that you and the team would hold my hand through this whole process and that is exactly what you have done.

To my parents Jean and George, who as always are there by my side with encouragement and are always willing to help with child care duties and making dinners, I just want to make you proud of me.

To my partner, Julian, who’s ear I bent with my frustrations. You are always my calming influence.

To my daughter, Ava, who has been my inspiration to gain this master’s qualification. I just want her to be proud of mummy and to show her whatever she strives to do in life she can do.

x x
ABSTRACT

The UK high streets have exploded with world-class international retailers, stable high street anchors and innovative independents, but in addition, many retailers are struggling to survive in an extremely competitive environment – which has led to rapidly changing customer demands for products. Because of this, the fashion industry now has planned obsolescence and has shortened new product development cycle times while the newly developed products have to meet the growing expectations of the end customer.

Tensions between retailers and suppliers may not be new, but the difficult market they both face has done nothing to help. The retailers are increasingly using time as a factor for enhancing competitiveness. Development cycles are becoming shorter, transportation and delivery more efficient and merchandising is presented floor ready. Responding to this fast-paced environment, suppliers are becoming increasingly adept at moving from the manufacture of commodity products to incorporating design and branding. Research has identified the importance of supply chain integration activities contribution to an organisation's success.

The buyer/supplier relationship needs to be ready for the customer’s wants and needs. This can be achieved by involving suppliers in the new product development stage of the fashion supply chain and forming a collaborative relationship.

The supplier’s designer needs to be embedded within the organisation, synergising in a collaborative partnership. The buyer and the supplier members shape the inter-organisational exchange and thus are critical in determining its outcomes. All of
which embed industry practices and enable the buyers and supplier to form partnerships to change the face of their relationship and cater for their ever-changing customer demands.

The study deployed rich data sets by combining case study methods and interviews from three UK fast fashion retailers and three of their suppliers. The results determined the critical dimensions of collaboration within the BSR within contemporary fashion supply chain and a conceptual framework has been developed, which identifies the key factors, that improve and/or mitigate the impact of collaboration within the BSR.
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1.0 Chapter 1 – Introduction

1.1 Background to the research

In 2017, the UK clothing market was valued at £57.7 billion with sales having increased by 3.1% over the previous five years (Mintel, 2017). Major value retailers account for almost one-quarter of this total market value. The clothing product offering of value retailers such as ASOS and Boohoo (Mintel, 2017) has been elevated as low-price items provide reasonable product quality. The selection of stylish and attractive fast fashion (FF) product available at low-price points has dramatically increased, especially in merchandise that is targeted at Millennial and Generation Z consumers who are typically aged 16-23 years old. E-commerce has supported the vigorous growth of this sector as fashionable online pure players provide a consumer experience which is distinct from the somewhat tired formats of the traditional value retailers such as New Look and Marks and Spencer (Mintel, 2017). As a result of the growth of discounting in retailing and the evolution of the brick-and-mortar retail model into more advanced capital-intensive supercentres, megastores, and online retailing or e-tailing (Randall et al., 2011), many retailers are now struggling to survive the ever changing and extremely competitive UK high street (Hodson & Yang, 2017).

1.2 Fast Fashion and Its New Product Development within Fashion Supply Chain Management over the last three decades

FF can be defined as a “strategy which aims to reduce the processes involved in the buying cycle and lead times for getting new fashion product into stores...” (Barnes and Lea-Greenwood, 2006, p.259). For a fast fashion supply chain to be competitive, it must be flexible, agile, cost effective, and responsive (Bruce et al.,
2004; Barnes and Lea-Greenwood, 2006). Inevitably, these features are
determined by how well the different parties involved are orchestrated and managed
(Moon et al, 2013., p.392). The dynamics of the buyer/supplier relationships (BSR)
in the 1980’s saw the power with the buyer. The buyer kept the supplier at “arm’s
length” (Bruce & Daly, 2006). Not only did the six largest retailers of this time (Marks
and Spencer, Burton, C&A, Storehouse, Sears and Next) (Crewe and Davenport,
1991), capture almost 40 per cent of the total UK clothing market, they were also in
a position to dictate prices to their manufacturers. In the New Product Development
(NDP) stages of the supply chain, it was the buyer who would dictate stringent
quality and design demands as well as the delivery dates. The buyers planned
forecasts, dictated that the turnaround time which was typically 26 weeks, be
reduced to 16 weeks; passing the costs of stock holding onto suppliers (Bruce &
Daly, 2006). To achieve these shorter lead times, a combination of localised
production (predominantly UK based suppliers) and sophisticated information
systems were required that facilitated frequent inventory monitoring and
replenishment, and expedited distribution methods (Moon et al, 2013).

The early 1990’s saw a fragmentation of the mass market in the UK, due to pressure
towards price reductions for UK fashion retailers as value players such as Matalan,
New Look and George at Asda emerged as strong contenders in the UK fashion
market (Barnes & Lea-Greenwood, 2006). To maintain a competitive advantage,
UK retailers accommodated price reduction by increasing their sourcing activity from
low cost countries, typically the Far East (Jackson and Shaw, 2001; Bruce et al.,
2004). This situation resulted in the development of extensive and complex apparel
supply chains, which despite the reduction in turnaround time, consequentially, led
to increased lead times for delivery due to the distances between the manufacturing
base and the base for distribution. The expected turnaround time of 16 weeks in
fact increased to 20 weeks. Despite the issues of speed to market, retailers perceived that the cost benefits achieved through off shore sourcing such as low cost labour quickly acquired skills, superior investment in technology and high-volume garment production were advantageous. (Fernie and Azuma, 2004).

The late 1990’s, saw the growth of innovative, technically advanced companies who responded to opportunities and challenges posed by the internet (Doherty & Ellis-Chadwick, 2010). This impacted on the changes in consumer lifestyles and increased demand for new product (Barnes & Lea-Greenwood, 2006). To meet new customers’ demands, product development and production times had to reduce further from 20 weeks to 8 (Barnes & Lea-Greenwood, 2006). Such transformations and reduction of production time within the supply chain management had profound implications on the BSR. The motivation for a restructuring of sourcing required at retailers found new ways to maintain control over production without bearing the risks typically associated with a fickle and unpredictable fashion market.

The late 1990’s saw growth in adoption of the FF concept and increasingly competitive environment which, resulted in new demands from buyers on their suppliers (Terpend et al, 2008). Demands such as the ability to deliver newness and “refresh” product (Christopher et al., 2004) as well as new product development and the ability to continuously improve. From a very linear supply chain the BSR moved away from the ‘arm’s length’ approach which many retailers had formerly adhered to. Instead, a close relationship with a smaller number of supplier firms was what the majority of existing high street retailers and new entrants such as Next, Solo and Principles introduced.

As the competitive context of business continued to change, new complexities and concerns emerged for the BSRs. The supply chain had to change to accommodate.
In the twenty-first century, this would change yet again however, this time it was not just about price. The growth of “Fast Fashion” saw foreign retailers such as Zara and H&M enter the UK retail high street (Barnes and Lea-Greenwood, 2006). This happened in response to another shift in consumer demand, not price, but demand for trend at low price. This led to another phase of price reduction driven by increased foreign competition. This demand was driven by external factors such as celebrity influences and the increase in availability of weekly glossy magazines, such as Grazia, fueling consumer demand for the latest look or product and ‘now’ (Alexander, 2003).

The rise of the internet and a shift in television formats which also lead to changes in mass communication, allowing constant access to information surrounding the latest trends and styles. E-commerce and m-commerce were new channels to market and had rapidly grown in popularity, supported by pervasive fixed and mobile internet access and broadband. This contributed to a substantial increase in home delivery, and a reduction in customer footfall (Drapers, 2015). These technological innovations substantially lowered barriers to market entry, making it far easier for new online businesses to be established including Miss Guided and Boohoo. This shift in focus of competitive advantage moved once again from price towards brands, capability to quickly respond to changing fashion trends of replenishment (Christopher et al., 2004). The fashion need for faster reactions to emerging trends and the move away from planned forecasts resulted in a marked change in the apparel supply chain, the buying cycle and consequently the BSR, accommodated 8 weeks.

This emergence of lean retailing has institutionalised quick response strategies in the supply chain, with clear differentiation between cost-based strategies and
strategies founded upon speed-to-market (Hammer and Plugor, 2016). The speed-to-market strategy allowed buyers to not only to push but also to pull a constant stream of basic fashion products through the supply chain, facilitating constant change in fashion lines in response to constantly adapting trends in popular culture (Taplin, 2014). Taplin states the supply chain rationalisation through quick response strategies and a closer interaction between BSR had become a competitive necessity. This rapidly changing situation fueled dramatic change in the BSR.

According to Athaide and Klink (2009), the close interactions between the buyer and supplier was typically characterised in the NPD stage. These interactions embedded in the context of collaborative relationships can facilitate enhanced operational performance, by means of collaborative design, installation and operation of new process equipment (Gruner and Homburg, 2000).

The industry is currently operating in its most recent iteration of the BSR fueled now by the concept of rapid rather than fast fashion which aims to design and produce garments in a one-week turnaround. Missguided founder and CEO Nitin Passi told Drapers in 2015, “[W]e’re rapid fashion…. if a trend comes, we need to have it on our site before our competitors in under a week.” The company states it can turn samples around in one day, and it is capable of getting products to market much quicker than fast-fashion legend Zara does.

The impact of the cost, speed trade-off of the FF production model (Taplin, 2014) not only reshaped consumer markets but established new requirements in BSR. Trend has had an effect on the buyer/supplier relationship in the product development process. The buyer/supplier relationship power has shifted. The impact over time of the BSR has changed from a distance relationship to a close collaboration relationship and is now unrecognisable. What is critical here is the
BSR because without that, how are the retailers going to deal with this rapidity that is required on the UK high street.

1.3 Fashion Supply chain and the buyer/supplier relationship

The pervading conceptualisation of retailer control mechanisms in the post war period proposes that there is a spectrum of control ranging from the tight control ‘marionette’ model such as that espoused by Marks and Spencer, to the ‘arm’s length’ approach characteristic of C&A. The ‘close control’ model comprised the powerful retailer who sourced directly from manufacturing supplier firms rather than via agents. To manage these distant BSR, retailers tended to adopt one of the three.

Lysons and Farrington (2012) stated that supply chains are a network of companies that work together to control and manage the flow of materials and information. This was discussion early in 1.1 and 1.2, which demonstrated the development of this network. A ‘network’ suggests that there is a system of people with strong partnerships working together to create successful companies. Lysons and Farrington (2016) go onto to describe supply chains as ‘networks’ which underlines the importance of the BSR relationship. In order for supply chains to be effective, Campbell (1997) stated that relationships were of key importance. The supply chain became a linear one and became quite fragmented.

Bruce and Hines (2007) proposed that buyers and suppliers should have a two-way or ‘dyadic’ relationship in order to form a successful bond to form a partnership. Mohr and Spekman (1994, p135) defined partnerships as, ‘purposive strategic relationships between independent firms who share compatible goals, strive for mutual benefit and acknowledge a high level of mutual independence’. Discussion suggests that if buyers want improved product quality, delivery service and reduced
costs, then close relationships and suppliers ‘partnerships’ maybe the route to increase market share and improve their financial position (Kannan & Tan, 2006). Successful relationships are formed when trust and understanding is apparent, and two parties have a desire to learn and assist one another (Lysons and Farrington, 2016). Sako (1994) believed that companies that have a strong partnership between buyers and suppliers performed better. Lysons and Farrington (2016) state that buyer/supplier relationships are only successful if they are built on trust and cooperation. Hoyt and Huq (2000), argue that closer buyer/supplier relationships have evolved over the past two decades from transaction processes based on arms-length agreements to collaborative processes based on trust and information sharing and that collaborative buyer/supplier relationships play an important role in an organisation’s ability to respond to dynamic and unpredictable change.

The importance of supply chains is further highlighted by Hines (2013) since he believes they ultimately have an effect upon the consumer. Fearne (1998, p. 4), also emphasised the importance of the customer and building relationships as “a philosophy of doing business”. Yet in stark contrast, Cox (2007, p.38), states that the predominant orthodoxy of supply-chain management thinking is devoted to discovering tools and techniques (co-makership, agile manufacturing, lean supply, quick response, value streams) that provide increased operational effectiveness and efficiency throughout the delivery channels. Both strategies highlight the differences between product push (supply) and market led (demand-based) strategies (Cox, 2007).

1.4. Fast Fashion and the Buyer/Supplier relationship

It is clear in the literature considered in section 1.3 that fast fashion and its
compression on production time reduction, has a direct influence upon the supply chain and the BSR. If suppliers deliver production late, then the current range of choice in the market means that consumers will go elsewhere leading to a loss of sales. Figure 1, highlights the key retailers in the current environment who have had to adapt their speed to market due to the fast moving retail market place. Effective management of the BRS in the supply chain has been identified as a critical success factor in retailing, to the extent that in the retail marketplace, it is the supply chains that compete rather than companies (Hines, 2004). As a result, more retailers are turning to partnering with their retailers, moving away from using a wide number of suppliers to using a limited set. Formerly, retailers regarded suppliers as adversaries. The emphasis now is strategic partnerships to create mutually financial benefits (Barnes and Lea-Greenwood, 2006).

![Figure 1: Retailers and their speed to market (Adapted by author from Drapers, 2017)](image)

While literature suggests that BSRs in FF are important, this has been contested by Hogarth-Scott (2004) who proposes that suppliers remain hostages in an
unbalanced power relationship. Similarly, Cousins (2002) suggests that relationships do not in fact exist at all, that companies do not trust each other, and that the BSR is better considered a process rather than a partnership. The majority of the literature suggests BSR are indeed an important foundation for the creation of successful firms, yet it is accepted that certain themes are more important than others. Timpson (2010) suggests that buyer/supplier relationships should be built on mutual trust and friendship. Similarly, Kannan and Tan (2006) propose that traits such as coordination, collaboration, commitment, communication, trust, flexibility, and dependence, all are central to meaningful relationships. It is noted that the implicit assumption here is that the subject is a cooperative rather than a more hands-off relationship (Timpson, 2010). Similar traits can also be observed in the supplier alliance literature (Whipple and Frankel, 2000; Vollman and Cordon, 1998; Ellram, 1995). The underlying proposition is that in the absence of these traits, the possibility for buyers and suppliers to create mutually beneficial outcomes will be limited. A long history of debate suggests that without signals and/or behaviours demonstrating a willingness to work together to increase rather than merely redistribute value within the supply chain, buyers and suppliers will be motivated to look out for their own interests. Willingness, however, to work together and to share risks allows benefits to be achieved not only in cost, quality, delivery, and productivity, but in product development, technology deployment, and problem solving (Fram, 1995; Hahn et al., 1990).

1.5. Power shift

The risk attached to lengthy and slow-moving logistics “pipelines” has become unsustainable, forcing organisations to look again at how their supply chains are structured and managed (Christopher, 2016). Supply chain agility is widely
considered to be the most crucial success factor in today’s competitive marketplace (Chan et al, 2016).

As the power of consumer demand continues to evolve and influence the nature of supply chains. Understanding the concept of collaboration within the interpersonal/inter-organisational dynamics of the BSR within the UK based fast fashion context becomes critical. This power shift has led to changes in the role of retailers in the buyer/supplier relationships (BSR), with important consequences for the management and deployment of supply chain strategies (Randall et al., 2011). Retailers need to carefully match their product life-cycles to demand and supply order and distribution cycles, in order to achieve optimal inventory, reduced waste, and seamless retail operations. This balance is particularly crucial because retail competition is time-based (Randall et al., 2011).

1.6. Rational for the Research

The three decades of the 1980’s, 1990’s and 2000’s have seen monumental changes in the economy, and technology leading to divergent changes in consumer’s behaviour. These changes have impacted on the supply chain, consequently leading to changes within the BSR. From the research emerges the critical concept to understand the concept of collaboration within BSR in the new product development stage in the UK fast fashion market. With the introduction of FF, the product development stage within the BSR had to be reviewed and revised. It is almost now accepted that it was fuzzy, and that fuzziness was part of the process, however, in order to progress, collaboration is the new concept which needs to be understood. Schoenherr & Wagner (2016) define the “fuzzy front end” (FFE) as the period between when an opportunity for a new product is first
considered, and when the product idea is judged ready to enter “formal” development. However, Christopher (2016) explains that responding to demand has always played an important role for suppliers, but it seems now there is more pressure to do this in a shorter time span. Previous research has found that buyer/supplier collaboration is NPD can contribute to project success. Empirical evidence is mixed, however, and the concept of buyer/supplier collaboration in fashion is under-developed. The aim is to critically evaluate the interpersonal/inter-organisational dynamic of the BSR within a UK based fast-fashion context and determine the critical dimensions of the BSR within the contemporary fashion supply chain, adopting a mixed method approach.

1.7. Research Aim and Objectives

The overall aim of this research is: To critically examine the concept of collaboration within the buyer and supplier relationship (BSR) within the new product development stage in the contemporary UK fast fashion and rapid fashion market.

Objectives:

1) To critically analyse the theoretical development of the buyer/supplier relationship (BSR).

2) To critically evaluate the interpersonal/inter-organisational dynamic of the BSR within a UK based fast-fashion context.

3) To determine the critical dimensions of collaboration within the BSR within the contemporary fashion supply chain.

4) To develop a conceptual framework, which identifies the key factors, that improve and/or mitigate the impact of collaboration within the BSR.

In order to fulfil the aim and set of objectives this research will review existing debate regarding the BSRs through a thorough review of literature in order to examine
theoretical perspectives and existing practices from an interpersonal and inter-organisational position. In-depth case studies with a number of well-established fast fashion retailers will capture quantitative and qualitative data in order to examine and evaluate how relationship dynamics evolve, focusing specifically on the new product development stage. This will involve interviews with three fast fashion retail buyers and three suppliers. Analysis of this will inform a conceptual framework which will illustrate key factors which improve and/or mitigate the impact of BSR on new product development.
2.0 Chapter 2 - Literature Review

2.1. Introduction

In order to critically examine the concept of collaboration within the BSR in the new product development stage in FF and rapid fashion (RF) market, it is necessary to identify articles dealing with collaboration in the BSR. To examine the extent to which these articles study the development of collaboration over three decades and which levels of the relationship are examined: interorganisational, interpersonal or both? What follows is a comprehensive overview of the literature. It will analyse the theoretical development of the BSR within the context of the new product development stage of the fashion supply chain, specifically focusing on the collaborative relationships, evaluating the interpersonal/inter-organisational dynamic of the BSR within a UK based FF context. This will determine the critical dimensions of collaboration within the BSR and guide in the development of a conceptual framework which will identify the key factors that improve and/or mitigate the impact of collaboration within the BSR.

The literature will map the development of the BSR from nineteen eighties through to present day as the UK retail marketplace has changed completely over this time with the introduction of FF and now rapid fashion (Hodson & Yang, 2017). “Collaboration” is an increasingly important area of interest in the academic and the business world. Many authors have called for the use of longitudinal approaches to better understand the development of collaborative relationships over time (e.g. Hingley et al, 2015; Vijver, 2009; Palmatier et al. 2007; Ring and Van de Ven 1994). In business the companies focused strongly on the development of closer ties with other organisations in search of a competitive advantage and improved market positioning. So far, little is known about the concept of collaboration within NPD in the BSR in the UK FF market (Vijver, 2009). A literature review provides the
background to this research topic by exploring related theory (Ridley, 2008). The research recognises the past, the present and the pace of change within retail. The discussion will evaluate the pace of change within the BSR; monitor the pace of change; identify how collaboration is possible to be managed in that change within the BSR and recognise how BSRs are managing the change of pace.

2.2. Buyer Supplier Relationship in New Product Development

An increasing number of buyer’s are involving their component suppliers in new product development (NPD) projects (Wagner, 2012; Parker et al., 2008; Petersen et al., 2003). According to Butner (2010), within his recent global and cross-sector study, 80% of the 393 sampled companies co-developed products with their suppliers. Suppliers can contribute to buying companies’ product innovation, by providing, for example, technologies and design expertise that can enhance the novelty of the final product (Azadegan and Dooley, 2010; Swink and Mabert, 2000; Handfield et al., 1999), information about component manufacturability that can improve product quality and reduce costs (Swink, 1999), and design capacity that can reduce the overall cycle time of an NPD project (Ragatz et al., 2002; Handfield et al., 1999). By involving suppliers, a buying firm gains benefits by allocating tasks in a manner that creates specialisation, leading to higher levels of skill, knowledge, and performance (Van de Ven & Walker, 1984; Thompson, 1967).

Despite a growing scholarly interest in supplier involvement in buyers’ NPD processes, a review of the literature reveals several important shortcomings. The literature highlights the importance of supplier involvement in product innovation primarily from the buyer’s perspective (Johnsen, 2009), with much less attention given to the suppliers’ perspective. Academics have generally assumed that within the dynamics of the relationship between buyers and suppliers, buyers are
dominant, and suppliers are susceptible to buyers’ demands and requirements (Yeniyurt et al, 2013). The increasing importance of suppliers as a critical source of innovation for buyers’ new product development processes, however, suggests that suppliers may occupy a stronger role within the BSR than scholars have previously tended to consider. The research from the buyers’ perspective argues that earlier and extensive involvement with suppliers in the buyers’ NPD improves the buyers’ product development performance in terms of quality, productivity, cost, and speed (van Echtelt et al. 2008; Ragatz et al. 2002; Petersen et al. 2003; Clark, 1989), these results have been observed almost exclusively in static situations using cross-sectional data. The most intensive use of suppliers in the buyers’ NPD occurs in manufacturing industries involving complex end products such as vehicles, aircraft, aircraft engines, large medical diagnostic equipment. In each of these industries, suppliers are typically simultaneously involved in multiple multi-year development programs in various stages of completion. In NPD activities, long-term strategic benefits are generally favoured over short-term benefits as they facilitate more effective and efficient future collaboration, alignment of strategies, and contribution to product differentiation, as well as improving access to both buyers’ and suppliers’ technologies (van Echtelt et al. 2008; Wynstra et al. 2001). Suppliers who are involved in a buyer’s NPD activities benefit from cooperative gains, as this situation favours joint resource coordination (Donada, 2002) while providing opportunity to obtain information on current and future product specifications (Cannon and Perreault, 1999).

Cooperation is a less prominent theme within the literature; Campbell (1997) states that mutuality causes cooperation in the buyer-supplier relationship. Similarly, Bruce and Daly (2006) believe the relationship should be ’mutual’ with buyers engaging
suppliers as part of the same business. In contrast, Hill et al., (2009) states that suppliers must be cooperative at all times and consider them as employees working for the buyers, and they should help purchase equipment for the use of the buyer. This view could be seen as harsh, suggesting that buyers see suppliers as subordinate to them, expecting them to be cooperative and controlling what they do.

Furthermore, early involvement in a buyer’s product development process enables a supplier to better plan for future investments and use of resources, as well as to focus its resource utilisation on meeting the buyer’s needs, all while realising a more secure long-term growth potential through increased new business opportunities (Ellram and Edis, 1996). Over time, as BSRs develop and opportunities for collaboration occur, a supplier is more likely to share its new proprietary technologies with a buyer (Monczka et al. 2000; Handfield et al. 1999;). It is therefore expected that the long-term return expectations of the supplier have a positive effect on the supplier’s attitudes toward co-innovation. As the relationship develops and the anticipated long-term returns increase, a supplier’s willingness to invest in buyer-specific technologies and its willingness to share proprietary technologies with the buyer are also expected to increase. BSRs and inter-dependence play a significant role in supplier involvement in buyer NPD. Yeniyurt et al.’s., (2013) findings, state good supplier working relations drive supplier attitudes toward co-innovation over time; communication, acceptable long-term returns, and trust have strong positive effects on supplier attitudes toward co-innovation activities. Over-time suppliers respond positively to good working relationship environments and that in this context their attitudes toward co-innovation improve significantly. The next section further examines deeper into the supplier’s involvement in the NPD, analysing the fuzzy front end.
2.2.1. Supplier Involvement in Fuzzy Front End (FFE)

Since one does not always know exactly what to find in the front end, it is has been known to be called "fuzzy" or in English "spongy". On the one hand, the front-end requires structure, but also openness and flexibility within the BSR. Zara (the FF company) was a leader in understanding the importance of the product design stage and working closely with the supplier/factory. Sheneen (2015) stated that product design is a competitive advantage in the fast fashion industry, he goes on to give the example of Zara, who produces each particular design only once. Schoenherr and Wagner (2016), named the period between when an opportunity for a new product is first considered, and when the product idea is judged ready to enter “formal” development Fuzzy Front End (FFE). Zara learned that their production processes and product designs had to be flexible so that it could switch from producing one product to the next without incurring significant set-up time or set-up costs (Tang, 2006). Therefore, there was no scope for forecasting errors in the FF supply chain system. The demand forecasting function had to be completed within a very short period of time with very little historical data being available (Choi et al, 2014). Forecasting inefficiencies and upstream disruptions result in overstocking at retail store results and inventory obsolescence as well as inventory holding costs.

Within the clothing apparel market, product complexity is concerned with collection and assortment (Guercini and Runfola, 2004). Sardar and Lee (2013) define an assortment as “collection of different consumer products to be shipped to retailer simultaneously”. In the FF and RF industry managers deal with thousands of assortments with varying degrees of novelty. Much of the product complexity is embodied in the product at the design stage. An example which Sadar and Lee (2014) stage is if each new design has a unique bill of materials, then impact on
inventory costs will be significant and will remain throughout the life of that product (Khan et al, 2012). If the market information is revealed, the fashion retailer could make better production plans, such as deciding the colour of the garment, the quality of the raw material, the style and the quantity.

In the FF/RF supply chains, if market information, for example fashion trends/inspiration is not available on time, the supplier faces serious pressure from upstream suppliers (raw materials) and downstream (retailers. In summary, global dispersion is key within the product design stages to give the retailers a competitive advantage in the FF/RF industry. Product design occurs at the front end of the product process. Consequently, getting this stage right is important to all parties within the supply chain.

To cope with challenges in FF, Christopher (2016) explains that responding to demand has always played an important role for suppliers, but it seems now there is more pressure to do this in a shorter time span. The fuzzy front end (FFE) of the innovation process has a key role within the supply chain. Hodson and Jie (2017), introduced a new way forward within the FF industry which reduced the apparel pipeline and brought the buyer and supplier closer, working in collaboration at the FFE. They recommended a member/s of the supplier’s design team to be located in the retailer’s head office to work in collaboration with the buyers. A supplier’s designer would sketch new ideas, which would be agreed with the buyer on day one (Hodson & Yang, 2017) the designer would then work with their factory to produce a sample on day three. The sample, would then be signed off by the buyer on day three with the order, photographed (day four), go on sale to the consumer on day five (Hodson & Yang, 2017).
The apparel supply chain is changing because of firstly FF now RF and therefore, the BSR has had to change. For some time now, supply chain management has been a major strategic concern of both the buyer and supplier (Hines and McGowan, 2002) in the NPD stages. The fuzziness of the front end is having to become more clearer, as retailers strive to secure competitive advantages, achieve success and enhance either relationship in an agile and collaborative way (Shankar et al., 2013; Doyle et al., 2006).

Within the BSR there was pervading conceptualisation of retailer control mechanisms in the post war period was that there exists a spectrum of control ranging from the close control ‘marionette’ model espoused by Marks and Spencer, to the ‘arm’s length’ approach characteristic of C&A. The ‘close control’ model comprised the powerful retailer who sourced directly from manufacturing supplier firms rather than via agents. Helper (1991) pointed out how the BSR in the U.S. automobile industry was first dominated by the cooperative relationship, subsequently moved to competitive relationship, and then reverted back to the cooperative relationship. Other studies corroborated her assertions about how, in recent years, more buying firms in the United States have favoured cooperative relationships with their key suppliers (Cusumano and Takeishi, 1991; Heide and John, 1990; Kerwin, 1998). This historic backdrop is quite understandable, given that the level of outsourcing to suppliers has increased in recent years and, consequently, the buying companies have placed increased importance on the relationship with suppliers. Likewise, a remarkable progress has been made in the buyer/supplier relationship studies over the past two decades (Carter et al., 1998). We have seen research evolve from reporting anecdotal best practices to using sophisticated case studies (Burnes and New, 1997; Ellram and Edis-Owen, 1996) and statistical methods (Anderson and Narus, 1990; Monczka et al., 1998).
researchers studying buyer/supplier relationships have sought theoretical support from other disciplines such as a political economy framework (Stern and Reve, 1980), social network research (Gulati, 1998; Holm et al., 1999) and complexity theory (Choi et al., 2001). One significant trend that has emerged from all these advanced studies is that the buyer/supplier relationship context should move beyond the traditional ‘dyadic’ context and begin to consider more complex dynamics of relational networks.

In fast fashion the main challenge is how to shorten the cycle time, in particular, how can buyers and designers capture consumer needs and so integrate into their designs and proceed to market. Suppliers involvement in the NPD stage is important, therefore, because suppliers possess specialised product and process capabilities, which are critical as consumers are becoming more demanding. There is substantial evidence to suggest that involving suppliers extensively and early in the NPD can improve the timeline of the supply chain (Johnsen, 2009). Figure 2, inspired by Dwyer et al., (1987); Wilson (1995) is the author’s findings to date, which follows the supply chain process of a fast fashion retail company. The buyers are shifting their supply chain to cater to their consumers demands which is “fashion on demand” (Logistics Bureau, 2018). Retailers are shortening their supply chains by forming a close relationship with their suppliers. It is easy to understand why the front end’s role in innovation is first and foremost about learning in order to clarify and recognise an opportunity. This is because the focus on this first stage is on the methodical acquisition, sharing, synthesis, creation and expression and insights of contextual relevant knowledge that will ultimately help feed downstream foresight, opportunity mapping, ideation, prototyping and validation exercises (Mootee, 2011). To be able to establish a strong BSR you first need to understand the effects of a
BSR. Once this has been established, your supply chain is now able to move onto the “rapid fashion” stage, (Drapers, 2015). The “rapid fashion” response approach is a major requisite for any apparel retailer wishing to capture the ever-changing retail marketplace.

![Diagram](image)

**Figure 2:** The effect of the buyer/supplier relationship in the product development process with the UK fast fashion market (Informed by Wilson 1995; Dwyer et al., 1987)

Naturally, this level of agility requires tight collaboration between business units and functions, to a degree that is just not possible without alignment of people, processes and especially information technology tools. The development and importance of BSR have been studied extensively since the late nineteen eighties. Research has identified a number of factors that affect the relationship (Wilson, 1995), how these factors affect the choice of relationship type (Cannon & Perreault, 1999; Sheth & Shah, 2003) and the long-term orientation of the relationship (Ganesan, 1994), and the typical lifecycle of a relationship (Dwyer et al., 1987; Wilson, 1995). Similar and complementary research in organisational buying has explored factors that affect the short-term transactional decision to buy a supplier's offer (Johnston & Lewin, 1996; Kauffman, 1996; Sheth, 1996). The initiation phase of a buyer/seller relationship, corresponding to the awareness and exploration phases proposed by Dwyer et al. (1987), and the partner selection and purpose definition phases as defined by Wilson (1995), have been found crucial for the
development of a long-term BSRs. During relationship initiation, the potential buyer and supplier engage in early interaction and consider the possibility of an exchange by weighing the potential benefits, costs and obligations entailed in the relationship. The phase ends when the partners have established an initial relationship, including settling on the tentative norms and expectations of the relationship. Wilson (1995), states that these factors include supplier’s reputation, power, trust, social bonds, interdependence, mutual goals and performance satisfaction. Further factors include commitment (Morgan & Hunt, 1994) and communication (Duncan & Moriarty, 1998). However, as indicated by Wilson (1995), factors that develop over time, such as investments, adaptations or commitment, cannot be considered in order to influence relationship initiation. At this stage, factors such as trust, reputation, power, social bonds, and mutual goals are important during relationship initiation.

If the BSRs are ineffective this can cause problems including unethical processes, high prices and reduced business (Bruce & Daly, 2006). A number of studies have examined the linkages between relationships and business performance. These have analysed and evaluated gains to the buyer from successful relationships in terms of financial (Carr and Pearson, 1999; Martin and Grbac, 2013; Johnston et al., 2004) and lead time performance (Larson and Kulchitsky, 2000). In addition, these relationships can result in improved responsiveness and customer loyalty (Martin and Grbac, 2003), innovation (Corsten and Felde 2004; Johnston et al., 2004) and quality (Johnston et al., 2004). From a supplier's perspective, they can lead to reductions in inventory cost (Kalwani and Narayandas, 1995) and lead times (Kotabe et al., 2003), as well as improvements in product/process design, quality (Kotabe et al., 2003), financial
performance and future relationship prospects (Duffy & Fearne, 2004). Successful relationships have also been shown to yield improvements in supply chain performance (Narasimhan and Nair, 2005; Benton, 2005; Benton and Maloni, 2005). The literature on BSR also provides empirical evidence of their benefits in terms of cycle time and new product development time (Monczka et al., 1998), delivery performance (Groves & Valsamakis, 1998; Zaheer et al., 1998), flexibility (Scannell et al., 2000; Stank et al., 1999; Zaheer et al., 1998) and product availability and customer satisfaction (Stank et al., 1999; Stank et al., 2001).

Overall, there seems to be some evidence to indicate that there are two major strategic tools that firms can utilise to enhance their competitiveness in response to a market characterised by intensifying globalisation, ever-increasing competition, and deepening volatility which are supply chain agility and supply chain collaboration and cooperation (Moon, 2013; Derrouiche et al., 2008; Shankar et al., 2013; Barnes and Lea-Greenwood, 2006).

2.2.2 The Impact of BSR on NPD Performance

Prior research has suggested both positives and negatives on the impact of the BSR on NPD performance. With some of the positives being: reducing cost and shortening lead times and the negatives being: design performance and quality consistency. Even in today’s market the current economic position is still unstable; therefore, cost is still at the forefront in the buying decision-making process and companies are taking advantage of lower priced products from overseas (Vinhas Da Silva et al., 2011). Countries such as the Far East, Italy, Portugal and Turkey (Vinhas Da Silva et al., 2011). In 2013, developing countries accounted for nearly
75 per cent of all clothing exports (Drapers, 2016) and more recently, with the removal of trade quotas, companies have greater opportunity to take advantage of goods from low-cost overseas manufactures.

Fast fashion is ever more competitive and consumers’ desire for the latest trends at cut-rate prices means retailers, particularly those in the value sector, are determined to stick to their price points.

The supplier to large multiples also points to the added complexity of rising operating costs in producing countries such as China, Vietnam and Romania. Although suppliers can look to produce in new up and coming markets, such as Myanmar, Morocco or Cambodia, the infrastructure in these countries is still developing. Shifting product to a new country can also bring other risks such as compliance (Shaw & Koumbis, 2015).

Assuming that the conversation between the buyer and the supplier is how to reduce prices, there are key factors which will help to collaborate with the supplier - acceptable cheaper fabrics? Take pockets out? Have a different seam or shorten the sleeves? When a supplier is designing to price, these decisions have to be made, but there is limited scope. It is fine for some retailers in the value sector, but for others there is a danger in reducing the quality of the garment, which then does not meet the customers’ expectations. In an age of the non-loyal consumers expectations are rising and will realise the product has been cheapened, which may accelerate the shift to cheaper retailers. Adding homogeneity of the high street is being exacerbated by escalating price wars: of course, retailers push back but they really are at the end game with regards to pricing. Suppliers cannot always absorb the cost price reduction, retailers need to collaborate with their suppliers to decide
how and where the decreases have to come from. Johnsen's (2009) research strengthens these findings as he states there is overwhelming evidence to support early and extensive supplier involvement as a key explanatory factor of superior new product performance in terms of cost, quality and time to market benefits. Nevertheless, research also shows that major management challenges selection processes, and long-term relationship adaptation is needed to accomplish supplier collaboration that have high levels of trust and commitment. To achieve trust and commitment the power dynamic firstly needs to be addressed. The following section focuses on the inter-organisational dynamics in the BSR.

2.3. Inter-organisational Dynamics in BSR

Inter-organisational dynamic in the BSR are defined as long-term cooperative relationships designed to increase the operational performance of the buyer and supplier (Vanpoucke, et al. 2013). Some of the main benefits of these relationships are the increase in synchronisation of the supply chain, the reduction of total costs, the improvement of quality and cycle time, and a stronger competitive position than any possible (Monczka et al., 1998). The literature describes inter-organisational relationships as being different from traditional buy–sell contractual arrangements in terms of the following three necessary and sufficient conditions (Yoshino & Rangan, 1995): interdependence of the parties, shared benefits among the parties and on-going, joint participation in one or more key strategic areas such as technology, products or markets.

Relationships can be seen as developing over time, through stages in which partners consider each other in different ways (Dwyer et al., 1987). The framework developed by Dwyer et al. (1987) is based on the exchange theory and a
comparison of discrete transactions and relational exchanges. As described by Macneil (1980), inter-organisational relationships have starting points of low norms and evolve gradually over time. Dwyer's framework identifies five distinct stages in a relationship: awareness, exploration, expansion, commitment and dissolution. In the awareness stage, i.e., before interaction takes place, partners position themselves to unilaterally enhance their attractiveness to the other party. An interaction, in the form of a transaction, marks the beginning of the exploration stage. In this exploration stage, trial purchases take place. These trial purchases form an extended period of testing and evaluation. To move to the expansion stage, partners should assess the potential rewards as sufficiently large to take the trouble and expend the psychic and physical energies necessary to negotiate and interact intensively. During the expansion stage, partners set up their first integration initiatives and implicitly test goal compatibility, integrity, and performance of the other. Based on the rudiments of trust and joint satisfaction established in the exploration stage, there is increased risk-taking within the dyad, which increases mutual dependence, resulting in a strong commitment. Finally, partners may withdraw or disengage, leading to the dissolution of the relationship.

Ring & Van de Ven (1994) provide another framework of how inter-organisational relationships develop over time. Similar to Dwyer et al. (1987), these authors also started from Macneil's (1980) comparison of discrete transactions and relational exchanges. However, Ring & Van de Ven (1994) differs in the description of the evolution of a relationship. Dwyer et al. (1987) describes a relationship as a linear process, Ring & Van de Ven (1994), describe it as a cyclical process consisting of three iterative stages i.e., negotiation, commitment and execution (Jap & Anderson, 2018). During the negotiation stage, partners develop joint expectations about
their motivations, possible investments and risks of the initiative they want to develop together. This process contains both a formal bargaining and a social–psychological process of sense making. In the commitment stage, the parties reach an agreement on future actions. This is codified in a formal relational contract and/or informal psychological contract. Finally, in the execution stage, the commitments are performed as discussed by the buyer and supplier. Based on these interactions, the parties become more familiar with one another and may start up negotiation processes for a new initiative, which again triggers the iterative processes of negotiation, commitment and execution.

While these frameworks are based on the underlying premise that relationships follow a common developmental process that typically results in similar trajectories there are some clear differences in the assumptions of the development process between the two frameworks described in previous paragraphs.

2.3.1. Power Dynamics of the Buyer/Supplier Relationship across the decades

In the early nineteen eighties, Britain was in a deep recession, Ginsbourg (1990) related that unemployment hit traditional industrial and manual jobs especially hard. In these early years of Margaret Thatcher’s first Conservative government, class politics were clearly evident, with the Labour Party moving dramatically to the left and the trade union movement seeking to resist government policy, as became apparent in the miners’ strikes in 1984 and 1985. A sign of the times was that, in 1981, nearly 20 per cent of the British population thought there was a “need for revolutionary change”, the highest proportion in Europe (Ginsbourg, 1990). At the start of 1980, a significant problem facing the UK (and other countries) was inflation. In the late 1970s, UK inflation reached over 20%. This was caused by: rising oil
prices, wage-push inflation and high inflation expectations (Economic & Labour Market Review, 2010). The UK government aggressively tackled inflation by increasing interest rates, reducing budget deficit through higher taxes and spending cuts and pursued monetarist policies of trying to control the money supply and meet money supply targets. However, this tightening of fiscal and monetary policy (combined with a high value of Pound Sterling) led to a significant fall in aggregate demand and the economy entered a recession. This leading to consumers tightening their belts and being selective as to where and what they buy (Economic & Labour Market Review, 2010). The dynamics of the buyer/supplier relationships in the 1980’s saw the power with the buyer. Not only did the six largest retailers (Marks and Spencer, Burton, C&A, Storehouse, Sears and Next), capture almost 40 per cent of the total clothing market (Mayer et al, 1995), they were also in a position of dictating prices to their manufacturers, imposing increasingly stringent quality, design and delivery demands (turnaround time being 16 weeks) and passing the costs of stock holding onto suppliers. Crewe and Davenport (1991) (Figure 3, p. 35), argued that the inter-organisational linkages within their preferred supplier model were progressively being modified. The pyramid, hierarchical in structure and comprised the dominant buyer along with multiple tiers of suppliers. The ‘preferred supplier model’ shows that the further down the hierarchy one moves, the more tenuous and distant the relationship between retailers and supplier becomes. The characteristic feature of this pyramidal control structure is that of long term, close working relationships between buyer and supplier.
Meyer and Allen’s model (1991) shown in figure 4 illustrates the factors and components of the benevolent dictatorship in the buyer-supplier exchange. Benevolence as an inter-organisational phenomenon, multi-dimensional in nature, which can be systematically developed through the focal firm's specific actions and resources. At the centre of benevolence is partner firms acting in ways that protect and refrain from exploiting focal firms’ interests (Atuahene-Gima & Li, 2002). Focusing in on Meyer & Allen (1991) propose a three-dimensional view of benevolence reflecting (i) a desire (affective benevolence), (ii) a need (calculative benevolence), and (iii) an obligation (normative benevolence) to maintain exchange continuity. They state that benevolence can arise from an affective, a self-interest, and/or a duty cause (Felin & Foss, 2009). They highlight the fundamental pillars of behavioural theory, attitude and behaviour, and then add a view of normative obligation. The three-part view of benevolence, which relates to the extent to which
a buyer is believed to want to do good to the supplier, aside from an egocentric motive (Mayer, Davis and Schoorman, 1995, p.718). Examples might include adjustment to the product requirements to accommodate the buyer's processes, price reductions, services, contracts and product quality changes (Meyer & Allen, 1991). Essentially, concessions might represent a sacrifice; a change of offer in the direction of the other party’s interests that involves a reduction in the level of self-benefit sought (Pruitt, 1981).

Benevolence - partner firms acting in ways that protect and refrain from exploiting focal firms’ interests (Atuahene-Gima & Li, 2002).

Figure 4: Benevolent dictatorship in buyer-supplier exchange (Source: Meyer and Allen, 1991)

Figure 5, the Hypothesized Realm of Buyer/Seller Relationships (Dwyer, Schurr & Oh, 1998) contradicts Meyer and Allen’s (1991) model to delineate the realm of possibilities of dyadic motivations for relational exchange. They suggest contingent seller roles in other industries such as the car industry and the space industry. For example, Toyota shares its production schedules with suppliers and has carefully knit the Toyota City manufacturing complex. Similarly, NASA and a home-owner
exemplify buyer-managed exchange as they orchestrate contractor performance in rocket assembly and major remodelling, respectively. The transactions devoid of significant relational elements. In these instances, for either or both of the parties. There is no concessions or inducements that one party is willing to offer that will provide sufficient satisfactions for the other to motivate exchange (Alderson 1965, p.84). As a map of exchange possibilities, Figures 5 (p.38), The Hypothesized Realm of Buyer/Seller Relationships (Dwyer, Schurr & Oh, 1998), provides a good representation of the topography. Many of the costs and benefits from BSR cannot be assessed on a prior basis. How practically discrete transactions might progress into more durable associations supported by shared goals, planning and commitment to the relationship. To develop this relationship process, Dwyer, Schurr & Or (1998) state relationships evolve through five general phases identified as (1) awareness, (2) exploration, (3) expansion, (4) commitment, and (5) dissolution. Each phase presents a major transition in how parties regard one another. There are limitations to Dwyer, Schurr & Or model (1998), it is not a road map and there are no concessions or inducements that one party is willing to offer that will provide sufficient satisfactions for the other to motivate exchange (Alderson 1965, p. 84).

By highlighting the mutual motivational investments of the parties, buyer/supplier relations involve analogous benefits and costs. The former includes reduced uncertainty, managed depended (Spekman, Strauss and Smith, 1985), exchange efficiency and social satisfactions from the association. Foremost is the possibility of significant gains in joint and consequently individual payoffs as a result of effective communication and collaboration to attain goals. The buyer's perception of the effectiveness of the exchange relation then, is a significant mobility barrier and a potential competitive advantage for the supplier that insulates the latter from price competition.
Figure 5: The Hypothesized Realm of Buyer/Seller Relationships (Dwyer, Schurr & Oh, 1998)

This section has reviewed the nineteen eighties which saw the effective management of the supply chain being identified as a key success factor in the BSR. The issue of the supply chain became more important as the BSR moved from the early nineteen eighties to late nineteen eighties. The move towards co-ordination with both parties (Wensley, 1999). Sheridan in 1998 states, that in the last five years, management commitment to supply-chain integration has increased, with the focus being on forging ‘downstream’ linkages with suppliers, retailers and consumers. In the early nineteen eighties, retailers regarded suppliers as cost centres or even adversaries, moving from the nineteen eighties into the nineteen nighties saw a shift in the BSR to more of a strategic partnership, with mutually profitable strategies. The fashion supply chain was notoriously long, complex and inflexible (Barnes & Lea-Greenwood, 2006), resulting in a long buying cycle, moving into the nineteen nighties, becoming untenable.
Through the mid to late nineteen eighties, strong economic growth caused high levels of inflation, peaking at over 10 per cent. Economic & Labour Market Review, 2010 reported interest rates were increased to control this, and the pursuit of lower inflation eventually led to sterling joining the European Exchange Rate Mechanism. However, inflationary pressures resulting from German reunification diminished the scope to cut interest rates as the UK economy entered into recession, with rates reaching up to 15 per cent as the government tried to defend sterling’s parity against the Deutschmark. High interest rates had a severe impact on the UK housing market, leading to a significant fall in prices, a surge in repossessions and growing numbers trapped in negative equity. These factors and a doubling in the level of unemployment led to a large fall in domestic spending (Economic & Labour Market Review, 2010). The early nineteen nineties on the UK high street saw a fragmentation of the mass market, which created risks such as supply demand mismatch, forecasting errors, failed style conditions, consumption changes and a reduction in production time with turnaround times moving from 26 weeks to 8 weeks. Such transformations within the retailing arena had profound implications for the organisation of buyer/supplier relationships. Due to the reduction in consumer spending (Economic & Labour Market Review, 2010) it motivated the retailers to restructure their sourcing requirement and to find new ways with which to maintain control over production without bearing the risks typically associated with a fickle and unpredictable fashion market. Risks such as, cost implications, product capacity and product time.

By the late 1990’s there was a trend amongst buyers to move from arm’s length to more collaborate methods. Moving away for the benevolence dictatorship of the powerful partner firms who could signal their benevolence to weaker firms through the use of concessions, dedicated investments and marketplace reputation. Instead
a close relationship with a smaller number of supplier firms was what the majority of existing high street retailers and new entrants such as Solo and Principles grasped (Crewe & Davenport, 1991). As the competitive context of business continued to change, brought with it new complexities and concerns for the buyer/supplier relationships. Moving from the nineteen nighties into the 21st Century saw the UK clothing manufacturing industry facing major problems. With job losses of up to 50,000 (Hind and Parsley, 2000). In February 2000 the stock market valuation of the entire clothing sector was calculated to be £740 million, a figure less than that of a single dot.com auction company (Key Note, 2000).

In this section, it has been explained that the retail industry was highly diverse and heterogeneous. All of the major retailers had the buying power to be able to “make or break” (Bruce et al 2006), the success of particularly smaller suppliers. Retailers sourced both closer to home and globally to acquire cost benefits, the supply chain needed to become more lean and agile to move into the 21st Century. The next section moves on to consider the BSR changes within the new product development (NPD) stage, (Thomas, 2013). With suppliers becoming an integral part of the design team and new product development (NPD) becoming increasingly important to a firm's profitability and competitiveness, giving it a sustainable competitive advantage, and, in some cases, was the key driver of a firm's overall success (Loch, Stein, & Terwiesch, 1996). Developing successful new products is particularly difficult in today’s marketplace: competitive pressures are building, consumer tastes are rapidly changing, technological changes are accelerating, and product life cycles are becoming shorter (Menon, Chowdhury, & Lukas, 2002).

There has arguably been a shift in power in the BSR over the past 58 years as we can see from Cox et al (2003) figure 14. In 1959, French and Raven (1959) suggest
that suppliers controlled the supply chain, due to their expertise in marketing and logistics, buyers heavily relied upon them. They also suggest that in the intervening years this had changed, and buyers dictate terms to suppliers where they have a strong position in the market. Teji (2012) implies that, during the 1980s, retailers and suppliers did not have a working partnership, and existed at odds then during the 1990s, the establishment of supplier development programmes meant that buyers and suppliers worked as a team. Fernie and Sparks (1999) believe that power has shifted from the supplier to the buyer suggesting that during the 1980s retailers gained the power, reducing supply chains and working closer with remaining suppliers. However, this literature could be questioned as it suggests a positive outcome of reducing supplier base, but if retailers have fewer suppliers it suggests risk are increased. Bruce and Daly (2006) believe that buyers should have a portfolio of suppliers, so they can choose who to place orders with depending on time to deliver and cost. This could be interpreted negatively as it means that buyers are using suppliers when they need them instead of creating a strong partnership. Teji (2012) adds a new dimension to the power discussion, implying that recently power has tipped, and it is now the consumer that has the power. Similarly, Easey (2009) states that fashion was once dictated to consumers and they accepted it, whereas consumers now have the power to reject or accept fashions. Bruce and Hines (2007) suggest that supply chains should be ‘demand chains’ as the power focus has shifted from the supplier to the consumer. Mendes (2011) model, (Figure 6 p. 42) demonstrates the demand-driven supply chain that is based on the customer, and how it responds to their demands. Mendes states, neither the supplier nor the buyer hold the power but instead respond to consumer power. This model was produced in 2011, however such models cannot be efficient depictions of evolution in power dynamics and factors of change. Moon et al (2017), agrees
with Mendes that the buyer or the supplier does not hold the power, but the consumer does. Stating:

“Supply chain agility and supply chain collaboration are widely considered to be two major strategic tools that firms can utilise to enhance their competitiveness in response to a market characterised by intensifying globalisation ever-increasing competition and deepening volatility”. (Derrouiche et al., 2008; Shankar et al, 2013; Barnes and Lea-Greenwood, 2006).

Figure 6: Supply Chains that Respond to Consumer Demand (Mendes, 2011)

Much of the literature on the use of power has treated the organisations in a buyer/supplier relationship as two monolithic entities connected by a single point of contact (e.g., Zhao et al. 2008; Handley and Benton 2012; Pulles et al. 2014). This
assumption is not fully in line with the reality that firms are often organised as loosely coupled business units, each focusing on different markets and supply chains (Martin and Eisenhardt 2010; Carter et al. 2015; Enz and Lambert 2015). It can be concluded that firms choose their use of power in a way that leads to superior allocation of exactly the desired resources by the supply chain partner. As such, different levels of multimarket contact should lead to differences in power use, if the types of resources that buyers and suppliers seek in the relationship also vary with the level of contact.

The shift in the fashion industry has affected the shifting topics attracting research attention over the three decades. Terpend et al. (2008) review revealed that the focus of academic researchers on types of value being extracted from BSR changed between 1986 and 2005, as did their interest in the buyer mechanisms implemented to create value in these relationships. Although emphasis changed over time, they found that scholars have primarily investigated four types of value derived from BSR: Operational performance improvements, integration-based improvements, supplier capability-based improvements and financial performance outcomes. Their review also noted that researchers considered more buyer-supplier mutual efforts since 1996 than the earlier decade, but the number of studies investigating buyer practices has declined as a percentage of total publications.

Dapiran and Hogarth-Scott (2003) challenge the view that power is negative, seeing it as positive and believe that a powerful buyer creates obedience, and therefore cooperation; leading to trust. This can be criticised as the use of the word ‘obedience’ suggests suppliers cannot fight back and does not create the idea of a positive relationship. Hingley (2005) similarly states that the common view that power is negative and prevents a successful relationship is inconsistent. He
believes that an imbalance of power does not mean a successful relationship cannot take place.

It has been suggested that suppliers are below retailers, with buyers holding the ultimate power to control them. Hines and McGowan (2009) believe suppliers are subordinate to the retail buyers, and that the control from a buyer can determine where fabrics are sourced from, and where and when delivery would take place. This is a negative approach that implies suppliers need to be controlled in order for them to do their jobs proficiently. In contrast, Campbell (1997) discusses a ‘political control relationship’, when buyers and suppliers have equal dependence on each other, and the supplier becomes part of the buyer’s company. This suggests that an optimistic and successful relationship is present. Alternatively, Jackson and Shaw (2001) state that not all suppliers are weak, and it is the suppliers who hold the power and use bribery in return for an order. There are a number of important differences between Hines and McGowan (2009) who believe suppliers are subordinates and Jackson and Shaw (2011) who state that not all suppliers are weak.

2.3.2. Structural Dynamics

Supply chain literature has drawn its attention to structural configuration given the increasing complexity found in modern supply chains. Prior research has examined outsourcing and supply chain vertical integration in this line of inquiry. Describing supply chains as ‘networks’ underlines the importance of the relationship between buyer and supplier. The key development of the past three decades consists of the emergence of the consumer-led global supply chains producing textiles and garments in ever accelerating cycles of design, production and distribution cycles. The value chain ranges from the production of raw materials (i.e. manufactured
fibers as well as natural) to the manufacture of a wide variety of semi-finished and finished products (Stengg, 2013). Downstream parts of the textile and garment industry, such as the clothing industry, consume the output of the upstream parts such as fabrics of all types and colours. Upstream activities are those activities that are confined to the supplier side in the supply chain for example, raw materials sourcing (Figure 8, p. 48). Downstream activities are those activities related to buyers side, for example the export and marketing of the product. Inputs from the agricultural section, such as the natural fibers (e.g. cotton or wool), are used in the production of textiles and garments, as well as inputs from the chemical industry, such as artificial fibers and chemicals used for dyeing. The apparel supply chain as seen in Figure 7 (p.47) created by Martin, 2013 has a complex structure due to independently separated divisions and a sequence of complicated processes required in each division (Sardar, 2015). Despite the fact Martin’s diagram (Figure 7, p.47) is useful for depicting the apparel supply chain, it does not illustrate the points in which the BSR come into play, it also does not show where the FFE could be located, therefore, Figure 9 (p. 50) by the author has been adapted and informed by Martin (2013) to show the changes over the decades of number of weeks in production to upstreaming and down-streaming. The quality of the work in the front end of the NPD stage as seen in Figure 8 (p.48), determines the degree of innovation and the success of innovation in the later phases, ensuring that no opportunities are missed (Jap et al, 2018). Time-consuming and labour-intensive processes in each element create difficulty in the synchronisation of various activities and obstruct the implementation of modern supply chain management practices in this industry (Sardar, 2015). Managing this supply chain has for some time been a major strategic issue of firms that are striving to secure competitive advantages, enhance BSRs and achieve success (Hines and McGowan, 2002). As
discussed previously, the time a garment spends travelling through a pipeline, from fiber to retailer, in 1980’s was 66 weeks, and of that, only 11 weeks was taken up with processing (Sardar and Lee, 2014), the balance of over one year was storage time.

*Speed to Market Shift*

These timings have changed dramatically due to FF, the time a garment spends travelling through the pipeline is now four weeks. Supply chain complexity in the apparel industry has caused the obstacles in coordination between buyer and the supplier. In the apparel supply chain, there is uneven distribution of financial benefits between manufacturer and retailer (Sardar and Lee, 2014). Except for the distribution portion of the apparel products, the dependent portion of global chains is ineffective and inefficient due to nonoptimal inventories, lead times, transportation and service levels. Recently, due to FF reshoring because of the requirement for short lead times, it has emerged due to the complexities involved in managing the dependent portion of the apparel supply chain. This situation has made it difficult for apparel companies to maintain competitive advantage in the global environment (Sardar and Lee, 2014). The move from the traditional supply chain to the FF fashion chain now needs to be investigated.
Figure 7: The Apparel Supply Chain, (Martin, 2013)
49

Downstreaming 66 weeks

Upstreaming 20 weeks

2000’s 4 weeks

Figure 8: The Apparel Supply Chain, (Martin, 2013) adapted by the author
The FF supply chain is the concept of shortening the lead time from production to distribution and offering new products to the market as fast as possible (Choi, 2013). FF retailers have to operate in a very competitive retail business market (Moon et al, 2017), that poses challenges and risks stemming from intensive globalisation, shorter product life cycles, demanding customers, higher market volatility, lower unit demand, predictability, reduced cost price pressure, increasing outsourcing, and reducing supplier bases (Moon et al, 2017; Chen et al., 2013; Bruce et al., 2004). Firms must manage the consistently changing apparel pipeline to be able to be competitive (Moon et al, 2017), see Figure 9 (p. 50) which indicates a selection of retailers and their speed to market in 2017). To establish an FF supply chain, effective and efficient supply chain management is required, buyers and suppliers need to plan and control a network of interconnected parties both internally and externally in an agile and collaborative way (Shankar et al., 2013; Doyle et al, 2006). These lineaments are driven by how well the different parties involved are synthesised and managed. Section 2.4 reviews why retailers are now reshoring (Sardar and Lee, 2012) as a result of complexities involved in managing the dependent portion of the textile supply chain. Just as FF has disrupted the traditional supply chain, changes are occurring within the FF supply chain due to the introduction of rapid fashion.
One of the key supply chain management trends in the FF/RF market sector has been the vertical disintegration and outsourcing of the production function to a global network of independent subcontractors. The expansion of free trade following the elimination of the Multi-Fibre Agreement (MFA) which governed the global trade in textiles and garments between 1974 and 2005, and imposed quotas on the amount developing countries could export to developed ones, this resulted in a greater number of apparel producers across a wider variety of countries (Abernathy et al, 2006). The extent of outsourcing is strongly related to the degree of control that a company wishes to exert across the supply chain. This is why the luxury retailers regain control over the manufacturing and distribution of their brands to sustain a consistent brand image across international markets (Fernie and Grant, 2015). The FF companies, however, have moved to both offshore sourcing and outsourcing options, over the last 20 years. Two thousand and sixteen onwards has seen an increase in 'reshoring' because of the high cost of doing business in China, it is unlikely that there will be a major upturn in traditional textile economies but more likely to boost to the economies of Eastern European suppliers to meet the demands of the UK retailers. To establish a context to these changing trends, it is firstly necessary to review the responding to market demand in the 21st century.

The evolution from the 1990’s leading into the 21st century saw the BSR transform. The UK economic situation in the 21st century seen low economic growth and in particular stagnant real wage growth, poor productivity growth, inflation contributing to a fall in disposable income. Expensive house prices and rents were contributing to intergenerational inequality, uncertainty from Brexit translation and relative poverty
and inequality. On the high street, over the last two decades, the UK has been filled with world class international retailers, stable high street anchors and innovative independents for example, Zara, Primark and Missguided. In recent years, e-commerce and m-commerce are the new channels to market and have rapidly grown in popularity, supported by pervasive fixed and mobile internet access and broadband (Department of Business, Innovation and Skills, 2016). This has contributed to a substantial increase in home delivery, and a reduction in customer footfall. These technological innovations have substantially lowered barriers to market entry, making it far easier for new online businesses to be established. Today’s competitors are not just down the road or in the next town, but throughout the country and even across borders. E-commerce is making cross-border trading much easier for retailers, both for UK companies to test and enter overseas markets, and for overseas retailers to do the same in the UK. This is rapidly increasing the global competition for UK retailers (Department of Business, Innovation and Skills, 2016). In addition, many retailers are struggling to survive in an extremely competitive environment, which has led to rapidly changing customer demand for products. Customers are demanding “faster, better, and cheaper” as well as personalisation and same-hour delivery (Drapers, 2017). The fashion industry has been forced to shorten new product development cycle times, while the newly developed products have to meet the growing expectations of the end customer (Drapers, 2016). Supply chain management has for some time been a major strategic concern of firms that are striving to secure competitive advantages, enhance buyer/supplier relationships, and achieve success (Moon, 2017). The fashion industry operates in a competitive business environment that poses challenges and risks stemming from intensive globalisation, shortening product
life cycles, rising customer expectations, higher market volatility, lower demand predictability, stronger cost reduction pressure, increasing outsourcing, and diminishing supplier bases. Firms must better manage and process ever-changing flows along the entire supply chain (Derrouiche et al., 2008). Effective and efficient supply chain management is therefore needed in order to plan and control a network of interconnected parties – internally, within a company, and/or externally, between companies – in an agile and collaborative way (Shankar et al., 2013; Doyle et al., 2006).

The Importance of buyer/supplier relationships in new product development within the UK fast fashion supply chain (Fuzzy Front End) is now imperative. Christopher (2011) explains that responding to consumer demand has always played an important role for suppliers, but it seems now there is more pressure to do this in a shorter time span. Consumers shop 24/7 and want their purchases delivered faster and to their preferred collection point; as customisation and provenance become important Christopher (2011). These increased demands have led towards greater supplier and customer involvement (Schoenherr and Swink, 2012).

While discussions in speed to market shift (p.46) demonstrated that in the 1990s, retailers focused on price to stay competitive because of the recession, in the 21st century consumer lifestyle has changed through the more demanding customer who wants newness, speed and competitive prices putting pressure on supply chains. Retailers such as Zara focused on developing integrated systems to support fast response to trends and consumer demand, developing a business model schedule ensuring that the products are released from design to store in as little as 5 weeks. Figure 10 (p.53) represents the ‘fast fashion’ business model for Zara, presenting
how they get their product to market in 5 weeks (Devangshu, 2004). Zara illustrates the emergence of ‘Fast fashion’. Bruce and Daly (2006) believed that FF has grown rapidly within the UK, creating shorter lead times and several more seasons. Similarly, Mintel (2016) states that the importance of delivering goods on time has increased due to fast fashion and more reliance has been placed on supply chains to deliver catwalk fashion to the high street quickly. Distance is key – goods from China can have a shipping time of 22 days, compared to five days from Turkey (Financial Times, 2017).

![Diagram](image)

Figure 9: Zara’s ‘Fast Fashion’ Business Model (Source: Devangshu, 2004)

![Diagram](image)

Figure 10: Relationship Management Mode Matrix (Krapfel et al, 1991).

Krapfel et al devised a relationship management model matrix, as seen in Figure 10 (p. 54). Substituting power for dependency, and recognising the power may be
balanced, or unbalanced favouring either party, yields six possible management modes. When interest commonality is high, the sellers may try to accommodate, collaborate or administer, depending on whether their perceived power position is one of weakness, balance or strength. Respectively, when interest commonality is low, sellers can submit, negotiate, or attempt to dominate, when they perceive their power to be low, balanced or high relative to the buyer (Krapfel et al, 1991).

Some high street retailers are sourcing and buying on a weekly basis to introduce new fashionable items and to replenish stock due to customer demands (Bruce and Daly, 2015). Retailers are switching to localising production Eastern Europe, Turkey and India, in response to competition from fast fashion specialists, such as Zara, this also mitigates against quality concerns and supply disruption, and escape rising product costs in China, the traditional outsourcing destination for many retail chains. Among the big names that have shifted manufacture back to domestic or near-shore locations are Burberry, Saks, American Apparel, and Brooks Brothers (Logistics Bureau, 2018). Meanwhile newer companies such as ASOS, Boohoo, and Misguided are leveraging near-shore production to introduce products to market in 5 weeks or less (Logistics Bureau, 2018). Zara itself sources around 60% of products from within European borders, predominantly in Spain (Where the companies head questers are located) and Portugal. The retailers are increasingly using time as a factor for enhancing competitiveness. Development cycles are becoming shorter, transportation and delivery more efficient and merchandising is presented “floor ready” on hangers and with tickets attached (Birtwistle et al., 2003). Responding to this fast pace environment, suppliers in the Far East are becoming increasingly adept at moving from the manufacture of commodity products to incorporating design and branding into the supply chain.
According to a recent report by Goldman Sachs “Short lead time supply chain models are yielding rapid Like-for-Like sales growth vs. the more traditional long lead time models,” (Figures 11).


Tokatli (2006) explains that Zara invested in highly responsive communication channels, so they could be inspired by trends on the catwalk, therefore a fast and innovative supply chain was needed to get trends to store quickly. They were also able to gather feedback from consumers (via direct communication with their store and regional management teams), turn it into demand data, analyse it, and respond by continuously launching new clothing ranges, which they introduce to market in around two to four weeks (Logistics Bureau, 2018). Proving that fast fashion and the Zara model had a huge impact on the industry, many other retailers followed in their footsteps suggesting that since the conception of fast fashion, suppliers have become more important. However, Christopher (2016) cited in Fernie and Sparks
(2006) explains that responding to demand has always played an important role for suppliers, but it seems now there is more pressure to do this in a shorter time span. Figure 12 compares the planning process of fashion versus basic products. The coexistence of fashion and basics calls for a dual supply chain. Moreover, the two types of products play different marketing roles. The fashion products generate customer traffic, sometime even playing the role of a loss leader, whereas the basics bring in the revenue (Caro & Martinez-de-Albeniz, 2014). That was then, this is now, in 2017 the 5-week turnaround of product has now reduced to 1 week – creating “rapid” fashion. Missguided founder and CEO Nitin Passi told Drapers in 2015, “We’re rapid fashion….if a trend comes, we need to have it on our site in under a week.” The company states it can turn samples around in one day, and it is capable of getting products to market much quicker than fast-fashion legend Zara does. The impact of the cost, speed trade-off of the fast fashion trend has had an effect on the buyer/supplier relationship in the product development process. The buyer needs to be first in the speed-to market war. The buyer/supplier relationship power has shifted, as the buyer now need to able to reply on the supplier for their cooperation to deliver the product at a faster speed.
This section has shown FF has had an impact on the BSR with the introduction of short product lifecycle, high volatility, low predictability, and a high level of impulse purchase, making such issues as quick response of paramount importance (Bruce & Daly, 2006). FF has in addition disrupted the traditional supply chain, with reshoring emerging as the new trend due to the various complexities involved in the FF supply chain (Sardar & Lee, 2015). As stated previously, research identifies the importance of supply chain integration activities contributors to an organisation’s success (Lysons and Farrington 2006). Braunscheidel and Suressh, 2009; Flynn et al., 2010; Koufteros et al., 2007; Swink et al., 2007; Wong et al., 2011 Zhao et al., 2011 all state that the integration of the supply chain increases performance. The union between the buyer and the supplier empowers firms to better manage the smooth and efficient flow of product through the supply chain. This then leads to resources and capabilities at supply chain partners that may have otherwise been costly to develop internally. One of re-occurring themes throughout this research is of cost and how FF/RF has impacted on the cost factors. To manage the flow of

Figure 12: Traditional vs. fast-fashion design-to-sales processes for a product introduced in January 2013. Source: Caro and Martínez-de-Albeniz (2013).
the product through the supply chain, the onshore-offshore shift needs to be taken into consideration. Reviewing how the supply chain responds to outsourcing.

**Onshore-offshore shift**

Mass outsourcing was facilitated by a combination of geopolitical reasons for further market needs (increased competition) and technological advancements, (Azuma and Fernie, 2004; Djelic and Ainamo, 1999). For example, in 2014, FF chain H&M used 872 suppliers from 1,964 factories world-wide (H&M, 2014). Outsourcing in the apparel industry has played an important role within globalisation over the last three decades (Sardar et al, 2015) due to FF and now RF. Manufacturer’s are under pressure from retailers as well as fabric and materials suppliers to reduce the lead-time, meet fast trends and give competitive pricing. To decrease the strain of managing thousands of items with different colours and sizes, companies outsource to domestic markets in addition to international markets. There is strong evidence that the FF industry has become globalised in nature (Choudhury & Holmgren, 2011). Globalisation has been an important development and the outsourcing of fashion products is an integral part of the fast fashion industry (Choudhury & Holmgren, 2011).

As the conventional method of supply to retailers was transformed by the new international entrants to the market, retail logisticians were faced with the challenges of dealing with shorter product life cycles, more seasons and shorter lead times while sourcing a greater amount of product offshore. For example, Next was relocated from Leeds to Leicester to be closer to suppliers (Fernie & Grant, 2015). The Quick Response (QR) concept was introduced in 1985 in the United States of American, it was a response to inefficiencies in the domestic supply chain in the wake of the Japanese textile imports and was part of the US ‘Pride with the USA’
marketing campaign to promote the purchase of US products. The QR model, strongly depended on steady demand for basic fashion products, with strong relationships developed between retailers and apparel manufacturers in relation to sharing information on both sales and inventory. Azume (2002) states that in 1990s the Japanese began to implement QR in response to Chinese imports, but he points out that Japanese firms in fact forged their success on bridge fashion with flexible specialisation through the use of a subcontracting network of process specialists in industrial clusters.

It be therefore argued that these Japanese firms along with the innovators from Europe for example, Benetton and Zara developed the network organisation in fashion retailing. Both companies draw heavily upon the ideas developed by the car manufacturer Toyota in implementing the Just-In-Time (JIT) technique (Fernie & Grant, 2015). Therefore, the capital-intensive parts of the operation for example the dyeing, weaving, knitting and cutting (figure 2) that can benefit from economies of scale are conducted in-house, products for example sewing, tailoring, finishing, pressing and quality control as well as packaging, (figure 2) are carried out by a network of sub-contractors (Camuffo et al, 2001; Tokatli, 2006; Christopher et al, 2004).

Zara and Benetton have been heralded as the leaders in creating the model to arrest the decline in domestic textile manufacturing, these companies are actually the exception to the rule. Tokatli (2006), however, questions Zara’s low-wage policy towards Portuguese and Spanish sub-contractors and points out that with global expansion the company sources as much product outside of Spain as in the domestic market. The decision that companies have been faced with since the 1990s are where to source product and whether to manage the process of end to
end supply chain coordination internally in-house or to outsource part of all the logistics functions. The products that Zara and Benetton produce domestically is their core areas centres and around luxury and upscale textile products. Other FF retailers such as H&M, who do not own their own factories within their home country, create a strong environment for global competition. Collaboration between buyers and suppliers may not be as important for basic fashion products, but for FF/rapid products, the buyers require specific technology to product an innovative fashionable product (Sheneen, 2015). The number of suppliers who are able to offer this service is limited (Costantini et al, 2013). H&M has 2653 stores in 54 countries, and Zara has 1972 stores in 89 countries. Globalisation motivates the companies to keep manufacturing facilities as close to home as possible. There is a substantial difference in unit cost in the international apparel market which further accelerates the cost-based competition. Labour accounts for about 50% of the total cost of garment (Sardar & Lee, 2013; Yu & Lindsay, 2011). Companies that outsource internationally focus on achieving cost benefits, while companies that outsource domestically focus on achieving capacity flexibility (Sardar & Lee, 2011; Groflier et al, 2013). Offshore outsourcing increases the disruption risk at a distressing level. Sheneen (2015), suggests a way to motivate the fast fashion companies to source domestically, with the idea to implementing a carbon footprint tax on all retailers.

Due to FF/RF the product life cycle had to speed up, retailers have faced increasing challenges of managing the trade-off between cost and lead time in offshore sourcing. FF/RF lines are often produced closer to home to avoid missing the short window of the selling season. The UK retailers are utilising global dispersion of the fashion supply chain to places such as Turkey and Eastern Europe, to avoid the
long shipping times from Asia as well as they are locations that mediate between the demands of cost, quality and responsiveness/distance (Tokatli et al, 2010).

Fernie and Sparks (2009) state that when buyers have a tight hold over suppliers, they drive down prices to levels that make production unsustainable. Leading to unethical issues; some buyers use power to impose unfair trading terms on their suppliers, including last minute changes to orders resulting in long working hours and low incomes (González-Calatayud, 2008). This indicates that buyers use power in the wrong way, creating negative effects for the supplier’s business. Similarly, Elliot and Rider (2000) suggest that buyers use power to control their suppliers to dictate prices. Using power in a negative way, making suppliers feel under pressure to perform.

*Domestic-to-global shift*

The onshore-offshore shift has now moved from the domestic-to-global shift, with Fernie and Azume, (2004) confirmed that the predominant trend of FF/RF retailers moving to mass offshore sourcing and outsourcing is due to geopolitics and technological advancements. The model adopted for the international fashion supply chain has been the design, sourcing, distribution model rather than the vertically integrated model utilised by Benetton and Zara as see in Figure 13 (p. 63). Due to complexity and labour intensity of garment manufacture, the nature of offshore sourcing is dictated by the nature of the product, availability of raw materials and a large workforce, lead times and cost as seen in Figure 3 (p. 36)
2.4. Dimensions of Collaboration: A BSR View

From the literature, BSR have an interorganisational perspective and only a few incorporate an interpersonal perspective. This observation was surprising when considering that collaboration between two companies builds on the interaction between boundary spanners in the relationship. Oxford English Dictionary (2018), describe boundary spanners as individuals within an innovation system who have, or adopt, the role of linking the organisation’s internal networks with external sources of information. When the interpersonal aspects of collaboration are discussed, there are three re-occurring themes: (1) the impact of emotional ties; (2) the role of trust; and (3) the importance of relationship maintenance (Van de Vijver, 2014).
Andersen and Kumar (2006) stress the importance of emotions on interpersonal relationships and show with several case studies how interpersonal emotions of boundary spanning personnel influence the development of BSR. The key role of boundary spanners in collaboration efforts is supported by Hutt et al. (2000), who emphasises the importance of analysing interpersonal aspects of collaboration in their work on joint product development alliances. Complementary work has been done by Bagozzi (2006), whose conceptual article focuses on the role of positive and negative emotions in salesperson-customer interactions in business-to-business relationships.

Some authors who have researched an interpersonal perspective have focused on the role of trust. Van de Vijver (2014) describe interpersonal trust as “the confidence that two individuals place in each other”. They state that interpersonal trust has the most positive impact on situations where there are low levels of opportunism. Conversely, when opportunism is high, interpersonal trust is less effective in preserving relationship outcomes. In another contribution, Anderson and Jap (2018) introduce the “dark side of collaboration”, which implies that high levels of trust in a BSR may induce opportunistic behaviour of one of the parties. So, while strong relationships with a high level of trust can create flexibility and responsiveness that may benefit the relationship, opportunism will negatively influence relationship outcomes. Narayandas and Rangan (2004) distinguish between trust and commitment by regarding trust an interpersonal construct and commitment an interorganisational phenomenon. Hence, according to them, one of the key drivers of successful collaboration, trust, emerges between individuals (interpersonal) rather than between organisations. They go on to say that while trust does have a positive influence on the development of interorganisational commitment, there is no such reverse relationship. Tellefsen and Thomas (2004) have a different
perspective on commitment, they view it as having both organisational and personal dimensions and arguing that both influence the relationship between the customer firm and the supplier. Perrone et al. (2003) focus on the role of interpersonal trust between boundary-spanners. Their findings suggest that boundary spanners with greater autonomy to manage interorganisational relationships are better able to cultivate trust from their counterparts (Perrone et al. 2003). Finally, Jeffries and Reed (2000) look at the role of interpersonal trust in BSR. Their results indicate that too much affective trust reduces the motivation of negotiators and so may be as harmful as too little trust. Indeed, they suggest that buyers should be rotated frequently to prevent the development of unduly high levels of affective trust.

The merit of developing and maintaining BSR, Welling and Kamann (2001) look at how personal contacts influence vertical cooperation. Bendapudi and Leone (2002) study the role of boundary spanners in buyer/supplier relationships. More specifically, they focus on what business-to-business customers most value in their relationships with key contact employees. Ulaga (2003) also stresses the value of interpersonal ties and personal relationships. Bettencourt et al. (2002) take a different approach as they focus on the customer in business-to-business relationships and find that the level of co-production is especially important in knowledge-intensive industries. All these studies indicate the importance of personal contacts in developing collaborative BSRs, but largely fail to show the role individuals can play in positive as well as negative relationship development. Hodson and Jie (2017) state engaging the suppliers in the early stages (NPD) of the supply chain process, you need to embed the supplier’s designers within the retailer’s head office. There is a growing recognition that the management of buyer/supplier activities offers significant opportunities for companies to create strategic advantage and achieve extraordinary financial performance. The Bose
Corporation allows suppliers to work on-site place orders for themselves and manage stock inventories. As a result, Bose has reduced significantly unnecessary inventories, eliminated redundant purchasing agents and received cost-savings tips due to the suppliers' increased familiarity with Bose (Jap, 2018). The suppliers have increased their business, received information on competitors, and learned general process and management information that can be used in customer relationships elsewhere.

Buyers are developing their suppliers' and building stronger relationships to be able to keep ahead within the current FF market, suppliers have become a true partner, synergising in a partnership (Hodson and Jie, 2017). Close collaborations also may bear significant risks (Harringan, 1985), the process of creating strategic advantages requires sharing of sensitive cost and process information and creating unique investments to support the dyad’s efforts (Jap, 2018). This can reduce bargaining power and increase exposure to opportunism. Therefore, these realities beg the questions of if and when such close relationships are effective. Do companies in such relationships experience outcomes that make the process worthwhile, or are they merely engaging in ephemeral processes with short-term, immediate payoffs?

Parsons (2002) looks at the role of interpersonal and interorganisational aspects on relationship quality and finds a positive relationship between interpersonal communication and relationship quality. Kamann et al. (2006) study reviewed whether a shared past and future can preclude problems and distinguish between the organisational and individual level. They found that a shared future at the organisational level only affects marginal problems in a current relationship. However, when there is an expected future at the individual level, there is a small,
but significant impact on the likelihood of problems within the relationship (Kamann et al. 2006).

Summarising, Kamann, (2006): Harringan, (1985): Welling and Kamann, (2001), have highlighted the important role of interpersonal aspects in the development of BSRs. Yet studies that indeed focused on the interpersonal dimension of such relationships, and on the effect of interaction between individuals on interorganisational relationship development, are scarce. Van de Vijver, (2014) states the development of collaborative relationships is determined by the dynamics at various levels in an organisation. First, experiences at operational level may influence tactical and strategic level and vice versa. Second, different dynamics may exist in different geographical regions within the same global collaborative relationship. For example, the interaction in a global partnership between two UK based companies may well be experienced and operated in a different manner in other regions of the world. Such geographical differences, as well as differences in perceptions of the collaborative agreement between different levels of the organisations, can put pressure on BSR development (Vijver, 2014). Before proceeding to further analyse the BSR to date, we must understand how the BSR has progressed throughout the last three decades.

2.4.1. Commitment

In order to create a strong partnership between buyers and suppliers, commitment needs to be apparent with a smaller supply base preferred creating a successful relationship (Elliot and Rider, 2000). One criticism of this literature is a smaller supply base causes risks to both parties. Campbell (1997) believes that relationships should be based on long-term commitment and the sharing of benefits
and risks is important. Similarly, Ellram (1991) defines buyer-supplier relationships as agreements that involve commitment.

Singhs and Hodges (2011) believe commitment should be two sided and is equally important to both supplier and buyer but Hill et al (2009) believe suppliers are committed to buyers and are willing to share details of production planning, suggesting power controls commitment in the relationship.

Several authors have discussed the link between trust and commitment. Morgan and Hunt (1994) developed the trust-commitment key mediating variable theory in relationship marketing. Narayandas and Rangan (2004) consider commitment an inter-organisational construct and trust inter-personal, where inter-personal trust contributes to inter-organisational commitment, not vice-versa. Empirical results provide support for the hypothesis that there is a positive relationship between trust and commitment (De Ruyter et al. 2001).

2.4.2. Trust

Trust is about having confidence in a partner and being able to rely on them (Moorm an et al, 1992) and if there is mutual trust then each party will be committed (Morgan and Hunt, 1994). Lyson s and Farrington (2006) believe if trust is apparent and each party want to help and learn from each other than dependable buyer-supplier relationships can be achieved. Trust can also be included in a broader sense of transaction costs, institutions and economic performance (TCE) (Williams, 1970s and Arrow 1970s), trust brings in the social capital dimension of business (Lin, Granovetter, Burt, 2015). Trust forms strong bonds, without it, there cannot be a relationship. Similarly, Campbell (1997) explores the relationship as a ‘marriage’ that each party can rely on each other 100% of the time and trust is high. However,
a ‘marriage’ could suggest the relationship is personal, which is not ideal for this situation, it should remain ‘business like’, otherwise buying and selling decisions become blurred and irrational (Jackson and Shaw, 2001). This literature could be questioned as if trust and communication are needed, then the relationship needs to be more personal. Fowdar and Labiache (2005) argue that trust is the most important factor in the relationship and leads to mutual success, stating that commitment and communication are less important and more of a by-product of trust. If the supplier shows trust then the buyer will trust back, portraying again the overriding theme of power. Similarly, Thomas et al (2004) explores the theory that each buyer sees trust differently; some as confidentiality and others as reliability. The supplier must figure out how this trust should be formed in order to keep the buyer’s business successful.

Trust is an important aspect, but many authors believe that trust is not common in the relationship. For example, Hill et al (2009) found that some suppliers do not believe buyers are trust worthy or honest however, Singhs and Hodges (2011) argue suppliers can become too eager to please and may twist the truth in order to keep buyers happy. Suggesting the suppliers are not trust worthy, but this could imply they are keeping the truth hidden, as they may be scared of the consequences if the truth is known. Campbell (1997) argues there is no correlation between a buyer’s trust in the supplier and vice versa, suggesting that trust can only be an important factor in the relationship if it is mutual. Valtakoski (2014) states, trust, a control construct in the literature (e.g. Ganesan, 1994: Moorman et al., 1992: Morgan & Hunt, 1994), has been conceptualised as both an antecedent and a consequence of other relationship factors. Much of the literature has disregarded the potential impact of the relationship lifecycle. As suggested by Wilson (1995) and tested
empirically by multiple authors (Claycomb & Frankwick, 2010; Jap & Ganesan, 2000), the impact of trust varies over the relationship’s lifecycle. Critically for supply chains, the presence of trust reduces risk and increases efficiency.

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Similarly, Campbell (1997) explores the relationship as a ‘marriage’ that each party can rely on each other 100% of the time and trust is high. However, a ‘marriage’ could suggest the relationship is personal, which is not ideal for this situation, it should remain ‘business like’, otherwise buying and selling decisions become blurred and irrational (Jackson and Shaw, 2001). This literature could be questioned as if trust and communication are needed, then the relationship needs to be more personal. Fowdar and Labiache (2005) argue that trust is the most important factor in the relationship and leads to mutual success, stating that commitment and communication are less important and more of a by-product of trust. If the supplier shows trust then the buyer will trust back, portraying again the overriding theme of power. Similarly, Thomas et al (2004) explores the theory that each buyer sees trust differently; some as confidentiality and others as reliability. The supplier must figure out how this trust should be formed in order to keep the buyer’s business successful. Singhs and Hodges (2011) believe trust forms the basis of any relationship and if there is no trust then there is no point in the relationship. Varley (2001) believes
there are two types of relationships; one of trust and mutuality, or one of conflict. Suggesting if there is no trust then there will be conflict; the value of this literature could be questioned, as not all relationships lacking trust cause conflict. It also seems the length of time is a strong factor in successful relationships. Varley (2001) states a relationship that has developed over time tends to be trusting and co-operative.

Trust is an important aspect, but many authors believe that trust is not common in the relationship. For example, Hill et al (2009) found that some suppliers do not believe buyers are trust worthy or honest however, Singhs and Hodges (2011) argue suppliers can become too eager to please and may twist the truth in order to keep buyers happy. Suggesting the suppliers are not trust worthy, but this could imply they are keeping the truth hidden, as they may be scared of the consequences if the truth is known. Campbell (1997) argues there is no correlation between a buyer’s trust in the supplier and vice versa, suggesting that trust can only be an important factor in the relationship if it is mutual. Valtakoski (2014) states, trust, a control construct in the literature (e.g. Ganesan, 1994: Moorman et al., 1992: Morgan & Hunt, 1994), has been conceptualised as both an antecedent and a consequence of other relationship factors. Much of the literature has disregarded the potential impact of the relationship lifecycle. As suggested by Wilson (1995) and tested empirically by multiple authors (Claycomb & Frankwick, 2010); Jap & Ganesan, 2000), the impact of trust varies over the relationship’s lifecycle. Critically for supply chains, the presence of trust reduces risk and increases efficiency.
2.4.3. Collaboration Quality/Satisfaction

Singhs and Hodges, 2011; Ellram, 1991; Hill et al., (2009) concentrate on drivers of satisfaction in business relationships. Crosby et al. (1990) examine relationship quality in services selling and consider satisfaction and trust as key constructs of relationship quality. Anderson and Narus (1994, pp. 66) define satisfaction as “a positive affective state resulting from the appraisal of all aspects of a firm’s working relationship with another firm.” This definition is also used by Morgan & Hunt (1994) although they make a further distinction between economic and non-economic satisfaction in their meta-analytical study of satisfaction in marketing channel relationships. Economic satisfaction is related to the economic rewards of a relationship, whereas non-economic satisfaction covers psychological aspects of the relationship, such as the level and quality of interaction with the exchange partner. Satisfaction is considered a performance outcome of alliances in the strategic management literature. For example, Ariño et al., (2003) uses separate measures for specific areas of an alliance, but also includes an item to assess the overall satisfaction with the results of the venture. Chandrashekaran et al., (2007) provide yet another perspective on the role of satisfaction in channel marketing literature. They suggest using level and strength as separate facets of satisfaction. Strength is determined by the variance in the distribution of the satisfaction scores. Their studies in business-to-consumer and business-to-business settings demonstrate that satisfaction strength is an important factor in explaining the relation between stated satisfaction and loyalty. In summary, there are several ways to look at satisfaction as a performance outcome. Distinguishing between economic and non-economic satisfaction, viewing satisfaction as a construct with satisfaction level and strength as underlying facets, and considering overall satisfaction with a relationship are the perspectives described in this section.
Commitment, trust, dependency, and satisfaction are the core elements within this section. Reviewing these perceptual differences of the key aspects between BSR and also between people working at strategic and tactical levels within the organisations. In doing this, it can be identified that informant selection may influence the assessment of key relationship variables.

2.4.4. Information Sharing

Singhs and Hodges (2011) believe that communication is key in the relationship, and a common understanding is achieved by sharing information and ideas. Communication is critical, helping to avoid misunderstandings and decreasing errors. Similarly, Hill et al (2009) found buyers believe that communication and the exchange of information are important to sustain a good relationship and that the longer the relationship, the stronger the communication. It is therefore, possible that BSR power dynamic is expressed/determined by the communication dynamic.

Hartley et al (1997) also believes that communication is the key aspect of the relationship and forms mutual respect leading to a reduction in delays and an improved quality of production. However, he describes communication as being reliant on the supplier not the buyer, highlighting the element of power. Similarly, Hill et al (2009) believes suppliers think that communication is important, but buyers do not have strong communication skills suggesting that buyers hold the power in terms of communication, only offering accurate information to gain something.

Fowdar and Labiche (2005) state that communication has to be a two-way process and can only be beneficial if both parties are equally effective at communicating. Campbell (1997), who believes communication is not important, has challenged this theory stating a good relationship cannot be formed when sharing exclusive information, he does not however indicate a reason for this opinion, suggesting
unreliable literature. Shared reticent literature presents difference conclusions. Overall, communication can be considered an important factor; buyers believe that suppliers should communicate everything, and suppliers believe they are forced to communicate; suggesting that power is integral to the relationship.

2.5. Chapter Summary

Barnes and Lea-Green (2009), state, that Zara and H&M have both identified that BSRs are crucial to the success of both parties. Whilst Dwyer et al. (1987) posit that traditional relationships develop towards long-term inter-organisational relationships through a predictable, stable series of events in a fixed order, Ring and Van de Ven (1994) describe a continuous and interactive cycle of events (Jap and Anderson, 2007). Based on these differences in development patterns, Dwyer et al., (1987) and Ring and Van de Ven (1994) have different predictions concerning problems that might arise in the relationship. This is also supported by Arino and de la Toerre (1998), who found that positive feedback loops are critical to build mutual trust and confidence in the relationship. If the relationship is ineffective this can cause problems including unethical processes, high prices, reduced production times and can lead to a reduced business.

The literature review has successfully provided secondary research on BSRs, NPD stage and the supply chain management concept centralises the importance of collaboration, integrated and trust-based working as key to efficiency and risk reduction. Hodson and Jie (2017) identified the BSR within the NPD stage at the FFE was at first messy and complicated, due to FF and the demands from the customers for “faster, better and cheaper” product. The BSR had to keep up with the changing pace of the retail market, they state that collaboration has been defined as the new way forward in moving from the FFE to a more focused solution. The themes that came through that collaboration relies upon were power, trust,
communication, length of relationship, reducing supply base, co-ordination, commitment, flexibility, dependence and incentives. One of the primary motivations for engaging in collaborative activities is to achieve competitive advantages, for example, superior access to resources, decreased supply, inventory costs, development of unique process technologies (Jap, 2018). Porter (1991, p.108) underscores this by noting that “Resources are only meaningful in the context of performing certain activities to achieve certain competitive advantages.” Competitive advantages are defined as strategic benefits gained over competing dyads that enable the dyad to compete more effectively in the market place.

With the FF model in place, the focus moving towards Figure 14 (Cox, 2003), demonstrates that when a buyer and supplier interact there are at least two fundamental aspects to the relationship. The first is the way of working, which refers to the level of operational linkage between the two parties. Operationally buyers and suppliers can choose to make few dedicated investments in their relationships and operate on a fairly short-term contractual basis (Cox, 2003). This arm’s length way of working (as seen in the 1980’s) involves the buyer providing only basic specification, volume and timing information to the supplier, with the supplier providing the buyer with limited specification, timing and pricing information. The alternative way of working (as seen in the 21st century) known as collaboration. Under the collaborative relationship approach the buyer and supplier make extensive dedicated investments in the relationship. Therefore, the complexity of any collaborative relationship required safeguarding and coordinating collaborative mechanisms. This suggests that there is room for further investigation into the dedicated investments in the relationship.
Figure 14: Relationship portfolio analysis (Cox, 2003)

Figure 15: A framework for buyer–supplier relationship types. (Cox, 2003)
Cox states there are six generic buyer/supplier relationship management types. These are shown in Figure 16. This framework is similar to that of Krapfel et al., (1991) Figure 10, but looks at the issue of buyer/supplier relationships from the perspective of both parties to the relationship. This is the case both in terms of the identification of alternative relationship types and in terms of the identification of alternative transactional circumstances.

Cox in 2003 in his relationship portfolio analysis, (Figure 14) showed that in order to align business relationships appropriately buyers and supplier had to adopt the power and relationship linkages. He went on to state when a buyer and supplier interact there are at least two fundamental aspects to the relationship. The first was the way of working, which refers to the level of operational linkage between the two

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BUYER DOMINANT ARM’S LENGTH RELATIONSHIP</th>
<th>BUYER-SUPPLIER RECIPROCAL ARM’S LENGTH RELATIONSHIP</th>
<th>SUPPLIER DOMINANT ARM’S LENGTH RELATIONSHIP</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Short-term operational relationship, with limited close working between buyer and supplier</td>
<td>• Short-term operational relationship, with limited close working between buyer and supplier</td>
<td>• Short-term operational relationship, with limited close working between buyer and supplier</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Buyer adversarially appropriates most of the commercial value created and sets price and quality trade-offs</td>
<td>• Buyer accepts current market price and quality trade-offs</td>
<td>• Supplier adversarially appropriates most of the commercial value created and sets price and quality trade-offs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Supplier is non-adversarial commercially and a willing supplicant, accepting work rather than high margins/profitability from the relationship</td>
<td>• Supplier accepts normal (low) market returns</td>
<td>• Buyer is a non-adversarial commercially and is willing supplicant, paying whatever is required to receive given quality standards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Buyer Dominance power situation (p)</td>
<td>• Both buyer and supplier operate adversarially commercially whenever possible, but normally have few leverage opportunities</td>
<td>• Supplier Dominance power situation (q)</td>
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<tr>
<th>BUYER DOMINANT COLLABORATIVE RELATIONSHIP</th>
<th>BUYER-SUPPLIER RECIPROCAL COLLABORATIVE RELATIONSHIP</th>
<th>SUPPLIER DOMINANT COLLABORATIVE RELATIONSHIP</th>
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<tr>
<td>• Long-term operational relationship, with extensive and close working between buyer and supplier</td>
<td>• Long-term operational relationship, with extensive and close working between buyer and supplier</td>
<td>• Long-term operational relationship, with extensive and close working between buyer and supplier</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Buyer adversarially appropriates most of the commercial value created and sets price and quality trade-offs</td>
<td>• Buyer and supplier share relatively equally the commercial value created</td>
<td>• Supplier adversarially appropriates most of the commercial value created and sets price and quality trade-offs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Supplier is a non-adversarial supplicant commercially, and accepts work rather than high margins/profitability from the relationship</td>
<td>• Buyer and supplier agree price and quality trade-offs, with supplier making more than normal returns</td>
<td>• Buyer is a non-adversarial supplicant and commercially, and pays whatever is required to receive given quality standards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Buyer Dominance power situation (p)</td>
<td>• Both buyer and supplier operate non-adversarially commercially</td>
<td>• Supplier Dominance power situation (q)</td>
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<th>WHO APPROPRIATES VALUE FROM THE RELATIONSHIP?</th>
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<td>BUYER DOMINANCE</td>
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Figures 16: Value appropriation, power and relationship management styles. (Cox, 2003)
parties. Operationally buyers and suppliers could choose to make few dedicated investments in their relationships and operate on a fairly short-term contractual basis (Cox, 2003). On the other hand, the alternative way of working (as seen in the 21st century) known as collaboration. Under the collaborative relationship, approach the buyer and supplier make extensive dedicated investments in the relationship.

Cox in 2003 established a correlation between power and leverage circumstances and appropriate relationship management styles and sourcing options. He went in to great detail by considering when buyers and suppliers both manage these three elements appropriately then relationship alignment rather than misalignment is achieved (Cox et al., 2004). However, since 2003, the research on BSR in understanding the FF marketplace has been touched upon by Shankar et al, (2013) and Doyle et al, (2006) who state effective and efficient supply chain management is needed in order to plan and control a network of interconnected parties, in an agile and collaborative way. Yet, still no consideration for the BSR concept in rapid fashion. This is therefore weak; this research will review what Cox established and what Shankar et al and Doyle et al established, but these are no longer appropriate for the NPD in this rapid environment, the best way of working is yet to be established, therefore, this research will investigate the best way forward.

These findings based upon the mapping and critical evaluation of the literature has delineated a gap in the literature from 1980’s – 2019, on the BSR in the product development process of the UK fast fashion market. The aim of this research was derived through the recognition and evaluation of key debates related to the BSR in the NPD stage for the UK fast fashion market as show in. To understand why collaboration within the NPD stage is important highlights the issue within supply
chains and the impact of this upon BSR. The literature has critically analysed the theoretical development of the BSR within the context of the NPD in the fashion supply chain, which specifically focused on the collaborative relation. It also critically evaluated the interpersonal/inter-organisational dynamic of the BSR within a UK based fast-fashion context. Therefore, what is written can be rendered as out of date, as the UK retail high street has seen over the last three decades such change of pace and this pace continues on a daily basis within the retail environment. The methodology will determine the critical dimensions of collaboration within the BSR within the contemporary fashion supply chain, adopting a mixed method approach.

To conclude, the key factors in the BSR that are at present influential upon the success of the BSR in FF and RF are; the arm’s length approach’ found in the 1980’s or the ‘collaboration approach’ found 2018. For collaboration to be achieved you require; power, trust, communication, length of relationship, reducing supply base, co-ordination, commitment, flexibility, dependence and incentives. As demonstration in the literature review, there are still areas of the unknown and gaps within the current literature due to the fast pace of the retail environment. This research will fill these gaps and provide a framework to give an up to date exploration on the collaborative buyer and supplier relationships applied to the product development stage in the contemporary UK fast fashion and rapid fashion market. Chapter three will inform the reader of the methodological approach this thesis will take to establish a versant approach to the concept of collaboration within the BSR in the NPD stage.
3.0 Chapter 3 - Research Methodology

3.1. Introduction

This chapter presents the research methodology used in this thesis. The following section 3.1 presents the research design based upon Saunders et al. (2009)’s research design framework. Discussion that follows considers the research philosophy (3.1.1), research approach (3.1.2), research strategy and choice (3.1.5) and research techniques (3.1.7) which includes the sampling of cases, the case study protocol, ethical concerns, pilot study, data collection and the units of analysis and finally data analysis. Prior to the 1980s ‘the arm’s length’ way of working involved the buyer providing only basic specification, volume and timing information to the supplier, with the supplier providing the buyer with limited specification, timing and pricing information. Following the introduction to FF saw Hodson and Jie (2017) identify the BSR within the NPD stage at the FFE was at first messy and complicated, The BSR had to keep up with the changing pace of the retail market. They stated that collaboration had been defined as the new way forward.

In concluding the literature review, it was identified that BSR has to keep up with the rapidly changing pace of the retail marketplace. Preliminary findings suggest that the two fundamental aspects of the buyer and supplier relationship are grounded in either ‘the arm’s length approach’ predominant in the 1980’s or ‘the collaboration approach’ which emerged 2018. Collaboration was found to be the new way forward to achieve more focused solutions in today’s retail market but considered less in the literature, which is where a gap is found. This is worthy of further investigation as
the findings from Cox et al. (2003) established a correlation between power and leverage circumstances, appropriate relationship management styles and sourcing options. Neither are those of Shankar et al (2013) and Doyle et al (2006) who stated effective and efficient supply chain management is needed in order to plan and control a network of interconnected parties in an agile and collaborative way. Given the nature of the gap in the current literature it is evident that these types of methods would be useful in exposing the dynamic of the BSR within a UK based FF context.

Following analysis of the literature review, the key themes of power, trust, communication, length of relationship, reducing supply base, co-ordination, commitment, flexibility, dependence and incentives emerged as those worthy of further investigation. Given these themes, the case study analysis and interviews were used to uncover key factors relating to the critical dimensions of collaboration within the BSR (Yin, 2014). It is evident that these types of methods would be useful in exposing the gaps. Having considered various research methods, it would appear on the face of it, that these two are good because they will identify a conceptual framework, which will identify the key factors that improve and/or mitigate the impact of collaboration within the BSR. Before deciding the approach to take in terms of case studies and interviews, the researcher has to consider their philosophical stance.

3.2. Research Methodological Design

The research design is an important aspect to explain and justify the type of data to be collected, the how and where it is to be collected and the how it is to be analysed, interpreted and presented (Yin, 2014). It links the data to be collected and the conclusions drawn to the research questions (Yin, 2009). There are several frameworks developed to guide research design. One being Creswell (2009) who
highlights three broad components of the research design e.g. the philosophical positioning of research (world view), the strategy of inquiry and the specific methods and procedures to be used. Saunders et al. (2009), (Figure 17 p. 82), also developed a research framework which they labeled ‘research onion’ with the following layers: philosophies, research approaches, research strategies, research choices, techniques and procedures. The researcher needs to consider the different layers of the onion, which represent: the philosophical orientation of the researcher; the research approach adopted; appropriate research strategies; the research time lines that are under review; and the data collection techniques employed by the researcher.

![Research Onion Diagram](image)

Figure: 17: The research process onion (Saunders et al., 2009:83)

3.2.1. Research Philosophy

Given the nature of the problem, researched in this study, a more constructivist ontological approach coupled with an interpretivist epistemological stance would guide a deductive form of research. This will enable the development to a
conceptual framework identify the key factors that improve and/or mitigate the impact of collaboration within the BSR to emerge.

The constructivist approach adopts a subjective stance to knowledge acquisition and research, asserts that all knowledge is perceived differently by individual social actors, and is constructed according to varying culturally specific meanings (Coghlan & Brydon-Miller, 2014). The questions of social ontology are concerned with the nature of social entities. Bryman (2016) states the central point of orientation is the question of whether social entities can and should be considered objective entities that have a reality external to social actors, or whether they can and should be considered social constructions built up from the perceptions and actions of social actors (Bryman, 2016). The research will also adopt an interpretivist epistemological stance and a deductive research approach. Interpretivists emphasise the value of lived experiences in developing knowledge and understanding of a phenomenon. The qualitative research approach is an interpretive and subjective approach and is based on the meanings that are attached to actions, decisions, beliefs, and values within the social world (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). It is particularly useful in examining social, emotional, or experiential phenomena, to understand impacts of setting and culture, and to highlight links between phenomena (University of York, 2009). Qualitative research methods can include content analysis, questionnaires, focus groups, or interviews (University of York, 2009).

This philosophical approach is highly appropriate for this thesis, as the researcher has been a buyer for 20 plus years in the retail industry and has seen changes within the BSR in the NPD stages. This experience has enabled the researcher to understand the dynamics, of the BSR, however, the researcher understands the critical dimensions of collaboration within the BSR, given work experience and what
this thesis wants to uncover, it is very clear that this philosophical approach is aliened to the researcher and aliened to the problem.

3.2.2. Research Approach

Saunders et al. (2009), research approach refers to whether the research is inductive or deductive. Combining both approaches in a single study is also possible and productive (Saunders et al. 2009). Deductive research begins with the theoretical framework developed from the prior literature and formulates the hypotheses of propositions that should be tested empirically. A purely inductive research process begins with empirical observations prior to any theoretical framework and aims at theory building (Kovacs & Spens, 2005). Whether there is a need to develop theory prior to empirical data collection is still debatable. Eisenhardt (1989) argues that the requirement for theory-building research to begin as close as possible to the idea of no theory under consideration is impossible to achieve. Nevertheless, to gain more valuable results, it is advised that researchers should allow room for flexibility in order to change positions between a strong theoretical background and a loose inductive design (Koulikoff-Sourviron & Harrison, 2005). To fulfil the aim of the research presented in this study, a range of sources which were used to analyse, and critique previous research published in academic publications, journals, databases, academic books and online sources.

This research began with a deductive approach by reviewing the literature in order to identify the knowledge gaps and develop research questions to guide the data collection. Therefore, an inductive approach was used during the interview data collection and analysis via in-depth examination of issues relating to the research questions this was in order to understand the BSR worked. The approach of combining both deductive and inductive approaches in one study is referred to as
an abductive approach (Dubois & Gabbde, 2002). This research aimed to describe what is happening, but also why and how it is happening (Saunders et al., 2009). This study adopted a largely inductive approach where the aim was to generate explanation from analysis as there was no commitment to preconceived theory. Figure 19 p.86) follows the research approach taken by the author.

3.2.3. Quantitative Research

Quantitative data is useful when understanding beliefs around complex topic issues (Sauro, 2015). Quantitative research is associated with questionnaires and observations but is relevant to a range of different research methods (Denscombe, 2010). An advantage of quantitative research is its scientific approach, therefore often seen as unbiased as it follows rules rather than values. Limitations include the researcher suffering from statistical overload and the quality of the results depends highly on methods used to collect it (Denscombe, 2010). A way to analyse quantitative data is through coding, where participant responses are numerically assigned a number to allow further analysis (Bryman, 2016).

3.2.4. Qualitative Research

Qualitative research typically reviews the understanding behaviours. It involves collecting and analysing information in non-numerical forms, such as observations, textual or visual analysis (e.g. from books or videos) and interviews (individual or group) by exploring detail, to gain depth (Blaxter et al, 2010). It is used in case studies and interviews (Denscombe, 2010). Both qualitative and quantitative research enables the researcher to gain new understandings of a certain topic (Leedy and Ormrod, 2010). Limitations include it being time consuming to process the results and an experienced researcher is needed for the generation of good
quality data (Monsen and Horn, 2008). An advantage is that some see it as more valid, as it has depth (Blaxter et al, 2010).

Figure 18: Research Approach, Author (2019)

Given the epistemological stance and the ontological stance, to maximise the quality of the research process and adapting Kvale (2007) seven stages to maximise the quality of the research process, the researcher has shown in Figure 18 the thesis research methods.
7 Stages to maximise the quality of the research process | The researcher’s methods
---|---
Rationale behind the study/problem | This thesis the researcher will examine the concept of collaboration within the BSR in the NPD stage.
Research Objectives | The researcher’s aims and objectives
Research hypothesis | Researcher’s 20 plus years in industry and the changing retail marketplace.
Research design | Case studies to establish the business followed by Semi-structured interviews
Sampling Plan | Three buyers and three suppliers to be interviewed.
Instrumental development and pilot testing | One buyer to be piloted to test the interview questions.
Data Collection & analysis tools | Three case studies of the retailer establishing the business followed by three semi-structured interviews with buyers and three with suppliers.
Limitations of the study | Small sample size of three buyers and three suppliers.

Table 1: Research Methods Adapted from Kvale (2007)

3.2.5. Research Strategy

The research has been designed according to the researcher’s philosophical stance. Having gained an understanding of research methods, it was considered that case studies and semi-structured interviews were the most appropriate methodologies to use to meet the aims of this project and to align with the philosophical perspective to demonstrate integrity within the research design. The research will use a multiple case study and interview method. The data collection for these methods will be done through semi-structured interviews. The research design process has been accessed through businesses, then accessed
through interviewees within that business, coupled with the methods, case study and interviews are the robust design for this research.

As the literature review conclusion, what has been written about the collaboration between the BSR is rendered as dated, as the UK retail high street has seen a vast change of pace, therefore, semi-structured interviews are the chosen methodology for this study, to collect qualitative research through gaining an understanding of prevalent respondent’s opinions (McLeod, 2017). In examining case study research within the context of business, Meyer (2001) asserts that the most important design decisions are: the selection of cases, including how many should be used; the sampling time, inclusive of how many times data should be collected, when to enter organisations, whether to collect data on a continuous basis or during distinct periods; choosing the business areas, divisions, and sites, and ensuring their relevance or representativeness; and the selection of data collection procedures (Meyer, 2001). Piekkari et al. (2009) extend these design decisions and suggests that the design decisions of case study research should also include the philosophical foundations of the research, whether it is variable or case-oriented, the selection of the cases, the selection of data collection sources, and the setting of the study’s boundaries. Gillam (2009) believes semi-structured interviews are significant because of the flexibility and quality of data obtained, the data the researcher will gather, will be up to date that is relevant to the UK retail high street now. Kvale (1996) points out the researchers can press for complete, clear answers during semi-structured interviews and can “probe” into emerging topics to broaden the scope of understanding. According to Dornyei (1997:140), a ‘good’ qualitative interview has two key features; it flows naturally, and it is rich in detail and captures present information. Talmy (2010) asserts interviewees should be given an opportunity to voice additional comments or questions. The character of this study
results from the joint use of case studies and interviews with each of the buyer and supplier informants to obtain more detailed information on their perception of (aspects of) their collaborative relationship. In the following sub-chapters design decisions will be considered in detail.

3.2.5.1. Method One - Case Studies

Case studies enable the researcher to analyse a particular individual or event over time. Two or more cases can be studied in order to make comparisons, increasing knowledge and offering preliminary support for the methodology (Leedy and Ormrod, 2014). Similarly, they can be a useful starting point to gain ideas for future research (Kumar 2008) since they increase the researcher's knowledge on a particular subject and help structure future research (Merriam, 2009). They also allow for the collection of both quantitative and qualitative data, increasing validation of the research (Denscombe, 2010) however because they are very specific they are not always applicable to all situations (Leedy and Ormrod, 2010).

Case study research is widely used in research on collaborative buyer/supplier relationships in the areas of marketing and operations management. The use of case studies is less common in strategic management literature. Case study research is an empirical inquiry of phenomena in their real-life context and has the following characteristics (Yin 2003, pp.13-14):

- Copes with the technically distinctive situations in which there will be many more variables of interest than data points
- Relies on multiple sources of evidence, with data needing to converge in a triangulating fashion
• Benefits from the prior development of theoretical propositions to guide data collection and analysis.

There are different types of case studies. Eisenhardt and Graebner (2007) discuss how multiple case studies are used for theory building. The main strength of case study research is the closeness with the data, while ensuring the objective character of the theory-building process. Siggelkow (2007), also stresses the persuasiveness and strength of case study research and states that even single case studies can be extremely powerful. This is especially true when the researcher is able to present something new or unique. In Siggelkow’s terminology, such unique and powerful case studies are called “talking pigs”. Furthermore, Siggelkow (2007) argues that case studies are useful for motivation, inspiration, and illustration. Inspirational case studies may precede theory, while illustrative cases are better positioned after theory. Positioning the case material helps to persuade the reader of its value. Other examples of studies focusing on case study roles and types include Voss et al. (2002) who indicate which case study designs are helpful for exploration, theory building, theory testing, and theory refinement, and Yin (2003) who distinguishes between exploratory, descriptive, and explanatory case studies.

It is important to identify when it is appropriate to use case study research. Yin (2014) identifies three conditions that determine whether to use the case study method: the type of research question posed, the extent of control the researcher has over actual behavioural events, and the degree of focus on contemporary as opposed to entirely historical event. Yin (2014) determines that case study research is not appropriate for “who” or “where” questions, while the usefulness of case study research is useful for exploratory “what” questions, however, yields little information for ‘how’ or ‘why’ research questions are being asked (Yin, 2014; Ghauri, 2004;
Meyer, 2001). The researcher should have little or no control over the phenomena being studied in the phenomena should be contemporary (Yin, 2014).

This research is both descriptive and explanatory and is best described as a hybrid case study since it uses both case study and interview data. Such a conscious pairing of methods provides an excellent opportunity for developing knowledge in the field of purchasing and supply management (Tazelaar 2007). Within this research a dyadic perspective is adopted throughout which allows for comparing perspectives from buying and supplying organisations on their collaborative business relationship.

3.2.5.2. Case Study Development and Analysis

The literature suggests that there are still areas of the unknown, and what is written can be rendered as date. There are not many dyadic case studies of collaborative relationships that also examine different levels within the BSR relationship (Shankar et al, 2013 & Cox at al, 2003). Such designs require much cooperation from the participating companies and suffer from considerable risk in the execution of the study. Furthermore, such studies are extremely time consuming and as a result most studies use cross-sectional designs (Narayandas and Rangan 2004). Due to current limitations in the current literature, this thesis is an effort to better understand the nature of relationship building between the collaboration of the BSR. As the previous literature has not covered the concept of collaboration within the buyer and supplier relationships within the new product development stages in a fashion context, this research will close this gap in the form of case studies and interviews with three fast fashion buying companies and three of its key suppliers as empirical setting. In order to capture the richness of the data, no more than three buyer/supplier relationships were selected at the start of the project. Eisenhardt and
Graebner (2007) stress that opportunities for unusual research access is a good reason for limiting the research scope. Furthermore, Siggelkow (2007, pp. 20) posits that “it is often desirable to choose a particular organisation precisely because it is very special in a sense of allowing one to gain certain insights that other organisations would not be able to provide”.

In this research the case study was conducted first to establish the way the business worked. The case study reviewed the way the retailers traveled through the supply chain, what appears to be on the basis of this case analysis, the key players in the BSR. What is the nature of the business, it is FF or RF. From the research design, when the themes that are inclined to emerge that will then inform how I ask the questions in my semi-structured interview. The case study findings will be analysed by a deductive approach, developing a hypothesis. The existing theory and the designed research strategy will then inform the interview questions to both the three suppliers and the three buyers.

3.2.5.3. Method Two – Interviews

On the basis of findings from my case study, the data collection method for the case studies is semi-structured interviews by the researcher. There are three types of interview; structured, unstructured and semi-structured. A structured interview is when the researcher has a list of questions they want to ask. An unstructured interview is a discussion where topics are put forward for debate (White, 2000). A semi-structured interview uses both open and closed questions (Naoum, 1998). Advantages to using interviews to collect data is that they produce in-depth and detailed research (Denscombe, 2010) and they also enable the researcher to modify the situation if needed, enabling the respondent to provide essential information (Kumar, 2008). Interviews are time consuming, whilst collecting, analysing and
McLeod (2017) recognises the problem of adequate validity or reliability being a criticism due to the subjective nature of qualitative data. Bias can also cause problems as the researcher’s personal views can reduce the reliability of information (White, 2000).

3.2.6. Interviews Development and Analysis

In order to effectively plan an interview, and to maximise the data generated from it as previously stated in 3.4.2, Kvale (2007) identifies three key questions: the why, what and how of an interview. In identifying ‘why’, the interviewer should clarify the purpose of the study, and they should be equipped with a knowledge of the subject matter to be investigated. In this research the interviewer will relate the purpose of the research which is to evaluate the effects of the BSR in the NPD process. Kvale (2007) goes on state the second key question which the interviewer is should be equipped with a knowledge of the subject matter to be investigated – the what. In this research the researcher has 20 plus years in the UK retail environment as a clothing buyer. ‘How’ entails becoming familiar with the practicalities of interviews, including techniques for interviewing the analysing (Kvale, 2007), this has been gained through a pilot interview where the interviewer was able to identify questions that were no longer required and change existing questions if applicable. This study’s interview process involved a maximum of 15 semi-structured questions. and whilst most questions remained consistent, some were tailored towards the interviewee’s profession. Each participant was provided with extra time to provide additional information of questions. Three interviews were conducted, ranging from 43 minutes mins to 56 minutes. Prior to the interview, each participant was sent a participant form (Appendix 1), the interview questions to review and a consent form (Appendix 4) via email, to print and sign. Each participant was informed the
discussion was going to be typed by the researcher and would send for confirmation after the interview.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OBJECTIVE</th>
<th>Methodology of case studies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1). To critically analyse the theoretical development of the buyer/supplier relationship (BSR) within the context of the new product development stages of the fashion supply chain, specifically focusing on the collaborative relation.</td>
<td>Literature Review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2). To critically evaluate the interpersonal/inter-organisational dynamic of the BSR within a UK based fast-fashion context.</td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3). To determine the critical dimensions of collaboration within the BSR within the contemporary fashion supply chain.</td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4). To develop a conceptual framework, which identifies key factors, which improve and/or mitigate the impact of collaboration within BSR.</td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Objective targets (Author, 2018).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STAGE</th>
<th>ASPECTS</th>
<th>APPLICATION IN THIS STUDY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Thematising</td>
<td>Formulating the purpose of an investigation and themes to be investigated before interviews begin.</td>
<td>Clarified in Aim and Objectives: developed in Chapter 1.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Designing</td>
<td>Designing to obtain the intended knowledge and consider ethical implications.</td>
<td>Appendix 2 and 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewing</td>
<td>Conduct interviews based on an interview guide and with a reflective approach to knowledge south and interpersonal relation of the interview situation</td>
<td>Appendix 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transcribing</td>
<td>Prepare interview material for analysis.</td>
<td>Appendix 4 and 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analysing</td>
<td>Decide the modes of analysis appropriate for the interviews/themes.</td>
<td>Chapter 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verifying</td>
<td>Ascertain the validity, reliability and generalisability of the interview findings.</td>
<td>Ethics section; Chapter 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reporting</td>
<td>Communicate the findings of the study and the methods applied in a form that lives up to scientific criteria.</td>
<td>Chapter 4; Chapter 5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3: Seven stages of interview inquiry and their application in this study, (adapted by the researcher from Kvale, 2007)

3.2.7. Techniques and Procedures

This subsection explains how the data was collected and analysed. It highlights the choice of the cases, interview protocol, ethical concerns, pilot study, main data collection, data analysis and the quality of the research design.
3.2.7.1 Selection of Cases

The gap within the literature on the BSR in the NPD stage for the UK fast fashion market has focused the researcher to select the retailers and interviewees across three levels of retail (large multinational, medium multinational and small independent) to give a better understanding of the BSR across all sizes of businesses. It is important to review different sizes of organisations and the impact the BSR has across the sizes. The researcher chose the supplier base to be multinational and with one UK supplier, European supplier and a Far East supplier.

The three buying and supplier companies for the research are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CASE STUDY COMPANY</th>
<th>SIZE OF COMPANY</th>
<th>LOCATION OF HEAD OFFICE</th>
<th>LENGTH OF TIME IN CLOTHING RETAIL</th>
<th>SUPPLIER PARTICIPANT INFORMATION</th>
<th>SIZE OF SUPPLIER</th>
<th>LOCATION OF FACTORY</th>
<th>LENGTH OF TIME IN CLOTHING RETAIL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>COMPANY P (PILOT)</td>
<td>3,000 employees</td>
<td>UK</td>
<td>25 Years</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMPANY A</td>
<td>40 employees</td>
<td>UK</td>
<td>25 Years</td>
<td>Supplier A</td>
<td>Small (below 500 employees)</td>
<td>(UK) Leicester</td>
<td>25 Years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMPANY B</td>
<td>600/700 employees</td>
<td>UK</td>
<td>20 Years</td>
<td>Supplier C</td>
<td>Medium (500 plus employees)</td>
<td>(Europe) Turkey</td>
<td>35 Years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMPANY C</td>
<td>16,000 people</td>
<td>UK</td>
<td>24 Years</td>
<td>Supplier C</td>
<td>Large (1,000 plus employees)</td>
<td>(Far East) Bangladesh</td>
<td>26 Years</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4: Three buying and supplier companies used for this research (Author, 2019)
Three different market size retailers and their suppliers have been chosen to provide a wide variety of data to be captured.

Sampling criteria: Identified interviewees with more than twenty years’ experience in the retail industry. They have seen change over time and therefore, can reflect and inform this study.

3.2.7.2. The Case Study/Interview Protocol

The research started by determining which three companies to study to meet the study aim, providing important details for the interview process. The case study described each company in depth in terms of history, background, finance, structure and products. Secondary sources including websites, journals, reports and newspapers were used to collect data on each company. Themes, similarities and differences between the three fast fashion buyers will create a comparative analysis (Leedy and Ormrod, 2014). Then, information was collected by way of semi-structured interviews. Interviews were chosen allowing the researcher to gain understandings on the subject, as respondent’s expertise is high. The respondents chosen are three buyers from fast fashion retailers and three owners or managers suppliers. The respondents were chosen due to their knowledge in the field of fast fashion and experience of the BSR.

The case study protocol refers mainly to the interview questions (Yin, 2003). According to Eisenhardt (1989) archival records, interviews and direct observations are the most common courses of case study evidence. Open-ended questions (for semi-structured interviews) were formulated. The aim was to establish if the BSR
has moved on over the years and so in what ways. The interview was structured into five main themes (1) interview introduction, (2) the retail environment, (3) the BSR - the structural dynamics, focusing on power, trust and communication, (4) Collaborative relationships and NPD stages, (5) The future (Appendix 4).

The protocol was piloted to ensure appropriateness for the main data collection as will be clarified later in section 3.2.5.3 (p.93).

3.3. Quality and Trustworthiness

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STRATEGIES TO ENSURE TRUSTWORTHINESS</th>
<th>RESEARCH</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Credibility</td>
<td>Ensuring the case study data is correct as this data lead to the design of the interview questions. Three buyers and three suppliers interacting with the researcher.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dependability</td>
<td>A rich description of the research methodology and data analysis. Direct Quotations from interviewees Description of the ethical principles adhered to.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conformability</td>
<td>A rich description of the research methodology and data analysis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transferability</td>
<td>Inclusion of findings into the classroom to enhance student experience and knowledge.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5: Strategies to ensure trustworthiness (Lincoln and Guba, 1985)

3.3.1. Ethical Issues

In order to further ensure data validity, the ethics of the interview must be considered (Ethics form see Appendix 3). The nature of the interview creates a power imbalance; the purpose and structure of the interview is determined by one party, the interviewer, who reveals very little about themselves, whilst the interviewee is expected to allow access to considerable amounts of information (Kvale, 2007). At each of Kvale’s (2007) several stages of interview inquiry (Table 2, p.96), ethical
issues arise and should be mitigated. Informed consent must be obtained from interviewees; this entails considering possible risks and benefits from interviewees participation and briefing and debriefing the interviewees on the purpose and procedure of the interview. Briefs may include information about confidentiality, publication of the interview, and the interviewee’s access to the transcript (Kvale, 2007).

Gillham (2009:13) brings to the attention areas of ethical consideration, which include confidentiality, anonymity, security, publication, and the data lifetime. A consent form and participation sheet (Appendix 1) were sent to interviewees before the interview, to ensure interviewees had information needed when deciding whether to partake within the research. A Risk Assessment Form, MMU (Appendix 2) Ethics Checklist (Appendix 3) were also completed prior to the interviews.

All primary data collected is kept confidential. During the interviews, data will be collected whilst the interview is in progress on a computer (author to type the answers during the interview) and mobile telephone recording Application (for the three buyers). The answers to the questions will be stored on a secure computer only accessible by the interviewer and used only for this research project. No names will be mentioned in the main body of the dissertation. The confidentiality procedures for handling, processing, storing and destruction of data match the Caldicott Principles and the Data Protection Act 1998. All data stored will be kept on a hard drive for two years then destroyed.

Ethical issues of confidentiality may vary between interviewees; some may wish that they are anonymised, whilst others may want to be credited with their full name. To address this, this should be discussed openly with the interviewee to determine their wishes (Kvale, 2007). The consequences of the study should be addressed,
considering any possible risks or benefits to the interviewees. Lastly, the integrity of the researcher and interviewer is an important ethical consideration. The interviewer is the medium through which information is communicated, whilst the overall ethics of the interview and study is subject to the ethical judgements of the researcher (Kvale, 2007).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Ethical Issues</th>
<th>Measures taken in this study</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Thematising</td>
<td>Purpose should be considered with regard to improvement of the human situation investigated.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Designing</td>
<td>Ensuring interviewees’ informed consent, securing confidentiality, considering the possible consequences of the study for interviewees.</td>
<td>Gaining interviewees’ informed consent through discussion full brief and debrief; discussing with interviewees whether interviewee wishes to be anonymised; discuss this in context of discussing business model and strategy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewing</td>
<td>Consequences of interview situation should be considered.</td>
<td>Consider implications of location.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transcribing</td>
<td>Confidentiality of interviewees should be protected, extent of whether transcript remains loyal to interviewee’s oral statements.</td>
<td>Discussing with interviewees whether interviewee wishes to be anonymised; discuss this in context of discussing business model and strategy; ensuring transcriptions convey interviewees’ intended meanings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analysing</td>
<td>How penetratingly interviews are analysed, whether interviewee has a say in how statement is interpreted.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verifying</td>
<td>Report interview as securely and verifiably as possible; how critically interviewee can be questioned.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6: Consideration of Ethical Issues at the Seven Stages of Interview inquiry and their Application in this study, Kvale (2007).
3.4. Interview Questions Development and Pilot Interviews

Within the interview there are a number of different styles of question, which can prompt different types of response (Kvale, 2007). Introductory questions serve to introduce the themes and open conversation. These initial questions may be followed by either follow-up or probing questions, which in a semi-structured interview, can be spontaneous and follow the direction of conversation. Specifying questions pursue details, while structuring questions guide the interview. Interpreting questions seek to rephrase or clarify. Direct and indirect questions might be used, along with silence, which can utilise pauses to allow the interviewee time to reflect and break the silence (Kvale, 2007). The researcher may choose to ‘pilot’ interviews in order to determine the appropriateness of questions, test clarity and phrasing of questions, and identify the main aspects of a topic.

To maximise the validity of the data generated from a semi-structured interview, there are a number of factors that should be considered. Firstly, the interviewer themselves can have considerable influence over the responses given by the interviewee, and therefore, can compromise the validity of the data (Lavrakas, 2008; Vogt, 2005; Holstein & Gubrium, 2003). The presence of the interviewer can affect interviewees’ responses: this includes effects of observable characteristics in the interviewer, such as age, gender, race or accent, which might change both the interviewee’s perception of the contact of questions and their responses to questions (Lavrakas, 2008; Vogt, 2005). The interviewer’s verbal and non-verbal behaviour can alter interviewees’ responses: cues such as verbal feedback facial expressions, or rate of speech can be understood by interviewees to reflect approval or disapproval, which can cause them to alter or omit information. The interviewer might be responsible for more systematic errors, including reading or delivering
questions incorrectly (Lavrakas, 2008; Holstein & Gubrium, 2003). To minimise bias and maximise data validly, the interviewer should use their interpersonal skills to encourage the expression of responses, rather than help construct them; the role of the interviewer is that of facilitator (Holstein & Gubrium, 2003). Systematic errors can be minimised by explaining the questions and answer process to the interviewee, ensuring well-written and clear questions, reading the questions exactly as worded and recording the interview without interpretation, paraphrasing, or inference (Lavrakas, 2008).

Given the significance and influence of the buyers and suppliers, the interviewees chosen are the buyer and supplier who have twenty years plus experience within their chosen field; they will have an overview of all areas of the business, and can speak about their personal experiences, which are noted in the literature as an important aspect of the BSR. The case companies were contacted through personal visits, e-mail, Skype and telephone conversations. The interviewees selected to take part within semi-structured interviews were chosen due to their specific work experience relating to various aspects of fast fashion industry. (The aims of the interviews were to get opinions and ideas from a range of different angles).

The interview was split into five section, shown in table 2 (Appendix 4). Some “probes” were used throughout the interviews, to clarify specific details. However, these probes were used scarcely, as the researcher did not want to persuade interviewees answers in a specific direction which would turn the interview bias.

To maximise the validly of the data generated from a semi-structured interview, a pilot interview was carried out with a FF buying manager, with twenty plus years of industry experience. The original questions were posed to participant A and from these, it was clear that some changes needed to be made. Some duplication was
found, when asking both questions in section two, The Retail Environment, both questions merged into one, therefore, one question has been deleted. There were two questions in section three – which have now been deleted as the interviewee had already answered these questions in section two, this question were just duplications.

The reliability of any data increases when two or more cases are analysed; if only one is studied it is harder for the generalisation of results (Leedy and Ormrod, 2010). Applicability of the data can also be affected by how and where data is collected and the nature of the respondents (McBurney and White, 2010). These factors can affect all types of data collected but can be minimised by using standardised procedures and rules (Kotzab et al, 2005) and piloting all aspects of the data collection process (Keats, 2000).

To mitigate the risk of the research as lone worker (see Ethics, Appendix 3) the interviews were carried out in a public place. However, because of this, there was interruptions in both interviews. This may have impacted and thought and speech of the interviewee.

The digitally recorded interview conversations were transcribed to facilitate analysis. Permission for digital recording was gained through a participant consent form (Appendix 1). The interviews were digitally recorded to enable the interviewer to focus on building rapport and asking relevant spontaneous questions, however, typed notes were made to record main themes should the digital recording fail Transcripts are the translation of spoken words and a face-to-face conversation into written text (Kvale, 2007). The process of transcription raises issues. The researcher must decide the style in which the conversations are transcribed: should they be verbatim, and contain habits of speech, including pauses, signs, laughter or
repetitions such as ‘mm’ or ‘uh’ or should they take a more formal written style (Kvale, 2007). There is no definition of an objective transcription; the researcher should focus upon transcription that is the most useful for their individual research purpose (Kvale, 2007).

Within this research, the transcription included hesitations in speech, as this might give insight into the interviewees’ attitude. Following the interview, the transcription was sent to the interviewers to be verified as an accurate representation Appendix 5).

After transcription, the research must decide the most appropriate way to analyse it. Indeed, there are several ways in which to do this; analysis focusing on meanings, analysis focusing on language, or a mixed analysis (Kvale, 2007). Analysis focusing on meaning entails meaning coding, meaning condensation, or meaning interpretation, while analysis focusing on language involves interpretation and analysis of linguistics, conversation or narrative, and deconstruction of speech (Kvale, 2007). The means of analysis chosen of this research is analysis focusing on meaning, using meaning coding. Meaning analysis has been chosen over linguistic analysis, as it enables an overview of these to be studies. Coding attaches one more keyword to a text segment in order to permit later identification of a statement, enabling a direct comparison between interviews and categorisation of common theses (Bartholomew, et al, 2000). Coding is suited to deductive research, the same approach taken by this project and it enables effective comparison between the three buyers and three suppliers profiled.

3.5. Data Collection Methods

Research is a process in which ‘new’ information is sought in order to gain knowledge (Rugg and Petre, 2007). Data collection and data analysis is a crucial
part of all research and data analysis forms the outcomes of the research (Flick, 2014). It can consist of primary data which is where new information is collected by a range of different methods including observations, interviews and questionnaires (Kothari, 2004), and/or secondary research which is where data comes from existing sources (Clark et al, 2000). In this research, the data collection method comes in the form of interviews and case studies. Case studies investigate contemporary and real-life events and phenomenon through a detailed analysis of particular events, conditions or context (Zainal, 2007). Case study research allows a researcher to study phenomena within their real-world contexts (Yin, 2014; Gibbert, et al, 2008). This allows the researcher to retain holistic view of events surrounding the studies phenomena (Schell, 1992). It is advantageous as it allows many different aspects of the phenomenon to be studied, acknowledged linked or interdependence between phenomena and addresses contemporary phenomena within their real-life contexts (Vissak, 2010; Meyer, 2001). The contemporary nature of case study research differentiates it from other research methods such as history or experiments (Yin, 2014; Ghauri, 2004). The limitations of qualitative methods must be recognised, as this demonstrates that the research has thought critically about the research problem and confronted what they do not yet know.

3.6. Data Analysis

Data was analysed inductively, generally following grounded analysis principles. Grounded analysis, which is closely linked to grounded theory, is considered appropriate for theory development where the structure develops from the data rather than forcing the data to fit into predetermined categories (Walker & Myrick, 2006). The use of grounded theory concepts is encouraged in developing theory in
supply chain research (Randal & Mello, 2012). A rigorous analysis was conducted, and themes, patterns and categories were developed out of the data as recommended by Easterby-Smith et al. (2008). The aim was to avoid being constrained by prior theory, to remain open to being surprised by the data and to make senses of emerging findings (Kaufmann & Denk 2011; Ketokivi & Choi, 2014). Repeated reading of the transcripts was first conducted in order to understand the data and identify data fragments that referred in some way to certain aspects of the research questions. Then tables were drawn in which segregated fragments of data were recorded and assigned codes which were continuously re-evaluated and modified where necessary through an iterative process as recommended by (Miles et al., 2014).

To present the results from the data, two models were expended from the literature review; Value appropriation, power and relationship management styles (Cox, 2004, p. 76) and The Hypothesized Realm of Buyer/Seller Relationships (Dwyer et al., 1987, p. 38). These models were used to exemplify the comparisons and variances of the BSR over the three decades. Themes will be established that are critical to the relationship and dynamics of the BSR. The nuances will be unpacked in great detail in Chapter 4 and the findings from the primary research will be used to develop a conceptual framework, which identifies the key factors, that improve and/or mitigate the impact of collaboration within the BSR.

3.7. Chapter Summary

This chapter has detailed how this research examined the critical dimensions of collaboration within the BSR within the contemporary fashion supply chain, adopting a mixed method approach. Due to the philosophical stance of the researcher and the nature of the phenomenon studies, case studies have been deemed the most
appropriate way in which to do this. Given the significance of the three buyers and three suppliers, identified within the literature, semi-structured interviews were deemed as effective way to collect data for the case study. Ways in which to maximise case study and interview validity were considered within the context of this research and will be used to guide the data collection and methods. In the following chapter, the findings of data collection will be discussed; this will aid in determining the critical dimensions of collaboration within the BSR within the contemporary fashion supply chain and develop a conceptual framework, which identifies the key factors, that improve and/or mitigate the impact of collaboration within the BSR.
Chapter 4 - Results and Analysis

4.1. Primary Data Collection

Having considered the research methods underpinning the study in the previous chapter, this chapter will focus on the interpersonal/inter-organisational dynamic of the BSR within a UK based fast-fashion context. It will also determine the critical dimensions of collaboration within the BSR within the contemporary fashion supply chain. The research analyses the dyadic relationship between the buyer and supplier.

4.2. Findings of interviews

The interviews have been reviewed case by case against the factors identified in the academic literature, the findings of each company demonstrate the shape of the BSR from the 1980’s through to the 2000’s and how it has developed and changed over time because of the introduction of FF. In the following section, the literature will be applied by using two models, Cox (2004) and Dwyer et al., (1987) in order to illustrate similarities and differences of the BSR over a period of time by these three cases. From section 4.3 (p.116), the themes that were establish as critical to the relationship and the dynamic of the buyer/supplier relationship in the literature will be evaluated in order to unpack those nuances in greater depth.

4.2.1. Findings in relation to Cox’s Model

In figure 19 (p.110) considers the value appropriation, power and relationship management styles of companies A, B and C from the 1980’s into 2000’s in relation to Cox’s model (2003).
The findings demonstrate that from all three case studies in conjunction with Cox’s model of value appropriation, power and relationship management styles exhibited identical outcomes for both the 1980’s and duplicate management styles into the 2000’s. The model identifies the way of working either by arm’s length or collaboratively and reviews this alongside with who appropriated value from the relationship. The 1980’s saw the BSR at arm’s length with the buyer being dominant within the relationship. With the buyer running a short-term operational relationship, with limited relationship shown between the buyer and the supplier. The buyer adversarial appropriated most of the commercially value and set price and quality trade-offs. With the supplier being non-adversarial and willing supplicant, accepting work rather than high margins/profitability from the relationship. In 2000’s saw a change for the BSR, with the relationship now becoming more collaborative with a buyer/supplier reciprocal collaborative relationship taking place. The relationship became a long-term operational one, with extensive and a close working relationship between them. The relationship became relatively equal with commercial value created. The buyer and supplier agree on price and quality trade-offs, with the supplier making more than normal returns. Both parties operating a non-adversarial commercially. The findings demonstrate how the management styles have changed within the BSR due to the introduction and growth of FF over the three decades.

On the face of it, when we consider Cox’s model it is evident that there are similarities for all three case studies. However, in section 4.2.2. (p.111) we will consider the same findings in relation to the Dwyer, Schurr and Oh’s (1987) model of value appropriate, power and relationship management style it is useful as this enables us to differentiate the behaviours within each case study.
Considering the Value appropriate, power and relationship management styles for company A, B and C in relation to Cox’s model across the decades.

Figure 19: Value appropriation, power and relationship management styles (Adapted from Cox, 2003 by the author)
4.2.2. Findings in relation to Dwyer, Schurr and Oh’s Model

When we consider these same findings in relation to Dwyer et al (1987) value appropriate, power and relationship management style model what unfolds are differences in the way each case study operates.

COMPANY A, B and C INRELATION TO DWYER, SCHURR AND OH (1987) MODEL

1980’s – Buyer’s market, with the buyer pulling all of the strings.

2000’s – The buyer and supplier are now in a bilateral relationship

2000’s – A bilateral relationship was formed, with both parties working together. The buyer now pushing more responsibilities onto the supplier

1980’s – The buyer was the dominant force, calling the shots, the supplier had to do as they asked.

1980’s – The buyer is the dominant party in this BSR

2000’s – The BSR is now a bilateral relationship with both parties working closely together.

Figure 20: Value appropriation, power and relationship management styles (Dwyer et al, 1987)
In using Cox’s model (2003) of value appropriation, power and relationship management styles to evaluate the findings, it would be easy to assume that all three case studies were very similar. However, analysing the same data in relation to Dwyer et al (1987) value appropriate, power and relationship management style model, has great value because here we are able to consider in more depth these similarities and differences from what we find from case study A, B and C.

Firstly, we will address the findings from 1980’s. Company A’s findings of the BSR in relation to Dwyer et al model established that in the 1980’s saw the buyer’s motivational investment in the relationship to be at the higher end of the Buyer’s market, further towards the seller’s motivational investment in relationship, meaning the relationship in comparison to Company B and C is closer to a more equal partnership. This is due to Company A’s geographical location in relation to their supplier, both the buyer and the supplier are located within the UK, (Manchester, buyer and Leicester, supplier). The BSR was at arm’s length, with the buyer being the dominant party, but the arm’s length was in touching distance. The rational for this was communication, the buyer and supplier were only a two hour drive away from each other, making the managing of the critical path lead-times more effectively (Figure 20, p.111), if decisions had to be made, they could be made on the same day. The critical path for UK based suppliers in 1980’s was 26 weeks.

When comparing Company B’s findings to the Dwyer et al model (1987), the buyer’s motivational investment in the relationship is found to be lower than that of A,
denoting the BSR is again at arm’s length, with the buyer’s dominance but in this relationship the distance expands further. The location of the supplier in Turkey was the factor as the buyer was based in Manchester. The European location made the communications problematic due to the language barrier, the time difference as well as longer critical path (45 weeks).

Comparing Company C to both A and B saw ever further movement into the lower buyer’s motivational investment in the relationship sector and moving further away from the seller’s motivational investment in relationships segment. Resulting in the BSR moving further away from forming bilateral relationships and expanding the distance of the arm’s length approach. The supplier was located in Bangladesh, geographically even further away from the buyer’s Merseyside head office. This distance created obstacles between the buyer and the supplier, as comparable to Company B, these were communication, language barriers, time differences and a lengthier critical path (66 weeks).

When analysing the 2000’s to evaluate if changes had occurred within the BSR over the three decades due to FF, all three case studies were found to have moved from their original position in 1980’s assembling within the buyer’s motivational investment segment into the bilateral relationship maintenance segment. As discovered in the 1980’s differences can be found within each case study BSR and the equivalent has been uncovered in 2000’s within the Dwyer et al model (1987).
Evidencing how the BSR has changed over the course of the three decades due to FF.

Company A’s BSR has moved to the opposite side of the hypothesized realm to now be positioned in the middle of bilateral relationship maintenance sector. In this current study, Buyer A and Supplier A both witnessed that their communicate was much more effective once their relationship became closer. However, the introduction of the internet as a communication tool may also have been an aiding factor. In addition, the critical path steps have been reduced from 66 weeks in 1980’s to 8 weeks in 2000’s as evidenced in Figure 8 (p. 49) and Figure 9 (p. 51). In this current study the researcher delved further to discovery that with the introduction of ‘rapid fashion’ the critical path has been reduced further.

“We have seen the critical path reduced over the last 30 years down to now 1 week due to rapid fashion”.

Supplier A

When analysing Company B findings in the 2000’s, their relationship was located within the bilateral relationship maintenance section, but further to the seller’s motivational investment sector, denoting that their relationship was bilateral. Comparable to Company A, working bilaterally with their Turkey based supplier, has enabled the communication process to flow more freely between both parties,
resulting in a reduced critical path moving from 45 weeks in 1980’s to 8 weeks in 2000’s (Figure 8, p. 49).

Company C’s findings saw their BSR located even further towards the seller’s motivational investment in relationship sector, to the point in which it is on the cusp of the bilateral relationship and the seller’s motivational investment in the relationship segment. The supplier is located in Bangladesh, as with the other two case studies, the communication channels because of the internet have vastly improved, seeing movement away from the facsimile machine, into e-mail, telephone, Skype and Facetime, reducing the critical path, from 66 weeks in 1980’s to 12 weeks in 2000’s.

“We can communication by many different mediums for example for me, I like that we can see each other over Facetime…. because of FF the critical path has had to be reduced”.

Supplier C

To conclude in 1980’s saw the buyer being the dominant party, holding the suppliers at arm’s length, the 2000’s saw a significant change within the BSR, moving to more a bilateral partnership.

There are certain nuances and now when moving into the next section these certain distinctions, show themselves by considering the findings in relation to those themes which are taken from the literature. The themes uncovered in the literature are critical to the BSR and its dynamics and the following will unpack these nuances in depth.
4.3. Buyer Supplier Relationship in New product Development

It became evident due to the introduction of FF, changes within the BSR in the NPD stages had to alter. The buyers in 1980’s worked by envisaging a finished product than worked backwards to components they needed to source to make the garment with the product lead times being as long as 66 weeks (Figure 8, p. 49). Now in 2019, as stated in 1.1 the consumer demands faster product to market. Thus, redeeming this process no longer viable due to the long lead times of sourcing each product. As uncovered in the findings from the Cox and Dwyer et al models, the BSR has changed dramatically over the last three decades. The major impact of these changes has been realised within the NPD stages. All three case studies may have moved to a bilateral relationship maintenance, but this current study exposed evidence that certain critical path responsibilities had shifted from the buyer to the supplier. These responsibilities include the creation of design ideas, specifications, approving lab dips and first fit samples, has now been reassigned to become the supplier’s responsibility in both FF and rapid fashion. When the researcher in this study delved further, addition to this list of new supplier accountabilities with the NPD stage a further one was discovered. To achieve the Rapid Fashion critical path of 6 days, the buyer now expects the supplier to hold, at the supplier’s cost, five main fabric bases on the factory floor at all times. The rational for this is if a key celebrity wears a garment that the consumer desires, the buyer requires the supplier to produce a version of that garment for sale in 6 days, utilising the stock fabrics has led to a vast reduction in the lead times. This practice was recognised by all
interviewees. The quote from Buyer B exposes this new working relationship further;

“Because we produce so much newness as a business and it is so quick, designers do not have the time or capabilities to devise the spec and tech packs. The suppliers have had to become more trend aware and also the suppliers need to come to retailers with idea”.

Buyer B

Subsequently, the suppliers have gained more responsibility as FF has been expanding and rapid fashion has been introduced. Further evidence in the present study also exposed how the suppliers are expected by the retailers to employ designers to develop design ideas for them and these designers are expected to work alongside the retailer’s designers to exchange ideas, to further meet the consumers demands for originality. The quote from Supplier C exemplified the changes and their increased involvement with the NPD stages.

“There has been a lot of changes over the years…. We now work with the designers and the QA much earlier in the product development stages. They now leave things up to us to do”.

Supplier C

The past three decades have seen immense changes within the BSR in the NPD stage, with processes along the critical path that were previously responsibilities of the buyer, have now been redeployed onto the supplier. Inevitably, the most serious
disadvantage to these changes is the additional costs to the supplier, yet evidence in the present study found no negativity to these changes.

4.4. Supplier Involvement in the Fuzzy Front End (FFE)

There is clearly evident that all interviewees have learnt about the impact of FF and now rapid fashion and have had to evolve their businesses over time. Some interviewees being more proactive in their engagement of FF than others, the traditional retailers such as Buyer C, experienced slower progressing out of the FFE. Pure play retailers such as Buyer A and B were earlier to adapt to change and moved out of the FFE more swiftly. This was due to their business model being more flexible as a higher percentage of their business was on-line and not in bricks and mortar. The differences from the traditional organisations is fundamentally one is a pull model and one is a push model. The pull model is the rapid and e-commerce model, which is where the buyers are engaged in developing very wide product ranges with very shallow buys. This is then offered up to their customer profile and then repeated only in depth when the customers have told them which products they prefer. This model is acknowledged as rapid fashion.

The push model is the traditional retailing model, where you have a very long lead time, a traditional approach where you start with strategy, range planning, the traditional roles for buying and merchandising, there are lots of forecasting and predicting and essentially what you are doing is buying a narrow range with quite
high depth, with high focus on trying to predict accurately as to what the customers wants and the buying trying to minimise markdown. This model is acknowledged as fast fashion, FF within the three case study retailers utilised the push model for their core lines.

The three retailers within the case studies use both models within their organisations but the current study’s findings discovered that each retailer’s participation in each model was different. When the current researcher in this study probed further as to how the interviewees moved from the FFE of FF into the new way of working to their advantage the evident uncovered the following.

“The pull model range is offered up to the customer profile and then we repeat only in depth when the customers have told us which products they prefer. Therefore, you do not invest in the depth of buy and your budget early, you do this at a later date when you have got that information from your consumer”.

Buyer A

There are a number of important differences between the Push and Pull model. The Pull model’s disadvantages are it has a long lead time with a narrow range to your consumer, therefore, the product offer is limited and not what the consumer wants, as they want a new range each week. The advantages are high margins due to sourcing product from the Far East, which is why this model is used on core lines. The advantages of the Push model are rapid lead times and consumer knowledge, but the disadvantages are low margins, this being due to sourcing product closer to
home e.g. Europe or the UK. The findings concluded that all three case studies were executing both models within their business at different levels, the Push Model for their rapid fashion product and the Pull Model for their fast fashion products. Table 6 demonstrates the percentage of push model versus pull model within each business (appendix 5).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>PUSH MODEL (Rapid Fashion) Sourcing from Europe and UK</th>
<th>PULL MODEL (Fast Fashion) Sourcing from Far East and Europe</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Buyer A</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buyer B</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buyer C</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7: Findings from buying interviewees of the percentage of push/pull model used within their businesses

4.5. The Impact of the BSR on NPD Performance

It was evident that the Buying interviewees considered that the arm’s length approach was no longer viable if they wanted their business to succeed. They need to move to a more closely working relationship with their supplier base, as this was a necessary step to survive the ever changing and competitive UK high street. As indicated by all interviewees the introduction of FF and RF had changed the impact of the BSR on the NPF performance. Previously before FF, the BSR was at ‘arm’s length’ as denoted in Cox’s model in 4.2 (p.108). Both parties spoke about being strategic partners, but in this current study the findings signified all three case
studies it was proven this was not the case in 1980’s. With the introduction of FF the impact of the BSR relationship on NPD performance changed as the key requirements from the buyer was speed and reliability. As established in section 4.3 (p.116), certain accountabilities within the NPD stages that were previously the buyers are now being relocated to the supplier. Therefore, the BSR had to change to a reciprocal collaborative relationship. Buyer A reaffirmed this in this explanation of how the BSR has changed.

“It is a different relationship and the rapid fashion environment requires a lot more trust and truly strategic suppliers”.

Buyer A

Previously in 1980’s one crucial element of the product develop stage was the trend and design. The buyer would sit with their retail designer and would review trends then create the designs and produce a specification pack for the supplier. This pack was extremely detailed with exact instructions for the supplier to follow to make the first fit sample. The pack would consist of a CAD drawing of the garment, colour and, sizes required, a swatch of the fabric and measurements for all sizes required. In contrast, as stated previously in 2019, the current researcher discovered that the responsibility of this pack was now with the supplier.

“Because we produce so much newness as a business and it is so quick, designers do not have the time or capabilities to devise the spec and tech packs”.

Buyer A
A subsequent result of this was the supplier felt pressured from the buyers to take responsibility for these processes of the NPD stages, concluding in the suppliers hiring their own design team. Interestingly, the suppliers have had to change their business model, to incorporate these designers within their organisation, yet the research found no negativity from any of the three suppliers. It is necessary here to note that the suppliers require retailers to place orders with their businesses to survive, therefore, there is pressure that they need to adhere to what the buyer requests. One possible implication of this is that this leads to a form of power dynamics for the buyer within the relationship.

4.6. Inter-organisational Dynamics in BSR

This study produced results which corroborate the finding that there was clear evidence that the inter-organisational dynamics in the BSR have seen change over the last three decades due to the introduction of FF and consumer demands. These dynamics can be addressed into two parts, firstly, the long-term cooperative relationship, secondly, how both the buyer and supplier increase their operational performance. These operational performances are achieved by the synchronisation of the supply chain, the reduction of total costs, quality improvement and product cycle time as well as a strong competitive position. Supplier C supported the findings and expanded further.
“For fast fashion and the quicker turnaround of product they (Buyer) needed our help and experience to be able to do this for them”.

Supplier C

In contributing to the conversation, similarly, Buyer A stated.

“There is an intrinsic requirement on both parties of sharing information and effective delivery”.

Buyer A

In reflecting on the 5 distinct stages in a relationship, in their inter-organisational dynamics in the BSR it has become apparent that the all three cast studies are in stage 4 the commitment stage.

“The relationship with the suppliers is key, because they have got to know they are going to get the volumes, we are not going to make things tricky for them we are not going to over complicate things. From our side we need value, we need quality, consistency and it is that partnerships, we have to make them feel we are working together”.

Buyer C
Both parties have a social responsibility and integral part of planning within that organisation, with the buyer supporting quiet periods for the supplier and really product solving in busy periods. Where previously in 1980’s there was more of an arrogant approach, formally in larger organisation, with the supplier needing the retailer more than the retailer needs the supplier, thus making the inter-organisational dynamics unbalanced within the BSR. It was concluded that to establish a synchronisation of the supply chain, transparency is required from both parties.

4.7. Power Dynamics of the Buyer/Supplier Relationship across the decades

As evidenced within Figures 21 (p. 111) the power dynamics have seen change over the decade due to FF and now RF. The speed to market has seen vast changes with how the BSR dynamics have had to be modified. This was indeed inveterate by all three suppliers.

“In the 80’s the power was with the buyer, but this has changed over time due to fast fashion and working with the retailer for so long”. We now have a partnership, 50%/50%”.

Supplier A

In contract, Buyer A contradicted these findings.

“There is always a power dynamic, whoever is making those purchasing decisions to make the supplier business successful, that will always lay from the buyer’s perspective”.

Buyer A
There was clear evidence that Supplier A and Buyer A were conflicting in their opinions of their BSR.

“The partnership thing is now key, it is about making it work, making it work for both of us”.

Supplier A

In contributing to the conversation above, Buyer B reaffirmed that a partnership was extremely important to the buyer as well.

“The relationship is key, because they have got to know they are going to get that volume, we are not going to make things tricky for them we are not going to over complicate things. From our side we need value, we need quality, consistency and it is that partnership, we have to make them feel we are working together”.

Buyer B

The distinction of the power dynamics is further exemplified by Supplier C.

“I would say 20 years plus ago, what the buyer wanted they got, but now things have changed. I think we both would say that the buyer/supplier dynamics have changed but for the better as far as I am concerned. You would probably say the power was previously with them, now I would say it is an even split”.

Supplier C
Figure 21 (p. 111) depicts the relationship as it was in the 1980’s, with the buyer holding the supplier at arm’s length and the buyer holding the power. Supplier C substantiates this.

“When I first started in this business the factory would be told what to do by the buyer...Now, because of the fast fashion, the early stages of the product development stages have changed as now our designers and production team work closely with the retailer’s QA, designer and buyer to produce samples as soon as possible”.

Supplier C

Despite the arm’s length relationship in 1980’s, the evidence in this present study found that all three supplier interviewees did not comment negatively on their relationship at this time. However, in contrast all three-supplier commented on how they relished their relationship now, as strategic partners, forming a reciprocal collaborative relationship. Consequently, with the introduction of FF, inevitably the supplier base had to be reduced, to make the critical path more streamline. Buyer A demonstrated the need to reduce the supplier base to become more streamline.

“We narrowed down our supplier base, to become important to that supplier…it is becoming a partnership…and becoming more and more important to each other”.

Buyer A
There are areas of significant differences between the dynamics of the BSR in 1980’s, Buyer A reinforced these differences.

“If a supplier made a mistake it was live or die by your last delivery situation, this has changed, due to FF the supplier relationship has had to be “embedded” into the retailer’s organisation. So, it is about working more in partnership if a supplier does something wrong”.

Buyer A

It has become evident that over the decades the BSR dynamics have commanded a different relationship. Indisputable are the percentage figures, of the capacity the retailers used to represent within their supplier base. In the 1980’s the present study discovered the buyers for all three retailers A, B and C would represent 20% to 30% of the supplier’s production capacity, in 2019, because of FF and RF they all now represent 70%/80% capacity.

It became evident that the change in production capacity did not alleviate the power dynamics.

“There sometimes needs to be, the suppliers could take advantage of a junior buyers, sometimes it is nature, isn’t it, they (supplier) will take advantage of a junior buyer, so it is monitoring that. We are going to be buying product from them, so we should have the power”.
Buyer C

In contradicting these findings their own supplier stated.

"I think the buyer had the power but not anymore, the power has changed over time it is now equal".

Supplier C

Contradicting views were expressed by all parties.

"Way back in the 80's the dynamics were buyer at the top of the pile then suppliers at the bottom, then in came fast fashion, so the buyer had to rely on the supplier more, in the 90's this power started to change, they buyer needed us. Then now, it has changed further to the buyers relying on us and I guess I would say it is more of a partnership role, not a them and us type of role".

Supplier B

"The fast fashion environment requires a lot more trust and truly strategic suppliers because of the fast turnaround.".

Buyer B
To demonstrate this further retailer B has funded a satellite office in close proximity to their supplier’s factory in Leicester, this has enabled even closer relationships with the supplier and has reduced the speed to market time, enabling the RF lines to achieve their target of 6 days. Furthermore, this is been advantageous to both parties.

“If we do not get something in on time, we lose out to our competitors. We have to be first to market of that trend all the time”.

Buyer B

“We talk more and work more closely as a team”.

Supplier B

Both parties gain benefits from working closely in partnership within BSR. The buyer gaining insider competitive intelligence from the supplier and the supplier understanding the handwriting first hand of the retailer’s customer.

4.8. The Market Shift

As a result of the introduction of FF there has been a vast change in the UK market place, therefore, the market has shifted.
“The retail landscape has changed dramatically, the traditional bricks and mortar stores have had to change the way they service their customer because of the internet. The retailers have had to change the way they buy”.

Buyer A

In reflecting upon the questions of the market shift, Buyer B echoed Buyer A.

“FF has changed the way the retailers interpret trends and the sourcing strategy”.

Buyer B

As previously stated, the consumer exploits the internet to review what their favourite celebrity is wearing and then demands to wear a similar garment themselves from the retailer within a week. This has had an immense impacted on the sourcing strategy of all three retailers. All three buyers have witnessed changes from 1980’s when 90% of their production came from the Far East. Pre-fast fashion, China, Vietnam and Bangladesh were producing 90% of their production and 20% from Europe or the UK. In 2019, 80% of their production is being sourced from Europe and UK (rapid fashion lines) to 20% from the Far East (fast fashion, core lines). This has led to a reduction of their supplier base and a change in their sourcing strategy, this has been further explored in chapter 4.4 (p. 118) (Table 6, p. 120).
With particular pertinence being the reduction of suppliers in the sourcing strategy and on the Open to Buy (OTB) budget for their rapid fashion lines. The reason for streamlining the supplier base, was to reduce the number of suppliers within the Far East due to long lead times and focus more on Europe and the UK as these two locations enabled shorter lead times to be achieved.

The main weakness with the Chinese suppliers were their requirements for big volumes and high cost prices, which they were unable to achieve working with the UK retailers. The key problem was that the three participant buyers required, speed to market, low volumes and lower prices. Consequently, the majority of Chinese suppliers now produce for their own local market. Most of the Far East production moved from China in the early 2000’s to Bangladesh due to lower cost prices. Therefore, Supplier C located in Bangladesh had to adapt to the FF changes and not lose their business to Europe or the UK.

“We have our own designers, who with our production team work closely with the retailer’s QA, designer and buyer to produce samples as soon as possible”.

Supplier C

There are a number of similarities between Supplier C and the current study findings as equally Buyer A and B work with Bangladesh suppliers and they specified their suppliers had also employed their own designers who are eager to work closely with the UK market to create product that is right for the UK retailer’s customer.

This market shift saw further sourcing strategy changes.
“Because of the internet, our critical path has had to change over the decades, and it has gotten faster and faster over the years and we now work more closely with the QA and design teams from the retailer to be able to hit the new critical path deadlines”.

Supplier C

These results are harmonious with Buyer B was supports Supplier C added that to cater for the internet demanding consumer there had been an impact on the company.

“Started out in the retailer’s business in the 80’s, their inspiration came from the catwalk which dictated the trend, now it is street style, the style bloggers and influences. Consumers relate to the bloggers and influences more than high end fashion”.

Buyer B

Ultimately, the rise of social media and the trickle up effect (from street style), has led to the buyer and supplier having to become more trend aware. The buyer is challenged by the customer who are demanding constant newness.

“It makes you much more aware of how quick things can change”.

Buyer B

Buyer C supported the conversation above.
“From a trend point of view, looking at a smaller trend, seeing what is coming through from bloggers, Instagram has been a massive, change on the whole industry”.

Buyer C

The impact has not only affected the buyers, but also the suppliers, the following quote illustrates the extent to this impact on the supplier.

“The whole factory had changed how they operated over the years. Timing had been the biggest change of them all, because of influences, so as suppliers we have to produce these products very fast”.

Supplier C

In reflecting upon the impact of the internet which has created the biggest market shift, the BSR has transformed, to a more collaboration relationship. The suppliers have had to invest in a design team who analyses the internet and celebrity styles, sketches and specs what they interpret as the next big trend ready to present to the buyer.

It was most evident that when describing the collaboration within the BSR view, both parties agreed that you needed to be able to collaborate with the supplier and trust them to deliver the product proposition to be in line with price parameters, trend and deliver the product at the right time. Fashion is very quick and changeable, therefore, there still needs to be an understanding from both parties how much goes into the BSR. The following supports the current study, indicating the extent to which collaboration is paramount to both the buyer and the supplier.

“We need to be able to trust the supplier to deliver the product proposition to be in line with price parameters, trend and right time, but they also need to be able to trust us to stick to what we say.

Buyer B

Both parties need to understand the limitations and capabilities of what both parties can achieve. This was reaffirmed by Buyer B.

“I think there needs to be a big openness between the buyer and the supplier and also a sense of realism with the buyer. The buyer needs to understand what the processes are in bringing a garment to market”.

Buyer B
Collaboration for the supplier has ultimately changed over the decades, in the 1980’s saw the buyer taking charge, in contrast in 2019, Supplier A endorses this.

“The tables have now turned, and this started to happen around the 90’s the buyers wanted us to work more closely with them. They wanted quicker production, so they had to trust and work with us more closely”.

Supplier A

The extent to which this was considered in great detail by Supplier C who witnessed the changes over time within the BSR.

“In the 80’s it was them and us, you always felt the buyers kept you at a distance, then when they needed us more, because of fast fashion, the collaboration started to happen, we started working together to make sure we hit the reduced critical path. They now share information with us, and we work in partnership with each other”.

Supplier C

This was considered encouraging as both parties need to trust and understand how each other operates to form a true collaboration partnership. This perhaps was a point for consideration given the earlier comments regarding the person that ‘provides the order, hold the power’.
4.10. Commitment

Commitment was of key important within the BSR. There were two areas with the NPD stages that commitment was found to be paramount. Firstly, both the buyer and supplier both needed to be equally committed to make a collaborative relationship work. This was reiterated by Buyer C who had firm views if a supplier did not have commitment.

“If the supplier lets the organisation down, by producing inferior garments, the partnership will be severe immediately”.

Buyer C

Secondly, the length of the relationship is importance, evidence in this present study specified that the longer you work together, the more enhanced your relationship becomes, as you both get to know how each other operate.

“I think the longer you work together the better trust you form in a relationship”.

Supplier C

The following quote illustrates how Buyer B is in total agreement with supplier C. Reaffirming that both sides agree that time equals commitment which is an important factory within the BSR in the NPD stages.
“I think it can take at least a year and year and a half to really get a supplier relationship where you have confidence”.

Buyer B

The length of the BSR was investigated further, as Buyer A believed that as fast fashion is a growth area, focusing on young fashion, most of the buying team are very young. This has consequences, as they are at the beginning of their careers, they move around from retailer to retailer, because of limited time spend at each retailer, limited time therefore, is spend with the supplier. This concluding that the relationship that is formed is one of a business relationship not a personal relationship between the buyer and the supplier. Evident in the present study established that when forming a personal relationship which is established over time becomes more of a committed relationship, when then forms a collaborative partnership.

4.11. Trust

Particularly pertinent to both the buyer and supplier in the BSR is trust.

“The relationships between me and the buyer has changed, as we need to trust each other and have confidence in each other more now than we used to. As we had time then to get it right, but not now”.

Supplier C
These results are similar to Buyer B.

“I think we need to be able to put more trust in our suppliers”.

Buyer B

Buyer B inveterate this with an example of working with a supplier who was based in the UK therefore, they understand the UK consumers demands. Negating this when dealing with Europe or Far East suppliers, the buyer previously would have travelled there 4 times a year, this has now been reduced to only twice a year, resulting in the buyer having to put the trust in the suppliers to be able to interpret the trend or the specification themselves rather a face to face with the buyer.

“You can be as descriptive as you like, but if you have worked with the supplier for a while, they are understanding exactly what you require. When you start out with a supplier, they think they understand your brand, but you have to work with them for a while for them to actually get what your brand is about and for you to trust them”.

Buyer B

Both Buyer B and A have the same viewpoint of trust.

“Trust is the most important thing in any relationship”.

Buyer A
There was clear evidence that trust was key for both parties and that trust needed to be in place if you were working in partnership together. Buyer C felt that if a long serving supplier had a “blip” in production then they would work with that supplier to overcome the issue, but if it was a new supplier and they sent in poor production quality, then the buyer would sever their relationship straight away, as the trust the buyer had put in that new supplier had been broken. All three case studies were definitive that trust was key in forming a collaborative partnership. When probed further on the future of the BSR, trust was mentioned here again, with Buyer C indicated that one of their European suppliers had proposed that they could accompany the buyer on their directional shop, at their own cost, achieving further synergy between the parties. Buyer C was deliberating this request as it required trust from both parties as intelligence would be passed from buyer to supplier.

4.12. Chapter Summary

This chapter has summarised the findings and contributions made from the three retailer buyers and their suppliers. From the research findings themes emerged that identified the key factors, that improve and/or mitigate the impact of collaboration within the BSR.

These themes are: -

- To achieve a viable retail business in 2019 and going forward, there are two rudiments of retail buying; each business has to operate as both a fast fashion and rapid fashion business.
• The geographical location of the supplier is paramount to the sourcing strategy of the retail business lead times as speed to market is crucial.

• To achieve collaboration within the BSR, there are three key elements that needs to be adhered to by both parties: -
  o Trust
  o Commitment
  o Power

• BSR Collaboration in 2019 and going forward, needs to be established in the NPD stages.

The following chapter will determine the critical dimensions of collaboration within the BSR within the contemporary fashion supply chain identified within the academic literature and the research findings. In order to maintain consistency in the presentation of discussion, the following chapter is structured according to the themes in the literature review, the findings from the case studies and interviews.
Chapter 5 – Findings and Discussion

5.1 Introduction

The previous chapter identified the key themes that emerged that improve and/or mitigate the impact of collaboration within the BSR. This chapter will use both the primary research and the literature review findings to address the research aim and objectives of this thesis (p. 18) to develop a conceptual framework, which critically examines the concept of collaboration within the buyer and supplier relationship (BSR) within the new product development stage in the contemporary UK fast fashion and rapid fashion market. The findings and discussion are structured around the same points as the literature review, however, in order to fully communicate the findings the order has been altered.

5.2 The Market shift

In today’s market the current economic position is very unstable; in contrast with Vinhas (2011), who identified that the cost price was still at the forefront in the buying decision-making process and companies were taking advantage of lower priced products from overseas from countries such as the Far East. Evidence in these research findings found sourcing from the Far East had been reduced dramatically (Section 4.4. p. 118), this now only occurred for the retailer’s core lines, for their FF products as speed to market over price is the retailer’s priority. This supports the findings from Sandar and Lee (2015) who stated, the global supply chains are ineffective and inefficient due to nonoptimal inventories, lead times, transportation and service levels, which is why due to FF and now RF reshoring has become the preferred method of sourcing for the UK retailers due to the shorter lead times. The
apparel pipeline timings have changed dramatically due to FF and now rapid fashion (Section 4.3, p. 116). The time a garment spends travelling through the pipeline is now as little as one week for a rapid fashion line. Participant B buyer identified with Sandar and Lee (2015) confirming that they expect their UK suppliers to be able to follow a condensed critical path and produce a product within one week for sale (Section 4.3, p.116). To manage the flow of the product through the supply chain, the onshore-offshore shift needs to be taken into consideration. FF/RF lines are often produced closer to home to avoid missing the short window of the selling season. This has been identified within the current primary research with all three retailers moving a high percentage of production from the Far East to Europe and the UK. Buyer C stated: “70% of their production comes from the Europe and the UK”, whereas in 1980’s “70% would have been from the Far East, now only 30% come from the Far East”. UK retailers are utilising global dispersion of the supply chain and utilising places such as Turkey and Eastern Europe as well as the UK, this avoids long shipping times from the Far East, mediating between the demands of cost, quality and responsiveness/distance.

In response to Moon et al., (2013); Chen et al., (2013); Bruce et al., (2004) the findings of this current study contribute to their recommendations that FF retailers have to operate in a very competitive retail business market. The research findings identified the challenges presented by intensive globalisation, rapid product life cycles, demanding consumers, market volatility, lower unit demand, uncertainty, reduced cost and selling price pressure and the reduction of their supplier base.

The buyer A, B and C identified that speed to market was imperative as they needed to be first to market before their competitors, to be able to achieve this the research findings identified the supply chain needed to become lean and agile and their
sourcing strategy for their RF garments was UK and Europe. Achieving speed to market but losing on cost benefits, to gain back some of these cost benefits they sourced their FF garments from the Far East.

5.3. Supplier Involvement in Fuzzy Front End (FFE)

As recommended by Hodson and Jie (2017), the research findings revealed that company A and C were following this advice and had already located a member/s of the supplier’s design team into the retailer’s head office to work in collaboration with the buyers. The research findings from companies A and C are consistent with (Christopher, 2016), who found if market information for example fashion trends/inspiration is not available on time, the supplier faces serious pressure from upstream suppliers (raw materials) and downstream (retailers). Consequently, to give the retailer an advantage over its competitors, global dispersion has to be key in the product design stages, concluding that product design must occur at the front end of the product process. Companies A and C are now designating a desk in their head office for the supplier’s designer to work on market information (for example, analysing the internet for new trend ideas on celebrities/influences). The research findings discovered that Buyer B had taken this one step further and invested in a satellite office alongside their UK factory, where designers and QA teams are located. The research findings found that this has not only aided in the reduction of the apparel pipeline to achieve the RF one-week critical path but had also steered the buyer and supplier to form a closer collaboration.
5.4. Buyer Supplier Relationship in New Product Development

These research findings do not support the previous research (Yeniyurt et al., 2013; Johnsen, 2009), in 2019 dominance is no longer with the buyer but the BSR is now equal, both parties now have a 50% stake in the partnership (Section 4.7, p. 124). Previously, buyers were dominant, and suppliers were susceptible to buyers' demands and requirements. The literature revealed several important limitations which highlighted the importance of supplier involvement in NPD primarily from the buyer's perspective, with less attention being given to the supplier. These findings counteract this by providing data from both the buyers and supplier's perspectives.

These research findings match those observed in earlier studies by Van Echtelt et al., (2008); Ragatz et al., (2002); Petersen et al., (2003); Clark., (1989) that the early and extensive involvement with suppliers in the buyers' NPD improves the buyers' product development performance in terms of quality, productivity, cost, and speed. It is interesting to note in section 4.3 (p. 116) which revealed that buyers no longer have time to work as they had previously in providing a full specification for the supplier and reviewing each stage of the critical path. The research findings confirm that the buyer must meet consumer's demands, much achieve greater speed to market of originality and be competitively priced in the 2019 retail market. It is clear that, at the point of data collection all three buyers and suppliers experienced trajectory in witnessing the changes in BSR over the three decades because of the introduction to FF. These changes were exposed further in Cox's model (Figure 21, p.111) which identified the significant changes prior to FF in 1980's and after its introduction to date. The evidence in the current
research findings established the buyer held their supplier at ‘arm’s length’ in the 1980’s and the suppliers were not involved in any part of the NPD stages; their involvement came in the production stages. The research findings contradict Meyer and Allen’s (1991) model but supports that of Dwyer, Schurr et al., (1987) to delineate the realm of possibilities of dyadic motivations for relational exchange in the NPD stages was accurate. The research findings evidence supports Dwyer et al., (1987) and Cox’s model., (2003) in 2000’s with the BSR moving to become a reciprocal collaborative relationship.

There are number of similarities between Azadegan and Dooley., (2010); Swink and Mabert., (2000); Handfield et al., (1999) and the current research findings. Suppliers can contribute to buying companies’ product innovation, by providing, technologies and design expertise that can enhance the final product as well as component manufacturability can improve product quality and reduce costs as well as design capacity can reduce the overall cycle time of an NPD project (Ragatz et al., 2002; Handfield et al., 1999). Evident from the research findings from all three interviewee revealed the early the involvement by the supplier in a buyer’s NPD process enables a supplier to better plan for future investments and use of resources. The research findings are consistent with (Ellram and Edis, 1996) that realising a more secure long-term growth potential through increased new business opportunities is critical to survive in this fast-paced UK market-place.

5.5. The Impact of BSR on NPD Performance

The research findings saw contradictions to the findings of Vinhas Da Silva et al, (2011) indicating that there are positives and negatives on the impact of the BSR
on NPD performance, with the positives being: reducing cost and shortening lead times. It was suggested by Buyer A who had not seen any reduction in costs, that this was a result of the location of their supplier being based in the UK, therefore, cost prices were already higher than those of the same product being sourced abroad. They did however agree that the shortened lead times was a positive, due to the location of their supplier. Research findings revealed that Buyer B and C whose suppliers are based in Turkey and Bangladesh respectively had experienced reduced costs and shortened lead times, as evidenced within the present study as all three supplier interviewees worked in the NPD stages of their buyer’s critical path. Buyer A and C (small to medium size retailers) did not support the negatives of Vinhas Da Silva et al, (2011) that design performance and quality were in consist, both stated that quality consistency was not their number one priority, speed to market before their competitors was their priority. Buyer C (larger organisation) was the only buyer whose company insisted quality was one of their top priorities. In contrast to the literature, design performance for all three of our retailers was a positive rather than a negative and this was evidenced as all three suppliers now employ designers to work closely with the retailers. The primary research uncovered that all three buyers and suppliers found working in collaboration in the BSR on the NPD performance was favourable. The research findings supported the literature which identified that to achieve supplier collaboration high levels of trust and commitment are required.

5.6. Inter-organisational Dynamics in BSR

The research findings corroborate the idea of Vanpoucke et al. (2013) and Monczka et al. (2000), who suggest that the inter-organisational dynamic in the BSR are defined as long-term cooperative relationships, which are designed to increase the
operational performance of both the buyer and supplier (Section 4.6, p. 122). The research findings support the literature but went further as all interviewees were unanimous in stipulating what they interpreted a long-term relationship to be five years or more. It can, therefore, be assumed that relationships needed time to be nurtured, time enables both parties to get to know how each other operates.

In response to Dwyer et al., (1987) framework of five distinct stages in a relationship (Section 2.3 p.31). (1) awareness, (2) exploration, (3) expansion, (4) commitment, and (5) dissolution, all interviewees within this present study were found to be at stage 4 the commitment stage. The size of the retail business did not have an impact on the relationship stages. It is interesting for the research to find evidence in the present study that both parties identified themselves as strategic partners (Section 4.6 p.123). In line with Dwyer et al., (1987), both parties set up their integration initiatives and had implicitly tested each other with test goals over time, all of which saw integrity and performance of the other. The researcher demonstrated that based on the fundamentals of trust and joint satisfaction both the buyer and supplier increased their risk-taking within the dyad, which saw increased mutual dependence, which then went onto result in strong commitment and trust.

5.6.1. Power Dynamics of the Buyer/Supplier Relationship across the decades

Discussion with participants suggests that they are in agreement with the proposition of Myer, Davis and Schoorman (1995); that the dynamics of the BSR in the 1980’s saw the power with the buyer and the buyers dictating prices to their manufacturers, commanding rigorous quality standards, design and delivery demands as well as passing the costs of stock holding onto suppliers. Evidence in the research findings identified that all three of the different sized retailers favoured
and were practicing tier 1 of the Crewe and Davenport (1991) 'preferred supplier model' (Section 2.2.1, p.24). The characteristic feature of this pyramidal control structure is that of long term, close working relationships between buyer and supplier, it is clear that, at the point of this current study, the research supports Spekman et al, (1985) that all interviewees were receiving exchange efficiency and social satisfactions from the association.

All interviewees experienced the fragmentation of the market in the early nineteen nighties. They expressed how the risks such as supply demand mismatch, forecasting errors, failed style conditions, consumption changes and a reduction in production time with turnaround times moving from 26 weeks to 8 weeks had impacted on their relationships. The evidence in this present study confirmed they had no choice but to restructure their sourcing requirement and to find new ways with which to maintain control over their production.

The research findings contradicted Bruce and Daly (2006), as a portfolio of suppliers was seen negatively by all interviewees, a reduced supplier base in 2019, was the researcher demonstrated the only way to survive this competitive retail market place. Interesting to note that if buyers did follow Bruce and Daly’s proposal of a portfolio of supplier, this could be construed as buyers picking and choosing their suppliers, therefore, no loyalty would be established, and the power would be back with the buyers, validating Teji (2012) findings.

The research findings revealed a new and further dimension to the relationship discussion, implying that recently the power within the BSR relationship has tipped, and it is no longer the buyer or supplier who holds the power this is now driven by
the consumer. This supports the findings of Easey (2009) who also found that fashion was once dictated to consumers and they accepted it, whereas consumers now have the power to reject or accept fashions. Evidence indicated both the buyers and suppliers were being led by consumer demands in areas such as design, quality and lead times. There are number of similarities in the current research study that support Christopher (2016); Schoenherr and Swink (2000) and the Mendes model (2011) findings who all highlight that consumers shop twenty-four hours a day and seven days a week, wanting their purchases delivered faster and to their preferred collection point; describing these increased demands have led towards greater supplier and customer involvement. The researcher noted from the current study that the Mendes model produced in 2011, cannot be efficient depictions of evolution in power dynamics and factors of change, as both the buyers and suppliers have identified the retail market place has changed and is continuously changing.

5.6.2. Dimensions of Collaboration: A BSR View

The research findings endorse the outcome of Hodson and Jie (2017), all three buyers are developing their suppliers to enable their retailers to compete in the current FF/RF market, evolving suppliers to become true partners, synergising in a partnership forming a strategic partnership. Contradicting Jap et al., (2018) and Harrigan’s (1985) findings, who believe that forming partnerships requires sharing of sensitive cost and process information and creating unique investments to support the dyad’s efforts. It is interested to note though that Buyer C is at this time only considering the proposal from their supplier to join them on their directional shopping trips, as their reservations support Harrigan’s (1985) concerns, this maybe one step to far in the BSR partnership. The research findings provide evidence that all the interviewees required their future outlook to be “long-term strategic partners”
as they felt these benefits out way the negatives and have a positive financial benefit to both parties, concluding that transparency was needed within the BSR.

5.6.3. Commitment

In response to the recommendations of Singhs and Hodges (2011) the findings believe commitment should be two sided and is equally important to both supplier and buyer. Evidence in the research findings did however demonstrate that Buyer C support Singhs and Hodges claims but also put previsions in place by asserting their authority and stating they would sever immediately the BSR if a supplier delivered inferior garments in the production stages, implying that the commitment on the supplier’s part would be missing (Section 4.10, p.136). Empirical results provided from this current research supports De Ruyter et al (2001) view that the hypothesis is a positive relationship between trust and commitment.

The evidence presented in the research findings supported Lysons and Farrington (2012) beliefs that trust is apparent and each party wants to help and learn from each other, this results in achieving dependable buyer/supplier relationships. Thomas et al., (2004) explores the theory that each buyer sees trust differently; some as confidentiality and others as reliability. The supplier must assess how this trust should be formed in order to keep the buyer’s business successful. Contradicting this, the research findings establish that all three suppliers stated that trust was also very important in BSR and they felt the buyer and supplier needed to work together to establish how trust was formed. This is identified in Singhs and Hodges (2011) belief that trust forms the basis of any relationship and if there is no trust then there is no point in the relationship. This belief was confirmed by all interviewees, as they all felt trust was a key function within the BSR. All three buyers
and suppliers interviewed reflected both Moorman et al (1992) and Lysons and Farrington (2012) beliefs that if trust is apparent and each party want to help and learn from each other then, dependable buyer/supplier relationships can be achieved.

The research findings confirmed Fowdar and Labiache (2005) findings that trust is the most important factor in the relationship and leads to mutual success, stating that commitment and communication are less important and more of a by-product of trust. If the supplier shows trust then the buyer will trust back, portraying again the overriding theme of power. The research findings supported the claim by Thomas et al (2004) that each of the buyers from the three different size companies sees trust differently; some as confidentiality and others as reliability. The research findings went onto to discover trust also varies depending on where the supplier is located. Buyers tended to place more trust in suppliers that are located closer to them. The researcher’s perspective in this study is that the supplier must ascertain how this trust should be formed in order to keep the buyer’s business successful.

In contrast to Singhs and Hodges (2011) argued suppliers can become too eager to please and may twist the truth in order to keep buyers happy. Suggesting the suppliers are not trustworthy, or this could imply they are keeping the truth hidden, as they may be scared of the consequences if the truth is known. The primary research disaffirms the literature given that all three retailers expected transparency from their suppliers and empowered them to take responsibility for the production processes of the critical path.
5.7 Development of the Conceptual Framework

The primary research has been reviewed alongside the factors identified in the academic literature, the findings from both sources have demonstrated the shape of the BSR over the three decades (1980’s through to the 2000’s). The research has addressed how it has developed and changed over time because of the introduction of FF and now RF.

This thesis has shown how the literature was applied to two models, Cox’s (2003) and Dwyer et al., (1987) in order to illustrate the similarities and differences of the BSR over a period of time by the three case studies. The themes that were established as critical to the relationship and the dynamic of the BSR in the literature and the research findings have concluded in a conceptual framework, which identifies the key factors, that improve and/or mitigate the impact of collaboration within the BSR.

Figure 22 (p. 153), The Conceptual Framework identifies the key factors that improve and/or mitigate an impact of collaboration present and future. This framework clearly demonstrates the changes over the three decades of the BSR within the supply chain, identifying when collaboration was achieved in each decade. The Conceptual Framework has been devised through the theoretical mapping of the BSR models from the literature review and the primary research findings. The framework illustrates each decade, 1980’s - Traditional supply chain to the 1990’s and the introduction of FF into to present day (2019) and RF. Table 7 explains further each stage within the supply chain, the parties involved and their roles within each stage.
Figure 22: Mapping the Findings of synthesised of the Buying/Supplier representation 1980’s – 2019
5.7.1. Traditional Season

The ‘traditional season’ illustrates the excessive supply chain lead times of up to 66 weeks from the start of the NPD stage through to the delivery stage.

5.7.2. Fast Fashion

The introduction of ‘Fast Fashion’ (FF) in the 1990’s found the supply chain lead times reduced to 8 weeks.

5.7.3. Fast Fashion

The introduction of ‘Rapid Fashion (RF) in 2017 to date found the supply chain lead times reduced to less than 1 week (6 days).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage within the supply chain</th>
<th>Parties involved in each stage and their roles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1980'S TRADITIONAL SUPPLY CHAIN</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Product Development Stage</td>
<td>Buyer – responsible for reviewing last seasons sales with merchandiser, departmental strategy, directional shop, creating new range with designer, merchandiser and QA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Day 1 to 112)</td>
<td>Merchandiser - responsible for reviewing past seasons sales, analysis and budget planning and strategy with the buyer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Designer - responsible for the directional shop visits with buyer, development of the specification pack</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Quality Assurance (QA) - responsible for returns analysis and fabric construction and size charts of specification packs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Supplier - involvement was limited, as the comprehensive design pack had instructions which they were expected to follow to make the first fit samples.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Order Placed Stage</td>
<td>Supplier - produce a first fit sample for the Buyer/QA/Designer - relay fit comments to the supplier who in turn would either produce a further fit sample or move to sealing sample stage.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Day 113 to 154)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Production Stage</td>
<td>BSR Collaboration - started to take place.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Day 155 to 378)</td>
<td>Three key elements of collaboration within the BSR; trust, commitment and power. These key elements occurred within the latter stages of the critical path in the production stage.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>BSR COLLABORATION</strong></td>
<td>Buyer/Merchandiser/QA – responsible for the sourcing strategy which at the time was predominately based within the Far East or to a lesser extent some parts of Eastern Europe to keep costs down by utilising the cheaper labour as lead times were not as critical, the UK was rarely used due to cost constraints.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delivery stage</td>
<td>Buyer/Merchandiser - followed the production process collaboratively with the supplier until the product was transported from the factory to the retailers' warehouse.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Day 379 to 463)</td>
<td>QA - The garments will be inspected at the warehouse.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage</td>
<td>Responsibilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Product Development</td>
<td>Buyer/Designer - review social media influences/posts and competitors to establish the new range. Also reviewing trend forecasting predictions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Day 1 to 14)</td>
<td>QA - establish quality standards for the new range.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Merchandiser - establish the budget.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Order Placed Stage</td>
<td>BSR collaboration - would start at this stage. Three key elements to collaboration within the BSR; trust, commitment and power.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Day 15 to 28)</td>
<td>Supplier - specification pack (no longer produced by the retailer, this responsibility was passed onto the supplier).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BSR COLLABORATION</td>
<td>Supplier/retailers QA - responsible for first fit and sealing samples.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Merchandiser - placing production orders.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Supplier - produce a first fit sample.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Buyer/QA/Designer - relay fit comments to the supplier who in turn would either produce a further fit sample or move to sealing sample stage.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Production Stage</td>
<td>Buyer/Supplier/Merchandiser – responsible for the sourcing strategy, at the time was predominately Europe and the UK with core lines being placed in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Day 29 to 42)</td>
<td>the Far East, cost was not the retailers first priority, speed to market was.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>QA – Review of the production stage.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delivery stage</td>
<td>Buyer/Merchandiser/Supplier - will follow the production process collaboratively until the product is transported from the factory to the retailers’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Day 43 – 56)</td>
<td>warehouse.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>QA - the garments will be inspected.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### BSR COLLABORATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **New Product Development Stage**  | BSR collaboration - would start at this stage. Three key elements to collaboration within the BSR: trust, commitment and power.  
Buyer/Supplier’s Designer/Buyers Designer - review social media influences/posts and competitors to establish the new trends.  
QA - establish quality standards for the fabric which the supplier stocks on their factory floor.  
Merchandiser - establish the OTB budget.  |
| **Order Placed Stage**   | Supplier/retailers QA - responsible for first fitting garment (using existing established block), this is also used for sign-off and photography for website and marketing purposes.  
Merchandiser - placing OTB orders.  |
| **Production Stage**    | Buyer/Supplier/Merchandiser – responsible for the sourcing strategy, predominately UK with a small amount in Europe. Cost was not the retailers first priority, speed to market before competitors is.  
QA – Review of the production stage.  |
| **Delivery stage**      | Buyer/Merchandiser/Supplier - will follow the production process collaboratively until the product is transported from the factory to the retailers’ warehouse.  
QA - the garments will be inspected.  |

**Table 8:** An explanation of Figure 22, explaining each stage within the supply chain the parties involved, their roles and responsibilities and the timeline of each stage within each stage from 1980’s to 2019 (Author, 2019).
5.8 Chapter Summary

This chapter has discussed findings within the context of the literature which examined the theoretical perspectives and existing practices from an interpersonal and inter-organisational position. Discussion has examined quantitative and qualitative data from three buyers and three suppliers of well-established fast fashion retailers and examined and evaluated how relationship dynamics evolve, focusing specifically on the new product development stage. It has demonstrated the critical dimensions of collaboration within the BSR in a contemporary fashion supply chain. Concluding in a conceptual framework which illustrates key factors which improve and/or mitigate the impact of BSR on new product development.
Chapter 6 – Conclusion

6.1 Summary of Findings

Buyer/supplier relationships are essential in today’s global and dynamic business environment. The UK is facing rapidly changing customer demands within the business environment. The buyers and suppliers are eager to develop long-term relationships with each other to form strategic partnerships and to be able to overcome the challenges the current UK FF market has imposed. The arm’s length approach’ found in the 1980’s has now moved to the ‘collaborative approach’ found 2019.

6.2. Aim

The overall aim of this research was to critically examine the concept of collaboration within the buyer and supplier relationship (BSR) within the new product development stage in the contemporary UK fast fashion and rapid fashion market. To achieve this, the study analysed the findings of three case studies from the buyer and supplier perspectives. The three case studies profiled are three different market size retailers. The buyers and suppliers were chosen to provide a wide variety of data to be captured and to give an overview of the retailing marketplace to date. The sampling criteria was to identify interviewees with more than twenty years’ experience in the retail industry and who have worked over the three decades. To achieve the aim, four objectives were addressed.
6.3. Four Objectives

6.3.1. Objective One

Firstly, the study critically analysed the theoretical development of the buyer/supplier relationship (BSR) within the context of the new product development stage of the fashion supply chain specifically focusing on the collaborative relationships. Both the findings and academic literature pointed to companies trying to develop closer relationships with their key suppliers to improve organisational performance. The research findings found retailers recognised the importance of a select group of suppliers, for example by creating strategic supplier programs. These strategic suppliers need to provide innovative solutions and are expected to invest in the relationship to form collaboration with the retailers in realising its long-term goals.

6.3.2. Second Objective

Secondly the study critically evaluates the interpersonal/inter-organisational dynamic of the BSR within a UK based fast-fashion context. It was established that the interpersonal/inter-organisational dynamic in the BSR are defined as long-term cooperative relationships, which are designed to increase the operational performance of both the buyer and supplier. The research findings uncovered that all three buyers and suppliers stipulated that to establish the interpersonal/inter-organisational dynamics of the BSR the relationship had to be long-term relationship, identifying that long term was five years or more. Establishing that relationships needed time to be nurtured which enables both parties to get to know how each other operates.
6.3.3. Third Objective

The current study determined the critical dimensions of collaboration within the BSR within the contemporary fashion supply chain. Evidence shown in the research findings have demonstrated that all three buyers and suppliers no matter the size work in a congruent way. The themes that emerged from the primary data are evident in Figure 22, mapping the findings of synthesized representation 1980’s – 2019. To stay viable in the modern day a retail business requires the company to operate as both a fast fashion and a rapid fashion business. The percentage of FF or RF garments produced will depend on the company’s business strategy. The literature review and the research findings established there were three key elements to collaboration within the BSR; trust, commitment and power, the difference being BSR collaboration was established in different stages for each of the decades. The traditional supply chain established BSR collaboration within the Production Stage, FF within the Order Place Stage and RF within the NPD stage. In 2019, to achieve the fast-paced supply chain RF process the suppliers have had to invest in their own designers who collaborate closely with the buyer and retailer’s designer, even to the point of having desks in their head offices or in some cases even establishing a satellite office adjacent to the supplier factory.

6.3.4. Four Objective

The conceptual framework developed through the literature findings and the primary research data identified the key factors, that improve and/or mitigate the impact of collaboration within the BSR. It was established that to achieve a collaborative BSR the key components for achieving FF/RF are; power, trust, commitment, length of relationship and the proximity of the supply base. The research also identified that an organisation is satisfied with the relationship when the performance meets or
exceeds expectations and trust and commitment is built as a result. Similarly, trust
and commitment suffer when expectations are not met.

This current study has established a new way forward in critically examining the
concept of collaboration within the buyer and supplier relationship (BSR) within the
new product development stage in the contemporary UK fast fashion and rapid
fashion market.
7.0 Limitations

The main limitations of this study pertain to the small sample size of data. The three buyers and suppliers chosen with over twenty years’ work experience in the fashion industry, offered depth of study and richness in case study description, however, in future, a study can be conducted considering a larger sample size to explore the concept of collaboration within in BSR within the NPD stage. In spite of these limitations, this empirical study has contributed to the understanding of how to identify the key factors, that improve and/or mitigate the impact of collaboration within the BSR in the UK FF/rapid fashion retail marketplace. With the new way forward moving closer and establishing more interdependent relationships between the buyer and supplier in the NPD stages. As anecdotal evident that such collaborative relationships are becoming more prevalent as a more retailers are seeking to develop them.
8.0 Future Research

To develop this study further, more case study companies should be developed to gain multiple perspectives. More specifically, considering the use of multiple informants is important to identify key factors to improve the BSR. It is suggested in the literature that the optimal number of cases is four, to increase the potential for theory testing and generation and therefore, the significance of such a study. A further development would be to interview three retailers who deal with the same supplier, to identify the improvements within the BSR. This study has also found several points that have limited discussion in the literature and can be developed further by future research: issues such as, the impact of the fast pace of change of the UK retail landscape and how the BSR had had to change. The extent to which awarding the status of collaborative supplier might have on the supplier and possible effects of such raised expectations on both the buyer and supplier. As well as the impact of a retailer who can simultaneously have a near vertical relationship with a supplier, act as partners in the NPD stages, and the supplier work with the retailers’ competitors in the same market place.

The future of rapid fashion is consistently changing and up to date research is required to entirely understand the UK retail market place. Two key developments could be addressed in further research; rapid fashion retailers are proposing to engage a percentage of their range offer from the wholesale environment. Technology, which will vastly improve the way the BSR operates and therefore, have an impact on how both parties collaborate together. The indications within technology are that the future holds no touch garment production.
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McLeod, S., (2017). “What’s the difference between qualitative and quantitative research?”. Simply Psychology.


Research on the fashion buying skill set in the contemporary context

I would like to invite you to take part in a research study. Before you decide you need to understand why the research is being done and what it would involve for you. Please take time to read the following information carefully. Take time to decide whether or not to take part. It is up to you to decide. I will describe the study and go through the information sheet, which we will give to you. We will then ask you to sign a consent form to show you agreed to take part. You are free to withdraw at any time, without giving a reason. (if applicable – this will not affect the standard of care you receive). We cannot promise the study will help you but the information we get from the study will help to increase the understanding of the buying/supplier relationship. All information which is collected about you and your company during the course of the research will be kept strictly confidential, and any information about you which leaves the MMU will have your name, your companies name, and the address removed so that you cannot be recognised.

The purpose of the study

The purpose of this research is to evaluate the effects of the buyer/supplier relationship in the product development process for the UK fast fashion market. Qualitative method including interviews and case studies are used in response to the research. Current fashion buyers and suppliers in the role are the interviewees of the survey. The findings can help better understanding the fashion buyer and supplier role in the demanding and constantly changing fashion industry in the future.

It will take approximately one hour for the interview. You are not required to provide your name and company name, whereas the information of your buying/suppling work experience, working department and business type are required.

(If you have a concern about any aspect of this study, you should ask to speak to the supervisor who will do their best to answer your questions:
Terence Chen - T.Chen@mmu.ac.u

Participant signature:

Julie Hodson
Manchester Metropolitan University
CONSENT FORM

Title of Project: To critically examine the concept of collaboration within the buyer and supplier relationship (BSR) within the new product development stage in the contemporary UK fast fashion and rapid fashion market.

Name of Researcher: Julie Hodson

Please initial all boxes

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet dated 12th July 2018 (version one) for the above study. I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily.

2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason, without my legal rights being affected.

3. I agree to the recording of the collection of the data.

4. I understand that relevant sections of my data collected during the study, may be looked at by individuals from Manchester Metropolitan University, where it is relevant to my taking part in this research. I give permission for these individuals to have access to my records.

5. I agree to take part in the above study.

Interviewees can request a copy of the transcript if they so wish.

Name of Participant ___________________________ Date ___________________________ Signature ___________________________

Name of Person taking consent. ___________________________ Date ___________________________ Signature ___________________________
## Appendix 2 – Risk Assessment Form

### Manchester Metropolitan University

### Risk Assessment Form

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FACULTY/DEPARTMENT</th>
<th>BUILDING</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MFI</td>
<td>Cavendish</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 1) ACTIVITY
- Talking to Buyers and Suppliers

### 2) PERSONS AT RISK
- Buyers and Suppliers

### 3A) HAZARDS
- Potential information sensitivity, will go through with the buyers and suppliers to see if they would like to redact any information.
- Acknowledge in the methods chapter the potential bias of the buyers and suppliers.
- Acknowledge my own bias and consider a method of achieving internal validity.

### 3B) Hazard Rating
- Low [X]  Med [ ]  High [ ]

### 4A) RISK CONTROL METHODS
- Peer input to counter my biases
- To achieve internal validity I will access other documentary sources, brochures, websites, internal memos if available, all media material, following the case study method outlines by Robert Yin.

### 4B) Hazard Rating with control methods
- Low [X]  Med [ ]  High [ ]

### 5) FURTHER ACTION REQUIRED
- N/A

### NAME AND TITLE OF ASSESSOR
- Julie Hodson

### SIGNATURE
- Julie Hodson

### DATE
- 10th August 2017

### REVIEW DATE
- 23rd October 2017

### SIGNATURE OF DEAN/HEAD OF DEPT.
- [Signature]

### DATE
- 23/4/19

### REVIEW DATE
Appendix 3 – Ethical checklist

ETHICS CHECKLIST

This checklist must be completed before commencement of any research project. This includes projects undertaken by staff and by students as part of a UG, PGT or PGR programme. Please attach a Risk Assessment.

Please also refer to the University’s Academic Ethics Procedures; Standard Operating Procedures and the University’s Guidelines on Good Research Practice

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Full name and title of applicant:</th>
<th>Julie Hodson, Senior Lecturer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>University Telephone Number:</td>
<td>0161 247 2419</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University Email address:</td>
<td><a href="mailto:j.hodson@mmu.ac.uk">j.hodson@mmu.ac.uk</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Status:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All staff and students involved in research are strongly encouraged to complete the Research Integrity Training which is available via the Staff and Research Student Moodle areas</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Department/School/Other Unit:</td>
<td>MFI, Fashion Buying and Merchandising</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programme of study (if applicable):</td>
<td>Masters by Research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name of DoS/Supervisor/Line manager:</td>
<td>Zhimin Chen, Tazmeen Sabir, Joanna Blaco-Velo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Title:</td>
<td>ships in new product development within the UK fast fashion supply chain (Forzy Front End) in new impartat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Start &amp; End date (cannot be retrospective):</td>
<td>April 2017 to April 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of participants (if applicable):</td>
<td>x3 fast fashion retail managers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funding Source:</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brief description of research project activities (300 words max):</td>
<td>Over the last 15 years the UK high street has exploded with world class international retailers, stable high street anchors and innovative independents, but in addition, many retailers are struggling to survive in an extremely competitive environment. This has led to rapidly changing customer demand for products. Customers are demanding “faster, better, and cheaper” as well as personalisation and same-hour delivery. The fashion industry has been forced to shorten new product development cycle times (the fuzzy front end - FF), while the newly developed products have to meet the growing expectations of the end customer (Lee et al., 2009). The Importance of buyer/supplier relationships in new product development within the UK fast fashion supply chain (Forzy Front End) in new impartat</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Does the project involve NHS patients or resources?</th>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>If yes please note that your project may need NHS National Research Ethics Service (NRES) approval. Be aware that research carried out in a NHS trust also requires governance approval.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Click here to find out if your research requires NRES approval</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Click here to visit the National Research Ethics Service website</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To find out more about Governance Approval in the NHS click here</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Does the project require NRES approval?</th>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>If yes, has approval been granted by NRES?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attach copy of letter of approval. Approval cannot be granted without a copy of the letter</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Are you gathering data from people?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For information on why you need informed consent from your participants please click <a href="#">here</a></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. If you are gathering data from people, have you:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Attached a participant information sheet explaining your approach to their involvement in your research and maintaining confidentiality of their data?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Attached a consent form? (not required for questionnaires)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Click <a href="#">here</a> to see an example of a <a href="#">participant information sheet and consent form</a></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Are you gathering data from secondary sources such as websites, archive material, and research datasets?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Click <a href="#">here</a> to find out what ethical issues may exist with secondary data</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Have you read the <a href="#">guidance</a> on data protection issues?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Have you considered and addressed data protection issues – relating to storing and disposing of data?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Is this in an auditable form? (can you trace use of the data from collection to disposal)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Have you read the <a href="#">guidance</a> on appropriate research and consent procedures for participants who may be perceived to be vulnerable?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Does your study involve participants who are particularly vulnerable or unable to give informed consent (e.g. children, people with learning disabilities, your own students)?</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Will the study require the co-operation of a gatekeeper for initial access to the groups or individuals to be recruited (e.g. students at school, members of self-help group, nursing home residents)?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Click for an example of a <a href="#">PIS</a> and <a href="#">information about gatekeepers</a></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Will the study involve the use of participants’ images or sensitive data (e.g. participants personal details stored electronically, image capture techniques)?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Click <a href="#">here</a> for guidance on images and sensitive data</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Will the study involve discussion of sensitive topics (e.g. sexual activity, drug use)?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Click <a href="#">here</a> for an advisory distress protocol</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Could the study induce psychological stress or anxiety in participants or those associated with the research, however unlikely you think that risk is?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Click <a href="#">here</a> to read about how to deal with stress and anxiety caused by research procedures</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Will blood or tissue samples be obtained from participants?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Click <a href="#">here</a> to read how the Human Tissue Act might affect your work</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Is your research governed by the Ionising Radiation (Medical Exposure) Regulations (IRMER) 2000?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Click <a href="#">here</a> to learn more about IRMER</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Are drugs, placebos or other substances (e.g. food substances, vitamins) to be administered to the study participants or will the study involve invasive, intrusive or potentially harmful procedures of any kind?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Click <a href="#">here</a> to read about how participants need to be warned of potential risks in this kind of research</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Is pain or more than mild discomfort likely to result from the study? Please attach the pain assessment tool you will be using.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 4 – Interview Questions (Buyer)
**Aim:** To critically examine the concept of collaboration within the buyer and supplier relationship (BSR) within the new product development stage in the contemporary UK fast fashion and rapid fashion market.

**Objectives:**

1) To critically analyse the theoretical development of the buyer/supplier relationship (BSR) within the context of the new product development stage of the fashion supply chain specifically focusing on the collaborative relationships.

2) To critically evaluate the interpersonal/inter-organisational dynamic of the BSR within a UK based fast-fashion context.

3) To determine the critical dimensions of collaboration within the BSR within the contemporary fashion supply chain.

4) To develop a conceptual framework, which identifies the key factors, that improve and/or mitigate the impact of collaboration within the BSR.

**(PROMPT NEW PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interview questions for the buyer</th>
<th>Reasoning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Section One – Interview Introduction</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thanking the participant for taking part in the interview</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading out the interview objectives and confidentiality agreement</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informing the participant that they can stop the interview at any time and/or not answer any questions they do not feel comfortable answering</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Please can you give a brief description as to the size of your organisation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1 The number of employees?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2 Privately owned/Public company?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3 Company’s organisational structure.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is your role within your company?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tell me about your career development?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
How has fast fashion (introduced in the late 1990’s) had an impact on your role and how your organisation operates?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section three – Buyer/Supplier Relationship</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How would you manage your relationships with your suppliers?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can you describe the changes you have observed in the product development stages?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(What aspects do you find more important)?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can you describe changes you have observed in the product development stages?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(How has this impacted on the BSR)?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(How would you describe the Inter-Organisational Dynamics in the BSR)?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STRUCTURAL DYNAMICS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To what extent do you think the length of the relationship determines the success of a BSR?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>POWER</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Would you agree that there is a power dynamic at play in all BSR?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How would you explain and describe that power dynamic?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| TRUST |
How important is trust within the BSR?

COMMUNICATION

Would you feel the nature and method of communication between the buyer and the supplier has changed? If so in what way and over what period?

Section four – Collaborative Relationships and NPD stages

Describe the nature of collaboration within the BSR?

(Has this changed over time)?

Section Five – End of Interview

Looking towards the future to see how things are progressing?

Let the interviewee know the interview is over and inform them if they have any further questions regarding the interview or the research project, the researchers email address is on the participant sheet for their reference.
Interview Questions Supplier

**Aim:** To critically examine the concept of collaboration within the buyer and supplier relationship (BSR) within the new product development stage in the contemporary UK fast fashion and rapid fashion market.

**Objectives:**

1) To critically analyse the theoretical development of the buyer/supplier relationship (BSR) within the context of the new product development stage of the fashion supply chain specifically focusing on the collaborative relationships.

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3) To determine the critical dimensions of collaboration within the BSR within the contemporary fashion supply chain.

4) To develop a conceptual framework, which identifies the key factors, that improve and/or mitigate the impact of collaboration within the BSR.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interview questions for the suppliers</th>
<th>Reasoning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Section One – Interview Introduction</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thanking the participant for taking part in the interview</td>
<td>To ensure the participant is aware how thankful the research is for taking the time to participate in this interview. This will motivate them to answer each question to a high standard.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading out the interview objectives and confidentiality agreement</td>
<td>To ensure the participant is aware of what the research aims to achieve from the interview, which may enable the interviewee to answer accordingly. To reassure the interviewee that the information they provide will be kept confidential.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informing the participant that they can stop the interview at any time and/or not answer any questions they do not feel comfortable answering</td>
<td>To ensure the participant feels comfortable throughout the interview and is aware they do not have to participate if they change their mind.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Please can you give a brief description as to the size of your organisation</td>
<td>To understand the structure and size of the organisation the interviewee works in and to gain an understanding of the interviewees position within that company and therefore, their experience in answering these questions.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
  1.1 The number of employees? |
  1.2 Privately owned/Public company? |
  1.3 Company’s organisational structure. |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What is your role within your company?</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tell me about your career development?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Section Two – The Retail Environment**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What changes in the retail landscape and your role have you encountered over the last 20 years?</th>
<th>This section focuses on the retail environment over the last 20 years and the impact it may/may not have had on the interviewee’s organisation or fashion background. It also looks at the impact of fast fashion. This is to gain an up-to-date data on the fast fashion industry both past and present.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How has fast fashion (introduced in the 1990’s) had an impact on your role and how your organisation operates?</td>
<td>See section 2.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Section three – Buyer/Supplier Relationship**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Have you seen any changes in the buyer/supplier relationship in the last 20 years (1980’s/1990’s/to-date) working with your supplier base both in the UK and Globally? If so what are these? Has your organisation seen changes within the production processes and product design stages, if so what impact has this had on the BSR?</th>
<th>This section focuses on their buyer/supplier relationships over the decades. Focusing on the changing environment at the NPD stages.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Can you describe your Inter-Organisational Dynamics in the BSR?</td>
<td>See section 2.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**STRUCTURAL DYNAMICS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>In your opinion, do you think the length of the relationship determines the success of a BSR? Have you seen a shift in the speed to market of fast fashion garments?</th>
<th>To gain an understanding if a length of a relationship with the buyer is important and the speed to market of how they have had to work.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**POWER**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How would you describe the relationship you have with your current buyer? Do you think</th>
<th>To gain a further understanding of the Power dynamic within the interviewees organisation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>the relationship is equal in terms of power? If yes, who do you feel has most control within the relationship?</td>
<td>and/or past fashion industry experience and/or past fashion industry experience See section 2.2.2.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TRUST</strong></td>
<td>To gain a further understanding of the Trust dynamic within the interviewee's organisation and/or past fashion industry experience See section 2.3.2.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is your understanding of trust within the buyer relationship and how important do you feel it is?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>COMMUNICATION</strong></td>
<td>See section 2.3.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you feel the communication between the buyer and the supplier has changed? If so in what way and over what period?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Section four – Collaborative Relationships and NPD stages**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Have you found it necessary to form collaborative relationships with buyers over the last 20 years, if so why and when within the product development stage?</th>
<th>Understanding of collaborative relationships and when in the supply chain are the buyers introduced. See section 2.3.3.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Section Five – End of Interview**

| Let the interviewee know the interview is over and inform them if they have any further questions regarding the interview or the research project, the researchers email address is on the participant sheet for their reference. | To ensure the participant is aware the interview is over, and they have an email address to contact if they have further questions. |
Appendix 5

Participant P – Pilot Interview

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interview questions for the buyer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Section One – Interview Introduction</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**What is your role within your company?**
Buying Manager

**Tell me about your career development?**
Buyers Assistant – within buying office of Littlewoods
Buyer – Levi’s Brussels
Buying Manager - Littlewoods /Shop direct
Change Manager/Buying Manager - M&S
Section Two – The Retail Environment

How has fast fashion (introduced in the late 1990’s) had an impact on your role and how your organisation operates?

Participant A

Ok so there has been a massive shift because of Fast Fashion has had a massive shift and we have had to go direct to the supply base and moving away from importers and 3rd party suppliers. There has been both positives and negatives to this. A positive being improve margin, but also a lot of negatives including having a buffer of third party to monitor production and the loss of market intelligent from 3rd party supplier, who would give you market knowledge of what other retailers were doing, what their best sellers had been from previous seasons.

This has also had a massive impact on technical team role and the designer’s role (who the buyers work very closely with).

JH: Can you give me an example

Participant A: For example, one 3rd party – Dewhurst, who supply M&S, provide the technical interface for the supplier and represent M&S in meeting/visit to factory, they hand carry samples back, pre-screen garments for non-conformant and therefore, do some of the first stages within the critical path. –The positives of this are the critical path is shortened for M&S and they helped with delays, as they were able to pick up any issues earlier in the critical path process, therefore, fewer samples means less cost and speed to market.

2018 – M&S work directly with the factories and have cut out the 3rd party (e.g. Dewhurst). M&S have to now communication directly with factories by e-mail/Skype/Telephone – a lot is missed in this type of communication, therefore, 1st fit samples arrive and are not correct and not compliant with M&S’s safety and quality, therefore, this has an impact on the critical path = Buyers and QA team are having to approve fit samples with comments to me to get the critical path, therefore, they then require pre-production samples to do a double check they are correct.

JH: Where would the supplier be situated.

Participant A: Globally, little UK production, you can visit the factory yourself. Eg. OTB (Open to buy) which is more your fast fashion, is slightly different, as a full-service vendor you can still go OTB with a full service vendor.

JH: What do you mean by a full-service vendor

Participant A: Like a Dewhurst, a supplier, buy now, wear now, Fast Fashion. Short cut the critical path. Cut the product approval process. So, you can get the product in earlier. E.g. We would generally approve a technical submission with all the fabric information in-house to speed up the process – we will say we will have a look at one of your competitors, test reports or we will say send us a sample we will fit the first one and you will seal yourself. This has shaved 3/5 weeks off the critical path, the aim was to get the FF product down to 3/4 weeks, which they have now achieved.

To wrap it up, it is about getting a good quality garment that is available on time and meets the customers’ expectations whilst achieving margin.

Use to buy two seasons a year in 1980 and early 1990’s, then it moved to 4 seasons in middle 1990’s then when FF was introduced it moved to multiple seasons throughout the year. The buying critical path started out at 26 weeks in 1980’s/ early 1990’s then reduced to 20, then 12 and now moved to 3/4 weeks for M&S FF product.
JH: In the retail landscape and within your role what changes have you encountered over the last 20 years?

Participant A and the interviewer felt this question was repeated – therefore, in revised questions this will be removed.

| Section three – Buyer/Supplier Relationship |
How would you manage your relationships with your suppliers?

Planning (pauses)

Critical plan discussion (pause)

Clear concise technical specifications in the full service vendor world you did not need to do technical specifications as your supplier would do that for you, but now that you are dealing with the factory they need a bom (Bill of Materials), they need a design sketch, a size chart and accuracy and an education and the experience of a head office that you do not always get.

Work closely with the bill of materials /design sketches/accuracy/education and have experienced staff in head office.

Work closely with designers and encourage them to work with the Quality Assurance team to get right specification out to factories first time. Upfront information needs to be correct and on-time – when this does not happen the whole critical path falls down. All the upfront planning that is important and the level of detail that you give them.

JH: So would does this differ now from then?

Participant A: Previously in 80’s and 90’s buyers would be able to go to the showrooms of their 3rd party supplier and select samples/work with their designers/work with their technical team, sit together as a team. The buyer would say aesthetically I want this, this role of the other functions and the technologist would give a size chart of some guidance about blocks and required measurements and a size to help them with a costing. It would either be show room samples, tear sheet or rough spec with a size chart attached to it, this has now evolved to go into a full specifications with full bill of materials. Which is having an impact on resources because you have that resource through the supplier base that you were having a commission for but now you do not have that you need the resource in-house, so you are constantly fighting the critical path and there is not enough people to get the specs done on time and accurately. 3rd party understood what was required from the buyer, who would then interpret it for the factory. Now as the buyer has to go directly to the factory, communication sometimes get lost. Both parties are to blame.  

JH: Can you describe the changes you have observed in the product development stages?

PARTICIPANT A: These changes have had an impact on resources in the head office, as the buyers relies heavily on their own design team/quality assurance team to liaise/communication with factories, therefore, causes issues if the information related is not correct first time. 

Critical path management – every department is now accountable for the critical path.

Due to FF the design team want to get the latest trends from the catwalk or from the celebrities and want to turn these styles around to get into the stores/on-line in 4 weeks, otherwise, the trend has been missed. Therefore, the design team now want to scrap the full specification and ask for a sample in a size 8 as this is a fit model size, so they can photograph it and get it out for promoting, (not the usual size 12), therefore, this has an impact on the critical path as the size 8 sample cannot be fitted on the fit model (size 12), therefore, causing more production delays. I think I may have gone off onto a tangent.

JH: No no, it is beginning process which is what the project is about, how it has involved as it is down to Fast Fashion.

It is not just about FF – it is about the whole process, replenishment, turning the stock around, phasing/promotions and FF – a buyer now works three seasons at one time:-

Developing/approving/analysing in store product/looking back as good sellers at the same time.
**STRUCTURAL DYNAMICS**

**JH:** To what extent do you think the length of the relationship determines the success of a BSR?

Participant A: It does have a lot of influence – the buyer forms a relationship and therefore, an understanding of what the buyer requires and also the communication between both parties is better as well. As the supplier feels more comfortable with a buyer they have known for a good length of time. Factory will have trust in length of time, they will make some compromises.

There is also loyalty that will be built over time, buyers then become more approachable to the suppliers.

Buyers who are new to the role tend to not have the full product knowledge, therefore, the supplier sometimes gets confused with what the buyer is asking of them.

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**POWER**

**JH:** Would you agree that there is a power dynamic at play in all BSR?

Participant A: Yes, in the 80’s the power was with the buyer, but this has changed over time due to FF. It has now moved to the dynamic being 50%/50% split, they both need each other; therefore, their relationship has become even.

**JH:** How would you explain and describe that power dynamic?

Participant A: Well, if an experience buyer (around 20% of the M&S buying team) – their natural is to give direction to the supplier, they will make their requests and have expectations and the supplier knows this through experience.

Younger buyers have little experience and in my experience are on a power trip. Therefore, the supplier knows they have little experience and they do not work as well with the younger buyers (now 80% of the buying team).

Vocational – now educational new buyers coming through – now graduates – from a supplier’s perspective – their behaviour is very different from a buyer who has been there for years. They are hungry for promotion and more ruthless, they manage things differently – they want the supplier to jump through hoops with the number of samples they request as they change their minds, as they are unsure as to what they want. This then costs the supplier money, in turn makes the supplier more reluctant to deal with them in the future.

Suppliers are now more a partnership with the buyers – 50% /50% split of the power dynamics.
JH: How important is trust within the BSR?

Participant A: Important, because there is money involved – both got their own KPI’s to be accountable for, therefore, the buyer needs to be able to trust the supplier and the supplier needs to be able to trust the buyer – both businesses need to make a profit.

COMMUNICATION

JH: Would you feel the nature and method of communication between the buyer and the supplier has changed? If so in what way and over what period?

Participant A: Well, 20 years ago – no technology - no mobile desk phones, no e-mail just a fax machine. All size chart and orders on a Lotus 1/2/3 or carbon copy

Then it moved to Excel in the 2000’s – easier form of communication, but still not very effective and still time consuming.

NOW – 2018 - PLM/PDM – Skype/3D/Hollow lens – ski goggle = Artificial intelligence (walk around a factory and buying and supplier can talk and walk together and send e.g. tech spec. And 3 D printing – mobiles, What’s App groups.

China’s factories are testing making garments (e.g. T-shirt) where no hands touch the production process.

Communication – a system called YAMMER has been introduced – this is a computer system which pops up on the correct departments computer and it is how stores would communicate to head office (e.g. if there is a quality issues on a pair of jeans that the store had received, they would send a message via YAMMER to the jean buyer and the jean QA, who would then have to communicate their answer back to the stores asap, as this message would be seem by the buying and QA team and their managers).

Section four – Collaborative Relationships and NPD stages

JH: Describe the nature of collaboration within the BSR?

Participant A: Collaboration has changed over time: -

Well the 80’s saw the buyer being king, what the buyer would want is what the supplier did, with no collaboration between them both.

90’s due to FF this changed, with the supplier moved to work more in collaboration with the buyer at the early stages of the specification and sampling stages, even through to the production stages. The buyer started to listen to the supplier and their expertise.

2000’s due to technology, it has changed again, the buyer/supplier relationships is now fully collaborative at all stages, but especially within the NPD stages, the buyers now work with the suppliers at the very early stages of the NPD e.g. at design and then sample specification stage first, making sure the relate their experience/knowledge to the buyers about what capabilities they have and how to improve each stage along the way.

(Has this changed over time)?
JH: Looking towards the future to see how things are progressing?

Participant A: My thoughts are technology – will be the key driver to the BSR – working together to product seamless systems which make the critical path run smoothly and the two business more profit.

Let the interviewee know the interview is over and inform them if they have any further questions regarding the interview or the research project, the researchers email address is on the participant sheet for their reference.
**PARTICIPANT A - BUYER**

(PROMPT NEW PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT)

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Please can you give a brief description as to the size of your organisation

1.1 The number of employees? 40

1.2 Privately owned/Public company? – Privately owed

1.3 Company’s organisational structure. – Mmm, I am Business Development Director, so I am part of the Exec, I worked very closely with the co-owners.

What is your role within your company? Business Development, but it is a title, my role for this organisation is to work with the owners to explore their info structure and identify and carve out a gap in the market that they can really win.

Tell me about your career development?

Ok, so erm, I have been working within the industry for 25 years. I took a very unorthodox approach to my career originally looking at accountancy and my first retail position was in Merchandising erm, then I worked in the food industry and the DIY industry. Erm, then I moved into buying when I was in the DIY industry and then took a role erm from and industry perceptive as a role as a buyer in fashion. I was a buyer for womenswear and promoted to Head Of Buying where I have managed both womenswear own brand and brand, erm, menswear and childrenswear, so cross gender. Most of my experience has been in the mail order environment erm, but I have had multichannel experience, but I would say from a rounded point of view, but my expertise is e-commerce, within that multi-channel environment. My employees and my careers would include Matalan and Shop Direct from a large organisation, had a little spell working in the other side of the table in selling in terms of sourcing production and selling to the high street, which was really interesting to understand how to kind of relate to buyers from the other side of the desk. Erm, I was at Miss Guided where I was in Buying and Design Director for three years, quite influencing as a key member of the Exec and then meteoric growth. I left Miss Guided after three years as I said this year and I am working on consultancy basis with my current employer who is Club L.
Section Two – The Retail Environment

How has fast fashion (introduced in the late 1990’s) had an impact on your role and how your organisation operates?

Ok, so erm, the difference is not really about erm, my experience working within organisation who have adapted to fast fashion and e-commerce because I do not think traditional organisations have done, it is more about my experience really working in a pure play. Then developing from a pure play e-commerce fast fashion environment to other channels. Which I think is the most interesting and has allowed me the most astute observations. The difference really from the organisations is fundamentally one is a pull model and one is a push model. One of the models which is essentially the pull model which is the rapid and e-commerce model is where buyers are engaged in developing very wide product ranges with very shallow buys. They offer that up to their customer profile and then they repeat only in depth when the customers have told them which products they prefer.

The push model is where you have from a traditional retailing perspective, where you have a very long lead time, a traditional approach where you start with strategy, range planning erm, the traditional roles for buying and merchandising, there are lots of forecasting and predicting and essentially what you are doing is buying a quite a narrow range with quite high depth, so there is a high focus on trying to predict accurately what your customers want to minimise your markdown, where from a rapid fast fashion, the kind of pull model, you are asking your customers and you are investing your depth of buy and your budget at a later date when you have got that information.

Erm, you know one has long lead times, high margins, narrow range, the other one has wide range, fleet of foot and rapid lead times, erm, but as a consequence lower margins erm, because you are usually sourcing product from closer sources rather than further sources.

JH – From your perceptive then, as your role, has it completely changed?

Participant A – My responsibilities, my KPI’s have remained the same, so I am still responsible for sales and profit target, developing and leading the teams, so essentially the whole kind of role profile has remained the same, however, the structure and the processing you operating within those teams and the roles and responsibilities of those team members are different, erm, in terms of from a development perceptive and how you manage, you have got to work when you are in fast fashion with a large inventory on a very very simple process where your sign off processing are very, very quick, no paper laborious sign-off process, where you push much more empowerment to buyers and merchandisers to make decisions. So, what that is, is clear guide lines up front in terms of strategy, very, very clear in terms of a range plan, number of options, average depth of buy, price architecture, and then essentially buyers and merchandisers are empowered to make decisions and develop product to that range plan with very brief touch points with myself as a manager and a leader to ensure that plan is being delivered.

That contract with a very laborious erm, process where it is a analytically heavy historical facing process where you are looking at detailed range plans, erm, and there is there is very little
empowerment given to the buyer and the merchandising where they have to get every stage their decisions signed off, so that has been the biggest difference.

Section three – Buyer/Supplier Relationship

How would you manage your relationships with your suppliers?

Well, this is my experience, my prior experiences working for non-organisation in a non-rapid fashion environment, you used to talk very much about strategic supply base management. Erm, but if I am honest, they were not truly strategic, what they were trying to do is be really important to fewer people to leverage margin and profitability, because that was the key focus. Erm, the supplier relationship when you get to fast fashion, the criterial for that relationship and what the retailer wants out of that relationship is slightly different because what you require from a fast fashion environment is speed and reliability from a delivery perspective because you push an awful lot of responsibility back to that supplier in terms of delivering to the contract essentially. So, erm, because there is a lot more product the inventory is wider to actually administer a product development process, erm, as a traditionally retailer would work, would require an army of people. So essentially you push more responsibility back to the supplier and you require more design input, some of the self-seal, they certainly erm, sort of approval lab dips and bulk fabric approval erm then in a rapid fashion environment you agree criteria, then they have to finish a product good on time and if that good does not meet the contract date they just get it back. So, it is a different relationship and the rapid fashion environment require a lot more trust and truly strategic suppliers. Which really resulted in the supply base where you truly had a partnership. When I worked in Miss Guided, many of the supplier or certainly my top 10 suppliers, exclusively made for Miss Guided or Miss Guided represented 70/80% of their production capacity. So, it was much more of an integral relationship, much more fluidity or sharing information, there was much more social responsibility of providing production plans and delivering again those production plans, erm, as a consequent the organisation got the service it requires from a product perceptive and an on-time delivery perspective.

Can you describe the changes you have observed in the product development stages?

Ok, so from the product development stages erm, really when you are working with a rapid fashion buyer and design team needs to really start with the product, so that is the biggest difference, when you are working with a traditional, core retailers, the buyers envisage a finish product then work back what components they need to source to make that garment. Because the buyers and designers in a rapid fashion environment, need to work with what is given, they need to eradicate from their thought process the lead time from components and fabric and therefore, are jumping stages and working with that is available, then developing product from that available fabric. Erm, now that can happen on two ways, sometimes, erm, because of the requirement of simplification these retailers work with very few core fabrics, there has been a piece of work which has been established where we state we need 8 core fabrics and we need our supplier base to have these 8-core fabrics on the floor, that is one core element. The other element is what is new, what other fabrics are being brought into the UK or Chinese or what every market we are talking about as finished goods that are available and we would develop into those fashion fabrics. But that is the biggest different in product development. Starting from fabric, then what you are working with is a lead time of finished garments rather than the total time of sourcing and approving fabrics then going into manufacturing then all that good stuff.

Because the buyers work on a 4-6 week lead time, they have an OTB to deliver a forward plan of 6 weeks, so hence they need to start with what is available within that specific market, in terms of fabric availability and design garment utilising that fabric.
(What aspects do you find more important)?

The most important would be fabric, you work with what is given, you develop into available things, the other difference in terms of product development, going back to the supplier base, erm, because of the enormous amount of options that a team, has responsibility for developing and purchasing what they need to work with is a supply base which can contribute to that development process. So, erm, obviously a finished range from a fast fashion buyer will be an equal split or a percentage split depending on what organisation they work from of product that they have originated or that the supplier has developed on their behalf. So, that is the difference, you are developing a strategic supply base so that they think of you when they are developing product the product so they will also contribute to your selection.

JH - How has it changed on the buyer verse the supplier

Participant A – It is a lot more integral, a lot more open, the buyer will need to give a lot more information to allow them to fulfil amazing product to their development brief unless they share that kind of relationship, erm, a supplier is going to waste resources that is on point.

Can you describe changes you have observed in the product development stages?

(How has this impacted on the BSR)?

AS ABOVE

(How would you describe the Inter-Organisational Dynamics in the BSR)?

Ok, the suppliers for a Fast Fashion perspective there is a much closer relationship, erm, that is really born out of the fact that there is more of an intrinsic requirement on both parties of sharing information and effective delivery really. It is a true partnership erm, for example when suppliers have quiet periods, they will speak to buyers to see if there is any good that they can manufacture for them in the quite periods. More of a social responsibility and integral part from a planning point of view, within that organisation, supporting quiet periods and really product solving in busy periods. Where previously in traditional there is more of an arrogant approach, formally in larger organisation, the supplier needs the retailer more than the retailer needs the supplier, so I guess it is unbalanced.

STRUCTURAL DYNAMICS

To what extent do you think the length of the relationship determines the success of a BSR?

That is interesting, erm, I believe within rapid fashion erm, because it is a growth industry and it is essentially focused on young fashion, most of the buyers and designers and merchandising are very young. Erm, as a consequence of that they are at the beginning of their careers, they move around a lot and high churn, from a product perceptive. So as a consequent as a Director in that environment I have always been very, very conscious to develop a supplier base owned by the business and the relationship is with the organisation rather than the individuals. So that is the first thing, it is not about that relationship it is about that organisation having a relationship of many people owning that, erm, because there is quite a lot of fluidity in terms of personal relationships. Erm, the longer the relationship you tend to find erm, in rapid fashion, it is a new phenonium and those essentially those larger organisations that exist in fast fashion and quite young, so we are talking about circa. 10 years, those suppliers have supported those retailers in the early days, there is an incredible amount of loyalty because they have grown up with them.
Many suppliers who support and have grown up with Miss Guided, Pretty Little Thing, PLC, In Style have been small manufacturers and supported and small organisation with flexibility, lots of product, small runs and as a consequence have erm, there is a great appreciation of that kind of relationship and that is a strong relationship both organisation have grown in a level of sophistication as both have been very successful with that growth.

**POWER**

Would you agree that there is a power dynamic at play in all BSR?

There is always a power erm, dynamic whoever is making those purchasing decisions to make the suppliers business successful, that will always lay from the buyers perspective erm, that said I think that the individual buyer within a fast fashion environment is less powerful in some respects because of the point we were making, the supplier base is owned by the organisation, it is normally embedded in the relationships erm, they are long standing relationship and it is much more of a strategic partnership. Erm, in the traditional retailers, you can live and die by your last delivery, things go wrong, my experience I have seen that a really good supplier can make one mistake and be exited from an organisation, because it is much more of a relationship, in my experience within the fast fashion, because of this growing success, I think there is more understanding and kind of lateral thinking, just dismissing that things have gone wrong.

That said, I have also seen, because of that relationship and trust is very important, there has been a lot of supplier that have been strong relationship with a specific retailer that has sacrificed that loyalty erm, in the advent of greed and gone to competitors to grow their business. That loyalty once betrayed, can end very, very quickly, in the demise of the buyer supplier relationship. So what has tended to happen, because it has been incredibly competitive within this arena, there has been very little cross pollination of suppliers and retailers in fast fashion. So for example Miss Guided have a separate supplier base, Boohoo have a separate supplier base and so on. So, where you will find in a traditional retailer, for example in Shop Direct, Matalan, Arcadia, a lot of suppliers, supply lots of different competitors. Because of this quite intrinsic relationship where you are asking of a supplier to think of you first that loyalty needs to be upheld. Erm, and that is quite a big difference.

How would you explain and describe that power dynamic?

**TRUST**

How important is trust within the BSR?

Laughs, it is important, trust is the most important thing in any relationship, obviously it does not matter what organisation or industry you are in, but from a buyer, supplier perspective that again is a very important thing. I would not say that trust is less or more important is any of those models, it is still an important characteristic erm, it is just that the relationship has different strengths.
COMMUNICATION

Would you feel the nature and method of communication between the buyer and the supplier has changed? If so in what way and over what period?

I suppose if we talk about the format of communication it goes down to practicalities. If you are working in traditional retailing, there is a lot of information that is required by a retail buyer from the supplier in terms of touch points, to ensure that the critical path is being followed and to also ensure that the lead times are being adhered to. So essentially a retailer buyer checks in on a supplier at various stages to ensure that everything is happening, so lots and lot of detailed information, a critical path need to be forwarded, lot of visibility where the sharing process is.

In a rapid fashion environment, because again, going back to a different relationship, pushing that accountability back to the supplier and also because of the sheer volume of product and critical paths and individual has to manage that communication is very much about, you have sealed your product, you have got your contact, you have got to delivery it in 4 weeks, are you all good, I do not want to hear from you until you are making the booking for delivery. You are pushing back that responsibility, so there is not an awful lot of checking in and if people do not deliver to that they have agreed from a contract point of you, they will probably get reduced business in the future.

JH – So you communicate via telephone.

Participant A – E-mail, telephone, no Skype, Skype is often talked about as a great innovation, but people do not tend to use it.

Section four – Collaborative Relationships and NPD stages

Describe the nature of collaboration within the BSR?

Erm, a little bit and it goes back to this fabric development perspective, so sourcing fabric is very much the responsibility of the supplier, erm, in a rapid fashion environment. In a traditional environment, erm, a buying department would be speccing the fabric they want the supplier to go and source, so in terms of the relationships and the requirements, it goes back to how the product development works.

(Has this changed over time)?

Section Five – End of Interview

Looking towards the future to see how things are progressing?

Ok, the rapid fashion area is incredible interesting and really revolutionised the way people buy and really challenged the traditional retailers, in terms of their ability to erm, you know bring product to the consumers first, but also from a value perceptive and that is wrapped up with e-commerce rather than rapid fashion. Erm, and also as a consequent of a retail perspective the buyers to entry are really, really low, the other things I have not mentioned in terms of rapid
fashion, is there are many rapid fashion retailers who are not engaged in manufacturing and buyers use a big percentage of fulfillment of their range plan from buying from a wholesale environment. They would visit specific wholesale manufacturers or retailers and select a buyer from stock. So that is kind of I have got this garment, I have 100 or 200 pieces in a box do you want it? Deliver it right away, so that is another element of all fast fashion retailers, to my knowledge, just some are engaged in that process of wholesale buys that others.

Erm, advantages are pure speed, because you can make a buying decision, photographed and on your website within a day. Erm, the disadvantages are that you have a lack of uniqueness because that product is in the market place and available for many. So, I think various fast fashion retailers use that as part of their armoury, in different levels of percentages, e.g. at Miss Guided we only use that for trading, so we did not buy wholesale product which was not exclusive as part of a range plan, but we would buy it for example, if we offered animal print we could not get animal print in for 4-6 weeks, but we could actually there was stock sitting there from the wholesaler, there was stock there, so we could buy it, photograph it and get it on-line quickly. So there are all sorts of different aspects from an element point of view.

JH – Where you not concerned that what if the consumer that seen it somewhere else?

Participant A – Yes, that is what I mean, it dilutes your exclusivity and that is where other people take and hold back, it’s given more importance depending on your brand. For example, somebody like Miss Pap do very little development and that organisation, fills their organisation with nearly exclusively from wholesale product and their uniqueness, yes, we will buy product you will see from somewhere else, but we will buy it first. So they pride themselves on the fact they have a close relationship with said wholesales and they will get offered their stock first, so essentially by the time other smaller retailers will have a bit of that cherry they will have it, offered to their customers and will be sold out and be onto the next product. So yes, there is a exclusivity risk, if you take somebody like Boohoo or Miss Guided because it is such a small percentage of their total buy, it is blended and I do not think the consumer realises, erm, so it is not as identifiable as where you are from a reputation point of view.

So, going back to the impact on that on the market place, it means that the barriers of entry to be able to buy wholesale product and offer that to customers is very, very low, so that means there is a plethora of erm, new brands coming up, new young entrepreneurs coming up with very little capital, that can bring a brand to market and offer that consumers with what looks like a very polished range with very little investment. So, I believe that is going to be a massive growth, there is a lot of entrance the challenge is the me-too situation, when they are all fishing from the same pool and offering it. Those people who will succeed from within that are those people who offer something different, whether that be creative, service, engage with their customers, it will be more about how they present their product, rather than the product in terms of success.

The other thing, that obviously in the market place it price, so as there are more entrance and it becomes more crowded, inevitable there is more pressures on price. We can see at the moment, you really require a call to action, whether it be discount, free delivery, to persuade customers to buy from you. So that puts price pressure on margin, and as a consequent of that you will see, and I believe we will see more of it in the future are manufacturers bringing their own product to market. What this will mean, is those said manufacturers will erm, not only have one margin to make, so within the supply chain you have not got the margin of a manufacture to add on then a retailer it is one of the same, so essentially you are buying your product, you developing your range, you manufacture it, you get that finished cost price and you eradicate from your cost model, the margin that would normally by with the manufacturer. Erm, that allows these guys to compete more effectively from margin. What that also gives these new entrants to
market is true agility and true flexibility, because they can manufacturer in very small scale, erm, in trial ranges then if they have the capacity truly scale up very, very quickly. So, they will have price on their side, they will also have scale and they will have agility on their side, and I believe that is going to see that more erm, within the presence and on the horizon. More entrants and more people being successful at the stage.

The other thing, that margin might not be used to invest into price, so for example what you may find you have manufacturers and retailers develop mid-market premium product but because ecommerce is becoming more challenging and crowed, the actually expenditure that an ecommerce retailer needs to invest to get their product to be seen with Google search and social media, means that there is a pretty heavy marketing spend these days required, to grow a brand and again if you have got that enhanced margin from a manufacturer that can bring a product to market then really truly integrated manufacturer from B to C, you have got that margin to be able to invest heavily in your marketing. With some retailers e.g. I Saw it First, it is a retailer partnered with a manufacturer, so it really is an integral manufacturing kind of supply chain, they have chosen to use that additional margin that they have got in marketing spend. The organisation I am currently engaged in we are trying to build good quality product at mid to exit prices to prove that quality, not devalue the price but create a business that has the ability to have added percentage of the turnover to make that product look beautiful on the best models, with the best digital marketing, you know, engaging on the best influences, investing that additional margin into the brand element of the DNA of that brand basically. So that is kind of changing for the future. I think brick and mortar will continue to be challenged, it is horrendous what we can feel at the moment is that the government high street commission erm, who are really looking at way in which they can invigorate the high street, cannot come up with any other reason than come up with dissing ecommerce retailers. The current sustainability and ethical campaign on people like, ASOS, Boohoo, Miss Guided, is completely victimising people, who are being successful and who have built a business model to supply the customer with what they want, just because the brick and mortar stores have not been done this they have got the legacy of retailer, and they cannot think of anything more creative to vigour the high street, does not mean they should not be vitalised and they should be in the same requirement of call to action for erm, erm, providing the government with answers. I think it is really, really, poor at the moment, and the Mike Ashley recent tax calling for 20% on ecommerce retailers is just to support and make sure they up their prices up and cannot compete with them. So it is really poor what is happening at the moment.

Let the interviewee know the interview is over and inform them if they have any further questions regarding the interview or the research project, the researchers email address is on the participant sheet for their reference.
## Interview questions for the supplier

### Section One – Interview Introduction

**What is your role within your company?**

- CEO

**Tell me about your career development?**

- Production Assistant
- Production Manager
- Head of Production
- CEO
Section Two – The Retail Environment

How has fast fashion (introduced in the late 1990's) had an impact on your role and how your organisation operates?

Participant A

Ow it has had a big impact, there has been a big change because of Fast Fashion (FF). Retailers have now moved to deal directly with us. We have seen more and more buyers/Technical/Designers coming and dealing with us directly. (Sneezes).

We are expected to work now very closely with the buyers and their teams and take more ownership of what they want to produce. We have seen the critical path reduced over the last 30 years down to now 1 week. Previously, when I started working with buyers in the 90’s we would have two seasons, each 6 months lead time, now it is one week. They want product now as that is what their customers are demanding. This of course has had an impact on our factories and our internal staff. We have had to train more of our show room staff and expand their knowledge to be able to write their own specifications, where as previously the buyer’s QA would have given them to us and also our factories have seen effected as speed is key to get the garment to market asap.

JH: When you say asap, how long are you taking about?

Participant A: In a lot of instances one week. They deal with us as we are local and based in Leicester, therefore, they expect rapid response. But of course, our quantities have been reduced, previously I would have received an order from one of our buyers for 5,000 pieces for a jersey pieces now it is 500 to 1,000 as they want to keep changing the style of the jersey to cater for their customers’ demands.

Section three – Buyer/Supplier Relationship
How would you manage your relationships with your buyer?

We have much more contact now that what we did. We are based in Leicester and them in Manchester, but now they have a satellite office based in Leicester, where they have a QA and Designer based. We work very closely with these to make what they want. We still work closely with the buyer and merchandiser, for costings and quantities but the actual design and spec comes from their Leicester office (pause).

We communicate via telephone and Facetime with the buyers sometimes face to face when they are in Leicester or we go to Manchester with samples. We deal face to face with the QA and Designers practically on a day to day basis.

The QA from the buying department would work closely with my QA and work on a spec for the garment, which has been designed by the buyer’s designer. We would put a critical path in place, with the production manager, this could be a little as one week or three weeks, whatever is required.

We will communicate with the buyer on a weekly basis to discuss if they accept or reject our proposed sealing sample and negotiate the cost price.

JH: Can you describe the changes you have observed in the product development stages?

PARTICIPANT A: We work now with the satellite office and the designer and the QA, this has changed as previously we would be in the Manchester head office, now they work in their Leicester satellite office. The designers would work very closely with my designer and the QA from the buyer would work closely to my QA to come up with what was required. We keep fabric on the floor ready to go into production. Due to time constraints we would normally only have time to produce one sealing sample, then go straight into production with comments. Previously we would have to product at least two sealers and go to gold seal before going into production, but due to time constraints we are not able to do this, so the buyer has to trust us.

These changes have had an impact on us as the responsibility is on use to make sure that when we are in production we get it right, as the buyers has to reply on us to follow their designers and their QA spec to communicate with us and therefore, to not get it wrong. We have found that if the information given to us is not correct for example a spec is not correct and the buyer gets an incorrect sample, then this has an impact on the critical path which makes the buyer unhappy.
JH: Can you describe changes you have observed in the product development stages? (How has this impacted on the BSR)?

I have been big changes, due to me and my team working more closely with the buyer/QA and designer. They re-located to be next to our factory and we now work together to create the ideas for the range. We talk a lot more (pause) I think this is due to the critical path and fast fashion, they want the garment quickly, we have to make it quickly, therefore, the product development stages have changed to become more of an equal responsibilities rather than previously it was the buyer and their teams responsibility.

We talk more and work more closely as a team or maybe I should say a partnership.

JH: How would you describe the Inter-Organisational Dynamics in the BSR?

Participant A: Do you mean how do I work with the buyer?

JH: Yes.

Participant A: Previously way back when, I was a starting out the buyer was the king of the castle, whatever they wanted we provided. We would be led by them, I guess you could say being dictated to as a factory. Now of course it has changed. When fast fashion was very first introduced, we saw a shift the buyer has to work a little closer with us as they relied on us to product their products but in a shorter lead time. They started to rely on our experience and therefore, they started to trust us, but I guess they had to as the critical path was becoming shorter. Now of course, they have to trust us more as they have no time to keep asking for new sealing samples as the competition is so vast in the high street or on line.
JH: To what extent do you think the length of the relationship determines the success of a BSR?

Participant A: Ow, I think lot, I think you need to gain trust, by this I mean you have to get the team and their team to trust you are capable or you have the staff who are capable to do what they want.

We have had to gain this trust over time, we have been working with this company since they began, so they now trust us to product garments to the standard they require. Do not get me wrong they did not at first, they wanted to keep an eye on us all the time, back and forth from Manchester and us back and forth to Manchester. When they created the satellite by our factory, I was confident to know that it was not down to mistrust and wanting to keep an eye on us again (laughs) but down to them wanting even faster production.

As a supplier I have earned loyalty, but I also feel the buyer has too as well. I need to know that the buyer is competent at their role and they are approachable. I need to know a buyer knows what they are doing so the process runs smoothly.

POWER

JH: Would you agree that there is a power dynamic at play in all BSR?

Participant A: Mmmm, Yes, I think it has evolved over the years, in the 80’s the power was with the buyer, but this has changed over time due to fast fashion and I would also say working with the retailer for so long. If I was to say now, I would say I think we would as a partnership together. I hope that would say the same (laughs).

JH: How would you explain and describe that power dynamic?

Participant A: I would say that if I have worked with a buyer for more than two years, I think I am able to say we know how each other tick and therefore, we would work well together. But, when I am starting a new relationship with a new buyer, I think we are both testing the water, so to speak, to see how we can form a relationship. I have been lots of buyers come and go over the years (laughs) and I would say now the power is about, if I was to use a percentage 50% /50% split, so more of a partnership.

TRUST
JH: How important is trust within the BSR?

Participant A: Very (laughs), I have to be able to trust who I am dealing with, this is my job and business on the line, I do not want to mess up as I have people’s livelihoods in my hands, therefore, trust has to be a key factor in the buyer supplier relationship.

COMMUNICATION

JH: Would you feel the nature and method of communication between the buyer and the supplier has changed? If so in what way and over what period?

Participant A: Mmmm, I would say it has changed due to technology. Over the last 20 years ago, before technology, we had not mobile phones or Facetime and things … so we had to communicate via fax machines and e-mail or a car to go from Leicester to Manchester. It took time, but we had the time then, the critical path was longer. Now of course everybody wants everything within the same day.

JH: What computer systems to you use to communicate?

Participant A: PLM/PDM, as well as Facetime – I know we are only up the road but 3 hours in a car could mean the difference between getting the garment on sale before a competitor, so the buyer wants answers now. So, as well as working with the QA and designers in their satellite office, we Skype as well. I quite like this as I think it forms a closer relationship with the buyer.

Section four – Collaborative Relationships and NPD stages

JH: Describe the nature of collaboration within the BSR?

Participant A: Now, collaboration with the buyer has changed over time since fast fashion was introduced, or rapid fashion as they now like to call it, which means it has just got faster with a fancier name (laughs).

Now, mmmm in the 80’s saw the buyer being the boss, what the buyer would ask for we as a supplier would supply. So I would have said then we had no collaboration, but the tables have now turned and this started to happen around the 90’s the buyers wanted us to work more closely with the them, I guess you could say (pause) collaborate more with them (laughs) as they needed us more. The wanted quicker production so they had to trust and work with us more closely. Now of course we work very closely together as I said they have a satellite office next to our factory and we work together. So yes I would say we work in collaboration with our buyers.

Section Five – End of Interview
JH: Looking towards the future to see how things are progressing?

Participant B: Ow now then, (laughs) probably technology, I think this will be the way forward or the future. I cannot think how we can get production any quick, but then again, if you would have said to me, I would be producing garment in one week to sell 20 years ago I would have thought you were mad, but of course they are doing this. So, who knows, kind of hoping I will not be around to see it, hoping to be retired and laying on a beach somewhere warm (laughs).

Let the interviewee know the interview is over and inform them if they have any further questions regarding the interview or the research project, the researchers email address is on the participant sheet for their reference.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interview questions for the suppliers</th>
<th>Reasoning</th>
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<td><strong>Section One – Interview Introduction</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Thanking the participant for taking part in the interview</td>
<td>To ensure the participant is aware how thankful the research is for taking the time to participate in this interview. This will motivate them to answer each question to a high standard.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reading out the interview objectives and confidentiality agreement</td>
<td>To ensure the participant is aware of what the research aims to achieve from the interview, which may enable the interviewee to answer accordingly. To reassure the interviewee that the information they provide will be kept confidential.</td>
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<td>Informing the participant that they can stop the interview at any time and/or not answer any questions they do not feel comfortable answering</td>
<td>To ensure the participant feels comfortable throughout the interview and is aware they do not have to participate if they change their mind.</td>
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Please can you give a brief description as to the size of your organisation

1.1 The number of employees?
Participant B: Probably about between 600 or 700 about that

1.2 Privately owned/Public company?
Participant B – Yes still privately owned

1.3 Company’s organisational structure.
Participant B: I am a buyer, come under the heading of the product team, which includes buying, merchandising, design and web admin and wholesale is included as well.

What is your role within your company?
Participant B: Buyer

Tell me about your career development?
Participant B: Started out in supply in London Debenhams for 4 years and worked through to assistant buyer through to junior buyer
Pretty Little thing as a buyer for one year
Current position as a buyer

Section Two – The Retail Environment
How has fast fashion (introduced in the late 1990’s) had an impact on your role and how your organisation operates?

Participant B: With the introduction to FF the retail landscape has changed dramatically, the traditional bricks and mortar stores have had to change the way they service their customer because of the internet businesses. They have had to change the way they buyer

How has fast fashion (introduced in the 1990's) had an impact on your role and how your organisation operates?

Ok, I think obviously FF has changed erm everything really erm changed the way we buy the way we change seasonality so erm before you would buy a year sometimes a year and a half ahead erm you would use up your OTB quickly and you would not have the facility to react with in season to any trends that came about. No OTB is more flexible, FF has changed the way we interpret trends and sourcing strategy. Erm there is a movement, traditional movement where a lot of sourcing was done in China and Pakistan and Bangladesh due to cost price and margin benefits. Erm because the customer expects products, if you see the likes of Kylie Jenner in something the girls wants it within two weeks, the sourcing has changed to the UK/Europe due to lead times (quicker). Demin specific sourcing from the likes of Turkey it reduces your lead time so much more. It has impacted on pretty much everything really.

JH – Thank you, in the way you buy, you have seen the shift in change you have bought originally year in advance, how has that had an impact on your role?

Participant B: I suppose the way we buy has changed, the OTB flexed even more erm you are not spent up straight away, no chance to react in season, erm I think as the role of the buyer it makes you more trend aware and also because of the massive rise of social media and the important of that and street style you are more likely to be aware and constantly on the lookout because you are challenged by your customer more because newness is key, especially in a brand such as this. It made you much more aware of how quick things can change. E.g. cycle shorts so cycling shorts actually you did not see it on the catwalk at all, it comes from street style and celebrity culture. Erm we had that in and it was absolutely fantastic for us, but we have seen a decline in it, that could be due to seasonality because it is freezing now, erm but the likes of Fendi now have started to show cycle shorts in their show, it is almost the reverse the way it has been. When I started out you were inspired by the catwalk and then the catwalk that dictated the trend, now it is street style. It’s the style bloggers and influences they have taken over so that has very much has changed the way that you buy and especially the way you look around you, they are much more accessible rather than looking at high end fashion.

Section three – Buyer/Supplier Relationship
How would you manage your relationships with your suppliers?

Equal relationship and seen that way, if you do favours for them they will do favours for you. In terms of supply base if we were looking at denim jeans specially, we are very much in a China basis, because of the minimums we buy we are around 300 we would on a trail test, repeat type of basis. Our flow will be done through Pakistan we have got to a position now where the company has grown so much, that we are able to reach those minimums, so we look at the requirement of the range. Flow and core will be done through Pakistan and due to the margin benefits and your fashion and trend base pieces are done through China, slightly different lead times from China and Pakistan and what they can sources through the market, as the trims are better out of China. Erm, we do not use that many suppliers as we have been if you buy from Turkey, your cost price is going to be higher and the quality is going to be so much nicer, (clears his through), but we are an e-commerce business predominately, so the customer cannot tell how good that fabric is on line. Also, kind of seen if you buy from Turkey and send it in a truck to Turkey if you do the same thing from China and airfreight it, you are only looking at a week’s difference in lead times, actually China is still more competitive in terms of price.

Erm so erm it could just be us, but we have only found one supplier who is competitive in Turkish, this supplier we think offers something that we really need. In terms of a general sort of main range point of view, my experience is only about 6 months or so, we have a real focus on bringing things back to the UK in Leicester. Again, it goes back to being as flexible as possible and being about to react to trends, in the past, we had became so obsession with China because of the amount of variety of fabrics they could source, they amount of trends, they are beautiful, what you get from the UK is more basis. With that in mind we can do shirts in the UK, we have found somebody who can now do plackets on shirts and I think there has been more demand for rapid fashion erm the capabilities of the Leicester, UK based suppliers has increased, and they are able to do a lot more now.

JH: Can you describe changes you have observed in the product development stages?

(How has this impacted on the BSR)?

Participant B: When I first started product develop would come from the design department, you would sit with your designer and you would look at the trends, design would come up with specs and then spec packs would be done with very detailed instructions for the supplier. E.g. I worked in accessories for a while and e.g. lining colours etc. Now, suppliers have got to the point where they work off images. Because we product so much newness as business and it is so quick, erm designers do not have the time or capabilities to devise the spec and tech packs. The suppliers have had to become more trend aware and also the suppliers need to come to retailers with ideas erm I think before retailers dominated a little bit in that and fed into suppliers in that, there is now there is very much an expectation for suppliers to provide an insight on trends and the latest things, there is an ownership on suppliers to take more direct approach on that.

JH: What elements do you feel are the most important in that?

So, when I worked at Debenhams, we would have to wait a month for a sample, longer lead times departments, now if we do not have samples of denim jeans within 2 weeks it just will not make sign-off, it needs to be there. When dealing with Leicester, we expect samples within 2-3 days. The speed of it, particularly within the likes of Miss Guides, Boohoo, Pretty Little thing, Missy Empire it so competitive and fast that we need to have it before competitors, so to be able to get it on line. E.g. I was interviewing for a junior buyer role and she worked for New Look, she spoke about the whole Love Island slogan t-shirts the previous year to this and Primark got onto it as well and Primark managed to get it in 2 days before New Look did and New Look had to scrap it entirely, the loss of that is massive, because Love Island was so important. The speed it
all has to go at and production lead times are key, I would not necessary, that quality is always inferior that what is has been put I would say FF and rapid fashion has become more disposable, I do not think our customer necessarily looks at quality as much, and as a product of that, production lead times of this have reduced so much. I was used to having three samples before you get to gold seal or production samples, now you often see 1 production sample before it gets sign-off.

Erm I think FF is actually quite positive thing for suppliers, I think the cost of making samples is massive, so continually having to re-sample, re-sample and re-sample based on something a very tiny amend, I think it has made people a lot more commercial in that way, particularly in the FF background. The middle end and high end with rely on quality garments, FF and rapid fashion, I think whilst it is challenging from a costing perspective for suppliers, most definitely, you know, that impacts, obviously there is a certain margin the supplier and to make, I think we have been able to cut corners maybe for the want of a better expression because fabrications aren’t as great as they were, but they serve and purpose and they are fit for end use. Erm, I think it has been positive when you look at it that way. We are a priced based business; we are about the best and right price.

JH: From your job perspective, the sampling has been the different, but in relation to the relationship with the suppliers, has that changed?

Participant B: Erm, I think obviously from the sampling it has been a positive.

JH: How would you describe the Inter-Organisational Dynamics in the BSR?

Participant B: Erm, I would describe them as very good, we work with a tight supplier base and I feel we work well with them all.

STRUCTURAL DYNAMICS
To what extent do you think the length of the relationship determines the success of a BSR?

Erm, you have rare suppliers that come in and get exactly what you brand identity is, what you want to do with the range they are able to provide direction, no other supplier has. They have unique product, but that is very rare. I think it can take at least a year and year and a half to really get a supplier relationship where you have the confidence. Previously where I have been talking about the block to reduce the amount of sampling that we do, that is with our main three suppliers, where we have the confidence in them. I think that is what it is all about, having the confidence with your supplier erm to be able to do off and trust them with fits and trust them with production will be exactly what you’d determined and what you have sealed.

Erm, I think the length of time really does impact on how important. I think that is something that has not changed from when I started to now. Even though we are rapid fashion and we have to be really fast we have to have a basis of trust and a basis of understanding on both sides. I suppose from the supplier side, they need to have trust with the retailer. That the retailer will not cancel a massive order or change their minds last minute or be quite flaky I suppose. It works both ways.

JH: The suppliers you work with out of China what percentage of the capacity do you take.

Participant B – (Names supplier) largest supplier, UK basis retailer, is about 80% we are massively important to them as they are to us.

(Names supplier) they do other fast fashion retailers, UK retailers we make up 40% of their business.

(Names supplier) they do a lot of European and volume and we make up a small product for them. We are one of their smaller UK customers. They do a lot of the core and flow lines for us.

Have you seen a shift in the speed to market of fast fashion garments?

Yes, definitely, if we do not get something in on time, we lose out to our competitors. We have to be first to market of that trend all the time.

To gain an understanding if a length of a relationship with the buyer is important and the speed to market of how they have had to work.

See 2.2.2.

POWER

Would you agree that there is a power dynamic at play in all BSR?

Participant B: Yes, there is, I would say, for example in my range of denim jeans, the buyer has the power, although the main supplier is essential to us, we could still source similar product, maybe not as strong from other suppliers’ basis (we have 7 suppliers on denim). They like doing smaller quantities, normally suppliers like bigger quantities, but these like smaller ones. The short lead departments in the company, there is equal power.

How would you explain and describe that power dynamic?
I think within this business for a long time we have not held the suppliers accountable for lateness or like I said it is not as important but production not being as per sealing sample.

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**TRUST**

How important is trust within the BSR?

Participant B: It is so important erm, especially, erm, delivery on time. Obviously as buyers we look at delivery on the merch side, but if something is running late it still comes back to the buying side. So, we have the give the reason. Also from production side, if something come in and it was a skirt and it is 3cm short as why you have sealed it as but the supplier has delivered, having full knowledge of that, can be detrimental to the relationship. For example, we had an issue where a lot of cord came in and it was not up to spec, it had not been checking at the factory. It soured the relationship, it was not acceptable, the cord shirts were too short, and the zips were falling off. The factory had changed their zip production but had not told up. We had to get rid of the whole lot of garments. It made the relationship hard for a long time. The supplier was debited for it. A lot of our suppliers that we work with, a lot outsource their product to factories, so it is hard to keep an eye on the factories they are using.

JH: If we are looking at the NPD side in relation to trust or Power, do you think it has changed: -

Participant B: I think we need to be able to put more trust in our suppliers so I think there is a little bit of a change there, when I think when I was at Debenhams, a lot of the suppliers would have a UK based team and they understand the UK consumer eye so therefore, know what you were talking about and what you wanted. As a business we do not travel to the Far East a lot, maybe once or twice a year, previously we would travel to the Far East 4 times a year, as a result of that you have to put trust in the suppliers to be able to interpret the trend or the specification. You can be as descriptive as you like, but if you have worked with the supplier for a while, they are understanding exactly what you require. I think when you start out with a supplier, they think they understand your brand, but you have to work with them for a while for them to actually get what your brand is about.

**COMMUNICATION**

Would you feel the nature and method of communication between the buyer and the supplier has changed? If so in what way and over what period?

Erm, I would say when I was at Debenhams, we were on the phone a lot more, you were always ringing them. Because of the time difference you were calling them when you got in. Erm, here is more on e-mail, which I think is a massive flaw I think we should be more on the telephone more I think you get a much quicker result. If you do it by e-mail you can go back and forth, where as you can sort it over the telephone quicker and efficiently.
In terms of supplier meetings, erm, again when I was at Debenhams, because we have UK offices, they could come in very regularly, but here we sent out things more via post and it is detrimental, not only to the product but also to the relationships. When we do Far East trips I would say we get three months of work done within 3 days, because you are there to say exactly what you want, able to do pricing, the designer is there to go through trend boards and I think this has changed and the trips aren’t maybe as key as they were.

JH: Is that coming from above that trips are being reduced?

Participant B: Yes, not only in this business, but all FF business, they think you can communicate everything from the UK, and you do not need to see your suppliers as much.

JH: Would you disagree with that?

Participant C: Yes, I would disagree with that, I think it is really important to do a trip. A minimum of 2 trips a year, with a minimum of 10 days at the time. It helps build relationships and in the long time is nothing but positive to the business.

JH: Do you Skype at all?

Participant B: Very, very rarely, not really, so department do, but we don’t

JH: Do you not think that would help?

Participant B: Erm, I do not think I would get anymore necessarily out of it, I think sometimes, a phone call and an e-mail would suffice. I have never had a situation where I needed to Skype to do it at this point.

Section four – Collaborative Relationships and NPD stages

Describe the nature of collaboration within the BSR?

Participant B: Understanding of collaborative relationships and when in the supply chain are the buyers introduced.

Participant B: Yes, we need to be able to trust the supplier to deliver the product proposition to be in line with price parameters, trend, is in for the right time, but they also need to be able to trust us to stick to what we say. Fashion is very quick and changeable, there still needs to be an understanding on the retailer’s side of how much goes into the supplier relationship. Eg. we were working with a supplier who produced a bag with an owl charm on it. It was coming out very expensive, when we looked into why it was so expensive by breaking the costing down step by step with the supplier, we found the making of the owl charm was costing more that the bag, as it needed to go through 8 different stages to be made.

So I think there needs to be a big openness between the buyer and the supplier and also a sense of realism with the buyer. The buyer needs to understand how what the processes are in bringing a garment to market. I think, from a FF side, the slightly cheaper end of the market, what can you afford for your money, erm, we can not necessarily expect beautiful fabrics and get
a good cost price we need to be collaborative. You need to be able to understand the limitations of what both sides can achieve, what the suppliers can give you and what they are capable of. It is like being married, with long term relationships you can achieve and understanding, can the suppliers engineer a product to get into a certain price bracket for you.

See section 2.3.3.

Section Five – End of Interview

Looking towards the future to see how things are progressing?

Erm, I think erm, long lead department, a lot of it on core and flow more and more will move to Pakistan and Bangladesh. I think because as the company strategy we need to be able to make a better margin on our core and flow lines. China will still play a key role in terms of fashion, and doing smaller minimums, but I think the UK will only grow and grow, because FF is getting faster and faster and has become rapid fashion and the customers’ expectations, the younger market, ages 16 – 24, they want it now and they will only wear it a couple of times, so quality is not that important. However, on the flip side of this, you see a lot on eco fashion, erm, sustainable product, we have looked into that for the denim, department with the amount of water that is used, but unfortunately for the FF business that is still not an open which is a shame but because of price increment and our customer would not understand, but I think whilst the demand is still there, the retailers will fill that demand. When their mind set changes to sustainable clothing then we will relook at it.

JH: You cannot see that changing?

Participant B: No, pay rises are less and less people are paying less than they did 10 years ago for clothing, people are not going to start paying more just because it is sustainable. There are certain people who will, but not everyone and for the time being our customers are not going to pay the extra.

Also technology has vastly improved over the years and I think this will continue to dominate our industry.

Let the interviewee know the interview is over and inform them if they have any further questions regarding the interview or the research project, the researchers email address is on the participant sheet for their reference.

To ensure the participant is aware the interview is over, and they have an email address to contact if they have further questions.
Participant A - Supplier

<table>
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<th>Interview questions for the supplier</th>
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<td>What is your role within your company?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Production Director</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tell me about your career development?</td>
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<td>Production Assistant</td>
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<td>Production Director</td>
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How has fast fashion (introduced in the late 1990’s) had an impact on your role and how your organisation operates?

Participant B

Now then, I will try and speak the best English I can to you.

I would say fast fashion has had a big impact on my role, over the year. I have been working in this factory now for 35 years and seen a lot of changes. I have seen people come and go in the factory and seen a lot of buyers come and go.

Fast Fashion has changed how we as a factory works and how the buyers have had to work with us. We now not only work with the buyer but their QA and their designers. My factory has had to change the way it works, or what was the word you used:

JH: Operates

Participant A: Yes, that is right operates as we now work with the buyer and their team more. Our critical path has had to change, and it has gotten faster and faster over the years. Previously I would work with a buyer over one season which would last for months, now of course a season can be over in a two week. It has affected how we work internally as a factory, as we have had to understand the designer and quality job better and help out more with these. What I mean by this is, we have had to get to know each job better and work with the buyer and their team to get the production quicker.

JH: When you say quicker, how long do you mean?

Participant B: In a lot of instances they expect us to make garments and sending them by truck in 2 weeks, so one week making them in the factory, one week on the truck. I think it is the UK customers, they want product as soon as they see it on a celebrity.
How would you manage your relationships with your buyer?

I think we work closely together; we communicate via telephone or e-mail and they visit us, and we visit them at least 4 times a year. We have worked with each other now for quite a few years, so we have formed a relationship where I feel they can talk to us about any issues they have, well I hope so anyway (laughs) and if I need to clarify anything I just pick up the phone can call them to clarify the issue. We have what you call up and downs when I call a lot and other times when we do not speak a lot. We communicate with the buyer for all of the critical path and also deal with their time the QA and the designers and the merchandisers, everyone is very nice (laughs).

JH: Can you describe the changes you have observed in the product development stages?

PARTICIPANT B: Ow wow yes, there has been a lot of changes over the years and my time working in the factory and dealing with buyers. We now work with the designers and the QA much earlier in the product development stages (pauses) I suppose you would say we deal with them more now than the buyers at the beginning, the buyers are involved, but the actual spec and sketch comes directly from the communication from the QA and designer. Also, the sealing process has got a lot quicker, a lot quicker (sighs). Everything has to be done so quickly now. This is due to the customer now of course; they want everything yesterday. I guess you could say the buyers have to trust us so much more than they did. They now leave things up to us to do as the time is so restrictive. We get the sketch or sometimes a picture of a celebrity wearing a garment from the designer and the spec which sometimes if a full spec sometimes not, then we have to make a sample from this. We wait for comments; this can be done with our QA in the same room as the buyers QA or sometimes done via telephone. Once we have comments, if the comments are not a lot then we are told to go into production, again because of time. If there are lots of comments, we are left to seal it ourselves. The buyer also likes us to create our own product ideas. The critical path has just got shorter and shorter (ahhh then laughs).

The relationships between me and the buyer has changed as we need to trust each other and have confidence in each other more now than we used to. As we had time then to get it right, but not now.
(How has this impacted on the BSR)?

JH: How would you describe the Inter-Organisational Dynamics in the BSR?

Participant B: Can you explain what you mean by that please?

JH: Of course, how would you describe the dynamics of your relationship with the buyer?

Participant B: Ow, thank you I see what you mean now. Ow years and years ago, what the buyer wanted, they buyer got. I guess you could say they have the power. Then when they needed us for fast fashion and the quicker turnaround of product, they needed our help and experience to be able to do this for them. So, I guess you could say the power started to change. We became closer and they started to rely on us more. Now I would say we work very closely together to get to the right product to the customer as quickly as possible.
JH: To what extent do you think the length of the relationship determines the success of a BSR?

Participant B: Mmmmm, I would say very much so (laughs), I have been in this business for a lot of years and when I say a lot, I mean a lot, so I have seen how things have changed and how things work. I think the longer you work together the better trust you form in a relationship. If they can rely on you and you can rely on them, trust I guess you would call it, but of course this comes with time. You have to prove yourself to them and I would definitely say they have to prove themselves to you. It is not a one-way street as you English say (laughs).

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POWER

JH: Would you agree that there is a power dynamic at play in all BSR?

Participant B: By power dynamics do you mean who has the power?

JH: Yes

Participant B: I would like to say no but I think yes (laughs), I think is power has changed over the years as I said earlier. I think now we work equally.

JH: How would you explain and describe that power dynamic?

Participant B: I think now it is an equal split, before it was not, the buyer wanted what they wanted and told us what to do, that changed when they needed us and we became a closer partner with them and I guess you would say the power shifted from them to us.
JH: How important is trust within the BSR?

Participant B: Ow now then, I would say very, they need to trust us, and we need to trust them. Like the power it is now equal.

COMMUNICATION

JH: Would you feel the nature and method of communication between the buyer and the supplier has changed? If so in what way and over what period?

Participant B: Now then, yes, definitely due to the internet. I now can pick up the Skype and see and talk directly with the buyer, QA and designer and speak directly to them and get answers, previously we would only have had fax machine then e-mail, so much better and quicker and of course easier as we get answers quicker but more accurate answers quicker. I also think it is better to talk to somebody eye to eye as you get to know the buyer and the team better, so therefore, work better together.

JH: What computer systems do you use to communicate?

Participant B: PLM/PDM, as well as Skype, at the moment we are looking at 3D but not that far down the line with that yet. All this new technology, I leave it up to the young ones to figure out how to use it (laughs).

Section four – Collaborative Relationships and NPD stages

JH: Describe the nature of collaboration within the BSR?

Participant B: I would say (pauses) let me think, (pause) that the collaboration between us and the buyers has changed. Like I said earlier, we now need us therefore, they have to work much closer with us to get the product in as quick as they would like.

Way back in the 80’s saw the buyer being in charge, they would tell us what to do and we would do it. They would give us the sketch and the spec and tell us to make it. In that day and age of course we had time, now the critical path is so tight and short we have to work in collaboration with them to make sure we hit the target deadline dates on the critical path, so they have to leave us to our own devices. We collaborate with all of the buying team now not just the buyer.

Section Five – End of Interview
JH: Looking towards the future to see how things are progressing?

Participant C: It is the dreaded T work again, technology, how they are going to get things fast I will never know, but we will have to watch and see. What I am being told now in the technology sector will vastly improve our way of working and therefore, how we all work and collaborate together. I went to a conference a while ago where they were trialling no hand production, (laughs) I found it amazing. I guess I will have to watch this space. The want fast production, we have to give them fast production.

Let the interviewee know the interview is over and inform them if they have any further questions regarding the interview or the research project, the researchers email address is on the participant sheet for their reference.

PARTICIPANT B – BUYER

(PROMPT NEW PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT)

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Section One – Interview Introduction

Thanking the participant for taking part in the interview

Reading out the interview objectives and confidentiality agreement

Informing the participant that they can stop the interview at any time and/or not answer any questions they do not feel comfortable answering

Please can you give a brief description as to the size of your organisation

1.1 The number of employees? 16,000
1.2 Privately owned/Public company? Private
1.3 Company’s organisational structure.

What is your role within your company?

Erm, I am Head of Ladieswear Buying, erm, part of the trading floor, erm, I report, erm, into the Directors.

Tell me about your career development?

I started off erm, I have a degree, erm, in fashion and textile design, erm, I have a Masters in textile design, erm and then I worked in design for, god 8-9 years, then I got into buying. The company I work for is my only buying appointment. I started off in Matalan as a trainee, then went all the way through to senior buyer, then I left to go to Shop Direct as a Senior Buyer for a short period then onto my role now in the this company as a Senior Buyer, then I was appointed as Head of Buying, which I have been doing for 10 months.

Section Two – The Retail Environment

How has fast fashion (introduced in the late 1990’s) had an impact on your role and how your organisation operates?

Erm, it had an massive effect on the company, erm, because we were not a fast fashion company, we were a traditional very Far East driven, brought product, erm, with core lines, which we brought in volumes, probably sit there for a season, erm, and erm, that had a massive effect on sales. We had to adapt and had to change our buying structure and we had to change to suit the market and which the consumer needed. Erm, we are core driven, but we have shifted from an open to buy, 10 years ago about 10%, but we are not around on fast fashion pieces, like, blouses, dresses and skirt I am 70 on open to buy, 30% Far East. I would say knitwear and formal wear formal wear we do not really touch that much anymore they are around about 50%/50%. Which is a massive, massive change for a company and organisation like ours.

JH – your role then within that FF, how has it changed?

Participant C – Erm, it is just the whole, from a trend point of view, looking at a smaller trend as it erm, seeing what is coming through from bloggers, you know, Instagram has been a massive, massive change in the whole industry. We have had to react quickly, so we do not know, it is working with a lot of UK and near east supply base that we can react to trend. Er, again, for a company like us our margin is critical and our value and our price offering is key, erm, it is just getting that right balance of relevant fast fashion, but we kind of keep, what we tend to do is have key prints or key fabrics, basic silhouettes, sometimes it is just the print driving things, but we have to erm, it is just adapting and working with new suppliers basis just to you know just work closer to home.
JH – Has the company changed it margin strategy, has it decrease because of this or stayed the same?

Participant C – Erm, we have increased it (laughs), we try and make as much margin as we can, erm, out of the likes of Bangladesh, but that is obviously very different now, particularly on blouses and dresses where, erm, it is 70% of the range is near east, erm, the companies are now looking at the net achieved margin, erm, so mark down is low, because we are selling things. Erm, there has been a change in attitude from the board level, but erm, the overall margin, they are trying to bring down costs from other parts of the business, that help us. Because there is no point in us having stock with the right made-in margin, because they cannot flog it, cannot sell it. They are slowly coming around; the mark down is significantly lower because we have more relevant pieces to sell.

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<td>How would you manage your relationships with your suppliers?</td>
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<td>Erm, we manage it by, we have sourcing departments as well to help, we narrow down our supplier base, we become important to that supplier. So, we are not doing lots of little bits with lots of people, it is almost become a partnership. You know, particularly for woven departments for ladieswear, it is treating it like a partnership, so we probably use 3 to 4 fabric basis, we put fabric down on the floor in certain mills, they hold fabrics, they know we give them production capacities, they know when we need intake, erm, and it is the relationships, because the suppliers have such good relationships with the print houses, so they have that amazing relationship there, so we have to treat it like a partnership and sometimes it is erm, like, a partnership we are trying to build and we are reducing the supplier base has been the biggest key thing. We are becoming more and more important to each other.</td>
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JH – previously then was it not a partnership?

Erm, we would have some, again it would be the Far East, long lead time guys, which those guys now that we are not placing vast volumes out in China, Vietnam in Bangladesh, erm, those partnerships had to finish. That partnership had to finish, as you know the Chinese market, their own local market is import to them now. Erm, so in terms of that, yes it has changed, but we now have kept a lot of people close to home and reduced that supplier base.

Can you describe the changes you have observed in the product development stages?

Erm, we tend to particularly on the fast fashion, we tend to select from the supplier’s styles, we do not do original design packs. Erm, there is still a need for that, absolutely, erm, but we tend to get fast fashion in we go to the supplier and select and make very little changes. Erm, just to keep the time period down. Sometimes, we have our own colour standards, we have all that good stuff in terms of critical path, needs to be met, we need to get things in quick, we use stock colours and stock fabrics. Erm, it is just the print which gives us the uniqueness. We might have erm, for example erm and existing block on a blouse and we would keep that same block and we would put different print in it. But there is a lot of selecting from the supplier base, because they have the market intel as well. So, they can tell us what people are selecting and what people are buying into, particularly the guys the work with the likes of the Zara’s and that sort of thing. Again, it is that partnership again, so they tell us what we need to buy.

JH – Have to see any changes from the packs your designers would have to create? Or anything else that has change in the PD stages.
Participant C – Again, it is not designing something, gone are the days we design something from an original pack, it all starts off from a bought sample because we need to get it in quick, erm, the company is strict on garment blocks and erm, keeping the fit and shape, more the blocks and we are consistent in sizing because as you know, never complain about it but when you go into Zara and try on a size 12 in something then a size 12 in something else, there is a massive difference. So, the drive for consistency in here, sometimes it is frustrating, because it holds and keeps time back, but 10% design from scratch, it is bought and selected pieces. Then the designers and then QA then kind of fit into, we might buy a Zara sample and say we want that, then working the QA and talking to them this is the look and the feel, then put it onto the company’s block, to have consistency with the fit.

JH - The 10% you mentioned from design from scratch, if that the 30% you send to the Far East?

Participant C – Yes, long lead time stuff.

(What aspects do you find more important)?

Erm, (long pause) for me, what I try and drive through to the buyers is to keep that consistency and to keep the quickness, it is the speed to market thinking, it is having a commercial view towards the product, erm, now that is not to say I want people to cut corners, I don’t, but there needs to be, if we go in and we see a dress in the suppliers in London, we go right we want this, this is the print we print, we have costed it, the purchase orders have gone within 48 hours, we then cannot go we want that sleeve, we want that shoulder detail, because that cancels out the speed to market thing. It is having that commercial view towards that, so my honour to that suppliers, we will take that garments as we have costed it and as it is and that is it. It is making sure that the QA keep up with them and we get the fits in a timely manner and all that sort of thing. Then it is the relationship from our supplier base, to keep to the company’s blocks and for their side not to cut corners as well.

Can you describe changes you have observed in the product development stages?

(How has this impacted on the BSR)?

AS ABOVE

(How would you describe the Inter-Organisational Dynamics in the BSR)?

Erm, long pause, the thing that has changed, the partnership thing is key, it is making it work. Making it worth for both of us. Even though we are fast fashion turn around, we do still buy anything from 2,000 to 10,000 on a quick turnaround product, because we can still get through that volume, but it is making sure that you, it is respect from us and the respect coming back from them. Erm, making sure and managing their expectations and our expectations. Keeping things easy by, like I mentioned earlier, with certain suppliers, we have 4 key fabrics on the floor at one point, so we can turn things quickly and it is not overcomplicating. The relationship is key, because they have got to know they are going to get that volume, we are not going to make things tricky for them we are not going to over complicate things. From our side we need value, we need quality, consistency and it is that partnership, we have to make they feel we are working together.

STRUCTURAL DYNAMICS

To what extent do you think the length of the relationship determines the success of a BSR?
It is really key, yes. I probably think, you know I always have a nervousness if it is a new supplier, erm, I like a good, they need some good sellers and a good year under your belt and you know it is the supplier getting used to how we work and us getting used to them and erm, we have some fantastic relationships now, for example, obviously, I am not directly in product at the moment, but I have certain suppliers on woven, I pinged over some prints I had seen, they said to me, yes you are spot on, on these, or they say not, too fringe, too this that and the other. This also comes from the buying side as well and it becomes, the behaviours and the social skills as well, you need to make them work for you. You know, we all have very different relationships with the supplier base.

JH – Just touching on this, do you think the relationships need to mature, do you think that has changed from a younger buyer to a buyer who is say 5 years into their buyer ship?

Participant C – Yes, very much so and I think a buying trip and a supplier meeting face to face is key. But unfortunately, in this organise it does not happen. It does happen if suppliers come in here and we are erm, our point of view, but I know in some company's people get into junior roles or assistant buyers' roles, right from one day. Where we can and time permitting, we get everyone involved in those buyer supplier relationships because it is key to see how you work together. But definitely erm, they need to mature into that and build up their own relationship.

JH: From the 70% you are buying UK or Near East, how many suppliers do you have now?

Participant C – Erm, there is not an awful lot, ladieswear, around 10, but of that only 4 are strategic partners.

POWER

Would you agree that there is a power dynamic at play in all BSR?

Erm, I think, (pauses) it is a tricky one, I think the key players we work with, the key suppliers, sometimes it needs to be, I do have to from a head off point of view and because I have a certain relationship with the supplier, I do have to step in, sometimes because fast fashion is so key, I think sometimes a supplier, can manipulate that and know that we need it and in turn, give us poorer quality garments or hike the prices up and now and again, it is like if we do not go and place all of this business, you know, you're not going to be able to survive. Sometimes it is nature, isn't it, they will take advantage of a junior buyer, so it is monitoring that from my head off role. We are going to be buying product from them, but we should have the power.

JH: If you were putting a percentage on it before Fast Fashion where would you say the buyer was.

Participant C – I would say the buyer had, we were the customer, so we had the buyer, absolutely, that is lessened a lot now. Now it would be 50%/50%, but prior, I hate the word but we were the gods.

How would you explain and describe that power dynamic?

AS ABOVE

TRUST

How important is trust within the BSR?

You have to have the trust, the minute you are let down, not let down if something naturally has
happened, erm, a natural disaster. But the minute anybody and I am quite, it is quite a biggie for me, the minute I feel that they have tried to pull a fast one or they have given me a lesser garment, I cannot stand it when you see things, when you know a gold seal is made by angels in a sample room somewhere and it is not on the product line, unless we have a long history and it is a blip, it is a new manager come in or the owner has handed it down to somebody else, but if it is a new relationship, I sever it from day one, it is just not one. You will see problems; you have to have that trust.

**COMMUNICATION**

Would you feel the nature and method of communication between the buyer and the supplier has changed? If so in what way and over what period?

The e-mail has killed it and tone of voice has changed a lot, we do not pick up the phone anymore, erm, and that is why I think erm, trips are key. Of course, it comes back to a monetary thing, erm, but I think that face to face negotiation and face to face speaking, nobody talks to each other anymore, erm, we do not talk to each other anymore. Sometimes I have to really pull people up on tone of voice and how they speak to people and these are, when I hear particularly trainees speaking to the supplier base, it can be quick sore of not great.

JH – Do you feel this is lack of experience?

Participant C – Yes, but I also think it comes down to the world in general and everything is done on e-mail. My biggest thing is just pick up the phone. If we have running line that is running like, it is like where is this or where is that seal or where is that, they say ‘I have e-mailed them four times’, I am like ‘pick up the phone’. You get everything done by picking up the phone or get them in or go and see them. Pick up the phone everything gets done, it gets lots somethings in translation.

JH – What about Skype?

Participant C – We have a VC room which is kind of like Skype, erm, we probably do not do it enough, what generally people do is Facetime on their own private phones. Now I know the younger companies, the pure players have a lot more facilities do that, with the Chinese suppliers, a lot of people do have video conference, 99% we go on Facetime.

**Section four – Collaborative Relationships and NPD stages**

Describe the nature of collaboration within the BSR?

Erm, well obviously if we are doing something purely from a pack it is (long pause) ideally it does happen, it sometimes it happens in the product development, face to face, erm, it key, erm, so there are some trips particularly on the long lead time, like knitwear. Outerwear is a good one, I have just well November, just done a product development trip for outerwear, we do erm, a lot, the first initial stages with their QA, unfortunately with our QA do not travel, in Shop direct they do, but here, that does not happen, it is making sure that erm, ideally it is to do with face to face. Some pieces are sent out in the packs, erm, it is working with the QA, it is crucial at that bit to make sure they are on board with the look and the feel and the silhouette of that. Prior to that, in the trends and the in presentation when we discuss silhouettes and we discuss how things are going, QA’s are really, really key in that. So, that in that design, trend process, we make sure that the product development people are involved in that. Particularly on the knit and outwear pieces, there are lot of product development trips, so it is done there, you can source fabrics and trims you can do all that sort of thing when you are face to face.

(Has this changed over time)?

JH: That is how you are working now, you said you relieved heavy on the designs from the
supplier, how had that changed from the way it was?

Participant C – Erm, where it, we probably would just send the packs out. We would put them in the post, swatch on them, doing a full design pack, pop them in the post and it was pot luck what you got back really. But we were not so fashion conscious then, does that make sense? We were so core driven and basic styling. Previously, you would have your deadlines and spend that week getting those packs out and what came back you would fit it. It is such a different company now.

Section Five – End of Interview

Looking towards the future to see how things are progressing?

Gosh, I am over tired, gosh, gosh, gosh (long pause), I do not know. Erm, I do not think, gone are the days there are going to be these long trips out the different areas, to go and ow gosh.

JH – What about from a technical perspective

Participant C – Technology, we are even seeing it now, we are doing virtual, (ow I have forgotten the name of it), virtual fit, when they do all the, it is being driven from a QA point of view, you know that model they have, you know that fit.

JH – Virtual reality

Participant C – I think it will get that we will not even get to see a cost we will cost a garment, then we will not see it again until it gets into stores. I know a lot of companies are a lot more advanced in that, I think the sealing process and the fit process and how much a buyer sees a product with dramatically reduce, erm, to that speed to market thing, erm, and I cannot think of anymore (laughs).

JH – On the buyer supplier relationship, the speed to market is going to impact, do you think we will eventually work with suppliers.

Participant C – Yes, probably, I do, I think we will probably be more partnerships, we even now have suppliers who have a desk here once a month. Their designers come in for the day. I am also being requested, that when we go to do the shopping trips, suppliers are asking for their designers to go with you, so they can get at the forefront of things. Erm, now that only happens again for those people who we have the ultimate trust with and who we have that relationship with. And then I have had one of the buyers who have been out with one of our partners one of our key suppliers, when they paid for her to go on a shopping trip and they have looked at and developed ranges and things like that, so it is all about that relationship there. I think that will drive things forward as well.

JH – That supplier, what percentage are you to them?

Participant C – We are probably their biggest supplier about 70% of their business with us.
Let the interviewee know the interview is over and inform them if they have any further questions regarding the interview or the research project, the researchers email address is on the participant sheet for their reference.
### Interview questions for the supplier

#### Section One – Interview Introduction

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<td>Tell me about your career development?</td>
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Participant B - Supplier
Section Two – The Retail Environment

How has fast fashion (introduced in the late 1990's) had an impact on your role and how your organisation operates?

Participant C: Fast Fashion has seen lots of changes on my role and the role of the whole factory. We have had to change how we operate over the years. Timing of course has been the biggest change of all. Due to the internet the customer now wants to wear what their favourite celebrity is wearing the next weekend, so as suppliers we have to produce these products very fast. We have to meet the customers’ demands so our operation has had to change. We now have to work very closely not only with the buyer but also with the designer and the QA teams. We have also had to change our internal personnel to accommodate how the changes have impacted on our business. For example, we have people now who analyse the internet for what the celebrities are wear and liaise with the designers in the buying office and work closely together. But we have had to employ our own designers, who now design and make garments for the buyer. If we get a sketch with a spec from the buyer, we then have to go straight into sampling. We sometimes only have time to have one sample made then we have to go into production even when the first fit sample has lots of comments. It is all about timing. Previously, we would have received high volumes from the buyer, now the volumes have decreased, and we keep stock fabric on the floor for when they need it.

JH: When you say timing, what time scale are you talking about?

Participant C: If we receive a sketch and spec let’s say day one, we sample by day 3 depending on if we have fabric on the floor if not then day 6 sample. We either send the sample to the UK, this take 2 days, then the QA will fit on their house model and send garment back if they have time, if they do not we Skype and this is done whilst we are both looking at the garment on the model and comments are then written down by us and the QA team and we then go into another sealing sample if we have time. Previously we would have 16 weeks but not any longer we now have around 3 to 4 weeks to get design and spec and fit and go into production. If we design product ourselves, we will send over a picture to the buyer via e-mail, then they could put this into production the following week.

Section three – Buyer/Supplier Relationship
**How would you manage your relationships with your buyer?**

I would manage it by communicating with them on a regular basis. My team here talk to the buyer or QA or designer at least one a week. We communicate via Skype or e-mail or telephone and they visit us twice a year and we visit them twice a year.

We have 4 meetings a year, normally when we meet, about the company’s strategy and how we are going to work going forward as well as looking back at how we have both worked together. These strategy meetings work for us both as I know where I stand from a production schedule for the next 6 months as they know what investments we are making with new machinery etc at our end. Yes, they work well (pauses), yes they definitely help both parties.

**JH: Can you describe the changes you have observed in the product development stages?**

Participant C: The last two years have been lots of changes. We I first started in this business the factory would be told what to do by the buyer. They would be given a spec and a sketch and told to make the garment and cost it by the buyer. The buyer would then negotiate with the supplier the best price. Then they would either give us the order or go to another supplier. Now, because of the fast fashion, the early stages of the product development stages have changed as now our designers and production team work closely with the retailer’s QA, designer and buyer to produce samples as soon as possible.

JH: What would you call asap?

Participant C: This can be done in two weeks. Our production team gather all the information they require for example the spec and the sketch and then produce the first sample for fitting. We would then send the sample to the UK and fit via Facetime, exchanging comments in the moment as they say (laughs). Everybody wants everything so much quicker now days (pauses). This happens on the samples we produce as well.

I guess you would say the relationships between myself and the buyer has changed as we rely on each other much more than we did.
JH: How would you describe the Inter-Organisational Dynamics in the BSR?

Participant C: I would say 20 years plus ago, what the buyer wanted a sample or production they got it, but now things have changed. I think we both would say that the buyer supplier dynamics have changed but for the better as far as I am concerned. You would probably say the power was previously with them, now I would say even split.
**JH:** To what extent do you think the length of the relationship determines the success of a BSR?

Participant C: Ow very much so, the longer I have worked with a buyer, the better they know me, and I know them. We understand where our strengths and weaknesses lay and therefore, we know how each other tick as they say, so we are able to get the best out of each other. The longer I have known betters the better our relationship. I have to be able to trust them and them trust me.

### POWER

**JH:** Would you agree that there is a power dynamic at play in all BSR?

Participant C: I think there was but not anymore, the power has changed over time.

**JH:** How would you explain and describe that power dynamic?

Participant C: Way back in the 80’s the dynamics were buyer at the top of the pile then suppliers at the bottom, then in came fast fashion, so the buyer had to rely on the supplier more, in the 90’s this power started to change, they buyer needed us. Then now, it has changed further to the buyers relying on us and I guess I would say in more of a partnership role, not a them and us type of role.

### TRUST
**JH: How important is trust within the BSR?**

Participant C: Very, they need to be able to trust us as we need to be able to trust them. At the end of the day we are both in business to make money, so we need to be able to do this, we can only do this by working together and forming a good relationship.

**COMMUNICATION**

**JH: Would you feel the nature and method of communication between the buyer and the supplier has changed? If so in what way and over what period?**

Participant C: Totally, the communication now is so much better for the buyer supplier relationship. We can communicate by many different mediums for example for me, I like that we can see each other over Facetime. Previously when I started, we could only communicate via fax, then came the internet, so via e-mail, but talking what feels like on a one to one with the buyer over Facetime of any of their team makes the whole process of what we do easier and you get answers. You get over obstacles much easier as well, if there is a problem with a fitting of a garment, you can see what it is by just looking at the garment on the fit model and talking to the QA team. Or the other day we were send a bought sample and a sketch, but they did not match, so we were able to speak directly via Facetime with the designer and ask them what they wanted. This saves time, but if the sketch had been properly completed along with the spec it would have save even more time.

**JH: What computer systems do you use to communicate?**

Participant B: PDM and PLM, as well as Facetime.

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**Section four – Collaborative Relationships and NPD stages**

**JH: Describe the nature of collaboration within the BSR?**

Participant C: Now, mmm (pauses) the collaboration between our factory and the retailers has seen some change. As I indicated earlier, in the 80’s it was them and us, you always felt the buyers kept you at a distance, then when they needed us more, because of fast fashion, the collaboration started to happen, we started working together to make sure we hit the reduced critical path. They now share information with me, and we work in partnership with each other. I would like them to come to Bangladesh more, but their trips seem to be only twice a year now, before they were up to 4 times a year. I think seeing the buyer face to face is always the better way to work on a partnership.
JH: Looking towards the future to see how things are progressing?

Participant C: Definitely without doubt I would have to say technology. It has changed our life already. It has changed how the customer buyers and how we have had to operate, going forward I think it will have even more of an impact. I think technology will change the production process as well as how we buy and also how we communicate.

Let the interviewee know the interview is over and inform them if they have any further questions regarding the interview or the research project, the researchers email address is on the participant sheet for their reference.
APPENDIX 6

Ethical Approval Form

Manchester Metropolitan University

Dr Tereonee Chen
Manchester Fashion Institute

19 July 2018

Dear Dr Chen,

Application for Ethical Approval: Julie Hodson

Project Title: The "Fuzzy Front end" of the buyer/supplier relationships in Fast Fashion

Ethics Reference Number: A&H1718-47

I am pleased to inform you that the above Ethical Application has been approved unconditionally.

I would be grateful if you could inform the other member(s) of the supervisory team.

Yours sincerely,

Katherine Wallall
Research Group Officer

Tel: +44 (0)161 247 8873
Email k.walhall@mmu.ac.uk

cc: Applicant
Research on the fashion buying skill set in the contemporary context

I would like to invite you to take part in a research study. Before you decide you need to understand why the research is being done and what it would involve for you. Please take time to read this following information carefully. Take time to decide whether or not to take part. It is up to you to decide. I will describe the study and go through the information sheet, which we will give to you. We will then ask you to sign a consent form to show you agreed to take part. You are free to withdraw at any time, without giving a reason. (If applicable – this will not affect the standard of care you receive). We cannot promise the study will help you but the information we get from the study will help to increase the understanding of the buying/supplier relationship. All information which is collected about you and your company during the course of the research will be kept strictly confidential, and any information about you which leaves the MMU will have your name, your companies name and the address removed so that you cannot be recognised.

The purpose of the study

The purpose of this research is to evaluate the effects of the buyer/supplier relationship in the product development process for the UK fast fashion market. Qualitative methodology including interviews and case studies are used in response to the research. Current fashion buyers and suppliers in the role are the participants of the survey. The findings can help better understanding the fashion buyer and supplier role in the demanding and constantly changing fashion industry in the future.

It will take approximately one hour for the interview. You are not required to provide your name and company name, whereas the information of your buying/supplying work experience, working department and business type are required.

(if you have a concern about any aspect of this study, you should ask to speak to the supervisor who will do their best to answer your questions:
Terence Chen - T.Chen@mmu.ac.uk
Step 1:

1. I confirm that the data collected and submitted are true and accurate, and the information provided is complete, without any errors or omissions.

2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I can withdraw at any time, without prejudice, without any legal right being affected.

3. I agree to the recording of the collection of data.

4. I understand that I cannot withdraw after data collection during the study, from termination or any decision by participants. Withdrawal should be done before the study.

No, I agree to take part in the above study.

Declaration of data of date: 18th July 2016

[Signature]
Endorsements:

I freely and voluntarily consent to the collection, use, and sharing of the data collected during the study. I understand that the data will be used for research purposes and that it will be kept confidential. I agree to participate in the study and to provide all necessary information.

Date: [Signature]

[Signature]

[Signature]
common name: \\
body position: \\
phalanges later to the measure.

COMMON FORM

Title:

Date of birth:

Place of birth:

Name of patient:

Date of admission:

Date of discharge:

Signature:

1. I confirm that the patient has signed the following: 
   * Consent Form
   * Information about the procedure
2. The patient has been informed about all risks associated with the procedure.
3. The patient has been informed about the expected benefits of the procedure.
4. The patient has been informed about any potential side effects of the procedure.
5. The patient has been informed about the possible complications of the procedure.
6. The patient has been informed about any follow-up care that may be necessary.

Date of signature:

Signature:

Date of signature:

Signature:

Date of signature:

Signature:
CURRENT FORM

Date of expiry: To avoid misleading this concept of enrolment with the length and number
numbering accurately, please place the same number of enrolments in the
beginning next year further corrected.

Name of teacher: 261.00.

1. I understand that the candidate has been asked to sign this Form 15.(a) and (b)
information about the candidate shall be verified and authorized by the
authorizers/authorizing agent.

2. I understand that my participation in the study is voluntary and that I can leave at any time
without any limitation of any kind.

3. I agree to the meaning of the confidentiality of the data.

4. I understand that the current version of the study is scheduled to be implemented in the
future.

5. I agree to be part of the above study.

Deviations were recorded: a copy of the transcript must be forwarded.

Candidate to sign below: 261.00.

[Signature]

Date of signature

[Date]
CONSENT FORM

Title of Project: To critically examine the concept of collaboration within the buyer-supplier relationship (BSR) within the new product development stage in the contemporary UK fast fashion and rapid fashion market.

Name of Researcher: Julie Hodson

Please initial below:

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet dated 25th July 2013 that explains the purpose of the research. I have been given the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had those answered satisfactorily.

2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason, without my legal rights being affected.

3. I agree to the recording of the collection of the data.

4. I understand that relevant sections of any data collected during the study may be shared with individuals from Manchester Metropolitan University, where it is relevant to my taking part in the research. I give permission for these individuals to have access to my records.

5. I agree to take part in the above study.

Participating was required to sign the consent form.

Date: 7/9/18

Date: 9/3/18

Name of Person taking consent:

Name of Person taking consent:

Page 2 of 2
Date: [ ]
Signature: [ ]

[Handwritten notes on the page]
Appendix 8

GLOSSARY

The definitions of these variables are as follows:

Fast fashion (FF): is a contemporary term used by fashion retailers to express that designs move from catwalk quickly to capture current fashion trends.

Rapid fashion (RF): is a contemporary term used by fashion retailers to express how a product can go from design to a product to sell in one week.

Supply chain: the sequence of processes involved in the production and distribution of a commodity.

Buyer/Supply relationships (BSR): The relationship between a buyer and supplier can be complex, because each one wants to maximise its time, resources and cash investment.

Collaboration: Collaboration is the process of two or more people or organisations working together to complete a task and achieve the same goal.

Trust: Trust is seen as the extent to which a firm believes that its exchange partner is honest and/or benevolent, and commitment is defined a desire to continue the relationship in the future and a willingness to make short-term sacrifices to maintain the relationship.

Communication: Communication is the act of conveying meanings from one entity or group to another through the use of mutually understood signs, symbols, and semiotic rules.

Open to Buy (OTD): is merchandise budgeted for purchase by a retail store during a certain time period that has not yet been ordered.

Power: the capacity or ability to direct or influence the behaviour of others or the course of events.

Shift in Power: to cause a situation in which one organisation has more power than a another, in this instance, the buyer or supplier has more power in the relationship than the other.

Successful relationship: Where both parties are happy with the way the partnership is working.

Unsuccessful relationships: Where either one or both parties are unhappy with the way the partnership is working.

Reducing the supply base: To reduce the portion of a supply network that is actively managed by the retailer.

Personal dimensions: The personal relationship the buyer has with the supplier or the supplier has with the buyer.