The impact of fast fashion, consumer behaviour and fashion brand communication on sustainability.

A thesis submitted to Manchester Metropolitan University for the degree of Master’s by Research in the Faculty of Arts and Humanities

Revised: January 2021

Noelle Hatley

Manchester Fashion Institute

Abstract

The fashion industry is globally important in terms of its financial contribution and the number of people it employs. Its negative impact on the environment and world poverty through inadequate sustainable practices are equally significant. Fast or 'disposable' fashion has exacerbated the phenomenon of selling masses of cheap clothes designed to be worn a handful of times. Brands such as H & M, ASOS and Zara have successfully exploited this trend. Although young people - the main fast fashion consumers - are becoming increasingly interested in sustainability, they do not appear to apply this to their fashion purchases.

This research develops understanding of the motivation behind young peoples' fashion consumption and interest in the provenance of their clothes, and examines the extent to which mainstream fast fashion brands are reacting to an increased societal interest in sustainability. Crucially, it examines the evolving relationship between the two parties.

In order to achieve the aims of the study, data from an online survey representing the views of female fast fashion consumers (18-24) in the UK was analysed to identify what drives them towards constant fashion purchasing, and the extent to which fast fashion satisfies this. It explores their need to match societal ideas of beauty portrayed through digital channels, the influence of social media and their relationship with fashion brands.

The case studies on the three most popular fast fashion brands, identified from the survey (ASOS, Topshop and Zara) revealed how digital technology has provided an unprecedented and direct access to their consumers. Whilst there are examples such as Patagonia and M & S using web sites and social media to inform their customers about sustainable initiatives, fast fashion brands are largely exploiting them purely as selling platforms.

The survey revealed that fast fashion customers want what fast fashion brands offer, but they would also like them to be sustainable. The case study highlighted examples where customers challenged brand social media posts about sustainable practice, confirming their significant role in the relationship and in sustainable progress in the fashion industry. The brands' continued success depends on listening and re-acting to their customers.

Newig et al., analytical framework (2013) provides theory about the flow, function and effectiveness of communication in relation to sustainable goals, and is used to develop guidelines for fast fashion brands to educate their consumers about sustainability. The guidelines will reflect young consumers' use of digital channels for shopping and communication and their interest in fashion and sustainability.

Key words: Sustainability, Fast fashion, Consumers, Communication.

Acknowledgements.

My first acknowledgement is to my husband David, who is undoubtedly the person that has been most affected by this journey. He has graciously accepted over the last six to nine months that almost everything had to fit around my research. I would also like to take this opportunity to prepare him for the fact that even though the thesis is submitted, I am not going to be filling the time with doing lots of housework – sorry, but there it is!

I would like to thank my two dedicated Supervisors: Dr. Tasneem Sabir and Dr. Joanna Blanco-Velo who have been with me from start to finish, although one of them has left MMU during this time. They have supported me in different and complimentary ways – providing a perfect combination of care and pragmatism.

Two other people were temporarily part of the Supervisory team, Dr. Sara Han who moved to another university and Professor David Tyler who joined us for the final few months, and has offered incisive vision that has added immensely to the content and quality of the thesis.

I would like to thank and acknowledge my parents for the upbringing that has enabled my sisters and me to achieve different and amazing things. Their continued support in whatever I have done is invaluable. My incredible Mum at eighty-six is always interested and encouraging. Although my Dad died a few years ago, I find myself unwittingly treading in his footsteps, including moving into academia. I know how proud he would be that I have completed this work.

Thank you to dear friends Andy and Alison for their invaluable input in keeping both the work and me on track.

Finally, to many others, who have shown interest or helped in a number of different ways throughout this process, Thank You!

Table of Content

List of Tables

List of Figures

Chapter 1 Introduction

In 2018 the global fashion industry was worth three thousand billion US dollars and equating to 2% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) whilst employing 57.8 million people, an increase of 69% since 1990 (Fashion United, 2018). Garment production is concentrated primarily in South East Asia, one of the two regions in the world with the highest number of people living below the poverty line (United Nations, 2015). Much of the fashion industry is unsustainable, dominated by low cost, and fast pace, with fragmented and complex supply chains, and little visibility between production and point of sale (Global Fashion Agenda and The Boston Consulting Group, 2018:34).

The United Kingdom (UK) continues to be internationally significant in fashion for design and trend setting, high street and luxury brands offer fashionable garments at all market levels. (British Fashion Council (BFC), 2018). London Fashion Week draws visitors from all over the world, and remains one of the key events of the fashion calendar (BFC, 2018). The scope of the industry extends from creative and retail, to marketing and media, and an internationally recognised fashion education system (BFC, 2018).

In 2018, 816,000 people worked in the UK fashion industry, which made a direct contribution of £21 billion to Gross Domestic Product (GDP) (BFC, 2018). In the United Kingdom's neo-liberal, political economy, which gives priority to markets (Gamble, 2019), GDP is the main indicator of economic performance (Coscieme et al., 2019). It measures financial output per person versus the cost of achieving it. A growing population demands financial growth to demonstrate economic strength, consumption of goods is encouraged, as it makes significant contribution to the country's financial status (Liao *et al.*, 2019) .

Since 2013, the annual turnover of leading fast fashion brands and the number of garments sold has increased every year, whilst the average selling price has decreased resulting in fierce competition, particularly on price (Table 10. Section 2.3.2). Despite sector level commitment to the United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's), forecasts up to 2022 are for this trend to continue (Euromonitor, 2018:7). Garment manufacture is labour intensive (Koksal et al., 2017) so when UK wages prohibited financial targets, production moved to offshore, low labour cost countries. These were frequently developing or third world regions such as India, Bangladesh and parts of China, all with undeveloped infrastructure and a poor record on human rights (Alam et al., 2018). Buyers focussed on sourcing products, sometimes through agents without supply chain visibility or any commitment to particular factories (Taplin, 2014). This altered the dynamic of relationships between retailer and manufacturer and allowed Buyers to move from one factory to another to secure the lowest cost (Koksal *et al.*, 2017). The physical distance between offshore production and customers in the UK resulted in consumers having little or no knowledge about the *making of their clothes, or the conditions that garment workers experienced (Koksal et al*., 2017).

The phenomenal growth (Euromonitor, 2018) of fast fashion has amplified many of the most damaging aspects of the industry (Gupta, 2019). Privately owned fast fashion retailers such as Zara and Hennes & Mauritz (H & M) increased their range of options to give customers more choice, and encourage multiple purchasing. The sector is important in terms of scale in the apparel industry (Watson and Yan, 2013). Selling prices have remained unsustainably low (ILO, 2017) and more garments are sold in order to achieve revenue growth (See Table 10, Section 2.3.2). Factories have to meet low costs, with smaller average order quantities, and increased number of options. As each has a unique specification of components, design, pattern, and construction, maintaining the same level of turnover was more complicated, time consuming and costly for the factories (Taplin, 2014). From the retailer's perspective, extensive product ranges and more frequent 'product drops' generated greater sales so that a customer shopping weekly would always see something new (Cook and Yurchisin, 2017). This led to a dramatic reduction in lead times from months to weeks, further increasing the demands on factories (Taplin, 2014). Digital technology has further increased the pace of fast fashion, smart devices, particularly mobile phones enable online purchasing at all times (Brewer, 2019, Nash, 2019). Brands encourage the perception that product is scarce (Cook and Yurchisin, 2017) with online or in store reminders to purchase before product sells out.

Young people are the most significant group of fast fashion consumers (Ritch, 2015:1166), this research includes Millennials (born 1981-1996) and Generation Z (born 1997-2012) (Dimok, 2019). Their number and potential buying power make them an attractive target for many industries (Calienes et al., 2016:47). Perhaps their most distinguishing characteristic is their digital proficiency, providing unprecedented opportunities for researching, purchasing and socialising (Nielson, 2017). This generation expect brands to provide personalised relevant information about products and services (Burch, 2017). They will supplement managed content from brands with other sources including comparison sites and other consumers to find information not generated from, or controlled by, the brand, which has led to a decrease in brand loyalty (Claveria, 2019). They expect personalisation and want to express their opinion (Calienes et al., 2016:48) this is significant in developing communication guidelines about sustainability.

Recent business data suggests that millennials in particular are more likely to buy products from companies using sustainable solutions and willing to pay more for them (The Business of Fashion and McKinsey, 2018:62). Other research, however, suggests that other factors limit the extent to which this influences their fashion consumption: enhancing or disguising parts of the body; being 'fashionable' or 'desirable' (Joyner-Armstrong et al., 2016, McNeill and Moore, 2015). Social media platforms where 'selfies' are posted, has encouraged the 'disposability' of clothes, an outfit 'shared' has limited use (Nash 2019, Bess and Bartolini 2011). Although fast fashion garments are relatively inexpensive, the cycle of constant disposal and replacement results in consuming much of young people's disposable income. Therefore, although they may have a positive predisposition towards sustainable purchasing (McNeill and Moore, 2015), other influences affect their consumption of fashion goods. They want fast fashion at affordable prices, and are not necessarily aware or interested in factory workers wages or working conditions (Maximillian, 2013:10). They are largely unaware of the origin of their clothes, and information provided by fashion brands about sustainability is absent, scarce and/or inexplicit - perhaps an indication that there is little good practice to communicate, and that it is safer not to attempt to do so (Ritch, 2015:1170).

Sustainability has become an increasingly important value in the global fashion industry (Gupta, 2019). Although there is not an industry wide definition of what it means, it encompasses terms such as organic, green, fair trade, and ethical (Cervellon et al., 2010) and includes environmental and social sustainability. The absence of sustainable information and 'greenwashing', (deliberately) misleading or vague communication that enhances brands' sustainable credentials, may have led to the emergence of organisations such as the Sustainable Lifestyles Frontier Group in 2013, which provides guidance for brands on optimising the sustainability message. Pressure groups and organisations such as The Ethical Trading Initiative (ETI), founded in 1998 have campaigned for transparency in the supply chain, but it was not until damaging publicity about factory conditions threatened to adversely affect sales, that many fashion brands began to implement changes (Arrigo, 2020). They developed Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) strategies, stipulating minimum standards and auditing procedures for the factories with which they traded. Recognition of investment of time and money, and working towards long rather than short-term goals presents perhaps the biggest challenge for many fashion businesses (Global Fashion Agenda and The Boston Consulting Group, 2018). However, as investors and shareholders increasingly assess sustainability in their risk assessment of a company, this will encourage sustainable strategies (Global Fashion Agenda and The Boston Consulting Group, 2018).

Some fashion brands have implemented sustainable practices (Gupta, 2019), particularly with environmental initiatives. For example, Kering introduced an Environmental Profit & Loss (EPL) system; Reformation use a RefScale that allows consumers to view each products environmental impact; G Star and H & M use Fibre Benchmark for the same purpose. Initiatives such as these have encouraged other brands to put sustainability on their business agenda for the first time, and have led to the development of The Global Pulse Score, a health measure for the Fashion Industry developed by Global Fashion Agenda and The Boston Consulting Group (2018:12). The 2018 report provides information for all fashion businesses regardless of size or market level about how they can become more sustainable. Focussing on four enablers: Resources, Strategy, Communication and Traceability, it uses previous companies' experience to set out key stages and outcomes that a business might expect in the drive towards sustainability.

Traditional channels of communication used by fashion brands include sales staff, store signage, swing tickets and labels, but digital platforms including web sites, e-mail, and social media give unprecedented opportunities to communicate with customers. There is a diverse range of communication about sustainability reflecting different practices, market levels and consumers. At one extreme, Patagonia, an outdoor clothing brand who have built their brand on sustainability, feature environmental campaigns on the home page of their web site alongside their mission statement: 'Build the best product, cause no unnecessary harm, use business to inspire and implement solutions to the environmental crisis' (Patagonia, 2018, online). M & S was the first mass market brand to provide a Supplier Map, as part of Plan A of their sustainability strategy (The Business of Fashion and McKinsey and Company (2018). At the fast fashion end, brands' primary communication relates to selling product, although in recent years both H & M and Zara have introduced sustainable collections (Conscious and Join Life).

This research addresses the significance of communication in contributing to improving the sustainability of the fashion industry. It requires an understanding of the two key parties: consumers and fashion brands. Digital technology, web sites and social media - may have contributed to increasing the pace of fashion, but now present an opportunity to develop a sustainability narrative between fashion brands and consumers. It will explore consumer motivation for fashion purchasing and interest in sustainability and brand interest in becoming more sustainable, in order to highlight the extent to which the two are compatible.

1.1 Research Aim and Objectives

The Research Aim for this study is:

To analyse the impact of fast fashion, consumer behaviour and fashion brand communication on sustainability.

The Research Objectives for this study are:

1) To analyse fast fashion consumers and their fashion consumption.
2) To evaluate how fast fashion brands communicate with their customers.
3) To make a comparative analysis of consumer and fashion brand interest in sustainability.
4) To recommend guidelines to optimise the communication of sustainability between fast fashion brands and consumers.

The following chapters uncover the theory and original findings of this research thus fulfilling the Aims and Objectives:-

- Literature Review (Ch. 2)
- Methodology (Ch. 3)
- Results and Findings (Ch. 4)
- Summary and Analysis (Ch. 5)
- Guidelines for Optimising Communication (Ch. 6)
- Conclusion (Ch.7)

Chapter 2.0 Literature Review

This chapter investigates the meaning of sustainability and the impact of the UK fashion industry. It discusses environmental and social sustainability and considers the influence of fast fashion brands and consumers. It compares areas of consumer and brand interest and behaviour in sustainable consumption. Concluding with an examination of theoretical perspectives of communication about sustainability.

2.1 Introduction

Fashion is an important global industry in terms of revenue, employment and impact on sustainability (Global Fashion Agenda and The Boston Consulting Group, 2018, Alam et al., 2018). It is not size alone that makes its contribution noteworthy, rather the speed, complexity and geography of parties involved (Brewer, 2019). The growth and ever-increasing pace of fast fashion, where constantly changing products are sourced and transported from countries offering the lowest cost, has led to a worsening situation in relation to sustainability over the last decade (Dissanayakea and Sinha, 2015). Digital technological developments have changed lifestyles, particularly of young millennials with their attachment to social media and unprecedented shopping opportunities (Brewer, 2019). Image driven sites such as Facebook and Instagram have led to increasing pressure particularly on young women to transform themselves to live up to others' curated images (Brewer, 2019). An analysis of the attitude-behaviour gap will show that despite increased millennial concern with sustainability, other fashion purchasing priorities may predominate.

Fashion has always represented a significant part of an individual's identity, and sense of well-being, but the pace, scale, and cost of fast fashion, has transformed the ***value*** of clothes. Basic jersey items from Primark such as T-shirts and leggings are cheaper than the price of an alcoholic beverage, so it is hardly surprising that young people perceive garments as disposable, and may only wear them a few times (McNeill and Moore, 2015). Millennial investment in fashion has led to a symbiotic relationship with fast fashion brands, which generate a huge amount of revenue and shareholder wealth. Amancio Ortega of Inditex (which includes Zara) has been the richest man in the fashion industry for the last three years (Fashion United, 2018). The rapid growth of online brands such as ASOS and Missguided are similar success stories; collectively they make formidable opponents to changing the current model.

Despite the magnitude and complexity of fashion creation and consumption, it is important to acknowledge some good sustainable practice across all businesses and market levels. The fashion industry pulse score which measures sustainability has increased by 6 points to 38/100 2017 - 2018 (Global Fashion Agenda and The Boston Consulting Group, 2018:7). The same period also saw improvements in the number of sustainably related targets and the extent that sustainability influences company decisions (2018, Global Fashion Agenda and The Boston Consulting Group), see Figure 1.

Figure 1: Global Fashion Agenda & The Boston Consulting Group, 2018.

Aside from the direct positive contribution to sustainability some businesses are making, their example raises the profile of the issue with government, investors, businesses and consumers, and provides experience from which other companies can draw. Initiatives such as the G7 Sustainability Fashion Pact which 32 of the world's leading fashion and textile companies have signed up to (Tafreschi, 2019), help to keep the issue of sustainability at the forefront of people's minds.

The focus for this research is an examination of communication between fashion brands and consumers, in order to develop guidelines to improve and optimise the narrative about sustainability.

2.2 Sustainability in the fashion industry.

2.2.1 Garment Production

There is little awareness outside the fashion industry of the labour intensity of clothing production and the processes that get products to consumers (Koksal et al., 2017:2). At the lower and mid-market level, the labour cost represents a significant percentage of the total garment cost (Jeffrey and Evans, 2011), which is significant in sourcing strategies. In the eighties and nineties, garment production for the home market began to move from the UK to South East Asia: China, India and Bangladesh where wages were dramatically lower (Taplin, 2014:74).

Table 1 lists in order from largest to smallest the ten biggest apparel-exporting countries in 2017. Perhaps the most disturbing revelation is the paucity of wages in Asia compared to Europe. Taken as a percentage of the country with the highest minimum wage, which is France at 100% Chinas minimum wage equates to 12.5% of that figure, Bangladesh to 3.69% and India just 3.03%. The attraction that these countries hold for a labour intensive industry like apparel is obvious.

Country	Apparel exports $ million -2017	National minimum wage per month 2019 US $	% of the highest minimum wage - France
China	110,519.0	224.70	**12.51**
Bangladesh	26,908.7	66.40	**3.69**
Italy	23,969.3	not known	n/a
Germany	22,448.8	1796.60	99.97
Turkey	22,116.9	535.40	29.79
Vietnam	21,591.4	not known	n/a
India	14,103.9	54.50	**3.03**
Spain	13,018.7	1197.80	66.65
France	**12,004.3**	**1797.10**	**100**
UK	10,572.4	1723.60	95.91

Table 1: Apparel Exporting countries & National Minimum Wage. Informed by 'Country Report & Euromonitor' 2018 Passport 2018.

Manufacturing in these countries enabled fashion businesses to maintain or lower retail-selling prices and protect their margin. It also started a trend of a spiral downward cost and selling prices, and fierce competition between factories to maintain or win orders (Taplin, 2014:74). The complexity of apparel in terms of the number and specificity of components within a single item is also unknown to most consumers. Apparel production is tiered, the factory making the garment is Tier 1, the factory supplying the components for the garment is Tier 2, and so on (Mejias et al., 2019). Figure 2 shows the number of components required to construct a pair of jeans, typically a main fabric, trim fabric for the pockets, zip, metal shank button, metal rivets, and thread, many originating from different factories. Even beyond Tier 2, a component such as a zip has several elements metallic & textile originating from different factories. The difficulty in accounting for and ensuring that all suppliers are sourcing ethically becomes clear (Mejias et al., 2019, Koksal et al., 2017:6). To add further complexity, whilst China, the biggest apparel exporting country, has a well-developed garment infrastructure and can source components locally, other countries, such as Bangladesh and India, are likely to be importing them, resulting in a global fragmented supply chain (Koksal et al., 2017:6).

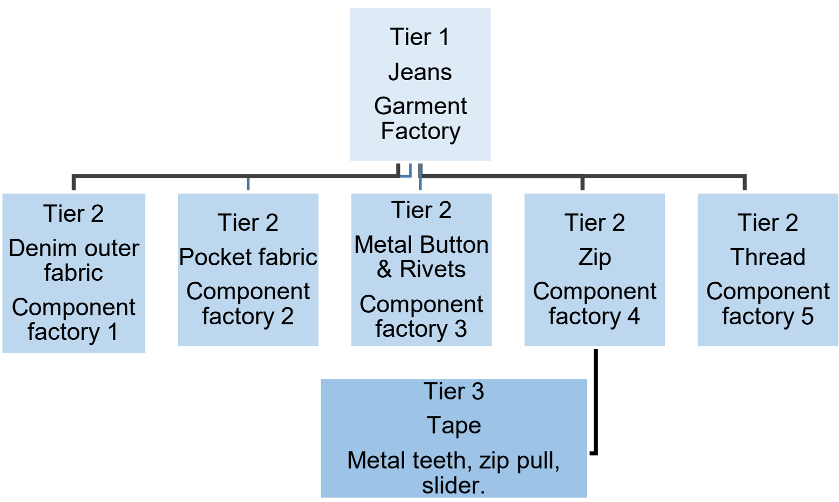


Figure 2: A section of a Three Tier supply chain for a denim jean, informed by Mejias et al., 2019).

According to ‘The Business of Fashion and McKinsey and Company’, an apparel company might think that they only have 1000 – 2000 suppliers the reality is likely to be 20,000-50,000 if you include all the sub-suppliers (2018:65). This extends the responsibility of fashion brands to include all Tiers in order for them to be fully sustainable (Mejias et al., 2019).
A typical fast fashion garment factory will work on many different small quantity orders simultaneously. Figure 3 developed by Martin (2013) shows the extended process.

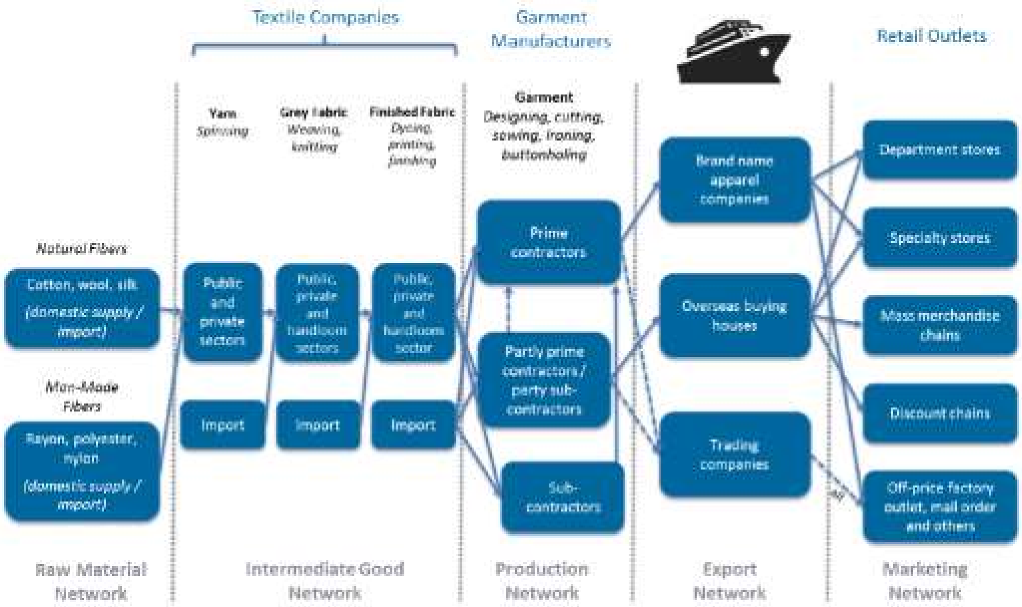


Figure 3: The apparel value chain. Martin, 2013:6

Fast fashion requires extensive planning and co-ordination, and reduces the potential cost reduction of traditional large production runs, where workers’ speed increased as they become familiar with completing operations. A picture of the demands on a fast fashion factory begins to emerge, toughly negotiated cost prices, small margins, diminished order quantities, short production runs, and tight deadlines leaving little room for error and with the threat of financial penalties (International Labour Office (ILO), 2017). Many factories face tough challenges in meeting contractual obligations. A global survey of all industries found that technical specifications from Buyers in the Textiles and Clothing sector were often lacking detail or incorrect, leading to additional overtime to keep the agreed date (ILO, 2017:5).

2.2.2 What is sustainability?

‘Sustain’ means to preserve, protect and provide for the future (Collins English Dictionary, 2019). In 1972, the United Nations first expressed concerns about the negative impact that industrial development was having on the environment and global equality. In 1987, the Brundtland Report ‘Our Common Future’ summarised sustainability thus: ‘Development which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.’ (World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED), 1987). Its message was that the planet’s resources were finite and harmed by industrialisation and population growth, leading to increasing inequality.

The UN formalised their concerns about sustainability in 2000 by developing eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). These were replaced in 2015, by 17 'Sustainable Development Goals' (SDG's) available in six languages, (Table 2), and the process of mapping the progress of 156 countries towards their achievement began (Bertelsmann Stiftung and Sustainable Development Solutions Network, 2018).

UN Millennium Development Goals 2000		**UN Sustainable Development Goals 2015**	
1	To eradicate extreme poverty and hunger.	1	No poverty
		2	Zero hunger
2	To achieve universal primary education	3	Good health and well-being
		4	Quality Education
3	To promote gender equality and empower women	5	Gender Equality
		6	Clean Water and Sanitation
4	To reduce child mortality	7	Affordable and Clean Energy
		8	Decent Work and Economic Growth
5	To improve maternal health	9	Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure
		10	Reduced Inequality
6	To combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases	11	Sustainable Cities and Communities
		12	Responsible Consumption and Production
7	To ensure environmental sustainability and	13	Climate Action
		14	Life Below Water
8	To develop a global partnership for development	15	Life on Land
		16	Peace and Justice Strong Institutions
		17	Partnership to achieve the Goal

Table 2: United Nations Development Goals 2000 and 2015

Social performance relates to human welfare including wages, working hours and factory conditions. Environmental sustainability includes depletion and/or pollution of natural resources. Financial sustainability includes economic factors, relating to the viability of the business.

2.2.3 Corporate Social Responsibility

In 1994 Elkington, the founder of a British sustainability consultancy recommended that businesses carry out an holistic assessment of a company's economic, social, and environmental performance, or 'Triple Bottom Line' (TBL) (Hiller Connell and Kozar, 2017:1). Simultaneously customers became increasingly interested in knowing about suppliers and the provenance of products, and businesses began to realise that sustainability was important (Perry et al., 2014). In response, many introduced Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) strategies, which outlined their commitment to improving their social and environmental impact. (Lueg et al*., 2*013). Aguinis (2011:855) defined CSR as organizational actions and policies that account for stakeholders' expectations and the triple bottom line of economic social and environmental performance. It conveys the idea that business should assume social responsibilities beyond any economic, technical and legal obligations, with the objective of reconciling social and environmental objectives (Davis, 1973).

CSR strategies are voluntary and in practice may become a compliance issue involving the application of guiding mechanisms, codes of conduct and audits (Perry et al., 2014). They lack the force of mandatory law (Brewer, 2019), and are associated with increasing costs and limiting profitability (Hume, 2010:386). Implementation at factory level is frequently compromised, particularly in fast fashion where achieving other demands including low prices, short lead times, and trend led products was considered to be more important (Brewer, 2019, Perry et al., 2014). Consequently, the perception was that they were 'little more than a PR exercise…that fail to fully address exploitative working conditions…' (Perry et al., 2014).

2.2.4 Sustainability in the Fashion Industry

Characterised by its globally fragmented supply chain (Koksal et al., 2017:6), buying offices distanced from production, and constantly changing low cost products, a lack of transparency in the fashion industry is unsurprising. An indication of the pressure garment factories face is that according to the International Labour Office (ILO), 52%, against a global industry figure of 39%, sell below cost (2017:7). The principal motivation for this in most cases was to secure future orders, although beating the competition and costing error calculations were also cited (ILO, 2017:8).

In a market where fashion products are constantly changing (Koksal et al., 2017, Thomas, 2015:537) negotiations around style, price and speed are normal. Research by the ILO (2017) found that the textile and garment industries were two of the worst industries as far as inadequate lead times were concerned. Furthermore, although in 2017 financial penalties for not meeting contract dates ran at 5% across all industries, the figure in textiles and garments was 35% (Koksal et al, 2017:6). In summary, apparel factories work with complex, constantly changing products made from numerous components, with short lead times, low prices, and the threat of discount for failure to meet contract details.

2.2.5 Social Sustainability in the Fashion Industry

A consequence of the labour intensive nature of the fashion industry it employs more than 60 million people worldwide (Global Fashion Agenda and The Boston Consulting Group, 2018:46), therefore, its social sustainability footprint is substantial. Apparel is frequently a starter industry for developing countries due to the relative ease in setting up garment factories, which employ significant numbers and lift people out of poverty (Alam et al., 2018) In Bangladesh 35% of all employees work in the apparel industry (Kirchain et al., 2015:3). Workers in these countries are reliant on their earnings to survive and have few rights, there is little or no welfare support, and trade unions are weak representing only 22% of global industries (ILO, 2017:12). It is common for apparel factory workers to work 10 -15 hours a day, six or seven days a week, on mind numbing repetitive tasks (Taplin, 2014, Hiller et al., 2012: 396).

The labour cost of a garment is significant (Jeffrey and Evans, 2011) and determined by where factory location (Alam, 2018). Table 1 highlighted disparity of National Minimum Wages between Europe and Asian garment exporting countries such as China, India and Bangladesh. Further investigation exposes the inadequacy of the National Minimum Wage in relation to a Living Wage, which expresses the needs of a family unit rather than an individual. The Living Wage measures social participation and mobility, rather than survival and social exclusion, allowing for food, accommodation, education and health care (Living Wage Foundation & ACCA, 2017:4). Acording to the Asia Floor Wage Alliance, all National Minimum Wages are far below the Living Wages in all the countries in Asia with which they work (2018, online). The latest figures available indicate that in 2014, China's Minimum Wage was 46% of the Living Wage; India's Minimum Wage was 26% of the Living Wage and Bangladesh's Minimum Wage represented only 19% of the Living Wage; (Asia Floor Wage Alliance, 2018, online). H & M, one of the largest global fast fashion brands and the fifth highest scoring brand in the fashion Transparency Index (Fashion Revolution, 2019) do not pay a living wage to any of the workers in the factories making their products (Labour Behind The Label, 2019).

Yet, despite increasing concern about sustainability in the fashion industry, cost continues to be the driving factor in determining order placement. A survey in 2017 revealed that across all industries cost was twice as important as working conditions (ILO, 2017:10). A further assessment of a country's social sustainability is the Sustainable Society Index (SSI), which measures 99% of the world's population by evaluating 151 countries over three categories - human, environmental and economic - to give an overall wellbeing indicator (European Commission, 2012:3). Table 3 shows the SSI position of the biggest apparel exporting countries. India (5.23) scores the least well, followed by China (5.24), followed by Bangladesh (5.36); and the UK (5.88) and Germany (6.24) are at the top. In analysing progress towards the UN's Sustainable Development Goals, India and Bangladesh are ranked 112th and 111th respectively from a total of 151 countries, whereas Germany are in 4th and France in 5th position. Scores from a 100 range from India's, the lowest at 59.1, to the highest, France, with 81.2. The report highlights the goals that present the biggest challenges for these Asian countries: Zero Hunger, Good Health and Well-Being, Life below Water, Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions and Reduced Inequalities (Bertelsmann Stiftung and Sustainable Development Solutions Network, 2018:12).

Ten biggest apparel exporting countries	SSI Overall Well being	Ten biggest apparel exporting countries	Sust. Dev. Goals rank /156	Ten biggest apparel exporting countries	Sust. Dev. Goals score
India	5.23	India	112	India	59.1
China	5.24	Bangladesh	111	Bangladesh	59.3
Bangladesh	5.36	Turkey	79	Vietnam	69.7
Vietnam	5.49	Vietnam	57	China	70.1
Spain	5.51	China	54	Italy	74.2
France	5.64	Italy	29	Spain	75.4
Turkey	5.75	Spain	25	United Kingdom	78.7
Italy	5.77	United Kingdom	14	Germany	81.2
United Kingdom	5.88	France	5	France	81.2
Germany	6.24	Germany	4	Turkey	68.5

Table 3: Social Sustainability Indicators – (SDG's, Bertelsmann Stiftung and Sustainable Development Solutions Network, 2018:16, & Sustainable Society Index)

A further symptom of the fast fashion cycle linked to social deprivation is inadequate time for order completion. Excessive overtime because of overcommitting to orders results in workers forced to do paid or unpaid overtime (Koksal et al., 2017:16, ILO, 2017:11). It is reported that this is what led to the deaths in 2013 of 1,135 people and injury to a further 2,500 in Bangladesh was the collapse of the poorly constructed Rana Plaza building, where work on orders due to be despatched that day continued even after cracks were identified (Chowdhury, 2017). Worldwide attention following this human disaster led to the setting up of the Bangladesh Building Accord on Fire and Safety, although criticism of its implementation remains (Koksal et al., 2017:16). Other common issues in garment factories include discrimination, abuse, health and safety hazards (e.g. blocked fire exits), child and forced labour.

2.2.6 Environmental Sustainability in the Fashion Industry

The fashion industry consumes huge quantities of raw materials and accounts for 10% of the world's carbon emissions (Brewer, 2019, Gupta 2019). Fast fashion has intensified the demand for constant product newness, leading to continual low cost fibre, fabric and garment production (Brewer, 2019). The industry produces in ways that deplete, damage or pollute natural sources through using harmful substances and/or processes, and utilising resources at a faster rate than are naturally replenished, thereby jeopardising sustainable practices (Koksal et al., 2017, McNeill, Moore, 2015:213, Joy et al., 2012:290). Aside from garment production processes, getting product to the point of sale involves extensive transportation of goods, contributing further to environmental damage (Brewer, 2019). Garment disposal has resulted in textiles representing the largest sector of household waste and significant landfill (Sinha, 2012). Table 4 illustrates the type and scale of environmental damage caused by the industry, including over use of water, water pollution, creation and disposal of non-renewable and harmful resources, and greenhouse gas emissions.

Water use & pollution	Use of non-renewable resources	Greenhouse gas emissions	Use of harmful substances	Plastic entering the ocean
Textile production (including cotton) uses 93 billion cubic metres of water annually. 20% of industrial water pollution globally is attributable to the dyeing and treatment of textiles.	98 million tonnes per year of oil for:- Synthetic fibres. Fertilisers to grow cotton. Chemicals to produce dye, and finish fibre and textiles.	Textile production totalled 1.2 billion tonnes of CO2 (equivalent). More than those of all international flights and maritime shipping combined.	Hazardous chemicals & processes have negative effects on farmers, factory workers, and the surrounding environment.	Half a million tonnes of plastic micro fibres shed during the washing of plastic based textiles, an end up in the ocean.

Table 4: Examples of environmental non-sustainable practices in the fashion industry. Informed by Ellen MacArthur Foundation & Circular Fibres Initiative, 2017:20.

As the largest apparel manufacturing country, exporting four times the value of any other, China's environmental footprint is highly significant. In the last few years, the government has begun to pay more attention to developing sustainable practices, but 80% of garment businesses have a poor environmental record (Zhang, 2015:995, Koksal et al., 2013). To highlight the magnitude of the environmental problem it is worth understanding the impact of a single garment, as assessed through a system developed by Zhang et al., as shown in Table 5 (2015:1003).

ADP-e	Abiotic depletion—elements	POCP	Photochemical ozone creation
ADP-f	Abiotic depletion—fossil	WU	Water use
AP	Acidification (AP)	ECP	Eco toxicity
EP	Eutrophication	HTCP	Human toxicity—cancer
GWP	Global warming	HTPNC	Human toxicity—non-cancer

Table 5: Impact categories. Informed by Zhang et al., 2015:999

Nine life-cycle stages of a cotton T shirt, including cotton cultivation, transportation, spinning, knitting, dyeing, making, distribution, consumption and disposal, were assessed in relation to ten impact categories. The largest portion of the Abiotic depletion-elements (ADP-e) burden is the dyeing stage (58.04 %) and the second largest is the cotton cultivation (28.66%). In relation to global warming, the dyeing and making-up represents approximately two thirds of the total processes involved, whereas 60% of the dyeing process impact relates to human toxicity-cancer (HTCP). (See Figure 4.)

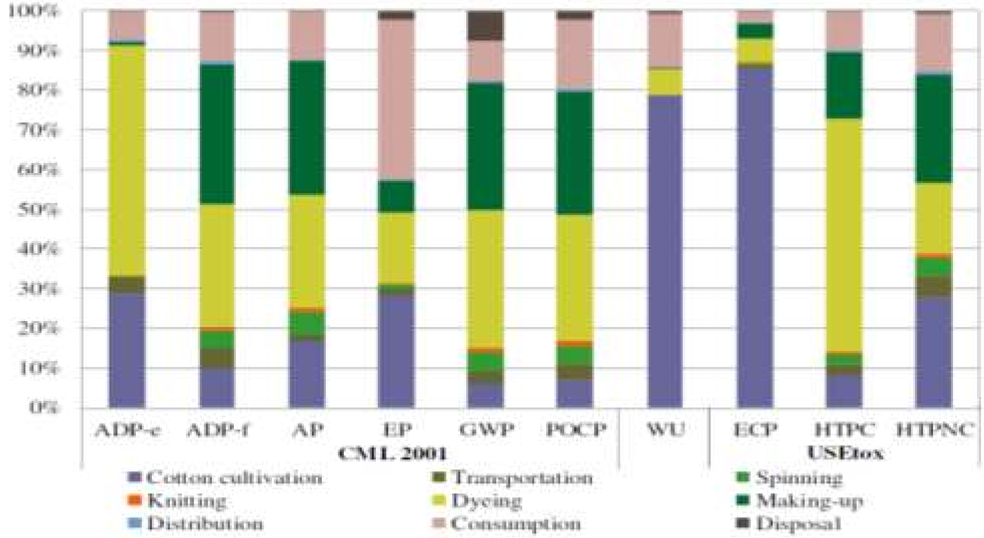


Figure 4: Impact categories from production of a cotton T-shirt. (Zhang et al., 2015:999)

2.2.7 Sustainability of UK Fashion Brands

A Parliamentary 'Interim Report on the Sustainability of the Fashion Industry', (2019), responded to concerns about labour practices, by asking sixteen leading UK fashion retailers about their social and environmental impact. Table 6 shows three categories: 'Engaged', 'Moderately engaged' and 'Less engaged'. Two of the biggest fast fashion brands - ASOS and Primark - appear in the 'Engaged' group, Boohoo and Missguided are both in the 'Less engaged' group. Analysis of one brand from each of the three categories (engaged, moderately engaged, less engaged), in relation to retail selling prices is shown in Table 7. Asda's prices are the lowest, although they are in the 'Moderately engaged' category, whereas Kurt Geiger's prices are 8-10 times higher than Asda's yet they failed to confirm any sustainable initiatives, and are therefore 'Less engaged'. There is little correlation between cost, price and sustainable initiatives.

Retailer	Sustainability actions					Sustainability Initiatives					Labour Market Initiatives		
	Sustainable Clothing Action Plan (SCAP)	Use of sustainable cotton (e.g. BCI, Cotton 2040	Use of recycled material in products	Zero discharge of Hazardous Chemicals (ZDHC)	In store take back scheme or textile banks	Commitment to climate change risk reporting (TCFD)	Sustainable Apparel Coalition	Microfibre initiative	Make Fashion Circular	Reuse or recycling of old stock	Action, Collaboration Transformation . (ACT)	Ethical Trading Initiative	Supplier Ethical Data Exchange (SEDEX)
Engaged													
ASOS	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Burberry	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No
Marks and Spencer PLC	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Tesco PLC	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Primark Stores Ltd	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Moderately engaged													
Arcadia Group	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	No
Asda Stores Ltd	No	No	No	No	Yes	No		Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Debenhams	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Next PLC	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Less engaged													
Amazon UK	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes
Boohoo Group	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes
JD Sports PLC	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Missguided Ltd	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes
Sports Direct International	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	Yes			Yes	No	No	Yes
TJX Europe (TK Maxx & Homesense)	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	No
Kurt Geiger	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No

Table 6: UK Parliament (2019) [online] Interim Report on the Sustainability of the Fashion Industry. Table of retailers' responses to questions about sustainability.

Own label products	Ladies footwear Opening and Closing prices.	Group	Number of actions & initiatives involved	Comment
ASOS	£10 - £80	Engaged	11	Positive result given that they are a fast fashion brand.
Asda	£6 - £25	Moderately engaged	6	Price range excludes slippers & flip flops
Kurt Geiger	£49-£199	Less engaged	Unknown - failed to respond	Indicates low interest in sustainability.

Table 7: Comparison of opening and closing footwear prices in relation to their engagement with sustainable initiatives. Informed by Asda, ASOS and Kurt Geiger web sites.

However, some companies including value brands such as Primark are actively promoting sustainable products. Figure 5 shows a range of denim jeans on sale in July 2019, that were marketed with large signs to draw attention, signs on the shelves and tickets attached to the waistband of the product itself.

Figure 5: Primark Manchester 08.07.19 Sustainable Denim - Products, Signs Garment Tickets.

Although not a UK brand Arket, launched by H & M in 2017 now has six stores in this country selling higher priced staple rather than trend products. Each item has information on the location and name of the factory it was made. The brand sees transparency as a means of driving positive change in the industry (The Business of Fashion and McKinsey and Company, 2018). Marks and Spencer was one of the first mass-market companies to provide a factory map on its web site for many categories including clothing (The Business of Fashion and McKinsey and Company, 2018: 65). Together M & S and Oxfam launched Shwopping a recycling service for customers in M & S stores (Oxfam, 2019).

A final but important example of sustainable initiatives is recycling by using biomaterials, which are biodegradable (H&M Foundation Accenture, 2018). Advantages include reduction of energy, water and raw material use and decrease in the need for new input materials (H&M Foundation Accenture, 2018). Mainstream fashion brands embracing this technology include H & M, Zara, Boohoo, M & S and ASOS.

2.2.8 Sustainability of UK Consumers

In 2015 McNeill and Moore, concluded that the constant array of new fashion products targeting young people limited their sustainable purchasing. However Lueg et al., (2013) had previously described how young peoples' (online) access to information about the fashion industry had led them to becoming increasingly interested in it. According to a report by Edited in 2019, sustainable and eco initiatives were hitting the headlines daily and interest was increasing (Edited 2019:6). This research examines to what extent their competing interest in fashion and sustainability determines their fashion consumption, and the impact that interaction with fashion brands has.

Many young people research for background information before buying and are demanding transparency particularly with fair labour and sustainable resources (The Business of Fashion and McKinsey & Company, 2018). Although recent research revealed that consumers are still largely unaware of the impact of the fashion industry on the environment (Perez and Lonsdale, 2019). Some (perishable product) industries including food and beauty have already embraced standards and certification relating to sustainability, fashion has not, this is an opportunity for them (The Business of Fashion and McKinsey and Company, 2018).

The State of Fashion 2019 report concludes that young people's desire for variety, affordability and sustainability has resulted in a 'fundamental evolution' in consumer behaviour, whereby ownership is subservient to their other demands. The report argues that rental, resale and refurbishment models not only extend product lifecycle but also provide the newness customers desire (The Business of Fashion and McKinsey and Company, 2018). Depop for example is a unique social marketplace where over 12 million people come to buy and sell, recycled, vintage, upcycled and reworked clothing (Parish, 2019, online). Paying less (for second hand clothes) and wearing a few times (before selling on) offers a tangible alternative to fast fashion.

2.2.9 Summary of Sustainability in the Fashion Industry

This section summarised how apparel production and supply chain impact on sustainability. Social exploitation include inadequate lead times, financial penalties for late shipments, factories selling below cost and not paying living wages (ILO, 2017). From an environmental angle, depletion and/or pollution of natural resources such as water are common (Koksal et al., 2017), as factories place other priorities, (cost and lead times) before sustainable goals.

Despite a growing interest in sustainability, cost was considered twice as important as working conditions in 2017 (ILO, 2017:10). As young people demand variety and affordability (The State of Fashion, 2019) they are probably completely unaware that some factories are selling below cost. It is clear that a better understanding of their conflicting interests is necessary in order to improve sustainability in fashion.

Diversity of interest, practice and action exists with UK fashion brands with little correlation between market level and sustainability. Findings from the UK Parliamentary report showed that even amongst fast fashion value driven brands ASOS and Primark are ‘Engaged’ in sustainable initiatives whilst Boohoo and Missguided were both found to be ‘Less engaged’.

Further research to expose brand attitude and behaviour towards their supply chain and their customers will forge a better understanding of how to improve sustainability in the fashion industry.

2.3 Fashion Consumption

Consumption reflects historical and societal priorities including ‘incentive structures, institutional barriers, inequalities in access, and restricted choice’ (Jackson, 2005). In 1899, Veblen described how wearers used fashion to display wealth and social standing - conspicuous consumption (Tortora, 2015:119). Consumer goods, including cars and clothes indicate status; their acquisition characterises an advanced industrial society, pre-occupied with and valuing materials, possessions and physical comfort above spiritual values (Jackson, 2005). Material goods play a symbolic role signifying ‘…status, identity, social cohesion, group norms and the pursuit of personal and cultural meaning’ (Jackson, 2005). Consumer behaviour flows from habits, routines, social norms, expectations and dominant cultural values (Jackson, 2005:vi). Participation in fashion has great cultural significance, self-expression or conformity, and often reflects significant events such as wars and politics (Tortora, 2015:121).

2.3.1 Fast Fashion

Fast fashion has revolutionized the UK apparel industry in recent decades (Brewer, 2019). It is characterised by copious styles reflecting catwalk trends interpreted into competitively priced garments (McNeill and Moore, 2015:213). Overseas low-cost supply chains, with short lead times and highly efficient production, deliver new product in days or weeks (Mintel, 2007). Design, sourcing and manufacturing decisions are made with an emphasis on speed (McNeill and Moore, 2015: 213), and hinge on selling many customers vast quantities of low-price clothing at the highest possible margin regardless of true cost (Ozdamar-Ertekin, 2017, Arrington 2017:282, ILO, 2017). Sometimes referred to as ‘disposable’ fashion, as product is inexpensive and not designed to last (McNeill and Moore, 2015:191). This phenomenon is particularly salient amongst young female consumers, who have little awareness of the social impact of their fashion consumption, but exhibit the highest levels of demand for new fashion items (Morgan and Birtwistle, 2009). Fast fashion allows consumers to make choices, with little economic or psychological investment, whilst expressing their lifestyle through consumption and possession (Veronica et al., 2013:206). The demand for fast fashion and the gratification it provides its consumers, although transient, is nevertheless addictive (Joy et al.,

2012:292). Consumers accept poor quality and discard clothes at unprecedented levels (Brewer, 2019, Joung, 2013:689, Chau, 2012).
Digital technology has significantly affected fast fashion through 1) online shopping 2) social media. Although the fashion industry was slower than others to introduce online shopping it is now one of the biggest in the world (Blázquez, 2014). Online only fashion brands such as Boohoo, Pretty Little Thing and Nasty Gal, have achieved phenomenal growth (Walker, 2019), by providing an even greater choice of even cheaper garments, including a £5 dress (Boohoo, 2019, online) and a £1 bikini from Missguided (Wood, 2019). It has facilitated unprecedented choice and speed (Brewer, 2019), leading to more demanding consumers seeking greater variety and cheaper prices, as consumers compare products online to find what they want (Blázquez, 2014). Social media platforms are an integral part of the day-to-day lives of young people (Nash, 2019) and have significant impact on fast fashion in two distinct ways. Fashion companies use channels such as Instagram for brand or product promotion, and consumers engage and share content with other users, thus creating demand and desire (Nash, 2019). Social Media is the main driving factor of visual representation of high-street fashion retailers, the quality of posts has a positive direct correlation on their followers and strongly influences brand image.

2.3.2 Fast fashion brands

Mainstream fashion in the UK is probably more competitive than anywhere in the world, offering stylish products, fast service and low prices. Short-term profit has primacy over long-term goals including sustainability (Brewer, 2019). 'Downward pressure on margins has reduced investment for activities not directly associated with driving sales' (Hussain, 2017, online). The continued success of Primark, H & M and Zara, and new online brands such as ASOS and Missguided, indicate a thriving market. Some of the biggest fast fashion companies: Primark, H & M, and Zara - have steadily increased market share (McNeill and Moore, 2015: 213). Table 8 illustrates how four major fast fashion brands in the UK increased their market share 2013 - 2017.

Fast-fashion brands market share in the UK.

Market share by % value	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	% growth 2013-2017
Primark	4.3	4.4	4.5	4.5	4.5	4.65%
H & M	1.6	1.6	1.7	1.8	1.8	12.50%
Inditex (Zara)	0.9	1	1	1.1	1.2	33.33%
ASOS	0.4	0.4	0.5	0.5	0.6	50.00%

Table 8: Brands UK market share of Apparel and Footwear. Informed by Euromonitor International Passport Apparel and Footwear in the United Kingdom Country Report. 2018

In its first four years, despite the challenge of established high street brands such as Zara and other new online brands, such as Boohoo and Pretty Little Thing, ASOS achieved year-on-year growth every year since their conception, with a 23.36% increase 2017 – 2018, as documented in Table 9.

Year to 31 Aug. 2013	% incr.	Year to 31 Aug. 2014	% incr.	Year to 31 Aug. 2015	% incr.	Year to 31 Aug. 2016	% incr.	Year to 31 Aug. 2017	% incr.	Year to 31 Aug. 2018
276,027	**34.86**	**372,241**	**7.31**	**473,884**	**27.42**	**603,800**	**15.63**	**698,200**	**23.36**	**861,300**

Table 9: ASOS revenue growth 2013 – 2018 informed by ASOS online trading report.

In fact, Table 10 shows growth forecast in the UK to 2022. The growth in volume is significantly higher (14.93%) than the growth in value (9.85%), resulting in a decrease in the average selling price over the nine-year period from £20.09 to £19.20. This indicates a greater number of low priced or fast fashion products overall.

Actual apparel sales - UK						Forecast apparel sales - UK					Total increase
Year	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2013-2022
Units (mills)	2,044.20	2,068.40	2,096.60	2,127.70	2,159.30	2,205.00	2,247.90	2,284.90	2,318.80	2,349.40	305.20
% increase	n/a	1.17	1.35	1.48	1.49	2.12	1.95	1.65	1.48	1.32	14.93
£ Value (mills)	41,060.70	41,756.00	42,064.60	42,436.00	42,896.30	43,334.70	43,776.20	44,214.60	44,661.60	45,103.50	4042.80
% increase	n/a	1.69	0.74	0.88	1.08	1.02	1.02	1.00	1.01	0.99	9.85
Ave SP £	20.09	20.19	20.06	19.94	19.87	19.65	19.47	19.35	19.26	19.20	n/a

Table 10: Actual and Forecast Apparel sales in the UK. Informed by Euromonitor International Passport Apparel and Footwear in the United Kingdom Country Report 2018

To provide context about the success of this model it is pertinent to note the extent of wealth created by fast fashion brand owners. Table 11 shows that Amancio Ortega of Inditex (Zara) has made more money from fashion than anyone else in the world, including owners of luxury brands LVMH and Hermes International. Stefan Persson of H & M is seventh of more than one hundred people who have made money from fashion (Fashion United, 2019). Paradoxically, none of H & M's factory workers earns a living wage (Labour behind the Label, 2019). Persson (H & M) recently demonstrated resistance to changing this successful model by claiming that reducing consumerism will hinder the eradication of poverty (Remington, 2019).

Position from a total of 110	Name	Company	Value – US $ Billion	Brand type
1	Amancio Ortega	Inditex (Zara)	71.30	**Fast Fashion**
3	Bernard Arnault	LVMH	41.50	Luxury
4	The Brennink Meijer family	C & A	30.00	Fashion
5	Betrand Puech & family	Hermes International	28.60	Luxury
6	Alain & Gerard Wertheimer & family	Nike	26.20	Sports wear
7	Stefan Persson	H & M	19.60	**Fast Fashion**

Table 11: List of the Richest People in Fashion in 2017, Fashion United 2019

The problem is that the fast fashion business model is unsustainable (UK Parliament, 2019, Bly et al., 2015:125). Mass media has played an increasingly significant role into societal discourse about sustainability (Newig et al., 2013) as a result, interest in sustainability is greater now than ever and yet the level of sustainable consumption in fashion remains low (McNeill and Venter, 2019). The primary research of this study will uncover the characteristics of fast fashion consumers and what motivates their consumption and reveal why there has been such limited progress in sustainable fashion.

2.3.3 Fast-Fashion Consumers

Identifying a generation shaped by their birth year and common life experiences provides a useful platform to understand them (Van den Bergh and Behrer, 2011). Sharing social, political, historical and economical events such as pace of change, employment status, family structure, and exposure to cultural diversity influences them. Critical in this research is how their experiences values and lifestyles influence their buying behaviour (Williams & Page 2011).

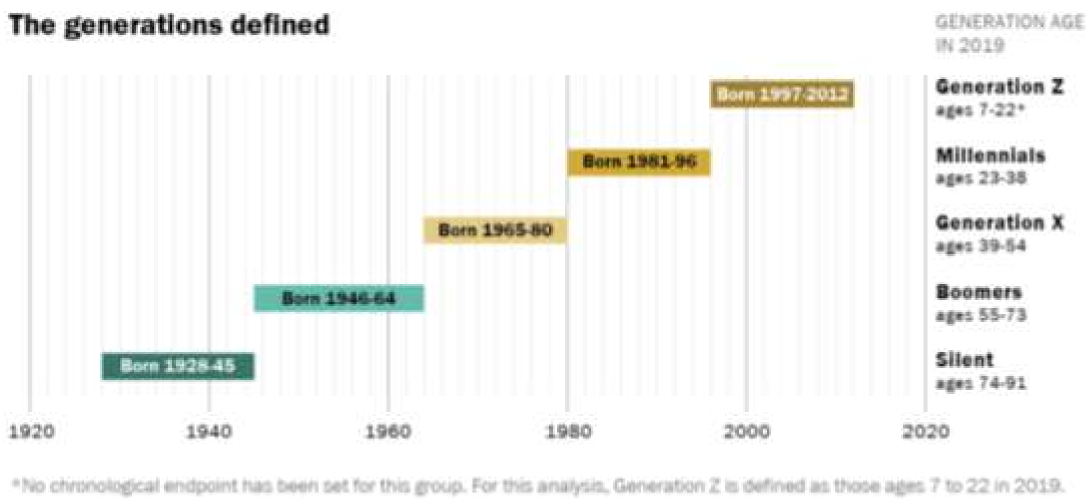


Figure 6: The Generations Defined. Dimok, 2019, online

Millennials (aged 23-38 in 2019) and Generation Z, (aged 7-22 in 2019) represent a significant group of fast fashion consumers and are at the centre of this research. They are digital natives;

owning a phone, tablet or laptop which give unprecedented access to the developed world unknown by earlier generations. Technology has always been around them so they are '…hyper-connected and digitally driven…' (Nielsen, 2017). It has also transformed the way that they interact and communicate with each other (Royal Society for Public Health, 2017). The significance is in establishing how this has led them to develop unique characteristics, particularly in their fashion consumption.

Their online community is very important; receiving immediate feedback on social media postings satisfies their demand for instant gratification. They trust, connect, and want acceptance from their peer social media group, who are important to them (Burch, 2017:56, Williams & Page 2011:8). They check their phone an average of 150 times a day and consume an average of nine hours of media, mostly on their mobiles (Forston, 2018). In 2016, 91% of 16-24 year olds used the internet for social media (Royal Society for Public Health, 2017:6). They use mobiles for research, entertainment and engaging with social media, so they are well connected and networked, especially with their peers (Burch, 2017:56, Williams & Page 2011:8). They curate images for posting on platforms such as Facebook and Instagram, using clothes and body adornments such as piercings and tattoos to make personal statements about their image and self-identity (Williams & Page, 2011:8). Wearing different clothes every day, and rarely wearing the same item more than a few times, plays a significant part in creating the illusion of multiple roles. The 'selfie generation' appear to reflect their ease with change even in their own presentation through multiple identities and constant transition (Forston, 2018, Bina, 2017). This has led to an increase in fashion consumption - more than half of fast fashion garments discarded in less than a year (Butler, 2018).

Mobiles are used to access global platforms to find and purchase everything they want (Forston, 2018, Williams & Page, 2011:8). In 2017, 60% still bought their clothes from physical stores, after researching online beforehand (CBRE, 2017). They have high expectations – style, cost, speed and service - as technology gives them access to extensive information (Burch, 2017:56). This generation is more likely to spend money on an experience than a product and to seek retail environments that supply this (Nielsen, 2017, Burch, 2017:56). Ideally, customised and personalised products to their unique needs (Burch, 2017:56, Williams and Page, 2011:9). In terms of service, their experience of technologically driven businesses, including Amazon, Uber, Netflix, and Deliveroo, has led to their expectation of simple transactions and expediency (The Business of Fashion and McKinsey, 2018:51).But what do these young people want from their fashion?

1. <u>"Clothes that enhance and disguise aspects of the body in line with societal ideal of beauty"</u>

The fashion industry perpetuates unrealistic stereotyped standards of beauty, pressurising young women particularly to fall in line with them (Joyner Armstrong, 2016:418). Fashion brands are very selective about their models, using those that fall within the current perception of cultural beauty norms, taller and slimmer than the average height of a woman (Pounders and Mabbry-Flynn, 2019). Over the last 30 years, whilst fashion models have become increasingly slender, the average woman has increased in size, thereby increasing the gap between the idealised body shape and reality (Rieke, *et al.,* 2016:212, Alessandro and Chitty, 2011). Even images of celebrities and fashion models are 'photo shopped' to enhance or change body shape and appearances (Rieke et al., 2016: 209).

Fast fashion is used to aspire to societal ideals of beauty (Guy and Banim, 2010:325) and hide negative societal features (Rieke, et al., 2016:212, Kim and Damhorst, 2010, Kaiser, 1997). It is a complex, on-going and changing relationship where consideration, including display and concealment, sit alongside changing fashions (Guy and Banim, 2000).

It is not a new practice for the fashion industry to use idealised images to raise consumer interest in fashion and appearance (Barnes and Lea-Greenwood, 2010). The evolution of aspirational images on social media sites such as Facebook 2004, YouTube 2005, and Instagram 2010, has increased the emphasis on appearance (Joyner Armstrong, 2016). The difference from previous decades is the unprecedented scale and ease of access to content, leading to the endless challenge for young consumers of living up to images that they view, and the effect that this has on their well-being (Child Mind Institute, 2020). Constant exposure can lead to body image dissatisfaction and low self-esteem (Krishen and Worthen, 2011). Disturbingly, the majority of girls, even those as young as seven want to be '…thinner, prettier, or even want a different body shape' (Rieke et al., 2016:212, Martin and Peters, 2005). Twenty per cent of young women have an eating disorder (Rieke et al., 2016: 213, Alessandro and Chitty, 2011). Others associate overweight people negatively in relation to work, relationships and success, resulting in negative implications on a female psyche (Rieke et al., 2016:212, Alessandro and Chitty, 2011). Fashion marketing frequently focusses on how body-enhancing products inspire confidence.

2. "Clothes that express their wearers image and identity

The concept of identity is critically important in providing understanding of an individual and in highlighting the intimate connection between inclusion and exclusion within society (Tseelon, 2003, online). Self-identity describes how someone perceives and values themselves, '…an abbreviation of one's self, using their identity to recognise their own status, in relation to other people' (Mobrezia and Khoshtinata, 2016:447). The development of one's self-identity is parallel with the development of one's social identity. Identity construction is a significant motivator in fashion consumption (Dantas, and Abreu 2020, McNeill and Venter, 2019). Tseelon (2003) and Mittal (2006) posit that women's identity is realised through multiple presentations of themselves by using clothes as the medium of expression. Rieke et al., (2009) argue that the reason for buying a particular item of clothing is for defining who they are and '…continual re-invention of self, achieved by constant 'newness' in their clothes'. Clothing has become a socially acceptable way to differentiate oneself from others and to feel a sense of belonging to a group (Dantas, and Abreu, 2020, McNeill and Venter, 2019). The digital world, including online shopping, and social media, have intensified behaviour that focusses on an individual's appearance in a society that values image above other personal qualities (McNeill and Moore, 2015). As the main users of social media and consumers of fast fashion, the extent to which this represents young people's identity and feelings of self-worth is significant.

3. Affordable fashion

Young people are the biggest group of fast fashion consumers, with the least disposable income (Ritch, 2015:1166). Inexpensive fashion allows consumers to make choices, with little economic or psychological investment, whilst expressing their lifestyle through consumption and possession (Veronica et al., 2013:206). The demand for fast fashion and the gratification it provides its consumers, although transient, is nevertheless addictive (Joy et al., 2012:292). One of the characteristics of fast fashion is that items are worn a small number of times, products must be low cost and affordable. Ruthless sourcing strategies to get unrealistically low costs (Ozdamar-Ertekin, 2017) have led to low and falling retail prices, enabling continual consumption, and the commodification of garments (Hussain, 2018). Sustainable production increases cost (Brewer, 2019), due to paying workers higher prices or increased technological investment. The margin that most garment factories make is unlikely to withstand additional cost; history suggests that retailers, driven by their shareholders are unable to reduce their profit, leaving the remaining option as passing the increased cost to the customer. This jeopardises the successful fast fashion business model, which focusses on profit and is likely to face opposition from its stakeholders (Ozdamar-Ertekin, 2017). Although consumers are more likely to pay higher prices for sustainable product, if it benefits them personally (Ritch, 2015). Finding ways to generate product value through a lens other than price such as usage, service, or delivery is another solution for fashion brands (Hussain, 2017).

4. Authentic fashion brands

This generation values realness, honesty and authenticity – and are looking for a meaningful existence. They are '…shifting away from the materialism of the Boomers (born 1946-1964) to the search for inner tranquillity and deeper meaning from life' (Williams & Page, 2011:9). Burch attributes this to the chaos in the world driving them towards investing in 'doing something for other people' (2017:56). They tend to be more socially conscious than older age groups, and influenced by product offerings marketed as ethical, sustainable or environmentally friendly (Fung Global Retail, 2016:2). They expect companies to report on sustainability (Global Fashion Agenda and The Boston Consulting Group, 2018:33).

In terms of fashion, this young generation increasingly want to know where the cotton came from that made their T-shirt. They are willing to spend more for products made by companies they see as socially and environmentally responsible (Just Style, 2018). They distrust fashion brands and want more transparency from them. Two in five consumers reported that they do not know which brands to trust (The Business of Fashion and McKinsey, 2018:60). Research also indicates that consumers they feel that fashion brands use sustainable claims to increase prices (Ritch, 2015:1175, Bray *et al.*, 2011, Fisher *et al.,* 2008). Although 52% of Millennials research brands to find out how ethical they are, they comment on a lack of information and understanding of what sustainable fashion is (Perez and Lonsdale, 2019, The Business of Fashion and McKinsey, 2018:60). They are particularly interested in fair labour, sustainable resourcing and the environment, and 66% of Millennials are willing to pay more for sustainable products (The Business of Fashion and McKinsey, 2018: 61). Whilst this is at face value very positive, other research has found that despite increased interest and awareness in sustainability, there is a drop in emphasis in fashion compared to general consumption

(McNeill and Moore, 2015:217). In fact, research found that only 16.3% of consumers considered social and environmental criteria when acquiring new clothing (Joyner Armstrong *et al.,* 2016:421, Koszewska, 2013). Other research suggests that consumers attach little importance to brand sustainability, and rely on their own expectations and personal contacts to guide their purchases (Goldsmith, 2006). This is significant insofar as it influences behaviour to consume more sustainably (Ciasullo et al., 2017:12).

2.3.4 The purchasing (consumption) process

Each purchase involves a complex decision making process (Young et al. 2010). Sproles and Kendall (1986:286) defined a consumer decision to purchase as a '…mental orientation characterizing a consumer's approach to making choices…'. Functional, emotional, social cognitive and conditional values influence decision-making criteria (Young et al., 2010). Identifying influences on purchase intention offers insight into affecting behavioural change. Fishbein and Ajzen (1975) proposed that the biggest determinant of a behaviour is intent. Purchase intent is the probability that a consumer will buy a product. A behavioural intention represents the amount of effort an individual is willing to exert (prompted by their level of motivation) in order to perform a given behaviour (Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975). Therefore as intention strength increases so does the likelihood of predicting a given behaviour. The Theory of Planned Behaviour (Ajzen) suggests the significance of intention, which presupposes cognitive deliberation implying the persons' perceived control over the outcome of their behaviour (1991). Young et al., build on this theorising that values, and context, including social, political, cultural, economic and psychological are all part of the process (2010). Social influence refers to the level of influence of celebrities, friends and family on behavioural decisions and cultural refers to societal ideas and customs (Mobrezia and Khoshtinata, 2016). The impact of messages from social media and celebrities to young people therefore is likely to be highly significant in their purchasing decisions.

Peattie (1999) suggests that the decisions involved in individual consumption may be inter-related and underpinned by common values or unconnected and situational. Joshi and Rahman (2015) propose the significance of both individual and situational forces in the consumption process. Individual variables include emotions, habits, trust, knowledge, values, personal norms, perceived consumer effectiveness and perceived behavioural control. Situational variables include price, product attributes, availability, brand, labelling, store attributes, subjective and social norm attributes and reference groups. In fashion pre-conceived ideas such as body image satisfaction, accompany personal, social and cultural factors in the decision to buy (Rieke et al., 2016:214, Joyner Armstrong, et al., 2016:421). Table 12 focusses on the individual variable that influence consumption.

Individual variables that influence consumption:	
Habits	Habit and past behaviour guide consumer preferences and influence their purchasing behaviour, making it difficult to change.
Trust	A belief or expectation about a products performance.
Emotions	Consumer emotions have a direct impact on consumer purchase intention and behaviour
Knowledge	Knowledge has a direct effect on consumer purchase intention and behaviour.
Values and personal norms	Individual values will have a direct effect on their purchase behaviour.
Perceived behavioural control	Perceived behavioural control is the perceived control one has over one's actions. It refers to the capacity of an individual to perform a given behaviour (Ajzen, 1988).
Perceived consumer effectiveness	Indirectly influences consumer purchase intention since it influences consumer attitudes, subjective norms and perceived behavioural control (Kang et al., 2013).
Situational variables that influence consumption	
Product attributes	Style, quality and functional characteristics of products influence consumers' green purchase behaviour.
Store related attributes	Store related attributes influence consumer purchase of products.
Price	In relation to expectations or other products.
Labelling	Labelling informs consumers about product characteristics.
Product availability	Limited availability and inconvenience in procuring products act as barriers.
Brand image	Consumers generally have personal favourite brands and they prefer them to green brands (Young et al., 2010).
Subjective & social norms & reference groups	Social and reference groups, especially peers and other individuals with close proximity have a stronger influence on consumers' decision-making process.

Table 12: Individual and Situational influences on Consumption. Informed by Joshi and Rahman, 2015

In relation to this research, which analyses the impact of communication on fashion consumption the individual variables are determined by the consumer, and the situational by fashion brands. To explain, if a consumer 'habitually' buys from a particular store, this will increase the chance of them making a further purchase from them, whereas if brand 'trust' has been lost a consumer is less likely to make a purchase. From a brand perspective 'product' and 'store' attributes such as product quality, and shop and web site communications influence purchasing decisions. For example as Gen Z expect expediency (Jones and Kang, 2019,The Business of Fashion and McKinsey, 2018, Parker et al, 2010) especially through digital channels they may be deterred from making an online purchase if it is slow. Other factors identified include labelling, discussed in more detail in Section 2.4.3 Fashion Brand Communication.

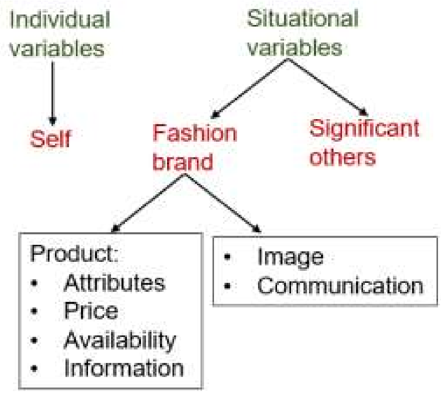


Figure 7: Influence of self, fashion brand and significant others on fashion communication and consumption. Informed by Joshi and Rahman, 2015

These variables are used later in the study as a basis for developing the primary research, which examines young fashion consumers purchasing influences and their attitude towards communication from fashion brands, and to analyse the meaning behind messaging from fashion brands across a range of channels.

2.3.5 Attitude-behaviour

For many years', 'attitudes' in social contexts were studied as they were believed to influence and predict behaviour (Guyer and Fabrigar, 2015). Allport's original Attitude-Behaviour theory in 1935 assumed that once an attitude was identified behaviour was predictable. By the 1960's this concept was criticised as it assumed that individuals always behaved according to their attitudes, regardless of other personal and situational variables, giving rise to the 'attitude-behaviour-problem'. Since the early 70's Attitude-Behaviour, research has explored why measures of attitude frequently failed to predict behaviour (Guy and Fabrigar, 2015).

Perhaps one of the most influential models was the Theory of Reasoned Action (ToRA), (Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975) which submits that the most significant influence on behaviour is intention. This theory is based on the construct that the individual believes that their intention determines the outcome therefore identifying intention leads to an accurate prediction of behaviour. This is significant in that it suggests that the stronger the intention the greater the effort to perform the behaviour (Guyer and Fabrigar, 2015:184). The relevance of this in contemporary fashion is that increasing consumer knowledge of the negative impact of the industry, may lead to a greater intention to buy sustainable fashion, avoid un-sustainable brands or simply buy less. Ajzen and Fishbein (1977) found a strong attitude-behaviour connection when they measured the strength of four specific elements of attitude: action, target, context and time. Schwartz's Norm Activation theory (SNAT, 1977) also focussed on the consequences of one's actions, in terms of taking personal responsibility for behaviour. In fast fashion, if consumers had greater awareness of the impact of continual consumption of low-cost clothes, by seeing river pollution or working conditions in clothing factories they are more likely to understand and take responsibility for their actions.

In 1986, Bandura developed the Knowledge-Attitude-Practice (KAP) model that proposes that increased knowledge may lead to behaviour change. Stern and Oskamp, (1987) developed the Attitude-Behaviour-Context (ABC) which explains the significance of the context or setting on individual behaviour. By 1991, Ajzen had developed the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) building on ‘intention’ to include cognitive function. The Value-Belief norm theory (Stern et al, 1999) developed SNAT to incorporate the relationship between values, beliefs attitudes and norms.

Theories	Year	Theorists	Summary of Theories
Attitude-behaviour	1935	Allport	Based on the assumption that attitudes predispose an individual to behave in a certain manner
Theory of Reasoned Action (TORA)	1975	Fishbein and Ajzen,	Theory begins with the premise that the effects of attitude on behaviour are not direct. The most proximal determinant of a behaviour is a behavioural intent.
Norm activation model	1977	Schwartz	A personal norm (PN) activates awareness of the consequences (AC) of one’s actions and the ascription of personal responsibility (AR) for them.
Knowledge-attitude-practice (KAP)	1986	Bandura	Model proposes that knowledge increase can change attitudes and changed attitudes can change practice
Attitude-Behaviour-Context (ABC)	1987	Stern and Oskamp	Attitude-Behaviour-Context (ABC)
Theory of planned behaviour (TPB)	1991	Ajzen	Ajzen’s model of behaviour is mediated by intention – which presupposes some sort of cognitive deliberation.
Value-belief norm theory	1999	Stern et al	‘An attempt to adjust SNAT to incorporate a more sophisticated relationship between values, beliefs, attitudes and norms.

Table 13: Theories exploring attitude behaviour through the 20th century, informed by Jackson 2005, Guyer and Fabrigar, 2015.

More recently, Guyer and Fabrigar (2015) synthesized previous models and theories on Attitude-Behaviour to identify influences that can intervene and reduce the predictive power of attitude and intention on behaviour. They concluded that greater ‘attitude-strength’ and ‘attitude-certainty’ increased the success in predicting behaviour, and that ‘attitude-formation’ and ‘attitude-ambivalence’ are important. Although two people might have similar attitudes, such as wanting to make a sustainable purchase, their behaviour reflects their underlying attitude-strength, in this case, the extent they are prepared to go, in terms of investing time for research and or additional cost in order to purchase sustainably. A high degree of Attitude-Certainty - the extent to which an individual is confident in their attitude towards a particular object (Tormala and Rucker, 2007), was also a reliable predictor of behaviour. Conversely, attitude-behaviour associations were weaker if ‘attitude-ambivalence’ defined as the simultaneous possession of positive and negative evaluative responses toward an object was present (Guyer and Fabrigar, 2015). Finally, the way attitudes are developed is significant in predicting behaviour. According to Guyer and Fabrigar (2015), behaviour prediction is more successful if attitudes are informed by direct experience. Therefore, a young consumers pre-purchase attitude towards buying fashion sustainably are most likely to translate into behaviour if they have: personal experience of the negative impact of fast fashion, such as seeing a factory with poor working conditions, conviction that their knowledge about fashion and sustainability are well-informed, and a strong disposition towards buying sustainably.

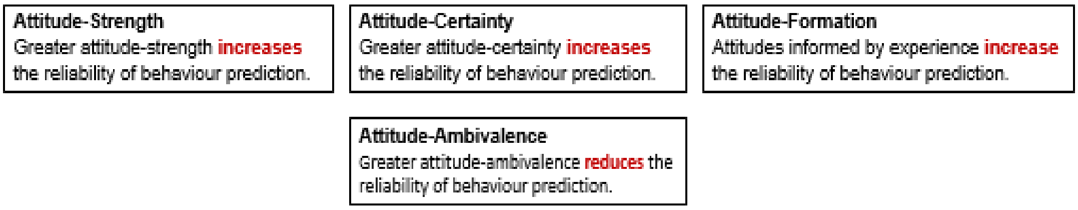


Figure 8: Impact of attitude on behaviour prediction, informed by Guyer and Fabrigar, 2015.

2.3.6 Attitude-behaviour gap

The attitude-behaviour gap refers to the gap between consumers' expression of environmental or social concern and intention (attitude) and ensuing actions, which do not translate directly into behaviour (Joyner Armstrong et al., 2016:421, Roberts, 1996). Despite consumers positive intentions and strong convictions to purchase something that they believe is sustainable, they frequently do not (McNeill and Moore, 2015:213, Carrigan and Attalla, 2001).
Consumers bring personal beliefs and expectations or 'attitude' to purchase considerations. Empathy positively influences pro-sustainable behaviour, leading to an intention to purchase something that they believe contributes positively to society (Hwang and Griffiths, 2017:142). In this situation their 'intention to purchase' or likelihood of making a particular purchase, is strong' they have an 'attitude' that pre-disposes them to purchase.

According to Antonetti and Maklan (2015), in a public setting, the social desirability bias persuades consumers to exaggerate their orientation to buying ethically (2015:51) – whereas the private act of purchasing is frequently not ethical (Young and McCoy, 2015:42, McNeill and Moore, 2015:215). In fact, only 3% of consumers with positive attitudes towards sustainable products translate these attitudes into consumption choices (Antonetti and Maklan 2015:51). Consumers are reluctant to admit publically that other factors - such as price - are more important than a socially desirable factor such as ethics (Young et al., 2015:43). The attitude-behaviour gap highlights how the influence of personal priorities, such as identity, body image, and affordability are more important than making a sustainable purchase. This study uncovers new research about the impact of social media in brand and consumer behaviour on the attitude-behaviour gap.

2.3.7 Sustainable fashion consumption

Typically, 'sustainability' refers to three dimensions: economic, social and environmental (Elkington, 2011). The term is used across multi-disciplines including health care, education and business and therefore lacks specificity, especially in terms of implementation (Moore et al., 2017). In reviewing extant literature, it is apparent that even amongst academics in the field a detailed definition of sustainability is frequently absent.

Sustainable fashion consumption implies that when purchasing, the consumer considers the consequences of their behaviour and/or power to bring about social change (Moisander, 2007). Each purchase involves a complex decision making process and in so doing contributes to more or less sustainable consumption (Young et al*.,* 2010).

Consumers 'purchase intention' refers to their willingness to purchase a particular product that satisfies their motivation, in the case of sustainable purchase intention this refers to motivational factors that influence sustainable purchase behaviour (Ramayah et al., 2010).

Information Processing Theory (Petty and Cacioppo, 1986, Chaiken, 1980) suggests that information processing is either systematic or heuristic A systematic approach involves detailed evaluation and comparison, whilst the heuristic approach relies on stereotypes and clues and is therefore less objective, and potentially less accurate.
It is evident that customer knowledge about sustainability is limited and/or inaccurate (Cerri et al., 2017:344, Antonetti and Maklan, 2015). It is exacerbated by fashion brands using vague and hyperbolic language contributing to confusion and/or misunderstanding (Markkula and Moisander, 2011). The retail landscape is unhelpful in terms of the information it provides customers about sustainability, both for the 30% who want to buy sustainably and others who may do if it was communicated effectively (Antonetti and Maklan, 2015). Too much information can lead customers to feeling overwhelmed; insufficient information leaving them unable to know which products to buy and using heuristics as a '…guiding principle to simplify the decision-making process' (Nisbett et al., 1982) to make their buying decision (Ritch, 2015).

In 2018 a thousand survey responses were collected from a range of ages from residents of Hong Kong, Shanghai, London, New York and Tokyo found the top three definitions of sustainable fashion were high quality and durable (37%), made without hazardous chemicals (28%), ethical and fair trade labour practice (25%) (Fashion Summit and KPMG, 2019). To expand, the most common answer was not about the provenance of clothes but about what the respondents expected from them. However, for this study, a sustainable fashion product is one that satisfies customers' needs but that has not contributed to environmental or human exploitation in its making (Shamdasami et al., 1993).

Despite extensive research, knowledge of the complexity of aligning sustainable attitudes with behaviour remains limited and the disconnection between expressed attitudes and actual behaviour, defined as the attitude-behaviour gap is still cause for concern in the drive for improving the sustainability of the fashion industry (Joshi and Rahman, 2015:129). Although it is difficult to provide precise measures about sustainable fashion in the UK, for the reasons already discussed, notably that the phrase is open to interpretation, in 2017 the sale of fashion promoted as sustainable in the UK was estimated as less than 1% of the total offering (Common Objective, 2019).

2.3.8 Summary of fashion consumption

Fast fashion satisfies many of young people's expectations, in being readily available, affordable, body and image enhancing, and on trend. However, extant research reveals that this group are also expressing concern about environmental and social deprivation, although not yet translating this attitude towards making a positive contribution to sustainability into behaviour by buying sustainable fashion. Further investigation into the attitude-behaviour gap through examining fast fashion brand communication and consumer motivation will explore these themes further. Brands such as M & S and H & M recognise customer interest in sustainability and are beginning to address it. For many others the route to sustainability will not be easy, much of their practice is not currently sustainable and many consumers now distrust brand information.

This section has defined and explained the complexity of consumption, in terms of influences that affect someone's decision to buy or not to buy. Purchase-intent is affected by individual and situational variables before or at the time of purchase. Attitude has for many years, been recognised as a critical factor and yet it is still not a reliable predictor of behaviour. Aspects including how attitudes are formed, how strongly beliefs are held and the subject they relate to all affect the relationship between attitude and behaviour. Belief based theories such as Norm Activation and Value Belief are more likely to lead to attitude and behaviour change. The main conditions leading to a sustainable purchase are that the consumer has a strong attitude towards buying sustainably, has time for research and decision making, is knowledgeable about sustainable issues, has positive previous purchase experience, can afford and are committed to paying higher costs and that product is available (Young et al., 2010).

The next section 2.4 'Fashion Communication' provides insight into brand commitment. It examines how and what fashion brands communicate and analyses the type of communication most likely to reduce the attitude-behaviour gap thereby encouraging consumers to buy sustainably. It reviews the extent to which consumer interface with the fashion industry helps or hinders consumers with decision-making.

2.4 Fashion Communication

Apparel is one of the largest global industries and its impact is significant. In terms of the environment, it is the second most damaging industry after oil, and it is a major contributor to global inequality (Roberts, 2018). Sustainability goals frequently involve conflicts of interest (Newig et al., 2013). Major shifts by both consumers and fashion brands are required in order for mainstream fashion to become more sustainable (Dissanayakea and Sinha, 2015). The previous section reviewed fashion consumption and assessed the level of brand and consumer interest in sustainability in order to highlight potential barriers and identify opportunities for moving towards a more sustainable industry. Central to the issue is communication, fundamental for sustainable development (Genc, 2017).

2.4.1 Communication

Communication involves the transfer of ideas, thoughts or feelings from a sender to a receiver. There are numerous reasons to communicate but Genc (2017) posits that the purpose of most is to affect another(s) feelings, thoughts or behaviours. Petty and Cacioppo (1986) measure the success of an effective message by the extent to which it leads to behaviour change. In developing this discussion, it is important to analyse the construction of an effective message. In the 1950's, the Hovland-Yale Communication and Persuasion (HYCP) group, identified three key elements to successful persuasion: the credibility of the speaker (the source); the persuasiveness of the arguments (the message); and the responsiveness of the audience (the recipient) (Hovland, 1957, Hovland *et al.,* 1953,). Although this theory has subsequently been criticised for its limitations, namely, that the message may be credible and understood, without leading to behaviour change (Jackson, 2005:106, Petty et al., 2002), it provides a useful start point.

Campbell argued that information provision and persuasion were far less effective in realising behaviour change than trial and error, through observing what others do and then observing others' reaction to their own behaviour (1963). Bandura agreed with the inadequacy of information only, but argued that not all learning could be through trial and error; social learning must complement it. That is, behaviour is learnt and modelled through observing influential role models and significant others, including parents, peers, people in the media, those who are powerful or successful or simply people with whom we identify (Jackson. 2005:111, Bandura, 1977b:27). Chapter 6 develops the theme of using celebrities, influencers and collaborations in fashion to promote sustainable behaviour.

Bator and Cialdini (2000) built on the 'message framing' theory developed by Kahneman and Tversky (1979) and 'regulatory focus' theory (Higgins, 1997) to propose four over-riding characteristics of successful persuasion. These include: the emotional and imaginative appeal of the persuasive message, the immediacy, directness and relevance of the message, the use of commitments to signal involvement; and using 'retrieval cues' that remind people of the message. (Summarised in Table 14). It is clear that changing consumer behaviour relies on a message from fashion brands that addresses all points.

Message framing theory	Kahneman and Tversky 1979	The degree of positivity of a message influences the extent of the risk the message recipient will accept.
Regulatory focus theory	Higgins 1997	Message design fits other message aspects
4 characteristics of successful persuasion	Bator and Cialdini 2000	Emotional, imaginative appeal of the message Immediacy, directness and relevance of the message Use of commitments – to signal involvement Use of 'retrieval clues' as reminders

Table 14 Communication/persuasion theories relating to purchasing behaviour informed by Jackson 2005, and Guyer and Fabrigar, 2015.

What begins to emerge is not only the challenges in achieving effective communication, but also the difficulties in relation to communication about 'sustainability', a word for which that there is no industry definition (Evans and Peirson-Smith, 2018, Thomas 2008, Kangul et al, 1991). To sustain is to preserve protect or provide for the future (Collins English Dictionary, 2019) frequent descriptions about behaving sustainably allude to what 'not to do' rather than what 'to do'. The challenges around successful communication about sustainability are clear.

2.4.2 Communication about sustainability

Six years after the United Nations (UN's) Millennium Development Goals about sustainability, Manderson (2006) found over three hundred definitions of the word (2006). Hume in 2010 described it as an under researched area strewn with confusion and difficulties, inhibiting the addressing of important issues. The absence of exact definitions of words like 'ethical', 'green' and 'sustainable', and the lack of industry wide meaning allows businesses to make vague or imprecise claims about their sustainable credentials or to exaggerate or to hide behind them (Thomas, 2008). A further difficulty in encouraging sustainability through communication is that the term is subjective and as such means different things to different people (Henninger *et al.*, 2016), it’s scope is broad and inclusive (Evans and Peirson-Smith, 2018, Thomas, 2008). In fact when asked, people were unable to define what sustainable fashion was without using the word ‘sustainable’ (Henninger et al., 2016).

The previous section identified the importance of attitude in the consumption process, it is equally significant in determining the effectiveness of communications, and particularly those intended to lead to behaviour change. Many theories of Persuasion posit that an effective persuasive message is one whose characteristics are designed to influence others by modifying their beliefs, values, or attitudes (Simons, 1976:21). (See Table 15) For example, Schwartz’s Norm Activation Model (1977) is based on the premise that personal norms determine behaviour. Chaiken’s Information Processing theory posits that by evaluating detailed information individuals are motivated to behave in a way that accords with the cognitive information they hold about themselves, for example that they are sustainable. The Elaboration Likelihood model prescribes that communication that brings about behaviour change is determined by how attitudes were formed in the first place, either ‘Centrally’ or ‘Peripherally’. In the former, motivation and ability are high and attitude change occurs as the result of deep analysis of the message content. Attitudes arrived at via careful thought are more enduring and consequential and therefore more powerful determinants of behaviour than attitudes arrived at superficially (Guyer and Fabrigar, 2015:186). Conversely, peripheral persuasion cues appeal to those who are not highly motivated for example by using a celebrity to endorse the message. Building on Norms model Stern (2000) developed a further belief-based model of persuasion believing that social attitudes and personal moral norms are significant predictors of environmental behaviour. Ives et al (2020) concluded that scientific communication about sustainability was not successful because it targeted the head not the heart. Its focus on the science rather than deep leverage points including worldviews and values, failed to engage the emotions and failed in the transformative human capacity for behaviour change.

Table 15 summarises other influential models including: Knowledge, Attitude, Practice, (Bandura, 1986) - by increasing individual knowledge attitude change will happen, and this will lead to a change in practice. For example, yielding behaviour change such as ‘not making a purchase’ by informing a consumer that the workers who have made the product have been exploited. The problem here is that it does not account for the other influences affecting the purchase, in fast fashion it is particularly complex, with low cost and constant change being two of the many driving forces. Mackie and Queller (2000) and Dragulanescu (2002) agreed that the message ‘sender’ was the most significant factor in determining whether behaviour change would occur. The problem is that they disagreed who it was, the former proposed that consumers are more accepting of information and therefore more likely to be persuaded to change if the source is someone in their ‘in group’, whereas Dragulanescu believed that people were more likely to change their behaviour if the source is perceived to be an expert.

Theory/model	Year	Author	Description
Persuasion models based on:- beliefs, values or attitudes			
Norm activation model	1977	Schwartz	A social-psychological 'belief-based models of persuasion'. Provides a framework for understanding pro-social altruistic behaviours on the premise of the theory that personal norms are the only direct determinant of pro social behaviour
Information Processing Theory	1980	Chaiken	Internal feelings of discomfort motivate people to reduce inconsistencies in the cognitive information they hold about themselves, their environment & their behaviour. Systematic – very detailed level involving evaluation and clarification of info to arrive at a conclusion.
Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM)	1981	Petty and Cacioppo	Behaviour change pivots on identifying how existing attitudes are formed, which determines different psychological processes involved in changing it Central – attitude change occurs when attention is given. Peripheral – low target audience motivation therefore 'persuasion cues' such as using a celebrity are used to encourage behaviour change.
Value-belief norm theory	2000	Stern	A social-psychological 'belief-based models of persuasion'. Social attitudes and personal moral norms are significant predictors of environmental behaviour
	2020	Ives et al	Scientific versus emotional appeal (Ives et al, 2020)
Other Persuasion models			
Knowledge, Attitude, Practice (KAP)	1986	Bandura	Propose that knowledge increase can change attitudes and changed attitudes can change practice
Theories relate to message originator.	2000	Mackie and Queller	People are more accepting of info & therefore more likely to be persuaded to change if the source is someone in their in group.
	2002	Dragulanescu	More likely to be persuaded to change if source is perceived to be an expert
Processing fluency	2011	Hanks et al	Suggests that information is processed either systematically or heuristically
	2014	Stanford	Persuasion works best when it articulates individual benefits

Table 15: Belief based and 'other' Persuasion models and theories.

Villarino and Font (2015) developed the ELM (1981) to conclude that increasing the likelihood of behaviour depended on four dimensions of 'persuasiveness', Types of Action, Structure, Content and Authority. 'Type of action' includes 'Theme' which refers to words used to describe sustainability, (particularly challenging in persuading behaviour change given the lack of universal understanding of it (Roberts, 1996, Kangun et al, 1991), and 'Beneficiary' or who the message is intended for, business, customers or society. The 'Message Structure' can be 'Explicit' (stating) or 'Implicit' (not stating) (O'Keefe 2002). An 'Explicit message is more likely to be understood and more effective in reaching a wider audience, whereas an 'Implicit' message works with audiences familiar with the concepts. The next variables 'Active' or 'Passive' relate to the specificity of the action called for, the more specific the recommendation the more persuasive it will be (O'Keefe, 2002). 'Denotative' or 'Connotative' describe the degree to which words are interpreted differently. Denotative, refers to a generally agreed meaning, 'Connotative' reflects the attitudes that individuals develop towards words, may be more abstract and therefore less effective as a means of persuasion (Bettinghaus and Cody, 1994).The third category is 'Content': further divided into Appeal and Logic, Social Norms and

‘Level of Experience’. A message with an emotional ‘Appeal’ is more likely to get attention, be memorable and lead to behaviour change than a message that is only ‘Logical’ (Bettinghaus and Cody, 1994). ‘Social Norms’ guide or constrain social behaviour, as people are influenced by others. If they involve emotions they are more likely to affect people, which increases the likelihood of being persuaded to change behaviour (Goldstein et al., 2008). Within ‘Content’ is ‘Level of experience’ – increasing customer empowerment improves the experience and outcome (Villarino and Font, 2015). The fourth and final category is Authority, and refers to the message originator and their credentials. However as discussed earlier there is disagreement about whether a perceived expert (Dragulanescu, 2002) was more persuasive than someone from within their group (Mackie and Queller, 2000).

Type of action	Structure	Content	Authority
Theme	Explicit/Implicit	Appeal versus logic	Author/originator of message
Beneficiary	Active/Passive	Social norms	
	Denotative/ Connotative	Level of experience	

Table 16: Dimensions of persuasiveness in relation to behaviour change informed by Villarino and Font (2015)

Other recommendations relating to persuading consumers towards more sustainable consumption include adopting a group rather than individual approach such as community-based projects (Jackson, 2005:132) and participatory problem solving where participants are trusted to define the problem themselves, and given support to find solutions (Kaplan, 2005:112).

Pratkanis and Greenwald (1993) posit that a persuasive appeal must stand out in a ‘message dense’ environment by being credible and structured around a single well-placed positive message to have the best chance of success. Jackson supports this argument for a single message, arguing that presenting multiple reasons why someone should change their behaviour may lead to them feeling helpless or out of control and less likely to change (2005:111).

Jackson draws on extensive evidence to conclude that changing behaviour is difficult and that simplistic prescriptions for change are unlikely to be successful, particularly in western societies where material goods are ‘…deeply embedded in the cultural fabric of our lives’ (Jackson, 2005:133). Clothes satisfy needs and desires, have cultural value, enable social and group cohesion, and communicate who we are (Jackson, 2005). Consumers rely on their own knowledge and experiences, when making consumption choices and may resist cues suggesting changes (Genc, 2017). Communication targeted to groups of people, such as customers, must be simple, direct and concise, with some knowledge of the target audience, including its cultural beliefs and values (Genc, 2017:511).

In scoping out this research, an examination of an extensive number of theories, concepts and principles about communication took place, before selecting those that enable the study to meet the aim and objectives. The appeal of the work of Antonetti and Maklan is two-fold.

Firstly, it focusses on decreasing the attitude-behaviour gap, a concept widely agreed to be significant in accounting for the lack of sustainable consumption. Secondly, as the focus of this research is on fast fashion, the communication strategy must be applicable to a wide range of consumers, not just those committed to sustainable consumption. (Objective 4: To recommend guidelines to optimise the communication of sustainability between fast fashion brands and consumers.)

Antonetti and Maklan (2015) based information provision about a brand's sustainability on consumer motivation. Those motivated by altruism, being socially or conspicuously responsible, or politically orientated would best respond to information provision about a brand's sustainability. For example, an 'Altruistic' consumer who is personally motivated and requires no public acknowledgement is more likely to purchase sustainably if information is easily available, such as at the point of sale. By contrast, a 'Political' consumer's intention to purchase increases if the product identifies them as part of a cohesive group and a 'Conspicuous Responsible' consumer wants publically to declare that they are purchasing responsibly, through the product, - so investing in sustainable obviously branded merchandise would appeal to them.

.Responsible purchasing behaviours			
1) Altruistic	2) Socially Responsible	3) Conspicuous Responsible	4) Political
Motivated by personal ethical beliefs, otherwise breaking a moral principle. Without public acknowledgement.	Motivated by ethical interest, but not at the expense of personal benefits.	Motivated by public perception of doing the right thing, therefore self- interest.	Motivated by political principles and identifying with a similar empowered group.
Influencing the attitude-behaviour gap			
Convenience of sustainable purchasing to transform moral commitment to action	Sustainable features are part of a bundle, which includes an advantage to self.	Independent of pre-existing attitudes and behaviour, the product must be socially distinctive.	Gap bridged by setting out conscious choices as markers of social and political identity
Significance in developing communication guidelines about sustainability.			
Providing easily understandable information at the point of purchase is likely to encourage this group to buy sustainably. The channel of communication is only significant insofar as being convenient, as public opinion is less important to them.	This group of consumers will only buy sustainably if product satisfies all their other requirements. They are interested in ethics so information relating to a products ethical provenance may convince them to purchase.	Communication must focus on the benefits of buying sustainably. A public channel where their actions are positively reinforced by others approbation is beneficial.	This consumer is oriented towards sustainable products. Information must be visible and accurate/honest. If the product identifies their cohesion to a group this will increase their purchase intent towards it.

Table 17: Decreasing the attitude-behaviour gap: Antonetti and Maklan, 2015.

The attraction of the work of Newig et al., in relation to this study is in its pragmatic and holistic approach to the development of sustainable communication. Their model provides analytical tools comprising of 'Communication *about* Sustainability' (CaS), 'Communication *of* Sustainability' (CoS) whereas 'Communication *for* Sustainability' (CfS) embraces all facilitators towards societal transformation to sustainability (Newig et al., 2013: 2978).

There are two distinct perspectives, 'about' and 'of' communication, which include the direction of information flow, the function of information and the effectiveness of communication (Newig et al., 2013: 2978). Table 13 illustrates how 'about' and 'of' are used to assess the function and effectiveness of communication.

Mode, function and effectiveness of communication processes			
	Direction/mode of communication	Function	Measures of effectiveness
Communication ***about*** sustainability	Deliberative; horizontal, many to many.	Deliberation; production of intersubjective/shared concepts/frames	Discourse oriented: quality of discourse; compatibility of concepts to sustainability
Communication. ***of*** sustainability	Transmissive; sender-receiver, one to many.	Transmission; transfer of information towards an objective.	Sender oriented; achievement of sender's communication objective.

Table 18: 'Communication about sustainability and communication of sustainability in comparison.' (Newig et al., 2013: 2977)

'Communication *about* Sustainability' (CaS) highlights the significance of information exchange and discussion about sustainability. Communication takes place at various levels, including 'face to face' and between the masses. It serves significant functions of framing concerns and structuring facts, arguments and claims through establishing a common understanding of the issue at stake. The flow of communication is multi directional (Newig et al., 2013:2978).

This contrasts with CoS where the flow of information is one directional – from experts and decision makers - educators and companies to the public. It has specific functions, such as informing and educating individuals, achieving social engagement and taking action. It takes an elitist stance by making a central distinction between experts and ordinary people. Its' success is assessed by whether recipients have been reached, understood the message, or changed their values and behaviours (Newig et al., 2013: 2979).

'Communication *for* sustainability' was the third constituent; the objective of CfS is to establish societal transformation based on the normative goals of sustainable development. The effectiveness of CfS is its impact in terms of measurable action towards sustainable development, which communication related to sustainability may in fact neglect or inhibit. Since no one is openly against sustainability, this happens by symbolically seeming to be supporting it but following (hidden) non-sustainable agendas (Newig et al., 2013:2980). See Table 19 for a summary of the key points:

	Communication ***about*** Sustainability CAS	Communication ***of*** Sustainability COS
Direction and initiators of Flow	Horizontal information flow and exchange Takes place at various levels, including 'face to face' and between the masses.	Mono-direction, sender-receiver flow i.e. Instrumental/managerial Flow of communication is one directional – from experts and decision makers - educators and companies to the public
The Function of communication	Frames issues, structures facts arguments and claims by creating a common understanding of the issues at stake, of goals and of who needs to take action.	Informs and educates individuals and achieves social engagement and action by adopting an elitist stance by making a central distinction between experts and ordinary people.
Measures of effectiveness or quality of communication	Amount of mass media attention Who has access to the discourse and influences the framing process The extent that discourse in one sub system is compatible with another i.e. science and politics.	Whether recipients have been reached, whether they have understood the message, and changed their values and behaviours
Communication ***for*** Sustainability' CFS		
To facilitate societal transformation towards sustainable goals Effectiveness relates to impact in terms of measurable action towards sustainable development. It may neglect or inhibit sustainable development by appearing to support sustainability but following hidden non-sustainable agendas.		

Table 19: Informed by Communication regarding Sustainability: Conceptual Perspectives and Exploration of Societal Subsystems (Newig et al., 2013)

Table 20 summarises the range of content centered communication processes from counterproductive (e.g. greenwashing) to transformative (e.g. educational). It is worth highlighting that some organisations include communication about sustainability simply to convey a positive and effective message, as it is an opportunity to improve their reputation (Newig et al., 2013:2984).

Content centered typology of communication processes.			
	Counterproductive	Neutral	Transformative (**CfS**)
Communication **about** sustainability	Discourse oriented to impede genuine sustainability development.	Scientific deliberation about sustainability related phenomena.	Participatory dialogues in local groups (Agenda 21 – 1992 UN goals)
Communication. **of** sustainability	Greenwashing in sustainability reporting.	Scientific communication of facts	Educating students or the public

Table 20: Adapted from 'Typology of communication processes in relation to sustainability with examples' (Newig *et al*., 2013: 2978)

Examination of the work of an extensive although not exhaustive range of theorists about communication, in and outside the fashion industry, enabled the researcher to identify two models on which to base the research methods and best answer the aim and objectives. The challenge of reducing the attitude-behaviour gap was discussed in Section (2.3.6) and in relation to most theories about Fashion Communication, therefore Antonetti and Maklan's work is appropriate. The second reason for selection is that they use consumer motivation as a basis for developing effective communication guidelines. Motivation is a concept widely agreed to lead to the possibility of behaviour change, and is relevant to all consumers. On the other hand, the communication model of Newig et al., complements Antonetti and Maklan's work by providing comprehensive detail relating to a wide range of aspects about developing and measuring the effectiveness of communication. The 'conceptual perspectives' of communication about sustainability (Newig et al., 2013) provide a framework for developing communication guidelines for fashion brands and are used to develop the communication framework in Chapter 6.

2.4.3 Fashion Brand Communication

There is little doubt about the increased mainstream narrative about the lack of sustainability in the fashion industry. Consumers and organisations such as the Fashion Transparency Index are increasingly demanding more information about sourcing and manufacturing (Fashion Transparency Index, 2019). Television programmes such as '*Fashion's Dirty Secrets*' and '*The One Show'* in October 2018, Radio 4 shows such as '*You and Yours*' and '*Mary Portas: In Style*' in 2019, and regular news features in papers and on television that connect fashion to environmental damage have all contributed to this. A Parliamentary report early in 2019 on *'The Sustainability of the Fashion Industry'* was widely publicised. 'Edited' reports that there has been a gradual increase this year in retailers' communications with customers in 'mentions' and 'iterations' of sustainability (2019: 6). This is good news given that societal discourse is fundamental in providing legitimacy in sustainable development and communication must reflect societal values (Genc, 2017). The value in this research is in analysing to what extent the narrative has led to fashion brands and consumers adopting more sustainable practices.

Brands must be pro-active, transparent and communicate an authentic message (Hakala et al., 2017, Fournier and Avery, 2011). Young people respond positively to brands that practise transparently and present an authentic message. Greenwashing or overstating sustainable credentials has led to consumers distrusting brand claims (Thomas, 2015:11). Online access to information about global events such as the aftermath to the collapse of the Rana Plaza garment factory in 2013 where 1135 people were killed (Chowdhury, 2017) has led to distrust of fashion brands. When this happened, UK brands were quick to disassociate themselves from it by claiming that they were unaware that this factory was making their product (Ritch, 2015:1178). The implication of Primark's ethical position is that they do not own factories and that their standards are acceptable as they are in line with the rest of the high street '… 98% of the factories making products for Primark also manufacture for other brands' (Primark, 2018, online). Brands frequently respond to multiple negative press exposes about poor working conditions in apparel factories by declaring the factories that they work with meet required standards, and that sub-contracting without their knowledge has led to the problem. (For example the response to allegations of staff in factories in Leicester being paid £3.50 per hour for making Boohoo product '…we are currently trying to establish the identity of this company' (Boohoo, 2020)). It is important to highlight the significance of their perception of a company's motivation for sustainability communication (Bronn and Vrioni, 2001). Scepticism results from marketing communications that appear deceptive or manipulative (Evans and Peirson-Smith, 2018, Forehand and Grier, 2003). A survey in 2017 found that two in five consumers declared that they did not know which brands to trust (The Business of Fashion and McKinsey and Company, 2018). This is important, as the credibility of the source (senders of information) is a significant factor in determining whether behaviour change will occur (Mackie and Queller, 2000, Dragulanescu, 2002). Hence, it can be concluded that lack of consumer trust in sustainable products acts as a barrier towards sustainable consumption (Athena Information Solutions Pvt. Ltd., 2020, Joshi and Rahman 2015) and consumer trust in a sustainable brand is an important purchase criterion which positively influences purchasing (Shen, et al, 2017. Rahbar and Wahid, 2011).

When examining the consumption process in Section 2.3.4, it was clear that Individual and Situational variables were fundamental in understanding behaviour (Joshi and Rahman, 2015). Table 21 details the Situational or External variables that influence fashion consumption as reflected through communication. It is apparent that fashion brands control all the Situational variables that influence consumption behaviour, except Significant others (Reference groups), see Figure 9. These include store attributes, product attributes, availability, labelling, price, image and communication.

In fashion, product attributes are arguably more important than in other products. Appearance, fashionability, colour, fit, quality and sustainable characteristics all influence whether to purchase or not. A high price may negatively influence purchase intention and behaviour, as could difficulty in procurement (Joshi and Rahman, 2015). Consumers are likely to purchase from one of numerous other brands available if the product attributes do not meet expectations, they consider it is expensive or the transactional process is not simple. Given that two key aspects of fast fashion are low prices and fast availability, it is clear that these variables would influence a fast fashion consumers' decision to buy. Joshi and Rahman (2015) found there is limited research about the information provided about sustainable products in stores and that favourable attributes such as clear signposting or helpful staff can positively influence the outcome. The success of labelling depends on whether the consumer trusts the information provided, this is explored further in the next section Channels of Communication.

Individual variables that influence consumption.	
Habits	Habit and past behaviour guide consumer preferences and influence their purchasing behaviour, making it difficult to change.
Trust	A belief or expectation about a products performance.
Emotions	Consumer emotions have a direct impact on consumer purchase intention and behaviour
Knowledge	Knowledge has a direct effect on consumer purchase intention and behaviour.
Values and personal norms	Individual values will have a direct effect on their purchase behaviour.
Perceived behavioural control	Perceived behavioural control is the perceived control one has over one's actions. It refers to the capacity of an individual to perform a given behaviour (Ajzen, 1988).
Perceived consumer effectiveness	Indirectly influences consumer purchase intention since it influences consumer attitudes, subjective norms and perceived behavioural control (Kang et al., 2013).
Situational variables that influence consumption	
Product attributes	Style, quality and functional characteristics of products influence consumers' green purchase behaviour.
Store related attributes	Store related attributes influence consumer purchase of products.
Price	In relation to expectations or other products.
Labelling	Labelling informs consumers about product characteristics.
Product availability	Limited availability and inconvenience in procuring products act as barriers.
Brand image	Consumers generally have personal favourite brands and they prefer them to green brands (Young et al., 2010).
Subjective & social norms & reference groups	Social and reference groups, especially peers and other individuals with close proximity have a stronger influence on consumers' decision-making process.

Table 21: Variables influencing the level of sustainable consumption. Informed by Joshi and Rahman, 2015.

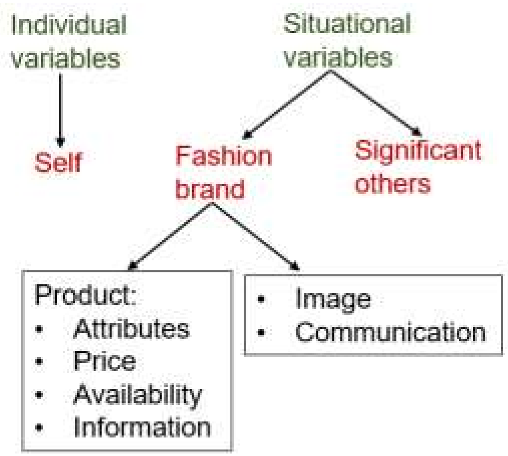


Figure 9: Influence of self, fashion brand and significant others on fashion communication and consumption. Informed by Joshi and Rahman, 2015

2.4.4 Channels of Communication

Research has established that customers increasingly want to know about the provenance of their clothes (The Business of Fashion and McKinsey & Company, 2018:62, McNeill and Moore, 2015). Communication about sustainability is complex it needs to portray a consistent message across a variety of channels that is suitable for a wide target audience (Evans and Peirson-Smith, 2018, Ackerstein and Lemon, 1999).

Digital developments over the last decade have created unprecedented communication prospects between brands and consumers (Fournier and Avery, 2011). Young people - the main protagonists of fast fashion are prolific users of digital platforms, so web sites and social media are important conduits through which fashion brands can engage with them. Communication between consumers and brands is through shops, web sites, online social platforms and product labels hence these channels are selected for the case studies.

The value in this research is in adding to the limited research about the effectiveness of digital communication about sustainability (Lundquist, 2014) in a fashion context. The internet supports bi-directional and multi-directional communication processes with stakeholders, which empowers them to become active in the generation of content (Ledingham and Bruning, 2000). Social media is as key communication channel that not only broadcasts messages, but also enhance organisation-consumer interactions (Bendeler 2017, Kimmel and Kitchen, 2014).

This is not to suggest that the power lies with consumers, rather that they have the opportunity to engage with a brand in a way that was not previously possible. Digital platforms guided by attention algorithms provide more and more content that initiates behaviour change and constant consumption (Bendeler, 2017, Busch, 2019). Elements such as Walls, Competitions, Newsfeeds, Blogs, Discussion forums, and Customer images, generate relationships and positively influence behavioural intentions (Hakala et al., 2017:542, Duffett, 2015:515). For example, Missguided responded to one of their customer's requests by introducing a 'Jeans and Nice Top' section on their web site. The story went viral, causing a spike of nearly six thousand interactions against their normal number of less than 500, and much more than their previous highest number for the month, engagement and brand loyalty increased (Redelmeier, 2018, online). Clearly, it is a powerful tool for engaging customers (Vazquez et al., 2017), and building loyalty.

Young consumers expect expediency (The Business of Fashion and McKinsey, 2018:51) and web sites that do not have easy navigation will deter them (Jones and Kang, 2019, Parker et al, 2010). They consider information from social media to be more trustworthy than marketing messages received through traditional channels (Hakala et al., 2017:552, Goldsmith, 2006:429). Online peer conversations are also important as they guide brand and product choice (Williams & Page 2011:8). Shared negative consumer comments can damage a brands reputation (Fournier & Avery, 2011).

Enabling the customer to make an informed decision by providing information about a product at the point of sale is an opportunity for fashion brands to limit the use of heuristics (Ritch, 2015:1175). Eco-labels have the potential to enhance sustainable consumption (Ma et al., 2017, Henninger, 2015). The Global Ecolabelling Network, (2020, online) describes an ecolabel as a marker that identifies products or services proven to be environmentally preferable, although the United Nations include Social Criteria in their definition (United Nations, 2020, online). Research demonstrates that consumers found labels with information about the sustainable aspects of the garment convenient and useful (Perez and Lonsdale, 2019) as long as they were easy to read and aesthetically pleasing, (Hiller-Connell Kozar, 2017). Their other advantage is that there is less opportunity for vagueness, as what is stated must link directly to the product. Gam *et al.,* (2014) found that participants familiar with '*socially responsible labels'* (labels that demonstrate a commitment to sustainable causes) and that those oriented to sustainable consumption showed a greater intention to purchase products that included them. The practice of using labels as an educational tool to enhance sustainable consumption is discussed further in Chapter 6 'Guidelines for Optimising Communication about Sustainability'.

There are over 100 eco-labels currently used in the UK, making it very difficult for consumers to recognise and understand what each represents (Henninger, 2015, Ma et al., 2017). In fact, even with fashion industry experts, Fairtrade was one of only four that was widely understood (Henninger, 2015). Clearly, product labels reflect whichever aspect of sustainability a fashion brand is developing or a product incorporates, so the range is extensive.

Earlier discussion highlighted that mainstreaming sustainability in fast fashion is likely to lead to price increases (ILO, 2017). Garment labelling provides brands with an opportunity to include cost information on swing tickets so that customers can understand the real cost of garment production. Providing information to educate consumers is significant in achieving long-term goals about sustainability, and in consumers accepting, that products made without exploitation may cost more (Ritch, 2015:1174). A further benefit was demonstrated when M & S started charging for plastic bags, customers viewed this action as an indication that the business was practising sustainably elsewhere (Ritch, 2015:1171). In 2018, Birnbaum (2017) suggested that the demand for knowledge was already leading the industry towards increased transparency through labelling and marketing. Ultimately, this level of transparency could be an effective means of gaining customer trust, leading to greater loyalty and increased sales (Ritch, 2015:1166).

Developing an independent logo or trademark is an opportunity for the fashion industry (Ritch, 2015:1175, Nisbett et al., 1982; Taylor, 1982,). Ritch posited that '…notions of sustainability are slowly transferring to fashion retailing, as sustainable concepts become ingrained within everyday behaviours', and that despite very different supply chains, the same principles apply to both (2015:1176).

The food industry has successfully developed sustainable or ethical branding, with logos such as 'Fairtrade' acting as a heuristic cue to guide purchasing (Nisbett et al., 1982, Taylor, 1982). The mission of the Fairtrade Foundation is to connect disadvantaged workers with consumers.

They check that standards are met by all parts of the products' supply chain, and license the FAIRTRADE mark to signal this to consumers (Fairtrade, 2010, online). Their web site provides links to their certified brands. In clothing, this includes People Tree, a niche ethical brand and White Stuff, but no fast fashion brands.

Figure 10: Fairtrade clothing logo (Fairtrade, 2020, online)

The Global Organic Textile Standard (GOTS) (2018) provides a means of identifying products where the '…processing, manufacturing, packaging, labelling, trading and distribution of all textiles made from at least 70% certified organic natural fibres', and sets out '…requirements on working and social conditions that are equivalent to those of leading social sustainability standards' (GOTS 2020, online). It defines high-level environmental criteria along the entire organic textiles supply chain and social criteria (GOTS, 2020, online). The web site has a Public Database with a search function, which leads to a list of garment manufacturers with the following proviso 'Not all products manufactured or sold by a certified operation may be GOTS certified. Please check if the products show the correct and complete labelling at the time of purchase.' (GOTS, 2020, online). The problem here is threefold. One, all products from one factory are not guaranteed to be GOTS certified. Two, even a sustainably oriented customer who takes the time to look at this web site will not find a list of fashion brands or stockists who sell GOTS accredited product. Three, although the web site states that GOTS products are '…already visible on the shelves of natural textile shops but large-scale retailers and brand dealers as well' (GOTS, 2020, online) this is not the case in mainstream fashion in the UK. An online search revealed some baby and children's product including at John Lewis, ladies wear at People Tree (an ethical brand) and product in the SEASALT ranges. Unfortunately, although their vision is for organic textiles to become part of everyday life – in the UK there is still a long way to go.

Using 95 -100% organic fibres:

Organic
Certified by [certifier's ref.]
License no [1234]

Using 70 – 94% organic fibres:

Made with [x] % organic materials.
Certified by [certifier's ref.]
License no [1234]

Figure 11: GOTS branding for garment labels and tickets (GOTS, 2020, online.)

Although labelling fashion products that are environmentally or socially preferable to others, can guide heuristics in the decision-making process of purchasing (Henninger, 2015), the effectiveness is inconclusive, especially with consumers who do not trust (Henninger, 2015), are unaware of or do not understand the information provided (Joshi and Rahman, 2015). The sheer number of certifications and the limited number that apply to fashion products could complicate rather than enhance decision-making. Additional marketing and communication to improve customer understanding is required before they reach their potential. A final point is that the many other demands on fast fashion consumers, including finding product that accords with their price, style and fit requirements are likely to be more important than finding products with eco- labels (Henninger, 2015).

2.4.5 Corporate Social Responsibility

It is important to review the part that Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) plays in fashion communication. Elkington recommended that businesses carry out an holistic assessment of a company's economic, social, and environmental performance, or 'Triple Bottom Line' (TBL) (Hiller Connell and Kozar, 2017:1). Simultaneously customers became increasingly interested in knowing about suppliers and the provenance of products, and businesses began to realise that sustainability was important (Perry et al., 2014). Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) strategies outlined businesses commitment to improving social and environmental impact. (Lueg et al., 2013). Aguinis (2011:855) defined Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) as organizational actions and policies that account for stakeholders' expectations and the triple bottom line of economic, social, and environmental performance. Hiller Connell and Kozar (2017) go further by recommending that brands include CSR initiatives in their marketing, to positively impact on their image.

A sustainable business approach requires effective communication that aims at sharing CSR values with stakeholders (Harrick and Pratt, 2013). The web sites of large companies play an increasingly important role in sustainability communication (Dade and Hassenzahl, 2013), and are replacing traditional corporate communication media (Siano et al, 2016). The risk of greenwashing is amplified by stakeholders' empowerment in digital environments (Kucuk and Krishnamurthy, 2007).

Thus, the purpose of sustainability communication is to convey an organisations commitment and ability to achieve and report the expected results (Siano et al, 2012). In practice, CSR strategies are voluntary and may become a compliance issue involving the application of guiding mechanisms, codes of conduct and audits (Perry et al., 2014). They lack the force of mandatory law (Brewer, 2019), and are associated with increasing costs and limiting profitability (Hume, 2010:386). Implementation at factory level may be compromised, particularly in fast fashion where achieving other demands including low prices, short lead times, and trend led products are considered to be more important (Brewer, 2019, Perry et al., 2014). Consequently, the perception is that they are sometimes 'little more than a PR exercise…that fail to fully address exploitative working conditions…' (Perry et al., 2014).

So, to evaluate the influence of CSR on fashion communication (and practice), assessment of: a) the type of business and b) the stakeholders is required. For example, sustainable practice may not be a priority for a business model built on 'low cost and speed' as opposed to 'quality and longevity'. Siano et al., (2016) define the stakeholders as employees, consumers' investors' communities and media. A CSR strategy helps investors and shareholders assess sustainability in their risk assessment of a company (Global Fashion Agenda and The Boston Consulting Group, 2018, Newig et al., 2013). It highlights business priorities and provides a benchmark for reviewing implementation against the plan (Fukukawa and Moon, 2004).

2.4.6 Summary of Fashion communication

This section has assessed communication between consumers and brands in relation to the sustainability of the fashion industry. Literature has revealed complex issues surrounding the creation and measurement of effective communication. The lack of a universally or even industry agreed definition of sustainability (Evans and Peirson-Smith, 2018, Kangun et al., 1991) leads to difficulties in language and understanding. Other challenges identified through the literature analysis include the relationship between the two stakeholders' consumers and brands in the fast fashion industry. In response to a gap in the literature, this study explores the consumer perspective on the frequency and content of communication received from fashion brands, their feelings about social media posts and their interest in knowing about the provenance of their clothes. It examines the extent to which fashion brands and fashion consumers understanding of sustainability align and which aspects are consumers most interested in, and are most likely to motivate them to change their behaviour to buy sustainably.

In response to the growing societal interest in sustainability, this study scrutinises fashion brands sustainable language for evidence of lack of clarity and exaggerating sustainable claims as suggested by the literature (Thomas, 2008). It assesses whether consumers unlimited access to world news and negative press exposes about the fashion industry have led them to distrust fashion brands, and considers the extent to which they 'buy into' *sustainable sub-brands* that many fast fashion companies have released, or recognise them as a marketing ploy to increase sales.

Research about the effectiveness of garment labels as a means of educating consumers about sustainability is inconsistent. It is beneficial for customers to access information that relates directly to the product, at the point of sale. However, the lack of an industry certification identifying sustainable fashion products means that individual brands determine labelling information. The risks with this are - brands may use words and symbols that imply sustainability but are not specific, or manipulate the content to exaggerate sustainable claims, customers may not trust labelling information that brands generate.

This research addresses a relatively new phenomenon relating to fashion brands utilisation of channels to communicate with customers, from the traditional shops and labels to web sites and social media. It analyses their messages to determine their business priorities through their investment of time and money. It investigates whether they use 'persuasive' messages to alter or influence behaviour, that encourages sustainable consumption or simply just to encourage them to *buy more*.

2.5 Chapter summary

In reviewing the literature, three significant themes that require further investigation emerged to address the aim of this research: *to analyse the impact of fast fashion, consumer behaviour and fashion brand communication on sustainability.* The first is an analysis of current sustainability, followed by an exploration of fashion consumption, concluding with an examination of communication about sustainability.

In response to both investors and customers, sustainability is now on the agenda of most brands (Global Fashion Agenda, 2018). However, evidence suggests that the fast fashion business model perpetuates social and environmental exploitation in order to satisfy the demands of both fashion brands and consumers (Arrigo, 2020, Waller and Waller, 2018, Ozdamar-Ertekin, 2017,). The number of clothes bought per person is higher in the UK than in any other country (UK Parliament, 2019). Although many fashion brands have CSR policies, in practice, they are frequently subservient to other business demands such as low cost and short lead times (Brewer, 2019, Perry et al., 2014).

Whilst it is encouraging that millennial consumers are increasingly interested in sustainability, fast fashion brands feed their customers' dreams and desires (Joy et al., 2012:291) by targeting marketing messages with slogans such as 'Become the person you want to be' and 'The future is yours to create' (Missguided, 2019, online). Image sharing social media sites have increased emphasis on physical beauty, resulting in more impulse buying for immediate gratification and less appreciation of the value of a single item of clothing. Research has identified an attitude-behaviour gap (Joyner Armstrong et al., 2016:421, Roberts, 1996) which describes how a consumer's positive attitude towards sustainability is not reflected in their buying behaviour. Through primary research, this work investigates consumer interest in sustainability and fashion consumption to identify how the two elements can be aligned so that they consume fashion sustainably, thereby satisfying Objective 1 *To analyse fast fashion consumers and their fashion consumption.*

However, reducing the gap depends not only on consumers, but also on fashion brands. The financial success of the current fast fashion business model of brands such as Zara and H & M means that they have little incentive to change (Arrigo, 2020, Ozdamar-Ertekin, 2017). Many have a poor reputational image in relation to sustainability in terms of both practice and communication about sustainability. A review of the literature revealed opportunities through communication that could lead to improving the sustainability of mainstream fast fashion. Primary research will examine communication about sustainability from a selection of fast fashion brands. It will explore the extent to which their communication educates their consumers and encourages them to buy sustainably, answering Objective 2 *To evaluate how fast fashion brands communicate with their customers.*

The originality and value of this research is in addressing how the relationship between fast fashion brands and consumers contributes to the current lack of sustainability in the fashion industry. The findings from the research on consumers and brands will be compared in order to satisfy Objective 3 *To make a comparative analysis of consumer and fashion brand interest in sustainability*. The literature review has shown the magnitude, scale and urgency of the problem. Resolving it requires systemic change and investment of time and money from all stakeholders, including consumers, fashion brands, and throughout the supply chain (Global Fashion Agenda and The Boston Consulting Group, 2018).

From a theoretical perspective, work by Antonetti and Maklin (2015) who grouped consumers according to their motivations for sustainable consumption and Newig et al., (2013) who provided analytical tools for improving communication about sustainability in terms of flow, function and effectiveness were most relevant and will be explored in later chapters. This will answer the final Objective (4) *To recommend guidelines to optimise the communication of sustainability between fast fashion brands and consumers.*

The Methodology chapter explains how the chosen methods seek to answer the research objectives by using a survey and case studies as a basis for examining communication between fashion consumers and brands, thereby achieving the thesis aim – 'To analyse the impact of fast fashion, consumer behaviour and brand communication on sustainability.'

1) To analyse fast fashion consumers and their fashion consumption.
2) To evaluate how fast fashion brands communicate with their customers.
3) To make a comparative analysis of consumer and fashion brand interest in sustainability.
4) To recommend guidelines to optimise the communication of sustainability between fast fashion brands and consumers

It includes the following sections: Introduction, Research Philosophy, Design, Methods, Data Collection and Analysis, Ethical considerations, Limitations and Chapter summary.

Chapter 3.0. Methodology

3.1 Introduction

The methodology provides a rationale and over-arching framework for the research process, including how and why the research is undertaken (Creswell, 2009). It includes the philosophical meaning, the approach and paradigms that underpin the research (Blaxter and Hughes, 2010), and the design phase where the researcher decides what it is that they want to do and how they will do it (Moon et al., 2018). The importance of the methodology within the research process and outcome cannot be overstated. It serves two critical functions: 1) providing validity and reliability (discussed further in section 3.3) by describing and explaining influences, and 2) documenting at each stage what was considered and/or dismissed, in order for others to replicate or alter the methods in future research. The approach to research arises from the desire to understand complex social phenomena (Yin, 2003), and is determined by the type of questions to answer, and the *researcher.* The researchers' thoughts on research, philosophical approach and ways of working strongly influence the process, methods and analysis of data and consequently shape what is learnt from a study (Brown and Rodgers, 2003*).* Understanding a researcher's principles and embedded assumptions is a pre-requisite for interpreting the work of others and developing their own work (Moon and Blackman, 2014). In fact, according to Sievanen et al., (2012) failure to recognise them can limit or distort interpretation of research outcomes.

This chapter discusses how the research design and methods achieve the research aim and objectives of this study. It begins with how the researcher's philosophical approach influenced the research strategy and design, followed by an explanation of the selected research methods. Discussion of the Sampling Strategy and Data Analysis precede Research Ethics and Limitations, and the Chapter summary.

Primary and secondary research inform the outcome and the success in answering the research questions, data may be qualitative (non-numerical) and quantitative (numerical). Primary research is original data, collected and analysed to address a specific research problem, rather than depending on previous data (Flick 2014, Kothari, 2004, Brown and Rodgers, 2003). Research issues and the nature of the research questions determine the approach, techniques and method applications (Yin, 2003). In this work, the selected methods of primary research to collect original data are a survey and case studies. The literature review process analyses data collated from existing (secondary) sources to determine what is known and yet to be known about a subject (Clark et al., 2000). According to Yin (2003), the purpose of the Literature Review is to develop insightful research questions about a topic, by reviewing existing literature and exposing gaps. It summarises what related studies have revealed but also discusses what has not, thereby revealing research questions on which to base the study (Brown and Rodgers, 2003). Figure 12 shows the relationship between the research stages and approach.

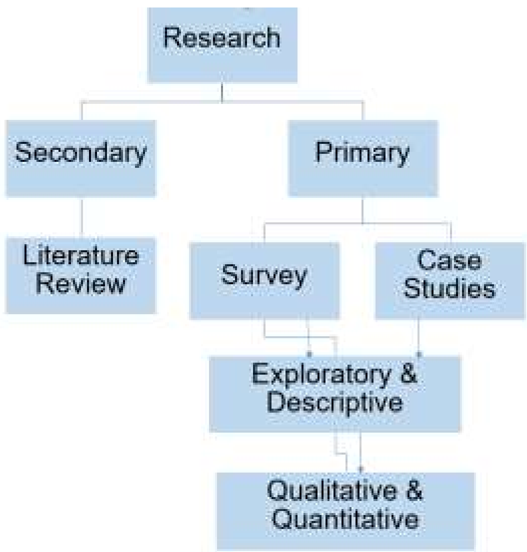


Figure 12: Thesis research methods and characteristics: adapted from Brown and Rodgers, 2003.

Secondary research sources include formally published items such as peer reviewed trade and professional journals, books, newspapers, conference proceedings, and reports including Government (Saunders, 2015). These resources provide historical and contemporary context and a background to inform existing research, knowledge and understanding (Blaxter and Hughes, 2010).

This study is ‘explorative’, as it asks questions, assesses and seeks insights into phenomena in a different way and ‘descriptive’ in terms of observations of behaviours and processes in given situations (Saunders et al., 2016). Descriptive research typically draws from a cross-section of a population (Duffett, 2014:507). This research investigates the attitudes and behaviour towards fashion, and sustainability, of a group of young people studying at Manchester Metropolitan University.

The Literature Review established that curtailing the sustainable footprint of the fashion industry requires a comprehensive understanding of the two main parties involved in fashion consumption: consumers and fashion brands (Global Fashion Agenda and The Boston Consulting Group, 2018). In reviewing the literature, two significant research questions emerged: 1) why young consumers are unaware or uninterested in how sustainable their clothes are, despite a reported interest in sustainability (McNeill and Moore, 2015), 2) to what extent are fashion brands interested in increasing their customers’ awareness of the provenance of their clothes. As apparel consumption continues to rise, an evaluation of the literature about the relationship between the two parties identified themes relating to barriers to the industry becoming more sustainable (See Section 2.3.1). The literature identifies opportunities to reduce the negative impact of fashion, predominantly by improving communication about sustainability (See Section 2.4.2).

First, it is important to establish how the researcher’s philosophical perspective influences the research process.

3.2 Philosophical perspective

The introduction to this chapter emphasized that processes must be meticulous, thorough and un-biased, in order that results are valid, replicable and reliable (Kumar, 2011). Philosophical assumptions shape all stages of research including the approach and the creation and interpretation of knowledge and meaning, therefore it is important to reveal the researchers philosophical perspective (Sievanen et al., 2012). Philosophical perspectives can be described as 'a basic set of beliefs and values that guide action, (Guba 1990:17) frame theoretical perspectives, and influence research questions (Moon et al., 2018). Underlying philosophical approaches explain how studies of the same phenomenon yield different insights (Easterby-Smith et al., 2008). If a researcher is aware of how their philosophy influences research practice by considering embedded assumptions it increases the objectivity of the research output (Saunders et al., 2016).

In social sciences 'ontology' – the study of being, of what actually exists in the world (Spirkin, 1983) and 'epistemology' the study of how people create knowledge and what it is possible to know, are important branches of philosophy (Oppong, 2014, Crotty, 1998). A third philosophical approach is 'axiology' or 'theoretical perspective', which relates to the influence of personal values in knowledge acquisition (Moon and Blackman, 2014, Oppong 2014). The acquisition of knowledge may be Deductive, value free or generalizable or Inductive – value-laden, and only applicable within a context. (Moon and Blackman, 2014:1169). Within each category a range of beliefs exists, for example within ontology, one extreme deals with Realism, or the view that one reality exists, or Relativism, the belief that multiple realities exist (Moon and Blackman, 2014:1169). The range of epistemological stances include Objectivism – where meaning only exists within an object, Constructionism – where meaning is created from interplay between subject and object and Subjectivism where the meaning exists within the subject (Moon and Blackman, 2014:1169). Dominant philosophical approaches in this study are Inductive, Relativist and Constructivist.

A final significant consideration in relation to research practice is 'researcher reflectivity'. As researchers themselves are part of the world they study one of the ways to retain rigor and validity is by being reflexive, by critiquing their frame of reference, pre-conceptions and inherent cultural and ethical views (Mills et al., 2012). This involves being transparent about how and what knowledge was uncovered (Mills et al., 2012). Declaring a researchers personal stance on a topic enables readers to consider the findings in light of the stance or position (Begoray and Banister, 2016).

In order to reveal and establish the researcher's dominant perspectives and philosophical research profile (Appendix 1), the researcher completed the HARP questionnaire 'Heightening your Awareness of your Research Philosophy' by Bristow and Saunders (2014). Table tbc describes how five philosophical approaches including Pragmatism, Interpretivist, Post Modernism, Positivism and Critical Realism influence research design and methods through their ontology (world-view), axiology (values) and epistemology (knowledge) (Hart, 2005). Responses from the questionnaire identify the researcher as predominantly a Critical Realist, the highlighted column summarises the approach and method selection of a Critical Realist (CR).

Critical Realist	Pragmatism	Interpretivist	Post Modernism	Positivism
Ontological (approach to reality)				
Realism – Is objective. Exists independently of human thoughts, beliefs but is interpreted through social conditioning.	External, multiple, view chosen to best enable answering of research question	Socially constructed, subjective, may change.	No one reality, there are multiple realities and interpretations.	External, objective and independent of social actors.
Axiological (values) approach				
Value-laden. Experiences - explained in terms of underlying structures of reality.	Value-driven Research initiated and sustained by researchers doubts and beliefs.	Value-bound. To understand, explain the subjective nature of human behaviour & complex social values.	Value- constituted Emphasizes the world-making role of language and power relations.	Value-free Knowledge is objective, true, with no allowance for cultural values or unpredictable human behaviour
Epistemological (knowledge) approach				
Knowledge historically situated & transient. Facts are social constructions	Driven by problem solving to inform future practice.	Focus on creating new, richer understandings and interpretations of social words and context.	Questions accepted ways of thinking & propose alternative view to dominant world perspectives.	Scientific. Designed to yield pure facts uninfluenced by human interpretation.
Typical Research Methods				
Range of methods & data types to fit subject matter.	Range of mixed methods & combination of qualitative & quantitative	Focus on complexity, richness, multiple interpretations and meaning-making	They de-construct data to expose the instabilities and absences within them.	Researcher is neutral, detached and as external to the data collection as possible.

Table 22: Researcher philosophical research profiles from HARP questionnaire. Bristow and Saunders, 2014.

Results from the HARP questionnaire revealed that ontologically the researchers approach was objective (science based) but the data was interpreted through a social science lens. This approach was invaluable in enquiring beyond the superficial, for example in examining the relationship between fashion brands and consumers. The influence of 'values' (axiology) which are built on personal experience affect the research topic selected and how it will be investigated. To expand, the selection of sustainability as a research topic resulted from the impact on the researcher of seeing poor working conditions in apparel factories, and the desire to improve them through education. Epistemologically, a researcher looks for historical causal relationships that explain social constructions. For example, to explain contradictory behaviours such as why young people continue to buy fast fashion on the one hand and increasingly demonstrate their support for sustainability on the other. A final but important point was the belief that the world exists independently of what we think of it, leading to an acceptance of the fallibility of knowledge and the possibility of getting things wrong (Zachariadis et al., 2010). A Critical Realist approach to data collection typically includes a range of methods this is discussed in section 3.5.

Philosophy is the relationship of thinking to being: a philosophical perspective reveals someone's general worldview (Moon and Jackson, 2014, Guba 1990). Completing the HARP questionnaire revealed theoretical understanding and embedded principles that could compromise the integrity of the process and research outcomes (Sievanen et al., 2012). By reflecting upon these findings, the researcher is able to be aware of how their philosophical perspective influences research design. The theoretical lens of Critical Realism influenced the research design by overcoming difficulties in the drive to get beneath the surface to understand and explain why things are as they are (Zachariadis et al., 2010). Critical Realists recognise the importance of multi-level study, including the existence of many structures and procedures, and the capacity that these have to interact with each other (Saunders, 2015). The approach involved a range of methods including collecting qualitative and quantitative data, to make sense of complex issues and expose meaning.

The research questions, listed below required an interpretative philosophical approach to gain an understanding of the constructs held by people in a given situation, whilst allowing for variance according to time and context (Mertens, 1998:161).

- What is the impact of fast fashion on sustainability?
- Why do young people keep buying fast fashion?
- How do fast fashion brands communicate with their customers?
- What aspects of sustainability are consumers interested in?
- What aspects of sustainability are brands communicating about with their customers?
- What is the most effective way of communicating sustainability to young people?
- What will lead to young people buying fashion more sustainably?

This contrasts with a positivist approach, where the unreliability of human beings has no influence (Biggam, 2009:93). An abductive approach to theory development (where the Researcher uses empirical data to explain previously unexplained phenomena) explored themes relating to young people's fashion consumption and interest in sustainability. It supported examination of the relationship between fashion brands and their consumers and identified themes including motivation for buying fashion and the content of communication from fashion brands to their customers. An inductive approach (where theory is developed from the observation of empirical data (Charmaz, 2008) approach guided exploration of the apparently contradictory values and behaviour of young people in terms of their general support for sustainable action, not applied to buying clothes.

In the social sciences, grounded theory is a research methodology that results in the development of a theory that explains data patterns expected in similar data sets (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). It is a theory based on scientific research that creates meaning from data but seeks to ensure that the emerging theory arises from the data rather than any other source (Crotty, 2014). It relies on the continuation of sampling and data collection until 'saturation' is reached, or no new conceptual insights emerge (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). A grounded theory approach is useful in predicting or explaining behaviour, as in this study (Goulding, 2002). To elaborate it depends on primary data to develop theory, and relies therefore on a research design and strategy that ensures that data is collected and analysed reliably, validly, objectively, accurately and economically to fulfil the aim and objectives (Kumar, 2011). Grounded theory is subjectivist, focussing on values, with an underlying view that social reality relies on perceptions and consequent actions of people. This is distinct from objectivism - which relies on facts and views social and physical phenomenon as existing independently of people - and constructivist, which recognizes the researcher's role in interpretation.

3.3 Research Strategy and Design

The research strategy lays out the most effective way of systematically solving a research problem.

> '…the first and most important condition for differentiating among the various research strategies is to identify the type of research question being asked' (Yin 2003:7).

Yin explains that this means understanding the questions *substance (*what it is about) and *form* (as in whether the questions begin with "Who", "What", "Why", "Where" or "How"). Accordingly, these factors provide clues to the most appropriate research strategy to be used (Yin, 2003).

Research design is a plan, structure and strategy of investigation, conceived to obtain answers to research questions or problems (Duffett, 2014:507). Research design is the logic that links the data to be collected to the initial questions of study (Yin, 2003). A grounded theory strategy has substantial flexibility and is adapted to fit the study and answer the research questions (Charmaz, 2008, Crotty, 2014). The design of the methodology in this study reflect principles of grounded theory by allowing the analysis of the literature to expose areas for research, and enabling survey data to inform the case study selection. This approach permits exploratory, explanatory and descriptive research and ensures that the research questions determine the methods employed.

In research, 'reliability' refers to consistency of results obtained (Evely et al., 2008) and is demonstrated by using operational procedures such as data collection that could be repeated and yield the same results (Yin, 2003). 'Validity' is the applicability of the results to other contexts (Moon and Blackman, 2014). Construct validity relates to establishing correct operational measures for the concepts being studied. External validity is the extent to which the study findings are generalizable or transferable to another setting. Internal validity is established by meticulous study design, which allows all explanations to be exposed (Yin, 2003).

Table 23 illustrates how the survey and case studies built on themes emerging from the literature. The survey was designed to establish a consumer perspective on fashion, shopping, and sustainability and develop insights into the influence of fashion brand communication on their purchasing behaviour. The case studies focussed on the brands, communication channels and language. These two research methods were selected to answer the aims of the study, develop knowledge and influence the empirical approach to data collection by focussing on what needs to be explored and understood whilst allowing the unexpected to emerge and be recognised (Moon et al., 2018, Saunders, 2015).

Literature review themes	**Survey themes (Consumer perspective) Themes for data description and analysis**	**Case study themes (Fashion brand perspective) Themes for data description & analysis**
Fashion Consumption	Fashion & Shopping	
	Channel	
	Frequency	
	Budget, value & price of clothes	
	Motivation for buying & wearing clothes	
Sustainability in the Fashion Industry	Fashion & Sustainability	
	Terminology &/or meaning of sustainability.	
	Aspects of sustainability	
	Provenance of clothes	
Fashion Communication.	Communication between Consumers & Brands	
	Channels	
	Frequency	
	Message content	

Table 23: Literature Review, Survey and Case Studies themes.

3.4 Research Methods

Methods are tools of data collection and analysis, this section focusses on the design of the methods selected, but first a reminder of the preceding stages. The process began by reviewing existing work on the topic of interest to identify a gap in the literature and refine research questions. To ensure that the outcomes were valid and reliable the researchers' philosophical principles were revealed. This is important as how researchers choose their methods reveals their commitment to a version of the world (Moon and Blackman, 2014, Oppong, 2014). A strategy or plan was developed to explain the best way for the researcher to answer the research questions (Yin, 2003) and finally a consideration of the range of methods to select those that were most suitable, allowed the most appropriate methods to emerge.

Figure 13: Stages of the research process leading to the selected methods.

Specifically, this section details how the selected methods answer the research questions that emerged from the aim and objectives of the study whilst ensuring reliability and validity. Yin (2003) proposes three criteria to evaluate the suitability of ‘methods’. The first is the ‘form’ of research questions, the second is the extent of control that the researcher has over the events, and the third is the extent of focus on contemporary rather than historical events. Surveys answers ‘what’, ‘how’ questions and Case studies answer ‘how’, and ‘why’ questions – this range includes all the research questions posed in this study. Neither method has control over the events, but both are appropriate for focusing on contemporary situations (Yin, 2003). The research questions in this study therefore are answered by surveys and case studies.

Table 24 summarises how the chosen methods fulfil the aim, objectives and research questions. The Literature Review informed the survey sample and questions (O1) and provided information about consumers, fashion brands and communication (O2). The survey forged a better understanding of fast fashion consumers (O1) and informed the case study sampling. The case studies analysed fashion brand communication and identified areas of current sustainable interest (O2 and O3). All the selected methods led to the development of the communication guidelines, fulfilling Objective 4.

Aim	Objectives	Research Questions	Lit. Review	Survey	Case Studies
To analyse the impact of fast fashion, consumer behaviour and fashion brand communication on sustainability.	O1 To analyse fast fashion consumers and their consumption of fashion.	**What** is the impact of fast fashion on sustainability? **Why** do young people keep buying fast fashion?	✓	✓	X
	O2 To evaluate how fast fashion brands communicate with their customers.	**How** do fast fashion brands communicate with their consumers?	✓	✓	✓
	O3 To make a comparative analysis of consumer and fast fashion brand interest in sustainability.	**What** aspects of sustainability are consumers interested? **What** aspects of sustainability are brands communicating with their customers?	✓	✓	✓
	O4 To recommend guidelines to optimise the communication of sustainability between fast fashion brands and consumers.	**What** is the most effective way of communicating sustainability to young people? **What** will lead to young people buying fashion more sustainably?	✓	✓	X

Table 24: Summary of Methods to meet the research Aim, Objectives and Questions.

Developing theory with a grounded approach is particularly appropriate in research that predicts or explains behaviour (Goulding, 2002). Data collection starts with positivist assumptions but without a theoretical framework (Saunders et al., 2016). It is an emergent method as it allows indeterminate and open-ended theories to emerge rather than testing existing ones (Charmaz, 2008). The subject of this study: an analysis of the combined impact of fashion consumers and brands on sustainability is un-chartered making it suitable for an emergent grounded theory approach, where what will emerge is unknown. Theory develops by a systematic inductive approach to data collection and analysis (Charmaz, 2008). Data collection and analysis through different research instruments (in this case a survey and case studies) means that each method informs the other and reveal new questions to be answered (Charmaz, 2008).

Section 3.2 highlighted the importance of reflection and on how the researchers 'critical realist' profile, influenced the selection and application of research methods. Table 22 showed that a CR approach was to use a range of methods and data to fit the subject under investigation, one that recognises the importance of multi-level study (Oppong 2014, Saunders et al., 2009). In relation to data collection, the 'critical' aspect reflects two stages in understanding, the thing itself and the mental processes that follow, each of which has the capacity to change the researchers understanding (Saunders et al., 2009).

'Realism' is a scientific approach to the development of knowledge, (Saunders et al., 2009). Researchers are only able to make sense of a small part of the social world when they understand the social actors and structures that have led to the phenomenon being researched (Bhaskar, 1989).

Further, a typical CR approach uses a range of methods (Oppong, 2014, Saunders et al., 2016) and attempts to explore, explain and describe, as distinct from others that may select one method and one action. In this case, a mixed method approach known as 'triangulation' facilitates the collection of qualitative and quantitative data, where insights from one method illuminate another (Zachariadis et al., 2010). Several research methods focus on the same subject and help to confirm the validity and reliability and give a more comprehensive description of the phenomenon (Patton, 2002, Denzin, 1978). This aligns directly with a CR approach. Using triangulation to develop a comprehensive understanding of a phenomenon from different perspectives and sources increases the validity of the findings (Carter et al., 2014). Mixed methods research draws on the strengths of quantitative methods (expressed numerically), and qualitative methods (offering an evaluation or explanation of meaning behind the numbers), to develop insights. It involves the use of all approaches in tandem so that the overall strength of a study is greater than either qualitative or quantitative research (Plano Clark and Creswell, 2008).

The selected research instruments led to the collection of unambiguous data providing a robust platform for analysis and synthesis. A sequential mixed method approach allowed the survey results to inform the case studies, see Figure 14. Stage 1 was collecting and analysing data from the survey, to plan and design the case study. Stage 2 was collecting case study data.

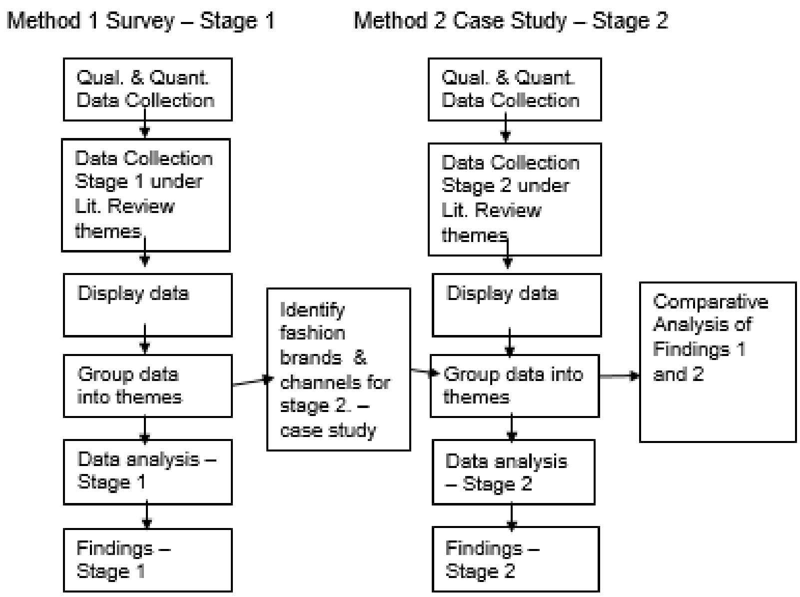


Figure 14: Sequential mixed method research design.

The next step was designing each of the methods to ensure the collected data was valid and reliable, that the process was detailed enough to be replicated at a different time by another researcher and that the research questions were answered. Eisenhardt (1989) developed a systematic process for case study research, which was used to develop both research instruments, the survey and the case studies in this study. The stages are shown in Figure 15, ranging from 'getting started to 'reaching closure'. Details of how these were implemented are found in 3.4.1 Survey Design and 3.4.6 Case Studies Design.

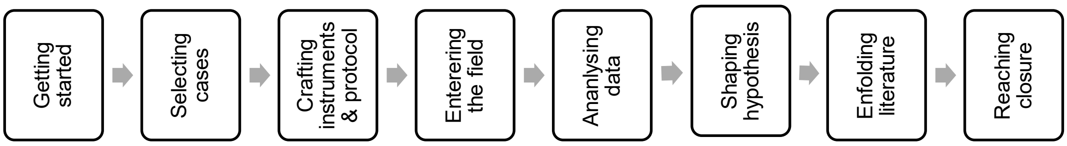


Figure 15: Eisenhardt's process of building theories from case study research, 1989.

At each stage, the design must retain theoretical flexibility whilst constraining extraneous variation (Eisenhardt, 1989). The research instruments collected qualitative and quantitative data to foster divergent perspectives, and strengthen the grounding of theory (Eisenhardt, 1989).

3.4.1 Survey Design

A survey or questionnaire design captures data that contributes towards answering research questions. This study examines social relationships, social processes and behaviour so a research method depending on, or 'grounded' in data was appropriate. The online survey collected data consistently in that all participants answered the same questions in the same order and each set of answers carried the same weight for analysis. The data set consisted of quantitative and qualitative data allowing descriptive, exploratory and explanatory theories to emerge.

A survey is a document with questions that gather information from individuals for research. The first and most important stage in survey development is in deciding what data needs collecting to answer the research questions (Saunders et al., 2016, Kumar, 2013). A survey offers a one-off opportunity therefore, it is essential to plan what data is needed and how it is analysed. Figure 16 illustrates the process. The response rate, validity and reliability of the data collected from a questionnaire depend on the final questions following implementation of amendments from pilot studies (Saunders et al., 2016).

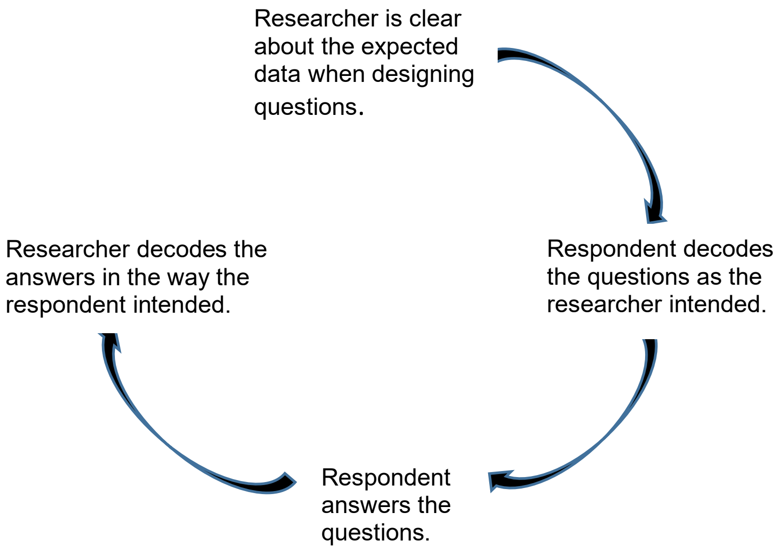


Figure 16: Stages that must occur if a question is to be valid and reliable. Source: developed from Froddy (1994) Constructing Questions for Interviews and Questionnaires.

Dilman et al., (2014) posit that 'data variables' determine the accuracy of obtaining data through survey questions. These include '*factual or demographic'* questions where respondents have the answers readily available, (age and gender for example) and explore the demographic influence on attitudes and behaviours whilst checking that the data set represents the population under investigation. '*Attitude and opinion'* questions demand answers requiring more thought, such as feelings or belief questions that may be influenced by the context of the question being asked. '*Behaviour and event'* questions that may also be influenced by context, relate to what people did (behaviours) or what happened (events) in the past, present or future. This type of question allows respondents to give a future 'socially desirable' behavioural response (Dillman, 2007), which may not reflect their action. An example might be that they indicate that they are happy to pay higher prices for sustainable fashion, but do not do so when the opportunity arises.

Table 25 illustrates how questions within each section of the survey aligned with the literature review: *Fashion & Shopping*, *Fashion & Sustainability* or *Communication with fashion brands.*

Literature review sections	Survey sections Themes for data description and analysis	Question number
Fashion consumption (2.3) Purchasing process Sustainable consumption Attitude-behaviour	**Fashion & Shopping**	
	Channel	4
	Frequency	5
	Budget, value & price of clothes	6, 7, 14
	Motivation for buying & wearing clothes	8,9,10
Sustainability in the Fashion industry (2.2) Definition of Environmental Social Attitude-behaviour	**Fashion & Sustainability**	
	Terminology &/or meaning of sustainability.	11
	Aspects of sustainability	12, 15
	Provenance of clothes	13
Fashion communication (2.4) Channels Content Language	**Communication with fashion brands**	
	Channels	16, 19
	Frequency	17
	Message content	18,20

Table 25: Literature and Survey sections and questions.

Other validity measures used to assess surveys include construct, content, internal and criterion related (Merriam and Tisdell, 2015, Saunders, 2015) Construct validity refers to the extent to which the questions accord with the construct intended to be measured. Content validity explores the adequacy of the measurement device (questions within a survey) in answering the investigative or research questions. Internal validity measures the ability of survey questions to measure reality and what was intended. Finally, criterion related reality is concerned with the ability of questions to make accurate future predictions.

The survey was one of two research instruments selected to collect data tailored to the subject matter. Data was collected from the survey first to inform the second research instrument the case studies. This typifies a CR approach where information from one method informs another and leads to new areas of investigation. Survey methods are typically associated with descriptive research (Hair et al., 2009). The advantage of a survey is that the questions collect unique data to answer a complex research question. Collected data examines underlying structures and layers of reality to expose causal relationships such as the affordability of clothes in relation to budgets, Questions 6 and 7.

It is important that investigators use instruments that are reliable and valid for the population and purpose for which they will be used (Morgan and Harmon, 2001 Saunders et al., 2016). The literature revealed that most fast fashion consumers are young people (Ritch, 2015) and the survey recruited students from MMU that were predominantly under 25. Data from a survey or questionnaire sample captures a snapshot of characteristics and views of a given research population at a particular time (Bhattacherjee, 2012). It reveals a picture of independent (usage characteristics and demographic factors) and dependent ('intention to purchase' and purchase) variables of a given research population by means of a sample at a given point in time (Duffett, 2014:507, Saunders et al., 2016). The sample participants are drawn from a larger population with the intention of making inferences describing the population. The generalizability of the findings therefore is determined by the sampling method and return rate (Morgan and Harmon, 2001).The extent to which survey findings are ‘generalizable’ where results can be applied to the wider population is determined by the survey design and sample selection (Saunders et al., 2016, Merriam and Tisdell, 2015). Data can expose causal relationships where an independent variable causes a change in a dependent variable.

A survey requires a thorough understanding of the best way to ask the important questions, in anticipation of a range of expected and unexpected responses, informed by analysis of literature. This survey determined whether young people’s interest in sustainability influenced their fashion consumption and provided insight into the evolving relationship between fashion brand and customer. From a Critical Realist perspective, the survey method offered an opportunity to consider underlying structures and different layers of reality, by looking beyond the superficial to understand a complex changing world. For example, the effect that communication young people receive from fashion brands has on their fashion consumption. In order to ensure data validity, a range of question formats including multiple choice and open ended were designed to avoid Common Method Bias (CMB) where variances in data are attributable to the measuring instrument rather than the construct (respondents’) answers (Cerri, et al., 2017). It was a structured survey whereby participants answered questions in the same order. The survey was pilot tested to ensure that questions were clear, easy to answer, and unambiguous and that it would provide data that was valid and reliable (Saunders, 2015). Finally, piloting tested data recording enabled evaluation of whether the data collected answered the research questions.

3.4.2 Pilot Study

The function of a pilot survey is to check that the investigative questions address what information is needed to answer the research questions and objectives (Bloomberg et al., 2014). Other determinations are ensuring that questions in the main survey instrument are unambiguous, clear and easily understood, making it easy for respondents to answer (Saunders, 2015). Conducting a pilot allows the researcher to refine the structure, content and design before implementing the main survey, thereby increasing the validity of the survey data. Other considerations tested in the pilot included length of time to complete, clarity of instructions, topic omissions and the layout (Bell and Waters, 2014).

There is a risk of contamination when data from a pilot is used in the larger study, (Ismail et al., 2018) particularly if the pilot instrument is unreliable and multiple changes are made between the design of the first and second instrument (Williams-Mcbean, 2019). This can lead to distorted data and biased or inaccurate analysis and findings, but can be prevented by leaving the decision about whether to include or exclude pilot data until the pilot is complete and the main survey is designed and evaluating the number of changes required (Williams-Mcbean, 2019). In this study 15 of the 20 questions were the same or included only minor

adjustments such as the age categories (Pilot – 18-23, 24-29, 30 or above, Main survey – 18-24, 25-30, 31 or over) and therefore the pilot data was added to the main data for analysis.
A convenience sample of 14 students taught by the researcher completed the pilot survey. This number is in line with guidelines recommending a minimum of ten responses for a research project of this nature (Fink, 2013). The sample was appropriate in aligning with the literature which identified under 25 year olds as the main consumers of fast fashion, and was similar to the main sample therefore its value was in exposing flaws in the survey design before the main survey was completed. (See Appendix 2). There were 21 questions in the pilot, three of which sought feedback about the number of questions and difficulties experienced in completing it. Evaluation of responses identified where changes were required before implementing the main survey. Three participants felt that 21 questions was '…a couple too many'; one participant felt that five should be the maximum number of multiple-choice answers; and one person felt that Q.11 was unclear. Other changes included adding a question about shopping to reflect the significance of this theme from the literature, and moving Q.3 to the Fashion and Sustainability section. The main survey instrument was up-dated to include these changes.

3.4.3 Sampling Strategy - Survey

Sampling refers to the selection of an appropriate group of people that share values relating to the research question (Hart, 2005:339). In this study, the survey represents the fashion consumer. Data collected from the sample suggest inferences about the larger population (Hart, 2005). Student samples have been widely used to examine the relationship between sustainable practice and consumer behaviour (Barone et al., 2007, Iyer and Kashayap, 2007) and fashion consumption (McNeill and Moore, 2015, Morgan & Birtwistle, 2009). Purposive sampling, defined as targeting a group of people for a particular purpose (Sekaran and Bougie, 2016), recruited participants that were predominantly under 25, the age group identified through the literature as the main protagonists of fast fashion, from Manchester Metropolitan University (MMU). The sample was also one of convenience as the researcher worked for the university and had access to students, making it a non-probability group. This is important insofar as it limits the suggestion that the findings are representative of the larger population, rather they are exploratory and provide insight for further research. The survey was e mailed to everyone within the Fashion department, Table 26 shows the demographic majorities i.e. 98% female and 88% were 18-24 years.

Participant Survey Sample

Gender	Female	98%
Age	18-24 years	88%
Demography	Student/Staff at MMU	Not confirmed by the survey, but as 88% were less than 24 years old it is probable that most were students not staff.

Table 26: Participant Sample for online survey.

3.4.4 Data collection – Survey.

Although the broad survey themes emerged from the literature, it was important from a CR perspective to allow new ideas that might answer the research questions to emerge. This approach led to the collection of quantitative and qualitative data providing both statistical and exploratory data.

Data findings are more robust if drawn from a large sample size, the larger the sample size, the more closely the distribution to normal, and the more likely they are to be representative of the population from which they are drawn (Saunders et al., 2016, Merriam and Tisdell, 2015). A sample size of no less than 30 has proved to be a reliable indicator for analysis (Stutely, 2003). Therefore, the target number of responses within a two-week period was 30 – 100. The data collection period was the beginning of Term 3 (April 2019). The survey link was e mailed to more than 4,000 students and staff via the MMU intranet – Moodle.

Reminders were sent on day seven and one day before the survey closed. It was important to maximise the sample size to increase the representativeness of the results (Biggs & Buchler, 2008). Table 27 indicates the effectiveness of the two reminders in achieving the targeted number of responses, so that a second phase was not required.

Mid-point (Day 7)	24
One day before the end (Day 13)	54
End of survey (Day 14)	63

Table 27: Number of Completed Surveys at different stages of data collection.

To maximise the number of completed surveys, a technique of virtual snowballing asked participants to forward the survey link to others through their social networks. As this method results in non-random participants, it is important to acknowledge the potential for bias (Faugier and Sargeant, 1997). The survey was voluntary, and self-administered online, which has the advantage of reaching a large number of people, eliminating interview bias and using a channel with which young people are comfortable (Duffett, 2014). However, Bhattacherjee (2012) argues that this method yields a low response rate, borne out here with 63/4000 completed surveys, yielding a response rate of just 1.5%.

The pilot survey used Microsoft Forms; however, software limitations prevented the inclusion of a Participant Information Sheet and Consent Form, required for ethical approval. An investigation into other survey software providers included Qualtrics, Survey Monkey and Online Surveys. Although some faculties within MMU have licences for Qualtrics, it was not available in Arts & Humanities and cost US $1500 for an individual user, which made it prohibitive. Survey Monkey advised that a single user license was required for the survey format required at a cost of £1,185. Whilst assessing these options, MMU's IT department recommended Online Surveys, available to all MMU staff, and meeting all the survey requirements. (Part of Jisc https://www.onlinesurveys.ac.uk). A final test with a colleague reviewed the link and questions of this new software. Question format included multiple choice, free text and ranking statements in order of preferences. The data collected was both quantitative and qualitative.

The first two pages were the Participant Information Sheet and Consent Form, followed by four sections containing 20 questions. Beginning with demographic information about age and gender, the remaining sections reflect the three key themes emerging from the Literature review: fashion consumption, sustainability and communication. (See Appendix 3).
The Fashion and Shopping section of the survey was to reveal participant preferences, including shopping channels, frequency, and budget, views on prices, motivation and priorities for buying clothes. The sustainability questions aimed to reveal participant interest in sustainability, and paying higher prices for sustainable products.

3.4.5 Data Analysis - Survey.

Most survey questions were designed to confirm or test theory arising from the literature review. They were multiple-choice questions designed to collect quantitative data. Questions were organised into sections based on three themes arising from the literature: fashion and shopping, fashion and sustainability, and fashion communication. Further sub themes from the literature determined the subject of each individual question. For example, one of the sub themes was that sustainable fashion costs more than fast fashion. Within the section on fashion and shopping Question 7 sought survey respondents' views about the price of clothes, to assess views on the current price of clothes and provide insight into whether they would resist paying higher prices for sustainable products. The data reduction process analysed responses from all completed surveys to find the most popular choice. The results were displayed as percentages, rounded to the nearest whole number. This question was answered by 70 participants, 37 of them (53%) selected that the price of clothes they buy are 'About right', 27 participants (38%) selected 'Good value' and the remaining 6 participants (9%) found clothes to be 'Expensive'. The finding arising from this question therefore is that some consumers who consider fashion to be good value may pay more for sustainable clothes. This area is worthy of further research.

Two survey questions that were not multiple choice, asked respondents to 'describe sustainable fashion' and 'describe any communication received from fashion brands about sustainability'. (Q11 from the fashion and sustainability section and Q20 from the fashion communication section). The sub themes here relate to the complexity of language and understanding of sustainability by consumers and fashion brands. Data from these questions were qualitative, useful for finding patterns and exploration. The process of analysing qualitative data required an additional coding stage as respondents used their own words, rather than selecting from words provided by the multiple-choice options. For example, in question 11 responses were, coded, analysed and grouped into eight sub-themes: re-cycling, longevity, fabrics, circular, transparency, environment, social and ethical. The frequency of the occurrence revealed dominant themes which were the environment, (mentioned by 56%), social sustainability (mentioned by 38%) and longevity (mentioned by 19%) of the total 63 respondents. Some respondents mentioned more than one theme explaining why the percentages do not total 100%. These findings support the need for further research around the language of sustainability and interest in different aspects of it.

A CR approach looks for data trends and patterns to identify themes originally grounded in the literature, but that can change as findings emerge during the analysis process (Fletcher, 2017). The first stage of data analysis was determining how the data would be organized and understood, the second was deciding a meaningful way to display the results.

In this study, quantitative data was analysed and displayed using Excel and descriptive statistics including tabulation and graphics – bar charts, and pie charts which record, summarise and display data from survey and case studies. Data analysis involves processing raw data into tools such as graphs, tables and word clouds, in order to describe and examine themes, trends and relationships between them (Saunders, 2015).

Qualitative data or data expressed through words requires a classification process before it can be analysed. The first step is organising data into codes, which are phrases or short sequences of text, which group data by meaning or concept. In order to reduce the number of different pieces of data, codes are arranged into categories, which in turn are grouped into themes (Daniel and Harland, 2017). In this study inductive coding, where codes were based on collected data were used, meaning that the codes were not known until data collection was completed. Finally, thematic analysis examines themes and the relationship between them (Thematic Analysis Inc, 2020, online). Figure 17 illustrates how quantitative and qualitative data were reduced and displayed to prepare for the Results and Findings discussion in Chapter 4.

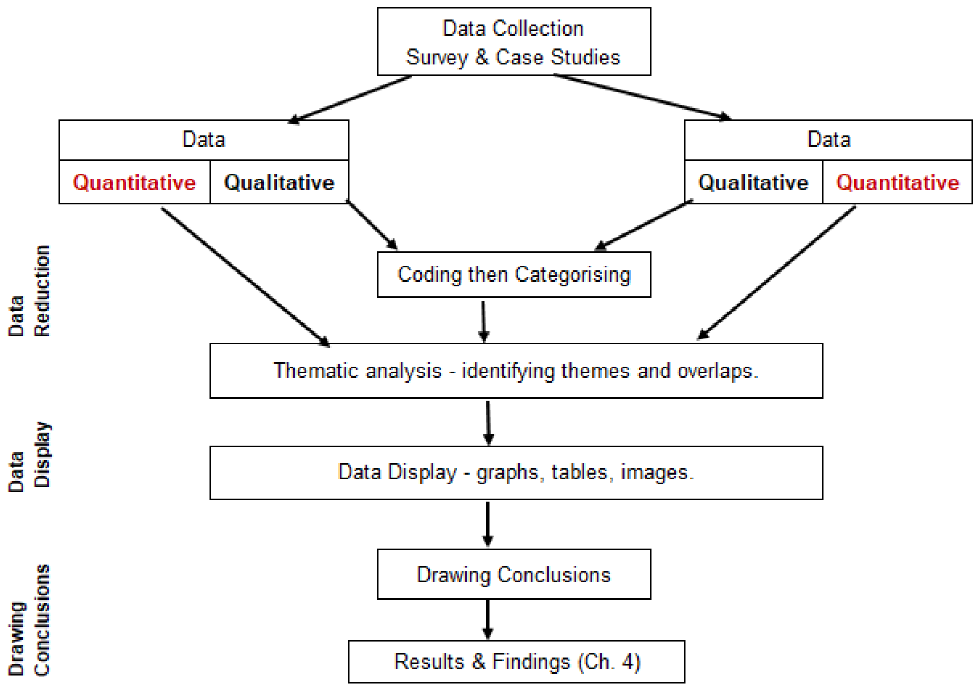


Figure 17: Process of data analysis - survey & case studies, informed by Miles and Huberman (1994)

3.4.6 Case Studies Design

In order to examine themes emerging from the LR and the Survey, the second research method selected were case studies. This reflects a grounded theory approach by examining and explaining social processes and behaviour from emerging data patterns. Eisenhardt (1989) defines the case study approach as one, which focuses on understanding the dynamics present within a single setting, although data from more than one case may be used. Case studies build theory from data as part of multi-level data collection and analysis (Eisenhardt, 1989). A case study is advantageous in answering how or why questions (Yin 2003:7). Typically, specified cases or samples are used. The selection for this study emerged from an open-ended survey question, which asked participants to list the main three brands that they buy. The data set consisted of quantitative and qualitative data for analysis, leading to the emergence and inclusion of descriptive, exploratory and explanatory theories. Eisenhardt (1989) recommends a flexible and opportunistic approach to data collection, in this study, an additional component was added to the store data collection in response to limited information in shops relating to sustainability; this is discussed in Section 3.4.8.

A distinguishing feature of case study research is that it allows detailed investigation in the context or real-life setting (Yin, 2014). The researcher probes and analyses a particular entity or characteristic and seeks to understand the dynamics of it within boundaries they define. 'Case study research requires a structure that allows the context to be described and its analytical importance to be established, but also maintains a balance between description, analysis & interpretation. An in-depth inquiry can identify what is happening and why, leading to an understanding and implications for further research or action (Saunders, 2015).

A Critical Realist approach influenced the decision to have a case study to explore fashion and sustainability from a brand perspective; it built on information from the survey, which identified consumer views on fashion brands, shopping and communication channels. A feature of a Critical Realist approach is using more than one method to collect data, Stage 2 of this data collection process, was case studies. The case study selection was determined by responses to the survey, the Researcher designed the data collection templates to probe beyond the superficial and expose causal relationships such as the effect that in-store messages from fashion brands have on the consumer.

The design of the case study was descriptive, exploratory and explanatory. Descriptive in searching for themes about message content. Exploratory in identifying new insight into how fashion brands encourage consumption through their communication with customers through quantitative data about frequency of posts on social media or results from using the 'Search' function on web sites.. Explanatory by focussing on a particular problem in order to explain a relationship between variables.

Informed by the survey, qualitative and quantitative data was collected from three fast fashion brands and three different sources: web sites, shops and social media, to examine one phenomena - brand communication. Templates were used to ensure consistent data collection for comparative and conclusive analysis. (See Table 28 and Appendices 7, 8 , 9). Checklists and Observations (descriptive and evaluative) collected data from each of the three brands web sites. Table 29 shows the plan for the number of visits to the case study stores. The focus of the third case study data collection was social media. Instagram, was selected because it is the most significant Social Media channel (You Guv, 2019). Checklists and observations were used to record consistent and structured data, which included brand posts and customer responses also providing insight into the interaction between the two parties. Data collection was primarily in July 2019 and therefore represents a snapshot in time rather than an exhaustive study. Figure 18 illustrates the structure of data collection from primary and secondary sources.

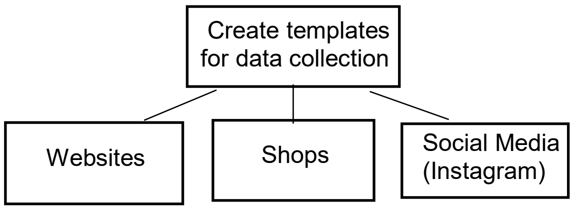


Figure 18: Case study data collection.

3.4.7 Sampling strategy – Case Studies

The purpose of the case study was to record and analyse the content, style and frequency of communication between fashion brands and consumers. Data from two of the survey questions (representing the consumer) informed the case study sampling. In Question 3: participants listed the main three brands where they bought their clothes and in Question 4: they selected their preferred shopping channels. The results and findings are discussed in Chapter 4.

3.4.8 Data collection – Case Studies.

Methods or data types do not limit a grounded theory approach, which uses quantitative and qualitative data from a range of sources to find meaning and develop theoretical concepts, whilst acknowledging the researchers influence in the process. In this study, purposive sampling directed by survey data determined the case study selection.

Templates were used to record data for each of the three channels so that information collected was consistent, valid and useful for analysis, please see Table 28 (Appendices 7, 8, 9).

Data Collection from stores.		Data collection from web sites.				Data collection from Instagram	
Data Collection from stores.	Date & time..	Data Collection from w/s.	Date & time..			Number of posts	Date & time..
1) Product labels & swing tickets		Pages		Features, User Interface	Contents	Number of likes	
Information on product tickets (Sustainable/CoO/Fabrics)		Home		Slider	Products Page	Type of posts	
Information on product labels: (Sustainable/CoO/Fabrics)		Front End		Header & Footer	Services Page	Themes	
2)Point of Sale information		About		Above the Fold	Call to action	Posts re Sustainability	
3)Other in store messages		Product		Navigation menu	Blog		
4)Recycling		FAQ's		Sidebar			
5)Staff knowledge		Contact		Infinite Scrolling			
Question - Do you have any ranges or garments that are sustainably sourced?		Press/News		Mobile compatibility			
Miscellaneous		Blogger		Colour, aesthetic appeal			
Themes from LR & Survey: Environment, Social Sustainability, Recycling, Circular, Transparency, Longevity, Ethical, Fabrics				User interface & experience			
		Themes from LR & Survey: Environment, Social Sustainability, Recycling, Circular, Transparency, Longevity, Ethical, Fabrics				Themes from LR & Survey: Environment, Social Sustainability, Recycling, Circular, Transparency, Longevity, Ethical, Fabrics	

Table 28: Templates used for data collection in stores, web sites and Instagram.

A reflective approach led to minor modifications of the templates such as speaking to store staff about sustainable products when there was little or no other visible information in stores about sustainable products and ranges. Data was collected concurrently from three different channels, shops, web sites and Instagram. The bracketed numbers indicate recurrences, for example 4 shop visits, and 7 visits to Instagram and web sites. The complete schedule is shown in Table 29.

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
1 **Create Templates Pilot web site & Instagram data collection**	**2** **Create Templates Pilot store data collection**	**3** **Top Shop & Zara shops(1) Web site data collection -all brands (1)**	**4** **Web site data collection all brands (2)**	**5** **n/a**	**6** **n/a**	**7** **n/a**
8 **Top Shop & Zara shops(2) Web site data collection - all brands(3)**	**9** **Instagram data collection (1)**	**10** **Top Shop & Zara shops(3) Web site data collection all brands (4)**	**11** **Web site data collection - all brands(5)**	**12** **Instagram data collection (2)**	**13** **Instagram data collection (3)**	**14** **Web site data collection (6)**
15 **Top Shop & Zara shops(4) Web site data collection (7)**	**16** **Instagram data collection (4)**	**17** **Instagram data collection (5)**	**18** **n/a**	**19** **Instagram data collection (6)**	**20** **Instagram data collection (7)**	**21** **n/a**

Table 29: Case study data collection schedule – July 2019

There were four visits to the two brands that have shops, Topshop and Zara on 3rd, 8th, 10th and 15th July in Manchester city centre and the Trafford Centre (red font). Data was collected from all three brands, including ASOS on seven occasions from web sites (black font) and a further seven dates from Instagram (blue font). All case study data collection was completed 3rd – 20th July. This provided sufficient insight into the current narrative and developed a foundation for developing appropriate sustainable communication within the planned research timescale.

A feature of case study research is an opportunistic approach throughout the data collection process (Eisenhardt, 1989, which allows the researcher to modify what is collected in reaction to what has emerged. In this case, it became clear from the first two store visits to Topshop and Zara that their signage provided little or no information about sustainability, therefore Element 5 was added to the template to record responses from store staff when asked about whether there were sustainable garments and/or ranges on sale (See Table).

3.4.9 Data analysis – Case Studies.

A combined CR and grounded approach to analysing the data, led to a coding process, the first stage in developing meaning. This process recognises the influence of the researcher throughout the process and allows themes to emerge (Fletcher, 2017). A Critical Realist perspective drew on both quantitative and qualitative data to enable a deep understanding of how fast fashion brands communicate with their customers. A two-step evaluation known as retroduction, beginning with the experience of sensations and events, followed by mental processing that goes on by reasoning backwards, analysed message content from fashion brands (Reed, 2005). Much of the interaction between fashion brands and consumers is image driven; therefore, data collection included images and language.

Quantitative data collection focused on the frequency of messages or posts from fashion brands across selected platforms to provide data for statistical analysis. The framework for analysis of the quantitative data from the case studies was Descriptive Statistics including, tabulation and graphics (bar chart, pie chart line charts). Analysis of the case study data involved cross checking facts and discrepancies from different sources to collaborate and support the findings. Results were displayed using tables and charts to record event frequencies and themes.

As described in Section 3.4.9 and Figure 17, all case study data was reduced to meaningful overlapping themes for display and drawing conclusions (Miles and Huberman, 1994) in preparation for Chapter 4, Results and Findings.

3.5 Ethical Considerations

An important aspect of research is that the process is ethically sound. From a methodological stance, this refers to safeguarding the interests and concerns of anyone involved in the process (Robson, 2002:18). However, its application is broader in that ethical considerations influence the design, implementation and reporting at all stages of the research process (Hart, 2005). Table 22 summarises how ethical considerations applied to this study, for example by ensuring that the survey data was anonymous and protected, and in the case studies by maintaining meticulously consistent records throughout the data collection period.

Participants for the survey were recruited from MMU but those taught by the researcher were excluded in order to avoid bias. The survey informed them that their answers were anonymous and confidential, and that by answering the survey questions they were consenting to take part in the study. No personal data was collected as the survey was anonymous. Participants could withdraw at any point. The data was restricted to the researcher and their supervisors and destroyed after six months. Explanations of the terms ‘sustainability’ and ‘fashion brand’ were provided before the questions were presented. Question designs were structured sensitively, so that there was an appropriate option for all participants to select from. The data collection method was subject to ethical approval by MMU.

Ethical influence on the methodology through all stages: designing, implementing and reporting.				
Designing	Including clear definitions	Considering and justifying methods	Thorough Literature Review	Independent Action
Survey	‘Sustainability’ & ‘Fashion Brands’ defined in the Introduction to the survey	Anonymous survey with no contact with the researcher enabled respondents to be honest.	Ensuring that survey questions were informed and fairly reflected a consumer perspective, informed through the LR.	The design based on the researchers work with supervisory support.
Case study	n/a	n/a	Although the literature highlighted many brands for possible focus, the selected three should emanate from the survey findings.	The design based on the researchers work with supervisory support.
Implementing	Respecting others	Avoiding mistakes	Being self-reflective	Un-biased collection
Survey	Advising participants how long the survey takes to complete, and being open for two weeks to accommodate individual time.	Piloting the survey with a small group of participants.	Receiving & acting on feedback positively, and being receptive to changes.	Defining the sample selection. Using all data collected
Case study	n/a	Piloting data collection templates before starting the data collection period.	Receiving & acting on feedback positively, and being receptive to changes.	Maintaining meticulous and consistent records throughout the two-week data collection period.
Reporting	Attributing ideas appropriately	Ensuring the integrity of data	Safeguarding confidential information	Maintaining authorship standards
Survey	Rigorous review of the Literature to avoid missing anything. Referencing other people’s words & ideas.	Using data as presented, representing the findings as they are. Conclusions supported by data.	No personal data as data collected anonymously. Data was password protected and destroyed after six months.	Acknowledging data sources appropriately.
Case study	Rigorous review of the Literature to avoid missing anything. Referencing other people’s words & ideas	Using data as presented, representing the findings as they are. Conclusions supported by data.	n/a	Acknowledging data sources appropriately.

Table 30: Influence of ethical considerations throughout three key stages of research, informed by Hart, 2005.

The case study did not involve participants, so ethical considerations revolved around consistency of collecting and analysing data to ensure its integrity. (Appendices 4, 5, 6).

3.6 Limitations of the Study

Some of the findings in this research are limited by the survey and case study sample selection in terms of size and generalizability to a) the wider population and b) the fashion industry.

Literature about 'fast fashion consumers' is generalised, clearly not all statements made can or will relate to the whole of this group.
Although survey participants represented the targeted age range for this study, they comprised of students who have unique characteristics relating to age, lifestyle and income (Su, 2018). Further exploration in this field should extend beyond the student population and include larger samples thereby increasing the representativeness of the findings. The data for analysis from the online survey was self-reported and participation was on a self-selecting basis, increasing the tendency for bias and not representative of young fashion consumers. Characteristics of this group are likely to include a higher level of motivation and empowerment than a non-self-selecting sample (Cecile et al., 2012). Another consideration with online recruitment is that the sample population is unknown to the researcher, pointing to the need for further replication and research (Cecile et al., 2012).

The empirical nature of case studies results in observational findings, where explanations are appraised solely by the researcher, subject to researcher bias and therefore only partly conclusive. They offer depth of study and relatability, rather than generalizability (Biggam, 2009). The case study sample in this study consisted of data collected from a two-week period, offering a snapshot in time during July 2019. The seasonal and trend led nature of fashion means that findings would be different at another time of year. Data collected from the three most popular brands identified from the survey may not represent mainstream fashion brands or the fast fashion industry. Extending the data collection phase and including other brands would improve the reliability and gain a better understanding of the reasons behind the findings, to give a more comprehensive basis for analysis and recommendations.

3.7 Chapter Summary

This chapter has detailed the rationale and operational decisions that have fulfilled the Research Aim, Objectives and Questions. It has explained and outlined all stages of the research process that qualify its *validity* - absence of bias and *replicability* – provision of comprehensive detail enabling others to replicate and trust the methodology. This included examining the researchers' philosophical perspective and its' influence on the research process. It concluded with an analysis of research methods to determine which best answered the aims and objectives of the study as exposed by gaps in extant literature.
Beliefs and values influence all stages of the process from scoping out the original research question, interpreting and describing findings to proposing avenues for future research. Failure to declare a researchers philosophical approach risks losing the objectivity and validity of the research output. The HARP questionnaire revealed that the researcher fell mainly into the Critical Realist category. This approach led to the selection of the research topic, which was formed from personal experience of working in the fashion industry. Using mixed methods (survey and case studies) to collect data from a range of sources (consumers, shops, web sites, Instagram) that were interpreted from a social science perspective characterise a CR approach. Reflecting back on the process to identify elements to change if repeated was another way of ensuring transparency and highlighting the researcher's frame of reference. For example if the survey was to be repeated some of the

ranking questions would be replaced by open- ended questions for deeper exploration of consumer views about fashion and shopping. A grounded theory approach that examined and explained social patterns and behaviour and allowed the research question to dictate the method selection was appropriate for the theme of this research. Although research questions were developed through an examination of the literature, the interpretation of primary data was independent of it. This approach permits new themes to emerge rather than testing existing ones.

Once the researchers' philosophical stance was declared the next stage was selecting the most effective way to solve a research problem. The research strategy considered the nature of the research question, and how best to answer it. It explained how the design linked the collected data to the research investigation and demonstrated a systematic process to ensure validity.

Analysis of the literature revealed a gap about the impact of the relationship between fashion brand and consumer on sustainable consumption, a range of emergent data collection methods was considered before selecting surveys and case studies. Both methods are appropriate for examining contemporary situations (Yin, 2003) and behaviour, and allow data sets from one to inform the other (Zachariadis et al., 2010). The other advantage was that quantitative and qualitative were collected and in the case studies changes to data collection in the field were made in response to early findings (Eisenhardt, 1987). Targeting young people, the survey provided a deep understanding of the consumer perspective on fashion, sustainability and communication from fashion brands. The case studies focused on how the three most popular brands from the survey communicate with their customers. The combined data provided new insights into the relationship between consumers and fashion brands.

The ethical section focussed on two aspects: a) protecting those involved in the research b) maintenance of accurate records at all stages to avoid bias and demonstrate transparency.

Most research is limited by time or budget as such the survey and case study methods represent a snapshot in time of a small sample that has limited generalizability. Data from case studies was interpreted solely by the researcher, which provided depth rather than generalizability to all fast fashion brands.

The comprehensive detail in this chapter creates a solid foundation for the 'Results and Findings' and 'Summary and Analysis'. The survey findings are organised by themes from the literature: Fashion, Sustainability and Communication, and the case study findings are analysed by channel: Web sites, Shops (including Product Labelling) and Social Media – Instagram.

Chapter 4 Results and Findings

4.1 Introduction

This chapter summarises the results and findings of the selected methods: the survey, which provided insight into young people's attitudes and engagement with fashion and sustainability; and the case study that explored how fashion brands communicate with their customers. Table 31 indicates how the themes emerging from the literature review led to the subject to be investigated through the Survey and Case studies. For example, analysis of the literature established that language around sustainability is confusing. The survey asked participants to explain what sustainability means, and to describe language about sustainability used by fashion brands in communication received from them. The case studies examined communication between fashion brands and consumers through the three main channels (web sites, shops & social media) to reveal how the three most popular fashion brands communicate about sustainability.

Summary of how primary research design & methods investigate the literature review themes.								
Sustainability in the fashion industry (LR Section. 2.2)	**Survey Section C**	Case Studies	**Fashion consumption (LR Section 2.3)**	**Survey Section B**	Case Studies	**Fashion communication (LR Section 2.4)**	**Survey Section D**	Case Studies
What is sustainability	✔		Fast fashion brands	✓	✔	Communication about sustainability	✓	✔
Corporate Social responsibility	X	✔	Fast fashion consumers	✓	✓	Fashion brand communication	✔	✔
Sustainability in the fashion industry	✔	✓	The purchasing (consumption) process	✓	✓	Channels of communication	✔	✔
Social sustainability	✓	✓	Attitude-behaviour	✔	✓	Corporate Social Responsibility	X	✔
Environmental sustainability	✓	✓	Sustainable fashion consumption	✓	X			
Sustainability of UK fashion brands	✓	✔	Attitude-behaviour gap	✔				
Sustainability of UK consumers	✔	✓						
✔ - very relevant, ✓ - relevant, X not relevant								

Table 31 – Summary of how primary research design & methods investigated the literature review themes.

4.2 Survey (Consumer insight).

4.2.1 Introduction to Survey

The results and findings from the survey represent views of a sample of fast fashion consumers. Section A - *General Information about you* included age and gender. Section B established attitudes and behaviours towards – *Fashion and Shopping,* including the most popular fast fashion brands (ASOS, Topshop, Zara), which became the case study selection. Section C – *Fashion and Sustainability* collected answers on attitude and behaviour about sustainability and the final Section D, *Communication with fashion brands,* asked respondents about the frequency and content of communication received from fashion brands, particularly the language. A summary is provided in Table 32.

Section A Attribute variables	Section B	Section C Opinion and Behavioural variables	Section D
General information about you.	Fashion & Shopping	Fashion & Sustainability	Communication with fashion brands.
Age & gender of respondent	Attitude & behaviour & most popular brands.	Attitude & , behaviour & language about sustainability.	Frequency, content & language of brand communication.

Table 32 Survey sections and content.

Survey Questions 1 and 2 established that 98% of the respondents were female, and 88% were aged between 18-24 years. As such, this sample represents fast fashion consumers identified in the literature (See P29, Section 2.3.2). The sequential mixed method approach determined the case study sampling of fashion brands, shopping and communication channels.

Question 3 was an open-ended question, which asked the participants to list the brands where they bought their clothes. Analysis of the data including participants first, second and third choices and revealed that the three most popular brands were Topshop, Zara and ASOS. (See Figure 19)

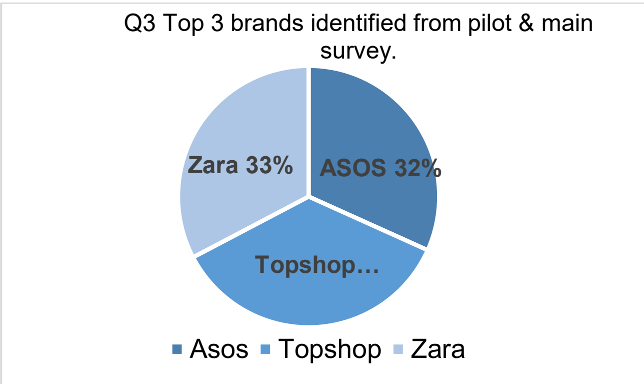


Figure 19: Popular brands from the survey, which identified case study samples.

Survey respondents completed a ranking question (Q4) about shopping preferences with five possible answers. Analysis of the data identified that the most common answer was shopping on websites (28%), closely followed by going to shops (25%), then using shopping apps on phones (18%). See Figure 20 for full results.

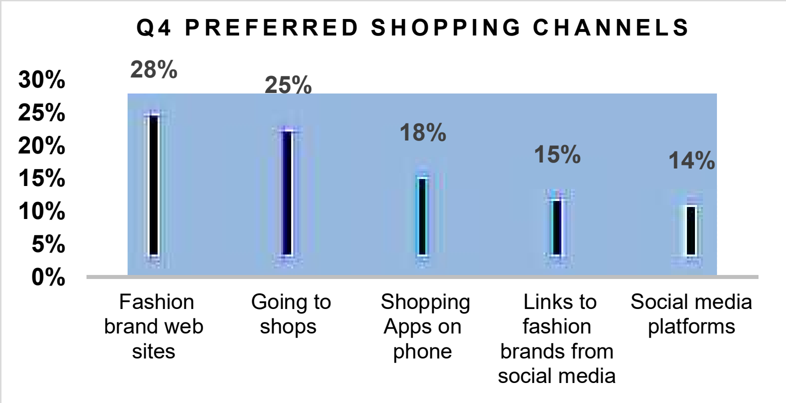


Figure 20: Survey responses about preferred ways to shop for fashion.

Questions 16 and 19, about communication, identified social media as the most popular channel for learning about the news (28%) and second most popular for information about sustainability (27%). Information on web sites and in shops was the first choice for the majority of survey participants (29%) to find information about sustainability. (Figure 21)

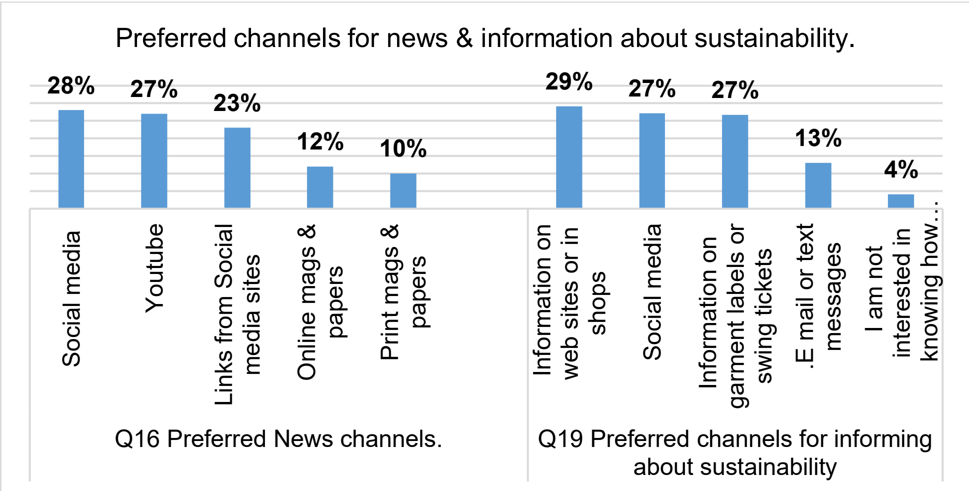


Figure 21: Survey responses about preferred News and Sustainability channels.

Table 33 shows the eight most popular fashion brands and highlights the final three significant channels for shopping and communication. It illustrates that although YouTube was the second most popular way of learning about the news, it was not significant for shopping or learning about sustainability, and was therefore not included in the case study selection. The survey results therefore determined that the case study sample of fashion brands was Topshop, Zara and ASOS, and channels for shopping and communication were web sites, shops and social media.

Popular brands from survey (26 brands in total)		Summary of preferred overall channels from the survey.	Preferred shopping channels Q4	Preferred channels for news & current affairs Q16	Preferred channels for fashion brands to inform about sustainability Q19
Top Shop	1st	Social media platforms	n/a	1st	3rd
ASOS	2nd	Fashion brand web site	1st	n/a	=1st
Zara	3rd	Shops	2nd	n/a	=1st
Pretty Little Thing	4th	Fashion brand e mails	n/a	n/a	n/a
H & M	5th	Fashion brand shopping apps	3rd	n/a	n/a
Primark	=6th	YouTube	n/a	2nd	0
New Look	=6th	Links from social media sites	4th	3rd	0
Urban Outfitters	8th	Information on swing tickets or labels	n/a	n/a	3rd

Table 33: Influence of survey results in determining the sampling strategy of the case studies.

4.2.2 Fashion and Shopping.

The first section of the survey was designed to gain a deeper understanding of young people's fashion shopping including the channels they use to shop, shopping frequency and motivation for buying and wearing clothes.

Question 5 was a multiple choice single answer question - established how often respondents bought new clothes. Figure 22 illustrates that the most popular answer selected by 44% was that they bought clothes once a month. However, the second biggest group - 35% - bought clothes once a week. The category between – 'Less than once a month' was selected by 21%.

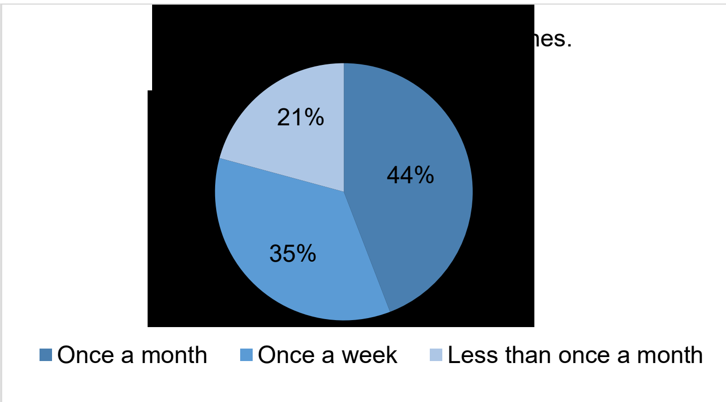


Figure 22: Survey responses showing frequency of clothes buying.

Following frequency of purchasing it was important to establish how much young people spent on clothes. Analysis of data from Question 6 (Figure 23) revealed that 46% of survey respondents spend £50 - £150 per month on clothes, closely followed by ‘Less than £50’ selected by 41%. The least common answer was ‘More than £150’, selected by just 13%.

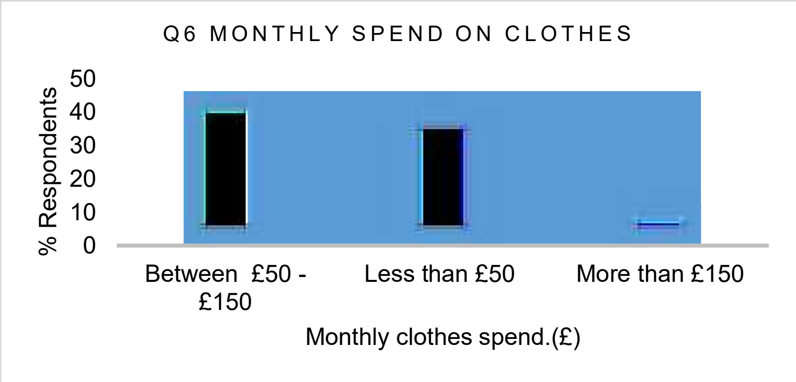


Figure 23: Survey results relating to money spent on clothes.

It is useful to know the frequency and budget of young people’s clothes buying but perhaps there is greater value in understanding their motivation for buying new clothes, as revealed through questions 8 and 9. Participants ranked in order of importance from multiple choices their **reasons** (Q8) and **priorities** (Q9) for buying clothes. See Figure 24. In question 8, analysis of the data shows 54% of the participants buy clothes because it *'makes them feel good'*. Buying clothing for a specific occasion was the second most selected answer with 32%. An unexpected result was that only 6% placed *'posting images on social media'* as the main reason from the given options for buying new clothes. Analysis of the responses to Question 9 clearly show that the priority for young women buying clothes relates to appearance with 48% selecting this option. ‘Fit’ was the second largest category, selected by 32%; and only 6% selected ‘*knowledge of how clothes are made*’ as a priority when buying clothes.

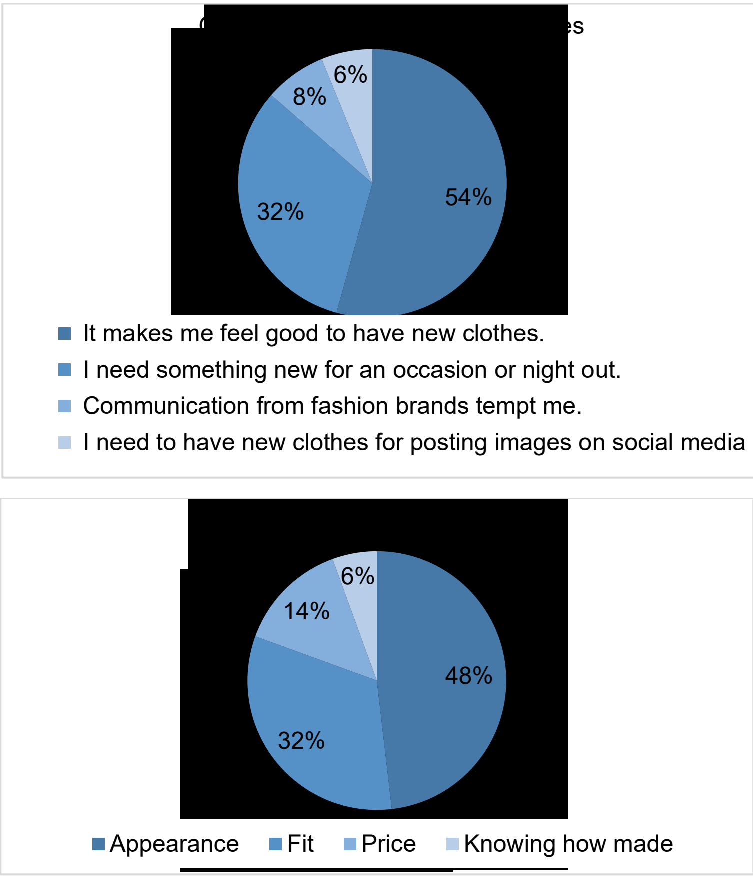


Figure 24: Survey responses (Q8 & Q9) ‘Reasons & Priorities’ for buying new clothes’.

<u>4.2.3 Fashion and Sustainability.</u>

Having established reasons for buying clothes it was pertinent to investigate frequency of wearing. Contrary to some of the findings from the literature (Joung, 2013, Chau, 2012), Question 10 revealed that none of the survey respondents reported wearing clothes only once and the vast majority (62%) reported that they wore an item ‘*more than 10 times*’, as shown in Figure 25.

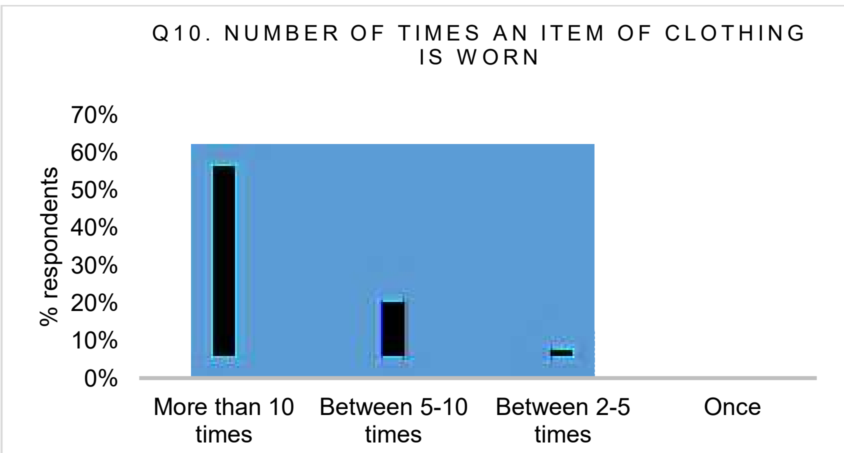


Figure 25: Survey results on frequency of wearing an item of clothing.

Analysis of the literature revealed that some fast fashion sells below cost (ILO, 2017) and is therefore unsustainably low. The survey results indicated that the majority of consumers (53%)

thought that prices were 'About right'. The second biggest group perceived fast fashion to be 'Good value' (Figure 26). This suggests that there may be scope for trialling marginal price increases on sustainable products whilst measuring the impact on sales.

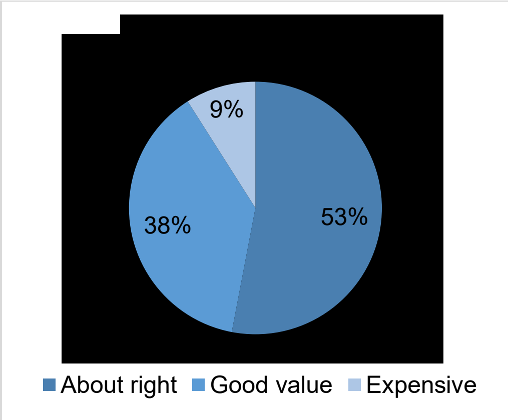


Figure 26: Survey results relating to the value of clothes.

Leading on from consumers view on fast fashion prices, a multiple choice single answer question (Q14), determined if and to what extent young people would pay more for sustainable products. The results indicated that 90% of the respondents would buy sustainable clothes even if they were more expensive. The most common answer, selected by 41%, was that they would pay up to 10% more. This was, closely followed by 33% who were prepared to pay up to 30% more. In fact, 12% of respondents reported that they would pay an additional 30% for sustainable products, whilst only 14% were not prepared to pay a higher price. (Figure 27) This is explored in Chapter 5 in relation to the attitude-behaviour gap.

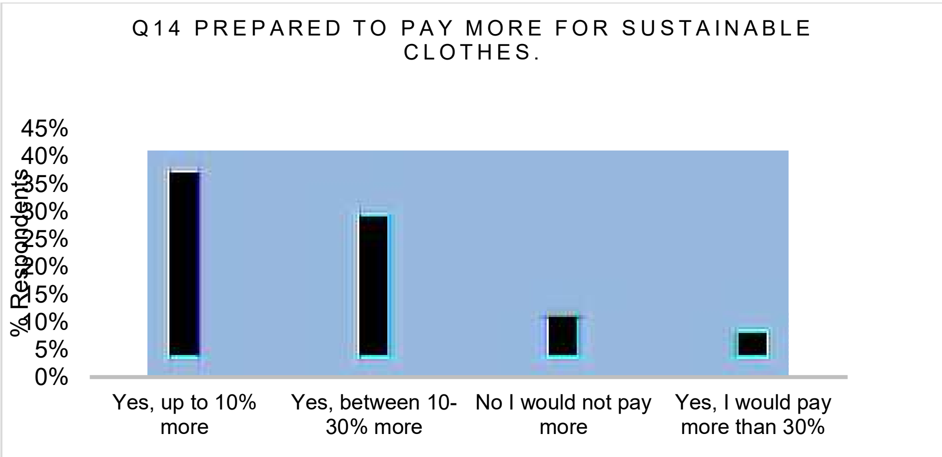


Figure 27: Survey responses 'Higher prices for sustainable clothes'.

Question 11 related to consumer views on sustainability, specifically, to reveal the language and words that they were using. It was an open-ended question where participants described '*sustainable fashion'* in their words. (Where respondents mentioned more than one theme, all have been included). The content of all answers was analysed and coded into the following themes: Environment, Social, Longevity, Fabrics, Re-Cycling, Circular, Ethical and Transparency. It is important to remind the reader here that the survey participants were all studying fashion and may have used terms unfamiliar to the wider population. The 'environment' was the most frequently occurring word in connection to sustainability, found in 36% of all responses. Social sustainability was the second biggest category, mentioned in 25% of responses, followed by Longevity (representing 12%). Figure 28 shows the percentage of respondents that mentioned the other themes when describing sustainable fashion.

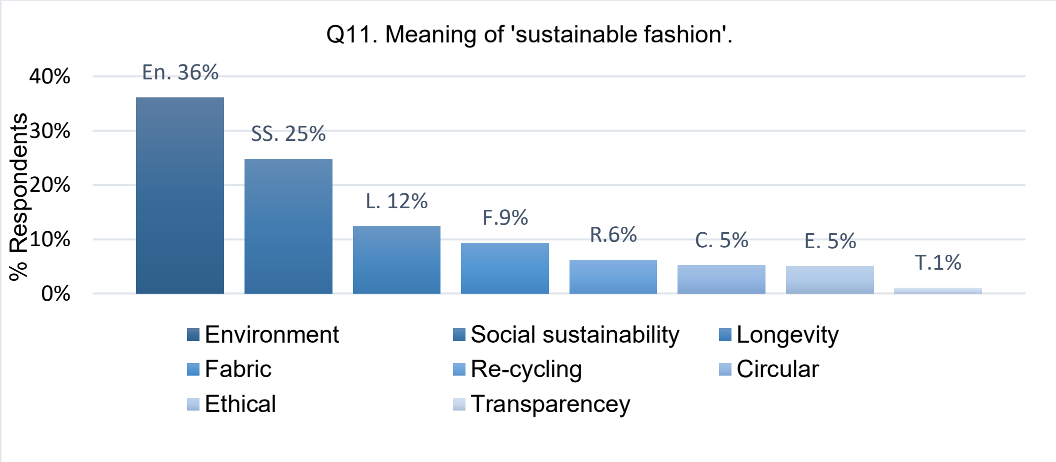


Figure 28: Survey responses 'Meaning of Sustainable Fashion'

A small number of answers describing sustainable fashion fell outside these themes but were recorded for further analysis. These included; '*Not fast throw away fashion*', '*Vintage and thrift*', '*I want brands that I currently buy from to offer sustainable product. I would not switch to another just because of sustainability*' and '*A student with limited budget I find it hard to find sustainable clothes that are fashionable and cheap.*'

Question 13 investigated the extent to which survey respondents' buying behaviour reflected their interest in sustainability. The conclusion was that 48% stated that although they were interested in how their clothes are made, it did not influence what they actually bought. A further 34% reported that they avoided buying from brands where they had concerns about how clothes are made, and 17% preferred to know how their clothes were made. (See Figure 29)

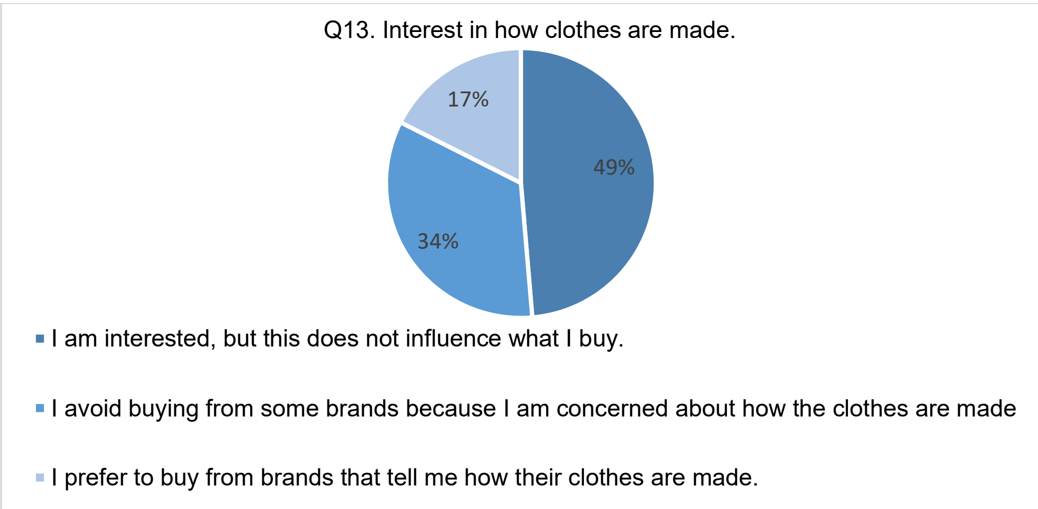


Figure 29: Survey findings relating to interest in clothes production.

The purpose of Question 15, a multiple choice ranking question, was to establish from four possible options which was the most likely to motivate consumers to make a sustainable purchase. Based on respondents' first choice answers, 38% of participants chose the environment, and 29% selected treatment of factory workers. Brand sustainability initiatives and treatment of staff were in third and fourth place with 18% and 15% respectively. Figure 30 shows the full results.

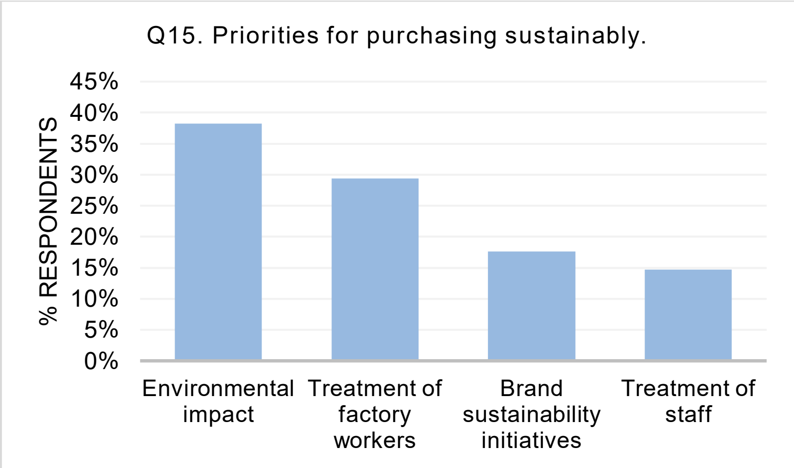


Figure 30: Survey results relating to motivation for purchasing sustainably.

The findings from this question about sustainable purchasing priorities support those from Question 11 where respondents described the meaning of sustainable fashion. In both cases, the environment was the most important and social sustainability, including the treatment of factory workers, was the second.

4.2.4 Communication between fashion brands and consumers.

The remaining survey questions encouraged fashion consumers to share views about frequency and content of communication. Question 12 investigated the extent of this group's interest in news and global issues including sustainability. Figure 31 shows that 48% of survey respondents considered that they were knowledgeable about news and current affairs. By contrast, the smallest number (4%) stated that they were not interested in the news. The second most popular answer, chosen by 27% of participants, was that they are concerned about poverty and deprivation in the world.

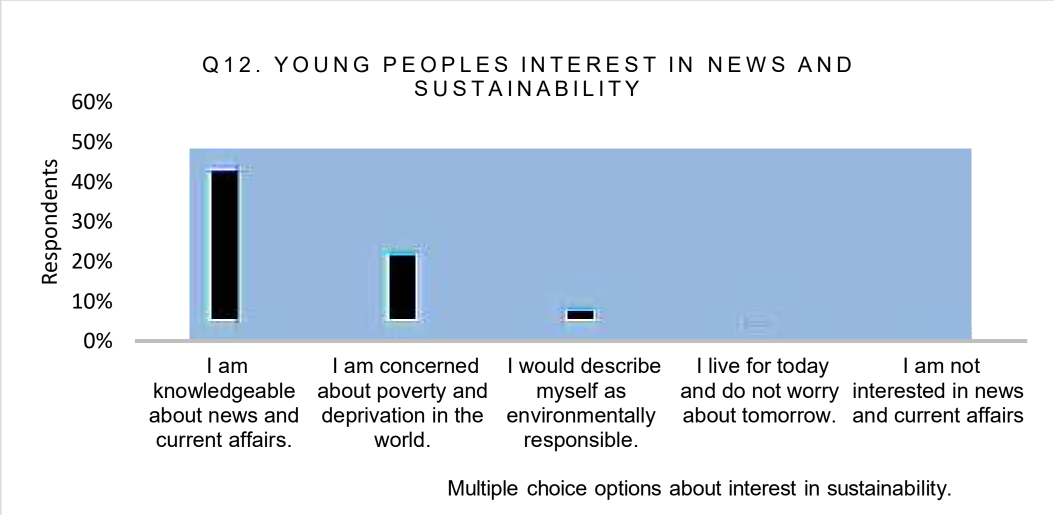


Figure 31: Survey results about interest in news and sustainability.

Analysis of the literature indicated that some young people felt overwhelmed by the number of targeted messages received from fashion brands (RSPH, 2017). Analysis of the results from Question 17 revealed that 43% of the participants selected ‘Once a week’ as their preference, followed by ‘Every 2-3 days’ selected by 28% and in third place 16% that confirmed that they would rather not hear from fashion brands at all. (See Figure 32)

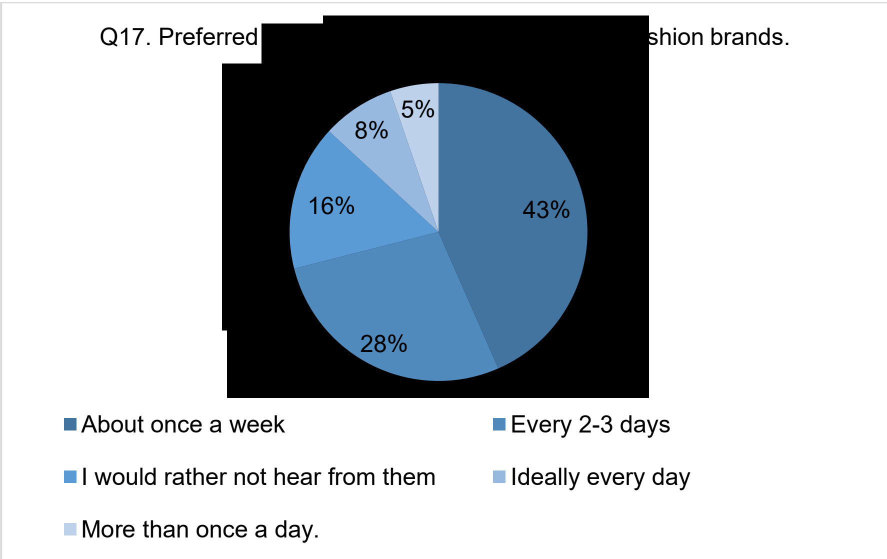


Figure 32: Survey results relating to frequency of communication.

Question 18, another multiple-choice ranking question, revealed respondents’ preferences about the ‘content of communication’ from fashion brands. Figure 33 illustrates that 64% selected either ‘*Promotions and offers*’ or ‘*Arrival of new styles’*. The third biggest category - ‘information about how clothes are made - was selected by 21% of the respondents. These findings are discussed further in the next chapter in relation to what information brands currently communicate and how it affects communication about sustainability.

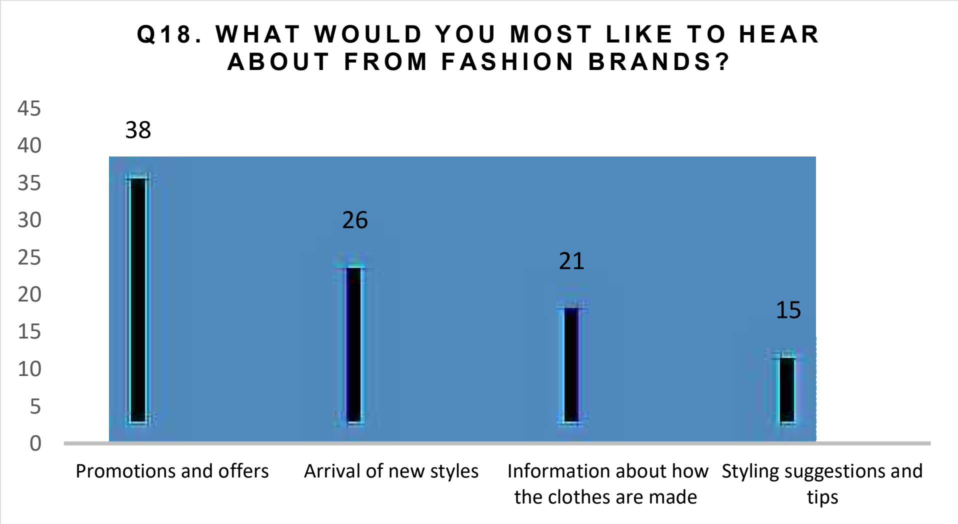


Figure 33: Survey results relating to preferred communication from fashion brands. '% Respondents 1st choices' and 'Multiple choice options')

The last survey question (Q20) asked the participants to detail any communication about sustainability seen or received from fashion brands. Answers were analysed and categorised into the same themes as Figure 28 (Q11), where participants defined sustainability. Seventy-seven survey respondents reported only 21 occurrences between them where they had received information from fashion brands about sustainability. The largest category was 'Recycling', mentioned by 38%, followed by Fabric innovations - 24%, then, in equal third position, Environment and Social Sustainability, with 14% each. See Figure 34.

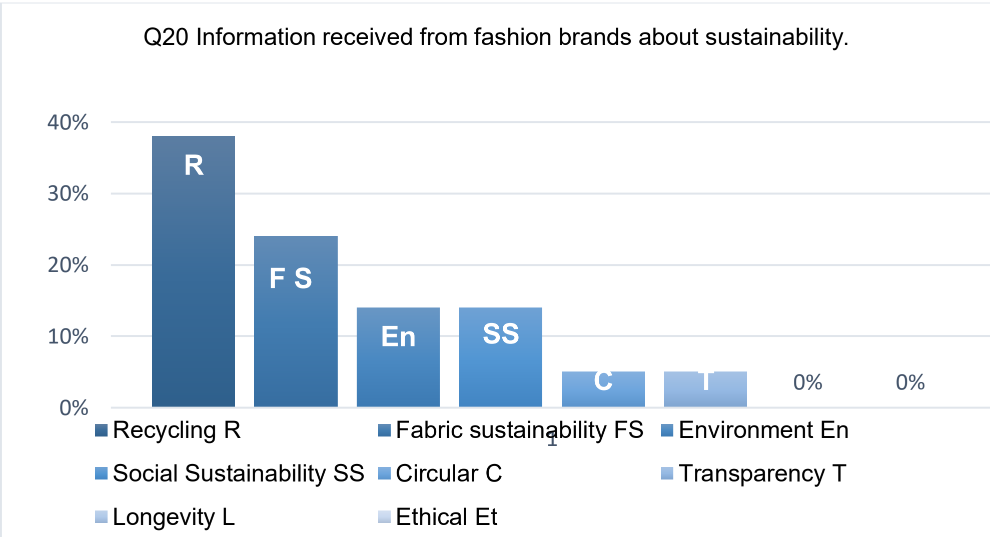


Figure 34: Survey results relating to communication received from fashion brands.

It is worth highlighting here that according to information sent to consumers, brands' sustainable priorities are as follows: recycling, fabric sustainability, environment then social sustainability. This contrasts with consumers' priorities, which were firstly the environment and secondly social sustainability.

4.2.5 Summary of Survey

To summarise, whilst most questions yielded a range of responses, answers found in the first section 'Fashion and Shopping' reveal that of the three options given, the biggest group (44%) of respondents buy clothes once a month and 46% spend between £50 - £150 on them. Their reasons for buying clothes overwhelmingly relate to 'making them feel good', selected by 54%, and their appearance, selected by 48%.

From a sustainable point of view, it was encouraging that 62% of respondents wore their clothes more than ten times and that 40% of them recognized that they were good value. Even more positive was that 90% of people completing the survey were prepared to pay at least 10% more for sustainable clothes. Although caution is required when examining the fact that 51% declared that brand or garment sustainability influenced what they bought, due to the attitude-behaviour gap (Section 2.3.6) this again indicated that this selection of fast fashion consumers have an appetite for sustainable products.

Conclusions drawn from questions 11 and 15 showed a parity between consumers' definition of sustainable fashion, and their priorities in being able to buy sustainable products. In both cases, the environment was the most important factor, followed by social sustainability (Referred to as factory workers in Question 15).

Although earlier questions indicated consumers' interest and inclination towards buying more sustainably, question 18 revealed that 59% of survey respondents were more interested in receiving communication about promotions, offers and the arrival of new styles than they were about how their clothes were made.

Although this group of young people spend an unprecedented amount of time on their phones (Forston, 2018) it is illuminating that 43% (more than twice the number of any other of the five options given) only want to be contacted by fashion brands once a week. In terms of information received from fashion brands the most frequently occurring content was 'recycling', followed by fabric innovation. This implies a disconnection between aspects of sustainability in which consumers are interested, and what fashion brands are communicating to them, examined in chapter five.

This concludes the survey findings, the results and findings of the case study follow.

4.3 Case studies - communication between fashion brands and consumers

4.3.1 Introduction to Case Studies

The case study data examines fashion brand communication with their consumers. Results from Question 3 of the survey determined the brand and channel focus for the case study. Topshop was the most popular brand, selected by 35% of respondents, closely followed by Zara at 33% and then ASOS at 32%.

Topshop began in 1964. It is now part of the Arcadia group. It describes itself as a '…global fashion and beauty destination that connects women with the new and the next in style and culture' (Arcadia, 2019, online. (A)). It has 620 stores located in over 40 countries, and launches 400 new products a week. It averages 4.5 million weekly visits across mobile, tablet and desktop (Arcadia, 2019, (B)). In October 2019, Topshop launched 'Considered' - which it describes as: 'A new range that's kinder to the planet' (Topshop, 2019, online).

Zara is the largest Inditex brand, representing 70% of Inditex group sales (Conlon, 2019, online). In 2018 Inditex carried out over 12,000 factory audits (Inditex, 2019, online). The first Zara store opened in 1975. Its priorities are '…bringing attractive and responsible fashion and improving customer service'. In 2015, Zara had 7000 stores. It now has stores in 96 markets with a further reach of 106 markets through its online stores. Zara has 36 million social media followers. The Join Life range launched in 2016 as a '…selection of more sustainable raw materials and processes that helps us take care of the environment' (Zara, 2019, online). The range excludes any aspects of social sustainability. Fifty seven percent of their factories are located, in Spain, Portugal and Morocco (Zara, 2019, online). Zara's annual sustainability report indicates their membership to many ethical and sustainable organisations. (ETI, IndustriALL, Accord, Higg). They have implemented initiatives including 'Clear to Wear', 'Ready to Manufacture' and 'Closing the Loop' (Gupta, 2019). Since this research began, Zara has added the following statement to its home page: 'Our products meet the most stringent health, safety and environmental sustainability standards' (Zara, 2019, online).

ASOS is an online brand established in 2000 with a mission 'To be the world's number one destination for fashion loving 20 somethings' (ASOS, 2019, online, (A)). Its revenue in 2018 was £2,417.4 million. It has 85,000 products on its web site, 20.3 million active customers and 20.2 million social media followers, 52% of which are on Instagram (ASOS, 2019, (A)).
The most popular channels for shopping and finding information were brand web sites, shops and social media, therefore these were the case study selection. (See P52, Section 3.5.2 for full detail of the sampling strategy).
Instagram was selected for the case study, as it is the most popular social media platform in the UK, used by 62% of Millennials (Youguv, 2019). Its image-driven emphasis make it particularly relevant for fashion customers and brands (Statista, 2019) and it is the primary platform of choice for following fashion (Nash, 2019).
Analysis began with the brands web sites, followed by the shops, as these were the two most popular channels for shopping. The third part of the case study focussed on social media. Data collection targeted two areas: general or non-product information, and product specific relating to sustainable characteristics, including garment labelling.

4.3.2 Web Sites

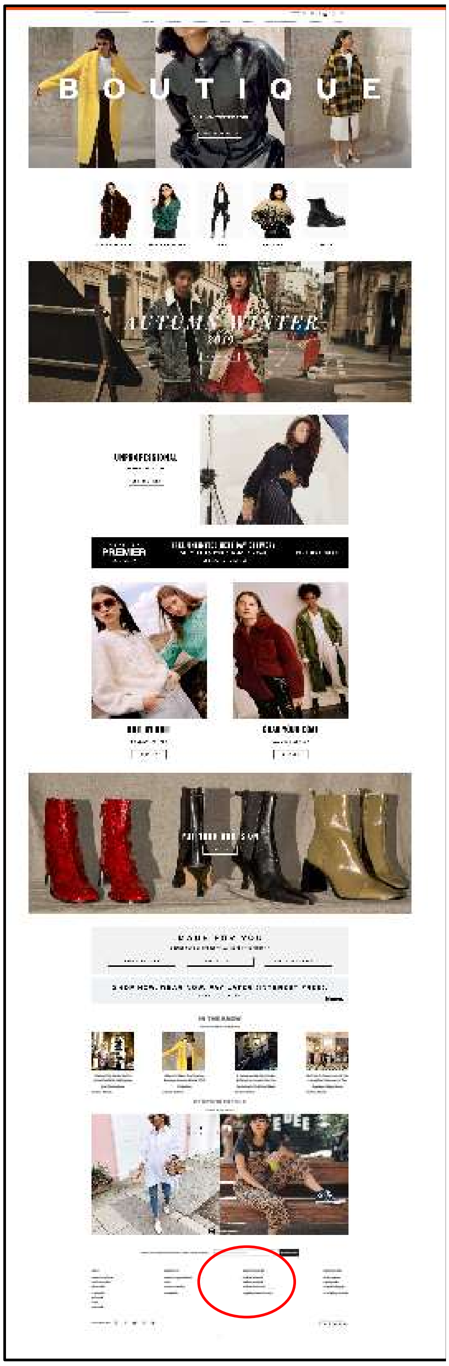
Many web sites, including ASOS, Topshop and Zara are dynamic, meaning that the content displayed varies according to time and user (MonsterPost, 2019). The information in this section is on the content accessed by the Researcher, collected during the data collection period. The focus of the analysis is sustainability, and the results and findings are discussed in two parts, a) web site structure, navigation and content, b) product.

Analysis of the brands web sites began at their home or landing page, significant in that this is what all site visitors see. Each brand determines the page size, which vary according to their requirements. Figure 35 shows a reduced scale of each of the home pages to see them in their entirety, a view normally only seen by scrolling either down or across.

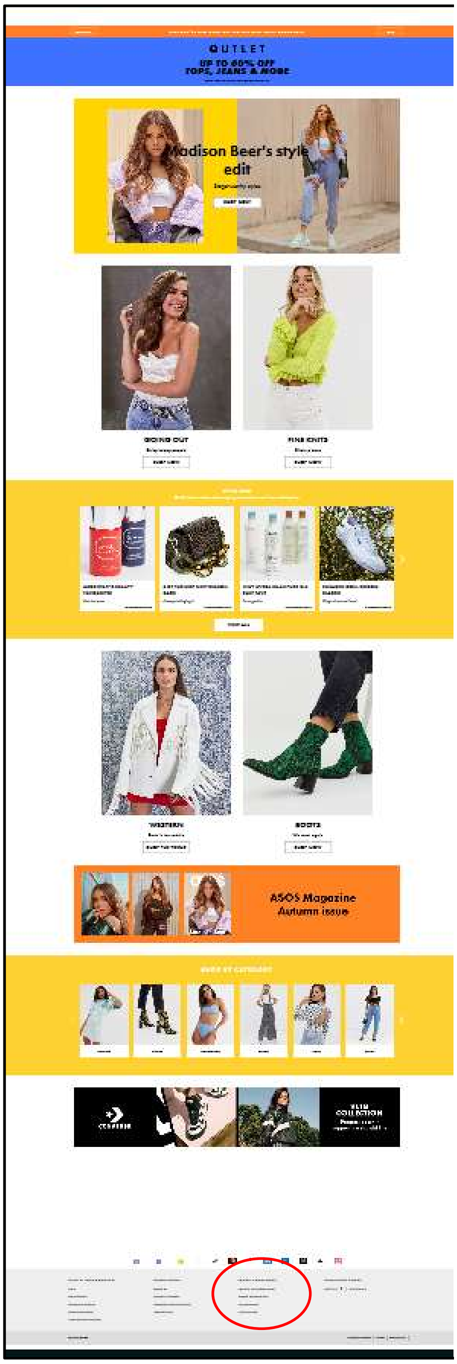
ASOS had the biggest page, measuring 1248.870 wide x 1658.620 long. Topshop was 647.898 long x 1658.620 wide and Zara's home page was 406.121 x 699.576 long. The significance of the page size is in how it affects the time it takes a user to get to the destination, the bigger the page, the more scrolling required, the longer it takes. This is particularly significant with young consumers who expect digital information to be quick and easily accessible to satisfy their needs for instant gratification, and are deterred by unnecessary time spent on navigation (Jones and Kang, 2019, Parker et al, 2010).

ASOS is the only brand selling exclusively online, which could explain why they have the biggest home page. The red ellipses show the position on the pages of the link to information about sustainability. Zara was the only brand displaying a link to the Join Life range, made from sustainable fabrics at the top of the page. There were no other words relating to sustainability on Zara's home page. A customer would need to scroll to the footers of the page to find the links to information about sustainability for the other two brands. ASOS had an 'About Us/Corporate Responsibility' section, and Topshop 'More From Us/Fashion Footprint and UK Act on Modern Slavery'. (Note that information relating to Topshop's sustainability is listed under Arcadia and relates to all their brands, not just Topshop). In other words the positioning of information about sustainability on the web sites of these three brands is likely to be frustrating rather than satisfying consumers desire to learn about sustainability.

ASOS Width 1248.870 x Length 1658.620



Topshop Size W 647.898 x L 1658.620



Zara Home page W 406.121 x L 699.576

Figure 35: View showing the entire home page of ASOS, Topshop, Zara, highlighting the position of the link to sustainable information. August 2019.

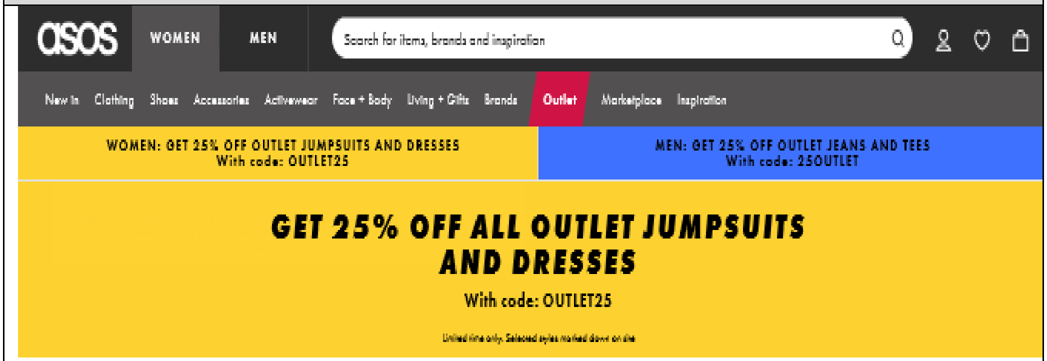
Figures 36, 37 and 38 show different sections of the web sites of ASOS, Topshop and Zara respectively, in more detail, including the page header, the route to information about sustainability and the page arrived at when following the link.

The top of the page for all three brands emphasizes product selection, discounts and sales. ASOS and Topshop use bright colours to draw attention to sales promotions; Zara has a fixed sidebar to select from and a smaller contrast coloured 'Sale' notification.

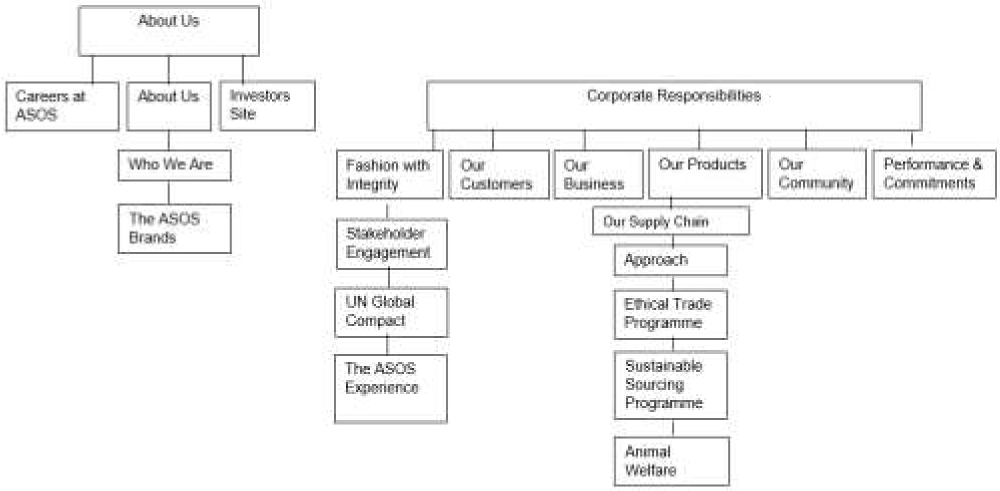
The middle section of each figure shows the navigation from the home page to information about sustainability. On the ASOS site, this involves selecting *'About Us'* and then '*Corporate Responsibility'*. With Topshop there are two possible options from the home page '*About Us'* or '*More from Us*' and the sustainable information is in the second one, where you select from *'Fashion Footprint*' or '*Modern Slavery'*. In the case of Zara, the route is simpler, as long as the person searching for sustainable information is aware of the JOINLIFE range, otherwise there is no link from the home page.

The third section shows the information found by following the links from the bottom of each home page: Corporate Responsibility (ASOS), Fashion Footprint and Modern Slavery (Topshop) and Join Life (Zara). The first statement from ASOS was that 'Fashion with integrity epitomises our approach to business', followed by 'By working together, we believe we can deliver a systemic shift in the way our industry addresses key ethical trade and sustainability challenges and proactively design a future we all believe in' (2019, online). Arcadia (which includes Topshop) did not provide an opening statement but an option to select from the following four links: upcycling clothing, Dorothy Perkins organic tee, Topshop vegan shoe range and Miss Selfridge Eco range. The second Topshop link gave access to 2107/2018 Modern Slavery Statements. By contrast, the top of Zara's 'Modern Slavery' section informs consumers that they can '…extend the lifespan…' of their clothes by returning them to stores. Section 4.3.3 follows up on this by describing what the researcher found on products and in stores in more detail.

Header of ASOS home page.



Route to information about sustainability



View of web site page by selecting Corporate Responsibility.

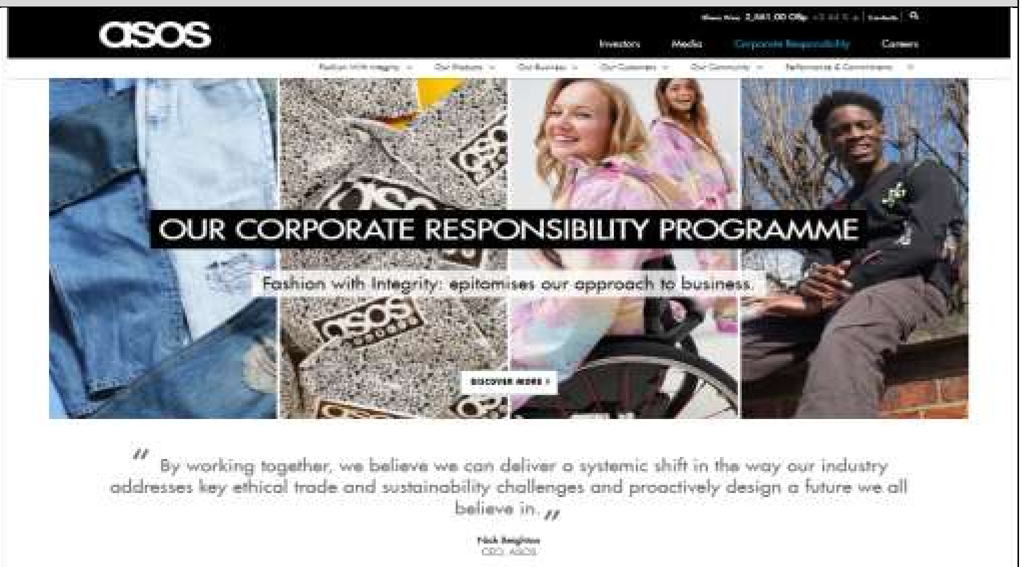
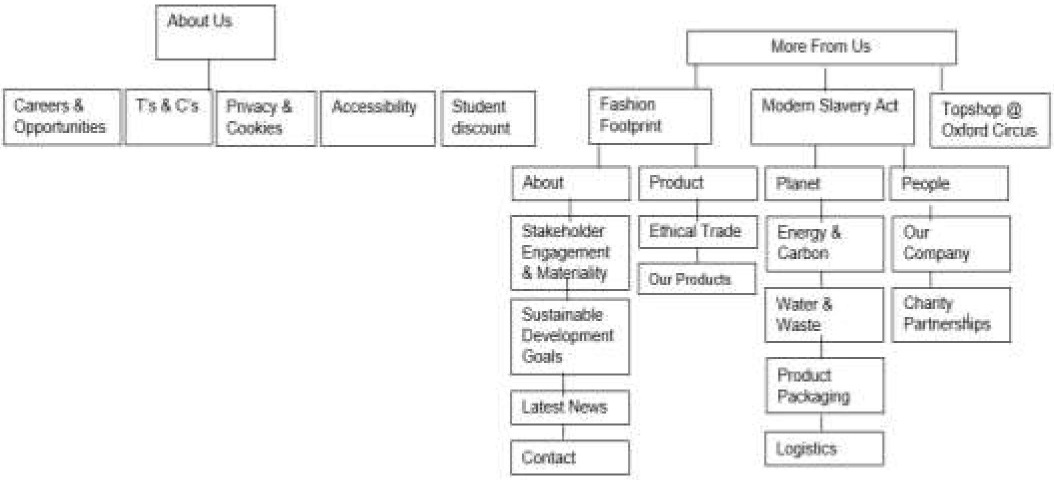


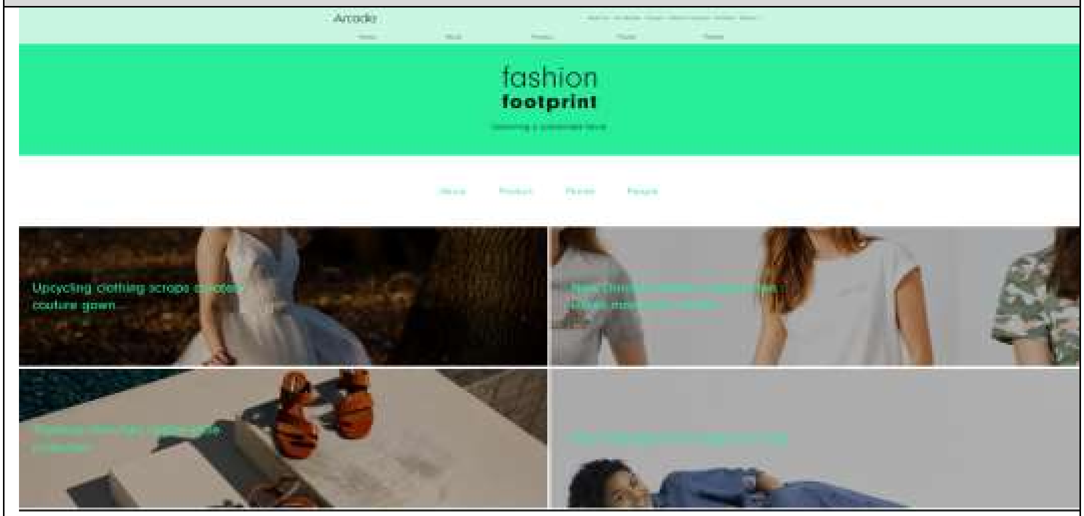
Figure 36: ASOS Header. Route to sustainable information and Corporate Responsibility web site page. July 2019

Header of Topshop home page

Route to information about sustainability



View of web site page by selecting Fashion Footprint

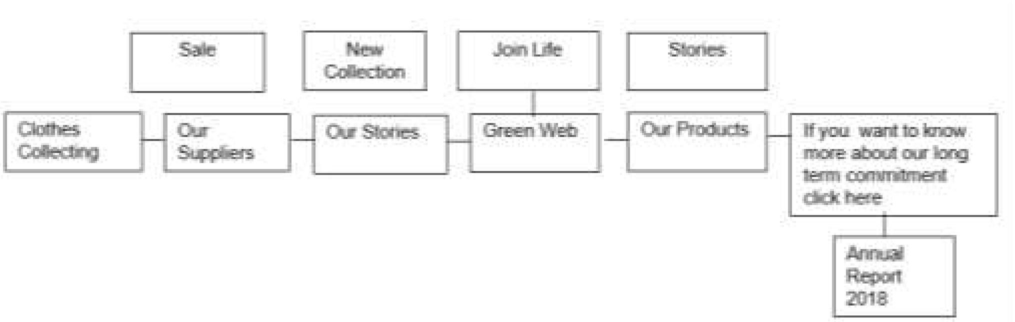


Greenwashing', Arcadia web site stating their support for the West London Waste Authority by using donated items and off cuts to create one wedding dress, despite the fact that they were simultaneously selling thousands of new product

Figure 37: Topshop Header. Route to sustainable information and Fashion Footprint web site page. July 2019

Header of Zara homepage

Route to information about sustainability



View of web site page by selecting Join Life

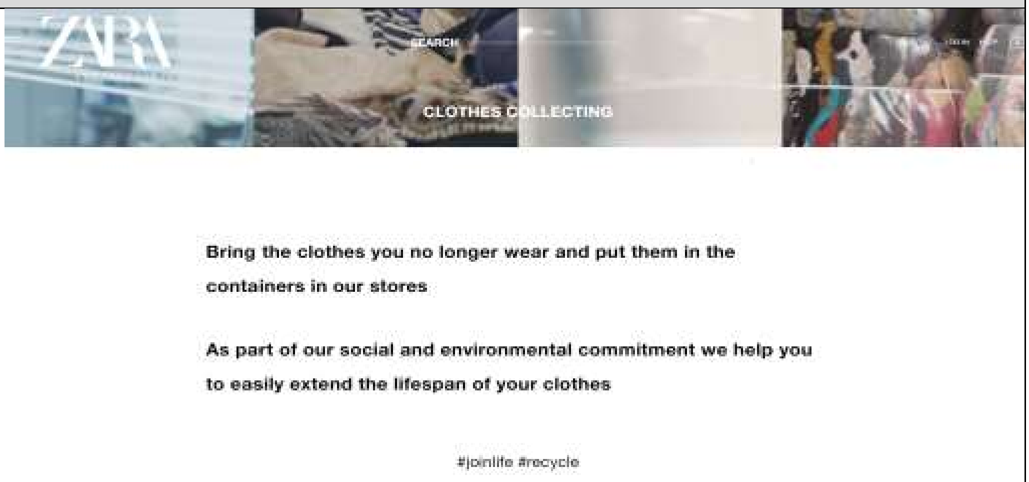


Figure 38: Zara Header. Route to sustainable information and Join Life web site page. July 2019

Analysis of brands web sites are summarised in Table 34. Key points that emerged were that Zara was the only brand, which referenced any aspect of sustainability at the top of their home page, with a link to the Join Life range. It was also quicker to navigate from the Zara home page to further information about sustainability than from ASOS or Topshop's web site.

Comments on headers of the home pages		
ASOS	**Topshop**	**Zara**
Bold contrasting colours used to draw attention to 25% off Outlet products. No reference to Sustainability.	Bold contrasting colour used to highlight 70% off on new styles. No reference to Sustainability.	Join Life features on the left hand side of the home page. Customers may not know that this is a range using sustainable fabrics.
Comments on navigation to 'sustainable' information.		
3 steps to reach 'Sustainable sourcing'.	Found in 'More from us' not 'About us' 3 steps to reach Sustainable Development Goals.	2 steps to access Annual report 2018 where there is a section on Diversity & Sustainability.
Information found by selecting links to information about sustainability.		
From Corporate Responsibility	From Fashion Footprint	From JOIN LIFE
'Fashion with integrity epitomises our approach to business'	'Upcycling Clothing Scraps creates couture gown	'Bring the clothes you no longer wear and put them in the container in our stores. As part of our social and environmental commitment, we help you to easily extend the lifespan of your clothes'.
'Our Products. When it comes to sourcing the perfect pieces, we don't just focus on commercial criteria – we put ethical trading, sustainable sourcing and animal welfare at the heart of how we work'.	New Dorothy Perkins' organic tee raises money for charity'	
	Topshop launches vegan shoe collection	'Our products meet the most stringent health, safety and environmental sustainability standards'.
'Our Business. We're serious about achieving growth, but we're as serious about doing it in a way that adds social value and reduces environmental impact.'	Miss Selfridge Eco range launches'	Our supply chain respects workers and the environment.
'Our Customers. We take an inclusive approach to giving young people the confidence to be whoever they want to be.'	**Topshop – Modern Slavery Act**	Up to 90% of our stores are eco-friendly
Our Community. We're making a positive difference wherever we can to young people's lives in the communities we operate'.	Modern Slavery Statements' available to read from 2016/2017/2018 See Appendix for 2017-2018	Zara.com's services & offices consume energy derived from renewable sources that respect the environment

Table 34: ASOS, Topshop & Zara comparative analysis between web site links to information about sustainability.

The second part of the web site analysis relates directly to products. It divides into two parts: a review of the products that appear by searching with sustainably related words, and then a review of the product and product descriptions in relation to their sustainable characteristics. A review of the ease in which a customer could find sustainable products through the search button proved an unreliable way of actually finding what each brand offered. With ASOS, only 32% of the 109 products presented through using 'sustainable' to search with were actually sustainable. There was no explanation about why some garments were there, such as the 'shirred bodice dress' shown in Figure 39. Other products included niche areas such as Maternity or Curve. The products that were sustainable consisted mainly of independent brands such as Ralph Lauren and swimwear made from Recycled fabrics.

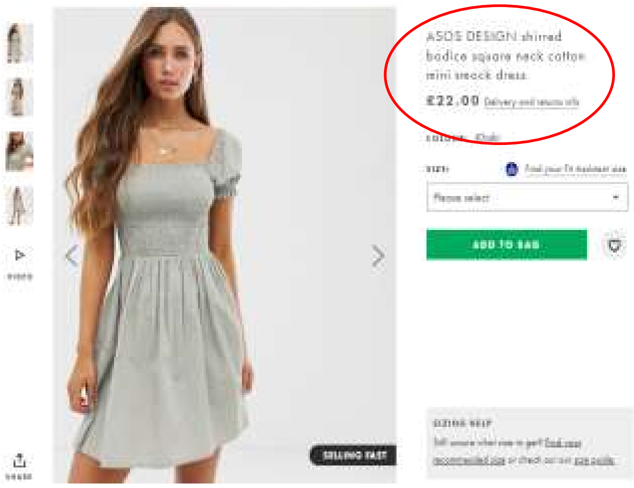


Figure 39: ASOS product presented from searching on the word ‘sustainable’ online.

A further indication about the importance that ASOS place on promoting sustainable products was found through garments displayed through searching on ‘sustainable’. It was initially unclear from reading the product description why the jacket seen in Figure 40 was presented; it was not until selecting the *‘Show More’* button that it explained that the product was made from recycled polyester – plastic bottles and textile waste.

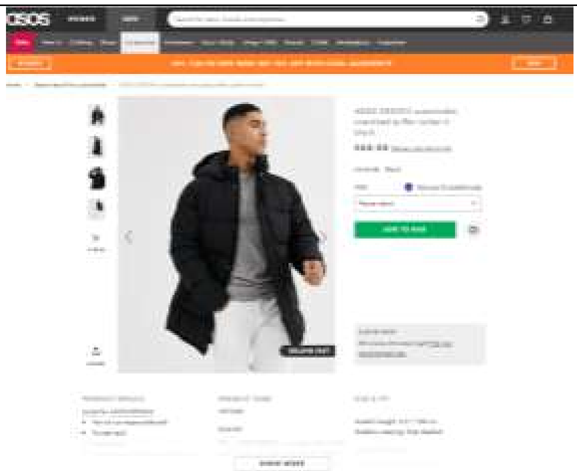
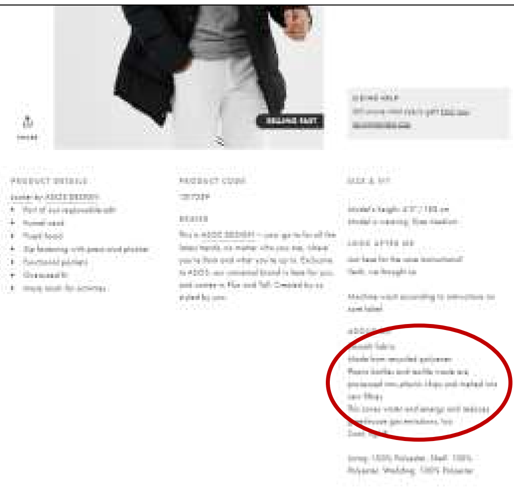
	Product and description as it appears through a ‘sustainable’ search. ‘Sustainable oversized puffer jacket in black’ (ASOS 2019. (D)).
	Product and description as it appears when selecting ‘Show More’ ‘Made from recycled polyester. Plastic bottles and textile waste are processed into plastic chips and melted into new fibres. This saves water and energy and reduces greenhouse gas emissions too’ (ASOS, 2019).

Figure 40: ASOS Web site description of the jackets ‘sustainability’ only revealed after selecting ‘Show More’ button.

‘No results’ were found for ‘Sustainable’ on Topshop’s web site, when the search word was changed to ‘Organic’ nine garments including the one in Figure 41 were found. The description for this product was ‘*Contains organic cotton without the use of chemical fertilisers, pesticides and Genetically Modified Organisms (GMO’s) and has a lower impact on the environment’.* Although the description is detailed, the emphasis created by the yellow banner at the top, is on discounting rather than the product’s organic characteristics.

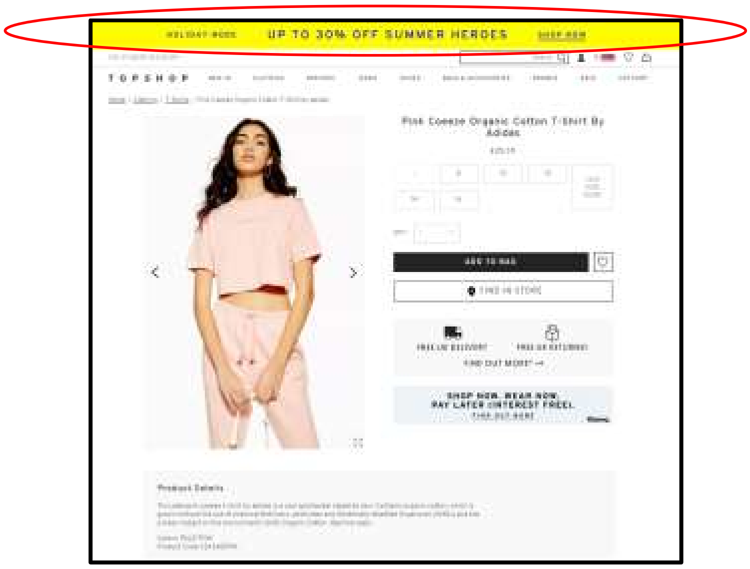


Figure 41: Image from Topshop web site - Organic T-shirt July 2019

Zara displayed 299 sustainable options through a word search using ‘sustainable’, most were part of their JOINLIFE range. They included garments for Men Women and Kids, of which 50 were recycled fabrics and the balance, were fabrics with other sustainable qualities such as organic cotton. The web site branding was inconsistent, the two garments shown in Figure 42 are both made from the same fabric, and part of the Join Life range, but only the dress has the Join Life branding.

FLOWING CROPPED SHIRT DETAILS 25.99 GBP
LIGHT BLUE - 6929/200
Cropped shirt with a V-neck and lapels. Featuring short sleeves, a front false flap pocket and an elastic hem.

HEIGHT OF MODEL: 177 cm. / 5′ 9″

JOIN LIFE
Care for fiber: TENCEL™ Lyocell.
TENCEL™ is made from wood grown in sustainably managed forests that guarantee their reforestation and is produced in a closed cycle that is environmentally and water friendly.'

Without JOIN LIFE branding on image.

BUTTONED DRESS DETAILS 29.99 GBP
LIGHT BLUE - 6929/341
Flowing A-line dress with a V-neck and short full sleeves. Featuring an elastic waist and button fastening in the front.

HEIGHT OF MODEL: 177 cm. / 5′ 9″

JOIN LIFE
Care for fiber: TENCEL™ Lyocell.
TENCEL™ is made from wood grown in sustainably managed forests that guarantee their reforestation and is produced in a closed cycle that is environmentally and water friendly.'

With JOIN LIFE branding on image.

Figure 42: Images from Zara web site – Join Life products. July 2019

As explained previously, because the nature of web sites are dynamic, searches were completed on three different days over a two-week period using the words: 'Sustainable, Recycled, and Organic' to establish any changes that had been made. Table 35 shows the results. ASOS displayed 109 on the first day and 106 on the next, but when examined most of these were niche product areas including 'Tall' and 'Maternity', rather than actually being sustainable products. On the third occasion ten days later, by selecting: **'**Clothing, Shop by Product, Responsible Edit' 2442 products were displayed. The information indicated that 2100 of these were sustainable materials but closer examination of the first twelve revealed that none of the product descriptions included any information about how the materials were sustainable. As on two previous searches, many of the products were niche categories, including Unisex, Tall & Maternity. No products were displayed using the word 'sustainable', the same nine branded (rather than Topshop) products were shown using 'recycled' and 'organic' as search words, on each of the tree occasions. Another page of the web sites discloses their commitment to circular fashion and closing the loop.

> ASOS' circular fashion commitment is our roadmap for the future of our clothes – we are redefining our approach to design to ensure that we keep circularity in mind at the beginning of the process. This presents the opportunity to design out waste, to encourage the product to remain in use for as long as possible and

to minimise waste at the end of life. We're certainly not there yet but we're committed to 'closing the loop' on fast fashion' (ASOS, 2019, online. (E)).

'Zara presented consistently high numbers of Join Life products on each occasion, 299, 291 and 256, including 50 recycled garments, in which characteristics of the fabrics appeared to be genuinely sustainable.

Dates	ASOS	Topshop	Zara
	Search for '*Sustainable*' products.		
03.07.19	109 products shown.	Did not match any products.	299 JOIN LIFE products shown
	35 products had sustainable features such as organic cotton or recycled. Most of these were brands including Cheap Monday, Ralph Lauren & Tommy Hilfiger or Swimwear using recycled fabrics (20) 74 consisted of product categories such as Maternity, Festival, & Tall.	Results from a further search with different words:- 9 ***Recycled*** products 9 ***Organic*** products Many were brands including Selected Femme, Adidas & Calvin Klein	Wide range of product categories for Men. Women & Kids including dresses, shorts, trousers & T-shirts. All Zara brand. 50 Recycled products. 'Care for Fiber' used to identify garments using a range of sustainable fabrics.
04.07.19	106 products shown.	Did not match any products.	291 JOIN LIFE products shown
	31 products had sustainable features such as organic cotton or recycled. Most of these were brands including Cheap Monday, Ralph Lauren & Tommy Hilfiger or Swimwear using recycled fabrics (16) 75 consisted of product categories such as Maternity & Tall.	Results from searching with ***Recycled*** & ***Organic***, returned the same results & products:- 9 Recycled products 9 Organic products	Wide range of product categories for Men. Women & Kids including dresses, shorts, trousers & T-shirts. All Zara brand. 47 Recycled products
14.07.19	By Selecting: **Clothing, Shop by Product, Responsible Edit:** 2442 products shown. 2100 Sustainable Materials, none of the product descriptions of the first 12 products shown included any information about how the materials were sustainable. 341 Recycled. As on two previous searches many of the products were niche categories including Unisex, Tall & Maternity	Using ***Recycled*** &'***Organic***' as the search word. Same 9 products in each category as shown 10 days earlier	256 JOIN LIFE products shown Wide range of product categories for Men. Women & Kids

Table 35: Using search word 'Sustainable' on web sites. July 2019

Further searches using the three most frequently occurring words used by Survey Participants to describe sustainability: Environment, Social Sustainability, and Longevity. No products were available from Topshop and Zara. One non-clothing product appeared from 'Environment' and 13 products including two non-clothing from 'Social Sustainability' on the ASOS web site see Table 36.

Top 3 survey words describing ‘sustainability’.	ASOS	Topshop	Zara
Environment	1 product - sun cream named Shiseido Urban Environment	No Results	No Results
Social sustainability	13 products including 2 non- clothing. Product description including the word ‘sustainable’ e.g. ‘New Look sustainable fibre, Friends tee’	No Results	No Results
Longevity	No Results	No Results	No Results

Table 36: Web site search using survey words. Accessed 05.08.19

4.3.3 Shops and Product Labelling.

Results from the survey showed that going to shops was the second most popular way of shopping following shopping online, therefore it was important to understand how the shopping environment communicates with its customers through visual merchandising, particularly signs. ASOS sell exclusively online, so three visits to Topshop and Zara were completed over a two-week period.

Although the original plan was to focus on communication about sustainability, material relating to this was limited, therefore this changed to include all signage. In addition to recording observations, the researcher acted as a customer to increase knowledge by speaking to the staff in the shops. This provided a better understanding of the research area as the Sales Assistants behave naturally (Johnson, 2018).

The previous section (4.3.2) analysed the ease of access and information provision on the three brands web sites, before looking at how product details were presented. This section is organised in the same way, initially focussing on the shopping environment, before examining product details, including garment labels and tickets. A selection of garments made from organic and recycled materials from ASOS were included, so that their product labels and tickets formed part of the analysis with the information collected in the shops from Topshop and Zara.

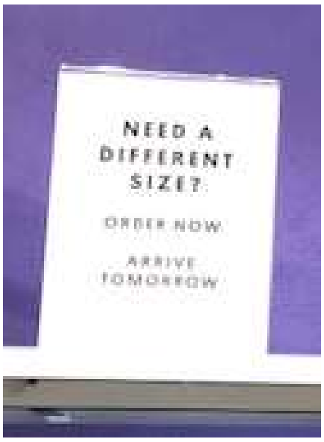
Topshop use signs extensively to draw attention to: the Boutique collection, Vegan footwear range, Gift cards, Brow threading, Ordering a different size, the Sale, Student discount, and ‘Last chance’ to Buy. See Figure 43. Although it was encouraging that there was a small sign highlighting their vegan footwear range, the emphasis was clearly on selling, particularly with ‘Need a different size? Order now, Arrive tomorrow’, ‘Students get 10% off’ All year Round’ and ‘Last chance to buy’.

POS – Boutique collection.

POS - Vegan footwear range

POS – Gift cards

POS – Brow threading



Sale

POS – Student discount

POS – Ordering a different size

Sale

POS – Student discount

POS – Last chance

Figure 43: Topshop ‘in store’ signage. July 2019

By contrast, the only signage found in Zara related to sale products and a very small ‘New Collection’ sign, shown in Figure 44. There was nothing to guide customers to a new premium range, which had a lot of space so was clearly important, or to Join Life products.

All store signage relating to 'Sale' prices

No Signage for JOIN LIFE range

No Signage for Premium range

Small signage for New Collection

Figure 44: Zara 'in store' signage. July 2019

Although shopping in stores is a different experience to online shopping, some principles such as the ease in which a customer can find sustainable products, apply to both. As the signage in stores, was limited the researcher, acting as a customer asked the sales staff whether they sold sustainable garments. Table 37 details Sales Assistants responses from visits to a range of Topshop and Zara stores and discussions with Sales Assistants. In summary only three of the twelve staff questioned understood what sustainable meant, although most recognised the terms ethical and organic. However, even the staff that understood the words 'ethical' and/or 'organic' were unaware of which of their products fell into these categories.

Store visits	Question	Top Shop staff responses.	Zara staff responses
03.07.19	'Do you have any ranges or garments that are sustainable?'	**Top Shop – Trafford centre** 'No garments as far as I know, but we have vegan shoes'.	**Zara – Trafford Centre** Did not understand what I meant by sustainable. When I used the word 'ethical', she referred me to the 'JOIN LIFE' range.
08.07.19		**Top Shop – Arndale, Manchester** Did not understand what I meant by sustainable. When I used the word 'Organic' she referred me to the 'Boutique' collection, a premium range, some items manufactured in the UK, nothing on the products promoting sustainability.	**Zara – Manchester** Did not understand what sustainable meant, when I added 'organic' I was referred to products that were 100% cotton.
10.07.19		**Top Shop – Trafford centre** Several staff advised that they had no sustainable or organic cotton products.	**Zara – Trafford Centre** Two Sales Assistants were unaware of 'sustainable' products but referred me to JOIN LIFE T shirts when I mentioned 'organic'.
15.07.19		**Top Shop – Arndale, Manchester** Two Sales Assistants advised that they did not have any organic products in store. **Top Shop concession in Selfridges.** Sales Assistant advised that Topshop did not currently have any sustainable products although she was aware that they were becoming important through ASOS	**Zara – Manchester** One Sales Assistant advised that they did not have this sort of product whilst the sale was on, another that they had 'the odd thing' referring me to the JOIN LIFE swing tickets

Table 37: Sales Assistants Responses to Sustainable Products - Top Shop and Zara. July 2019

Some retailers, including M & S, offer customers the opportunity to return products for recycling. Zara promote this service on their web site as shown in Figure 32, P80, Section 4.3.2. The researcher was unable to find any recycling points in the Trafford Centre or Manchester Zara stores, so again, acting as a customer, asked the Sales Assistants for help in finding them. The majority of responses advised that they did not have recycling facilities, although one thought it might be in the staff room and another thought that it was a good idea! Topshop do not offer a recycling service.

The second stage of the shop analysis was focussing on product. ASOS is an online only brand, so although there was no store data, there was product information from all three brands by ordering a selection of garments from ASOS through their web site.

Labels and swing tickets on ASOS own brand recycled swimwear and Cheap Monday garments found from the online search for sustainable products were examined. Figure 45 shows that although the web site swimwear description states 'recycled', nothing appears on the actual garment. There was no swing ticket and the woven label does not mention recycled fabric. The second sustainable ASOS product was the Cheap Monday T shirt; this had a swing ticket attached with 'Organic Cotton' but again nothing on the woven label.

<table>
<tr><td colspan="3">Product from a range of recycled swimwear products from ASOS</td></tr>
<tr><td>The garment description on the web site described the fabric as recycled, but there was no information on the product label that mentioned it, and the garment had no swing ticket.</td><td>
</td><td>
</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">One of a range of branded ‘Cheap Monkey’ products from ASOS</td></tr>
<tr><td>
</td><td>
</td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">The garment description on the web site and the swing ticket described the fabric as organic cotton, although there was nothing on the product label.</td></tr>
</table>

Figure 45: Tickets & labels on ASOS ‘sustainable’ products July 2019

No sustainable ranges or products were found in Topshop stores, however as a Sales Assistant suggested that their Boutique Collection might be sustainable, the swing tickets and garment labels were examined. The components did not refer to any sustainable characteristic, although the woven product label included the ‘Country of Origin’, and some of the products ae manufactured in the UK. See Figure 46.

Boutique swing tickets on Topshop's range of the same name.

The range was not from sustainable fabrics although some pieces are manufactured in the UK.

Figure 46: Tickets & labels on Topshop Boutique Collection July 2019

By contrast, most of Zara's sustainable products featured Join Life branded tickets. Figure 39 shows a range of sustainable fabric descriptions 'Care for Fiber' shown on the reverse of the JOIN LIFE swing tickets, including 'Ecologically grown cotton' and 'Lyocell'. The same ticket shape and design with different wording, also featured on their BASICS range. See Figure 47.

JOIN LIFE ticket	At least 75% of ecologically grown cotton.	100% Ecologically grown cotton
		
TENCEL TM Lyocell	JOIN LIFE & Zara swing tickets	Same ticket as JOIN LIFE used for BASICS range
		

Figure 47: Swing Tickets from Zara's JOIN LIFE & BASICS ranges July 2019

A concluding note on this subject that although it is not a legal requirement in the UK to include the Country of Origin (COO) on garment labels, most labels examined in Topshop and Zara included this information.

4.3.4 Social media - Instagram

The researcher elected to 'Follow' ASOS, Topshop and Zara on Instagram to provide insight into how brands engage with their 'Followers'. A 'Follower' is someone that has requested to see posts from a particular person or brand, which become part of their news feed. This section summarises activities of each of the three brands on Instagram from the data collection period. The structure of this section follows the two previous about web sites and shops, insofar as the initial focus is on the brands appearance on Instagram, including how many posts they make. Following this is an examination of posts that relate specifically to product.

A final point about this channel is that unlike web sites and shops, here, communication is two-way and the consumer plays a significant part in setting the agenda (Fournier and Avery, 2011).

As with web sites, each brand's Instagram home page is important, as anyone following them will see it. Figure 48 shows the top of each of the brand's Instagram page. Although the format of all is similar, one significant difference is their 'Highlights', which are circular icons that appear half way down the home page to promote products, and share news, information, updates, and customer generated content (Influencer Marketing Hub, 2019, online). Topshop and Zara do not have a 'Sustainability' highlight, whereas the first one on the ASOS home page was Sustainability. See Figure 38, with the circled Sustainability highlight. Information this leads to includes a pledge to have 100% sustainable cotton and denim by 2025 (ASOS, 2019, online. (E)). The frequency and content of posts are discussed in the next chapter. Suffice to say that the most recent post was seven weeks ago, and some posts were over a year old.

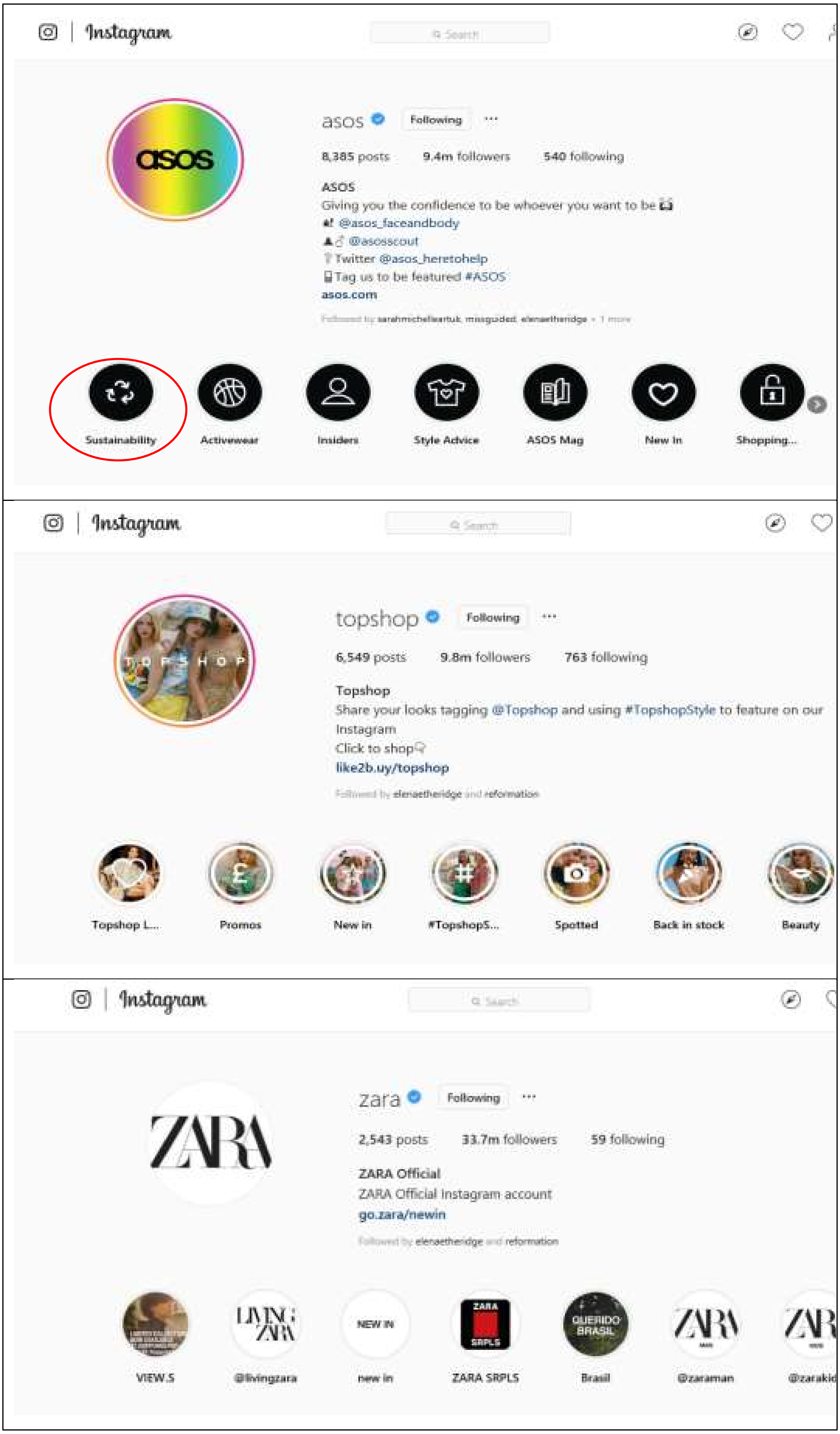


Figure 48: Instagram home pages with Highlights – 06.07.19. ASOS, Topshop & Zara

Although ASOS posts more frequently than Topshop and Zara, a similar number of examples are presented for each brand to allow themes to emerge for comparison and analysis in Chapter 5.

An Instagram 'Follower' can decide whether they to want to receive notifications of new posts as they appear or find them themselves when they go to their Instagram account.

During the initial data collection period in July 2019, ASOS, the 'online only' brand, communicated on Instagram significantly more than both Topshop and Zara, with an average of ten posts per day, compared with Topshop - six, and Zara - two. See Figure 39. A similar pattern emerges when analysing the total number of Instagram posts, ASOS has posted 8,385, Topshop – 6549 and Zara – 2543. See Figure 50.

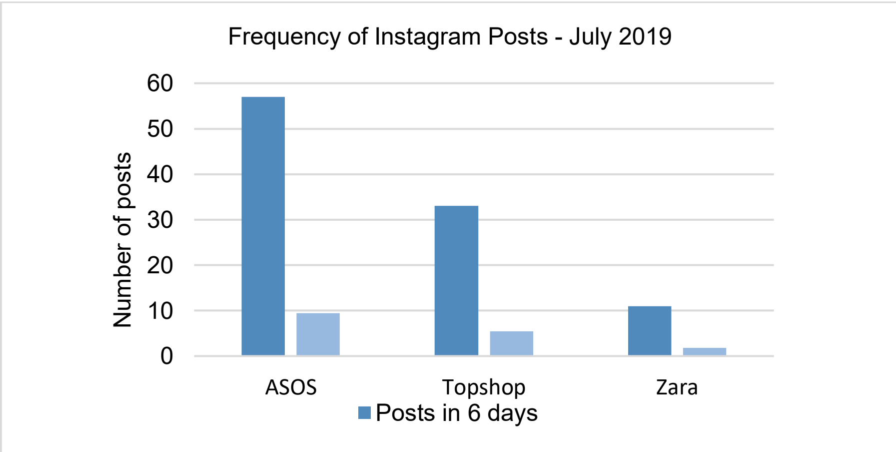


Figure 49: Daily Instagram posts ASOS, Topshop & Zara. Instagram, 2019

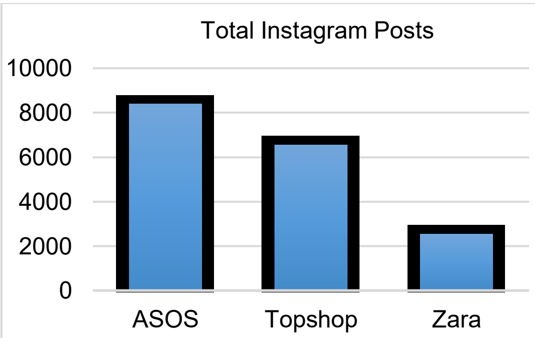


Figure 50: Total Instagram posts ASOS, Topshop & Zara, Instagram, 2019

Zara have more than three times the number of 'Followers' as Topshop and ASOS, although it is important to highlight that they have far greater international presence than the other two brands, see Figure 51, (Zara, 2019).

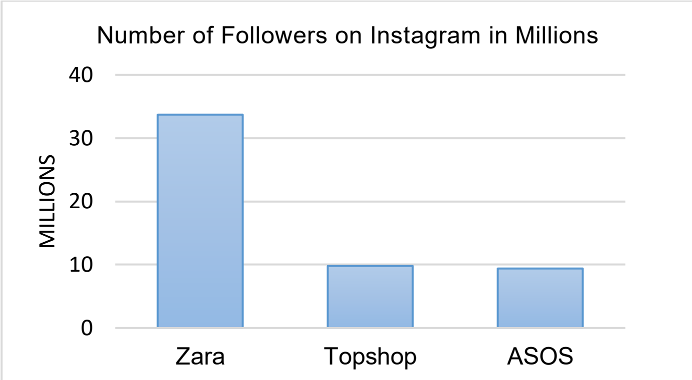


Figure 51: Instagram Followers – ASOS, Topshop & Zara. Instagram, 2019.

In researching brands' use of social media for conveying messages it was notable that ASOS and Primark use the same circular icons on their Instagram page - three arrows moving in a circular direction - to suggest sustainability. (See Figure 52) Semiotics, the study of images and icons that have cultural meaning and significance (Leeuwen and Jewitt, 2011) has become increasingly significant in assessing brand communication. Further research into the extent of consumer understanding of this symbol is required.

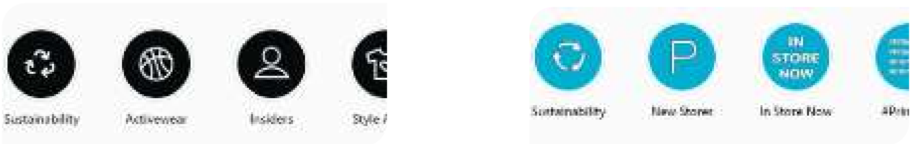


Figure 52: Top of ASOS & Primark Instagram page. 26.07.19

A distinguishing feature of this channel of communication is that it is two-way. Instagram users (Instagrammers, IGers) can register their approval of a post by tapping an outline of a heart at the bottom of the screen, which changes to red, as shown in Figure 53.

Figure 53: Instagram 'Like' to a post on a mobile phone.

'Likes' and 'Views' are customer endorsements to images and videos on Instagram. Measuring the number and types of posts that are popular, provides insight into what consumers like and dislike. The number of Likes to posts ranged from 6,541-165,689 with ASOS, 3,866 – 35,522 with Topshop and 33,199 – 275,332 with Zara. Video posts appear to generate more customer responses than still images, Zara and ASOS respectively, posted two and three videos, which received a minimum of 98.648 and maximum of 262,464, Views. See Table 38 for a summary of brand posts and customer endorsements during a two-week period in July 2019.

	ASOS		Topshop		Zara	
Number of **Images** posted	72	6,541 – 165,689 Likes	42	3,866 – 35,522 Likes	25	33,199 – 275,332 Likes
Number of **Videos** posted	3	98,648 – 215,330 Views	0	n/a	2	238,957 – 262,464 Views

Table 38: Instagram image and video posts and customer responses. July 2019.

Customers can also respond to brand posts by adding their ‘Comments’ to express satisfaction or disapproval. Figure 54 provides an example from each brand where posts elicited customer responses where customers are challenging brand images. A comment to a model wearing just a jacket highlighted that ASOS must ‘…keep it real...’ and comments to Topshop and Zara posts complained about the use of ‘skinny models’. This provides further invaluable insight into customer motivation and things in which they disapprove.

ASOS image. ‘Blazes worn as dresses? It’s a yes from us’.

Customer response ‘Nice blazer but the majority of women won’t wear a short blazer as a dress in real life, keep it real please’. **20,412 Likes**

Topshop image ‘Cue the paparazzi’

Customer response ‘Why can’t companies and brands have healthier people advertise for them and stop encouraging skinny people?’ 19.546 **Likes**

Zara video ‘Which team do you support?’

Customer response ‘Zara always choosing skinny models. I much prefer to see Primark with its diversity’. **568,583 Views**

Figure 54: Instagram posts and Customer responses from ASOS, Topshop & Zara. July 2019.

Moving the focus to find evidence on Instagram relating to product sustainability from any of the three brands ASOS, Topshop and Zara. During an eleven-day period in July 2019, there was one post from ASOS about a bikini made from recycled materials, two from Zara, a garment made from a sustainable fabric - Lyocell, and another about Zara was working with their suppliers towards circularity (this was a double image, accessed by swiping sideways).

There was nothing from Topshop during this period. Figure 55 shows the brand post and image, the number of Likes received and Customer Responses (**CR**) to the post. An ASOS customer commented that the bikini was good quality, a Zara customer responded to a post about Lyocell, by commenting on how thin the model was, and there were some challenging posts back to Zara about their claim to be working towards circularity with their suppliers.

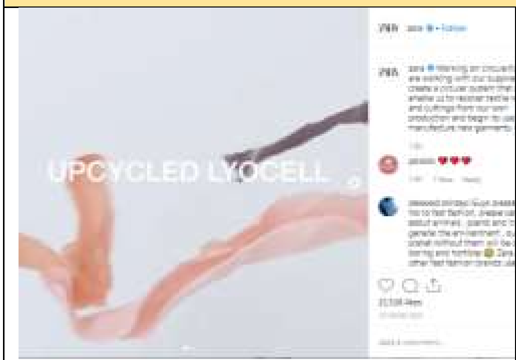
<table>
<tr><td>ASOS image. 'DYK [sic 'Did You Know] the fibres in this bikini are made up of recycled materials...'</td><td>Zara image 'Garments from our own garments. Upcycled Lyocell. With this new fiber we transform textile waist into a new resource #joinlife'</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>CR 'You see ASOS have quite a lot of recycled bikinis? I own one and it's [sic} super good quality'. 1,529 Likes</td><td>CR 'Please stop using models that are so thin that they look ill. It does not give the customer a good idea of what your clothes will look like on a healthy sized body and in my opinion, it fuels serious mental health disorders'. 17,651 Likes</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Zara – double image. 'Working on circularity. We are working with our suppliers to create a circular system that will enable us to recover textile waste and cuttings from our own production and begin to use it to manufacture new garments. #joinlife' 21,526 Likes</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>CR 'Guys please say No to fast fashion, please care about animals, plants and in general the environment, our planet without them will be so boring and horrible ☹ Zara and other fast fashion brands use lots of toxic materials that pollute the rivers , seas , forests and the air , many species effect such bees we humans must not be so selfish this planet is not just for us'</td><td>Multiple Customer Responses
'#greenwashing in its purest form…Nice try Zara'.
'Great! Now what about working conditions for people who sew your clothes?!'
'Very good decision to make use of your own garment waste! 😱☺@zara'
'Ok, but why didn't you do this years ago????'</td></tr>
</table>

Figure 55: ASOS & Zara Instagram 'Sustainability' posts & customer comments. ASOS & Zara. July 2019

Table 39 shows the number of Instagram posts each brand made during an eleven-day period in July 2019. ASOS made 57 in total, of which one related to sustainability, Topshop only posted 33 - none was about sustainability, and Zara made the fewest posts - 2 of the 11 related to sustainability. Further research to evaluate consumer reaction to posts about sustainability would examine the number of Like and Views and Comments, but as there were only 3 from this period, it was too limiting.

9-20th July 2019	ASOS	Topshop	Zara
Total posts	57	33	11
Number of posts relating to sustainability	1	0	2
% of posts relating to sustainability	1.75	0	18.18

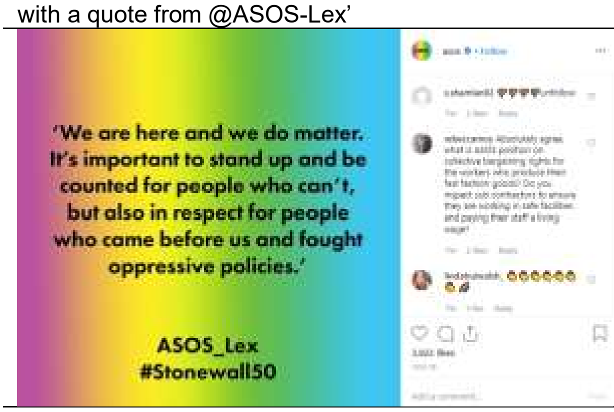
Table 39: Brand posts relating to sustainability. 2019

There were other examples where customers themselves raised the issue of sustainability in response to brand posts, as shown in Figure 56. A Zara post about ‘creating a circular system’ were hostile – ‘#greenwashing in its purest form…Nice try Zara’ and ‘Ok, but why didn’t [sic] you do this years ago????’. One customer ‘loved’ a pair of jeans, but could not buy them unless they were sustainable; another enquired about the safety and payment of garment factory workers in response to an ASOS post about Stonewall, and a third response to a post about a hair product introduced the subject of single use plastic. This suggests that some consumers are actively oriented towards buying sustainably and express their belief that brands should be doing more.

ASOS image ‘Good morning, Angels’

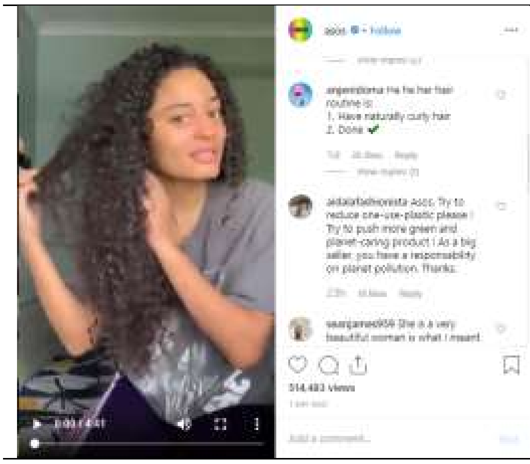
CR ‘I don’t suppose these are sustainably made are they? I love them but if they were not made from recycled materials then I couldn’t bring myself to buy them, my ethics come first’. **27,113 Likes**
ASOS had not responded to this post a week later.

ASOS image ‘Today we remember the 50th anniversary of Stonewall with a quote from @ASOS-Lex’



CR ‘Absolutely agree, what is ASOS position on collective bargaining rights for the workers who produce their fast fashion goods? Do you inspect sub-contractors to ensure they are working in safe facilities and paying their staff a living wage? **3,822 Likes**

ASOS video ‘Getting curly with @asos-ebony’



Customer response ASOS, Try to reduce one-use-plastic please! Try to push more green and planet caring product. As a big seller, you have a responsibility on planet pollution. Thanks. **550,833 Views**

Figure 56: Customers ‘Comments’ on Instagram posts about sustainability. July 2019.

4.3.5 Summary of Case Studies

Findings from the case study are presented in three sections: web sites, shops and social media, and further divided into non-product and product specific information.

It was clear that the priority for all three web sites was on selling product rather than providing information about sustainability. Areas on the site that brands want the customer to focus on were highlighted with bold or contrasting colours, and were situated in prominent positions, such as at the top of the home page. By contrast, although all three brands' web sites included information about sustainability, it was less accessible in that it involved scrolling and clicking, and therefore took longer to reach. The significance of this is discussed further in Chapter 5 in relation to young people's attitudes towards technology and time spent on shopping and researching. Information about sustainability on the ASOS web site was available by selecting ABOUT US and then Corporate Responsibility at the bottom of the home page. With Top Shop it appears in the 'More From Us' rather than the first 'About Us' category, placing it in second place to 'Careers & Opportunities', T's & C's', 'Privacy & Cookies' and 'Accessibility'. Although 'JOIN LIFE' was easy to access as it was in a prominent position on the side bar at the top of Zara's home page, a customer may not be aware that this was a 'sustainable' range.

Searching for sustainable products on the ASOS web site was even more challenging. Only 32% of products displayed when using 'sustainable' as the search word were sustainable. Niche clothing categories such as ranges for tall or larger women were included instead. The few that used organic or recycled materials were brands rather than ASOS products. There were no product matches on Topshop's web site by using the same word, and just nine when using 'Organic'. Zara on the other hand displayed 299 Join Life products, although some of the branding was inconsistent. As a final check, searches using the words from the survey respondents to describe sustainability (environment, social sustainability, and longevity) were done. ASOS was the only one of the three brands to show any products in this search.

In summary, the findings from the shops of the two brands show that Topshop did not have sustainable products, with the exception of the vegan footwear range, but heavily use signage to direct or inform customers about other product ranges or promotions. Whereas Zara have a substantial sustainable range, but there is nothing in the shops to inform their customers about it. The Sales Assistants who were largely unaware of the sustainable credentials of the JOIN LIFE range, or of the recycling service featured prominently on their web site.

The shop analysis included reviewing garment labels and swing tickets. Again, an opportunity to inform customers through garment labels was lost, as the ASOS bikini had no swing ticket and there was no mention of re-cycled fabric on the woven label. The second branded (Cheap Monday) product from ASOS included the word 'Organic Cotton' on the swing ticket but nothing on the woven label. There were no sustainable garments to look at in Topshop, although most of the woven labels included the 'Country of origin'. In Zara, the sustainable products were identifiable by the JOIN LIFE/CARE FOR FIBER swing tickets.

In contrast to web sites and shops where most of the interaction is from brand to consumer, social media is two-way between brand and consumer. At first glance, ASOS's Instagram page is encouraging as one of its highlights is Sustainability, although its' most recent post was seven weeks earlier, in contrast to their average of ten new product posts per day. Indeed, ASOS had the highest number of daily posts, followed by six from Topshop and two from Zara. Zara has three times more followers than ASOS and Topshop, but this may be because of their international base.

Instagram users appear very engaged with the brands that they follow, particularly ASOS, the only online only brand who post more than the other two. During the eleven-day analysis period, Instagrammers expressed their concern to all three brands about their use of thin models. There was very limited content from the brands about sustainability, nothing from Topshop, one garment made from recycled fabric from ASOS, a garment made from a sustainable fabric and a statement about moving towards circularity from Zara. The latter post provoked two negative Customer Responses. There were three further examples where ASOS users raised sustainability themselves: this suggests that there was an appetite for learning more about sustainability from the brands - this is discussed later.

4.4 Chapter Summary.

This chapter brings together the Results and Findings from the primary research, the survey and case studies, representing the two parties involved in fast fashion consumption – consumers and brands.

Findings from the survey data uncovered behaviour about fashion consumption and sustainability, and how society influences consumers through social media and news channels.

Although consumers preferred not to hear from fashion brands more than once a week the case studies highlighted that posts on social media from the three brands ranged from 2 -10 per day. It becomes apparent that fashion brands feed on consumers motivation for buying clothes 'appearance' and 'making them feel good' despite 49% being interested in sustainability it did not influence their clothes purchasing. This reflects literature about the attitude-behaviour gap particularly evident in fashion (Section 2.3.6*)*. A more positive result was that 90% of survey participants **said** that they were prepared to pay at least 10% more for sustainable fast fashion, as long as it also met their other requirements. A global survey, which polled all ages rather than predominantly under 25's from Hong Kong, London, New York, Shanghai and Tokyo, found that 13% were prepared to pay more for sustainable fashion (Fashion Summit and KPMG, 2019). It is worth noting that in both surveys responses reflect behaviour intention rather than action and that sustainable intention is frequently not converted to action in fashion consumption (Fashion Summit and KPMG, 2019).

The complexity of language and competing priorities around sustainability was confirmed by survey respondents own description of the term versus communication received from fashion brands. Whereas the first and second most frequently found words in brand communication about sustainability were recycling and fabric innovation, the most frequently occurring words from survey participants were environment and social sustainability.

Findings from the case studies showed that fashion brands use web sites, shops, and social media to maximise sales with little or no attempt to educate consumers about sustainability. Examples of brands exploiting language relating to sustainability was found in one brand when a third of products displayed by searching on their web site for 'sustainable' were niche product categories such as festival, rather than products that were in any way sustainable. A similar theme emerged from the shops where a limited range of sustainable products were poorly signposted. Similarly, although sustainability was mentioned on Instagram posts there was no indication of any serious commitment to sustainable goals. The content and frequency of posts were to encourage consumption. Some customer responses to posts suggested a cynicism towards some of the brands sustainable claims.

Chapter 5, 'Summary and Analysis', brings all the findings together under the headings of consumer, brand, and finally communication between brand and consumer.

Chapter 5.0 Summary and Analysis

5.1 Introduction

The value of this research is in creating guidelines for fashion brands to optimise the communication of sustainability with their customers. As such, this chapter synthesises information from the literature and the original findings of the survey and case studies to present significant themes that have emerged

Eighty eight percent of survey respondents were between 18-24 years of age, spanning the Millennial and Generation Z spectrum (Dimok, 2019) and representing the most significant group of fast fashion consumers (Morgan and Birtwistle, 2009). ASOS, Topshop and Zara represent fast-fashion brands and are the basis for the case study findings. Figure 19, P84, Section 4.2.1 shows that these were the top three brands identified from the survey).

The WCED (1987) described *unsustainable* behaviour as that which irrevocably destroys the planet and leads to increased poverty. Part of the reason for limited progress towards sustainability within the industry is that making products environmentally and socially sustainable leads to higher cost prices, whereas fast fashion is low cost and continual consumption (Ozdamar-Ertekin, 2017).

Both fashion brands and consumers bear responsibility for the growth of fast fashion (Passport, 2018). From a brand perspective, analysis of the results of the Parliamentary Interim Report on the Sustainability of the UK Fashion Industry (2019) revealed that there was no correlation between retail prices and brand sustainability - business strategy determines the extent of sustainable practice. Findings showed that Kurt Geiger, the brand with the highest price hierarchy, was engaged in the least number of sustainable practices. Social forces and the availability of low cost fashion products undoubtedly influence consumer behaviour (Hussain, 2018), but young people face a dilemma, as they are increasingly interested in sustainability and transparency (The Business of Fashion and McKinsey and Company, 2018).

The next section draws from the survey and case study findings to analyse and discuss themes relating to the sustainability of fast fashion from both consumer and brand perspective. Discussion explores areas of commonality and disparity about different aspects of sustainability, and concludes by examining communication between the two parties.

5.2 The Consumer

This section is organised under themes that emerged from primary and secondary research. It begins with the fast fashion consumer thereby fulfilling Objective 1 - *To analyse fashion consumers and their consumption of fast fashion.*

Findings confirmed challenges faced by young people desiring sustainable fashion. Forty eight percent of survey respondents considered themselves '…*knowledgeable about news and current affairs'* and only 4% said that they were '*uninterested*'. The same question revealed that 27% are concerned about '*poverty and deprivation*' and 12% described themselves as '*environmentally responsible'*. Their digital proficiency means that they are knowledgeable about fashion and sustainability yet they have limited budgets, restricting their choices, and resulting in their actions (buying fast fashion) not always matching their ideals (buying sustainably). They are politically aware, but under pressure to buy clothes to match their appearance to societal ideals in order to increase their confidence (The Business of Fashion and McKinsey & Company, 2018). They are starting to demand transparency from fashion brands (The Business of Fashion and McKinsey and Company, 2018:62) which could lead them to purchasing from only those that are transparent and authentic (Fournier & Avery, 2011, Hakala et al., 2017).

5.2.1 Fashion Consumption

With its emphasis on high speed and low cost, fast fashion has transformed the industry over the last two decades. Fashion serves many purposes, including self-identity, group cohesion, inspiring body confidence and body positivity (Jackson, 2005). The Survey findings confirmed that appearance was the main reason for buying new clothes, selected by 48% of respondents. The success of Spanx, a multi-million dollar company designed to 'improve' women's silhouettes, states on their web site how their products will '… help women feel great about themselves and their potential' (Spanx, 2019, online). The survey corroborated this as 54% of the respondents reported that they invest in fashion because it 'makes them feel good'. (Figure 14, P63, Section 4.2.3). Accepting that appearance and feeling good are inextricably connected; a further question asked which of four characteristics was important when buying clothes. 'Appearance' was selected by 48%, 'Fit' – 32%, 'Price' – 14% and 'Knowing how products are made' selected by just 6% (Figure 24, P88 Section 4.2.2).

The survey findings supported the literature about social media intensifying fast fashion consumption (Brewer, 2019, Joyner Armstrong, 2016). Responses from this group reported how '*viewing'* images from peers, celebrities, influencers and fashion brands on social media encouraged them to purchase new products. '*Posting'* images' was selected by just 6% as a reason for buying new clothes. Given the amount of time that young people spend on social media it becomes apparent that viewing images and buying products that help them achieve what the images project results in a continuous and never-ending cycle of consumption.

However, findings from the present study challenge the view that garments are bought and worn a handful of times (Forston, 2018, Joung, 2013. Chau, 2012). The biggest group of participants, 44%, bought clothes once a month and 62% stated that they wore items more than ten times - none admitted to only wearing an item once (Figure 25. P88 Section 4.2.3). This could suggest that personal consumption is slowing or that this group of fashion students are limiting their consumption because they are more aware of issues around sustainability. Table 40 summarises the survey findings in relation to three stages of fashion consumption – Buy, Use and Dispose.

Buy (Q5)	Use (Q10)	Dispose (n/a)
Frequency of buying new clothes.	Frequency of wearing clothes.	After what period & how.
	Survey findings	
Once a week – 35%	Once – 0%	Recycling – in 5th place by consumers, but 1st by brands in relation to sustainability,
Once a month – 44%	2-5 times – 14%	
Less once a month – 21%	5-10 times – 24%	
n/a	More than 10 times – 62%	

Table 40: Summary of survey and case study findings in relation to Buy, Use, Dispose phases of fashion consumption.

Finally, in terms of fashion consumption, the literature highlighted that this group of young consumers are moving towards temporary ownership of second hand products as another means of having variety without compromising sustainability (The Business of Fashion and McKinsey and Company, 2018).

5.2.2 Affordability and Shopping

Given that young people are the biggest group of fast fashion consumers and have little disposable income (Ritch, 2015), it follows that products that they buy must be low cost and affordable. Figure 23 (P88, Section 4.2.2) illustrates the survey results, which found that 46% spend between £50 - £150 per month, closely followed by 'Less than £50', selected by 41%. The least common answer was 'More than £150', selected by just 13%. Although the survey participants were mainly students, the findings are relevant in demonstrating fashion consumption with a limited budget.

Whilst it is essential to consider the possibility of consumers saying one thing and doing another, evidence from the survey supports the literature that consumers are prepared to pay higher prices for products made by brands they perceive as sustainable (Just Style 2018). The Business of Fashion report in 2018 found that 66% of Millennials are willing to pay more for sustainable products. Results from Q14 of this survey found that 86% of those asked indicated that they would buy sustainable clothes even if they were more expensive. The most commonly selected answer was that they would pay up to 10% more (41%), closely followed by 33% that said that they would pay an additional 30% (Figure 27, P89, section 4.2.2). They also recognised that the current price of fashion is ‘good value’ (40%) and ‘about right’ (54%) (See Figure 26, P89, Section 4.2.2). This is particularly significant as this group is predominantly students and therefore likely to have financial constraints. These findings suggest that if brands source higher priced sustainable products customers will pay for them. Ritch (2015) highlighted that if brands are transparent and inform customers about the cost of sustainable initiatives this will not discourage purchasing, particularly if products also benefit them personally.

In 2017, CBRE found that 60% of Millennials bought their clothes from physical stores. However the survey results (Figure 20, P85, Section 4.2.1), showed that online shopping was the most popular (28%) followed by going to the shops (25%). Digital technology enables young people to ‘shop’ whenever and wherever they choose, order multiple items and sizes, which they ‘try on’ at their convenience and can return without difficulty (Escobar-Rodriguez, Bonson-Fenandez, 2019) making it a perfect vehicle for fast fashion.

This trend towards shopping on digital channels is significant in relation to fashion brand web site design and content, as it is the customer interface. Several points emerge from this:-

- The extent to which the design of brand web sites prioritise content relating to sustainability. Websites are not only selling platforms but also survey respondents’ first choice for finding information about sustainability (See Figure 21, P85, Section 4.2.1).
- The ease and speed in which customers can find sustainable products on brand web sites through ‘search’ or any other options, as discussed in Section 4.3.2.
- The degree to which consumers can trust information on web sites, such as sustainable product characteristics on products found by searching for sustainable products (See Figure 35, P106, Section 4.3.2)

5.2.3 Attitude-behaviour

Survey findings revealed a conflict of interest between buying fast fashion and interest in sustainability. Questions 12 and 14 showed that the young people surveyed described themselves as environmentally responsible, concerned about world poverty, and prepared to pay more for sustainable clothes. However, Q13 revealed that 49% stated that knowing how their clothes were made had no impact on what they bought. Seventeen percent expressed a preference for brands that informed them, and 34% said that they avoided buying from brands that they had concerns about (See Figure 29, P90 Section 4.2.3). This is in line with ‘The State of Fashion 2018’ report that found that consumers wanted more transparency from brands and did not know which to trust (The Business of Fashion and McKinsey and Company, 2018). Question 18 revealed that 59% of survey respondents were more interested in receiving communication about promotions, offers and the arrival of new styles than they were about how their clothes were made (selected by 19%) (See Figure 33, P93, Section 4.2.4). It was apparent that in spite of evidence of sustainable orientation from other survey questions (Q11, 14, 18, and 24) question nine revealed that only 6% placed knowing about how their clothes were made as being more important than appearance, fit and price (Figure 24, P88, Section 4.2.3).

The significance of this is the correlation between consumer intention and action. The respondents are knowledgeable about sustainability and aware of desirable answers yet exposed how appearance was more important than knowing the origin of their fashion. This supports previous research that only 16.3% of consumers considered social and environmental criteria when acquiring new clothing (Koszewska, 2013, Joyner Armstrong, et al., 2016:421). Findings from Question 18 also indicated little interest in receiving communication from brands about how clothes are made - in fact only 21% selected this answer, whereas ‘promotions and offers’ and ‘arrival of new styles’ between them accounted for 64%, leaving a further 14% looking for styling suggestions.

These findings support extant literature that there is a conflict of interest with many young people between purchasing sustainably and fashion consumption (Burch, 2017:56, Fung Global Retail, 2016). Consumers bring personal beliefs and attitudes to a purchasing decision, including that sustainable consumption makes a positive contribution to society (Hwang and Griffiths, 2017). However, McNeill and Moore (2015) found that there was less emphasis on sustainability in fashion than in other areas, and that even when consumers have a strong disposition towards buying sustainably, it might not translate into action or behaviour (Joyner Armstrong et al., 2016:421, McNeill and Moore, 2015:213). Antonetti and Maklin (2015) surmised that there are four different types of sustainably oriented consumers: Altruistic, Socially Responsible, Conspicuous Responsible and Political, each with different motivation for purchasing and requiring unique elements to bridge the attitude-behaviour gap.

5.3 Fashion Brands

This section fulfils Objective 2 – ‘*To evaluate how fashion brands communicate with their customers’.* Structured by themes that have emerged through analysis of the survey, case study and literature findings it investigates brand understanding and interest in sustainability as revealed through their communication, .

5.3.1 Shareholders and strategy.

Findings confirmed that between 2013-2017 fashion brands including ASOS, Primark, H & M, and Zara all increased their market share (See Table 8, P29, Section 2.3.2), indicating the success of fast fashion (McNeill and Moore, 2015). Also significant is the wealth acquired by the owners of the two biggest fast fashion brands, Ortega of Zara and Persson of H & M, who may resist moving away from this model (See Table 11, P31, Section 2.3.2). However, a change in strategy may result if, as evidence suggests (Wade, 2019), consumers start to demand sustainable fast fashion, and Zara and H & M do not provide it.

The other reason for shareholders to acknowledge sustainability is that it has become an increasingly important investment criterion. In fact, between 2017 and 2018, sustainably related targets increased from 56% to 66% and have become a bigger part of business strategy from 34% to 52% (Global Fashion Agenda and The Boston Consulting Group, 2018).

5.3.2 Understanding and Committing to Sustainability

Case study findings revealed that brands recognise that 'sustainability' is important by presenting products that were not sustainable through online search options. On the ASOS web site only 32% of products displayed when using the word 'sustainable' fell into that category - the balance was made up of niche clothing categories such as ranges for tall or larger women or festival wear (Please see Section 4.3.2 Web Sites).

Survey responses relating to communication received from fashion brands identified a range of 100% polyester recycled T-shirts from Boohoo, as shown in Figure 57. The press described this as:

> To counteract the negative environmental impacts that online retailer's increased output produces, some, are stepping up to trail blaze a change – and Boohoo is leading the way (Shemazing, 2019, online).

Figure 57: Boohoo Recycled T shirt. (Boohoo, 2019 online)

However, this initiative cannot be appraised in isolation - the facts are that Boohoo offers 2,000 new lines each week, and delivered 7.2 million orders in the six months to August 2019, a 13% 'year on year' increase (Chambers, 2019). The number of T-shirts made and sold is unknown, but is a fraction of 7.2 million orders and cannot counteract 'negative environmental impacts'. Rather, the brand is acknowledging its customers' interest in sustainability with tokenistic actions to demonstrate that they understand their customers and to attract media attention. It suggests, however, that brand initiatives centred on sustainability can improve their reputation, whether or not deservedly.

Conversely, observational research found that Topshop do not understand what their customers are looking for. There were no garment ranges promoted as sustainable in their stores in July 2019, although some products in their Boutique Collection are manufactured in the UK (See Figure 46. P112, Section 4.3.3). This suggests that they appear not to understand or be aware of consumer interest in social sustainability - selected by 29%. The second biggest category after the environment (38%) and is a lost opportunity to promote the range as sustainable because some items are made in the UK.

Analysis of responses from staff when enquiring about sustainable products in the shops provided little evidence of brand commitment to staff training. Three of the twelve sales assistants questioned understood what ‘sustainability’ meant, and most recognised the words ‘ethical’ and ‘organic’, but were unable to show any products that fitted these categories (See Table 37, P110, Section 4.3.3). This was less surprising in Topshop, but Zara state on their web site that they are working to make their products more sustainable every day (Zara, 2020, online) and stock many Join Life products that staff did not know were sustainable.

5.4. Consumer and Brand interest in Sustainability

This section explores the evidence from primary and secondary research that revealed a disparity between consumer and brand interest in sustainability. Accordingly, it fulfils Objective 3 – ‘*To make a comparative analysis of consumer and fashion brand interest in sustainability’.*

5.4.1 Recycling

Considering that Q20 of the survey revealed that ‘Recycling’ was the dominant subject that consumers received communication about from brands, findings from the case study revealed that ASOS and Topshop do not offer the consumer any support or incentive to recycle. Furthermore, despite the prominence of recycling claims on Zara’s web site (Figure 38, P101 Section 4.3.2) there were no recycling bins available and staff in the shops were unaware of this service, indicating little commitment to published information. The UK Parliamentary Report on the Sustainability of the Fashion Industry (Table 6, P25 Section 2.2.7) confirmed that all brands except Kurt Geiger were participating in ‘*Reuse or recycling of old stock’.* However, case study findings revealed that neither ASOS nor Topshop are offering their customers a recycling service.

This focus on recycling reveals two important insights into brand motivation. Sustainable experts argue that the only way for the fashion industry to become sustainable is by replacing the current linear model with a circular one (Ellen MacArthur Foundation, 2017). This starts with sourcing materials and designing product with sustainability both at the forefront and throughout the process (Ellen MacArthur Foundation, 2017). If brands focus on recycling, many of the current problems including landfill, materials taking hundreds of years to decompose, and garments worn a handful of times, will continue (Ellen MacArthur Foundation, 2017). The other concerning fact is that by focussing on recycling, brands are placing the emphasis and responsibility for sustainability entirely in the hands of the consumer.

To summarise, little or no change to the fast fashion model is required for brands engaging in recycling. The only additional cost is of providing recycling bins. They can continue buying and selling vast quantities of goods, many of which are unsuitable for recycling. In fact in 2016 the figure was 1% of clothing material is recycled (Wicker, 2016).

5.4.2 Fabric sustainability

Using fabrics with sustainable qualities, such as recycled fibres or ecologically grown cotton is one of the simplest ways that a fashion brand can proclaim sustainable characteristics without making changes to its business model. The only adjustment required is paying higher fabric prices. Fabric and garment production are usually two different factories. The garment manufacturer receives the order and the fabric factory becomes a Tier 2 supplier to the brand (See Figure 2, P17, Section 2.2.1). This means that the brand can absolve responsibility for this supplier. Never the less Zara's Join Life range uses sustainable fabrics and Inditex are the first international brand to state that by 2025 products in all their brands will be made from sustainable fabrics (Conlon, 2019, online).

In assessing how well each of the three brand cases prioritise their use of sustainable fabrics, findings from web sites, shops, products and social media were examined. Some ASOS garments made from sustainable materials were found by searching online for 'sustainable'. However Figure 40, P103, Section 4.3.2, shows that a customer needs to select 'Show More' in order to see how the garment is sustainable, leading to the possibility of some not reaching that stage, and missing the description of how the fabric is sustainable. This is particularly pertinent against a backdrop of the same brand presenting festival and non-standard size ranges as sustainable!

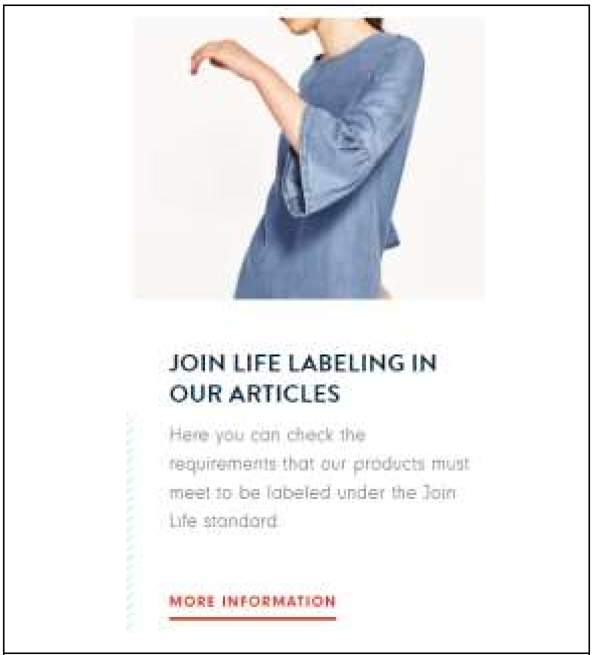
With Topshop, although no products were displayed when searching 'sustainable', nine products appeared from searching 'organic' and a detailed description appeared next to the image. During an eleven-day period in July, Topshop made 33 posts on Instagram and none related to sustainability (See Table 38, P117, Section 4.3.4).

In 2016, Zara introduced the Join Life range, which it described as 'A selection of more sustainable raw materials and processes that helps us take care of the environment' (Zara, 2019, online). Table 41 summarises the details provided on their web site which allow products to be labelled as Join Life which fall into one of three categories all based on caring for 'Fibers', 'Water' or the 'Planet'.

'Care for Fiber'	'Care for Water'	'Care for Planet'
': products manufactured using sustainable raw materials such as organic cotton, TENCEL™ Lyocell or recycled fibres.'	': items that have been manufactured, in at least one stage of production, with technologies that reduce water consumption.'	':garments that, during the manufacturing process, have consumed energy from renewable sources.'
' As long as the minimum requirements for each category are met, the attributes can be combined with each other resulting in multi-category products.'		

Table 41: Summary of Join Life product categories outlined on Inditex web site (Inditex, 2020, online)

There was also a link to further information with detailed specifications about Join Life fabrics and garments (Figure 58), unfortunately the document is in Spanish, so not very helpful For most UK consumers (Zara, 2020, online) (See Appendix 10)!



https://www.wateractionplan.com/documents/177327/558131/Requisitos+Join+Life.pdf/fb65aef1-07fb-4945-33d7-c2b1b45f3f37

Figure 58: Link from Inditex web site to '*Spanish*' Join Life specifications.

Zara advise that their standard is based on the Higg Index and that they work with their suppliers to integrate this standard into the production processes of our garments (Inditex, 2020, online). However, the statement found through the Higg Index web site is 'We promote workers wellbeing.' (Inditex, 2020, online) A statement that is so broad and unspecific that it is meaningless. There is no evidence that the Join Life range embodies any other aspects of sustainability, than the materials, and 43% of Zara products are made in countries, including India and Cambodia, (Zara, 2019, online), who have very poor sustainable records particularly regarding the treatment of factory workers. During an eleven-day period in July, Zara made 11 posts on Instagram and two related to sustainability (See Table 39, P120, Section 4.3.4)

It is worth mentioning that many other brands, including value retailers such as Primark, are selling and promoting denim made with sustainable cotton (Figure 5, P26, Section: 2.2.7). It is quite telling that although Topshop are well known for stocking an extensive range of jeans, at the time of the research (July 2019 and November 2019), there was not one option featuring any sustainable characteristics.

Evidence from case study findings demonstrates that although brands are communicating their commitment to simple sustainability initiatives such as recycling, they are not implementing them. In terms of using sustainable fabrics, whilst Zara is focussing on this quite successfully, no evidence was found from either ASOS or Topshop. This raises the issue of future commitment to more demanding areas highlighted by their customers: environment and social sustainability.

5.5 Communication between Consumers and Fashion Brands.

This section draws conclusions from the original findings of the survey and case studies, which examined three channels - web sites, shops and social media - to evaluate communication between fashion brands and consumers. It analyses the content of communication, to extrapolate underlying reasons to expose why it is sometimes limited or inadequate.

5.5.1 Language about sustainability

Findings from the survey emphasised a disconnection between the content of sustainable information from fashion brands and consumer priorities. They revealed that the most frequently occurring word used in communication from fashion brands was '*Recycling'* and the second was '*Fabrics'*. By contrast, consumers' description of sustainability placed *'Recycling'* in fifth position. The two biggest areas of consumer interest were the '*Environment*' (38%) and '*Social Sustainability'* (treatment of factory workers) (29%). Question 11 of the survey asked participants to describe the meaning of sustainable fashion. The most frequently occurring answer was 'environment' in second place 'social' and then 'longevity'. Question 20 asked participants to describe communication received from fashion brands, relating to sustainability. The most common answer to this question was 'recycling' followed by 'fabrics', with 'social' in third position.

Figure 59 was created from software, which generates a word cloud (Word Cloud, 2019) to summarise answers to Q11.and Q20.of the survey showing the dominant and contrasting language being used by consumers and brands, suggesting different priorities.

Main words used by respondents **(consumers)** to describe sustainable fashion	Main words respondents have seen from fashion **brands** about sustainability.

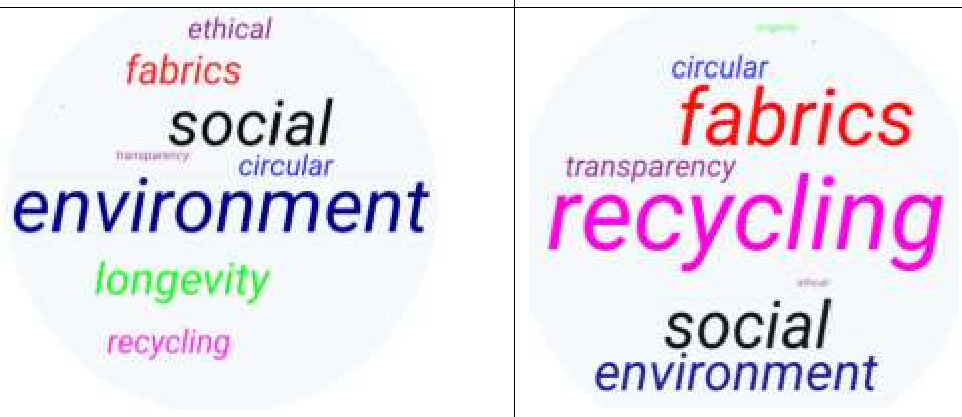


Figure 59: Survey results showing Consumer and Brand emphasis on language of sustainability. (Authors own image, 2019)

It is interesting that *Longevity* was the consumers' third priority, although it did not appear in any communication that they had received from fashion brands. Clearly wearing clothes for longer rather than buying new, would disrupt the current model of constant consumption, and therefore unlikely to be a priority for fashion brands. Table 42 illustrates the first, second and third priorities of brands and consumers.

	1st	2nd	3rd
Brands	Recycling	Fabric	Social
Consumer	Environment	Social	Longevity

Table 42: Survey results showing consumer and brand emphasis on ‘sustainable’ words.

These findings align with the Business of Fashion report that young people are particularly interested in fair labour, sustainable resourcing and the environment (2018). Brands that want to become more sustainable should listen to customers and use the themes most important to them to determine sustainable priorities for the business. Addressing the language disparity involves brands educating customers about the language of sustainability or adopting a more customer friendly language themselves.

Central to numerous challenges, including the fact that much of the fashion industry is not currently sustainable, lies the issue of communication between fashion brands and consumers (Global Fashion Agenda and The Boston Consulting Group, 2018). Communication about sustainability is effective if it creates a common understanding based on societal values, and includes goals that facilitate behaviour change (Newig et al., 2013, Genc, 2017). The literature revealed key factors that increase the likelihood of its success, including that it must be simple, direct and concise, whilst addressing the cultural beliefs and values of its audience (Genc, 2017). Other factors include the emotional and imaginative appeal, the immediacy, directness and relevance, the use of commitments – to signal involvement; and the importance of identifying ‘retrieval cues’ that remind people of the message (Bator and Cialdini, 2000).

In fashion, the absence of clear definitions of words such as ‘green’ and ‘sustainable’, and the lack of an industry-wide standard (Thomas, 2008, Cervellon et al., 2010,) hinders the effectiveness of communication between brands and consumers. Negotiating the sustainable fashion landscape is difficult - even where brands provide information it is sometimes vague and incomplete (Thomas, 2008). Communication must meet customer expectations by being precise and specific (Henninger, 2016). JD Sports is one of the UK’s ‘*less engaged’* brands from the Parliamentary Report, 2019. Their web site statement about the Modern Slavery Act informs us that it has 247 Tier 1 and 275 ‘Known’ Tier 2 suppliers but there is no information about whether they have supported or driven any improvements.

This is damaging as it has led to consumers disregarding ‘green’ claims, as they either did not believe or did not understand their meaning (Thomas, 2015: 528, Cotton Incorporated 2007). Many of today’s fashion consumers distrust fashion brands’ sustainable claims (McNeill and Moore, 2015: 221). Due to exposes of poor practice such as treatment of factory workers, further ambiguity in their sustainability message leads to further distrust. It is clear that authenticity in action and communication, hand in hand with transparency, is critical in gaining and maintaining trust and brand loyalty.

Examining customer responses to Instagram posts gave a unique insight into how young people perceive fashion brands and do not trust sustainable claims. For example, when they presented non-sustainable products through a search on the word ‘sustainable’. In the case of ASOS, only about 30% of products displayed were sustainable (Table 26, P81, Section 4.3.2). These findings are supported by analysis of the literature, where 40% of fashion consumers reported that they are not given enough information and do not know which brands to trust (The Business of Fashion, 2018:60), and feel that fashion brands use sustainability to increase prices (Ritch, 2015).

Analysis of the literature and case studies revealed a correlation between the sustainable practice of a brand and the success of its sustainable communication. The greater the brands' sustainable practice, the better the quality and content of their communication about it. (Section 2.4.3). Given the current zeitgeist around sustainability, brands that maintain their current offer in terms of product, price and service, can benefit from also being sustainable (Ciasullo et al., 2017).
Evidence from the survey and case study findings confirmed that fashion brands are using unprecedented digital opportunities to engage their customers and encourage purchasing. They acknowledge consumer interest in sustainability with tokenistic actions and/or bold or vague claims about their initiatives Zara - recycling, Boohoo - sustainable T-shirt, Top Shop - vegan footwear collection, and ASOS - sustainability highlight on Instagram. The investment that brands are making in digital platforms reflect their acknowledgement of the importance of communication to their business model (Lay, 2018). However, there is little evidence of dialogue encouraging sustainable fashion consumption in terms of recycling or buying less. According to Hussain (2018), retailers are not taking advantage of their powerful position to educate customers with information on labels, garment care or recycling.

Case study findings about the content of fashion brand posts on Instagram revealed that product promotion overshadowed any other subject. Figure 60 shows that during an eleven-day period, content relating to sustainability from ASOS, Topshop and Zara was 2%, 0% and 18%, respectively. This indicates that sustainability is not a priority for fashion brands, despite what they might indicate in CSR.

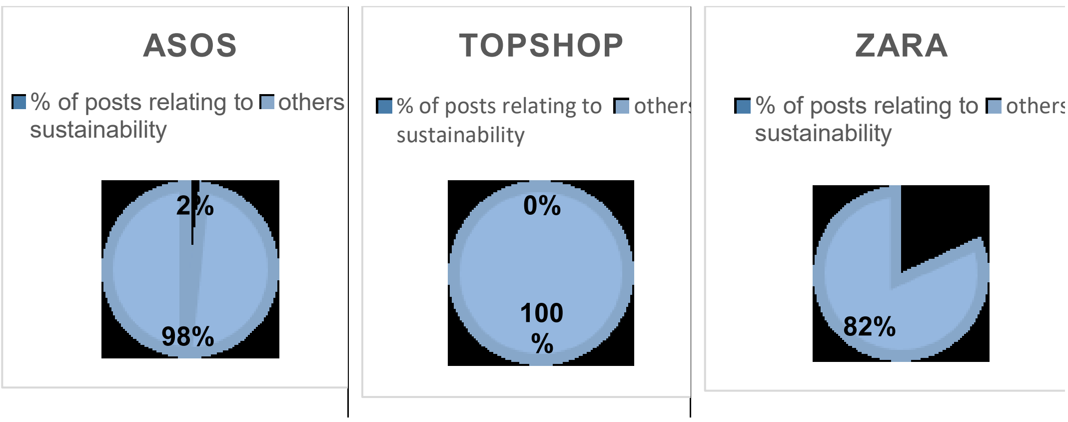


Figure 60: Instagram posts relating to Sustainability and Others

5.5.2 Channels of communication

Forty three percent of survey participants revealed that they want no more than weekly contact from brands. Case study data confirmed that the number of 'daily' brand posts on Instagram are much higher, ranging from two from Zara, six from Topshop and ten from ASOS (See Figure 49, P114, Section 4.3.4). Product images encouraging consumption dominate Instagram content and 'Followers' receive a message from the brand every time a new post is added unless they have switched off 'Notifications'. Fashion brands use web sites and social media as conduits to build loyalty by encouraging interaction and engagement with their customers. However, although this group spend an unprecedented amount of time on social media, they can feel overwhelmed by the number of messages and notifications (RSPH, 2017).

Findings from the survey established that the most popular way to shop was online (28%) closely followed by going to shops (25%). Findings from the case study illustrate how brands use these two channels to detract or draw attention to certain information. On their web sites, positioning of information, ease of navigation and use of appropriate search words all impacted on the customer experience and influenced their buying decision. Shops, on the other hand, employ store staff, visual merchandising and garment tickets to communicate with their customers. As the survey identified social media (Instagram) as the most important channel for communication, it was also essential to examine brands' and consumer posts to reveal common themes. In parallel with shops and web sites, the emphasis was on selling by providing images of new products. An analysis of each channel:- web sites, shops, product labelling and social media - follows.

5.5.2.1 Web Sites

Question 19 of the survey identified '*web sites or shops'* as the preferred channels (29%) for being informed about sustainability (see Figure 21, P85, Section 4.2.1). The case study findings however concluded that it was difficult to find information about sustainability on ASOS, Topshop and Zara's web sites. Consumers would need to be familiar with terms such as 'Modern Slavery Act' (Zara) and 'Fashion Footprint' (Topshop), which were not terms used by survey respondents to describe sustainability, or by customers posts on Instagram.

The prime space on a web site is the top of the home page as all site visitors see it without scrolling or navigation. It is reasonable to assume that brands determine what appears here according to business priorities. Figures 41 and 42 (P104 and P105, Section 4.3.2) showed that the top of ASOS's and Topshop's web sites feature sales promotions such as '70% OFF'. Zara was different in that a link to *Join Life* was part of the content on the fixed sidebar at the top left of the home page and remained there as the user navigated to other pages. Whilst this is positive, it requires the consumer to know that their *Join Life* range is sustainable. It is logical to conclude that content that the brand considers less important (sustainability) requires the customer to navigate away from the home page.

The web site design of all three brands was unhelpful for a customer looking for sustainable products. There were *'no'* options from Topshop or Zara from searches using the three most popular words used by survey respondents to describe sustainability (Environment, Social Sustainability, Longevity). Of the 87,000 products available at any one time from ASOS (ASOS, 2019c), eleven products were displayed when searching under the consumers three most popular words for sustainability. One non-clothing product appeared from ‘Environment’ and thirteen products including two non-clothing from ‘Social Sustainability’ on the ASOS web site (Table 35, P106, section 4.3.2). All brands fared slightly better with searches using ‘Sustainable, Recycled’ and ‘Organic’, averaging nine from Topshop, just over one hundred from ASOS and just under three hundred from Zara by selecting Join Life. However, these numbers were misleading. Both brands presented niche product categories, including Tall, Petite, Maternity, and Festival wear as sustainable, and there was no information about how many of the products were sustainable. One of the problems identified in the literature was the number of different words used to describe ‘sustainable’ and no industry standard (Thomas, 2008).

Zara, on the other hand, presented consistently high numbers of Join Life products in which characteristics of the fabrics appeared to be genuinely sustainable. In fact, Zara’s web site promotes the Join Life range quite well, in that the link remains at the top of the page on all pages. However, even here there was inconsistency about product branding which could confuse or lead customers to mistrust information. Figure 42 (P105, Section 4.3.2) showed two garments made from the same fabric - one branded as Join Life the other not. Given Zara’s commitment to this range in terms of the breadth of the range, this is not only misleading but also a lost opportunity.

In summary, the problems found by using the ‘Search’ button were:

- Products that were not sustainable were displayed (See Figure 39, P103 & Table 35, P106, Section 4.3.2)
- Branding was inconsistent - Zara (See Figure 42, P105, Section 4.3.2)
- No information about products’ sustainable credentials were provided (See Figure 40 P103, Section 4.3.2)
- There were no products available matching the consumers’ preferred search words (See Table 36, P107, Section 4.3.2)

The beginning of this section defined characteristics of effective communication as clear direct and concise. Case study research has exposed that current information provision on web sites neither meets these requirements, or young fashion consumers’ expectation of expediency (The Business of Fashion and McKinsey, 2018).

5.5.2.2 Shops

Case study findings about the retail environment and how it assists consumers with decision-making, showed little progress since 2015 when Antonetti and Maklan declared that the retail landscape was unhelpful in terms of the information it provided customers about sustainability (2015). Although Zara stocked many Join Life products there was nothing to direct customers to them, or to advise that this was a sustainable range (see Figure 44, P109, Section 4.3.3). Signs were used exclusively to draw attention to sale garments.

Figure 43, (P108, Section 4.3.4) illustrated that Topshop use signs quite heavily to encourage customers to purchase (discounts, last chance to buy), the only sign they had relating to sustainability, was next to the vegan footwear range launched in April 2019 (De Klerk, 2019). Many of the garments in their Boutique Collection are made in the UK, but there was no promotional material highlighting this, suggesting that they are unaware of the growing importance of country of origin and sustainability to their customers.

Although store staff are an important conduit through which customers can learn about sustainable products, case study findings confirmed that Topshop and Zara are not investing in, or ensuring that customer-facing staff are aware of business sustainability goals (Table 37. P110, Section 4.3.3). In the stores visited, the majority of staff did not understand 'sustainability' and were unaware of whether they had sustainable products on sale. This is particularly lamentable with Zara who have steadily increased the number of *Join Life* garments (Zara, 2019) but are still not promoting it to customers. Also concerning is that if this range is not being clearly signposted in shops, customers looking for sustainable products may not find them. This could lead to poor sales and Zara incorrectly interpreting this as lack of demand for sustainable product. Contrast this with the emphasis placed on '*selling'* where staff have a financial incentive to achieve both individual and store sales targets (Inditex, 2019, online, Topshop, 2019, online).

Zara Sales Assistants were largely unaware of the recycling service promoted heavily on their web sites, a further indication that although they are communicating about their sustainable actions, there is little commitment to them. In fact, neither brand appears to be seizing the opportunity to communicate effectively with their customers about sustainability, not only to facilitate customer decision making but also to ensure that they are maximising sales.

5.5.2.3 Product labelling

Question 19 revealed that 27% of the respondents wanted sustainable information on garment tickets and labels. Analysis of literature also found that providing information on a garment at the point of sale minimised vagueness and enabled the customer to make an informed decision (Ritch, 2015). It is a low cost method of helping customers to buy sustainably presuming the existence of sustainable characteristics. A further opportunity is to include costing information on garment tickets to educate customers about the real cost of sustainable garment production, which is significant in achieving long-term goals about sustainability, and in consumers accepting that products made without exploitation may cost more (Ritch, 2015:1174).

Zara use branded 'Join Life' swing tickets on the range of that name, however, Figure 47, P112, Section 4.3.2. Illustrates that the size, shape, quality and colour of them were the same as those used on other products such as the Basics range. This was an opportunity for Zara to emphasize and identify this range as distinctive from others with unique branding to draw customers' attention. The labelling on ASOS's own brand products gave no indication on either the swing ticket or the woven label that the fabric was recycled, even though this was part of the web site description (Figure 40, P103 Section 4.3.2).

5.5.2.4 Social Media

Q18 and Q19 of the survey showed that social media was the preferred news channel for young people and the second preference for information about sustainability (See Figure 21, P85, Section 4.2.1). It is unique in that it facilitates two-way communication between brands and consumers, allowing customers to express their opinions, approval or disapprovals to posts made by brands (Bearne, 2016).

The format of Instagram's home pages are significant, as all Followers see them. ASOS was the only one of the three brands that referenced sustainability on the home page with a highlight (Figure 48. P114, Section 4.3.4). Although this was positive, analysis of the frequency of posts revealed that the most recent post was seven weeks earlier and some were from more than a year ago. Contrast this with ten daily product posts as evidence of their priorities and financial investment. In common with analysis of web sites, information that did not relate to sustainability, such as new store openings, was found through the ASOS sustainability highlight.

Analysis of ASOS Topshop and Zara posts on Instagram exposed that during the eleven-day data collection period there were no posts about sustainability from Topshop, 1.75% of total posts from ASOS and 18.18% from Zara. Consumers' responses to posts about sustainability were frequently cynical or dismissive. For example, in response to Zara's claim to be working towards circularity with their suppliers *'…'#greenwashing in its purest form…nice try Zara'* (See Figure 55, P119 (Section 4.3.4). There was also evidence of consumers pushing brands towards sustainability, for example a Customer's Response to an product post on Instagram, which ASOS had not replied to a week later, particularly significant against a backdrop of making ten new product posts per day.

> "I don't [sic] suppose these are sustainably made are they? I love them but if they were not made from recycled materials then I couldn't [sic] bring myself to buy them, my ethics come first".

Finally, question eight revealed that communication from fashion brands tempted eight percent of respondents to buy products. Although this is a small number, it is important in demonstrating the influence of social media on fashion consumption, and shows the potential for marketing sustainable products.

5.5.3 Brand – Opportunity and Intention

The current focus of fast-fashion brands is on selling vast quantities of low price goods, rather than sustainability. However, brands that are unaware of the increased mainstream focus on sustainability (Edited, 2019) risk losing business to brands that have responded by offering sustainable fast fashion. Although the evidence presented next suggests that brands are not *currently* seizing the opportunity to communicate about sustainability with their customers, Arrigo (2020:14) believes that brand intention will evolve to become more sustainable.

It is difficult to access information about brand CSR policies and requires consumers to have a reasonable understanding of terminology When customers search online for 'sustainable' products, ASOS brands present product categories such as 'Festival' and 'Maternity', rather

than sustainable clothing (See section 4.3.2). This is an example of brands exploiting terminology, which could lead to consumers losing trust.
A key focus of Zara's web site is on their 'Closing the Loop' recycling service:-

> "We are also making it easier for our customers to drop off their used garments with us, so that we can aim to give them a second life or recycle them" (Inditex, 2019, online).

Notice first the vagueness of '*aim*' to give clothes a second life '*or recycle'* them. The case study showed that this service was not available in stores (See section 4.3.3).

Although 25% of survey respondents placed social sustainability as second only to the environment (36%) in terms of defining sustainability (Figure 28, P90, Section 4.2.4) the only information on the Inditex (which includes Zara) web site relating specifically to their supply chain is that there are 'Two million workers, 1800 suppliers, 43 markets and 12,000 audits' (Inditex, 2018, online). Whereas sustainable information might refer to paying a 'Living Wage', or the number of 'passed audits'. In other words, the information is vague and provides no measures of social sustainability.

One of the themes emerging from survey and literature findings is that fashion consumers want to keep buying from fast fashion brands but they want the brands to become more sustainable. This is significant in highlighting the opportunity that brands have to retain customer loyalty, subject to improving their sustainable practice. Newig et al., assert that communicating about sustainability through CSR information on web sites presents an opportunity for brands to improve their reputation through conveying a positive and effective message (2013:2984). Although this is a reason for brands to improve their sustainability, these examples demonstrate that although there are many opportunities to present information about sustainability to customers, at present brand intention relates to maximising overall sales, even when - as in Zara's case - sustainable products are available.

5.5.4. Brands – Inaccurate and limited communication about sustainability

Evidence from brands' web sites, shops and social media compounded literature findings that suggested that vague and misleading claims by fashion brands about sustainability (Thomas, 2015). For example, a statement from ASOS's web site states…

> "By working together, we believe we can deliver a systemic shift in the way our industry addresses key ethical trade and sustainability challenges and proactively design a future we all believe in" (ASOS, 2019, online. (E)).

However, whilst the statement recognises that 'our' (implying joint responsibility) industry needs a systemic shift to become more sustainable, it is imprecise. There are further examples on their web site such as being the '1st e-commerce brand to sign up to IndustriALL', but little specificity about how this commitment relates to product sourcing and influences sustainable principals such as paying factory workers a living wage.

Thomas (2015) suggested that brands are concerned about receiving an adverse reaction by publishing information about their sustainability initiatives. Brands that prioritise sustainability, where sustainable principles shape all aspects of their business, including Parks Project, Klean Kanteen, and United by Blue, do not claim to be perfect, rather they inform the customer of progress that they are making and their direction of travel. Brands that adopt a more realist approach which highlight areas of progress without claiming to be entirely sustainable are more likely to convince customers of their integrity, particularly against a backdrop of current consumer distrust (The Business of Fashion, 2018:60).

5.6 Chapter Summary

This chapter has examined survey and case study findings to forge a better understanding of consumers and fashion brands and how they engage with each other.
The findings demonstrate that this consumer group are politically and socially aware and are seeking information about the provenance of their clothes. They have high expectations and little loyalty to fashion brands whom they distrust. Many have small budgets, which limits where they can shop. They feel torn between the demands of society in terms of appearance, and concern for the long-term welfare of people and the planet. Although it was found that social media encourages consumption, the findings contradicted the literature suggesting that a garment is worn only a handful of times. There was evidence that despite a proclivity towards sustainability, this often did not transfer to their fashion consumption.
Whilst the findings suggest that brands recognise that sustainability is an important issue, by presenting non-sustainable products through a search on 'sustainable', there was little evidence of commitment to it from the communication examined during the case study data collection period.

Analysis of survey and case study findings highlighted that although brands emphasised Recycling more than other aspects of sustainability, there was no recycling service in the stores. There was also a disconnection between consumer and brand priorities. Brands emphasised Recycling first then fabrics, whereas consumers prioritised the Environment and then Social sustainability. An analysis of communication channels demonstrated that both parties heavily use web sites, shops, labels and social media, but there was little to analyse about sustainability, as the emphasis was on buying and selling product.

The Recommendations chapter maps out how brands can use powerful channels of available communication to engage and educate customers about sustainability. It acknowledges that whilst most fashion brands have CSR policies, they are ineffective or counterproductive. It assesses current communication before outlining specific actions designed to satisfy all stakeholders in fast fashion businesses.

Chapter 6.0 Guidelines for Optimising Communication

6.1 Introduction

This section fulfills the final objective (O4), '*To recommend guidelines to optimise the communication of sustainability between fast fashion brands and consumers.'* It compares survey and case study findings with the typology of communication developed by Newig et al., (2013) and consumer behaviour theories of Antonetti and Maklin (2015) and finds limited or misleading brand communication about sustainability with customers despite considerable opportunity. Newig et al., (2013) emphasized the direction, function and measures of effective communication (See Table 19, Section 2.4.2) yet it is clear that there is a significant gap between this model and the findings from ASOS, Topshop and Zara.

Regarding ***direction of communication*** (a) the findings illustrate that the intention of communication in stores and online between ASOS, Topshop, Zara and their customers is to *inform* and *engage* rather than *educate* or *transform* behaviour as recommended by Newig et al., (2013). Although social media is an opportunity for consumers to reply to or initiate conversation with brands, messages (not about sustainability) from fashion brands to consumers dominate the channel. During the 11 day data collection period there were no posts from Topshop about sustainability, one from ASOS and 2 from Zara, against a total number of 33, 57 and 11 respectively. Therefore it can be concluded that the majority of communication between fashion brands and consumers is *one directional* (Newig et al., 2013), and originates from a source that is not trusted in relation to sustainable claims (Thomas, 2015:11). This reduces the likelihood of brand communication leading to an increase in sustainable consumption.

The ***function of communication*** (b) about sustainability (Newig et al., 2013) is to frame issues and arguments that create common understanding. To inform engage and identify individuals who need to take action. The main findings from the case studies was the absence of or inadequate information about sustainability. Far from educating customers, communication was vague or (deliberately) misleading. There were no signs in Zara stores promoting or explaining the Join Life collection, and staff were unaware of which products were 'sustainable'. Festival and maternity products were presented by searching with the word 'sustainable' on ASOS's web site. In other words, the only *calls to action* (Newig et al., 2013) related to maximising sales of any products, rather than encouraging sustainable consumption. To conclude, *the function of and about* (Newig et al, 2013) communication from fashion brands is unlikely to improve the consumption of sustainable products even when available such as with Zara's Join Life collection.

In terms of ***measures of effectiveness*** (c) (Newig et al., 2013) of communication about sustainability, the effectiveness of narrative from fashion brands that lead to behaviour change depends on the extent to which their message resonates with or contradicts other societal sub systems and discourse. Ultimately, the success of a message is not only that it is understood but that it has led to an increase in sustainable fashion consumption. As there was limited messaging about sustainability from any of the brands, it is reasonable to suggest that they have not contributed positively in this respect. A final important point is that the survey findings revealed that consumers position 'recycling' in fifth position when defining sustainability, but reported that it was the term used most often by brands to define sustainability. (See Table 42, Section 5.5.1) This suggestion that consumers rather than the brands themselves are responsible for improving sustainability through recycling. This is even less tolerable considering that neither ASOS or Topshop offer recycling services and although Zara promote it, there was no evidence of it in stores.

The findings from this research illustrate that mainstream fashion brands recognise the importance of sustainability. Most have CSR policies, and are members of organisations such as IndustriALL or the Sustainable Clothing Action Plan (SCAP) (Gupta, 2019). They promote initiatives such as recycling unwanted garments, or sourcing products made from organic or recycled materials. However, interrogation of their overall actions and message to consumers about sustainability is that they are inconsistent (from one channel to another), limited in their focus (largely pointing to the responsibility of the consumer) and fail to address the main issues identified by consumers.

The following section provides guidelines on how brands committed to improving sustainability can use communication to ensure that they simultaneously satisfy customer demands. This includes prioritising sustainable issues that reflect customer interest, employing channels their customers use and ensuring that content is relevant to them.

6.2 Communication Guidelines about Sustainability

The first stage in Newig et al.*'s* typology is Counterproductive the second is Neutral, and the final is Transformative (Newig et al., 2013). (See Table 43)

Case study brands are Counterproductive in content centred communication typology of communication processes.			
	ASOS, Topshop, Zara.		
	Stage 1.	Stage 2.	Stage 3.
	Counterproductive	Neutral	Transformative (CAS)
Communication **about** sustainability (CAS)	Discourse oriented to impede genuine sustainability development.	Scientific deliberation about sustainability related phenomena.	Participatory dialogues in local groups (Agenda 21 – 1992 UN goals)
Communication. **of** sustainability (COS)	Greenwashing in sustainability reporting.	Scientific communication of facts	Educating students or the public

Table 43: Fashion brand current position within the Newig typology. Adapted from Newig et al., 2013: 2978.

The case study findings position ASOS, Topshop and Zara in Stage 1 – Counterproductive, within the '*economy/industry'* societal subsystem, whose primary goal is to sell goods and perpetuate rather than transform behaviour (Newig et al., 2013). Examples include: *Greenwashing*', Arcadia web site using donated items and off cuts to create one wedding dress, despite the fact that they were simultaneously selling thousands of new products. '*Limited'* information about sustainable products, even in Zara shops where an extensive range of products made from sustainable fabrics are available, and '*Inaccurate'* information such as ASOS presenting niche product categories such as Maternity as being sustainable. See Table 44.

	Evidence of Greenwashing & Counterproductive communication from case studies brands	
	Stage 1 - Counterproductive Identify brands current positon in terms of communication about sustainability	
1	Greenwashing	Scale of recycling projects in relation to number of goods sold - 'Arcadia is supporting the West London Waste Authority and E&W Couture campaign to create a beautifully intricate, upcycled wedding dress – by donating our fabrics and material off cuts!'
2	Absence and/or limited information about sustainability.	Limited number of Instagram posts re sustainability. Join Life range not signposted Topshop Boutique collection not identified as sustainable Store staff unaware of sustainable products or terminology Poor response to social media questions about product sustainability No information on product labels
3	Excessive communication about selected products	Number of daily Instagram posts featuring new products. Number of Sale signs in Zara stores
4	Using unfamiliar language	Fashion footprint Modern slavery Join Life
5	Vague & imprecise	Zara –'aim' to 'recycle' used garments ASOS – 'By working together, we believe we can deliver a systemic shift in the way our industry addresses key ethical trade and sustainability challenges and proactively design a future we all believe in'
6	Inaccurate information	Niche or minority product categories presented as sustainable New store openings presented through sustainability highlight
7	Primarily one-way flow from fashion brand to consumer – web sites, shops, garments.	Brands have total control over the content with little opportunity for customers to be heard.
8	Selective transparency	Content relating to sustainability focusses on fabrics and recycling. (Inditex – number of suppliers, workers, markets & audits ASOS – '1st e-commerce brand to sign up to IndustriALL'
9	Selective focus thereby not presenting the full picture.	ASOS – sustainability highlight Arcadia selecting 4 SDG's (3, 8. 12, 13)
10	Inconsistent message across different channels	Recycling service featured heavily on web sites but not offered in stores.
11	Pushing responsibility towards consumers.	Returning clothes for recycling. Buying clothes made from sustainable fabrics
12	Influencers & celebrities used to increase sales.	ASOS – origin As Seen On Screen – Sara Cummings, Pandora Sykes, Fleur De Force Topshop – Beyoncé – Ivy Park range

Table 44: Examples from case studies illustrating Stage 1 – Counterproductive to achieve improved sustainable action to accompany communication about sustainability. (ASOS, 2019, (F))

To develop guidelines tailored for fast fashion that optimise the communication of sustainability the author has developed Newig et al.'s Counterproductive, Neutral, and Transformative stages to Immature, Transitional and Mature. Table 45 illustrates how case study findings are mapped onto the new framework thus providing a start point for moving from Immature to

Transitional and the final Mature stage. The timescale for moving through the stages is largely determined by the level of commitment, and production lead times.

	Proposed Stages of Communication about Sustainability for Fashion Brands		
(Newig et al., 2013)	Counterproductive	Neutral	Transformative
	Stage 1 - Immature Identify brands current positon in terms of communication about sustainability	**Stage 2 – Transitional** Outline the steps, including measures of success,	**Stage 3 – Mature** Describe ideal future position - improved sustainable communication
	Honest appraisal.	Assess areas to improve.	Informative & Educational
1	Greenwashing	Identify specific and measurable data to report on.	Eliminate greenwashing
2	Absence/limited information about sustainability.	Develop a communication strategy that meets revenue targets whilst providing more information about sustainable products.	Increased revenue from sustainable products, to achieve overall revenue targets.
3	Excessive comm. about new products		
4	Using unfamiliar language	Identify areas of potential lack of or misunderstanding.	Educate consumers around the language of sustainability.
5	Vague & imprecise	Provide data to build trust and to educate customers e.g. garment labelling & using Trade Standards branding (GOTS).	Demonstrate expertise in sustainable fashion. Consumers well informed about sustainability.
6	Inaccurate information	Identify currently inaccurate areas and develop plan on what to inform consumers about.	All information is relevant and transparent.
7	Primarily one-way flow from fashion brand to consumer – web sites, shops, garments.	Use Social Media to engage with customers to create two-way communication.	Horizontal communication - Social Media. Message framed to create common understanding
8	Selective transparency	Identify information previously not disclosed.	Full Transparency
9	Selective focus - not presenting full picture.	Honest about what is yet to do	Share ongoing sustainable goals
10	Inconsistent message - different channels	Test different communication channels	Consistent message across all channels
11	Pushing responsibility towards consumers	Understanding areas of consumer interest in sustainability and motivation to be sustainable.	Focus on areas of consumer interest. Regular dialogue about sustainability
12	Influencers & celebrities used to increase sales.	Identify appropriate influencers /celebrities to endorse brand sustainability.	Use credible influencers/celebrities to champion sustainability
13	n/a	Identify experts to focus on sustainable areas of common interest.	Use experts to communicate and educate consumers about sustainability.

Table 45: Summary of three stages for fashion brands to achieve improved sustainable communication. (Authors own, 2019).

Current brand communication provides limited information about sustainability and focusses on selling products. A new business strategy (addressing points 2 and 3 from Table 45) with increased focus on the communication of sustainability and revenue targets that include sustainable products is required to shift the focus. Point 5 relates to brands developing expertise in sustainability and building consumer trust. Customers could be educated through product labels, which include information about the sustainability of a garment. Existing certifications include The Fairtrade Foundation, which relate to garment production methods (2019) and The Global Organic Textile Standard (GOTS, 2018), which identify raw materials and manufacturing processes. To utilise such labels requires a fast fashion business to invest substantial time and money to re-design the process, beginning with sourcing raw materials are sustainably and ensuring that all processes throughout the supply chain are transparent and non-exploitative. This would result in higher prices that reflect the real cost to one more akin to slow fashion (ILO, 2017). This explains why these certifications have not been adopted, and suggests that an intermediate stage (such as proposed in Figure 61) is a more realistic option for fast fashion brands.

Point 7 underlines the transformative powers of horizontal communication by using social media to encourage dialogue about sustainability. Point 8 states that current transparency is selective, so brands only share successful areas of sustainable practice with consumers, whilst others are excluded or deliberately vague. The final points, (12 and 13) address the potential for brands to use appropriate celebrities or experts to champion sustainability. For example, Emma Watson who currently supports Good on You a directory of ethical brands, and advocates re-wearing, recycling and wearing clothes that embrace transparency (Good on You, 2019).

Transformative communication about sustainability relies on brands committed to sustainable actions, as an essential constituent is honesty, especially given the backdrop of mistrust that currently exists amongst consumers (McNeill and Moore, 2015). Therefore, it is also necessary for brands to address actions to improve sustainable business practice. Table 36 outlines a range of critical points in each of the same stages: Immature, Transitional and Mature, which include finance, staff, education, product, marketing and media. Beginning with an honest appraisal of current practice, a transitional stage that identifies improvement areas and a future mature position with an enhanced sustainability record. It advocates several significant concepts including that the business will:

- Continue to be financially viable.
- Employ senior staff with power to influence company policy.
- Require a shift in product and product mix to include higher priced sustainable garments.
- Re-educate customers to change their consumption habits.

	Proposed Stages of Sustainable actions accompanying communication about sustainability for fashion brands.		
	Stage 1 - Immature Identify brands current sustainable practice.	**Stage 2 – Transitional** Outline the steps, measures of success, contribution to business goals.	**Stage 3 - Mature** Describe ideal future position - improved sustainability, whilst maintaining financial goals.
1	Financial focus with little regard for sustainability.	Identify avenues of sustainability and economic viability.	Achieving financial targets and practicing sustainably.
2	Low-level staff seniority for sustainability.	Review seniority of sustainable staff, in line with business strategy.	Director (or senior level employee) of Sustainability
3	Educating customers – low priority.	Identify educational subjects for customers, including the **Cost** of sustainable garments.	Customers knowledgeable:- **True cost** of sustainable products. Shift in fashion **consumption,** to include non-fast fashion garments. Buying less and paying more.
4	Review current balance of non-sustainable and sustainable products.	Introduce more sustainable higher priced products.	Achieving financial targets whilst increasing the ratio of sustainable to non-sustainable products.
5	Review marketing activity.	Develop marketing strategy around sustainable initiatives.	Marketing activity about sustainable initiatives.
6	Review level of media attention - positive and negative.	Develop communication strategy in line with sustainable actions.	Positive mass media attention & publicity..

Table 46: Summary of stages to achieve improved sustainable action to accompany communication about sustainability. (Authors own, 2019)

A further recommendation is for brands to improve their understanding of how consumers oriented to sustainable consumption frame their purchasing decisions. Antonetti and Maklin (2015) suggested four behavioural categories: Altruistic, Socially Responsible, Conspicuous Responsible and Political as a basis for developing an effective targeted message about sustainability, and a means of bridging the gap between general positive attitudes towards sustainable consumption and purchasing. The Altruistic consumer for example, has strong moral beliefs and wants information about products sustainable qualities before purchasing. A Socially Responsible consumer’s intention to purchase is greater if the product offers personal and sustainable benefits. The Conspicuous Responsible consumer on the other hand requires public recognition of a sustainable purchase. Whereas the Political consumer wants their sustainable consumption to enable them to be part of a cohesive group or community (See Table 46).

Antonetti and Maklin Responsible purchasing behaviours (2015). Consumer focus.

1.Altruistic	2.Socially Responsible	3.Conspicuous Responsible	4.Political
Desired benefits.			
Helping others or the environment	Self-interest – ethically and other benefits	Social reputation and associated social benefits	To see themselves as part of a community
Motivation for action			
Want to be consistent to personal ethical beliefs otherwise breaking a moral principle	Acknowledge social responsibilities alongside maximising personal utility	Motivation is self-interested as want to be perceived as altruistic	Motivated by support for social political causes Personal gain is secondary
Significance in developing communication guidelines about sustainability.			
The channel is unlikely to influence behaviour. Content must show environmental or social benefits.	Private channel Sustainable product characteristics are considered alongside other attributes	Public channel which influences behaviour Motivated by public approbation.	Public channel which influences behaviour Motivated by support for social political causes
Bridging the Attitude-Behaviour Gap			
Convenience of sustainable purchasing to transform moral commitment to action	Sustainable features are part of a bundle, which includes an advantage to self.	Independent of pre-existing attitudes and behaviour, the product must be socially distinctive.	Gap bridged by setting out conscious choices as markers of social and political identity.

Table 47: Antonetti and Maklin (2015) behaviour categorisation for brand communication for sustainably-oriented consumers.

This work provided a framework from which to develop guidelines that illustrate how communication from fashion brands to consumers is optimised by utilising the most appropriate communication 'channels' and 'content', as shown in Table .

Development by Author from Antonetti and Maklins (2015) behavior categorisation to how fashion brands communicate effectively about sustainability with different consumer types.

Preferred channels relating to fashion products.			
Web sites, Shops, information on products, Social Media	Web sites, Shops, information on products, Social Media.	Social Media & Shop Assistants.	Social Media
Communication matches desired product of promoted characteristics in fashion.			
Transparent information on web sites. Garment swing tickets featuring information about sustainable costs	Information relates to multiple attributes of product such as being value for money as well as any sustainable credentials	Social media campaign about range or product sustainability. A clearly identifiable branded range known for its sustainable characteristics.	Social media campaign about range or product sustainability A clearly identifiable sustainable branded range. Garments featuring sustainable slogans.

Table 48: Development of Antonetti and Maklin (2015) behaviour categorisation for brand communication for sustainably oriented consumers.

The shopping channel is less important to the Altruistic consumer as their motivation is intrinsic rather than extrinsic, whereas the Conspicuous Responsible consumer prefers interactive shopping through channels such as social media or shops, with an opportunity for public recognition. The former consumer needs to know details of how the product was sustainable, but requires no public approval. The latter needs products that are easily recognisable as being sustainable through their branding, in anticipation of public approbation of their action. Many customers are not oriented to buy sustainable clothes (McNeill and Moore, 2015) and do not fit in any of these categories. However, research has shown that education through communication particularly from fashion brands (Perez and Lonsdale, 2019) will expedite sustainable consumption. Analysis of the literature and original findings identified socially responsible labelling as a convenient channel for consumers to know about the sustainability of a garment (Hiller-Connell Kozar, 2017). This method increases the intention to purchase of sustainably and non-sustainably oriented consumers (Gam et al., 2014) as highlighted in the Transitional stage of (Table 46 (Section 6.2).

Figure 61 proposes a new price and label suggestions for a Zara sweatshirt currently on sale for £25. Each label uses words with a different emphasis to appeal to customers that are not currently sustainable, or those that have different motivations. Two of the labels include ‘Environment’, which was the most frequently used word used to describe sustainability from the survey. Option A. appeals to a customer who is not currently motivated to buy sustainably but may respond to a positive message ‘*Congratulations you have just purchased a sustainable garment’.* It also appeals to a ‘Conspicuous Responsible’ customer seeking public recognition for buying sustainably. Label option B shows that it is a sustainable brand, but also includes other product benefits for the ‘Socially Responsible’ consumer. Label options C and D appeal to Altruistic and Political consumers who want to know the real cost of sustainable products. Caution is essential with Option D, which reveals a brands margin, which may act as a deterrent (See Figure 61). The introduction of labels about sustainability would align with the brand and consumer. As Join Life is marketed as a sustainable range, it could be assumed that some of the consumers buying it have an interest in sustainability. A cautious approach to their introduction is required particularly as they highlight that the garment is slightly more expensive because it is sustainable – the antithesis of fast fashion where products are low cost. Therefore, the recommendation would be to introduce Label ‘A’ first, monitor the sales to evaluate any decrease in comparison to previous similar products and then move sequentially through to D, reviewing sales at the introduction of each new label. Although a trial of all four labels could be simultaneous, it is a high-risk strategy for the retailer, (particularly in fast fashion) in terms of its possible negative impact on sales, therefore less likely to be adopted.

Zara sweatshirt £25 (Zara, 2020, online).

Conspicuous Responsible	Socially Responsible	Altruistic	Political
Little/no interest in sustainable fashion	Political	n/a	Altruistic
Label Option A.	Label Option B.	Label Option C.	Label Option D.

JOIN LIFE Congratulations, you have just purchased a sustainable garment. £28 It costs a little more but helps to protect the environment.	JOIN LIFE Sustainable Range £28 This product is made without harming the environment therefore the cost is a little higher. Designed to last if you take care of it.	JOIN LIFE – for sustainability. £28 This product is made without exploiting people or the planet therefore the cost is a little higher. See reverse for more information.	JOIN LIFE – for sustainability. £28 This product is made without exploiting people or the planet therefore the cost is a little higher. Fabrics and components – 25% Making cost – 15% Transportation & taxes – 5% Zara – 55%

Figure 61: Proposed labels about garment sustainability (Authors own, 2020).

Fashion consumers have many priorities that lead them to behaving inconsistently in their product consumption (Antonetti and Maklin, 2015), so they are unlikely to remain in one category. The expectation is that through education they are better informed about sustainability and demand more information such as is provided in Labels C and D.

A further recommendation is for fashion businesses to use organisations including The Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) and German Sustainability Code for guidance relating to external communication about sustainability (Global Fashion Agenda and The Boston Consulting Group, 2018;33). A final but significant point is that if brands can demonstrate implementation of a sustainable action plan they should receive increased political or legal support to encourage them towards more sustainable practices (Brewer, 2019).

6.3 Summary

This chapter has used findings from the literature and primary research to address key areas for fashion brand improvement relating to communication. The case studies established fast fashion brands' current position regarding communication about sustainability. Examples of communication used Newig et al.*'s* typology (2013) to identify improvement areas, which were developed into Immature, Transitional and Mature stages specifically for fast fashion brands into Antonetti and Maklins (2015) research about reducing the attitude/behaviour gap provided a framework for targeting different approaches which captures all consumers including those that are not currently oriented to sustainable consumption. The communication guidelines draw on data about fashion consumers from the survey to ensure that fashion brands prioritise areas of sustainability that replicate their interests. The final chapter draws on the empirical findings of this research, which examines the impact of recent dynamic changes, including the impact of online shopping and social media, on the sustainability of the fashion industry.

Chapter 7.0 Conclusion

The aim of the study was to analyse the impact of fast fashion, consumer behaviour and fashion brand communication on sustainability. Despite a growing concern about social and environmental exploitation, especially amongst young people, evidence found that other motivations for purchasing clothes were more significant than buying sustainably.

Online channels have become the perfect vehicle for fast fashion – giving customers the convenience of shopping at any time or place, and providing them with an even greater choice of inexpensive garments (Escobar-Rodriguez and Bonson-Fenandez, 2019). Fast fashion brands and consumers have embraced digital channels - 75% of survey participants shopped through web sites, shopping apps, and social media. Simultaneously, social media, has become an integral part of contemporary society increasing the focus on image, intensifying the demand for fashion products (Nash, 2019, Hakala *et al.,* 2017) and contributing to the phenomenal growth of fast fashion (Walker, 2019). During the five years from 2013, the number of garments sold in the UK has increased every year, and the trend is for this to continue (Euromonitor, 2018). The impact of this has amplified the culture of waste and other damaging aspects of the industry (Brewer, 2019).

Fast fashions' growth arises at the same time as increased mainstream media coverage of sustainability and a societal shift towards mindful consumption (Chambers, 2020). The fashion industry is one of the world's most exploitative and polluting industries (Brewer, 2019). As changing weather patterns emerge worldwide (Carbon Brief, 2019), attention focusses on the impact of business practice and consumer behaviour on the environment. In South East Asia, where clothing factories are predominantly located, many people live below the poverty line (United Nations, 2015). It suggests that the industry has been protected by its economic importance (McNeill and Moore, 2015).

The value of this research is in capturing the motivation behind *current* customer and brand behaviour, and the consequence of interaction between them. In order to achieve the research aim, the following objectives were identified:-

1) To analyse fast fashion consumers and their fashion consumption.
2) To evaluate how fast fashion brands communicate with their customers.
3) To make a comparative analysis of consumer and fashion brand interest in sustainability.
4) To recommend guidelines to optimise the communication of sustainability between fast fashion brands and consumers.

Fast fashion '*consumers'* are predominantly young people (Ritch, 2015:1166) who have unprecedented digital access to global news (Nielson, 2017). They learn of over-use of natural resources, social exploitation, over-consumption and landfill (Gupta, 2019). As this socially conscious generation (Fung Global Retail, 2016:2) become aware of the unsustainability of the fashion industry, this conflicts with their need for fast fashion. Although earlier research confirmed that they place less emphasis on the sustainability of fashion than other areas

(McNeill and Moore, 2015), they are beginning to express a desire to buy their fashion from brands that are sustainable (The Business of Fashion and McKinsey and Company, 2018:62). The survey findings support the view that personal priorities, such as being confident about their appearance, outweighed positive attitudes towards buying sustainably, when applied to purchasing decisions (Antonetti and Maklin, 2015).

Some '*fashion brands'* are taking initiatives to promote notions of sustainability (Gupta, 2019). In the case study brands ASOS is at the top of the hierarchy of the UK Parliamentary Interim Report on the Sustainability of the Fashion Industry (2019) and Inditex (Zara) was ranked as the most sustainable fashion company by Dow Jones Sustainability Index for the third consecutive year in 2018 (Business Leader, 2020). In recent months, Zara have added a statement about sustainability to the home page of their web site and Topshop have launched a new sustainable range.

Evidence from the case studies suggests that in their pursuit of sustainability brands are modifying rather than transforming their current business model. For example, by focussing on recycling, little change to their current practice is required, and responsibility shifts to their consumers. Whereas the fashion industry requires a systemic, shift from linear to circular practise for it to become sustainable (Ellen MacArthur Foundation & Circular Fibres Initiative and Circular Fibres Initiative, 2017, Global Fashion Agenda and The Boston Consulting Group, 2018). Despite unparalleled opportunities through web sites and social media for fashion brands to inform and engage their customers in discussion about sustainability, empirical evidence found that whilst fast fashion brands recognise the importance of sustainability their communication centres on selling. In fact, current communication about sustainability was largely 'counterproductive' in terms of improving sustainability with all three case study brands, according to Newig et al.'s (2013) framework.

The case study findings demonstrated that where brand communication about sustainability existed, it was limited, confusing or did not reflect areas of consumers' interest. Brands priorities were Recycling, Fabric and Social Sustainability, whereas consumers' priorities were Environment, Social Sustainability and Longevity. Zara state on their website that they want to make it '…as easy as possible for customers to recycle' as it contributes to their 'Closing the Loop' scheme (Inditex, 2020, online). However, findings revealed that staff were unaware of the scheme and there were no recycling points in any of the stores visited by the researcher.

Although social sustainability was one of Zara's sustainable priorities, nothing about the Join Life range relates to how factory workers are treated - the characteristics relate exclusively to fabrics. Inditex carried out over 12,000 audits in 2018 (Inditex, 2019, online) but provide no information about action taken where standards are not met. There was no evidence found from any of the brands studied about treatment of people in factories, although survey findings showed that this was second priority for this group of consumers.

A further problem identified in the empirical research was the difficulty that customers have finding sustainable products through web sites or in shops. Issues online were: non-sustainable products presented as sustainable, no products presented when using a variety of different search words for 'sustainable' and little information about sustainable characteristics on products that were genuinely sustainable. In Zara shops, many staff were unaware that Join Life was a sustainable range, and Top Shop staff did not understand the term 'sustainability'.

The challenge for fashion brands is to establish a balance between increasing sales and becoming more sustainable (McNeill and Moore, 2015). Given the demand for transparency, communication needs to promote sales and educate customers about sustainability simultaneously. If brands are transparent and inform customers about the cost of sustainable products, it will not discourage purchasing (Ritch, 2015). In fact, survey results confirmed that 86% of respondents would pay at least 10% more for sustainable products.

This work has extended the '*consumer'* categorisation developed by Antonetti and Maklin (2015) about understanding motivation and rewards for sustainable consumption, to include consumers who are not oriented to buying sustainably. This is a significant number in fashion, only 6% of the survey sample group placed knowing how their clothes are made as more important than appearance, fit and price. Newig et al.'s content centred typology (2013) provided the framework for establishing guidelines for '*fashion brands'* to improve their communication about sustainability. Three stages Immature, Transitional and Mature are proposed to identify a brands current position and guide them to the ideal future or Mature position. Case study evidence situated the brands currently in the Immature or 'Counterproductive' (Newig et al., 2013) phase.

Brands should avoid overstating their sustainable credentials and use language that resonates with their consumers to state their position, even where improvements are still required. There is evidence that they are fearful of communicating progress until everything is perfect (Global Fashion Agenda and The Boston Consulting Group, 2018), but cautious and honest communication is needed (Fournier & Avery, 2011). Ultimately, this level of transparency will regain lost trust and improve loyalty (Ritch, 2015, McNeill and Moore, 2015). Introducing and communicating about sustainable initiatives is an opportunity to attract consumers and win business from competitors (PWC, 2017, Ciasullo et al*.,* 2017).

Digital technology may have accelerated detrimental aspects of fashion practice, but could prove to be a valuable medium for brands to engage consumers in narrative about sustainability (McNeill and Moore, 2015). Online communication is the main channel used by young people and is therefore the most appropriate one to use (Royal Society for Public Health, 2017). Conversation from online communities can guide new strategies, products or language (Hakala et al., 2017), as evidenced in the case study findings where consumers on social media were driving brands to provide sustainable information and products.

Investing time and money, and working towards long - rather than short-term goals, are likely to be significant challenges for many fashion businesses (Brewer, 2019), but the positive findings from this research reveal that;-

- Fast fashion consumers want their fast fashion brands to offer clearly labelled, affordable sustainable products. Survey results revealed that they do not want to switch to other brands.
- Investors and shareholders increasingly assess sustainability in their risk assessment of a company (Global Fashion Agenda and The Boston Consulting Group, 2018, Newig et al., 2013).

This study has successfully analysed the impact of fast fashion on sustainability but a few *limitations* need highlighting. The first is that the literature about 'fast fashion consumers' is generalised, clearly not all statements can or will relate to the whole of this group. Primary data collection was from a cohort of fashion students, therefore the findings do not apply to the wider population, particularly in terms of lifestyle, financial status and knowledge of the fashion industry. Analysis of fast fashion brands was limited to three; further research should include more online brands. It is important to acknowledge that the fashion and digital landscape evolve and change rapidly, so the results if replicated in the future will be different.

The scale and reach of the fashion industry is extensive, important future research *recommendations* include:

- Examining consumer motivation for fashion consumption with the non–student population.
- Getting a wider perspective of fashion brand practice by extending the number of case studies.
- Appraising developments in digital technology (social media and online shopping) and their impact on consumers and brands.
- Increasing global perspective by examining fast fashion in countries outside the UK.

The value of this research is in addressing how the relationship between fast fashion brands and consumers is sustaining fast fashion and hindering sustainability. The findings have exposed a disparity between consumer and brand interest in sustainability and that current brand communication is unhelpful in terms of assisting consumers to buy sustainably. Once brands accept the need to be more sustainable and implement changes accordingly, this will provide the content for future communication. Education about sustainable initiatives through digital channels and product labelling will help consumers to buy sustainably, ultimately benefitting all stakeholders

This study has answered the aim and objectives, and the empirical and theoretical findings establish a snapshot in time of fast fashion consumption and communication between brands and consumers. It has provided guidelines to optimise the communication of sustainability between fast fashion brands and consumers.

8.0 References

Ackerstein, D.S. & Lemon, K.A. (1999) "Greening the Brand: Environmental Marketing Strategies and the American Consumer" in , eds. M. Charter & M.J. Polonsky, 1st edn, Routledge, pp. 233-254.

Alam, M.S., Selvanathan, E.A., Selvanathan, S., Hossain, M., (2018). The apparel industry in the post-Multifiber Arrangement environment: a review. *Review of Development Economics*. 23(1)

Aguinis, H., (2011). *APA Handbook of Industrial and Organizational Psychology,* Washington American Psychological Association.

Amnesty International Ltd (2017). *Amnesty International Report 2016/2017: The State of the World's Human rights.* [Online] [Accessed 17.10.18] https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/pol10/4800/2017/en/

Antonetti, P. Maklan, S (2015). 'How categorisation shapes the attitude-behaviour gap in responsible consumption International' *Journal of Market Res*earch, 57(1) pp. 51-72.

Arcadia Group, (2019). (A) Arcadia Group Brands [online] [accessed 28.10.19] https://www.arcadiagroup.co.uk/brands/topshop

Arcadia (2019). (B) Arcadia supports sustainable couture campaign to promote re-use and recycling of clothing. [Online] [Accessed 28.12.19] https://www.arcadiagroup.co.uk/fashion-footprint/about/news/upcyclng-clothing-scraps-to-create-couture

Arket, (2019). Stores and Cafes, [Online] [Accessed 06.11.18] https://www.arket.com/en_gbp/stores.html

Arrigo, (2020). *Global Sourcing in Fast Fashion Retailers: Sourcing Locations and Sustainability Considerations.* MDPI. [Online] [Accessed 17.01.20] file:///C:/Users/55109782/AppData/Local/Microsoft/Windows/INetCache/IE/6CW4QWW7/sustainability-12-00508.pdf

Arrington D. W. (2017). 'Ethical and sustainable luxury. The paradox of consumerism and caring', *Fashion, style and popular culture*, 4(30, pp. 277-285.

Arrington, (2017). Ethical and sustainable luxury: The paradox of consumerism and caring. *Fashion, Style, & Popular Culture* 4(3) pp. 277-285.

Asda. (2019). Asda footwear. [Online] [Accessed 11.02.18] https://direct.asda.com/george/women/shoes/boots-wellies/D1M1G20C20S2,default,sc.html?start=60&sz=20

Asia Floor Wage Alliance, (2019). [Online] [Accessed 31.12.18] https://asia.floorwage.org/what

ASOS. (2019). (A) 2013 – 2018, Trading reports [accessed 17 Dec 2018] https://www.asosplc.com/investors/latest-results https://www.asosplc.com/investors/2019-year-in-review

ASOS, (2019). (C) ASOS PLC Annual Report and Accounts 2019, [Online] [Accessed 28.10.19] https://www.asosplc.com/~/media/Files/A/Asos-V2/reports-and-presentations/annual-report-2019-24102019.pdf

ASOS, (2019). (D) Sustainable Puffer Jacket. [Online] [Accessed 29.10.19] https://www.asos.com/asos-design/asos-design-sustainable-oversized-puffer-jacket-in-black/prd/12831410?clr=black&colourWayId=16475066&SearchQuery=sustainable

ASOS, (2019). (E) Corporate Responsibility. Sustainable Sourcing Programme. [Online] [Accessed 15.10.19]
https://www.asosplc.com/corporate-responsibility/our-products/sustainable-sourcing-programme

ASOS, (2019). (F) Celebrity Endorsers, (2019). (Accessed 28.12.19)
https://celebrityendorsers.com/endorsements/asos-com/
Bandura, A., (1977). *Social Learning Theory*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Athena Business Solutions Pvt. Ltd. (2020) Sustainability: The Next Big Question: To Be or Not to be Sustainable *Images Business of Fashion*. [Online]. [Accessed 24.01.21]
https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/A636219426/ITOF?u=mmucal5&sid=ITOF&xid=145d1671

Barnes, L. and Lea-Greenwood, G. (2010). 'Fast fashion in the retail store environment.' *International Journal of Retail and Distribution Management*, 38(10), pp.760-772.

Barone, M.J., Norman, A.T. and Miyazaki, A.D. (2007). 'Consumer response to retailer use of cause-related marketing: Is more fit better?' *Journal of Retailing*, 83(4), pp. 437-445.

Bator, R and R Cialdini (2000). 'The Application of Persuasion Theory to the Development of Effective Pro-Environmental Public Service Announcements'*. Journal of Social Issues,* 56(3) pp. 527-541.

BBC, (2019). Bitesize (no date) *Digital Devices*. [Online] [Accessed 10.12.18]
https://www.bbc.com/bitesize/guides/zxb72hv/revision/1

Bedat, M., (2016). *The High Cost of Our Cheap Fashion* Ted Talks [Online video] [Accessed 05.04.19] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5r8V4QWwxf0

Begoray, D., L., Banister, E., M., (2016) *Adolescent health literacy and learning*. London Elsevier B.V.

Bell, J., and Waters, S., (2014) *Doing Your Research Project* (6th ed.) Maidenhead. Open University Press.

Bendeler, G., (2017).The Art of Modern Sustainability Communications: How to Embrace an Audience-First Approach. *Sustainable Life Media* [Online] [Accessed 24.10.21]
https://sustainablebrands.com/read/marketing-and-comms/the-art-of-modern-sustainability-communications-how-to-embrace-an-audience-first-approach

Bess, C. and Bartolini, C. (2011). 'Cultivating Millennials and harvesting the value they produce.' *Cutter IT Journal*, 24(9) pp. 11-17.

Bertelsmann Stiftung and Sustainable Development Solutions Network (2018). Sustainable Development Goals [online] [accessed 02.10.19]
http://sdgindex.org/assets/files/2018/01%20SDGS%20GLOBAL%20EDITION%20WEB%20V9%20180718.pdf

Bettinghaus, E, Cody, A.M., (1994) Persuasive Communication. Fort Worth: Harcourt Brace.

Bhardwaj, V., Fairhurst, A., (2010). 'Fast fashion: response to changes in the fashion industry.' *The International Review of Retail Distribution and Consumer Research*, 20(1) pp. 165-173.

Biggam, J, (2008). Succeeding with your Master's Dissertation: A step-by-step handbook. Berkshire. Open University Press.

Biggs, M. & Buchler, D. 2008, "Eight criteria for practice-based research in the creative and cultural industries", *Art Design and Communication in HE,* vol. 7, no. 1, pp. 5-18.

Bina, J., (2018). *What you don't know about American Millennials* [Online] [Accessed 18.02.18] https://www.businessoffashion.com/articles/opinion/op-ed-what-you-dont-know-about-american-millennials

Birnbaum, E., (2017). *How Millennials (and actually everyone) want to shop* [Online] [Accessed 09.02.18] https://www.just-style.com/comment/how-millennials-and-actually-everyone-want-to-shop_id130730.aspx

Blázquez, M., (2014). 'Fashion shopping in multichannel retail: the role of technology in enhancing the customer experience.' *International Journal of Electronic Commerce,* 18 (4) pp. 97-116.

Bly, S., Gwozdz, W., Reisch, L.A. (2015). 'Exit from the high street: an exploratory study of sustainable fashion consumption pioneers.' *International Journal of Consumer Studies, 39 pp. 125-135.*

Boohoo, (2019). (A) Footwear prices [online] [accessed 11.02.18] https://www.boohoo.com/womens/shoes?sz=80&prefn1=boohooBrand&prefv1=Boohoo&pmin=50&pmax=100

Boohoo, (2019). (B) Landing page [Online] [Accessed 14.03.18] https://www.boohoo.com/

Boohoo, (2019). (C) £5 Dresses. [Online] [Accessed 30.12.19] https://www.boohoo.com/womens/dresses/5-pound-dresses

Brewer, M., (2019). Slow Fashion in a Fast Fashion World: Promoting Sustainability and Responsibility. *Laws* 8(4), [Online] [Accessed 03.07.20]. https://www.mdpi.com/2075-471X/8/4/24

Bristow, A., Saunders, M.N.K, (2014). *Research Methods for Business Students*. London. Pearson

British Fashion Council, 2018, Value of Fashion Report, [Online] [Accessed 13.11.19] https://www.britishfashioncouncil.co.uk/news_detail.aspx?ID=228

Burch, T., (2017). The State of Fashion 2018 Business of Fashion & McKinsey & Company.

Busch, o. V., (2019) *A Crisis of power in fashion: Is There Agency for Change*? Fashion Practice Vol 11. Issue 3 pp 302-308

Business Leader, (2020). *H&M AND ZARA, THE 'SUSTAINABLE' FASHION BRANDS KILLING THE ENVIRONMENT.* [Online] [Accessed 02.01.20]. https://www.businessleader.co.uk/hm-and-zara-the-sustainable-fashion-brands-killing-the-environment/56166/

Butler, S., (2018).*Is fast fashion giving way to the sustainable wardrobe?* [Online] [Accessed 19.01.20] https://www.theguardian.com/business/2018/dec/29/fast-fashion-giving-way-sustainable-wardrobe

Cambridge Dictionary, (2018). [Online] [Accessed 06.01.19] https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/consumerism

Campbell, D., (1963). 'Social Attitudes and Other Acquired Behavioural Dispositions.' P*sychology: a study of a science,* 6 pp. 94-172.

Carbon Brief, (2019). *How climate change affects extreme weather around the world.* [Online] [Accessed 31.12.19] https://www.carbonbrief.org/mapped-how-climate-change-affects-extreme-weather-around-the-world

Carrigan, M., Attalla, A., (2001) *The myth of the ethical consumer – do ethics matter in purchase behaviour?* Journal of Consumer Marketing. Vol 18. No 7 pp 560-577

Carter, N. Bryant-Lukosius, D, DiCenso, A. Neville, A. (2014).The Use of Triangulation in Qualitative Research. *Oncology Nursing Forum*, 4(5) pp. 545-547.

CBRE, (2017). *UK Millennials: Myths and Realities*. CBRE. [Online] [Accessed 15.01.19] https://www.cbreresidential.com/uk/sites/uk-residential/files/Millennials%20in%20the%20UK.pdf

Cecile, A., Janssens, J.W., Kraft, P., (2012). Research Conducted Using Data Obtained through Online Communities: Ethical Implications of Methodological Limitations. *PLOS Medicine* 9(10) [Online] [Accessed 12.04.19] https://journals.plos.org/plosmedicine/article?id=10.1371/journal.pmed.1001328

Cerri, J., Testa, F., Rizzi, F., (2017). 'The more I care, the less I will listen to you: How information, environmental concern and ethical production influence consumers' attitudes and the purchasing of sustainable products.' *Journal of Cleaner Production,* 175 pp. 342-353.

Cervellon MC, Wernerfelt AS. 2012. 'Knowledge sharing among green fashion communities online: lessons for the sustainable supply chain.' *Journal of Fashion Marketing and Management,* **16**(2) pp. 176– 192.

Chambers, S., (2019). Boohoo's tears in the boardroom. The Sunday Times. [Online] [Accessed 14.03.19] https://www.thetimes.co.uk/edition/business/tears-in-the-boardroom-at-mahmud-kamani-s-boohoo-ql0fvbnw3

Chambers, S., (2020). *Christmas fails to light up supermarkets*. The Sunday Times. Business & Money supplement. 5th January 2020. p.4.

Charmaz, K. (2008). *Grounded theory as an emergent method.* In S. N. Hesse-Biber & P. Leavy (Eds.), *Handbook of emergent methods* (p. 155–170). The Guilford Press.

Child Mind Institute, (2020). *Social Media and Self-Doubt* [Online] [Accessed 19.01.20] https://childmind.org/article/social-media-and-self-doubt/

Chowdhury, R., (2017). Rana Plaza Fieldwork and Academic Anxiety: *Some Reflections, Journal of Management Studies* 54:7, [Online] [Accessed 30.12.1] https://onlinelibrary-wiley-com.ezproxy.mmu.ac.uk/doi/full/10.1111/joms.12262

Claveria, K., (2019). *When it comes to Gen Z, forget everything you know about brand loyalty.* [Online] [Accessed 12.01.19] https://www.visioncritical.com/blog/gen-z-brand-loyalty
Ciasullo, M., Maione, G., Torre, C., and Troisi, O., (2017). *What about Sustainability? An Empirical Analysis of Consumers' Purchasing Behavior in Fashion Context.* [Online] [Accessed 04.02.19]
https://www.mdpi.com/2071-1050/9/9/1617

Collins English Dictionary, (2019). [Online] [Accessed 31.12.18] https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/sustain

Common Objective (2019) Mapping the Fashion Industry. [Online] [Accessed 12.08.20] https://commonobjective-uploads.storage.googleapis.com/resources/articles/The-Size-of-the-Sustainable-Fashion-Retail-Market-081.pdf

Conlon, S. (2019). *Zara clothes to be made from 100% sustainable fabrics by 2025* [Online] [Accessed 28.01.20] https://www.theguardian.com/fashion/2019/jul/17/zara-collections-to-be-made-from-100-sustainable-fabrics

Cook, S.J., Yurchisin, J., (2017) Fast fashion environments: consumer's heaven or retailer's nightmare*? International Journal of Retail & Distribution Management*, 45(2) pp. 143-157

Coscieme, L., Mortenson, L., Anderson, S., Ward, J., Donohue, I., Sutton, P., (2019). *Going beyond Gross Domestic Product as an indicator to bring coherence to the Sustainable*

Development Goals'. Journal of Cleaner Production [Online] [Accessed 02.01.20] https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0959652619341022

Country Economy, (2018). National Minimum Wage [Online] [Accessed 31.12.18] https://countryeconomy.com/national-minimum-wage

Creyer, E. H. (1997). 'The influence of firm behavior on purchase intention: do consumers really care about business ethics?' *Journal of Consumer Market*ing, 14(6) pp.421-432.

Crotty, M., (1998). *The Foundations of Social Research: Meaning and Perspectives in the Research Process*. Sage, London

Crotty, M., (2014) The Foundations of Social Research: *Meaning and Perspective in the Research Process*. Sage London

Dade, A.; Hassenzahl, D.M. Communicating sustainability: A content analysis of website communications in the United States. Int. J. Sustain. High. Educ. 2013, 14, 254–263. [Cross Ref]

Daniel, B. K., and Harland T., (2017). Higher Education Research Methodology. A Step-By-Step Guide to the Research Process. Oxfordshire. Taylor & Francis Group

Dantas, B.L.L. and Abreu, N.R. (2020) 'AN ANALYSIS OF THE INFLUENCE OF THE CONSPICUOUS CONSUMPTION OF FAST FASHION ON IDENTITY CONSTRUCTION ON INSTAGRAM 21(5), [Online] [Accessed 30.01.21] https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/A639071598/AONE?u=mmucal5&sid=AONE&xid=eda4e39f

Davis, K. (1973). 'The case for and against business assumption of social responsibilities. *Academy of Management Journal*, 16(2) pp. 312-322.

Dealspotr, (2017). 2017 *Millennial Shopper Survey – How Social Media Influencers Impact Purchasing Decisions* [Online] [Accessed 08.12.18] https://dealspotr.com/reports

De Klerk, A., (2019). *Topshop is launching its first vegan shoe collection.* Harpers Bazaar. [Online] [Accessed 12.10.19] https://www.harpersbazaar.com/uk/fashion/fashion-news/a27095971/topshop-vegan-shoes/

Delai, I., and Takahashi, S (2011). *Sustainability measurement system: A reference model proposal*. Social Responsibility Journal. 7(3), 438–471.https://doi-org.mmu.idm.oclc.org/10.1108/17471111111154563

Denzin, N.K. (1978). *Sociological methods: A sourcebook*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Dillman, D.A., (2007) Mail and internet Surveys: The Tailored Design Method (2nd Ed.) Hoboken, NJ: Riley

Dillman et al., (2008). *International handbook of survey methodology.* New York: Taylor & Francis Group.
Dimok, M., (2019). *Pew Research Centre, Where Millennials end and Generation Z Begins* [Online] [Accessed 23.11.19] https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2019/01/17/where-millennials-end-and-generation-z-begins/

Dissanayakea, G., and Sinha, P., (2015). 'An examination of the product development process for fashion remanufacturing'*. Resources, Business Conservation and Rec*ycling, 104 pp. 94 – 102.

Dovidio, J.F., Kawakami, K., Johnson, C., Johnson, B., Howard, A., 1997. On the nature of prejudice: automatic and controlled processes. Journal of Experimental Social Psychology 33, 510–540.

Dragulanescu N-G (2002) *Website quality evaluations: criteria and tools.* The International Information & Library Review 34: 247–254.

Duffett, R., G., (2015). 'Facebook advertising's influence on intention-to-purchase and purchase amongst Millennials.' *Edited*. 25(4), pp.498-526.

Ehlers, S. (2016). *Zara goes sustainable with new Join Life initiative* [Online] [Accessed 10.08.19]. https://fashionunited.uk/news/fashion/zara-goes-sustainable-with-new-join-life-initiative/2016092021831

Eicher, J. B., Evenson, S. L., & Lutz, H. A. (2008). *The visual self: global perspectives on dress, culture and society*. New York: Fairchild Books.

Eisenhardt, K. M. (1989). Building theories from case study research. *Academy of Management Review,* 14(4), pp. 532-550.

Ellen MacArthur Foundation, Circular Fibres Initiative, (2017). *A new textiles economy: Redesigning fashion's future* [Online] [Accessed 15.09.19] https://www.ellenmacarthurfoundation.org/news/new-circular-fibres-initiative-brings-industry-together-to-build-a-circular-economy-for-textiles
Escobar-Rodriguez, T., Bonson-Fenandez, R., (2017). Analysing online purchase intention in Spain: fashion e-commerce. *Information Systems and e-Business Management,* 15, pp. 599–622.

Euromonitor International Passport Apparel and Footwear in the United Kingdom Country report March 2018 Euromonitor (2018). Apparel Exports [Online] [Accessed 31.12.18] http://www.portal.euromonitor.com.ezproxy.mmu.ac.uk/portal/statisticsevolution/index#

European Commission, (2012). JRC Scientific and Policy Reports. Sustainable Society Index (SSI): Taking societies' pulse along social, environmental and economic issues [Online] [Accessed 30.12.18] http://www.ssfindex.com/ssi2016/wp-content/uploads/pdf/JRCauditSSI2006_2012.pdf

Evans, S., Peirson-Smith, A. (2018). The sustainability word challenge: Exploring consumer interpretations of frequently used words to promote sustainable fashion brand behaviors and imagery. *Journal of Fashion Marketing and Management.* Vol 22 No 2. Pp 252 269

Evely, A. C., I. R. A. Fazey, M. Pinard, and X. Lambin. (2008). *The influence of philosophical perspectives in integrative research: a conservation case study in the Cairngorms National Park.* Ecology and Society 13:52.

Fabrigar, L.R., Wegener, D.T., MacDonald, T.K., 2010. *Distinguishing between prediction and influence: multiple processes underlying attitude–behavior consistency*. In: Agnew, C.R., Carlston, D.E., Graziano, W.G., Kelly, J.R. (Eds.), Then a Miracle Occurs: Focusing on Behavior in Social Psychological Theory and Research. Oxford University Press, New York, pp. 162–185.

Faiers A, Cook M, Neame C. 2007. *Towards a contemporary approach for understanding consumer behaviour in the context of domestic energy use*. Energy Policy 35: 4381–4390. DOI: 10.1016/j.enpol.2007.01.003

Fairtrade, 2010, [online] [Accessed 19.07.20] https://www.fairtrade.org.uk/Buying-Fairtrade/Cotton

Fairtrade Foundation, (2019). [Online] [Accessed 30.12.19] https://www.fairtrade.org.uk/

Fashion Revolution CIC, (2018). *Consumer Survey Report. A baseline survey on EU attitudes to sustainability and supply chain transparency in the fashion industry.* [Online] [Accessed 19.02.19] https://www.fashionrevolution.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/201118_FashRev_ConsumerSurvey_2018.pdf

Fashion Revolution, (2019). *Fashion Transparency Index 2019* [Online] [Accessed 06.05.19] https://issuu.com/fashionrevolution/docs/fashion_transparency_index_2019?e=25766662/69342298

Fashion Summit and KPMG (2019) Sustainable fashion. A survey on global perspectives. (online) [Accessed 16.09.20] https://assets.kpmg/content/dam/kpmg/cn/pdf/en/2019/01/sustainable-fashion.pdf

Fashion United, (2019). (A) *List of the Richest People in Fashion*, [Online], [Accessed 24.10.19] https://fashionunited.com/i/list-of-the-richest-people-in-fashion accessed 24.10.19

Fashion United, (2019). (B) *Global fashion industry statistics - International apparel* [Online] [Accessed 22.11.19] https://fashionunited.com/global-fashion-industry-statistics/

FAUGIER J. & SARGEANT M. (1997). 'Sampling hard to reach populations'. *Journal of Advanced Nursing,* 26 pp. 790–797

Fink, A., (2013) How to Conduct Surveys (5th Ed.) Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Fletcher, A., J., (2017) Applying critical realism in qualitative research: methodology meets method, International Journal of Social Research Methodology, 20:2, 181-194, DOI: 10.1080/13645579.2016.1144401 To link to this article: https://doi.org/10.1080/13645579.2016.1144401

Fleetwood, S. (2005). 'Ontology in organization and management studies: A critical realist perspective.' *Organization,* 12 pp. 55-84.

Fletcher, K., (2010). *Slow Fashion: An Invitation for Systems Change*, Fashion Practice, 2(2) pp. 259–266

Forston, D., (2018). 'Novel way to hook the young ones'. The Sunday Times Business. Supplement. 11th February p. 3

Fournier, S., & Avery, J., (2011). The uninvited brand. *Business Horizons* 54(3) pp. 193-207.

Fukukawa, K., Moon, J. (2004). A Japanese model of corporate social *responsibility?: A study of website reporting. Journal* of Corporate Citizenship.

Fung Global Retail, (2016). *The Millennials series: Millennials and Beauty* [Online] [Accessed 10.11.18] https://deborahweinswig.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/Millennials-and-Beauty-by-Fung-Global-Retail-Tech-July-18-2016.pdf

Futerra Sustainability Communications, (2015). *Selling Sustainability: Primer for Marketers*. Sustainable Lifestyles Frontier Group. [Online] [Accessed 02.03.19] https://www.wearefuterra.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/FuterraBSR_SellingSustainability2015.pdf

Gabrielli, V, Ilaria Baghi, I, Codeluppi, V, (2013). 'Consumption practices of fast fashion products: a consumer-based approach.' *Journal of Fashion Marketing and Management*: *An International Journal*, 17(2) pp.206-224.

Gam, H., J., Ma, Y., J., Banning, J. (2014). 'Socially responsible Apparel Labels: Effects on Fashionable Shoppers.' *Family and Consumer Sciences Research Journal*, 42(3). [Online] [Accessed 13.12.19] https://doi-org.mmu.idm.oclc.org/10.1111/fcsr.12062
Gamble, A. (2019) 'Why is Neo-liberalism so Resilient?' *Critical Sociology*, 45(7–8) pp. 983–994.

Genc, R, (2017). 'The Importance of Communication in Sustainability & Sustainable Strategies.' *Science Direct,* 8 pp. 511-516,

Glaser, B., & Strauss, A. (1967). The Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research. Mill Valley, CA: Sociology Press.

Global Ecolabelling Network, (2020) [Online] [Accessed 19.07.20] https://www.globalecolabelling.net/what-is-eco-labelling/

Global Fashion Agenda & The Boston Consulting Group, (2018). *Pulse of the Fashion Industry*. [Online] [Accessed 18.09.19] https://globalfashionagenda.com/initiatives/pulse/#

Global Organic Textile Standard, (2020) [Online] [Accessed 18.07.20] https://www.global-standard.org/licensing-and-labelling/how-to-get-products-labelled.html

Goldsmith, R.E. (2006). *Electronic word-of-mouth*. Encyclopaedia of E-commerce, E-Government, and Mobile Commerce. [Online] [Accessed 14.08.19] https://www.researchgate.net/publication/314473856_Electronic_Word-of-Mouth

Goldstein NJ, Cialdini RB and Griskevicius V. (2008) A room with a viewpoint: using social norms to motivate environmental conservation in hotels. Journal of Consumer Research 35: 472–482.

Good on you, (2019). *Introducing Our No.1 Supporter, Emma Watson* [Online] [Accessed 01.01.20] https://goodonyou.eco/emma-watson-good-on-you-supporter/

Guba, E. G. 1990. The paradigm dialog. Sage, Newbury Park, California.

Gupta, A., (2019). 'Sustainability Policies for the Fashion Industry; A comparative Study of Asian and European Brands'*. Indian Journal of Public Administration,* 65(3) pp. 733-748.
Guy, A, Banim, M. (2000). 'Personal Collections: Women's clothing use and identity*.' Journal of Gender Studies,* 9(3) pp. 313-327.

Guyer, J. J., and Fabrigar, L. R., (2015) *Attitudes and Behavior* This article is a revision of the previous edition article by A.S.R. Manstead, volume 2, pp. 908–913, 2001, Elsevier Ltd.

Hair, J.F., Bush, R.P., Ortinau, D.J., (2009). Marketing Research, McGraw Hill/Irwin, New York, NY

Hakala, H., Niemi, L., Koohtamaki, M., (2017). 'Online brand community practices and the construction of brand legitimacy.' *Marketing Theory*, 17(4) pp. 537–558.

Hart, C., (2005). *Doing your Masters dissertation*, London, SAGE Publications Ltd.

H & M, (2018). *H & M Foundation puts euro 1 million and coaching program on the table for ideas reinventing the entire fashion industry*. [Online] [Accessed 08.02.19] https://globalchangeaward.com/news/hm-foundation-puts-1-million-euro-and-coaching-program-on-the-table-for-ideas-reinventing-the-entire-fashion-industry/

H&M FOUNDATION Accenture (2018*). Circular X Fashion Tech Trend Report 2018*. [Online] [Accessed 07.05.19] https://www.accenture.com/_acnmedia/PDF-74/Accenture-GCA-Circular-FashionTech-Trend-Report-2018.pdf

Henninger, C. E. (2015) *Traceability the New Eco-Label in the Slow-Fashion Industry?—Consumer Perceptions and Micro-Organisations Responses* Sustainability 2015, 7, 6011-6032; doi:10.3390/su7056011 Journal of sustainability

Henninger, C, Oates, CJ & Alevizou, PJ (2016). 'What is sustainable fashion?' *Journal of Fashion Marketing and Management,* 20(4) pp. 400-416.

Herrick, C.N.; Pratt, J.L. *Communication and the narrative basis of sustainability: Observations from the municipal water sector*. Sustainability 2013, 5, 4428–4443. [Cross Ref]

Hiller Connell, K, Y, Kozar, J M (2012). 'Sustainability knowledge and behaviours of apparel and textile undergraduates' *International Journal of Sustainability in Higher Education* 13(4) pp. 394-407.

Hiller Connell, K, Y, Kozar, J M (2017). *Introduction to special issue on sustainability and triple bottom line within the global clothing and textiles industry.* Open Access DOI 10. 1186/s40691-017-0100-6 [online] [Accessed 21.11.19] https://link.springer.com/article/10.1186/s40691-017-0100-6

Hovland, C (1957). *The Order of Presentation in Persuasion*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Hume, M., (2010). Compassion without action: Examining the young consumers consumption and attitude to sustainable consumption. *Journal of World Business*, 45(4), pp. 385-394.

Hussain, T., (2018). Re-Fashioning the garment industry: Exploring innovations for a circular economy. *Clothing Cultures* Vol 5, Issue 1, [Online] [Accessed 21.09.19] https://go-gale-com.mmu.idm.oclc.org/ps/i.do?p=AONE&u=mmucal5&id=GALE|A551424185&v=2.1&it=r&sid=summon

Hwang, J. Griffiths, M, A, (2017). 'Share more, drive less: Millennials value perception and behavioural intent in using collaborative consumption services.' *Journal of Consumer Marketing,* 34(2) pp.132-146.

Inditex, (2018). (A) *Inditex Annual Report 2018*, [Online] [Accessed 09.11.19] https://static.inditex.com/annual_report_2018/en/2018-data.html

Inditex, (2019). (B) *Closing the Loop* [online] [Accessed 09.11.19] https://www.inditex.com/our-commitment-to-the-environment/closing-the-loop

Inditex, (2019). (C) *Inditex About Us* [Online] [Accessed 28.10.19] https://www.inditex.com/about-us/our-story

Inditex, (2020). (D) Collect, Reuse, Recycle. [Online] [Accessed 01.01.20] https://www.inditex.com/en/our-commitment-to-the-environment/closing-the-loop/collect-reuse-recycle

Inditex, 2020, Inditex Annual Report [online] [Accessed 14.11.20] [https://static.inditex.com/annual_report_2017/assets/pdf/c51_en.pdf

Inditex (2020) Join Life Labelling (online) [Accessed 11.10.20] https://www.wateractionplan.com/es/join-life

Influencer Marketing Hub (2019). [Online] [Accessed 24.09.19] https://influencermarketinghub.com/10-ways-brands-are-using-instagram-highlights-to-bolster-their-engagement/

International Labour office (ILO) (2017). *Purchasing practices and working conditions in global supply chains; Global Survey results* [Online] [Accessed 19.11.18] https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_protect/---protrav/---travail/documents/publication/wcms_556336.pdf

Ismail, N., Kinchin, G., Edwards, J., (2018) Pilot study, does it really matter? Learning lessons from conducting a pilot study for a qualitative PhD thesis. International Journal of Social Science Research 6(1) 1-17

Ives, C.D., Freeth, R. & Fischer, J. (2019) "Inside-out sustainability: The neglect of inner worlds", *Ambio,* vol. 49, no. 1, pp. 208-217.

Iyer, E.S., and Kashyap, R.K., (2007). 'Consumer recycling role of incentives, information, and social class.' *Journal of Consumer Behaviour*, 6(1) pp. 32-47.

Jackson, T., (2005) *Motivating Sustainable Consumption a review of evidence on consumer behaviour and behavioural change.* Sustainable Development Research Network Sponsored by DEFRA.

Jeffrey, M., Evans, N., (2011). *Costing for the Fashion Industry.* London, Bloomsbury Publishing.

JD Sports Plc. (2016/17) *Modern Slavery Report 2016/17*. [Online] [Accessed 16.02.19] https://www.jdplc.com/~/media/Files/J/Jd-Sports-Fashion-Plc/documents/modern-slavery-report.pdf

Jestratijevic, I, Rudd, N., A., & Uanhoro, J., (2020) *From Transparency of sustainability disclosures among luxury and mass-market fashion brands*. Journal of Global Fashion Marketing Bridging Fashion and Marketing. 11:2, 99-116,

Johnson, M, (2018). *The sage encyclopedia of communication research methods* (Vols. 1-4). California SAGE Publications.

Joshi, Y., Rahman, Z., (2015) *Factors Affecting Green Purchase Behaviour and Future Research Directions.* Science Direct. International Strategic Management Review 3 pp 128-143

Joung, H-J., (2014). 'Fast-fashion consumers' post-purchase behaviours.' *International Journal of Retail & Distribution Management*, 42(8) pp. 688-697.

Kangun, N, Carlson, L, Grove, S. J., (1991) *Environmental advertising claims: a preliminary investigation.* Journal of Public Policy & Marketing 10: pp 47-58

Khan, E. A., Dewan, M. N. A., & Chowdhury, M. H. (2016). *Reflective or formative measurement model of sustainability factor: A three-industry comparison.* Corporate Ownership and Control Journal, 12(2), 84–9

Kimmel and Kitchen (2014) *WOM and social media: Presaging future directions for research and practice.* Journal of Marketing Communications 20 (1/2) pp5-20
Kucuk, S.U.; Krishnamurthy, S. 2007. *An analysis of consumer power on the Internet.* Technovation 2007, 27, 47–56.

Jones, A., and Kang J., (2019) Media technology shifts: Exploring millennial consumers' fashion information-seeking behaviours and motivations. Canadian Journal of Administrative Sciences [Online] [Accessed 12.10.20] https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/cjas.1546

Joy, A, Sherry, J.F. Venkatesh, A, Wang, Chan, J (2012). 'Fast Fashion, Sustainability, and the Ethical Appeal of Luxury Brands' *Fashion Theory*, 16(3) pp. 273-295.

Joyner Armstrong, C. M. & Hiller Connell, K Y. & Lang, C. & Ruppert-Stroescu, LeHew, M. L. A (2016). 'Educating for Sustainable Fashion: Using Clothing Acquisition Abstinence to Explore Sustainable Consumption and Life Beyond Growth'*. Journal of Consumer Policy,* 39 pp. 417–439

Jung, S., Jin, B., (2016) 'Sustainable development of slow fashion businesses: customer value approach.*' Sustainability*, 8(540) pp. 1-15

Just Style (2018). How Millennials and Actually Everyone Want to Shop [Online] [Accessed 09.02.18] https://www.just-style.com/comment/how-millennials-and-actually-everyone-want-to-shop_id130730.aspx

Kaplan, S and R Kaplan (1989). 'The Visual Environment: public participation in design and planning.' *Journal of Social Issues,* 45 pp. 59-86.

Kirchain, R. Olivetti, E. Miller, R. Greene, S. (2015). 'Sustainable Apparel Materials. An overview of what we know and what could be done about the impact of four major apparel materials: Cotton, Polyester, Leather, & Rubber.*' ISSUELAB* [Online] [Accessed 26.05.19] https://www.issuelab.org/resource/sustainable-apparel-materials.html

Koksal, D., Strahle, J., Muller, M., Freise, M., (2017). 'Social Sustainable Supply Chain Management in the Textile and Apparel Industry—A Literature Review Sustainability.' *MDP*I [Online] [Accessed 0.05.19] https://doaj.org/article/7ebf13d2b4694ee5b662e4ab37bbebd1

Kostka G, Moslener U, Andreas J (2013*).* 'Barriers to increasing energy efficiency: evidence from small-and medium-sized enterprises in China'. *Journal of Clean Production,* 57 pp. 59–68.

Kumar, R. (2011). *Research Methodology.* Pretoria, Sage.

Kumar, R. (2013). *Research Methodology: A guide for researchers.* New York. Springer

Kurt Geiger, (2019). Footwear prices [Online] [Accessed 11.02.18] https://www.kurtgeiger.com/women/shoes?page=1&gclid=EAIaIQobChMImN-Ag7az4AIVihrTCh2FKQLLEAAYASAAEgJu3vD_BwE#brand/kgeiger/sortBy/price-low-high

LaBat, K. L. DeLong, M. R. (1990). 'Body Cathexis and Satisfaction with Fit of Apparel Clothing and Textiles' *Research Journal,* 8 pp. 43-48.

Labour Behind the Label, (2019). *Not a single worker is making a living wage yet H&M claims to have done an amazing job.* [Online] [Accessed 06.11.19] https://labourbehindthelabel.org/not-a-single-worker-is-making-a-living-wage-yet-hm-claims-to-have-done-an-amazing-job/

Lambert, N., (2020). *An (in) convenient truth: Gen Z and the culture of instant gratification.* [Online] [Accessed 01.01.20] https://www.sapho.com/blog/an-inconvenient-truth-gen-z-and-the-culture-of-instant-gratification/

Lay, R., (2018). *Digital transformation - the ultimate challenge for the fashion industry*. [Online] [Accessed 19.01.20] https://www2.deloitte.com/ch/en/pages/consumer-industrial-products/articles/ultimate-challenge-fashion-industry-digital-age.html

Ledingham and Bruning (2000) *Public Relations as Relationship management: A Relational Approach to Public Relations.* Oxfordshire Routledge

Leeuwen, T.V, & Jewitt, (2011). *Semiotics and Iconography. The Handbook of Visual Analysis,* London, SAGE Publications Ltd.

Liao, SY., Wang, LH., Huang, ML., (2018). 'Does More Consumption Promote Real GDP Growth?' *Scottish Journal of Political Economy*. 66(3) [Online] [Accessed 02.01.2020]. https://doi-org.mmu.idm.oclc.org/10.1111/sjpe.12189

Liu, X., Wang, C., Shishime, T., & Fujitsuka, T. (2012). *Sustainable consumption: Green purchasing behaviours of urban residents in China.* Sustainable Development, 20(4), 293-308.

Living Wage Foundation & ACCA (2017). The Living Wage: A global overview of initiatives and regulations, [Online] [Accessed 31.12.18] https://www.livingwage.org.uk/sites/default/files/pi-living-wage-global-overview%20final%20draft_0.pdf

Lubin, G (2013). *There's A Staggering Conspiracy Behind The Rise Of Consumer Culture*, Business Insider [Online] [Accessed 06.01.19] https://www.businessinsider.com/birth-of-consumer-culture-2013-2?r=UK&IR=T

Lueg, R., Medelby Pederson, M., Norregaard Clemmensen, S., (2013). 'The Role of Corporate Sustainability in a Low-Cost Business Model – A Case Study in the Scandinavian Fashion Industry.' *Business Strategy and the Environment*, [Online] [Accessed 11.01.20] https://doi.org/10.1002/bse.1825

Lundquist. 6th CSR Online Awards 2014—White Paper [online]. [Accessed on 21.07.20] http://www.lundquist.it/6th-csronline-awards-white-paper?cat_slug=whats-on/white-papers

Ma, Y. J. Gam, H., J., Banning, J., (2017) *Perceived ease of use and usefulness of sustainability labels on apparel products: application of the technology acceptance model.* Fashion and Text 4, [Online] [Accessed on 24.01.21] https://doi.org/10.1186/s40691-017-0093-1

Mackie and Queller (2000). *The impact of group membership on persuasion: Revisiting "Who says what to whom with what effect?"* In Terry, D. J., Hogg, M. A. (Eds.), Attitudes, behavior, and social context: The role of norms and group membership (pp. 135-155). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Madden, T. J. Ellen, P. S., Ajzen, I., (1992) *A comparison of the theory of planned behaviour and the theory of reasoned action.* Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin 18, 1-8.

Magliocco, S., (2019). *Boohoo.com take a step towards sustainability with recycled t-shirts,* Shemazing [Online] [Accessed 14/03.19] https://www.shemazing.net/boohoo-com-take-a-step-towards-sustainability-with-recycled-t-shirts/

Mamede, P., & Gomes, C. F. (2014). Corporate sustainability measurement in service organizations: A case study from Portugal. Environmental Quality Management. 23(3), 49-73. https://doi-org.mmu.idm.oclc.org/10.1002/tqem.21370

Manderson, A.K., (2006**). '**A Systems Based Framework to Examine the Multi-contextual Application of the Sustainability Concept'. *Environment, Development and Sustainability* 8(1) pp. 85–97.

Markkula, A., Moisander, J., (2011) *Discursive Confusion over Sustainable Consumption: A Discursive Perspective on the Perplexity of Marketplace.* Springer Science+Business Media, LLC. 2011
Martin, C, Bush, A, (2000). 'Do role models influence teenagers' purchase intentions and behavior?' *Journal of Consumer Marketing*, 17 (5) pp.441-453.

Martin, M., (2013.) *Creating Sustainable Apparel Value Chains. A Primer on Industry Transformation*. 2013 Impact Economy.

McKinsey & Company, (2018). *'True Gen': Generation Z and its implications for companies'* [Online] [Accessed 22.11.19] https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/consumer-packaged-goods/our-insights/true-gen-generation-z-and-its-implications-for-companies

McNeill, L., Moore, R., (2015). 'Sustainable fashion consumption and the fast fashion conundrum: fashionable consumers and attitudes to sustainability in clothing choice.' *International journal of Consumer Studies*. 39 (3) pp. 212-222.

McNeill, L., Snowdon, J., (2019). 'Slow fashion – Balancing the conscious retail model within the fashion marketplace'*. Australasian Marketing Journal (AMJ)*, 27(4) pp. 215-223.

McNeill, L and Venter, B., (2019) *Identity, self-concept and young women's engagement with collaborative, sustainable fashion consumption models. International Journal of Consumer Studies. (online) [Accessed 14.09.20]* https://onlinelibrary-wiley-com.mmu.idm.oclc.org/doi/epdf/10.1111/ijcs.12516

Mejias, A., Bellas, R., Pardo, J., Paz, E., (2019). 'Traceability management systems and capacity building as new approaches for improving sustainability in the fashion multi-tier supply chain.' *International Journal of Production Economics*, 217 pp. 143–158

Merriam, S, Tisdell, E (2015). Qualitative Research: A Guide to Design and Implementation. 4th Ed. New Jersey. John Wiley & Sons.

Miles and Huberman (1994). *Qualitative data-analysis – an expanded sourcebook*. 2nd Ed. Journal of Environmental Psychology, London, Sage

Mobrezia, H, and Khoshtinata, B (2016). 'Investigating the factors affecting female consumers' willingness toward green purchase based on the model of planned behaviour' *Procedia Economics and Finance* 36 pp. 441 – 447.

Moisander, J. (2007). Motivational complexity of green consumerism. International Journal of Consumer Studies, 31(4), 404-409.

MonsterPost, (2019). [Online] [Accessed 21.09.19] https://www.templatemonster.com/blog/what-is-dynamic-website/

MOON, K. & BLACKMAN, D. 2014, "A Guide to Understanding Social Science Research for Natural Scientists", *Conservation biology,* vol. 28, no. 5, pp. 1167-1177.

Moon, K, Blackman, A, Adams, V, Colvin, R, Davila, F, Evans, M, Januchowski-Hartley, S, Bennett, N, Dickinson, H, Sandbrook, C, Sherren, K, V. St. John, F, Kerkhoffs, L, Wyborn, C. (2018). 'Expanding the role of social science in conservation through an engagement with philosophy, methodology, and methods'. *Methods in Ecology and Evolution*. [Online] [Accessed 11.04.19] https://doi.org/10.1111/2041-210X.13126

Morgan L, R, and Birtwistle G, (2009). 'An investigation of young fashion consumers' disposal habits' *International Journal of Consumer Studies,* 33(2) pp. 190-198.

Morgan, G. A., and Harmon, R. J. (2001) *Data Collection Techniques.* Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry

Naderi, I, (2013). 'Beyond the fad: a critical review of consumer fashion involvement.' *International Journal of Consumer Studies,* 37(1) pp. 84-104.

Nash, J., (2019). 'Exploring how social media platforms influence fashion consumer decisions in the UK retail sector'*. Journal of Fashion Marketing and Management*, 23(1) pp. 82-103.

Newig, J., Schulz, D., Fischer, D. Hetze, K. Laws, N. Ludecke, G. Rieckmann, M. (2013). *Communication Regarding Sustainability: Conceptual Perspectives and Exploration of societal Subsystems.* [Online] [Accessed 11.03.19] https://www.mdpi.com/2071-1050/5/7/2976

Nielsen Report (2017). '*Young and ready to travel (and shop) A look at Millennial travellers.* [Online] [Accessed 27.01.19] https://www.nielsen.com/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2019/04/nielsen-millennial-traveler-study-jan-2017.pdf

Oppong, S., (2014) A Critique of the Philosophical Underpinnings *Academus: International Scientific Journal* Vol MMXIV, no. 10 pp 242-254 [online] [Accessed 25.01.21] https://doi.org/10.7336/academicus.2014.10.17

Ozdamar-Ertekin, Z., (2017). *The True Cost: The Bitter Truth behind Fast Fashion* International Society of Markets and Development. [Online] [Accessed 21.11.18] https://digitalcommons.uri.edu/mgdr/vol2/iss3/7/

Oxfam, (2019). *M&S and Oxfam Shwopping*, [Online] [Accessed 06.11.19] https://www.oxfam.org.uk/donate/donate-goods/mands-and-oxfam-shwopping

Oxford Dictionary (2018)   [Online] [Accessed 06.01.19] https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/consumerism

Parker, C. M., Zutshi, A., Fraunhlz, B., (2010) *Online Corporate Social Responsibility communication by Australian SME's: A framework for website analysis*. In Proceedings of the 23rd BLED eConference eTrust pp 509-523

Parish, L. (2019). *Young people throughout the UK make thousands selling their old clothes* [Online] [Accessed 5.11.19] https://spotlightmag.co.uk/young-people-throughout-the-uk-make-thousands-selling-their-old-clothes/

Patagonia, 2019, landing page, [online] [accessed 14.03.19] https://www.patagonia.com/shop/kids-natural-fiber-clothing

Perez, A., and Lonsdale, M., (2019) 'Garment label design and comparison information to communicate fashion sustainability issues to young consumers.' *Visible Language,* 52(3) pp. 114-139.

Perrin, A., (2016). Book Reading 2016 Pew Research Center [Online] [Accessed 19.02.19] http://assets.pewresearch.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/14/2016/08/PI_2016.09.01_Book-Reading_FINAL.pdf

Perry, P., Wood, S., Fernie, J, (2014). 'Corporate Social Responsibility in Garment Sourcing Networks*:* Factory Management Perspectives on Ethical Trade in Sri Lanka'*. Journal of Business Ethics*, 130(3) pp.737-752.

Petty, R.E., Priester, J., Briñol, P., (2002). *Mass Media and Attitude Change: advances in the elaboration likelihood model.* [Online] [Accessed 21.05.19] https://psycnet.apa.org/record/2002-00742-007

Plano Clark, V, L & J.W. Creswell, (2008).*The mixed methods reader.* London, Sage.

Pounders, K., & Mabbry-Flynn, A., (2019). 'Consumer Response toward Plus-Size Models Featured in the Mainstream Media.' *The Journal of Consumer Affairs* 53(4) pp. 1355-1379.

Pratkanis, A and A Greenwald (1993). 'Consumer involvement, message attention, and the persistence of persuasive impact in a message-dense environment.' *Psychology and Marketing,* 10(4) pp. 321-332.

Proctor E, Luke D, Calhoun A, McMillen C, Brownson R, McCrary S., (2015) Sustainability of evidence-based healthcare: research agenda, methodological advances, and infrastructure support. Implement Sci. 10:88

PwC, (2017). *SDG Reporting Challenge 2017.Exploring business communication on the global goals.* [Online] [Accessed 17.11.18]]https://www.pwc.com/gx/en/services/sustainability/sustainable-development-goals/business-reporting-on-the-sdgs.html

Primark (2019). Newcastle store. 25.01.19 ladies leggings on sale £2.50

Primark (2018). *How Primark Keeps Prices Low Whilst Keeping Ethical Standards High*, [Online] [Accessed 26.03.18]. https://www.primark.com/en/our-ethics

Ramayah, T., Lee, J. W. C., & Mohamad, O. (2010). *Green product purchase intention: Some insights from a developing country.* Resources, Conservation and Recycling, 54(12), 1419-1427.

Ravenswood, K., (2011) *Eisenhardt's impact on theory in case study research.* Journal of Business Research. Vol 64, issue 7, pp 680-686 https://www-sciencedirect-com.mmu.idm.oclc.org/science/article/pii/S0148296310001657

Redelmeier, R, (2018). *Missguided innovated ecommerce marketing* [Online][Accessed 14.03.19) https://www.newswhip.com/2018/08/missguided-innovated-ecommerce-marketing/

Reed, M. (2005). Reflections on the 'Realist Turn' in Organization and Management Studies.' *Journal of management studies*. 42(8) pp. 1621-1644

Remington, C (2019). *H&M CEO criticised over fast fashion comment.* ECOTEXTILE NEWS [Online] [Accessed 22.11.19] https://www.ecotextile.com/2019110125229/fashion-retail-news/h-m-ceo-criticised-over-fast-fashion-comments.html

Rieke, S.E. Fowler, D, C, Chang, H. J. Velikova, N (2016). 'Exploration of factors influencing body image satisfaction and purchase intent: Millennial females'*, Journal of Fashion Marketing and Management,* 20(2), pp.208-229.

Ritch, E L. *(*2015). 'Consumers interpreting sustainability: moving beyond food to fashion', *International Journal of Retail & Distribution Management*, 43(12) pp.1162-1181.

Roberts, D, (2018). Copenhagen Fashion Summit 15-16th May SPACESHIP EARTH https://vimeo.com/270358252

Roberts, JA (1996) *Green consumers in the 1990s: profile and implications for advertising*. Journal of Business Research 36: 217–231.

Roberts, J. A., (1996) *"Will the socially responsible consumer please step forward?"* Business Horizons Vol 39 pp79-84

Robson, C. (2002). *Real World Research; A Resource for Social Scientists and Practitioners*. 2nd. Ed. Oxford, Blackwell.

Rokka, J., & Uusitalo, L. (2008). *Preference for green packaging in consumer product choices–Do consumer's care?* International Journal of Consumer Studies, 32(5), 516-525

Royal Society for Public Health, (2017). *#StatusOfMind Social media and young people's mental health and wellbein*g. [Online] [Accessed 26.07.19] https://www.rsph.org.uk/uploads/assets/uploaded/d125b27c-0b62-41c5-a2c0155a8887cd01.pdf

Saunders, M., Lewis, P., Thornhill, A., (2009). Research Methods for Business Students 5th Ed., London. Prentice Hall.

Saunders, M. Lewis, P. Thornhill, A. (2016). Research Methods for Business Students 7th Ed, Essex, Pearson.

Segran, E., (2018). *Why fashion brands should think more like tech companie*s (Online) (Accessed 31.03.18) https://www.fastcompany.com/3067912/why-fashion-brands-should-think-more-like-tech-companies

Sekaran, U, Bougie, R, (2016). *Research Methods for Business* 7th Ed. West Sussex. John Wiley & Sons Ltd.

Sener A, Hazer O. 2008. *Values and sustainable consumption behaviour of women: a Turkish sample.* Sustainable Development 16(5): 291–300.

Shen, B., Li, Q., Dong, C., Perry, P., (2017). Sustainability Issues in Textile and Apparel Supply Chains. *Sustainability.* Vol. 9 no.9, pp 1592

Shen, B. Wang, Y. Lo, CKY. Shum, M. (2012). 'The impact of ethical fashion on consumer purchase behavior.' *Journal of Fashion Marketing and Management: An International Journal*, 16(2) pp.234-245.

Siano, A., Francesca Conte, Amabile, S., Vollero, A., and Piciocchi, P., (2016) *Communicating Sustainability: An Operational Model for Evaluating Corporate Websites*

Sievanen, L., Campbell, M, Leslie, H., (2012). Sievanen, *Challenges to interdisciplinary research in ecosystem-based management*. Conservation Biology 26:315-

Simis, M., Madden, H., Cacciatore, M. A., (2016) *The lure of rationality: Why does the deficit model persist in science communication?* Public Understanding of Science. Sage. Volume: 25 Issue 4. Pp 400-414

Simons, H. W., (1976) *Persuasion: understanding, practice, and analysis*. Journalism Quarterly. Pp 550 https://mmulibrary.summon.serialssolutions.com/#!/search?bookMark=ePnHCXMw42LgTQStzc4rAe_hSmEBb1cGra8yNuSAFpHAaDc152RwDQY6J69YR8EDaEJqUYICuJ6eAmjhd2kiaKTISqEUeX-HjgJs35COAlAEiCGHdvAwsJQUlabyQihuBlU31xBnD13USeT4RNAwfnwQ-IQ2Y0PQZQbEqQMAWxU_4Q

Sinha, P., (2012) 'Creating a global vision for sustainable fashion.' *Pakistan Textile Journal*. 61(1). [Online] [Accessed 18.01.20]. https://link-gale-com.mmu.idm.oclc.org/apps/doc/A279987279/ITOF?u=mmucal5&sid=ITOF&xid=d4ba2847.

Spanx (2019). About Us [Online] [Accessed 08.01.19] https://www.spanx.com/about-us

Spirkin, A., (1983) *Dialectical materialism*. Moscow. Progress publishers.

Sproles, G.B. and Kendall, E.L. (1986). 'A methodology for profiling consumers' decision-marking styles.' *Journal of Consumer Affairs*, 20(2) pp. 267-279.

Statista, (2019) Countries with the most Instagram Users. [Online] [Accessed 08.01.19] https://www.statista.com/statistics/578364/countries-with-most-instagram-users/

Stutely, R., (2003). *Guide to economic indicators: making sense of economics*. London. The Economist in association with Profile Books

Su, J., (2018). 'Factors affecting college students' brand loyalty toward fast fashion A consumer-based brand equity approach.' *International journal of retail & distribution management*, 46(1) pp. 90-107

Sustainable Society Index, (2019). [Online] [Accessed 30.12.18] http://www.ssfindex.com/

Tafreschi, J., (2019). G7 *Fashion Pact: Sounds good, but…* [Online] [Accessed 22.01.20] https://www.sportswear-international.com/news/stories/Sustainability-G7-Fashion-Pact-Sounds-good-but...-14853

Taplin, M., (2014). 'Who is to blame? A re-examination of fast fashion after the 2013 factory disaster in Bangladesh'. *Critical perspectives on international business, 10(1/2) pp.72-83.*

Tasscioglu, M, Kilsheimer Eastman, J, Iyer, R, (2017). 'The impact of the motivation for status on consumers' perceptions of retailer sustainability: the moderating impact of collectivism and materialism.' *Journal of Consumer Marketing*, 34(4) pp. 292-305.

The Economist, (2009). Triple bottom line [Online] [Accessed 16.12.18] https://www.economist.com/news/2009/11/17/triple-bottom-line
The Global Organic Textile Standard, (2019). [Online] [Accessed 30.12.19] https://www.global-standard.org/the-standard.html

Thematic Analysis Inc, 2020, [online] [Accessed 14.11.20] https://getthematic.com/insights/coding-qualitative-data/#:~:text=What%20is%20coding%20in%20qualitative,recurring

Thomas, S. (2008). 'From "Green Blur" to Eco fashion Fashioning an Eco lexicon', *Fashion Theory*, [Online] [Accessed 27.08.19] 10.2752/175174108X346977

The Business of Fashion and McKinsey & Company, (2018). *The State of Fashion 2019*. [Online] [Accessed 04.11.19] https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/retail/our-insights/the-state-of-fashion-2019-a-year-of-awakening

Tjandra, N., C., Omar, M., Ensor, J., (2015). 'Advanced and emerging economies Generation Y's perception towards country-of-origin'. *International Journal of Emerging Markets,* 10(4) pp.858-874.

Tie, Y., C., Birks, M., Francis, K., (2019) *Grounded theory research: A design framework for novice researchers.* Sage Open Medicine [Accessed 15.06.20] https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6318722/

Tolkes, C., (2018) *Sustainability communication in tourism – A literature review. Tourism Management Perspectives.* 27 10-21 Elsevier

Topshop, (2019). [Online] [Accessed 14.10.19] http://www.peoplebank.com/pbank/owa/pbk24w12.main?p=beffnZocggkkbn3oEDEwnaoddgfeddn, Tormala, Z.L., Rucker, D.D., 2007. *Attitude certainty: a review of past findings and emerging perspectives.* Social and Personality Psychology Compass 1, 469–492.

Trentmann, F (2007). 'Citizenship and consumption'. *Journal of Consumer Culture* 7(2): pp. 147–158.

Trentmann, F (2007).'The impact of the motivation for status on consumers' perceptions of retailer sustainability: the moderating impact of collectivism and materialism.' *Journal of Consumer Marketing,* 34(4) pp. 292-305.

Trentmann, F (2016). *How Humans Became 'Consumers': A History. The Atlantic* [Online] [Accessed 07.01.19] https://www.theatlantic.com/business/archive/2016/11/how-humans-became-consumers/508700/

Tseelon, E. (2003). *Masquerade and Identities: Essays on Gender, Sexuality and Marginality* MLA (Modern Language Assoc.) London, Routledge.

Tsur, M. (2008).'The selectivity effect of past experience on purchasing decisions: implications for the WTA-WTP disparity.' *Journal of economic psych*ology, 29(5) pp.739-746.

Thomas, S., (2015). 'From 'Green Blur' to Eco fashion: Fashioning an Eco-lexicon.' *Fashion Theory*, 12(4) pp. 525-539.

Tortora, P, (2015). *Dress, Fashion and Technology: From Prehistory to the Present*. London. Bloomsbury Publishing PLC

Ukko, J., Saunila, M., Rantala, T., Havukainen, J., (2018) *Sustainable development: Implications and definition for open sustainability.* Sustainable Development 2019. 27 321-336 https://doi-org.mmu.idm.oclc.org/10.1002/sd.1904 Accessed 29.07.20

UK Parliament (2019). *Interim Report on the Sustainability of the Fashion Industry* [Online] [Accessed 03.02.19]
https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201719/cmselect/cmenvaud/1148/114804.htm#_idTextAnchor002
United Nations, (2019). *The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2018* [Online] [Accessed 20.01.19], https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/report/2018/data_revolution

United Nations, (2020) *Eco-labelling*. [online] [Accessed 20.07.20]
https://www.unenvironment.org/explore-topics/resource-efficiency/what-we-do/responsible-industry/eco-labelling

Van den Bergh, J., & Behrer, M., (2013). *Praise for how cool brands stay hot. Branding to Generation Y.* London. Kogan Page.

Vazquez, D., Dennis, C., Zhang, Y., (2017). 'Understanding the effect of smart retail brand – consumer communications via mobile instant messaging (MIM) – An empirical study in the Chinese context.' *Computers in Human Behaviour,* 77 pp. 425 – 436.

Villarino, J., Font, X., (2015) *Sustainability marketing myopia: The lack of persuasiveness in sustainability communications.* Journal of Vacation Marketing 2015, Vol. 21(4) 326–335

Wade, P., (2019). *How sustainable shopping can cut environmental cost of fast fashion; BBC Planet presenter Liz Bonnin and fashion designer Amy Powney are raising awareness on the surprising impact the industry is having on the world.* Belfast Telegraph. Independent News & Media Ltd. [Online] [Accessed 14.01.20] https://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/life/fashion-beauty/how-sustainable-shopping-can-cut-environmental-cost-of-fast-fashion-37821122.html

WAIYEE, L., Hassan, S.H., (2016) *ATTITUDE-BEHAVIOUR GAP IN SUSTAINABLE FASHION CONSUMPTION: THE ROLE OF FACILITATING CONDITIONS*
International Journal of Management and Applied Science, ISSN: 2394-7926 Volume-2, Issue-7, Jul.-2016

Waller, D.S., & Waller, H.J. (2018). *H&M Post-Rana Plaza: Can Fast Fashion Ever Be Truly Ethical?.* In *Bloomsbury Fashion Business Cases*. London: Bloomsbury Academic. [Online] [Accessed 24.01.21] http://dx.doi.org.mmu.idm.oclc.org/10.5040/9781474208765.0010

Walker, H, (2019). '*In The Style, Boohoo, Missguided... Why Manchester fashion brands are taking over the world'* The Times. [Online] [Accessed 12.11.19] https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/in-the-style-boohoo-missguided-why-manchester-fashion-brands-are-taking-over-the-world-zl6s8xz09?shareToken=14ae53f66e5893dd52e1e34e209e7b1f

Watson, M. Z, Yan, R-N, (2013). 'An exploratory study of the decision processes of fast versus slow fashion consumers.' *Journal of Fashion Marketing and Management: An International Journal*, 17(2) pp.141-159.

Welch, S., (2018). Why it's time for retail to focus on transparency Just Style [online] [Accessed 09.02.18] https://www.just-style.com/analysis/why-its-time-for-retail-to-focus-on-transparency_id132682.aspx

Whatis:Tech target, (2019).*Definitions* [Online] [Accessed 10th December 2018] https://whatis.techtarget.com/search/query?q=collective+word+for+tablets%2C+phons%2C+lap+tops

Wicker, A., (2016). *Fast fashion is creating an environmental crisis*. Newsweek Magazine [Online] [Accessed 08.01.20] https://www.newsweek.com/2016/09/09/old-clothes-fashion-waste-crisis-494824.html

Williams-McBean, C, T, (2019) The Value of a Qualitative Pilot Study in a Multi-Phase Mixed Methods Research. Research Gate Vol 24 No 5 https://www.researchgate.net/publication/333200988_The_Value_of_a_Qualitative_Pilot_Study_in_a_Multi-Phase_Mixed_Methods_Research?enrichId=rgreq-ba920fba9041722fdbc371bdd516fb2f-XXX&enrichSource=Y292ZXJQYWdlOzMzMzIwMDk4ODtBUzo3NjAyNjE5Mjk2MDcxNjlAMTU1ODI3MTk3NzE0Mw%3D%3D&el=1_x_2&_esc=publicationCoverPdf

Williams, K.C. and Page, R.A. (2011). 'Marketing to Generations.' *Journal of Behavioural Studies in Business,* 3(1) pp. 37-53.

Wood, Z., (2019). *How a £1 bikini revealed the changing shape of fast fashion* The Guardian. [Online] [Accessed 30.12.19] https://www.theguardian.com/fashion/2019/jun/22/one-pound-bikini-missguided-fast-fashion-leaves-high-street-behind

World Commission on Environment and Development (1987). Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development: Our Common Future (Brundtland Report),

Word Clouds (2019) [Online] [Accessed 23.07.19] https://www.wordclouds.co.uk/

Yin, R. K. (2003) *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*: (Applied Social Research Methods, Volume 5) Sage Publications. London
Yin, R. K. (2014). Case Study Research: Design and Method (5th Ed). London, Sage

Youguv, (2019). The most popular social networks among millennials. [Online] [Accessed 23.01.19] https://yougov.co.uk/ratings/technology/popularity/social-networks/millennials

Young, M., E., & McCoy, A., W., (2015). 'Millennials and chocolate product ethics: Saying one thing and doing another.' *Food Quality and Preference*, 49 pp.42-53.

Young, W., Hwang, K., McDonald, S., Oates, C.J., (2010) *Sustainable* Development 18, 20–31 (2010) [Accessed 03.07.20] https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/epdf/10.1002/sd.394

Zara, (2019). (A) JOIN LIFE, [Online][Accessed 28.10.19] https://www.zara.com/uk/en/join-life-collection-l1868.html?v1=1081027

Zara, (2019). (B) [Online] [Accessed 17.10.19] https://www.zara.com/uk/en/sustainability-suppliers-l1456.html

Zara, (2020). (C) *Faded effect slogan sweatshirt* [Online] [Accessed 05.01.20] https://www.zara.com/uk/en/faded-effect-slogan-sweatshirt-p00208907.html?v1=32291885&v2=1430742

Zara, (2020 last one) Join Life, [Online] [Accessed 28.01.20] https://www.zara.com/uk/en/sustainability-l1449.html

Zara (2020) [Online] [Accessed 11.10.20] https://www.zara.com/uk/en/sustainability-products-mkt1455.html

Zhang, Y, Liu, X, Xiao, R, Yuan, Z, (2015). 'Life cycle assessment of cotton T-shirts in China.' *International Journal Life Cycle Asses*s 20 pp. 994–1004

9.0 Appendix

Appendix 1 – Diagnosing researcher philosophy

Heightening your Awareness of your Research Philosophy (HARP) - questions

questions and to discuss your answers with your friend.

Progressing your research project

Diagnose your research philosophy

Place indicate your agreement or disagreement with each of these statements. There are no wrong answers.

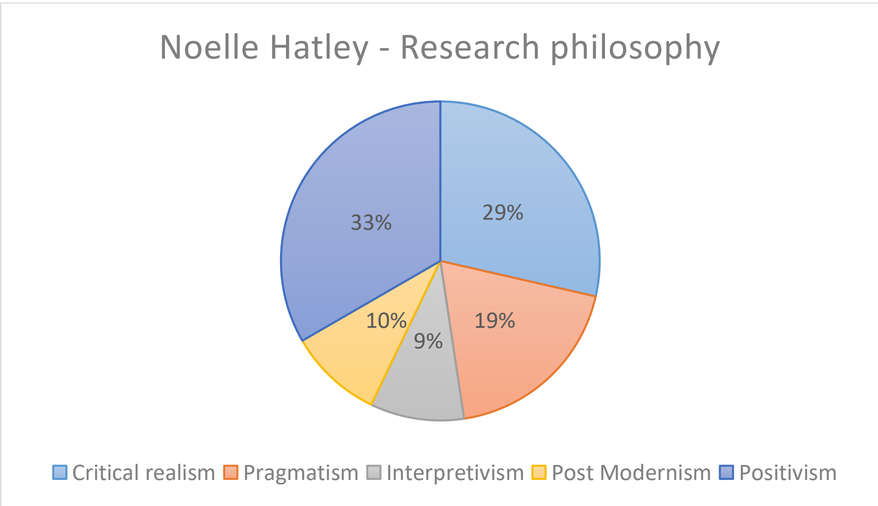
		Strongly	Agree	Agree slightly	Slightly	Disagree	Disagree strongly
1	For the topic being researched there is one single reality, the task of the researcher is to discover it	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
2	The reality of the topic being researched exists separately from the researcher	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
3	Management research is value laden	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
4	A researcher cannot be separated from what is being researched and so will inevitably be subjective	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
5	A variety of data collection techniques should be used in research, both quantitative and qualitative	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
6	The reality of what is being researched exists independently of people's thoughts, beliefs and knowledge of their existence	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
7	Researchers must remain objective and independent from the phenomena they are studying, ensuring that their own values do not impact on data interpretation	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
8	Management research should be practical and applied	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
9	Management research should integrate different perspectives to help interpret the data	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
10	Management researchers need to employ methods that allow in-depth exploration of the details behind a phenomenon	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑

Now discuss your answers with your colleagues. To guide your discussion you need to think about:

1 What do you consider to be the nature of reality? Why?
2 To what extent do your own values influence your research?Why?
3 What is your relationship with what you research? Why?

Don't forget to also use the questions in Box 1.4 to guide your reflective diary entry.
Developed with help from Judith Thomas and Joanne Duberley.

151



Appendix 2 Pilot Survey

How sustainable is your fashion?
The survey should only take a few minutes to complete. Please answer all questions, and 'submit' when completed. Some questions require you to re-order possible answers, please hover over the bar to see up and down arrows, which facilitate this. Please note that 'fashion brand' applies to online and shops, and 'sustainability' is used to describe issues that relate to people or the planet. The purpose of the survey is as a pilot as part of a 'Masters by Research'. Thank you in anticipation for completing it, your help is invaluable.

1. Please select which age bracket you fall into

- 18-23
- 24-29
- 30 or above

2. Please select any of the following that apply to you.

- I am knowledgeable about news and current affairs.
- I live for today and do not worry about tomorrow.
- I would describe myself as environmentally responsible.
- I am concerned about poverty and deprivation in other countries.

3. Please arrange the following in order of statements that apply to you, with the ones that most apply at the top and least apply at the bottom. Please use the arrows on the right of the bar to navigate.

I am knowledgeable about news and current affairs
I live for today and do not worry about tomorrow.
I would describe myself as environmentally responsible
I am concerned about poverty and deprivation in other countries.

4. Please list in order of most to least, the three main brands that you buy your clothes from, with the main one first.

5. Which of the following most closely describes how frequently you buy new clothes.

- More than once a week
- Approximately once a week
- Approximately once a month
- Less than once a month

Which of the following best describes how much you spend on clothes in an average month.

- Less than £50
- Between £50 - £150
- More than £150

6. Please rank in order of importance which of the following prompt you to buy new clothes - with the most important at the top. Please use the arrows on the right of the bar to navigate.

Need something new for an occasion or night out.
It makes me feel good to have new clothes
You need to have new clothes for posting images on social media
I have the same amount of clothes as my friends
I spend more money than I should on buying new clothes
Receiving offers and promotions from fashion brands

7. Please rank in order of importance, with the most important being at the top and least at the bottom, your main priorities when buying clothes. Please use the arrows on the right of the bar to navigate.

Appearance
Price
Fit
Knowing how they were made
Other

8. Please rank in order of importance, with the most important being at the top and least at the bottom, your main priorities when buying clothes. Please use the arrows on the right of the bar to navigate.

Appearance
Price
Fit
Knowing how they were made
Other

10. Is there anything that you would like from fashion brands that they do not currently do? Please describe in your own words.

11. Do you consider that the price of the clothes you buy are:

Good value

About right

Expensive

12 .Excluding staple items such as underwear, how many times on average do you wear your clothes

Once

Between 2-5

More than 5 times

13. Please select which of the following best describes your interest in how your clothes are made.

I am not interested

I am interested, but this does not influence what I buy

I avoid buying from some brands because I am concerned about how the clothes are made

I prefer to buy from brands that tell me how their clothes are made

I only buy from brands that inform me about how their clothes are made

14. Would you like fashion brands to provide information about how the clothes are made

No, I am not interested

Yes, but it probably would not influence what I buy

Yes, this would influence what I buy

15. Would you be prepared to pay more if you knew that clothes were made without negatively impacting on the planet or people

No

Yes, up to 10% more

Yes, between 10-20% more
Yes, between 20-30% more
Yes, I would pay more than 30%

16. Please rank in order of what you are most interested in at the top and least interested in at the bottom, what you would like to know about how sustainable fashion brands are. Please use the arrows on the right of the bar to navigate.
Treatment of factory workers
Impact on the planet
Sustainability initiatives
Treatment of staff
Other

17. Please rank in order of preference with most preferred at the top and least favourite at the bottom, how you would like fashion brands to inform you about the sustainability of their clothes. Please use the arrows on the right of the bar to navigate.
Garment labels or swing tickets
Information on web sites or in shops
E mail or text messages
Social media

18. Please select how frequently you like your favourite fashion brands to contact you?
Yes, more than once a day
Yes, ideally every day
Yes, every 2/3 days
Yes, about once a week
No, I would rather not be contacted by them

19. Please arrange in order of importance with the most important at the top and least at the bottom, what you would like to hear about from fashion brands. Please use the arrows at the right of the bar to navigate.
Promotions and offers.
Arrival of new styles
Styling suggestions and tips
Information about how the clothes are made.
Other

20. Please describe any difficulties you have had in completing this survey

21. Were there any questions that were unclear or confusing?

22. How did you feel about the number of questions that you were asked to answer?

Appendix 3 Survey

1) E mail message sent to Staff and students in The Manchester Fashion Institute

Please find a link to an online survey about fashion and sustainability, which I would be very grateful if you would spend around ten minutes completing.
Please share the link with your friends and acquaintances to maximise the number of responses.
https://mmu.onlinesurveys.ac.uk/fashion-and-sustainability
Thank you in advance for your time.

2) The Survey

‘a) Participant Information Sheet
Title: Communicating Sustainability

Invitation: 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. Ask questions if anything you read is not clear or if you would like more information, before deciding whether to take part.
Purpose: The research purpose is primarily educational and is undertaken as part of a 'Masters by Research' at MMU.
Content: This research is about the impact of global fashion production and consumption on sustainability. It considers both environmental and social (relating to people working in the industry) aspects. The survey designed to collect data from consumers, about their relationship with fashion and fashion brands and their interest in sustainability.
Why you: The survey is being sent to students from the Manchester Fashion Institute, who are primarily under 25 years of age, and are fashion consumers.
Voluntary participation: It is entirely up to you to decide whether to take part in the research by completing the survey. You will need to read and acknowledge the online consent form at the beginning of the survey before completing it. You are free to withdraw at any time by not finishing the survey.
What happens if I take part: The survey will take approximately ten minutes to complete, and can be completed in your own time within a given two-week period. This is the end of your involvement. The data collected will be analysed and used as a basis to develop communication guidelines to develop a better understanding of sustainability in the fashion industry. The raw data destroyed within six months.
Why should I take part: Whilst there is no immediate benefit to you in taking part, the information collected from the surveys will help to get a better understanding of the fashion industry's contribution to the worldwide problems of environmental harm and exploitation of people.
Concerns: If you have a concern about any aspect of this study, you should speak to the researcher Noelle Hatley who will endeavour to answer your questions. n.hatley@mmu.ac.uk. If you remain unhappy and wish to complain formally, you can do this by contacting my Research Supervisor – Tasneem Sabir tasneem.sabir@mmu.ac.uk. Beyond this, details for the University Complaints Procedure are found through the below link:- https://www2.mmu.ac.uk/media/mmuacuk/content/documents/research/Procedure-for-the-Investigation-of-Misconduct-in-Research.pdf
Will my taking part in the study be kept confidential: All information which is collected about you during the course of the research will be kept strictly confidential. In line with the data protection act 1988 your confidentiality will be safeguarded during and after the study. Data collected through the online survey is anonymous. It is stored safely on a password protected computer known only to the researcher. Access is restricted to Supervisors and myself. Raw data destroyed within six months. The data collected from the survey may be used for further research.
Withdrawing from the study: If you decide to withdraw from the study by not completing the survey, all data collected from you, to date, will be destroyed and removed from the study files.
What will happen to the results of the research study: The results of the study can be shared with you on request.
Further information and contact details:
Noelle Hatley. noelle.hatley@stu.mmu.ac.uk or N.Hatley@mmu.ac.uk

b) Consent for Participation in the Study

The researcher requests your consent for participation in a study about fast fashion and sustainability. This consent form asks you to allow the researcher to use your answers and comments to enhance understanding of the topic.

Your survey responses will remain anonymous.

Participation in this study is voluntary. If you decide not to participate, there will not be any negative consequences. Please be aware that if you decide to participate, you may stop participating at any time and you may decide not to answer any specific question.

The researcher will maintain the confidentiality of the research records or data, and all data will be destroyed within six months.

By submitting this form, you are indicating that you have read the description of the study, are over the age of 18, and that you agree to the terms as described.

If you have any questions, or would like a copy of this consent letter, please contact me at noelle.hatley@stu.mmu.ac.uk

Many thanks in advance for your participation!
Noelle

c) Introduction

When you have completed the consent form, please complete this survey about how you buy and use fashion products, and what you know about their origin. Please note that all your answers are confidential and anonymous. The survey should only take a few minutes please answer all questions. Please select 'Finish' when completed. Please note that 'fashion brand' applies to online and shops, and 'sustainability' is used to describe issues that relate to people or the environment. The results from the survey will inform my 'Masters by Research'.

Thank you in anticipation for completing the survey, your help is invaluable.

d) Survey questions

Section A – general information about you.

1) Please select your age bracket.

18-24
25-30
31 or above

2) Which gender do you identify as?

Male
Female
Other

Section B – Fashion and Shopping

3) Please list the three fashion brands that you buy your clothes from, in order of most to least, with the main one first, the second one next and the third at the end.

4) Please indicate in terms of most to least how you shop for fashion, using a 1 for the usual way that you shop, 2 for the next, with any that apply

I go to shops
Social media links to fashion brands
Fashion brand web sites
YouTube
Shopping apps on phone.

5) Which of the following most closely describes how frequently you buy new clothes.

More than once a week
Approximately once a week
Approximately once a month
Less than once a month

6) Which of the following best describes how much you spend on clothes in an average month.

Less than £50
Between £50 - £150
More than £150

7) Do you consider that the price of the clothes you buy are:

Good value
About right
Expensive

8) Please arrange the following reasons for buying new clothes in order of statements that apply to you. Please use 1 to indicate the main reason and 5 for the least.

I need something new for an occasion or night out.
It makes me feel good to have new clothes
I need to have new clothes for posting images on social media
Communication from fashion brands tempt me

9) Please rank your main priorities when buying clothes in order of importance, with 1 being the most important and 5 least important.

Appearance
Price
Fit
Knowing whether they were made sustainably.

10) Excluding staple items such as underwear, coats and jeans, how many times on average do you wear an item of clothing?

Once
Between 2-5
Between 5-10 times
More than 10 times

Section C – Fashion and Sustainability

11) Please describe what 'sustainable fashion' means to you?

12) Please arrange the following in order of statements that apply to you, with the ones that most apply at the top and apply least at the bottom.

I am knowledgeable about news and current affairs
I am not interested in news and current affairs
I live for today and do not worry about tomorrow.
I would describe myself as environmentally responsible
I am concerned about poverty and deprivation in the world

13) Please select which of the following best describes your interest in how your clothes are made.

I am not interested
I am interested, but this does not influence what I buy
I avoid buying from some brands because I am concerned about how the clothes are made
I prefer to buy from brands that tell me how their clothes are made
I only buy from brands that inform me about how their clothes are made

14) Would you be prepared to pay more if you knew that clothes were made without harming the environment or people?

No
Yes, up to 10% more
Yes, between 10-30% more
Yes, I would pay more than 30%

15) Which issue is most likely to motivate your decision to purchase a sustainable product? Please rank with 1 being the most and 5 the least likely.

Treatment of factory workers
Environmental impact
Sustainability initiatives
Treatment of staff

Section D Communication with Fashion Brands

16) Which of the following channels do you use to find out about news and current affairs? Please arrange in order of importance, with the most important at the top and least important at the bottom.

Social media networking sites
You-Tube
Links from social media sites
Online magazines and newspapers
Print magazines and newspapers

17) How frequently do you like to hear from your favourite fashion brands?

More than once a day
Ideally every day
Every 2/3 days
About once a week
I would rather not hear from them

18) What do you most like to hear about from fashion brands? Please arrange in order of importance with the most important at the top and least at the bottom.

Promotions and offers.
Arrival of new styles
Styling suggestions and tips
Information about how the clothes are made.
.

19) How would you like fashion brands to inform you about the sustainability of their clothes? Please rank in order of preference with most preferred at the top and least at the bottom.

I am not interested in knowing how sustainable my clothes are.
Garment labels or swing tickets
Information on web sites or in shops
E-mail or text messages
Social media

20) Have you received or seen any communication from fashion brands about sustainability? If yes, please describe.

Thank you for your time in completing and submitting this survey. Your anonymous responses will be used to analyse fashion consumption and communication with fashion brands, and to explore opportunities to improve the sustainability of the fashion industry.

e) Final Page
Thank you for your time in completing and submitting this survey. Your anonymous responses will be used to analyse fashion consumption and communication with fashion brands, and to explore opportunities to improve the sustainability of the fashion industry.'

End of Appendix 3 – Survey

Appendix 4 Ethics Application

Thank you for visiting the Ethics Online System (EthOS)
The University seeks to lead the sector in ensuring that the decisions we make concerning research ethics align with our values as an institution as well as meeting all regulatory requirements. (Manchester Metropolitan University, Research and Knowledge Exchange Strategy 2017).

EthOS is an important part of our efforts to achieve "beyond compliance" status in research ethics and governance.

All members of staff and students who are about to undertake a project or investigation in the broad area of research are required to use EthOS to determine what form of ethical approval, if any is required. This system will guide you through the process of determining what form of ethical approval is required for your project. The questions within EthOS will be automatically generated based on your previous answers to ensure that only relevant sections are displayed. The RKE Strategy can be found by clicking the following link: http://www2.mmu.ac.uk/rke-strategy/

A1 The University is committed to adhering to the principles of the Concordat for Research Integrity and we expect all staff and students to complete the relevant online training. Have you completed the Manchester Metropolitan University Research Integrity training course?
Yes
No

A2 Health and Safety
Every member of staff and students have a responsibility for their own health, safety, and wellbeing, and those around them who may be affected by their acts and omissions. Have you completed any University Health and Safety training?
Yes
No

A3 Data Protection
The University is responsible for complying with the General Data Protection Regulation whenever personal data is processed. Under the Data Protection Policy, all staff and students have a responsibility to comply with the regulation in their day-to-day activities. The first step you can take to understand these responsibilities is to complete the University's Mandatory Data Protection Training. The Data Protection Training can be accessed from the web page https://www2.mmu.ac.uk/data-protection/. To make sure your knowledge up to date, all staff and students must complete the training annually.
Have you completed the Data Protection Training?
Yes
No

Have you completed relevant training?
Applicant
Page 1 of 13
A4 Applicant Details
Title First Name Surname
Noelle Hatley
Email noelle.hatley@stu.mmu.ac.uk
A4.1 Manchester Metropolitan University ID number
12501592
A5 In what capacity are you carrying out your project? (see information button for guidance)
As a postgraduate research student
A6 Which Faculty is responsible for the project?
Arts and Humanities
A6.1 Which University Centre for Research and Knowledge Exchange (UCRKE) is responsible for the project?
If you are unsure, please select "Not aligned to any Research Centre").
A&H: School of Art Research Centre
A6.2 Is your project in its entirety a literature review?
Yes
No
This is the end of the page
Once you have answered all the questions, please click "Next" or "Navigate" on the sidebar to proceed with the application.

Applicant Status
Project Information
Page 2 of 13
A7 Your Full Project Title is
To establish guidelines for fast fashion businesses that optimise the communication of sustainability to young people
A8 Project Short Title
This is the title by which your project will be known
Optimising fast fashion's sustainability narrative.
A9 Do you propose to commence your data collection within the next 31 days?
Yes
Yes - but I have confirmation from my FHREG to proceed with the application
Yes - but I have ethical approval in place
No
A9.1 What is the proposed start date of your data collection?
29/04/2019
A10 Is there any funding attached to this project?
Yes - I have a Worktribe project ID
No
Yes - but I do not have a Worktribe project ID
This is the end of the page
Once you have answered all the questions, please click "Next" or "Navigate" on the sidebar to proceed with the application.

Does your project require ethical approval?
Page 3 of 13
A11 Please select any statements that apply for your project, relating to previously obtained or required approvals (select all that apply):
You want Manchester Metropolitan University to certificate an existing approval you hold from a recognised body
You need to apply for ethical approval from a particular recognised approving body or are in the process of being reviewed for ethical approval by such a body
You are using ionising radiation as part of your research for medical, biomedical, diagnostic or treatment purposes
You want Manchester Metropolitan University to certificate an existing ethical approval you hold from another University?
You want to submit an amendment to a project which was approved via the Manchester Metropolitan University paper-based process
The project being undertaken within a larger research study for which an application for Manchester Metropolitan University ethical approval has already been submitted
You are a member of staff who is applying to do research involving Manchester Metropolitan University staff and/or students, as part of a research degree/qualification with another Institution.
This is a new application for ethical approval at Manchester Metropolitan University
This is the end of the page
Once you have answered all the questions, please click "Next" or "Navigate" on the sidebar to proceed with the application.

A13 Although it is not possible to provide exhaustive criteria which determine whether or not a proposed project needs ethical review, the following can be used as guidance. Please tick the boxes below for all statements that apply to your project.
The generation of new ideas, images, performances or artefacts. This also applies for projects that are purely conceptual, or consist only of a literature review, or only use fully anonymised human participant data sourced from 3rd parties

Primary data collection from human participants (including, but not limited to interviews, questionnaires, images, artefacts and digital data)
Further analysis of identifiable, pre-existing data obtained from human participants
Privileged access to personal or clinical records
Activities or materials related to terrorism
Observation of human participants or the collection of their data without their consent
Vulnerable individuals (children, adults who lack the capacity to consent or are temporarily vulnerable within the context of the project)
Access to individuals who may pose a safety risk to the researcher
Any form of physical and/or psychological risk, damage or distress to the human participant
Recompense other than reasonable expenses and compensation for time to the human participant
Clinical procedures with human participants
The use of novel techniques, even where apparently non-invasive, whose safety may be open to question with human participants
The ingestion of any substance by human participants, by any means of delivery
The administration of drugs to human participants, by whatever means of delivery
The use of ionising radiation or exposure to radioactive materials
New human tissue samples or other human biological samples
Existing human tissue samples or other human biological samples
The use of equipment which may be a medical device, or is a known medical device, but will be used outside its intended purpose and be tested on human participants
Biological agents or toxins
The design or production of new or substantially improved materials, devices, products or processes
Animals, their tissue or their remains
Plants or plant matter
None of the above
What will your project involve?
Page 4 of 13
This is the end of the page
Once you have answered all the questions, please click "Next" or "Navigate" on the sidebar to proceed with the application.

This section aims to capture the basic project information.
Begin section
B1 Please provide an abstract for your project
The global fashion industry is far from sustainable, despite sector level commitment to United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. Fast fashion particularly, is characterised by constant consumption of low priced on-trend clothes, not designed to last. It is significant that since 2013 the number of garments sold each year has increased whilst the selling price has decreased. Labour intensive garment production and low cost targets have driven garment sourcing to factories located in low wage, low regulation
countries, where long hours are worked in poor conditions often for less than a living wage. Although sustainable brands such as Patagonia are thriving, until mainstream retailers such as H & M prioritise economic over sustainable goals, progress will be limited.

Although millennials, the main consumers of fast fashion, are interested in buying sustainably and paying more for sustainable products, this is not reflected in their fashion purchasing. An absence of sustainable information and greenwashing, (deliberately)
misleading or vague communication that enhances brands sustainable credentials, may contribute to this. Habitual social media users, posting images onto photo sharing platforms such as Instagram and Facebook, requires the wearers to constantly renew their clothes, once seen, garments are unlikely to appear again. This will be considered as part of an analysis of the reasons behind the attitude-behaviour gap between fashion consumption and

sustainability. The need for support in developing sustainable communication is apparent through emergence of organisations such as the Sustainable Lifestyles Frontier Group, which provides guidance on creating an effective sustainability message. This will be used to optimise sustainable communication targeting fast fashion brands and millennial consumers. Critical to the success of improving the fashion industry's sustainability will be framing the guidelines so that fast fashion brands understand that ignoring millennial interest in it, risks losing their custom altogether.

B2 Please provide key words for the project Fast-fashion, sustainability, millennials, communication.

Short Description

Project team details

Page 5 of 13

B3 Supervisor Details

Title First Name Surname

Dr Tasneem Sabir

Organisation MMU

Faculty Arts and Humanities

Telephone 0161 247 2643

Email tasneem.sabir'mmu.ac.uk

B4a Are you the Principal Investigator for the project?

Yes

No

Please enter your details in the Principal Investigator question below

B4 Principal Investigator

Title First Name Surname

Ms Noelle Hatley

Organisation MMU

Faculty Arts and Humanities

Telephone 07808 779507

Email noelle.hatley@stu.mmu.ac.uk

B5 Are other investigators involved in the project?

Yes

No

B6 What is the end date of your project?

31/12/2019

Timescales

Page 6 of 13

B7 Is data collection only taking place on Manchester Metropolitan University sites?

Yes

No

B7.1 Which country will the data collection take place?

United Kingdom

B7.2 Data collection will take place at the following

Public location(s)

Private location(s)

Isolated location(s)

Manchester Metropolitan University approved location(s)

On the internet

B7.3 Do you have or need any special security clearances for this project?

Yes

No

This is the end of the page

Once you have answered all the questions, please click "Next" or "Navigate" on the sidebar to proceed with the application.

Location

This section aims to identify the purpose and design of the project. The information provided should be clear and concise, to allow the reviewer to understand the reasons why and how the project is being done.

Begin section

Purpose and Design of the Project

Page 7 of 13

B8 What is the rationale for your project?

Despite sector commitment to sustainable goals: protecting the environment, greater equality, the fashion industry is contributing to a worsening rather than improving global situation. Garment production is labour intensive; factories are often located in low wage, low regulation countries with inadequate pay and working conditions, whilst in the United Kingdom economic goals have resulted in a decrease in the average price of a garment and increase in the number of garments sold.

Sustainability is a global issue demanding urgent attention. '…today's development needs must not compromise the ability of future generations to meet their own needs'. (Brundtland Report, 1987:16) Its 'call for action' was for global co-operation to achieve socially and environmentally sustainable growth. It also identified the significance of communication. Unless we are able to translate our words into a language that can reach the minds and hearts of people young and old, we shall not be able to undertake the extensive social changes needed to correct the course of development. (Brundtland, 1987:8)

Millennials are the main consumers of fast fashion, whilst they generally prefer to buy sustainable products; there is little explanation of why this does not extend to their fashion consumption. This research will address this gap by examining the motivation behind buying clothes and examining their understanding of any connection between fashion and sustainability.

An analysis of content, style and channels of communication that millennials respond to positively, will be used alongside existing sustainable communication guidelines to create a sustainable message tailored for millennial fashion consumers.

The importance of this research is to create guidelines that encourage mainstream fashion brands to practice and communicate sustainability more effectively. It will also address the impact of the fast fashion continuum on millennials themselves.

Reference

World Commission on Environment and Development 1987 Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development: Our Common Future (Brundtland Report),

B9 What is the aim of your project?

To establish guidelines for fast-fashion businesses that optimise the communication of sustainability to young people

B10 What are your project objectives/questions?

To evaluate fast-fashion consumption and its impact on sustainability.

To examine fast fashion business and communication.

To analyse sustainability communication between fast-fashion brands and millennial consumers.

To develop guidelines to optimise the communication of sustainability to millennials.

B11 Please describe the methodology

Literature review primarily based on current literature including journals and reports.

On-line survey, aiming for minimum 30 and up to 100 responses.

Case studies - fashion brands, analysing stores, web sites and product labelling.
Page 8 of 13
B12 Please describe the methods of data collection
On-line Survey
A survey link will be e mailed to Level 4/5/6 students from within 'Manchester Fashion Institute'. E mail addresses are accessed by me through Moodle 'Manchester Fashion Institute' 'Participants'. Students that I teach (L3) have been removed from the 'Participants' list and will not be contacted.
The survey begins with a Participant Information Sheet, then a Consent Form. The Consent form explains that the survey is completed voluntarily and that they can stop at any point without any negative consequences. Participants are advised that they are consenting by completing the survey. Both documents explain that data collected is confidential and anonymous.
The respondents will be asked to complete 20 questions beginning with general information about age and gender and then how they shop and wear clothes.
They will be asked to select from the following age categories:- 18-24, 25-30, 31 or above. The main focus of the research is on Generation Z - up to 24 years of age. Other age categories will be analysed separately.
Participants are asked to select from the following genders:- Male, Female, Other, to determine any differences between them in shopping and wearing clothes.
There will be quantitative questions such as how frequently they purchase new items and how much they spend on clothes a week or month, and qualitative ones such as what do they know about how their clothes are made.
The findings will not represent young people in the UK as they will all be university students from within the Manchester Fashion Institute at MMU.

The data will be analysed on site at MMU or at my home. data will be stored on a password protected secure MMU lap top, and secure MMU network data storage.

Case Studies
The focus of the case studies is to analyse communication about sustainability between significant (as identified through the survey responses) fast fashion brands and their customers. This may be an online brand such as Boohoo, in which case the analysis will focus on their web site, or a ‘bricks & mortar’ retailer such as H & M where both the web site and stores will be analysed. In all cases analysis of product labelling will also be included. An investigation into how some ‘non’ fast fashion, more sustainable, brands communicate sustainability will provide insight into forming the guidelines for this research. The investigation is to evaluate methods, style and content of brand communication, and will be completed over a period of a several weeks to assess patterns, frequency and trends.

B13 Please describe your methods of data analysis
Quantitative data will be analysed with descriptive statistics using SPSS and qualitative data with thematic analysis using NVIVO.
B14 Please upload your project protocol

Type	Document Name	File Name	Version Date	Version	Size
Project Protocol	Noelle Hatley Final RD1	Noelle Hatley Final RD1.docx	04/07/2018	Final	23.8 KB

This is the end of the page.
Once you have answered all the questions, please click "Next" or "Navigate" on the sidebar to proceed with the application.

Risk
Page 9 of 13
C1 Are there any Health and Safety risks to the researcher and/or human participants?
Yes

No
This is the end of the page
Once you have answered all the questions, please click "Next" or "Navigate" on the sidebar to proceed with the application.

D1 This section aims to identify the access and management of the data within the project.
Begin section
Data Access and Transmission
E1 How do you intend to report and disseminate the results of this project? (Tick all that apply)
Peer reviewed journals
Internal report
Conference presentation
Publication on website
Submission to regulatory authorities
Publication to funder
Access to raw data and right to publish freely by all investigators in the study or by independent Steering committees on behalf of all investigators
No plans to report or disseminate the results
Other
E2 Will you be informing participants of the results?
Yes
No
This is the end of the page
Once you have answered all the questions, please click "Next" or "Navigate" on the sidebar to proceed with the application.

Publication and dissemination
Funding
Page 10 of 13
F1 Has internal funding for the project been secured?
Yes
No
F2 Has external funding for the project been secured?
Yes
No
F2.2 Please indicate why no external funding has been secured?
External funding application to one or more funders in progress
No application for external funding will/has been made
F3 What type of project is this?
Standalone project
Project that is part of a programme grant
Programme that is part of a centre grant
Project that is part of a fellowship/personal award/research training award
Other
This is the end of the page
Once you have answered all the questions, please click "Next" or "Navigate" on the sidebar to proceed with the application.

G1 This section aims identify there are any risks relating to insurance and indemnity.
Begin section
G2 Will you be travelling outside the UK as part of this project?
Yes
No
Insurance and Indemnity

Techniques, Testing and Interventions
Page 11 of 13
G3 Does your project involve any of the following techniques, tests or interventions (Please tick all that apply):
Physically invasive techniques
Ingestion of food stuffs or drugs
Physical testing
Psychological intervention
None of the above
G4 Are you working with a medical device manufacturer and/or a clinician to develop the product for commercialisation?
Working with Hepatitis, Human T-Cell Lymphotropic Virus Type iii (HTLV iii), or Lymphadenopathy Associated Virus (LAV) or
the mutants, derivatives or variations thereof or other viruses such as Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) or any syndrome
or condition of a similar kind
Working with Transmissible Spongiform Encephalopathy (TSE), Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease (CJD), variant Creutzfeldt-Jakob
Disease (vCJD) or new variant Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease (nvCJD)
Working in hazardous areas
Working with hazardous substances outside of a controlled environment
Working with persons with a known history of violence, substance abuse or a criminal record
None of the above
G5 I confirm that if Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) clearing is required for my project, this will be obtained before the commencement of data collection.
Yes
No
Not Applicable
G6 Will the project be conducted in line with a specific licence?
Yes
No
This is the end of the page.
Once you have answered all the questions, please click "Next" or "Navigate" on the sidebar to proceed with the application.

Other Hazards and Additional Information
This section allows you to include any further information, sign and submit the application for review
Begin section
Additional Information
Page 12 of 13
L1 Do you have any additional information or comments which have not been covered in the form?
Yes
No
L2 Do you have any additional documentation or forms which you would like to upload in support of your application?
Yes
No
L2.1 Please upload any additional documentation here
Type Document Name File Name
Version
Date Version Size
Additional

Documentation
17th april 19 - survey questions 1 17th april 19 - survey questions 1.docx 18/04/2019 2
26.8
KB
Additional
Documentation
NH Participant Information Sheet April 2
2019
NH Participant Information Sheet April 2
2019.docx
18/04/2019 1
14.1
KB
Additional
Documentation
Informed Consent for online survey Informed Consent for online survey.docx 18/04/2019 2
12.5
KB
This is the end the page.
Once you have answered all the questions, please click "Next" or "Navigate" on the sidebar to proceed with the application.

M1 Please notify your supervisor that this application is complete and ready to be submitted by clicking "Request" below. This application will not be processed until your supervisor has provided their signature - it is your responsibility to ensure that they
do this.
M3 By signing this application you are confirming that all details included in the form have been completed accurately and truthfully.
Declaration
Page 13 of 13
End of Appendix 4.

Appendix 5 - E mail re Ethics Approval – Susan Baines

From: Susan Baines <S.Baines@mmu.ac.uk>
Sent: 28 November 2019 13:33
To: Noelle Hatley <N.Hatley@mmu.ac.uk>
Cc: artsandhumanitiesethics <artsandhumanitiesethics@mmu.ac.uk>; Anne-Marie Walsh <A.Walsh@mmu.ac.uk>
Subject: RE: URGENT Ethics approval still outstanding
'Dear Noelle
Ann-Marie has forwarded to me your email below. Unfortunately, you appear to have been misinformed. You do not have ethical approval. However, in my opinion, although it is impossible to grant approval at this stage, it would not be fair or proportionate to disallow use of anonymous questionnaire data in this highly exceptional case. The reasons are detailed below. I advise you to print off this email and append it to your dissertation.
The application you submitted to EthOS in September 2019 was desk-checked and returned because it gave a start date in the past and retrospective approval is not possible. As I understand it, you spoke to Ann-Marie about this on the 1st October 2019 and she told you that data collected without ethical approval cannot normally be counted towards a degree award. She contacted the university's central Research Ethics & Governance team on your behalf for guidance. They were fully appraised of the situation and advised that it should be resolved at faculty level. As Faculty Head of Research Ethics & Governance, I therefore carefully reviewed all the information

supplied by you in an email letter of 9/10/2019 with nine appendices, plus comments from Ann-Marie and the research officer responsible for ethics in the faculty. I concluded that the evidence supports your claim to have acted in good faith, and your misapprehension that you had gone through the processes necessary for approval was not entirely unreasonable given several factors, most notably an error on the part of Faculty Research Ethics and Governance Committee back in July 2018. Moreover, your actions did not result in harm to participants, damage to the reputation of the university, or non-compliance with GDPR. For the purpose of an audit trail, my reasoning in more detail is as follows.
Incorrect information to the effect that a survey-based project "does not require full ethical review" was included in the July 2018 review of your original EthOS application. You underlined this in an attachment (Appendix 3). Since EthOS was introduced all applications require full ethical review. It is not clear why the FREGC reviewer made this mistake but it is true that under the old paper-based system a survey of this type would have been signed off, on the basis of a checklist without the need for a full application. In July 201, the former process had not long been superseded. Understandably, you relied on this information.
You believed you resubmitted your original application on 18.04.19 with a revised data collection start date 29.04.19. If this had actually gone into the EthOS system, the research officer would have done a desk check and returned it immediately with instructions to change to a date at least 31 days after application. She would also have spelled out that under no circumstances should data collection start before approval. This did not happen because the application was not properly submitted. I am not entirely clear why this was so but recognise that there are currently no alerts in EthOS for started but un-submitted applications or changes that do not result in resubmissions.
Although ethics and RD1 were officially 'decoupled' in 2017, the wording in Skillsforge did not clearly reflect this at the time of your RD1. One scrutineer correctly declined to answer the question about ethics, which (although redundant) still appeared on the RD1A form. The other scrutineer ticked the box confirming that no ethical issues were raised, as you point out in the timeline.
Finally, comments in your letter and timeline about GDPR are not correct. However, they are not relevant as the survey in question was anonymous with no way of identifying respondents, either through information they were asked to supply or by linking with other data sources.
In the circumstances, my opinion is that it would be unfair to impose a negative impact on the student by requiring data collection to be repeated. I have not come to this view lightly, as FREGC adheres strongly to the principle that all research must go through EthOS for approval. However, I am persuaded that this case is highly exceptional for several reasons detailed in this email.
Sue Baines

Chair of Faculty Research Ethics and Governance Committee, Arts & Humanities

T +44 (0)161 247 2511

Appendix 6 - E mail re ethics Approval Steve Miles

From: Steve Miles <S.Miles@mmu.ac.uk>
Sent: 06 December 2019 15:22
To: Tasneem Sabir <tasneem.sabir@mmu.ac.uk>
Subject: Re: URGENT Ethics approval still outstanding - Noelle Hatley

HI Tas,

In my view, despite Sue's somewhat non-comital response Noelle can now continue as planned. As Chair of FRDC I interpret the email below as indicating that under the circumstances no additional ethical approval is required. If any further issues arise please come back to me. Is all OK on this basis?

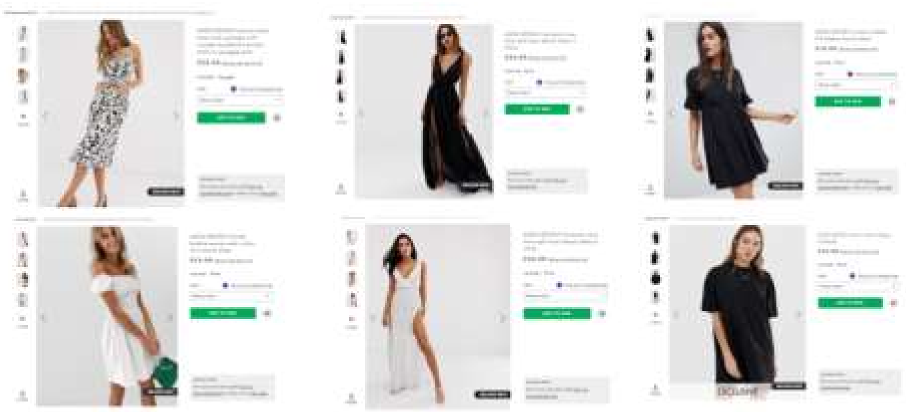
Regards,

Steve

Appendix 7 – Web site data collection – example

ASOS web site 14.07.19

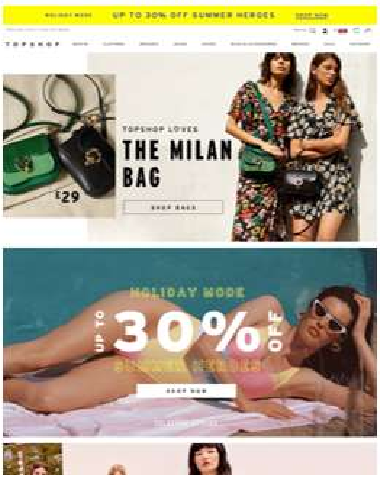
Checked the first 12 items from the Responsible Edit – Sustainable Fabrics, none of the descriptions included any sustainable credentials!
ASOS appear to believe that the following product categories are 'Sustainable';- Unisex, ASOS - TALL, CURVE, PETITE, MATERNITY.



Topshop website - 14.07.19

Comments
It's all about selling– themes including price discounts, trends, featured products & 'Shop now pay later, Interest free'. About having stuff even if you haven't got the money right now, about discounting to encourage buying, and about things you must have to be on trend.
The 4 shots are what are visible by scrolling down from the home page (see next page)

1 - top



2

Zara web site 14.07.19

196 Join Life Womens products

The latest sustainability report available is from 2017
I set up a 'Chat' from their web site to ask when 2018 was available

I am sorry for Zara sustainability report 2018 is not available. For further information please refer to https://www.inditex.com/en/contact/customer-contacts

Unfortunately, I don't have the information available. We strongly suggest that you sign up for our Newsletter so that you may be alerted for our upcoming bi-annual season sales event.07:20

If you want to know more about our long-term commitment, click here

Subsequently sent an e mail asking the same question ...

Appendix 8 – Shop data collection - example

Example of retailers extending their offer by adding experiences targeting young people

Topshop Trafford Centre – 10.07.19

Approx. 30%-40% of stock on sale.

Topshop Boutique range, some garments made in the UK, but no marketing about it being sustainable – lost opportunity?

Comments
- POS focussing on discounts (students) & the Sale, expediency of getting product (order now, arrive tomorrow), buying now (last chance) & encouraging gift card buying.
- Staff advised that they had no sustainable products (even organic cotton) or garment recycling, which was confirmed by looking at garments in store.

Zara Trafford Centre – 10.07.19

Approx. 70% of the stock was on Sale

Other than Sale signs & prices, the only other POS seen was this very small 'New Collection'

Example of reverse of Join Life ticket.

Web site information.

CROPPED SWEATSHIRT WITH SLOGAN Details
9.99 GBP5.99 GBP
Cropped sweatshirt with a round neckline and long sleeves. Featuring a slogan print on the front and a seamless hem.
JOIN LIFE
Care for fiber: At least 65% ecologically grown cotton. Ecologically grown cotton is grown using practices that help us protect biodiversity, such as crop rotation and the use of natural fertilisers.

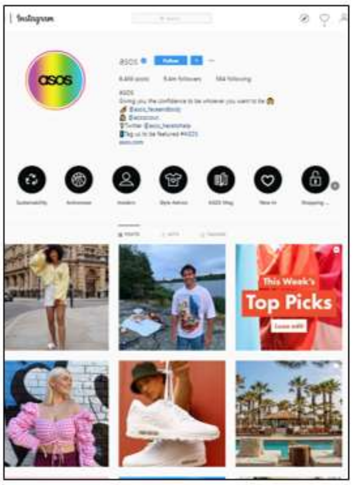
Comments
Neither the store manager or another member of staff were aware of any products that were 'sustainable'. When I mentioned 'organic cotton' they referred me to the products with the Join Life swing tickets, specifically T shirts, although I also found sweatshirts – see info from web site.
3 different staff members were unaware of the opportunity for customers to '…bring back clothes that they no longer wear, and put them in the containers in the store..' as claimed on their web site. No containers found.

Appendix 9 – Instagram Data Collection - example

ASOS on Instagram 17.07.19

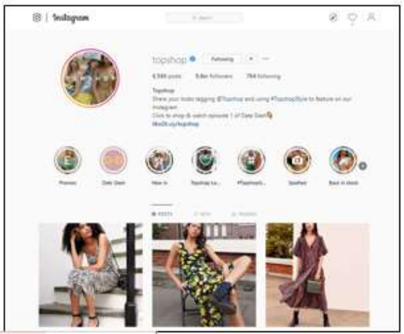
Comments
6 new posts in 1 day
The information from the Sustainability remains unchanged from the beginning of the data collection period.
Number of Likes range from 6k – 11k, but the Top Picks got 170K.

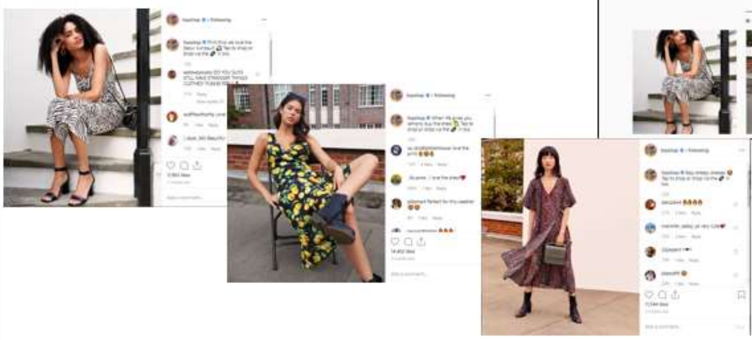
This weeks 'Top Picks post –
Zara – 'This Week's Top Picks from ASOS DESIGN Luxe with @courtneybethjackson'
Customer comment – 'Why is it ALL plastic ☹ This is how micro plastic gets I to the oceans: We wash our ASOS and co polyester clothing and the particles get into the water circle. They also get into your tab water that way. Sry for that but brands do have responsibilities'



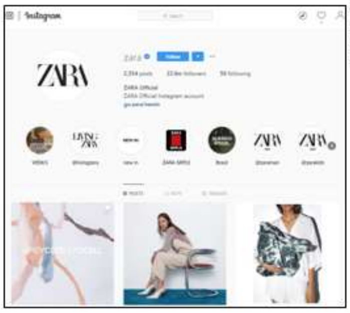
Topshop on Instagram 17.07.19

Comments
Topshop are following 764 others.
3 new posts in 1 day
Jumpsuit nearly 12k likes in 15 hours
Lemon print dress, 14.4k likes in 19 hours
Wrap print dress , 11.5k likes in 23 hours
No controversial or sustainable comments.





Zara on Instagram 17.07.19



Comments
1 New post in 1 day
Post is about Lycocell
21.5k likes in 19 hours
Zara are following 59 others

Comments from Upcycled Lyocell post
Zara comment – 'Working on circularity. We are working with our suppliers to create a circular system that will enable us to recover textile waste and cuttings from our own production and begin to use it to manufacture new garments. #joinlife'
5 customer responses

1. 'Guys please say No to fast fashion, please care about animals , plants and in general the environment , our planet without them will be so boring and horrible ☹ Zara and other fast fashion brands use lots of toxic materials that pollute the rivers , seas , forests and the air , many species effect such bees we humans must not be so selfish this planet is not just for us'
2. 'Great ! Now what about working conditions for people who sew your clothes ?!'
3. 'I know this will get lost in the comments but I've been posting animal facts everyday for over 200 days!🐱□□🐼'
4. 'Very good decision to make use of your own garment waste! 👗😊@zara
5. 'Ok, but why didn't you do this years ago????'

Using the arrow you can navigate to a product made from Lyocell

Appendix 10 – Spanish Inditex Join Life information

REQUISITOS Join Life

I2020

INDITEX

CARE FOR FIBER

CARE FOR WATER

CARE FOR PLANET TEXTIL

Appendix 11 – List of Organisations relating to Sustainability

Action Collaboration and Transformation. ACT - is an initiative between international brands & retailers and trade unions to address the issue of living wages in the textile and garment sector. http://www.ethicaltrade.org/act-initiative-living-wages
As You Sow - To promote environmental and social corporate responsibility through shareholder advocacy, coalition building, and innovative legal strategies.http://www.asyousow.org/about-us/
Better Cotton Index - exists to make global cotton production better for the people who produce it, better for the environment it grows in and better for the sector's future, by developing Better Cotton as a sustainable mainstream commodity. http://bettercotton.org/
Better Factories Cambodia – 'Since 2001, BFC has pioneered a project aimed at lifting Cambodians out of poverty by facilitating competitive advantages for the nation's biggest formal employer, the garment sector. Our rigorous monitoring and reporting have earned us international recognition as a neutral, independent assessor of factories, guided by the idea that improving working conditions engenders economic benefits and progress for everyone.' http://betterfactories.org/?page_id=979
Better Work -a partnership between the UNs' International Labour Organization and the International Finance Corporation, a member of the World Bank Group, Better Work brings diverse groups together – governments, global brands, factory owners, and unions and workers – to improve working conditions in the garment industry and make the sector more competitive. http://betterwork.org/
Business and Human Rights Resource Centre BHRRC – 'We work with everyone to advance human rights in business and eradicate abuse.' https://www.business-humanrights.org/en/about-us
Canopy works to protect the world's forests, species and climate by collaborating with business leaders, scientists and decision makers to help create sustainable supply chains and foster innovative solutions to environmental challenges. https://canopyplanet.org/
Carbon Disclosure Project (CDP) – runs the global disclosure system that enables companies and regions to measure and manage their environmental impacts. https://www.cdp.net/en
C2C-Centre the gateway for Cradle-to-Cradle knowledge, expertise and professionals. http://www.c2c-centre.com/news
China Labour bulletin '*Supporting the Workers' Movement in China' http://www.clb.org.hk/*
Cividep - India attempts to empower workers and communities and to ensure that businesses comply with human and labour rights and environmental standards. With this objective, we

educate workers, study effects of corporate conduct, dialogue with various stakeholders and advocate for policy change. http://www.cividep.org/
Clean Clothes Campaign - an international alliance that works to improve conditions and support the empowerment of workers in the global garment industry. https://cleanclothes.org/
Corporate Human Rights Benchmark (CHRB) - assesses 98 of the largest publicly traded companies in the world on 100 human rights indicators. https://www.corporatebenchmark.org/
Digital RMG Factory Mapping in Bangladesh – 'Field workers from BRAC University will visit every factory in Bangladesh over the next year to plot them on a map and collect the data. Verification will be crowdsourced from the public to ensure the information remains up to date and accurate.' https://www.drapersonline.com/news/all-bangladeshi-clothing-factories-to-be-mapped/7024865.article
Ellen Macarthur Foundation – 'Inspiring learners to re-think the future through the circular economy framework' https://www.ellenmacarthurfoundation.org/about
Ethical Consumer http://www.ethicalconsumer.org/buyersguides/clothing/sportswear.aspx
Ethical Trading Initiative (ETI) 'Our member companies, trade unions and voluntary organisations work together to tackle the many complex questions about what steps companies should take to trade ethically, and how to make a positive difference to workers' lives.' http://www.ethicaltrade.org/about-eti/what-we-do
Eco Age - is an ideas consultancy, which powerfully aggregates global thought leaders and influencers to address the compelling issues and opportunities of our day by delivering solutions, through ethical and sustainable values. http://eco-age.com/
Fair Labour Association (FLA) - is a collaborative effort of universities, civil society organizations and socially responsible companies dedicated to protecting workers' rights around the world. www.fairlabor.org/
Fair Wear Foundation - works with brands and industry influencers to improve working conditions where your clothing is made. https://www.fairwear.org/
Fashion Revolution – 'We believe in a fashion industry that values people, the environment, creativity and profit in equal measure.' http://fashionrevolution.org/about/
FTSE4Good - global index leader, committed to working with our clients to create the benchmarking, analytics and data solutions that they need to give them a precise view of the market relevant to their investment process. Choosing the right index partner has never been more important. FTSE Russell indexes are trusted by investors in every corner of the world to measure and benchmark markets across asset classes, styles or strategies.' http://www.ftse.com/products/indices/ftse4good
Follow the Thread - The Need For Supply Chain Transparency in The Garment and Footwear industry.
https://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/report_pdf/wrdtransparency0417_brochure_web_spreads_3.pdf
Garments without guilt – 'We make garments with conscience and care. By protecting worker's rights, creating opportunities for education and personal growth, and helping to alleviate poverty in our communities, Sri Lanka Apparel does business with integrity and helps create a more equitable society.' http://archive.gwg.garmentswithoutguilt.com/
Good on you – 'Good on people, the planet and animals. Good on you.' A directory of ethical brands. https://goodonyou.eco/
Global Data - mission is to help clients decode the future to be more successful and innovative. https://consumer-globaldata-com.ezproxy.mmu.ac.uk/HomePage
Global Organic Textile Standard - defines requirements to ensure ***organic*** status of ***textiles***, from harvesting of the raw materials, through environmentally and socially responsible manufacturing up to labelling in order to provide a credible assurance to the end consumer. https://www.global-standard.org/
Global Recycle Standard GRS – an international, voluntary, full product standard that sets requirements for third-party certification of recycled content, chain of custody, social and environmental practices and chemical restrictions. https://certifications.controlunion.com/en/certification-programs/certification-programs/grs-global-recycle-standard
Homeworkers Worldwide - works to support homeworkers and their organisations in their struggle for rights and respect. http://www.homeworkersww.org.uk/about
IISD International Institute for Sustainable Development - is an independent think tank championing sustainable solutions to 21st century problems. Our mission is to promote human development and environmental sustainability. http://www.iisd.org/topic/sustainable-development.
Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility (ICCR) our engagements are framed within a human rights construct. Whether the issue is direct deposit advances, increased disclosure

of lobbying expenditures or the preparation of a climate risk assessment, at the end it is the impact on people, usually economically vulnerable people, who inspire us to act. http://www.iccr.org/

IndustriALL - Our mission is to build trade union power and to defend workers' rights in our sectors. Strong democratic unions are essential to social equality and democracy**.** www.industriall-union.org/

INNO (China) - as a non-profit organisation, is an advocate and driver of innovative community development projects. We aim at bringing actual improvements and promotions to communities by implementing our creative systems and solutions. http://www.inno-cn.cn/En/index.html

Institute for Global Labour and Human Rights - is a non-profit 501(c)(3) human rights organization dedicated to the promotion and defense of internationally recognized worker rights in the global economy. http://www.globallabourrights.org/

International Labour Organisation – (ILO) is devoted to promoting social justice and internationally recognized human and labour rights, pursuing its founding mission that social justice is essential to universal and lasting peace. http://ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/mission-and-objectives/lang--en/index.htm

Labour behind the Label - is a campaign that works to improve conditions and empower workers in the global garment industry. http://labourbehindthelabel.org/who-we-are/

Nielson - is a global measurement and data analytics company that provides the most complete and trusted view available of consumers and markets worldwide. http://www.nielsen.com/uk/en.html

OTB (Only the Brave) **foundation** - mission is to rebalance social inequality and contribute to the sustainable development of less advantaged areas and people throughout the world http://www.otbfoundation.org/who-we-are/

Project Just - With no information, consumers continue to buy fast fashion; incentives stay misaligned; more fast fashion is made; abuses continue. Informed and empowered consumers have the power to transform the fashion industry to an ethical and sustainable one with each purchase.' https://projectjust.com/shopsmarter/

Rank a Brand – is an independent and reliable brand-comparison website that assesses and ranks consumer brands in several sectors on sustainability and social responsibility. Our rankings and assessments are fully transparent. https://rankabrand.org/

The Ethical Fashion Forum (Source) - The Global Platform for Sustainable Fashion http://www.ethicalfashionforum.com/About-the-SOURCE-platform

The Higg Index - the result of unparalleled collaboration, enables transparency for our industry. http://apparelcoalition.org/the-higg-index/

Sustainable Apparel Coalition – their vision is of an apparel, footwear, and home textiles industry that produces no unnecessary environmental harm and has a positive impact on the people and communities associated with its activities (The Higg index) http://apparelcoalition.org/

Sustainable Brands is to empower more brands to prosper by leading the way to a better world. http://www.sustainablebrands.com/

Sustainable Clothing Action Plan SCAP – 'the SCAP 2020 Commitment sees leading organisations from across clothing sector – supply, re-use and recycling – working together to reduce the environmental footprint of clothing.' http://www.wrap.org.uk/content/scap-2020-commitment

Sustainable Society Index - insight in the level of sustainability of your own country as well as of all 154 countries included in the Sustainable Society Index, SSI. http://www.ssfindex.com/

The Accord on Fire and Building Safety in Bangladesh (the Accord) - was signed on May 15th 2013. It is a five year independent, legally binding agreement between global brands and retailers and trade unions designed to build a safe and healthy Bangladeshi Ready Made Garment (RMG) Industry. The agreement was created in the immediate aftermath of the Rana Plaza building collapse. http://bangladeshaccord.org/about/

The Asia floor wage alliance - An international alliance of trade unions and labour-rights activists who are working together to demand garment workers in Asia are paid a living wage. Launched by the Ethical Fashion Forum launched the SOURCE, a ground breaking social enterprise set to transform livelihoods for 2.5 million people in the developing world and significantly reduce the environmental impact of the fashion industry.'http://asia.floorwage.org/

The Fashion Transparency Index - reviews and ranks 100 of the biggest global fashion and apparel brands and retailers according to how much information they disclose about their suppliers, supply chain policies and practices, and social and environmental impact.http://fashionrevolution.org/faqs-fashion-transparency-index-2017/

Trusted Clothes 'Welcome to the world of conscious consumers, fair trade, organic fibres, and all the hard work that goes into changing an entire industry, together.'https://www.trustedclothes.com/AboutUs.shtml
War on Want - is a movement of people who are committed to global justice.http://www.waronwant.org/what-we-do
World Fair Trade Organisation - is a global network of organisations representing the Fair Trade supply chain. Provides Fair Trade organisations with credibility and identity by way of an international guarantee system, a place of learning where members connect with like-minded people from around the world, tools and training to increase market access, and a common voice that speaks out for Fair Trade and trade justice - and is heard. http://wfto.com/
WRAP – Works with governments, businesses and communities to deliver practical solutions to improve resource efficiency. Our mission is to accelerate the move to a sustainable, resource-efficient economy..'http://www.wrap.org.uk/about-us/about
Zero Discharge of Hazardous Chemicals Programme (ZDHC) - Zero Discharge of Hazardous Chemicals Programme (ZDHC)https://www.cattermoleconsulting.com/what-is-the-zero-discharge-of-hazardous-chemicals-zdhc-program/