



# **A Study of the Impact of Sustainability Marketing on Consumer Attitude Towards Fast Fashion**

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## **Abstract**

Sustainable development is a growing concern in today's globalised world and the fashion industry is often pointed out as one of the main culprits of the environmental and social issues faced. Many companies want to take this increasing interest into account by considering the sustainable dimension of their products. To do so, new methods are being implemented, notably through marketing practices. This study aims to determine how sustainability marketing can have an impact on consumer attitude towards fast fashion. Specifically, it investigates whether the awareness of sustainability marketing has an impact on people's propensity to buy fast fashion.

To test the hypothesis that high awareness of sustainability marketing leads to a decrease in fast fashion purchasing, an online self-administered survey was delivered using Google Form tool. A total of 160 responses has been received. Respondents have been asked to answer 26 questions including demographic matters, fast fashion consumption pattern, sustainability marketing awareness and sustainable fashion consumption. SPSS statistical package version 26 has been used to test the hypotheses of this research.

These results suggest that there is a statistically significant relationship between the awareness of the environmental and social impact of the fast fashion industry and consumer attitude towards fast fashion.

**Keywords:** sustainability marketing, sustainable development, fast fashion, sustainability awareness, sustainability, overconsumption, sustainable fashion

## Submission of Thesis and Dissertation

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Lastly, I would like to dedicate this thesis and offer my special thanks to my mother, my grandparents, and my boyfriend for their unfailing support. Their love and encouragement force me to always give my best to make them proud.

## **Dedication**

This dissertation is dedicated in memory of my late father, Jean-Marc Poli-Lasalle and grand-father, Pascal Ndjave.

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## **Chapter 1: Introduction**

### **1.1 Introduction**

This chapter will serve as an introduction of the following research study. The topic of the research and the area of research will be discussed, and a background of the main concepts will be provided. This chapter will also include the rationale for choosing this subject. Finally, this introductory chapter will be concluded with an outline of the dissertation which will give an overview of the overall structure of this paper.

### **1.2 Background**

The concept of fast fashion, which has been introduced over the past few years, has been widely adopted since to become a new trend for most consumers. Fast fashion is in line with today's fast changing world where people are accustomed to get everything quicker than ever and at the lowest possible price. Fast fashion also reflects consumer's desire to consume more for a shorter period of time, which explains the pace at which new items are released several times a month for famous retailers such as Zara, H&M, TopShop or Forever 21 (Gwozdz, Nielsen and Müller, 2017). As a result, this concept is now often called into question because of its practices that conflict the 'green movement'.

Indeed, over the last few years, there has been an increase in interest in green concept and sustainability because of growing concern regarding environmental issues. This has given rise to the democratization of new marketing methods in line with consumer's new expectations in terms of sustainability. This is one of the reasons why we hear a lot about green marketing nowadays.

Green marketing is the type of marketing focused on products that are environmentally and socially responsible. The main purpose of green marketing is to create a link between the consumers, the companies and the social and environmental concerns that are gaining ground in global interest.



### 1.3 Rationale

The idea of sustainability marketing practices has been the ideal topic for many researchers these last few years as a result of a growing interest in the importance of the concept of sustainability in today's society.

It is evident that previous researchers tried to understand the impact that sustainability can have on consumer purchase intention towards green products at large. However, the literature suggests that there has been little research on the relationship between consumers' awareness of sustainability marketing and their attitude towards fast fashion presents a significant gap in the literature. Therefore, the main purpose of this study is to investigate this gap by focusing on the role that sustainability marketing plays in consumer decision-making in purchasing from fast fashion brands.

Nowadays, consumers are surrounded by the business practices of the fast fashion industry which has grown into a norm for most fashion consumers. This mode of consumption has become so common and popular that for a long time, its harmful effects have been overlooked and ignored in favour of the few benefits that this industry brings.

The growth in interest in sustainability issues and the responsibility of fast fashion on several issues which is becoming increasingly known to the public, make them a subject that is more and more in demand for further investigation.

The relationship between sustainability marketing and fast fashion is often considered as challenging due to the notion of sustainability which perception is totally opposite to the values that the fast fashion industry conveys (Liu, Napier, Runfola and Cavusgil, 2020; Grazzini, Acuti and Aiello, 2021).

#### 1.4 Dissertation outline

This study is divided into seven chapters which a brief explanation of each follow:

- *Chapter 1:* Offers a brief introduction along with the background of the study and the importance of this research work. This chapter will also outline the key terms used in this research.
- *Chapter 2:* Divided into five main parts, this chapter consists of a review of all existing and relevant literature along with an analysis of previous studies that have been conducted about the key objectives and concepts investigated throughout this research study. The first part discusses the business model which is fast fashion, the second part focuses on the environmental and social impacts of this business model, the third part is concentrated on the development of sustainability awareness, the fourth part emphasises on the notion of sustainability marketing, and the last part deals with the sustainable fashion consumption idea.
- *Chapter 3:* Introduces the research aims and objectives and displays the research questions and corresponding hypotheses suggested to be examined in the research methodology chapter.
- *Chapter 4:* Provides a justification about the research methodology utilised in the study to answer the research question as well as an analysis of the data collection process and research instruments adopted. A brief description on the analysis technique used in this study (SPSS) is provided.
- *Chapter 5:* Focuses on an in-depth analysis of the data collected and discusses the findings identified as a result of this analysis. The results of the pilot study will also be provided in this section. The hypotheses previously proposed in Chapter 3 will be tested and examined.

- *Chapter 6:* Proposes a discussion followed by an evaluation of the hypotheses suggested.
- *Chapter 7:* Concludes the research study and provides the limitations of the study. Recommendations for future research will also be offered.

## **Chapter 2: Literature Review**

### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter will provide an investigation of the existing literature with a specific focus on the relationship between sustainability and fast fashion. This research project seeks to answer the following research question: *Does the awareness of sustainability marketing decrease people's propensity to buy fast fashion?*

The fashion industry has undergone many innovations and technological developments since the Industrial Revolution in the 18<sup>th</sup> century (Gaynor, Greenwood and Ho, 2013). The democratisation of fast fashion and its unique business model focused on rapid inventory turnover, low-quality, low prices, and short product life cycle (Byun and Sternquist, 2011) have changed people's way of consuming fashion and have encouraged global overconsumption and impulse purchases. However, this dazzling success hides many aspects, notably in social and environmental matters as well as business activities, including marketing practices, are the most cited culprit (Bridges and Wilhelm, 2008).

The exposure of these issues in the media around the world over the last few years has led to a significant public reaction and consumers are increasingly aware of the detrimental impact of their consumption patterns. Consequently, businesses and more specifically, fast fashion brands have started developing new ways of consumption with the emergence of ranges of sustainable fashion items and promoting these new practices using sustainability marketing methods (Kapoor, 2020).

According to Riley (1997), the literature review is a significant part of every research project and is an analysis of available articles, books, and journals that are relevant to researchers for their own research interests. The literature review allows the researcher to identify any gap that might be addressed and provides a background on the research topic.

Firstly, the concept of fast fashion will be discussed. Secondly, the review will be focused on the environmental and social issues caused by the fashion industry at large. Thirdly, the sustainability awareness will be observed. Fourthly, the notion of sustainability marketing will be argued, before ending this chapter by talking about the sustainable fashion consumption alternatives.

Last of all, in respect of the newness of the topic of this research, the majority of the articles that will be referred to in this chapter are intended to be as up to date as possible so that the information gathered allows the researcher to put forwards the most recent and current facts.

## 2.2 Fast fashion

The rise of fast fashion as a new trend has changed our way of thinking about and consuming apparel products over the decades (Knošková and Garasová, 2019; McNeill and Moore, 2015; Stringer, Mortimer and Payne, 2020) and has become the normality for most people. Consumers are now accustomed to consuming lower quality clothes at a cheapest price (Stringer *et al.*, 2020). Fast fashion is inciting consumers to move towards the purchase of little perceived value items with small economic and psychological investments required (Stringer *et al.*, 2020). This new way of consumption has been widely criticized (Moon and Lee, 2018) due to the social, economic, and environmental issues that this pattern implies, calling the growing success of fast fashion into question. Indeed, even though the fashion industry is worth \$3 trillion, accounting for 2% of the world's Gross Domestic Product (Grazzini *et al.*, 2021), the industry is particularly known to be the second largest polluter following the oil industry (Stringer *et al.*,

2020; Garcia-Torres, Rey-Garcia and Albareda-Vivo, 2017; Swara, 2019; Neumann, Martinez and Martinez, 2020).

Nowadays, fashion has become a way for people to express themselves and their personalities through their clothing style and the clothes they wear. Fashion products seems to be a part of people's identity and we can assume that this is related to the fact that clothing is always visible by everyone and can be considered as a 'second skin' which provides details of one's true self (Gaynor *et al.*, 2013). In the same way, fashion offers the possibility of creating an ideal identity and has a stronger symbolic value than ever before (Neumann *et al.*, 2020).

Over the past few decades, the purpose of shopping has shifted to become a form of entertainment for consumers (Knošková *et al.*, 2019). Until the mid-20th century, the fashion consumption was operating based on seasonal changes (Sharma, 2020) but this is not the case anymore; the fashion consumption today is now operating on the basis of overconsumption and buying more clothes than ever, for less money than ever before. Nowadays, buying cheap clothes is a kind of a lifestyle, to which we do not give the same meaning anymore. As a result, people own an increasing amount of apparel products without even having the chance to wear or use them all (Knošková *et al.*, 2019). According to Lang, Armstrong and Brannon (2013), some research suggested that the intensification of fashion consumption combined with low prices offered by fast fashion brands would encourage and promote premature and more frequent disposal (Grazzini *et al.*, 2021), highlighting the undeniable association between fast fashion and the rise of textile waste (Morgan and Birtwistle, 2009).

Indeed, fast fashion gives consumers the opportunity to go shopping more regularly (Gaynor *et al.*, 2013) while having the possibility to find new products and the advent of micro seasons virtually every week (Knošková *et al.*, 2020; Sharma, 2020; Barnes and Lea-Greenwood, 2006) which increases consumers' demand for accelerated cycles of fashion and products turnover by relying and focusing on the idea of 'Here Today, Gone Tomorrow' (Lang *et al.*, 2013). This signal sent by fast fashion retailers encourages consumers to grab as many items as possible and keep them on hand

throughout the shopping session as if they were going to vanish into thin air. This contributes to the phenomenon of 'in-store hoarding' introduced by Byun and Sternquist (2008) which itself participates in the normalisation of compulsive buying and overconsumption and urge consumers to take immediate action without involving too much thinking (Byun *et al.*, 2011).

Fast fashion and its business model are very representative of the world we live in today, almost to the point of becoming a synonym for fashion in the broadest meaning of the word (Hall, 2018). In a globalized world driven by new technologies, the use of internet and faster and easier communication around the world than ever before, society today is used to immediate gratification and people always want to get things faster and faster in every aspect of their lives (Sharma, 2020), and consumption is no exception. This craze for immediacy has led to an increase in impulse buying (Blasi *et al.*, 2020; Morgan *et al.*, 2009) and the fashion industry has responded to this growing demand by accelerating production rate and lowering costs as much as possible (Sharma, 2020). However, this race to the bottom forces fast fashion companies to manufacture their products in countries with lower environmental awareness and looser regulatory systems at the expense of sustainability (Liu *et al.*, 2020).

The success of the fast fashion business model is mainly based on rapid manufacturing. This rapid manufacturing is not without consequences and implies the extensive use of unsustainable production techniques (McNeill *et al.*, 2015; Liu *et al.*, 2020) and unethical workforce management which are seen as the antithesis of the concept of sustainability (Liu *et al.*, 2020; Grazzini *et al.*, 2021). Consequently, the fast fashion industry is becoming more and more controversial and problematic, and the growing interest in sustainability and fair trade only reinforces scepticism around the practices of fast fashion and its future. In addition to this, the fast fashion business model combines several specific elements that make it distinctive: quick responses to consumer demand, short product-life cycle (PLC) due to increased availability and affordability of fashion, fast supply chain, frequent assortment changes, and fashionable designs at affordable prices (Knošková *et al.*, 2019; Garcia-Torres *et al.*,

2017; Jain, 2019). To be more specific, some studies have emphasized the importance of the supply chain for fast fashion brands' success: the use of 'Just-in-Time' concept allow the companies to have a faster retail turnover (Clark, 2008), reduce costs and increase efficiency. De Klerk *et al.* (2019) define this process as the ability for the companies to align consumers demand in time 'without carrying up front supply chain inventory'.

In line with McNeill *et al.* (2015)'s research, it has been highlighted that young female consumers are the most inclined to purchase fast fashion items on a regular basis. This observation has been supported by Knošková *et al.* (2019): 'This phenomenon is particularly noticeable among young female consumers'. Indeed, according to McNeill *et al.* (2015), this segment of customers would have little awareness of the impact of their consumption and high level of demand for new fashion items. Furthermore, in accordance with Morgan *et al.* (2009), 1 out of 5 young females purchase a new garment every week. The main reason for this might be related to the low prices offered by the fast fashion brands that are most likely to attract a younger age groups of customers and they are also more prone to want to stand out in terms of their identity (Knošková *et al.*, 2019; Gwozdz *et al.*, 2017).

Millennials<sup>1</sup> customers are attracted to fast fashion because it offers a large range of trendy and fashionable clothes at an affordable price (Knošková *et al.*, 2019; Gaynor *et al.*, 2013). Because of their youth, this group of customers usually have lower income level and so they will tend to give priority to cheap products even if this means low quality, rather than on better quality products at a higher price. Trendiness appears to be a major reason for fast fashion consumption, especially for the young generation (Gaynor *et al.*, 2013); Morgan *et al.*, 2009) who is the most likely to be influenced by the fashion press and media (Morgan *et al.*, 2009). Fast fashion brands have realised the importance that this customer segment plays and most of their marketing strategies tend to target young consumers as a priority. As specified by Uddin and Khan (2018), combined purchasing power of young consumers

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<sup>1</sup> Millennials refers to a person who was born in the 1980s or 1990s.

globally was \$2.45 trillion in 2015 and this figure has been steadily increasing until overtaking the spending of the Baby-Boomers<sup>2</sup> by the end of 2017.

### 2.3 Environmental and social issues

Often blamed for the environmental and social issues that we face today and for encouraging overconsumption, labour exploitation, frequent disposal, and early obsolescence (Liu *et al.*, 2020), the fashion industry is indeed considered the second most polluting industry following the oil industry (Neumann *et al.*, 2020; Sengupta and Sengupta, 2020). But particularly, there are more and more concerns about fast fashion, whose unsustainable practices are beginning to take their toll on the planet and its future, and consumers are becoming increasingly aware of the urgency (Stringer *et al.*, 2020). Indeed, research have demonstrated that the fashion industry and especially fast fashion have a devastating impact on both the environment and the people who are making the clothes.

*Figure 1* below, taken from Gardetti *et al.* (2013)'s book illustrates the process used by the textile, clothing, and fashion industries throughout the production of a garment and many problems can be discerned, particularly in the environmental and social aspects. It is this process of creation, production and distribution that is being called into question and criticised by public opinion because of the negative impact it has on several areas.

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<sup>2</sup> A baby-boomer is a person born in the years following the Second World War, when there was a temporary marked increase in the birth rate.



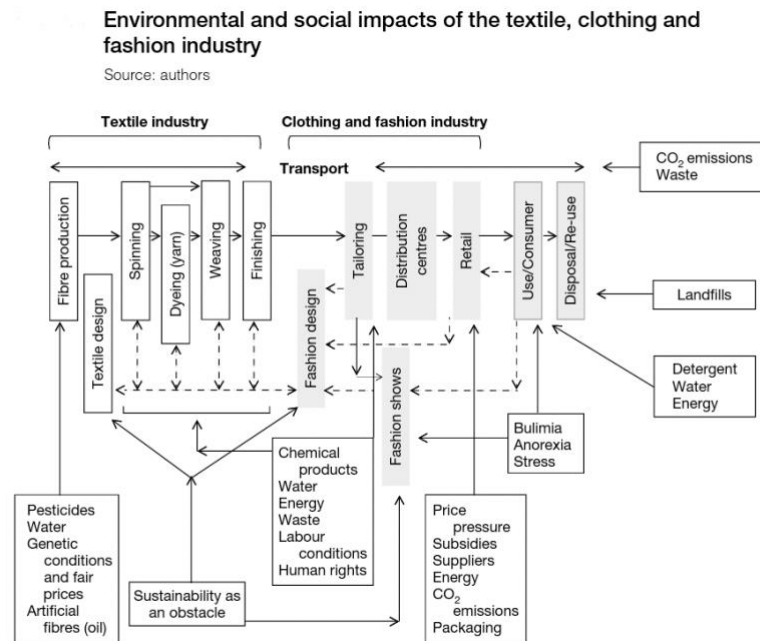


Figure 1: Environmental and social impacts of the textile, clothing and fashion industry (Gardetti *et al.*, 2013)

In terms of the environmental issues, the negative effects of the fashion industry are massive (Blasi, Brigato and Sedita, 2020) and can be seen throughout the whole journey of a single item of clothing, starting with the textile fibres used, through the production and manufacture of the garment, all the way to the hands of the consumer making the purchase and ending with its disposal, which is usually the final blow to the environment sustainability (Stringer *et al.*, 2020) with approximately 10-20% of textiles from the fashion industry who result in waste (Lang *et al.*, 2013). The recent years have seen a significant increase in environmental issues leading to a widespread awareness of this issues in the world (Bhagwat, 2010).

As argued by Blasi *et al.* (2020), the main environmental issue caused by the fashion industry is the extensive usage and pollution of water during the production stage of the clothes. This observation is heavily supported by Bhatia and Jain (2013) who acknowledge that there was an increase in air and water pollution over the last few years due to the rise in fashion consumption. Furthermore, according to a report by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), it is estimated that 93 billion cubic meters of water is used by the fashion industry annually which is

a significant concern considering that water is a resource in ever more limited supply around the world (Gwozdz *et al.*, 2017).

The main culprits of pollution and excessive water use are synthetic fibres and cotton. Indeed, the production of cotton requires a lot of chemicals, pesticides, GMO<sup>3</sup>, and fertilizers (Sengupta *et al.*, 2020; Jung and Jin, 2014), not to mention the need for a large quantity of water which is consequently polluted. The book from Gardetti *et al.* (2013) mentions that the production of cotton requires so much water that this crop has been called the “thirsty crop” and Sengupta *et al.* (2020) points out that 20,000 litres of water are needed to produce 1 kilogram of cotton, or 8.5 tons per kilogram in accordance with Gwozdz *et al.* (2017).

As for the synthetic fibres, frequently used by fast fashion brands, such as polyester, nylon, fleece, rayon, and acrylic (Stringer *et al.*, 2020), their production requires the usage of many petrochemicals (Sharma, 2020) and the action of cleaning them releases millions of microfibers and microbes which are then discharged into water and end up in the oceans, seas, and rivers, further exacerbating water’s fate and negatively impacting marine biodiversity at the same time (Sengupta *et al.*, 2020). As specified by Sharma (2020), ‘annual synthetic microfiber pollution in the oceans is estimated to be equivalent in weight to 50 billion plastic bottles’.

As for the social issues provoked by the fashion industry and fast fashion, we can see in *Figure 1* that many human rights are being infringed and violated throughout the whole textile chain.

Studies that have been conducted highlight that consumers are more and more conscious about the negative effects of fast fashion and especially in terms of a social aspect as we hear about it more often than before.

At the forefront is the problem of labour exploitation (Liu *et al.*, 2020) and the poor and dangerous working conditions in which employees operate for below living wages (Tomolillo and Shaw, 2003). By way of illustration, the collapse of the Rana Plaza can be used; on 24<sup>th</sup> of April 2013, the building located in Bangladesh who

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<sup>3</sup> Genetically Modified Organisms.

housed five garment factories, collapsed, and killed at least 1,132 people (International Labour Organization, 2018). This disaster, which was widely covered by the worldwide media, helped to open the eyes of public opinion to the harsh realities of the inhumane working conditions face by workers in the garment factories in Bangladesh. Among the companies identified as being involved are world-renowned fashion brands such as Benetton, Primark or even Mango (Clean Clothes Campaign, 2021).

As a consequence of this tragedy, many consumers began to take an interest in the social impact of their fashion purchases.

## 2.4 Sustainability awareness

According to Picková and Hruby (2020), the first mentions of environmental concerns emerged between 1960 and 1970, at a time when pollution and energy preservation was a major global issue. Since then, environmental problems have only grown and intensified (Fraj and Martinez, 2007), partly because of the significant expansion of technological advances requiring more and more means and resources, but also because of increased consumerism and unsustainable consumption patterns encouraged by the capitalist society (Uddin *et al.*, 2018). McDonagh and Prothero (2014) say that our current way of consumption is endangering the planet sustainability and that awareness must evolve to change things and move towards more sustainable modes of consumption that are more in line with current concerns about the environment.

It is important to emphasize that the interest in sustainability is not new: in fact, as early as 1987, the Brundtland Commission defined sustainable development as a 'development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs' (Brundtland, 1987). However, the increase in interest in sustainability is due to a heightening in awareness of all the negativities promoted by our current consumption pattern (Bridges *et al.*, 2008).

In accordance with previous research, it appears that the younger generations are the ones with the highest sustainability awareness and with the greatest willingness to change things for their future and that of the generations that will succeed them. The Guardian (2020) mentions the impact that the 'Blue Planet effect'<sup>4</sup> had on young people's attitude towards the fashion industry and their fashion consumption. As the first generation to have grown up with access to the Internet and digital technology from a young age, members of Generation Z<sup>5</sup> – also called 'digital natives' – have access to information from more sources than ever before and the emergence of online apps dedicated to second-hand shopping, upcycling, customising etc., they are more inclined to demonstrate high awareness in this area (The Guardian, 2020).

Although fast fashion is in trend and very much in demand by consumers, the many criticisms that have emerged towards this business model over the last few years have somewhat raised awareness and people are becoming more interested in sustainability and more conscious of the important role they must play (Stringer *et al.*, 2020; Sharma, 2020) in this new tendency (McDonagh *et al.*, 2014).

In today's society, the awareness of sustainability has never been greater, however, the challenge we face in this regard has never been more important (McDonagh *et al.*, 2014) considering that sustainability is now at the centre of all preoccupations and is a growing source of uncertainty for the future (Badgare, 2018). Consumers and brands are now mindful of sustainability and want to make changes in order to move the situation forward (Sharma, 2020). This raise of awareness is considerable because, as suggested by many researchers, there has been an increase in social pressures on fast fashion brands and this is having an effect and pushes them to improve their transparency and methods, implicated in many of today's social and environmental problems (Garcia-Torres *et al.*, 2017). Neumann *et al.* (2020) and Kapoor (2020)'s research studies reinforce this observation by including the fact that,

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<sup>4</sup> *Blue Planet II* is a 2017 British nature documentary series on marine life produced by the BBC Natural Unit. The programme has been credited with raising awareness of plastic pollution both domestically and internationally, an influence dubbed the "Blue Planet effect".

<sup>5</sup> Generation Z refers to the generation born between 1997 and 2012, following Millennials.

as well as companies, government institutions are also expected to bring about change and take effective action in the sustainability direction.

## 2.5 Sustainability marketing

The concept of sustainability has gained importance in many disciplines over the past few decades, and marketing is no exception (Kemper and Ballantine, 2019). In the modern literature, it is observed that this concept of sustainability is usually studied under the term of 'green marketing' (Shabbir *et al.*, 2020) and this notion has become a global phenomenon over the last few years (Kapoor, 2020).

According to Jain and Kaur (2004), green marketing can be defined as all activities designed to generate and facilitate any exchanges intended to satisfy human needs or wants, such as the satisfaction of these needs and wants occurs, with minimal detrimental impact on the natural environment.

Unlike traditional marketing, green marketing uses inbound marketing, which focuses on pull strategy with the use of green products, green packaging, green pricing, and green communication throughout the whole process (Shrestha, 2018). From what previous research have taught us, the essence of sustainability marketing would reside in the consideration of future generations as a main concern rather than just focusing on the present ones (Badgare, 2018). Indeed, our everyday consumption does have a critical impact on the condition of the planet, making its future and the future generations' prospects uncertain (Brem and Puente-Días, 2020).

One of the first introduction of green marketing in the literature was made by Polonsky, Winston and Mintu-Wimsatt (1995) under the term of 'sustainable marketing'. According to them, it will require a proactive corporate marketing strategy (Uddin *et al.*, 2018) and active government intervention to promote the global development and democratisation of green marketing.

This relatively new concept owes its emergence to the extent to which sustainability has become a global trend and concern (Kemper *et al.*, 2019) in the current world.

This new tendency has not escaped the attention of fast fashion brands who, faced with the enlarging interest in sustainable development and the rise in popularity of green marketing (Uddin *et al.*, 2018; Khaleeli, 2020), are trying to become more eco-friendly (Grazzini *et al.*, 2021; Moon *et al.*, 2018) and have undertaken to respond to the new consumer demand by increasing the number of 'ethical fast fashion brands' such as: H&M Conscious, ASOS Green Room, Zara Join Life or even Boohoo's for the Future (Stringer *et al.*, 2020).

The appearance of these new ranges of clothing created by the fast fashion brands themselves is evidence of a willingness on the part of these bands to prove and demonstrate their commitment to social and environmental causes, while at the same time enhancing their brand image by using advertising and other 'green' marketing strategies to showcase their efforts to the world (Kong, Witmaier and Ko, 2021).

In line with Kong *et al.* (2021)'s research, demand for green sustainable brands and eco-friendly products keeps increasing; 70% of consumers would be more inclined to purchase from environmentally conscious brands even if it means paying a higher price (Bhatia *et al.*, 2013). Consequently, the emphasis made on communicating about sustainable actions undertaken is a way for companies to meet consumers' new requirements and to refine consumers' satisfaction and purchase intentions (Grazzini *et al.*, 2021). However, some of the 'green' marketing practices are mainly used for managerial purposes to increase profit and the primary focus on sustainability is often overshadowed (Kilbourne, 1998).

This observation leads us to discuss about the term 'greenwashing': Indeed, as more companies have now understood that the sustainable concept is a new opportunity to make profit while taking the public concerns into account, there is an increase in 'green' communication and fast fashion brands have also committed to further promote their efforts towards the planet and social rights (Delmas and Burbano, 2011). However, as it is mentioned by Neumann *et al.* (2020) in their study and as we discussed previously in the *Fast fashion* part, the perception of fast fashion brands is far from being in line with the global idea of sustainability. Hence, most of the eco-

friendly efforts made by these companies are easily called into question and the consumers tend to perceive them as dishonest and untruthful (Neumann *et al.*, 2020).

Greenwashing is defined by Delmas *et al.* (2011) as the 'act of misleading consumers regarding the environmental practices of a company or the environmental benefits of a product or service' which makes it the combination of environmental negligence and positive communication of the same. This is a growing issue because it undermines and affects the sustainable movement and makes consumers sceptic and wary of green products, services, and brands, impacting the positive effects of communication (Delmas *et al.*, 2011; do Paço and Reis, 2012; Laufer William, 2003).

The concept of sustainability marketing has many grey areas and is still very questioned by researchers who are still uncertain about its clear meaning (Kemper *et al.*, 2019) and unsure about the association of sustainability and marketing. Indeed, most researchers have highlighted the conflicting nature between marketing and sustainability (Kemper *et al.*, 2019). This observation is explicable considering the many criticisms that have been made of traditional marketing for being an important part of fostering overconsumption and the consumer culture of the capitalistic world (McDonagh *et al.*, 2014). Furthermore, the broad definition of marketing from the American Marketing Association (2013): 'Marketing is the activity, set of institutions, and processes for creating, communicating, delivering, and exchanging offerings that have value for customers, clients, partners, and society at large', does not mention the concept of sustainability, which raises even more questions about the legitimacy of marketing to encompass a more sustainable dimension to its action.

Although we have demonstrated that sustainability marketing has been introduced a few decades ago, it is still a very recent concept which is understudied and that only has limited literature, nonetheless (Albinsson *et al.*, 2020; Kemper *et al.*, 2019). Additionally, the current amount of research that has been conducted about sustainability marketing reflects a gap in literature regarding what is the exact meaning of 'sustainability marketing' (McDonagh *et al.*, 2014).

## 2.6 Sustainable fashion consumption

As previously discussed, trends are changing rapidly, and the fashion industry has not escaped this phenomenon; fast fashion is one of the most consumed type of fashion. However, recent studies have shown a rise in social and environmental concerns caused by this unsustainable consumption. Therefore, in response to this, alternative ways of fashion consumption arose over the last few years (Hall, 2018). Among these new practices, we distinguish mainly between slow fashion, ethical fashion, and eco fashion, according to Kowalski (2019). However, for the purpose of this research, these three terms will be grouped under the concept of 'sustainable fashion'. Thereupon, the environmental, ethical, and social dimension of fashion consumption will be encompassed.

Figure 2 below shows the different forms that sustainable fashion consumption can take.

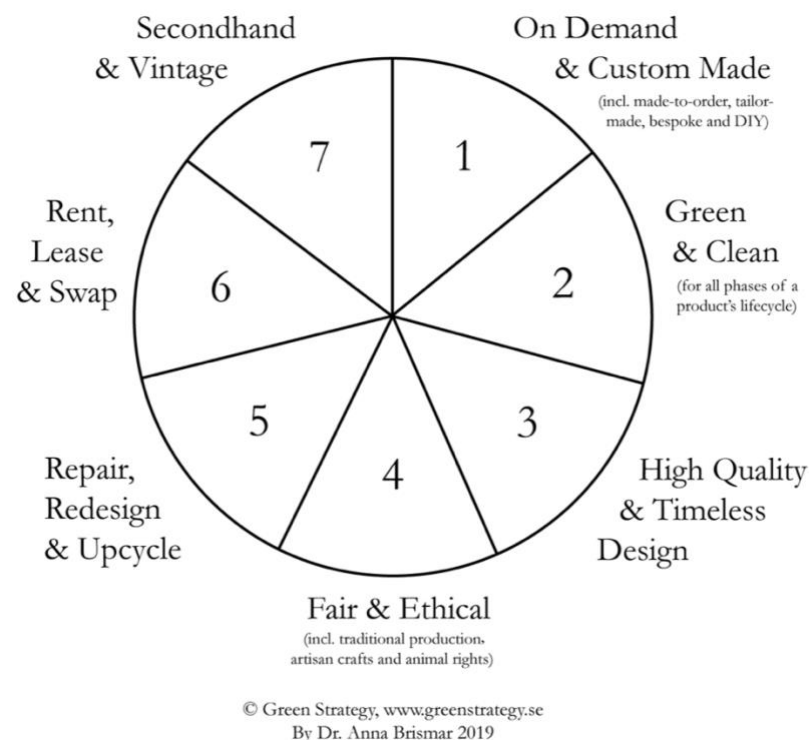


Figure 2: Different forms of sustainable fashion consumption (Brismar, 2019)



According to a report from KPMG (2019), most people tend to define sustainable fashion as including factors such as high quality and durable products, ethical and fair labour practices, use of recycled materials, and no use of harmful chemicals. To start with, the focus will be put on slow fashion: this term was first introduced by Fletcher (2007) as an antithesis to the current fast fashion system (Jung *et al.*, 2014). The slow fashion movement is still a quite recent concept in the fashion industry (Pookulangara and Shephard, 2013) and was inspired by the 'slow food' movement made known by Carlo Petrini in Italy in 1986 (Jung *et al.*, 2014; Pookulangara *et al.*, 2013; Fletcher, 2007), which combines pleasure of food with a sustainable approach throughout the process, from production to the final consumer's plate (Hall, 2018; Clark, 2008). As opposed to the fast fashion model, the characteristics of slow fashion are small scale production, utilization of regional production, season-less and timeless design concepts, slower production time to focus on quality, rights prices along with fair labour conditions and a focus on sustainability as a whole (Hall, 2018; Pookulangara *et al.*, 2013). In general terms, the main purpose of slow fashion is valuing the items that we own and give importance to not acting at the expense of the environment and social rights (McNeill *et al.*, 2015) and offers a new approach to fashion without the damaging aspects of the latter (Clark, 2008).

Secondly, the attention will be directed to the concept of 'eco fashion'. Even though the definition of eco fashion is still vague within the literature (Grazzini *et al.*, 2021), the concept includes a variety of terms such as organic, green, Fair trade, or even slow. According to Kowalski (2019), the term eco fashion mainly includes the environmental aspect of fashion, i.e., the use of organic, recycled fibres and materials that respect the environment.

Lastly, the emphasis will be on the concept of 'ethical fashion' which has been on the rise lately following the increase of media coverage and the spread of more information on the subject (Manchiraju and Sadachar, 2014). Additionally, many clothing brands are now emerging with the primary aim of claiming to sell ethical items.

According to Connolly and Shaw (2006), previous research such as Joergens (2006) has focused the definition of this concept on the environmental and fair-trade concerns, a perspective supported by Kowalski (2019), Tomollilo *et al.* (2003) and Burke *et al.* (2014) and to which the animal welfare dimension is added.

Fashion brands acknowledge that they must change their approach to address the consumers' demand in favour of more sustainable fashion options, but the difficult relationship between sustainability and the fashion industry often overrides brands' intentions to change because of the significant financial cost of change, which some brands are not prepared to overcome to keep low costs (Pookulangara *et al.*, 2013). In addition to this resistance on the part of the brand, most of the literature examining the relationship between consumer attitude towards sustainable clothing brands and the actual purchasing behaviour has shown that there is a gap between these two; this difference is referred to as 'attitude-behaviour gap' (Uddin *et al.*, 2018; Kong *et al.*, 2021). In line with a report by (Zalando Report, 2021), the sustainability attitude-behaviour gap can be described as 'a situation in which individuals exhibit positive attitudes but fail to execute on these attitudes by engaging in responsible behaviours'.

This term has firstly been identified by Roberts (1996) who describes the complex behaviour of consumers who, even though they seem concerned about sustainability and seem to prefer sustainable products and are willing to consume more in that way, their actual purchase behaviour fail to translate this willingness into actions in the end (Hassan, Shiu and Shaw, 2016; Manchiraju *et al.*, 2014) and they do not actually purchase what they claim to be their preference. Carrigan and Attalla (2001)'s study indicates that 'although consumers had socially responsible attitudes, only 20% had actually purchased something in the last year because the product was associated with a good cause'.

From what the literature shows, this phenomenon is due to several factors such as the higher prices charged for so-called 'sustainable' products, the confusion, misinformation, and lack of knowledge about these products, the quality perception and the few companies that actually offer these products (Roberts, 1996; Park and Lin, 2020; Kaufmann, Khan Panni and Orphanidou, 2012). All these components seem

to get in the way of consumers and their purchasing action, and the rising concerns in environmental and social matters does not seem to be sufficient to fill the attitude-behaviour gap in (Neumann *et al.*, 2020).

Figure 3 illustrates the increasing gap that exists between 12 different dimensions of sustainable purchasing decisions.

**Exhibit 1. The Attitude-Behavior Gap Across 12 Dimensions of Sustainable Purchasing Decisions**

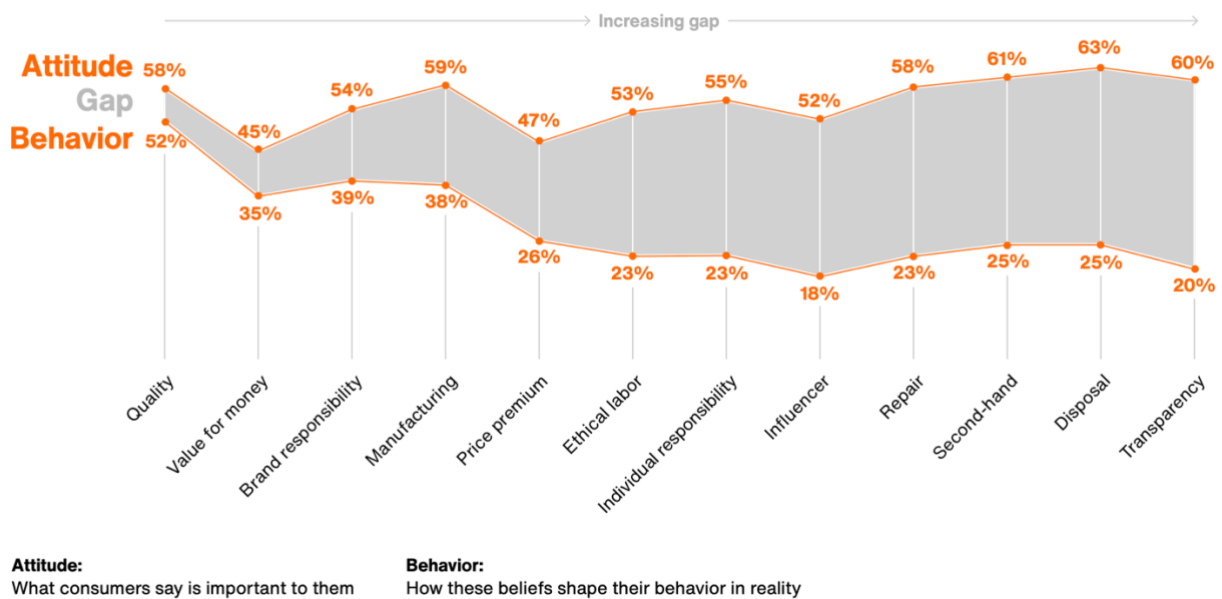


Figure 3: The attitude behaviour-gap across 12 dimensions of sustainable purchasing decisions (Zalando Report, 2021)

## 2.7 Conclusion

The main purpose of this chapter was to provide with a relevant academic literature background in order to analyse the ins and outs of the main concepts of this research study. This chapter has allowed to get an in-depth understanding of the main aspects of the dissertation topic, which defined the necessary foundations to conduct a substantial research.

The literature review has discussed the implications of the fast fashion industry and the transformations the fashion industry has undergone to reach this new business model, known worldwide and widely used by consumers nowadays. Although very popular, fast fashion is nonetheless under criticism and its credibility is being contested by public opinion.

The literature outlined the environmental and social impacts caused by the fashion industry and especially by fast fashion brands and their unsustainable practices which incrementally put the planet at risk.

The rise in popularity towards the negativities generated by the fashion industry is encouraging a higher level of interest in sustainability and hence, increases global awareness around this concept.

The literature expressed how sustainability marketing is gaining importance and is becoming widely acknowledged by marketers and consumers. The impact that the latter can have on consumers' purchasing intentions was mentioned, as well as some of the adverse practices that are emerging in response to this surge in popularity. Research have shown that many brands are engaging in 'greenwashing', misleading consumers about their real commitment to sustainability and thus weakening the credibility of the 'green' movement at large.

Finally, the literature looked at the development of sustainable fashion consumption and the different alternatives that exist to consumer a more ecological, ethical, and 'slow' fashion, more respectful of the environment and the workers.

## Chapter 3: Research Question

### 3.1 Research aim

The main purpose of this research study is to assess the role that sustainability marketing plays on people's attitude towards fast fashion. In other words, whether the awareness of sustainability marketing has an impact on consumers' purchase intention of fast fashion products.

### 3.2 Research question

The study's research question is as follows:

***Does awareness of sustainability marketing decrease people's propensity to buy fast fashion?***

### 3.3 Hypotheses:

- Null hypotheses ( $H_0$ )

$H_{01}$ : There is no significant relationship between the awareness of the environmental and social impact of the fast fashion industry and consumers' attitude towards fast fashion.

$H_{02}$ : There is no significant difference between levels of education in terms of attitude towards fast fashion.

$H_{03}$ : There is no significant relationship between sustainability and consumer's attitude towards fast fashion.

$H_{04}$ : There is no significant relationship between sustainability fast fashion marketing and consumer's attitude towards fast fashion.

H<sub>05</sub>: There is no significant relationship between positive perception of the fast fashion industry and consumers' attitude towards fast fashion.

H<sub>06</sub>: There is no significant difference between the five age groups in terms of attitude towards fast fashion.

- Alternate hypotheses (H<sub>a</sub>)

H<sub>a1</sub>: There is a significant relationship between the awareness of the environmental and social impact of the fast fashion industry and consumers' attitude towards fast fashion.

H<sub>a2</sub>: There is a significant difference between levels of education in terms of attitude towards fast fashion.

H<sub>a3</sub>: There is a significant relationship between sustainability and consumer's attitude towards fast fashion.

H<sub>a4</sub>: There is a significant relationship between sustainability fast fashion marketing and consumer's attitude towards fast fashion.

H<sub>a5</sub>: There is a significant relationship between positive perception of the fast fashion industry and consumers' attitude towards fast fashion.

H<sub>a6</sub>: There is a significant difference between the five age groups in terms of attitude towards fast fashion.

## Chapter 4: Research Methodology

### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter will outline the methods and approaches utilised to conduct this research. It will include the different stages of the ‘Research onion’: *Figure 5*, taken from Saunders *et al.* (2019), illustrates the different stages the researcher will face throughout the decision-making process of their study. The ‘research onion’ will be used in this chapter as a tool to describe the overall methodology utilised in this study, starting from the outer layer and proceeding to the core of the Research Onion as suggested by the authors. Consequently, the research philosophies will be discussed as a starting point of the research methodology, followed by an analysis of approaches to theory development, methodological choices, strategies, time horizon, and will conclude with the techniques and procedures of the research. Finally, ethical considerations will also be highlighted at the end of this chapter.

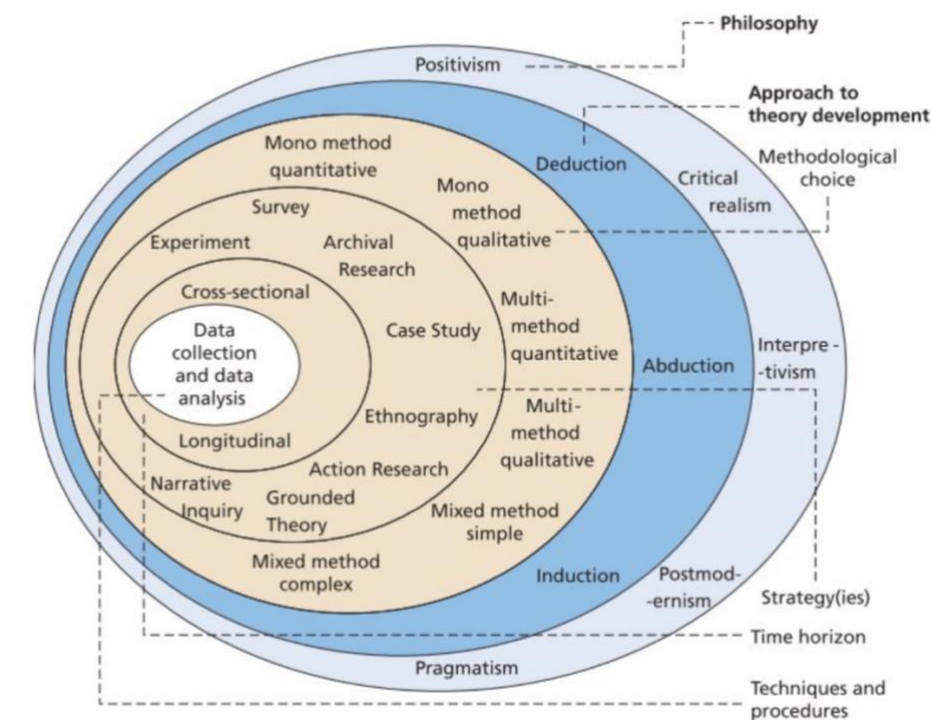


Figure 4: The “Research Onion” (Saunders et al., 2019)

## 4.2 Research philosophy

The first layer of the research onion (*Figure 4*) focuses on the research philosophy of the study.

In Saunders *et al.* (2019), the authors suggest that research philosophy ‘refers to a system of beliefs and assumptions about the development of knowledge.’ Throughout the process of the research, each researcher is likely to make assumptions either about the nature of realities encountered in the study or about human knowledge and how we can define what reality is and communicate it to others (Crossley and Jansen, 2021; Saunders *et al.*, 2019). The first type of assumptions refers to the concept of Ontology, while the second type refers to Epistemology. These assumptions have an impact on our understanding throughout the whole research and thus influence the process differently.

In accordance with Ramsberg (2018), there are two main types of research philosophies which are positivism and interpretism. A brief overview of each follows:

*Positivism*: this philosophy aims at thinking that there is only one objective reality and that it has its own essence and is subject to universal laws. This philosophy is associated with deduction and objectivity (Quinlan, 2019). In other words, a positivist study can only be done so objectively, and cannot include personal opinions or viewpoints (Crossley *et al.*, 2021).

*Interpretism*: this philosophy aims to understand how the researcher builds the meaning he gives to reality. As opposed to positivism, interpretism considers reality to be multiple and relative, and the research studies carried out in relation to this type of philosophy tend to be more personal and flexible (Saunders *et al.*, 2019; Crossley *et al.*, 2021).



Hence, this research uses the philosophy of positivism and aims at analysing the impact of the awareness of sustainability marketing on people's consumption pattern of fast fashion items. To do so, empirical research will be carried out through measurements and observation of the data collected.

According to Saunders *et al.* (2019), 'quantitative research designs are generally associated with positivism', which reinforces the researcher's choice for this philosophy.

#### 4.3 Research approach and method

Following *Figure 4*, the second layer of the 'research onion' focuses on determining which approach is going to be used in the research. A distinction is made between two approaches: inductive and deductive. It is important for the researcher to have a clear idea of the different approaches available and to be able to identify the one who will best suit the research study because it will influence the future choices that will be made in terms of data collection, analysis, and interpretation (Crossley *et al.*, 2021).

On one hand, the inductive approach is usually utilised when there is a limited amount of previous research on a specific topic because observations will be carried out prior to the development of a theory.

On the other hand, the deductive approach is constructed based on an existing theory, according to one or more hypotheses will subsequently be formulated before proceeding to the data collection stage that will allow the hypotheses to be tested. Finally, the results of the data collection will be evaluated to assess the validity of the hypothesis(es).

The aim of this study is to assess the relationship between the awareness of sustainability marketing practices and consumers' fast fashion consumption pattern. Moreover, the literature review has allowed the researcher to realise that the vast majority of previous related research studies have applied a quantitative approach.

According to Crossley *et al.* (2021), a deductive approach generally leads to the use of quantitative research method, because the researcher begins the development with a theory as the foundation and aims to test it through research and hypothesis testing. Thus, in line with the positivism philosophy adopted for this study, the researcher considered that a quantitative and inductive approach was the most suitable for conducting this research.

#### 4.4 Research design and strategy

Experimental research is a strategy where the researcher will be required to manipulate different variables by observing how the independent variable behaves in the event of a change in another dependent variable, which will provide an analysis of the relationship between these two variables. The experimental research will enable the researcher to test and assess the research hypothesis(es) of their study. In accordance with Crossley *et al.* (2021), the purpose of experimental design is to build on existing theories which leads us to confirm the use of a deductive approach for this research.

According to Saunders *et al.* (2019), the research design gives an overview of the plan determined by the researcher to answer the research question(s) of the study. This includes the methodology used for data collection, the characteristics of the sample, and a discussion on how the collected data will then be measured and analysed.

The methodological choice of this study is based on a mono method quantitative study because a single data collection method was used for this research, i.e., a questionnaire. Indeed, this method seems to be the most appropriate to this research considering that the relationship between sustainability marketing and fast fashion consumption is examined, which means that numerical results and statistical techniques will be needed to determine a causal link between these two variables (Saunders *et al.*, 2019).

#### 4.4.1 Sample characteristics and sampling techniques

For this research, the sample population target is both female and male, aged 18 or over. The setting of an age limit is explained by the fact that consumers aged 18 or over can be considered as fully responsible of their purchasing decisions, which is a significant factor to be considered for the reliability of this research study.

In addition to this, no location constraints have been imposed to allow respondents from all countries and continents to participate in this study.

In respect of the sample size for this study and according to Sarkar and Sahu (2018), it is best for the researcher to get a large sample size because a larger number of respondents will increase the representativity of the sample and thus enhance the reliability of the results. Furthermore, Hair *et al.* (1998) suggest that for a good reliable quantitative research, the researcher should be able to get at least 100 respondents in order to have enough material to analyse the data and get the desired results. Consequently, the aim for this research was to get between 100 and 150 respondents.

There are two different types of sampling techniques, namely, probability and non-probability sampling. Probability sampling is commonly used by researchers who have a clear idea of the population that needs to be used as a sample (Howitt and Cramer, 2020). This technique involves a random selection of people out of a specific group, such as the people of France for example.

As for non-probability sampling, non-random selection is utilised and not every individual will be included in the sample (Saunders *et al.*, 2019). For the purpose of this study, non-probability sampling techniques have been used, convenient sampling in particular. The survey was shared on various internet and social media platforms (e.g., Facebook groups, LinkedIn network, emails, and WhatsApp messages). The survey was closed after 3 days.

#### 4.4.2 Pilot study

For the questionnaire to be tested before using it to collect data and to enhance the quality of the research, a pretesting of the questionnaire was conducted. According to Quinlan (2019), a pre-test is 'a test of the data-gathering instruments designed for the research'. Indeed, the main purpose of this pretesting was to determine whether the questionnaire needed to be adjusted or modified, as well as to identify questions that did not make sense to participants, or any misconceptions in the questionnaire that might lead to biased answers.

To do so, after finishing designing the survey questionnaire, a pilot experiment was conducted with the use of 7 people who have an interest in sustainability and/or fashion, and who were approached to pre-test it.

The testers' characteristics were as follows:

- The testers were aged between 19 and 37 years old.
- Out of the 7 testers, 6 were female and 1 was male.
- 3 of the testers were Belgian, 2 were French, and the 2 other ones were Polish and Irish.
- 5 out of the 7 testers were founders of a sustainable and ethical small business specialised in fashion items (clothing, home textiles, jewellery, accessories), and 2 were social media influencers with a strong interest and commitment to sustainability, slow fashion and zero waste.
- Finally, one of the testers was studying a degree in Fashion and Textiles Design.

The testers were sent the questionnaire via email and were asked to carefully read the questions without answering it to identify confusions or difficulties that may arise from the reading. The testers were also asked to give a critical opinion on the questionnaire, indicating whether they clearly understood what was asked and whether they could suggest ways of improving the overall quality of the questionnaire.

Once all the testers had finished their review, it was clear what the errors were and what changes were needed, and it was easier to go about improving the survey. Indeed, the main changes were needed with regard to the wording of certain statements and a few questions were also added to the questionnaire in order to improve its accuracy.

The pre-test conducted was of considerable benefit to the proper design of the questionnaire and allowed the author to assess its accuracy before administering it. The modifications that were made enabled the necessary improvements to be made to refine the questionnaire, thereby contributing to the increased reliability of the results. See *Appendix 1* for the final questionnaire used in this study.

#### 4.4.3 Research instrument

Questionnaires allow the researcher to collect data from a large sample size with a very slim possibility of biased responses (Saunders *et al.*, 2019). According to Sarkar *et al.* (2018), questionnaires are more convenient than interviews for instance, because the respondents can take the time they need to answer it and they might as well feel more comfortable answering it if the questionnaire necessitates to provide sensitive information.

For these reasons, the data collected for the purpose of this study were done so using an online questionnaire. Furthermore, this method seemed to be the most appropriate in line with the methodological choices made and discussed earlier in this chapter.

As the researcher wanted to conduct this study on a large sample of different nationalities, the choice was made to administer the questionnaire online in order to reach as many potential respondents as possible, from different cultures and countries.

As stated previously, a quantitative survey approach was taken in this study: data collection was conducted via an online self-administered survey hosted by Google Form. The survey consisted of 4 parts with a total of 26 items. The first six questions

of the questionnaire were about demographic data, the second part included 5 items and asked the respondents about their fast fashion consumption habits. The third part included 8 questions and dealt with sustainability marketing at large, while the fourth and last part was made of 7 items and was focused on sustainable marketing practices in the fast fashion industry.

Except for the demographic questions and one question that required a multiple-choice response, all questions in the questionnaire necessitated an answer to be scored on a five-point Likert scale (*Figure 5*) ranging from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree (agreement scale), or from Never to Always (frequency scale).

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I consider fast fashion as a positive trait of the fashion industry.

☐ Strongly Disagree

☐ Disagree

☐ Neutral

☐ Agree

☐ Strongly Agree

Figure 5: Five-point Likert agreement scale taken from the questionnaire utilised in this study (Google Form, 2021)

#### 4.5 Time horizon

According to Saunders *et al.* (2019), the penultimate layer of the Research Onion is the time horizon for the research study. Crossley *et al.* (2021) describe time horizon as an overview of the period of time utilised for the data collection and analysis process.

There are two main types of time horizon strategy: cross-sectional and longitudinal. If the research study needs the researcher to observe a phenomenon and collect data over a certain time period at various points, while being able to control the variables, it means that the horizon is longitudinal. This method can be useful in research where an overtime evolution needs to be assessed for example. On the other hand, the

cross-sectional horizon aims at collecting and analysing data at a specific time, without the ability for the researcher to manipulate the variables (Saunders *et al.*, 2019).

Considering that the data gathered for the purpose of this study have been collected at one point in time, it is appropriate to say that this research utilises a cross-sectional time horizon. Furthermore, the researcher was faced with a time limit of 7 months to carry out this research which would have made a longitudinal study more difficult to conduct and would have required more time to be reliable enough.

#### 4.6 Data collection procedures

For this study to be conducted, primary data have been collected from a sample of 160 individuals with the help of an online self-administered questionnaire with close-ended questions. The main objective of this questionnaire is to get the respondents' demographic profile and analyse their fast fashion consumption pattern along with their awareness of sustainability marketing to establish a relationship between these factors (Sarkar *et al.*, 2018).

Secondary data have also been used as a source of data collection and was collected from books, journal articles and internet sources.

The use of a quantitative technique of data collection allows the researcher to gather a certain amount of information that can be quantified in order to be more easily analysed at a later stage. Because of the quantifiable nature of the data collected, the researcher can then base their research on empirical facts without the prospect of data analysis being biased.

#### 4.7 Data Analysis

This section aims at focusing on how the data is to be analysed during the research process. The data collected with the help of the questionnaire are then analysed using Statistical Packages for Social Science (SPSS) version 26.

Cronbach's alpha was used to check the internal reliability of the questionnaire. Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) test and Chi-Square test of Independence were conducted in order to test the six hypotheses proposed in this study.

#### 4.8 Ethical considerations

According to Quinlan (2011), ethical considerations is a critical part of every research project, and every researcher should consider it when conducting their study to avoid any ethical issues. This includes considering ethics through the data collection process but also at the end of the research while concluding it.

In the context of this study, all ethical guidelines stated by National College of Ireland were strictly followed. The participants were informed of anonymity of the research and their consent to participate in the survey was taken at the beginning of the questionnaire (*Figure 6*).

To ensure the anonymity, there was no documentation of name or any other data that might allow the participants to be identified through their responses. Furthermore, the participants were informed that their participation in this research was entirely voluntary and that they could withdraw their participation from the survey at any given time. Finally, the data collected in this questionnaire and the results of this study were only accessible by the researcher alone and carefully secured.



The screenshot shows a Google Form titled "Informed Consent" with a yellow header. The main text explains that data will be kept confidential and used solely for the study, with identities and data stored securely. Below this, a prompt asks the user to indicate consent, with two radio button options: "I consent" and "I do not consent". At the bottom, there are "Back" and "Next" buttons, a progress bar, and a page indicator showing "Page 2 of 7".

**Informed Consent**

I understand the following by consenting to participate in this study: The data obtained will be kept confidential, anonymous, and will be used solely for the purposes of this study. Confidentiality of participants will be protected throughout and after the study by ensuring the following: the identities of any participants' will be kept anonymous, any data collected will be stored securely on a password protected laptop, the disposal of data collected will be done thoroughly and securely.

Please indicate your consent before proceeding. \*

☐ I consent

☐ I do not consent

[Back](#) [Next](#) Page 2 of 7

Figure 6: Research Informed Consent (Google Form, 2021)

#### 4.9 Conclusion

This research was conducted using quantitative descriptive and deductive approach. The importance of the choices made in terms of data collection method was discussed and highlighted as being a significant part of a research's success. The researcher utilised a questionnaire in order to gather information about consumers attitude towards fast fashion according to their awareness of sustainability marketing.

The researcher is confident in saying that the methods and approaches used were the most appropriate to carry out this study.

The following chapter will provide an analysis of the data collected throughout this research, along with an outline of the findings that resulted from this.

## **Chapter 5: Analysis and Findings**

### **5.1 Introduction**

This research is motivated by a need to identify the link that exists between consumers awareness of sustainability marketing and their attitudes towards fast fashion.

This chapter provides with an in-depth analysis of the research results collected via the survey. In addition to this, the hypothesis put forward earlier in this study will be tested. The data for this study was analysed using SPSS version 26.

### **5.2 Data Analysis**

The first part of data analysis consists of exporting the responses collected from Google Form to Microsoft Excel in order to code the data properly. The coded data are then exported to SPSS Statistics for analysing the data.

A total of 160 respondents participated in the questionnaire and all were filled and valid.

### 5.2.1 Findings of Demographic factors

The details of the demographic factors are presented in the figures below.

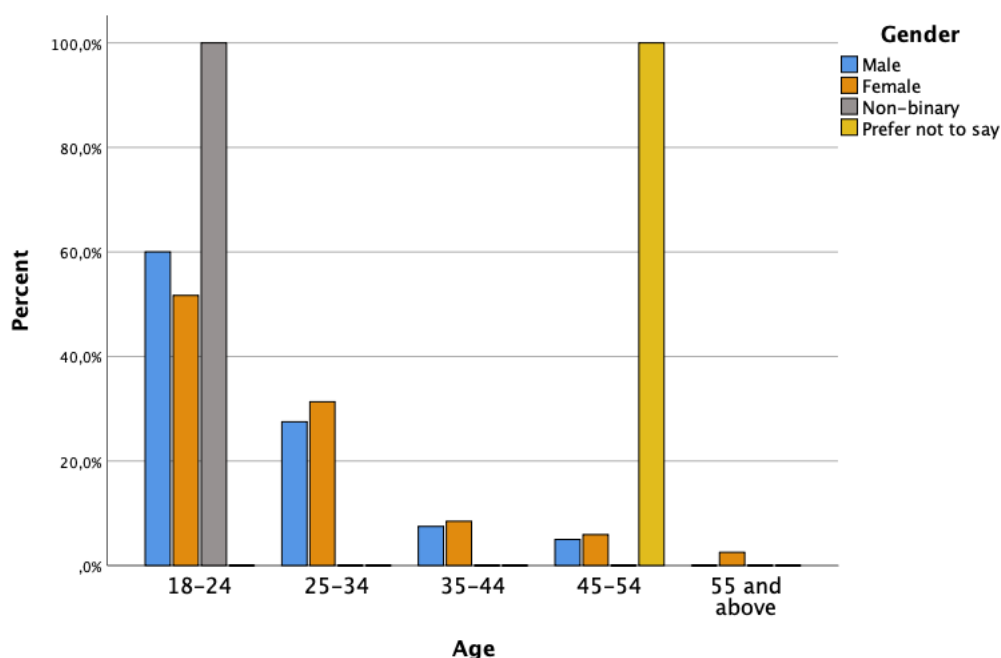


Figure 7: Distribution of Respondents' Age by Gender

Of the total number of respondents, 118 were female, 40 were male and 2 were non-binary or preferred not to answer this question.

The largest number of respondents was in the age group 18 to 24 years with 86 of the respondents, 48 of respondents were between 25 to 34 years old, 13 were in the 35 to 44 age group, 10 were aged between 45 and 54, and 3 were aged over 55 years old. Figure 7 clearly demonstrate that the youngest age groups represent the largest part of the studied sample. This can be regarded as a limitation of this study because there is a lack of representation of certain groups of age, and a more even representation of the population could have been of interest for the purpose of the research.

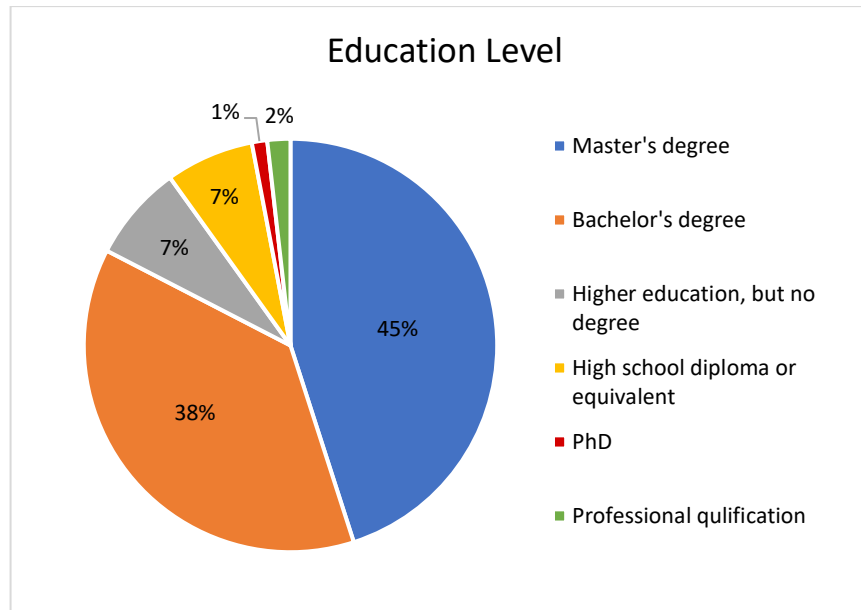


Figure 8: What education level are you pursuing now?

On an education level, a total of 72 participants have graduated with a master's degree, 60 have graduated with a bachelor's degree, 12 and 11 have respectively achieved higher education but no degree and high school diploma or equivalent. A total of 2 of respondents have graduated with a PhD and the remaining 3 participants have completed a professional qualification. As *Figure 8* highlights, the largest proportion of respondents (85%) have obtained (or are currently pursuing) high levels of education (i.e., bachelor's degree, master's degree or PhD). According to Santhakumar, Shephar and Gupta (2020), those who have higher education level are likely to have more knowledge and awareness about sustainability, more concerns about the environment and this might have an impact on their consumption as a result.

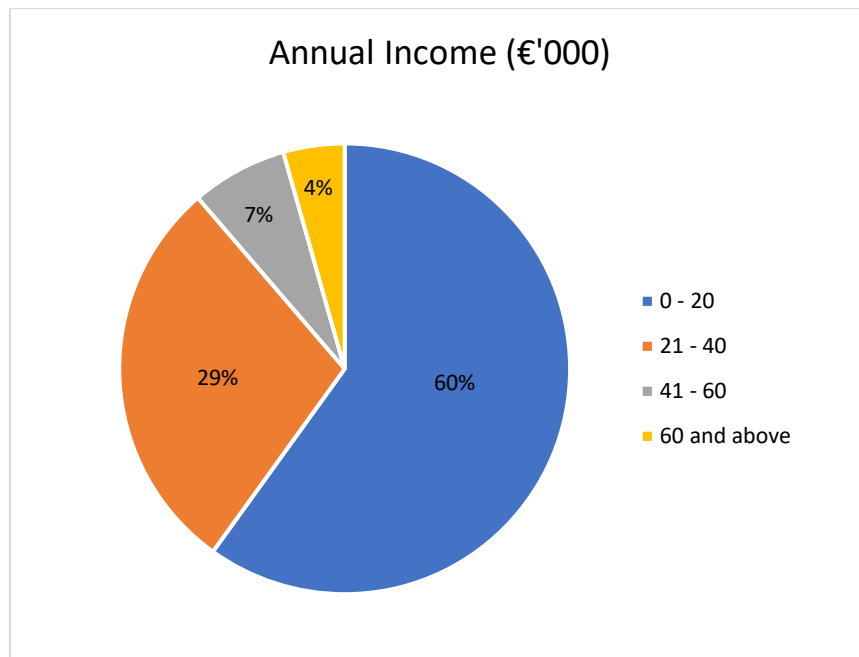


Figure 9: What is your annual income?

*Figure 9* shows the responses of the participants on their annual income. As seen in the figure above, 96 of the respondents earn €20,000 or less per year, 46 respondents earn between €21,000 and €40,000 per year, while 11 and 7 of respondents earn respectively between €41,000 and €60,000 and €60,000 and above per year.

The results as seen above shows that the majority of respondents earn €20,000 or less per annum. This may be explained by the majority of respondents (96 making 60%) who are student (see *Figure 10* below).

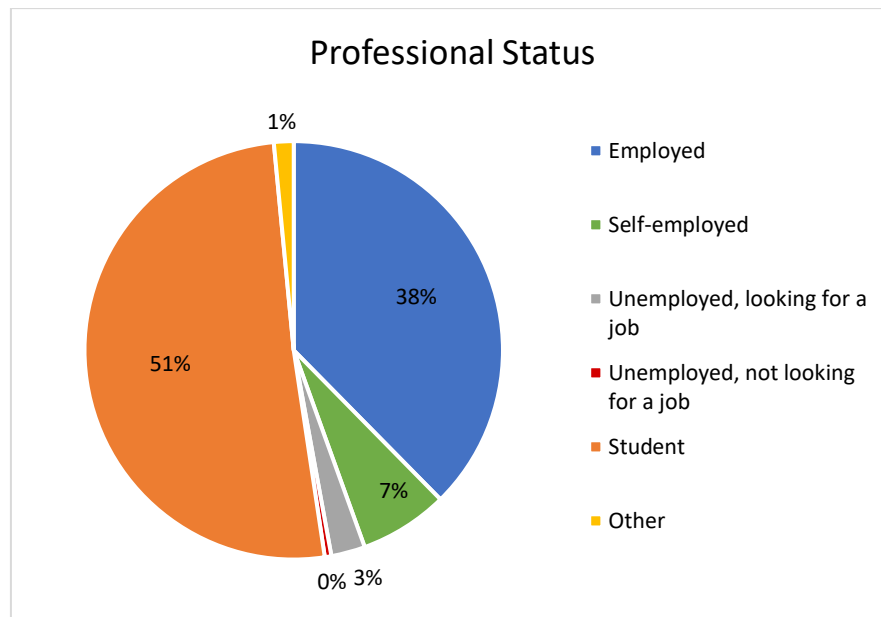


Figure 10: Which category best describes your professional status?

The most frequent employment of respondents was student with 96 of respondents, followed by employed with 71 of participants. Figure 10 indicates that 13 of the respondents are self-employed, 5 are unemployed and looking for a job, 1 is unemployed and not looking for a job, while 3 of the respondents are qualified under 'Other'. Finally, none of the respondents were retired.

Finally, in terms of nationality, the most representative groups of people were French and Irish with respectively 28 and 26 of respondents.

### 5.2.2 Internal consistency

Cronbach's Alpha	Number of Items
0.729	19

Table 1: Test of internal consistency of the overall questionnaire

According to Howitt *et al.* (2020), the Cronbach's coefficient alpha is an internal consistency type of reliability used as a 'measure of reliability based on the average of all the possible splits into two equal sets of items'. It is considered as a reliable tool for calculating internal consistency of responses to a sub-set of questions (Saunders *et al.*, 2019). A coefficient higher than or equal to 0.7 serves as an indicator of the internal reliability of the internal scale and is therefore considered as consistent in terms of measurement. Consequently, according to *Table 1* and considering that the Cronbach's alpha for this current study is above 0.7, it can be concluded that the scale of items was found to be reliable and consistent for the construct of this research.

It is noteworthy that, in order to calculate this coefficient, demographic data as well as the Multiple-Choice Question (i.e., Question 3, Part 2. See *Appendice 1*) were not included in the calculation so as not to bias the results. The Cronbach's alpha is therefore based on 19 items and not on the 26 included in the questionnaire.

### 5.2.3 Descriptive Statistics

#### 5.2.4.1 Fast Fashion

Fast Fashion		Percentage
I can explain what fast fashion is in my own words	Strongly Disagree	7
	Disagree	8
	Neutral	13
	Agree	49
	Strongly Agree	23
How often do you shop from fast fashion brands?	Never	9
	Occasionally	33
	Sometimes	21
	Often	27
	Always	9
I consider fast fashion as a positive trait of the fashion industry	Strongly Disagree	28
	Disagree	23
	Neutral	30
	Agree	16
	Strongly Agree	3
I am well informed on the social and environmental impact of the fast fashion industry	Strongly Disagree	9
	Disagree	18
	Neutral	19
	Agree	35
	Strongly Agree	19

Table 2: Fast fashion consumption responses of participants

Table 2 above shows the responses of participants regarding the second part of the questionnaire. The results indicate that nearly half of the respondents (49%) agree that they are able to explain what fast fashion is in their own words, while 23% strongly agree, 13% are neutral, 8% disagree and 7% strongly disagree.



A majority of respondents (33%) say they only shop from fast fashion brands on an occasional basis, while 27% say they shop often, 21% say they shop sometimes and 9% say they either never or always shop from fast fashion brands.

Out of the 160 respondents, 30% of them are neutral in considering fast fashion as a positive trait of the fashion industry and 28% of them strongly disagree. 23% of the respondents disagree, 16% agree and only 3% strongly agree to the statement.

Finally, a majority of respondents reaching 35% agree to the fact that they are well informed on the social and environmental impact of the fast fashion industry, 19% are neutral and strongly agree, 18% disagree and 9% strongly disagree.

#### 5.2.4.2 Sustainability Marketing

Sustainability Marketing		Percentage
I can explain what sustainability marketing is in my own words	Strongly Disagree	2
	Disagree	23
	Neutral	23
	Agree	36
	Strongly Agree	16
Sustainability marketing influences my purchase intention towards more sustainable clothes (e.g., ethical, second-hand etc.)	Strongly Disagree	6
	Disagree	16
	Neutral	24
	Agree	40
	Strongly Agree	14
I would be willing to pay more for clothes made from sustainable resources	Strongly Disagree	3
	Disagree	7
	Neutral	14
	Agree	53
	Strongly Agree	23
I can explain what sustainable fashion is in my	Strongly Disagree	0
	Disagree	8

own words (ethical brands, second-hand, upcycling, renting, etc.)	Neutral	17
	Agree	46
	Strongly Agree	29
I purchase ethical and ecological fashion (On Demand & Custom Made, High quality and timeless design, Fair & Ethical brands, Upcycled items, etc.)	Never	16
	Occasionally	28
	Sometimes	34
	Often	19
	Always	3
I purchase circular fashion (Second-hand, Vintage, Rent & Swap, etc.)	Never	25
	Occasionally	25
	Sometimes	21
	Often	23
	Always	6
I consider the environmental and social impact of my apparel products purchases	Strongly Disagree	6
	Disagree	16
	Neutral	24
	Agree	39
	Strongly Agree	25
I consider myself as environmentally responsible	Strongly Disagree	3
	Disagree	12
	Neutral	32
	Agree	44
	Strongly Agree	9

Table 3: Sustainability Marketing responses of participants

Table 3 above shows the responses of participants regarding the third part of the questionnaire dealing with sustainability marketing. The results indicate that 36% of the respondents agree that they can explain what sustainability marketing is in their own words. 40% agree that sustainability marketing influences their purchase

intention towards more sustainable clothes. 53% agree that they would be willing to pay more for clothes made from sustainable sources. 46% agree that they can explain what sustainable fashion is. 34% of the respondents state that they sometimes purchase ethical and ecological fashion. 25% never purchase circular fashion and 25% occasionally purchase circular fashion. 39% agree that they consider the environmental and social impact of their apparel products purchases. Finally, 44% agree they consider themselves as environmentally responsible.

#### 5.2.4.3 Sustainable Fast Fashion Marketing

Sustainable fast fashion marketing		Percentage
I am aware of the existence of sustainable ranges of items promoted by fast fashion brands	Strongly Disagree	14
	Disagree	12
	Neutral	16
	Agree	42
	Strongly Agree	16
Sustainability is important to me in terms of the choices I make as a consumer when shopping with fast fashion brands	Strongly Disagree	2
	Disagree	16
	Neutral	29
	Agree	37
	Strongly Agree	16
I am more likely to shop with fast fashion brands who promote more sustainable choices	Strongly Disagree	6
	Disagree	10
	Neutral	27
	Agree	45
	Strongly Agree	12
I am more likely to buy clothes from sustainable fast fashion ranges than clothes from sustainable brands	Strongly Disagree	11
	Disagree	24
	Neutral	28
	Agree	31

	Strongly Agree	6
I believe that fast fashion brands will commit to their promise of improving their impact on the environment thanks to the development of their sustainable ranges of items	Strongly Disagree	11
	Disagree	19
	Neutral	34
	Agree	31
	Strongly Agree	6
I can explain what greenwashing is in my own words	Strongly Disagree	19
	Disagree	21
	Neutral	13
	Agree	23
	Strongly Agree	24
I investigate about greenwashing practices before purchasing from fast fashion brands	Strongly Disagree	17
	Disagree	35
	Neutral	22
	Agree	16
	Strongly Agree	10

Table 4: Sustainable Fast Fashion Consumption responses of participants

*Table 4* above shows the responses of participants regarding the fourth part of the questionnaire dealing with sustainable fast fashion marketing. The results show that 42% of the respondents agree that they are aware of the existence of sustainable ranges of items promoted by fast fashion brands.

37% agree that sustainability is important to them in terms of the choices they make as consumers when shopping from fast fashion brands.

45% are more likely to shop with fast fashion brands who promote more sustainable choices.

31% of the participants agree on the fact that they are more likely to buy clothes from sustainable fast fashion ranges than clothes from sustainable brands.

34% are neutral in believing that fast fashion brands will commit to their promise of improving their impact on the environment.

24% strongly agree that they can explain what greenwashing is and 35% disagree investigating about greenwashing practices before purchasing from fast fashion brands.

#### 5.2.4.4 Fast fashion purchase motivation

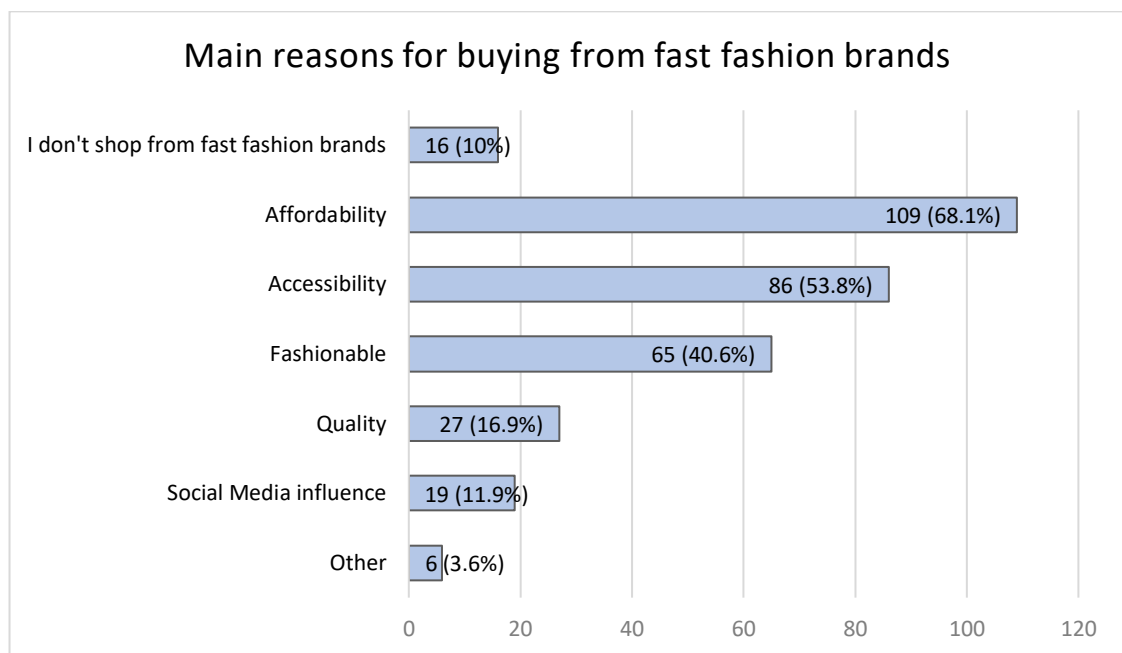


Figure 11: Main reasons for buying from fast fashion brands

According to the results of the survey, Affordability is considered the major motivation factor for buying fast fashion brands. Following is Accessibility with 53.8% of responses and Fashionable reaching 40.6%.

17% of the respondents chose Quality as a factor for buying from fast fashion brands and 12% of them chose Social Media Influence.

10% say they do not shop from fast fashion brands and 3.6% stated other reasons that the ones proposed.

#### 5.2.4.5 Distribution of values

According to Saunders *et al.* (2019), it is necessary to determine the distribution of values for the variables. In this current study, the mean of three variables (fast fashion, sustainability marketing and sustainable fast fashion marketing) was measured using a scale ranging from 1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree.

The results indicate a mean = 12.5, which suggests that respondents showed a moderate level of involvement against fast fashion. A mean = 26.73 is reported for sustainability marketing, which indicates relatively high levels of impact from sustainability marketing in participants. Finally, sustainable fast fashion marketing reveals a mean = 22, which implies a moderately high level of impact from sustainable fast fashion marketing on participants' responses.

In addition to this, the normality of the distribution was evaluated using measures of skewness and kurtosis. These measures values provide information about the distribution of scores for the two groups (Pallant, 2020).

*Table 5* below shows that all values for skewness for the three variables are negative which means that the data for fast fashion, sustainability marketing and sustainable fast fashion marketing are skewed towards negative values (Saunders *et al.*, 2019).

The results of the skewness analysis for all three variables are between  $-0.5$  and  $0.5$ , which indicates that the data are fairly symmetrical. The results of the kurtosis analysis for all three variables are less than 3, which indicates that the distribution is shorter, meaning that the distribution is called 'Platykurtic'. The negative values of kurtosis for fast fashion and sustainability marketing show a relatively flat distribution, and the positive value of kurtosis for sustainable fast fashion marketing indicates a somewhat clustered distribution.

Scale	Mean	Standard deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis
Fast Fashion	12.5	2.5	-.33	-.14
Sustainability Marketing	26.73	5.35	-.001	-.45
Sustainable Fast Fashion Marketing	22	3.92	-.18	1.07

Table 5: Descriptive statistics of questionnaire scales

#### 5.2.4 Inferential Statistics

##### 5.2.4.1 Hypothesis Testing

In order for the hypotheses of this study testing a significant difference between variables to be tested, one-way analysis of variance (one-way ANOVA) has been used. According to Salem Press (2014), ANOVA is defined as a ‘family of statistical techniques that analyse the joint and separate effects of multiple independent variables on a single dependent variable and determine statistical significance of the effect’.

To evaluate the outcomes of the hypotheses testing, the ANOVA F-statistics (*F*-score) and significance degree (probability – *p*-score) are considered. A *p*-value lower than .05 indicates that there is a statistically significant difference between the means of the different variables.

Furthermore, in order for the hypothesis testing a significant relationship between variables to be tested, Chi-Square Test for Association has been used. A *p*-value lower than .05 indicates that there is a statistically significant association between the variables.

**Hypothesis 1:** There is no significant relationship between the awareness of the environmental and social impact of the fast fashion industry and consumers' attitude towards fast fashion.

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	123.226 <sup>a</sup>	52	.000
Likelihood Ratio	76.667	52	.015
Linear-by-Linear Association	14.544	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	160		

a. 58 cells (82.9%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .03.

Table 6: Chi-Square test of Independence – Hypothesis 1

Based on the Chi-Square test results presented in *Table 6*, the Pearson Chi-Square statistic is 123.226 and the  $p$ -value = .000. The likelihood Chi-Square statistic is 76.667 and the  $p$ -value = .015. Therefore, considering that the  $p$ -value is less than the significance level of .05, the null hypothesis ( $H_{01}$ ) is rejected, and it can be concluded that the association between the awareness of the environmental and social impact of the fast fashion industry and consumer attitude towards fast fashion is statistically significant.



**Hypothesis 2:** There is no significant relationship between sustainability marketing and consumer's attitude towards fast fashion

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	258.575 <sup>a</sup>	312	.988
Likelihood Ratio	213.874	312	1.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	.098	1	.754
N of Valid Cases	160		

a. 350 cells (100%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .01.

Table 7: Chi-Square test of Independence – Hypothesis 2

Based on the Chi-Square test results presented in *Table 7*, the Pearson Chi-Square statistic is 258.575 and the  $p$ -value = .988. The likelihood Chi-Square statistic is 213.874 and the  $p$ -value = 1.000. Therefore, considering that the  $p$ -value is greater than the significance level of .05, the null hypothesis ( $H_{02}$ ) has failed to be rejected because there is not enough evidence to conclude that sustainability marketing and consumer attitude towards fast fashion variables are associated.

**Hypothesis 3:** There is no significant relationship between sustainable fast fashion marketing and consumer's attitude towards fast fashion

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	252.227 <sup>a</sup>	286	.926
Likelihood Ratio	181.084	286	1.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	12.800	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	160		

a. 322 cells (100%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .01.

Table 8: Chi-Square test of Independence – Hypothesis 3

Based on the Chi-Square test results presented in *Table 8*, the Pearson Chi-Square statistic is 252.227 and the  $p$ -value = .926. The likelihood Chi-Square statistic is 181.084 and the  $p$ -value = 1.000. Therefore, considering that the  $p$ -value is greater than the significance level of .05, the null hypothesis ( $H_{03}$ ) has failed to be rejected because there is not enough evidence to conclude that sustainable fast fashion marketing and consumer attitude towards fast fashion variables are associated.

**Hypothesis 4:** There is no significant relationship between positive perception of the fast fashion industry and consumers' attitude towards fast fashion

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	123.226 <sup>a</sup>	52	.000
Likelihood Ratio	76.667	52	.015
Linear-by-Linear Association	14.544	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	160		

- a. 58 cells (82.9%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .03.

Table 9: Chi-Square test of Independence – Hypothesis 4

Based on the Chi-Square test results presented in *Table 9*, the Pearson Chi-Square statistic is 123.226 and the  $p$ -value = .000. The likelihood Chi-Square statistic is 76.667 and the  $p$ -value = .015. Therefore, considering that the  $p$ -value is less than the significance level of .05, the null hypothesis ( $H_{04}$ ) is rejected, and it can be concluded that the association between positive perception of the fast fashion industry and consumer attitude towards fast fashion is statistically significant.

**Hypothesis 5:** There is no significant difference between the five age groups in terms of attitude towards fast fashion

ANOVA					
Types	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	39.028	4	9.757	1.584	<b>0.181</b>
Within Groups	954.966	155	6.161		
Total	993.994	159			

Table 10: Analysis of Variance test – Hypothesis 5

Based on the ANOVA results ( $F(4, 155)=1.584, p=.181$ ) from *Table 10*, the  $p$ -value is greater than the .05 alpha level. This means that the variance is near-marginal significance. Therefore, the  $p$ -value is not statistically significant and indicates strong evidence for the null hypothesis. Consequently, the null hypothesis ( $H_{05}$ ) has failed to be rejected.

## Chapter 6: Discussion

### 6.1 Study objective

The main objective of this research is to investigate the relationship between consumer's awareness of sustainability marketing and their fast fashion consumption pattern. To do so, three variables, namely: fast fashion, sustainability marketing and sustainable fast fashion marketing were used. Five hypotheses were proposed and tested using analysis of variance (ANOVA) and Chi-Square test for Independence in order to evaluate respectively, the differences among means of the variables and the association between the variables.

This chapter will provide a discussion and an overview of the main findings of this research in order to determine whether they fit previous research. In addition to this, the implications and limitations of this current study will be disclosed.

### 6.2 Discussion of findings

- Awareness of the environmental and social impact of the fast fashion industry

This study proposes that the awareness of the environmental and social impact of the fast fashion industry has no relationship with consumer attitude towards fast fashion which suggests that the awareness does not necessarily impacts consumer attitude towards fast fashion. However, based on the findings of Pereira *et al.* (2021) have previously referred to in their work. For instance, (Kong *et al.*, 2021; Neumann *et al.*, 2020; Hassan *et al.*, 2016) have identified the gap that exists between consumer attitude towards fast fashion industry and their actual purchasing behaviour that do not translate into actual action in favour of more environmental and more ethical purchases. Indeed, although the environmental and social issues seem to gain importance in consumer decision making, it seems that some barriers still exist and are sometimes difficult to overcome in order to turn attitudes into concrete actions.

- Sustainability marketing

The current paper used several questions asking the participants about sustainability marketing. The responses collected allowed the researcher to obtain more information about the level of awareness of sustainability marketing of participants and about their attitude towards it.

The results of the hypothesis testing concluded that there is not enough evidence to assume that there is a significant association between sustainability marketing and consumer attitude towards fast fashion. Even though the concept of sustainability marketing has gained popularity, it seems that consumers are still reluctant in trusting sustainability marketing actions. In line with the claims of do Paço *et al.* (2012), the increase and acceleration of communication around sustainability sometimes seems to have the opposite effect and raise consumer scepticism towards sustainability marketing. This can be explained by the still fragile and limited knowledge of what sustainability marketing really is. Indeed, even though a majority of the participants (36%) to the questionnaire 'Agree' being able to explain what sustainability marketing is, 43% of the respondents say they either 'Disagree' or are 'Neutral' as a response to this same question.

This is consistent with the work of Kemper *et al.* (2019) who states that the concept of sustainability is still 'understudied and contested' and with the work of McDonagh *et al.* (2014) who state that, despite the considerable amount of research that has been made about this concept, researchers are still unsure about the clear definition of sustainability marketing.

- Sustainable fast fashion marketing

The findings shows that there is not enough evidence to support the fact that there is an association between sustainable fast fashion marketing and consumer attitude towards fast fashion. The data contributes a clearer understanding of Stringer *et al.* (2020)'s thought that as a response to the rise in concerns associated with the fast fashion industry, many fast fashion brands have started to introduce 'ethical fast fashion brands' in order to address environmental and ethical concerns of consumers and to win back consumers who have turned their backs on fast fashion brands.

Furthermore, according to the responses of the questionnaire, most participants are 'Neutral' in the trust placed in fast fashion companies to meet environmental and ethical commitments. This can be explained by the increase in greenwashing practices which tends to damage consumer confidence in the sustainable marketing actions of fast fashion brands (Delmas *et al.*, 2011). However, even though the majority of respondents (24%) of the questionnaire 'Strongly Agree' being able to explain what greenwashing is, the responses show that a majority of them (35%) 'Disagree' investigating about greenwashing practices before purchasing from fast fashion brands.

- Positive perception of fast fashion

The data suggests that the association between positive perception of the fast fashion industry and consumer attitude towards fast fashion is statistically significant. Indeed, based on the findings, more than half of the total number of respondents (51%) either 'Disagree' or 'Strongly Disagree' considering fast fashion as a positive trait of the fashion industry. On the other hand, 30% of respondents are 'Neutral' and only 19% of respondents either 'Agree' or 'Strongly Agree' as a response to the same question. These results suggest that the more people perceive fast fashion as a positive trait of the fashion industry, the more their attitude towards fast fashion will be impacted in a positive way.

- Age categories

According to the results, it appears that there is strong evidence in favour of the hypothesis that there is no significant difference between the means of the two variables.

The results somehow contradict the claims of Jain (2019) that the competitive prices offered by fast fashion brands tend to be more attractive to young consumers. Indeed, it seems that fast fashion is not only for the budget conscious but also for people who want to have a large and diverse wardrobe or for shopping enthusiasts. The responses of the questionnaire proved that fast fashion attracts all age groups. Furthermore, the work of Gazzola *et al.* (2020) highlighted that a report from PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) has demonstrated that the youngest generations (i.e., Millennials and Generation Z) are the most willing to pay higher prices for responsible products which suggests that people aged under 38 might be the group of people with the highest aversion to the fast fashion model, which, once more, is not in accordance with the findings of this hypothesis testing.

### 6.3 Limitations of the study

The study presents several limitations that the researcher has highlighted and that can be discussed. This current study has provided some interesting knowledge about the impact that sustainability marketing at large can have on consumers' attitude towards fast fashion. Nonetheless, this research presents some limitations. One of the main limitations with which the researcher was faced was the limited sample size, especially in terms of age diversity, which would have allowed a better overview and understanding about consumer attitude among different age groups. Indeed, most respondents were students or young people, which does not represent a major part of the global population. In addition to this, the online distribution of the questionnaire may have limited the participation of an older population for whom access to the internet may be more restricted.

Furthermore, the recent nature of sustainability marketing has made the analysis of relevant theories and concepts somewhat challenging for the researcher.



## Chapter 7: Conclusion and Recommendations

### 7.1 Conclusion

This study contributes to the knowledge of sustainability marketing and fast fashion and provided some insights about the relationship between these two terms, usually seen as contradictory. The purpose of this research was to establish how sustainability marketing at large impacts consumer attitude towards fast fashion.

The author of this research work utilised a descriptive survey research design using quantitative approach. The data was collected using an online Google Form survey to recruit participants. The sample size reached 160 respondents, men and women of all age groups, all education levels, and all countries. All participants have different relationships to fast fashion consumption and the information collected allowed the researcher to test the hypotheses that were put forward.

The study found a statistically significant relationship between positive perception of the fast fashion industry and consumer attitude towards fast fashion, and between the awareness of the environmental and social impact of the fast fashion industry and consumer attitude towards fast fashion.

However, there was not enough evidence to confirm the existence of a statistically significant relationship between sustainability marketing, sustainable fast fashion marketing and consumer attitude towards fast fashion, and not enough evidence either to confirm the existence of significant difference between all five age groups in terms of attitude towards fast fashion. Indeed, these tests did not reach statistical significance, and these assertions could not be supported.

Based on this study, it has been demonstrated that even though consumers are getting increasingly aware of the impact that fast fashion can have on an environmental and social point of view, giving up the consumption of fast fashion products is not yet possible for everyone. Indeed, to answer the research question of this research study which was the following: *Does awareness of sustainability marketing decrease people's propensity to buy fast fashion?*, it can be said that,

despite the rise in marketing actions in favour of more sustainability and ethics, behaviour do not follow attitude and there is still too large a gap for sustainability marketing to have an impact on consumer attitude towards fast fashion. The lack of popularisation and the newness of the concept of sustainability does not yet encourage the majority of the population to change their consumption habits in terms of apparel products. Furthermore, the fast fashion model has been so strongly entrenched in modern society for many years that it makes it all more difficult for consumers to shift their way of consumption.

In order for sustainability marketing to have a real impact on decreasing the global consumption of fast fashion products, it would be necessary to make this concept clearer and more understandable so that it can become more widely known. In the current situation, it cannot be argued that the awareness of sustainability marketing decreases people's propensity to buy fast fashion.

## 7.2 Recommendations for future research

To Quinlan (2011), the recommendations of the study are 'courses of actions that the researcher recommends based on the findings of the research and the conclusions drawn from those findings'. After concluding this research and acknowledging its limitations, there are also several areas for further development. Indeed, given that the growing interest in sustainability is still emerging, it can be considered that the timing of this current research may have affected the results. Therefore, future researcher who wish to study sustainability marketing in more depth will benefit from doing so in a few years' time, when the concept is more popular, and consumers are more used and sensitive to it. This will allow for more objective results considering that a larger number of participants may be familiar with this notion. In addition to this, further studies can be done by focusing on a generation aspect of fast fashion consumption, or on an educational level aspect of sustainability marketing to compare different parts of the population.

# Appendices

## Appendix 1

### Assessing global awareness of sustainability marketing: the impact on people's attitude towards fast fashion.

Dear Sir/Madam,

This survey is being carried out to collect data on the research topic: ASSESSING GLOBAL SUSTAINABILITY MARKETING AWARENESS: THE IMPACT ON PEOPLE'S ATTITUDE TOWARDS FAST FASHION.

Please answer the questions freely and note that you will not be identified from the information you provide throughout this survey.

ALL THE INFORMATION YOU PROVIDE WILL BE TREATED IN THE STRICTEST CONFIDENCE. YOUR DECISION TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS RESEARCH IS ENTIRELY VOLUNTARY.

The questionnaire should take about five minutes to complete.

Please write your answers in the given spaces and tick in the given boxes the option that best answers the question(s).

*\*Required*

#### Part 1: Demographics

1. What is your gender? \*

*Mark only one oval.*

- ☐ Male  
☐ Female  
☐ Non-binary  
☐ Prefer not to say

2. In what age category are you in? \*

*Mark only one oval.*

☐ 18-24

☐ 25-34

☐ 35-44

☐ 45-54

☐ 55+

3. What is your nationality? \*

---

4. Which category best describes your professional status? (check all that apply) \*

*Tick all that apply.*

☐ Employed

☐ Self-employed

☐ Unemployed, looking for a job

☐ Unemployed, not looking for a job

☐ Student

☐ Retired

Other: ☐ \_\_\_\_\_

5. What is the highest level of education or degree you have achieved? (Or are pursuing now)

*Mark only one oval.*

- ☐ Less than high school diploma
- ☐ High school diploma or equivalent
- ☐ Higher education, but no degree
- ☐ University Bachelor's degree
- ☐ University Master's degree
- ☐ PhD
- ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

6. What is your annual income? \*

\_\_\_\_\_

#### Part 2: Fast fashion

7. I can explain what fast fashion is in my own words.

*Mark only one oval.*

- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly Agree

The term 'fast fashion' is used to describe low-cost clothing collections that mimic current fashion trends (e.g., H&M, Zara, Primark, Topshop, Forever 21, Fashion Nova etc.)

8. How often do you shop from fast fashion brands?

*Mark only one oval.*

- ☐ Never
- ☐ Occasionally
- ☐ Sometimes
- ☐ Often
- ☐ Always

9. What are your main reasons for buying from said brands? \*

*Tick all that apply.*

- ☐ I don't shop from fast fashion brands
- ☐ Affordability
- ☐ Accessibility
- ☐ Fashionable
- ☐ Quality
- ☐ Social Media Influence

Other: ☐ \_\_\_\_\_

10. I consider fast fashion as a positive trait of the fashion industry. \*

*Mark only one oval.*

- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly Agree

11. I am well informed on the social and environmental impact of the fast fashion industry. \*

*Mark only one oval.*

- ☐ Strongly Disagree  
☐ Disagree  
☐ Neutral  
☐ Agree  
☐ Strongly Agree

### Part 3: Sustainability Marketing

12. I can explain what sustainability marketing is in my own words. \*

*Mark only one oval.*

- ☐ Strongly Disagree  
☐ Disagree  
☐ Neutral  
☐ Agree  
☐ Strongly Agree

Sustainability marketing is the promotion of environmental and socially responsible products, practices, and brand values.

13. Sustainability marketing influences my purchase intention towards more sustainable cloth (e.g., ethical, second-hand etc.) \*

*Mark only one oval.*

- ☐ Strongly Disagree  
☐ Disagree  
☐ Neutral  
☐ Agree  
☐ Strongly Agree

14. I would be willing to pay more for clothes made from sustainable resources (e.g., good working conditions for the workers, recycled textile fibres, environmentally friendly, fair wage?) \*

*Mark only one oval.*

- ☐ Strongly Disagree  
☐ Disagree  
☐ Neutral  
☐ Agree  
☐ Strongly Agree

15. I can explain what sustainable fashion is in my own words (Ethical brands, second-hand, upcycling, renting etc.) \*

*Mark only one oval.*

- ☐ Strongly Disagree  
☐ Disagree  
☐ Neutral  
☐ Agree  
☐ Strongly Agree



16. I purchase ethical and ecological fashion (On Demand & Custom Made, High quality and timeless design, Fair & Ethical brands, Upcycled items etc.) \*

*Mark only one oval.*

- ☐ Never  
☐ Occasionally  
☐ Sometimes  
☐ Often  
☐ Always

17. I purchase circular fashion (Second-hand, Vintage, Rent & Swap etc.) \*

*Mark only one oval.*

- ☐ Never  
☐ Occasionally  
☐ Sometimes  
☐ Often  
☐ Always

18. I consider the environmental and social impact of my apparel products purchases. \*

*Mark only one oval.*

- ☐ Strongly Disagree  
☐ Disagree  
☐ Neutral  
☐ Agree  
☐ Strongly Agree

19. I consider myself as environmentally responsible. \*

*Mark only one oval.*

- ☐ Strongly Disagree  
☐ Disagree  
☐ Neutral  
☐ Agree  
☐ Strongly Agree

#### Part 4: Sustainable fast fashion marketing

20. I am aware of the existence of sustainable ranges of items promoted by fast fashion brands (e.g., H&M Conscious, Zara Join Life, ASOS Green Room, Boohoo's for the Future etc.) \*

*Mark only one oval.*

- ☐ Strongly Disagree  
☐ Disagree  
☐ Neutral  
☐ Agree  
☐ Strongly Agree

21. Sustainability is important to me in terms of the choices I make as a consumer when shopping with fast fashion brands. \*

*Mark only one oval.*

- ☐ Strongly Disagree  
☐ Disagree  
☐ Neutral  
☐ Agree  
☐ Strongly Agree

22. I am more likely to shop with fast fashion brands who promote more sustainable choices.

*Mark only one oval.*

- ☐ Strongly Disagree  
☐ Disagree  
☐ Neutral  
☐ Agree  
☐ Strongly Agree

23. I am more likely to buy clothes from sustainable fast fashion ranges (e.g., H&M Conscious etc.) than clothes from sustainable brands (e.g., Patagonia etc.) \*

*Mark only one oval.*

- ☐ Strongly Disagree  
☐ Disagree  
☐ Neutral  
☐ Agree  
☐ Strongly Agree

24. I believe that fast fashion brands will commit to their promise of improving their impact on the environment thanks to the development of their sustainable ranges of items. \*

*Mark only one oval.*

- ☐ Strongly disagree  
☐ Disagree  
☐ Neutral  
☐ Agree  
☐ Strongly agree

25. I can explain what 'greenwashing' is in my own words. \*

*Mark only one oval.*

- ☐ Strongly Disagree  
☐ Disagree  
☐ Neutral  
☐ Agree  
☐ Strongly Agree

Greenwashing is a communication and marketing strategy adopted by companies or other organizations which consists in putting forward ecological arguments in order to forge an ecologically responsible image among the public. Nevertheless, the reality of the facts does not correspond, or corresponds insufficiently, to the content of the messages shared.

26. I investigate about greenwashing practices before purchasing from fast fashion brands. \*

*Mark only one oval.*

- ☐ Strongly Disagree  
☐ Disagree  
☐ Neutral  
☐ Agree  
☐ Strongly Agree

Thank  
you!

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. If you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact me via email: [x20101392@student.ncirl.ie](mailto:x20101392@student.ncirl.ie)

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