



What influences the decision of consumers to purchase sustainable fashion?

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Anotace

Bakalářská práce se zabývá spotřebitelským chováním v oblasti udržitelné módy. Předmětem zkoumání je vztah mezi rozhodnutím spotřebitele ke koupi udržitelného produktu v souvislosti s několika uvedenými faktory. Těmi faktory jsou ochota zaplatit vyšší cenu za udržitelný produkt, povědomí spotřebitelů o sociální i environmentální újmě způsobené módním průmyslem. Dále také přesvědčení spotřebitelů o důležitosti udržitelného chování firem a demografické faktory, kterými jsou pohlaví, věk a zaměstnání. Data byla sbírána pomocí online dotazníku, který byl distribuován přes sociální síť Facebook. Sesbíraná data byla následně vyhodnocena pomocí několika statistických metod (t-test, ANOVA a regresivní analýza). Vztah mezi věkem spotřebitele, ochotou zaplatit vyšší cenu za udržitelnou módu, povědomím o újmě na životním prostředí, přesvědčením spotřebitelů o důležitosti udržitelného chování firem a finálním rozhodnutím ke koupi udržitelné módy byl potvrzen. Oproti tomu vztah mezi věkem spotřebitele, zaměstnáním a povědomím o sociální újmě způsobené módním průmyslem byl zamítnut. Bakalářská práce je zakončena shrnutím s diskuzí a doporučením pro další výzkum.

Klíčová slova

Udržitelnost, módní průmysl, spotřebitel, nákupní chování.

Annotation

The dissertation aims to study the relationship between consumers' willingness to pay premium money for sustainable fashion, consumers' awareness of environmental and social harm caused by the fashion industry and last the consumers' belief that to behave according to the ethical standards is a companies' obligation with the decision to purchase sustainable fashion. Moreover, the relationship between demographics factors and the decision to buy sustainable fashion is examined. In order to collect the data, an online questionnaire was chosen as a best suited method which was distributed through Facebook. Findings were analysed with the use of several statistical methods, particularly t-test, ANOVA, and regression analysis. The relationship between consumers' age, willingness to pay premium money, awareness of the environmental issues, and the belief that companies should behave ethically were confirmed. Although, the relationship between consumers' gender, employment status, and awareness of the ethical issues was rejected. The dissertation then concludes with discussion limitations and recommendations for future research.

Key words

Sustainability, fashion industry, consumer, purchasing behaviour.

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Introduction

Sustainability is not a new movement, but it has been studied since 1960 when consumers started to put more focus on the protection of the environment (Henninger, Alevizou, Goworek, & Ryding, 2017). Currently, people put more focus on sustainability in business. They try to find a balance between environmental and business needs besides they feel pressure from the public and build a good relationship between three main assumptions: economic growth, social equity, and respect for the environment. This is supported by the triple bottom line which talks about business achievement as a successful harmony between economic, social, and environmental principles. The environmental principle is about behaving environmental-friendly. The social principle involves treating everyone fairly. The last principle of sustainability is a bit different than the other two it is the principle of sustainability in the economic sector (Caniato, Caridi, Crippa, & Moretto, 2012).

Forty million people are employed in the fashion industry and it makes the fashion industry one of the biggest industries across the globe and it is a very important part of the economy in some countries for example the UK. Nowadays it is obvious that such a huge industry causes harm to the environment as well (Farley & Hill, 2015). In the UK, the fashion industry is one of the biggest contributors to the British economy, accounting for £26 billion per year. The fashion industry makes 2% of the world's Gross Domestic Product which is about £2.5 trillion. This confirms the fashion industry is a huge part of everyday life because one in every six people works in the industry (Henninger et al., 2017). At the same time, fashion industry is the second biggest water polluter worldwide (Muthu & Gardetti, 2016). The fashion production uses a lot of chemicals mainly for dyeing, drying and that cause harm to the environment. Another problem is a huge water consumption during production (Caniato et al., 2012).

Furthermore, there is an issue with unethical practices in fashion production (Haug & Busch, 2016). These problems are closely linked with the trend of fast fashion. Fast fashion is not sustainable in the long term. Fast fashion is about to offering new products to the market as fast as possible thanks to cutting the time of production, distribution, and consumption. Fashion trends from catwalks reach fashion chain stores all over the world in a few weeks so they can be purchased by a wide range of consumers. Fast fashion brands

try to make consumers think they need to keep buying new clothes to stay trendy. Big producers of fast fashion are for example Primark, Zara, Topshop, or H&M (Choi, 2014). The production is mainly focused on a low cost and these practices can and usually hurt the environment through water pollution, water consumption, and carbon footprint. Humans and animals who are part of the process also do not have fair and ethical conditions. Workers in the fashion industry do not have fair working conditions especially in developing countries where almost three-quarters of the world's fashion products are made. Working places with horrible working conditions are known as sweatshops or sweat factories (Haug & Busch, 2016). Workers in sweatshops usually do not get paid even minimum wage. Another unethical practice in the industry has been employing child labour (Farley, Hill, 2015). The public has started to pay more attention to the ethical problems in the fashion industry after one of the biggest disasters which happened in April 2013 in Bangladesh. When fashion factory Rana Plaza collapsed, and 1100 people died there. The collapse was caused by unsatisfactory safety conditions in the factory where was the production of a lot of famous brands such as Zara or H&M (Muthu & Gardetti, 2016). What is known about the disaster is that the buildings were not designed as factories but as offices and had been illegally extended. By the cause of the extension in the factory, there were not enough exits and some of them were just commonly blocked (Press & Wilson, 2016)

Sustainable fashion is also known as an eco-fashion, ecological, ethical, organic, recycled, and green. In comparison to the fast fashion sustainable fashion avoids these practices whose harms planet or human and animals which are involved in the production, on the other hand, the ones have fair conditions (Haug & Busch, 2016). The term sustainable fashion is also connected with social responsibility. In the production of sustainable fashion is usually used organic cotton, recycled materials. Moreover, sustainable fashion use sweatshop-free production. Sustainable fashion has been more popular over the past decade because companies and customers as well have realized the importance of sustainability which is supported by the fact that customers are willing to pay more for fair trade or eco products (Pookulangara & Shephard, 2013). Another important part of the sustainable fashion business is the logistics of products. Sustainable retailing is connected with green transportation and green store operations such as recycling or waste reduction. By green transportation is meant for example which produces lesser amount of emissions and effluents (Yang, Song & Tong, 2017).

A number of customers who prefer to buy sustainable fashion instead of fast fashion increases (Dickson, 2001). Customers are more informed about the production and they are aware of the materials from which their clothes are made. Most fashion brands use toxic chemicals for production, and it can also cause a problem for the ones who wear it (Paulins & Hillery, 2009). Still, a lot of customers do not have the information, so they do not see the reason why to pay more for ethical fashion. To promote ethical business ethical brands must educate customers about these practices. (Shen, Wang, Lo & Shum, 2012). Usually, customers who have pro-environmental behaviour tend to buy more ethical products than non-ethical. A pro-environmental attitude means that people pay attention to the needs of others and protect the planet. It is also supported by the fact that a lot of customers of ethical fashion are interested in volunteering or donating (Guedes, Paillard-Bardey & Schat, 2020). Even though customers have ethical values they do not always follow those values in their every day behaviour. Quite often there are differences between what they say and the final situation at the checkout counter (Haug & Busch, 2016). An improvement of rising interest in sustainable fashion is the situation in Finland in 2009 showed that 63% of asked customers are interested in ethical and green products. On the other hand, only 21% agreed that their purchasing behaviour is ethical (Caniato, Caridi, Crippa & Moretto, 2012).

The goal of the dissertation is to introduce sustainability in the fashion industry, sustainability in general, differences between fast fashion and ethical (sustainable) fashion. The problems of fast fashion and ethical fashion as a kind of solution to the problems will be analysed. The aim of the research is to find what is consumers' purchasing decision process like in the case of fashion. The research analyses the relationship of the willingness to pay a higher price for sustainable fashion and the consumers' awareness with the consumers' decision to buy sustainable fashion. In order to fulfil the main aim of this research, several objectives need to be assessed.

Those then are (1) the identification of the main decisive factor for customers in purchasing fashion. Secondly, (2) the consumers' perspective on specific problems in the fashion industry such as sweatshops and environmental harm. Lastly, (3) how the consumer is influenced by knowing and sustainable fashion in the purchasing decision making will be evaluated. Quantitative research will be carried out, during which the questionnaire is used as a main data collection method to meet the answers to the questions. The results will be further presented.

This dissertation is further organized as follows. The next chapter, literature review, provides an overview of literature focusing on chosen problematic, provides mainly definitions and theoretical background. Further in this chapter conceptual model and 7 hypotheses are presented. The second chapter, methodology, compares quantitative and quantitative research, outlines the philosophy of the research, explains methods used, and reason for choosing them. The next chapter show s research findings that are more detailed discussed in the fifth chapter. Later, the summary of the whole dissertation is provided as strong as the limitations of the research and recommendation for future research.

1 Literature Review

The following chapter aims to introduce sustainability in general, the fashion industry, the main differences between sustainable fashion and fast fashion, the consumers' purchasing behaviour universally, in the case of fashion, and also factors influencing the purchasing behaviour. In the chapter hypotheses and conceptual model are built as well. The first section presents the review of sustainability literature, presenting existing definitions of sustainability and different concepts of this topic. The second section introduces the literature background of the fashion industry and information about the social and environmental harm which is caused by fast fashion, next shows principles of sustainable fashion. The third section of the literature review focuses on consumers' behaviour in general, on sustainable fashion purchasing behaviour and mainly on factors influencing the purchasing behaviour. Last, the conceptual model is built and presented.

1.1 Defining Sustainability

In the literature, sustainability is defined as *"...sustainability demands ways of living, working and being that enable all people of the world to lead healthy, fulfilling, and economically secure lives without destroying the environment and without endangering the future welfare of people and the planet"* (Santillo, 2007, p. 62). Another possible definition is: *"Sustainability demands turning and charting a new course that will improve the quality of our lives and the lives of our children while restoring the gift of natural systems upon which our lives depend"* (Santillo, 2007, p. 62).

Thiele (2016) says that to behave sustainable means to meet needs without causing harm to future welfare. Since climate change is a serious issue the term sustainability is being one of the most used words because people are more under pressure from climate issues. And unsustainable lifestyle, economies, technologies, and social practices are tightly connected with the harming of the environment. Easier to say what sustainability represents is to say what sustainability is not. Behaviour of an institution is not sustainable if they sabotage the social, economic, or environmental conditions of its viability. Unsustainable behaving ends by collapse sooner or later. An example of unsustainable behaviour is a case when a company extracts water from rivers and lakes faster than nature can take care of it by recharging it by rain or snow (Thiele, 2016).

The truth is that everything humans do has a future impact across the generations, borders, or the globe and it is dependent on everybody what the impact is. The protection of the environment and natural resources is a huge part of sustainability, but it has to be in harmony with economic needs, cultivate economic opportunities, and social needs as well. Because even though if a business has ecological practices but it is not profitable and there is no money to pay employees well the business is not sustainable. This is supported by the fact of three pillars society, ecology, and economy, or of people, planet, and profit. The point is that all of these three aspects has to stand or fall together. There is no way that two of them are working well without the third one (Thiele, 2016).

In general terms, sustainable production can be defined as a way of producing new goods without causing any harm to the environment, workers, or animals. The production that uses non-polluting methods, that conserve energy and natural resources, that respects human and animal rights, and create a safe and fair workplace (Glavič & Lukman, 2007).

Moreover, the term sustainability is also linked to the stakeholder theory. The literature says that stakeholder theory leads to more successful management. In the last 40 years, a stakeholder approach has been recognized, since the companies have put more interest in the intangible capital, predominantly human capital. In other words, since the companies have started to be more interested in social and environmental issues. Moreover, the social, environmental accounting and reporting have been developed. Thus, it makes a company more interact with the stakeholders. According to the instrumental stakeholder theory, the company is more sustainable and successful when the managers take care of the stakeholders. The key mechanism of how a company can build a relationship with the stakeholders is being active in social responsibility context (Bellucci & Manetti, 2018).

In the case of sustainability there are three principles (dimensions) observed. Those then are economic, environmental, and social or differently profit, planet, and people. And this model called the triple bottom line was coined by Elkington (1997) (Alhaddi, 2015). According to the principle, a successful business should be defined not only by their financial performance but also by their impact on the environment, society, and economy. Basic measures for the three elements are shown in Table 1 (Strähle, 2016). The economic line which includes sales, profit, etc. (see Table 1) shows how is the economic system influenced by the business practices of the particular company. It demonstrates the relationship between the growth of the company with the growth of the economy with the purpose to survive and to evolve into the future for the next generations. The environmental line focuses on the company's behaviour in the context of sustainability of using energy resources and in general on the behaviour which does not harm the environment in order to maintain good conditions for life for future generations. The last part of the triple bottom lines is the social line. Goel (2010) explains social line as a relationship between the organization and the community. In other words, it means that company or organization is sustainable when they pay fair wages to their employees, they are able to arrange healthy and safe working conditions and they are behaving according to the human rights (Alhaddi, 2015).

Table 1 The triple bottom line

	Economic	Environmental	Social
Typical measures	Sales, profit, ROI	Pollutant emitted	Health and safety record
	Taxes paid	Carbon footprint	Community impacts
	Monetary flows	Recycling and reuse	Human rights, privacy
	Jobs created	Water and energy use	Product responsibility
	Supplier relations	Product impacts	Employee relations

Source: Strähle (2016) Savitz, Weber (2013)

1.2 Fashion industry

The fashion industry has been indicated as being one of the most polluting in the world. Every year 80 billion pieces of clothing are sold in the world. At the same time, a huge amount of textile is discarded (Allwood & University of Cambridge, 2006). Fashion companies have been criticized for decades for behaviour that hurts the environment and human health by producing high levels of carbon dioxide, poor working conditions, excessive waste, and chemical consumption (Morgan & Ross, 2015).

1.2.1 Fast fashion

The term fast fashion is generally understood to mean cheaply produced items available to a wide range of consumers for low prices. Producers of fast fashion are under the pressure to keep their prices extremely low to make a success in the global market in the case of fast fashion. And thanks to that consumers are able to more consume the clothes. At the same time, the large consumption causes the carousel to accelerate positive feedback: faster consumption leads to cheaper production. The garments are not only designed and sewn so that they will not be worn after a short time. Globalization makes it possible to produce garments in countries with a relatively cheaper workforce (Heuer & Becker-Leifhold, 2018).

Catriona Macnab (2018) provides several facts about fast fashion. First of all, companies that launch new products to the market in less than 6 months, precisely between 3 and 6 months are producers of fast fashion. Even in China they make new products in one week which is extremely fast. In the case of the time of production, fast fashion companies work very fast and close to the season. Catriona Macnab (2018) comes to the conclusion that also these extremes are driven mainly by customers. Since the customers want constantly new products and as fast as possible (Blaszczyk & Wubs, 2018).

Luz Claudio (2007) claims that fast fashion chains are aimed primarily at young girls who go shopping several times a month to keep the trends. The literature investigates fast fashion brands such as Zara, H&M, and Topshop. These brands have really fast production. Data shows that Zara launches with new products twice a week. Besides, Zara is referred to as the biggest fashion brand across the globe. The second biggest player in the industry with fast fashion is H&M. The next brand is Topshop which injects 7000 new garment styles per year (Press & Wilson, 2016).

The fashion industry is facing massive overproduction what shows the data given in the documentary 'The True Cost'. In the U.S. is the waste of textile 82 pounds per person in one year and 11 million tons of textile is waste in the U.S. alone (Morgan & Ross, 2015).

Social harm

According to the documentary 'The True Cost' most of the garment's factories are located in China, Bangladesh but also in Haiti. The main reason why is the massive production located in these countries is cheap labour. The gigantic fast fashion companies abuse the needs of people there to get a job. Although, it can seem like a good thing that fashion companies offer jobs to people in these countries, it is not. The companies pay only the minimum wage and sometimes even less that is the minimum wage given by law (Morgan & Ross, 2015). Besides the extremely low wage, the fast fashion industry has much more unethical practices even though the fashion industry is one of the most labour dependent industries in the world (Press & Wilson, 2016). This problem is tightly connected with the fact that the pressure on the fashion market to cut the prices down is big, Hence, the fast fashion tends to be cheap. So, fast fashion brands thanks to these unethical practices can produce a huge amount of clothes for very cheap prices. Thus, they try to make the consumer think they can afford and they want to buy more clothes more often (Choi, 2014).

One of the biggest proofs of failure to provide safe working conditions was already mentioned disaster in Bangladesh. But many problems with unsafe working conditions are observed also in Cambodia, India, Vietnam, China, India, Brazil, or Mexico (Heuer & Becker-Leifhold, 2018).

Environmental harm

In recent years there has been considerable interest in the protection of the environment because of growing observation of climate change and the fashion industry is one of the biggest polluters in the world. Fashion production and later the transportation of goods is one of the many industries that cause large carbon footprints (Hancock & Peirson-Smith, 2019).

The fashion industry also covers a wide range of steps from primary raw material to the final product. Because of their complexity, they have very broad impacts on the environment. The steps of the product range from the effects of material production, dyeing, sewing, through the effects of using clothing to the problems of disposal. For example, the production of polyester and other synthetic materials requires high energy inputs. Moreover, these materials are made of oil and its derivatives that are obtained from non-renewable sources (Claudio, 2007).

Next, during the textile production in addition to overusing energy, water, and chemicals are overusing as well (Hancock & Peirson-Smith, 2019). United States is according to the USDA largest exporter of cotton. However, cotton is one of the most favourite and popular clothing fibres, the process of growing cotton is one of the most pesticide and water dependent crops. The industry uses pesticides and other chemicals to keep the price low and production high. After, most of the grown cotton is being exported to China and other countries with cheap labour (Claudio, 2007).

Thanks to the eco-fashion movement amount of sustainably grown materials such as cotton, bamboo that has been grown with fewer pesticides, irrigation, and other inputs have increased. According to the Organic Trade Association in 2004, the sale of organic cotton grew by an estimated 23% over the previous year. Moreover, sales fashion for women made of organic cotton grew by 33%. Even though at the time organic cotton represented just 0,03% of the worldwide production of cotton (Claudio, 2007).

Every year 80 billion pieces of clothing are sold in the world. At the same time, a huge amount of textile is discarded (Allwood & University of Cambridge, 2006). In addition to that the world is facing excessive textile waste. As it is mentioned above the production of fast fashion is enormous so the chance that every piece of clothes will be used is not possible. LeBlanc (2017) published information that the amount of textile waste that ends in landfills is counted to 15 million tons per year. While some materials can be recycled or decomposed, further treatment and treatment of materials, as well as the manufacture of blended fabrics, makes recycling more difficult. For example, in the U.S., textiles are said to represent 5% of the total waste (Heuer & Becker-Leifhold, 2018).

1.2.2 Sustainable fashion

It is difficult to define sustainable fashion with one term. The concept of sustainable fashion encompasses several terms such as organic, green, fair, slow, ecological (Haug & Busch, 2016). Joergens (2006) describes sustainable fashion as a fashion that does not cause harm to the environment and workers, a fashion that has fair trade principles and provides sweatshop-free conditions. In the literature, there are differences in using the term ethical and sustainable in the case of fashion (Shen et al., 2012). Some authors use both these terms for the same garments or company, as synonyms. Sue Thomas (2017) claims that there is a difference between sustainable fashion and ethical fashion. She describes sustainability as continuing or preserving something and it is being connected with protecting the environment but also with human rights, and social justice. However, sustainability has been built on the structure of ethics (Thomas, 2017).

The sustainable clothes would be made of a material that is renewable and has grown without using pesticides and any other chemical. The clothes would be made by workers who have fair and safe working conditions – fair wages, acceptable working hours, safety environment, without force, and without child labour. And last but not least with gender equality. Finally, the clothes would be possible to recycle or compost. To achieve this process of making fashion the industry players who are fashion brands but also costumers need to act. If the transportation of the product is counting so it means that the more local product means more sustainable products (Hancock & Peirson-Smith, 2019).

A Czech company called Circlle is a good example of a sustainable fashion brand. Brand's environmental standards are high, their products are made almost only of organic materials for example their denim is made of 100% organic material, moreover recycled material (CIRCLLE, 2019-20). Another example of a sustainable fashion brand is the French footwear brand Veja. The company produces sneakers made of organic cotton, natural rubber, and offers vegan collections. They have the Fairtrade certificate as well (Veja, 2020).

Buying clothes in second hands instead of in the fast fashion stores is another way of sustainable purchasing since a lot of pieces of clothes already exist and this gives them the second chance being used. By buying second hand fashion consumers are able to reduce the harmful impact of the production on the environment and society (Ferraro, Sands & Brace – Govan, 2016).

1.3 Consumers' purchasing behaviour

This section of the paper focuses on the theory of the purchasing behaviour. Consumers' purchasing behaviour is tightly linked to influencing factors. The process of consumption, many factors, in some cases also many people, are included. The main roles during the process are buyer, seller, and a product or service. (Solomon, 2018). As mentioned by Foxall (2015) marketers and generally the business has to know their customers and have more information than just what they buy but also why they buy and where they buy. The marketing concept mentions three main suggestions: first of all, the good performance of any company depends on the consumers' behaviour and mainly on how much the consumer is willing to pay for a product and what is he or she able to accept. Secondly, the company has to behave and manufacture according to the market's needs. Thirdly, they need to investigate the wants of consumers all the time to react more flexible and faster than the competitors (Foxall, 2015;2014).

1.3.1 Customer vs. Consumer

These two terms are being confused, although they have a different meaning. In literature, the term ‘consumers’ tends to be used to refer to the person, who has a need or wish to buy a product and later consume the product. A consumer can be an individual person, group of people, or even the institution that consumes the final product. The term customer has come to be used to refer to an individual or business that buys a product or service. However, the purchaser and consumer do not have to be the same person. An example can be a parent who buys clothes for his or her child. In this case, the parent is the purchaser, and the child is in the role of the user (Solomon, 2018). According to literature customers are the main stakeholder group to business. For the company, it can be beneficial to a built good relationship with the customers. On the other hand, macroenvironment includes demographics, economic, natural, technological, political, and cultural factors (Armstrong & Kotler, 2013).

1.3.2 Sustainable purchasing behaviour

In the literature, buyer responses are understood as buying attitudes and preferences, brand and company relationship behaviour, and purchasing behaviour (Armstrong & Kotler, 2013). In the last few years, much more information on the purchasing behaviour of the green product, in general, has become available. Sustainable purchasing behaviour is not only about supporting green firms by buying their products rather than the unsustainable ones, but it is also about what is happening with the goods when the consumer is done with them. Product disposal is one of the keys aspects of consumer’s behaviour. It can be an important part of the process of making a purchasing decision, the fact if the product is recyclable or not (Solomon, 2018). Above in the literature review is mentioned the importance of consumer awareness and Moser (2015) links the claim with the green buying behaviour in the research which says that consumers buy green products according to their beliefs. Consumers of sustainable fashion are quite often motivated by aesthetics satisfaction or they want to avoid feeling of guilt (Lundblad, & Davies, 2016).

Although consumers are concerned about sustainability, their actual buying behaviour does not always reflect the principles of sustainable buying behaviour. The price of products can be one of the key aspects in which the final purchase is made. In the case of sustainable goods, the price is usually higher than the price of basic goods. In general, people who are interested in environmental issues and its' protection do not have a product's price as a main decisive factor. People who turn to behave more environmentally friendly are usually willing to pay considerably more money as soon as the product sustainable (Moser, 2015).

For sustainable fashion brands is important that fashion buyers have knowledge about how the industry works. Because as a response to the growing market with ethical fashion companies have started to put more focus on green marketing as well (Kim, Ko & Kim, 2018). Brands with fast fashion have already started to produce and promote their sustainable collections as well. In this case, consumers have to ask a question if the brand is more ethical or if it is just about green marketing (Balch, 2013). Because greenwashing is one of the fast-fashion firm's reactions to the increasing customer's interest in sustainable products. In general greenwashing means that companies disseminate misleading information about their environmental behaviour. They promote themselves as an ecological company even though it is not true. (Strähle, 2016) In this case, the company puts more effort into their marketing than into actual environmental-friendly behaviour. The promotion of the companies usually involves words such as organic, eco, green or natural, but these are just words without any other activity. But for a consumer who does not have so much information, it can be misleading. The main reason why the companies do it is to increase their sales thought better public opinion. On the other hand, when the public finds out about a firm using greenwashing it can damage the firm's reputation (Corcione, 2020).

Previous studies found out that the number of consumers of sustainable fashion has been increasing during the past years. Dickson (2001) says that consumers do not want to tolerate it when humans' rights are breaking hence, buy more sustainable fashion, in other words when the clothing purchasing decision is making consumers are most concerned about social harm like sweatshop labour practices are. And Ha-Brookshire and Hodges (2009) discovered that people buy sustainable fashion for environmental reasons, mainly for organic material using when the production.

1.3.3 Factors influencing sustainable purchasing behaviour and hypotheses development

During the decision making process of purchase, a consumer is influenced by many factors such as his current mood or knowledge about goods (Solomon, 2018). The literature investigates the influence of buyer's age, economic situation, lifestyle, occupation, personality and self-concept on purchasing behaviour. Demography is part of macroenvironment and it investigates population in the case of age, location, occupation, gender, race, size, and other factors. The macroenvironment forces are important for marketers since it involves people and people are a key part of market and business in general. The main factors influencing sustainable purchasing behaviour in the fashion context are personal and psychological factors (Armstrong & Kotler, 2013).

Personal factors

A purchasing decision can be also made according to personal factors such as age, life-cycle stage, gender, economic situation, lifestyle, personality, and self-concept, or occupation. People change their preferences in shopping over their lifetimes. Buyers change their taste on food, or clothes and the change can be based on age. Buying behaviour is based on the buyer's lifecycle as well which can be quite often tightly connected with the economic situation of the consumer. The literature observes differences in buying behaviour between people who are in a marriage, single, have children, have has a change in personal income (Armstrong & Kotler, 2013). Following the logic the first hypothesis has been created as follows.

Hypothesis 1: There is a relationship between gender of consumers' and their decision to buy sustainable fashion.

Furthermore, people in the same age group are likely to have similar needs, wants, and values. Thus, people who belong to a different group tends to buy different kind of products (Solomon, 2018). For example, teenagers usually see the way of clothing as a tool to show their opinion or personality but also to judge other people. Moreover, they prefer to buy more cheap clothes than buy the ones which are more expensive (Harris, Roby, & Dibb, 2016). Many age groups are observed but this research focuses mainly on the four as follows: baby boomers, Generation X, millennials (also called Generation Y), Generation Z. In the literature, there are differences in defining the years when each of the group of people were born. According to Armstrong and Kotler (2013) The first group is called the baby boomers. People that belong to the group were born between 1946 and 1964. People who were born in this period are still the wealthiest generation, so it means that they are important for the market. The second group consists of people who were born between 1965 and 1976 and the group is called generation X. Generation X has been shown as a less materialistic generation, they prefer quality than quantity. People are also more skeptical they do more research about a product before purchasing. However, they tend to be more careful with spending their money they are still the main target segment for many companies. Millennials (also called Generation Y) were born between 1977 and 2000. Millennials are explained as the first generation that grew up with computers, laptops, smartphones, and online social networks. Thus, they tend to communicate with companies through social media, receive feedback, share opinions online, read, and write reviews (Armstrong & Kotler, 2013). The last-mentioned generation is Generation Z where people were born after 2000 belong. (also called Post-Millennials or Gen Z). Different literature says that Generation Z includes people who were born in 1995 and later. Generation Z much more pay attention to sustainability and protecting the environment, they tend to have more knowledge than the previous age groups (Su, Tsai, Chen & Lv, 2019).

Hypothesis 2: There is a relationship between age of consumers' and their decision to buy sustainable fashion.

Furthermore, the economic situation of consumers can have a strong impact on their purchasing decision. The current economic situation can be also related to the current occupation of the consumer (Armstrong & Kotler, 2013).

Hypothesis 3: There is a relationship between consumers' current employment status and their decision to buy sustainable fashion.

Mainly in the sustainable fashion context, since sustainable clothes can be sometimes much more expensive than fast fashion clothes (Harris, Roby, & Dibb, 2016). Creyer (1997) found out in the research that people reward brand that is ethical by paying a higher price for the products. Moreover, Co-operative Bank Ethical Consumerism Report (2012) published the ethical market in the UK in 2011. The second-hand clothing market was worth £330 million in 2011 and the ethical fashion market was £177million in 2010. Ha-Brookshire and Hodges (2009) studied consumers in the U.S. and they found that more than 50% of respondents are willing to pay more for sustainable shirts. Other authors claim that one of the key factors that motivate a consumer to shop sustainable clothes is to do not feel guilty (Lundblad, & Davies, 2016).

H4: Consumers' willingness to pay higher price for sustainable fashion has a positive influence on buying sustainable fashion

A lifestyle of a consumer is included in the personal factors as well. A person's purchasing behaviour is based on his or her (1) activities i.e. sports, hobbies, or job, (2) interests i.e. fashion and (3) opinions i.e. opinions about social and environmental issues, business, and products (Armstrong & Kotler, 2013).

Psychological factors

Psychological factors influencing buying behaviour are motivation, perception, learning, beliefs, and attitudes. Thanks to the process of doing and learning people obtain beliefs and attitudes that later affect their purchasing behaviour (Armstrong & Kotler, 2013). Moreover, the process of consumers' behaviour is basically learning, since when decision making consumer is strongly influenced by the his or her past experience or by experience others (Foxall, 2014). Logically if consumers have strong beliefs they will support a brand that applies the same philosophy as the consumer believes (Armstrong & Kotler, 2013). In the case of fashion purchasing the researches show that one of the main barriers for sustainable purchasing is that consumers have limited knowledge about the ethical and environmental issues caused by the fashion industry. It means that the sustainable brand could be more successful by educating people about the problems caused by the production of fast fashion brands (Harris, Roby, & Dibb, 2016).

Hypothesis 5: Consumers' knowledge of the social harm cause by fashion industry has a positive influence on buying sustainable fashion.

Hypothesis 6: Consumers' knowledge of the environmental harm cause by fashion industry has a positive influence on buying sustainable fashion.

Hypothesis 7: Consumers' belief that companies have a responsibility to behave according to ethical standards has a positive influence on buying sustainable fashion.

1.4 Conceptual model

As is mentioned above the aim of the research is to find if the consumer behaviour in sustainable fashion is influenced by following factors: (1) willingness to pay more money for sustainable fashion, demographic factors such as (2) age, (3) gender and (4) current employment status. Moreover (5) consumers' awareness of ethical issues in fashion industry, (6) consumers' awareness of environmental issues and (7) the consumer's belief that firms have responsibility to behave according to the ethics. (see Figure 1)

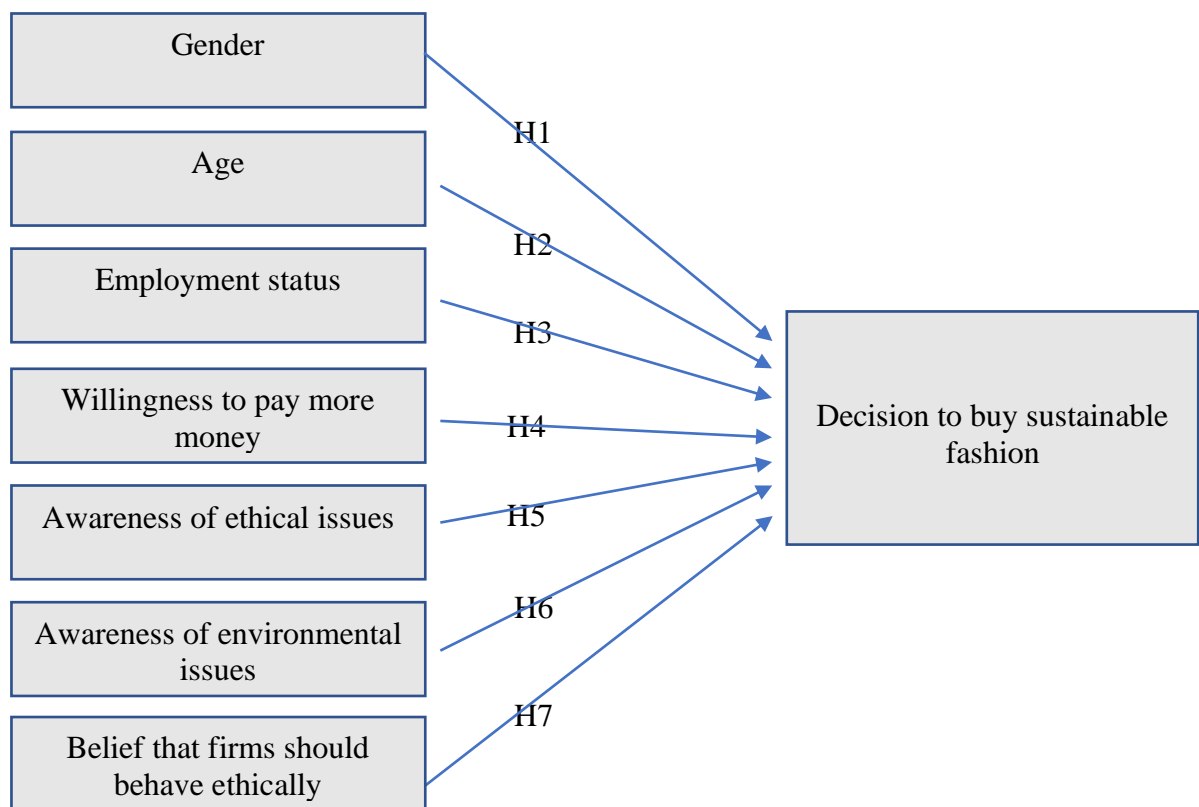


Figure 1 Conceptual model
Source: Authors own

2 Methodology

This chapter looks at the information about the process of collecting data in order to achieve the goal of the research, which is to analyse consumer's awareness and purchasing behaviour in the sustainable fashion context. The research is based on the two previous articles done by Creyer (1997) and Shen, Wang, Lo & Shum (2012). Some of the questions that were examined in the case of the previous two research are applied to study academics, students, absolvents of the University of Huddersfield. Furthermore, the main differences between qualitative and quantitative research are explained according to the literature. The process of data collection is presented and the key fact about the questionnaire as a research method as well.

2.1 Research approach and strategy

Research is defined as a process that is performed with pre-defined aims, to discover, find out, and interpret facts. Research is run based on the reasonable relationships or information, in other words it is done in systematic way (Saunders, Thornhill & Lewis, 2019). In the literature, scientific research is defined: "*to perform a methodical study in order to prove a hypothesis or answer a specific question*" (Lomas, 2011, p. 2). In general, the purpose of the research is to get an answer to questions (Lomas, 2011).

In business organisations, business research is used for solving problems that are related to manufacturing, HR, management, marketing, or finance, and in this case, most favourite types of research are as follows. Firstly, operation research which helps to predict demand, and makes production more effective and for this particular research are usually used mathematical, analytical, and logical methods. Secondly, marketing research investigates a marketplace. Last, motivational research can be used in addition to motivate employees but also to gain a piece of knowledge about consumer behaviour (Sreejesh, Anusree & Mohapatra, 2013). Business research can be also divided into two categories that are applied research and basic research. Basic research is mainly focused on acquiring knowledge about the problem rather than dealing with the problem. In other words, to gain more information about a particular problem by testing without discomposure for practical application. Examples of basic research are: learning about consumer purchasing behaviour, or testing a process of learning in the case of consumers.

In comparison, applied research aims to find a way how to solve a specific problem or to get a particular answer. The applied research can be used for “*examining consumer response to direct marketing programmes*” (Malhotra, Nunan, & Birks, 2017, p. 4).

As showed in Table 2, two main types of research methodologies are used: quantitative and qualitative. Strauss and Corbin (1998) explain qualitative research as research that does not use statistical procedures to gain findings (Yilmaz, 2013). The literature says that by quantitative research is meant “*the collection of extensive data on many variables over an extended period of time, in a naturalistic setting, in order to gain insights not possible using other types of research*” (Gay & Airasian 2000, p. 627) When qualitative research is used, responses are collected only from a small sample of participants. In other words, qualitative research tends to be focused more detailed on each answer than on analysing responses collected from many participants. On the other hand, doing quantitative research means collecting data and later measuring the data and applying statistical analysis (Malhotra, Nunan, & Birks, 2017). Another literature says that quantitative research uses analysed numeric data to define phenomena. As it is shown in Table 2 the for qualitative research data are not analysed through statistical methods as it is in quantitative research. Moreover, the best suited methods for qualitative research are observations and interviews while when quantitative research is used data are collected through measuring things. Last, qualitative research tends to understand the problem from the participant’s perspective but the quantitative research describes the phenomena (Yilmaz, 2013).

Table 2 Qualitative vs. quantitative research

	Qualitative	Quantitative
Conceptual	Concerned with understanding human behaviour from the informant’s perspective Assumes a dynamic and negotiated reality	Concerned with discovering facts about social phenomena Assumes a fixed and measurable reality
Methodological	Data are collected through participant observation and interviews Data are analysed by themes from descriptions by informants Data are reported in the language of the informant	Data are collected through measuring things Data are analysed through numerical comparisons and statistical inferences Data are reported through statistical analyses

Source: Saul McLeod (2019)

2.2 Research design and quantitative methods

For this research has been chosen quantitative research through a survey because this research studies the relationship between variables (hypotheses) and introduces the main findings. (Daniel Muijs, 2011). Three methods of collecting quantitative data through the survey are known: self-completion methods, interviewer-completed methods, and observation. Interviewer-completed methods are used for collecting data communication with the participant through phone or face-to-face communication. Quantitative observation focusses on numerical information and this tool for collecting data is mainly used for examining sales. For this research, the self-completion method has been chosen because it is one of the most practical ways how to get the data for this particular research since the method is suited to examine individuals. In this category belongs to mail surveys, electronic or Internet surveys. But it does not include direct contact unlike interviewer-completed methods (Hair, 2011). For the research, the Internet survey has been chosen for the advantage of quick and cheap or even free option how to collect data from a wide range of respondents.

2.3 Data collection

Precisely, an online self-administered questionnaire has been created for collecting the data for the research on account of the fact that this method is a fast way of collecting data and low cost or free. A questionnaire is basically an array of questions created to achieve primary data for a research (Hair, 2011).

2.3.1 Primary data vs. secondary data

The primary data are newly collected data to be best suited for particular research while the secondary data have been already collected before for a different purpose which is not related to the research. Secondary data can be found from government organizations, research journals, and newspapers. The source of primary data can be a questionnaire because in this case, the respondent fills the questionnaire, and the researcher can collect the data (Hair, 2011). Because the purpose of the research is to study consumers purchasing behaviour author chose to collect primary data directly from consumers.

2.3.2 Population and sample

A population, in general, can be any group with similar characteristics (e.g. group of people, students, doctors, or shops) (Quinlan, 2015). The target population can be defined as a group that has the information that is needed to collect (Hair, 2011).

The survey target population for this research has been chosen people at the age over 18 who are tightly connected with the University of Huddersfield, thus academics, students, or graduates of the university. For the reason, the author of the research is a student of the university and because of the assumption that people from the academic environment could be aware of the topics. Since the target population are males, females, people of different age and different employment statuses, the research examines the differences between the different demographics group as well.

Two main sampling methods are known: probability sampling and nonprobability sampling. When the probability sampling method is used, each unit has the same chance to be chosen for the target population. In comparison, non-probability samples do not have an equal chance to be chosen, some of the units have a greater chance of selected than others (Saunders, et al., 2019). Even though literature says that quantitative research is more common using probability sampling (Hair, 2011), this quantitative research uses nonprobability sampling. Four nonprobability techniques exist that can be applied for nonprobability sampling. These techniques are (1) judgemental or purposive sampling. When this technique is used the researcher is supposed to choose the target population based on his or her own judgment. (2) Quota sampling is used for studying the sample where a key characteristic is defined. (3) Snowball sampling where respondents are volunteers and only a small number of participants is chosen and later the participants distribute the survey to others (Saunders, et al., 2019). (4) The convenience sampling technique has been chosen as the best suited one for the research since by using the technique “*the researcher engages those participants in the research whom it is easiest to include*” (Quinlan, 2015, p. 181). In other words, by this technique are participants who are available for the study are examined. The advantage of the method is that it enables the collection of data in a short time (Saunders, et al., 2019). The sample for the research was obtained via social media, namely Facebook.

2.3.3 Distribution of questionnaire

For a building, the questionnaire Google Forms were used as a platform that offers a free and quick way of collecting data. To gain enough responses the link to fulfil the questionnaire was shared via social media, namely Facebook and its groups of the University of Huddersfield. As a result of using the online method for the distribution, were quickly collect data by many respondents. The data were collected during March 2020.

2.3.4 Design of questionnaire

The questions for the questionnaire have been inspired by two previous research papers investigating the relationship between consumers behaviour and business ethics. The first of them is hold by Creyer (1997) and the purpose of his research is to find out if consumers pay attention to the business ethic. The second research which is done by Shen, Wang, Lo & Shum (2012) has been chosen in light of the fact that studies the relationship between ethical fashion and consumer purchasing behaviour.

According to Malhotra, Nunan & Birks (2017) questionnaire is a structured method which is consists of many questions in a row to collect data for research. The questions can be written or verbal as well. A good questionnaire has to deliver the right information thus make the respondent understand it well. It should also motivate the respondent, to be honest, therefore gives valuable answers. The last important point in order to do successful research via questionnaire is to minimalize response error. The response error can arise when the respondent answers inexactly but also when there is a mistake during the recording or analysing the answer (Malhotra, Nunan & Birks, 2017).

The first part of the questionnaire delivered to the respondents is meant to inform about the goal of the questionnaire, about the information processing, and the anonymity of respondents. The following part of the questionnaire consist of 12 research questions. These questions are developed based on previous studies investigating the relationship between consumers behaviour and business ethics. The first of them is hold by Creyer (1997) and the purpose of his research is to find out if consumers pay attention to the business ethic. The second research which is done by Shen, Wang, Lo & Shum (2012) has been chosen in light of the fact that studies the relationship between ethical fashion and consumer purchasing behaviour.

Section (1) are demographics questions, precisely questions about gender, age, and employment status. Demographics questions are very important for further analysing of the collected data. These questions usually investigate for example gender, occupation, age, or location (Sreejesh et al. 2014;2013). For the examining respondent's gender, age, and employment status. Author decided to use multiple-choice questions. When the multiple-choice question is used, the respondent has to choose one of the possible options (Sreejesh, Mohapatra & Anusree, 2014;2013). The sections (2) aims to examine consumers' preferences in purchasing fashion, where the consumer buys fashion most often. In other words, if the consumer prefers to buy his or her clothes in second-hand or from fast fashion, sustainable luxury brands (Sreejesh et al., 2014;2013). The purpose of the section (3) is to find the main decisive factor for consumers in purchasing fashion. For these two sections, multiple-choice questions with other response alternatives are used. The response options are given but also the possibility to write another answer which is not included in the options (Malhotra et al., 2017). Section (4) was decided that the best type of questions is ranking scale questions. The ranking scale question is usually used for a question where the purpose is to gain a respondent's feelings or opinion about something. For these questions is a list of possible options characteristics (Sreejesh et al. 2014;2013). The overview of questions that are included in section (4) is shown in Table 3.

Table 3 Section (4) questions

Question	Reason for asking	Source in literature where the questions comes from
I believe I am informed about unethical practices (i.e. sweatshops) in the fashion production.	To find out if consumers have the knowledge about the ethical issues across the fashion business.	Shen, Wang, Lo & Shum, (2012)
As a consumer, I am interested in the labour practices behind the apparel that I purchase.	To find out if consumers care about the ethical issues across the fashion business.	Shen, Wang, Lo & Shum, (2012)
I believe I am well informed about environmental issues in the fashion business.	To find out if consumers have the knowledge about the environmental issues across the fashion business.	Shen, Wang, Lo & Shum, (2012)
I am willing to pay considerably more money for sustainable and ethically made fashion.	To find out how much is the price important for consumers and if they are fine with paying more for sustainable fashion.	Creyer, 1997
Firms have a responsibility to behave with high ethical standards.	To find out if the brand's behaviour is important for consumers.	Creyer, 1997
If the brand is sustainable or not is not important to me in making my purchasing decision.	To find out if the sustainability of the brand is a decisive factor for consumers.	Creyer, 1997
In the future I plan to buy fashion from sustainable companies.	To examine consumers future plan for purchasing.	Shen, Wang, Lo & Shum, (2012)

Source: Authors own

2.3.5 Pilot study

Through pilot testing is a small sample of participants analysing in purpose to improve the questionnaire by finding a potential problem and the process of collecting data for the pilot study is informal. The absence of the pilot study can lead to problems with misunderstood questions (Malhotra, et al., 2017, Sreejesh et al. 2014;2013).

The pilot study of this questionnaire was consulted with the supervisor and later carried out on six students before distributing via Facebook. According to the feedback some changes had been made. Firstly, the order of questions has been changed and demographics questions have been removed to the beginning of the questionnaire. Secondly, in section (2) the term fast fashion brand has been replaced by the term common fashion brand. Last, the claim: “As a consumer, I should be interested in the labour practices behind the apparel that I purchase.” Has been changed to do not put respondents under pressure to answer. The new version of the sentence is: “As a consumer, I am interested in the labour practices behind the apparel that I purchase.” Next, for the question asking the main decisive factor option “brand name” was added. And for the question of studying where consumers buy clothes option “luxury brand” was added. After these changes that were made according to the feedback questionnaire was posted on Facebook groups.

2.4 Data analysis

In order to analyse the gained data MS Excel was used. MS Excel is software that many companies use to work with any data. It is used for creating charts, graphs, or manipulating with data, etc. For this particular analysis, mainly Regression analysis tools and cotangent charts were used (Schmuller, 2013). To examine the relationship between two types of variables, hypothesis testing was done. Multiple linear regression analysis was chosen as the best suited test because it is an appropriate method to find a relationship between two and more variables. Next, ANOVA and t-test were used in order to determinate whether there is a relationship between dependent variable and independent variable (demographics factors). When calculated P-value $< 0,05$ then there is statistically significant difference and the relationship is confirmed. And when P-value $> 0,05$ then there is not statistically significant difference, thus there is not a relationship (Saunders, et al., 2019).

2.4.1 Measurements

For the research two types of variables were used: dependent and independent. The dependent variable is basically the outcome of the research. The independent variable has an influence on the dependent variable. (1) The dependent variable, the decision to buy sustainable fashion, was measured by the question “In the future, I plan to buy fashion from sustainable companies” and possible answers were “strongly agree”, “agree”, “disagree”, “strongly disagree”.

(2) The independent variables include demographic factors such as gender, age, employment status, willingness to pay more money, awareness of ethical and environmental issues, and last belief of the firm’s responsibilities. Gender was measured by the question “What is your gender?” and possible answers were “male”, “female”, “prefer not to say”. The age of respondents was measured by the question “What is your age?” and five answers were possible “18 – 24”, “25 – 34”, “35 – 44”, “45 plus”, “prefer not to say”. Employment status was studied by the question “What is your current employment status?” and possible answers were “employed full-time”, “employed part-time”, “student”, “seeking opportunities”, “maternity leave”, “retired”, and “prefer not to say”. Variables willingness to pay more money, awareness of ethical issues, awareness of environmental issues, belief that firms should behave ethically were measured by the following questions. “I am willing to pay considerably more money for sustainable and ethically made fashion.” “I believe I am informed about unethical practices (i.e. sweatshops) in fashion production.” “I believe I am well informed about environmental issues in the fashion business.” “Firms have a responsibility to behave with high ethical standards.” And possible answers were “strongly agree”, “agree”, “disagree”, “strongly disagree”.

2.5 Ethical consideration

The research was run according to ethical standards. The author of the research put an effort to avoid leading questions thanks to the results of the pilot test. All the participants were adults and they were a part of the research voluntary. Moreover, the anonymity of all participants was respected, not even research knows the identity of each participant. The information about the purpose of the research was communicated to the participants with honesty.

3 Research findings

In this chapter is provided analysis of the outcomes. In other words, this chapter presents what was found by the questionnaire. Firstly, the respondents' profile is introduced. Secondly, the general findings of the research are presented. And last sub-chapter examines the seven above mentioned hypotheses.

3.1 Respondents profile

Finally, the questionnaire has been collected from 74 people and of the 174 respondents were 102 females which accounts for 58,62% and 72 males which are 41,38%. (see Table 4)

Table 4 Gender of respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Female	102	58,62%
Male	72	41,38%
Total	174	100%

Source: Authors own

As shown in Table 5 more than half of the respondents are people the age of 18 – 24, the second biggest age group of respondents are people the age of 25 – 34. The fact that most of the respondents belong to these two groups can be caused by the fact that the questionnaire was distributed via social media, precisely via Facebook groups of the University of Huddersfield. It is known that the younger generation is more familiar with using social media (Fink, Koller, Gartner, Floh, & Harms, 2018).

Table 5 Age of respondents

Age	Frequency	Percent
18 - 24	93	53,45%
25 - 34	58	33,33%
35 - 44	16	9,20%
45 plus	7	4,02%
Total	174	100%

Source: Authors own

The majority of respondents are students which account for 51,72% because the questionnaire was accessible to many students based on the fact it was distributed via university groups on Facebook. The second biggest group of respondents is made up of 39,66% of full-time employees. (see Table 6)

Table 6 Employment status of respondents

Employment status	Frequency	Percent
Student	91	52,30%
Employed Full-Time	70	40,23%
Maternity Leave	6	3,45%
Employed Part-Time	5	2,87%
Seeking opportunities	2	1,15%
Total	174	100%

Source: Authors own

3.2 General findings

As shown in Table 7 the vast majority of people, precisely 84,48% buy their clothes from common fashion brands such as Zara, Adidas, H&M, etc. that are taken as fast fashion brands. Compare to that only 2,87% of respondents said that they usually buy their clothes from sustainable brands.

Table 7 I usually buy my clothes from:

	Frequency	Percent
Common fashion brands	147	84,48%
Second-hand	15	8,62%
Sustainable/ethical brands	5	2,87%
Luxury fashion brands	5	2,87%
Other	2	1,15%
Total	174	100,00%

Source: Authors own

Table 8 shows that for respondents the main decisive factor when buying fashion is a price, specifically 66 respondents that counts for 37,93% hold the opinion that price is crucial for them. The quality of the product was investigated as the second biggest decisive factor for consumers since 65 respondents that counts for 37,36% said that quality is the most important for them. Thus, the difference between the importance of price and quality is almost negligible. Compare to that only 6 respondents that count for 3,45% said that the most factor when buying fashion is the sustainability of the brand.

Table 8 The main decisive factor in fashion purchasing for me is:

	Frequency	Percent
Price	66	37,93%
Quality	65	37,36%
Current fashion trend	22	12,64%
Design	10	5,75%
Sustainability of the brand	6	3,45%
Other	4	2,30%
Brand name	1	0,57%
Total	174	100,00%

Source: Authors own

As it was mentioned earlier awareness of the harm that the fashion industry cause could lead to more support for sustainable brands by consumers. Table 9 shows how well consumers think that they are informed about unethical practices in the fashion industry. It was found out that more than half of 174 respondents said that they either “agree” or “strongly agree” that they believe they are aware of these issues.

Table 9 I believe I am informed about unethical practices (i.e. sweatshops) in the fashion production.

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly agree	14	8,05%
Agree	96	55,17%
Disagree	56	32,18%
Strongly disagree	8	4,60%
Total	174	100,00%

Source: Authors own

Table 10 As a consumer, I am interested in the labour practices behind the apparel that I purchase.

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly agree	15	8,62%
Agree	89	51,15%
Disagree	62	35,63%
Strongly disagree	8	4,60%
Total	174	100,00%

Source: Authors own

The research investigated that people are not very aware of environmental issues that are tightly connected with the fashion industry. As shown in Table 11, 44,25% of respondents said that they disagree and 6,90% said that they strongly disagree with the claim “I believe I am well informed about environmental issues in the fashion business.” In other words, people do not have enough knowledge about the fashion industry (mainly fast fashion brands) harming the environment.

Table 11 I believe I am well informed about environmental issues in the fashion business.

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly agree	18	10,34%
Agree	67	38,51%
Disagree	77	44,25%
Strongly disagree	12	6,90%
Total	174	100,00%

Source: Authors own

The results of the questionnaire showed that people are willing to pay a premium cost to brands that produce sustainable fashion. As seen in Table 12, 55,75% of respondents answered “agree” and 12,64% of respondents answered “strongly agree” on the question that was investigated their willingness to pay a premium price.

Table 12 I am willing to pay considerably more money for sustainable and ethically made fashion.

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly agree	22	12,64%
Agree	97	55,75%
Disagree	50	28,74%
Strongly disagree	5	2,87%
Total	174	100,00%

Source: Authors own

The vast majority of participants agreed (93,68%) on the claim that companies are obliged to behave ethically (see Table 13). In other words, people want brands to treat their employees fairly such as ensuring safe conditions and do not cause harm to the environment and animals.

Table 13 Firms have a responsibility to behave with high ethical standards.

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly agree	72	41,38%
Agree	91	52,30%
Disagree	8	4,60%
Strongly Disagree	3	1,72%
Total	174	100,00%

Source: Authors own

According to the results shown in Table 14 more than half (57,47%) of 174 respondents do not consider the sustainability of the fashion brand as a key factor when purchasing decision making.

Table 14 If the brand is sustainable or not is not important to me in making my purchasing decision.

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly agree	11	6,32%
Agree	89	51,15%
Disagree	64	36,78%
Strongly disagree	10	5,75%
Total	174	100,00%

Source: Authors own

The last question investigated the plans of consumers for the purchasing of sustainable fashion. And it was found out that the participants of the research plan to buy clothes from sustainable brands in the future. Particularly, 16,67% and 59,77% of participants gave answer “strongly agree” and “agree” on the statement “In the future, I plan to buy fashion from sustainable companies.” (see Table 15)

Table 15 In the future I plan to buy fashion from sustainable companies.

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly agree	29	16,67%
Agree	104	59,77%
Disagree	37	21,26%
Strongly disagree	4	2,30%
Total	174	100,00%

Source: Authors own

3.3 Hypotheses testing

In order to examine the relationship between dependent variable and independent variables the regression analysis was used. The hypotheses testing was done with the confidence of 95%. As mentioned in sub section Data analysis, firstly t-test was done in order to test hypothesis 1 (see Table 16), secondly ANOVA was done for the testing of hypotheses 2 (see Table 17) and 3 (see Table 18). Furthermore, for testing hypotheses 4, 5, 6, 7 regression analysis was done (see Table 20)

3.3.1 T-test

The first hypothesis proposes that there is a relationship between consumers' gender and the decision to buy sustainable fashion. The result (see Table 16) does not indicate a relationship between consumer's gender and his or her decision to buy sustainable fashion ($p = 0,06$). Thus, hypothesis 1 was rejected.

Table 16 T-test gender/decision to buy sustainable fashion

	<i>male</i>	<i>female</i>
Mean	2,208333333	2,00980392
Variance	0,533450704	0,40584353
Observations	72	102
Hypothesized Mean Difference	0	
df	139	
t Stat	1,86038623	
P(T<=t) two-tail	0,064943981	
t Critical two-tail	1,977177724	

Source: Authors own

3.3.2 ANOVA

The second hypothesis states that there is a relationship between consumers' age and the decision to buy sustainable fashion. As shows Table 17 the result indicates there is a significant relationship between consumers' age and their decision to buy sustainable fashion ($p < 0,05$). Thus, the hypothesis 2 was supported.

Table 17 ANOVA test for age/decision to buy sustainable fashion

ANOVA						
Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	P-value	F crit
Between Groups	17,933908	1	17,933908	31,8672117	3,443E-08	3,86847
Within Groups	194,718391	346	0,56276992			
Total	212,652299	347				

Source: Authors own

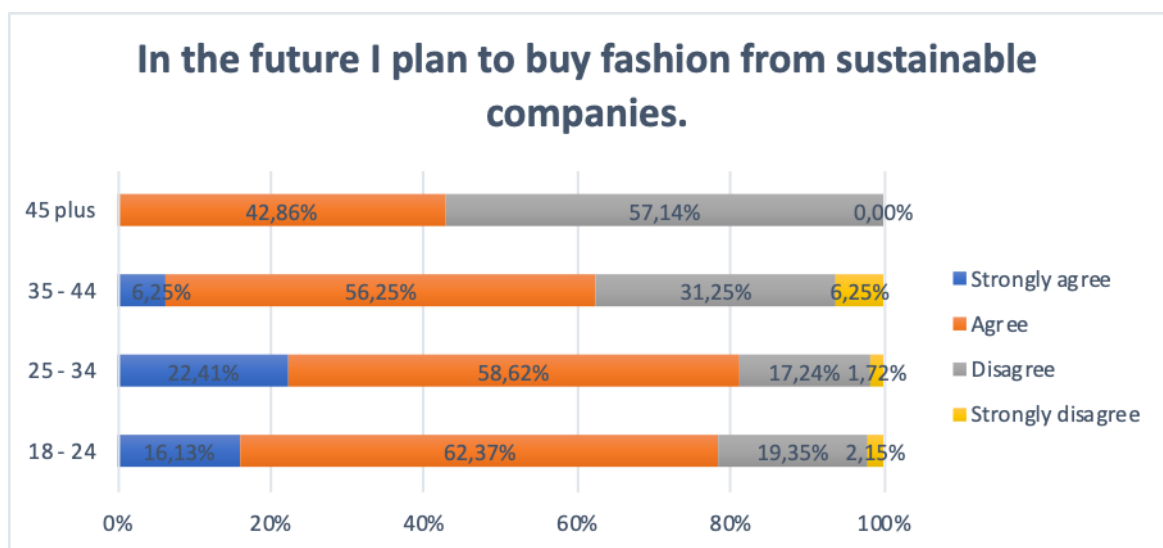


Figure 2 Age/decision to buy sustainable fashion

Source: Authors own

The third hypothesis says that there is a relationship between consumers' current employment status and the decision to buy sustainable fashion. The result does not indicate relationship between employment status and decision to buy sustainable fashion ($p = 0,117$). Thus, the hypothesis 3 was rejected. (see Table 18)

Table 18 ANOVA test for employment status/decision to buy sustainable fashion

ANOVA						
Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	P-value	F crit
Between Groups	2,09482759	1	2,09482759	2,47458059	0,11661424	3,86847492
Within Groups	292,902299	346	0,84653844			
Total	294,997126	347				

Source: Authors own

3.3.3 Regression analysis

Table 19 shows results of regression statistics and strength of the relationship between one dependent variable (decision to buy sustainable fashion) and the independent variables. The most important value for the particular research is value of R Square which is quite low and it means that 32% variability of dependent can be explained by the independent variables.

Table 19 Regression Statistics

Regression Statistics	
Multiple R	0,563
R Square	0,317
Adjusted R Square	0,301
Standard Error	0,570
Observations	174

Source: Authors own

Table 20 Regression analysis

	Coefficients	Standard Error	t Stat	P-value	Lower 95%	Upper 95%
Intercept	0,411	0,211	1,948	0,053	-0,005	0,828
Willingness to pay more money	0,431	0,065	6,630	4,34E-10	0,302	0,559
Awareness of ethical issues	0,009	0,078	0,115	0,909	-0,146	0,164
Awareness of environmental issues	0,177	0,070	2,540	0,012	0,039	0,314
Belief that firms should behave ethically	0,160	0,069	2,318	0,022	0,024	0,296

Source: Authors own

The fourth hypothesis states that consumers' willingness to pay higher price for sustainable fashion has a positive influence on buying sustainable fashion. The analysis shows that consumers' willingness to pay higher price has influences positively the final decision to buy sustainable fashion ($p < 0,05$). Thus, hypothesis 4 was supported.

The fifth hypothesis proposes that consumers' knowledge of the social harm cause by fashion industry has a positive influence on buying sustainable fashion. The results do not indicated relationship between consumers' awareness of ethical issues and decision to buy sustainable fashion as significant ($p = 0,909$). Therefore, hypothesis 5 was rejected.

The sixth hypothesis says that consumers' knowledge of the environmental harm cause by fashion industry has a positive influence on buying sustainable fashion. The results confirmed the claim and indicate relationship between the awareness of environmental issues and decision to buy sustainable fashion ($p < 0,05$). Thus, hypothesis 6 was supported.

The seventh hypothesis states that consumers' belief that companies have a responsibility to behave according to ethical standards has a positive influence on buying sustainable fashion. The analysis indicates the significant relationship ($p < 0,05$). Therefore, hypothesis 7 was supported.

4 Discussion

Following chapter provides discussion of findings that have been presented in the previous chapter. Firstly, few of the general findings are discussed in more details. Secondly, the findings of hypotheses testing are presented.

The general finding of the research claims that when making a purchasing decision in the case of fashion the most important factors for consumers are price and quality. Surprisingly, the sustainability of the brand is not very important to the consumers since only 3,45% said that they do the purchase according to this factor. This fact is linked with another finding of where people usually buy their clothes. The results showed that the vast majority of people buy their clothes from fast fashion brands which do not support earlier mentioned claim that nowadays more consumers buy sustainable fashion instead of fast fashion (Dickson, 2001). On the other hand, the research also found out that consumers plan to buy more sustainable fashion in the future (see Table 15). The possible explanation of the finding could be that even though people have bought most of their clothes from fast fashion brands till now, for the future they plan to buy more sustainable fashion because they may have gotten the information about the environmental harm that is caused by fast fashion brands.

4.1 The relationship between gender and purchase decision

The first hypothesis said that there is a difference between men and women in the decision to buy sustainable fashion. However, the relationship was expected thanks to the previous researches, it was not confirmed. In comparison, the previous study examined ecological and ethical behaviour in general bases only in the case of purchasing fashion and the study found out that in the UK there is a slight difference between the sustainable behaviour of men and women. The study showed that 71% of women tend to behave more according to a sustainable lifestyle compare to 59% of men (Mintel, 2018). Jasmin (2018) found out a slight difference between men and women in the case of sustainable fashion buying behaviour, particular that women tend to buy sustainable fashion more than men.

4.2 The relationship between age and purchase decision

The second statement is that age of consumer has an effect on his or her decision to buy sustainable fashion. As mentioned in literature review there are differences in purchasing behaviour within generations. Based on the literature was expected that consumer's age influence his or her purchasing behaviour in the sustainable fashion context, mainly it was expected that Generation Z will be the biggest supporter of sustainable fashion (Su, Tsai, Chen & Lv, 2019). As shows Figure 2, the research found out that there is a relationship between consumers' age and their purchasing behaviour but the age group that is decided to buy clothes from sustainable brands is the group of people in the age of 25 -34. 81% of this age group answer either "strongly agree" or "agree" that they plan to buy fashion from sustainable brands in the future. And these people belong to the group of Millennials not Generation Z. Although the difference between Millennials and Generation Z is small since 79% of respondents who belong to the Generation Z answered "strongly agree" or "agree". Thus, the findings confirmed that younger consumers are more interested in sustainability in the fashion that older consumers.

4.3 The relationship between employment status and purchase decision

The third hypothesis stated that there is a relationship between consumers' current employment status and the decision to buy sustainable fashion, but this hypothesis was rejected. Even though earlier in the literature review is said that sustainable purchasing behaviour can be quite strongly influenced by costumer's current occupation because of the fact that sustainable fashion can be very expensive in comparison to the fast fashion. This research did not show any significant difference between consumers' current employment status.

4.4 The relationship between willingness to pay more money and purchase decision

The fourth hypothesis stated that consumers' willingness to pay considerably more money for sustainable fashion leads to making decision to buy sustainable fashion. As previously mentioned in literature review, sustainable fashion can be much more expensive than fast fashion. And for that reason, it was supposed that consumers who are willing to pay more money for clothes are really decided to purchase sustainable clothes. It was confirmed that the willingness to pay more money for sustainable product is one of the main factors that leads to the final decision to buy the sustainable fashion.

4.5 The relationship between awareness of social harm and purchase decision

The fifth hypothesis suggested that the consumers' awareness of the social harm caused by the fashion industry influences their decision to buy sustainable fashion. It was expected that consumers who have the knowledge support sustainable fashion brands based on the previous research that has been done by Shen, Wang, Lo & Shum, (2012). However, the previous research confirmed that consumers who have knowledge about unethical behaviour such as sweatshops tend to support more sustainable brands, in this research the hypothesis was rejected. Since the result from regression analysis did not confirm the hypothesis. Even though 63% of respondents answered "agree" or "strongly agree" that they have knowledge about the unethical issues, it does not lead them to purchase sustainable fashion. The possible explanation could be that even though consumers are aware of the social harm caused by the fashion industry it is too important for them to change their fashion buying behaviour.

4.6 The relationship between awareness of environmental harm and purchase decision

The sixth hypothesis stated that the decision to buy sustainable fashion is influenced by consumers' awareness of the environmental issues that are tightly connected to the fashion industry. This statement was supported by this particular research as well as in previous research that was done by Shen, Wang, Lo & Shum, (2012).

This supports the fact that people who are aware of the environmental harm caused by fast fashion do not want to be part of the process of harming, so they prefer to buy sustainable clothes. Moreover, a considerably large number of consumers is more interested in what is in their clothes, in other words, what is their clothes made of. It means that they prefer to wear clothes made of ecological materials, in other words they prefer to wear sustainable fashion (Paulins & Hillery, 2009).

4.7 The relationship between belief about firms' responsibilities and purchase decision

The seventh hypothesis examined the relationship between consumers' belief that firms have a responsibility to behave according to the ethical standards and consumers' decision to buy sustainable fashion. According to results from previous research of Creyer (1997) was expected, that consumers expect companies to behave ethically, moreover that the ethicality of a company is a key factor for making a purchasing decision. Since the results of the research of Creyer (1997) found out that consumers consider as an important when a firm's behaviour is according to the ethical standards. Thus, it was also founded that consumers will reward the ethical brand. However, the previous research was not focused specifically on fashion but on the ethical businesses at all (Creyer, 1997), the claim same claim was supported in the case of sustainable fashion in this particular research as shown in the Research findings chapter.

5 Conclusion

As stated in the Introduction, the main research aimed to examine purchasing behaviour in the sustainable fashion context. Mainly, the research focused on the relationship between the final consumers' decision to buy sustainable fashion and their willingness to pay a higher price for sustainable fashion, awareness of ethical and environmental harm caused by the fashion industry with the consumers' decision to buy sustainable fashion. The research focused on the relationship between demographics factors such as age, gender, and employment status of participants and their final purchasing decision in the sustainable fashion context. Moreover, the additional purpose of the research was to identify the main decisive factor for consumers when buying clothes.

Primary data were collected via an online questionnaire that was distributed through social media, mainly Facebook. Later, the data were analysed by Excel in order to find out the research objectives.

It was confirmed that the sustainable purchasing behaviour is influenced by consumers' willingness to pay premium money for sustainable fashion. As well as was supported the claim that the purchasing sustainable fashion is influenced by the awareness of consumers of the environmental harm within the fashion industry. Thus, people who have enough knowledge about the environmental issues caused by fast fashion brands tend to buy sustainable fashion more than the consumers' who do not have the knowledge. This supports the fact that it would be valuable for sustainable brands to educate the population more about what sustainability in fashion means as well as about the issues. The finding also showed that the decision to buy sustainable fashion is influenced by the consumers' belief that companies should behave according to ethical standards. Surprisingly, was not confirmed that consumers who are aware of the unethical practices and are used by fast fashion brands prefer to buy more sustainable clothes. The research found out there is no relationship between the knowledge about ethical harm and sustainable purchasing behaviour. Moreover, the relationship between the decision to buy sustainable fashion and consumers' gender, the same as a consumers' current employment status was not confirmed. According to the results, the decision to buy sustainable fashion is not influenced by gender and employment status. However, the relationship between consumers' age was confirmed.

The research found out that the main decision factor for consumers when buying fashion is a price and just behind a quality. The achievement that the price is such an important factor for consumers is not very good for sustainable brands since as was mentioned in previous chapters the sustainable fashion is not able to compete in the case of low prices with fast fashion. The importance of the price of a product to the consumers is connected to the fact that the massive majority of respondents usually buy their clothes from fast fashion brands. The research found out that the purchasing decision in the sustainable fashion context is influenced by consumers' age, willingness to pay a premium price, awareness of environmental harm, and the belief about firms' responsibility to be ethical. On the other hand, it was founded that for sustainable purchase decision are not important following factors: gender, employment status, and awareness of the social harm caused by the fashion industry. According to the findings, it could be helpful for sustainable brands to more educate the population about the practices of fast fashion brands and also about the consequences of unsustainable behaviour. Because for sustainable brands it is not possible to offer the same low prices as fast fashion companies offer they should highlight the quality of their clothes and also improve the design of the clothes to be more attractive for the consumers.

5.1 Limitation and recommendation

The research clearly has also limitations. Firstly, the chosen sample was quite limited since the participants of the research were only students, graduates, or academics of The University of Huddersfield. Secondly, the asked questions did not research a lot of details about the information that consumers either have or do not have about the issues in the fashion context.

Future research should more focus on the question if consumers know which fashion brand is sustainable. In other words, to find out if consumers know which brand belongs to the fast fashion and which one is sustainable. Since sometimes consumers could be confused by the green marketing tactics of fast fashion brands. Moreover, it would be useful to find more about the inspiration for sustainable fashion brands' consumers. For example, if sustainable behaviour in purchasing fashion is also connected with the other aspects of the sustainable way of life. To examine the relationship between buying zero waste and sustainable fashion, or the influence of a diet such as veganism, etc. and purchasing sustainable fashion.

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Appendix 1 Questionnaire

Dear respondents,

My name is Dorota Cikánová and I am a third-year student at the Business School of the University of Huddersfield. For my undergraduate dissertation, I am carrying out research focusing on consumer perception of sustainable fashion. Therefore, I would like to ask you to undertake this questionnaire. Your responses will be then used to help me understand your opinions about how you perceive the sustainable and responsible behaviour of fashion companies.

This questionnaire will take up 5-10 minutes.

The answers are anonymous and results will be used only for the research purpose.

Thank you in advance for your answers.

What is your gender?

- Male
- Female
- Prefer not to say

What is your age?

- 18 – 24
- 25 – 34
- 35 – 44
- 45 plus
- Prefer not to say

What is your current employment status?

- Employed Full-Time
- Employed Part-Time
- Student
- Seeking opportunities
- Maternity Leave
- Prefer not to say

I usually buy my clothes from:

- Common fashion brands (Zara, H&M, Adidas...)
- Sustainable/ethical brands (People Tree, Veja, Patagonia...)
- Second-hand
- Luxury fashion brands (Gucci, Louis Vuitton, Armani)
- Other _____

The main decisive factor in fashion purchasing for me is:

- Price
- Current fashion trend
- Quality
- Brand name
- Sustainability of the brand
- Other _____

I believe I am informed about unethical practices (i.e. sweatshops) in the fashion production.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

As a consumer, I am interested in the labour practices behind the apparel that I purchase.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

I believe I am well informed about environmental issues in the fashion business.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

I am willing to pay considerably more money for sustainable and ethically made fashion.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Firms have a responsibility to behave with high ethical standards.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

If the brand is sustainable or not is not important to me in making my purchasing decision.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

In the future I plan to buy fashion from sustainable companies.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree