

A Stitch in Time

- An Exploratory Study of the Attitude-Behaviour Gap Concerning Young Consumers' Intentions and Behaviour within Sustainable Clothing Consumption



Master's Thesis

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Abstract

Through the years and today, the fashion industry has grown rapidly and causes a vast impact on people and the environment. In the UK, consumers are buying and spending more money on clothing than ever, meanwhile also becoming more aware of the environment and how their consumer behaviour has an effect on it. This has resulted in consumers actively trying to purchase more sustainably. Yet, academic studies have shown that even though the intention of buying sustainably is present, it is not always visible in consumers' actual behaviour. This paradox of an attitude-behaviour gap, meaning consumers having the intentions but not acting on them is the phenomenon and the focus of this master's thesis. The aim of this exploratory study is to investigate why there is a difference between consumers' intentions and their behaviour when purchasing sustainable clothing. Specifically, this master's thesis tries to examine and explain why the attitude-behaviour gap occurs.

In order to understand and examine the attitude-behaviour gap within sustainable consumption, this master's thesis draws upon the fields of Human Behaviour and Cognitive theory, implementing a combined theoretical framework of Martin Fishbein and Icek Ajzen's Reasoned Action Model (2010) and Leon Festinger's Cognitive Dissonance (1957).

Through a qualitative method and eight semi-structured interviews with British students between the ages of 18-35, we collected data concerning the respondents' attitudes, intentions and their consumer behaviour when purchasing clothing. These data were coded and structured with Template Analysis' coding process. The themes and codes formed the newly gained knowledge which was analysed and interpreted by using the combined theoretical framework. The analysis showed that several elements and factors are able to influence or interfere with a consumer's intention or behaviour. Those intentions and behaviour were often rooted in their social identities or background factors. Finally, the master's thesis can conclude that there sometimes is a difference between consumers intentions and actual behaviour when purchasing sustainable clothing, and this attitude-behaviour gap was often caused by cognitive dissonance, i.e., either conflicting attitudes or conflicting attitudes and behaviours. The master's thesis can also conclude that the attitude-behaviour gap is influenced by several elements, some more salient than others depending on the individual. These elements were mainly controlling factors such as financial abilities or COVID-19, influence from friends, family or society/social media, their occupation as a student and their individual clothing preferences.



This master's thesis contributes to the field of research regarding ethical consumption and attitude-behaviour gap. Based on this research individuals as well as organisations can find guidance of why an attitude-behaviour gap might occur within the context of purchasing sustainable clothing. Moreover, this research also provides assistance on how British students between the ages of 18-35 are talking about and perceiving sustainable clothing. Lastly, this master's thesis also contributes to the field of attitude-behaviour gap within one market segment. In relation to this, it would be interesting to examine whether the influential factors within our focus group is similar to other groups.

Keywords: Consumer behaviour, Attitude-behaviour gap, Sustainable fashion, Ethical consumption, British students, Cognitive processes.



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“You cannot get through a single day without having an impact on the world around you. What you do makes a difference, and you have to decide what kind of difference you want to make.”

- Jane Goodall
(Khandual and Pradhan 2018, 37)¹

¹ The quote is by Jane Goodall, however, we were not able to find the original source, therefore, we have used a reference in which we could find the quotation.



1. Introduction

Today, consumers are buying and spending more money than ever. In 2019, in the UK alone, households spent £1,38 million annually on household items such as food, clothes, cleaning supplies, etc. This is an increase of 2.5% from 2018 (Statista 2020; Office for National Statistics 2021).

As UK consumers are spending more money, they simultaneously also are becoming more aware of the environment and how their behaviour has an effect on it. A survey shows how consumers are embracing a more sustainable behaviour as one in five consumers have chosen a more sustainable lifestyle such as opting for low carbon modes of transportation or switching to renewable energy (Deloitte 2020). However, sustainable awareness is not a new phenomenon, as studies show that consumers back in the 1960's became more concerned about how their consumption affected the climate and their environment (Peattie 1995; McCormick 2001, 3-4). The increased awareness of sustainability and how consumption and human behaviour are affecting the environment is not without reason. This is evident as sustainability has become a common theme within our everyday language and the public sphere (Neckel 2017). Additionally, this is also evident as several expert groups argue that humanity's impact on the Earth has entered the Anthropocene epoch (Carrington 2016; Castree 2016). The Anthropocene epoch is defined as a current geological time in which humans are using the Earth and its resources in a way that is causing an impact on the Earth's climate and ecosystems (National Geographic 2021). The Earth Overshoot Day is an organisation that calculates the date when resource consumption of the current year exceeds the Earth's capacity to recreate those resources. In 2020, the Earth's resources were already utilised by human activity on the 22nd of August (Earth Overshoot Day 2021). In order to stop this growing resource consumption, there are multiple people who are starting movements to create awareness about the climate and the consumption of the Earth's resources. An example is Greta Thunberg, a Swedish climate activist, who has become one of the leading voices of the climate discussion (BBC News 2020). Actors, such as Emma Watson and Leonardo DiCaprio, have also joined the discussion, as both of them are also working on increasing the attention to climate changes (Larkin 2020; United Nations 2014).

This increased awareness of climate change has created an ethical perspective which is affecting several industries. This increased awareness has also created an increased demand



from consumers that companies should opt for more sustainable and ethical business practices (Haller, Lee and Cheung 2020). Globalisation and especially the development of digitalisation enables the consumers to easily communicate and gain knowledge regarding different issues occurring within an organisation (Shenkar, Luo and Chi 2015, 3-10; Hamilton and Webster 2015, 5-7+23; Abbas 2020), such as organisational procedures, working conditions or that some organisations use child labour (International Labour Organization 2013). The easily obtained knowledge also makes it possible for consumers to gain knowledge that they would not be able to access before the age of digitalisation. For example, today consumers are able to obtain information and knowledge across borders and understand how their spending habits are affecting the Earth. To exemplify, this was seen with a case that involved labour conditions in developing countries. In 2013, consumers could see and read on their screens how their consumer behaviour and spending habits had affected others, as 1.134 people died in the Rana Plaza accident in Bangladesh, where an eight-storey commercial building crashed. This accident happened because the high demand for clothing production was forcing workers to work even though several warnings of the bad construction of the building had been noted (International Labour Organization 2021).

Cases, such as Rana Plaza in Bangladesh, have played a part in the rapid change of both ethical and sustainable movements within various industries. Several industries have already created eco-friendly and ethical initiatives and options which some consumers are buying with great success (Care2 2016). This is, for example, seen in the food industry, where free-range and barn-range eggs are preferred by consumers because of their ethical principles, i.e., animal welfare (Miele 2010). One of the industries to also join the sustainable market is the fashion industry. Many companies within the industry have developed or are starting to develop sustainable clothing by offering sustainable options to meet the consumers' demands in a more sustainable manner. This can be seen with the fast fashion giant H&M's 'conscious' line, where they offer sustainable clothing made from organic cotton or other recycled materials (H&M 2021). Compared to the food industry, the consumers of the fashion industry also have intentions of buying eco-friendly or ethical items. However, studies show that the intention is not visible in their actual behaviour, as other elements such as price and quality are a higher priority for the consumers (Joergens 2006; Cowe and Williams 2000).

Additionally, other studies show that sustainability within the fashion industry is important to consumers (Gowork, et al 2012; Chan and Wong 2012; Gupta and Hodges 2012) as more



consumers wish to become more sustainable. On the contrary, other studies show that even though the intention of buying sustainably is present, it is not visible in consumers' actual behaviour (Joergens 2006; Cowe and Williams 2000; Carrigan and Attalla 2001). This paradox of consumers having the intentions but not acting on them is the phenomenon and the focus of this paper. We question why this attitude-behaviour gap is present. Why do consumers perceive themselves as being eco-friendly but at the same time are not acting eco-friendly? Some factors or elements might motivate consumers to buy more sustainably while other factors or elements might prevent the consumers from acting on their intentions. We question if certain attitudes or perceptions of sustainable clothing and sustainability might have an effect on the consumers' intentions and behaviour. We also question how consumers justify their behaviour when having different intentions. These questions led us to the following problem statement:

Why is there a difference between young consumers' intentions and their actual behaviour when purchasing sustainable clothing?

In order to answer our problem statement, we will start by giving a more in-depth description of the background of why this paper is relevant, i.e., the burning platform, an introduction to the phenomenon, the attitude-behaviour gap and our selection of the chosen focus group for this paper. We will then introduce the concept of sustainability and ethical consumption. Hereafter, we will present our literature review that will introduce the field of human behaviour and other relevant literature within the field of cognitive theory and attitude-behaviour theories. Next, we will present the theoretical framework of this paper, The Reasoned Action Model by Martin Fishbein and Icek Ajzen and the theory of Cognitive Dissonance by Leon Festinger. Afterwards, we will present the methodological perspective which includes our philosophy of science, social constructivism and our qualitative method. We will then present our method of analysis, Template Analysis, and an introduction of our empirical data which consists of eight interviews. Next, we will analyse and interpret our coded empirical findings and relate them to our theoretical framework. We will then discuss our findings and implications and relate our findings to a bigger perspective. Lastly, our conclusion.



1.1. The Burning Platform

In this section, we will present a more in-depth description of the background within this paper. The burning platform is our reasoning for why this paper is relevant, as it portrays the current situation within the fashion industry. We will present the social and environmental impacts the fashion industry is causing and display how the fashion industry is contributing to climate changes. Hereafter, we will present and define this paper's phenomenon, the attitude-behaviour gap. Lastly, we will present this paper's chosen focus group and the reasoning hereof.

The fashion industry is the third biggest manufacturing industry after automotive and technology industries (House of Commons Environmental Audit Committee 2019, 5; SustainYourStyle 2020). Through the years and to present time, the fashion industry has a vast impact on people and the environment, especially the industry of fast fashion. As the name implies, fast fashion retailers have given us a chance to buy trend-driven clothes at a very low price, all while producing new clothing collections as often as every two weeks (Darmo 2020). This comes with a vast impact on not only the workers who make the clothes but also the environment. In 2020, a survey disclosed that 93% of the examined brands were not paying the garment workers a living wage (Fashion Checker 2020). Many fashion retailers locate their production facilities in foreign countries such as Bangladesh, India, China or Indonesia, as these nations are able to provide cheap workforce due to little or no trade union representation and weak environmental protection (Fashion Checker 2020). On an environmental aspect, each step in the textile production has an environmental impact. This is due to utilisation of large amounts of water, landfills, chemicals and energy. For example, producing one T-shirt uses 2.700 litres of water which is enough drinking water for one person for 2.5 years. Moreover, the textile industry is set to cause 8-10% of the global greenhouse gas emissions. This is more than all international flights and maritime shipping combined (European Parliament 2021; Ellen MacArthur Foundation 2017, 38; Niinimäki, et al. 2020, 189). Current fashion consumption results in a large amount of textile waste which is a consequence of consumers' increased purchasing behaviour. The rise in consumerism, the increased efficiency of the textile production and the environmental impacts all contributes to the increasing developments of climate changes.

In 1988, the NASA-scientist and climate researcher, James Hansen, testified to the American Congress that global warming and, therefore, climate changes were real, and he suggested that



the globe needed to take immediate action or else it would have consequences in the future (Hansen et al. 1988; Shabecoff 1988). In time, as people gained more knowledge about the consequences of their actions, several initiatives have been initiated. For example, the Kyoto Protocol in 1997 (United Nations Climate Change 2021) or The European Commission's Circular Economy Action Plan in 2020 (European Commission 2020).

The increasing awareness of the fashion industry's impact on both people and the environment has made consumers more aware of their consumer behaviour. Several studies and articles present that the younger generation is more aware and concerned about climate changes and is also more willing to change their consumer behaviour (Halliday 2019; Inquirer.net 2020). For example, 49% of millennials prefer ethical and sustainable clothing above what is currently trending (Halliday 2019). The fact that the younger generation seem to be more keen on sustainable clothing is an aspect that will be elaborated in section 1.3. when presenting this paper's focus group. Moreover, the studies also indicate that consumers have intentions about having a more sustainable consumption, but it is not, however, displayed in their behaviour (Joergens 2006; Cowe and Williams 2000; Carrigan and Attalla 2001).

On the basis of the impact the fashion industry is causing on the Earth, we outline a need for fundamental changes throughout the fashion industry's supply chain. This includes everything from the production process to a shift in consumer behaviour. As this paper focuses on the attitude-behaviour gap, we will only focus on the last step in the supply chain which is consumer behaviour. Despite the well-debated and published environmental impacts, the fashion industry still continues to grow at a rapid speed. A study estimates that if the industry continues at its current path, the clothing sales will reach 160 million tonnes by 2050, triple today's amount, and it will also use more than 26% of the global carbon budget (Ellen MacArthur Foundation 2017, 19-21). Several known activists have expressed their concern about climate changes and the importance of confronting these issues now (The Climate Reality Project 2020). As young climate activist Greta Thunberg once said:

"I want you to act as if the house is on fire. Because it is." (Greta Thunberg 2019).

Having presented some of the major social and environmental impacts that the fashion industry is causing, we will now move onto this paper's phenomenon, the attitude-behaviour gap.



1.2. The Attitude-Behaviour Gap

As mentioned, the phenomenon we wish to focus on in this paper is the attitude-behaviour gap. As the name implies, the phenomenon is essentially a gap between one's attitude and one's behaviour. Some argue that the attitude-behaviour gap is influenced by individual, social and situational factors (Terlau and Hirsch 2015, 1). The attitude-behaviour gap has been investigated and is well-documented in ethical consumer literature, especially with a focus on trying to explain why the gap occurs (Carrigan and Attalla 2001; Carrington, Neville and Whitwell 2010; Papaioannidou, Ryan and Ginieis 2011). However, the ethical consumer literature has also been connected and examined in relation to other sub-themes such as food consumption (Terlau and Hirsch 2015), tourism (Juvan and Dolnicar 2014), business ethics and corporate social responsibility (Creyer 1997; Boulstridge and Carrigan 2000) and the fashion industry (Jacobs et al. 2018; Wiederhold and Martinez 2018; Park and Lin 2020). Research and studies concerning the attitude-behaviour gap has indicated that despite consumers expressing concern for the environment and having socially responsible attitudes, only a low number of consumers are acting on them. A survey found that 57% participants stated that they would stop buying a brand if they knew it had been produced by child labour. However, the survey also discovered a notable difference between supporting an action and the action itself (Carrigan and Attalla 2001, 564). In addition, another study revealed a 30:3 syndrome, as 30% of the consumers declared that they cared about ethical standards but only 3% of the purchases reflected these standards (Cowe and Williams 2000). The big question of why this phenomenon occurs is well-debated, and it might be difficult to provide a 'correct' answer. This is mainly because our attitudes, intentions and behaviour are often associated with a complex cognitive process that cannot be seen or measured. The field of human behaviour and cognitive theory will be further explained in sections 3.1. and 3.1.1.

As mentioned, some argue that the attitude-behaviour is affected by individual, social and situational factors (Terlau and Hirsch 2015, 1). Other research also suggests that the gap may be affected by demographic characteristics such as age (Carrigan and Attalla 2001, 570). Based on prior research and statistics, we have chosen to examine sustainable consumerism within the fashion industry and the attitude-behaviour gap in relation to a specific group. The next section will give an in-depth presentation and explanation of the specific focus group within this paper.



1.3. Our Focus Group

In 2020, the fashion industry was estimated to increase in value from approximately 1.5 trillion US dollars to approximately 2.25 trillion dollars by 2025. This reveals that the demand for clothing is on a rise across the whole world (Statista 2021). In the UK, the consumption of new clothing alone is projected to be higher than any other European country (House of Commons Environmental Audit Committee 2019, 40).

Studies show that even though the clothing consumption is high, all generations are adopting more sustainable consumer habits. Yet, they also display that it is the younger generations who are more concerned about sustainable issues. It is especially the younger millennials² that is the most engaged in sustainable issues, while Generation Z³ is more concerned about supporting ethical brands. Essentially, people between the ages of 18-34 are more likely to support ethical brands and opt for a more sustainable lifestyle (Deloitte 2020). Additionally, other statistics show that young British consumers not only care more than the older generation, but they also see environmental issues as the third biggest issue in the UK (YouGov 2021). Based on these studies and statistics, we have chosen to focus on British consumers between the ages of 18-35, as we wish to understand if the attitude-behaviour gap exists within this group. As we wish to examine British young consumers' behaviour, we tried to narrow down our search. We found that people at this age are more likely to attend a university (HESA 2019), so we added the aspect of students since we then were able to direct our attention to universities when looking for participants and respondents to this paper. Narrowing down our focus group made it possible to commence a more specific search rather than searching for participants within the entire UK. Moreover, it is important to mention that when finding our respondents at British universities, it is likely that not all will have a British nationality. This aspect aligns with this paper's international perspective.

Furthermore, research indicates that when looking at one specific focus group, it is important to mention that people will or may hold many different social identities than just the typical firm-generated economically oriented role such as customers. These different social identities may affect the findings of a study, as research suggests that these may influence attitudes, intentions and behaviour (Crane and Ruebottom 2011). To explain, a respondent may be a

² Born in the 1980's or the 1990's (Merriam-Webster 2021).

³ Born in the late 1990's and the early 2000's (Merriam-Webster 2021).



student, however, they may also be a mother, woman, daughter, etc., which also needs to be considered as these roles may have an influence on their behaviour.

In summary, we have chosen to focus on a group of British students between the ages of 18-35. An in-depth introduction of this paper's respondents is available in section 5.4.1. Having introduced the burning platform, the attitude-behaviour gap and our focus group of this paper, we will now introduce and define the aspect of sustainability in general and within the fashion industry.



2. Sustainability

The concept of sustainability is known as a broad and fuzzy concept. Today, the concept has found its way into several different contexts and paradigms as it has become a part of everyday language in the public sphere. Through this section, we will look further into the concept of sustainability, and we will present this paper's definition of sustainability. Since this paper aims to work with sustainability in the fashion industry, it is important to create a mutual understanding of what sustainability is and how it can be related to the fashion industry. First, we will look at the historical development of the concept and the definition of sustainability. Second, we will relate sustainability to the fashion industry, introducing slow and fast fashion. Furthermore, we will display how the fashion industry is trying to be more sustainable by presenting different methods of sustainable solutions. Lastly, we will introduce the aspects and differences of ethics and morality regarding consumerism within the fashion industry.

2.1. Defining Sustainability

The concept of sustainability can be traced back to Thomas Malthus in the late eighteenth century. His argument was that the Earth, at one point, would not be able to support the continuously growing population, and the only solution was to control the growth of the population (Portney 2015, 5). The first time sustainability was used, within the world of academics, was in the mid-1980s. Since then, it has been adapted and defined by many researchers (Portney 2015, 1).

In 1987, the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED) defined sustainable development, in the Brundtland Report, as "*Meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs*" (World Commission on Environment and Development 1987, 15). To explain, this definition is broad and sees sustainability as a way of ensuring that all needs today, in every aspect and category, are met without harming the future generations and their capability to meet their own needs. Essentially, the world, as we know it today, must continue to function in a way that can meet all of our needs but without harming our future generations and their ability to function in a way where they are unable to meet their needs. Today, this definition is the most quoted, and it is seen as the foundation for the concept of sustainability (Portney 2015, 2). However, as



WCED's definition is broad and general, we have chosen to focus more on a definition that relates to sustainability within the fashion industry.

There is no correct or final definition of sustainability. This is seen as there exist hundreds of different definitions of sustainability which are more specific within a certain topic or category, e.g., sustainable fishing. Since this paper wishes to work with sustainability within the fashion industry, we will need a definition of sustainability that is more focused on our chosen industry. One study defines sustainable fashion as *“Fashionable clothes that incorporate fair trade principles with sweatshop-free labour conditions while not harming the environment or workers by using biodegradable and organic cotton.”* (Joergens 2006, 361). In this definition, the focus is on human rights and the use of natural and biodegradable materials within the production of clothes. It is essential here that the workers are safe and treated fairly while working, but it is also important that the manufacturers are using the right kind of materials. However, as this definition solely focuses on human rights and the production of clothing, it only portrays a small part of the entire supply chain and industry. We argue that sustainable fashion should be sustainable throughout the entire supply chain and industry, which is why we have chosen the following definition of sustainability within this paper:

“[...] sustainable fashion can be defined as clothing, shoes and accessories that are manufactured, marketed and used in the most sustainable manner possible, taking into account both environmental and socio-economic aspects.” (Brismar 2014).

To explain, the definition states that both environmental and socio-economic aspects need to be considered, meaning that the entire supply chain needs to act in the most sustainable way possible. For example, this means that the manufacturing process needs to use the right materials but also that the manufacturers need to consider if they offer sustainable working conditions for the workers. Moreover, the definition also states that sustainability or sustainable behaviour must be performed throughout the entire supply chain. Manufacturers, retailers and consumers have to do what they can to produce, sell and dispose of the product in the most sustainable way that is possible for them. As this definition of sustainable fashion takes both environmental and socio-economic aspects and the entire supply chain within the fashion industry into account and not only the production, we have chosen to use this definition of sustainability in this paper. Additionally, the selection of this definition is also due to the already established harmful impact the fashion industry has on not only the environment but



also social factors in society. Furthermore, our chosen definition correlates with existing research (Lai, Henninger and Alevizou 2017), implying that there are four guiding principles that need to be considered before clothes can be classified as sustainable. First, any element produced must be child labour free through the entire supply chain. Second, materials used within the production must not be harmful to the environment. Third, the production must be done in an ethically and socially responsible manner, such as paying the workers fair wages and (ideally) creating local jobs in the manufacturing country. Last, loyal long-term relationships across the supply chain are crucial when producing sustainably, meaning that a retailer should not always choose the cheapest collaborators but the most ethical ones (Lai, Henninger and Alevizou 2017, 83). As sustainability is a broad and fuzzy concept, it is important that we, in this paper, gather the same understanding of the concept in relation to the fashion industry. Therefore, the next section will present sustainability in the fashion industry and some of the different ways retailers can be more sustainable.

2.2. Sustainability in the Fashion Industry

The concept of sustainability is present in all industries including the fashion industry. While sustainability has been a major factor within some industries for many years, such as the food industry (Miele 2010), it is only within the last couple decades that it has become the focus within the fashion industry (Eco Friend 2021). The fashion industry has been known for showing unethical behaviour when it comes to not only their actual products but also in terms of exploitation of their workforce, social well-being and drainage of the world's natural resources (Henninger et al 2017, 2). This unethical behaviour has created a negative image of the industry from which the industry suffers. This is one of the reasons why many fashion retailers have started to implement and offer more sustainable options (Henninger et al 2017, 3). For example, H&M has created a sustainable line of clothing which is called 'conscious' (H&M 2021) and ASOS' responsible edit (ASOS 2021). Additionally, as mentioned in section 1, the consumers are becoming more aware of how their behaviour and the harmful impact the fashion industry has on the Earth. This awareness has created a growing demand from consumers to the fashion retailers, forcing them to offer more sustainable options (Henninger et al 2017, 2-3).

Several studies and research show that the fashion industry is harmful for the environment (Henninger et al 2017; House of Commons Environmental Audit Committee 2019, 6;



Mukherjee 2015). In 2016, the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) stated that “*It can take more than 20,000 litres of water to produce 1 kg of cotton; equivalent to a single T-shirt and pair of jeans [...]*” (Joy and Peña 2017, 32). In this statement, WWF provides an example of how much of the Earth's resources is utilised when manufacturing two pairs of clothing. However, even though the manufacturing of clothes is proven to be harmful for the environment, consumption is still at a high level. A study done by the European Environment Agency (EEA), shows that the EU's citizens' amount of clothing has increased by 40% between 1996-2012. Moreover, the research mentions that 30% of clothes owned by the EU's citizens have not been used for at least a year, and when it is discarded, over half of it is not recycled (Sajn 2019, 2).

As mentioned earlier, there are four guiding principles for clothing to be considered more sustainable (Lai, Henninger and Alevizou 2017, 83). The fashion industry can mainly be divided into two categories: Fast fashion and slow fashion. Today and throughout the years, fast fashion has been the most popular choice for consumers. Fast fashion can be defined as “*an approach to the design, creation, and marketing of clothing fashions that emphasizes making fashion trends quickly and cheaply available to consumers*” (Merriam-Webster 2021). Fast fashion retailers have the ability to, at rapid speed, create trendy and affordable clothes with a short lifetime which is what consumers have been demanding (House of Commons Environmental Audit Committee 2019, 6). Other key elements within fast fashion are cheap fabrics, low salaries and worker exploitation often practised at outsourced production facilities in developing countries (Clark 2008, 428; Mihm 2010). Examples of fast fashion retailers are H&M and ASOS, as they offer several new collections of clothes throughout the year at low prices (Hayes 2021).

Recently, a new movement within the fashion industry has started due to the increasing awareness of the harmful impact that the fashion industry has on the planet. This increasing attention has demanded the start of the movement, slow fashion, which can be related to the slow food movement in the food industry that started in the 1980's in Italy (Clark 2008, 428-429). Slow fashion can be defined as:

“(...) sustainable fashion solutions, based on the repositioning of strategies of design, production, consumption, use, and reuse, which are emerging alongside the global fashion system, and are posing a potential challenge to it. The slow approach offers more sustainable



and ethical ways of being fashionable that have implications for design, production, consumption, and use.” (Clark 2008, 428).

The definition states that the idea behind slow fashion is the opposite to fast fashion and its approach. Slow fashion's approach is slow and is often seen as more ethical. There are fewer releases with more focus on the quality so the product can last longer. This means that the clothes are not being wasteful and disposed of as quickly as fast fashion clothes (Joy and Peña 2017, 35-36). Examples of slow fashion retailers are Patagonia (Patagonia 2021) and Boden (Boden 2021), as they implement and follow the slow fashion approach while also considering some of the four guiding principles in their production of sustainable clothing (Lai, Henninger and Alevizou 2017, 83; Boden 2021; Patagonia 2021). Additionally, slow fashion makes it possible for the consumer to be sustainable while still being fashionable. Having defined and presented sustainability within the fashion industry, we will now look into the concept of sustainable clothing. The next section will go into depth with the concept and some of the different materials that are used to produce sustainable clothing.

2.2.1. Sustainable Clothing

Sustainable clothing refers to clothes that have been produced in a way to not harm the environment through the manufacturing process (Lai, Henninger and Alevizou 2017, 82-83). Several fashion retailers are trying to become more sustainable by using environmentally friendly materials such as organic cotton, whereas other ways to become more sustainable can be by focusing on more social factors such as labour conditions or the transportation methods. The several ways of being sustainable have created different sustainable terms, e.g., eco-friendly, green fashion, ethical fashion, etc. (Rotter, Armstrong and Cano 2017, 15). In this section, we will present some of the ways retailers are trying to be more sustainable. We have chosen to divide sustainable clothing into three categories: Organic fabrics, recycling and other initiatives. However, it is important to mention that these sections will only focus on the major approaches we deem to be most influential within these categories.

2.2.1.1. Organic Fabrics

Some fashion retailers are using organic fibres instead of other more synthetic materials in the manufacturing of the garment. The **organic fibres** are usually obtained from animal or herbal sources such as organic cotton, hemp, bamboo or wool with no pesticides having been used during the growth phase. In the manufacturing process, the organic fibres are not exposed to



any dangerous chemicals, and if the clothes are coloured or printed, vegetable dye is used. Moreover, most of the organic clothing is also promoted to be non-allergic and good in quality (Joergens 2006; Saricam and Okur 2019, 13). Many of the large international fashion retailers, e.g., H&M, have already incorporated organic fibres in their production (H&M 2021). However, it is questionable how sustainable the manufactured clothes really are. These retailers are positioned within the fast fashion industry, meaning that even though they are using organic fibres in their production, they are still producing an enormous volume frequently, which is just as bad for the environment.

As previously mentioned, there is confusion about sustainability within the fashion industry, and this is especially when it comes to the materials used. An article disclosed that organic fibres are often perceived as ‘good’, while synthetic fibres are perceived as ‘bad’ (Fletcher 2014, 11). This means that society has prescribed certain materials as being better than others. However, according to the article, there is no dispute that producing synthetic fibres impacts the environment, but the cultivation and processing of the organic fibres also causes a substantial impact. The process of 1 kg of cotton uses 3800 litres of water, whereas the production of 1 kg polyester only uses 17 litre pr. kg. (Fletcher 2014, 11). Nevertheless, if you look at the energy consumption, synthetic manufacturers consume twice as much energy to make the same amount of cotton. In this example, it is evident that, depending on the angle, both synthetic and organic fibres can be harmful for the environment.

2.2.1.2. Recycle

Another way to become more sustainable is by **recycling**. One of the most common waste management strategies is the 3R’s: Reuse, reduce and recycle (Fletcher 2014, 117-118). The concept of recycling can be done in several ways. First, you can convert the waste (clothes) into reusable material. For example, change a pair of old jeans into a new skirt. Second, you can return waste to a previous stage. For example, this is what happens when the Danes hand in their used plastic bottles. Some of the bottles will be cleaned while others will be melted into new bottles (Dansk Retursystem 2021). The last and third is to use again. This means instead of buying new clothes, use what you already have (Fletcher 2014, 117-118).

As mentioned earlier, the fashion industry is one the largest polluters, and the industry has already taken some initiatives into action. However, it is debatable whether more sustainable manufacturing processes and options are needed. The fashion industry is currently producing



more sustainable options which are alleged to be less harmful to the environment, but it still raises questions about the enormous volume of clothes that are being manufactured. Even though many retailers offer to recycle consumers' used clothes, there are several indicators that the clothes do not get recycled but are instead burnt or thrown into the sea. For example, this was seen in the Danish documentary, Operation X, in which it was found that H&M burned 19 tonnes of clothes in 2017 instead of recycling it, as they told their consumers (TV2 Nyhederne 2017).

Within the concept of recycling clothing and the materials hereof, another way of recycling is to **upcycle**. While recycling means to reuse the materials used in the product, which usually is done through a chemical reconstruction of the materials to create a whole new product, upcycling is a physical process. The goal is to transform and improve the already existing garment into a product that holds a greater value (Khandual and Pradhan 2019, 39-40). For example, upcycling can be done by transforming an old T-shirt into a handbag or hair ties.

Thrifting is another way of recycling clothes and shopping more sustainably. Thrifting or thrift stores have many names: Second-hand stores, vintage shopping, charity shops, etc. Products sold at these stores are usually used and donated from people who do not need them anymore. Buying clothing at thrift stores is therefore more sustainable as these items are being sold as second hand with the intend of reusing, meaning they have not been produced to be sold in shops (Khandual and Pradhan 2019, 43). Moreover, it is essential to mention that clothing at second-hand stores is also sometimes expensive, as there are some second-hand stores that solely sell luxury, high street or vintage brands.

2.2.1.3. Other Initiatives

Another way that clothing can be more sustainable is if it is made from only **one isolated fibre or material**. Today, clothing normally consists of multiple different materials and fibres. However, if only one fibre or material is used to produce a garment instead of multiple, the item can be recycled, and fibres like wool and cotton can be decomposed (Jones 2021).

Clothes that are either **made-to-order** or **custom made** are also ways for clothing to be more sustainable. As already established, mass production and overconsumption are some of the most damaging factors within the fashion industry. By eliminating these factors and only



producing the amount of clothing that is actually needed, the clothing can be more sustainable (Khandual and Pradhan 2018, 39).

Shopping locally and **supporting small local businesses** is also a way for consumers to buy more sustainably. Supporting local businesses is not only more sustainable but also good for the surrounding communities. With locally produced clothing, consumers may experience a different shopping experience than if they shopped at fast fashion retailers such as H&M. Consumers, shopping locally, may be able to know more about the production and the materials used if the garments have been made locally. In addition, we question if the Western laws' more strict quality control standards may ensure that consumers experience a higher quality when shopping locally (The Unique Group 2019).

As shown above, there are many ways that clothing can be sustainable, and those introduced are only a handful of them. For the average consumer, it may be difficult to know which products are sustainable within the fashion industry. This is why several certificates and labels exist to help guide the consumer. Additionally, it is important to acknowledge that certificates and labels often are used as marketing tools for fashion retailers to promote their products (SustainAbility 2011, 9-10). However, as the fashion retailers marketing strategy is not part of this paper's focus, we will only present a few of the major certificates and labels within the fashion industry. In relation to the certificates and labels in the fashion industry, there exists both third-party certified certificates and labels but also certificates and labels which fashion retailers themselves have created. An important aspect to mention is that fashion retailers are not required to certify any of their products, meaning that the certificates and labels that should help guide the consumers might actually be a marketing strategy instead (Conscious Fashion Collective 2020). The next three sections will present some of the major certifications.

Fairtrade

If a clothing item is **Fairtrade** certified, it means that the cotton, which is in the garment, has been produced by a Fairtrade certified producer in a developing country who also has received a fair pay. This certification also ensures that the cotton used in the garment has been safely produced for both the farmer but also the environment since Fairtrade has banned genetically modified cotton seeds. Additionally, a large amount of the cotton produced under the Fairtrade certificate is classified as organic (Fairtrade International 2021).



World Fair Trade Organization

If a company is **World Fair Trade Organization** (WFTO) certified, it means that they have met the 10 principles of Fairtrade set by the WFTO throughout all their products and supply chain. Essentially, the producers of the garments and all others throughout the supply chain have been paid and treated fairly (World Fair Trade Organization 2021).

Fair Wear Foundation

Fair Wear Foundation is an NGO that works to improve conditions for workers in garment factories. They are currently active in 15 different countries in Asia, Africa and Eastern Europe. If a brand has the Fair Wear mark, it does not necessarily mean that they have fair labour rights and working conditions for their employees, however, it means that they are actively working to improve them (Fair Wear 2021).

These three introduced third-party certificates are all international and to some extent well-known. Besides the third-party certificates, fashion retailers will also sometimes create their own certificates, labels and standards that are not certified by a third-party. For example, H&M's 'conscious' line is a label that H&M themselves have produced (H&M 2021). The mix of third-party certificates and those the retailers, themselves, are able to create might generate some confusion among the consumers. The consumers may believe that they are buying sustainable options when they are in fact buying clothing which is branded as sustainable but in reality, they might not be (SustainAbility 2011, 9).

As stated earlier, the fashion industry is having both environmental and social impacts on the Earth. This information is something some consumers might be affected by while others are not. It is possible that the information might change an individual consumer's behaviour due to the individual's own principles of what is 'right' and 'wrong'. For example, solely buying sustainably because it is perceived to be less harmful to the environment and therefore the 'right' thing to do. Referring to the concept of 'right' and 'wrong', we argue that it is important to include the aspects of ethics and morality within this paper. Therefore, the next section will introduce the concepts of ethics and morality within the fashion industry.



2.3. Ethics and Morality

The fashion industry and consumer behaviour hold both ethical and moral dimensions. In this section, we will gain a better understanding of the two terms in relation to the fashion industry but also in relation to consumer behaviour. First, we will define the terms ‘ethics’ and ‘morality’. Second, we will relate the two terms to sustainability in the fashion industry and to the concept of consumption.

According to Merriam-Webster, morals can be defined as the “[...] *principles of right and wrong in behavior*” and “*sanctioned by or operative on one's conscience or ethical judgment*” (Merriam-Webster 2021). To explain, morality relates to an individual’s own personal sense of right and wrong. Morality is not imposed by anyone but rather what the individual thinks is good or bad. For example, a person who is buying sustainable clothes is doing so because the individual believes it is the right thing to do.

Ethics is, according to Merriam-Webster, defined as “*the discipline dealing with what is good and bad and with moral duty and obligation*” (Merriam-Webster 2021). Ethics is generally considered as standards, good and bad or right and wrong, which are imposed by some outside group such as society or a profession. For example, the legal profession states what lawyers should or should not do based on the standards of their profession. Additionally, ethics can be viewed on a larger scale, such as within a country or culture, that perceives certain things as right or wrong and impose them on others. To exemplify, ethics is the social norms and rules within society regarding what is right or wrong or good and bad.

Ethics and morality are often used interchangeably, as they both are used to distinguish between what is right and wrong. However, the main distinction is that ethics is imposed by an outside group while morality is an individual’s own sense of right and wrong. Furthermore, it is important to mention that ethics are not always moral and vice versa. For example, if a lawyer tells the court that his client is guilty, the lawyer might be doing so out of moral principles, believing that he needs to tell the court that his client is guilty because he believes it is morally wrong to lie. However, telling the court is unethical, as it violates the attorney-client privilege. Another example is that you might live in a society that agrees on a certain code of conduct that you personally disagree with, i.e., you might think that free speech is right but live



somewhere that most people think defaming religious icons is wrong. In these two examples, the ethics and morality are conflicting.

According to a study, ethical and moral behaviour is influenced by several factors, such as situation and context (Papaiokonomou, Ryan and Ginieis 2011, 79). For example, in some situations and different contexts, people can easily act more ethically, e.g., when buying organic meat, because it is easier for people to have sympathy with the animals. Meanwhile, it may be harder for those individuals to relate to child labour in Bangladesh, as it is something that is happening on the other side of the world. This implies that consumers still buy and support brands that uses child labour, as they choose to stay intentionally unaware of the ethical issue.

In the fashion industry, the term ‘ethics’ is “[...] *not only hard to define, as there is no one industry standard. Moreover, it often has common characteristics with other movements such as fair trade and ecology or green fashion*” (Joergens 2006, 361). In this statement, ethics within the fashion industry has no standard definition and it is often swept into the same pile of other terms such as green fashion, sustainability and ecology. Gathering the terms under one pile indicates that they have the same meaning. However, we argue that they do not have the same meaning. For example, a garment or piece of clothing can be produced ethically but not be sustainable and vice versa. Research shows that within the fashion industry, the most common way to describe a consumer’s sustainable shopping behaviour is by using the term ‘ethical consumption’ (Joergens 2006; Carrigan and Attalla 2001). Ethical consumption can be defined as the “[...] *purchase decisions by persons concerned with not only the price of products and services, but also with the political, social, and environmental consequences of their purchases.*” (Liebe, et al. 2014, 2). To explain, ethical consumption is when the consumer's purchase decisions are based on more than just the style and price. The consumer is thinking about the effect their purchase can have on the environment and society. The aspect of ethical consumption is essential to mention since we are describing ethics and morality within the fashion industry, and the term ‘ethical consumption’ is generally used when describing the ideal consumers who are actively trying to shop more sustainably and ethically.

However, we argue that it is important to mention that within the industry there are both aspects of ethics and morality since the industry has issues that influence people on an individual level, e.g., body image or working conditions, but also issues which influence the entire world, e.g.,



a harmful production process. These issues are often not entirely ethical or moral since they all overlap each other with aspects of environmental, social, legal and political concerns. For example, fashion retailers may outsource their clothing production to reduce the cost of labour, materials, etc. (Mihm 2010).

Another reason we argue that both ethics and morality is present in the fashion industry is due to the paradox between consumers' intention and their actual behaviour (Cowe and Williams 2000; Joergens 2006; Carrigan and Attalla 2001). This paradox implies that some consumers might have attitudes that are conflicting with their behaviour. For example, buying non sustainable clothes even though they might think it is morally wrong. The attitude-behaviour gap is a well-known phenomenon within the field of human behaviour. In order to understand the attitude-behaviour gap, how and why it occurs, we need to understand the field of human behaviour, i.e., why people act the way they do and how they justify it. Therefore, the next section will present a literature review of human behaviour.



3. Literature Review

In this section, we will present the field of human behaviour. The research concerning human behaviour is a broad field with different branches. The field often includes aspects from psychology, culture, anthropology, cognitive science etc. This means that the study of human behaviour can be divided into several subcategories, e.g., human development, decision-making, emotions, attitudes and cognitive processes. As this paper focuses on the relationship between attitudes, intentions and behaviour, we will start by presenting research and studies that examine human behaviour in general. We will look at the key concepts of human behaviour, e.g., action and cognition in order to understand how the decision-making process works. Later, we will go into depth with literature concerning the study of cognitive theory and the field of attitude-behaviour theories. This will give us an introduction to the field and help us find the ideal theory we deem applicable within this paper.

3.1. Human Behaviour

Human behaviour is a complex unity of three elements: Actions, emotions and cognition (Farnsworth 2019). Actions are visible and can be seen through observation and measured by different physiological sensors, e.g., body temperature and sweat measurement. On the contrary, cognitive behaviour is not visible and, therefore, impossible to measure. Cognitive behaviour stems from a person's memory, thoughts and mental images (Farnsworth 2019), such as remembering the colour of your childhood home or the lyrics to your favourite song. Cognition is also the storage of a person's skills and knowledge. This means that a person's behaviour mirrors the person's mind. Lastly, emotions are a person's mental reactions and feelings such as anger or joy. It is notable that emotions are often influenced by external factors such as receiving the news of the passing of a loved one or getting offered your dream job. Similar to cognition, emotions cannot be observed. However, emotions are possible to measure, e.g., through the heartrate. Nevertheless, it is important to mention that emotions can sometimes be visible through a behaviour, e.g., when a person cries. The action of crying might have multiple reasons, such as originating from joy or sadness (Farnsworth 2019). The three elements of human behaviour are both connected and interdependent. For a person to live and express themselves, they are all needed. For example, if you are feeling sad, you may go for a walk because you know from past experiences that it helps to clear your head (Farnsworth 2019).



Human behaviour is also learned through genetics and environmental factors. Several studies have investigated this nature versus nurture issue (McGue and Bouchard 1998; Pinker 2004; Ellis, Hoskin and Ratnasingam 2018). The main theme in the studies is whether a person obtains their behavioural and physical traits through genetics or environmental factors, or if it is a combination of them both. For example, if a man abuses his family, was he born with abusive tendencies? Or did he learn that behaviour from his environment growing up? A lot of the nature versus nurture debate has been researched and discussed through studies that include twins. This is, for example, seen in a health study, where identical twins who share the same genetic code were being compared in order to determine whether it was genetics or environmental factors that had an influential role on their health concerning gout (Krishnan, et al. 2012). Today, several researchers believe that both genetics and environmental factors play an important role in the development of human behaviour, and it is naive to believe that behavioural traits can be based on solely genetics or environmental factors (Hebb 1958, 128-129; Gwin, Roberts and Martinez 2005; Domingue, et al. 2018).

Besides the literature regarding the unity of actions, emotions and cognition which human behaviour is based upon, other studies argue that the human mind is made of two systems (Kahneman 2012). These two systems constitute a person's behaviour, and according to these studies, they are “[...] *self-evident that people are neither fully rational nor completely selfish, and that their tastes are anything but stable.*” (Kahneman 2012, 269). To explain, the human mind has two systems: System 1 and system 2. System 1, also called the autopilot, is the fast-thinking part of the mind. We use this part when making short-term and intuitive decisions, e.g., buying a cup of coffee or buying that chocolate bar we see at the cashier. These fast decisions are often associated with habits or things we do every day. System 2 is the slower part of the mind in which decisions are deliberate and thought through. In system 2, we evaluate the outcome of our decision (Kahneman 2012, 19-30). For example, before you buy a new car, you will do some research on the model, and you will probably want to take the car for a test drive. Sometimes, human behaviour is conflicted between the two systems. People may sometimes have an illusion of a certain way they want to act in certain situations (system 2). However, if the decision is about a habit or known element, the behaviour is usually dominated by system 1 (Kahneman 2012, 19-30).

Kahneman's description of human behaviour in two systems can also be related to the field of intentional or unintentional behaviour. This field's main research is to understand whether



behaviour is intentional or unintentional and if it is even possible to have unintentional behaviour. Some research suggests that intentional behaviour is when a person acts because the person has an intention to act. Whereas an unintentional behaviour is performed when the intention that the person acts upon causes or have an unintended or unexpected outcome. Research indicates that the main essence of intentional and unintentional actions is knowledge, i.e., whether or not the person knows they are performing the action (Gorr and Horgan 1982). Some actions may seem unintentional as they often are perceived as a habit, e.g., going to the toilet or brushing your teeth in the morning, yet we argue that these actions are also performed based upon an intention. Using the toilet example, this behaviour may seem unintentional, but you still go to the toilet with an intent to empty your bladder. Research within this field also argues that behaviour sometimes can be both not intentional nor unintentional. This is evident through research arguing that there is a third kind of action, the non-intentional action (D. K. Chan 1995; Johns 2020). This is an action in which the person is not acting for a reason when performing, such as when you feel an itch on your arm and you then scratch it. We acknowledge that there may be three kinds of actions, but as we focus on consumer behaviour, we will mainly focus on intentional behaviour.

Having presented the general aspects of human behaviour, the next section will include a presentation of literature that is positioned within the fields of cognitive theory and attitude-behaviour theories.

3.1.1. Cognitive Theory

Understanding human behaviour and predicting it has for many years been a goal for numerous researchers. Over time, the field of human behaviour has led to the development of several different branches of theories and models which examine different types of human behaviour, e.g., interest-based, attitude-based and emotion-based. Since the field of human behaviour is broad and there is a wealth of literature on human behaviour, this section will only focus on studies, models and theories relating to the cognitive processes of how consumers justify their decision-making and behaviour.

One approach within the study of human behaviour is cognitive theory. This field attempts to explain human behaviour by understanding their cognitive processes (Kozbelt 2011, 475-476). Jean Piaget was one of the world's first psychologists to make a systematic study of cognitive



development (Mitchell and Ziegler 2013, 10). His theory included a stage theory in which children go through different stages of cognitive development when growing up. Piaget argued that these different stages of cognitive development improved the children's intelligence as they grew (Mitchell and Ziegler 2013, 10-11). Today, this theory is still ground-breaking and relevant as it has led the way for many studies and theories. Another theory that is important to mention is the model of Cognitive Orientation, created by Hans Kreitler and Shulamith Kreitler in 1972 (Kreitler and Kreitler 1972). Their model focuses mainly on the cognitive processes that occur within the human brain in different situations as influenced by both external and internal factors (Kreitler and Kreitler 1972, 9-15). To explain, Cognitive Orientation can be used to understand how a person can use his thought-process to motivate himself to act in a certain way or perform a specific behaviour. This means that the Cognitive Orientation process is motivation-driven as the theory suggests that a person will plan out the entire situation in different scenarios before it happens in their head before deciding on the specific behaviour they wish to have to achieve a certain outcome of the situation. For example, you wake up and still feel tired, and then you think that there is no use of getting up, which makes you sad. Suddenly, you also remember that today is quiz day at school which makes you sick because you feel unprepared. These thoughts make you decide to stay home, creating a certain feeling of relief. One important aspect to notice in this model is that the outcome of the cognitive process may not be rational since Kreitler and Kreitler do not always see humans as rational but more as individuals who act on their intuitive intentions (Kreitler and Kreitler 1972, 14-15).

Furthermore, within the field of cognitive theory, there are also studies that investigate the inconsistency between attitudes and behaviours. The theory of Cognitive Dissonance by Leon Festinger in 1957 focuses on situations involving conflicting attitudes and beliefs that can cause psychological discomfort for the person if they experience inconsistency between them (Festinger 1957). Cognitive Dissonance is a classic theory that, from its start, has played an important part within the world of social psychology (Cooper 2011, 377). The theory of Cognitive Dissonance can be used to understand why people may behave in a way which they know is harmful (Festinger 1957, 1-3). In this paper, the theory of Cognitive Dissonance can be used to examine the attitude-behaviour gap, i.e., why some people may want to shop sustainably but do not act upon it. In addition, the theory can help examine how individuals justify or reduce the cognitive dissonance they may be experiencing.



3.1.1.1. Attitude-Behaviour Theories

Within the field of predicting and justifying human behaviour, there are many researchers who have made different studies, models and theories in order to understand, predict or change human behaviour. One of the major and first theories is the Classical Conditioning Theory which states that attitudes are learned through similar associations over time (Larsen, Ommundsen and Van der Veer 2015, 162). This theory suggests that people over time are able to associate certain items or sounds with a specific behaviour. For example, music can create positive cognition which are sometimes used in advertisements to make consumers associate happiness to the advertised product after seeing the advertisement several times, making them more inclined to buy the product. Other research focuses more on persuasion through communication as a key element since it can be used to motivate people to act in a certain way and perform a certain behaviour. This research mainly concerns the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) (Petty and Cacioppo 1986). The ELM correlates with the research of people having two systems (Kahneman 2012) as it is a dual process model which claims that certain communication might influence an individual's attitude and thereby the selection between the two routes, i.e., their behaviour. Lastly, other researchers argue that for people to form a certain attitude and behaviour and/or change an attitude, they must collect more information from different sources to make an overall judgment (Anderson 1971). This is the key aspect in The Information Integration Theory.

In common for most of the attitude-behaviour theories is the assumption that attitudes are playing an important role when trying to understand what people think and how they behave as they do. This promotes the idea that people's attitudes can most of the time be used to predict their behaviour (Holdershaw and Gendall 2008, 1; Krosnick, Judd and Wittenbrink 2005; Fishbein and Ajzen 2010; Fishbein and Ajzen 1975; Ajzen 1991; Ajzen and Fishbein 1980). A person's attitude towards a certain product or brand might have an impact on whether the person buys the product. Most of the literature concerning attitude-behaviour theories stem from Martin Fishbein and Icek Ajzen's Theory of Reasoned Action Model (RAM) from 1975 (Fishbein and Ajzen 1975). The goal with RAM is to understand the relationship between attitudes and behaviours within human behaviour in order to predict a specific behaviour happening at a specific time (Fishbein and Ajzen 1975). Later, Ajzen further developed the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) based upon RAM in 1991 (Ajzen 1991). The main difference between RAM and TPB was that TPB included the aspect of behavioural control as



an additional crucial factor of people's intentions and behaviours. Behavioural control deals with the individual's physical control of performing the intended behaviour. For example, you want to go on holiday, but you do not have the money to finance it, so you do not go on holiday. Furthermore, it is important to mention that in Fishbein and Ajzen's newest edition of RAM from 2010, they also include the aspect of behavioural control (Fishbein and Ajzen 2010). This means that throughout the years they have further developed and improved their own theory. This is also seen as an improvement on the theory from 2010 called the Reasoned Action Approach (Fishbein and Ajzen 2010).

As mentioned earlier, the field of human behaviour is broad and has many branches. One of these branches is consumer behaviour. As this paper wishes to understand why some consumers might experience an attitude-behaviour gap, we argue that it is essential to create a mutual understanding of the concept of consumer behaviour.

3.1.2. Consumer Behaviour

According to Merriam-Webster, a consumer is “*one that consumes: such as [...] one that utilizes economic goods*” (Merriam-Webster 2021). To explain, a consumer is a person who uses or enjoys purchased products or services. For example, when a person buys new clothes and enjoys them afterwards.

The most used definition of consumer behaviour is “[...] *the activities people undertake when obtaining, consuming and disposing of products and services.*” (Blackwell, Miniard and Engel 2001, 6). Per this definition, consumer behaviour is an intended behaviour or activity. Fundamentally, consumer behaviour is the study of why people purchase. When working with consumer behaviour, researchers can gain an insight into how and why people buy and their justification for it (Blackwell, Miniard and Engel 2001, 6). Within consumer behaviour, three terms are essential: Obtaining, consuming and disposing (Sethna and Blythe 2016, 6-8). An example of this would be buying food, eating the food and then throwing the food wrapper into the garbage. The first essential term, obtaining, is all the activities that happen before a consumer's actual purchase and to the purchase itself. This is the information that the consumer obtains about the product or service before buying it, e.g., looking at the product's features and examining if there are any alternative products or comparing the product to different brands (Blackwell, Miniard and Engel 2001, 6). The second term, consuming, deals with when, where



and how the consumers consume their bought or otherwise obtained products or services. Issues within consuming may be that sometimes consumers will not use the products the way the manufacturer intended, e.g., using a skirt as a top. Also, will the product be used completely before being disposed of or will some part of the product remain unused? Consuming is an essential part of our life. However, the aspect of overconsumption such as drug abuse or being too dependent on your phone is not (Blackwell, Miniard and Engel 2001, 6). The last term, disposing, deals with how consumers get rid of products and packaging (Blackwell, Miniard and Engel 2001, 6). In the past years, the study of consumer behaviour was mainly focused on why people consume. However, in recent years, there has been a shift in the field meaning that researchers not only focus on why people consume but also how they consume (Sethna and Blythe 2016, 9).

Within consumer behaviour there are multiple different theories and models that can be used to understand why consumers behave in a certain way. The field of consumer psychology mainly focuses on human behaviour in relation to consumers' buying patterns, reactions and preferences in relation to products, advertising or packaging (Emotiv 2021). Moreover, when looking at consumer behaviour, research also indicates that consumers' behaviour often is based on motivation, and this is often prompted by a different set of physiological, biological and social needs (Sethna and Blythe 2016, 176-183). Some needs are more urgent than others, and research suggests that when a need becomes urgent there is a higher chance of the consumer actually performing the needed behaviour, e.g., if you are hungry, you are more inclined to buy something to eat. One field within consumer behaviour is mainly focused on motivation and needs in ranked levels such as lower and higher levels (Maslow 1954). This approach suggests that an individual needs to fulfil the lower levels of needs before being able to fulfil the higher levels (Maslow 1954). However, this theory is criticized mainly for being outdated as the theory's pyramid suggests that the lower needs must be fulfilled before any of the higher needs can emerge or be met (Kaur 2013, 1063-1064). Another approach within the field of motivation is focused on how individuals are motivated by expected outcomes. This field suggests that motivation is higher when the individual believes there is a more desirable outcome (Vroom 1964). It is evident that motivation is a major part of the field of consumer behaviour as it is often used to examine how and why a consumer buys a product, yet the aspect of motivation can also be used by companies to persuade or influence consumers to buy their product. Lastly, it is essential to mention that when examining the attitude-behaviour gap, it is inevitable that motivation may be one of the elements that is expressed. However, we are solely trying to



understand our focus group's behaviour and why there might be a gap between their attitudes, intentions and behaviour. To exemplify, most motivation theory is focused on examining what drives a person towards a specific goal or outcome whereas this paper is more focused on the cognitive processes that occurs towards that outcome. This is why we argue that we will need a theory that is more comprehensive and concerned about the attitudes and the cognitive processes as these will help us understand not only why our focus group consumes but also how they are justifying their consumption.

3.2. Summation

This literature review's aim was to establish an insight into the field of human behaviour and the broadness of it. The review established that there are several different branches of human behaviour, and the ones that are relevant for this paper are the theories within cognitive processes and attitude-behaviour.

The theories that we find most relevant to use within this paper are the Reasoned Action Model (RAM) and Cognitive Dissonance. Since this paper wishes to understand already existing attitudes and behaviour, RAM will be the most applicable model to use (see section 4.1.). While this model can be used to predict, persuade, change and understand a person's attitudes and behaviour, we will merely use this model to examine and understand the reasoning behind our focus group's behaviour, why they form certain attitudes and what their pre-existing attitudes are. If we can understand their pre-existing attitudes concerning sustainable clothing and their average clothing consumption, then we might be able to understand their decision-making and cognitive process(es). Additionally, as this paper's focus is on the attitude-behaviour gap, which entails conflicting attitudes and behaviour, we acknowledge that the theory of RAM might not be sufficient. Therefore, we have chosen to complement RAM with the theory of Cognitive Dissonance. The theory of Cognitive Dissonance will enable us to understand why some attitudes and behaviours may be conflicting, yet it will also allow us to examine how our focus group justify or reduce their conflicting attitudes and behaviour. In the next section, we will present our chosen theories, the Reasoned Action Model and Cognitive Dissonance.



4. Theory

In this section, we will elaborate on the chosen theories of this paper. First, we will introduce The Reasoned Action Model by Martin Fishbein and Icek Ajzen which will help us understand our respondents' cognitive processes behind their attitudes, intentions and behaviour. As the focus of this paper is the gap or inconsistency between young consumers' attitudes, intentions and behaviour, we will have to apply a secondary theory that enables us to understand why this inconsistency occurs and also how people justify or deal with the inconsistency. The complementary theory in this paper is Cognitive Dissonance by Leon Festinger. Lastly, we will go into depth with the relationship between the two theories and how they, in this paper, complement and correlate with each other.

4.1. The Reasoned Action Model

In 1975, Fishbein and Ajzen developed the Reasoned Action Model. This model has been further developed through the years. In this paper, we will draw upon the latest development from 2010, the Reasoned Action Approach and will refer to it as The Reasoned Action Model or RAM. As mentioned, Fishbein and Ajzen have, through several years, been working on their approach. They have modified and refined the theory's theoretical construct by adding new elements such as control (Fishbein and Ajzen 2010, 17+330). In this paper, we have chosen to draw upon the 2010 version of the theory, since it is the latest version, and it takes prior criticism of the theory into account (Fishbein and Ajzen 2010, 281).

Before presenting the model, we will start by examining the term 'Reasoned Action'. The name of the theory implies that there is a reason behind each action. These reasons are often based upon an individual's own set of beliefs and attitudes. According to Fishbein and Ajzen (2010), most of the time people act based upon these beliefs. However, it is important to mention that when individuals act upon a belief, it may seem rational and logical to the person performing the action, but it may seem irrational and illogical to bystanders (Fishbein and Ajzen 2010, 23-24). Because we all have different upbringings with different environments, norms and beliefs that influence our behaviour and attitudes, these different upbringings make behaviour subjective. For example, this is seen when people act differently in certain situations such as consumption, accidents, etc. RAM enables us to understand not only the different attitudes and beliefs our respondents possess concerning sustainability within the fashion industry, but the



theory also suggests that it is possible through analysis to predict a future behaviour (Fishbein and Ajzen 2010, 21). In the next section, we will present the model, RAM, in which the beliefs and attitudes will be further explained in the subsection below.

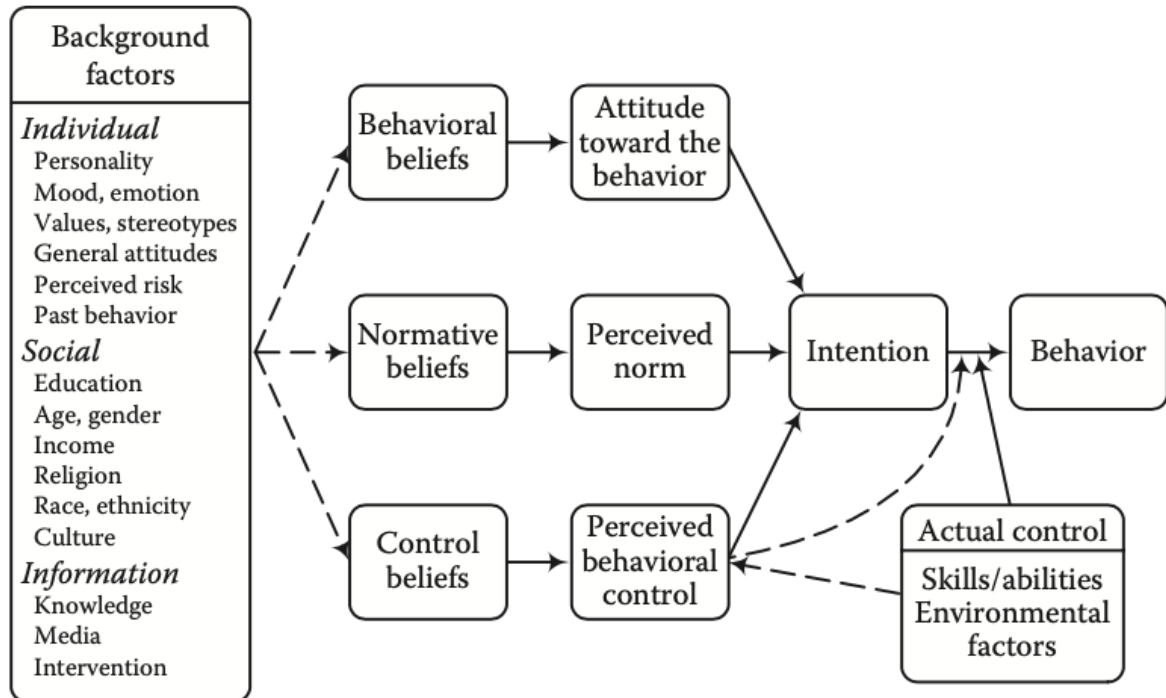


Illustration 1: Reasoned Action Model (Fishbein and Ajzen 2010, 22)

As seen in Illustration 1, RAM consists of ten different components: Background factors, behavioural beliefs, normative beliefs, control beliefs, attitude towards the behaviour, perceived norm, perceived behaviour control, actual control, intention and behaviour. Fishbein and Ajzen state that “*Our reasoned action framework stipulates a causal sequence of events describing the processes that determine human social behavior.*” (Fishbein and Ajzen 2010, 321). This means that these components together show the journey of thoughts that the individual might have when deciding whether or not the individual should perform the behaviour. Additionally, Fishbein and Ajzen also state that even though an individual goes through the aforementioned journey, an individual’s action will always be controlled by the cognitive antecedent of behavioural beliefs, normative beliefs and controlled beliefs (Fishbein and Ajzen 2010, 398). In the model, these three beliefs are weighted equally, yet the theory suggests that when examining an individual’s behaviour and the antecedents of that behaviour, one belief will most likely be more salient than the others (Fishbein and Ajzen 2010, 180).



Furthermore, it is important to mention that Fishbein and Ajzen's illustration is a simplified representation of a cognitive process which lacks important aspects such as feedback loops or other relations between the components (Fishbein and Ajzen 2010, 23). According to Fishbein and Ajzen, the cognitive process continues after a behaviour has been performed, as the outcome of that behaviour is being processed and evaluated by the individual. This evaluation of a past behaviour can change their behavioural, normative and control beliefs and, therefore, change their future intentions and actions. This is called feedback loops (Fishbein and Ajzen 2010, 218).

As mentioned in section 3.1., prior research states that human behaviour consist of several elements e.g., actions, emotions and cognition (Farnsworth 2019). The fact that there is no unified definition or answer of why humans behave as they do indicate that the cognitive processes of decision-making can be complex, muddled and far from a linear process (Kreitler and Kreitler 1972, 15; Shinohara 2016, 19-20; Kahneman 2012). The cognitive process of decision-making is more likely to be long and often entails multiple shifts between different components, e.g., beliefs and intentions. Moreover, the decision-making process is also controlled and shaped by the individual experiencing it, meaning that because people are different individuals with different subjective opinions and attitudes, it is unlikely that a decision-making process will be identical. Therefore, we have created an illustration of the RAM model with our own additions to create a more complex and realistic view upon the decision-making process. However, it is essential to mention that as cognitive processes are never the same, we have tried to provide an example of what a decision-making process could look like (Illustration 2).



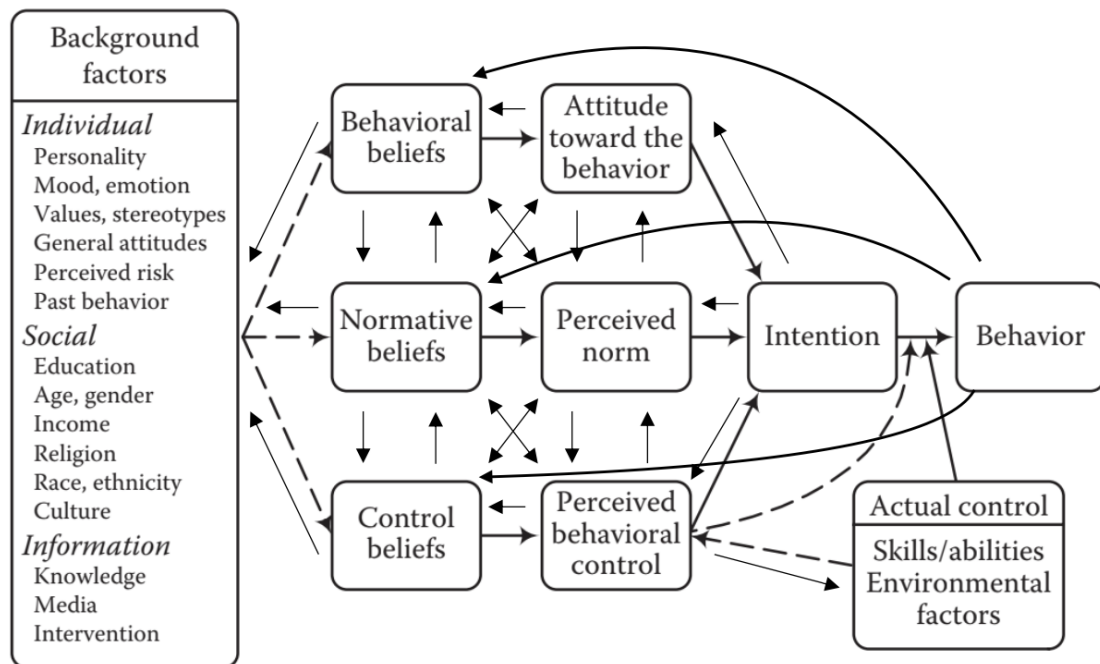


Illustration 2: Reasoned Action Model with Our Own Additions

In Illustration 2, we have added several arrows in order to display how the cognitive processes can be more complex and move between different components, both back and forth and up and down, before it turns into an intention or an actual behaviour. As the cognitive process often is complex, we argue that this illustration and example of a cognitive process is more realistic. However, it is important to mention that our version might not be an exact replica of how a cognitive process is, though it does show a more interactive picture of the decision-making process.

Having presented the general aspects of RAM, we will now go into depth with each component and how they emerge and are connected.

4.1.1. Background Factors

First, we will start by introducing **background factors**. Background factors are a new addition in the 2010 model and were added to help create more insight into the justification process of a person's behaviour. Fishbein and Ajzen argue that it is important to understand that different



backgrounds might influence one's behavioural beliefs, normative beliefs and control beliefs (Fishbein and Ajzen 2010, 224-225). For example, a person's demographic background, culture or education may play a part in how the individual might behave in the world. However, it is not certain that there is a correlation between one's background factors and beliefs, but it is certain that all beliefs serve to form a guide for whether the person should perform the behaviour or not (Fishbein and Ajzen 2010, 24-25). Additionally, the correlation between one's background factors and beliefs may not be on a one-to-one basis. We, however, argue that the social and cultural perception of what is right and wrong is usually created within an individual's background factors, e.g., through one's culture or social upbringing. To exemplify, the social and cultural perception is different around the world. In Asia, it is custom that parents make decisions on behalf of their children, whereas in the Western part of the world, children are more liberated and freer to decide what they want to do with their lives (Fu and Markus 2014; Kevyn 2020). The three next sections will present the three different beliefs: Behavioural beliefs, normative beliefs and control beliefs.

4.1.2. Behavioural Beliefs

Behavioural beliefs are a person's belief about the consequences that align with a particular behaviour. These consequences can both be positive and negative. Fishbein and Ajzen explain that this evaluation of the outcome and the attitude towards certain elements, e.g., exercising, is assumed to determine a person's **attitude towards the behaviour** (Fishbein and Ajzen 2010, 20). According to Fishbein and Ajzen, an attitude is defined as "*a latent disposition or tendency to respond with some degree of favorableness or unfavorableness to a psychological object.*" (Fishbein and Ajzen 2010, 76). In this definition, Fishbein and Ajzen state that attitudes are opinions towards an object or event. These attitudes can also be both negative and positive depending on the individual that is evaluating it. Moreover, if a person evaluates their behaviour to be perceived in a more positive than negative outcome, the person's attitude towards the behaviour will become more favourable and therefore more likely to be performed.

4.1.3. Normative Beliefs

Normative beliefs are a person's belief about the extent to which certain people or individuals, who are perceived important in their life, are able to influence whether or not the individual should perform the behaviour. Normative beliefs consist of two sub-categories: **Injunctive normative beliefs** and **descriptive normative beliefs**. Injunctive normative beliefs are the



perception that a person may have regarding what others think the individual should do, e.g., “*I should work out because I believe my family thinks I should work out*”. Descriptive normative beliefs are the visible and perceived behaviour of others, e.g., “*My family works out*”. Injunctive normative beliefs and descriptive normative beliefs together form the component **perceived norm** which Fishbein and Ajzen describe as “[...] *perceived social pressure to engage or not engage in the behavior*” (Fishbein and Ajzen 2010, 20). To explain, this means that if a person identifies with a certain group or person, and the individual believes that others might approve of their behaviour, they will act on it and vice versa (Fishbein and Ajzen 2010, 130+151). The model implies that the relationship to others influence the individual’s motivation to comply. If the relationship is e.g., deemed as meaningful, it might have a higher influence on the individual to perform the action. However, if the relationship is deemed as irrelevant, the motivation to comply is low (Fishbein and Ajzen 2010, 137).

4.1.4. Control Beliefs

The last belief is the **control beliefs**. People form beliefs concerning personal and environmental elements that might help or hinder a person’s attempt to carry out the behaviour. The control beliefs entail a sense of high or low self-efficacy or **perceived behavioural control** in regard to the behaviour. If a person associates the behaviour with more positive thoughts and ‘helping’ elements than negative thoughts and ‘hindering’ elements, the perceived behavioural control will be high (Fishbein and Ajzen 2010, 21). To exemplify, perceived behavioural control is not whether the behaviour is or is not within the person’s actual control but more that the person believes that it is.

The component **actual control** is an addition to perceived behaviour control which is positioned within the control beliefs. Fishbein and Ajzen (2010) argue that to predict a person's behaviour, it is vital to understand how much actual control a person has over the situation. This actual control is visible through knowledge and the skills the person possesses to perform the behaviour (Fishbein and Ajzen 2010, 330). For example, if a person wants to work out, do they possess the knowledge or skills to actually do the workout correctly, or are they even able to access the gym? Additionally, it is important to note that not all people possess the same knowledge and skills which sometimes makes it difficult to predict a certain behaviour. This means that the perceived behavioural control and the actual control are sometimes in conflict. To exemplify, a person has the ability to work out but cannot afford to pay for the transport or



the gym membership. The actual control is able to influence whether or not the person will perform the behaviour, as actual control is able to stop or prevent the person from performing the behaviour.

4.1.5. Intention

Behavioural **intention** indicates a person's intentions and readiness to perform the behaviour (Fishbein and Ajzen 2010, 40). For example, "*I will work out tomorrow*" or "*I plan to work out tomorrow*". However, it is important to mention that intention does not equal actual behaviour. Additionally, a person's intention is based upon one's beliefs and control as mentioned above in sections 4.1.2., 4.1.3. and 4.1.4.

4.1.6. Behaviour

Finally, the last component is the **behaviour** which refers to the actual behaviour that is performed or has been performed (Fishbein and Ajzen 2010, 29). For example, "*I worked out*".

According to Fishbein and Ajzen, it is important to clearly identify the behaviour. Additionally, behaviour is composed of four different elements: Action, target, context and time (Fishbein and Ajzen 2010, 30-32). To exemplify, "*I work out every Tuesday at 6pm at the gym because I want to lose weight*". In this example, we have the action of working out, the target of losing weight, the context being at the gym and the time being every Tuesday at 6pm. It is important to mention that we, within this paper, are not able to describe and identify all four aspects, i.e., action, target, context and time, within the consumer behaviour that we are examining. This is because we are examining a behavioural pattern within sustainable fashion and the phenomenon of an attitude-behaviour gap that might occur within a cognitive process which means that we, through conversations, will emphasise on the action of purchasing clothes and not on what time, or context, it is happening in.

After presenting Fishbein and Ajzen's Reasoned Action Model, we have noticed some critical aspects and limitations of the model that we wish to address. First, the model is, as mentioned earlier, simplified, as it does not show all of the relations that might exist between the different components. This means that a person's justification for performing the behaviour or not might change throughout the decision-making process. For example,



“I want to buy a new sweater from H&M because I find it really pretty, and I have experience with buying clothes at H&M. However, recently, I obtained knowledge that H&M is using child labour which is against my moral values. Therefore, I do not buy the sweater at H&M, but I might look for alternative options elsewhere”.

In this example, the person wanted to perform a behaviour based upon their behavioural beliefs, but due to recently obtained knowledge the person chose not to perform the intended behaviour. Again, we argue that the issue of the model being too simple and not showing the detours or feedback loops, etc. in the decision-making process is a common theme throughout the model. This missing element is something that Fishbein and Ajzen acknowledge but do not take into account in their model as they describe the process as a structural equation (Fishbein and Ajzen 2010, 184). Second, the theory as being a structural equation can also be seen as a limitation, as it suggests that all behaviour is preceded by an intention. As stated in section 3.1, we mentioned that behaviour can be intentional, unintentional and non-intentional. The Reasoned Action Model is mainly focused on intentional behaviour, as it states that individuals are influenced in a certain way by certain elements that result in a cognitive process that evaluates whether or not to perform the action. However, as the literature states, there is some behaviour that also can be classified as unintentional and non-intentional as some behaviour may have an unexpected outcome or occur based on a sudden event (Gorr and Horgan 1982; D. K. Chan 1995; Johns 2020). This is, for example, seen when an individual goes to H&M to buy summer clothing, but upon entering the store, the individual notices that there is a sale of ‘50% off winter jackets’, upon which the individual chooses to buy a winter jacket instead of the intended summer clothing. This is an example of an unintentional behaviour, as something unexpected happened during the behaviour which led to different behaviour than what the individual intended. However, as this paper wishes to examine young consumers’ behaviour and their cognitive processes of decision-making when buying clothing, we argue that the model is still applicable.

Lastly, Fishbein and Ajzen acknowledge that attitudes and behaviours sometimes are conflicting and are able to create an attitude-behaviour gap (see section 1.2.). However, the theory only mentions this aspect briefly and does not take this aspect into further account. This means that our paper will include a complementary theory that can help us understand why this attitude-behaviour gap exists. The complementary theory will be presented in section 4.2.



Nevertheless, even though the Reasoned Action Model has its limitations, it is still applicable, as RAM enables us to understand our respondents' cognitive processes behind their attitudes, intentions and behaviour. By understanding these factors, we will be able to see whether our respondents' attitudes and intentions align with their actual behaviour which in the end will help us identify and understand why the attitude-behaviour gap might exist. Fishbein and Ajzen only briefly mention the attitude-behaviour gap. However, as this paper focuses on understanding the attitude-behaviour gap and why it exists, we need to combine the Reasoned Action Model with a complementary theory that focuses more on why the inconsistency between attitudes and behaviour occurs and how our respondents might cope with it. In the next section, we will introduce our complementary theory which is Cognitive Dissonance.

4.2. Cognitive Dissonance

In 1957, Leon Festinger created the theory of Cognitive Dissonance. The theory of Cognitive Dissonance argues that there is a consistency between what a person knows or believes and how they behave (Festinger 1962, 1). For example, a person who believes the vegetarian lifestyle is more ethical will most become a vegetarian himself or encourage others to do so. According to Festinger, “[...] *the individual strives towards consistency within himself.*” (Festinger 1962, 1). This means that a person will always try to create consistency between their cognitive elements such as knowledge, attitudes and their actions. However, the theory suggests that there is sometimes an inconsistency between a person's cognitive elements and their behaviour. This inconsistency is referred to as cognitive dissonance (Festinger 1962, 2). It is important to mention here that Festinger's term ‘cognition’ refers to any knowledge, opinion or belief about the environment, about oneself or about one's behaviour (Festinger 1962, 3).

When an inconsistency occurs, an individual will attempt to rationalise the dissonance by reasoning or justifying the behaviour. For example, a person who eats three cakes a day may be aware that eating too much cake can be bad for their health. However, they might enjoy it so much that it is a risk they are willing to take, or they might have the assumption that if they stop eating cake every day, they will get unhappy or a headache due to the less intake of sugar. In this example, the individual rationalises the dissonance by finding several reasons for continuing to eat cake. These reasons result in the individual continuing to eat cake. Sometimes the reasoning or justification process is not possible or fails as the inconsistency continues



which sometimes results in psychological discomfort. Why does it happen that a person sometimes finds themselves doing something that does not fit with their opinions? According to the theory, the inconsistency may happen for several reasons. One reason may be that the individual obtains new information or experiences. Another reason is that not all situations are black and white which means that sometimes certain opinions and behaviours may be based on contradictory knowledge (Festinger 1962, 5). For example, an individual who is investing their money might have some knowledge concerning investments, but the economic conditions and the stock market are uncertain and out of the individual's control. Sometimes the dissonance is only momentary, yet at other times it is ground-breaking which, as mentioned earlier, might result in psychological discomfort. The psychological discomfort might have such a big impact that the person will actively avoid situations and information which would increase the dissonance (Festinger 1962, 3).

According to Festinger, *“The existence of dissonance, being psychologically uncomfortable, will motivate the person to try to reduce the dissonance and achieve consonance.”* (Festinger 1962, 3). In this statement, Festinger argues that as soon as the dissonance occurs the person will try to reduce it. The reduction of a cognitive dissonance can be done in three different ways:

1. **By changing one or more elements involved in the dissonance.** For example, by changing the attitude and reasoning or justifying the behaviour by convincing yourself that it is alright (Festinger 1962, 264).
2. **By adding new cognitive elements that are consonant with already existing cognition.** For example, creating additional attitudes that justify the behaviour or justifying your behaviour with other elements such as *“I do not eat meat, so it is okay not to buy sustainable clothing”* (Festinger 1962, 264).
3. **By decreasing the importance of the elements involved in the dissonance.** For example, by altering the cognitive elements by minimizing the outcome of one's behaviour, e.g., *“I only buy non-sustainable, when it is basic items, such as socks and underwear”*. Another way to decrease a dissonance is to suppress the thoughts. Here, an individual might deny that the attitude(s) is conflicting (Festinger 1962, 264).

The complementary theory Cognitive Dissonance corresponds well with Fishbein and Ajzen's Reasoned Action Model as it is able to clarify why the attitude-behaviour gap might occur. It



clarifies why intentions and attitudes sometimes do not align with an individual's behaviour. To exemplify, the Cognitive Dissonance theory enables us to understand why some people have intentions of buying sustainable but end up not acting on them.

Both theories emanate from the field of social psychology whose focus is to study people's thoughts, feelings and behaviour. Nevertheless, the two theories still examine two different focuses. RAM helps us understand an individual's cognitive process towards a behaviour while Cognitive Dissonance helps us understand why a dissonance or attitude-behaviour gap might occur, i.e., why people sometimes experience inconsistencies between their attitudes, intentions and their behaviour.

In summation, we will, in this paper, use RAM as the main theory as we are examining our respondents' cognitive processes and their expressed consumer behaviour. However, as RAM only acknowledges the attitude-behaviour gap and does not provide any elements on how to examine the attitude-behaviour gap, which we may find in our respondents' attitudes and behaviour, we will apply Cognitive Dissonance. When examining the attitudes, beliefs, intentions and behaviours of our respondents, we will use RAM. However, when there are any conflicting attitudes and/or conflicting attitudes and behaviours, we will use Cognitive Dissonance in order to examine how our respondents justify and cope with these conflicting attitudes, intentions and behaviours.



5. Methodology

The following section will go into depth with our methodological choices. First, we outline our philosophical standpoint. Second, we will introduce our use of the qualitative method which entails our use of semi-structured interviews. Third, the method of analysis, Template Analysis, will be presented. Finally, we will give an overview of our empirical data which includes a presentation and background context of the group of our chosen respondents, a presentation of the collected dataset and its limitations.

5.1. Philosophy of Science

We will begin by introducing this paper's philosophy of science, including the ontological and epistemological perspectives and our philosophical standpoint, social constructivism.

The ontological perspective entails how we, as researchers, choose to see the world (Kjørup 2014, 124). In addition to this, we must acknowledge what we perceive to be real. In this paper, this means that we have chosen to focus on a specific respondent group's (see section 1.3.) consumer behaviour and their attitudes towards sustainable fashion. In addition, we have also decided that the cognitive process of decision-making, attitudes and the phenomenon, attitude-behaviour gap, exist within society, even though it sometimes may be difficult to see or measure. The acknowledgement of these attitudes and the attitude-behaviour gap leads us to the epistemological perspective which entails how we obtain knowledge (Kjørup 2014 124). In this paper, we have obtained knowledge that attitudes are based on an individual's knowledge, which is based on their experiences with the world around them. These attitudes are often reflected in their behaviour which might have an effect on the world around them. Our epistemological approach is that knowledge is obtained through our respondents' lived experiences. We are able to understand each other's attitudes and behaviour through conversations and collective interactions. This aspect is evident in how we obtained our empirical data as we obtained our data through interviews (Kjørup 2014, 123). Our ontological and epistemological perspectives lead us to our philosophical standpoint, which is a social constructivist perspective. This means that our underlying philosophical standpoint for our research and this paper is social constructivism, as we wish to examine how our respondents construct their own self-awareness, their behaviour and attitudes through social events and language. Additionally, it is important to acknowledge that the chosen theories of this paper,



RAM and Cognitive Dissonance, may not have the same philosophical standpoint or realm of understanding the world. This is because, as mentioned in section 3., our chosen theories are positioned within the field of human behaviour which often involves research concerning observations of stimulus and cognitive schemes in order to understand a certain behaviour (Sharma 2021), whereas we are using interviews, which is a social event, in which our respondents are able to express themselves and their construction of their world through the use of language (Kvale 2007, 11).

5.1.1. Social Constructivism

Research describes social constructivism as “... *the idea that “reality” is something we create collectively through our interactions and ways of speaking about the world.*” (Holm 2018, 157). Our ontological and epistemological view is shaped and constructed through our individual and collective understandings. These understandings occur based on an agreed-upon understanding of several elements such as language, culture, history and society (Kjørup 2014, 123). For example, we have agreed that the purpose of a bed is different from the purpose of a couch. We agree because we have allowed social norms and mutual agreement to teach us the difference. The field of social constructivism contains four fundamental assumptions (Holm 2018, 143-150). The first assumption involves language, the collective agreement and the use of it (Holm 2018, 145-146). For example, we have collectively agreed that the meaning of a ‘freezer’ refers to an ice-cold storage space for food. However, the use of language does not only refer to common spoken language or everyday language, but also genre-specific language such as technical terminology or jargon. Examples of these would be DOA (Dead on arrival) in healthcare (Merriam Webster 2021), KIA (Killed in action) in the military (Merriam Webster 2021) and AFK (Away from keyboard) used in online language (Merriam Webster 2021). All of these examples are explicit to a certain area or genre, and it is essential that one has some kind of knowledge within these genres or areas in order to understand them. The second assumption relates to the idea that we, collectively, have constructed an image of the world (Holm 2018 146-148). To exemplify, the concept of money is a social construction. In essence, it is in its physical form nothing more than a piece of paper or metal. However, we have, collectively, created an understanding that the piece of paper or metal has a certain value, and it has therefore become valuable (Holm 2018, 141). The third and fourth assumptions entail the perception of the world, meaning what we believe, at the present time, may shape the future (Holm 2018, 148-150). The third assumption relates more to the consideration of what is right



and wrong. This is essential in our laws and regulations as well as our collective understanding of morals and ethics. The fourth assumption emanates from the third assumption, as it concerns the everchanging evaluation of what is considered to be right or wrong through time (Holm 2018, 148-150). For example, society's view on women is different today than previous generations (McKeown 2018) or on the acceptance of various sexualities compared to the 1950s (History.com 2021).

In this paper, our social constructivist perspective is evident in how we have obtained our data. The data collection was obtained through qualitative semi-structured interviews (see section 5.2.1.) in which we were able to examine our respondents' answers and experiences regarding how they construct their own perception of the world through language or collectively through social events (Kvale 2007, 11). To explain, our respondents were able to express what they deemed as most important to them in relation to the questions asked throughout the interview. Additionally, the interview in itself is a social construction, as we together co-create a social situation where we, as researchers, can obtain knowledge through language about how our respondents construct their own view of the phenomenon and the world (Holm 2018, 157-158).

As already mentioned, the theories within this paper may not have the same philosophical perspective. However, as we wish to examine our respondents' consumer behaviour, we need to implement theory within the field of human behaviour and cognitive processes in order to understand and analyse the behaviour expressed verbally in the interview. It is essential to mention that our social constructivist perspective lies mainly within our data collection, which is conducted through a qualitative method, hence interviews.

5.2. Qualitative Method

As we have a social constructivist perspective, the qualitative method is a way for us to examine and obtain knowledge from our respondents about how they construct their own perception of the world but also gain a more in-depth understanding of their lived experiences within it.

Within the field of qualitative research, there exist many different approaches, and there is no general or unified definition of what qualitative research essentially is. However, some research argues that qualitative research is in contrast to quantitative research (Brinkmann and Tanggaard 2020, 15; Ingemann, et al. 2018, 43). The qualitative research approach enables us to examine



how our respondents experience, interpret and construct their own reality, whereas quantitative research focuses more on the numerical amounts or measurable variables that are present (Brinkmann and Tanggaard 2020, 15). To exemplify, research often describes qualitative data intangible whereas quantitative data is tangible as it can be quantified (Ingemann, et al. 2018, 43). As there is no unified definition of the qualitative research approach, this paper will draw upon Steiner Kvale's definition. According to Kvale, a qualitative approach is "... *intended to approach the world 'out there' (not in specialized research settings such as laboratories) and to understand, describe and sometimes explain social phenomena 'from the inside' in a number of different ways.*" (Kvale 2007, x). To explain, a qualitative research method entails a way to describe, interpret and understand the world through a human perspective. Another essential element from Kvale's statement is that the qualitative approach examines the actual world in its natural environment, in that the qualitative research is not controlled within a special or controlled setting such as a laboratory but is conducted in the actual world including all the elements that exist within it (Brinkmann and Tanggaard 2020, 16; Kvale 2007, x). An example of examining the actual world could be by investigating consumers' purchasing behaviour in the fashion industry by observing the consumer behaviour or asking questions that relate to the investigated behaviour. This paper's chosen definition of qualitative research correlates with our philosophical perspective, social constructivism, as it seeks to gain a more in-depth understanding of how people construct the world around them. This understanding is shaped through interpreting actions and lived experiences that are deemed meaningful, separately, by these people (Kvale, 2007, x).

As mentioned, there are many different approaches to qualitative research such as interviews or field observations (Brinkmann and Tanggaard 2020, 15+24; Karpatschhof 2020, 572-574). By using the qualitative research approach, we are able to examine why the attitude-behaviour gap exists within our respondents' worlds but also how our respondents understand and interpret this phenomenon. However, it is essential to mention that qualitative research does not allow us to generalise our findings, meaning it will not enable us to say how many people within the world have actually experienced the same phenomenon or how often it occurs. The use of a qualitative method does make it possible to examine our respondents' experiences more in-depth and detailed giving us an estimate of not just how some people, within society, experience the attitude-behaviour gap but also why it occurs.



Moreover, our qualitative research method gathers information by retrieving empirical data from eight interviews. As we are problem-oriented and in search of an answer within our dataset, we, as researchers, have a deductive-oriented approach to research (Kastberg 2017, 15). The deductive approach is visible in the way we use our obtained knowledge, based on previous research, studies and theories, which will help guide our analytical process. To exemplify, we have obtained knowledge through prior research that the attitude-behaviour gap exists. Prior research has also displayed some of the key reasons why the attitude-behaviour gap occurs. As we know that the attitude-behaviour gap exists, we actively look for reasons in our dataset that might help us understand how our respondents experience it and why it sometimes occurs when they are purchasing clothes. Furthermore, it is important to mention that we are also aware that certain findings are unforeseeable or unpredictable, e.g., finding new reasons why the gap occurs when consumers purchase clothes or other elements that might influence the decision-making process that our prior research did not take into account. This aspect is related to our thematic coding process which will be further explained in section 5.3.2.

As mentioned, we will retrieve our data through interviews. The interview genre enables us to talk to our respondents as the interview is a human interaction through conversation. Through these conversations, we are able to get to know our respondents, their constructed world, hopes, feelings, attitudes and lived experiences. In the interview, we are able to ask questions and listen to what our respondents are expressing. It is important to mention that the interview in itself constructs a reality in which knowledge is co-constructed through the interaction between the interviewer and the respondent (Kvale 2007, 1). When using interviews as our empirical data collection, we acknowledge that our respondents and ourselves are social beings with several different social identities (see section 1.3) such as student, mother or woman (Crane and Ruebottom 2011). Through the interview, the respondent may bring several of these social identities into the social event depending on the situation and context. It is the social identities the respondent deems important in order to participate in the interview, yet other social identities may also be brought into the conversation depending on the topic. As the interview is a social event, it is inevitable that our social identities will influence the flow and orientation of the interview in relation to, e.g., the language that is used and the debated topics (Kjørup 2014, 123). For example, one respondent may speak with an accent or use certain technical terms such as jargon that is related to a specific group of people. Additionally, another might talk more about certain topics such as their financial status, while others may talk more about their hobbies. All of these social identities contribute to the co-constructed reality and



knowledge that is retrieved from the interview. The group of our chosen respondents and their social identities is explained in sections 1.3. and 5.4.1.

An important element to identify when working with interviews is the saturation point. Meaning when have we collected enough interviews? Some research suggests that one should interview as many as needed to be able to answer one's problem statement (Kvale 2007, 43-44), whereas others suggest that a researcher should always try to reach the saturation point. The saturation point is reached when one can see a pattern between the answers within the interviews and when there is no new information shared (Ingemann et al. 2018, 170). Nevertheless, the number of respondents rely on the study, meaning what is the aim of the study. For example, if you want to predict the outcome of the next Presidential election, you may need a lot more data than if you were to investigate how ninth graders at a local school reacted to a book they had to read in class (Kvale 2007, 43-44). How the saturation point was achieved and the number and selection of respondents chosen within this study will be further explained in section 5.4.

5.2.1. Semi-structured Interviews

The interview genre can be conducted in a number of different ways depending on the research question to be answered. These include structured, unstructured or semi-structured formats (Ingemann, et al. 2018, 158). In our case, we have chosen to use the semi-structured format as it is particularly suitable because it is neither an everyday conversation nor a formal questionnaire (Kvale 2007, 11). The semi-structured format is especially beneficial, as the interviewers are able to utilize the knowledge that is being shared and ask follow-up questions on topics that are interesting (Brinkmann 2014, 38-39). Steiner Kvale and Svend Brinkmann (2015) defines the semi-structured interview as “... *an interview that aims to obtain descriptions of the interviewee's life-world with a view to interpret and understand the phenomena described.*” (Kvale and Brinkmann 2015, 22). In this statement, it is displayed that the semi-structured interview aims to obtain useful knowledge from the respondents' own perceptions and reflections of a specific phenomenon within their own reality (Brinkmann 2014, 39-40).

5.2.1.1. Interview Guide

Before conducting the interviews, we created an interview guide (see Appendix II) to make sure that all of our respondents were met by the same process and overall questions. Ensuring



the same process in every interview was done through a scripted interview guide with our respondents being met by the same starting point (Kvale 2007, 56-57). The interview guide usually consists of three main sections: Briefing, questions and debriefing (Kvale 2007, 55-56). In the beginning of each interview, we started with a briefing in which we defined the situation, the purpose of the interview, that the interview would be recorded and a transcript of the interview would be available for our respondents if they wished to see it. In addition, we also stated that all things shared in the interview would be confidential and only shared between us and our examiners. The confidentiality is shown as our respondents' names are anonymised in the transcriptions (Kvale 2007, 27-28; Appendix IV). We argue that the anonymisation also secures a safe and calm environment in which the respondents feel comfortable enough to share information. The aspect of creating a comfortable setting will be further explained later in section 5.2.1.3. Lastly, in the briefing, we also asked whether the respondents had any questions for us concerning our research or the interview before starting the actual interview. After the briefing, we started the interview, i.e., asking questions. Having asked all of our questions, we followed up with a debriefing. This entailed that we thanked our respondents for their participation and asked them if they had any questions or anything they wanted to add before ending the interview. In addition, when conducting the interviews one of us took the role as the interviewer while the other observed and took notes. This meant that lastly the observer was asked if they had any questions that they wanted to ask the respondent (Kvale 2007, 56). The notes that the observer took during the interviews are available in Appendix IIIA-H, and these notes assisted us later in the process, as they contained some of the themes and thoughts that we, during the interview, perceived as important. Moreover, the notes also helped when we had to transcribe the interviews. The development of themes and the transcribing process is further explained in section 5.3.

The questions created in the interview guide were based upon our prior research and our theoretical framework. Under each question, we also created different follow-up questions which enabled us to examine our respondents' answers more in-depth (Kvale 2007, 60-65). These follow-up questions are displayed by the brackets surrounding them. For example:

*“Have you ever bought clothes that were branded as sustainable or eco-friendly?
(If not, why not?) (Have you ever considered it?) (Would you pay more for a sustainable option?)”* (Appendix II, 2)



Here the main question is whether the respondent had ever bought clothes that were branded as sustainable or eco-friendly. Depending on the respondent's answer, we outlined some follow-up questions in order to get a more in-depth answer from the respondent. However, as stated earlier, our respondents are all social beings with different social identities which means they might not answer the questions in the same way. Therefore, not all follow-up questions were relevant to ask each respondent as some had already included it in their answer or they were focusing on other aspects where we then had to create new follow-up questions during the conversation (Kvale 2007, 63-65).

Furthermore, as we wish to examine and understand our respondents' consumer behaviour, we needed to create questions within the interview guide that concerned their attitudes, their behaviour or their past behaviour. When investigating people's behaviour, research suggests that attitude questions should be replaced with questions that the respondent truthfully can answer (Labaw 1980, 32). Asking questions concerning the respondent's environment, knowledge and their current and past behaviour are more likely to provide an overview of the respondent's reality (Labaw 1980, 32). This inclusion of both attitude-related and current/past behaviour related questions will help us understand not only why and how the attitude-behaviour gap occurs, but it might also help us understand when, in the cognitive process of decision-making, it occurs.

5.2.1.2. Asymmetrical Power Relation

Furthermore, another aspect to consider when working with semi-structured interviews is the asymmetrical power relation. Through a semi-structured interview, the researchers have the overall control due to the questions they have created and outlined in their interview guide. Yet, the respondents do have some capabilities of getting the feeling of having control over the interview by expressing what the respondent deems important to the question asked. This shows that in the semi-structured interview genre there is an asymmetrical power relation (Kvale 2007, 14-15). This asymmetrical power relation is seen because we are the ones who are hosting the interview and also the ones that hold the theoretical knowledge. As a result, we, as interviewers, determine the situation, topics and which answers from our respondents we chose to follow up on. Moreover, since we are asking the questions, and the respondent is the one who is answering, the power relation will always be present no matter how much we try to make the social event as comfortable and equal as possible. Nevertheless, it is essential to mention that the respondent has the ability to take some counter-control by, e.g., avoiding



questions, turning the conversation in another direction or not answering the question asked (Kvale 2007, 15). Even though the asymmetrical power relation exists within the interview and might have an effect on how our respondents answer and construct their reality, we argue that a well-planned interview guide and a prepared and attentive interviewer can help minimise the feeling of the asymmetrical power relation.

5.2.1.3. Validations and Limitations

Usually, interviews are conducted through a face-to-face conversation where the interviewer and the respondent are able to see each other, their body language and facial expressions. However, due to the current COVID-19 pandemic⁴, it was not possible for us to go to the UK and conduct the interviews in person. Therefore, we chose to use the media, Zoom, as it enabled us to talk to our respondents and obtain data through online meetings without having to travel. Online meetings through Zoom are a great way to obtain knowledge and widen one's range, as the online format is able to eliminate the geographical boundaries (Lacono, Symonds and Brown 2016, 6). One can obtain knowledge from all over the world without leaving the house. The online interview does have some limitations. First, as the interviews are being conducted online, it requires a strong internet connection to keep a steady and reliable conversation. In some of our interviews, we experienced bad connections which made the transcribing process difficult. When these situations occurred and the sound was inaudible, we displayed it in the transcript by writing 'inaudible'. For example:

“No. Uh, maybe because I'm not, I've got massive trust issues when it comes to massive brands [inaudible] of, um, and if I remember to give, without giving a second thought and yeah, I think it was just like a PR stand more than.” (Appendix IVD, 5, l. 130-132).

However, it is essential to mention that these situations only occurred a few times when it was a couple of words or a single word that was inaudible, so we were still able to retrieve the overall meaning of what the respondent said. Another element is that some people may not be comfortable participating in an online interview. This might be due to several reasons, e.g., the interviewer and the respondent might not know each other and therefore the respondent might feel uncomfortable when having their camera turned on. Furthermore, research suggests that it

⁴ COVID-19 is the current (2019-2021) global pandemic. It is a disease that is caused by a newly discovered coronavirus (Merriam-Webster 2021; BBC News 2021).



is the video itself that might create an uncomfortable environment and not the interviewer (Lacono, Symonds and Brown 2016, 10). The aspect of a comfortable environment was something that had our attention throughout all the interviews. We tried to create a normal and informal setting by also asking questions relating to everyday language such as “how are you doing?” in the beginning of each interview. This was to make sure that the respondent felt as comfortable as possible but also to create a connection with him/her in which he/she wanted to open up and answer truthfully. As mentioned earlier, some respondents might feel uncomfortable with their camera on during the interview, but we encouraged comfort by ensuring a more informal setting, as we then all were able to see each other, see some of our body language and have an everyday conversation with eye-contact.

By conducting data through interviews, research argues that reliability and validity are common themes to consider during the entire process of handling the interviews (Kvale 2007, 122-124). Often validity is considered based on quantitative methods, meaning the researcher collects data that is measurable. However, when conducting a qualitative research validity needs to be considered differently (Ingemann, et al. 2018, 60). Here, the researcher needs to focus more on the information retrieved, meaning the verbal expressions stated by the respondents, and how it correlates with the domain of the paper, e.g., prior knowledge, the aim and the content (Ingemann, et al. 2018, 61).

In our paper, the validity is related to the authenticity of our collected data, meaning is our respondents’ expression about their consumer behaviour the truth? Through the use of interviews, we were not able to confirm and validate our respondents’ expressions and answers, so when asking questions in relation to their consumer behaviour, we were unable to observe and, therefore, verify the expressed consumer behaviour. We had to trust and believe our respondents when they talked about what they would do and what they had done. Additionally, we acknowledge that some respondents may have hidden agendas, withhold information or not always answer truthfully which may be due to different aspects. For example, some might want to portray themselves in a more favourable way than what they perceived themselves to be. Another reason may be that the respondents are embarrassed about the truth and therefore choose to give an answer they do not find embarrassing (Ingemann, et al. 2018, 191-193). Moreover, it is essential to mention that as we wish to examine our respondents’ own reality in which they express their consumer behaviour, we are not looking for a specific or ‘correct’ answer, meaning that we argue that the expressions from our respondents can never be ‘wrong’



as we are trying to understand their subjective cognitive processes (Kvale and Brinkmann 2015, 318).

The next section will explain the method of analysis, Template Analysis, which will help us process and analyse our collected data.

5.3. Method of Analysis

In this section, we will first present Kvale and Brinkmann's method of transcribing interviews. Thereafter, we will apply Nigel King's Template Analysis and coding process to our conducted interviews.

5.3.1. Transcribing the Interview

Before processing the data such as coding and analysing the interviews, they need to be transcribed. Here, the key is to turn oral language into written language (Kvale and Brinkmann 2015, 238). According to Kvale and Brinkmann, oral language and written language can be seen as two different genres which is why it is important for us to decide how we will transcribe the interviews (Kvale and Brinkmann 2015, 239). To exemplify, oral language usually is amplified by body language to express emotions while written language lacks this aspect. The process of conducting the interviews is usually an actual live social interaction where the interviewer, observer and respondent can see, hear and watch each other's body language. These aspects are, however, lost in the transcription (Kvale 2007, 93). Because of these factors, we have chosen to transcribe the interviews word by word to maintain as much meaning as possible from the actual conversation. This means that we also included all interjections and filler words, e.g., "eh", "um" and "uh", as these words display certain emotions our respondents might have. After having transcribed all the interviews, they were read through to make sure that any grammatical errors were corrected. However, it is important to emphasise that any grammatical errors our respondents said have not been corrected, as we chose to transcribe exactly what our respondents said. Moreover, as mentioned in section 5.2.1., all the respondents' names were anonymised in order to create a safe environment. All of the transcribed interviews can be seen in Appendix IVA-H and listened to in the attached audio files, Appendix VIIIA-H.



After having transcribed our interviews, we are now able to process and code our data through our method of analysis, Template Analysis.

5.3.2. Template Analysis

The Template Analysis stems from the field of thematic analysis and was first encountered in 1992. Ever since, King has both worked and further developed this method (King and Brooks 2017, 3). The method enables us to organise and interpret our qualitative data, and this is done through a two-step process: First, defining themes that are expressed within the dataset and second, organising them in some kind of structure that represents a connection between the themes. Through this method, we are able to examine which themes our respondents use when they talk about the phenomenon, attitude-behaviour gap and their lived experiences. The Template Analysis does not only allow us to examine which themes our respondents are using. It also enables us to understand the language and the way or manner that our respondents use to express their consumer behaviour and the phenomenon.

The Template Analysis is a generic method in that it does not have any specific philosophical, theoretical, and/or methodological standpoint (King and Brooks 2017, 5-6). This aspect provides flexibility and gives qualitative research the ability to use Template Analysis as a method of analysis in which we try to understand our respondents' expressed lived experiences, thoughts or behaviour across our data collection (Kiger and Varpio 2020, 846-847). The Template Analysis is applicable to use in qualitative research, as it enables us to structure these lived experiences, thoughts or behaviour across our data collection into a constructed pattern of themes and codes. This aspect relates to this paper's philosophical standpoint, social constructivism.

The goal with Template Analysis is not to code each line and word but to instead understand the meaning and make sense of what is said as a whole. The method entails eight steps to follow when using King's Template Analysis:

1. Familiarisation with the data
2. Preliminary coding
3. Clustering
4. Developing the initial template



5. Modifying the template
6. Defining the 'final' template
7. Using the template to interpret the data
8. Writing-up

(King and Brooks 2017, 26).

As mentioned earlier, the method is generic. However, the eight procedural steps might by some be seen as functionalistic, meaning that one has to follow the correct order of the steps throughout the process. Others might argue that as the method is generic, it also has a more pragmatic technique which can be used within a wide range of different qualitative research approaches (King and Brooks 2014, 4-5). In relation to this, we argue that the method can be used without following the correct order of the procedural steps. For example, when transcribing or getting familiar with the data, we argue that the researcher might already have been thinking about codes and themes and their connection which, according to the procedural step, first should begin in preliminary coding or clustering. Having briefly presented the method, we will now explain our process of coding the data with Template Analysis.

According to King, the first step is **familiarisation with the data**. At this step, we read and listened through our conducted data collection multiple times (King and Brooks 2017, 27). The second step is **preliminary coding**. Here, we started to identify and mark interesting sections within the transcripts. At each section, we added notes for why we found it interesting. For example:

Um, Ooh. I like Nike and Adidas. Even though I'm not sure if they are particularly ethical. Um, yeah, mostly sportswear brands. I think I don't really, I don't really care for brands too much, but some sportswear.

Brand preferences - Likes Nike and Adidas
CD - Likes sportswear such as Nike and Adidas even though they are not ethical in their production - reason her CD by stating the brand does not matter but it is the sportswear.

Illustration 3: An Example of Our Notes (Appendix VB, 4, l. 100-103)

In this example, it is visible how throughout our read through and preliminary coding we wrote notes concerning elements that we deemed important in the interview. Our transcripts with the notes were later coded, and therefore, Appendix VA-H only entails our coded transcripts and not the notes anymore. Moreover, since we have a deductive-oriented approach, it is essential



to mention that before starting the coding process, we had already established themes and codes that we expected to find in the dataset, as the questions that were asked in the interview were based upon our theoretical framework and prior research. King calls these **a priori themes** which are displayed in Illustration 4 below (King and Brooks 2017, 27-31). These a priori themes are also based upon prior knowledge and our theoretical framework. To explain, when coding and analysing the transcripts, we created guidelines for each theme in order to make sure that each theme was coded and analysed in an unambiguous manner. These guidelines were based upon our theoretical framework to help us through the coding process so that when coding and analysing each theme and its underlying codes, we looked for specific expressed attitudes and intentions that aligned with how Fishbein and Ajzen described their different components. For example, when coding the theme Control with the code Perceived control we looked for expressions in the transcripts where our respondents expressed how they perceived their control in a specific situation or if they perceived that they had the ability to act on a certain intention. Another example was when we coded our theme Background factors. Here we looked for specific expressions that could be related to either age, occupation, nationality etc. To exemplify, when our respondents expressed or described themselves as students, this was seen as a background factor. Additionally, when using qualitative interviews that entailed different subjective experiences and attitudes, the creation of these guidelines also ensured that all of our interviews would be coded with the same principles.

Themes	Behavioural Beliefs	Normative beliefs	Control beliefs	Intention	Background factors	Cognitive Dissonance	Behaviour	Actual Control	Attitudes	Fashion Industry
Codes	Belief Attitude	Injunctive beliefs Descriptive beliefs Influence	Perceived control	Buying sustainable Eating sustainable	Age Personal information Nationality Occupation	Adding new cognitive elements Changing cognitive elements	Consumer behaviour Changed consumer behaviour	Skills/abilities Knowledge Environmental factors - COVID-19	Negative - Towards Fast Fashion brands - Towards second-hand stores becoming popular	Knowledge - Cheap labour - Production - Material

Illustration 4: An Extract of A priori Themes and Codes in the Initial Template (Appendix VI).

As mentioned in section 5.2., we acknowledge that even though we have a deductive-oriented approach, there are some findings that are unforeseeable and unpredictable, and these findings might only be discovered during the actual coding process. These findings will also be given a code if they emerge.

As displayed in Illustration 4, we created a priori themes and codes based on our theoretical framework which we expected to find during the coding process. However, it is important to



mention that these themes and codes may change and expand during the later steps in the coding process. To exemplify, some codes may be deleted while others may be discovered or be categorised differently than first expected. During the coding process, we also applied colour-coding to make a distinction and create structure between the different themes. This means that each time we noticed a statement or expression that had any indications of normative beliefs, these were colour-coded with the colour blue. The different colours to each theme are displayed in Appendix VI.

At the third step, we started to **cluster** the codes that we had found in the preliminary coding step. The clustering process usually consists of merging similar codes under one title and removing duplicates. However, our deductive-oriented approach meant that we had already established a priori themes and codes based on our theoretical framework. We only had to cluster the codes that were new and unforeseeable. These codes were then clustered to already established themes or new themes were created. Through our preliminary coding process, we discovered two new themes: Attitude and Fashion Industry. Both of these themes contained several codes such as Knowledge and Attitude towards sustainable clothing. These new themes and codes are displayed in the initial template which is shown in Illustration 5. Moreover, we noticed a connection or hierarchy between some of the codes and themes. This was seen when some of the codes or themes were mentioned more than others, therefore seeming more salient than other themes and codes (King and Brooks 2017, 33-34). An example of a more salient code within the theme Background factors was the code Occupation, as all of our respondents often mentioned that they were students (Appendix VA-VH)

At the fourth step, we developed the **initial template** (King and Brooks 2017, 34), as shown below:



Themes	Behavioural Beliefs	Normative beliefs	Control beliefs	Intention	Background factors	Cognitive Dissonance	Behaviour	Actual Control	Attitudes	Fashion Industry
Codes	Belief Attitude	Injunctive beliefs Descriptive beliefs Influence	Perceived control	Buying sustainable Eating sustainable	Age Personal information Nationality Occupation Education Culture/Social norms Living situation Past behaviour Income Social status Hobbies/Interest	Adding new cognitive elements Changing cognitive elements Decreasing cognitive elements Conflicting attitudes Conflicting attitudes and behaviour	Consumer behaviour Changed consumer behaviour	Skills/abilities Knowledge Environmental factors - COVID-19	Negative - Towards Fast Fashion brands - Towards second-hand stores becoming popular Towards fashion industry Towards sustainable awareness Towards sustainable items Towards sustainable clothing Towards conditions in the UK Clothing preferences	Knowledge - Cheap labour - Production - Material

Illustration 5: An Extract of Our Initial Template (Appendix VI)

Illustration 5 displays our initial template which was created during the clustering step. We found new themes and established new codes concerning our respondents' behaviour.

At the fifth step, we **modified the initial template**. Through a repeated process, we made sure that all of the relevant data could be coded. For example, when we met any codes that at first were difficult to code, we noted them down and made sure that through the repeated process of modifying the template we overcame the issue and were able to code them (King and Brooks 2017, 34-36). To explain, the codes that we first perceived as difficult to code became easier to code after having gone through all the transcripts because during the coding process we found new themes and new codes that the codes we found difficult belonged under. In the end, the codes were also easier to code as we had a greater understanding of the different codes and themes but also because we were able to see a more clear connection between the different themes and codes and how they should be categorised.

Additionally, it is important to point out that the transcripts were divided between the two researchers of this paper and then coded. When the researchers felt they had coded all the important elements, the researchers then switched transcripts to validate the themes or codes but also to make sure that no important sections or codes that were difficult to code were left out. This process helped modify our initial template into our final template.



At the sixth step, after the template had been modified and all interesting sections had been coded, we were able to define the **final template**. Additionally, we made sure that the final template was structured and able to contain all of our final themes and codes (King and Brooks 2017, 37-39). The initial template and the modified template have both been displayed in a table, but our final template is displayed in a linear illustration as we argue that the linear illustration makes the hierarchy more visible between the codes and therefore provides an improved overview. The final template is available in Appendix VII and is the foundation of our analysis. An extract of the final template is displayed in Illustration 6 below:

- Control**
 - Control belief
 - Perceived control
 - Control
 - No control
 - Actual control
 - Skills/abilities
 - Knowledge
 - Fashion Industry
 - Knowledge
 - Cheap labour
 - Production
 - Materials
 - Environmental factors
 - COVID-19
 - Physical factors

Illustration 6: An Extract of the Final Template (Appendix VII)

The seventh and eighth steps are part of our analysis as these steps involve a written presentation of the findings, we found in the coding process. We will present each theme here and interpret and analyse them in relation to our respondents' answers and our theoretical framework (King and Brooks 2017, 37-44). The interpretation of the themes and the analysis will be presented in section 6.

Even though our method of analysis, Template Analysis, enables us to understand what themes our respondents use to express their reality and attitudes regarding their behaviour but also the attitude-behaviour gap, the method also has its limitations. One aspect is that the Template Analysis is being criticized for being too flexible. Some argue that there is too much freedom when working with this method and not enough guidance in how to use it (Brooks, et al. 2015, 218; King and Brooks 2017, 87-89). This can be explained as an issue for researchers who are new or less experienced within the world of coding templates since they may rush through the



descriptive coding process and into the interpretive process of analysing (King and Brooks 2017, 87-89; Brooks, et al. 2015, 218). During our coding process, we were aware not to rush ourselves through the descriptive coding process and jump too quickly into the interpretive analysis. We took the time to evaluate each theme and code while also considering and assessing their relationship to each other. Another aspect of criticism is that some researchers might lose their original focus, i.e., the problem statement, and instead end up focusing on or seeing the constructed template as the end result (Brooks, et al. 2015, 218). In this paper, the constructed template is only meant as a way of making sense of the data, it is not the analysis in itself. Therefore, we argue that Template Analysis is still applicable in this paper since it allows us to explore the most important aspects in-depth that our respondents express. The next section will present our empirical data.

5.4. Empirical Data

Our empirical data consists of eight interviews which have been collected in the time span from March to April 2021. All of the interviews were done online through Zoom at either Camilla or Ida's place of residence. As mentioned earlier, both of us were present during each interview where one took the role as the interviewer while the other one observed and took notes. However, these roles were not fixed as we switched roles per interview. For example, this is visible as Camilla is the interviewer in Appendix VA and Ida is the interviewer in Appendix VB.

The interviews were conducted over several days and lasted 35 minutes to a little over an hour. To give a quick overview, Interview A was conducted on the 16th of March 2021 and lasted around 40 minutes. Interview B was conducted on the 17th of March 2021 and lasted around 35 minutes. Interview C was conducted on the 19th of March 2021 and lasted around 39 minutes. Interviews D, E and F were conducted on the 23rd of March 2021 and lasted around 35 minutes to around one hour each. Interview G was conducted on the 26th of March 2021 and lasted around one hour and 15 minutes. Interview H was conducted on the 23rd of April 2021 and lasted around one hour (Appendix VA-H; Appendix VIIIA-H).

We obtained our respondents in different ways. Some of the respondents we got in contact with through our thesis supervisor, Lise-Lotte's, contacts. These contacts come from Lancaster University and The University of the West of England in Bristol. We contacted these



connections by email and asked if they were able to share an invite we had created with their students – which they gladly did (see Appendix I). Also, through our own network, we obtained one respondent. In addition, we contacted different British universities and professors and asked them if they would share our invite with their students, which some of them did. Lastly, we obtained additional respondents through some of our other respondents as they helped spread the word of our search for respondents to their friends. This is also known as the snowballing technique (Dilley 2000, 132). When using the snowballing technique, we have no control over who we will end up with as our respondents. When our respondents invite their own friends, we might acquire respondents who either are very similar or the direct opposite. Snowballing can be an advantage since we may end up with a wide range of respondents who hold different views which gives us a more nuanced data collection. This also means that the technique can be a limitation if our original respondent only shares our invite with people who have similar opinions (Aarhus Universitet 2021).

By creating the invite, we beforehand introduced the topics of sustainability and consumer behaviour. This introduction may have been a determining factor for why some of our respondents wanted to participate in the interviews. Some respondents might have a special interest in these topics and possess more knowledge about these topics than the usual consumer would. In addition, research suggests that people are more inclined to participate when they e.g., have a personal interest in the specific topic (Involve 2018). In our case, this means that we might have, through our invite, attracted respondents that have a personal interest in our topics. We argue that if our respondents have prior knowledge or an interest regarding the topic beforehand, it could have both negative and positive effects. The negative effect may be that the respondent possesses fake or false information which they believe to be real. The positive effect may be that a personal interest and knowledge about the topic could provide us with more in-depth answers as they might possess more knowledge about the topic. When the respondent possesses some knowledge regarding the industry or topic it may be easier to identify whether the respondent has conflicting attitudes.

As mentioned earlier, the saturation point depends on the aim of the study. In this case, we intended to conduct ten interviews, but we were only able to conduct eight interviews. This may be due to several things, e.g., the current COVID-19 pandemic or that the respondents that we were looking for are students themselves meaning that their focus might be elsewhere. Such as writing major papers or having exams. However, even though eight interviews may seem



quite limited, it is still useful as we did not wish to generalise and examine the attitude-behaviour gap within society, but rather we wanted to provide a glimpse of which elements our respondents express may influence or are responsible for the attitude-behaviour gap. This correlates with research which states that when working with respondents' lived experience a small sample tends to be sufficient (Kvale 2007, 43).

The next section will provide a more in-depth presentation of each respondent.

5.4.1. Presentations of Our Respondents

All of the presentations are based upon our respondents' own expressions from the transcripts.

5.4.1.1. Respondent A

A is a 24-year-old woman from the US, but since November 2020 she has lived in the UK. A is a full-time student at Lancaster University where she is doing her master's degree in English Linguistics. Back in the US, she did her undergraduate degree in Biological Anthropology where she also worked part time at a local winery. A has previously lived in Hungary for two years, mainly working as a teacher at a primary school. In the US, A is from a small town where she grew up on a farm. There, her parents are almost self-sufficient when it comes to food. A buys clothes often and spends approximately 20 euros on average per month on clothes. She mostly buys all her clothes from second-hand stores as she has convinced herself that they last longer. The only items A is buying new are shoes and underwear. These items are mainly purchased at grocery stores or fashion retailers like Sainsbury or Primark. In the US, A and her mother go to thrift stores together and buy 'weird' clothes as a bonding activity. Furthermore, A possesses some knowledge concerning the production of garments such as the process of processing cotton, dying the fabrics, water consumption, chemical runoff and underpaid labour. A expresses that she would like to shop more sustainably. However, due to several social factors, A does not feel that she is able to act on her intention right now but maybe in the future (Appendix VA).

5.4.1.2. Respondent B

C is a 22-year-old woman and a student at University of West England in Bristol where she is majoring in English. In her spare time, C is running a small fashion business in which she is making handmade clothes and earrings. C is quite passionate about fashion and sustainability. When she was little her nan taught her how to sew and make clothes. C buys clothes once or



twice a month, spending approximately 50 pounds on average per month. However, C expresses that she makes a lot more clothes than she buys. She tries to buy from second-hand stores or other small businesses, yet she likes sports brands such as Nike and Adidas. C also expresses that when buying new clothes, it is mainly cheap basic items that she will wear until they break which also can easily be replaced. These basic items are bought at stores like Primark. Even though C knows that most of the items at Primark or similar stores are produced from the fast fashion industry, she still buys basic items there because she has convinced herself that she then does not waste the hard work that has gone into these items. C possesses some knowledge concerning the production of clothes, the quickly changing trends, working conditions and the waste and disposal of garments (Appendix VB).

5.4.1.3. Respondent C

MO is a third-year English Language and Linguistics student at the University of West England in Bristol. Originally, she comes from Winchester in Hampshire. Today, she lives in a flat in Bristol with roomies. In her spare time, she plays lacrosse at the university team and has two part time jobs, one at the local stadium and the other at an inland local surfing lake called The Wave. MO buys clothes once a month and spends approximately 100 pounds on average per month. She tries to do the best she can when it comes to sustainable items by buying second-hand. However, sometimes she also buys new clothes. When buying clothes, she would rather buy more expensive items or clothes with better quality as she has convinced herself that it lasts longer. Like some of the other respondents, MO also buys socks or underwear at Primark. Besides Primark, she likes to shop at ASOS or Zara. MO also possesses some knowledge concerning the production of clothes and the amount of waste the fast fashion industry has (Appendix VC).

5.4.1.4. Respondent D

MA is a 28-year-old male who is a final year student at Aberystwyth University in Wales where his major is Psychology. He is originally from Poland but moved to the UK when he was 18 years-old right after high school graduation. Besides being a student, MA has a work placement where he works as a social science research officer. MA buys new clothes once a year as he is focusing on reducing his carbon footprint and trying to be a more eco-friendly consumer. Before going to university, MA used to buy more clothes from high-street shops like River Island or Topshop. He expresses that back then he saw clothes as a way to treat himself but also as a way of expressing his identity or protecting himself. Today, MA is more aware of his



consumption, and he prefers to buy second-hand in which he spends approximately 20 pounds on average per month. Besides buying second-hand, MA has also since university started to eat vegetarian and does not travel by aviation anymore. Even though MA buys second-hand, he does not buy shoes or underwear at second-hand stores, as he believes these items are quite intimate. MA and his Polish family do not share the same concern for the environment as they buy new stuff whenever they want it. MA does not have a lot of knowledge concerning the fashion industry (Appendix VD).

5.4.1.5. Respondent E

L is a 20-year-old woman who is a full-time student in Psychology and Linguistics at Lancaster University. Her family is from Poland, but she grew up in the Southeast area in the UK. In her spare time, she likes to read books. L expresses that she comes from a poor background in which her parents always bought clothes at the grocery stores because that was the only place they could afford. L also expresses that her family only sees clothes as a necessity. Additionally, she received a lot of hand-me-downs from her sister or other family members. L buys clothes every few months where she spends 50 pounds on average. She likes to shop at cheap stores such as Missguided, ASOS, Pretty Little Thing, Primark or New Look, but today, she mostly shops online. L buys more clothes now than before university because she got student finance, and as a result she has more money to treat herself. L does not really buy second-hand but she wants to in the future because she feels bad when buying cheap clothes. L has also convinced herself that there are no good thrift stores as the clothes coming from those stores usually are old and damaged in which she has to fix them, and she does not have those skills. In addition, L believes there is a certain stigma to buying clothes from second-hand. L has little knowledge concerning the working conditions in the fashion industry, and she expresses that she does not really do anything to try to become more sustainable (Appendix VE).

5.4.1.6. Respondent F

V is a 21-year-old woman who has dual citizenship between Russia and the US. She grew up in the US, however she is currently studying Linguistics and English Language at Lancaster University. In her spare time, she works part time as an XML coder, and she just started sewing a little bit. She rarely buys clothes and spends on average 10 pounds per month. V tries to buy clothes from second-hand stores or from small businesses. She is very aware of how the fashion industry is affecting the environment and as a result usually does a lot of research concerning



the brand and their sustainable or ethical practices. Furthermore, V does not mind paying a little more for items that she knows are sustainable or from a more ethical business practice. As a kid, she was accustomed to receiving a lot of hand-me-downs or buying more cheap clothes. When shopping, V tries to stay away from bigger brands because she would rather support smaller businesses. She still lets her parents buy her things that she would not buy for herself when visiting them. As V is aware of the impact the fashion industry has on the environment, she also has a great knowledge concerning the production, the water consumption, the dye of the clothes and the amount of garment waste (Appendix VF).

5.4.1.7. Respondent G

F is a 26-year-old male who is studying a degree of Arts in Conflict Resolution and Peace Studies at Lancaster University. Through his degree, he has a particular interest in the issue of human trafficking between Mexico and the US. F is originally from Puebla, Mexico but has lived in the UK, Lancashire Northwest of Manchester since October 2020. Previously, F has also lived and studied at the University of New Mexico, in Albuquerque, USA. There, he took his GRE test and worked at New Mexico Immigrant Law Centre. Today in his spare time, he works part time as a Digital Content Ambassador at Lancaster University. F states that he never buys clothes. He usually receives a lot of hand-me-downs from friends or gets clothes when his father has shopped second-hand at the local Mexican street market for F and his brother. He does not mind getting socks, underwear and shoes at a second-hand store, and if his clothes break, he is able to sew or fix them. He tries to live as sustainable as possible, which means that he also tries not to eat meat, as he knows it is bad for the environment. However, the vegetarian lifestyle is not going very well. F has little knowledge of the fashion industry and clothing production, but he is very aware of microplastics in clothes made from polyester (Appendix VG).

5.4.1.8. Respondent H

MG is a 21-year-old woman from Wales studying Biomedical Sciences. Currently, she is on an international placement in pharmaceutical research in Denmark. In her spare time, she plays netball for the home university team, and recently she started crocheting. MG buys clothes two or three times a month and spends 200 pounds on average per month. She has done a lot of research about fast fashion, sustainability and the impact the industry has on the environment which is why she tries to only buy second-hand. However, she is also convinced that you sometimes cannot find what you are looking for in second-hand stores which means that she



sometimes purchases clothes at regular stores. MG especially likes to buy a lot of trainers from the brand, Nike. In this case, she knows that Nike is not sustainable and does not have a very ethical business practice, but she still buys the trainers, stating that her behaviour is not justifiable. Besides MG's attempts to become more sustainable in relation to clothes, she has also become a vegetarian. Lastly, MG possess some knowledge concerning the fashion industry such as the production, use of cheap labour, bad working conditions and that when consumers return their goods bought online, the brand usually do not take the time to handle the returned goods, instead sending them directly into landfills (Appendix VH).

Having presented our methodological choices, the next section will present our analysis.



6. Analysis

This section will contain our analysis which is the seventh and the eight steps in our method of analysis. These steps are a presentation and an interpretation of the findings from our final template (Appendix VII). Through our method of analysis, we discovered 64 codes which were modified and clustered into six main themes: Behaviour, Attitude, Control, Normative belief, Background factors and Cognitive dissonance. Through this section, we will analyse and interpret each theme separately and relate it to our theoretical framework. However, it is important to mention that when analysing the main themes, we will include the examples of codes that were most salient in our conversation with our respondents.

As mentioned in section 5.3.2, we coded our data through themes and codes based upon guidelines which were founded in our theoretical framework. For example, in Illustration 7 the respondent expresses that she would buy clothes if she needed something quickly or if she was bored.

Um, so if I need something quickly, um, cause sometimes you can't always find exactly what you need in a second-hand store and you have to do a lot of rummaging. So, the ease of just doing them sometimes when I'm just bored, I was

Behaviour -
Consumer
behaviour
Control
belief -
Perceived
control - No
control

just wondering around the shops with no intention of buying anything and then something sort of catches your eye and then it's hard to leave it in the shop. Um,

Illustration 7 (Appendix VH, 3-4, l. 78-82)

This expression belongs under the theme Behaviour and its underlying code Consumer behaviour, which was coloured turquoise. Furthermore, she expressed that it is not always possible to find exactly what you need at a second-hand store, and that it takes a lot of work when actually shopping there. This expression can be seen belonging under the theme Control and the underlying code Perceived control as she does not believe that she has the time to shop at second-hand stores but also that she will not be able to find what she needs at second-hand stores. For further explanation regarding our colour coding of the themes and codes see section 5.3.2.



In the analysis, we have placed the themes in the order of Behaviour, Attitude, Control, Normative belief, Background factors and Cognitive dissonance. This is because we believe it makes sense to first analyse our respondents' expressed behaviour and intentions and thereafter analyse and interpret the remaining themes that might be the root of, or influence, the respondents' behaviour or intentions. To explain, in order to understand where our respondents' expressed behaviour emanates from, we need to examine the different themes separately. For example, when analysing behavioural beliefs and the theme Attitude, we examine what attitudes and beliefs our respondents hold towards sustainable clothing, climate change and also the fashion industry. The first theme we will analyse is Behaviour.

6.1. Behaviour

In the first section of the analysis, we will present and analyse our respondents' expressed intentions and behaviour in relation to their consumer behaviour when purchasing clothes.

6.1.1. Intentions

Throughout our interviews, several of our respondents expressed that when they buy clothes, they try to buy it at second-hand stores or from other small businesses. This intention of buying clothes from second-hand stores was usually expressed by saying “*I am trying to buy second-hand*” (Appendix VB, 2, l. 45; Appendix VD, 2, l. 45; Appendix VF, 2, l. 51). For example, this is displayed in Illustration 8 where C expresses that she makes a lot of her own clothes, but when she is buying clothes, she tries to buy it from second-hand stores or from other small businesses. In Illustration 9, MA states that he is trying to buy second-hand because he cannot afford to buy clothes in other places.

Um, I, I make a lot more clothes um than I buy. Um, but yeah, when I buy clothes, like say I generally try and buy them from sort of like either second hand or from other small businesses.

Background factors - Personal information
Behaviour - Consumer behaviour
Actual control - Skills

Illustration 8 (Appendix VB, 2, l. 44-46)



Um, I'm trying to buy that second-hand, uh, one, just to reuse something that is already there, um, or buying from environmentally friendly outlet, but they're quite expensive. So, in the moment I can't afford them. So, you usually I will go for the second-hand.

Behaviour - Consumer behaviour
 Attitude - Towards sustainable clothing
 Control belief - perceived control
 - No control
 Intention

Illustration 9 (Appendix VD, 2, l. 45-48)

Another intention our respondents expressed was that several of them wanted to acquire a more sustainable behaviour in general, meaning not only in relation to clothes and shopping at second-hand stores, but also in other aspects of their life. Several of them based their intentions of buying sustainable as they also wished to minimise their impact on the environment, e.g., by reducing their carbon footprint. In Illustration 10, MA states that before going to university, he used to buy a lot of clothes from high street or fast fashion brands, but today he is thinking more about what he can do to minimise the carbon footprint.

That has changed quite a lot. Um, I remember before I went to university was something quite often to, to treat myself with a bit of new clothing and usually was from the high street shops, but now, we need to re-evaluate whether we need that new item and whether there's anything that I can do to minimize the carbon footprint or feel more environmentally friendly. So, it has changed over the years. Now, I will say maybe once a year, if I really need a new item, but, um, you know, it takes quite a lot of persuading.

Behaviour - Consumer behaviour
 Attitude - Towards sustainable clothing and climate change

Illustration 10 (Appendix VD, 2, l. 37-43)

This intention was also visible in our conversations with some of the other respondents as several of them expressed that they also wanted to become more sustainable. However, this intention was perceived as not always possible. In Illustration 11, V states that it is difficult to always be 100% sustainable, eco-friendly or ethical, yet she wishes to make an effort to at least buy something that is less harmful.



Of course, I'm a student, so I can't always afford, um, things that are 100% sustainable, 100% eco-friendly 100% ethical, but I do try to make an effort to at least buy something that's, you know, slightly less impactful.

Background factors -
 Occupation
 Control belief -
 Perceived control
 - No control
 Intention - buying sustainable
 CD - Adding cognitive elements

Illustration 11 (Appendix VF, 6, l. 185-187)

A third intention expressed by most of our respondents was that if they were not able to become more sustainable now due to several things, they definitely believed or wanted to be more sustainable in the future. This was often mentioned in relation to our respondents' willingness to pay more for sustainable options (Appendix VA, 6, l. 161; Appendix VD, 4, l. 85-89; Appendix VE, 10, l. 259-265; Appendix VF, 11, l. 326-333; Appendix VH, 15, 410-414), yet the respondents also expressed that as a student you cannot afford to buy expensive sustainable clothes now. Nevertheless, several of the respondents stated that when they were done with their degree and got a job, they would buy more sustainably, as they then would be able to afford it. It is necessary to mention that one of our respondents, A, stated that when getting a degree and a job, she would buy more clothes and inevitably these clothes might not be more sustainable, as a job would make her dress more professionally, and it might not be possible to find sustainable options in that style (Appendix VA, 10, l. 256-264). The influence from social factors such as Occupation or Control will be further analysed in sections 6.5.1. and 6.4. Having displayed some of our respondents' expressed intentions, we will now move on to their expressed behaviour.

6.1.2. Consumer Behaviour

Through our interviews, several of our respondents' expressed intentions were also visible in their consumer behaviour. When our respondents stated that they tried to buy second-hand, many of them actually also bought clothes at second-hand stores. This behaviour was often reasoned with that several of them believed that second-hand were affordable and also because they believed it to be a more ethical or sustainable option. However, during the conversation, we also discovered that a majority of the respondents also bought clothes at fast fashion brands. For example, in Illustration 12, MO states that she goes to Primark to buy socks. This behaviour is shared with some of our other respondents.



Uh, yeah. I'd like to say so, but I know that if I'm being honest probably not always, you know, sometimes I do have to go to a Primark and buy some socks and you know that. But I do try to be as, as, as good as possible, I guess. Not, not buying things for the sake of it.	Intention - Buying sustainable Behaviour - Consumer behaviour CD - Decreasing cognitive elements
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Illustration 12 (Appendix VC, 7, l. 180-183)

When our respondents stated that they still would buy clothes at fast fashion stores, almost all of them mentioned that it was especially when they had to buy basic items such as underwear, socks and shoes. Several of the respondents indicated that they would never buy these items at second-hand stores due to various reasons. Two of our respondents expressed that they thought it was quite intimate, unhygienic and gross to buy these at second-hand stores (Appendix VA, 4, l. 94-97; Appendix VD, 3, l. 58-60). A third expressed that those basic items are not very durable and had previously experienced that especially underwear would tear or get discoloured after 6 months, whether it was bought sustainable or from new, and therefore, she needed to replace it anyway. She believed she would be able to save some money when buying basic items from a fast fashion retailer (Appendix VC, 16, l. 437-453). Additionally, only one of our respondents had another opinion in relation to buying socks, underwear and shoes in second-hand stores. In Illustration 13, F expresses that he does not mind buying shoes, underwear and socks at second-hand stores, as he always washes the clothes right after buying them to make sure they are clean.

do remember once being questioned if there were like, uh, hygiene concerns about that, but, you know, I always took my clothes from second-hand shops to the, to the, uh, laundry and then make sure they're clean. And I think there should be no problem with that. Yeah.	Behaviour - Consumer behaviour Attitude - Towards sustainable clothing
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Illustration 13 (Appendix VG, 4, l. 84-87).

Lastly, one of our respondents, L, expressed that she did not buy second-hand clothes because she does not think that there are any good second-hand stores in her town, and it is very time consuming. In addition, she believes that most of the clothes in such stores are of bad quality and are falling apart. Therefore, she would rather shop at stores such as Primark, Missguided,



etc. L also mentioned that if she found a good second-hand store, she could not rule out the possibility that she would shop there (Appendix VE, 4, l. 95-101).

Through the interviews, our respondents were asked where they like to purchase their clothes, and we discovered that our respondents liked to buy their clothes both online and in physical stores as they expressed that there were pros and cons with both shopping opportunities. Some of the pros with online shopping were the browse function which made it easier to see a wide range and the variety of clothes in various sizes which our respondents expressed second-hand stores and sometimes physical stores lacked. Additionally, online shopping was less time-consuming, as they could do it from everywhere. For example, in Illustration 14, MG states that she does not buy that much online anymore, but she perceives buying online to be very easy. Due to today's technology, it is something you can do from anywhere.

Um, just, I wouldn't say I buy that much online really anymore.	Um, but it's just	Behaviour - Consumer behaviour
some of the ease of it to be honest. Um, you can do it from your bedroom. You can do it on a phone on the class if you're just bored, you think, Oh, I just have a little		Control belief - Perceived control - Control
browse.	Um, I'm not as bad as I used to be. I used to be terrible. I will hold my	Behavioural belief - Attitude
hands up and say, it was like, I just be on ASOS. I was like, woo, got to buy all this stuff. And I'm like, why was I doing that?		CD - Decreasing cognitive elements

Illustration 14 (Appendix VH, 4, l. 103-108).

This belief that online shopping is easy is also an aspect that was shared from some of the other respondents such as MO who stated that it is very convenient right now when everything else is closed due to COVID-19 (Appendix VC, 3, l. 78-83). However, a con that was expressed with online shopping was that our respondents were not able to try on the clothes before buying them, which they were able to if they were shopping at a physical store. Several of our respondents mentioned that due to COVID-19 all physical stores were closed which meant they had to shop online if they wanted to purchase new clothes. The influence of COVID-19 will be further analysed in section 6.4.2.



6.1.2.1. Clothing Preferences

Another element that was mentioned in relation to our respondents' consumer behaviour was their clothing preferences. The element, clothing preference, was initially coded as an Attitude called Clothing preferences. However, as this attitude and preference have an essential impact on our respondents' actual consumer behaviour, we have chosen to include this element in this section and not in section 6.2. which presents our respondents' Attitudes.

During the interviews, our respondents were asked what they deemed as important when they were buying clothes. Some of the elements our respondents mentioned were price, quality, style and comfort, which aligns with findings from prior research that also indicated that price, quality and style were major factors that could affect one's consumer behaviour when purchasing clothes (Joergens 2006; Bray, Johns and Kilburn 2011). In the interviews, all of our respondents stated that, as a student, price was a crucial element, as they could not afford to buy really expensive clothes. Their clothing preferences and where they ended up buying their clothes were usually affected by price (Appendix VA, 10, l. 256-264; Appendix VB, 5, l. 109-112; Appendix VH, 10, l. 266-274). Another element that was mentioned was fit and style. Both A and V mentioned that the fit and style was an important element when they both described themselves as having a more unique and different style than the majority. In Illustration 15, V mentions that she has an alternative style, the clothing style goth, and sometimes it is difficult to find clothing in that particular style.

fabric that they use, like minimize the amount that they throw away.	Um, like I have a	Fashion Industry - Knowledge - Production Background factors - Personal information Control belief - Perceived control - Control Attitude - Clothing preference - Style
pretty alternative style,	so it's been a little hard finding, like places that will do like goth	
style clothing, but, um, it's, they're still out there,	you know, it's not all necessarily like	
hippie style and clothing or, um, like just really plain everyday items. Um, I think that it		

Illustration 15 (Appendix VF, 13, l. 414-417).

Whereas A's clothing style is more influenced by the 70's (Appendix VA, 2, l. 48-53). A third clothing preference was comfort, in which F expressed that comfort is a key element as he tends to sweat a lot and needs clothes that are more breathable (Appendix VG, 5, l. 134-142). Quality of the clothes was the fourth element our respondents mentioned as a major factor. Here, for example, C expressed that it is important for her that the quality of the clothing match



the price (Appendix VB, 4, l. 91; Appendix VC, 5, l. 126-132). A fifth element our respondents mentioned as important was how the clothes were going to look on them and how it was going to make them feel (Appendix VE, 4-5, l. 108-116; Appendix VH, 7, l. 173-179). For example, MG expressed that what leads her to buying clothes is that she feels good and confident in them (Appendix VH, 7, l. 176-177). The last element our respondents expressed was how sustainable and ethical the clothes they bought were (Appendix VF, 5, l. 136-140; Appendix VD, 3-4, l. 80-83). For example, in Illustration 16, MA states that the most important element for him when purchasing clothes is how sustainable or environmentally friendly the clothes are, followed by the price.

Um, now in the moment, definitely how environmentally friendly they are and whether they are sustainable. Um, if they source the material ethically and

sustainably. Um, yeah, I think that that's the major one and the price. I think the price is always something that drives their decisions.

Attitude -
Clothing
preferences -
Price

Illustration 16 (Appendix VD, 3-4, l. 80-83).

During our interviews we noticed that our respondents' clothing preferences were often connected with other elements. For example, as displayed in Illustration 16, MA states that how sustainable the clothes are is a major concern, but he also mentions price as an element that always drives his decision. Another example of connected preferences is when C expressed that the quality of the clothes is important, but she also believes that consumers need to pay attention to the clothes background and how they are made (Appendix VB, 4, l. 91- 98). C's example relates to V's and MA's concerns of how sustainable and ethical the clothes were (Appendix VF, 5, l. 136-140; Appendix VD, 3-4, l. 80-83). It was observed several times that our respondents' preferences were not based on a single preference but rather more often based on various preferences. Furthermore, it is also essential to mention our respondents' differences in their preferences. When selecting the group of British students between the ages of 18-35 in section 1.3, we assumed that some of their answers and preferences would be similar. However, as stated earlier in section 1.3, the social identity of being a student may only be one of our respondents' identities. We experienced through our interviews that each of our respondents drew upon other background factors or other social identities that influenced how they



answered our questions. The aspect of Background factors will be further analysed in section 6.5.

Another essential element we noticed through our interviews was that several of our respondents involved examples of their food consumption or sustainable eating habits when they were referring to sustainable consumption. We discovered that several of our respondents compared the intention of buying sustainable clothes to their intention of buying sustainable food (Appendix VD, 7, l. 182-189; Appendix VH, 12-13, l. 345-353; Appendix VG, 8, l. 219-226). This involvement was often done in relation to providing us with examples which would make us understand our respondents' beliefs concerning sustainable consumption but also to provide us with more relatable examples to their own sustainable consumption. The involvement of food consumption and sustainable options within the food industry might be because it is something our respondents are familiar with. As mentioned in section 2.2., some industries became aware of sustainable options or started to provide sustainable options earlier than others due to an increased demand from consumers, and the food industry was one of the industries that was first movers within sustainable options. As a result, our respondents might have had more experience dealing with sustainable food consumption and, therefore, providing us with examples as they found them more relatable and easier to explain.

Having presented our respondents' intentions and behaviour, we will now analyse some of the elements that might be the root of, or influence, our respondents' behaviour or intentions.

6.2. Attitude

The second main theme is Attitude. Within this theme there are several different codes, e.g., Behavioural belief, Attitude towards sustainable clothing, Attitude towards climate change and Attitude towards fashion industry. Through our conversations with our respondents, we discovered several behavioural beliefs and attitudes that were more salient than others, meaning that they were mentioned more often than others. The theme Attitude was the first theme that we, through our interviews, experienced that influenced our respondent's behaviour. Through this section, we will analyse and interpret some of our respondents' behavioural beliefs and attitudes.



6.2.1. Attitude Towards Climate Change

One of the salient codes was Attitude towards climate changes. All of our respondents expressed that they in some ways were concerned about climate changes and believed that something had to be done in order to stop or prevent further damage. An element almost all of our respondents expressed was that they, themselves, were actively trying to become more sustainable. For example, in Illustration 17, MA expresses that he sees climate change as a climate crisis and that he has changed his lifestyle in order to become more sustainable and to minimise his impact on the crisis. To become more sustainable, he does not travel by flight, he is vegetarian and, earlier in our conversation, he also expressed that he tries to buy sustainable clothing at second-hand stores (Appendix VD, 2, l. 45-48). However, he also expressed that he could do more as he still drives which implies that his attitudes and behaviours are conflicting. The aspect of conflicting attitudes and behaviours will be analysed later in section 6.6.

Yeah. Yeah. When I went to university, um, I would ask how much. It's not a climate change, it is a climate crisis. I change my, um, the lifestyle a little bit to be more environmentally friendly. You should don't take flights, and eating vegetarian for, since the university. So, um, and trying to not add too much more of carbon footprint as much as possible. I still quite bad person because I drive. Um, so as you can imagine, it's almost like, yeah, I did this nice thing on the site, but it's something that I, yeah. So, of course I am concerned and I'm trying my best by, and now I'm not perfect person when it comes to environment either.

Attitude - Towards climate change

Behaviour - changed consumer behaviour

CD - Conflicting attitudes and behaviour

Illustration 17 (Appendix VD, 7, l. 182-189)

Another respondent, MG, expresses that she is concerned about climate change, as seen in Illustration 18. However, she also doubts how much one person can do. She believes that it is a common view and that many people may consider whether their actions can actually help the climate in the long run. Additionally, she states that she believes that her actions would not make a difference because her change of behaviour would also require a lot of time and determination from her side and, believing it would not make a difference, essentially makes her do nothing.



I think they just don't see it as a 'them problem'. And again, just have this attitude that, what am I going to change? And there's no, there's no motivation or like passion to say, okay, I'm going to be that one person that makes this huge change. So, I'm just going to sit back. Someone else will do it eventually. I think, you know, that's their sort of. Again, in some, in some respects, that is sometimes my I'm like, ah, I can't really do anything. Like I could, if I really put my all into it, I feel like there is something I could do, but it's, you have to make, like, to make the change that I personally would want to make. That would require, require a lot of time. And like, I would want to put something like that. I want to put my all into and I wouldn't con, like put my all into it. So, I'm like, yeah, someone else will do that, which is really bad. I know, but it is the truth.

Attitude -
Towards
sustainable
awareness
Control
belief -
Perceived
control - No
control
CD -
Conflicting
attitudes

Illustration 18 (Appendix VH, 17, l. 482-492)

In summation, during our conversations, we learned that all of our respondents are concerned about climate changes. Some were trying to change their lifestyle by reducing their travelling habits, becoming a vegetarian or buying sustainable clothing. Meanwhile, others were concerned but were not actively doing something to reduce their own footprint (Appendix VA-VH).

6.2.2. Attitude Towards Sustainable Clothing

Another attitude that was addressed in our conversations was the code Attitude towards sustainable clothing. Several of our respondents stated that they believed that sustainable clothing would be more expensive and of higher quality which also would make them last longer. In Illustration 19, MO expresses that she thinks it is a common conception that sustainable clothes are expensive. She, herself, has tried to buy Converse's recycled shoes. In this example, MO really wanted to buy a sustainable product, but due to price, she was not able to afford them, meaning she had to find a cheaper alternative. The fact that she is a student may be one of the reasons why she cannot afford to pay more than normal for sustainable items. This aspect can be related back to the theme Background factors which will be analysed in section 6.5.



Yeah, to be honest because it is, it is common, but that they are expensive. I think some, some of the brands that I mentioned earlier, the COLLUSION brand on ASOS their recycled, um, section is cheap, which is good. You know, my, my long sleeve t-shirts, they, the unisex box standard t-shirts. They were only about six pounds each, but, um, other brands that if, even if you buy, I tried to buy recycled Converse last year and they were, they were so much more expensive than the normal ones. And so, I just didn't buy them.

Attitude -
Towards
sustainable
clothing

Behaviour -
Consumer
behaviour

Illustration 19 (Appendix VC, 10, l. 267-273)

The belief that sustainable clothing is of better quality is shared with other of our respondents. In Illustration 20, L assumes that sustainable clothing is of better quality. She cannot really explain why, but her belief is that it is of better or higher quality. These assumptions may also be rooted in her background factors. It might be an assumption she possesses because she never had the opportunity of buying sustainable clothing when coming from a poor background and never experienced her parents buying sustainable options. Furthermore, sustainability is an aspect that has recently become popular, meaning it may only recently become a part of the everyday conversation (Rosmarin 2020). Buying sustainable items may not be a part of one's past behaviour, which means it is a habit that must be acquired.

I feel like it's better. I don't really have a reason why just seems better. I feel like the tails that are sustainable tend to be better quality anyway, it's just, I don't have a reason for it. That's just what I think. I might be wrong, but that's just what it seems like.

Attitude -
Towards
sustainable
clothing

Illustration 20 (Appendix VE, 14, l. 393-396)

As mentioned in section 6.1.2, several of our respondents mentioned that they buy clothes at thrift stores, second-hand stores or other small businesses. One of our respondents, A, explains that she shops at second-hand stores because she believes that the clothing they sell is of higher quality, as it has been here for a long time and therefore lasts longer. This behavioural belief may stem from her own mother, since A expresses that her mother still has some of her clothing from the sixties and seventies which she still uses.



I guess, because my mom still has some clothes that she wore in the sixties and seventies. Um, and the stuff I get at thrift stores tends to be higher quality, but it's cheaper because I can't afford really nice clothes. Um, that would be brand new. Um, yeah.

Behavioural belief - Belief

Control belief - Perceived control - No control

Illustration 21 (Appendix VA, 3, l. 55-58)

The assumption that A believes second-hand or older clothes last longer is confirmed in Illustration 21 above, where she states that she may have convinced herself that older clothes last longer than new clothes. She also explains that she does not know if it is correct or not, but it is, however, just a belief. This positive belief and connotation that stems from her mother is influencing her actual consumer behaviour and as a result she has a greater chance of actually acting on her belief. This can be related to Fishbein and Ajzen's outcome of evaluation in which they state that if a person evaluates the behaviour to have a positive outcome, then the person will be more inclined to act on their belief (Fishbein and Ajzen 2010, 20).

That is also what I did. Yeah. Um, stuff that there's a reason. They no longer sell it in stores. Um, just weird old shirts that someone wore in the seventies. And I have decided are cool now. Um, in Hungary, I mostly went to thrift stores as well. And I did that when I travelled. Um, I mostly don't shop that new places because I've convinced myself whether it's accurate or not the older clothes last better. I don't know if that's true, but that's what I tell myself.

Behavioural belief - Attitude + Belief

Background factors - Personal information + Past behaviour

Illustration 22 (Appendix VA, 2, l. 48-53)

We also found during our conversations that second-hand clothing was described and talked about in a certain way. We discovered that there were certain assumptions related to sustainable and second-hand clothing. For example, in Illustration 22, A associates clothes from second-hand stores as being 'weird'. When using the word weird, it is usually used with a negative connotation, yet in this expression A explains that she finds the weird clothes cool. Another assumption is that C associates sustainable and second-hand clothes with her art teacher. In Illustration 23, C further explains that she believes it is a general opinion that sustainable fashion is more often associated with a hippie vibe. She also believes that if the hippie



association would disappear or become socially accepted, more people would be inclined to buy sustainable fashion.

Um, the only assumption I can think of is that most sustainable fashion that I'm familiar with kind of reminds me of what my art teacher at school might have worn, you know, like big cotton dungarees and, you know, flowy shawls and, you know, beads in her head, that kind of thing. And, um, I think that kind of puts people off sometimes or they think it's all just like knitting and stuff, but, you know, I think that idea does kind of put people off. So, I think if there was more, there was something to kind of combat that, that would be beneficial. Combat the hippie vibe and then I think more people would be up for it. Yeah.

Attitude -
Towards
sustainable
clothing
Normative
belief -
Influence

Illustration 23 (Appendix VB, 10, l. 253-260)

The belief that sustainable fashion is associated with a hippie vibe correlates with one of our other respondent's assumptions of second-hand clothing. In Illustration 24, L expresses that she believes there is a certain stigma attached to buying clothes at second-hand stores. She explains that buying second-hand clothes has become more popular, but there is still a stigma attached to it which she believes will be difficult to get rid of.

Well, I think it's become more popular. Maybe than it was a few years ago. Um, I do feel that there is still a stigma around it and because not enough people are talking about it, I feel like that stigma is not necessarily going away anytime soon.

Attitude -
Towards
sustainable
clothing

Illustration 24 (Appendix VE, 9, l. 239-241)

In the conversation with L, stigma was also used with a negative connotation. This negative connotation might be due to her background factors in which she had a poor upbringing. In our conversation with L, she mentioned that her mother told her to never shop for shoes at charity shops or anything like that (Appendix VE, 8-9, l. 222-235). This might be because of her Polish nationality, in which used items are perceived as inappropriate or as a sign of poverty or lower social status in Poland (Borasiak, et al. 2020). Another assumption L possessed, concerning second-hand clothing, is that they are old clothes of poor quality often needing to be fixed before they can be worn. In this example, the outcome of evaluation is negative, meaning that



L is less inclined to shop for shoes at charity shops because her mother has taught her not to. As shown in Illustration 25, L actually wants to become more sustainable, yet she points out that the selection of good thrift stores is poorly represented in her part of town. The poor representation of thrift stores and the assumption that second-hand clothes are perceived as of poor quality might be the reason why she chooses to shop at fast fashion retailers such as Primark instead of more sustainable businesses. Additionally, another reason why she chooses not to shop at more sustainable places may be due to her belief that clothing bought at second-hand stores needs to be fixed before it can be worn. This implies that some work has to be put into the item before she can wear it. This work might require a skill that she believes and expresses that she does not possess. The aspect of skills is further analysed in section 6.4.

Um, I want to because it's more sustainable,	and I feel bad about like buying	Intention - Buying sustainable
cheap clothes because you have to question the ethics	behind it. I feel like we	
don't really get nice thrift stores and like good clothes or charity shops. It's normally like pieces of clothing that are falling apart. And I don't, I don't really know how to sew and like remake pieces of clothing, but if I did, I would probably buy things from charity shops and just sort of make them into		Behavioural belief - Attitude Control belief - Perceived control - No control
things that I would want to wear. But I don't have the skill, so I can't really do that.		

Illustration 25 (Appendix VE, 4, l. 95-101)

Another respondent also addressed that second-hand clothes are sometimes damaged, but he does not see that as an obstacle. In Illustration 26, F explains that some of the clothes he buys in second-hand stores have some small holes. However, he does not mind. He explains that it is just proof that it is second-hand and wearable.



Mm. Hmm. For me, I like that they are comfortable, uh, you know, uh, I have a very, um, hot like body in the sense of like, I, my skin needs to breathe. Uh, and so I get very uncomfortable if the clothes I'm wearing, like rise the temperature. Um, so I, I like to wear very thin clothes that are also comfortable. Um, so that's one, when my, when I'm choosing from the things that my dad bought, you know, I want it to be comfortable, uh, two of course, that it looks reasonably nice, you know, um, which reasonable is like, most of, most of the times people can't tell they're second hand. But if, for example, if you look at my, uh, shirt here, um, if you look carefully,

Attitude -
Clothing
preferences
- Style

Behaviour -
Consumer
behaviour

you will see that this is broken, right. I still need to fix it. Um, but it's proved that it's totally second hand. I don't know how long this shirt is, but I personally have had the shirt for like, probably almost 10 years. Cause I got it back when I was starting my, my Bachelor's. Um, so yeah. Um, the sweater I have here, for example, was given to me here by a friend, uh, uh, from Portugal, um, that I have. What else do I have? Well, I have also jacket that was given to me by a friend in Mexico. So yeah. So, I think when I'm, if, if I'm accepting a gift from someone, for example, it's also a matter of whether or not it fits my, the shape of my body, you know? Um, I'm very, very thin. So, um, if it fits, yeah, if it's not too loose, I guess.

Behaviour -
Consumer
behaviour

Attitude -
Clothing
preferences -
Size

Illustration 26 (Appendix VG, 5-6, l. 134-150)

Furthermore, F might have this positive connotation towards second-hand clothes because he possesses the skill to fix the broken second-hand clothes, and he explains how people usually cannot see that his clothes are second-hand. F's positive experiences with wearing and consuming second-hand clothing are likely to influence his sustainable behaviour today. In our conversation with F, he also explained that his father usually buys a lot of second-hand clothes from the local Mexican street market (Appendix VG, 5, l. 112-119). The fact that F's father provides F and his brother with second-hand clothes might have developed a view in which second-hand clothes are normal. In this norm, it is not unusual to have to fix clothes before wearing them. The influence from family, friends or society is analysed in section 6.3.



6.2.3. Attitude Towards the Fashion Industry

A third salient topic in our conversations with our respondents was their Attitude towards the fashion industry. Several of our respondents had a negative connotation towards the fashion industry and especially towards major fast fashion brands. In Illustration 27, C expresses that fast fashion brands and its owners should take more responsibility and offer more sustainable items because she believes that consumers will never stop buying from them as people always want to follow the trend. In her belief, this is even if the retailers increased their prices a little bit.

Um, I think it's definitely something that needs to be encouraged. Um, and I think, I think fast-fashion brands especially need to be a lot more sustainable with their fashion because people are always going to be buying from them because people always want to keep up with the trends. So even if they raised their prices just a little bit, I'm sure they can add something much better into their product. An extra pound or two is it really going to make that much difference? So, like Boohoo's sales and the guy that owns it is a billionaire anyway, so it's not like he needs the money, you know, I just, yeah, I think it's, I think it's something very important that people should think about. Sorry, I can't remember what the question was.

Attitude -
Negative
Towards-
Fast
Fashion
brands

Illustration 27 (Appendix VB, 9, l. 240-248)

Another negative Attitude towards the fashion industry is expressed in Illustration 28. Here, MA states that some brands tend to be very transparent in the way they promote their clothes as eco-friendly, but he also states that it is very difficult to know whether the information is true or not, as the information does not mention how the clothes are eco-friendly, only just mentioning that it is. This was a common attitude of our respondents, and through our interviews, we discovered that several of our respondents did a lot of research before buying clothes from a company. V especially does a lot of research before she buys as she is suspicious of the information that major brands provide on their websites (Appendix VF, 3-4, l. 87-95).



Not much to be fair, I think takes quite a lot of research behind it to make an informed decision. Um, so definitely, I always ask my friend for advice for whatever and anything that I miss out and I should check this out because, um, I think that a lot of brands are transparent when it comes to that they labelled themselves as environment friendly, but they will not mention what's the source of material, how much carbon footprint it will produce during this process. And yeah, it's a quite a lot of, um, bad and on the consumer to, to find the information.

Attitude -
Towards
fashion
industry
Fashion
Industry -
Knowledge
Normative
beliefs -
Injunctive
belief

Illustration 28 (Appendix VD, 5, l. 121-127)

Furthermore, we discovered that several of our respondents had knowledge of the fashion industry and its impact. Cheap labour, bad working conditions, garment waste, etc. were some of the main topics that our respondents mentioned when asked about their knowledge of clothing production (Appendix VC, 6, l. 158-169; Appendix VF, 7-8, l. 214-226; Appendix VH, 9, l. 232-245). The negative connotations, attitudes and knowledge that our respondents possess towards the fashion industry or some major fast fashion brands could be a reason for why some of our respondents actively choose not to buy their products. While several of our respondents hold a negative attitude towards big fashion retailers, others of our respondents have a more positive attitude towards smaller businesses. For example, V expressed that she shops at small businesses that she believes to be ethical as their products are often handmade by a single person instead of supporting big fast fashion retailers, as she explains that she finds it difficult to verify their ethical statements (Appendix VF, 4, l. 106-114). This is also a belief C possesses, having experienced that small businesses are more inclined to show transparent information on their website that shows the whole production process (Appendix VB, 10-11, l. 278-283).

As mentioned earlier, we noticed that several of our respondents related the fashion industry, and especially the fast fashion industry, in connection with cheap labour, bad quality and poor working conditions. However, when they referred to small businesses, they related it to handmade, ethical practices, independent and sustainable. Yet, it is essential to mention that a company with an ethical business practice does not equal a sustainable business. The aspect of positive and negative connotations can also be related to our theoretical framework as a behavioural belief. As previously defined, a behavioural belief influences how likely the behaviour is to be acted upon. In this case, the attitude is negative towards the fast fashion



industry and mostly positive towards small businesses. It is unlikely that our respondents that hold these beliefs, based on the theory, will shop at fast fashion retailers but instead shop at small businesses.

Having analysed our respondents' attitudes in relation to sustainable clothing, climate changes and the fashion industry, we will now move onto the third theme Normative belief and analyse how these may affect one's behaviour.

6.3. Normative Belief

The third theme is Normative belief. Within this theme, we created different codes such as Injunctive normative belief, Descriptive normative belief and Other influence. Through our interviews, we noticed that several of our respondents' behaviours were influenced by various factors, e.g., what they believe others would want them to do, what they have seen others do or a perceived pressure from society. Through this section, we will analyse and interpret how our respondents' behaviour were influenced.

6.3.1. Injunctive Normative Belief

During the interviews, we noticed that some of our respondents' behaviour could be traced back to how they believed their surrounding environment would want them to behave. For example, in Illustration 29, MA mentions that after going to university, he became a part of a more environmentally aware group of friends that has influenced his consumer behaviour. As mentioned earlier, MA used to shop at high-street or fast fashion retailers, but this had changed after he started at the university.

That's a good question. I think it's mostly, um, Hmm. I think one way to look at this, um, back then, uh, I treat clothes as a way to, um, extend my identity or like a bit of explore who I am, and it was kind of add to protect myself a little bit. And now I think my priorities has changed, since I went to university, I met more diverse group of people, and I think there is a lot of influence from friends that are very into environmentalist. So, um, it was almost impossible not to care about the issues if you, if you hear about them all the time, um, you don't want to get in trouble. Um, so it became like a second-hand nature, just to do a bit of research before I buy something. Yeah. Um.

Background factors - Personal information
Normative belief - Injunctive + Descriptive beliefs
Behaviour - Consumer behaviour

Illustration 29 (Appendix VD 4, l. 93-101)



MA also expresses that after being in this group of environmentalists and hearing and talking about these issues, it is almost impossible not to care about it yourself. This can be seen as an injunctive normative belief because MA acts in the way that he believes his friends will approve of. Nevertheless, it is important to mention that if MA had met another group of friends with other interests or beliefs such as movies, travelling or politics, he might also have adapted their habits. This relates to our theoretical framework that states if a person identifies with a group in which they believe the group will approve of a certain behaviour, then the person is more inclined to behave in that way (Fishbein and Ajzen 2010, 130+151). In this case, MA's motivation to comply is high because he believes that his chosen group of friends will approve of his behaviour as an eco-friendly consumer.

6.3.2. Descriptive Normative Belief

Another influence we noticed within our respondents' behaviour was that they sometimes behaved based upon what they had experienced and observed in their surroundings. For example, in Illustration 30, C expresses that her nan taught her to sew when she was a child.

<p>Um, I know some, I mean, I know the process of clothes being made. Um, my nan, my nan used to teach me when I was little. So, I would always sit in, things like that, so I know that people sit in front of that machine for hours and hours trying to get something right. And I can imagine if they're working like in an environment where they've got to make a lot, all to the same size, I can imagine that being really difficult. Like it's hard getting it right anyway. And I do it myself slowly. So how other people do it so quickly? It's just beyond me. It's really hard.</p>	<p>Background factors - Personal information</p> <p>Fashion industry - Knowledge - Production</p> <p>Normative belief - Descriptive normative beliefs</p> <p>Attitude - Towards fashion industry</p>
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Illustration 30 (Appendix VB 5, l. 126-132)

The fact that C had watched her nan sew clothes as a child and later been taught how to make them herself, by her nan, may have influenced how she behaves today. During the conversation, we learnt that C has started her own small business, where she produces her own clothing which she sells (Appendix VB, 2, l. 30-34). This interest may stem from her interaction with her nan as a child. Moreover, in Illustration 30, C explains that she believes she has acquired a higher respect for the clothing production in itself as she knows the amount of work it takes to produce one single item.



Through our interviews, it was common for our respondents to include their families and close friends when talking about their own consumer behaviour. In Illustration 31, F explains that his father usually goes to the local Mexican street market and buys a bag of second-hand clothes which F and his brother get to share. The fact that F has seen his father's behaviour of buying second-hand might make him more inclined to buying second-hand as well. This does correlate with F's expressed behaviour. Through our conversation, we learnt that F never or rarely purchases clothes with his own money, but he does receive a lot of hand-me-downs or donated clothes which are second-hand (Appendix VG, 2-3, l. 50-56+68).

So, most of the times, uh, it's my dad who buys things at this second-hand stores. And then let's say, I see my dad when I'm in Mexico I see my dad, like once every month or something, I go to his house and I spent the night there and he sometimes, uh, uh, you know, already has a bag of stuff that he bought thinking that we might like, um, me and my brother. And so, he's like, "oh, go through that and see if you like any of the things I bought". And he bought them at the street market, but, uh, you know, um, uh, sometimes he gives those clothes to me, to my brother, to friends. He has things like that. So that's, yeah, that's the way we do it.

Behaviour -
Consumer
behaviour

Normative
belief -
Descriptive
norms

Illustration 31 (Appendix VG, 5, l. 112-119)

It is essential to mention that, through the interviews, we noticed two of our respondents deviated from their parents' consumer behaviour. Both L and V expressed that they do not have the same consumer behaviour as their parents. One element both have in common is that they grew up with parents with foreign nationalities, Russian and Polish. In Illustration 32, L expresses that she grew up in a poor household in which clothes were seen as a necessity to only keep you warm. The fact that L has experienced a poor upbringing in which she usually would get a lot of hand-me-downs or clothes from the local supermarket that her parents would buy for her also meant that she was not able to express herself through her clothing (Appendix VE, 7-8, l. 188-198). This may be the reason why she deviated from her parents' consumer behaviour and chooses to shop at fast fashion retailers today.



No, I don't really have any friends that are that into fashion and because my parents are poor. So obviously that wasn't really on their mind when they were buying clothes for me which was just about providing me with something to wear, to keep me warm and comfortable. Um, so when you're trying to survive, you know are not really thinking about what other people have to go through, as horrible as that sounds.

Normative
belief -
Descriptive
norms

Attitude -
Towards
sustainable
awareness

Illustration 32 (Appendix VE, 7, l. 180-185)

While L has increased her clothing consumption after starting university, V has done the opposite. V expressed how she grew up in a Russian household where the goal when shopping was to get the best deal, i.e., get the most for the cheapest price. However, V has since deviated from her parents' consumer behaviour, and she only buys out of necessity, not being motivated to buy something because of a low price (Appendix VF, 3, l. 68-77). Even though V expressed that she has deviated from her parents' behaviour, there are still aspects that she believes she has inherited. She explained that the Russian norm is to reuse everything until it breaks or tears (Appendix VF, 9-10, 277-289). The fact that L and V both are influenced by their parents' nationalities and cultures can be related to Background factors which will be further analysed in section 6.5. Through our interviews, we learnt that it was usually our respondents' inner circle of acquaintances such as family or friends that had the biggest influence on our respondents' behaviour. We also noticed that there was an aspect of other elements that influenced our respondents' behaviour. Having analysed Injunctive normative belief and Descriptive normative belief, we will now move onto the aspect of Other influence.

6.3.3. Other Influence

Throughout our interviews, we noticed that our respondents expressed that they were influenced by other elements such as social media, labels and society. Several of our respondents mentioned that it has become more trendy and socially acceptable to shop at second-hand stores and wear vintage clothes (Appendix VA, 4, l. 89-92; Appendix C, 5, l. 135-140; Appendix VE, 9, l. 239-241). Additionally, several of them expressed that the aspect of sustainable clothing and sustainable consumption was something that they all witness on social media. Most of the respondents mentioned that they follow certain influencers⁵, celebrities and

⁵ Influencers are people who inspire, guide or influence actions of others by, e.g., posting content on social media (Merriam-Webster 2021).



youtubers because they find them interesting. One of our respondents, MO, expressed that she believes that influencers on social media play a major part in promoting unsustainable consumption by posting about fast fashion sales and hosting giveaways. She believes that by doing this, influencers and the fashion industry are contributing to the trend of always having the latest and trendiest clothing. In addition, MO perceives that this may create a sense of a competition between the influencers' followers to keep buying the promoted clothing (Appendix VC, 12-13, l. 334-349). This belief is shared by MG who also sees the negative side of social media when it is used to promote the latest trends. In Illustration 33, MG explains that she believes that there is a socially accepted consumer culture which is promoted through the use of social media. The fact that we constantly are confronted with giveaways, competitions, advertisements and last-minute offers is what MG believes fuels this consumer culture. She also explains that marketing teams today have become experts at doing their job and that it is difficult for consumers to not become a part of the consumer culture (Appendix VH, 5-6, l. 132-140).

Um, I think it has a lot to do with social media. Honestly, I think the impact that, um, this like, how do I describe it? This like constant facade of people, you know, like influences, they've always got new clothes and then it's like hopping on the new trend and people constantly want to be on trend. So, they're constantly consuming. Um, and when you're seeing these people and all these nice clothes and shoes and they're all advertising these things and a lot of people, sometimes, they can't spot that this is an advertisement and they think, Oh, my favourite celeb is wearing this. I'm going to buy it. Um, and people just can't help themselves. It's just almost like a social pressure as well to keep up with the trend. Um, so I would say that it has a huge impact, um, as well as just like companies constantly in your face with emails or the adverts that we get today, again, through social media, with all the algorithms. Like I can talk about this now. I know when I go on my phone, there's going to be adverts for clothes. Um, just that it's always in, you can't like get away from it almost. Do you know what I mean? It's constant. I feel like we do have a consumer culture that it's, it's hard to not be a part of it.

Normative belief - Influence

Attitude - Towards fashion industry

Behavioural belief - Attitude

Illustration 33 (Appendix VH, 6, l. 149-163)

Another aspect that is important to mention is the people, sites or communities our respondents choose to follow on social media are chosen by themselves. Here, literature suggests that people



tend to follow other people or sites they find interesting or can identify with (Fastenau 2018). This aspect is also acknowledged by some of our respondents. For example, MA stated that people usually follow other people with the same ideologies (Appendix VD 9, l. 237-245) and V explained that her behaviour online is a self-fulfilling cycle as she chose to follow the sites, communities and persons that she agrees with and wants to learn from (Appendix VF, 16-17, l. 506-525). Having this aspect in mind, it is evident to mention that with whom and what our respondents have chosen to follow or being influenced by on social media is essentially people, sites or communities they actively have chosen to follow.

During the interviews, we asked the respondents whether or not they felt influenced by labels or certificates when purchasing clothes. Through the coding process, these expressions and statements were coded either as Attitudes towards sustainable clothing or Attitude towards fashion industry, yet when interpreting these codes, we noticed that these statements also held a great deal of influence on our respondents. Several of our respondents expressed that they had seen and knew about the certificates and labels that fashion retailers are using to promote their sustainable clothing. One respondent, C, expressed that she was quite sceptical towards the labels and certificates as she did not possess the knowledge concerning how and what the fashion retailers needed to do in order to acquire the label or certificate (Appendix VB, 13, l. 362-369). This concern was shared between most of our respondents, feeling that there was no unified definition or standards of when clothes could be promoted as sustainable. This concern was further expressed when our respondents stated that they believed that the labels and certificates used were made by the brand itself and not from a third-party, which could make it hard to verify and therefore seem unreliable. For more information about labels and certificates within the fashion industry see section 2.2.1.

Additionally, our respondent, MG, expressed a more sceptical attitude towards the fashion industry's use of certificates in relation to some clothing collections. In Illustration 34, MG expresses that she does not understand and questions why it is only a limited part of a brand's clothing that is certificated as sustainable and not their entire collection. She believes that it is likely that fashion retailers see the sustainable movement as a trend in which they are able to make profit.



It's just not, it's like, it's just not, is it? like, okay. If it is sustainable, why isn't your whole, why isn't all of your clothes stainable? I don't get how you can just have this sustained. It's almost it's again, it's like, it's, it's a trend for them. I feel they're just like, Oh, sustainable selling at the moment. Let's work sustainable as a label on it. And then people will buy it. But yeah, it's just not true.

Attitude -
Negative -
Towards fast
fashion
brands

Illustration 34 (Appendix VH, 13, l. 368-372)

Another respondent, MA, expressed that he, too, is quite sceptical towards the labels. He believes that the opportunity of purchasing clothes that are labelled as sustainable promote sales in the purchasing situation, and he expresses that it minimises the cost of a consumers' decision-making time, making the decision-making process easier (Appendix VD, 9-10, l. 252-271). While most of our respondents expressed their scepticism towards fashion retailers' use of labels and certificates to promote sustainable clothing, one of our respondents, L, deviated from this scepticism. In Illustration 35, L expresses that she would buy clothing that was labelled or certified sustainable from a fashion retailer, as it makes her feel happy and less guilty when she believes that she is buying an item that is not harming the environment.

Um, I think so. I feel like sometimes you get those little tags, um, when you go shopping in like big shops, like Matalan and Primark, and they'll be like, "Oh, this is eco-friendly material.". "This is quite sustainable.". And I feel like when I see that it does make me feel happy and less guilty. And I feel like if something was 15 pounds and something was 20 pounds, but the 20-pound item was sustainable, the customer, I would be more willing to spend that extra five pounds just because I know then that I'm not destroying the environment.

Behaviour -
Consumer
behaviour

Behavioural
belief - Attitude

Illustration 35 (Appendix VE, 10, l. 259-265)

Based on the above information and our theoretical framework, it is most likely that the respondents that possessed some scepticism towards labels and certificates are more likely to not get influenced by them or to at least not base their purchase decisions on these labels.



6.4. Control

A fourth element that can have an impact on our respondent's behaviour is the aspect of control. Within the theme Control there are different codes such as Perceived control and Actual control. During our interviews, we noticed that some of our respondent's expressions could be related to whether or not they perceived that they had the ability to act on their intention or if there were any environmental factors that were out of their control that hindered their intentions of acting in a certain way. Moreover, we also noticed that some codes were mentioned more than others, making them more salient. The first element we will analyse is the code Perceived control.

6.4.1. Perceived Control

The aspect of Perceived control and whether or not the respondents saw the intended behaviour as possible were brought up several times during our interviews. The most salient Perceived control was the fact that all of our respondents expressed that they did not have the financial ability to be able to afford buying only new sustainable clothing because of their current occupation as students (Appendix VA, 10, l. 256-264; Appendix VC, 9, l. 231-233; Appendix VF, 6, l. 185-187). As displayed earlier, in Illustration 9, MA explains how he currently does not have the ability to buy sustainable clothing from a sustainable retailer which is why he tries to shop at second-hand stores instead. Most of our respondents believed that they are able to shop sustainable clothing at second-hand stores, but due to their financial situations they are unable to buy new sustainable clothing from sustainable retailers. This perceived control may stem from their background factors since they are students and therefore do not believe that they can afford new sustainable clothing. The aspect of them being students can be seen as a way for them to excuse some of their conflicting attitudes and behaviour since they believe they do not have the ability to do more as they do not have the money. The conflicting attitudes will be further analysed in section 6.6.

Another aspect of Perceived control that is important to mention is that several of our respondents perceived second-hand shopping as time-consuming. They explained that if they needed something quickly, they would go to a fast fashion retailer to buy it because they believed they would be unable to find the needed item at a second-hand store due to time and the selection a second-hand store holds (Appendix VH, 3-4, l. 78-82; Appendix VD, 3, l. 62-65). In Illustration 36, A explains how she finds second-hand shopping time-consuming and



that when she is in a hurry, she will go to a department store instead. This may be because she has experienced not being able to find what she needed at a second-hand store, whereas when shopping at department stores, she has always been able to get what she needed.

Um, generally, no. It takes a very long time. I've gotten better at it, but that's why it's more like a hobby than something I would actually do. Like if I need a shirt for whatever reason, very urgently, I would not go to second-hand shop.

Control belief -
Perceived
control -
Control + No
control
CD - Adding
cognitive
elements
Behaviour -
Consumer
behaviour

Illustration 36 (Appendix VA, 5, l. 114-116)

The deviation in behaviour of buying second-hand due to lack of time is an example of Cognitive dissonance which will be analysed in section 6.6. Additionally, we learned throughout the interviews that lack of time was not the only thing that would make our respondents deviate from their intentions about shopping second-hand. We noticed that if our respondents had the belief that they would not be able to find a certain style of clothing or size at a second-hand store or sustainable retailer then they would not even try and look for it but rather instead go straight to a big fast fashion retailer or department store (Appendix VC, 15, l. 421-431; Appendix VF, 6, l. 185-187). In Illustration 37, MA explains that he uses a small shoe size which he believes is unavailable at a second-hand shop, so he will buy them from a normal shop. The fact that his perceived control indicates that he is unable to get his wanted style or size is influencing his intention and changing his behaviour as he ends up shopping at department stores.

And shoes sometimes, um, with me it is a bit of a problem because I got a small size of, um, of shoes, I need to buy. Sometimes you can't get them like in good condition in second-hand or the style that I wanted. So, you know, I need to buy a new one. From the shop.

Behavioural
belief - Attitude
Background
factors -
Personal
information
Control belief -
Perceived
control - Control
CD - Adding
new cognitive
elements

Illustration 37 (Appendix VD, 3, l. 62-65)

As stated in section 6.1.2., most of our respondents prefer to shop at second-hand stores and from, what they believe to be, ethical suppliers. However, as mentioned in section 6.2.2, our respondent, L, does not shop second-hand, as she believes that the clothing is of bad quality



and needs to be repaired before it can be worn. As displayed earlier in Illustration 25, L explains that sewing is not a skill that she believes that she possesses. This is a perceived control as she believes that she does not possess the skill that is needed for her to perform the behaviour. During our conversation with L, she expressed that she wanted to shop more sustainable, but due to her missing skill and the poor selection and quality of clothing, she chose not to act on her intention. According to our theoretical framework, L is most likely not to act on her intention if she does not change her perceived control (Fishbein and Ajzen 2010, 21). She has to believe that she is able to fix the clothing that second-hand stores offer before there will be a change in her behaviour. Additionally, the aspect of not acting on one's intention and using control as a reasoning or justification for why you chose not to act on your intentions can also be seen as a Cognitive dissonance, which will be analysed in section 6.6.

The example in Illustration 25 can also be seen as an actual control since L expresses that she does not know how to or what to expect when shopping more sustainably. This indicates that her missing knowledge or skills are preventing her from buying sustainably. The aspect of actual control will be analysed in the next section.

6.4.2. Actual Control

While the aspect of Perceived control may be important in what our respondents perceive they are able to do, the aspect of Actual control is important in order to understand what factors are hindering our respondents from acting on their intentions, e.g., physical and environmental factors. Through our interviews, we noticed that Actual control was present in our respondents' expressed behaviour. We noticed that the respondents that possessed certain knowledge and skills in relation to making or repairing clothes were more inclined to buy clothes at a second-hand store. Our respondents, V and F (Appendix VF, 7, l. 192-196; Appendix VG, 5, l. 122-129), both mentioned that they possess the ability to sew and repair their clothes if they tear. This may indicate that they hold a greater chance to shop at second-hand stores where the clothes sometimes may be used or of poor quality as they have the ability to successfully repair the items.

Um, I, I make a lot more clothes um than I buy. Um, but yeah, when I buy clothes, like say I generally try and buy them from sort of like either second hand or from other small businesses.

Background factors - Personal information
Behaviour - Consumer behaviour
Actual control - Skills

Illustration 38 (Appendix VB, 2, l. 44-46)



Within the field of possessing certain skills to perform more sustainable behaviour, our respondent C expresses in Illustration 38 how she, on her own, has the skill to make more clothes she can wear than what she buys. This can be seen as an actual control since she possesses the skill to actually act on her intention to be more sustainable. However, producing your own clothes does not necessarily mean that it is sustainable or more eco-friendly if the materials used to produce it are not. As mentioned, our respondent V, possesses the skill of sewing her own clothes. V also expressed that her intention is to solely rely on sewing her own clothes which she believes is more eco-friendly than buying new clothing from a retailer. However, through our conversation, she became aware that when buying fabrics, she did not always look for the most sustainable option (Appendix VF, 12-13, l. 377-394). This is another example of a conflicting intention and behaviour which also will be analysed in section 6.6.

During our interviews, we learned that the current pandemic, COVID-19, has had a big influence on our respondents as they brought it up frequently as a reason for why they were not able to act on their intentions and shop at second-hand stores (Appendix VA, 2, l. 43-46; Appendix VB, 4, l. 80-82). In Illustration 39, A explains how she does have the ability to shop online and at the supermarkets, but she chooses not to since it is not second-hand. This indicates that A is willing to do a lot to act on her intention to buy sustainably. However, as displayed earlier in Illustration 36, A does see second-hand shopping as time-consuming and expressed that she will shop at fast fashion retailers if she needs something urgently. This means that there is an inconsistency between her expressed intention and behaviour which will be analysed further in [section 6.6](#).

Um, I mean, I could buy online and do an in-store pickup, or I guess have them shipped to me, I guess people are still buying stuff on Amazon. **So, I am not a big fan of Amazon.** Um, so I am unwilling to use it for that. Um, I guess if I wanted to buy clothes, I have options, but they would not be second-hand options.

Behavioural
belief - Attitude
Background
factors - Personal
information

Illustration 39 (Appendix VA, 13, l. 345-348)

An aspect that we discovered during our conversations was related to physical factors and whether or not second-hand stores would have clothes that would fit our respondents. This can be seen as an actual control since, according to our theoretical framework, actual control determines whether or not the person is actually able to perform the behaviour (Fishbein and



Ajzen 2010, 330). Our respondents may go to a second-hand store with the intention of buying clothing but end up not buying anything as the clothing does not fit them. As mentioned in section 6.4.1., we learned that some of our respondents perceived second-hand shopping as time-consuming and when they urgently needed an item, they went to department stores or fashion retailers. However, this aspect can also be related to actual control as our respondents may have experienced in the past that they were unable to get what they needed. Some of our respondents, A (Appendix VA, 5, l. 110-112), F (Appendix VG, 5-6, l. 134-150) and MA (Appendix VD, 3, l. 62-65), expressed in our conversations that they all have issues when shopping at second-hand stores, as they find it difficult to find the right size for their body types. In our coding process, these statements were coded as Attitudes, but as their bodily compositions such as height and shoe size are physical traits and out of their control, we argue that while they are an Attitude, they also have an aspect of Actual control. For example, in Illustration 40, A expresses how her height plays a part for her when buying clothes. She describes shopping as quite difficult, as the clothing has to fit the colours in her closet but also has to fit her physical body traits since she is tall.

Um, I guess mostly colour and fit. Um, so not so much style, but whether it fits into the other colours of my wardrobe and whether or not it actually fits me, I'm very tall. So, it's kind of a, it's a narrow margin.

Attitude -
clothing
preferences -
Style + Size
Background
factors -
Personal
information

Illustration 40 (Appendix VA, 5, l. 110-112)

It is essential to mention that the aspect of actual control may over time turn into perceived control and vice versa. For example, this can happen if our respondents experience that second-hand stores do not have what they need. If this happens several times, our respondents may create a perception that second-hand stores do not have what they need, and therefore, they have to find other alternatives. Through our interviews, none of our respondents expressed that they had any intentions of stopping their shopping at second-hand stores or at sustainable retailers. However, if our respondents keep experiencing that they are not able to act on their intentions then they might deviate completely from their intention and start solely shopping at fast fashion retailers because they may be more likely to provide what our respondents need.

Having analysed our respondents' perceived control and actual control, we will now move on to the influence from our respondents' background factors.



6.5. Background Factors

The theme Background factors and codes categorised under this were present in all of our interviews. These codes had a wide range such as Age, Occupation, Nationality, etc. Through the interviews, our respondents used these Background factors to both introduce themselves and justify their behaviour. In addition, it was notable that some codes such as Occupation and Nationality were more salient than others through our conversations as they were mentioned more than others. All of the respondents described themselves as students, which correlates with our choice of British students between the ages of 18-35 (see section 1.3.). As mentioned earlier, all of our respondents were British students, yet some of them had different nationalities. For example, one of our respondents was from Mexico, while another had dual citizenship between the US and Russia. In addition, we also noticed that the respondents who lived in the UK also had different upbringings. Some came from middle-class families whereas others came from homes with lesser means. In fact, the only element all of our respondents had in common was that they were students at a British university and in their twenties. Additional information concerning each of our respondents can be seen in section 5.4.1.

6.5.1. Occupation

During our coding process, we noticed a pattern of how our respondents reasoned or justified their behaviour with various background factors. For example, several of our respondents mentioned their occupation as a student in which they explained that they could not afford to purchase new clothes or maintain the same lifestyle or behaviour as some of them did when they were younger. In Illustration 41, respondent A expresses that her occupation as a full-time student has changed her behaviour, as she believes that she cannot afford her previous lifestyle. Furthermore, she also expresses that if she had a normal job that entailed a specific dress code, e.g., formal wear, she believes that she would spend more money on clothes that would not necessarily be sustainable. This justification may be related to her past behaviour and how she would shop for new clothes when she was younger, and this has only changed because she went to college, became a student and therefore had less money.



Oh yeah. Um, I guess I've been more sustainable as I've gotten older, like in high school, I think I still bought quite a lot of new clothes. Um, and that started changing in college when I had less money. Um, and so I guess if I had an income, like a regular, instead of being a full-time student, if I actually had a regular job, um, I think I would probably spend more on clothes and inevitably I think they would be less sustainable options. Um, especially if I had to dress more professionally or formally at a job. Um, cause here I can just wear second-hand athletic clothes and it's fine. Um, but on a job, I think it's harder to find things that look very professional, um, at second-hand stores.

Behavioural belief - Attitude

Background factors - Personal information - Income

Control belief - Perceived control - No control

Illustration 41 (Appendix VA, 10, l. 256-264).

Another example of how Occupation is used as a reason for our respondents' behaviour is visible in Illustration 42. Here, respondent V expresses that due to her occupation as a student she cannot afford to buy the most ethical or sustainable options. She will, however, still try to buy clothes that are less harmful for the environment.

Of course, I'm a student, so I can't always afford, um, things that are 100% sustainable, 100% eco-friendly 100% ethical, but I do try to make an effort to at least buy something that's, you know, slightly less impactful.

Background factors - Occupation

Control belief - Perceived control - No control

Intention - buying sustainable

CD - Adding cognitive elements

Illustration 42 (Appendix VF, 6, l. 185-187).

Through the interviews, we discovered that of all the codes, in relation to the theme Background factors, our respondents expressed all had an influence on their behaviour in one way or another today. This was, for example, also seen with other Background factor codes such as Interests or Culture, as some of our respondents mentioned that their intentions of buying sustainably were based upon an interest or hobby or based upon inherited social norms from a different culture. Generally, we noticed a common pattern in which the respondents' expressed attitudes, intentions and behaviour could often be traced directly back to their background factors. To exemplify, as mentioned in section 6.3., we noticed that culture and environment played a major part in how our respondents behaved as many of them mirrored the behaviour of their surrounding environment, e.g., friends and family. Furthermore, we



noticed that some of our respondents expressed that their sustainable behaviour had become a hobby or interest which indicates that they are more inclined to act on their interest as they see it as something that brings them joy or something they find meaningful. The fact that Background factors influenced all of our respondents aligns with our theoretical framework, Reasoned Action Model (2010), as Fishbein and Ajzen argue that background factors almost always are the foundation of every attitude, decision or behaviour (Fishbein and Ajzen 2010, 24-25). Even though we experienced that all of the background factors were present and able to influence our respondents' behaviour, some background factors were still more salient than others. Now, we will move onto Nationality.

6.5.2. Nationality

Looking at our collected data, it is apparent that our respondents' expressions concerning their nationality and upbringings had a major influence on their behaviour. The respondents who had different nationalities than British were all more aware of how their nationality had influenced their behaviour. For example, respondent V expressed that her dual citizenship and the Russian culture and social norms of buying everything for the cheapest price but also reusing everything that can be reused have influenced her behaviour.

Yeah. I wouldn't say it's like a thing that I really grew up with in my family. Um, I don't cause my family like that, my family wasn't like very wealthy when they were in Russia.

So, like, I think the main thing that's like really weird to a lot of people around here is like reusing a lot of items that you really wouldn't think of. You wouldn't like think of reusing.

So, like in a sense, they are like kind of eco-friendly, but they're also like when they buy things, they don't really care about that sort of thing. Um, like I remember going to school and like opening up like, like a bag from a loaf of bread and there was just a sandwich in there because that's how my mom would package sandwiches instead of using new plastic to do it. Um, I remember like a lot of friends gave your comments about that, they were like, that's so weird, but like, I mean, it makes sense. Like it's not a dirty bag or anything.

Um, things like, like reusing a lot of plastic bags for a lot of different things. Um, yeah. I

Background factors - Culture / Social norms

Behavioural belief - Attitude

Normative belief - Influence

can't think of anything right now, but like things would get reused into like indefinitely. Um, we could reuse it for anything. Conceivably would reuse it in my house.

Illustration 43 (Appendix VF, 9-10, l. 277-289)



In Illustration 43, V explains that the Russian culture she experienced growing up affects her attitude and behaviour to this day. Here, she gives the example of how her mother would always reuse the plastic bags from loafs of bread. This behaviour is something V also does today, meaning that she might have inherited this behaviour from her mother. The aspect of reusing plastic bags may also have had a general impact on how V wishes to live sustainably in other aspects of her life. As mentioned in section 6.3.2., V expressed that she has in some way deviated from her parents' consumer behaviour as she only buys clothes out of necessity and not because it is a good deal as her parents would (Appendix VF, 3, l. 68-77). This indicates that V has only adapted the aspects from her upbringing that align with her own belief of sustainable consumption. The change in V's behaviour might be because she had a different upbringing than her own parents, as she grew up in the US, whereas her parents grew up in Russia. Her parents' upbringing was probably different from V's upbringing in the Western world (Leibensperger 2014). It is important to mention that the culture is not the only difference in their upbringings, but the different periods of time may also be a factor. As mentioned in section 6.3.2., this deviation in behaviour is not only seen in V's behaviour but also in our respondent L's, in which she expressed how she sees clothes differently than her Polish family due to both nationality and a different upbringing.

<p>No, but I did. I got a lot of second. Like I got a lot of hand me downs from other people that was like, I don't really have to shop clothes that often, but obviously</p>	<p>Normative belief - Descriptive norms</p>
<p>not. I didn't really get to choose what I wanted to wear. I just sort of got what I was</p>	
<p>given, and I got into a lot of arguments with my mom. Who's um, she didn't really understand why it was important for me to express myself. Like for fashion and clothes. She doesn't necessarily see it as a form of expression. She just thinks it's a necessity. Like you have to wear clothes, cause I'm from Poland and obviously she grew up in a communist state and she, like, there would be days where she wouldn't eat just because she, she didn't have any money. And obviously I didn't grow up</p>	<p>Background factors - Personal information</p>
<p>that poor so my sort of had more of a nicer bringing so I could appreciate clothes for something else rather than just survive on keeping warm.</p>	<p>Background factors - Personal information</p>

Illustration 44 (Appendix VE, 7-8, l. 188-198)

In Illustration 44, L expresses how her family sees clothes as a necessity because of their upbringing with lesser means. L explains how she grew up in a family that was poor and



therefore not able to buy new clothes which meant that she was given a lot of hand-me-downs. The fact that she could not decide on her own what clothes she wanted to wear growing up may have affected her behaviour today. Today, L views buying new clothes as a treat for herself but also as a form of self-expression. Just like V, L did not grow up in the same country, culture, environment and time as her parents, so she therefore experienced a completely different upbringing from that of her parents. Similar to V, this may be one of the reasons why L has deviated from her parents' behaviour.

Another example in which we saw culture and social norms having an influence was in our conversation with respondent F. In Illustration 45, F explains that it is normal in Mexico to buy new underwear for New Year's Eve as a way of expressing a new start or new beginnings. Additionally, he explained that the colour of the underwear is important as there is some symbolic meaning attached to it. For example, buying yellow underwear means economic wealth and red underwear symbolises love. However, F also states that he does not follow this belief, yet he still bought new underwear when he started his bachelor's degree at the university. He may not see himself following these superstitious thoughts and traditions, yet this tradition is still a part of the cultural and social norm in Mexico where he grew up which means that he might have experienced his family or others following this tradition. This might imply that buying new underwear for new beginnings is a subconscious action that is deeply integrated from his childhood that still affects his behaviour today.

Well, the socks I bought online were, uh, there, there was a time, I think when I started my university, um, my Bachelor's, this is the in 2012. Uh, I did buy underwear, uh, from Walmart. Um, but, uh, and I did that, you know, because you've wanted to feel comfortable like new cycles, new beginnings, whatever, um, you know, people in Mexico buy new underwear for New Year's Eve sometimes like matching colour. You know, like if it's, if you want to have money, uh, in 2021, you get like yellow underwear, you don't have love a year filled with love, you get red underwear or things like that for New Year's Eve, but I've never done that. You know, I, I wear the colour I want and I'm not superstitious. I just do it because the people there anyways. Um, but, um, yeah, I, I, I, I think in 2012 I bought underwear, uh, for my university life moving to campus and so on. But other than that, yeah, no, I don't know. I don't know. I don't know if I'll be a good subject for your study.

Behaviour -
Consumer
behaviour

Background
factors -
Education +
Culture +
Social norms
+ Past
behaviour

Illustration 45 (Appendix VG, 4, l. 90-101)



As mentioned previously, our theoretical framework argues that background factors are able to influence every attitude, decision and behaviour (Fishbein and Ajzen 2010, 24-25). The theory also argues that in order to understand how people reason and justify their behaviour but also understand why they behave as they do, it is essential to understand the person and their background factors as the background factors often are the root for a person's beliefs and attitudes (Fishbein and Ajzen 2010, 24-25). From our conversations with our respondents, it is apparent that our respondents' background factors play a major role in how they are behaving today. These background factors affected not only their attitudes and decisions but also their actual consumer behaviour. To explain, the positive attitude towards second-hand clothing and the occupation as a student influenced why some of our respondents purchase clothes at second-hand stores. Additionally, we observed that our respondents' social identities and background factors either meant that they had adopted certain behaviours growing up, or they had deviated from what they had been taught by their parents. No matter how the respondents behave, their background factors will always have some kind of influence. To exemplify, whether the respondents deviate or follow the same behaviour as their parents, the background factors are still influencing, as the respondent has chosen to actively deviate or adopt the same behaviour.

Having analysed and interpreted some of our respondents' background factors and their importance, we will now move onto the theme Cognitive dissonance.

6.6. Cognitive Dissonance

During our interviews, we noticed that sometimes there was an inconsistency between our respondents' attitudes, intentions and their expressed behaviour. When our respondents experienced these inconsistencies, they tried to reason or justify them in different ways. Some tried to reason or justify their behaviour by decreasing the importance of it while others tried to defend it. According to our theoretical framework, there are three ways for one to reason or justify one's conflicting attitudes, intentions and behaviour. You can either add new cognitive elements to justify one's behaviour, change cognitive elements to convince yourself that the behaviour is okay, or you can decrease cognitive elements by deprioritising the behaviour (Festinger 1962, 264). Since we want to examine and understand why there might be a difference between young consumers' intention and behaviour, i.e., the phenomenon, attitude-



behaviour gap, the use of Cognitive dissonance will enable us to examine the gap and explain why it occurs and how our respondents justify or decrease their inconsistency/inconsistencies.

As mentioned earlier, we noticed that sometimes our respondents had an inconsistency between their attitudes, intentions and behaviour in some way. This inconsistency was usually because they had different attitudes that were conflicting or attitudes that were conflicting with their actual behaviour. When coding this theme, we found five codes: Conflicting attitudes, Conflicting attitudes and behaviour, Adding new cognitive elements, Changing cognitive elements and Decreasing cognitive elements. However, like the other themes, we noticed that some codes were more salient than others, e.g., Decreasing cognitive elements or Adding new cognitive elements

6.6.1. Decreasing Cognitive Elements

Through our interviews, we noticed that most of our respondents handled their inconsistency by decreasing cognitive elements such as decreasing the importance of an attitude or the behaviour. As mentioned in sections 6.1.1. and 6.1.2., several of our respondents mentioned that they intend to only buy clothes from second-hand stores, but they also expressed how they sometimes deviated from this intention. Several of our respondents believed that it was quite intimate, unhygienic or gross to buy items such as socks, underwear and shoes second-hand. Therefore, several of them bought these items at department stores instead. In this example, the respondents decreased the importance of buying these items second-hand because they have a belief that it is unhygienic and thereby making it okay when purchasing these items at department stores (Appendix VA, 4, l. 89-97; Appendix VD, 3, l. 58-60). Another example of decreasing cognitive elements was when our respondents expressed that they saw second-hand shopping as time-consuming which often led them to shop at department stores or fast fashion retailers when they were in a hurry (Appendix VH, 3-4, l. 78-82; Appendix VD, 3, l. 62-65; Appendix VA, 5, l. 114-116). In this example, again, the respondents decreased the importance of buying second-hand when they were in a hurry because they believed that they would not be able to find the needed item at the right time. The aspect of time relates to both Control and Background factors. The fact that several of our respondents expressed that they were full-time students could indicate why they sometimes believed that they did not have the time to visit several stores in order to find the wanted item as they probably spend a lot of their time studying.



Another example of decreasing cognitive elements was seen when our respondents suppressed their conflicting thoughts. In Illustration 46, MG explains that she knows that her consumer behaviour when buying Nike trainers is unethical due to the company's unethical business practice. However, she also states that it is easy to forget these thoughts, as this unethical business practice is not something you see when purchasing the trainers.

Yeah. It's yeah. It's like the way they look the comfort, the style, and it's like, my morals are telling me these things should not come above child labour. Like I, like my brain knows that, but honestly, I don't know. It's, I think it's very easy to forget in that moment. You think, boy, these are so nice and then you buy them and then you think, Oh, this is so bad, but it sounds awful, like I didn't even know. Like there is just no way to justify it. I think it's just very easy because it's not in your face, so close, close your eyes and go, Oh, these are nice trainers, do you know what I mean? And just pretend it isn't happening, but it is happening. And then it's this also. Okay.

What can I do? What can I actually do to make a change for this to stop happening?

Okay. I can stop buying the trainers. Yeah. Uh, yes. I know. It's not an excuse and it's not justifiable. I'm not even going to say it because it's just like such deep, not word. I don't know, is, you can tell like me, I'm just going backwards and forwards in my head. I know it's bad, but like, yeah. I don't know how to answer that,

Behavioural belief - Belief

CD - Conflicting attitudes and behaviour

Control belief - Perceived control - No control

Illustration 46 (Appendix VH, 11, l. 302-314)

The fact that MG knows that Nike has unethical business practices but still chooses to buy their shoes is an indication that MG is suppressing or denying her thoughts in the actual purchase situation. In our conversation, MG expressed that she acknowledges and is aware of this inconsistency which sometimes makes her uncomfortable. In these situations, she expressed that suppresses her knowledge and thoughts as she is aware that her behaviour cannot be justified.

Lastly, we noticed that the aspect of decreasing the importance was usually combined with adding an attitude. For example, several of our respondents decreased the importance of buying basic items at second-hand stores because they had an attitude towards basic items in which they would wear out quickly. The respondents justified that it is okay to buy basic items at



department stores or fashion retailers as they have the belief that the items are not going to last long anyway. In the next section, we will introduce the code Adding new cognitive elements.

6.6.2. Adding New Cognitive Elements

Another element we noticed through our interviews was that some of the respondents justified their behaviour by adding new cognitive elements. For example, as mentioned in section 6.3.2., respondent F expressed that he rarely buys clothing because he usually gets a lot of hand-me-downs and therefore, he does not see himself as a consumer. However, in Illustration 47, F explains that last Christmas he received a new pair of shoes, as a Christmas gift, from his brother which made him realise that he is still consuming, just through others. Nevertheless, F justifies the purchase of new shoes because his brother bought them from a friend who recently lost his job (Appendix VG, 7, l. 178-181). In this case, the adding element is that the shoes were only bought to help his brother's friend. This justifies F's brother's consumption of these new shoes but also F's usage of the shoes.

Yeah, well, it's funny, you mentioned that I didn't considered shoes, clothes to be clothes, but, um, my, this tennis shoes I have right now where, uh, um, Christmas no not Christmas gift, birthday gift, uh, from my brother, he gave me two pairs actually. Uh, and he was, he bought it from his best friend's mom who sells shoes in catalogue, um, um, online basically. Um, and, and then I have a pair of boots that were, also a gift for my mom, but I didn't buy them. So, I guess, I guess I am somehow still consuming clothes because my brother is buying them or my mom, they, uh, no, I did not buy them directly from my own money, if that makes sense.

Attitude -
Towards
sustainable
clothing

Behaviour -
Consumer
behaviour

CD - Adding
new cognitive
elements

Illustration 47 (Appendix VG, 3, l. 70-77)

Another example of adding new cognitive elements to justify one's behaviour comes from our respondent V. As mentioned in section 6.4.2., V is convinced that sewing her own clothes is more eco-friendly rather than buying new clothing from a retailer even though she is not always using eco-friendly fabrics or materials. V justifies her conflicting attitude and behaviour by adding the element that when she sews her own clothing it is better for the environment. Moreover, when choosing fabrics, the only thing she is aware of avoiding is polyester since she believes that it is harmful for the environment (Appendix VF, 12-13, l. 377-394). This may



imply that as long as V makes her own clothes and does not use polyester fabric, she believes her behaviour is sustainable.

As mentioned in section 6.1.2.1., we discovered that several of our respondents included examples of their eating habits, such as eating vegetarian or trying to eat less meat (Appendix VD, 7, l. 182-189; Appendix VH, 12-13, l. 345-353; Appendix VG, 8, l. 219-226). This involvement of sustainable food consumption can also be related to adding cognitive elements because several of our respondents might have used these examples as a way to justify their consumer behaviour. For example, as displayed earlier in Illustration 17, MA states that he has changed his lifestyle and become a vegetarian since the start of university. While the food industry may be used as an easier way for our respondents to compare their sustainable habits to, the food industry may also be referred to if our respondents may not be sustainable within the world of fashion. By shifting focus and adding the element of their sustainable food consumption, they may feel like they can justify their conflicting attitudes and behaviours.

6.6.3. Changing Cognitive Elements

The last element we noticed was how some of our respondents changed their attitude to reason or justify their behaviour. This was seen with respondents V and F who expressed that when visiting their parents, there is a change in their behaviour as both V and F allow their parents to buy them stuff that V and F would not normally have bought themselves (Appendix VF, 13, 389-394; Appendix VG, 11, l. 289-293). During our conversation, we learned that F is aware of his meat consumption and that he tries to eat less meat. However, he also explained that when he visits home in Mexico, his mother eats a lot of meat and therefore, he will deviate from his intention of eating less meat and eat meat during his stay. In this case, F changes his behaviour as he might be influenced by his mother or family that still eats meat and fall back into an old pattern he had when he lived at home. This change in F's behaviour may also happen because he does not want to cause any trouble by following a specific diet (Appendix VG, 11, l. 289-293). Respondent V also deviates from her usual consumer behaviour when she is visiting home. She explained that her mother often sees her visits as an occasion that needs to be celebrated. In Illustration 48, V explains that when visiting home, her mother often buys her stuff or clothing that she would not have bought herself. The reason for V's deviation may be similar to F's in which she may fall back into the same old pattern.



<p>So, and I was learning to sew at the time. So, it wasn't really a priority for me. Um, uh,</p>	<p>Actual control - Skills</p>
<p>groceries probably. That's a really weird thing to say, but, um, like, especially in the US the meat production is very bad. Like, it's very, not sustainable. It's very bad for the workers, but, you know, I still eat meat, so that's kind of hypocritical of me. Um, Uh, I,</p>	<p>Behavioural belief - Attitude</p>
<p>sometimes I let, like, when I come back home, sometimes I let my parents buy things for me that I probably wouldn't have bought for myself. Um, like my mom's a stay-at-home mom, so it's like an occasion for her when I come back. So, she will take me like clothing shopping at stores that I probably wouldn't buy from if it was my money, but I will let my parents buy me things if, um, they offer, even if they're not something that like, I am, I would buy for myself. Um.</p>	<p>Behaviour - Consumer behaviour</p>

Illustration 48 (Appendix VF, 13, l. 385-394)

Through the interviews, we discovered several examples of cognitive dissonance in which some of them were addressed and analysed in this section. We noticed that our respondents justified and reasoned their conflicting attitudes, intentions and behaviour by decreasing, adding or changing cognitive elements so they became more consistent.

In summation, through the interviews, we also discovered that several of our themes had direct connection or relationships with each other. For example, when analysing the themes Behaviour and Attitude, we noticed that our respondents' Background factors were present and often interfered with their Attitudes or Behaviour. Additionally, this was not only the case with Background factors but also something we noticed with of our other themes as they were intertwined in some way or another. This aligns with our theoretical framework, as the theory suggests behaviour is the final outcome of the model in which the antecedent of a behaviour can stem from several of the components, e.g., background factors, behavioural beliefs, normative beliefs or control beliefs, in the model, yet one of them will always be more salient (Fishbein and Ajzen 2010, 398). This element will be further discussed in the next section, the Discussion.



7. Discussion

In this section, we will outline various discussion points from the findings in our analysis in section 6. and relate them to this paper's phenomenon and its theoretical framework.

7.1. Findings

When analysing the different themes and codes we noticed that there were multiple different factors that influenced our respondents' attitudes, intentions and behaviour such as behavioural beliefs, clothing preferences, control and background factors. It was evident that all of our respondents were concerned about climate changes and had an attitude, some more positive than others, towards sustainable clothing. These attitudes were often influenced by the respondents' individual clothing preferences. Moreover, the aspect of control was also evident, as several of our respondents mentioned e.g., COVID-19 that hindered them from going to the physical stores. The last major influential theme was background factors as these were often used to explain or justify our respondents' attitudes, intentions and behaviour. Through the interviews, the background factors were often referred to as the root of our respondents' behaviour. According to RAM, background factors was a new addition to the 2010 edition, as they state that a person's background factors sometimes have the ability to influence one's behaviour (Fishbein and Ajzen 2010, 24-25). Based on our findings from the analysis, we agree with Fishbein and Ajzen that background factors have the ability to influence one's behaviour. In fact, our findings showed that our respondents' expressed intentions and behaviour frequently could be traced directly back to their background factors. This indicates that background factors are an important element when trying to understand how individuals behave and their justification behind it. This aspect is supported by other research that has investigated how socio-demographics variables has an influence on people's environmental consciousness (Diamantopoulos, et al. 2003, 477). Furthermore, our respondents' background factors and expressed behaviour can be related to the debate concerning nature versus nurture (see section 3.1.). This was seen as some of our respondents' expressed behaviour mirrored the behaviour they had experienced in their childhood. For example, respondent C sews her own clothing as that was something her nan also did. Other respondents behaved in a certain manner due to body composition and/or their physical appearance. This was, for example, seen with F who expressed that all his clothes had to be breathable because he sweats a lot. Nevertheless, in our findings, we learned that both nature and nurture was present. Nurture was expressed as



more salient and influential than nature as our respondents often expressed how their surrounding environment, upbringings and social relationships had more prominent influence on their behaviour than their body types or physical appearance did. However, just because our respondents do not emphasize the aspect of nature and how their physical appearance plays a part, it is likely that body types and physical appearance are able to influence one's clothing preferences and therefore also one's consumer behaviour (Park, et al. 2009; Barquet and Balam 2015). To explain, if you are a size XXXL, you may be limited to only buying clothing at one specific store that you know carries your size. Even though you may be limited to buying clothes at a single store, it is not likely the store will hold your clothing preferences for colour and style.

Furthermore, the aspect of nurture holds many different elements which were expressed by our respondents. This was seen as our respondents expressed different nurture elements as more salient than others. For example, L expressed that her growing up in a poor household where clothes were seen as a necessity has influenced her behaviour today, as she has deviated from what she experienced growing up. This change in behaviour may be due to several aspects, but in the analysis, it was visible that nurture elements such as upbringings and social cycle were often more influential factors. The fact that some of our respondents actively chose to deviate from the behaviour they had experienced growing up and instead adopt behaviour that they had experienced from their surroundings or social cycle is an indication that surroundings and social relationships may sometimes hold a greater influence. Based on the analysis, it is questionable whether one can stop being influenced by one's upbringing. Through the analysis, it was visible that the change of our respondents' behaviour often was based on the fact that they did not want to have the same behaviour as their parents. We, however, argue that in this example our respondents' changed behaviour is actually influenced by their parents' behaviour as they did not want to adopt it. This might be because of their personal morals of what they deem to be right or wrong.

Through the interviews and our analysis, it was also apparent that our respondents sometimes had conflicting attitudes and behaviour which resulted in them experiencing cognitive dissonance. When dealing with this dissonance, we noticed that our respondents most of the time tried to somewhat decrease the importance of an expressed attitude or behaviour in order to reduce the dissonance and reach a consistency again. The frequent use of this element may be because it is easier to justify an action by decreasing an attitude rather than changing one.



Additionally, the decreasing performance enabled our respondents to suppress conflicting attitudes and intentions to be able to behave the way they would normally do. This was, for example, revealed when MG expressed that she knew Nike has an unethical business practice as they have been accused of using cheap or child labour (New Idea 2019). However, she expressed that she would still buy the trainers as she would suppress her knowledge at the moment of the purchase to avoid feeling uncomfortable. When our respondents decreased an important element, it was usually combined with adding a new cognitive element. In the example above, MG decreased the importance of her behaviour when buying shoes from Nike, yet later in our conversation, she also expressed that she is a vegetarian which implied that she may have added this aspect to still be perceived as a sustainable consumer to herself.

Another relevant discussion point is how our respondents expressed that their attitudes, intentions and behaviour were influenced by their surrounding environments, social cycle and social media. In our findings, the respondents expressed that they sometimes behaved differently depending on the situation and who they were with. Some respondents explained that they behaved differently when they were with their parents than when they were at work or with friends. In section 1.3., we stated that people may hold many different social identities in which they define themselves (Crane and Ruebottom 2011). In our analysis, these different social identities were sometimes visible as the respondents brought them into the conversation. Here, our respondents expressed that depending on the social situation, they would hold different social identities. In these social situations, we noticed that the close social relationships were often more likely to have a bigger influence on our respondents' attitudes, intentions and behaviour. This correlates with literature within the field of social identity concerning ingroups and outgroups. Ingroups are a social group that you strongly identify with whereas outgroups are the opposite (Stets and Burke 2000, 226; Abrams and Hogg 1998; Dovidio, et al. 2015, 234-235). In the analysis, our respondents expressed that they often possessed the same attitudes as their ingroup, e.g., friends and family. This indicates that the social contexts and relationships our respondents are a part of are more likely to influence their behaviour than other elements.

Another influential element was social media, and our respondents mentioned this as a way for them to be influenced. Several mentioned Instagram or Facebook in which they were part of online communities that allowed them to share common interests whereas others mentioned the influence from Influencers. This aspect of how much influence social media has on



individuals is fairly new as the concept of social media is new (Appel, et. al 2020, 79). The fact that our theory RAM's latest edition is from 2010 and has several prior editions means that the data and the work of making the model was done before the age of social media. If the theory were to be further developed today, it is likely that the theory would need to incorporate some changes. One of those changes could be to consider the influence from social media as it has become a major part of our everyday life. Research argues that consumers are sometimes unintentionally influenced by their social cycle or advertisements e.g., on social media which can lead to an intentional purchase (Parmelee 2018; Sicilia, Palazón and López 2020). An example is that when you scroll through your Facebook which has millions of advertisers (Statista 2021), you may see many advertisements, yet you do not think about them. However, the next day you buy a pair of jeans from Topshop without even realising that they were promoted in one of the advertisements from your scroll the day before. This example may indicate that advertisements on social media are able to influence our sub-consciousness and make consumers behave in a way without them even knowing that they are being influenced.

7.1.1. Relationship Between Our Themes

During the analysis, we pointed out that our themes were interrelated and influenced each other. Several of the themes were able to influence our respondents' expressed behaviour. For example, when our respondents expressed that their occupation as students often influenced their behaviour, this expression was also influenced by other themes such as the perceived control and the aspect of not having the financial means to buy sustainable clothing which they perceived as expensive. This perceived control also influenced their behavioural beliefs and their motivation to comply as our respondents would end up not buying the sustainable item. Some of our respondents' expressed behaviour could have a combination of several components from our theoretical framework. However, depending on the respondent or the situation, one of the beliefs would be more salient than the others. This aspect can be related to our theory RAM which states that all three beliefs can be predictors of an intention, yet depending on the situation, one belief will be more salient than the others (Fishbein and Ajzen 2010, 22). This aspect was also evident in our findings, as they showed that all of the beliefs could be present, though one would always be expressed more prominently than the others. To exemplify, this was seen as several of our respondents used money, their financial situation or price as a reason or justification for their behaviour. The aspect of control was prominent as they expressed that they were not able to afford expensive clothes. This assumption can be



related to both actual control but also perceived control, as we do not have access to their bank accounts and therefore do not know whether they actually have the money or not.

7.2. Implications and Perspective

In this section, we will discuss and display this paper's contribution to its field, its implications and how it can be put into a bigger perspective.

Through the interviews and our analysis, it was apparent that several of our respondents had an ongoing cognitive process when talking about their intentions and behaviour. As mentioned in section 4, we agreed with Fishbein and Ajzen when they acknowledged that their model of a decision-making process was very simplified. Therefore, we tried to create a more realistic model of a cognitive decision-making process (see Illustration 2). We added several arrows as an attempt to display how complex a cognitive process may be before an actual intention or behaviour occurs. Additionally, the arrows were added because we also had the expectation that the different components would have an effect and interfere with each other. From our findings, we noticed that the cognitive process could be very complex and often rather difficult to navigate through as several of the components from the model were present. This was, for example, seen with MG and her justifying process of buying Nike shoes. She tried to explain how her mind worked when she took us through her cognitive process (Appendix VH, 12, l. 320-329). Even though we have tried to display a more realistic model of one's cognitive process, it is essential to mention that our model may not display the exact cognitive process and how humans plan their intentions and behaviour. The human mind and cognitive process is probably more complex than what we are able to illustrate. To fully understand the human brain and its cognitive processes it may be necessary to include some aspects of biology, especially the field of neurosciences (Fellows 2004).

Another element is how this paper's findings can be put into a bigger perspective. How can sustainability be examined or related to a specific market segment? This paper examines consumer behaviour and attitudes towards sustainable clothing within one specific focus group that is relevant for this paper. However, it is also possible to examine consumer behaviour and attitudes towards sustainable clothing within other specific market segments. Examining consumer behaviour and ethical consumption in relation to a specific market segment makes it possible to understand how the market segment perceives and talks about sustainability as a



concept but also how or if sustainability is a part of their everyday life. In this paper, we were able to get a glimpse of how British university students between the ages of 18-35 perceive and talk about sustainability and sustainable clothing. Information concerning consumers and their specific market segment can be valuable information for companies. Knowing the specific target group and how they perceive and talk about themes that are related to a product is important as the company may be able to calculate and understand how their target group will receive the product but also how they can promote it. To explain, knowing the specific market segment and how they talk and react enables the company to choose the right elements such as language, image and style when promoting the product. Often market research is based upon surveys, i.e., quantitative data that can be generalised and quantified. However, as stated earlier, consumers and their social identities are more complex and play a vaster role than first anticipated, indicating that quantitative surveys can sometimes be inadequate. By using qualitative interviews, we were able to collect subjective opinions and knowledge from our respondents about their consumer habits and the topics of this paper. Therefore, quantitative surveys may be or could be complemented with qualitative data such as interviews as these are able to provide more in-depth information about the consumers' attitudes, intentions and behaviour.

Furthermore, it is important to mention that when working with qualitative research no data collection will be alike. If we were to collect more data from a similar group of British students between the ages of 18-35 or examine another market segment such as British adults 55+, we might have had other results, yet we might also have been able to recognise some of the same intentions, attitudes and behaviours. To explain, even though we collect data from a similar group of our current respondents, our respondents still possess several different social identities and subjective attitudes that may differ from the social identities or attitudes of the new group. However, we also acknowledge that by choosing a similar group of respondents, we might be able to recognize some of the same attitudes, intentions and behaviours.

Lastly, our use of the words 'eco-friendly consumer'. In the beginning of this paper, we did not notice how the words in themselves are contradictory. Throughout the paper, we noticed how the term was used in several research studies, how we used it in our process of collecting our data and also how our respondents used the term. Working with the themes of this paper, we became aware that the words are quite contradictory, as it is questionable whether it is possible to be eco-friendly and a consumer at the same time. We believe that for a consumer to be truly



eco-friendly they would have to be self-sufficient in all aspects of life. This would, for example, entail making your own clothing and even producing the fabric yourself, i.e., you would become responsible for the whole supply chain. However, we also believe that there is an aspect of consuming eco-friendly when reusing old clothing that have been donated or given to second-hand stores as we believe this is better than buying new clothes and supporting the fast fashion industry. Today's society and the sustainable movement has come far, yet there is still a long way to go, as we believe the fast fashion industry is not likely to decrease its production. Based on these thoughts, we propose that further research within the field of sustainability and ethical consumption should consider this contradiction and inconsistency that exists within the term 'eco-friendly consumer'. In this context, we recommend that a redefinition of the term may be needed.

Having discussed our paper's findings, displayed its implications and put it into a bigger perspective, we will now move onto the conclusion in which we will summarise the paper as a whole and answer our problem statement.



8. Conclusion

Within this paper, our aim was to answer the following problem statement:

Why is there a difference between young consumers' intentions and their actual behaviour when purchasing sustainable clothing?

Based on our analytical findings, it is possible to conclude that there was sometimes a difference between our respondents' expressed intentions and their behaviour when purchasing sustainable clothes. In the analysis, we found that our respondents' attitudes, intentions and behaviour were influenced by several different elements. Sometimes it was a combination of various elements whereas other times it was only one or a few. Our analysis showed that all our respondents had different attitudes and intentions which were often rooted in their social identities or background factors. From the analysis, it was evident that our respondents' behaviour was often based upon a combination of behavioural beliefs, normative beliefs and control beliefs. However, some beliefs were more salient than others. Moreover, it was evident that our respondents' attitudes were reflected in their behaviour. To explain, this was seen as the respondents, having a more positive attitude towards sustainable clothing and second-hand clothing, were also more inclined to act on their attitude and purchase the sustainable clothing. Another element that can be concluded from this paper, is the fact that our respondents possessed a great amount of knowledge about the fashion industry and its production but also possessed a large concern about climate changes which influenced their consumer behaviour.

Based on our analytical findings, it is also possible to conclude that clothing preferences, especially price, quality and style, played a huge part in our respondents' consumer behaviour. All of our respondents mentioned price as a controlling factor, as they all expressed that they were influenced by their financial status which always were put in relation to their occupation as students. Another controlling factor that was expressed was the current pandemic, COVID-19, which hindered most of our respondents from purchasing clothing in physical stores. Additionally, it is possible to conclude that background factors also played a big part, as they almost always were the foundation for our respondents' beliefs, attitudes, intentions and their behaviour. Yet, the background factors were also sometimes used a justification of their



behaviour e.g., when they used their occupation as students to justify buying non-sustainable clothes because that was what they, as students, perceived they could afford.

Furthermore, we can conclude that our respondents' consumer behaviour is influenced by their surrounding environment, i.e., friends and family, but also influenced by social pressure from society to engage in a more sustainable behaviour, especially on social media. This was seen as several of our respondents mentioned that they follow influencers who promoted a more sustainable lifestyle. However, other respondents were also influenced by influencers who promoted a more unsustainable consumer culture.

As several of our respondents expressed that they intended to buy more sustainable clothing they, however, sometimes ended up buying clothing at a fast fashion retailer. This happened even though several of their attitudes leant against a more negative connotation towards fast fashion retailers and their business practices. The attitude-behaviour gap was therefore sometimes present in our respondent group. Based on the analysis, it is also possible to conclude that the attitude-behaviour gap was caused by Cognitive dissonance, i.e., either conflicting attitudes or conflicting attitudes and behaviours. Our findings showed that when our respondents experienced dissonance, they, most of the time, decreased the importance of their attitudes or intentions and/or added new cognitive elements, such as an attitude, to justify or reason their behaviour. Additionally, the inconsistency of attitudes and behaviour were most salient when it concerned aspects such as price, purchasing basic items and when our respondents were unwilling to change their clothing preferences.

Lastly, it can be concluded that the Reasoned Action Model complemented with Cognitive Dissonance were sufficient for us to examine our respondents' consumer behaviour. These theories enabled us to examine and understand what underlying elements have influenced our respondents' attitudes, intentions and behaviour which essentially were able to create an attitude-behaviour gap.

In summation, we can conclude that our respondents' attitudes and behaviour are subjective and where some respondents had inconsistencies others did not. Additionally, we also draw the conclusion that our respondents have a difference in their intentions and behaviour when purchasing sustainable clothing because they are influenced by several components such as



their occupation as students and their clothing preferences but also by more controlling factors such as their financial abilities and COVID-19.



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