

# **"Consumer Perceptions and Brand Authenticity in Sustainable Fashion: Analyzing the Impact of Sustainability Claims in Taglines and Advertising Tactics"<sup>1</sup>**



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<sup>1</sup> My thesis is an article based thesis. That's why I chose this title for my article.

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## Abstract

This thesis investigates if advertising through taglines in clothes actually represent sustainable practices or are just marketing ploys, and I analysis whether and how look at sustainability information as part of purchase decisions. This study applied the Theory of Planned Behavior and Green Marketing Theory to examine data derived from qualitative research, which included interviews with young consumers in Copenhagen as well as insights from two Danish fashion Companies. In order to encourage sustainable purchasing, the findings stress the need for openness of the companies, consumer education, and strong certification. Brands may enhance their sustainability policies and better connect their marketing with genuine environmental pledges with the practical ideas presented.

**KeyWords:** Sustainability, Fashion Industry, Consumer Perceptions, Greenwashing, ESG Compliance, Theory of Planned Behavior, Green Marketing, Brand Authenticity, Marketing Strategies, Consumer Trust, Environmental Practices.

## 1. Introduction

Sustainability has become more important in the fashion business as a result of rising consumers' awareness of environmental issues. Many consumers are wary of firms that promise to address environmental concerns, believing that some of these businesses are guilty of "greenwashing" (making misleading or exaggerated claims about their environmental operations),(De Freitas Netto et al., 2020). This skeptical attitude brings up a crucial issue:

Research question-

**"How do consumer perceptions of sustainability claims in fashion impact their purchasing decisions, and to what extent do brands' advertising strategies reflect genuine sustainable practices versus marketing tactics?"**



Image 01: Sustainable tags,Source-<https://www.istockphoto.com/photos/sustainable-clothing>

This thesis investigates this important subject by looking at how sustainability claims influence buying habits in relation to consumer trust, particularly in taglines<sup>2</sup>. The study's overarching goals are to determine whether fashion commercials' sustainability claims are sincere, how these claims influence consumers' purchasing decisions, and whether or not advertising in taglines actually present sustainable guidelines. Additionally, the research delves into why Certification is important to impact consumers' choice for buying clothes.

The study applies a qualitative research approach and gathers data from semi-structured interviews with Copenhagen-based young consumers as well as insights from two Danish fashion businesses(renowned and famous brands who design and sell their products in Europe) based on interviews. It presents a comprehensive framework to initially elucidate consumer behavior in the context of clothing purchases, with a specific focus on taglines.After obtaining insights from consumers, I approach the organization to inquire about their stance on consumer perspectives regarding sustainability.In order to gain a comprehensive understanding, I conducted interviews with four individuals involved in my third semester research to delve into the perspectives and observations of consumers.Upon analyzing the data, I presented a design proposal and provided my perspective on this research.

The results add to the field of sustainable design engineering by stressing the significance of the consumer's perception in the sustainable context.It also adds the importance of consumer education, and in need of good certification in gaining consumers' confidence and encouraging them to make environmentally conscious purchases. In an effort to close the gap between consumer expectations and brand actions, this thesis provides practical suggestions for how businesses might enhance their sustainability claims and align their marketing initiatives with tangible environmental commitments.

## **2.Literature Review**

### **2.1 How Customers Evaluate Sustainability Claims in Fashion Ads through taglines and the Sincerity of Brands-**

Sustainability has become more important in the fashion business as a result of rising consumers' awareness of environmental problems. But many people doubt that the sustainability claims made by businesses in their ads are real(Rahman, Park, & Chi, 2015; Peattie & Crane, 2005). This literature study intends to examine the relationship between customers' perceptions of sustainability claims and their purchasing decisions, as well as to determine if sustainability claims reflect genuine sustainable activities or are merely marketing schemes.

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<sup>2</sup> captures their brand's essence and appeals to their consumers.

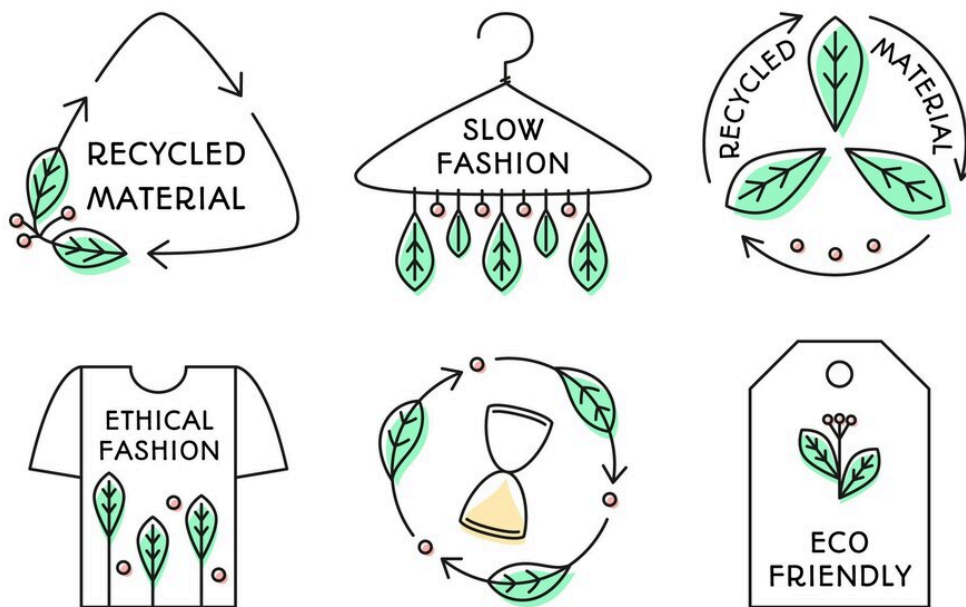


Image 02: Sustainable tags, Source-<https://www.freepik.com>

### 2.1.1 The Way in Which Consumers Evaluate Sustainability Statements-

It is well-documented that consumers are skeptical of sustainability promises. Greenwashing occurs when corporations make misleading or exaggerated claims about how environmentally beneficial their products are. Consumers are becoming more and more conscious of this, according to De Freitas Netto et al. (2020). They are more likely to trust and buy from you because of this knowledge. Rahman, Park, and Chi (2015) found that consumers are more inclined to trust firms that offer verified proof of their sustainability initiatives, and that transparency and third-party certifications can help reduce mistrust.

In addition, Testa et al. (2015) discovered that consumers' concern for the environment greatly affects their choice of products. Brands that make genuine sustainability claims will likely attract more environmentally conscientious consumers. But they also want openness and responsibility, and they look at these assertions with a critical eye.

### 2.1.2 Effect on Consumer Choice in Buying-

Consumers' perceptions of the veracity of sustainability promises are vital in determining their purchase choices. Perceptions of a brand's dedication to sustainability impact consumers, according to research by Lim (2017). Brands that make their sustainable practices known to consumers are more likely to have their loyalty and spend their money with them. Delmas and Burbano (2011) found that when consumers believe that sustainability promises are not genuine or accurate, it can result in a decline in trust and unfavorable perceptions of the business.

Claims about sustainability can also influence purchases based on the wording used. According to Schmuck, Matthes, and Naderer (2018), some words like "eco-friendly," "organic," and "recycled" have the power to make people feel good and make them want to buy more. The phrases' usefulness, however, is conditional on consumers' background knowledge and environmental priorities.

### **2.1.3 Veracity of Taglines by Popular Brands-**

True sustainable practices encompass the whole product lifecycle, as opposed to marketing strategies that just aim to profit corporations through product sales. These are the two main types of sustainability claims made by companies. In order to reduce their environmental effect, companies should implement real sustainable practices, which include making significant changes to their manufacturing processes, supply chain management, and corporate policy (Khan et al., 2019). Transparency and third-party verification are commonplace in these procedures and contribute to their legitimacy.

Conversely, some companies participate in greenwashing, wherein they make empty sustainability claims for marketing purposes (Cherry & Sneirson, 2012). Both consumers and the efforts of really sustainable companies are harmed by this behavior. The ubiquity of greenwashing, according to a TerraChoice (2010) analysis, can lead to consumer mistrust, which in turn makes it tougher for really sustainable firms to stand out.

What matters to consumers when making a purchase choice is how they perceive statements about sustainability. Consumers are more inclined to remain loyal to firms that offer visible and verifiable proof of their sustainable activities, since trust in these promises is vital. But environmental marketing is still a big obstacle to getting people to believe you for real.

## **2.2 The Role of Certifications in Consumer Perceptions and Brand Authenticity in Sustainability Claims-**

Sustainability claims in advertising have proliferated due to the fashion industry's growing emphasis on the issue. But consumers still have a lot of doubts regarding the veracity of these promises (Ghazali et al., 2017). In this perspective, Certification in the sustainable fashion sector is in line with ESG (Environmental, Social, and Governance) standards. In addition to the specific criteria and guarantees offered by certifications, ESG offers a more comprehensive framework for assessing the overall effect and ethical performance of a corporation. Since I am conducting my study in Denmark, a member of the European Union, I should mention that the directives issued by the EU also contribute to the implementation of sustainable practices.



Image 02: Sustainable Certificates in tags, Source-<https://www.considerate-consumer.com/certified-fashion>

### 2.2.1 Importance of Certifications-

Certification is of utmost importance in the sustainable fashion business, since it significantly influences how consumers perceive brands and improves brand legitimacy. Certifications serve as a reliable third-party validation in the field of sustainability claims, thereby reducing doubt and fostering consumer confidence (Testa et al., 2015). Certifications serve as a reliable standard for consumers to trust amidst the growing occurrence of greenwashing, which involves companies making exaggerated or deceptive claims about their environmental advantages (Delmas & Burbano, 2011).

Brands that utilize certifications like GOTS (Global Organic Textile Standard) or Fair Trade may greatly enhance their credibility. These certifications provide consumers with assurance that the products meet rigorous environmental and social criteria, therefore strengthening the brand's dedication to sustainability (Ghazali et al., 2017). Moreover, accredited brands frequently see a favorable influence on their brand image, as customers link these certificates with ethical and accountable business operations (Hervé & Mullet, 2009).

### 2.2.2 Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) Rules and EU Directives-

Furthermore, incorporating Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) standards into a company's operations and reporting not only improves transparency but also increases responsibility, in addition to any specialized certifications. ESG standards offer a complete framework that encompasses environmental sustainability, social responsibility, and governance



practices. Brands may address consumers' growing concerns about labor abuses, ethical sourcing, and corporate governance by aligning their strategy with ESG principles (Eccles et al., 2014).

EU directives have a substantial impact on the promotion of sustainable practices and the enforcement of stringent environmental and social responsibility criteria for companies. The EU's regulations, such as the Circular Economy Action Plan and the Directive on the Eco-design of Products, establish explicit norms and criteria for enterprises functioning in the European market. The purpose of these regulations is to diminish the negative effects on the environment, encourage the efficient use of resources, and guarantee the clarity and honesty of sustainability statements (European Commission, 2020).

Consumer views are significantly influenced by the execution of EU directives. EU consumers are becoming more conscious of the strict standards that regulate sustainable activities, and they prefer to have confidence in firms that adhere to these regulations. Adhering to this compliance improves the perceived genuineness of sustainability assertions made by firms in their taglines and advertising strategies (Moser, 2015).

Research suggests that consumers are more inclined to react favorably to sustainability assertions when they are supported by well-known certifications and compliance with EU legislation. A study conducted by Testa et al. (2015) showed that certifications have the power to impact purchase choices by increasing the perceived credibility of sustainability promises presented in taglines and advertising. This emphasizes the need for firms to not only embrace sustainable practices but also to pursue certification and adhere to EU rules in order to validate their assertions.

Furthermore, certifications, robust ESG performance, and adherence to EU requirements may set businesses apart in a fiercely competitive industry. As customers grow increasingly ecologically aware, they actively search for firms that not only discuss sustainability but also substantiate their dedication through certifications, clear ESG reporting, and compliance with EU rules (Hervé & Mullet, 2009). The ability to distinguish oneself in this manner is crucial for cultivating enduring consumer allegiance and has the potential to result in a greater portion of the market in the sustainable fashion sector.

At some point certification, ESG standards, and EU legislation are essential components in the sustainable fashion sector, exerting influence on customer views and bolstering brand credibility. Certifications, Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) practices, and European Union (EU) laws play a crucial role in verifying sustainability claims and showcasing a brand's dedication to ethical standards. By doing so, they assist firms in overcoming the pitfalls of greenwashing, establishing customer confidence, and eventually achieving business prosperity.

### **3. Methodology**

#### **3.1 Research Design-**

Using a qualitative method, this study seeks to investigate how sustainability promises are perceived by consumers and how it affects their purchase decisions. It also seeks to determine the sustainability practices that are reflected in brand advertising, is it true or just marketing. Consumers in the heart of Copenhagen are the subject of this study, which makes use of semi-structured interviews (Brinkmann, S., & Kvale, S., 2018), business insights, and subsequent conversations.

To explore more I tried to use artificial intelligence to enhance my proficiency in English vocabulary. It really helps me to compare the terms in some aspects and to choose the right words for my article.

#### **3.2 Data Collection-**

##### **3.2.1 Semi-Structured interviews with consumers-**

Semi-structured interviews with 50 young consumers between 25-30 aged groups in the heart of Copenhagen were used to gather primary data. This approach permits adaptability and thorough investigation of the perspectives and experiences of participants (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2018). Topics such as sustainability perceptions, marketing's impact, and individual views on sustainable fashion were addressed in the interview guide. For in-depth analysis, interviews were transcribed from live, in-person events.

##### **3.2.2 Company Insights-**

Two Danish fashion businesses, Company G and Company AA, were consulted after the consumer interviews for their insights. These businesses were hand-picked because of their substantial footprints in the Danish market and their stated dedications to sustainability. The legitimacy of the company's sustainability claims and details on its sustainability procedures were supplied by company officials. Topics covered were certifications, environmental social and governance (ESG) rules and EU directives, how they shape their approach to sustainability.

##### **3.2.3 Conversations that Follow-Up-**

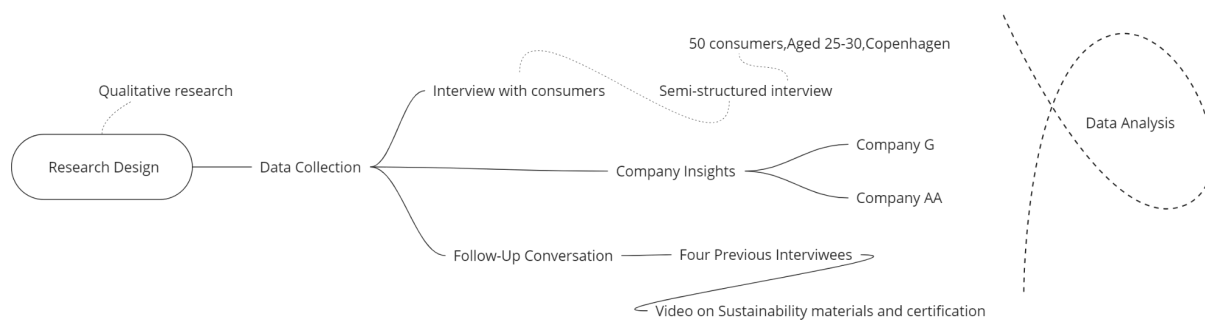
In order to enhance the study, and value the role of certifications, I went to the four persons who were interviewed during my third semester project. Consumer interviews were contacted for follow-up talks. I choose the video on sustainability in fashion from Harper's Bazaar (D'Souza, 2022). This is the video where designers are talking about the fabric, their certification and contribution to the sustainable field. We used the documentary as a springboard to inquire about

clarification from designers regarding sustainable practices and how they see sustainable fashion labels.

### 3.3 Data Analysis-

The transcripts of the interviews and the meeting minutes were analyzed using thematic analysis. Data patterns may be found, examined, and reported using this approach (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The thematic analysis procedure entailed getting to know the data, organizing it, formulating issues, assigning it identities, and finally reporting the results. With this methodical strategy, I am confident that the data and what it means for our research questions are fully understood.

For better understanding the procedure i have attached the following Diagram 01:



## 4. Theories

This research investigates the influence that consumers' views of sustainability claims have on their purchase decisions within the fashion sector. Additionally, the study investigates the degree to which the advertising methods of businesses represent true sustainable practices as opposed to marketing efforts. The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) and Green Marketing Theory are the two theoretical frameworks that are applied in order to answer this research topic. In the context of sustainability, these frameworks offer a complete lens through which to comprehend both the behavior of consumers and the actions of corporations.

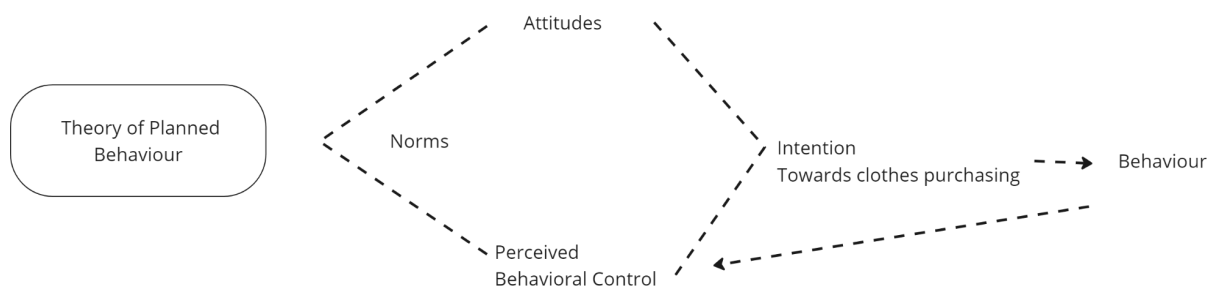
### 4.1 Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB)-

In 1991, Icek Ajzen presented the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), a widely used model for forecasting intentional actions that relies on three essential factors: attitudes, subjective standards, and perceived behavioral control. When trying to make sense of how shoppers respond to sustainability promises made by the fashion industry, this idea comes in handy.

The extent to which an individual views the activity in question favorably or unfavorably constitutes their **attitude** toward it. The focus of this research is on how people feel about buying sustainable goods. A more positive outlook on sustainability claims is associated with a higher propensity to buy items that make such claims (Ajzen, 1991). For the interview questions I try to create the questions that help me to read their attitude towards sustainable taglines.

**Norms** that are viewed as socially pressured to engage in or refrain from the action are known as subjective norms. Consumers' choices to purchase sustainable fashion are impacted by subjective norms, which in this study refer to the impact of family, friends, and society expectations. Sustainable purchasing may gain more traction among customers if they perceive that their significant others share this value (Ajzen, 1991). People always buy the products that have social value. Conversation with people I feel the norms between people. That really enhance my knowledge to see the real practice of the theory.

What we mean by "**perceived behavioral control**" is how easy or hard it is to carry out the activity in question, which is thought to be a function of both actual and predicted challenges. Consumers' self-assurance in determining the veracity of sustainability promises is the key component of perceived behavioral control in this research. The likelihood that consumers will believe and act on these promises increases if they are able to independently verify them (Ajzen, 1991). Interviewing with people, they all emphasize the simple clarification of the product so that they can easily self-assess the products. One can see the main framework of TPB in Diagram 02 in the below-



This study utilized TPB because it provides a comprehensive analysis of the ways in which both internal and external influences impact customers' intentions and behaviors. The study examines how consumers' attitudes, social norms, and perceived control interact to shape their skepticism or acceptance of sustainability marketing by examining interview data via this framework.

## 4.2 Green Marketing Theory (GMT)-

While conversing with companies, I make an effort to structure my inquiries by applying theoretical frameworks. After engaging in a chat, I believe that GMT is relevant to this article. A

critical viewpoint on the incorporation of environmental issues into marketing strategies is offered by Peattie and Crane's (2005) Green Marketing Theory. This theory was developed by Peattie and Crane. According to this notion, there is a distinction between greenwashing, which occurs when businesses make misleading or exaggerated claims about their environmental efforts, and true green marketing, which incorporates significant environmental benefits.

#### 4.2.1 Commitment to the Environment-

This component assesses the extent to which a corporation is truly committed to the preservation of the sustainable environment. It goes beyond marketing buzzwords to investigate whether or not businesses are actually incorporating environmentally responsible business practices into their operations(Peattie & Crane, 2005).

#### 4.2.2 Transparency-

The information that businesses offer about their efforts to be more environmentally responsible should be presented in a clear and honest manner in order to be considered transparent. The establishment of consumer trust and the avoidance of perceptions of greenwashing are both dependent on this(Peattie & Crane, 2005).

#### 4.2.3 Education of Consumers-

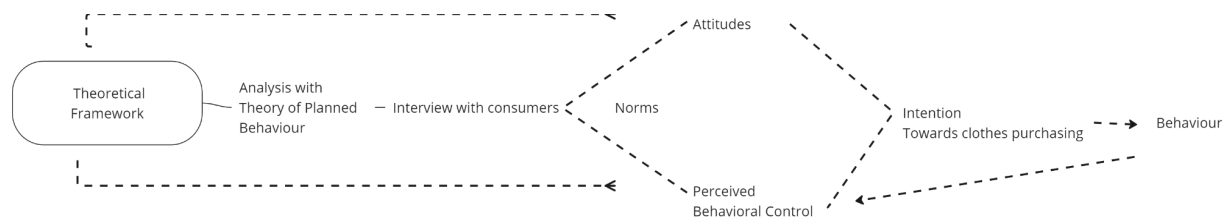
An essential component of successful green marketing is educating consumers about environmental concerns and the efforts that the firm is doing to be more sustainable. Consumers are given the capacity to make decisions based on accurate information, and a greater awareness of what constitutes real sustainability is fostered as a result(Peattie & Crane, 2005).One can see the main framework of GMT in Diagram 03 in the below-



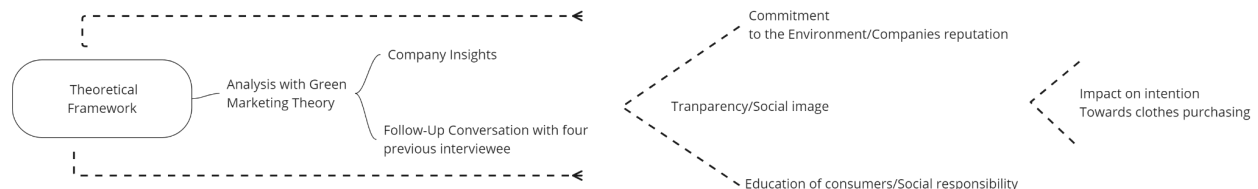
In this particular investigation, Green Marketing Theory plays a significant role since it assists me to identify the genuine sustainable activities. Through the application of this theory, the research investigates the degree to which companies such as Company G and Company AA are dedicated to making genuine changes to the environment, as opposed to relying largely on sustainability claims as a marketing technique.

### 4.3 Application in the Study-

In order to conduct an analysis of qualitative data obtained from consumer interviews, the Theory of Planned Behavior was utilized. Through the investigation of attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control, the study sheds light on the aspects that contribute to consumer skepticism and the decisions individuals make regarding their purchases. During conversation with the consumers, consider the fact that a significant number of consumers in my research have voiced their skepticism regarding the veracity of sustainability claims. This is a reflection of the unfavorable sentiments and perceived societal norms that call into question the legitimacy of such statements (Ajzen, 1991). Below in Diagram 04, one can see visualization of how I utilize TPB in my research article-



The Green Marketing Theory was utilized in order to assess the insights provided by brand representatives as well as the substance of the video debate that was conducted by Harper's Bazaar. The purpose of this research was to establish a framework for determining if the sustainability claims made by these businesses were backed by actual practices or whether they were merely marketing methods aimed at increasing their image and sales. Within the scope of the study, the openness of the companies' messaging and their attempts to educate consumers, in addition to their real environmental commitments, were subjected to scrutiny (Peattie & Crane, 2005). Below in Diagram 05, one can see visualization of how I utilize GMT in my research article-



Through qualitative research, it provides a complete knowledge of the complicated interaction between consumer perceptions and brand tactics in the context of sustainability in the fashion industry. This understanding is achieved via the integration of the Theory of Planned Behavior and Green Marketing Theory. The aforementioned ideas emphasize the significance of openness,

true commitment, and consumer education in the process of establishing trust and bringing consumers' expectations into alignment with brand methodologies.

## 5. Empirical material

This study examines the impact of consumers' perceptions of sustainability claims on purchase decisions in the fashion sector. The study reveals a notable level of skepticism among 50 young consumers in Copenhagen towards sustainability marketing in taglines. These consumers express worries about the genuineness of sustainability promises, which persist in both online and physical buying experiences. Interviews with representatives from Danish fashion firms Company G and Company AA highlight the challenges they have in upholding openness and credibility in their sustainability initiatives. In addition, the Harper's Bazaar video debate on Company's activities emphasizes the importance of improving communication and educating consumers to establish confidence in sustainable fashion. In this section, I describe the opinions of the interviewers based on actual data.

### 5.1 Interviews with Consumers-

This study explores the influence of consumers' views of sustainability promises on their purchase decisions and evaluates advertising methods in taglines aligned with authentic sustainable activities rather than marketing ploys. The study entailed conducting interviews with around 50 young consumers, aged 25-30, residing in the central Copenhagen region. The objective was to obtain valuable insights into their attitudes and actions pertaining to sustainability within the fashion industry.

Table 01:

Consumer Interviews (Aged 25-30 )

Key Findings Table( opinions of 35 out of 50 people)-

Categories	Findings	Details
Marketing Strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Doubtfulness Regarding Marketing Strategies</li> <li>→ Greenwashing Concerns</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Hold a dubious stance towards marketing strategies.</li> <li>→ Consumers question the veracity of sustainability assertions.</li> </ul>

Purchase Research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Active Investigation of Websites before purchasing</li> <li>→ Disparity Between Assertions and Experiences</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ To verify sustainability claims.</li> <li>→ There is a noticeable gap between brand claims and consumer experiences.</li> </ul>
Understanding of Sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Deficiency in Understanding Terms</li> <li>→ Consumers Feel Deceived</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Consumers lack understanding of sustainability terms.</li> <li>→ Consumers feel misled after purchase.</li> </ul>
Terminology Impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Impact of Terms like 'Eco-friendly', 'Recycled', 'Organic'</li> <li>→ Lack of Awareness of Phrases</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ These terms significantly influence purchasing decisions.</li> <li>→ Consumers are unaware of the true meanings of sustainability phrases.</li> </ul>
Pricing Perception	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Belief in Higher Costs for Sustainable Items.</li> <li>→ Willingness to Pay Extra if Clear</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Consumers believe sustainable products are more expensive.</li> <li>→ Consumers are willing to pay more if marketing claims are clear and credible.</li> </ul>

#### 5.1.1 Major Discoveries Doubtfulness Regarding Marketing Strategies-

An important discovery from the interviews reveals that a majority of participants (35 out of 50) hold a dubious stance towards the marketing strategies employed by fashion businesses. This distrust remains there regardless of whether individuals make online purchases or visit physical stores to buy clothing. Consumers frequently question the veracity of sustainability assertions in tags put out by companies, thinking that these assertions may be embellished or deceptive, a behavior popularly known as greenwashing (Lyon & Montgomery, 2015).



### **5.1.2 Conduct thorough research before making a purchase-**

The majority of participants stated that they engage in active investigation of company websites in order to authenticate sustainability assertions prior to making a purchase. At first, people are inclined to trust the facts presented in taglines and certificates. Nevertheless, after buying the products, several individuals have a sense of being misled when they realize that the garments fail to fulfill their sustainability standards. There is a noticeable disparity between the assertions made by a brand and the actual experiences of consumers, resulting in a decline in trust (Chen & Chang, 2013). Additionally, some individuals express that they are unable to make a purchase unless they are content with the explanations provided on the tags. Consumers who conduct research on product certification before making a purchase often find it challenging to obtain straightforward answers. Therefore, it is recommended that firms provide clear and concise explanations, which will help customers save time and effort when purchasing items.

### **5.1.3 Insufficient comprehension-**

It also emphasizes a widespread deficiency in consumers' comprehension of the words and practices associated with sustainability. Although participants understand that some organizations must meet specific requirements to introduce their products, they frequently fail to grasp the true significance of the certificates and labeling employed. Their lack of comprehension adds to their sense of being deceived after making a purchase, as consumers come to discover that the items are not as environmentally friendly as they previously believed (Connell, 2010). They also discussed the ESG report of large firms that actually adhere to EU rules, which ensures the quality and effort. However, they still have doubts.

### **5.1.4 Impact of commonly used terminology-**

Significantly, a considerable number of consumers (30 out of 50) said that their purchasing choices are greatly impacted by three prevalent terms: "Eco-friendly," "Recycled," and "Organic." These words inspire immediate confidence, leading consumers to conduct more research because of these claims on the businesses' credibility on their websites. The discovery highlights the significant influence that certain sustainability-related keywords have on customer behavior (Rahman, Park, & Chi, 2015). Additionally, they indicate that the majority of individuals lack awareness of these phrases. Companies should provide clear evidence to support their claims about a product, including details on how the product may be recycled, if it is organic, or whether it is environmentally friendly.

### **5.1.5 Pricing Perception-**

Participants commonly believe that sustainable items are generally more expensive than traditional products. Consumers are prepared to pay a higher price, but they are concerned about the possibility of purchasing a product at a high cost and receiving a subpar one. Respondents indicated a readiness to pay extra for sustainability, but they requested more clarity in marketing

strategies to validate the increased expenses. Consumers are willing to spend on sustainable products, but only if they are confident in the genuineness and worth of their purchases.

#### **5.1.6 Distrust and Alternative Practices-**

Fifteen people, on the other hand, were very skeptical of sustainability promises and saw them for what they really are: marketing ploys to drive up product costs. Some people don't buy things that have sustainability labels because they think the labels are merely a way to charge more for things that don't actually help the environment. They would rather help the environment by recycling things rather than buying new ones, especially if the sustainability claims are questionable. In particular, this faction doubts the veracity and usefulness of third-party verifications which are done by the agency on behalf of the companies to give the clarification or final clearance to sell the product, when it comes to guaranteeing genuine sustainable practices. They strongly advocated for the reuse of items in order to prolong their lifespan.

Table 02:  
Consumer Interviews (Aged 25-30 )  
KeyFindings Table( opinions of 15 out of 50 people)-

Categories	Findings	Details
Distrust and Alternative Practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Skepticism of Sustainability Promises</li> <li>→ Sustainability Labels Seen as Marketing Ploys</li> <li>→ Preference for Recycling Over Buying</li> <li>→ Doubt in Third-Party Verifications</li> <li>→ Advocacy for Reuse of Items</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ People were very skeptical of sustainability promises, viewing them as marketing ploys to drive up product costs.</li> <li>→ Some consumers believe sustainability labels are a way to charge more for products that don't actually help the environment.</li> <li>→ Some consumers prefer to help the environment by recycling items rather than buying new ones with questionable sustainability claims.</li> <li>→ There is doubt of veracity and usefulness of third party verifications done on behalf of companies.</li> <li>→ Advocacy for the reuse of items to prolong their lifespan.</li> </ul>

The study's findings demonstrate an intricate correlation between consumers' views of sustainability promises and their purchase choices. Although there is a significant desire to endorse sustainable fashion, it is hindered by mistrust and a limited comprehension of the terminology employed by businesses.

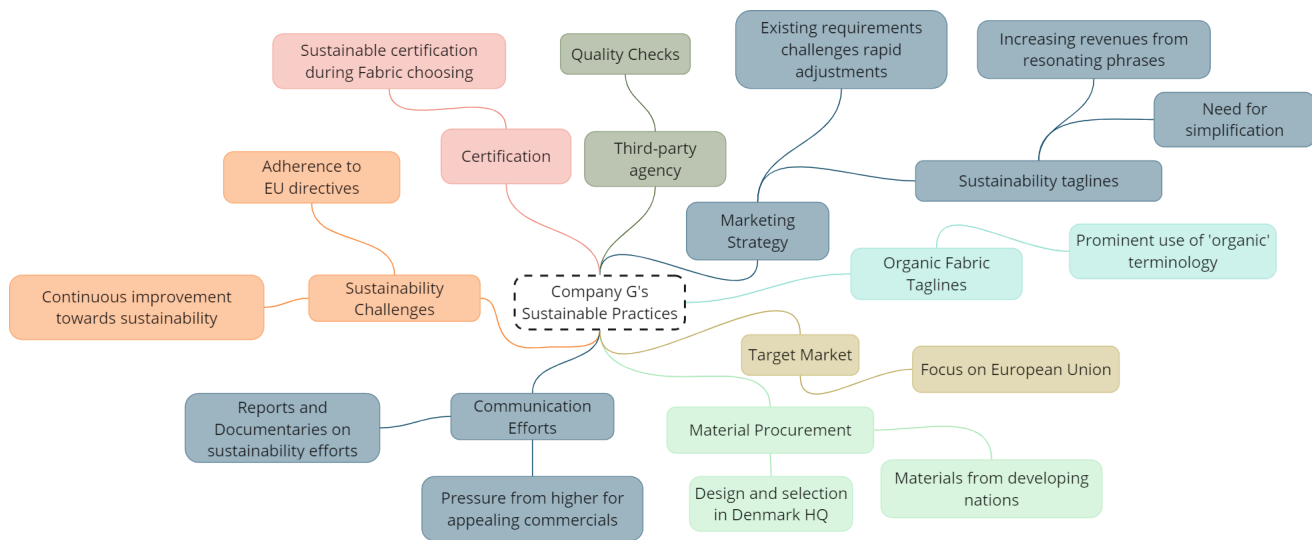
## **5.2 Company insights regarding consumer view-**

After conducting interviews with consumers, further information was acquired by having interviews with personnel from two Danish fashion brands, namely Company G and Company AA. Here I also follow semi-structured interview to get some insights regarding consumers feedback or doubt about taglines in clothing. The purpose of this study was to get an understanding of the viewpoints held by the firms about sustainability claims, production practices, and marketing tactics in light of the skepticism observed among consumers.

### **5.2.1 Company G**

Company G introduced their goods using taglines that prominently included the term "organic fabric," which is a widely recognized and commonly used phrase. Consumers purchase the goods upon observing these tags and believe that they are helping to sustainability. I selected this firm based on their website, where I encountered their sustainable promises and films that captivated my interest and prompted me to delve more into their processes. During the course of the discussion with company G, it was disclosed that the company's fabric collection frequently involves the procurement of materials from developing nations. Although the manufacturing of the product takes place elsewhere, the selection of fabric and design is done at their headquarters located in Denmark. They fixed the textiles and the layout of both items before sending them for manufacturing. They conduct quality checks there. Typically, a third-party agency does this check. To enhance comprehension, a set of criteria was established for each cloth. The company maintains that this practice helps sustainability by bolstering the economies of the local communities. On the other hand, they acknowledged the difficulties associated with obtaining sustainability throughout the whole duration of the product and emphasized that they are continually working toward this objective while adhering to the strict requirements imposed by Eu Directives in future. Due to their primary target market being within the European Union, they prioritize their focus on that region. I also endeavor to engage in discussions on sustainable certification with them. They informed me that they validated this during the fabric choosing process using certification. Officials at company G have acknowledged that Certification and third-party verifications are occasionally utilized; nevertheless, the company added that it is important to note that these verifications do not always ensure total validity. This revelation is in

line with the worries that consumers have regarding the trustworthiness of statements made regarding sustainability. For simplified the companies sustainable practices, I create Diagram 06, which is given below:



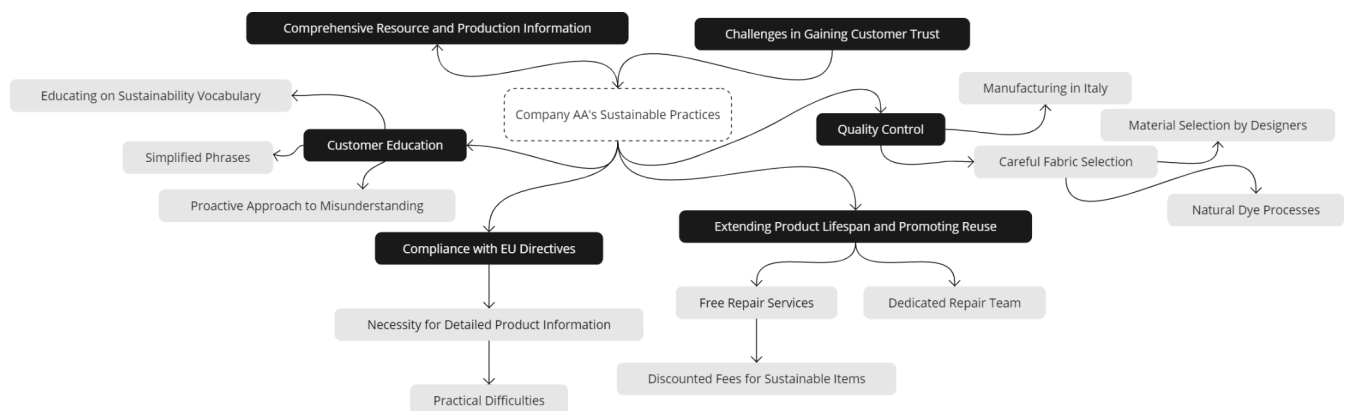
When the marketing team at Company G was reviewing the input from consumers on the complexity of sustainability taglines, they acknowledged the need of simplifying these phrases. However, they also mentioned that making rapid adjustments is difficult owing to the fact that there are already requirements in place to simplify the taglines. They said that they would be open to the possibility of facilitating communication that is less complicated in the future. In addition, they produce reports and documentaries to inform the public about their endeavors in the field of sustainability. They also brought attention to the pressure that comes from higher authorities in the company to develop appealing commercials that make use of phrases that resonate with consumers, and they acknowledged that this tactic has greatly increased their revenues.

### 5.2.2 Company AA

Company AA offered a straightforward viewpoint on the challenges that are associated with acquiring the trust of consumers. The website provides comprehensive information on the sourcing of resources and the production process. Therefore, assist me in selecting this firm for my investigation. In spite of the fact that maintaining rigorous adherence to EU directives is practically hard, they pointed out that it is nearly impossible to provide extensive information on every product. Despite the fact that they acknowledged the possibility that a single shirt would

not be recycled in its whole, they stressed their dedication to extending the lifespan of products and promoting reuse, both of which they consider to be essential for achieving sustainability. In addition, they assemble a crew that is responsible for repairing consumer items, if necessary. Their objective in launching this initiative was to encourage the reutilization or extension of the lifespan of the items. They provide the service for free, and if the items are not from their firm but are sustainable, they provide a reduced fee.

They added, manufacturing their goods in Italy to personally inspect its quality and production. They are unwilling to make any concessions when it comes to the quality of the items. Their designers carefully choose the cloth and prioritize the use of natural dye processes to further enhance their commitment to sustainability. They are of the opinion that every time clothes lose their color while washing, it has a negative influence on the environment, especially in relation to water. Therefore, they meticulously manage the situation and personally choose each material through their own designers. The business is contemplating the possibility of simplifying phrases in order to make them more consumer-friendly and easy to comprehend. They emphasized the significance of educating consumers on the vocabulary and procedures involved in sustainability claims in order to establish trust in the industry. As a proactive technique to address the misunderstanding and mistrust that has been emphasized by consumers, this approach indicates a proactive strategy (Connell, 2010). For simplified the companies sustainable practices, I create Diagram 07, which is given below:



The insights that were provided by businesses shed light on the intricate dynamics that are involved in sustainability claims in the apparel sector. In spite of the fact that consumers have a significant inclination to support sustainable fashion, they frequently face obstacles in the form of skepticism and a lack of comprehension of the phrases used by manufacturers. When it comes to preserving openness and authenticity in their sustainability claims, businesses such as company G and company AA confront considerable problems. For the purpose of establishing trust, both businesses acknowledge the need of enhancing communication and educating

consumers. However, I believe that companies have the potential to achieve even greater results if they prioritize the environment over their profits.

### **5.3 Insights from Harper's Bazaar Video Discussion-**

In order to gather opinions on the sustainability commitments of companies, I selected the most widely seen videos from a renowned brand to engage in discussions with individuals and gauge their thoughts on the matter. The documentary focuses on the discussion of sustainable materials and their suppliers. Company G has stated their intention to simplify their product specifications through a documentary. This film is a suitable means to determine whether or not the videos are earning people's confidence. After conducting interviews with consumers and representatives from company G and company AA, I met with the interviewees from my third semester project to discuss the findings. I choose to interview because company G feel that through documentary they educated the consumers. I would like to see that consumers taking this positively or not. The four Danish women participating in the initiative are highly dedicated to promoting sustainability, although they maintain a suspicious stance towards the advertising practices and vocabulary employed by fashion manufacturers. In order to get the proper insights, we conducted a thorough examination of a Harper's Bazaar documentary that showcases endeavors in promoting sustainability (D'Souza, 2022).

The video showcased the company's commitment to use organic cotton and other environmentally-friendly materials, along with its dedication to revitalizing old crafts through the use of handcrafted textiles. The conversation among the four women unveiled crucial viewpoints about this subject matter:

#### **5.3.1 Enhancing Comprehension via Simplification-**

The ladies expressed the view that although the film was educational, the information conveyed should be made more accessible to the general public in order to facilitate their understanding of companies sustainability initiatives. Their suggestion was to provide comprehensive elucidations of the company's sustainability objectives, going beyond a mere grading system, in order to foster consumers' confidence. This is consistent with other research that suggests consumers' frequently have limited knowledge of sustainability terminology and certifications (Connell, 2010).

#### **5.3.2 Openness and Elucidation-**

They stressed the necessity for increased openness and comprehensive elucidation in tags. They also advised companies to offer more explicit elucidations of the concepts in taglines and certifications associated with sustainability. The constant feature of these certificates was a lack of comprehension, which mirrors the larger consumers' perplexity emphasized in prior interviews (Chen & Chang, 2013).

The conversation emphasized the skepticism expressed towards taglines such as "be more sustainable," which the ladies believed to be inadequate without substantial evidence or support. The authors Lyon and Montgomery (2015) advocated for a greater level of detailed information on the sustainability measures employed, in line with the general expectation for marketing claims to be transparent and genuine.

### 5.3.3 Certifications, ESG Compliance and Beyond-

The ladies contended that certifications is very important to believe og tags. In addition to adhering to ESG criteria, companies should also consider other facets of sustainability that may not be encompassed by these standards. They should produce an ESG report about items that aid in simplifying procedures. The same things found according to Cherry & Sneirson, 2012, authors recognized the complexity of attaining complete transparency but emphasized the need of openly acknowledging the limitations and obstacles encountered in the pursuit of sustainability.

### 5.3.4 Consumer Education-

The ladies proposed that corporations should use a more proactive approach in teaching customers about sustainability. This may entail simplifying intricate terminology and procedures into more easily understandable information, so empowering customers to make well-informed choices. The video is satisfactory, but it would greatly benefit from further elaboration and simplicity in order to effectively educate the consumers. This highlights the necessity for enhanced consumer education also as noted in the study conducted by Rahman, Park, and Chi in 2015.

In order to enhance comprehension, I try to make a precise Table 03, with Key findings from Harper's bazaar video discussion-

Key Findings	Details
Enhancing Comprehension via Simplification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Simplify information for better public understanding.</li> </ul>
Openness and Elucidation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Increase transparency and clear explanations in tags.</li> <li>•Provide explicit sustainability concept explanations.</li> </ul>
Skepticism towards Taglines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Taglines like 'be more sustainable' need evidence.</li> <li>•Detailed information on sustainability measures is needed.</li> </ul>



Certifications and ESG Compliance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Certifications are essential for trust.</li> <li>• Consider all sustainability facets and produce ESG reports.</li> </ul>
Consumer Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proactively educate consumers.</li> <li>•Simplify complex terminology and procedures.</li> </ul>

Harper's Bazaar video is a crucial means of conveying company's sustainability efforts. The video was disseminated to inform the public about their environmentally conscious methods. While it is commendable to take the step to educate people about sustainable materials and manufacturing, it is important to note that this effort is aimed at creating a positive impact and raising awareness. However, I think it fails to adequately address the intricacies and intricacies of sustainability that are crucial for establishing consumer confidence.

This study emphasizes the complex relationship between consumers' perceptions and the impact of sustainability claims in the fashion sector. The results of interviews conducted with young consumers' in Copenhagen indicate a widespread doubt towards sustainability marketing, stemming from apprehensions over the genuineness of these assertions. After conducting this research, I found that Consumers frequently feel deceived when it comes to supporting sustainable fashion, since there is often a discrepancy between what brands offer and how their products actually perform. This problem is further caused by a lack of comprehension of sustainability terms. The experiences of fashion labels company G and company AA highlight the difficulties that firms have in upholding openness and credibility. Both businesses recognize the necessity for improved communication and higher consumer education in order to close this gap in trust. The examination of the Harper's Bazaar video conversation underscores the need of simplifying sustainability information to enhance its accessibility and comprehensibility for the general audience.

This research highlights the significance of being transparent, providing thorough consumer education, and simplifying sustainability communication. By tackling these concerns, fashion firms may more effectively synchronize consumer expectations with authentic sustainable practices, cultivating trust and promoting more knowledgeable and conscientious purchase choices within the sector.

## 6. Analysis

The study topic investigates the influence of consumer views of sustainability claims on their purchase decisions, as well as the extent of companies advertising methods in taglines aligned with authentic sustainable practices rather than marketing approaches. After engaging in discussions with each company and seeing their endeavors, I have gained valuable insights. This has greatly assisted me in analyzing the current scenario. The analysis uncovers key insights by utilizing the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) and Green Marketing Theory (GMT), and drawing on empirical data obtained from interviews with customers and corporate officials.

### 6.1 Consumer Perceptions and Their Impact on Purchasing Decisions-

Before analysis this part, I created a Table 04, to see the overview of consumers interviewees. Below I attached the table-

Aspect	Similarities	Differences
Skepticism Towards Marketing	Both groups display distrust towards the marketing strategies of fashion businesses.	Degree of skepticism varies; some are slightly skeptical, while others are highly skeptical and see sustainability claims purely as marketing ploys.
Research Before Purchase	Majority of consumers conduct thorough research on company websites to verify sustainability claims before making a purchase.	The effort and thoroughness of the research may vary, with some consumers being more meticulous and others being satisfied with less information.
Impact of Terminology	Terms like 'Eco-friendly,' 'Recycled,' and 'Organic' have a significant impact on consumers' purchasing decisions.	Some consumers lack awareness of these terms, leading to varying levels of understanding and influence on their decisions.

Perception of Pricing	Consumers believe sustainable items are generally more expensive than traditional products.	Willingness to pay the higher price varies; some consumers are willing to pay extra for sustainability if convinced of its genuineness, others are not.
Comprehension of Sustainability	There is a widespread lack of comprehension regarding sustainability terminology and practices among consumers.	Understanding of the significance of certificates and labeling varies, with some consumers feeling deceived post-purchase due to their lack of comprehension.
Trust in Certificates and Labels	Many consumers question the veracity of sustainability certificates and labels.	Some consumers are unable to make a purchase unless fully content with the explanations provided on the tags.
Alternative Practices	Some consumers prefer alternative practices like recycling and reusing items over purchasing new ones with questionable sustainability claims.	The extent to which alternative practices are preferred varies; some consumers advocate strongly for reuse, while others are more focused on verification.

Above table really helps me to take a look over some important facts and relate them to the company's sustainable practices. To ensure my opinion regarding this research, Harper's Bazaar discussion supports my statements. I give an overview of my thought below-

#### 6.1.1 Skepticism and Trust Issues-

The examination of consumers' interviews reveals a notable degree of doubt among young consumers in Copenhagen regarding the credibility of sustainability assertions made by the fashion sector. This skepticism is consistent with the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), which highlights the influence of attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control on consumer intents and behaviors. A study conducted by Ajzen (1991) found that consumers' purchase decisions are highly influenced by unfavorable views towards sustainability promises, which are motivated by skepticism and perceived greenwashing. According to the interviews, 35 out of 50 participants expressed skepticism regarding the truthfulness of sustainability promises, indicating a pessimistic outlook towards these marketing messages (Ajzen, 1991). This distrust is

intensified by the widely held belief that several fashion firms practice greenwashing, which in turn influences subjective standards and decreases the probability of buying sustainable items.

#### **6.1.2 Influence of Terminology and Certifications-**

I noticed, The vocabulary employed in sustainability assertions, such as "eco-friendly," "recycled," and "organic," has a substantial impact on interviewees' perceptions and choices. In their study, Schmuck, Matthes, and Naderer (2018) discovered that some phrases elicit favorable feelings and enhance the likelihood of making a purchase. However, the efficacy of these phrases relies on the comprehension of consumers. The study's findings demonstrate that a significant proportion of participants are swayed by these phrases, this prompting them to do further investigations. However, the absence of a clear comprehension of these phrases and the related certifications sometimes results in emotions of being misled after making a purchase, the same thing found by Connell, 2010 also. This is consistent with the TPB's notion of perceived behavioral control, which emphasizes the importance of consumers' capacity to evaluate the legitimacy of sustainability promises. Consumers are more inclined to trust and act upon statements when they have a strong sense of confidence in their comprehension (Ajzen, 1991).

#### **6.1.3 Transparency and Verifiable Proof-**

The significance of openness and reliable evidence in sustainability claims cannot be exaggerated. Rahman, Park, and Chi (2015) discovered that consumers' had a higher level of confidence in businesses that offer transparent and reliable information regarding their sustainability efforts. This trust has a substantial influence on buying decisions. The interviews with company G and company AA indicated that although both businesses aim for openness, they have difficulties in presenting intricate sustainability information in a more accessible manner for consumers'. It is clear that there is a need for enhanced communication and consumer education in order to close this gap after doing analysis.

### **6.2 Role of Certifications, Eu directives and ESG Regulations in Shaping Perceptions-**

#### **6.2.1 Trust and Regulatory Compliance-**

Certification has a significant impact on how consumers perceive the authenticity of a business. The Global Reporting Initiative (GRI, 2019) highlights that the use of standardized reporting and verification methods enhances the credibility of sustainability claims. Consumers trust the certification because they believe on this but they want more simplified version. Consumers are more inclined to place trust in brands that conform to recognized Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) criteria (Rahman, Park, & Chi, 2015). However, they acknowledge the significance of these standards in establishing consumer confidence.

### **6.2.2 Impact on Purchase Decisions-**

The influence of certification on buying decisions is substantial. The study's results corroborate this claim, as participants expressed a readiness to pay a higher price for really sustainable items, on the condition that there is clear and verifiable information available. This is consistent with the Green Marketing Theory, which distinguishes between authentic green marketing and greenwashing (Peattie & Crane, 2005).

## **6.3 Genuine sustainable Practices or Marketing Tactics-**

### **6.3.1 Commitment to Environmental Sustainability-**

The Green Marketing Theory by Peattie and Crane (2005) offers a structured approach to differentiate authentic sustainable behaviors from marketing strategies. The study revealed that a true dedication to environmental sustainability necessitates substantial alterations in industrial processes, supply chain management, and business policy. Both companies highlighted their endeavors in these domains, while acknowledging the difficulties in attaining complete sustainability.

### **6.3.2 Transparency and Consumer Education-**

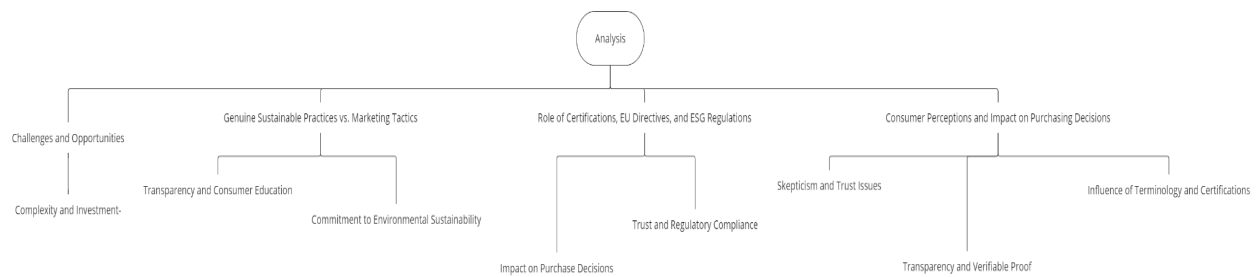
Transparency and consumer education are essential for distinguishing authentic activities from marketing strategies. The Harper's Bazaar video conversation emphasized the necessity for firms to offer unambiguous and thorough details regarding their sustainability endeavors (D'Souza, 2022). This aligns with Peattie and Crane (2005) focus on openness and the education of consumers on environmental matters. I again emphasize that It is crucial to simplify sustainability tag-lines and make them easily available to consumers in order to establish trust and promote well-informed purchase choices, as shown by the study.

## **6.4 Challenges and Opportunities-**

### **6.4.1 Complexity and Investment-**

The investigation revealed that fashion firms have substantial obstacles when it comes to implementing and adhering to EU directives. Companies said that these issues encompass the intricacy of implementing sustainable practices and the significant capital expenditure needed. They added companies have high authorities pressure to get more profit rather than thinking of true sustainable practices.

For simplified my Analysis, I created following Diagram 08 to make easy readable-



## 7. Design Result

After analyzing empirical materials I try to accumulate data and design a solution in my point of view. In this section I discuss the facts that we can consider.

### 7.1 proposed Solution-

The recommended solution that for addressing the doubt and lack of confidence around sustainability assertions in the fashion sector is a comprehensive strategy that prioritizes transparency, consumer enlightenment, and rigorous adherence to certifications. The solution comprises the following components:

#### 7.1.1 Enhanced Transparency in Marketing and Labeling-

Companies claim that they are labeling the products after analyzing the component that is used for the manufacturing. But consumers have doubt that fact. Brands should embrace transparent, unambiguous, and provable sustainability assertions to improve marketing and labeling practices. This encompasses comprehensive details on the procurement, production procedures, and general ecological ramifications of their merchandise and mostly simplification. Comprehensive descriptions of the content and process of third-party certifications should be provided alongside these certifications (Peattie & Crane, 2005).

#### 7.1.2 Consumer Education Programs-

Enact educational initiatives to educate consumers about sustainable practices. Give them proper data about Certifications, and Eu directives. ESG report help them to prove their sustainable practices. They can plan a simplified education system to enhance their transparency. This may be accomplished by utilizing internet platforms, conducting in-store information sessions, and engaging in partnerships with environmental groups (Connell, 2010).

### **7.1.3 Interactive and Engaging Communication-**

Enhance communication by employing interactive marketing techniques, such as mobile applications and augmented reality, to captivate consumers and deliver the right and clear information regarding the sustainability of products. They can steer clear of phrases that customers are unsure about. They have the option to either replace it or make the phrase standard among consumers. This resource can aid in clarifying intricate sustainability terminology and procedures (Schmuck, Matthes, & Naderer, 2018).

### **7.1.4 Initiatives from higher authorities-**

Companies should guarantee that senior executives take the initiative in executing strategies to establish confidence. As from empirical material, I found that they have pressure about profit making from high ranking people from companies. They should think about the fact that people want to buy product with high price if the quality and claim is authentic. This is giving priority to authentic sustainable practices in marketing efforts, rather than focusing just on short-term economic motivations. For the purpose of ensuring that marketing messages are in line with genuine practices, it is essential to have the support and dedication of senior management towards sustainable growth.

## **7.2 Development of the solution-**

The solution was developed through an iterative process. Danish fashion labels, as well as young Copenhagen consumers viewpoints and practices were surveyed to identify their main concerns and challenges with sustainability claims. A thematic review of the interview transcripts uncovered important points including doubts about sustainability promises, the power of words, the importance of openness, and the part that consumer education plays.

To lay the theoretical groundwork for the suggested solution, I conducted a thorough literature analysis on green marketing, EU directives, ESG report, and consumer behavior. Ajzen (1991) and Peattie and Crane (2005), two prominent theories in the field of green marketing and theory of planned behavior, were incorporated into the design. The solution was fine-tuned with the aid of feedback from Company experts and interviewees in subsequent talks. Among these measures was the need to improve consumer education resources and streamline communication (D'Souza, 2022).

## **7.3 Solution Implementation and Evaluation-**

The suggested approach tackles the fundamental problems found in the research by boosting transparency, enhancing consumer education, and assuring strong clarifications. I emphasize this as I believe this is the main fundamental terms in education and clarification that should be

imposed. The purpose of the interactive and engaging communication tools is to enhance the accessibility and comprehensibility of sustainability information. This, in turn, enables consumers to make well-informed decisions when purchasing products.

The solution has the capacity to substantially diminish consumer doubt and augment confidence in sustainability assertions. To establish consumer trust, organizations may showcase their sincere dedication to sustainability by adopting transparent marketing strategies and conducting comprehensive ESG reporting and documentaries. Educational initiatives have the potential to narrow the knowledge gap, allowing consumers to have a deeper understanding and make more informed assessments of sustainability claims.

Yet, the effectiveness of the approach in addressing the problem relies on the dedication and adherence of fashion firms in adopting these measures. Consistently observing and adjusting with EU directives are essential to meet changing consumer demands and regulatory standards (McKinsey & Company, 2020).

Although the suggested solution tackles many of the mentioned difficulties, there are still numerous elements that need more attention:

consumer interaction: The suggested method incorporates interactive communication technologies, however, continuous consumers interaction is essential. Brands should consistently solicit customer input and adjust their strategy accordingly in order to preserve trust and relevance, which is also suggested by Connell, 2010.

Long-Term Commitment: Authentic sustainability necessitates a sustained dedication from companies that go beyond mere marketing. It should be for a long period of time. Sometimes frequently changing the commitment doubt in companies strategy. In order to create significant and enduring effects, brands must include sustainability into their fundamental business strategy and corporate culture (Peattie & Crane, 2005).

The suggested solution presents a thorough strategy for tackling consumer doubt and improving confidence in sustainability assertions within the apparel sector. In order to achieve a lasting impact, it is crucial to continue working on establishing industry-wide standards, engaging consumers, and maintaining long-term commitment. These initiatives have the potential to greatly enhance consumer views and purchase decisions.

## **8. Conclusion**

This thesis makes a significant contribution to the existing knowledge on sustainable design engineering. It does so by conducting a thorough analysis of consumers' perceptions of



sustainability claims affect their purchasing decisions. The study incorporates theoretical frameworks, namely the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) and Green Marketing Theory, to comprehend consumer behavior and brand activities within the realm of sustainability. It emphasizes the need for top executives in firms to spearhead the implementation of plans that prioritize long-term sustainability objectives over short-term financial gains. As I see companies have lack of long-term activity. Furthermore, the research highlights the need of implementing universal standards throughout the sector and consistently involving consumers to uphold confidence and relevance.

### **8.1 Generalizability of the Contribution-**

The research primarily examines the two fashion businesses in Copenhagen, but the knowledge gained and suggested remedies may be used for sustainable design engineering in different sectors as well. The concepts of transparency, consumer education, and consumer interaction are applicable to all sectors that seek to enhance their sustainable policies. Nevertheless, the distinct cultural and market dynamics of Copenhagen could impact the applicability of certain conclusions. Hence, doing more study in various geographical and industry settings will be advantageous to authenticate and enhance the suggested solutions.

### **8.2 Next Steps to Improve and Refine the Proposed Solution-**

In order to enhance and perfect the suggested solution, it is advisable to broaden the area of research by conducting comparable studies in other locations and sectors. This will allow for the collection of diverse data and the validation of results in multiple situations. Employing continual consumer interaction tactics would facilitate the consistent collection of input and enable the adjustment of marketing and sustainability activities accordingly. Furthermore, it is essential to simplify things that provide increased transparency across the whole process, encompassing the procurement of raw materials to the delivery of the end product. Finally, advocating for companies to include sustainability into their fundamental business objectives and corporate culture will guarantee a long-term business dedication to authentic sustainable practices.

### **8.3 Strengths and Limitations of the Project-**

The project showcases notable qualities, offering a strong foundation for examining consumer behavior and brand tactics. The empirical data obtained from qualitative interviews conducted with both customers and brand representatives provides significant insights based on real-world experiences. Moreover, the suggested remedies are feasible and implementable, specifically targeting the main problems highlighted in the study.

Nevertheless, the study does have certain constraints. The concentration on the fashion sector in Copenhagen may limit the applicability of the results to different geographical areas and sectors. The subjective character and relatively limited number of participants may restrict the degree to which the results may be applied to a broader population.

Ultimately, this framework greatly enhances our comprehension of how consumers perceive and engage with brands in relation to sustainability. The research provides essential insights and practical solutions for improving trust and encouraging sustainable practices in the fashion industries are crucial in order to enhance and execute these solutions with maximum effectiveness.

## **Reflexion**

During this study, I acquired an extensive comprehension of the intricate correlation between consumer views of sustainability promises and their purchase choices in the fashion sector. Young customers commonly exhibit mistrust towards sustainability marketing due to apprehensions around greenwashing and a perceived absence of openness. Furthermore, it was found that although consumers are prepared to pay a higher price for items that are truly sustainable, there exists a notable disparity in their comprehension of sustainability language and certifications. The experiences of fashion labels Company G and Company AA highlighted the difficulties that firms encounter credibility while managing the demands of marketing and regulatory compliance.

## **Considerations for Future Research-**

To undertake comparable research, it is advisable to broaden the geographical scope by including numerous locations and industries. This will enable the collection of a more diversified range of data and allow for the validation of findings in different situations. By increasing the sample size and utilizing both qualitative and quantitative methodologies, the strength and applicability of the findings may be improved. As I only focus on qualitative methods. Conducting longitudinal research enables the monitoring of changes in consumer perceptions and actions over time, offering more profound insights into the effects of sustainability claims and marketing methods. The use and acceptance of standardized sustainability terms and certifications will decrease customer perplexity and bolster trust. By implementing continuing consumer interaction initiatives, companies may assure a continual flow of input, which allows for the adoption of marketing and sustainability activities. Finally, promoting partnerships among companies, regulatory agencies, and environmental groups will facilitate the establishment and implementation of global criteria for sustainability assertions and ESG disclosure.

Future studies can expand upon the findings of this study, adding to the existing information on sustainable practices in the fashion sector, and facilitating the alignment of consumers' expectations with brand practices.

## **Acknowledgements**

First and foremost, I would like to thank my respective supervisor, Michael Søgaard Jørgensen, Associate Professor, Department of Sustainability and Planning, for his guidance, feedback, and support throughout the project. Thanks for taking the time to help me with the different questions I had. I would like to thank everyone who manages to sit with me and give valuable input on my project. And last but not least, my husband, who gives me time and space to complete my dream.

## **Declaration of interest statement**

My interest in sustainability and people's attitudes towards it began early on, deeply rooted in Bangladesh's rich textile tradition. During my third semester project, I explored the motivations behind consumers' choices in purchasing sustainable clothing, comparing the purchasing behaviors of women in Bangladesh and Denmark. The findings revealed that Danish women are significantly more conscious about contributing to sustainability through their clothing choices. However, a common theme among all participants was their skepticism towards the sustainability claims made in advertisements and their heightened awareness of the terminology used in these claims. This intrigued me greatly.

The inspiration for my thesis came from the insights I gained during these interviews. I felt compelled to further investigate this topic, particularly from the perspective of the clothing brands themselves. After conducting initial research and discussing with friends involved in brand advertising, I solidified my focus and proceeded with my research. This thesis represents the culmination of my efforts to understand and address the complexities surrounding consumer perceptions of sustainability claims in the fashion industry.

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# Appendix

## Interview Guide-

### **1. Consumer Perceptions of Sustainability Claims in Fashion Advertising**

#### **Section 1: Demographic Information**

1. **Age:**
  - 25-30
2. **Gender:**
  - Male
  - Female
3. **Location:**
  -

#### **Section 2: Shopping Habits**

4. **How often do you purchase new clothing?**
  - Weekly
  - Monthly
  - Quarterly
  - Annually
  - Rarely
5. **Where do you primarily shop for clothing?**
  - Online
  - Local boutiques
  - Major retail stores
  - Second-hand shops
  - Other

#### **Section 3: Perceptions of Sustainability Claims**

6. **How important is sustainability to you when purchasing clothing?**
  - Very important
  - Somewhat important
  - Neutral
  - Somewhat unimportant
  - Not important at all
7. **Which of the following terms do you find most convincing in sustainability claims?**  
(Select up to 3)
  - Eco-friendly



- Ethical
  - Organic
  - Recycled/Upcycled
  - Biodegradable
  - Fair Trade
  - Zero Waste
  - Non-Toxic
  - Renewable
  - Carbon Neutral
  - Other
8. **How often do you doubt the sustainability claims made by fashion brands?**
- Always
  - Often
  - Sometimes
  - Rarely
  - Never
9. **What factors make you skeptical about sustainability claims? (Select all that apply)**
- Lack of transparency
  - Past negative experiences
  - General distrust in advertising
  - Complexity of sustainability
  - Inconsistent information
  - Other

#### **Section 4: Impact on Purchasing Decisions**

10. **Have you ever decided not to purchase from a brand because you doubted their sustainability claims?**
- Yes
  - No
11. **How likely are you to research a brand's sustainability practices before making a purchase?**
- Very likely
  - Somewhat likely
  - Neutral
  - Somewhat unlikely
  - Very unlikely
12. **What sources do you trust the most for verifying a brand's sustainability claims?**
- Official brand website
  - Third-party certifications
  - Customer reviews

- Social media influencers
- News articles
- Environmental organizations
- Other

## **Section 5: Open-Ended Questions**

**13. In your opinion, what can fashion brands do to better convince you of their commitment to sustainability?**

○

**14. Share any personal experiences you've had with sustainability claims in fashion (positive or negative).**

○

## **2. Key Questions for Companies:**

The Following questions are initial to start the interview,after that we discuss lots of issues.

1. How do you ensure the authenticity of your sustainability claims?
2. What specific regulations do you follow to maintain sustainable practices?
3. How do you balance marketing tactics with genuine sustainability efforts?

## **3. Interview with people from my third semester project:**

<https://www.harpersbazaar.com/uk/fashion/shows-trends/a38792610/sustainability-series-copenhagen-fashion-week/>

Discussion Points:

The Following questions are initial to start the interview,after that we discuss lots of issues.

1. What are your thoughts on the video's portrayal of sustainability in fashion?
2. Do you think the brands featured genuinely practice sustainability, or is it more of a marketing strategy?
3. Has the video influenced your perception of sustainable fashion brands?