

RE-WEARING
RE-WEARING



IS _____.
CARING



“ The most ”
sustainable
garment is the one
already in your
wardrobe

●
Orsola De Castro

Ethics **Statement**

I confirm that this work has gained a favourable ethics opinion and that I have honestly observed the terms of the opinion in the conduct of this project.



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Word Count: 7594

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1.1

Introduction

This report covers the impact of sustainability on the fast fashion industry; discovering why are Gen-Z ignoring sustainable ranges within mass market fashion when they are the leading generation for sustainable freedom. Sustainability is the focus of planning for the future and prolonging the wellbeing of ourselves and the planet (Portney, 2015). With the rise of the trend in contemporary society (Schweighofer, T. 2018), there has been significant influence in the fashion industry. As discussed in the PESTLE, The United Nations Sustainability goals now advocates for responsible consumption and production (United Nations, 2022 (See Appendix. 1.)). Furthermore, 57% of consumers are searching for sustainable fashion options and 73% of consumers stated they would spend more money for a product which is "socially conscious" (Sender Ceron, 2019).

Fast fashion is the processes in making ready-to-wear clothing; the system involves design, production, distribution and fast marketing, advocating overconsumption (Muthu, 2019). Implementing sustainability in mass market fashion is confronting, as the industry has negatively impacted the planet (Muthu, 2019). Due to the rise in sustainability awareness and in order to compete in the industry, mass market brands have introduced eco-conscious ranges, for example Zara Join Life and H&M conscious. The ranges include clothing which use recycled materials and humane processes to lessen environmental and ethical impacts (Park and Oh, 2014).



Gen-Z consumers (consumers born from 1997-2012) are the leading generation advocating sustainability (Warren, 2020), with 70% of 16-19-year-olds agree that sustainability is an important issue, compared with 20% of 65-79-year-olds (Kale, 2021). They are also the key drivers of fast fashion consumption; with surveys suggesting that over half of Gen-Z consumers buy "most of their clothes" from fast fashion brands (Maguire and Arnett, 2020). Therefore, this report has been conducted to analyse the responses Gen-Z have towards eco-ranges within the mass market; and to understand why there is an ignorance towards sustainable ranges when they are the leading generation for sustainable freedom. Additionally, the gap between Gen-Z's attitudes and behaviours will be investigated; finding the drivers and barriers of pro-environmental behaviour. Overall informing future marketers of how the generation can be targeted to act sustainably.

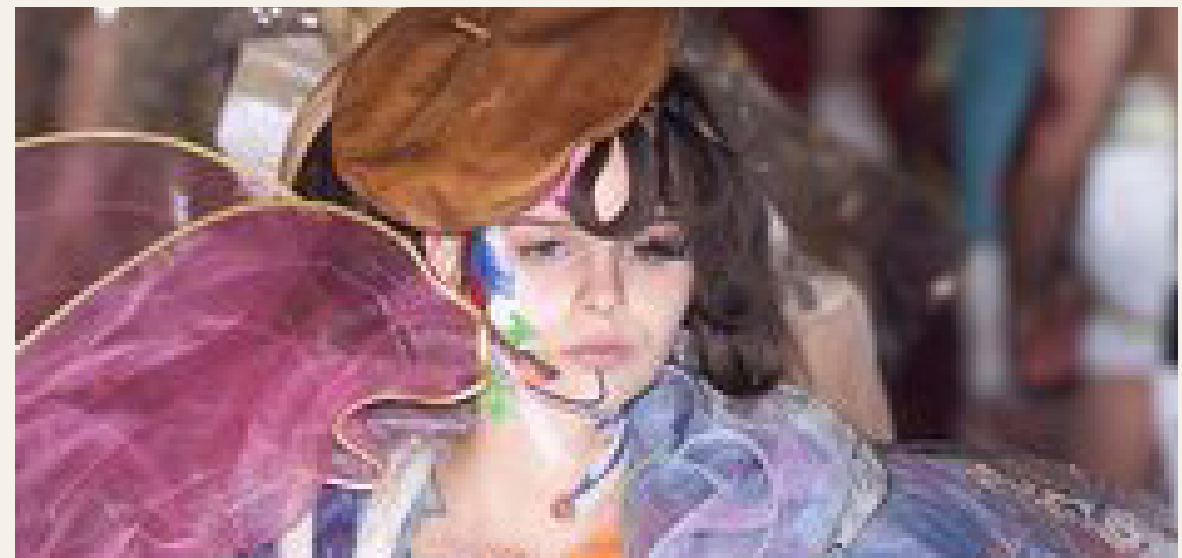


1.2 Rationale

Our world is consistently changing in trends, it is argued that sustainability is the most prevalent trend due to the negative impacts our contemporary behaviours will have on future generations and the planet. The impact of fast fashion on global warming and environmental pollution is a notable concern for all generations (Muthu, 2019). However, Gen-Z has been the generation which has campaigned and advocated for sustainable freedom (Arora and Manchanda, 2022). Gen-Z are said to hold sustainable values, albeit have an ongoing desire to overconsume fashion to fulfill pressures to upkeep with trends (Nugroho, Rahayu and Hapsari. 2022), whilst ignoring sustainable ranges within the market (Carrera and Salibian, 2019). This report has been written to understand why the generation have an ignorance towards sustainable ranges within mass market fashion and further aim to close the gap between attitudes and behaviours. Achieving methods which motivate sustainable purchasing behaviour, limiting effects on the overconsumption of fashion.

1.3 Research Question

Why are Gen-Z ignoring sustainable ranges within mass market fashion when they are the leading generation for sustainable freedom?



1.4 — Aims

Investigate why consumers aged 18-25 are ignorant towards eco-conscious ranges within the mass market when they are the leading generation for sustainable freedom.



• — 1.5 Objectives

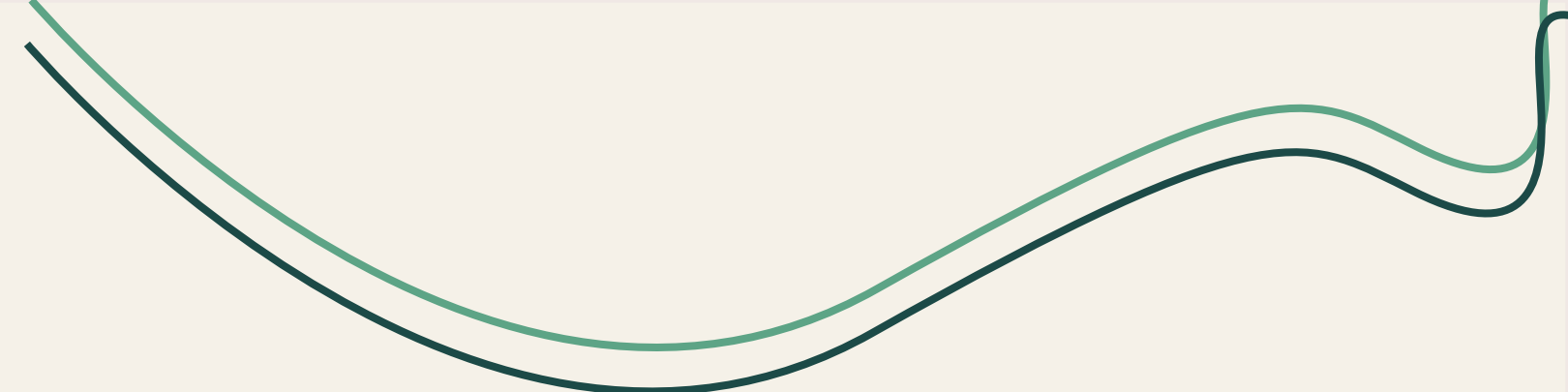
- 1 To analyse what view and knowledge Gen-Z consumers hold in regards to sustainable options in the fast fashion market.
- 2 To identify what influences Gen-Z consumers to purchase unethically when they hold sustainable concern.
- 3 To identify the main source of information that is causing Gen-Z consumers to have negative preconceptions of sustainable ranges within mass market brands.
- 4 Analyse Gen-Z's purchasing decisions to understand their awareness and attitudes towards eco-conscious ranges.
- 5 To identify what is driving the gap between consumer attitudes and behaviours to come up with a business solution which advocates ethical consumption and adheres to convenience culture, without disturbing brand image.

2.1 —•

Literature Review

Introduction

A literature review will be undertaken initially to examine what has already been published on this subject. This will then inform the objectives of the primary research undertaken in this report. The literature review will shape the methodology, aiding the success of the report. By reading topics from different perspectives, gaps in knowledge can be identified. Primary research can then be conducted around the gap and manifest how sustainability within fast fashion market can move forward (Dragt, 2019). The secondary sources reviewed include; peer-reviewed articles, journals, books and data trend websites such as Mintel. The sources will be analysed to contribute to the following discussions; sustainability within fast fashion, Gen-Z and overconsumption, the Attitude Behaviour Gap Theory and knowledge distribution.



2.2 Sustainability —• in Fast Fashion

Sustainability within fast fashion alludes to creating ready-to-wear clothing; limiting the negative effects the processes have on the environment and humanity (Zhang, Zhang and Zhou, 2021). The discussion between sustainability and fast fashion is confronting, as making cheap, quick and disposable clothing creates a critical impact on the sustainability of the planet (McNeill, and Moore, 2015). The industry promotes overconsumption (Gabrielli, Baghi and Codellupi, 2011) leading to an increase in CO2 emissions and fashion waste in landfill (Silva, Douglas and Morais, 2022). As discussed in the PESTLE (see appendix. 1.), fast fashion also has a significant impact on wellbeing of workers; with BooHoo having modern slavery investigations (Duncan. 2020). Highlighting the detriments that the mass market industry has on the environment and humanity.

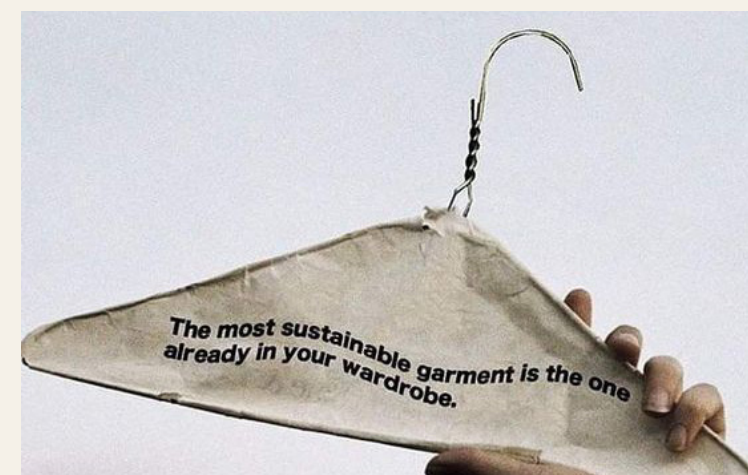
Due to the increase in sustainability awareness, to ensure brands withstand in the industry, it was necessary to incorporate sustainability into their ranges (Salfino, 2019).

Resale and rental schemes increased by 64% in 2022 (Bain, 2022); additionally, bio-positive materials are being introduced in premium market brands such as Timberland and Levi's (Scott et al., 2021). With consumers actively seeking sustainable options, it gives incentive for the fast fashion industry to implement sustainable values into their ranges (Kim, Park and Glovinsky, 2019). The industry has seen a rise "Eco-Conscious" clothing lines in their brands, such as H&M "Conscious". Eco-Conscious ranges within the mass market industry refers to clothing that has a lesser impact on the sustainability of the planet than regular fast fashion (Muthu, 2019). By using recycled materials, the ranges advocate reuse of waste materials (Buller and Scott, 2022). The ranges were incorporated to broaden consumer demographic and improve brand image (Koh, Burnasheva and Suh, 2019).

Greenwashing

Albeit sustainable changes have been made by fast fashion brands (Heuer, and Becker-Leifhold, 2018), it is discussed how trustworthy the values are. The misrepresentation of adding “green” ranges from notoriously unsustainable brands (McNeill, and Moore, 2015)) leads to deception of consumers with their sustainability efforts (Munir, and Mohan, 2022). Greenwashing can be defined as the disclosure of positive information about a brands environmental values, whilst hiding the ongoing negative impacts (Cook and Yurchisin, 2017). Fast fashion brands will hide the impacts through ambiguous statements, false advertisements and images (Parguel, Benoît-Moreau and Larceneux, 2011), to lure consumers who have desire to purchase sustainably (Szmigin, Carrigan and McEachern, 2009). Arguably, it is crucial for stakeholders in the industry to make sustainable changes to compete within the market; as greenwashing can improve brand image, increase revenue and promote sustainability awareness (Jamali and Karam, 2016).

Whilst it is a benefit to use greenwashing as a marketing tool, it can take a negative effect on the brand as a whole. The impacts of greenwashing is heavily documented (Amrani, 2022), creating dissentient associations. This disrupting consumer loyalty (Nyilasy, Gangadharbalta and Paladino, 2013) and negatively influencing purchases from sustainable ranges (De Jong, 2019). Furthermore, greenwashing not only effects the individual brand, but can cause consumers to be reliant in purchasing from other companies in the industry (Zabkar and Hosta, 2012).



Sustainability within fast fashion is a challenging issue; whilst the industry has reacted well to the trend, the implementation of eco-conscious ranges gained negative responses (Adrita and Mohuiddin, 2020). Existing literature suggests the importance to hide unsustainable processes, as it can be damaging to brand image (Markham, 2014). This is challenged by the gap in literature, advocating that a lack of transparency caused negative responses from consumers, creating untrustworthy preconceptions (Szabo and Webster, 2020). Generating a deterrence to purchase from eco-conscious ranges, giving insight why Gen-Z are ignoring the ranges. Indicating that the implementation of sustainable ranges in fast fashion brands has not influenced Gen-Z to make pro-environmental purchases.

2.3. Gen-Z & Overconsumption

Gen-Z are the largest current generation, accounting to 25% of the global population (Nugroho, et al. 2022), holding a significant effect on the fashion economy (Ayuni, 2019). The generation are a target for marketers, due to their considerable influence on the success of the industry (Thangavel, 2019). Overconsumption is defined as the excessive use of goods and services, intending to please one's self for their personal happiness, pursuit or comfort (Simpson, 2019). Half of surveyed Gen-Z consumers stated they spend the majority of their money on fashion (Schneider and Lee, 2022), highlighting the desire to overconsume within the generation. By understanding what encourages Gen-Z to overconsume, it can be learnt why the gap is prevailing between attitudes and behaviours.

There are various vendors encouraging Gen-Z to overconsume (Thangeval, 2019); the strongest motivators derive from social media pressures (Jacobsen, and Barnes, 2020). Social media is an ideal platform to target Gen-Z, as they are the first digital generation (Katz et al., 2022); as discussed in the PESTLE (See Appendix. 1.) the average Gen-Z consumer spends up to 4 hours a day on their device (Kastenholz, 2021). During the era of online influencers being at an all-time high (Lou and Yuan, 2019), it is important for the Gen-Z consumer to withstand in this space (Jacobson and Barnes, 2020). With students claiming they "feel pressured to be wearing different clothes online" (Kale, 2021). The pressure to upkeep trends leads to moral discomfort, resulting in overconsumption from mass market brands, ensuring variety in their wardrobe (Workman, Lee and Liang, 2022). Whilst literature advocates that Gen-Z strictly purchase unsustainably, many consumers purchase from second hand retail sites such as Depop and eBay; with 90% of Depop's users being under 26 (Schneier, 2019), contributing to a circular fashion economy. Albeit this is a sustainable method, arguably the intention to use second hand sites is for monetary purposes (Kale, 2021), as it is a cheaper method than purchasing first-hand. Therefore the motives are questionable as to whether the purchases are for sustainable freedom or personal gain.

Social Media

vs

Gen-Z

Social media has a significant impact on purchasing decisions, with data stating that 96% of Gen-Z consumers use it as their main source of inspiration (Kastenholz, 2021); further data suggesting influencing gives a better reach than traditional marketing methods (Kadam, 2021). Influencer endorsement creates positive associations with a brand and has consumer trust (Blandi, et al., 2022). In contrast, the large use of advertisement on social media platforms cause reliance in Gen-Z purchasing behaviour (Lisboa, et al., 2022). Due to their digitally savvy nature, the generation prevents processing advertisement from social media, as the messages are distrustful (Pragathi, 2021). Proposing that Gen-Z are too digitally analytical to be influenced and is their personal determinant to overconsume.

To conclude, Gen-Z are the leading generation for overconsumption. Literature highlights they are leading in second-hand purchases; it is challenged the intent is not for sustainability purposes. Moreover, the pressure from social media to stay on trend comes in to the forefront of priority. Showing how the generation is encouraged to overconsume, proving the importance of closing the gap between attitudes and behaviours.



2.4. Attitude Behaviour Gap

In relation to this report, the attitude behaviour gap refers to Gen-Z having strong feelings toward sustainability, but retaining the desire to overconsume (Tölkes, 2018). Understanding the relationship between attitudes and behaviours is crucial to create a system which influences Gen-Z to shop sustainably. The gap is challenging, as the exaggeration of demand for environmental products leads to an overreaction from brands (Bernandes et al., 2018), creating unnecessary clothes.

It is prerequisite that the increase of consumer awareness towards sustainability is obliged for responsible consumption (Buerke, 2016). A higher knowledge of sustainability equates higher concern for the environment, translating into pro-environmental purchasing behaviour (Moser, 2015). Consumer awareness is heightened within Gen-Z, as 81% of Gen-Z consumers agree that apparel manufacturing processes have a considerable environmental impact (Muthu, 2019). Assuming that standards in contemporary society awards pro-environmental behaviours, which is required to achieve a sustainable fashion economy (Wokje Abrahamse, 2019). Allowing the consumer to reflect on unsustainable behaviours; and feel socially responsible to create rational purchasing decisions.



It is suggested an increase in consumer awareness positively impacts pro-environmental purchasing behaviours (Galbreth, and Ghosh, 2014), arguably the opposite effect is taken. The negative connotations with eco-conscious clothing that comes with an increase of knowledge can deter consumers from purchasing sustainably (Lisboa et al., 2022). The nuances with eco-conscious clothing is lower performance, higher costing and inconvenience (Naderi and van Steenburg, 2018). Data displays this, as more than half of reported Gen-Z consumers continue to purchase from fast fashion brands, despite 70% stating sustainability is a concern for them when purchasing clothing (Kale, 2021). Proving materialistic and monetary values are prioritised in Gen-Z.

Whilst Gen-Z lead sustainable freedom (Williams and Hodges, 2022), they are at the frontline for environmental misbehaviour (Arora and Manchanda, 2022). The consumer holds purchasing values such as; convenience, performance and experience (Lisboa et al., 2022). Whereas the associations that Eco-Conscious ranges withhold are; inconvenience and higher costing (Naderi and van Steenburg, 2018). Causing an unwillingness to translate sustainable attitudes into behaviours.

Gen-Z have a knowledgeable vision of the future environment, suggesting a higher demand for sustainable clothing (Goldring and Azab, 2020), this is prohibited by the urge for new products, pragmatism and analytical nature (Chillakuri, 2020). Challenging the attitude behaviour gap theory and concluding that increased awareness does not lead to increase of demand. Further suggesting that the gap between attitudes and behaviours is driven by an increase in knowledge. Therefore, it is prerequisite to understand how Gen-Z are gaining this knowledge to diminish negative preconceptions and encourage the generation to purchase sustainably within mass market fashion.

2.5. Knowledge Sharing

Reluctance from Gen-Z to purchase environmental products is confusing for marketers; as the generation hold sustainable values (Buckle, 2019). To understand how the negative preconceptions arose, it is important to find where the generation are gaining this information.

Peer to peer knowledge is the discussion of information between word of mouth (Asterhan and Bouton, 2017). In all generations, exchanging knowledge between peers is prevalent (Neugebauer, J. et al., 2016). Trading information is beneficial to enhance learning through creating socio-cognitive conflicts in discussion with different levels of opinions (Bell and Kozlowski, 2002); which in vein builds on elaborate knowledge (Buder, 2007). Less knowledgeable consumers benefit from peer-to-peer knowledge, as the information is fed through a style which is comprehensive for the individual (Dehler Zufferey et al., 2010).

Controversially, there are difficulties seen in peer knowledge. New learners are sporadic or not spontaneous in seeking knowledge (Fischer et al., 2002), due to bias on another person's knowledge, in that they are similar to their own (Sangin, 2011). This can cause complications, as the learner is reluctant to request explanations of information appropriate to the partners knowledge level; limiting feedback (Crommelinck and Anseel, 2013). Albeit, information is still being discussed, triggering conflicting opinions, whether it is outwardly spoken or not; it creates new knowledge for the individual (Tesser and Smith, 1980).

The rise of social media creates platforms to discuss opinions over topics. Social media is not only a method for social purposes, but for frustrative discussion (Tseng, and Kuo, 2014) and formal learning (Ma and Chan, 2014). Individuals from Gen-Z stated that online knowledge sharing is a preferred method of learning (Szymkowiak et al., 2021). Groups can create communities of interest where users collaborate and form contemporary information (Junco, 2014). However, it can feed bias or incorrect opinions, causing dispute or misinformation (Kirschner, 2010). In regards to sustainability ranges within fast fashion brands, misinformation and particularly bias through online knowledge sharing can be detrimental for a brand image (Feinlieb, 2017); as it can influence purchasing decisions and can hinder consumer loyalty (Tsotsou, 2016).

Overall, the two main information sources are peer-to-peer knowledge and online sharing (Hamdi, 2022). Suggesting where the generation are gaining their knowledge around sustainability ranges within fast fashion. Further indicating the reason for negative preconceptions are due to bias from the previous sharer or misinformation through social media. Overall, implying the negative information distribution has caused Gen-Z to have a deterrence towards sustainable ranges within the mass market.



2.6. The Gap

The secondary research concluded that Gen-Z have negative connotations regarding sustainable ranges within fast fashion. The preconceptions being that they are low performance and untrustworthy (Lisboa, et al., 2022). It is stipulated that peer-to-peer distribution, and information from social media are the main vendors that influence Gen-Z's knowledge of eco-ranges. Suggesting that if Gen-Z are gaining their information surrounding sustainable ranges in fast fashion through said vendors, it can lead to misconception. Indicating why there is a gap between attitudes and behaviours.

If Gen-Z retain negative preconceptions; does it lead to the generation having a reluctance to look for sustainable options, causing a lack of awareness of sustainability ranges within fast fashion? The gap in knowledge is, has an increase in knowledge surrounding fast fashion has caused a deterrence in sustainable purchasing behaviours within Gen-Z? Therefore, when conducting primary research, it is prerequisite to understand where Gen-Z gain their main source of information, and how this has influenced their attitudes and behaviours towards eco-ranges. This will also shape the answer of what is deterring the Gen-Z consumers from making sustainable purchasing decisions.



Figure 1
(See Appendix. 2)





The primary research follows The Delphi Method. The Delphi method involves a round of questions, with the following methods being reshaped to how the responses were interpreted. Concluding to a true consensus of how the researched group respond to what is being investigated (Kauko and Palmroos, 2014). The Delphi method is being utilised by gaining survey responses from Gen-Z consumers to understand knowledge towards sustainable ranges. Following this, focus groups and expert interviews will be reshaped to understand Gen-Z's attitudes. Finally a shopping analysis will be conducted to determine the purchasing behaviours. Culminating to the consensus of Gen-Z's views and responses towards eco-conscious ranges.

3.1. Approach to Research

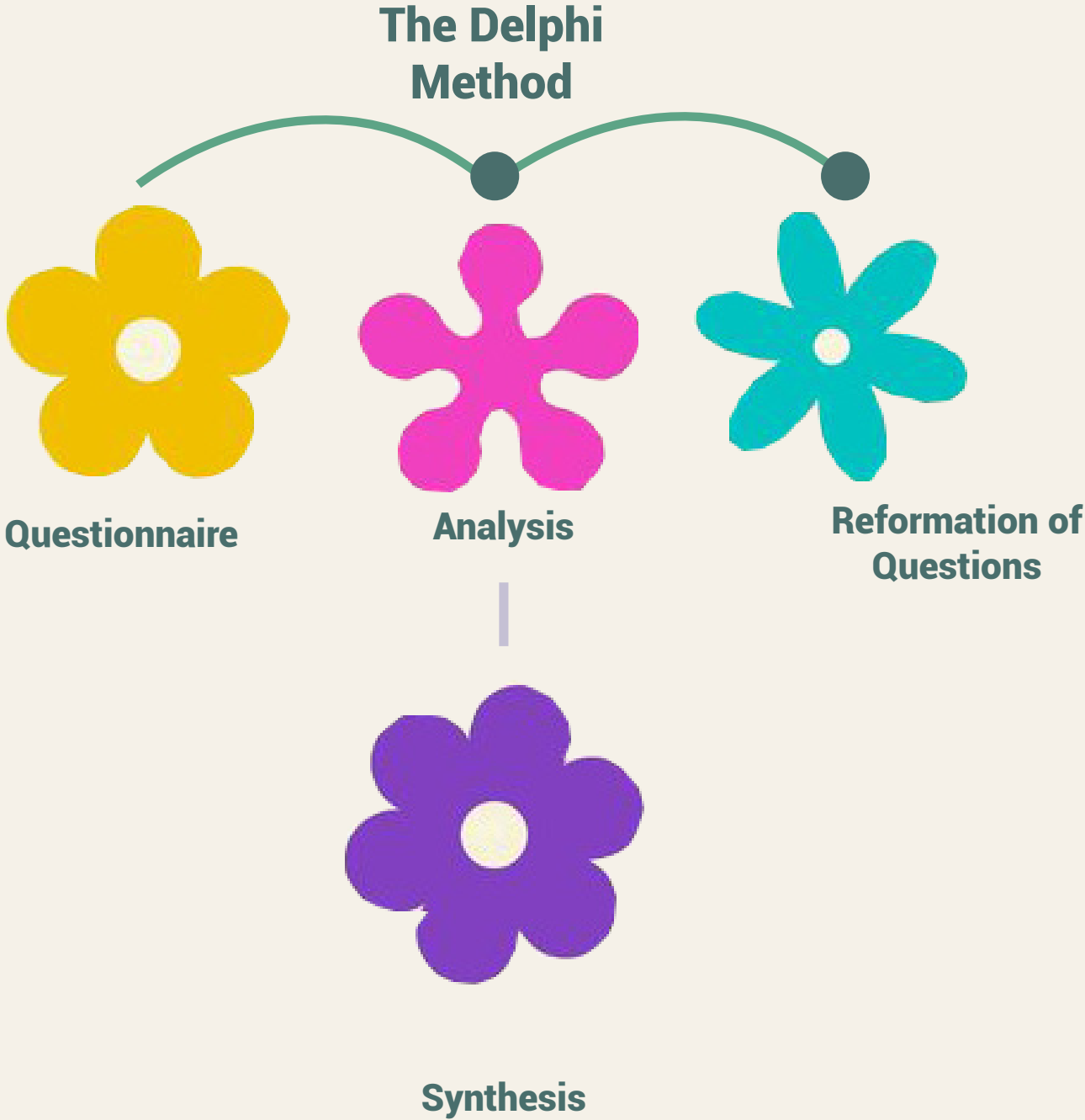


Figure 2
(See Appendix. 2)

3.2. Sample

By using convenience sampling through social media distribution, the survey and focus group covers a sample of males and females ranging from 18-25. Additionally, the shopping analysis involved two females from Gen-Z whom both are regular fast fashion buyers, but stated they are looking for sustainable options in the market.

This generation has been honed on due to their love of fast fashion whilst retaining sustainable values (Muthu, 2019), showing contrast between attitudes and behaviours. As the generation are leading for fast fashion purchases (Mcneill & Moore, 2015), it is prerequisite for future marketers to understand how to target the generation sustainably. The majority of survey respondents and focus group participants are female, as one in five females have reported purchasing an item of clothing per week (Morgan & Birtwistle, 2009), reflecting how the majority of fast fashion purchases are from women (Morgan & Birtwistle, 2009). Women are also stated to have stronger sustainability values in comparison to men (Chuvieco, 2018), therefore by using a female dominated sample, it gives an accurate depiction on who is being targeting, meaning the discussions are successful.

A limitation of the sample was the use of convenience sampling. Convenience sampling is the non-probability method in which the researcher uses convenient access for the selection (Emerson, 2015). As the survey was targeted at consumers who had similar interests to the researcher, it limited the representation and may introduce bias as the sample may not be diverse.



3.3. Positionality

There is positionality based on my own social identities (Takacs, 2003). The combination creating a unique shape of how I have interpreted the research question. As we occupy multiple identities which are fluid in nature and create different results in comparison to one another (Alcoff, 1988). The main social identities which have influenced my report being; social class and geographical location.



I come from a middle class background with my family earning a high disposable income. This has allowed me to have access to more expensive options in regards to amenities such as food and clothing. Meaning I have access to the sustainable options within fast fashion brands. Additionally, the participants from the focus group and shopping analysis are people I am affiliated with, and also come from middle class backgrounds. This is a significant identity on how the results are shaped; as middle class citizens are suggested to be more aware of sustainable ranges (Niu, Zhou and Pei., 2020).

Another affinity is the location I am from. The survey was distributed through social media, meaning the sample is limited to certain parts of the UK. Leading to the UK population serving as the object of study, with main links to Merseyside. This may limit the results of the survey, as the shopping habits may vary in Merseyside in comparison to the UK; showing difficulty when selecting a representative sample. However, I ensured the participants of the focus group came from different backgrounds for accurate representation.



3.4. Secondary Research



The secondary research conducted covered the appropriate topics and shaped the primary research for discussion. The sources used included; peer-reviewed articles, books and data trend websites such as Mintel. The material was appropriately selected and is relevant to the topic of sustainability within mass market fashion. To analyse the trend in a global aspect, a PESTLE was created (See Appendix. 1.), this enabled an understanding of how sustainability has influenced different aspects of society (Aguilar, 1967). The research was analysed to understand different influences that impacts Gen-Z's fast fashion purchasing behaviours and their sustainability values.

Select data being out of date limits the report due to irrelevance (Peloquin et al., 2020). Additionally, the information may not be accurate, as some sources may be vague or have bias; disrupting the accuracy of the report (Baldwin, et al., 2022). To ensure dated sources are reliable, further reading has been conducted to warrant accuracy. The authors of the sources have been checked to avoid bias, and research has been undertaken for authentic theory.

3.5. Survey



Initiating the Delphi Method, a survey was conducted using multiple choice and open-ended questions to provoke honest answers (See appendix 5.1. and 5.2.). The survey received 101 responses, in which 30% were male and 69% female. The questions were related around sustainability within fast fashion and eco-conscious ranges; in order to understand Gen-Z's sustainability knowledge and attitudes towards mass market fashion, answering objective 1.

The respondents may make "socially correct" answers, limiting the results of the survey and misshaping the discussion. It was reassured to the respondents that the data would remain anonymous. Furthermore, the survey was limited to 13 questions and was succinct to encourage instantaneous reactions; as the respondents did not spend copious amounts of time thinking about their answers (Goyder, 1986).

3.6. Focus Groups

Following the next stage of the Delphi method, the focus groups were reshaped to uncover what source of information is causing the negative nuances between Gen-Z and sustainable ranges within mass market fashion (See Appendix. 6.1. & 6.2.). The attitude behaviour gap was tested by analysing the generations attitudes towards sustainability; covering objectives 3 and 5. The groups entailed a conversation between a mix of males and females from Gen-Z; stating that they purchase from fast fashion, but look for sustainable options.

Limiting the discussion is the participants acting socially conscious when answering to avoid confrontation. To avoid this, the focus group was held in a calm setting, ensuring everyone felt comfortable to share honest answers); additionally, digital ethnography was used to encourage instantaneous responses (Murthy, 2008) (see Appendix 8).



See Appendix 6

3.7. Shopping Analysis

Succeeding the focus group, it was prerequisite to understand the consumer responses and awareness towards eco-ranges in the high street. To analyse purchasing decisions, a shopping analysis was conducted (See Appendix. 7.). The participants were told to shop for clothes, observing their reactions towards the eco-conscious ranges. Giving insight to their awareness and attitudes towards sustainable ranges, suggesting what deters or motivates the consumer to make environmental purchasing decisions; contributing to objective 2 and 4.

The Hawthorne effect may limit the results of the shopping analysis. In regards to this study, the Hawthorne effect relates to the responses and behaviours from the participants, as they may be altered due to the realisation that they are being monitored (Parsons, 1975). By discarding the initial observations and allowing the participants to acclimatise to their surroundings, it will ease the temporary discomforts and reveal the raw behaviours that are being observed.

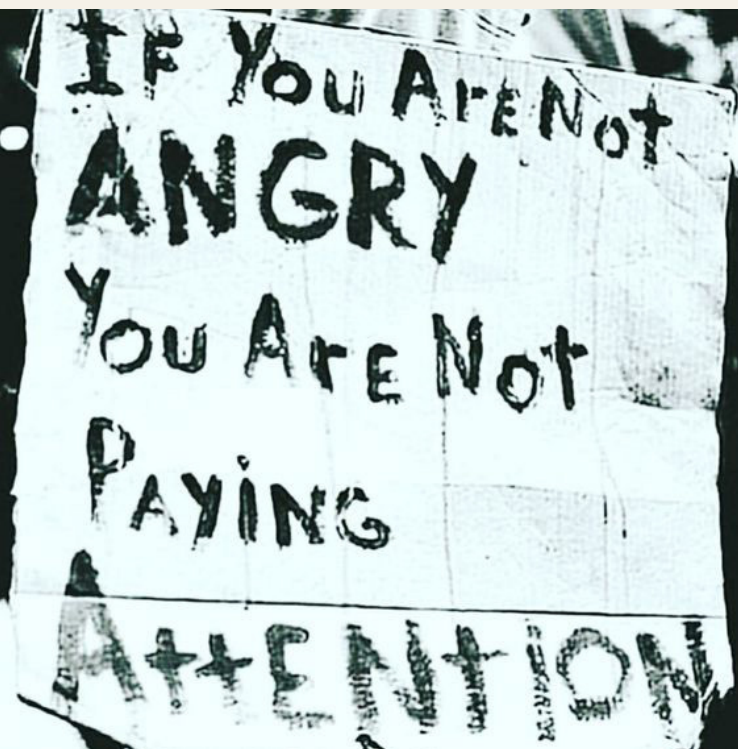
3.8. Expert Interview

To gain a professional viewpoint of how information is distributed, an interview with a sustainable influencer was conducted. A series of questions were asked to understand what information was being delivered, and how they are influencing their followers to make sustainable decisions, covering objective 3. Giving insight to which platform is the most successful when delivering information to Gen-Z.

Limiting the industry interviews would be to protect their image, the answers may be vague, to avoid damage to their reputation (Hughes, Swaminathan and Brooks 2019). To circumvent this, the interview will be conducted over a video platform; ensuring the answers are raw, avoiding time to create an answer which suits their reputation.



4. Chapter 1



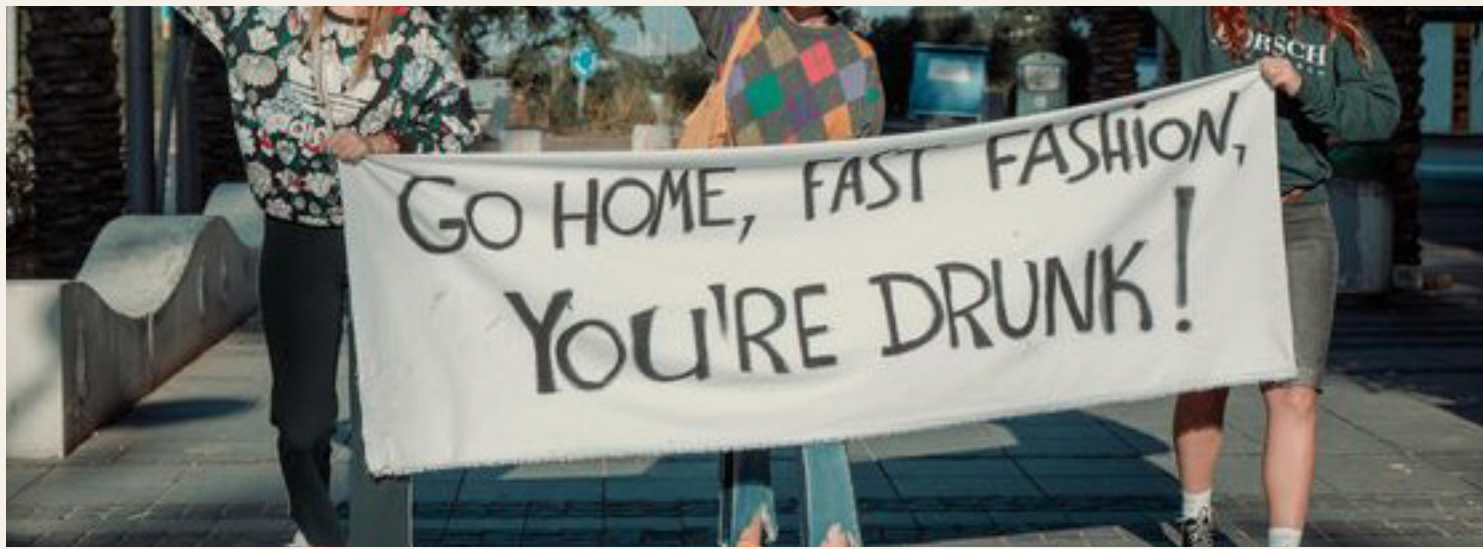
In this report, the aim was to investigate the gap between Gen-Z's attitudes and behaviours in regards to sustainability and their fashion purchasing behaviours. To understand what is driving the gap, the primary research investigated responses from Gen-Z towards eco-conscious ranges further gaining a comprehension to why there are negative preconceptions. Using the methods of primary research combined with the support of analysed secondary literature; this chapter aims to conclude why there is an ignorance towards eco-conscious ranges in the mass market industry whilst the generation are leading for sustainable freedom. There are multiple reasons driving the attitude behaviour gap such as; the internal pressures of social media, the desire to overconsume and affordability. However, this chapter will be focusing on the analytical nature of Gen-Z and how it has motivated the gap; discovering what preconceptions are held surrounding sustainable ranges in mass market fashion and how they have gained that information.

4.1. Why do Gen-Z Overconsume?

The literature discussed how social media is the main influence encouraging overconsumption from Gen-Z (Salo, 2017). The presence that fast fashion has on social media platforms targets a generation whom are pressured to look their best, causes unsustainable purchasing (Odden, 2012). Arguably, the primary research displays how the generation are too digitally savvy to consume through this marketing method. As 1.9% of consumers stated social media was an influence of their purchasing behaviours (See Appendix. 5.2.). Further displaying this in the expert interview, McSorely stated "my social media influencing does not have a great impact on what my followers buy" (Jade McSorely, sustainable influencer and rental brand owner. See Appendix. 6.3.). Proving the analytical nature of Gen-Z, and do not seek validation online, and do not adhere to social media pressures. Suggesting that there is a more significant determinant endorsing unsustainable purchasing behaviour.



What motivates you to purchase from fast fashion?



The primary research proposes the discussion that peer influence is noteworthy motivator of unsustainable behaviour. Looking at the focus group, it is identified that participants are driven by...

"I mean I always feel pressured by my friends to get new clothes, because they always look great so why wouldn't I buy clothes to feel pretty too."



"I 100% think my friends influence how much I buy"



"if you see something nice that your friend got you would just go and buy it"

See Appendix 6.1. & 6.2.

These quotes showing a common theme of peer pressure on purchasing influence within the study's demographic. Although online pressures are apparent, it is indicated how the consumer feels in competition with peers to stay on trend. The consumer desires validation from their peers, as they want to "feel pretty too", showing how the competition advocates overconsumption, so the consumer ensures they don't feel inferior to their friends. Further evidencing this, during the shopping analysis, it was noted how the individual buying the clothes had to ask each time whether their peer liked the item as well (See Appendix. 7). Proving how the generation seek validation from their friends for confidence that they are making the right purchasing decision, confirming that peer approval ensures certitude in what the consumer is buying. Highlighting that peer influence and competition takes a mastery of consumer behaviour and endorses overconsumption of fashion.

4.2. Responses Towards Eco-ranges

The literature evidenced the higher demand for environmental products from Gen-Z due to an increase of sustainability awareness (Fletcher and Tham, 2016). However it was argued that the initial responses towards eco-ranges in mass market fashion were negative. The primary research agrees with the literature of the common negative nuances surrounding eco-ranges. Focusing on the survey, when asked what deterred the individual from making sustainable purchasing decisions, a pattern arose...

Greenwashing



Low Quality



Expense

(See Appendix. 5.2.)

The research agrees with the literature showing how greenwashing has taken an authority on consumer purchasing misbehaviour, as it creates untrustworthy associations (Guo et al., 2015). To display this, 18% of the respondents stated that greenwashing was discouraging them from making pro-environmental purchasing decisions (See Appendix. 5.2.); evidencing that the consumer is analytical towards dishonest marketing and has distrustful preconceptions towards eco-ranges.

Additionally, the preconception that eco-ranges are expensive is a significant indicator as to why there is a deterrence, as the consumer values "lower cost and general efficiency" (See Appendix. 5.2.). Moreover, during the focus group, it was stated "why would I spend more money on a product if I know it's not sustainable" (See Appendix. 6.2.). Showing how the combination of greenwashing and connotations of being higher costing is preventing any incentive for the consumer to purchase from a sustainable range within the mass market.

Another common deterrence was the bias of low quality. It is assumed by 10% of consumers that eco products are low quality (See Appendix. 5.2.). By introducing a range by a notoriously low quality industry, it does not give the consumer motivation to pay for sustainable clothing, as they already have low expectations for the quality of the product. To further evidence this, in the focus group it was stated "why would I spend more money on a product if I know it's not going to last", evidencing that the consumer needs reassurance in the quality of a sustainable product to ensure motivation for purchase.

Greenwashing has a remarkable influence on the consumers purchasing behaviours, as it alters the trust between brand and consumer, displaying eco-ranges as a “gimmick” (See Appendix. 6.2.). Not only does the consumer have doubts in how sustainable a product is, but the confidence in the range as a whole is obstructed. As the consumer is analytical due to greenwashing, it leads them to believe that the eco-ranges are also low performance and expensive, creating a barrier for the incentive to implement sustainable behaviours as their confidence in the product is lessened.

The primary research displayed the negative preconceptions that Gen-Z hold in regards to eco-ranges within the mass market. Challenging the literature that an increase in sustainability awareness leads to an increase in demand. This rather indicates that as the consumer gains knowledge, it creates an ignorance towards sustainable ranges, and further causes a deterrence to look for sustainable options. To display this 45.5% of consumers were not aware of what an eco-conscious range was, whilst the majority evidenced they knew what sustainability meant (See Appendix 5.2.). Additionally, during focus group 1, it was stated “I have just never seen the eco-conscious clothes in store...but I’m not against buying them” (See Appendix 6.1.). Demonstrating how awareness of sustainability in regards to greenwashing and other negative nuances has given the consumer incitement to ignore sustainable ranges and continue to overconsume. To prove this representationally, during the shopping analysis, 24.5% of the clothes purchased were sustainable (See Appendix. 7.), it was also noted that the participants were only aware of the sustainable ranges in H&M and Superdry. Exhibiting that the consumer has a lack of knowledge and awareness towards sustainable options not only theoretically, but also in the high street.

The attitude behaviour gap is challenged, as an increase of knowledge in sustainability has motivated the gap by creating negative associations, which has caused a lack of incentive to seek out eco-ranges. Therefore, it is prerequisite to understand where Gen-Z are gaining this information to diminish the negative connotations and further encourage the consumer to create sustainable purchasing decisions.

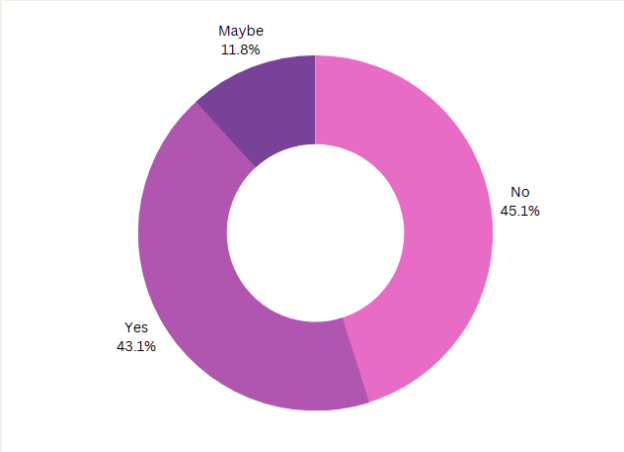


Figure 3
(See Appendix. 2)

Do you know what
an
Eco-Conscious
Range is?



75.5% Unsustainable
Clothes Purchased



24.5% Sustainable
Clothes Purchased

5. Chapter 2

From the previous chapter, it is clear how an increase of information from the consumer was creating a deterrence towards sustainable ranges within the mass market; as it encouraged negative nuances and ignorance. Following from this, in this chapter it is discussed how the consumer gains their knowledge through social media and peer-to-peer knowledge. Additionally, the drivers of sustainable purchasing behaviour will be analysed. This is in order to understand and delve deeper into what is motivating the attitude behaviour gap. Combining this knowledge with research within the previous academic studies, it will be highlighted how to close the attitude behaviour gap, giving insight to encourage ethical concern in relation to mass market fashion consumption within Gen-Z.



Where are Gen-Z

5.1. getting their Information?

From analysing the literature, the main source to distribute information between Gen-Z is through social media. The literature shows how online knowledge sharing through social media advocates collaboration of knowledge to create contemporary information to influence others. When asked how they know about the negatives of sustainability in mass market fashion, the following was said...



"I see a lot [of information about sustainability through fast fashion] on TikTok and Instagram"

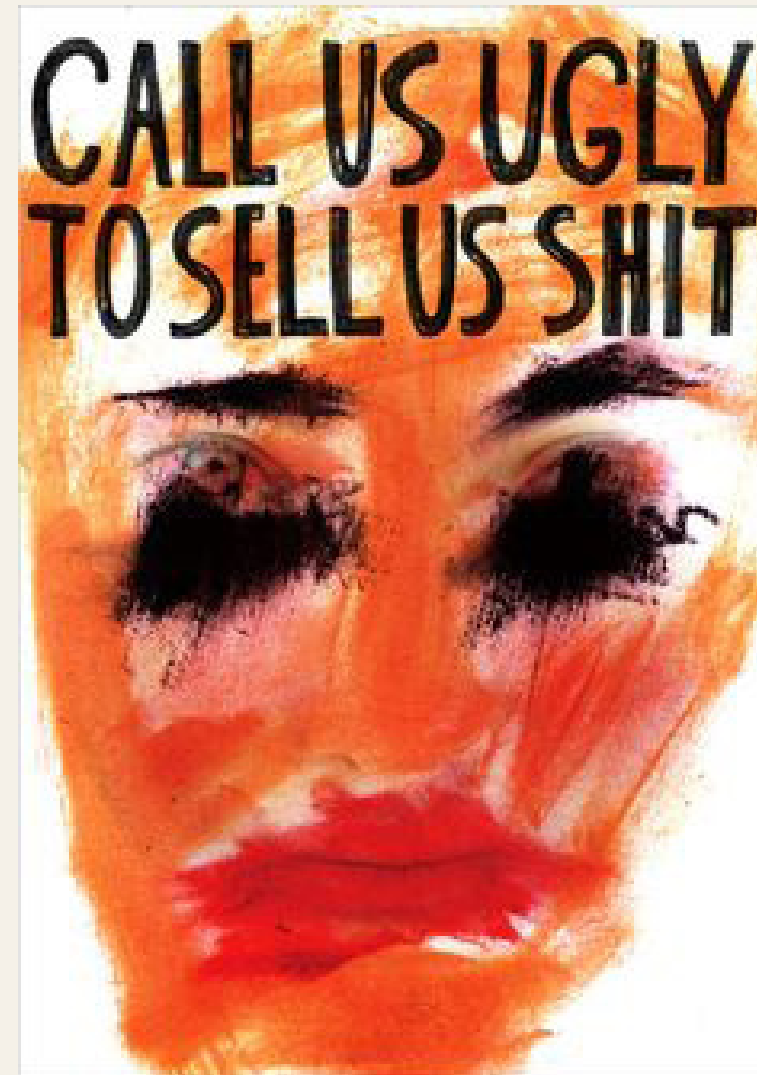


"I think social media, I wouldn't go out of my way to look and find out, so probably TikTok."

(See Appendix. 6.1.)



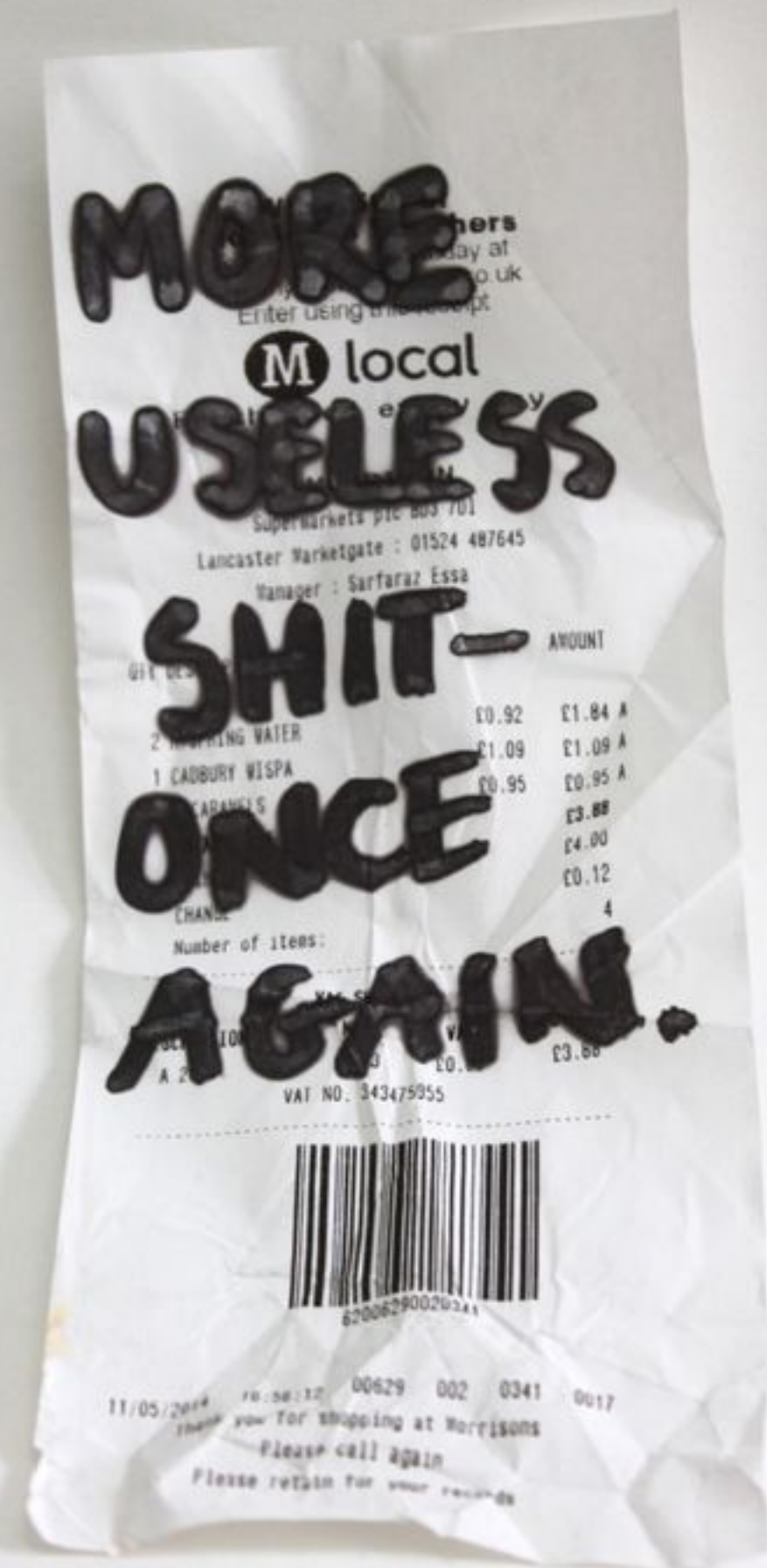
Throughout both focus groups, TikTok had a considerable amount of mentions in sharing of information surrounding sustainability. Indicating that TikTok is the social media platform which has significant influence over the generation, due to the nature of having quick, addictive videos. It was also stated that “[they] don’t use google to search things, [they] just search it on TikTok” (See Appendix. 6.1.). Proving the remarkability that TikTok has as a platform for information research, as the app uses videos and rememberable gimmicks to engage the consumer whilst informing. The interview with Jade McSorley further displays this, as she stated that TikTok is the most successful platform to encourage sustainable purchasing behaviour (See Appendix. 6.3.) and that she believes that through TikTok, she has been able to successfully alter her followers purchasing habits. Overall proving the considerable influence TikTok has on targeting and informing the generation, and agreeing with the literature showing that social media is a preferred vendor of learning for Gen-Z.



On the other hand, it is clear of the significance of peer-to-peer knowledge on encouraging the information from social media. The literature states how the consumer values trust, and thus use knowledge coming from word of mouth, from someone they are affiliated to ensure reliability of information. Furthermore, in chapter 1, it was highlighted how peer encouragement takes a mastery of the Gen-Z consumer. The focus groups evidenced this as many participants stated that they found their information by “talking it about it with [their] friends”. The focus groups indicate if an individual was unaware about sustainability within fast fashion, it has been their peer relaying information via social media. This indicating that peer distribution is shaping negative attitudes from Gen-Z towards sustainable ranges within the mass market.

The literature states how peer-to-peer and online knowledge sharing can create misinformation and also form bias opinions, giving insight as to why there is misleading information and negative bias surrounding sustainability within the mass market. Furthermore, as discussed in Chapter 1, if the consumer already has negative preconceptions, there will be reluctance research about sustainable ranges to rectify the bias knowledge, driving ignorance towards eco-ranges. Therefore an increase of knowledge surrounding fashion sustainability has caused a lack of awareness and ignorance towards eco-conscious ranges.

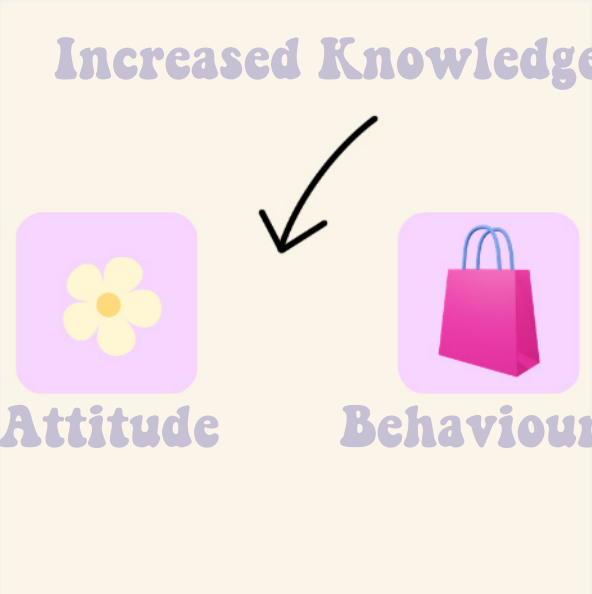
The primary research has shaped the conclusion that peers and social media have a significant influence on knowledge sharing in Gen-Z. The incitement made clear that social media is utilised to share factual knowledge, creating initial negative connotations towards eco-ranges; peer knowledge sharing is then used to encourage said connotations, motivating each other to ignore eco-ranges and continue to purchase unsustainably. As a participant from focus group 1 stated "I see a lot of information on TikTok, and then I tell my friends to stop them from wasting their money." (See Appendix 6.1.). Demonstrating how the combination of online knowledge sharing and peer-to-peer distribution has caused an increase of negative connotations towards eco-ranges within Gen-Z; as the sources are deemed reliable. Overall indicating that an increase in shared knowledge within Gen-Z surrounding eco-ranges has disrupted the incentive to create sustainable purchasing decisions.



To conclude, peer to peer knowledge and social media are the main drivers which are causing negative preconceptions, as they are the dominant forces in which Gen-Z gain their knowledge. The literature states how peer-to-peer and online knowledge sharing can create misinformation and also form bias opinions, giving insight as to why there is misleading information surrounding sustainability within the mass market. Furthermore, if they already have negative influences, there will be reluctance research about sustainable ranges to rectify the bias knowledge, driving ignorance towards eco-ranges. Therefore an increase of knowledge surrounding fashion sustainability has caused a lack of awareness and ignorance towards eco-conscious ranges.



In terms of the attitude behaviour gap, the primary research challenges the theory. Firstly it is apparent that an increase in knowledge about sustainability does not lead to positive attitudes. The primary research shaped the idea that an increase in knowledge has only lead to an increase in negative nuances, such as greenwashing, low performance and high costing; causing the consumer to be dissuaded from eco-ranges within the market. This in turn has caused an ignorance from the Gen-Z consumer to seek out sustainable ranges when they are making a clothing purchase, which can be proved by the primary research, as 45% of consumers did not know what an eco-conscious range was, even when given an example (See Appendix. 5.2.). Therefore, this highlights how the gap between is driven by an increase of knowledge, creating negative preconceptions and attitudes which is causing ignorance of eco-ranges in the market and further encouraging the continuance of unsustainable behaviour.



5.2. How has Ignorance Effected the Market?

The previous primary research discussed how increased knowledge has created negative attitudes and connotations towards sustainable ranges; which in vein has caused a deterrence and ignorance towards eco-ranges. Therefore, to be able to close the gap, it is important to understand the effect that ignorance towards eco-ranges has had on purchasing behaviours; further gaining knowledge on how to motivate sustainable behaviour. Due to the ignorance towards eco-conscious ranges from Gen-Z, it has created a knock-on effect of the awareness of said ranges, with only 45% of consumers knowing what an eco-conscious range is (See Appendix 5.2.). This was also apparent in the focus group, stating "I have heard of them, but I don't think I have ever seen them" (See Appendix. 6.1. and 6.2.), highlighting how the recognition of eco-ranges has been flagged due to ignorance from the consumer.

To further display how this has effected sustainable ranges in the high street market, 24.5% of the clothes purchased were sustainable, whilst the shoppers stated they were looking for sustainable options (See Appendix. 7.). Additionally, both shoppers were unbeknownst to whether they had purchased an item from an eco-conscious range (See Appendix. 7.), which proves ignorance from the consumer and further lack of encouragement from brands. Proving how there is an unawareness for sustainable products in the high street, giving the consumer no incentive to implement pro-environmental behaviours. This encourages the attitude behaviour gap; as the awareness of eco-conscious ranges in the market is significantly absent, another barrier is issued which hinders the consumer to fabricate pro-environmental behaviours.



The highest amount of sustainable products purchased during the shopping analysis was in H&M, with 10 out of 13 eco-products being from H&M Conscious (See Appendix. 7.). To understand what caused the significant rise in sustainable purchases, it was stated in the exit interview that they were aware of the eco-range in H&M due to having a "specific section for sustainable options" (See Appendix. 6.4.). It is indicated that because H&M had a section for sustainable products, it was effortless for the consumer to gain a comprehension. This encouraged pro-environmental behaviour, as the awareness for the consumer was increased and it was interesting for the consumer to look at and compare to the unsustainable products. Showing how product placement and highlights is an advocator for sustainable behaviours. This also encourages the consumer to create their own opinions on eco-ranges, as they can compare with their unsustainable products as to which is higher quality or more expensive, which could potentially diminish bias.

6.1. Key Findings

Gen-Z have an analytical nature surrounding eco-ranges which has caused negative preconceptions.



The main preconceptions Gen-Z retain about eco-ranges are; greenwashing, low performance and high costing.



Greenwashing has not only created distrust in concern of sustainability values, but has also hindered the loyalty of other claims including performance and cost.



The knowledge gained about sustainability in mass market fashion stems from social media sharing and peer-to-peer knowledge distribution.



An increase in knowledge has caused negative attitudes, which has created an ignorance towards eco-ranges in the mass market as a whole.



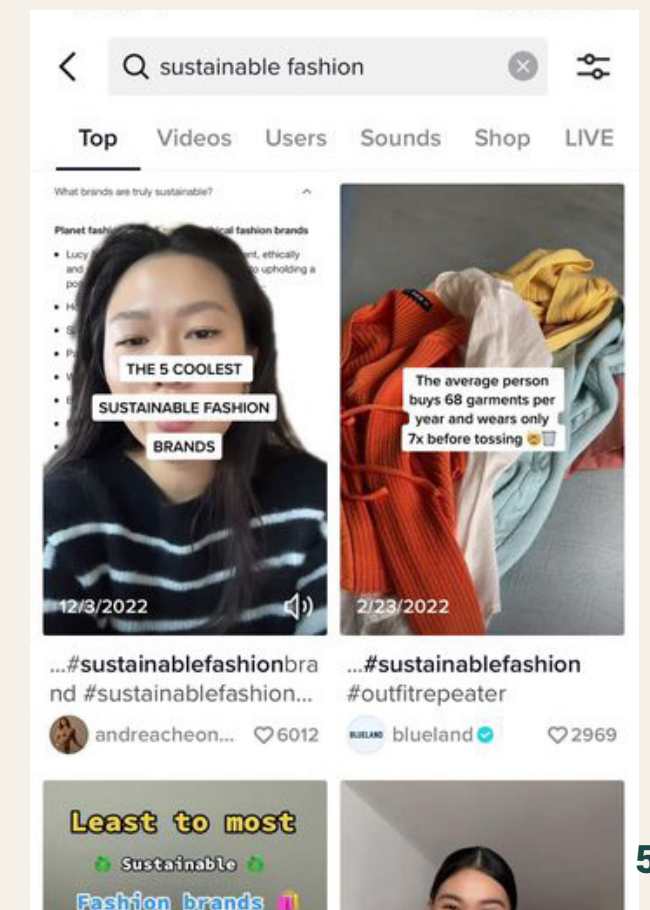
The ignorance has translated into a lack of awareness towards eco-ranges.



Consumers are now unaware of what is sustainable and what is not in the high street

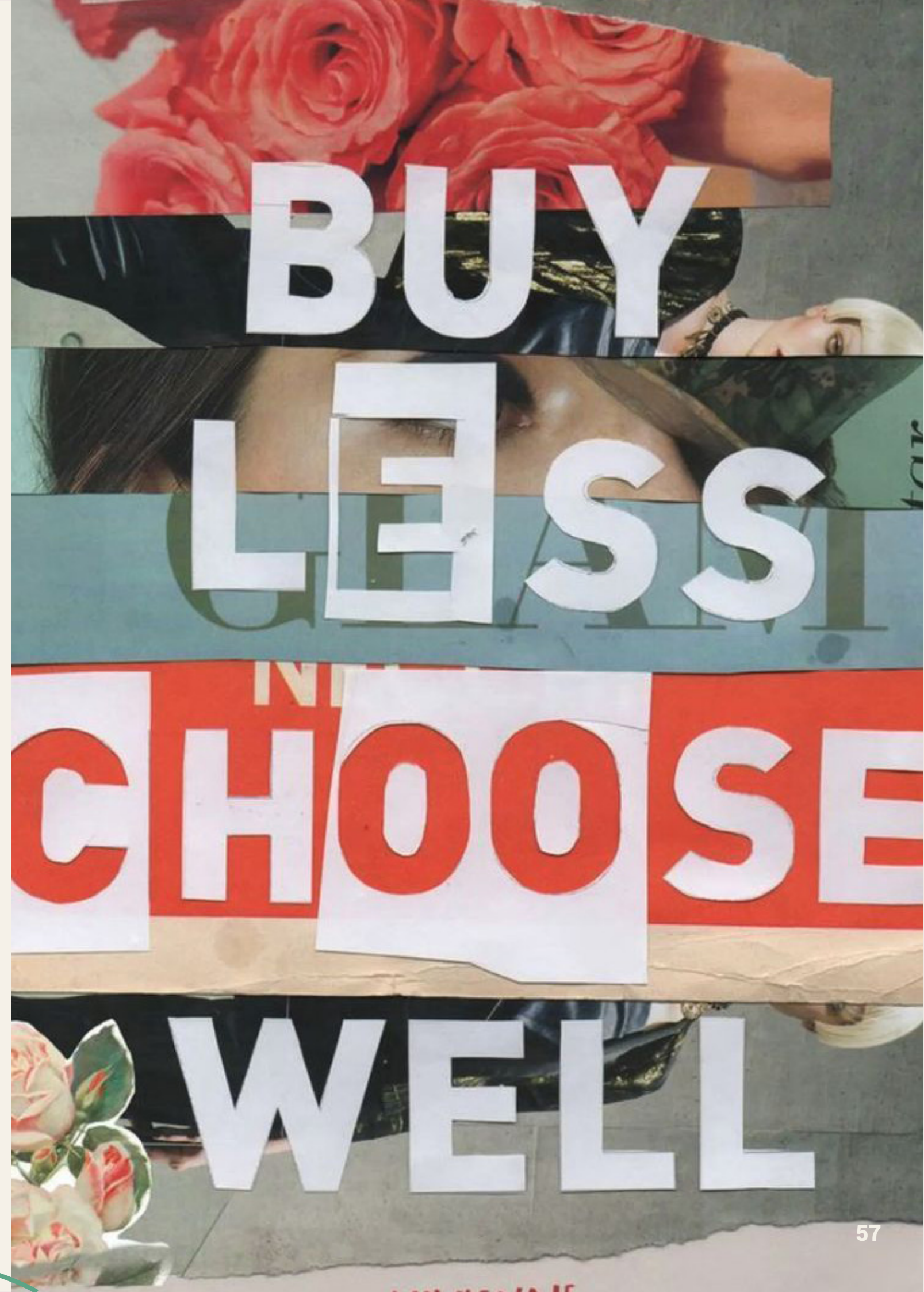
6.2. Information Distribution

Information distribution through social media and peer-to-peer knowledge are clear vendors which are deterring Gen-Z from making sustainable purchasing decisions. Therefore, it is suggested to create positive associations surrounding the sustainable ranges, and highlight how sustainable ranges are a more accessible way for consumers to purchase from cheap fashion and lessen their environmental impact. To effectively target the Gen-Z consumer, TikTok is emphasised as the most successful platform to deliver information, using quick and rememberable videos to ensure engagement. By informing the consumer about the positives of eco-ranges through this platform, it will break down the ignorance, build reassuring associations and slowly increase consumer awareness.



6.3. Transparent Marketing

Due to Gen-Z being analytical to the use of greenwashing in mass market fashion, it has created distrust between brand and consumer, leading to negative nuances towards eco-ranges within fast fashion. To be able to encourage sustainability brands need to diminish the negative preconceptions and show why their sustainable range is not just a way to make profits. To achieve this, brands must be transparent in their marketing, showing what makes their sustainable ranges different from any other range they have come out with. Moreover, 39% of consumer stated that transparency in marketing would motivate them to create sustainable behaviours (See Appendix. 5.2.). This building trust and positive attitudes with the consumer, and further diminishing the other negative connotations that eco-ranges are low quality and expensive. Emphasising why they should invest their money into eco-ranges rather than the regular ranges. By highlighting the sustainable processes/materials through online and instore advertisement, it will deliver positive knowledge surrounding eco-ranges. Further giving the consumer incentive to seek out sustainable products, as they are aware of the benefits that come with purchasing from an eco-range.





See Appendix 6



6.4. Increase Awareness

Due to an ignorance of eco-ranges in the mass market, the discussion made clear that this has had a negative effect on the awareness of said ranges. The apparent lack of awareness for eco-ranges means that the consumer will not think to purchase sustainably within the market. Therefore it is important to highlight the ranges online and instore, as the discussion proves that this is an effective way of gaining attention from the consumer (See Chapter 2.). To successfully intrigue the Gen-Z consumer, the sustainable ranges need to be specifically highlighted instore and online. As discussed in Chapter 2., this was a successful marketing method for H&M, as 10 out of the 13 eco-clothes bought were from H&M. Showing how awareness is essential for consumer incentive to purchase. Furthermore, adding specific sections/labels/etc will set apart the sustainable range from the other products and highlight to the consumer that there is a benefit that comes with purchasing sustainably. Overall giving the gen-Z consumer motivation to seek out eco-conscious ranges.

7 • Conclusion

To conclude, following in depth literature analysis to access gaps in the existing knowledge and the primary research to further investigate the gaps, this report has covered the explanation as to why there is a gap between sustainable attitudes and behaviours within Gen-Z. The combination of secondary analysis and primary research were effectively used to answer the aims and objectives of the report. Using the Delphi approach, the primary research shaped was made prerequisite that the focus of changing Gen-Z's unsustainable behaviours stems from an increase in knowledge surrounding sustainable ranges within the mass market. As it has created negative connotations of eco-ranges which is prohibiting the consumer to have incentive to implement pro-environmental purchasing behaviours. This, in turn has lead to an ignorance of eco-ranges, further limiting the awareness the consumer has of these ranges, showing how information and increase of knowledge is driving the gap between attitudes and behaviours. As the consumer has shown an analytical nature towards greenwashing, the potential for Stage 2 would be to have more transparency in their marketing; as this will diminish any negative misconceptions and further rebuild the trust between a brand and consumer. This will also ensure that any peer knowledge distribution shared is positive. Furthermore the awareness of eco-ranges needs to be heightened to ensure that there is an increase in consumer knowledge, which would further encourage sustainable purchasing behaviour.



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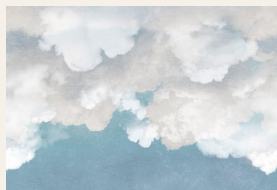
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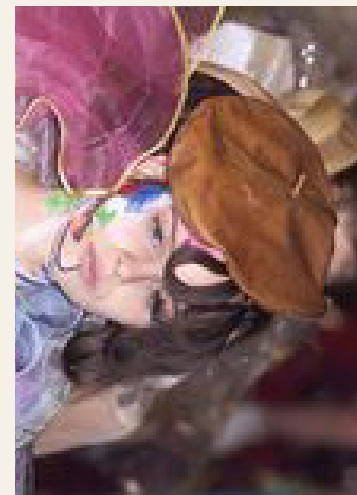
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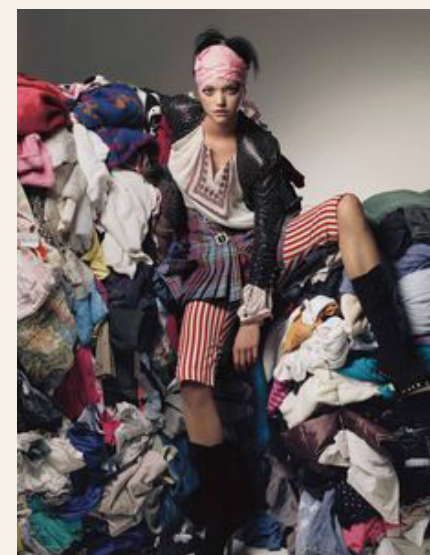
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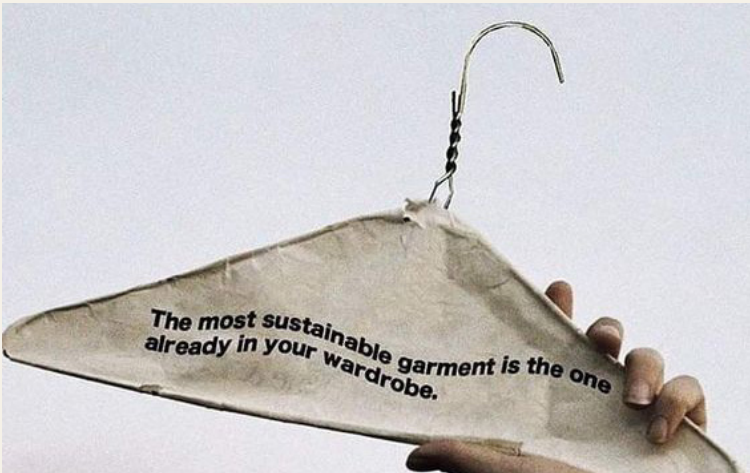
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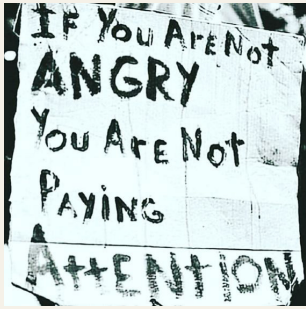
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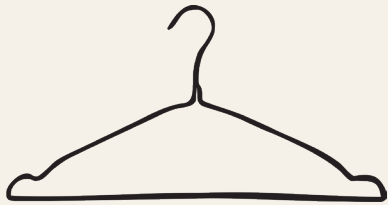
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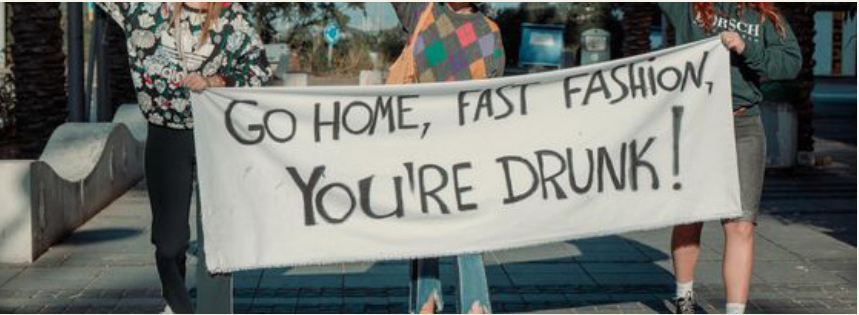
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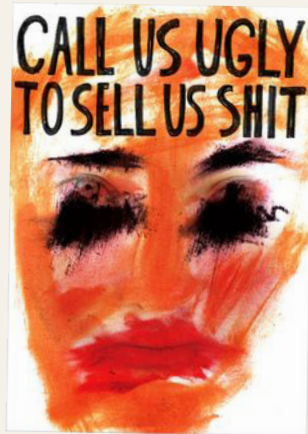
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