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EXPLORING THE ROLE OF SELF-IMAGE CONGRUENCE WITHIN SUSTAINABLE
DECISION-MAKING AND THE CHANGES IN THE ATTITUDE BEHAVIOUR GAP

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Abstract

Although the Attitude-Behaviour Gap and the Self-Image Congruence have received much attention in past and current studies, the literature is lacking research on how these two concepts influence each other within the context of sustainable consumption behaviour. By focusing on the ethical clothing industry, the objectives of this research were to combine the two theoretical models in order to gain a deeper understanding of the role of self-image congruence in the context of ethical decision making and highlights how these insights can help to bridge the long-standing Attitude-Behaviour gap.

A total of seventeen in-depth interviews were conducted and analysed through a grounded theory approach. Four overarching findings emerge from the data analysis: a gradual change in the Attitude-Behaviour Gap, the interdependence of Social, Situational and Individual Factors when engaging in complex decision-making, the importance of Brand Attributes, and the necessity of a cognitive match between the Actual and Ideal Self for accurate consumer behaviour predictions. This study's contributions might be of interest to scholars and marketing practitioners within the low-involvement green product industry.

Keywords: Consumer Behaviour, Sustainable Decision-Making, Attitude-Behaviour Gap, Self-Concept, Self-Image Congruence, Ethical Clothing

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1. Introduction

In the aftermath of a global pandemic, an economic recession, and the rising social and political issues around the globe, one might suppose a temporary decrease of sustainability concerns. However, the studies conducted by Deloitte, Ipsos Mori and KPMG demonstrate quite the opposite. Expectations for ethical practices are intensifying, and sustainability governs long term business viability (Ipsos Mori, 2020). The general public is alarmed by environmental issues such as climate change, and convinced that the future of the planet should not be put at the expense of an economic recovery (KPMG, 2020).

According to Ipsos Mori (2020), 39% of survey respondents disclose that ensuring an environmentally and socially responsible production of consumer goods remains the responsibility of the companies. Whilst businesses join the decarbonisation trend (KPMG, 2020) and praise the transparency of their supply chains, practitioners need to accurately predict consumer purchase behaviour to allow the successful execution of sustainability strategies.

Traditional decision-making models such as Ajzen's Theory of Planned Behaviour model (1991) (Appendix - Figure 1) assume that a customer's attitude is the best predictor for purchase behaviour (Ajzen, 2011). However, this model reveals its flaws once applied in the context of ethical decision making (Papaoikonomou et al., 2011), and receives criticism for overlooking an "ethical dimension" (Shaw and Shiu, 2003; Chatzidakis et al., 2007). Deloitte's report on Sustainability and Consumer Behaviour (2020) warns that ignoring factors such as ethics, altruism and social responsibility when empirically examining purchase behaviour is a critical mistake regarding the significant increase in sustainability concerns.

Although the relentless efforts and numerous models attempting to predict sustainable consumption choices, the overarching presence of the so-called Attitude Behaviour Gap

remains undisputed. Scholars such as Terlau and Hirsch (2015) elucidate the inconsistency between consumer attitudes and behaviours by constructing a Decision-Making Model for Sustainable Consumption (Appendix - Figure 2). Separately, the consumer behaviour literature turns the spotlight on the successful application of the Self-Concept Theory when influencing and predicting purchase patterns. Although both concepts have received much attention in past and current studies, the literature is lacking research and insights on how they influence each other within the context of sustainable consumption behaviour. Consequently, the following research explores the role of self-image congruence in the context of ethical decision-making and the changes in the Attitude-Behaviour Gap. Through qualitative research, this study assesses the commonly used variables of ethical consumer behaviour and elaborates on fundamental factors neglected in previous research. By combining the two concepts, this research fulfils the purpose of developing an enhanced version of the sustainable decision-making model from Terlau and Hirsch (2015).

This thesis is structured into five parts. The Literature Review elaborates on the Attitude-Behaviour Gap and on the Self-Concept Theory before projecting the idea of self-image congruence onto sustainable decision making. The Methodology explains the research design for this study, while the Results section examines the themes emerging from the data analysis. The Discussion evaluates these findings against established theories within the academic literature, and underlines this study's contributions to the theory and practice, before investigating its limitations as well as giving suggestions for future research.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Revisiting the Attitude-Behaviour-Gap

The Attitude-Behaviour Gap is an excellent demonstration of researchers' unsuccessful attempt to predict ethical consumer behaviour. Despite the amount of research conducted on the topic, the origins of this phenomenon remain unclear and inconsistent within

the academic literature. Shaw et al. (2016) argue that a cognitive source such as willingness to pay is at the roots of the Attitude-Behaviour Gap, while numerous scholars support the hypothesis that individual factors such as personality, habits and culture are the predominant factors influencing an individual's behaviour towards ethical consumption (Sener and Hazer, 2008; Wheale and Hinton, 2007). Other researchers however, gravitate towards the idea that external factors such as social and demographical influence, price and availability of ethical products explain the inconsistency between the consumer's attitude toward ethical consumption and actual purchase behaviour (Joshi and Rahman, 2015).

These contradictory research findings result from the increasingly complex decision-making process when an individual engages in a more sustainable lifestyle (Joshi and Rahman, 2015). Consumers adopting ethical practices base their decisions on a wider spectrum than the average consumer, weighing the product's lifecycle, including concerns about materials used during the production process, as the impact it generates at its disposal (Lewandowska et al., 2017). Moisander (2007) upholds this claim, as the translation of ethical ideologies into actions often involves trade-offs. These consumers pursue intrinsically motivated behaviours that minimize impacts on an individual scale.

Finally, Terlau and Hirsch (2015) adopt a unique approach when decoding the Attitude-Behaviour Gap, and develop the Decision-Making Model of Sustainable Consumption (Appendix - Figure 2). This model considers the previously mentioned variables yet counters previous research by shifting the focus from the "attitude" variable to the "intention" variable as the main predictor of buying behaviour. The factors influencing the intention are categorized in three different dimensions: *Individual Factors* (socio-economic characteristics such as age, gender, income; also covering external motivations such as needs and wants, and internal motivations such as personal values, habits and lifestyle; control of action refers to the consumer's aptitude to exercise his determined purchase behaviour),

Social Entities (social norms, consumer culture, mass media), and finally *Situational Factors* (the buyer's purchase situation, different incentives influencing his decision, as well as products characteristics).

2.2 Introducing the Self-Concept Theory in Consumer Behaviour

Examining the incoherencies of the Attitude-Behaviour Gap literature captures the need for further research in the field. Belk argues that “We cannot hope to understand consumer behaviour without first gaining some understanding of the meanings that consumers attach to possessions” (1988, p.139). Heath and Scott (1998) echo this statement and emphasise that consumers often purchase products and services whose symbolic meaning relates to their Self-Concept. Although the academic literature elaborates various definitions of the Self-Concept, Rosenberg's (1979, p.7) remains the most recurring: “the totality of an individual's thoughts and feelings having reference to himself as an object.”. Numerous researchers build on this theory in the field of consumer behaviour and expanded across various industries and products/services: mobile application use (Wu et al., 2020), consumer attitude towards electric vehicles (Bennett and Vijaygopal, 2018), fashion and clothing choices (Legere and Kang, 2020), green product purchase behaviour (Nguyen and Nguyen, 2020) and even the choice of touristic destinations (Hosany and Martin, 2012).

Scholars distinguish two components within the Self-Concept: the ideal self and the actual self (Sirgy, 1985; Wu et al. 2020), the actual self being how an individual recognizes and perceives himself in the present time, in contrast to the ideal self, which defines the image the individual aspires to perceive of himself in the future (Sirgy, 1982; Wu et al, 2020). Being aware of their Self-Concept, individuals adopt attitudes and direct their behaviours to enhance and protect the actual self (Grubb and Grathwohl, 1967). Although the literature depicts some disparities regarding the evidence of which “self” predominantly influences consumer behaviour, researchers agree that individuals have an intrinsic urge to fill the gap between

their actual and their ideal self (Dogan, 2015; Higgins, 1987). Ekinci and Riley (2003) convey that these two facets of the Self-Concept constitute the foundation of the self-congruity theory, namely the tendency to align purchase behaviours with the Self-Concept (Aaker, 1999; Sirgy, 1982). Solomon et al. (2013) enhance this idea, stating that individuals consume goods from desirable brands for the attributes to reflect on their perceived sense of self. Accordingly, one can expect individuals seeking to enhance their self-image actively express their sense of self through purchase behaviours (Legere and Kang, 2020). Park and Lee (2005, p.42) illustrate the self-image congruence theory by a distinct model (Appendix - Figure 3), indicating that consumers chose products aligning with their self-image, and suggests the emergence of a relationship between the consumer and the brand tending towards brand loyalty over time.

Consequently, the congruence between brand image and a consumer's self-image dominates brand loyalty (Kressmann et al., 2006). However, Park and Lee (2005) depict that the correlation variable with the stronger effect on brand loyalty for high involvement products is the quality of the consumer-brand relationship, whereas for low involvement products, the customer's satisfaction has a stronger effect.

Several studies portray the Self-Concept as an indispensable construct to understand and predict consumer purchase behaviour (Islam et al. 2019; Sirgy, 2015; Wu et al., 2020). Sirgy (2015) and Japutra et al. (2019) highlight the direct positive effect between self-image congruence and a product's pre- and post-consumption evaluation by the customer, influencing customer willingness to use, customer loyalty and brand attachment (Wu et al., 2020). The influence that self-image congruence exerts of purchase decisions is a powerful opportunity for researchers to deepen their knowledge of individual decision-making within sustainable consumption behaviour.

2.3 How Self-Image Congruence Predicts Sustainable Decision Making

As discussed previously, a stronger alignment between brand image and customer self-image increases the prospects of product purchase. This pattern also adheres within sustainable consumption, as individuals with a green consumer self-image express their identity by acquiring ethical products (Sparks and Shepherd, 1992). Ethical consumers align their self-image with their environmental concerns, which positively influences their purchase intentions (Lee, 2008). Therefore, green consumer self-image is an excellent predictor of sustainable consumption behaviour. Nguyen and Nguyen (2020) emphasize this hypothesis noting that individuals with ethical consumer self-image convey their identity through the consumption of sustainable products. Moreover, individuals whose Self-Concept is supported by strong and authentic beliefs are more consistent when translating their purchase intentions into actions within the sustainable decision-making context (Damon and Hart, 1992; Meijboom and Brom, 2012).

Finally, by studying millennial green product purchase, Nguyen and Nguyen (2020) identify self-image congruence as a key antecedent of ethical purchase intention. However, in their paper on consumer attitudes toward electronic vehicles (EV), Bennett and Vijaygopal (2018) highlight that, although self-image congruence in relation to EV ownership increases by 14%, the willingness to purchase an EV is not substantially affected. Consequently, it unveils a discrepancy between the self-image congruence effect on intention to purchase between high involvement and low involvement product. One could hypothesise that self-image congruence affects the individual's intention to buy for low involvement ethical products but not for high involvement ethical products.

2.4 Intended Contributions to the Literature

As previously demonstrated, the Attitude-Behaviour Gap is a tedious subject of study especially with regards to ethical consumption. Additionally, former empirical studies focus on a quantitative research approach to identify the underlying variables influencing consumer

behaviour and ethical decision making. Similarly, scholars explore self-image congruence models predominantly through the use of surveys and questionnaires (Bennett and Vijaygopal, 2018; Nguyen and Nguyen, 2020; Wu et al., 2020). Consequently, although the self-concept being widely researched within the field of consumer behaviour, it is often focussing on the alignment between brand image and self-image, without accounting for the wider influencing factors of consumer decision making.

Despite the academic literature providing a rich documentation on the decision-making process in the generic context and in ethical purchase decision, the accuracy of these models is questionable given the exponential increase in environmental concerns witnessed in the last year (Deloitte, 2020). Through exploratory qualitative research, this study engages into a unique approach to propose an updated consumer behaviour framework through the combination of the self-image congruence and the sustainable decision-making models.

3. Method

3.1 Research Design and Procedure

Due to the short time span of this research, and to its exploratory nature, a single qualitative research design was adopted through the use of semi-structured interviews. These enabled a strong understanding of the participants' attitudes and patterns towards sustainable consumption, and the feelings involved in ethical purchase decisions. The use of open-ended questions to collect data provides in-depth insights into the complex ethical decision-making phenomenon and allows the researcher to adopt a discovery-oriented perspective (Qi et al., 2020). It is the optimal technique to collect a rich set of data, as it allows participants to develop their thought process while expressing it (Saunders et al. 2012).

As exploring consumer's reflection on self-image congruence is essential for a deeper understanding on how self-image congruence influences sustainable consumer behaviour, interpretivism would be the adequate paradigm underlining this study. It allows the researcher

to evaluate different interpretations through the participants' perceptions, and therefore, comprehend and capture a social reality (Bryman and Bell, 2015). In line with this philosophy, grounded theory was applied to the findings resulting from the interviews to depict how self-image congruence fits into the sustainable decision-making model. With this scientific method, researchers can adopt inductive reasoning to implement a theory building approach and explain behaviour patterns, build on existing theories, and provide insightful perspectives on consumer choices. This theory is consistent with the use of semi-structured interviews as it allows the researcher to ask intense questions, while keeping an objective view during the in-depth exploration and explanation of social phenomena (Goulding, 2000).

Furthermore, as consumers commonly use clothing to express their identity (Legere and Kang, 2020), previous studies examined self-image congruence within fashion choices. Consequently, to combine the self-concept framework with sustainable decision-making, this research was conducted in an ethical apparel industry context.

3.2 Sampling Participants and Data Collection

For this research to be insightful and to contribute to the wider consumer behaviour literature, the interviewees had to fit a certain type of consumer profile. Therefore, this study employed snowball sampling to find adequate candidates. It consists in asking each participant to recommend another person fitting the same profile. The selection of interviewees was also based on the following criteria: (1) be aged between 20 and 35 years old, (2) be intrinsically motivated to engage in sustainable consumption, (3) be regular buyers of ethical clothing brands.

Due to the current pandemic circumstances, data collection was carried out through virtual interviews on a one-to-one basis. These lasted approximately forty minutes and were recorded to minimize inaccuracies in the transcription of the data. Prior to the dialogue, all participants were informed that the data would be anonymous, confidential and securely

stored. The self-concept being a delicate subject to study, considering its link to morale and self-esteem, it was important to formulate the interview questions accordingly to avoid any misunderstanding that might offend participants and cause reluctance in answering.

Three topics were discussed with the candidates during the interviews: their interest towards sustainability and sustainable clothing, the factors motivating their sustainable choice behaviour in comparison to non-ethical decision-making, and their self-concept (considering the ideal self against the actual self). This research was carried out during October 2021, and the data was collected on seventeen participants. The data collection process included recursive interviewing, data coding and analysis until saturation.

3.3 Data Analysis

The data was analysed following an inductive reasoning approach, a method proven particularly successful in identifying patterns within discussions (Qi and Yu, 2020; Rana and Paul, 2017), enabling the researcher to develop theoretical explanations with regards to the behaviour of its subjects. The constant juxtaposition of the data allows a rigorous analysis and creates a perfect setting for a theory building procedure (Gioia, 2013). Data coding was used to perform a structured analysis of the responses. Following Qi and Yu's (2020) method, open coding was first adopted to identify initial concepts in the data. As seventeen candidates were interviewed, twenty-two open codes emerged (Appendix – Table 2). Secondly, axial coding was implemented to merge the similar open codes into nine broader themes. Finally, through selective coding, resembling themes were connected into aggregate dimensions, generating a precise audit of the data and enabling the ability to review it against the existing literature. When analysing the transcripts, the recurrence of specific words was also tracked and applied as descriptive statistics that were grouped into five categories (Appendix – Table 3).

4. Findings

The data was analysed against the “Decision-making model of sustainable consumption” (Appendix - Figure 2) (Terlau and Hirsch, 2015, p.161) and the “Self-image Congruence Model” (Appendix - Figure 3) (Park and Lee, 2005) to investigate the relevance of the variables established by Terlau and Hirsch, and to determine the role of self-image congruence in the customer’s decision-making process when buying ethical clothes. Furthermore, specific recurring words were tracked in grouped into five dimensions shown in Table 3 (Appendix). By analysing the transcriptions, four selected codes were considered as the overarching findings of this study: the gradual change of the Attitude-Behaviour Gap, the influence exercised by Social Factors and Situational Factors on Individual Factors, the key consideration of Brand Attributes, and the importance of a close alignment between the actual and the ideal self within consumer self-image congruence to accurately predict the ethical decision-making process.

4.1 The Gradual Change of the Attitude-Behaviour Gap

More than half of the participants expressed their view on sustainable clothing encompassing two components: environmental and social aspects. Through their own research, participants had realized that the fast fashion industry was harming the environment through its excessive use of energy and the release of toxic substances, and that social workforce was lacking labour rights and appropriate working conditions.

Participant 15: “Fairness is both about the relationship between the consumer and the planet and the resources, leaving enough resources for other people and making sure that we stay in the level of consumption that that doesn’t impact of future generation. “Fairness” is also related to the relationship between the consumer and the people that produce the products, so having fair wages and good production conditions.”

With this realization, participants engage into a more complex decision-making.

Participant 1: “Now I’m asking questions such as ‘Hey where does it come from? Is it good?’ (...) there is definitely a second dimension where I ask myself if I agree to what the brand does, in terms of ‘Do I feel good about buying this?’”

However, when talking about the apparel industry or the individuals' fashion choices, this change in decision-making process is also partially influenced by the realization of their own maturity, and their common deviation from popular clothing trends.

Participant 3: "I am very happy that I didn't buy into those trends but I very much noticed myself being influenced by them."

These findings highlight the fact that socio-demographics factors such as age and income play a major role in carrying out sustainable attitudes into actions, even for low-involvement purchases. By questioning their choices, most participants also express their changes in habits and ethical engagement in other areas than clothing: diet, food shopping, cosmetics, transport. The interest in ethical apparel varies amongst the candidates, as the changes in behaviour in some areas are easier facilitated than others.

Participant 6: "I have changed my diet, I became vegetarian. I also change the way I commute, I'm much rather take the bike or go walking somewhere instead of using the car. Also, I am using the aeroplane much less than before (...) My personal hygiene products and cosmetic products are also more sustainable, there is way less plastic involved as before."

These changes in "Habits/Lifestyle" and in consumer "Needs/Wants" are gradual and the candidates often realise their need for improvement. In the most extreme case, a handful of participants also alluded to anti-consumption practices.

4.2 Social Factors and Situational Factors influencing Individual Factors

Although all the participants manifest a strong will to minimize their environmental and social impact, it would be misleading to assume that these changes in "Habits/Lifestyle" and "Needs/Wants" are solely intrinsically motivated. By putting into perspective the different factors influencing the ethical decision-making process, a high correlation between the Social and Situational Factors, and the above mentioned Individual Factors is observed.

Within the Social Factors, both "Mass Media" and "Social Norms" significantly influence individuals' decision-making. Participants evoked the information received on

climate change and efforts towards sustainability through various communication channels, documentaries and personal research, and the social pressure exercised by peers or the media.

Participant 2: "I guess the media influenced me a lot as well, as there is much more attention given to climate change and I guess that also made me wake up."

Participant 3: "(...) you almost feel bad because you are not stepping in the footsteps of the people that want to do good actions for the environment."

A few candidates also expressed their discontent about the previous absence of information on the causes and harming effects of the fast fashion industry.

Participant 9: "In my opinion, the worst example (are brands) that come out with a new clothing is nearly every week. When I grew up, no one told me that this is something that should be looked at more critically, it was super normal."

However, the emphasis on appearances and perception also influences the decision-making process in the context of clothing purchases. Several participants revealed wearing some clothes to be perceived and seen by others in a certain way, namely the social self.

Participant 5: "What the clothes reflects and convey is definitely important (...) If I'm going to work, and I know that I have a big client meeting, then I will always try to look a little bit professional so that I inspire confidence."

Upon this finding, one could generate the hypothesis that the actual and ideal social selves are indispensable variables when studying self-image congruence in the decision-making context.

Within the Situational Factors, all participants shared concerns regarding the "Availability" of ethical clothing. When describing ethical clothing attributes, "price" and "quality" were the two most persistent words amongst the participants (Appendix – Table 2) revealing the decisive function of the price/quality ratio when assessing sustainable items. Supporting this hypothesis, thirteen participants state the importance of the longevity of their ethical clothing pieces:

Participant 7: "now that I have a full-time job and that I earn a little bit more money I can afford pieces that I couldn't before and I am definitely looking for pieces that will last me a long time."

Besides, relating to the "Purchase Situation", Surroundings and Emotions are crucial components of the Situational Factors, as more than half of the participants experience a

feeling of happiness when buying ethical clothing. However, some disparities appeared amongst the candidates whereas this feeling is perpetuated when wearing the item.

Participant 8: "I have this feeling of happiness when I buy an item that is sustainable, but then I get detached from it."

Most interestingly, one participant also mentioned that clothes may influence how comfortable individuals feel in a certain setting:

Participant 13: "You can also re-purpose that feeling, for example when you put on a blazer when you want to feel more powerful and stronger (...) You can dress up for success truly, because you can start wearing things to look more powerful than you might actually feel, but then slowly you also feel like that."

Additionally, half of the participants experience pride (Appendix – Table 2) when asked about their sustainable clothes. Six of these candidates also revealed embracing a "role model behaviour", by influencing other people to engage in the same ethical practices.

Participant 12: "I'm happy to share this brand with other people and I'm happy to maybe influence others in a good way."

These findings capture the interdependent nature of the Social, Situational and Individual Factors. However, within the context of this research, some of the influencing factors elaborated by Terlau and Hirsh (2015) were not touched upon by the candidates, such as "Culture". The recent gain in maturity previously mentioned, that most participants faced in the last couple of years could be a plausible explanation. Additionally, within the Situational Factors, the subject of "Incentives" remains under dispute, as most of the participants order sustainable clothing items online, the only incentive these companies could create for customers are product newsletters and discounts. However, most participants view these practices as highly controversial when adopted by sustainable brands, as these are procedures employed by fast fashion companies.

4.3 The Importance of Brand Attributes

Despite the numerous influencing factors presented by Terlau and Hirsch (2015), the model seems to overlook the importance of Brand Attributes within the individual's decision-

making process. Two individual brand factors emerged from this research: “Transparency” and “Proximity” to the brand in terms of relatability. With thirteen participants addressing the importance of trust when assessing an ethical brand, authenticity and transparency of the supply chain and of the production processes are essential topics to consider by the company. By openly addressing issues with customers and sharing detailed information on materials, revenues and pricing, companies gain credibility and brand loyalty.

Participant 2: “They also explain where the clothing is sourced from and this is something that some other necessarily do, or at least they don’t go into that much detail. I feel that the fact that they are so open really makes me trust them more.”

Transparency becomes a significant advantage, as the interviewees mentioned that when brands clarify their processes and their sustainability “flaws”, they are inclined to give the company a “second chance” and still engage in brand loyalty while waiting for the brand to improve on the lacking sustainability aspects.

Participant 7: “I know that there are definitely some improvements needed but they are already doing a great job and I know that they will tackle the other problems at some point in time.”

Finally, several participants revealed that the size of the brand influences the concept of trust and the likelihood of consuming the brand.

Participant 8: “There is the interesting thing that I like sustainable clothing when it is still individualistic, but once everyone has them I don’t really like the brand anymore (...) In the little concept stores I can find smaller brands, and it is important to me to really see who I buy my things from.”

Most interviewees also praised the “Proximity” to the brand in terms of relatability, highlighting the ease of getting in touch with the founders, the impeccable customer service such as generous repair policies, and an underlying emotional connection to the brand.

Participant 5: “So, there is definitely this proximity to those brands (...) this feeling of knowing the brand (...) even if I am not close to the brand in terms of distance I feel that the brand is close to my heart because people that I care about work there. It’s where I come from.”

Furthermore, the feeling of representativeness, the diversity within the models that the brand displays on their website and the absence of stereotypes is crucial.

Participant 11: "I am identifying myself in the brand because I can imagine much easier if the item is going to look on me"

Consequently, an emotional connection emerges through the perceived sympathy of the brand, and the feeling of belonging to a community of consumers endorsing the same ideologies.

Participant 6: "I feel very connected to the people who also buy the brand, because they believe in the same things as me. Also, you can definitely see that they are normal people like you and me, so that makes me feel more part of that community. I know that if I reach out to them I can be part of the group."

4.4 Brand Values, Personal Values and the role of Self Image Congruence

As the above-mentioned brand characteristics are stand-alone factors, other attributes such as "Personality Fit" and "Brand Values" are interlinked with the "Personal Values" of the Individual Factors. The majority of participants align the brand image to their actual self-image, notably through the personality fit between the individual and the brand.

Participant 10: "The brand almost feels like a little bit rebellious (...) But in a mature way, maybe that's why I identify with it, it's not like a teenage rebellion, it's a 'we need to change the world rebellion'."

Although most participants express a close fit between the brand image and their actual self-image, one can discern a higher alignment between ideal self and brand image for the people that recently became interested in sustainability. Candidates having adopted an ethical lifestyle for time however, had a higher alignment between ideal self and actual self.

Participant 15: "I think the image of the brand and the image that I want to have of myself are already quite closely aligned."

Therefore, the closer the cognitive match between ideal and actual self, the higher the self-image congruence and the more accurate the prediction for ethical consumer behaviour.

Individuals who integrated sustainable practices to their Self-Concept for the past couple of years demonstrate a higher self-image congruence.

On an interesting note, when asking the participants if the brand image of their favourite ethical clothing brand was enhancing their own self-image, the candidates with a high self-image congruence favoured ethical actions to have a positive effect on their self-image, rather than sustainable items.

Participant 17: "I don't think it specifically enhances the image that I have of myself, because I think that this rather happens though the things I do to be a better person."

Nonetheless, a major element fuelling this personality fit is the alignment between the brand values and the individual's personal values. The reason being that individuals engaging in sustainable consumption prefer living by their personal morals and convictions; sustainable clothing brands facilitate this alignment.

Participant 1: "I feel that when you live by your values, all the actions that you take towards those values are somewhat satisfactory. By not ignoring sustainability concerns it makes me feel like I'm a more accomplished person (...)"

Participant 14: "I feel good I would say, my conscience feels lighter, because I know that no children have worked to produce this item. (...) I feel like I'm contributing to a greater good."

Additionally, the same participants expressing a close cognitive match between their actual and their ideal self, experience a feeling of discomfort when their choices of clothing are not aligned with their self-image. This supports the hypothesis that individuals with a higher self-image congruence are more prone to translating their intentions into actions.

Participant 3: "when I go into fast fashion clothing shops I feel kind of weird almost hypocritical because the shop doesn't align with my values and what I stand for (...) I feel uncomfortable."

To conclude, the "Personality Fit" between the brand image and the individual's self-image, and the alignment of "Personal Values" and "Brand Values" determine self-image congruence of individual. The closer the perceived actual self is to the ideal self, the stronger the self-image congruence and therefore the purchase intention for ethical goods.

5. Discussion

Four aggregate dimensions emerge from the findings of this study which are being assessed against the literature. First, several results of this study allude to a gradual change in the Attitude-Behaviour Gap. Being aware of the negative consequences of the fast fashion industry, individuals start to question their purchases and their impact on an environmental and social level. This confirms Lewandowska et al.'s (2017) claim that individuals engaging in sustainable consumption think about the whole lifecycle of their product and are concerned about the supply chain and the production process. These findings reinforce the theory developed by Yoshi and Rahman (2015) and Terlau and Hirsch (2015), that ethical consumers engage in even more complex decision-making when facing a purchase decision, as they have a higher degree of cognitive dissonance. As this study shows, this change in behaviour is also adopted in other areas, fostering an overall change in habits, which contradict previous studies suggesting that the modern-day consumer focuses on convenience and is discouraged by the additional efforts necessary to engage in ethical consumption (Zanoli and Naspetti, 2002). Scholars should question the degree of persistence of the Attitude-Behaviour Gap, as the results of this study demonstrate the rising awareness for the need of societal improvement and a gradual change in behaviours.

However, the remodelling of the decision-making process and of behaviours is not solely due to a change in Individual Factors: the second aggregate dimension indicates that Social and Situational Factors are primary antecedents of "Needs/Wants" and "Habits/Lifestyle". In these unprecedented times of climate activism, the exponential rise in environmental concerns due to climate change demonstrates the leading role of the media, influencing individuals to contribute to the solution, rather than accentuating the problem. However, along this mediatization comes the generalization of social norms and pressure exercised by peers voicing their opinions and marginalising actions. Therefore, one could question the sincerity of these so-called intrinsically motivated behaviours. More surprisingly,

despite the increasing severity of social norms regarding sustainable conducts, most research papers omit the importance of the social self when analysing consumer decision-making.

Through the perceived peer pressure, individuals find themselves confronted to an ideal social self which is extremely close to the ideal self, and therefore becomes a fundamental variable influencing consumer behaviour.

Regarding Situational Factors, consumers measure the “Availability” of a product in terms of the product’s price to quality ratio. Individuals’ concerns over the quality and the longevity of their products in the sustainable goods industry is a re-occurring topic within the literature (McNeill and Snowdon, 2019). This differs to Terlau and Hirsch’s (2015) model which also includes influencer variables such as “Time”, “Occasion” and “Information”. However, according to this research, these factors do not exert a decisive influence since the majority of customers order their ethical clothing items online; a situation in which limited time does not act as a purchase constraint and information is limitless.

Third, in contrast to the commonly known decision-making models such as Ajzen’s Theory of Planned Behaviour (1991) (Appendix – Figure 1), this study uncovers the influencing role of Brand Attributes on the decision-making process. Within the consumer behaviour literature, only Brassington and Pettitt’s model (2003, p.94) (Appendix – Figure 4) alludes to brand attributes through the Marketing Mix factors. As four dimensions emerge from the findings, “Transparency” and “Proximity” of the brand are stand-alone factors influencing purchase intention. Singh et al.’s (2012) study align with these results, suggesting a positive relationship between brand trust and brand effect on brand loyalty within the ethical consumption context. Moreover, they reinforce Park and Lee’s (2005) theory that the quality of the customer brand relationship is the most critical aspect customers are considering when deciding to engage in brand loyalty. Despite Brand Trust being a widely known influencer of customer satisfaction and brand engagement within the literature, this finding of this research

reveals that it benefits sustainable businesses in a unique way by capturing the customers' patience and faith in the brand.

Lastly, the two other brand dimensions "Personality Fit" and "Brand Values" are interlinked with the "Personal Values" of the Individual Factors, they are essential in determining self-image congruence. The suggested importance of "Personal Values" reflects Moisander's (2007) theory that ethical consumers are often intrinsically motivated. By living up to their values and moral convictions, these individuals are subject to positive emotions such as satisfaction, pride and confidence. On a larger scale, various studies hint towards this hypothesis, such as Sener and Hazer (2008), and Wheale and Hinton's (2007), claiming individual factors such as personality and habits the prevailing influencers of ethical attitudes and behaviours.

The alignment of "Personal Values" and "Brand Values" is indispensable for Self-image congruence within the ethical decision-making process. The results of this study endorse the fit between the individual's actual self and the brand image as a significant component in customer choices and therefore advocates Nguyen and Nguyen's (2020) allegations that self-image congruence is a key antecedent of ethical purchase intention. However, the findings develop upon this hypothesis and identify a new variable, namely the alignment between the ideal self and the actual self which bears a more important role when accurately predicting ethical purchase intention. The data analysis demonstrates that individuals perceiving a close alignment between their actual and ideal self experience a stronger self-image congruence, which ordinarily translates the purchase intention for ethical goods into actions. In line with Damon and Hart (1992) and Meijboom and Brom (2012), the interviewees that cherished ethical beliefs for many years integrated these convictions into their self-concept and were more consistent in their ethical purchase intentions than the participants that expressed recent interest in sustainability.

Therefore, this research fills a gap in the literature and concludes that the ideal self is of higher importance when engaging into complex decision-making. Although previous studies agree on individuals' urge to fill the gap between their actual and their ideal self (Dogan, 2015; Higgins, 1987), a strong cognitive match between both selves will predominantly influence consumer behaviour and remains crucial for the accurate prediction of ethical purchases.

5.1 Conceptualization

Through the findings from this study, it was possible to elaborate an improved conceptual framework combining the “Decision-making model of sustainable consumption” (Figure 1) (Terlau and Hirsch, 2015, p.161) and the “Self-image Congruence Model” (Figure 2) (Park and Lee, 2005). This framework (Figure 1) considers the consumers’ “ethical dimension” which was neglected in previous studies (Shaw and Shiu, 2003; Chatzidakis et al., 2007). It confirms the relevance of the concepts established by the researchers, and the acknowledgement of new dimensions when analysing sustainable decision-making for low-involvement ethical purchases.

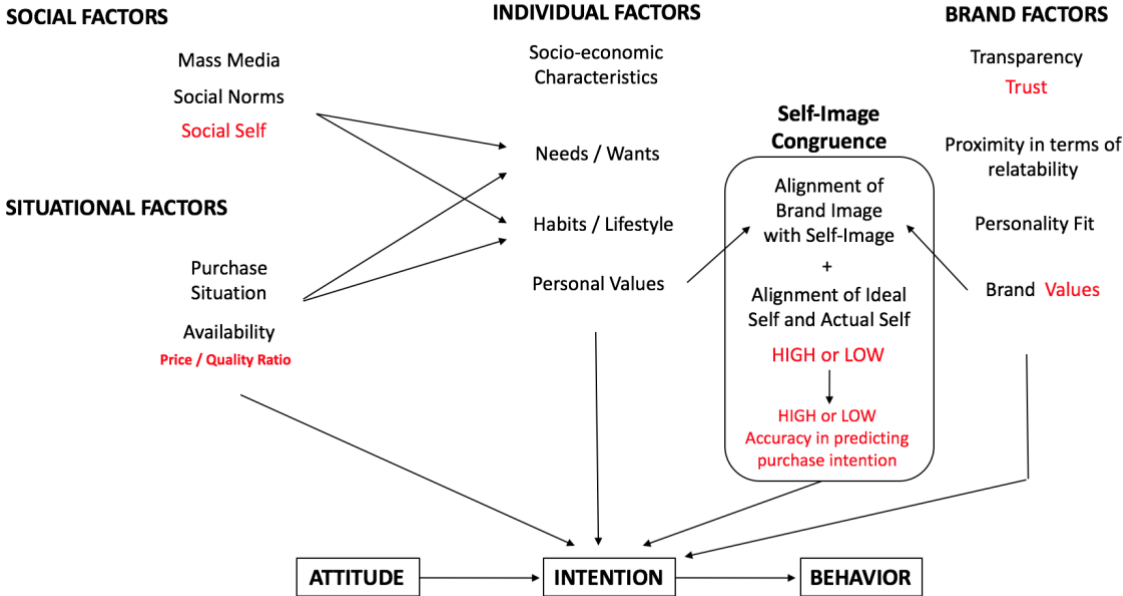


Figure 1 - Improved Ethical Decision-Making Model including Self-Image Congruence

First, the model recognises the interdependence of Social, Situational and Individual Factors with “Social Norms”, “Mass Media”, “Social Self”, “Purchase Situation” and “Availability” influencing “Needs/Wants” and “Habits/Lifestyle”, as opposed to Terlau and Hirsch (2015) who consider these factors as separate entities. It includes the “Social Self” in the Social Factors as it is very much a product of the “Mass Media” and “Social Norms”.

Within sustainable decision-making, an individual’s ideal social self and ideal self are difficult to distinguish due to peer pressure and heated circumstances.

Certain components such as “Control of Action” and “Capabilities/Skills” are dismissed, as these aspects did not interfere with the online purchase context of the interviewed candidates and were not mentioned during the data collection. The absence of “Incentives” in the Situational Factors can also be noted, as they remind consumers of selling strategies used by unethical brands.

Second, the model introduces a new element often neglected by previous research: “Brand Attributes”. As this study demonstrates, these are essential for the comprehension of the individual’s decision-making process, particularly in a sustainable consumption context. Four components constitute these brand factors. Two are stand-alone attributes and are directly influencing the purchase intention “Brand Transparency” and “Proximity”. The aspect of trust, similarly missing in both previous models, generates credibility for the brand and offers a significant advantage over competitors.

Finally, “Brand Values” and “Personality Fit” are dynamic attributes that directly intertwine with “Personal values” Individual Factors. Jointly, they serve as the base of Self-Image Congruence within the sustainable decision-making process. The alignment of personal and brand values is the decisive influencer determining the self-image congruence within the improved decision-making model. As the perceived distance between the individual’s actual

and ideal self is the best predictor of sustainable behaviour, one distinguishes between a high and a low self-image congruence, which translates into a high and low accuracy when predicting ethical purchase intentions.

5.2 Theoretical Implications

This research offers significant theoretical contributions to the academic literature within the fields of consumer behaviour, more specifically on ethical decision-making, and the field of the Self-Concept, notably the significance of self-image congruence. In a low-involvement product context, the findings of this study validate the existing assumption that the self-concept is a powerful indicator and predictor of consumer behaviour, and expose the role of the closeness between individuals' actual and ideal self when translating ethical attitudes into actions.

By adopting a grounded theory approach, the results identified the unique role of the ideal self within self-image congruence and its accuracy when trying to predict ethical consumer behaviour. Therefore, this study sets itself apart from the popular research practice which consists in assessing the roots and causes of the Attitude-Behaviour Gap.

This research fills a gap in the literature by examining how the Self-Concept and ethical decision-making influence one another, and how the findings help close the Attitude-Behaviour Gap. It maps out the current flaws of the ethical decision-making model from Terlau and Hirsch (2015), and provides crucial insights on decisive variables within sustainable purchase behaviour. Finally, this study implements theoretical implications for prevalent models neglecting the importance of self-image congruence at all levels within sustainable choice behaviour.

5.3 Practical Implications

For marketers, in terms of implications for practice, it is essential to consider a gradual change in consumer behaviour directed towards more sustainable habits and therefore, a

change within the Attitude-Behaviour Gap. However, these change in behaviours often occur after a certain gain of maturity and a certain disposable income, therefore, this study highlights the futility of targeting a consumer group responding to different criteria. Furthermore, facilitating the access to information on ethical consumption and to sustainable products fosters the closure of the Attitude-Behaviour Gap and amplifies the customer base of the ethical product market.

From a company's perspective, transparency and traceability are essential for business viability. A brand hiding behind perfectionist statements and polished appearances does not appeal to the ethical customer. By addressing sustainability issues openly, customers relate to the brand, which comes across as more credible and gains individuals' sympathy and faith. Ethical companies need to create emotional connections with their target audience as they stand for specific values and moral convictions the customers want to identify with. However, authenticity is key, and ethical consumers question their purchases much more, as they are aware of greenwashing. A high-quality brand-customer relationship translates into brand loyalty in the long term.

5.4 Limitations and suggestions for future research

Although the use of semi-structured interview in this qualitative study has unveiled the deep complexities of the ethical decision-making and has shed light on the role of the Self-Concept within sustainable choice behaviour, the limitations of this methodology have to be presented and taken into account for future research.

First, the data collection and transcription contribute to the time-consuming nature of the employed method, limiting the study to a restricted sample. Therefore, the findings of this research and the improved proposed model should be tested on a larger and more diverse population before supposing its legitimacy. Moreover, the model should be tested within other industries before making generalizations, as these findings concentrate on low-involvement

products such as clothing. Furthermore, the challenges presented by qualitative interviewing have to be reminded: research bias and participant bias remain issues to consider carefully as the interviewer takes the responsibility of the main data collection instrument (Saunders et al., 2012).

Finally, Saunders et al. (2012) point out the representativeness issues linked to theory building approaches and highlight that the conclusions drawn from a specific research might not apply when changing some characteristics. Despite those limitations, the results of this study open various directions for future research. First, it is essential to verify the proposed improved model (Figure 1) against a larger sample size and different product categories, as this allows the acquisition of a stable representation, and determines if the role of the Self-Concept in sustainable decision-making is of similar importance in other industries and product or service categories. Moreover, the arising hypothesis suggesting the improvements within the Attitude-Behaviour Gap requires academic consensus. Determining the roles of the ideal social self in contrast to the ideal self in ethical customer choice behaviour is also subject to further investigation. Secondly, an interesting addition could be to expand this research to high-involvement purchase goods, since, as previously mentioned, a disparity between the self-image congruence effect on intention to purchase between high involvement and low involvement products can be observed (Bennett and Vijaygopal, 2018; Nguyen and Nguyen, 2020).

By investigating the suggested paths for future research, scholars can expand their knowledge to generate a more precise ethical decision-making model including the Self-Concept, and therefore uncover the remaining consumer behaviour theories necessary to decode the Attitude-Behaviour Gap.

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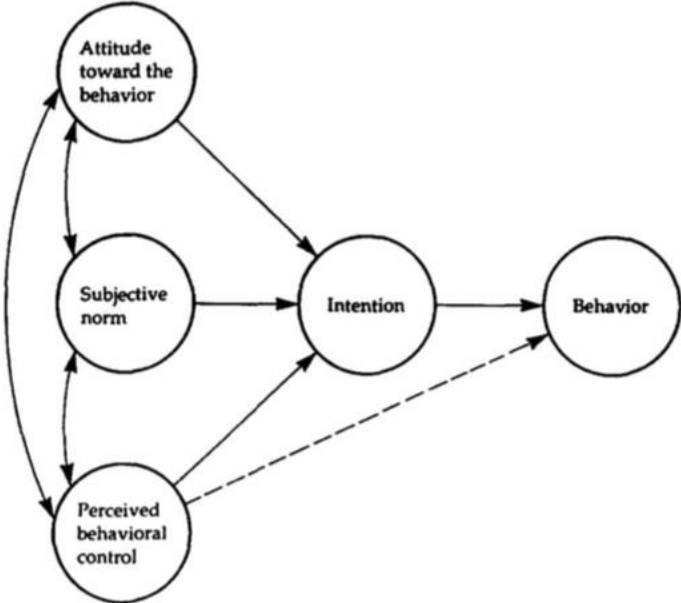
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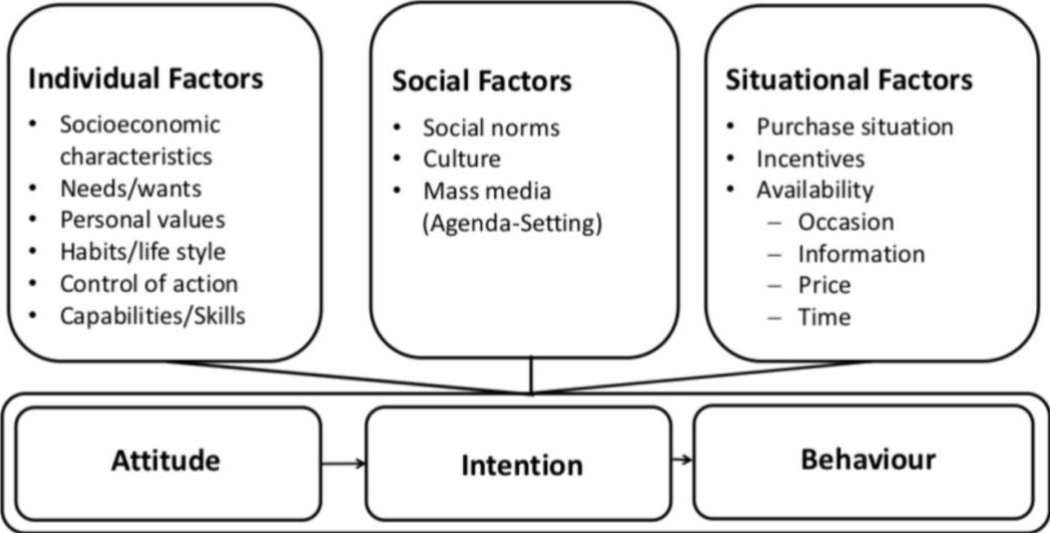
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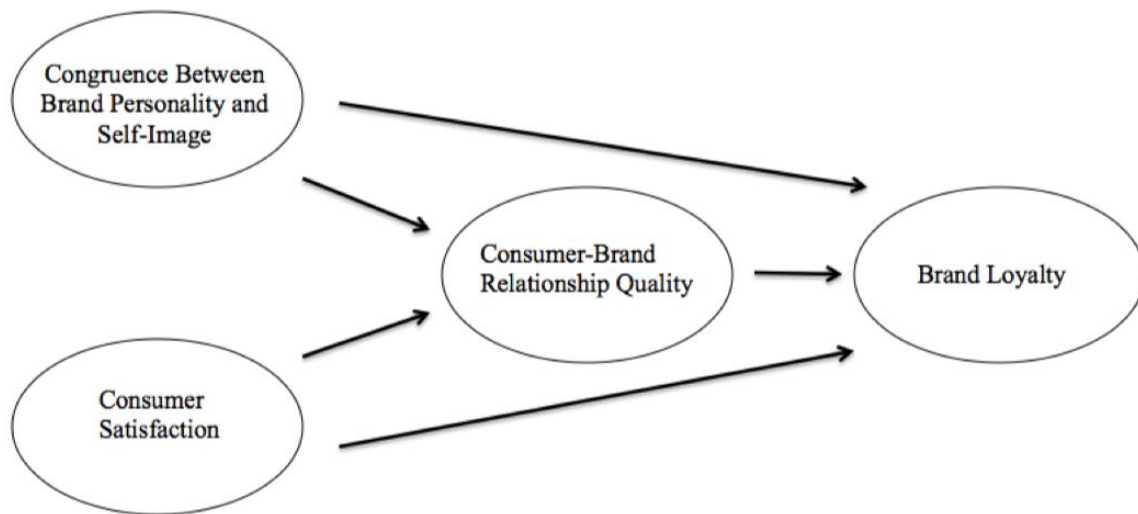
Appendix – Figure 1 – Theory of Planned Behaviour (Ajzen, 1991, p.182)



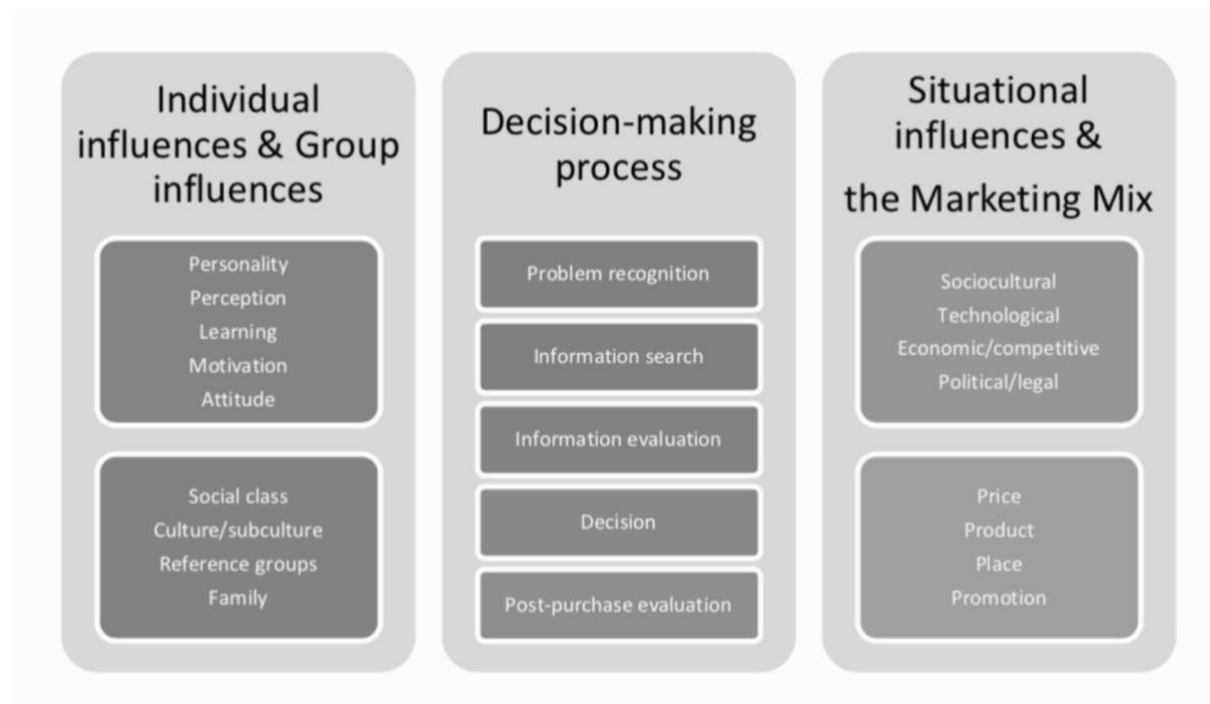
Appendix – Figure 2 – Decision-Making Model in the Context of Sustainable Consumption (Terlau and Hirsch, 2015, p.161)



Appendix – Figure 3 – Self-image Congruence Model (Park and Lee, 2005, p.42)



Appendix – Figure 4 – Consumer Buying Decision-Making Process and its Influencing Factors



Appendix – Document 1 – Interview questions

General attitude and interest towards sustainability and sustainable clothing

Please write down 3 words that come into your mind when you think about sustainable clothing.

Tell me the story of how you became interested in sustainability and sustainable fashion.

What is your favourite ethical clothing brand and why? What does this brand reflect? How do you associate to the brand?

Why did you switch to sustainable clothing and why to this brand specifically?

Factors influencing sustainable choice behaviour

What influences you when you buy new clothes in general?

What are the attributes that you like about your favourite ethical clothing brand?

How do you feel when you are wearing clothing from your favourite ethical clothing brand and why?

Self-concept

To what extent do you feel like your clothes represents you in general?

To what extent do you feel like your favourite ethical clothing represents you?

Actual Self

To what extent does the image from your favourite ethical clothing brand match with your own?

Ideal Self

To what extent is the brand consistent with the person you would like to be?

Do you think this brand enhance the image you have of yourself? Do ethical clothes in general enhance the image you have of yourself?

Appendix – Table 1 - Characteristics of participants interviewed (n=17)

Participant number	Occupation	Gender	Age
001	Student	M	< 25
002	Student	F	< 25
003	Student	F	< 25
004	Student	F	< 25
005	Student	M	25 < x < 30
006	Working	F	25 < x < 30
007	Working	F	25 < x < 30
008	Working	M	> 30
009	Working	F	25 < x < 30
010	Working	F	> 30
011	Student	F	< 25
012	Working	M	< 25
013	Working	F	> 30
014	Student	F	25 < x < 30
015	Student	F	25 < x < 30
016	Working	M	25 < x < 30
017	Student	F	< 25

Appendix – Table 2 – Open Codes

Name	Files	References
Alignment between brand values and personal values	14	15
Change in decision-making process - asking questions	13	14
The importance of trust	13	17
Price - quality ratio and longevity of clothes	13	15
Change of habits and lifestyle	11	15
Alignment between brand image and actual self	11	11
Happiness about buying or wearing ethical clothes	11	13
Wearing	6	6
Buying	5	7
Environment and social view on sustainability	10	12
Emotions and surroundings	9	13
Awareness of the social self	9	13
Reflection on teenage behaviour vs. adult behaviour	9	9
Feeling of proximity with a brand in terms of relatability	9	13
Alignment between brand image and ideal self	9	10
Feeling of belonging to a community	8	10
Feeling pride and happiness when being asked about sustainable clothes	8	8
Anti-consumption aspect	7	9
Enhancing the self-image through the image of the ethical clothing brand	6	6
Feeling discomfort when clothing choices do not align with self-image	6	6
Embracing a role model behaviour	6	8
Enhancing the self-image through actions	6	6

Actual self being close to the ideal self	6	7
Media influencing decision-making	5	5

Appendix – Table 3 – Reoccurring words in five categories

Categories	Individual Words	Number of mentions
Sustainable Clothing Attributes	Quality	10
	Expensive	10
	Timeless / Minimalistic	8
	Capsule Wardrobe	5
	Organic Cotton	3
Concerns about the environment	Impact	8
	Energy / Water	7
	Climate change	4
	Natural	3
	Biodegradable	3
	Local	3
Concerns about ethical practices	Second Hand	8
	Recycled / Recycling	7
	Circular	5
Concerns about unethical practices	Fair	5
	Green Washing	4
Feelings towards sustainable clothing and ethical practices	Pride	8

Appendix – Table 4 – Data Structure

Open Codes (Number of Mentions)	Axial Coding	Selective Coding
Environmental and social view on sustainability (10)	Validating the theory that sustainable decision-making is more calculated, less impulsive, and more complex	Gradual change in the Personal factors and therefore in the Attitude-Behaviour Gap.
Change in decision-making process - asking questions (13)	Age and income are important factors influencing ethical decision making	
Anti-consumption aspect (7)		
Reflection on teenage behaviour vs. adult behaviour (9)		
Change of habits and lifestyle (11)		
Media influencing decision-making (5)	Importance of the influence of Social Factors on "Wants/Needs" AND Taking the social self into account when analysis decision-making process about fashion/clothing purchase decisions	Social Factors and Situational Factors are influencing Individual Factors
Awareness of the social self (8)	Importance of Availability on "Wants/Needs"	
Price / quality ratio and the longevity of clothes (13)	Influence of Situational Factors on "Wants/Needs"	
Happiness about buying (5) or wearing (6) ethical clothes	Importance of the Purchase situation and the surroundings and emotions	
Felling of pride and happiness when being asked about sustainable clothes (8)		
Embracing a role model behaviour (6)		
Emotions and surroundings (11)		
The importance of trust (13)	The multiple benefits of transparency	The importance of Brand Attributes
Feeling a proximity to the brand in terms of relatability (9)	Customers feeling represented and integrated by the brands	
Feeling of belonging to a community (8)		
Alignments between the brand image and the actual self (11)	Close fit between the brand image and the actual self-image	The importance of close alignment between the actual and the ideal self within consumer self-image congruence to accurately predict ethical decision-making process.
Alignment between brand image and ideal self (9)	The closer the perceived actual self is to the ideal self, the stronger the self-image congruence and therefore the purchase intention for ethical goods.	HIGH vs LOW self-image congruence
Actual self close being close ideal self (6)	Self-image congruence is higher for individuals who integrated sustainable practices to their self-concept for the past couple of years	
Alignment between brand values and personal values (14)		
Enhancing self-image through the image of the ethical clothing brand (6)		
Enhancing the self-image through actions (6)		
Feeling of discomfort when clothing choices do not align with self-image (6)		

Appendix – Open Codes References

Alignment between personal values and brand values

Files\\Interview_001 - § 1 reference coded [1.99% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 1.99% Coverage

I feel that when you live by your values all the actions that you take towards those values are somewhat satisfactory. By, not ignoring sustainability concerns it makes me feel like I'm a more accomplished person I don't really see it as a restraint.

Files\\Interview_002 - § 1 reference coded [0.79% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 0.79% Coverage

I guess it's also to feel less guilty about not doing anything else for the environment.

Files\\Interview_003 - § 1 reference coded [0.97% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 0.97% Coverage

when I go into Zara or H&M or any other fast fashion clothing shop I feel kind of weird almost hypocritical because the shop doesn't align with my values and what I stand for

Files\\Interview_005 - § 1 reference coded [1.60% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 1.60% Coverage

I am conscious of my ideologies and I would find it hypocritical to live in a way that goes against them, I want my actions to reflect my ideas and sometimes that also goes through what I'm wearing

Files\\Interview_006 - § 1 reference coded [1.18% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 1.18% Coverage

I guess aligning my values to my purchase decisions definitely brings me some satisfaction, and gives me joy to buy something that I truly believe in.

Files\\Interview_009 - § 1 reference coded [0.87% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 0.87% Coverage

these are things are definitely go against this type of ideology and my moral convictions

Files\\Interview_010 - § 1 reference coded [1.33% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 1.33% Coverage

Purchasing clothes from sustainable brand is a very good action, it makes me feel good about myself because it feels like I'm behaving in a way that is aligned to my values.

Files\\Interview_011 - § 1 reference coded [1.16% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 1.16% Coverage

For me the brand just represents something that is aligned with my values and maybe also the fact that I would like to continue to stick to those values.

Files\\Interview_012 - § 1 reference coded [3.29% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 3.29% Coverage

From what I know from the brand, it is a line with my moral convictions, it is very transparent it is fair with its consumers and workers, they pay a good wage. The fact that it is not flashy or blingy are too materialistic, and clean, this aligns with my ideologies.

Files\\Interview_013 - § 1 reference coded [0.35% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 0.35% Coverage

For me it is important to be aligned with my values

Files\\Interview_014 - § 2 references coded [3.59% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 2.56% Coverage

I feel good I would say, my conscience feels lighter, because I know that no children have worked to produce this item

Reference 2 - 1.03% Coverage

I feel like I'm contributing to a greater good.

Files\\Interview_015 - § 1 reference coded [0.33% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 0.33% Coverage

It really aligns with my own values

Files\\Interview_016 - § 1 reference coded [2.30% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 2.30% Coverage

I guess this is because these close represent my values and my convictions and therefore I just maybe feel a little bit more confident in them.

Files\\Interview_017 - § 1 reference coded [2.24% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 2.24% Coverage

I was happy because I knew that I was going to keep them for a long time. It feels like I am in line with my ideologies even more.

What I also like about these clothes is that they're very casual elegant.

Change in decision-making process – asking questions

Files\\Interview_001 - § 2 references coded [1.77% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 1.04% Coverage

Now I'm asking questions such as "hey where does it come from? Is it good?", so it definitely changed my behaviour in my daily life.

Reference 2 - 0.73% Coverage

I ask myself if I agree to what the brand does. In terms of "Do I feel good about buying this?".

Files\\Interview_002 - § 1 reference coded [1.85% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 1.85% Coverage

Also with social media you come across much more at statistics and facts about the fast fashion clothing industry and about climate change so I thought that I should really contribute to the right movement

Files\\Interview_003 - § 1 reference coded [1.14% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 1.14% Coverage

when I actually purchase clothing items I am more thinking about the clothes I already own and how I can combine this new item with the ones I already have. I base most of my purchasing decisions on that.

Files\\Interview_004 - § 1 reference coded [0.87% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 0.87% Coverage

I have the feeling that decision-making concerning clothes became much more complicated

Files\\Interview_005 - § 1 reference coded [2.34% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 2.34% Coverage

I also tried to adapt this mindset when I go out with friends, we are not going in the bars anymore where they serve big beer brands but we try to go to the local bar is where they serve artisan beer and local food. So, I really tried to focus on this local aspect in my everyday consumption

Files\\Interview_007 - § 1 reference coded [1.92% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 1.92% Coverage

knowing that I am also contributing to that problem by buying fast fashion, I thought that I definitely needed to take a step back and look at my choices and try to limit my impact on the environment

Files\\Interview_009 - § 1 reference coded [1.27% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 1.27% Coverage

I don't know but I just started thinking really really far ahead. This is typically what influences me in those types of situations

Files\\Interview_010 - § 1 reference coded [1.17% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 1.17% Coverage

And I catch myself thinking that there are quite a few items that I would like to have but then I don't really buy them until I know that I really need them.

Files\\Interview_012 - § 1 reference coded [1.53% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 1.53% Coverage

Yes, I think I make a conscious effort in my consumption, not just in clothing but in general, not to buy as much as I used to.

Files\\Interview_013 - § 1 reference coded [1.85% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 1.85% Coverage

I try to buy like one or two pieces but that means that also another piece in my closet gets replaced or recycled so that I don't add to what I have, but rather change the non-sustainable options that I have in my closet. I also try to have this capsule wardrobe approach.

Files\\Interview_014 - § 1 reference coded [2.32% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 2.32% Coverage

I got really tired of packing and unpacking my stuff, so now I really think twice if I really need something

Files\\Interview_015 - § 1 reference coded [1.19% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 1.19% Coverage

It really made me think, and I made the decision that I don't want to buy something anymore that is not going to last me a long time.

Files\\Interview_017 - § 1 reference coded [1.72% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 1.72% Coverage

the third aspect that would come to my mind, is to think if this item would go with a load of other items in my wardrobe, this is extremely important to me.

The importance of trust

Files\\Interview_002 - § 1 reference coded [2.03% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 2.03% Coverage

They also explain where the clothing is sourced from and this is something that some other necessarily do, or at least they don't go into that much detail. I feel that the fact that they are so open really makes me trust them more

Files\\Interview_003 - § 1 reference coded [2.02% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 2.02% Coverage

I just trust them, I guess this is probably irrational because obviously I don't see where and how are their produce, I just choose to put my trust in them.

I guess it's probably the fact that I feel closer to the brand now that I live in Denmark and there's also a lot of minimalism influencers on social media which I trust that our ambassadors for this brand.

Files\\Interview_004 - § 1 reference coded [2.53% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 2.53% Coverage

I just like the fact that they are offering sustainable clothing and one thing that is quite cool on their website, is that you can see reports of what they have done every year. You can have a detailed overview on the wall how many CO2 emissions they are produced.

Files\\Interview_006 - § 1 reference coded [2.89% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 2.89% Coverage

They give a lot of information on their processes and you don't have to search for hours and hours to figure out what their ethos is and how their ethos is actually displayed. They give you a lot of information on their website and through their social media presence. They also give you a lot of background information which made me believe them more than another brand.

Files\\Interview_007 - § 2 references coded [3.16% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 1.66% Coverage

I know that there are definitely some improvements needed but they are already doing a great job and I know that they will tackle the other problems at some point in time.

Reference 2 - 1.49% Coverage

I think that if the brand was trying to look very polished and perfect, and having this image of perfection, I don't think I would like them as much as I do.

Files\\Interview_008 - § 1 reference coded [1.17% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 1.17% Coverage

I have this feeling that whenever I buy something that is closer to me, it is also healthier. Most

of the time I really just think that it's better

Files\\Interview_009 - § 1 reference coded [3.49% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 3.49% Coverage

Very few brands are spreading a message that goes against this ideology, and it makes you aware of the fact that they are producing a problem. Recognising that issue and addressing it with customers is something very honourable nowadays, but on the other hand it's also the least you can do. This is the thing where Patagonia is doing a very good job in my opinion.

Files\\Interview_010 - § 1 reference coded [1.54% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 1.54% Coverage

They also had a very good review and a high score on an app that evaluates ethical products. So, I thought, okay this brand is doing everything right, and it is also very engaged into social movements.

Files\\Interview_011 - § 1 reference coded [3.00% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 3.00% Coverage

You go on this website and you look at the models in lingerie, and you have the impression of just seeing normal women. They look like women that you could cross in the street. So, I really like this aspect of the brand, they are making the brand accessible by making it easy to relate to the women on those pictures, you have the feeling that every shape and size is represented by one of the women.

Files\\Interview_012 - § 2 references coded [4.47% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 2.00% Coverage

And I think one important aspects that they reflect is also transparency, because everything is very much shown to the consumer and explained on the website.

Reference 2 - 2.47% Coverage

I don't mind paying a higher price but there is a limit. If I know that this clothing item is from a well-known consumer brand, I am less likely to buy it, I just don't think I like clothes for the masses

Files\\Interview_013 - § 3 references coded [4.58% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 0.72% Coverage

they were transparent about the effect that they have. They are smaller and therefore more credible.

Reference 2 - 1.15% Coverage

So it might happen that I like them now because they're small and they're really conscious, but they could change in the future and then I might not like them anymore.

Reference 3 - 2.71% Coverage

Yes for sure and I think that the one thing that I like about them so much at the moment is that they are also approachable. You know the founder; you know how they were built and so on it's not just one store you just go into and you don't know who's behind it. I think that's a very important aspect on why they come across more credible and more authentic, but I mean that can change when they grow.

Files\\Interview_015 - § 1 reference coded [4.35% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 4.35% Coverage

They also communicated very well so it is definitely a strong selling point, it is not something they recently added, it is the purpose of the brand. It is part of the culture that they're established. Also in terms of the repair policy, it is just something that gives you incentive to go and repair your clothes instead of buying new ones, and I think that this is so rare that it is almost honourable from them. Although every brand should technically do that, right?

Files\\Interview_017 - § 1 reference coded [1.94% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 1.94% Coverage

Also, I got to know the brand through Instagram, and sometimes I comment on her posts, or on her stories and she always answers to me, which makes her easily approachable.

Price - quality ratio and longevity of clothes

Files\\Interview_002 - § 1 reference coded [1.57% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 1.57% Coverage

I also started realising that the clothes that I have from fast fashion companies start breaking down quickly and I wanted to see if I can get clothes that have a better quality

Files\\Interview_003 - § 1 reference coded [0.71% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 0.71% Coverage

what makes it more sustainable for me is that they are timeless, when you buy an item from them you're going to wear it forever

Files\\Interview_004 - § 2 references coded [1.37% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 0.87% Coverage

I try to build myself a basic sustainable wardrobe which I'm going to keep for a long time.

Reference 2 - 0.50% Coverage

I am trying to focus on the longevity of the products

Files\\Interview_005 - § 1 reference coded [0.97% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 0.97% Coverage

Those jeans are from the 80s, so the carbon footprint that they have is next to nothing if you compare their longevity

Files\\Interview_006 - § 1 reference coded [1.14% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 1.14% Coverage

I thought that if I invest in a good sustainable brand, that will last me for a long time, I would decrease my impact on the environment a little bit

Files\\Interview_007 - § 1 reference coded [1.74% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 1.74% Coverage

now that I have a full-time job and that I earn a little bit more money I can afford pieces that I couldn't before and I am definitely looking for pieces that will last me a long time.

Files\\Interview_008 - § 1 reference coded [0.86% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 0.86% Coverage

I buy a lot of sustainable shirts because it's heavier cotton, I like when the T-shirt feels more robust.

Files\\Interview_011 - § 2 references coded [1.67% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 0.86% Coverage

Even if sustainable clothes are supposed to be higher quality and last for longer they still have a higher price

Reference 2 - 0.81% Coverage

This is why I like buying clothes of high-quality because I know that they're going to last me a long time.

Files\\Interview_012 - § 1 reference coded [1.26% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 1.26% Coverage

I like the quality of the clothes, I like having clothes of high quality that will last me a long time.

Files\\Interview_013 - § 1 reference coded [1.39% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 1.39% Coverage

But I felt that this "in between" is having something really nice and long lasting that you absolutely love and that is not tied to any trends and tied to a larger corporation that is trimmed to profit.

Files\\Interview_014 - § 1 reference coded [2.38% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 2.38% Coverage

I started realising the importance of having good basics are good essential items that last for a long time.

Files\\Interview_015 - § 1 reference coded [1.18% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 1.18% Coverage

It really made me think, and I made the decision that I don't want to buy something anymore that is not going to last me a long time

Files\\Interview_017 - § 1 reference coded [1.94% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 1.94% Coverage

the T-shirt shouldn't break after the first or the second washing, real sustainable clothes I think should last to at least 10 years in terms of the quality of the product

Change of habits and lifestyle

Files\\Interview_001 - § 1 reference coded [0.71% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 0.71% Coverage

I also started a plant based diet so I can definitely say that it changed a lot of my habits.

Files\\Interview_003 - § 1 reference coded [1.19% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 1.19% Coverage

I was the one person in my friendship group who was defined as of the “sustainable” one. Not just in terms of fashion but also in terms of zero waste, trying to rescue food waste, believing in food sharing and so o

Files\\Interview_004 - § 2 references coded [2.29% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 0.81% Coverage

I had a look on the Internet and I read some blogs and I guess I just changed my mindset

Reference 2 - 1.49% Coverage

In other aspects of my life I genuinely tried to pay more attention to the environment, for example I am cycling a lot or I also try to not buy useless stuff.

Files\\Interview_005 - § 2 references coded [2.30% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 1.59% Coverage

I started to go to local markets and to try and buy my groceries directly from the producer and not from any middleman shop. In this way, I tried to reduce the carbon emissions of my food shopping

Reference 2 - 0.71% Coverage

The whole idea is to change my consumption behaviour and to find better alternatives

Files\\Interview_006 - § 2 references coded [2.19% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 1.20% Coverage

I have changed my diet, I became vegetarian. I also change the way I commute, I’m much rather take the bike or go walking somewhere instead of using the car

Reference 2 - 0.98% Coverage

My personal hygiene products and cosmetic products are also more sustainable, there is way less plastic involved as before

Files\\Interview_008 - § 1 reference coded [1.25% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 1.25% Coverage

I need to make an impact where I live, even if it’s more expensive. For example, I spend a lot of money on food, much more than anyone else in my friends group

Files\\Interview_009 - § 2 references coded [2.08% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 0.95% Coverage

I just made a decision not to be part of the process anymore, there is still so much I can and should do

Reference 2 - 1.13% Coverage

Food and drinks are also a big area where I try to buy seasonal and local stuff. I also tried to go to the zero-waste shop

Files\\Interview_011 - § 1 reference coded [1.21% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 1.21% Coverage

So, I first started with the food, I went to 0 waste trucks to start a bulk shopping, I bought reusable items or even for example solid shampoos or shower gels.

Files\\Interview_012 - § 1 reference coded [2.15% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 2.15% Coverage

When it comes to food, or electronics I always try to consume better quality products that I know will last me a long time and where the origins are from a better background.

Files\\Interview_013 - § 1 reference coded [0.79% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 0.79% Coverage

I also figured I should change a few of my own behaviors and produce less waste and emissions also my private life.

Files\\Interview_017 - § 1 reference coded [4.25% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 4.25% Coverage

I became more interested in sustainability in general, so it was especially the fact of reducing waste, I started buying solid shampoos solid toothpaste solid deodorant and I started going to 0 waste shop to buy my dried goods such as pasta, rice-cereals. I moved a lot in the last couple of years, but everywhere I would go I will try to find a zero waste shop close to my place

Alignment between brand image and actual self

Files\\Interview_001 - § 1 reference coded [0.92% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 0.92% Coverage

I feel like it fits really well my feelings and emotions at the moment. It fits this whole relaxed vibe at the moment.

Files\\Interview_002 - § 1 reference coded [4.58% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 4.58% Coverage

I think I probably associate the most with the fact that they think about all the aspects of sustainability because that reminds me a little bit of myself. Not the fact that I try to apply sustainability and all the aspects of my life but the fact that I'm sometimes a little bit of an over-thinker. So, I guess that this is what I associate with in the run the fact that I tried to kill several birds with one stone. So, I guess in that sense we could say that my personality and the bronze personality are quite similar.

Files\\Interview_003 - § 1 reference coded [1.43% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 1.43% Coverage

If someone compliments me on my outfit and asks me where I have the pieces from then I can tell them that it's my favourite sustainable brand and that does make me very happy. I like this aspect as it confirms who I want to be and what I want to be perceived as

Files\\Interview_004 - § 1 reference coded [1.61% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 1.61% Coverage

So, I think the way that my clothes represent me at the moment, is definitely this classical style and also the fact that I am probably a little bit more stable in my life

Files\\Interview_005 - § 1 reference coded [0.60% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 0.60% Coverage

This brand definitely reflects my origins which is very important to me

Files\\Interview_006 - § 1 reference coded [2.95% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 2.95% Coverage

I think that one thing that I very much like about this brand and that represents me, is that the brand is very bold, it's not afraid of risks. And I think that I have changed to become such a person. I consider myself as a sustainable person, at least I'm trying a lot, and so when I show my clothes off that come from this particular brand I feel like I'm showing off a big part of my life

Files\\Interview_008 - § 1 reference coded [3.86% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 3.86% Coverage

I think one of the aspects where I can definitely align with sustainable clothing is that most of those brands they make sure that everything they do is kind of done sustainably, so they have a look at the producers, they have a look at the energy that they are using, and all of that. I would say that I am also the sort of person that tries to do everything right, I don't do things short-term, I look at the longevity. I love to work in the long-term and be thoughtful about things.

Files\\Interview_010 - § 1 reference coded [2.61% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 2.61% Coverage

The brand almost feels like a little bit rebellious, it has a little rebellious side. The clothes are quite basic and casual, they're not edgy, but the brand itself gives me a sort of rebellious vibe. But in a mature way, maybe that's why I identify with it, it's not like a teenage rebellion, it's a "we need to change the world rebellion".

Files\\Interview_011 - § 1 reference coded [0.67% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 0.67% Coverage

I would say that the patterns and the colours maybe reflect my personality a little bit

Files\\Interview_012 - § 1 reference coded [1.09% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 1.09% Coverage

I think so, because I'm not flashy, I'm not materialistic, I don't like blingy things.

Files\\Interview_017 - § 1 reference coded [3.11% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 3.11% Coverage

In general I would say that I like to look approachable and calm. To be honest I nearly don't own any clothes that have patterns, because I don't want to have a hard time combining pieces and I feel just that some plain T-shirt or plain trousers or skirt is calm and comforting.

Happiness about buying or wearing ethical clothes

Files\\Interview_002 - § 1 reference coded [1.36% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 1.36% Coverage

I feel happy and good about the purchase I made but once I wear them I don't think about it anymore. That chapter is closed, and I just think about the look.

Files\\Interview_003 - § 1 reference coded [0.55% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 0.55% Coverage

I don't think about it a lot, but for example when I wear a whole sustainable outfit, I do feel nice

Files\\Interview_004 - § 1 reference coded [0.47% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 0.47% Coverage

I feel happy about wearing a sustainable outfit

Files\\Interview_005 - § 1 reference coded [0.71% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 0.71% Coverage

I'm happy when I wear those items because they fit my image and they represent my ideas

Files\\Interview_006 - § 1 reference coded [1.06% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 1.06% Coverage

I feel very confident and smart in a way, because I feel very comfortable in the clothes are in the swimsuit and it makes me feel radiant.

Files\\Interview_008 - § 2 references coded [3.63% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 2.06% Coverage

I guess when I buy an item from a sustainable clothing brand I feel happy and satisfied because I know that I'm supporting the community and doing something good for myself and also for others, but once I wear the T-shirt or the item, but feeling vanishes

Reference 2 - 1.57% Coverage

I have this feeling of happiness when I buy an item that is sustainable, but then I get detached from it. I think I need to get back into the store and choose another item to have that feeling again

Files\\Interview_009 - § 2 references coded [2.78% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 2.19% Coverage

I realised that when I need stuff, I am very influenced by those buzzwords like circular economy or recycled materials. If those terms are mentioned on the label and if I really need the item, then I feel good about the purchase.

Reference 2 - 0.59% Coverage

To be honest I just feel normal, not very special or anything.

Files\\Interview_012 - § 1 reference coded [1.55% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 1.55% Coverage

I feel good knowing that what I'm wearing comes from a good place, I think I had a good effect on the world by buying this item.

Files\\Interview_013 - § 1 reference coded [0.79% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 0.79% Coverage

Very happy, so it makes it now it makes me really happy to wear those because I know that those are like great pieces

Files\\Interview_016 - § 1 reference coded [1.03% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 1.03% Coverage

I literally just get dressed and I don't think about it too much.

Files\\Interview_017 - § 1 reference coded [2.35% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 2.35% Coverage

To be honest I have them for a long time now, so I don't really think about it that much anymore but in general I would say that I feel happy because it's something easy to wear and that's also easily combinable.

Environment and social view on sustainability

Files\\Interview_001 - § 1 reference coded [3.52% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 3.52% Coverage

One of the dimensions is the material, a lot of textiles come with micro-plastics which end up in the environment when you are washing your clothes. This also happens also during the production process. So, if you work with organic cotton, this can solve a lot of these problems, this is why it is a huge part of the sustainable clothing for me. Another part is the labour that is included in the production process, the way you treat your labour.

Files\\Interview_002 - § 2 references coded [2.32% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 0.86% Coverage

For me sustainability is more related to when you use resources in a way that they don't run out.

Reference 2 - 1.46% Coverage

Then "ethical" comes in second place because that's where I put the human workforce, obviously I also care about the fact that I don't want people to be exploited.

Files\\Interview_004 - § 1 reference coded [1.82% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 1.82% Coverage

Who are the people producing my clothes, in what country are they? Talking about traceability as well, when I go on the website of a sustainable brand, I like to see where the item comes from

Files\\Interview_005 - § 1 reference coded [1.82% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 1.82% Coverage

LOCAL (to minimise transit by train flights or lorries), SOCIAL (there is this social aspect where I hope that the company where I am buying my clothes from is paying the workers correctly, this is very important to me),

Files\\Interview_007 - § 1 reference coded [2.27% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 2.27% Coverage

By "ethically made" I mean that there is a transparent supply chain honouring human rights in the working conditions and being carbon neutral or at least offsetting the CO2 emissions, and limiting the impact on the environment.

Files\\Interview_009 - § 1 reference coded [1.72% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 1.72% Coverage

Of course, it's better to produce something sustainably making sure that human rights are met or making sure that the clothes don't have any dangerous materials or ingredients

Files\\Interview_010 - § 1 reference coded [1.99% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 1.99% Coverage

It is important for me that those people are paid a living wage in the work under good conditions, or at least decent conditions. So, I would say that ethical is the social aspect of sustainability and natural is the environmental aspect of sustainability.

Files\\Interview_011 - § 2 references coded [2.60% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 0.70% Coverage

So, to find sustainable clothing is definitely one of the ways to protect the environment.

Reference 2 - 1.89% Coverage

When you buy a T-shirt that costs €3 you can't expect that it has been produced under fair conditions. You have to think of the price of the materials of the energy of the workforce and then also the transport that this T-shirt has done to come to you.

Files\\Interview_015 - § 1 reference coded [4.21% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 4.21% Coverage

Fairness is both about the relationship between the consumer and the planet and the resources, leaving enough resources for other people and making sure that we stay in the level of consumption that that doesn't impact of future generations, and go beyond what the planet can supply. "Fairness" is also related to the relationship between the consumer and the people that produce the products, so having fair wages and good production conditions

Files\\Interview_017 - § 1 reference coded [1.73% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 1.73% Coverage

When no harm for me represents sustainability on a global scale, so no harm done to the environment and also no harm done to the people that made this item

Emotions and surroundings

Files\\Interview_001 - § 2 references coded [2.36% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 1.44% Coverage

Before, I never thought so much about the way I dress, but I came to realise that my style changed a lot and this does reflect how I feel and how I live my life and how I think about things.

Reference 2 - 0.92% Coverage

I feel like it fits really well my feelings and emotions at the moment. It fits this whole relaxed vibe at the moment.

Files\\Interview_006 - § 1 reference coded [1.40% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 1.40% Coverage

Having the chance to express that through clothes by wearing very colourful pieces, and wearing cool pieces that make you look great, I would say it brings me confidence as well.

Files\\Interview_007 - § 1 reference coded [2.09% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 2.09% Coverage

But I'm trying to match the vibe of the places I go to, for example if I go to a restaurant or to a bar or if I just go out with friends to the city. I definitely try to match the aesthetic of my outfit to the place I'm going.

Files\\Interview_008 - § 1 reference coded [0.80% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 0.80% Coverage

Sometimes shirts also connect me back to the place where I bought it, they are linked to memories.

Files\\Interview_012 - § 1 reference coded [0.82% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 0.82% Coverage

that's the first reflection of how you feel and your personality

Files\\Interview_013 - § 2 references coded [1.95% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 0.80% Coverage

You can also re purpose that feeling for example put on a blazer when you want to feel more powerful and more strong.

Reference 2 - 1.15% Coverage

You can dress up for success truly, because you can start varying things and look more powerful than you might actually feel, but then slowly you also feel like that.

Files\\Interview_014 - § 2 references coded [3.06% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 2.01% Coverage

Then on other occasions I think that my close friend is a part of my personality, and represents my mood

Reference 2 - 1.06% Coverage

my style varies a little bit on the surroundings

Files\\Interview_015 - § 2 references coded [2.65% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 1.12% Coverage

Maybe it is also something to do about the fact that I know that I'm going to go someplace nice with a beautiful landscape

Reference 2 - 1.53% Coverage

Usually when I wear those clothes I'm going to go somewhere nice and I'm going to have a nice time, and even if I don't, I remember the other nice times that I had with it

Files\\Interview_016 - § 1 reference coded [2.55% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 2.55% Coverage

There for example some of the clothes that I wear, that I think really bring across the message that I told you about before, and I feel good about wearing them.

Awareness of the social self

Files\\Interview_001 - § 1 reference coded [2.06% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 2.06% Coverage

I always felt good wearing these types of clothing but I guess unconsciously it was definitely how I wanted to be seen as well that influenced my choice of clothing. Part of the reason of why I feel good wearing these clothes is probably of how I wanted to be seen.

Files\\Interview_005 - § 2 references coded [1.87% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 0.53% Coverage

So, what the close reflects and convey is definitely important

Reference 2 - 1.34% Coverage

If I'm going to work, and I know that I have a big client meeting, then I will always try to look a little bit professional so that I inspire confidence and assurance

Files\\Interview_007 - § 2 references coded [3.51% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 1.55% Coverage

Sometimes I think that ethically made clothes make you really look like granola mums, and I really like that this brand is trying to step away from that image.

Reference 2 - 1.96% Coverage

I think it really does depend on where I'm going, are used to work for different jobs and I would always try to represent the company, when I was talking to clients I would really wear a business attire.

Files\\Interview_008 - § 1 reference coded [1.03% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 1.03% Coverage

They probably think I'm not in the business sector, and that's important for me as I want people to feel comfortable around me

Files\\Interview_010 - § 1 reference coded [1.33% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 1.33% Coverage

sometimes I feel like I'm purposely trying to give off that queer vibe just so that people feel comfortable around me and that they feel like I am open to these sort of topics

Files\\Interview_012 - § 1 reference coded [0.56% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 0.56% Coverage

clothes are the first thing people see of you

Files\\Interview_013 - § 1 reference coded [1.00% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 1.00% Coverage

You can select quite well in terms of ‘what does represent me?’ and ‘how I want to also be perceived?’ and I think that’s a crucial aspect as well.

Files\\Interview_014 - § 2 references coded [2.83% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 1.14% Coverage

When I wear formal clothes to go to work for example.

Reference 2 - 1.69% Coverage

I won’t wear the same clothes with my friends then when I wear with my parents.

Files\\Interview_017 - § 2 references coded [2.27% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 1.29% Coverage

But then, when I go out with my friends to party for example, then I also like to have almost an unapproachable look

Reference 2 - 0.98% Coverage

And I guess that this is something I want for myself and I also want others to perceive.

Reflection on teenage behaviour vs. adult behaviour

Files\\Interview_002 - § 1 reference coded [1.34% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 1.34% Coverage

The older I get the more of the material of the clothing plays an important role as well. I came to appreciate clothes much more that have a good fabric.

Files\\Interview_003 - § 1 reference coded [0.60% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 0.60% Coverage

I am very happy that I didn't buy into those trends but I very much noticed myself being influenced by them.

Files\\Interview_004 - § 1 reference coded [2.02% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 2.02% Coverage

Also, now that I'm a little bit older and more mature I do pay more attention to the quality and the fabric of my clothing and I want to have items that lasts for longer time and I don't mind paying more money for it.

Files\\Interview_007 - § 1 reference coded [1.70% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 1.70% Coverage

I am at this point now where I am getting a little bit older and more mature, I become more aware of the fact that our planet is being destroyed, and I am worried about my future.

Files\\Interview_008 - § 1 reference coded [0.47% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 0.47% Coverage

Until I was mid 20s I did not wear any sustainable clothing

Files\\Interview_010 - § 1 reference coded [0.85% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 0.85% Coverage

And then my life started to change a little as well, I became mature and I became a mum and a lot of things changed

Files\\Interview_011 - § 1 reference coded [3.86% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 3.86% Coverage

When I was younger I think that this trend aspect really took over my shopping behaviour. For example, a couple of years ago, skinny jeans were very trendy, but now it's rather larger jeans, with bootleg for example. So, when I was younger, I definitely wanted some skinny jeans as well, but now I also definitely realise that this is not a shape that is fitting me at all. So, I started to buy jeans that are a little bit larger, that were not specifically trendy, but where I just felt much more comfortable

Files\\Interview_013 - § 1 reference coded [1.92% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 1.92% Coverage

I think one thing is really about this like “hey I’m kind of like grown up now I can check about my foot print”, it’s a bit of maturity as well, you know it’s like saying “OK I just don’t I just do not buy this anymore and just throw it away” but rather buy something very consciously.

Files\\Interview_015 - § 1 reference coded [1.31% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 1.31% Coverage

I guess when you are a teenager you try a lot of different things and you try to fit in and you experiment a lot with your clothes and your make up

Feeling of proximity with a brand in terms of relatability

Files\\Interview_001 - § 2 references coded [2.04% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 0.49% Coverage

I think the biggest part is this local connection to Portugal

Reference 2 - 1.55% Coverage

I feel like lots of insiders in Lisbon know the brand. Is this feeling of: if you lived in Lisbon you know the brand, it's this "wink wink" effect. That's what makes the brand pretty special I think.

Files\\Interview_003 - § 2 references coded [2.01% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 0.86% Coverage

I like the fact that they're such a small brand because I think that if I wanted to reach out to the founder I could very easily do so and ask some questions

Reference 2 - 1.15% Coverage

And one of the things I really liked about this brand that was when you bought an item from them it would always tell you what person created it. It is almost like you had a personal connection to this brand.

Files\\Interview_005 - § 2 references coded [3.10% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 1.78% Coverage

So, there is definitely this proximity to those brands although I learned about that later, there is also a friend of my sister's boyfriend working there. So, there is definitely this feeling of knowing the brand.

Reference 2 - 1.32% Coverage

even if I am not close to the brand in terms of distance I feel that the brand is close to my heart because people that I care about work there. It's where I come from

Files\\Interview_006 - § 1 reference coded [4.01% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 4.01% Coverage

You can tell that they care about the people that buy their products and they want to engage with them, and they bring people together. Social justice is also very important for them because that is the other side of sustainability I guess, it's not just the environment is also the social dimension. Being fair to your customers and to your workers, and being fair throughout your supply chain, that is all very important to them and that's what I like about them. They want to improve their social impact as well.

Files\\Interview_007 - § 1 reference coded [3.71% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 3.71% Coverage

What I really like for example is that on their Instagram they're never showing models, they show people that have a real Instagram account that don't even have a huge number of followers. These are very different people in all shapes and sizes with very different types of styles. I think that seeing different women expressing their style and wearing this brand inspires me.

Files\\Interview_011 - § 2 references coded [0.94% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 0.80% Coverage

I am identifying myself in the brand because I can imagine much easier hold the item is going to look on me

Reference 2 - 0.14% Coverage

I feel integrated

Files\\Interview_013 - § 1 reference coded [1.07% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 1.07% Coverage

The founder is similar age like me, so the clothes they produce is something that really fits well with what I do so there's a huge personality fit as well.

Files\\Interview_015 - § 1 reference coded [2.81% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 2.81% Coverage

They also have a very generous repair policy, for example wherever you go in the world if you go into a Patagonia shop with some clothes from them they will repair them for free, even if you haven't bought your item in that particular shop or even in that particular country. I find that very impressive.

Files\\Interview_017 - § 1 reference coded [1.53% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 1.53% Coverage

You can see that they're professionally made, but it's not in over exaggerated settings, which also makes the brand very relatable.

Feeling of belonging to a community

Files\\Interview_001 - § 2 references coded [1.04% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 0.65% Coverage

I think it is definitely there is a local aspect and the feeling of belongingness.

Reference 2 - 0.38% Coverage

I would say that I feel part of the Lisbon family.

Files\\Interview_005 - § 1 reference coded [0.53% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 0.53% Coverage

there is definitely this dimension of cultural belongingness

Files\\Interview_006 - § 1 reference coded [2.56% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 2.56% Coverage

I feel very connected to the people who also buy the brand, because they believe in the same things as me. Also, you can definitely see that they are normal people like you and me, not super humans, so that makes me feel more part of that community. I know that if I reach out to them I can be part of the group rather than just by myself.

Files\\Interview_007 - § 1 reference coded [3.43% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 3.43% Coverage

With this brand choosing to post normal people on their page that don't have a huge amount of followers and that are just very normal and authentic people who don't make money on Instagram for looking great, I think that definitely makes the brand very relatable, and it makes the brand very sympathetic. It makes me way more willing to buy from them.

Files\\Interview_008 - § 2 references coded [1.70% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 0.86% Coverage

You definitely get a connection to the community, I know people around me started their own little label

Reference 2 - 0.84% Coverage

I like to feel a part of the community or of a group, a group of people that stands for the same values as me

Files\\Interview_013 - § 1 reference coded [1.35% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 1.35% Coverage

I think in general for sustainable brands it's important to have this community and to be approachable, it can differentiate them really from the big brands. You know who is getting the money.

Files\\Interview_015 - § 1 reference coded [2.21% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 2.21% Coverage

I definitely think so, especially the climbing community can be very close knit, and people help each other. It is a very social sport. It makes you feel like you are part of it and you can also identify other people based on what they wear.

Files\\Interview_017 - § 1 reference coded [0.87% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 0.87% Coverage

I would say that there is a feeling of belonging to a sustainable community.

Feeling pride and happiness when being asked about sustainable clothes

Files\\Interview_003 - § 1 reference coded [1.79% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 1.79% Coverage

It is almost an idle function: people think that if I can get those nice-looking outfits sustainably, why couldn't they? I don't like telling people what to buy or how to live their life, I like it when they see something and think "Oh I could copy that, apparently it is easy". I think it is the most impact you can have

Files\\Interview_004 - § 1 reference coded [2.63% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 2.63% Coverage

Well in general I do feel good when I am wearing items from this particular brand that also ethical clothing in general and it makes me happy when my friends are asking me where the items come from. I am happy to be able to tell them that the item comes from a fair fashion brand.

Files\\Interview_008 - § 1 reference coded [1.44% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 1.44% Coverage

I love to tell people where I get my sustainable clothing from, and where they can buy something that makes a difference, so I'm happy to tell these people where I get those from.

Files\\Interview_009 - § 1 reference coded [0.90% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 0.90% Coverage

When people ask me where I get my clothes from, I do feel happy about it but only to some extent.

Files\\Interview_012 - § 1 reference coded [1.37% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 1.37% Coverage

I would feel happy that someone is interested enough in what I'm wearing to ask me where I got my clothes from.

Files\\Interview_013 - § 1 reference coded [0.35% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 0.35% Coverage

Of course you feel kind of like proud and satisfied

Files\\Interview_016 - § 1 reference coded [1.64% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 1.64% Coverage

I would definitely say that it makes me feel proud to talk about it and also the people are interested.

Files\\Interview_017 - § 1 reference coded [1.07% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 1.07% Coverage

I feel happy that people are interested in sustainable fashion and I am happily giving advice

Anti-consumption aspect

Files\\Interview_003 - § 1 reference coded [2.28% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 2.28% Coverage

Therefore, I would say that sustainability for me also means anti-consumption. If a so-called ethical brand sends out a newsletter to its customers prompting to buy new things and comes out every time with new collections then I don't think this is a very sustainable brand. For me a sustainable brand is also a brand that prompts you to buy less and that makes you think if you actually need this item.

Files\\Interview_007 - § 1 reference coded [2.95% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 2.95% Coverage

We definitely need to limit consumption. But especially if you're interested in fashion and if it's a hobby for you, stopping to buy all types of clothes would be an approach that most people can't live with. So, there is definitely this aspect of limiting consumption but not stopping it radically.

Files\\Interview_009 - § 2 references coded [5.50% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 2.28% Coverage

I think everyone, at least in the developed countries, has so many clothes that they don't really need to buy anymore. So, the first consideration when you think about sustainable clothing would be, do you actually need another piece?

Reference 2 - 3.22% Coverage

I think that clothes are only one part of the problem, I'm not going to save the world and stop climate change just because I am only cautious about what I buy in terms of clothing. Technologies like laptops or phones are also another big part of the problem, Apple just released the iPhone 13, and I am just thinking do we really need that?

Files\\Interview_012 - § 1 reference coded [0.79% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 0.79% Coverage

To me it means that you don't consume as much as other people do.

Files\\Interview_013 - § 1 reference coded [1.07% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 1.07% Coverage

I realized that the idea of like sustainable fashion would be to not wear anything new at all, it's to not consume, that would be the most sustainable way.

Files\\Interview_014 - § 2 references coded [7.90% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 4.23% Coverage

I am trying to maintain a small ecological footprint and I'm trying to not live on the cost of

others. I don't have a lot of money because I'm a student, and the best thing I can do is just using less.

Reference 2 - 3.67% Coverage

I am more an anti-shopping person. I think that there is definitely a minimalist dimension to sustainability and I think that we also need to control our consumption.

Files\\Interview_016 - § 1 reference coded [3.62% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 3.62% Coverage

So, I would definitely say, the most sustainable clothing is the one that doesn't need to be newly produced to be used, limiting the production of new clothes and trying to use what we already have is the most sustainable way.

Enhancing the self-image through the image of the ethical clothing brand

Files\\Interview_001 - § 1 reference coded [1.23% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 1.23% Coverage

But to me personally it is important to have consistency and to think about what I wear, and it makes me feel good about the way I live. It rounds it up nicely.

Files\\Interview_002 - § 1 reference coded [1.27% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 1.27% Coverage

But in that sense, I did the action of purchasing sustainable clothes and I guess in that sense it does enhance the image that I have of myself.

Files\\Interview_005 - § 1 reference coded [2.04% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 2.04% Coverage

I like the fact that this brand generally aligns with the ideas that I have of sustainability. I'm trying to live as close as I can to my ideas and I'm trying to do the maximum to respect my ideas in any possible way, and this brand is part of the process

Files\\Interview_006 - § 1 reference coded [1.72% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 1.72% Coverage

Maybe, I never really thought about it like that. When I'm wearing them, I do feel better about myself. It brings me some joy, I feel more satisfied about my choices and more stable in my values when I'm wearing this brand.

Files\\Interview_012 - § 1 reference coded [3.20% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 3.20% Coverage

I think that this is something I feel quite passionate about, the fact that I am wearing a quite clean and simple and high-quality product which comes from a sustainable source, it definitely enhances my feelings and my image and the opinions that I hold.

Files\\Interview_013 - § 1 reference coded [0.89% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 0.89% Coverage

There's always there this feel good aspect when you're either consuming this brand or if you're wearing stuff from this brand.

Feeling discomfort when clothing choices do not align with self-image

Files\\Interview_001 - § 1 reference coded [0.60% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 0.60% Coverage

Because I don't want to be that guy who wears the business shirts all the time

Files\\Interview_003 - § 1 reference coded [0.22% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 0.22% Coverage

I feel kind of weird and uncomfortable

Files\\Interview_005 - § 1 reference coded [1.36% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 1.36% Coverage

I also want to convey an image that is rather simple or simplistic, I am never going to buy shoes that cost €500 or gold chains or rings because it doesn't represent me

Files\\Interview_010 - § 1 reference coded [0.80% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 0.80% Coverage

if I was going to wear some sort of business attire. I just feel completely off like I'm not being myself.

Files\\Interview_015 - § 1 reference coded [2.20% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 2.20% Coverage

I guess that there are clothes that make you look good, but they feel a little bit like a costume, they don't feel like you. For example, if I was wearing a suit and high heels, like a cup of business woman, it would feel insincere to myself.

Files\\Interview_017 - § 1 reference coded [0.67% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 0.67% Coverage

I do feel a bit weird when I am in a fast fashion clothes shop.

Embracing a role model behaviour

Files\\Interview_003 - § 1 reference coded [2.58% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 2.58% Coverage

As I said before if I can contribute to this new modern image to the sustainable person and if I can save some of the second-hand clothing being wasted away then this is definitely where I want to be. This is where I see the purpose in what I wear. For me clothing is not just expressing your identity by following trends, for me I express my identity by wanting a change and moving to a place where are you closing it doesn't have a negative impact on the planet.

Files\\Interview_006 - § 1 reference coded [0.79% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 0.79% Coverage

It might influence of someone else to go and check this brand out and grow the sustainable community.

Files\\Interview_012 - § 1 reference coded [1.50% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 1.50% Coverage

I'm happy to share this brand with other people and I'm happy to maybe influence other consumer practices in a good way.

Files\\Interview_013 - § 3 references coded [1.64% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 0.41% Coverage

I guess it's another way to influence by being a role model.

Reference 2 - 0.54% Coverage

The nice thing is that once you have discovered a good brand, you can share it.

Reference 3 - 0.69% Coverage

I think it is important then to also share where you got it from so other people also feel empowered.

Files\\Interview_016 - § 1 reference coded [3.84% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 3.84% Coverage

If they ask questions, it may be because the place of clothing attracts their attention and maybe because they would also like to buy something similar, then I would feel happy that I have influenced them to go in a sustainable direction.

Files\\Interview_017 - § 1 reference coded [0.98% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 0.98% Coverage

If I can be a source of influence in their life that that would be even better of course!

Enhancing the self-image through actions

Files\\Interview_002 - § 1 reference coded [0.70% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 0.70% Coverage

Usually I tend to say that it is what you do, obviously not the clothes you wear.

Files\\Interview_009 - § 1 reference coded [1.04% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 1.04% Coverage

I think for me it is more important to be represented by what I'm doing and what I say rather than my clothing.

Files\\Interview_010 - § 1 reference coded [0.54% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 0.54% Coverage

I think that I will definitely enhance myself image through actions.

Files\\Interview_011 - § 1 reference coded [0.63% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 0.63% Coverage

I would say with the discussions that I have with friends or with people in general

Files\\Interview_016 - § 1 reference coded [1.62% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 1.62% Coverage

I think that the main thing I think about is that it is a good action to buy a second-hand clothing item

Files\\Interview_017 - § 1 reference coded [1.44% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 1.44% Coverage

I don't think it specifically enhances the image that I have of myself, because I think that this further goes through actions

Actual self being close to the ideal self

Files\\Interview_007 - § 1 reference coded [1.12% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 1.12% Coverage

I don't think having those items in my closet makes me think higher of myself or enhances the image I have of myself

Files\\Interview_009 - § 1 reference coded [0.66% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 0.66% Coverage

I think that this pretty much aligns with who I want to be in the future

Files\\Interview_010 - § 1 reference coded [1.53% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 1.53% Coverage

I have this image of myself and I think that the only way that I can enhance images through my actions, and if the actions that I take are aligned with my values then I would say that I enhance this image

Files\\Interview_011 - § 1 reference coded [1.04% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 1.04% Coverage

It's definitely a brand that aligns with my core values, but I don't really think that the brand represents something I would like to be

Files\\Interview_013 - § 1 reference coded [0.36% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 0.36% Coverage

I think it's more like something that I do for myself

Files\\Interview_015 - § 2 references coded [2.28% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 1.25% Coverage

I think the image of the brand and the images that I have of myself are already quite closely aligned. We are already a pretty close fit.

Reference 2 - 1.03% Coverage

I would say I already have a quite solid self-image and I don't feel like I need external objects to enhance it.

Media influencing decision-making

Files\\Interview_002 - § 1 reference coded [1.21% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 1.21% Coverage

I guess the media influence me a lot as well, as there is much more attention given to climate change and I guess that also made me wake up.

Files\\Interview_004 - § 1 reference coded [1.79% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 1.79% Coverage

I started following some people on social media that talked a lot about the topic of sustainability and that were sharing the message to incentivise people to stop buying fast fashion

Files\\Interview_006 - § 1 reference coded [0.79% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 0.79% Coverage

I became interested in sustainability because I more and more noticed how the planet was destroyed

Files\\Interview_007 - § 1 reference coded [1.06% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 1.06% Coverage

I think that the media is pressuring the consumer in trying to tell them that everyone needs to do their part

Files\\Interview_009 - § 1 reference coded [2.00% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 2.00% Coverage

In my opinion, the worst example is H&M, that come out with a new clothing is nearly every week. When I grew up, no one told me that this is something that should be looked at more critically, it was super normal.