Consumers Changing Clothes: what needs to change for British residents to become sustainable clothing consumers

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Abstract

The emergence of the fast fashion phenomenon has had negative impacts on the environment and the people involved in the supply chains. It is suggested that a change in consumer behaviour is required to ensure the sustainability of this industry. This study seeks to nuance current literature, by providing a holistic insight into British residences' current awareness of the need to change, current clothing consumption and disposal habits and their expressed barriers to changing these. Research is based on 20 semi-structured interviews, using two methods including 'wardrobe stories', a novel research method adapted from a previous study, which aims to facilitate more in-depth, open interviews.

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Thank you to my 20 participants who so kindly welcomed me into their homes and gave up time to let me into their wardrobes.

To Betony and Eden, thank you for bringing me joy through the final few weeks.

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1. Introduction

Wardrobes are not a common point of discussion, although each holds a hundred stories. To the consumer, these are often positive reflections of identity, culture, and comfort. However, each item also holds a parallel story of hidden costs (Leonard, 1020). The increasingly fast-paced nature of the clothing consumption system had led to mass production, mass consumption and mass disposal (Brooks, 2019). Through research and media attention, awareness of the environmental and ethical implications of the fast fashion industry have increased (Hill and Lee, 2012). Sustainable fashion is becoming more popular (D'Souza et al., 2015), however, there appears to be an attitude-behaviour gap among clothing consumers which means that the fashion cycle is not slowing down (Niinimäki, 2010). It is not the clothing items in themselves which are harmful, but the stories behind them which are the premise for this study.

Jevons Paradox has never been used to explore the link between fast fashion and consumer behaviour, this study aims to fill that gap (Jevons, 1865). Previous research within the field of sustainable clothing consumption has often focused on qualitative data based on either a small sample of experts (Harris et al., 2016), or a limited age range (Lundblad and Davies., 2016; McNeill and Moore, 2015). They have also often been more specific to one aspect of sustainable clothing consumption such as barriers (Hiller Connell, 2010) or motives (Lundblad and Davies., 2016), or are exclusive to one aspect of sustainability such as the environment (Hiller Connell and Kozar, 2014). This paper nuances this research by providing a more holistic collection of data. Awareness, behaviour and barriers are discussed as both qualitative and quantitative findings. This provides both a more in depth understanding of participants' thoughts and motives, in addition to transferable data which can be used to display relevant information. By systematically selecting 20 interviewees, between the ages of 18-65+, according to proportional age intervals, this provides a broad range of insight into

the industrial change witnessed, and personal change experienced. This paper is uniquely focused on the theme of change. The aim of this research is to investigate British resident's current awareness of the need for a change within the fashion system, their current behaviour to assess whether they show a need for changing clothing consumption patterns, and their barriers to changing to become sustainable clothing consumers. This will provide a baseline of information, from which decisions regarding how to encourage or enforce change can be made.

Through 20 semi-structured interviews using two methods, an interview discussion followed by 'wardrobe stories' based on research by Joosse and Hracs (2015), this paper aims to contribute to existing literature on sustainable clothing consumption by addressing the following questions: (1) What is the current level of awareness of the meaning and impacts of fast fashion? (2) Do participants demonstrate an attitude-behaviour gap? (3) What are the barriers preventing change? (4) Is there evidence of behaviour in line with Jevons Paradox? (5) Is there a difference in behaviour between younger and older consumers? (6) Is there hope for a change in clothing consumption behaviour?

This paper begins by reviewing relevant literature on how the fashion industry has changed over time resulting in today's fast fashion model. The environmental and ethical impacts of fast fashion are then presented. The ways in which consumers and companies are currently changing to become more sustainable are laid out, followed by the explanation of two proposed methods of clothing consumption change, the Circular Economy and Degrowth. The research methodology used is described, followed by an analysis of the results these obtained. This empirical section is divided into three sections, each addressing a different element of the research aims. Section 4.1 discusses awareness; Section 4.2 investigates current behaviour; and Section 4.3 identifies the barriers to change.

2. Literature Review

2.1 How the fashion industry changed over time

2.1.1 History of the Fashion Industry

In order to understand the current fashion industry, it is helpful to look back and see how the industry has changed over time. In the 1780s, the Industrial Revolution in England changed manufacturing of goods, including clothing, from handicraft tools to machines (Brooks, 2019). Productivity boomed although working conditions were poor both for British laborers and for slaves on plantations in the colonies (Olmstead and Rhode., 2018). A global economic system emerged with textile production and trade being key contributors (Brooks, 2019). The second industrial transition took place in the late 19th, early 20th century, mass production. Based upon Frederick Taylor's idea of labourer standardisation, the production-line became a driver of faster and increased production. Laborers became a consumer market as Henry Ford introduced the '$5 day' (Wilson and McKinlay, 2010). After the war era, mass consumption rapidly developed in the global North. Harry Selfridge redefined retail from errands to entertainment and enabled those of lower social classes to wear higher quality clothing (Newman and Atkinson, 2012). Living standards and wages increased in Europe and North America, urging clothing companies to offshore production to the poorer global South to increase profits.

2.1.2 The Fashion Industry Today

Today, the apparel industry is one of the cornerstones of economic and cultural global connectedness. The industry is estimated to be worth $2.4 trillion (2017) and if it was a country it would have the seventh largest GDP in the world (Bick et al., 2018). In the UK, the fashion industry has higher sales than any other European country. It is worth $65 billion (Amed et al., 2018) and employs 890,000 people according to the House of Commons Environmental Audit Committee report (2019) (here-on cited as HoCEAC, 2019). Global fashion revenue has been

able to rise so rapidly due to the business model that has been evolving since the 1980s, *fast fashion*. The term was coined by retailers to describe the rapid movement of trends from the catwalk to the stores (Brooks, 2019). Fast fashion is characterised by faster production, lower costs, and shorter product lifecycles (Fletcher, 2008) all encouraged by social media and made easy by online shopping (Wahnbaeck and Roloff, 2017). The abundance of low-priced clothing makes purchasing and disposing easy and painless (Claudio, 2007). Fast fashion is defined here as: trendy clothing inspired by catwalk styles and rapidly made into garments by high street stores to be cheaply sold and quickly discarded in the wake of new trends (based on: Good On You, 2018; Brooks, 2019; Elander and Palm, 2015; Fletcher, 2008). For consumers, this appears to be beneficial, they can buy more for less and look ready for a catwalk while doing so (Reid, 2018). According to Remy (2016), compared to 15 years ago, people buy 60% more clothing items and keep them for half the amount of time. Planned obsolescence is one of the main ways the fashion industry shapes this system. Companies save costs by creating lower quality garments, so the item's lifetime is shortened, termed by Paul Midler (2011) as 'quality fade'. It has become cheaper to buy a replacement item than to get it mended (Niinimäki and Hassi, 2011). Therefore, production and consumption have risen and continue to do so (Hinton and Maclurcan, 2019). The result has been an increased demand on the environment's resources and labour (Elander and Palm, 2015).

2.2 Environmental and Ethical Impacts of Fast Fashion

2.2.1 Benefits of fast fashion

Although most commonly used as a negative term, fast fashion does also provide some benefits. Never before has fashion been so accessible to so many people across class, income and background of society, thereby reducing perceived social inequality (HoCEAC, 2019). The scale of activity fast fashion requires means that the fashion industry can employ millions

worldwide including farmers, tailors, models, photographers and graphic designer, to name a few, all earning a living and providing for themselves and others (Kashyap, 2017). With these in mind, however, clothing always comes at a cost, most of which is paid for by our environment and the people exploited within the industry. Although there are many benefits to fast fashion, this paper will highlight the negative implications of the industry as this will be discussed in the empirical section (Section 4).

2.2.2 Defining Terms: Environmental, Ethical and Sustainable

The terms environmental, ethical and sustainable are frequently used in this paper. The definitions of which are often used interchangeably within literature, the media and the minds of the general public. There is no consistent definition of 'sustainable' within clothing related literature. There is a lack of clarity of whether it incorporates both ethical and environmental aspects. This paper combines and adapts Wigley's (2012) definition of 'sustainable clothing' and Brundtland's (1987) definition of 'sustainable development', to define 'sustainable clothing' as: clothing which is made and disposed of in a way which enables today's needs to be met without compromising future generation's ability to meet their own resource needs, in addition, enable everyone involved in the clothing lifecycle to be able to meet their own present needs. This therefore includes both environmental aspects such as not polluting waterways, and ethical aspects such as fair wages for workers. The criteria for these within this paper is based upon Kate Raworth's (2015) proposal for a safe and just space for humanity, of social foundations (ethical) and the

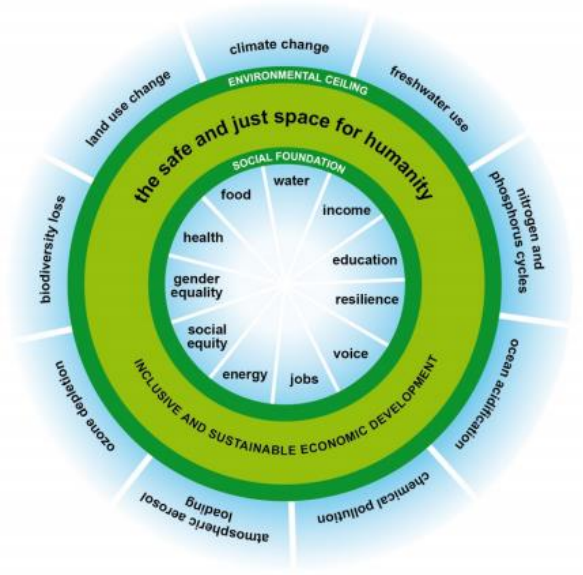

Figure 1. A safe and just space for humanity according to 11 social foundations and 9 planetary boundaries between which we must stay. Source: (Raworth, 2012).

planetary boundaries (environmental) presented in Figure 1. ‘Environmentally friendly’ and ‘ethically friendly; will be used when discussing items possessing respectively either environmentally or ethically positive qualities.

2.2.3 Environmental Implications

With each step of the fast fashion lifecycle, a pollution footprint is left (Claudio, 2007). The farming of raw materials, production, consumption and disposal of clothing, all have hugely damaging impacts on the environment (Hill & Lee, 2012). In the UK, clothing is the fourth most impactful industry on the environment and contributes more to climate change than both shipping and aviation combined (Ellen MacArthur Foundation, 2017). Approximately 3500 chemicals are used in the production process (Wahnbaeck and Roloff, 2017) which often pollute water systems (De Brito et al., 2008). 11,000 litres of water are required for each kilogram of cotton used, from farming to consumption (Brooks, 2019). It was through cotton irrigation that the Aral Sea nearly disappeared (Brooks, 2019). An additional harm to waterways is plastics. Over 60% of clothing fibres are synthetic; they are constantly released during washes and pollute the ocean which then enters the food chain (Wahnbaeck and Roloff, 2017). The fast fashion model promotes the mindset that clothing is disposable. This attitude has become the behavioural norm as on average, in the UK, people keep clothing for just 3.3 years before disposal (WRAP, 2013), resulting in an annual waste stream of 2 million tonnes (Niinimäki and Hassi, 2011). Landfills pollute groundwater contaminating drinking sources. They also release methane, a greenhouse gas thereby contributing to global warming **(**Alvarez-Vazquez et al., 2004).

2.2.4 Ethical Implications

There are over 40 million slaves in the world today, more than at any time in human history (IJM, 2020). Many of whom work within clothing supply chains. Consumers in the West have such a vast variety of cheap clothing options in part because the price is paid by cotton farmers

who must use toxic chemicals which impact their health (Brooks, 2019), and by children, prisoners and bond labourers who must work long hours in poor lighting with little to no labour rights, leaving them vulnerable to sexual harassment, forced over-time and other human rights abuses (Kashyap, 2017). The overproduction and over-consumptive nature of fast fashion is based on western indifference towards these people (HoCEAC, 2019). As 90% of the worlds clothing is made in lower-and-middle-income-countries (Bick et al., 2018), and 85% of workers are women (Reid, 2018) so these groups in particular incur the consequences at play. The fashion industry is hindering the progress of every UN Sustainable Development Goal, for example, 1. No poverty, 5. Gender equality, 12. Responsible consumption and production and 16. Peace, justice and strong institutions (UNECE, 2018). Disasters such as the Rana Plaza factory collapse in 2013 (Bick et al., 2018) and reports of labour distress notes inside Zara clothing (BBC News, 2017) have increased public awareness about these issues and many wonder how they can avoid contributing to it.

Although often overlooked, fast fashion also has negative impacts on its consumers. Fast fashion contributes to a pressure on people to keep up a standard of appearance, often through adverts featuring extremely thin models, which can have adverse impacts on mental health (Stice, 2002; Dittmar and Howard, 2004). There are many benefits to having an abundance of choice, however 'The Paradox of Choice' is a theory suggesting an overload of choices can lead to decreased mental wellbeing (Schwartz, 2004). In addition, 'decision fatigue' caused by the ever-increasing requirement of decisions needed when shopping for clothes, can lead to anxiety (Dougher, 2015). Minimalism is a recent response to this phenomenon. Consumers are realising the personal, ethical and environmental benefits of living with less (Obendorf, 2009). The capsule closet is one of the most popular aspects of this. Susie Faux, a London fashion boutique owner, coined the term in the 1970s, describing the concept as buying less clothes of

higher quality that you will wear more often leading to higher confidence (Dougher, 2015). In short, quality over quantity, the opposite of fast fashion (Morgan and Birtwistle, 2009).

2.3 Ways to Change

If the fashion industry is to become sustainable, it must alter the way it produces clothing and people must change their consumer patterns.

2.3.1 Current Changes

Consumers are changing behaviours to be more sustainable in everyday purchases such as food and paper (Cerri et al., 2018). However, despite the growth in popularity of general sustainable goods, this consumer behaviour has not extended to clothing to the same extent (D'Souza et al., 2015; Gam, 2011). Evidence suggests awareness of fast fashion implications and of sustainable clothing is also increasing (Bick et al., 2018). One reason for this has been an increase in information access through international media. The previously mentioned Rana Plaza disaster (Bick et al., 2018) prompted international public response which led to a general increase in awareness (Aizawa and Tripathi, 2016). However, although knowledge can be a catalyst for attitude and behavioural change (Kong et al., 2016), a clothing consumption attitude-behaviour gap is a consistent finding within literature (Mainieri et al., 1997; Nordlund and Garvill, 2002; Bamberg, 2003; Bernardes et al., 2018). This means although people are aware of a situation, they do not act upon the change required. Meyer (2001) proposes the following reasons for this gap: cost, fewer options, aesthetic and functional disadvantages, lack of knowledge and a scepticism over the environmental benefit.

At an industry level, the clothing sector has begun to respond to negative publicity and consumer demand. Some large retailers have created sustainable lines such as H&M; others have based their selling point on being sustainable, like TOMs shoes (Wigley et al., 2012); and others have aimed to improve supply chain conditions by, for example committing to the

Transparency Pledge. However, the majority of companies have not released factory details to the public, including Urban Outfitters and Forever 21 (Human Rights Watch, 2018). Although accreditations are a positive step towards accountability, currently many companies engage in 'greenwashing', increasing sales by marketing as 'green', when they are not so (Bick et al., 2018). It is through customers understanding this reality that a mistrust of company claims has emerged as a barrier to consumption (Hinton and Maclurcan, 2019; Hill and Lee, 2012).

The mentioned attempted changes and shortfalls of consumers and companies suggests there is a lack of clear, reliable for which direction both should take. The following provides some current leading views on how best to change the clothing industry both at individual and industrial levels to pave the way for a sustainable future of fashion.

2.3.2 Circular Economy

Proposed as an alternative to the prevalent 'take-make-waste' industrial model, the Circular Economy aims to "close the loop" of production and decouple economic growth from finite resource consumption (MacArthur, 2013). For a consumer this could involve repairing damaged clothes, recycling material, and buying from Circular companies (Geissdoerfer et al., 2017). For companies this could include making durable items, using recycled rather than virgin materials and renewable energy. One such company is Rapanui, based on the Isle of White, who use only natural materials, a wind turbine for power, and are designed to be sent back to continue the cycle (Rapanui, 2020).

A critique of the Circular Economy relates to Jevons Paradox. As far as literature suggests, this is the first paper to present the relationship between this Paradox and clothing consumption behaviour. In his highly cited book, Jevons (1865) argued that increased coal efficiency heightened coal consumption due to lower costs increasing scalability and accessibility. A modern analogy is electric cars. As per-trip financial and environmental costs of journeys

decrease, people feel encouraged to drive more, and may cause an overall increase in consumption of energy use. Fast fashion has increased the efficiency of the clothing industry. It has reduced costs which have increased scalability and accessibility. This has enabled consumers to purchase more than before. Rather than saving money and buying the same amount, they spend the same amount and buy more. This will be explored in Sections 4.2.2 and 4.3.1.

2.3.3 Degrowth

According to HoCEAC, (2019) business as usual is no longer an option; a new economic model for fashion is needed. Sustainable Degrowth, is an economic movement defined by Schneider (2010, p. 512) as "an equitable downscaling of production and consumption that increases human well-being and enhances ecological conditions at the local and global level, in the short and long term". Kallis (2011), explains that the premise of this movement is we cannot grow our way to sustainability, CO2 and resources limits prevent this. Within the fashion industry, campaigns such as 'Slow Fashion' and concepts like capsule closets promote the equivalent message. The brand Patagonia received public attention in 2011 for their "Don't Buy This Jacket" campaign. They explained that although their jacket was made from recycled materials and would have been described as 'sustainable', it still requires masses of CO2 and water to be produced (Jung and Jin, 2014). The message therefore is that the most sustainable item is the one we already own. To avoid a circular model that keeps growing, we must first shrink demand and supply. A sustainable clothing production and consumption model could therefore include uniting Degrowth and the Circular Economy.

3 Methodology

Before research began a series of steps took place to ensure ethical dependability. Ergo ethics was submitted and approved, and a consent form and participant information sheet were designed and approved. A dictaphone was requested and obtained from the University of Southampton (UoS) School of Geography. The topics of sustainable and fast fashion were researched, and interview questions were formed in correspondence, which can be found in the Appendix (Section 7). This acted as an interview guide, as questions could deviate from this to allow participants freedom to discuss what they knew or were most passionate about. Both qualitative and quantitative data collection methods are used in this study. Although most questions were open and opinion based, many were quantifiable and could be made into graphs. This combination of types of results enabled an enhanced understanding and the ability to evaluate and compare participants responses. Table 1 outlines the demographic and assigned code of participants interviewed. 20 British participants were identified using systematic sampling. These consisted of students, young professionals, experienced professionals and retirees, all of whom I previously knew. In order to have a variety of socio-demographics, the Indexmundi UK Age Structure and Sex Ratio (2020) was used to form four age categories with a proportional number of interviewees for each section of the population. In each category the gender ratio was approximately 1:1, so Table 1 shows the same ratio.

Age	Occupation status	Gender	Participant Code
18-24	Student	Female	P1
		Female	P2
		Male	P3
		Male	P4
25-39	Young Professional	Female	P5
		Female	P6
		Female	P7
		Male	P8
		Male	P9
		Male	P10
40-64	Experienced Professional	Female	P11
		Female	P12
		Female	P13
		Male	P14
		Male	P15
		Male	P16
65+	Retired	Female	P17
		Female	P18
		Male	P19
		Male	P20

Table 1. Participants arranged by demographics and assigned codes

Prospective interviewees were contacted through Facebook Messenger or face-to-face. Suitable times were agreed, and they provided their home address. On the allocated day and time, I travelled to their home. Two methods were used, each lasting 20 minutes on average. The approximately 40 minutes allowed for answers to be more free, in depth and to cover a broader range of topics that a shorter length of time would have provided. It was made clear that responses would be recorded and later transcribed. Consent forms were signed and other than the Participant Information Sheet, no prior information of questions was given. In order to keep research refined and consistent, it was clarified that shoes and accessories were not part of the research. The following research techniques sought to address the aim of this study, to understand UK residents' awareness of clothing consumption sustainability; consumption and disposal habits; barriers to changing habits to become more sustainable; and willingness to change.

1. Interview

20 semi-structured interviews were conducted with the 20 participants in December 2019 and January 2020. The first approximately 20 minutes of the total interview sought to understand the following main six categories of questions:

1. Awareness: of definitions and the fashion industry impacts
2. Consumption habits: their method and trend of buying or receiving clothes
3. Dress habits: how they choose what they wear
4. Disposal habits: how and why they dispose of clothing they no longer want
5. What informs the decisions they make about clothing consumption
6. Past and potential sustainable change

Answers were recorded using a dictaphone. The semi-structured nature allowing space for more information where the participant had more or less to say on specific sections.

2. Wardrobe Stories

The second half of the interviews are called ‘wardrobe stories’. This method is based on Joosse and Hracs (2015) who conducted ‘fridge stories’. They used the contents of participants’ fridges to prompt responses to questions about how and why they curate food. Wardrobe stories used in this study, similarly, use a prop (the participant’s wardrobe) to prompt responses regarding the curation of a product. The participant led me to where they store their clothes, which each time was their bedroom, although some stored some items in other rooms in their house. For the next approximately 20 minutes I asked another series of questions which were more interactive such as: ‘please pull out your favourite item and why did you buy it?’. The difference between this method and the previous, was this aimed to obtain more casual and personal responses. By the participant being able to see and feel their clothes they could give more emotive and detailed answers.

These methods were used as they were straight forward for participants to understand, allowed flexibility of interview times and dates and provided qualitative and quantitative data. Focus groups were not used as they may have inhibited openness. Videos and images of participants wardrobes were not taken as they may have been too intrusive. A large number of surveys or questionnaires were not used as they may have been impersonal and caused answers to be what I assumed I needed to find out and therefore slightly biased, rather than letting questions be a guide for participants to direct the interview towards the themes they were most knowledgeable and passionate about. This brought out ideas which I had not considered before. Additionally, for this type of research, and in line with the premise of slow fashion, quality of information was more valuable than quantity. To strengthen rigour of the research, as outlined by Lincoln and Guba (1985), the following techniques were used. For credibility the interviews were each on average 40 minutes which provided prolonged engagement. Triangulation of data was ensured by using 20 different interview sources and two data collection methods.

Transferability has been ensured by thick descriptive data of the context, meaning others may replicate my findings. Dependability was established by mechanically recording data using a dictaphone.

Recorded interview audio was transferred to a password protected laptop and transcribed verbatim using Microsoft Word. Audio was deleted and transcribed documents were uploaded to Google Drive and a personal memory stick for back-up. Participant confidentiality was ensured by correlating interviewees to codes (P1, P2, P3…) providing anonymity. Transcribed documents were then manually thematically coded (Saldaña, 2015) to identify main themes using writing software, Scrivener. Graphs were created using Microsoft Excel providing a method for easy and quick interpretation of results for both myself and the reader (Wainer, 1992). Both interview methods were analysed together, and the themes and quotes use in this paper include a combination of both methods.

Limitations of this research include the number and location of participants. They lived in either Southern England or Northern Ireland, because these were the most accessible and willing participants given the time and facilities available. This is a limitation of the results as the whole of the UK was not represented. Further studies could broaden the research field and incorporate Wales, Scotland and Northern England. Interviewing 20 people allowed for a substantial spread of ages and was a manageable amount to allow for in depth analysis. This sample size is also comparable to other studies in this field of research (Harris et al., 2016; Bly et al., 2015; McNeill and Moore, 2015). However, identifying more people would allow for a broader perspective on sustainable clothing, in particular people from different socio-economic situations as most participants in this study were University educated, middle class and white.

4 Empirical Analysis

The following section provides an analysis of results from interviews with 20 participants (see Section 3 for methodology). Three major themes arose from these results: awareness of the need for change (Section 4.1); consumer habits (Section 4.2); and barriers to change (Section 4.3).

4.1 Awareness of the need for change

4.1.1 Defining environmentally and ethically friendly clothing

Respondents on average had a good understanding of what environmentally and ethically friendly clothing items meant. Table 2 shows the 10 most frequently mentioned characteristics.

Environmentally friendly item description	References	Ethically friendly item description	References
Sustainable material	12	Workers not exploited	6
Transport not harmful	9	Suitable worker's wages	6
Not plastic material	6	Country of origin	4
Materials are farmed well	4	Not using sweatshop	4
Manufacturing process not harmful	4	Material farmers are treated well	2
Not harmful dyeing process	3	No child labour	2
Low Carbon footprint	3	No slave labour	2
No Pollution	2	Deforestation	1
No Deforestation	2	Supply chain traceable	1
Durable	2	No health inhibiting chemicals used	1

Table 2. Table showing respondents top 10 most frequently used phrases describing environmentally and ethically friendly clothing items

Aside from P19, who had not heard of the term environmentally friendly, and P17 who did not know what ethically friendly meant, every other participant had heard of the terms and each answer, other than ‘deforestation’ for ethically friendly, had an element of correctness in line with the definitions given in Section 2.2.2. Overall although most people only mentioned a few characteristics of each type of item, there was a good level of awareness of what both terms meant.

4.1.2 The Fashion Industry: Environmentally and ethically positive, negative or neutral?

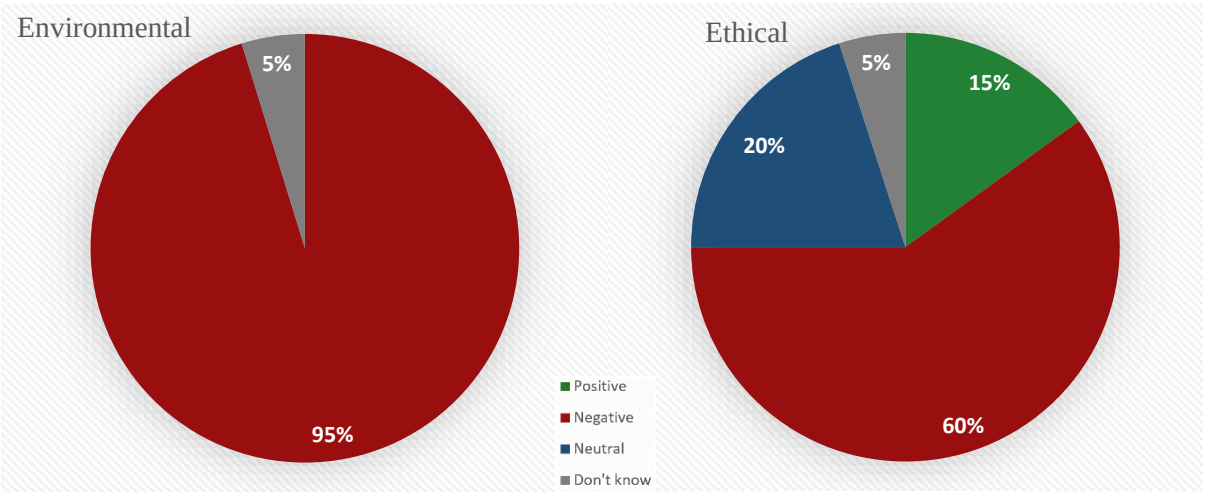

Figure 2. The perceived net environmental and ethical impact the fashion industry has

As shown in Figure 2, every participant who knew what environmentally clothing was, answered that the fashion industry has a net negative impact on the environment. A female experienced professional (FEP) commented:

> *Right from the beginning there were leaves taken off trees to make clothes, followed by animals killed for clothes… when did it ever have a positive benefit? (P13)*

Other participants echoed this sentiment giving reasons for the negative impact including the damaged caused by shipping, postage, waste, ozone degradation and plastic. The 5% that did not know was P17 who had not heard of the term.

Opinions on the ethical nature of the fashion industry were more varied. The majority answer was still 'negative' and P17 was the 5% which did not know. The interesting change from environmental opinion is the increase in 'positive' and 'neutral' responses. A FEP claimed it has a neutral impact, and highlighted a tension also expressed by others:

> *Yes, there may be 13-year-old children being used to make garments 12 hours a day, but in this country that actually is bringing a wage into a family which could not always afford it. So, I think we can have a very simplistic*

view about what is ethical, and not necessarily understand that by taking that factory out of Bangladesh we actually put more people into poverty. (P13)

This ethical dilemma is discussed by seven participants and within literature. Zwolinski (2007) suggests that it is morally significant that individuals choose to work in sweatshops. It gives us insight into the alternative options available to workers. White (1996) emphasises that for children, should that job be made unavailable due to increased regulations, they may become vulnerable to work elsewhere which is more exploitative. Some participants when asked about this dilemma commented that despite this uncertainty, the costs still outweigh these cautions, as summarised by a female student:

I think slave labour has to outweigh everything else. (P2)

A point highlighted by P7 was the negative ethical impact of models promoting an unhealthy body image. This is supported by Dittmar and Howard (2004) who explain the thinness of models advertised has increased body-focused anxiety (also mentioned in Section 2.2.4). This was the only ethical issue mentioned which primarily occurs in the Western post-production stage. Most people described ethical issues such as child labour and unfair wages in the manufacturing-stage in developing nations.

4.1.3 Sustainable item perception

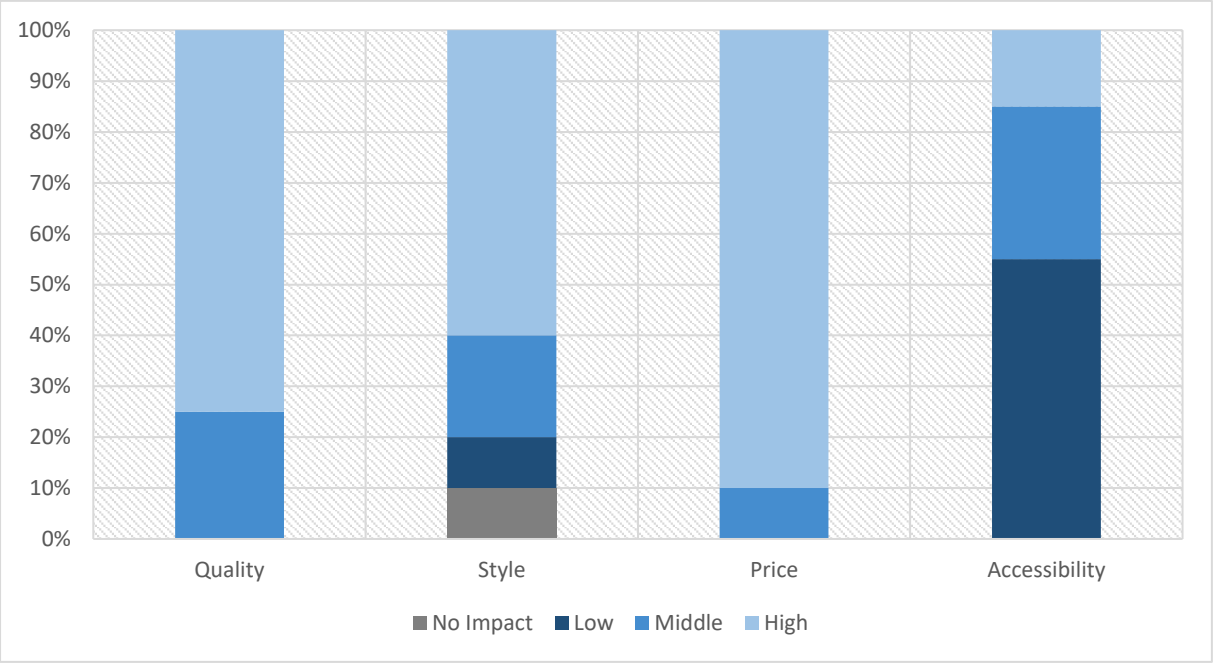

Figure 3. participants' descriptions of sustainable clothing characteristics in terms of quality, style, price and accessibility. High quality means it is well made. High style means fashionable. High price means expensive. High accessibility means it is easy to locate.

The trend in participants responses was that sustainable clothing items would be of high quality, stylish, expensive and hard to find; this is generally true (Harris, 2016). The first two characteristics, quality and style, are positive attributes and usually one of the unique selling points for sustainable brands such as Vetter Capsule and Elvis and Kresse. As with any high quality and style brand it is expected to be more expensive. When asked if participants thought as general rule more expensive items last longer, 72% agreed. The outcome is that possible barriers to people changing how they buy clothes from fast fashion brands to sustainable brands are the cost and lack of accessibility to them (discussed in Section 4.3).

Harris et al (2016) reported that there is a stereotype of ethically friendly clothing as using hemp and being 'hippyish'. Although majority of respondents in this study did not mention this an FEP described their view of ethical clothing:

...baggy trousers and long tops over them with beaded necklaces. Things that are very beautiful in their own culture but don't match ours. (P13)

P14 also made this distinction claiming ethical items would be less fashionable than environmental ones. When asked to define sustainable fashion a male experienced professional (MEP) provided an interesting view:

I think it is incongruous, because fashion changes and sustainable does not. The two of them don't go together. (P16)

This is one of the main issues. Many participants referred to their desire for variety in their wardrobe. An allure of fast fashion is this abundance of choice and quick turn over of new outfit looks. The lack of this within sustainable fashion may be a barrier to change.

4.1.4 Fast Fashion

Participants were asked whether they had heard of the term 'fast fashion' and if so to define it. Six had not heard of it but all except two were able to guess to a degree of success what it meant. The top 10 terms and phrases used are shown in Table 3.

Interview fast fashion description	References	Compared to this paper's fast fashion definition	Compared to literature
High turnover rates	6	'rapidly made' 'cheaply sold and quickly discarded'	'steadily increasing turnover' (Barnes et al., 2006)
Disposable and frequently discarded	6	'quickly discarded'	'disposal painless' (Claudio, 2007)
Frequently buying	5	'sold and quickly discarded in the wake of new trends'	'average person buys 60 percent more items of clothing' (Remy, 2016)
Cheap	3	'cheaply sold'	'lower costs' (Fletcher, 2008)
Poor quality	3		'quality fade' (Midler, 2011)
To keep up with trends	3	'trendy clothing'	'aimed at consumers who want to change their wardrobe on a regular, trend driven, basis' (House of Commons Environmental Audit Committee, 2019)
The rate of store movement	3	'inspired by catwalk styles and rapidly made into garments by highstreet stores'	'faster production' (Fletcher, 2008)
Quickly buying	3		'a culture of impulse buying' (Mintel, 2007)
Young people	2		'younger people in particular shop despite already having too much' (Wahnbaeck and Roloff, 2017)
Media/ Social media	2		'encouraged by social media' (Wahnbaeck and Roloff, 2017)

Table 3. The 10 most frequently used terms to define 'fast fashion', the number of times these were referenced in definitions and a comparison between how these align with both this paper's definition of fast fashion and how literature describes it (as found in Section 2.1.2).

Table 3 shows that most people were aware of the of the main themes of what fast fashion is according to literature and this paper's definition (Section 2.1.2). A succinct summary provided by a female young professional is:

> *Fashionable today but not tomorrow. (P7)*

90% of respondents believed that it is a negative term. The one person who believed it to be positive (P10) had not heard of it but imagined fashion being trendy was a good thing. It was P3, a male student's candid response which was fascinating:

> *I guess the way you think of it for yourself is positive. It's great I can order it and it's with me very soon afterwards for normally a reasonable price. Whereas, the other impacts it has on the environment and stuff like that are probably more negative. (P3)*

This echoes the observation by Reid (2018) in Section 2.1.2, and HoCEAC (2019) in Section 2.2.1, which highlights the benefit of the accessibility of this new fashion model.

4.1.5 Source of Information

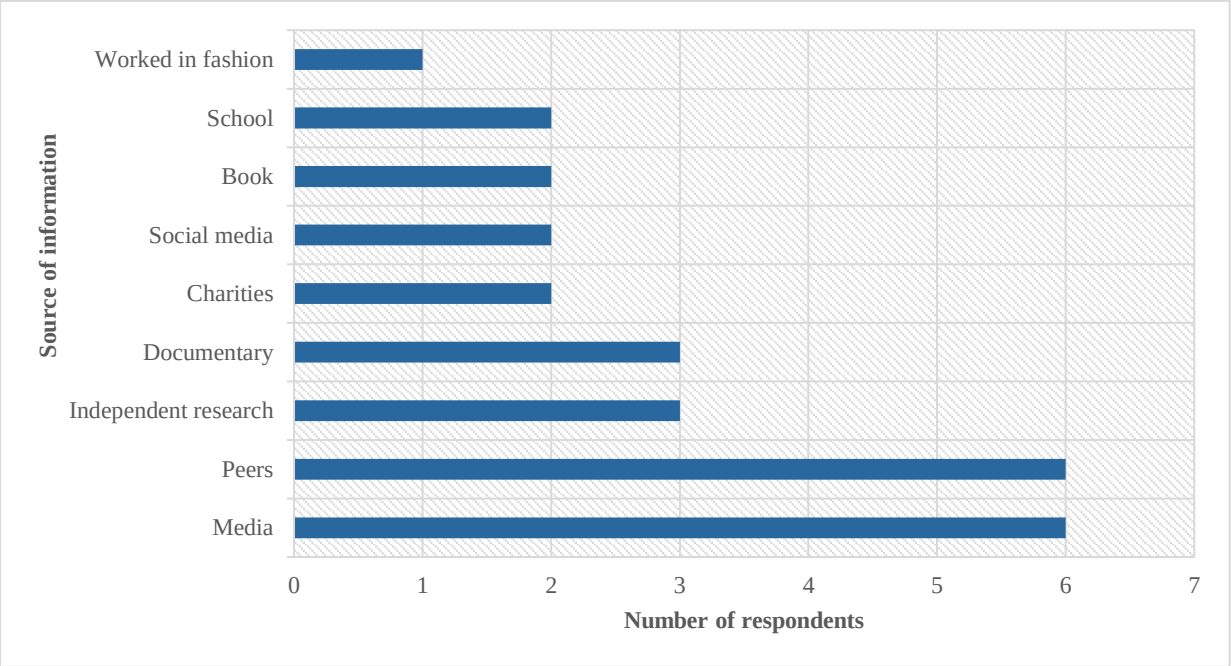

Figure 4. The ways in which respondents source information about the environmental and ethical impacts of fast fashion and the number of respondents who use each.

Majority of respondents, source information concerning the impacts of fast fashion from the media, this includes both the News and general TV programmes. A FYP commented that the reason she changed how she purchased make up, cards and toilet paper to be more sustainable was:

> *I saw a wee orangutan hitting a big digger and it broke my heart. I thought no we are doing too much damage to the planet. (P7)*

Although the media is a main driver behind fast fashion through social media and celebrity culture (Birtwistle and Moore, 2006), it is also one of the main ways sustainable consciousness has grown (Sasmita and Suki, 2015). The other highest source of information from Figure 4 is peers. Literature provides an abundance of research supporting the claim that peers are strong environmental awareness and behavioural influencers (Kalafatis et al., 1999; Pickett-Baker and Ozaki, 2008; Wahid et al., 2011).

4.2 Consumer Habits

This section discusses the current habits exercised by participants structured by consumption, and disposal. It is important to understand the baseline situation of behaviour before deducing whether it need to change, or the areas in which it does.

4.2.1 Consumption

Trend

Participants were asked what their trend of getting new clothes was. Fast fashion promotes a consumption trend of cheap and many (Section 2.1.2). Figures 8 and 9 indicate whether participants are currently adhering to this trend.

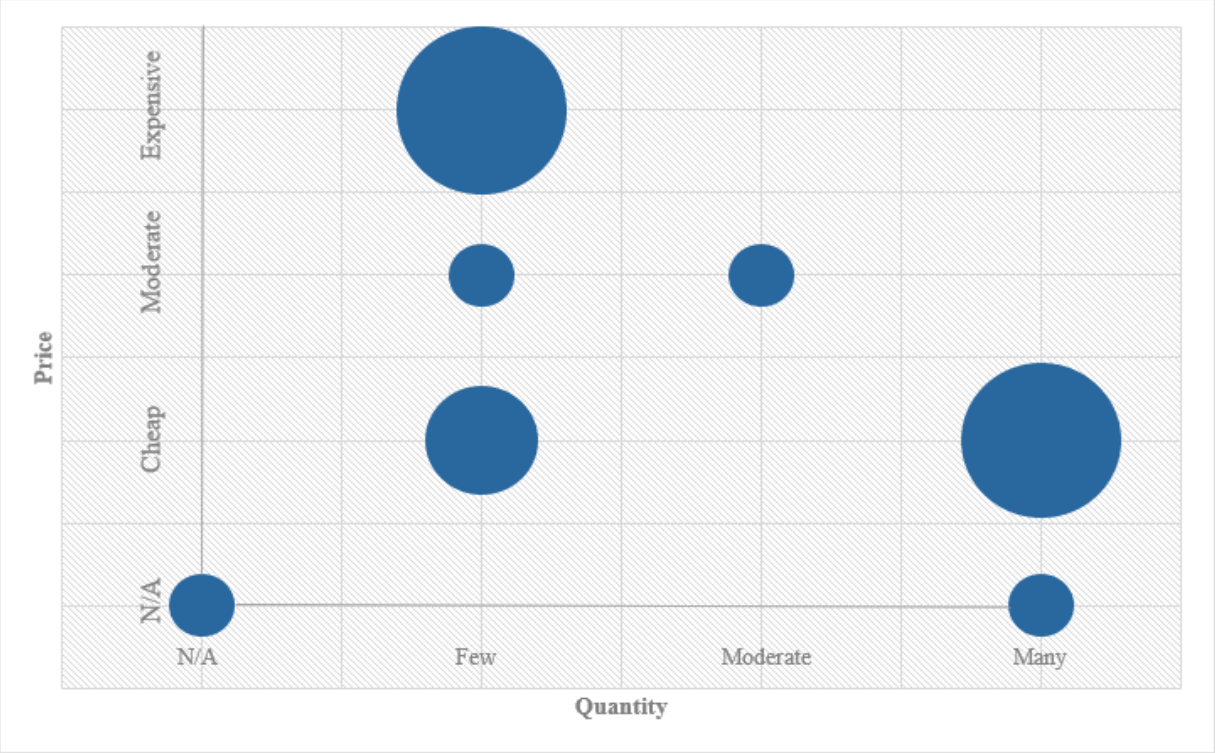

Figure 5. Participants' description of their trend of purchasing clothes. Circle size represents the number of respondents per quantity and price.

To be expected, Figure 5 shows that most participants claimed their trend was either few expensive or many cheap items. A following question to those who claimed to buy few is: relative to what? 'Few' for one person many be 'many' to another. Figure 6 seeks to address this by showing the number of items participants think they get new to them per year. The separation into the younger and older participants provides an interesting comparison. The highest range of quantity of purchase for participants over the age of 40 was between 1-5 items per year, compared with the highest category for participants younger than 40, 21-25 items per year. In total this age group got 166 new items per year and over 40s got 95 new items. A female retiree said the following:

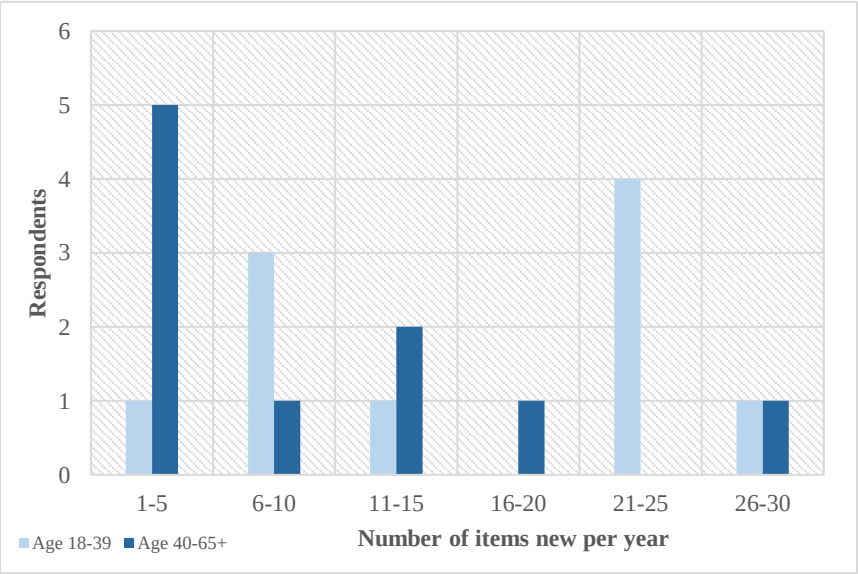

Figure 6. Number of items respondents purchase or receive from others, within a year, separated in half according to participant age.

> *We only go to buy something new if we are going to something special. I broke out last year and bought two things. (P17)*

This correlated to Wahnbaeck and Roloff, (2017) who claim fast fashion is mainly consumed by younger people.

Source

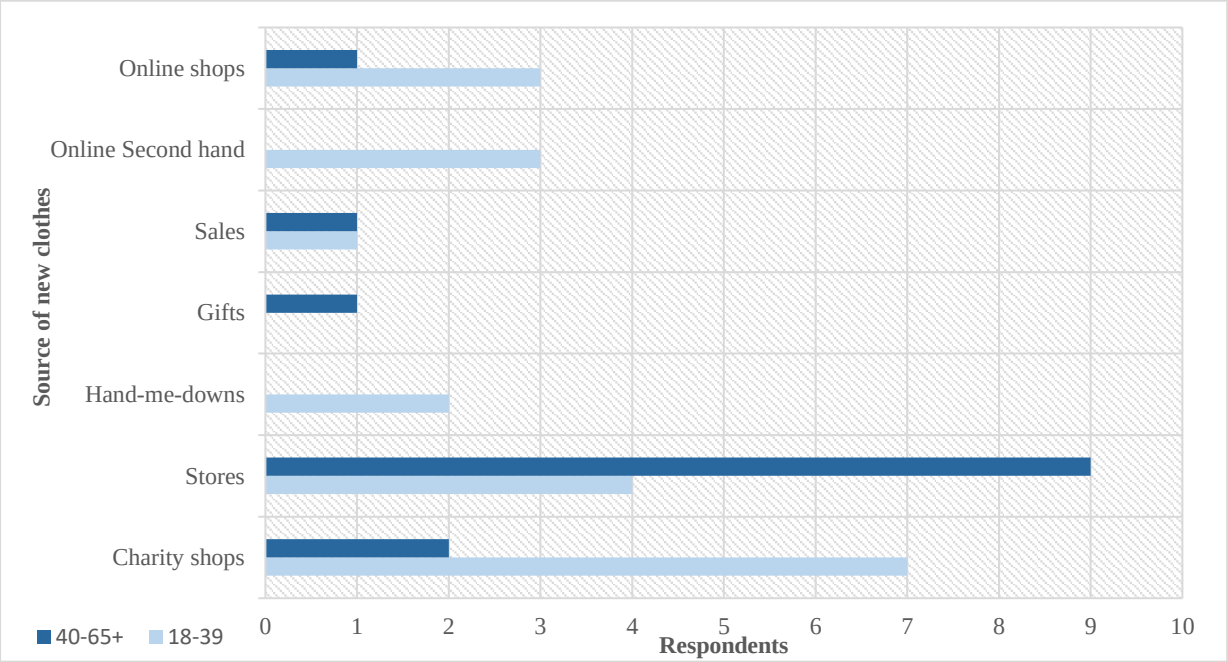

Figure 7. Participants' sources of new clothing separated in half according to participant age.

The most striking comparison between the younger and older participants is that majority of younger interviewees sourced new clothes from charity shops and majority of older interviewees from stores. Also, only younger participants sourced from online second-hand shops such as Depop and eBay and received hand-me-downs. Two of them claimed this was a recent transition. A male student said it was through peer inspiration:

> *I've started going to charity shops… I saw people getting really good looking cheap but good quality stuff in a charity shop and I thought this is amazing. And I know it's good to reuse other people's clothes. (P3)*

Charity shops have emerged as a retail phenomenon since the 1990s (Parsons, 2002) and by providing a platform for reusing clothes they contribute to "closing the loop", a feature of the Circular Economy (Geissdoerfer et al., 2017).

Eight of the ten participants over 40-years-olds highlighted that the stores they shop in are local. A MEP provides the following reason for this choice:

To support the local economy and for convenience. (P14)

Although these participants are likely unaware, localising production is a key feature of Degrowth (Mocca., 2020). It shortens product transport distance, reduces the need for packaging and decreases vulnerability to global crashes (Buhr et al., 2018). When asked to choose between two identical items but one said, 'Made in UK' and the other 'Made in China' 80% of participants favoured the one made in UK. However, just 45% said they would pay more for this. This indicates that in relation to origin of item, there is a possibly cost induced attitude-behaviour gap, as mentioned in Section 2.3.1.

Reason for purchase

Figure 8 shows interviewees' priorities when choosing whether to buy or accept an item.

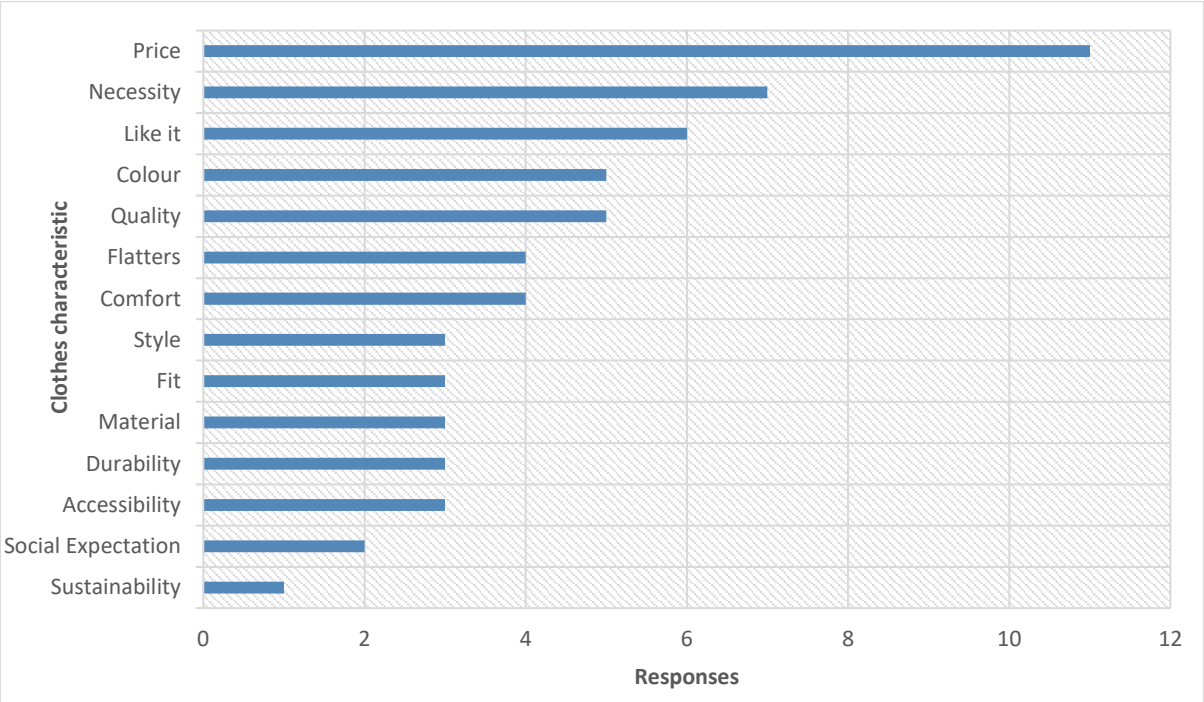

Figure 8. Participant's three most important factors to them when choosing an item to buy or accept.

Iwanow (2005) found that price, quality and style are the main clothing purchase influencers. Despite awareness of ethical issues such as child labour, they found price was 30% more important to their respondents than buying ethical clothing. Price was the most highly valued

characteristic by participants in this study shown in Figure 8. A male young professional (MYP) stated:

> *Money is everything in this day and age… it's the number one purchase decision that I make. As much as I'd like to say its due to the environment, money is what's most important to me. (P9)*

Despite high sustainability awareness levels shown by participants (Section 4.1.2), only one respondent saw sustainability as a purchasing priority, this was a young female student. This suggests interviewees show the previously mentioned attitude-behaviour gap (Section 2.3.1).

The main distinctions between interviewees ages were in cost and necessity. 70% of those below the age of 39 valued cost whereas only 40% of over 40s did. Necessity was important to 7 people, 5 of whom were over 40 years old. A MEP pointed out that the people around you act as life models.

> *People are modelling it out in the open so you're actually getting a good picture of what it's like; and maybe subconsciously if that person is someone you respect or is in a position of influence, just like sports people promoting merchandise, it influences you in subtle ways. (P14)*

Ajzen (2006) supports this view claiming that the more important one believes someone to be, the more social pressure they feel to follow their behaviour. No longer do we have to go to a fashion show to be influenced and thereby crave different clothing; trendy fast fashion is being modelled everywhere we go by colleagues, family and friends. Social media is a major contributor to this, especially for the younger generation. They see celebrities and 'influencers' wearing different clothes and with a click of a button can own and, in their minds, maybe look like their role model (Birtwistle and Moore, 2006).

Another social pressure expressed by every married male interviewed, is that from their wife. A male retiree commented:

> *I don't have any worry about anybody else, so long as my wife is happy enough (P19)*

4.2.2 Disposal

Method

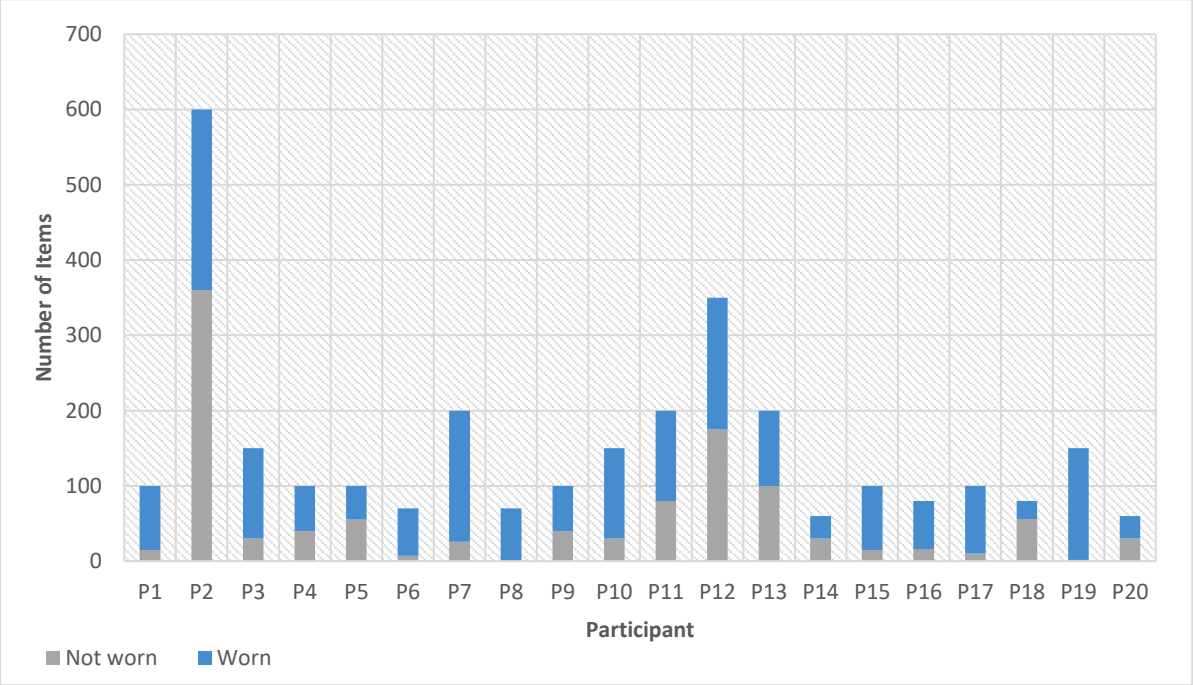

Figure 9. The number of items of clothing participants claim to own and the percentage of which they have not worn in the past year.

A change brought by fast fashion is the quantity of items people own. The total number owned by the 20 respondents is 3020, yet 31% of these items are estimated to have not been worn in the past year (2019). A FEP, who had not worn 50% of her 350 items commented:

> *I could really clear out a bucket load of stuff. (P12)*

Even a male retiree who had worn 99% of his items that year said:

I've got far too much probably. (P19)

With 3020 items being owned and 261 new items being consumed each year by the participants (Figure 9), this increase in items each year either builds up in wardrobes, or the total number owned is kept consistent by items being disposed of. The following section reports and discusses what participants do with clothes they no longer want.

The most popular method of disposal by participants was charity shops which had over double the responses for the second most popular options, hoarding items and giving them to someone they know. As previously mentioned, charity shops have increased in popularity for sourcing new clothing (Parsons, 2002), but they have also increased as the primary method of disposal (Norum, 2017). This premise of reusing clothing is, as mentioned in Section 4.2.1, a positive step towards a Circular Economy, however, a question this paper seeks to address is could having this easy outlet option of old clothing encourage people to buy more new items, in line with the Jevons Paradox. Participants were asked two scenarios to investigate this.

Firstly, they were asked whether the knowledge that they can give clothes to a charity shop, and in a way have a positive impact, encourages them to buy more clothes. All but two respondents said 'no' however, four of whom, including P9, said although they do not, others might think like that:

> *I definitely think there is something about rewarding ourselves for doing a good thing and offsetting it by doing something we know will be damaging. So yeah, I think that would make sense, it's like going on a run and eating chocolate afterwards. And I reckon people that go to charity shops, that then in their head affords them to go and buy more. (P9)*

This response fits with Jevon's (1865) observation of increased efficiency leading to increased consumption. As the per-buy financial and environmental cost of the sale decreases, people

feel encouraged to buy more (Section 2.3.2). However, majority of participants did not relate to this scenario. Within answers there appears to be a disconnect between the processes of disposal and purchasing. A male student explained:

> *You don't buy clothes with the intention of giving them away… I just buy clothes because I like them (P3)*

Consumers are much more concerned with their wardrobe input than output. This is supported by respondents' answers to whether they would purchase less if they had to pay to dispose of clothing. 64% of interviewees said they would not buy less but would change how they dispose of clothing instead by selling or giving to friends, or they would hoard.

Secondly, to understand the prevalence of Jevons Paradox on purchasing behaviour a second scenario was asked. If participants went into a store willing to spend £30, and items were cheaper than they expected, would they spend the whole £30 and get more items, or only get what they need and save the rest. 40% said they would spend it all. Although this is not the majority, it is still a substantial proportion of participants implying Jevons Paradox is a factor.

Capsule Closet

Hoarding was a frequent discussion point throughout interviews. A female retiree stated:

> *Children can't share rooms anymore because there is just no space for their stuff. One wardrobe is not enough. (P18)*

This overload of 'stuff' including clothes has led to the 'paradox of choice' and 'decision fatigue', as discussed in Section 2.2.4. To assess views on a transition to a more minimal way of consumption, in line with the Degrowth vision, interviewees were asked how they would feel about having a capsule closet, owning roughly 30 items and giving the rest away (Heger, 2016). In total 60% said they would be happy with this. Interestingly, the youngest 5 participants said they would not like this and the oldest 7 said they would. Reasons younger

participants gave included wanting variety, keeping items 'just in case', and not wanting to do laundry often. A female student pointed out:

> *You would have to do washing every other day and that's not good for the planet either so unless your hand washing all your clothes in a river, no. (P1)*

Although this is a good alternative perspective, Pakula and Stamminger (2015) claim that laundry is one of the most sustainable household activities. They report that due to water efficiency technology, a t-shirt can be washed between 540-720 times before it amounts to that needed to grow and process the cotton used to make it (Section 2.2.3). Worldwide washing machines also only account for 2% of household residential consumption (Barthel and Götz, 2017). Washing does harm the planet by causing synthetic microfibres of garments to be released into oceans. (Section 2.2.3). However, it could be argued that this should be solved at the root of the problem by using natural fibres rather than through mitigating the inevitable damage. Therefore, P1's view that it is more planet friendly to buy many items instead of washing a few is incorrect.

The reasons participants gave in favour of getting a capsule closet included clothes taking up space, getting stressed about outfit choices and not liking the clothes they have enough. A female young professional (FYP) explains the latter point:

> *I would love it…but I don't at the minute have 30 items I love enough to only have those, because I think a part of it is when you like things less then you kind of own more to make up for the fact. (P6)*

This leads back to Susie Faux's vision for capsule closets, that each item owned is of higher quality and matches that person's preferred style (Section 2.2.4). A FEP commented that she would maybe have 30 items she likes and wears enough to have one:

Out of that lot there, I probably have a capsule closet within that. I probably do have the same clothes that I wear time and time again. (P11)

Figure 8 shows that P14 and P20, both older males, do in fact wear just 30 items a year despite owning more; thus, within their wardrobe they have a capsule closet.

4.3 Barriers to Change

Having considered the need for change, the way to change and the current condition of consumer behaviour, this section investigates the barriers preventing people from become sustainable clothing consumers.

Barrier to sustainable clothing consumption	References
Price	8
Effort	6
Not caring	6
Do not know enough about it	4
Accessibility of sustainable items	3
Doubt over difference made	3
Haven't had to think about it	3
Want a specific item	3
Habit	2
Too late	2

Table 4. The most commonly stated barriers to always clothes shopping sustainably that participants face

Once again price was the highest priority for consumers. A new observation from Table 4 was the focus on taking the line of least resistance. Participants did not want to go to the effort of checking the sustainability of clothes and found the brands they knew and mode of current shopping to be more convenient. Linked to this was an apathy towards the problem, a mistrust of the proposed solutions and a doubt over the good of the outcomes. Although people claimed not knowing enough about the situation was a barrier, responses shown in Figures 3 and 4 suggest that participants do have a sufficient clothes sustainability awareness. It appears instead that people have not captured the vision behind the movement and therefore do not feel motivated to change habits.

When asked what would need to change for interviewees to become sustainable shoppers reasons included needing; an education in what they are being asked to support, adverts raising

awareness, less effort being required, cheaper items, an increase in trust of brands claiming to be sustainable and to capture the vision that their change actually makes a difference.

The following section describes three of the most discussed barriers within participant responses.

4.3.1 Price

When asked to choose between two identical items, one was guaranteed to be ethically and environmentally friendly and the other was not, every interviewee responded the sustainable one. 75% additionally said they on average pay 24% more for this. This is a significant finding implying that there is a willingness to financially invest into sustainable clothing. Yet, there is a tension as price was the main barrier people expressed against changing behaviour. Other cost related contradictions include people's willingness to buy expensive clothes which are seen as trendy yet are not sustainable (Harris, 2016). Also, linked to Jevons Paradox, it appears that some spend the same amount or more on cheaper fast fashion items rather than buying the same amount as they would previously and saving money (Harris, 2016). Therefore, perhaps people can in fact afford the items, but they are unwilling to spend that amount on one item. This was evident in Section 4.2.2 as 40% of participants said they would spend £30 on more, cheaper items they did not need rather than only getting what is needed and saving the rest. A FYP highlighted that:

> *I have friends that say they would like to shop environmentally, but they just can't afford it. I would challenge them probably if you just bought less you could. (P6)*

Morgan and Birtwistle (2009) point out that particularly young people now choose to make multiple cheap purchases rather than one expensive one. Exploring the reason behind this would be an area for further study. Considering this, literature suggests changing consumer

mindsets is more important than changing prices (Schwartz, 2004; Schneider et al., 2010; Kallis, 2011; Assadourian, 2016; Heger, 2016).

4.3.2 Line of least resistance

Table 4 showed that two main barriers were the lack of wanting to put in effort and not caring enough. It is likely that these are linked, that it is due to a lack of care that people are unwilling to put effort into changing habits so take the line of least resistance. Although interviewees are aware of the situation (Section 4.1.2) and are in theory willing to spend more money on sustainable items (Section 4.3.1), when asked if there were any ways in which participants have changed clothing consumption behaviour for the sake of sustainability, only 35% had made a change and most of these were one off purchases rather than a pattern, such as buying one jumper made of recycled bottles (P7). Such steps are a good thing and provide hope for a change over time, but majority of people have not made any clothing consumption change to be more sustainable and therefore an attitude-behaviour gap is further evident. However, many participants had made other changes for the sake of sustainability. 50% purchase loose vegetables, 20% have switched to a low meat diet and others use different make-up, reusable shopping bags and oat milk for sustainability reasons. Kunz (2005, p.4) claims that clothing is much more difficult to change than other products as it appeals to basic human need, identity and social pressure. To buy a £50 pair of jeans is much more of a commitment to sustainability than to by a 50p extra carton of oat milk.

Government regulations are often a cause of change as they shape new lines of resistance. For example, the carrier bag charge introduced in 2015 caused a drop in 80% of bag use (Department for Environment Food & Rural Affairs, 2018). Several participants used this example when responding to the question, which would have a greater impact for a transition to sustainable fashion, a top down or bottom up approach. Interestingly answers were 50/50. Those who favoured a top down approach suggested that although people may learn about and

understand the problem, when that emotion wears away people revert to their own priorities. A male student summarised this:

> *I think government regulations, because that almost guarantees it happens. Trying to get individuals to do it would be hard because when you are behind closed doors you are going to do what is best for you. (P3)*

Others in favour of top down thought the sustainability benefits of regulations would outweigh the increase in costs and that it would be a quicker solution. However, a FYP suggested:

> *Straws and plastic bags aren't as big as clothes. As annoying as it was at the time, it was quite easy to change overnight, whereas with clothes companies, I'm sure it would take a long time. (P5)*

This is concurrent with what was previously said regarding clothing being more difficult to change. Others therefore suggested a bottom up approach would be more effective long term. A MEP was in favour of a population-based change citing the flight shaming from Sweden in 2018 (Mkono, 2020):

> *Look at the transportation tax that we pay, versus the whole flight shaming that is coming out of Sweden, basically, people are influenced by what society thinks. So, I think if society got on board that it was not cool to have fast fashion that would change better than any regulations from the government. (P16)*

Another limitation to the top down approach is that there is evidence of greenwashing despite governmental advice and regulations as discussed in Section 2.3.1. A female student commented on this when asked about whether a universal sustainability accreditation mark should be implemented:

> *People aren't allowed slave labour but that still happens…. if they can get around using that, they can get around a sticker. (P2)*

This tendency of scepticism towards brands claims was common throughout interviews.

4.3.3 Trust

From Table 4, 'doubt over difference made' was one of the 5 most common barriers and a general scepticism was mentioned often throughout interviews. 45% of interviewees claimed that they did trust brands when they claim to be sustainable. They suggested they could be being naïve and mainly questioned why companies would go to the effort of saying that they are sustainable if they are not. A MEP captured these points:

> *If they have gone to the trouble to say that, you tend to believe them. It's being a bit naïve, but you don't have the time or the inclination to check it out. (P14)*

Several others echoed the sentiment that if they are trying to do the right thing by looking up guidance, they trust companies are doing the same. The motives appeared to be to avoid a guilty conscious rather than to make a positive impact.

For the 55% who did not trust companies, reasons included a view of fashion as a business driven by greed so cutting corners was to be expected; a view that they use jargon to make themselves sound sustainable when they are not; and the belief that companies are not completely autonomous over their supply chain (linked to Section 2.3.1). Some relayed examples of what Section 4.1.2 referred to as the 'ethical dilemma'. This was the case with TOMS shoes, famous for their 'wear one share one' social impact model, which has been criticised for increasing dependency on external providers leaving communities vulnerable to poverty and damaging local shoe markets due to the influx of free shoes (Kingston and Guellil, 2016). This was a reason given by a FEP as a barrier to sustainable behaviour:

> *I probably don't know enough about it to be convinced that what I do will have the impact I was sold, like with the TOMS thing. I think these questions are a little bit*

more complicated and I don't know enough about it. Change takes effort and conviction and you need to capture a vision and be persuaded. (P12)

This scepticism over whether their change in clothing consumption would make a difference was further laid out by a female retiree:

It really boils down to the fact of, while we would like to see our world in a better place, whether our contribution would make a difference. (P17)

5 Conclusion

The aim of this research was to investigate British resident's current awareness of the need for a change within the fashion system, their current behaviour to assess whether they show a need for changing clothing consumption patterns, and their barriers to changing to become sustainable clothing consumers. Reflecting on the proposed research questions, (1) the results found that participants awareness level was high. Most were aware of the negative environmental and ethical implications of the fashion industry. There was more uncertainty in opinions regarding ethical impacts, in line with literature on the ethical dilemmas relating to slave and child labour (Zwolinski, 2007; White, 1996). 90% of participants believed the term 'fast fashion' was a negative one, concurrent with research discussed in Section 2.2 regarding its negative environmental and ethical impacts. Most participants sourced information regarding these topics from the media and peers, these authorities were both drivers of fast fashion and sustainable clothing change. (2) The prevalence of an attitude-behaviour gap was found within several empirical sections. Findings suggested a willingness to invest in sustainable clothing; there was an awareness of the negative impacts of fast-fashion; 45% said they would pay more for an item made in the UK; and 75% said they would pay on average 24% more for a completely sustainable item. However, only one participant stated sustainability was one of their main three reasons for buying items and only 35% had made any change to their consumption behaviour. (3) The barriers preventing this change were a perceived high price of sustainable items; an apathy towards the issues reducing willingness to put effort into changing habit; and a mistrust of company claims. (4) This paper was the first to explore the link between Jevons Paradox (1865), fast fashion and clothing consumption. It found

that a disconnect between purchasing and disposal meant that Jevons Paradox did not apply to disposal, but it did, to a degree, apply to purchasing behaviour, as 40% of respondents suggested they would spend more money on cheaper items they did not need rather than only getting what was needed for cheaper and saving the remainder. (5) Through systematically sampling based on age, which was quite original among related literature, results were able to show a comparison between younger and older participants. Fewer younger participants would like a capsule closet, majority got 21-25 new items per year and they prioritised cost as a purchasing factor. More older participants would like a capsule closet, majority got 1-5 new items per year and they prioritised necessity. This means that younger participants were more likely to purchase fast fashion which agrees with Wahnbaeck and Roloff (2017). (6) Overall there is hope for change, although Kunz (2005, p4) suggests clothing habits are more difficult to change than other products, the general trend of increased awareness and some behavioural shifts, in addition to the increase in movements such as the Circular Economy and Degrowth, gives us reason to believe a more sustainable clothing consumption pattern among UK residents is on the right trajectory.

Further study from this paper could include: research into the cause of the attitude-behaviour gap; the ways in which the identified barriers could be overcome; the implications for Jevons Paradox being an actor within clothing consumption behaviour; and which top down and bottom up changes would be most effective.

Limitations of these results include the socio-economic uniformity of participants and their geographic limitation to Southern England and Northern Ireland. Further study could investigate a more comprehensive sample of the UK. The use of more methods such as large-scale surveys could provide a broader series of results.

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7 Appendix

Interview Guide

1.	**General clothing trends**
	On a scale of 1 to 10 how passionate are you about fashion? 1 being not at all, 10 being extremely
	What would be your trend of getting new clothes, more cheap ones, less expensive ones, lots of any priced ones etc?
	How often do you get new clothes to your wardrobe (both new or second hand)?
	Where do you usually get new clothes to your wardrobe from? Brand new from shops, online, charity shops, friends etc
	Are most of your clothes brand new or second hand?
	In order what are the 3 most important factors to you when choosing an item to get?
	Do you think as a general rule, more expensive items last longer?

2.	**Disposal**
	What do you do with clothes you no longer want?
	Do you think they the knowledge that you can pass your clothes on to charity shops or get them recycled encourage you to buy more clothes because it then doesn't seem like a waste if you don't end up wearing the clothes often? (Jevons Paradox)
	If you had to pay to dispose of clothes do you think would you be less likely to buy more?
	Would you tend to get clothes mended or altered or would you just buy a replacement of the item? Why?
3	**Environment & Ethical Knowledge**
	When people talk about clothes being environmentally friendly, what do you think that that means?
	Do you think that the fashion industry has a net positive, negative or neutral impact on the environment? And what makes you think so?
	When people talk about clothes being ethically friendly, what does that mean?
	Do you think the fashion industry has an overall positive or negative or neutral impact on the people who are involved? And what makes you think so?
	Would you be more likely to buy an item that said 'Made in Bangladesh' or 'Made in UK'? (identical items in quality and price) If Made in UK, how much more would you pay for that? (%)
	If two items were the same price but you knew one was guaranteed environmentally and ethically friendly and the other was not which would you choose? If environmentally friendly one, what percentage more would you pay for that guarantee?
	Have you heard of the term fast fashion? If yes, how would you define it? Do you think it is generally a positive or negative term?

	Have you heard of the term sustainable fashion? How would you define it?
	Using the words high, middle and low, what do you imagine sustainable item would be? In terms of quality, style/ fashion, price, accessibility? Quality – Style/ how it looks - Price – Accessibility -
4	**Making decisions**
	Do you ever go out of your way to check whether the clothes you buy are environmentally and ethically friendly?
	If yes, what do you use to check this?
	Do you ever want to make an informed decision but don't know how to find reliable guidance?
	If you went into a store and you had £30 you could spend, if the items were very cheap would you be more likely to spend the whole 30 and get more clothes, or just get what you really need and want and save some of the 30? If there was an app or website which gave reliable guidance would you use it?
	If there was an ethical and environmental ranking on clothing labels would you take that into consideration?
	What do you think would have a bigger impact, making small daily changes to their consumer patterns or government regulations forcing brands to change?
5	**Change**
	Have you ever changed the way you purchase any product other than clothes, e.g. meat, milk, paper, fairtrade, loose veg. for sustainability reasons?

	Would you rather change how you consume clothing for ethical or environmental reasons?
	What are the main reasons you don't buy completely sustainable clothing? E.g. cost, accessibility What would need to change?
	Have you heard of the term Capsule closet?
	A capsule closet is where you would have roughly 30 items of clothes and give the rest away, would you be up for that? What would stop you?

	Wardrobe Stories
	• Please pull out the newest item to your collection – where and why did you get it?
	• Please pull out your favourite item – Why is it your favourite? How long have you had it for? Where did you get it?
	• Pull out one of your cheapest items – Why did you buy it?
	• Keep it out and pull out your most expensive item – Do you notice a difference between the quality of these two? Do you think the price difference is reflective of their qualities? (of same item)
	• Which country are the most expensive and cheapest made?
	• When you have a really good item do you wear it more because it's good or less to keep it good
	• Pull out an item you got second hand if you have one – why did you buy it? Would you have bought it if it was brand new and full price?

	• Do you have a summer and winter closet?
	• Have you got any items that are very similar/ duplicates? When buying the second one did you remember that you had this other one?
	• What percentage of your clothes do you think you wear on a weekly basis?
	• Within the past year, what percentage of your clothes do you think you haven't worn?
	• Do you know if any of these items claim to be ethically or environmentally made? If yes, did you pay any more for them? Do you think the style or quality is any better or worse than others?
	• How many pairs of blue jeans do you have?
	• how often do you repeat clothes? E.g. within a week how often would you wear the same outfit – why would you not repeat
	• here are a few scenarios for if you had three events in three days to dress up for: 1. would you wear the same outfit for all three events if you put a picture of yourself up on social media after the first one, and the others were with the same people? 2. would you wear the same outfit for all three if you put a picture of yourself up on social media after the first one, and the others were with different people? 3. would you wear the same outfit for all three if it wasn't on social media, and the others were with the same people? 4. would you wear the same outfit for all three if it wasn't on social media, and the others were with different people?
	• What is your ideal style? Does it watch your current style or is there a gap between your intention and behaviour

	• How much influence do you think those around you have on your clothing consumption patterns?
	• Do you have lots of memorabilia clothes? E.g. tops from school
	• Do you often buy clothes that are in trend, when they go out of style do you keep them?
	• Do you have many items that are just in case? E.g. just in case you have that dress up party or holiday that you could need that one shirt for. • Why do you still have them?
	• Have you lived in both a city and countryside? • If yes, Do you think city style is different from country style? Did you dress differently in both situations? • If no, have you observed a difference between city style and country style when visiting either?