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Bachelor thesis

Changing attitudes towards fast-fashion

- *A qualitative study of Swedish Generation Z and their increased ecological conscience*

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Abstract

The fast-fashion industry's effect on the environment becomes more of a critical subject as the industry grows and dominates the apparel industry. Fast-fashion is based on frequently pushing new trends to consumers in order to increase sold volumes. This has led to overconsumption and fashion waste where large volumes of unsold garments are burned each year. Alongside of this, the industry has begun to understand the importance of ethical conduct and sustainability to positively affect or minimally harm humans and reduce their overall impact on the environment. Generation Z are said to be a finely tuned ecologically conscious generation, whilst being frequent shoppers of fast-fashion.

This has led to the purpose of this study, to see how Swedish Generation Z's increased ecological conscience affects their fashion consumption. This will be found by examining how shifts in thinking affects their attitudes towards fast-fashion retailers and their willingness to purchase sustainable and ethical fast-fashion. This, with the intent of addressing the behavioral-attitude gap that exists amongst sustainable fast-fashion, where consumers want sustainable fashion but do not purchase it. To answer this, the empirical foundation was obtained through 20 semi-structured video-interviews via telephones to give an understanding of Generation Z's attitudes and behaviors surrounding sustainability and ethics in fast-fashion.

Conclusions drawn were that there was an awareness of sustainability concerning fast-fashion, but that it was not something that changed their behaviors so much as their attitudes. What was found was a strong attitude about ethics in fast-fashion as the majority of participants felt that they were in the dark about what happens in the supply chain, and that they could do nothing about it. If companies would clearly define why something is more ethical, it was found that the majority would be willing to change their behaviors, and purchase ethical fast-fashion. Sustainability that was something they were aware of, was lacking in fast-fashion but something they compromised for price, whilst price was not such a sensitive subject regarding ethical fashion.

Keywords

Fast-fashion, sustainability, ethics, environmentally responsible fashion, socially responsible fashion, ecological conscience, Generation Z, attitudes, consumer behavior

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Kalmar, May 22th, 2020

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1 Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of the main issues of the subjects that have been studied for this paper. It illuminates why the questions at hand are important and how it will contribute to academic literature by addressing a theoretical gap. Research questions, purpose and delimitations give clear insight to the focus of this thesis.

1.1 Background

> "Fashion ... suggests a passing trend or fad—something transient, superficial and often rather wasteful. It represents the opposite of longevity and, as such, would appear to be an impediment to sustainability." - (Walker, 2006)

In 2019, the total value of the fashion retail market was estimated at $1.78 trillion, an increase of 14% from 2018 (Lissaman, 2019). Even though the industry is growing, there are many challenges held for the future. Climate changes, new technologies, resource shortages, additions of new distribution channels, and global economic shifts that are impacting retailers and customers are some of the challenges the fashion retail industry has to face (Fashion Futures 2025, n.d.). With the enormous economic clout and its significant size, the fashion industry has an opportunity to have a positive impact on society and the environment globally. Fast-fashion is currently dominating the apparel industry, which has led to an increase in fashion trends. Consumers buy more than they need, they are over-consuming which results in fashion waste (ibid).

The concept fast-fashion is a result of the growth of the media and magazines' coverages of fashion, where consumers' fashion awareness has increased (Doyle et al., 2006). With consumers being more confident about fashion, the demand for new fashion pieces has grown, and for modern retailers such as H&M and Zara, fast-fashion has become a key strategy for success. With the constant renewing of their product ranges, they attract attention from media, and young females are frequently enticed into the stores (Barnes and Lea-Greenwood, 2010; Barnes and Lea-Greenwood, 2006). Retailers who adopt fast-fashion strategies have developed supply chains that can quickly respond to the demand of emerging fashion trends and deliver the merchandise in around a month (Kunz, 2005). The development of digitalization has simplified communication between store

employees and management at-home offices, making it easier for the employees to inform the designers of consumers' requests so they can quickly start the production of new fashion styles (Lopez and Fan, 2009). Frequent deliveries are crucial for fast-fashion retailers in order to meet customer demand by ensuring items do not go out of stock and always have new arrivals in store (Watson and Yan, 2013). Consumers are constantly pushed to spend more money on fashion apparel as the product life-cycle is short, with trends that last between 6 weeks and 3 months (North et al., 2003), and the prices are very affordable. Especially in today's society where social media platforms are a primary marketing tool for fashion marketers, collaborating with influencers on platforms such as Instagram who can reach out to many consumers around the world helps to create a want and not a need for the company's products which leads to impulsive shopping (Léa et al., 2018).

In the last decade, the fashion industry has been swept by a wave of change, as fashion companies have realized that ethical conduct and sustainability have begun to matter (Moisander and Personen, 2002). Ethics, often called social responsibility, within the apparel industry, is a philosophy that aims to balance ethics with profitability by producing apparel products that positively affect or minimally harm humans, and their environments. This responsibility is a very broad term that touches many aspects of the apparel industry, from environmental protection, labor practices in and trade with developing countries, consumerism, and body image (Dickson and Eckman, 2006). Sustainability in the fashion industry mainly implies that fashion retailers reduce their overall environmental impacts by improving their supply chains and focus on producing clothes in a manner that is friendly for the environment (Green strategy, 2020).

As a more sustainable approach, an increasing number of brands are rejecting fast-fashion and its principles. From brands starting to focus on sustainability in their processes and resources required to produce clothing, the slow fashion movement has arrived. The movement involves buying garments that are more durable and giving values of treating the people, animals, and planet fairly (Hill, 2018). However, it is difficult for fast-fashion retailers to maintain their low costs and offer superior quality products. Therefore, it is hard for them to be sustainable (Khan, 2009). Taking one of the leading names in the fast-fashion industry H&M for example, as one of their sustainability initiatives, they have introduced garment collecting in their

stores (Balch, 2013). It could be described as a step in the right direction, but as long as their business is based on selling more and more, it will not save the planet (Balch, 2013). In spite of the retail giant's ongoing sustainability efforts, they are burning 12 tonnes of unsold garments per year (Hill, 2018).

Research has shown that Generation Z, a generation of the people born between 1996-2013 (Dimock, 2019), are the ones who increase consumption through social shopping, but they are also the ones with finely tuned ecological consciences. Ecological conscience implies that there is a growing awareness about being respectful and caring for the natural world and its content, such as plants, trees, the humankind and animals (Siegle, 2019). The growth of social media has coincided with the height of the young consumers online, which fast-fashion retailers have taken advantage of and target this group with enticing discounts and collaborations with influencers. While the generation is said to be engaged in topics regarding sustainability, they are yet constantly seduced by new trends and spends billions of dollars on these retailers each year. It is tricky to tell whether Generation Z will impact the fast-fashion industry to move towards a more sustainable model- or if it will keep on getting it faster (Abu, 2019).

1.2 Problem discussion

1.2.1 The practical problem

Statistics have shown that Sweden came in third place as the country with the highest spending on apparel per capita in 2016 (Statista, 2020). Swedish fashion consumption of fashion textiles has increased during the past decade, and the average consumption has reached to 13,5 kilos for each consumer per year, compared to the world's average of nine kilos per person and year (Sandin et al., 2019). One of the main reasons why there has been an increase in the total consumption in Sweden, is the increase in fast-fashion consumption (Persson, 2019). More than half of what swedes buy, end up in residual waste that goes to waste incineration for energy recovery. Half of the textiles that go to waste are whole and could be reused (Naturvårdsverket, 2018).

The masses of resources used to create clothes in forms such as energy and water are only one side of measuring the impact fashion has on the environment. Compared to 15 years ago, consumers keep their apparel half

of the time than they did before, throwing them out quicker escalates the waste from the fashion industry. Within a year of production, more than half of fast-fashion items are thrown away. The impact fashion production has on the environment can be measured in many ways; one is the pollution of greenhouse gases. Tracing from the pesticides distributed over cotton fields to the last stage of making 1 kg denim fabric results on average, 23kg of greenhouse gasses (M.S.L.J, 2017).

Scientists point out that consumers in rich countries play an important role in supporting organizations and business models that minimize negative effects in favor of the humankind and the environment (Persson, 2019). Sustainability certifications are a way for the industry to raise its standards. However, consumers need to be critical and aware of the risk of retailers giving a better picture of their businesses than they are. Researchers also think consumption needs to change, and the fast-fashion model concept ‘’less is more’’, which means that paying less gives more fashion, needs to be dropped. Consumers in rich countries can contribute to global environmental justice by consuming high-quality garments that last longer, shop second-hand, repair garments they already own, and purchase their clothing from retailers with transparent supply chains (ibid).

The fashion industry is estimated to be a workforce of 80 million people. The vast majority of these workers are underpaid supported by minimum wages, which are 2-5 times less than they would need to reach a living wage (Clean clothes, n.d.). A living wage should cover the employee’s basic needs such as residence, food, healthcare, education for children, and certain savings. In 2003, H&M announced that they would establish living wages for all of their 850 000 textile workers, but it turned out to be something that has vastly failed (Larsson, 2019). Minimum wages are a result of governments being under pressure from retailers offering work to large amounts of people that will give underdeveloped countries an economic boost (Clean clothes, n.d.).

Alongside the unstable pay, subcontracting work is the norm where 3-month contracts are offered continuously with no end and no guarantee for future extension (Clean clothes, n.d.). These types of contracts create a challenge in working against child labor as work gets subcontracted to other factories that can be hidden from buyers and brands with strict guidelines (Moulds, 2020). It is estimated that there are 170 million child laborers in the world, with many of them working in the fashion supply chain and being paid below

minimum wage. Child labor is illegal in most countries and is on the decline, the International Labour Organization (ILO) state that from year 2000 to 2012, it has decreased with 30%, but the issue is still very much present where 11% of the world's child population are child workers today (ILO, 2019).

The SOMO report from 2014, found that 60% of workers at mills in India were under the age of 18 when they started working in factories. Young women especially, are subject to these issues, as they are willing to work for meagre pay and are easily lured into these industries under false promises that they will make decent wages. Child labor in textile production is desirable as many stages of the production are low-skilled labour that is better suited for children than adults, and in cotton picking, their small hands do not damage the crops. They are forced to work long hours and are deprived of going to school without inference from work. They are easy to manage as they can slip under the radar, no unions can help them get better working conditions resulting in them becoming easy target with no voice (ibid). Because the fashion supply chain is so complex, big brands and consumers may never find out where exactly child labor is enforced (Moulds, 2019).

The discriminatory effects from the fast-fashion industry have affected women and immigrants to be taken advantage of. Women start working at young ages, as recruiters convince parents that they offer well-paid jobs, accommodations, three meals a day, education and a promised lump-sum payment after three years (SOMO, 2015). Most textile workers are women, an estimate of 80%. Several factors play a role in this issue. As a starting point, textile production takes place in countries where cultural stereotypes mean that women will be more submissive and docile. Their other gender-specific responsibilities such as domestic tasks as cooking, cleaning and childcare, and not forgetting their reproductive responsibilities, makes it difficult for them to seek other types of employment. They have many roles that they are juggling, making time an issue to seek out help to improve their working conditions. These women live in countries where gender discrimination runs deep, and women are frequently subjected to verbal and physical abuse and sexual harassment where they work in fear (Clean clothes, 2015).

An important factor in keeping prices low in fast-fashion is the migrant workforce. For long has workforce from neighboring countries been essential for garment industries in, for example, Malaysia, Thailand and Taiwan (Clean clothes, 2015). More recently, exploitation of the upheavals in war-torn zones where hundreds and thousands of Syrian refugees work in Turkish garment factories has taken place. There has also been an increase of migrant workers in Europe, the USA, and Australia to compete with the low prices industries in Asia and Africa offer. Many of these workers have to work illegally due to strict asylum or immigration policies they live under and fear discovery. In fear of arrest or deportation, many do not leave the factories or their dormitories (ibid).

1.2.2 The theoretical problem

As the fast-fashion industry is confronted with changes, there is a question regarding what direction it will move take. Data shows that there is an increasing drive for consumers to buy sustainable products. However, the demand for fast-fashion has not dissipated. Retailers therefore, need to find ways to adapt (Nguyen, 2020). There are not many previous studies regarding identifying characteristics of fast-fashion consumers, but from the studies that exist, the results have shown that consumers who prefer fast-fashion have a hedonic and convenience shopping orientation, whereas the group that do not prefer fast-fashion have shown economic, social position and brand orientations (Kim, 2006). Older consumers tend to buy high-quality products while young consumers have a preference for clothes that are trendy, fashionable, low quality and cheap (Bhardwaj & Fairhurst, 2010). Much of the previous research carried out regarding sustainability, and ethical values in fast-fashion have shown that there is a growing concern along with consumers' increasing awareness of the situations of fashion brands' unsustainable and unethical laboring (Shen et al., 2012; Aspers and Skov, 2006; Jin Gam, 2011; Watson and Yan, 2013).

Generation Z has not grown up in a time without the internet and social media, and they have been blamed for forcing retailers to rethink their selling strategies (Hanbury, 2019). This generation is said to fuel a massive change in consumer behavior because they want to be unique and still be able to balance that with saving money. A frequent documenting of their lives on social media leads to them feeling pressure always to wear new clothes. They also do not want to pay full price for anything and believe that value can be achieved in two ways: by buying clothing from low-priced brands or buying

more expensive items that last longer. In fact, price is the most important factor when it comes to choosing which brand to buy clothes from for the generation (ibid). The fashion society is full of contradictions today. Even though people express their interest in sustainability, they continue to seek out fast and inexpensive fashion items (Johansson, 2010).

As there is a current increasing trend in ethical consumerism, it is important to understand the gap between what socially and environmentally conscious consumers intend to do and what they actually do at the point of purchase. By investigating this attitude-behavior gap, it will benefit from an academic, managerial and social level and explain how to close this existing disequilibrium (Carrington et al., 2010). An attitude-behavior gap, sometimes called cognitive dissonance, is where a consumer seeks to senses discomfort from a conflict of beliefs and behaviors not correlating and tries to reduce this inconsistency (Festinger, 1957). The definition of ethical consumerism in this study stands for "the conscious and deliberate choice to make certain consumption choices due to personal and moral beliefs" (Carrigan et al., 2004). In the case of ethical consumerism in the field of sustainable fashion, consumers find themselves in a dilemma of choosing between their desire to behave ethically and their needs from fashion that includes their needs to be socially accepted and the effect it has on self-esteem, many contributing factors that influence the buying decision contribute to confusion for consumers (Lundblad & Davis, 2016).

Generation Z is, unlike earlier cohorts of Baby Boomers, Generation X and Y, still an under-researched topic in the context of behavior related to retail (Vojvodić, 2019). There is an on-going concern regarding sustainability and ethics in the fashion industry, while consumption still keeps on growing. Based on the fact that Swedish fashion consumption still increases every year (Persson, 2019), sustainability and ethics become more popular topics in the fashion industry, and Generation Z that represent the target market for fast-fashion retailers (Kim et al., 2013), we believe that there is a research gap in the field of sustainability and ethics in the fast-fashion industry regarding Generation Z.

1.3 Problem definition and research questions

In order for fast-fashion retailers, both Swedish and international, to be able to meet the requirements of Generation Z, a conclusion has been drawn that

there is a need for a better understanding of the generation's attitudes, behaviors and consumption patterns concerning sustainability and ethics in the fast-fashion industry. The result of this thesis may help fast-fashion managers to understand one of their largest target markets better, and rethink or improve their brand strategies towards it. Two main research questions have been implemented for this thesis in order to achieve a credible result.

1. *How does sustainability and ethics influence Swedish Generation Z's attitudes towards fast-fashion?*

2. *How does an increased ecological conscience amongst Swedish Generation Z's affect their willingness to purchase sustainable and ethical fast-fashion?*

1.4 Purpose

The aim of this thesis is to study how Generation Z's increased ecological conscience affects their fashion consumption, in particular fast-fashion. We are examining how this shift in thinking affects their attitudes towards fast-fashion retailers, and their willingness to purchase sustainable and ethical fast-fashion. This with the intent of addressing the behavioral-attitude gap that exists amongst sustainable fast-fashion.

1.5 Delimitations

The literature review does not acknowledge all aspects of sustainability and purposefully disregards economic sustainability. Due to this thesis having focus on both sustainable and ethical fashion it has been chosen to describe ethical fashion as socially responsible fashion, and environmentally responsible fashion as sustainable fashion as its own subject, even though they in practicality function together. When referring to ethical or social responsible fashion, animal welfare has been selectively left out and mainly aims at how people are affected by the fashion industry in various ways. All participants reside in the lower half of Sweden, meaning that our sample does not represent Swedish Generation Z members that live above Stockholm.

1.6 Disposition

A figure of the outline of this thesis is here presented along with short descriptions of each section.

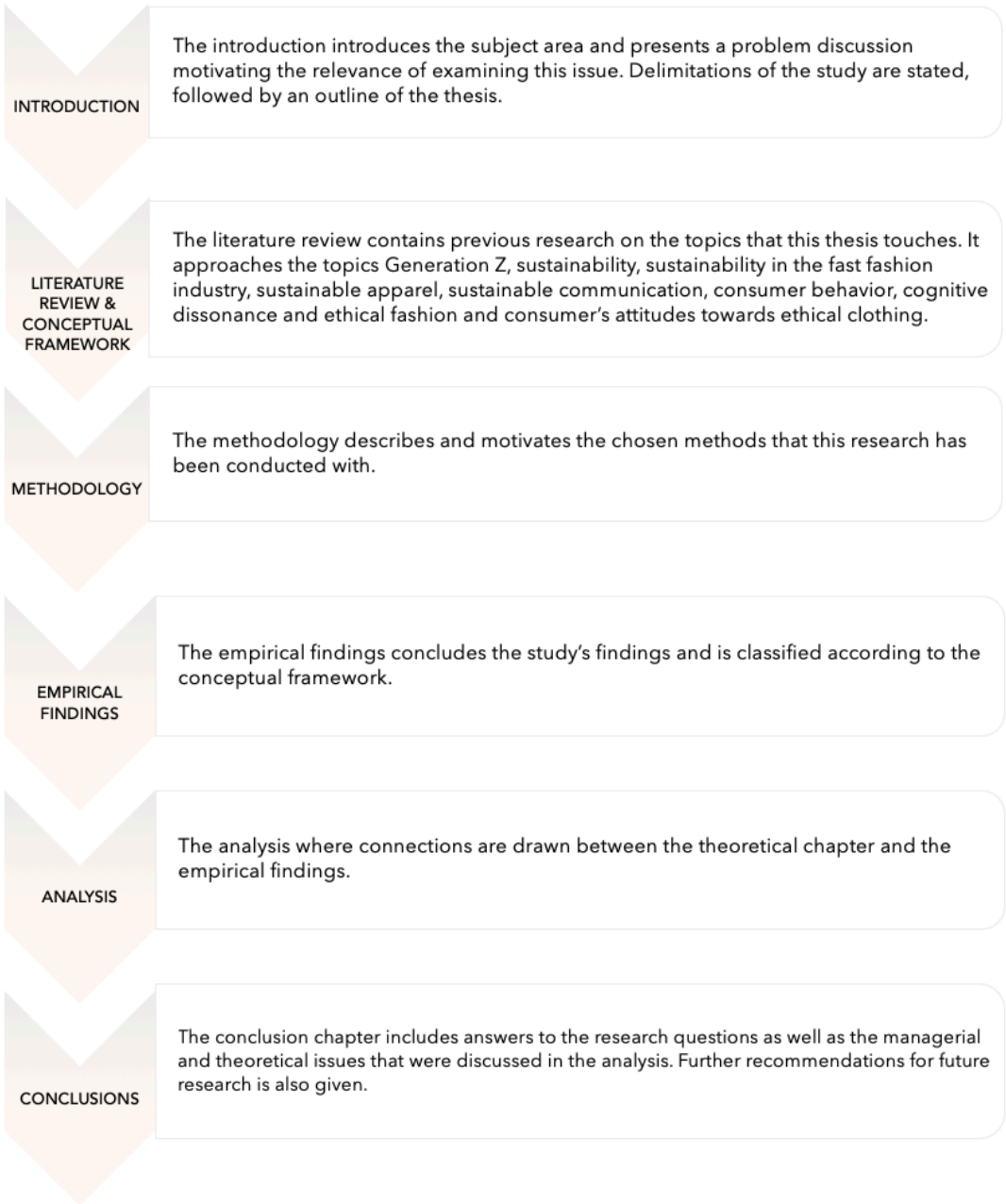

Figure 1 Outline of thesis

2 Literature review

This chapter introduces the theories this thesis is based on, beginning with Generation Z, followed by concepts regarding sustainable fashion, consumer behavior and ethical fashion. The literature review is then concluded with a summary and finalized with a conceptual framework that depicts how the theories presented are related to each other.

2.1 Generation Z

Generation market segmentation, meaning generational cohorts that have close years of birth, is a creation from the generational cohort theory with the basis that this age group will have developed similar beliefs and attitudes based on their experiences (Priporas et al., 2017). The reason for this is that researchers believe that the macro-level social, political and economic events that occur during the pre-adult years of a cohort result in a generational identity compromising a distinctive set of values beliefs, expectations and behaviors and stay constant throughout a lifetime (Jackson et al., 2011). This way of segmenting has been proven to be more beneficial than merely diving groups by age and not considering group attitudes and behavior (Priporas et al., 2017).

Generation Z is the post-millennial generation that has been raised in The World of Web 2.0 technology and social media where being constantly connected is the norm, and they virtually interact with their favourite brands (Parry & Battista, 2019). Globalisation has also attributed largely to their behaviors and preferences where they grew up using the same culture, and have the same food, fashion and place preferences (Törőcsik et al., 2015). As consumers, they are less loyal to retailers than previous generations and expect retailers to come to them, creating the issue for retailers to both grab their attention and retain it. Not only do they have no brand loyalty, but they also have higher expectations and care more about the experience (Priporas et al., 2017).

Generation Z members are tech innate, realistic and prefer to communicate through images. In work environments, they are ready to work for success rather than have the hopes of being discovered and are more persistent. They have a future-focused orientation, which supports their willingness to work and are more aware of those around them (PrakashYadav & Rai 2017).

Communicating with Generation Z has to be specific and to the point, as they have a very short attention span. The most effective messages should be short, up-to-date, real-time information with pictures, due to their good ability to communicate through visuals. Social media is a prime channel to reach this group as they spend more and more time-consuming information via mobile devices (Törőcsik et al., 2015). When it comes to what information they trust, it is mainly user-generated information compared to previous generations that trust company generated information, creating an obstacle for retailers (Herrando et al., 2019).

A study by Yarimoglu (2017) has shown that despite being the first generation to have grown up with social media, they still prefer to shop in stores rather than online. Reasons for this are that they value the functional aspect of a store where they can touch and see the products, and receive the products immediately. They also want to avoid shipping prices, being one of the most price-conscious target markets. The same study also stated that the top three reasons for online shopping according to Generation Z is that (1) it saves time, (2) there is a better selection online, and (3) the prices are lower (Yarimoglu, 2017).

The generation's members include the age group that probably value fashion the most - teenagers. (Schroth, H., 2019; Hermans et al., 2004). Clothing is especially important to their particular group as it is a means of self-expression or a way to cope with social situations (Hermans, 2004). It is also a common way for teenagers to be socially accepted by their peers, and be social affiliation to be associated with the "right" things. There are three reasons as to why they are particularly appealing to the fashion market aside from their large global population. They have a significant discretionary spending power that encourages teenagers to become trendsetters. They are still maturing and therefore are impressionable in their brand preferences, and their loyalties can still be built. They spend both their own earned money and family money and have the ability to influence their families' purchasing behaviors (Ibid).

Research on Generation Z's attitudes and behaviors towards sustainable fashion is a relatively unexplored topic in an academic context, as they are the new generation. It has been found that quality is not enough of a quality for Generation Z and that companies that position themselves or their brands

on this, may struggle in making themselves attractive to the group (Sharma, 2019).

2.2 Sustainability

The apparel industry has entered an ecological crisis due to its rapid growth since the industrial revolution (Armstrong & LeHew, 2011). Social, environmental and economic issues must now be addressed, and while the fashion industry already has taken action to these issues with sustainable strategies, there are still opportunities to be found. Vast amounts of key inception points for impact is found amongst design and product development processes where it is imperative to specify which processes need to be enhanced or revolutionized by existing strategies of other industries that are innovatively leading within sustainability. Fashion is inherently at odds with sustainability, being the definition of a passing trend or fad with little longevity. However, fashion is a part of modern culture that with perceptive can transition to environmentally friendly and socially responsible production and consumption, attracting attention, energy, and imagination around sustainable solutions (Ibid).

Fashion stands out from many other products, and need to have different sustainability approaches due to seasonality, the rapid decline of the value of the product and the constant pressure to lower prices due to globalization (Armstrong & LeHew, 2011). Despite popular beliefs, fast-fashion represents emerging frameworks of sustainable features and has paved a viable pathway to economic development to many developing countries, particularly China and India. Fast-fashion is often critiqued for producing low-quality garments for unethically low prices, vouching for disposal, and encouraging consumers to buy more. What fast-fashion does demonstrate is a dramatic reduction in time-to-market and on-hand inventories. It also caters to its consumers in a timelier manner where there is a higher responsiveness to consumer desires with the use of sophisticated technology. This is a model that when large amounts of countries have moved their productions off-shore, Italy and France have defended their domestic production using this model. With a fast and responsive production, the need for large and risky inventories that often result in markdowns, and address problems of scale (ibid).

Sustainability in terms of fashion has influenced the industry landscape by working as a “Megatrend” (Mittelstaedt et al., 2014). This trend has drawn

more focus to sustainable fashion and normalized the concept amongst consumers (Watson & Yan, 2013). This approach to fashion first came to place in the 1960s when the eco-conscious consumer became enlightened to the repercussions the clothing industry had on the environment (Jung & Jin, 2014). Textile production impacts the environment in several ways; energy consumption, water use, chemicals, dyes and finishes, and greenhouse emissions (Pedersen & Gwozdz, 2014). Being a concept that has developed and been refined many times over, sustainable fashion has been used interchangeably with eco-, green-, and ethical-fashion (Carey & Cervellon, 2014).

Sustainable fashion is sometimes misinterpreted as the opposite of fast-fashion, however, being a part of the slow fashion movement, slow fashion is more centered around a philosophical ideal holding sustainable values (Pookulangara & Shephard, 2013). On the other hand, there is still confusion around the meaning of the term "sustainable fashion" as there is no specific definition or guidelines for producing sustainable clothing (Watson & Yan, 2013). This movement is causing a structural change in organizations and asking for a balanced approach to fashion production (Clark, 2008). It is challenging fast-fashion by demanding ethical conduct and changes in the supply chain, supporting both existing assets in traditional production and innovative production (Fletcher, 2010). This includes, amongst others, utilizing upcycling and recycling and using integrating renewable and organic materials.

2.2.1 Sustainability in the fast-fashion industry

Fast-fashion brands have begun to capitalize on young consumers' socially conscious opinions, and they have become a target for sustainable fast-fashion products. These customers are fast-fashion buyers who are young and seek trendy, fashion-forward products which means that even sustainable products need to fit their preferences (Morgan & Birtwistle, 2009). That means that even if the shopper values sustainability, they will, in the end, determine if the product meets their style, fit, quality, and price beforehand (Joergens, 2006). With large experience of previously targeting this group, it is possible for fast-fashion brands to produce sustainable products with a similar trend (Goldsmith & Clarke, 2009). Because this young group are likely to contain fashion leaders, focusing on them could speed up the process of creating a fashion trend out of sustainability.

The risk that comes with implementing a new sustainable product can be reduced by creating a brand extension under an established company's name. In that way, consumers' evaluation of the new product is based on their previous experiences with the brand. Brand extension is a tool to bridge two very different categories, meaning this is a way for fast-fashion retailers to implement sustainable products (Keller & Aaker, 1992). This is a strategy that fast-fashion retailers have utilized where they leverage both their brand name and associated style to other lines (Choi et al., 2010).

A study in 2015, testing young consumers, showed that the more frequently a consumer purchased from a fast-fashion retailer, the more inclined were they to purchase from their new sustainable products. In these circumstances, the importance of fit is crucial, meaning that the more understanding the consumer had for the brand or the cause, they had a larger perspective of the fit which could lead to positive evaluations of the extension product (Hill & Lee, 2015).

2.2.2 Communication of sustainability

The popularity of organic and sustainable fashion has increased along with interest in recycling and change in lifestyle to lessen personal environmental impact. However, despite that the demand is existing, it does not match the actual sales as they are not selling very well (D'Souza et al., 2015). This attitude-behavior gap that is not entirely understood is because of a range of factors that will be discussed, as well as consumers purchasing behaviors are not always rational and aligned with their values (Henninger & Singh, 2017; Niinimäki, 2010).

There is also the issue of sustainable communication, where the trend of sustainable clothing has led to companies greenwashing their products using the buzzwords eco, organic, environmentally friendly, and green (Chen & Chang, 2013). This has led to confusion and mistrust amongst consumers, and although it has been shown that showing sustainable qualities of the product is beneficial, consumers have no way knowing of what is true or false (Chen & Chang, 2013; Delmas & Burbano, 2011). This results in trust in companies promoting social or environmental credentials have a hard task of building relationships with consumers, as they are at first treated with mistrust and need to prove their intentions in order to build trusted relationships (Rahman et al., 2015)

It has been found that one of the most determining factors in selling sustainable clothing is the price, as consumers do not find that sustainability alone is enough of an attribute (Butler and Francis, 1997; Harris et al. 2016). According to Harris et al. (2016), the reasons for this are three; clothing sustainability is too complex, consumers are too diverse in their ethical concerns, and clothing is not an altruistic purchase. While the larger market for sustainable clothing is for those who are concerned for the environment, it has been shown that young consumers are without a doubt supportive of the idea, but do not make the connection between sustainability and fashion making it a non-priority (Reimers et al., 2017; Joy et al., 2012).

2.3 Consumer behavior

> "The field of consumer behavior is the study of individuals, groups or organizations and the processes they use to select, secure, use and dispose of products, services, experiences, or ideas to satisfy needs and the impacts these processes have on the consumer and society.''- (Hawkins, Best & Coney, 2004)

The decision-making process heavily relies on the type of product involved in the process (Furaiji et al., 2012). If it is a low-cost product that the consumer frequently buys, such as groceries, it is a routine response behavior. When the consumer knows what they want, but for example, not from what brand, it is called a limited decision-making process, and it is when a routine response decision and an extensive decision is combined. The most complex decision-making process is the extended decision-making, where the consumer is buying a product that they infrequently purchase that is more expensive, such as a house or a car. Common fashion behavior is following the limited decision-making process where the consumer knows what they want but need to decide what brand to buy from (ibid). Typical for fashion is also impulse buying, a sudden, compelling, hedonically-complex buying behavior (Bayley & Nancarrow, 1998). Impulse buying provides significant revenue to the fashion industry, and in the USA, impulse buying resulted in over $4 billion in annual sales (Kacen & Lee, 2002). Fashion impulse buying is affected by the consumer's fashion involvement and positive emotions when shopping (Matilla & Enz, 2002).

The shopping experience can go beyond functional utility and task orientation where the consumer is seeking to gain value from the experience (Jackson et al., 2011). Shopping provides a beneficial experience and gratification that leads to value for consumers. Value can be explained as

what the consumer is gaining (e.g. quality and benefits) versus sacrificing (e.g. cost). The term value is multidimensional, referring to many factors such as qualitative and quantitative, subjective and objective, that make up the complete shopping experience. This suggests that the value is provided by the "complete shopping experience," not simply by product acquisition. The shopping value is determined on two dimensions that are correlated to satisfaction, and repeated purchase behavior, utilitarian (task-related) and hedonic value referring to the worth found it the shopping experience itself. It has shown that generational cohorts differ in their utilitarian approach and that women perceive significantly higher hedonic values from hedonic value as well as be more task-oriented resulting in utilitarian shopping values being lower for men (ibid).

Possessions can become an extension of the self, and come to symbolize a part of our personality. As we do not only live as individuals, we are part of something bigger, we transfer our idea of the self to other entities such as family, group, subculture or nation, using possessions to visualize our self (Francisco Dávila & Casabayó, 2013). There are needs to be a match between the consumer's self and their attitude towards the brand in order for a purchase to occur (Jackson et al., 2011). In the case of this possession being, clothing can be a medium of self-expression (Hermans et al., 2004). Identity is fundamental to fashion consumers, and there is a desire to express meanings of oneself. Identity is a factor that in a fashion context often outweigh other factors, such as being sustainable, ethical and functional (McNeill & Moore, 2015). McNeill and Moore (2015) emphasize that it is beliefs and behavior that are a result of other factors playing a more important role in determining purchase behavior, which includes price, value, trends and brand image, elements which are important in fashion consumption. Factors being cast aside is dependent on the consumer's knowledge of the negative impacts the fashion industry has on the environment (Birtwistle & Moore, 2007).

In fashion consumer behavior, consumers behave differently from other markets (Diamond & Diamond, 2013). Historically it was the designers that dictated what fashion consumers were to buy, but since the 21st century, it has become more customer-centric where retailers and designers must strive to satisfy customers' needs and wants instead. The motivation for fashion purchases also differs from other industries; a fashion purchase is very often something that is fulfilling an emotional need. Fashion consumers often

select their clothing based on brand, before Calvin Klein introduced the jeans designer market, jeans had a practical function and was purchased rationally by consumers (ibid). In the choice of purchasing a sustainable garment, it is important to note that a combination of psychological brand benefits, such as experiential, symbolic and utilitarian benefits, such as sustainable pricing, quality, brand image, and sustainable labelling, are needed (Hartmann & Apaolaza-Ibáñez 2012).

Sustainable fashion consumption differs from fashion consumption where the drive and motivation behind a purchase is most likely self-expression, group conformity, aesthetic satisfaction, and a desire to act ethically and avoid feelings of guilt (Lundblad & Davies, 2016). All fashion consumption in hedonic consumption have the same motivational factors, and that does not differ in sustainable consumption where comfort, individuality and look of the product are very important. An important motivational factor is the fact that they are decreasing the risk for other people in society by buying products that come from companies that promise better working conditions. The physiological benefits of buying a sustainable garment is a feeling of accomplishment and self-esteem (ibid).

2.3.1 Attitudes

The definition of the term attitude is a lasting, general evaluation of people (including oneself) objects, advertisements and issues (Baron & Byrne, 1987). An attitude object is anything that an attitude can be directed towards. According to the functional theory of attitudes developed by Daniel Katz, attitudes exist because they serve a function for the person where in anticipation of an event they will be able to deal with similar information as they have already formed an attitude of the subject (Katz, 1960; Lutz, 1975; Fazio et al., 1984). Katz identified four attitude functions; utilitarian related to basic principles of reward and punishment, value-expressive expressing the consumer's central values or self-concept, ego-defensive protecting a person from either external or internal threats and knowledge. A function can serve more than one, but most commonly one will be more dominant, and this dominant function is what marketers can take advantage of in their communications and packaging (Katz 1960; Lutz 1975). In the case of sustainable clothing, product attribute information is crucial. Consumers' knowledge of the subject, unavailability of product details, and lack of trendy designs influence consumers attitudes towards sustainable fashion (Martinez & Wiederhold, 2018).

A consensus amongst most researchers conclude that an attitude has three components; affect, behavior and cognition that are the components of the ABC-model of attitudes and is one of the most commonly cited models of attitude (Eagly & Chaiken, 1998; Van den Berg et al., 2006). The three components indicate an effect towards the attitude object. Affect denotes the individual's feelings about an attitude object. Behavior denotes the individual's intention towards to an attitude object. Cognitive denotes the beliefs an individual has about an attitude object (Vishal, 2014). These three components all play an important role of the formation of an attitude. However, their relative importance varies depending upon a consumer's level of motivation with regard to the attitude object (Ahmed et al., 2014). To explain the relative impact of the components, researchers have developed the concept of the hierarchy of effects where three hierarchies depict a fixed sequence of steps to developing an attitude, as seen in figure 2 below.

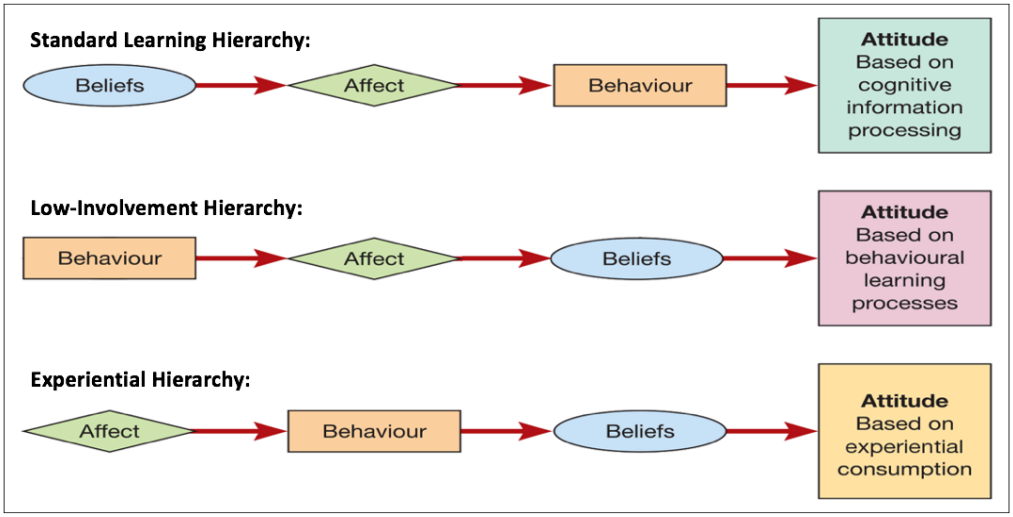

Figure 2 Three Hierarchies of Effects Model (Solomon et al., 2016).

These hierarchies are the standard learning hierarchy, the low-involvement hierarchy, and the experiential hierarchy (Ahmed et al., 2014). The standard learning hierarchy is based on the assumption that a consumer approaches a product decision as a problem-solving process. They start by forming a belief from accumulating knowledge of the product attributes, and then these beliefs are evaluated by the consumer that becomes the effect which is a feeling about the product. Based on this, the consumer then engages in

relevant behavior. The low-involvement hierarchy is formed the other way around, and it entails that the consumer develops an evaluation once the product has been purchased or used as the consumer does not possess a preference of brand and acts on the basis of limited knowledge. An attitude is built through behavioral learning, where the attitude is based on the consumer's evaluation after purchase. The last hierarchy, the experiential hierarchy, is based on the significance of the emotional response. Here, affect comes first, followed by behavior and then beliefs. In this case, product attributes can sway a consumer based on their reactions to it, and the stimuli such as advertising and brand name are affected by the consumer's attitudes (ibid).

2.3.2 Cognitive dissonance

Cognitive dissonance, otherwise referred to as attitude-behavior gap in this thesis, is a theory that assumes that people have a need for order and consistency in their lives and that when beliefs and behaviors conflict with each other, a state of tension is created (Festinger, 1957). In the choice of two alternatives, a conflict may be resolved through cognitive dissonance reduction where people want to eliminate an unpleasant tension by reducing this inconsistency. Bringing attitudes into the equation, there are other issues presented as people are confronted with situations where there is a conflict between their attitudes and behaviors. Cognitive dissonance can take place in a situation where there is inconsistency in two cognitive elements, e.g. something a person believes about themselves, a behavior they perform or an observation about their surroundings (ibid). When a psychological inconsistency occurs, a feeling of discomfort motivates a person to change their behavior. In the example of the choice between ethical and unethical behavior concerning buying e.g. sustainable, organic or fair-trade products or recycling it has been found that consumers try to compensate for what they perceive as unethical behavior through engaging in perceived ethical behavior in other contexts (Gregory-Smit et al., 2013). To deal with dissonance, a consumer may reduce their discomfort by either eliminating, adding or changing elements. As consumers actively seek support for their purchase decisions, this is something marketers can target by understanding their target market and supply them with additional reinforcement (ibid).

Even though the interest for ethical and sustainable fashion has increased, there is a particular issue in this industry as even if the consumer intends for something, it does not mean that it will lead to a purchase, creating an

intention-behavior gap (Carrington et al., 2010). To make an ethical consumption choice, and then frequently continue with it, there is a need to plan (Carrington et al., 2014). First, the consumer must have access to information that is understood, then the consumption must be made habitual, but breaking habits is often difficult. If ethical consumption is not made into a habit, compromises and unethical purchases will take place. As emotional motivations are often stronger than rational when consuming fashion, it is reliant that in order to sell ethical products, consumers must be more emotionally motivated (Eckhardt et al., 2010).

2.4 Ethical fashion and consumers' attitudes towards ethical clothing

Ethical fashion is the result of consumer education in the fashion industry that started in the 1980s, where the goal is for transparency and ethicality to be clearer (Shen et al., 2012). Ethical fashion was the follow up to eco-fashion that first began around the subject anti-fur, which in the 1990s, the direction turned to ethical clothing (Henninger et al., 2016). The definition of ethical fashion is fashion clothing that is produced under fair trade principles in sweatshop-free labour conditions, with efforts made to reduce the environmental harmfulness of the process (Joergens, 2006). Ethical fashion is more than what it is commonly associated with fair working conditions. It is also the promotion of companies using sustainable business models in their practices (Joergens, 2006), the origin of materials and the background as well as the environmental impact it has (Johnston, 2012), and certifications and traceability where the industry that was previously behind a curtain is apparent (Henninger, 2015).

Referring to previously mentioned that consumers do not take action to purchase sustainable clothing, similar issues are present when speaking of ethical fashion. It is not a top priority in the consumer's mind, and they tend to focus on their own needs first, meaning that the needs of others involved in the supply chain of the garment is not as important and ranked lower. However, when compared to environmental issues, consumers view human rights as inherently more valuable (Cooney, 2011). A study taken place in 2000, proved that 70 percent found a company's commitment to ethical conduct is important, but only one out of five were willing to pay more for a socially and environmentally responsible product (Wessels, 2001). It is not that consumers do not want to make ethical purchasing decisions; it is more that they feel like they do not have a say in the matter. This is because they

do not know of the working conditions or that they can have an effect as most garments are produced in developing countries (Joergens, 2006).

It has been found that ethical conduct may benefit the business when researched if consumers care about business ethics (Shen et al., 2012). It was also found that unethical behavior may be harmful to the business. Outcomes of negative brand relationships ‘’can cause a brand to lose numerous existing customers and can alienate innumerable potential customers, which can result in millions of dollars of damage to a brand’’ (Kähr et al., 2016).

When it comes to apparel purchase decisions, increasing ethical concern has been reported amongst consumers, and the avoidance of sweatshop labour is the most important concern regarding human rights violation (Shen et al., 2012). The purchase rate of an ethical product highly relies on the consumers understanding of the ethical dimensions of a product. What that means for fashion is that the more knowledge of the fashion industry and its practices the consumer has knowledge of, the more willingly will they be towards buying an ethical garment. Consumers with higher ethical attitudes are those that purchase and use recycled clothing (ibid). It has been found that ethical consumers are driven by factors such as personal values, moral norms, internal ethics that result in purchasing intentions (Carrington et al., 2010).

2.5 Summary

The apparel industry has entered an ecological crisis, especially due to fast-fashion retailers that are often critiqued for producing low-quality garments for unethically low prices, and continually encouraging more consumption (Armstrong & LeHew, 2011). Generation Z is a new generation and includes the age group that probably value fashion the most- teenagers (Sharma, 2019; Hermans et al., 2004). It is a generation that has been raised in The World of Web 2.0, and they are constantly connected to social media where the interaction with their favorite brands also takes place (Parry & Battista, 2019). It is said that this generation will create issues for fast-fashion retailers to grab their attention and retain it because they are less loyal to retailers than previous generations (Priporas et al., 2017). Sustainability and ethical considerations are usually not taken into consumers’ minds when purchasing fashion garments (Cooney, 2011). A fashion purchase is very often something that is fulfilling an emotional need (Diamond & Diamond, 2013), while in the choice of purchasing a sustainable garment, a

combination of experiential, symbolic, and utilitarian benefits are needed (Hartmann & Apaolaza-Ibáñez 2012).

2.6 Conceptual framework

Five main topics have been brought from the literature review in order to build the conceptual framework; Generation Z, sustainability, consumer behavior, attitudes and ethics. The topics are put in the context of the fast-fashion industry where Generation Z represents the target group which is presented in figure 2. In order to assess the research questions, the conceptual framework model shows the coherence of the research and lays out a base for it. There is a need to understand the generation's attitudes and purchase behaviors in the fast-fashion industry, as the drive and motivation for purchasing a certain product and the beliefs and feelings towards the product influence each other. Furthermore, their attitudes may be influenced by sustainability and ethics, which in turn may influence their behaviors. A conceptual framework-model is presented below.

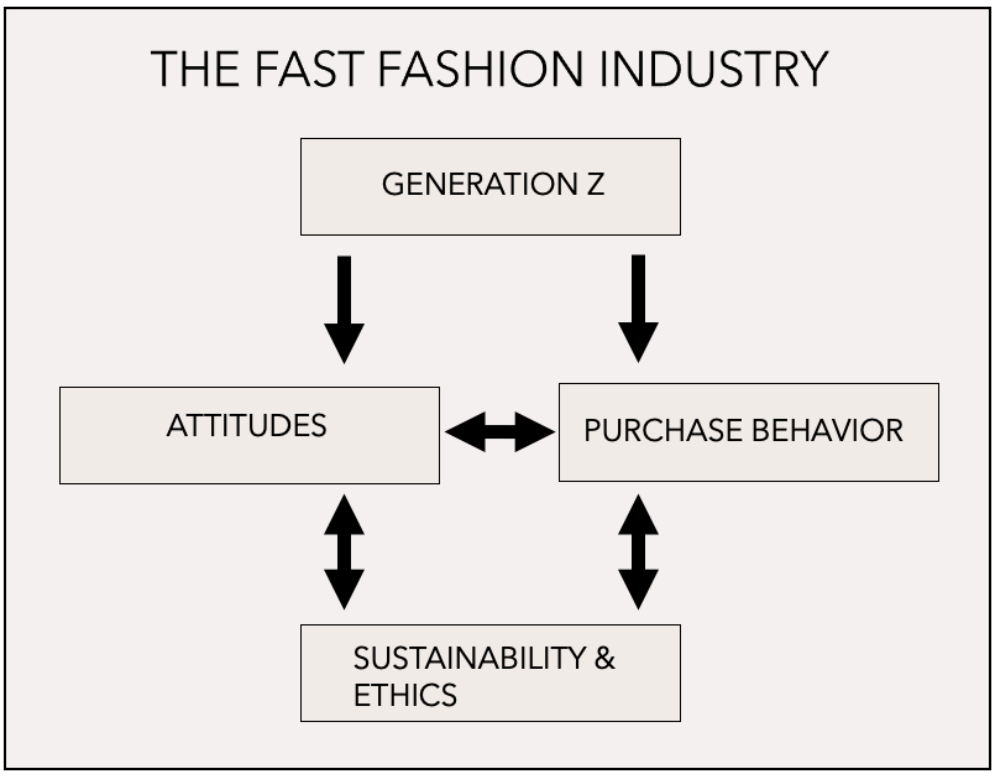

Figure 3 Conceptual framework-model

3 Methodology

This chapter explains chosen research approach, research methods, research design and what type of data that will be used for this study. A presentation of the operalization clarifying interview conduct is provided and how data analysis and quality of research will be obtained. This chapter is finalized with ethical and sustainability considerations.

3.1 Deductive approach

When conducting a scientific research, there are two main traditional ways to explain the relationship between the theory and the empirical data; deductive approach and inductive approach (Ghauri & Grønhaug, 2010). An inductive approach is where one first look at specifics and then moves on to the general. Conclusions are drawn from empirical observations about some phenomenon of interest and forming concepts and theories based on them (Locke, 2007). A disadvantage of inductive research is that the conclusions drawn from them can lead to an association with uncertainty regarding the study's validity because they imply a general truth (Ghauri & Grønhaug, 2010).

A deductive approach, also called concept-driven, is where researchers start from existing theories and test their implications against collected data in a study (Graneheim et al., 2017). In this method, the researcher starts from a general level of data or theories and then move on to more specific cases. A challenge for this approach is the way leftover data is handled that does not fit into the selected theory, and this is largely affected by the researcher's intentions when selecting a theoretical model. If the intention is to verify an existing model, leftover data has implications regarding the fitness of the selected model. If it is desirable to develop or add new dimensions to existing models, leftover data are essential. Problems that may occur for this study due to the chosen method may be that deductive reasoning does not adequately capture the way that people think (Ormerod, 2009). Compared to an inductive approach, in a deductive approach, the conclusions are drawn from a logical process based on a general set of known premises, and therefore, the approach is perceived as less risky (Ghauri & Grønhaug, 2010). As this thesis derives from existing theories in the theoretical framework, and not from the empirical findings, a deductive research approach has been adopted. Due to the lack of previous research in the field

of study (Vojvodić, 2019), we consider it necessary to gain a better understanding of it before observing the empirical findings.

3.2 Qualitative research method

Depending on one's research question/s, a choice between two different methods of research is made for collecting data, quantitative and qualitative (Holme & Solvang, 1997). A quantitative research method often involves conducting surveys or standardized interviews with a high number of respondents when collecting data (Olsson & Sörensen, 2011), and from there, an analysis is made of the context evolved from statistics (Saunders et al., 2016). On the other hand, a qualitative method involves collecting data through social interactions with only a limited number of participants. The method is used to collect information when the aim is to gain a deeper understanding of a research area (Olsson & Sörensen, 2011). Also, where the participants are able to express themselves more freely regarding the research topic by bringing forward their own thoughts, knowledge and experiences (Merriam & Tisdel, 2016).

''Qualitative researchers are interested in knowing how people understand and experience their world at a particular point in time and in a particular context'' (Merriam, 2009). Quantitative research is where the researcher can identify the factors before the study, but during data gathering of a qualitative study, unidentified factors and perspectives that have not occurred to the researcher may come up. Qualitative studies can also be identified by the matter of that the researcher is the primary instrument for data collection and data analysis. Interpretation is embedded in this research method, each individual has different experiences and interactions, and these are up to the researcher for interpretation (ibid). Since the aim for this thesis is to gain an understanding of Generation Z's behaviors and feelings about sustainability and ethics towards the fast-fashion industry, a qualitative research method is, therefore, the most suitable choice (Novick, 2008). This is because qualitative research is appropriate when exploring perspectives and experiences where results need to be interpreted and cannot necessarily be counted or measured (Novick, 2008).

3.3 Research design

Research design is defined as a framework for how the collection and analysis of data will be made. The choice of research design depends on priorities such as the necessity of understanding different behaviors and thus

meaning in its context, the importance of casual relationships and also, the ability to generalize the results to the population as a whole (Bryman, 2012).

3.3.1 Purposive sampling

When gathering data for an identified problem, the first step for the researcher is to select a sample, which is the units of analysis (Merriam, 2009). A sample can be defined as a subset of the population. Since it is not necessary or convenient to study the entire population, a sample will be representative of the larger population (Acharya et al., 2013). There are two broadly classified sampling techniques, 'probability' and 'non-probability' samples. Probability samples are standard for ensuring the generalizability of the study results to the target population. Each individual in the population has an equal chance of being selected in the study. Non-probability samples are those in the process of gathering samples that do not have an equal chance of being selected. A non-probability sampling includes one of the most commonly used sampling methods, which is purposive sampling (ibid).

For purposive sampling, the researcher has something in mind and participants that suit the purpose of the study will be included (Etikan et al., 2016). The researcher makes a decision on what needs to be discovered or understood of a phenomenon of interest, and after that, the aim is to find people who are proficient and well-informed about the specific issue and are willing to provide the information by virtue of knowledge or experience (Bernard, 2002). Some advantages of purposive sampling are that at times, the method is less time consuming and less expensive (Rai & Thapa, 2016).

Based on the arguments and recommendations presented in the previous sections, a choice has been made to use a purposive sampling method for this thesis. In order to find suitable participants for the purpose of the study, criteria of the interviewees have been implemented. The criteria for the interviewees are that they must have Swedish citizenship, be living and consuming goods in Sweden, and be born between 1996-2004.

Furthermore, for this study, a sample size of twenty has been gathered, as depicted in table 2 below. An inadequate sample size can undermine the credibility of the research findings. A sample size of 10 may be too small, and the researcher may not get a variation when developing theory, while for narrative analyses, it may be too large (Sandelowski, 1996). According to Creswell & Poth (2018), the number of participants depends on the

qualitative research approach, where narratives includes 1-2, phenomenology includes 3-10 and the grounded theory includes 20-30, and therefore, a sample size of twenty will be appropriate to represent the older members of Generation Z. Interviews will only be conducted with participants of the age sixteen or older, as we believe they have just started high school and are able to spend more money freely without the impact of their parents' decisions, and there is no intention to study children's consumption. A table of participants for the study is presented below.

Table 1 Information of interview participants

PARTICIPANT NO.	GENDER	YEAR OF BIRTH	CITY
1	FEMALE	97	LJUNGBY
2	FEMALE	96	LUND
3	FEMALE	96	KALMAR
4	FEMALE	97	LUND
5	MALE	96	KALMAR
6	MALE	96	GÖTEBORG
7	FEMALE	96	STOCKHOLM
8	FEMALE	96	KALMAR
9	FEMALE	97	NYBRO
10	FEMALE	98	VÄXJÖ
11	FEMALE	96	KRISTIANSTAD
12	MALE	98	KRISTIANSTAD
13	FEMALE	96	KALMAR
14	MALE	02	GÖTEBORG
15	FEMALE	03	OSKARSHAMN
16	MALE	03	OSKARSHAMN
17	MALE	97	GÖTEBORG
18	FEMALE	96	KALMAR
19	MALE	96	HELSINGBORG
20	FEMALE	96	KALMAR

3.4 Data collection

Primary data is real-time data collected by a researcher, whilst secondary data is existing data of the past. It is the primary data that addresses the problem at hand, secondary data is collected for other purposes (Ghauri & Grønhaug, 2010).

3.4.1 Primary data collection

When conducting qualitative research, primary data is recommended to be collected through focus groups, interviews and observations by the researcher (Malhotra et al., 2012). These three research techniques can be described as motivational research techniques as they attempt to give an explanation of why consumers behave in a certain way, and also discover and comprehend what motives influence consumers that they may not be fully aware of (Kitzinger, 1995).

3.4.1.1 Structure of interviews and communication technology

Interviews are one of the most useful and powerful methods of collecting data. Disadvantages of the method are that they require preparation by the interviewer in order to ensure consistency of the process, and they may also be time-consuming (Phillips & Stawarski, 2008). However, the interviews method is a way of securing data that cannot be found in performance record, or data that through written responses or observations are difficult to obtain (Kvale, 1996). Structured, semi-structured and unstructured interviews are three interviews methods, wherein a structured interview, the interviewees are asked a series of pre-established questions which only allows a limited number of response categories (Doyle, 2004). In a semi-structured interview, questions are prepared guided by identified themes consistently and systematically to elicit more elaborate responses (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009). An unstructured interview is an informal interview method where open-ended questions are asked (Hannabuss, 1996). The chosen structure of interviews for this thesis is semi-structured interviews, which can be regarded as more qualitative in nature, and it is also considered to be suitable for researching more complex issues (Descombe, 2010). Compared to structured interviews, semi-structured interviews can allow more leeway for following up on whatever angles are deemed by the interviewee, which in turn, can lead to making better use of the knowledge-producing potentials of dialogues. Compared to unstructured interviews, semi-structured interviews allow the interviewer to have a greater say and let the conversation to have a focus on the issues related to the research project (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009).

Traditionally, in-person interviews have been considered the ultimate standard interviewing method because of the natural encountering they represent, where the interviewer communicates and builds rapport while observing the body language of the interviewee (Irani, 2018). More recently,

videoconferencing has gained increased attention to be used as an alternative to traditional interviewing methods for qualitative research due to advancements in communication technology. By conducting an interview through videoconferencing, it allows the interviewer and interviewee to have a real-time, online synchronous conversation with the ability to send and receive audiovisual information (Ibid). There is a close resemblance between in-person interview and videoconferencing compared with other methods for collecting qualitative data online such as email interviews and instant messaging (Tuttas, 2015).

The semi-structured interviews for this thesis will be conducted using videoconferencing as communication technology. The decision to choose this method was made because of its logistical convenience which implies a reduction of geographical constraints associated with in-person interviews, as we are offered greater opportunities to reach participants of our study who are geographically dispersed (Irani, 2018). It has also been chosen due to its low cost, as we are able to avoid expenses for travelling for both us interviewers and our interviewees (Novick, 2008). Moreover, videoconferencing allows us to be more flexible when scheduling the interviews, since our interviewees may have busy professional or personal lives, they are given more options to fit the interviews. Lastly, when the participants of our study are being interviewed in the environment of their choice, they are more likely to be relaxed (Irani, 2018). The video conferencing interviews for this thesis will be conducted through video call-platforms such as FaceTime and Messenger. The interviews will be recorded, with the consent of the participant, using the recording function on Iphones, and also, notes will be written down during the whole interviewing process. In this way, we will be able to collect both verbal and nonverbal data.

3.4.2 Secondary sources

The secondary sources used in this thesis consist of academic journal articles, where the majority are published within a 10-year timeframe guaranteeing up-to-date information. The main topics that these scientific sources cover are: the fashion industry, fast-fashion and sustainable and ethical fashion. The secondary sources have been mainly collected from databases such as Google Scholar, Scientific direct and EBSCO, which has also given access to many articles from the Journal of Fashion Marketing and Management that have been used in this thesis. When searching for the articles, keywords have been used such as fast-fashion, fashion, sustainability, ethics, the fashion

industry, consumer behavior, attitudes, generation Z, young consumers, Swedish fast-fashion, Swedish consumers and fashion consumption.

3.5 Operationalization

In order to gather answers to the research questions of this thesis, a total of 30 questions have been constructed based on previous studies within the chosen field of study as seen in table 2. The purpose of an operationalization is to build a bridge between theory and practice (Lynham, 2002). The theory is examined and confirmed in an environment where the problem, phenomenon or question arises. In order to obtain confirmation of the relationship between the questionnaire and the theory, the theoretical framework must be transformed into indicators. This is in the form of an operationalization (ibid). The formulation of the interview questions has its basis in earlier theory for the reason that the intention is to get an as comprehensive a picture of the topic as possible, and thus the theory is tested in reality. The interview questions in the interview guide were designed along the most prominent areas that the study intends to investigate. Interviews will be conducted and compiled in Swedish as it is unreliable that all interviewees have the ability to express themselves in English. The data will then be translated into English.

Table 2 Operationalization

CONCEPT	QUESTIONS NO.	REASONING
General shopping behavior	1-9	In order to gain an understanding of what apparel mean (if they are interested in shopping/fashion or just see it as a necessity) for the interviewee, these questions will be asked. This section also includes questions to get an understanding of what factors Generation Zs' looks for when making their purchase decisions, if they prefer to shop online or offline, and how often they purchase new garments.
Fast fashion	10-12	These questions are asked to find out if the interviewees are familiar with the term "Fast fashion" (regardless of their answers, the authors will give a brief description on what it implies for the thesis in order to avoid miscommunication/misunderstanding), if they shop fast fashion, and why (if yes) or why not (if no).
Sustainability	13-14	In order to find out if the interviewees know any fast fashion retailers that have implemented sustainability in their concepts, and what they consider makes a fashion retailer sustainable, these questions will be asked.
Ethics	15-17	The same previous questions will be asked, however, from an ethical perspective instead of sustainable. One extra question will be asked regarding what they consider are good working conditions.
Changed & intended purchasing behavior towards sustainability	18-19	These questions will be asked to gain an insight if the interviewees have changed their behaviors towards fast fashion purchasing regarding sustainability, and what their intended behavior would be towards a more sustainable collection from fast fashion retailers.
Changed & intended purchasing behavior towards ethics	20-21	These questions will be asked to gain an insight if the interviewees have changed their behaviors towards fast fashion purchasing regarding ethics, and what their intended behavior would be towards a more ethical collection from fast fashion retailers.
Buying behavior	22-26	In order to find out if their shopping behavior have changed in the past years, if they want to change their behaviors to a more sustainable or ethical approach, what factors would be crucial for making a sustainable/ethical fast fashion-garment purchase, and what their reaction would be if they unintentionally purchased an ethical/sustainable garment, these questions will be asked. A final question in this section will be asked to see if they think their current purchase behaviors towards sustainable and ethical fast fashion match their opinions.
Opinions and attitudes on retailers' responsibilities	27-30	This section of questions is intended to help give the authors an understanding of Generation Z's opinions and attitudes towards sustainability and ethical conducts by fast fashion retailers.

3.6 Method of data analysis

As qualitative data tend to consist of extensive and unstructured material, it can result in implications and difficulty to analyze (Bryman & Bell, 2017). In comparison to quantitative data, qualitative data has no set rules on how the data analysis should be performed, and for that reason has many approaches

as options. Here, the researcher has a different role where interpretation has to take place. In a qualitative analysis, the goal to find more general findings meaningful to many amongst rich, and large amounts of data.

3.6.1 Content analysis

According to Ghauri & Grønhaug (2005), a way to analyze data collected through case studies is to look for commonalities and differences, for example, in situations where there are many cases. Content analysis can be used in any written text and do not require specific rules to be followed in data collection (Bengtsson, 2016). This method applies to both in an inductive and deductive way and qualitative and quantitative research. Qualitative research presents data in words and leaves a task of interpretation for the researcher. It is up to the researcher to interpret in a manifest analysis or a latent analysis. A manifest analysis describes what the participants express using their specific words and describes the visible and evident in the text. A latent analysis is where the researcher seeks to understand the underlying meaning of the text on an interpretive level. As video interviews will be conducted, the recordings are to be transcribed into written form, which is an interpretive process (ibid). The method of a latent analysis will be used in this thesis to draw more profound conclusions from the primary data collected.

When conducting the data analyzation, there are four stages: (1) the decontextualisation, (2) the recontextualisation, (3) the categorisation, and (4) the compilation (Bengtsson, 2016). Stage 1, the decontextualisation, it is where the researcher familiarizes themselves with the data to gather an overall understanding of what is happening and identify meaning units. After that stage 2, the recontextualisation, it is when all aspects are considered if they have been covered in relation to the aim, if it is not, it should be removed. After that, a categorisation process begins where themes and categories are identified with the aim of the study in consideration. The last stage, compilation, the researcher may begin the analysis and writing up process (ibid).

3.7 Quality of research

According to Merriam (2009), the “quality” of a study is relative and up to interpretation. The meaning that the research is to consider to be well constructed by many, it requires it to be conducted in a rigorous, systematic and ethical manner. If done accordingly, the study can be considered to give

reliable results and can be applied to practice. Regarding qualitative research, there are different strategies on how to ensure quality and way to think about validity and reliability than when conducting positivist research, ex. Surveys. For assessing the "quality" of qualitative research Merriam suggests considering four parts of the thesis, the problem, the methods, the findings and the discussion where the importance of clarification, identification, description and flow is expressed (ibid).

3.7.1 Validity

Internal validity refers to how well a research's findings agree with reality. In the case of qualitative studies, there may exist more than one reality. This is because there are multiple, changing realities, and there is no person that sees one situation the same, as reality is always interpreted through symbolic representations such as words and numbers. That means that in qualitative research, there are two interpretations involved, the researches interpretation of the participants' interpretation of the subject being investigated. The goal of qualitative research is to uncover the perspectives of the chosen group to be examined and offer a holistic interpretation of what is happening (Merriam, 2009).

In qualitative studies, according to LeCompte & Goetz (1982), there is internal validity and external validity. Internal validity refers to the correlation between the researcher's observations and the theoretical ideas that are developed and is a counterpart of the credibility of the study. Internal validity helps strengthen the thesis as a high level of conformance between concepts and observations due to the researcher has the possibility to have a long-term presence and participation. External validity is more difficult in a qualitative study as case studies, and a limited selection of participants is common. External validity concerns the extent to which results can be generalized to other social environments and situations (LeCompte & Goetz, 1982).

Three strategies will be used to ensure validity; member checks, peer review and providing a rich, thick description. Member checks is a common strategy where some of the participants of the study confirm that the researcher's interpretation of the data "rings true". It is important the participant recognizes themselves, and if not suggest how to explain their experiences better. Peer review is naturally a process part of writing a dissertation, but not an overlooked one. Lastly ensuring that the results offer a rich, thick

description to ensure generalizability and transferability where providing an extensive database is crucial for readers to determine how closely their situations match (Merriam 2009).

3.7.2 Reliability

Reliability refers to the replicability and consistency of the findings. In qualitative research, reliability means to the degree that similar research in the field generate similar interpretations and results, as well as the extent to which the set of meanings derived from several interpreters are sufficiently congruent. To ensure reliability in any scientific study, an intersubjective agreement has to have taken place, meaning that there is a consensus between two or more observers (Thyer, 2010). Just as validity, reliability can be viewed from the point of views of extern and intern reliability. Extern reliability is as mentioned before, the extent that a study can be replicated, and intern reliability is in the case that a study has been conducted by more than one author and their consensus on how to interpret their observations (LeCompte & Goetz, 1982). To ensure reliability in this thesis, the authors will use comparable data collection protocols, clearly state the researcher's role and ensure that the findings show meaningful parallelism across data sources (Thyer, 2010).

3.7.3 Ethical considerations

According to Bellman & Bryman (2017), examples of ethical principles for Swedish research are the requirement that has been followed for this study. There is a need for information, meaning that the researcher should inform participants of the purpose of the thesis and what stages are involved in the study. Secondly, there is a need for consent where the participants must understand that their participation is entirely voluntary, and they may terminate the participation at any time. If a minor is participating, a guardian's approval may be necessary. Information regarding participants in the study must be treated with confidentiality and be stored in a way where those that are unauthorized may not access the information. Anonymity must be offered, and the researcher may not give false or deceptive information about the study. Information gathered may only be used for the research purpose. Lastly, participants may not be harmed by the study (ibid). According to Merriam (2009), ethical dilemmas are likely to emerge regarding the collection of data and in the dissemination of findings. Researcher-participant relations may sometimes create ethical conflicts regarding the trustworthiness of the findings. To prevent this in the case of preexisting researcher-participant relations the interviews may take place as

planned, but the data will be analyzed by an outside party, in this case, the other author of this thesis, to ensure an ethical interpretation of data (ibid). As minors will be participating in this study, Swedish law will be followed according to the law (SFS 2003:460) on the ethical review of research concerning people. According to 18 §, if the participant has not turned 18 but is older than 15, he or she shall be informed themselves and must have an understanding of how the study affects them and express consent to the research according to 16 and 17 §§. 16 and 17 §§ instructs how the participants should be informed, and that consent has to been given with the information of the study as well as the consent must be voluntary and documented. In other cases, when the participant has not turned 18, the guardian of the participant must be informed according to 16 and 17 §§, and give consent to the study (ibid).

3.7.4 Sustainability considerations

Sustainability, being one of the core topics of this study, has been taken into vital consideration and will be a theme throughout the conduction of this thesis. The goal is to present a thesis that is representational of Generation Z's preferences and behaviors, and that will be relevant as this group and topic ages. As for environmental sustainability, no travel was conducted by participants of the study, as all interviews were conducted via video interviews through Facetime. Both authors of the study have not travelled for the purpose of conducting studies or meetings, and have only met in Kalmar, Sweden. The use of digital tools for data collection has been used in order to minimize the use of paper.

3.8 Author's contributions

Throughout this thesis, most sections have been one of the authors' responsibility and then been complemented by the other author. The work has been evenly divided, and in all parts of this thesis, both authors have somehow contributed. Mimmy Ly has been responsible for the majority of the introduction chapter, where Sophie Vigren has contributed with parts of the problem discussion, problem definition, research purpose and delimitations. Vigren has written the literature review where Ly has added complementary sections and written the summary and conceptual framework. Ly has created all figures and tables presented in this thesis. In the methodology chapter, Ly has written the deductive approach, qualitative research method, research design, data collection and operationalization. Vigren has written the method of data analysis and quality of research. Ly

conducted 19 of the interviews, Vigren 1, and half of the interviews were transcribed by each of the authors. Vigren wrote the empirical findings, and Ly wrote the analysis. Conclusions were written together.

4 Empirical findings

This chapter presents the empirical results of the study, categorized into themes according to the conceptual framework. Starting with sustainability and continues with ethics, fashion consumption, fast-fashion consumption, attitudes, and finishes with attitude-behavior gap. Each category is finalized with a summary.

4.1 Sustainability

What most believed makes a fashion company sustainable was mainly surrounding recycled materials and the production of the garments. That they create new items from old materials and collect old clothes from customers to create new ones. As for production, firstly and most mentioned was control over the production as a whole, from the acquisition of the material to the creation of garment using coloring that does not harm the environment and finally the transport. Participant 4 believed that the type of product that was being discussed played a role:

> *"It depends on what type of product is being made. If it is a pair of shoes that break after a month, then it will never be sustainable and then we have claimed these resources in vain."*

A disconnection was also found within the concept and fast-fashion retailers. "*It might be hard to urge customers not to buy more clothes when you are a clothing company whose goal is to sell as much as possible"- Participant 13.* Sustainability was regarded in two ways; what and how the product is made in regard to its effect towards the environment, and how long the product lasts until it breaks or if the opportunity for giving it new life or new owner to create a more circular clothing life.

> *"Sustainability for me is when you take something old or a resource and use it in a new way. I know some companies that have made shoes and clothes from plastic. If they have old clothes and alike that no longer are in style they can turn it into something new, it feels as if they simply throw it away."*
> *- Participant 9*

There was a good recollection of what fast-fashion companies work with sustainability. H&M's conscious collection was frequently mentioned, companies that offered products with organic cotton such as Lindex, and Gina Tricot offering jeans with reduced use of water during production. The presence of sustainable collection was something that has started to come to people's attention, and they are aware that this type of products are becoming

more available to them *"It is starting to show more and more"- Participant 11, while* some see it as a strategy companies are using to escape previous scandals.

> *"H&M has started to use it more since their crisis. It was a year when they had bought wool from a farm in New Zealand where they used a method that was harming the sheep and it ended up in a large scandal and since then they have worked with initiatives against this and had to market themselves away from bad publicity. That is all I know."- Participant 6*

There was also somewhat of an awareness of sustainable collection amongst fast-fashion retailers, besides H&M's conscious collection, Zara, Lindex, Gina Tricot and Bik Bok were specifically mentioned for working with sustainability, but not as a whole. There was a belief that there were actions made to be more sustainable, but that they did not believe that this was true. *"I know that those types of labelling are actually not that sustainable, even if that is what is expressed"- Participant 2.* Even though nobody could point out the specifics of these "sustainable" collections, most could recall and describe what the collection contributes with, and that they had noticed companies taking action regardless if they had positive or negative opinions of it.

Most admit that they do not consider sustainability when shopping. The feeling of as a consumer in the dark leads to a sense of a lost point to try. They thought it was difficult as a consumer to see resource measures and knowing of what chemicals and such have what kind of repercussions to the environment. Same went with the shipping transportations, not knowing what country the inventory was in where it was being sent to and from. "You *do not have a perception of how the whole process works. I think it is hard to be aware if you do not have an interest in fashion because then you might actually look it up"- Participant 2.* There is a slightly higher awareness of sustainability when shopping for fast-fashion, but still very low interest. Those that try to buy more eco-friendly clothes think of the material of the clothes and shop less often. Participant 13 focuses on material "*I only try to buy clothes made of natural fibers, that does not have as much plastic in them".* It is clear that participants feel as if they should think about sustainability.

> *"I try to think about it more, but I think it is hard to shop for clothes accordingly. In my world, sustainability would be to not shop at all, not buy new clothes at all, I do not think any garment in store is "good enough". It*

> *does not matter if I buy organic cotton in the end. It is hard when certain products are not on the market, and you try to buy something because it is labelled sustainable, but in the end, it is not really sustainable. I think about it but I do not do it."- Participant 2*

If a fast-fashion company that the interviewee usually shops from, would create a collection that was made with a sustainable focus, most say that they would purchase from it. *"It is something I often think about when looking for clothes. It should preferably come from a pretty fair environment background. I would absolutely pay for more for it"- Participant 13.* Most accept a higher price, under the condition that the quality goes up with it. About half of the respondents are also critical towards the idea. "*It feels like a term companies love to throw around. It has become a bit annoying and overused"- Participant 6.* It would only be a bonus to the garment, but not something that would motivate to a purchase. As it is not a motivator price is highly relevant and very sensitive. "*If they would increase the prices, I might as well go shop somewhere that is not fast-fashion."- Participant 17.*

Summary
Sustainability is a term that all participants had somewhat knowledge of, but very little understanding of what it entailed. It was not a factor that many considered as a motivator of a purchase and that they felt that it is often used as a marketing scam, in other words, greenwashing, and a way for companies to drift focus away from their environmental scandals. Sustainability for fashion meant that either how the clothes are made, what materials, resources used in production, and an overall view of the supply chain as a whole or how sustainable the garment is from purchase referring to durability and longevity. They felt that buying eco-friendly meant avoiding shopping altogether. Work that companies do that focuses on sustainability was able to be recalled and connected to certain retailers, and marketing efforts have been seen, but not enough for it to be affecting their opinions of the importance of sustainability in garments. In some cases, participants had knowledge of the works brands do, but did not view it positively, as they see the industry as a whole, unsustainable.

4.2 Ethics

When it came to association between fast-fashion and ethics, there was close to none who had seen any. Only a few could have some recollection of that either more expensive companies work with these issues or that H&M had worked some with it. One participant, Participant 19, had read H&M's annual report and remembered that they had a chapter on ethics,

> *"I think it is starting to become an important thing for PR and image for companies. It has to be a company you like to shop from, not just clothes, but because you like them as a company. It is a strong main point in how they produce their clothes."*

Participant 6 felt a recollection that he had heard of companies using it as a marketing strategy with the claims of providing ethical material.

In regard to ethics, most believed that ethical conduct mainly surrounded worker conditions and not using child labor. Child labor was what they found absolutely unacceptable. The workers were to have pay that matched their work and not to take advantage of the situation. Many stressed that they believed that textile workers should be over 18 years old and have a right to breaks, lunch breaks, vacation and not work more than eight hours a day regardless of where the production takes place.

Overtime needs to be compensated accordingly, and they have a right to protective equipment, good lighting, be safe from chemicals, and the spaces should be hygienic. Most seemed to accept that the situation was not something they would consider ethical, but stated what their minimum guarantees should be towards textile workers given to how the situation currently is. Participant 11 believed in offering workers safety, that they have a right to good insurance as factories are often not modern and they need protection due to bad machinery, and that they should be able to have a life outside of work. When hearing of unethical conduct from specific companies, this lead to avoidance of the brand.

> *"Zara has had many rumors of mistreating their employees, and that has led to me completely refrain from Zara. Same with H&M that have had a lot of rumors around them, I am not too glad to shop there either."- Participant 6*

There is also a connection to sustainability where participant 4 believed that it was unethical to take advantage of other countries' laws where nothing prohibits companies from releasing harmful chemicals into their surroundings. Even if that does not affect the companies' workers per say, she believed that it affects those surrounding the factories. There was also found a belief that ethicality should be present between the company and their suppliers, cotton should be bought for a fair price and farmers should be cared for. They wanted for companies to be more transparent about their products, with the belief that there is much under the surface that we do not know about. According to participant 13, ethical conduct means:

> *"That they think about the environment and the whole cycle from the design to the arrival in the store. That it is fair to both people and the planet. We cannot have children sewing clothes for nothing and people who buy the garments have no knowledge of it. Everyone needs their fair share and that they freely provide information of what they are doing and what is going on."*

Most do not think about shopping ethically. Either they do not think about it at all, or they find it too difficult if something has been produced unethically. If they knew that the products had been made under poor circumstances, they claim that they would stop shopping from that company, as participant 6 has boycotted Zara. Some say that they do think about ethics and say that they do not support companies with poor worker conditions, and some would try to look for alternatives.

> *"I have not heard much about ethics. It feels as if they are more trying to market sustainability. I have not seen it at all, of even thought of it, and god yes, I would like to see more of it marketed because then we could be more conscious of how the situation is out of an ethical standpoint. It feels more sustainability is an idea they want to sell to us, but I think it is a bit of greenwashing. It is, of course, good but looking at e.g. H&M and their percentile of sustainable garments and those that are not, it is not that large." – Participant 2*

If a fast-fashion company that the interviewee usually shops from would create a collection that made with better working conditions, all but one responded that they would purchase from this collection. Most would be willing to pay more, but with a clear price sensitivity. Limitations would be that the garment does not agree with their own personal style and that the price is too high. There would also be a need for clarification in clear detail exactly why this collection is a "better choice", many would distrust the intentions behind the labelling, *"If we got to know why, we would accept it easier" - Participant 18.* Those that state that they would not purchase from the collection solely use price as a reason. Despite some saying that they would purchase there is always some hesitation:

> *"If they were clear with what better conditions mean in the context. At the same time, you can turn it around and say why create a collection with better working conditions, it feels a bit weird. It is like saying all other clothes are made under poor conditions. Then I probably would not support the collection at all." - Participant 2*

Another participant says she is more supportive of something being ethical rather than sustainable:

> *"I think this is what is the most important. I am unusual not liking organic things as it considers the world's natural resources and it puts me off, no never. But if it was a collection with better conditions for workers with more control over the production it would weigh more over something sustainable."*
> *- Participant 4.*

Many suggest high marginal over how much more they would pay for a garment like this, some say 50% depending on what product it is, and some suggest 100% as long as the starting prices are low. It is obvious that many would be willing to pay more for an ethical product rather than a sustainable one. There is an understanding that to create "better" clothes, the price must go up, but it has to be reasonable.

Summary
Most had never heard of a connection between ethics and fast-fashion, and does not consider it when shopping. It was, however clear that this was a very important subject, so important that they would pay more for an ethically produced product and boycott those who do not follow such practices. A vast majority thought ethics was more important than sustainability. The same harsh requirements were demanded from sustainability, and proof of what makes a garment to be considered ethical. Working conditions were most discussed, that child labor has not taken place was extremely important, and more important than other factors. Many admitted that they are aware that fast-fashion supports poor working conditions, but believed that workers should have right to what is considered "Swedish standard", controlled working hours, overtime compensation, vacation and a safe workspace. The age restriction most believed in was that no one under 18 should be working in factories. Ethicality also implied that all parties involved are treated fairly, mainly in fair payment. There was very little association between ethics and retailers working with the subject, but that they would not like to support companies that have poor working conditions.

4.3 Fashion consumption

Regardless of interest in fashion and gender, the average Generation Z person shops clothes about once or more a month, with some deviating to circa three times a year. Buying for necessity and not for pleasure was a recurring theme and closely tied to an interest in fashion. The interviewees that expressed an interest shopped more frequently and was trend and seasonality affected. Others that did not have the same level of interest shopped out of necessity leaned towards products that "looked good" but was not necessarily trendy and cost-reduced items.

The majority of the participants said that they either prefer and do most of their shopping or all of their shopping in a physical store. Underlying factors for this was that there is the possibility to try on the merchandise in-store, the dislike of paying for something online before it was in their hands and waiting for the product feeling like they had "lost" their money, untrust of online sizings and what the garment looks like in reality. Those that preferred shopping online enjoyed that they could try things at home, they found it more convenient, a way to pass the time during boredom and if they shopped in stores, it was more of a social event.

All participants felt that both women and men their age shop a lot of clothes, both those that they know in their surroundings and in general, *"My classmates always have new things" - Participant 17*. Slightly higher spending was perceived to be done by women. Different factors were believed to contribute to this, one explanation was that they felt like they triggered each other to buy more and that social media is bringing focus to many surrounding their looks, creating a sense of always having to look good, and always have the latest with an updated wardrobe. There was also an agreement with more money being spent on clothes as they have a larger income from student aid and having entered the workforce. Some also consider their shopping behaviors something that they have grown up with, and now consider a hobby. The contradictory belief was that they spent less as they are now older and have accumulated more clothing and do not need as much anymore.

All participants agreed that marketers best reach them through digital channels. YouTube, Instagram and Facebook were the social media platforms mentioned. Mail was also a common answer, but it was also regarded as spam and annoying to others. The trust in the ads variegated and depended heavily on what brand was responsible for the ad.

> *"I prefer social media, they have become very talented at discovering what you like, and it becomes easier to click on them. I do not trust the ads at all, I can get stuck and click on the ad, but then all you see is that the clothes do not look the same as they did on the model." - Participant 11*

They found that they were most respondent to pictures and lowered prices.

> *"If they have a discount code, I want to receive it via mail, but it cannot be spam." – Participant 14*

> *"To an extent I trust them, sometimes they send out campaigns with comments such now we have lowered these prices to these, and it feels to good to be true." – Participant 6*

Influencers were somewhat mentioned, especially tied to YouTube where the trust towards the influencer was higher than other platforms, but not many found influencers to be an important messenger, and in some cases, negative associations if an influencer was a part of the marketing strategy.

There was a consensus that fashion is a way to express who you are. Participant 3 said, *"I care about what I wear, I would not put on just anything"*. In this topic, comfort was brought up by multiple people, that wearing clothes that suited them personally lead to comfort and self-confidence. It is also a way to express your mood, your personality, and a personal connection to the brand of the garment. Participant 5 describes it as:

> *"I guess I think that clothes in some way show who you are as a person and what charisma you have. If you wear clothes that you like, you will have better confidence and when you are out and about and with friends."*

Those that had expressed that they did not have an interest in fashion were the only to say that there was no connection between fashion and the self and only see clothes as a "necessity".

Summary
Generation Z are frequent fashion buyers, and a reason for this is that they trigger each other to buy more and social media has brought more focus around their appearances. Brick-and-mortar stores are preferred as the ability to try the merchandise in-store and seen as a social event. Meanwhile, online shopping does occur frequently because it is convenient and a recreational way to pass boredom. Generation Z's members are best reached through digital channels and are the most respondent to pictures and lower prices. Influencers were regarded as both positive and negative, depending on the level of trust towards the influencer. Fashion had a strong tie to their self-identity, however many viewed clothes as a necessity when there was low interest in fashion.

4.3.1 Fast-fashion consumption

Participants of this study had very little understanding of what the concept fast-fashion is. The few terms that were used to describe could be summed up to; cheap, disposable clothing, mass production, conveyor belt and trend-based. About half of the participants had an idea of what it was but could not describe it, and the other half had no previous knowledge. It was more

common for an association to a brand, meaning that this brand is a representation of the concept. In these cases, H&M was the most recalled, Gina Tricot and Bik Bok in that order, all Swedish fashion retailers. Zara was also mentioned but in noticeably less favorable opinions.

Nearly all participants admitted to being frequent shoppers of fast-fashion, participant 1 saying *"I cannot afford anything else"*. When asked to recall what stores they frequently buy from women answered H&M, Gina Tricot, Zara, Nelly, Bik Bok, New Yorker, MQ, & Other Stories, Asos, Mango, Indiska, Stadium, Carlings, BooHoo and Topshop. Men answered H&M, Jack and Jones, Nelly, Mango, Asos, MQ. Even those that are not frequent fast-fashion consumers still visit and purchase from these retailers. Participant 4, who is a frequent second-hand consumer, says:

> *"I usually do not shop fast-fashion. I shop the "fast-fashion style", but I do it second hand. I may buy stockings, and try something on when I am there and may be tempted to buy a top for 40 SEK at Zara or H&M if it is there, why not? I go more on price. I buy fast-fashion if I, for example, need underwear or socks, but I usually have an idea of what I want before I go into the store."*

Buying only simple pieces such as T-shirt's, pants, and socks is common, as participant 19 puts it, "*to spend 799 SEK on a single colored T-shirt can be unnecessary when H&M sells it for 99 SEK."*

Why they shop fast-fashion mainly came down to price. Other factors did weigh-in, that it is accessible, that your size is available compared to second-hand stores where it is limited, and long-lasting consumer relationships where participant 12 expresses, "*I have always known about H&M and always shopped with them, I have never thought much about it"*. They know that the stores will follow the ongoing trend and always have the latest, but also, they have confidence in the retailer to have what they need because they are well-established companies, and therefore they are a first-hand choice for them. When discussing price, most mentioned that they are students and have smaller amounts of spending money, that it is regrettable to spend large sums of money on for what you really need or simpler things as socks and T-shirts. It was also a norm to have the attitude of wanting to buy more, *"Why only buy one top when you can buy five?" – Participant 6,* and the need to have to save to buy disappears. Participant 20 had a similar point of view,

> *"By the time that they have begun to fade or break I have already begun to get bored of them so I can use them without having to think about it and buy new till next time and I do not have to worry about them. Even if i get bored of them easily, I can change and buy new things without it costing me too much."*

Participant 11 expressed stress related to having to keep up with the fast pace of new trends on the market. She now chooses to invest more in the pieces that she buys and strives for more classic garments with good quality that increases the garments durability.

> *"Before it was a lot, I had to have new things, but now I think more and do not shop as often and when I do it is at a higher price point. You get stuck in the concept fast-fashion, and the speed and there comes in new stuff, and you think - oh no, ahh I have to shop." - Participant 11*

When deciding what garments to buy top priorities are; price, quality, material, fit, design, comfort, and brand. These factors, combined with a reasonable price, felt most fair for them to make a purchase decision. There were also statements made that the retailer should put a focus on creating classic looks and not trendy ones for these types of garments, and it was important that the garment did not look similar to another garment that was cheaper. As participant 15 stated, she would not buy it if it just was a plain t-shirt, but preferably, a nice shirt. It was also important that the retailer needs to be clear on what really are the good impacts from the process of producing the garment. For those that value quality, choice of brand follows, and there is a clear connection to price.

> *"I do not count on quality if I buy fast-fashion, I am not counting on that it is going to last for ten years as it might have done if I had bought something from the real fashion industry." – Participant 3*

The participants can be divided into two categories, those who value design and price, and those who value fit and quality, even though all factors weigh in with different priorities. The demands on the different attributes are high and need to meet the exact mix of standards, *"It is a mix of it all. It needs to be as cheap as possible, but high quality and look good on. If I am going to wear it often, I can pay more for it. Stylish but not too expensive" – Participant 19.* The price for fast-fashion is more sensitive as the consumer is not willing to pay a higher price for something that is going to go out of style, classic styles and material is something most are willing to pay for. Participant 12 who finds price the most important factor considers durability in a way few others did, pointing out specifics that he looks for:

> *"The price is most important, but I still think it would last for at least a year. That is why I look at the construction, for example, the seams and zippers to make sure everything looks good and that they did not buy at something like Wish."*

Most others only had an overview "idea" of what they look for regarding quality, but not entirely sure of what they were referencing to.

As for the future of fast-fashion, Generation Z members believe that it is going to look more and more towards sustainability and ethical conduct. They believe that it is something that the industry is being forced into. "*If clothing companies do not have sustainable and ethical thinking, they will cease to exist."- Participant 2.* If they do not take action, they think that the consequences in bad publicity and outside pressure will result in too large critique from many directions that they could financially handle and need to change. They believe that in the future these subjects are going to become even more important to customers and that their generations will transition more smoothly into this type of thinking, as older generation have been shocked and become fanatic about the subject, but that they will fade into it and long for proper clothes and be a little bit better as a generation.

Summary

The term fast-fashion was something many had heard of but had low knowledge of what it entailed. Either they had a hum of what it meant or had no previous knowledge at all. Most are frequent shoppers of fast-fashion, and all either visit or purchase from these retailers. fast-fashion was favorable due to advantageous prices, and they showed significant signs of loyalty to certain fast-fashion brands due to long-lasting consuming relationships.
The majority of the participants see price as the most important factor when evaluating their purchases regarding fast-fashion. Low prices were also liked due to the fact that they could purchase more. Accessibility, size availability and customer loyalty were other factors that were considered when buying fast-fashion. The demands on the garments are high and need to meet the exact mix of standards including price, quality, material, fit, design, comfort and brand. However, price is most sensitive, and most are aware that the quality will not be something to count on when shopping fast-fashion. Stress-related to keeping up with trends was expressed when discussing fast-fashion, and was a reason for avoidance of fast-fashion. The participants followed two categories, those who valued design and price, and those who value fit and quality, even though all factors weigh in with different

priorities. Sustainability and ethical conduct is something that they believe fast-fashion is forced to be more focused on, and there will be vast consequences.

4.4 Attitudes

Only a small part of the generation gave much thought to the companies' background when purchasing their clothes. A few recalled scandals, all regarding H&M, and many have developed a dislike to supporting these brands. Despite large scandals, most disregard past behavior, *"You easily forget the scandals pretty quickly and focus more on what is in it for me, if I will be honest"- Participant 19.* A few liked to follow the information the company gave out regarding their practices, but most saw it as something they should do, but do not. Some showed signs of loyalty towards fast-fashion companies and felt like they did not need to stay informed, *"I usually do not keep up. I shop at the stores I trust and stay loyal to them" - Participant 8.*

Many thinks that fast-fashion companies should have ethical and environmental motives and that they have heard more bad things than good. If they do not take action, participant 11 believes that:

> *"They do not care about their customers' opinions. When it concerns fast-fashion, I do not believe that they should just follow the fashion trends, but they also need to follow the sustainability and ethics trends. Otherwise, they are ancient and will not hold in the long haul with today's way of thinking. We are the generation that thinks these things are more important and are being more and more affected."*

The balance of believing that they as individuals believe that it is a bad thing but that the company has to earn something from it, making the situation not so simple. That somewhere, the employee agrees to the terms offered because it is that or nothing does not mean that it is a loss for the employee just because it is minimum wage. The effect the subject has towards their own character seems to affect them just as much as when it concerns someone else. They see it as irresponsible and affects if they choose to buy from them or not.

> "I am ashamed that I am fooled by it because I go and shop it. I think it is horrible because they could do something about it and are really setting an example. If the bigs can do it the other slip under as well I think." - Participant 7

There were strong emotions that companies need to be better on informing of how customers can purchase clothes that are good both for the environment and people. They considered that it is the company's responsibility to bring awareness to the customer, as otherwise, the customer would not buy accordingly. Most felt that the information being given currently is unclear, and they would be willing to accept more information under the right circumstances. The information cannot be given in a way that would annoy the customers, for example, information given in person in stores would not be accepted. Information should be accessible and transparent on their websites, marketing and via post. Most agree that companies would only benefit by being more honest and participant 4 believes "*If it was more laid out on the table it would bring it to the next level, not just this is our conscious organic collection but dare to bring it further"*.

All participants would have reacted positively if they realized that they had purchased a sustainable or ethical garment unconsciously. Participant 7 stated: *''Even though I have bought it by coincidence and not made an active choice to buy this garment, it would be like a positive surprise, and I would absolutely feel good.''*, and participant 13 *'' I would react very positively, it would be accidental happiness.''*

Many disagree that it is the retailer's job to be responsible for the impact their clothes have. Most consider a large responsibility in their purchasing behaviors and believe that fashion stores will continue to sell what they buy and that it is consumers that need to set the demands. On the level of each participant, they believe that it is also their duty to society on how they shop. They believe that as long they shop what companies offer, they will keep offering it. What they expect from the companies is that they follow laws and restrictions, and that is all they can ask from them, but also that they need to offer better options. The majority believe that they alone cannot affect with their purchasing power to force companies to change, but that they need to be an organized group of many or an organization on government level to make a change. The power that could be found amongst consumers is the power to boycott a company completely, that they believed has a significant effect. *"I do not think consumers should feel responsible to shop to save the world" - Participant 19.*

Summary
Company background is not something brought into consideration, only if something significant connection to the brand is recalled. They believed that companies need to be more transparent regarding their practices. They believe that they have an obligation to their customers to not only offer fashion trends, but they also need to follow sustainability and ethical trends. They had difficulty in determining what was unethical or ethical, e.g. someone having a minimum wage and someone not having a job. In the research, feelings of shame occurred where customers felt like they were being tricked from not knowing the working conditions. They also felt strongly that it is the company's responsibility to bring awareness to the customer, and they need to be better at it, as current information is unclear and perceived to be hidden. Very positive reactions were found if something they had bought was ethical or sustainable without the intention of buying that type of garment. Despite feeling deceived by retailers, many felt like it was their jobs to buy sustainably as a duty to their society, but all they expect from companies are to inform and follow restrictions, but they believe that as long as people consume their products, they will continue to sell the same types of products.

4.5 Attitude-behavior gap

There was found to be a large purchase intention behind their purchases. A small part of the generation considered themselves frequent impulse buyers, and some admitted to impulse buying if there was a sale, or if something that they thought looked good was cheap, *"If something looks good and is cheap you cannot stop yourself"- Participant 10.* Many considered themselves as planners and only bought what they needed, and showed a dislike towards buying something that would not get used and consider what they have in their wardrobe at home first.

> *"I would say I plan my purchases. In my mind, I have my wardrobe and do not try to stock it more. If I see something, I give myself a couple of days to think about it and consider if I need to declutter." - Participant 6*

behaviors that are common for more elderly generations are found amongst many of the participants. They had a desire to have a clean, stylish everyday wardrobe with 20 pieces that always go, and if a special occasion item was needed, second-hand was preferred to save money and not clutter their wardrobes. Impulse buying was found to occur more frequently in stores, rather than online as placing items into the shopping bag online become somewhat of a second time to think if the buyer needed the item and there

was more thought behind the purchase. Participant 7 also described a continues searching for items that lead to longer purchase decision:

> *"It depends because I am always looking the perfect white T-shirt or shirt and I can be looking for forever, and when I finally find it I will buy it on the spot, it is pre-decided that I want to find it."*

Others plan in a way that they are not decisive of what exact item that they are buying but have the intended brand in mind, *"I do not pick out much beforehand, If I am going shopping my thought process is "I am going to buy H&M clothes" - Participant 4.*

All would want to shop more ethical and sustainable fast-fashion and state that there is not much hindering them, possibly their economy, but that it is actions that they would like to take. Another reasoning was the ranges offered:

> *"I feel that there is not much in Sweden that I am aware of, it feels as if it is more common in other countries such as Australia or USA, we do not have as many options." - Participant 1*

There were others that considered the process more where they would like to support better packaging and the shipping process. There were also opinions on that the company should be sustainable, that everyone wins if their customers, suppliers, workers, the whole chain should be stable. *"It is important, and we need to get better on how we shop" - Participant 11.*

After the interviews, all respondents were asked if they felt that their values and attitudes surrounding fast-fashion aligned with their actions and mixed responses were given. Only a few felt that they had become better and tried their best to shop with others and the environment into consideration. The majority felt that they did not line up and that they considered these subjects to be important but that they needed to better themselves. One respondent stated that he did not want to think about it. "*I want companies to think about sustainability, but then they have to do it for me" - Participant 14.* Most had not considered ethics in their shopping behavior but tried to better themselves in regard to the environment and had noticed a difference in thinking surrounding purchasing fashion. Most considered themselves too uneducated and wanted to be more knowledgeable. Participant 1 put her actions into words accordingly:

> *"Not really no. I like to say that it is important with ethics and the environment and stuff but I do not really buy it, I instead say it is important, but I do not do it myself. But then I do not feel as if we have a ton of options in Sweden. I have the interest, but it is inaccessible to me."*

Summary

The majority declared themselves as people who had large amounts of purchase intentions bought out of necessity, and rarely engaged in impulse purchasing due to a dislike towards buying things that will not be used or that they already have in their wardrobes. Many desired to create a capsule wardrobe with items that do not go out of fashion. Impulse buying was more common in-stores as purchase decision was much shorter compared to shopping online. There was also an intention of what brand they intended to purchase from. To shop more ethically and sustainable, fast-fashion was something that all participants desired to do more, and only some felt that they had bettered themselves when shopping with consideration of the environment and ethical practices. Most, however felt that their feelings towards the subject do not correspond with their purchase decisions and that it is important that they better themselves.

5 Analysis

This chapter connects the findings of the study to the theoretical framework. Starting with Generation Z, followed by analyzing their behaviors and attitudes, then we discuss sustainability and sustainability in the fast-fashion industry. The chapter then finalizes with ethics.

5.1 Generation Z

According to Priporas et al., (2017), Generation Z is a target market that has no brand loyalty, have higher expectations and care more about the experience. This statement is not supported by findings obtained from the primary research. The empirical findings have shown that there are significant signs of loyalty from Swedish Generation Z members to certain fast-fashion brands due to advantageous prices, but also long-lasting consuming relationships.

Due to the increase in time consumption on mobile devices, the most effective way for fashion retailers to approach the generation is through social media where the messages should include pictures (Törőcsik et al., 2015). This statement has been verified from the empirical findings where it was shown that they are best reached through digital channels and are most respondent to pictures. A study by Yarimoglu, E. K. (2017) showed that despite social media being the most effective way to reach Generation Z, they still prefer to shop in stores rather than online. The empirical findings showed similar results as they prefer shopping in stores because of the possibility to try on the merchandise, receiving the products immediately, and it is also seen as a social event.

5.2 Behaviors & attitudes

According to Bayley & Nancarrow (1998), impulse buying is something common in fashion. This statement cannot be fully supported by the Swedish Generation Z, as large purchase intentions were found to be behind the majority of the generation's purchases. However, a small part found themselves doing impulsive buying frequently, mostly when fashion garments were on sale or looked flattering and were cheap. McNeill & More (2015) mention in their study that identity is extremely important to fashion consumers, and there is a desire to express meanings of oneself. Also, Hermans et al. (2004) believe that clothing can be a medium of self-expression. These statements are supported by Generation Z's expressions in

the empirical findings, where they mentioned that fashion is a way to express who they are. Wearing clothes that suited them personally lead to comfort and self-confidence. It was also a way to express their moods, personalities, and appeared to show a personal connection to the brand of the garment. In Jackson, et al.'s study (2011), it is stated that value can be explained as what the consumer is sacrificing (e.g. cost) for gaining (e.g. quality and benefits). Findings from the empirical chapter showed that the generation values the ability to purchase more fast-fashion for less money. *"Why only buy one top, when you can buy five?" – Participant 6.*

What has become apparent from the empirical findings is that the interviewees show clear signs of the attitude-behavior gap that Henninger and Singh, 2017; Niinimäki, 2010 discovered, where their purchase behaviors are not always rational and aligned with their values. The members of Generation Z expressed in the empirical chapter that they wanted to shop more ethical and sustainable fast-fashion and were aware that there was nothing that prevented them from doing so. They also mentioned that they think fast-fashion retailers should have more ethical and environmental motives in their businesses, and while some were able to recall scandals by H&M in the past, they still were happily shopping there. *''You easily forget the scandals pretty quickly and focus more on what is in it for me, if I will be honest'' - Participant 19.* The majority of the generation also stated that their values and attitudes did not align with their actions surrounding fast-fashion, and considered sustainability and ethics to be important topics, however they needed to better their purchase behaviors in regard to it.

As consumers actively seek support for their purchase decision, this is something marketers can target by understanding their target market and supply them with additional reinforcement (Gregory-Smit et al., 2013). This statement can be supported by the interviewees, as they expressed strong emotions that companies need to be better on informing how customers can purchase clothes that are friendly for both the environment and people. They considered that the responsibility lies in the companies to bring awareness to the customers, and the information should be accessible and transparent. These findings agree with Martinez & Weiderhold, 2018, that product attribute is essential for sustainable clothing and that consumer's knowledge and unavailability of product details influences their attitudes towards sustainable fashion.

Reflecting on the participants attitudes, one can refer the ABC-model and discuss sustainable fashion as the attitude object from the participants results (Eagly & Chaiken, 1998; Van den Berg et al., 2006). In a marketer's perfect world, the formation of an attitude of sustainable clothing follows the standard learning hierarchy, where beliefs regarding sustainability would lead to an individual's feelings about sustainable garments and that would be followed by a purchase and an attitude based on cognitive information processing. Our findings found that this is not true, and reflects the attitude-behavior gap previously discussed. How we would describe the participants attitudes, we would follow the experiential hierarchy, where the significance of emotional response is a central aspect of an attitude, and the basis of their actions. In this hierarchy, the consumer first is influenced by intangible product attributes such as packaging and reactions to accompanying stimuli such as advertising or even brand name. These emotions lead to the behavioral action and later a belief of the product is formed, creating an attitude based on experiential consumption. The motivation behind that we believe this was the sustainability aspect, what we would consider to be a belief formed by accumulating knowledge, was not what would convince our participants to purchase a product. Quality, design, fit and price were all a priority, meaning they had a primary emotional response to the garment. When they decided to buy a product or not, based if they really had a need for it or if they simply wanted it and were impulse shopping. That lead to a belief or cognition to the product such as feeling guilty for purchasing something they didn't need or would wear frequently. Through this, they adapted an attitude towards the garment with a connection to fast-fashion.

5.3 Sustainability & sustainability in the fast-fashion industry

According to Reimers et al., (2017) and Joy et al., (2012), the larger market for sustainable clothing is for those who are concerned for the environment, and it has been shown that young consumers are supportive of the idea, but do not make the connection between sustainability and fashion, which makes it a non-priority. Also, Watson and Yan (2013) mention in their study that more focus has been drawn to sustainable fashion, and it has normalized the concept amongst consumers. Findings from the empirical chapter show that the generation is aware of the fact that sustainability is a growing concern, especially in the fashion industry, however the majority admit that they do not consider sustainability when shopping.

According to Pedersen and Gwozdz (2014), fashion production impacts the environment through energy consumption, dyes and finishes, water use, and greenhouse emissions, which is a similar way to how the participants of our study would describe it. Empirical findings showed that Generation Z believed that sustainability approaches from fashion companies involved using recycled materials in their products, and also the whole production process where it was important that no harmful toxins were released, and the transportation of the products were considered. A study conducted by Morgan and Birtwistle (2009) showed that fast-fashion brands have begun to capitalize on young consumers' socially conscious opinions and these customers are young fast-fashion buyers who seek trendy and fashion-forward products, which also means that sustainable products also need to fit their preferences. The empirical findings showed that the majority of the participants could recall work with sustainability approaches that fast-fashion retailers have implemented in their businesses. *"It is starting to show more and more" - Participant 11.*

A study by Hill and Lee (2015), showed that the younger consumers frequently purchased from a fast-fashion retailer, the more inclined were they to purchase from their new sustainable products. The study also showed that under those circumstances, the importance of fit was crucial. Findings obtained from the empirical chapter showed that if a fast-fashion retailer the participants usually were shopping from, would create a collection with a focus on sustainability, half of Generation Z would purchase from it, while the other half were critical to the idea. *"It feels like a term companies love to throw around. It has become a bit annoying and overused." Participant 6.* They also stressed that fit was one of the most important factors amongst other factors such as price, material, quality, design, and comfort for deciding which garments to buy.

5.4 Ethics

According to Joergens (2006), the definition of ethical fashion is fashion clothing that is produced under fair trade principles in sweatshop-free labour conditions, with efforts made to reduce the environmental harmfulness in the process. When speaking of ethics, the empirical findings showed that the majority of Generation Z would describe ethics in fast-fashion brands as something that would be associated with how they treat their employees, and not using child labor. It was also found that they believed that ethics in fashion also included retailers paying fair prices to their suppliers and

subcontractor, and factories releasing harmful chemicals into the air in its surroundings.

> *"That they think about the environment and the whole cycle from the design to the arrival in the store. That it is fair to both people and the planet. We cannot have children sewing clothes for nothing, and people who buy the garments have no knowledge of it. Everyone needs their fair share and that they freely provide information of what they are doing and what is going on." – Participant 13*

Compared to environmental issues, according to Cooney (2011), consumers view human rights as inherently more valuable. This statement can be supported by the empirical findings where it was shown that some members of Generation Z do not support companies they knew had poor conditions for their workers. A study conducted by Wessels in 2000 found that 70 percent of their participants believed a company's commitment to ethical conduct was important, but only one fifth was willing to pay more for a socially and environmentally responsible product. Findings obtained from the empirical chapter of this thesis partly support Wessel's study as it showed that the majority of Generation Z's members were more likely to purchase an ethical product rather than a sustainable one, and they would also pay a higher price for a garment that was ethically produced.

> *"I think this is what is most important. I am unusual not liking organic things as it considers the world's natural resources and it puts me off, no never. But if it was a collection with better conditions for workers with more control over the production, it would weigh more over something sustainable." – Participant 4*

It is not that consumers do not want to make ethical purchasing decisions, it is more that they feel like they do not have a say in the matter, and the reason behind it is that the consumers do not know of the working conditions as most garments are produced in developing countries (Joergens, 2006). Joergens's study can be supported by the participants of this thesis as there were only a few who could recall seeing an association between fast-fashion retailers and ethics. There were expressions that there was a lack of information about fast-fashion retailers and their works with ethics, and also that they think that sustainability was more common to find. According to Kähr et al. (2016), unethical behavior may be harmful to businesses, which can cause a brand to lose its customers and result in loss. From the primary data collected, several individuals within Generation Z stressed that they

were likely to boycott a brand if they knew they did not follow ethical practices.

6 Conclusions

In this chapter, the main points that have arisen from the conducted study will be presented. The research questions will be answered in order to meet the desired research purpose. Furthermore, the reader will be provided with results from practical and theoretical implications that this thesis has resulted in. The final part will include suggestions for the future of further improvements in the research field.

6.1 Answering the research questions

The first research question presented in the early stage of this thesis was stated:

1. *How does sustainability and ethics influence Swedish Generation Z's attitudes towards fast-fashion?*

Members of the Swedish Generation Z have noticed an increase of fast-fashion retailers using sustainability in their business concepts, however, ethical conduct is not as common. The majority of Generation Z shops fast-fashion regularly because of its low price, which also is one of the main factors when making purchase decisions. They do not think about sustainability and ethics, or the companies' backgrounds when shopping in general. However, a small part of the generation has stopped buying fast-fashion because they find the garments having low quality and not tasteful, and another small part focuses on purchasing reused fashion garments from e.g. second-hand stores.

The findings from this study found that sustainability had somewhat of an impact on their attitudes towards fast-fashion, most were aware that fast-fashion is no friend to the environment and that it was something that they were aware of, but did not affect their attitudes to the extent that many researchers have predicted. There was an awareness of fast-fashion retailers' efforts to better themselves and create more environmentally friendly, but most found this hesitative and lowered their trust towards the brand as they considered it greenwashing, and ways to bring focus away from negative

associations. When sustainability was considered, fast-fashion retailers were not, fast-fashion garments claimed to be sustainable was not a top choice, but brand avoidance was where fast-fashion retailers were rejected.

The contrary, towards what most felt towards sustainability, ethical conduct in the fast-fashion industry was something many had not connected to fast-fashion before, but found to be much more important than sustainability. They considered themselves in the dark where they felt that they had little to say about the injustice in the industry, and would like to see more action from the retailers' side. Here there was more engagement, where if poor ethical conduct came to their knowledge they would go so far as to boycott a brand, something they would not do for poor sustainability practices. Sustainability was considered more regularly than ethics, but ethics concerning fast-fashion gave away much stronger attitudes.

The second research question stated:

2. How does an increased ecological conscience amongst Swedish Generation Z's affect their willingness to purchase sustainable and ethical fast-fashion?

Even if there is a current increased ecological conscience amongst Swedish Generation Z, the majority still frequently purchases fast-fashion. They express a lack of knowledge about the specific garments they buy and therefore, the lack of information leads to the generation as consumers to not change their fast-fashion consumption. However, they stressed that if the retailers were to give more specific information on what makes their garments sustainable or ethical, they would be more likely to buy it, and they would also accept paying more for it because they would know the reason behind the price increment. Fewer were prepared to sacrifice low prices for sustainability, but there was a larger marginal regarding ethics where more would be willing to pay in order for those throughout the supply chain to have better conditions.

Despite having an awareness of sustainability, and feelings of guilt when consuming fast-fashion, it was not enough to change their behaviors. Sustainability was only possibly considered when shopping according to plan, but not during an impulse buy. There was the importance given to shopping ethically and sustainably, and most felt that they did not shop

according to their values and felt that they needed to change. It can be concluded that the majority of the generation's attitudes towards fast-fashion are influenced by sustainability and ethics, however, the changing attitudes are not strong enough to change their behaviors.

6.2 Theoretical implications

By far, the majority of research on sustainability has been conducted more focused on the fashion industry in general rather than in the field of fast-fashion. Ethical fashion has not been heavily studied and most of the existing studies were not up-to-date. Also, the previous studies have mainly centered on older generation cohorts as fashion consumers. Therefore, the field of sustainability and ethics effect on Generation Z's attitudes and behavior towards fast-fashion is a non-exploited combination of research areas in academic research, which indicates the scientific research gap. This thesis aspired to provide further knowledge on the impact of sustainability and ethics in a yet, rather unexplored context. The authors were able to obtain a new view of Generation Z's attitudes and behaviors from the conducted semi-structured interviews, which provided valuable insights of sustainability and ethical impacts on the generation.

This study has shown how Generation Z members show some loyalty to fast-fashion retailers due to advantageous prices and long-lasting relationships, while previous studies have not shown any signs of it. It has also shown an increased awareness of sustainability issues among the generation's members. An attitude-behavior gap remains. However, their strong beliefs in fair working conditions showed, would change their attitudes towards retailers if the information on how it was better was clearer and therefore, impact their purchase behaviors as well. This study also uncovers the importance of price when making their purchase decisions, as most of the members are young and have low-income.

6.3 Managerial implications

From a managerial perspective, this research can serve as a commencement to being able to understand the preferences and behaviors of an upcoming generation to prepare themselves to target this market. It gives an understanding of what is of importance to young consumers, and what they want from fast-fashion retailers regarding sustainability and ethics. From the findings of this study, retailers must find ways to inform consumers so that with an increased knowledge, they can start to take steps towards more

sustainable shopping patterns, and help dissolve the attitude-behavior gap found amongst those that valued sustainability, but did not purchase sustainable clothing. It is also a signal for the fast-fashion industry what Generation Z members truly value, it has been stated by many researchers that they are environmentally friendly and ecologically conscious, which is the contrary to the findings of this study. As it was found that sustainability was an awareness but not crucial, their strong ethical concerns may be something to tap into, in order to target them as consumers.

6.4 Recommendations

Recommendations for the industry is to continue working heavily on sustainability, as it is something that does reach this target market, and is something important to them. However, we found that it is something that they prefer not to consider when purchasing fast-fashion, and that it was something that they felt that they did not understand. We think that continuing developing this and becoming more transparent about the work would be beneficial. That said, as ethical conduct was found to be more important than sustainability, and that may be because that is something they feel that they know even less of, and is only connected to negative publicity they have heard of in the past.

To address the trust issues that have been found amongst consumers regarding sustainable fashion, our suggestion is to in fashion marketing clearly state the product benefit over product attribute. For example, pushing “less water used” or “less harmful chemicals” over “organic” or “sustainable” so that the consumer has an understanding of why a certain product is the better choice, and through that creating a purchase motivation. This would tackle the need for transparency that many in our research felt, and bring focus away from triggering words that gave alarms of greenwashing thus creating hesitation to purchase.

6.5 Limitations

Limitations for this thesis mainly surrounds the ongoing pandemic COVID-19 that limited our ability to access people to interview outside of our personal connections. It limited the method of conduct as in defense of the virus, social distancing is encouraged and conducting data collection with physical meetings was not appropriate. Another limitation was also that only resources available in English and Swedish were used.

6.6 Suggestions for future research

As sustainability was not found to be as important to Generation Z members as implied by other researchers, but still an important attribute to them. Our suggestions for future research is to examine how to understand the implications of their moral standings. It was found that ethical conduct in the fast-fashion industry was more vital to them than if a garment was sustainable, and this is something we think needs to be further investigated. If this is a future way to target Generation Z, this could become the next hype in marketing following sustainability. By acknowledging what failed in the trend of creating sustainability, one could find what product attributes attracts this target market, and incorporate that to create a more suited product.

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Appendix A

CONCEPT	QUESTIONS NO.	REASONING
General shopping behavior	1. Are you interested in buying apparel/fashion? 2. Do you consider apparel as something to help express who you are? 3. How often do you buy apparel? 4. Describe what specifications you are looking for when you purchase apparel (price, quality, material etc.) 5. Which channel do you use for purchasing apparel? Online or offline? How often? 6. How can retailers reach you for advertising? (social medias, windows…) 7. Do you think you make a lot of impulse purchases? 8. Do you think about fashion retailers' background when you are purchasing apparel? 9. Do you think people of your age consume a lot of apparel?	In order to gain an understanding of what apparel mean (if they are interested in shopping/fashion or just see it as a necessity) for the interviewee, these questions will be asked. This section also includes questions to get an understanding of what factors Generation Zs' looks for when making their purchase decisions, if they prefer to shop online or offline, and how often they purchase new garments.
Fast fashion	10. Have you ever heard about the term "Fast fashion?" 11. Do you shop for fast fashion? (if yes, which retailers?) 12. Describe why you buy fast fashion? What is positive/negative?	These questions are asked to find out if the interviewees are familiar with the term "Fast fashion" (regardless of their answers, the authors will give a brief description on what it implies for the thesis in order to avoid miscommunication/misunderstanding), if they shop fast fashion, and why (if yes) or why not (if no).
Sustainability	13. Do you know any fast fashion retailer that uses sustainability in its concept? Which one/s? How? 14. Describe in your opinion what you consider makes a fashion retailer sustainable	In order to find out if the interviewees know any fast fashion retailers that have implemented sustainability in their concepts, and what they consider makes a fashion retailer sustainable, these questions will be asked.

Ethics	15. Do you know any fast fashion retailer that uses ethics in its concept? Which one/s? How? 16. Describe in your opinion what you consider makes a fashion retailer ethical 17. What do you consider are good working conditions for textile workers? What rights should they have?	The same previous questions will be asked, however, from an ethical perspective instead of sustainable. One extra question will be asked regarding what they consider are good working conditions.
Changed & intended purchasing behavior towards sustainability	18. Have you started to purchase fast fashion more based on sustainability than before? 19. If a fast fashion retailer you usually shop at has made a collection that is environmentally conscious would you pay more for those garments? How does cost affect your thoughts?	These questions will be asked to gain an insight if the interviewees have changed their behaviors towards fast fashion purchasing regarding sustainability, and what their intended behavior would be towards a more sustainable collection from fast fashion retailers.
Changed & intended purchasing behavior towards ethics	20. Have you started to purchase fast fashion more based on ethics than before? 21. If a fast fashion retailer you usually shop at has made a collection with better working conditions for their employees, would you pay more for those garments? How does cost affect your thoughts?	These questions will be asked to gain an insight if the interviewees have changed their behaviors towards fast fashion purchasing regarding ethics, and what their intended behavior would be towards a more ethical collection from fast fashion retailers.
Buying behavior	22. Have you changed your shopping behavior during the last couple of years? How? 23. Do you want to start making your purchase decision more based on sustainability and ethics when shopping for fast fashion? (If yes- what is preventing you from doing that now?) 24. If you would buy an ecolabelled or ethic labeled garment, what would make you buy it? (design, price, fitting, material, color…)	In order to find out if their shopping behavior have changed in the past years, if they want to change their behaviors to a more sustainable or ethical approach, what factors would be crucial for making a sustainable/ethical fast fashion-garment purchase, and what their reaction would be if they unintentionally purchased an ethical/sustainable garment, these questions will be asked. A final question in this section will be asked to see if they think their current purchase behaviors towards sustainable and ethical fast fashion match their opinions.

	25. If you realize that you have purchased an ecolabelled/ethical-labelled garment without diligence, how do you react to it? (positive or negative?) 26. Do you think that your shopping pattern matches your opinions and thoughts within this field? Do you have any intentions to change your shopping behavior in the near future?	
Opinions and attitudes on retailers' responsibilities	27. Describe your opinions on fast fashion retailers that do not use sustainability/ethics in their concepts 28. Would you like retailers to be clearer on how you can purchase apparel that is friendly for both the environment and people? 29. Do you consider it is your responsibility to shop in an environmentally friendly way? Or do you think that all responsibility lies with companies? Do you think you can influence working conditions as a consumer? 30. How do you think the future will look like for fast fashion retailers? Do you think they will be more focused on the environment?	This section of questions is intended to help give the authors an understanding of Generation Z's opinions and attitudes towards sustainability and ethical conducts by fast fashion retailers.