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Does knowledge about social-related issues influence consumers' consumption behaviour?

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Does knowledge about social-related issues influence consumers consumption behaviour

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Abstract

Globalisation has increased competition between foreign and domestic businesses, leading to companies using labour with unfair health and work conditions to succeed in their low cost strategies. This study aims at understanding how consumers' knowledge about social responsibility influences their buying intentions within the apparel industry. The theoretical framework builds upon combining the theory of knowledge about social related issues, SHIFT theory, and consumer social responsibility and were developed into a conceptual model. To understand how knowledge about socially related issues influence consumers' consumption behaviour, two semi-structured focus groups were conducted. The result showed that consumers lack knowledge about social related issues. Knowledge has also been found to affect the five factors in the SHIFT model; social influence, habit formation, individual self, feelings and cognition, and tangibility. Tangibility was seen as the most decisive factor in consumers acting sustainable or not. As most clothes are produced in Asia, consumers found it hard to imagine the situation in reality, making the issues intangible. Another important finding is that some consumers do not see their own role in transforming the apparel industry into socially sustainable.

Keywords

Social responsibility, Consumer behaviour, Knowledge, Consumer social responsibility, apparel industry

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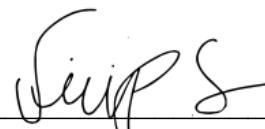
Family & friends

Thank you for encouraging and supporting us through this period. Your support is invaluable as always.

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1 Introduction

Globalisation is a factor that has led to increased competition between domestic and foreign businesses. The competition has resulted in companies using labour in countries with unfair health and work conditions to succeed in their low-cost strategies. Low wages, child labour and poor working conditions are among the most distinct issues associated with the fast-fashion retail market (Arrigo, 2020). With fast-fashion retail businesses such as H&M and Zara becoming increasingly reliant on cost efficiency, the risk of scandals and unsustainable actions increases simultaneously. However, as consumers purchase products from companies that abandon their responsibilities, consequences follow (Ahmed & Peerlings, 2009). According to Nationalencyklopedin (n.d), consequences are something that “follows” as a result of one's actions. In companies abandoning their responsibilities, consequences stand for the impact on ecological and social aspects (Arrigo, 2020).

One of the most discussed disasters associated with the fast fashion industry occurred in early 2013 when the Rana Plaza garment factory in Bangladesh collapsed, causing thousands of people their lives (Arrigo, 2020). The accident opened people's eyes, putting fast-fashion retailers, specifically H&M, at the centre of criticism (SVD, 2015). Companies within the industry have ever since tried to repair their reputation by making their products and manufacturing more sustainable (Arrigo, 2020). However, even though the accident affected the involved companies' shareholders around the date of the accident they were not significantly affected long term. The market's reaction can either indicate that the consumers do not take such events into account when shopping or that knowledge regarding sustainability commitment among consumers is low (Jacobs & Singhal, 2017; Khan et al., 2020). Apart from H&M, other companies that operate within the apparel industry have also been involved in serious sustainability incidents (Arrigo, 2020). For example, the Guardian (2021) found that workers in Karnataka have not been paid the state's minimum wage since April 2020. Even though not all incidents are highlighted, Shaw et al. (2006) found that apparel brands such as Nike and Gap are among some other brands having issues with their social responsibility. Many of the incidents have occurred in the present, but the issues with social responsibility withstand (Arrigo, 2020; SVD, 2015; Shaw et al., 2020). More recently, the Swedish apparel manufacturer Kavat, known for their high-quality shoes, was exposed by the Swedish investigative journalism programme “Uppdrag granskning” for their social responsibility work.

The article displays that Kavat uses labour with low wages and unfair working conditions, followed by their outsourcing to Bosnia. Kavats sustainability report indicated fair wages, whilst in reality, the minimum wage occasionally did not exceed 2500 Swedish crowns, which is less than 50% of the recommended living wages (SVT, 2022).

In the 17 UN SDGs (i.e. United Nations sustainable development goals), the United Nations highlights the importance of knowledge regarding sustainability. The organisation aims to “promote prosperity while protecting the planet” and is composed of a framework to clarify crucial aspects of a prosperous world (UN, 2022). UN (2022) formulated the 12th goal as “Responsible production and consumption” and is closely connected to consumers' and businesses' sustainability behaviour. To reach the set targets of the 12th goal United Nations (2022) explains that knowledge and education are significant factors. Without access to relevant information and research, people will not be able to understand the consequences of their consumption (UN, 2022). Khan et al. (2020) found that intelligence, education and knowledge are linked to greater responsiveness to choosing more eco-friendly and sustainable products. Therefore it is in the best interest of companies that invest in their sustainability work to educate and inform the consumers of the consequences of consuming unsustainable products. Furthermore, Kuźniar et al. (2021) argued that concern and motivation for sustainability issues align with their knowledge within the area.

1.2 Problematization

Businesses' role in society has for a long period been associated with increasing profits (Köksal et al., 2017). However, the debate has changed to a rather ecological approach during the last decade. The concept of social responsibility has developed two dimensions, including the environment and the economic, depicted as “*business results are no longer based solely on economic performance but also take into account the environmental and social impacts*” (Lacoste, 2016, p.151). According to White et al. (2019), social inequity and poverty increase due to our consumption patterns.

Companies within the apparel industry use international competitive advantages to produce quality clothes at a low cost (Arrigo, 2020). At the same time, Bartels et al. (2009) explain that outsourcing in developing countries can benefit the country by reducing poverty through employment. They also explain that producing countries will improve their competitiveness

due to the accelerated industrialisation that outsourcing leads to. Ahmed and Peerlings (2009) explain that addressing workers' rights under these circumstances becomes increasingly important. Many companies have made progress in improving workers' rights. For instance, addressing workers' rights has been done by implementing a voluntary code of conduct for apparel suppliers in developing countries. An organisation working on preventing social issues is the International Labour Organisation (ILO). The ILO has, for instance, developed trade unions and non-government organisations to pressure companies to take responsibility (International Labour Organization, 2022).

Köksal et al. (2017) explain that there is already a broad range of research regarding sustainability within the apparel industry. For example, Byrd & Su (2020) found that consumers lacked knowledge about environmental practices within the apparel industry. Another study, written by Kruzniar et al. (2021), concluded that many young customers are starting to see the harmful effects of their consumption. The younger generation has acquired the necessary knowledge, which is believed to be the main reason for their sustainability consciousness. Nevertheless, studies such as Byrd & Su (2020) and Kruzniar et al. (2021) mainly focus on environmental and not social issues. According to Köksal et al. (2017), there is a need to add more socially related problems to the discussion of sustainability within the apparel industry.

Consumers in the apparel industry demand trendy products, which pressure companies' ability to achieve low prices and shorter lead times (Köksal et al., 2017). On the other hand, Byrd and Su (2020) explain that companies have the opportunity to keep up with the market by listening to their consumers and acting to their desires. As the apparel industry is one of the most concerning regarding social issues, the authors argue that knowledge is essential to be aware of the impact their consumption has. Most studies focus on the companies' perspective to change toward social sustainability. For example, Arrigo (2020) has found that companies take a more ethical approach in their global sourcing strategies. But they also argue that future studies need to investigate consumers' awareness of the social-related problems in the apparel industry.

To better understand the consumer's role in affecting sustainability work within businesses, White et al. (2019) has reviewed the current research within the field. The authors look at both literature from marketing and behavioural science and have developed a comprehensive

framework to describe consumers' behaviour. The review indicates that consumers play a crucial role in transforming businesses into more sustainable ones. White et al. (2019) introduce five factors that explain why consumers act responsible in certain situations. The factors are Social influence, Habit formation, Individual self, Feelings and Cognition, and Tangibility. The five elements make up the SHIFT model, which will be a part of the theoretical framework of this study. The model is explained thoroughly in chapter 2 of this article.

Köksal et al.'s. (2017) literature review indicates that there is a need to further research on the social-related problems within the apparel industry. The need for social responsibility research (Köksal et al., 2017), combined with the lack of research from the consumers' aspect (Arrigo, 2020), opens up the demand for understanding the consumers' perspective of social responsibility. United Nations (2022) indicates that sustainability knowledge is essential in working toward reaching the 12th goal (Responsible production and consumption). Moreover, White et al. (2019) found that an understanding of marketing and behavioural science can make consumers more sustainable. Altogether, the current research shows a lack of studies on how consumers' knowledge about social responsibility influence their buying behaviours.

1.3 Purpose

The purpose of this research is to investigate how consumers' knowledge about social responsibility influence their buying intentions within the fast fashion retail industry.

1.4 Research question

How does knowledge about social-related issues influence consumers' buying intentions?

2. Theoretical framework

In this chapter, an introduction of the current literature is presented to understand consumer behaviour related to social responsibility. Firstly, the SHIFT model is introduced. Secondly, a review of the current research on how knowledge affects consumers' purchasing decisions is conducted. Thirdly we introduce consumer social responsibility and companies' advantage of understanding their customers. Lastly, a conceptual model is introduced.

2.1 Sustainable consumer behaviour

The theoretical framework in this paper is partly based on the SHIFT model. The model was developed by White et al. (2019), who based the model on marketing and behavioural science literature. The authors have suggested that consumer engagement in sustainability depends on the following psychological factors: Social influence, Habit formation, Individual self, Feelings and Cognition, and Tangibility. The five factors explain how different behaviours affect consumers' consumption choices and are presented below. Each factor will be used to analyse the consumers intended consumption behaviour.

Table 1

Keywords explaining the SHIFT model

SHIFT	Keywords
S ocial influence	Social norms, social identities and social desirability
H abit formation	Habits and repetition
I ndividual self	Self-concept, self-consistency, self-interest, self-efficacy and individual differences
F eelings and cognition	Emotions, values, attitudes
T angibility	Self-distant, urgent vs future interests, and communicating sustainability

Note: Based on the SHIFT model by White et al. (2019).

2.1.1. Social influence

White et al. (2019) have highlighted social influence as the first part of the SHIFT model. The authors more specifically use three different angles of social influence to describe how it influences change in sustainable consumer behaviour; social norms, social identities and social desirability. Social norms can be decisive for people regarding their sustainable behaviour since consumers act according to what is socially approved. The social identities facet is contrary to social norms highlighting the influence of being part of a group. Vugt et al. (2014) have described positive, sustainable behavioural changes resulting from the collective self not wanting to be connected to “dissociative groups”. In line with this, White et al. (2019) have suggested that consumers will act more sustainably if the rest of the groups act sustainably. The social desirability factor highlights the consumers' willingness to improve their image as a reason to change sustainable consumer behaviour. White et al. (2019) point out the importance of understanding the individual's preference to act sustainably when other people observe their actions. However, Brough et al. (2016) have pointed to the dilemma that, in some cases, the individual's sustainability behaviour can be seen as both a negative and positive impression depending on the association of the behaviour.

2.1.2. Habit formation

The second part of the SHIFT model is habit formation. According to White et al. (2019), some behaviours only require a onetime action, while other sustainable behaviours are more complicated and need to be repeated. Some habits are unsustainable, so it is seen as an important factor in changing consumers to be more sustainable. According to Blumberga and Saulīte (2017), lifestyles, values, habits, and consumption change depending on the individuals' age. People born between 1945 and 1962 emphasise the importance of maintaining traditional and cultural values, but for people born between 1962 and 1980, it is important to feel recognition and status. They are positive toward work and will seek opportunities to develop their skills and knowledge. The last generation described by Blumberga and Saulīte (2017) was born between 1980 and 2000. They are confident with their professional advantages, including knowledge in social capital, technologies, and languages. Blumberga and Saulīte (2017) concluded that the young generation has better habits when it comes to sorting waste than the other two generations.

Furthermore, White et al. (2019) explain that certain discontinuities can change bad habits. Penalties are a type of punishment that can decrease undesirable behaviours. The authors

argued that this method could be successful in some cases, but there is a risk that punishments lead to negative and defensive responses. Instead, it can often be more favourable to use more positive strategies. Examples of those can be facilitating sustainable actions, giving incentives, prompts or feedback on their behaviour.

2.1.3. Individual self

White et al. (2019) explained the individual self as to how different aspects regarding the individual's self affect consumer behaviour. Sedikides et al. (2011) described the individual self as the attributes an individual might have that others do not. The attributes, such as experience or interests, are separate from social influence and focus solely on the individual. However, according to White et al. (2019), several different concepts of the individual self (e.g., self-concept, self-consistency, self-interest, self-efficacy, and individual differences) influence consumer behaviour.

The key element of self-concept to the individual self is that the consumer wants to remain positive regarding their self-concept. Therefore, the consumers may avoid or seek to be more sustainable, depending on if it is against their individual self. Moreover, the self-consistency concept builds upon the theory that consumers act by what they believe is consistent with their individual selves. As a result, consumers tend to have a consistent consumption behaviour. In the context of sustainability, the individual has an increased chance to establish recurring sustainable consumer behaviour if they do it once (White et al., 2019). On the other hand, White et al. (2019) also lifted the concept of self-interest, which can be used to affect individuals' sustainable consumer behaviour positively. Targeting the individual selves' relevance and fulfilling these factors will influence the behaviour in a pro-environmental manner. Self-efficacy is another concept and aims to describe the effects of whether the consumer believes their choices will make a difference or not. If individuals are insecure and uncertain regarding the consumption outcome, they are more likely to withdraw from the sustainable option. White et al. 's (2019) introduction of individual differences is similar to Sedikides et al. 's (2011) description of the individual self attributes. White et al. (2019) expressed that individuals differ in their normative definition of sustainability, which will affect their consumer behaviour. The authors mean that personal beliefs regarding sustainability and demographics such as age and gender affect how the individual self understands and behaves while consuming.

2.1.4. Feelings and cognition

The fourth part of the SHIFT model are feelings and cognition. White et al. (2019) have found that negative and positive emotions can impact consumers' sustainability behaviour. A similar description of consumer behaviour is also described by Smith et al. (2013). They argued that their consumption behaviour is influenced by values and attitudes, similarly to what White et al. (2019) explained. According to White et al. (2019), negative emotional consequences are often considered when choosing whether to engage or not to engage in sustainable behaviours. The authors address three specific emotions that have a negative impact: fear, guilt, and sadness. Fear is often used when communicating the negative consequences but failing to deliver the message can lead to inaction or denial of sustainable actions. To avoid those mistakes, communicators should combine fear with information and suggestions for what actions consumers should take. Guilt can also influence sustainable behaviour. The reason behind the influence is described as the individuals feeling responsibility for the unsustainable outcomes. Studies have shown that “anticipated guilt” can positively impact consumers. Lastly, researchers have concluded that sadness impacts consumers' sustainability behaviours. White et al. (2019) give the example that showing the consumers a footprint calculator can bring out sad emotions and eventually lead to pro-environmental behaviour.

White et al. (2019) have also explained that positive emotions are important in consumers' decision making. They give an example that joy, pride and optimism can lead to pro-environmental behaviour. Positive emotions are believed to differ between individuals. For example, people who feel a sense of pride, are more likely to engage in sustainable behaviours and climate activism. At the same time, they argue that communicators should be aware of the negative risks of distributing positive emotions, as they could lead to unsustainable behaviours. In the end, White et al. (2019) point out the importance of knowledge, which will be discussed in chapter 2.2 of this article.

2.1.5. Tangibility

Sustainable consumer behaviour is, according to White et al. (2019), remote to the individual self, and the impact of decisions can at times be uncertain. They express that consumers tend to behave unsustainable as it is only realised in the distant future rather than focusing on local and urgent sustainable actions. McDonald et al. (2015) likewise imply that sustainable issues are too distant from the individual self and therefore causes people to feel like the issue is intangible and not real. However, White et al. (2019) suggest that consumers' behaviour can be

influenced to become more sustainable. The authors express that the consumer can be encouraged to answer urgent issues by using different steps. They imply that by communicating concretely and making the consumers future-focused, understanding local impacts, and being less materialistic can be impactful for the issue of tangibility. Four different views are introduced to simplify further and concretise how tangibility can be handled: Matching temporal focus, communicating local and proximal impacts, concrete communication, and encouraging the desire for intangibles (White et al., 2019).

White et al. (2019) introduce matching temporal focus as the issue with consumers neglecting sustainable actions that show the result in the distant future. The authors express that if consumers can be thought to concretise the result and understand it rather than see it as distant, more consumers would act sustainably. Communicating local and proximal impacts rather explains the impact of communicating the current and local pro-environmental behaviours as it makes the consequences of the action more tangible. This type of communication can be the global warming or local pollution levels (White et al., 2019). Sedikides et al. 's (2011) introduced the individual self and its attributes and White et al. (2019) mean that communicating issues more related to the self and its attributes increases tangibility. This explains that if the communication is focused on the self and seems more relevant, the behaviour most likely changes towards more sustainable. Lastly, White et al. (2019) explain that to truly shift the consumers' behaviour, it is necessary to understand that people are materialistic. The author means that if more consumers were less addicted to tangible product, the sustainable behaviour would increase

2.2 Knowledge and purchasing decisions

White et al. (2019) argues that one important aspect of the decision-making process is to provide the consumers with relevant information about the desired behaviours and the consequences of consumption. Hill and Lee (2012) conducted a study regarding the younger consumers' knowledge and concluded that the generation expressed positive sentiment toward sustainability but lacked knowledge. Apparel clothes are described by the authors as “*a vessel of self-expression, allowing the wearer to express ideas, through which ideas of sustainability and environmental concern could be communicated*” (Hill & Lee, 2012). Yet, consumers are believed to need more knowledge about sustainability to alter attitudes and behaviours (Hill & Lee, 2012). Khan et al. (2020) described knowledge as the most crucial factor that affects

consumers' pro-environmental behaviour. They also explained that many individuals do not have enough knowledge about environmental issues, limiting their understanding of their choices. Looking back at the SHIFT model, White et al. (2019) explain that knowledge is essential in all five factors. They give the example that consumers must have knowledge about social norms to comprehend information related to self-values, self-benefits and self-efficacy.

2.3 Consumer social responsibility

To understand consumers' role in social sustainability, there is a need to distinguish between corporate social responsibility (CSR) and consumer social responsibility (CnSR). Vitell (2014) defines CSR as a company that *“proactively offers social benefits or public service, and voluntarily minimizes practices that harm society, regardless of any legal requirements”*. The author further argues that it is important to understand that this strategy only works if the company's interests align with the customers' interests. Vitell (2014) gives the example that if a company offers electric cars to take environmental responsibility, it can only be successful if customers demand electric cars. The argument is also strengthened by Quazi et al. (2015), who argue that corporate social responsibilities cannot be implemented successfully without active participation of their customers. Therefore, it is relevant to look at social responsibility from the consumers' perspective.

Anderson (2018) explains that the term consumer social responsibility has been expanded as consumer utility includes not only price, convenience, reliability and availability, but also social issues, fairness, rights, virtue and sustainability. Vitell (2014) defines consumer social responsibility as *the moral principles and standards that guide the behaviors of individuals as they obtain, use, and dispose of goods and services*. The author divides consumer responsibility into two major parts, consumer ethics and consumer social responsibility. First, consumers have a responsibility to behave ethically towards stakeholders, including obtaining, using and disposal of goods and services. The second part is the responsibility toward society as a whole. Consumers are responsible for avoiding societal harm and even acting proactively for societal benefits. As this study focuses on the issues on a societal level, only the second part will be relevant and further described. According to Vitell (2014), studies have been made in China, Germany, India, Spain, Turkey, and the US regarding consumers' position on social responsibility. The study showed that consumers were unconcerned about social issues and were primarily interested in obtaining a product at a reasonable price. They also point out that

many consumers see large multinational companies as unethical, especially in developed countries. The author sees this as an indicator that if more companies behave more ethically, it might lead to consumers taking on more ethical behaviour.

According to Vitell (2014), studies have shown that green advertisements work best at reaching consumers who already have green behaviour. Some customers were willing to pay more for green products, but most were already concerned for the environment. However, the results of the studies have also indicated that consumers in general lack awareness and understanding of social issues. In those cases, the green advertisement had low effectiveness. As a result, Vitell (2014) concluded that companies need to educate consumers to fulfil their corporate responsibility initiatives.

2.4 Companies' advantage of knowing their customers

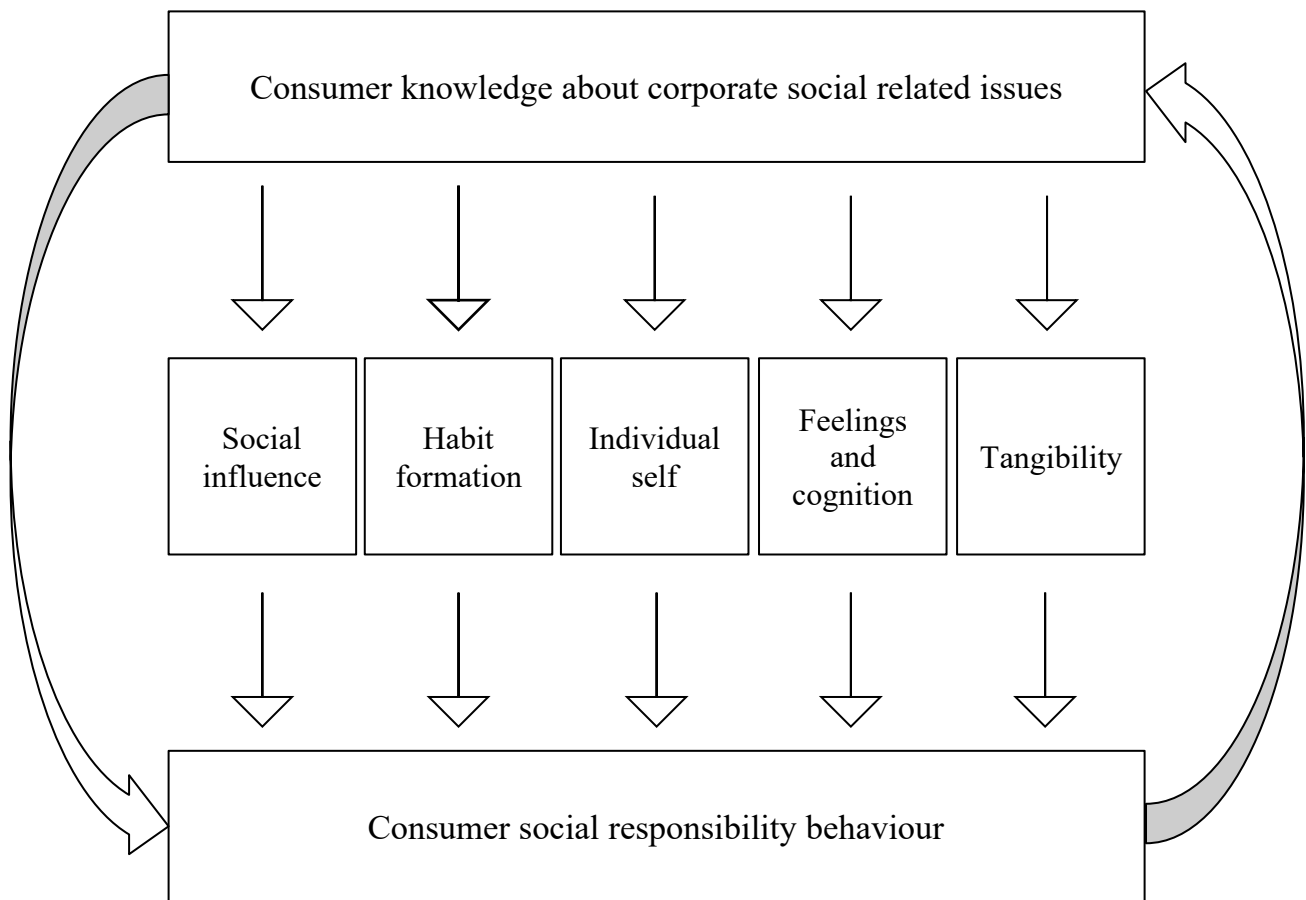
Understanding consumers' motivational factors that lead to purchase is a complex issue that can vary from one product to another. White et al. (2019) explain that there are many reasons why an understanding of consumer behaviour is of interest to marketers. The current mindset that traditional marketing encourages is described as a key driver of negative environmental impacts. As the world is changing and sustainability is becoming increasingly important, companies will need to adapt to gain a long term strategic advantage. The authors suggest that those advantages can be identifying new products and markets, driving organisational efficiency, and motivating and retaining employees. They also suggest that social and environmentally sustainable companies will have the potential to increase consumers' positive perceptions and increase their profits (White et al., 2019).

2.5 Conceptual model

To understand the relation between consumer knowledge, consumer behaviour and consumer responsibility, a conceptual model was created. The model displayed in Figure 1 is produced by combining the *theory of knowledge about social related issues*, *SHIFT theory*, and *consumer social responsibility*. The model gives an explanation of how the different theories connect to each other.

Figure 1

Conceptual model of knowledge and consumer behaviour social responsibility,



Note: Conceptual model of consumer behaviour social responsibility, modified from SHIFT model by White et al. (2019)

White et al. (2019) expressed that knowledge is relevant in all five factors of the SHIFT model. Therefore, knowledge is seen as the starting point in the model and is illustrated in the top square of the model “Consumer knowledge about corporate social related issues”. The five arrows between the knowledge square and the separate parts of the SHIFT model illustrate that knowledge has the power to affect all five factors. However, as knowledge does not certainly affect all parts of the SHIFT model the individual parts are presented (i.e Social influence, Habit formation, Individual self, Feelings and Cognition, and Tangibility). From the SHIFT model, five more arrows show that each of the five factors is analysed to understand whether knowledge affects if consumers achieve the bottom square which is “consumer social responsibility behaviour” or not. The arrow on the left side proceeds to show the direct effect

of knowledge on consumer social responsibility behaviour. The arrow on the right side, explains that consumer social responsibility is not permanent. For consumers to remain responsible, knowledge needs to be repeated.

3 Method

In this chapter, an argumentation is made for our chosen method of study and how it has been conducted. To fulfil the purpose “to investigate how consumers' knowledge about social responsibility influence their buying intentions within the fast fashion retail industry.” focus groups were used, as the aim is to understand a complex subject on a deeper level. Also, the selection of participants and how the data was analysed are presented. Lastly, the trustworthiness of the study are highlighted and discussed.

3.1 Research philosophy

Denscombe (2018) introduced two different views of the scientific environment in which the study is conducted: *Positivism* and *Interpretivism*. According to Bryman and Bell (2011), these epistemological philosophies will affect the implementation of the study. Positivism is more frequently used in quantitative research and has the purpose to explain human behaviour. In contrast, interpretivism aims to understand human behaviour in different situations (Bryman & Bell, 2011; Denscombe, 2018). As the purpose of this study is to understand consumer buying intentions and knowledge, the use of interpretivism was suitable.

3.2 Research approach

Bryman and Bell (2011) introduced three different research approaches, the deductive, inductive, and abductive approaches. According to Lind (2019), a research method is how the empirical material relates to the theoretical framework of a study. Bryman and Bell (2011) have explained that a study that uses a deductive approach uses current research and theory to form a foundation on which the empirical data collection is based on. On the other hand, an inductive study can be described as the opposite of a deductive study. In an inductive approach the empirical data which is collected form the foundation for the concept and theory that the research is based upon (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Similar to both deductive and inductive, an abductive research approach combines the views of both deductive and inductive. Lind (2019) stated that an abductive approach integrates the use and development of theory with the gathering of empirical data.

This thesis used an abductive approach as the purpose was “to investigate how consumers' knowledge about social responsibility influence their buying intentions within the fast fashion retail industry”. The abductive approach was used as both the theoretical framework and empirical data were used in an integrated manner during the research. The theoretical framework is further important for the data collection and methodology. An abductive research approach was therefore seen as most suitable for this study.

3.3 Data collection

When conducting a study with a holistic perspective, the preferred methodology is a qualitative study (Denscombe, 2018). Since the purpose of this study aims to understand consumers buying intentions and knowledge on a deeper level, a qualitative study was conducted in the form of focus groups. The use of focus groups is a suitable method to use in situations where the subject is complex. Complex factors can be opinions, perceptions, feelings and experiences (Bryman & Bell, 2011). As this study aims to understand how knowledge influence consumers buying intentions, the subject is seen to be complex. The focus groups were divided into two different segments on two different occasions. As a consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic, a hybrid solution was conducted. Since the data gathering was implemented in a limited time frame, both focus groups had some cases of illness and therefore contributed by being a part through live video and audio streaming. Bryman and Bell (2011) introduce two different methods of online data gathering, synchronous and asynchronous. However, since our focus groups were both online and physical, the only possible alternative was synchronous focus groups because they are accomplished in actual time. Even though the hybrid solution at first seemed to complicate the focus groups, the outcome of the focus groups seemed to be unaffected, since the use of video conferences has become more effective.

The use of focus groups as a method results in both advantages and disadvantages in gathering empirical data (Bryman & Bell, 2011). The focus groups tend to guide the participants of the study to have a natural discussion regarding their ideas and experiences which more clearly shows differences and similarities in opinions (Bryman & Bell, 2011; Denscombe, 2018). According to Denscombe (2018), focus groups challenge the participants to not only answer the question but to explain and argue for what they believe. As a result, the answers became more thoroughly explained and different views appeared. On the other hand, Denscombe (2018) implied that as a result of the discussions that occur during focus groups, it sometimes

leads to other subjects being discussed as well. The difficulty is to leave the participants to discuss without being disturbed by the moderator, but at the same time reach relevant conclusions about the subject. To the best of our knowledge, the hybrid solution did not affect the results of the study. To make the two groups involved in the same discussion, it was important to distribute the word to make every respondent feel included in the discussion. It was also communicated to the online participants before the session to use a strong internet connection and a suitable device. This resulted in a connection that seamlessly worked throughout the discussion and reduced the risks of absence in the discussion.

In the beginning, interviews as a method were also considered. According to Bryman and Bell (2011), interviews could give a similar understanding as focus groups, of why people behave the way they do. However, focus groups could challenge each other to make respondents argue for their opinion. To achieve the desired result, Denscombe (2019) stresses the importance of creating a trustful climate in the group. If this is not successful, the respondents will not speak openly and freely and not share their personal thoughts. The authors also explain that there is a risk that the respondents will be affected by each other and not give their honest opinions. Focus groups are also a suitable method for respondents to discuss a common opinion on a specific subject (Denscombe, 2018). In this study, the task is to understand the buying intentions on an individual level. The focus groups were semi-structured and questions were prepared in advance. A strong factor that favours semi-structured focus groups, is that we easily can ask questions when we do not understand or something is unclear. The respondent was encouraged to develop ideas and thoughts deeply. To achieve this the interviewer has to be flexible and change the order of the questions during the focus groups (Denscombe, 2018).

3.3.1. Selection of participants

As the topic of consumer consumption behaviour is relevant in all three generations described by Blumberg and Saulite (2017), all three were included in the two focus groups. The authors explained that consumption changes depending on people's age. Therefore, the target groups for the focus groups were chosen and compared depending on their age. The first group included people born between 1942 and 1980 (i.e 42 - 80 years old) and the second group of people born between 1980 and 2003 (i.e 19 - 41 years old). Age played a crucial role in the selection, as it was believed to significantly affect the results. The selection was mainly based on the convenience sampling strategy. According to Denscombe (2018), the method is often used in small-scale projects, but the strategy is a part of almost all scientific projects, one way

or another. For instance, it facilitated the implementation of focus groups to find people living in the same regions. In this case, Skåne and Småland, two regions in the south of Sweden. Bryman and Bell (2011) explains that the convenience sampling strategy can be hard to generalise. To make it more representative, the respondents were selected on age, gender, and occupations in different industries and sectors (Table 2).

Table 2

Focus group participants

Focus group	Name	Age	Gender	Occupation	Sector
1	Anna	78	Female	Retired	Former public
	Alex	72	Male	Retired	Former public
	Adrian	54	Male	Product development manager	Private
	Aaron	60	Male	Transport/logistics	Private
	Ashley	44	Female	Administration	Public
2	Britney	24	Female	Financial administration	Private
	Bob	22	Male	Retail employee	Private
	Bailey	19	Female	Student	Public
	Boris	29	Male	Store Employee	Private
	Brie	27	Female	Social worker	Public

3.3.2 Focus group guide

The focus groups build upon the concept of providing the participants with the necessary knowledge and awareness to see their changes in behaviour. To achieve the desired reaction from the participants a semi-structured interview guide consisting of sixteen main questions and nine elaborative questions was used (Appendix 1). The two focus groups were conducted with the same approach and consisted of two stages. Before the focus group discussions formally began, the participants were informed and introduced that their names would not be seen in the study, instead, the answers were anonymously presented. The necessary key points

of the research were also introduced before the discussions started. These key points were subjects and information that were crucial for the participants to understand what parts of the questions intended, this was for example, that the questions are regarding fast-fashion retail and the social part of the responsibility.

The focus groups consisted of two parts and in between the parts a hypothetical case was introduced to provide the participants with the knowledge we believed was necessary to achieve consumer social responsibility behaviour (Appendix 1). However, before the case was presented a series of questions were asked to the group for discussion. The first three questions aimed to investigate and understand the current knowledge that the participants have regarding social responsibility. After the three initial questions, the sequent questions were based upon the SHIFT model (Appendix 1) to further understand the intended behaviour people have when buying clothes. The SHIFT model parts, Social influence, Habit formation, Individual self, Feelings and Cognition, and Tangibility each had one or two questions with follow-up questions on situations that it was believed to be important to further understand. Since not every part of the SHIFT model may be affected by the increase in knowledge, the questions are sectioned to easier understand the connection between knowledge.

After all questions regarding the SHIFT model were asked, the hypothetical case was presented to the participants. The participants are also asked to take a minute to reflect on the case and to keep it in mind when answering further questions. The respondents were then informed that the second segment of the discussion was to begin. The questions of the second part were similar to the first questions that were based on the SHIFT model, as it highlighted the difference in knowledge and awareness of every part. In the end, questions about how the participants viewed consumers' role in transforming businesses to become more socially sustainable were asked.

3.5 Data analysis

To ensure that the data gathered during both focus groups were correctly interpreted, the groups were recorded during the discussions. All participants approved of the decision to record their voices and signed a contract that they confirmed the consent of recording and that they demanded anonymity. The questions stated in the focus group guide (Appendix 2) were translated to Swedish as the focus groups were conducted with only Swedish speaking

participants. Moreover, the data that was collected were also transcribed to Swedish to minimize the risk of confusion during a translation of all data, instead only the presented quotes were thoroughly translated. The data was read multiple times and important sentences were marked with a colour. During and after the transcription stage we also commented our own thoughts of how specific parts of the discussion connect to different parts in the SHIFT model. To analyse the data, the grounded theory was used. Bryman and Bell (2011) explain that there are three types of coding strategies related to the grounded theory, namely; open coding, axial coding, and selective coding. As this study was analysed based on the SHIFT model, the selective coding was seen as a natural strategy. The data from the focus groups were structured in line with the focus group guide. Firstly, data that refers to the respondents knowledge about social related issues were categorised. Secondly, data were selected and categorised into each of the five parts of the SHIFT model. Lastly, data connected to the respondents perception of knowledge and their own role in social responsibility were separately analysed. The focus group guide was divided into two parts, separating the answers depending on whether they were answered before or after the case was introduced.

3.6 Trustworthiness

The social aspects of using a qualitative study creates difficulties in guaranteeing the trustworthiness of the conducted study. The measurement of trustworthiness shows the quality and credibility of a qualitative study (Bryman & Bell, 2011; Denscombe, 2018). Further, Denscombe (2018) highlights the four benchmarks that indicate the trustworthiness: Credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. To establish a credible and confirmable study a semi-structured focus group guide is presented and the transcript were archived. To ensure that the study is possible to conduct with a similar result it is thoroughly described how and why certain steps were taken in the data collection stage.

4 Empirical findings

In this chapter, findings based on information from two focus groups are presented. Similarities and differences from both groups are compared and highlighted. In the first section, answers related to the respondents knowledge within the area is discussed. Secondly, the role of knowledge on the five SHIFT factors is introduced. Lastly, the findings of consumers perception of how their knowledge influence sustainable consumption behaviour is presented

4.1 Consumer knowledge about related social issues

This section aims to understand how aware the respondents were of social responsibility. Knowledge is seen as the starting point in the conceptual model, shown in chapter two. According to Khan et al. (2020), knowledge is the most important factor that affects consumers' pro-environmental behaviour. Therefore, questions regarding the respondents' knowledge about social related issues were asked before introducing them to the case.

“I think of moral” (Aaron, 60 years old)

“People who work in the industry, what kind of working conditions do they have” (Adrian, 54 years old)

“I think of equality” (Bob, 22 years old)

“ I think that maybe you should buy second hand [...] “ (Brie, 27 years old)

“ I think of the people that produce the clothes, They who produce the product are supposed to have fair working conditions. They are not supposed to do it for cheap money. Fair conditions, nothing less ” (Britney, 24 years old)

During the focus groups both group 1 and 2 exhibited a generally good understanding of what social sustainability is. In focus group 1, Adrian and Aaron implied that the concept of the social part of sustainability is the morale and working conditions in the industry. However, focus group 2 deviated slightly from what normally is understood as social responsibility. Brie and Bob connected social responsibility to equality buying second-hand. On the other hand,

Britney stressed the importance of working conditions and fair terms for the employees, which is similar to what focus group 1 concluded.

“We had more knowledge about workers' conditions when the clothes were produced locally. Today, our knowledge is based on what media mediates” (Adrian, 54 years old)

“Today, everything is global and we buy products from other countries. I don't know the situation in those countries” (Britney, 24 years old)

“I think the situation is worse as we buy clothes from low-cost countries. Companies can't afford to employ people with better working conditions.” (Bob, 22 years old)

“I think it has improved as the problems have been highlighted”. (Britney, 24 years old)

Even though the respondents showed a good understanding of the concept, they admitted a lack of understanding of the situation in reality. Adrian expressed it was easier to understand the workers' conditions when the clothes were produced in Sweden. Globalisation complicates the mediation of knowledge, in which media plays a crucial role. The problem is also confirmed by Britney, who mentioned that she is not aware of the situation in countries where clothes are produced nowadays. Both groups also exhibited a lack of enough knowledge regarding specific responsibility incidents and commitments among businesses and implied that it could be a barrier to sustainable acting.

The respondents were later asked whether the apparel industry had taken a more sustainable approach during the last 20 years or not. Some answered that workers' rights are significantly better today than 20 years ago, but others insisted that the problem remains the same. Bob gave an example, as low cost is an important factor when consumers purchase clothes, companies can not afford to employ workers with better conditions. The fact that price is the most crucial factor when buying clothes, is further discussed in chapter 4.2.4 of this article. Britney had another view who believed that workers conditions have improved as the problems have been highlighted.

4.2 Sustainable consumer behaviour

In this section, the role of knowledge in all five SHIFT factors is presented. The respondents were first of all asked questions to understand the consumers' intended purchasing behaviour based on the five factors. White et al. (2019) argued that knowledge has the power to affect all five factors of the SHIFT model in different constellations. In the second phase, the participants of the focus groups are introduced to a case that aims to increase their knowledge and understand how it affects the five factors. Each of the factors are analysed before and after the respondents were introduced to the case. The first table of quotes represents the respondents answers before the case was introduced. The second table is labelled with “introducing the case”, to clarify that the case has been introduced to the respondents when they answered the questions. The case is described below:

Your favourite company has been accused of being involved in serious incidents. The company produces clothes in Bangladesh, a country known for cheap labour with unsustainable working conditions. The factory collapsed, causing thousands of people their lives. Some of the affected are children that worked for the company.

The case was presented, and the participants were told to consider the scenario in the second part of the focus group and thus better understand how knowledge about social related issues influence consumers buying intentions.

4.2.1 Social Influence

The answers regarding how social influence affects consumers' purchasing behaviour varied. Some respondents answered that they were not affected by others, but some implied that they were. Differences could also be seen depending on the respondents' age.

“As I am older, I am not affected by others. When I was younger, I was. But at the same time, when I see someone wearing something I like, I want that piece of clothes as well”.
(Anna, 78 years old)

“There is no simple answer to that question, as it follows how old you are”(Alex, 72 years old)

“No, I wouldn't say that. I believe it is my own opinion that matters” (Boris, 29 years)

“Of course you get affected by others. What is trending right now and so on. I watch Bianca Ingrosso (Swedish influencer) a lot. I get my inspiration there” (Bailey, 19 years old)

“I definitely think so. If my friend tells me something, It affects me more than for example the news” (Bob, 22 years old)

The participants of both group 1 and 2 showed signs of disagreement when asked the question *“How do others' opinions affect you and your shopping behaviour?”*. Alex implied that whether a person is affected by others' opinions or not is something depending on the age of that person. Anna initially agreed; however, in the end, she concluded that other people's clothing choices might have an influence. In contrast to focus group 1, focus group 2 exhibited differences between several participants. Boris was straightforward in answering that other opinions do not matter. Instead, the individual's opinion should come first. On the other hand, both Bob and Bailey said they are affected by their friends and influencers. The information aligns with White et al.'s (2019) findings in that people are influenced by the group they want to belong to. Some of the respondents could not answer the question as they did not know, which can be a sign that it is difficult to know how they are affected in reality.

Anna explained that she is not affected as much as when she was younger. The statement aligns with Blumberga and Saulītes' (2017) findings, who stated that lifestyles, values, habits and consumption differ depending on people's age. Anna's explanation is also confirmed by Alex, who argued that there is no simple answer to whether you are affected by others, as it depends on your age. Different information channels can affect people differently depending on age. Bob gave an interesting explanation that he is affected by his friends, but not the news. Similarly to Bob, Bailey belongs to the younger generation. She admitted that trends are important and that she is inspired by influencers on social media. In contrast, Adrian explained that he bases his decision on what media mediates.

****Introducing the case****

“The level of social acceptance will decrease.” (Aaron, 60 years old)

” Yes, I absolutely think it will change, the more information that is unveiled the more it will change. However, I also believe there is a difference between a change in norms and change in behaviour. “ (Boris, 29 years old)

“I think that if something like this were to happen, I think people would stop going there. Because they know the situation” (Bailey, 19 years old)

“ I believe that if others were to buy from that store, I would do so too. Had it been empty I wouldn't buy from there. I think it is all because of peer pressure and how others act. “ (Britney, 24 years old)

Aaron gave the example that when knowledge and awareness increase, the level of social acceptance will decrease. Group 1 agreed with the statement, which could be an important explanation of how the norms in society change as a result of knowledge and awareness. The statement also aligns with White et al.'s (2019) explanation that social norms can be decisive for people's sustainability behaviour since consumers act according to what is socially approved. In line with White et al.'s (2019) and Aarons statement, Bailey argued that as more information is unveiled, she thinks the norms will change but is not convinced the norms will change the behaviour. Brough et al. (2016) found that an important aspect of changing consumers' behaviour is that consumers are more likely to be sustainable if their actions can be observed and evaluated by others. The authors' findings could explain why some consumers' intended behaviour does not match the change in norms. During the focus groups, Bob explained that it is not possible to distinguish clothes depending on whether they are purchased from a socially responsible store or not. Based on Brough et al.'s (2016) findings, this could be a problem in the apparel industry transforming into socially responsible, as people's purchases are not observed or evaluated by others.

White et al. (2019) implied that there is a bigger chance a person will act sustainably if the groups with whom they are associated also act sustainably. Britney expressed that she sees peer pressure as a big influence and would not go against the norm of what it is acceptable to do. White et al. (2019) describe this as “the social desirability factor” which highlights consumers' willingness to improve their image by improving their sustainable consumption behaviours.

As explained above, sources of information might impact people differently depending on their age. Bob described that the news would not have as big an impact as his friends. To change the younger generation's norms into more sustainable, the news might not be the right source to deliver information about catastrophes and problems in society. Instead, Bailey argued that social media and influencers could play a more crucial role in transforming the younger generation into more sustainable.

4.2.2 Habit formation

The respondents' answers about their consumption habits showed low loyalty towards stores and brands within the apparel industry. Knowledge indicated a change in consumption habits, but the answers varied on whether they would return to the store after the incident described in the case.

“If it is the same product, it does not matter where I buy it.” (Britney, 24 years old)

“My last few purchases have actually been from the same store, but that is because I do not have many brick and mortar stores to choose between here.” (Bob, 22 years old)

“I usually go to H&M, but sometimes I am crazy enough to go to other stores.” (Brie, 27 years old)

“I once found a shoe I liked in a brick and mortar store, but they did not have the shoe in my size. I took a picture of the shoe and looked it up on the internet when I came home. I found it 450 Swedish crowns cheaper on the internet. I ordered it the same afternoon.” (Alex, 72 years old)

The answers regarding the respondents' intended consumption showed that different factors affect what store they choose. The first factor is availability. Bob explained that he had bought his clothes from the same store the last couple of times. The reason is that he does not have many stores to choose between. The explanation aligns with Aarons description, who usually goes to the same store, as the availability is too low. Both Bob and Aaron are living in small towns with under 6000 inhabitants. It is also important to mention that the majority had a favourite store that they usually visit. Still, every respondent also answered that they usually purchase their clothes from several stores.

The second factor is price. Britney stated that it does not matter where she buys the product, as long as it is the same. The descriptions were accepted by every respondent who found the product's price to be the most important factor. Alex gave an interesting story related to the importance of price. He explained that he found a shoe online to be 450 SEK cheaper compared to the brick and mortar store. The fact that price is one of the most crucial factors when choosing what store to buy from shows a low level of loyalty.

****Introducing the case****

“I do not have enough knowledge to understand worker's rights when the clothes are produced somewhere else in the world. I have to stand by my previous statement, that price is the most important factor” (Alex, 72 years old)

“I will not go there anymore” (Bob, 22 years old)

“It would definitely affect me, but I am not sure I would stop going there” (Brie, 27 years old)

“[...] if the accident gets silenced, I would eventually forget and go back there” (Britney, 24 years old)

As concluded above, the loyalty towards stores is low for the younger and the older generations. A hasty conclusion would be that consumers will change to another company with similar offerings when a company acts socially unsustainable. However, the price seems more crucial than social responsibility for some consumers. The conclusion aligns with Vitells' (2014) study, which found that consumers in China, Germany, India, Spain, and the US, are unconcerned about social issues and are primarily interested in obtaining the product at a reasonable price. The answers from the focus groups varied, showing indications of change in habits while others did not. Alex explained that he lacks knowledge about workers' rights, favouring the price factor. The description is similar to Hill and Lees' (2012) statement in chapter two of this article that consumers are believed to need more knowledge about sustainability to alter attitudes and behaviours. After hearing about the case, Bob immediately answered that he would not go to that store after the incident. Brie gave the opposite answer, she is affected by the incident, but she cannot rule out that she will not return. An incident like the one described in the case was not enough to change every respondent's habits. The

knowledge about consumers' role in social responsibility might have a role in changing habits, which will be discussed in chapter 4.3 of this article.

Britney gave the example that if an accident is silenced, she would eventually return to the store. The statement started a discussion showing that time might be an essential factor related to habits. The respondents showed an agreement that they would be directly affected by the incident at the time it happened. But over time, and as others continue to go there, they would fall back into their old habits. The case that was introduced to the respondents in the focus groups was mainly built on the Rana Plaza incident, briefly described in chapter one of this article. Interestingly, none of the respondents connected the case to Rana Plaza or even mentioned the incident when discussing the situation of H&M. The discussions indicated that consumers forget over time or do not have enough knowledge. If not reminded, they will fall into their old consumption habits from unsustainable companies.

4.2.3 Individual self

The answers to the question “does it matter how you want to be perceived by others when you buy your clothes” varied depending on age. The older group explained that their purchase is based on their own preferences. They also concluded that others' opinions could be important in some cases. For instance, at work, you want to be perceived as professional. The younger group showed greater responsiveness of the individual self. However, two of the younger respondents argued that it does not matter how others perceive them; price is more important.

“When you are older, you just want clothes that do not stand out” (Anna, 78 years old)

“I am affected of my classmates, as I want to blend in[...] ” (Bailey, 19 years old)

“There are some unwritten rules about how to dress in different situations. You do not dress the same when you go to work, as you would do to a party.” (Britney, 24 years old)

“No, that [how she wants to be perceived by others] does not affect me... But of course I want the clothes to look nice” (Brie, 27 years old)

When the question was asked in the older group, everyone agreed that the individual self depends on your age. They just want clothes that do not stand out from others. Adrian explained

that when at work, he wants to be perceived as a professional. The group agreed that the individual self plays a more crucial role at work than their personal life. The older group concluded that the individual self is more important for younger people, which aligns with most respondents' answers of the younger group. The differences of ages were also found by White et al. (2019), who described age to be an important factor of how the individual self behaves while consuming.

According to the respondents, an important aspect of the individual self is to blend in. Bailey argued that she is affected by her classmates and wants to dress like one of them. The choice of clothes were discussed and found to be important in people's ways to feel like they belong to a group. The look and the uniqueness of the clothes were also described as important. According to White et al. (2019) and Sedikes et al. (2011), this is an important aspect of the individual self. Individual attributes are essential as it separates the individual from others.

****Introducing the case****

“It has to be on everyone owns conscience” (Aaron, 60 years old)

“It is wrong that others continue to buy when knowing what have happened” (Bob, 22 years old)

“It feels good for myself to buy something that makes a difference. It makes me feel good” (Britney, 24 years old)

“When buying from for example H&M, I am just one of many others” (Brie, 27 years old)

After introducing the case to the respondents, they were asked what they think of others who continue to buy from the store after the accident. The respondents were also asked to describe their own gains from purchasing more sustainable clothes. No clear difference could be shown between the two focus groups. Every respondent explained that they would negatively view people not being responsible for their purchases. Bob explained that he thinks it is wrong that people continue to buy unsustainable clothes when they have the knowledge needed to decide. Aaron described another perspective, people's unsustainable consumption has to be on their own conscience.

An important aspect of the individual self is self-efficiency. As mentioned earlier, the concept describes the effect of whether the consumer believes their choices will make a difference or not. If individuals are insecure and uncertain regarding the consumption outcome, they are more likely to withdraw from the more sustainable outcome. During the discussions, several participants explained that they lacked information about the outcome of their consumption. Several respondents also expressed the problem of being one of many others. To give an example, Brie explained that when buying from bigger companies like H&M, she feels like one of many others and that her consumption will not make a difference. The same dilemma was discussed in both groups and was agreed by everyone.

Another aspect discussed was the consumer's own gain in buying sustainable clothes. Britney gave the example that she feels good when taking responsibility, as it feels like she contributes to something good. Britney's statement aligns with White et al. (2019) concept of self-interest. It is a crucial element for consumers acting sustainable. Another view described by White et al. (2019) is the self-concept. The authors explained that consumers act by what they think is consistent with their individual selves. Consumption is also seen as a consistent behaviour. During the focus groups, few of the respondents admitted they considered the social issues before hearing about the case. The fact that the respondents did not value the social issues means that it is not part of their self-concept.

4.2.4 Feelings and cognition

The respondents expressed similarities in their answers between both focus groups. The majority of the answers either explained that price or quality was the decisive factor when they value a brand or store. However, when the groups were asked about good or bad feelings towards companies, the young participants appeared to connect more to sustainability than the older participants. The older group showed less concern and were not as vocal about feelings towards companies, instead they fell back on price and quality.

" You get what you pay for " (Aaron, 60 years old)

"Its first of all price I would say [...]" (Brie, 27 years old)

"H&M have several times been accused of using labour with unfair working conditions. It is in my head." (Adrian, 54 years old)

“Expensive clothing brands are more sustainable. I do not feel as good when I buy from cheap brands” (Bailey, 19 years old)

The most significant takeaway from the focus groups is the importance of price related to quality. When the respondents were asked if they had any values when buying clothes. Price, and the value they gain for the money were agreed as the most important factor in both groups. Some of the respondents mentioned that they connected some companies to bad feelings. In both groups, H&M were connected to bad feelings because of their previous accusations of using labour with unfair working conditions. Aaron also explained that he does not buy from stores that he recognizes as low quality brands as he does not believe it is worth it in the long term. White et al. (2019) and Smith et al. (2013) have found that values and attitudes are important in consumers' consumption behaviour.

The younger participants of the focus group also discussed that they perceive more expensive brands as more sustainable. Bailey expressed that she valued more expensive brands as sustainable and that there was a bad feeling towards cheaper brands. This indicates that for some of the respondents in the younger group, the exclusivity and expensiveness of a product can be directly connected to the perception of a brand's sustainability work.

****Introducing the case****

*“I will have a bad feeling when I enter the store in the future, if I even would go there”
(Alex, 72 years old)*

“I'm getting a real eye-opener, I'm getting a negative view of the company and I wouldn't want to go there” (Bailey, 19 years old)

*“I am losing my trust in the company. It is bad that they are not taking their responsibility”
(Adrian, 54 years old)*

“Depends on whether it is an expensive or cheap brand. If it is cheap then you already have a bad feeling from the start. There is not as big of a reaction. If it were a more expensive brand, you would have thought you bought something good. It would have been

a bigger chock. The image of the company would have changed. The more expensive clothes would not have been so exclusive “ (Bailey, 29 years old)

“You get no trust in the company I think, that they do not have better knowledge” (Adrian, 54 years old)

The case presented the participants with both emotional and factual information and were then questioned whether their emotions towards their favourite brand would change. Both focus groups were united in the statement that their feelings would negatively change in some way. Group 1 were vocal about the decrease in trust toward the businesses and both Adrian and Aaron expressed that they would feel betrayed by their actions. Bailey on the other hand connects back to what was discussed before the case was introduced and implied that her change in emotions would depend on what type of brand it was. She meant that if the brand were associated with cheap clothes there were already negative feelings towards the company. Whilst she would feel worse if the company were associated with expensive clothes. Bailey further argued that it would be a bigger shock and that the clothes had lost their exclusivity if an expensive brand would be unsustainable..

White et al. (2019) expressed that guilt is one of three emotions that can affect a consumer to become more sustainable. In this case participants of both groups discussed the fact that they would think more before purchasing from an unsustainable store. Alex for instance implied that the feeling already would be bad when entering such stores, if he even would go there. Alex's comments show the anticipated guilt that White et al. (2019) discuss, and show that the participants would avoid certain shops if they thought they supported unfair workers rights.

4.2.5 Tangibility

Tangibility showed to play a major role in why consumers do not act responsible. The respondents believed the local companies to be more sustainable than the multinationals. They also admitted they would be significantly more affected if the incident happened in Sweden instead of Bangladesh.

“The local companies are more sustainable.. I have more trust in local companies. But it might be an imagination [...].” (Alex, 72 years old)

“If something happens to the local companies we would know. But if something happens to the multinationals I am not sure we would know.” (Adrian, 54 years old)

“I think the local companies have better control over their supply chains.” (Brie, 27 years old)

Every respondent agreed that local companies are more sustainable. The conclusions were based on feelings and imagination. They admitted that they did not know the actual situation but insisted that if local companies acted socially unsustainable, reputations would spread, and they would eventually know. Brie logically explained why the smaller local companies are more sustainable. She argued that the local companies have better control over their supply chains. The fact that consumers see local companies as more sustainable has also been concluded by Vitell et al. (2014). The authors of the study found that many consumers see multinational companies as unethical, especially consumers in developed countries.

**** Introducing the case****

“If the incident would happen closer, it would affect me more” (Brie, 27 years old)

“As I described earlier, I have more trust in local companies. If something like this happens them, I would be very surprised and more emotionally affected” (Adrian, 54 years old)

“I think you have to see it in reality to understand what it really is like in those countries” (Bob, 22 years old)

As concluded above, consumers have more trust in local companies. When asking the respondents whether they would be more affected if the incident happened in Sweden, the answer was clearly yes. Looking back at the other four SHIFT factors, there have been different explanations and perceptions. Tangibility seems to have the most significant impact, as every participant in the focus groups agreed.

As most clothes are produced in Asia, tangibility can describe why consumers behave socially irresponsible. Aligned with the explanations of the participants, McDonald et al. (2015) mean that sustainability issues are too distant from the individual self, causing people to feel the issue is too intangible and not real. A clear example of the dilemma is Bob's statement, who explained that he thinks people need to see the social issues with their own eyes. If not, people will not be able to understand what the situation, in reality, looks like. To make the issues more tangible, White et al. (2019) provide the solution that problems related to the individual self need to be communicated. If consumers understand how the different elements of the individual self are affected, consumer behaviour will shift into more sustainable.

4.3 Consumer social responsibility behaviour

This section aims to explain consumers' thoughts of their role in companies transforming their businesses to be more sustainable and to explain how consumers perceive the role of knowledge in their sustainable consumption behaviour.

4.3.1 Consumers responsibility

Participants were asked about consumers' role in companies transforming their businesses to be more sustainable. They were also asked if knowledge and awareness of socially related issues play a role in reaching a socially sustainable society. The answers regarding consumers' roles varied in both focus groups. At the same time, the respondents agreed that knowledge and awareness are crucial in the transformation into a sustainable society.

“If no one buys from the unsustainable stores, they do not need to produce anything. Therefore, consumers have a responsibility” (Alex, 72 years old)

“I do not think they [consumers] should have to take responsibility. The companies should be responsible, and laws need to control them. It has to be regulated on a higher level” (Bob, 22 years old)

“At the end, it is the consumer's responsibility. If we do not buy from them, they will not sell. We have an important role in companies transforming into more sustainable. But the companies still have to take their responsibility” (Britney, 24 years old)

As mentioned earlier, corporate social responsibility only works if the consumers are interested in buying socially sustainable clothes. Consumers play a crucial role in participating in companies' CSR initiatives (Quazi et al., 2015; Vitell et al., 2014). The respondents who agreed on the importance of consumers' role in companies' transmission into socially sustainable argued that if the consumers do not buy from the unsustainable companies, they will have to change their strategy. For example, Alex explained that if no one buys from the unsustainable store, they will not be able to sell. And because of that, the consumers have a responsibility as well as the company itself.

Some respondents argued that they are just one of many others and that their purchases will not make a difference. Instead, the responsibility has to be the companies and the governments in each country. The companies have to take responsibility for their supply chains, and governments have to regulate laws that decrease the violations of social issues. The same respondents who argued for consumers' low impact on companies' transmission to be more sustainable also admitted that they lack knowledge about social related problems. White et al. (2019) explained that knowledge about the consequences of consumption significantly affects consumers' responsibility behaviour. The information can explain why some consumers do not see their own role in companies' CSR initiatives.

Companies can be a key driver to engaging the customers to a more sustainable behaviour (Vitell et al., 2014). Some of the respondents found the company itself to have the main responsibility. They argued that companies need to control their supply chains. Vitell et al. (2014) explained another view of companies' responsibilities. As green advertisements work best at consumers that are already concerned for the environment, companies need to educate consumers to fulfil their social responsibility initiatives. Both focus groups conducted in this article showed a lack of knowledge about social issues within the apparel industry. A logical conclusion would be that advertisements with socially responsible initiatives have a low effect on consumers with low knowledge. Because of that, it should be in the interest of socially responsible companies to educate consumers of social related issues. The connection between knowledge and advertisements related to social issues has however not been scientifically confirmed.

4.3.2 The role of knowledge

The last question asked in both focus groups aimed at understanding how consumers view the role of knowledge in their decision making process.

“It [knowledge] is the most important factor” (Bob, 22 years old)

“Knowledge is important as the more knowledge people have, the better decisions they can make. If people do not know, they do not have anything to base their decisions at” (Boris, 29 years old)

“The problem is that people will only know when serious incidents happen, for example factories collapsing or burning down. It is hard to find out the working conditions if not something special happens” (Adrian, 54 years old)

“I have been working in the public sector and the question is interesting when doing public procurements. Based on my experience, the most important factor in public procurement is price. The social sustainability is somewhere in the bottom of prioritization. I have actually never heard people reasoning about social issues in public procurements” (Alex, 72 years old)

“As the public procurement has a huge role in the market. Knowledge is needed in leading positions [...]” (Aaron, 54 years old)

Every respondent agreed that more knowledge is needed in order to make the right decisions. Boris gave the example that if consumers have knowledge, they will be able to make better decisions related to social issues. The statement aligns with Khans et al’s. (2020) findings, who described that a lack of knowledge limits consumers' understanding of their choices. The respondents also expressed that it is hard to find knowledge about the situation in reality. It is seen as a problem that they are only reached by information that is related to their consumption, when something serious happens.

Alex has been working within the public sector and pointed out that knowledge is interesting when looking at the public procurements. He argued that when public procurements are conducted, the most important aspect is price. Alex also pointed out that the social issues are not prioritized. Aaron had the same experience from the transport industry. He explained that

most transport companies are importing the labour from other countries to avoid the high wages, holiday compensation, and collective agreements. He further describes that companies using this strategy can keep their costs down in order to win the public procurement deals. As a result, Aaron argued that knowledge is not only needed for consumption in the business to consumer market, but also in the business to business market.

5. Analysis & discussion

In this chapter an analysis and discussion will be made based on the presented empirical material and the findings in this study. The analysis will be divided into the theory of knowledge about social related issues, SHIFT theory, and consumer social responsibility.

Until this stage, most studies regarding how knowledge affects consumers consumption behaviour have been made from an environmental perspective. The younger consumers have understood the environmental effects of their consumption, which has led to a more pro-environmental behaviour (Byrd & Su, 2020). As consumers play an important role in the transmission into more sustainable, there is a need to understand how knowledge about social related issues affect consumers behaviour (White et al., 2019). Several studies have described knowledge to be a crucial factor for consumer sustainability behaviour (Hill & Lee, 2012 ; Khan et al., 2020 ; White et al., 2019). The results from the study shows a general understanding of the concept of social responsibility, but lacks knowledge about reality. The finding is in line with previous research, indicating that consumers lack knowledge about sustainability (Hill & Lee., 2012 ; Khan et al., 2020). A low level of knowledge is limiting consumers' understanding of their choices (Khan et al., 2020). The respondents shared the same view as Khan et al. (2020), who explained that the lack of knowledge is a crucial barrier in consumers acting responsible. Based on the findings in this study, the younger generation did not show a better understanding for social related issues compared to the older group. There is a difference in level of knowledge between environmental and social issues, as Byrd and Su (2020) found the younger generation to have a better understanding of environmental issues.

The social influence factor showed that an increase in knowledge in all of society would change the normative acceptance of what is right and wrong. The younger group indicated that if many others were to change or keep their buying behaviours the respondents would do so too. The explanation is in line with White et al's (2019) findings, who found people to act more sustainable when others do so. This shows that if knowledge about social issues were communicated to big parts of the younger generation, a change in norms may occur and therefore improve consumers' intended sustainable consumption behaviour. Brough et al. (2016) explained that consumers are more likely to be sustainable if their actions can be observed and evaluated by others. As the consumer's sustainable consumption can not be

observed or evaluated by others, it can decrease the consumer's chances of acting socially sustainable.

The consumers habits shown in this study can be described by low loyalty towards specific stores and that price is the prioritisation. Some habits can be seen as unsustainable, which is why they are an important factor in responsible consumption (White et al., 2019). Consumers' low loyalty could favour a boycott when a company is not acting socially responsible. The problem remains that consumers base consumption decisions mainly on price. As consumers play an important role in transforming companies into more socially sustainable, consumers decision-making habits must include the aspect of social responsibility. To change those habits, some types of discontinuities can be used. Those can for example be penalties, giving incentives, prompts or feedback (White et al., 2019).

The younger people seemed to be more concerned about others' perception compared to the older generation. However, the results implied that knowledge and information about social issues may not change the behaviour of the consumer, instead the consumer must understand the effect of their consumption. As people want to keep their self-concept positive (White et al. 2019), knowledge needs to be associated with their behaviour for them to take action. Another important aspect of the individual self is self-efficiency (White et al., 2019). The study showed a varied understanding of consumers' role in social sustainability. For consumers to act more sustainable, they must understand how their consumption affects social related issues within the apparel industry.

Negative and positive emotions are often considered when choosing to engage or not to engage in sustainable behaviour (Smith et al., 2013 ; White et al., 2019). The result of this study shows that knowledge about social related issues leads to a changed attitude and mistrust against the company. The majority of the respondents indicated that they would not go back to the company after hearing about the incident. In the discussion concerning the Rana Plaza incident, H&M have since the incident tried to repair their reputation. After all, the shareholders around the date were not significantly affected long term (Arrigo, 2020). In this study, respondents explained that they would eventually go back to the store if not reminded of the incident. The respondents also explained that when they see others keep going back to the store, the social influence would make them return. The respondents explanation could explain why H&M were not affected in the long term.

Tangibility was the most prominent factor that affected knowledge. It is believed that when a consumer feels like their actions are tangible it is more likely they will follow through and change towards sustainability (White et al. 2019). The respondents expressed their concern that incidents such as the presented case were too distant for them to certainly take action. McDonald et al. (2015), had the same explanation, showing that sustainability issues are too distant making it feel unreal to the consumers. It was also brought forward that if something horrible happens geographically far away, it is not sure consumer behaviour would change. However, if the events were to occur closer everyone unanimously agreed that it would stop or considerably decrease their consumption from involved businesses. This indicates that if knowledge is only presented to the consumer it may only affect opinions and emotions towards businesses. Instead the answers from the respondents indicated that knowledge must be presented in a way that makes it tangible for the consumers to change their behaviour. Sedikes et al. (2011) suggests that communication of sustainability issues have to be communicated related to the aspects of the individual self. Based on Sedikes et al. (2011) explanation, communication of social related issues could involve the aspect of self-interest, explaining how the consumers are affected by the issue to make it more tangible.

The literature presented in this study points out the importance of responsible consumers. Corporate social responsibility only works if the consumers are interested in the sustainability initiatives (Vitell, 2014 ; Quazi et al., 2015). The study showed that most consumers understand that they have a responsibility when consuming clothes. There were however several participants not seeing their own role in improving social sustainability. Those consumers need knowledge about how their consumption affects the social related issues in order to promote sustainable behaviour (White et al., 2019). The same respondents also expressed that they do not see how their consumption will make a difference as many others keep purchasing. This is in line with White et al's (2019) description of the importance of self-efficacy. Consumers must understand that their consumption will make a difference in order for them to be more sustainable. This study also shows that communication of knowledge must be communicated in suitable channels depending on age. For example, the younger generation are more affected by information coming from influencers on social media, compared to the news on tv.

6. Conclusion

In this chapter, conclusions are drawn based on the research question “how does knowledge about social-related issues influence consumers' buying intentions?”. A brief summary of the thesis will be presented followed by the conclusions. Lastly, contributions, a critical review, and suggestions for further research is given.

6.1 Summary of the thesis

The competition to reach low-cost production in the apparel industry has in the past decades increased the popularity in outsourcing production to countries with unfair wages and rights for the employees. This thesis aims to understand how consumers' knowledge about social responsibility influence their buying intentions within the apparel retail industry. A theoretical framework is suggested to help understand the different stages of how knowledge affects consumer social responsibility behaviour. To visualize how the theory is expected to cooperate, a conceptual model is presented (Figure 1). The conceptual model consists of theory of knowledge about social related issues, SHIFT theory, and consumer social responsibility. Further, the method that is used to examine the research question is focus groups. Focus groups are a qualitative method and are suitable since the study aims to understand how knowledge influence consumer behaviour. The empirical data were then analysed according to grounded theory and selective coding to better understand and distinguish the suitable data.

The finding of the focus groups indicated that knowledge regarding social sustainability issues in reality is inadequate. Furthermore, the respondents' answers indicated that knowledge does affect every part of the SHIFT model but to different extents. The empirical data highlighted tangibility as the most decisive factor to change behaviour when knowledge is given. Further, the data indicated that knowledge is not enough for consumers to change their consumption behaviour, instead the knowledge must be connected to the consequences of their consumption. The study also concluded that information needs to be communicated regularly for customers to continue consuming socially sustainable products.

6.2 Conclusion

In conclusion, our study indicates that consumers lack knowledge about corporate social related issues within the apparel industry. Consumers consider themselves as one of many others when buying products and our respondents expressed that they felt that their consumption will not make a difference. For consumers to act more responsible, we believe they need more knowledge about how their consumption can make a difference, and what role they have in a socially sustainable society. As the consumers showed a lack of knowledge, their probability to act socially sustainable is limited. Based on the findings in this study, there was no difference in level of knowledge between the two focus groups.

We found that tangibility has a significant impact on whether knowledge affects consumer behaviour or not. We draw the conclusion that when clothes are produced geographically distant, consumers find the issues and consequences intangible and therefore have trouble imagining the situation in reality. If the issue is intangible, and the consumer has knowledge, it does not mean that the behaviour will change. For issues to become more tangible, knowledge has to be communicated based on the aspects of the individual self. For example, if knowledge is communicated explaining how the consumer's consumption will affect the social issues, consumers are more likely to act sustainable. When knowledge increases and the issue is tangible, consumers will negatively view the company and their trust will decrease. We herewith draw the conclusion that if the social issues can become more tangible, the social influence in society will change making the norms of socially unsustainable consumption unacceptable. The study indicated that consumers have a low level of loyalty towards companies. Therefore, consumers are believed to easily switch from an unsustainable company to a more sustainable one. As presented above, we found all factors of the SHIFT model to be essential for knowledge to change consumer behaviour into more socially sustainable. However, we argue that a social issue must be tangible for knowledge to affect the other four factors of the model and thus improve social sustainability behaviour.

Furthermore, we found that knowledge about social issues is not permanent and needs to be repeated to have a lasting effect on consumer intended consumption behaviour. Companies like H&M have been involved in incidents where social sustainability has been an issue but have not been significantly affected long term. We argue that the reason is that consumers'

knowledge decreases over time and for consumers to remain socially responsible, their knowledge needs to be refreshed and improved. Therefore, we draw the conclusion that if a consumer is only presented with knowledge about a social issue on a few occasions they can be socially influenced to go back to brands such as H&M if other people do so.

6.3 Contributions

Previous studies have indicated that there is a lack of research for social responsibility within the fast fashion retail industry (Köksal et al., 2017), especially from the consumers perspective (Arrigo, 2020). According to White et al. (2019), consumers play an important role in companies transforming their businesses into socially sustainable. It was therefore relevant to contribute with an explanation about how knowledge about social related issues influence consumers' intended consumption behaviour. We argue that consumers play an important role in transforming businesses into more sustainable organisations. Therefore, the study contributes with an understanding of how different aspects affect consumers' sustainability behaviour. It has previously been discovered that the SHIFT model has been a relevant framework to understand the change in consumer sustainability behaviour, however, this study contributes with findings about how knowledge affects the five factors. The study also contributes to an understanding that if the consumer is presented with the right knowledge about how companies work with social sustainability, a change towards more sustainable consumption behaviour in the apparel industry might take place.

6.4 Critical review

This study contributes to an understanding about how knowledge influence consumers' social responsibility behaviour. The focus-groups gave interesting insights in consumer behaviour but the convenience sampling strategy with the small number of participants can make the study hard to generalise (Bryman & Bell, 2011). The participants were also limited to Sweden and there is a risk that consumer intended behaviour and knowledge about social issues is different in other countries.

6.5 Suggestions for further research

This study aimed to investigate and understand how consumers' knowledge regarding social responsibility influence their buying intentions. In the future it is possible to conduct a study with a similar research question and theoretical framework as this study but substitute the use

of focus groups with in-depth interviews. By changing the methodology the data will lose some depth due to the removal of the discussions, however, it will thoroughly neglect the complications with peer pressure described in White et al's (2019) SHIFT model. Another suggestion of further research is to explore whether consumers act according to their statements or not. It would be further developing to see the actual behaviour of the consumer, by conducting interviews or focus groups and in a later stage investigate their buying patterns. Last of all, research about how to make social issues more tangible for consumers must be conducted.

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Appendix 1 - Focus group guide

Model/ Theory	Question	Purpose	Source
Knowledge	What do you think of when you hear the concept of consumer social responsibility?	<p><u>Knowledge</u></p> <p>To understand if consumers are familiar with the concept of social responsibility.</p>	Vitell (2014), Quazi et al. (2015), Anderson (2018) Hill & Lee (2012), White et al. (2019)
	<p>What is your view on social sustainability within the apparel industry?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How have social aspects in the apparel industry changed in the last 20 years? 	<p><u>Knowledge and awareness</u></p> <p>Understand consumers' view of social sustainability within the apparel industry. Also, to understand if the consumers think the social aspects are improving or not.</p>	(SVD, 2015), (Arrigo, 2020),
	<p>What store do you normally visit when you buy your clothes?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Why? - Do you have an idea of where in the world your clothes are produced? - Do you know how the company is working toward social responsibility ? 	<p><u>Awareness</u></p> <p>Understand what factors are important when choosing stores to buy clothes. Also, to understand if the consumers are aware of companies' social responsibility work.</p>	Jacobs & Singhal (2017), Khan et al. (2020)

S ocial influence	How do others' opinions affect you and your shopping behaviour? - - - Does the norm regarding the choice of brand and store change your mind?	<u>Social influence</u> Understand if consumers get affected by others and if norms are something that influences their consumption choices	White et al. (2019), Brough et al. (2016)
H abit formation	How does your choice of store or brand depend on habits?	<u>Habits</u> To understand how the choice of brand or store depends on consumers' habits.	White et al. (2019), Blumberga and Saulīte (2017)
I ndividual Self	Does the choice of store or brand depend on how you want to be seen by others?	<u>Individual self</u> To understand how the individual self affects consumers' behaviour.	White et al. (2019), Sedikides et al. (2011)
F eeling & Cognition	How do your values affect what store or brand you choose to buy from?	<u>Feelings and Cognition</u> Understand the role of values in consumers' behaviour.	White et al. (2019)
	Are there any stores or brands you connect to good or bad emotions? ➤ How does that affect your choice?	<u>Feelings and Cognition</u> Understand how emotions affect consumers' choices.	White et al. (2019)
T angibility	Is there a difference in social sustainability between local and international companies? ➤ Does that affect your choice of company?	<u>Tangibility</u> Find out if the consumer focus more or less on sustainability if the company is local or international	White et al. (2019)

We are now introducing a hypothetical case based on real incidents:

Your favourite company has been accused of being involved in serious incidents. The company produces clothes in Bangladesh, a country known for cheap labour with unsustainable working conditions. The factory collapsed, causing thousands of people their lives. Some of the affected are children that worked for the company.

Theory/ Model	Question	Purpose	Source
S ocial influence,	How does your view of your favourite company change after the incident?	<u>Social influence and knowledge</u> Understand if the awareness of the incident affects the view of a company and the norms in society.	White et al. (2019), Brough et al. (2016) Vitell (2014), Quazi et al. (2015), Anderson (2018) Hill & Lee (2012), White et al. (2019)
	With the case in mind and a raised level of understanding of social sustainability within the society. How do you think the norms in society will differ?		
H abit formation	Do you believe such incidents would change your shopping habits from your favourite brand? ➤ Are the social responsibility issues enough for a boycott of the brand?	<u>Habit formation and knowledge</u> To see if knowledge regarding social responsibility of a customer's frequent brand affects the consumption behaviour	White et al. (2019), Blumberga et al. (2017)

I ndividual Self	How does your view of others who choose socially unsustainable companies change after hearing of the incident?	<u>Individual self and knowledge</u> Understand how consumers see others who act unsustainably.	White et al. (2019), Sedikides et al. (2011)
F eeling & Cognition	Describe how your emotions change about your favourite company after hearing about the incident. > Will you still buy from the company, or will you seek yourself to others?	<u>Feelings and cognition, and knowledge</u> To understand how emotions change after hearing about the incident and if the knowledge affects their choice of company.	White et al. (2019)
T angibility	Would such an incident affect your consumption behaviour depending on if it is international or local?	<u>Tangibility</u> Understand whether social-related problems depend on if an incident is distant or close.	White et al. (2019)
Consumer social responsible behaviour	What role do you as a consumer have in companies transition into socially sustainable?	<u>Consumers role</u> To understand how consumers see their own role in reaching social sustainability	Vitell (2014), Quazi et al. (2015), Anderson (2018) Hill & Lee, (2012), White et al. (2019)
	Does knowledge play a role in reaching a more socially sustainable society?	<u>Importance of knowledge</u> Understand the consumer's perception about if knowledge plays a role in reaching a more socially sustainable society.	Vitell (2014), Quazi et al. (2015), Anderson (2018) Hill & Lee, (2012), White et al. (2019)

Appendix 2 - Summary of sources

N	Author	Title	Used information
1	Ahmed & Peerlings (2009)	Addressing Workers' Rights in the Textile and Apparel Industries: Consequences for the Bangladesh Economy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Scandals and unsustainable actions increase as cost efficiency becomes more important. - Consumers have a responsibility in their consumption. - Outsourcing can reduce poverty
2	Anderson (2018)	Fair trade and consumer social responsibility.	Consumer social responsibility have become more about social issues such as fairness, rights, virtue and sustainability
3	Arrigo (2020)	Global Sourcing in Fast Fashion Retailers: Sourcing Locations and Sustainability Considerations. <i>Sustainability</i>	Sourcing locations is important when choosing new sourcing locations and has become even more important during the last years, low cost remains the most important criteria,
4	Bartels et al. (2009)	Industrial competitiveness and openness of economies in Africa and Asia: an introduction	Outsourcing in developing countries can benefit the country by reducing poverty through employment.
5	Blumberg a and Saulite (2017)	Corporate social responsibility and consumers waste sorting habits	Lifestyle, values, habits and consumption differ depending on age.
6	Brough et al. (2016)	Is Eco-Friendly Unmanly? The Green-Feminine Stereotype and Its Effect on Sustainable Consumption	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Social influence of SHIFT model - Dilemma that an individual's sustainability behaviour can be seen as both a negative and positive
7	Byrd & Su (2020)	Investigating consumer behaviour for environmental, sustainable and social apparel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Consumers lack knowledge regarding sustainability in the apparel industry - The younger generation has more knowledge
8	Hill et al. (2012)	Young Generation Y consumers' perceptions of sustainability in the apparel industry	Low level of knowledge regarding sustainability within the apparel industry,
9	Jacobs & Singhal (2017)	The effect of the Rana Plaza disaster on shareholder wealth of retailers: Implications for sourcing strategies and supply chain governance.	Shareholders around the date of the Rana Plaza incident were not affected long term

10	Khan et al. (2020)	Consumer green behaviour: An approach towards environmental sustainability	Intelligence, education and knowledge are linked to greater responsiveness to choosing more eco-friendly and sustainable products
11	Köksal et al. (2017)	Social Sustainable Supply Chain Management in the Textile and Apparel Industry—A Literature Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The role of businesses has change toward ecological - Consumers pressure companies as they demand quality at low prices.
12	Kuźniar et al.(2021)	The Impact of Ecological Knowledge on Young Consumers' Attitudes and Behaviours towards the Food Market	Concern and motivation for sustainability issues align with knowledge within the area.
13	Lacoste (2016)	Sustainable value co-creation in business networks.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Businesses are responsible for the environmental and social aspects of the company.
14	Quazi et al. (2015)	Conceptualizing and measuring consumer social responsibility: a neglected aspect of consumer research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Corporate social responsibilities cannot be implemented successfully without active participation of their customers -
15	Sedikes et al. (2011)	Individual Self, Relational Self, Collective Self: Hierarchical Ordering of the Tripartite Self.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Individual self - Attributes that differentiates one person from another - self-concept, self-consistency, self-interest, self-efficacy, and individual differences
16	Shaw et al. (2006)	Fashion victim: the impact of fair trade concerns on clothing choice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Incidents in the apparel industry - Brands such as Nike and Gap have issues with their social responsibility.
17	Smith et al. (2013)	Emotions and dissonance in 'ethical' consumption choices.	Consumption behaviour is influenced by values and attitudes
18	Vitell (2014)	A Case for Consumer Social Responsibility (CnSR): Including a Selected Review of Consumer Ethics/Social Responsibility Research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Price is the most important factor when choosing a company to buy from. - Studies have shown that green advertisements work best at reaching consumers who already have green behaviour - Companies need to educate consumers to fulfil their social responsibility initiatives
19	Vugt et al. (2012)	The Evolutionary Bases for Sustainable Behaviour:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Social influence - positive, sustainable behavioural

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Policy, and Social
Entrepreneurship.

changes resulting from the collective
self not wanting to be connected to
“dissociative groups”