GENERATION Z

Consumer Behavior in Sustainable Fashion
Acknowledgement

I would like to express my gratitude towards my coaches Constantin von Maltzahn and Suzanne Beulens for their valuable and constructive guidance throughout the entire process, which helped me complete my thesis. Also, I would like to thank everyone who supported me throughout the course of my final graduation project and the interviewees/respondents for their contribution to this study.
Disclaimer

1. This report, as part of the graduation project aimed at attaining the BA title from the Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences, has been written and/or compiled solely by me.
2. This project report (or any amended form of it) has never before been submitted by me or anyone else in the framework of a learning assignment aimed at the attainment of a certificate or degree, within the AMFI program or elsewhere.
3. The work that was necessary for the realization of this project was performed entirely by me. All the data that has been collected are original.
4. All quotes from other sources are recognizable in the report by quotation marks and the sources of all my information have specifically been indicated.

Date: 19.06.2017

Place: Amsterdam

Name: Queeny Cheung

Signature
Abstract

Generation Z is a growing buying force and will be a very important consumer group with concerns to purchasing power. For the fashion industry to be able to respond to this, it is crucial to understand their needs and wants. Furthermore, sustainability has been considered very important for both the environment and other social aspects. Many brands have already incorporated this aspect into their businesses. Therefore, this thesis examines generation Z's consumer behavior and their values and beliefs concerning sustainable fashion products. Finding out to what extend sustainability is a driving factor in their purchasing behavior is serving as the main research question.

Following the literature review, which discusses the theories and definitions of consumer behavior, sustainability in fashion and what is known about generation Z, an empirical analysis based on focus groups and surveys presents the findings of generation Z's purchasing motivations. Generation Z may perceive sustainable issues as important, but sustainability as a driving factor of their fashion purchases is not very accountable. It is noticeable that factors like style, price, quality and comfort still dominate their motivations for their decision-making. The brand and where the products are made are considered very unimportant driving factors in generation Z's fashion consumption choices. The empirical analysis is followed by a Two-Step Cluster Analysis, which shows that generation Z cannot be seen as a niche market, but rather as a market that can be divided into three subgroups: the indifferent, the reserved social conscience and the non-conformist. These subgroups value sustainability differently and hence need to be approached in different ways by marketers.

To conclude, an article written for the Business of Fashion compliments the thesis by discussing the findings of this study and proposing an (fictive) Instagram platform, which will serve as an inspirational and sustainable shopping guide. It is created to show generation Z that being sustainable does not mean that you have to make drastic changes in your lifestyle, but rather small adjustments will help as well. Also, it presents ethical fashion products from (fast fashion) brands that are highly accessible for the target group, which will result in higher awareness and consciousness when making fashion purchases. This solution is created for the issues that retain generation Z from converting sustainability concerns into their purchasing decisions. For example, one of the problems is accessibility of sustainable products, which may hinder consumers that have the intention to contribute to a more sustainable system and obstruct them to incorporate the assessment of sustainability into their purchasing process. Additionally, lack of information about sustainable consumption makes ethical decision-making a very complex process for the consumer, resulting in consumers choosing for products that do not require complex decision-making.

Key words: sustainability, ethical, fashion, generation Z, consumer behavior, cluster analysis, motivations, purchasing drivers
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## 1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background  
1.2 Purpose  
1.3 Research Question(s)  
1.4 Methodology and Methods  
1.5 Thesis Structure

## 2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1. Generation Z  
2.1.1 Defining Generation Z  
2.2 Consumer Behavior  
2.2.1 Defining Consumer Behavior  
2.2.2 Consumer Behavior in Fashion  
2.2.3 Generation Z's Consumer Behavior  
2.2.4 Drivers of Generation Z's Fashion Consumption  
2.3 Sustainability  
2.3.1 Defining Sustainability  
2.3.2 Sustainability and Fashion  
2.3.3 Drivers of Sustainable Purchases  
2.4. Conceptual Framework

## 3 EMPERICAL METHOD

3.1 Research Strategy and Design  
3.2 Sample Selection  
3.3 Pilot Test  
3.4 Data Collection Method  
3.5 Reliability & Validity  
3.6 Generalizability
4 DATA ANALYSIS

4.1 Descriptive Statistics
4.2 In-store and Online Shopping
4.3 Meaning and Importance of Sustainability in Fashion
4.4 Purchasing Drivers
4.5 Exploratory Factor Analysis
4.6 Cluster Analysis
4.7 Motivations for Ethical Decision-Making

5 DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION

5.1 Discussion
5.2 Contribution of the Research
5.3 Limitations
5.4 Future Research
5.5 End Product

REFERENCES

APPENDIX
LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. Gender
Table 2. Descriptive Statistics
Table 3. Test of Normality
Table 4. Motivation for In-Store and Online Shopping
Table 5. “Have you ever bought sustainable clothes?”
Table 6. Sustainable Consideration
Table 7. Cronbach’s Alpha Sustainable Considerations
Table 8. Descriptive Statistics Purchasing Attributes
Table 9. Factor Analysis of Other Constructs
Table 10. Factor Analysis Motivational Statements 2-Components Solutions
Table 11. Factor Analysis Motivational Statements 4-Components Solutions
Table 12. Cluster Analysis
Table 13. Cluster Description

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. Consumption Stages
Figure 2. Sustainable Consideration
Figure 3. Correlation Matrix
Figure 4. Motivations related to Sustainable Purchases

LIST OF APPENDICES

Appendix 1. Model Summary & Cluster Sizes
Appendix 2. Predictor Importance Cluster Analysis
1. Introduction

"We, the youth generation, are imaginative. We lack real world experience and predict future outcomes. We come of age, create the person we want to become. Never face any limitations, worries and fears. These components make a great accidental inventor: the fanciful and active process of recognizing, questioning, comparing and creating opinions - Making sense of the responses we get." – Elise By Olsen, 16 year old editor in chief of youth culture magazine Recens Paper.

In the statement above, Elise By Olsen identifies herself with a new generation that researchers have named generation Z. By 2020, this group will be the largest group of consumers worldwide, constructing 40% of Europe, US and BRIC countries and 10% in the remaining part of the world according to consultancy agency Fitch (2016). In contrast with generation Z, extensive research has only been conducted about the consumer behavior of their previous generation, the millennials – also known as generation Y. Since generation Z will become the largest group of stakeholders in the coming years, it is important to understand their needs and behavior for the future of fashion consumption, and to analyze how they differ from their predecessors. Additionally, sustainability has been an important topic in recent years and various variables e.g. stakeholder pressure, governmental regulations and consumer awareness demanded ethical fashion. However, empirical research on generation Z and their consumer behavior in sustainable fashion products is still lacking. For these theoretical and practical reasons, it is important for businesses to understand the differences and similarities of consumer behavior between generations to enhance future strategy or decision-making processes that include generation Z. This chapter contains the research background, purpose, research questions, methodology and structure of the thesis. In a broader aspect, an overview of the thesis is presented.

1.1 Background

The sustainability aspect in fashion has become increasingly important over the years and many companies have incorporated this aspect in their business model (Fineman, 2001; Klimley, 2005; Niinimaki, 2010). At first, small businesses dominated the movement of sustainability. However, many big brands have recently taken their part of it due to growing awareness and pressure of consumers (Crane & Matten, 2010). For instance, Adidas collaborated in 2016 with Parley for the Oceans that resulted in a groundbreaking silk polymer fiber, replicating spider silk to create biodegradable shoes. That same year, retail giant ZARA started their Join Life collection, which is produced by environmentally responsible materials. This was additionally an answer to H&M’s Conscious collection. Although it is not clear whether these companies are working more to allay the anxieties of its customers about the negative consequences of global capitalism or are trying to encourage genuine social change, as philosopher Slovoj Zizek argues, it is important to acknowledge that they are at least making the effort to engage with social problems we all face today (Foley, 2016). On the other hand, due to the buying and production power of large fashion companies, a little effort can make a difference. What we do not know is if this difference can significantly change the industry, since these approaches only happen on the fringes of the market.
There is also a certain contradiction between fashion’s economic and socio-cultural importance and its wastefulness in the aspect of sustainability. The breakdown of the traditional fashion seasons into shorter cycles represents an unsustainable model in a long term. Fashion appears to be directly the opposite of sustainability and portrays therefore an oxymoron (Black, 2010). The profile of the ecological conscious consumer has evolved alongside environmental concerns and it reacted along this fundamental change in public opinion (Roberts, 1996). Additionally, Perrels (2008) argues that the largest issue in sustainable development is change, which is not only limited to production systems but also consumption patterns. Although consumers think that they as individuals can help solve environmental issues, research has shown that they rarely apply this to fashion consumption because unethical choices do not directly affect the consumer’s well-being. This means that concern does not always translate into buying (Joergens, 2006; Niinimaki, 2010; Moulds, 2015).

A report by The Center for Generational Kinetics (2016) shows that generation Z will become the fastest-growing generation in the workforce sooner than we might expect, which means that they will become a critical group in the buy force to analyze. According to Ernst & Young (2015), generation Z were those born from 1997 onwards and Millennials, the late generation Y, were born between 1981-1996. However, research claims that critical differences between these groups are highly relevant to identify future needs and expectations for the fashion industry, because previous generations will adapt to trends faster. For example, technology is easier accepted by the youngest generation. More than that, gender and age could indicate different consumer requirements for fashion and clothing (Rocha et al., 2005). Key factors that differentiate the new generation with generation Y are for example self-awareness – they are realistic, innovative and self-reliant. However, generation Y is more self-centered, an idealist, creative and dependent (Ernst & Young, 2015). These rather universal characteristics tend to describe how all members of generation Z think and behave, while this is in reality highly doubtful. Even when they do share a set of values and common cultural experiences when growing up, people who belong to the same age group can differ in many ways (Solomon et al., 2016). Although it is clear that a shift in consumer values is occurring, there has not been substantial empirical research to find out how this motivational process works (Freestone & McGoldrick, 2008). Hence, it is interesting to find out insights on how generation Z behaves when buying fashion products and to what extend they relate and engage in ethical consumerism.

1.2 Purpose
Capturing generation Z’s consumer behavior or patterns and their values and beliefs concerning sustainable fashion products will be valuable data for all organizations within the fashion industry. However, not much empirical research has been conducted aimed specifically at generation Z. Therefore, there are strong theoretical and managerial reasons to better understand their consumer characteristics. Hence, the objective for this thesis will be identifying Generation Z’s consumer behavior concerning products and practices within the fashion industry and finding out to what extend sustainability is a driving factor in their purchasing behavior. The end product next to the thesis is an online article for the Business of Fashion that communicates the generated knowledge of the research and proposes an inspirational Instagram platform, which can be used as a shopping guide for ethical fashion. Companies that want to target Generation Z in the near future can use the information of the article to improve their strategy or decision-making. Altogether, the study and article will help tighten the gap between research and practical knowledge.
1.3 Research Question(s)
The discussion above has led to the following main exploratory research question:

To what extent does sustainability constitute a driving factor in generation Z’s fashion consumption choices?

Consecutively, the sub questions below are composed to support the main research question:

1. Who is generation Z?
2. What do we know about generation Z’s consumer behavior?
3. What are the drivers (motivations) in the fashion consumption of generation Z?
4. How can sustainable fashion be defined?
5. What are the subsets that drive sustainable consumption in generation Z and under what conditions do they materialize?

It is essential to find out generation Z’s consumer behavior characteristics first and then explore their awareness and motivations for buying sustainable products and engagement of ethical practices. For these reasons, the sub questions are necessary before answering the main research question.

1.4 Methodology and Methods
Before starting the research process, the researcher needs to define which research approach to use. Rather moving from theory to data (as in deductive reasoning) or data to theory (as in inductive reasoning), an abductive approach combines both. Although deduction and induction are the two most commonly used research approaches, according to Saunders et al. (2016), abduction matches what many business and management researchers actually do. However, it is often the case that either deduction or induction will be more dominant. Therefore, while selecting an abductive approach, keeping in mind the restricted time frame, deduction will presumably be the dominant approach in this research. A (pre-tested) survey is used as the main instrument to test the hypotheses with empirical data. Next to this, focus groups can reveal alternative information that can be established in different views of the analyzed phenomenon. Hence, it is also important to rely partly on induction, since qualitative methods are usually used to get a deeper understanding of human behavior (Solomon et al., 2016). Bringing together both quantitative and qualitative data means that a sequential exploratory research design is implemented and this strengthens the reliability and validity of the results.
To be able to conduct the research project, accessibility of data and feasibility of the research needs to be taken into account. Therefore, mainly local high schools and universities were targeted, meaning that students are used to conduct the survey and focus groups to gain primary data. This also means that convenience sampling will be used, which is a type of non-probability sampling (Saunders et al., 2016). Unfortunately, the schools did not reply due to vacation days. Therefore, social media was used to recruit respondents. For the theoretical background, the thesis will rely on relevant previous literature and research to support the realization of the survey questions and focus group topics.

Data analysis is done with SPSS for the obtained quantitative data through the survey. Having previously obtained knowledge about using the SPSS software at the University of Amsterdam during my Pre Master Business Administration program was very helpful to find statistical evidence and support for the formulated hypotheses. For the qualitative data from the focus groups, thematic analysis is used as the generic approach.

The timescale for this thesis is four months in total, February 2017 until June 2017, which is also the execution phase. Prior to this, a preparation phase of 3 weeks was outlined for orientation on a research topic. This means that the conducted research is cross sectional, because it covers a particular phenomenon at a specific time (Saunders et al., 2016).

1.5 Thesis Structure
This thesis consists of five sections. The first section presents the background, purpose of the study and the formulated research questions based on the problematization. This chapter ends in an overview of the outline of the thesis. In the second section a general illustration of what is known about generation Z is discussed. The chapter continues with the development of consumer behavior and sustainability within the field of fashion. The aim of this part is to answer the formulated sub questions or at least give an idea of what is already known and where to focus on during the survey and focus groups. The section ends with the conceptual framework that also presents the formulated hypotheses or propositions. The third section reveals the chosen research strategy and design, which is followed by the choice of respondents and data collection method. The next section presents the empirical data analysis, reliability and validity and generalizability. It continues with the hypothesis testing based on exploratory factor analysis and a two-step cluster analysis. The section ends with a summary of the results. The final section presents the discussion, conclusion, limitations, suggestions for future research and ends with a description of the final product.
2. Theoretical Framework

A theoretical framework is the structure used to introduce, describe and support the theory that explains why the chosen research problem exists. Next to that, theories are formulated to explain or predict phenomena and it often consists concepts or models that are used for the study (Abend, 2008). In this chapter, an overview of what is known about generation Z is presented and several theoretical models and relevant literature define sustainable fashion and consumption behavior. The end of this chapter encloses the conceptual framework and formulated hypothesis.

2.1.1 Defining Generation Z

In less than 4 years from now, generation Z will be the largest group of consumers worldwide, constructing 40% of Europe, US and BRIC countries and 10% in the remaining part of the world according to consultancy agency Fitch (2016). According to Ernst & Young (2015), the members of this generation are those born from 1997 until around 2010. This means that today, the market segment consists of kids and teens aged between 7 and 20 years old. Millennials, the late generation Y, were born between 1981-1996 (Ernst & Young, 2015). Therefore, generation Z is considered as the post-millennial cohort. However, not much empirical research has been conducted on this generation, which makes it important to get them know better.

A report by The Center for Generational Kinetics (2016) shows that generation Z will become the fastest-growing generation in the workforce sooner than we might expect, which means that they will become a critical group in the buy force. Research claims that critical differences between these groups are highly relevant to identify future needs and expectations for the fashion industry. The reason for this is because younger generations adapt to trends more easily. More than that, gender and age could indicate different consumer requirements for fashion and clothing (Rocha et al., 2005). A key factor that differentiates the new generation with generation Y is for example, self-awareness. Although they are realistic, innovative and self-reliant, generation Y is more self-centered, an idealist, creative and dependent (Ernst & Young, 2015).

However, what is important to note is that most companies define generation Z with a set of universal characteristics to describe how all members think and behave, while this is highly doubtful in reality. Even when they do share a set of values and common cultural experiences when growing up, people who belong to the same age group can differ in many ways (Solomon et al., 2016). Therefore, it is important to consider the knowledge given by these companies, yet maybe more important to use them as tendencies as opposed to facts or realities.
Below an overview of the known tendencies of generation Z:

- Generation Z is a global and diverse generation, raised in a high-tech, hyper-connected, on-demand, impatient culture and grew up in a stronger economy.

- They are skeptical, less brand loyal and more averse to corporate insincerity.

- They are considered digital natives, since they don’t know the world without technology and the Internet.

- Privacy and safety are very important; they stay realistic.

- They are more price conscious and value financial stability.

- They can quickly sort out and assess large amounts of information. The average attention span in 2015 was only eight seconds.

- Some companies say that they have a more pragmatic approach to their career, others say that generation Z are entrepreneurs at heart.

- They are willing to pay more for products from sustainable and ethical companies.

Sources: (Williams, 2015; Nielsen, 2015; National Center for Biotechnology Information, 2016; Barley, 2016; Finch, 2016)

2.2 Consumer Behavior

The following chapter presents a general view of consumer behavior. Several theories are discussed and the sub question: ‘What do we know about generation Z’s consumer behavior’ and ‘What are the drivers (motivations) in the fashion consumption of generation Z’ are answered.

2.2.1 Defining Consumer Behavior

Consumer behavior is a field that relies on different disciplines such as psychology, sociology and economics to define the choices that consumers make. It is an ongoing process that includes 3 stages: pre-consumption, consumption and post-consumption (figure 1) (Solomon et al., 2016).

According to Solomon et al. (2016, p. 33), consumer behavior can be defined as:

“[…] the study of the processes involved when individuals or groups select, purchase, use or dispose of products, services, ideas or experiences to satisfy needs and desires.”

This means that consumer behavior studies the actions and feelings of people going through their purchasing journey. To get a better understanding of consumer behavior, it is crucial to adopt different approaches including behavioral, cognitive and emotional, instead of focusing on a single approach. This is due to the fact that these components are rational to the individual in the specific situation where the behavior occurs and not one particular dimension can entirely explain an explicit behavior. Furthermore, not only intrinsic but also extrinsic factors can influence consumer behavior (Solomon et al., 2016). Belk (1975) additionally states that consumer behavior can be affected by
situational variables, meaning that depending on the reactions of consumers to a specific situation their behavior can change. Hence, Belk argues that large trends e.g. environmental concerns can have changed the consumers’ purchasing behavior in sustainable products.

Consumer behavior can also be seen in the perspective of role theory. This means that consumer behavior appears like action in a play and consumers match their behavior with their roles. For instance, a classical role is when the consumer is a ‘chooser’ and therefore can choose between various alternatives and explores different criteria before making the choice. However, additionally to the role consumers play, they also are involved in communicating their roles and statuses (Solomon & Rabolt, 2009, p.27). Biancetti and Mailer (2004) found in their research that young people use clothing as a way of self-expression and that their clothing choices are closely linked with their self-concept. The researchers also argue that young people use clothing as a function in role-fulfillment, making the wearer more self-assured and adequate in purchasing decisions.

2.2.2 Consumer Behavior in Fashion

People often associate the term ‘fashion’ with clothing and accessories. However, since fashion reflects our society and culture, it can also be used for other phenomena that are affected by culture. According to Muggleton (2010), to be “fashionable” is therefore a cultural construction that is dependent on economic, political and ideological factors. Moreover, fashion is context dependent and can therefore be interpreted differently among people that diversify in e.g. age. It is also semiotic, meaning that it has no definite explanation, but rather has the ability to be interpreted differently among perceivers (Solomon & Rabolt, 2009, p.5). Likewise, Simmel (1957) states:

“Fashion is a form of imitation and so of social equalization, but, paradoxically, in changing incessantly, it differentiates one time from another and one social stratum from another.”

(Simmel, 1957, p.541)

According to Kotler and Armstrong (2014), consumers have physical, social and specific individual needs. Physical needs include shelter and food and social needs satisfy the feelings of belonging and affection. To gain knowledge and new experiences are examples of individual needs. Having said that, these needs cannot be affected by marketers, since they are part of human nature. Fashion can be part of all three different needs. For example, clothing functions as a form of protection or warmth, but also as a tool to belong to a certain group or culture and to boost self-esteem. Next to that, clothing can be an individual need and how people feel about fashion can influence their purchasing habits (Solomon & Rabolt, 2009, p.128). In a similar vein, Black (2010) asserts that in mature markets, fashion-purchasing decisions are based on desire or aspiration, rather than basic need. Then again, according to Solomon and Rabolt (2009, p.128), consumers’ needs and wants might change in different phases of their lives and marketers should realize this. It is also important to consider that behavioral change occurs in a series of incremental steps (Miller & Rollnick, 2002). Wants are someone’s needs that are affected by extrinsic (e.g. social environment) and intrinsic (e.g. personality) factors. In other words, needs could be fulfilled in different ways. This can also be seen in the market where marketers try to influence consumers and make them demand a certain product when encountering a need that could be realized through numerous options (Kotler & Armstrong 2014). Furthermore, Skov (2010) argues that there also is a paradox in fashion consumption. In terms
of emotional attachment or identification, consumers have a positive involvement with clothing. However, they also gravitate towards a negative image of the industry behind it, indicating that there is a comprehensive cynicism about the fashion industry. Involvement is understood as the perceived relevance of an object, based on a person’s inherent needs, values and interests (Zaichkowsky, 1985). Here, ‘object’ can be defined as a product or brand, but also as a purchasing situation or advertisement. It is important to consider involvement when explaining consumer behavior, because research indicates e.g. that high involvement can lead to higher brand loyalty. Additionally, a market can be segmented based on involvement levels and different marketing strategies should be used to target each segment.

Fashion purchases are often part of hedonic consumption. Hedonic shopping behavior occurs when consumers are using shopping as an act of an enjoyable experience, rather than go out and buy a specific product. In a research study by Tifferet and Herstein (2012), women show higher levels of hedonic consumption than men and women scored also higher on brand commitment and impulse buying. However, the researchers also argue that gender differences may be product-dependent. This said, it would be within reason to take gender differences into account when conducting the empirical research for more reliable results and to achieve higher validity.

2.2.3 Generation Z’s Consumer Behavior

Both marketing as apparel research or literature conclude that young consumers are considered fashion leaders and is possibly the most concerned about trends than any other age group (Morgan & Birtwistle, 2009; Martin & Bush, 2000). As such, clothing can be viewed as an important social tool for young consumers, also since this market segment is capable of reading the signals and meanings represented in clothing choices (Piancentini & Maier, 2004). This market segment is also highly influenced by fashion press and media (Birtwistle & Moore, 2006). It is therefore of significant importance to know how this market segment with influential young consumers perceive fashion and clothing and to understand how they make their purchase decisions. However, this might not be applicable to generation Z as a whole.

In Western societies it is often the younger people that take more risks and are not afraid to try new trends. Therefore, marketers need to be able to identify the needs and wants of this group that is still connected to their parents but does not automatically want to show that (Solomon & Rabolt, 2009). Making clothing choices is often the first purchasing decision that teenagers make independently from their parents. Shopping for clothes is also the main aspect for young girls to spend their disposable income on and they use shopping as a way of an enjoyable experience with their friends (Solomon & Rabolt, 2009). Even though this decision-making is independently based, parental influence still remains a factor in their purchasing habits. On the other hand, the Deep Focus 2015 Cassandra Report indicates that in about 94 percent of the purchases for the household, children affect the decisions of the parents (Hulyk, 2015). This means that there is an interdependent relationship between parents and their children that influence both purchasing decisions.
2.2.4 Drivers of Generation Z’s Fashion Consumption

Next to parental influence, members of generation Z are highly influenced by social media. A study in 2012 by J Walter Thompson (JWT) Intelligence assert that respectively 81 percent of generation Z uses social media and more than 50 percent of their purchasing behavior is done online, rather than offline for all retail categories (Hulyk, 2015). Social network sites also give them a platform to develop personal and social identities (Anh, 2011). According to the Deep Focus 2015 Cassandra Report, generation Z is also more receptive towards communicating with brands through social media than the millennials. Research indicates that advertising is often more a source of fashion inspiration than a stimulus to buying (Johnson, Torntore and Eicher, 2003). The loss of effectiveness could be explained by discrepancies in advertising practice, or consumer attitudes. In 2014, Variety conducted a study of 1,500 teenagers and concluded that generation Z is interested in public figures that are more real, genuine and relatable e.g. social media influencers on YouTube. This could explain why traditional ways of advertising are experiencing loss of effectiveness and do not have the same function and result anymore as on other generations. However, these insights should again be considered as tendencies rather than real facts.

Especially young consumers make fashion choices as a form of self-expression, either making a statement of who they are or who they want to become (Johnson & Ein-Gar, 2008). Therefore, generation Z’s possessions of products define them: first, because they spend time deciding, buying and using them and secondly, because they use fashion products as an expression of their self-identity (Mittal, 2006). During the focus groups it became apparent that price, quality and aesthetic were the most important product attributes when making fashion consumption choices. Also, offline shopping is still an important driver, since it is considered a social activity to enjoy with friends or family. In a similar vein, according to a January study from the National Retail Federation in partnership with IBM, 98 percent of generation Z still shop offline – with 67 percent using physical stores most of the time (Stone, 2017). Online shopping is more perceived as a tool to avoid long queues in the store or to order missing sizes or models in the store.
2.3 Sustainability
Sustainability has been a significant subject and major issue within mainstream media since the 21st century, but increasingly important for the past two decades. Also, connections between fashion and sustainability have not been fully explored (Entwistle, 2015). This section of the chapter presents the definition of sustainability and the current landscape in sustainable fashion. Also, the sub questions: ‘How can sustainable fashion be defined?’ and ‘What are the subsets that drive sustainable consumption in generation Z and under what conditions do they materialize?’ are answered.

2.3.1 Defining Sustainability
When speaking about consuming sustainable (fashion) products, there is a significant need in defining this term first. However, there is not one exact definition that can embody the concept of sustainability, which causes companies to create their own conflicting definitions. As a result, people face a bewildering array of different synonyms and terminology, such as: green, eco-fashion, organic, bio-fashion, ethical or environmental, but possibly composed of vastly different criteria (Black, 2010; Stoffer, 2015). Nevertheless, according to Reilly and Weirup (2012), the principle of sustainability is often stated as the integration of ecological, social and economic concerns. This is in line with one of the most frequently cited definitions of sustainability by the Brundtland Commission in their ‘Our Common Future’ report:

“Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.” (Brundtland Commission, 1987, p.41).

Sustainable (fashion) products are therefore products that use resources and methods that are environmentally and socially responsible, which means that it e.g. allows the regeneration of raw materials or does not contribute to pollution and that it will not have any negative effects on future generations. As previously discussed, the meaning of this term can vary and be very broad in the sense of context. Therefore, using “one definitions fits all” should be discarded and the term ‘sustainability’ should match the developments, awareness and ambition levels of the businesses (Marrewijk, 2003). Ethical is another general term used to often express the same as sustainability, but adds the “people” aspect to sustainability. Freestone and Goldrick (2008) define the ethical consumer as someone who supports greater goods that motivate consumers’ purchases. The ethical consumer essentially avoids products or practices that:

“endanger the health of the consumer or others; cause significant damage to the environment during manufacture, use or disposal; consume a disproportionate amount of energy; cause unnecessary waste; use materials derived from threatened species or environments; involve unnecessary use or cruelty to animals [or] adversely affect other countries.” (Freestone & Goldrick, 2008, p.446).

Henceforth, we can see that the term sustainability can be often interchangeable with various synonyms. In this thesis the meaning of ‘sustainable’ and ‘ethical’ can therefore be interpreted as a combination of both quotes stated above and will be used synonymously.
2.3.2 Sustainability and Fashion
Fashion is beyond doubt a global business and occupies a powerful position both economically and in sociocultural terms. The production and consumption of fashion represents two extremes in the truly complex supply chain that produces textiles from fiber, which are then made into the clothing we buy through designers, manufacturers and buyers. This complexity has caused the fashion industry to have difficulties with incorporating the concept of environmental friendly and economically sustainable clothing. Also, already since the early 1990s, fashion has become both faster and cheaper, which consequently encouraged higher consumption and the devaluation of clothing (Black, 2010). As a result, 80 billion pieces of clothing are produced yearly worldwide and after the short lifespan of the garments, 3 out of 4 pieces will end up in landfills or be incinerated. In addition, only a quarter will be recycled according to Greenpeace (Chung, 2016). In a similar vein, NGO WRAP (2016) states that lower prices and reduced demand downsizes the incentive for collecting used textiles, which can lead to increased levels of landfill.

Although fashion appears to be the direct opposite of sustainability and therefore portrays a paradox, the impact of the fashion industry on global environment as well as economy and social welfare is recognized by some fashion companies (Black, 2010). Patagonia’s mission statement for instance, gives a very clear example of a company’s view on the sustainability aspect within the fashion industry: “Build the best product, cause no unnecessary harm, use business to inspire and implement solutions to the environmental crisis.” (Patagonia, 2017). This statement is very much in line with the definition given by the Brundtland Commission (1987). Another example is Scandinavian fashion label NOIR, who produces eco-luxury garments since 2005 when environmental concerns regarding CO2 emissions and melting glaciers were the biggest trends. The success of these cases shows that it is not impossible to be sustainable in fashion, despite the oxymoron, and can be used as examples for other companies as well.

However, the real challenge for the fashion industry according to design-thinker Ehrenfeld (2015) is acknowledging two important aspects of sustainability: first, finding a meaningful definition and goal, and, second, finding and understanding the roots of unsustainability and make “a commitment to replace them with cultural drivers that both eliminate or greatly reduce the impact of everyday life and begin to bring flourishing forth” (Ehrenfeld, 2015). This is because he argues that unsustainability can be perceived as a set of unintended consequences of modern cultures. Moreover, what Ehrenfeld means with ‘flourishing’ becomes clear when he gives his definition of sustainability, which differs from the definition given by the Brundtland Commission: “Sustainability is the possibility that humans and other life will flourish on the planet forever” (Ehrenfeld, 2008). Having said that, the current sustainable fashion practices are only focused on eco-efficiency: practices that provide more or the same value, but with a smaller impact on the environment, or on Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR): practices that manage social impacts. However, these practices are only reducing unsustainability and are not finding the cause to solve the problem. Therefore, he argues that negative consequences of the fashion industry can only be targeted and eliminated with a new set of beliefs that lead to a new set of cultural habits. Even though this might be a very radical way of changing the system of the fashion industry, it does address a very important problem that the industry is facing today.
2.3.3 Drivers of Sustainable Purchases

Boulstridge and Carrigan (2000) argue that there is an attitude-behavior gap when it comes to purchasing sustainable products. Although consumers may have good intentions purchasing green products, the reality shows that sustainability is not their main criteria. Lizzie Harrison of Sustain RCA elevates this and claims that consumers like to think they will buy a sustainably sourced t-shirt, but a lot of those values get suppressed in the moment of buying (Moulds, 2015). Also, other significant contributors to an individual's involvement in fashion clothing and purchase decision-making, such as: product expertise, self-identity and materialistic values, could be additional plausible causes (O’Cass 2004; Niinimaki, 2009; 2010). Furthermore, studies similar to Joy (2012), repeatedly conclude that positive consumer intentions towards sustainable products, do not translate directly into consumption choices. When focused on sustainable purchases, a regression analysis of Lee (2008) showed that social influence, environmental concern, self-image and perceived ethical responsibility are top predictors of sustainable purchases of young adolescents.

However, Freestone and McGoldrick (2008) assert that the complicated process of ethical purchase behavior is reflected by the choices derived from evaluations of personal and social benefits or harms when reviewing product attributes. In their research, Freestone and McGoldrick indicate that motivational attitudes of consumers are a result of their ethical concern, action and awareness. Furthermore, social motivators have a higher impact on ethical behavior than personal motivators (Bucic, Harris and Arli, 2012). Solomon et al. (2016) define motivations as “the process that cause people to behave as they do [and] occur when a need is aroused that the consumer wishes to satisfy”. Through understanding someone’s motivation and values, we can find out why people behave as they do. Additionally, underlying values drive consumer motivations and consumers use values as criteria to select and justify behavior.

Some researchers found it more convenient to make a distinction of different categories for values, such as cultural, consumption and product values (Solomon & Rabolt, 2009). Furthermore, personal and social values can often be closely intertwined (Solomon et al., 2016, p.156; Freestone & McGoldrick, 2008). This means that products can be instruments for the consumer to achieve some goal that is linked to a value, such as individuality or freedom. Also, according to Freestone and McGoldrick (2008), values are a very important aspect in consumption behavior, since many products or services are selected with value-related goals in mind.

2.3.4 Sustainable Consumption of Generation Z

According to Lundblad and Davies (2016), sustainable consumption is closely linked to consumer’s self-concept. There is much emphasis placed on self-expression and self-esteem, which then motivates consumers to purchase clothing with attributes like unique styles and materials to obtain goals such as individuality. Other drivers that the authors found in their research of sustainable consumption are social justice, responsibility, sense of accomplishment and value for money. Research shows that a major group of generation Z is consciously shopping, however not much research has been done about the reason behind their choices or preferences.
During the focus groups, participants answered that even though they would like to contribute to a more sustainable fashion cycle, they do not have the knowledge or resources to do so. Additionally, they felt very powerless and not able to influence other people’s choices. They believe that only a small group of people really focuses on sustainability during shopping and that the majority of people do not care:

“I don’t think it will matter [if all clothing became 100 percent sustainably produced]. I mean, some people don’t even know what cotton is, they just buy it, ecological or not. I don’t think it really matters to them, as long as it [the product] looks good.”

Therefore, finding the subsets that drive generation Z making sustainable consumption choices should be an important focus during the surveys.

2.4 Conceptual Framework
According to Solomon et al. (2016), there are two main philosophical or scientific approaches to understanding and analyzing consumer behavior: positivist and interpretivist. The positivist approach urges that the nature of reality is objective and can be discovered by science. The newer paradigm of interpretivism stresses the importance of subjective experience. Thus, the nature of reality is socially constructed and people construct their own meanings based on previous unique and shared experiences. More than that, this also means that there is no right or wrong answer, but the generated knowledge is context-dependent. In this research, both perspectives are addressed. The goal of a positivist view is to ‘predict’ and therefore deductively designed surveys match this approach. On the other hand, the goal of an interpretivist approach is to ‘understand’, meaning that e.g. focus groups are more suitable for this perspective. Therefore, before developing the hypotheses or propositions of the research, it is important to obtain more information from generation Z and the latter would be most the suitable method.

Two focus groups were organized:
- Group 1 consisted of three females and two males born in the years 1999 and 2000, which means that the participants were between the age of 16 and 18. The focus group was conducted on the 27th of March 2017 and lasted for 50 minutes and 59 seconds.
- Group 2 consisted of four females and zero males born in 2001 and 2002, which means that the participants were between the age of 14 and 16. The focus group was conducted on the 27th of March 2017 and lasted for 40 minutes and 59 seconds.

According to Saunders et al. (2016), the size of the focus groups should consist of at least 4 participants and at most 12 participants. Also, to reach data saturation, which means that no new information will be provided, at least two focus groups should be conducted. Both arguments were satisfied. During the focus group, the participants answered 15 questions and 7 discussion statements. The transcriptions, coding analysis and focus group design can be found in the Process Book. In conclusion of the obtained empirical data and the literature review, the following hypotheses were developed.
From the focus groups it became apparent that although concerns about the environment are seen as a very important, sustainability awareness and consideration was not very high. The respondent did not have much knowledge about sustainable practices in the fashion industry and it seemed as if this was not even part of their main drivers when buying clothes. When talking about this rather unknown subject to them, some of the respondents felt more inclined to support sustainable causes. On the other hand, some of the respondents were rather realistic, saying things as: “it [the clothing] has already been made, nothing can be changed about that” or “I don’t really care about sustainability, as long as I like the clothing style”. Consecutively, the following hypothesis has been constructed:

**Hypothesis 1**: Higher sustainable consideration will not affect generation Z’s purchasing behavior

Bucic, Harris and Arli (2012) extended Freestone and McGoldrick’s (2008) research and used millennials as their target group. They found that there are three distinct subgroups, meaning that millennials shouldn’t be treated as a niche market, but rather as a collection of submarkets that vary in their awareness, engagement and motives when making (sustainable) consumption decisions. Additionally, Solomon et al. (2016) assert that even when people who belong to the same age group do share a set of values and common cultural experiences when growing up, they can differ in many ways (Solomon et al., 2016). During both focus groups, opinions also differed variously on several topics. With this in mind, it is relevant to find out if generation Z will also consists of different submarkets. Hence, the following hypothesis has been constructed:

**Hypothesis 2**: Generation Z is a collection of submarkets and cannot be perceived as one niche market.
3. Empirical Method

This chapter presents the research strategy and design, choice of respondents and data collection method. It continues with the pilot test for the survey and ends with a discussion of the reliability, validity and generalizability of the conducted research. The term “empirical” refers to the use of hypotheses that can be tested by observation or an experiment. Doing empirical research is important, because it means that the study is based on evidence (Saunders et al., 2016).

3.1 Research Strategy and Design

Rather than moving from theory to data (as in deductive reasoning) or data to theory (as in inductive reasoning), an abductive approach combines both. Although deduction and induction are the two most commonly used research approaches, according to Saunders et al. (2016), abduction matches what many business and management researchers actually do. However, it is often the case that either deduction or induction will be more dominant. Therefore, selecting an abductive approach and keeping in mind the restricted time frame, deduction will presumably be the dominant approach in this research. A (pre-tested) survey can then be used as the main instrument to test the propositions with empirical data. Next to this, focus groups may reveal alternative information that can be established in different views of the analyzed phenomenon. Hence, it is also important to rely partly on induction, since qualitative methods are usually used to get a deeper understanding of human behavior (Solomon et al., 2012). Bringing together both quantitative and qualitative data in this way means that a sequential exploratory research design is implemented and this strengthens reliability and validity of the results. First, the focus groups were conducted to get a general view of generation Z’s consumer behavior. Based on the focus group data and after conducting thematic analysis, two hypotheses were constructed that is researched with a self-administered survey.

The survey consisted of 5 open questions and 32 items that the respondents rated on a Likert scale of 1-5. The items were constructed based on the data of the focus groups and the research of: Freestone & McGoldrick (2008), Bucic, Harris and Arli (2012) and Solomon and Rabolt (2009).

Data analysis was done with SPSS for the quantitative data through the survey. Having previously obtained knowledge about using the SPSS software at the University of Amsterdam during the Pre Master Business Administration program was helpful to conduct statistical analyses and support the formulated propositions.

3.2 Sample Selection

To be able to conduct the research, accessibility of data needs to be taken into account. Although people who belong to the same age group can differ in many ways, considering age groups for the research design does make the unit of analysis more concrete. This became more apparent during the focus groups: respondents between the age of 15 and 18 years old were more independent from their parents than respondents of 13 and 14 years old. This independency caused them to make fashion choices more based on their own values, rather than their parents’ opinions. According to the CBS (2017), 4 out of 10 teenagers in the Netherlands aged between 15-20 years old have a part-time job next to their study, representing their own buying power. Therefore, the target audiences for the survey were males and females aged between 15 and 20 years old.
3.3 Pilot Test
Before conducting the survey on a large scale, a pilot test was conducted to refine the survey so that the respondents would not encounter any problems when answering the questions and no issues would appear when recording the data. It also provides an idea of the survey’s face validity, which means that the survey should make sense. The test was completed with five individuals that matched the target group. The respondents did not mention any unclear questions and the survey was on average completed within ten minutes. However, the order of the questions were slightly altered and the following two items were deleted after pre-analysis since these questions did not measure the analyzed phenomenon:

- ‘I go to the offline store for the ‘experience’ of the brand’: this question was deleted from the survey because the question ‘Do you buy your clothes online or offline and why?’ already covers the purpose.
- ‘I find it bothersome when I am confronted with the negative sides of the apparel industry’: the motivational statements should represent merits and demerits and the question does not focus on this.

3.4 Data Collection Method
Mainly local high schools and universities were targeted and used to conduct the survey and gain primary data. This also means that convenience sampling will be used, which is a type of non-probability sampling (Saunders et al., 2016). A total of three high schools in Almere in the Netherlands were approached to collaborate. The main method was to conduct the survey in classrooms since it allows for better attention and dedication of the students. Therefore, more answers could be collected (Denscombe, 2014). Another option was also given to the school: they could also send it to their students via email or put it on their online learning platform. This could lead to less respondents, but the sample would still be large. However, none of the schools replied due to the holidays and the May vacation that lasted for two weeks. The survey was therefore also posted on social media platform Facebook and Instagram to reach out to other members of the target group that were not in the targeted local high schools and universities. Combining different methods additionally lead to higher generalizability of the study and also positively influences validity. However, since the schools could not be contacted, this was not achieved.

According to CBS (2017), the total population of Dutch youngsters aged between 15 and 20 years old is 1,018,727 people (521,725 males and 497,002 females). To reach validity for the survey and since the survey consisted of 5 open questions and 32 items, at least 384 respondents need to be collected (Saunders et al., 2016). If this amount is reached, there will only be a Margin of Error of 5 percent, meaning that there is a 95 percent level of certainty that the sample is representative.
3.5 Reliability & Validity
It is very important to consider the reliability of the study, since it implies that the study should give the same results if the same sample was used for replication, which would increase the stability of the survey. It also refers to the questions validation and how the answers are measured as how the chosen measurements are suitable for the examined constructs (Saunders et al., 2016). However, it was not possible to administer the survey for a second time, due to the time frame and limits of this study. Therefore, reliability cannot be considered high. On the other hand, the results of the study do give an indication and could be an important examination used for future research. Validity refers to the study of conceptual and theoretical relevancy. More specifically, how well the questions answer what is studied (Saunders et al., 2016). In other words, it refers to how well a measure of a concept really measures an underlying construct. The validity of the tested concepts is measured with Cronbach’s Alpha, which measures internal consistency of the variable and can be accepted at a level higher than 0.6. However, even when the internal reliability is low of a variable, it does not mean that it does not generate valuable meanings. Therefore, the possibility of respondents not understanding the questions or poorly constructed statements should be taken into account when interpreting the results of the analysis.

3.6 Generalizability
The generalization of the results and findings from this study will be limited due to generalizability being restricted to the studied population (Bryman & Bell, 2015). The study is conducted on individuals aged between 15 and 20 years old, meaning that the findings can be generalized for Generation Z at large. However, since the sample is also a convenience sample, this type of sampling is problematic to generalize. Furthermore, since the study is conducted in the Netherlands and largely on Dutch individuals, the findings can only be generalized to the Dutch context.
4. Data Analysis

This section presents the results of the survey for discussion. First, the demographics of the sample are discussed. After that the analysis is divided into different sections: in-store and online shopping behavior, the meaning and importance of sustainability in fashion and the purchasing drivers of generation Z. Third, an exploratory factor analysis is conducted to find underlying concepts and their internal reliability is discussed. Fourth, a cluster analysis shows the different clusters that can be found in the sample. Lastly, the results of the email questionnaires are presented.

4.1 Descriptive Statistics

The survey was open from the 17th of April 2017 until the 3rd of May 2017, resulting in a window of two weeks and two days for recruiting respondents. The average time to complete was 8 minutes and 26 seconds. With 201 completed answers, the Margin of Error (M.E.) holds approximately 7 percent. Additionally, the ideal age for the sample were respondents aged between 15 and 20 years old, meaning that they would have been born between 1996 and 2002. However, a tolerance of one year has been chosen since analyzing the target group their buying behavior should be seen as a tendency. Therefore, after eliminating 11 completed surveys, a total of 190 data samples were used for analysis. Although the result of the survey was not as representative as wanted, it is definitely an indication of the target group. Also, it is important to mention the unbalanced ratio of females and males, which resulted in a heavily female biased view, while in reality the ratio of males and females is more balanced (table 1) (CBS, 2016).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1. Gender</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>25,8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>74,2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2 shows the descriptive statistics for the dependent, independent and control variables used in the study. The minimum ranges from 1 to a maximum of 5, except for the variables gender and sustainable purchases since these variables are not measured on a Likert scale.

The dependent variables in this study are sustainable consideration and sustainable purchasing of the individual. The process of identifying the people’s consideration towards ethical causes was measured by asking how important sustainability is for them when buying clothes and if they purchase or have purchased ethical products. The last question was an open question, which could have been better measured on a Likert scale instead for a more precise outcome. The dependent variables are the personal and social motivations for making ethical decisions, divided in positive and negative aspects. Lastly, the control variables are important attributes that the individuals consider when purchasing ethical or non-ethical product, their gender and their attitude towards helping other people. All these control variables are crucial since they can influence the given answers and therefore also influence the study’s outcome.
### Table 2. Descriptive Statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sustainability consideration</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3,41</td>
<td>0,780</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sustainable purchases</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1,60</td>
<td>0,491</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social positive motivations</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3,66</td>
<td>0,730</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social negative motivations</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3,34</td>
<td>0,704</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal positive motivations</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2,74</td>
<td>0,863</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal negative motivations</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2,97</td>
<td>0,742</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1,26</td>
<td>0,439</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Price</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4,17</td>
<td>0,772</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4,06</td>
<td>0,672</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brand</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2,62</td>
<td>0,911</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Style</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4,19</td>
<td>0,710</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comfort</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4,05</td>
<td>0,725</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sustainability</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3,12</td>
<td>0,798</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Country of origin</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2,34</td>
<td>1,004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3,23</td>
<td>0,883</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Store appearance</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3,49</td>
<td>0,907</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitude towards helping others</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3,82</td>
<td>0,636</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer conformity motivations</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2,60</td>
<td>0,770</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outward conformity motivations</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3,66</td>
<td>0,620</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A test of normality was conducted to test if the data is normally distributed or not. As expected and showing in table 3, the variable sustainability consideration has a \( p \)-value = 0,0 < 0,1 = \( \alpha \) (significance level of 10 percent), which indicates that the variable is not normally distributed.

### Table 3. Test of Normality

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Kolmogorov-Smirnov</th>
<th>Shapiro-Wilk</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Statistic</td>
<td>df</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sustainability consideration</td>
<td>0,156</td>
<td>190</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.2 In-store and Online Shopping

According to a January study from the National Retail Federation in partnership with IBM, 98 percent of generation Z still shop offline – with 67 percent using physical stores most of the time (Stone, 2017). This was also very apparent in the focus groups and is the same for the respondents of the survey. Almost 65 percent expressed that they rather buy their clothes in the store than online, leading it to being the most important channel for the target group to shop. However, online shopping is also a very important platform. It is easy, fast and consumers can browse through the products without feeling pressured by sales assistants and other external factors. Some respondents indicated that online shopping’s main issue is the return policies. Other obstacles for online purchasing are e.g. that the product often does not look the same as on your screen, shipping fees and lack of trust (table 4). On the other hand, people that buy online try to avoid the very crowded stores and long queues.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 4. Motivation for In-Store and Online Shopping</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>In-store motivations (ranked)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Fitting/sizing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Feeling the product</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Social Activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Having the product immediately</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Assistance and ambiance of the store</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Even though convenience and accessibility were not measured in the survey, the motivations for in-store and online shopping do indicate that these subsets are very important in their shopping behavior. Therefore, when considering ethical decision-making, convenience and accessibility should be considered as very important. Currently, generation Z may feel that finding sustainable fashion products is a very complex process. Hence, increasing accessibility can possibly counter affect these issues. However, more research should look into this.

4.3 Meaning and Importance of Sustainability in Fashion

When asked what sustainability means in fashion to the respondents, the answers “clothes, accessories and jewelry that were made with respect for the environment, animals and people” and “good working conditions for people that are involved in manufacturing” are almost as equally important. The use of sustainable materials and recycling of clothes were less chosen. Respondents that chose ‘other’ gave meanings such as: no use of animal based material, the lifespan of a garment according to the consumer and the durability or quality of the clothes. Also, sustainable clothes are expected to be expensive, causing most people not wanting to spend extra money.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 5. “Have you ever bought sustainable clothes?”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Yes</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In the sample, 40 percent buys or have bought sustainable clothes, 42.6 percent has never bought sustainable clothes and 17.4 percent is not aware how sustainable their purchases are or simply does not consider this factor when shopping (table 5).

People that buy or have bought sustainable clothes indicated drivers such as caring for the environment, taking some form of action against bad working conditions or a good feeling. Extrinsic factors such as education and influence of people close to you also constituted as drivers for buying ethical. More specifically, one respondent expressed that her neighbors were very into sustainability practices, causing her to be more aware and informed about ethical products. Also, a specific lifestyle e.g. being vegan also influences fashion consumption choices. Another respondent indicated that it is very important for brands to become more sustainable and she thinks that brands are motivated by their consumers instead of the other way around. Hence, different motives can be found for purchasing ethical fashion products. Furthermore, consumers often buy clothes because of its style or look. When it is sustainable as well, this is seen as a plus, but not as a requirement. Overall, the respondents expressed that sustainable fashion should be affordable. Therefore, vintage or second hand clothing is perceived as a solution to expensive sustainable brands.

Reasons such as “it’s too expensive”, “I buy what I like” and “you don’t think about it while shopping” were given to not buy sustainable fashion. Respondents also expressed that they have no knowledge to find out if something is sustainable or what sustainability even means when shopping for clothes. This is a crucial point for brands to work on. When educated, consumers can make better choices so saying “I want to, but do not know how” is not an excuse anymore.

**Table 6. Sustainable Consideration**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Sustainability in fashion is important to me</th>
<th>I get inspired by brands that involve me in solving social problems</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>3.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Std. Deviation</td>
<td>.899</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>3.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Std. Deviation</td>
<td>.861</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>3.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Std. Deviation</td>
<td>.877</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
When looking at how important sustainability in fashion is for the target group rated on a Likert scale of 1-5, it becomes apparent that sustainability is found important (mean = 3.53) and it is more important to females (mean = 3.60) than to males (mean = 3.33). Also, generation Z is just a little bit inspired by brands that involve their participation to help solve social issues, like for example sustainable causes. Again, females scored higher (mean = 3.40) than males (mean = 2.96). When testing the two items on their internal reliability, they showed high consistency (Cronbach’s Alpha = 0.711), meaning that items together measure the same underlying construct.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 7. Cronbach’s Alpha Sustainable Considerations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cronbach’s Alpha Based on Standardized</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cronbach’s Alpha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.711</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 4.4 Purchasing Drivers

The respondents were asked to identify which drivers are important for them when making fashion purchases. The results are presented in table 8.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 8. Descriptive Statistics Purchasing Attributes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Price</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Style</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comfort</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sustainability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Country of Origin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service in Store</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Store Appearance</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is noticeable that factors like style, quality and comfort still dominate their decision-making. This result can be explained by previous literature that conclude that young consumers are considered fashion leaders and are possibly the most concerned about trends than any other age group (Morgan & Birtwistle, 2009; Martin & Bush, 2000). Price is second, making it very important as well. However, this is a very sensible result, since generation Z is quite young and needs to make choices about how to spend their monthly allowance or money earned with their part time job. Members of generation Z also expressed during the focus groups that the price of a product has a heavy influence on their purchasing decisions.

Furthermore, sustainability (mean = 3.12) is important, but only to a certain extend. Participants of the survey expressed that they do think it is an important topic, but that it is often not integrated in their lifestyle. One of the possible causes is that accessibility of this type of product is perceived very
low, making it harder for consumer to make ethical choices. The brand (mean = 2.62) and where the products are made (mean = 2.34) are considered quite unimportant. These are very interesting outcomes since this means that first of all, generation Z does not care about brands, meaning that brand loyalty is also low. This is in line with the given tendencies discussed in section 2.1.1. Furthermore, the country of origin of the product is considered the least important purchasing attribute, which gives managers the option to not include this as an important aspect when making retail strategies.

It is also interesting to consider the relation between sustainable consideration and the sample’s sustainable purchasing behavior, which shows that higher sustainable consideration often means that the individual has done an ethical purchase before (figure 2). Therefore, based on these data results hypothesis 1: Higher sustainable consideration will not affect generation Z’s purchasing behavior, is not supported. Sustainability may not be one of the main purchasing drivers for generation Z, the people that do have interest in ethical issues do at least try to contribute to a more sustainable fashion industry. They may not purchase ethical fashion products on a regular basis, but the results show that they do care. Therefore, it is inevitable to assume that someone’s sustainability consideration does influence his or her consumer behavior in fashion.

4.5 Exploratory Factor Analysis

To find out underlying constructs before continuing with a cluster analysis, an exploratory factor analysis was conducted. First, questions 9 to 23 (excluding question 20 that was deleted after the pilot test) were tested on their suitability for conducting a factor analysis. Suitability was tested through an initial Bartlett’s test (Chi-sq. = 212,098, p = 0.000) and the KMO Measure of Sampling Adequacy, which at 0.639 is higher than the recommended minimum of 0.50. This means that there are shared correlations between the items. The number of components to extract was determined by comparing two established procedures for factor extraction. Eigenvalue criteria indicated three components with a total variance explained of 53.98 percent and the Scree Test gave the same three-component outcome. There were five items deleted (question 9, 15, 17, 18 and 19) as they lowered the KMO Measure of Sampling Adequacy and had double loadings on different components. After reviewing the items, it became apparent that they did not share the same meaning as proposed in the three-component solution. Varimax rotations were implemented to achieve a more interpretive result of the constructs (table 9).

The first component represents the attitude towards helping others with a Cronbach’s Alpha of 0.748, meaning that the items are internally consistent and measure the same construct. The second component measures peer conformity motivation and assessed the influence of others on generation Z’s consumer behavior in e.g. clothing (Cronbach’s Alpha = 0.485). Even though internal consistency
is rather low and not acceptable for these four items, it was decided to keep all items since there is a possibility that they still contain important information. The last component represents the outward appearance of the product that influences consumer behavior (Cronbach’s Alpha = 0,136). Cronbach’s Alpha indicates that these two items probably do not measure the same construct, however it was meant to measure how outward attributes like price, quality and function influences consumer behavior. Therefore, it was decided to keep the proposed three-component solution.

**Table 9. Factor Analysis of Other Constructs**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Component 1</th>
<th>Component 2</th>
<th>Component 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Attitude towards helping others (Cronbach’s Alpha = 0,748)</td>
<td>Peer conformity motivations (Cronbach’s Alpha = 0,485)</td>
<td>Outward conformity motivations (Cronbach’s Alpha = 0,136)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People should be willing to help others who are less fortunate</td>
<td>.830</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People should be more charitable towards others in society</td>
<td></td>
<td>.796</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helping troubled people with their problems is very important to me</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.784</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When a friend or family member suggest me to buy something, I buy it faster then when not knowing the product</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.790</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When I buy the same clothing my friends buy, I feel closer to them</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.724</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If I were to buy something expensive, I would worry about what others think of me</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.534</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is important that others think well of how I dress and look</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.377</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How elegant and attractive a product is, is as important as how well it works</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.822</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I always look for the best price / quality ratio when it comes to clothing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.466</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total variance explained = 53,98%; KMO = 0,639; Bartlett’s test Chi-sq. = 212,098; p = 0,000
For the second part, questions 24 to 34 (excluding question 28 that was deleted after the pilot test) were tested for suitability for an exploratory factor analysis and possible underlying constructs. The initial Bartlett’s test (Chi-sq. = 498,203, p = 0,000) and the KMO Measure of Sampling Adequacy, which at 0,666 is higher than the recommended minimum of 0,50, indicated that the items were suitable. This means that there are shared correlations between the items. First, a two-component solution was extracted, since the items should represent positive and negative motivations of ethical decision-making (table 10). Orthogonal (Varimax) rotations were implemented, as the objective was to get the original items separated into two components. The items “It is a waste of time to try to influence big brands so they would produce in a sustainable way and act ethically correct” and “People are too busy today to be concerned about sustainability in the fashion industry” should actually be deleted according to the conventional cut-off criterion of 0,40 (Freestone & McGoldrick, 2008), but it was decided to keep the items since they may have been misunderstood by the respondents and still contain important information.

The first component represents the positive motivations for ethical decision-making and has an acceptable level of internal consistency (Cronbach’s Alpha = 0,686). The second component that measured negative motivations has a rather poor internal consistency level (Cronbach’s Alpha = 0,583), but is still close to 0,6 since it is possible that ill-constructed items influenced the results.

However, the number of components to extract determined by comparing two established procedures for factor extraction gave a different outcome. Eigenvalue criteria indicated four components with a total variance explained of 56,11 percent and the Scree Test gave the same four-component outcome. This can be explained since the proposed motivations can be an intertwined combination of personal and social motives (table 11). The first component represents social positive motives with a high internal consistency level (Cronbach’s Alpha = 0,766). The second component measures social negative motives is problematic in internal consistency (Cronbach’s Alpha = 0,261). It was decided to keep both items since in theory they possibly still measure the same construct. The third component represents personal positives with an acceptable level of internal consistency as well (Cronbach’s Alpha = 0,601). The last component measured personal negative motives with an acceptable level of internal consistency (Cronbach’s Alpha = 0,605).
Table 10. Factor Analysis MotivationalStatements 2-Components Solutions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positive Motivations (Cronbach’s Alpha = 0.686)</th>
<th>Component 1</th>
<th>Component 2 Negative Motivations (Cronbach’s Alpha = 0.583)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>It would be better if people would buy clothes from sustainable brands</td>
<td>826</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consumers could make fairer choices if they were aware which brands had high ethical principles and find sustainability important</td>
<td>.645</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel better about myself if I take some form of action against brands that are not sustainable or ethically correct</td>
<td>.601</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People around me would respect me if I buy sustainable clothes</td>
<td>.582</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My friends are concerned about sustainability and transparency in the fashion industry</td>
<td>.502</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It would make shopping less convenient if I had to choose only from sustainable clothes</td>
<td></td>
<td>.712</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It would take the pleasure out of shopping if I had to choose only from sustainable clothes</td>
<td></td>
<td>.640</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It would be too much hassle to buy only from brands that do no violate sustainable principles</td>
<td></td>
<td>.549</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People’s choices would be unreasonably restricted by the removal of non-sustainable clothes</td>
<td></td>
<td>.502</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My friends would find it uncool to be concerned about sustainability in the fashion industry</td>
<td></td>
<td>.483</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having to take sustainability into account would make shopping less convenient for people</td>
<td></td>
<td>.435</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People are too busy today to be concerned about sustainability in the fashion industry</td>
<td></td>
<td>.339</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is a waste of time to try to influence big brands so they would produce in a sustainable way and act ethically correct</td>
<td></td>
<td>.125</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total variance explained = 37.21%; KMO = 0.666; Bartlett’s test Chi-sq. = 498.203; p = 0.000
Table 11. Factor Analysis Motivational Statements 4-Components Solution

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component 1</th>
<th>Component 2</th>
<th>Component 3</th>
<th>Component 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social Positive (Cronbach’s Alpha = 0.766)</td>
<td>Social Negative (Cronbach’s Alpha = 0.261)</td>
<td>Personal Positive (Cronbach’s Alpha = 0.601)</td>
<td>Personal Negative (Cronbach’s Alpha = 0.605)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consumers could make fairer choices if they were aware which brands had high ethical principles and find sustainability important</td>
<td>,819</td>
<td>,816</td>
<td>,770</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It would be better if people would buy clothes from sustainable brands</td>
<td>,784</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having to take sustainability into account would make shopping less convenient for people</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>,725</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People are too busy today to be concerned about sustainability in the fashion industry</td>
<td></td>
<td>,536</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My friends are concerned about sustainability and transparency in the fashion industry</td>
<td></td>
<td>,770</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel better about myself if I take some form of action against brands that are not sustainable or ethically correct</td>
<td></td>
<td>,725</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People around me would respect me if I buy sustainable clothes</td>
<td></td>
<td>,563</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is a waste of time to try to influence big brands so they would produce in a sustainable way and act ethically correct</td>
<td>,263</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It would take the pleasure out of shopping if I had to choose only from sustainable clothes</td>
<td>,713</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It would make shopping less convenient if I had to choose only from sustainable clothes</td>
<td>,668</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People’s choices would be unreasonably restricted by the removal of non-sustainable clothes</td>
<td>,655</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My friends would find it uncool to be concerned about sustainability in the fashion industry</td>
<td>,470</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It would be too much hassle to buy only from brands that do no violate sustainable principles</td>
<td>,429</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total variance explained = 56.11%; KMO = 0.666; Bartlett’s test Chi-sq. = 498,203; p = 0.000
Even though some constructs showed low internal reliability, they still partly contribute to the findings since these outcomes could be explained by misinterpretations of the statements by the respondent or items with high variance leading to a skewed distribution. Therefore, it is important to look at correlations between different constructs for further analysis.

Sustainability consideration and social/personal positive motivations show strong correlations, but are still moderate positive. This means that social/personal positive motivations have sizable, but not overwhelming effects on considering sustainability as important within the fashion industry. This is in line with the negative support for hypothesis 1. When members within generation Z have high social/personal positive motivations, it is likely that their sustainability consideration is also high. Moreover, both constructs have acceptable internal consistency, meaning that this result is highly compelling.

**Fig. 3 Correlation Matrix**
In figure 2, social and personal motivations are compared with the sustainable purchasing behavior. As expected, both social positive motivations and personal positive motivations are positively related to sustainable purchasing behavior. This means that higher positive motivations can be translated into the fact that the individual purchases or has purchased ethical fashion products. Furthermore, the opposite would be expected for all negative motivations. Higher negative motivations would mean that the consumer is not interested in ethical decision-making. However, it is noticeable that this is not the case for social negative motivations. According to the data, higher social negative motivations do not influence the ethical-decision making of the individual, since they still purchase or have purchased ethical fashion products.
4.6 Cluster Analysis

To find out if the sample consists out of different segments instead of a niche market, a Two-Step Cluster Analysis was conducted. The following eight variables were used to test the clusters: sustainable consideration, peer conformity consideration, outward conformity consideration, attitude towards helping others, personal negative motivations, personal positive motivations, social negative motivations and social positive motivations.

The analysis resulted in a three-cluster solution with a fair cluster quality (table 12). The smallest cluster consists of 44 persons within the sample and the largest cluster consists of 86 persons. The ratio of the cluster sizes is also acceptable (Ratio = 1,95), meaning that the largest cluster is only 1,95 times bigger than the smallest cluster (appendix 1). In research, the ratio is often desired to be less than 2. The predictor importance also shows that there are no individual dominating variables. The most important variable when the clusters were tested was social positive motivations and the least important variable was the attitude towards helping others (appendix 2).

Table 12. Cluster Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Label</th>
<th>Cluster 1</th>
<th>Cluster 2</th>
<th>Cluster 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Size</td>
<td>45,3% (86)</td>
<td>31,6% (80)</td>
<td>21,2% (44)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sustainability consideration</td>
<td>2,95</td>
<td>3,98</td>
<td>3,53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social positive motivations</td>
<td>3,19</td>
<td>4,11</td>
<td>3,95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social negative motivations</td>
<td>3,50</td>
<td>3,52</td>
<td>2,81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal positive motivations</td>
<td>2,38</td>
<td>3,35</td>
<td>2,59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal negative motivations</td>
<td>3,26</td>
<td>2,98</td>
<td>2,39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer conformity consideration</td>
<td>2,90</td>
<td>2,71</td>
<td>1,85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outward conformity consideration</td>
<td>3,49</td>
<td>4,02</td>
<td>3,48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitude towards helping others</td>
<td>3,58</td>
<td>4,10</td>
<td>3,89</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

After the Two-Step Cluster Analysis, a comparison was made to find out the differences between the clusters. The clusters can be considered as someone that had low, middle or high consideration or awareness for sustainability in the fashion industry. The full description for each cluster can be found in table 4.12.
Table 13. Cluster Description

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cluster 1</th>
<th>Cluster 2</th>
<th>Cluster 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Indifferent</strong></td>
<td><strong>The Reserved Social Conscience</strong></td>
<td><strong>Non-conformist</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The people in this cluster have no particular interest in sustainability and show the lowest attitude in helping others. This does not mean that they do not want to help other people, but they score the lowest of the three clusters. They also score the highest on peer conformity, meaning that they get more easily influenced by others opinions than the people in the other two clusters. These people could therefore be considered as trend followers, as they tend to follow what the majority likes instead of making a statement themselves. To conclude, sustainability is a topic that is not within their interest and therefore definitely not a driver when making fashion purchases.</td>
<td>This cluster is so named because of its high motivations and consideration for sustainability. These people have the strongest social and personal positive motivations and middle scores between cluster 1 and 3 on personal negative motivations. They are conscious of the benefits if they are concerned about sustainability in the fashion industry to both themselves and society. However, they are also aware that there could be personal and social drawbacks involved with sustainability. For example, “it is too much hassle to only buy sustainable products (personal) or “people are too busy to be concerned about sustainability” (social). They also score the highest on outward conformity motivation, meaning that these people care about the quality and functionality of the product, rather than the opinions of others. To conclude, sustainability is a possible driver when making fashion purchases.</td>
<td>The people in this cluster are in between the people of cluster 1 and 2. This means that they do care about sustainability, but are not sure in how to change this. They do not think it is a hassle, but are not so sure that them taking action will actually change something. They basically do not conform to prevailing sustainable ideas or ethical practices in their consumer behavior. Furthermore, they score the lowest on both peer and outward conformity motivations. This indicates again that they stay true to their own ideas and opinions (intrinsic motivations) when making fashion purchases. Additionally, because of these reasons, these people could be considered fashion leaders as they tend to be more themselves and are not scared to show this.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Freestone and McGoldrick (2008) argue that the motivational attitudes of consumers are a result of their ethical concern, action and awareness. This is in line with the results from the cluster analysis. For example, cluster one shows high negative emotions and scores the lowest consideration in sustainability, which is in line with the argument of Freestone and McGoldrick (2008). Additionally, social motivators have a higher impact on ethical behavior than personal motivators and this is also represented by the results of the study (Bucic, Harris and Arli, 2012). The values of the social motivators are higher than the values of the personal motivators. The predictor importance (appendix 2) however shows that social negative motivation was not very important when constructing the clusters. This can be explained by the low internal consistency of the variable, causing it not to be reliable. Also, personal and social values can often be closely intertwined (Solomon et al., 2016, p.156; Freestone & McGoldrick, 2008). Hence, it is important to consider both values when assessing a consumer’s sustainability consideration and that is accomplished in analyzing and evaluating the results of the study.

According to Lundblad and Davies (2016), sustainable consumption is closely linked to consumer’s self-concept. There is much emphasis placed on self-expression and self-esteem, which then motivates consumers to purchase clothing with attributes like unique styles and materials to obtain goals such as individuality. Unfortunately, even though it would make the clusters even more reliable, this was not measured.

Based on the data results, hypothesis 2: Generation Z is a collection of submarkets and cannot be perceived as one niche market, is therefore supported. Within the generational group there can be a distinction made between three types of consumer regarding to sustainable fashion products. Furthermore, it is important for brands to know each type of consumer, in order to understand their needs and wants for their targeting strategies.

4.7 Motivations for Ethical Decision-Making
To gain more insights into the motivations or drivers of generation Z to purchase sustainable fashion products, three persons agreed to participate in an email questionnaire. In terms of importance, they indicate that sustainability is not considered very important when purchasing clothes. However, it is not that is not necessary at all, there are just other factors that are more important (e.g. style and fit). Recycling or re-using things is seen as contributing to a more sustainable environment and also thinking about whether some purchases are needed or just an impulse buying can be considered as consciously shopping. Overall, it is more about being aware of what you buy and where. Both respondents are fashion students, meaning that they have excessive background information about the fashion industry and its negative sides. This heavily influences their consumer behavior as one respondent argued: “I think that people who care more about the world or either work in the fashion world are maybe more aware of the harms of the fashion industry.” Therefore, they could be categorized in cluster 2. Motives that were given for buying sustainable clothes are: to support environmental causes, create awareness to other people, durability and quality instead of aesthetic only and value and respect the product development process.
“Some friends around me buy sustainable clothing like organic cotton or no leather because they feel the fit is better, the fabrics are of better quality and of course because of the environment. My family and other friends, however, don’t really care about it and wears cheap clothes because they feel like sustainable clothing either being unfashionable or too expensive.”

“They do care. My family considers biological meat as very important. Sustainable values are important, but they do not yet translate this into clothing. My friends, who are not from AMFI, don’t really care. They don’t think about it.”

It is noticeable that price and accessibility of sustainable products are crucial negative perceptions of the mainstream consumer. Also, due to the intensely competitive fast fashion brands and their low prices, sustainable brands may have a hard time attracting people. A possible solution to these problems according to a respondent: “[…] make sustainable clothing less expensive or make it more accessible through marketing or social media, because people feel like there are no shops or web shops that sell sustainable clothes”. Furthermore, more clear and easy information should be available for the consumer and it is necessary for the whole industry to work on transparency. As another respondent explained: “My mum would like to buy more sustainable clothes, if it would work the same way as with meat (she once told me): A rating from 1-3 of how ‘good’ the product is (like with eggs).” Hence, giving consumers the easiest option possible would contribute to higher sustainable consumption.

When looking at certain subsets that drive sustainable consumption of generation Z, it is noticeable that factors such as lifestyle, knowledge, interest as well as education influences their ethical behavior. A lot of companies consider sustainability as an important aspect of their business and tries to inform their consumer about it. So there is information out there, it is just that the consumer has to look it up and spend time thinking about it. However, there are certain conditions where higher sustainable consumption under materializes, the most important one being accessibility. When accessibility of ethical fashion products is high, respondents indicated that it is more likely for people to consume ethically. Furthermore, price is also an important condition since it currently is negatively associated with sustainable consumption. There is an overall expectation that these products are more expensive than other products, which is not always the case. To conclude, it is important to address these problems to increase awareness and sustainable consumption in fashion.
5. Discussion & Conclusion

In this final section a summary of the thesis and findings of the study are presented. It is continued with the discussion of the contributions of the research. The section ends with limitations and suggestions for future research.

5.1 Discussion

The aim of this thesis was to answer the research question: To what extent does sustainability constitute a driving factor in generation Z’s fashion consumption choices? The reviewed literature and conducted research have investigated and explored the topics of consumer behavior, sustainability in fashion and generational characteristics to be able to answer the research question. The findings suggest that sustainability in fashion is not considered one of generation Z’s main drivers when shopping for clothes. In fact, other factors such as price, quality and style are perceived as things they care more about than ethical-decision making. In a similar vein, Mohr et al. (2001) explain that, despite consumers’ interest in social responsibility and its demonstrative impact on purchase intention, in reality sustainability only plays a minor role in their consumption decisions. This might be a contradiction to the tendency that generation Z is the most ethical generation so far (Eisingerich et al., 2011). However, the results of analyzing people’s motivations for purchasing ethical products show that when people have a certain lifestyle, for example when someone is vegan, they tend to have more consideration and feel ethical obliged to make ethical decisions when it comes to clothes. This is because it suits and it part of their lifestyle. It is in line with the research of Lee (2008), who showed that social influence, environmental concern, self-image and perceived ethical responsibility are top predictors of sustainable purchases of young adolescents. Furthermore, there has been a growing interest for sustainable causes over the years, influencing the younger generation. This means that generation Z could be the most ethical generation so far, but this is possibly represented and biased by a small group of individuals within the generational group.

The results of the research led to no support for hypothesis 1, which means that higher sustainable consideration can influence generation Z’s purchasing behavior. However, the exact amount of influence was not measured by the study. Furthermore, this result is in contrast with the study of Joy (2012), who conclude that positive consumer intentions towards sustainable products do not translate directly into consumption choices. Sustainable consideration might not be a major direct motivational driver, however it is something consumers think about, meaning that there is certain awareness for the topic.

Sustainability is definitely a concern for generation Z, but several issues retain them from converting this into their purchasing decisions. One of the problems is accessibility of sustainable products, which may hinder consumers that have the intention to contribute to a more sustainable system and obstruct them to incorporate the assessment of sustainability into their purchasing process. Additionally, lack of information about sustainable consumption makes ethical decision-making a very complex process for the consumer. Another issue regarding to ethical decision-making are the price perceptions of consumers. According to Öberseder, Schlegelmilch and Gruber (2011), marketers should be aware that income influences an individual’s ability to take sustainability into account. If possible, the focus for brands should be on communicating that the product of a socially
responsible company is not more expensive than other products. All in all, generation Z is a very young generation at this moment. They are still developing and exploring their identity, which means that there are lots of opportunities for brands to capture their needs and wants.

As for hypothesis 2, the results supported the proposition that generation Z is a collection of submarkets and cannot be perceived as one niche market. After conducting the cluster analysis, the sample was divided into three types of consumers: the indifferent consumer, the consumer with a reserved social conscience and the non-conformist. Freestone and McGoldrick’s (2008) study assert that the complicated process of ethical purchase behavior is reflected by the choices derived from evaluations of personal and social benefits or harms when reviewing product attributes. In their research, Freestone and McGoldrick indicate that motivational attitudes of consumers are a result of their ethical concern, action and awareness. These motivations were used for the cluster analysis, together with the perceived social consideration and attitude towards helping other people of the sample. According to Twenge et al. (2012) individuals with a higher attitude of helping others will consume more ethical products. Therefore, this variable was also considered for composing the clusters.

Bucic, Harris and Arli (2012) extended Freestone and McGoldrick’s (2008) research and found that there are three distinct subgroups within the millennial generation, meaning that this generation shouldn’t be treated as a niche market, but rather as a collection of submarkets that vary in their awareness, engagement and motives when making ethical consumption decisions. However, their subgroups compared to the results of this study are partially different. Bucic, Harris and Arli (2012) identified a very committed sustainable consumer, however this was not represented in this study. This variation could be explained by the low representation of generation Z, but other interpretations are not eliminated.

To conclude, the answer to the research question “To what extent does sustainability constitute a driving factor in generation Z’s fashion consumption choices?” is essentially that generation Z may perceive sustainable issues important, but sustainability as a driving factor of their fashion purchases is not very accountable. It is noticeable that factors like style, price, quality and comfort still dominate their motivations for their decision-making. The brand and where the products are made are considered very unimportant driving factors in generation Z’s fashion consumption choices.

5.2 Contribution of the Research

This study captured generation Z’s consumer behavior and their values and beliefs concerning sustainable fashion products. Since not much empirical research has been conducted aimed specifically at generation Z, this is valuable data for all organizations and marketers within the fashion industry. Additionally, the study provides a perspective on to what extend sustainability is a driving factor in generation Z’s purchasing behavior. Furthermore, the results of the research give an indication on the ethical concerns and behaviors of three consumer clusters. In doing so, it is clarified that instead of being conceptualized as one niche market, generation Z consist of submarkets that are amendable to ethical consumer behavior to different levels. This distinction is useful for theory development and further research on this topic. Finally, this study is also a small step towards helping tighten the gap between research and practical knowledge.
5.3 Limitations
This thesis contributes to a better understanding of the ethical purchasing behavior of generation Z. However, it is not without limitations and it is clear that this study only represents a starting point for research on this topic. The first limitation is the selection of respondents used in the survey. Since it is a convenience sample it prohibits the findings to be generalized into a greater group (Saunders et al., 2016). The second limitation is that the study is conducted within a restricted time frame and resources, leading to the elimination of research approaches and methods that may have helped to increase the level of validity of the study and representation of generation Z. Also, time limited the possibility of reviewing all previous literature. Thirdly, the study is limited to one country, while the values that motivate people are likely to vary across cultures (Solomon et al., 2016). The fourth limitation is the fact that the study was heavily female biased. It would be within reason to take gender differences into account when conducting the empirical research for more reliable results and to achieve higher validity as Tifferet and Herstein (2012) suggest. However, this was not achieved. Lastly, this study uses a mixed method of quantitative questionnaires and qualitative focus groups to collect data on consumers’ behavioral aims. According to Young et al. (2010), it would have been better to conduct in-depth interviews, since this method tends to collect actual behavior.

5.4 Future Research
Since there are limitations within this study, the following advices are presented that might enable future research to be conducted more effective and efficient. The first recommendation is to use a random selection for the sample to accomplish a better replication of the study. This would make the findings more generalizable for generation Z as a whole. Furthermore, one of the discussed limitations mentioned the possible differences in levels of awareness and concern about sustainability across countries. Therefore, the second recommendation is to conduct a longitudinal research, which may help to assess whether there is a consistent pattern over time. Additionally, a longitudinal study would be useful in determining behavioral changes in the clustered subgroups over a longer period of time. Thirdly, future research may compare generations to research if generations share similarities of differences between them. Additionally, researches could connect the morals of the generations to ethical consumerism. Lastly, research could be conducted on the same sample that was used in this study, to find out if their behavior is according to their statements or not.
5.5 End Product

An online article written for the Business of Fashion compliments this thesis and presents the findings of the study. Also, it introduces an (fictive) online Instagram magazine that will help generation Z shop more sustainable. The focus of this Instagram platform is to show generation Z that being sustainable does not mean that you have to make drastic changes in your lifestyle, but rather small adjustments will help as well. Also, it presents ethical fashion products from (fast fashion) brands that are highly accessible for the target group. This will result in higher awareness and consciousness when making purchases. Furthermore, consumers will not find it troublesome to shop sustainable anymore, since they know most the brands. It is more guiding them through all the products and filtering all the more ethical products. Publishing the article on the Business of Fashion was chosen because of its relevance to fashion professionals, retailers, students, young graduates and anyone interested in fashion. Additionally, it would be helpful if magazines such as Elle, Vogue or Grazia promoted ethical platforms, so a larger audience could be reached. The article is written and presented in English.
REFERENCES


APPENDIX

Appendix 1. Model Summary & Cluster Sizes

Appendix 2. Predictor Importance Cluster Analysis