Leveling Up & Closing the Gap!

Sustainable Fashion Consumers’ Journeys to New Levels of Sustainability

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When we look back at our childhood, the major occasions for us to buy clothes were to celebrate our religious festivals and protect us from harsh winters. Besides that, we used to shop if there were big family festivities. Growing up, we saw these trends changing. People started buying updated fashion more often to display themselves in the best possible manner to society. By the time we started earning, we also began giving in to the trend. In this process, we started buying many fashion products and using them less and less. We stopped caring about using them longer as they became less valuable and more available to replace. When we both moved to Sweden for our Master’s Program, we did not feel the need to use fashion as a tool for displaying our worth to society. In both of our cases, people around us and our economic capacity influenced our fashion consumption choices. While interviewing our respondents and listening to their stories, we could connect our journeys with theirs. We felt that the comment made by one of our classmates, Hela, ‘Fashion is a story’ started making more sense to us because we all have our own stories to tell when it comes to our evolution as fashion consumers.

We had a fun ride writing our Thesis, and for this, we would first like to thank our supervisor Marie, who listened to our ideas with much patience and helped us transform them into something worthwhile. When we look back at what we had planned initially and what we developed at the end, it gives us a feeling of no lesser than a great feat.

Secondly, we thank all of our 16 sustainable fashion consumers who managed time in these trying times for our study and shared their incredible fashion stories with sheer enthusiasm.

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Finally, we would also like to thank the readers for their patience in reading our attempt to explaining fashion and sustainability in our own ways. We hope that you have a pleasant read and that you could also connect with all our sustainable stories, findings, and discussions.

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“Don’t be into trends. Don’t make fashion own you, but decide what you are.”
- Gianni Versace
Abstract

Fashion democratization over the last few decades made fashion products available at lower costs to everyone in society. It alarmingly increased consumption, leaving drastic impacts on the world’s sustainability both on the social and environmental fronts, thereby leading to water and land pollution, dangerous working conditions, sweatshops, wage exploitation, and gender discrimination. Our study, therefore, sheds some light on addressing this core problem of fashion sustainability by focusing on the problem from the consumers’ perspectives because researchers conclude that consumers hold power to mitigate this issue to a greater extent by becoming sustainable. However, in many cases, consumers show the attitude-behavior gap when it comes to consuming sustainable fashion. The area of actual sustainable fashion consumers is also under-researched.

Therefore, we conducted our research in this area and used qualitative methods for it. We identified a small group of 16 sustainable transitional fashion consumers who have started their sustainable fashion consumption journey. We performed an inductive process study of these transitional consumers' journeys and developed a Conceptual ‘Consumer Journey Map’ from unsustainability towards sustainability. We used semi-structured interviews for data collection. By studying their entire process of transition, we identified a number of constraints that retained them from making the transition towards sustainable fashion consumption, such as Social Influence, Trend and Newness, Unaesthetic Appearance and Lack of Variety, Lacking Sizes and Fitting, Low price, and Lower Income, Lack of Knowledge and Information and Greenwashing by the brands. However, the enablers that pushed them to become sustainable were Influence from Sustainable social circles, Tangible Experiences, Quality and Longevity, and Feelings of guilt and remorse which are presented in our conceptual ‘C-E Framework.’

Our research also identified conceptual ‘Levels of Sustainability,’ where consumers reuse or reduce or reject to pass Level one. To reach Level two, a consumer has to begin combining any two of these behaviors. However, to reach the final Level X, a consumer needs to reuse, reduce, and reject simultaneously. A consumer passes through these different levels from being a ‘self’ consumer to be a ‘social’ one and finally converting into a ‘sacrifice’ consumer in their journey.

Keywords: Fashion, sustainability, sustainable fashion consumption, attitude-behavior gap, constraints and enablers, levels of sustainability, socio-environmental impacts
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1.2.1  Clothing and Fashion

Have you ever wondered how consumers turned fashion consumption into a source of global unsustainability? Clothes were worn merely just as forms of protection from weather and expressions of modesty towards social norms. Gradually, clothing became a tool for non-verbal communication queues to represent individuals’ self-identities, division of genders, social and economic hierarchies, and signifying social occasions (Fowles, 1974), and societal opinions and reactions. Someone's intelligence, attitudes, or abilities started to get influenced by their dressing (Aliakbari & Abdollahi, 2013). Eventually, clothing was associated with fashion and turned into luxury when people started using precious materials in clothes to represent their socio-economic classes (Okonkwo, 2007). For centuries, fashion symbolized luxury until globalization and industrialization gave birth to fast fashion (Joy et al., 2012), which democratized fashion (Bick et al., 2018) by mass-producing trendy clothes at lower costs to make them affordable for most of the social classes (ibid). It developed global demands for fashion and doubled clothing production in the past 15 years, where 60% of all textile production is used for fashion clothing (Moorehouse, 2020).

1.2.2  The Awful Blessings of Fashion

The abovementioned developments came with a heavy price tag of adverse effects on socio-environmental sustainability. On the environmental front, the UK House of Commons Environmental Audit Committee (2019) named clothing production the third largest manufacturing sector after automobiles and electronics. It contributes to global warming more than all the international travels and shipping, with around 1.2 billion metric tons of CO2 emission every year from its transportation (Moorehouse, 2020). It is responsible for 20% of the global water pollution (McKinsey, 2020) and approximately 70 million barrels of harmful crude oil consumption every year (Forbes, 2015). On the social side, most fashion manufacturing takes place in lower and middle-income countries with a lack of enforcement in occupational and safety standards. The ultimate result is the myriad of health risks, and the Rana Plaza disaster of Bangladesh can be one of the most significant examples (Bick et al., 2018). Alongside that, the fast fashion business model also operationalizes child labor, wage exploitations, gender discrimination (Smestad, 2009), and sweatshops (Moorehouse, 2020). Moreover, globally 73% of clothing consumption ends up in landfills, and only 1% is recycled (ibid), which creates millions of tons of textile waste in unregulated settings (Bick et al., 2018). It happens...
from shoppers clearing their old wardrobes and fashion stores dumping or burning unsold clothes instead of recycling or donating them, which results in an annual loss of more than $500 billion in value (Ellen MacArthur Foundation, 2017).

1.2.3 The Role of Consumers in All These and the Dilemmas They Face

The fast fashion business model and democratization of fashion through this were made possible due to the large-scale consumer demand at the core of its existence (Bick et al., 2018). This demand is generated to feed consumers' need of receiving the desired responses from society by displaying their socio-economic strata through fashion (Fowles, 1974). They intend to show that they are at the forefront of trend adoptions and display narcissistic 'watch me' obsession to seek societal attention (Gombrich, 1974). In this 'game of display,' fashion consumers have two paths to respond to these 'follies of fashion' (Gombrich, 1974, p.3), either dismiss this particular trend as an unprofitable eccentricity or emulate them and try to outdo the others. According to research, most consumers take the latter path and follow the take-make-waste consumption model and cause socio-environmental unsustainability (Lauten-Weiss & Ramesohl, 2021).

1.2.4 The Blind Spot and Purpose of Our Study

In order to negate these effects, consumers' transition towards sustainable consumption is required. These transitioned people are often described as autonomous shoppers whose collective decisions decide the planet's destiny and future. Brown and Cameron defend their emphasis on individual actions by stating that "not only programs and strategies at company levels but also understanding the individual consumer in minimizing consumption inevitably must change individual consumption decisions" (2000, p.28). Consumers these days seem to be aware of the unsustainability caused by their consumption and show an increased preference for sustainable product choices (Carrington et., 2010). Researchers have investigated the transition towards sustainable consumerism from the perspectives of general consumers, who intend to, but have not yet 'walked their talk' towards sustainable fashion consumption (Carrington et al., 2010, p. 141). Cowe and Williams (2000) referred to this gap as the 30:3 phenomenon, which mentions how almost 30% of consumers care for ethical and environmental values, but only 3% of sales reflect these values. The purpose of our study is to shed some light on why this gap exists in terms of fashion consumption. In order to do that, we studied fashion consumers who contribute to this 3% sales value. This is a small group of consumers who started their transition towards sustainable fashion consumption and are under-researched
(Rausch & Kopplin, 2021). We focused on their journeys to understand why they were consuming unsustainably before and what shifted them towards sustainability. Also, we found out different steps in their journeys and sustainable activities to conceptualize a journey map and different levels of sustainability for sustainable fashion consumption. Though we could not identify measures to close the gap completely, we made contributions by presenting our respondents’ efforts to minimize it and defining conceptual steps and levels of sustainability that can be achieved through them.

1.2.5 Research Questions

For the above purposes of the study, our research answered the below questions:

RQ 1. What does consumers’ transitional journey towards sustainable fashion consumption look like? What are the major Constraints and Enablers in terms of consumer transition from unsustainable fashion consumption to sustainable fashion consumption?

RQ 2. What are different levels of sustainability consumers can reach? How have these levels changed the idea of fashion for these consumers?

We conducted a process study to discover what sustainable fashion consumption means to our respondents and how their transitional journeys towards it look like. We identified their various starting points and the positions they are at right now. This helped us in developing the conceptual ‘Consumer Journey Map’ and ‘Levels of Sustainability’ fashion consumers can reach through various sustainable acts. We also identified the factors that kept our respondents away from sustainable consumption before and the ones that drove them towards sustainability later. We call the first set of factors Constraints and the latter ones Enablers. These factors helped us to develop a conceptual framework of factors mediating sustainable consumer behaviors, which we named the ‘C-E Framework.’
**Our Thesis Structure: Glimpse of What to Expect From Our paper**

| Chapter 01: How Did We End Up Here? | • Introducing Our Study  
• Presenting the Gap and Our Research Questions |
| Chapter 02: Fashion Consumption and All It Has Done to Us | • Frame of Reference  
• Understanding Fashion and Sustainability  
• Sustainable Fashion Consumption |
| Chapter 03: Conducting an Inductive Process Study | • Step by Step Process of Our Research Methodology |
| Chapter 04: Getting to Know Our Sustainable Fashion Consumers and Their Sustainable Acts | • Stories of Our Respondents  
• Our Interview Findings |
| Chapter 05: Connecting the Dots | • Answering the Research Questions with the Help of Relevant Theories |
| Chapter 06: Wrapping Things Up | • Summarizing the Thesis  
• Synthesizing the Findings and Revisiting the Research Problem |
| Chapter 07: Our Wish for Future Research | • Managerial Implications  
• Future Research Suggestions |

*Figure 1: Our Thesis Structure*
Chapter 02: Fashion Consumption and All It Has Done to Us

This chapter will talk about the evolution of fashion in detail based on the theoretical evidence found. It will also focus on consumer behavior and choice-making theories in terms of fashion consumption.

2.1 Why Do We Wear Clothes?

Every morning of our lives, we humans painstakingly cloak our bodies in preparation for the day ahead. We go through the trouble of selecting clothes from our closets and bureaus, softly fastening the fasteners, and examining ourselves from head to toe in the mirror. No other species, with the exception of apes who sometimes drape themselves in leaves, put on clothes with the same zeal as we do. Clothing is clearly a significant phenomenon for our species. The importance humans attach to clothing is mirrored in the size of the clothing industry (Fowles, 1974), which generates a global revenue worth $1.2 trillion (Moorehouse, 2020).

Researchers have never been able to pinpoint exactly when humans began wearing clothes, with estimates varying from 40,000 to 3 million years ago. According to new studies on the history of clothes, some people wore clothing as recently as 170,000 years ago, and others wore it as recently as 40,000 years ago. Regardless of these signs, no single estimate has achieved universal approval (Kittler et al., 2003; Toups et al., 2011; Reed et al., 2007).

*Why do we go to such expense and trouble wearing clothes?* The standard response is that we dress for two reasons: first, to cover and protect ourselves, and second, to be modest (Fowles, 1974). In the opinion of Charles Darwin, who disproved the first explanation by observing that inhabitants of Tierra del Fuego wore no clothing despite the extreme weather conditions. As a result, if clothes are purely dependent on the temperature, we would logically go about naked during the warmer months of the year, indicating that the primary function of clothing does not seem to be protecting ourselves (Flugel, 1933). The second reason is that modesty, which often makes us wear clothes, tends to be minor at best. In many cultures, the fundamental instinct of modesty has come to be associated with clothes. However, in some other cultures, wearing clothes makes them feel immodest, and their most immodest dances are performed while they are covered up (ibid). As a result, the underlying reason for wearing clothes must be found somewhere else. The reason is found in the complex networks that bind humans together into functional social units. Humans accomplish this by information flows, in which one person communicates with another. After decades of research, Birdwhistell (1970) came
to the conclusion that about one-third of human communication is achieved by speech, but non-verbal communication is occupying the remaining two-thirds, and here, clothing plays a vital role. According to Fowles (1974), clothing serves to communicate, which is its cardinal function. What we are actually doing when we dress is composing messages for each other. Clothing is used to communicate messages that define the person’s self-identity, and it distinguishes different gender portrayals made by us, humans. Clothing also helps to identify one's position in the social and economic ladder in a society along with the power rank associated with it (Fowles, 1974). Clothing also helps us to distinguish among different events. For example, people wear different types of clothes when they go to work or study and when they attend any occasion such as marriage or funeral. Clothing can send signals for individuals when they represent themselves as a member of a group. Wearing similar uniforms in a common job can be a good example here (ibid). Clothing also determines how fashionably updated members are in the society, and it lets social members precede with a certain style that becomes fashion for the others. These fashion trendsetters stay at the forefront of the ladder, and the people below them adapt to their directions. Thus, members of society form a collective sense of fashion by getting influenced by someone's individual style (ibid).

On the other hand, the receiving sides of the non-verbal messages also tend to make decisions about the dresser’s level of sophistication, level of success, economic level, educational level, trustworthiness, social position, economic background, social background, educational background, and moral character solely based on their clothing (Aliakbari & Abdollahi, 2013). Additionally, the dressers are also judged about their credibility, likability, interpersonal attractiveness, and dominance through their dressing and sense of fashion (ibid). Hence, even the most casual dresser prefers one item over another depending on the occasion while getting dressed (Fowles, 1974).

2.2 Fashion Industry Journey From Luxury to Fast Fashion

"Take a stroll down London’s Old Bond Street or Milan’s Via Montenapoleone, and you will see the latest offerings of Chanel and Gucci: exquisite creations of the finest material and craftsmanship. Hop over to Oxford Street or Corso Vittorio Emanuele, and you will discover the window displays of H&M and Zara exhibiting pretty much the same designs – albeit with lower quality materials, questionable craftsmanship, and significantly lower prices. Guess which is flush with cash?"- this quote by fast fashion meets luxury labels by Brown (2011) formidably distinguishes luxury brands from fast fashion phenomena.
To start from a more general background, fashion is an ancient phenomenon. Evidence can be found regarding the linkage between fashion and social evaluation throughout the history of mankind. Fashion has always been influenced by the changes in our society, history, cultural traditions, politics, economy, religion, technology, or even psychological evaluation, as per Okonkwo (2007). It has become a symbol of identity for every individual in our societies. On most occasions, fashion was a symbol of luxury, and it used to identify the social class back in time. Evidence can be traced back to the era of Egyptian pharaohs, who used to style their wardrobes with expensive materials in extravagant colors. They used to employ the best jewelers, craftsmen, artists, and designers for assembling these flamboyant wardrobes. Only the finest of the materials were used for their fashion products back then (ibid). As per research, there are two main purposes of luxury in fashion: one is ‘Luxury for other,’ this mostly focuses on the externalized luxury consumption that is mainly done for showing off a certain social position, and the second one is ‘Luxury for oneself,’ which by the name of it implies the fact that fashion is used to express a personalized expression of style and sophistication (Kapferer & Bastien, 2017; Kastanakis & Balabanis, 2012; Amatulli & Guido, 2012).

However, after the first world war, the social class system distinguished by fashion was eliminated during the early years of industrialization, when living standards were growing, and foreign trade and the global economy were booming, affluent Americans and Asians began traveling to Europe to buy luxury goods. Especially after the industrial revolution, mass production led the way for readymade fashion available for all the social classes (Okonkwo, 2007). Further development of this mass production created the concept of fast fashion, which is a consumer-driven business strategy in the fashion industry. It decreases the number of processes involved in the purchase cycle and focuses on restocking novel designs in regular intervals to satisfy the ever-growing consumer demands for newness (Joy et al., 2012). Most of these products are trendy, inexpensive, cheaply made designer copies that focus on producing products in smaller quantities that usually are not restocked to avoid the risk of inaccuracy and being outdated (Joy et al., 2012; Tokatli, 2008).

More specifically, 'fast fashion' as a term defines a fashion business model that works at a more accelerated pace and has evolved since the 1980s. The core idea of this model is to involve increased numbers of new fashion collections every year at quick turnarounds and cheaper costs. The whole idea of this rapidness is to react faster to the ever-changing consumer demand for something new and trendy. Although this business strategy influences consumers' purchase habits to a higher frequency, on the other hand, it pressurizes to follow the fast-changing trends. In fast fashion
boutiques, new styles rapidly replace the old ones, which stimulates the constantly emerging desires of consumers for novelty and change (Joy et al., 2012).

2.3 The Upside of 'Fashion Democratization'

The rapid change in fashion trends is not a new phenomenon. In her 1893 article, Foley mentioned this in many details, which means it has been going on for centuries. She mentioned that fashion has always reflected societal tradition, use, or tastes. Tastes here denote an aesthetic intent, regardless of whether they are concerned with the ‘what’ or ‘how’ of our desires: tradition or use may also be based on comfort or morality. This consequence of a more or less persistent propensity to change, which is understood and stressed by French meanings of 'mode,' best characterizes fashion when viewed alongside tastes and use as modes in which a society satisfies its various wants. Here, fast fashion business model characteristics sound familiar to how Foley (1893) described fashion in general. She mentioned, the supply of various fashion products becomes highly speculative because the room for the selective play of the consumer's preference is significant here.

On the other hand, demand will almost certainly be immediate and widespread, regardless of where consumers made their choices. For both historical and contemporary purposes, it may be more helpful to describe this fashion as a co-efficient of all of these, so that it appears as want in wants, rather than as a class of wants under such headings as needs, comforts, or luxuries. Even though regulative forces limit selection, fashion often triumphs over them or else exploits them as their co-efficient, turning them into taste excesses and stripping them of their purity and dignity. According to the higher force, fashion is an expression of refined sensuality, opinion, or caprice that generates unreal desires. Fashion interplays a significant role in terms of economic moderators as well (Foley, 1893).

What strikes interesting is that fast fashion brands take their leads from luxury fashion brands. However, luxury consumers are usually less price-sensitive and look for a package experience of socially escalated identities through the brand characteristic (Phau & Prendergast, 2000). Fast fashion consumers act in the opposite direction, which is why fast fashion producers look into the speed of imitating luxury brands and stress more on the price tag and scale of production. This is how fast fashion has 'democratized' fashion for consumers from all social classes and income levels. The core benefit of fast fashion is 'democratizing' the entire fashion phenomena and making all sorts of fashion trends available for everyone, not restricting any consumers from being able to purchase any product.
due to the price tag at least (Bick et al., 2018). Fast fashion producers make the products cheap and turn away the innovation focus from expressive aspects to status aspects, which means it gives the consumers similar feelings of exclusivity to that of owning luxury fashion products at affordable prices (Suk & Hemphill, 2009). Fast fashion brands have converted consumer expectations regarding speed and variety by showing the consumers that style is possible at a lower price. This idea has changed even the loyal luxury brand consumers who are attracted to having the fun of buying ten cheap knockoffs for the price of one authentic jacket (Rohwedder, 2004).

2.4 The Downside of 'Fashion Democratization'

The ugly side of this abundance is that goods are purchased quickly and disposed of or forgotten by the consumers, which provides a very short-term life span for the products that were once new and novel (Birtwistle & Moore, 2007). To simply demonstrate, according to a study conducted by Klepp et al. (2020), the average possession span for a garment is around 4 years. Although it varies based on the type of products, for example, it is 2.6 years for socks to over 6 years for jackets, skirts, coats, dresses, or suits. According to Cooper et al. (2014), jeans are estimated to be worn 75 times per year and a total of 300 times in the span of the average 4 years mentioned above. However, from the consumer cases, it was identified that it is worn only 42 times in these 4 years. Thus, a pair of jeans is worn 8 times lesser in reality than the average estimation of its statistical usage. In Norway, about 20% of garments from consumer wardrobes are either never worn or only worn a couple of times. Whereas in the UK, the percentage is extended to around 30% (Klepp et al., 2020).

These shortened lifecycles of fashion products directly impact the increment of fashion production and consumption, which is the triggering point of unsustainability generated by the industry. However, according to Foley (1893), anything that adds rigidity to production increases fashion's destabilizing capacity. Adaptability and flexibility, both mental and manual, are needed to deal with the high specialization of machinery and expertise and the need for mass-production to achieve profit. Fast fashion business strategy seems to comply with this motto Foley (1893) mentioned. It also influences consumers' purchase habits to a higher frequency and pressurizes to follow the fast-changing trends to leverage huge revenue for the fashion brands (Joy et al., 2012).

2.4.1 The Unsustainable Consequences of Fast Fashion and Fashion Democratization

To start with the environmental front, the rising consumption in the fashion industry poses threats to the people, planet, and animals due to excessive usage of valuable natural resources and leaving
a major environmental footprint. Due to its carbon footprint, the fashion industry is deemed to be the second-largest polluter after oil and other most wasteful consumer industries in the world (Brydges, 2021). For example, the heavy use of valuable natural resources is causing a critical environmental footprint. This footprint accumulates to the utilization of 118 billion cubic meters of water for global clothing production in the year 2030, along with the 2791 million tons of CO2 emissions and 148 million tons of textile waste (Rausch & Kopplin, 2021). The new ‘throwaway culture’ has also increased demand for fashion, which has resulted in extreme obsolescence as well as a loss of inherent value of garments (Morgan & Birtwistle, 2009), which leads to yet more impulse buying and wasting of valuable resources (Achabou & Dekhili, 2013). The number of times an item of clothing is worn has decreased as fashion production has increased (Ellen MacArthur Foundation, 2017; Reichel et al., 2014). Consequently, the industry generates enormous quantities of waste (Niinimaki et al., 2020) and has resulted in an environmental sustainability crisis (Bick et al., 2018).

The social aspect of sustainability is also quite critical, particularly for those who live at the bottom of our social value chain. This gets derived from the delocalized production model, for which developing nations have become the most prevailing choice because of the low-cost labor market and not very stringent standards and regulations regarding the social and environmental issues. These social impacts consist of unethical worker rights, poor working conditions, long hours, low wages, child labor, and health and safety issues (Kozlowski et al., 2012). Smestad (2009) has also elaborated the physical abuse and elongated working hours that have been enforced on the factory workers, especially children, to meet this ever-increasing demand of delivering more products at quick successions at very low costs. The good thing is, studies of consumer behavior have pointed out that consumers are showing more concern in the ethical context of fashion, especially when the social sustainability consequences are higher because of the violation of human rights caused by numerous sweatshop incidents (Pedersen et al., 2018; Dach & Allmendinger, 2014). In addition to this, in their manufacturing plants, 68% of fast fashion brands do not maintain gender equality as well. Despite the fact that women make up the majority of the 80 million workers in the fashion supply chain, the majority of companies are unconcerned about workplace gender equality. Fast fashion is not only a sustainability issue but a major feminism concern (Sanders & Mawson, 2019).

2.5 The Oxymoronic Relationship Between Sustainability and Fashion
Over the last three decades, the fashion industry has been in the talk of being a subject of central trends. Fashion and sustainability seem to be mutually exclusive terms. The former is characterized
by hedonism and short-term product lifecycles, especially in fast fashion (Ertekin & Atik, 2015), while the latter means ethics, longevity, and product reuse (Cervellon et al., 2010). Nonetheless, the intersection between social sustainability, environmental sustainability, and fashion is not a novel concept. With several sweatshop controversies in the 1980s and late 1990s, the first campaigns emerged, which placed considerable societal pressure on fashion firms and retailers to introduce improved factory inspection and monitoring systems. These campaigns, though, helped the fashion industry to improve its production processes and products to be more sustainable than before, but the industry still has not yet achieved the level of response from the consumers as needed for sustainable production to be profitable (BSR, 2012).

The aim remains the same for both consumers and brands to meet the demands of social and environmental sustainability. The enablers and constraints might vary for both the groups here. But this thesis focuses on the consumers, their journeys towards sustainability, the inherent enablers and constraints, and their impact on changing their fashion styles. This is understandable since the buyer is given a lot of control, including the right to obliterate or ensure sustainability (Brown & Cameron, 2000).

Moreover, there is a lack of industry standards for sustainable consumption or sustainability in general when it comes to fashion, and therefore, there is no uniform definition for sustainable fashion purchase behavior. The common concept about all sustainable fashion is to define fashion production and consumption behaviors that intend to mitigate the already perceived wrongdoings in the fashion industry, such as environmental damage, worker exploitation (Bianchi & Birtwistle 2012; Blanchard, 2013; Bray, 2009). The use of organic fabrics and manufacturing methods with relatively low environmental impact, as well as the use of recycled materials in the clothing line to advocate for more ‘sustainable’ sourcing, design, and production structures, are called sustainable activities from the supply chain side of fashion sustainability (Thomas, 2020). When it comes to ‘green’ and ‘ethical’ apparel, words like ‘sustainable,’ ‘eco-friendly,’ and ‘responsible’ are often used in marketing materials and annual reports from major brands, high-profile fashion magazines, and fashion retailers. These are the words they use to describe their contributions and initiatives to the creation of sustainable fashion. An example can be one of the statements made by Levi Strauss & Co. in December 2017 on their website that said, “Sustainability is sewn into the fabric of everything we do—from how our clothing is made to the work we do to help protect our planet” (Thomas, 2020).
The collective definition of sustainable fashion can encompass terms like organic, fair-trade, slow fashion, eco-conscious and eco-friendly, ethical, green, and organic. These are used in various literature interchangeably based on the context of the studies (Rausch & Kopplin, 2021; Cervellon et al., 2010). However, there is a harmony amongst literature on the concept of sustainable fashion behavior, which indicates the pro-environmental courses taken by consumers at every stage of their fashion product consumption lifecycle. It starts from the pre-purchase phase and moves on to the purchase and post-purchase actions that include acquiring the products, storing them, using them along with care and maintenance, and disposing them at the end (Rausch & Kopplin, 2021).

2.6 Sustainable Fashion Consumption

Researching fashion consumption from a sustainability context, therefore, necessitates a deeper dive into the term since it has a multitude of meanings and interpretations (Schaefer & Crane, 2005). Agenda 21, the action plan for sustainable development introduced at the 1992 Rio Earth Summit, was the first time the word 'sustainable consumption' appeared in public policy and research. While it was formulated as a pluralistic term, it has at its heart the concepts of more efficiently manufactured products and a 'green' and 'ethical' buyer who, in making purchasing choices, acts as the driving force of a market transformation that combines both social and environmental issues (Seyfang, 2011). This fundamental structure was extended to include consistency in later discourses (McDonough & Braungart, 2010). Sustainable Consumption is the utilization of products, resources, energy, and services in such a way that their use minimizes both social and environmental impacts such that human needs can be fulfilled not only in the present but also for future generations is known as sustainable consumption (Butlin, 1989).

Additionally, the official definition of sustainable consumption is: "[...] the use of goods and related products which respond to basic needs and bring a better quality of life, while minimizing the use of natural resources and toxic materials as well as the emissions of waste and pollutants over the lifecycle, so as not to jeopardize the needs of future generations” (Norwegian Ministry of Environment, 1994, cited in OECD, 2002). The concept’s uncertainty has led to a number of meanings and a widespread opinion that "there is no clear definition of sustainable consumption" (Heiskanen & Pantzar 1997, p. 410). One of the most difficult behavior change goals is transitioning to a more sustainable consumption behavior (Verplanken & Roy, 2016). This is because, despite many expressing concerns, environmental problems are given a low priority within the framework of daily
issues, while more urgent, local, and tangible concerns are deemed more relevant when consumers are making fashion consumption choices (Ockwell et al., 2009; Scannell & Gifford, 2013).

2.6.1 Types of Sustainable Fashion Consumers
Another dimension towards understanding sustainable fashion consumption can be looking at the three types of fashion consumers and their behavior identified by McNeill and Moore (2015), and these are ‘Self,' ‘Social' and ‘Sacrifice' consumers. ‘Self’ consumers are the ones who are concerned with their own hedonistic needs, they are not very sensitive about the impact of their actions on the world or its people, and they act as they please mostly. These are the ones who give in to the fashion trends more quickly and can be classified as the unsustainable ones (ibid). 'Social' consumers are concerned with their social image, and their attitude towards sustainability might remain positive to uphold their status in their society. These are the consumers who might not have the connection between their attitude and behavior. This means that these consumers might show sustainable consumption intentions in their social circles but do no end up consuming sustainably. Thus, they are the ones who do not always 'walk the talk' towards sustainable fashion consumption (Carrington et al., 2010). The last type of consumers is similar to the ones who are alluded to by McNeill and Moore (2015) as 'Sacrifice' consumers. As the name suggests, they keep the environmental and societal interests before their own. They strive to reduce the impact on the world through their consumption behaviors and make the actual move towards the sustainable side of it.

2.7 Current State of Affair in Sustainable Fashion Consumption Front
On a positive note, over the last two decades, a general transition towards sustainable consumerism has been in progress (Wiederhold & Martinez, 2018), and consumers seem to be aware of the unsustainability caused by their excessive demands, as shown by an increase in interest in green products (Carrington et al., 2010). As a result, global organizations and large-scale retailers have recently invested in sustainable actions, and there are reasons to think this trend will continue (Todeschini et al., 2017).

From a global organizational point of view, heavy investments have been made, and actions have been taken on sustainability all over the world under the UN's 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) since 2015 as per UNDP (UNDP, 2020). According to Kharas and McArthur (2019), the forecast of global investment in SDGs was more than 20 trillion USD in 2015, and it is going to cross a yearly global total of 30 trillion USD in 2030. Specific brands are also not shying away from showing their
efforts to fuel sustainable fashion consumption. For example, H&M group has issued a EUR 500 million sustainability-linked bond with a maturity of 8.5 years. These sustainability-linked bonds are coupled to H&M meeting several well-defined sustainability targets. These targets include increasing the share of recycled materials used to 30%, reducing emissions from the Group’s own operations by 20%, reducing absolute Scope 3 emissions from fabric production, garment manufacturing, raw materials and upstream transport by 10% etc. The bond has already generated great interest and was 7.6 times oversubscribed (H&M Group, 2021).

2.8 Fashion Choices of the Consumers

According to Aliakbari and Abdollahi (2013), researchers have found that clothing has an impact on first impressions, that there is a connection between clothing and personality, that there are similar tendencies toward favorite clothing types, and that clothing affects people’s reputation. These rationales influence consumers in purchasing more than their consumption requirement. This trend goes with the analogy Gombrich (1974) made, where he mentioned that, as fashion consumers, we are told that we must keep up with the times, and each period has its own idiom or style to follow. Even Beethoven, who was brilliant in the early nineteenth century, had nothing good to offer in the second half of the twentieth century. The desire for this new and trendiness can be better explained by Veblen’s mention of the trickle-down theory from his 1899 article. Here he mentioned that fashion consumers are parts of a hierarchical society, where there always remains a desire for upward mobility among the various social strata through heightened aesthetic appearance and social acceptance. According to this model, those at the top of society give and accept a style, which is then followed by those at the bottom (Veblen, 1899), which means that fashion consumers, in most cases, do not really follow their own judgment for fashion choices, they embrace the on-going trends. In her 1983 article, Foley coined the word ‘Sequaciousness’ to describe this type of consumer behavior.

Research has been talking positively about consumer behavior towards buying sustainable fast fashion products. However, the process of consumers’ fashion consumption choice making is not straightforward, especially when it comes to making sustainable fashion consumption choices. Consumers sometimes also become unreasonable when it comes to choosing between sustainable and unsustainable fast fashion products. The first challenge of sustainable consumer behavior is that consumers often perceive such actions as having some cost to the self, such as increased effort, increased cost or inferior aesthetics (Luchs & Kumar, 2017). Sustainable products lose consumer preferences in the face of all these factors, and they also seem to be indifferent to
sustainability information. Here, fashion consumers' purchasing intentions do not always translate into actual purchases (Morwitz et al., 2007; Gnanapragasam et al., 2018). Despite pro-environmental behaviors, recycling intentions, and desire to pay higher prices for environmentally and socially sustainable goods, only a few consumers engage in regular, sustainable purchasing activity (Mintel, 2006). An example can be that a positive attitude toward sustainable products was found in the study of Ajzen and Fishbein (1977) to be a strong indicator of engaging in a particular behavior, which is considered a good place to start promoting sustainable consumption of the fashion consumers. However, research on environmental and sustainable consumption, later on, shows that purchasing intentions do not always translate into actual purchases (Morwitz et al., 2007; Gnanapragasam et al., 2018).

Similarly, intentions have also been shown to be poor predictors of actions over brief time spans, as shown by Kor and Mullan's study (2011). Despite the fact that a growing percentage of consumers have favorable views toward sustainable products, they often do not purchase them (Morwitz et al., 2007). Thus, despite pro-environmental behaviors, recycling intentions, and a desire to pay higher prices for environmentally and socially sustainable goods, few consumers engage in regular, sustainable purchasing activity (Mintel, 2006). Aside from Cowe and Williams (2000) calling it the 30:3 phenomenon, other scholars have dubbed this paradox as the Ethical Purchasing Gap (Nicholls & Lee, 2006) and the Attitude–Behaviour Gap (Kim et al., 1997). The explanations for this disparity in behavior have not yet been thoroughly investigated. It's likely that respondents' responses show their willingness to conform to social expectations, even though this isn't mirrored in their individual consumption patterns (Carrington et al., 2010).
Chapter 03: Conducting an Inductive Process Study

This chapter will elaborate on the methodology of our study for answering the research questions. It will begin with a detailed description of the research approach along with the research process and design. Here, the sections will mostly talk about the methodological approach to the interview respondents, the data collection and its process and the development of the interview guide. This will be followed by the data analysis process with the evaluation of data reliability and validity.

3.1 The Research Process We followed

We wanted to conduct a process study where we can identify respondents from the source of purchase and find out how they become sustainable consumers over time. In this process, what factors mediate their choices for being sustainable and after being sustainable, do they still consume unsustainably? If yes, then why? Is there any particular product feature they are more attached to? What changes can be observed in their individual senses of fashion consumption and disposal? However, due to Covid-19, we could not follow our consumers' journey in real life, and we had to virtually interview them to collect information in a retrospective manner where they answer our questions themselves rather than us finding them out.

Our study began with an elaborative theoretical review of the relevant concepts of fashion and sustainable consumption of fashion. The idea of our reading was to study theories of sustainability, fashion and consumer behavior so that we can identify how they connect with the empirical data that were obtained from our interviews for further analysis in the results and discussion section. This study also later helped us to establish our own structure of understanding sustainable fashion consumption behavior. Merriam (2009) also mentioned that reviewing the relevant concepts is essential for establishing the foreground and building a knowledge foundation that can help to articulate the problem statement and depict already existing views by the experts and scholars in the relevant fields, which validates our mentioned approach.

In this process, we studied research articles, newspaper journals, expert interviews, online reviews and books that we believed could deepen our understanding and knowledge about sustainability and the fashion industry. We continued exploring the resources that talked about the relationship between sustainability and the fashion industry. Since consumers are the core of our research; therefore, it was mandatory for us to learn about consumer behavior in terms of sustainable fashion
choices along with consumer behavior in the fashion industry. Our research question revolves around transitional consumers. That is why we identified the consumers who have actually started the transition and requested them to tell us their stories that elaborately explain the journey.

From the literature front, we have come across articles that talked about how sustainable or unsustainable consumers behave, but interestingly, not many studies were found that research on the consumers who have started the transition. Although, we found much literature that talks about the consumer behavioral factors in general, which can motivate consumers negatively or positively towards sustainability. In our study, we have learned about those factors and added more with them, which were carved out from our consumer journeys.

We followed an inductive process study with the help of the Qualitative research method. We let the respondents talk openly so that we can identify the step-by-step transition from unsustainable consumption to sustainable ones and many factors that subconsciously influenced them in this move. In order to achieve that, mostly open to semi-structured questions were selected that worked as a conversation opener and allowed the participants to tell their stories from their own point of view. We also used follow-up questions as anecdotes to guide the respondents if they drift away too much from the area of sustainability and fashion. We will discuss this more in detail while discussing the interview process.

3.2 Our Research Design

Our main focus of the study was listening to our respondents' sustainable consumption journeys so that we can visualize their transition. We wanted to learn about each of the steps and timeline to understand the gradual shift of consumers. Process study helps in this kind of research as it talks about observing the respondents very closely and identify changes in their behavioral patterns in the light of different stimulating events and factors. These data help researchers to induce necessary conclusions to the research questions (Merriam, 2009). We drew out meanings from the collected interview data to understand the respondents' transitional journeys and induce a general journey map from them and develop a conceptual framework of factors mediating the journeys of these respondents.
3.3 How We Selected Our Respondents

For our study, it was necessary to choose ‘information-rich scenarios’ (Merriam, 2009, p. 77) in order to understand how consumers make the transition to more sustainable fashion consumption, which subsequently affects their idea of fashion. We wanted our respondents to be the ones who have previously consumed fashion items in an unsustainable manner and have since transformed into more sustainable fashion consumers because such study of transition can give us a chance to see its impact on the respondents' idea of fashion. We took help from Patton's (2015) purposeful sampling method to identify these individual consumers and hear about their interesting journeys and experiences. We describe our study as the type in which the researcher wishes to learn, investigate, and gain insight about the study respondents; therefore, we selected a group of respondents from which the most can be obtained (Merriam, 2009). The purposeful sampling method provided us the right group of consumers to study the phenomenon, which we call 'the transitional journey.'

When choosing our study’s respondents, we considered a variety of factors. We used the following elements to determine the appropriate group of respondents:

1. The transitional consumer, as defined above, should have already started the journey and are not the ones who are thinking about making the transition towards more sustainable fashion consumption. It does not matter how far the consumers have gone in their sustainable fashion journey; the important thing is that they started the journey. It could be in various manners, either buying sustainable products or consuming sustainably or disposing of them off in a sustainable manner. The focus was only on these consumers as research is lacking more useful data for us regarding their behavior and psychological changes regarding fashion in an illustrative manner.

2. These consumers are also the ones who can tell us about the reasons why they did not consume sustainably before and why they started consuming sustainably afterward. These reasons underpinned the factors which can be connected with already established theories in order to develop the planned theoretical framework in the end.

3. For our study, we wanted to generate data from a wide range of audiences who can cover different parts of the Globe. Therefore, we contacted people from Asia, Africa, North America, Europe and Australia. However, it was not possible to cover all the continents as we planned and hence, we needed to settle with Asia, Africa, Europe and North America. The larger part of our respondents
represents wider Europe, but we managed to get single respondents from Africa and North America and a couple of respondents from Asia.

4. We also intended to make our study a gender-neutral one by collecting data from a similar number of male and female respondents. However, most of the males we contacted were not really confident about their stands on sustainability, and therefore we needed to settle for a couple of male respondents for our study.

5. After starting to contact people to take part in our study, we realized that there exist multiple types of sustainable fashion consumers. There are enthusiasts who started their sustainable journey very recently; consumers who have become sustainability activists and invest their time and effort to uphold fashion sustainability via social media channels pledges or getting involved in promotional activities; and the last category that could be identified are the people who are working with the fashion sustainability for a long period and became experts in this field in terms of sourcing, consumer behavior management etc. Experts are the people who have reached the highest level of sustainable consumption among the 3, and they were working as activists at some point in time.

Our initial plan was to visit shopping malls and independent sustainable shopping boutiques to observe the behavior of the consumers there and identify respondents for face-to-face interviews. However, due to the Covid-19 situation, this plan did not work as it was very difficult to walk up to strangers and ask them anything. Therefore, like all the academic activities worldwide, the respondents' selection plan needed to be moved online.

The idea behind looking for respondents in the shopping malls or brand shops was straightforward. There it is easy to identify consumers who are buying sustainable fashion products and approach them to assess whether they meet the remaining criteria or not. However, virtually finding the potential target group was not easy as it is nearly impossible to distinguish the consumers who have started the transition from being unsustainable to becoming more sustainable online. We started looking among our friends and family first. But that did not provide any positive response as most of the people in the surrounding were not well informed about the sustainability drive in the fashion industry. Therefore, we started searching beyond our known circles. However, Covid-19 made it even more difficult to get in touch with people.
Then we started doing netnography, where we mostly looked into Facebook groups which are full of people promoting fashion sustainability, or Instagram blogs by fashion sustainability experts or activists. We started with writing posts in two Facebook groups called ‘Sustainable Fashion’ (Link) and ‘Sustainable Fashion Collective’ (Link). In the beginning, we were a little pessimistic about the responses they might receive as most of the members in these groups were promoting their own businesses through numerous posts. To our surprise, the post received around 12 comments where people appreciated our study that we were planning to conduct. We started contacting them via private messaging options and found out that many of them commented on the post as a token of good wishes but were not intending to participate in our study. There were five respondents whom we found from these two groups who accepted the requests to participate in our study.

Simultaneously, the attention was drawn towards Linköping University (Sweden) student groups that work with sustainable developments. To be more specific, there is a student body called 'Navitas,' and under their umbrella of different operating projects, Linköping University Student Secondhand Shop is the one that was established in 2019 by some young sustainability activist. The purpose of this project is to provide students at Linköping University with a platform to buy and sell their used furniture. We contacted an active member of this project group who is a transitional sustainable fashion consumer, and she wholeheartedly accepted the invitation. We also received the first six primary respondents in this way. Then we started taking interviews and initiated snowball sampling to find new respondents through the six initial respondents. Snowball sampling is a type of purposeful sampling that helps when respondents with the target characteristics are not easily accessible. The already existing respondents then guided us to reach other respondents with similar characteristics (Ghaljaie et al., 2017).

We started interviewing the experts, who have quite a wide network that include many academic and professional experts from the field of fashion sustainability. They redirected us to few more experts who own sustainable fashion labels themselves and a couple of academicians who hold Ph.D. in the relevant fields. We also requested the young activists to help to reach a few more activists and consumers. Unfortunately, the greatest number of rejections came from the experts as they were not interested in contributing to the student thesis. We covered this lack in respondents’ number by finding more consumers, enthusiasts and activists as our remaining study participants. An additional challenge that came up during our data collection was that there were few respondents who misunderstood what our study was about but got curious just by reading the words sustainability and
fashion. They were basically the consumers who wanted to know about sustainability and wanted to contribute with their experience in the field but did not make the transition themselves towards sustainable consumption. From that point onwards, we had to make the participation requirements clearer in the electronic requests that we sent out for participation.

Altogether, we finalized a total of 16 respondents whose interview could be considered for our study, and the time constraint did not allow us to look for any further respondents. Time constraint, however, is a well-known issue in studies and has to be acknowledged (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). The reason behind the struggle to find participants easily was the criteria our study had for the respondents. The confidentiality agreement restricts our study from sharing the full name and specific occupational details of our respondents. However, we took their permission to disclose their first names, age, residential information and general, occupational information for putting the data into a demographic perspective. As mentioned earlier, for our study purpose, we divided the respondents into three different categories, and this will be discussed in minor details below:

### 3.3.1 The Experts

These are the respondents who have been consuming fashion sustainably for more than five years and are involved in promoting the same behavior via their social activities. They all have their Instagram handles or own fashion labels through which they promote sustainable fashion. They are very active in participating in social events and deliver lectures on how to be a sustainable fashion consumer. We tried inviting ten experts but could connect with only three for our study.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondent group</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Country of origin</th>
<th>Country of residence</th>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>Activity involved in</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Experts</td>
<td>Joanna</td>
<td>UK</td>
<td>UK</td>
<td>36-40</td>
<td>Independent Consultant and Visual Blogger</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Amandeep</td>
<td>India</td>
<td>India</td>
<td>31-35</td>
<td>Owner of An Upcycling Brand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Shruti</td>
<td>India</td>
<td>India</td>
<td>31-35</td>
<td>Consultant, Marketeer, and Sales Agent for Local Young and Slow Fashion Brands</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 3.3.2 The Activists

These are the people who have started consuming fashion sustainably in the last 3-5 years. They are mostly young adults who once loved to be trendy but just recently discovered the dark side of fashion
and started sustainable fashion consumption. They are also involved in promoting sustainable consumption behavior via their attachments with sustainable causes. Few of them even are actively participating in media events to talk about upcycling or participating in long-distance bike rides to promote the cause. We identified 4 respondents from the participants to be sustainable fashion consumption activists.

### Table 2: Overview of Activists in Our Respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondent group</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Country of origin</th>
<th>Country of residence</th>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>Activity involved in</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Activists</td>
<td>Moa</td>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>21-25</td>
<td>Upcycling, Biking for a Cause, Secondhand consumption</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Eva</td>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>26-30</td>
<td>Founding Project Leader of Linköping University Student Secondhand Consumption</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nora</td>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>26-30</td>
<td>Secondhand Consumption</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bilaal</td>
<td>Mauritius</td>
<td>Mauritius</td>
<td>31-35</td>
<td>Eco Products Promoter</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 3.3.3 The Enthusiasts

This group of consumers has become actively sustainable within the last three years. They are involved in sustainable fashion purchases, occasional upcycling or recycling along with re-designing fashion products that suit their own 'style consumption'. We have classified the remaining eight respondents in this group.

### Table 3: Overview of Enthusiasts in Our Respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondent group</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Country of origin</th>
<th>Country of residence</th>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>Activity involved in</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Enthusiasts</td>
<td>Tania</td>
<td>Bangladesh</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>31-35</td>
<td>Leading Sustainable Lifestyle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Frida</td>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>21-25</td>
<td>Upcycling and Recycling Enthusiast</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Anna</td>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>21-25</td>
<td>Linköping University Secondhand Project Leader</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Björn</td>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>21-25</td>
<td>Linköping University Secondhand Project Vice Leader</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Daria</td>
<td>Russia</td>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>26-30</td>
<td>Occasional Upcycling and Fashion Re-imaginator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Laura</td>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>21-25</td>
<td>Sustainable Product Enthusiast</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mara</td>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>21-25</td>
<td>Sustainable Product Enthusiast</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Aydan</td>
<td>Turkey</td>
<td>Turkey</td>
<td>21-25</td>
<td>Secondhand Consumer</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.4 Data Collection Process

3.4.1 Interview Guide

The development of an interview guide to act as a reference for the interview was the first step in the data collection process (Merriam, 2009). The guide, which was divided into eight different sections (see Appendix: 1), was created in order to gain specific knowledge about our research problem.

Section one provided the respondents with an idea of our study and the purpose behind it, along with providing important definitions of sustainability in fashion and transitional consumers for our study. Section two was developed to get personal data of the respondents, which included age, education and occupation data etc. Personal data helps us to distinguish our research interviewees. This section also had an open question that asked respondents their definition of sustainable fashion consumption, and it ends with asking respondents to identify their role in the sustainability sector, whether they are just a consumer or an expert or an enthusiast etc. This section worked as a warm-up for the interviewees, along with breaking their ice. It also helped us to put respondents into our classification of experts, enthusiasts and activists. Section three is the main part of our interview guide that asked respondents the open question about their transitional journey from being unsustainable to the sustainable consumer. We also asked respondents about their first sustainable fashion purchase and the process of finding it. This gives us an idea of our respondent’s usual place of shopping. The section ended with the question of respondents’ frequency of purchase which later helped us to put them in different levels of sustainable consumers. Section four asked respondents about their current state of sustainable consumption, whether they have fully transformed into a sustainable consumer or if they still go back to fast fashion for any of their needs. Here, we also asked respondents about their most important features in fashion products as a follow-up question if the respondent has not answered that already. Section five asked respondents about their product disposal behavior. This is also to help us identify the level of sustainability which our respondents practice in all fronts of sustainability.

Additionally, we could also manage interesting insights about how our respondents think about the lifecycle of a product. Section six was designed as a follow-up section to ask respondents about the mediating factors that kept them in an unsustainable world before and the ones that helped them shift from that one to the sustainable world. Many respondents answered this question while describing their transitional journey, either intentionally or subconsciously. This question helped us
to identify if there was any more important factor left that the respondents left to speak about. Section seven asked respondents about their fashion style changes due to the transition. Our last section was a rhetoric one that asked respondents to come up with their solution for sustainable consumption from the position of brands and policymakers. Although we did not include the findings from this question in our study, we kept that section as we believe it provided a good closure to our interview guide.

The bulk of the interview guide was made up of open-ended and follow-up questions that we asked in response to the responses given by our respondents and in light of the sustainability context in the fashion industry, as well as the respondents' journey and the changes in their idea of fashion. These questions helped us to get the respondents' personal views apart from general terms spoken by them. We designed the questions to help us identify the saturation point at which respondents start repeating the information already provided. We used characteristics for good questions to create the questions in the interview guide, which included a combination of knowledge, insight, skill, and background questions, according to Patton (2015). Also, since open-ended questions extract the most descriptive qualitative data from interviewees (Merriam, 2009), we decided that the majority of our questions should be open-ended.

Merriam (2009) claims that good questions are required for qualitative analysis and that only good questions yield good results. Besides good questions, we assured the interview guide's accuracy by pre-testing it with a few respondents and our supervisor who decided to volunteer their time for our study. It helped us to refine the questions because a few of the participants struggled to understand some of the questions in our interview guide, and some questions were repetitive because, during the pre-test, they gave the same answers to these questions. As a result, we reworded the questions that were causing problems in respondents' comprehension. We deleted the repetitive questions or replaced them with new ones relating to the category. As a result, pre-testing the questions improved the questions' understandability and condensed the interview guide. Finally, a second pre-test of the interview guide was performed, and the guide was finalized for the interviews after ensuring that no problems were discovered during the second pre-test. Although, we had some structural modifications to smoothen the flow of questions after taking the first two interviews, and we followed the version after this as our final interview guide for the rest of our interviewees.
The final phase of the data collection process was to start the interview, communicate with the respondent, and record and transcribe the interview data. Due to factors such as Covid-19 and the physical distance of certain respondents located in other countries, the contact between interviewer and respondent was conducted via videocall using Zoom Video Communication Software. Before we started asking questions, we clarified our study's purpose, promised and informed the respondents about their company's anonymity and requested permission to document the interview discussion using a recorder.

We used semi-structured interviews to capture the thesis's primary data because they allow for both flexibility and consistency. We created a list of questions on each important category in order to minimize the possibility of getting inconsistent responses, where the interviewee gets derailed from the research area and starts talking about sustainability in a different industry. We also asked follow-up questions based on the answers of the respondents to collect more data where necessary. In certain cases, we have modified the order and language of the questions. This approach allowed respondents to express their subjective opinions on different categories mentioned above to know their journey completely, which is supported by a similar claim from Bell et al. (2019).

In addition, we conducted the interviews in English, and the lengths were from 40 to 70 minutes based on respondents' convenience. The length varied from respondent to respondent based on their comfort level in a virtual setting, which means, in cases where we felt respondents are not willing to expand their answers, we kept the sessions to the minimum. We used our experience here as we also do not feel sitting in front of the computer screen for long under this Covid-19 enforced virtual working world. The comfort level check also complies with Saunders et al.'s (2009)'s recommendation for good interviews. During the interviews, one of us was serving as an active interviewer and asking the list of questions regarding each section coupled with follow-up questions in order to get a thorough understanding of the journey. While the other was acting as a passive interviewer who was assessing the overall progress of the interview and constantly monitoring respondents' comfort levels. This method is also advised by Bell et al. (2019) for qualitative interviews. We recorded the interviews, and for transcription purposes, we used Otter as the software platform. Then, we emailed the transcripts to the participants, encouraging them to review them and add some supplementary material if desired in order to enhance our study's accuracy and validity. The participants followed the requests and returned the transcripts, allowing us to start the
data analysis. The reliability of the research was considered to be extremely high due to this transparency measure we took.

We also studied and reviewed other research articles published in the areas of consumer behavior or psychological factors affecting consumer behaviors or studies that talked about what affects consumers in putting their intentions into practice. It allowed us to receive valuable background information about consumer behaviors and their connection with sustainability. Then we used our interview guide to collect interviewees’ responses and went back to literature for finding additional relevant theories to analyze the findings. As we conducted process study, we required to identify respondents’ sustainability practices, which we planned to do by observing them in real life. But due to the Covid-19 restrictions, we had to limit our observations by collecting relevant pictures from the respondents which exemplifies their sustainable journeys and practices. We gathered theory from literatures, empirical data from interviews and observation data from the collected pictures to synthesize our outcome from this study. This technique is similar to triangulation, which is a method of combining information and theory from several sources to guarantee that the empirical data are inclining towards the truth (Saunders et al., 2009). The use of numerous data sources provided us a solid basis for our qualitative testing and also added to its validity standards as suggested by Bell et al. (2019).

Moreover, the group of respondents that were chosen for the data collection were knowledgeable and engaged in the field of sustainability and fashion. Therefore, we could gather the required data from them in a quite comprehensive manner, and we collected the data till interviewees reached the point of saturation. The trigger point for this was the moment when we realized that the respondent had started repeating the same information, or we heard similar things from different respondents. Hence, we figured out that no new insights might be forthcoming. In our study, many of these saturation incidents happened due to the respondents coming from a similar geographical region, background knowledge, common social circles or, in some cases, similar age groups. The data saturation was not considered as something negative, as it put a stronger emphasis on certain matters and helped us to classify factors accordingly. Merriam and Tisdell had mentioned something similar about this phenomenon in their 2015 article about qualitative research.
3.5 How We Analyzed Data

Data analysis, according to Flick (2014), is the understanding of textual (or visual) data in order to make conclusions about implied and explicit aspects of it, which provides help in the meaning-making of the collected material. The first step in the data analysis for our study was to transcribe each interview after it was conducted, both to prepare the data for patterns and to gain preliminary insights. Initially, we planned to manually capture the data when interviewing the individuals. However, we found it difficult to keep up with the interviewees on the majority of the topics, as manual notetaking and note-making have a problem with going into the details of the consumers' journey through follow-up questions. Maintaining the flow when engaging with the respondents seemed to be a challenge for both of us. As a result, we began recording the interviews after our first interview.

As the schedule continued, the interviews were transcribed, allowing us to collect the details required. It shaped the preliminary meanings, which affected the questions in our subsequent interviews to some degree. Qualitative data analysis helps to collect inductive and comparative data in nature (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015), and we induced our respondents' journey and planned framework of mediating factors from these data.

In order to address the research question, our data analysis involved moving back and forth between our empirical data and abstract concepts from the scholarly paper readings, inductive and deductive reasoning, explanation and description, and identification of respondents in different categories. We identified these categories after the data was gathered and processed by transcription. Both of us went over the verbatims of the respondents' interviews one by one, looking for any inconsistencies, redundancy, misreading, or misquoting in the text. The categories were important for us because they demonstrate the data's repetitive regularities. Merriam & Tisdell also mentioned a similar method for data categorization (2015).

3.5.1 How We Captured and Categorized Data From Interviews

To fully exploit the data and find codes to compare and categorize, we reviewed the interviews regarding the respondents’ journeys and behaviors both separately and then together. We developed an excel sheet with all the data categories mentioned in our interview guides, such as age, nationality, occupation and educational details, along with the provisions for capturing respondents' journeys towards sustainable consumption. Details about their first sustainable consumption, the process of
finding it, reasons to look for it etc. Also, details about why they did not consume sustainably before and if they still make unsustainable consumptions were also put focuses on. Alongside, we captured interesting quotes from the respondents which talked about specific factors or events that we found relevant with our studied theories of consumers' sustainable fashion consumption behavior.

Once we started putting empirical data from each of our interviews categorically, it helped us to compare the data collected from different respondents, and we started finding patterns of both similar and contradicting answers regarding their journey, enablers, mediating factors and the overall impact on their idea of fashion. As a result, we broke down the data into tiny chunks that were important to craft a model of consumers’ transitional journeys, mediating factors and levels of sustainability to address our research questions. This expansive and open approach to coding the data, which we used for our study, is known as open coding, as mentioned by Merriam & Tisdell (2015).

Both of us did the free coding individually to reduce any bias to maintain the depth of the coding. We broke down the data into tiny bits using our excel sheet, which provided us to access the relevant sections while looking for the findings of the study. Taking these steps helped us; firstly, to provide the smallest piece of information relevant to the research study; secondly, even that smallest piece of information was able to stand alone, which means it is interpretable even in the absence of further details or knowledge of the whole context of our study and these steps go in line with the suggestions made by Lincoln and Guba (1985) for data coding. The comparison of the codes from each interview during the coding process to find similarities and differences is also known as ‘constant comparisons of the respondents’ data set mentioned by Corbin and Strauss (2008, p. 65). Since we had done the coding separately, we then made a comparison of our results and ensured the consistency of our results. We synchronized the open coding findings after cross-checking the data to get them ready for the next step. The next step was to categorize the data in their relative categories. We decided on these categories after finding all the different required pieces of information (codes) from the data set about the consumer journey towards more sustainable consumption. The main categories were: (1) definitions relating to sustainable fashion consumption, (2) steps taken in the journey to make the first piece of sustainable fashion consumption, (3) factors that triggered the sustainable consumption, (4) factors that constrained them from sustainable consumption before, (5) factors that enable them towards sustainable consumption, (6) any
particular features on fashion products they are more attached to (7) the disposal behaviors of the consumers and finally (8) changes in their ideas of fashion.

3.6 How Did We Check Data Validity and Reliability

In order to increase the confidence in the conduct of our study and its results, there are several strategies that we applied in order to increase the validity and reliability of our qualitative study. Validity and reliability are considered to be the two criteria that assess the quality and the trustworthiness of a qualitative study (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015).

3.6.1 Internal Validity

The results for our study have been constructed directly from interviews we conducted, and hence, it was not possible to check the objective truth behind the claims of our study respondents. Merriam and Tisdell (2015) have also explained this phenomenon in their article and provided direction for the researchers to overcome this issue of validity to some extent. According to them, the triangulation approach could be used quite effectively in such a scenario, where the empirical claim can be backed up by the already established theoretical background of certain scenarios, and we also complied with this process by doing our own triangulation through constant re-iteration between theories and empirics. Also, we collected pictures from respondents to validate their sustainability claims.

To further increase the validity of our study, both of us have acted as 'triangulating analysts,' and we checked the data individually to reach our own conclusions only to cross-check afterward and matching the patterns for the best outcome. This process is mentioned as one of the validations methods by Patton (2015), and he believes that triangulation can increase the credibility and validity of findings by confirming that the findings of a study are not merely an artifact of a single method, single source and a single investigator's biases. Although, as our study followed the process model and inductive approach, we focused on interweaving the empirical data more with the theory in the result and discussion part of our thesis.

As mentioned above, we also involved 'adequate engagement' in data collection where we kept on collecting data from an interview until the respondents could reach a saturation point through finding repetitive data provided by the respondents. This is to make sure that we manage to get all the relevant data without any additional or redundant information uncovered from the interviews, and it complied with the suggested process by Merriam and Tisdell (2015).
### 3.6.2 Reliability

The issue with qualitative study and its finding lies in the reliability of the collected data. Due to the diversity of the data, the research findings are difficult to replicate in these types of studies (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). The reason behind this is that humans show dynamism in their behavior, and the qualitative study constructs data from the group of respondents in a particular moment. At that moment, the respondent can experience some phenomenon in a particular way which can alter later due to the changes in the context, age, social status or the respondent’s exposure to a new set of experiences (Tracy, 2013). This can affect the replication of findings even to represent the same respondent in the future. However, for this study, the journey map can be generalized for transitional consumers. Another concern regarding the reliability of our study is that we tried collecting data from a diverse geographical region. However, in the end, one region became more dominant in the final group of respondents. Therefore, the study findings might not be reliable to have a general understanding of consumer behavior for all the regions.

According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), study findings also need to be consistent with the presentation of data to ensure reliability and dependability, and for this, we have followed the triangulation analysis explained by Merriam and Tisdell (2015), where the theoretical data has been used to provide the basis for the empirical data extracted from the qualitative analysis. Additionally, to be transparent, our study has provided explanations similar to that of an audit trail regarding how the respondents were gathered and classified in different groups, along with how data was collected, transcribed and analyzed to reach a conclusion in the end. This will help the readers to understand our process throughout our study period and build their confidence in the findings of this study. The importance of this elaborated explanation has been discussed by Merriam and Tisdell (2015) as part of making any study more reliable and valid for the readers.

### 3.6.3 External Validity

Every study comes with its own limitations, and our research is no different. This section will try to validate those in a structured order one by one. Firstly, we set the interviews for a specific time limit based on the recipients' preferences. Secondly, despite having planned to gather the respondents from around the world and find out region-specific findings, we could not manage to get that diverse set of respondents due to the time constraint. Most of the respondents are from Europe, and this could put a limit on the reliability of the findings to be generalizable. Our study still needed to draw the conclusion from these 16 respondents due to the time constraint mentioned previously. All of
the respondents fulfilled the mandatory criteria for our study, which is that the participants need to have started the transition from being unsustainable fashion consumers to becoming sustainable ones. In addition to that, many of these respondents were more than just sustainable fashion consumers; they are sustainable fashion industry advocates, and, in that sense, their inputs can be considered credible for our study. After that, another limitation in the respondents was the imbalance between male and female respondents, due to which our study cannot be called a gender-neutral study. During the interview, we asked the respondents questions that go beyond the scope of our research and concern sustainability in fashion as a whole. To ensure that the interview guide can find out the relevant data, we pre-tested the draft questions with our supervisor and a few of the participants even before conducting the interview. This provides the assurance that the questions work as proper tools to collect the data our study required.

3.6.4 Ethical Considerations

In the last part of this section, we talk about the ethical stances that we took in our study. The credibility of the research depends on the integrity of the researcher while carrying out a study (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015), and we fully complied with this notion. As our study was done through interviewing consumers, we found out that most of the respondents were not very sensitive about the recording of the interviews. However, their concerns were addressed at the start of the interviews regarding where these recordings and personal data will be used. Therefore, we followed the ethical considerations suggested by Patton (2015) by informing each of the respondents about the procedure of data capturing and their usage of them afterward. In this process, before starting the interview, we briefed each of the respondents regarding our study and what data we are planning to extract from the interviews.

Additionally, we asked the respondents about what level of data will they be comfortable with being published with the work. Most of the respondents were comfortable sharing their names, occupational data and age except for a few who requested to use the first name, generic occupational information and the age range rather than the actual age. To maintain the conformity, we decided to keep the request of the last group of respondents and decided to use only the first name, generic occupational details and the age range of all the respondents. Thus, we used this method combined with all the others mentioned in this chapter to ensure the credibility of our study and findings from an ethical point of view.
This chapter will discuss the results of the qualitative process study that we underwent for this paper. This is the pure reflection of what the respondents said in their own words, which will be critical for analyzing and reaching the goal of our research.

The consumer's whole sustainable transitional journey is discussed in this chapter, from the moment they were consciously or unconsciously consuming unsustainable fashion to the times when they had a triggering point, at which point they became sustainable fashion consumers and advanced through the sustainability ladder to the possible end of the journey towards the highest individual levels. We expanded the entire journey using information from the respondents' interviews, which would include, among other aspects, the reasons that hampered them, the triggering point, and the factors that kept them motivated to stay sustainable. We maintained the categorization of respondents into three groups (expert, activist and enthusiast) mentioned in the previous chapter during this elaboration of the journey.

4.1 Meet Our Sustainable Respondents

Before we started our interviewees, we assumed that despite the fact that they differ in terms of geographical regions, age, education and occupation, their sustainable journeys and the consumption patterns might be quite similar. But to our surprise, we found out that their consumption patterns vary at large from each other. This starts from their product preferences, purchasing point choices, disposal behaviors and even changes in fashion sense. Now, we would like to introduce our respondents through glimpses of their journeys from being unsustainable fashion consumers to become sustainable ones. All the stories are interesting, but we picked the ones that represent all of our three respondent categories and cover all the unique attempts made by our respondents towards sustainable fashion consumption.

4.1.1 Meet Joanna: Our Sustainability Specialist

*Joanna is a sustainable fashion material sourcing expert who has worked for brands like H&M. She is specialized in sourcing materials from Asia, especially China. When young, she was a fast fashion enthusiast due to her urge to be trendy among her social circles. Although she started working for sustainability in fashion, she did not*
start her transition towards sustainable fashion consumption right away. She was concerned about the greenwashing as she experienced the brands' activities from close proximity. She shifted towards sustainable purchases once H&M launched its "Conscious Collections." Since then, she has been purchasing from different sustainable brands and looking for more organic clothes.

She values brands' transparency in activities to avoid greenwashing. At the same time, she shops from secondhand stores and donates or sells her unused clothes to extend their lifecycles. She promotes sustainable fashion movement through her Instagram handle very actively (Link) and also attends fashion lectures as an expert speaker.

4.1.2 Meet Amandeep: The Sustainable Entrepreneur

Amandeep realized that her Indian culture has a lot to offer to the world of fashion in terms of varied design, color and most importantly, sustainable options. This realization hit her while she was doing her Fashion MA in Milan. She was never too attracted to fast fashion from before, and her Indian way of brought up helped her. But after realizing what she can do more with Indian cultural fashion, she fixed her life's ambition. She worked with few fashion designers at home and abroad but finally started her own fashion line, which is focused on material upcycling. Amandeep collects used clothes or fashion materials from her friends, relatives or practically anyone and turns them into unique and exclusive fashion products (Link).
Her life and business share the same vision, that is 'Zero Waste,' and she is busy onboarding people on her mission with passion and patience.

4.1.3 Meet Bilaal: The Sustainability Champion from Mauritius

Bilaal is a father of two, who is an environmental engineer by profession, and who started his transition towards sustainable fashion purchases when he realized the importance of conserving materials on earth for future generation's survival.

Due to his profession, he is exposed to sustainable actions taken in the construction industry, and he is a part of those. Consequently, he wants to replicate the same
mentality when it comes to shop fashion sustainably. Mauritius is not very resourceful when it comes to sustainable fashion product availability as it has only one shop that offers eco-fashion products. Hence, many times, even with the intention of buying sustainable, he has to go for unsustainable options. He is a believer in extending each of the product lifecycles individually, and his not-so-fashion enthusiast mindset helps him to do so.

4.1.4 Meet Moa: The Inspiring Sustainability Activist

Moa, Master’s Candidate in Design and Product Development, thinks that sustainability is all about creativity. Of course, you can buy sustainable products, but the beauty of sustainability lies in how you can reuse something once it is a little damaged or you get bored of it.

Her passion for creativity drove her towards pausing her master's for a year and taking up a professional degree in Upcycling and Recycles Designs for a year. She demonstrates upcycling techniques in many of her live sessions for others, and she even designed her bike with broken pieces of ceramics that gave it a unique look.
She is an active member of the F/ACT movement (Link) and her university’s secondhand shop, which promotes sustainable consumption. She regularly takes part in sustainability pledges and gets featured on local news for her efforts, which she plans to continue more intensively.

4.1.5 Meet Eva: The Sustainable ‘DO-er’

Eva learned about the impact of social media’s influence on our fashion consumption and the unsustainability generated through it during her exchange year in the USA, where she took a course about Environmental Science. She learned about the environmental consequences of our limitless consumption through a movie at the end of her course, which showed the social consequences. She genuinely feels that there is a huge amount of clothes that are being produced already, and we need to utilize them by sharing them or selling them secondhand. Her belief in secondhand consumption inspired her to join the sustainable students’ clubs in her university, and she is the founder of the first-ever student-run secondhand shop on her campus. The shop started with selling furniture at first, but now it is a platform for students to swap clothes with each other (Link). She also fancies innovating her wardrobe by designing one clothe out of another.
Figure 7: Eva and Her Re-designing Wonder

The picture shows how she transformed one of her skirts into a full-fledged dress with the help of few tools. She loves to get inspired and inspire others for the causes she is passionate about.

4.1.6 Meet Nora: The Microbiologist Who Cares

Nora is a Microbiology graduate who was overwhelmed by a street secondhand fashion district in Milan during her exchange semester there. She was surprised to find so many unique clothes in one place at such a cheap price. In her opinion, clothes' lifecycles can be extended by having emotional attachments with them. "We seldom want to get rid of things that mean something to us," she says. Ever since she came to realize it, she started looking for secondhand clothes with individual touches on them. For example, she looks for jackets with artwork or a pair of jeans with custom patches. When she wears them, she feels that she is wearing someone else's story with her and adding her own stories with it. This sense of uniqueness made her stop buying fashion products from boutiques and becoming a devoted consumer of secondhand fashion. She is an active member of her university's secondhand shop project and an inspirer for her friends to adapt to secondhand fashion consumption. Few of our other interviewees (Aydan, Dilyana and Laura) are living examples of Nora's successful inspiration. She initiates regular Clothes Swapping among friends. We will talk more about this later.
In the above picture, Nora is showing us off her unique jacket during the time of her interview.

4.1.7 Meet Frida: The Sensible Consumer

For Frida, sustainable fashion does not only mean the production process to be environmentally sustainable. The people who are working in the business should also have a promise of leading a good life. There can be no sweatshops or wage exploitations. The brands’ responsibilities do not just stop there even. They need to design clothes that can last longer and create a system where consumers can return their products for recycling.
Only good-looking or trendy clothes are not something she looks to buy. She likes defining her own style statements. She utilizes her clothes properly and wishes others would do the same once she gives them away. For fashion to be sustainable, there needs to be an end-to-end circularity of environmental and social elements.

4.1.8 Meet Daria: The Sustainable Fashionista

Daria is a Master’s Candidate in Strategy and Management who had a head start on sustainable experiences by sharing clothes among her family and neighbors since childhood, which is apparently a very common thing in her country, Russia. As per her, a sustainable product means that it needs to be of good quality, and she is even ready to pay higher bucks for the product that promises to stay with her long. She is a make-up enthusiast who loves mixing up outfits from her wardrobe to create even more fashionable and unique combinations of clothing for her. She is also an aspiring up-cyclist who crafts leather wallets out of passion (Link).

These can be made at a cheaper cost than what the brands offer and have a similar lifetime, “[...] then why not keep on making them?” she said.
4.2 Categorized Results and Findings

With the help of our data coding, we have captured all the individual inputs from our respondents regarding different categories, and in the below section, we will present those in the order of our interview guide along with respondents' actual quotes according to relevance for better validation.

4.2.1 Definition of Sustainable Fashion Consumption

This discussion will be initiated with the idea of sustainable fashion consumption defined by the respondents. This consumer definition part is important because the attitude of consumers is directly related to what they perceive about certain terms. Their perceptions pave the way towards their final behavior, at least most of the time.

The interviews opened up with the question regarding the definition of sustainable consumption for all the respondents. The responses collected from them are so diverse and interesting that they are worth mentioning. In the Chapter 2, we have talked about the ambiguity in defining sustainable fashion consumption by theories, and there is no universal definition for the fashion industry itself (Bianchi & Birtwistle 2012; Blanchard, 2013; Bray, 2009). Therefore, the idea of this question was to find any common patterns from the interviewees. Interestingly, the experts were more or less on the same page while they defined sustainable fashion consumption. All of them agreed on the fact that sustainable fashion consumption shall include buying more sustainable products and using them for a longer period of time to avoid environmental unsustainability. The amount of purchase here is also critical as that is directly connected with the consequence of landfilling by the consumers. When consumption is more, wastage also follows similar patterns through disposing of products. Sustainability in consumption does not stop at the point when a consumer stops using a product. It is stretched to the point when consumers make the decision regarding the disposal of the product.

One of the expert respondents mentioned that Zero Waste is the ultimate level of any kind of sustainability.

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**Joanna:** “Sustainable fashion consumption has three parts, purchasing organic products, purchasing less and using your products more and more. At this point, avoiding landfilling is a particularly important aspect of sustainability.”

**Amandeep:** “Sustainable consumption should be ensuring ‘Zero Waste’ policy by individual consumers themselves. There are no alternatives.”
According to one of the activists, sustainable fashion consumption requires creativity, and this creativity comes in handy when you need to use your old clothes in the context of new trends. Creativity can help consumers to re-imagine their fashion products to give them new lives.

Moa: “For me, sustainability is about creativity. Definitely, products are important (Organic cotton etc.). But it’s more like what can you do with your old shirt to use it again rather than buying a new cheap shirt. New ways need to be developed to use old products to save nature.”

Eva: “Last weekend, I made a dress out of my old skirt, which is sustainable fashion consumption to me.”

The young consumers and enthusiasts are more focused on connecting sustainability with resource efficiency. Sustainability to them also means sustaining yourself first and then help others to do the same. People need to have more knowledge and awareness about the environmental and social impact of every single piece of fashion products in order to moderate their consumption choices to reduce the individual impact on the planet and its people.

Bjorn: “Sustainable consumption should mean resource-efficient consumption. It should not only talk about natural resources, but consumption should be made of such products that ensure that social resources like women and children workers having better lives.”

Frida: “Sustainable fashion is just the opposite of fast fashion. It needs to be good quality materials which are also stand out as timeless fashion products for ensuring longer lifecycle.”

Dilyana: “Sustainability to me means becoming more aware of the environment and society along with knowing what is good for the world. The more you understand, the better you can cope with the measures you need to take in order to save the planet. No matter how drastic they might seem.”

4.2.2 Transitional Journey

4.2.2.1 Unsustainable Behavior (How they used to be)

This part of the discussion of this chapter will talk about the different states of unsustainable consumption behavior shown by the respondents of this study before they turned to the sustainable
side and also will identify the underlying factors which attracted them towards consumption of unsustainable fashion products.

Most of the respondents used to be part of the unsustainable consumer group, who used to shop to fulfill their hedonistic needs of looking good, blending into the mass, following their social circles. For them, fashion was attractive based on the price tags, seasonal offerings, and aesthetic attributes. They either had no knowledge about their consumption consequences on the planet, or they used to care less about it. They were more motivated when they receive positive feedback regarding how they maintain trendiness with their fashion sense, so it can be said that fashion used to define them more than they defined their own styles. The discussion below will talk about how the respondents used to think about fashion and why.

The first thing we found out from the interviews is that while most of them were unaware of the side effects of their activities, few of them continued consuming unsustainably for a very long time even after knowing what they are doing, despite showing sustainable consumption intention simultaneously. Also, many of these factors are still effective for them in terms of pulling them back to the unsustainable level of consumption. This relates back to Festinger’s (1964) analogy regarding consumer behavior, which talks about the attitude-behavior gap of consumers. In this study, however, seven of the respondents, till one point, did not have enough knowledge or information regarding the downside of unsustainable and cheap fast fashion. They were unaware of the environmental harm caused by unsustainable consumption and also how the social lives in the developing countries are getting affected by the ever-increasing human demand for cheap and throw-away-worthy fashion products. They also had very limited knowledge about the availability of eco-friendly and green fashion products.

*Amandeep: “I was never a person who looks for lots of variety in fashion consumption, and I was not aware of the negative impacts we can actually make through our consumption. I got to know about all these in detail during my MA in Fashion from Italy. I was suddenly presented with all the waste statistics from fashion and the sufferings they cause, and I started thinking what I did till then and what I can do to change my negative impact on the earth.”*
Moa: "Growing up, I loved to buy clothes; colorful and fashionable clothes. It was not up until I joined university when I learned about the harm all the fashion lovers are creating, I am creating."

Farzana: "I am from Bangladesh, and we always see all these garment workers in the news for all the wrong reasons. News about their below-par lifestyle and working in hazardous conditions. But it was not until I moved to the US when I realized the environmental harm generated by the fashion industry as well. To be very honest, that moved me even more, partly because in Bangladesh, no one really cares about the environment, and no one focuses on its harmful effects as well. But in the US, it is a huge topic."

Aydan: "I never thought about the environmental impact of fast fashion. Although, I kind of knew about the social unsustainability issues as I am from Turkey myself. But this information was never complete nor vivid to my imagination. I wish I could think harder!"

Bjorn: "I knew nothing about sustainability. It has been the last year or two when I really got to know it and started thinking about my impact and how can I reduce it? There is a huge lack of formal knowledge about it."

Anna: "I knew the term sustainability as I am from Sweden! But I never really knew the consequences of my personal unsustainability on the world. Gladly, now I know, and I will only thrive on knowing more about it so that I can educate myself and the people around me."

One of the expert respondents mentioned that she used to buy fast fashion products in her early teenage years to stay fashionable and comply with the newer trends around her. At the same time, three of the consumers and enthusiast have also mentioned that they used to buy fast fashion to always have something new in their wardrobes, does not matter if they even use them or not. One of the fashion activists also used to go shopping with her friends and surrendering to the latest fashion clothes while shopping with her friends. These behaviors kept the respondents away from being sustainable fashion consumers and motivated them to give in for something new or trendy, novel and unique. These factors are discussed by Joy et al. (2012) in their article about fashion, sustainability. Consumers here lost their fights with the adrenaline rush or trickle-down feeling of possessing something from the Now-Fashions as mentioned by Veblen (1899).
**Joanna:** “When I was a teenager, I used to shop impulsively whatever the trends had to offer. I was young and naive, and I used to give in to my inner adrenaline rush that could only be satisfied with the possession of newness.”

**Moa:** "As a teenager, I used to go shopping with my friends in the shopping malls, and my eyes always seemed to look for the newest designs from H&M or Zara, which I could never resist from buying back then. Those were the days!"

**Laura:** "The city I live in is a small one, and it does not offer many options of fashion products for me. For me, finding something fancier and trendier always makes me feel happy and makes my day a successful one as a shopper."

**Daria:** "I always love to follow the current trends of fashion, and I bought orange jeans, pink jeans or high waist jeans whenever I saw them trending in the fashion magazines or ramp walks."

**Mara:** "When I was young (not that I am a lot older now), fashion was a thrilling hobby for me. The thrill of buying something new has always given me an adrenaline rush, which I used to enjoy a lot!"

Two of the experts were buying unsustainable fast fashion products because of the *cheap price tags*. One of them was starting a student life abroad and needed to find the balance between value and money. The other one was considering a lower price as a means of refilling her wardrobe with a less financial burden. One of the activists used to buy unsustainable fashion products from Zara and H&M as she truly believed that these were the options she could afford as a student with low or no income. The enthusiast respondents validated the above argument from student perspectives and mentioned that fast fashion is the only go-to when it comes to dressing smartly when both the time and money are limited.

**Joanna:** "Brands like H&M and Zara used to give me options of picking up something fast and without worrying too much as they carry price tags which do not let you think about the future of those products. Even if I never used any of my purchased items, they did not give me the feeling of guilt of spending money behind something unutilized.”

**Shruti:** “As a student living abroad alone made me prioritize the power of my wallet. I was buying cheap clothes mostly since I was living on a budget, and you won’t get
anything cheaper than a pair of Primark jeans or a gap t-shirt as an international student living in London.”

**Bilaal:** “Cheap clothes always give me the feeling that I can buy them without thinking too much, that too when I am a guy who did not use to put that much mental effort while choosing everyday clothes. Fast fashion was my go-to when it comes to worry-free shopping.

**Laura:** “As a student, I am always on a budget, and it was hard to buy a sustainable pair of jeans for an amount of money that could buy me a month’s wardrobe if I buy them from fast fashion.”

**Daria:** “Cheap price tags have always been a motivating factor for me when I used to turn to the fast fashion brand. They never disappointed me when I required to be dressed for a casual party with a steep budget.”

Fast fashion provided the interviewees with product options in beautiful colors and fabrics. According to the experts, they come in polyester or cotton or knit fabrics and change the pattern in very quick successions. Whereas most of the sustainable clothing options offer either organic cotton or eco-friendly hemp and very few of them come in silk. These products usually have very static designs and do not change in-between seasons that much. Therefore, whenever they go window shopping, fast fashion is the one that attracts consumers’ attention before any of the unaesthetic organic products. One of the activists used to love the color options fast fashion had to offer, and many of the enthusiasts talked about the different styling varieties they could find in brand shops of H&M, Zara, Topman, Uniqlo etc.

**Joanna:** “You get really excited when you see a simple top in three different designs and lots of colors in comparison to a grey organic cotton-made sweater, at least I do, every time I go shopping.”

**Nora:** “I love colors, and I am an adventurous shopper, so for me, fast fashion had a lot to offer. When you get to choose from an ocean of options in front of you, you stop thinking about which one will suit you best rather than which one will cause more harm. It’s really sad, but it’s the hard truth when it comes to fashion.”

**Bilaal:** “In Mauritius, the place I live has only one shop that sells sustainable fashion products and most of the time, it runs out of a variety of these products. Due to this
issue, even with having honest intentions to consume sustainably, many of us living here really can’t be sustainable."

**Mara:** "I am a fashion lover, and the thing I love about fashion products are the vibrancies of color and variety they offer. I do not like to experiment with my fashion choices that much, but when I see a unique blouse in orange during fall, I got to try that!"

Fashion wears are very personal, and they need to fit the consumers properly, at least, that is what the experts think. The fitting of clothing is a particularly important factor for a consumer. For any consumer, if a brand offers the **size and fitting** that goes best with him or her, it is awfully hard to move away from that brand. For many consumers, that is the reason they buy fashion products from a brand. Many of the fast fashion brands offer this particular size and fit, which are perceived perfect to some of the respondents, and it is not easy for them to ignore these brands due to this fact.

**Joanna:** “A huge part of how you look in a dress depends on how that fits you. If a brand can somehow provide you the right fit, the obvious consequence for many will be going back to that brand shop regularly and be a loyal consumer for them. In my case, I would say that H&M gets me, and I can never stop going there even after knowing that they might not be the best option for a sustainable world.”

**Anna:** “I am fond of a unique type of fitting when it comes to clothing, and I found it in a few brands which are not sustainable, and I am not proud of them as well. But I could not help myself from buying things that are so me.”

**Bjorn:** “I am very particular about the fitting of my dresses, and I can never compromise with that at all. For me, this is the main reason for becoming a returning consumer for Zara.”

Social circles and belongingness played a critical role in the respondents' lives to pick unsustainable fashion products. **Social influence** for them came from different directions. While one of the experts was trying to blend in with her friends and dressing up to attend the parties with them, for one of our activists, marketing campaigns and celebrity endorsements played the mediating role.

**Joanna:** "When I was younger, for me looking good in front of my friends was very important. I used to follow the fashion trends my friends used to follow so that we
all can be on the same page, and I can feel the belongingness to my circle. I was going to a lot of parties back then and buying fashion products in bulks to keep my fashionista image alive."

**Moa:** “The flashy ads on the magazines and stores really move me, especially when I see my favorite celebrity’s faces on them. For me, if I could get to wear what they were wearing on those advertisements, I would feel so much connected with them.”

Our experts mentioned the lack of transparency and lots of false promises just to increase the price from the brands’ side to be another reason for them not to trust the sustainable brands on product offerings and buy them with a lot of money. They would rather be unsustainable than getting fooled by the brands’ false promises. **Greenwashing** by one brand takes away the credibility for lots of other brands who might not be providing false statements, mentioned by one of our enthusiasts. Once the trust is gone from consumers' minds, it is very difficult to regain it.

**Amandeep:** “Fashion producers are not transparent regarding the process of their production. They say that they are different, but behind the scenes, they are doing the exact same thing as the other unsustainable brands. However, they are charging more for their products based on their sustainability claims, which to me is far worse than those unsustainable brands. Why can’t they let consumers watch while they produce clothes sustainably like a sushi restaurant, where the consumers can see the chef behind the glass windows preparing food for them.”

**Bilaal:** "I was fooled by brands' greenwashing quite a few times, and then I literally stopped searching for sustainable products. I mean, what is the point? They might all lie just to charge a few more extra bucks for their products."

**Eva:** “Discovering greenwashing makes me more furious than discovering unsustainable acts by a brand. It has the ability to make consumers start disbelieving the entire sustainability efforts taken by all the brands and make people care less about being sustainable, just like it to me before.”

Most of the respondents felt that they carry responsibilities for the environmental and social unsustainability generated by their fashion consumptions. The experts think that consumers are indeed at the center of all these excessive demands and productions that result in landfilling by throwing away clothes and suffering of the many from undue employment regulation maintained by
the factories in the underdeveloped countries. If consumers can change their habits, then sustainability conditions may turn around. Both the experts and activists in the interview respondents feel that they need to contribute to the sustainability drives around the world, and small steps by anyone can bring in bigger results. The enthusiasts also believe that every individual can make a difference and are also ready to accept the responsibilities on their parts and thrive to keep their consumption at levels that cause lower impact to the society and environment.

Shruti: “Of course we are responsible, all of us are. We are the ones who are pushing the brands to produce more in different variety, and we are the ones who can try to stop demanding for more.”

Eva: "As a responsible human being, I understood I need to take the steps possible by me to change the world or at least keep it away from destruction. After understanding my own abilities to contribute towards the sustainability act, I started working on it, and there is where I came up with the idea of opening a Secondhand furniture store for students. This can be a small step, but many steps like this can bring in the change we need."

Moa: "After acknowledging my own responsibilities, I started to think what can I do? I always like creativity, and to use that for sustainability; I took a one-year course on upcycling. This helped me learn new ways of reusing materials, and I decided to spread my knowledge. I have also joined an organization called the F/ACT movement. They are promoting sustainable lifestyles through pledges and various activities and try to use my upcycling knowledge to help them in many of their awareness campaigns through demonstrating various use of a simple torn cloth to the pieces of a broken vase."

### 4.2.2.2 Starting Point (Describing the trigger to change)

Through the interviews, we realized that for each of the respondents to start their transitions from being unsustainable to become more sustainable, there were a few triggering points. These can be a sudden incident, influence by a friend, visiting a new country, discovering new products, watching a show on Netflix that shows tangible information regarding how unsustainable we humans are, experiencing a disastrous incident that generated negative feelings about the way we live or as simple as finding a secondhand shop while walking on their city center. For some respondents, they started being sustainable from a very early age due to the culture they belong to or the way of living in certain
parts of the world. In general, these triggers might not sound so special, but they made the respondents take their first steps towards a sustainable consumption journey. We have felt that consumers at this point were not fully committed to sustainability. They were mostly interested in trying out the sustainable side of fashion. Although they portrayed themselves as consumers who started thinking about the societal and environmental impacts while consuming, 100% of their consumption was not yet sustainable at this point. Here, they were still suffering from the attitude-behavior dilemma analogy mentioned by Festinger (1964).

Joanna: "I started working on sustainable sourcing for fashion quite a long time ago. But it was not until eight years ago when I started buying more sustainable products, and it was the time when H&M first launched their "Conscious Collections." For me, I was working in H&M back then, and I saw the evolution in H&M's supply chain to become sustainable. Once they launched these collections, things became more substantial for me, and I went ahead to make my first sustainable purchase."

Amandeep: "When I was doing my MA in Italy, I realized that Indian clothes are very sustainable compared to the widespread fast fashion out there. I was using only our traditional clothes growing up like millions of others do in India. In that sense, I would say that culture had the silent trigger for me to be a sustainable consumer before I even became aware of the term sustainability."

Nora: "I went to Milan for one of my Erasmus years, and one evening I was strolling down a road where I saw hundreds of clothing hangers standing. All these hangers had secondhand clothes, and thousands of people were shopping in that area smilingly. I was astonished to see the quality and variety of clothes that the place had to offer, and it made me realize that I too can be fashionable by not buying new clothes. I can rather spend less and buy something nicer."

Aydan: "I met Nora, this crazy, friendly and fun person, while studying in Italy. She was a vegetarian and very conscious about the environment. Her thoughts at that early age got me thinking that I need to change myself to that as well. Then she took me to this huge street secondhand fashion market, and I was so impressed to see all these colorful high-quality clothes, even the designer ones hanging in such great shape. I made my first sustainable consumption there."
Anna: “I was walking down the street of Linköping and came across a shop named Myrorna (Swedish Secondhand Clothing Store). It looked very interesting to me from outside, and I stepped in only to find all these secondhand furniture and fashion products ready to find new homes. I found this pair of Levi’s jeans at a one-third price of the new one, and I immediately got hooked to it. I knew about sustainability and secondhand but never really consumed anything myself before, which can be called sustainable. That was my first one.”

Daria: "In Russia, we had a tradition of giving away clothes which are not in use to our family members or neighbors. I grew up wearing clothes I got from my aunts, which were used by my older cousins and my clothes found their way to my younger ones. At that age, I did not know what we were doing was sustainable as it was just the way we lived. I myself made my first sustainable purchase from H&M, and it was this eco-friendly sweater which was reasonably priced."

Dilyana: “It began from my Childhood. I used to go with my mom to vintage shops in Bulgaria and buy fashion products for our entire family. Although these shops were not our main source of consumption back then, this practice drew marks on my memory in such a way that now I can connect my past with my present doable to become sustainable, and I do not need to learn from scratch, as I had got my training when I was a child.”

Tania: “Since I moved to the USA, Netflix has been my best friend and sometimes an innocent educator as well. Netflix has these amazing documentaries, for example, Our Planet, Rotten, When the two worlds collide and recently Seaspiracy documentary, which shows how we humans are destroying this beautiful world and how very few of us are trying to protect it. They really triggered my sense of responsibility, and I started to modify the way I think and live.”

Mara: “Rana Plaza tragedy, it literally shocked me and opened my eyes to see beyond the beautiful fashion wear and beauty in them. I never knew people are paying with their lives for us to be fashionable. Do we really need this? To be honest, I want to look good, but not at the cost of human lives anymore.”

Very interestingly, one respondent mentioned cultural stigma, which kept him away from secondhand clothes.
Bjorn: "Wearing or buying secondhand products used to be a stigma for me because of the culture I was living in during my childhood. Secondhand products were considered to be bought by only poor and needy in the society, and that kept me away from it too for a long time in my life."

4.2.2.3 The Evolution Towards Sustainability (The Permanent Change)

All of our respondents made their transitional journey towards sustainability, but that was just the beginning of something great in the making. Once they got onboarded, they realized many upsides of sustainability, and those kept them going. They did not become sustainability champions overnight. There were many reinforcing elements that kept on coming for them to keep their head in the sustainability game. As for the experts, they found out that sustainability has a business side to it, and it can be retained by spreading the knowledge on to others and promoting sustainable products for others that can ensure mutual benefit. The experts found that sustainable acts can be fun when they can mix them with something of interest. They think consumers can use their own areas of interest to promote causes both for you to practice sustainable living and influencing others towards it as well. For many of our enthusiasts, they started joining social clubs in the university as a start which makes them hang out with students who are working on sustainable causes to their own extents. It also helps them share ideas and spread the knowledge to their outer circles. They were also found working for secondhand shops themselves to further grow the habit of sustainability. Validation from social circles helps our respondents to continue their sustainable journey. Additionally, some of them found reasons to extend stories of individual products in interesting ways to get themselves attached to sustainable consumer behavior more.

Joanna: "I am experienced in sourcing sustainable materials from Asia, and I am currently helping many fashion brands to source those for their production. I participate in sustainable sourcing conferences as a guest speaker to share my journey to inspire others to look out for sustainable materials to produce fashion."

Shruti: "In India, there are many independent fashion labels who make excellent fashion products that are highly sustainable. Indian tie-dye and fabrics are quite appreciated in the Western world. While spreading sustainability, I thought, why not promote it by creating a business out of it. In this way, I can be part of my sustainable quest and at the same time help these local brands to survive and keep up their good works for the world."
Moa: "I love biking, and there was this thing with F/ACT Movement where they were promoting sustainability through awareness activities. Biking is one of the most sustainable ways of commute, and we had an idea of using that to promote sustainability."

Nora: "I bought a jacket from the secondhand clothing market in Milan, and it had all these patches sewed on it which gave it a unique look, and I was thinking that I am wearing someone else's story with me, and this cannot get copied by anyone else."

Frida: "I find it easy to get habituated about something when I keep on doing it on a regular basis. I try to find people around me who are already on the same path, and that motivates me to keep going. I joined our university student club, which promotes sustainability. When I find more people validating my purpose, it grew stronger on myself."

4.2.2.4 The Current Sustainable Behavior
The transitional journey seems to change the respondents’ consumption patterns in multidimensional ways and at this point. They started converting 100% of their attitude to behavior in this phase by consuming sustainably and thinking about the bigger picture, the world, its environment and its people. For them, sustainability has become a collective interest rather than only showing off attitudes of being sustainable to others. Here the discussion will initiate with the enthusiasts. The study has found that most of our enthusiast respondents have become fully aware of the individual impacts they can make on the environment and society by their actions, and they have started working to promote sustainable lifestyles. As they are the beginners among the three groups mentioned here from the sustainable consumption side, they start with something small. For example, many of them started by working in secondhand shops and change their source of purchases as well. They look for secondhand product options whenever they need to buy something new. The rise of the online secondhand marketplace has helped our respondents a lot, especially during corona. These online shops have become their go-to places for shopping. Our enthusiasts, however, have started taking part in the pledges or promotions themselves, along with indulging in a sustainable lifestyle. Finally, our experts have started building their careers on sustainability and spreading their knowledge to the consumers, whom they believe can make the best possible impact on the sustainability drives all around the world.
Frida: "I started working in the university's secondhand shop last year. Through buying and selling things secondhand, I have already started not to look for something new. I always look around to find a used but usable version of the products I need before I go to buy it from the brand shops, and, in Sweden, I do not need to go for something new most of the times. We have online shopping places like Tradera, Selphy and countless Facebook groups and secondhand shops."

Eva: "I avoid buying new fashion products right out of the brand shops. I mean, there are already way too much produced that we are not consuming properly, then why bring in some more into our lives? I am content with secondhand fashion products at this moment and really happy with my options."

Moa: "I am actively working with F/ACT Movement right now, and I take part in their pledges and sustainability campaigns. I myself rode my bicycle all the way from Linköping to Stockholm recently to support one of our sustainability campaigns. This, for me, is mixing business with pleasure to continue my share of sustainable movement, and it motivates me to keep going on this path and do more."

Nora: "Secondhand clothes are unique, and they carry a fashion story of the different people who wear them. This gave me a sudden realization that it is better to wear something unique by paying much less than wearing something every second person is wearing by paying more. Why not become unique and spread fashion stories around?"

Shruti: "I have built my career around promoting sustainable fashion around the world, and I now work as a marketer for many independent fashion labels of my city. My target markets are the UK and USA, where there is a huge demand for Indian fashion products. This way, I have finally found my reason to be ever sustainable."

Joanna: "I have realized that I need to steer my focus on the consumers who can create bigger impacts that boost the worldwide sustainable drives. Therefore, I am promoting sustainable fashion products online via Instagram, and I join numerous expert talks to share my experience regarding the available sustainable products with others. I believe this can help and inspire them to look for a sustainable way of fashion consumption by themselves. This influencing works also evolve my knowledge and knack about sustainability and keep me away from fast fashion, well for most of the times at least."
Disposal is a big part of fashion consumption considering the huge amount of fashion ending up in the landfills. Therefore, the study put a special emphasis on the disposal behavior of the respondents. It turned out that sustainable consumption practices consequently changed the disposal behaviors of the respondents as well. At the same time, one of our experts has developed her entire business around the upcycling of fashion materials. Her motto behind her business is to ensure “Zero Waste” from fashion, and she not only separates reusable materials from her own products but also urges her friends and family to let her know whenever they have some products to get rid of. She collects those products by herself and uses them to create something new and unique out of them. One of our activists has taken formal education on upcycling, and she uses her creativity to use pieces of any broken products to redesign something existing. She practically redesigned her own bike with broken pieces of ceramics and glasses from home utensils, she is an upcycling architect of higher proportion, and she wants to step up even higher. Another of our activists arranges ‘Fashion Swapping Tuesdays’ every month with her friends, where they offer any fashion product they want to get rid of to other group members, and the group member can choose among them. In this way, everyone can have something new in exchange for the ones they were planning to dispose of, and thus products get new lives this way. Our enthusiasts also come forward and donate their used products among the friends and family to extend their lifecycles. The common behavior noticed here is that none of our respondents want any of the fashion products to end up in the landfills.

Amandeep: "My whole business model revolves around upcycling. I use torn fabrics to design unique bangles, earrings, necklaces and even buttons by simply wrapping them. I use materials, such as glass or metal designs from one dress and use them in re-designing old dresses into something new for our consumers. Our consumers like unique products, and we can never have clothes in the same designs in many sizes. If someone wants a dress that is almost out of stock in an unavailable size, we regret them and offer them a new one in the same design but with different fabrics and materials. My Upcycled clothes are always unique and limited edition."

Moa: "Upcycling is nothing new to me. My mom and I used to make things out of broken things since my childhood. She was the one who gave me the idea of designing my bike by gluing a colorful ceramic vase that was broken into pieces. Now that I hold professional certification in upcycling, I know about the components that can be used to upcycle. Every day I try to be creative with my experiments, sometimes with fabric, sometimes metal or glass. I include my friends or project
members in my experiments sometimes. We fail more often, but we learn every time and get a little better than the last, and most importantly, I have fun."

**Nora:** "The second Tuesday of every month is the “Fashion Swapping Day” in our student building, and I am the organizer. We swap clothes, jewelry, and accessories from each other. The ones left from the event are being donated to a secondhand shop in the city. Now when I locate my friends wearing my things, I feel much more connected to them than before."

**Tania:** "I never learned to throw away clothes. When I was back home, I saw my mother using torn pieces of cloth to make dusters or window wipers. I have inherited this innate resistance of throwing away my clothes even till now. Once I am done with something, I keep it in my special luggage. In the USA, secondhand clothing stores are not that popular, so I try swapping or giveaway my clothes with my acquaintances here. If I still have some leftovers, I send it back home to be worn by my sister and to be made into a duster in the end by my mom, but never throw it away for no good reason."

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### 4.2.3 How the Idea of Fashion Changed

Sustainable consumption did not stop at buying, using and disposing of products for the respondents, but it also changed their entire fashion lifestyle and their idea of fashion. One of the experts has started learning about products before buying them so that she can establish a **tangible** connection with the clothes' sustainability journey. Alongside, she can also strengthen her expertise on sustainable clothing before influencing others to buy them. One of the experts has given up on the consumption of fast fashion forever. She has found her solace in her cultural wears, and she will promote that fashion via her own consumption and "Zero Waste" focused **upcycling** work. Moreover, she has developed her entire entrepreneurial journey around it. The activists have turned into their own fashion designers cum wardrobe planners and said no to buying products from brand shops. They have started enjoying their creativity to be sustainable and fashionable at the same time. The enthusiasts, however, have either concentrated on **high-quality**, sustainable fashion products, regardless of their price tags or have made peace with defining individual style ideas. These **individual style** ideas mean that the respondents are motivated to pose their consumption behaviors as their own identities. They reject the ongoing trend and define their own styles to depict their **individual selves** as role models in sustainable consumption. This includes becoming a functional dresser or a classical one or even connecting clothes with **feelings** gathered from the emotional experiences while
wearing them so that they never get boring or meaningless. One thing found common in all of them is the disposal behavior of the products. They are all determined not to let their fashion products find their way to the landfills till they are fully utilized one way or another.

**Joanna:** "I just bought a pair of 200-pound jeans from a sustainable brand, while I could buy the same pair of jeans from Zara or H&M for only 30 pounds. But I spent a month learning about the company and its sustainable practices. I have watched videos of the founders and got to know his ideology behind his production process and selection of materials. When I bought it, it got connected to all the tangible and sustainable journey it took to end up in my hands. For example, the amount of water it saved, the lives of people it made better and the long life it can have with me. It made me feel like I now own a piece of sustainable artifact. I have become a knowledgeable shopper now who looks for tangible information about the environmental and social effects of my clothing from an impulse buyer who focused on just the design and price tags. Corona also taught me how to live with less. So, I do not think I will ever change my style from buying something that has a sustainable story behind it and go back to purchasing things that I cannot connect with."

**Amandeep:** "I have said my share of goodbyes to all the fast fashion in the world. I only wear traditional Indian clothes now, which are way more sustainable than any other fashion product. I wore Saree from my mom or aunts, and I match tops in my possession with different bottoms to create my own set of dresses every day, and I am not going to change. Additionally, with every bit of fashion material I find, I will turn it into something new, exciting and unique to help to grow my business and my own journey of becoming a "Zero Waste" specialist someday.

**Nora:** "I have always seen my mother who was retaining fashion products which have tangible emotion connect with it. For example, she never threw away her wedding gown or her engagement ring or my first ever overall or my brother’s first pair of shoes. While looking at her, I felt that our experience with a fashion product connects us emotionally with it, and that can be a good reason to retain it and use it as many times as possible. Every bit of my fashion possession from the last five years reminds me of either a certain date or a concert or a traveling moment or maybe an individual achievement. I am now an emotional consumer now who
wants all her products to tell stories about herself, that will give them reasons to stay longer in my life."

**Eva:** "I stopped buying anything new, except for my socks and undergarments. I have hygiene issues with buying them secondhand. Hopefully, I will find a way to overcome that as well. I like restyling my existing clothes and turning them into something else. I usually turn my skirts into a dress just using a rubber band or a cut piece of a dress into a hairband. It helps me to explore my creative side along with my sustainability drives."

**Moa:** "I have changed my strategy for clothing altogether. I love colors, and I will never stop that, but I can always plan my colorful clothes ahead of time so that I do not need to look for something new when the season arrives. For example, if I go out on a beautiful spring day, I might have already planned what to wear way ahead. To make this happen, I have started planning and organizing my wardrobe according to the probable future every six months. This planning includes dresses to address the weather or any parties in the future. In this way, I know what I have and what I need to buy beforehand. It helps me to avoid any seasonal or occasional impulse buying and also gives me enough time to look for secondhand clothes way before so that I do not need to go to buy anything new."

**Bjorn:** "I have always been a classical dresser. I like long jackets and Chelsea boots which never go out of style, at least for me. Or even if they do, I am fine with it as I will not change my uniqueness over the trend of fashion ever. I do not want to be known as a guy who changes clothes every season. I would rather be the guy who is known for a particular fashion style."

**Daria:** "For me, it is quality over aesthetics. I have become a quality fashion consumer who can forget about an expensive price tag if the clothes ensure longer life with me. If an item of sustainable clothing is of superior quality and a bit more expensive than the fast fashion, I would definitely buy it knowing that it will last longer than a cheaper fast fashion product."

**Tania:** "There is a documentary called Minimalism on Netflix. It showed we should give importance in our lives, and, quite unnecessarily, what we give importance to. It literally spoke to me, and ever since then, fashion for me has become a functional thing in my life. I have nothing to prove by wearing designer shoes or trendy spring tops, or an expensive jacket. I need products that can do the job for me. I am a
consumer who buys most of the clothes in subtle colors and uses the same clothes for either an official presentation or a romantic date. I use the same clothes for grocery shopping and if I go out for a run."

4.2.4 Categorizing the Different Sustainable Consumption Behaviors

We asked the respondents how many clothes they purchase on an average every month now compared to how many they used to buy before when they were unsustainable. This question was targeted to find out whether there has been any reduction of consumption level by the respondents. We found that all of the respondents have reduced their amount of fashion purchases after they realized the unsustainable impact caused by the huge amount of purchase.

_Tania:_ "After becoming more of a functional dresser, I realized I do not need clothes based on occasions or activities. I can wear the same clothes to multiple places. There is no problem. Since then, my wardrobe has been very lean and thin, and I intend to keep it that way."

_Shruti:_ "I used to go shopping bi-weekly at one point, and I was habituated to buy more than I needed for my future need. Then I changed my shopping cycle to monthly, and slowly it became a quarterly thing now. This reduction in shopping mall visits has made me 'One clothe per month' type of consumer, and I am proud of it."

_Aydan:_ "I stay quite busy with my work lately, and I realized that I don’t really need a lot of clothes anymore. In my workplace, dressing smart is a requirement, but not dressing differently on a daily basis. This gives my sustainability-loving mind an extra push, and I started visiting mall maximum once a month to buy not more than two dresses maybe."

There was another question, asking if the respondents are willing to or already buying secondhand (used) products or not and what do they do once they are done with their products? This question was supposed to identify whether reusing someone else’s clothes was an option for the respondents or not and whether they are willing to give their own products an extended life by donating, swapping, or selling them. We found that only 3 out of the 16 respondents are reluctant to buy _secondhand_ clothes, and one other said that she does not have an option to go for secondhand shopping in her country.
Anna: "Since I turned to the sustainable side, I only go for secondhand shopping. It does not make sense for me to buy a new H&M t-shirt for 200 Swedish Crowns when I can have a year older version of it for a maximum of 50 Swedish Crowns."

Nora: "Secondhand products give me a way of crafting stories about my clothes, and I love making the story of my clothes. Buying secondhand can only help me to do that."

Shruti: "Secondhand fashion product does not really have a big market in India yet. If I have a chance to buy something secondhand, I will definitely buy it. For me, something new does not hold any extra value anyways."

We also asked the respondents whether they still buy unsustainable or fast fashion products or not. This question was placed to identify how many of the respondents have actually rejected the entire idea of consuming unsustainable fashion products. To our surprise, one of the experts mentioned that she still turns to unsustainable fast fashion when she needs to grab something cheap and fast. She feels guilty about it, and she is becoming better at avoiding these impulses. But she is not alone; eight more respondents from both activists and enthusiast side have mentioned that they still consume fast fashion products from time to time due to the exact same reason (cheap and fast) or the variety of size and fit. However, their frequencies and amounts have reduced a lot since they turned to the sustainable side.

Joanna: "Well, I cannot lie, I still go to the H&M and Zara to window shop and end up buying a thing or two. H&M especially has a soft corner in my heart as it was my previous employer. It also plays a role in my not so often unsustainable consumption. But I promised myself to get better at avoiding my impulses."

Bilaal: "As I mentioned earlier, in Mauritius, we do not have a lot of sustainable shopping options. Whenever that place does not have anything that fits me, I have to turn to the other options which are not sustainable enough."

Aydan: "When I need to buy something without thinking too much, and I am also short on cash, H&M is my answer. I know I am doing wrong, but old habits die hard."

Mara: "I am a student, and I don't have enough income now to spend on only sustainable fashion now because it is very expensive to buy sustainably."
This chapter would summarize the key inductive observations from our study to analyze and discuss them in relation to the relevant theories of sustainable fashion consumption after reviewing all the results from the respondents. Based on the findings, a conceptual transitional ‘Consumer Journey Map’ has been developed that begins with consuming unsustainably and ends at consuming more sustainably. After that, the conceptual ‘C-E Framework’ discussion will take place, and then the ‘Levels of Sustainability’ will be discussed along with the subsequent changes in the respondents’ ideas of fashion. The study results allowed us to present a clearer answer to all the research questions and sub-questions.

5.1 How is sustainable fashion consumption defined by our respondents?

This question is not among the main research questions of our study, but it will help us to identify our respondents’ understanding of sustainable fashion consumption and answer the research question in the light of this understanding.

We captured what sustainable fashion consumption means to each of our respondents, who explained it in their own words. This group of consumers mentioned starting their sustainability journey by either reducing the quantity and frequency of purchases or purchasing sustainable products or changing the points of purchases, or extending the lifecycle of products. All of them were aware of the environmental and social impacts of fashion and tried to act responsibly from their parts. They viewed fashion in contradictory ways and their responses towards sustainability, thus, were significantly different from each other (McNeill & Moore, 2015).

We found out four basic consumer behaviors in terms of sustainable fashion consumption from their definitions, i.e., (1) Quantity and Frequency of Consumption, (2) Product of Choice, (3) Point of Purchase and (4) Post Purchase and Disposal Behavior. We will briefly explain them for connecting our upcoming discussions.

5.1.1 Quantity and Frequency of Consumption

Some respondents mentioned sustainable fashion consumption as reducing the quantity and frequency of purchases. It refers to the concept of slow fashion, in terms of consumer behavior,
which indicates reducing the purchase frequency along with the reduced amount of purchase and also a tendency to use a single product for longer and in higher frequency than before (Mont, 2004; Cho et al., 2015). These respondents also indicated their focus on products that are of high quality, comparatively more durable, made out of natural fiber, entailing timeless design, and their production process need to have the minimum possible environmental impacts (Ertekin & Atik 2015). The respondents also valued quality over quantity and tried to redirect their behavior towards lower consumption volumes (Jung & Jin, 2014).

5.1.2 Product of Choice
Some respondents talked about sustainable fashion consumption as a practice that can start with the selection of products that are more sustainable. They synonymized sustainable fashion consumption with buying and consuming organically produced clothes. They believed that they carry a mindset that organic clothes can reduce the environmental challenges we face due to the pollution made by the clothing industry (Hasanspahic, 2016). Their thoughts are backed up by research scholars. For example, usual productions of cotton require the usage of a huge number of pesticides and water (Harkin, 2007; Kang et al., 2013). Along with these, for the higher growth of cotton, chemical fertilizers are also used on the soil, which, together with the pesticides, exposes the environment to an elevated level of toxicity. This toxic combination reduces the fertility of the soil for the long term along with impacting the loss of biodiversity, water pollution and severe health problems for all the living things around those production areas (Fletcher, 2008).

5.1.3 Point of Purchase
There were some respondents who defined sustainable fashion consumption by changing their places of purchase, i.e., secondhand buying. The respondents associated their secondhand fashion consumption with reducing the amount of environmental pollution because they thought it avoids filling up the landfills by someone else’s used and disposed clothes. Thus, they considered it as one kind of sustainable consumption option considering its pro-environmental angle. In fact, this behavior automatically reduces the need for newly produced products which is referred to in the study of (Hasanspahic, 2016). The respondents also believed that the cheap price tags plays as a big factor in consumers' minds to go for secondhand fashion, especially when consumers quest for finding something of high value at a bargain price (Xu et al., 2014). In addition to that, the respondents also got intrigued towards secondhand buying due to emotional attachments (Xu et al., 2014).
5.1.4 Post Purchase and Disposal Behavior

Finally, some respondents did not limit sustainable fashion consumption to purchases only but also what happens to the products after purchase and even consumption life cycle. The behaviors, they mentioned, consisted of actions related to whether the products are re-used, recycled or only thrown away for destruction (Jacoby et al., 1977). Using, reusing, recycling, and discarding are all examples of post-purchase activities that contributed to our respondents’ sustainable consumption (Liu et al., 2012). Therefore, the disposal behavior of the clothes that respondents are no longer willing to use is also an important part of sustainable behavior. Its reason is also environmental because it talks about reducing the products that go to the landfills (Hasanspahic, 2016).

We categorized their responses into three categories, i.e., (a) repairing and re-using, (b) recycling, swapping and donating, and (c) anti-consumption.

5.1.4.1 Repairing and Re-using

The respondents emphasized the idea of repairing and reusing due to the influence it has on the environmental landscape through their consumption practices. Therefore, the respondents wanted to get involved in modifying their used clothes in a manner that can reduce their need for buying new clothes and at the same time redirect these clothes' destination away from the landfills, at least at a very early stage. This can be a transition from the standard disposal process for used clothes to a more pro-environmental process (Schor, 2005). To exemplify, these activities they wanted to re-imagine the used clothes by re-designing them. Re-designing can fulfill a basic fashion demand for the consumer. The respondents constantly purchased fashion products that surpassed their economic ability, just to fulfill their demand of following the current trend along with being unique and novel at the same time (Joy et al., 2012).

5.1.4.2 Recycling, Swapping and Donating

The respondents believed that increased fashion consumption is not suitable for sustenance in the long run, and among many other ways to retain used products, recycling, swapping and donating are three more post-purchase and disposal behaviors that can fuel sustainability for the environment (Britwistle & Moore, 2007). The respondents wanted to use these post-purchase behaviors to prolong usage and material life cycles for each individual product (Ekström & Salomonson, 2014). They were aware of the “take-back” programs that can allow them to deposit their used products at
retail shops (Laitala, 2014), which the fashion retailers then put back into their production lines to make something new out of them. The focus amongst them on recycling has been increased by the states as well to assure the circularity in the fashion industry. For instance, organizational bodies such as European Commission have incentives for waste management or "Pay-as-you-throw" schemes to boost better waste management (Jacometti, 2019).

However, the respondents mentioned another way of disposal phenomenon, which has opened new possibilities for consumers to get rid of their unwanted clothes, and it is called Clothes Swapping (Laitala, 2014). In this channel, consumers exchange their used clothes with other consumers without any retailer intervention. This phenomenon has been mentioned in a study by Lee et al. (2013), but it is too often overlooked by researchers and is still in its immature stage (Lee et al., 2013).

The final post-purchase and disposal behavior the respondents were engaged in was donating their clothes. This giving away can include people inside their family for re-use or to charity shops, where these products are sorted to either get them sold in the very shop or send them across to developing countries for reuse. The last option is to send the clothes to recycling plants which then convert these products into fillings or cleaning rugs (Britwistle & Moore, 2007).

### 5.1.4.3 Anti-consumption

Some of the respondents accumulated more or less all the abovementioned consumer behaviors of sustainable fashion consumption. This concept denotes the behavior of a more advanced level of sustainability. It connects to Cherrier’s (2010) article and Black and Cherrier in their joint article from the same year, which discussed a new concept, 'Anti-Consumption' in which sustainable consumers practice acts of rejection, reduction and reuse to lower the burden on society and environment and this is what some of these respondents resorted to when they became more aware of the harmful impacts on the environment and society.

The respondents rejected the number of trends and seasons that decided when the new fashion emerged in the market. Consequently, it implied on reduction in the number of products consumed in a year. It also put extended focus on the quality perspective of each product to increase their individual values in contrast to the disposable fashion, which consequently reduced the amount and frequency of new product purchases (Cataldi et al., 2010). Repairing, donating, swapping, recycling and upcycling also helped the respondents in reusing their products and
preserving their fashion for longer periods to defy the adrenaline rush for something new all the time.

Now we will answer the main research questions one by one based on the abovementioned findings from re-iterating our empirical data with existing relevant theories.

5.2 RQ1 (a). What does consumers’ transitional journey towards sustainable fashion consumption look like?

We have found out that consumers move through three different stages in their sustainability journey. These stages are named the Unsustainable point, Triggering point and Sustainable point.

In the first stage, they were unsustainably consuming fashion products. Most of them were consuming the products unsustainably without consciously realizing it. They had to put themselves above any other thing. The respondents were obsessed with their own hedonistic desires, and they were unconcerned with the effect of their behavior on the planet and its people or animals, which is in line with the category of ‘Self’ Consumers defined by McNeill and Moore (2015).

In the second stage, the respondents had a triggering event or factor which had affected them, and they started thinking about their decisions more rationally now. For example, some of them watched documentaries and came across the harmful impacts that the fashion industry is having on society and the environment. This realization had a deep impact on the respondents to initiate their sustainability drive. Some were a part of a social group that was very sustainable in their purchases and consumptions, which influenced them as well. Others had to express themselves in their own way, which made them consider looking fashionable without buying new fashion. The behaviors of these respondents go in line with the definition of ‘Social’ consumers (McNeill & Moore, 2015) because they were obsessed with their social image and decided to maintain a positive attitude toward sustainability in order to maintain their social standing. However, they did not turn out to be sustainable 100% overnight, and their intentions did not always translate into actions. They sometimes had this gap between their attitudes and behaviors (Festinger, 1964; Kim et al. in 1997; Cowe & Williams, 2000) due to factors such as price, trend and newness, variety etc.

In the third stage, the respondents progressed on the sustainability ladder and had set aims to minimize their effect on the environment and society with the help of their consumption habits, and they had their transition towards a more sustainable lifestyle, leaving minimal or no carbon
footprints. They sacrificed their own fashion pleasures for the sake of the environment and people. According to (McNeill & Moore, 2015), these respondents are known as ‘Sacrifice’ consumers. The respondents were seen to be commonly involved in three of the activities. They were reducing, reusing, and rejecting new fashion clothes, which turn them into anti-consumers (Black & Cherrier, 2010).

Now in the following sections, we will provide details of the three stages together with the things that were either enabling or constraining the respondents in each of the stages.

5.2.1 Point U: Unsustainability – ‘Self’
When the respondents were self-consumers, there were a variety of reasons that have affected their decision to remain unsustainable and constraining them from purchasing or consuming sustainable fashion goods. The lack of knowledge or information was the first cause or consideration that was mentioned by many respondents. They considered it as one of the most important factors which constrained them (Smith & Paladino, 2010). They were consuming fashion products unconsciously without having knowledge or information about how dangerous or harmful their consumption is. We also observed a connection between their knowledge and behavior (Hoch & Deighton, 1989; Park et al., 1994). The respondents’ knowledge and information about fashion brands influenced their behavior because when they became more aware and understood the negative consequences of unsustainable goods, they felt less likely to buy and consume them.

The second factor that constrained them was trend and newness (Joy et al., 2012). We found out that the respondents were eagerly searching social media and their social circles (friends and family) to find out about the new trends and fashion styles. They appreciated the brands that were replacing their stocks with new items carrying different varieties to choose from, which satisfied their quest for the new fashion trends regularly. In line with the study of Connell (2010) and Joergens (2006), respondents turned to unsustainable alternatives rather than sustainable ones because they deemed sustainable clothing did not fulfill their needs of the current trends and their lifestyle standards (Connolly & Prothero, 2003).

With the increasing scale of production, the prices of the fashion items in these fast fashion brands went significantly down, which made it possible for everyone to buy fashion at giveaway prices (Foley, 1893). The respondents could get new stock almost every week from the brands, which convinced
them to buy more unsustainable fashion at cheaper prices. Also, it seemed that respondents' financial status also influenced them to buy more fast fashion. For example, when the respondents started living in a new country or were studying, they were not earning a lot of money and depended on Fast fashion to fulfill their fashion needs. These are in line with the economic aspect theory (Kollmuss & Agyeman, 2002; Bray et al., 2011). We realized that the respondents found economic aspects as one of the major reasons that affected consumers most of the time during both at their times of unsustainability periods and also, later on, even when they had transitioned to sustainable consumption. Moreover, finding something new and cheap affected most respondents' decisions whenever they had a special event to attend. They did not want to waste a lot of money and effort in filling the occasional need with a sustainable option. Here, it is also relevant to discuss that cheap, trendy and new fashion products are the results of fashion democratization (Foley, 1893), which has given birth to the concept of Fast fashion. The business model of fast fashion revolves around excessive production by outsourcing supply chain activities in the developing nations and thus increasing the number of trends offered in quick successions by the brands in affordable price tags (Bick et al., 2018).

We also found that the trend and newness factors are also supported by the social influence factor in the case of the respondents. The respondents had to wear trendy and new clothes because the social circle that the respondents belonged to had an influence on their purchase and consumption behaviors (Cialdini, 1984). They tried to blend in their social circles in a given situation by complying with the fashion codes, which means they were influenced by the preferences of those around them, and they sometimes felt so helpless and lacking independence or originality of thought, which led them to make choices of fashion that were not their own. This is similar to what Foley (1893) tried to explain with the term 'sequaciousness.'

The aesthetic appearance and variety of the fashion products had an influence on the respondents' purchase and consumption decisions too. They avoided sustainable fashion brands because they believed that sustainable brands are lacking style and variety and are unfashionable or unstylish (Connolly & Prothero, 2003). They bought the products that made them look unique and trendy, which they liked, and it also fits perfectly. It is also important to note here that the variety of the products was influential for the respondents due to the factor of size and fitting. The brands that offer their products in different varieties to fulfill the need for size and fitting were often preferred over the others (Karessli et al., 2020). However, the sustainable options are often limited without offering
much of a variety in terms of colors, designs and sizes, which makes it difficult to find the right size and fit. The respondents quoted the same reasons during their unsustainability periods.

The respondents showed the factor of skepticism as one of the main factors too. It was revealed in two different ways; their own ability to make a difference (inertia) and the trust in the brands' transparency (greenwashing). When it comes to inertia, the respondents disagreed with the fact that individuals are not responsible for changing the bigger picture of fashion unsustainability. They strongly believed that they carry the ability to make or change their purchasing and consumption decisions which can subsequently affect the brands to offer more sustainable options. This factor went against the definition of inertia provided by Bray et al. (2011), where he mentioned that the people would not buy sustainable because they may think that their individual sustainable purchases would not have a big impact. However, our respondents, on the one hand, showed that they are able to make a difference. On the other hand, there is a feeling of skepticism that clashes with this ability because their skepticism was that most commonly, the brands are not being transparent when it comes to communicating with consumers (Bray et al., 2011). They are greenwashing according to the definition provided by Becker-Olsen and Potucek (2013), due to which their trust was affected and steered them away from buying sustainable products. They did not find any rational justification for paying extra for something that they felt is not sustainable.

5.2.2 Point X: Start/Triggering Point- ‘Social’

The respondents quoted several different events or reasons which they considered as the triggering events or factors. These varied from respondent to respondent. We identified a few main events of which the most common one was the social influence (Abrahamse & Steg 2013; Cialdini, 1984) because they were part of a social circle that was leading a sustainable lifestyle which had an influence on them too to change their consumption behavior to be sustainable over time.

The second reason that triggered them to move towards sustainable consumption was becoming more aware of the impacts of unsustainable fashion products. Some mentioned that they watched documentaries on the ugly facts about fashion from sourcing to production to delivery and final consumption, which for them was the first tangible encounter with the negative impacts of unsustainable fashion brands. This tangibility of experience due to the exposure of knowledge and information actually compelled them to know more about the fashion industry, and the more they
came across the information, the more it opened their eyes to see the dark sides and influenced them to change their consumption behaviors (Reczek et al., 2018; White et al., 2019).

The next important reason by the respondents was related to the abovementioned factor of information and knowledge. As the respondents got aware and collected more information on the consequences of unsustainable consumption, they started feeling remorseful and, more importantly, guilty due to their harmful contribution to the plight of the people involved in the supply chain and the environment in general. This negative feeling of guilt and remorse convinced them to make a conscious decision and start making the transition towards more sustainable options which have minimal impacts. The respondents, after opting for sustainable options, felt less guilty or remorseful with their new way of sustainable fashion choices.

The other triggering factor which proved to be very influential was quality and longevity as several respondents have moved towards buying sustainable fashion because they perceived them to be made with a superior standard which is more durable in nature and can last longer than the cheap fast fashion products (Gnanapragasam et al., 2018; Cooper, 2005). They especially mentioned that sustainable products last longer than fast fashion. Even though they cost more, they are still worth the amount of money because of the opportunity to use them for a longer period of time. The product for them needed to have longevity, and that is why it can be considered as one of the important factors to make the transition towards sustainability by the respondents.

One of the most motivating factors that convinced our respondents to shift was the idea of creating individual styling and based on their interests. The respondents made the transition because they wanted to create their own definition of fashion. They wanted to be fashionable and look fashionable using their own colors, designs, products and styles. For them, the self-expressed idea of fashion pushed them to choose sustainable products over unsustainable ones. This idea is quite opposing to what Foley (1893) considered as 'Sequaciousness.' As per these respondents, it is not the trend or product that should define you to be fashionable, but your own self-expression. They believed that one could be fashionable with used clothes from secondhand as much as they can be with fast fashion or luxury fashion brands. Fashion sense depends on how individuals can think of it. Our respondents’ beliefs reflect the concept of individual self mentioned by White et al. (2019).

Moreover, we also found a mediating factor that we could not relate to any theory that talks about sustainability in fashion and it is national culture. It also influenced some respondents towards
becoming sustainable fashion consumers. They started being sustainable and consumed secondhand fashion from a very early age due to the national culture they belonged to. For few others, fashion products are part of the national culture, and they are produced in a sustainable manner in certain parts of the world. There were some more respondents who talked about "cultural stigma" that associated secondhand fashion products with poor economic conditions. This is the reason that a few of the respondents never considered secondhand fashion to be an option for them when they were young. However, national culture can be considered as part of our society. Hence, national cultural influence can be considered under the social influence for this study. Although, specific studies on national cultural connection with fashion sustainability can be an interesting future study.

5.2.3 Point S: Sustainability – ‘Sacrifice’

This was the highest point in the sustainability journey of the respondents. They had realized the power of their individual influence. Unlike our assumptions of consumers' inertia which means they believed that consumers do not consume sustainable fashion because they may feel that their individual influence is not going to be much. However, the results were quite contrary to that. All the respondents believed that they could have an influence on their individual consumption choices. They held themselves responsible for the harmful impacts. Therefore, they initiated actions to remedy the situation. They used their individual ability and took pledges to promote sustainability not only in fashion but sustainability in general. For that matter, they either founded their own startups of sustainable brands or joined organizations, community groups or started working in secondhand shops which were providing or promoting sustainable fashion. At this point, the respondents can be quoted as ‘Sacrifice’ consumers, and they had pledged to sacrifice their personal interests for the betterment of their surroundings. They prioritized social and environmental sustainability over their personal fashionability (McNeill & Moore, 2015).

Most respondents did not reject the idea of fashion altogether. They decided to be fashionable in their own way, which they started at the triggering point already. They become comfortable in rejecting the trend of fashion by following the consumption habits which Tai (2005) referred to as "Style Consumption." They selected their individual style to possess that is distinct and appeals to them at the same time. Here many respondents chose to be functional and classical dressers. The idea is similar to that of the individual self mentioned above. The only difference is by choosing the individual styles, consumers stopped following others, but when they picked a fixed type of style for themselves, they became 'Style Consumers.' Thus, they started engaging in various sustainable
behaviors (reduce, reuse and reject) to express their individuality in a way to reflect a consistent aspect of their personal taste, interests and characteristics.

After the sustainable transition by the respondents, it slowly and gradually made the individuals become more and more sustainable with the passage of time. However, there were times where their intentions did not match their actual consumption behaviors (Festinger, 1964; Kim et al. in 1997; Cowe & Williams, 2000). They still sometimes had this attitude-behavior gap dominating or suppressing their idea of sustainability. They still had to make some purchases that were not sustainable. In fact, most of these purchases occurred due to attending an occasion for which they could not spend a lot of money or effort to search at an expensive sustainable brand or the secondhand shops or vintage shops or check with friends and family circle, and they turned to fast fashion brands. Some respondents mentioned reasons like finding something that they really liked and feared that they would not be able to find by looking at sustainable options. However, some others mentioned that few fast fashion brands offer the size and fitting which are perfect for them, and that’s why they cannot stop going back to those brands from time to time. Based on this discussion, we have visualized the conceptual ‘Consumer Journey Map’ in the following figure:

Figure 11: Conceptual Consumer Journey Map Towards Sustainability
We named these respondents as “Sustainable Occasional Sinners” and visualized their actions in the above figure. These are highly sustainable and committed enthusiasts, activists or even experts from our respondents’ list who still go to the fast fashion shop when they need to buy something quick, cheap, and available in more variety, size and fit.

5.3 RQ 1 (b): What are the major Constraints and Enablers in terms of consumer transition from unsustainable fashion consumption to sustainable fashion consumption?

The study here discusses the factors that were identified to be keeping the respondents away from sustainable consumption choices based on the interviews. Social Influence, Economic Aspects (cheap prices of fast fashion), Lack of Knowledge and Information about sustainability, Size and Fitting issues with sustainable fashion products, Unaesthetic Appearances and variety of the sustainable fashion products, Trend and Newness of fast fashion and finally Greenwashing as factors that work as constraints for the respondents from consuming fashion in a sustainable manner. Whereas developing an individual-self identity or posing as sustainable role models, Tangible knowledge about the impact of unsustainable consumption or experiencing a sustainable production process of sustainable clothes, better Quality or Longevity of sustainable products and positive Feelings after consuming fashion sustainably triggers respondents to start their journey towards sustainable fashion consumption and keep on enabling them to continue their actions on that path. However, there are a few factors among them, namely Social Influence and Feelings and Cognition, which have shown to be both enabling and constraining respondents based on their changes in dynamics (Lawlis et al., 2014).

The above reiteration from the previous section’s discussions provides us with an idea to develop the conceptual ‘C-E Framework’ as mentioned in Chapter 1 of this paper. We have visualized this framework based on the discussion in figure 12 on the next page:
5.4 RQ 2: What are different levels of sustainability consumers can reach? How have these levels changed the idea of fashion for these consumers?

We developed an idea from our readings and the first few interviews that unsustainable consumers will begin their shift towards sustainability by reusing their fashion products more and start buying secondhand fashion products. Hence, Reuse has been identified as Level One of the sustainable consumption levels. The idea behind this was that it is not easy to give up the adrenaline rush of buying something new right away by any consumer (Gombrich, 1974). Therefore, although consumers might not buy less, they might buy more sustainably, from secondhand, perhaps. Thus, they can reuse the products that have completed single or multiple phases of their lifecycles with other consumers, thus extending their lifecycles. Here, they can also upcycle their products to make them novel and unique for satisfying their trickle-down feelings (Veblen, 1899) to some extent.

Reduction in the consumption amount has been identified as the Level Two of sustainable consumption. The underlying justification here is that, with time, consumers get a better hold on their attraction to buy more products and consequently, their number of product purchases declines. This decline includes both new and secondhand fashion purchases. For this to happen, consumers...
here can **plan their wardrobes** ahead of time and constrain themselves from any sort of impulse buying at any point in time.

Rejection has been considered as **Level Three** of sustainable consumption. Here, consumers do not follow seasonal trends to buy new products and reject unsustainable product consumption as a whole. Consumers are expected to define their own unique style or *Style consumption,* which can translate into dressing up more functionally or adapting concepts of vintage or classical dress up. This behavior takes away the pressure of being one of the social masses and lets consumers stay content with their own way of expressing themselves via fashion, and Gombrich (1974) refers to this as unprofitable eccentricity. Consumers here can focus more on quality and sustainable products regardless of the prices, as these products are considered to last longer than the cheap fast fashion and hence can provide more value out of consumers’ investments.

The final level of **Level X** has been awarded to consumers who have mastered all three of the levels: Reusing products, reducing the amount of purchase and rejecting seasonal fashion trends or any unsustainable cheap product options. These consumers devote their consumerism to the lowest possible level for the betterment of the environment and society. This level is in line with the concept of anti-consumption, and it will take a lot for a consumer to follow the *Anti-consumption* pattern (Black & Cherrier, 2010), as it indicates that consumers will be strict with their own commitment despite the factors like trend and newness, social Influence, cheap prices, aesthetic look and good fitting of the unsustainable fashion options. There are not many who can beat all these barriers to be an *Anti-consumer.* The study also affirms this assumption, and it shows that only 4 out of 16 of the respondents can be considered as *Anti-consumers* in the study.
The above-discussed results are presented in a tabular form below for easy identification:

**Table 4: Identifying Sustainability Levels of Respondents**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondents</th>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Level 1: Reuse</th>
<th>Level 2: Reduce</th>
<th>Level 3: Reject</th>
<th>Level X: Anti-Consumption</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
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<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
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<td>Expert</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
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<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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</tbody>
</table>

We also assumed that the respondent class would have a direct link with the Levels of sustainability, meaning that the experts will be at the top level, followed by the activists and the enthusiasts. However, the study found that there is no correlation between a respondent being an upper-class sustainable consumer and holding the highest level of sustainability. In reality, the study could identify only one expert to be at Level X (Anti-consumption level). All the other three belong to the activist class.
Based on our initial understanding, a conceptual ‘Levels of Sustainability’ have been visualized in the below figure along with the enablers and constraints:

**Figure 13: Conceptual 'Levels of Sustainability'**

We predicted that respondents might start with Level 1, then go to Level 2 and 3, and finally reach Level X, where they master all 3 Levels at once. This thought process somewhat matched with Black and Cherrier’s (2010) discussion of Anti-consumption. However, the results of our study have shown that respondents do not follow these levels in the abovementioned order. They can go to Level 3 directly from an unsustainable level and then come to Level 1 or Level 2, or it can be in other orders. Based on these findings, we decided to re-define the levels to define our conceptual 'Levels of Sustainability.' We considered that a consumer could reach Level 1 if they comply with any of the three behaviors, which means he or she can only be doing Reuse or Reduce or Reject to pass Level 1. To reach Level 2, a consumer has to begin combining any two of these behaviors. So, if any consumer is Reusing and Reducing, he or she can be at Level 2 of sustainability. The other combinations to reach this level can be combinations of Reducing and Rejecting or Rejecting and Reusing. This is logical from the point of view that performing two types of sustainable activities together can bring down the unsustainability level more than performing only one type of activity. However, to reach the final Level X, a consumer needs to be Reusing, Reducing and Rejecting simultaneously that can decrease
the unsustainability level to a maximum by an individual consumer. The respondents’ sustainability level scores have been recalibrated according to the above discussion in the below table:

Table 5: Recalibrated Sustainability Levels of Respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondents</th>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Reuse</th>
<th>Reduce</th>
<th>Reject</th>
<th>Level: 1</th>
<th>Level: 2</th>
<th>Level X: Anti-Consumption</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Joanna</td>
<td>Expert</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amandeep</td>
<td>Expert</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shruti</td>
<td>Expert</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moa</td>
<td>Activists</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eva</td>
<td>Activists</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nora</td>
<td>Activists</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bilaal</td>
<td>Activists</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tania</td>
<td>Enthusiasts</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frida</td>
<td>Enthusiasts</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anna</td>
<td>Enthusiasts</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Björn</td>
<td>Enthusiasts</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daria</td>
<td>Enthusiasts</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laura</td>
<td>Enthusiasts</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mara</td>
<td>Enthusiasts</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aydan</td>
<td>Enthusiasts</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dilyana</td>
<td>Enthusiasts</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Subsequently, the aforementioned conceptual ‘Levels of Sustainability’ visualization has been recalibrated according to the information from Table 5 and presented in figure 14 on the next page:
Figure 14: Recalibrated Conceptual ‘Levels of Sustainability’

So, what is your level of sustainability?
6.1 Closing the Loop on Consumers’ Journeys Towards Sustainability

For the last few decades, democratization in the fashion industry (Joy et al., 2012) has increased the demand to feed consumers’ ‘trickle-down feeling’ of having something new and trendy in quick successions to maintain their social strata (Veblen, 1899). This also negatively impacted socio-environmental fronts (i.e., water and land pollution, sweatshops, hazardous working conditions, wage exploitation and gender discrimination, etc.) due to the shortened lifecycles of fashion products (Bick et al., 2018). According to research, consumers are at the core of this issue and they can solve it by being sustainable (Brown & Cameron, 2000).

It was found that consumers aim for sustainable consumption, but they end up consuming unsustainably. Thus, they display an attitude-behavior gap in terms of sustainable fashion consumption (Carrington et al., 2010). Our purpose was to identify why consumers do not act according to their sustainable intention. We found out that consumers are constrained to be sustainable due to Social Influence, Trend and Newness of fast fashion, Unaesthetic Appearance and Lack of Variety along with Lacking Sizes and Fitting of the sustainable products, Cheap price of fast fashion, Lack of Knowledge and Information about sustainability and Greenwashing (Bray et al., 2011). Here they consume to satisfy their own hedonistic needs rather than thinking about the consequences on the environment and society (McNeill & Moore, 2015). They get triggered to follow sustainable consumption paths and enable themselves to continue following that by the influences of their Social sustainable circles, Tangible Experiences from any incident or visual experiences, Quality and Longevity of the sustainable fashion products, Feeling of guilt and remorse for being unsustainable and negatively impacting the environment and society (White et al., 2019). Here they start thinking about their consequences but still do not get out of the aura of unsustainability as a whole. At one point, consumers can stop giving in to their hedonistic needs and start behaving in such a manner that can benefit their surroundings. In order to do that, they develop their own fashion identity to represent themselves in society. It can be said that a consumer takes a journey from being a ‘self’ consumer to be a ‘social’ one and finally converting into a ‘sacrifice’ consumer (McNeill & Moore, 2015).
6.2 How Consumers ‘Walk the Talk’ and Minimize the Attitude-behavior Gap?

We found our respondents to think about fashion sustainability and promoting the ways to be followed in a very constructive manner. They were found to not only talk about these actions but performing them as well. In that manner, there was very little, or no attitude-behavior gap found in them. For example, they were found to reuse old products more and more by either upcycling their old clothes to re-imagine those as unique fashion products or buying secondhand products or donating and selling their products. They also reduce the number of clothes they purchase by planning their wardrobes to avoid any impulse purchase or start buying a little expensive but high-quality, durable clothes that promise longer life (Schor, 2005; Britwistle & Moore, 2007). Additionally, they reject the idea of following fashion trends. Once they master to simultaneously undertake all three of these behaviors (i.e., reduce, reuse, and reject), they reach the highest level of sustainable consumerism called 'Anti-Consumption' (Black & Cherrier, 2010). At this level, they develop personal senses of styles to become vintage, classical or functional dressers and start relevant 'style consumption' in accordance to these. That is how our respondents ‘walk their sustainability talk,’ and moreover, they influenced others not by saying what they do but also by demonstrating their actual behaviors so that their social circles can also minimize their attitude-behavior gap (Kim et al., 1997).

Referring back to the visual example of our respondents' sustainable acts, it can be observed that many of the re-imagining activities do not incur any additional costs to the respondents. However, they require increased effort, time, and, in many of our respondents' cases, some level of creative skills, passion and formal education. Additionally, when some respondents look for something quick and cheap, secondhand shopping does not help because it might be cheaper. However, it is time consuming and often lacks the required aesthetic variety, size and fittings. We found our respondents going back to consume fast fashion when these types of situations arise. Here they fail to 'walk their talks,' and the attitude-behavior gap resurfaces. Here our conceptual 'journey map' and 'levels of sustainability' can help consumers identify their positions in sustainable fashion consumption region and find ways to level up their sustainability through actions that our respondents practice for similar quests. It will not develop someone as the most sustainable consumer on the planet but will surely give a good start like the respondents of our study.
Chapter 07: Our Wish for Future Research

Our study focused on sustainable fashion consumers and their journeys from unsustainability towards sustainability. Future research can help to contribute more in the field of sustainable fashion with further developments.

Firstly, the steps in between and the mediating factors can help brands develop their sustainable product offerings to minimize the constraints and catalyze enablers to drive consumers towards more sustainability. The factors' individual strength of connection with both sustainable and unsustainable consumption behavior has not been analyzed in depth in our study. Future researchers can further explore this with the help of a variance study through a quantitative method to identify the strongest contributors and recalibrate the ‘C-E Framework’ based on the findings.

Secondly, we mentioned in Chapter 3 that our empirical data were not gender neutral and it opens up opportunities for future researchers to include more male consumers in their studies and find out if it adds more to the list of sustainability efforts and mediating factors. A similar recommendation can be made for widening the geographic distribution of the respondents across the world for finding out new mediating factors and ways to be sustainable.

Thirdly, we found an interesting connection between national culture and sustainable fashion consumption. Our respondents were identified with sustainable ways of dressing up since their childhood or using cultural sustainability to develop businesses. The abovementioned broader geographical spread of respondents can further contribute to this particular area. More and more visual demonstrations of sustainable fashion consumption recipes can influence and at the same time help consumers to find the relevant fit of activities that they can try to be sustainable. These can also provide inputs to the brands on attracting more sustainable consumers and even designing product offerings that can comply with consumers' sustainable needs. Policy makers can also look into consumers' interests and device regulations to boost individual consumer efforts to make the world of tomorrow a little more sustainable than today.


Appendix I: Interview Guide

A study on the consumers’ transitional journey from unsustainable fashion consumption to sustainable fashion consumption

Section 1: General Idea and Important Definitions:

These questions are being prepared to facilitate study for a Master’s thesis from Linköping University, Sweden. The area of study is “Sustainability in Fashion Industry.” We are going to study consumers who have changed their fashion consumption behaviors. To explain further, we are trying to identify why some consumers did not buy sustainable fashion products before, why did they change their preference towards fashion consumption and moved over to the sustainable side.

First of all, we will provide an overview of Sustainable fashion and our operational definition of Sustainable fashion consumption for this particular study:

- **Sustainable Fashion:**
  - Sustainable fashion is an approach that refers to the design, sourcing and manufacturing of clothing benefitting to its maximum to people and communities while it seeks to minimize the impact on the environment (Ethical Fashion Forum, 2016). In practice, this means no child labor or forced labor, health and safety at work, living wages, further protection of biological diversity and securing of chemical products.

- **Sustainable Fashion Consumption Behavior?**
  - Purchase behavior
  - Usage behavior
  - Disposal behavior

- **Transitional Consumers:**
  - Consumers who used to be unsustainable consumers have now started sustainable fashion consumption.
    - **Product** (Used to buy 0 sustainable product, now buy few)- We are not looking for 100% sustainable consumers.
    - **Frequency** (Used to buy regularly due to adrenaline rush, now limited their purchases based on necessity)
    - **Amount** (Used to buy similar products in different colors and didn’t think about durability, now buy clothes which can be used for many instances and for longer period)
    - **Place** (Used to buy only from the Fast fashion outlets, now also go to brands which are more eco-friendly, green, not mass produced)
    - **Disposal** (Used to get rid of clothes in quick succession, now practice upcycling, donation etc to increase products’ lifecycle)

- **Changes in the Idea of Fashion:** Consumers who make the abovementioned transition are also observed having changes in their idea of fashion. For example, during the unsustainable consumption times, they might have been buying clothes out of adrenaline rush, but now they can be inclined towards more functional consumption. There can be other changes as well.
Now we will begin with the questions:

Section 2: Personal Data and Individual Definition of fashion sustainability

Personal data:
1. Tell us a little bit about yourself
   a. Age:
   b. Highest completed level of education:
   c. Occupation or field of studies:

Define sustainable fashion consumption:
2. How would you define sustainable fashion consumption?
3. What do you do in the sustainability sector?
   a. Only a consumer
   b. Sustainability activist
   c. Sustainable industry employee/owner
   d. Sustainability enthusiast
   e. Sustainability industry expert

Section 3: Knowing about the Journey:

4. Tell us about the 1st piece of sustainable fashion consumption you made (It can be a sustainable product or sustainable way of consumption)
5. Why did you choose to be sustainable then?
6. How did you search for it?
7. How did you feel about it after consumption?
   a. What were your positive feeling?
   b. What were your negative feelings?

Frequency & Amount:
8. How many times do you go shopping every month and why?
9. How many fashion products do you buy every month? And what is the purpose of your purchase? Even Including small things like socks or hairbands etc. Think about the last 6 months or 1 year.
10. How many of these products are sustainable? And why do you consider them sustainable?

Section 4: Current Status on Sustainable Fashion Consumption:

Respondents Current Status on Sustainability:
11. Do you still buy unsustainable fashion products? Why do you buy them?

Attribute and Point of Purchase:
12. What do you look for in-terms of product attributes when you search for a product?
13. Where do you look for sustainable products generally?

Section 5: Disposal Behavior:
14. How many times do you use a single product? And Why do you stop using a single product?
15. What do you do with it once you stop using that product?

**Section 6: Assessing the Mediating Factors:**

16. Remember when you used to consume fashion products unsustainably. What were the reasons for that?
   o (If too many) What were the three most important criteria for you?
17. What are the reasons for you to change and be a sustainable fashion consumer?
   o (If too many) What are the three most important criteria for you?
18. What are the reasons for you to continue sustainable fashion consumption now?
   o (If too many) What are the three most important criteria for you?

**Section 7: Changes in the Idea of Fashion:**

**Jobs Done Through Fashion Products:**

19. If you look back to the time when you were consuming unsustainably and now, do you think your idea of fashion has changed between these periods? If yes, why has it changed and how?
   a. What were the purposes for your fashion consumption before?
   b. What are the purposes for your fashion consumption now?

**Section 8: Individual Opinions and Recommendations for the Industry**

20. Have you ever changed your opinion/behavior on a fashion brand after you have heard good/bad press about their sustainable actions?
21. Do you think you carry a responsibility for the impacts of the fashion industry on socio-environmental issues? How?
22. Do you consume reused or reprocessed clothes? (e.g., second hand, clothes swapping, upcycling)? Why?
23. Will you continue consuming reused or reprocessed clothes? (e.g., second hand, clothes swapping, upcycling) Why?
24. In your opinion, what must be done by the brands and the policy makers in order to influence consumers putting sustainability into practice?