

Anastasiia Polianskaia

Bridging the attitude-behaviour gap in sustainable fashion consumption

Eco fashion company perspective

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<p>The purpose of this study is to identify relevant frameworks to account for the attitude-behaviour gap in eco fashion consumption, a phenomenon considered by researchers as the main obstacle encountered by sustainable fashion brands to reaching mass market. The study constructs an integrated strategy sustainable fashion companies can pursue to avoid the barriers created as a result of the attitude-behaviour gap.</p>	
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1 Introduction

Fashion "is a temporary cyclical phenomenon adopted by consumers that involves change". (Kozlowski 2012) In attempt to increase their revenues, large apparel retailers created a culture of fast fashion under the pretence of following fashion tendencies. What it means in reality is that people simply buy more of cheap and low quality, however, what is considered "fashionable", clothing, and throw it away as the new trend appears. In the meantime, the externalities that this system produces are enormous. In the United States only the municipal textile waste increased by 87% from 1994 to 2012, while the population grew by just 14% (Pierre-Louis, 2012). Fashion is blamed for a large number of other hazardous practices, such as discharging toxic chemicals in air and water. It is mainly caused by the increasing production of synthetic fibres and cotton, requiring the use of large amounts of energy, water resources and pesticides. (Shen et al., 2012)

Concerns regarding the adverse impacts of apparel industry on the environment were first raised by consumers in 1960s, demanding a shift towards sustainable practices, however it was only in late 90s that the concept of ethical fashion became sound. Ethical fashion can be broadly defined, but mainly relates to a combination of "fair working conditions, a sustainable business model, organic and environmentally friendly materials, certifications, and traceability". (Henninger et al. 2016) Ethical or sustainable fashion first reached somewhat noticeable market share in 2007, when its global retail sales estimated nearly \$3 billion. (Pierre-Louis, 2012) Although the seemingly high number made up only 1 percent of the overall apparel market (Pierre-Louis, 2012), it was an important sign for traditional apparel companies to start adopting sustainable business practices (Fulton and Lee, 2013). Indeed, large apparel companies responded by launching organic collections and developing sustainable supply chains. (Shen et al. 2012)

On consumption side, more than half of the population in developed countries has claimed to be concerned about the sustainability related issues (Doherty,

2014; Peattie et al., 2009) Thanks to the spread of the Internet and online buying, millennial consumers can go as far as to investigating the entire supply chain on the subjects of transparency and ethical operations, prior to making a purchase. (Shen et al. 2012) The content of the clothing items has also become an increasingly important factor in purchase decision making process of modern consumers (Shen et al. 2012).

Despite the rising concerns and increasing availability of information, existing trends in eco-fashion reach a fairly small number of customers. (Niinimäki, 2010) While consumer knowledge, beliefs and support of ethical issues is known to be an important factor in shaping purchase behaviour (Shen et al., 2012), apparel companies systematically fail to effectively inform their customers of their green initiatives (Fulton and Lee, 2013). This is due to a failure to understand the phenomenon of an attitude-behaviour gap, which explains the inability or unwillingness of consumers to turn claimed environmental concerns into sustainable purchasing behaviour. (Peattie and Crane, 2005)

1.1 Research question

The growing concern of the externalities of fashion industry prompts the response from consumers and producers. Despite expressed concern towards environmental issues, sustainable fashion companies find a discrepancy between estimated level of concern and actual consumption behaviour. Limited research has been conducted to account for the attitude-behaviour gap and the lack of understanding of the phenomenon creates a barrier for eco fashion brands to expand from niche market they currently occupy. (Carrington et al., 2010; Henninger et al., 2016) This research will aim at raising in-depth discussion of the attitude-behaviour gap and answering the following research question:

Q1 What is the most prominent scientific method to account for full scope of complexity of the attitude-behaviour gap in eco fashion consumption?

Lacking the theoretical explanation of the attitude-behaviour gap green marketers make a mistake of using traditional marketing methods in approaching sustainability. (Fodness, 2015) Upon discussion of the relevant theory, this research will focus on providing practical approach to dealing with a variety of aspects related to the issues raised in the discussion of the attitude-behaviour gap. This part will focus on answering the following question:

Q2 How can sustainable fashion companies leverage the research of the attitude-behaviour gap to engage consumers in sustainable consumption behaviour, such as purchasing eco clothing?

As a result, this thesis paper will construct a wide theoretical discussion of the issue many researchers and practitioners consider as a major barrier in accelerating expansion of sustainable fashion, i.e. the attitude-behaviour gap. It will also aim at providing an integrated action plan for sustainable fashion companies to encourage sustainable purchasing behaviour based on the conclusions of theoretical discussion.

1.2 Research methodology

Current research will aim at identifying theoretical frameworks to study a phenomenon of attitude-behaviour gap in sustainable fashion on basis of which it will construct an integrated strategy of mitigating adverse effect of the phenomenon and triggering sustainable consumer behaviour. The methodology for answering the research question is selected from interpretative group of methods, also known as qualitative research, which is defined as follows:

Interpretive methods focus on analytically disclosing the meaning-making practices of human subjects [the why, how, or by what means people do what they do], while showing how those practices arrange so that it can be used to generate observable outcomes.

Interpretative methods are appropriate for researching attitude-behaviour connections as they focus on understanding phenomenon in a holistic way by careful examination of variables relative to subjective knowledge. (USC Libraries, 2018)

Such methods place human actors in the centre of scientific explanation, who in the context of current research, are apparel consumers. Within the scope of interpretative methods research is conducted from practical perspective, where researcher seeks to determine concepts from real-life encounters. Current research will use interpretative methods to assess sustainable consumer behaviour in fashion and discover means of directing it to form more proenvironmental patterns. (Institute of Public and International Affairs, 2018)

The data for this research will be collected from secondary sources, such as scientific journals and books on the topics of fashion marketing and management, behavioural psychology, product and brand management. The secondary data are most relevant for this research due to the need to identify scientific frameworks and the existence of vast number of sources from previous empirical studies. The study will aim at compiling empirical data into the most appropriate framework to construct a full-scope strategy to approaching phenomenon stated in the research question.

2 Literature review

The initial purpose of this research was to study the effectiveness of sustainability initiatives of global fashion companies since the spread of the concept of Triple Bottom Line, which became sound due to increasing sustainability concern of various stakeholders. Companies that adopted Triple Bottom Line measure their performance by taking into account not only financial bottom lines, but also their environmental and societal impact. (Elkington, 2004) It is based on the idea that changes happening in society will eventually put environmental responsibility as the main competitive factor and only those companies that can adopt Triple Bottom Line will be able to successfully compete in the market. (Jakobsen, 2017) Marketing has been viewed as the key enabler of a Triple Bottom Line framework in an organization due to its direct relation to both product and consumer (Thorp, 2007).

The conclusion of Thorp (2007) led the author of this research to study green marketing as a potential driver of sustainability and consequently a Triple Bottom Line of fashion companies. In their paper "Green marketing: legend, myth, farce or prophesy?", Peattie and Crane (2005) present the history of green marketing from its emergence in 1990 and explains why it has failed to become a primary marketing strategy supporting the Triple Bottom line. In their study, the authors suggest that the main reason for the demise of the early sustainability strategies is the fact that companies were falsely driven to producing and advertising sustainable products according to consumers' claimed environmental concern, which ended up not leading to consumption. The phenomenon, which describes the mismatch in the estimated level of environmental concern of consumers and their actual purchasing behaviour of sustainable products was coined as "the attitude-behaviour gap". (Peattie and Crane, 2005)

Subsequent study of relevant literature presented significant research on various dimension of green consumption, such as environmental consciousness and awareness (Peattie et al, 2009; Doherty, 2014), consumption patterns (Ritch, 2015; Perry and Chung, 2016) and non-consumption behaviour (Carrington et al., 2010, Joergens, 2006). However, literature review has shown lack of relevant literature devoted specifically to attitude-behaviour gap in the context of sustainable consumption behaviour in fashion. (Joshi and Rahman, 2015) The negative impact attitude-behaviour gap historically had on the expansion of sustainability initiatives led to sustainable fashion remaining the niche market and fast fashion companies dominating and producing enormous externalities (Pierre-Louis, 2012). The attitude-behaviour gap can be viewed as the main barrier to the expansion of sustainable fashion, requiring in-depth study and practical solutions to tackle the problem.

Carrington et al. (2010) identify the lack of efficient research methodologies to explain the gap between the growing concerns towards environmental issues and the actual purchasing behaviour. The paper states that cognitive theories previously applied to study the phenomenon "assume perfect and constant conditions without consideration of environmental or social settings". The authors suggest

employing more holistic theories to account for the complexities of ethical buying behaviour. Such theories have been developed by behavioural psychologists.

The research of the attitude-behaviour gap will be based on the works of Paul C. Stern (1999, 2000), one of the most known behavioural researchers, who has developed holistic view of environmentally sound behaviour. Since consumption of eco clothing, or environmentally benign goods, is defined as an act of private sphere environmentalism, such behaviour can be assessed from the perspective of the conceptual framework for defining the Theory of Environmentally Significant Behaviour (TESB) developed by Stern and his colleagues. The framework suggests taking into account other factors, or domains, in addition to attitudinal to explain why consumer engage or not in a proenvironmental behaviour. Based on the factors relevant to a particular behaviour, eco fashion consumption in case of current research, Stern (2000) suggests a framework for changing environmentally significant behaviour, which can serve as a starting point to constructing an integrated strategy for bridging the attitude-behaviour gap.

In her paper “Eco-Clothing, Consumer Identity and Ideology”, Niinimäki (2010) identifies eco fashion as a social phenomenon, which shifts consumption from traditionally individualistic to account for social benefits. Within such context, removing the attitude-behaviour gap in eco consumption, would require building strong relationships with personal identity and the lifestyle to account for individual and social factors affecting consumption.

Connell and Kozar (2012) further discuss attitudinal and contextual forces affecting purchasing behaviour in sustainable clothing by focusing on knowledge variable. They discuss the extent to which consumers are knowledgeable about environmental issues surrounding the production and consumption of clothing and state the degree of engagement in sustainable clothing consumption. Their findings further prove the existence of the attitude-behaviour gap between consumer knowledge of the environmental issues and proenvironmental behaviour in sustainable clothing consumption. The authors further discuss other barriers to eco

consumption arising from the attitudinal and contextual forces related to lack of awareness and knowledge.

Having identified the various barriers to eco fashion consumption, the thesis study will aim at constructing strategies to overcome those barriers. The research initiated by the European Commission and executed by BIO Intelligence Service in 2012 provides a complete framework for communicating environmental information based on previously applied successful practices, which can be used by commodity producers including eco fashion companies. Engelke and Spindelmann (2017) conduct an in-depth research of the scarce academic resources devoted to studying sustainable fashion communication and conclude that a more innovative way of thinking in marketing and communication is required for bridging the attitude-behaviour gap in eco fashion consumption. The practical side of the study serves as a useful input for constructing an integrated communication framework to build up on the existing research.

Various models to study eco-consumption decision (Chan and Wong, 2012) and corporate brand building (Miller and Merrilees, 2013) predominantly address contextual barriers to eco fashion consumption and suggest relevant frameworks to construct strategies to overcome those barriers. Empirical research studies on pricing (Ha-Brookshire and Norum, 2011), quality (Klerk and Lubbe, 2008), design (Beard, 2008; Niinimäki, 2010), sales channels (Schoenbachler and Gordon, 2002), customer service (Fuentes and Fredriksson, 2016), and store ethical practices (Forum for the Future, 2009) suggest different approaches to overcoming the barriers to eco fashion consumption based on the studies of consumer perceptions.

3 Attitude-behaviour gap

3.1 State of apparel industry and rising public concern

Climate change and other environmental issues have been at the core of public concern in the past decades. (Epstein and Buhovac, 2014) The greenhouse gases released in the atmosphere along the ever-increasing production and consumption of the growing world population, have been proven to have direct impact on changing temperatures globally. The consequent changes in climate patterns are believed to have drastic impacts not only on environment, but also on global economy. The issues of climate change have been brought to public by major media outlets and famous personalities around the globe, which lead to unprecedented levels of public concern ever witnessed. Peattie et. al (2009) provide an example of a study that suggests that 91% of respondents believe in the issue of climate change. (Peattie et. al, 2009)

According to multiple research studies conducted in the United States, there are six types of consumers existing today. They are positioned according to the level of belief in Global Warming, concern and motivation. Figure 1 Figure 1 “Global Warming's Six Americas segments” (Doherty, 2014) shows that more than 30% of consumers are concerned about the environmental issues and at least 16% are ready to act upon them. (Doherty, 2014).

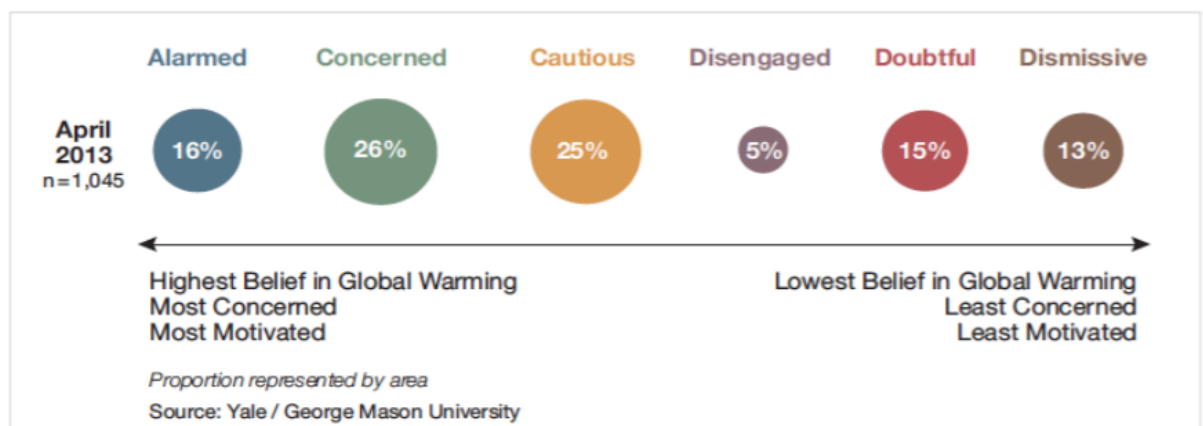


Figure 1 “Global Warming's Six Americas segments” (Doherty, 2014)

Companies are extensively blamed for contributing to the menacing conditions and those statements are far from groundless. (Buhovac, 2014) Due to the increased consumption and globalized supply chains enabling drastic reduction of production costs, apparel or fashion industry, in particular, has become one of the biggest contributors to the emerging environmental issues (Kozlowski 2012). Clothing and textiles are estimated to be responsible for 5-10% of environmental impacts (Sudbury and Böltner, 2011). The main concern surrounds extensive use of raw materials, toxic chemicals, energy and water. (Kozlowski 2012) Only in the UK waste from clothing industry accounts for around 1.5-2 million tonnes a year. (Sudbury and Böltner, 2011) As for the social impacts, apparel companies have been involved in “labour rights violations, the use of child labour, precarious employment, indentured servitude, earnings below minimum living wage and major health and safety issues”. Together with the growth of fashion consumption and production, the environmental and social issues continue to expand. Furthermore, globalization has moved production to developing countries, where resources and labour are cheaper and less regulated than in developed nations, meaning even less legal responsibility of global apparel brands and consumers for the growing sustainability issues. (Kozlowski 2012)

Together with rising overall concerns towards climate change, and the publicly spreading assumption that fashion is the second most polluting industry in the world (EcoWatch, 2015), apparel companies had no choice but to respond by establishing more responsible practices (Kozlowski 2012).

3.2 The gap

The increasing interest and consumption of green products in late 1980s lead to the rise of sustainable products and “green marketing”. Market research conducted in 1990 showed that 85 to 92% of the European corporations claimed to have changed their products and production processes following the “green” trend. In the United States in the same year the amount of green printed and TV advertisements increased by 430% and 367% respectively. Nevertheless, the

new study on green consumption conducted after the following five years showed that the actual consumption of sustainable products was significantly less than the estimated level of concern. The market disappointment led to companies mainly in non-service sectors to significantly reduce their green product introductions reflected by the dropping advertisement for such products. The reduction of advertisement is debated to be associated with either the actual demise of a green product or rather a decline of the false advertisement interpreted as greenwashing. (Peattie and Crane, 2005)

What marketers of the first eco products failed to notice was the gap between the consumer's claimed level of concern towards sustainability and the actual purchase behaviour, also known as attitude-behaviour gap (Peattie and Crane, 2005). Indeed, researchers who studied the effect of environmental concern on consumer behaviour, have discovered that high level of concern does not necessarily prompt consumers to look for information regarding environmental issues or further engage in proenvironmental behaviour (Connell and Kozar, 2012).

Nowadays, extensive research has been conducted on the subjects of ethical manufacturing and consumption of eco fashion, however, sustainable fashion still holds a fairly small market share in comparison to the global fast fashion brands. Practice shows that today's consumers, despite expressing negative attitude towards unethical companies, in fact are not willing to switch consumption to a more ethical production. Consumers avoid possible inconvenience caused by such change in terms of higher costs, loss of quality and worsened shopping experience. As a result, the fear of inconvenience prevents consumers from ethical buying behaviour. (Niinimäki, 2010)

Multiple studies provide statistical proof for the existence of the attitude-behaviour gap in sustainable clothing consumption. In a study conducted by Butler and Francis, 90% of respondents mentioned that they never or hardly ever took into account environment while buying clothing. Connell and Kozar (2012) asked similar question in their poll and received 70% of similar answers. Besides, their research has also demonstrated that 50% of respondents had never purchased

apparel items made from sustainable fibres. (Connell and Kozar, 2012) A nationwide telephone survey conducted by Ha-Brookshire and Norum (2011) in the US including 500 respondents also showed strong and positive attitude towards environment. Respondents from the sample group generally identified themselves as responsible consumers, however expressed very neutral attitude towards consumption of organic cotton apparel.

The gap between consumer environmental attitudes and their purchasing behaviour in clothing may be explained by the fact that consumers base their purchasing decisions on factors other than environment, such as price, style fit, and fashion. Further research shows the existence of other personal and contextual factors that “disrupt a clear and direct predisposition path between attitude and consumer behaviour”. (Connell and Kozar, 2012).

In order to successfully leverage existing environmental concerns, eco fashion companies need to understand what factors affects consumer buying behaviour and find out what they can do to efficiently direct it to more sustainable consumption patterns. Obtaining a wider understanding of environmentally significant individual behaviour has been identified as a key priority of research in the upcoming years by the National Academies. (Connell and Kozar, 2012)

4 Consumer behaviour in sustainable fashion

4.1 Sustainable fashion

Sustainable, also used as green, eco or ethical, fashion is a segment in the global apparel industry created to respond to the environmental degradation brought by operations of the fast fashion companies. Fast fashion is “a form of low-cost clothing that mimics current luxury fashion trends”. Companies related to fast fashion have developed such supply chain processes that allow them to produce clothing and satisfy demands on weekly basis versus traditional seasonal production. This fast change from use to obsolescence is what defines fast fashion as environmentally irresponsible. “Resource depletion, environmental damage and textile waste” combined with neglect of employee welfare are all externalities of cheap and fast fashion clothing lifecycles. (Reimers et. al, 2016)

Slow fashion movement was established as a counter force against fast fashion and its externalities. Slow fashion can be defined as “a socially conscious movement that shifts consumers’ mindsets from quantity to quality, thereby reducing production and purchase frequency” (Reimers et. al, 2016). Sustainable fashion is a product of the slow fashion movement. Chan and Wong (2012) define sustainable fashion as “the type of clothing that is designed and manufactured to maximize benefits to people and society while minimizing adverse environmental impacts”. Sustainable fashion has a number of key characteristics differentiating it from conventional fashion, such as longevity of use, ethical or local production, little or no environmental impact of production, use of eco-labelling and recycled materials. (Niinimäki, 2010)

The main challenges particularly related to sustainable fashion are the complex and fragmented global supply chain as well as the strong competition of fast fashion brands. Eco fashion companies hold a strong commitment to longevity and sustainable production, which prevents them from being able to satisfy the current high demands for cheap and continuously fashionable production, the way

their fast fashion counterparts do. (Niinimäki, 2010) In case of organic cotton, for example, its production is heavily regulated and underdeveloped, therefore producers have to charge 20% higher price for their product versus conventional cotton. In fact, not using pesticides and fertilizers in production of cotton brings the highest financial benefit as their use accounts for 60% of the overall production cost. (Anyangwe, 2017)

4.2 Eco Fashion consumption

Eco fashion consumption describes consumers' purchasing behaviour towards sustainable fashion. (Chan and Wong, 2012) Eco fashion consumption, as any other purchasing behaviour, is based not solely on satisfying basic needs, but it also serves as a means of identification with certain social status, brand, or lifestyle. Through lifestyle a person communicates his/her actions and routines, which are changeable and are formed by small everyday decisions. Ethical purchasing behaviour occurs when a person's lifestyle runs contrary to his/her idea of an "ideal ethical world". (Niinimäki, 2010)

According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, human behaviour is the most complicated and underexplored variable in the climate system. (Doherty, 2014) Decision making process related specifically to consumption of sustainable fashion products is one of the most complex variables. (Chan and Wong, 2012) It is so due to the fact that green consumerism bears moral and aesthetics characteristics connected to the self-expression and lifestyle shaping. These aspects are very volatile and add complexity to purchasing behaviour. (Niinimäki, 2010) Models predicting that ethical intentions will result in ethical behaviour end up being erroneous in 90% of cases and it poses a great challenge for marketers of sustainable products in the upcoming decades. (Carrington et al., 2010)

A key challenge relevant almost exclusively to fashion among other industries that apply environmental practices is the fact that there is no direct harm of wearing conventional clothing and no direct benefit of choosing the environmentally

preferable options. (Niinimäki, 2010) Unlike in eco food sector, for example, marketers of sustainable fashion cannot point out any direct health benefits of their products to consumers. (Chan and Wong, 2012) Eco fashion consumption goes beyond individual wants including social aspects. In addition to individual motives associated with conventional fashion consumption, such as price, quality, saving of time and purchase convenience, ethical products emphasize collective benefit from consumption, both environmental and social. The availability of information raises awareness among consumers and they are forced to take into account social benefit of buying apart from the primary satisfaction of individual needs. (Niinimäki, 2010) Within the modern individualistic society appealing to common benefit to incentivise purchasing is extremely challenging and requires applying radically new strategies.

4.3 Eco fashion consumption as proenvironmental behaviour

The environmentally significant, or proenvironmental, behaviour is defined by “the extent to which it changes the availability of materials or energy from the environment or alters the structure and dynamics of the ecosystems or the biosphere itself”. Proenvironmental behaviour can be either direct or indirect. Consumption of environmentally benign goods refers to a class of environmentally significant behaviour, *private sphere environmentalism*, defined as “purchase, use and disposal of personal household products that have environmental impact”. (Stern, 1999)

4.4 Theoretical frameworks

In order to understand consumer behaviour in clothing consumption and be able to modify it to follow more sustainable patterns, researchers and organizations have to reach a deep understanding of the underlying motives of consumers to engage into certain behaviour. (Connell and Kozar, 2012) With the growth of eth-

ical consumption, multiple studies attempted to develop models of ethical consumer behaviour in order to explain the social change. (Carrington et al., 2010) Environmentalism has mostly been regarded by researchers either as “a matter of worldview”, or values related to quality of life and self-expression, religion, general and “prosocial” concerns. (Stern, 2000)

The first cognitive models were derived from the Ajzen’s Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB), which stated that eco buying comes from the set of individual values, ethics and norms. (Carrington et al., 2010) Despite consumers holding values of ethical consumerism and claiming to be basing their purchase decisions on environmental concerns, there is little evidence that such attitudes and beliefs actually lead to eco consumption. (Carrington et al., 2010; Kim and Choi, 2005) In fact, one of the studies shows that out of 30% of consumers that state their ethical purchase intention only 3% actually end up buying sustainable products. (Carrington et al., 2010)

Another cognitive theory, “the moral norm-activation theory of altruism” developed by Shalom Schwartz is based on an assumption that environmental quality, as a precondition factor, activates pro-environmental purchasing behaviour. It states a hypothesis that by owning information regarding environmental impact of a product, consumers will make more environmentally responsible purchasing decisions. Consequently, the amount and availability of information about eco products is positively correlated with the number of such products in the market. This theory, however, has proven to be erroneous in practice. (Niinimäki, 2010) In fact, contrary to the stated theory, the Internet, being the major information source worldwide, has become the key enabler of fast fashion much more than it increased production and sales of eco fashion.

Two hypotheses exist today to describe the failure of researchers to adequately estimate the relation between the expressed concerns of consumers and their actual buying behaviour. The first one states that when questioned regarding their buying intentions towards sustainable products, respondents choose to give socially acceptable answers. The second hypothesis argues respondents’ abilities

to adequately estimate their future shopping context, such as sufficient amount of money they have, availability of eco products and price competition of “unethical” products. (Carrington et al., 2010)

A resulting observation of theoretical frameworks based on cognitive perspective demonstrates that by focusing on studying influence of internal ethics on purchase intentions, these theories overlook the complexity of the gap between intentions and actions. Besides, they ignore the effect of environmental/situational factors, which impact the process of transformation of intentions into buying. Behaviourist researchers, in the meantime, have proven that apart from individual determinants, environmental factors have to be taken into account to explain ethical consumer behaviour. (Carrington et al., 2010)

One of the most widely known framework for advancing behavioural theories developed to account for the limitations in existing cognitive theories explaining behaviours in eco consumption, is the theory of environmentally significant behaviour. (Carrington et al., 2010)

5 Sustainable fashion within the scope of the theory of environmentally significant behaviour

It has been previously identified that eco fashion consumption can be viewed as an action referring to environmentalism. As can be concluded from the theoretical frameworks discussion, the complexity of behaviour in eco consumption requires assessment from a more holistic perspective inherent to behavioural theories. In this section, eco fashion as proenvironmental behaviour, will be assessed from the perspective of the theories of environmentally significant behaviour and further actions will be suggested to encourage such behaviour by an eco fashion brand.

5.1 Towards the theory of environmentally significant behaviour

Paul C. Stern, one of the most renowned behavioural researchers of modern times, has developed a conceptual framework for advancing the theories of environmentally significant behaviour. His research mainly focuses on studying “the determinants of environmentally significant behaviour, particularly at individual level”. (Social and Environmental Research Institute, 2018) The framework comprises research of the author’s research group and others attempting to develop a coherent theory of the environmentally significant behaviour. It has summarised the definitions of environmentally significant behaviour, classified behaviour and their causes, provided and explanation for relationships between environmental concern and behaviour, and suggested strategy to alter environmentally significant behaviours based on factors determining them. (Stern, 2000).

5.2 Domains of the theory of environmentally significant behaviour

Multiple research has been conducted to study environmentally significant behaviour and factors that shape it. Among a variety of such factors, the theory of environmentally significant behaviour identifies three main domains, which have

highest impact on behaviour, which are behavioural domain, personal attitudes and context. (Stern, 1999)

5.2.1 Behavioural domain

The ABC (“Attitude-Behaviour-Context”) model developed by Paul C. Stern within the scope of the theory of environmentally significant behaviour, aims at mitigating the complexities of environmentally significant behaviour. The model suggests viewing behaviour (B) as a variable in an interrelated system comprised of consumer personal attitudes (A) and contextual factors (C). (Stern, 2000)

The main finding within the theory relates to the dependence of attitudinal variables for proenvironmental behaviour on contextual aspects, such as “amount of effort, expense, or inconvenience required to change the target behaviour”. (Stern, 1999) The theory states that behaviour is reinforced by the attitudinal factors in a positive direction only if it is strongly influenced by contextual variables, such as being required to complete an action or materially incentivised. On the opposite side, if behaviour requires more effort, time or money to achieve an outcome, the attitudinal factors play insignificant role in the process. The hypothesis provides further proof that cognitive theories focusing solely on internal set of values and norms are ineffective in assessing consumer behaviour. (Stern, 2000)

Stern (1999) suggests that behavioural domain, i.e. eco consumption, is strongly influenced by attitudinal and contextual domains. Following Figure 2, it can be concluded that the probability of behaviour to take place is higher in two cases: when external conditions are positive or are supported by strong positive attitude; and when attitudes are positive or are strongly supported by external conditions.

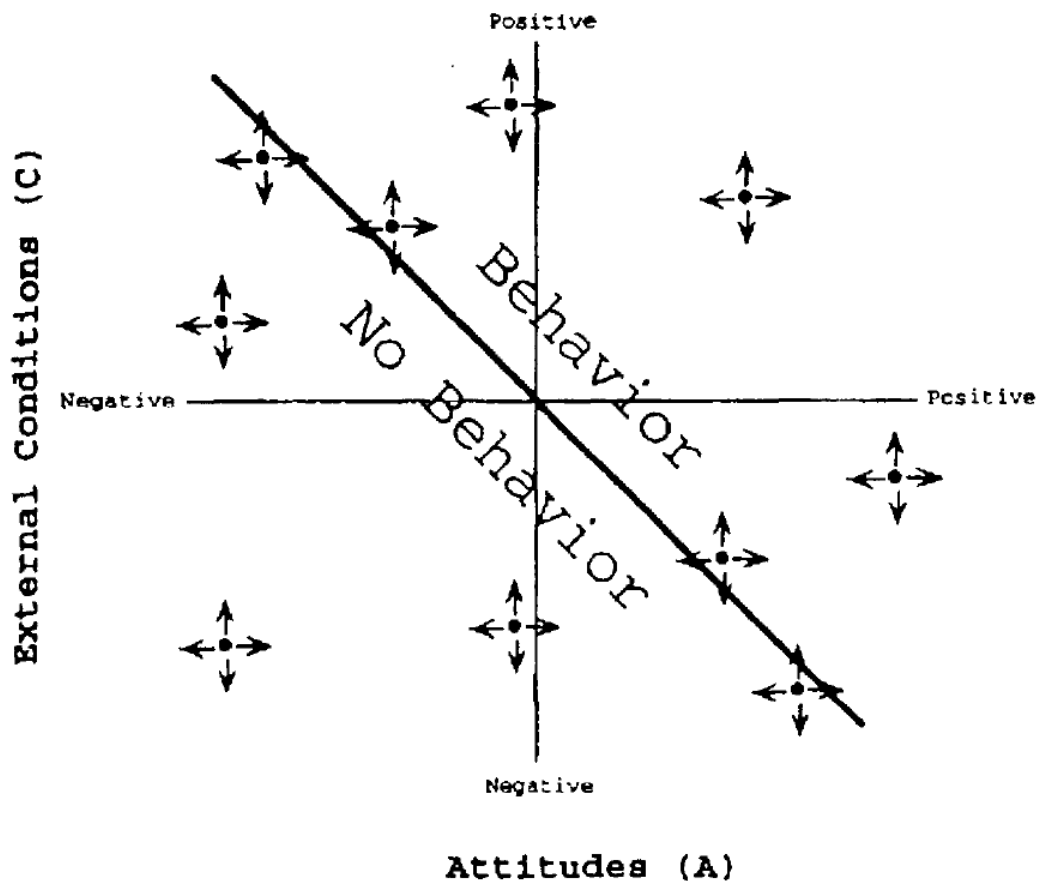


Figure 2 “A schematic model of the effects of attitudes and external conditions on behaviour” (Stern, 1999)

A relevant example of the conclusions of the ABC behavioural model is the relationship between knowledge of the environmental issues and environmentally significant consumer behaviour. If the awareness as an attitudinal factor is strongly affected by contextual constraints (such as high price for sustainable products), behaviour is unlikely to occur.

5.2.2 Attitudes

This research paper commenced with the statement that modern consumers show significant level of concern towards environmental issues. Studies show, however, very neutral attitudes towards the issues related to clothing industry and sustainable fashion in particular. (Connell and Kozar, 2012)

The discussion of attitudinal variables within the context of TESB will be based on the Value-Belief-Norm theory developed by Paul C. Stern and his colleagues to study how personal attitudes affect an individual's involvement in an environmental movement. The theory states that involvement can be defined by a person's support of key values of a movement, the level of concern he/she holds of an environmental condition the movement opposes as well as their personal ability to contribute to mitigating a particular environmental condition. (Stern, 1999)

5.2.2.1 Key values of slow fashion movement

Since attitudinal variables play an important role in shaping proenvironmental behaviour, it is important to outline the values of slow fashion movement, which may prompt purchasing behaviour in eco fashion. As was mentioned previously in this paper, slow fashion holds the idea of designing and producing clothing of higher longevity, universal use and design, and high quality with an aim of reducing environmental impacts of fast production, consumption and disposal of clothing items. Apart from environmental impacts, reducing the number of seasons and production speed, removes the harsh time constraints from apparel producers, hence enhancing the employee welfare. (Reimers et. al, 2016) Acceptance of the values of slow fashion can increment the level of support towards sustainable fashion consumption.

5.2.2.2 Awareness of the environmental issues

General concerns and belief in environmental issues and its extent can also prompt environmentally sound behaviour. (Connell and Kozar, 2012; Stern, 1999) The insufficient amount of knowledge or awareness regarding environmental issues related particularly to the externalities of the clothing industry, on the other hand, can become a prerequisite for consumers engaging in non-environmentally

conscious consumer behaviour. The lack of knowledge serves as a constraint for multiple reasons. Some consumers are generally unaware that consumption of fast fashion has any environmental impacts. Others are aware of the externalities, but do not realize the impact behavioural change can have on mitigating them. The third group may be aware of the negative externalities of their consumer behaviour, however do not have sufficient knowledge on how to engage in a more environmentally sustainable behaviour. (Connell and Kozar, 2012)

Studies have shown that knowledge related particularly to the externalities of fashion industry is extremely low, and less than of gasoline and soft drinks. Even studies conducted among environmentally conscious consumers show extremely low level of awareness of fashion industry externalities. As knowledge has been identified as an important factor driving environmentally significant behaviour, the low level of knowledge can serve as a major constraint to such behaviour. (Connell and Kozar, 2012)

5.2.2.3 Beliefs and perceived consumer effectiveness

Lastly, the level of support for environmentalism depends on a person's belief that they can act upon certain environmental conditions they view as threatening their values. (Stern, 1999). Multiple social-psychological theories have shown that proenvironmental behaviours are influenced by "personal commitment and the perceived personal costs and benefits of particular actions as well as behaviour-specific beliefs and personal norms" (Stern, 2000). According to the social cognitive theory developed by Albert Bandura, an influential efficacy scholar and behavioural psychologist, people are more incentivised to act upon issues they believe they are capable to resolve producing positive results or reversing the negative ones. (Doherty, 2014) The described efficacy, or perceived consumer effectiveness, (Kim and Choi, 2005) is believed to have significant level of influence on behaviours (Doherty, 2014). Indeed, individuals are more likely to engage in environmentally conscious behaviour if they hold strong beliefs that it will lead to positive outcome. (Kim and Choi, 2005) The factors that form perceived

consumer effectiveness are general values and concerns. (Kim and Choi, 2005) The national survey polling American adults discovered that the perceived consumer effectiveness of Americans accounts for 33% (Connell and Kozar, 2012).

The challenge for eco fashion companies is to raise the importance of the issues related to sustainable apparel in the eyes of consumer and make them believe that the issue they are concerned about is “real” and they can act upon it to make difference. (Peattie et al., 2009)

5.2.2.4 Trust

Although trust has not been explicitly identified as an attitudinal variable in the Value-Belief-Norm theory, the issue has attracted much attention of empirical researchers of the attitude-behaviour gap in sustainable consumption (Joshi and Rahman, 2015) and will be discussed in the context of this research.

Fashion is a fast-changing and highly competitive environment. It is challenging for sustainable fashion brands to compete by lowering prices or following the changing tendencies, therefore many of such companies resort to “greenization” (Henninger et. al, 2016) i.e. using the green attributes as the means of differentiation. The incorrect communication of those sustainability credentials often leads to consumers perceiving a product as “greenwashing”, i.e. “using a statement of ethical intent as a means of competitive advantage, instead of real commitment to the cause” (Thorp, 2017). This clearly does not relate to every company in green fashion, however, companies that actually use the marketing trick, lose trust of consumers and affect the reputation of the companies that actually are invested in green practices.

A study conducted by Joergens (2006) questioned focus groups of the age 18-26 (as this age group is believed to be the next generation of eco buyers) in Germany and England regarding their awareness and concerns of the environmental issues related to fashion industry as well as their consumer behaviour,

engagement in eco fashion and their attitudes towards it. Participants of the survey showed low level of trust in the sustainability claims companies make on their websites. They are mainly viewed as a means to maintain brand image and to mitigate negative news regarding the unsustainable practices they pursue.

Eco fashion companies face challenge of having to be authentic and transparent at the same time. Consumers are increasingly seeking for authenticity in products, meaning that the ability to prove environmental credentials and satisfy expectations of consumers in this area is crucial in defining company's position within the fashion industry. (Beard, 2008)

The lack of transparency and inability to support the sustainability claims, may serve as a major barrier in promoting proenvironmental behaviour among consumers. (Joergens, 2006; Joshi and Rahman, 2015)

5.2.3 Context

The contextual factors influencing environmentally significant behaviour are numerous. The likelihood of environmentally significant behaviour to occur generally depends on unique set of capabilities and constraints. They mainly but not exclusively relate to:

- Sociodemographic variables (cultural background, religion, family economic condition, family economic condition, social class)
- Acquired capabilities (knowledge and skills required to act upon the issue, education)
- Situational factors (place of residence, local climate)
- Existence of public policies to support behaviour (regulations, monetary incentives)
- Social, economic and political context (income and price levels, availability of goods and services) (Stern, 1999; Stern, 2000)

A review of empirical articles on sustainable consumer behaviour published in reputed academic journals from 2000 to 2014 conducted by Joshi and Rahman (2015), identified the following contextual factors as the most commonly featured: price, product availability, subjective norm/social norm and reference groups, product attributes and quality, store related attributes, brand image.

The contextual forces relevant specifically to eco fashion industry that pose greatest barriers to eco fashion consumption have been discovered throughout research of consumer perceptions and will be summarized in the following section.

5.2.3.1 Price

Pricing has been identified as one of the key contextual constraints to eco fashion consumption. The perception that sustainable fashion is a highly priced, luxurious alternative to conventional apparel, comes from the traditional business model and marketing (Henninger et al., 2016; Peattie and Crane, 2005). In the late 90s at the peak of the green boom, companies realized that the green trend can not only bring financial benefit (by reducing energy and material consumption and costs), but also serve as an additional promotional mechanism. Nevertheless, the cost reductions enjoyed by companies, did not make the green products cheaper. To the contrary, companies used “green” as an additional value added component in their pricing strategy. (Peattie and Crane, 2005)

Practice has shown that not all the sustainable products are highly priced by simply being labelled “green”. The price premium for sustainable items is usually justified by sourcing sustainable or organic materials and providing unique hand-made items. Potential consumers and companies agree upon the fact that the environmentally friendly materials used in production of sustainable fashion are decisive in determining the prices. (Henninger et al, 2016)

Even though customers perceive sustainable apparel options as expensive and luxurious (Henninger et al. 2016), they are generally willing to pay a price premium for such products (Peattie and Crane, 2005). The Nielsen Global Survey of Corporate Social Responsibility and Sustainability, which polled more than 30,000 online consumers in 60 countries throughout Asia-Pacific, Europe, Latin America, the Middle East/Africa and North America, concluded that even Millennials living in toughest economic conditions of the past 100 years, are willing to pay more for sustainable products. The research has also shown over 50% annual growth between 2014 and 2015 in consumers within the group Generation Z (15-20 years old) claiming that they are willing to pay more for products and services provided by environmentally and socially oriented companies. The similar trend is seen within the generation of Baby Boomers (50-64 years old). 50% of respondents within this age category responded that they are also willing to pay more for sustainable products. (Nielsen, 2015)

Figure 3 summarizes the consumer rationale behind purchasing sustainable products and services. It also demonstrates the key determinants of willingness to pay more. Consumers in their decision to pay more for sustainable products put most value on such aspects as environmental and social commitment of a company offering such products. Environmental packaging, organic components as well as benefits company brings to community, are other key determinants of willingness to pay more (Nielsen, 2015).

TOP SUSTAINABILITY PURCHASING DRIVERS

Global Respondents vs. Those Willing To Pay More*



Figure 3 "Top sustainability purchasing drivers" (Nielsen, 2015)

Reviewing the contextual factors suggested by Stern (1999), there is a clear connection between sociodemographic factors and eco consumption. As the research shows, the sales figures of companies that use product claims and integrated sustainability marketing promotions are higher in developed countries than developing, where people have lower propensity to consume and consequently less willing to pay more for sustainable products. (Nielsen, 2015)

5.2.3.2 Fashion tendencies and style

Another common perception influenced by contextual forces of eco fashion consumption is related to the inability of eco fashion brands to follow fashion tendencies. Fashion is closely connected with emotions. The desire to be involved in fashion driven by emotions prompts consumers to make purchasing decisions.

Consumption under such context is mainly done for pleasure rather than for satisfying the actual need. (Vignali, 2009) A questionnaire of American consumers concluded that fit was the first consideration in evaluating fashion item, while style the fourth after price and care requirements (Ha-Brookshire and Norum, 2011). Fast fashion companies mastered the art of quickly adjusting to and creating changing trends to encourage pleasure-based consumption. (Henninger et. al, 2016) As is fairly stated by Niinimäki (2010): “It is most difficult to be opposed to an effective production and marketing system that constantly produces new, easily fulfilled needs and temptations with a reasonable price”.

Previously it has been discovered that eco fashion is a derivative of slow fashion movement emphasizing longevity, quality, and decreased production of apparel (Reimers et. al, 2016). In connection to this, eco fashion brands tend to develop perfect products from sustainability perspective, while being totally misled about or indifferent to what consumers wants really are. (Peattie and Crane, 2005) The research of the UK eco-fashion online outlets has shown that the most common items on sale are t-shirts and jeans, while the style of clothing is predominantly casual. (Beard, 2008) This may be the reason why eco companies are often associated with being unfashionable or unable to satisfy certain style demands of consumers. Additionally, consumers mention the lack of specific articles within the sustainable fashion offering, such as footwear and formal wear. (Connell and Kozar, 2012)

5.2.3.3 Availability

One of the most common contextual constraints relative to eco brands is the lack of knowledge of their existence. The nature of this constraint relates to the fact that consumers are generally unaware of the externalities of fashion industry, and consequently how their consumption behaviour affects the environment. (Joergens, 2006) The root cause of the problem lies in the fact that eco fashion companies take up two different communication approaches. Some companies publicly advertise their environmental practices, while others prefer to follow non-communication strategy to avoid possible accusation of greenwashing. The latter,

also called “muted sustainability brands”, communicate sustainability related efforts in a separate section their website rather than directly in store and on products. (Engelke and Spindelmann, 2017) Such strategy can serve as a major prerequisite for a contextual barrier based on perception of limited availability of sustainable fashion brands as consumers are reluctant to study corporate social responsibility of commodity fast moving consumer goods (Joergens, 2006; BIO Intelligence Service, 2012).

Limited knowledge and interest results in consumers lacking realization of the existence of other, more sustainable options. This leads to consumers’ inability to consider the entire range of options available during their purchase decision making process. Consumers state that they find it challenging to purchase sustainable clothing since there are few mainstream retailers offering such products. (Connell and Kozar, 2012)

Apart from the failure to relate the brand to sustainable fashion category, therefore limiting the ability of consumers to make a conscious proenvironmental choice, eco fashion brands provide limited purchase and delivery options. (Joergens, 2006)

5.3 Changing environmentally significant consumer behaviour

In the previous sections we discussed various attitudinal and contextual factors affecting and shaping consumer behaviour towards sustainable fashion based on the Theory of Environmentally Significant Behaviour. In this chapter we will see how the same theory can be used to shape the desirable proenvironmental behaviour.

There are four major approaches to changing environmentally significant behaviour outlined by researchers. They can similarly be applied to sustainable fashion consumption. The approaches are the following:

1. Religious and moral approaches that appeal to values and aim to change broad worldviews and beliefs
2. Education to change attitudes and provide information
3. Provide incentives in the form of rewards and penalties
4. Community management by means of establishing shared rules and expectations.

It has been proven that all the aforementioned approaches have a positive impact on changing environmentally significant behaviour, however moral and educational approaches show the lowest impact. (Stern, 2000)

In order for proenvironmental behaviour, such as eco fashion consumption, to be shaped, both individual and contextual forces have to be taken into account. External influences of the contextual domain define the level of influence of personal domain on behaviour. (Stern, 1999)

Table 2. Principles for Intervening to Change Environmentally Destructive Behavior

A.	Use multiple intervention types to address the factors limiting behavior change
1.	Limiting factors are numerous (e.g., technology, attitudes, knowledge, money, convenience, trust)
2.	Limiting factors vary with actor and situation, and over time
3.	Limiting factors affect each other
B.	Understand the situation from the actor's perspective
C.	When limiting factors are psychological, apply understanding of human choice processes
1.	Get the actors' attention; make limited cognitive demands
2.	Apply principles of community management (credibility, commitment, face-to-face communication, etc.)
D.	Address conditions beyond the individual that constrain proenvironmental choice
E.	Set realistic expectations about outcomes
F.	Continually monitor responses and adjust programs accordingly
G.	Stay within the bounds of actors' tolerance for intervention
H.	Use participatory methods of decision making

Figure 4 "Principles for Intervening to change environmentally destructive behaviour" (Stern, 2000)

As can be seen from Figure 4, there are multiple practical approaches existing to direct behaviour towards more proenvironmental. All the interventions described aim at removing the barriers to behaviour change, which refer to attitudinal and

contextual factors, such as lack of financial resources or knowledge. Since each consumer may be affected by a different barrier, it is important for eco companies to find a correct combination of such barriers to focus on to be able to effectively direct consumer behaviour. (Stern, 2000)

Stern (1999) suggests using two strategies for engaging customers in environmentally significant buying behaviour. The first strategy is centred around information as a means of removing barriers created by attitudinal factors. The second strategy uses incentives to address the contextual factors affecting behaviour. The two strategies interact with each other to produce desirable effect on ethical consumer behaviour.

The practical part of the theory of environmentally significant behaviour concludes that for reaching maximal outcome of the information and incentives, identified as the most effective interventions into proenvironmental behaviour, companies have to create effective interactions between the two domains. Research has shown that the effectiveness of an incentive is largely dependent on how it is delivered to customer in the form of information: its clarity, extent, channels and credibility.

Further discussion will be devoted to assessing the aforementioned strategies and suggesting techniques, which eco fashion companies can employ to remove potential barriers to environmentally significant purchasing behaviour created by the contextual and attitudinal barriers.

5.3.1 Information dissemination

Multiple research studies have demonstrated that consumers who are aware of the environmental issues, are more likely to engage into ethical consumption. Information regarding the impact of environmentally significant behaviour and its extent is important in triggering such behaviour. (Connell and Kozar, 2012)

The effectiveness of knowledge also depends on the way the information is designed and delivered to the customer (Connell and Kozar, 2012). Stern (1999) states that it is important to deliver relevant information at the time and point where the target behaviour is thought to occur as well as deliver that information in seamless way to consumer. Another factor adding value to the information is the way it captures attention of potential customer, its ability to engage customer and add credibility to the offered products and services. (Stern, 1999)

A “study on different options for Product’s Environmental Information Communication” conducted by the European Commission in 2012 concludes that the complexity and amount of information serve as important barriers to its understanding by final consumers. Due to the vast scope of environmental information, the main challenge is to deliver such information with technical accuracy and in a seamless manner. (BIO Intelligence Service, 2012)

The study suggests planning the information dissemination according to three main criteria: type and amount of information, means of communicating the information and place of its communication (BIO Intelligence Service, 2012).

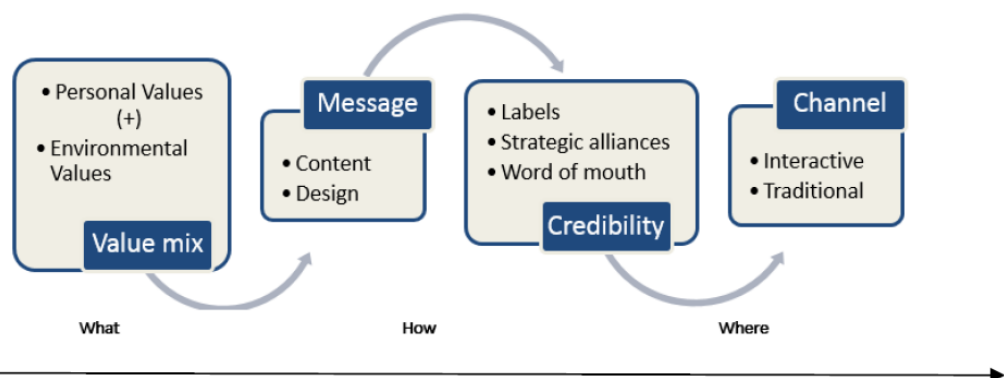


Figure 5 “Communication process of sustainable fashion” (Engelke and Spindelmann, 2017)

The model of communication process of sustainable fashion developed by Engelke and Spindelmann (2017) graphically presented in Figure 5, describes a similar process to the one developed by BIO Intelligence Service with more elaborated pillars. Both models will be used to construct a comprehensive strategy of information communication to eco fashion consumers.

5.3.1.1 What information to communicate

In an attempt to provide sufficient information regarding environmental practices, eco fashion brands need to develop complete but easily comprehensible information. Abundance of information may lead to worsened decision-making abilities. (BIO Intelligence Service, 2012) Yet this information has to be persuasive enough to reach beyond niche market. (Engelke and Spindelmann, 2017)

Researchers point out that consumers select clothing according to the emotional bond they create with it rather than a certain rationale, therefore it is important to create positive appeal in communicating environmental information to avoid prejudice and aversions. (Engelke and Spindelmann, 2017) Previously we also defined that the concept of perceived consumer effectiveness is crucial in shaping attitudes towards sustainable fashion. (Kim and Choi, 2005). In relation to this, the information of sustainable product should bear not only positive and emotional appeal, but also practical benefit-based rationale (Engelke and Spindelmann, 2017). Even though there is no direct health benefit of wearing sustainable clothing, producers can identify such aspects as comfort, skin safety, ease of care apart from direct benefits to environment that the item creates (Niinimäki, 2010). It is important to ensure credibility of the information communicated to consumers especially if it concerns environmental practices. Communication has to show utmost involvement of the company, including all its stakeholders, in the sustainability issues it raises. (Beard, 2008).

The initial step in establishing a communication strategy based on the identified personal and environmental benefit of a product is to compile a brand value profile.

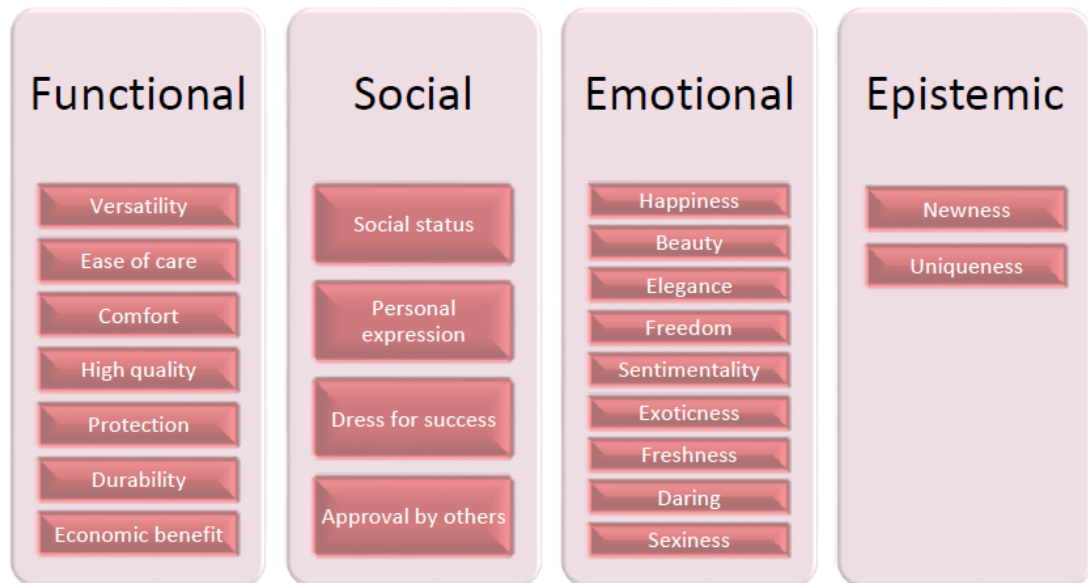


Figure 6 Brand value map (Engelke and Spindermann, 2017)

Figure 6 shows that environmental aspects of a product only relate to functional values, while in communication company has to focus on a wide range of other aspects inherent to a product, including social, emotional and epistemic values. The combination of the values company chooses to communicate may vary, nevertheless, successful communication depends on correct balance of different values, predominantly non-functional. (Engelke and Spindermann, 2017).



Figure 7 Sustainable clothing label (Baid, 2015)

Visual appeal is the foundation for successful communication of environmental practices. Consumption intention of eco products is positively reinforced by emotional appeal of the message, which can be achieved by using visual and low-text communication. Colour is by far the most important emotional connector. Combining green colour, commonly associated with nature and sustainability, with personal benefit tagline, brands can increase positive consumer attitudes. (Engelke and Spindemann, 2017) A good example of sustainable clothing label represented in Figure 7 identifies both environmental and health benefit of an item in a positive manner.

The information design and development also depends on the complexity of a product. Clothing refers to a type of fast moving consumer goods, which means that it takes up few time for consumer to make a purchase decision. In connection to this, information has to deliver short and highly recognizable message. The problem with this approach is a threat of potential misinterpretation of information connected to certain indicator (in case the indicator refers to a degree or percentage of certain number). Information provided by eco fashion brands, therefore, requires high level of aggregation, but to the point that it is transparent for consumer. The most successful methodologies suggest the average of three environmental indicators as a sufficient amount to effectively communicate sustainability practices. Considering the example in Figure 7, the label shows three indicators: sustainable composition, why producers define it as sustainable and what are the direct benefits to the consumer. The indicators also define what producers mean by “organic”, which is usually considered as a vague standalone term. (BIO Intelligence Service, 2012)

Transparency is one of the main challenges and a barrier to expansion of sustainable fashion. In their marketing communication eco fashion brands often use such buzz words, such as “organic”, “recycled”, “eco-friendly” providing few information on what they mean and company commitment to the issue. This leads to distrust to a company’s claims and reluctance to buying green products. On way

of dealing with the issue is through improved credibility of messages addressed in the next section. (Engelke and Spindelmann, 2017)

5.3.1.2 How to communicate information

Design and physical appearance of the information can be crucial in influencing environmentally significant purchasing behaviour. Scaling can be used to compare environmental performance or impact of two products. Research conducted in France to study consumer preference on different methods of displaying information, has shown that physical values are less comprehensible than letter rating (e.g. A,B,C). Consumers prefer to compare products rather than measure their performance. (BIO Intelligence Service, 2012)

Labelling has become the most preferred means of environmental identification among customers and producers (BIO Intelligence Service, 2012). Eco labels are used to influence consumer's decision making by providing information on product characteristics. Visual markers, such as labels established by independent organizations, have been more popular among consumers than technical information. Although consumers are generally unfamiliar with labels, they serve a purpose of communicating eco-benefits in accessible way. (Engelke and Spindelmann, 2017) Labels can also serve as a tool to avoid the trust barrier. Companies can use both internal and external sources of eco labels. The benefit of using eco-labels from external sources, such as government and NGOs, is that it adds credibility to eco products as such labels are strictly regulated by laws. (Engelke and Spindelmann, 2017) Statistics show that during 2007 only the global sales of products endorsed by Fairtrade Labelling Organizations International reached 47% growth (Carrington et al., 2010).

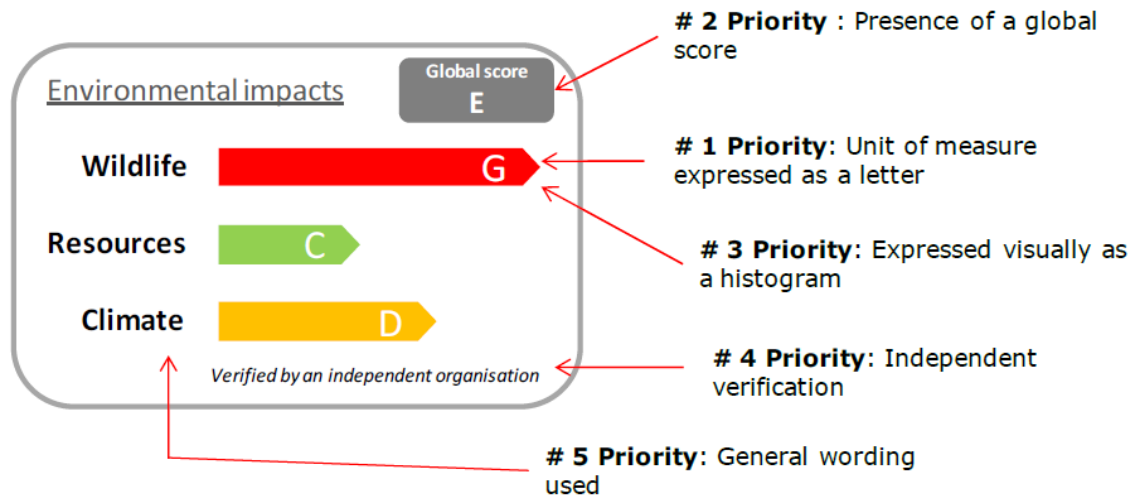


Figure 8 “Aspects of environmental display methods that consumers preferred” (BIO Intelligence Service, 2012)

Figure 8 demonstrates the results of a study by Ernst & Young to determine what aspect of product labelling consumers consider most effective. The figure shows a successful example of labelling, where scale is used instead of absolute values to facilitate comparing information. The information is expressed in simple wording, using colour indicators and link to independent party that released the label. (BIO Intelligence Service, 2012)

Another tactic to overcome lack of credibility is establishing different **strategic alliances** with environmental groups, social media influencers, popular sustainability projects and companies. The more networking and media coverage a company can accumulate, the more trust it can reach from its potential consumers. (Engelke and Spindemann, 2017)

Finally, using new technologies to disseminate information is a modern challenge and opportunity for eco fashion brands. With a global spread of **smartphone systems**, it is becoming vital for companies to deliver real-time purchase input. In addition to labelling, supporting technologies can immediately provide full range of information about an item at the point of purchase. Besides, eco clothing items allow for much space for placing product barcodes or flashcodes. Eco fashion brands mainly target developed markets, where such technology is easily

available, removing the technological challenge of the method. (BIO Intelligence Service, 2012)

5.3.1.3 Where to communicate information

The information regarding environmental properties of a product can be communicated through a variety of means and channels. Figure 9 provides a comprehensive summary of all the potential channels, where most effective outreach can be achieved.

Means and Channels	
At the point of sale	On-pack : all the information is given on the packaging
	On-shelf : all the information is provided at the shelf where the product is situated
	Price terminal (with bar code), 2D code/tag + decoding device, bar code or 2D code/tag reading with cell phone (smartphone)
Close to the point of sale	Leaflet : informative document available in store
	Receipt : Information provided on the till receipt
	Representative in shops : store-employed resource or brand representative in-store during a promotion
	In-store signage and advertising : backer cards, display cartons, posters, floor decals and ceiling hangers etc.
Beyond the Point of Sale	Public Relations : field concerned with maintaining a public image for organizations
	Marketing Campaigns through television, radio, print, online
	Advertising : the purchase of advertising time / space for a company or brand through a variety of media channels
	Internet/Social Media through social networks, blogs, company websites, etc.

Figure 9 Channels of communicating sustainability related product information (BIO Intelligence Service, 2012)

According to Stern (1999) and other supporting research studies, information dissemination is most effective when it is provided at the point of sale (BIO Intelligence Service, 2012). Today's eco fashion brands have two main points of sale, i.e. physical and online stores.

Physical shop should be leveraged by eco fashion companies as one of the most important marketing tools. The advantage of having own shop is that a company has full control over image and messages it wants to communicate to its consumers through the design of the shop's setting. This way company can fully engage its customers in its brand ethos and create a tangible connection with its customers. (Beard, 2008)

One of the most prominent examples of effectively raising awareness of environmental practices is Marks & Spencer's campaign "Plan A" advertising its commitment to ethically sound fashion business. Its success is mostly related to extensive use of printed media channels for dissemination. (Beard, 2008) Due to high cost of this channel, the web has become the most popular channels for smaller eco fashion companies to communicate their sustainability initiatives online. Since website is a major point of sale for eco fashion brands, companies can additionally leverage this channel as an information source. Web sources, such as own website, social media accounts and forums, allow for dissemination of greater amount of information for larger public in a cheap and fast way. Democratization of online communication brings significant competitive advantage to eco fashion brands since now they can avoid costly marketing strategies associated with traditional marketing channels and fast fashion brands. (Da Giau et. al, 2016) To reach maximum savings on advertisement investment, eco fashion companies can also take advantage of media hype towards environmental issues and promote their products in emerging "ethical" sections of non-specialized national and local media outlets. (Beard, 2008)

5.3.2 Addressing contextual barriers

Despite the fact that knowledge and its extent may be decisive in promoting pro-environmental behaviour, researchers have discovered weak relationship between high level of concern and initiative to obtain more knowledge regarding environmental issues expressed by consumers. Some studies show no relationship whatsoever between the level of knowledge, concern about environmental issues and engagement in proenvironmental issues. Such evidence confirms that

knowledge is not the key to resolving the attitude-behaviour gap. (Connell and Kozar, 2012)

Stern (1999) suggests that the main reason why knowledge does not translate into concern and vice versa and consequently lead to proenvironmental behaviour is because there are strong contextual constraints to such behaviour. As we can see from the previous discussion of the ABC model, if the external conditions are strongly negative, attitudinal factors indeed have very limited effect on consumer behaviour. (Stern, 2000)

Incentives are key to addressing the contextual barriers. They can be either monetary or non-monetary incentives, such as convenience and availability. The following section will suggest various incentives to address the barriers to proenvironmental consumer behaviour identified in the theoretical part of this research.

This section of research will be constructed according to empirical studies aiming at developing frameworks to assess brand attitudes perceived by consumers (Miller and Merrilees, 2013) and eco-consumption decision (Chan and Wong, 2012) based on contextual factors affecting eco consumption.

The general model for assessing brand attitudes perceived by consumers includes such determinants as perception of low prices, staff services, organization store design and merchandise selection. (Miller and Merrilees, 2013) They can be merged in two groups: product-related attributes and store-related attributes. The former group consists of price, quality and design, while the latter includes customer service, store design and environment, ethical practices and shop convenience. Both groups of attributes are positively associated with eco-consumption decision. (Chan and Wong, 2012)

The model of assessing brand attitudes perceived by consumers for sustainable products differs from conventional models by including the environmental variable. Eco consumption decision in this case depends on how well a company can balance and increase importance of different variables to build favourable brand

attitudes. (Miller and Merrilees, 2013) Environmental variable can potentially add competitive advantage to an eco-fashion company as, if properly communicated, it can balance out other variables, such as price, design or shop convenience.

5.3.2.1 Product-related attributes

Price

In order to maintain or improve brand perceptions of consumers, companies have to balance the price premium for sustainable product and the environmental variable. Sustainable fashion companies can add price premiums to their products because the environmental practices build positive associations with a brand. (Miller and Merrilees, 2013) An ability of a brand to build certain attitudes, such as attitudes towards organic garments used in production, are also more powerful than demographic characteristics of consumers or product attributes. (Ha-Brookshire and Norum, 2011) Consequently an extent to which eco fashion company can assign a price premium will depend greatly on its ability to influence attitudinal variable of consumers by communicating environmental variable.

Despite the importance of environmental variable in defining price premium, price remains a strong contextual variable affecting consumer behaviour and companies should understand the correct level of price premium they can assign to their products. Price variable has shown significant negative impact on willingness to pay price premium for sustainable clothing. The amount of a premium that consumers are willing to pay decreases as the price of the shirt rises in spite of existence of strong positive factors. Generally, more than half of consumers are willing to pay a price premium of over \$5.00 for a sustainably made shirt with a \$30.00 retail value. (Ha-Brookshire and Norum, 2011) Other studies show that the premium of 10% is assumed to have no effect on purchase decision, while 25-30% premium over conventional fashion will discourage consumers from buying eco clothing items. (Chan and Wong, 2012)

Sensitivity to price premium is reinforced by sociodemographic characteristics of consumers, therefore companies should use careful segmentation and targeting strategies for product placement and price definition. Price premium discourages purchase decision of consumers under certain economic threshold. (Chan and Wong, 2012) Younger consumers are more prone to buying from fast fashion brands due to social pressure to follow changing fashion tendencies and lack of resources to afford to follow the tendencies by buying even slightly more expensive clothing. Mothers with young children, on the other hand, appear to be more aware of the environmental issues and more inclined to green buying. (Ritch, 2015) Women in general have been found to be more prone to paying price premiums for eco apparel. (Ha-Brookshire and Norum, 2011)

In relation to the aforementioned points, eco fashion companies need to use careful demographic segmentation to account for the most interesting segments to target. As the research has shown those are generally women of average or more than average income level residing in developed countries. Selecting target segments can later help company position its product according to a brand equity it will define, comprising price, design and quality. (Chang and Jai, 2015) Generally economic theories state that high prices for clothing of unfamiliar brand is used by consumer as an indicator of quality or good service, thus company can charge higher price if it can assure high quality of product and services. (Chan and Wong, 2012) Defining style and design will also help cater to the needs and wants of the selected target segment.

Quality

Quality in sustainable clothing is as important as for conventional apparel brand. To be able to justify price premium added to sustainable product due to more expensive raw materials, production and shipping, eco fashion companies have to ensure high quality of products. In their research on consumer apparel quality evaluation, Klerk and Lubbe (2008) mention sensory experience, mainly sight and touch, as some of the most important factors for purchase decision making.

As has been mentioned previously in this research, the visual and sensual qualities of organic and recycled materials do not differ from conventional ones, thus eco fashion companies should pay much attention to a consumer's aesthetic experience with clothing items as it is another important quality indicator. (Klerk and Lubbe, 2008)

Design

Consumers show high level of concern towards environmental issues, however, fashion as a global social phenomenon has a greater contextual impact on consumers. For sustainable fashion to expand from a niche segment and reach substantial market share, eco fashion brands need to target both environmentally conscious consumers and those who are more fashion oriented. (Niinimäki, 2010) Besides, it is wrong to assume that environmentally conscious consumers would completely trade style for environmental benefit. Consumers commonly identify lack of style as the main reason why they would not purchase sustainable clothing items. (Joergens, 2006) The dominating culture of fast fashion and its social impact on consumer choices makes it increasingly challenging for green companies to attract their customers with timeless design and durable quality. (Peattie and Crane, 2005) Despite relating to slow fashion movement, eco fashion companies should be able to satisfy the aesthetic needs of their customers as well as their environmental concerns. In fact, Engelke and Spindemann (2017) suggest that the first criteria a product should fulfil is satisfying the aesthetic needs and only after that advertise its environmental impact. Indeed "the ethical part needs to be value added" to a person's reflection of a lifestyle communicated via his/her fashion choices (Beard, 2008).

5.3.2.2 Store-related attributes

Although product-related attributes have been identified as the major contextual barriers to eco fashion consumption according to the most common perceptions of fashion consumers, research shows that store-related attributes play equal or greater role in eco-fashion decision making and in forming overall brands attitudes. (Miller and Merrilees, 2013; Chan and Wong, 2012)

Availability

Multiple research studies have identified lack of availability as one of the main constraints to buying eco fashion. Not all of the eco fashion companies can afford own physical stores and sell their products at the same spots, where high street and fast fashion retailers can afford to, however eco fashion brands can apply multi-channel retail strategy and use a combination of physical and online channels. (Schoenbachler and Gordon, 2002) McKinsey&Company (2014) suggests that providing seamless shopping experience online via multiple digital sales channels including social media, defines success in tomorrow's global fashion market.

Eco fashion brands have to carefully analyse their potential sales channels and define where most success can be achieved. Due to high cost of setting up a physical store, companies need to identify the channel's potential sales generating abilities or define whether it can be used as a brand ambassador delivering customer experience and supporting online sales. (McKinsey&Company, 2014) Online channels are important as they can serve not only as sales, but also as information dissemination channels increasing awareness of brand's existence. Overall, depending on the identified target market and other demographic factors, eco fashion brands need to choose most relevant channels, even if it requires using multi-channel strategy, where they can obtain commercialization and marketing benefits. (Schoenbachler and Gordon, 2002)

Merchandise selection

Today's eco fashion retailers tend to concentrate on offering simple casual clothing, which may be explained by relative ease of production and ability to reach wider customer base with such offering. However, even in Europe, where dress code is generally very relaxed, people are still expected to wear formal clothing for work and special occasions. Gaining further acceptance and expanding further the customer base will require from eco fashion companies to develop clothing for different occasions and different settings, such as formal clothes and clothes for varied climate conditions. Apart from that, companies need to expand the entire range of the products to include shoe wear, accessories, swimwear, etc. to move to mass market. (Beard, 2008)

Customer service

Retail service is an important tool to stimulate customer satisfaction and promote customer loyalty. (Fuentes and Fredriksson, 2016)

Consumers have different levels of knowledge about sustainable fashion, therefore staff has to be able to answer not only store- but also sustainability-related queries. Educating staff about products and general sustainability issues is a relevant practice to ensuring good customer services. The store's staff needs to know how to answer queries on three levels: general product in-store location, contents of products and supply chain related queries. (Fuentes and Fredriksson, 2016)

Since eco fashion stores predominantly sell online, it is important to ensure that the right IT systems are in place to provide high level customer service, whether it is product display, logistics or information service. IT services developed in-store can also greatly improve information dissemination (as has demonstrated the example of smartphone systems) and appeal to millennial consumers. (Fuentes and Fredriksson, 2016)

Store design and environment

Design and environment of an apparel store are important in influencing shoppers' orientation and triggering different behaviours. (Parsons, 2011) Consumers generally imagine a sustainable store to be small-scale, with rural and natural settings. Green and natural colours similar to the ones used in communication combined with eclectic rural setting and natural materials used in store design are key to building sustainable store image. Despite the simple authentic look, a store has to imply modern shopping experience and exhibit technological advancements both in physical and online environment. (Fuentes and Fredriksson, 2016)

Apart from creating strong visual stimuli (Parsons, 2011), common practice of eco fashion stores is creating green shopping trails by highlighting products and clearly using signage and labels. The signage can relate to the composition of apparel items, their functional characteristics and benefits. (Fuentes and Fredriksson, 2016)

Ethical practices

Modern consumers view sustainability in a holistic way rather than considering solely product related attributes, therefore ethical practices of the company on all stages of supply chain are crucial in building image of a sustainable brand. A report on "sustainability trends in European retail" (Forum for the Future, 2009) identified top priorities for retailers, which are carbon footprint mitigation, packaging, waste management and recycling.

Carbon footprint mitigation within retail landscape is driven by government regulations and public concerns. It concerns reduction of in-store energy use, emissions related to logistics and manufacturing. Internally companies can use carbon footprinting to measure and compare carbon performance of different products

and various stages of supply chain. Carbon labelling can be used to communicate those results to final consumers and authorities.

Packaging is one of the most visible representation of a company's sustainability practices. Companies have put much effort into developing green packaging practices and communicating it to final consumer.

Manufacturing	Transportation	Consumer Use
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reduced weight and volume of packaging at source – e.g. glass and plastic bottle lightweighting • re-assessment of product packaging design • reducing raw material use through increased recycled content and product concentration • sustainable raw material sourcing (e.g. paper from sustainably managed forests) • translation of packaging improvements into commercial benefit through the use of packaging scorecards in procurement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use of re-usable transportation packaging for fresh produce rather than FMCG • use of 'shelf-ready' product bundling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • improved recyclability of product packaging • clearer sign-posting of packaging recyclability for domestic consumers • use of bio-degradable packaging material • consumer engagement on excessive packaging with 'leave the packaging' at the counter and 'bag for life' campaigns.

Figure 10 Key retailer actions in packaging (Forum for the Future, 2009)

Figure 10 demonstrates sustainable development in packaging on different levels of supply chain, which can be used as guidelines by eco fashion companies.

Retailers also focus on waste management as a part of their sustainable practices. It concerns not only own production waste, but also managing post-consumer waste. (Forum for the Future, 2009) A relevant example is Skunkfunk, an eco-fashion brand from Basque country, which uses recycled materials in both

production and packaging, while offering in-store recycling services for its consumers. (Skunkfunk, 2017)

5.3.3 Information and incentives

As the study has shown, information has strong interrelation with incentives. Carefully designed dissemination strategy has strong effect on the effectiveness of incentives. Companies need to encourage better reflection on consumer behaviour and respond by combining information with incentives. (Goworek et al., 2012) Brand attitudes built on strong product- and store-related attributes is key to eco consumption decision.

5.4 Summary and discussion

The framework for developing a theory of environmentally significant behaviour has helped to identify the scope of variables affecting the attitude-behaviour gap in sustainable fashion consumption. The variables bear attitudinal and contextual character. Based on the variables identified within the scope of the framework of the Theory of Environmentally Significant Behaviour, Value-Belief-Norm theory and empirical research, current study has constructed an integrated strategy to address the barriers created by attitudinal and contextual variables. The framework for the strategy has been suggested by Stern (1999), who identified information and incentives as the main tools to address the barriers of the attitude-behaviour gap. Further empirical research has shown that effective information dissemination depends on careful planning of message content and design, means and channels of dissemination. The best methodology discovered to deliver for both monetary and non-monetary incentives to triggering eco-consumption decision is model of assessing brand attitudes. By combining assessment of product- and store-related attributes it allows to construct brands attitudes avoiding contextual barriers. The summary of findings is provided in the table below.

TESB		Empirical research
Addressing attitudinal variables		
Scope of the TESB	Support of Key Values of slow fashion movement	Value mix and message design Highlight personal and environmental benefits Define a mix of functional and non-functional values Define aggregated set of environmental indicators
	Awareness of the environmental issues	Define visual design of the messages Establish means of message dissemination and credibility
	Beliefs and perceived consumer effectiveness	Provide labels Establish strong position within relevant communities Adopt new technologies to facilitate message dissemination
	Trust	Develop channels of message dissemination Point of sale dissemination Web channels
Addressing contextual variables		
Contextual factors based on common perceptions		Product related attributes
Price		Foster environmental attitudes Select acceptable amount of price premium Apply segmentation and targeting
Fashion tendencies and style		Quality Ensure favourable sensory experience Ensure favourable aesthetic experience Design Balance functional and aesthetic characteristics Develop wide range of products
Other contextual factors		Store related attributes
Availability		Define multiple sales channels Define the purpose of physical store Use segmentation to decide on relevant sales channels
Merchandise selection		Add more items such as accessorise, shoes, premium
Customer service		Educate staff to answer consumer queries

Empirical research	Store design and environment	Develop well-functioning and modern IT systems
		Create relevant visual stimuli
		Add modern shopping experience attributes
		Establish green shopping trails
	Ethical practices	Carbon footprint mitigation
		Sustainable packaging
		Recycling

Table 1 Research summary

6 Conclusion

This study achieved to identify an integrated framework for assessing the entire scope of factors relevant to the attitude-behaviour gap in sustainable fashion consumption. Stern's (1999) theory of environmentally significant behaviour allowed to identify the main barriers to eco fashion consumption decision based on attitudinal and contextual domains of the theory. The framework also enabled constructing a strategy for promoting proenvironmental behaviour, i.e. eco fashion consumption, based on information and incentives. The actions towards improving information dissemination have targeted the barriers established by personal (attitudinal) domain, while development of incentives, both monetary and non-monetary, aimed at eliminating the barriers to proenvironmental behaviour established by contextual domain. Further empirical research discovered strong positive influence of well-planned information dissemination on the effectiveness of the incentives created to address the contextual barriers.

The research has combined both theoretical and empirical studies to construct an integrated action plan for sustainable fashion companies to trigger eco consumption and bridge the attitude-behaviour gap, which previous studies of the phenomenon failed to achieve due to inability to interrelate different variables in a coherent model.

The main observation discovered throughout the research is the strong social aspect of fashion, which may play bigger role in widening the attitude-behaviour gap in sustainable fashion than researchers estimate. The modern phenomenon of fast fashion is continually changing behaviours of consumers by setting extremely low threshold on price and quality of apparel product, rendering it even more challenging for consumers to make ethical choices. There is a considerable need for extensive and more robust empirical research methods to expand sustainable fashion from niche market due to social, economic and environmental pressures traditional fashion industry faces today.

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