

SUSTAINABILITY IN THE FAST FASHION INDUSTRY

H&M Group

Abstract

Author(s) Yrjölä, Jenni	Type of publication Bachelor's thesis	Published Autumn 2019
	Number of pages 41 pages, 5 pages of appendices	
Title of publication Sustainability in the clothing industry Hennes & Mauritz		
Name of Degree Bachelor of Business Administration		
Abstract <p>The clothing industry has never been so large in value than it is in the 21st century. The clothing industry reached a bit over three trillion dollars in 2018, which is two percent of the world's overall Gross Domestic Product. This is part of the reason why the environmental and social concerns have been increasing during the past years and it is known as "sustainable fashion", which is a relatively new concept. Sustainability means ecological, cultural and social diversity.</p> <p>This thesis is about how one of the biggest clothing retailers has worked with their sustainability in the fashion industry. H&M Group has promised to challenge themselves to make more sustainable choices concerning producing their clothes and being the leader of the fast-fashion industry. One of those actions is garment recycling and this thesis discusses the impacts of fast fashion, how the garment recycling works at H&M Group and what sustainability plans Hennes & Mauritz has for the future.</p> <p>The objective of the thesis is to answer the research questions concerning sustainability in the fast fashion industry, consumers impact towards it and does the second largest fast fashion company H&M encourage its customers to become more sustainable. The primary data was collected through online survey that was shared through author's social media and at workplace. The secondary data was collected from written and electronic sources. The research method was based on qualitative research to understand the different views and perceptions. The results show, that there is a need for fast fashion companies to become more sustainable, not just for the consumers point of view but also for the environmental point of view.</p>		
Keywords Fast fashion, Fashion industry, Garment recycling, Environment, Hennes & Mauritz, H&M Group, Sustainability		

CONTENTS

1	INTRODUCTION	1
1.1	Research Background	1
1.2	Thesis Objectives, Research Questions and Limitations	2
1.3	Theoretical and Empirical Framework.....	3
1.4	Research Methodology and Data Collection	3
1.5	Thesis Structure	4
2	GARMENT RECYCLING	6
2.1	Overview	6
2.2	The Importance of Garment Recycling.....	6
2.3	How Does It Work?.....	9
2.4	Why Companies Use Garment Recycling?	11
3	I:CO.....	13
4	HENNES & MAURITZ.....	16
4.1	Basic Information.....	16
4.2	Promises and Acts.....	18
5	EMPIRICAL RESEARCH AND DATA ANALYSIS.....	23
5.1	Data Collection Process.....	23
5.2	Data Analysis.....	25
5.3	Recommendations.....	29
6	CONCLUSIONS	31
6.1	Answers to Research Question.....	31
6.2	Reliability and Validity of the Research	33
6.3	Further Research Suggestions	35
7	SUMMARY	36
	REFERENCES	37
	APPENDICES.....	42

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Research Background

Fast fashion has been a hot topic during the whole 21st century and it has been growing rapidly. People do express themselves – and their feelings and thoughts – through their clothing. This affects especially the youngsters, who have not fully found their identity yet. The whole fashion industry affects on people's choices according to their own establishment. (Gregory Stone 1962, 92.) The period of time, when the consumer has born, does affect their mindset of their purchasing behaviour (Solomon & Revolt 2009, 200). Clothing industry has never before been so large with its value than it is now (Remy, Speelman & Swartz 2016). Companies must to keep up with the all the time changing trends to keep the consumers happy (Peter & Olsen 2008, 6-7).

Fashion industry nearly tripled its growth between 2016 and 2018 according to The McKinsey Global Fashion Index forecast (McKinsey & Company 2018). In 2018, the global fashion and retail industry did reach a bit over three trillion dollars (3.875 billion dollars) market share which is two percent of the world's overall Gross Domestic Product (FashionUnited 2019). One of the world's fast fashion dominates, Hennes & Mauritz Group, H&M Group, did increase its net sales by five percent, which reflects SEK 210,400m, more than in 2017 (Handley 2019; H&M Group 2019A). After oil, fast fashion is the world's largest polluter of clean water and the reason for it is mostly because of the garment dying (Kianna 2018; Perry 2018).

Nowadays, consumers wear the clothes only about half as long as they did 15 years ago and most of the clothes will be never worn. The low-priced clothes that fast fashion produces are only worn seven or eight times or even less than that. Reason for this is mainly because the fashion constantly changes, so the companies are answering to the consumers' needs by producing new low-quality products all the time. At the same time when tons of these clothes are produced, they are also producing a critical amount of greenhouse gases. Reason why fast fashion is such a big polluter is that while producing the clothes, it requires a lot of water and chemicals. For example, in 2016 H&M did offer 12 to 16 new collections each year and refreshed them weekly. (Remy, Speelman & Swartz 2016.) All of this can be combined to the global warming as the greenhouse gases affect the whole energy balance and climate on Earth (The Royal Society 2019). This is part of the reason why the whole fashion industry is going through shaking times and there are expected to be a big long-term change on the whole industry according to Signh (2018). Consumers have answered to the fast fashion by buying it, but just recently fast

fashion has become on the news by its sustainability impacts. Companies are forced to make a step for towards more sustainable fashion, because of the consumers' pressure. (McKinsey & Company 2019.)

This thesis aims to help to get better understanding how well people do know the impacts of fast fashion. The topic has been on top of the news lately and it did seem logic to search answer for the questions that affects most of people's everyday life. The main focus will be towards Hennes & Mauritz and its garment collection. This thesis will go through the importance of garment recycling in fast fashion and uses Hennes & Mauritz's garment recycling on this study. At the end of this thesis, there is a desire to build an answer, is the Hennes & Mauritz's garment recycling functional and successful among their consumers.

1.2 Thesis Objectives, Research Questions and Limitations

This thesis aims to answer to the following questions:

1. Why the fast fashion companies need to become more sustainable?
2. Does the consumer know their impact towards fast fashion?
3. Does Hennes & Mauritz encourage their customer towards more sustainable choices?

The research questions are relevant part of the thesis, as the purpose of them is to provide an explanation of what this research is all about. The author also aims to answer to these questions. It is impossible to go through everything according to the fast fashion in this research and for that reason the topic has been narrowed down to H&M and its garment recycling and impacts of it. In order to provide as good and realistic perspective as possible, the people who have answered to the survey are both Finnish and international.

The focus on this thesis is on Hennes & Mauritz and their garment recycling: what garment recycling is and how is the garment recycling sustainable. The simple objective of the research is to get to know how many people are concerned about the sustainability of the fast fashion and how many people do know about Hennes & Mauritz's garment recycling and the impacts of it. For reader, to understand better the impact of fast fashion,

how does it affect to the nature and how much the fast fashion pollutes environment and for last, how can consumer be more sustainable what comes to fast fashion.

The main limitations concerning this research are the data availability concerning H&M garment recycling. There is a lot of data from H&M itself, but it is only one point of view of this research. Therefore, the chapter two and three goes through the overall fast fashion and its sustainability and how it affects the environment.

1.3 Theoretical and Empirical Framework

This study is divided into two sections: theoretical and empirical. The theoretical part does discuss the fast fashion and consumers impact towards it and fast fashion's impact towards nature. It shows, how much it pollutes clean water and nature next to other huge polluters as an oil industry. The theoretical part is very fact consumed and found only from the literal and online sources.

The empirical part will consist an online survey for the consumers. The survey's statics will be presented on this thesis as well as the questions asked from respondents. These respondents will be from the age 18-55 and above. Reason for wide group chart is to recognise the possible differences between them.

1.4 Research Methodology and Data Collection

This thesis is based on qualitative research which means that the theoretical part of this thesis is based on secondary data and a survey. The secondary data is analysed mainly from different online sources but from the literal sources as well. The chosen methodology gives the author the possibility to analyse and provide the information of the fast fashion. The methodology helps to gain more information about the current situation and the impacts of fast fashion towards nature. The survey gives more updated information from the subject and how the Hennes & Mauritz has succeed to spread their sustainable choices for the consumers. The survey also helps to gain more knowledge of the consumers knowledge towards the big company, Hennes & Mauritz, and does the consumers know how they can act towards more sustainable fast fashion.

1.5 Thesis Structure

This thesis is structured by using theoretical base and empirical research. Theoretical base is covered in Chapter 2, Chapter 3 and Chapter 4 and the empirical research is gone through Chapter 5 and Chapter 6. Figure 1 below shows the structure of this thesis.

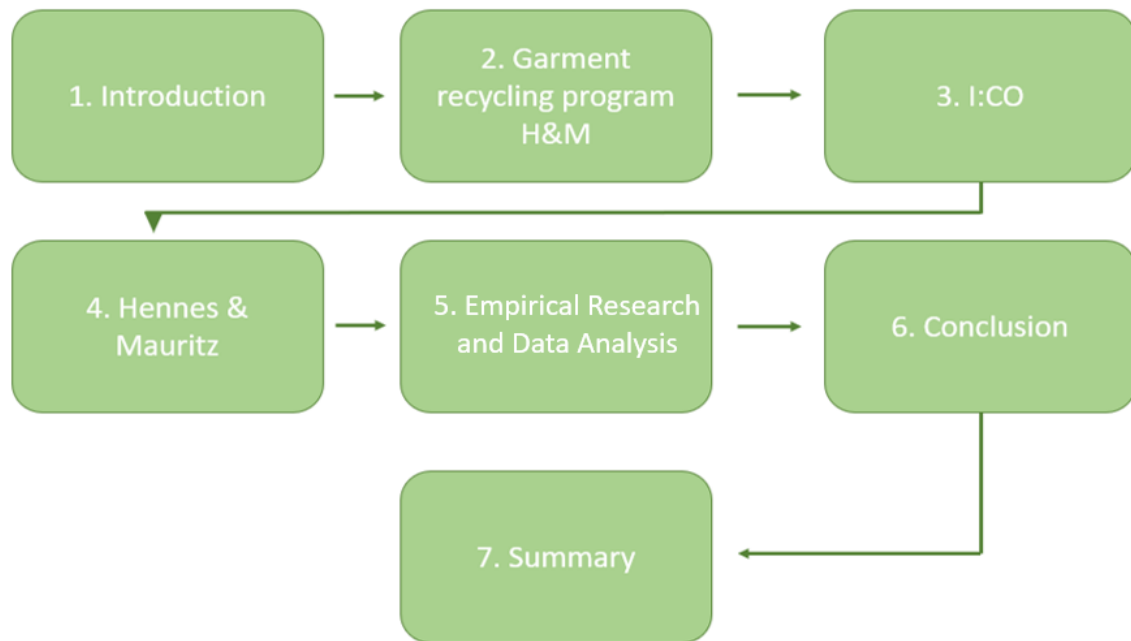


FIGURE 1 Thesis structure

The first chapter – Introduction, provides readers an overview of what the thesis aims to explain and answer. The first chapter goes through the target itself and why it is important. It tries to get the readers focus and convince why this thesis is worth for the readers time. It does explain the main questions that the thesis aims to answer and its limitations. After those, the introduction part keeps ongoing till the theoretical part and empirical part that tells what are the parts that are discussed and which one these parts are. The second last part of the Introduction is data collection and after that the framework of the whole thesis.

Second Chapter of this thesis is all about Garment recycling: the effects of fast fashion and why it is important to recycle garments, how does the garment recycling work and why companies use garment recycling. Third chapter is about I:CO, the collector that H&M uses for their garment recycler -collector. It does tell what I:CO is all about, what happens

to the recycled garments through them and how many clothes can be saved through recycling. The final part of this chapter is about how the fast fashion burns garments.

The fourth Chapter is devoted to Hennes & Mauritz, what is Hennes & Mauritz and what is the company's goal towards more sustainable fast fashion. First, it goes through the basic information of the company, financial side of the company and then the promises the company has made for the next years that are related to sustainability in the fast fashion industry. After that, it goes through the Conscious collection and H&M's clothe repair - service which is known as Take Care -program.

The fifth chapter is all about the survey, the questions the survey had and going through the percentual answers from the survey. Chapter 6 is about Conclusion and goes through what answers the survey produced and answers the questions for the main questions of this research. This chapter has also recommendations for the company. The final chapter is Summary and it is self-explanatory by its title.

2 GARMENT RECYCLING

2.1 Overview

The process when the old garment needs recovering as a reuse or recovering as a material itself, is called textile recycling. It defines the whole textile recycling industry. The textile recycling industry's main steps involve collection, donation and sorting, and processing of the textiles. The sorting process means processing the garments forward depending the garments' condition. Garments that are not in a good shape are processed forward to a new life as material of a new garment, rugs or for other use. (Leblanc 2019.)

The textile recycling industry has never been as big as it is now. At the moment, the whole industry is worth a trillion dollars globally and it recycles both clothes and furniture's materials as linens and mattress materials. Overall, there are two primary sources for textile recycling: Post-consumer and Pre-consumer. Post-consumer includes all kind of textiles from garment to vehicle upholstery. Pre-consumer includes junk that comes as a by-product from manufacturing garments or textiles. (Leblanc 2019.)

When the textiles are recycled, there are two choices for the garment recycling company: Either the company can sell the clothes, which are in good condition, forward or sell the textiles as a reuse. The second option means that the garment is not in a condition to be used again as a cloth. (Leblanc 2019.)

2.2 The Importance of Garment Recycling

The amount of the products that fast fashion produces and the waste that comes from it, is huge as the life circle of the garments is quite short. The problem is on the global scale, as more and more consumers buy those products. (Perry 2018.) Approximately only 1 percent of the garments people buy are recycled and turned into the new garments. Main reason for this is the complexity of turning those garments into the garment elements and therefore, those garments will end up in the landfills. (Cooper 2018; McCarthy 2018.) The garments that can be recycled, turn into new garments or insulations. Globally the amount of the garments ending up in a landfill or insulation is 80 percent and only in The United States the amount is 21 billion tons of textile. (Cooper 2018.) By giving the garment for a longer life circle, it would reduce emissions around 24 percent in the whole clothing industry (McCarthy 2018).

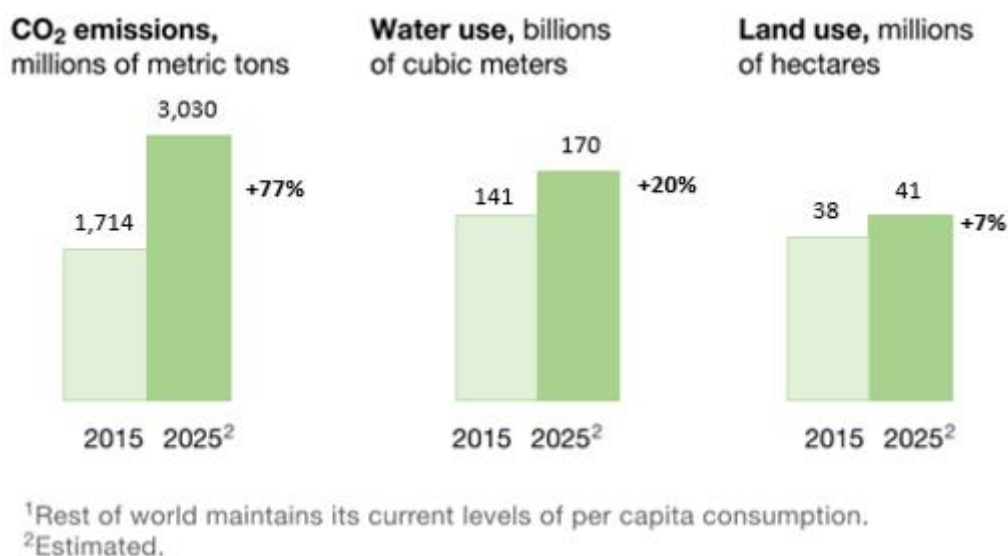


FIGURE 2. Environmental impact of fast fashion decrease

At the same time when consumers are spending more money on the clothing industry, the environmental affect is rapidly expanding. Above, the Figure 2 shows how the environmental impact increases if the Western markets per capital consumption levels will increase 80 percent. (Remy, Speelman & Swartz 2016.) It seems that clothing has become disposable. It could take up to 200 years for synthetic fibres to decompose and the amount of clothes that are made from synthetic fibres is 75 percent from all the clothes that are produced. An average western household throws away textiles each year an average of 30 kilograms. Only 15 percent of these textiles are donated or recycled. The waste that goes into the landfills covers 5.2 percent of all the textiles that are produced. (Sustain Your Style 2019.) Globally the amount of the garments ending up in landfill or insulation is 80 percent and only in The United States the amount is 21 billion tons of textile (McCarthy 2018).



FIGURE 3. The effect of fast fashion (Ellen McArthur Foundation 2019)

While fast fashion companies produce new clothes, the production of clothes also pollutes water and sets microfibres in the oceans and destructives rainforests next to the high greenhouse gas emissions. Figure 3 shows what happens to the production materials of clothing over the years and how many percent ends up in different stages while processing clothes. The numbers are from 2015. The first step is to recycle the garments by their condition and material when the consumer has decided that the garment has reached the end of its life circle. Second step is to recycle the low-quality garments into lower-value applications such as wiping clothes or mattress stuffing. The third step is that the factory offcuts the garments and withdrawals the overstocks. Most of the garments also end up in the landfills and micro fibres are set on the riverbanks. (Ellen McArthur Foundation 2019.)

Reason why producing the clothes pollutes the water, is that the countries where the clothes are produced, do not clean the toxic water, but releases it straight into the rivers. It is not only harmful for the nature and the ocean or for river itself, but as well for the people living next to those riverbanks. Wastewater does contain for example arsenic and mercury which are toxic substances. What comes to the cotton water use, the water is fertilized and by releasing fertilized water back to the rivers and oceans without cleaning it, it pollutes overland flow as well as evaporation waters. As a reference, while dyeing a ton of fabric the amount of fresh water that is used, can take up to 200 tons not to mention that

cotton needs water to grow. The amount of wastewater in developing countries is 90 percent. (Sustain Your Style 2019.) Now, there are 100 million people without access to clean drinking water in India which 85 percent could be avoided if instead of using the cotton, the water would be cleaned into clean drinking water (Leahy 2019, as cited in Sustain Your Style 2019.) Overall the whole fashion industry uses almost two trillion (1.5 trillion) litres of water each year when 750 million people are need of access to fresh drinking water. (Sustain Your Style 2019.)

By the year 2015, it is expected that the worlds GDP is going to growth 400 percent. This would mean even greater demand of clothing in fast-fashion industry. (OECD 2014.) Producing the fast fashion clothes does let synthetic fibres into the sea while the clothes are washed. It means that the synthetic fibres are let into the sea where the fish are accidently eating those fibres. The synthetic fibres are slowly pollution the ocean and the fish in it. The danger that comes with the synthetic microfibres plays a huge part in the food chain as it has the potential to poison the whole food chain itself. An average synthetic fleece jacket releases 1.7 grams of microfibres on each wash and the older jackets almost twice as much. The fibres are not only found from the oceans but as well as in the fresh water as well. (Messinger 2016.)

2.3 How Does It Work?

Fast fashion companies have recognized that they have to be more sustainable with their actions. Zara produces 20,000 different styles a year which means over 450 million garments a year. That is why the world's biggest fast fashion companies H&M and Zara have taken actions towards a more sustainable fashion. These two leading fast fashion companies have garment collection boxes in their stores to consumers to drop off their old garments and recycle them. Both companies have the same structure for their garment collecting. The Figure 4 shows the basic structure of the garment recycling through clothe stores. First step is, when customer comes to the store and drops off a garment recycling bag to the garment recycling box, which is the second step. Third step is, when the garments leave from the store and are either donated to local NGO's or to the nearest garment recycling point of the collector. Zara donates collected garment to the local NGO and H&M uses a textile recycling company I:CO. On the fourth step, the garments will be sorted for next step. Step number five includes the process of the garments when the garments will be reused or sold for charity or if the garments condition does not allow that, the garments will be recycled to the industrial materials. (I:CO 2019A; Inditex 2019; Liu 2019.)

H&M donates 3 cents for every kilogram the consumers drop off their stores. The garment recycling technology is developing all the time and it is just a matter of time when all the synthetic materials can be recycled. At this moment, the technology isn't that modern that blended materials as polyester or elastane could be made into new materials in most of the cases which these materials cannot be recycled again. This kind of technology would need a huge investment and unfortunately it doesn't attract many investors in that matter. (Liu 2019.)

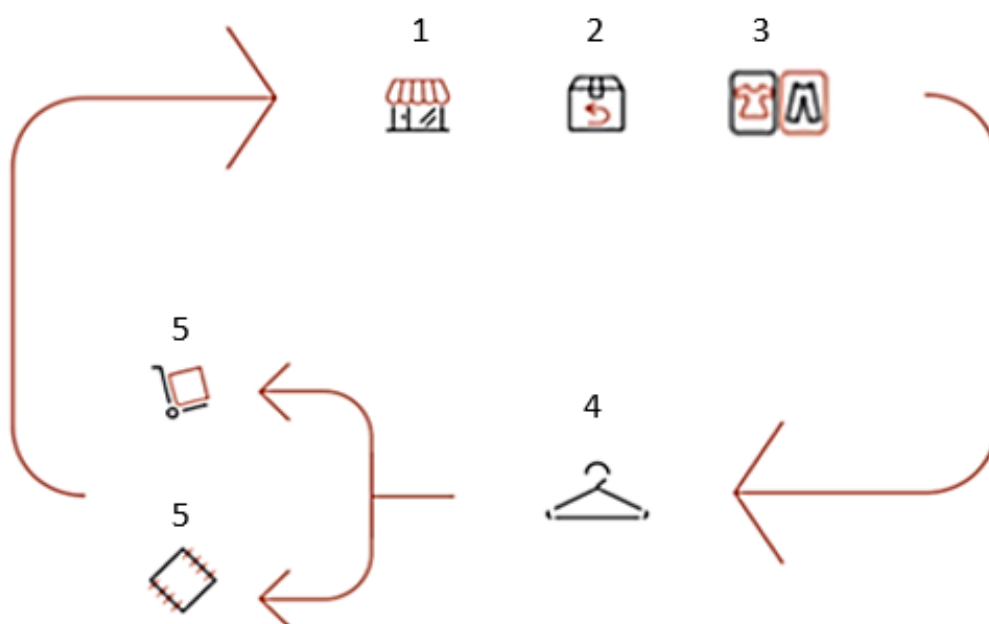


FIGURE 4. The structure of garment recycling (Inditex 2019)

H&M has shown for a long time, how important sustainability is in the fast fashion industry and the company isn't the only that has noticed it. Both customers and employees can drop off their used accessories, footwear and clothing to the Zara's main markets. Unlike Zara, H&M doesn't take any accessories or footwear to their garment recycling and unlike H&M, Zara doesn't give vouchers for the consumers for dropping off their old garments. Zara co-operates with the non-profit organisations and they have launched a project called "Closing the Loop". The biggest difference compared to H&M is that the online customers can send their old garments to Zara by a return. Countries as Spain and China do also have a clothing collection service that pickups the garments from the consumers home in several cities. It has extended to Paris, London and New York during 2019.

Zara's garment recycling model is the same recycling model as the one H&M uses. The only exception is where the garments which are in a good condition end up. As mentioned earlier, the biggest difference is where the garments will end from the companies. As H&M does send their garments to I:CO who will then move forward with them, Zara's recycled garments are donated to the non-profit partners such as Red Cross and CEPF. (Inditex 2019.)

Even when the garments are collected through famous fast fashion companies, there are no guarantees that the garments wouldn't end up in landfills. There are no current data or capabilities to be 100 percent sure that the recycled garments will be recycled. Overall, recycling garments takes more time and money than producing new ones. It does not mean that the trusted brand as H&M or Zara would willingly lie to the consumers, but the textile collectors might do something that the brands do not know as there are no actual data for where the garments go. (TFL 2019.)

2.4 Why Companies Use Garment Recycling?

H&M uses the company called I:CO to recycle the donated garments. Companies that recycle garments are earning even 250 euros for every ton of the garments that the customers bring to the store. The company won't only help for better and more sustainable future for fast fashion, but also earns money for its good commercial side. The sector that buys the garments from the big companies – in this case I:CO – is called a sorter. The sorter sells the garments to its own retailers who either sell the garments that are in a good condition or uses them as a material for the different use. (Baig, 2013.)

When the big companies have taken the garment recycling -method near their customers, it affects on the charitable organizations as a Punainen Risti and UFF (Baig, 2013). Still, the facts that speak behalf of the garment recycling through the big companies as H&M are better than not doing anything. The amount of the garments that people have donated trough charity has found its limits. The companies, especially fast fashion companies, are producing too much clothes in such a short time that there is no need for them anymore. Fast fashion symptom is a problem nowadays. "There's so much now that the countries where these items end up, either as second-hand items or for processing, have started saying: Enough already." says Kirstin Brodde, a textile expert with Greenpeace. (Grundmann, 2018.)

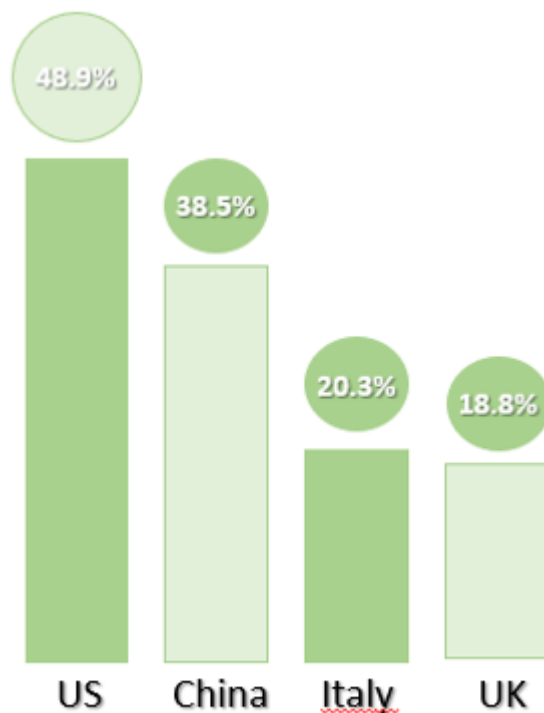


FIGURE 5. How concerned millennials are for sustainability in the fast fashion industry

H&M, as the many other fashion company, has also noticed that sustainability is today's trend. The company maintains its customers by offering sustainable choices as helping the customers to recycle their clothes and giving a voucher to shop more and use more money in their store. Still, H&M would need to recycle 12 years with the same amount of recycled clothes as it has now to recycle the garments that the company is producing in a day. By looking at the Figure 5, it is noticeable that the millennials are more concerned the brands sustainability and ethics than ever. The figure shows that almost half of the millennials in the United States of America, almost 40 percent of Chinese millennials, 20 percent of millennials in Italy and a bit less than 20 percent of the millennials in the United Kingdom do prefer sustainable fashion rather than not sustainable fashion in 2017. At the same time when the company is cheering consumers to be more sustainable and recycle their old garments, the company is provoking their consumers to buy more garments from their stores. (Biondi 2018; Deloitte 2017; Whiting 2019.)

3 I:CO

The company has collected old garments over 600,00 kilograms since 2013 from its Canadian partners. (Agro & Matteis 2018.) I:Collect, which is also known as I:CO, works for the effective future with the idea of more economic clothing industry. The idea beneath it is to recycle and give a new life for the garments instead of throwing those unwanted garments into the landfills or burn them. I:CO is already used by some of the biggest companies in the world, as Adidas, Guess, H&M, Levi's and Reebok, which are donating garments through their stores. Overall, I:CO is working with the companies over 60 countries with more than 40 retail partners. (I:CO 2019B, Agro & Matteis 2018.)

I:CO has their headquarter in Germany where the clothes from Finland are shipped as part of the take-back system as the whole idea with the garment collection is based on. The company collects the used garments and the shoes and either sells them forward or gives them new life depending the garments condition. (I:CO 2019B.)

What happens to the garments?

Most of the recycled garments will end up in second-hand clothing markets which are most of the times located in Central and South America and Africa (Agro & Matteis 2018). I:CO's mission is to offer its clients the sustainable and simple solution to close the loop of throwing garments into the garbage. I:CO's method is a resource-efficient and their services includes sorting the garments, preparing them for recycling or for the reuse. Depending of the garment's condition, the garments will be sold as second-hand items, or the garments will be used in the textile industry as a material for making new garments. In the textile industry, the fibres that has managed to save, are spun into a yarn so the fibre can be integrated into the supply chains of the company's partners. Even the new shoes can be created from the rubber granules which hasn't been available before. The sorting and separating itself happens by transporting the garments to the nearest sorting and recycling point. At the sorting facility the garments are evaluated and sorted individually as it is agreed between the company and the retail partner. Evaluation is made by using the international waste hierarchy of reuse. (I:CO 2019A.)



FIGURE 6. I:CO's garment recycling (Remy, Speelman & Swartz 2016)

The whole process starts from the point when the consumer brings their used garments or shoes into the store that has the garment collection point as the Figure 6 shows.

Depending the company, the consumer will get a reward from bringing the used garments into the store. At the H&M, the consumer gets a voucher as a reward by bringing a bag of garments to the store. The voucher is worth -10 percent discount from the normal priced items. After the consumer has dropped the used garments, those will be shipped to the I:CO's nearest sorting and recycling facility where the garments will be sorted by garment by garment. Sorting part is made by hand and the garments are categorised based on their condition. The garments and shoes that are in a good condition are kept and sold forward as it is the best ecological solution for reusing them. (I:CO 2019A.)

Garments that are not in the condition for re-selling, remains in the closed loop. At this moment, this is only possible for the denim clothes. Those garments are used as a material for new clothes or shoes as the fibres that are collected are used in various industries. The fibres of the clothes are recovered so it can be integrated into a new life. The garments that are too synthetic to collect the fibres are used for the material for the cleaning products. At the cases where the garment is in a very bad shape, it is used as an energy source which means burning the garment. (I:CO2019A.)

How many clothes can be saved?

Overall, only less than one percent of the clothes that end up being recycled from the stores are managed to be saved and recycled in the clothing industry. I:CO recycles over 35 percent of the clothes that are recycled through the company. These recycled clothes are used as paddings and cleaning items. Reason for this is, that turning the old clothes into the new fiber is not the easiest thing to do and it is rather expensive as well. The difficult part with the synthetic clothes is that the blended fibers won't break so easily as the pure fibers. For example, a piece of clothing as a pure cotton or wool. Still, even those fibers won't last forever and the amount of using them is limited as the fiber weaknesses every time as it is broken from the peace of clothe into a fiber. (Agro & Matteis 2018.)

Burning Clothes

I:CO has partners in Canada and Canada's best customer for second-hand garments is Kenya. In many cases when the garment isn't good enough for resale or it isn't in the condition to be sold, it ends up in the trash. Especially the low-quality clothes are very hard to sell. These garments that are dumber, usually end up in fire as well. (Agro & Matteis 2018.)

Västerås Power Plant in Sweden did announce that the company would be going fossil fuel free by the year 2020. Reason for this is, that H&M did do a contract with the company, to burn 15 tons of discarded clothes from it by November 2017. H&M does say that they do not burn any garments that do not contain mould or any other forbidden chemicals. All the garments that are burned are somehow not safe to use says the head of communications for H&M, Johanna Dahl. Still, only 0.1 percent of the returned clothing that were not in a condition for re-sale, was reused. (Schumacher 2018; Starn 2017.)

4 HENNES & MAURITZ

4.1 Basic Information

Hennes & Mauritz was founded in 1947 in Västerås, Sweden by Erling Persson. It was selling only women's clothing until the year 1968 when the brand's next step was to start selling men's clothing next to the children clothing. In 1976, H&M did open its store to London (H&M Group 2019D.) As the Figure 7 shows, H&M did have almost 4000 stores worldwide in 2017. The number of stores has gone up almost by a thousand as the current unit of the stores is 4900 and spread in 73 different markets. (H&M Group 2019E.)

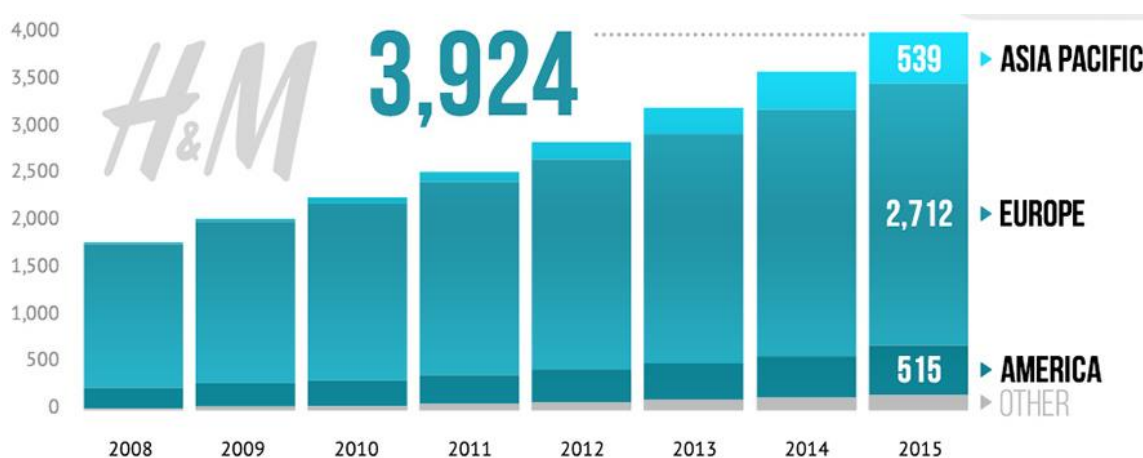


FIGURE 7. The number of H&M stores in 2017 (Knoema 2017)

After 70 years later there has been a lot of going on: in 1976 H&M did open up its store to London, in 2006 the brand expands to online, in 2010 H&M did launch its first Conscious Collection made with sustainable materials as an organic cotton and recycled polyester and at 2014 H&M launched fully recycled denim collection. The direction is clear, and the company has set ambitious goals for its sustainability for its future. (H&M Group 2019D.) Overall, H&M isn't just a one brand, but the H&M Group operates under the brands as Cheap Monday, COS, Weekday, & Other Stores next to the H&M and H&M Home. The H&M Group offers everything for everyone: accessories, cosmetic products, footwear and home text tiles next to the clothes that also includes underwear and sportswear. H&M Group's business concept is based on the company's values as they say, "*Fashion and quality at the best price*". H&M has announced to drive to user-friendly, well-made, as chemical free as possible and durable items. (H&M Group E2019.)

Value of the Company

By the time in 1974 Hennes & Mauritz was listed on the Stockholm Stock Exchange and now, almost 50 years later its market cap has estimated to be \$29.7 billion with sales over \$24.3 billion by Forbes. The company has also listed #33 Best Employers for Women in 2019 and World's Most Valuable Brands 2019. (H&M Group 2019D; Forbes 2019.)

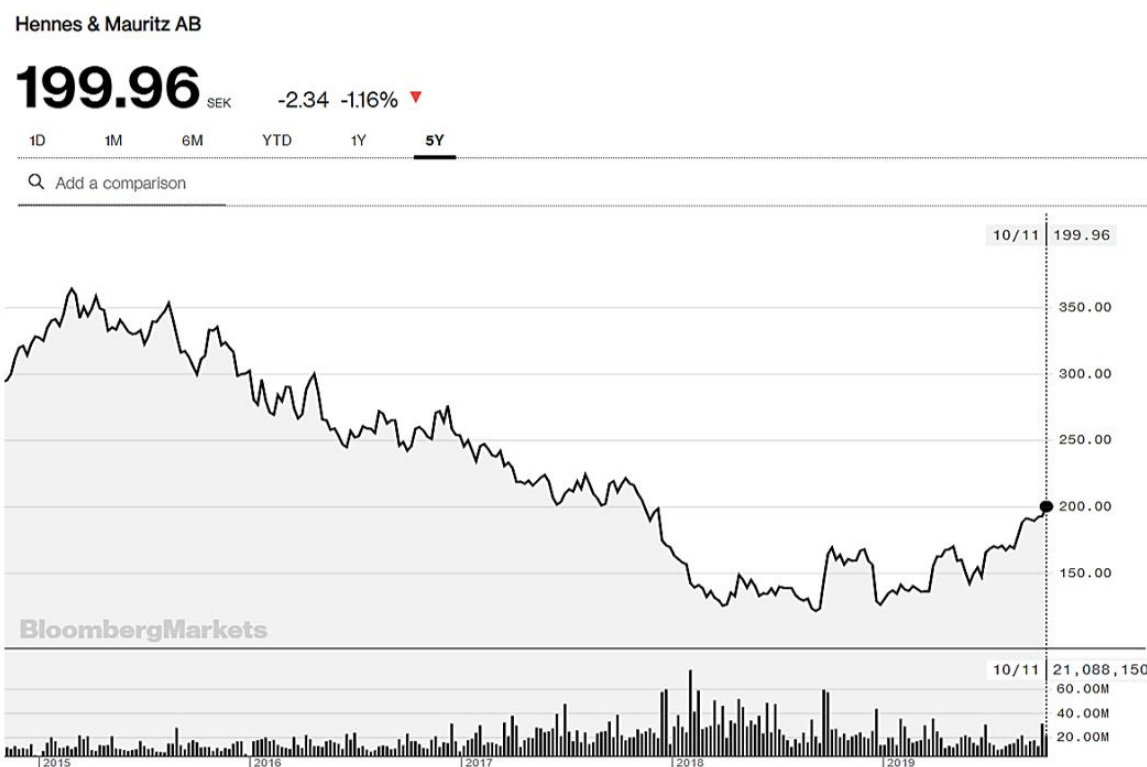


FIGURE 8. H&M overall stock value for the past 5 years (Bloomberg Markets 2019)

H&M net sales did reach up SEK 210 billion in 2018 (H&M Group 2019E.) Still, even though H&M is one of the most valuable brands in the world, its stock price has been going down since 2015 as the Figure 8 shows. The company's shares have gone down more than a third of the share's value in the past year. Nowadays other fast fashion companies as Zara – Inditex SA – and Asos has gone past H&M with their sales in the past years. Eric Persson has said that the reason for bad share is the company's negative development. The company's sales drop did start already in 2016. H&M operating profit did drop down to 62 percent in 2018. The year before, in 2017 the company had its biggest sales drop in its fourth quarter. H&M did have to do a big summer clearance which did have a massive effect on company's sales. Still, H&M managed to rise its shares up to 13 percent in Stockholm trading in 2018. One of the reasons might have been its

marvelous online sales that did rise 32 percent when the goal was to increase online sales at least 25 percent. (Hanbury 2018; Molin 2018)

4.2 Promises and Acts

H&M has promised eager goals to its consumers in terms of the sustainable fashion and its future. By 2030, the company has promised to use only recycled or other sustainably sourced materials for its products. By 2040, the company's value chain is supposed to be more favourable than ever before what comes to the company's sustainability. H&M has promised to be the leader of more sustainable fashion and show the road with its more conscious choices to the other fashion companies. One of those methods is garment recycling that H&M has provided in its stores. In 2018, the company did collect more than 20 tons of textiles through its garment collecting. Hennes & Mauritz have also announced to support and encourage the innovations towards more sustainable fashion industry. H&M is one of the 79 global fashion companies, that have promised to replace the poisonous chemicals, pollutants, to nontoxic substances by the year 2020. (Grundmann 2018; H&M 2019B; H&M 2019C.)

The company's IT department has combined for making decision towards more sustainable choices which is essential part of the company's development. IT is important part of the company as the manufacturing operations goes through it. Company used their continuous development to reduce their buying time for 15-20 percent. The main idea of the company's buying structure is to restock their best-selling products. This helps the company to reduce products that do not sell as well as the best-selling products. (Lu 2014.)

H&M Group believes that instead of garments ending in landfills, there should be more sustainable alternative for it. H&M Group has made the decision to recycle clothes and reuse them by collecting textiles through their garment collecting initiative worldwide in some of the H&M Group brand stores. Every year consumers throw away thousands of tonnes of clothes and other textiles. Recycling and giving textiles a new life is one way to prevent it. In 2018, the H&M Group did collect more than 20 thousand tonnes (20,649 tonnes) of textiles which is 16 percent more than in 2017. Overall it means approximately 103 million t-shirts. All these clothes are for recycling and reuse through garment collecting action. H&M Group contains H&M and H&M Home, Monki, Weekday, COS, & Other Stories, Cheap Monday, AFound and Arket. (H&M Group 2019C.) H&M has its own Conscious Exclusive collection where all the collections have been made from sustainable

or recycled materials. Bringing sustainable collections into the fast fashion markets shows, that sustainable fast fashion is a realistic goal. (H&M Group 2019D.)

H&M Group launched the garment collecting first at H&M stores and after that they launched it to their other brand, Monki, as well. The textiles that are dropped off won't have to be from H&M Group brands, but those textiles can be from any brand and the condition doesn't matter either. These textiles could be old t-shirts or dresses, broken socks and tights, old towels etc. The idea beneath the garment collecting is to keep it as simple as possible for the consumers. When the consumers drop off their unwanted garment bag, or bags, by the cash desk or the garment collecting box, they will receive a voucher for it. The brand & Other Stories, which is also part of the H&M Group, has given 10 percent voucher from the next purchase to the consumers that drop off an empty tube of lip gloss. Afterwards, some countries as Denmark, France, Sweden and United Kingdom have also offered same textile recycling as at the H&M and Monki. (H&M Group 2019.) In Finland, the customer did get a voucher worth 15 percent of the overall price of the normal priced item. During the autumn 2019, H&M did change the worth of the voucher up to 10 percent. This is an observation that the author has noticed in Finland by themselves and there is no written data from it. Overall H&M Group has over 4200 stores worldwide and most of the stores has the garment collecting box. Still, for company like H&M it would take more than a decade to collect and recycle the products the company sells in matter of days. H&M's own garment material use is only 0.7 percent of recycled material. (Agro & Matteis 2018.)

Tim Cooper, from Nottingham Trent University, thinks there is a huge market area to be filled. There is also the need to build a market area that is made from sustainable materials as the current situation can't go on much longer. Still, the latest studies of IPCC have showed that it is the consumption that the companies need to avoid, rather than keep on going the same rhythm with the sustainable garments. It is estimated that the fast fashion companies could cut down their carbon, water and waste by 3 percent. This goal has one condition: to make the garments last three months longer. By producing the garments so, that they will last up to 9 months, the amount of wastes could be even 10 percent instead of 3 percent less than it is now. As the consumers are buying more and more second-hand clothing, there has been studies that has shown that if the whole North America would buy one second-hand item instead of buying a new one, it would save 200 000 tonnes of waste and 2.6 million tonnes of carbon dioxide. This amount equals half of million cars emissions.

One of the biggest concerns of sustainable fashion are jeans and denim overall. Jeans and denim need a lot of water and they are hard to recycle if there is any extra on them as: leather labels or other specific details. For these reasons, H&M does co-operate with the Hong Kong Research Institute of Textiles and Apparel (HKRITA) to be more sustainable and prevent the waste behalf of them. The institute adds virgin fibre to the clothes that are collected from the H&M stores, so those garments are ready to be recycled again. (Mehta 2019.)

H&M Conscious

Different brands of fashion have started to make actions towards their customers by innovating sustainable choices for them. One of the reasons is that the companies are afraid of boycotts that might follow for not making any actions. (Biondi 2018.) H&M has launched a clothing collection which garments are made off more sustainable materials. Overall, H&M has increased the sustainable materials of their garments by more than 20 percent. The first Conscious collection was launched in spring 2011. This means that when the garment has a green hangtag written "*Conscious*", it means that the specific garment contains at least 57 percent sustainable materials as recycled polyester and organic cotton. The maximum amount of the recycled cotton at least 20 percent per garment made of cotton as there are such a high standard for produce it so the quality won't suffer. Still, what comes to the recycled cotton, at least 95 percent of the cotton is sourced in a more sustainable way. It is common though that cotton is considered as an eco-friendly option but, it is not as it is hard to recycle and unlike the synthetic alternatives, it needs 20 000 litres to grow 1 kilogram of cotton. By this amount of water, the factory is able to make one pair jean's and a t-shirt. However, the goal is to use 100 percent recycled cotton by the year 2020. (Biondi 2018; Young 2018; H&M Group 2019H; H&M Group 2019I; Whiting 2019.)

Now, H&M uses a hydrothermal recycling machine, but the company has promised to work on their techniques to find out better way to use more recycled cotton per garment. Still, there are already new innovations and methods to help to cut the waste as concentrating on their supply chains and overall on the whole 3D project that includes designs, samplings and prototyping's. On 2018 Conscious collection, H&M did show that it is possible to use recycled silver for jewellery and the lace can be made of the fishnets. (Biondi 2018; Young 2018; H&M Group 2019H.)

If the companies really want to make an effect, they need to focus on the manufacturing as the fabric production and yarn preparation are the most harmful steps on the process

next to the garment dying. As many of the companies, neither H&M owns their manufacturing companies which makes it more difficult to control it. Most of the companies defend themselves by pointing the factory that they don't own to show that their hands are tied. Rachel Arthur, chief innovation officer at innovation agency TheCurrent, says: "They deal with [these suppliers] in big numbers, so they have the ability to put pressure on them to make these changes happen." H&M thinks that not only their garments should be conscious, but the whole process of it since the customer buys the garment. For this reason, the company has tried packaging-free delivery that followed electric vans in India. These sustainable ideas did bring the brand no. 4 spot in the Fashion Revolution 2018 Transparency Index. H&M also uses external certifications and the third-party data to maintain their sustainability goals. (Biondi 2018; H&M Group 2019H.)

H&M has banned to use angora, fur, exotic animals and skins on their garments. The company also uses wool from non-molested sheep. This isn't just part of their Conscious clothing line but their overall value to not to use these as the company can't guarantee the animal welfare. H&M has considered to use cashmere again if the cashmere industry will meet the company's sustainability criteria. Leather is still in use, but the company does specify where it is sourced, and the down is used only if it fills the responsible down standards. It means that the garments that are made from down are labelled with a blue sticker "RDS" to prove that the downs have not gone through unnecessary harm and they got the humane treatment. (H&M 2019I; RDS 2019; Robertson 2019.)

Between 2013 and 2018, New York University did do a research which showed that the items that were highlighted as "sustainable" were sold faster than the products which were not highlighted. Sustainability isn't just a making better choices, but it is also a way of making money these days. The research was made from consumer sales between 2013 and 2018 by researchers from the Stern Center for Sustainable Business -line. (Kronthal-Sacco & Whelan 2019.) H&M does advertise their Conscious collection via TV and social media.

H&M Take Care

H&M has a program called H&M Take Care. The main idea beneath it, is to give clothes a second change and make them last longer. On H&M website, there are various tips and hacks how to repair old garments or how to remake old garments to this century. The repair and care section do include tips, for example, how to steam clothes properly, what to do if shoe is too small and how to sew a button. There is also a section called Laundry

& Stains that helps the consumer to get rid off a lipstick stain and how to wash their denim right. These instructions tell the reader; what they need and how to do it. (H&M Group 2019J.)

Next to these tips and hacks, at the bottom of the bottom, there is a product that helps the consumer to get closer to the final goal. As for example, at the bottom of the lipstick stain hack, there is a stain remover spray. They do also sell a laundry liquid, a sewing kit, wool combs etc. so it is not just sharing the tips and hacks but also making money for the company. The other sections next to Repair & Care are: Laundry & stains, Inspo & DIY as well as the Products. (H&M Group 2019J.)

5 EMPIRICAL RESEARCH AND DATA ANALYSIS

This chapter goes through the information collected from online survey “H&M garment collecting program -survey” and the empirical research of the thesis. The ideal objective of this research is to introduce the authentic data that has been collected through the survey.

5.1 Data Collection Process

In this chapter, it is represented the process of collecting the data for empirical research. Figure 9 shows, how and when the whole data process was proceeded.

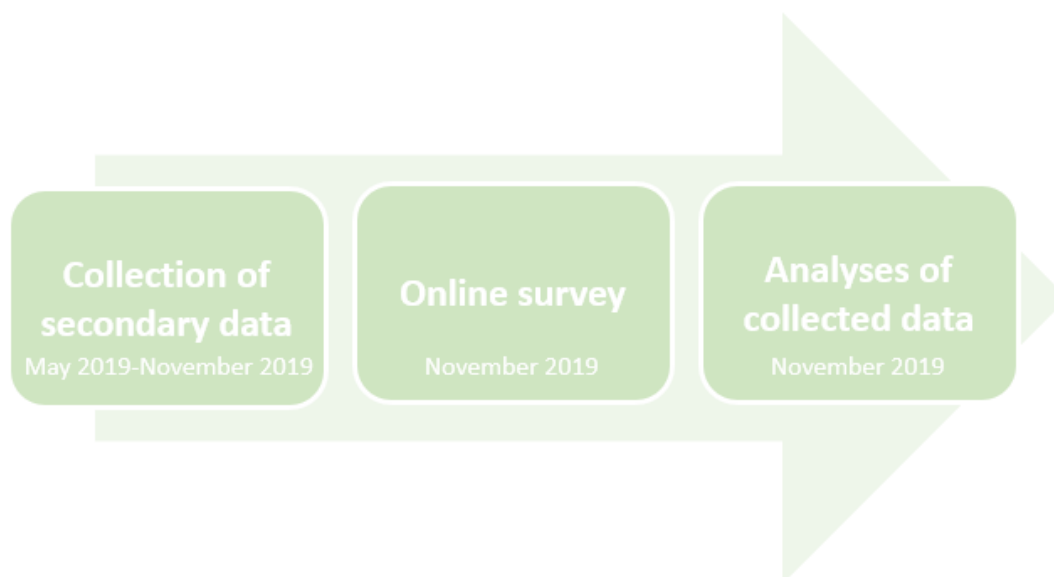


FIGURE 9. Process of data collection.

At the beginning of this research, it was decided that the best approach to this thesis would be a qualitative research. Reason for this was, that the interview part that was made as an online research, did contain questions as how people feel about the brand or the product. These were more general questions and for that reason, the online survey used on this research is not counted as a quantitative research. There was also one open-ended question on the online survey so the survey respondents could have a free word of how they feel about H&M’s sustainability in general. The author shared the online survey via social media as the author’s own Facebook, Instagram and Snapchat as well as at the author’s workplace.

There are various types of surveys: Online surveys, Paper surveys, Telephonic surveys and One-to-One surveys. These surveys are based on the data collection timeline as when the survey is administered and how often it is administrated. The survey that is used on this research is Cross-sectional survey. It means, that the survey is given to the small group from larger population to answer in short time frame. Reason, why this kind of survey was used on this research was that it is short and quick to answer so it offers multiple answers in given time. (Bhat 2019B.)

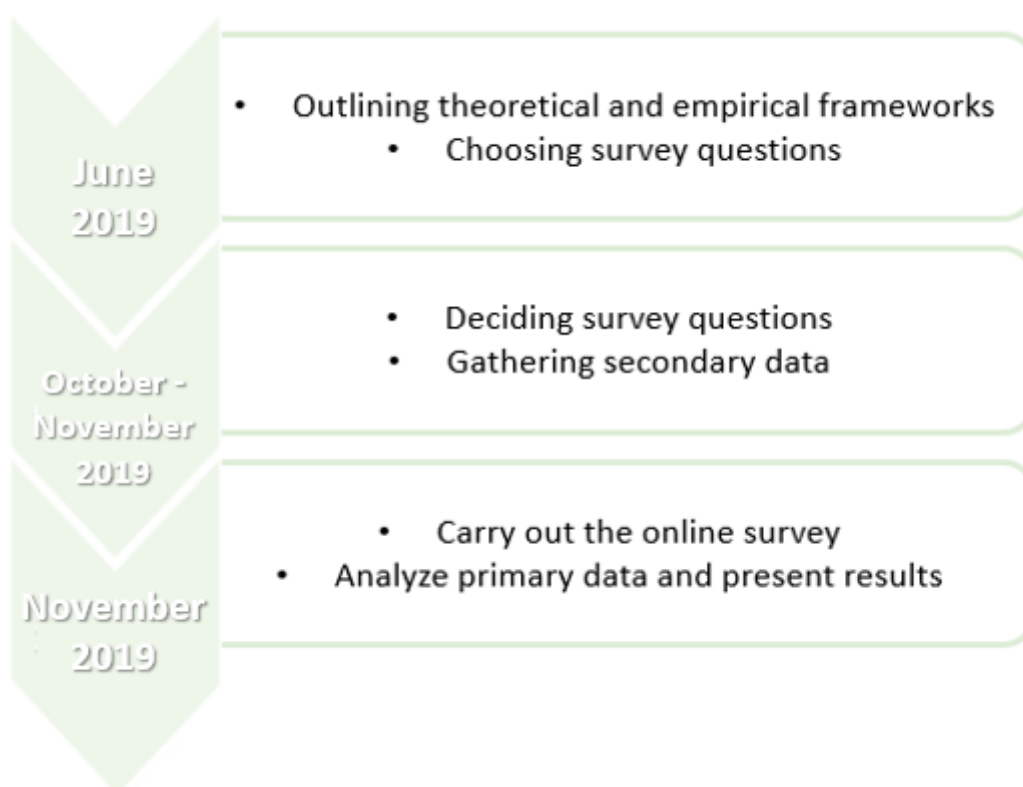


FIGURE 10. Representing the author's data collection process

There are six different steps for online survey. First step, is the purpose of it: why the online survey is made? What does it stand for? Second step is to tailor the questions individually for the specific online survey and build the structure. By this the researcher decided how to collect the data and how to measure the data afterwards. There are various kind of types of research methods as cross-sectional, correlational, experimental, longitudinal etc. Third step is based on the survey questions as choosing what kind of questions there will be: Dichotomous -, Likert Scale -, Matrix – or Multiple-choice questions. After this, it is time to choose the target audience which is the fourth step of the survey process. It is important to narrow the subject, so the data of the survey serves best

for the researcher. The last two steps are collecting and analysing the data that usually follows the feedback or transcribe the data. (Bhat 2019A.)

Figure 10 shows the process of the data collection. The online survey did include 20 questions were one of the questions was an open-ended question. This question did follow the question “Do you think H&M is a sustainable choice” by asking “Why do you think so?”. The style of the online survey was mostly choosing the best answer for the question as using the multiple-choice questions. The survey started with the basic questions as an age and gender. After the basic questions, there were questions related to fast fashion in general that were followed by questions related H&M and the company’s sustainability. The survey was shared to different respondents who are in different life situations so there were both female and male respondents from Finland and outside Finland, different ages and both students and those who are at a work life. Reason for wide scale was to get as large scale for the answers as possible so the survey would be neutral.

5.2 Data Analysis

In this sub-chapter, there is collected the data from the online survey, and it is been analysed. The author aims to answer to the research questions by the primary and secondary data. The online survey questions are separated in three topics: General questions according to fast fashion (questions 3-6), questions about H&M (questions 7-12) and questions about H&M garment recycling (questions 13-20.) As one of the online survey questions was open ended question, there is collected the most common answers for the question. The first two questions are considered as a background information of the responder. With this, the author can estimate the diversity of the respondents as an age and gender.

Overall there were 72 respondents who answered the online survey between the ages 18 to 55 years or above. Most of the respondents were young adults: 29 percent (21 respondents) of the respondents were between 18-25 years old and 63 percent (46 respondents) of the respondents were between 26-35 years old. Therefore, the collected data and findings are mostly collected from the millennials. Over 70 percent of the respondents were female and the rest 30 percent were male. This might also affect to the findings as the respondents are not 50/50 distribution. On the other hand, when considering the company’s main target group, it might be a good thing that most of the respondents are women.

General questions of fast fashion

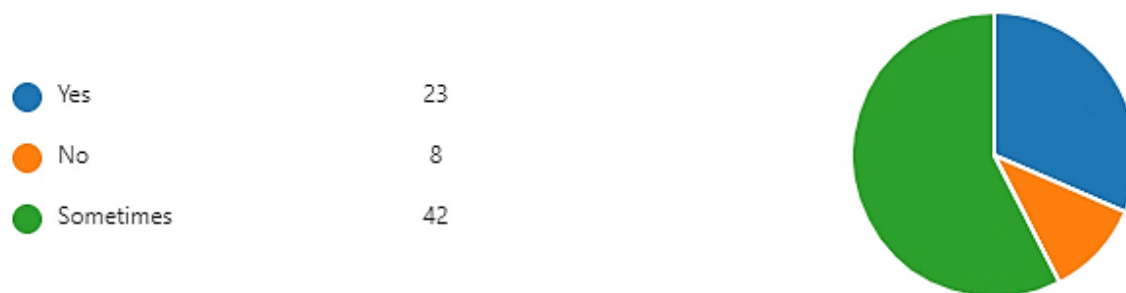


FIGURE 11. Pie chart from the online survey question “Do you prefer sustainable fashion?”

59 percent of respondents do shop different fast fashion brands as Boohoo, H&M, Primark, Zara etc. All the people who answered the survey, 30 percent would prefer sustainable fashion and only 11 percent did admit that sustainability is not their priority what comes to fashion. Over half of the respondents do not think that garments and accessories that are mass produced at the develop countries, could be sustainable. Figure 11 shows that most of the respondents prefer sustainable fashion always or sometimes, but the respondents do not consider H&M as a sustainable choice. The most common answers for the open-ended question that followed the question in the Figure 13 were: “*Facilities are most likely not sustainable*”, “*Fast fashion can’t be sustainable*”, “*Fast fashion uses so much synthetic fibres which is bad for the environment*”. For these reasons, respondents did think fast fashion is unethical.

Figure 12 shows, that even though people do prefer sustainable fashion, most of the respondents do have clothes or footwear on their wardrobe that they have used only once. As mentioned in the sub-chapter 1.1, clothes lifeline has rapidly changed, and clothes are worn only half as long as they did before. Some of the clothes might have never been even worn.

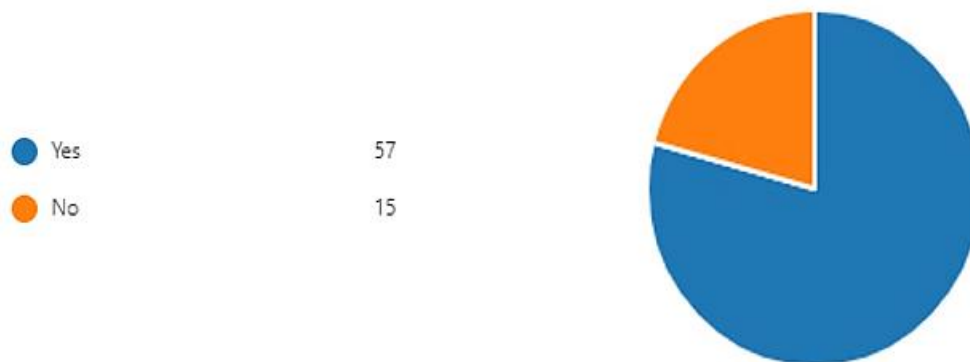


FIGURE 12. Pie chart from the online survey question, how many people have clothes in their wardrobe that they have worn less than 8 times

Overall, there were 70 respondents who answered to the online survey and only 32 percent of them knew the number of garments that ended up in the landfills. 68 percent of the people who answered did not know what happened to the clothes that were not sold or recycled.

Questions about H&M

All the respondents knew the brand H&M and almost 40 percent of the respondents did admit that they shop at H&M at least once a week or once a month. 55 percent answered that they shop at H&M at least once a year. Over half of the respondents did know that the company has a sustainable collection, but most of the respondents did not consider H&M as a sustainable choice. Still, some of the respondents said, that they think H&M is a sustainable choice because of their H&M Conscious -collection and their acts towards more sustainable fashion which has been growing during the years.

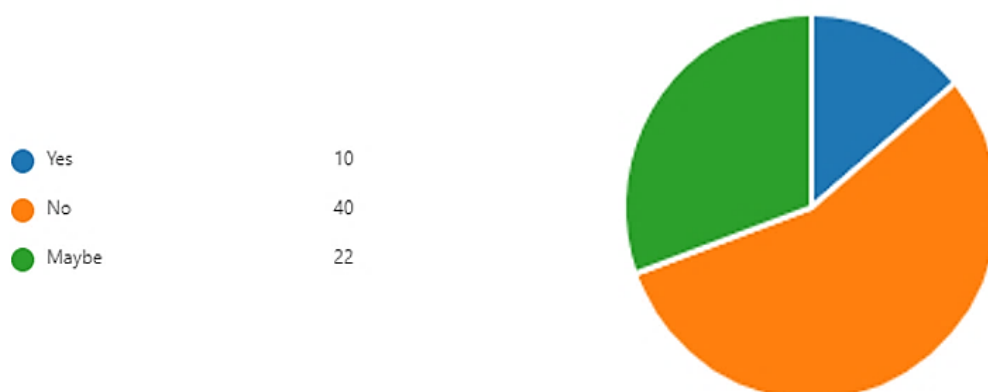


FIGURE 13. Pie chart from the online survey question “Do you think H&M is a sustainable choice”

These answers were answered on the open-ended question. The topic has been very much on the news lately, and respondents did justify their opinion by saying that they have seen documents from fast fashion and for that reason, they do not think H&M could be sustainable brand. The figure 13 shows, that people do not consider H&M as a sustainable source and people think that the brand is part of fast fashion. Still, by analysing Figure 14, it seems that people do not know H&M’s sustainability plans and part of that might be the impact of the social media. As it was not part of the questions, the author cannot say is the social media behind this or not.

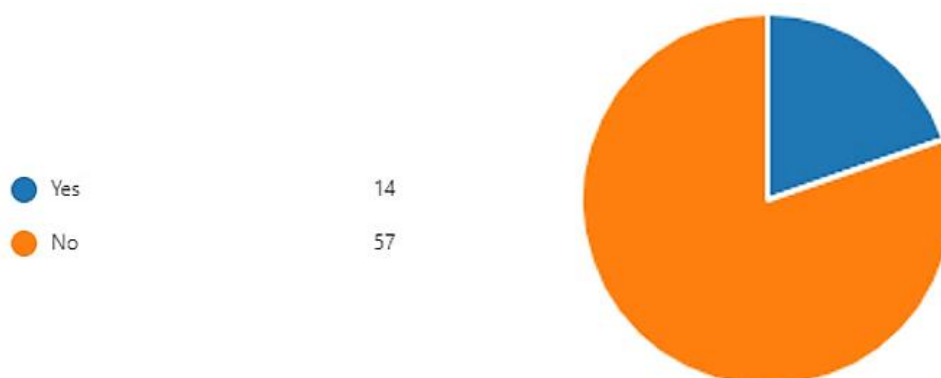


FIGURE 14. Pie chart from the online survey question “Did you know that by the year 2030, H&M has promised to use only recycled or other sustainably sourced materials for its products?”

Questions about garment recycling at H&M

More than half of the respondents the survey knew that H&M offers garment recycling, but only 32 percent have recycled through H&M. This 32 percent does contain 27 people, and 15 of them have recycled through H&M because of the voucher.

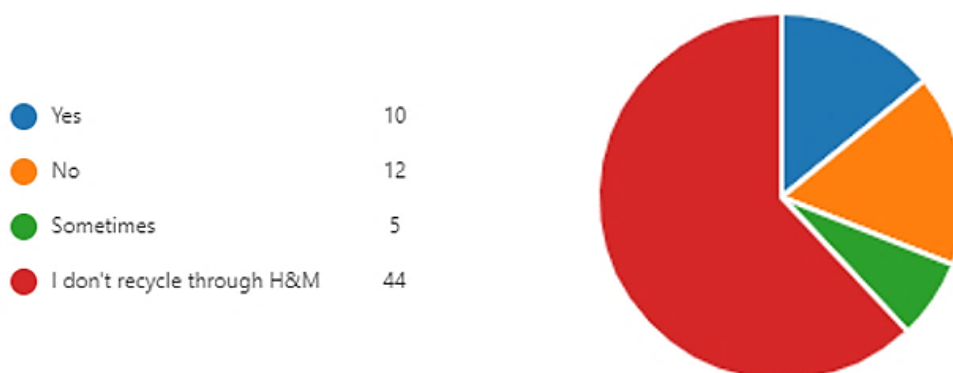


FIGURE 15. Pie chart of the online survey question “Do you recycle through H&M because you get a voucher from there?”

Over 60 percent of the respondents do recycle their clothes, but only 32 percent have recycled their clothes through H&M. Respondents who said they have been recycled clothes through H&M, over half of them also knew what happens to the clothes. Half of them who recycle through H&M admit, that one of the reasons is the voucher they get from the store as the Figure 15 shows. Overall, 70 percent of all the respondents thought that H&M has not succeed with their advertising according to their garment recycling. H&M also provides tips and hacks on their website, so people could freshen up and repair their old clothes. Almost 85 percent did not know this and for that matter, that H&M provides all the necessary products for it as well.

5.3 Recommendations

Hennes & Mauritz need to focus on their advertisement according to their sustainability and garment recycling. By using a social media to advertise their sustainability goals,

people would become more aware of the company's sustainability plans which might affect their image towards the brand. If the company would use big social media influencers or celebrities – other than princess Victoria from Sweden – to advertise their Conscious collection, it might catch the consumers attention. Also, by expanding the Conscious collection and by reducing the other collections, the company would answer for the consumers needs and even if not, make and show the way of more sustainable fashion for the consumers.

Still, the company needs to focus on their buying in strategy as everyone who has been shopping at H&M knows, that they sell the same clothes after year after year which end up on the sales corner. The big sales corners show, that the company has failed on their buying in as some of the clothes do not sell even after bigger sales. One of the essential steps is to focus on the buying in and think about the company's future and how the company wants to be taught of the eyes of the consumers. For the long term, it will define how successful the company will be. By renew the company's buying strategy, it would also save money for the company as it is going to be the biggest thing that will matter for the company that wants to get high profit. As the company is already investing a huge amount of money for the technology to invent sustainable fashion choices for the consumer, the next step would be to map the number of products sold. Also, by making statics which garments are the best sellers, should help the company not making false purchases.

These recommendations are based on the results of the survey as well as the secondary data which is collected to this research. As the sub-chapter 5.2 Data Analysis showed, most of the respondents do not think H&M has succeed with their advertising what comes to the company's sustainability. Most of the respondents also want to buy sustainable fashion and what would be a better way, then giving consumers more sustainable choices to choose from.

6 CONCLUSIONS

6.1 Answers to Research Question

The study aimed to gain an accurate result from consumers of H&M, to identify their opinions towards the brand that has been marketing itself as a leader of more sustainable fast fashion. This research contains one main research question and two sub-questions. Reason for these two sub-questions is to support and give more open wide answer for the main question itself. The main research question and the two sub-questions are listed and answered below. These questions are answered starting from the main question.

The first sub-question is stated here:

Why the fast fashion companies need to become more sustainable?

Fast fashion has tripled its growth between the years 2016 and 2018 and it is the world's second biggest polluter after oil. The low-priced clothes and accessories that fast fashion produces are only produced because of the consumers' needs. Over half of respondents shop different fast fashion brands as Boohoo, H&M, Primark, Zara etc. All of the respondents, only 30 percent would prefer sustainable fashion and a bit over 10 percent did admit that sustainability is not their priority what comes to fashion. Other respondents did go between the middle which shows that sustainable fashion is not the number one priority while shopping fashion. Even though H&M is one of the world's biggest fast fashion company and the company has comprehensive web pages towards sustainable fast fashion, 30 percent of respondents do not consider H&M is a sustainable choice. Still, most of the people who think that H&M is not a sustainable choice, did not know about the promise H&M has made for the year 2030. Reason why people do not think H&M as a sustainable choice, might be just a lack of knowledge what comes to results of the survey.

At the same time, when tons of low-priced fast fashion clothes and accessories are produced, the producing itself does free a critical amount of greenhouse gases. Reason for this is, that producing the clothes requires a lot water and chemicals. Producing fast fashion pollutes water and set microfibres into the oceans. It is damaging the rainforests because of the high greenhouse gas emissions. For the long run, it is not only harmful for the nature and ocean, but also for the people living next to those riverbanks and who are using the sea life as their living. These wastewaters, where the colour dyeing water have been released, contains for example arsenic and mercury which are toxic for human and

nature. Now, there are more than 100 million people without access to clean drinking water in India. 85 percent of this could be avoided if instead of using the water for cotton, the water would be cleaned into clean drinking water.

To maintain our nature and access to the clean drinking water, it is necessary that fast fashion chains will start to invest its sustainability. H&M has showed an example by promising to use only sustainable materials by the year 2030 and taking steps to more sustainable fashion. Still, at the same time it is trying to sell more and more which conflicts with the act of sustainability. 30 percent of the respondents prefer sustainable fashion and only 11 percent do not prefer sustainable fashion.

The second sub-question is stated here:

Does the consumer know their impact of fast fashion?

The amount of the garments ending up in landfills or insulation is 80 percent of the whole world's garments. Only in the United State the amount is 21 billion tons itself. This means that only 20 percent of the world's clothes are recycled. By giving the garment for a longer life circle, it would reduce emissions around 24 percent in the clothing industry. Over half of the people who answered the survey, 70 percent, admit that have clothes on their wardrobe that they have worn less than 8 times.

Only a bit over 30 percent of the respondents knew the number of garments that ended up in the landfills and almost 70 percent of them did not know what happened to the clothes that were not sold or recycled. It seems that the topic has not been on the news enough, even though it has taken huge step in these last couple years to make people more aware of the situation. As the result for the survey question "Did you know that globally the amount of the garments ending up in landfill or insulation is 80?" showed, people do not know their impact towards fast fashion as they do not know how bad fast fashion is for the nature.

The third sub-question is stated here:

Does Hennes & Mauritz encourage their customer towards more sustainable choices?

H&M offers their customers a choice to choose more sustainable fast fashion than before. The company has its own sustainable collection called Conscious collection and it is made from the materials that are more sustainable. This collection is made of at least 20 percent of more sustainable materials than the other collections that H&M has. For example, the

cotton that is used in Conscious collection is produced in more sustainable way and at least 20 percent of the cotton that is used, is recycled cotton. Overall, the minimum amount of the recycled fibre in Conscious collection is 57 percent and it also contains recycled polyester which is a synthetic fibre. H&M does advertise this collection via TV and social media next to their websites. The customers will know that the garments belong to Conscious collection when there is hanging a green brand tag on the garment.

H&M does also advertise once or twice a year for their garment recycling, when on the specific market areas – as for example Finland – will give the customer two vouchers instead of one, for one garment recycling bag. This is a way to attract the consumers attention, but at the same time it does encourage the consumer to buy more fast fashion garments and accessories. For this reason, there is a conflict what comes to the sustainability. The truth is, that the big fast fashion companies are trying to make more money and even though those companies are advertising them as a sustainable choice, it is not it. It is true, that the companies have gone forward and become more sustainable, but it does not erase the fact that fast fashion is the world's second largest polluting industry after oil.

6.2 Reliability and Validity of the Research

Validity states the indication of how sound the stage of the research is. It states that the research is factually and logically acceptable regarding the elements in research that needs to be measured as well as how well those elements are measured. These elements include both design and the methods of the research. By using the word “*validity*” it means that all the data collection techniques, analysis and findings in research are reliable.

Validity itself could be divided into two categories: internal and external. These two focus on the different things what comes to the research as the internal is more focused on the little things and the external focuses on the big image. Internal validity tells how truthfully the research were tested and the outcome of it. For example, were there any factors or other variables that might have impact the research on the one way or the other. During this research, it is possible that given study might have eliminated some explanations for a finding. Internal validity depends how pricelessly the research have been made. External validity evaluates the outcome of the research as how it will affect to people and different situations. It is important to understand that the external validity needs to be carry out in the real world, because it measures the research's need in the everyday life in a practical way. (Gans 2019.) The online survey that has been made does focus more on the

external validity. This measurement shows different results in different event from different persons but at the same time the observations is collected in a same way. Because the main subject in this research is so wide, the research could not be considered as reliable as it only focuses on garment recycling through H&M and the sustainable part of the research that is considered as a fact knowledge, is only made from the H&M's point of view. There were no other studies or information of H&M's sustainability project. Validity shows the quality of conclusions of the research that is made by the knowledge collected from the secondary sources, online sources, and from the primary data, online survey. The results of the online survey did show how similar the assumptions and attitudes were. The information that were collected from the secondary data were similar in different aspects that were collected from primary data.

Reliability gives the same answer whenever the measurement is made. It is specific and reliable in one way as it doesn't change the answer if the research is done every time under the same circumstances. For this reason, it is not always valid as the circumstances when the research is made might affect the result and then it won't be necessarily correct. This is very common approach in scientist researches, but when researchers are dealing with numbers, reliability is important part. It is a data collection tool. On this thesis, the reliability part does show up on the chapter's where it is stated that fast fashion is not sustainable and how it affects the nature as well as on the online survey. The approach way is subjective, and it needs to be bend on the practical way as well or the reliability of the research is not rational as it does not have a purpose. (Dudovskiy 2019.) On this research, there has been mainly used validity measurement, but reliability measurement is used through the secondary data that counts how much greenhouse gases fast fashion produces. Also, the amounts how much garments people dumb every year and how much garments end up in the landfills.

Both of these concepts which are mentioned above, are invented to evaluate the quality of the research. The similarity of them is to show and prove how well a method, technique or test measures the main idea of the research. By only using validity or reliability alone as a measurement, does not cover enough proves to call the research solid. For this reason, it is important to use both of these measurements so the research could be called reliable and valid. (Dudovskiy 2019.)

The research itself, do have several limitations and results and for that reason it should be used with caution. In this research, there have been used mainly validity, but also reliability as some of the sources do contain data that have been measured in

6.3 Further Research Suggestions

The research does point out how people's attitude towards fast fashion affects the entire planet. It also shows the challenges of the research subject as it is so wide that it is hard to narrow it into one section without considering the other areas in it. Further research could be done from different point of views as from the different sections or narrow it even more and be specific why the greenhouse gases from fast fashion are so enormous compared to the other industries in the world. Due to the tight timing of the research, the author was not able to touch all the different areas that could have given more wider image for the main title.

Furthermore, the author did notice how much sustainability is needed in the fast fashion industry. At the same time, there is a conflict that people do still prefer fast fashion because of the price of the clothing. When the industry of fast fashion shows the new sustainable ways of produce garments, people won't stop buying them and the same rat race just keeps going on. This do not erase the main problem which is how much the industry pollutes the Earth. People do know how much the oil industry pollutes the Earth and there are many different opinions about which are for and against it. There is not yet the same split in the fast fashion industry even though people are more aware of it.

Now, the situation towards fast fashion has start slowly changed and the main reason for it is, that people are more aware of the current situation and the big companies are more open according the topic as it does not give a good image for the company by hiding those details. Social media spreads the positive and negative feedback faster than ever which affects how the companies deals with the feedback and what kind of image they want to show from themselves. Therefore, an additional and wider research towards the fast fashion companies and their sustainability according to the sales would be a great and needed for the future. It would show, does these companies really try to become more sustainable without polluting as much as now or is it just the money that drives the companies forward.

7 SUMMARY

This research aims to investigate how fast fashion impacts to the nature. The main objective of the research was to investigate it through H&M and their garment recycling. Reason for investigating it through H&M is, that the company is one of the biggest fast fashion companies in the world. The author approaches the research by qualitative research methods.

The research starts with the theoretical part in the Introduction. Introduction goes through the definition of the fast fashion, reasons why the research is important as well as the elements and structure of the research. The research does consist of two main parts: an empirical and theoretical part - as mentioned above. In the theoretical part the main focus is to open up the main factors regarding this research: Garment recycling and the garment recycling company I:CO. These chapter provides the reader a good background information according to fast fashion.

The empirical part starts at the chapter 4 that consists the basic information, value of the company, promises, acts towards more sustainable fast fashion, H&M's sustainable collection and the company's project "Take Care". The following chapter, Chapter 5, goes through how the data is collected, and the process of analysing collected data. At the Chapter 5 the research goes through the results of the research and the online survey and the conclusion of the thesis. The primary data was collected through online survey through author's social media channels and the link was shared at the author's workplace as well.

The research shows the findings, that has been made towards fast fashion and shows the impacts of it for the current situation as well as for the long run. The thesis did use secondary and primary data to reach its goal to find answer for the questions that were stated for this research. After this research, there are some topics that are suggested to further investigation to provide the maximum information for this topic and to analyse the whole subject better.

REFERENCES

Written references

Stone, G. 1962. Appearance and the Self. Human Nature and Social Process. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Solomon, M.R. & Rabolt, N.J. 2009. Consumer behavior in fashion. Second edition. New Jersey: Pearson Education inc.

Electronic references

Agro & Matteis 2018. What really happens to old clothes dropped in those in-store recycling bins [accessed 15 May 2019]. CBS. Available at:
<https://www.cbc.ca/news/business/clothes-recycling-marketplace-1.4493490>

Baig, 2013. H&M wants your old clothes [accessed 20 October 2019]. DW. Available at:
<https://www.dw.com/en/hm-wants-your-old-clothes/a-16630550>

Bhat, 2019A. Online surveys: Definition, characteristics, examples, advantages and disadvantages [accessed 16 November 2019]. QuestionPro. Available at:
<https://www.questionpro.com/blog/what-are-online-surveys/>

Bhat, 2019B. Types of survey with examples [accessed 16 November 2019]. QuestionPro. Available at: <https://www.questionpro.com/blog/types-of-survey/>

Bloomberg, 2018. H&M Shares Rise Despite Profits Falling [accessed 18 October 2019]. BOF. Available at: <https://www.businessoffashion.com/articles/news-analysis/hm-profit-dives-again>

Cooper 2018. Fast fashion: Inside the fight to end the silence on waste [accessed 15.5.2019]. BBC. Available at: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-44968561>

Deloitte 2017. Bling it on What makes a millennial spend more? [accessed 20 October 2019]. Deloitte. Available at:
<https://www2.deloitte.com/content/dam/Deloitte/uk/Documents/consumer-business/deloitte-uk-young-luxury-shopper-2017.pdf>

Dudovskiy 2019. Reliability and Validity [accessed 14 November 2019]. Research Methodology. Available at: <https://research-methodology.net/research-methodology/reliability-validity-and-repeatability/>

Ellen McArthur Foundation 2017. A New Textiles Economy: Redesigning fashion's future – download the report infographics [accessed 03 September 2019]. Available at: <https://www.ellenmacarthurfoundation.org/news/a-new-textiles-economy-redesigning-fashions-future-download-the-report-infographics>

FashionUnited 2019. Global fashion industry statistics - International apparel [accessed 11 May 2019]. Available at: <https://fashionunited.com/global-fashion-industry-statistics/>

Gans, 2019. Understanding Internal and External Validity [accessed 14 November 2019]. Available at: <https://www.verywellmind.com/internal-and-external-validity-4584479>

Grundmann, 2018. Fashion's eco-sins: In search of sustainable clothing [accessed 20 October 2019]. DW. Available at: <https://www.dw.com/en/fashions-eco-sins-in-search-of-sustainable-clothing/a-43402431>

Forbes 2019. [accessed 25 November 2019]. Available at: <https://www.forbes.com/companies/hm-hennes-mauritz/#65f7e4d0727b>

Handley 2019. Fast-fashion retailers like Zara and H&M have a new threat: the \$24 billion used clothes market [accessed 11 May 2019]. Available at: <https://www.msn.com/en-us/money/companies/fast-fashion-retailers-like-zara-and-handm-have-a-new-threat-the-dollar24-billion-used-clothes-market/ar-BBUXMiv>

H&M Group 2019A. HENNES & MAURITZ AB FULL-YEAR REPORT [accessed 11 May 2019]. Available at: <https://about.hm.com/en/media/news/financial-reports/2019/1/3190999.html>

H&M Group 2019B. GOALS AND AMBITIONS [accessed 11 May 2019]. Available at: <https://about.hm.com/en/sustainability/vision-and-strategy/goalsandambitions.html>

H&M Group 2019C. RECYCLE YOUR CLOTHES [accessed 11 May 2019]. Available at: <https://about.hm.com/en/sustainability/Recyclingandgarmentcare/recycle-your-clothes.html>

H&M Group 2019D. THE H&M GROUP – THE FIRST 70 YEARS [accessed 25 September 2019]. Available at: <https://about.hm.com/en/sustainability/Recyclingandgarmentcare/recycle-your-clothes.html>

H&M Group 2019E. At a Glance: H&M Group [accessed 9 October 2019]. Available at: <https://hmgroup.com/about-us/h-m-group-at-a-glance.html>

H&M Group 2019H. CONSCIOUS PRODUCTS EXPLAINED [accessed 21 October 2019]. Available at: https://www2.hm.com/en_gb/ladies/shop-by-feature/conscious-products-explained.html

H&M Group 2019I. ON THE WAY TOWARDS SOURCING 100 percent MORE SUSTAINABLE MATERIALS [accessed 25 October 2019]. Available at: <https://about.hm.com/news/general-news-2019/on-the-way-towards-using-100--sustainable-materials.html>

H&M Group 2019J. H&M Take Care [accessed 11 November 2019]. Available at: https://www2.hm.com/en_gb/free-form-campaigns/takecare.html#/

Inditex 2019. COLLECT, REUSE, RECYCLE [accessed 25 October 2019]. Available at: <https://www.inditex.com/our-commitment-to-the-environment/closing-the-loop/collect-reuse-recycle>

I:CO 2019A. TAKING ON PRODUCT RESPONSIBILITY [accessed 31 May 2019]. I:Collect. Available at: <https://www.ico-spirit.com/en/services/>

I:CO 2019B. CREATING THE FUTURE [accessed 08 November 2019]. I:Collect. Available at: <http://www.ico-spirit.com/en/homepage/mission/>

Kianna 2018. Fast Fashion Facts: What you need to know [accessed 15 May 2019]. Available at: <https://7billionfor7seas.com/fast-fashion-facts/>

Knoema 2017. H&M Locations Worldwide, 2008-2016 [accessed 9 October 2019]. 7Billion for 7Seas. Available at: <https://knoema.com/infographics/psoqqgg/h-m-locations-worldwide-2008-2016>

Kronthal-Sacco & Whelan 2019. Sustainable Share Index™: Research on IRI Purchasing Data (2013-2018) [accessed 25 October 2019]. NYE STERN. Available at: [https://www.stern.nyu.edu/sites/default/files/assets/documents/NYU percent20Stern percent20CSB percent20Sustainable percent20Share percent20Index percentE2 percent84 percentA2 percent202019.pdf](https://www.stern.nyu.edu/sites/default/files/assets/documents/NYU%20Stern%20percent20CSB%20Sustainable%20Share%20Index%20E2%20percent84%20percentA2%202019.pdf)

Leblanc 2019. The Basics of Textile Recycling [accessed 16 November 2019]. The balance small business. Available at: <https://www.thebalancesmb.com/the-basics-of-recycling-clothing-and-other-textiles-2877780>

Liu 2019. Time to make fast fashion a problem for its makers, not charities [accessed 26 October 2019]. The Conversation. Available at: <http://theconversation.com/time-to-make-fast-fashion-a-problem-for-its-makers-not-charities-117977>

Lu 2014. H&M Supply Chain Strategy - Successful Retail Inventory Control [accessed: 16 November 2019]. Tradegecko. Available at: <https://www.tradegecko.com/blog/inventory-management/hm-retail-inventory-control>

Matteis and Agro 2018. What really happens to old clothes dropped in those in-store recycling bins [accessed 11 September 2019]. CBC. Available at: <https://www.cbc.ca/news/business/clothes-recycling-marketplace-1.4493490>

McCarthy 2018. Are Our Clothes Doomed for the Landfill? [accessed 15 May 2019]. Remake. Available at: <https://remake.world/stories/news/are-our-clothes-doomed-for-the-landfill/>

McKinsey & Company 2018. How your clothes are poisoning our oceans and food supply [accessed 3 September 2019]. The Guardian. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2016/jun/20/microfibers-plastic-pollution-oceans-patagonia-synthetic-clothes-microbeads>

Mehta 2019. Beyond recycling: Putting the brakes on fast fashion [accessed 16 November 2019]. Ethical Corporation. Available at: <http://www.ethicalcorp.com/beyond-recycling-putting-brakes-fast-fashion>

Messinger 2016. Are Our Clothes Doomed for the Landfill? [accessed 15 May 2019]. Remake. Available at: <https://remake.world/stories/news/are-our-clothes-doomed-for-the-landfill/>

Molin 2018. H&M Shares Rise Despite Profits Falling [accessed 10 October 2019]. BOF. Available at: <https://www.businessoffashion.com/articles/news-analysis/hm-profit-dives-again>

OECD Data 2014. GDP long-term forecast [accessed 3 September 2019]. Available at: <https://data.oecd.org/gdp/gdp-long-term-forecast.htm>

Perry 2018. THE ENVIRONMENTAL COSTS OF FAST FASHION [accessed 15 May 2019]. Available at: <https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/fashion/environment-costs-fast-fashion-pollution-waste-sustainability-a8139386.html>

RDS 2019. Responsible Down Standard [accessed 21 October 2019]. Available at: <https://responsibledown.org/>

Remy, Speelman & Swartz 2016. Style that's sustainable: A new fast-fashion formula [accessed 10 May 2019]. McKinsey & Company. Available at: <https://www.mckinsey.com/business-functions/sustainability/our-insights/style-thats-sustainable-a-new-fast-fashion-formula>

Robertson 2019. How Ethical Is H&M? [accessed 21 October 2019] Good on You. Available at: <https://goodonyou.eco/how-ethical-is-hm/>

Schumacher 2018. H&M sits on billions of unsold clothes as profits plummet [accessed 16 November 2019]. DW. Available at: <https://www.dw.com/en/hm-sits-on-billions-of-unsold-clothes-as-profits-plummet/a-43175750>

Singh 2018. The Evolution of Clothing: How Fast Fashion Has Completely Changed The Game [accessed 10.5.2019]. HIGHLARK. Available at: <https://highlark.com/fast-fashion/>

Starn 2017. Swedish power plant ditches coal to burn H&M clothes instead [accessed 25 October 2019]. Independent. Available at: <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/business/news/sweden-power-plant-h-m-coal-burn-vasteras-stockholm-oil-discarded-products-a8073346.html>

Sustain Your Style 2019. The fashion industry is the second largest polluter in the world [accessed 16 May 2019]. Sustain Your Style. Available at: <https://www.sustainyourstyle.org/old-environmental-impacts#scroll-to-top>

TFL 2019. Fast Fashion's "Sustainability" Endeavors Need to Be About More than Fabrics, Recycling [accessed 26 October 2019]. Available at: <http://www.thefashionlaw.com/home/fast-fashion-sustainability-is-about-more-than-the-fabrics>

The Royal Society 2019. The Basics of Climate Change [accessed 10 May 2019]. Available at: <https://royalsociety.org/topics-policy/projects/climate-change-evidence-causes/basics-of-climate-change/>

Whiting 2019. 'Sustainable Style': The Truth Behind The Marketing of H&M's Conscious Collection [accessed 25 October 2019]. Medium. Available at: <https://medium.com/@tabitha.whiting/sustainable-style-the-truth-behind-the-marketing-of-h-ms-conscious-collection-805eb7432002>

Young 2018. H&M LAUNCHES CONSCIOUS EXCLUSIVE 2018 COLLECTION [accessed 21 October 2019]. Independent. Available at: <https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/fashion/hm-conscious-exclusive-2018-collection-sustainable-organic-a8322011.html>

APPENDICES



H&M garment collecting program -survey

This survey is part of my "Sustainability in the fast fashion industry, H&M Group" thesis for Lahti University of Applied Science. All responses will be kept anonymous and no one will be identified on this survey. The questionnaire will consist of 20 questions and will take no longer than 10 minutes to complete.

1. Age

- Under 18 years old
- 18-25
- 26-35
- 36-45
- 46-55
- 55 years or above
- Prefer not to say

2. Gender

- Male
- Female
- Prefer not to say

3. Do you prefer shop sustainable fashion?

- Yes
- No
- Sometimes

4. Do you buy fast fashion? (For example. Zara, H&M, Primark, Topshop, Boohoo, FashionNova etc.)

- Yes
- No
- Sometimes

5. Do you have clothes or footwear in your wardrobe that you have worn less than 8 times?

- Yes
- No

6. Did you know that globally the amount of the garments ending up in landfill or insulation is 80%?

- Yes
- No

7. Have you heard from the brand H&M?

- Yes
- No

8. How often do you shop at H&M?

- Daily
- Weekly
- Monthly
- Yearly
- Never

9. Do you think H&M is a sustainable choice?

- Yes
- No
- Maybe

10. Why do you think so?

Kirjoita vastaus

11. Have you heard of H&M's Conscious collection?

- Yes
- No

12. Did you know that H&M Conscious -collection is made of more sustainable materials?

- Yes
- No
- I haven't heard from H&M Conscious -collection

13. Do you recycle your clothes?

- Yes
- No
- Sometimes

14. Did you know that H&M has been offering a garment recycling?

- Yes
- No

15. Have you recycled garments through H&M?

- Yes
- No

16. If you answered YES, do you know what happens to the recycled garments?

- Yes
- No
- I haven't recycled through H&M

17. Do you recycle through H&M, because you get a voucher from there?

- Yes
- No
- Sometimes
- I don't recycle through H&M

18. Do you think H&M has advertised their garment recycling well?

- Yes
- No

19. Did you know that by the year 2030, H&M has promised to use only recycled or other sustainably sourced materials for its products?

Yes

No

20. Did you know H&M have tips and hacks how to repair and remake your clothes on their website?

Yes

No