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# CONSUMER BEHAVIOR TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE CLOTHING INDUSTRY AMONG YOUNG ADULTS IN SOUTH- WEST FINLAND

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This study investigates consumer behavior towards sustainable clothing among young adults in Southwest Finland. The main motivation for this study is to provide reliable data for local sustainable clothing stores to use in their own marketing strategy to promote and please the target group to purchase rather sustainable clothing than fast fashion. In this study we explore which are the main factors impacting consumer's purchasing decision during selecting clothes and is there any connection between environmental issues and consumer behavior towards sustainable clothing.

Since the environmental issues are more visible in everyday life, for example the snow cover is decreasing and polar ice cover is melting faster than before, it is important to find the ways to stop climate change and global warming. In this study we explored the connection between those issues and clothing industry and how preferring the sustainable clothing is better option environmental-wise than fast fashion. We implemented this study by doing theoretical investigation about the topic. Then, we collected data both quantitative and qualitative methods by doing interviews and questionnaires. In this study we found that the price seems to be most demanding factor among young adults while purchasing clothing. We examined that there is still inner motivation, such as worry about environment and future, but since the sustainable clothing is several times more expensive, the price becomes the most important internal factor influencing consumer behavior based on this study.

**KEYWORDS:** Sustainable, customer behavior, sustainable clothing industry

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Consumer behaviour towards sustainable clothing industry among young adults in Southwest Finland (Asiakaskäyttäytyminen kestävää vaateteollisuutta kohtaan nuorten aikuisten keskuudessa Varsinais-suomessa) Tässä tutkimuksessa selvitetään nuorten aikuisten kuluttakäyttäytymistä kestäviä vaatteita kohtaan Varsinais-Suomessa. Tämän tutkimuksen päämotivaatio on tarjota luotettavaa tietoa paikallisille kestävän kehityksen vaateliikkeille käytettäväksi omassa markkinointistrategiassaan mainostaakseen ja houkutellakseen kohderyhmää ostamaan ennemmin kestäviä vaatteita kuin pikamuotia. Tässä tutkimuksessa tutkimme, mitkä ovat tärkeimmät tekijät, jotka vaikuttavat kuluttajien ostopäätökseen vaatteiden valinnan aikana, ja onko ympäristöasioiden ja kuluttajien käyttäytymisellä yhteyttä kestävämpien vaatevalinnoiden kannalta. Koska ympäristökysymykset ovat näkyvämpiä arkielämässämme, esimerkiksi lumipeite vähenee ja napajäätiköt sulavat entistä nopeammin, on tärkeää löytää tapoja estää ilmastonmuutos ja ilmaston lämpeneminen. Tässä tutkimuksessa selvitämme näiden aiheiden ja vaateteollisuuden välistä yhteyttä ja kuinka kestävien vaatteiden suosiminen on ympäristöystävällisempi vaihtoehto kuin pikamuoti. Toteutimme tämän tutkimuksen tekemällä teoreettisia tutkimuksia aiheesta. Keräsimme tietoa sekä kvantitatiivisella että laadullisilla menetelmillä tekemällä haastatteluja ja kyselyitä. Pääsyy molempien menetelmien käyttöön on tarjota mahdollisimman luotettavaa tietoa jatkotutkimuksille. Tutkimuksessa havaittiin, että merkittävin tekijä asiakaskäyttäytymiseen vaatteita valitessa on hinta: monet nuoret aikuiset ovat juuri valmistuneet tai valmistumassa, ja työuraa ei välttämättä ole vielä takana paljoa. Tästä syystä vuotuiset tulot eivät ole vielä merkittävän suuria, jonka johdosta hinta merkitsee eniten, eikä ympäristötekijöillä vaikuttaisi olevan suurtakaan vaikutusta tähän.

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## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

NASA = National Aeronautics and Space Administration

CO<sub>2</sub> = Carbon dioxide, a greenhouse gas

EU = European Union

UNFCCC = United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

# 1 INTRODUCTION

Recently environmental topics have been increasingly on the news headlines, for example Australia's bushfires in the beginning of 2020 raised questions of global warming and how fast it is developing. (Calma, 2020) Pollution of water, land and air, deforestation, waste problems, toxics and many other environmental issues are increasing year by year. Over-consumption and production process are the biggest factors what is causing a lot of those issues. (Ling, 2019.) There are lot of ways, such as statistics, articles and documentaries, how scientists try to gain acknowledge of environmental issues and slowly information is starting to reach people. For example, evidences on global temperature rise, warming oceans, shrinking ice sheet, sea level rise are some of the hot topics in the world. Scientists from NASA provides evidence of how CO<sub>2</sub> concentration in atmosphere has gone above the normal in our atmosphere shows how fast we need to act on it (NASA, 2020) Those issues force people to think about their own purchasing behavior and how they could do their own part for environment. Especially, young generation has the major role of changing the attitudes and spreading the knowledge. They are open-minded and they accept the new ideas easily. Younger generations are started to value more sustainable options and take environment into considerations while making purchasing decision. (Ballew et al, 2019)

Clothing industry is one field which has major environmental impact. Especially, fast fashion clothing makes huge negative impact to the environment since it is cheap, easily available everywhere and customers might do easily purchases even without proper need for the cloth. (Ellen MacArthur Foundation, 2017) Relating increasing knowledge of environmental impacts of clothing industry and current state of environment, people are slowly starting to prefer sustainable options. Also, several celebrities and influencers give a good example by promoting sustainable clothing and since major part of population is active on social media they are influenced by that promotion. (Santander Trade, 2020) As mentioned before, especially younger generations have started to value environmental issues while purchasing decision process and as a result, many companies have created sustainable

production line, such as H&M (Remy, Speelman, Swartz, 2016.), and many huge football franchise clubs have started to use their jersey from the plastic waste found in ocean, which gives perfect advertisement to the people since football is largely followed by the young adults. (The Post Game, 2018)

### 1.1 Motivations

The main motivation to write thesis about this topic is a common interest of environment and environmental issues, especially global warming. We enjoy spending time in the nature and use what it gives us, such as picking berries and mushrooms, fishing and camping. We like to live as natural and sustainable life as possible, and for example we try to take global warming into consideration in our everyday life: we recycle, try to avoid buying things without proper need and avoid buying plastic products. We are aware that there is impact even small acts.

We can already see the impacts of global warming in our everyday life outside and in the news. Recently, there has been huge bush fires in Australia and Amazon. Various scientist says those bush fires are signs of the global warming and climate change: heat and dry gives optimal conditions for devastated fires. (Calma, 2020) Not only in the world we can see the impacts but also in Finland: snow cover is less, and winter is shorter. (Luomaranta et al, 2019) In Southwest Finland, we couldn't have enjoyed snowy wintry weather this winter at all and we saw cherry blossom already on February since normally we could have enjoyed it later on the spring. By seeing all the impacts of global warming, we are worried for the future as well and how the world will be for our own children since it might be current topic for us near in the future. We should try to stop global warming and give good opportunities for life for future generations.

Another motivation, we are interested in clothing and especially sustainable clothing. We have been thinking our own habits relating to clothing and we realized we used to buy new clothes without proper need and buying the cheapest possible option. We cleaned our closets and there were several bags of clothes we don't wear anymore or used to wear only few times. It is sign for

over-consuming: buying it by impulse or attracted by the good offers. After recycling old clothes, we decided to avoid over-consuming. We are aware of global warming and other environmental issues and we try to take more action to stop climate change and improve the environmental state with small acts. Moreover, there are several other reasons why this topic is important. Selecting sustainable clothing instead of fast fashion is one and simple way to make impact for improving the environment's current state since traditional clothing industry has major CO<sub>2</sub> gas emissions which has significant impact for global warming. (Ellen MacArthur Foundation, 2017) That is why it is important to study which factors influence customers buying decision towards sustainable clothing so companies can focus on their marketing to correct customer segments.

This research is concentrated in Southwest Finland and there is a lot of small sustainable clothing companies. Therefore, they could gain information from this thesis to develop their own business plan and marketing strategy to attract more customers. We decided to do research specifically about young adults since this generation is most likely to change the clothing industry to more sustainable and they care more about global warming, like mentioned before.

## 1.2 Objective and Research Questions

This thesis is about research about customer behavior towards sustainable clothing towards young adults in Southwest Finland. Our research questions are:

1. Which internal factors influence consumer behavior the most?
2. What is the role of environmental issues, such as global warming, in purchase decision? Does it lead to purchase more sustainable clothing?
3. What is the most important motivation to buy or not-to-buy sustainable clothing?

The objectives of the thesis are to find motivations which drives consumers to buy or not-to-buy sustainable clothing and do research about the role of

environmental issues, especially global warming on consumer behavior towards sustainable clothing.

### 1.3 Thesis Structure

This thesis starts from Introduction (chapter 1) to the topic. Motivations and research questions are defined.

The introduction part leads to Literature Review (chapter 2). There is general information on sustainability and sustainable clothing, environmental issues of clothing industry and how sustainable clothing industry differs from that. Also, it defines benefits of sustainable clothing and theoretical factors which affect the customer behavior generally and it is introduced the previous research made about consumer behavior in Finland.

Chapter 3, Methodology, explained research methods which were used and also how they were processed during the research.

Conclusion part, chapter 5, includes all the findings from the collected data and answer the research questions. Moreover, we made suggestions for the further research.

## 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

This section consists theory of sustainability and why it is important globally and introduce the clothing industry as an enormous cause of greenhouse gas emissions and therefore global warming. Later, there is examined more sustainable model for clothing industry. In the end of this section, there is theory of consumer behavior generally and how it is in Finland.

### 2.1 Importance of sustainability

As a word, sustainability has been defined by Commission on Environment and Development in 1987 as economic-development activity which meets present needs without taking anything from the future generations. (Pourtney, 2015) Nowadays, sustainability is defined as the concept which focuses on the condition of Earth's biophysical environment and respectful use of natural recourses. (Pourtney, 2015)

Importance of environmental issues and sustainability has been acknowledged globally recent years amongst citizens, companies, and politicians. United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) the Paris Agreement was signed in 2016 by 194 states and the European Union (EU) which altogether produce approximately 87% of global greenhouse emissions. The agreement set the global goals to slow and avoid climate change, global warming, environmentally harmful emissions. (European Commission, 2016a) The Paris Agreement long-term goal is to get adjusted to impacts of climate change and set economics to more sustainable options. (Ympäristöministeriö, 2018) That could mean, for example, stores prefer to sell fewer plastic products and avoid packaging material. Lidl, grocery store in Finland and many other countries, has decrease selling the plastic, single use products and finally quit selling them till the end of 2019. (Tekniikka&Talous, 2018) That is just one example, how companies are taking importance of sustainability into consideration while doing business.

International agreements, such the Paris Agreement is essential, since climate change is global problem and requires countries to make common goals and

cooperation to avoid global warming and adjust the current situation. We can see already impacts of the global warming in our everyday life. For example, in Finland snow cover has been decreasing between 1961-2014 up to 4-6 cm/decade. Moreover, the seasonal snow cover period has been shortened 8-14 days/decade. (Luomaranta et al, 2019) There has been extreme weather conditions in Finland, such as heavy heat wave on summer 2018 when it was total 27 extreme hot days, when temperature was over 25 degrees. (Yle News, 2018) Not only weather wise, but there is new species in Finland as well. Climate change and global warming is bringing new species especially to the Åland Islands since it is the most south-westerly, mildest part of Finland. For example, there was three new fly species found in Åland, and those species normally can be found in western European countries. (Yle News, 2012)

We can reflect the data for real life since in Turku, the cherry trees were flowering on early February this year 2020 since normally it starts flowering later on the spring. Also, we didn't get proper snow cover this year in South Finland.

Not only Finland, but global warming and climate change can be noticed all around the world. In the beginning of 2020, Australian bushfires, It was reported that an area equals the size of South Korea burned during those fires and it had major consequences: 1 billion mammals, birds and reptiles died, and it is huge chance that many species has been extinct since in Australia there is unique ecosystem. (Calma, 2020) Climate in Australia is normally hot and dry, so the bushfires and firestorms are not new thing there. Nevertheless, this year the fires and conditions become extremely hot. Many scientists claim that such an extreme condition is caused by climate change and global warming. (Calma, 2020) Not only in southern part of the Earth but also northern part had been affected by global warming. The North Pole ice has been declining since it has been examining with assist of satellite pictures from 1979. Exact rate of decline can be seen on Figure 1: approximately 3,15 percent per decade and during satellite recording over 42 years around 1,86 million square kilometers of ice has melted in The North Pole. (NSIDC, 2020) Since most of the climate change and its impacts are caused by human actions, it is valuable to make global agreements of sustainability to endeavor cease the global warming and climate change. International agreements and

visible impacts help people to realize the importance of sustainability and they will take it into consideration.

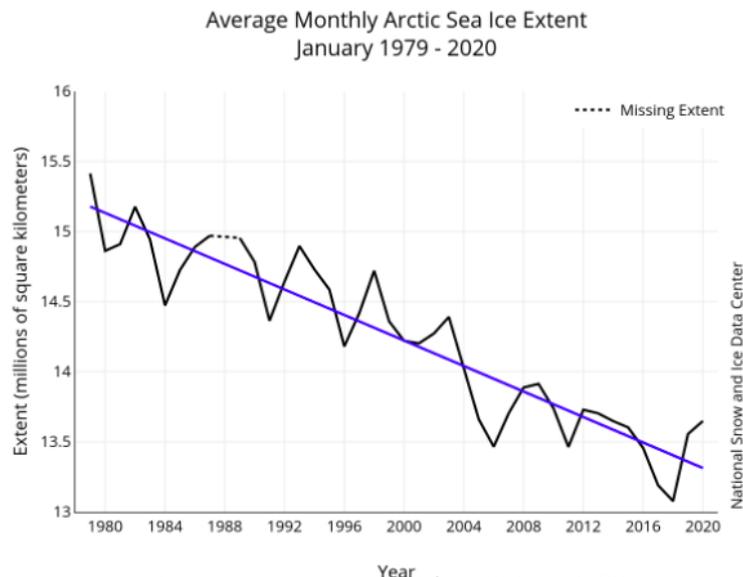


Figure 1. Monthly January ice extent for 1979 to 2020 shows a decline of 3.15 percent per decade (National Snow and Ice Data Center, 2020)

As a result of global ice melting, there will be more water flows to the world's seas. Therefore, water warms and disseminates in volume which is rising average sea level. (Glick, 2020) Rising sea level might cause problems cities below or close to the sea level, such as Amsterdam and Venice.

As mentioned on previous examples in Finland and all around the world from Australia to the North Pole, impacts of climate change can be seen globally. The global warming and the temperature rising are especially noticeable since it is most likely (more than 95 % probability) caused by human activity from the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. It is progressing at the radical rate over decades to millennia. (NASA, 2020)

These factors highlight the importance of sustainability. We do not necessarily need statistics or facts to realize the impacts of the climate changing. In everyday life, it is visible as well.

It has proven that most impacts of climate change and global warming are caused by human action. Those action are, for example, burning fossil fuels, cutting forests, livestock farming and fluorinated gases. It has been proven that CO<sub>2</sub>, which is the climate warming greenhouse gas, is mainly produced by human activities and it is causing 64% of man-made global warming.

Atmosphere consist 40% more CO<sub>2</sub> than it was before industrialization began after 18<sup>th</sup> century. Moreover, other greenhouse gas concentrations have been increased after industrialization, such as methane and nitrous oxide. (European Commission, 2016b) Since man-made global warming has been increasing after industrialization, it is important to examine which industrial sector has the greatest impact on it. Therefore, it is easier to begin to make impact and difference.

One significant sector to impact to global warming is clothing industry. In this section we talk about fast fashion and traditional clothing industry and by that we mean clothing, which is cheap, fashionable, and easily available for everyone. It has produced in developing countries, and it has been criticized by poor working conditions and contributing pollution. (Hayes, 2020)

See Figure 2, that each part of the clothing industry life cycle has negative impact to the environment. Starting from fiber production, 30 % of all textile fiber consumption is cotton, requires a lot of water, fertilizers and pesticides to grow. Moreover, 60 % of fiber are oil-based fibers to produce textile for clothing industry, which has major CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. For the next step, clothing production, has the most significant impact since it has been examined that making 1 kilogram of fabric generates approximately 23 kilograms of greenhouse gases. That is consequence of countries depending on fossil fuels for produce energy for clothing production. (Remy, Speelman, Swartz. 2016) During the use the clothes causes negative impact as well, since by washing clothes release 0,5 million tons plastic microfibers annually into the oceans.

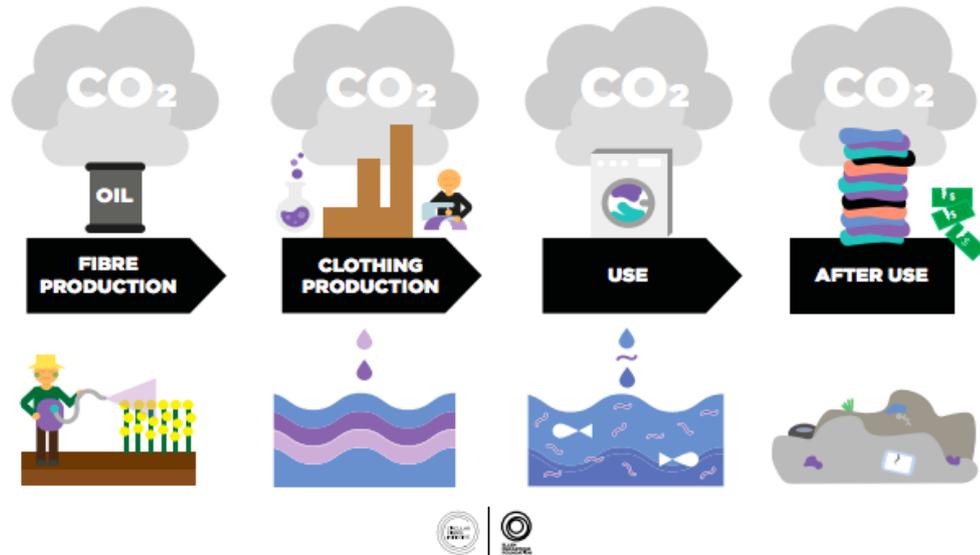


Figure 2: Clothing system pressure on resources and pollutes the environment. (Ellen MacArthur Foundation, 2017)

When washing and drying clothes causes greenhouse emissions as well: 1 kilogram of clothing creates approximately 11 kilograms of greenhouse emissions during its life cycle. Moreover, when fast fashion industry became trend, and affordable clothing was available either stores or online, and fast fashion companies release new collections several times a year, it causes that globally average number of times the cloth is worn has decreased 35 % compared how it was 15 years ago (Ellen MacArthur Foundation, 2017). In China it has decreased by 70 %. Therefore, it is studied that 73 % of produced clothes ends up to landfills within year of being made and only approximately 1 % will be recycled to produce the new clothing. For total CO<sub>2</sub> emission in 2015 was 1.2 billion tons which is more than all international flights and maritime shipping combined together (Ellen MacArthur Foundation, 2017). Besides all the negative impacts to the environment and climate, there is several other ethical impacts of the clothing industry, such as employees' dangerous working conditions, low wages and child labor. (Ellen MacArthur Foundation, 2017)

## 2.2 Sustainable clothing industry

Fast fashion is not the only form of clothing industry. Since there are uncountable researches done about environmental impacts of clothing industry and consequences can be seen both in statistics and human eye, there is demand to more sustainable options. Consumers and companies have become more aware about negative impacts and recent years there has been actions to the better way. (Remy, Speelman, Swartz. 2016)

Major clothing companies have linear economic system. See Figure 1, and it means mainly that materials are processed into product and after use the product is ending up to the landfills as a waste. Linear system is extremely harmful to the environment and the clients, as explained before. Moreover, the linear economic system has studied to be a major reason for the current environmental crisis because it is using resources unsustainable way and the companies produce huge amounts of waste and greenhouse gases. (Jørgensen and Pedersen, 2018) Therefore, the circular economy system would lead to better impacts environment-wise (Figure 3).

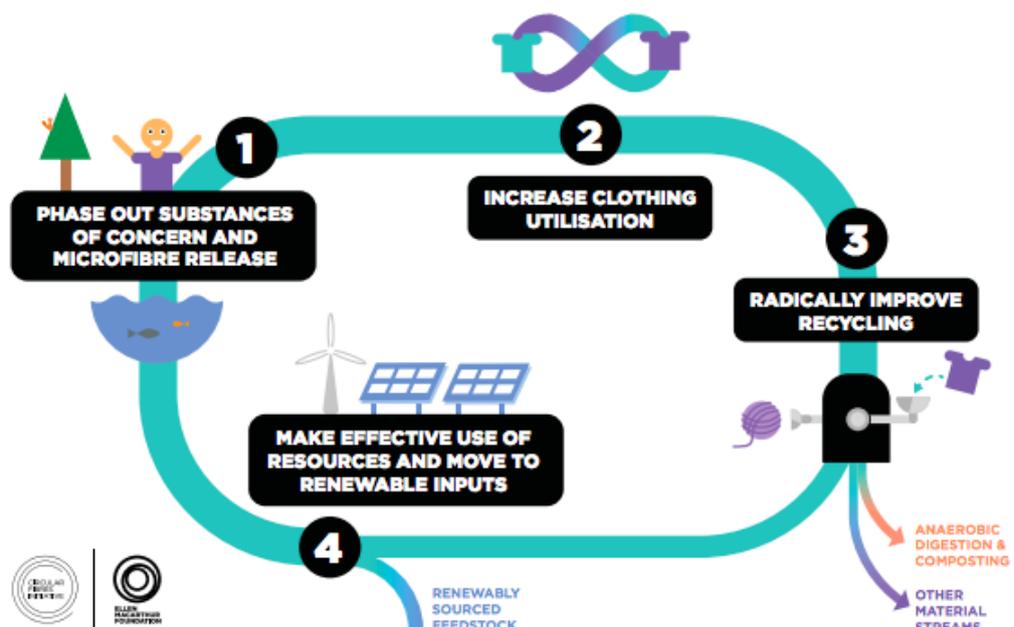


Figure 3: Circular economy system has better impact to the climate versus linear economic system (Ellen MacArthur Foundation, 2017)

Figure 3 provide better option to linear economic system. On the first phase, circular clothing economy must make proper research about materials and their impacts to the nature is there any harmful chemicals or microfiber emissions during any steps on product life cycle. During the second phase is to design the clothing such the way that average number of the times they are worn will be increased. It means that clothing should be high quality and design them such a way that they are easier to disposable after use. Also, the design should fill the customers' needs and expectations so clothing utilization will increase. There could be even new opportunities to make business to please different customer segments, such as clothing rental.

On third phase, goal is to increase and improve recycling. Different ways to gain that goal are to use materials which are convenient and profitable to recycle and develop the technological innovations to make recycling easier, more efficient and improve its quality. Also, there must be demand for recycling materials so demand must be stimulated by committing to use recycling materials and through transparency, policy and communication channels. Finally, fourth phase is to use resources effectively and using renewable energy sources. It means decreasing using of fossil fuel and changing to renewable energy sources, such as wind and solar energy, and using renewable feedstock for plastic-based fibers and regenerative agriculture for producing renewable recourses. (Ellen MacArthur Foundation, 2017)

Not only while producing the clothing, also transportation causes CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. Therefore, to make industry more sustainable, it is necessary to make geographical shifts. Nowadays, many clothing companies produce their products in Asia or Africa, in the developing countries, due to cheap labor. To transport products to where most markets locate, in Europe and America, it requires a lot of logistics. Production should be re-located where the markets are to decrease emissions from transportation. (Quantis, 2018)

There are many technologies available to use to change system to circular, but it requires huge design-thinking, global, collaborative and systemic approach. Big fast fashion companies are eager to make as much profit as possible and keep costs as less as possible and sustainable production methods cost more. Nevertheless, there is already few fast fashion companies trying to make own sustainable clothing line, such as H&M has own, still small

line of ecological cotton and they collect used clothing and reuse and recycle it. (Remy, Speelman, Swartz. 2016) It is positive start and as a big, global clothing company H&M shows good direction to other companies. Despite all, if big fast fashion company with linear economic system launch small sustainable branch, it is questionable how big impact it will make to the climate since the company's emissions stays same if they are not willing to change their economic system.

It requires a lot of global initiatives and system-level changes to make big companies to shift their economic system to circular and therefore it might still take time to gain it in the bigger scale. Still, global demand and purchasing power leads the markets and since people are more aware of environmental impacts of clothing industry it slowly forces companies to operate in a sustainable manner. (Remy, Speelman, Swartz. 2016) It was reported that 99 % of Finnish felt that actions must be taken to stop climate change and global warming and 53 % of the people responded the survey said that everybody in Finland must make personal changes to avoid global warming. (Yle News, 2020) Relating the study, in Finland is demand for sustainable options and people are open-minded to accept new options to take actions to stop climate change. If there is more demand for more sustainable clothing options, it might be the risk for those companies which are not making any effort for environmental issues. (Ellen MacArthur Foundation, 2017.)

### 2.3 Model of Consumer Behavior

Consumer behavior is the study which examine how customer, which can be individual person, group or organization, select, use, buy or dispose ideas, goods or services and the goal is to fulfill customer's needs and wants. It includes consumers actions in the marketplace motivations behind the buying decision. There are elements from many subjects when studying customer behavior: psychology, sociology, social anthropology and economics. (Chand, 2014)

There are several factors which influence consumer behavior (Figure 4).

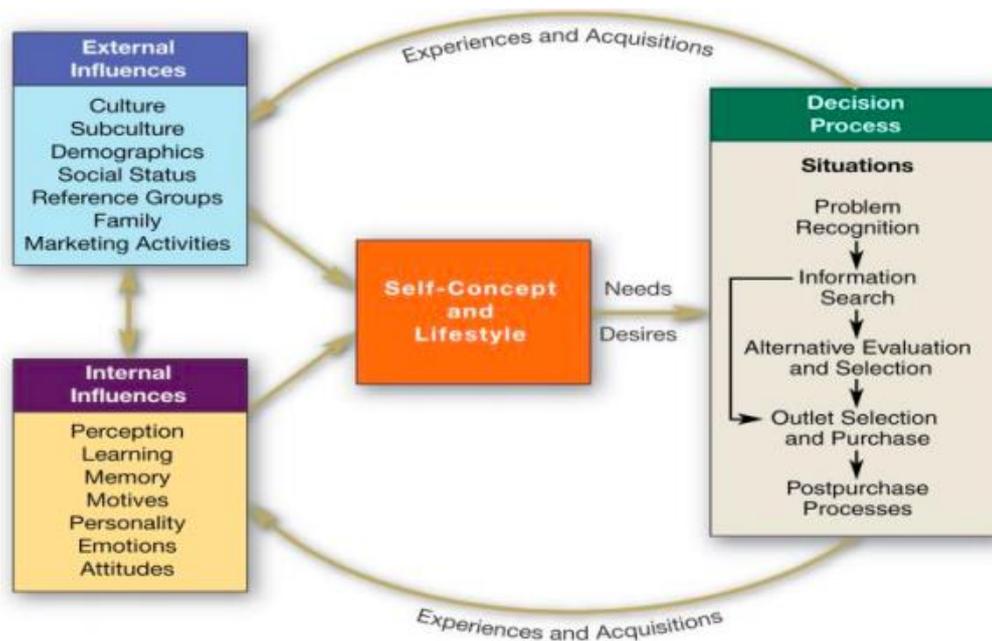


Figure 4: Model of Consumer Behavior (Hawkins and Mothersbaugh, 2013, p. 25)

Factors which influence consumer behavior has been divided into two groups: external influences and internal influences. Nevertheless, both of those groups work together, and both affect consumer decision making. External influences are culture and subculture, demographics, social status, reference group, family and marketing activities and those factors are coming outside of the person. Internal influences are mostly psychological and physical, coming from the consumer inside, for example perception, learning, memory, motivates, personality, emotions and attitudes. Consumers develop their self-concept and subsequent lifestyle based on both internal and external factors mentioned before. The decision-making process starts by need or want. Furthermore, the experiences and acquisitions will affect the consumer's self-concept and lifestyle by influencing both internal and external factors. (Hawkins and Mothersbaugh, 2013, p. 24-25)

Since this thesis is studying more about internal factors which influence consumer behavior, we concentrate theory about them more than external factors. Firstly perception, it means the process from the consumer exposure and notice to the specific marketing object till the interpretation. Since people can convert just limited part of the available information and interpretation is strongly subjective, marketers are required to learn the nature of perception

and different factors which might affect it. Steps of perception are exposure, attention, interpretation and memory which will lead to purchase. (Hawkins and Mothersbaugh, 2013, p. 272-290) We have noticed, that in fashion industry, many companies use social media and influencers to promote their product to the consumers to get their attention.

Next, memory and learning are also internal influences which has strong impact on consumer behavior. Since consumption is mostly learned habit, learning is also essential to the consumption process. Learned things affect consumer decision, for example, good reviews from specific clothing or brand might lead consumer to purchase it. Consumer make the purchase decision based of their learned experiences, satisfaction for the quality, price, service or product, they will make the same decision in the future as well. Learning is the result of processing information around and has the same stages as mentioned before: exposure, attention, interpretation and memory which will lead to purchase. Memory has a major role in learning, and it has two sectors: long-term and short-term memory. Memory as an internal factor is significant since if idea of product or advertisement can be stored on consumers' long-term memory, they come back to consume that specific product. (Hawkins and Mothersbaugh, 2013, p. 312-328) From our own experience, we have learned which brands are good quality and we are satisfied from them. It leads us to purchase specific brand or clothing constantly.

Third, there is motivation, personality and emotion which all are unique for each consumer. The motivation means reason behind specific behavior and there must be the motive, the reason why individual acts as the way they do. Furthermore, the motive influences the consumers perceive, feelings and emotions. While motivation leads consumer behavior to the goal, the personality assists to guide and farther control the behaviors to achieve the specific goals. Similar personality types tend to behave the identical in the purchasing situation and consumers desire to choose products fitting and representing their own personality. Moreover, emotions are also linked to motivations and personality. Brands, products or services are able to create positive consumption emotions by satisfying and fulfilling consumers' needs and expectations and therefore the consumer loyalty will increase but if expectations are unmet, then there is opposite effect and consumer create

negative emotions regarding to the product or brand. As mentioned, personality is linked to emotions since it differs from person how emotional individual is and how much emotions will affect to the purchasing decision. Moreover, age, lifestyle, income, personality and such personal features are counted as internal factors. (Hawkins and Mothersbaugh, 2013, p. 352-373) Finally, the attitude, which means internal interpretation of some issue or product about environment. It is the ways of feeling, acting or thinking toward some specific condition of their surroundings. Attitude is sum of all other factors mentioned before and it has major role on consumers lifestyle. (Hawkins and Mothersbaugh, 2013, p. 384)

Self-concept means the consumer's idea of themselves based on beliefs and attitudes about themselves. Depending on the situation, sometimes consumer might accentuate different self-concept: when they are in private, they will choose the product or service based on their actual self-concept but if they are making the decision in public based on public-self-image to behave as public would expect consumer to behave. For example, people tend to make more effort to dress up for the work but when staying home, there is more demand for comfortable clothes such as pyjamas. Moreover, it has been divided as actual self-concept which mean how consumer perceive themselves and ideal self-concept, which is consumer's idea how they would like to be. (Kardes, Cronley, Cline, 2010. p. 151-153) In contrast to self-contrast, lifestyle refers actual pattern of customer's behavior which will be significant factor when making purchasing decision. If consumer is part of some specific activity and different opinions, it will influence their decision-making process. (Hoyer, MacInnis. 2018, p.78) For example, individual who has sporty lifestyle will make most likely purchase sporty clothing and favor sport brands versus the one who has artistic lifestyle.

See Figure 4, needs and desires leads consumer to purchase the product or service. First step of the decision process individual recognizes the need of specific product. Next, consumer search information about the product and the brand because they are willing to avoid being disappointed of the product. Information is available from advertisements (commercial source), friends (personal source), magazines (public source) or consumer can reflect their own experiences (experimental source) while decision making.

After all necessary information has been researched, consumer will evaluate different alternatives available on markets at the time. For instance, price, quality or reviews could be compared before the final decision making. Finally, the final purchase decision will be made when combining all factors mentioned before and consumer will consider all facts, logical thinking, emotional connections and personal experiences. After the purchase, consumer will consider how useful the product was and did it fulfill the expectations. If the experience was positive consumer will most likely purchase it again or recommend it to the social groups and the opposite happens if the experience was negative. (Shaw, 2018) Marketers and brands use decision process as advantage by creating the need for the customer or making it stronger. They will help consumers figure what they need and desire to push them into the decision process where also advertisements plays big role. (McKinsey on Marketing & Sales, 2011)

#### 2.4 Consumer behavior in Finland

Generally, in Finland the population is ageing, and the median age is 42,6 years and population is well educated: 58% of people aged 25 to 64 have secondary education and 42% have university-level education. Average annual earning is for men 39 984 euros and women 33 252 euros. 85,4% of population of 5,5 million lives in urban areas, especially in South Finland. (Santander Trade, 2020)

On consumer decision process, in Finland consumers prefer primarily quality. The origin of the product and brand image are other important factors. One enormous consumer decision factor in Finland is related to environment and its protection, ecological foods, minimal packaging and second-hand options. (Santander Trade, 2020) While technology is developing and in Finland consumers are comfortable with it, online shopping is increasing for quick purchases. In internet, also information can be found easily, and product can be compared. Since 60% of the population are active on social media and social media influencers affect the purchase decision. Nevertheless, shopping

centers are growing as well, and consumers quality good customer service. (Santander Trade, 2020)

#### Household Consumption Expenditure

Sector	Percentage
Housing, water, electricity, gas and other fuels	28.0%
Transport	11.9%
Food and non-alcoholic beverages	11.6%
Culture and Leisure	10.5%
Miscellaneous goods and services	9.8%
Restaurants and Hotels	6.6%
Furnishings, household equipment, everyday house maintenance	4.7%
Health	4.7%
Alcoholic beverages, tobacco and narcotics	4.3%
Clothing and Shoes	4.2%
Communication	2.3%

Figure 5: Household Consumption Expenditure (Santander Trade, 2020)

As can be seen on Figure 5, in Finland significant part of consumption is concentrated for housing and other essential, everyday costs such as food, transport and so on. For clothing and shoes (4,2%) are consumed almost as much as population spend for health (4,7%).

## 3 METHODOLOGY

The main objectives of the thesis are to find motivations which drives consumers to buy or not-to-buy sustainable clothing, and do research about the role of environmental issues, especially global warming on consumer behavior during the decision process and which internal factors have impact to it the most. The methods of doing research is explained on this section.

### 3.1 Data Collection Methods

Theoretical framework of the thesis consists of the features of the sustainable clothing industry and customer behavior. In literature review, we concentrated to define sustainability in clothing industry and impacts of the clothing industry to the environment, especially to the global warming, and also, internal and external factors which influence consumer behavior and possible motivations behind the purchase decision.

We started our research by writing literature review chapter. There was plenty of existing literature about generally customer behavior and how is it in Finland but not specifically research from Southwest Finland. Also, there was not directly comparable statistical information about the topic of our study. Nevertheless, we were able to use current literature in our literature review. We got information for the literature review from existing articles, essays, news and books. We defined sustainable clothing industry, what are environmental issues of clothing industry and what are benefits for favoring sustainability in clothing. Also, we searched which factors might affect the customer behavior generally and investigated the previous research made about consumer behavior in Finland.

Throughout our research we conducted surveys with Webropol Surveys which gave us information about local young adult's consumer behavior in South-West Finland relating sustainable clothing and purchasing clothes generally. We examined the motivations which has affect for buying decision and what could be done to make buyers prefer sustainable clothing. We collected data for the survey and for the interview by travelling the few biggest cities in South-

West Finland and doing random selection when collecting responses. After the data collection we filtered the respondents and counted only the responses which include our target group (young adult aged between 20 to 30 and living in South-West Finland). The specific locations are following:

Turku: Hansa, shopping mall (interview + questionnaire)

Salo: Plaza, shopping mall (interview + questionnaire)

Kaarina: Krossikeskus (interview + questionnaire)

Raisio: Mylly, shopping mall (interview + questionnaire)

Lieto: In the center close to Lieto Kebab Pizzeria (questionnaire)

After doing both quantitative and qualitative research we analyzed the data. Like mentioned before, there was very less statistical information about our topic, and therefore we needed to focus on collecting and analyzing primary data.

### 3.2 Qualitative and Quantitative methods

We approached investigating our research question by using mixed method on our thesis, because it gives us more reliable results. Mixed methods include both qualitative and quantitative research. Semi-structured interviews were held because it is suitable method to conduct research about objective factors, such as behavior, internal features and opinions. (Krishnaswami & Satyaprasad, 2010) Therefore, it was optimal tool to examine internal factors of consumer behavior. Quantitative method can be more trustworthy. We reflected the interview questions to questionnaire results to see if it is reliable on bigger group of consumers and therefore, to make better conclusions. Using the mixed method gave us opportunity to examine both numeric results and in-depth examinations.

Semi-structured interviews were held to examine internal factors to explain the consumer behavior and decision-making process toward clothing. We didn't send the questions beforehand because the respondents were selected by

using simple random sampling method. We selected the 10<sup>th</sup> person we met in each city we decided to conduct an interview. Semi-structured interview is flexible way to collect information and therefore it gives replicants freedom to express their own views. It provides reliable qualitative data which can be compared later with quantitative data and theory. (Krishnaswami & Satyaprasad, 2010) All interviews were recorded and analyzed later. In case the person didn't suit to be our research unit, we selected the new person the equal way. We did not have pre-knowledge about the participant's concerns for environment.

Quantitative research were conducted using questionnaire made by Webropol questionnaire tool. With questionnaire, we decided to use also random sampling because when using random selection, market researchers are able to make probability statements from a target demographic. One of our motivation was to provide data to local sustainable clothing companies to improve their own business to satisfy their customers so that is why we were willing to create reliable and valuable data. We created the questionnaire by using Webropol survey and visited 5 biggest cities in Southwest Finland: Turku, Salo, Kaarina, Raisio and Lieto (locations mentioned before) and asked every 10<sup>th</sup> person we met to answer to our questionnaire. In case the person didn't agree to answer, we selected new person the equal way. It was necessary to make a numerous request to fill our questionnaire, because after all we were required to filter the results and count only those which suits to be our research unit.

All questions in survey and interviews were formed with the motivation to investigate the topic. The goal of the survey and interviews was to provide reliable data and to provide answers to the research questions:

- Which internal factors influence consumer behavior the most?
- What is the role of environmental issues, such as global warming, in purchase decision? Does it lead to purchase more sustainable clothing?
- What is the most important motivation to buy or not-to-buy sustainable clothing?

Because our research was about young adults, age between 20-30 years and area is limited, Southwest Finland, by using random sampling method for both methods we could ensure that we got relevant replicants and data to our research and they represent our research units, young adults in Southwest Finland efficiently.

### 3.3 Reliability, Generalization and Validity

If other researchers made the same study in the same circumstances or repeat the study after the time for the same respondents, the median result would be most likely the same. The consumer behavior is impacted for so many different features including external and internal factors, personality and lifestyle as learned on literature review, and those things are not willing to chance rapidly and therefore we can assume that the same respondents would reply similar way each time. Other major reason for high reliability is the random sampling which was used: all members of the population has the same possibility to participate on the study which also increase generalization. Generally, quantitative research, in our case the survey, produce more reliable data compared to qualitative, because it relies on the statistics and numbers and therefore it is more convenient to find specific patterns of behavior. In this study we used also qualitative research methods to give option for open questions and to complement and refine quantitative data collected from the survey. Using both methods gives us deeper understanding into our topic and provide more reliable data for the further use.

Nevertheless, the total population of Southwest Finland is around 479 341 (Tilastokeskus, 2018) and 61 415 of the total population are aged between 20-30 (City Population, 2019). We got 58 respondents on the survey and 4 interviews and therefore our study covers 0,1% of the total target group. The study cannot be generalized to the all population. The more respondents the more generalized the study can be.

All questions in survey and interviews were formed with the motivation to investigate the topic. The goal of the survey and interviews was to provide reliable data for the further use and to provide answers to the research questions mentioned before. To make sure that all questions are valid and don't let space for misunderstandings or unclarities for respondents, we had a test and asked a friend to "pretend" to be our respondent and give us feedback about interview questions and survey questions. Based on the feedback we fixed the questions as valid as possible. Moreover, the random selection of respondents increases the internal validity: there is no interaction between participants, and they don't know the interviewer before. Also, the target group was defined clearly beforehand: young adults aged between 20-30 years from Southwest Finland and it increase the external validity.

### 3.4 Limitations

As mentioned before, the major limitation of the whole study is the lack of generalization since the coverage was 0,1% of the total target group.

The interviews were extremely time-consuming including planning, travelling the different cities and getting the person to agree to participate to the study. Moreover, the analyzing the interview answers took time and we were required to go through the interview records several times. Moreover, since it is difficult to guarantee interviewees were answering honestly which is common on semi-structured interview. Due to social pressure and environment the participant might have answer different way versus if they were replying questions home alone in peace. One more limitation of the interview is that different participants might have understand the questions different ways and it might lead difficulties to compare the results.

Limitations of the survey was difficulty to get people to answer it due to current situation of COVID19. People were unwilling to touch the iPad so therefore we had sanitizer pads with us so participant could wipe the screen and hands before touching it and feel more comfortable to answer the survey. As a result of that, also holding the survey was time-consuming including the travelling

between different cities to collect answers. Other limitations of the survey could be differences in understanding of the questions and dishonest answers.

## 4 ANALYSIS

Chapter 4 summarize the data and findings collected from the interviews and from the survey.

### 4.1 Interviews

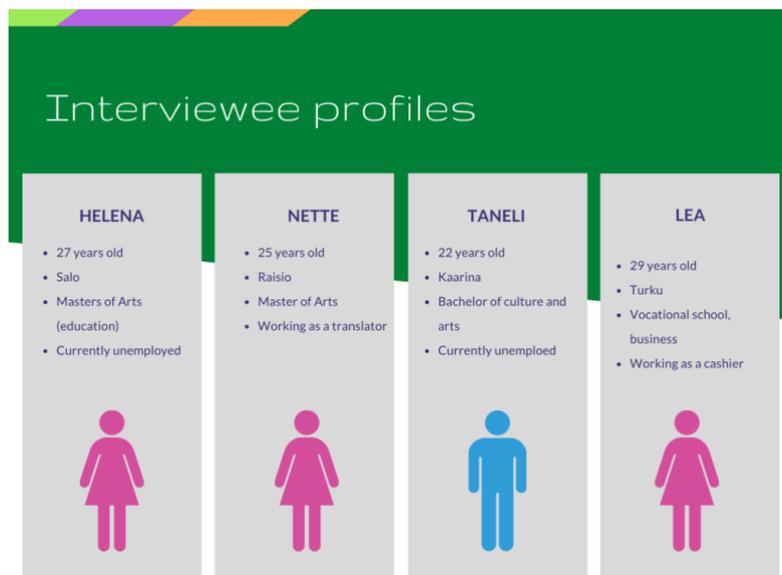


Figure 6: Interviewee profiles

As shown on Figure 6, 4 people were selected randomly from 4 different city in Southwest Finland, from Salo, Raisio, Kaarina and Turku. They are all young adults aged between 22-29. They all have different educational background and different situation in life: Helena and Nette are Masters of Art. Taneli is Bachelor of Culture and Arts and Lea has vocational education in Business. Helena and Taneli are currently unemployed, Nette works as a translator and Lea are working as a cashier. All 4 participants have quite similar free time activities: seeing friends, watching movies and series, walking and riding the bike or playing games, swim, handicrafts and yoga. Questions relating education, profession and free time were asked to investigate if those factors have impact on consumer behavior or thoughts about sustainable clothing.

#### 4.1.1 Thoughts about climate change and global warming

There were few questions related on the thoughts of climate change and its impacts. Those questions were asked to investigate if realizing the impacts of climate change, social media or friends has any impact on persons consumer behavior or if it forces to make more sustainable consumer decisions.

Each participant care about climate change and global warming and are worried about it. "It is going faster and faster and it makes me worried about our planet. Especially, I am worried about polar bears", says Nette. They have noticed visible impacts of climate changing and mentioned less snow in the winters and extreme weather conditions, especially in summer times it might be very cold and the next day extremely hot.

When asking why participants care about environment, the answers had a lot of similarities. Helena said, that she cares about it because the healthier the planet is the better living conditions we have for not and for the future. Also, she wishes the nature stays clean and pleasant to use for the people to enjoy. Other interviewees told to be worried about the future generations as well. Lea said that it is everybody's responsibility to care about it because most impacts of climate change is caused by human action.

Helena, Nette and Taneli said that they don't talk about environmental issues with friends so much, only once in a while but Lea said she talks with friends who are also interested in environment and climate change. Only Lea and Helena follow some environmental influencers on social media and Helena feels it has not impacted on her consumer behavior, but Lea said there is little bit impact on her.

#### 4.1.2 Consumer behavior towards clothing

Most interviewees said that they bought their clothes from general fast fashion stores, such as H&M, Bikbok, supermarkets, Vero Moda or Cubus. Only Lea said that buy clothes online and flea markets. Taneli mentioned few brands he favors: Vans and Sketchers, Lea said she likes Globe Hope, Marimerkko and Adidas and Nette said she prefer some brands only if she needs to purchase something high quality: Reebok and Peak Performance. Helena said that she

does not care about the brands. All participants answers relating the consumer behavior towards clothing, everybody mentioned the price to be the most important or second important factor on decision making process.

Helena said that the most important factor on purchasing the clothing is the *price*. She said that since she just graduated from University and currently seeking a job, her financial situation is limited. She said that sustainable clothing is often *pricier* so that is the why she prefers to choose the fast fashion stores which is affordable. Secondly, she mentions *comfortability*, practicality and clothes look good on her the important when doing decision process. She said that environmental issues don't affect at all on her consumer behavior and she has not experience of sustainable clothing. Moreover, she said that her background doesn't make difference on her current consumer behavior.

Nette has similar opinions of importance of *price* when purchasing the clothes. Yet, she said that she is willing to pay more to get good *quality*, for example, winter jacket must last several years so she is ready to pay more to get better quality. She said that her background has impact on that because her parents taught that if she is willing to have better quality, it will cost more. Basic clothes she rather buys from fast fashion stores. Moreover, *comfortability* and *look* matters to her when thinking of buying new clothes. Nette feels that *environmental issues don't affect* on her consumer behavior, yet she mentions that if there is ecological label on the clothes it makes her feel better about buying it. She said that she has some experience of sustainable clothing: she used to have some shirts and pants where was the eco label.

Similarly, Taneli highlight the *price* the major factor on decision process. He said that he needs to know if *clothing is cheap* enough and if it will actually *look good on him*, and if the material is good and doesn't get *wrinkly* when folded. He said that *environmental issues* don't have *major impact* on his decision process as he buy clothes very rarely. Yet, he said that recently he has been thinking to buy more sustainable clothing, but it is difficult to find them within reasonable price range. Taneli names following factor which matters the most: the price, material and previous experience from the same store. He doesn't have previous experience of sustainable clothing because of the high price and on his words "sustainable clothing to be often very bland." Background has no impact on her consumer behavior on Taneli's opinion.

Lea's answers vary a little bit from other participants. She mentions the *quality* of the clothing the major factor impacting on her decision making. Yet, she says the *price* comes second important factor and therefore she prefers shop clothing from flea markets. She mentions that *environmental issues impact* on her decision process and most of the times she tries to choose more sustainable and ethical option. She said that *background* has major impact on her current consumer behavior since from childhood she went to secondhand stores with her family. Lea mentioned that she has quite much previous experience from sustainable clothing: flea markets, secondhand stores and sustainable online stores.

#### 4.2 The survey

We were using Webropol questionnaire tool by analyzing the results. Total amount of respondents was 62 but 4 response were required to filter from the final analysis because they were not included in the target group as feel into over 30 years old category. Therefore, it was 58 participants counted in the final report and all of them are included in target group, young adults aged between 20-30 and are living in Southwest Finland.



Figure 7: Gender of the survey participants

In the beginning of the survey it was asked the gender. Majority of the respondents were female, 60% male 36% and the rest 4% says "Other". Despite majority participants were female, it doesn't seem to be major

difference for the final result since when comparing the replies between females, males and others the results are mostly similar. Therefore, it can be said that the gender has not so much impact on the consumer behavior relating this study.

When asked about educational background, the most respondents, 41%, said they have been in University of Applied Sciences. The educational background is connected to person's lifestyle and personality and therefore it might have impact on consumer behavior.

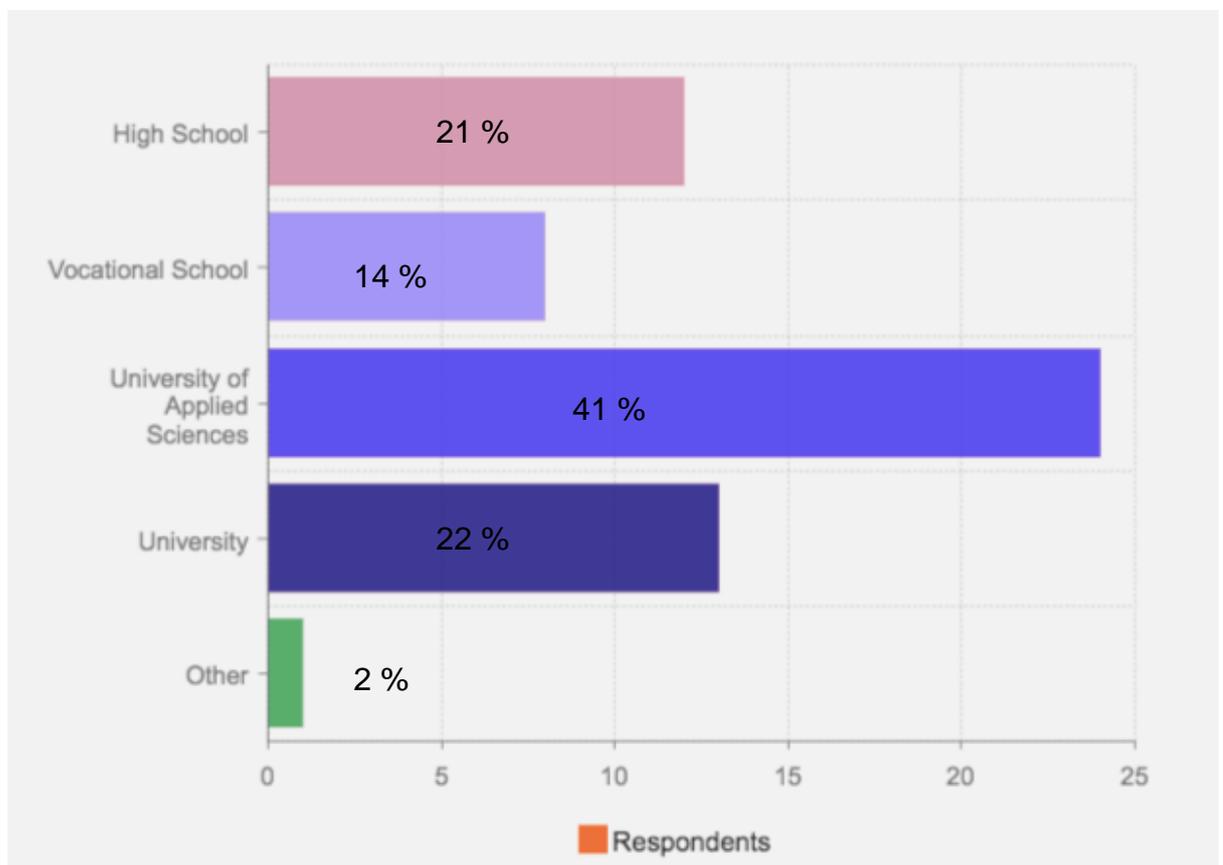


Figure 8: Education

The second common educational background is university, 22%, and third is high school 21%. Minor respondents got vocational school, 14 % and other options, 2%. In the survey, after the “Other” -option there was an open text field and we got the response “PhD”, there.

The following question in the survey is relating the annual income. It was extremely valuable to investigate the income impacting the consumer behavior since the earned income might lead the person to make either bigger

investment for clothing or choosing the cheaper option (which is in many cases fast fashion).

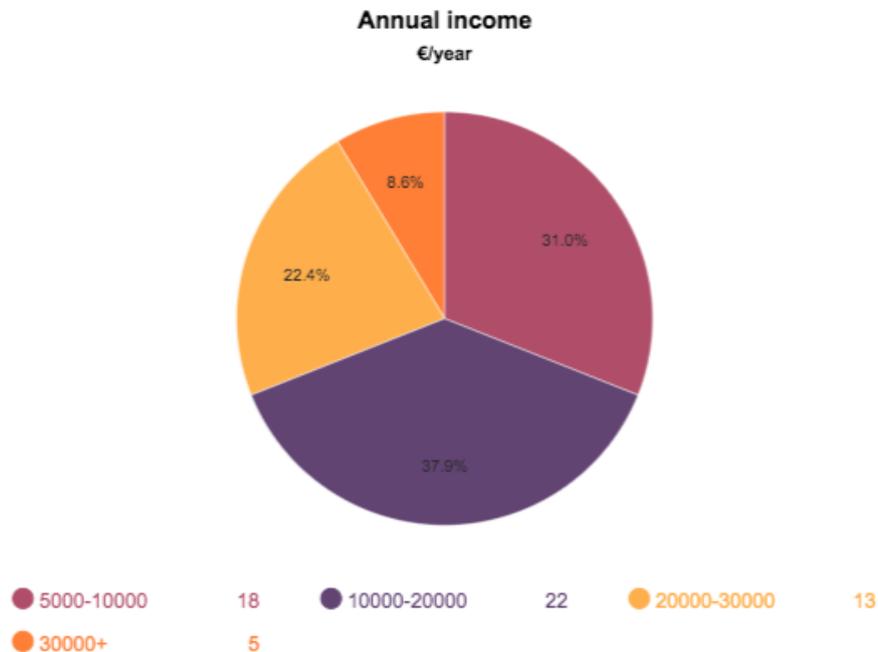


Figure 9: Annual income

The major part of the participants, 37.9%, said their annual income is between 10000 – 20000 euros and 31% said their annual income is 5000 – 10000 euros. Therefore, the dominant annual income in this study is less than 20000 euros which include 68,9 % of all respondents. Approximately one fourth of the participants said their annual income is 20000 – 30000 euros and the minor part of the participants, 8,6%, said the annual income is more than 30000 euros.

The next question of the survey was “Where do you buy your clothes and why?” and it was open field. We received total 45 open answers here so respond rate for this question is 77,59%. As can be seen on Figure 9, the major part of the respondents, 67%, said that they buy their clothes from fast fashion stores, such as shopping malls, supermarkets, H&M, Zara, Vero Moda and such. The major reason for that was said to be cheap price, they are easily available, they fit well and are looking good. Only 4% of the participants said they are using sustainable clothing stores or flea markets. The reason for using flea markets was affordable price. Online store users were 29% of the

participants. Online store shopping was said to be easy, there is more selection and often better sales. Few online store users said that they like to favor brand stores, such as Marimekko, Ivana Helsinki, Voglia, R-collection, Superdry and some sport stores. Those who mentioned Finnish brand said that their motivation to buy them is to support them as Finnish brands.

Figure 10: Where do you buy your clothes?



The last two survey questions were related about motivations about buying new clothes and factors the consumer feels important while doing buying decision. Second last question included list of 9 factors and respondent was required to rate on the scale between 1 to 5 how much they care about the specific factor while decision making process. 1 means that respondent doesn't care at all about the factor and 5 means that the respondents care highly about the factor. The factors listed are ethical issues, global warming, climate change, other environmental aspects, price, quality, trends, brand and other people. That question was asked to investigate the person's dominant motivations and factors which impact on decision making while purchasing clothing.

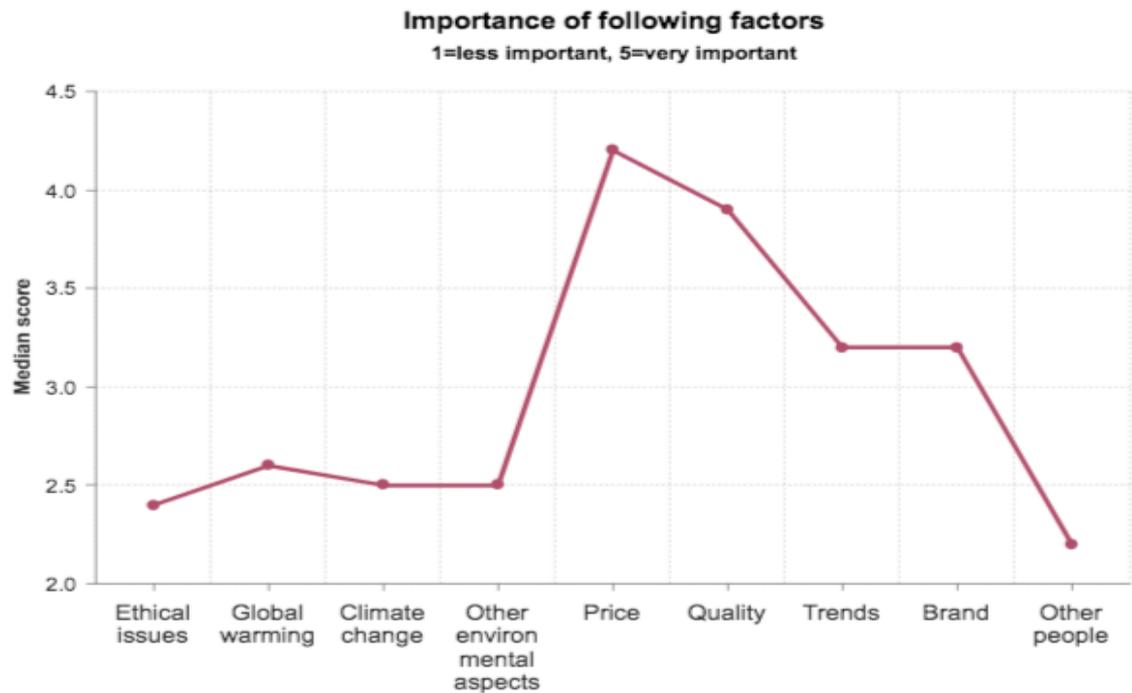


Figure 11: How important are following factors while decision making process between the scale 1 to 5?

As can be seen on Figure 11 the price got the highest score and therefore it seems to be the most important factor while making purchasing decision. Also, respondents value the quality, trends and brand. Other people don't seem to be impact on participants. All factors relating to environmental issues got lower points: Ethical issues, global warming, climate change and other environmental aspects got all less than 2.6 as a median score, which is significantly less compared to price, quality, trends and brand.

Lastly, it was investigated motivations which drive to the participant to purchase the new clothing on the first place. It was listed 7 different reason to go and purchase the new clothing which are need, want, sale, trending, example of other people wearing the same clothes, it looks good and advertisement. It seems that the major motivation is that respondent need the new clothing, 26,8%. All three following factors got similar amount of replies: replicants wanted to buy it, it was on sale and it looked good, around 17% each. If the clothes were trending, it was seen on someone else or on advertisements had minor impact.

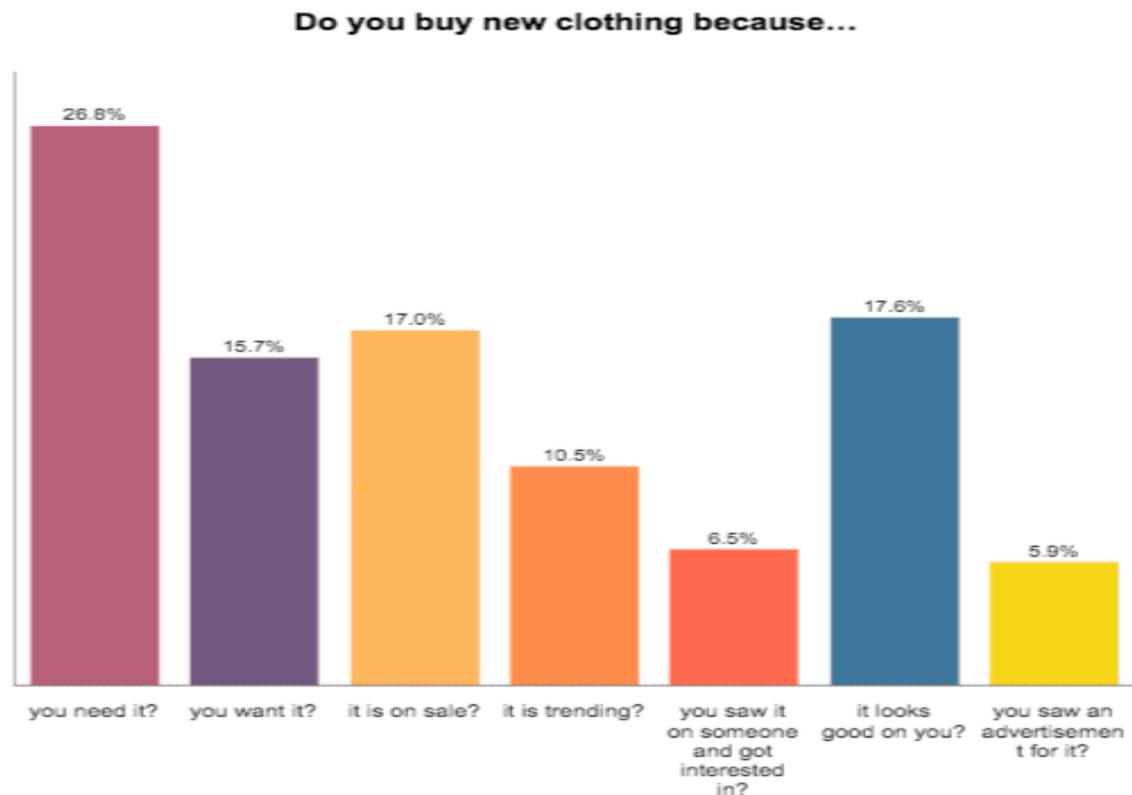


Figure 12: Motivations driving the purchase the new clothing

#### 4.3 Analysis of Interviews

During the interviews we found that all participants are aware of the impacts of environmental issues and have seen visible impacts of it, such as lack of snow. Likewise, we investigated during theoretical research, there has been studies which prove that statement: the snow cover has decreased on timewise and amount-wise during the time. (Luomaranta et al, 2019) Moreover, all participants are more or less worried about climate change. Still, only one respondent actively purchases sustainable clothing and think about environmental issues during the decision making. To conclude, the participants are conscious about the issues but don't let it affect the consumer behavior. All of the participants mentioned one or more free time activities which can be done on the nature, so that might be the one reason why they are worried about environment and therefore nature.

The major reason not rather buy sustainable clothing is the price due to interviews. We made comparison for this study and selected similar floral

dress from fast fashion store H&M and sustainable “slow fashion” store Ekohelsinki. From H&M, the floral dress is available for less than 10 euros (H&M, 2020) and from Ekohelsinki similar dress 120 euros (Ekohelsinki, 2020). 3 of our interview participants has just graduated from the university or university of applied science and they don't have long working history behind them and therefore it is common that annual income of young adults is not reaching the average income level in Finland, which is for men 39 984 euros and women 33 252 euros. (Santander Trade, 2020) That is one reason why young adults might prefer to use their money for necessary costs, such as rent, food or bills. Only 1 participant had vocational education and longer working history and she mentioned the brand and quality matters and also the environment as an factor which matters on her consumer behavior so we can assume that her income is slightly higher than other participants and therefore she can afford to choose sustainable options sometimes and care about the brand.

General consumer behavior in Finland: *“On consumer decision process, in Finland consumers prefer primarily quality. The origin of the product and brand image are other important factors. One enormous consumer decision factor in Finland is related to environment and its protection, ecological foods, minimal packaging and second-hand options.”* (Santander Trade, 2020)

Our interview results don't support the previous research results since 75% of the participants said that environmental factors don't affect their consumer behavior. Thus, they were worried about those factors and therefore we can assume that the answers and therefore consumer behavior would be different if the price was not the issue. Some responds support the previous theory, since few participants mentioned brand and quality secondary factors which impact on consumer behavior. Moreover, one participant was willing to prefer second-hand stores.

Moreover, the most interviewees didn't agree that social media would impact on their consumer behavior. Yet, half of them mention they follow some social media influencers which promote sustainability and admit it could impact on them faintly. Article from Santander Trade said that 60% of the population are active on social media and social media influencers affect the purchase decision so our interview result support that statement.

#### 4.3.1 The survey

As can be seen the survey results, the most participants have the higher education (university or university of applied sciences). It supports the fact 42% of population aged 24 to 64 have university-level education (Santander Trade, 2020). That supports the results of the interview as well since 3 from 4 participants had degree from university or university of applied sciences.

The high education might lead to higher income, but as mentioned previous section, young adults most likely are graduated recently or soon-to-be graduated, the income level is not significant yet. Regarding to the survey, the most participants earn annually 5000-10000 or 10000-20000 which is the below average income mentioned before. Therefore, it supports the assumptions about lower income of young adults.

The survey respondents claim to purchase their clothing mostly from fast fashion stores, supermarkets or malls. Second common platform was the online stores since it is fast and easy. Santander Trade (2020) said that in Finland consumers are comfortable with it, online shopping is increasing for quick purchases since technology is developing so it explains why online shopping is favored. Nevertheless, the article mentioned the shopping malls are also preferred, as our survey result proved too.

In the survey, the most important factor while buying new clothing is the price. It can be explained with the facts mentioned before: the annual salary seems to have connection with the importance of the price. Also, in the interview all respondents said the price to be major factor which leads on purchasing decision process. Secondly, trend, quality, brand and trends are mentioned to be second important factor. That result can be compared to the Santander Trade article (2020), which mentioned quality and brand image to be important factors on consumer decision process in Finland. Unlike in the article, the survey participants didn't mention environmental issues to be important factor. That could be explained the income level. Due to interviews, participant would most likely to value those factors more on decision making process if the income was higher since they are aware and worried about the impacts of the global warming and climate change.

Overall, we got very similar responds from the interviews and from the survey and they complete each other. There were several matching points between the collected data and previous research made about consumer behavior in Finland. Most differences are caused by the scoping of the topic: we were making investigation about young adults between the ages 20 to 30 living in Southwest Finland and the previous study (Santander Trade, 2020) has been made with all people in Finland generally.

## 5 CONCLUSIONS

In this section we are going through conclusion based on the collected data and research made on the literature review and giving answers to the research question. In the end of this section we are making suggestions for the further research and introduce our own learnings during the process.

### 5.1 Findings

The objectives of the thesis are to find motivations which drives consumers to buy or not-to-buy sustainable clothing and do research about the role of environmental issues, especially global warming on consumer behavior towards sustainable clothing. Moreover, we wanted to investigate more how important factor annual income is while decision process.

*Which internal factors influence consumer behavior the most?*

Based on the study, the most influencing internal factor influencing the purchasing decision is income. Like mentioned on previous chapter, annual income is lower in many cases among young adults since they don't have significantly long working history yet and are most likely just graduating or graduated. Moreover, we examined the sustainable clothing to be majorly expensive compared to fast fashion clothing, therefore participants rather select the cheaper option. The interesting finding was, that there was the inner motivation to select sustainable clothing but it didn't have major impact on buying decision because the price was more demanding factor on this study among youn adults.

*What is the role of environmental issues, such as global warming, in purchase decision? Does it lead to purchase more sustainable clothing?*

Environmental issues don't seem to be significant impact while purchasing decision among young adults. Most participant are interested in environmental issues and are concerned about it and how it could stay safe for the future generations. Several respondents have noticed visible changes in the environment but despite that does not lead participants to purchase sustainable clothing. Insignificant part of participants said environmental

issues impact on their consumer behavior. Nevertheless, major part of respondents of this study said that environmental issues have no impact on their decision making while purchasing new clothes. On the previous research about consumer behavior in Finland (Santander Trade, 2020) was examined that environmental issues are the factor influencing the purchasing decision. Therefore, we can assume that if the income was not an issue, several participants would select the sustainable option rather than cheaper, fast fashion clothing because inner motivation for that, such as worry about the environment and the future generation, was there in major cases.

*What is the most important motivation to buy and not-to-buy sustainable clothing?*

Based on the study, the most important motivation to buy sustainable clothing is to worry about the environment and the nature. Those who mentioned environmental issues impact on decision making said that they want to decrease global warming and climate change by doing small actions such as choosing more sustainable options as clothing. Also, major of those who prefer sustainable clothing enjoy spending free time in the nature and they wish to keep nature and environment clean for now and for the future.

The most important motivation not-to-buy sustainable clothing seems to be the price. As we explore on the previous chapter by comparing sustainable option of clothing and fast fashion option of clothing, it is multiple times more expensive to purchase sustainable clothing. The annual income seems to be connected on this factor, as explained earlier.

## 5.2 Suggestions for the future research

One path of the further research could be more detailed research about consumer behavior. The consumer behavior is extensive and complicated and there are other aspects to study as well and more detailed, such as lifestyle, some singular factor's impact on consumer behavior or external factors. Moreover, decision making process could be one topic of the study to provide more detailed and varied data.

As we mentioned in the beginning of this study that one of our main goal is to provide the data for the local sustainable store owners and market researchers to explore target group's consumer behavior and use that data for their own business strategies and marketing. For the further research, it is suggested to make research about how to produce successful marketing plan about sustainable clothing to attract the target group by using data produced on consumer behavior study.

### 5.3 Own learning

During the research, we learned the importance of the planning of the academic study. Since there is plenty of different processes during the journey, it is important to plan it properly and predict the possible risks and changes. For our case, we didn't make proper risk analysis and therefore the data collection took us extremely long time: we didn't predict the impact of COVID-19 for our investigation.

As an academic project, we gain large knowledge of project managing and time managing. Since there was two of us doing the investigation, we learned leadership, patience and co-operation skills as well.

From our topic we learned that consumer behavior as a topic is large and there are several different branches to make research. We tried to narrow our topic as much as possible, but during the process we learned importance of narrowing the topic even more to produce data from specific topic. There was plenty of factors we were not aware of beforehand, such as all the impacts of the clothing industry. We did know that it impact largely environment, but it surprised us how wide impacts it has on it.

Overall, we feel that during the project we develop deeper understanding from the academic study and learned how much previously studied topics and courses helped us during the project. Especially, we did benefit for having Academic English course on previous years. With skills learned from

the course we managed to conduct the interview and the questionnaire and analyze the data professionally. Moreover, other important course was Research Methods. That course gave us tools to process the academic research.

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## Interview questions

1. How old are you?
2. Where do you live?
3. What is your education and current profession?
4. What do you do on your free time?
5. Do you care about climate change or global warming?
6. Have you seen any visible impacts of global warming? Are you worried about it?
7. Where do you purchase your clothing? Which brands do you use?
8. How would you describe your decision process while purchasing clothes?
9. Do you think of environmental issues while decision process?
10. Which factors influence your buying decision?
11. What is the role of your background on decision making?
12. Why do you care or not-to care about environment?
13. Do you talk about environmental issues with your friends or do you follow environmental influencers on social media? Do you think that it influences your consumer behavior?
14. Do you have any experience of sustainable clothing? If yes, what kind of experience?  
If you don't prefer sustainable clothing, why not?

## Interview 1 – Helena

1. How old are you?
  - 27 years old
2. Where do you live?
  - Salo
3. What is your education and current profession?
  - Master of Arts (education). Currently I am seeking a job, I just graduated.
4. What do you do on your free time?
  - I see friends, watch movies, walk in nature, play PS and computer games. Also, I like to ride a bike.
5. Do you care about climate change or global warming?
  - Yes, I care, medium amount.
6. Have you seen any visible impacts of global warming? Are you worried about it?
  - I have seen less snow in the winter and there is more extreme weather in summer times. I am little bit worried about.
7. Where do you purchase your clothing? Which brands do you use?
  - From regular fast fashion stores, such as H&M, Micks, BikBok. I don't prefer any brands.
8. How would you describe your decision process while purchasing clothes?
  - The most important is that clothes fit well for me and look good on me. Also, I want my clothes to be comfortable and practical. Second, the price is very important since I am just seeking a job, I don't have too much money to spend for clothes.
9. Do you think of environmental issues while decision process?
  - Not really, very rarely.
10. Which factors influence your buying decision?
  - Price, look, comfortability, practicality. Those things I think when thinking of buying the clothes.
11. What is the role of your background on decision making?
  - There is not major role of my background.
12. Why do you care or not-to care about environment?

- I care about environment because the healthier the planet the better living conditions we have for now and the future. It is not good thing for the humanity if we let the planet to be bad condition. Nevertheless, I wish our nature to stay clean.
13. Do you talk about environmental issues with your friends or do you follow environmental influencers on social media? Do you think that it influences your consumer behavior?
- Sometimes I talk about it with friends but not so often. I follow some youtubers who protest for environment, but I don't think it influences my consumer behavior.
14. Do you have any experience of sustainable clothing? If yes, what kind of experience?
- If you don't prefer sustainable clothing, why not?
- I don't have experience of it because sustainable clothes cost much more than fast fashion. I cannot afford to spend too much money for clothes.

## Interview 2 – Nette

1. How old are you?
  - I just turned 25 years.
2. Where do you live?
  - Raisio
3. What is your education and current profession?
  - Master of Arts, currently I am working as translator as a freelancer
4. What do you do on your free time?
  - I watch movies and series, go for walks and gym. Also, I love spending my free time with my friends and travel.
5. Do you care about climate change or global warming?
  - Yes, I feel it is going forward faster and faster. I am not thinking about it all the time but sometimes.
6. Have you seen any visible impacts of global warming? Are you worried about it?
  - In winters, there is less snow nowadays compared to how it used to be and overall all kind of extreme weather conditions. Especially I am worried how climate change impact on polar bears.
7. Where do you purchase your clothing? Which brands do you use?
  - I buy my clothes from H&M, Vero Mora, Gina Tricot, Cubus or other fast fashion store. I don't prefer any specific brand but if I want some quality clothes, I buy Reebok or Peak Performance, such as winter jacket which needs to be good quality and long-lasting.
8. How would you describe your decision process while purchasing clothes?
  - Price is the most important for me because I cannot afford too much. I am willing to pay more for quality clothes if I know it will be long-lasting. Basic clothes I prefer buy cheaper. For me, it also matters if the clothes are comfortable or if they look good on me.
9. Do you think of environmental issues while decision process?
  - Not really, never. Though, if there is sustainable label on the clothes, I feel glad about it.
10. Which factors influence your buying decision?
  - Price, look, comfortability

11. What is the role of your background on decision making?
  - Not major, my parents taught me that if I want to get good quality I must be preferring to pay more.
  
12. Why do you care or not-to care about environment?
  - I care about it because environmental acts can make huge impact for the nature and environment and also for the future generations.
  
13. Do you talk about environmental issues with your friends or do you follow environmental influencers on social media? Do you think that it influences your consumer behavior?
  - I do talk about environmental issues sometimes with my friends, but it is not the major topic. I don't follow environmental influencers on social media. I don't think that those things impact my consumer behavior even though I don't talk about those issues because I try to think about nature and environment by myself and make small acts.
  
14. Do you have any experience of sustainable clothing? If yes, what kind of experience?  
If you don't prefer sustainable clothing, why not?
  - I used to have 2 t-shirt and pants which has ecological label.

## Interview 3 – Taneli

1. How old are you?
  - I am 22 years old
2. Where do you live?
  - I live in Kaarina
3. What is your education and current profession?
  - Bachelor of culture and arts, currently unemployed
4. What do you do on your free time?
  - Play videogames and draw
5. Do you care about climate change or global warming?
  - Yes
6. Have you seen any visible impacts of global warming? Are you worried about it?
  - There is less snow in the winter, and it worries me that one year there might not be anything at all
7. Where do you purchase your clothing? Which brands do you use?
  - In any store, also supermarkets, no specific brands. Although for shoes I always choose Skechers or vans
8. How would you describe your decision process while purchasing clothes?
  - First, I need to know it's cheap enough, if it will actually look good and if the material is good and doesn't get wrinkly when folded.
9. Do you think of environmental issues while decision process?
  - Not really as I buy clothes very rarely. I have previously thought to buy more sustainable clothing, but it is hard to find options that are to my liking within reasonable price range.
10. Which factors influence your buying decision?
  - Price, material and previous experiences from same store
11. What is the role of your background on decision making?
  - I think I don't care about brands because it was never a thing even in my childhood home and for this, I'm also comfortable with getting clothes from places where not everyone would buy them, like supermarkets or secondhand shops

12. Why do you care or not-to care about environment?

- I care because I find it important, but it is also very difficult for an average person to buy sustainable clothing as it is often multiple times the price of "normal" clothing.

13. Do you talk about environmental issues with your friends or do you follow environmental influencers on social media? Do you think that it influences your consumer behavior?

- I do neither but I'd think that it would not affect on my behavior anyway

14. Do you have any experience of sustainable clothing? If yes, what kind of experience?

If you don't prefer sustainable clothing, why not?

- I'd have to save money for months just to buy a shirt. Also, sustainable clothing is also often very bland

## Interview 4 – Lea

1. How old are you?
  - 29 years old
2. Where do you live?
  - I live in Turku
3. What is your education and current profession?
  - I went to vocational school, business. I am working as cashier currently.
4. What do you do on your free time?
  - I like to go yoga, do handicrafts and swim.
5. Do you care about climate change or global warming?
  - Yes, I care.
6. Have you seen any visible impacts of global warming? Are you worried about it?
  - Sometimes on summertime it is extremely cold, such this year mid-May it was snowing but meanwhile winters are less snowy.
7. Where do you purchase your clothing? Which brands do you use?
  - I mostly order online because it is easy and saves my time. There is also much bigger selection online. Also, I am big fan of flea markets. I like to use brands like Globe Hope (sustainable), Marimekko or Adidas.
8. How would you describe your decision process while purchasing clothes?
  - I like to shop good quality but also, I care about the price. That is why I like to browse Facebook flea markets or secondhand stores.
9. Do you think of environmental issues while decision process?
  - Yes, I think, most times I try to select better option than fast fashion.
10. Which factors influence your buying decision?
  - Quality, ethicality, price
11. What is the role of your background on decision making?
  - I think there is some impact, since I used to go to secondhand stores with my family and I guess from family I learned to prefer used clothes and other stuff.

12. Why do you care or not-to care about environment?

- I care because I feel it is our responsibility to take care of the environment since mostly it has polluted by our actions. I am worried how our planet will be for future generations.

13. Do you talk about environmental issues with your friends or do you follow environmental influencers on social media? Do you think that it influences your consumer behavior?

- I talk about it with those friends who are also interested in it. I follow some influencers on Instagram who post about zero waste and I think it impact on me as well.

14. Do you have any experience of sustainable clothing? If yes, what kind of experience?

If you don't prefer sustainable clothing, why not?

- I have, I bought sustainable back bag recently. Also, I shop quite much from flea markets or secondhand stores, so I count those clothes also as sustainable clothing.