

Fast Fashion and Sustainability: An Investigation of Young Chinese Consumers

Cong Hu

A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of
Master of Research

Department of Marketing and Management

Faculty of Business and Economics

Macquarie University

9 October 2017

Statement of candidate

I certify that the work in this thesis entitled “Fast Fashion and Sustainability: An Investigation of Young Chinese Consumers” has not previously been submitted for a degree nor has it been submitted as part of requirements for a degree to any other university or institution other than Macquarie University.

I also certify that the thesis is an original piece of research and it has been written by me. Any help and assistance that I have received in my research work and the preparation of the thesis itself have been appropriately acknowledged.

In addition, I certify that all information sources and literature used are indicated in the thesis.

The research present in this thesis is approved by the Macquarie University Ethics Review Committee via Reference Number: 5201700601 dated 28 June 2017 and amendment approved on 21 July 2017.

Cong Hu (Student ID: 44711395)

9 October 2017

Acknowledgments

First, I would like to thank my supervisor, Dr LayPeng Tan, who has provided valuable supervision and instructions during my research. Her scholarly thoughts and approach have helped my first steps in academic research and will continue to benefit me throughout my career. This thesis would not have been possible without the help of Dr Tan. I would like to convey my gratefulness to her for the skills and knowledge I have gained throughout this thesis. They will be very valuable components of my future development.

Thanks to my parents, I am so fortunate to have their support to return to university and continue my study. Their encouragement and unwavering belief were an essential ingredient of my completion.

To my husband, Guoju, who has always been supportive and encouraged me and my research. Thank you for your love and care.

Last, but certainly not least, my grateful thanks to all my teachers, colleagues, and friends who have in their own ways contributed to the completion of this thesis.

Abstract

For young consumers, fast fashion garments are affordable to buy and to throw away. Eighty billion pieces of fast fashion clothing are sold worldwide every year, and three out of four are discarded to landfills after their short lifespan. This has a significant environmental impact.

With its large population base, China is a promising fast fashion market with a massive demand for clothing. According to Euromonitor International (2014), China will replace the US as the number one apparel market by 2017.

The purpose of this study is to explore what drives young Chinese consumers to purchase fast fashion clothing, the role fashion plays in their daily lives, and what sustainability means to them. Five focus groups and eight follow-up one-on-one interviews were conducted in the course of this study in the Shandong Province of China. The results show that young Chinese people are concerned about visible environmental issues, like saving water and not littering, but are ignorant to invisible environmental issues, such as the impact of fast fashion. Through fashion theory and fashion perspectives, the factors that drive young Chinese to buy fast fashion products were identified and analysed as internal-individual, internal-social, external-individual, and external-social models. In view of the environmental impact of fast fashion, these driving factors are essentially barriers for greener fashion consumption.

In addition, this research also reveals that fashion plays a key role in self-expression and Mianzi, a form of face perception, for these young Chinese consumers. In other words, fast fashion is an affordable instrument they can use to gain social acceptance in a collectivist society. At the present stage of their lives, fast fashion products seem indispensable, even when they come with an environmental cost. The lack of information in the public press and government campaigns about the environmental impact of fashion also account for their ignorance.

This study makes several contributions. It identifies the key driving factors behind fast fashion consumption. In so doing, the findings shed light on the barriers and opportunities for promoting greener fashion choices to these young consumers. This research also introduces a new perspective from the literature on water resource management for marketers, which demonstrates the different impact visible and invisible environmental issues may have on consumer behaviour. This distinction offers a new way to analyse green and non-green consumer behaviours.

Table of contents

Statement of candidate	I
Acknowledgments	II
Abstract	III
Chapter 1: Introduction	7
1.1 The environmental impact of the fast fashion industry	7
1.2 Overview of fast fashion industry in China	9
1.3 The environmental attitudes and behaviours of Chinese consumers	11
1.4 Clothing, identity and culture	12
1.5 Literature gaps and research questions	12
1.6 Academic and managerial importance	15
1.7 Summary	16
Chapter 2: Literature review	18
2.1 Fashion consumption theory	18
2.2 Self-concept theory and social identity theory.....	22
2.3 Sustainability and fast fashion	24
2.5 Drivers behind green consumption	27
2.5 Young consumers - Generation Y & Z.....	28
2.6 The effects of culture	30
Chapter 3: Methodology	33
3.1 Research methods	33
3.1.1 Focus group (main study)	33
3.1.2 Brief one-on-one interviews (follow-up study)	36
3.1.3 Data collection and language	37
3.1.4 Ethical considerations	38
3.2 Data analysis	38
Chapter 4: Findings and discussions	41
4.1 The factors driving fast fashion purchases.....	41

4.1.1 Internal-individual factors.....	41
4.1.2 Internal-social factors.....	46
4.1.3 External-individual factors.....	51
4.1.4 External-social factors	52
4.1.5 Summary of the key drivers behind fast fashion purchasing.....	54
4.2 The role of fashion in the daily lives of young Chinese consumers	55
4.3 The meaning of sustainability in the daily lives of young Chinese consumers	57
4.3.1 Invisible environmental impacts	58
4.3.2 The effects of culture	60
4.3.3 The effects of government practices	61
4.4 Changes in the importance of fashion and sustainability according to stage of life	63
4.5 Summary of fast fashion and environmental protection	65
Chapter 5: Implications, limitations, and conclusions	67
5.1 Review of the research objectives and methods	67
5.2 Contributions and implications	68
5.2.1 The key drivers behind fast fashion purchasing.....	68
5.2.2 The role of fashion	71
5.2.3 The meaning of sustainability	71
5.3 Limitations and future research	73
5.4 Conclusions.....	74
References.....	76
Appendices.....	91
Appendix 1: Focus Groups Participants Description.....	91
Appendix 2: One-on-one Interview Participants Description.....	92
Appendix 3: Moderator’s Guide	93
Appendix 4: One-on-one Interview Guide	96
Appendix 5: Participant Information and Consent Form.....	97
(Version A).....	97

Appendix 6: Participant Information and Consent Form (Version B)	100
Appendix 7: Participant Information and Consent Form (Version C)	103
Appendix 8: Debriefing Statement	106
Appendix 9: Human Research Ethics Approval	108
List of Figures	111
Figure 1.1 China in comparison to Australia	111
Figure 2.1: Fashion perspectives.....	111
Figure 3.1: Phases of thematic analysis	112
Figure 4.1: Fast fashion products purchase driving factors	112
Figure 4.2: Environmental issues and fast fashion purchasing.....	113
List of tables	114
Table 1.1: A frequency count of fast fashion brands in media publications	114
Table 4.1: Allocation of 100 points according to importance	115

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 The environmental impact of the fast fashion industry

Fashion industry has changed significantly since late 1980s. One of the most obvious symptom is the shortening of fashion cycle (Djelic & Ainamo, 1999; Kim, 2013; Richardson, 1996). Fashion retailers began to compete with others by ensuring the speed to market e.g. increasing the number of fashion seasons, reducing the time gap between designing and consumption and adopting key strategies to lowering cost and maintaining profitable position (Bhardwaj & Fairhurst, 2010; Taplin, 1999). As such, fast fashion industry emerged to encourage consumers to visit their retail stores frequently with the idea of “here today, gone tomorrow” (Bhardwaj & Fairhurst, 2010).

Fast fashion is addictive and it's designed to be. It's a super-zooming conveyor belt of new things quickly going out of date or even falling apart, whilst the next thing zips along cooing “buy me”. It's convenient and cheap yet never quite satisfies our insatiable desire to keep up with ever changing fashion trends. (Gbor, 2017)

Fast fashion is affordable to buy and affordable to throw away (Cao et al., 2014). Eighty billion pieces of garments are sold worldwide each year (Hargreaves, 2015), and three out of four items of clothing are discarded to landfills after their short lifespan (Chung, 2016). North Americans buy 37 kilos of textiles each and trash 11.8 million tonnes of textiles to landfill annually (State of Reuse Report, 2016). Australia is the world's second largest textiles consumption market, ranking just behind North American (Pepper, 2017; Textile Beat, 2016). Australians purchase an average of 27 kilos of textiles each year, and collectively they send approximately 6000 kilos of textiles to landfill every 10 minutes (Press, 2016; Textile Beat, 2016). China dwarfs these statistics. Although Chinese average consumption of textiles - 15 kilos (Textile Beat, 2016) is

lower than North Americans and Australians, given its population and their enormous rising demand for garments, China sends a truly staggering amount of textile waste to landfills annually – approximately 26 million tonnes (Ravenhall, 2016). This type of throw-away society has the potential to cause significant environmental, economic, and social degradation (Hume, 2010). Resource depletion is a credible threat (Vince, 2012). Further, fast fashion has been associated with a disposable culture (Caro & Martínez-de-Albéniz, 2015). Its cheap prices accelerate the throw-away phenomenon and move society closer towards the concept of disposable fashion (Cao et al., 2014).

Fast fashion creates a massive burden for the environment because of the production process. With the rise of fashion production, the demand for man-made fibres has nearly doubled in the last 15 years (Claudio, 2007). Polyester, one of the most representative manufactured fibres, is made from petroleum. It, along with other synthetic fabrics, requires large amounts of crude oil to produce and can release toxic emissions (Claudio, 2007). Man-made fibres also take many years to degrade. Therefore, these “plastic” clothes could lead to huge environmental consequences (Pepper, 2017). More keenly, natural fibres are not innocent. For example, cotton also has a significant environmental footprint in terms of pesticide use (Claudio, 2007).

Generally, producing 1 kg of textiles requires 60 kgs of water and 0.6 kg of oil-equivalent primary energy. The process generates an average of 1 kg of solid waste and 2 kgs of carbon dioxide (Allwood, Laursen, de Rodriguez, & Bocken, 2015). It takes 7000 litres of water to produce one pair of jeans, and the hazardous chemicals used in the dyeing process may leave a permanent impact on the environment (Chung, 2016). A so-called “great value” \$4 fast fashion T-shirt requires 2700 litres of water to make, which is enough drinking water for one person for 900 days (Chung, 2016; Gbor, 2017).

Meanwhile, fast fashion brands are flourishing. Famous brands, such as H&M, Zara, Gap, and Uniqlo operate across the world. Caro and Martínez-de-Albéniz (2015) generated a list of fast fashion firms from a frequency count of the Factiva database. They found that H&M had the highest appearance of phrases related to “fast fashion”

over the last two years, both in Factiva's research databases and PDF documents available through Google (see Table 1). H&M operates more than 3200 stores in 55 countries and produces at least 600 million items of clothing per year (Bain, 2015). Collectively, these fast fashion brands create a massive strain on the environment. Consequently, the waste and environmental destruction caused by the fast fashion industry has begun to receive public exposure (Caniato, Caridi, Crippa, & Moretto, 2012).

Specialty apparel retailer	Number of appearances in Factiva search		Number of appearances in PDF online search	
	Rank	% appearances	% appearances	Rank
H&M	1	31.7 %	41.0 %	2
Zara/Inditex	2	29.2 %	45.9 %	1
Gap	3	11.9 %	18.2 %	3
Uniqlo/Fast Retailing	4	9.9 %	9.4 %	8
Topshop	5	9.3 %	13.7 %	4
Forever 21	6	7.5 %	11.2 %	6
Mango	7	4.3 %	12.4 %	5
Wet Seal	8	3.2 %	0.6 %	16
Benetton	9	3.1 %	10.1 %	7
New Look	10	2.8 %	6.2 %	9
Esprit	11	2.8 %	4.7 %	10
C&A	12	1.9 %	4.7 %	11
American apparel	13	1.2 %	2.6 %	13
Urban outfitters	14	0.9 %	2.8 %	12
Peacocks	15	0.5 %	1.1 %	15
Charlotte Russe	16	0.5 %	0.2 %	17
Armani Exchange	17	0.3 %	1.5 %	14

The search in the Factiva database was among 7,587 articles published in the last 2 years that mentioned fast fashion. The PDF search was among 466 PDF files available to download in Google.com that mentioned fast fashion

Table 1.1: A frequency count of fast fashion brands in media publications
Source: Caro and Martínez-de-Albéniz (2015)

1.2 Overview of fast fashion industry in China

With its large population base and a huge demand for clothing, China is one of the most promising fast fashion markets in the world. According to Euromonitor (2014), China will replace the US as the number one apparel market by 2017. As the second largest

economy in the world, China is labelled as an environmentally unsound place because of its inadequate investment in environmental protection, and its lack of specific environmental standards (Martinsons, So, Tin, & Wong, 1997; Yau & Davies, 2012). China's rapid economic expansion has brought massive consumption and unsustainable resource use (Yau & Davies, 2012). In 2015, fast fashion sales in China amounted to CNY 534.7 billion (US\$ 90 bn), representing an increase of 7.4 percent from 2014 and a 14.5 percent compound annual growth rate (CAGR) (Daxue Consulting, 2016).

In 2016, 14 fast fashion brands opened over 350 new stores in China (Liu, 2017). By the end of 2016, Uniqlo had nearly 472 stores with plans to open 100 more across China in 2017. H&M had over 370 stores with plans to open 90-95 more in 2017 (Liu, 2017; Mamillan, 2016). Uniqlo only took 2 minutes 53 seconds to achieve CNY 1 billion in sales (US\$ 1.7m) during the 2016 Chinese Tmall Double Eleven Carnival held annually on November 11 (Liu, 2017). (Tmall stands for Taobao Mall, a B2C online retail platform operated by the Alibaba Group).

Fast fashion attracts young Chinese consumers for its low cost and the newest catwalk pieces. Young people mix cheap clothes with expensive accessories, like luxury bags or designer shoes to form "mix & match styles" that create fashion trends, which are followed by an increasing number of consumers. This phenomenon has led to a boom in the fast fashion industry in China (Gentlemen Marketing Agency, 2015).

The post-1990s generation in China was born in an era of rapid information technology growth. They have high technology literacy, and can easily access up-to-date global trends through the Internet. These consumers watch fashion shows, movies, reality shows, etc. to keep abreast of the hottest designs and fashions. They also swap fashion items with their friends and exchange and photos of their outfits via social media (Lee & Edwards, 2014). Fast fashion brands suit their needs well because they are affordable and offer the latest fashion trends. Thus, these brands achieve high sales volumes in China (Lee & Edwards, 2014).

1.3 The environmental attitudes and behaviours of Chinese consumers

Johnstone and Tan (2015a) defined environmental friendly products as “products that consumers perceive to be environmentally friendly, whether it is due to the types of materials used, the production process, packaging, promotion, and so on” (p.805). They also defined green consumption behaviour as “consumption behaviours that are perceived by people to have either a nil, minimal, or reduced impact on the environment, such as purchasing environmentally friendly products, recycling, and using public transportation” (p.805). Chan (1999) found that Chinese consumers express a positive attitude towards environmental issues and eco-friendly purchase intentions. However, their practical actions were low, and they would only pay an average of 4.5 percent more for green products than for conventional products. In a later study, Chan (2004) reported that Chinese consumers’ environmental awareness had increased. They were also more concerned about the impact environmental disruption had on their life as China continued its economic and social development.

According to Huang, Zhang, and Deng (2006), Chinese people try to save energy, use renewable energy to help reduce carbon emissions and not litter. Based on a survey conducted in Qingdao, China, Zhao et al. (2014) conclude that 71.6 percent of consumers are willing to pay 5 to 10 percent more for eco-friendly products. The recency of these findings indicates that Chinese consumers are showing increasing ecological concern and green purchasing intentions. However, survey findings such as these often attract criticism, as environmental and sustainability topics are susceptible to social desirability bias (Nederhof, 1985). That is, respondents may tend to provide answers in a way they feel is logically consistent with socially desirable behaviour and present themselves in a manner that will be regarded favourably by others. (Marino, Lilienfeld, Malamud, Nobis, & Broglio, 2010).

Nevertheless, discussion in the public press suggests that the Chinese public are

increasingly expressing their concerns about the country's air and water quality (Pew Research Centre, 2013). For example, fireworks and firecrackers have been a traditional way to celebrate Chinese New Year for thousands of years. However, burning fireworks and firecrackers also creates serious environmental issues, such as air pollution. So, to reduce environmental pollution, Chinese people are starting to think of substitutions to reduce pollution issues, such as trampling balloons and using social media to send blessings and greetings. In turn, these environmentally-friendly Chinese people are encouraging others to have a low-pollution Chinese New Year and take responsibility for the environment (Ye, Chen, & Chen, 2016).

In short, according to academic journals and the public press, Chinese environmental concerns appear to be increasing in recent years due to increasing income and a growing education rate (Liu & Mu, 2016). Therefore, a question remains as to why Chinese consumers are still purchasing such high volumes of fast fashion clothing.

1.4 Clothing, identity and culture

Clothing is visual to others because what people are wearing can be quickly learned and readily understood by others (Barnard, 2017). According to the sociological interest in clothing and fashion, people could communicate through clothing and allocate themselves into different groups based on their different symbolics (Davis, 1994). On the basis of what others are wearing, people could make a preliminary judgement about who they are and whether they have something in common (Barnard, 2017). Similarly, we could understand our sense of self and express our own identity through what we are wearing (Barnard, 2017). Clothing nowadays is not only worn for functional reasons like warmth and protection but also worn to perform individual identities and emotional expression (Buse & Twigg, 2015; Midgley & Wills, 1979; Stone, 1990).

On the other hand, clothing provides an accessible medium to understand community identities (Ahrens, 2017). It reflects the ideology of culture visually. Clothing can indicate a cultural community's interests and values, and clothing allows individuals to

express personal identities. For example, the American hip-hop style (Cleveland, Rojas-Méndez, Laroche, & Papadopoulos, 2016; Schmidt, 2016).

1.5 Literature gaps and research questions

The literature relating to Chinese environmental attitudes and behaviours suggests increasing environmental awareness in China. However, the consumption of fast fashion clothing is growing at a faster pace. Some scholars argue that socialising and maintaining relevancy with peers plays a dominant role in the purchase process of young fashion consumers (Johnson, Lennon, & Rudd, 2014; Jørgensen & Jensen, 2012; McNeill & McKay, 2016; Ruane & Wallace, 2015), which subsequently causes the majority of excessive overconsumption. These arguments mainly originate from studies in Western culture, which is distinct from Chinese culture. China has unique cultural characteristics (see Figure 1: China in comparison to Australia) that have affected its development for thousands of years (Sun, D'Alessandro, & Johnson, 2014; Wan et al., 2009; Wang & Lin, 2009). For example, Asian countries are more collectivist than Western societies, especially China whose political system has been shaped by Confucianism and one-party rule (Cho, Thyroff, Rapert, Park, & Lee, 2013; Wan et al., 2009; Wang & Lin, 2009). Lowe and Corkindale (1998) conducted a cross-cultural study between Chinese and Australians on the difference in their cultural values and related marketing response stimuli. They found that the Chinese “relationship with hierarchical system” and “social harmony” heavily effect Chinese consumer behaviours. To be specific, when Chinese are looking for new products, they are more likely to choose familiar brands than Australians. They avoid buying complex products if a simpler product has the same function. Advertisements that feature “older people”, “experts”, or that have a “practical theme” (i.e., pain relief), etc. are more persuasive to Chinese than Australians. Zhou, Xia, and Zhang (2016) compared Chinese and American consumer online buying behaviour and find that the Chinese are influenced by their traditional Confucius culture and follow the *Doctrine of the Mean*. They often use euphemistic expressions to show their emotions about products, while Americans

are more direct. Additionally, Chinese people are influenced by the perception of “face” (Mianzi) culture when making purchase decisions. They are concerned about the external features of a product, like its packaging, while Americans focus more on internal features, such as quality.

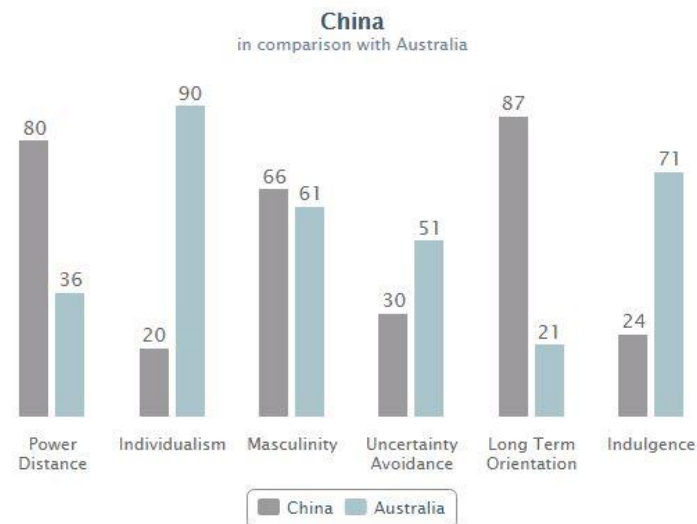


Figure 1.1: China in comparison to Australia
Source: The Hofstede Centre (2017)

Taking China’s unique cultural characteristics and political system into consideration, the aim of this study is to understand the factors that underpin the fast fashion purchasing and consumption behaviour of young Chinese consumers. This study explores what drives young Chinese consumers to purchase fast fashion clothing and what role fashion and sustainability plays in their lives and purchasing decisions. In particular, this study aims to address the following research questions:

- (1) What drives young Chinese consumers to purchase fast fashion products?
- (2) What roles does fashion play in young Chinese consumers’ daily lives?
- (3) What does sustainability mean to young Chinese consumers in terms of their daily life?

1.6 Academic and managerial importance

The literature often emphasises the importance of corporate social responsibility; however, very little literature discusses the role of consumers in achieving corporate social responsibility, while, in fact, without the assistance of consumers, corporate social responsibility has little chance of success (Vitell, 2015). Sustainability should not only focus on what enterprises have been doing, it should also focus on consumers. Consumer choices dictate what will be consumed, how much will be consumed, and forms the structures of consumer society (Mujtaba & Jue, 2005). As such, consumer preferences can determine an enterprise's motivations and actions to a great extent (Firat & Venkatesh, 1995; Hume, 2010; Mujtaba & Jue, 2005). Marketing literature often views consumers as a significant stakeholder (Hult, 2011) and has identified a key role for consumers as decision makers as society moves towards sustainable initiatives, such as waste recycling and reducing carbon emissions (Jones, Clarke-Hill, Comfort, & Hillier, 2008). There has been a tendency to study individual behaviour when focusing on green consumption within green marketing literature (Johnstone & Hooper, 2016). This is natural because insights into the purchasing behaviour of eco-friendly consumers can help us understand why consumers both buy and do not buy green products, which leads to promising avenues for future research (McDonald, Oates, & Young, 2006). Therefore, it is important to understand how consumers arrive at their purchasing decisions.

Young consumers today will become the leaders and decision makers of the future. Their attitudes towards sustainability could inform the sustainability strategies and policies needed for the future (Hume, 2010). As the main target demographic of the fast fashion industry, the attitudes of young consumers towards the environment are particularly important and directly related to whether sustainability can be successfully implemented in the fast fashion industry. Various studies suggest that Generation Y consumers – people born between 1978 and 1994 – and Generation Z consumers – people born between 1995 and 2005 – are environmentally conscious because they were

born in a time of environmental crisis (Spire Research and Consulting, 2010). For example, they are interested in green products, such as solar-powered equipment, electric or hybrid cars, and LED lighting (Spire Research and Consulting, 2010). Why then, do they purchase and consume environmentally-unfriendly fast fashion clothing? Cao et al. (2014) find that consumers buy fashion products not as a result of their rational needs, but mostly as a result of their emotional needs. In addition, these young consumers care about their appearance, and fashion can sometimes help them to express their values and identities and to communicate with others (Midgley & Wills, 1979; Stone, 1990).

The amount of textile waste in China (26 million tonnes annually) makes it paramount to delineate the meaning of fast fashion sustainability to these young consumers and explore the interplay of roles between fashion and sustainability in these young consumers' fast fashion products purchase decisions.

1.7 Summary

The fast fashion industry in China is booming, and its serious environmental impacts are the motivations for this study. This study focuses on fast fashion's main target market in China – young Chinese consumers. Through qualitative analysis, this research will explore what drives these consumers to purchase fast fashion products and what roles fashion and sustainability play in their lives. In doing so, how young Chinese consumers balance their need for fashion and their presumed commitments to environmental sustainability will also be investigated (Joy, Sherry Jr, Venkatesh, Wang, & Chan, 2012).

In recent years, the fashion industry has begun to give greater consideration to more sustainable and ethically sound production (Hoh, 2017; McNeill & Moore, 2015). However, as McNeill and Moore (2015) posited, there has been reluctant uptake of sustainable and ethical clothing by many consumers and “a seeming conflict with existing ‘fast fashion’ desires in this area” (p.212).

This study aims to identify the key driving factors behind fast fashion consumption. The findings of this study will shed light on the barriers and opportunities in marketing sustainably-produced fashion products to these young consumers.

Chapter 2: Literature review

2.1 Fashion consumption theory

The economic importance of fashion and its widespread impact on society and culture grants fashion a significant role in both commercial products and the marketing literature (Yoganarasimhan, 2017). Fashion is used in numerous contexts, and the fashion phenomenon involves consumer choices in a variety of products and services. Clothing, and its associated accessories, are the most widely-applicative fashion-oriented behaviour (Sproles, 1979; Taylor & Costello, 2017). In his seminal works, Sproles (1974) posited that fashion is not only an object representing specific physical features, but it is also a behavioural process that describes the emergence and adoption of new styles among consumers. He identified three key themes of fashion theory: (1) fashion is a behavioural phenomenon in consumers; (2) fashion exists in both tangible and non-tangible contexts; and (3) fashion is diffusible. Sproles (1979) proposed a conceptual framework to illustrate how the marketing system helps to diffuse fashion, and how the upper class and youthful innovators lead the latest trends. Subsequently, in an attempt to provide different perspectives to explain the fashion process, Sproles (1981) presented two perspectives of the fashion process. The first perspective examines the levels at which fashion is taking place: the individual level or the societal level. The second perspective explores the driving factors behind the fashion process and whether they are endogenous factors or exogenous factors.

Similar to Sproles' (1974; 1979; 1981) view, fashion as a consumer behaviour phenomenon is diffusional and can be impacted by social influence, Evans (1989) put forward the concept of a two-step flow of communication to illustrate fashion's diffusion and adoption. Step one identifies a fashion leader through marketing activities, such as fashion shows, and step two disseminates fashion information to persuade fashion followers.

Based on the work of Sproles (1985), Miller, McIntyre, and Mantrala (1993) developed a theoretical framework of the fashion process and a mathematical model as a way of formalising fashion theory. They presented an adaption of various different perspectives on fashion and categorised those perspectives into two main dimensions: the internal-external dimension and the individual-social dimension. “Internal” considers the fashion process as an independent phenomenon within a closed system, which is driven by endogenous factors. “External” considers the fashion process as an extended external change indicator within a society, which is driven by exogenous factors. “Individual” focuses on the fashion process at an individual level, while “social” focuses on the fashion process at a societal level. From these two dimensions, four models were derived: the external-individual, external-social, internal-individual, and internal-social models. Figure 2.1 illustrates the two dimensions and four models of Miller et al.’s (1993) fashion perspectives.

		Internal			
Individual	Internal – Individual Models <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Demand model• Scarcity-rarity model• “Conspicuous consumption” model• Individualism-centred model• Conformity-centred model• Uniqueness motivation model	Internal – Social Models <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Trickle-down theory• Collective behaviour theory• Adoption and diffusion model• Symbolic communication model• Subculture leadership model• Spatial diffusion model• Historical resurrection model• Historical continuity model		Social	
	External – Individual Models <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Aesthetic perceptions and learning model	External – Social Models <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Social conflict model• Art movement model• Mass-market model• Market infrastructure model			
		External			

Figure 2.1: Fashion perspectives

Source: Miller et al. (1993)

In other words, “internal” regards the fashion process as a single and independent activity driven by endogenous factors. “External” regards the fashion process as a reflection of the changes in a society driven by exogenous factors. “Individual-social”

concerns the fashion process, whether from the perspective of the individual or the society.

a) The internal-individual model

The demand model and the scarcity-rarity model, contained within the internal-individual model, focus on the price of fashion products. Scarce objects have exceptional value. Hence, they have higher prices, which leads to limited demand. Only when the price drops, will the demand for fashion increase up to a certain point.

Tak and Pareek (2016) surveyed respondents in shopping malls and discovered that a consumer's need for uniqueness has a positive influence on their attitude towards luxury brands. These findings confirm the uniqueness motivation model within the internal-individual perspective. The uniqueness motivation model suggests that people search for similarities and differences compared to other people to find unique attributes, then use them to form their own self-identity.

b) The internal-social models

Collective behaviour theory and the adoption and diffusion model in internal-social models demonstrate that fashion can be spread and followed across social systems due to the collective behaviour of consumers (Miller et al., 1993). Landi and Dercole (2016) identified that social interactions between ordinary people can be responsible for fashion diffusion and that they seek social success through fashion styles. Relationships between collective consumer behaviour, social interaction, and purchase intentions have also been found in a study by Baek and Choo (2015). Their empirical study of 200 Korean women aged 20 to 30 years old found that social influence affects the purchase intentions of interdependent people. In particular, the consumption of peers increases the purchase intentions of interdependent people. The adoption and diffusion of fashion also inspired a study by Taylor and Costello (2017) on how to improve the efficiency of fashion advertisements. The findings show that casting choices play a vital role in fashion advertising. This can be explained by the trickle-down theory in the internal-

social model, which states that lower classes will imitate new objects adopted by upper classes. Thus, the celebrity effect promotes the sale of new objects.

c) The external-individual model

Fogel and Raghupathi (2013) surveyed 200 New York college students by asking them whether they would learn information about beauty products from e-mail advertisements and whether this would increase their purchase intentions. The findings showed that e-mail significantly increased the odds of a purchase because consumers learned to like the new information and products. This reflects the aesthetic perceptions and learning models in the external-individual model that consumers like exploring new stimuli that are different from their familiar stimuli. If the new object is not too different or too complex, it will be marked as “acceptable”, and consumers will learn to like it.

d) The external-social models

The mass-market model and the market infrastructure model in the external-social model emphasise that mass production and affordability help to disseminate fashion. Anguelov's (2015) research is consistent with these models, which states that, historically, the meaning of “fashion” and “garment” was different. Fashion refers to high-priced clothing, while garment refers to low-priced mass-market clothing. With the development of technology and improvements to manufacturing, the price of fabrics has dropped and the fast fashion industry has emerged. Fashion no longer belongs solely to the upper classes; it is now available and affordable for ordinary people as well.

To date, different models of Miller et al.'s (1993) fashion perspectives have been tested, although most studies have been conducted in Western countries (Anguelov, 2015; Fogel & Raghupathi, 2013; Landi & Dercole, 2016; Tak & Pareek, 2016). Therefore, the usefulness of this model for explaining the fashion consumption of Chinese consumers remains unclear – especially its ability to explain the fast fashion consumption of young Chinese consumers. Moreover, most existing marketing literature on fashion has taken a theoretical standpoint (Caulkins, Hartl, Kort, &

Feichtinger, 2007; Miller et al., 1993; Sproles, 1985) or has only empirically tested some of Miller et al.'s (1993) models (Baek & Choo, 2015; Fogel & Raghupathi, 2013; Landi & Dercole, 2016; Lowe, 1993; Tak & Pareek, 2016). Few studies have tested all four models using focus groups. Moreover, since purchase behaviour is reflective of social interactions between consumers (Hausman, 2000; Park, Kim, & Forney, 2006; Piron, 1991; Yu & Bastin, 2010), it is important to consider the social interactions among participants.

2.2 Self-concept theory and social identity theory

With the abundance of social substance and material conditions, clothing nowadays is not only worn for physically functional reasons like warmth and protection, but also for emotional expression (Evans, 1989). Appearances can sometimes help people to announce their values, identity, and even communicate with others (Midgley & Wills, 1979; Stone, 1990). Self-concept theory involves the primary motivation to achieve the ideal self in both private and social contexts because individuals desire to enhance their own self-concept to achieve a better self (Evans, 1989). Similarly, brands are regarded as a visible and self-expressive way for people to identify with each other. People can use brands to evaluate others and form opinions based on these appearances (Evans, 1989). Ruane and Wallace (2015) conducted research involving 675 Gen Y consumers in Ireland. They found that people do seek information about other people from the brands they use. Moreover, brands contribute to consumers' self-expression and could enhance consumers' self-concept. Thus, individuals need brands to identify or enhance their own personal image and then bring positive social influence upon themselves.

Social identity theory was proposed by Tajfel and Turner (1979) as a way of expressing an individual's sense of who they are based on the groups they belong to. The theory describes the relationships and conflicts within and between groups. "Belongingness" is a significant source of pride and self-respect in a person's social life. There are three mental processes involved in evaluating social identity theory: social categorisation,

social identification, and social comparison. Social categorisation is the process of classifying people into groups based on similar characteristics. For instance, a group of people with a common interest or identity are referred to as an in-group. People who do not belong to a specific in-group are called out-group. Social identification means adopting the identities of the affiliate group and acting in the same way as the affiliate group. Social comparison is used to maintain an in-group's superiority by comparing the group favourably against others, which helps to explain discrimination and prejudice. Social identity theory became a broader social psychological theory as it developed. It has been used to describe the phenomena of self and identity in-group and intergroup (Hogg, 2016; Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, & Wetherell, 1987). Fashion, as a stimulus, can express social psychology and can reflect one's behaviour, beliefs, attitudes, feelings, and perceptions (Johnson et al., 2014). Holland and Haslam (2013) manipulated models to dress provocatively or in plain clothing, then observed participants' attention to the models. The results show that participants were more interested in the provocatively dressed models. This outcome supports Johnson et al.'s (2014) view that dress can reflect an individual's social psychology. Similarly, Adam and Galinsky (2012) found that clothing affects the behaviour of the wearer, and it has symbolic meaning. Additionally, Gino, Norton, and Ariely (2010) designed different experimental groups and asked the participants to wear either a counterfeit or an authentic pair of Chloé sunglasses (a luxury brand). Although the counterfeit glasses looked exactly like the authentic ones, the participants wearing the counterfeit glasses behaved significantly differently to the participants wearing the authentic ones. They felt different, as though they were not wealthy enough to buy authentic sunglasses.

Fast fashion culture is a medium for young generations to communicate this same sense of symbolism, matched to their self-image. Young consumers are arguably more fashion-oriented than older consumers, and they represent an important target market due to its size. Young consumers are more interested in expressing themselves and have a greater desire to be accepted for their appearance. Nevertheless, research that applies self-concept theory and social identity theory to the fast fashion purchase behaviour of

young consumers is still limited, especially studies that explore their relationships with sustainability.

2.3 Sustainability and fast fashion

“Our Common Future”, also known as the Brundtland Report, from the United Nations World Commission on Environment and Development was published in 1987. It defines sustainability as meeting “the needs and aspirations of the present generation without destroying the resources needed for future generations” (Brundtland, 1987 p.27). Further, Elkington (1994; 2004) defined the concept of the triple bottom line to balance what are still commonly regarded as the three key components of sustainability – economic, environmental, and social performance.

Sustainability places tremendous pressure on the fast fashion industry because the industry is intrinsically complex and highly fragmented (Seuring, Sarkis, Müller, & Rao, 2008). A key challenge is how to guarantee producers of each individual component in the supply chain take environmental responsibility for the entire industry’s production and consumption. (Beard, 2008).

The fast fashion industry is often described as “fashion McDonaldization” because of its similarities to McDonald’s fast food restaurants, which emphasises fast-paced efficiency (Chang & Jai, 2015). Fast fashion is characterised by cheap prices (Caro & Martínez-de-Albéniz, 2015), the latest trends (Choi, Hui, Liu, Ng, & Yu, 2014), short lead times (Barnes & Lea-Greenwood, 2006), and quick responses (Li, Zhao, Shi, & Li, 2014). Fast fashion enterprises aim to increase consumer purchasing frequency (Barnes & Lea-Greenwood, 2006) by frequently changing stock in stores (Li et al., 2014) and by exploiting fashion-conscious consumers’ insatiable appetites for the hottest designs (Choi et al., 2014).

The leading fast fashion brand, Zara from Spain, has its famous “two weeks magic”, which means the whole product cycle only takes two weeks from initial conceptual

design to retail stores around the world receiving the final products (Choi et al., 2014; Ghemawat, Nueno, & Dailey, 2003). To fulfil just-in-time strategies, achieve agile supply chain structures, and ultimately accomplish profit goals, the fast fashion industry inevitably encounters environmental problems and disruptions, and ethics issues like treating employees unfairly (Li et al., 2014). For example, numerous textile and chemical products are used in manufacturing and dyeing processes that have significant environmental impacts (De Brito, Carbone, & Blanquart, 2008). Caniato et al. (2012) point out that textiles are mainly made from cotton, wool, and synthetic fibres. Cotton and wool cannot be produced without massive quantities of water and pesticides, while synthetic fibre cannot be manufactured without non-renewable resources. In addition, fast fashion products are usually produced in less developed countries to reduce manufacturing costs because the labour force is cheap (Abecassis-Moedas, 2006). As a result, transport mileage and carbon emissions are increased (Borghesi & Vercelli, 2003).

In this context, any practices these fast fashion firms adopt are often deemed controversial, whether or not they are being proactive about environmental protection or simply reacting to public pressure, with ulterior motives for short-term success and brand reputation (Dolan, 2002). For instance, the H&M Group releases a sustainability report every year. They claim they are devoted to bringing fashion to the world in a socially-conscious way and that they take responsibility for their suppliers (H&M Group, 2017). However, many are sceptical as to whether fast fashion and sustainability can ever mix well, even though sustainability in fast fashion “sounds” like a great idea. (Birtwistle & Moore, 2007; Chang & Jai, 2015; Gibson, Waitt, Head, & Gill, 2011; Thomas, 2008). Through this lens, H&M’s voucher program, which offers discounts to people who donate their used clothing to stores, is perceived to be both “green washing” to boost sales, and an initiative that does little to decrease their massive environmental footprint (Bain, 2016; Rahman, Park, & Chi, 2015). Moreover, technological limitations mean recycling clothing into textile fibres is costly (Balch, 2013). In fact, many scholars argue that the limited profitability of being sustainable makes going

green too expensive and too difficult for the fast fashion industry (Mader, 2008; Wirtenberg, Lipsky, Abrams, Conway, & Slepian, 2007).

McNeill and Moore (2015) proposed a conundrum between fast fashion and sustainable consumption. They investigated the attitudes of fashion-conscious consumers and sustainability in clothing choices and found that consumers can be classified into three types. “Self” consumers are hedonistic. They are concerned with personal desires and have the lowest probability of buying sustainable fashion products. “Social” consumers are concerned with environmental and social issues, but their buying practices are inconsistent with their ideologies; they rarely consider these issues in relation to fashion consumption. “Sacrifice” consumers strive to reduce their impact on the world. Their practices are consistent with their attitudes, and they have negative attitudes towards fast fashion. These findings show that sustainable fashion consumption is determined by the consumers’ level of concern for social and environmental wellbeing.

Joy et al. (2012) assert that if sustainability is to be viable, consumers must constrain their desires and purchase behaviours when it comes to fast fashion products. They suggest that sustainable fashion should become aspirational products for consumers, and consumers should adopt the lens of long-term thinking. Following that Joy et al. (2012) went on to argue that, to achieve this goal, encouraging luxury fashion purchases would need to play a major role in the transition. However, Kozlowski, Searcy, and Bardecki (2016) suggest that ensuring consumers understand the meaning of sustainability in the fashion industry is a precursor to marketing sustainable fashion since this could help consumers make more sustainable choices when purchasing garments.

Being one of the largest and most promising fast fashion markets in the world, young Chinese consumers offer an ideal research context to explore the relationship between fast fashion and sustainability. This market also offers a rich context for identifying likely ways to market greener consumption choices to young consumers.

2.5 Drivers behind green consumption

Vermeir and Verbeke (2008) conducted empirical research on 456 young adults aged 19-22 years and found that, while a positive attitude towards green products is a good start, it does not always lead to green consumption. Social influence and perceived behavioural control also affects the purchase intentions of consumers. In particular, consumers will have stronger green consumption intentions if they have experienced high social pressure to buy green products, or they believe that buying green products will have a positive impact on the environment. Thus, strong intentions are a precondition for action in relation to the green consumption of young consumers. Hsu, Chang, and Yansritakul's (2017) study of university students aged 18-24 on purchase intentions regarding green skincare products showed that attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural controls had a significantly positive effect on purchase intentions. Their probability of buying green skincare products was also much higher with strong purchase intentions. The authors suggest that increasing a consumer's purchase intention is the most important factor for green marketers.

These studies are based on the theory of planned behaviour (TPB). TPB refers to three determinants of intention: behaviour attitude, meaning the degree to which behaviour is evaluated either favourably or unfavourably; subjective norms, which means whether or not the behaviour is implemented under social pressure; and perceived behavioural control, which means the ease or difficulty of the particular behaviour (Ajzen, 1985). TPB determines that behavioural decisions are based on strong intentions. People will not necessarily perform a behaviour if they feel uncertain, even when they have the opportunity and/or resources to do so (Ajzen, 1991).

Chan and Lau (2002) examined TPB's applicability to green purchasing behaviour in the context of China and America. In Chinese cultural settings, they found that the subjective norm exerts a stronger influence on the behavioural disposition to purchase green products than attitude because of the traditional collectivist nature of the Chinese

people. According to Chan and Lau (2002), the subjective norm has a positive impact on green purchasing behaviour of Chinese consumers. They measured the subjective norm by asking Chinese consumers questions about whether “purchasing eco-friendly products” was the “right choice”. Social pressures are currently pushing Chinese consumers to buy green products. However, as a “glorious” industry for young consumers, whether they are aware of the environmental problems associated with fast fashion products is dubious. Therefore, it is also unknown whether subjective norms will have a positive or negative impact on the sustainable fast fashion consumption of young Chinese.

Namkung and Jang (2017) investigated the relationships between the green perceptions and demographic characteristics of consumers, and their willingness to pay more for green practices at restaurants. The results reveal that consumers with a strong willingness to pay more also have higher green perceptions and practices. However, those with a strong willingness had educational backgrounds that armed them with the knowledge of the issues and the financial means to do something about it. On the topic of fashion and its related sustainable issues, it is unclear to what extent young Chinese consumers are willing to pay more for sustainable fashion.

2.5 Young consumers - Generation Y & Z

Different generations often have different attitudes, values, preferences, and motivations (Inglehart, 1997; Mitchell, 1998). Those born during a particular period are called a “generational cohort” (Parment, 2013). Sharing similar life experiences, technological developments, and social environments (Hume, 2010; Ordun, 2015) can influence values and consumption behaviours (Parment, 2013). Moreover, demographic factors, such as education, gender, and income, can also determine generational lifestyles and social values (Giancola, 2006; Ordun, 2015; Schewe & Meredith, 2004). Therefore, generational marketing research is based on using generational cohorts to segment the market (Hume, 2010; Parment, 2013).

Generation Y (Gen Y) was born between 1978 and 1994 (Egri & Ralston, 2004; Hume, 2010). As of 2017, these individuals are aged between 23 and 39 years. Gen Y is described as being highly active in the marketplace, with unprecedented purchasing power and impact on the economy (Noble, Haytko, & Phillips, 2009). They are a culturally diverse and open-minded generation (Wolburg & Pokrywczynski, 2001). They are also the first generation to be able to easily access information through the Internet and share their lives with their families and friends via social media. As the first entirely high-tech generation, they are confident in making purchase decisions because they have many ways to access and gather information (Eastman, Iyer, & Thomas, 2013). A study by Nadeem, Andreini, Salo, and Laukkanen (2015) shows that social media peer recommendations give members of Gen Y confidence when making purchasing decisions.

Gen Z were born between 1995 and 2005 (Beall, 2016). As of 2017, these individuals are aged 22 or younger. Gen Z has experienced numerous political, technological, social, and economic changes in their brief lifetimes (Merriman, 2015). They are colloquially termed “digital natives” as they have been surrounded by digital devices since they were born. Their ubiquitous access to information has endowed them with distinctive tastes, for example, a consciousness of fashion (Jain, Vatsa, & Jagani, 2014).

The literature on sustainability and fashion regarding Gen Y is divided. Some literature indicates that Gen Y cares about environmental issues and social responsibility (Barber, Taylor, & Dodd, 2009; Smith, 2012); other literature considers Gen Y to be ignorant to such issues (Hill & Lee, 2012; Hwang, Lee, & Diddi, 2015). Birtwistle and Moore (2007) targeted young fashion consumers aged 18-25 to understand their attitudes towards buying and disposing of fashion. Their findings show that many young people frequently shop, up to two or three times a week, but end up disposing of most garments. McNeill and Moore (2015) show consistent findings: the newness and style of fast fashion is particularly attractive for younger fashion consumers, especially those who subscribe to a culture of impulse buying.

This study focuses on a mixture of Gen Y and Gen Z Chinese consumers, aged between 18 and 30 years, with the aim of investigating their fast fashion purchasing behaviour and their perceptions towards sustainability. These young Chinese consumers are either university students or just starting their career.

2.6 The effects of culture

Fan (2000) summed up a range definition of culture from last century to this century as “...the collection of values, beliefs, behaviours, customs, and attitudes that distinguish a society” (p.3). Cultural studies include various levels: international culture, national culture, business culture, organisational culture, etc. (Fan, 2000). In marketing disciplines, culture relates to consumer consumption and its significant impact on human behaviour (Yaprak, 2008). Consumers often connect brands or material goods with their personal and social backgrounds. Therefore, understanding the role of culture can help international marketing managers create better targeting, positioning, and segmentation when developing their strategies (Grayson & Martinec, 2004; Holt, 2002; Kozinets, 2001; 2002; Peñaloza, 2000; Ritson & Elliott, 1999).

Hofstede (1984) initially proposed four dimensions of culture. Of these dimensions, individualism/collectivism has received a great deal of research attention, especially in cross-cultural studies (De Mooij, 2015; Gelfand, Aycan, Erez, & Leung, 2017; Minkov et al., 2017; Zhang, Liang, & Sun, 2013). Individualism refers to situations where people only look after themselves and their immediate family, whereas collectivism refers to situations where people belong to groups and look after others in exchange for loyalty (Hofstede & Bond, 1984). Individualism focuses on personal goals and situations where individuals are independent of one another. Conversely, collectivist culture emphasises belonging to a group and situations where groups create mutual obligations for individuals (Lonner, Berry, & Hofstede, 1980; Oyserman & Lee, 2008).

Unlike most Western societies that have higher scores on individualism, Asian countries are more collectivist (Cho et al., 2013). In particular, China has unique cultural

characteristics. China's political system (Wang & Lin, 2009) has been shaped by Confucianism, Buddhism, and Maoism. These ideologies have lasted for thousands of years and have affected its generations (Wan et al., 2009). The collectivism of the Chinese is in keeping with the study of Zha, Walczyk, Griffith-Ross, Tobacyk, and Walczyk (2006). They surveyed 55 American and 56 Chinese doctoral students on their sense of individualism and collectivism. The results show that Americans have greater individualism, while Chinese are more collectivistic. Hepple and Dennison (2017) compared the culture of China and the UK and found that Chinese consumers are greatly influenced by their social group when expressing purchase intentions and making purchasing decisions. Chinese consumers have a greater emotional dependence on the group and seek greater group harmony than UK consumers.

The Chinese people's collectivist behaviour is determined by their Confucianist thinking because Confucianism is one of the behavioural and moral guides for the Chinese (Fan, 2000). Confucian values comprise three value systems: Yi (morality), Ren (benevolence), and Li (ritual) (Lu, 1998). Among them, Yi defines collectivism "not only as a cultural trait but also as a moral attribute, acting in the interests of family, group, and society is an indication of moral-ethical behaviour" (Lu, 1998, p.95). Referring to consumption, Confucianism imposes a feeling of guilt on people when they buy luxuries and feelings of ease when they spend on necessities. From this point of view, Confucianism helps to restrain purchasing with a positive effect on Chinese green consumption (Yan, 2013). Similarly, Christensen (2017) argues that Confucianism has the ability to restrict people's use of natural resources and can help to restrain consumers' desires and demands.

However, Mianzi (also known as face) is also imperative in Chinese culture. "Face is essentially the recognition by others of one's social standing and position" (Lockett, 1988, p.488). Protecting an individual's Mianzi is the equivalent of protecting a person's dignity and prestige (Buckley, Clegg, & Tan, 2006) because Mianzi reflects social self-esteem, reputation, pride, and respectability in social contexts (Ting-Toomey

& Kurogi, 1998). Mianzi plays an important role for the Chinese, as it embodies prestige, achieving self-satisfaction, and being successful in life (Ang & Leong, 2000). Sun et al. (2014) point out that Mianzi can influence the purchase behaviour of Chinese consumers. For example, Chinese consumers will buy something extremely expensive to manifest their status, and they are interested in luxury goods to maintain their face. He, Cai, Deng, and Li (2016) studied non-green behaviour in approximately 600 consumers in four Chinese cities (e.g., food waste and excessive use of packaging products). They found face perception to be a significantly positive factor in non-green consumption. In Chinese culture, banquets represent status and the “face” of the host. It brings shame to the host for the guests to finish all the food on their plates, as this may mean the guests have not had enough to eat. Thus, face perception increases non-green behaviour in Chinese consumers, in particular, in providing excessive food in banquets (i.e., wastage).

Researchers have explored how collectivism (Chan & Lau, 2002), Confucianism (Christensen, 2017; Yan, 2013), and Mianzi (He et al., 2016; Sun et al., 2014) account for Chinese buying behaviours and non-green behaviours. However, there is still limited understanding as to whether these Chinese traditional values will positively or negatively influence the sustainable fast fashion consumption of young Chinese consumers.

The key research propositions stems from the literature review include why young Chinese consumers buy fast fashion products in the context of Chinese rising environmental awareness. It will be meaningful to explore the role that fashion and sustainability play in these young consumers’ daily lives as well as the influence of Chinese culture for their fashion purchase decisions.

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1 Research methods

This study aims to explore the critical factors that may influence the fast fashion purchase decisions of young Chinese consumers and the role that fashion and sustainability plays in their daily lives. The focus of this study is on the specific phenomenon of consumer behaviour (Zikmund, Ward, Lowe, Winzar, & Babin, 2011). Qualitative research explores the attitudes and behaviour of the consumers (Bryman & Bell, 2015) and serves to provide a greater understanding of the phenomenon under investigation as background information (Zikmund et al., 2011). It focuses on real-life contextual settings and should help to constitute an intersubjective world (Johnstone & Tan, 2015b). Thus, this study adopted the qualitative research method.

A focus group methodology was used to gather the data. Focus groups have been developed most strongly in the marketing area since the mid-20th century (Ritchie, Lewis, Nicholls, & Ormston, 2013). They are a form of qualitative research, based on group interviews, which have been widely used in social science research to explore interactions within groups (Morgan, 1996b; 1997; Ritchie et al., 2013). Focus groups work particularly well when studying feelings, perceptions, and thinking about products, issues, or ideas (Krueger & Casey, 2014; Silverman, 2016).

3.1.1 Focus group (main study)

Five focus groups were conducted during the course of this study. Each was audio recorded and professionally transcribed. It is important to gain new perspectives and new insights via spontaneous group discussion and the interactions of group members as this study is exploratory (Hartman, 2004; Morgan, 1996b; Stewart & Shamdasani, 2014). Once the examination reaches “theoretical saturation” (Johnstone & Tan, 2015b), no further focus groups need to be conducted since no new insights will be generated

(Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Similar to this study, Grant and Stephen (2005) conducted four focus groups to explore the societal communication factors that influence fashion buying behaviours of young girls. Holm, Norén Fahlman, and Wassén (2017) conducted five focus groups to explore the attitudes towards eco-fashion of Gen Y females. Kamenidou, Mylonakis, and Nikolouli (2007) conducted five focus groups to explore the consumer purchasing reasons behind high fashion clothing, etc. In this study, it was deemed that theoretical saturation had been reached after five focus groups.

Each focus group was comprised of four friends with strong, established relationships prior to the study. Prior relationships were important because focus groups are used to promote self-disclosure by the participants, but whether this is effective depends on the individuals. For example, outgoing people can quickly become engaged in discussions and can express their thoughts to others with confidence, while introverted people may find that difficult without effort, trust, and encouragement (Krueger & Casey, 2014; Ritchie et al., 2013). However, an environment of friends is nonthreatening and permissive, which ensures the discussion is more relaxed and comfortable, making participants feel freer to share their insights (Edmunds, 2000; Krueger & Casey, 2014). People are also more likely to be themselves in groups of friends than with strangers (Edney & Grundmann, 1979). Most importantly, based on Miller et al.'s (1993) framework, social factors may influence these young consumers' fashion purchases. A group of friends are enjoying share information and provide entertainment together to develop friendships and strengthen group norms. This interaction process could help them increase closeness of social connections (Dunbar, 2004). Talking particular brands or fashion trends is one of the most attractive topics among these young consumers, like discussing who is wearing what, is that style hot, and is he or she dressed appropriately (Lee & E. Workman, 2014). It was essential that the focus groups were conducted within groups of friends to capture the effects of social interactions on these young consumers. Group of friends could relate to each other's comments with their shared daily lives. Compared with a group of non-connected individuals, there is no need to encourage participants to engage with one another or formulate their ideas

(Kitzinger, 1995).

According to Edney and Grundmann (1979), four people is the optimum size for highly-effective group interactions. Groups of more than four people will have lower quality interactions, especially when the participants are strangers. Therefore, an individual's personality is most authentic in groups of four friends (Edney & Grundmann, 1979). A relaxed and harmonious atmosphere was created to make sure everyone who participated in the study felt free to speak their mind. Each focus group lasted approximately one hour. A moderator's guide (Appendix3: Moderator's Guide) was used to facilitate the discussion and the interactions, which followed Morgan's (1996a; 1996b) focus group guidelines.

To satisfy the requirement of focus groups of friends, snowball sampling was used to form each group. First, the researcher contacted several Chinese friends and asked whether they were interested in this study. Second, five friends, aged between 18 and 30 years old, who are fast fashion consumers and were keen to participate in this study were identified. Third, these individuals were asked to invite three additional friends who were also within the same age group to form a focus group. Each group contained four people, which means the originally identified individual plus three friends.

The resulting focus groups involved a total of 20 participants, including three all-female groups, one all-male group, and one mixed gender group. This sample provided a diverse range of insights into the research objectives (see Appendix 1: Focus Group Participant Descriptions). Snowball sampling refers to the social structures and relationships among individuals in social science literature (Coleman, 1958; Noy, 2008). It provides an efficient way of acquiring information from both groups and also from individuals within the groups (Noy, 2008). This method is uniquely suited to this study because it allows interactional objectives to be sampled (Biernacki & Waldorf, 1981), and this study aims to explore the social interactions of young Chinese consumers.

During the recruitment process and on the participant consent form, the concept of

sustainability was concealed (see Appendix 5: Participant Information and Consent Form (Version A)). Only “what influences young consumers to purchase fast fashion clothing” was included on the information presented to participants at the beginning of the study and sustainability was not mentioned during the focus groups until all questions about fast fashion’s negative aspects had been discussed (see Appendix 3: Moderator’s Guide 3 a). According to the literature, green topics are susceptible to social desirability issues. This means respondents may tend to provide answers in a way they feel is logically consistent with social desirability, or they may present themselves in a manner they believe others will regard favourably (Marino et al., 2010). Social desirability will have an effect on the validity of the research findings, and it is one of the most significant sources of bias (Nederhof, 1985). Participants might be prompted to contrive their responses if sustainability was mentioned at the beginning of the focus group. Therefore, a de-briefing was conducted at the end of the focus group, where the full research aims were disclosed to the participants. Following the debriefing, participants were given the opportunity to re-consent to their participation (see Appendix 6: Participant Information and Consent Form (Version b)).

3.1.2 Brief one-on-one interviews (follow-up study)

After the focus groups, one-on-one follow-up interviews were conducted with eight randomly selected focus group participants (see Appendix 2: One-on-one Interview Participants Description). The main purpose of these interviews was to gain additional insights into the findings of the focus group. Particular emphasis was placed on whether the participants expected the roles fashion and sustainability played in their lives to change over time. Follow-up interviews can explore specific opinions and in-depth experiences of focus group respondents to identify more perspectives and add more depth to the study (Morgan, 1996a). For example, when Roux and Dalvit (2014) conducted research on cell phone use in South Africa, they conducted one follow-up interview after the focus groups and found that females used mobile technology to stay in touch with friends. Mah, van der Vleuten, Ip, and Hills (2014) conducted several

follow-up telephone interviews after semi-structured interviews to collect supplementary information for their study on smart grid development in South Korea. Yang, Newman, and Forlizzi (2014) selected 15 participants from the original study and conducted follow-up interviews to ask about long-term experiences of using smart home devices.

Follow-up respondents were given an opportunity to sign the consent form (see Appendix 7: Participants Information and Consent form (Version C)). The interviews were guided by four structured questions (see Appendix 4: One-one-one Interview Guide).

3.1.3 Data collection and language

The participants of this study are Chinese; therefore, Mandarin was used to collect the data and translated into English for analysis. Not using the participants' native language might cause communication barriers, concepts, or words may be misunderstood, it may be impossible to express original meanings, and participants may not be able to talk freely about their thoughts (Birbili, 2000; Mohanty, 1995; Spivak, 1992). Hence, using the participants' native language to collect the data can help to overcome the difficulties and obstacles of language barriers (Maclean, 2007).

The translation process from Mandarin to English was done by Chinese online retail translation service agents. The researcher, who is fluent in both languages, then examined the transcripts against the original version to ensure the participants' true intentions were not misrepresented or omitted during the translation process. According to the equivalence paradigm (Pym, 2007), translation aims to achieve equal value, which means to express the same values from the target language in the original language (Chidlow, Plakoyiannaki, & Welch, 2014). To preserve the original expressions and meanings, only minimal editing was carried out on the translated data (English). As such, the translated data may contain grammatical errors, issues with punctuation and the sentence structure may at times appear as "unnatural" to native

English speakers.

3.1.4 Ethical considerations

Ethics is one of the most important considerations when conducting research (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). According to the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (National Health and Medical Research Council, 2007), researchers are responsible for protecting the welfare and rights of research participants. This study was approved by the Human Research Ethics Committees (HRECs) of Macquarie University before collecting the data (see Appendix 9: Human Research Ethics Approval).

3.2 Data analysis

Qualitative data analysis is the process of structuring and ordering a collected mass of data (Marshall & Rossman, 2014). The data need to be cleaned and well-structured to find relationships among the data and to be able to search for categories and themes. The discovered relationships were then explored to identify phenomena (AlYahmady & Alabri, 2013; Basit, 2003; McCracken, 1988). The data from the focus groups (main study) and the one-on-one interviews (follow-up study) was imported and analysed separately using NVivo 11.

NVivo 11 was selected because this software is considered to be the best analysis tool for handling the coding process (AlYahmady & Alabri, 2013). According to Bazeley and Jackson (2013), NVivo has five excellent task capabilities: managing data, managing ideas, querying data, visual modelling, and reporting. NVivo makes it easy and efficient to discover themes and is a highly accurate tool for recognising tendencies (Wong, 2008; Zamawe, 2015).

At the beginning of the analysis, three main themes were generated based on the three research questions: purchase drivers, the role of fashion, and the meaning of

sustainability. Themes are important elements that connect with the research questions, and, to some extent, reveal patterns of responses within the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Based on Miller et al.'s (1993) fashion perspectives, four child themes were further generated under purchase drivers. These included internal-individual factors, internal-social factors, external-individual factors, and external-social factors. This is a deductive (or top-down) approach to analysing data. It is also known as a theoretical thematic analysis, as this type of analysis is based on a theoretical or analytical area of interest (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Johnstone, 2017; Patton, 1990). After establishing these themes, the data was analysed following Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase thematic analysis (see Figure 3). The advantages of thematic analysis are: (1) it allows researchers to look for commonalities and explore themes across entire texts (Kellehear, 1993); and (2) researchers can pursue social relations, feelings, and perceptions through the texts (Dittmar & Drury, 2000).

Phase	Description of the process
1. Familiarizing yourself with your data:	Transcribing data (if necessary), reading and re-reading the data, noting down initial ideas.
2. Generating initial codes:	Coding interesting features of the data in a systematic fashion across the entire data set, collating data relevant to each code.
3. Searching for themes:	Collating codes into potential themes, gathering all data relevant to each potential theme.
4. Reviewing themes:	Checking if the themes work in relation to the coded extracts (Level 1) and the entire data set (Level 2), generating a thematic 'map' of the analysis.
5. Defining and naming themes:	Ongoing analysis to refine the specifics of each theme, and the overall story the analysis tells, generating clear definitions and names for each theme.
6. Producing the report:	The final opportunity for analysis. Selection of vivid, compelling extract examples, final analysis of selected extracts, relating back of the analysis to the research question and literature, producing a scholarly report of the analysis.

Figure 3.1: Phases of thematic analysis

Source: Braun and Clarke (2006)

Analysis was conducted using a step-by-step process. First, the transcribed data was carefully read and re-read to become familiar with the data. Second, top-line interesting data was collated into codes. Coding is a procedure of noting relevant phenomena, gathering examples of those phenomena, and analysing those phenomena to explore its structures and patterns (Basit, 2003; Kelle & Bird, 1995). Codes are extracted from

words or entire paragraphs of a transcript, and then relationships and connections among those words are found (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Third, codes were allocated into appropriate themes. Fourth, the themes were checked to determine whether all codes were appropriate and still fit the themes. In this phase, a new theme “fashion and sustainability balancing problems” emerged because the original three themes did not fit some codes. Then, an entire thematic analysis map was generated. Fifth, the codes and themes were reviewed again to check for appropriateness. Lastly, the finalised codes and themes were prepared for the findings report and discussion.

This chapter provided a detailed description of this study’s research methodology, including methods, samples, and data analysis procedures. The findings and discussions of the interviews are presented in the next chapter.

Chapter 4: Findings and discussions

The purpose of this study is to explore what drives young Chinese consumers to purchase fast fashion clothing and what role fashion and sustainability plays in their lives. Following the research questions, the findings are organised into four key themes: (1) the factors driving fast fashion product purchases; (2) the role of fashion in the daily lives of young Chinese consumers; (3) the meaning of sustainability to these young Chinese consumers; and (4) changes in the importance of fashion and sustainability according to their stage of life.

4.1 The factors driving fast fashion purchases

The findings were organised into internal-individual factors, internal-social factors, external-individual factors, and external-social factors using fashion theory (Sproles, 1974; 1979) and fashion perspectives (Miller et al., 1993).

4.1.1 Internal-individual factors

In Miller et al.'s (1993) fashion perspectives, internal-individual factors characterise the fashion process as an independent activity driven by endogenous factors from the perspective of the individual. In the context of this study, internal-individual factors include the endogenous factors that drive the fast fashion purchases of young Chinese consumers from their own perspectives.

a) The effect of low prices on consumer demand for fast fashion products

When the participants were asked about the main reasons they buy fast fashion, the words “cheap” and “low price” were not only frequently mentioned, but, in most cases, “cheap” was the first answer most provided. This indicates that “cheap” is a salient, top-of-mind fast fashion attribute. As the literature suggests, price is a key consideration in consumer purchasing decisions about fast fashion, and fast fashion consumers tend

to buy greater volumes of clothing at lower prices (Cook, Cook, Yurchisin, & Yurchisin, 2017; Gabrielli, Baghi, & Codeluppi, 2013; Joung, 2014). Fast fashion consumers buy the maximum amount of clothing by spending the minimum amount of money on each item, and they gain happiness through this process (Zarley Watson & Yan, 2013). In other words, the lower costs increases the consumers' demand for fast fashion products.

Young consumers like myself buy fast fashion products mainly because they are cheap. (FG2F2)

The price is affordable and cheap; fast fashion garments are the cheapest in the shopping centre. (FG4M3)

Moreover, the findings indicate that low prices also make consumers feel less distressed about their consumption.

It is cheap... if you have only worn [an item] once or twice and then you don't want to wear it anymore, you won't feel regret... I buy these kinds of brands (fast fashion) frequently as they are not only in fashion but also cheap. I buy them almost three or four times a month with several pieces every time. (FG2F1)

Fast fashion has the style of luxury brands but the price is much cheaper than luxury brands. They are so cheap that we won't feel distressed if the clothes are set aside. (FG2F1)

Fast fashion products are cheap. You don't need to consider how much you earn this month and how long you can wear them when you are buying them. You won't feel distressed when throwing them away. (FG3F2)

The literature on consumer guilt states that guilt exists in consumer decision-making and purchasing situations (Burnett & Lunsford, 1994; Lascu, 1991; Steenhuisen, 1990). Financial guilt is the first dimension of consumer guilt. It usually emanates from extravagant expenditure, which means "spent" does not equal "deserve", for example, when a purchase costs two months' salary (Burnett & Lunsford, 1994). Consumers are most likely to experience consumer guilt when buying high-priced products (Dedeoğlu & Kazançoğlu, 2010). However, as the findings suggest, the low price of fast fashion products mean consumers do not feel guilty when buying them and will not feel

distressed when disposing of them. These circumstances have, therefore, further increased the attractiveness of fast fashion and, subsequently, the demand for fast fashion products with young Chinese consumers.

The findings above support Miller et al.'s (1993) demand model in that lower prices increase the consumer demand for fashion. Luxury fashion brands are often costly. Most young consumers have limited purchasing capacity. Fast fashion designs are based on the latest catwalk pieces. This meets the fashion needs of young consumers at lower prices. As such, the affordability of these fast fashion products has become one of the most important driving factors behind fast fashion purchases.

Interestingly, a comparison across the various focus groups revealed that only participants of Group 1 demonstrated some restraint in their demand for fast fashion. Unlike the remaining focus groups, most members of Group 1 commented that fast fashion would bring serious environmental problems and expressed relatively more mindful consumption attitudes about fast fashion products. The members of this focus group were mainly individuals working in the energy industry. This idiosyncratic finding from Group 1 confirms the extant literature about the positive roles environmental knowledge has on consumer purchasing decisions (Ali & Ahmad, 2016; Aman, Harun, & Hussein, 2012; Chan, 2001; Wahid, Rahbar, & Shyan, 2011).

It is part of the reason why we do not buy clothes so often now. It is acceptable to wear old clothes if they aren't worn out. (FG1F1)

The clothing in fast fashion brands updates too quickly. When modern styles are in, the old is out. It is a waste if we throw away old clothes, which is also harmful to the environment. (FG1F2)

I used to buy up-to-date clothes of low quality, but with a view to our environment. We would buy suitable clothes of high quality in order to wear them longer. (FG1F4)

The literature suggests that female and male consumers differ in their fashion purchase and consumption behaviour (Cho & Workman, 2014; Michon, Yu, Smith, & Chebat, 2008; Stokburger-Sauer & Teichmann, 2013; Workman & Cho, 2012; Workman & Lee,

2011). Women enjoy the clothes shopping process and usually shop for their emotional needs rather than their real needs (Cho & Workman, 2014). Emotional needs stimulate good and energetic feelings in consumers (Chan & Wong, 2012; Niinimäki, 2010), which leads to fashion-oriented impulse buying (Ko, 1993; Park et al., 2006). As a result, women tend to shop more both in frequency and volume. On the other hand, male consumers are more convenience-oriented. They focus more on utility and quality than female consumers (Workman & Cho, 2012).

Focus Group 4 consisted solely of young male participants. Members of this focus group reported that they buy clothing mainly for functional use, for example, for protection against freezing weather. Low price did not appear to have as much influence on the volume of fast fashion products they purchased, as opposed to their female counterparts. In other words, the findings suggest that the effect of low price on increasing demand for fast fashion products were stronger among young female consumers than male consumers.

Once the sudden drop in temperature made me shiver with cold. I went directly to Uniqlo, bought a coat, and put it on. Wow, feeling much better.
(FG4M2)

I only go clothing shopping when I really need a T-shirt or one pair of jeans. I don't like wandering around clothing stores. I prefer to play online games or go to the gym. (FG4M3)

b) Expression of personal image through fashion drives fast fashion purchases

The individualism-centred models of Miller et al.'s (1993) fashion perspectives emphasise fashion's function in the pursuit of individuality. The uniqueness motivation model indicates that people seek unique attributes in comparison to others in society.

Young consumers purchase fast fashion products to look better and express their self-image. To some extent, appearance can help to announce values and identity and communicate with others (Hunt & Miller, 1997). Fast fashion is a medium for young generations to communicate that they share the same symbolism with their fellows and

match their self-image. This argument is consistent with self-concept theory (Evans, 1989; Midgley & Wills, 1979; Stone, 1990) in that individuals desire to enhance their self-concept to achieve a better self. Young consumers are fascinated with wearing “cool clothing” because it can help them gain high levels of self-image, and it has a positive effect on their self-concept (Noh & Mosier, 2014). Cassidy and Schijndel (2011) explored what is “cool” for young consumers. They found that being fashionable through clothing is one of the cool things for them. Fast fashion brands offer the hottest and latest design. Therefore, fast fashion brands are “cool” for these young consumers. The self-expression of fast fashion caters to the pursuit of individuality in young consumers.

Fashionable clothes can make me attractive. We love pretty clothes and enjoy sharing fashion trends with friends. (FG1F2)

We humans have different personalities, so does fast fashion. Fast fashion has different styles, flamboyant or restrained. I can express my personality through fashion. (FG2F1)

Moreover, the findings show that fast fashion clothing is easy to match. Fast fashion allows young consumers to match clothes with bags, jewellery, etc. to create their own unique style. This is a creative generation that is fond of the latest fashion trends and devotes themselves to pursuing unique fashion styles (Latter, Phau, & Marchegiani, 2010; Rajamma, Pelton, Hsu, & Knight, 2010). Their need for uniqueness is often particularly satisfied through clothing (Kaiser, 1997). Avoiding similarity is one of the manifestations of a young consumer’s need for uniqueness (Latter et al., 2010). The ease of matching items increases the motivation for uniqueness in young consumers.

I am attracted by the design of fast fashion. It is easy to match, I can match it with luxury bags and jewellery. It’s cool. (FG2F3)

The above findings support Miller et al.’s (1993) individualism-centred model and uniqueness motivation model in that fast fashion helps young Chinese to express themselves and with their search for uniqueness. These motivations further drive young consumers’ demand for fast fashion products.

4.1.2 Internal-social factors

In Miller et al.'s (1993) fashion perspectives, the internal-social model views the fashion process as a single, independent activity driven by endogenous factors from the perspective of society. In this study, internal-social factors include the influence of groups (social and cultural) on the fast fashion purchasing and consumption behaviour of young Chinese consumers.

a) The influence of friends on fast fashion consumption

Almost all female participants mentioned that fast fashion stores are ideal places for friends to “hang out” together. Fast fashion stores usually have upbeat music, and the shop assistants never bother customers unless assistance is requested. Friends can, therefore, chat together and gossip while shopping and give each other suggestions about clothing styles. Participants reported they felt their friendships intensified and deepened while shopping at fast fashion stores.

I love shopping with friends at fast fashion stores. The upbeat music in the store makes for a joyful atmosphere to chat with each other. We can share fashion trends and give each other suggestions. This is wonderful. (FG2F2)

Luo (2005) finds the presence of peers increases the urge to purchase because shopping with friends has a positive impact on impulsive purchasing. Impulsive purchasing is defined as the unplanned or uncontrolled purchasing by consumers (Faber & Vohs, 2004; Kollat & Willett, 1967; Piron, 1991). It is affected by mood, and people who are happy tend to reward themselves more generously (Rook & Gardner, 1993). Therefore, friends chatting together, which is a relaxing and joyful environment for young people, could, arguably, lead to a willingness to spend more money than usual. This could subsequently increase their fast fashion purchase intentions. In addition, Gentina and Bonsu (2013) reveal that the frequency of shopping with friends is influenced by their relationships. The closer the friendships, the higher the shopping frequency. Therefore, if shopping at fast fashion stores helps young consumers maintain and deepen their

friendships, the closer their relationships, the higher the purchase frequency they may have at fast fashion stores.

I often go shopping with my close friends, rarely with so-called friends or colleagues. If we are not so close, I will feel uneasy when I'm in the fitting room. Because I always feel anxious [about] whether I let them wait too long outside the fitting room. (FG5F2)

Furthermore, the findings indicate that young Chinese females are more likely to hang out with friends of similar fashion taste because they have more topics in common. Social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) can explain this phenomenon: the group a person belongs to can significantly influence one's social life by instilling them with pride and self-respect. A group of people with a common interest or identity are referred to as an "in-group". Young female Chinese consumers with similar fashion tastes form an in-group and have more communications than other groups.

I like listening to my friends' suggestions to make purchase decisions when we are shopping together. (FG2F1)

Hanging out with similar fashion taste friends [means I] do not need to worry about the awkward moments of silence because we have so much to talk about. Such kinds of friends will give me practical advice when we are buying clothes. (FG3F1)

Interestingly, when male participants were asked whether they were more likely to hang out with people with similar fashion tastes, most answered "no". Males do not seem to be as concerned about fashion tastes. They care more about sports, games, photography, etc. This finding differs from McNeill and McKay (2016), who determined that young men in New Zealand use clothing to create a sense of self-identity, attain the security of group belonging, and reinforce links between themselves and their reference groups. Moreover, this finding suggests that young Chinese males might not be as fashion-sensitive as male consumers in Western cultures, at least within this study. However, caution should be taken when interpreting this finding in view of its limited sample size.

We are more likely to hang out with people who love [the] same sports, games, or other similar things. We seldom care about whether we have

similar fashion taste. (FG4M3)

This finding extends Miller et al.'s (1993) existing models regarding individual-social model to show that female and male young consumers respond differently to social influences when consuming fast fashion products (Cho & Workman, 2014; O'Cass, 2000; Workman & Cho, 2012).

b) The influence of cultural factors on fast fashion consumption

The findings show that Mianzi and collectivism among Chinese consumers are important reasons for young consumers to purchase fast fashion products, especially among male consumers. Some male participants mentioned that they are not interested in “fashion” at all, but they do care about how people evaluate their appearance. As the literature on Mianzi states, Mianzi plays a significant role for the Chinese because it embodies prestige, achieving self-satisfaction, and being successful in life (Ang & Leong, 2000). Fashion's diffusion in China is driven by Mianzi to a certain degree. For example, once a new fashion item is worn by someone of note, others will follow that trend to declare they are also fashionable and preserve their Mianzi (Kwan, Yeung, & Au, 2003). Moreover, as the fashion-conscious literature states, fashion motivations in Western countries and Confucian societies are completely different (Parker, Hermans, & Schaefer, 2004). Westerners focus on living an authentic life and are free to express their inner values, while the Chinese feel pressure to “save face” (Salzman, Matathia, & O'Reilly, 2003; Wong & Ahuvia, 1998). Fast fashion products have trendy elements, even for those who are not sensitive to fashion. Therefore, wearing fast fashion clothing is a safe, “never-go-wrong” option. Consequently, some young Chinese consumers, especially males, buy fast fashion to avoid being labelled as “old-fashioned” and maintain their Mianzi.

As a male, I'm not interested in fashion trends, but I will feel embarrassed if others say I'm out of fashion. That's my face, I need to protect my image. Fast fashion products have the best value to dress me fashionably. With those pieces of clothing in the closet, I'll never go wrong. (FG4M1)

In addition, Chinese are collectivist and seek conformity. They place emphasis on the collective self rather than the individual self, due to the traditional Confucian culture (Cho et al., 2013; Zha et al., 2006). On the one hand, young Chinese consumers seek unique styles to stand out as a new generation. On the other hand, they feel the need to be similar to members of their own in-group. This might seem contradictory, but such behaviour co-exists among young Chinese consumers as they seek to conform to the expectations of their social groups (McKechnie, Tynan, & Liu, 2015). The “ease of matching” fast fashion clothing satisfies fashion-sensitive consumers’ desires for uniqueness, while the trendy styles of fast fashion products ensures fashion-insensitive consumers never feel isolated from their social groups.

All my colleagues are fashionable, I don’t want to be old-fashioned. I’ll feel awkward to be left alone. Either I’m the only person to do something or not to do something. We like following others to show that we are gregarious. The others choose fast fashion brands; I also want to choose fast fashion brands. (FG3F1)

Collective behaviour and the psychology of conformability account for my fast fashion purchases. To be honest, we often evaluate people by their clothes. I am concerned about how people evaluate me, I don’t want to be dowdy and out of place. A fast fashion store is a place where I can spend less money and less time to keep up-to-date with fashion trends. (FG3M1)

The adoption and diffusion model from Miller et al.’s (Miller et al., 1993) fashion perspectives states that a particular style will spread in society until everyone has adopted the style. Their collective behaviour theory reflects that fashionable trends can be controlled by the collective force of individuals. The findings above support both Miller et al.’s (1993) adoption and diffusion model and collective behaviour theory in that the effects of these two models are apparent in the fast fashion purchase behaviours of young Chinese consumers because of traditional Chinese culture. Once a particular fashion trend has been adopted by the members of a social group, other fashion-sensitive group members will imitate the trend. Fashion-insensitive consumers will also imitate the trend to maintain Mianzi. Collectivism also exacerbates young Chinese consumers’ desires for fast fashion products because they are afraid to be isolated from

their social groups. If other people in the group purchase fast fashion products, they will also be driven to make purchases to conform and harmonise with the group.

The intricate roles of Mianzi and collectivism in driving fashion consumption are unique to Chinese culture. For example, a study by McNeill and McKay (2016) of young males in New Zealand found that they use clothing to create a sense of self-identity, to attain the security of group belonging, and to reinforce the links between themselves and their reference groups. In the context of Chinese consumers, it is Mianzi and the desire to conform to group norms (collectivism) that truly underpin the reasons these young consumers follow and adopt new fashion trends, even though they also appear to use fashion as a way to create a sense of self-identity and gain group acceptance.

c) The effect of celebrity on fast fashion consumption

Young Chinese consumers are greatly influenced by the celebrities who purchase fast fashion products. They are keen on watching fashion shows, movies, and surfing the Internet to get the latest fashion trends. They learn from celebrities and adopt their styles of dress, sharing these trends via social media with their friends. Imitating fashion trends and spreading celebrity styles to young consumers increases their demand for fast fashion products. As the literature states, Gen Y and Gen Z can easily access information through the Internet and share their lives with their friends through social media (Eastman et al., 2013). They have numerous ways to access information, and they are more open-minded than ever before (Wolburg & Pokrywczynski, 2001). Fast fashion brands provide young Chinese consumers with affordable opportunities and a variety of fashionable choices to imitate celebrity styles.

I always keep an eye on celebrity dresses. If I'm fond of one outfit, I will look for it in fast fashion stores. (FG1F3)

I like watching fashion shows, movies, and reading fashion magazines. I often get inspired through models or stars, and will try to find similar styles in fast fashion stores. (FG5F4)

Trickle-down theory in Miller et al.'s (1993) fashion perspectives suggests that the imitation of a new object travels from the upper classes to the lower classes. After a new object becomes “not new”, it is replaced, and consumers move on to another new object. This is an endless cycle that keeps repeating.

The findings above support Miller et al.'s (1993) trickle-down theory. The endlessly changing fashion cycle stimulates infinite demand for fast fashion clothing in young Chinese consumers.

4.1.3 External-individual factors

In Miller et al.'s (1993) fashion perspectives, external-individual models perceive the fashion process as reflecting change within a society driven by exogenous factors from the perspective of the individual. Therefore, the external-individual factors in this study reflect the exogenous factors of young Chinese consumers' fast fashion purchasing behaviour from the perspective of the individual. In particular, the aesthetic perceptions and learning model in the fashion perspectives framework (Miller et al., 1993) indicates that consumers make an initial evaluation when they discover new things, and they learn to like and accept them if the new stimuli are not too complicated or unconventional.

Young Chinese consumers purchase fast fashion products because the styles are easy to adopt and ready-to-wear in daily life. As the literature on consumer learning processes suggests, consumers continually explore new stimuli, but their “like” of a new object depends on how different and how complex it is from an object they are currently familiar with (Lowe & Corkindale, 1998; Sproles, 1985). If the object is too different or complex, it will not be accepted (Sproles, 1985). Some of the focus group participants commented that a new luxury fashion style is sometimes not applicable to ordinary people because it is too flamboyant or it is more suitable for the stages or the media spotlight. Fast fashion, however, is not only trendy but the designs often appeal

to the general public and are ready-to-wear. As such, fast fashion is attractive to young consumers because it is widely appropriate and easily adopted.

The latest trends of fast fashion are more acceptable than other fashion brands. (FG2F1)

I like reading fashion magazines, but the styles in the magazines are too different and too exaggerated. They are hard to imitate in our daily life. That's why fast fashion attracts me a lot, almost all the styles of fast fashion suit my daily life. (FG3M2)

These findings support Miller et al.'s (1993) aesthetic perceptions and learning model in that fast fashion products are created for ordinary people. The clothing is fashionable. It is easily accepted and adopted by young consumers. This subsequently fuels the purchase and consumption of fast fashion products.

4.1.4 External-social factors

The external-social models in Miller et al.'s (1993) fashion perspectives framework posit the fashion process as a reflecting change within a society driven by exogenous factors from the perspectives of society. This includes factors, such as market infrastructure, with an emphasis on how the availability, variety, affordability, and convenience of fashion drives the fashion process (Miller et al., 1993).

a) Mass-market model: fast fashion is convenient and widely available

Focus group participants commented that they buy fast fashion because it is widely available and easy to access. Unlike luxury brands, which have a limited number of stores, fast fashion stores are everywhere. Consumers can shop for the latest clothing trends whenever they want, making it a convenient alternative to luxury fashion. Moreover, fast fashion stores sell a wide range of garments, providing one-stop convenience to shoppers. According to the fashion literature, fashion was rare and expensive before fast fashion emerged and was only available to the upper class. Due to mass marketing and production, fast fashion has now replaced expensive fashion and

has made fashion available to all socioeconomic classes (Barnes & Lea-Greenwood, 2010; Ghemawat et al., 2003; Mihm, 2010; Sproles, 1985).

You can get all kinds of clothes in fast fashion stores, fashionable style or comfortable style, formal suits, party dress, pyjama, even underwear. It is very convenient. (FG2F3)

Clothes of all family members are available to buy in fast fashion stores. It's convenient and time saving. (FG3F1)

Their stores can be seen everywhere. Most of the stores [are] located on the entry level of the shopping centre. (FG4M2)

The mass-market model of fast fashion, supported by mass production and mass communication, has made fashion available to consumers of diverse backgrounds. New styles are no longer limited to the privileged upper classes. Indeed, all people of all classes can adopt new styles at the same time. In other words, the mass-market model of fast fashion not only drives consumption through its wide distribution, it also enables young Chinese consumers with limited financial ability to keep up-to-date with the latest fashion trends easily and affordably.

b) A pleasant store environment induces purchases

As reported in Section 4.1.2, focus group participants reported that they enjoy shopping at fast fashion stores for the atmosphere. Store environments and ambience influence consumer emotions and, subsequently, their purchasing behaviour (Mohan, Sivakumaran, & Sharma, 2013; Sherman, Mathur, & Smith, 1997). For example, bright colours or upbeat music have a positive impact on pleasure, and pleasure has a positive influence on the money and time spent in stores (Sherman et al., 1997). Friendly employees also help to increase consumers' pleasure, which leads to enhanced purchase quantity and frequency (Mattila & Wirtz, 2008). Through upbeat music and friendly staff, fast fashion stores provide young consumers with a pleasant environment for frequent shopping.

I love shopping with friends at fast fashion stores. The upbeat music in the

store makes for a joyful atmosphere to chat with each other. (FG2F2)

I don't like store assistants following me around when I go shopping. Fast fashion staff never bother you unless you need them. When you need them, they are friendly and help you. I really like this kind of shopping environment. (FG4M2)

4.1.5 Summary of the key drivers behind fast fashion purchasing

This study aims to explore the factors driving young Chinese consumers' fast fashion purchase. Figure 4.1 summarises the key findings according to Miller et al.'s (1993) fashion perspectives models.

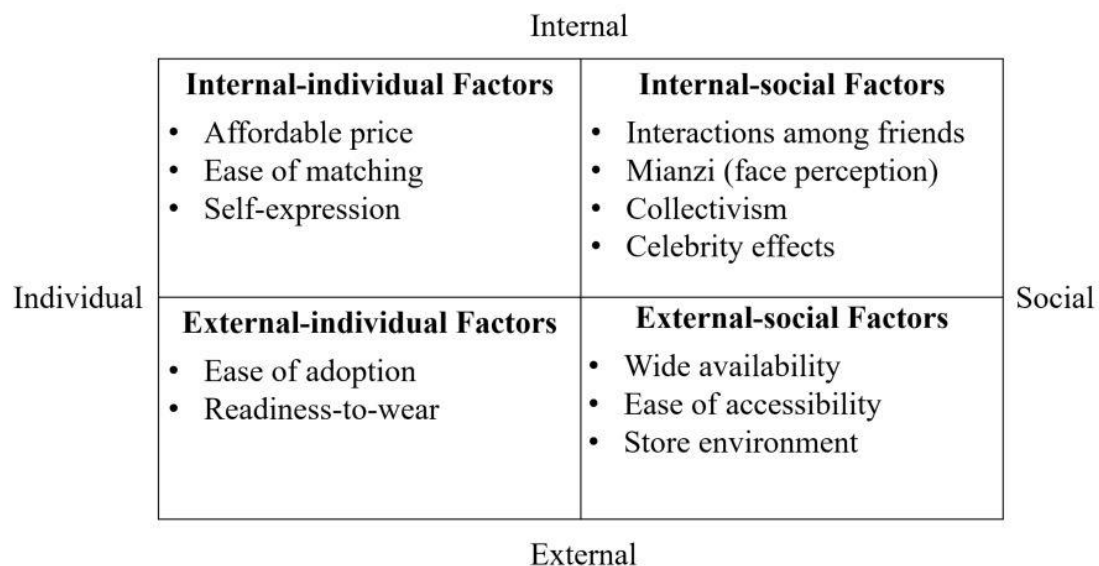


Figure 4.1: Fast fashion products purchase driving factors

The findings are consistent with most factors posited in Miller et al.'s (1993) framework. Additionally, several new factors were identified. For example, the interaction of friends, Mianzi, and a pleasant store environment. Discovery of these new factors can be attributed to: (1) fast fashion and its particular characteristics, which are different from other types of fashion; and (2) the particular purchasing behaviour of Chinese people, which is influenced by their traditional culture and is unlike Western culture, for example, Mianzi, and collectivism.

4.2 The role of fashion in the daily lives of young Chinese consumers

The findings from the focus groups suggest that fashion plays three key roles in the daily lives of these young Chinese consumers and that these key roles have contributed to driving fast fashion purchases (reported in Section 4.1). To avoid repetition, the objective of this section is to briefly report the key findings from an alternative perspective.

(1) To communicate

The findings show that fashion plays a role as a communication medium for young Chinese to make friends and helps them gain acceptance by others. This mirrors social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) in that young people – university students for example – are afraid of isolation and seek belongingness. Thus, they are more driven to make friends. Fashion is one of the symbols for claiming an in-group and is an easy form of communication with others. Moreover, the literature on self-concept states that people's appearances sometimes can help them to announce their identities and communicate with others (Evans, 1989; Midgley & Wills, 1979; Stone, 1990). The way people dress enhances their personal image and brings positive social influence (Ruane & Wallace, 2015). Therefore, presenting a fashionable appearance and particular tastes helps young Chinese consumers announce their values and identity, and helps them to make more friends.

I just started my university life; sometimes we need 'fashion' to make friends. ... We girls often get together talking about the latest fashion trend, and what celebrities wear in public. Dressing [in] fashionable clothes for me means a sunny, positive attitude towards life, and having the vitality to make campus life better. (FG1F2)

(2) To attract

Like all young people, Chinese consumers also dream of finding a partner. Dressing in

fashionable clothing is attractive and impressive in matters of the heart. As the social psychology literature states, dress as a stimulus can reflect one's behaviour, belief, attitude, feelings, and perceptions (Johnson et al., 2014), and dressing in provocative clothing is significantly more attractive than plain clothing (Holland & Haslam, 2013). According to a Chinese saying, "One's inner beauty is important, but others can hardly see the beauty through a slovenly appearance." Fashion provides the tools and, thus, the opportunities for those young Chinese who are seeking partners and loved ones.

I dress up to find a boyfriend... (FG2F1)

I haven't got a boyfriend now. I need to dress myself up to impress boys. The so-called "appearance is not important at all, I only focus on what's inside" is totally false. Focusing on the inside is based on whether he is satisfied with your appearance. Firstly, you should have an attractive appearance, then it will come to your insides. Fashion could dress me up to be attractive girl and determine my mood. (FG2F1)

(3) To maintain Mianzi

Mianzi is a paramount driving factor of young Chinese fast fashion purchasing. Mianzi is vital in Chinese daily life. It represents reputation, pride, and respectability (He et al., 2016). For example, in the Chinese culture, respectability comes with one's age, among other intricate factors, such as occupation, social/family status, or life achievements. Young Chinese consumers who are students or in the early years of their career are often too young to receive respectability by default because they lack work experience and job performance. Fashion, therefore, serves as an instrument to give them confidence, feel good, and help them maintain their Mianzi.

As a male, fashion means nothing for me in my daily life. However, the issue of face doesn't allow me to ignore the role of fashion. I don't want others to look down me. ... Fashion can make me feel confident in my dressing, and encourage me to communicate with others. Fashion makes a great-looking package. We all hide ourselves within this package to make ourselves look fantastic. ... Fashion makes me feel good and helps to maintain this kind of feeling. (FG4M1)

In summary, fashion is not only about following the trends. For young Chinese consumers, fashion is intertwined with social influence and plays an intricate and inseparable role in their daily lives. These young Chinese consumers need fashion to express themselves and to convey their positive social influence.

4.3 The meaning of sustainability in the daily lives of young Chinese consumers

The participants reported that they pay a great deal of attention to environmental protection in their daily life. For example, they do not litter, they classify their garbage, try to conserve energy and water, use their own bag when they shop, use rechargeable batteries, and do what they can to lower their carbon emissions, such as taking public transport and buying low-emission cars. These environmentally-friendly practices are consistent with the suggestion that the Chinese have an increasing awareness about protecting the environment (Hang & Chunguang, 2015; Huang et al., 2006; Wong, 2003; Ye et al., 2016). They are willing to put their environmental responsibilities into practice (Huang et al., 2006), and even think of substitutes for fireworks and firecrackers to celebrate Chinese New Year (Ye et al., 2016).

No littering outside, do garbage classification, turn off the lights when going out, etc. (FG3F2)

I prefer to buy rechargeable batteries in my daily life, try my best to save water and electricity, and take public transportation as much as possible. (FG2F1)

I love performance cars but considering our environment I chose a low-emission car to reduce carbon emissions. In summer, I set the air conditioner to 25 degrees, also to reduce carbon emissions. (FG4M1)

I always bring my own bag to the supermarket. If I forget to take it, I will buy a cloth bag and never ask for a plastic bag. Cloth bags are more expensive than plastic bags, but they can help to reduce environmental pollution. (FG5F4)

However, when the participants were asked about the negative aspects of fast fashion without being prompted about the “environment” or “sustainability”, only the members of Focus Group 1 commented on the seriousness of its environmental impacts. It is worth noting that the members of this group work in the energy industry. The remaining focus group participants did not relate fast fashion to sustainability or the environment. For these participants, the negative aspects of fast fashion included inferior quality, non-durability, and attractive, trendy clothing that caused them to spend more money on frequent shopping.

I think there are too frequent discounts. I was very angry because I bought a lot of clothes but have not yet worn, and then they began to be discounted. (FG2F3)

The lifespan for fast fashion clothes is too short. ... Fast fashion clothes won't last long either due to their inferior quality. (FG3M2)

Outfit clashes (with friends) often happen due to our high purchase frequency. (FG4M3)

This finding clearly demonstrates that most participants are ignorant about the environmental issues related to fast fashion. This lack of awareness presents a key barrier to promoting more sustainable fashion consumption to young consumers. Following this observation, the focus group members, excluding Focus Group 1, were shown a short documentary video about the environmental impacts of fast fashion production, consumption, and disposal as a way to enrich their knowledge. After watching the video, most respondents expressed their concerns about sustainability and showed determination to lower their need for fashion. However, and most interestingly, many also admitted that they could hardly promise never to purchase fast fashion clothing again for there were several barriers to being more sustainable in their fashion consumption. The following sections report the key findings.

4.3.1 Invisible environmental impacts

The participants reported that the environmental issues related to fast fashion are

invisible. They commented that it is easier to pay attention to the visible environmental problems, like wasting water and dropping litter, because they have been sufficiently educated to protect the environment in these ways since children. In other words, they have enough knowledge about visible environmental protection. However, they were unaware that the environmental pollution from fast fashion production and consumption was so serious. They lacked knowledge of the environmental disruption caused by fast fashion. This finding provides “reverse-evidence” for the effects of environmental knowledge on consumers’ green purchasing behaviour (Ali & Ahmad, 2016; Aman et al., 2012; Chan, 2001; Wahid et al., 2011).

I never thought that clothes pollution was so severe. But when I buy household appliances, I will consider the energy efficiency or something else related to sustainability. (FG5F1)

I never think of sustainability when I buy clothes but I am trying to have a low-carbon lifestyle. (FG4M4)

We don't have environmental awareness about fast fashion sustainability, and we don't know that it is not good to buy fast fashion garments so often. (FG5F4)

Furthermore, even after they were shown the serious environmental issues caused by the fast fashion industry, some participants struggled to grasp the idea of “pollution produced by the clothes” as the damage was abstract and invisible to them.

We can't distinguish right from wrong in our daily lives towards environmental sustainability if we haven't done any research about environmental protection. As you mentioned, fast fashion causes environmental damage. However, we ordinary people can never know there is relationship between fast fashion and environmental sustainability. We lacking access to the information, as well as to public service advertising to tell us that is bad for environment. (FG4M1)

The notion of visible and invisible environmental problems are discussed in water resource literature. Not all environmental vandalism acts are direct, for example, changes in the creeping water table and the degradation of water-dependent

ecosystems. Similarly, not all water resource destruction phenomena are visible, for instance, the growing eutrophication and the endocrine disruptors found in water sources (Falkenmark, 2001). Water flows through visible and invisible parts of systems. When it flows underground or it evaporates, it becomes invisible; when it comes up through rivers or seas, it becomes visible. Covitt, Gunckel, and Anderson (2009) find from their water study that people often ignore the invisible aspects of water systems.

It is interesting to find that the implications of visible and invisible environmental problems also exist in consumer behaviour. The findings suggest that consumers always pay attention to visible environmental problems but ignore the invisible ones due to a lack of environmental protection knowledge.

As a consumer, I never thought buying fast fashion clothes would do harm to our environment. We will surely avoid creating visible pollution such as avoid wasting water and dropping litter. However, to those invisible pollution, like [the pollution] produced in fast fashion industry, I have never heard of that. Yes, I never knew that clothes pollution is so serious, it is awful. (FG3F2)

It's hard for me to promise that I will never buy fast fashion clothing. To be honest, the pollution produced by one piece of clothing is not visible to me. It's hard to resist the temptation of fashionable fast fashion products. (FG3M2)

Environmental problems began to emerge in China because of the serious fog in recent years. Only on seeing the harm can we really think what we should do. It's hard for ordinary people to act if they can't see the harm. (FG4M3)

We can see the waste of food and battery pollution, but we can't see the pollution produced by clothes. We lacking this kind of knowledge. (FG5F1)

4.3.2 The effects of culture

The effects of Mianzi were discussed earlier. However, it is clear that Mianzi and collectivism account for young Chinese consumers' demand for fashion. This high

demand and their limited financial capacity consequently form another key barrier to promoting more sustainably-produced fashion products to young Chinese consumers.

Moreover, Chinese are family-centred. As a participant commented, Chinese see themselves having a greater responsibility to their family than to society. This is consistent with the viewpoint of Fan (2000) that Confucianism orients Chinese behaviour toward the family. Chinese always consider how their family will benefit before taking action (Lowe & Corkindale, 1998). This theme is reflected in fast fashion buying behaviour of young Chinese, who choose cost-effective fast fashion products to satisfy their fashion and clothing needs. They are not willing to spend more on environmental responsibility because they have a limited income. They would prefer to save money and supporting their family, leaving fast fashion's environmental problems behind or for the future to deal with.

Chinese people are family-centred, we are more responsible to our family rather than society. Social responsibility comes behind familial responsibility. I should earn more money for the whole family and make sure my wife and child can have a better life. (FG3M2)

4.3.3 The effects of government practices

According to some participants, young Chinese consumers are incapable of dealing with the environmental issues associated with fast fashion because of a lack of government support. This is consistent with Chan's (2000) study that the Chinese feel they lack government facilitating support. Chan (2000) argues that the Chinese government, businesses, and citizens should join together to achieve nationwide goals for sustainable development to avoid the dilemma of pursuing economic growth while protecting the environment. In recent years, the Chinese government has begun to place greater emphasis on building a harmonious society to balance economic growth with environmental protection (Hang & Chunguang, 2015). China's ambitions to reduce pollution (water pollution, air pollution, and solid waste) and targets for energy consumption are reflected in the government's recent National Five-Year Plans

(Eisenbarth, 2017). However, a shortfall in environmental regulations and policies has become the biggest weakness in implementing sustainability and is making these objectives difficult to reach (Stalley, 2010; Zhu, Pickles, & He, 2017). As a matter of fact, the dilemma has never faded (Tang, McLellan, Snowden, Zhang, & Höök, 2015; Woo & Song, 2013). China is still a developing country; the gap between the rich and the poor and between urban and rural citizens is tremendous. There are still people struggling for survival (Xie & Zhou, 2014).

Many resource- and pollution-intensive industries, such as the fast fashion industry and the garment manufacturing industry, harm the environment, but they can provide job opportunities for the poor. People from needy families who cannot afford a better education need these industries to feed their families. China has a long way to go both in economic development and in environmental protection. Therefore, the lack of government campaigns to raise awareness of the environmental impact of fast fashion is another barrier for young Chinese consumers in showing more concern about the environmental problems associated with fast fashion.

China has a huge gap between the rich and the poor. Many people are still struggling to survive. They haven't even got enough food. How can you let them pay attention to environmental issues? Only if the economy develops and the survival problems are solved, will they start to be concerned about the environment. After all, we haven't got to the stage where everyone is adequately fed and clothed. (FG4M1)

It's a dilemma for the Chinese government to balance the development between economic and environmental protection. Many industries do harm to the environment, but they can provide job opportunities and feed the workers' whole family. It's not that difficult if the government really wants to solve environmental issues. A top-down implementation of policy is the most efficient approach in China. However, Chinese people are exposed to greater survival pressures than Westerners are. Economic development is our priority now. The government won't take practical action in battle with environmental destruction. (FG3M1)

According to TPB (Ajzen, 1985), the three key determinants of behavioural intention are attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control. Attitude refers to the

degree to which behaviour is evaluated favourably or unfavourably. Among the focus group participants, the attraction of fast fashion obviously outweighs the invisible environmental impacts of fast fashion. Subjective norms imply social pressures to implement or not implement a behaviour. At present, the lack of information in the public press and government campaigns in relation to the environmental impact of fashion in China provide no social pressure for consumers wanting to consume less fast fashion. Until being environmentally-friendly in fashion consumption becomes a social norm, young Chinese consumers will not feel any social pressure, and simply continue their current practices. Whereas, Mianzi and collectivism represent great social pressure for young Chinese if they do not follow others, as they could struggle to gain social acceptance in this collectivist society. Perceived behavioural control means the perceived ease or difficulty of a particular behaviour. The factors driving fast fashion purchases, along with the Chinese collectivist social environment, make it extremely hard to refuse fast fashion clothing as an option.

As argued in Section 2.4 “The driver of consumer’s green consumption”, it was unknown as to whether subjective norms would have a positive or negative impact on young Chinese sustainable fast fashion consumption. Through the analysis, it is apparent that not only subjective norms but also behaviour attitudes and perceived behavioural controls are having a joint and negative impact on the sustainable fast fashion consumption of young Chinese consumers. Fast fashion is an affordable instrument for them to gain social acceptance within a collectivist society. At the present stage of their lives, fast fashion products appear to be indispensable to these young Chinese consumers, even when they come with an environmental cost.

4.4 Changes in the importance of fashion and sustainability according to stage of life

This section reports the findings of the eight short one-on-one follow-up interviews with the focus group participants. The key objective of these post-hoc interviews was

to gain further insights into how the young consumers think the importance of fashion and sustainability (as discussed in the main study – focus groups) might change as they go through different stages of their lives. In particular, the participants were asked to allocate 100 points between “fashion” and “sustainability” according to importance for the present, the immediate future, and the longer term. Table 3 presents the findings.

Code	Gender	Occupation	F-S (present)	F-S (immediate future)	F-S (longer term)
FG1F2	Female	Undergraduate student	50-50	40-60	20-80
FG1F4	Female	Energy company	20-80	20-80	10-90
FG2F1	Female	City exhibition hall	75-25	70-30	50-50
FG3F2	Female	Banking	80-20	60-40	30-70
FG3M2	Male	Transport service	80-20	60-40	30-70
FG4M1	Male	Construction	80-20	80-20	20-80
FG4M4	Male	Software engineer	1-99	1-99	1-99
FG5F2	Female	Government employee	50-50	50-50	30-70

Table 4.1: Allocation of 100 points according to importance
(F=fashion; S=sustainability; Immediate future=within 5 years; Longer term=beyond 5 years)

Most of the respondents anticipated that the importance of fashion and sustainability would most likely change in their longer-term future, with greater importance being placed on sustainability.

In the immediate future, a slight increase was given to sustainability. In the immediate future, university students or career new starters felt their personal roles in society would not change much. Thus, the role of fashion would also not change much. They still needed fashion to communicate with others, to gain respect from others, express a better self, make themselves appear attractive and confident, and to maintain face. However, they allocated many more points to sustainability in longer term. Female participants felt that marriage would change their lifestyles as they took on responsibilities for taking care of their family, which is natural in Chinese culture. They felt their attitudes towards fashion and sustainability might change as a result. All participants mentioned that, as their age increased, they would look for more

comfortable clothes rather than fashionable clothes. Moreover, as time went by, they would gain the respect of others through job performance instead of appearance. Their Mianzi would be maintained by a successful career, and fashion would no longer play such an important role in face perception. By that stage, they could focus more on sustainability and would have more financial ability for environmental responsibilities. Notwithstanding the limited sample size, the follow-up interviews revealed some interesting insights that could be worthwhile avenues for future research.

4.5 Summary of fast fashion and environmental protection

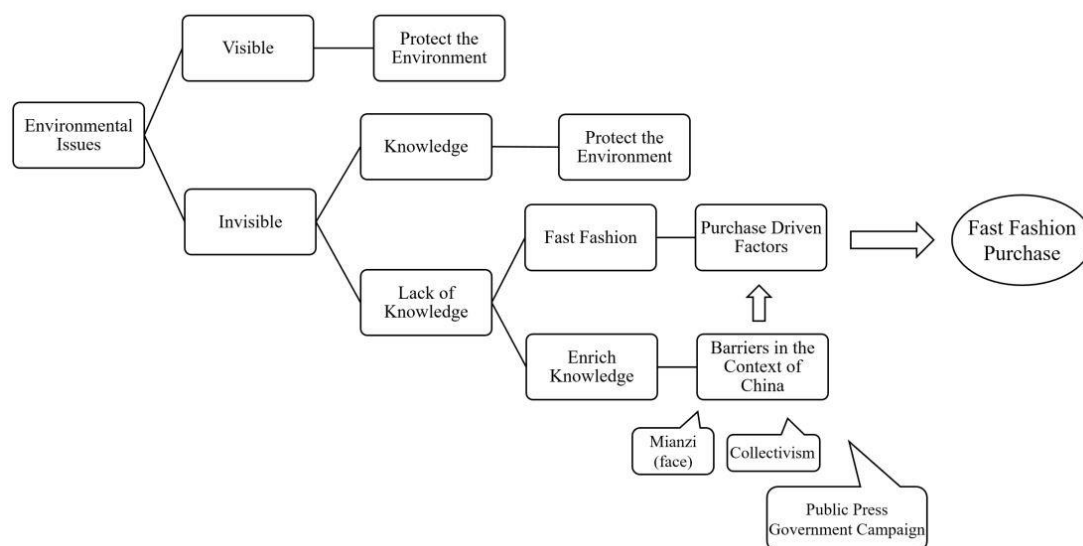


Figure 4.2: Environmental issues and fast fashion purchasing

Young Chinese consumers are concerned about visible environmental problems, such as water conservation and litter. They have been well-educated on these environmental issues and their responsibilities in environmental protection since children. However, most young Chinese consumers are unaware of invisible environmental problems, such as fast fashion consumption, except for those with occupations related to the environment. In this context, young Chinese consumers are divided into two groups:

(1) *Those working in environmental areas.* This group has sufficient knowledge of the environmental impact of fast fashion. They prefer to restrain their need for fashion and

actively carry out their responsibilities to environmental protection.

(2) Those who lack knowledge of the environmental impact of fast fashion. This group is driven to purchase fast fashion by a series of internal-external or individual-social factors. After learning about the environmental impacts of fast fashion, they showed a determination to reduce their purchase frequency but could not promise to do more. In addition to the key drivers for fast fashion purchases, these consumers face barriers for more environmentally-friendly fashion products, which often come with higher price tags. Mianzi, collectivism, and a lack of public press and government campaigns to raise awareness or provide incentives towards greener fashion consumptions number among those factors.

The lack of information in the public press and government campaigns in relation to the environmental impact of fast fashion also accounts for the lack of knowledge among these young consumers. Encouragingly, the participants anticipated that their attitudes towards sustainability would become increasingly positive as time goes by. They appear willing to use their job performance to gain the respect of others and maintain their Mianzi, rather than appearance. Once fashion no longer plays a role in their social acceptance, they may practice more environmental responsibility.

Chapter 5: Implications, limitations, and conclusions

5.1 Review of the research objectives and methods

China's large population base generates a massive demand for clothing, and, according to Euromonitor (2014), it will replace the US as the number one apparel market by 2017. Fast fashion attracts young Chinese consumers for its low cost and its trendy catwalk apparel. Chinese youth mix cheap garment with expensive accessories, like luxury bags or designer shoes, to form their own "mix & match styles", creating fashion trends that are followed by an increasing number of people (Gentlemen Marketing Agency, 2015). The boom in China's fast fashion industry has seen 14 fast fashion brands open over 350 new stores across the country in 2016 alone, (Liu, 2017). The numbers are still increasing with more planned store openings in 2017 (Liu, 2017; Mamillan, 2016). Meanwhile, garment disposal in China is a serious phenomenon with approximately 26 million tonnes (26 billion kilos) of textile waste being sent to landfills every year (Ravenhall, 2016). Fast fashion is causing increasing and excessive burdens to the environment due to waste in both production and consumption. As a result, the fast fashion industry along with a throw-away society are beginning to be exposed to the public eye (Caniato et al., 2012).

However, according to academic journals and the public press, the number of Chinese environmental consumers appears to be increasing in recent years due to increasing income and a growing education rate (Liu & Mu, 2016). Therefore, a question arises as to why Chinese consumers are still purchasing such high volumes of fast fashion clothing.

This study focuses on young Chinese consumers in a small attempt to begin answering this question. Five focus groups were conducted among groups of friends, along with

eight follow-up one-on-one interviews in Shandong Province, China. The results show that young Chinese are well educated and are active in visible environmental issues, such as saving energy and not littering. However, they are not conscious of invisible environmental issues. The environmental impacts of fast fashion are one such invisible issue for them. In fact, this research reveals that sustainability does not play any significant role in these consumers' fashion purchase decisions. Chinese traditional culture (e.g., Mianzi and collectivism) and a lack of government campaigns exacerbate their fast fashion consumption.

Using fashion theory (Sproles, 1974; 1979; 1981) and fashion perspectives (Miller et al., 1993), several factors were identified that drive young Chinese to buy fast fashion products. In view of the environmental impacts of fast fashion, these driving factors are essentially barriers to promoting greener fashion consumption to young consumers. The following sections discuss the contributions and implications of this study.

5.2 Contributions and implications

5.2.1 The key drivers behind fast fashion purchasing

Following Miller et al.'s (1993) fashion perspectives, the driving factors underpinning young Chinese consumers' fast fashion purchases can be categorised into:

(1) internal-individual factors: The low price and easy-to-match nature of fast fashion products, along with the use of fast fashion to express their self-image drive young Chinese consumers to demand more fast fashion products.

(2) internal-social factors: Shopping for fast fashion to hang out together increases young Chinese consumers' interactions with friends, Mianzi and Chinese collectivism. These pressures make them afraid to be labelled as old-fashioned, and the celebrity effect accelerates fast fashion's diffusion among these young consumers.

(3) external-individual factors: The trends and designs of fast fashion are easy to adopt

and ready-to-wear in their daily lives.

(4) external-social factors: Fast fashion stores are everywhere. They are widely available and easy-to-access, and the pleasant store environment encourages young consumers to purchase more.

These findings provide contemporary empirical evidence for Miller et al.'s (1993) fashion perspective within the context of fast fashion. Moreover, they extend the extant literature to include several factors of high relevance to Chinese culture. As previously discussed, some literature argues that Chinese culture promotes green purchasing behaviour in its consumers, whereas others argue the opposite; Chinese culture promotes non-green purchasing behaviour (Chan & Lau, 2002; Christensen, 2017; He et al., 2016; Sun et al., 2014; Yan, 2013). These findings enrich the extant literature on green fast fashion behaviour in young consumers. They also provide evidence to motivate further sustainable fast fashion research on the Chinese culture of collectivism and Mianzi, which have negative effects on the green purchasing behaviour of Chinese consumers.

Consumers never feel distressed when they dispose of fast fashion because of its very nature. Fast fashion is designed to be affordable to buy and to throw away. This has become one of the important drivers of fast fashion purchasing for young Chinese consumers. Unless the price gap between fast fashion and sustainably-produced fashion, which often has a higher price tag, narrows, these young consumers may very well continue to demand fast fashion products. This calls for policy makers to reduce the price gap between fast fashion and more sustainably-produced clothing. Joy et al. (2012) finds that some fashion-conscious consumers complain that sustainable fashion is too drab and too boring to meet their needs. This should remind sustainable fashion managers to design better choices to attract consumers. However, consumers also need to be educated about the total costs of their choices. This means the environmental costs need to be considered as part of the total costs when consumers spend money on clothing.

Collectivism and Mianzi are two primary social factors that drive the overconsumption of Chinese fast fashion. Other factors include the lack of public press and government campaigns. These findings should remind the Chinese government of the importance of establishing eco-fashion consumption values among its citizens and promote restraint in fast fashion consumption as the right thing to do to encourage citizens to decrease fast fashion purchases. As Johnstone and Hooper (2016) suggest, “using mainstream role models may influence more consumers to adopt green consumer behaviours” (p.847). People will adopt green behaviour when they consider it to be mainstream (Rettie, Burchell, & Barnham, 2014). Particularly in the context of Chinese collectivism and conformity seeking cultures, people are only likely to follow the green behaviour of others when it becomes normal practice. Therefore, the Chinese government should continue campaigning to educate its citizens about the environmental impacts of fast fashion consumption. Ongoing encouragement to reduce fast fashion waste will help China resist a “throw-away culture” and help sustainability become a mainstream aspect of society. As one of the respondents mentioned, when the day of wearing sustainable clothes becomes a subjective norm, people who are fond of fast fashion and a “disposable culture” will feel shame for their behaviour. Then, they will pursue sustainable fashion to maintain their face.

Celebrity endorsements would also be a potentially effective way to promote sustainably-produced fashion and reduce fast fashion waste. The findings showed support for the impact celebrities have on these young Chinese consumers’ fashion choices. The public holds an unabated fascination for famous people (Pringle & Binet, 2005), and they can draw public attention to a particular issue (McDonagh & Martin, 2015). The celebrity effect is often used as a marketing technique in advertising (Pringle & Binet, 2005). Such a tactic could be used in a sustainable fashion campaign to raise Chinese consumers’ concerns for the environmental problems associated with fast fashion.

5.2.2 The role of fashion

This study revealed that young Chinese consumers use fashion to communicate, to attract others, and maintain their face. Young Chinese consumers do not merely follow fashion trends blindly. They also rely on fashion to gain social acceptance. This means, to them, the significance of fashion far outweighs its environmental costs. The negative effects of buying too much fast fashion may not be immediately visible to these young consumers, but the effects of being excluded by their peers or not gaining social acceptance because they are “old-fashioned” are not only visible but immediate. It is hard for these young consumers to take action towards greener fashion choices if they do not see the necessity of taking such actions (Johnstone & Tan, 2015b). As Johnstone and Tan (2015b) highlight, the solution for policy makers in these circumstances is to make “long-term social dilemmas, such as the environment, meaningful to consumers today” (p.322). Social dilemmas mean the conflicts between noncooperative to maximise personal interests and cooperative to support the group’s interests. If choosing non-cooperation, individuals might immediately maximise interests but the whole group will lose in the long term. If choosing cooperation, individuals may not maximise their interests immediately, but everyone will ultimately benefit (Dawes, 1980; Hardin, 2009; Sen, Gürhan-Canli, & Morwitz, 2001; Van Lange, Liebrand, Messick, & Wilke, 1992). The Chinese government should ensure its citizens understand the long-term social dilemmas of their fashion choices. Individuals may benefit today, but at the cost of health, water, and air crises in the longer term.

5.2.3 The meaning of sustainability

This study also introduces a new perspective from the water resource literature to marketing with a demonstration of the different impacts visible and invisible environmental issues have on consumer behaviour. This cross-disciplinary approach offers a new way to analyse both green and non-green consumer behaviours. Sustainability plays an existing role in the daily lives of young Chinese consumers.

They are well educated, environmentally-conscious about littering, saving energy, wasting water, and turning off lights, etc. They bring their own bags to the market or are asking for cloth bags, even though they are more expensive than plastic bags, and choosing eco-friendly modes of travel, like public transportation. Sustainability is even present in other purchase decisions, such as preferences for rechargeable batteries and low-emission cars. One common characteristic of their current environmental protection activities is that, the consequences of not doing these protections (such as not littering, saving water etc.) are visible to these young Chinese consumers. However, most have never thought of the environmental problems caused by fast fashion products and the impacts are not apparent in their daily lives. As a result, they do not restrain their shopping desires in favour of the environment. These findings provide more evidence for the extant literature that having environmental knowledge promotes green purchasing behaviour in consumers, whereas ignorance of environmental knowledge increases non-green purchasing behaviour. The findings suggest that one of the best ways to reduce fast fashion consumption is to shift fast fashion environmental problems from “invisible” to “visible”. This would require the government to enrich public knowledge about the environmental impact of fast fashion in its citizens.

Notably, environmental knowledge enrichment should be continuous. It is seldom possible to improve practical, sustainable consumption in consumers within a short period of time, even when making a concentrated effort (Eagly & Kulesa, 1997; Thøgersen & Ölander, 2002). Participants also mentioned that they feel less motivated to do more when considering that small actions alone cannot make a difference. Their tiny efforts are too limited to change a whole society. In terms of these consumers, the best way to solve the problem is through government initiatives. China is ruled by a one-party political system, and policy initiatives are easier to implement through a top-down government approach (He et al., 2016). For example, the government could encourage its citizens to participate in a green consumption campaign and award credits or publicly praise citizens who have made excellent achievements.

Likewise, marketers need to promote fast fashion as moving towards slow fashion. Slow fashion emphasises a slowing down of the whole fashion cycle, from the initial designer to the producer, through to the end consumer (Clark, 2008). To some extent, the disposal habits of young consumers are encouraged by the fast turnover fashion market. Fashion marketers must take responsibility for reducing the number of trends and seasons to encourage sustainable practices in consumers (Ozdamar Ertekin & Atik, 2015). They should also improve the quality of clothing and raise prices to urge consumers to buy less and wear items for longer.

5.3 Limitations and future research

The focus groups were conducted solely in the Jining, Shandong Province of China due to resource constraints. Jining is a third-tier city in China. Although third-tier cities account for the majority of Chinese cities, they have differences with the first- and second-tier cities. As mentioned, China is still a developing country, and the development between cities of different tiers is imbalanced (Tan, Li, Xie, & Lu, 2005). For example, first-tier cities (e.g., Beijing and Shanghai) have more developed economies and advanced facilities. Education and income levels are higher and, thus, people are better financially-able to practice environmental awareness (Su & Haynes, 2017; Wang, Zhao, Shen, & Liu, 2015). In future studies, a nationally representative sample might be undertaken to improve the generalizability of the findings. For example, the summary diagrams produced for this study in Figure 4.1 (fast fashion products purchase driving factors) and Figure 4.2 (environmental issues and fast fashion purchase) should be tested by survey data from various cities in China. Moreover, since the present study did not find a meaningful role for sustainability in fast fashion purchase decisions of young Chinese consumers, first- and second-tier cities might provide better opportunities to study whether sustainability plays a bigger role in their decision-making processes. In addition, a cross-country study comparing China and a Western country also could provide an interesting extension of the present research.

The follow-up interviews revealed that the importance of fast fashion and sustainability would likely change over time. In future research, a generational comparison could be conducted between younger and older Chinese consumers. Since older generations are not the main target market for fast fashion, the data collection aspects of the study would need to be modified to focus more on their opinions about fashion and sustainability rather than their fast fashion shopping habits.

While the role of environmental knowledge has been found in the literature to have positively influenced green consumption, the interplay between environmental knowledge and fashion needs in these young consumers also remains an interesting avenue for further investigation. Moreover, the increasing environmental awareness of young Chinese consumers and their continual demand for fashion would make for an intriguing study on whether they have decisional conflicts when purchasing fast fashion products. And how they deal with those decisional conflicts towards fast fashion and sustainability.

Finally, as previously mentioned, the fashion market should move from fast fashion to slow fashion. The characteristics of slow fashion and the consumer attitudes toward slow fashion provide rich fodder for future research. It would be interesting to compare slow fashion with fast fashion. Slow fashion may provide a viable substitute for fashion-sensitive consumers.

5.4 Conclusions

The objective of this study was to explore why young Chinese consumers purchase fast fashion products and whether they are concerned about fast fashion environmental issues. To achieve this objective, three research questions were proposed. The first question aimed to identify the factors that drive fast fashion purchasing in young Chinese consumers using fashion theory (Sproles, 1974; 1979; 1981) and Miller et al.'s (Miller et al., 1993) fashion perspectives. The second question aimed to identify the role fashion plays in the daily lives of young Chinese consumers. The third question

sought to identify the meaning of sustainability in the daily lives of young Chinese consumers.

Five focus groups and eight follow-up one-on-one interviews were conducted in Shandong Province, China to address these research questions. The findings revealed the factors that drive fast fashion purchases and the role that fashion plays in increasing young Chinese consumers' demand fast fashion. Chinese Mianzi and collectivism culture exacerbate these young consumers' need for fashion. The findings also show that sustainability does not play a significant role in their decisions to purchase fast fashion. For these young Chinese consumers, the environmental issues associated with fast fashion are invisible.

This study shines a light on the barriers and opportunities in promoting greener fashion consumption among young Chinese consumers. The findings suggest that society should work together to heighten environmental awareness about fast fashion in consumers in order to lower the waste this massive and growing industry produces.

References

- Abecassis-Moedas, C. (2006). Integrating design and retail in the clothing value chain: An empirical study of the organisation of design. *International Journal of Operations & Production Management*, 26(4), 412-428.
- Adam, H., & Galinsky, A. D. (2012). Enclothed cognition. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 48(4), 918-925.
- Ahrens, K. (2017). Dressing the Part: Clothing and Gender Identity on the Frontier Artifacts from Steamboat Bertrand.
- Ajzen, I. (1985). From intentions to actions: A theory of planned behavior *Action control* (pp. 11-39): Springer.
- Ajzen, I. (1991). The theory of planned behavior. *Organizational behavior and human decision processes*, 50(2), 179-211.
- Ali, A., & Ahmad, I. (2016). Environment friendly products: factors that influence the green purchase intentions of Pakistani consumers. *Pakistan Journal of Engineering, Technology & Science*, 2(1).
- Allwood, J. M., Laursen, S. E., de Rodriguez, C. M., & Bocken, N. M. (2015). Well dressed?: The present and future sustainability of clothing and textiles in the United Kingdom. *Journal of the Home Economics Institute of Australia*, 22(1), 42.
- AlYahmady, H. H., & Alabri, S. S. (2013). Using NVivo for data analysis in qualitative research. *International Interdisciplinary Journal of Education*, 2(2), 181-186.
- Aman, A. L., Harun, A., & Hussein, Z. (2012). The influence of environmental knowledge and concern on green purchase intention the role of attitude as a mediating variable. *British Journal of Arts and Social Sciences*, 7(2), 145-167.
- Ang, S. H., & Leong, S. M. (2000). Out of the mouths of babes: Business ethics and youths in Asia. *Journal of business ethics*, 28(2), 129-144.
- Anguelov, N. (2015). *The Dirty Side of the Garment Industry: Fast Fashion and Its Negative Impact on Environment and Society*. CRC Press.
- Baek, E., & Choo, H. J. (2015). Effects of peer consumption on hedonic purchase decisions. *Social Behavior and Personality: an international journal*, 43(7), 1085-1099.
- Bain, M. (2015). H&M's "sustainability" report hides the unsustainable reality of fast fashion. Retrieved from <https://qz.com/380055/hms-sustainability-report-hides-the-unsustainable-reality-of-fast-fashion/>
- Bain, M. (2016). Is H&M misleading customers with all its talk of sustainability? Retrieved from <https://qz.com/662031/is-hm-misleading-customers-with-all-its-talk-of-sustainability/>
- Balch, O. (2013). H&M: can fast fashion and sustainability ever really mix? Retrieved from <https://www.theguardian.com/sustainable-business/h-and-m-fashion-sustainability-mix>
- Barber, N., Taylor, D. C., & Dodd, T. (2009). The importance of wine bottle closures in retail purchase decisions of consumers. *Journal of Hospitality Marketing & Management*, 18(6), 597-614.
- Barnard, M. (2017). Looking Sharp: Fashion Studies. *The Handbook of Visual Culture*, 405.
- Barnes, L., & Lea-Greenwood, G. (2006). Fast fashioning the supply chain: shaping the research

- agenda. *Journal of Fashion Marketing and Management: An International Journal*, 10(3), 259-271.
- Barnes, L., & Lea-Greenwood, G. (2010). Fast fashion in the retail store environment. *International Journal of Retail & Distribution Management*, 38(10), 760-772.
- Basit, T. (2003). Manual or electronic? The role of coding in qualitative data analysis. *Educational research*, 45(2), 143-154.
- Bazeley, P., & Jackson, K. (2013). *Qualitative data analysis with NVivo*: Sage Publications Limited.
- Beall, G. (2016). 8 key differences between Gen Z and Millennials. Retrieved from http://www.huffingtonpost.com/george-beall/8-key-differences-between_b_12814200.html
- Beard, N. D. (2008). The branding of ethical fashion and the consumer: a luxury niche or mass-market reality? *Fashion Theory*, 12(4), 447-467.
- Bhardwaj, V., & Fairhurst, A. (2010). Fast fashion: response to changes in the fashion industry. *The International Review of Retail, Distribution and Consumer Research*, 20(1), 165-173.
- Biernacki, P., & Waldorf, D. (1981). Snowball sampling: Problems and techniques of chain referral sampling. *Sociological methods & research*, 10(2), 141-163.
- Birbili, M. (2000). Translating from one language to another. *Social Research Update*, 31(1), 1-7.
- Birtwistle, G., & Moore, C. M. (2007). Fashion clothing—where does it all end up? *International Journal of Retail & Distribution Management*, 35(3), 210-216.
- Borghesi, S., & Vercelli, A. (2003). Sustainable globalisation. *Ecological economics*, 44(1), 77-89.
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative research in psychology*, 3(2), 77-101.
- Brundtland, G. H. (1987). World commission on environment and development (1987): Our common future. *World Commission for Environment and Development*.
- Brundtland, G. H., & Khalid, M. (1987). Our common future. *New York*.
- Bryman, A., & Bell, E. (2015). *Business research methods*: Oxford University Press, USA.
- Buckley, P. J., Clegg, J., & Tan, H. (2006). Cultural awareness in knowledge transfer to China—The role of guanxi and mianzi. *Journal of world business*, 41(3), 275-288.
- Burnett, M. S., & Lunsford, D. A. (1994). Conceptualizing guilt in the consumer decision-making process. *Journal of Consumer Marketing*, 11(3), 33-43.
- Buse, C. E., & Twigg, J. (2015). Clothing, embodied identity and dementia: Maintaining the self through dress. *Age, Culture, Humanities*(2).
- Caniato, F., Caridi, M., Crippa, L., & Moretto, A. (2012). Environmental sustainability in fashion supply chains: An exploratory case based research. *International journal of production economics*, 135(2), 659-670.
- Cao, H., Chang, R., Kallal, J., Manalo, G., McCord, J., Shaw, J., & Starner, H. (2014). Adaptable apparel: a sustainable design solution for excess apparel consumption problem. *Journal of Fashion Marketing and Management*, 18(1), 52-69.
- Caro, F., & Martínez-de-Albéniz, V. (2015). Fast fashion: business model overview and research opportunities *Retail Supply Chain Management* (pp. 237-264): Springer.
- Cassidy, T. D., & Schijndel, H. V. (2011). Youth identity ownership from a fashion marketing perspective. *Journal of Fashion Marketing and Management: An International Journal*, 15(2), 163-177.
- Caulkins, J. P., Hartl, R. F., Kort, P. M., & Feichtinger, G. (2007). Explaining fashion cycles: Imitators

- chasing innovators in product space. *Journal of Economic Dynamics and Control*, 31(5), 1535-1556.
- Chan, R. Y. (1999). Environmental attitudes and behavior of consumers in China: Survey findings and implications. *Journal of International Consumer Marketing*, 11(4), 25-52.
- Chan, R. Y. (2000). An emerging green market in China: Myth or reality? *Business Horizons*, 43(2), 55-60.
- Chan, R. Y. (2001). Determinants of Chinese consumers' green purchase behavior. *Psychology & Marketing*, 18(4), 389-413.
- Chan, R. Y. (2004). Consumer responses to environmental advertising in China. *Marketing intelligence & planning*, 22(4), 427-437.
- Chan, R. Y., & Lau, L. B. (2002). Explaining green purchasing behavior: A cross-cultural study on American and Chinese consumers. *Journal of International Consumer Marketing*, 14(2-3), 9-40.
- Chan, T., & Wong, C. W. (2012). The consumption side of sustainable fashion supply chain: Understanding fashion consumer eco-fashion consumption decision. *Journal of Fashion Marketing and Management: An International Journal*, 16(2), 193-215.
- Chang, H. J., & Jai, T. M. (2015). Is fast fashion sustainable? The effect of positioning strategies on consumers' attitudes and purchase intentions. *Social Responsibility Journal*, 11(4), 853-867.
- Chidlow, A., Plakoyiannaki, E., & Welch, C. (2014). Translation in cross-language international business research: Beyond equivalence. *Journal of International Business Studies*, 45(5), 562-582.
- Cho, S., & Workman, J. E. (2014). Relationships among gender, fashion leadership, need for affect, and consumers' apparel shopping preference. *Family and Consumer Sciences Research Journal*, 42(4), 369-385.
- Cho, Y.-N., Thyroff, A., Rapert, M. I., Park, S.-Y., & Lee, H. J. (2013). To be or not to be green: Exploring individualism and collectivism as antecedents of environmental behavior. *Journal of business research*, 66(8), 1052-1059.
- Choi, T. M., Hui, C. L., Liu, N., Ng, S. F., & Yu, Y. (2014). Fast fashion sales forecasting with limited data and time. *Decision Support Systems*, 59, 84-92.
- Christensen, J. E. (2017). Confucianism, food, and sustainability. *Asian Philosophy*, 27(1), 16-29.
- Chung, S.-W. (2016). Fast fashion is "drowning" the world. We need a fashion revolution! Retrieved from <http://www.greenpeace.org/international/en/news/Blogs/makingwaves/fast-fashion-drowning-world-fashion-revolution/blog/56222/>
- Clark, H. (2008). SLOW+ FASHION—an Oxymoron—or a Promise for the Future...? *Fashion Theory*, 12(4), 427-446.
- Claudio, L. (2007). Waste couture: Environmental impact of the clothing industry. *Environmental Health Perspectives*, 115(9), A449.
- Cleveland, M., Rojas-Méndez, J. I., Laroche, M., & Papadopoulos, N. (2016). Identity, culture, dispositions and behavior: A cross-national examination of globalization and culture change. *Journal of business research*, 69(3), 1090-1102.
- Coleman, J. (1958). Relational analysis: the study of social organizations with survey methods. *Human organization*, 17(4), 28-36.

- Cook, S. C., Cook, S. C., Yurchisin, J., & Yurchisin, J. (2017). Fast fashion environments: consumer's heaven or retailer's nightmare? *International Journal of Retail & Distribution Management*, 45(2), 143-157.
- Corbin, J., & Strauss, A. (2008). Basics of qualitative research: Techniques and procedures for developing grounded theory.
- Covitt, B. A., Gunckel, K. L., & Anderson, C. W. (2009). Students' developing understanding of water in environmental systems. *The Journal of Environmental Education*, 40(3), 37-51.
- Davis, F. (1994). *Fashion, culture, and identity*: University of Chicago Press.
- Dawes, R. M. (1980). Social dilemmas. *Annual review of psychology*, 31(1), 169-193.
- Daxue Consulting. (2016). The fast fashion industry in China dresses the new mix & match generation. Retrieved from <http://daxueconsulting.com/fast-fashion-industry-china/>
- De Brito, M. P., Carbone, V., & Blanquart, C. M. (2008). Towards a sustainable fashion retail supply chain in Europe: Organisation and performance. *International journal of production economics*, 114(2), 534-553.
- De Mooij, M. (2015). Cross-cultural research in international marketing: clearing up some of the confusion. *International Marketing Review*, 32(6), 646-662.
- Dedeoğlu, A. Ö., & Kazançoğlu, İ. (2010). The feelings of consumer guilt: A phenomenological exploration. *Journal of business economics and management*, 11(3), 462-482.
- Dittmar, H., & Drury, J. (2000). Self-image—is it in the bag? A qualitative comparison between “ordinary” and “excessive” consumers. *Journal of economic psychology*, 21(2), 109-142.
- Djelic, M.-L., & Ainamo, A. (1999). The coevolution of new organizational forms in the fashion industry: a historical and comparative study of France, Italy, and the United States. *Organization Science*, 10(5), 622-637.
- Dolan, P. (2002). The sustainability of “sustainable consumption”. *Journal of Macromarketing*, 22(2), 170-181.
- Dunbar, R. I. (2004). Gossip in evolutionary perspective. *Review of general psychology*, 8(2), 100.
- Eagly, A. H., & Kulesa, P. (1997). Attitudes, attitude structure, and resistance to change. *Environmental ethics and behavior*, 122-153.
- Eastman, J., Iyer, R., & Thomas, S. (2013). The impact of status consumption on shopping styles: An exploratory look at the millennial generation. *Marketing Management Journal*, 23(1), 57-73.
- Edmunds, H. (2000). *The focus group research handbook*: McGraw-Hill.
- Edney, J. J., & Grundmann, M. J. (1979). Friendship, group size and boundary size: Small group spaces. *Small Group Behavior*, 10(1), 124-135.
- Egri, C. P., & Ralston, D. A. (2004). Generation cohorts and personal values: A comparison of China and the United States. *Organization Science*, 15(2), 210-220.
- Eisenbarth, S. (2017). Is Chinese trade policy motivated by environmental concerns? *Journal of Environmental Economics and Management*, 82, 74-103.
- Elkington, J. (1994). Towards the sustainable corporation: Win-win-win business strategies for sustainable development. *California management review*, 36(2), 90-100.
- Elkington, J. (2004). Enter the triple bottom line. *The triple bottom line: Does it all add up*, 11(12), 1-16.
- Euromonitor International. (2014). China to overtake US as largest apparel market by 2017. Retrieved from <http://blog.euromonitor.com/2014/04/china-to-overtake-us-as-largest->

[apparel-market-by-2017.html](#)

- Evans, M. (1989). Consumer behaviour towards fashion. *European Journal of Marketing*, 23(7), 7-16.
- Faber, R. J., & Vohs, K. D. (2004). To buy or not to buy?: Self-control and self-regulatory failure in purchase behavior.
- Falkenmark, M. (2001). The greatest water problem: the inability to link environmental security, water security and food security. *International Journal of Water resources development*, 17(4), 539-554.
- Fan, Y. (2000). A classification of Chinese culture. *Cross Cultural Management: An International Journal*, 7(2), 3-10.
- Firat, A. F., & Venkatesh, A. (1995). Liberatory postmodernism and the reenchantment of consumption. *Journal of consumer research*, 22(3), 239-267.
- Fogel, J., & Raghupathi, V. (2013). Spam e-mail advertisements for cosmetics/beauty products and consumer behavior. *Journal of Business Theory and Practice*, 1(1), 28.
- Gabrielli, V., Baghi, I., & Codeluppi, V. (2013). Consumption practices of fast fashion products: a consumer-based approach. *Journal of Fashion Marketing and Management: An International Journal*, 17(2), 206-224.
- Gbor, N. (2017). War on Waste: It's time to step off the fashion trend-mill. Retrieved from <http://about.abc.net.au/war-on-waste-its-time-to-step-off-the-fashion-trend-mill/>
- Gelfand, M. J., Aycan, Z., Erez, M., & Leung, K. (2017). Cross-cultural industrial organizational psychology and organizational behavior: A hundred-year journey. *Journal of Applied psychology*, 102(3), 514.
- Gentina, E., & Bonsu, S. K. (2013). Peer network position and shopping behavior among adolescents. *Journal of retailing and consumer services*, 20(1), 87-93.
- Gentlemen Marketing Agency. (2015). The growing appetite of Chinese consumers for fast fashion brands. Retrieved from <http://fashionchinaagency.com/the-growing-appetite-of-chinese-consumers-for-fast-fashion-brands/>
- Ghemawat, P., Nueno, J. L., & Dailey, M. (2003). *ZARA: Fast fashion* (Vol. 1): Harvard Business School Boston, MA.
- Giancola, F. (2006). The generation gap: More myth than reality. *People and strategy*, 29(4), 32.
- Gibson, C., Waitt, G., Head, L., & Gill, N. (2011). Is it easy being green? On the dilemmas of material cultures of household sustainability. *Material geographies of household sustainability*, 19-33.
- Gino, F., Norton, M. I., & Ariely, D. (2010). The counterfeit self: The deceptive costs of faking it. *Psychological science*, 21(5), 712-720.
- Grant, I. J., & Stephen, G. R. (2005). Buying behaviour of "tweenage" girls and key societal communicating factors influencing their purchasing of fashion clothing. *Journal of Fashion Marketing and Management: An International Journal*, 9(4), 450-467.
- Grayson, K., & Martinec, R. (2004). Consumer perceptions of iconicity and indexicality and their influence on assessments of authentic market offerings. *Journal of consumer research*, 31(2), 296-312.
- H&M Group. (2017). Sustainability. Retrieved from <http://about.hm.com/en/sustainability.html>
- Hang, S., & Chunguang, Z. (2015). Does environmental management improve enterprise's value?—An empirical research based on Chinese listed companies. *Ecological Indicators*, 51, 191-

- Hardin, G. (2009). The Tragedy of the Commons*. *Journal of Natural Resources Policy Research*, 1(3), 243-253.
- Hargreaves, S. (2015). Your clothes are killing us. Retrieved from <http://money.cnn.com/2015/05/22/news/economy/true-cost-clothing/>
- Hartman, J. (2004). Using focus groups to conduct business communication research. *The Journal of Business Communication* (1973), 41(4), 402-410.
- Hausman, A. (2000). A multi-method investigation of consumer motivations in impulse buying behavior. *Journal of Consumer Marketing*, 17(5), 403-426.
- He, A. z., Cai, T., Deng, T. x., & Li, X. (2016). Factors affecting non-green consumer behaviour: an exploratory study among Chinese consumers. *International Journal of Consumer Studies*, 40(3), 345-356.
- Hepple, S. J., & Dennison, J. A. (2017). The Effects of National Culture on Social Commerce and Online Fashion Purchase Intention *Advanced Fashion Technology and Operations Management* (pp. 250-276): IGI Global.
- Hill, J., & Lee, H.-H. (2012). Young Generation Y consumers' perceptions of sustainability in the apparel industry. *Journal of Fashion Marketing and Management: An International Journal*, 16(4), 477-491.
- Hofstede, G. (1984). Cultural dimensions in management and planning. *Asia Pacific journal of management*, 1(2), 81-99.
- Hofstede, G., & Bond, M. H. (1984). Hofstede's culture dimensions an independent validation using Rokeach's value survey. *Journal of cross-cultural psychology*, 15(4), 417-433.
- Hogg, M. A. (2016). Social identity theory *Understanding Peace and Conflict Through Social Identity Theory* (pp. 3-17): Springer.
- Hoh, A. (2017). Australian fashion week: Designers must focus more on sustainability, eco-fashionistas say. Retrieved from <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2017-05-17/sustainable-brands-at-australian-fashion-week-2017/8532358>
- Holland, E., & Haslam, N. (2013). Worth the weight: The objectification of overweight versus thin targets. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 37(4), 462-468.
- Holm, J., Norén Fahlman, S., & Wassén, J. (2017). How Green Are We? Attitudes Towards Environmentally Friendly Fast Fashion.
- Holt, D. B. (2002). Why do brands cause trouble? A dialectical theory of consumer culture and branding. *Journal of consumer research*, 29(1), 70-90.
- Hsu, C.-L., Chang, C.-Y., & Yansritakul, C. (2017). Exploring purchase intention of green skincare products using the theory of planned behavior: Testing the moderating effects of country of origin and price sensitivity. *Journal of retailing and consumer services*, 34, 145-152.
- Huang, P., Zhang, X., & Deng, X. (2006). Survey and analysis of public environmental awareness and performance in Ningbo, China: a case study on household electrical and electronic equipment. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 14(18), 1635-1643.
- Hult, G. T. M. (2011). Market-focused sustainability: market orientation plus! : Springer.
- Hume, M. (2010). Compassion without action: Examining the young consumers consumption and attitude to sustainable consumption. *Journal of world business*, 45(4), 385-394.
- Hunt, S. A., & Miller, K. A. (1997). The discourse of dress and appearance: Identity talk and a rhetoric of review. *Symbolic Interaction*, 20(1), 69-82.

- Hwang, C. G., Lee, Y.-A., & Diddi, S. (2015). Generation Y's moral obligation and purchase intentions for organic, fair-trade, and recycled apparel products. *International Journal of Fashion Design, Technology and Education*, 8(2), 97-107.
- Inglehart, R. (1997). *Modernization and postmodernization: Cultural, economic, and political change in 43 societies*. Princeton University Press.
- Jain, V., Vatsa, R., & Jagani, K. (2014). Exploring generation Z's purchase behavior towards luxury apparel: A conceptual framework. *Romanian Journal of Marketing*(2), 18.
- Johnson, K., Lennon, S. J., & Rudd, N. (2014). Dress, body and self: Research in the social psychology of dress. *Fashion and Textiles*, 1(1), 20.
- Johnstone, M.-L. (2017). Depth Interviews and Focus Groups *Formative Research in Social Marketing* (pp. 67-87): Springer.
- Johnstone, M.-L., & Hooper, S. (2016). Social influence and green consumption behaviour: a need for greater government involvement. *Journal of Marketing Management*, 32(9-10), 827-855.
- Johnstone, M.-L., & Tan, L. P. (2015a). An exploration of environmentally-conscious consumers and the reasons why they do not buy green products. *Marketing intelligence & planning*, 33(5), 804-825.
- Johnstone, M.-L., & Tan, L. P. (2015b). Exploring the gap between consumers' green rhetoric and purchasing behaviour. *Journal of business ethics*, 132(2), 311-328.
- Jones, P., Clarke-Hill, C., Comfort, D., & Hillier, D. (2008). Marketing and sustainability. *Marketing intelligence & planning*, 26(2), 123-130.
- Jørgensen, M. S., & Jensen, C. L. (2012). The shaping of environmental impacts from Danish production and consumption of clothing. *Ecological economics*, 83, 164-173.
- Joung, H.-M. (2014). Fast-fashion consumers' post-purchase behaviours. *International Journal of Retail & Distribution Management*, 42(8), 688-697.
- Joy, A., Sherry Jr, J. F., Venkatesh, A., Wang, J., & Chan, R. (2012). Fast fashion, sustainability, and the ethical appeal of luxury brands. *Fashion Theory*, 16(3), 273-295.
- Kaiser, S. (1997). *The social psychology of clothing: symbolic appearances in context*, Fairchild. New York.
- Kamenidou, I., Mylonakis, J., & Nikolouli, K. (2007). An exploratory study on the reasons for purchasing imported high fashion apparels: The case of Greece. *Journal of Fashion Marketing and Management: An International Journal*, 11(1), 148-160.
- Kelle, U., & Bird, K. (1995). *Computer-aided qualitative data analysis: Theory, methods and practice*: Sage.
- Kellehear, A. (1993). *The unobtrusive researcher: A guide to methods*: Allen & Unwin.
- Kim, S. (2013). The analysis of pant style trend to establish a fashion cycle theory: Focus on 1967 to 2012. *Journal of the Korean Society of Clothing and Textiles*, 37(6), 786-798.
- Kitzinger, J. (1995). Qualitative research. Introducing focus groups. *BMJ: British medical journal*, 311(7000), 299.
- Ko, S. (1993). The study of impulse buying of clothing products. *Unpublished Master's thesis, Seoul National University, Seoul*.
- Kollat, D. T., & Willett, R. P. (1967). Customer impulse purchasing behavior. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 21-31.
- Kozinets, R. V. (2001). Utopian enterprise: Articulating the meanings of Star Trek's culture of

- consumption. *Journal of consumer research*, 28(1), 67-88.
- Kozinets, R. V. (2002). Can consumers escape the market? Emancipatory illuminations from burning man. *Journal of consumer research*, 29(1), 20-38.
- Kozlowski, A., Searcy, C., & Bardecki, M. (2016). Innovation for a sustainable fashion industry: a design focused approach toward the development of new business models *Green Fashion* (pp. 151-169): Springer.
- Krueger, R. A., & Casey, M. A. (2014). *Focus groups: A practical guide for applied research*: Sage publications.
- Kwan, C., Yeung, K., & Au, K. (2003). A statistical investigation of the changing apparel retailing environment in China. *Journal of Fashion Marketing and Management: An International Journal*, 7(1), 87-100.
- Landi, P., & Dercole, F. (2016). The social diversification of fashion. *The Journal of Mathematical Sociology*, 40(3), 185-205.
- Lascu, D.-N. (1991). Consumer guilt: examining the potential of a new marketing construct. *ACR North American Advances*.
- Latter, C., Phau, I., & Marchegiani, C. (2010). The roles of consumers need for uniqueness and status consumption in haute couture luxury brands. *Journal of Global Fashion Marketing*, 1(4), 206-214.
- Lee, S.-H., & E. Workman, J. (2014). Gossip, self-monitoring and fashion leadership: comparison of US and South Korean consumers. *Journal of Consumer Marketing*, 31(6/7), 452-463.
- Lee, X., & Edwards, S. (2014). Fast fashion in China. Retrieved from <https://www.chinabusinessreview.com/fast-fashion-in-china-revved-retail/>
- Li, Y., Zhao, X., Shi, D., & Li, X. (2014). Governance of sustainable supply chains in the fast fashion industry. *European Management Journal*, 32(5), 823-836.
- Liu, S. (2017). Fast fashion trend in 2017. Retrieved from <http://www.ifanr.com/776512>
- Liu, X., & Mu, R. (2016). Public environmental concern in China: Determinants and variations. *Global Environmental Change*, 37, 116-127.
- Lockett, M. (1988). Culture and the problems of Chinese management. *Organization studies*, 9(4), 475-496.
- Lonner, W. J., Berry, J. W., & Hofstede, G. H. (1980). Culture's consequences: International differences in work-related values.
- Lowe, A. C.-T., & Corkindale, D. R. (1998). Differences in "cultural values" and their effects on responses to marketing stimuli: A cross-cultural study between Australians and Chinese from the People's Republic of China. *European Journal of Marketing*, 32(9/10), 843-867.
- Lowe, E. D. (1993). Quantitative analysis of fashion change: A critical review. *Family and Consumer Sciences Research Journal*, 21(3), 280-306.
- Lu, X. (1998). An interface between individualistic and collectivistic orientations in Chinese cultural values and social relations. *Howard Journal of Communication*, 9(2), 91-107.
- Luo, X. (2005). How does shopping with others influence impulsive purchasing? *Journal of Consumer psychology*, 15(4), 288-294.
- Maclean, K. (2007). Translation in cross-cultural research: an example from Bolivia. *Development in Practice*, 17(6), 784-790.
- Mader, R. P. (2008). Is going green too expensive for most people? Retrieved from http://contractormag.com/columns/editorial/going_green_expensive

- Mah, D., van der Vleuten, J. M., Ip, J. C.-m., & Hills, P. (2014). Governing the transition of socio-technical systems: a case study of the development of smart grids in Korea *Smart Grid Applications and Developments* (pp. 259-277): Springer.
- Mamillan, A. F. (2016). Foreign fast fashion beats its Chinese rivals at their own game. Retrieved from <http://realmoney.thestreet.com/articles/12/19/2016/foreign-fast-fashion-beats-its-chinese-rivals-their-own-game>
- Marino, L., Lilienfeld, S. O., Malamud, R., Nobis, N., & Broglio, R. (2010). Do zoos and aquariums promote attitude change in visitors? A critical evaluation of the American zoo and aquarium study. *Society & Animals*, 18(2), 126-138.
- Marshall, C., & Rossman, G. B. (2014). *Designing qualitative research*: Sage publications.
- Martinsons, M. G., So, S. K., Tin, C., & Wong, D. (1997). Hong Kong and China: emerging markets for environmental products and technologies. *Long Range Planning*, 30(2), 277-156.
- Mattila, A. S., & Wirtz, J. (2008). The role of store environmental stimulation and social factors on impulse purchasing. *Journal of Services Marketing*, 22(7), 562-567.
- McCracken, G. (1988). *The long interview* (Vol. 13): Sage.
- McDonagh, P., & Martin, D. M. (2015). *Sustainable consumption: activism, innovation and brands*: Taylor & Francis.
- McDonald, S., Oates, C., & Young, W. (2006). Choosing to be sustainable: tracing complex decisions.
- McKechnie, S., Tynan, C., & Liu, M. (2015). *FITTING IN OR STANDING OUT: LUXURY BRAND CONSUMPTION AMONGST CHINA'S POST-80S CONSUMERS*. Paper presented at the 2015 Global Fashion Management Conference at Florence.
- McNeill, L., & McKay, J. (2016). Fashioning masculinity among young New Zealand men: young men, shopping for clothes and social identity. *Young Consumers*, 17(2), 143-154.
- McNeill, L., & Moore, R. (2015). Sustainable fashion consumption and the fast fashion conundrum: fashionable consumers and attitudes to sustainability in clothing choice. *International Journal of Consumer Studies*, 39(3), 212-222.
- Merriman, M. (2015). Rise of Gen Z: new challenges for retailers: Rapport, Ernst & Young, UK. En ligne [http://www.ey.com/Publication/vwLUAssets/EY-rise-of-gen-znewchallenge-for-retailers/\\$FILE/EY-rise-of-gen-znew-challenge-for-retailers.pdf](http://www.ey.com/Publication/vwLUAssets/EY-rise-of-gen-znewchallenge-for-retailers/$FILE/EY-rise-of-gen-znew-challenge-for-retailers.pdf).
- Michon, R., Yu, H., Smith, D., & Chebat, J.-C. (2008). The influence of mall environment on female fashion shoppers' value and behaviour. *Journal of Fashion Marketing and Management: An International Journal*, 12(4), 456-468.
- Midgley, D., & Wills, G. (1979). Fashion Marketing: Lateral Marketing Thought (s). *MCB. Bradford*.
- Mihm, B. (2010). Fast fashion in a flat world: Global sourcing strategies. *The International Business & Economics Research Journal*, 9(6), 55.
- Miles, M., & Huberman, A. (1994). *Qualitative data analysis* California: Sage.
- Miller, C. M., McIntyre, S. H., & Mantrala, M. K. (1993). Toward formalizing fashion theory. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 142-157.
- Minkov, M., Minkov, M., Dutt, P., Dutt, P., Schachner, M., Schachner, M., . . . Sanchez, C. (2017). A revision of Hofstede's individualism-collectivism dimension: A new national index from a 56-country study. *Cross Cultural & Strategic Management*, 24(3), 386-404.
- Mitchell, S. (1998). American generations. *American generations series*.
- Mohan, G., Sivakumaran, B., & Sharma, P. (2013). Impact of store environment on impulse buying

- behavior. *European Journal of Marketing*, 47(10), 1711-1732.
- Mohanty, S. P. (1995). Epilogue. Colonial legacies, multicultural futures: relativism, objectivity, and the challenge of otherness. *Publications of the Modern Language Association of America*, 108-118.
- Morgan, D. L. (1996a). Focus groups. *Annual review of sociology*, 22(1), 129-152.
- Morgan, D. L. (1996b). *Focus groups as qualitative research* (Vol. 16): Sage publications.
- Morgan, D. L. (1997). *The focus group guidebook* (Vol. 1): Sage publications.
- Mujtaba, B., & Jue, A. L. (2005). Deceptive and Subliminal Advertising in Corporate America: Value Adder or Value Destroyer? *Journal of Applied Management and Entrepreneurship*, 10(1), 59.
- Nadeem, W., Andreini, D., Salo, J., & Laukkanen, T. (2015). Engaging consumers online through websites and social media: A gender study of Italian Generation Y clothing consumers. *International Journal of Information Management*, 35(4), 432-442.
- Namkung, Y., & Jang, S. (2017). Are consumers willing to pay more for green practices at restaurants? *Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Research*, 41(3), 329-356.
- National Health and Medical Research Council. (2007, May 2015). National statement on ethical conduct in human research. Retrieved from <https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/guidelines-publications/e72>
- Nederhof, A. J. (1985). Methods of coping with social desirability bias: A review. *European journal of social psychology*, 15(3), 263-280.
- Niinimäki, K. (2010). Eco-clothing, consumer identity and ideology. *Sustainable Development*, 18(3), 150-162.
- Noble, S. M., Haytko, D. L., & Phillips, J. (2009). What drives college-age Generation Y consumers? *Journal of business research*, 62(6), 617-628.
- Noh, M., & Mosier, J. (2014). Effects of young consumers' self-concept on hedonic/utilitarian attitudes towards what is 'cool'. *International Journal of Fashion Design, Technology and Education*, 7(3), 163-169.
- Noy, C. (2008). Sampling knowledge: The hermeneutics of snowball sampling in qualitative research. *International Journal of social research methodology*, 11(4), 327-344.
- O'Cass, A. (2000). An assessment of consumers product, purchase decision, advertising and consumption involvement in fashion clothing. *Journal of economic psychology*, 21(5), 545-576.
- Ordun, G. (2015). Millennial (Gen Y) consumer behavior their shopping preferences and perceptual maps associated with brand loyalty. *Canadian Social Science*, 11(4), 40-55.
- Oyserman, D., & Lee, S. W. (2008). Does culture influence what and how we think? Effects of priming individualism and collectivism. *Psychological bulletin*, 134(2), 311.
- Ozdamar Ertekin, Z., & Atik, D. (2015). Sustainable markets: Motivating factors, barriers, and remedies for mobilization of slow fashion. *Journal of Macromarketing*, 35(1), 53-69.
- Park, E. J., Kim, E. Y., & Forney, J. C. (2006). A structural model of fashion-oriented impulse buying behavior. *Journal of Fashion Marketing and Management: An International Journal*, 10(4), 433-446.
- Parker, S. R., Hermans, C. M., & Schaefer, A. D. (2004). Fashion consciousness of Chinese, Japanese and American teenagers. *Journal of Fashion Marketing and Management: An International Journal*, 8(2), 176-186.

- Parment, A. (2013). Generation Y vs. Baby Boomers: Shopping behavior, buyer involvement and implications for retailing. *Journal of retailing and consumer services*, 20(2), 189-199.
- Patton, M. Q. (1990). *Qualitative evaluation and research methods*: SAGE Publications, inc.
- Peñaloza, L. (2000). The commodification of the American West: Marketers' production of cultural meanings at the trade show. *Journal of Marketing*, 64(4), 82-109.
- Pepper, F. (2017). Australia's obsession with new clothes and 'fast fashion' textiles hurting the environment. Retrieved from <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2017-01-12/australias-obsession-with-new-clothes-hurting-the-environment/8177624>
- Pew Research Centre. (2013). Environmental Concerns on the Rise in China. Retrieved from <http://www.pewglobal.org/2013/09/19/environmental-concerns-on-the-rise-in-china/>
- Piron, F. (1991). Defining impulse purchasing. *ACR North American Advances*.
- Press, C. (2016). Why the fashion industry is out of control. Retrieved from <http://www.afr.com/lifestyle/fashion/why-the-fashion-industry-is-out-of-control-20160419-goa5ic>
- Pringle, H., & Binet, L. (2005). How marketers can use celebrities to sell more effectively. *Journal of consumer behaviour*, 4(3), 201-214.
- Pym, A. (2007). Natural and directional equivalence in theories of translation. *Target. International Journal of Translation Studies*, 19(2), 271-294.
- Rahman, I., Park, J., & Chi, C. G.-q. (2015). Consequences of "greenwashing" Consumers' reactions to hotels' green initiatives. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 27(6), 1054-1081.
- Rajamma, R. K., Pelton, L. E., Hsu, M. K., & Knight, D. K. (2010). The impact of consumers' need for uniqueness and nationality on generation Y's retail patronage behaviors: Investigating American and Taiwanese consumers. *Journal of Global Marketing*, 23(5), 387-410.
- Ravenhall, L. (2016). Fast fashion and the destruction of developing countries. Retrieved from <http://www.ecooutfitters.co.uk/blog/fast-fashion-the-destruction-of-developing-countries/>
- Rettie, R., Burchell, K., & Barnham, C. (2014). Social normalisation: Using marketing to make green normal. *Journal of consumer behaviour*, 13(1), 9-17.
- Richardson, J. (1996). Vertical integration and rapid response in fashion apparel. *Organization Science*, 7(4), 400-412.
- Ritchie, J., Lewis, J., Nicholls, C. M., & Ormston, R. (2013). *Qualitative research practice: A guide for social science students and researchers*: Sage.
- Ritson, M., & Elliott, R. (1999). The social uses of advertising: an ethnographic study of adolescent advertising audiences. *Journal of consumer research*, 26(3), 260-277.
- Rook, D. W., & Gardner, M. P. (1993). In the mood: Impulse buying's affective antecedents. *Research in consumer behavior*, 6(7), 1-28.
- Roux, K., & Dalvit, L. (2014). Mobile Women: Investigating the Digital Gender Divide in Cellphone Use in a South African Rural Area. *Proceedings of the 3rd National South African e-Skills Summit*, 17-21.
- Ruane, L., & Wallace, E. (2015). Brand tribalism and self-expressive brands: social influences and brand outcomes. *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, 24(4), 333-348.
- Salzman, M., Matathia, I., & O'Reilly, A. (2003). *Buzz: harness the power of influence and create demand*: John Wiley & Sons.

- Schewe, C. D., & Meredith, G. (2004). Segmenting global markets by generational cohorts: determining motivations by age. *Journal of consumer behaviour*, 4(1), 51-63.
- Schmidt, J. (2016). Subversion in Style: Clothing, Identity, and Social Change in 1920s Paris. *Footnotes*, 2.
- Sen, S., Gürhan-Canli, Z., & Morwitz, V. (2001). Withholding consumption: A social dilemma perspective on consumer boycotts. *Journal of consumer research*, 28(3), 399-417.
- Seuring, S., Sarkis, J., Müller, M., & Rao, P. (2008). Sustainability and supply chain management—an introduction to the special issue. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 16(15), 1545-1551.
- Sherman, E., Mathur, A., & Smith, R. B. (1997). Store environment and consumer purchase behavior: mediating role of consumer emotions. *Psychology and Marketing*, 14(4), 361-378.
- Silverman, D. (2016). *Qualitative research*: Sage.
- Smith, K. T. (2012). Longitudinal study of digital marketing strategies targeting Millennials. *Journal of Consumer Marketing*, 29(2), 86-92.
- Spire Research and Consulting. (2010). Generation Y and Z: Is marketing to the young all about technology? Retrieved from <https://www.spireresearch.com/spire-journal/2010-2/q4/generation-y-and-z/>
- Spivak, G. C. (1992). *The politics of translation*: na.
- Sproles, G. B. (1974). Fashion theory: A conceptual framework. *NA-Advances in Consumer Research Volume 01*.
- Sproles, G. B. (1979). *Fashion: Consumer behavior toward dress*: Burgess Publishing Company.
- Sproles, G. B. (1981). Analyzing fashion life cycles: principles and perspectives. *The Journal of Marketing*, 116-124.
- Sproles, G. B. (1985). Behavioral science theories of fashion. *The psychology of fashion*, 55-70.
- Stalley, P. (2010). *Foreign firms, investment, and environmental regulation in the People's Republic of China*: Stanford University Press.
- State of Reuse Report. (2016). The state of reuse. Retrieved from <https://www.savers.com/sites/default/files/reusereport-june7.pdf>
- Steenhuysen, J. (1990). Nostalgia Hooks a New Generation. *Advertising Age*, 61(3), 26.
- Stewart, D. W., & Shamdasani, P. N. (2014). *Focus groups: Theory and practice* (Vol. 20): Sage publications.
- Stokburger-Sauer, N. E., & Teichmann, K. (2013). Is luxury just a female thing? The role of gender in luxury brand consumption. *Journal of business research*, 66(7), 889-896.
- Stone, G. P. (1990). Appearance and the self: A slightly revised version. *Life as theater: A dramaturgical sourcebook*, 141-162.
- Strauss, A., & Corbin, J. (1990). *Basics of qualitative research* (Vol. 15): Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Su, C., & Haynes, P. (2017). Tradition as the New Alternative: Organic Food Consumption and Food Related Lifestyle in China.
- Sun, G., D'Alessandro, S., & Johnson, L. (2014). Traditional culture, political ideologies, materialism and luxury consumption in China. *International Journal of Consumer Studies*, 38(6), 578-585.
- Tajfel, H., & Turner, J. C. (1979). An integrative theory of intergroup conflict. *The social psychology of intergroup relations*, 33(47), 74.
- Tak, P., & Pareek, A. (2016). Consumer attitude towards luxury brands: an empirical study. *IUP Journal of Brand Management*, 13(1), 7.

- Tan, M., Li, X., Xie, H., & Lu, C. (2005). Urban land expansion and arable land loss in China—a case study of Beijing–Tianjin–Hebei region. *Land use policy*, 22(3), 187–196.
- Tang, X., McLellan, B. C., Snowden, S., Zhang, B., & Höök, M. (2015). Dilemmas for China: energy, economy and environment. *Sustainability*, 7(5), 5508–5520.
- Taplin, I. M. (1999). Statistical Review: Continuity and change in the US apparel industry: A statistical profile. *Journal of Fashion Marketing and Management: An International Journal*, 3(4), 360–368.
- Taylor, C. R., & Costello, J. P. (2017). What do we know about fashion advertising? A review of the literature and suggested research directions. *Journal of Global Fashion Marketing*, 8(1), 1–20.
- Textile Beat. (2016). Aussies send 85% of textiles to landfill. Retrieved from <http://textilebeat.com/aussies-send-85-of-textiles-to-landfill/>
- The Hofstede Centre. (2017). What about China? Retrieved from <https://geert-hofstede.com/china.html>
- Thøgersen, J., & Ölander, F. (2002). Human values and the emergence of a sustainable consumption pattern: A panel study. *Journal of economic psychology*, 23(5), 605–630.
- Thomas, S. (2008). From “green blur” to ecofashion: Fashioning an eco-lexicon. *Fashion Theory*, 12(4), 525–539.
- Ting-Toomey, S., & Kurogi, A. (1998). Facework competence in intercultural conflict: An updated face-negotiation theory. *International journal of intercultural relations*, 22(2), 187–225.
- Turner, J. C., Hogg, M. A., Oakes, P. J., Reicher, S. D., & Wetherell, M. S. (1987). *Rediscovering the social group: A self-categorization theory*. Basil Blackwell.
- Van Lange, P. A., Liebrand, W. B., Messick, D. M., & Wilke, H. A. (1992). Social dilemmas: The state of the art. *Social dilemmas: Theoretical issues and research findings*, 3–28.
- Vermeir, I., & Verbeke, W. (2008). Sustainable food consumption among young adults in Belgium: Theory of planned behaviour and the role of confidence and values. *Ecological economics*, 64(3), 542–553.
- Vince, G. (2012). The high cost of our throwaway culture. Retrieved from <http://www.bbc.com/future/story/20121129-the-cost-of-our-throwaway-culture>
- Vitell, S. J. (2015). A case for consumer social responsibility (CnSR): Including a selected review of consumer ethics/social responsibility research. *Journal of business ethics*, 130(4), 767–774.
- Wahid, N. A., Rahbar, E., & Shyan, T. S. (2011). Factors influencing the green purchase behavior of Penang environmental volunteers. *International Business Management*, 5(1), 38–49.
- Wan, W. W., Luk, C.-L., Yau, O. H., Tse, A. C., Sin, L. Y., Kwong, K. K., & Chow, R. P. (2009). Do traditional Chinese cultural values nourish a market for pirated CDs? *Journal of business ethics*, 88, 185–196.
- Wang, C. L., & Lin, X. (2009). Migration of Chinese consumption values: traditions, modernization, and cultural renaissance. *Journal of business ethics*, 88, 399–409.
- Wang, Q., Zhao, Z., Shen, N., & Liu, T. (2015). Have Chinese cities achieved the win–win between environmental protection and economic development? From the perspective of environmental efficiency. *Ecological Indicators*, 51, 151–158.
- Wirtenberg, J., Lipsky, D., Abrams, L., Conway, M., & Slepian, J. (2007). Empowerment, waste and new consumption communities. *Organization Development Journal*, 25(2), 11–21.
- Wolburg, J. M., & Pokrywczynski, J. (2001). A psychographic analysis of Generation Y college

- students. *Journal of advertising research*, 41(5), 33-52.
- Wong, K.-K. (2003). The environmental awareness of university students in Beijing, China. *Journal of Contemporary China*, 12(36), 519-536.
- Wong, L. (2008). Data analysis in qualitative research: A brief guide to using NVivo. *Malaysian family physician: the official journal of the Academy of Family Physicians of Malaysia*, 3(1), 14.
- Wong, N. Y., & Ahuvia, A. C. (1998). Personal taste and family face: Luxury consumption in Confucian and Western societies. *Psychology & Marketing*, 15(5), 423-441.
- Woo, W. T., & Song, L. (2013). *China's dilemma: economic growth, the environment and climate change*: ANU Press.
- Workman, J. E., & Cho, S. (2012). Gender, fashion consumer groups, and shopping orientation. *Family and Consumer Sciences Research Journal*, 40(3), 267-283.
- Workman, J. E., & Lee, S. H. (2011). Vanity and public self-consciousness: a comparison of fashion consumer groups and gender. *International Journal of Consumer Studies*, 35(3), 307-315.
- Xie, Y., & Zhou, X. (2014). Income inequality in today's China. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 111(19), 6928-6933.
- Yan, J. (2013). Media Countermeasures to Expand Green Consumption Demand from Perspective of Consumption Re-culturing. *Management & Engineering*(13), 99.
- Yang, R., Newman, M. W., & Forlizzi, J. (2014). *Making sustainability sustainable: challenges in the design of eco-interaction technologies*. Paper presented at the Proceedings of the SIGCHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems.
- Yaprak, A. (2008). Culture study in international marketing: a critical review and suggestions for future research. *International Marketing Review*, 25(2), 215-229.
- Yau, A., & Davies, I. (2012). *The modern Confucian values influence on Chinese ethical consumption*. Paper presented at the Academy of Marketing Conference 2012, Southampton, UK.
- Ye, C., Chen, R., & Chen, M. (2016). The impacts of Chinese Nian culture on air pollution. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 112, 1740-1745.
- Yoganarasimhan, H. (2017). Identifying the presence and cause of fashion cycles in data. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 54(1), 5-26.
- Yu, C., & Bastin, M. (2010). Hedonic shopping value and impulse buying behavior in transitional economies: A symbiosis in the Mainland China marketplace. *Journal of Brand Management*, 18(2), 105-114.
- Zamawe, F. C. (2015). The implication of using NVivo software in qualitative data analysis: Evidence-based reflections. *Malawi Medical Journal*, 27(1), 13-15.
- Zarley Watson, M., & Yan, R.-N. (2013). An exploratory study of the decision processes of fast versus slow fashion consumers. *Journal of Fashion Marketing and Management: An International Journal*, 17(2), 141-159.
- Zha, P., Walczyk, J. J., Griffith-Ross, D. A., Tobacyk, J. J., & Walczyk, D. F. (2006). The impact of culture and individualism-collectivism on the creative potential and achievement of American and Chinese adults. *Creativity Research Journal*, 18(3), 355-366.
- Zhang, X., Liang, X., & Sun, H. (2013). Individualism-collectivism, private benefits of control, and earnings management: A cross-culture comparison. *Journal of business ethics*, 114(4), 655-664.

- Zhao, H.-h., Gao, Q., Wu, Y.-p., Wang, Y., & Zhu, X.-d. (2014). What affects green consumer behavior in China? A case study from Qingdao. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 63, 143-151.
- Zhou, Q., Xia, R., & Zhang, C. (2016). Online shopping behavior study based on multi-granularity opinion mining: China versus America. *Cognitive Computation*, 8(4), 587-602.
- Zhu, S., Pickles, J., & He, C. (2017). Going green or going away: Environmental regulation, economic geography and firms' strategies in China's pollution-intensive industries *Geographical Dynamics and Firm Spatial Strategy in China* (pp. 169-197): Springer.
- Zikmund, W. G., Ward, S., Lowe, B., Winzar, H., & Babin, B. J. (2011). Qualitative research *Marketing Research* (2nd ed.). Melbourne: Cengage Learning Australia Pty Limited.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Focus Groups Participants Description

Code	Gender	Age	Occupation	Marital Status	Have Child	Live with Parents
FG 1						
FG1F1	F	25	Energy company	Married	No	No
FG1F2	F	18	Undergraduate student	Single	No	Yes
FG1F3	F	27	Energy company	Married	Yes	No
FG1F4	F	25	Energy company	Married	Expectant mother	No
FG 2						
FG2F1	F	26	City exhibition hall	Single	No	Yes
FG2F2	F	29	Real estate administration	Single	No	No
FG2F3	F	28	Real estate assessment	Single	No	No
FG2F4	F	27	Training teacher	Single	No	Yes
FG 3						
FG3F1	F	27	Finance	Single	No	Yes
FG3F2	F	27	Banking	Married	No	No
FG3M1	M	28	Banking	Married	No	No
FG3M2	M	27	Transport service	Single	No	Yes
FG 4						
FG4M1	M	27	Construction	Married	No	Yes
FG4M2	M	27	Postgraduate student	Single	No	Yes
FG4M3	M	27	Office administration	Single	No	No
FG4M4	M	27	Software engineer	Married	No	No
FG 5						
FG5F1	F	27	Finance	Married	No	No
FG5F2	F	27	Government employee	Single	No	Yes
FG5F3	F	28	Finance	Married	No	No
FG5F4	F	26	Training teacher	Married	No	No

Appendix 2: One-on-one Interview Participants Description

Code	Gender	Age	Occupation
FG1F2	Female	18	Undergraduate student
FG1F4	Female	25	Energy company
FG2F1	Female	26	City exhibition hall
FG3F2	Female	27	Banking
FG3M2	Male	27	Transport service
FG4M1	Male	27	Construction
FG4M4	Male	27	Software engineer
FG5F2	Female	27	Government employee

Appendix 3: Moderator's Guide

Moderator's Guide: Broad Outline and Structure

1. Warm-up/ice-breaker/Introduction

- a) Moderator introducing what fast fashion is.
- b) How often do you buy fast fashion garments?
- c) Where do you usually shop for these clothing?
- d) Who do you reckon is (are) the largest fast fashion consumer markets?

2. RQ1 - What drives young Chinese consumers' fast fashion purchases?

A) Internal – Individual Factors

- a) Why do you think these young consumers like yourself buy fast fashion products?
 - Probe: motivation, perceptions, attitude
 - Probe: emotional needs (How does wearing these garments make you feel?)
- b) Compared with other fashion products, what do you think fast fashion attracts you the most?
 - Probe: needs / wants, perception, attitude, motivation
- c) What does fashion mean to you? In particular fast fashion?
- d) How important is it for you to keep up-to-date with fashion trend? What does current fashion trend mean to you?

B) Internal – Social Factors

- a) Who do you usually go clothes shopping with?
 - Probe: Reasons
 - Follow-up: Will you give each other suggestions when you are shopping together? Will these suggestions affect your purchase decision?
- b) Is your choice of fashion influenced by anyone? How great is their influence?
 - Probe: friends, family, colleagues (social circle), anyone whom is considered as fashion innovator
 - Probe: public figure (movie star)
- c) Have you ever been influenced by your (friends/family/etc) to buy clothing which you actually do not need?
 - Invite examples / experience
- d) Say (Scenario) – If you see your friend is wearing an outfit that you really like, how likely will you ask him/her about the label or where did she/he get it from?

- Probe: Why?
- e) Are you more likely to hang out with people who have similar fashion taste as you?
- f) Have you ever feel pressured by people around you if you do not follow the latest fashion trend?

C) External – Individual

- a) Can you describe your fashion style? How do you decide on your dressing style?
How do you keep updated with the latest fashion?
- Probe: shows, magazines, blogs, websites, advertisements
- b) Is the appearance of someone important to you? Will you evaluate a person through his/her appearance?

D) External – Social

- a) What do you think is the latest fashion trend among people that you know? Who do you think contribute to this trend?
- b) How easy do you find shopping at retail store such as H&M or online platform such as Taobao?
- Probe: widely available, easy access
- c) Do you think the wide availability or easy access help to promote fashion trend?
(Invite examples or personal experiences)

3. RQ-2 Does sustainability play any roles in young Chinese consumers' fashion purchase decisions?

- a) Can you think of any negative aspects of fast fashion?
- Probe: environmental sustainability
- Probe: awareness, attitude and perceptions towards environmental impacts by fast fashion
- b) What do you deal with clothes that you no longer wear (out of fashion)?
- Probe: disposal or recycle, environmental awareness
- c) Does sustainability influence your shopping decisions?
- In what product category?
- What about fashion?
- d) Do you ever feel the needs to balance what you like about fashion with say,

environmental sustainability issues?

- Probe: How? Invite examples / personal experience
- e) Do you see the needs to be more environmentally conscious? What will motivate you to become environmentally conscious?
- Will you perform your behaviour as others wish you to be?

4. Do young consumers face any decisional conflicts when buying fast fashion products? If so, how do young consumers deal with these decisional conflicts?

- a) Have you ever faced any hesitations when you are buying/intend to buy fast fashion products? What are they? How did you deal with them?
- Probe: decisional conflicts (Invite examples / personal experience)
- b) How did you balance the needs for fashion and the disadvantages of fast fashion when you were making the purchase decision?

5. Debriefing and Closing

- a) Explain the objectives of this study.
- b) If invited, moderator will share information about the environmental issues of fast fashion with the participants.
- c) Provide the opportunity to re-consent.

Appendix 4: One-on-one Interview Guide

1. What do you regard as the most important focus for the present stage of your life? What about immediate future, say one or two years from now? What about in longer term, say five years from now? Or ten years from now?
2. What roles does “fashion” play in your daily life? Do you expect these roles to change in the immediate future? What about in the longer term?
3. What does “sustainability” mean to you at the present stage of your life? Do you expect these roles to change in the immediate future? What about in the longer term?
4. If you are requested to allocate 100 points between “fashion” and “sustainability” according to their importance to you at the present stage of your life, how would your allocation be? Do you expect this allocation to change in the immediate future? What about in the longer term?

Appendix 5: Participant Information and Consent Form

(Version A)

Department of Marketing and Management
Faculty of Business and Economics
MACQUARIE UNIVERSITY NSW 2109



Phone: +61 (0)2 9850 8505
Fax: +61 (0)2 9850 6065
Email: laypeng.tan@mq.edu.au

Chief Investigator's / Supervisor's Name & Title: Dr LayPeng Tan

Participant Information and Consent Form

Name of Project: **Fast fashion purchase: An investigation of young Chinese consumers**

You are invited to participate in a study to investigate young Chinese consumers' perceptions toward fast fashion. The purpose of the study is to explore what influence young Chinese consumers to purchase fast fashion clothing.

The study is being conducted by Cong Hu to meet the requirements of Master of Research under the supervision of Dr LayPeng Tan (Tel: +61 02-9850 8505; email: laypeng.tan@mq.edu.au) of the Department of Marketing and Management.

If you decide to participate, you will be asked to share your thoughts and opinions in a focus group. The focus group will take approximately 1.5 hours and will be audio-recorded.

Any information or personal details gathered in the course of the study are confidential, except as required by law. No individual will be identified in any publication of the results. Only Dr LayPeng Tan and Cong Hu (the Chief Investigator, Co-Investigator of this study) and the professional transcriber/translator will have access to these data. A summary of the results of the data can be made available to you on request via email.

Participation in this study is entirely voluntary: you are not obliged to participate and if

you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw at any time without having to give a reason and without consequence.

I, _____ (*participant's name*) _____ have read (*or, where appropriate, have had read to me*) and understand the information above and any questions I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I agree to participate in this research, knowing that I can withdraw from further participation in the research at any time without consequence. I have been given a copy of this form to keep.

Participant's Name: _____
(Block letters)

Participant's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Investigator's Name: _____
(Block letters)

Investigator's Signature: _____ Date: _____

The ethical aspects of this study have been approved by the Macquarie University Human Research Ethics Committee. If you have any complaints or reservations about any ethical aspect of your participation in this research, you may contact the Committee through the Director, Research Ethics & Integrity (telephone (02) 9850 7854; email ethics@mq.edu.au). Any complaint you make will be treated in confidence and investigated, and you will be informed of the outcome.

(INVESTIGATOR'S [OR PARTICIPANT'S] COPY)

Appendix 6: Participant Information and Consent Form (Version B)

Department of Marketing and Management
Faculty of Business and Economics
MACQUARIE UNIVERSITY NSW 2109



Phone: +61 (0)2 9850 8505
Fax: +61 (0)2 9850 6065
Email: laypeng.tan@mq.edu.au

Chief Investigator's / Supervisor's Name & Title: Dr LayPeng Tan

Participant Information and Consent Form

Name of Project: **Fast fashion and sustainability: An investigation of young Chinese consumers**

You are invited to participate in a study to investigate young Chinese consumers' perceptions toward fast fashion and sustainability. The purpose of the study is to explore what influence young Chinese consumers to purchase fast fashion clothing and what roles sustainability has in these decisions. In doing so, this study aims to explore how young consumers balance their needs for fashion and environmental sustainability.

The study is being conducted by Cong Hu to meet the requirements of Master of Research under the supervision of Dr LayPeng Tan (Tel: +61 02-9850 8505; email: laypeng.tan@mq.edu.au) of the Department of Marketing and Management.

If you decide to participate, you will be asked to share your thoughts and opinions in a focus group. The focus group will take approximately 1.5 hours and will be audio-recorded.

Any information or personal details gathered in the course of the study are confidential, except as required by law. No individual will be identified in any publication of the results. Only Dr LayPeng Tan, Cong Hu (the Chief Investigator, Co-Investigator of this study) and the professional transcriber/translator will have access to these data. A summary of the results of the data can be made available to you on request via email.

Participation in this study is entirely voluntary: you are not obliged to participate and if you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw at any time without having to give a reason and without consequence.

I, _____ (*participant's name*) _____ have read (*or, where appropriate, have had read to me*) and understand the information above and any questions I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I agree to participate in this research, knowing that I can withdraw from further participation in the research at any time without consequence. I have been given a copy of this form to keep.

Participant's Name: _____
(Block letters)

Participant's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Investigator's Name: _____
(Block letters)

Investigator's Signature: _____ Date: _____

The ethical aspects of this study have been approved by the Macquarie University Human Research Ethics Committee. If you have any complaints or reservations about any ethical aspect of your participation in this research, you may contact the Committee through the Director, Research Ethics & Integrity (telephone (02) 9850 7854; email ethics@mq.edu.au). Any complaint you make will be treated in confidence and investigated, and you will be informed of the outcome.

(INVESTIGATOR'S [OR PARTICIPANT'S] COPY)

Appendix 7: Participant Information and Consent Form (Version C)

Department of Marketing and Management
Faculty of Business and Economics
MACQUARIE UNIVERSITY NSW 2109



Phone: +61 (0)2 9850 8505
Fax: +61 (0) 2 9850 6065
Email: laypeng.tan@mq.edu.au

Chief Investigator's / Supervisor's Name & Title: Dr LayPeng Tan

Participant Information and Consent Form

Name of Project: **Fast fashion and sustainability: An investigation of young Chinese consumers**

Thank you for your participation in the focus group conducted in early July, in China. We wish to invite you to participate in a short one-on-one telephone/Skype follow-up interview. If you decide to participate, you will be asked to share your thoughts and opinions via an interview. The interview will take approximately 5-10mins and will be audio-recorded.

As a reminder, the study aims to investigate young Chinese consumers' perceptions toward fast fashion and sustainability. The purpose of the study is to explore what influences young Chinese consumers to purchase fast fashion clothing and what roles sustainability has in these decisions. In so doing, this study aims to explore how young consumers balance their needs for fashion and environmental sustainability.

The study is being conducted by Cong Hu to meet the requirements of Master of Research under the supervision of Dr LayPeng Tan (Tel: +61 02-9850 8505; email: laypeng.tan@mq.edu.au) of the Department of Marketing and Management.

Any information or personal details gathered in the course of the study are confidential, except as required by law. No individual will be identified in any publication of the results. Only Dr LayPeng Tan, Cong Hu (the Chief Investigator, Co-Investigator of this study) and the professional transcriber/translator will have access to these data. A summary of the

results of the data can be made available to you on request via email.

Participation in this study is entirely voluntary: you are not obliged to participate and if you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw at any time without having to give a reason and without consequence.

I, _____ (*participant's name*) _____ have read (*or, where appropriate, have had read to me*) and understand the information above and any questions I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I agree to participate in this research, knowing that I can withdraw from further participation in the research at any time without consequence. I have been given a copy of this form to keep.

Participant's Name: _____
(Block letters)

Participant's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Investigator's Name: _____
(Block letters)

Investigator's Signature: _____ Date: _____

The ethical aspects of this study have been approved by the Macquarie University Human Research Ethics Committee. If you have any complaints or reservations about any ethical aspect of your participation in this research, you may contact the Committee through the Director, Research Ethics & Integrity (telephone (02) 9850 7854; email ethics@mq.edu.au). Any complaint you make will be treated in confidence and investigated, and you will be informed of the outcome.

(INVESTIGATOR'S [OR PARTICIPANT'S] COPY)

Appendix 8: Debriefing Statement

Department of Marketing and Management
Faculty of Business and Economics
MACQUARIE UNIVERSITY NSW 2109



Phone: +61 (0)2 9850 8505
Fax: +61 (0) 2 9850 6065
Email: laypeng.tan@mq.edu.au

Name of Project: **Fast fashion and sustainability: An investigation of young Chinese consumers**

Debriefing Statement

Thank you for your participation in this focus group. The goals of this study is to explore what influences young consumers to purchase fast fashion clothing and what roles sustainability has in these decisions. In so doing, we aim to find out how young consumers balance their needs for fashion and their presumed commitments to environmental sustainability.

Your participation is greatly appreciated by the researchers. The insights we gain from this study could potentially help to create greater awareness among the young consumers about the sustainability issues surrounding fast fashion purchases and consumptions. The findings could also potentially shed lights on ways, the managers and/or policy makers could better address the sustainability impact of fast fashion industry.

In the beginning of this focus group, you were provided the Participation Information / Consent Form which stated that this study was about an investigation of young Chinese consumers' perceptions towards fast fashion. We had excluded "sustainability" in this document. This is because as shown in the literature, environmental/sustainability/green topic is susceptible to social desirability issues. That is, respondents have the tendency to provide answers in a way that they feel are logically consistent, and/or present themselves in a manner that will be regarded favourably by others due to social desirability. Social desirability will affect the validity of the research findings and it is one of the most significant sources of bias. In particular, if "sustainability" is mentioned at the beginning of this focus group, participants might be prompted to contrive their responses.

Participation in this study is entirely voluntary. You will now have the opportunity to re-consent or to withdraw from this study should you wish. If you choose the later, then all data from your participation will not be included in the analysis.

If you have any questions about this study, please feel free to contact me, Cong Hu at cong.hu@hdr.mq.edu.au, or my supervisor Dr LayPeng Tan at laypeng.tan@mq.edu.au.

If you wish to obtain a summary of key findings from this study, please contact Cong Hu at cong.hu@hdr.mq.edu.au.

Finally, we urge you not to discuss this study with anyone else who is currently participating or might participate at a future point in time. As you can certainly appreciate, we will not be able to avoid social desirability biases in participants who know about the true purpose of the project beforehand.

Thank you.

Appendix 9: Human Research Ethics Approval

Re application entitled: Fast fashion and sustainability: An investigation of young Chinese consumers

Reference Number: 5201700601

The above application was reviewed by the Faculty of Business & Economics Human Research Ethics Sub Committee. Approval of the above application is granted, effective "28/06/2017". This email constitutes ethical approval only.

This research meets the requirements of the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007). The National Statement is available at the following web site:

<http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/files/nhmrc/publications/attachments/e72.pdf>.

The following personnel are authorised to conduct this research:

Dr LayPeng Tan
Cong Hu

NB. STUDENTS: IT IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY TO KEEP A COPY OF THIS APPROVAL EMAIL TO SUBMIT WITH YOUR THESIS.

Please note the following standard requirements of approval:

1. The approval of this project is conditional upon your continuing compliance with the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007).
2. Approval will be for a period of five (5) years subject to the provision of annual reports.

Progress Report 1 Due: 28th June 2018
Progress Report 2 Due: 28th June 2019
Progress Report 3 Due: 28th June 2020
Progress Report 4 Due: 28th June 2021
Final Report Due: 28th June 2022

NB. If you complete the work earlier than you had planned you must submit a Final Report as soon as the work is completed. If the project has been

discontinued or not commenced for any reason, you are also required to submit a Final Report for the project.

Progress reports and Final Reports are available at the following website:
http://www.research.mq.edu.au/for/researchers/how_to_obtain_ethics_approval/human_research_ethics/forms

3. If the project has run for more than five (5) years you cannot renew approval for the project. You will need to complete and submit a Final Report and submit a new application for the project. (The five year limit on renewal of approvals allows the Committee to fully re-review research in an environment where legislation, guidelines and requirements are continually changing, for example, new child protection and privacy laws).

4. All amendments to the project must be reviewed and approved by the Committee before implementation. Please complete and submit a Request for Amendment Form available at the following website:

http://www.research.mq.edu.au/for/researchers/how_to_obtain_ethics_approval/human_research_ethics/forms

5. Please notify the Committee immediately in the event of any adverse effects on participants or of any unforeseen events that affect the continued ethical acceptability of the project.

6. At all times you are responsible for the ethical conduct of your research in accordance with the guidelines established by the University. This information is available at the following websites:

<http://www.mq.edu.au/policy/>
http://www.research.mq.edu.au/for/researchers/how_to_obtain_ethics_approval/human_research_ethics/policy

If you will be applying for or have applied for internal or external funding for the above project it is your responsibility to provide the Macquarie University's Research Grants Management Assistant with a copy of this email as soon as possible. Internal and External funding agencies will not be informed that you have approval for your project and funds will not be released until the Research Grants Management Assistant has received a copy of this email.

If you need to provide a hard copy letter of approval to an external organisation as evidence that you have approval, please do not hesitate to contact the FBE Ethics Committee Secretariat, via fbe-ethics@mq.edu.au or

9850 4826.

Please retain a copy of this email as this is your official notification of ethics approval.

Yours sincerely,

Dr. Nikola Balnave
Chair, Faculty of Business and Economics Ethics Sub-Committee



Nikola Balnave

21/07/2017 6:58 PM

Re: Final Ethics Approval 5201700601

To: Lay Peng Tan Cc: FBE Ethics; Cong Hu (HDR)

Dear Dr Tan,

Re: 'Fast fashion and sustainability: An investigation of young Chinese consumers'
Reference No.: 5201700601

Thank you for your recent correspondence. The following amendments have been approved:

1. Follow-up interviews with approximately 10 focus group participants

If you have any questions or concerns please contact the FBE Ethics Secretariat on 9850 4826 or at the following email fbe-ethics@mq.edu.au.

Yours sincerely,

Dr. Nikola Balnave
Chair, Faculty of Business and Economics Ethics Sub-Committee

Dr Nikola Balnave
Senior Lecturer, Department of Marketing & Management
Faculty of Business and Economics
E4A 509 | Macquarie University NSW 2109
Phone: +61 (0)2 9850 7278 | Fax: +61 (0)2 9850 6065
Email: nikki.balnave@mq.edu.au | Website: www.bus.mq.edu.au

List of Figures

Figure 1.1 China in comparison to Australia

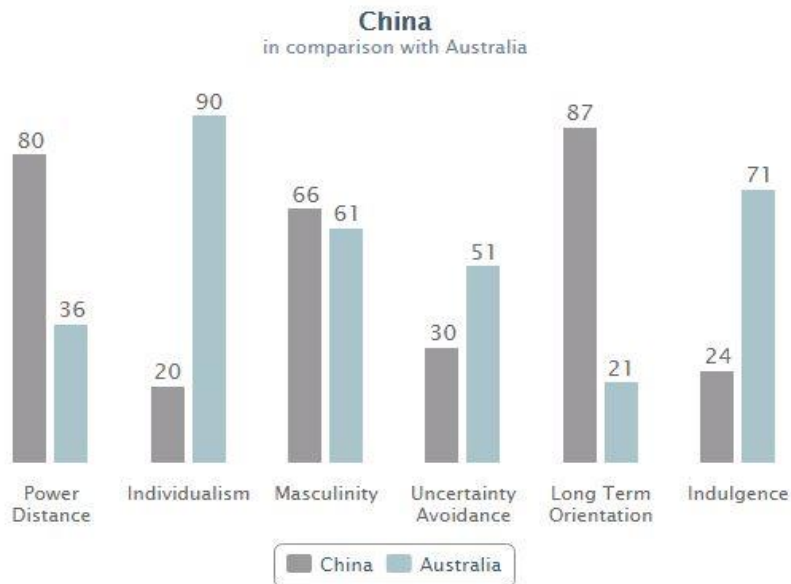


Figure 2.1: Fashion perspectives

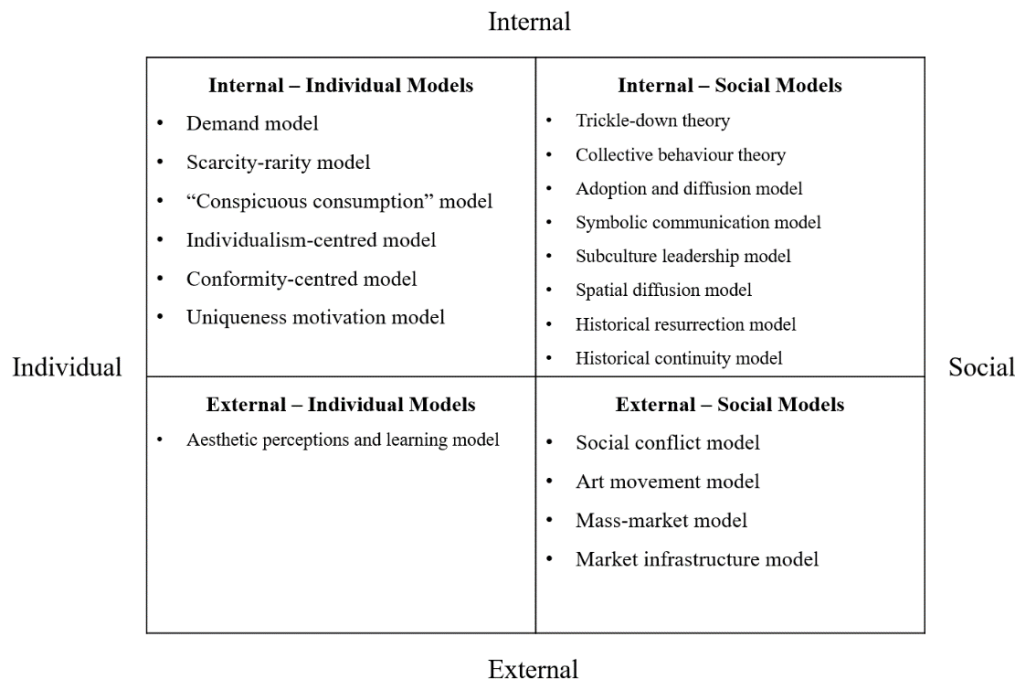


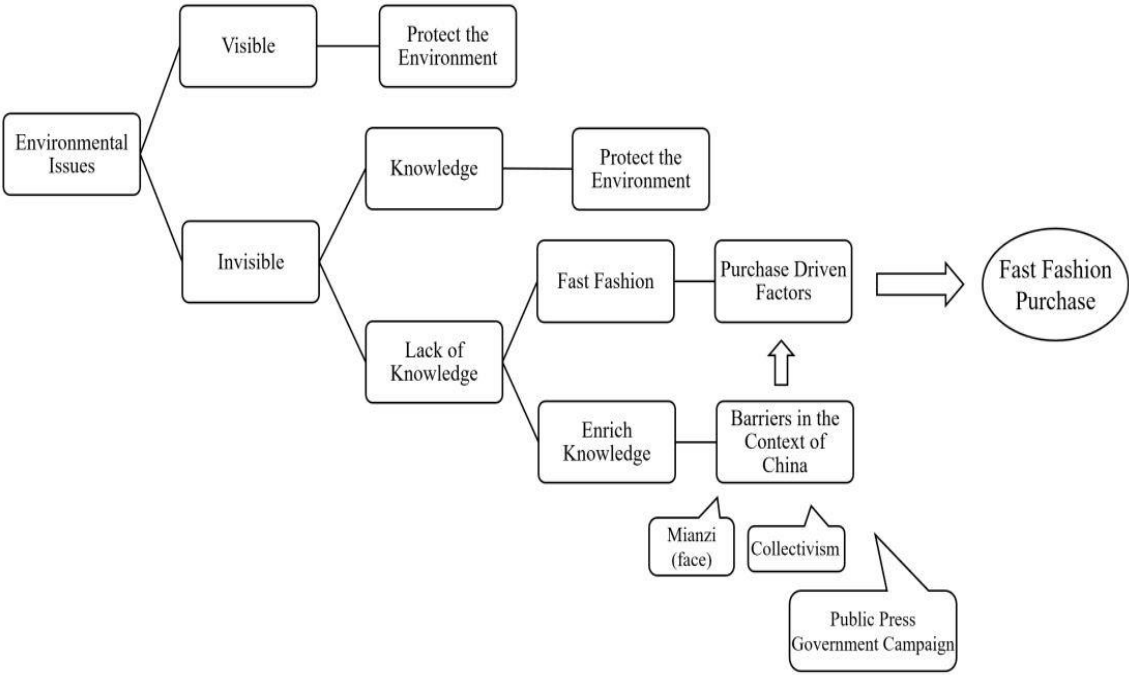
Figure 3.1: Phases of thematic analysis

Phase	Description of the process
1. Familiarizing yourself with your data:	Transcribing data (if necessary), reading and re-reading the data, noting down initial ideas.
2. Generating initial codes:	Coding interesting features of the data in a systematic fashion across the entire data set, collating data relevant to each code.
3. Searching for themes:	Collating codes into potential themes, gathering all data relevant to each potential theme.
4. Reviewing themes:	Checking if the themes work in relation to the coded extracts (Level 1) and the entire data set (Level 2), generating a thematic 'map' of the analysis.
5. Defining and naming themes:	Ongoing analysis to refine the specifics of each theme, and the overall story the analysis tells, generating clear definitions and names for each theme.
6. Producing the report:	The final opportunity for analysis. Selection of vivid, compelling extract examples, final analysis of selected extracts, relating back of the analysis to the research question and literature, producing a scholarly report of the analysis.

Figure 4.1: Fast fashion products purchase driving factors

		Internal			
Individual	Internal-individual Factors <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Affordable price• Ease of matching• Self-expression		Internal-social Factors <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Interactions among friends• Mianzi (face perception)• Collectivism• Celebrity effects		Social
	External-individual Factors <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ease of adoption• Readiness-to-wear		External-social Factors <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Wide availability• Ease of accessibility• Store environment		
		External			

Figure 4.2: Environmental issues and fast fashion purchasing



List of tables

Table 1.1: A frequency count of fast fashion brands in media publications

Specialty apparel retailer	Number of appearances in Factiva search		Number of appearances in PDF online search	
	Rank	% appearances	% appearances	Rank
H&M	1	31.7 %	41.0 %	2
Zara/Inditex	2	29.2 %	45.9 %	1
Gap	3	11.9 %	18.2 %	3
Uniqlo/Fast Retailing	4	9.9 %	9.4 %	8
Topshop	5	9.3 %	13.7 %	4
Forever 21	6	7.5 %	11.2 %	6
Mango	7	4.3 %	12.4 %	5
Wet Seal	8	3.2 %	0.6 %	16
Benetton	9	3.1 %	10.1 %	7
New Look	10	2.8 %	6.2 %	9
Esprit	11	2.8 %	4.7 %	10
C&A	12	1.9 %	4.7 %	11
American apparel	13	1.2 %	2.6 %	13
Urban outfitters	14	0.9 %	2.8 %	12
Peacocks	15	0.5 %	1.1 %	15
Charlotte Russe	16	0.5 %	0.2 %	17
Armani Exchange	17	0.3 %	1.5 %	14

The search in the Factiva database was among 7,587 articles published in the last 2 years that mentioned fast fashion. The PDF search was among 466 PDF files available to download in Google.com that mentioned fast fashion

Table 4.1: Allocation of 100 points according to importance

Code	Gender	Occupation	F-S (present)	F-S (immediate future)	F-S (longer term)
FG1F2	Female	Undergraduate student	50-50	40-60	20-80
FG1F4	Female	Energy company	20-80	20-80	10-90
FG2F1	Female	City exhibition hall	75-25	70-30	50-50
FG3F2	Female	Banking	80-20	60-40	30-70
FG3M2	Male	Transport service	80-20	60-40	30-70
FG4M1	Male	Construction	80-20	80-20	20-80
FG4M4	Male	Software engineer	1-99	1-99	1-99
FG5F2	Female	Government employee	50-50	50-50	30-70

(F=fashion; S=sustainability; immediate future=within 5 years; long term=beyond 5 years)