

# **Green brand extensions in fast fashion: The impact on generation Z consumers when buying clothing in Western Switzerland**

**Bachelor Project submitted for the degree of  
Bachelor of Science HES in International Business Management**

by

**Yolanda CARVALHO FRAZÃO**

Bachelor Project Mentor:

**Nicolas MONTANDON, HES Lecturer**

**Geneva, 3 June 2022**

**Haute école de gestion de Genève (HEG-GE)**

**International Business Management**



# Disclaimer

This report is submitted as part of the final examination requirements of the Haute école de gestion de Genève, for the Bachelor of Science HES-SO in International Business Management. The use of any conclusions or recommendations made in or based upon this report, with no prejudice to their value, engages the responsibility neither of the author, nor the author's mentor, nor the jury members nor the HEG or any of its employees.

# Acknowledgments

The completion of this bachelor thesis was made possible thanks to the assistance and participation of several people to whom I am grateful.

I would like to thank Mr. Montandon, who served as my Bachelor Project Mentor. I would want to express my gratitude for his availability and support, which helped me.

I'm also grateful to all the anonymous fast-fashion employees who agreed to work with me, I'd want to express my gratitude for their involvement in the study and their time and insights. I'd also like to express my gratitude to the 184 anonymous individuals who responded to the survey for their cooperation, time, and insights.

Finally, I would want to express my gratitude to my mom and my friends, for their assistance and support during my studies.

## Executive Summary

*Fast fashion* is an Anglo-Saxon word that originated in the early 2000s. Its characteristics are low-priced products leading to high production and less development on the quality, encouraging the renewal of consumer's wardrobe as much as possible (Hall, 2017). It was estimated that in 2015, the manufacture of fashion resulted in 1,2 billion tons of carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) emissions, accounting for up to 10% of total world CO<sub>2</sub> emissions (Kell, 2018). As a result, various concepts offer an alternative to the fashion industry's unsustainable methods resulting from the fast-paced fashion cycle, such as *slow fashion*. (Cataldi et al., 2010). Moreover, some experts believe that direct exposure to climate change affects the environmental awareness and action of the youth. Moreover, Gen Z individuals are the most interested in incorporating sustainability into their activities (Petro, 2021).

In addition, a trend in marketing and used by brands is the linkage of products and brands with environmental and social concerns (Anderson et al., 1972) (Kassarjian, 1971). The term "sustainable" or "green" branding refers to the process of creating an extension to a brand due to sustainability. These environmental linkages have a positive reciprocal influence and a favourable green image that can lead to a halo effect. However, in 2006, research on the benefits and drawbacks of brand expansions (Völckner & Sattler, 2006) suggested that over 80% of all brand extensions in many Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) product categories fail. The excessive use of environmental claims has caused consumers to question the honesty and trustworthiness of companies' environmental values. (Karna et al., 2001). Moreover, according to research made by Kearney, there is a considerable gap in price disparity between sustainable products and what difference the general market would bear. Even if people want to purchase for the environment, many can't afford or don't want to spend so much more knowing that almost the same product is available but at a much lower price.

This study aims to study the consumer behavior towards fast fashion green brand extensions in Western Switzerland. More precisely, if those brands have an impact or influence on Generation Z. To provide this information, current thinking about the subject has been summarized in the literature review. Moreover, a quantitative analysis has been done via an online survey to question consumers and understand how they react to fast fashion and those extensions. Additionally, interviews with retailers have been conducted to examine the evolution of consumer behavior and what feedback they receive and to propose recommendations.

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# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Context

As Carolina Herrera, a fashion designer, said: "The difference between fashion and art is that fashion is art in movement." Fashion interpretations across time reveal the regional, cultural, and personal influences of expressing oneself. Fashion has been a sign of beauty and represents what is deemed desirable since the beginning of time (Thompson & Whittington, 2012). However, fashion has entered a period in which the environment is considered, necessitating new inventive ideas to operate more sustainably (Fletcher, 2010). The consumerism linked with global prosperity puts an unsustainable strain on natural ecosystems due to the fast rise of the world's population. As a result, we all endeavor to defend our planet in as many ways as possible; avoiding the use of plastic goods, favoring electric cars and public transportation, sorting our waste, and a variety of other measures are just a few examples. However, the behaviors are less visible when it comes to acquiring fashionable apparel. According to a projection by the Global Fashion Agenda and Boston Consulting Group, clothing industry consumption will climb by 63 percent by 2030, equivalent to 102 million tons of clothes, while the world population expands simultaneously (Eder-Hansen, 2017).

Moreover, in Switzerland, the spending on fashion will increase to 16 billion in 2025. Another factor in increasing demand is low prices, which contribute to overconsumption and waste. Many water, power, fuel, and chemicals are used in the textile production process. As a result, consumption patterns and high production rates have a significant environmental impact (Parisi, 2015).

"Buy less, pick well," said fashion designer Vivienne Westwood during London Fashion Week in 2013, pushing consumers to consume less and buy high-quality items. Today, this is referred to as the notion of *slow fashion*, which focuses on slowing down the manufacture of garments while considering what we buy and why we buy things and establishing those principles in terms of sustainability. Another option in contrast to that is *fast fashion*. It is defined by firms preferring to create quickly and at a cheap cost, often linked to "wear and tear" fashion (Bhardwaj & Fairhurst, 2010). Catwalk trends swiftly transition from runway to retail influence collections to fulfill customer demand for new trends. As a result, businesses rush to make pretty things as rapidly as possible before the current trend fades away.

## **1.2 Issue Definition**

The fast fashion industry now dominates the fashion business, increasing the variety and number of fashion trends. This motivates businesses to match market demands and, as a result, boost output while individuals are pushed to consume more than what they need. (Pookulangara & Shepard, 2013). Compared to 15 years ago, global clothing utilization, or the average number of times a customer wears a garment before discarding it, has reduced by 36% and is presently at ten average usages per garment (Press, 2019). Moreover, over half of fast fashion is discarded in less than a year (Ellen MacArthur Foundation, 2017). In 2015, the manufacture of fashion resulted in 1,2 billion tons of carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) emissions, accounting for up to 10% of total world CO<sub>2</sub> emissions (Kell, 2018). This figure exceeds the total emissions of all foreign flights and maritime transport (Ibid). Another environmental hazard brought on by the fashion industry is the massive water use. The fashion sector is the world's second greatest water user, using roughly 93 billion cubic meters annually (Ibid), and is responsible for 20% of all industrial wastewater (Kell, 2018).

Despite that, consumers declare that they are more concerned about the environment than ever (Cheng, 2019). As a result, Positive Luxury discovered that the sustainable keyword related to fashion increased by 75% from 2008. In addition, the research said that some customers claim to be prepared to pay a premium for environmentally friendly items, which is surprising given the importance of pricing when purchasing fast fashion. (Lin et AL., 2016). Generation Z, in particular, "increasingly support their convictions with their buying behaviors, selecting businesses that are aligned with their values and rejecting those that aren't," according to a study. However, research has found that sustainability concerns are not yet powerful enough to be an essential factor when purchasing fashion products. Sustainability is the most important driver of purchase behavior for just 7% of customers (Lehmann et AL., 2019).

Yet, green brand extensions are a method that many fast fashion companies use to become more sustainable and boost their brand's image among customers (Borin et AL., 2013). But what's the impact of these extensions on the consumers? Are they breaking barriers and changing consumers' habits? Do young consumers trust green labels?

This report aims to identify the motivators for buying green brand extensions of fashion and understand their impact on young consumers.

### **1.3 Research question and objectives**

This report aims at answering the following question:

*"To what degree are green brand extensions of fast fashion impacting generation Z consumers when buying clothing in Western Switzerland?"*

As seen in the previous sections, the fast fashion industry is now trying to add green brand extensions to its parent brand. This paper aims to discover whether the target group has seen their consumption change.

Before conducting primary data on consumers using a quantitative and qualitative research approach, the current literature review has findings on two specified emphasis areas, the fast fashion sector, and its green brand extensions, and the consumer side, it will enable to identify of behavioural patterns among consumers. Consumer behaviour is the focus of this study's core research.

### **1.4 Organization of the thesis**

Firstly, this study will focus on the literature review, which aims to define the theoretical concepts of this thesis. Analyzing the literature highlights will provide precious insights that will allow us to understand and overview the fast fashion industry and sustainability. Additionally, we will try to understand the consumption patterns of Generation Z in Western Switzerland towards green brand extensions and fast fashion. The main objectives would be to study and analyze the consumption behavior, how they react to green brand extensions of existing fast fashion brands, and their needs in terms of quality, price, and sustainable measures.

### **1.5 Purpose of this study**

By investigating the impact of green branding in the fast fashion sector, the goal of this thesis is to provide fresh insights and understandings of previous studies. The findings and recommendations of this study will be helpful to managers, marketers, young customers, and fast fashion firms.

## 2. Literature review

### 2.1 The Fast-fashion concept

#### 2.1.1 The origins of fast fashion

Despite the growing number of garment factories and advancements, much of the clothing manufactured in the early twentieth century was still done at home or in small workshops. Nevertheless, due to the fabric constraints and the need for practical clothes imposed by World War II, the standardized garment was upsurge. It led middle-class customers to grow more open to the value of purchasing mass-produced apparel after being acclimated to such uniformity after the war (Breward, 2003).

However, the fashion trends took another speed in the '60s when youngsters adopted low-cost apparel, rejecting the stylistic norms of previous generations. Soon after, fashion businesses had to find new ways to meet the growing demand for inexpensive apparel, which led to the establishment of enormous textile mills in underdeveloped countries, allowing American and European corporations to save millions of dollars by outsourcing their workforce.

#### 2.1.2 The fast fashion industry

"Fast fashion" is an Anglo-Saxon word that originated in the early 2000s and is taken from the term "fast food". It includes everything from underwear to outerwear, footwear, bags, hats, belts, gloves, and other accessories. Its characteristics are low-priced products that are not intended to be kept from one season to the next, leading to high production and less development on the quality of the fabric or the construction, encouraging the renewal of consumer's wardrobe as much as possible (Hall, 2017). It implies a maximum reactivity of brands, the flexibility of the production process, and logistic flows stretched to the extreme. The goal is to allow consumers, especially those on a tight budget, to stay on the leading edge of fashion and update their wardrobe regularly to follow the trends.

Moreover, the fast-fashion business does not follow the fashion cycle's seasons, which was common in the sector until the 1990s. Indeed, in the 1990s, the average time between a runway and the clothes arriving in a consumer's closet was six months (Joy et AL., 2012).

### **2.1.3 The fast fashion manufacturing process**

Clothing production is a complex process, and to make these giants perform, an efficient supply chain is necessary. For example, Zara successfully works with a minimum inventory and responds quickly to market needs (Zhang, 2017). As a result, Zara's new items can be designed and out to the stores in 4 – 6 weeks (Mhugos, 2020). Plenty of fast fashion brands use the same supply chain strategy. However, some of them have their products manufactured in independent factories, such as H&M (Giertz-Marteson, 2012). Moreover, each stage of garment manufacture occurs in a separate nation, according to the authors of research on "The environmental effect of fast fashion," which increases the logistical steps between operations, depending on economic considerations.

The countries are principally where labour costs are low. They used to be in China for many years. However, factory employees in China are increasingly asking for more significant salaries, and companies have responded by shifting production to Southeast Asia, where wages are even lower (Taplin, 2014). Nevertheless, the design process, the conception, and the communication strategy are located principally in Europe and in the US, where the head offices are located.

### **2.1.4 The fast fashion business model**

*Fast fashion* can be defined as a business model combining three elements: quick response, frequent assortment changes, and fashionable designs at affordable prices (Martinez-de-Albeniz, Caro, 2014). These elements can be explained by the clothing industry's high volatility and uncertainty; therefore, predicting consumer demand has become difficult. So, to respond quickly, it is necessary to use new capabilities or resources. Indeed, Inditex (Zara) was the first fashion retailer in the world to compete based on this time-to-market strategy (Vincent et AL., 2013). They decreased the whole process to only two weeks, resulting in higher profit margins. To keep stock fresh, fast fashion merchants provide new products virtually weekly. This refreshing approach is comparable to treating fashion as perishable goods (Dutta, 2002).

### **2.1.5 The fast fashion marketing/communication**

Many brands rely on their flagship stores to communicate their message. For example, Inditex spends only 0.3 percent of its turnover on advertising, compared to 5% for comparable fashion retailers. Instead of spending money on "influencers," Zara prefers building new stores. The limited advertisements are used to promote the company's twice-yearly discounts and the launch of new stores (Aftab et al., 2018), which means

that customers should be able to visit a Zara storefront before seeing a Zara commercial. However, influencers play a significant part in the fast-fashion industry's consumption. Influencers are, indeed, at the centre of a new style of marketing and every follower has the potential to become a target. (Fast fashion - Les dessous de la mode à bas prix, 2021 | ARTE)

## **2.2 The slow fashion concept**

According to 440 industries, "Slow fashion describes a conscious and sustainable approach to production and consumption. This category is where you find clothes designed, created, and sold to last a long time." Whereas fast fashion refers to a business approach that, because of our economy's fixation with speed, quantity takes precedence over quality, leaving less time for quality management (Honoré, 2004), slow fashion is a countermovement that prioritizes quality and takes a more deliberate approach to fashion. As a result, this concept offers an alternative to the fashion industry's unsustainable methods resulting from the fast-paced fashion cycle. (Cataldi et al., 2010).

The characteristics of slow fashion are making efforts toward sustainability (see below), such as improved quality, fair working conditions, and a lesser amount of manufacturing and consumption. It uses sustainable materials, classic designs, and technologies to reduce pollution and waste and address the product's mobility across the supply chain (Fletcher, 2010).

Slow Fashion also encourages shoppers to consider their needs and their purchases' social and environmental implications. The goal is to cut down consumption by extending the product's lifespan and increasing the value of each item of apparel purchased by clients (Clark, 2008). Moreover, for a product to work in a slow fashion system, its design and durability must be long-lasting in both quality and design (by avoiding micro trends), allowing the buyer to appreciate the items and their adaptability (LeBlanc, 2012) (Tinmark et al., 2019). Buying high-quality clothing, wearing it repeatedly, employing its timeless design in various ways, and ensuring that the textiles are given new life when they are no longer in use, would be the description of slow fashion for the customers. (Clark, 2008).

Furthermore, according to Kate Fletcher, slow fashion is more than simply a way of slowing down the supply chain; it's also a way of embracing true social responsibility and transparency while being lucrative in the long term. (Viola et al., 2018).



However, it's debatable if a truly "fast, sustainable fashion" system can exist. Even sustainable fashion necessitates continuing resource exploitation from the environment. On the other hand, sustainability is based on the logic of preservation; a criterion also absent from fast fashion. (Henninger et al., 2016).

### **2.3 The sustainability trend and concept,**

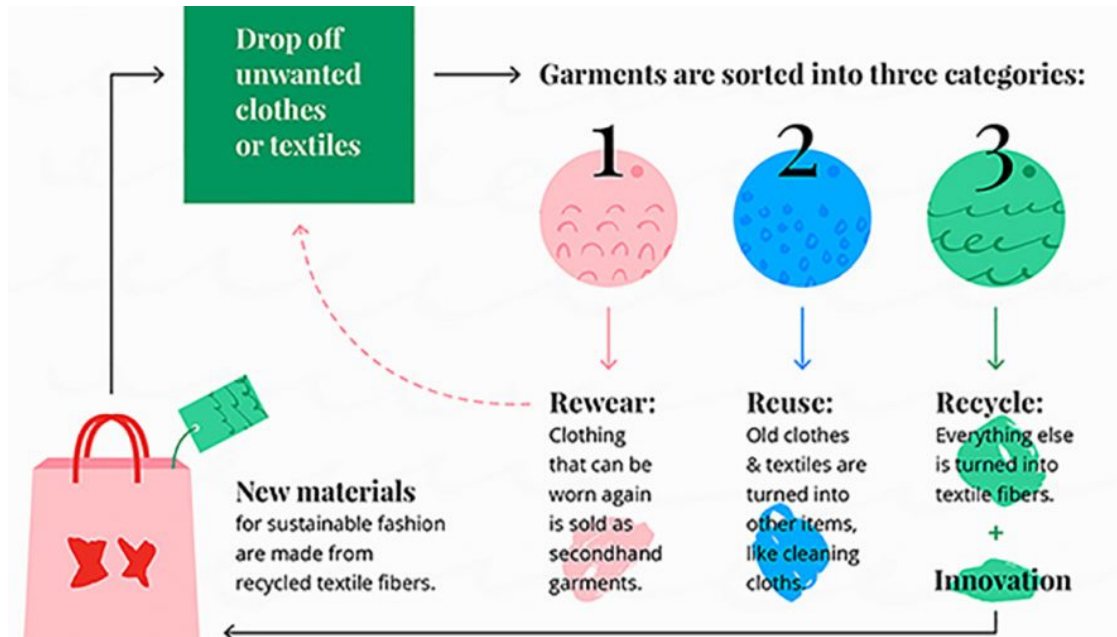
WARC's Marketer's Toolkit 2020, a report designed to help marketers make effective decisions, said that in the coming years, conscious consumption and sustainability would influence marketing tactics, and more than 75% of the participants believed that businesses must take a statement on social concerns. After research, Anna Hammill (2020) concludes that "... sustainability is no longer just a consumer trend but is increasingly perceived as a business imperative."

The concept of sustainability was developed in the World Commission on Environment and Development-Brundtland Report in 1987. The UN defined this movement as "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs." However, sustainability must extend beyond our interaction with the environment. It's about our relationships with ourselves, our communities, and future generations, claim William Seidman (Seidman et al., 2007). *Sustainability* is a complex and shifting dynamic that influences human lives and well-being, including ecological, economic, and socio-political components.

Sustainability for the fashion industry may be characterized as "respect for people at all levels of the organization, the community, and its supply chain, as well as respect for the earth while acknowledging that resources are limited" (Langenwater, 2009). However, according to research, fast-fashion companies struggle to keep track of all their suppliers and various components to provide full transparency to their customers on ethically performed labour (Mihm et al., 2010). This lack of supply chain transparency is a problem since customers believe manufacturers' quality and sustainability testing without questioning the traceability of the items they buy (Hepburn et al., 2013). However, some businesses, such as Patagonia, have imagined "The Footprint Chronicles" to allow customers to track the fabric, components, and manufacturing process of their clothing (Polley, 2012).

### 2.3.1 Sustainable solutions in fashion

Figure 1- Recycling your fashion for a better future



Source: 1 Impacting your future

Recycling is the treatment of waste and the reintroduction of the generated materials into the manufacturing cycle of all types of goods. Recycling minimizes waste volume and pollution by using previously created materials or textiles to make new goods and preserving natural resources (Xie et al., 2021). Furthermore, fast-fashion companies have embraced recycling. Many businesses are now producing collections made of recycled materials and apparel. H&M and Zara, for example, have lately created apparel lines made from previously used clothes. In addition to recycling, there's upcycling. According to Kylie Fuller, upcycling is the act of repurposing obsolete materials to make something more valuable or of more excellent quality. Using an old wine bottle to build a lamp base, for example, upcycling. There's no need to melt the bottle in this case; instead, we use it as is to give it a new lease of life. This means that upcycling takes something old and generates something new from its existing state, whereas recycling destroys waste to create something new.

Moreover, second-hand stores arose in the 18th and 19th centuries with one goal in mind: to sell old "items" to customers (Weinstein, 2014). But this shopping style, conveyed the image of a household that did not have enough money and aimed at low- and middle-income families (Lemire, 1988). However, in the 2000s, second-hand shops took a new turn, according to research (Ferraro et al., 2016). This was due to different customer attitudes and understanding of the fashion industry's environmental impact. In

recent years, second-hand stores have grown and are now recognized as a socially acceptable alternative to traditional retail establishments (Brace-Govan et al., 2009).

## **2.4 The negative externalities of fast fashion**

Rapid consumption means waste and pollution. The increase in fashion production makes up for 10% of total world CO<sub>2</sub> emissions (Kell, 2018) of humanity's carbon emissions, dries up water sources, and pollutes rivers and streams (McFall-Jonhsen, 2019). As a result, the fast-fashion sector is the world's second-largest pollution producer. Furthermore, due to the advances of e-commerce, most deliveries are now free, thus, less activity in the stores. The procedure is ordering the pieces of clothes and, if it does not fit, return them for no charge. Demand is going up thanks to this new policy. In 2010, 50 billion garments were produced compared to the double 100 billion in 2020.

Moreover, to be able to "keep up with the trends," items purchased were worn on average just seven times, according to recent research on 2,000 women, with a third of the women deeming clothing outdated after only three years. Currently, just 13.6 percent of apparel and shoes discarded in the United States are recycled, even if the typical American throws away 37kg of clothing each year. Indeed, throwing away garments before they are entirely worn-out results in a waste of resources (Dardis, 1974). A study also found that producing large amounts of low-quality man-made apparel had a significant negative influence on natural resources (Cline, 2012). According to research published in Nature Reviews Earth and Environment, each kg of clothes consumed needs around 200 gallons of water to be manufactured. The damage doesn't end there since the microfibers are swept into the seas and oceans throughout the washing process. Clothes are responsible for one-third of the microplastics that arrive there.

## **2.5 The fast fashion green brand extensions concept**

A trend in marketing and used by brands is the linkage of products and brands with environmental and social concerns (Anderson et al., 1972) (Kassarjian, 1971). The term "sustainable" or "green" branding refers to the process of creating a collection that can clearly be distinguished from rivals' brands owing to the aspect of sustainability. Moreover, we are seeing an increase in the number of organizations engaged in corporate social responsibility (CSR) (Caroll, 1979), and green advertising, the adoption of ecolabels, and a multitude of new green goods are examples of the swarm of activities centred on the eco-trend (Lin & Chang, 2012).

With the rise of this trend and the rebranding, people may feel that green marketing is still in its "debuts," the concept of incorporating ecology into a marketing plan was first proposed in the 1970s. (Anderso et al., 1972) (Kassarjian, 1971) (Nyilasy et al. 2013) (Hesse et al., 2022).

A brand extension is an addition to an existing brand. A green brand extension is an addition to an existing brand but with "sustainable" features. Companies use these extensions to make it easier to introduce new items into product categories that the brand does not presently serve (Keller & Aaker, 1990) (Danciu, 2015). This strategy lowers the risk of selling a new product by allowing buyers to evaluate the new product based on existing brand connotations (Aaker & Keller, 1990). A brand extension may now be expanding the brand into new product categories as well as within the same product category. Categories and line expansions that leverage the same product category to deliver a new product to a new target market are known as horizontal brand extensions (Choi et al., 2010). Vertical brand extensions, on the other hand, are used to establish diffusion brands, in which a lower-cost product is launched to the mass market under the umbrella of a higher-cost designer brand (Choi et al., 2010), such as Balmain x H&M.

But what are the goals of green brand extensions? According to Tauber (1981), they meet the needs of environmentally conscious customers, and they might have a "synergistic rub-off" on the original brand. Moreover, environmental linkages have a positive reciprocal influence, and a favourable green image that can lead to a halo effect (*the halo effect is the tendency for positive impressions of a person, company, brand, or product in one area to positively influence one's opinion or feelings in other areas, Wikipedia*) and the main brand can be boosted as well (Chatterjee, 2019) (Olsen et al., 2014). However, the impact of the parent brand's environmental reputation on its green extendibility must be considered (Johnson et al., 2019).

According to 2019 research, consumers are often unclear about the different labels used on product packaging (Schmidt et al., 2017; Sharma & Kushwaha, 2019). Linking a brand to an ecolabel has the goal of incorporating sustainability into brand knowledge and so giving value to customers. (Schmidt et al. 2017). The phrases "eco," "bio," "organic," "fair trade," and "vegan" are frequently used to characterize ecolabels, which are generally depicted with green colour codes. Such ecolabeling methods are meant to serve as "mental short-cuts" to aid decision-making by providing transparency and distinction. (Canavari, Coderoni, 2019) (Hutchinson, 2013). However, research found that consumers are less likely to trust labels pushed by profit companies than labels promoted by independent and unbiased third parties (Taufique et al., 2017). In 2006, research on

the benefits and drawbacks of brand expansions made by Völckner & Sattler (2006) claimed that over 80% of all brand extensions in many Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) product categories fail. As a result, it is critical for a manager to analyse potential brand expansion success factors to lower the failure rate. Moreover, the same research (Völckner & Sattler, 2006) identified five success factors for brand extensions: "(1) the fit between the parent brand and the extension product, (2) previous experience with the parent brand, (3) consumer conviction with the parent brand, (4) retailer acceptance of the new product, and (5) marketing support for the extension product."

## **2.6 Sustainable actions put in place by the fast fashion industry.**

Since the rising of the sustainable trends, several fashion firms have begun to embrace a variety of sustainability efforts, ranging from green marketing to CSR programs, to develop a sustainable brand identity (Park & Kim, 2016). These businesses took some steps to enhance their reputation and attract a broader spectrum of ethical customers. Nowadays, fast fashion firms must address the negative consequences of reduced manufacturing costs, poor quality, and lack of sustainability, which many companies do by adopting various methods to more sustainable practices (Chang & Jai, 2014). Some fast-fashion companies, such as Nike, and Timberland, have opted to take the lead on environmental issues and are working to create organic textile production (Blanquart et al., 2008). Moreover, Inditex, the most prominent fast fashion retailer, is similarly devoted to the planet's well-being by pursuing a strategy to encourage sustainable development. This strategy entails making significant investments in environmentally friendly solutions. Before 2025, the retailer announced that all its lines would be manufactured entirely of sustainable fibers (Inditex, 2020). All these indicated on the tags are considered green brand extensions.

## **2.7 Green washing**

The rising sustainability trend made consumers more likely to choose one brand over another if they think the brand will help the environment, which means that consumers are also more inclined to be favourable toward businesses that are seen to be environmentally conscious (Chase et al., 1992). As a result, many businesses and organizations attempt to improve their environmental standing through various green marketing promises (Hagman et al., 2017). However, credibility is also one of the most critical criteria in determining the consequences of a compelling message, according to the research of Petty & Cacioppo (1981). The excessive use of environmental claims

has caused consumers to question the honesty and trustworthiness of companies' environmental values. (Karna et al., 2001). Companies have been accused of misusing the greening technique to raise profits in several incidents (Rahman et al., 2015). As a result, consumer distrust and accusations of greenwashing have arisen because of the injudicious and tactical use of green marketing initiatives (Nyilasy et al., 2013)

When advertising, numerous firms make promises that seem environmentally conscientious but are ambiguous and often even fraudulent to appeal to the expanding environmentally concerned consumer sector (Furlow, 2010). As a result, greenwashing has become a popular notion in today's business (Kalafatis et al., 1999). According to Furlow (2010), "Greenwashing is an organization's broadcast of incorrect or incomplete information to project a public picture of environmental responsibility" he adds that companies with sincere efforts to be environmentally responsible will lose their "reputation" because of increased public skepticism about green branding. Being dishonest in these assertions has a significant danger of being labeled as greenwashing, which might jeopardize the entire marketing strategy (Miller, 2008).

## **2.8 Generation Z from the western world**

A *generation* is a sociological concept that designates a sub-population whose members, being close in age or having lived in the same historical period, share many practices and representations (Lerner et al., 2011). Growing up in the same period leads to a shared macro-level of socialization. People have the same experiences in relation to the economy, politics, and current events. These shared experiences manifest themselves in forming opinions and values common to a generation. Moreover, because these experiences are fundamentally different across generations, generations will have different reference points and perceptions from one generation to the next (Assaidi et al., 2015).

The growth of smartphones and technology, as well as the legalization of same-sex marriage, are some of the events that Generation Z, born between 1995 and 2012, have witnessed. Generation Z has a distinct view of perceived safety, is more receptive to diversity, and connects more digitally than previous generations (Twenge, 2021), making it easier to buy online.

Furthermore, Gen Zers are 2x more likely than Millennials to purchase on mobile devices, and one-third of Gen Zers have been tempted to buy something after seeing it on social media. Gen Z makes consumption easy because 85 percent utilize social media to learn about new items. Moreover, 69 percent of Generation Z will visit a store

based on a retailer's social media posts. Over 80 percent of Gen Z-ers are influenced to purchase at a retailer they have never visited before but saw on social media. Therefore, firms targeting Generation Z must have a solid social media presence (sproutsocial, 2022).

### **2.8.1 Gen Z's perception towards green brand extensions in the fast fashion industry**

Consumers' knowledge of the parent brand is utilized to evaluate the extension in brand extension evaluation (Czellar, 2003). The processing of new information is influenced by the consumer's knowledge of the parent brand (Dacin and Smith, 1994). Similarly, the intensity of emotional sentiments toward the parent brand will impact the extension's rating (Boush & Loken, 1991). More levels of emotion linked to the parent brand increased favourable views of the extension, according to Hem and Iversen (2003).

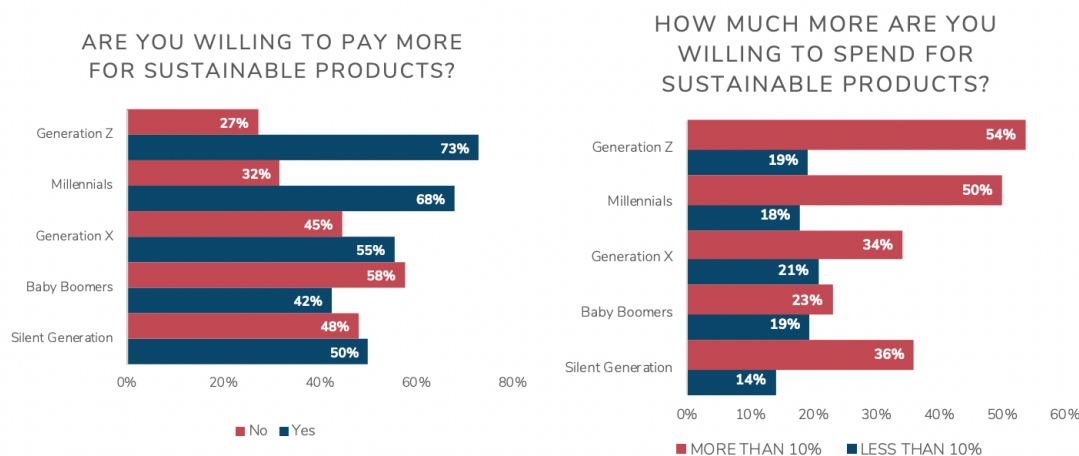
One of the green brand extension boom catalysts is growing consumer awareness of health and environmental issues, yet this may lead to distrust. For good reviews of sustainable extensions, customer trust is a must. According to Durif et al. (2010), Greenwashing is a phenomenon in which customers have doubts and suspicion regarding a product's greenness. Moreover, according to research by White et al. (2019), sustainable product alternatives are frequently associated with negative associations among consumers who view them as less visually attractive and costly.

### **2.8.2 Gen Z Awareness towards sustainability**

According to O'Brien et al. (2018), today's youth is already involved in politics and social change. Some experts believe that direct exposure to climate change influences children and teens' environmental awareness and action. Moreover, Gen Z individuals are the most interested in incorporating sustainability into their activities among the current generations of consumers (Baby Boomers, X, Y, and Z), according to Lazányi and Bilan.

Different customers react to green signals and other green marketing stimuli differently. Environmental participation can impact the cognitive process of customer perceptions of green brand expansions as a predisposing variable (Liu and Hei, 2021). Moreover, according to the Gen Z Shoppers Demand Sustainable Retail research, the great majority of Generation Z customers want to purchase sustainable brands and are ready to pay up to 10% extra for them.

Figure 2 - Gen Z Shoppers Demand Sustainable Retail



Source : 2 First Insight

Millennials and GenZ individuals are the most predisposed to purchasing based on their beliefs and ideals. However, a consumer's increased environmental participation may anticipate a critical evaluation and substantial debate on green brand extensions (Grimmer and Woolley 2014). Consumers will respond with greater distrust if they perceive that a parent brand corporation is taking advantage of the ecological cause and trying to profit from it to market its branded products. Jennifer Schmidt, a senior partner at the consulting firm McKinsey & Company, said, "People are using a storyline that has something with sustainability, low waste, appropriate ingredients or appropriate fabrics that you'll find on the front of their websites, on the packaging, as part of their marketing, I can't think of a brand that's not doing this right now."

### 2.8.3 Price influence on sustainability

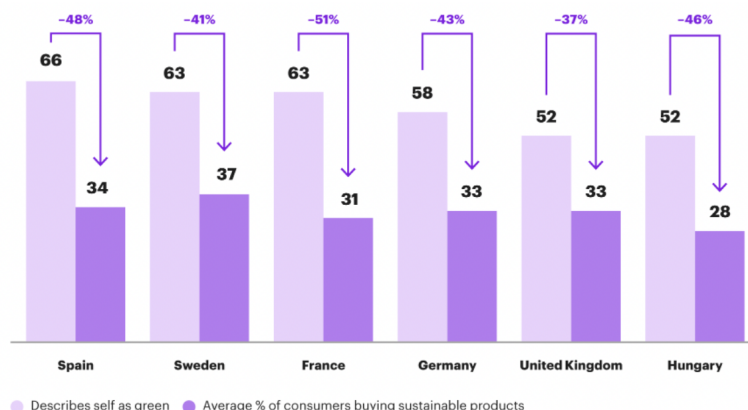
The manufacturing method for sustainable products is designed to have the least environmental and social effect while being commercially feasible. However, green products are typically more expensive than traditional items. Fashion, beauty, and health have the most significant price difference. Sustainable fashion has a wide range of elevations in prices ranging from 150 to 210 percent, depending on the company. Consumers are prepared to pay more for sustainable items across countries, income levels, and categories. However, only if they understand why the item is more expensive, for example, if a better quality or security within the materials is justified, 70% of buyers would be prepared to spend an additional 10%. In addition, research by Nielsen shows that brand trust is the critical factor in selling sustainable products at higher prices. Furthermore, the number of Generation Z respondents willing to spend more on

Figure 3 - "The green gap" of selected European countries



sustainable products has increased significantly.

However, according to research made by Kearney, there is a considerable price disparity between sustainable products and what difference the general market would bear, with sustainable items 75 to 85 percent more expensive than conventional ones. Even if people want to purchase for the environment, many can't



Source : 3 Kearney - *Why today's pricing is sabotaging sustainability*

afford or don't want to spend so much more knowing that almost the same product is available but at a much lower price. As a result, there is a gap between customers' intentions to act sustainably and their actual actions. 50% of European customers say they are willing to pay a premium price for sustainable items; sustainable products have a market share of less than 1% (De Pelsmacker et al., 2005). Moreover, the cost of sustainable clothing is sometimes considered a barrier to sustainable consumption since customers may not be able to afford it, even if they want to buy it. In addition, shoppers say that criteria including style, trend, and availability influence their decision to purchase sustainable fashion goods (McNeill & Moore, 2015)

## **2.9 Consumer decision-making process and fast fashion brands influence**

To understand how people make decisions, it is critical to study decision-making in consumer behaviour. (Millwood, 2020). The buying process begins with need recognition, in which the buyer recognizes a need or responds to a brand's marketing stimulus. Almost all purchases, in general, stem from physiological or emotional requirements at a very fundamental level. However, they might manifest in a variety of intensities and contexts. (Millwood, 2020).

A customer who wants to impress others by dressing beautifully may shop for items to meet this demand in a social setting. Secondly, the consumer determines how much information is needed to decide and then evaluates the various options based on the information gathered. They will begin looking for solutions that meet that need. For low-involvement judgments such as buying a cleaning product, people will look for internal

information such as their memories, or external information such as online information, reviews, or word of mouth for a high-involvement good such as a car. This leads to the buy decision in the fourth step and then to a post-purchase evaluation after the purchase has been made. They'll scrutinize if they're happy enough with it to suggest it to others (Stankevich, 2017). They will also examine if they will become loyal to the brand through future purchases. Customer reviews, both favourable and unfavourable, can aid other buyers in their information quest. This customer decision-making process differs based on the product or service that is being purchased. As a result, three different purchase habits may be observed (Furaiji et al., 2012, p. 81).

Firstly, the routine response behaviour. Because their degree of engagement is minimal when acquiring often purchased low-cost items, customers reduce the information search and choice evaluation phase. The second category is limited decision making, which refers to customers who know what product they want to buy but haven't settled on a brand. The cost of the goods and the amount of engagement are higher than for ordinary response purchases but still inexpensive. Additionally, the amount of time spent looking for the right product and weighing options grows. The final form of buying behaviour is prolonged choice-making. Customers purchase high-priced goods and, as a result, devote a significant amount of time to the decision-making process due to their high participation.

In many sectors, customers do not act in the same manner, particularly in the fashion business, where consumers are increasingly adopting shopping based on Omni-channelling. Research made by Strähle (2017) explains, that fashion items are mainly purchased because of an emotional rather than a rational requirement. Therefore, people may seek counsel from a friend or read product evaluations online. As a result, relevance to peers plays a significant role in the decision-making process, especially in the fast-fashion business.

Moreover, research made by Furaiji said, "When confronted with 'ethical' products, consumers often become more involved, and this results in a more extensive information search" (Furaiji et al., 2012). Consumers choose environmentally friendly goods and brands because they believe they are of superior quality, which leads to satisfaction, repurchase intentions, and ultimately loyalty, which is the ultimate objective for most companies (Mohd, 2015). Even if customers lack scientific expertise on environmental concerns (Chatterjee, 2009), if information is given at the point of purchase, they may still make more sustainable decisions. The perceived value of a good (Park & Kim, 2016b, p. 115) is another crucial aspect of their decision-making process. It's vital to note

that customers' intentions aren't always mirrored in their actual purchasing behaviour, which makes analysing consumer behaviour difficult (Isa & Yao, 2013).

However, in the fast fashion industry, impulsive buying is one unique consumption pattern. According to Dhurup (2014, p. 170), impulse purchase behavior is linked to hedonistic seeking objectives, which means the buyer is seeking desire/pleasure for a product. This buying pattern can be linked to retailers promoting consumption with discount coupons, exclusive bargains, and offerings such as Cyber Monday, Black Friday, or the newest trend coming from China, Single's Day (Bu-Xu-Zipser, 2019). In research, the neuroscientist Robert Sapolsky (2015) found that dopamine, the "feel-good" hormone, is released in anticipation of a reward; therefore, when someone orders online, the waiting for the order is the anticipation. The sensory input of clothing, such as its colour, shape, or texture, also has the power to stimulate dopamine and help consumers feel better (Maldonado, 2021). Moreover, brands have connected with renowned celebrities and influencers, which can convert whatever they wear into an immediate trend (Nguyen, 2020).

A predisposition for brand switching is the second consumption pattern identified in the fast fashion sector (Michaelidou & Dibb, 2009). This tendency is reinforced when consumers perceive a high degree of similarity within a product category, but it is weakened when people are emotionally invested in a product. In addition, because the fast fashion sector sells items at low rates, consumers are less involved in purchasing and are more likely to switch brands. Without the impulsive behaviour of these customers, fast fashion would not exist. According to Guiltinan's research, a garment's enjoyment and lifetime are no longer the same as they were previously. All that matters currently in the eyes of customers is aesthetic appearance and sophistication, according to Guiltinan (2009), which has enhanced the notion of fast fashion (Abrahamson, 2011).

### **3. Methodology:**

The study's goal is to answer the following question: "To what degree are green brand extensions of fast fashion impacting generation Z consumer baskets when buying clothing in Western Switzerland?" The study was executed by assembling secondary data entirely in the form of a qualitative approach. Following secondary data gathering, primary data was collected in two stages, quantitative with surveys and qualitative with interviews. Primary research is original data collected and analyzed to address specific research problems, rather than depending on previous data. Analysis through an inductive research approach was conducted, which was supported by the fact that the purpose was to examine the research question.

#### **3.1 Surveys**

Following the literature review, a survey was sent out to the French-speaking Swiss population aged 18 to 25 years old. This questionnaire aimed to collect information that was not included in the literature review. It was meant to better understand the purchasing behavior and habits of Generation Z in the French-speaking area of Switzerland. Discerning young customers' perceptions of sustainability in the fast fashion business and their trust in green brand extensions was another goal. This research aimed to spot any possible emerging patterns among consumers, particularly if they believe that they will keep buying green brand extensions in the long run.

#### **3.2 Interviews**

In addition to the quantitative data with the questionnaire, qualitative research was collected with five interviews, and this research produces non-numeric data. Moreover, according to Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill (2009), qualitative research focuses on understanding how people perceive their social reality; there was a motive to speak with fast-fashion retailers from the French part of Switzerland. The primary goal of this qualitative research, as stated in the title, is to investigate the purchase experiences of a representative sample and their experiences, specifically to learn what they buy, why, and through which intermediary, as well as to gain insights into what they are looking for when buying green brand extensions.

The interviews took place with five fast-fashion entities in the French-speaking region of Switzerland to learn about their perspectives on the emergence of Generation Z's sustainable development in the fast-fashion business. The opinion of fast fashion merchants on whether they take the younger generation's drive towards a greener

environment seriously through these interviews. Moreover, there was a will to learn if the stores fit the expectations and demands of their young clients through these dialogues. These interviews will also enable us to assess if the green brand extensions had increased turnover and attracted more young customers aged 18 to 25. Finally, it was asked how the advancement of green brand extensions and the feedback retailers receive from Gen Z.

### **3.3 Limitations of the study**

Various challenges were encountered during the study for this publication. Firstly, for the survey, most of the respondents came from canton of Jura which has ~73'000 inhabitants. In contrary, canton of Vaud has ~800'000 inhabitants but represents only a small part of the answers. As a result, relying just on this study would be insufficient, as it lacks a representative sample of Gen Z in western Switzerland.

Moreover, many of the retailers interviewed do not have much interaction with customers because most fast fashion stores are self-service and therefore very few customers ask the salespeople for regular advice. The interaction is mostly done at the checkout once the customer has already made his decision.

## 4. Results

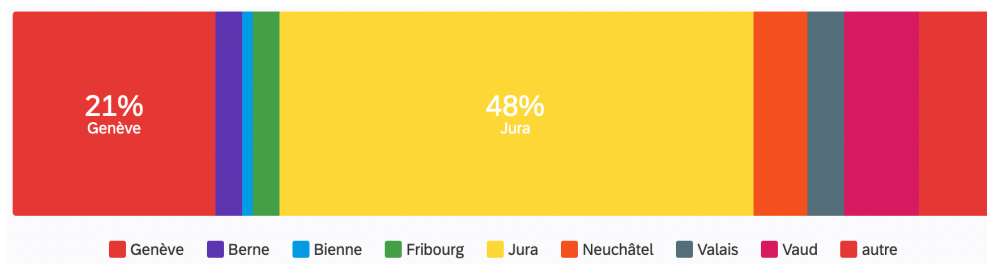
### 4.1 Survey results

Following the completion of the online survey, this chapter briefly describes the sample's demographic characteristics, followed by the quantitative empirical data obtained from the survey.

#### 4.1.1 Demographics description

As noted in the methodology, a questionnaire was distributed throughout French-speaking Switzerland as part of the research. The target demographic was young fast-fashion buyers between 18 and 25. The questionnaire was completed by 184 persons. Figure 3 provides every canton in French-speaking Switzerland. People from every canton responded to our survey. Of the population that answered the survey, the majority came from canton de Genève and canton du Jura, with 69,02% of the respondents. In

Figure 4 - In which canton do you live?

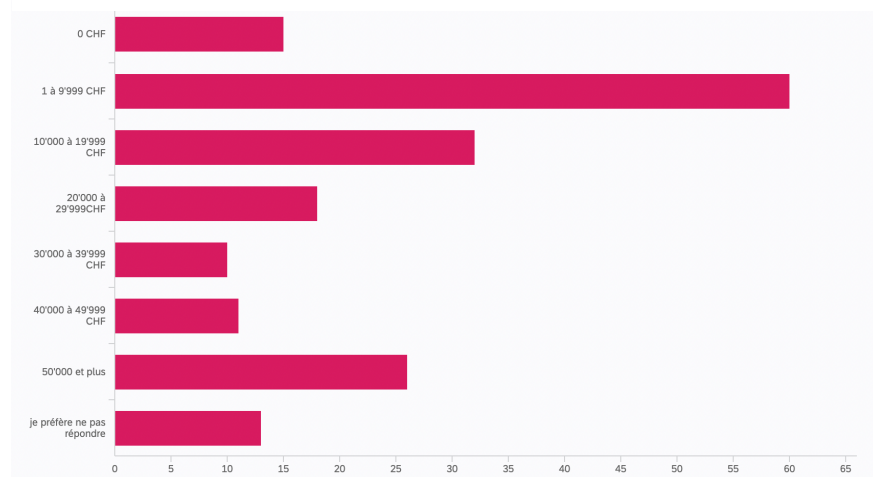


the other cantons, 7,61% come from canton de Vaud; in the additional cantons, they counted less than 6% per canton.

The annual salary is of interest, given that it could influence one's purchase. Of the target audience, the

majority earn between 1.- CHF and 9'999 CHF. Therefore, it can be assumed that most of the respondents are students, either part-time or doing apprenticeships.

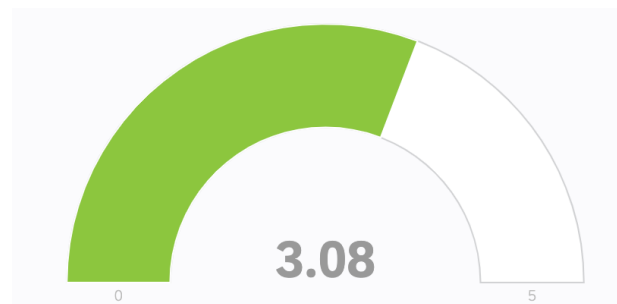
Figure 5 - What is your annual salary?



### 4.1.2 Fashion interest

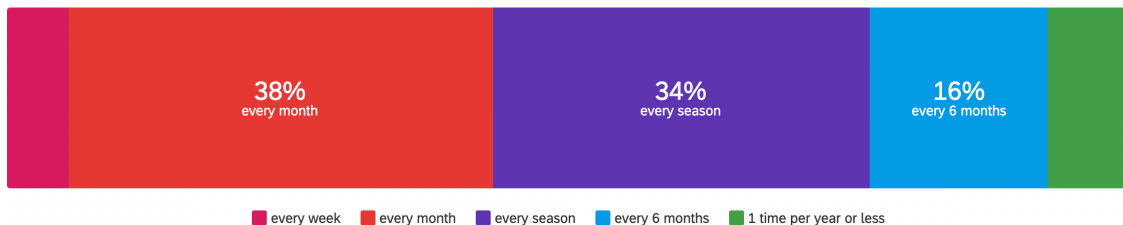
The first affirmation was “I love fashion, and I keep up with the latest trends”, and to answer that a scale from 0 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) was created. The mean was 3.05 meaning that most youngster have a fashion interest. This is confirmed by the fact that most respondents buy clothes several times a year (figure 6), with 37,80% buying clothes every month and 33,54% every season.

Figure 6 - I love fashion and I keep up with the latest trends



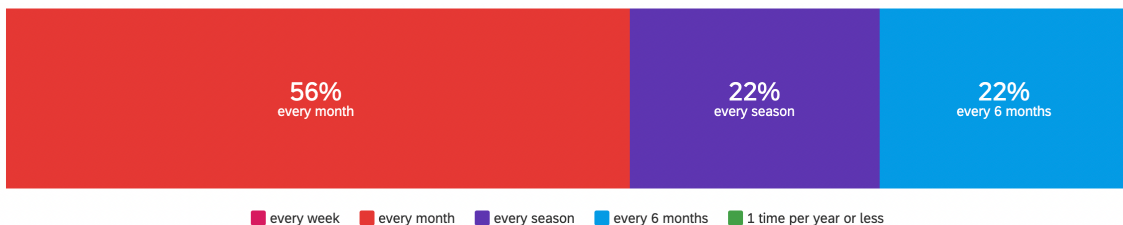
The distribution of the frequency at which each category of annual salary buy clothes is

Figure 7- How often do you buy fast fashion clothes?



almost the same except for those earning between 40'000 and 49'000 CHF who 50% of the participants in this category go shopping every month.

Figure 8 - How often the category that earns between 40'000 and 49'000 CHF buy clothes ?



Moreover, in terms of money spent on fast fashion per month, the average young consumer spends less than 100 CHF.

But when taking the earning group who gains from 1.- to 9'999 CHF, 50% of them spend less than 50.- CHF per month in fast fashion, whereas almost 30% of them spends between 50.- to 100.- CHF. Nonetheless, 22,22% spend more than 100.- which is not negligible in view of the low prices of the fast fashion it makes 3 to 4 items.

Figure 9 - How much do you spend in fast fashion per month?

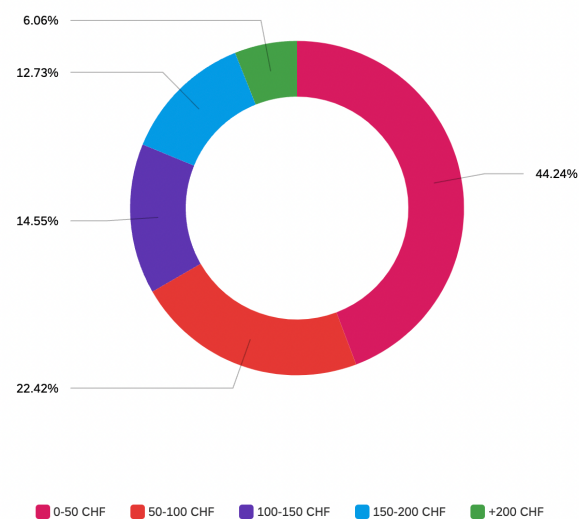
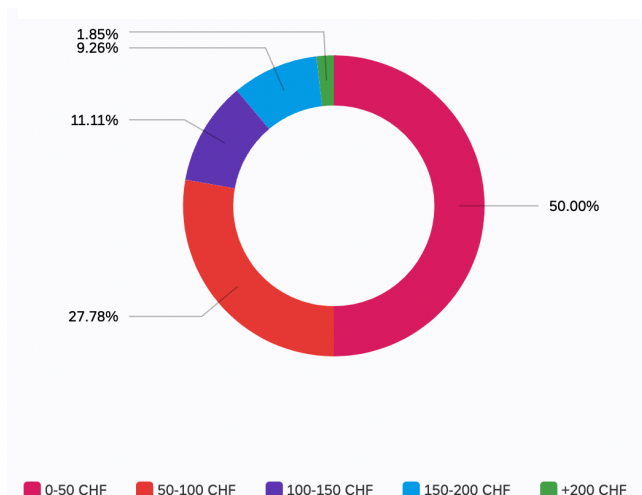
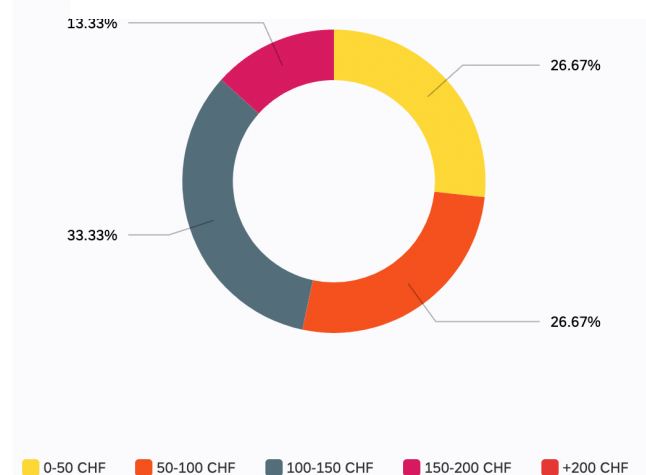


Figure 10 - How much does the group who earns between 1 and 9'999 CHF spends in fast fashion per month?



Those who earn between 20'000 to 29'999 CHF, spend in majority more in fast fashion, between 100 -150 CHF. None of the respondents in this earning category spends more than 200 CHF.

Figure 11 - How much does the group who earns between 20'000 and 29'999 CHF spends in fast fashion per month?





However, the biggest fast fashion consumers are those receiving between 40'000 and 49'000 CHF, which 22.22% percent spend more than 200 CHF in fast fashion per month being approximately 5% of their salary. There's only 33.33% of them who spend less than 100 CHF. Those who earn more than 50'000 CHF also in average between 150 and 200 CHF per month but half of them spend less than 100 CHF per month.

Figure 13 - How much does the group who earns between 40'000 and 49'999 CHF spends in fast fashion per month?

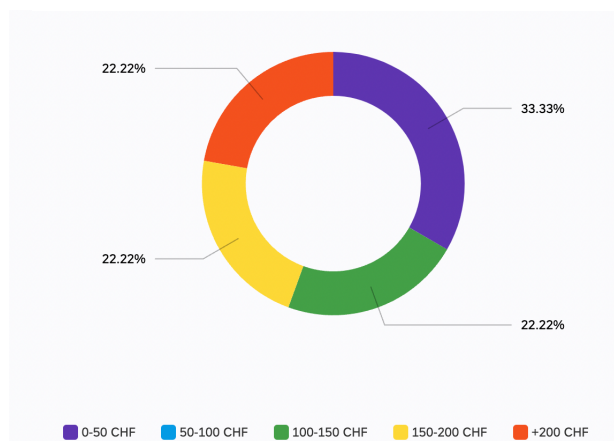
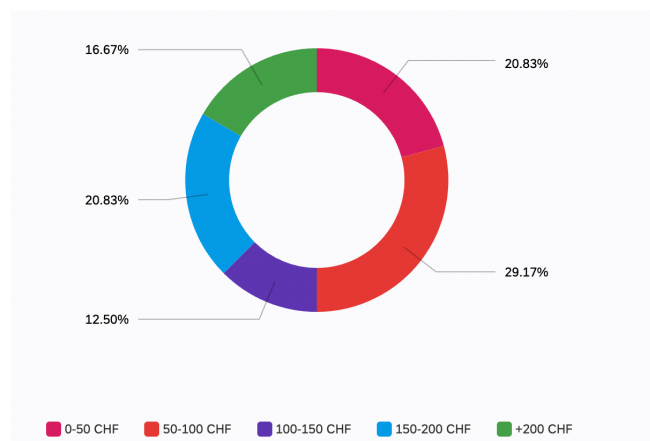


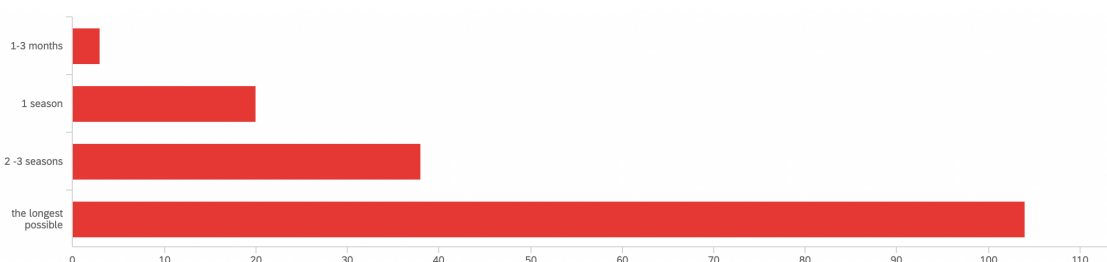
Figure 12 - How much does the group who earns more than 50'000 CHF spends in fast fashion per month?



We can observe a correlation between the annual salary and the monthly spending in fast fashion.

Moreover, most of the respondents, 63,03% tries to keep its garments as long as possible. 23,03% keep it 2-3 seasons and only 13,94% keep it only one season or less.

Figure 14 - What is the life expectancy of your clothes?



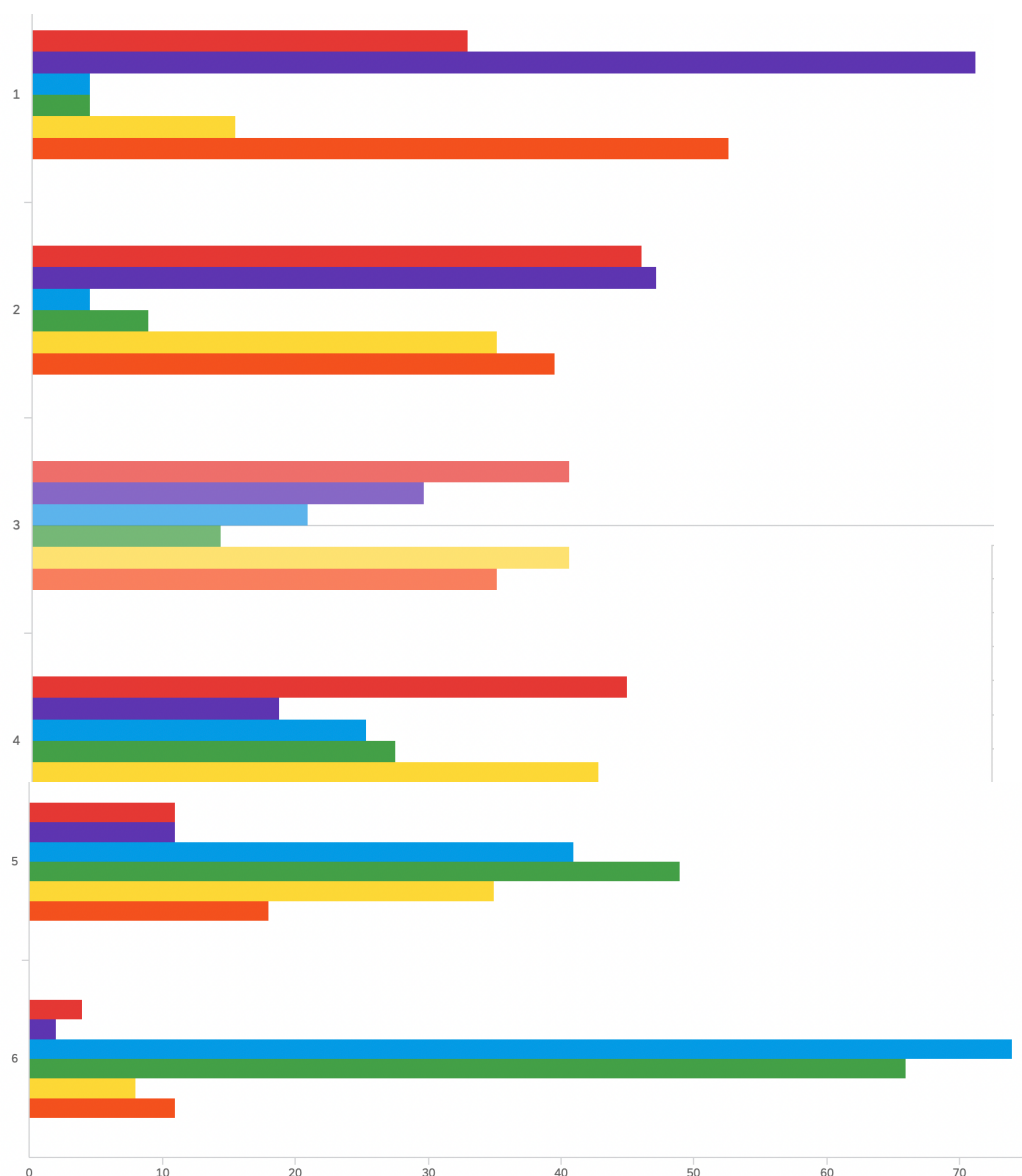
Besides, Inditex group stores (Zara, Bershka and Pull & Bear) are among the favourite for these young people followed by H&M, and Mango. Others stores such as Brandy Melville, Manor and COS were often at the bottom of the students' preferences. What is remarkable is that the most liked stores (except for H&M) have no or only little green brand extensions. According to research made by "good on you" the Inditex stores are "not good enough" when it comes to the planet whereas H&M or COS are rated as "it's a start" due to eco-friendly materials such as recycled materials.

It is coming to the most critical factor when young fast fashion consumers shop; respondents could choose in descending order what mainly influenced them. The style/trends were chosen by 65 participants as the most important when buying fast fashion and only two respondents as the least important. Four respondents chose the brand and the eco-friendly aspects as the leading factor. This indicates that youth still buy fast fashion for the apparency and appreciate the renewal of the trends rather than for its sustainable side even if it is essential for them, as seen in the literature review. The price has been chosen several times, first positions as well because, as seen during the literature review, it is one of fast fashion's most essential characteristics.

*Table 1 : Fast fashion factors*



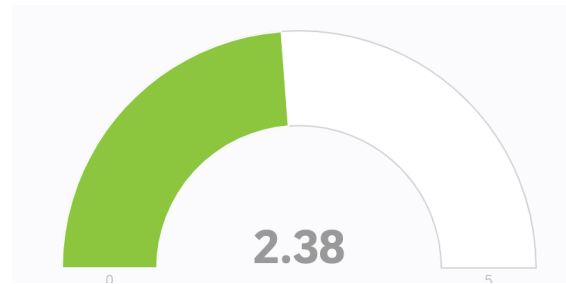
*Figure 15 - From the most to the least chosen (important) factors when buying fast fashion*



### 4.1.3 Green brand extensions and sustainability

Coming to the phrase “I pay a lot of attention to what I buy in terms of sustainability (not necessarily fast fashion)” to answer this affirmation a scale from 0 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) was created. The mean was 2,38 making it a bit less than the half on the scale of participants who try to have a sustainable consumption.

Figure 16 - I pay a lot of attention to what I buy in terms of sustainability



A difference is seen between the earnings categories. Those earning + 50'000 CHF, in average, pay more attention to what they buy in terms of sustainability due to the high prices of bio or natural products.

Figure 18 - I pay a lot of attention to what I buy in terms of sustainability (earning category + 50'000 CHF)

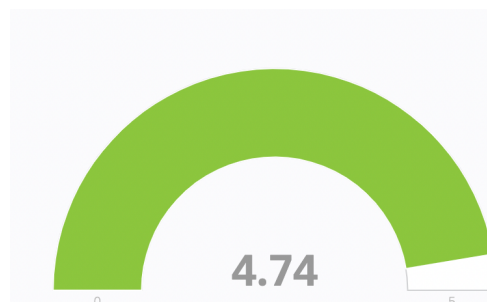
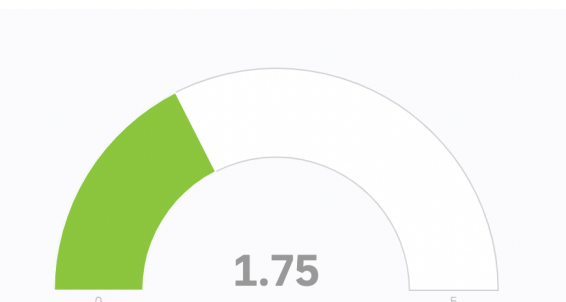
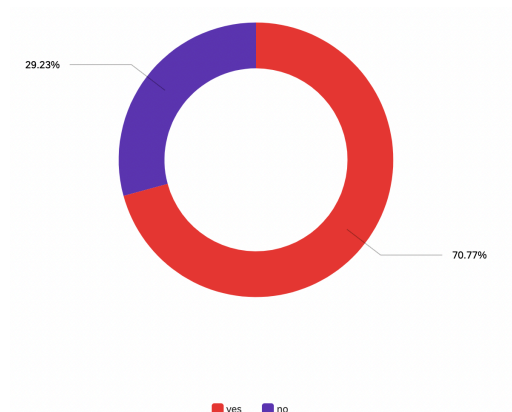


Figure 17 - I pay a lot of attention to what I buy in terms of sustainability (earning category 10'000 - 19'000 CHF)



Moreover, out of the total of participants to this survey, 70,77% had already tried green brand extensions and on average for every earning category the percentages are the same.

Figure 19 - Have you already bought fast fashion items with green labels?

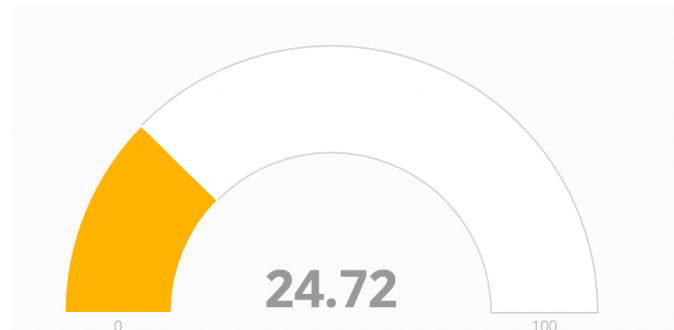


When asking people what they thought about green brand extensions, on the scale 0 “I don’t like it” and 5 “I love it a lot”, the mean was 3,23 meaning that a lot of people seem

to appreciate them. However, this question wasn't mandatory, therefore, only 129 people answered it and meaning that 55 answerers didn't have an opinion.

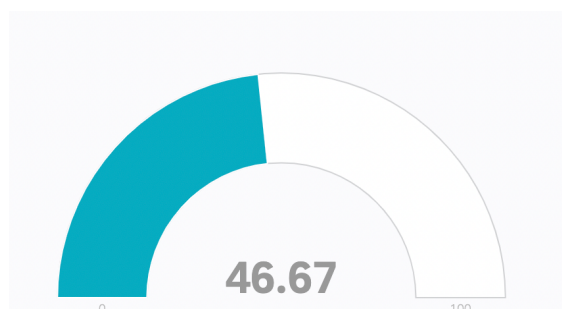
Moreover, on a scale from 0 to 100% on the percentage of fast fashion clothes bought with green labels, 24,72% was the mean of garment bought with a sustainable label, meaning that generally young Swiss consumers are not attached to these labels.

*Figure 20 - What's the percentage of fast fashion clothes bought with green labels?*

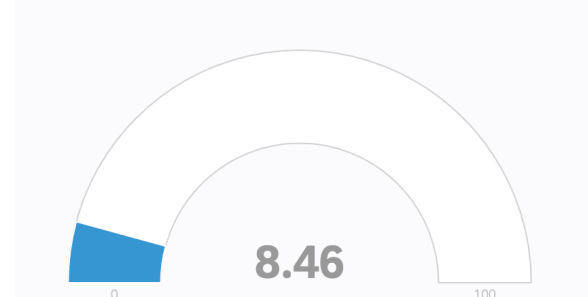


However, when taking the participants that pay the most attention in terms of sustainability, the percentage of the clothes bought with sustainable labels went up to 46.67%. Compared to those who do not pay much attention to sustainability the percentage of clothes bought is only 8.46%.

*Figure 22 - What's the percentage of fast fashion clothes bought with green labels for those paying attention to what they buy in terms of sustainability?*



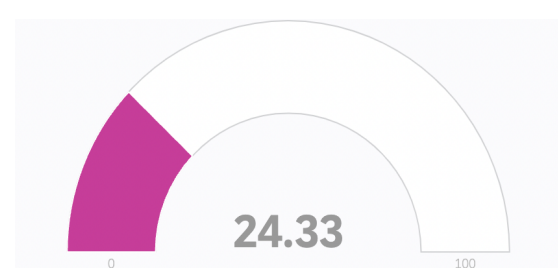
*Figure 21 - What's the percentage of fast fashion clothes bought with green labels for those not paying attention to what they buy in terms of sustainability?*



Forthcoming to the price, the respondents in the average would be willing to pay 24,33% more for more sustainable clothes.

*Figure 23 - What percentage would be you willing to pay more for a green brand extension?*

When looking through the earning categories, in average every earning category is willing to pay between 22.22 and 27.23 percent more for a fast fashion item but not more than that.



But what would make them buy more green clothes? The sustainable and eco-friendly side seems to be important which seems logical since it is the essence of these

extensions, however, the “trendy” side has its importance too because has seen above it’s the most important factor when buying fast fashion.

*Table 2 : What would make you buy a green brand extension?*

#	Field	1	2	3	4	5
1	if it's less expensive than the parent brand	11.45% 15	22.90% 30	12.98% 17	12.98% 17	39.69% 52
2	if it's better for the planet	40.46% 53	12.98% 17	22.90% 30	9.16% 12	14.50% 19
3	for the quality	13.74% 18	29.77% 39	22.90% 30	25.95% 34	7.63% 10
4	for the confort	7.63% 10	12.21% 16	21.37% 28	36.64% 48	22.14% 29
5	if it's pretty	26.92% 35	22.31% 29	20.00% 26	15.38% 20	15.38% 20

Moreover, since green washing is a source of great debate within green labels and fast fashion, it was important to know what young consumers in western Switzerland thought about it. To this end the respondents had to answer on a scale from 0 (strongly disagree) to 100 (strongly agree) on their trust towards these extensions.

The quality seems to be the factor they trust more on these labels because most of the times the ingredients to these garments are fabricated closer to them and are

*Table 3 : I trust green labels while I shop fast fashion.*

Field	Mean
I trust the quality	45.38
I trust the provenance of the materials	38.13
I trust the labels created by the brand	42.13

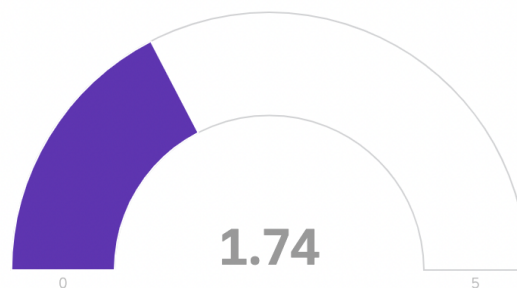
often made with more natural materials. However, the mean never exceeds 50 meaning that green brand extensions are still questionable to these consumers.

Furthermore, after posting the survey, young consumers have reached out to the author to give their opinions on the fast fashion industry and more specifically on those green brand extensions. Some of those consumers radically stopped using fast fashion these last two years and only shop vintage clothes except for the shoes because the comfort and quality factor is more important. Some others talked about the doubts they have towards fast fashion supply chain and their transparency on workers conditions and that even if the materials are better the situations stays the same because it keeps pushing people to overconsumption. They do not trust the green brand extensions due to the negative reputation of fast fashion and preferred not even buying from these labels. Some of the answerers were even surprised that some brands such as COS or Brandy Melville were considered fast fashion due to their smoother brand image.

#### 4.1.4 Small experiment on creating a green brand extension

The respondents were given the statements “I like X brand” and “I think X brand cares for the environment with the X being their favourite brand chosen previously. For the first statement the mean was 4.33 making sense due to their prior selection. When coming to the second statement the mean was 1.58 which indicates that the young consumers are aware that these brands are not environment friendly.

*Figure 24 - I think brand X cares about the environment.*

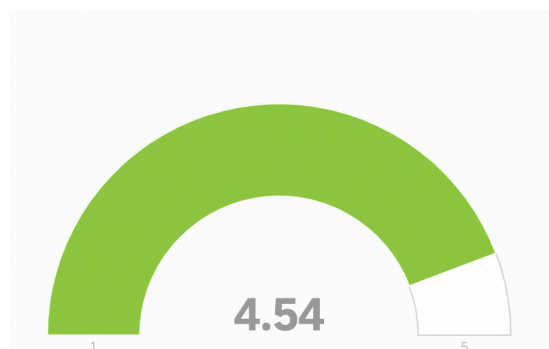


After that a situation has been set up:

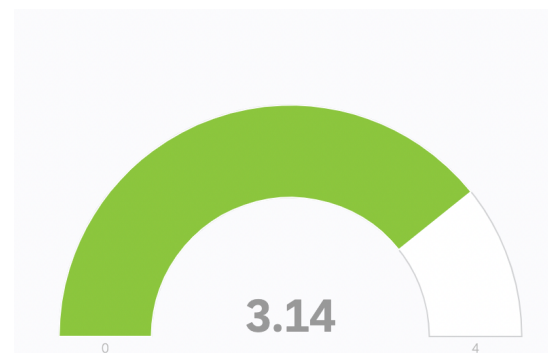
“Imagine that X brand launches a new clothing line called “X brand Green”, whose items are more sustainable than the usual brand’s clothing. The clothes are made from organic, recycled materials and the workers in the production are paid fairly. Does your overall opinion of the brand change?”

Followed by questions to know if consumers perceptions changed in function of that. Generally, people would appreciate the chosen brand even more if it launched a green line extension with a mean of 4.54 from a scale 0 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). They would also buy a little more from the brand with a mean of 3.14.

*Figure 26 - I would like brand "X" even more*



*Figure 25 - I would buy from brand "X" even more*

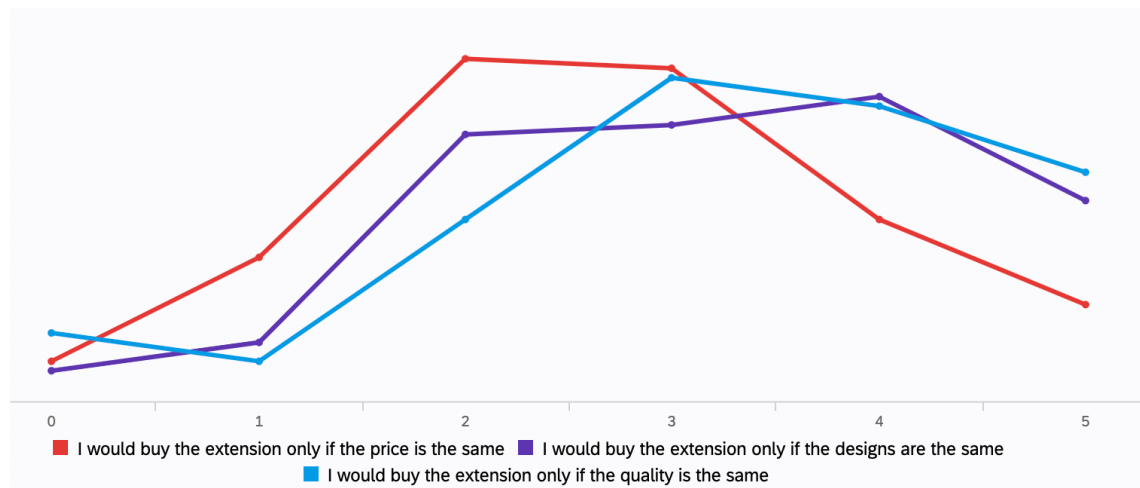




On a scale from 0 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) the respondents had to answer to three statements:

1. I would buy this line only if the prices are the same (red)
2. I would buy this line only if the designs are the same (violet)
3. I would buy this line only if the quality is the same (blue)

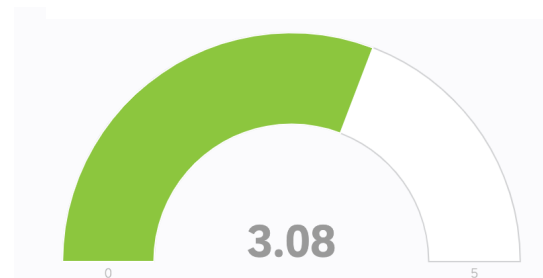
Figure 27 - How do you agree with the following statements?



The first statement had a mean of 2.67 because people, as seen above, would be willing to pay a little more, + 24%; if they know they are making a conscious choice. The second statement had a higher mean of 3.21 because the aesthetic side is the key to fast fashion, people buy fast fashion for the appearance. The last statement had a mean of 3.26 making it the highest of the three statements.

Lastly, whether consumers would be sceptical of a green extension on their favourite was essential, therefore, from a scale 0 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) the mean was 3.08. This result can show the reticence and the fear of green washing some consumers.

Figure 28 - I would be skeptical if brand X launches a green brand extension



## **4.2 Interview results**

As seen above, sustainability is becoming a trend increasingly, and multiple brands are rushing into it. The young population seems to be more and more sensitive to the planet's fate, but what about what happens at the time of their purchases? Do they prioritize their need to belong to a group by wanting to follow the clothing trends, or do they buy consciously? Those were the main topics discussed with the vendors to better understand the behaviour of those young consumers. According to an H&M employee, "I have the impression that what attracts consumers are other aspects that are also promoted by the brand such as the designs of the clothes and the attractive price and even if we use more and more labels that indicate that the clothes were "conscious," that there were recycled materials or organic cotton "sustainably sourced," it is not what makes people come to us that is for sure." And it is what was heard mainly during all the interviews. An employee from Zara stated, "I think that young people do not care; they buy because it is cool and stylish and fashionable...I think that young people do not think about the collateral damage as long as they live well today." What came out the most is that young people are aware but do not act because personal pleasure is above everything happening, whether it is the planet or even the problems in the supply chain. Young people will buy an outfit because it is beautiful and rarely because it is sustainable.

When consumers buy green brand extensions, they are often unaware that they are doing so; as said by an H&M employee, "When people come to my checkout, and I make them pay for the item, often there are chit-chats during this time if there is no one in the store and often if I see the label I say "Oh that is good and you're doing something for the planet," and often people do not pay attention to it at all, they don't even notice they are buying green." Moreover, a GEMO employee said that the majority of young consumers buy bio labels, especially for skin problems rather than for the planet, because the quality of the materials is often better and gentler. A former employee from Manor said almost the same; she said that people buy "bio" for example, because they "know-how" the materials are treated and prefer that for their well-being rather than looking up the environment.

All the employees from the stores interviewed said that their company will continue to make efforts and expand the range of green labels, such as bio or a transparent supply chain, when it comes to the future of green brand extensions. "Over the years that I have worked at H&M, it has become more and more important, that is for sure, and in 2030 we want our clothes to be sourced in a recyclable way and contain organic and sustainable cotton from an ethical point of view". However, for most of those stores the



green labels are mainly on the basics, the Gemo employee said, "Yes, it is in development, it was mainly basics: black t-shirt, white t-shirt, tops, socks, and little by little Gemo is trying to develop it in all kinds of clothes, and even in various materials, we are starting to have a range in cashmere which was natural." But an important remark was from the Zara employee showing that they are still behind, "...first thing that comes to my mind is that we as employees, we have no information at all about these extensions, I see them in small on some clothes, but it is very little indicated, at the checkout, I do not even know if I sell a green extension or not. I think that there is a problem, and it is that we as salesmen are not enough informed to be able to inform the customer." Still, he added that "...even though I do not see a lot of green clothes at Zara for the moment, there has already been a change compared to 1 year ago. Especially because there is all the craze around it, it will take time because internally it is always like that with us. In addition, the former employee from Manor and Blackout, a retail teacher today, points out that many young consumers are not aware enough. They do not know where to find the information and how to understand it, and it can be a bad point for the extensions because consumers can lose trust and be sceptical about buying. The Zara employee added that they have a kind of box where people can deposit their unused clothes. Nevertheless, internally they have no idea where it goes, they have no information on what becomes of it. "I think it is a pity because better communicated it could be a very good project".

We can see that every store even with small steps is starting to fit into the green trend. The former Manor and Blackout employee added that they had a small box too to incentive their consumers to buy and that they gave them a "gift card" with 5.- to spend in the store, but it is counterproductive because it still encourages overconsumption.

The price and the quality are the same for Zara and H&M green brand extensions. The H&M employee stated, "it is only the tag that changes". In addition to that, one of the respondents added that these stores must have also increased the price of their main range to match the green brand extension because they don't want to give the image of "we need more purchasing power to be good for the planet."

For the GEMO employee, there is a difference in the quality due to consumers feedback and them picking 100% cotton labels due to allergies. Therefore, the prices also change for them to "The basic t-shirts with us without the extension can go from 2 CHF for children to 5,50 CHF for adults and with the extension it was more around 10-12 CHF". Moreover, the production cost must also differ according to her, "I don't know exactly the difference but yes, they do not come from the same countries, the basic t-shirts come

from China and Bangladesh and the extensions come from elsewhere in Europe like Portugal." The former Manor employee stated that the production price changes due to the price of the label. "Labels cost money and that adds to the final price. But you should be aware when buying a brand with its own green label because a lot of times it's especially for brand image". However, the Zara employee stated that "The quality has deteriorated over time; these are the customers and my own experience because I also dress at Zara. Nevertheless, I cannot say precisely if it is on the articles with organic or recyclable material; it is rather in general."

Moreover, even after having spoken with store managers, none of them was able to answer the impact on profits because this information is only known by the central offices and is not widely disseminated internally.

When it comes to the market segment targeted by these extensions, most of them don't have a specific target, "...we also have these for the children and we develop nicely for the men" stated the Gemo employee. A manor employee also stated, "We try to target everyone, but since style plays a lot for most young people, it's pretty hard because our sustainable are mostly basics." But the H&M employee has not the same point of view, "In this day and age many consumers say they are sensitive to sustainability, but often there is a difference between what people say and what they do, so I think that the segment that is most affected by this range is not necessarily the 18-25-year-olds, but rather the older generation, from the age of 30 onwards, who are more careful about what they consume. However, no, the younger generation does not pay any attention at all; they look at the price first".

As the interview drew to a close, the author asked the fast fashion companies interviewed the following question: "What is the feedback you receive in terms of efforts made in sustainability?" Manor was the only one that globally made its consumers happy in a way. "Honestly, we have very good feedback, our customers are satisfied but would like us to expand our green range in clothing and all our types of products". For GEMO it is the opposite "No, not at all, we had a lot of remarks because we had only plastic bags and very big ones, it caused many problems when a customer bought a small t-shirt and asked for a bag, it was a waste because the bag was not even 1/10 full. So, we raised the problem higher up, but we still did not receive any paper bags or different sizes".

## 5. Discussion

With the findings obtained and analysed throughout the investigation by the author, we aimed to answer the question “Is generation Z really into sustainability, or is it just a trend? If so, to what degree are green brand extensions of fast fashion impacting generation Z consumers when buying clothing in Western Switzerland?” Moreover, what sustainable actions does the fast-fashion industry need to take to make customers between 18 and 25 years buy and trust their green brand extensions?

*Fast Fashion* is an Anglo-Saxon word derived from “fast food” that first occurred in the early 2000s, as indicated in the literature review. It is defined by fashion companies’ ability to respond rapidly to fashion trends and client preferences while preserving pricing stability. The key feature of these garments is their appearance as well as their inexpensive prices. Indeed, the goal is to allow consumers, especially those on a tight budget, to stay on trend and regularly refresh their wardrobes.

However, as seen above, the exciting fast fashion business has a negative side. Meeting consumer demands and expectations comes at a hefty cost, particularly for the environment. According to the findings of the literature assessment, the ongoing need for new clothing has a significant adverse environmental impact, notably in terms of carbon dioxide emissions. Fashion production accounts for 10% of global CO<sub>2</sub> emissions (Kell, 2018), dries up water supplies, and pollutes rivers and streams (McFall-Jonhsen, 2019). Every year, more than 100 billion pieces of apparel are sold worldwide. As a result, the fast-fashion industry is the second-largest polluter.

In addition, according to the literature review, Generation Z is growing increasingly worried about the planet’s harmful consequences. They are, in fact, getting increasingly excited about implementing sustainable development techniques to conserve best the environment in which they will grow up due to experiencing climate change impact. Many people increasingly prefer brands that reflect their ideals and avoid those that do not.

However, for the H&M employee, there is a difference between what these youngers say and do. Most of them say that they are aware of the importance of sustainability but do not take the necessary steps to start buying “ethical.”

Moreover, the prices of sustainable items are high. Other studies have shown that some customers ignore sustainability issues and act selfishly to meet their desires and requirements (McNeil & Moore, 2015; Wiederhold & Martinez, 2018). As a result, several young people would be unwilling to give up fast fashion’s convenience and benefits. They

feel lost towards all the emerging green brand extensions in fast fashion and don't know what to think.

Referring to the survey launched by the author among the young Swiss population aged 18-25, in the French part of Switzerland, 184 responses were collected and analysed. Among the population surveyed, more than half like fashion, keep up with the latest trends, and buy fast fashion items each month. Among those people, the majority try to keep their garments as long as possible, even if some only keep them for 2-3 seasons. When asking the participants what the most important factors were when buying fast fashion, the appearance and price were far ahead of the other factors, the literature review confirmed this because the goal of fast fashion is to create fashionable designs at affordable prices (Martinez-de-Albeniz, Caro, 2014). The eco-friendly aspect of garments was the least important for many respondents. To complete that, most of them do not consider sustainability while shopping.

Moreover, in recent years we saw a new trend rising among fast fashion brands; the number of companies engaging in corporate social responsibility is increasing and creating green brand extensions or green labels. The terms *eco-conscious*, *green*, or *sustainable* can now refer to the development of a brand that stands out from competitors due to its features. They suit the demands of ecologically concerned clients, and they may create a synergy out of the original brand. On one hand, environmental ties have a positive reciprocal effect favouring the green image. On the other hand, one of the most important variables in deciding the outcomes of a persuasive message is trustworthiness, and more consumers are questioning the honesty and reliability of firms' environmental principles because of their overuse of environmental claims, several companies make claims that appear environmentally conscious yet are imprecise, vague and do not give enough information about the design of their products.

Growing environmental activity among consumers may lead to a critical review and heated debate about green brand extensions. And even if fast fashion brands make steps towards sustainability, these stores keep pushing to overconsumption as seen in the case of Blackout with the 5.- CHF gift cards given to the consumers who wanted to recycle their garment.

Consumers will be more sceptical if they believe a parent brand firm is profiting from the environmental cause to advertise its own, green-labelled items. For the youth fast fashion has anyway a bad connotation in terms of the environment so for most of Gen Z, and due to the lack of information on the extensions proposed by the industry, the green

extensions are not going to be impactful enough for the young consumers to start buying from them.

As a result, "greenwashing" has grown prevalent in today's commercial world. "*Greenwashing* is defined as "an organization's broadcast of incorrect or incomplete information to project a public image of environmental responsibility" (Furlow, 2010), it is growing public scepticism about green branding. Being untruthful in these claims runs the risk of being labelled as greenwashing, which might endanger the entire marketing plan. In addition, more than half of the participants would be sceptical about their favourite brand launching a green brand extension due to these practices. Current feedback from the interviews was that the young generation has little or no interest in these extensions; what matters while buying fast fashion is the aesthetic and the price. Moreover, as mentioned by the former Blackout employee, when young people want to buy green, they often don't know where to find information and how to decrypt it, giving them even more doubts about the extensions.

When coming to the survey launched by the author, the respondents, in average, would be willing to pay 24,33% more for more sustainable clothes. But has seen in the literature review, consumers would be willing to buy conscious items at higher prices only if they consider that the quality of the product is also better. Taking an H&M basic shirt, which costs 19.90 CHF, the average consumer would be willing to pay 24.74 CHF for a shirt. However, are there sustainable brands of fashion (not fast fashion brands with green extensions) offering items at such prices? After researching good on you, a website with thousands of brand reviews, articles, and expert advice on ethical and sustainable fashion, the author found a page called "The 9 Most Ethical and Sustainable Clothing Brands from Switzerland," and analysed the brands. Nikin was the most affordable brand, with shirts around 30 CHF. However, the designs were basic, and the choice was limited. The other brands proposed by the website, such as Sanikai, Avani, or Jungle folk, had more refreshing designs but the prices were also higher. A top from those websites, was between 160 and 190 CHF, something many of the respondents, due to their low salary could not afford. All these brands are considered "slow fashion" and are characterized by sustainability efforts, higher quality, better working conditions, and less manufacture and consumption. It emphasizes the use of sustainable materials, classic design, the application of technology to decrease pollution and waste, and product mobility across the supply chain (Fletcher, 2010). The garments proposed by these stores are meant to last as long as possible and to never get out of style, that is a major argument when trying to sell clothes with high prices compared to fast fashion. However, throughout this thesis an observation was made: the aesthetic and trendy aspect is

essential for generation Z. Another worry from those brands are the sizes. Size inclusivity has become an important aspect for the young generations with the rising of plus-size models such as Ashley Graham. Nevertheless, sometimes the combination between size inclusivity and sustainability is not easy. One feedback received by the author after launching the survey was from a person wearing a size 46 and not having the possibility to buy other brands than fast fashion because the *slow fashion* brands having clothes for her morphology are either only a few or very expensive. "I mostly shop on Shein curve, because they have a lot of designs and I always find my size." Moreover, according to Marie Claire and their post about the best brands for plus size, the brands are either fast fashion or too high prices, letting people with tight budgets have no choice but to buy from a fast fashion company. When going through the NIKIN website, the maximum size is XL and there are less models on it than in an S size.

Moreover, all the participants interviewed by the author believe that the fast-fashion business is unconcerned about sustainability even with all the extensions and efforts made. They all believe that there is no meaningful long-term activity in the fast fashion sector and that quantity is more important than quality. The Zara employee stated that the quality of the clothes has deteriorated. Finally, they all believe that the human and environmental aspects of the fast-fashion industry have been utterly overlooked.

Most fast fashion stores took the same approach towards sustainability, most retailers have introduced a line made entirely of recycled or biomaterials. Furthermore, these fashion companies have devised a system of reusable certificates. Customers may return their worn garments and earn 5 CHF off coupons to spend in the stores in exchange. Some stores, such as Manor, are even expanding their sustainability to all their sectors, they are reducing power consumption in their data centres.

However, not all fast fashion stores have this vision. The Zara employee stated: "... the first thing that comes to my mind is that we as employees have no information about these extensions, I see them in small on some clothes...I think that there is a problem, and it is that we as salesmen are not enough informed to be able to inform the customer". He also added that they have a box where consumers put their old garments available in all the stores, but no one in the store knows what happens nor how it is recycled.

According to the author's feedback, a minority of 18-25 has taken drastic measures to confront fast fashion by totally stopping buying from it. Instead, these young's only buy on the second-hand market or, if needed they buy new items for shoes, but they go to

the most sustainable shops possible because they do not believe in the sincerity of the extensions towards a more conscious economy.

To encourage consumers to reduce their consumption of fast fashion and buy more of the green brand extensions instead, the author proposes a few recommendations to enable fast fashion companies to gain the trust of the young generation.

## **5.1 Recommendations**

A few pertinent recommendations may be offered to the fast fashion sector based on the data conducted as part of this study to assist them in promoting their green brand extensions and gaining client trustworthiness.

The author's first suggestion to the fast-fashion business and its green brand extensions is to form their employees on it. As mentioned above, the ZARA employee stated that the salesmen and women were not aware of ZARA's steps towards sustainability; they had no idea what measures were taken to safeguard the environment through sustainable practices. The employees could take training days with activities, and it might also improve their sales abilities and increase their productivity. During those training, the employees would have all the details and explanations to inform the most precisely and accurately the consumers. They should be aware of all the practices of the company. For example, in the case of Zara, concerning the box where the consumers put their old clothes, the retailers must know the process and what happens with the garments. Games can be played to make the formations dynamic, exciting, and engaging to keep the workers' attention to pass their knowledge in the best possible way.

The second suggestion is to promote the green brand extensions through new channels, and try to make sustainability look “cool”. As seen in the interviews and the literature review, brands do little promotion of the green brand extensions and use mainly the same strategy to promote the parent brand. The author suggests that if fast fashion retailers wish to raise awareness of their sustainable practices among young people, they must be prominent on social media such as TikTok and Instagram. They will have a lot more visibility among young people this way. Furthermore, fast fashion stores might leverage the exposure of influencers to boost the visibility of their sustainable efforts. Instead of only advertising the garments, these influencers could also promote the ethical side, the production chain, and the sustainable materials used in apparel manufacture.

Consequently, Generation Z will be more aware of their favourite store's sustainability initiatives and will be able to shop knowing that the items are environmentally friendly.

They might keep promoting old collections and showing young customers new ways to wear them. They must also show consumers a capsule wardrobe, a collection of apparel made entirely of basic and replaceable pieces that allow one to create as many looks as possible. The goal is to have an ensemble that can be worn for any occasion without having too many clothes. Fast fashion stores might exploit influencers' prominence to encourage upcycling of their unsold or essential merchandise. As a result, fast fashion retailers will be able to sell the unsold stock before launching new collections.

Posters will also be on display in the store with all the creative processes and their passage through the supply chain to show consumers the improvements made by the brand. Flyers with QR codes will be available throughout the store and on the tags of all extensions. When the customers scan this code, they will have access to dynamic and short animations of all the benefits of buying this article and the differences in the process. The goal is to gain the consumer's trust by showing the maximum of details and what changes when buying these extensions and to make them aware of the real impact they can have.



## 6. Conclusion

To conclude, this bachelor thesis has considered the impact of the green brand extensions in fast fashion on customers aged between 18 and 25 years in Western Switzerland. To answer this question, a survey was launched among the French-speaking Swiss population aged 18 to 25. In addition, a discussion was held with fast fashion retailers. Thanks to the survey and the discussions, a pattern has emerged; young consumers care about the planet but do not trust green brand extension or are not able to give up the comfort of fast fashion to buy sustainable brands. Therefore, the impact green brand extensions have on this target is minimal. Recommendations have been made so that the fast fashion industry can keep their young customers aged 18 to 25 years in Western Switzerland willing to buy more from the green brand extensions and to gain their trust.

The target audience is becoming increasingly conscious of the fast-fashion business's detrimental consequences on the globe, as noted earlier in the research. According to studies, the younger generation wishes to grow up in a greener and healthier environment. On the one hand, the targeted surveyed population and the feedback from the interviews do not seem to show a willingness for these young consumers to give up on the comfort of fast fashion. But on the other hand, they would be willing to pay more for a green brand extension if they had more explanations and transparency for what is going on in the supply chain and the changes these labels make. The findings demonstrate that things need to change and that the fast-fashion sector must pay more attention to the planet's needs by informing their youthful consumers in the right way and gaining their trust.

The proposals would enable the fast fashion business to adapt to the demands and expectations of the 18-25-year-old demographic in the French-speaking region of Switzerland to improve its green brand extensions. These proposals would also help the fast-fashion business establish a reputation and legitimacy among these young customers, resulting in an increased turnover.

Finally, suppose the report answers the final question. In that case, it also opens the discussion on the green extensions in other FMCG industries to see if general patterns of consumer behavior toward these labels can be established or if consumers' brand attitude in the fashion business is unique and different. Another possible research could be the comparison between the attitude consumers have towards established green labels such as Max Havelaar and green labels owned by an FMCG brand. These are

important issues that might be answered in order to have a better understanding of consumer behavior and sustainable choices.

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## **Appendix 1: Questions of the surveys sent to the population aged between 18-25 years old in Western Switzerland**

- Dans quel canton habitez-vous ?
- Lequel correspond à votre revenu annuel ?
- Veuillez noter à quel point vous êtes d'accord avec l'affirmation suivante : J'aime la mode et je suis les dernières tendances
- À quelle fréquence achetez-vous de la fast fashion pour vous ?
- Où achetez-vous principalement vos habits de fast-fashion ? (du plus au moins fréquenté)
- Combien dépensez-vous en fast fashion par mois?
- Quelle est l'espérance de vie de vos habits de fast fashion ?
- Quand vous achetez de la fast fashion quels facteurs sont les plus importants ? (du plus au moins important)
- Veuillez noter à quel point vous êtes d'accord avec l'affirmation suivante : Je porte beaucoup d'attention à ce que j'achète en ce qui concerne l'environnement
- Les extensions de marque "vertes" sont des collections fait avec des matériaux recyclés/bio et dans des conditions éthiques. Par exemple la gamme conscious choice/durabilité de H&M.
- Répondez selon vos préférences : Que pensez-vous des extensions de marques "vertes" ?
- Avez-vous déjà acheté des vêtements de fast fashions avec des labels "verts"?
- Veuillez noter à quel point vous êtes d'accord avec l'affirmation suivante : Si un article n'a pas de label "vert" je serais plus réticent à l'acheter
- Répondez selon vos habitudes d'achat : Quel est le % de fast fashion que vous achetez qui ont des labels "verts" ?
- Combien de % en plus seriez vous prêt à payer pour un article similaire de fast fashion "vert" ?

- Qu'est ce qui fait que vous achèteriez une gamme "verte" de fast fashion ? (du plus important au moins important)
- Veuillez noter à quel point vous êtes d'accord avec les affirmations suivantes : Je fais confiance en leur qualité / Je fais confiance en la provenance de leurs matériaux / Je fais confiance aux labels verts mis en avant par la marque (exemple : fabriqué avec des matériaux recyclés/bio)

Mise en situation:

Nous allons vous poser des questions sur le magasin de fast fashion choisi plus haut.

- J'aime \${q://QID2/ChoiceGroup/ChoiceWithLowestValue}
- Veuillez noter à quel point vous êtes d'accord avec l'affirmation suivante : Je pense que ce magasin se soucie de l'environnement

Mise en situation : Imaginez que \${q://QID2/ChoiceGroup/ChoiceWithLowestValue} lance une nouvelle ligne de vêtements appelée "\${q://QID2/ChoiceGroup/ChoiceWithLowestValue} Green", dont les articles sont plus durables que les vêtements de la marque habituelle.

Les vêtements sont fabriqués à partir de matériaux organiques, recyclés et les travailleurs de la production sont payés équitablement. Est-ce que votre opinion générale sur la marque change?

- J'aimerais encore + \${q://QID2/ChoiceGroup/ChoiceWithLowestValue}
- Veuillez noter à quel point vous êtes d'accord avec l'affirmation suivante : J'achèterais + dans ce magasin
- Veuillez noter à quel point vous êtes d'accord avec les affirmations suivantes : J'achèterais cette gamme seulement si les prix sont les mêmes / J'achèterais cette gamme seulement si les designs sont les mêmes / J'achèterais cette gamme seulement si la qualité est la même
- Veuillez noter à quel point vous êtes d'accord avec l'affirmation suivante : Je serais sceptique si ce magasin lance une gamme verte



## **Appendix 2 : Interviews with fast fashion retailers**

### **Interview with an anonym employee from H&M**

**De nombreux clients dans mode, et plus particulièrement la catégorie des 18-25  
Avez-vous observé différents comportements de cette génération ?**

En tant que vendeuse dans le magasin H&M pas forcément. J'ai l'impression que ce qui attire les consommateurs ce sont d'autres aspects qui sont aussi promus aussi par la marque dont les designs des habits et le prix attractif et même si on utilise de plus en plus des étiquettes qui indiquent que les habits étaient « conscious », qu'il y avait des matériaux recyclés ou du coton bio « sustainably sourced », ce n'est pas c'était pas ce qu'il fait venir les gens chez nous ça c'est sûr.

**Vous proposez des versions de vos produits fabriquées en tenant compte de critères de durabilité spécifiques (extensions de marques vertes). Avez-vous remarqué une influence sur le comportement d'achat de vos clients dans cette tranche d'âge ?**

« Non, mais ça rejoint un peu la réponse que j'ai donnée avant dans le sens où ce qui attire les consommateurs c'est pas du tout l'aspect « sustainable » parce que par exemple quand il y a des gens qui viennent à ma caisse et que je leur fais payer l'article souvent il y a des chit-chats qui se passent pendant ce moment-là s'il y a personne en magasin et souvent si je vois l'étiquette je dis « Ah c'est bien en plus vous faites un geste sur la planète » et souvent les gens c'est pas du tout ce à quoi ils font attention souvent ils ont même pas remarqué. »

**Est-ce que les extensions de marque vertes vont-elles devenir une partie plus importante de votre marque ?**

« Au fil des années durant lesquelles j'ai travaillé, et je travaille chez H&M, ça a pris de plus en plus d'importance ça c'est sûr et en 2030 nous voulons que nos habits soient sourcés de manière recyclables et/ou contiennent des cotons bio et « sustainable » du point de vue éthique. Du coup oui ça prend de plus en plus d'importance. »

**Comment décririez-vous la qualité des vêtements des extension de marque verte ?**

« Je n'ai pas l'impression qu'il y a une qualité différente et je n'ai jamais eu de retours non plus. C'est juste l'étiquette. »

**Pour un article similaire (un simple t-shirt), quelle est la différence dans le prix entre les collections principales et les extensions de marque ?**

« Les prix sont les mêmes, il y a peut-être quelques exceptions mais rien d'anormal »

**Y a-t-il une différence de coût de production ?**

« En tant que 1<sup>ère</sup> vendeuse du magasin ce n'est vraiment pas une information à laquelle moi et les autres vendeurs on a accès parce que nous on nous transmet des informations sur les prix à afficher par exemple sur des nouveaux arrivages. Non n'est pas du tout informé du prix de production ça se passe bien avant que ça arrive chez nous. Même ma supérieure n'a pas accès à ces informations. »

**Ciblez-vous un segment de marché spécifique avec vos extensions de marque verte ?**

« Oui je pense que par les temps qui courent beaucoup de consommateurs se disent sensibles la durabilité mais souvent il y a une différence entre ce que les gens disent et ce qu'ils font réellement du coup je pense que le segment qui est plutôt touché par cette gamme ce n'est pas forcément les 18-25 ans mais plutôt les plus anciennes générations entre guillemets à partir de 30 ans qui font plus attention à ce qu'ils consomment. Mais non, la génération plus jeune ils font pas du tout attention il regarde vraiment le prix avant tout. »

**Les 18-25 ans achètent-ils vos extensions de marque verte ?**

« Oui parce qu'il y a certains habits ou en fait on ne fait pas la distinction. Il n'y a pas une gamme « exprès sustainable » c'est vraiment les habits qui sont mélangés, et si il y a des composants à l'intérieur qui sont durables ce sera juste indiqué sur l'étiquette mais on n'a pas une gamme vraiment définie pour ça du coup les habits sont mélangés et si quelqu'un cherche un Jean noir et que il y en a 2, 1 « sustainable » et 1 pas et que le prix est le même c'est le consommateur qui choisit »

**Quel a été l'impact de ces extensions de marque verte sur vos revenus ?**

« Malheureusement je ne suis pas autorisée à parler des chiffres du magasin »

**Lorsque vous êtes au service d'un jeune de 18 à 25 ans qui cherche à acheter un article d'extension de marque verte, quels termes utilisent-ils pour décrire l'article (parlent-ils du fait qu'il s'agit d'une extension de marque verte/bon pour l'environnement/respect dans la supply chain) ?**

« C'est quasiment jamais les consommateurs qui apportent l'aspect durabilité sur la table c'est souvent nous quand on essaie par exemple de conseiller un client on peut dire « ce produit on voit que il a été fait avec 100% de coton recyclé » mais non c'est jamais eux qui amènent le sujet comme je l'ai dis avant c'est pas l'aspect qui les intéresse le plus chez nous à mon avis et je pense aussi que mine de rien si quelqu'un vient faire ses achats chez H&M il est quand même conscient que c'est de la fast fashion et c'est pas du tout un endroit si on vient chez nous ou chez Zara si on veut être durable dans ses actions »

**Quels canaux utilisez-vous pour communiquer sur ces extensions de marque verte ? Sont-ils différents de ceux des collections principales... ?**

« Il y a tout sur le site internet avec une section qui détaille vraiment tout ce que nous faisons pour l'environnement les actions qui sont prises et ce qui est prévu pour le futur, mais dans tous les cas c'est toujours du vert qui est utilisé pour en faire la promotion mais si non pas de canaux spéciaux »

**D'après les retours de vos clients, faites-vous assez d'efforts en matière de durabilité ?**

« Sur le papier donc ce qu'on voit visuellement oui il y a beaucoup de choses qui sont faites parce que c'est très mis en avant encore soit par les affiches à l'entrée ou sur les étiquettes ou sur le site internet si on se renseigne un peu mais je pense que les Français n'est pas assez sur ce qu'il y a derrière et les scandales qu'il y a qui sont liés aux fast fashion ou le travail des enfants par exemple et ça j'en ai parlé avec une cliente mais on parle beaucoup de la durabilité du point de vue écologique mais il y a aussi la de la durabilité du point de vue éthique et ça c'est très important et je pense que les gens de nos jours ils font pas assez attention à ça et il y a beaucoup de greenwashing il faut pas se leurrer par rapport aux actions de la H&M »

### **Interview with an anonym employee from GEMO**

**De nombreux clients dans mode, et plus particulièrement la catégorie des 18-25 ans, se disent préoccupés par l'impact environnemental de l'industrie de la mode. Avez-vous observé différents comportements de cette génération ?**

« Alors oui j'ai observé plusieurs comportements il y a beaucoup de jeunes qui n'y prêtent pas attention, parce que ça coûte plus cher si on veut acheter un vêtement comme ça, ça coûte plus cher donc il y a beaucoup de jeunes qui se disent « ouais non en fait je suis étudiant donc je vais pas mettre de l'argent en plus là-dessus » et il y a

certaines jeunes qui font un peu plus attention parce que c'est vrai que c'est beaucoup des matériaux en coton et pour la sensibilité de la peau certaines personnes qui sont allergiques au polyester elles partent plus là-dessus quoi »

**Vous proposez des versions de vos produits fabriquées en tenant compte de critères de durabilité spécifiques (extensions de marques vertes). Avez-vous remarqué une influence sur le comportement d'achat de vos clients dans cette tranche d'âge ?**

« Non pas vraiment, pas beaucoup franchement »

**Est-ce que les extensions de marque vertes vont-elles devenir une partie plus importante de votre marque ?**

« Oui c'est en développement là c'étaient beaucoup des basiques : t-shirt noir, t-shirt blanc des tops, des chaussettes, et petit à petit Gemo essaye vraiment de développer un peu dans toutes les sortes d'habits et puis même dans diverses matières on commence à avoir une gamme en cachemire qui était naturel. Ça se développe gentiment quoi »

**Comment décririez-vous la qualité des vêtements des extension de marque verte ?**

« Très bonne, franchement, a plupart du coup c'était du coton et c'est plus agréable à porter. On n'a jamais eu de retour négatif en tout cas sur les habits que nous vendons donc je pense que les clients sont satisfaits »

**Pour un article similaire (un simple t-shirt), quelle est la différence dans le prix entre les collections principales et les extensions de marque ?**

« Les t-shirts de base chez nous sans l'extension ça peut aller de 2 CHF pour les enfants à 5,50 CHF pour les adultes et avec l'extension c'était plus aux alentours des 10-12 CHF »

**Y a-t-il une différence de coût de production ?**

« Je ne connais pas exactement la différence mais oui, ils ne viennent pas des mêmes pays, les t-shirts basiques viennent de Chine et Bangladesh et les extensions ça viennent d'ailleurs en Europe comme le Portugal »

**Ciblez-vous un segment de marché spécifique avec vos extensions de marque verte ?**

« Non parce qu'on a ça aussi pour les enfants et puis on commence à développer aussi gentiment pour les hommes »

**Les 18-25 ans achètent-ils vos extensions de marque verte ?**

« Alors très peu mais certains jeunes oui et justement notamment parce qu'ils font des allergies mais surtout parce que c'est bien pour la peau et pas parce que c'est une extension de marque verte »

**Quel a été l'impact de ces extensions de marque verte sur vos revenus ?**

« Pas un grand impact parce que on n'en vend pas beaucoup, moi je propose aux clients les 2 puis certaines personnes elles ne donnent pas d'importance donc c'est le moins cher et d'autres c'était plutôt des 30 et + qui trouvaient que c'était une bonne idée, donc on en vendait quelques-uns mais ce n'est pas ce qui marchait le plus n'a jamais eu de rupture de stock là-dessus »

**Lorsque vous êtes au service d'un jeune de 18 à 25 ans qui cherche à acheter un article d'extension de marque verte, quels termes utilisent-ils pour décrire l'article (parlent-ils du fait qu'il s'agit d'une extension de marque verte/bon pour l'environnement/respect dans la supply chain) ?**

« Que c'est bon pour la peau, en coton, sans polyester, « Vous n'avez pas un t-shirt un peu plus naturel », mais ils ne parlaient pas ou très rarement de la planète »

**Quels canaux utilisez-vous pour communiquer sur ces extensions de marque verte ? Sont-ils différents de ceux des collections principales... ?**

« Non ce n'est pas vraiment différents, on avait on a des plus pubs télé, journaux, affiches dans le magasin, mais on met vraiment l'accent sur le fait que c'est bon pour l'environnement. Par exemple une pub télé la première partie ce sera focus sur la nouvelle collection et la 2e nous souhaitons montrer au client que nous avons des produits durables »

**D'après les retours de vos clients, faites-vous assez d'efforts en matière de durabilité ?**

« Non pas du tout, nous on a eu beaucoup de remarques parce que on avait que des sacs en plastique et en plus que des très grands et ça a posé beaucoup de problèmes quand un client achetait un petit t-shirt qui demandait un sac c'était clairement du gaspillage parce que le sac il n'était même pas 1/10 rempli. nous avons remonté le

problème plus haut mais nous n'avons toujours pas reçu de sacs en papier ou de différentes tailles. »

### **Interview with an anonym employee from ZARA**

**De nombreux clients dans mode, et plus particulièrement la catégorie des 18-25 ans, se disent préoccupés par l'impact environnemental de l'industrie de la mode. Avez-vous observé différents comportements de cette génération ?**

« Comment le dire, moi je pense que les jeunes ils n'en ont rien à faire, ils achètent parce que c'est cool, parce que c'est stylé et c'est la mode. C'est surtout leurs quand ils viennent avec qui font parfois des petites remarques. De plus en ce qui concerne leur mobilisation par rapport aux Ouighours après tous les scandales et à la supply chain ou même juste par rapport à l'environnement personnellement j'en doute. Je pense que les jeunes tant qu'ils ont bien aujourd'hui ne ils pensent pas aux dommages collatérales. »

**Vous proposez des versions de vos produits fabriquées en tenant compte de critères de durabilité spécifiques (extensions de marques vertes). Avez-vous remarqué une influence sur le comportement d'achat de vos clients dans cette tranche d'âge ?**

« C'est compliqué de répondre à votre question car le premier truc qui me vient à l'esprit c'est que déjà nous en tant que nous avons pas du tout d'informations concernant ces extensions-là, je les vois en petit sur certains habits mais c'est très peu indiqué, alors à la caisse en scannant je ne sais même pas si je vends un habit vert ou pas. Je pense déjà qu'il y a un problème et c'est que déjà nous en tant que vendeur on n'est pas informé pour pouvoir informer le client à leur tour donc ça rend difficile de pouvoir « analyser » et voir une influence chez eux. »

**Est-ce que les extensions de marque vertes vont-elles devenir une partie plus importante de votre marque ?**

« Oui c'est sur car malgré le fait que je ne vois pas beaucoup pour l'instant d'habits verts chez Zara il y a déjà eu un changement par rapport à il y a 1 ans et surtout car il y a tout l'engouement autour mais ça va mettre du temps car à l'interne c'est toujours comme ça chez nous. De plus, nous Zara, nous une sorte de boîte où les gens peuvent déposer leurs habits, les habits qu'ils veulent, ils peuvent les déposer et puis nous on les prend, on les récupère et puis à ce moment-là il y a un recyclage qui se fait. Mais en interne on a aucune idée, on n'a même pas une mini communication sur ça, on ne sait pas ou ça

va, ce que ça devient, je trouve ça dommage car mieux communiqué car peut être un très bon projet. »

**Comment décririez-vous la qualité des vêtements des extensions de marque verte ?**

« La qualité elle s'est dégradée avec le temps, ce sont les clients et aussi de ma propre expérience car je m'habille aussi chez Zara. Après de là à dire précisément si c'est sur les articles qui ont du matériel bio ou recyclable ça je ne peux pas dire, c'est plutôt en général. »

**Pour un article similaire (un simple t-shirt), quelle est la différence dans le prix entre les collections principales et les extensions de marque ?**

« Non ce sont les mêmes prix à quelques exceptions près. »

**Y a-t-il une différence de coût de production ?**

« J'en ai aucune idée, chez Zara la centrale ne communique jamais ces choses-là »

**Ciblez-vous un segment de marché spécifique avec vos extensions de marque verte ?**

« Non, je pense juste que Zara essaye de rentrer dans la trend, surtout après tous les scandales sur eux »

**Les 18-25 ans achètent-ils vos extensions de marque verte ?**

« Oui mais malgré eux, ils ne font pas attention, ils achètent parce que c'est beau »

**Quel a été l'impact de ces extensions de marque verte sur vos revenus ?**

« J'en ai aucune idée, chez Zara la centrale ne communique jamais ces choses-là »

**Lorsque vous êtes au service d'un jeune de 18 à 25 ans qui cherche à acheter un article d'extension de marque verte, quels termes utilisent-ils pour décrire l'article (parlent-ils du fait qu'il s'agit d'une extension de marque verte/bon pour l'environnement/respect dans la supply chain) ?**

« Je n'ai jamais servi un jeune qui m'ai demandé ça, car je pense qu'une personne activiste ne viendrait pas chez Zara. »

**Quels canaux utilisez-vous pour communiquer sur ces extensions de marque verte ? Sont-ils différents de ceux des collections principales... ?**

« Comme je vous ai dit, nous sommes très peu informés, surtout notre site il n'y a presque rien non plus, ce sont des informations très dures à trouver, ils ne font pas une mise en avant particulière »

**D'après les retours de vos clients, faites-vous assez d'efforts en matière de durabilité ?**

« Nous avons reçu beaucoup de commentaires négatifs quand les sacs en papiers sont devenus payants car pour les gens, Zara ne faisait de toute façon pas attention à l'environnement donc pour eux c'était scandaleux de faire payer des sacs »

« Je voulais encore souligner un point et c'est qu'il y a 2-3 ans il y a le scandale avec les ouighours ça m'avait touché, j'en avais même parlé avec certains clients et en fait il y a des clients ils savaient pas du tout et quand je leur disais ça changeait pas du tout leur manière d'acheter ; ce que je veux dire c'est que j'ai l'impression que les gens tant qu'ils voient pas directement que comme c'est à des milliers de chez eux, ça les touche peut-être mais ça ne va pas changer leur façon de consommer pour la plupart. Moi je garde mon job car j'étais étudiant et j'en avais besoin à ce moment-là mais j'ai arrêté de consommer chez Zara car aussi comme je vous ai dit la qualité n'est pas bonne et après deux lavages beaucoup de mes habits n'étaient vraiment plus portables. »

**Interview with the under-manager of the men's textile department at MANOR**

**De nombreux clients dans mode, et plus particulièrement la catégorie des 18-25 ans, se disent préoccupés par l'impact environnemental de l'industrie de la mode. Avez-vous observé différents comportements de cette génération ?**

« Alors, oui un petit peu, je veux dire par là que de plus de jeunes viennent chez nous car nous avons une assez vaste catégorie de textile avec des labels « bio » par exemple, après ce n'est pas tout le monde mais j'ai vu un petit changement ces deux dernières années. »

**Vous proposez des versions de vos produits fabriquées en tenant compte de critères de durabilité spécifiques (extensions de marques vertes). Avez-vous remarqué une influence sur le comportement d'achat de vos clients dans cette tranche d'âge ?**

« Oui mais surtout lorsque le prix est similaire ils ont plus tendance à choisir la marque verte »



**Est-ce que les extensions de marque vertes vont-elles devenir une partie plus importante de votre marque ?**

« Oui tout à fait, nous allons étendre la marque « REthink everyday » surtout en ce qui concerne l'environnement, nous avons un partenariat avec Max Havelaar, nous allons arrêter les fourrures animales et espérer d'ici quelques années ne plus que avoir des vêtements labélisés. »

**Comment décririez-vous la qualité des vêtements des extension de marque verte ?**

« Honnêtement, elle est similaire au reste de notre gamme voir meilleure. »

**Pour un article similaire (un simple t-shirt), quelle est la différence dans le prix entre les collections principales et les extensions de marque ?**

« Nous avons une différence de prix dans notre marque « ReThink everyday » mais comme nous vendons surtout des marques externes je ne peux pas vous dire la différence de ces marques-là, ça dépend de la marque »

**Y a-t-il une différence de coût de production ?**

« Je ne peux pas vous dire exactement, mais cela dépend des matières et de plein de facteurs dont le label. »

**Ciblez-vous un segment de marché spécifique avec vos extensions de marque verte ?**

« Nous essayons de viser tout le monde, mais comme pour la plupart des jeunes le style joue beaucoup c'est assez difficile pour l'instant car nos pièces sustainables sont surtout des basiques. »

**Les 18-25 ans achètent-ils vos extensions de marque verte ?**

« Comme je l'ai dit, oui certains, j'ai eu des feedbacks de jeunes qui ont arrêté d'aller dans d'autres magasins et qui viennent chez nous justement pour nos labels mais c'est une minorité, plein de jeunes qui achètent, achètent sans s'en rendre compte qu'ils ont acheté un label vert »

**Quel a été l'impact de ces extensions de marque verte sur vos revenus ?**

« Alors, elle nous apporte une certaine visibilité mais c'est difficile à quantifier comme revenu supplémentaire »

**Lorsque vous êtes au service d'un jeune de 18 à 25 ans qui cherche à acheter un article d'extension de marque verte, quels termes utilisent-ils pour décrire l'article (parlent-ils du fait qu'il s'agit d'une extension de marque verte/bon pour l'environnement/respect dans la supply chain) ?**

« Après le dernier scandale des ouïghours je vous avoue que c'est surtout un respect de la supply chain qui revient plus souvent car quand ils achètent le label vert ils savent de toute façon que c'est meilleur pour la planète. »

**Quels canaux utilisez-vous pour communiquer sur ces extensions de marque verte ? Sont-ils différents de ceux des collections principales... ?**

« Les mêmes mais sur le site nous expliquons plus en détail ce en quoi consiste « REthink everyday. »

**D'après les retours de vos clients, faites-vous assez d'efforts en matière de durabilité ?**

« Honnêtement, nous avons de très bons retours, notre clientèle est satisfaite mais voudrait que l'on étende notre gamme verte et pas que dans les habits mais dans tous nos types de produits. »

**Interview with a former employee from Blackout and Manor - Teacher of retail knowledge for sellers' apprenticeship and lifestyle courses**

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Moi ça fait donc 6 ans que je travaille plus dans la vente et en 6 ans ça a vraiment évolué, mais comme je suis enseignante en connaissances du commerce de détail et en life style, j'ai beaucoup de retours de mes jeunes étudiants dans la vente.

**De nombreux clients dans mode, et plus particulièrement la catégorie des 18-25 ans, se disent préoccupés par l'impact environnemental de l'industrie de la mode. Avez-vous observé différents comportements de cette génération ?**

À l'époque moi je travaillais chez Manor et Blackout et un t-shirt c'était 29.90-39.90, je n'avais pas forcément des 18-25 ans mais l'environnement c'était déjà une préoccupation, mais plutôt au niveau de de l'emballage, des articles ou de comment ils venaient, que de comment ils étaient fabriqués. Quand a la caisse ont déballait la marchandise et que tu avais des t-shirts qui était emballé dans un pack de 10 avec un plastique qui était de nouveau dans un plastique qui était dans un carton qui était aussi dans un plastique, ça choquait un peu les clients. Après le bio coton ça faisait très longtemps qu'il était sur le marché donc ça c'était beaucoup demandé, mais plus je

pense par des soucis de santé, car les gens eux ont dans l'idée que justement dans le traitement c'est moins nocif.

**Vous proposez des versions de vos produits fabriquées en tenant compte de critères de durabilité spécifiques (extensions de marques vertes). Avez-vous remarqué une influence sur le comportement d'achat de vos clients dans cette tranche d'âge ?**

Typiquement, à Blackout ce n'était pas dans les marques jeunes qui proposait du vert, c'était dans les marques où le public cible avait entre 30 et 60 ans. Finalement c'est aussi un peu plus cher le bio coton, ou le Fairtrade donc forcément c'est que dans des marques qui visent une autre un autre type de clientèle.

**Est-ce que les extensions de marque vertes vont-elles devenir une partie plus importante de votre marque ?**

Quand j'y étais moi on le mettait aussi de plus en plus en avant, ça commence par juste les t-shirts basiques et puis après justement on a eu le merchandising, la communication et tout ce qui était promotion étiquette, il fallait bien les montrer et puis je pense que ça a fortement gagné du terrain, la Manor ils ont développé leur propre leur propre marque étiquette donc oui je pense que ça va continuer d'aller de l'avant

Mais malgré tout, faut faire attention quand c'est leur propre label, je ne veux pas pointer du doigt, mais c'est souvent pour se donner une bonne image.

**Pour un article similaire (un simple t-shirt), quelle est la différence dans le prix entre les collections principales et les extensions de marque ?**

Alors dans mes souvenirs je te dirais que c'était environ une dizaine de francs, tu avais 29.90 pour le t-shirt normal et après on l'avait à 39.90 en bio, dans mes souvenirs. Et aussi les prix des habits sans labels ont augmenté car les magasins ne veulent pas montrer aux clients qu'il faut gagner plus d'argent pour respecter l'environnement et donc pas aligné pas bonne image

**Y a-t-il une différence de coût de production ?**

Les Labels il faut les payer, je sais qu'il faut faire partie de ça puis pour mais c'est une association finalement donc il y avait un coup donc forcément ce coup il est répercuté sur les sur le prix de vente.

**Ciblez-vous un segment de marché spécifique avec vos extensions de marque verte ?**

Je pense que maintenant ça touche quand même une large partie de la population et justement je pense qu'ils vont gentiment se tourner vers les jeunes avec tout ce qui est grève du climat et autres alors quand j'y étais, comme il y a une différence de prix on visait plutôt une clientèle entre 30 même 40 60 ans parce que finalement il y a un plus grand pouvoir d'achat que chez les jeunes de 18 ans.

### **Les 18-25 ans achètent-ils vos extensions de marque verte ?**

Typiquement les jeunes de 18-25 ans ils ne savent pas comment s'informer, mes jeunes à l'école souvent ils ne savent pas, ils ne savent pas comment traiter une information, ils ne savent pas aller la chercher, et le marketing bah tu sais ce que c'est, tu mets un peu du vert et puis les gens ils pensent que c'est bio. Je trouve que c'est que c'est difficile d'avoir l'information car souvent les entreprises elles vont le faire que quand ça va dans leur sens surtout les magasins.

### **Lorsque vous êtes au service d'un jeune de 18 à 25 ans qui cherche à acheter un article d'extension de marque verte, quels termes utilisent-ils pour décrire l'article (parlent-ils du fait qu'il s'agit d'une extension de marque verte/bon pour l'environnement/respect dans la supply chain) ?**

Mes élèves, ils essaient de faire attention à l'environnement mais ce qui est la priorité pour eux c'est l'argent ça veut dire que à la fin du mois ils ne vont pas se ruiner pour un Jean qui est correctement fait que ce soit du point de l'environnement, que ce soit du point de vue des droits de l'homme et autres. Cependant je pense qu'ils ont quand même ce côté un petit peu de recyclage plus que ma génération et, c'est dire qu'ils se disent « bah tiens je peux le retravailler, je peux en refaire un autre, je peux le donner plus loin » et puis c'est vrai que dernièrement on parlait des groupes de vente Facebook et ça marche quand même bien, et puis du coup ça je pense que la 2e vie de l'article. Par Exemple, un joli t-shirt qui a déjà été porté ne dérangera pas aux jeunes d'aujourd'hui, alors que ma génération n'aurait jamais pu, pourtant c'était qu'il y à 15 ans.

### **Quels canaux utilisez-vous pour communiquer sur ces extensions de marque verte ? Sont-ils différents de ceux des collections principales... ?**

Quand je travaillais à blackout on travaillait avec une association qui reprenait les anciens vêtements des gens qui venaient de blackout ou de de toute autre magasin, et puis en fait tu donnais au client un bon de 5 francs pour le remercier d'être venu, c'était à partir de tranches de 25 francs il pouvait l'utiliser et puis du coup en fait ça pousse un peu les gens à revenir en magasin. L'association fait le recyclage elle-même et les tissus

deviennent pour tout ce qui était à l'intérieur des sièges de voiture, les entourages de peluches ce genre de chose.

**D'après les retours de vos clients, faites-vous assez d'efforts en matière de durabilité ?**

Mes élèves trouvent que dans les magasins de textiles c'est beaucoup trop compliqué si tu veux vraiment faire attention. C'est super cher et c'est difficile d'avoir les informations et puis même si tu fais attention à ton article, il vient quand même de super loin... donc en bateau ou avion et ça pollue quand même

Une expérience personnelle, c'est que c'est compliqué, si on en revient aux vêtements, je suis enceinte et je dois acheter des vêtements de grossesses. Première chose ou j'habite il n'y a pas, du coup qu'est-ce que tu fais, moi je ne suis pas une comme ça, mais j'ai commandé sur internet, j'essaye quand même de faire attention mais les fringues c'est hyper compliqué, parce que les vêtements de grossesse je ne vais pas les porter toute ma vie. Je vais veux pas non plus acheter des choses pas chères qui se fabriquent n'importe comment mais sur Zalando tu peux filtrer avec la conscience écologique mais c'est leur propre label, je ne suis pas allé regarder en toute.