

The Emotional Durability of Fast Fashion: Male and Female Perspectives

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Abstract

The empirical focus of this thesis has been to investigate the emotional durability of fast fashion, considering how this can inform the sustainability debate. Much has been written about the relationship between women and clothing, there is however a limited understanding of comparable male relationships, particularly in relation to sustainable consumption. The research responds to existing gaps in theoretical debates on fashion, by addressing the lack of studies which have explored the trend cycle in the context of sustainability, and also aims to deepen understanding regarding male and female perspectives towards the emotional durability of fast fashion garments.

Given the research's focus on individual attitudes and behaviours towards clothing and sustainability, material culture and sustainable consumption form the theoretical framework of this study. A multi-method, qualitative approach, that has partly been grounded in ethnographic principles, has been developed. The research has included the analysis of a clothing archive, FashionMap, which is a unique collection of garments and accessories, sourced heavily from fast fashion brands, belonging to Nottingham School of Art and Design at Nottingham Trent University (NTU). The archive spans seventeen years, and documents trends on the British high street at a time when fast fashion was growing alongside the emergence of online shopping. The study employs a methodology which uses FashionMap archive to track trends and evaluate garments' emotional durability in line with gendered responses. Focus groups and workshops with students and young adults were designed to encourage interaction with the FashionMap collection. These focus groups were followed up with detailed wardrobe studies with interviews, which have produced rich, ethnographic data.

The endpoint is a series of insights to inform sustainable development within the fast fashion industry. By drawing from a unique trend-based garment collection, the notion of the fashion trend has been re-thought within the realms of sustainability and consumer behaviour. My study has created a new way for understanding the trend system post 2020. I consider the lives of the individual consumer, which brings out the emotional attachment of trends. Gendered findings uncovered how males and females hold different reasons for attributing emotional attachment to items of clothing, but place equal importance on attitudes towards sustainable fashion consumption. This study has brought forth new knowledge of what fast fashion means to the young consumer in the context of sustainability and their own lives.

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Chapter 1 – Introduction

1.1 Summarising key issues in the field relating to fast fashion

Sustainability issues associated within the fashion industry have been widely documented. Marriot and Clayton (2006) describe fashion as an ‘impediment’ to sustainability. Environmentally polluting supply chain operations include over 92 million tonnes of waste produced per year and 79 trillion litres of water consumed by the industry (Niinimäki et al., 2020). Fast fashion is maintained through consumer identity building, and the consumers need for excitement and difference within their wardrobes. Changes in consumers’ lifestyles which required the fashion industry to adapt rapidly to trends, and offer more products to choose from, have encouraged the growth of fast fashion (Su and Chang, 2018). Consumers have a desire to create their identity through fashion, the importance of this means that often the desire to be fashionable outweighs drivers to be ethical or sustainable (Mcneill and Moore, 2015). Current research in the field of sustainability and fast fashion suggests that whilst the industry’s success has been built upon speed and novelty, a paradox is presented, as the fast fashion business model has been slow to adapt to sustainability (Black, 2019). The paradox highlights the tension between wanting to consume, with efforts to limit consumption (Mcneill and Moore, 2015).

Fundamental changes are needed to improve the sustainability of the fashion industry. This urgent need for change was recognised by the European Union in April 2022, when they revealed a long-term initiative aiming to boost the market for sustainably made textiles. New legislation will be introduced, and by 2030, the EU hopes that textile products will ‘be durable and recyclable, free of hazardous substances, and produced with respect for both people and the planet’ (Webb, 2022). This is undoubtedly a step in the right direction, but alongside the introduction of sustainable practices throughout the supply chain, a shift in consumer behaviour is also needed. This will involve decreasing clothing purchases and increasing garment lifetimes (Niinimäki et al., 2020). One way to prolong the durability of fast fashion may be to enhance the symbolic value of clothing. Research has shown that considering emotional attachment in relation to garments may also encourage longevity (Niinimäki and Armstrong, 2013). Fast fashion has not always been associated with longevity, indeed it is more often linked to disposability. This PhD study is unique as it sets out to investigate

whether fast fashion can be imbued with symbolic value that will increase its longevity. This is where this PhD is situated within the sustainability debate. While not the most radical approach, it is widely acknowledged by fashion sustainability researchers that multiple tactics will be required to reduce the fashion industry's impact on the environment. This research fits best into Alice Payne's (2020) notion of taming the current system. This is where actions are taken *within* the dominant fashion system in order to reduce negative impacts (Payne, 2020). By investigating the emotional durability of fast fashion garments through male and female viewpoints, this study brings a new perspective to consumer behaviour in relation to the long-term sustainability of the fashion supply chain.

1.2 Outlining the context

High street fashion is the expression of the power of fashion as popular culture... the innovativeness of individually created 'street style' has been a major influence in the design and manufacture of fashionable clothing since the second world war (FashionMap Archive NTU, 1999). FashionMap is a unique research resource, which is housed in Nottingham School of Art and Design, at Nottingham Trent University (NTU). Second year Fashion and Textile Design students created this collection through research projects that have explored seasonal high street trends. The Fashion and Textile Design students' brief was to research and buy an outfit from the high street in Nottingham, which reflected a current seasonal trend. This activity took place twice a year, for Spring/Summer and Autumn/Winter, and approximately six different trends were identified for each season, by six different groups of students (three womenswear and three menswear trends). Collected between the years 2000-2018, this has led to an accumulation of over 1900 garments and accessories, which contribute to the FashionMap archive. Trends were identified through popular culture, fashion magazines, and celebrity influences. All garments that make up the archive have been sourced from key fashion retail stores on the British high street, including some which would be considered as fast fashion. The archive is particularly valuable to this thesis. FashionMap presents a unique opportunity to explore the trend cycle through physical garments and stimulate discussions surrounding emotional attachment to clothing. Utilising the archive in this way will bring new perspectives to the sustainability debate.

The FashionMap archive is situated within the context of the fashion industry being one of the world's biggest polluters (Moorhouse and Moorhouse, 2017), with fashion cycles becoming increasingly fast paced. To withstand this demand, and increase profit margins,

some sectors of the fashion industry have adopted unsustainable production techniques (McNeill and Moore, 2015). 'Fast fashion' refers to low cost clothing that takes direct inspiration from luxury fashion trends (Joy et al., 2012). This encourages an environment where, 'design, sourcing and manufacture decisions are made with an emphasis on speed rather than sustainability' (Bruce and Daly 2006 in McNeill 2015:213). Low price points associated with fast fashion encourage frequent impulsive consumption (Cairns, Ritch and Bereziat, 2021). Fashion consumption is set to grow with each new generation of consumers (Peirson-Smith and Evans, 2017), and so the need to employ sustainable consumption habits is becoming more urgent. Although the environmental issues associated with fast fashion are systematic, this thesis will focus on the consumer behaviour aspect. Fast fashion leaders tend to be young consumers, and some researchers have suggested that when following new fashion trends, females fall into the 'innovator' categories, and males the 'late majority' categories (Beaudoin, Lachance and Robitaille, 2003). There is however a lack of understanding regarding gendered differences towards fast fashion garments and the emotional durability of clothing.

With regards to gender, the sample research participants have been asked to respond to garments from FashionMap that were originally sourced according to male/female stereotypes. The intention is to understand how participants respond to these gender stereotyped trends/garments and whether that has implications for the longevity of trends and garment types. Participants were selected through snowball sampling, and were asked to define the gender that they identified with at the point of study. This fell under male and female identifications. It must be noted that the study has not set out to exclude other gender identifications.

Throughout this PhD, the FashionMap archive will be utilised as a vehicle to explore the longevity of trends, and emotional durability of fast fashion. Garments from FashionMap will be used to illustrate different aspects of the trend cycle. Following on from this, a content analysis of a number of trends will be conducted which will identify trends in the archive that were particularly influential in the history and development of fashion. This content analysis will inform items of clothing which will be selected for use as key discussion points in focus groups. The focus groups will then be followed by in-depth wardrobe studies. Garments from FashionMap will be used as discussion points in focus groups with both males and females, in order to gain gendered opinions on style through longevity. This research takes a nuanced approach to previous findings in relation to clothing (Niinimäki and Armstrong, 2013) by

focusing on students and young adults, who are important consumers of fast fashion (Gilliland, 2019), and a demographic key to instigating a more sustainable future.

Material culture and sustainable consumption form the theoretical framework of this study. Clothing as a form of material culture emerges from everyday life, relationships and wider consumption patterns (Woodward, 2014). Woodward (2014) notes that undertaking an ethnographic approach to investigating clothing practices also offers important insights into sustainable clothing practices.

1.3 Presenting aim and objectives of the thesis

This aim of this PhD is to contribute to knowledge of the relationship between fast fashion and sustainability by exploring male and female attitudes towards clothing attachment and opportunities for longevity.

The research objectives are:

- To document reoccurring trends in fast fashion and examine the workings of the trend cycle using NTU's FashionMap collection to establish evidence of longevity and style obsolescence.
- To investigate student and young adults' opinions towards sustainability, emotional durability and fast fashion.
- To gain understanding of male and female attitudes and behaviours towards clothing ownership and style obsolescence, and identify opportunities for a more sustainable future.

1.4 Highlighting gaps in the literature

Framed around the parameter of the objectives highlighted above in Section 1.3, several gaps in the literature have been identified which this study will seek to address. The first research objective is to document reoccurring trends in fast fashion and examine the workings of the trend cycle using NTU's FashionMap collection to establish evidence of longevity and style obsolescence. This objective responds to current literature which suggests that the subject of the collection is under-researched, with little attention being paid to the way the collection could contribute to possible strategic potential (Raebild and

Bang, 2017). Documenting reoccurring trends in FashionMap will contribute new knowledge to a detailed understanding of the trend cycle through examining a collection of fast fashion. There is little exploration of the relationship between fast fashion, quality and product longevity (Day, Beverley and Lee, 2015). My research intends to bridge this gap by analysing consumer perspectives on the longevity of fast fashion garments.

The second research objective is to investigate student and young adults' opinions towards sustainability, emotional durability and fast fashion. Pentecost and Andrews (2010) note that there is a notable lack of research comparing generational cohorts. The 'generational cohort theory' (Ladhari, Gonthier and Lajante, 2019) states that populations can be grouped by generation cohorts, based on years of birth. This is a powerful market segmentation tool as cohort members share similar values, experiences and preferences (Parment, 2013). Students and young adults are the chosen sample range for the focus groups and wardrobe studies, as mentioned earlier, they are key consumers of fast fashion (Gilliland, 2019). In addition to this, little is known about the post purchase behaviours of young fashion-oriented consumers, who can easily buy and dispose of cheap fast fashions (Joung, 2014).

The final research objective is to gain understanding of male and female attitudes and behaviours towards clothing ownership and style obsolescence, and identify opportunities for a more sustainable future. There is a limited amount of empirical research on gendered differences found in fashion behaviour (Pentecost and Andrews, 2010). Fashion is highly gendered, and much has been written about the relationship between women and clothing, (Woodward, 2007), (Guy, Green and Banim, 2001). There is however a limited understanding of comparable male relationships. Research has shown that there are significant differences between 'positive buying emotions' for men and women (Coley and Burgess, 2003). Women are more likely to impulse buy, and their behaviour is generally thought to be more emotionally and psychologically rooted than men (Coley and Burgess, 2003). Investigating gendered differences relating to emotional attachments to clothing is a further under researched area, which will be explored through my primary research.

The overarching aim of this thesis is to contribute to knowledge of sustainability by exploring male and female attitudes towards clothing attachment and opportunities for longevity. Historically, the wardrobe has been neglected in dress and fashion theories (Cwerner, 2001), but there is now a growing field of wardrobe analysis studies, which this PhD will add to. The clothing that people already have in their wardrobes, and how this clothing is used, is central to understanding more sustainable consumption practices (Woodward, 2014). Throughout a

series of focus groups and wardrobe studies, I have explored the links between emotional attachments to fast fashion garments. There is also little research surrounding the lived experience of actively worn items of attachment clothing (Fleetwood-Smith, Hefferon and Mair, 2019), which I will investigate through primary research activities.

Based on the gaps in the literature, there have been contributions to knowledge in the following areas: emotional attachment, the importance of identity, re-thinking of the trend cycle, gendered perspectives, methodological based contributions and the bringing together of different theoretical strands.

1.5 Outline structure of the thesis

The first chapter has presented background to the investigation, providing key definitions, and identifying the research aims and objectives. Following on from the introduction, Chapter 2 will detail the literature review. This chapter reviews existing literature on the emotional durability of fast fashion, and identifies several sub-themes which form the foundation of the research. These subthemes include: the evolution of fast fashion, sustainability, emotional attachment and gender.

Chapter 3 outlines the methodology of this study, and establishes a theoretical and practical framework within which the primary research was to be conducted. A focus arises from the aim and objectives and gap in the literature which is, 'to contribute to knowledge of sustainability by exploring gendered attitudes towards clothing attachment and opportunities for longevity.' The project methodology has been designed to interrogate the phenomenon of the emotional durability of fast fashion. In line with principles of a mixed methods qualitative research strategy, the methodology has been structured to draw out new knowledge around individual and gendered attitudes towards sustainability in the context of fashion.

Following on from the methodology, Chapter 4 is dedicated to exploring trends and the FashionMap archive. This chapter investigates UK fashion archives, and explores components of FashionMap in detail. The impact of digitalisation on the fashion system will be addressed, using FashionMap to document the noticeable shift of the declining UK high street, and move to online shopping. A 'map' of the high street in Nottingham will be used to detail this shift. This will then lead onto the introduction of the fashion cycle and trends. The 'fastness' of fast fashion will be questioned, followed by an exploration of 'accidental classics.'

Chapter 5 uses a content analysis method in order to track recurring trends in fast fashion using NTU's FashionMap archive. The aim of this is to establish evidence of longevity and style obsolescence. In this context, longevity refers to the nuances of trends, and how styles fluctuate between being in and out of fashion. This trend analysis will inform which items of clothing will be selected for use as key discussion points in the focus groups. The chosen trends are all linked by a gendered focus, which facilitates a gendered approach.

Following on from the content analysis in Chapter 5, Chapters 6 and 7 present the findings and discussion. The analysis has been structured into two chapters (Chapter 6 and 7) which cover the main themes identified during transcription of primary research data. These themes respond to issues raised in the literature review, and analysing the themes will contribute to knowledge in the field. The themes are as follows:

- The trend cycle and incremental style differences
- Garment types – denim and t-shirts
- Emotional attachment
- Sustainability

Surveying the literature in the fields of sustainability and fashion revealed a lack of approaches that considered the role of gender in understanding these debates. In response to this, gendered differences will be explored as a thread throughout the different sections of this analysis. As students and young adults have been identified as the sample participants, a specific analysis will be undertaken to determine potential differences in the life stage split of the given sample.

The thesis concludes with a summarisation of the research findings in line with the study's contribution to knowledge and opportunities for future research development.

Chapter 2 - Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews existing literature on the emotional durability of fast fashion, and identifies several sub-themes which form the foundation of the research. These subthemes are: the evolution of fast fashion, sustainability and emotional attachment. Identity and gender are further subthemes which will be examined. This includes identifying existing gendered stereotypes and the relationship between fashion, gender and the importance of identity. Following a review of this background contextual information, a theoretical framework has been established, which develops clothing as material culture. The theoretical framework includes theories of sustainability (Fletcher and Tham, 2019) and of emotional durability (Niinimäki and Armstrong, 2013). Clothing as a form of material culture emerges from everyday life, relationships and wider consumption patterns (Woodward, 2014). Furthermore, Woodward (2014) states that clothing as a form of material culture must always be contextualised within wider cultural values including; gender, identity and social relationships. 'The process of combining items to be worn involves the process of constructing the individual in the eyes of others' (Woodward, 2005, p.22). This PhD builds upon the work of Woodward (2005, 2014) by considering fashion as an embedded component of wider cultural practices, and how it can be linked to emotional durability and sustainable consumption. Schwartz's Theory of Values (2012a) is a key concept which draws out the reasons behind emotional attachment to clothing, and is therefore explored in relation to the framework.

The evolution of fast fashion throughout the fashion cycle is the first subtheme which has been identified. Fast fashion can be defined as 'using improved and more efficient supply chains to be more responsive to changing trends and consumer demand' (Barnes and Lea-Greenwood, 2009, p.760). The terms 'sustainability' and 'fast fashion' do not necessarily go hand in hand, and much has been documented about the environmental issues surrounding the fashion industry. Furthermore, the fashion industry has the fourth largest environmental impact after housing, transport and food (WRAP, 2017). Therefore, sustainability is the second subtheme which has been identified. Sustainable fast fashion can be described as an oxymoron. 'There would seem to be irreconcilable differences between this notion of fashionable products and the principles of sustainability' (Marriot and Clayton, 2006, p.71).

There has been some positive change, particularly in line with production and achieving a more circular economy. Raebild and Bang's (2017) research shows that the fashion collection can be designed around circular economy thinking, However, there is still much work to be done in terms of reaching more sustainable levels of consumption. This raises a pressing need for this PhD research, which has focused on sustainability in terms of consumer behaviour.

The impact of the digital age upon the high street will be explored. This involves the decline in the physical high street store, and the rise in online fashion retailers. Fast fashion is now readily available at the click of a button, and as the channels of distribution and communication have changed, the effect on sustainability will be examined. The number of empty shops in the UK stands at an all-time high (Simpson, 2019), and in 2019 it was reported that consumers were spending one in every five pounds online (Whelan, 2019). 'Research by the Hubbub Foundation suggested that 17% of young people questioned said they wouldn't wear an outfit again if it had been on Instagram' (Audit Committee, 2019, p.7). This represents the changing face of fashion perpetuated by the rise of the digital age. Purchasing fast fashion through online retailing creates a different type of industry, which may shorten the lifespan of garments and people's attachment to them. The outbreak of Covid-19, in March 2020, has further impacted the British High Street, putting 'huge pressure' on the fashion sector, which was already facing challenges (Sender, 2020).

By looking at emotional durability, the thesis intends to bring a greater understanding to the sustainability debate within the context of the consumer. 'Although research has investigated aspects of sustainable fashion, current studies lack an academic understanding of what sustainable fashion is from a holistic perspective' (Henninger, Alevizou and Oates, 2016, p.401). Specifically, there is a lack of research which addresses gendered attitudes towards sustainable fashion. A gendered approach has been applied, focusing on consumer attitudes and behaviours, including attitudes towards purchasing fashion and sustainability. The gendered approach involves asking males and females the same questions in gender specific focus groups and wardrobe study interviews, and then comparing their responses to identify any potential differences. Particular attention will be placed on the 'behaviour gap.' This is where there is a perceived difference between positive attitudes towards ethical fashion and actual consumption of such fashion. One third of the adult population in the UK consider themselves to be 'strongly ethical,' but total sales for ethical clothing are only worth

0.4% of the total market (Sudbury and Böltner, 2011, p.146). This paradox and tension has been explored throughout the PhD study.

2.2 Mass Production and the Rise of Fast Fashion

This section will establish the beginnings of mass production, which will lead onto an exploration of the fashion cycle and how retail has evolved. This sets the context for understanding how the fast fashion industry has developed. Fast fashion can be defined as low-cost clothing that takes direct inspiration from luxury fashion trends (Joy et al., 2012). This encourages an environment where, 'design, sourcing and manufacture decisions are made with an emphasis on speed rather than sustainability' (Bruce and Daly 2006 in McNeill 2015:213). According to McCracken (1988), modern consumption 'transformed' the Western world as it caused a multitude of societal changes, and the consumer revolution is part of a larger social transformation. A new global trade in British consumer goods had emerged by the end of the eighteenth century (Berg, 2007). Many of the consumer goods which appeared in during the twentieth and twenty-first centuries were non-necessities, but they became important aspects of 'personal identities, cultural and symbolic display, and social interaction' (Berg, 2007, p.5).

The Industrial Revolution triggered 'endless innovation' which allowed for the mass production of items for the first time in history (Ward, 2010). Modernists saw themselves as creators of a machine age aesthetic, which explored new forms and materials that were compatible with mass production (Woodham, 1997). The modernist period, which favoured the omission of ornament in aesthetics and design, led to a reduction in manufacturing time, and an increase in wages (Hughes, 1991). The consolidation of populations in major urban centres, alongside mass production, led to 'consumer societies' (Sturken and Cartwright, 2001, p.191). Prior to the Industrial Revolution, industries such as calico printing and dress making relied on the manual skill and strength of workmen (Forty, 2014). This period represented a critical point for fashion as textile production became extensively mechanised. Industrial manufacture transformed the making of clothes (Wilson, 2003) and the introduction of steam made a more rapid rate of production possible. Steam machines within the textile industry meant that the annual production of printed textiles in the UK increased from one million to sixteen million pieces (Forty, 2014, p.47). This led the way for modern methods of production, and can be seen as the foundations of the fast fashion industry. Mass production allowed for tighter information loops, which in turn creates greater reactivity to demand and speed to market. However, Schulz (2015) notes how this does not also

guarantee greater product variety and differentiation. On the contrary, it becomes easier to imitate, leading to a 'sameness' within fast fashion (Schulz, 2015). This raises questions relating to consumers' clothing choices, trends and individuality. It may be the case that over-consumption is in part a result of consumers wishing to frequently differentiate their style. Writing from an anthropological perspective, Grant McCracken (1988) details the relationship between culture and consumption, and the effects of this relationship on the modern world. McCracken outlines the origins and development of modern consumption. The significance of consumer goods goes beyond their commercial value, as they can communicate cultural meaning. This meaning is constantly in transition, and can be effected by the individual efforts of designers, producers, advertisers and consumers (McCracken, 1986, p.76). It is important to understand the cultural meaning in consumer society, as this can help to demonstrate some of the complexities of consumption. Meaning is transferred through the fashion system, and McCracken (1988, p.57) notes how 'the study of clothing has been used to examine cultural categories, principles, and processes as well as social distance and social change.'

2.3 The Evolution of Fast Fashion

The fashion cycle involves the production, distribution and disposal of clothing (Goworek et al., 2018). A fashion refers to a style which is adopted by a group of consumers, at a particular time (Joung, 2014). Acceptance of a style follows a life cycle comprising of four stages: introduction, growth, maturity and decline. This process can be seen in Figure 2-1, outlined by Easey (2009).

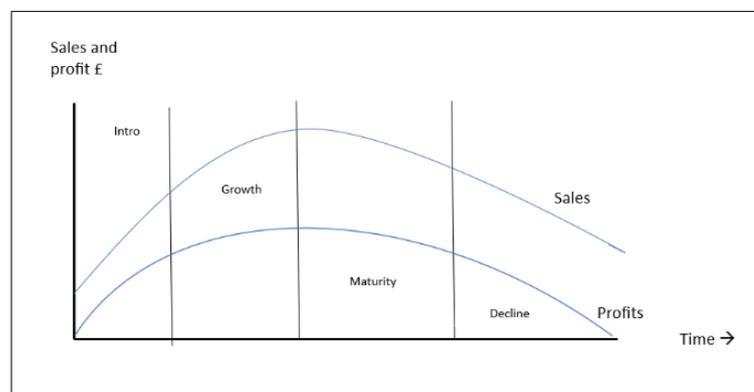


Figure 2-1 - The fashion product life cycle. Adapted from Easey, 2009.

Easey, (2009) defines the fashion cycle as a 'bell shaped curve.' The introduction phase is where new fashions emerge, and may take time to gain acceptance. During the growth stage competition increases as the trend gains exposure and appeal. At the maturity stage, the trend has reached mass appeal, and finally the trend will decline, falling out of fashion (Easey, 2009), which creates style obsolescence.

The fashion cycle has evolved significantly over the last 20 years, with one of the main shifts being an increase in the number of fashion seasons (Bhardwaj and Fairhurst, 2010). Since the 1990s, globalisation has had a major impact on fashion supply chains. A key strategy emerged in the 80s and 90s to provide quick response (QR) programmes, which promoted speed by reducing fashion lead times (Tyler, Heeley and Bhamra, 2006). A combination of factors have contributed to the rise of fast fashion. Fashion trends are dictated by the principle of product lifecycle management (PLC), whereby products have a limited time in the marketplace (Barnes and Lea-Greenwood, 2009). There has been a decline in the length of fashion PLCs, which have decreased 'from months to weeks and even days' (Barnes and Lea-Greenwood, 2009, p.761). The fashion market is now highly competitive, and consumer driven demand for new and fresh product ranges has influenced fashion retailers to increase the number of seasons in store. This means the frequency which merchandise is updated has accelerated (Bhardwaj and Fairhurst, 2010). In addition to consumer driven demand for fast fashion, considerable competitive pressure also exists from newly industrialised countries. Imports from these low-wage countries have penetrated Western markets, as traditionally the clothing industry has been driven by cost minimalization (Taplin, 2006). In the last three decades, clothing manufacture has migrated substantially from the developed, to the less well-developed economies (Maccarthy and Jayarathne, 2009). Quick response programmes shortened product lifecycles and low-cost manufacturing are all factors which have contributed negatively to the sustainability of the fashion industry.

Fast fashion is driven by cheap, low-quality production (Niinimäki and Armstrong, 2013), feeding consumers desire for novelty by producing copies of high-end designs at affordable prices (Hirscher, Niinimäki and Joyner Armstrong, 2018). 'The modern consumer will desire a novel rather than a familiar product because this enables him to believe that its acquisition and use can supply experiences that he has not so far encountered in reality' (Campbell, 2018, p.144). The fast fashion business model has evolved since the 1980s, and is often seen as having a positive impact on competitive business markets, but adverse effects on resource conservation and environmental stewardship (Marriot and Clayton, 2006). Fast fashion can

now be described as 'ultra-fast.' Retail think tank, Fung Global Retail and Technology, 2017's report, which stated that Zara, who were once known as the pioneer of fast fashion, have now been overtaken by online brands who are able to deliver the product process from design to purchase in as little as a week. Online retailers such as ASOS, Boohoo and Missguided have streamlined supply chains and moved their production closer to key markets. This has consequently enabled them to speed up their design processes. According to Fung Global Retail, 'Boohoo.com, ASOS and Missguided are now able to produce merchandise in 2–4 weeks, compared to 5 weeks for Zara and H&M and the 6 to 9 month cycle for traditional retailers' (Weinswig, 2017, p.2). This has been reflected in profit margins. In January 2019, online retailer BooHoo.com, announced that in a four month period, their revenues had jumped by 44% to £328.2m (Browning, 2019). The digital age can be defined as, 'the present time where many things are done by computer, and large amounts of information are available because of computer technology. (Also known as the information age)' (Cambridge Dictionary, 2022). This has allowed for the 'creation of always-on, always connected consumer communities' (Crewe, 2017, p.130). As a result, fashion spaces have become portable, flexible and fluid; emerging technologies have perforated the boundaries between the material and the virtual (Crewe, 2017). For example, in 2019, Topshop launched an immersive experience in their flagship store on Oxford St, London. This included a sensory pop up window display which brought the shop window into the store, giving customers the chance to, 'shop, share and play' (Carr, 2019). Although Topshop's flagship store featured a multitude of experiences, including live DJ sets, and nail bars, the brand were criticised for sending mixed marketing messages by not implementing the same strategy across the rest of its outlets (Russon, 2019). The Arcadia retail empire, which includes the brands: Topshop, Topman, Dorothy Perkins and Miss Selfridge agreed in June 2019 to close 23 stores, resulting in 520 job losses. This move was crucial in order to secure the companies short term survival on the British High Street (Blackley, 2019). Arcadia has in part blamed its decline on this "increasing switch from in-store to online shopping" (Blackley, 2019). Unfortunately, the brands survival plan was ultimately unsuccessful, resulting in Topshop disappearing from the high street altogether in 2021, a fate which was accelerated by the Covid-19 pandemic (Fish, 2021). Predictions are that online fashion sales will increase in the coming years, and that online fashion spending in the UK will rise by 54.4% in the next five years to £35.4 billion (Sender, 2019). The transition from high street to online may challenge the consumers conventional beliefs about consumption, space and practice (Crewe, 2017). This thesis will explore how and why these conventional beliefs might have been challenged through

primary research questions which seek to understand how the consumer is shopping for clothing.

2.4 The Trend Cycle

FashionMap is an archive which is built upon the study of trends. It is therefore important to establish the context of how trends work. The word 'trend' was first used as a verb in the sixteenth century, meaning, 'the way that something bends' (Goncu-Berk, 2017). The typical twenty-first century meaning, referring to change, is relatively new. Trends can apply to both fashion and also many different industries in wider society. The word 'trend' was used to describe stylistic and cultural changes in the 1960s, with the term 'trendsetter' appearing in 1962 (Goncu-Berk, 2017).

In his 1957 essay 'Fashion,' Simmel discusses fashion as a form of imitation. Fashion has the power to unite certain members of social classes, and segregate others. According to Simmel, the elite initiate fashions, which the mass then imitates. 'Fashion does not exist in tribal and classless societies' (Simmel, 1957, p.541). Carter (2003) comments on the work of Simmel (1904), and the links between class and fashion. Carter notes that the upper class need the lower class, because without their recognition, competition would not exist (Carter, 2003). This is also known as 'trickle-down theory.' 'Innovation takes place at a higher level and then spreads downwards, because the lower social classes strive to move upwards, which results in them always being one step behind' (Svendsen, 2004, p.39). Blumer (1969) observes that fashion carries the stamp of approval of the elite.

Prior to the introduction of the couture industry in Paris, in the second half of the nineteenth century, fashion was regulated by strict sumptuary laws. Fashions were controlled by the aristocratic elite, who set styles and trends (Geczy and Karaminas, 2015). 'The growth in fashion can be seen as a result of the attempt to combat it' (Svendsen, 2004, p.30). The church and state looked to control the fact that people were beginning to compete in displays of wealth, and sumptuary laws were introduced in order to restrict certain items of clothing for particular classes (Svendsen, 2004). Even if they could afford it, lower classes were forbidden to purchase certain items of apparel. Sumptuary laws were however constantly being broken (Svendsen, 2004). In 1899 Veblen proposed one of the earliest theories about the distribution of fashion, which he describes as, 'a movement of adoption from one societal class to another in a vertically hierarchical society.' This is known as, 'The

Theory of The Leisure Class' (Goncu-Berk, 2017, p.2). Under Veblen's theory, society is based upon economic principles, and social classes are dictated by conspicuous leisure and consumption activities (Veblen, 2007). Fashions emerge through the upper classes, who have the capital to innovate new forms of dress that are sophisticated and expensive. This reaffirms their place of occupancy within society. Fashions and trends begin to spread as the lower classes imitate the upper classes. The lower classes aim to emulate the class above by differentiating from their own class (Veblen, 2007). Bourdieu believes that those with a high volume of cultural capital in society, generally speaking the upper classes, have the ability to assert their power, and determine what constitutes as good taste (Bourdieu, 1986). He describes the working classes as only holding 'the taste of necessity, which is characterised by functionality' (Bourdieu in Svendsen, 2006:47). Bourdieu shares similar ideas with the Veblen, maintaining that fashion is an upper-class invention, which is mainly used to create distinction between different classes. Bourdieu states that taste is not freely chosen, and, 'For anything to have a high value, it is imperative that others do not have it' (Bourdieu in Svendsen, 2006:50). This idea can be used to reflect on why perhaps fashion archives have historically focused on collecting garments of high value, and not high street garments. Questions can be raised here such as, 'Does style have longevity if it is more exclusive?' and 'If a garment is mass produced, does this mean that it is less valuable and more disposable?' These questions will be returned to during the findings and discussions sections.

Georg Simmel is regarded as one of the great influences on the development on the sociological interpretation of fashion, and his approach plays a major role in creating a model for understanding fashion (Rocamora and Smelik, 2016). Like Veblen, he believed that fashions could be used as a distinguishing feature between classes: *The fashions of the upper stratum of society are never identical with those of the lower; in fact they are abandoned as soon as the latter prepares to appropriate them. Thus fashion represented nothing more than one of the many forms of life by the aid of which we seek to combine in uniform spheres of activity the tendency towards social equalisation with the desire for individual differentiation and change* (Simmel, 1957, p.543).

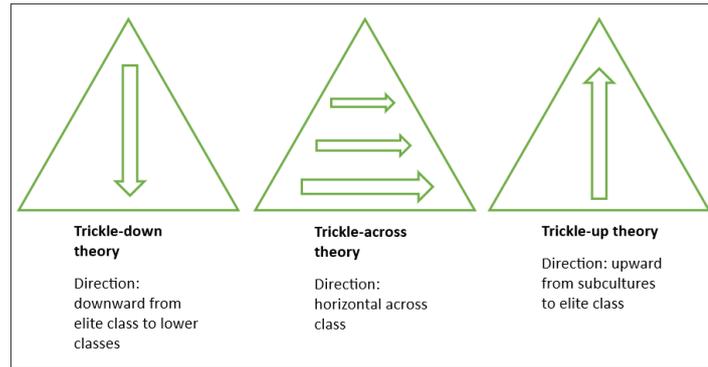


Figure 2-2 - Theories of diffusion, adapted from Eundeok, 2011

Trickle-down theory has been criticised for over-simplifying contemporary society (McCracken, 1988). The social system that we live in today is complex, and has more than two classes (Eundeok, 2011). Furthermore, many theorists have argued that the elite did not continue to set fashion trends after the introduction of mass production and consumption after the latter half of the twentieth century (Divita, 2019). King (1963) argued that trickle-down theory did not help the sophisticated marketer understand fashion behaviours in the 1960s (Divita, 2019) and he proposed a competing theory, known as ‘trickle across theory’ (Field, 1970). This is where new styles trickle across horizontally within classes rather than vertically across classes. Rather than the elite introducing fashion ideas into society, leadership occurs within each social group (Divita, 2019). A further theory proposed in the late 1960s called ‘trickle up’ theory dictates that, ‘fashions no longer “trickle down,” they usually “bubble up” from various subcultures’ (Steele, 2015, p.285). Bubble up theory was developed by Field (1970), initially known as ‘status float phenomenon’ (Divita, 2019). This is where higher status segments with more power imitate those with lower status. This theory acknowledges the importance of street fashion, and encompasses subcultures as a major influence of mainstream fashion trends. The most recent development in the theory of trend diffusion is known as ‘trickle round’ theory (Bellezza and Berger, 2019). This theory suggests that fashion trends originate from the elites and move downwards, but that sometimes low status is also mixed with high. The elites can adopt items associated with low status groups as a way to distinguish themselves from middle status individuals. As a result, signals sometimes ‘trickle round,’ moving directly from lower to upper classes, before diffusing to the middle class (Bellezza and Berger, 2019). Rather than trying to be viewed as low status, high status individuals mix and match high and low signals. Social media has further influenced how consumers respond to trends. Social media has created a consumer

which can be impacted at any stage of the buying process, and this has an impact on how consumers align their buying behaviours in response to trends (Nash, 2019).

Having a comprehensive understanding of the workings of the trend system is important as it can help to contribute to new knowledge in this field. Limitations of the literature, as discussed above, include that current trend cycle key thinking does not consider the lives of the individual consumer in relation to the trend cycle. This research will bring forward new knowledge to this debate.

2.4.1 Diffusion of innovation types

The diffusion of innovation curve (Figure 2-3) can be placed alongside the product life cycle (Figure 2-1), and shows the types of consumers who adopt trends at a certain time.

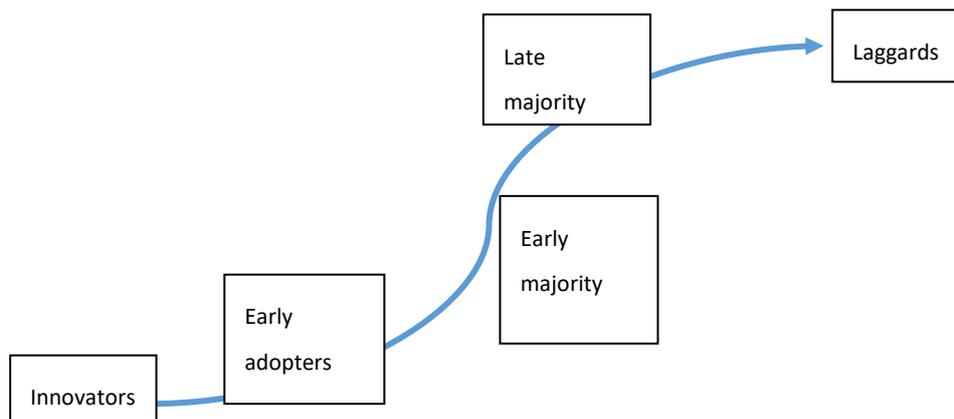


Figure 2-3 – Diffusion Innovation Curve – Adapted from Raymond (2010:19).

This model was originally devised by Rogers in 1962 and was inspired by the diffusion of innovations in farming communities (Rogers, 2003). Since the 1960s, it has been applied to many different industries, including the fashion industry. It is significant to note that although the diffusion curve is over sixty years old, it is still being used today by fashion scholars such as Raymond (2010). Innovators are responsible for the development and introduction of a new idea, and they make up about 2.5% of any group (Raymond, 2010). Fashion innovators are the first group of consumers who adopt a new style and influence other consumers for adopting the style (Sproles, 1979). Early adopters are usually close friends of colleagues of the innovator, they are happy to be exposed to new ideas and have a high degree of involvement with other groups. The first two groups are crucial to the spreading of a new trend (Raymond, 2010). Early majority members are highly sociable and

usually active online. They follow other people who they trust, and hold onto new trends before passing them over to the late majority. The late majority are conservative by nature, and require high levels of reassurance about new trends, before they will buy into it. They tend to adopt trends in ‘watered down’ formats, because of this they are easier to target, and their tastes are easier to define. Finally, the laggards are the slowest group to adopt new trends, because they are conservative and resistant to trying new styles. When a trend becomes regarded as ‘the norm,’ laggards will tacitly subscribe to it (Raymond, 2010). In the context of FashionMap, fashion students who curated the archive can be described as innovators and early adopters. As mentioned in the above section, these groups are highly sociable and usually active online. Participating in a fashion degree means that they will have had a vested interest in fashion and the latest trends. *‘Theories about why people follow rather than lead in fashion are plentiful. Among the explanations are feelings of insecurity, admiration of others, lack of interest, and ambivalence about the new’* (Stone and Farnan, 2018). Figure 2-4 shows that once a new style has been introduced, there are three possible rates and durations of acceptance – fad, fashion or classic.

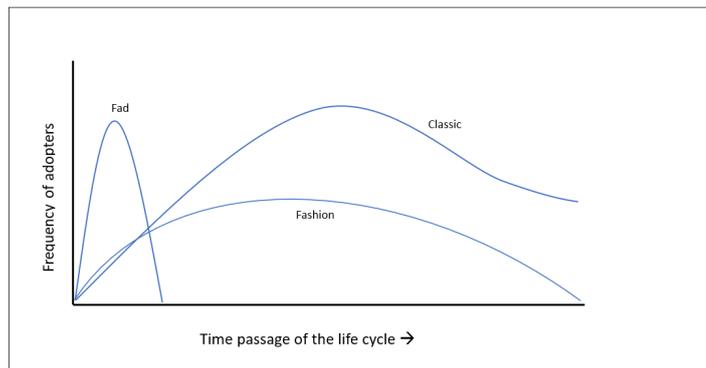


Figure 2-4 - Fad, fashion and classic styles have different rates of acceptance. Adapted from Eundeok 2011.

Fashions typically fall into either short term or long term cycles. Short term cycles can exist from a month to a year, whilst long term cycles follow ‘evolutionary style movements’ and can be traced to last for as long as a century (Strauss and Lynch, 2007). Short term cycles can be described as ‘fads.’ A fad will rise meteorically in popularity, only to suffer an abrupt decline as the trend becomes adopted (Easey, 2009). ‘As a fad becomes fashionable, it also becomes unfashionable’ (Easey, 2009, p.151). Simmel notes that, ‘as fashion spreads, it gradually goes to doom’ (Rocamora and Smelik, 2016, p.76). In contrast, a long term cycle can be described as a ‘classic,’ which ‘denotes a lasting significance, endurance, and long life span’ (Goncu-Berk, 2017). A classic is never out of style for its market segment, and may move in and out of fashion for other segments. Design changes are minimal, and classic

garments share the quality of 'timelessness' (Easey, 2009, p.150). Fashion items, as depicted on Eundeok's (2011) graph (Figure 2-4), lie between the fad and classic items. A fashion style is diffused among consumers at a moderate rate, it is slowly accepted before reaching a peak, and then gradually declining. A fashion style remains popular for a prolonged period of long time. Chapter 4 will explore how different items of clothing from the FashionMap archive fit into the cycle in Figure 2-4. An exploration of where trends originate from will be analysed in the following section – fashion forecasting.

2.5 Fashion Forecasting

Textile producers take their inspiration from a variety of sources, including design houses and trade shows. They will choose a selection of designs, textures and colours twelve to eighteen months before they offer their lines to manufacturers. Apparel manufacturers begin deciding which styles they will produce in which fabrics about three to nine months before showing a line to buyers. Then, two to six months before the fashions appear on the selling floor, the retail buyers make their selections from the manufacturers' lines (Stone and Farnan, 2018). The system of fashion in the Western World has shifted over the twentieth century from 'class differentiation' to 'collective selection' (Majima, 2013, p.71). It used to be the case that fashion monopolists seasonally introduced new designs, and reduced the price of old designs so that they become obsolete. However, now they have difficulty keeping the monopoly which allows the designs to diffuse more quickly (Majima, 2013). Barnes and Lea-Greenwood (2009) note how the nature of consumer demand has seen supply chains which were driven by manufacturers and designers who would traditionally 'push' products, have been replaced by the consumer 'pulling' products. This has had a negative effect on the overall sustainability of the fashion industry. The consumers role in improving the environmental impact of the industry will be a key factor moving forward, which is reflected in the aim and objectives of this study.

Blumer (1969, p.279) studied the women's fashion industry in Paris, and he describes how fashion buyers developed common tastes due to their intense immersion in the area of dress, also known as an 'appreciation mass.' The 'appreciation mass' guided the buyer's perceptions and channelled their judgements and choices. Blumer argues that this explains why buyers independently of each other made almost identical choices at fashion openings. Schulz (2015) builds upon the work of Blumer (1969), and evidences how many UK womenswear retailers offer surprisingly similar products. Schulz (2015, p.58) argues that the

product sameness on the UK high street is a 'deliberate strategy employed by industry practitioners to limit demand uncertainty.' This differs from Blumer's theory in which collective taste is seen as a by-product of interaction. Establishing a collective taste is a way to assert 'orderliness' in the fashion system, and minimise economic risk (Schulz, 2015). Schulz's theory will be used to analyse the current workings of the trend system through the study's research. The fashion industry needs to be marketable in order to sell clothes, so high street retailers will interpret designer innovations in a 'palatable' way, which allows for collections to be 'risk averse' (Almond, 2020).

Fashion forecasting is the process of anticipating future developments by watching for signals of change, and applying frameworks to predict possible outcomes. 'Forecasting seeks to identify how past trends will change and project their influence on the future' (Divita, 2019, p.3). With the globalization of consumer markets, many apparel firms hire forecasting companies and also employ their own in-house forecasting teams (Eundeok et al., 2021). WGSN (World Global Style Network) is an example of a trend forecasting agency, whose subscribers include Marks and Spencer and Giorgio Armani (Milmo, 2005). WGSN offers information on current and future trends in fashion, interior design and lifestyle, using the tagline, "Know what's next" (Hope, 2017). Similarly, Edited is a specialist in 'retail market intelligence,' helping brands to 'create the best strategic decisions to succeed in today's retail landscape' (Edited, 2021). Drapers is a company which provides industry news, analysis and data for UK fashion retailing (Drapers, 2021). Fashion forecasting agencies used to provide 'fairly vague long-term predications' that required considerable interpretation from designers to translate into tangible designs. However, the rise of the digital age has allowed today's web-based fashion forecasting agencies to provide almost instantaneous coverage of key fashion events (Schulz, 2015, p.64). This helps to eliminate risk, but can also stifle the creative process. According to Marriott (2014), the digital age is a time beyond mass trends and big pop-cultural movements. It is no longer the case that if Vogue declares a colour is in, it will instantly become popular, as it would have done so in previous decades. In the digital age, micro trends appear, and consumers can 'cherry-pick' what appeals to them, but very little appeals to the masses (Marriott, 2014). Limited literature exists on the micro trend, and by examining consumer behaviour, this study will seek to gain greater insight into how consumers respond and behave to micro trends, contributing to knowledge in this field.

2.6 UK Fashion Retail

The broad perspective on UK fashion retail discussed in the below section will set the framework for the focus of this PhD, which is centred around the regional city of Nottingham. The British high street is unique in terms of its identity, history, and heritage. For the purposes of this PhD, the term 'high street' refers to the shops situated in main towns and cities across the UK, where fashion can be bought from independent stores and chain store retailers (Marroncelli and Braithwaite, 2020). Hubbard (2017) notes the link between successful high streets and class. Successful high streets are depicted as those without inclusion of working class consumption, while failing high streets are depicted as harbouring 'unhealthy' stores, potentially putting off more affluent consumers and tourists. At the time of writing in 2022, the general trend for the British high street as a whole is that it's in a state of decline, as the Coronavirus pandemic has accelerated the move towards online shopping. 2020 saw the worst year for the high street job losses in twenty five years (Haigh, 2021). However, retail on the high street has been facing difficulties long before the Coronavirus pandemic, Wilson (2003) notes that the demise of the department store has been affected by the decline of the inner city. Increased use of the car is one factor which has encouraged the development of out of town shopping centres. Wilson (2003, p.154) describes this as, 'a new kind of consumerist dream world for the new decentred concept of a city.' Despite the fact that retail on the high street is in a state of decline, high street employment in the accommodation and food services sector was growing in most local authorities between 2015 and 2018 (Holgate, 2020). Hubbard's (2019) research reiterates this point, demonstrating that the diversity of land use on the high street is not just limited to fashion retail.

While decline in physical retail is a global issue (KPMG, 2020), this PhD will focus solely on the British high street, and specifically the high street in Nottingham, of which the FashionMap has been curated. FashionMap plays a key role in aiding the analysis of the changing landscape of UK fashion retail. This research will investigate certain aspects of the archive in detail, with the aim to contribute to knowledge regarding fast fashion and sustainability. The British high street is influential on the global fashion industry, with consumers in the UK buying more clothes per person than any other country in Europe (UK Parliament, 2019).

The effect of digital technology on the fashion system is 'turbulent' and 'little understood,' with a lack of critical analysis of the impact of new technologies on the fashion sector (Crewe,

2017). As the FashionMap archive at NTU tracks trends through the emergence of the digital age, it brings a unique opportunity to fill this gap in knowledge by examining how this has impacted the trend cycle, consumer attitudes towards fashion consumption and the consequences for sustainability. The shift documented from high street to online fashion, as a result of the digital age, can be linked to an increase in the perceived disposability of fast fashion (Joy et al., 2012). It can be argued that the instant gratification achieved by purchasing garments at the click of a button, without the need to visit the local high street, adds to the disposable nature of fast fashion, and contributes to the sustainability problem. In addition to this, it has been reported that, 'One in six young people won't wear an outfit again if it's been seen on social media' (Bowman, 2017). This culture and attitude online fuels the disposable nature of fast fashion. The growing need for sustainable practices within the fashion industry have resulted as a consequence of the existing system, and will be explored within the following sub-theme.

2.7 Sustainability

The concept of sustainability gained prominence and recognition in the mid-1980s, and has since gone through a substantial evolution (Portney, 2015). One of the most widely accepted definitions of sustainability is as follows: 'Sustainability is an economic development activity that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs' (World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987). Since the onset of mass production and industrialisation (discussed in Section 2.2), this impact has intensified significantly (Zalasiewicz et al., 2018). In 2016, scientists announced that humanity's impact upon the planet is now so profound that a new 'geological epoch,' 'the Anthropocene' was declared (Carrington, 2016). Evidence of the Anthropocene includes human activity which has caused: accelerated extinction rates of animals and plants, increased levels of CO₂ in the atmosphere and irreversible plastic pollution (Carrington, 2016).

Sustainability considerations now affect all industries, and the fashion industry is facing increasing scrutiny and pressure to adopt more sustainable practices. Fashion cycles have become increasingly fast paced, and to withstand this demand, and increase profit margins, some sectors of the fashion industry have adopted unsustainable production techniques (Mcneill and Moore, 2015). 'Fast fashion' encourages an environment where, 'design,

sourcing and manufacture decisions are made with an emphasis on speed rather than sustainability' (Mcneill and Moore, 2015, p.213).

2.7.1 Sustainable Brands

The sustainable fashion industry has experienced significant growth, as consumers become more aware of the environmental issues associated with fast fashion. WRAP's (2017) report into the environmental impact of the UK clothing industry detailed positive action from companies such as M&S, Tesco, and Sainsburys who all committed to using more sustainable cotton. Sustainable fashion brands have historically been criticised for lacking 'style.' This stems from traditional images of eco-fashion which are often associated with the Hippy subculture, and can include 'rope sandals' and 'hemp cargo pants' (Winge, 2008, p.511). *'Concerned consumers can purchase garments from sustainable-fashion retailers, however, research has found the garments are not perceived as fashionable or suitable for work'* (Ritch, 2014, p.1163).

In 2006, Joergens questioned if ethical fashion would become a 'myth' or a 'future trend.' Her research concluded that ethical issues had a relatively low impact on consumers purchasing behaviour, as it is almost impossible to avoid acting unethically when purchasing clothing. In addition to this, Joergens findings ascertained that consumers felt like they did not have a large choice of ethical fashion on the market (Joergens, 2006). Winge (2008), also questioned if "green" or eco fashions are just the latest trend or if the fashion industry has opted for a more environmental approach to fashion. It can be argued that sustainable fashion has significantly progressed over the last ten years, and furthermore, a *trend* has emerged for sustainable fashion, driven by both producers and consumers.

Existing brands on the British high street have adapted their corporate design strategies in order to comply with sustainability requirements, and new brands have also emerged from the increasing consumer demand to produce affordable, sustainable and stylish clothing. This has resulted in a selection of innovative and environmentally friendly fashion collections on the British high street. 'There are many brands proving that you need not spend a small fortune in order to wear sustainable fashion' (Baram, 2019). According to Mintel, Marks and Spencer are seen as the most ethical fashion retailer on the high street. In 2007, M&S launched their ethical programme, 'Plan A.' This initiative has been successful, and has allowed the company to become the world's first major carbon neutral retailer (Baram, 2019).

Further examples of sustainable fashion brands include TALA - an active wear label which places sustainability at the core of their business. The British online brand was set up in 2019, and sells sports bras and gym leggings, made from 92% reused materials including plastic bottles and factory offcuts (Rackham, 2019). The focus of the brand is to create sustainable and affordable gym products, providing an alternative to the 'fast fashion' label. This is currently a popular area of the market, which is becoming increasingly crowded, as brands compete for 'millennial spend' (Hahn-Petersen, 2018). Nike offer a selection of gym garments made from at least 50% recycled polyester (Nike, 2020), and Nottingham based active wear company, Player Layer, also provide an 'Eco layer' legging, with fabric made from twenty five recycled water bottles (Player Layer, 2020).

Patagonia is a further example of a brand who incorporates sustainability into their company ethos. They make outdoor and casual clothing, focusing on functionality and style, with minimal environmental impact. The company distance themselves from mainstream fashion brands, and identify their core consumer as an active individual who engages in extreme sports (Hepburn, 2013). The brand Patagonia will be discussed in further detail in Chapter 7. Similarly, outdoor brand Finisterre have taken a pioneering approach to making sustainable activewear. Finisterre offers the consumer a repair service, stating that, 'the most sustainable garments are the ones which we already own' (Finisterre, 2020). A distinction can be made here between clothing brands who offer sustainable solutions. Brands such as Tala, Patagonia and Finisterre incorporate sustainability at the core of their business ethos. According to Ryding (2017), operating in this manner will become increasingly important. However, many other brands have had to adapt their corporate design strategies in order to comply with sustainability requirements. It may be the case that some brands are using sustainable terminology as a marketing technique, in order to promote the perception that their products are environmentally friendly, a term otherwise known as 'greenwashing.' Niinimäki (2013) notes how it is appealing for companies to use sustainable arguments, merely to increase sales; and because these arguments are complex, it is often easy to mislead the consumer. 30% of consumers state that they would choose a retailer based on whether or not they sold sustainable fashion ranges, but 79% of people find it difficult to ascertain which retailers are sustainable (Baram, 2019). This shows that there is a demand for retailers to stock sustainable fashion ranges, but Baram (2019) notes that it would be useful for brands and organisations to devise an industry standard, so that consumers could easily access how sustainable a fashion company is. The notion of greenwashing will be analysed and discussed further in Chapter 7.

2.7.2 Clothing Rental, Resale and Vintage Fashion

Collaborative fashion consumption is a consumption trend where consumers have access to already existing garments, as opposed to buying new fashion products (Becker-Leifhold and Iran, 2018). This can be through gifting, swapping, second hand and renting clothing, and examples of this will be discussed in the following section.

Several initiatives have emerged as evidence of the fashion industry’s commitment to becoming more environmentally friendly. One initiative gaining popularity is clothing resale, this is a small fraction of the overall clothing market, but is growing twenty-one times faster than the sale of new clothes (Kent, 2020). Resale is occurring at both the high and low ends of the market. The app Depop targets Gen Z and Millennials, and in the UK, one in three young people are registered with the app (Depop, 2020). The RealReal is an American website and store which aims to extend the life cycle of luxury goods through creating a ‘marketplace for authenticated luxury’ (The RealReal, 2020). Table 2-1 outlines advantages and disadvantages of clothing resale:

| Advantages of resale | Disadvantages of resale |
|--|---|
| Can act as an entry point for consumers who would otherwise be unable to afford luxury items (Kent, 2020). | Critics say resale that resale is similar to outlet shopping with better branding – ‘it’s another step in a linear chain, there’s nothing circular about it.’ As garments are often new, with tags on (Kent, 2020). |
| The <i>buyers</i> care about sustainability (Kent, 2020). | Resale entices <i>sellers</i> to spend their profits on more clothes – fuelling the current culture of binge shopping (Kent, 2020). |
| Finding new owners for used clothes keeps them out of landfill and reduces their environmental footprint (Kent, 2020). | <i>Consumer behaviour</i> is the problem not resale (Kent, 2020). |
| The resale market is growing rapidly, compared to the overall apparel market (Kent, 2020). | 55% of consumers are concerned about cleanliness when it comes to rental options (DeSalva, 2020). |

Table 2-1 - Advantages and disadvantages of clothing resale. Adapted from (Kent, 2020) and (DeSalva, 2020).

Similar to resale, clothing rental has also gained popularity in recent years. Several retailers have implemented clothing rental into their business models. In 2019, American Eagle, Urban Outfitters and Bloomingdales began offering rental offers to customers, in addition to traditional retailing (DeSalva, 2019). Clothing rental offers customers flexibility, and engages new shoppers (DeSalva, 2019). Research has shown that consumers are open to renting rather than owning their clothes, but that there are currently not enough options to make this feasible (Braithwaite and Schlemann, 2017). Piontek et al. (2020) note how rental services have the potential to reduce the environmental impact of fashion, but that this is highly dependent on the structure of the rental business model itself, which therefore makes the environmental benefits uncertain. In addition to this, there are environmental issues such as dry cleaning and transportation which must also be accounted for. Challenges may be presented when considering clothing rental in line with emotional durability. As the clothes have to be returned, often under a short time frame, the consumer is unable to form an emotional connection with the garments. Therefore, longevity cannot be achieved through emotional attachment, but this may be balanced out by the fact that the garments are likely to be worn multiple times by different consumers. Ultimately, in order to be successful, rentals need to be cheap, convenient and accessible (Braithwaite, 2018). Clothing rental and resale, on their own, cannot solve the sustainability problem within the fashion industry. It can be argued that they need to be used as part of the solution and are a singular aspect of much broader changes required (Kent, 2020). Shopping second hand and vintage is another example of an aspect of the circular economy which could improve the environmental impact of the fashion industry.

The global second-hand clothing trade can be defined as, 'any fashion item that has been pre-loved or pre-owned' (Ryding et al., 2017, p.245) Fashion is often associated with a craving for the new, but the 'rise of vintage highlights the nature of novelty in fashion as erratic (Mackinney-Valentin, 2017, p.19). Shopping vintage and second hand is part of the slow fashion movement (Clark, 2008). Slow fashion is a term used to identify sustainable fashion solutions, challenging the current fashion system. It is based on principles including, innovative design, production, consumption, use and reuse. Slow fashion questions the understanding that fashion must exclusively be associated with the new (Clark, 2008).

A typical criticism of fast fashion is that it can often lack individuality, due to being mass produced, and rarely exclusive. This can equate to consumers wearing the same clothes as each other. This can be linked to an increased popularity and demand for vintage, and as a

consequence vintage has shifted from subculture to mass culture (Clark and Palmer, 2004). Shopping vintage offers the consumer the opportunity to find many different brands, all under one location (Kent, Winfield and Shi, 2018). Clothes that are disposed of by one consumer, still have the potential for ‘many lives’ with further consumers (Jenss, 2017). It can be argued that this promotes an opportunity for emotional durability. Along with wearing vintage fashion, ‘one also wears the spirits of the past,’ and in this way, fashion has become an ‘art of memory’ (Vinken, 2004, p.69). According to Mintel, ‘43% of fashion shoppers have bought items second-hand in the last 12 months, while 24% have not yet done so but would be interested in doing so in the future’ (Baram, 2019). The second-hand market is becoming a global phenomenon, and is expected to grow 127% by 2026. The growth of second-hand is predicted to expand three times faster than the global apparel market overall (thredUP, 2022). Several theorists have noted the role that the concept of nostalgia plays in vintage consumption (Cassidy and Bennett, 2012) (McRobbie, 1989). Nostalgia will be discussed at a later stage in this literature review in relation to both vintage and emotional attachment.

Cassidy and Bennett (2012) list the following factors, visible in Table 2-2, as being significant in the rise of the vintage trend:

| Factor | Significance / effect on the rise of vintage fashion |
|----------------------------------|--|
| Changing attitudes | This is linked to the diminishing stigma against wearing real fur. Consumers are more likely to buy fur as long as it is vintage, due to the fact that it was produced at a time when real fur in fashion was considered acceptable. |
| Return to post-war values | A lack of disposable income due to the recession may have forced some consumers into buying second hand and vintage. Vintage consumers are adopting a ‘repair, reuse and recycle’ attitude, which challenges the ‘throwaway fashion’ idea. |
| Fashion trends and designers | Designers take inspiration from vintage clothing, as all fashion trends are recycled to produce current collections. |
| Style, quality and individuality | Vintage consumers are able to create individual identities for themselves, by wearing unique and one of a kind items of clothing. They can mix and match items from the past with items from the present to create new identities. It is also argued that vintage offers better quality clothing than the high street. |
| Eco-sustainability | Vintage fashion is a form of recycling and re-using. Increased media attention on the sustainability of fashion has prompted consumers to make more conscientious purchasing decisions. |

| | |
|---------------------|---|
| Celebrities | Celebrities have helped to improve the image of vintage fashion. By wearing vintage fashion to red carpet events, celebrities such as Renee Zellweger and Reece Witherspoon have increased the popularity of vintage. |
| Media | Vintage fashion is often promoted in the media as a 'sign on individuality and connoisseurship.' When film, television and catwalks show vintage fashion, it also raises the profile of the trend. |
| Film and television | Film and television has had a significant influence on fashion designers. In particular, the American TV series 'Mad Men,' which is set in the 1960s, has been attributed to a rise in demand for vintage fashions. High street shops have also noted an increase in vintage inspired garments, as a result of the 'Mad Men effect.' |
| Internet | The internet has increased awareness and popularity of vintage fashion, making it accessible to a wider audience. Online vintage fashion and craft forums aid consumers with their purchases. Websites such as eBay help consumers to buy into the vintage trend, at an affordable price. Social media sites such as Facebook facilitate vintage groups and events. |

Table 2-2 - Adapted from 'The Rise of Vintage Fashion and the Vintage Consumer,' Cassidy and Bennett (2012).

2.7.3 The Circular Economy

Clothing rental, resale and shopping vintage are all examples of methods which can be included in the circular economy. The circular economy (CE) is based on the principles of eradicating waste and pollution, and keeping existing products and materials in use (Ellen Macarthur Foundation, 2020). This theory is based on McDonough and Braungart's (2002) literature 'Cradle to Cradle.' Their work recommends a framework which is characterised by three design principles, derived by nature: 'everything is a resource for something else', 'use clean and renewable energy' and to 'celebrate diversity' (McDonough and Braungart, 2002). According to these principles, a product is designed to have multiple life cycles, or it is biodegradable. This new way of thinking reveals opportunities to constantly seek improvement within designs (McDonough and Braungart, 2002). The CE is 'regenerative by nature, based on principles of closed loops' (Niinimäki, 2017). The Ellen MacArthur Foundation states that the system which we are currently using, known as the linear system, no longer works for 'people, businesses or the environment.' The volume of minerals, ores and fossil fuels consumed annually is set to triple by 2050 unless there is a separation between economic growth and resource consumption (Moreno, Braithwaite and Cooper, 2014). In order to eliminate waste and pollution, there will have to be changes in the system,

to help reduce the effects of climate change. This requires new ways of thinking about fashion, and disrupts the traditional fast fashion system.

Consumers are becoming more aware of the harmful environmental effects surrounding fast fashion. In response to increased consumer concern, business are beginning to understand the economic benefits of how to efficiently utilise waste (Moorhouse and Moorhouse, 2017). Integrating a circular economy can create new business growth opportunities within the fashion industry. 'A CE approach in fashion aims to develop a more sustainable and closed-loop system where the goal is to extend the use time of garments' (Niinimäki, 2017, p.152). This requires radical innovations, and includes the whole supply chain from designers, to manufacturers and consumers. In order to extend the use time of products, consumer satisfaction has to be the focus of design, and quality is a critical aspect of this (Niinimäki, 2017). It has been argued that the industry so far has resisted widespread adoption of techniques to implement and integrate CE practices. Governments could contribute positively by developing regulations which encourage a CE within the fashion sector (Goworek et al., 2018). However, in June 2019, the UK Government rejected a series of recommendations proposed by The Environmental Audit Committee, stating that some of these proposals may be reconsidered by 2025 (Baram, 2019). In March 2020, the outbreak of Covid-19 in the UK impacted upon the circular retail economy. DeSalva (2020) warned that heightened health concerns could spark hesitation to engage with rentals and resale. 'With the current health crisis, worries around sanitation and social distancing can result in fewer needs and willingness to participate in circular retail unless consumers can have more visibility around point of origin or product life cycle' (DeSalva, 2020).

Recycling is often regarded as a solution to combat textile waste, and a key component of the circular economy. However, the recycling process itself has energy impacts through transportation, reprocessing and further manufacturing (Moreno, Braithwaite and Cooper, 2014). Natural and man-made textile fibres can be recycled, but only 50% of all textiles thrown away are recyclable (Birtwistle and Moore, 2007). Textile waste is often not prioritised by local councils for recycling, and this can lead to unsustainable landfill disposal (Goworek et al., 2018). It is problematic to dispose of textile waste in landfill, as synthetic products do not decompose. Woollen garments do decompose, but they release methane, which contributes to global warming (Birtwistle and Moore, 2007). Although the circular economy appears to be the ideal in principle, it is not always achievable in practice. 'It is impossible to have a complete circular system in which there is no use of virgin materials and

no final waste' (Moreno, Braithwaite and Cooper, 2014, p.1). Consumer attitudes and behaviours will play a part in determining the future success of the circular economy. Responding to this the research will assess consumer attitudes towards fast fashion garments, and findings will contribute to the sustainability debate.

Sustainable consumption can be defined as, 'patterns of consumption through which the purchase and use of goods and services meet people's basic needs while minimising any environmental degradation' (Cooper, 2000, p.47). Cooper (2000) goes on to state that that this definition does have limitations, as widely differing opinions exist on what constitutes as a 'need.' How consumers value products is complex and multi-faceted (Cooper, 2010), and consumer behaviour with regards to sustainability can be problematic. Decisions made by consumers at the time of purchase can have lasting implications for the product's lifetime. According to research commissioned by Defra, some consumers will present an 'ethic of care' towards products, but many will not (Cox et al., 2013). Cairns et al. (2021) research revealed that millennials in particular experience tensions between their desire to purchase fast fashion, and their growing concern for sustainability. This PhD has considered the highlighted tension in relation to Gen Z and their consumption habits.

2.7.4 The Attitude Behaviour Gap

The consumer has a crucial role to play in the circular economy, however research has revealed that there is a clear and large gap between positive attitudes towards sustainable fashion, and actual consumption of such fashion, known as, 'the attitude behaviour gap' (Sudbury and Böltner, 2011). This gap can also be described as a 'misalignment of values' (Cairns, Ritch and Bereziat, 2021, p.1), when a consumer's values do not align with their purchasing behaviour (Park and Lin, 2018). Or similarly, the 'intention-behaviour gap,' where despite their ethical intentions, ethically minded consumers rarely purchase ethical products (Carrington, Neville and Whitwell, 2010). Better understanding sustainable consumption and closing the attitude behaviour gap will contribute positively towards the sustainability debate (Park and Lin, 2018). There are several barriers that deter consumers from purchasing green apparel. These barriers include, 'price, availability, knowledge, transparency, image, inertia and consumption habits' (Wiederhold and Martinez, 2018, p.419). For all consumers, when purchasing new clothes, regardless if they are sustainable or not, quality and aesthetics remain highly important factors (Niinimäki, 2010). Whilst the attitude behaviour gap does exist, the growth of the sustainable clothing market suggests that consumers are starting to

pay attention to sustainability (Ryding et al., 2017). Wiederhold and Martinez (2018) propose a series of recommendations with the intention to reduce the attitude behaviour gap. They advise that brands need to adopt adequate communication strategies, and make green apparel more attainable.

Karl Marx's 1867 theory of commodity fetishism can be applied here, which outlines that in a capitalist system, where we exchange goods for money, the commodity masks the real social relationships between people. 'The fetishism of commodities has its origin in the peculiar social character of the labour that produces them' (Arthur, 2001, p.76). This implies that instead of seeing the value in the craftsmanship required to make products, we just see value in the products themselves. There is a disconnect between the maker and the consumer. It can be argued that this disconnect leads to increased disposability, due to a lack of emotional attachment between consumers and products. Twigger Holroyd (2017) notes how the disconnect between production and use is a fairly recent phenomenon, as the 'make do and mend' attitude remained popular until the first half of the twentieth century. Therefore, fostering emotional attachment to clothing becomes an important factor in reducing the attitude behaviour gap. Niinimäki and Armstrong (2013) hypothesise that fostering deep attachments to clothing offers opportunities to extend the use time of garments, and postpone disposal.

2.8 Emotional Attachment

Designing objects which encourage emotional attachment can present alternatives to our 'throwaway society,' by developing powerful frameworks which foster relationships between people and things (Chapman, 2005). Emotional attachment can be defined as, 'encapsulating an affect-laden, possession-specific bond between a person and an object or objects. Affects can be multidimensional, positive or negative, and can also differ in terms of felt intensity toward an object' (Kellett and Holden, 2013, p.120).

Textiles have a physical proximity to the skin, and an ability to embody individual emotions and collective experiences. Museum exhibitions, such as the 2015 exhibition 'Wedding Dresses' at the V&A, highlighted the power of textiles to convey memory and emotion (Dolan and Holloway, 2016). Pleasurable use experiences and meaningful memories with products can encourage attachment (Niinimäki and Armstrong, 2013). This offers potential for designers to explore fashion as a more sustainable practice. It is possible that the stories and

origins of clothing can be designed to encourage care (Clark, 2008). Twigger Holroyd demonstrated this through her knitwear label, 'Keep & Share,' which encouraged consumers to buy less and form a strong bond with products. Garments are designed to be worn by a range of sizes, different genders, and in different ways. The versatility of the range provides opportunities for clothing to be handed down (Twigger Holroyd, 2020). Niinimaki and Armstrong (2013) hypothesised that fostering deep attachments to clothing offered opportunities to extend the use time of garments and postpone disposal. However, there are limitations with studying emotional attachment. It is often problematic to gauge how and when garments gain particular emotional power, and understand how they move us (Dolan and Holloway, 2016). Personal and memorable experiences attached to clothing may be deeply significant to the wearer, but invisible to others (Twigger Holroyd, 2017). As previously mentioned in Section 2.7.2, aspects of the circular economy such as clothing rental may not lend themselves to developing emotional attachments between clothing and consumers. In addition to this, attachment experiences may be negative, or expressed as disgust. Miller and Clark (2002) link compulsive or inappropriate purchases with depression, guilt and uncontrolled emotions. Just because an emotional attachment has been formed with a product, this doesn't necessarily mean that replacement products or future consumption will be prevented (Fletcher, 2012).

Emotional attachment can lead to 'accumulation and storage of seldom used items' (Cooper, 2010, p.334). The value of unused clothes in wardrobes is estimated to be at around £30 billion (WRAP, 2015). Through a series of wardrobe studies, Woodward (2007) revealed that many items within women's wardrobes remain unworn. This may be because the women's body shape has changed, or they no longer have the lifestyle to wear these clothes. These kept but unworn items, Woodward argues, become part of how women construct their identities through clothing. Wardrobes accumulate items slowly over time and can demonstrate the evolution of the owner's personal taste. This leaves a 'fossilised record' of past selves kept in clothing (Hertz, 2011). Unworn clothing is used to remember former versions of the self (Banim and Guy, 2001), and we save threads of the past, in order to keep our memories alive (Gibson, 2015).

Jenss (2017) states that 'memory is in fashion,' and that vintage fashion in particular, has the ability to form material memory. 'Clothes are thus layered with meaning since they have the power to act as memory prompts' (Gibson, 2015, p.XV). Through the wearing of vintage garments, consumers can feel in touch with and emotionally attached to previous periods

throughout history. Bide (2017, p.449) notes how 'setting up interactions between personal memories and the materiality of fashion objects creates opportunities for new perspectives in the field of fashion history.' Fast fashion has accelerated the need for individuality and authenticity, which is often lost through mass production, and vintage fashion fulfils this need. Furthermore, shopping vintage can be seen as a form of stability in a rapidly changing environment (Cassidy and Bennett, 2012). Owners of vintage clothing may feel that the memories associated with the garments are too precious to be discarded (Guy, Green and Banim, 2001). The potential for objects to elicit emotions does not end within a given period of time, and clothing can retain the power to move consumers, as across time periods (Dolan and Holloway, 2016). However, a distinction can be made between the motivations behind attachments to products over time. For example, enjoyment may be the main driver of attachment to new products, whereas memories may be more important for attachments to older products (Schifferstein and Zwartkuis-Pelgrim, 2008).

Certain items of clothing may be particularly susceptible to delivering evolving narrative emotional experiences. For example, denim jeans develop character with age. They are worn, moulded and torn by everyday experiences (Chapman, 2015). Consumers have a close relationship with their jeans, which are like a second skin, 'they are a familiar old friend, a repository of memories, a comfort blanket' (Chapman, 2015, p.116). Denim jeans are a unique example of a mass-produced product that ages well, and gains character through use. Jeans don't necessarily fit into the fast fashion cycle, which encourages rhythms of rapidly changing styles. Woodward's (2014) research found that consumers could have 'highly personalised and long-term relationships' with particular pairs of jeans (Woodward, 2014, p.131). However, it must be noted that like all items of clothing, denim jeans do leave an environmental footprint. Different components involved in the making of a single pair of jeans, such as denim, thread, cotton and buttons can originate from different countries all over the world. This raises questions regarding the social, economic and political costs in the making of a pair of jeans (Crewe, 2008). In addition to this, the denim market commonly uses the technique of stonewashing to purposefully distress jeans, which gives the product a 'lived in' character. This involves incorporating stones into the manufacturing process, which cause abrasion by removing fibres for the fabrics surface. Stonewashing proved to be popular, and by the 1990s, 90% of all domestically produced denim garments were receiving some type of garment wash treatment (Card, Moore and Ankeny, 2006). Although, there are sustainability issues associated with this technique, as stonewashing produces several tons

of powdered pumice each year that is discarded. This often leaks into local streams, killing plants and fish (Crewe, 2008).

It is likely that younger consumers will own a pair of jeans which has been processed through a wash treatment, due to the demand for distressed denim (Card, Moore and Ankeny, 2006). However, the un-manufactured, natural surface marks acquired on denim through time can reinforce the metaphor of the cloth as a vehicle for personal narratives (Townsend, 2011). Some users strive to preserve their denim once it has reached an optimal stage of aesthetic perfection, similar to the care taken to preserve haute couture garments (Townsend, 2011). Therefore, denim is a fabric which is naturally associated with product longevity (Cooper et al., 2013). Character gained through use may also allow denim to become a vehicle for nostalgic memories, as past experiences can become woven into the fabric (Gibson, 2015). Links between emotional attachment and denim have been explored further through primary research activities.

2.8.1 Emotional Attachment and Age

In order to better understand emotional attachment, it is beneficial to contrast how both mature and young people interpret the emotional durability of their clothing. Townsend, Sadkowska and Sissons (2016) study explored fashion design for mature women, with a focus on emotional and physical needs alongside aging. In the study, women reported issues with inconsistent sizing on the high street, and frustration at how reoccurring fashion trends were mainly aimed at younger bodies (Townsend, Sadkowska and Sissons, 2016). Certain types of emotional attachment are formed over many years, and therefore the older generation will naturally be at an advantage, as they have had more time to form these attachments. Niinimäki and Armstrong's (2013) study showed that long ownership time was the consequence of deep meaningful memories embodied into the items. These clothing items were often linked to a memory of a special person, linked to the participants' youth, or a special event, such as a wedding.

Fashion brands benefit financially when consumers develop strong emotional ties with their products. Emotional brand attachment can lead to loyal customers who repurchase (Grisaffe and Nguyen, 2010). The digital age may have affected the brand loyalty of young consumers. It is now possible to instantly purchase garments at the click of a button, through social media platforms such as Facebook and Instagram. This raises questions with issues of

sustainability and disposability (Marroncelli and Braithwaite, 2020). The ease of purchasing through digital platforms can also bring into question the brand loyalty of young consumers. With a reduced disposable income often leading to limited choices (Sorensen and Jorgensen, 2019), it may in fact be cost and convenience which drives purchasing decisions, compared to older consumers who may be motivated by 'emotional fit.' 'Emotional shoppers are not motivated by economic considerations, but by products they connect with *emotionally*' (Ladhari, Gonthier and Lajante, 2019, p.116). This does not mean that younger consumers are not emotionally attached to garments, but that attachment may be formed in a different way to their older counterparts. Throughout the methodology and primary research, student and young adults' attachment to fast fashion products have been explored. Male and female perspectives have also been examined in relation to emotional attachment.

Strong links can be identified between emotional attachment and nostalgia. Wen et al. (2019) coined the term 'nostalgic emotion' for their research when investigating brand trust and attachment. 'Nostalgic emotion is a feeling which invokes a sense of intimacy, comfort and security' (Wen, Qin and Liu, 2019, p.1118). It is this feeling which reduces the consumers intention to throw away, prompting sustainable product disposal.

2.8.2 Nostalgia

Nostalgia is defined by Boym (2008, p.16) as 'a sentiment of loss and displacement, but it is also a romance with one's own fantasy.' McRobbie (1989, p.41) sees nostalgia as, 'a desire to recreate the past faithfully, and to wallow in such mythical representations.' 'Savouring' is considered to be an important process in the generation of nostalgia. Having a savoured experience may increase the likelihood that it will later be reflected upon nostalgically, and furthermore, links have been identified between nostalgia and optimism (Biskas et al., 2019). Nostalgia can have important psychological benefits, and although it can sometimes be triggered by negative emotions, it has been shown to improve mood, by helping us to remember good things about ourselves and others (Biskas, 2018). Furthermore, nostalgia is able to touch a universal chord, which gives it a universal appeal (Moriarty and McGann, 1983). Some people may wish to return to history for happy memories, as they become disillusioned by what is going on today (Guffey, 2006). Nostalgia can produce feelings of comfort and security (Wilson, 2014). The past is idealised through selective memory, emitting negative elements, which is why nostalgia is generally considered to be a positive emotion (Cervellon, Carey and Harms, 2012).

Nostalgia has had a deep influence on art and literature (Guffey, 2006), and fashion has a temporal and nostalgic potency (Jenss, 2017). In particular, nostalgia is a primary motivation which drives vintage fashion consumption (Yang, Song and Tong, 2017), as vintage items contain elements of nostalgia (Cervellon, Carey and Harms, 2012). Sentimental values are often associated with vintage shopping (Ryding et al., 2017), and a need to seek out nostalgic qualities through consumer goods may inform the quest for authenticity (Kent, Winfield and Shi, 2018). However, over sentimentality can lead to the retention of unworn clothing (Hertz, 2011). Clothes have the capacity to conjure up intimate memories, as we are likely to remember the clothes that we wore in significant moments our lives, such as a first date or wedding (Gibson, 2015). Once items become associated with personal meanings, which can be linked to events, relationships, or identity, it becomes difficult to discard these garments. This is because, 'draining them of those meanings or sending them back into circulation can foster feelings of guilt, loss, or failure' (Hertz, 2011, p.13).

Identifying past or revived trends creates relationships with the concept of nostalgia (Potts and Reeves-Dearmond, 2014). Interaction with the FashionMap archive has been used to generate feelings of nostalgia amongst focus group participants with the intention to stimulate personal stories of emotional attachment to garments. This is a concept which will be explored in greater detail throughout the methodology. Cervellon et al. (2012, p.956) explain; 'to those people who actually lived during the period in which the goods were manufactured, they often call back positive memories.' Holbrook (1993) found women to be slightly more nostalgic than men, which is a further concept that will be explored throughout the methodology, as male and female differences towards clothing is a key focus. Feeling a sense of nostalgia towards an item of clothing can extend the product's longevity. Vintage fashion has facilitated nostalgia in becoming part of material culture. Materials used in vintage fashion represent authenticity, which means that the garments are often cherished (Jenß, 2005). Vintage style comments on consumer culture, and wearing old garments can be a way to communicate an 'authentic identity' (Veenstra and Kuipers, 2013).

2.8.3 Longevity

When analysing current academic research on the emotional durability of clothing, longevity emerges as a key theme. Longevity is defined as keeping garments in active use for longer (Mclaren et al., 2015), and this idea can be linked back to the circular economy debate. The circular economy's key principles advise that a product is designed to have multiple life cycles,

or it is biodegradable (McDonough and Braungart, 2002). Having a sentimental attachment to a garment may mean that the garment is more likely to be looked after, as it would not be easy to replace (Cooper et al., 2013). Considering emotional design as an aspect of the design process may encourage longevity (Niinimäki and Armstrong, 2013), and this is worthwhile from a sustainability perspective (Marriot and Clayton, 2006). The average lifetime for a garment in the UK is 2.2 years, but extending the active life of clothing by just nine months can significantly reduce its environmental impact (WRAP, 2017). However, a paradox emerges as fashion 'represents the opposite of longevity' (Marriot and Clayton, 2006, p.71). Fast fashion thrives on changing trends and built in design obsolescence (Cramer, 2011). The 'slow fashion' movement has developed in response to a need for extending the active life of clothing. Slow fashion challenges the notion that fashion is concerned exclusively with the 'new' (Clark, 2008).

Longevity can be encouraged in new products throughout the design process. Schifferstein and Zwartkuis-Pelgrim's 2008 study proposed several design strategies with the aim of intensifying the emotional bond which consumers experience with their products. This included; designing more enjoyable products, developing products that can be used together with other people and designing products which gracefully accumulate signs of history in their appearance (Schifferstein and Zwartkuis-Pelgrim, 2008). Designing classic styles, and using more durable materials can also contribute to extending the active use of clothing (Mclaren et al., 2015). Durability is an important quality to consider in relation to longevity. Fast fashion is deliberately designed to have a short life span, which forces the continual purchase of new garments, and this cheap clothing is often of relatively poor quality (Cramer, 2011). Despite this, some fast fashion garments become 'accidental classics.' Fletcher defines this as, 'those products that defy obsolescence in informal or unintentional ways, rarely as a result of design planning' (Fletcher, 2016, p.167). Chapter 4 has utilised the FashionMap archive to identify 'accidental fast fashion classics,' and analyse the material and physical qualities which these garments contain.

The 'Craft of Use' project is a body of work devised by Fletcher (2016) which favours the use of garments as much as their creation. Fletcher recognises that garments are sold as products, but lived in as processes. 'Craft of Use' draws from stories and portrait photography to document the ways in which consumers use their clothes. Durability is an essential part of society, but the relationship between enduring use and durability is 'scrambled' (Fletcher, 2016, p.143). Long life product design is supported by emotional durability, which involves

design for attachment and trust (Bocken et al., 2016). 'Craft of Use' explores the notion that durability is facilitated by materials, design and construction, but despite this, things last and continue to be used when people want them to. Durability is specific, personal and often difficult to predict; it's therefore shaped by a social system, or an 'ideology of use' (Fletcher, 2016, p.144). Durability and longevity can be considered as foundations which can lead to emotional attachment. While there is much work on the value of emotional attachment for longevity, there is a lack of understanding of this in a gendered context, which this study has sought to address.

2.9 Identity

It is important to consider what fashion and identity implies for sustainability in the context of this study, as it is anticipated that implications may influence the wider sustainability debate. Consumption has become central to the construction of identity (Veenstra and Kuipers, 2013), whilst the need to make global consumption more sustainable remains a pressing issue (Bloodhart and Swim, 2020). The below section will reflect how identity relates to material culture and sustainable consumption.

Miller's (2001, 2005, 2008, 2010) work on material culture has been key in informing the research approach. According to Miller (2005), when we go out in the world, we want to look good, and this depends on our ability to wear new garments. In this way, clothing as material culture can be used to accentuate and express our understanding of the public gaze and reflect our identity. Clothing mediates the relationship between an individual and the outside world, and the process of combining items to be worn involves constructing the individual in the eyes of others (Woodward, 2005). Similar to McCracken (1988), Woodward (2005) details the links between culture, consumption and identity. Woodward (2005) states that when individuals choose what to wear for the day, this is a decision which relies upon social norms and expectations. Dressing is not just based upon individual style preferences, but fundamental cultural competences, meaning that the way we dress has symbolic implications. Miller and Woodward (2007) use denim jeans as an example of clothing which has a near global ubiquity, as jeans are able to offer people 'different ways of negotiating the conflicting socio-cultural forces of conformity and individuality' (Miller and Woodward, 2011, p.159).

Clothing communicates our social identity, and this is framed by cultural values. A postmodern era has challenged the once fixed boundaries which defined cultural values, including; gender, sexuality and social status (Davis, 1994). Postmodernism recognises identity as fluid and fragmented, a state which can be achieved through fast fashion, through the purchasing of low-cost garments (Furlong, 2016). Consequently, the opportunity for announcing individual identity is only now possible through products provided by a shifting and uncertain mass culture (Darden and Worden, 1991). 'Consumption becomes a natural tool for present and future identity building' (Deutsch and Theodorou, 2010, p.251). As previously mentioned in Section 2.2, it may be the case that over-consumption is in part a result of consumers wishing to frequently differentiate their style, driven by the need to establish an individual identity in a postmodern world. Over-consumption amongst younger generations has been blamed partly on the pursuit of ideal identities, particularly in periods of heightened awareness of identity development (McNeill et al., 2020). On social media platforms, such as Instagram, it can be perceived as distasteful amongst younger generations to wear the same outfit twice, a trend which has negative sustainable implications (Grant, 2018). It can be argued that existing knowledge surrounding the links between sustainability and identity have been underexplored. Dobers and Strannegård (2005) research found that sustainability must be seen as intertwined with social processes such as fashion, identity and identity construction.

Woodward (2007) investigates the relationship between how women look and how they feel. The relationship that clothing has to the body is pivotal, in a world where popular culture has presented an increasingly extreme and distorted view of the female ideal body. Woodward states that, 'clothing gives women a sense that they have a self, and indeed that they can change it' (Woodward, 2007, p.157), thus cementing the links between fashion and identity. How both men and women look and feel in their clothes could be a significant point of interest for this research. It was anticipated that clothing which positively reflects an individual's identity may also be susceptible to qualities of emotional durability, and longevity. This notion has been explored in greater detail through primary research activities. Dittmar et al's. (1995) research revealed how products are often bought on impulse to reflect self-identity. They argue that gender, as a major social category, has an influence on products bought impulsively and the buying considerations used. Personal identity was shown to be particularly important for men, and social identity important for women, when considering impulse purchases (Dittmar, Beattie and Friese, 1995). This study will build upon Dittmar et

al's. (1995) research through investigating male and female attitudes towards clothing, identity and sustainability. The following section will further investigate the links between gender and consumption.

2.10 Gender

Gender studies have evolved significantly over the last two decades. Gender shapes social life, and our understanding of our own experiences (Kimmel and Aronson, 2008), and remains a salient discriminator between young people (McDowell, 2016). The World Health Organisation defines gender as, 'the characteristics of women, men, girls and boys that are socially constructed. This includes norms, behaviours and roles associated with being a woman, man, girl or boy, as well as relationships with each other. As a social construct, gender varies from society to society and can change over time' (World Health Organisation, 2022).

Stereotypes about the way that men and women think and behave are widely shared (Ellemers, 2018). Dittmar et al's. (1995) study into impulse buying showed that men were usually more oriented towards use-related, functional products, and women to emotional and stylistic products. However, more recent data suggests that there has been an increase in the popularity of the male grooming industry, with publications like GQ regularly running content on haircare, skincare and shaving (Dover, 2020). Marcoux (2004) states that gender roles, behaviours and stereotypes are constructed through the manipulation of objects, which includes clothing. Gender is one of the utmost significant factors to young people's uses of style. Dominant expectations and reactions comprise key elements to both majority and minority styles (Hodkinson, 2016). Youth studies into style have been criticised for exhibiting gender bias. Studies into male youth culture often focus on deviance, and female youth culture on ordinary forms of fashion and style including 'make-up and hair in the bedroom' (Hodkinson, 2016, p.268). There is a notable gap in current literature about how gender may be considered in the context of sustainable consumption – which this study will seek to address.

As mentioned above, men can be categorised as being linked to functionality, and women to the emotional durability of products. This does not mean that men do not also resonate with emotional and stylistic aspects of clothing. Walker (1994) argues that the notions that men share activities in their friendships, and women share intimate feelings are more accurately

viewed as 'cultural ideologies' than as 'observable gender differences in behaviour' (Walker, 1994, p.246). Moreover, Walker believes that men share more feelings than the existing literature indicates, and women share less. 'The Gender Similarities Hypothesis,' (Hyde, 2005) notes that men and women often show more similarities than differences in their attitudes, behaviours and emotions.

'Who we become as gendered beings is enmeshed in a social process' (Trier-Bieniek, 2014, p.5). We often think that men and women have preferences that are gendered, but these preferences are the effect of gender socialisation over the life course. Fashion is highly gendered, and much has been written about the relationship between women and clothing, (Woodward, 2007), (Guy, Green and Banim, 2001). In response to the identified lack of understanding of male attitudes to clothing and sustainability identified through the literature review, male and female responses to the same questions asked throughout focus groups and wardrobe studies will be compared and contrasted to existing gendered literature.

A recent survey of a thousand millennials found that half of them think that gender is a spectrum, which questions the traditional idea that gender rigidly fits into two categories – male and female (Marantz Henig, 2020). Themes of media exposure and celebrity influence emerge in relation to gender studies. Certain celebrities, propelled by the media, have increased awareness of issues relating to gender. For example, the openness of Lady Gaga's performances, and the continuing ambiguity of her own sexual and gender identities, creates opportunities to explore a number of queer reading strategies (Marshall, 2014). As society's perception of gender has evolved, so has the fashion industry's approach to gender. Heather Gramston, a buying manager at Selfridges, notes how she used to see 'men shopping on the women's floor and vice versa,' but that designers are now, 'responding with a more fluid approach to gender by breaking down constructs such as separate runway shows for men and women' (Gramston, 2020). Indeed, several high street stores have adopted unisex ranges for both adults and children. Consumers can now purchase unisex Stan Smiths by Adidas, and in 2016, Zara introduced a line of unisex clothing called 'Ungendered' (Falcao, 2020). Along with fashion brands embracing unisex clothing, this demonstrates how the trend towards consumers questioning traditional expressions of gender is gaining strength (Falcao, 2020). The FashionMap archive enables an exploration of trends in the context of gender, through trends identified by students including unisex and androgyny. This research will consider what this implies for sustainability.

By undertaking a gendered approach, I will develop upon Cox and Dittmar's (1995) work which investigated the (dis)satisfaction of clothing amongst British students. This study consisted of sixty male and sixty female British students at the University of Sussex, with a model age of 20 years. Respondents were approached and asked to complete a short questionnaire on their clothing and its importance to them. This included perceived functional and mood related benefits, and how clothes can act as a means for expressing personal and social identity. The students also completed a measure of dissatisfaction with their clothing and described their financial circumstances. Cox and Dittmar identified several subtle, but systematic gender differences. This included the hypothesis that men and women value a favourite item of clothing for different reasons, regardless of financial circumstances. Additionally, mood and confidence related aspects of clothes were more important for men than women (Cox and Dittmar, 1995). This study was carried out in 1995, and more up to date research is now needed to explore how the digital age has affected the male and female emotional experience with clothing.

Klepp (2008) interviewed women about their clothing habits, focusing on: consumption, luxury, emotions and cleanliness. Although she did not interview men, she concluded that because the above factors are associated with the feminine, a difference could be expected with male counterparts. A possible reason for the lack of research into males' relationships with their clothing is because shopping has stereotypically been considered a feminine activity (McRobbie, 1989) (Entwistle, 2015). Sociologists have focused their studies on the activities of young men associated with a strongly masculine image (McRobbie, 1989). Cassidy and Bennett's (2012) research found that females were more likely to engage with vintage fashion than males. Guy, Green and Banim (2001) argue that women aspire to 'the idealised body and the clothed image wrapped around it,' and in this way they become 'the consumers of clothes' (Guy, Green and Banim, 2001, p.6). Clothes are a visible social marker of gender difference in society, and clothing signifies the ways in which bodies are made 'masculine' or 'feminine' (Entwistle, 2015, p.136). These social norms tend to go unnoticed until they are broken, and even minor deviances can cause a stir. Therefore, our choice of what to wear is not entirely open, as most people are not looking to make a stand in this way; fashion trends must be balanced with social expectations (Twigger Holroyd, 2017). The importance of power and gender identity in society means that some men may contain deep-rooted anxieties regarding appearing female through their clothing (Kirkham, 1996). However, Klepp (2008) argues that the societal norms expected of women's clothing are much higher than that of men's. There are fewer demands for variation between men. For

example, men who wear the same white shirt and trousers to an occasion will not be scrutinised, but two women wearing the same dress may be seen as a problem (Klepp, 2008).

There is a growing body of research which suggests that men are rejecting ethical behaviours, due to concerns that it threatens their masculinity (Duckett, 2018). Women report stronger environmental attitudes, and have higher levels of socialisation to be 'other' oriented and socially responsible (Zelezny, Chua and Aldrich, 2000). Mintel claim that men find it harder to choose vegetarian options when eating out in public, for fear of being teased by their male friends (Duckett, 2018). However, the popular 2019 Netflix documentary, 'The Game Changers,' featured celebrities including Arnold Schwarzenegger, Jackie Chan, Lewis Hamilton and Novak Djokovic, who all endorsed the benefits of a plant-based diet, as being in favour of enhancing their athletic performance (The Game Changers, 2020). Sports stars have become one of the most common types of role models to engage with male audiences (Duckett, 2018), and this highlights the theme of how media exposure has increased awareness of sustainability issues across multiple industries. Statistics show that 72% of women are concerned about the future of the UK environment, compared to just 62% of men (Duckett, 2018). This study has investigated how this relates specifically to sustainable fashion, as there is a lack of research in this area. Research has shown that there are significant differences between 'positive buying emotions' for men and women (Coley and Burgess, 2003). Women are more likely to impulse buy, and their behaviour is generally thought to be more emotionally and psychologically rooted than men (Coley and Burgess, 2003). Investigating gendered differences relating to emotional attachments to clothing is a further under researched area, which has been explored through the primary research.

In 'The Gendered Object,' Kirkham (1996) notes that relationships between objects and gender are formed, but that these relationships often become invisible. Because of this we sometimes fail to recognise the effects that notions of gender have on the design and use of objects (Kirkham, 1996). Relationships between objects and people are important, and a key objective of this PhD is to, 'gain understanding of gendered attitudes and behaviours towards clothing ownership and style obsolescence.' Clothing is often a signifier of gender (Kirkham, 1996), and this research has been particularly interested in investigating gendered attitudes towards fast fashion. Previous research on the ethnographies of clothing choice, which can be observed through wardrobe studies, have been female centred. 'Why Women Wear What They Wear,' is Sophie Woodward's (2007) literature which observed women at the moment of getting dressed, to investigate theories of the body and identity. Guy, Green, and Banim

(2001), have also researched women's experiences with their wardrobes in 'Through the Wardrobe,' which uses wardrobe studies to challenge ascribed meanings about femininity. There is however a lack of understanding regarding males and their wardrobes, and my own research will make a significant contribution towards addressing this gap in knowledge.

2.11 Theoretical Framework

Building upon the contextual information set out in sections 2.1 – 2.10 of this literature review, material culture encompasses the overarching theoretical framework of this study. Clothing as a form of material culture emerges from everyday life, relationships and wider consumption patterns (Woodward, 2014). Material culture can be defined as, 'the study through artefacts of the beliefs, values, ideas, attitudes and assumptions of a particular community or society at a given time' (Prown, 1982, p.1). Prown (1982) separates material culture into six functions: art, diversions, adornment, modifications of the landscape, applied arts and devices. Clothing is situated within the adornment function. Because clothing is closely attached to the body, it frames our visual appearance, and reflects our identity (Davis, 1994). Furthermore, cloth and clothing constitute as one of the largest categories of material culture (Schneider, 2006). Analysing material culture contributes to an understanding of social relationships in qualitative research, and can inform insights into new perspectives of the social world (O'Toole and Were, 2008). Investigating clothing practices within material culture can also offer important insights into sustainable clothing practices (Woodward, 2014).

While sustainable consumption within the fashion industry has been extensively investigated by a number of key theorists, (Fletcher, 2012, Twigger Holroyd, 2017, Marriot and Clayton, 2006 and Strauss, 2019), the contextual review has identified an opportunity for applying a material culture approach within sustainable consumption in order to draw out a deeper understanding of individuals' relationships to their clothing. Given clothing's emotive relationship to individuals, the research speaks to the theory of emotional attachment and its relationship to both sustainable consumption and material culture. This PhD study will therefore contribute to the field of material culture through its investigation of clothing as material culture in the context of sustainability and emotional durability, particularly with an approach that combines owned garments with those in FashionMap. Positive emotional responses to garments may lead to these garments being kept in active use for longer (longevity), which can increase garment sustainability. Figure 2-5 illustrates the links

between the conceptual framework, which is discussed in the above section. Sections 2.11.1, 2.11.2 and 2.11.3 will explore how theories of sustainability and emotional durability inform the material cultural framework, and how this links to Schwartz’s theory of values, which has been useful to the analysis of this PhD. Schwartz’s theory of values has enabled the analysis of the data in the context of human values and how they are related back to material culture and sustainability.

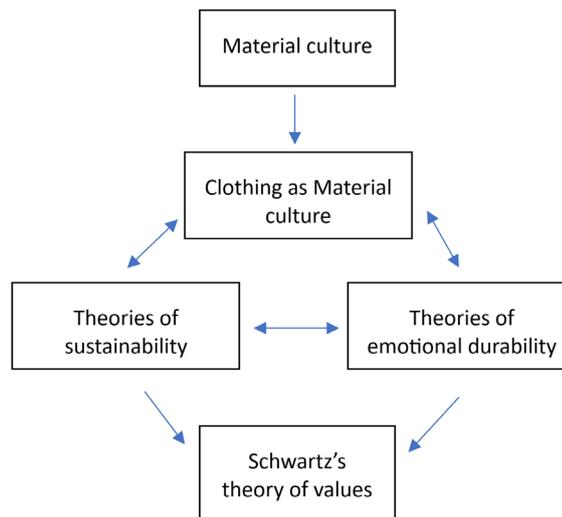


Figure 2-5 - Material culture conceptual framework

2.11.1 Theories of emotional durability

Niinimäki and Armstrong’s (2013) investigation, ‘From pleasure in use to preservation of meaningful memories: a closer look at the sustainability of clothing via longevity and attachment,’ is particularly relevant to the scope of this thesis. This study focuses on product-person attachments to clothing items, and hypothesises that deep attachment to clothing offers opportunities to extend the owning and use time of garments. Niinimäki and Armstrong carried out an online open-ended questionnaire, with a sample that consisted of 598 US participants, ranging in age from 18 to 67. The respondents were asked to identify an item of clothing which they were particularly attached to, and then select a product category from a pre-determined list to which the item belonged. This list included categories such as: activewear, outerwear, sleepwear, dress clothing and accessories. Participants were asked to explain why they were attached to the item, and to estimate how often this item of clothing was worn. Finally, respondents were asked how long they had owned the item, and how they had acquired it.

Findings from the questionnaire concluded that certain qualities could be attributed to clothing attachment. The attributes connected to meaningful garments were practicality, emotional memories, product satisfaction, aesthetical experiences, values, quality, and effort. This shows that emotional attachments to garments are not only linked to a special memory. 'Other attributes, such as good functionality, emotional satisfaction, and aesthetical experiences (design, style, colour, and material choices), are also important, creating pleasurable use experiences at both physical and emotional levels' (Niinimäki and Armstrong, 2013, p.193). The findings from this study show that most items which elicited attachment were purchased new. Interestingly, many everyday items such as T-shirts, dress clothing, jeans, and active wear were mainly selected as somehow meaningful to the owner. Although a questionnaire was not distributed as part of this research, Niinimäki and Armstrong's findings regarding emotional attachment to garments are central to this work. Emotional attachment is important theoretically due to clothing's emotive relationship with individuals. Findings gathered from participants emotional responses to garments will be used to inform the material culture approach. This research has built upon Niinimäki and Armstrong's study by investigating gendered differences to emotional attachment. Under a framework of clothing as material culture, the FashionMap archive has been used as a discussion tool in focus groups to stimulate conversations surrounding attachments to fast fashion garments. The implications that this may have on the sustainability of fast fashion garments will be discussed in the findings and discussion section of this thesis.

2.11.2 Theories of sustainability

Fashion has been described as an 'impediment' to sustainability (Marriot and Clayton, 2006). The shift in consumer attitudes and move towards online retailing raises further questions of sustainability. Fast fashion is maintained through consumer identity building, and the consumers need for excitement and difference within their wardrobes. Changes in consumers lifestyles which required the fashion industry to adapt rapidly to trends, and offer more products to choose from, have encouraged the growth of fast fashion (Su and Chang, 2018). Consumers have a desire to create their identity through fashion, the importance of this means that often the wish to be fashionable outweighs drivers to be ethical or sustainable (Mcneill and Moore, 2015). This is a key aspect of why studying material culture can impact practices of sustainability. Research in the field of sustainability and fast fashion suggests that whilst the industry's success has been built upon speed and novelty, the fast

fashion business model has been slow to adapt to sustainability (Black, 2019). This highlights the tension between wanting to consume, with efforts to limit consumption (Mcneill and Moore, 2015).

Current theoretical debates surrounding future sustainability of the fashion industry include Fletcher and Tham's (2019) literature, Earth Logic. This involves advocating a strategy of degrowth, which is a managed reduction of the economy and new materials in order to address the climate crisis (Webb, 2022). Fundamentally, Fletcher and Tham (2019) propose a radical invitation to put the earth first. Under Earth Logic, there are six landscapes: less, local, plural, learning, language and governance. These landscapes set our progressive areas for transformation of the fashion sector (Fletcher and Tham, 2019). Traditionally, economic growth has been associated with increased welfare (Jackson, 1996). Economic degrowth implies however that current levels of growth cannot be sustained, and furthermore, human progress can continue to flourish without it (Schneider, Kallis and Martinez-Alier, 2010). Theorists of degrowth call for a reduction in production, and argue that this does not have to mean increased levels of unemployment. Hueting's (2010) research concludes that safeguarding the environment in fact requires additional labour. It is important to note that these scholars do not present fast fashion as simplistically negative. Fletcher and Tham (2019), for example, acknowledge that the fashion industry contributes to livelihoods and communities. Whilst production can be environmentally damaging, the fashion industry contributes to the livelihoods of 25 million of garment workers worldwide, and can offer values on both individual and national levels (Fletcher and Tham, 2019). As previously mentioned, this PhD research fits best into Alice Payne's (2020) notion of taming the current system. This is where actions are taken within the dominant fashion system in order to reduce negative impacts (Payne, 2020). While not the most radical approach, its widely acknowledged by fashion sustainability researchers that multiple tactics will be required to reduce the fashion industry's impact on the environment.

Hur and Cassidy (2019) observe the challenges to implementing sustainability in fashion as being both internal and external. Fashion designers face internal challenges including personal and organisational influences, and external challenges involve social and cultural factors (Hur and Cassidy, 2019). One way to prolong the durability of fast fashion may be to enhance the symbolic value of clothing. Steele (2019) suggests that this may be achievable through fostering an environment within which consumers' creativity can flourish. Consumers can also buy into sustainable brands to improve their environmental footprints.

Many ethical fashion brands are trying to bring a fresh approach to the market, to attract the 'ordinary' fashion consumer (Joergens, 2006). As stated previously, a review of the literature on sustainability has evidenced a pressing need to flesh out a deeper understanding of attitudes towards fashion consumption through the application of a material culture framework. Drawing sustainability theories with material culture enables this study to contribute this knowledge within fashion and sustainable consumption.

2.11.3 Schwartz's theory of values

Material culture recognises the importance of values in understanding consumer behaviour and attitudes. However, given the subjective nature of individual relationships to fashion, values are complex. To address this complexity Schwartz's theory of values has been identified as a complement to material culture and sustainability. Schwartz (1992) devised a theory of ten basic values, which can be defined as goals that vary in importance, and serve as guiding principles in the life of a person. These values can help to explain individual decision making, attitudes and behaviours (Schwartz, 2012a) and therefore offers a deeper understanding of the motivations for fast fashion consumption. The values are recognised in virtually all cultures, and are as follows: universalism, benevolence, conformity, tradition, security, power, achievement, hedonism, stimulation and self-direction (Schwartz, 2012a). Please see Figure 2-6 below.

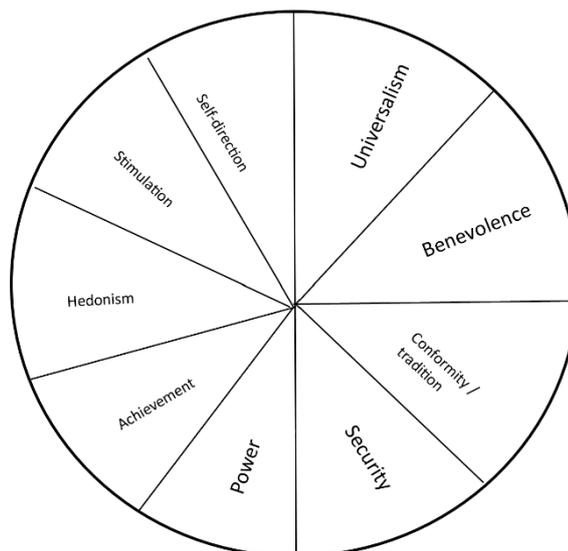


Figure 2-6 - Schwartz Theory of Values (Adapted from Schwartz, 2012, p.12)

As previously stated, Prown (1982) defines values as an important aspect of material culture. Schwartz's value definitions enable consideration of the complexity of values within a material culture context. Throughout the analysis section of this thesis, Schwartz's (2012a) value system has been used as a tool to analyse sustainable consumption and consumers who have displayed emotional attachment to their clothing. The theory of values does not display emotion, but will be used as a 'bridge' to explain the reasons or values which may motivate an individual to exhibit certain behaviours towards their clothing. For example, attachment to an item of clothing may be linked to the memories that this piece of clothing holds between the individual and members of their family. 'Family' as a key theme can be connected to the conservation aspect of Schwartz's wheel, which included values such as security and tradition.

Links can be identified between values and gender, as Schwartz's (2012a) value system can be utilised to help analyse gendered attitudes towards sustainable consumption. Previous research has found that; 'Women are more likely to ascribe to self-transcendence values than men and are more concerned about social justice, unity with nature, and social and environmental accountability. Men are more likely than women to ascribe importance to self-enhancement values, being more worried about success, capability, and ambition' (Bloodhart and Swim, 2020, p.106). Research has shown that women report stronger environmental attitudes (Zelezny, Chua and Aldrich, 2000), and are more likely to engage in ethical fashion consumption than men (Manchiraju and Sadachar, 2014) (Gazzola et al., 2020). This can be linked back to traditional caretaking roles associated with women, and the expectation that women are more likely to be concerned about environmental issues like climate change, whilst men are expected to be dismissive (Bloodhart and Swim, 2020).

A key motivation when purchasing clothes is the desire to buy something new. Using Schwartz's theory of values, purchasing and owning new clothes links to the fulfilment of achievement and conformity. Self enhancement is achieved, as new clothes can offer pleasure, stimulation and can allow an individual to 'fit in' to their peer group (Schwartz, 1992). This is where awareness of sustainability issues does not translate into motivations for change (Braithwaite and Schlemann, 2017), and links can be identified here with the attitude behaviour gap (see Section 2.7.4 for further information on this). Furthermore, Niinimäki (2010) argues that consumer choice can be described as irrational and not always linked to values. Wiederhold and Martinez (2018) believe that designers need to focus on a product's attributes, including creating emotional benefits. This can be linked to Sudbury and

Böltner's (2011) research which revealed a 'detachment phenomenon,' where consumers feel detached from their clothes and shifted ethical responsibilities to third parties.

In response to the complexity of fast fashion and sustainability and the need to unpack individual's attitudes and behaviours, the theoretical framework for this research draws together material culture, sustainability, emotional durability and the theory of values. Material culture has been fundamental in fleshing out the relationship between individuals and fast fashion, and applying this framework in the context of sustainability, emotional durability and theory of values, supports a nuanced understanding of this complex subject.

2.12 Conclusion

The use and meaning of clothing within material culture has been a focal point of this PhD research. The broader aspects of the research involve gender, sustainability and emotional attachment, and the meaning of clothing has been used to discover new knowledge about these topics. Several clear questions emerge, as gaps in the literature have been identified within the framework of material culture. The concluding section will outline the key themes which this thesis will contribute to, including; the workings of fast fashion, the trend cycle, sustainable consumption, male and female attitudes towards clothing and emotional durability.

Throughout this research, FashionMap has been used as a vehicle to explore the workings of fast fashion. The subject of fashion collection itself is under-researched (Raebild and Bang, 2017, p.12) which is a gap in knowledge that this study has sought to address. Aside from Eundeok et al's. (2021) literature, 'Fashioning Trends,' little academic knowledge has been documented about the study of trends. Utilising a trend-led fashion archive brings a unique perspective to this area of interest. The act of buying and the process of looking and choosing remain relatively unexplored (McRobbie, 1989). This remains relevant in the present day (2022), and the relationship will be examined amongst young fast fashion consumers. The Fashion Map archive commenced in the year 2000, and therefore, some of the earlier items in the archive may now be classed as 'vintage.' Sustainable fashion ideals compliment the vintage trend phenomenon (Cassidy and Bennett, 2012). Opinions will be recorded on some of the earliest pieces in the FashionMap archive, which may now be described as 'vintage,' and this will be explored in the context of the trend cycle.

The evolution of fast fashion has raised issues of sustainability within the industry. Marriot and Clayton (2006) describe fashion as an 'impediment' to sustainability. The shift in consumer attitudes and move towards online retailing raises further questions of sustainability. Little is known about the post purchase behaviours of young fashion-oriented consumers, who can easily buy and dispose of cheap fast fashions (Joung, 2014). Joung's 2014 research revealed an attitude behaviour gap, as it showed that fast-fashion consumers had positive attitudes towards the environment, yet they did not participate in recycling. This thesis has investigated the post purchase behaviours of young fashion-oriented consumers throughout a series of focus groups, wardrobe studies and interviews. Much has been written about sustainable fashion and clothing practices, but there is a lack of research that considers the fields together (Woodward, 2014). This therefore became one of the main focuses of the methodology. There is a lack of existing knowledge surrounding the links between sustainability and identity. Dobers and Strannegård (2005) research found that sustainability must be seen as intertwined with social processes such as fashion, identity and identity construction.

The links between emotional attachments to fast fashion garments have been explored. The research takes a nuanced approach to previous findings in relation to clothing attachment (Niinimäki and Armstrong, 2013) by focusing on students and young adults, who are important consumers of fast fashion (Gilliland, 2019), and a demographic key to instigating a more sustainable future. There is also little research surrounding the lived experience of actively worn items of attachment clothing (Fleetwood-Smith, Hefferon and Mair, 2019). Bide (2017, p.449) notes how 'setting up interactions between personal memories and the materiality of fashion objects creates opportunities for new perspectives in the field of fashion history.' Chapter 4 has explored specific items of clothing from the FashionMap archive, which will inform discussions around emotional attachment to clothing. Longevity has emerged as a key theme whilst researching emotional attachment. However, a paradox emerges as fashion 'represents the opposite of longevity' (Marriot and Clayton, 2006, p.71). Despite this, some fast fashion garments do become 'accidental classics.' Several fashion marketing studies have researched extrinsic quality attributes of garments, but their relationship to initial product life has not been robustly explored (Day, Beverley and Lee, 2015). Using the FashionMap archive, the evolution of fast fashion trends has been tracked, and analysed as to which factors contribute to 'accidental classics.' Fletcher (2012) notes that extending the life span of products must also be accompanied by a change in consumer attitudes, and patterns of consumption, in order to achieve optimal impact. Trend cycles

have been tracked through the archive, assessing which garments retain sustainability through style and emotional durability.

Undertaking a qualitative approach, gendered attitudes towards sustainable fashion and emotional durability have been investigated. Fashion is highly gendered, and much has been written about the relationship between women and clothing, (Woodward, 2007), (Guy, Green and Banim, 2001). There is however a limited understanding of comparable male relationships. 'Research on environmentalism and gender has been somewhat limited' (Zelezny, Chua and Aldrich, 2000, p.444). There is a limited amount of empirical research on gender difference found in fashion behaviour (Pentecost and Andrews, 2010). Through a series of focus groups and wardrobe studies, this research has investigated gendered differences towards clothing attachment and sustainability. Historically, the wardrobe has been neglected by dress and fashion theories (Cwerner, 2001), but the clothing that people already have in their wardrobes, and how this clothing is used, is central to understanding more sustainable consumption practices (Woodward, 2014).

Gaps identified from the literature review have raised several questions, detailed in the above section, which will be explored throughout the methodology (Chapter 3). This research has contributed to the fields of material culture, sustainable consumption and knowledge of emotional durability.

Chapter 3 – Methodology

3.1 Introduction

The aim of this methodology is to establish a theoretical and practical framework within which the empirical research has been conducted. A focus arises from the aim and objectives and gap in the literature which is, 'to contribute to knowledge of sustainability by exploring gendered attitudes towards clothing attachment and opportunities for longevity.' In order to address this a qualitative mixed methodological approach (Barbour, 2006) has been applied.

Students and young adults are identified primary consumers of fast fashion (Gilliland, 2019), and therefore were the target sample group for this research. They are also a key demographic in instigating a more environmentally friendly future for the fashion industry (Bedor et al., 2021). There was a focus on durability and longevity through an exploration of trends in FashionMap. The key theme of longevity was explored through primary research methods including focus groups and wardrobe study interviews. Gendered differences towards clothing attachment and sustainable fashion were investigated. Primary research generated throughout the execution of this methodology has facilitated rich and original data, making a significant contribution towards the workings of the fast fashion trend cycle, consumer behaviour knowledge and the sustainable development debate.

Significant data was collated following the completion of five focus groups with students and young adults. In total fifty-five participants were interviewed for the focus groups and wardrobe studies (including pilot studies). The young adult focus groups were split by gender, with one male and a one female group respectively, which took place in person. There were three student focus groups, which were mainly female, and due to Covid-19 restrictions, were facilitated online. An in-person workshop also took place with two undergraduate female students. Twenty-two wardrobe studies were conducted both online and in person with a gendered mix of students and young adults. The FashionMap archive was used as a tool to explore the longevity of style throughout the wardrobe studies. The majority of garments owned by participants in this study were from fast fashion brands, with some vintage and designer exceptions. Please see Section 3.2 for a methodology trajectory, which shows the sequence of methods, and which participants took part in which activities.

3.2 Methodology trajectory

This research has undertaken the following trajectory:

1. Pilot studies:

| | |
|--|---|
| <p>Pilot study 1: Exploring the relationship between consumers and their t-shirts (an object-based FG followed by 2x in-depth wardrobe studies. Nov 2019. (Majority female)</p> | <p>Pilot study 2: A series of in-depth wardrobe studies. Happiness and the wardrobe inspired by the covid-19 pandemic and WFH phenomenon. July 2020. (Male and female)</p> |
|--|---|

2. **Content analysis** using FashionMap, selection of garments made for focus group use (see Chapter 5 for further details).

3. Focus groups/Workshop:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| <p>FG 1: Student focused Online. March 2021.</p> | <p>FG 2: Student focused Online. March 2021.</p> | <p>FG 3: Student focused Online. March 2021.</p> |
| <p>Student in person workshop with 2x female students. Nov 2021.</p> | <p>FG 4: Female Young adult focused. In person. August 2021.</p> | <p>FG 5: Male Young adult focused. In person. August 2021.</p> |

4. Wardrobe studies:

| | Male | Interview Date | Female | Interview Date |
|---------|--------|----------------|---------|----------------|
| Student | Eliott | 02.11.21 | Monique | 09.03.21 |
| | Owen | 02.11.21 | Elle | 15.03.21 |
| | Harvey | 02.11.21 | Bao | 15.03.21 |

| | | | | |
|-------------|---------|----------|--------|----------|
| | Jacob | 01.11.21 | Mary | 10.03.21 |
| | Noah | 29.10.21 | Shauna | 16.03.21 |
| | Jake | 02.11.21 | Chen | 30.03.21 |
| Young Adult | Matthew | 09.10.21 | Viv | 13.10.21 |
| | Will | 05.11.21 | Ivy | 23.09.21 |
| | Charles | 23.09.21 | Kelsey | 26.08.21 |
| | Liam | 13.10.21 | Zelda | 31.08.21 |
| | Theo | 23.09.21 | | |
| | Otto | 31.08.21 | | |

Table 3-1 - Wardrobe study participant information

Participants who have been interviewed more than once throughout focus groups and wardrobe studies are highlighted in red.

3.3 Philosophical underpinnings

Ontology is the study of being, this includes the nature of existence and what constitutes reality (Gray, 2022), and it sits alongside the epistemology, informing the theoretical perspective (Crotty, 2014). ‘While ontology embodies understanding *what is*, epistemology tries to understand *what it means to know* (Gray, 2022, p.23).

Woodward (2020) defines ontology as what you think of the material and social worlds that you are researching. The material and social worlds that were explored centre around fast fashion in the context of sustainability and involve investigating gendered attitudes towards sustainability through clothing-based research. The ontological position of this study is that clothes are meaningful and can be utilised a method for uncovering attitudes towards emotional attachment and longevity, thus contributing to the sustainability debate. This research is grounded in a ‘material-orientated ontology’ (Woodward, 2020, p.25) where garments from the FashionMap archive and the study of participants’ relationships with their own clothing play a central role in the material culture that is being researched. The ontology

is shaped by Woodward's (2007, p.157) work, which states that, 'clothing quite literally does the ontology of the self.'

This PhD has utilised a material orientated ontology and follows a constructivist ontological theoretical position (Walliman, 2006). Constructivism takes 'the approach that the realities we study are social products of the actors, of interactions and institutions' (Flick, 2018, p.36). Social phenomena rely on social reactions, and as a result, is in a constant state of change. The self is relational, which means that social relationships can be formed through people and objects, and clothing can act as a relational structure of meaning (Woodward, 2005). The researcher's own accounts of the social world are also constructions, and 'researcher reflexivity' is the ability of the researcher to acknowledge how their own experiences inform the process and outcomes of their work (Etherington, 2004). This is important as social researchers are part of the social world that they study (Hammersly and Atkinson, 2007). Von Busch (2018) notes that, 'the social tensions at the heart of fashion need to be better understood' (Von Busch, 2018, p.313). Consumers seek inclusion in society through consumption, but this causes tensions between ethical and sustainable fashion practices (Von Busch, 2018). This PhD has addressed these social tensions by conducting research which sits within an epistemological framework of material culture and sustainability.

Different ontologies will have epistemological implications. Epistemology can be defined as, 'the theory of knowledge embedded in the theoretical perspective and thereby in the methodology' (Crotty, 2014, p.3). A constructivist ontological theoretical position can be linked to an epistemology in which the researcher 'attempts to lessen the distance between himself or herself and that being researched' (Creswell, 2007, p.17). This research followed an interpretivist epistemological position. This is where the researcher seeks knowledge 'inductively,' allowing multiple perspectives to emerge from the process of discovery (Jenß, 2016). It is acknowledged that subjectivity plays a crucial role in social actions, and the research aims to reveal interpretations and meanings (Walliman, 2006). The study of the social world requires a research procedure which reflects the distinctiveness of humans (Bryman, 2001). An interpretive epistemological position typically lends itself to a methodology which involves qualitative methods including interviewing and archival research (Jenß, 2016). Qualitative research is concerned with understanding the meanings which people attach to phenomena, within their social worlds (Spencer and Snape, 2003). This PhD applies a qualitative mixed methods approach (Barbour, 2006), to investigate beyond the superficial (O'Toole and Were, 2008). This approach allows for diverse

constructions of reality to be incorporated into exciting interpretations, with the ultimate goal of contributing new knowledge (Jenß, 2016).

3.3.1 A qualitative mixed methods approach

'Mixed methods' is a term which is used to describe the mixing of both qualitative and quantitative methods (Bryman, 2015). However, it can also be used to describe the use of multiple methods within a qualitative approach (Barbour, 2006), which this study has employed. This approach has several strengths including being able to tailor different methods towards answering a range of research questions, enhancing research credibility and varied applicability at different stages of a project (Meth and Mcclymont, 2009). The mixing of methods can generate multi-layered, richly textured information (Gabb, 2009). My study has combined the methods of a content analysis, focus groups and wardrobe studies (involving interviews and observations) to answer different aspects of the research objectives, and the multi-faceted approach has allowed for the generation of rich data.

Ethnographic research aims to understand how people experience their social and material worlds, taking into account different people's perspectives (Woodward, 2020), and can be understood as a reflexive process. My mixed method qualitative research involving wardrobe study approaches and interview style formats, has been inspired by ethnographic principles. This has enabled me to observe and experience participants' relationships with their material and social worlds through an investigation into their clothing habits.

At home, ethnography has the potential to gain cultural familiarity, comprehend sensitivity and build rapport (Hameed Qamar, 2020). Informed by this approach, this research has been inspired by ethnographic principles through a series of wardrobe studies, investigating the emotional durability of clothing. The methods involved observation and interviews with participants in the home. The broader perspectives and aims of this study involved observation and elicitation of personal narratives around clothing and its role in everyday life. In total, fifty-five participants were interviewed throughout the course of this PhD (including pilot studies), and seventeen of these participants were interviewed more than once.

Miller and Woodward (2007) conduct anthropological research which is based on the belief that philosophical insight can be grounded through an ethnography which observes the experiences and objects of ordinary people. This ethnography can be linked back to the

epistemology of this study, and the framework of material culture within which it sits. Clothing as a form of material culture has been used to uncover meaning behind everyday practices in the context of fast fashion for student and young adult participants.

3.4 Material culture framework

This study is grounded in object-based research, as the clothes situated in FashionMap and participants' wardrobes can be viewed as material objects. 'Objects evoke memories: they connect the past and the present' (Bide, 2017, p.451). Object based research sits within a framework of material culture. Steele (1998) notes the important role that objects can play in the creation of knowledge of clothing. Objects have symbolic functions and social meanings (Candlin and Guins, 2009). Some scholars do not appreciate the value of examining actual garments, and dismiss such work as a 'cataloguing exercise' (Kim and Mida, 2015). However, Steele (1998) emphasises the benefits of interpreting objects within a methodology, stating, 'object-based research provides unique insights into the historic and aesthetic development of fashion' (Steele, 1998, p.327). The process of object-based research can be divided into three main phases which include; observation, reflection and interpretation (Kim and Mida, 2015). The below table has been adapted from Kim and Mida's (2015) literature, 'The Dress Detective.' A similar process has been used to document and analyse garments from the FashionMap archive, which were used as points of discussion in the focus groups (this will be introduced in Chapter 5, Section 5.3). The 'reflection' and 'interpretation' columns were completed during the findings and analysis chapter for the items which have been selected for focus group use.

| Item | Observation | Reflection | Interpretation |
|-------|---|--|---|
| Image | Capturing information from the dress artefact. Eg, brand, price, composition. | considering embodied experience and contextual material. Focus group's comments. | Linking the observations and reflections to theory. |

Table 3-2 – The process of object-based research – adapted from Kim and Mida, 2015.

The analysis of objects has to begin with a descriptive approach, based on a close visual examination of the unworn garment (Palmer, 2013), as demonstrated in Table 3-2. Even though we already make daily decisions about our own clothing, evaluating items of fashion in this way is a highly important research tool, as it can deepen our understanding of the

meanings of fashion (Palmer, 2013). *The singular details of the garment's construction, fabrication, and use can be set within a broader understanding of fashion and offer unique insights that are not accessible elsewhere* (Palmer, 2013, p.277).

Undertaking a garment analysis aligns specifically to the first research objective, which is, 'To document reoccurring trends in fast fashion and examine the workings of the trend cycle using NTU's FashionMap collection to establish evidence of longevity and style obsolescence.' When interpreting garments from the FashionMap archive, construction, fabrication and cost were considered alongside further information such as the trend that the garment is part of, and the year which it was purchased. This helped to build a contextual background for the object being studied and enlarge understanding of modern fashion.

Hodder's (1987) theory of the meaningfulness of objects framed the analytical approach to this data. Hodder argues that cultural objects have three broad types of meaning. The first is the objects meaning in terms of the effects that it has on the world, for example, how the object is used, and how it conveys information. The second is that objects have structured or coded meanings - items have meaning because they are part of a code. For example, garments in FashionMap have meaning because they are part of the archive. The third type of object meaning is the 'content' of meaning. Hodder (1987) states that objects have meaning through their past associations, and this can also be referred to as historical meaning. For this PhD study, this may mean carefully considering the year which particular garments were bought in the archive, and assessing the historical and cultural factors which were present during this time. This helped to build a comprehensive understanding and analysis of object meaning for particular garments in the FashionMap archive. Assessing the historical meaning of garments brings broader knowledge to the wider study, and this helped to inform which garments are selected as discussion points in the focus groups. The FashionMap archive is central to this PhD methodology, and it has been used as a vehicle to explore the aim and objectives. This was focused on exploring gendered attitudes towards the emotional durability of fast fashion. The archive is gendered by nature, as it has been curated according to male and female trends, which makes it particularly useful when exploring gendered attitudes.

FashionMap has the potential to stimulate interesting and meaningful discussions around fast fashion and sustainability. Researching how fashion has been collected can influence the way that it is conceptualised (Jenß, 2016). As an archive which contains many fast fashion items, FashionMap provides a unique and original perspective on clothing studies and

material culture. Historically, fashion archives have been focused on 'extraordinary' items of clothing, and little attention has been paid to the 'ordinary.' Curating methods have been centred around the clothes of select designers, celebrities and avant-garde practices. Church-Gibson (2012, p.18) states, 'Cheap, ubiquitous clothes, which lack artistic merit of any kind are consigned not only to landfills in the real world, but also to hinterlands beyond scholarship.' Over recent years, there has been increased scholarly interest in fast fashion. However, there remains little research which considers an archive of fast fashion, and also poor visibility in museum collections of, 'fashion that has been embedded in ordinary lives' (Jenß, 2016, p.26). This provides an opportunity for the methodology to draw from this archive, and through a material culture approach, to identify the significance of an archival collection in gaining narratives around how fashion trends are experienced in young consumers' lives.

This research has investigated young people's opinions towards sustainability and fast fashion, with the aim of contributing to the sustainability debate. The FashionMap archive was a valuable resource in facilitating these discussions. According to Jenß (2016, p.30), in order to fully integrate fashion into the 21st century, investigation is needed into, 'the ways in which *fashion*—as opposed to *dress*—infiltrated everyday lives in an ongoing, sustained way over time and across class, gender, ethnicity, and generation.' The clothing that people already have in their wardrobes, and how this clothing is used, is central to understanding more sustainable consumption practices (Woodward, 2014). Greater knowledge of how young adults use and wear their clothes has fleshed out opportunities for change in a system and industry which is one of the world's biggest polluters (Moorhouse and Moorhouse, 2017).

The FashionMap archive has been selected due to its specific contents and time period. In addition to the garment analysis, clothing from the archive was used to facilitate discussion in focus groups. Although garments from the archive have never been worn or lived in, they cover an extremely broad range of styles and trends. Following an analysis of the database which accompanies the archive, trends were tracked and identified. The database catalogues individual garments, detailing an image and brief description of each garment. This links to a key aim of the research, which is to document reoccurring trends in fast fashion and examine the workings of the trend cycle using NTU's FashionMap collection to establish evidence of longevity and style obsolescence.

3.5 Pilot studies

In order to assess the feasibility and effectiveness of the proposed methods, two pilot studies have taken place. These studies used items of clothing from FashionMap as a discussion point in focus groups, and tested the method of in-depth wardrobe studies. In addition to this, a published paper in the Journal of Fashion Practice has also been used to test the method of applying a content analysis (Marroncelli and Braithwaite, 2020). Pilot studies have numerous purposes, which include; assessing the practicality of a full study, designing and testing protocols, establishing and testing recruitment strategies and collecting preliminary data (Connelly, 2008).

The first pilot study used an object based focus group followed by an ethnographic inspired approach (Skinner, 2012) to explore the relationships between consumers and their t-shirts. A focus group with seven participants, was followed by two in-depth wardrobe studies. Although the study targeted both males and females, six out of the seven participants were female, due participation responses. Snowball sampling was used to identify participants. T-shirts were selected as a focal point in the archive, in order to test the methods on a ubiquitous item of clothing, and a prominent sub-section of the 1900 garments and accessories available. The aim of the focus group was to explore how the t-shirt fulfils communicative and self-expressive purposes. Prior to joining the focus group, participants were asked to complete a t-shirt inventory, noting the quantity and type of t-shirts in their wardrobes. Participants were also asked to bring t-shirts to the focus group which symbolised an affiliation to a particular brand or cause, or which the individuals felt said something about their identity. Eleven t-shirts from FashionMap with distinctive graphics and logos were selected to initiate discussions around identity, authenticity, sustainability and perceived meaning. The focus group began with a conversation around these t-shirts, a selection of which are visible in Figure 3-1.



Figure 3-1 - Selection of t-shirts used in pilot study 1 – FashionMap at NTU ©.

Participants were then asked to describe the t-shirts that they had brought from their own wardrobes. This pilot study had a particular interest in how t-shirts were used in protests and activism, so the final part of the focus group involved a discussion around the environmental activist group, Extinction Rebellion, and feelings towards wearing a t-shirt printed with the group's logo. T-shirts are particularly susceptible to eliciting debates around activism, due to their ability to communicate both personal style and greater meaning (Sklar and Donahue, 2021). Two participants from this focus group were then asked to take part in an in-depth wardrobe study.

Starting the focus group with a discussion around certain t-shirts from FashionMap was effective, 'breaking the ice,' and initiating interesting conversations. Participants could link the t-shirts back to the year which they originated, and this also prompted memories of what they were doing/wearing in these years, which evoked feelings of nostalgia. This sparked conversations around wider cultural topics. For example, Union Jack t-shirts from the early 2000s, were linked to both the Spice Girls, and the World Cup. This research contributed to a paper which was published as part of the IFFTI 2020 conference proceedings (Marroncelli et al., 2020), receiving the 'IFFTI Doctoral Researcher Award' for 2020. This pilot study was important in informing how garments from FashionMap would be used within the PhD.

The second pilot study involved a series of in-depth wardrobe studies. This pilot allowed for the testing of knowledge, and use of, wardrobe studies. The study contributed to the fields of consumer behaviour and material culture, by investigating the links between consumer happiness and the wardrobe. The study was inspired by the Covid-19 pandemic, which presented a unique opportunity to investigate what people were wearing and why, when they were forced to work from home over a series of lockdowns. A paper entitled 'Working from home: clothing choice and happiness' was written for the Home Renaissance Foundation's 2021 conference 'Happy Home, Happy Society?' In response to the lockdown and unprecedented developments following Covid-19, this paper investigated what drives the decision to wear particular clothes when working from home, and how this links to productivity and overall happiness. The study focused on exploring how consumers develop emotional attachments to existing items of clothing (Clark, 2008), by investigating the different factors which contribute to an attachment being formed, through in-depth interviews. The interviews comparing male and female attitudes towards clothing worn when working at home, this facilitated the gendered approach, which has been applied throughout this thesis. Seven participants were asked to keep a photo diary for a week,

detailing the outfits that they wore whilst working from home, and this was followed by seven wardrobe study interviews. This diary acted as a discussion point at the start of the wardrobe studies. Due to the Coronavirus pandemic, the majority of the wardrobe studies took place online. This second pilot study was significant in informing the development of the qualitative methodology and stimulating data that has been integral to the wider findings of this thesis.

The archive has also been utilised as a focus point in previous research, published as 'Insta-Fashion: How the Digital Revolution Has Affected Celebrity Culture and the British Fashion Retail Landscape,' in the *Journal of Fashion Practice* (Marroncelli and Braithwaite, 2020). This paper explored the cult of celebrity, its deployment within social media, and how this has been central to the rise of online retailing, and ultimately, the decline of the British high street. The FashionMap archive was used as a key aspect of the methodology for this journal article, and informed the development of its use in the PhD research. A content analysis of the student research portfolios took place to identify which celebrities remained constant influences on the student portfolios which complement the archive, and which celebrities gained prominence at the same time as the rise of the digital age. This was achieved by looking to the corresponding student portfolios for celebrity influences on specific trends, which was part of the brief that students had to follow and include in their presentations. A detailed analysis also occurred regarding the types of trends which each celebrity had influenced. This was then linked to the key themes of the paper which included authenticity and glamour, as well as class and taste. The value of FashionMap on this research was extremely important as it provided a unique and original angle to approach the paper. In terms of this PhD, the archive was used in a similar way, a content analysis has been conducted in Chapter 5, with a focus on developing knowledge on the use and 'fastness' of trends.

3.6 Sample

The sample used in this research was small scale, i.e., a singular group of people, which facilitated an in-depth study (Hammersly and Atkinson, 2007). This sample will be discussed in the following section.

The 'generational cohort theory' (Ladhari, Gonthier and Lajante, 2019) states that populations can be grouped by generation cohorts, based on years of birth. This is a powerful

market segmentation tool as cohort members share similar values, experiences and preferences (Parment, 2013). Students (aged 18-25) and young adults (aged 28-35) were the chosen sample range for the focus groups and wardrobe studies, which allowed for a consideration of a range of experiences. Focus group participants were identified through snowball sampling (Ritch, 2014) and convenience sampling (Wall Emerson, 2015). These methods of recruitment will be discussed later in this section. Along with the wardrobe studies, the focus groups facilitated an approach which explored both male and female perspectives. The sample can be linked to the second and third research objectives, which are:

To investigate student and young adults' opinions towards sustainability, emotional durability and fast fashion.

and

To gain understanding of male and female attitudes and behaviours towards clothing ownership and style obsolescence, and identify opportunities for a more sustainable future.

Students usually fall within the 18-25 age range, and can be classed as 'emerging adults.' This refers to the extended period of development between adolescence and young adulthood (Arnett and Tanner, 2016), and is a distinct period of development in terms of identity explorations (Arnett, 2000). This age bracket can also be described as 'Generation Z,' who have grown up surrounded by exposure to the internet and social networks (Francis and Hoefel, 2018). They are therefore a more 'digitally native' age group than their older peers. Generation Z shoppers are unique in that they shop both online and offline, appreciating convenience and speed, but also seeking personal and unique experiences (DeSalva, 2019). Digital communication has become integrated into every aspect of life for Generation Z, and research has shown that brands must look beyond traditional advertising in order to capture this demographic (King, 2019).

Convenience sampling (Wall Emerson, 2015) was used to recruit NTU university fashion students; twenty-two students were recruited in this way. Fashion students were an appropriate sample due to the research focus on the emotional durability of fast fashion. The demographic focus of the fashion cohort has an international weighting and it was therefore expected that these students came from a range of cultural backgrounds. As the criteria for participation was focused on male and female gender specification, and

attendance on a fashion degree course, demographic data related to ethnicity was not logged as a defining feature. However, the study acknowledges that different cultural backgrounds may bring different attitudes and behaviours to the study.

Ritch (2014) notes how it is pertinent to investigate how fast fashion manifests within everyday behaviours for a specific life-stage. Students are indeed at an interesting life stage; a tension arises as they often do not have a large disposable income, but they are increasingly educated about the environmental impact of unsustainable production methods. 'With low discretionary income they have limited choices in today's marketplace' (Sorensen and Jorgensen, 2019, p.1). This research has investigated how this manifests in terms of their clothing habits. Cheap fast fashions are easily adopted by university students due to the low price points, and the importance of wearing fashionable clothing in socializing at this stage in the life cycle (Joung, 2014). The digital age, and specifically the introduction of Instagram in 2010, have made it particularly easy for consumers to purchase fast fashion items at the click of a button (Marroncelli and Braithwaite, 2020). This raises questions regarding issues of disposability and sustainability. Instant gratification gained through purchasing garments in this way may also lead to a lack of attachment, due to the disposable nature of the fast fashion being purchased, combined with the lack of visiting a physical store on the high street (Marroncelli and Braithwaite, 2020). This is a tension which lies at the core of this PhD. Students are the future generation of leaders and consumers, and therefore have the power to influence change. 'The next generation wants a different experience of fashion that the traditional industry is struggling to provide. They want choice and individuality, the ability to buy on-demand and sell on with ease. At the same time, they want to reduce waste. They want authenticity and to set their own trends. They are influenced by their peers and people they share values with' (Depop, 2020).

While students fit into the 'emerging adults' category, 'young adults' can be described as being in the late twenties and early thirties age range (Lam, Yurchisin and Cook, 2016). Also known as 'Millennials', or 'Generation Y,' this demographic are categorised as individuals born between 1980 and 1995 (Lam, Yurchisin and Cook, 2016). Millennials value environmental and social issues, and are willing to pay extra money for socially responsible products, but still consume fast fashion (Sorensen and Jorgensen, 2019). The affordability and convenience of fast fashion fits in with Millennials budget and life stage (Lam, Yurchisin and Cook, 2016). Including young adults into the study has helped to encompass a wider, but still young demographic. Young adults were recruited through the researchers own personal

network. A snowball sampling approach has been drawn upon, and this method has been used to build upon the researchers immediate networks. This meant that friends' partners, and 'friends of friends' were interviewed as the study progressed. In total, seventeen participants were interviewed more than once throughout the focus groups and wardrobe studies. Snowball sampling offers an opportunity to focus on participants who are from similar social networks (Ritch, 2014).

Through a series of focus groups and wardrobe studies with both students and young adults, the study has examined a range of experiences in attitudes with regards to fast fashion and emotional durability. Males and females were interviewed equally, in order to facilitate a gendered approach. As previously mentioned in the introduction, participants were asked to define the gender that they identified with. While the study did not set out to exclude other gender identifications, the sample has fallen under the gender definitions/identifications of male and female. The complexities of gender in 2021/2022 present challenges for both researchers and retailers. In response to the identified lack of understanding regarding male attitudes towards clothing and sustainability identified through the literature review, a gendered approach has been applied to comparing male and female answers to the same questions asked throughout focus groups and wardrobe studies. These responses were then compared and contrasted to existing gender literature.

3.7 Overcoming assumed stereotypes

Throughout the course of this PhD, it was important to not exhibit gender bias, whilst facilitating a gendered approach. The literature review has drawn out the problematic nature of gender stereotypes that can exist when facilitating qualitative research.

Often within qualitative research, fieldwork is conducted by establishing relationships. Researchers naturally approach these relationships from their own personal backgrounds, and this involves incorporating their age, sexual orientation, educational background, ethnicity, class and gender (Bell, Caplan and Karim, 1993). Women have been traditionally associated with the feminine, and the feminine with the emotional. Bell et al. (1993) argue that this has largely excluded women from mainstream anthropology. To reduce the risk of bias, a representative sample of men and women was constructed, which includes both university students and young adults. The danger of generalisability is reduced, by interviewing men and women who are at different life stages (Zelezny, Chua and Aldrich,

2000). In addition to this, and as previously mentioned in Section 3.6, the risk of bias was further reduced by asking both males and females the same questions throughout focus groups and wardrobe studies. Leading questions were not asked which might prompt stereotypical gendered responses. An open approach with regards to interviewing technique was developed, by avoiding asking direct questions about emotional attachments to clothing, but instead by asking questions that could lead towards answers of attachment. For example, the following question was asked during focus groups and wardrobe studies, *'Which items of clothing have you owned the longest? And why?'*

3.8 The reflexive researcher

There has been little systematic attempt to reflect upon emotions experienced when conducting research in an overarching or epistemological sense (Coffey, 1999). Despite this, it is important to consider 'the self' in research. The construction and production of self and identity occurs during and after fieldwork (Coffey, 1999). 'Self-report' and bias can affect the validity of research, and hinder advancements in specific fields (Donaldson and Grant-Vallone, 2002). Schmitt (1994) suggested a theory of method bias in order to understand how to prevent and control for it. Although directed at organisational behaviour, this theory can be applied to this PhD, and involves a sample matrix which illustrates how bias may affect research. My personal views as a researcher, may influence social desirability, consistency, likeability and carelessness, in relation to my interviewees. Etherington (2004) notes that 'researcher reflexivity' is the ability of the researcher to acknowledge how their own experiences and contexts inform the process and outcomes of their work. This is important as social researchers are part of the social world that they study (Hammersly and Atkinson, 2007). Etherington (2004) states that good qualitative research can be achieved if the researcher can be aware of their own, 'thoughts, feelings, culture, environment, and social and personal history,' as they interact with participants (Etherington, 2004, p.32). Pink (2000) looks at how feminist researchers overcome their bias when researching women, by using reflexivity in the research process. This involves becoming more reflexive in order to enhance the quality of research. Pink explores how the use of videos in research can be used to empower participants, and give a good understanding of how these participants represent their identities, reducing bias from the researcher. Reflexivity is a significant feature of social research, and it acknowledges that the orientations of researchers will be shaped by their values and interests (Hammersly and Atkinson, 2007). Reflexivity demonstrates that research

cannot be carried out in an 'autonomous realm,' insulated from wider society, and the biography of the researcher (Hammersly and Atkinson, 2007, p.15).

According to Schmitt (1994), there is no easy solution to overcome researcher bias, and general guidelines do not exist. The researcher is inextricably bound within their own research, 'there is no escaping the mental and physical presence of the researcher' (Coffey, 1999, p.20). Part of the answer is to identify your own position as a researcher - each researcher must 'clearly delineate the nature of substantive constructs, potential methods factors, and plan for the measurement and/or control of both in the design and conduct of their research' (Schmitt, 1994, p.397). Whilst conducting focus groups and wardrobe studies, it was imperative that I did not ask leading questions, which could inflict my opinions onto the interviewees. Throughout the methodology, I applied a semi-structured approach to research questions, which allowed for the discussion and development of thoughts and ideas. Semi-structured interviews can shed light on the very beginning of the decision making process in a consumer's journey (Wiederhold and Martinez, 2018). Undertaking initial interviews through pilot studies enabled me to reflect on how I approached and asked questions. Online wardrobe studies allowed for a conversational narrative to be developed, which was brought forward into the PhD primary research. Triangulation of different research approaches has increased the validity and credibility of the research findings (Joergens, 2006). Data from the wardrobe studies and focus groups was analysed alongside existing literature, in order to help alleviate the risk of bias in the research. An additional crucial factor to be considered when undertaking qualitative research is finding a balance between having a clear focus, but also remaining open to the unexpected. Being open minded is a central component of the ethnographic approach (Woodward, 2020), of which this research has taken inspiration from.

A further consideration was how to interpret the data which was collected from primary research activities. The paradoxical nature of style means that what people say they do, and what they *actually do* could be two different things. With regards to sustainability, this is demonstrated through a theory called, 'the attitude behaviour gap.' Research has revealed that there is a clear and large gap between positive attitudes towards sustainable fashion, and actual consumption of such fashion. (Sudbury and Böltner, 2011). It was therefore important to be aware of the difference between the conscious and the unconscious within the research. Although we are able to examine our own conscious feelings and gather information about ourselves, many of our actions are unconscious (Mair, 2018). We imagine

how others see and judge us, so we develop a favourable response, and make social comparisons with those around us who we believe to be in the same 'category' (Mair, 2018). Prown (1982) holds similar beliefs, as he notes that 'cultural perspective' is a difficult problem to recognise when conducting research into material culture. Prown (1982) states that we are products of our own cultural environments, and therefore we are pervaded by the beliefs of our own social groups. These beliefs mean that we make unconscious assumptions, which translates into 'biases that we take for granted' (Prown, 1982, p.4). Once we become aware of this problem, we can battle against subjectivity, in a bid to move towards greater objectivity. Being aware of my own cultural bias is a big step in overcoming the issue when conducting research (Prown, 1982).

3.9 Content analysis and archival research

Researching from the FashionMap archive has involved drawing from two methods, a content analysis and archival research. These methods were used to identify and track significant trends in the archive, please refer to Chapter 5, which explains the process in detail. The items of clothing selected through this process were used as discussion points in gendered focus groups, in order to facilitate a gendered approach.

A content analysis can be defined as a systematic, replicable research technique which draws conclusions objectively by identifying specific characteristics of messages (Stemler, 2000). Drisko (2015) identifies three different types of content analysis: basic, interpretive and qualitative. Basic content analysis is often referred to as a statistical analysis. Interpretive content analysis uses researcher generated summaries and interpretations, rather than quantitative analytical methods. This type of analysis typically draws on newly generated texts, and may also examine existing data sets (Drisko, 2015). Finally, qualitative content analysis seeks to 'develop carefully specified categories,' (Drisko, 2015, p.5). It is this category of content analysis which this PhD best strategically aligns, as specific trends from FashionMap were selected to analyse. A content analysis is a flexible method that can be applied to a variety of different media (Bryman, 2015). Furthermore, it allows for general statements to be made about aspects of representation in which non-specialists in the field can understand (Bell, 2012). Conducting a content analysis can result in data which is 'particularly rich and meaningful,' as the method requires a reliance of coding and categorizing of data (Stemler, 2000). For the purpose of this PhD, a content analysis was used to identify and track significant trends in FashionMap. Trends have been documented

through a trend document, which can be viewed in Chapter 5 – Section 5.2. This process involved categorising trends by year and season. These trends were named by the students in response to research that they carried out on key seasonal trends that were influencing men's and women's fashion at that time.

In addition to undertaking a content analysis of trends within the archive, archival research was also used to select specific trends. Almond (2020, p.81) defines archival research as, 'a qualitative methodology that involves looking for and extracting information from archived records.' Approaches to how comparable UK fashion archives have been utilised and analysed can be investigated and applied here. When describing how the House of Fraser Archive has been catalogued and utilised, Paterson (2009, p.180) notes how 'practices have been developed from the archivist's perspective.' In addition to this, the archive has been catalogued by a curator in a way that they best believe will facilitate use by users. In a similar way, certain garments were selected from FashionMap which the researcher believed would prompt interesting discussions amongst the sample of students and young adults.

3.10 Focus groups

A focus group is a group interview, guided by a moderator to discuss certain topics that the interviewer raises. The expectation is that the group discusses an issue, and the data produced goes beyond what a series of single interviews would provide (Flick, 2018). Typically, there are six to eight participants, and what they say during the course of the focus group becomes the essential data (Morgan, 1998). Focus groups have been selected as a relevant method for this study for several reasons. Previous research (Acocella, 2012) has found that the discussion amongst participants in a focus group setting means that they are more likely to consider and reflect on aspects of their daily life which are usually taken for granted. This may be particularly relevant when discussing items of clothing. As previously mentioned in the literature review, clothing as a form of material culture emerges from everyday life. Throughout the focus group, the interviewer must remain objective. They should try to balance their behaviour between directly steering the group, and non-directly moderating it (Flick, 2018). Data drawn from the focus groups was used to compliment and inform the wardrobe studies, which allowed for an in-depth analysis.

In 'Opening up the Wardrobe' (2017) Yuille describes conducting a method called 'consumer material perceptions,' which involves face to face semi-structured interviews, and observed

artefact analysis. Yuille's aim was to investigate levels of consumer knowledge within a fast fashion consumer group, and to consequently encourage sustainable and mindful practice. Yuille's approach was drawn from and adapted for the object based focus groups. Yuille identified a selection of particular garments, relevant to his participant group, just as relevant items of clothing from the FashionMap archive were selected in this study. The selection process involved using archival research to identify iconic pieces of clothing which were used in the discussion. This process has been discussed in detail in Chapter 5. This method places the consumer at the centre of the research activity, and explores how they physically experience and interpret fashion (Yuille, 2017). Using archival research in this way has highlighted the importance of FashionMap, and how it can be utilised as a qualitative research tool.

Five focus groups took place – three with male and female students (online), one with female young adults (in-person), and one with male young adults (in-person). In addition to this, an in-person workshop also took place with two female undergraduate students. Limitations include the small sample size, in total fifty-five participants were interviewed for the focus groups and wardrobe studies (including the pilot studies). Although this limitation cannot be neglected, it does however also provide an opportunity: 'Focusing upon a narrow sample defined by the life-stage of the participants provides an opportunity to better understand the holistic experience of decision making' (Ritch, 2014, p.1177).

3.10.1 Focus group structure

The focus groups were structured around object-based learning. This is a mode of education which involves the integration of objects into the learning environment (Chatterjee and Hannan, 2016). The term object can be used to describe any item which fits within a framework of material culture (Chatterjee and Hannan, 2016). In this particular setting, the objects used were items of clothing. Chatterjee and Hannan (2016, p.13) state that 'objects can inspire, inform, engage and motivate learners at all stages of their education.' Both the online and offline focus groups started with an explanation of what the FashionMap archive is, accompanied with a PowerPoint presentation. Following this, participants were shown a selection of garments from the FashionMap archive. They were then asked to respond to these garments. 'It can be difficult to talk broadly straight away, but individual garments readily prompt conversation: every item has a story' (Twigger Holroyd, 2017, p.59). Following a discussion of these items, participants were then asked a series of questions

regarding their own clothing habits. Please see Table 3-3 which explains the sequence of events that took place for the online and in person focus groups and workshop.

| | 3x Student focus groups (March '21). Mainly females. Online. | 1x Student workshop (Nov'21). Females. In person. | 2x Young adult focus groups (1x male and 1x female Aug '21). In person. |
|----------------|--|--|--|
| Stage 1 | Prior to attending the online focus group, students were asked to upload an image to a Padlet of the oldest item of clothing in their wardrobes, followed by a short explanation/story about their attachment to the item. | An explanation of what the FashionMap archive is, accompanied with a PowerPoint presentation. See Appendix 3. | An explanation of what the FashionMap archive is, accompanied with a PowerPoint presentation. See Appendix 3. |
| Stage 2 | An explanation of what the FashionMap archive is, accompanied with a PowerPoint presentation. See Appendix 3. | The students were shown a selection of garments from the FashionMap archive (photoshoots on screen, and also the physical garments in person). | The young adults were shown a selection of garments from the FashionMap archive (photoshoots on screen, and also the physical garments in person). |
| Stage 3 | Students were asked to respond to garment images from FashionMap archive. They were shown a selection of images on screen, and asked to comment their perceptions in the chat function on Teams. Eg, 'retro,' 'grunge,' etc. | They were asked to respond to these garments by answering the following two questions: <i>Which year do you think these trends were bought? And why?</i> <i>Would you wear any of these garments? If not, why?</i> | They were asked to respond to these garments by answering the following two questions: <i>Which year do you think these trends were bought? And why?</i> <i>Would you wear any of these garments? If not, why?</i> |
| Stage 4 | The students were then asked a selection of questions regarding their clothing habits. | The students were then asked a selection of questions regarding their clothing habits. | The young adults were then asked a selection of questions regarding their clothing habits. |
| Stage 5 | The students were asked if they would be willing to take part in a follow up wardrobe study. | The students were not asked if they would be willing to take part in a follow up wardrobe study. (Enough had been recruited at this stage). | The young adults were asked if they would be willing to take part in a follow up wardrobe study. |

| | | | |
|--|---|--|---|
| | See Appendix 4 for an example transcript. | | See Appendix 5+6 for an example transcript. |
|--|---|--|---|

Table 3-3 - Focus groups and workshop sequence of events

It was expected that members of the focus group would be able to relate to certain styles and time periods through the clothing. This was the case when t-shirts from FashionMap were used in the pilot study (as discussed in section 3.5). Union Jack t-shirts from the early 2000s evoked nostalgic memories that the participants linked to the Spice Girls. Focus group participants could also relate to the FashionMap archive in terms of thinking about the age that they were at the time when the garments were bought. All participants were over the age of 18, and able to think about the archive in this way. The following chapter (Chapter 4) tracks trends and analyses contents from FashionMap, and in doing so garments used in the focus groups were identified. Hein (1998) suggested that when students interact with real materials or objects, they engage with knowledge more fundamentally. This is because hands on or active learning with objects requires the learner to ‘think’ as well as to physically ‘do,’ which involves ‘mental activity.’ The overarching research questions for the focus groups were linked to the key themes identified throughout the literature review: fast fashion, sustainability, the attitude behaviour gap, emotional attachment, nostalgia and longevity. A particular focus on trends was applied to the ‘in person’ focus groups, as participants were asked to guess the year which the trends were bought. This helped to draw out discussions surrounding the longevity of style. These discussions were continued in the wardrobe studies, where participants could further express their attitudes towards trends in the context of clothing from their own wardrobes. Please see appendices 3-5, which details the number of participants interviewed in each focus group, and the questions that were asked.

3.10.2 Focus group strengths and limitations

Focus groups enable researchers to understand how individuals think or act in social settings, but the researcher must also be aware that individual responses are likely to be shaped by the group environment (Cyr, 2019). It can be difficult to study sensitive areas of research such as consumer opinions, attitudes and perceptions regarding ethical issues as consumers may give politically correct or socially desirable, rather than truthful answers (Joergens, 2006). Further limitations can arise, such as the problem of note taking during the interview

(a second facilitator is often required), and the limited number of questions that can be addressed (Flick, 2018). As the facilitator, it is also important not to 'condition' participants' answers by inflicting personal opinions and views on their responses. Focus groups do however enable the researcher to ask follow up and more probing questions, which is an advantage that is not available with questionnaires (Joergens, 2006). Focus groups can also provide in-depth access to people's knowledge, experiences perceptions and discourses. The main advantages include being low cost and rich in data, and they can stimulate respondents to remember events (Flick, 2018). However, focus groups can only produce material on how clothes are discussed within the context of the group setting. In wardrobe studies, semi-structured interview questions can be used as a supplement, and as an integral part of the method (Grimstad Klepp and Bjerck, 2014). This allows for the wardrobe study to be less of a conversation about abstract issues and subjects, and more focused on the narratives of individual garments and specific events (Grimstad Klepp and Bjerck, 2014).

3.11 Wardrobe studies

In addition to conducting focus groups, the second research method involved a series of wardrobe studies. These wardrobe studies explored attachment to clothing in greater detail, conducting a gendered approach amongst males and females. Klepp and Bjerck (2014, p.373) define wardrobe studies as, 'a methodological approach that analyses the way in which clothes relate to each other on the whole or in parts of the wardrobe.' Investigating wardrobes involves incorporating methods which seek to uncover knowledge about the contents and dynamics of a wardrobe, studying how garments are selected and used (Fletcher and Grimstad Klepp, 2017). The term 'wardrobe' can be used to refer to the total set of clothes that an individual owns, as well as the constructed physical space where the clothing is stored (Cwerner, 2001). Woodward (2007) describes the wardrobe as a collection of items accumulated from previous occasions.

Wardrobe studies have the ability to stimulate rich descriptions and stories, and can contribute to increasing the materiality of clothing studies (Grimstad Klepp and Bjerck, 2014). McCracken (1988) reported on the term the 'Diderot effect,' which can be applied to wardrobe studies. This is where certain products are consumed in groups which have an internal consistency based on lifestyle (Davis and Gregory, 2003). The 'Diderot effect' symbolises how culture controls consumption (McCracken, 1988). Items in an individual's wardrobe can stand individually, but also work together as a whole, through different

combinations of outfits. The wardrobe as a whole may also reflect specific styles and tastes of the wearer. However, McCracken (1988) does acknowledge that there may be certain items which do not fit into the 'Diderot unity,' these are known as 'departure products.' These items could consist of impulse purchases, which depart from the usual pattern of consumption. With regards to this research, when conducting wardrobe studies, it was assessed if there were any items in individuals' wardrobes which were impulse buys, and if they reflected, or conflicted with the styles and tastes of the wearer. Analysing the clothes already situated in an individual's wardrobe is a key method in understanding more sustainable consumption practices (Woodward, 2014). The wardrobe studies allowed for key themes and ideas identified through the focus group to be explored in greater depth. Much has been written about sustainable fashion and clothing practices, but there is a lack of research that considers the fields together (Woodward, 2014). This therefore became one of the main focuses of the wardrobe studies.

FashionMap can be viewed as a collection of clothing styles according to trends, and in the same way, the wardrobe is a personal collection relating to an individual's style. The wardrobe can be influenced by trends, but there may also be additional external influences, such as links to family and emotional attachment. These additional themes have been explored in Chapters 6 and 7.

3.11.1 Wardrobe study structure

Twenty-two wardrobe studies with students and young adults were actioned, with an equal gendered balance. Klepp's (2017) work on wardrobe studies was analysed to incorporate methods that seek to uncover knowledge about the contents, dynamics and practices of a wardrobe. The first method described involves 'mapping contents,' in order to assess clothing going out of use. In this study, unused clothing in participants' wardrobes was explored in relation to sustainability. As previously discussed in the literature review, emotional attachment can lead to 'accumulation and storage of seldom used items' (Cooper, 2010, p.334). Woodward (2007) finds this to be the case in 'Why Women Wear What They Wear.' Through a series of wardrobe studies, Woodward reveals that many items within women's wardrobes remain unworn. This may be because the women's body shape has changed, or they no longer have the lifestyle to wear these clothes. These kept but unworn items, Woodward argues, become part of how women construct their identities through clothing.

Fletcher and Grimstad Klepp (2017) describe mapping contents in terms of documenting a defined part of the wardrobe. This method uses photography and identical questions which relate to the garment. This provides detailed information about a selected part of the wardrobe, and produces a quantitative and qualitative analysis (Fletcher and Grimstad Klepp, 2017). As mentioned in the literature review, certain items of clothing may be particularly susceptible to delivering evolving narrative emotional experiences, and denim jeans in particular develop character with age. Therefore, all wardrobe study participants were asked specific questions about their denim jeans, with the aim to uncover stories of emotional attachment. The broader research questions for the wardrobe studies followed the same framework as the focus groups, which built upon key themes identified throughout the literature review. Appendices 7 and 8 show a male and female wardrobe study transcribe, and detail the questions asked to participants.

Four participants were asked the same questions regarding emotional attachment a year apart. During the working from home pilot study (detailed in section 3.5 of the methodology) which took place in August 2020, participants were asked,

Are you emotionally attached to any items of clothing in your wardrobe? What factors contribute to an attachment being formed?

The same question was asked to these participants again in August 2021, as part of PhD wardrobe study data collection. This allowed for a comparison of answers, facilitating an assessment of the strength and consistency of attachment. In addition to this, many of participants who took part in the focus groups, also participated in follow up wardrobe studies. In total, fifty-five participants were interviewed throughout the course of this PhD (including pilot studies), and seventeen of these participants were interviewed more than once (30%). Please see Appendix 6 for a wardrobe study interview log, which details the number and gender of participants interviewed.

3.11.2 Wardrobe study strengths and limitations

The process involved in choosing an outfit is not always visible or apparent in the self that is presented to the outside world. Therefore, conducting wardrobe studies is a valuable resource, as it can uncover a 'dialect of dressing,' which is only visible through observing the process that individuals go through, when they decide what to wear (Woodward, 2007). Male and female wardrobe studies were undertaken in order to gain a gendered perspective

on the emotional durability of fast fashion. Personal relationships and narratives with clothing have been uncovered that would not necessarily be visible through simply viewing an outfit in an external setting.

Wardrobe studies allow for conversations which are concrete and related to practice, as narratives are focused around individual garments and specific events. A quantitative analysis can take place as the same information can be gathered for many pieces of clothing (Grimstad Klepp and Bjerck, 2014). Wardrobe studies allow for participants to be studied naturally, in a relaxed setting, which can capture the social meaning of an ordinary activity (Brewer, 2000). However, 'wardrobes by their very nature are changeable and complex' (Grimstad Klepp and Bjerck, 2014, p.377). A key focus of the wardrobe studies was to explore emotional attachment to clothing, but as discussed in the literature review, there are several difficulties with measuring and studying emotional attachment. In addition to this, wardrobe studies can be coordinated and planned, but there is a difference between the 'ideal and the real' when using this type of research method (Brewer, 2000, p.57). The wardrobe in its very nature can uncover unexpected twists and turns, which happens as a result of dealing with people in their natural environment. This prevents this type of research from being a 'neat series of sequential stages' (Brewer, 2000, p.57). Overall, wardrobe studies and focus groups were specifically chosen as significant methods for examining the relationship between fast fashion, emotional durability and sustainability.

3.11.3 Approach to data analysis

Following transcription from the focus group and wardrobe studies, a thematic analysis was undertaken. This is a method for identifying, analysing and reporting themes within data (Braun and Clarke, 2006). Coding of emotional attachment data via particular garment type has followed what is called interpretative data analysis. This is where garment types have been coded via function, memory and story. Interpretive data analysis involves a systematic search for deep understanding of how a person subjectively experiences the social world (Hultgren, 1989). The interpretive approach aims to gain a deeper understanding of what people experience in their everyday lives, and researchers can access rich descriptions of how their participants experience the world (Ha-Brookshire and Hodges, 2009). Key themes coded from the qualitative research have been identified and examined within the findings and discussion. The proceeding chapter (Chapter 4) has focused on identifying trends withing the FashionMap archive. This will be followed by a content analysis, used to identify

garments which have featured as discussion points in the focus groups. Images taken during the focus groups and wardrobe studies have been used to illustrate and support the analysis. As previously mentioned, a gendered approach has been applied to comparing male and female answers to the same questions asked throughout focus groups and wardrobe studies. These responses were then compared and contrasted to existing gender literature.

Please consult the Appendix 9 for a series of documents which show how key codes have been grouped together, forming the preliminary basis of the analysis.

3.12 Ethics

Research surrounding the social sciences often includes planning and implementation which requires collecting data from people. Conducting qualitative research produces a number of challenges on an ethical level, (Flick, 2018) including raising questions about how the participants should be treated (Oliver, 2010). 'There are ethical issues surrounding social research, just as there are with any other form of human activity' (Hammersly and Atkinson, 2007, p.209). Hammersly and Atkinson (2007, p.210) specifically focus on the ethical issues associated with ethnography, and break them down into five distinctive categories: informed consent, privacy, harm, exploitation and consequences for future research. In terms of this research, participants were free to withdraw participation at any moment: before, during, or after the research had taken place - up to a period of two weeks. Participants were required to sign a consent form agreeing to take part in focus groups and wardrobe studies (Appendix 2). Informed consent was essential, and participants were given a project information sheet, which detailed the nature of the research, what was expected of them and their rights as a participant (Appendix 1).

Privacy is an additional important factor to which must be taken into consideration. In everyday life we make distinctions between public and private places, and the bedroom is considered a private space (Hammersly and Atkinson, 2007). 'Within the enclosed, private domain of the home is the bedroom, and the innermost enclave within this is the wardrobe' (Woodward, 2007, p.40). Wardrobe studies involve entering participants bedrooms to access their wardrobes. To minimise risk involved, the majority of wardrobe studies that took place were with participants who were from a selection of the researcher's own network. This meant that the researcher was therefore aware of their personal situations, had been to their houses previously, and did not ask any questions that might prompt an unexpected

emotional response. Through the use of snowball sampling, there was also a selection of wardrobe studies with participants who the researcher did not personally know. In this instance, the wardrobe studies took place online. A further privacy consideration is the anonymity of participants – all participants were made aware that their identity would remain anonymous throughout the research. The research has not knowingly involved vulnerable participants.

A data management plan was completed prior to project approval, which outlined that the data gathered would be stored securely in line with NTU's data protection legislation. Participants were made aware in the project information sheet that only the supervisory team would have access to the data during the project. Upon completion of the PhD, NTU requires that the data supporting the thesis is kept and made openly available with as few restrictions as possible. Audio files were destroyed once they had been fully transcribed. Personal data (such as participant contact details) were deleted once the project had been completed. All participants were informed through the information sheet that their name and identity would remain anonymous, they would be referred to through pseudonym names, and images of their face would not be used. In line with NTU ethical clearance, students were made aware that the research activity they were being invited to participate in was totally separate from their module, and they were free to decline this invitation.

3.13 Methodology Conclusion

The project methodology was designed to interrogate the phenomenon of the emotional durability of fast fashion as material culture. In line with the principles of mixed method qualitative research strategies, the study has intended to draw out new knowledge around individual and gendered attitudes towards sustainability in the context of fashion.

The methodological approach which initiates interactions between individuals, their behaviours, attitudes, personal memories and the materiality of fashion objects creates opportunities for new perspectives (Bide, 2017). The following section, Chapter 4, will examine how the FashionMap archive contributes to a new approach to examine the trend cycle.

Chapter 4 - Trends and the FashionMap Archive

4.1 Introduction

The following chapter will investigate the FashionMap archive in detail. The impact of digitalisation on the fashion system will be addressed, using FashionMap to document the noticeable shift of the declining UK high street, and move to online shopping. A 'map' of the high street in Nottingham will be used to detail this shift. The archive will be used to examine the workings of trends within the fashion cycle.

The 'fastness' of fast fashion will be questioned, followed by an exploration of 'accidental classics.' This refers to, 'those products that defy obsolescence in informal or unintentional ways, rarely as a result of design planning' (Fletcher, 2016, p.167). Accidental classics are significant in the context of this thesis, as they can be used as a vehicle to explore the concept of longevity, which is a central concept of this PhD. Garments from FashionMap will be used to explore and illustrate different aspects of the trend cycle. This will create a knowledge base which can be applied to an in-depth content analysis of trends and individual garments in the FashionMap archive. In addition to this, the archive will be used to explore the mechanisms of fashion, and what the implications of this are in the context of sustainability.

4.2 UK Fashion Archives

The fashion archive is a common resource for designers to draw information from, and many established fashion companies hold their own private archives (Evans, 2011). In addition to this, archives are a key learning resource for fashion students to consider as primary research material to inspire the design process (Evans, 2011). In terms of fashion education, 'This derivative research can inform choices of fabric, silhouette, shape and the skills and technologies employed in the execution of the collection' (Almond, 2020, p.78). The Victoria and Albert Museum's fashion collection is one of the largest and most comprehensive fashion archives in the world, which spans from 17th century gowns to 1960s daywear (V&A, 2021). Several UK universities also hold fashion archives, including, the Yorkshire Fashion Archive held at University of Leeds (Almond, 2020), The House of Fraser Archive, improved

by the University of Glasgow (Paterson, 2009), Central St Martins Museum and Study collection, Heriott-Watt University Archive, which focuses on Scottish textile heritage (Evans, 2011), The Textiles and Dress Collection at Falmouth University (TDC, 2023), Westminster Menswear Archive (WMA, 2023) and The FashionMap archive at Nottingham Trent University.

The presence of fashion archives has prompted debate and discussion regarding their purpose, function, validity, management and application (Peirson-Smith and Peirson-Smith, 2020). A particularly contested viewpoint involves asking *why* fashion items are worthy of preservation, *which* items should be included in archives, and *how* these archives should be managed (Peirson-Smith and Peirson-Smith, 2020). As a fast fashion archive, FashionMap provides a unique and original perspective on clothing studies and material culture. Historically, fashion archives have been focused on 'extraordinary' items of clothing, and little attention has been paid to the 'ordinary.' Over recent years, there has been increased scholarly interest in fast fashion. However, there remains little research which considers an archive of fast fashion, and also poor visibility in museum collections of, 'fashion that has been embedded in ordinary lives' (Jenß, 2016, p.26). Back (2015) notes the importance of studying the ordinary and everyday life. He argues that attention to everyday life is valuable as it 'brings the seasons of society into view' and 'develops an eye for detail to the seemingly unimportant' (Back, 2015, p.820). It is worth questioning why garments of the ordinary, including fast fashion, have not been collected historically in the same way as haute couture, or garments of historical significance. It may be due to the fact that fast fashion is mass produced, issues with quality or perceptions of the seemingly disposable nature of fast fashion.

4.2.1 FashionMap

High street fashion is the expression of the power of fashion as popular culture

(FashionMap Archive NTU, 1999).

It is important to note that, 'archives are enhanced by an understanding of the context in which they were created, used and maintained' (Paterson, 2009, p.117). FashionMap is a unique collection of high street fashion garments and accessories from 2000 - 2018, that belongs to the School of Art and Design at NTU. A key directive of the archive was that all garments had to be sourced and purchased from fashion retailers located on the Nottingham

High Street. The purchase of garments for the collection was originally funded by Rolf Noskwith (1919-2017), former Chairman of Charnos, and an Enigma code breaker (Smith, 2017). The archive was founded for several reasons. Prior to its conception, curators at NTU believed that the collection could become of national significance in documenting central aspects of contemporary culture (which were at the time being neglected by research). In addition to this, the collection was anticipated to become of significant benefit to a range of users. This includes commercially benefiting the fashion industry, as well as being used for research and exhibitions. Central objectives of the archive were to map fashion trends and the location of fashion retail stores on the Nottingham High Street (FashionMap Archive NTU, 1999).

Second year Fashion and Textile Design students created this collection through research projects that have explored seasonal high street trends. The Fashion and Textile Design students brief was to research and buy an outfit from the high street in Nottingham, which reflected a current seasonal trend. This activity took place twice a year, for Spring/Summer and Autumn/Winter, and approximately six different trends were identified for each season, by six different groups of students (three womenswear and three menswear trends). This has led to an accumulation of over 1900 garments and accessories, which contribute to the FashionMap archive. Trends were identified through popular culture, fashion magazines, and celebrity influences. When compiling trends and outfits for the FashionMap archive, students were briefed to explore how trends from the catwalk have trickled down to the high street, the archive is therefore based on the trickle-down model. The introduction of the digital age will have had an influence on how trends were identified over the duration of the FashionMap project. In the early 2000s, magazines would have been a key resource, but there will have been a gradual shift towards online sources.

The British high street is unique in terms of its identity, history, and heritage. For the consumer, collections of shops are associated with a reduction of effort, which allows the consumer to comparison shop (Parker et al., 2017). No definition of the high street currently exists, and as a result of this, the Ordnance Survey has created an experimental dataset which aims to depict the extent of Britain's high streets and their land use (Holgate, 2020). Based upon their dataset, the Ordnance Survey define the high street as, 'a cluster of 15 or more retail addresses within 150 metres' (Holgate, 2020), this is within the context of a central shopping district. This dataset uses an automated methodology and provides a street-level definition, grouping retail clusters, and deliberately excluding other retail

functions including retail parks, industrial estates and isolated shopping centres (Holgate, 2020). Figure 4-1 shows a 'candidate high street retail cluster,' visualised using the buildings that the retail addresses are associated with.

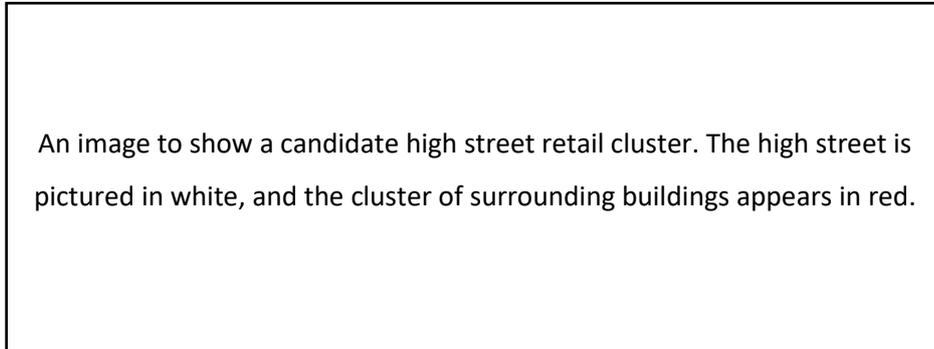


Figure 4-1 - candidate high street retail cluster – (Holgate 2020).

Building upon the ordinance survey's automated methodology, for the purposes of this PhD, the term 'high street' refers to the central shopping area situated in main towns and cities across the UK, where fashion can be bought from independent stores and chain store retailers (Marroncelli and Braithwaite, 2020).

The FashionMap archive contains different elements which includes garments and accessories which have been catalogued in physical archive boxes organised by year (Figure 4-2).

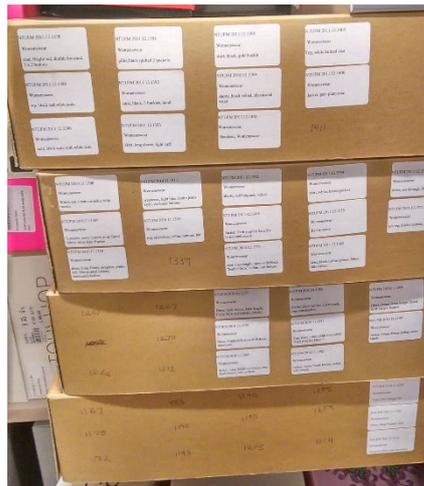


Figure 4-2 - catalogued boxes in FashionMap archive. NTU©

There is also an online database, which catalogues individual garments, detailing an image and brief description of each garment. The screenshot below (Figure 4-3) has been taken from the online database, illustrating its function:

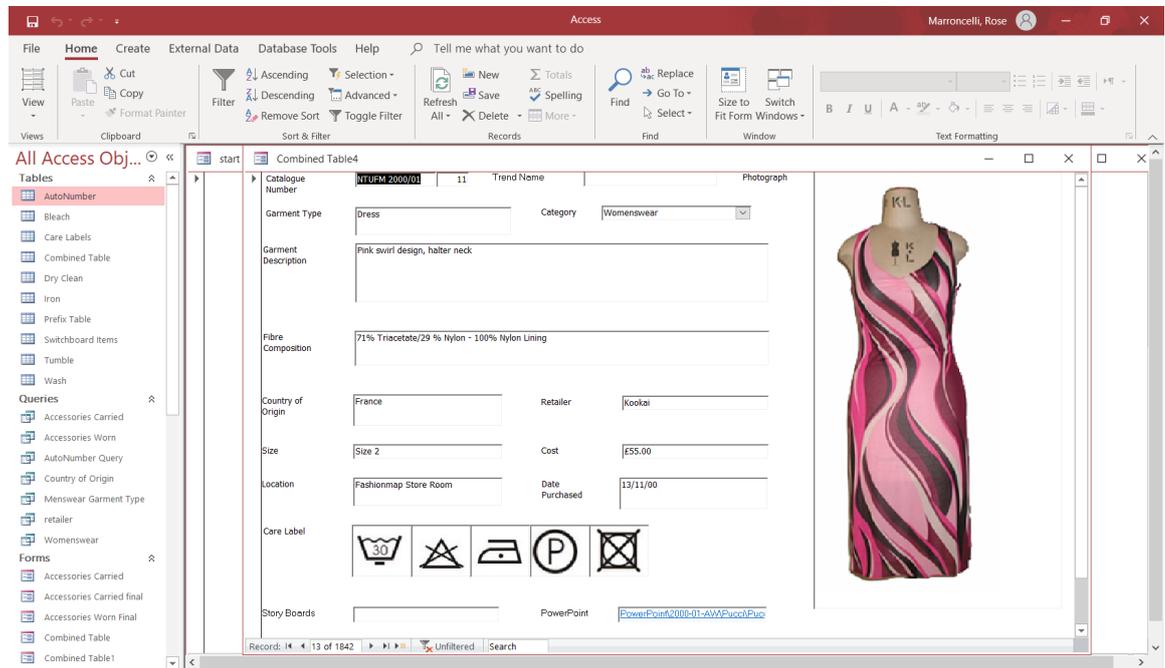


Figure 4-3 - FashionMap online database. NTU©.

There are also 171 student PowerPoint presentations which catalogue the students work from sourcing the trend ideas to purchasing garments for the archive. These presentations finish with a photoshoot, taken by students, to showcase their final garment selection (Figure 4-4).

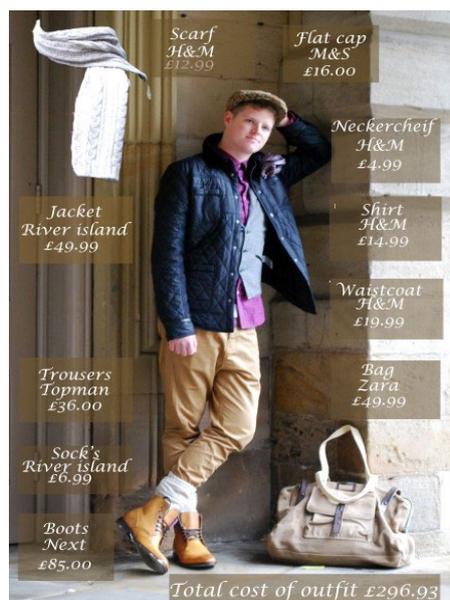


Figure 4-4 – 2010/2011 – ‘All the Queens Countrymen.’ NTU©.

In addition to this, the archive also contains a separate street style project. This is where students undertook mass fashion observation on the streets of Nottingham, capturing street style around the city over a couple of weeks each year. Individuals were selected according to their style, and photographed and interviewed about their style choice and other interests. This extensive range of images and interviews were collected between 2004 and 2015 (Braithwaite, 2019). FashionMap is a valuable resource for the longitudinal study of fashion on the British high street. The eighteen-year time frame that FashionMap covers is significant in terms of shifts in manufacture from Europe to Asia, further evolution of the fast fashion model, increasing concerns over sustainability, as well as the growth in online shopping driven by the digital age (as previously mentioned).

Bide (2017) states that archives do not contain a single clear set of factual information to be uncovered. When studying archives, researchers are drawn to the material that best fits the story that they want to tell, and also stories which speak to them personally. The value of FashionMap has been outlined in this section through an explanation of the online and physical archive. FashionMap offers many different opportunities for research, which include, but are not limited to;

- Studying the evolution or 'map' of trends, and what they can reveal about fashion and its relationship to culture.
- Exploring the geographical 'map' of fashion. The 'map' can be interpreted in terms of the changing map of the high street, but also a manufacturing map where the country of origin can be tracked through garment care labels.
- This leads onto the opportunity to investigate the relationships of garments to economic growth within the UK and beyond.
- 'Mapping' fashion in an everyday sense.

The above opportunities also explore the different interpretations of the meaning of FashionMap. Throughout this PhD, FashionMap has been used as a vehicle to explore the emotional durability of fast fashion, with a particular focus on gendered attitudes and differences. By investigating the workings of trends through FashionMap, the emotional durability of fast fashion has been examined. The literature review uncovered that there is little exploration of the relationship between fast fashion, quality and product longevity (Day, Beverley and Lee, 2015). This research intended to bridge this gap by analysing particular garments in FashionMap to identify indicators of longevity. This was achieved by tracking trend cycles through the archive, and assessing which garments retain sustainability through

style and emotional durability. This was investigated through the process of focus groups, where participants were invited to comment on the perceived fashion ability of certain garments from FashionMap. The archive demonstrates the importance of, and highlights several opportunities for exploring the dynamics of fashion.

4.2.2 Limitations of FashionMap

It must be noted that garments in the archive are solely representative of student and young people's tastes, as it is this demographic which has curated the collection. This means that there is a limitation in terms of the wider picture of trends that FashionMap covers between 2000-2018. They have been sourced according to specific trends which may not include all seasonal trends of the era. The garments and trends that they represent are reflective of a specific focus in seasonal fashion that is representative of high street trends. Given their selection by young people they are representative of certain taste levels. While they may give a partial picture of what was happening on the high street seasonally over the time period, they are significant as the archive does resonate with the study's research sample. It is this demographic choice who are the biggest consumers of high street fast fashion (Lam, Yurchisin and Cook, 2016). A second limitation to consider is how focus group participants responded to student-styled photoshoots from the FashionMap archive. The archive has been curated by students, and so have the photoshoots. The way that trends have been curated and styled is reflective of particular periods in time. This may have had a bearing on the participants' ability to guess the year of these trends, thus potentially affecting the longevity of the trends. For example, some photoshoots include accessories which instantly date the trends (such as an Apple iPod from the early 2000s). In addition to this, there may be variations in how participants respond to static garments, compared how they respond when they see the garments worn on models from the photoshoot imagery. The models themselves may give the garments different meanings when they are worn, as opposed to being static.

Further limitations of the archive include implications of the fact that the garments are static and have not been 'lived in.' This is in significant contrast to the wardrobe studies, where garments have been worn. From a material culture perspective, unworn garments do not have an accompanying story from lived experience, and also don't evidence traces of wear. Using the archive as a vehicle to explore emotional attachment can be considered initially problematic, as the participants have not ever owned or worn items in the archive, and

therefore cannot be attached to them. However, the archive can act as a vehicle to illicit nostalgic memories. Indeed, the following chapters will explore examples where after seeing items from the archive, participants were reminded of clothing from their own youth, or from a particular period in history over the last twenty years.

4.3 The changing high street in Nottingham

FashionMap is representative of trends that have been retailed mostly by chain stores in a regional city centre at the heart of the UK. Nottingham is the UK's ninth largest city, with a population of 785,000 (Elledge, 2020). It's renowned for being a cultural hub of creativity with a heritage in lace making, hosiery and Raleigh bicycle production, and is a prime shopping destination in the East Midlands (Braithwaite, 2019). Nottingham Trent University is ranked in the top ten universities in the UK to study a fashion and textiles course (The Guardian, 2020), and has an extensive student population who are avid consumers of fashion. Many of these students from fashion and textiles courses were responsible for compiling the FashionMap archive. The below map (Figure 4-5) shows the main high street in Nottingham, which spans from the Victoria Centre to Bridlesmith Gate.

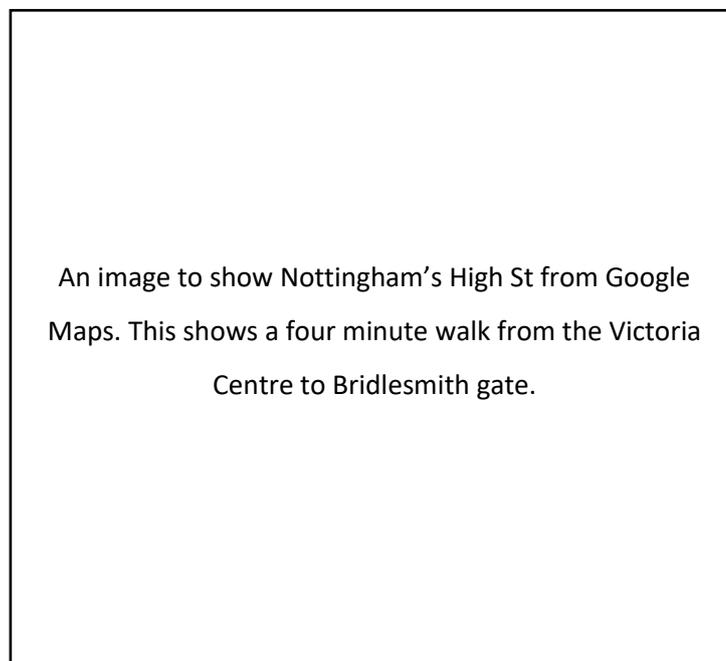


Figure 4-5 – Nottingham's High St - Google Maps

When the FashionMap archive was conceived in the year 2000, a map of the key fashion stores and their locations in Nottingham was created by students (Figure 4-6). The face of

the high street has changed considerably since 2000, and very few stores have remained trading in the same location from 2000 to the present day (2022).



Figure 4-6 – Nottingham’s High Street – 2000/2001 - NTU©

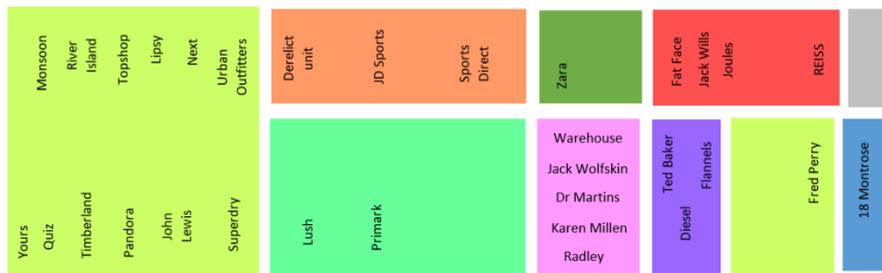


Figure 4-7 - Nottingham’s High Street – 2018 - NTU©



Figure 4-8 - Nottingham's High St – 2022 - NTU©

Figure 4-7 and Figure 4-8 show two further maps of Nottingham’s high street, which were created at the beginning (2018) and end (2022) of this PhD project.

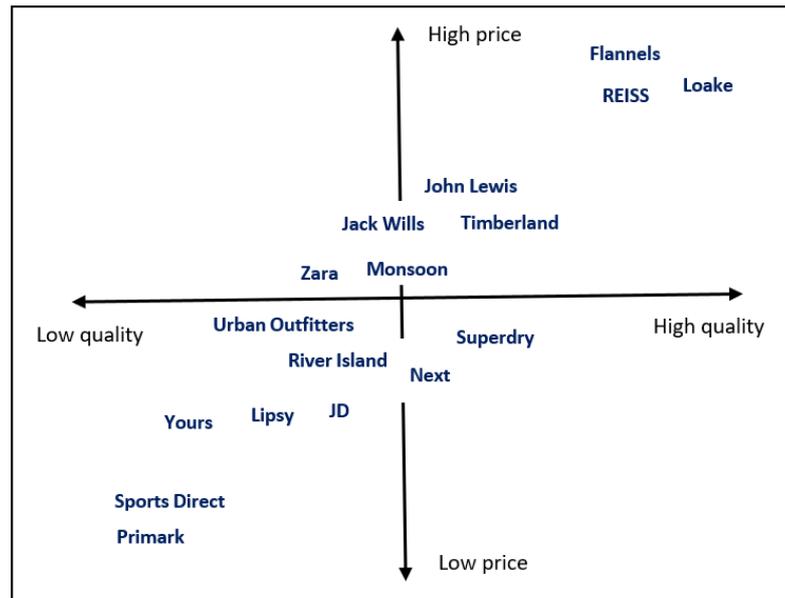


Figure 4-9 - Market positioning/Perceptual map featuring fashion brands on Nottingham's high street in 2022

Figure 4-9 details a perceptual map, showing the market positioning of the fashion brands on Nottingham's high street in 2022. These selected brands all have an important representation in the archive. The shifting retail landscape, which the Nottingham maps illustrate (Figures 4.6, 4.7 and 4.8) are an important representation of the wider decline of the British high street. This has in part been impacted by the digital age, which has enabled online shopping, and in turn, accelerated the decline of the physical retail store.

4.3.1 Online retail

It is commonly publicised that the high street is in a state of 'decline' or 'crisis.' Furthermore, The Grimsey Review 2 predicts that the number of empty shops in the UK could rise to 100,000 within a decade (Grimsey, 2018). Consumers are increasingly driven to out of town shopping centres, which offer value, convenience, choice and free parking, not available on the high street (Fletcher et al., 2016). In addition to this, technology is increasingly changing the face of shopping (Ladhari, Gonthier and Lajante, 2019). ASOS, PrettyLittleThing.com, In The Style and Boohoo are market leaders in online fashion. Several factors have contributed to the demise of the UK high street, and subsequent rise in online retailing. Rising operating costs, business rates and Brexit uncertainty have all influenced the decline of the high street (Marroncelli and Braithwaite, 2020). Covid19 increased the shift towards online shopping,

due to the forced closure of physical stores for prolonged periods of time. It is estimated that Covid19 has accelerated e-commerce growth by four to six years (Koetsier, 2020), and heightened online demand will be a legacy trend of the pandemic (Sender, 2020). Online only fast fashion retailers are highly adept at rapidly responding to consumer needs, which includes the demand for immediacy and constant newness (Weinswig, 2017). KPMG noted several retail trends of 2020, one of which is the evolving nature of business models. KPMG (2020) stated that even before the retail upheaval caused by Covid19, it was becoming increasingly clear that 'store based retailing had passed its zenith.' Furthermore, those with a poor or non-existent online channel have struggled to survive this challenging time. It was announced in November 2020 that retail giant Topshop had entered administration, and a lack of investment in an online retailing platform was cited as one of the company's downfalls (Hodson, 2020). Online sales are increasing year on year, and these sales are driven by Topshop's key demographic, the 14-24 year old market (Hodson, 2020). Also known as 'Generation Y,' this segments purchasing power and technical skills are crucial to the success of online retailers (Ladhari, Gonthier and Lajante, 2019).

Topshop are just one of the brands which has disappeared from the physical 'FashionMap' and high street in Nottingham. Morgan, Bay Trading, Etam, Pilot, Kookai, Whistles, Wallis, Dorothy Perkins, GAP, Warehouse, Karen Millen, FCUK, Coast, Hobbs and Jigsaw also no longer exist on Nottingham's high street at they did in the year 2000 (as visible in Figure 4-6). Some brands have disappeared altogether, whilst others have continued to trade online only. Morgan, which once existed as a physical store on the high street, is now only available through online retailers such as ASOS, Zalando and La Redoute, further evidencing the shift to online retailing. Ryding et al. (2017, p.247) note that, 'retailers must innovate in response to changing trends and become geographically dispersed within omni-channel systems to remain competitive.' The most noticeable shift between 2018-2022 is the change of retail units in The Exchange Arcade in Nottingham City Centre. This is the pink shaded area in figures Figure 4-7 and Figure 4-8. Over the course of four years, this shopping arcade has seen the disappearance of shops including Warehouse, Jack Wolfskin, Karen Millen and Radley. These stores have been replaced with Bubble Vintage and Loake (shoemakers). Gong Cha and Dunkin Donuts are two new further additions, which are both eateries. In addition to this, a derelict unit in the city centre in 2018 had also been transformed into an eatery by 2022 (Jollibee, a chain Filipino restaurant). This shows how the high street has had to change and adapt in order to survive. The value of FashionMap as an archive can be highlighted here, as the archive contains garments from a selection of retail stores in Nottingham which have

disappeared from the high street. This therefore adds to the preservation of their contribution to fashion. It also means that these brands' interpretations of particular trends have been conserved throughout the archive.

4.4 The Fashion Cycle

The trend research and garment collecting for FashionMap mirrored the original workings of the fashion cycle with its traditions of Autumn/Winter and Spring/Summer collections. 'Fashions are, by definition, temporary cyclical phenomena adapted by consumers for a particular time and situation' (Sproles, 1981, p.116). (Please see to Chapter 2, Section 2.4, for an in-depth explanation of the fashion trend cycle). The FashionMap archive focused on trends which had trickled down from the catwalk to gain mass popularity, and trends in the archive are thus reflective of the maturity stage. The life cycle of a fast fashion garment is typically a month or less (Doeringer and Crean, 2006).

The business models of high street fashion brands have evolved dramatically since the 2000s. Fast fashion, described as "low- cost clothing collections that mimic current luxury fashion trends" trends (Joy et al., 2012, p.273) can now be labelled as "ultra-fast." High street brands such as Zara and H&M were once known as the pioneers of fast fashion, but they have now been overtaken by online companies such as ASOS, Boohoo and Missguided (Marroncelli and Braithwaite, 2020). According to the retail think tank, Fung Global Retail, "Boohoo.com, ASOS and Missguided are now able to produce merchandise in 2–4 weeks, compared to 5 weeks for Zara and H&M and the 6- to 9-month cycle for traditional retailers" (Weinswig, 2017, p.2). The following section will detail the formation and spread of trends which occurs at the start of this cycle, accompanied with garment examples from the FashionMap archive.

4.4.1 Diffusion of innovation types

As previously discussed in Chapter 2, Eundeok's (2011) diffusion of innovation graph depicts fad, fashion and classic items of clothing. The following images show examples of fad, classic and fashion items of clothing from FashionMap online database, and corresponding student presentations.



Figure 4-10 - Fad – A/W 2002/03 - The Poncho - FashionMap NTU©.

Figure 4-10 is an image from FashionMap’s street style project, where students captured street style around the city of Nottingham over a couple of weeks each year. This particular image is from 2002/03 and depicts a woman wearing a poncho. The poncho gained popularity for a brief period in the early 2000s, but this particular style was not long lasting, and thus is applicable to the fad category.



Figure 4-11 - Classic - 2001/02 – Little Black Dress - FashionMap NTU©.

Figure 4-11 is a little black dress from the FashionMap archive. This is one of the earliest garments in the archive, collected by students for the 2001/02 season. ‘The tell-tale sign of a classic is its staying power’ (Eundeok et al., 2021, p.7). Indeed, the little black dress has remained in fashion for many years, and despite undergoing slight variations (such as the addition of gold chain straps on this dress), it remains a timeless classic.



Figure 4-12 - Fashion - 2007/08 - Shoulder Pads – FashionMap NTU©.

Figure 4-12 shows 1980s style shoulder pads, as featured in a student presentation from FashionMap. Throughout the 80s, the shoulder pad was used to enhance the silhouette of clothes, and they were sometimes used by women to galvanize an impression of power and emancipation (Almond, 2019). Their inclusion in fashionable clothing depends on current fashion tastes. In the 1980s in particular shoulder pads dominated fashion trends, and defined the term, ‘power dressing,’ which was synonymous with the decade (Entwistle, 2015). The shoulder pad is therefore a fashion item.

It can be argued that Eundeok’s (2011) trend cycle can also be viewed in economic terms, with reference to retail brands on the high street. Some brands experience rapid growth, followed by an early demise, reflective of the ‘fad’ trend. For example, the British fashion retailer Superdry achieved global success in the mid 2000s, but has since experienced a rapid loss of popularity and decline. ‘The company expanded too quickly, and in an attempt to maximise the brand's potential, it may have "diluted its appeal" (BBC News, 2019). Brands such as Topshop can be seen as ‘fashion’ items on the trend curve. The legacy of the Topshop women’s fashion chain started in Sheffield and London in 1964 (Hodson, 2020), and the brand remained on the high street until 2021, when they were bought by online retailer ASOS. Finally, a brand which can be described as a ‘classic’ on the trend curve is John Lewis, which has remained on the British high street for over 100 years (John Lewis, 2020). However, as previously discussed, the landscape of the high street is changing, and its future remains uncertain. This is reflected through FashionMap, which can be used to track the changing retail landscape in Nottingham. Whilst FashionMap looked for newness each season through the student research of high street collections, this PhD research of the archive evidences the cyclical (and repetitive) nature of trends. Indeed, the poncho as previously mentioned as

a fad style of the early 2000s (Figure 4-10), has been recently declared as the ‘next throwback trend to return’ (Sutton, 2022).

4.5 Trends

Trickle ‘down’, ‘across,’ ‘up’ and ‘round’ theories of fashion have been established in Chapter 2. Ripped or faded jeans can be seen as being part of ‘trickle-round’ theory. These types of jeans were previously associated with consumers who could not afford new pairs, typically minors or factory workers in the 1800s (Bellezza and Berger, 2019). They were however popularised by designer brands, such as Gucci, and are now part of mainstream fashion, featuring heavily on the high street. Figure 4-13 shows a pair of ripped jeans from FashionMap, purchased from Urban Outfitters in the 2014/15 season. These ripped jeans are reflective of the ‘trickle-round’ theory, and also demonstrate how the fashion system has evolved beyond its traditional model of two seasons per year. This links to the fast fashion effect, and raises questions of style and longevity, and also the speed of trends.



Figure 4-13 - DIY Denim trend - 2014/15 – FashionMap Archive NTU©

It must be acknowledged that whilst trickle ‘down’, ‘across,’ ‘up’ and ‘round’ theories of fashion are useful tools to explain aspects of trends within FashionMap, such as from which groups in society trends may originate, they cannot be used to describe the complete trend cycle. It may be the case that ‘trickle’ is no longer an appropriate verb, given the rate of change and speed of adoption. ‘Stream’ or ‘torrent’ could be more applicable verbs. Furthermore, it is difficult to place ‘fad’ trends into any one of these theories, as they do not

detail the timescale or afterlife of a trend. According to Divita (2019), 'trends also may not have clearly defined ending and beginnings.'

4.5.1 Trends are influenced by the socio-economic climate

Fashion forecasters focus on large-scale shifts in cultural indicators (Divita, 2019). 'Megatrends' indicate a critical restructuring of culture, and involve shifts in lifestyles, changes in generational attitudes or mirror cycles in the economy (Divita, 2019). This includes what is going on in the world at a particular moment in time. Hodder (1987) states that objects have meaning through their past associations, and this can also be referred to as historical meaning. Laurie Pressman, vice president of the Pantone Colour Institute states, 'Popular colours often reflect what's happening culturally and socially' (Hope, 2017). For example, the 2001 September 11th terrorist attacks in New York, are considered a major world event of the new millennium, and consequently impacted fashion trends. Clothing items were designed using the American flag, as people expressed their feelings of patriotism and grief (Eundeok, 2011). Another major world event, the 2008 global financial crash, had an impact upon consumer spending, and consequently fashion trends. Under pessimistic economic conditions, mid-income consumers purchased less luxury goods, and turned to inexpensive brands and discount retailers for their apparel needs (Eundeok, 2011). Hope (2017) noted how a "vast movement of grey" began to emerge after the 2008 financial crisis. The colour grey is 'hard-wearing and practical,' and has psychological connotations as being the colour of granite, rock and stone, indicating 'stability' (Marriott, 2014). Figure 4-14 has been taken from a FashionMap student presentation, and shows how the chosen 'White Wash' trend has been influenced by the 'current economic climate.' This trend was identified two years after the 2008 financial crash, and the colour white had been identified by students in the UK as symbolising a 'new beginning.'



Figure 4-14 - 'White Wash' trend – 2010/11 – FashionMap Archive NTU©

Global sporting events, such as the Olympics and Football World Cups can also influence fashion trends. There are several patriotic style garments and accessories in FashionMap, from the year 2002, which was a World Cup year. These garments and accessories are visible in Table 4-1.

| Patriotic garments and accessories in FashionMap - 2002: | | |
|--|---|---|
|  <p>T-shirt - Topshop</p> |  <p>Sweatshirt - Topshop</p> |  <p>Brooch – H&M</p> |
|  <p>Bag – Topshop</p> |  <p>Umbro/England cap - Topman</p> |  <p>Umbro/England cap - Topman</p> |

| | | |
|---|--|---|
| <p>Scarf – H&M</p>  | <p>Sweatshirt – Topman</p>  | <p>Flip flops with England lions – Topman</p>  |
| <p>Navy shorts with blue and white stripe – Topman</p>  | <p>Ring – Topman</p>  | <p>'England' sliders – Topman</p>  |
| <p>Pale grey tie with Union Jack design – Topman</p>  | <p>'FCUK football' t-shirt – French Connection</p>  | <p>'FCUK Football... what about me' t-shirt – French Connection</p>  |

Table 4-1 - Patriotic garments and accessories in FashionMap - 2002 - NTU©

This trend is dominant throughout the students' 2002 outfit selections, suggesting that it was prominent on the high street at the time. As previously discussed, the core nature of the fashion industry means that some items become unsustainable due to their design – as time

passes, they become outdated and 'uncool,' as dictated by fashion trends. This can be described as design obsolescence. The 2002 'fcuk football... what about me,' t-shirt by French Connection, visible in Table 4-1, could today be interpreted as potentially sexist, as the women's football game has gained much prominence over recent years. It could also be viewed as 'bad taste' considering that England ladies did incredibly well winning the UEFA Women's Euro 2022 Final against Germany. This t-shirt would have however played into the brash style of the nineties, and early 2000s. During this period, French Connection sold over one million £20 logo t-shirts (Armstrong, 2017). French Connection's FCUK logo did eventually fall out of fashion, and the brand consequently lost significant market share, as their signature strapline dated, becoming 'uncool.' However, the retailer innovatively decided to use the 'FCUK' logo once again in 2018, within the context of sustainability. To mark world recycling week in September 2018, French Connection partnered with the charity Plastic Oceans to launch 'FCUK Plastic' (French Connection, 2018). As part of this initiative, French Connection designed two white t-shirts branded with 'FCUK Plastic,' the brand described these t-shirts as, 'a nod to our iconic campaign and our nostalgic identity' (French Connection, 2018).

At the time of writing (2022), the most recent global event to influence fashion trends is the Coronavirus pandemic, which has meant extended periods of time spent at home for many people around the globe. The pandemic has had a significant impact on the fashion industry, and the importance of digital channels has been highlighted as physical stores on the high street were forced to close (Faria, Providência and Cunha, 2021). At the start of the pandemic and subsequent lockdowns in March 2020, consumers curbed their spending due to financial uncertainty, but in the months that followed, the demand for comfortable athleisure items quickly started to grow (Baram, 2020). Retailers with an online only presence, such as Boohoo and ASOS, reported sales increases with popular product categories including loungewear (Bourke, 2021). Vogue predicted athleisure to be 'the ultimate trend of the next twelve months,' with the tracksuit marking a return to basics and a desire to have a more comfortable wardrobe (Salessy, 2021).

The examples detailed in the section above demonstrate the cyclical nature of the trend cycle, as detailed throughout this chapter, and how trends can be influenced by the socio-economic climate.

4.6 How fast is fast fashion?

Historically, the UK fashion industry has been widely acknowledged to have initiated a unique strategy which has been characterised by high levels of dominance by large retailers, leading to inflexible supply chains (Bhardwaj and Fairhurst, 2010). From the late 1980s, price pressures and high levels of competition meant that UK retailers shifted their sourcing of merchandise to the Far East for a low cost advantage. This led to supply chains becoming more complex as a result of extensive geographical distance. This forced retailers to introduce practices such as JIT (just in time manufacturing) with a focus on shorter supply lines and quicker time to market (Bhardwaj and Fairhurst, 2010). Retailers in the UK started providing increased variety and fashion ability, whilst also delivering low-cost products. Mid-season purchasing was added to previous two-season calendars, this resulted in the 'throwaway market.' The 'throwaway market' became known as fast fashion, which is now the trend or norm (Bhardwaj and Fairhurst, 2010).

A shoe dataset from FashionMap was created for the paper, 'Too many shoes ? An Exploratory Study of Footwear and Sustainability' for the 3rd Plate 2019 Conference (Braithwaite and Marroncelli, 2019). This dataset was utilised to analyse the country of manufacture and price differences in footwear, demonstrating the changing landscape of the British high street. The archive contains over 200 pairs of trend-led shoes, which have been catalogued according to type, price, brand, country of origin and material composition. The dataset shows how the first pair of heels recorded as being made in China appeared in 2004. From 2004 onwards, shoes made in Brazil and China overshadowed production in Europe. This is reflective of the earlier literature – shifting manufacture from Europe to Asia for cheaper and quicker production times as a result of the growth of fast fashion (Armstrong-Gibbs and McLaren, 2017).

| <u>Image</u> | <u>Price</u> | <u>Country of Manufacture</u> | <u>Brand</u> | <u>Year</u> |
|---|--------------|-------------------------------|--------------|-------------|
|  | £30.00 | England | Barratts | 2000/01 |
|  | £19.99 | China | New Look | 2012/13 |

Table 4-2 - Examples from the heel dataset in FashionMap

Table 4-2 shows two examples from the heel dataset in FashionMap. The gold heels cost £30 from Barratts in the 2000/01 season and were manufactured in the UK. The pink heels were £19.99 from New Look in 2012/13 and were made in China. Although an isolated example, this further demonstrates significant shifts in costs and country of manufacture during the growth of fast fashion.

Trends are at the centre of the fashion system, but they also evidence the complexities of sustainability in fashion. Veblen (2007) noted how fashion is a typical form of waste. When styles fall out of fashion, old clothes are easily discarded, even if they are in perfect condition. Corporations employing ‘planned obsolescence’ introduced fashion cycles to manufactured products, encouraging additional sales by abruptly rendering the previous one stylistically obsolete (Guffey, 2006, p.70). Blumer (1969, p.276) notes that, ‘past fashions usually seem odd and frequently ludicrous to the contemporary eye.’ Von Busch (2018) builds upon this, stating that ‘being “out” does not only connote that the garments are “out” of the trend or store, but bodies wearing these garments are also left out, that is, being rejected and excluded from the in-group. The demarcation between “in” and “out” comes at a social cost, the cost of exclusion; people and bodies are rejected along with the rejected style’ (Von Busch, 2018, p.313). The cyclical nature of fashion means that some items become unsustainable due to their design – as time passes, they become outdated and ‘uncool,’ as dictated by fashion trends.

However, Woodward (2009) questions the fastness of fashion, as some trends appear to be timeless. Woodward states, ‘There is not a rapid shifting change of styles, rather street styles tend to emerge more slowly at the intersection between new looks and older styles’ (Woodward, 2009, p.95). The fast fashion business model may seem to question the

longevity of style. However, the following research into trends takes a content analysis of images and garments from the FashionMap archive, and examines how often trends do re-emerge. Monochrome as a trend gained notable significance during the 1990s, following on from the excess and opulence of 1980s style. Monochrome can be defined as, ‘using only black, white or grey or only one colour’ (Cambridge Dictionary, 2022). Designers such as Calvin Klein, Yohji Yamamoto and Issey Miyake lead the way for new minimalistic styles (Olivia, 2017). Yamamoto’s use of black became a prominent feature within his collections, and the designer ‘built a career on proving that black is beautiful’ (Menkes, 2000). Table 4-3 shows reoccurrence of the monochrome trend between 2003-2015. The repetition of this trend throughout FashionMap questions the fastness of fashion, building upon Woodward’s (2009) debate.

| Year | Monochrome trend as evidenced in FashionMap |
|---------|--|
| 2003-04 |  |
| 2006/07 |  |

| | |
|----------------|--|
| <p>2007/08</p> | |
| <p>2011/12</p> | <p style="text-align: center;">The Photo shoot</p> <p>Coat, Skirt and Necklace - Oasis Top - New Look Ring - Heise Gloves - John Lewis Earrings, Tights and Shoes - Topshop</p> <p>Model: Steph Parsons Make-up: Sally Light</p> |
| <p>2012/13</p> | |
| <p>2012/13</p> | |

| | |
|---------|--|
| 2014/15 |  |
| 2014/15 | <p>Final Photoshoot</p>  |

Table 4-3 - Examples of monochrome in FashionMap - NTU©

It is clear that between 2003-2015 there are variances within the monochrome trend, but a core element of using the colours black and white remains consistent throughout each outfit. Fashions are temporal by nature, and although new trends are continuously created, most of them are not greatly different from existing fashions, they are modifications of previous ones (Eundeok, 2011). This is evidenced through the monochrome trend with incremental additions such as floral or colourful accents complementing the style. Fashions are caught up in a recurrent process of innovation and emulation (Blumer, 1969). The same could also be said regarding personal identity, as tensions arise between the need for sameness and difference. This section has evidenced that the 'fastness' attributed to fast fashion does not always refer to the speed of new trends emerging, but it could instead allude to the speed at which garments are purchased and discarded by consumers. The adaption of the monochrome trend can be further analysed, and it may be the case that fashion in this sense is less about innovation and more about improvisation. Innovation assumes the something is completely new, but improvisation assumes that we cannot create something completely new, as our past experiences and surroundings influence what we make (Hallam and Ingold, 2007). Improvisation could be seen to enable the longevity of trends, as shown in Table 4-3, which evidences several variances in the monochrome trend.

4.6.1 Non-reoccurring trends

Alongside the identification of recurring trends in the FashionMap archive, such as the monochrome trend featured in the previous section, there are trends evident in FashionMap which do not repeat or reoccur. This does not mean that these trends will not ever reoccur, but they have only been identified by students once over this eighteen year period. These 'stand-alone' trends further evidence the complexities and nuances of the trend cycle.

For example, the trend identified as 'Pucci style prints' bought from the brand Kookai for the 2000/2001 season as featured in Figure 4-15.



Figure 4-15 - Pucci Style Prints. 2000/2001. FashionMap. NTU ©.

'Pucci style prints' only features once in the archive, but it can be argued that this is a classic style which retains longevity within the wider trend cycle. Pucci are an Italian brand, founded by Emilio Pucci in 1951. Throughout the 1950s Pucci dressed stars such as Sophia Loren, Jackie Kennedy and Marilyn Monroe (Vogue Runway, 2023). The brand experienced a renaissance in the 1990s, due to the retro trend that permeated that era, and Figure 4-15 can be seen as catching the tail end of this resurgence on the British high street in the early 2000s. This is reflective of trickle-down theory. Figure 4-16 shows a selection of Pucci dresses on NET-A-PORTER in 2023, which have a similar look and bold print to the FashionMap Pucci inspired dress from the early 2000s.

An image to show three Pucci dresses from NET-A-PORTER. The three dresses are different styles, but all have bold geometric patterns and colours.

Figure 4-16 - Pucci dresses on NET-A-PORTER. 2023.

Figure 4-15 demonstrates how trends which only appear once in the archive can retain longevity within the wider trend cycle. This links back to the limitations of the archive in that it is representative of what the students deemed important, or what they were drawn to. Building upon this, Figure 4-17, 'Warrior princess' also only features once in the archive.



Figure 4-17 – Warrior princess. 2007/2008. FashionMap. NTU. ©.

It may be the case that although the trend only features once over an eighteen year period, individual parts or part of the outfit may remain in style. For example, the handbag or shoes from this particular trend might retain style longevity when placed with a different outfit. This is a theme which will be explored in further detail in the following chapters.

4.7 Planned obsolescence and accidental classics

The fashion industry is based upon economic and industrial systems which encourage fast-changing trends and planned obsolescence (Niinimäki, 2013). The objective of planned obsolescence is to encourage repeat buying, as durability becomes a 'drag' on replacement sales volume (Guiltinan, 2009). Most fast fashion products are not designed for durability, low unit price and low quality means that they are frequently 'throw away' items. It is often not worthwhile to repair these products (Niinimäki and Koskinen, 2011). Vance Packard's (1960) criticisms of planned obsolescence came to light in the 1960s, with the prevailing view that it was unethical to design products which would fall out of style and wear out quickly. Today, issues concerning planned obsolescence continue to spark criticism, and environmental campaigners and consumers are working to highlight the cost of fast fashion. An example of this is in November 2020, when online fast fashion retailer Pretty Little Thing participated in Black Friday discounts by offering dresses for as little as 8 pence (Blackall, 2020). Experts expressed concerns about both the environmental and ethical impact of producing clothing with such low price points.

A possible solution which addresses the 'obsolescence of desire' is to manufacture products with classic and timeless designs (Mont, 2008, p.5). This strategy addresses consumers who tend to develop emotional attachment to their products. However, the implementation of this design strategy depends on changed consumer behaviour and patterns. In the fashion industry, changing consumer behaviour is reliant upon social factors, not just material properties (Fletcher, 2012). Designing classic and durable items of clothing also goes against the business model of many fast fashion brands. Despite the planned obsolescence built into fast fashion garments, some items become 'accidental classics' as they contain both classic designs and durability. In the following discussion I have used the FashionMap archive to identify 'accidental fast fashion classics,' and analyse the material and physical qualities which these garments possess. Fletcher's (2012) study shows that some garments 'defy obsolescence' in unintentional ways, by becoming 'accidentally durable.' This is rarely as a result of their design planning or material qualities. The UGG boot can be described a fashion item which has defied obsolescence in an unintentional way. UGG's hit their peak of popularity in the 2000s, with many speculating that the shoe would become a 'fad' item. However, the Australian boot has, 'defied fashions laws of gravity' (Meltzer, 2016). Berlinger (2020) explains, 'So, like it or not, UGG's are cool again. Or maybe they were always cool. Or,

keeping in mind the strange and fickle ways that trends ebb and flow in the social media era, maybe they were never cool, which is what makes them, well, cool' (Berlinger, 2020).

In order to analyse accidental classics in the FashionMap archive, I have started with an example from my own wardrobe. This dress was bought in 2010, and over ten years later, it is an item which I still wear today. The dress was purchased from New Look, it is made from 100% polyester with 100% nylon lace detailing, and made in China. This dress can be described as a fast fashion garment with unusual longevity. It must be noted here that what makes an item a classic piece of clothing is based on subjective opinion.



Figure 4-18 - New Look dress

The garment has withstood over ten years of laundering, and due to the classic style, which can be described as 'boho chic,' it has also remained fashionable. Similar style dresses were found on New Look's website in 2021, as seen in Figure 4-19.

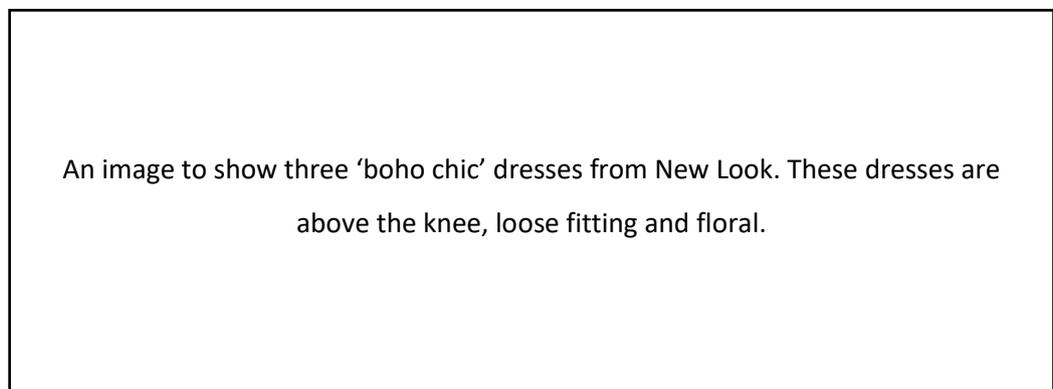


Figure 4-19 – New Look (2021).

This type of dress, which can be described as an accidental classic due to its fast fashion origins, can be linked to items in FashionMap which fall into Bohemian and floral trends. Items from FashionMap have not been ‘lived in,’ or laundered, so it is difficult to establish durability, but longevity through design can be noted through certain trends. Aspects of the 70s bohemian trend from the 2004/05 season can still be seen today, such as this faux fur gilet (Figure 4-20, available at online fast fashion retailer, ASOS). This reflects Woodward’s (2009) research which questions the fastness of fashion, and Eundeok’s (2011) theory that although new trends are continuously created, most of them are not greatly different from existing fashions, they are modifications of previous ones. It is visible in the below images how the trend for the faux fur gilet has become stylised and streamlined. The flowing bohemian skirt fashionable in 2004 (Figure 4-21), has been replaced with skin-tight leather trousers, but the gilet remains a central component of the outfit.

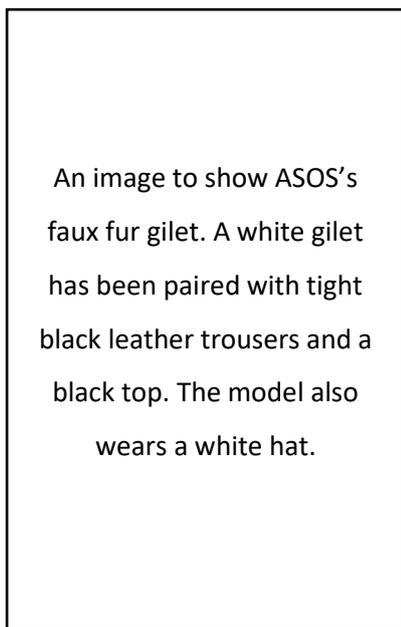


Figure 4-20 – ASOS (2021).



Figure 4-21 - 2004/05 – 70s Bohemian - Cream gilet: Etam. FashionMap Archive. NTU©

A comparable bohemian style is reflected through the below ‘Folklore’ trend from autumn/winter 2008/09.



Figure 4-22 – Folklore 2008/09 – FashionMap Archive NTU©

A 70s vintage trend was identified for spring/summer 2010/11. Interestingly, this was the same year that I purchased my New Look dress, which has a similar style, and is possibly part of the same micro-trend as the images below.



Figure 4-23 – 70s vintage – 2010/11 – FashionMap Archive NTU©

The final example which represents the bohemian trend is shown in Figure 4-24, this trend from S/S 2015/2016, and is called, ‘retro remix.’



Figure 4-24 – retro remix – 2015/16 – FashionMap archive NTU©

Flowing, floral dresses remain a consistent aspect of the bohemian trend, and this section has demonstrated how the ‘accidental classic’ can retain longevity, despite the fact that it is intended to be ‘fast’ fashion. Recycling fashion ideas is part of ‘historic continuity,’ which is ‘the steady evolution of clothing including the continual recurrence of symbolism, styles, and elements of decoration’ (Divita, 2019, p.83). Schulz (2015, p.58) argues that the product sameness on the UK high street is a ‘deliberate strategy employed by industry practitioners to limit demand uncertainty.’ Schulz’s theory can also be applied to the slow movement of new trends in the fast fashion system, such as the bohemian trend as mentioned above. The bohemian style falls into the ‘classic’ trend cycle (Easey, 2009). Through the use of the FashionMap archive, this has demonstrated the cyclical nature of trends. In the following chapters, primary research will explore the idea of the accidental classic in greater detail, through a series of wardrobe studies with participants.

4.7.1 Pseudo-events

Trends can be seen through the lens of Boorstin’s 1992 concept of pseudo-events. The pseudo-event is an event such as a press conference or a presidential debate which is manufactured solely in order to be reported on (Boorstin, 1992). This is fuelled by consumers ‘extravagant expectations,’ as Boorstin (1992, p.3) describes, ‘when we pick up our newspaper at breakfast, we expect – even demand – that it brings us momentous events

since the night before.’ This is a product of a revolutionary change in our attitude towards what happens in the world, and how much of it is new. In this way, the pseudo-event can be linked to fashion, through the constant desire for new trends, styles and outfits as demanded by the consumer, and produced by brands. As previously discussed, ‘The demand for cheap fashion is high, and the fast-fashion clothing market has grown significantly in response to this trend’ (Morgan and Birtwistle, 2009, p.190). Consumers can gain ‘status’ by following new trends, this group are also known as ‘fashion innovators’ (Raymond, 2010). The pseudo-event can be evidenced through fashion when trends are reported on as if they were ‘new.’

The top below from Monsoon is advertised on the brand’s website as ‘new in,’ and whilst the stock itself is new, the bohemian trend has been evidenced as a classic trend which retains longevity, with some styles falling into the ‘accidental classic’ category. The top below has direct similarities with the ‘Folklore’ trend from autumn/winter 2008/09 (evidenced previously in Figure 4-22).



Figure 4-25 - Monsoon, 'new in' Boho embroidered blouse. (Monsoon, no date).

A second example is the bohemian trend as advertised on online retailer Boohoo’s website. This website has an ‘edit’ for items of clothing which fit under the boho style, of which 52 products feature.

An image to show Boohoo's boho edit. Four styles can be seen in this screenshot: two kimonos, a maxi dress and a midi dress. They contain paisley and floral patterns.

Figure 4-26 - Screenshot of the boho edit on boohoo. (boohoo UK, no date)

These garments are also described as new, and feature incremental differences which set them apart from previous boho styles. One of the easiest ways to create style obsolescence is to change a fashion item's dimensions, for example, by raising or lowering a hemline (Divita, 2019). In addition to the need for newness, consumers are also influenced by the zeitgeist, and the desire for historical continuity. Divita (2019) notes how when music festivals such as Coachella and Glastonbury became popular again with young people in the early 2000s, a 'new' category of fashion was born. As described on Boohoo's website, 'Go boho for your next festival with boho style trousers and boho tops to team with floral headbands and layered jewellery' (boohoo.com, 2021). However, this 'new' category of festival fashion directly referenced the original music festival, Woodstock, with its bohemian influences that had been reinterpreted for a modern audience. The Boho garments evidenced above reflect the 'new' category of festival fashion, and Boorstin's 1992 concept of pseudo-events, which driven by consumers expectations, fuels the constant need for new fashion. The original bohemian styles become outdated, and may even be considered as socially unacceptable. Otto Von Busch (2020) describes how micro-regulations in fashion guide everyday style, and that through social pressures of affirmation, fashion is inflicted on us and enforced by our peers. In this way, the incremental differences that set apart new and old styles (such as the length of a hemline) can, 'manifest the everyday notion of social fashion regulation' (Von Busch, 2020, p.79). These findings respond to one of the key objectives, which is to explore the workings of the trend cycle, and they emphasise the complex nature of this cycle.

4.8 Conclusion

This chapter has investigated through the FashionMap archive the introduction of the fashion cycle and trends. The UK high street has been explored, and the 'fastness' of fast fashion questioned. FashionMap has been utilised to explore 'accidental classics.' Key questions have been raised; such as what stylistic attributes contribute to accidental classics. This will be explored further through the empirical research where participants will be asked to identify accidental classics in their own wardrobes. Chapter 4 has created a knowledge base which can be applied to an in-depth content analysis of trends and individual garments in the FashionMap archive. This will take place in the following chapter, (Chapter 5). A key objective of Chapter 5 is to document recurring trends in fast fashion using NTU's FashionMap collection to establish evidence of longevity and style obsolescence. This garment analysis will inform which items of clothing will be selected for use as key discussion points in the focus groups.

Chapter 5 – Content analysis (working with the archive)

5.1 Introduction

A key objective of this chapter is to document recurring trends in fast fashion using NTU's FashionMap archive to establish evidence of longevity and style obsolescence. This trend analysis will inform which items of clothing will be selected for use as key discussion points in the focus groups. The trend analysis will also deepen understanding of the workings of the trend system and what this means in terms of longevity. This will then be analysed in the context of sustainability. Garments that were sourced by the student researchers to be identified as male and female in their nature have been chosen for the identified trends. They were then used in one male and one female focus group with young adults, in order to obtain male and female viewpoints. This chapter will track trend cycles through the archive, and assess which garments retain sustainability through style and emotional durability. The chosen trends are all linked by a gendered focus, they either apply to female, male or both genders. This is crucial criteria as it facilitates a gendered approach. The process for choosing particular trends involved studying the trend document (Table 5-1) in order to analyse the frequency and patterns of various trends. This was followed by a focus on specific trends of significance. The method for deciding which trends were considered significant will be detailed in Section 5.2.

When studying archives, researchers are drawn to the material that best fits the story that they want to tell, and also stories which speak to them personally. Trends documented in FashionMap may appear representative of students' tastes, as they have been compiled by this age group, and resonate with their own fashion interests. Other studies have examined students' engagement with trends from a streetstyle perspective (Braithwaite, 2019) (Woodward, 2009) and have found a tendency for them to be drawn to participants who appear like themselves. A previous visual observation study at NTU that photographed and documented style choices as worn by ordinary individuals on the streets of Nottingham (2005-2017) evidenced that many of the photographs captured individuals who were mirror images of the fashion students who were taking the photographs. In a similar way, the trends detailed throughout this chapter are based upon student representations and viewpoints.

While these data sources may hold a specific demographic bias, they are an invaluable and unique insight into how this age group wears and consumes fashion.

5.2 Rationale for selection of focus group garments

For the purpose of this PhD, a content analysis has been used to identify and track significant trends in the FashionMap archive. Trends have been documented through a trend map, which is categorised by year and season, and can be viewed in the below table. These trends were tracked through the student research presentations. The students named the trends in response to research that they carried out on key seasonal influences on men's and women's fashion at that time.

| Year | Season | Female Trends | Male Trends |
|---------|--------|---|--|
| 2000/01 | S/S | Fifties Revival / Military / Madonna 1 / Madonna 2 / Op Art Monochrome | Denim / Military (No PowerPoint) |
| | A/W | Natural Dressing / Pucci Prints / Rock Chick / Ladylike / Golden Girl / Trouser Suit / Tailoring / Stripes / Little Black Dress | Trench Coat Mod / Sports Style (No PowerPoint) |
| 2001/02 | S/S | Gypsy / Hippy / Safari / White Suit / Nautical / Rock Chick | N/A |
| | A/W | N/A | N/A |
| 2002/03 | S/S | Acid Accents / Asia Major / Pretty Woman / Retro Punk | N/A |
| | A/W | Bewitched / Folklore / Folklore Spirit / MENS: The Mod / Raw Glamour / Tank Girl | The Mod |
| 2003/04 | S/S | 1920's / Chanel/ Cartoons | Indie Rock / Westerns |
| | A/W | Monochrome / Rebel / Rural Life (Tweed) / 60's | Punk |
| 2004/05 | S/S | Greek Chic / Florals / Ethnic Safari / Nautical | Pink |
| | A/W | Vintage Glam / Tweed / Vintage English Eccentrics / Western Nomadic / 70s Bohemian | Outlander |

| | | | |
|---------|-----|--|--|
| 2005/06 | S/S | Bold Prints / Romance / Geisha / Nautical | Rock and Roll |
| | A/W | Volume / Hitchcock Glamour / Victorian / Modern Oriental / Cossack Chic / 60s | N/A |
| 2006/07 | S/S | New Rave / Legs 11 / Floral / Soft Volume / Monochrome / 80s Elegance / Citrus | Relaxed Neutrals / Preppy / Formal Sport |
| | A/W | Gold / Mannish / Highland Fling 1 / Back to School / Leopard Print | Urban Freestyle |
| 2007/08 | S/S | On Safari / Art Attack / American Parade/ Flower Power / Sheer Romance | Shine on |
| | A/W | Warrior Princess / Big and Bold / Skin on Skin (Leather) / Dance in Purple / Statement Skirts | Slim Him (60's) |
| 2008/09 | S/S | Darling Buds 1 (Floral) / Acid Reign / African Adventure / New Romance / Geometrics | Acid Colours |
| | A/W | Minimalism / Dark Romantic / Wonderland / Peek a Boo / Folklore | Old English Heritage |
| 2009/10 | S/S | Inside Out / Print Play / New Military / Sophisticated Sports / Denim | Polished Pastels |
| | A/W | Embellishment / Ruched for Time (No PowerPoint) / Antique Opulence/ Highland Fling 2 / Sharp Shoulder | Military |
| 2010/11 | S/S | Whitewash / Colour Pop / 70's Vintage / Bad Romance / Centre Stage (Ballet) | Urban Explorer |
| | A/W | Shaggy Cuts (Fur) / Italian Glamour / Sheer and Lace / Bumpkin Chic | All the Queens Countrymen |
| 2011/12 | S/S | On Track / Darling Buds 2 (Floral) / Pastel Perfection / Shimmer and Sheen | Mr Brightside |
| | A/W | Life of Luxury / We Want Quant (60's) / Country Heritage / Do it Like a Dude / Bad is the New Black | Tailored to a T |
| 2012/13 | S/S | Lay back and Slouch (No Presentation) / Lattice / UNISEX: The Future is Floral / Stripes / Sports Luxe / White | UNISEX: The Future is Floral |

| | | | |
|---------|-----|--|--|
| | A/W | Wallpaper / Baroque / Dare to Flare / Glam-Ma / Body Doubles (Matching) / Textured New World | 70'S |
| 2013/14 | S/S | Fondant Fancies (Pastel) / Head to Toe Floral / The Long Skirt | Segmentation (Mondrian) / In Bloom / Logo |
| | A/W | Glam Punk / The Dark Arts / The New New Look / Oversized / Organic Oriental | The Modern Man |
| 2014/15 | S/S | DIY Denim / Activewear/ Walk the Line (Stripes) / Urban Jungle | Vivid Print / Denim |
| | A/W | Shades of Chrome / Tomboy / Fuzz (Fur) / Poncho | Sports Luxe |
| 2015/16 | S/S | Chalk (White on White) / Patch and Attach / Space Odyssey / Retro Remix / Active Glow | Sneaker Culture |
| | A/W | Animal Instincts / Monochrome Floral / Fluffy Love (Fur) / UNISEX: Utility | Active Lifestyle / UNISEX: Utility / Back to British |
| 2016/17 | S/S | UNISEX: Washed Out / Sew Embroidery / Underwear as Outerwear / Pretty in Pink / Jasmine Garden | UNISEX: Washed Out / Defining Lines (Stripes) |
| | A/W | Frills / Oversized / Animal Print / Modern Floral / Shine On (Metallic) | Frontliners |

Table 5-1 FashionMap trend document

The categorisation of the above trends became a starting point when choosing garments for the content analysis. The following trends have been specifically selected as they frequently occur in the above table, and can also be viewed through the lens of gender. They either apply to female, male or both genders. This is crucial criteria as it facilitates a gendered approach. Specific examples of each trend will be identified from the FashionMap archive, followed by a short contextual review of the trend. Particular significance will be placed upon how the trends link to gender and longevity, and what this means in the context of sustainability. Following this, between two to five garments from each trend were chosen from the physical FashionMap archive. These garments were used as tools in focus groups, aiming to stimulate interesting discussions surrounding clothing and consumption habits, and opinions on the fastness of fashion.

The following six trends are all influential in the history and development of fashion. A distinction can be made here between trends and garments. Denim, for example, is a trend-led garment. Kitsch, unisex, vintage and the sexualisation of fashion can be described as trends. Subcultural style can be observed as a cultural influence which inspires trends. Chapter 3, Table 3-1 detailed an adaption from Kim and Mida's (2015) literature, 'The Dress Detective.' This process has been applied to document and conduct a content analysis of garments from the FashionMap archive (visible in Sections 5.3 to 5.8), which will be used as points of discussion in focus groups.

5.3 Trend 1: The Sexualisation of Fashion

The sexualisation of fashion

| Item | Observation |
|---|--|
| Image | Capturing information from the artefact. |
|  | <p>'little black dress' Topshop, 2000/2001</p> |



Inside out - 2009/2010
– A/W



Bad is the new black -
2011/2012 – A/W



corset - Raw Glamour –
Topshop - 2002-2003
A/W

| | |
|---|---|
|  | <p>Underwear as outerwear - 2016/2017 - S/S</p> |
|  | <p>Dark romantic - 2008/2009 - A/W</p> |
|  | <p>Peek a boo - 2008/2009 - A/W</p> |

| | |
|---|---------------------------------|
|  | <p>'Legs' - 2006/2007 - A/W</p> |
|---|---------------------------------|

Table 5-2 - The sexualisation of fashion

The origins of the sexualisation of fashion can be linked back to the 1960s and 1970s which produced provocative fashion trends that reflected the growing wave of gender politics, the sexual revolution and rebellion (Paoletti, 2015). New models of dress (such as the miniskirt) reflected these desires and freedoms. As a result, this movement can be typically applied to female trends. Differences in the types of display that are achieved by the way that men and women dress can be explained through the concept of the 'seduction principle' (Barnard, 2013). This is where historically women's clothes are intended to make the wearer more attractive to the opposite sex, whereas men's clothing is intended to display 'enhanced social status' (Barnard, 2013). However, Barnard (2013) does also note that a lot of clothing is intended to display and enhance the social and sexual attractiveness of both men and women.

Loschek (2009) notes how throughout the course of history, erotic zones have changed continually, and different parts of the body have been revealed as being 'on trend' in turn. Erotic zones can include the shoulder, back, bottom, legs, navel or cleavage, and influence the perception of the entire body (Loschek, 2009). These different erotic zones can be viewed in various outfits in the above table. For example, the back is the focus of Topshop's 2000 little black dress, and several outfits have been styled to highlight the model's legs. This idea reflects Laver's 1973 theory of shifting erogenous zones. Laver's theory states that sensual areas of the female body are accentuated through fashionable clothing, and once styles become outdated, fashions transform to emphasise another area (Scarborough and Hunt-Hurst, 2014). The focus on display of the body must 'shift' from time to time as the

imagination becomes 'bored' (Paoletti, 2015). Laver also explains clothing as fulfilling the human need for display and sexual allure (Scarborough and Hunt-Hurst, 2014). Laura Mulvey (1975) states that the focus on different areas of the female body is predetermined by what she describes as, 'the male gaze.' Mulvey conducted an analysis of images of women in mainstream film, concluding that women are, 'passive objects of the male gaze' (Patterson and Elliott, 2010, p.236). It must be noted that Mulvey was writing in 1975, and it can be argued that sexualisation is relative, as we accept 2023 what may have been viewed as provocative in 1975.

The gendered focus of this trend is on womenswear, garments identified reflect erotic zones previously mentioned including the back, legs, and highlighting the waist (Loschek, 2009). Objectification theory can be used to explain how women and girls in 'sexually saturated' cultures are looked at, assessed and potentially objectified by others (Lennon and Johnson, 2015). Objectification here refers to the treatment of a person (usually a woman) as an object (Papadaki, 2010). The 'darker' side of sexuality within fashion is also reflected through FashionMap, through several trends listed in Table 5-3 such as, 'bad is the new black' and 'dark romantic.' Certain aspects of this trend have retained longevity, such as Laver's 1973 theory of shifting erogenous zones. It remains on trend for women to display their legs or cleavage, for example. The focus on display of the body does 'shift' from time to time as the imagination becomes 'bored' (Paoletti, 2015). The 'underwear as outerwear' trend, visible in Table 5-2 for 2009/2010, A/W and 2016/2017, S/S has also retained longevity in this way. In May 2021, online fashion retailer ASOS claimed that, 'Underwear as outwear is in,' calling the trend, 'the year's biggest breaking-the-internet moment' (Baker, 2021). Section 5.9.1 will explore the nuances of trends in relation to longevity.

5.4 Trend 2: Kitsch

| Item | Observation |
|---|--|
| Image | Capturing information from the artefact. |
|  | Oasis t shirt, 2000/2001 |
|  | Acid rain trend, 2008/2009 |
| <p style="text-align: center;">Chosen outfit</p>  <p>£28 New Look Dress</p> <p>£2 Bay Trading</p> <p>£15 Barretts</p> <p>£50 Faith</p> <p>£89.99 Next Coat</p> | Leopard print trend, 2006/2007 |

| | | |
|---|---|--|
|  |  | <p>Cartoons - 2003/2004 – S/S</p> |
|  | | <p>Bold prints - 2005/2006 - S/S</p> |
|  | | <p>Citrus - 2006/2007 - S/S</p> |

| | |
|---|--|
|  | <p>New rave - 2006/2007- A/W</p> |
|  | <p>Men's – acid colours - 2008/2009 – A/W</p> |
|  | <p>Men's – Mr Brightside - 2011/2012 – S/S</p> |
|  | <p>Jasmine garden - 2016/2017</p> |

Table 5-3 - Kitsch

‘What makes an object kitsch is that it is a cheap, mass-produced copy of some original object or model which was considered elegant’ (Gronow, 1997, p.42). Kitsch once operated as an indicator of social position, but this is no longer applicable as ‘clear cut divisions between so-

called good and bad taste have dissolved into bewildering configurations' (Potts, 2007, p.1). Potts (2007, p.3) notes how, 'kitsch has now lost its class connotations.' and 'some things are so bad they pass through good bad and become bad again.' This is reflective of the fashion cycle and the cyclical nature of trends. Social and cultural factors can dictate that once obsolescent styles may re-emerge again as fashionable.

A number of garments in the FashionMap archive have been identified as kitsch by the researcher, building upon the fundamental characteristics of the trend which have been identified. Key words used to identify kitsch items of clothing in the archive have included; vulgar, cheap, mass produced, ironic, bad taste, garish and sentimental. This has led to a search for items which may contain bold colours, large prints, distinctive graphics and nostalgic qualities, such as an appropriation of styles from previous decades. However, it must be noted that boundaries and limitations exist when using this method of identification for kitsch garments. Clothes which are cheap and mass produced are not also automatically kitsch, and vulgar taste may also be expensive. In addition to this, definitions of kitsch can hold cultural connotations. For example, Hello Kitty is one of the biggest and most global icons of Japanese cool (Allison, 2006), but the figure is seen as kitsch to some people in the West, and can be viewed as cute to others.

Returning to Gronow's (1997, p.42) definition of kitsch as being, 'a cheap, mass-produced copy of some original object or model which was considered elegant;' several examples of kitsch items of clothing have been identified in the FashionMap archive in Table 5-3. One of the earliest examples is Oasis's 2000/2001 cherry graphic logo t-shirt. This t-shirt features a plain white background with a red cherry graphic. The cherry was a popular feature of the pop art movement, which emerged in the 1950s in Britain. This is reflective of Gronow's statement that kitsch often reflects a mass produced copy of an original model, once considered to be elegant. Interestingly, this particular design has not become style obsolescent. A strikingly similar t-shirt was identified on Oasis's website in 2019, nearly twenty years on from the 2000 design. Oasis's 2019 t-shirt is described as the 'cherry ooh la la tee' which will 'never go out of style' (Oasis, 2019). Two years later, in 2021, Oasis featured the 'Organic cotton cherry stripe t-shirt' (Oasis, 2021). This t-shirt displays the same cherry graphic logo, showing the longevity of the cherry logo, identified as part of the kitsch style. Subtle design changes can be noted between all three t-shirts, such as the repositioning and size of the cherry logo in the 2021 t-shirt, along with the addition of stripes. However, the logo itself has retained longevity.



An image to show Oasis's cherry t-shirt 2019. A red printed cherry on a grey t-shirt, with the text, 'ooh la la.'

An image to show Oasis's cherry t-shirt 2021. A blue and white striped t-shirt with small red cherry feature.

Figure 5-1 - Oasis 2001 NTU FashionMap©, Oasis 2019 and Oasis 2021.

A further example of kitsch in the FashionMap archive is the 2008/2009 trend identified as 'acid rain.' This trend can be seen in Table 5-3. This particular trend can be defined as kitsch in terms of 'gaudy, tacky or brash – inferring both cheap manufacture and dubious aesthetic quality' (Potts and Holliday, 2012, p.47). Unlike the cherry t-shirt, this look is no longer in fashion, it has become style obsolescent. Although, it is true that individual items from this outfit might still be considered as stylish today. This could be in an ironic sense, 'It's so bad it's good,' as Wayne Hemmingway (1999) states in Potts (2007). In terms of gender, the trend for kitsch can be applied to both male and female styles, as displayed in the table. Issues of taste associated with kitsch may imply that the trend is short lived. However, as shown through the cherry logo t-shirt, some aspects of the trend have the ability to remain timeless. The cyclical nature of the trend cycle means that garments once considered as 'bad taste' can pass through the cycle over a given period of time, and emerge as fashionable. This goes against the traditional notion that trends are often short-lived.

5.5 Trend 3: Subcultural Style

| Item | Observation |
|--|---|
| Image | Capturing information from the artefact. |
|  | <p>Rebel - 2003/2004 - A/W</p> |
|  | <p>Men's – indie rock 2003/2004 – S/S</p> |
|  | <p>Men's rock n roll 2005/2006 – S/S</p> |

| | |
|---|---|
|  | <p>Dark romantic 2008/2009 – A/W</p> |
|  | <p>New rave 2006/2007 A/W</p> |
|  | <p>Men's – acid colours - 2008/2009 – A/W</p> |
|  | <p>Bad romance – 2012 -2011 - S/S</p> |

| | |
|---|---|
|  | <p>Bad is the new black 2011/2012 – A/W</p> |
|  | <p>Glam punk 2013/2014 – A/W</p> |
|  | <p>The Dark Arts 2013/2014 – A/W</p> |
|  | <p>Retro remix 2015/2016 – S/S</p> |

Table 5-4 - Subcultural style

Subcultural style can be viewed as a cultural force which inspires trends. Dick Hebdige defines the term subculture as being, 'Loaded down with mystery. It suggests secrecy, masonic oaths, an underworld. It also invokes the larger and no less difficult concept of 'culture' (Hebdige, 1979, p.4). The term was first used in the 1940s to describe groups who did not adhere to the norms and rules of mainstream society, which often consisted of young, working class people (Divita, 2019). Wilson (2003) notes how within the analysis of youth

subcultures, it is often missed that the styles of these groups are in fact surprisingly similar to that of mainstream fashions.

Hebdige (1979, p.123) describes how as soon as the original subcultural signifiers are picked up by the mainstream, and translated into commodities, they become, 'codified, made comprehensible, rendered public property and profitable merchandise.' It can be argued that youth subcultures must establish new sets of conventions, such as creating new commodities, in order to survive. In terms of the longevity of this trend, subcultures are 'time bound,' they are present for a limited period of time, and then disappear. However, aspects of subcultural style may retain longevity. Qualities of the punk style, for example, are visible in the 2003-2004 look, 'Rebel,' and also in the 2013-14 look, 'The Dark Arts.' The 'Retro remix' trend from 2015/16 which references the bohemian and hippy subculture of the 1960s, has previously been identified in Chapter 4 as being part of a classic style which questions the fastness of fashion.

Guffey (2006) studied the culture of revival, and her work can be applied to subcultures, used to explain why various attempts to revive subcultural style have taken place. Guffey states that, 'retro is an attempt to come to terms with Modernity's ideas, as well as its boundaries and mortality (Guffey, 2006, p.14). By reliving the fashions and culture of poignant and iconic times in history, this may be a subconscious way of evoking feelings of freedom and rebellion which the original subcultures experienced. Guffey (2006, p.21) states that revivals represent 'a desire to recycle the past in a somewhat exploitative manner.' In today's modern era, we can pick and choose which elements of subcultural style to revive. Samuel (1994, p.112) states, 'retro chic blurs the distinction between originals and re-makes. It prides itself on being proactive, not so much slavishly imitating the past, as reinventing it.' It is evident that even when subcultures 'die,' elements of the subculture continue to live on. Subcultural style is reflected in FashionMap, as demonstrated in Table 5-4. Featured styles include: punk, rock n roll, goth, rave culture and hippy/retro remix. Despite the fact that some original subcultures were largely dominated by male members (such as mods and rockers of the 1960s), FashionMap includes a mix of male and female subcultural styles.

5.6 Trend 4: Denim

| Item | Observation |
|---|--|
| Image | Capturing information from the artefact. |
|  | <p>Madonna 2000-2001 S/S</p> |
| <p><i>How D'ye Like Me?</i></p>  <p><i>casual</i></p> | <p>Men's pink 2004/2005 – A/W</p> |
|  | <p>Modern oriental 2005/2006 A/W</p> |

| | |
|--|--|
|  | <p>Art attack – 2007/08 - S/S</p> |
|  | <p>Denim 2009/10 - S/S</p> |
|  <p>Jacket – Urban Outfitters (£70.00) Jeans – Urban Outfitters (£59.00) Top – Zara (£25.99) Shoes – JD Sports (£70.00) Bag – Topshop (£34.00) Socks – TopShop (£3.50)</p> | <p>DIY Denim 2014/15 – S/S</p> |
|  | <p>Men's denim 2014/15 – S/S</p> |
|  | <p>Space Odyssey 2015/2016 – S/S</p> |

| | |
|---|---|
|  | <p>Sew embroidery 2016/2017 – A/W</p> |
|---|---|

Table 5-5 - Denim

Denim can be viewed as a ‘trend-led’ garment, which is influenced by macro-trends. It has a global presence, exists in every country in the world and in many countries has become the single most popular item of everyday attire (Miller and Woodward, 2007). The popularity of jeans is displayed through Miller and Woodward’s (2012) research which demonstrated that in most countries outside of South Asia and China, half the population were wearing denim on any given day.

It is likely that some younger consumers will own a pair of jeans which have been processed through a wash treatment, due to the demand for distressed denim (Card, Moore and Ankeny, 2006). However, the un-manufactured, natural surface marks acquired on denim through time can reinforce the metaphor of the cloth as a vehicle for personal narratives (Townsend, 2011). Some users strive to preserve their denim once it has reached an optimal stage of aesthetic perfection, similar to the care taken to preserve haute couture garments (Townsend, 2011). Therefore, denim is a fabric which is naturally associated with product longevity (Cooper et al., 2013). Character gained through use may also allow denim to become a vehicle for nostalgic memories, as past experiences can become woven into the fabric (Gibson, 2015). Szymdke-Cacciapalle (2018, p.7) note that denim has become the most ‘meaningful textile’ in the industry, and that since its introduction, it has crossed over ‘class, cultural and political lines.’ Denim items identified in FashionMap are visible in Table 5-5. Ripped and faded denim, skinny jeans, denim jackets and embroidered and embellished denim all feature, showing a snapshot of the evolution of the trend for denim on the British high street from 2000-2017. These different styles can be seen as aligning with fad, fashion and classic items on the fashion trend cycle (Easey, 2009). It is possible that the Space Odyssey trend for 2015/16 can be viewed as a fad. These particular jeans are covered with a shiny metallic coating which can be viewed as part of a short-term trend cycle. Skinny jeans however can be allocated to the classic trend cycle. They have remained popular for a considerable period of time throughout the 90s and early to mid-2000s. In March 2022, UK

fashion magazine Elle declared that, ‘the skinny jean is dead,’ citing shifts in trends towards the flared and baggy leg (Sowray and Murray, 2022). Thus demonstrating how the skinny jean has eventually reached the end of the fashion cycle. Denim features equally across male and female trends, and it remains a ubiquitous item of unisex fashion.

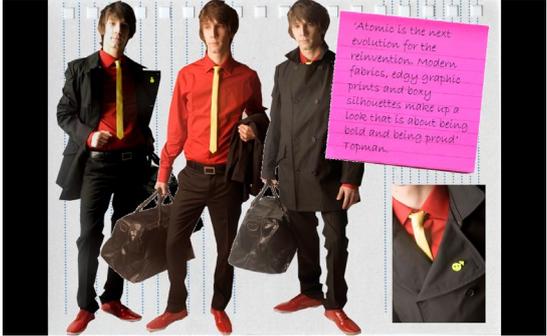
In ‘Why Women Wear What They Wear,’ Woodward (2007) concludes that jeans represent a default wardrobe mode that is central to understanding clothing choice as a whole. ‘This discussion sheds light on why women wear denim all the time. Denim allows women to fit in, given that it is so widely worn and is not restricted to any particular sub-culture or group. At the same time, it fits women’s sense of self; worn regularly, women are comfortable wearing it’ (Woodward, 2007, p.149). It must be noted that Woodward was writing in 2007, and since then, the rise in popularity of athleisure and sportswear has meant that leggings now have a strong presence in addition to denim (Lipson, Stewart and Griffiths, 2020). Despite this, denim’s ability to be ‘dressed down’ or ‘dressed up,’ means that for many wearers, it is an item which bridges the gap between habitual and non-habitual clothing (Miller and Woodward, 2012, p.10). Throughout the wardrobe studies, both men’s and women’s perceptions and use of denim will be explored.

5.7 Trend 5: Vintage

| Item | Observation |
|---|--|
| Image | Capturing information from the artefact. |
|  | <p>The Fifties 2000-2001 S/S</p> |

| | |
|---|---|
|  | <p>60s 2003-2004 A/W</p> |
|  | <p>1920s 2003/2004 S/S</p> |
|  | <p>70s Bohemian 2004/2005 A/W</p> |
|  | <p>Vintage English Eccentrics (no photoshoot) 2004 – 2005 A/W</p> |

| | |
|---|---|
|  | <p>Vintage glam (bling bling) 2004 – 2005 A/W</p> |
| <p><u>High street Sixties</u></p>  | <p>Sixties 2005/2006 A/W</p> |
|  | <p>Victorian 2005/2006 A/Wi</p> |
|  | <p>80s elegance 2006/2007 S/S</p> |

| | |
|---|---|
|  <p>Atomic is the next evolution for the reinvention. Modern fabrics, edgy graphic prints and long silhouettes make up a look that is about being bold and being proud. 7pman...</p> | <p>Men's – slim him (1960s)</p> <p>2007/2008</p> <p>A/W</p> |
|  <p>Brown cut wood belt - Pink and Lily - £22.50</p> <p>Boots - New Look - £36</p> <p>Tights - Grey/Blue and Cream - Primark - £1.50</p> <p>Jams - Mad's Own</p> | <p>Folklore</p> <p>2008/2009</p> <p>A/W</p> |
|  | <p>70s vintage</p> <p>2010-2011</p> <p>A/W</p> |
|  | <p>We want Quant</p> <p>2011/2012</p> <p>A/W</p> |

| | |
|--|--|
|  <p>Get the Look!</p> <p>Shirt by Topshop, £28.99. Bag by Next, £30.00. Shoes by New Look, £24.99. Belt by New Look, £9.99. Bow Tie by H&M, £7.99. Jacket by Zara, £69.99. Trousers by H&M, £19.99. Braces by H&M, £6.99. Tank Top by Primark, £10.00. Glasses by H&M, £9.99.</p> | <p>Men's 70s wallpaper 2012-2013 A/W</p> |
|  | <p>The New Look 2013/2014 A/W</p> |
|  | <p>Retro remix 2015/2016 S/S</p> |

Table 5-6 - Vintage

Vintage fashion has previously been mentioned in section 2.7.2 of the literature review, and is a key component of the sustainable fashion debate, as well as being a significant trend identified within the FashionMap archive. The global second-hand clothing trade can be defined as, ‘any fashion item that has been pre-loved or pre-owned’ (Ryding et al., 2017, p.245) Fashion is often associated with a craving for the new, but the ‘rise of vintage highlights the nature of novelty in fashion as erratic’ (Mackinney-Valentin, 2017, p.19). Items identified as part of the vintage trend in FashionMap are not second hand, they have all been purchased from the high street in Nottingham. The garments identified in Table 5-6 all refer

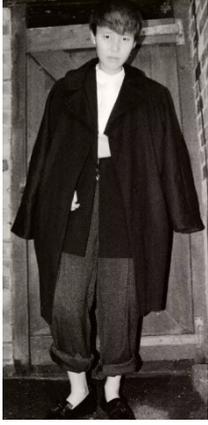
to historic trends and time periods, such as the 1920s, 50s, 60s, 70s and 80s, and can also be considered as 'retro style.'

A symptomatic criticism of fast fashion is that it can often lack individuality, due to being mass produced, and is rarely exclusive. This often equates to consumers wearing the same clothes as each other. This can be linked to an increased popularity and demand for vintage, and as a consequence vintage has shifted from subculture to mass culture (Palmer and Clark, 2005). The trend for vintage and looking back to previous decades as inspiration for current styles also reflects the cyclical nature of the fashion cycle, it can therefore be argued that on a macro scale the trend for vintage retains longevity. A reoccurring vintage trend identified from FashionMap is that of 1970s style. This is reflected throughout several outfits in Table 5-6 including 2004/2005 – A/W '70s Bohemian,' 2008/2009 A/W 'Folklore,' 2010/2011 S/S '70s Vintage' and 2015/2016 S/S 'retro remix.' According to Wilson (2003), buying into the retro trend is a way to follow fashion and simultaneously not follow fashion at the same time. Guffey (2006) notes how 'retro' suggests an admiration for the past.

Wearing vintage styles can be linked to 'trickle round' theory. This is where fashion trends originate from the elites and move downwards, but that sometimes low status is also mixed with high. The elites can adopt items associated with low status groups as a way to distinguish themselves from middle status individuals. As a result, signals sometimes 'trickle round,' moving directly from lower to upper classes, before diffusing to the middle class (Bellezza and Berger, 2019). Bellezza and Berger (2019) propose the example of the actress Sarah Jessica Parker, who was photographed wearing a flea-market jacket, but she does so while wearing Manolo Blahnik heels. The mixing and matching of downscale markers with traditional upscale tastes allows high-status individuals to more clearly communicate their social position. This can be linked to the rise of street fashion, and the decline of seasonal looks dictated by designers and retailers. As Vinken (2004, p.63) notes, 'the public no longer determines trends, but reacts to trends that emerge from subcultures.' The trend for vintage is applicable to both male and female styles.

5.8 Trend 6: Unisex

| Item | Observation |
|--|---|
| Image | Capturing information from the artefact. |
|  | <p>Mannish 2006/2007 A/W</p> |
| <p>The Outfit</p>  | <p>Men's – polished pastels 2009/2010 A/W</p> |
|  | <p>Do it like a dude 2011/2012 A/W</p> |

| | |
|---|--|
|  | <p>Pastel perfection 2011/2012 S/S</p> |
|  | <p>Body doubles (matching) 2012-2013 – A/W</p> |
|  | <p>Unisex – the future is floral 2012/2013 – S/S</p> |
|  | <p>Tomboy 2014/2015 – A/W</p> |

| | |
|--|---|
|  | <p>Unisex – utility 2015/2016 – A/W</p> |
|  | <p>Washed out 2016/2017 – S/S</p> |

Table 5-7 - Unisex

So far throughout this chapter, male and female trends have been explored. The final trend to be investigated in unisex, which considers how the boundaries between both genders can become blurred.

There are many different understandings of unisex clothing, followed by a range of interchangeable terms including, ‘agender,’ ‘androgenous’ and ‘genderless’ (Bardey, Achumba-Wöllenstein and Chiu, 2020). ‘The unisex movement suggested that men and women could wear the same garment types, styled in the same way, purchased from the same stores’ (Jenkinson, 2010). Androgyny is the blending together of the masculine and feminine, which should not be confused with unisex, according to Reilly (2020), which is the *absence* of masculinity and femininity. For example, overalls are unisex, but not necessarily

androgenous (Reilly, 2020). Unisex fashions first appeared in the 1960s as an element of rebellion, and peaked in the early 1970s (Paoletti, 2015). Men began to wear more silks and satins, and women more trousers, shirts and clumpy shoes (Gregory, 2002). In the early 1960s, young designers were producing clothing for a new generation, inspired by the sexual revolution. The movement of women into male dominated professions coincided with the rise of professional clothing for women.

Unisex fashion is predominantly associated with masculine clothing for girls and women, as reflected in Table 5-7, which details primarily women's unisex and androgenous fashion in FashionMap. During the 1960s, Gregory (2002) notes how unisex fashion appeared to be marked more stereotypically 'masculine,' with both young men and women depicted wearing the casual uniform of young men of the period. This included jeans or flared trousers with t-shirts (Gregory, 2002). The main 'feminine' adoption by both sexes during the 1960s was that of 'long, flowing artificially curled hair' (Gregory, 2002, p.47). However, boys and men did also experience a 'peacock revolution,' where bold colours and patterns entered mainstream men's fashion trends during the 1960s (Paoletti, 2015). 'The radical changes in men's clothing reflected, and contributed to the changing ideas of masculinity initiated by a youthquake of rebellious baby boomers coming of age in an era of revolutions' (Hill, 2018, p.xi). The men's 2012/13 Spring Summer trend, 'Unisex – the future is floral,' depicted in Table 5-7 was inspired from these 1960s styles. During the 'peacock revolution' of the 1960s, men were buying flowery shirts, and women were buying pantsuits. Increasingly, both genders crossed-shopped in each other's boutiques for accessories such as belts, scarves, jewellery and shoulder bags (Hill, 2018). By the second half of the 1960s, perceived effeminate styles of peacock men, and masculinity associated with women's dress met in the middle as a commercialised unisex look (Hill, 2018).

The unisex movement affected all ages, as adult fashions trickled down to school children age (Paoletti, 2015). This is reflective of 'trickle down' theory. However, by the mid-1970s, unisex clothing had fallen out of fashion, as more feminine clothing was in favour. This was influenced by the introduction of Dianne Von Furstenberg's wrap dress, and the launch of Victoria's Secret (Paoletti, 2015). Bardey et al. (2020) state that, 'unisex appears to be one of the latest fashion trends,' demonstrating the cyclical nature of the trend cycle. Both unisex and androgyny are identified as trends in the FashionMap archive by students at NTU. Along with fashion brands embracing unisex clothing, this demonstrates how the trend towards consumers questioning traditional expressions of gender is gaining strength (Falcao, 2020).

Unisex fashion therefore offers a mode of dressing which has played a part in shifting perceptions of masculine and feminine societal roles and behaviours (Jenkinson, 2010). This is a trend which has maintained longevity, as it has been adaptive to gendered societal roles which have gradually shifted over the last six decades.

5.9 Triangulation of trends

Trends are interconnected and often overlap; they rarely exist as isolated entities. It must be noted that although six trends have been identified in the FashionMap archive, many other trends also exist – both within the archive and throughout history. Please see Appendix 10 for the full range of trends in the FashionMap archive, accompanied by student photoshoots. Focusing on six specific trends has allowed for a detailed analysis. Analysing these trends raises questions which align with the thesis narrative. This includes; the longevity of trends, the role of gendered characteristics in trends and how certain trends fit into different cycles such as fad and fashion. Chapter 6 will explore in detail how participants may view the idea of style as opposed to the idea of trends and evidences how the fast fashion business model may seem to question the longevity of style, but when studied in detail, trends do frequently re-emerge. Several similarities and links exist between these trends which will be discussed in the following section.

The proposed triangulations of trends are all linked by the process of producing and consuming. In order to better visualise this triangulation, a working tool, ‘family tree’ of trends has been conceptualised in Figure 5-2:

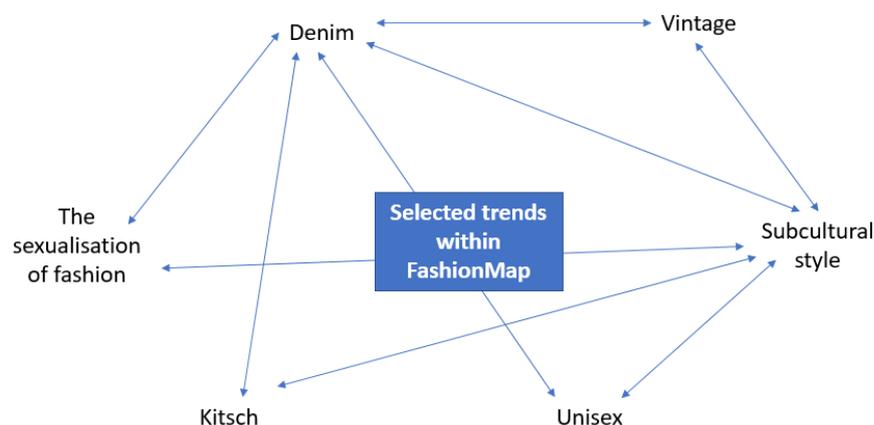


Figure 5-2 - Family tree of FashionMap trends

The first link identified is the connection between denim and subcultures. Szmydke-Cacciapalle (2018) notes how in the 1960s, the hippies started wearing denim, making it 'political.' Szmydke-Cacciapalle (2018, p.8) comments, 'It was hard to not spot anyone wearing blue in Woodstock.' Woodstock was a music and art fair which took place in New York in 1969 (Hillstrom, 2012). In the mid-1980s, Katherine Hamnett put shredded jeans on the fashion map as a symbol of economic hardship (Szmydke-Cacciapalle, 2018), further cementing the links between subcultures and denim, specifically, the punk subculture. Strong links can also be identified between denim and unisex. Bardey et al. (2020) note that one of the most famous and timeless examples of unisex clothing is the Levi's jean. During the 1960s, Gregory (2002) notes how unisex fashion appeared to be marked more stereotypically 'masculine,' with both young men and women depicted wearing the casual uniform of young men of the period. Alongside t-shirts, jeans were a particularly prominent aspect of this uniform. Steele (2015, p.284) states, 'What began as the hard-working garment of the hard-working man has been transmuted into the uniform of nonconformity— and a unisex uniform at that.' This quote alludes to denim's links between both subcultures and unisex. In the 1950s, jeans became a symbol of youth culture, and as a contemporary unisex garment, they challenged gendered dress codes, reflecting a wave of change that influenced how both genders would dress for decades to come (Jenkinson, 2010).

A further link can be identified between subcultures and unisex. Many subcultures adopted iconic unisex garments. For example, the punk subculture were commonly associated with the leather biker jacket, Dr Martens boot, and the kilt. These garments are borrowed from either sex, and they are assembled by men and women to create a new democracy of dress (Jenkinson, 2010). Reilly's 2020 research aligns with this – 'The punk, goth, and grunge subcultures and the subsequent trends they inspired contained androgynous elements' (Reilly, 2020, p.7).

Another connection identified is that between vintage and subculture. Vintage fashions were once a subcultural trend, but this has now shifted to the mass culture, as the popularity of wearing vintage has risen (Palmer and Clark, 2005). In addition to this, the 1970s/Bohemian style identified in the vintage section of the content analysis is in itself modelled on the subcultural style of that time period. Strong links can also be identified between subcultural style and the sexualisation of fashion as key trends, which were both heavily influenced by wider societal changes which took place during the 1960s. Subcultural style can also be linked

to the trend for kitsch. Hebdige (1979) noted how the punks favoured cheap trashy fabrics, vulgar designs and 'nasty' colours. These were styles which had been discarded by the elite fashion industry, considered to be 'obsolete kitsch,' but salvaged by the punks. Kitsch garments offered the punk subculture self-conscious commentaries on the notions of modernity and taste.

Further links have been identified, which have not been mentioned in the above section, for example, the connection between denim and the sexualisation of fashion. It can be argued that the cut and style of the below dress from FashionMap (Figure 5-3) links these two trends together.



Figure 5-3 – 2009/10, Spring/Summer, FashionMap NTU©

The 'family tree' of trends is not exclusive, but visualises some of the potential links between different trends. It is clear from the diagram that both denim and subcultural style are driving forces in influencing further trends and styles. Conducting a detailed trend analysis of the FashionMap archive, and focusing on six trends in particular, has raised questions over the fastness of fashion, as all trends have evidenced features of longevity through style. It can be argued that they have a wave-like characteristic as they modulate between in-fashion and out-of-fashion. Fashions are temporal by nature, and although new trends are continuously created, most of them are not greatly different from existing fashions, they are modifications of previous ones (Eundeok, 2011). Fashions are caught up in a recurrent process of innovation and emulation (Blumer, 1969). The 'fastness' attributed to fast fashion does not always refer to the speed of new trends emerging, it could also allude to the speed at which garments are purchased and discarded by consumers.

5.9.1 Defining longevity

As discussed within the literature review, longevity has been defined as, 'keeping garments in active use for longer' (Mclaren et al., 2015). The research in this thesis demonstrates that this definition should be extended to encompass 'clothing longevity' and 'style longevity.' Clothing longevity refers to the garment itself, whereas style longevity aligns to trends. The content analysis of specific trends throughout this chapter alongside the analysis of trends in Chapter 4 has identified contradictions and complexities with the concept of style longevity. Throughout FashionMap it is evident that some styles reappear consistently. For example, the monochrome trend (demonstrated in Chapter 4, Section 4.6). Conclusions can be drawn that due to the repetitive nature of this trend in FashionMap, style longevity is evident. However, the discussion is more nuanced than this, as there are several examples of trends which only appear once in the archive, but can be tracked as appearing consistently as part of the wider trend cycle. For example, the cherry motif (see section 5.4), and also the Pucci print dress, (Chapter 4, Section 4.6.1). This observation draws out potential limitations of the archive as a resource, given that it was created from students' perceptions of trends it cannot contain every trend present over the seventeen year period in which it was actively being curated. In addition to this, it highlights certain difficulties when studying the concept of longevity. For example, measuring the exact length of longevity, and the fluctuating characteristics of trends.

Some styles of clothing in the archive only appear once, and simply fall out of fashion. An example of this is the 'FCUK football' t-shirts, which were popular in the early 2000s, and feature in Chapter 4, Table 4.1. This does not mean that this trend for 'FCUK' will never return. As discussed in Chapter 4, the brand French Connection decided to use the 'FCUK' logo once again in 2018, within the context of sustainability. To mark world recycling week in September 2018, French Connection partnered with the charity Plastic Oceans to launch 'FCUK Plastic' merchandise (French Connection, 2018). Here the FCUK logo has returned, albeit with a different message, which is a reflection of how trends can follow the changing socio-economic climate.

The above examples reflect the wave-like characteristics of trends as they fluctuate between in and out of fashion, and of fad, fashion and classic items in the trend cycle. Crucially, this does not mean that every item of clothing will retain longevity. It cannot be presumed that all garments which fall out of fashion will eventually come back round the trend cycle. Factors in addition to style, such as fabric durability and the consumers individual preferences and

shifting identities must also be considered. The trend cycle implies a contradiction to longevity, as it illustrates how garments naturally fall out of fashion as they reach the end of the cycle. However, the study of trends and garments in the FashionMap archive details a more complex landscape, as trends and garments can go through different 'waves' of being 'in/out of fashion.' In this sense, longevity can be seen as being in a state of flux. The following chapters will reflect on the individual lives of the consumer in relation to the trend cycle, thus bringing forward new knowledge to the concept of longevity.

The analysis of trends in FashionMap brings a unique perspective to this study. Working with an archive of high street fashion reveals findings about the workings of the trend cycle which have not been evidenced previously in current literature. Studying the FashionMap archive over a timeframe shows how trends are repeated, adapt and evolve. The accompanying student research portfolios contextualise the archive beyond the trends and garments to consider them within broader culture. This is important as it frames the archive within popular culture and history, which perhaps brings longevity to it.

The collection would have been started on the premise that trends emerge and then fade for something new. However, the trend document and my own analysis show that looking at this collection longitudinally brings a different view to the workings of trends. The archive may demonstrate that trends are not so short lived, but the consumers view on the longevity of trends must also be considered. This leads onto the next stage of the research. This aim of this PhD is to contribute to knowledge of sustainability by exploring male and female attitudes towards clothing attachment and opportunities for longevity. The next step will therefore be to use garments from FashionMap as discussion points in focus groups, in order to gain male and female opinions on style through longevity.

The trend cycle has not been analysed before in the context of sustainability, and this is a significant contribution to knowledge which my study has brought to the discussion. My analysis so far has been of the trend, and how it is referenced through the creation of a look or outfit that has been made up of different garments. Therefore, trends are complex and not just about the theme, but how the look is styled and the design and detailing of the garments that make up the look, and therefore reflect the trend.

5.10 Final selection of garments for focus group use

The final selection of garments for focus group use is listed below, between two to five garments have been chosen for each trend category. These particular garments have been selected as they link back to the findings discussed above from the archive analysis. The chosen garments represent insights to be explored through the focus groups such as longevity through style and style obsolescence.

The sexualisation of fashion

| Item | Observation / Year |
|---|--|
| Image | Capturing information from the artefact. |
|  | <p>Little black dress 2000/2001</p> |
|  | <p>White lace top 2012/13</p> |

| | |
|---|-----------------------------------|
|  | <p>Black corset 2001/2002</p> |
|  | <p>Grey corset 2008</p> |
|  | <p>Sequin pants 2008</p> |

Table 5-8 - The sexualisation of fashion - final selection for focus group use

Unisex

| | |
|---|---|
|  | <p>Body doubles (matching) 2012-2013 – A/W</p> |
|  | <p>Unisex – the future is floral 2012/2013 – S/S</p> |
|  | <p>Unisex – utility long green coat 2015/2016 – A/W</p> |

| | |
|---|---|
|  | <p>Washed out - white top 2016/2017 – S/S</p> |
|---|---|

Table 5-9 - Unisex - final selection for focus group use

Kitsch

| | |
|---|--|
|  | <p>Men's – Mr Brightside 2011/2012 – S/S</p> |
|  | <p>Jasmine garden 2016/2017</p> |

Table 5-10 - Kitsch - final selection for focus group use

Subcultural Style

| | |
|--|---|
|  | <p>Men's – indie rock black t-shirt 2003/2004 – S/S</p> |
|  | <p>white t-shirt Early 2000s</p> |
|  | <p>Men's rock n roll boots 2005/06 – S/S</p> |
|  | <p>Bad romance - Sex pistols/H&M t-shirt 2010 -2011 – S/S</p> |

| | |
|--|---|
| | <p>Glam punk- tartan trousers 2013/14 – A/W</p> |
|--|---|

Table 5-11 - Subcultural style - final selection for focus group use

Denim

| | |
|--|--|
| <p><i>How D'ye Like Me?</i></p> <p><i>casual</i></p> | <p>Men's pink - Levi's jeans 2004/05 – A/W</p> |
| | <p>Women's studded jeans 2000/2001</p> |

| | |
|--|--|
|  <p>Jacket – Urban Outfitters (£70.00) Jeans – Urban Outfitters (£59.00) Top – Zara (£25.99) Shoes – JD Sports (£70.00) Bag – Topshop (£34.00) Socks – TopShop (£3.50)</p>   | <p>DIY Denim - jacket and jeans 2014/15 – S/S</p> |
|   | <p>Space Odyssey - jeans 2015/2016 – S/S</p> |

Table 5-12 - Denim - final selection for focus group use

Vintage

| | |
|---|--|
|   | <p>1920s -skirt 2003/2004 – S/S</p> |
|---|--|

| | |
|---|---|
|  | <p>Folklore - dress 2008/2009 – A/W</p> |
|  | <p>Men's 70s wallpaper - trousers, waistcoat and jacket 2012-2013 – A/W</p> |

Table 5-13 - Vintage - final selection for focus group use

5.11 Conclusion

A key objective of this chapter has been to document recurring trends in fast fashion using NTU’s FashionMap archive to establish evidence of longevity and style obsolescence. This trend analysis has directly influenced which items of clothing have been selected for use as key discussion points in the focus groups. Male and female garments have been selected for the corresponding trends which will be used in one male and one female focus group with young adults, in order to facilitate a gendered approach.

The driving force of this chapter has been longevity, and the longevity of each trend has been considered throughout the analysis. This has been achieved by tracking trend cycles through the archive. In the context of this thesis, the trends discussed have been linked to literature regarding the trend cycle (Easey, 2009) and theories of trend diffusion (Eundeok, 2011). FashionMap allows for an exploration of debates surrounding longevity and gender through the mechanisms of the fashion system. This will be examined further in the following chapters considering the lives of the young consumer. The next stage is to assess which

garments retain sustainability through style and emotional durability. Garments selected from the FashionMap archive will act as discussion points in the focus groups, stimulating interesting conversations around trends, style and emotional attachment to clothing. Participants' opinions on items from the FashionMap archive, and also their own wardrobes will be explored.

Chapter 6 – Fashion Trends and Garment Types

6.1 Chapter Introduction

A content analysis of the archive, conducted in the previous chapter, utilised garment and trend research to identify significant trends, and examined the workings of the trend cycle in the context of sustainability and longevity. The sexualisation of fashion, kitsch, subcultural style, denim, unisex and vintage were identified as reoccurring trends in the archive over an eighteen-year period. These trends were specifically selected as they frequently reoccur and can also be viewed through the lens of gender. The chosen garments represent insights which have been explored through the focus groups such as longevity through style and style obsolescence. Please refer to Chapter 5, Section 5.10, for the final selection of garments for focus group use, which was based on the six trends mentioned above.

Significant data was collated following the completion of focus groups with students and young adults. In addition to this, data from several pilot studies has also been considered during the analysis. The analysis has been structured into two chapters (Chapter 6 and 7) which cover the main themes identified during transcription of primary research data. These themes responded to issues raised in the literature review and analysing the themes has contributed to knowledge in the field. The themes are as follows:

- The trend cycle and incremental style differences (Chapter 6)
- Garment types – denim and t-shirts (Chapter 6)
- Emotional attachment (Chapter 7)
- Sustainability (Chapter 7)

Surveying the literature in the fields of sustainability and fashion revealed a lack of approaches which considered the role of gender in understanding these debates. In response to this, gendered attitudes and behaviours will be explored as a thread throughout the different sections of this analysis, with a view to identify whether gendered distinctions had an influence on the findings. As students and young adults have been identified as the sample participants, a specific analysis will be undertaken to determine potential differences in the life stage split of the given sample. This may prove important to the sustainability debate, as the consumer behaviour of students and young adults may differ, and therefore possible recommendations may need to be specifically tailored to different generations.

The FashionMap archive will be utilised throughout the findings and discussion, both directly and indirectly, as a key research tool. Garments from the archive will be analysed under the first two sections, 'the trend cycle and incremental style differences' and 'garment types,' in Chapter 6. In Chapter 7, the archive will be used as a vehicle to explore the longevity of style, through the remaining two themes, 'emotional attachment' and 'sustainability,'. The analysis will identify opportunities for change which will contribute to the sustainability debate.

6.2 The trend cycle and incremental style differences

6.2.1 Introduction

'Over the past decade, sustainability and ethical conduct have begun to matter in fashion, companies have realized that affordable and trend-sensitive fashion, while typically highly profitable, also raises ethical issues' (Joy et al., 2012, p.274).

Ten years after it was first published, the above quote is now extremely relevant. This section of the analysis will address the research objective, 'to investigate student and young adults' opinions towards sustainability and fast fashion,' and will also aim to understand male and female attitudes and behaviours. It can be argued that breaking the current unsustainable fast fashion economic system will require a collaborative, global effort between both companies and consumers. One factor may involve shifting consumer mindsets around purchasing habits and over-consumption. The content analysis of trends within the FashionMap archive raised questions of longevity, the fastness of fashion, and the analysis of this chapter will further challenge the fastness of the trend cycle, and perceived style obsolescence. A possible solution which addresses the 'obsolescence of desire' is to manufacture products with classic and timeless designs (Mont, 2008, p.5). This strategy addresses consumers who tend to develop emotional attachment to their products. However, the implementation of this design strategy depends on changed consumer behaviour and patterns. In the fashion industry, changing consumer behaviour is dependent upon social factors, not just material properties (Fletcher, 2012). In order to achieve this, greater understanding of consumer behaviour and attitudes is needed, which this study has intended to reveal. The FashionMap archive will be utilised here to question the fastness of fast fashion and to interrogate the concept of longevity in the context of style and trends.

Garments selected from FashionMap acted as discussion points in the focus groups. Participants were shown images of the garments on a projector screen. In addition to this,

they were also shown the physical garments alongside. It was important to show participants both an image and the physical garment, as this meant that they were able to handle the garments during the focus groups, thus being able to engage with the materiality of the garments. This was a crucial factor in determining their responses. Participants were asked two questions for each look, the first question being: 'What year do you think this style was created?' The aim of this question was to gauge the enduring style and fashion ability of these fast fashion garments, in order to assess which looks retained sustainability through style. The second question to be asked was: 'Would you wear this outfit today?' This question links to the participants' personal interpretations and sense of taste, and was asked with the intention to reveal what makes a style desirable to an individual. A particular focus was placed on gaining participants' opinions on items from the FashionMap archive, and also their own wardrobes. This allowed for an analysis and discussion surrounding the trend cycle and fastness of fashion, with the intention to reveal sustainability implications.

6.2.2 Findings and Discussion

Findings from the content analysis evidenced that trends do re-emerge frequently within the FashionMap archive, which challenges some of the existing debates surrounding the fastness of fashion, building upon Woodward's (2009) research. Having already fleshed out discussions surrounding the fastness of fashion in Chapter 4, Section 4.7, attention will now move onto the focus group findings.

6.3 Small, incremental style differences

One of the main conclusions uncovered through analysing and coding transcriptions from focus group data was that it became apparent how small, incremental changes linked to trends means that garments become 'uncool' to the consumer, and fall out of fashion. This data was collected through showing participants both an image and the physical garment from FashionMap. Following this, three key variances have been identified, which will be detailed in the below section. Collectively, they demonstrate a new way to understand the trend system post 2020.

6.3.1 'I would wear part or parts of the outfit'

The first key code identified was that participants would wear 'part or parts' of the outfit, but not the whole outfit today. An example of this is the female trend for unisex, from the year 2012/13. After seeing Figure 6-1 on screen and being shown the matching suit, a female young adult stated, '*I don't think I'd wear it as an outfit, maybe separately.*' (See Figure 6-1 below).

Unisex



Figure 6-1 - Unisex 2012/13, FashionMap NTU©.

Sarah, a female undergraduate student, held a very similar opinion,

I would wear the pants today, but not the whole outfit. I think I would wear them with something longer, like a longer coat – Sarah.

For the next unisex trend, pictured in Figure 6-2, Zelda, a female young adult, stated,

I like the socks, I have those socks actually.

This identified one specific part of the outfit which the participant would wear today. (Please refer to Figure 6-2).



Figure 6-2 - Unisex 2016/17, FashionMap NTU©

The below male trend for kitsch (Figure 6-3) was presented to the male young adult focus group, with one respondent stating, *'I probably would wear the trousers with a black t-shirt, if they were the only bright part of the outfit. If that makes sense.'*



Figure 6-3 - Kitsch 2011/12, FashionMap NTU©

It is apparent that for some styles, the whole outfit worn together becomes style obsolete, but parts of the outfit remain in fashion. This common theme was mentioned six times throughout the duration of both young adult focus groups, and also in the undergraduate workshop. This shows how small, stylistic details are incredibly important to the consumer, but also questions the speed of design obsolescence and the fastness of fashion. It is possible to challenge assumptions that consumers are fickle, or that fashion is always 'fast,' when clothing is investigated through ordinary consumption practices (Woodward, 2014). So perhaps it is the 'complete look' which makes up a trend that falls out of fashion, and not the individual garments themselves. This is reflective of how garments can be bought as individual items, and are often not purchased together as a whole outfit. In this way, the focus is on the individual piece, and not about the complete trend. This links back to FashionMap in terms of the physical garments, but also the trend research compiled by the students. Figure 6-4 shows a breakdown of individual items from the Unisex trend, previously identified as one of the six significant trends in the archive.

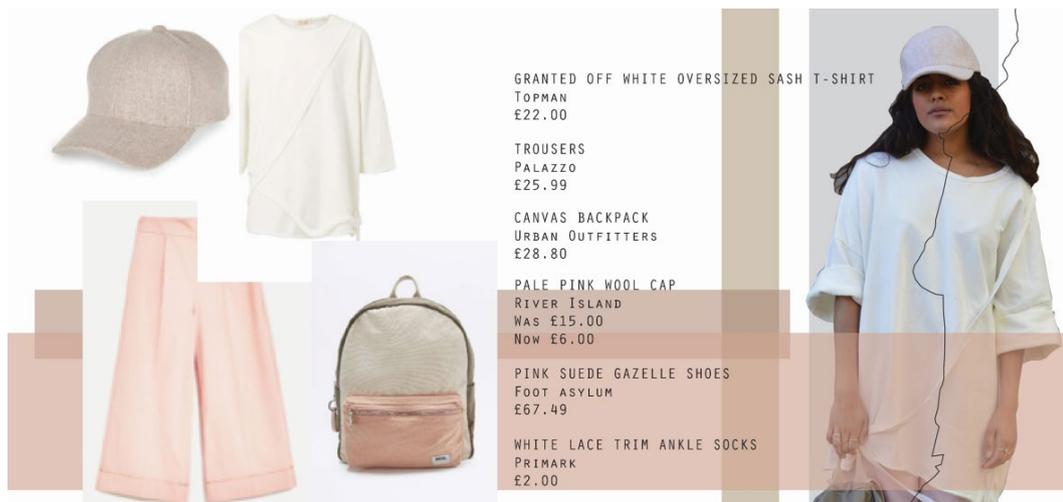


Figure 6-4 - Unisex trend 2016/17 breakdown of components, FashionMap archive NTU©

Although this trend was purchased as a whole outfit (as per the students brief), it is clear that the outfit was sourced from a variety of high street shops including; Primark, Foot Asylum, River Island, Urban Outfitters and Topman. This is as opposed to purchasing the whole outfit from one store, and consequently places an importance on the individual items which make up the trend.

The purchasing and wearing of clothing often conceals the complexities of the term 'fast fashion,' (Woodward, 2009) as evidenced through this research, as not all parts of the outfit follow 'fast' trend cycles. Given that Woodward questioned the complexities of fast fashion in 2009, an opportunity is presented to develop this viewpoint in terms of what it now means for the present day (2023). The fast fashion industry has developed since 2009, with increased awareness of sustainability issues, in addition to the rise of social media. It can be argued that because of this, the meaning of 'fast' fashion has become less concealed. However, it is still the case that not all parts of an outfit follow 'fast' trend cycles. This could be because individual parts of the outfit come back into style, fall out of fashion at a slower pace than the outfit as a whole, or indeed retain style longevity. Despite this, trends documented in FashionMap are likely to have been created by high street brands with intended style obsolescence, as dictated by the nature of the fast fashion industry. This raises the question as to whether it is the trend cycle system which causes garments to fall out of fashion, or the individual consumers changing preferences.

6.3.2 'I would wear the outfit, but only if it were to be altered in some way'

The second key theme identified is that several participants mentioned that they would wear the given outfit, but only if a part of the outfit were to be different, or altered in some way. Examples of this viewpoint are visible below:

I think I would wear it, but I would buy it in a size up – Ella, a female young adult (describing Figure 6-5).

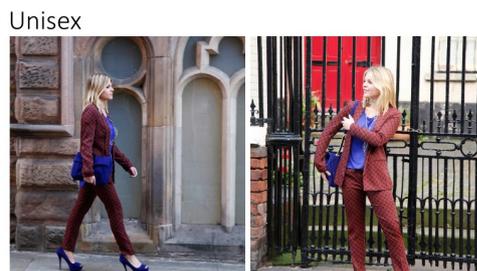


Figure 6-5 - Unisex trend 2012/13. NTU©.

I'd probably wear it if it was a bit shorter, if it didn't look a bit more like a trench coat – Christy, a female young adult (describing the coat in Figure 6-6).



Figure 6-6 – Unisex trend 2015/16. NTU©.

If you cut those things off the top, then yes – Zelda, a female young adult (describing Figure 6-7).



Figure 6-7 - Unisex trend 2016/17. NTU©.

The colour of the shirt is fine, the thing which puts me off is the sharpness of the colour of the buttons – Otto, a male young adult (describing Figure 6-8).



Figure 6-8 - Kitsch 2011/12. NTU©.

The trousers are just slightly too bright – Jay, a male young adult (describing Figure 6-9).



Figure 6-9 - Kitsch 2011/12. NTU©.

This highlights the subtle design features which render certain designs style obsolescent (as previously evidenced through the monochrome trend in Chapter 4, Section 4.7). Kopytoff (2014) notes how objects can convey subtle meanings. These findings also emphasise the complexity of individual consumers, and their differing taste and style choices. Links can be made here with the postmodern idea that identity is fluid and fragmented, which can be reflected through the purchasing of fast fashion clothing (Furlong, 2016). This consequently presents challenges for sustainability, but also demonstrates a benefit of the fast fashion industry, in that it can easily fulfil consumers' needs and cater to individual identities. Fashions are temporal by nature, and although new trends are continuously created, most of them are not greatly different from existing fashions, they are modifications of previous ones (Eundeok, 2011). This resonates with the links between fashion and improvisation (as discussed in Chapter 4, Section 4.7). Innovation assumes the something is completely new, but improvisation assumes that we cannot create something completely new, as our past experiences and surroundings influence what we make (Hallam and Ingold, 2007). Fashions are caught up in a recurrent process of innovation and emulation (Blumer, 1969). However, the incremental style differences are important, as although they might only be a small deviance from the desired look, such as the colour of a button as mentioned in the above section, this feature means that the outfit becomes rejected and redundant. It may also be the case that the participants' desire to alter the garments in some way might be reflective of a consumer need and want for individuality and personal identity. The participants' desire for individuality to be included in their garments is a theme commonly found amongst my given sample (students and young adults). Younger generations search for individuality is a topic which has received previous scholarly attention (Dempsey, 2020). Dempsey's (2020) research found the move from adolescence to adulthood to be a pivotal transition where cultural, social and personal changes were likely to take place in an individual's life. This is reflective of my samples' findings in relation to the importance of individuality at this life stage. The opportunity for announcing individual identity is only now possible through products provided by a shifting and uncertain mass culture (Darden and Worden, 1991). In this way, 'Consumption becomes a natural tool for present and future identity building' (Deutsch and Theodorou, 2010, p.251). This raises questions in terms of the longevity and sustainability of fast fashion garments, which will be addressed in greater detail in Chapter 7, Section 7.5.

6.3.3 'I like but wouldn't wear it'

The final key theme identified is that several participants stated how they, 'liked but wouldn't wear' garments and outfits from the FashionMap archive. This particular trend was mentioned eight times during both focus groups, and specific examples can be seen below:

I really like the styling in the shoot, but it's not the same as wanting to wear the outfit – Kelsey, a female young adult (describing

Figure 6-13).



Figure 6-13 - Unisex 2015/16. NTU©.

I wouldn't wear it, but I don't know why, I kind of like it – Lucas, a male young adult (describing Figure 6-14).

For me, it is almost nice, but I dunno, there is something that puts me off it, I don't know what. But I do quite like it – Theo, a male young adult (also describing

Figure 6-14).



Figure 6-14 - Vintage. 2012/13. NTU©.

I like the idea of it, but I'd probably look at myself in the mirror, and wouldn't like it – Charles, a male young adult (describing Figure 6-15).



Figure 6-15 - Kitsch 2011/12. NTU©.

This key theme can be linked to the idea that trends may not always be the motivation behind what makes a consumer purchase, and subsequently want to wear, an item of clothing. This raises the question of the influence of the trend versus the importance of individual style. As previously discussed, consumers value individuality, and this presents a challenge for the fashion industry, who are responsive to the latest trends. This research has demonstrated how consumers are individual, subjective and not always driven by trend-led designs, illustrating how consumer behaviour in relation to the consumption and interpretation of trends can be complex.

The three key themes identified above display the importance of incremental style differences on the fashion-ability and longevity of trends. However, despite this, an overarching theme emerged, which was that none of the garments discussed in the focus groups looked 'out of place.' When asked to reflect on the term 'fast fashion' after learning the correct years which each outfit was bought, Ivy, a female young adult stated;

If you saw anybody wearing any of those things out in the street now, you wouldn't think oh, that's very 2003, 2004. Everybody would still look pretty normal in those things (Ivy).

Similarly, Charles, a male young adult held the same viewpoint;

For me, I struggled to place any of them really. I'm not particularly fashion conscious myself anyway, but I don't look at these outfits and think that any of them look massively out of place. For me, it does challenge thinking about fast fashion (Charles).

This quote demonstrates how participants may view the idea of style as opposed to the idea of trends and evidences how the fast fashion business model may seem to question the longevity of style, but when studied in detail, trends do frequently re-emerge. These trends may have fallen out of fashion, and come back round the trend cycle, or they have remained timeless pieces, due to being a classic look. This pattern is reflective of the fashion product life cycle, as discussed in the literature review. The example below shows how participants are aware of this cycle:

We have established the chiffon-esque [sic] pleated skirt has been in for the past 20 years, and it's not going anywhere (Robyn, a female young adult, describing Figure 6-16).



Figure 6-16 - Vintage (1920s) 2003/04, FashionMap NTU©

However, this relationship can be complex: just because something has remained in fashion, it doesn't always mean that the consumer will want to wear it, as shown through Key Code 3. Recycling fashion ideas is part of 'historic continuity,' which is 'the steady evolution of clothing including the continual recurrence of symbolism, styles, and elements of decoration' (Divita, 2019, p.83). Timeless fashion styles, such as the 'chiffon-esque pleated skirt,' may also be known as 'accidental classics' in the FashionMap archive. The 'accidental classic' is identified as a style which has retained longevity, despite the fact that it is intended to be 'fast' fashion, and will be explored in greater detail in Chapter 7, Section 7.5 of the analysis.

6.3.4 Wardrobe study wider findings

Wardrobe studies have been utilised throughout this study as a significant primary research method which have facilitated an opportunity to consider how individuals relate to their own clothing collections, and their attitudes towards fashion and sustainability, bringing rich data to the research. General findings from this research method included consumer behaviours

around buying and wearing garments. When interviewing participants in front of their wardrobes, they often discussed buying individual items, not necessarily whole outfits together. This is reflective of findings uncovered through Section 6.3.1 where garments can be bought as individual items, and are often not purchased together as a whole outfit. The focus is on the individual piece, and not about the complete trend. Participants did not actively discuss following trends, and garments stored in the wardrobe reflected many influences, including fashion, function and emotion. In this way, the wardrobe can be seen as a fragmented space, and links can be made here to the idea that identity is also fluid and fragmented (Furlong, 2016).

Despite the focus on individual pieces within the wardrobe, there is value in examining the relationship of a collection of owned garments, rather than just individual items, as this helps to draw out the workings of the wardrobe. Wardrobe studies have demonstrated how emotional attachment to clothing can be uncovered through feeling and memory. The trend is about the look not the feel, but the individual cares about *feel* and *memory*. This finding will be discussed in greater detail in relation to materiality of garments in Chapter 7, Section 7.3, when focusing specifically on the hoodie and jumper. The next stage of the analysis will consider a development of Section 6.3.3, where wardrobe study data has been utilised to further the discussion around the opinion that participants, 'liked, but wouldn't wear' items from FashionMap.

6.3.5 'I like it but wouldn't wear it' – further thinking

This section will build upon Section 6.3.3. This can be linked to the first objective, which is to examine the workings of the trend cycle. As previously discussed, it became apparent how participants may view the idea of style as opposed to the idea of trends, and this consequently raised the question of the influence of the trend versus the importance of individual style. Wardrobe studies followed the focus groups, and 30% of participants were interviewed more than once, which means that a number of participants took part in both the focus groups and wardrobe studies. Throughout the course of the wardrobe studies, participants were asked a series of questions, including if they owned or had kept any clothing which remained unused in their wardrobes. A motivation for asking this question was to uncover the reasons why this clothing had been kept, and how this could be applied to the context of sustainability. Building upon focus group data, and in particular Section

6.3.3, the idea of unused clothing in the wardrobe can be linked to focus group findings, where participants stated that they, 'like but wouldn't wear' garments from FashionMap.

Woodward (2015) discusses how wardrobes are a space where things are worn all the time, and also a space where things are rarely worn. Studying these spaces 'allows for an understanding of the diversities of clothing practices' (Woodward, 2015, p.221). Cwerner's (2001) research shows how it is often assumed that clothes are always worn. However, for the majority of their active lives, clothes are stored away, and spend most of their time 'at rest.' Unused clothing in the wardrobe became a key focus during wardrobe studies with students and young adults. The majority of participants interviewed did possess a number of items of clothing which were stored but not currently in use in their wardrobes. A common re-emerging theme mentioned several times throughout the wardrobe studies was that the Covid-19 pandemic had stopped participants from wearing formal clothes, and that these clothes had largely remained dormant in wardrobes over the last two years:

There's a few bits that I have bought and then not had anywhere to wear them – Charles, a male young adult.

Participants also mentioned also only wearing a very small percentage of their overall wardrobes:

I have a really small wardrobe, and I probably wear like 15% of that. I wear the same thing every day, and maybe switch it up a bit at the weekend – Jake, a male student.

I probably only wear about 5% of my wardrobe, I often cycle through the same outfits, which I love. I've hardly worn some things because of the pandemic, if you take out weddings and holidays, I probably wear quite a small percentage of my wardrobe – Kelsey, a female young adult.

The key theme of wearing a small section of the overall wardrobe applied to both genders, who mention above wearing the same outfits regularly. This may be because they feel comfortable in their everyday clothes. Comfort is an incredibly important factor when deciding what to wear, and moreover there has been a noticeable general trend towards more comfort in fashion (Bardey, Achumba-Wöllenstein and Chiu, 2020). 'Comfort is far more than just the feel of a fabric, as this physical experience also encodes a sense of what seems suitable or appropriate for a particular person' (Miller and Woodward, 2012, p.52). It can be argued that there is comfort in the ordinary, and in everyday routine. In the same

way, unused clothing can be linked to garments which make the user feel ‘uncomfortable.’ Elle, a female undergraduate student, details this viewpoint below,

Generally, there are a few things that I don't feel myself in, or if I've had a bad social experience/encounter in it, I tend to keep these things at the bottom of the pile, and then not go to them again. I have a few clothes like that – Elle.

Here, Elle is describing an uncomfortable physical experience which has determined that certain clothes no longer get worn in her wardrobe. Miller and Woodward (2012) note how comfort can be described as both the physical idea feeling comfortable and the social concern of how the wearer looks in public. In addition to feeling uncomfortable in clothes that she no longer wears, Elle describes how she ‘doesn’t feel herself’ in these clothes. This may be as a result of the shifting relationship between style and identity as the participant has matured. It is important to consider the materiality of garments within the longevity of trends, particularly within the context of the consumer. Elle is an undergraduate student, and the move from adolescence to young adulthood is a pivotal transitional period, which can commonly include stylistic exploration (Dempsey, 2020). Ivy, a female young adult, details how a lack of confidence leads her to feel uncomfortable when wearing a red ‘skimpy’ dress:

For me, this dress is quite skimpy, and I'm not sure how I feel about wearing something this skimpy, but like, I still like it. So I have the intention of wearing it. But then I put it on and I'm like, oh no. You can see what I've eaten for lunch. I have the intention of wearing it again. Yeah, but I don't know if I have the confidence to – Ivy.



Figure 6-17 - Ivy's red dress

Ivy's concerns here are linked to negative body image, which means that this item of clothing remains unused in the wardrobe. This leads to the question, 'why is this clothing kept?' Ivy mentions that she 'has the intention' of wearing the dress, and it is therefore this intention which stops the dress from being discarded. Unworn clothing is used to remember former versions of the self (Banim and Guy, 2001), and we save threads of the past, in order to keep our memories alive (Gibson, 2015). Woodward (2015) notes how things which are no longer used can still resonate with memories and also associations with people. The process of discarding of these items 'can become a problematic and emotionally charging experience' (Woodward, 2015, p.217).

Considering this through a gendered lens, the above concerns regarding body image and physical discomfort are not factors that male participants described when detailing unused clothing in their wardrobes. Male participants mainly mention keeping old, unused clothing for 'back up.'

I have a couple of bits on the top shelves, like old jumpers that are on their way out. I'll keep these as a backup – Otto, a male young adult.

Brennan et al.'s (2010) study looked at gender differences in body image perceptions between undergraduate students in North America. They carried out an online survey with 200 participants, and findings demonstrated that body dissatisfaction was more common and felt more strongly amongst women, but that men were also clearly affected by body dissatisfaction. Parallels can be made between Brennan et al.'s (2010) study and this research. Just because male participants didn't mention negative body image as a factor when describing unused clothing in their wardrobes, it doesn't mean that they are not affected by it. Males may not have mentioned negative body image for several reasons – one reason could be because they didn't feel comfortable talking about these issues with a previously unknown female researcher.

6.4 Band t shirts and understanding the trend cycle

Band t-shirts will form the premise of the following discussion due to their prominent feature in both FashionMap and the participants' wardrobes. Several male participants mentioned their band t-shirts during the wardrobe studies. Due to their designs, which often contain graphics and typography, band t-shirts have the ability to draw out interesting discussions surrounding trends and authenticity, which will be reviewed in the following section. The

band t-shirt will be used to question trend cycle longevity, and individual feelings around style and identity, building upon the key points raised in Section 6.3. This garment has been described as a visual signifier to subcultural identity, whilst also working as an expressive tool which has the ability to convey irony, authenticity and hyperbole (Mackinney-Valentin, 2017). Band t-shirts are examples of garments which are coded with cues that are recognised by the wider society and the insular communities which they emerged from (Sklar and Donahue, 2021). Initial analysis following transcription of primary research data demonstrated that participants held a comprehensive understanding of the trend cycle. This became apparent through focus group and workshop discussions surrounding the years which particular items from FashionMap were bought (it must be noted that these participants were not from a fashion background). Tammy, a female undergraduate student, stated,

I see how some pieces could come out in like 2003, but it would still be okay to wear them later on... But then again, like fashion always does come back, like repeats itself. Not always, but often – Tammy.

When asked if learning the correct years which garments were purchased challenged his perceptions of fast fashion, Charles, a male young adult, responded,

The thing which threw me off a little bit was the one with Converse and band shirts, I think it was 2001, I guessed the timeline was 2012/2013. When I was at uni, there was a lot of people dressing like that, including myself. So obviously, it's come back around, so it made it hard for me to judge where it started – Charles

Yes, so maybe it is a timeless style? – Interviewer

Or it has gone round the loop already – Charles



Figure 6-18 - Band t-shirts from FashionMap archive - NTU©

The t-shirts discussed in the dialogue above are shown in Figure 6-18. This displays how both participants are aware of the cyclical nature of trends. Similarly, during a workshop with undergraduate students, the students guessed that the same t-shirts were bought in 2015, which is a very similar response to Charles's opinion from male focus group, mentioned above. The t-shirts were in fact purchased in 2003, which shows the timeless nature of the designs in Figure 6-18. Despite the fact that the band t-shirts appear to be timeless in their design, some participants did question the perceived authenticity of these items. Band t-shirts were used in focus group discussions to question trend cycle longevity and individual feelings around style, revealing opinions surrounding authenticity on a deeper level. This is demonstrated in the conversation extract below from the young adult male focus group, where participants were asked if they would wear the given t-shirts in Figure 6-18:

It looks like they have ripped off a benefit gig as well, so that's just cheeky – Theo

It's like a made up thing – if it was a real band that I liked maybe then yeah – Liam

You feel like it's a bit fake? – Interviewer

Yeah, massively – Liam

The authenticity of band t-shirts has been scrutinised here. 'Authenticity is especially important to young people and is used as a tool in constructing identities through consumer behaviour' (Jenß, 2004, p.388). The authenticity of t-shirts was further discussed amongst male and female young adults in the t-shirt specific pilot focus group, where participants questioned the authenticity of wearing a t-shirt manufactured in support of the environmental activist group, Extinction Rebellion. When discussing the topic of activism, it was crucial for the participants to be authentic to the cause of Extinction Rebellion. This involved not wearing a t-shirt which had been purchased from a retailer promoting Extinction Rebellion, which they believed was supporting consumerism.

According to Sklar & Donahue (2021) the increase in sales options and lack of exclusivity of band t-shirts means that there has been a diffusion away from the lifestyle background that originally informed these t-shirts. The most authentic band t-shirts are sourced through local punk scenes (Sklar and Donahue, 2021). Discussions of authenticity and appropriation are initiated when replica t-shirts are mass produced for high street retailers. Baudrillard (1994) notes how the term 'simulacra' can be used to describe copies of things that no longer relate to their original meaning, which can be applied to band t-shirts in the FashionMap archive. Baudrillard's (1994) cultural analysis suggests that signs are increasingly detached from what

they signify. Similarly, in the female focus group, participants were shown the t-shirt in Figure 6-19, which was purchased from H&M, but resembles Vivienne Westwood's famous t-shirt created using the band The Sex Pistols artwork (Yaeger, 2017).



Figure 6-19 - H&M t-shirt - FashionMap - NTU©

Female participants questioned the authenticity of the t-shirt, echoing the viewpoints of their male counterparts:

It's just so washed out with any of the kind of punk heritage that it's come from. It's so accessible, and 'H&M mmie' – Ella, a young adult.

Yeah, even then I always felt really self-conscious about really borrowed statements. It's a bit like the band t's that you'd get. It's like, yeah, it's too far removed from. It's like what? What is it now? - Maya a young adult.

If you're buying yourself cultural stuff from H&M, it's not subculture – Robyn a young adult.

This shows how both genders were conscious of the perceived authenticity of the t-shirts, holding a high awareness of the cultural connotations of borrowed imagery. These examples can be used to demonstrate the complexities of the trend cycle. At surface value, band t-shirt designs appear to be timeless in their style. This is reflective of Hodder's (1987) theory of the meaningfulness of objects, as previously mentioned in the methodology. According to Hodder (1987), cultural objects convey meaning through how they display information. In this way, the band t-shirts initially appear to be timeless. The male focus group struggled to date the band t-shirts, guessing that they were purchased ten years after they were initially bought, indicating style longevity. The female H&M t-shirt is a replica of a design from the late 1970s, which shows that the image has remained fashionable. However, both genders expressed distaste at how the imagery had been appropriated. Following Hodder's (1987)

theory, objects have structured and coded meanings, and can hold meaning through their past associations. It is the coded meaning of the band t-shirts which implies a lack of authenticity. Perhaps it is the nature of a band t-shirt which implies that it is not conformed to the place of fashion and trends in the minds of the consumer. In this way, it is more about specific style than trend-led style. This can be compared to subcultural style, which when considered in its original and authentic place, was almost 'anti-fashion.' It is possible that the same could be said for band t-shirts in this context.

The above analysis of band t-shirts draws out further discussions surrounding nostalgia and sustainability. Just because a garment evokes nostalgic memories, this doesn't mean that it will remain in fashion, or continue to be worn by the consumer. Even so, Wang et al. (2020) note how both personal nostalgia and collective nostalgia reduce intention to throw away. Nostalgia can be considered in the realms of the consumer, and in this way, there are different types of nostalgia. For example, trends themselves are often nostalgic by nature. For example, a band t-shirt detailing a 1980s band might provoke memories or images of this time period. In addition to this, this thesis has considered how studying the lives of the individual consumer brings out the emotional side of trends, and associated nostalgia. Band t-shirts from the participants' wardrobes elicited personal memories, and feelings of emotional attachment. Will, for example, describes how he has a '*suitcase full of band t-shirts*' at his parents' house:

I don't really want to wear them, but I don't want to get rid, so I've packed them away to keep for when I'm older and then can get them back out, or give them to other family members – Will, a male young adult.

These t-shirts were from bands that Will was part of in his youth, which he describes as a '*memento from that period.*' The t-shirt as a key fashion item will be explored in greater detail in Section 6.14 of this analysis.

6.5 Gendered approach

This gendered section of this analysis will build upon the work of Klepp (2008) who interviewed women about their clothing habits, focusing on, consumption, luxury, emotions and cleanliness. Although she did not interview men, Klepp concluded that because the above factors are associated with the feminine, a difference could be expected with male counterparts. Gendered insights have so far demonstrated how both genders have unused

clothing in their wardrobes. However, women are more likely to link this to negative social experiences and body image, whereas men do not. The relationship between gendered views and the fastness of fashion will be highlighted in this section. Historical studies support the viewpoint that women are more involved in fashion and clothing than men (O’Cass, 2003). Women may thus have greater knowledge about clothing than men (Hansen and Jan, 2009). Previous research has shown that women report stronger environmental attitudes (Zelezny, Chua and Aldrich, 2000), and are more likely to engage in ethical fashion consumption than men (Manchiraju and Sadachar, 2014) (Gazzola et al., 2020). In the focus groups with young adults, men and women were asked the same questions for six identified trends, so that their answers could be compared. Both genders were shown the same image of a unisex trench coat (Figure 6-20), they were also shown the physical coat in the focus groups.



Figure 6-20 - Unisex 2015/16, FashionMap NTU©

When asked, ‘would you wear this garment today?’ neither gender displayed an affinity for the coat. The male participants made two comments regarding the coat’s appearance, *I’d probably wear it if it was a bit shorter, if it didn’t look a bit more like a trench coat* – Liam, a male young adult.

It kind of looks like a suit bag – Otto, a male young adult..

By comparison, female participants made significantly more remarks regarding a wider range of the coat’s visual attributes,

I really like the styling in the shoot, but it’s not the same as wanting to wear the outfit – Ella, a female young adult.

You can see from here, that the coat has a kind of nasty shine. It looks to me like a copy of something that Noel Gallagher would wear. It looks like a copy of that, but they've not quite hit the fabrics or maybe they can't make fabrics that well – Robyn, a female young adult.

I think the sleeve pockets are an unnecessary detail – Christy, a female young adult.

I feel like it's a bit odd without a hood as well, it's a bit like a parka, but someone has cut the hood off – Zelda, a female young adult.

It's also doing that weird exposed zip thing, but the zip doesn't go all the way to the bottom – Maya, a female young adult.

With the flap under the zip, it looks like they've put a bit of effort into that detail – Ella, a female young adult.

I suppose the short, exposed zip situation is so that you can move – Robyn, a female young adult.

It is apparent that female participants have identified a greater number of features on the coat signalling as to why they wouldn't want to wear the garment. 'It has been suggested that male and female consumers demonstrate considerably different approaches in their decision-making and purchasing behaviour when shopping for clothing for a variety of different reasons' (Koca and Koc, 2016, p.234). Despite the fact that females have identified a greater number of features on the coat, both genders are essentially making the same point in that they wouldn't wear the garment today for various reasons. This research does therefore question gender norms traditionally associated with fashion, it is not the case that women 'care more' about fashion, simply because their decision making and purchasing behaviour is different to that of males. Similarly, it would be inaccurate to suggest that males are not affected by negative body image, just because they did not mention this as a factor when describing unused clothing. It must be noted that the above discussion which outlines differences in the male and female decision-making process, can also be reflective of individuality and taste, in addition to gender.

Building upon this, during the focus groups, participants were asked if they had any items of clothing in their wardrobes which they regretted throwing away, as they had now come back into fashion. Male and female responses from two young adults to this question are visible below.

I had a shirt that was never in fashion, and hasn't come back into fashion, but I still regret throwing it away. It was a dark purple, floral shirt, it was always an ugly shirt. There are not

really memories attached to it, I just really liked the colour. It got to a point where it didn't quite fit, so I thought that's got to go, but now I think it would fit again – Liam.

I have clothes I wish I still fit into that I've had to let go. I had a couple of Toast dresses, that I loved. I was like it's tough, but they don't fit. Yeah, they need to go, and new clothes will come to my life, that fit me – Maya.

Both genders detailed getting rid of clothing which no longer fits, due to fluctuations in size and weight. Significantly, neither gender mentioned the trend cycle or placed an importance on caring about and following trends when describing these items of clothing. This reiterates the earlier finding (discussed in section 6.3.3) which detailed how consumers are individual, subjective and not always driven by trend-led designs. Females did however allude to the fact that keeping clothing in their wardrobes which no longer fit elicited feelings surrounding negative body image, as previously discussed:

The reason I've given stuff away is because it doesn't fit. And I've gone no more, I can't have these aspiration clothes in my wardrobe. Get out! – Zelda, a female young adult.

Even though males did not discuss this issue themselves, one female young adult participant described how her boyfriend also got rid of clothing which did not fit him, and had a negative effect on his body image:

My boyfriend has just charity shopped like half of his clothes because he's got this wild amount of clothes from when his weight has fluctuated. Yeah. I'm always like, you need to get rid of these because, they're making you sad – Ella.

A further finding to emerge from the topic, with regards to regretting throwing clothing away, was that attachment to clothing can be drawn out through feeling and memory. This is visible in the below extract, which is from the male young adult focus group:

I just had a couple of t-shirts at uni that I really liked. They were getting older, so I just got rid of them and replaced them, and now I look back and wish that I still had those t-shirts – Lucas.

Because of the happy memories associated with them? – Interviewer.

Yeah, exactly – Lucas.

I had a very similar experience as well, with old t-shirts. You had a good time with them, and then you look back at a photo of yourself, and you think, 'oh god, I loved that t-shirt.' I tried to track it down, but I can't find it anywhere – Theo.

These responses illustrate how feeling and memory are important to the process of attachment, and this finding applied to both genders. Trends are primarily about how garments look and not how they feel, but this research has considered the lives of the individual consumer to demonstrate the importance of feeling and memory within clothing, and how this links to trends. This finding is novel in contrast to previous studies regarding trends, and therefore presents a contribution to knowledge.

Both genders were asked to guess which year each trend was selected in the focus groups. The purpose of this question was to assess the timelessness of trends, and also to evaluate males' and females' knowledge of trends throughout the last twenty years. Both genders scored equally, guessing the correct year five times. However, the females had fourteen trends to guess, whereas the males only had eight. This means that females guessed correctly 36% of the time, and males 63%. This shows that the males had a high awareness of placing fashion trends in recent history, which is contrary to the historical viewpoint that women may have greater knowledge about clothing than men (Hansen and Jan, 2009). However, it is also possible that males may have remembered the trends more accurately than females. In male fashion, there are fewer options of different clothes and styles when compared to female fashion, which could make the male trends easier to remember. Klepp (2008) argues that the societal norms expected of women's clothing are much higher than that of men's. There are fewer demands for variation in clothing between men, which is reflective of the above discussion surrounding males' high awareness of placing fashion trends in recent history.

6.6 The Trend Cycle Conclusion

This section of the analysis has investigated the fastness of the trend cycle, and perceived style obsolescence. Nostalgia and attachment have been explored in the realms of the consumer. The research has demonstrated how trends are at the centre of the fashion system, but they also evidence the complexities of sustainability in fashion. When styles become out of fashion, old clothes are easily discarded, even if they are in perfect condition. It has become apparent that incremental style differences are incredibly important, as although they might only be a small deviance from the desired look, these features mean that the outfits become rejected and redundant. In summary, perhaps it is the complete look which makes up a trend that falls out of fashion, and not the individual garments themselves.

However, despite this, certain styles remain timeless, meaning that they have achieved sustainability through style.

This study has created a new way for understanding the trend system post 2020, which is a key contribution to knowledge. This section of the analysis has broken down the notion of the trend, and re-thought the trend system within the realms of sustainability and consumer behaviour. Trends can be viewed at surface level, but they also represent how garments *feel* to the user. Wardrobe studies have demonstrated how emotional attachment to clothing can be drawn out through feeling and memory. The trend is about the look not the feel, but the individual cares about *feel* and *memory*. The six trends identified throughout the content analysis confirmed that there are 'feel good' trends (such as vintage, which can illicit happy memories) and more controversial trends (such as the sexualisation of fashion).

The perceived speed of trends has been scrutinised. It can be argued today that there is fast consumption in all areas, not only in fashion (Ozdamar-Ertekin, 2016). Trends offer the opportunity for personal expression and transformation, and change is important in the fashion industry as it regulates the organisation of the seasons (Mackinney-Valentin, 2017). However, some argue that the pace of change in the fashion industry has become 'too fast' (Mackinney-Valentin, 2017).

When questioned about the fastness of fast fashion, Ivy, a female young adult, had the following response;

It's the same with everything, though, isn't it? We live our lifestyles faster, you've got more access to information because of the internet. Things come in and out faster, it's not just clothes, it's part of the way we live. No one has free time, we run around, and then you've got everything there at your disposal. You could go onto the internet and be like, oh, what did people wear in the 80s? And you can see it. People wouldn't have been able to do that, like in the 80s, however many years back – Ivy.

Ivy is describing here how the digital age has allowed for the 'creation of always-on, always connected consumer communities' (Crewe, 2017, p.130). This has allowed fashion spaces to become portable, flexible and fluid; emerging technologies have perforated the boundaries between the material and the virtual (Crewe, 2017). According to Marriott (2014), the digital age is a time beyond mass trends and big pop-cultural movements. It is no longer the case that if Vogue declares a colour is in, it will instantly become popular, as it would have done in previous decades. In the digital age, micro trends appear, and consumers can 'cherry-pick' what appeals to them, but very little appeals to the masses (Marriott, 2014).

Using the FashionMap archive as a key discussion tool in focus groups has allowed for a unique contribution to knowledge. This is due to the methodological approach of looking at sustainability in fashion through the lens of a fast fashion archive. By its very nature and design, FashionMap is a unique research resource. Findings have brought original perspectives on the trend cycle and the fastness of fashion. Studying the trend system evidences the complexities of sustainability in fashion. Veblen (2007) noted how fashion is a typical form of waste. When styles become out of fashion, old clothes are easily discarded, even if they are in perfect condition. This research aligns with Woodward's (2009) study of street style trends which questioned the fastness of fashion, as some trends appear to be timeless. Woodward notes how the infrastructure of the fashion system moves at a rapid pace, with constantly changing styles and increased capacity, but that this is not matched by the rate at which people replace their clothing. Woodward states, '*There is not a rapid shifting change of styles, rather street styles tend to emerge more slowly at the intersection between new looks and older styles*' (Woodward, 2009, p.95). My research has built upon this work, demonstrating the importance of incremental style differences on the fastness of fashion.

The aim of this section has been to question the fastness of fashion by gaining an understanding of male and female attitudes and behaviours towards style obsolescence. 'Questions about clothing, fashion, and sustainability must relate to matters of gender, affects, and emotions' (Pettersson McIntyre, 2021, p.752). Gendered differences uncovered from this study's primary research revealed how both genders have unused clothing in their wardrobes, however women are more likely to link this to negative social experiences and body image, whereas men do not. When questioned about the same unisex garment, it became apparent that women may have greater knowledge about clothing than men (Hansen and Jan, 2009). These findings reflect traditional gendered norms. However, males had a high awareness of placing fashion trends in recent history, which is contrary to the historical viewpoints. As demonstrated through the FashionMap archive, the fast fashion business model may seem to question the longevity of style, but when studied in detail, trends do frequently re-emerge in complex ways. The subsequent section will examine two specific garment types, denim and t-shirts, as a case study to further explore the longevity of fast fashion items.

6.7 Garment Types

6.7.1 Introduction

This section of the analysis will focus on jeans and t-shirts, as individual garment key categories, contextualising these items both within FashionMap and participants' wardrobes. Jeans and t-shirts are the most common garment types in FashionMap, with an estimated 60 pairs of jeans, and 119 t-shirts respectively. Wardrobe study data reflected FashionMap findings, reinforcing that they are both popular wardrobe staples. Woodward's (2007) study noted how many women 'live in' jeans, 'because denim is seen to go with everything' (Woodward, 2007, p.147). The t-shirt is one of the most iconic symbols of fashion and culture. It is a sign vehicle which has the ability to communicate both personal style and greater meaning (Sklar and Donahue, 2021). The t-shirt and denim jeans gained popularity as both individual items, and also being worn *together* as an outfit in the 1950s. Film stars such as Marlon Brando of 'The Wild Bunch' and the James Dean of 'Rebel Without a Cause' popularised the jeans and t-shirt look to a young generation (Miller and Woodward, 2007) (Manning and Cullum-Swan, 1994). Worn both individually and together, the garments became symbols of rebellion and a totem of youth uprising (Sims, 2019).

T-shirts and denim jeans are often seen as two of the most problematic fashion products in terms of sustainability, with both items leaving a considerable environmental footprint. This is due to their production processes, through to cheap prices on the high street, which increases disposability. Cotton, which is commonly the main fabric for both garments, is incredibly water intensive. Cotton is the most widely used natural fibre in the world, and although synthetic materials or blends are sometimes used, the t-shirt generally remains faithful to its 100% cotton origins (Brunel, 2002). It takes between 10,000-17,000 litres of water to produce one kilogram of cotton, this is the amount required to manufacture one t-shirt (Baydar, Ciliz and Mammadov, 2015). Similarly, denim is also at the top of the pyramid of water-consuming textiles, with the production of one pair of jeans using approximately 11,000 litres of water (Pal, Chatterjee and Sharma, 2017). Crewe (2008) notes how different components involved in the making of a single pair of jeans, such as denim, thread, cotton and buttons can originate from different countries all over the world. This raises questions regarding the social, economic and political costs involved in the production process. Further issues include that jeans (and some t-shirts) are often not made from single fibre materials, and therefore cannot be recycled (UK Parliament, 2019). The points raised above challenge the longevity of both jeans and t-shirts.

This section will start by analysing denim jeans, drawing on key codes identified during PhD focus groups and wardrobe studies. Building upon this, the t-shirt as a garment staple will also be investigated, using pilot study data which involved a t-shirt specific focus group. Both jeans and t-shirts will be used as a case study to channel ideas about trends and longevity. Building upon the first section of the analysis which was focused on trends, there are some important stylistic motivations associated with jeans and t-shirts, which will be explored in the following discussion.

6.8 Denim jeans – a case study

'Jeans are everywhere and nowhere, a source of both creativity and constraint, comfort and discomfort, individuality and conformity' (Crewe, 2008, p.29).

Denim has a global presence, it exists in every country in the world, and in many of these it has become the most popular form of everyday attire (Miller and Woodward, 2007). Wardrobe study data revealed that on average, males owned four pairs of jeans in their wardrobes, and females six, with many participants stating that they did indeed regularly wear denim. Mintel carried out research into the number of jeans owned by consumers in September 2010, and found that 36% of people owned 3-4 pairs, and 22% owned 5-7 pairs (Sender, 2010). These findings are reflective of participants' consumption of jeans in this study. The estimated 60 pairs of jeans in FashionMap cover a range of brands from Levi's to Topshop to GAP. Figure 6-21 shows the range of brands and corresponding number of jeans in the archive.

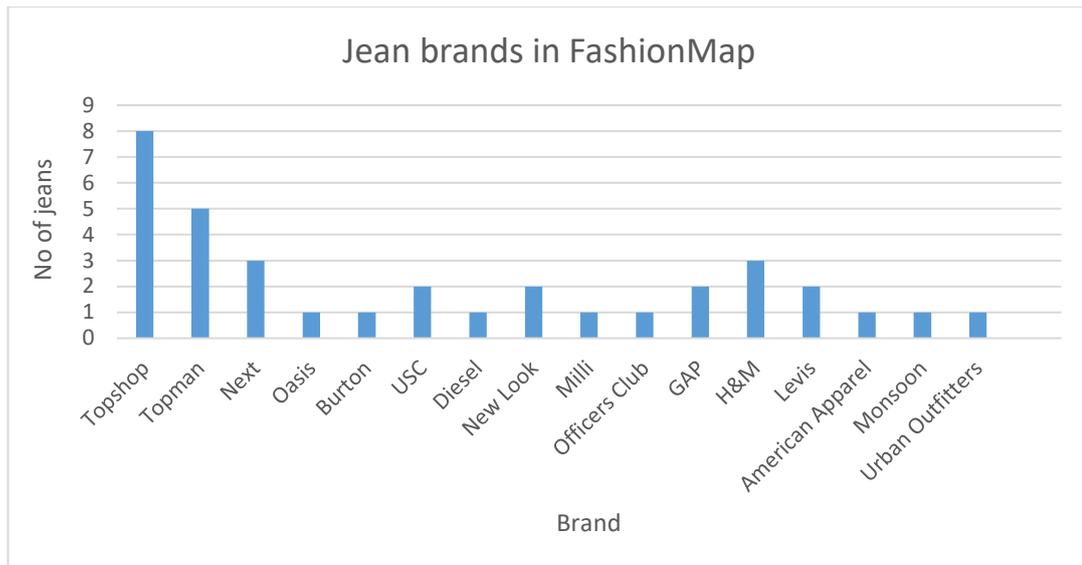


Figure 6-21 - A graph to show jean brands in FashionMap

The semiotic meaning of denim jeans has evolved from workwear in the 1850s to becoming a symbol of teenage rebellion in the 1950s (Rahman, 2011). Denim has a multi-generational appeal, jeans are worn across the world by the fashionable and un-fashionable, and by those who want to stand out and conform (Crewe, 2008). According to Mintel, the sales value of jeans increased by 56% between 2000 and 2005. This was partly due to grocery multiples selling jeans for as little as £3 (Ihekweazu, 2007). However, reporting on the jeans market eight years later in 2015, Mintel noted that fewer women were purchasing jeans, due to growing competition from other fashion options such as leggings, which are part of the growing trend for athleisure (Smith, 2015). In a similar way to t-shirts, denim jeans are not bound by gender. Although blue jeans were originally worn by miners and were a symbol of labourers, they gradually became popular as a casual clothing style among blue-collar workers, young consumers and mainstream consumers (Eundeok, 2011). Following focus group and wardrobe study transcription, several striking findings emerged concerning participants' relationship with their jeans, including issues surrounding trends, emotional attachment and finding the 'perfect' pair of jeans. Alongside an analysis of denim in FashionMap, these findings will be discussed in the next section.

6.9 Micro trends

Denim jeans are a unique example of a mass-produced product that ages well, and gains character through use. Jeans don't necessarily fit into the fast fashion cycle, which

encourages rhythms of rapidly changing styles. However, the basic silhouettes of jeans considered to be 'in fashion' do change over time. For example, a skinny style versus a boot cut, or a low rise versus a high rise. These stylistic differences can be considered to be important one year and not the next (Regan, 2015). This can be linked back to earlier discussions in Chapter 4 surrounding the workings of fashion trend cycle. Different styles of jeans can fall into either short term or long term contexts, depending on the trends popular at that given time. In March 2022, UK fashion magazine Elle declared that, 'the skinny jean is dead,' citing shifts in trends towards a more flared and baggy leg (Sowray and Murray, 2022). The elastane that you find in a typical pair of skinny jeans is unrecyclable, and this may have been one factor which has contributed to this shift. This is situated amongst a backdrop of increased consumer awareness of sustainability issues (Sowray and Murray, 2022).

The micro trend can be defined as a trend which quickly rises in popularity, and then falls out of popularity at a similar speed. The micro trend cycle has a typical short duration of 3-5 years (Nelson, 2021). This is reflective of the fad fashion cycle, as discussed previously in Chapter 4, Section 4.4.1. Micro trends demonstrate how the 'wrong' denim can fall out of fashion and be discarded by the consumer. Focus group data revealed the importance of incremental style differences on the wider trend cycle – these small but important style differences have been outlined in Section 6.3 of this chapter. Focus group participants noted a general feeling of distaste towards a pair of Levi's jeans from the early 2000s, pictured in Figure 6-22.

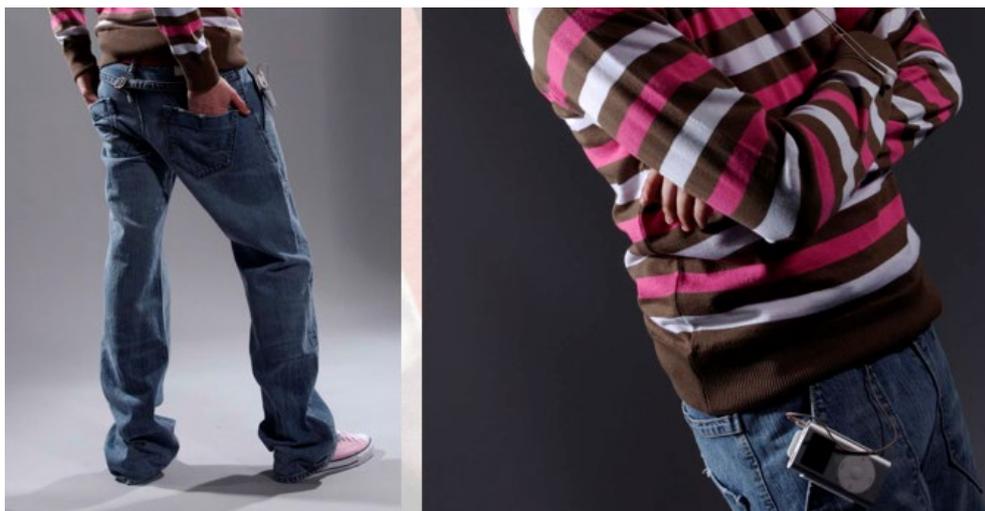


Figure 6-22 - Levi's jeans, early 2000s, FashionMap at NTU©

When presented with these jeans, the young adult male focus group communicated a consensus that they were an item which they 'would have worn when they were younger.' Responses amongst the group towards the jeans included:

Oh, those pockets! – Charles

I had a pair of jeans like that when I was a lot younger, quite revolting! – Lucas

It's the kind of thing you would clear out of your parents' house – Jay

I've definitely thrown away a pair like that from when I was in my early teens – Liam

Several pairs of those have gone to charity shops – Otto

The participants were then asked if the fact that these jeans are Levi's would prevent them from being discarded in their own wardrobes, and Otto responded, '*no, I don't think so.*' Charles however stated,

'I would probably hold onto them, because if they still fit me, were from 10 years ago, and were Levi's, they are probably going to last, so I would use them to do old jobs and stuff in. Because Levi's used to be pretty good. I think I had a pair of Levi's for 10 years once, and they didn't really get damaged.'

Although a pair of denim Levi's at first appears to be a timeless item of clothing, this example has highlighted the power of micro trends, with further potential links to shifting consumer identities. Participants picked up on certain details such as the pockets on the jeans, which they perceived to be distasteful. This has emphasised an interesting tension between sameness and difference within trends, and how different consumers relate to this. In reference to the trend cycle and the fastness of fashion, this particular pair of Levi's jeans (Figure 6-22) has fallen out of fashion. Despite their good quality, the longevity of these jeans has been compromised, due to the strength of the micro trend. Identity expressed through fashion balances on a fine line between the individual being able to belong to their social group and fit in, yet also wanting to stand out, communicating individuality (Woodward, 2008). Simmel (1957) argues that this tension is a core dynamic of being human, and central to changes in fashion trends. By wearing denim jeans, which are a ubiquitous item of clothing (Miller and Woodward, 2007), individuals are able to become part of the 'invisible majority' (Woodward, 2008, p.68). The example in Figure 6-22 demonstrates how a slight deviation from this majority and conformity can cause distaste and disgust if it is not an intentional effort on behalf of the consumer to 'stand out.'

6.10 Emotional attachment to denim

Certain items of clothing may be particularly susceptible to delivering an evolving narrative of emotional experiences. For example, denim jeans develop character with age. They are worn, moulded, and torn by everyday experiences (Chapman, 2015). Consumers have a close relationship with their jeans, which are like a second skin, 'they are a familiar old friend, a repository of memories, a comfort blanket' (Chapman, 2015, p.116). Woodward's (2014) research found that consumers could have 'highly personalised and long-term relationships' with particular pairs of jeans (Woodward, 2014, p.131). Townsend (2011) found that some users strive to preserve their denim once it has reached an optimal stage of aesthetic perfection, similar to the care taken to preserve haute couture garments. Therefore, denim is a fabric which is naturally associated with product longevity (Cooper et al., 2013). Character gained through use may also allow denim to become a vehicle for nostalgic memories, as past experiences can become woven into the fabric (Gibson, 2015).

Some participants did indeed display emotional attachment and nostalgic feelings towards certain pairs of jeans. Chen, a female student describes how she has a pair of jeans that, '*my friends gave me, and I was so happy, because I didn't expect to receive them, also my friend designed them!*' This example shows that due to their unique design, the jeans are irreplaceable – perceived irreplaceability is a key feature described as being important to fostering emotional attachment (Mugge, Schoormans and Schifferstein, 2005). Further participants who described attachment to their jeans cited reasons such as memories linked to friends and family members. Solomon's (1986) case study explored attachment to Levi's 501 jeans, finding that they are part of a small number of products which possess extraordinary symbolic significance to consumers. Describing these jeans as a 'cultural icon,' Solomon notes that many participants attributed feelings about their Levi's jeans to specific romantic experiences, which subsequently led to feelings of attachment.

However, the overwhelming consensus amongst participants when asked about attachment to jeans was that they did not feel any level of attachment to this item of clothing. This finding is contrary to previously mentioned existing literature which outlines the links between attachment and denim (Solomon, 1986) (Chapman, 2015) (Gibson, 2015) (Woodward, 2014) (Townsend, 2011). The main reason behind this lack of attachment was the feeling that denim jeans were seen as an 'everyday item' by participants. Examples of this viewpoint can

be seen below, where participants were asked during wardrobe studies if they had any nostalgic memories associated with their jeans:

Not particularly because I'm kind of always wearing them and so I can't say that can associate a memory with them – Ivy, a female young adult.

Ah, I'd say, probably not with the jeans, just because they're just such an everyday thing for me that I don't really associate them with anything. As opposed to clothes like jackets or something which might have a memory attached to them – Elliott, a male student.

No, sorry. I've you know, I've worn them so often that nostalgia doesn't really come into it anymore – Noah, a male student.

This data shows that, for the majority of participants, denim jeans have become a ubiquitous item of clothing in everyday life. It is possible that everyday items are not considered to be valuable to the consumer, because they are too ordinary. This potential lack of value presents challenges for the sustainability of the ubiquitous denim jean, as nostalgic memories no longer prevail. The generic, frequent use of jeans means that there is not a special event which can be associated with them, and this therefore reduces their stimulation to specific memories. Indeed, researchers agree that possession usage may affect attachment and memory (Mugge, Schoormans and Schifferstein, 2005). It can be argued that we are now in a new use phase of denim. No longer a symbol of 1950s teenage rebellion, and also contrary to Solomon's (1986) study, denim does not frequently appear to possess extraordinary symbolic significance to consumers. This research has demonstrated that in general, the use of denim has become utilitarian, and during this process, denim jeans have lost their original garment identity. As Eco (2007, p.315) notes, 'today they are worn also for looks, but primarily they are very utilitarian.'

When asked if he had any nostalgic memories associated with his jeans, Liam, a male young adult, displayed an additional viewpoint:

Not really. No, they don't last long enough for that – Liam.

This comment demonstrates the quality issues associated with some brands of denim jeans; in this instance Liam's jeans were from Marks and Spencer. Links between poor quality and denim have been identified as a key code, and furthermore, this is one of the factors which hinders consumers from finding their 'perfect pair' of jeans.

6.11 The illusive 'perfect pair' of jeans

It is evident through existing literature, and this study's primary research, that the 'perfect pair' of jeans is an elusive concept to most consumers. Woodward (2007) noted how many women that she worked with talked about searching for the perfect pair of jeans, and that this appeared to be surprising, given the number of jeans that these women owned. This is a common viewpoint which was echoed in this research:

I have eight, eight pairs of jeans and two pairs of jean dungarees. And I probably wear two pairs of them because I mean I don't know if you have the same issue. I find trying to find a pair of jeans that I really like, which fit nicely, are comfortable and go with most things is really difficult. So I tend to stick with my favourites basically – Matthew, a male young adult.

Matthew mentions several factors here which are crucial to his perfect pair of jeans including style, fit and comfort. This male viewpoint resonates with Woodward's (2007) female focused study. Rahman's (2011) research which studied consumer behaviour in order to make future recommendations for denim jean design noted that the fit of denim jeans is the most important cue, closely followed by style and quality. In his 2007 essay, Umberto Eco describes the intimacy of wearing denim and complexities of fit, which relates to the idea of the illusive perfect pair of jeans (Eco, 2007). Eco (2007) explains how the restrictive characteristics of tight jeans physically shape his form, and also his thoughts. In this way, clothes are semiotic devices, and machines for communicating behaviour. It can be argued that the perfect pair of jeans are illusive for a reason – they have to be correct for the individual wearer. This relates to social and personal identity and also the complexity of fit. Links can be made here between the previously described identity tension of wanting to fit in, whilst also wanting to stand out from the crowd; and the need for fit and comfort, relating to the materiality of denim jeans. The importance of identity has emerged as a key finding from the data. Key Code 2 explored participants' desire to alter garments from FashionMap, which might be reflective of a consumer need and want for individuality and personal identity. Participants also described feeling uncomfortable in clothes that they no longer wear, and this may be as a result of the shifting relationship between style and identity during the transition from adolescence to young adulthood.

In terms of the workings of the trend system, consumers may go through several pairs of jeans in succession, whilst they are searching for their perfect pair, or may indeed never find the perfect pair. Viv, a female young adult was asked how many pairs of jeans she owned, and she responded;

Too many. And again, that's something I think about, I think because I've never found my dream pair. I have too many – Viv.

This means that the sustainability and longevity of the jean is brought into question. The inability to find the perfect pair of jeans may encourage over-consumption. Mintel (2011) reported on a gendered difference when addressing the issue of fit with jeans. Their market research revealed that, 'Almost two thirds of women (64%) have trouble finding jeans that fit their body shape properly, however less than half the proportion of men (29%) struggle with the same problem' (Clifford, 2011). This report also states that women are more body conscious than men and therefore more likely to be interested in jeans which flatter their figures. Despite this, men did also mention fit as being a problem in this primary research. Matthew describes it as being 'really difficult' to find a pair of jeans which 'fit nicely' in the passage above. Liam, also a male young adult, talks about how he is 'quite big at the moment' which affects the fit and quality of his jeans. These examples demonstrate that men may face equal issues to women when searching for the perfect pair of jeans, and that fit remains an issue for both genders.

In 2010, Levi's responded to the differences in women's body shapes, as opposed to just size, by launching a 'Curve ID jeans range' (Clifford, 2011). Aimed at women, this range was created as a result of studying more than 60,000 body scans and subsequently creating three distinct fits of jeans (Levi's®, 2010). However, this range was discontinued and streamlined to only one fit in 2014. Retailers claimed that the range had been confusing for shoppers and demanded too much investment which prohibited many retailers from stocking the full range (McGregor, 2014). The case study of denim jeans here relates to the research aim, which is to contribute to knowledge of the relationship between fast fashion and sustainability. This example illustrates the complexities of addressing differences in body shapes, and why the perfect pair of jeans is so hard to achieve, from the perspective of both the consumer and the retailer. Wider implications imply that opportunities for product longevity through finding the 'perfect pair' of jeans may be extremely difficult to achieve for both genders. Although, this does remain a pressing issue, as previous studies have found fit to be of a higher evaluative criterion than aesthetics when choosing a pair of jeans (Jegethesan, Sneddon and Soutar, 2012). This echoes earlier points raised surrounding the influence of the trend cycle on consumer purchases. As previously discussed, it became apparent how participants may view the idea of style as opposed to the idea of trends, and this

consequently raised the question of the influence of the trend verses the importance of individual style (and in this case, additionally, the importance of fit).

6.12 Denim within the FashionMap archive

Chapter 5 documented a detailed content analysis of the archive, which included a section on denim (Chapter 5, Section 5.6). This section captured several examples of denim in the archive from 2000-2017, and following on from this, a final range of garments were selected for focus group use. The corresponding table (Table 6-1) shows further examples of denim jeans in the FashionMap archive, with additional information, such as price, composition and country of origin.

| Image | Year | Brand | Price | Composition | Country of Origin |
|---|---------------|--------|--------|-----------------------------|-------------------|
|  | 2004/05 – A/W | Levi's | £80.00 | 100% cotton | Turkey |
|  | 2000/01 | Next | £40.00 | 60% cotton 40% polyester | Hong Kong |

| | | | | | |
|---|----------------|------------------|--------|---|----------|
|  | 2014/15 – S/S | Urban Outfitters | £59.00 | 99% cotton 1% elastane | China |
|  | 2015/16 – S/S | Topshop | £46.00 | 60% cotton 40% lyocell | Turkey |
|  | 2013/14 A/W | Monsoon | £45.00 | Outer – 67% cotton, 31% polyester, 2% elastane Flocking – 71% viscose, 29% cotton, Lining – 80% polyester, 20% cotton | China |
|  | 2013/14 A/W | H&M | £14.99 | 63% cotton, 35% polyester, 2% elastane | Cambodia |

| | | | | | |
|--|----------------|---------|--------|-------------|--------|
|  | 2013/14 S/S | Topshop | £40.00 | 100% cotton | Turkey |
|  | 2015/16 A/W | Topman | £35.00 | 100% cotton | Turkey |

Table 6-1 – Jeans in FashionMap NTU©

Although only a representative sample of denim jeans from the archive, Table 6-1 shows jeans which range in price from £14.99 - £80.00, the fashion retail versions are unsurprisingly cheaper than branded versions. The majority of these jeans are 100% cotton, although some examples do contain blends including polyester, elastane and lyocell. Turkey is the most common country of origin, and this dataset confirms the shift in manufacture from Europe towards Asia. Indeed, the global denim market was expected to grow by 8% between 2015-2021, with Asia anticipated to lead this increase in production (Karthik and Murugan, 2017), which this dataset reflects. Given that developing countries generally hold the competitive advantage in manufacturing and labour costs, textile production has, therefore, shifted to these nations (Niinimäki et al., 2020). The consequence that this has on the price, quality and perceived disposability of clothing is key to sustainability (Braithwaite and Marroncelli, 2019). As previously mentioned, several participants noted links between poor quality and denim, *I could spend more on Levi's jeans, but don't always have a spare £90 to spend when my jeans break... it's a false economy... cheap jeans are designed to break* – Charles, a male young adult.

So yeah, I actually threw out like so many. I threw out like 12 pairs like maybe about six months ago that were like all just kind of like ripped. But yeah, I used to buy loads, I've spent loads on jeans over the years. I used to wear Levi's quite a lot but I just kind of don't want to pay for them anymore – Jake, a male student.

Both Jake and Charles resent paying a higher price for a pair of Levi's jeans, so spend less on high street alternatives. This demonstrates the perpetuating cycle of fast fashion, driven by cheap, low-quality production (Niinimäki and Armstrong, 2013), which feeds consumers desire for novelty by producing copies of high-end designs at affordable prices (Hirscher, Niinimäki and Joyner Armstrong, 2018). Low price points achieved through low-quality production often compromise product longevity. This builds upon the earlier discussion in Section 6.9 which discussed a pair of Levi's jeans from FashionMap that had fallen out of fashion. This illustrated how the power of the micro trend is a further factor which can shorten product longevity.

6.13 Gendered approach

As previously mentioned in Section 6.11, with regards to fit, both males and females struggled to find the 'perfect' pair of jeans. This section of the analysis will aim to highlight gendered differences with regards to attitudes towards denim. Following transcription of data, and a thematic analysis, a key code identified was how the trend for workwear inspired denim had become a popular fashion choice amongst male students. Out of the six male students interviewed, five of these participants mentioned preferring workwear style jeans over skinny jeans;

I own four pairs of jeans. Although two of which, they're not really my style anymore. They're kind of skinny jeans and I tend to stick to like baggy jeans now. But yeah, I find the baggy ones more comfy, and I kind of find them a bit more fashionable as well. I don't really like those kind of spray on type jeans anymore. I've grown out of that kind of fashion, I suppose – Elliott.

This shows the cyclical nature of the trend cycle. 'Fashions are, by definition, temporary cyclical phenomena adapted by consumers for a particular time and situation' (Sproles, 1981, p.116). It is clear that skinny jeans have fallen out of fashion with male students, due to the frequent re-occurrence of this opinion. Many of these male participants mentioned favouring brands such as Carhartt and Dickies;

I like hard wearing clothes, workwear style clothes, like Carhartt and Dickies – Will.

Now at uni cargo trousers are a lot more in fashion, a lot more people wear them with the emergence of brands like Dickies, and Carhartt. A lot of people wear cargo trousers – Harvey.

Simmel (1957, p.541) notes how, 'fashion is a form of imitation and so of social equalisation.' Furthermore, Rocamora & Smelik (2016) state that clothes are used as a key tool in the process of self-construction, and can be seen as props to help individuals to negotiate different social situations. It is clear that workwear style jeans are a current trend amongst male students, and that wearing this type of clothing allows them to manage their social identities by fitting in with their peers. The wearing of clothes that are similar to peers, can be compared to the mechanisms of trends, which try to create uniformity of fashion styles in a seasonal way. Unlike their male counterparts, female participants did not highlight a common theme with regards to popular styles of denim jeans. The main key code identified amongst female young adult participants was a change in the use phase of denim, whereby old pairs of jeans were kept for jobs such as cleaning and decorating;

I do have cleaning jeans. So they were jeans that I wore on the regs, and now they have paint all over them - Zelda.

I've got a couple of pairs of jeans that I do gardening and stuff in, they've got ripped knees, ripped bum, like, got paint on them. So like I've just held on to them for work wear – Ivy.

Although the actions to keep these jeans in use may not be a direct result of a conscious sustainable decision by the consumer, extending the use phase of denim has significant environmental benefits. According to WRAP (2012) extending average clothing lifetime by one third could reduce its environmental footprint by over 20%. While the intrinsic durability of products is a direct result of design and manufacturing techniques, product longevity is achieved through a combination of these techniques, consumer behaviour and wider socio-cultural influences (Cooper, 2010). Re-thinking the use phase of denim can contribute to progress away from a throwaway culture. Gendered differences with regards to denim jeans revealed that in terms of style, male students favour workwear jeans and females indicated a change in the use phase of their denim. Females did not mention their denim as being of particular importance in terms of a fashion item, placing greater stylistic value on men's denim in this study. These gendered differences have been explored in the context of social and sustainability contexts.

6.14 T-shirts – a case study

In this section of the analysis, the t-shirt will be investigated, using pilot study data which involved a t-shirt specific focus group, with a particular focus on t-shirts and identity. This builds upon previous analysis of band t-shirts, which has been documented in Section 6.4 of this chapter, and explored themes of authenticity and identity.

‘The t-shirt has become one of the prime emblems or icons of modern life... It is a sign vehicle whose functions not only express selves, but the social and political fields in which it exists’ (Manning and Cullum-Swan, 1994, p.147). Since the mid-twentieth century, the t-shirt has been regarded as one of the most iconic symbols in fashion and culture. Indeed, it is cheap, classless and globally recognised, and is a key item in many people’s wardrobes (Mathieson, 2008). Low price points attributed to the t-shirt make it an inclusive item, available to all. However, this in itself raises questions regarding sustainability. FashionMap contains an estimated 119 t-shirts. T-shirts which convey messages and signs through their design and typography were examined as a communication tool, and primary research using a focus group and wardrobe studies explored how participants respond to these t-shirts as personal expressions. T-shirts can be viewed as vehicle for which individuals can express their identity. Dant (1999) believes that t-shirts can specifically serve as indicators of who somebody is perceived to be, and that this in turn can inform a reaction from others about how they might be treated.

6.15 T-shirts and Identity

‘Identity is the construct that defines who or what a particular person is’ (Cheek and Briggs, 1982, p.401).

Clothes make a clear reference about who we are, and how we wish to be observed by others (Davis, 1994). ‘We seek identity in the body, and clothes are an immediate continuation of the body. That is also why clothes are so important to us: they are closest to our body’ (Svendsen, 2004, p.77). Clothing communicates our social identity, and this is framed by cultural values. While cultural values were traditionally defined by, ‘gender, sexuality, social status and age,’ (Davis, 1994, p.191) a postmodern era has challenged these fixed boundaries. Postmodernism recognises identity as fluid and fragmented, a state which can be achieved through fast fashion (Furlong, 2016). This has created a modern dilemma, as the opportunity for announcing individual identity is only now possible through products provided by a

shifting and uncertain mass culture (Darden and Worden, 1991). 'Consumption becomes a natural tool for present and future identity building' (Deutsch and Theodorou, 2010, p.251). Ward (2010) notes the significance of the public and private self in relation to identity and that public identity is not always an accurate reflection of what an individual is truly like. Moreover, it may be impossible to ever access this truth. The effect of postmodernism means that there may not be a true or 'deep down' identity. This is because an individual can adopt many different images, and there may not be a single 'true self' that resides beneath them all (Ward, 2010). Svendsen (2004) also argues that there is no such thing as a true nature, as this is heavily influenced by different cultural interpretations. Furthermore, Goffman (2016) questions the idea of a fixed identity - rather than being, identity is realised through actions. An advantage of looking at a wardrobe collection is that it brings the opportunity to consider these ideas of fluidity and different identities. Examining t-shirts and identity in this context can inform and contribute to knowledge regarding sustainability and the emotional durability of garments.

When describing emotional attachment, several males noted an attachment to band t-shirts, which evoked memories of being part of a band in their youth,

At home, like at my parents, I have a suitcase full of my band T shirts. Because I've been in a few different like, moderately successful bands that have toured around Europe and things like that... - Will, a male young adult.

I wore this t-shirt during a time that I quite liked, so it reminds me of it... this kind of thing is from my old band, my friend designed it, so that's pretty nostalgic - Theo, a male young adult.

These t-shirts can be seen as a physical memento of the participant's youth, and possibly as a reminder of a former identity. The participants are no longer members of these bands, but they have kept the t-shirts, which hold particular significance. In this instance, t-shirts act as a vehicle which can elicit memories and youth identities. These responses are in direct contrast to the males' attitudes towards the Levi's jeans in Section 6.9. An apparent tension is presented, as t-shirts remind the participants of their youth, holding nostalgic powers which encourage emotional attachment. Whereas, participants described discarding of similar jeans to the Levi's pair in FashionMap, as they had fallen out of style. This is despite the fact that the jeans also elicited memories from the participants youth. This reinforces the importance of incremental style differences, which by their nature of design, jeans are more susceptible to acquiring than t-shirts (such as the addition of pockets, straps or belts). It can be argued that t-shirts are blank canvases which imagery, and identity, can be applied to.

6.16 T-shirts and signs

The t-shirt is a powerful advertising medium. The inexpensive white cotton surface is easy to decorate, and a blank canvas which can offer freedom of expression (Brunel, 2002). The t-shirt has become a canvas or billboard in a way that no other article of apparel has (Presley and Jenkins, 2011).

Candidates for the 1960 presidential elections in the United States were the first recorded group of people to use the t-shirt as a campaign medium. The t-shirt's simplicity in design means that it is able to bypass language barriers and display universal messages (Brunel, 2002). The t-shirt is an important communication tool, thinkers and designers have capitalised upon its ability to transcend boundaries and carry subversive or controversial messages (Mathieson, 2008). Furthermore, the t-shirt has become a piece of 'independent media,' which has the ability to infiltrate a range of different spaces. As a garment, the t-shirt is able to announce identity to other individuals, and also indicate an articulation between the individual and the larger mass consumption society (Darden and Worden, 1991).

Manning and Cullum-Swan (1994) propose seven codes which aim to define the t-shirt in terms of semiotics, encoding the clothing item as an object, as visible in Table 6-2. This shifts attention away from the t-shirt as an object and towards its perception and use (Manning and Cullum-Swan, 1994). Manning and Cullum-Swan (1994) describe how the t-shirt has become an assemblage of signs, which has the ability to convey and contain a range of messages.

| | |
|---------|--|
| Code 1: | The t-shirt as a utilitarian undergarment |
| Code 2: | The t-shirt as a manufactured item |
| Code 3: | The t-shirt as a visible outer garment |
| Code 4: | The t-shirt as a representational sign vehicle |
| Code 5: | The t-shirt as a problematic icon |
| Code 6: | The t-shirt as a walking pun |
| Code 7: | Copies and real copies |

Table 6-2 - What is a t-shirt? Seven codes. Adapted from Manning and Cullum-Swan, 1994.

The next section will evaluate pilot study data against the above codes, investigating the variety of slogans and logos that appear on the t-shirt, and how this can indicate an individual's ideologies and identity.

6.17 Pilot study methodology summary

A focus group with seven participants, which concentrated on one specific garment from FashionMap, the t-shirt, was carried out prior to the main primary research. Although the study targeted both males and females, six out of the seven participants were female. The purpose of this pilot study was to assess how participants would react and respond to garments from the archive, and also to gain detailed information about the t-shirt – an important aspect of everyday life which has largely been ignored by sociology (Darden and Worden, 1991). The aim of the focus group was to explore how the t-shirt fulfils communicative and self-expressive purposes. Prior to joining the focus group, participants were asked to complete a t-shirt inventory, noting the quantity and type of t-shirts in their wardrobes. Participants were also asked to bring t-shirts to the focus group which symbolised an affiliation to a particular brand or cause, or which the individuals felt said something about their identity. Please see section 3.4 of the Methodology chapter for a full description of the t-shirt pilot study methodology.

6.18 Pilot study findings and discussion

The t-shirt inventory completed by focus group participants revealed that they owned between 5 to 40 t-shirts. Participants were asked to select certain t-shirts from their wardrobes which symbolised affiliation to a particular brand or cause, or which said something about their identity, and bring them to the focus group. Dan, a male young adult, brought a Zen-inspired t-shirt (see Figure 6-23) and described being motivated to buy it because it reminded him of Zen art, and the circles that you often see in Zen paintings. As a member of a Zen group, this t-shirt had an important link to his cultural identity. Therefore, by wearing this t-shirt, Dan is displaying a 'form of symbolic behaviour that enables the articulation of a particular identity' (Moore, 2008, p.12), and shows how Dan's social identity is framed by his cultural values (Davis, 1994). This reflects Manning and Cullum-Swan's (1994) 'code four' in their seven codes which aim to define the t-shirt in terms of semiotics,

the t-shirt as a representational sign vehicle. In this instance, the t-shirt is conveying a representation that signals membership to a particular group.



Figure 6-23 – Dan’s Zen t-shirt

Emily, a female young adult, bought the t-shirt shown in Figure 6-24 from a John and Yoko exhibition at The Museum of Liverpool. Similar to Dan, she bought the t-shirt because she liked the message which it carried. However, Emily stated, *‘When I wear it, I notice that people look at it, as if I am protesting, which I am not! I tend to hide it a bit, to take away some of the impact.’* This implies that there may be a conflict between the participant’s public and private self-identity. Goffman (1959) notes how illusions and impressions are openly constructed through ‘items of personal front.’ It also shows that outside of the context of the exhibition, the t-shirt can take on a different meaning. Davis (1994) notes that clothing is highly context dependant. Aligning with Manning and Cullum-Swan’s (1994) research, this example reflects ‘code five’ – the t-shirt as a problematic icon. This is where the t-shirt may reference political meanings or ideologies, but the relationship between the field of broader political activities and the person’s claims are tenuous. In this instance, although Emily likes the t-shirts message, she is not an active anti-war or peace protestor.



Figure 6-24 – Emily's imagine peace t-shirt

A follow-up wardrobe study with Emily uncovered a further t-shirt which had direct links between the wearer and her personal identity. The t-shirt in Figure 6-25 was bought as a memento from a visit to the Hard Rock Café in Krakow. *'I wear it to represent me as a person, I like that it says where I have been on the t-shirt, and I love travelling and adventure. Also I like music and gigs, so I bought it because it reflects my interests. – I want this to come through in my style.'* This reflects Davis's (1994) ideology that clothes make a clear reference about who we are and how we wish to be received by others. It also shows that personal choice is overriding trends with participants' t-shirt selections. This is interesting as it was not a finding that equally emerged for jeans. This finding links back to earlier discussions in Section 6.3.3 regarding the influence of trends, verses individual style and the complexities of consumer choices and tastes. This identified tension has wider implications for the industry's ability to ensure sustainability through product longevity. As previously discussed, consumers value individuality, and this presents a challenge for the fashion industry, who are responsive to delivering the latest trends.



Figure 6-25 – Emily's Hard Rock Cafe t-shirt

The example in Figure 6-25 can be compared to contrasting focus group findings where participants were asked their opinions on a 2013 New Look t-shirt from the FashionMap archive.



Figure 6-26 - New Look t-shirt. FashionMap - NTU©

Samantha, a female young adult responded, *'I don't like wearing things with names on of places that I have never been.'*

This implies a lack of authenticity associated with t-shirts that are copies of original mementos, linking to 'code seven' in Callum Swan and Manning's (1994) research - copies and real copies. 'One is no longer required to have been somewhere to make a claim to the

experience... t-shirts are disconnected from direct experience and no longer unambiguously communicate membership status' (Manning and Cullum-Swan, 1994, p.422). In the same way, copies of band t-shirts were considered inauthentic by participants in section 6.4 of the analysis. Both genders were conscious of the perceived authenticity of the band t-shirts in FashionMap, holding a high awareness of the cultural connotations of borrowed imagery. These examples demonstrate the complexities of the trend cycle. Despite the importance placed on the authenticity of t-shirts by participants in this research, it is potentially only the wearer of the t-shirt who is aware of this truth. For example, when passing someone in the street, it is not obvious if the wearer has been to the place name on their t-shirt or not. Darden and Worden (1991, p.78) noted that the t-shirts 'are the medium of choice for the announcement of a fluid, ephemeral identity.' However, this research implies that a high value is placed on authentic identity, even when referring to garments such as t-shirts, which are often classified as a cheap and disposable items of clothing.

Wardrobe study data revealed that Jake, a male student, was particularly attached to an inexpensive t-shirt, visible in Figure 6-27:

'So this is only cheap. I bought this on ASOS like four years ago, but I went travelling in it. I actually did a clear out recently, like this was in like the maybe pile, but then I kept it. I think it's because I went travelling in it, so I don't think I'll ever throw it away.'



Figure 6-27 - Jake's travelling t-shirt

The above example demonstrates how consumers can place high levels of value on t-shirts. Low cost items of clothing are not always disposable, and can in fact become irreplaceable, due to interwoven memories. Emotional attachment will be explored in greater detail in Chapter 7. The t-shirt can be used as a case study to explore trends and attachment. The longevity of the t-shirt can be considered, alongside its enduring appeal. Moving away from

its functional origins, the t-shirt becomes a key fashion item, and consequently a symbol of authentic identity and individuality.

6.19 Garment Types Conclusion

This section of the analysis has investigated jeans and t-shirts as individual garment case studies, contextualising these items both within FashionMap archive and participants' wardrobes. Key denim jean findings have highlighted how micro trends reinforce the importance of incremental style differences on the wider trend cycle. Focus group discussions surrounding a 2002 pair of Levi's jeans emphasised a significant tension between sameness and difference within trends, showing how the 'wrong' style of jeans can easily fall out of fashion. This raises the question as to whether it is the trend cycle system which causes garments to fall out of fashion, or the individual consumers changing preferences. The second key finding to emerge was that the majority of participants were not emotionally attached to their denim. This is contrary to existing literature, and also to comparable findings with the t-shirt, which participants did exhibit attachment towards. The data revealed that jeans have become a ubiquitous item of clothing in everyday life. For the participants in this study, the generic and frequent use of jeans reduced their stimulation to specific memories. The final key finding to emerge from studying denim was that the 'perfect pair' of jeans are an elusive concept to most consumers. This relates to social and personal identity and the complexity of fit, and this research shows that this is an issue which applies to both genders. Levi's unsuccessful Curve ID range illustrated the difficulties of addressing differences in body shapes, and why the perfect pair of jeans is so hard to achieve, from the perspective of both the consumer and the retailer. Gendered differences with regards to denim jeans revealed that in terms of style, male students favour workwear jeans and females indicated a change in the use phase of their denim. These gendered differences were explored in the context of social and sustainability implications. The t-shirt and jeans are both fairly un-gendered items of clothing, and perhaps it is the trend cycle which engenders them. Jeans in particular may be gendered by their cut. This chapter has explored how the trend cycle contributes to certain styles falling in and out of fashion.

In contrast to denim jeans, strong links have been identified between t-shirts and identity. It can be argued that t-shirts are as much a ubiquitous item of clothing in everyday culture as denim jeans, but the key difference between the two items of clothing is that t-shirts have the ability to convey signs. Callum Swan and Manning's (1994) research outlines how the t-

shirt has become an assemblage of signs, proposing seven codes which aim to define the t-shirt in terms of semiotics, encoding the clothing item as an object. In this way, the t-shirt has the ability to convey and contain a range of messages. In contrast to denim jeans, participants did frequently link their t-shirts to happy memories and events. Personal choice overrode trends with participants' t-shirt selections. This was an important finding, as it did not equally emerge for jeans, where trends were a significant factor. Several previously unexplored contradictions have emerged from this analysis chapter including: 'nostalgic versus not nostalgic,' 'disposable versus keep' and 'fashion versus not.' These contradictions contribute to existing knowledge on jeans and t-shirts, as although they are seemingly similar items of clothing, important differences between their use phase have been identified. The discussions on garments have drawn out the importance of identity. Identity can be considered further in light of its connections to sustainability. Dobers and Strannegård (2005) argue that sustainability must be seen as intertwined with social processes such as fashion, identity and identity construction.

As previously mentioned, t-shirts and denim jeans are often seen as two of the most problematic fashion products in terms of sustainability. This is due to their production processes, and cheap prices on the high street, which increase disposability. Cotton, which is commonly the main fabric for both garments, is extremely water intensive. This study has built on this existing knowledge by examining individual attitudes towards these garment types in the context of trends and sustainability. This brings a novel approach and contribution to the sustainability debate. The subsequent and final section of this analysis will explore emotional attachment and sustainability. This will bring together findings and discussion sections which have included the trend cycle, and garment types, in order to consider future opportunities for longevity.

Chapter 7 – Emotional Attachment and Sustainability

7.1 Emotional attachment

7.1.1 Introduction

‘Clothing is intensely intimate and thus a consumer good with high potential for emotional attachment’ (Mellander and Petersson McIntyre, 2021, p.344).

This section of the analysis will explore emotional attachment to clothing, with the aim of distinguishing if particular garment types evoke attachments, and to identify if gendered differences are present when discussing attachment to garments. Clothing from the FashionMap archive was used here as a vehicle to explore longevity. This clothing has not been lived in or used by participants, but it has the ability to evoke nostalgic memories linked to the participants’ own wardrobes. As previously discussed, garments from FashionMap were utilised in a series of focus groups to stimulate interesting discussions. Emotional attachment to clothing was further explored during wardrobe studies, where participants were asked the following questions:

‘Which items of clothing have you owned the longest? And why? are you attached to this item?’

And

‘Are there any items in your wardrobe which evoke nostalgic memories?’

Strong links can be identified between emotional attachment and nostalgia. Wen et al. (2019) coined the term ‘nostalgic emotion’ for their research when investigating brand trust and attachment. This is a feeling which invokes a sense of intimacy, comfort and security. Emotional attachment encapsulates bonds between people and objects. The effects of this can be multidimensional and can also differ in terms of felt intensity toward an object (Kellett and Holden, 2013). Nostalgia is associated with a desire to recreate the past faithfully (McRobbie, 1989). ‘Savouring’ is considered to be an important part of the process here, as having a savoured experience may increase the likelihood that it will later be reflected upon nostalgically (Biskas et al., 2019). Cervellon et al’s. (2012) research demonstrated that contrary to expectations, young adults were just as prone to nostalgic feelings as older adults.

Wang et al. (2020) differentiate between personal nostalgia and collective nostalgia. Nostalgia in the realms of the consumer can be seen as personal, which will be demonstrated by the numerous personal examples of participants' attachment to garments throughout this section. Collective nostalgia in this context can be seen as the way in which trends are often driven by nostalgia.

This study has undertaken twenty-two wardrobe studies in the home. Four participants have been asked the same questions regarding emotional attachment a year apart. This data will be analysed in section 7.2, in order to ascertain if levels of emotional attachment remained consistent. In addition to this, interpretive data analysis has been used to code emotional attachment data via particular garment types, including; dresses, shirts, t-shirts and sweatshirts. It must be noted that emotional attachment is not a universally accepted notion - not everybody is emotionally attached to items of clothing. This became apparent through primary research analysis. Consumers may keep certain items of clothing for a long time, but this does not automatically mean that this is because they are attached to them. Durability and practicality may be additional factors which encourage longevity. Longevity and emotional attachment, although linked, are conceptually different (Mugge, Schoormans and Schifferstein, 2015).

Designing objects which encourage emotional attachment can present alternatives to our 'throwaway society,' by developing powerful frameworks which foster relationships between people and things (Chapman, 2005). The aim of this PhD is to contribute to knowledge of sustainability by exploring male and female perspectives towards clothing attachment and opportunities for longevity. Therefore, if participants express emotional attachment to certain items of clothing, the characteristics of these garments will be analysed. Aligning with Chapman's (2005) research, this PhD will consider whether emotional attachment properties can be designed into new items of fast fashion, thus increasing the longevity of these garments. Emotional attachment properties have the potential to be meaningful and powerful, but they are also intangible, and therefore difficult to include in the design process. Niinimäki (2014) notes how consumers' emotional needs have to be fulfilled in sustainable ways. It is thus important to study consumers' satisfaction in long-term product relationships in order to acquire further knowledge on ways to extend the product life span (Niinimäki, 2014).

7.2 Re-visiting emotional attachment

During the working from home pilot study (detailed in section 3.4 of the methodology) which took place in August 2020, participants were asked,

Are you emotionally attached to any items of clothing in your wardrobe? What factors contribute to an attachment being formed?

The same question was asked to participants in August 2021, as part of PhD wardrobe study data collection. Participant responses from 2020 and 2021 are visible in Table 7-1:

| Young adult participants | Aug 2020 emotional attachment to clothing response | Aug 2021 emotional attachment to clothing response | Photograph |
|--------------------------|---|--|--|
| Ivy | Things that I'm never going to get rid of are things that I wore for my graduation, or my prom dress, I am definitely emotionally attached to. I have a problem with shoes. I can't throw my shoes away, even if they are worn to death, or if they rub my feet and don't fit me, I just can't get rid of them. I like them, I don't need them, but they are my downfall. | I think it was my like prom in sixth form first year. Yeah, so this is probably the oldest thing I own. I would never wear it now, but also can't get rid of it. |  |

| | | | |
|---------------|---|---|---|
| <p>Kelsey</p> | <p>I've got a dress that my grandma bought me years ago. She randomly put it in the post for me, when I was a fresher in halls, and it was exactly the same as a dress that I wanted. She out of the blue treated me. I haven't worn it for years, but it's still in my wardrobe because I like it. It was a totally random, generous gift – just before the Christmas season, so I had a nice dress to wear for the period. I didn't ask for it, didn't need it, but did want it! I'd been in Topshop looking at it.</p> | <p>Most of it is because my grandma bought it for me. Grandma bought me this, this is a fun story. Grandma bought me this when I was a fresher and just randomly posted it to me for Christmas. But not for Christmas present, just to wear for Christmas. And it's basically it wasn't a print I liked, but there was one of the same print in Topshop I loved and couldn't afford or like, as a student wasn't going to buy. But my Grandma, out of nowhere sent me this dress to treat me.</p> |  |
| <p>Viv</p> | <p>The only items that I'm emotionally attached to are from family members who have passed away. A couple of chunky knit, cable knit, cardigans. This one here actually. This was hand knitted, my great aunts. And then the</p> | <p>I probably would say that would be the sentimental ones. I've got some of my Nana's old cardigans. My great Auntie's cardigan, just a knitted cardigan. And my Nanas aran knit cardigans. Those two, because if they weren't sentimental, then</p> |  |

| | | | |
|---------|---|---|--|
| | <p>other things are just old handbags of grandparents. <i>Do you use that bag?</i> Not this one, I've got another one which is navy which is do use, I think it's more because of the colour that I don't use it, but I would never chuck it out.</p> | <p>I'd have probably got rid of them by now. That's why they're the longest because I know whose they were. I won't ever get rid of them. I have some like old lady handbags and they were my Nana's so things like that.</p> |  |
| Charles | <p>I think for me, it's mostly suits, I don't think I've ever gotten rid of a suit that I've had as an adult. I only buy them for special occasions, so a prom, or a wedding or graduation. So I think it would be difficult to get rid of those, because they are associated with good things. Also, shirts that I had at uni that I would wear on nights out, they remind me of that.</p> | <p>I've got some really old ugly shirts from uni nights out, probably about 9 years old now. They remind me of the happy memories of being a care free fresher.</p> |  |

Table 7-1 - Emotional attachment responses one year apart

It is clear from the Table 7-1 that emotional attachment has remained consistent for these participants. There are some variations in their answers, but all participants have mentioned the same garment a year later, when asked if they are attached to any items in their wardrobes. It can be argued that one of the reasons that these items of clothing may have been kept is because they are closely linked to an expression of the participants' personal

identity. Clothing linked to identity in this way remains the case throughout an individual's life course (Twigg, 2009).

For Ivy and Charles, the attachment is linked to happy memories and events, such as a school prom or nights out at university, which is further associated with memories of youth. Family is the key reason for Viv and Kelsey's attachment, as these participants mention being emotionally attached to items which remind them of family members. Some participants state how they 'would never wear' these items, but also cannot throw them away. It can be argued that deep attachments have been formed with these garments as the users have described positive emotions, memories and special meanings. Attachment constructed over a longer period comprises of a 'reflective' level, as memories can trigger powerful, long lasting emotions (Norman, 2005). Therefore this explains why these emotional attachments are individual and related mainly to old garments that may no longer even be in use (Niinimäki, 2014). Objects externalise relations to others and can also give people comfort, making them feel at home (Woodward, 2021). Following further interview questions, all four participants confirmed that the items of clothing which feature in the above table are no longer in use. These items may therefore be described as 'clutter' in the wardrobe. Woodward (2021) notes how clutter in the home can be seen as a medium through which people negotiate, reinforce and manage social relationships. As demonstrated in Table 7-1, reinforcing relationships with family members, and remembering happy social occasions from the participants' youth are crucial factors which have led to the attachment of these items. Although, this does raise questions of sustainability. Keeping items in the wardrobe which are not being worn or used can be seen as an unsustainable practice. However, because these items of clothing are serving a personal and identity purpose, they are incredibly important.

'Clothing, can be seen to be a symbol of individuality and uniqueness, autonomy and importance, affiliation and social identification, all needed for the maintenance and enhancement of self-esteem' (Banister and Hogg, 2004). Furthermore, Owen et al. (2019) support Woodward's claims, stating that caring for material things can manage feelings of nostalgia or loss and serve as a form of 'material emotional grounding,' which generates a sense of security. Previous studies on clothing attachment have placed an importance on frequency of use (Niinimäki and Armstrong, 2013). Interestingly, Ivy's prom dress has probably not been frequently worn. This presents a challenge to the current literature. It can be argued that the prom dress symbolises a rite of passage in Ivy's life, and in this way, it has

become the marker of an important life stage. Rites of passage, such as a school prom, are significant as they can represent a symbolic divide between youth and young adulthood (Stannard, 2013). This is a period profound change and importance in an individual's life, and is distinct in terms of identity exploration (Arnett, 2000). Shona, a female student, described a similar experience with her 'holy conformation dress,' visible in Figure 7-1. This dress does not fit her anymore, but she keeps it in her wardrobe:

The dress is definitely sentimental, it wasn't expensive, it was off the market, but it was a key memory for me, because I do really love that religious part of me, and it just reminds me of that – Shona.

Yes, it's part of growing up? – Interviewer.

Yes, it's a rite of passage sort of thing – Shona.



Figure 7-1 - Shona's Confirmation dress

Further links can be made here between nostalgic references to youth highlighted by the wardrobe study responses to participants band t-shirts (please refer to Chapter 6, Section 6.4). Keeping clothing which holds meaning around family and memories evidences the role of these clothing items in the self as a relational being. Being part of the social world creates meaning for the individual, which can be linked to Schwartz's theory of values (2012), (previously discussed in Chapter 2, Section 2.11.3) According to Schwartz (2012) individuals hold numerous values, with varying degrees of importance.

It can be argued that the deeper levels of attachment can be linked to a connection to the participants core values. As one of Schwartz's value is security, this can help to explain the importance of memories in the context of material culture and sustainability. When looking at the example in Figure 7-1, sentimental childhood memories triggered through the confirmation dress can be linked to feelings of security, or the sense of being secure.

Values underline attitudes which are used to evaluate objects. (see Figure 7-2 below). We evaluate objects positively if they promote the goals that we value. Therefore, the value priority of participants can be measured through the use of Schwartz's tool.

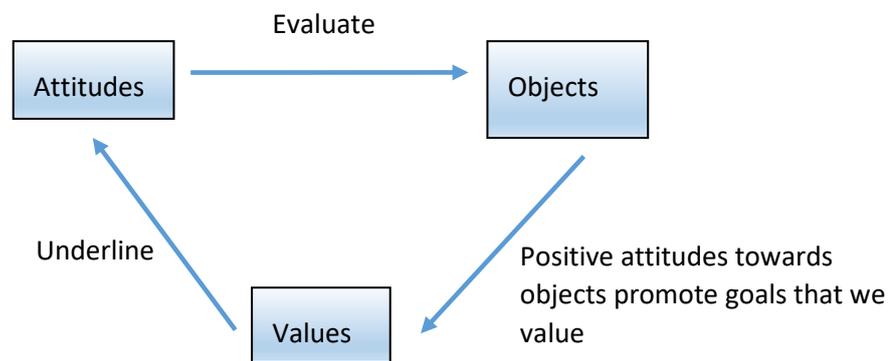


Figure 7-2 - Model adapted from Schwartz's (2012) theory of basic values

The theory of values does not explicitly define emotion, but some of Schwartz's values resonate with the idea of emotion, as shown through the feeling of security, mentioned above. The theory of values can be used as a 'bridge' to explain the reasons or values which may motivate an individual to exhibit certain behaviours towards their clothing. For example, friends and family and memories of youth are key codes amongst participants for fostering an emotional attachment to items of clothing as identified in Table 7-1. In Schwartz's (2012) theory, these key codes can be seen to present an attitude which underlies the values of security, tradition and benevolence. It is the importance of these values which means that the items of clothing are not discarded, even though they are no longer in use. Schwartz's theory of values has been used to help understand the relationship between individual social values and fashion consumption in the context of sustainability. In this study the clothes participants have purchased and wear are representative of their values. The data has revealed that these values are complex and multi-layered according to the individual, the garment and the meanings that have been attached to them. When examining the wardrobes of participants some garments evidence Schwartz's category of self-fulfilment,

whereas garments that are kept and treasured because for sentimental reasons, resonate the values linked to conservation, which includes security.

Coding items of clothing via reason for attachment, (such as family and youth/nostalgia), types of garment and being attached to 'dormant' items are areas that will be explored in the subsequent sections. The reasons behind emotional attachment to garments, that is the key codes, will be identified in the following section. This can be linked to Schwartz's (2012) theory via the attitudes which evaluate objects.

Material culture draws out the deeper relationships between individuals, their garments and how these negotiate their relationships to the social world. While the theory of values does not give a complete explanation of what individuals do with their clothing it presents an intriguing way to consider the differing values that individuals have for different clothing items. Schwartz's ten values are contradictory to each other and in this context have aided the fleshing out of the flux in meanings that individuals express towards the clothing they have bought and own. It is this focus that has been helpful to bring a nuanced approach to considering the role of social values within the context of material culture and sustainability.

Schwartz's theory of values can be linked to emotions and emotional durability. Drawing on the confirmation dress example in Figure 7-1, the broader category that security falls under is conservation. This dress has been kept in the participant's wardrobe, due to being a rite of passage. Applying the theory of values in particular those linked to conservation has brought a deeper understanding of how values can be manifested through material culture and sustainability.

7.3 Emotional attachment via themes

Previous studies on attachment to clothing have placed an importance on frequency of use and stages of attachment (Niinimäki and Armstrong, 2013). Niinimäki & Armstrong (2013) noted how certain attributes fostered attachments to garments including: functionality, memory, personal values and quality. Following a thematic analysis of transcription from wardrobe study interviews (please see Appendix 9), it became apparent that participants' reasons for emotional attachment to their garments could be grouped into several key themes. Please see Table 7-2.

| Themes | Key words / associated terms |
|--------------------|---|
| Friends and Family | 'I bought it with my dad, 'my grandma's vintage Dior bag,' 'my best friend designed it for me,' 'my mum and me bought them together,' 'my brother bought me that.' |
| Function | 'It's quite convenient, because it's warm,' 'I still wear my GCSE PE stuff, they were decent items of clothing,' 'just because it's a good coat, it still works as a coat.' |
| Place | 'This jumper from Australia,' 'I bought this t-shirt when I was at college,' 'I took this travelling with me,' 'My socks remind me of field trips from my undergrad.' |

Table 7-2 - Emotional Attachment Themes

Further themes including 'happy memories' and 'stories' were often interwoven into the themes mentioned in Table 7-2. For example, Owen, a male student, details the story behind his tracksuit bottoms below:

Yeah. I'd say I'm attached to these trackies I'm wearing. My girlfriend got them for me for Valentine's Day. And it's one of those ones where it's like, you can't justify paying for it yourself, because they're quite expensive so I appreciate that. They are my comfiest trackies, they are the thickest, they are very stylish – Owen.

These themes built upon Niinimäki & Armstrong's (2013) findings and included: friends and family, happy memories and stories and function. One of the most common themes identified was that of friends and family.

There is a blazer that I have that is really close to me, because it was one of my first blazers, and I went to buy it with my dad – Elle, a female student.



Figure 7-3 - Elle's blazer.

My grandmas vintage Dior bag is a nice design piece, but it also reminds me of my her and her lifestyle, and stories from her youth. It's interesting to think which occasions and outfits she might have worn the bag with... So yeah, it's a very nice item, it's kept here separated from the other bags, it has the special treatment – Monique, a female student.



Figure 7-4 - Monique's Dior bag.

This Australia jumper. When I was five or six, my grandma bought me one back from Australia when she went. I always wore that, it was my favourite jumper. Obviously I grew out of it, but I managed to go to Australia. And I saw that jumper. And I thought, well, I need to get that no matter how expensive it is. Yeah, by far the most nostalgic piece in my wardrobe. It's probably one of my most worn jumpers – Jacob, a male student.



Figure 7-5 - Jacob's Australia jumper.

This common theme was mentioned 18 times throughout the primary research. Types of garments kept which elicited memories of friends and family ranged from blazers to t-shirts to dresses. However, the most common type of garment which participants talked about with this kind of attachment was the hoodie or jumper. This could be in part due to the material qualities of the hoodie, which it can be argued lends itself to developing emotional attachments. For example, a hoodie is an item of clothing which encloses and envelopes the wearer, fostering comfort. Comfort is a key factor which can be linked to Schwartz's value of security. Security is further defined by the feeling of safety and a sense of belonging (Schwartz, 2012), which are qualities that Jacob is alluding to when describing his Australia jumper in Figure 7-5. The feeling of comfort through clothing is powerful as it can be linked

to evoking feelings of attachment. The jumper is impersonal by nature, as they are usually loose fitting and unisex. This means that they are easy to share with friends and family and can easily be borrowed by others. The jumper fulfils functional purposes, as in addition to being warm, they can also contain pockets. This data has shown how different kinds of emotional attachment exist – there is the personal aspect, where key codes such as friends, family and youth have been identified. Further key codes which fostered attachments to items of clothing included: practicality, holiday memories, and as a result of making a significant financial investment in the item. In addition to this, there is the material aspect, where key code such as comfort and warmth are relevant. It may be the case that both the personal and the material can sometimes become interwoven. This is evident in the above example of Jacob’s Australia jumper.

The following example of Liam’s attachment to his shirt can be further used to demonstrate Schwartz theory of values:

So this shirt is from United Colours of Benetton. It was from Tenerife, where we holiday a lot. I bought it probably about 10 years ago, it still looks brand new, pretty much doesn't fit at the moment, but I'm not going to chuck it away. We went to the shop to buy it. I tried it on. And when my nan was alive, we went in, and she was like, I'm gonna buy it for you. She handed over 20 euro note, and the cashier gave her a change for 50. So they actually paid us for it! But yeah, so it's got good memories, I'd never want to throw away, and I do want to fit back into it – Liam, a male young adult.



Figure 7-6 - Liam's shirt.

Analysing Liam’s response in detail, the value of security can also be applied to this attachment as he talks about how the shirt was bought for him by his late nan. According to Schwartz (2012) security is a value which promotes the stability of relationships, including family security. Therefore, the shirt can be seen as a vehicle which stimulates happy memories of both holidays and family. Building upon this, the value of benevolence is also

relevant here, as this is a value which promotes supportive social relations, i.e., the relationship between Liam and his nan. The value of tradition can also be applied to this attachment, as Liam notes how he holidays in Tenerife frequently. This implies a sense of familiarity and ritual which may bring a notion of comfort when thinking about the memories associated with the shirt. Although Liam doesn't currently wear the shirt as it is too small, he has the intention to 'fit back into it.' It is this intention, along with associated special memories, which stops the shirt from being discarded. The idea of wanting to fit back into the garment is reflective of the materialistic properties concerning the size of the shirt. Banim and Guy's (2000) research detailed how women's relationship with their clothes could be grouped into co-existing views of self, including, 'the woman I want to be.' This discourse is linked to aspirations relating to clothes, and attempts to create images perceived as successful. This idea can be linked back to Liam wanting to fit back into his shirt, as he may be keeping it as an aspirational item of clothing.

Using Schwartz's (2012) theory, it is clear that the deep level of attachment formed with this item is linked to a connection of the participants' core values. The attachment formed is not motivated by sustainability concerns. This shows that an individual's sense of identity in the context of clothing and sustainability within their wardrobe is complex. Although not an initial priority of the consumer, sustainability can become an output of keeping clothing due to emotional attachment. This has been demonstrated with Liam's shirt, which will not be thrown away, and has the potential to be worn again. It must be noted that memories which lead to items of clothing being kept in the wardrobe are not always positive. When asked if there are any items of clothing in which she is attached to, Zelda, a female young adult states:

Not in this wardrobe. All the clothing which I am emotionally attached to is at my mum's house. This is clothing from my childhood, which doesn't fit me anymore as I have put on weight. I don't want to see it in my own wardrobe because it makes me sad/not feel good about myself – Zelda.

This can be linked to unused clothing which make the user feel 'uncomfortable,' as mentioned in section 6.3.4 of the analysis. Unworn clothing is used to remember former versions of the self (Banim and Guy, 2001), and we save threads of the past, in order to keep our memories alive (Gibson, 2015). Woodward (2015) notes how things which are no longer used can still resonate with memories and also associations with people. The process of discarding of these items 'can become a problematic and emotionally charged experience' (Woodward, 2015, p.217).

This data has revealed that fast fashion has the ability to stimulate emotional attachment. It has become apparent that items of clothing which participants are attached to are not dependent on quality. As discussed throughout Chapter 7 thus far, attachment has ranged from a vintage Dior handbag to a Topshop dress. There is no evidence that participants were less attached to fast fashion clothing owned versus other garments. Primary research data suggests that it may be the experience of wear which gives value to fast fashion garments. This places an emphasis on the relationship between the garment and the owner, and not the individual trend. This shows that some items of fast fashion hold value, which is contrary to traditional stereotypes that fast fashion is easily disposable. It can also be noted that items discussed such as the Dior bag hold an additional monetary value, which when considered alongside the emotional connection with its owner, may further add to the bags longevity. The value discussed here is linked to participants' value systems, and what they consider to be important. For example, Kelsey's Topshop dress (visible in Table 7-1) was given to her by her Grandma, which underlies the values of security, tradition and benevolence (Schwartz, 2012a).

7.4 Design implications

Designing objects which encourage emotional attachment can present alternatives to our 'throwaway society,' by developing powerful frameworks which foster relationships between people and things (Chapman, 2005). However, 'attachment doesn't necessarily lead to lifespan optimising behaviour' (Cooper, 2010, p.334) and can lead to the storage of seldom used items. This outcome has been visible through this data. All of the clothing items discussed when revisiting emotional attachment, in Section 7.2, were indeed no longer in use. However, this was not always the case. When talking about his Australia jumper, visible in Figure 7-5, Jacob states, '*It's probably one of my most worn jumpers.*' As outlined in section 7.3 it may be the materiality of the jumper which lends itself to developing emotional attachments. Chapman (2005) notes how most products are incapable of sustaining long term relationships with their owners. Furthermore, designers cannot control the lived experience of a garment, and it is this aspect which has the potential to attract memories and emotional attachment. The use of emotional attachment as a design strategy 'remains elusive' (Mugge, Schoormans and Schifferstein, 2015, p.40). This is partly because past experiences, cultural backgrounds and life journeys of the user determine this. Designers can

craft the conditions which might lead to and intended experience, but not the experience itself (Chapman, 2010).

A possible design strategy for emotional attachment is to create products which are highly unique and personal, with the intention of stimulating irreplaceability (Mugge, Schoormans and Schifferstein, 2015). When a product is irreplaceable, it has symbolic meaning to its owner, and this meaning is not present in other products, even if they are identical (Schifferstein and Zwartkuis-Pelgrim, 2008). This attachment is further fostered due to the products self-expressive meaning. This is apparent in the below example:

I have a t-shirt from the Philippines that has this guy did a doodle of all of us, and then turned into a t-shirt, so I have that. I was volunteering with a group, and there for 3 months. I really enjoyed that time, so have kept it for sentimental reasons – Zelda, a female young adult.

This example shows how Zelda's t-shirt is irreplaceable, due to the personal nature of how it was designed. Happiness comes through as an important emotional there here. Bao, a female student, has a similar experience with her hoodie, which is visible in Figure 7-7:

Yes, this one I can show you. It's a black hoodie, and the image on the hoodie is very creative. My friend designed it for me, it was a birthday gift. And the friend is my best friend. When I go abroad to study, when I came to the UK, and I felt like I missed my friend and my family, I wear this hoodie, and I feel like I am not alone – Bao, a female student.



Figure 7-7 - Bao's Hoodie.

These examples demonstrate how highly unique and personal products can stimulate emotional attachment. Involving consumers in the design process of their own products is a further design strategy which has the potential to encourage emotional attachment (Niinimäki and Hassi, 2011). The two examples above are interesting as Bao's hoodie is still in use, whereas Zelda's t-shirt is not. This shows that emotion can be captured through wearing something, but also just by having something. Which leads to the question, 'Is there a difference between emotion in the context of the worn object versus the static/lifeless garment that hangs in the wardrobe?' Norman (2005) details three levels of the attachment process – the visceral, behavioural and reflective. The visceral level is linked to appearance, and the behavioural relates to a person's behaviour with the object. The highest level is the reflective level, which is where experiences are driven by emotions. It may be the case that in the context of emotional attachment to clothing, the reflective level can be further categorised into two groups – the worn and unworn.

Fostering attachment may be achieved through designing products which gracefully accumulate the signs of their usage history in their appearance (Schifferstein and Zwartzuis-Pelgrim, 2008). In terms of clothing, this strategy could be applied to denim and leather, which are two fabrics that can display patina through age. Patina shows the relationship between fashion and time, comes from wearing a garment, and can become integral in the creation of a designer's artistic vision (Townsend, 2011). Within fashion, patina becomes an element of symbolic enhancement of value (Calefato, 2021). During the male focus group with young adults, Theo describes the oldest item in his wardrobe, and why he has kept it for so long:

I've got a really nice old leather jacket, but it has aged really nicely, which you don't really see with any other clothes. Because its leather, the fade on it, or whatever, has aged really cool. I kind of want to see how it progresses almost – Theo, a male young adult.

The leather has aged in a way which has given the jacket character. 'In leather the aging process is considered to be aesthetical' (Niinimäki and Koskinen, 2011, p.174). Calefato (2021) notes how patina 'gives us back the best of the past,' and in doing so, invites us to reuse and recycle meaningful objects. As a personal reflection on my own relationship with clothing, the below images show a leather jacket which was purchased new in 2011. This jacket has also aged well, the 'worn out' leather grain reflects the style of the jacket and shows character through use. I am attached to this item due to its timeless style and patina,

which evokes a sense of lived-in authenticity. Stories of ‘patina of use’ demonstrate an alternative relationship with clothes over time (Fletcher, 2016).



Figure 7-8 - Leather Jacket.

Further examples from the data which evidence relationships to garments over time and links to materiality and patina include Viv’s description of her Levi’s jeans:

I've got a pair of denim Levi jeans which the bum bit has ripped, I've had them patched over several times. There's three different sewing patterns all over the bum because I won't get rid of them because they're a good pair of jeans. So yeah, if they're good jeans and they are worn, I will take them to Soul and Flare in Nottingham. I'll take them there and get them patched, or my Nana will do it for me. So yes, I will preserve them rather than get rid, I think that looks like it's more exciting as well – Viv, a female young adult.

Here, the patches on Viv’s jeans add to the aesthetic, with her describing that they now look ‘more exciting.’ There may also be an element of sentimentality and ‘personal nostalgia’ (Wang et al., 2020) connecting to Viv’s family values, as she notes that her Nana has worked on the jeans. This also demonstrates the appetite for repairing old garments, which is contrary to literature review findings suggesting that fast fashion always creates a throwaway culture. Following on from this, the final design strategy to be discussed is designing with a classic style to encourage emotional attachment. Mugge et al. (2015) note how classic designs may lengthen the product life cycle. Niinimäki et al.’s (2011) research also shows that classical styles or colours look good even when trends are changing, leading some garments to stay in longer term use. The longevity of trends has previously been discussed in Chapter 4, which covers fad, classic and fashion trend cycles. Consumers can become attached to products which follow fad trend cycles, but this is often only for a relatively short time period. Generally, consumers discard items which are considered to be ‘out of fashion.’ This is because people strive to maintain a positive self-identity, and ‘un-trendy’ garments are less valuable for maintaining a person’s self, and therefore, the

experience of product attachment will decrease (Mugge, Schifferstein and Schoormans, 2014, p.464). This is the fundamental crux of the argument, as it describes how the fashion system works, and what drives consumption. Keeping up with trends means that our identity as consumers is constantly being brought into question.

Primary research investigating emotional attachment has shown that participants are often attached to items of clothing which fall into classic styles. T-shirts and hoodies/jumpers are two of the most common garments which participants describe as holding emotional value. These findings align with Armstrong et al.'s (2016) research, who also discovered that t-shirts and sweatshirts embody emotional attachment more frequently than other items of clothing. In addition to being a classic design, the inherent nature of the t-shirt means that it can easily become a memento. Quality and durability associated with sweatshirts (compared to the high use intensity of a gym kit for example) may further attachment to the item (Armstrong, Niinimäki and Lang, 2016).

The above examples have shown that there are possibilities for designers to help consumers create emotional and valuable bonds with their clothing (Hirscher and Niinimäki, 2013). Creating products which are highly unique and personal, involving consumers in the design process, designing to accumulate patina and designing with a classic style are all approaches which can encourage emotional attachment. These design strategies show that there is the possibility of introducing the dimensions of time and use into garments (Fletcher, 2016). Incorporating emotional design into fast fashion may seem to go against the business model of creating 'throwaway items' linked to low price and quality, thus encouraging repeat purchase. Moreover, the whole economic system in the industrialised world is based on products fast replacement and planned obsolescence (Mont, 2008). However, despite this, some items of fast fashion do become 'accidental classics.'

7.5 Accidental classics

As previously mentioned in the above section, a possible solution which addresses the 'obsolescence of desire' is to manufacture products with classic and timeless designs (Mont, 2008, p.5). Building upon Fletcher's (2016) discussions around longevity, the accidental classic can be defined as a garment which defies obsolescence in unintentional ways, rarely as a result of design planning. This strategy addresses consumers who tend to develop emotional attachment to their products. Improving the performance of clothing can lead to

increased attachment (Armstrong, Niinimäki and Lang, 2016). As detailed in Chapter 4, Section 4.7, examples of accidental classics have been identified in my own wardrobe, and the FashionMap archive. Using a personal reflection from my own wardrobe, the dress below (Figure 7-9) was bought in 2010, and over ten years later, it is an item which I still wear today. The dress was purchased from New Look, it is made from 100% polyester with 100% nylon lace detailing and made in China. This dress can be described as a fast fashion garment with unusual longevity. The enhanced durability and extended use of this garment, along with the classic design, have led to an attachment being formed with the dress.



Figure 7-9 - New Look dress

This example challenges the perception that fast fashion items does not last, or quickly become style obsolescent. A key theme has emerged here, as this is reflective of Jake's inexpensive ASOS t-shirt that he was attached to as detailed in Chapter 6, Section 6.18. This consequently contests the existing literature that fast fashion is always perceived to be negative. Longevity through design was noted through several trends in FashionMap, such as Bohemian and floral. The 'accidental classic' can retain longevity, despite the fact that it is intended to be 'fast' fashion. 'Mass produced goods can age well, and they can gain character through use' (Chapman, 2005, p.118). Wardrobe study participants were asked if they owned any items of clothing which could be described as accidental classics. The majority of participants did own clothing which had lasted longer than expected, with surprising durability. Primark was the brand which was mentioned most frequently when discussing these items of clothing. This was an unexpected finding as Primark are a low-price, value retailer. Table 7-3 shows garment types and descriptions of accidental classics purchased from Primark.

| Participant | Garment Type | Age / Attributes / Cost | Image (If available) |
|------------------------------|--------------------|--|---|
| Noah, a male student. | T-shirt | Yeah, this if we're talking about durability, this was Primark. So I was expecting it to disintegrate as soon as I got home, about three years ago. So this one was seven pounds from Primark and is actually lasted quite a while. Which I wasn't expecting it to. |  |
| Shauna, a female student. | Top | This top I had, it must have been since before I was a teenager, I'm gonna say 12. I'm not kidding, I've really not grown that much since I was 12 (laughs). It is actually something that I regularly wear in the summer. It gets to the summer, and it's a nice stripe, it's got a nice bow detail on the shoulder. It's not really casual, but it's not too fancy, and it's a nice lightweight material, so I love wearing it in summer. I wasn't meant to keep it this long, but I have. |  |
| Matthew, a male young adult. | Orange raincoat | This is one of those jackets I bought for a festival... I remember being in town just picking up a few bits I was in Primark and I saw this hanging on the end of a rail on the sales like a fiver. I only bought it for that weekend, and I've just not been able to part with it since because it's just it's become more of an accidental staple if you like of my wardrobe. I always wear this near Halloween because it's orange. |  |
| Matthew, a male young adult. | Plain white shirts | I do have quite a few shirts from Primark, just white plain shirts, some of them I've had for years and they really are you know, still washing really | N/A |

| | | | |
|----------------------------|-----------------|--|-----|
| | | well, still a really nice bright white. | |
| Viv, a female young adult. | Green coat | <p>I've got coat which unfortunately I don't remember the last time I bought anything from Primark, but I have a green coat. Which I don't necessarily like, but I keep putting it on because it's still weirdly within fashion now and people do compliment it. So that's an accidental one.</p> <p><i>How old is that?</i></p> <p>Maybe two years. And I thought it would just be a short seasonal thing. It's a khaki green, knee length khaki green quilted coat, which, at the time I was looking for one and I thought I'd only like it for a short amount of time but still get complimented on that.</p> | N/A |
| Owen, a male student. | Socks and pants | I get my socks and pants from Primark sometimes. But that's literally just like plain white, so like I don't really care about them. And regarding them lasting long, I mean I don't think really think that much different from Nike socks, they just don't have the little tick on them. To be honest though, Nike socks, when I've had actually had them, they've been quite poor quality. So I prefer Primark ones. | N/A |

Table 7-3 - Accidental classics purchased from Primark

Table 7-3 shows how a selection of young fashion consumers are behaving with regards to their relationship with fast fashion. A level of value has been placed on these Primark garments, and they have been kept and worn for an extended period of time. 'Placing value on fast fashion products, and thus, engaging with their care, highlights the role of these products as highly fashionably desirable in some contexts' (McNeill et al., 2020, p.367). This does not mean that fast fashion is sustainable, but it does bring a different viewpoint to the fast fashion debate. This could be seen as a surprising outcome, given that Primark is

renowned for being a value retailer on the British high street, with some of the lowest price points. This is visible in Figure 7-10 (also featured in Chapter 4), which shows the market positioning of the fashion brands on Nottingham’s high street in 2022.

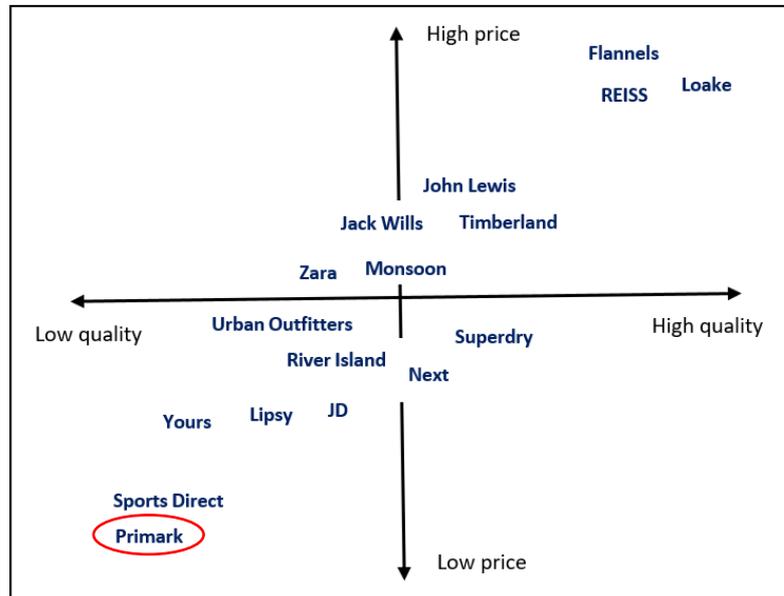


Figure 7-10 - Market positioning/Perceptual map featuring fashion brands on Nottingham’s high street in 2022

Other brands mentioned by participants when describing accidental classics included Zara, ASOS and Marks and Spencer. It is clear from Table 7-3 that there is not one defining feature which connects these garments together. Participants do however collectively mention not expecting the garments to last as long as they have. When describing elements which can create satisfaction from the long-term use of products, Niinimäki & Armstrong (2013) note how quality, functional aspects and aesthetic attributes are all important contributing factors. They also mention how tactility can contribute to the long-term use of products. Materiality, which includes tactility and comfort, has been a particularly important finding to emerge from this data. The materiality of the hoodie, for example, is a key aspect of the garment’s sustainability and longevity. Figure 7-11 has been adapted from Niinimäki & Armstrong’s (2013) research. The garments in Table 7-3 contain some, if not all, of the features which are described by Niinimäki & Armstrong.

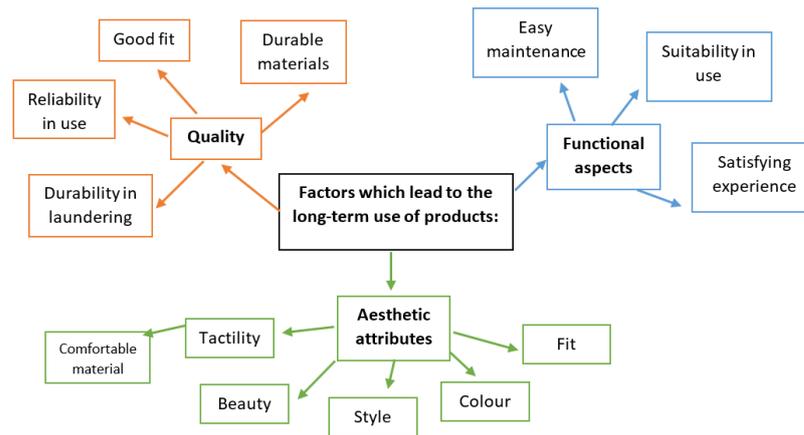


Figure 7-11 - Adapted from Niinimäki & Armstrong (2013)

This shows that the repeated use of things, like clothes, are dependent on many factors (Fletcher, 2016, p.144). Performance and appearance have been above average for the garments in Table 7-3, which has resulted in a deep satisfaction with the user. Mugge et al.'s (2005) research found that when product performance is above average this may contribute to the degree of attachment experienced. It must be acknowledged that as previously mentioned in Chapter 4, what makes an item a classic piece of clothing is based on subjective opinion. The garments visible in Table 7-3 can be classified as accidental classics according to their owners. However, if the same garments were bought by different consumers, it is unknown if they would have been kept for a prolonged period of time, or discarded. In this way, it is difficult to discern to what capacity qualities of an accidental classic are inherent in the design of the garment, and to what degree it lies in the personal relationship between the wearer and the clothing. Similarities can be drawn here between earlier discussions on the nuances of longevity (Chapter 5, Section 5.9.1), where contradictions and complexities are evident in studying this concept.

This section of the research analysis has demonstrated that many items of clothing which participants are emotionally attached to are kept, but no longer in active use. However, accidental classics are often still worn on a regular basis. In many ways, classic styles in fashion challenge the traditional fast-paced trend cycle. Wardrobe study data with a young adult named Kelsey revealed that some of her fast fashion items have lasted for 'years.' It is possible that these items of clothing have gained sustainability through longevity. A combination of being the right garment at the right time and price, in addition to a positive personal relationship with the consumer, can contribute to items of fast fashion becoming accidental classics.

7.6 Gendered approach

Gendered insights with regards to emotional attachment to clothing have revealed that males often describe their reasons for attachment as being linked to practicality, whereas females were more likely to link attachment to friends and family. Research has shown that there are significant differences between 'positive buying emotions' for men and women (Coley and Burgess, 2003). Women are more likely to impulse buy, and their behaviour is generally thought to be more emotionally and psychologically rooted than men (Coley and Burgess, 2003). 'Object attachment has been shown to differ between genders, e.g. women have been found to emphasize social ties through favourite objects, whereas men were found to represent individual accomplishments (Fleetwood-Smith, Hefferon and Mair, 2019, p.43).

When describing a particular raincoat which he is attached to, Elliot, a male student, states, *'It's quite convenient because it's warm enough on cold days as well. Even though it's a raincoat. Yeah, I am quite attached to it. I really like the colour as well... Like I've had it, yeah, five, six years.'* Here, the use of the word 'convenient' alludes that the coat is functional in its use and appearance. Harvey, also a male student, notes that he is attached to his *'GCSE PE stuff... they were decent items of clothing that I still have and still wear. I wear them if I'm doing physical work, like DIY or something like that.'* Durability is clearly a factor here which has contributed to the attachment. It may be the case that these males have subconsciously differentiated between attachment and emotional attachment. Furthermore, when asked the questions, *'Which items of clothing have you owned the longest?'* And *'Why are you attached to this item?'* several males responded that they had kept coats for a considerably long time, again, for practical reasons:

Just because it's a good coat. I mean, it still works as a coat. Yeah, it's not offensive. I don't think I have anything against wearing it I just have other coats now that I think I prefer... I can still put it on. It's still warm. It's still fine. But yeah, still fits. So I mean, why have I kept it? because there's nothing wrong with it. Maybe that's why I haven't got rid of it – Charles, a male young adult.



Figure 7-12 - Charles's coat.

I have a really plain blue jacket, it's my summer jacket that I wear. Like, if it's getting chilly in the evening, in summer. I've had it for, I can't think how long, years. I'll just wear it basically, whenever, because I know that it's like acceptable. I don't have to think about it. I can just bang it on... I guess it would never go out of style. I don't know if it's a bomber or one of those. It's just like, it's kind of like a granddad coat. I don't know, it's just really plain. The sort of thing you'd probably see in Marks and Spencer's or something. It's got lots of like, zip pockets and stuff – Theo, a male young adult.

In both coat examples above, the participants mention factors such as warmth, classic style and an abundance of pockets, which have led to the garments being kept for a long time. It must be noted that more masculine clothing does have a tendency towards greater functionality. Emotional factors, such as memories of family and friends, have not been mentioned here. These factors were more often mentioned by women. Building upon existing data Holbrook's (1993) research study found that women were slightly more prone to nostalgic feelings than men. This does not however mean that men cannot be *emotionally* attached to items of clothing. One key gendered finding uncovered was the strong links between youth and nostalgia amongst young men, particularly in relation to band t-shirts. As previously mentioned in Chapter 6, Section 6.4, band t-shirts in FashionMap appeared to be timeless in their design, but some participants did question the perceived authenticity of these items. When describing emotional attachment, several males described attachment to band t-shirts, which evoked memories of being part of a band in their youth. Unlike band t-shirts from FashionMap, these items contained lived-in authenticity;

At home, like at my parents, I have a suitcase full of my band T shirts. Because I've been in a few different like, moderately successful bands that have toured around Europe and things like that... - Will a male young adult.

I wore this t-shirt during a time that I quite liked, so it reminds me of it... this kind of thing is from my old band, my friend designed it, so that's pretty nostalgic – Theo, a male young adult. The t-shirt as a key fashion item has been explored in detail in Chapter 6 Section 6.14 of this analysis. Women also expressed feelings of emotional attachment towards their clothing, but this was most often linked to memories of family or friends.

For me personally, the only really nostalgic ones are when it's like sentimental family related. So I have some, here's an example. I have some like old lady handbags and they were my Nana's so things like that. Yes, bags and scarves, handbags, scarves and cardigans and a dressing gown. They were my great Nanas. Other sort of modern contemporary clothes that I've got, that I've worn to like places and events, I don't actually attach the memory to them – Viv, a female young adult.



Figure 7-13 - Viv's Nana's handbag.

Viv's comments here surrounding her modern contemporary clothes can be linked to earlier discussions which detailed how fast fashion is often deemed to be cheap and disposable, and therefore not valuable. The reason for keeping her Nana's handbag can be linked to Viv's social values, of which she places family of great importance. Under Schwartz's (2012a) theory, these key codes can be seen to present an attitude which underlies the values of security, tradition and benevolence. Viv further states how she does not use this handbag *'because of its colour, but would never chuck it out.'* Not using items of clothing which they described as being emotionally attached to, was a common theme for female participants. It may be the case that for women, emotional attachment to clothing encourages dormant items in the wardrobe. Csikszentmihalyi and Rochberg-Halton (1981) found that females are more likely to mention clothing as special objects. Males cherish objects of action more frequently, whereas females cherish objects of contemplation. When discussing meanings that these objects evoke, women were also more likely to give reasons referring to memories

and immediate family, more often than men. This is reflective of this research's findings. Women's greater tendency to mention clothing as special objects may be fuelled by a higher level of involvement with the product category (O'Cass, 2003). This could also be linked to the importance of the experience of wear, and how clothes can make an individual feel. Previous discussions (Chapter 6, Section 6.3.4) revealed that both genders have unused clothing in their wardrobes, however women are more likely to link this to negative social experiences and body image, whereas men do not. It may also be the case that different genders place different levels of value on products which they consider to be important.

7.7 Emotional Attachment Conclusion

This section of the analysis has investigated emotional attachment to clothing. Close links between emotional attachment and nostalgia have been explored. Wang et al. (2020) differentiate between personal nostalgia and collective nostalgia. Nostalgia in the realms of the consumer can be seen as personal, as demonstrated by the numerous personal examples of participants' attachment to garments throughout this section. Collective nostalgia in this context can be seen as the way in which trends are often driven by nostalgia. 'Nostalgia is not only about individuals, but also about collective memory' (Wang et al., 2020, p.571). Altogether, thinking about the different dimensions of nostalgia contributes to a new way of understanding the trend system.

The data has shown how different kinds of emotional attachment exist – there is the *personal* aspect, where key codes such as friends, family and youth have been identified. Further key codes which fostered attachments to items of clothing included: practicality, holiday memories, and as a result of making a significant financial investment in the item. These codes define the behaviours and attitudes of the students and young adults who have been profiled. Although not generalisable to the wider population, these findings reveal what drives young consumers to become attached to certain items of clothing. Understanding motivations behind consumer behaviour with regards to clothing consumption contributes to knowledge, as little remains known surrounding the post-purchase behaviours of young consumers (Joung, 2014). In addition to the *personal* aspect of emotional attachment, there is also the *material* aspect, where key code such as comfort and warmth are relevant. It may be the case that both the personal and the material can sometimes become interwoven.

Gendered differences have been highlighted which revealed that males often describe their reasons for attachment as being linked to practicality, whereas females were more likely to link attachment to friends and family. This does not mean that men do not also resonate with emotional and stylistic aspects of clothing. Walker (1994) argues that men share activities in their friendships, and women share intimate feelings, and that these notions are more accurately viewed as 'cultural ideologies' than as 'observable gender differences in behaviour' (Walker, 1994, p.246). Moreover, Walker believes that men share more feelings than the existing literature indicates, and women share less. 'The Gender Similarities Hypothesis,' (Hyde, 2005) notes that men and women often show more similarities than differences in their attitudes, behaviours and emotions. The importance of the materiality of clothing in relation to emotional attachment is a significant finding, which was present for both genders, and reflects Hyde's (2005) hypothesis. Further contributions to knowledge include how the data has shown that emotion can be captured through wearing something, but also just by having something. Some participants stated how they were emotionally attached to items which they 'would never wear,' but also cannot throw away.

The important link between clothing and identity has been reiterated through attachment to clothing, and keeping dormant items in the wardrobe. Schwartz's (2012) theory has been utilised to show how it is clear that deep levels of attachment formed with clothing items are linked to a connection of the participants' core values. Interestingly, the attachment formed is not motivated by sustainability concerns. This shows that an individual's sense of identity in the context of clothing and sustainability within their wardrobe is complex.

This data has revealed that fast fashion has the ability to stimulate emotional attachment. Accidental classics challenge perceptions that fast fashion is always negative - Table 7-3 was used to show how a level of value has been placed on Primark garments, as they have been kept and worn for an extended periods of time. This does not mean that fast fashion is sustainable, but it does bring a different viewpoint to the fast fashion debate. Thus bringing new understanding to the workings of the fashion trend cycle.

When designing for emotional attachment, perceived irreplaceability is an incredibly important factor (Mugge, Schoormans and Schifferstein, 2015). Armstrong et al. (2016) argue that increasing the emotional and mindful experience with clothing are essential factors which can contribute to sustainable clothing consumption. Primary research has demonstrated that although not an initial priority of the consumer, sustainability can become an output of keeping clothing due to emotional attachment.

Certain design strategies can be followed which offer the opportunity to create extended use. This has highlighted the role of design for longevity. Encouraging emotional connections to garments suggests a pathway for disposable behaviour change, ultimately resulting in more sustainable behaviours (McNeill et al., 2020). Durability, classic styles a strong person–product relationship (Niinimäki and Armstrong, 2013) are factors which can contribute to a fast fashion product becoming an accidental classic, in addition to the materiality of garments. It can therefore be argued that some garments are beyond trends as they have surpassed their intended lifespan within the trend cycle. However, designing for emotional attachment alone is not enough. Fletcher (2012) notes that extending the life span of products, must be accompanied by a change in consumer attitudes, and patterns of consumption, in order to achieve optimal impact.

The subsequent and final section of the analysis will explore sustainability, aiming to bring together findings and discussion sections which have included the trend cycle, emotional attachment and garment types, in order to consider future opportunities for longevity.

7.8 Sustainability

7.8.1 Introduction

The World Commission's (1987) widely accepted definition of sustainability recognises that it must be an economic development activity which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. In the following section, this definition will be crucial in relation to the fashion industry moving forward, and the strategies which will be proposed. The sustainability issue within the context of fashion is incredibly complex. The issue has been identified as 'fashion's paradox,' whereby 'cheap fashion means disposable fashion and encourages more consumption creating a vicious cycle' (Black, 2008, p.14). Primary research findings will be used to assess the sample of student and young adults understanding of sustainability issues within the fashion industry. 'Given that fashion consumption appears set to grow with each new generation of consumers, the need to provide a regulatory system for sustainable fashion and to communicate that effectively appears to be essential' (Peirson-Smith and Evans, 2017, p.373).

Fashion cycles have become increasingly fast paced and to withstand this demand, and increase profit margins, some sectors of the fashion industry have adopted unsustainable production techniques (McNeill and Moore, 2015). Although, findings so far have questioned

the 'fastness' of fast fashion through particular consumer attitudes and behaviours. However, this does not detract from that fact that as mentioned in Section 2.8 of the literature review, the fashion industry has detrimental impacts on the environment. The final section of this analysis will explore sustainability, bringing together findings and discussion sections which have included the trend cycle, emotional attachment and garment types, in order to consider future opportunities for longevity.

7.9 Sustainable contradictions

The first key code identified through primary research data analysis with regards to sustainability, was a high level of awareness amongst participants regarding contradictions within sustainable fashion. A pilot focus group was undertaken, which focused specifically on the t-shirt. During this focus group, a discussion was initiated surrounding a t-shirt which has been produced to promote the environmental activist group, Extinction Rebellion. Focus group participants noted that for an environmental activist t-shirt to be effective, it must be produced in an ethically responsible way. This became apparent through discussions surrounding Extinction Rebellion—supply chain transparency is required in order for consumers to buy into t-shirts displaying environmental messages. Otherwise, the t-shirt itself becomes a contradiction. There will always be an environmental impact in producing a t-shirt, but perhaps the need to convey a particular message about the environment takes precedent over this impact by contributing to secure a more sustainable future.

When asked to describe which factors he considered to be important when purchasing a new garment, Elliott, a male student, explained:

If I was choosing between two garments, and they were the same price, and there was an ethically sourced one, and something that I much preferred style wise, I'd probably lean more towards the one that I preferred. Because I'd be worried that I wouldn't end up wearing the other thing. And then if it's not getting used by me, maybe that's even worse than getting it in the first place. Because, you know, it would just be sitting in my wardrobe, and no one would be wearing it – Elliott.

This viewpoint highlights a key contradiction within the sustainable fashion debate. If sustainably produced clothing is bought, but not worn, does this therefore make it unsustainable? It is also reflective of the intention-behaviour gap, where despite their ethical intentions, ethically minded consumers rarely purchase ethical products (Carrington, Neville

and Whitwell, 2010). Unused clothing in the wardrobe has previously been explored in the emotional attachment section of this analysis. Some participants stated how they were emotionally attached to items which they 'would never wear,' but also cannot throw away. Because these items of clothing are serving a personal and identity purpose, they are very important. Owen et al. (2019) state that caring for material things can manage feelings of nostalgia or loss and serve as a form of 'material emotional grounding,' which generates a sense of security. The same conclusions therefore cannot be drawn between unused clothing in the wardrobe which the owner is emotionally attached to, and sustainably produced clothing which remains unworn in the wardrobe, with no attachment. Perhaps the difficulty lies in that it is impossible to predict how much a garment will be worn at the point of purchase. A possible solution here may be to implement slow fashion practices. As previously discussed in the literature review, slow fashion is a term used to identify sustainable fashion solutions, challenging the current fashion system. It is based on principles including, innovative design, production, consumption, use and reuse, and questions the understanding that fashion must exclusively be associated with the new (Clark, 2008). Implementing these principles alongside sustainable production may be a feasible way to ensure the long-term use of garments. An example of a historical successful slow fashion initiative would be Twigger Holroyd's knitwear label, 'Keep & Share,' which encouraged consumers to buy less and form a strong bond with products, and is discussed in Section 2.8 of the literature review (Twigger Holroyd, 2020). Section 7.5 of the analysis described how the repeated use of clothes is dependent on many factors (Fletcher, 2016). When describing elements which can create satisfaction from the long-term use of products, Niinimäki & Armstrong (2013) note how quality, functional aspects and aesthetic attributes are all important contributing factors. This PhD study has also found materiality to be a significant factor in the discussion of sustainability and longevity. As outlined in section 7.3, the materiality of certain garments, such as jumpers or hoodies, may lend itself to developing emotional attachments with the consumer, encouraging extended use.

Further contradictions within sustainable fashion highlighted by participants included issues around transparency and price. When asked if he would be willing to pay a premium for a garment which had been sustainably produced, Charles, a male young adult, responded;

Companies I suspect capitalise on it as a way to you know add or hide some sort of margin. So yeah, I don't know if it was Nike or Adidas that did the shoes made out of ocean plastic. And they cost like 300 quid. Okay, well, that's never going to be the manufacturing cost,

because it's just not. I get it's gonna be more expensive. But at the end of the day, I'm not paying a premium for sustainability. I'm paying for kind of a gimmick that's contemporary. So I think I would be willing to pay if I thought that it was actually a markup, reflecting sustainability, but I think it depends on how much you trust the company - Charles.

This implies a lack of transparency with regards to price, and a mistrust of global retail corporations' environmental motives. As a contrasting example, Nudie Jeans are a Swedish denim garment retailer who are attempting to become, 'the most transparent company in the world' (Egels-Zandén, Hulthén and Wulff, 2015, p.95). Consumers visiting Nudie Jeans website can view a tab labelled 'transparency' when browsing information about each product. This allows the consumer to view detailed information about the production process of every garment, including information about raw material, production and the final stages of manufacturing and transport. The company also offers CO₂ emissions and water use data for many products (Nudie Jeans, 2021). Although it is undoubtable that as a company, Nudie Jeans are incredibly transparent, they do not mention price as part of their approach. This is a factor that Charles refers to as being problematic when describing the high cost of shoes made out of ocean plastic in the passage above. However, it can be argued that businesses cannot make profit margins public knowledge in order to protect the very nature of the business. Nudie Jeans claims to be, 'one of the first brands in the industry' which offers 'everyone a look into their production' (Nudie Jeans, 2021), and by doing so they are leading the way for transparency within clothing production.

Although, as Kelsey, a female young adult notes, '*shopping ethically is still consumerism.*' Will, a male young adult, further describes the contradictions and complications involved with sustainable consumption:

For me buying something locally from a brand that isn't sustainable, is better than buying something online from a sustainable brand. You've just got to weigh it up... it took a while to be comfortable with the fact that I couldn't fix a lot of things by just buying it, you can't buy your way out of it, either. I could go and clear my wardrobe out of everything that's in here, and then go buy, like sustainable products, but then you just consume loads more products just to you know, have them be sustainably sourced – Will.

The common viewpoint amongst participants demonstrates how consumers are mindful and also highly aware of sustainable contradictions. These contradictions may be one of the reasons which deters consumers from sourcing and committing to sustainable fashion. Reluctance to prioritise sustainability when purchasing new garments will be explored as a

further key code in section 7.11.1 of this analysis. Bruce and Daly's (2006) research presented that although users supported the concept of eco fashion, they continued to buy cheap, fast fashion products, which is a similar finding to participants' responses in this research. It is important to understand these contradictory sensibilities, in order to alter future perceptions and attitudes (Joy et al., 2012). Research has revealed that there is a clear and large gap between positive attitudes towards sustainable fashion, and actual consumption of such fashion, known as, 'the attitude behaviour gap' (Sudbury and Böltner, 2011). Irrational consumer choices are often completely disconnected from consumer values (Moisander and Pesonen, 2002). There are several barriers that deter consumers from purchasing green apparel. These barriers include, 'price, availability, knowledge, transparency, image, inertia and consumption habits' (Wiederhold and Martinez, 2018, p.419). Transparency, in particular, will be explored in further detail in the below section.

7.10 Greenwashing

Pereira et al. (2021) note that lack of transparency in the fashion industry is an aspect that creates barriers for consumers when implementing more sustainable practices. It is this lack of transparency which can lead to the implementation of greenwashing. 'Transparency towards consumers about materials, production and value chain are missing' (Pereira et al., 2021, p.23). Furthermore, scholarly conversation about supply chain transparency is limited (Egels-Zandén, Hulthén and Wulff, 2015). As previously mentioned, Nudie Jeans are 'one of the most transparent companies in the world,' due to their openness and honesty when sharing information with consumers about their supply chain. This approach is however uncommon in the fashion industry.

Information empowerment has caused Generation Y to become highly sceptical of both large companies in general and the messages they present (Hill and Lee, 2012). Greenwashing techniques implied by organisations include using ambiguous terms like 'eco-friendly,' creating 'ethical' capsule collections and investing in marketing campaigns rather than improving unsustainable conditions (Reilly, 2020). Reilly (2020) uses Zara's 'Join Life' and H&M's 'Conscious Collection' as examples of how companies are claiming sustainability through capsule collections, but in reality, this only represents a small fraction of their total output. Ella, a female young adult, reiterated this point when she recognised the problems with Primark's sustainable collection;

Primark have one line of sustainable jeans with sustainably sourced cotton... If that is sustainable, inherently, everything else that they do is unsustainable. So, although it's nice that they're doing it, it's not an answer to the problem. And yeah, that wouldn't make me want to shop at Primark and spend a bit more. I think a sustainable brand is more important to me than one single product because I think it's also about the cohesive way you're affecting fashion and the industry – Elle.

In addition to this, two further participants also mentioned H&M's Conscious Collection as being problematic, with reference to greenwashing concerns. Niinimäki (2013) notes how it is appealing for companies to use sustainable arguments, merely to increase sales; and because these arguments are complex, it is often easy to mislead the consumer. Research data shows that 30% of consumers state that they would choose a retailer based on whether or not they sold sustainable fashion ranges, but 79% of people find it difficult to ascertain which retailers are sustainable (Baram, 2019). This demonstrates the demand for retailers to stock sustainable fashion ranges. Baram (2019) notes that it would be useful for brands and organisations to devise an industry standard, so that consumers could easily access how sustainable a fashion company is.

The contradictions explored in the above discussion demonstrates the complexities associated with the sustainability debate. Although there is not one single answer to this problem, addressing consumer behaviour will be part of the solution. Zhang et al. (2021) identify three perspectives which must be considered when looking at the relationship between fast fashion and sustainability. These are: the supply side (fast fashion brands), the demand side (consumers) and the regulator side (governing organisations). The following section will investigate issues relating to the demand side and consumer behaviour in order to make meaningful sustainable changes.

7.11 Consumer behaviour and sustainability

7.11.1 Importance of sustainability when shopping for new garments

A key finding following primary research analysis was a detailed insight into how students prioritise sustainability, when shopping for new items of clothing. It became apparent that sustainability was not a priority at point of purchase, as other factors took precedent. Style and fit were commonly mentioned as primary concerns, with sustainability often only being considered as an afterthought. The data shows that the students interviewed were not

actively shopping at, or purposefully seeking out sustainable fashion brands. Shauna, a female student, described her thought process when buying a new t-shirt, and was asked if she would pay more for a sustainably sourced garment;

I wouldn't base it on the fact of sustainability actually, I'd base it on which one had a better fit, better quality. I prefer a softer material, a slightly fitted cut – so if the sustainable one fitted that criteria, than yeah I'd pay extra for it – Shauna.

Jacob, a male student, voiced a similar opinion;

Honestly, no, it's not something that I look at as much as I should and would like to. Sustainability is not something that I bear in mind when I purchase. The fit is probably the most important thing, along with if I like the look of it – Jacob.

This viewpoint reinforces that sustainability is a secondary consideration. This key code was mentioned several times throughout wardrobe study interviews;

When I go clothes shopping, the first thing in my head is 'would I actually wear this?' Not 'where'd it come from?' And 'how is it made?' I would like that to change. I would like it to be more obvious which clothes are sustainable and which aren't. But, you know, my priority is, I'm going shopping, I'm willing to spend a decent amount of money on something I'm actually gonna wear – Noah, a male student.

It would make me respect the brand more... but something being sustainable is not really something I look out for, to be honest... As I said, like I feel kind of bad saying but yeah, sustainability isn't a top factor when buying clothes – Owen, a male student.

There is a clear recognition here that young consumers care about sustainability, but a contradiction emerges with purchasing fast fashion (Cairns, Ritch and Bereziat, 2021). These viewpoints show a different perspective to current literature, which suggests that the growth of the sustainable clothing market indicates how consumers are starting to pay attention to sustainability (Ryding et al., 2017) (Gazzola et al., 2020). Furthermore, a recent Unilever study found that over one third of consumers from EU and UK are choosing to buy from brands that they believe are doing social or environmental good (Zhang, Zhang and Zhou, 2021). In 2004, Solomon and Rabolt suggested that sustainability is simply not an attribute that most consumers consider when purchasing clothing (Solomon and Rabolt, 2004). Despite the growth in both awareness of sustainable issues and brands since this research was published eighteen years ago, this study suggests that there has not been a significant shift in consumer behaviour and attitudes during this period. Although, the relatively small

sample size of this research must be taken into consideration. It must be noted that these viewpoints are not generalisable to the whole of Generation Z, but are indicative of a feeling amongst that generation.

Consumer choices can be irrational and are not always well connected to values (Niinimäki, 2010). A key theoretical model which has been applied throughout this thesis is Schwartz's (2012) value system, which can further be utilised here to help explain and understand consumer behaviour in relation to sustainability. Under the ten personal values which Schwartz (2012) identified, benevolence and universalism can be linked to ethical consumer behaviour (Manchiraju and Sadachar, 2014). These values focus on traits such as preservation, enhancement, and the welfare of people and nature (Schwartz, 2012). This can therefore be associated with sustainable fashion and mindful consumerism. Schwartz's value system can also be used to explain when consumer choices are disconnected from their values, as presented in this research project. When consumers purchase excessive amounts of clothing, engage in premature disposal of fashion, and do not prioritise sustainable consumption, this can be linked to values of power and hedonism (Manchiraju and Sadachar, 2014). Previous studies have found materialism to be strongly connected to power and hedonism (Burroughs and Rindfleisch, 2002). Over-consumption amongst younger generations has been blamed partly on the pursuit of ideal identities, particularly in periods of heightened awareness of identity development (McNeill et al., 2020). The wardrobe study extract below describes how Bao, a female student, displays un-sustainable shopping habits, which could be seen as over-consumption:

In your wardrobe, would you say that you have a lot of clothes which remain unworn, or do you wear everything? – Interviewer.

I wear everything, but just for one time. Most of the clothes in my wardrobe, I only wear once. So I need to get rid of this habit – Bao.

Okay, so you wear everything, but you really only wear it once? – Interviewer.

Yes – Bao.

Why is this? - Interviewer.

Because new clothes make me feel very fresh, and make me feel very happy and energetic. When I wear it the second time, I do not feel this fresh or pretty – Bao.

Okay, you must have a lot of clothes?! - Interviewer.

Yes, I do, all in different colours! (laughs) – Bao.

This wardrobe study extract shows how wearing new clothes makes Bao *feel* happy. Consumption here is driven by a desire for the new, as opposed to a need. As Kwon et al. (2020, p.1) note: 'The joy that a new article of clothing gives eventually fades. We tire easily of our clothing and often feel that we have nothing to wear despite our full closets.' Previously mentioned high awareness of contradictions within sustainable fashion amongst the sample participants may also be part of the reason for reluctance to purchase sustainable fashion. Rausch and Kopplin's (2021) research into purchase intention and behaviour with regards to sustainable clothing concluded greenwashing concerns played a major role in creating the behaviour gap. As Noah, a male student notes, '*I would like it to be more obvious which clothes are sustainable and which aren't.*' The following section will explore a sustainable brand which was mentioned multiple times throughout primary research discussions – Patagonia.

7.11.2 Patagonia + coolness, a case study

Patagonia are an American outdoor clothing company, founded in 1973 (Patagonia, 2022). The brand initially sold bespoke mountain climbing gear, before expanding production to include further outdoor sports and leisurewear. Patagonia are a 'B Corp Certified' brand, which means that they have achieved a highly respected industry certification, validating their sustainable credentials (Waite-Taylor, 2022). In 2019, Patagonia were recognised by the UN for their environmental efforts, winning the prestigious, 'UN Champions of The Earth Award,' for their entrepreneurial vision (UN Environment Programme, 2019). Patagonia places sustainability at the heart of their business model, and have been identified by the UN as a 'global leader in sustainability' (UN Environment Programme, 2019). This is due to initiatives such as pioneering a self-imposed Earth tax, where 1% of annual sales are donated to grassroots environmental groups. This initiative has been in place at the company since 1986 (Waite-Taylor, 2022). In addition to this, nearly 70% of Patagonia's products are made from recycled materials, with the company aiming to increase this to 100% by 2025 (UN Environment Programme, 2019).

As previously discussed, there are many contradictions involved with sustainable fashion. Meltzer (2017) notes how Patagonia are wrestling with a consequential paradox which is central to contemporary consumerism – consumers want to feel morally good about what they buy. Patagonia have crafted an image which is more than about just being ethical, as they also promote ideas about 'nature, adventure and exploration' (Meltzer, 2017). Meltzer

argues that this in itself creates a paradox as, 'by presenting themselves this way, they are selling a lot more jackets. In other words, they are selling stuff in part by looking like they're not trying too hard to sell stuff, which helps them sell more stuff. You might call this the authenticity problem' (Meltzer, 2017). Hepburn (2013) echoes this viewpoint, with a term that she calls 'complicated greenness,' this is where green practices actually increase consumption. It can be argued that what differentiates Patagonia from many other fashion brands is that they publicly recognise the paradox that they face. Patagonia's environmental action and initiatives director, Beth Thoren, outlined how the private sector is facing a large and understandable 'trust deficit on the back of widespread greenwashing,' and that Patagonia, 'doesn't use the word sustainable, because we recognise that we are part of the problem' (Thoren, 2021).

Primary research participants were asked if they owned any garments in their wardrobes which were purchased from ethical/sustainable brands, and Patagonia was frequently mentioned;

I do own a few T shirts from Patagonia and I will spend 50 pounds on a t-shirt from Patagonia over 35 pounds top from H&M or something like that, because I know that it's been sort of sustainably sourced and that they stand for quite a good cause really, sustainability is good – Harvey, a male student.

Owen however admitted a different motive for purchasing his Patagonia t-shirt;

I have a Patagonia t-shirt. But yeah, I literally just bought that because I thought it looked cool – Owen, a male student.

This viewpoint implies that Owen prioritised a cool aesthetic over Patagonia's sustainability credentials when purchasing his t-shirt. Patagonia were indeed featured on Fortune magazine's cover in 2007, named as 'the coolest company on the planet' (Chouinard and Stanley, 2012). This raises the question, 'do sustainable brands need to be cooler?' and 'how can the future coolness of these brands be ensured?' Like trends, things which are considered to be 'cool' move in and out of fashion. Owen is an undergraduate student, and the concept of coolness has been perceived to be fundamental to identity construction in this transitional life phase (Pedrozo, 2010). Furthermore, studies have shown that consumption is important to provide the feeling of being 'cool' and 'fitting in' for young people (Pedrozo, 2010).

Meltzer (2017) questions what it is about Patagonia as a brand which makes them cool, 'there is something undeniably alluring about the lengthy descriptions of the technical merits of this cutting-edge gear.' Cool remains an elusive and complex phenomenon. Cool theory does seem to be implicated in some of the pressing questions of contemporary life, including the transitions from unsustainable behaviours and consumption (Brown, 2021). There is little academic literature on the links between sustainability and cool, but Sachkova's (2018) study does indicate that sustainable fashion could be made cool in the eye of the millennial consumer, if presented in a subtle way. She notes that millennials care about doing good, and that is now considered cool. Sachkova's (2018) findings show that millennials prefer to 'discover' brands which are sustainable, which in turn adds greater value to the brands, making them cooler. Owen, who previously commented that he bought a Patagonia t-shirt because he 'though it looked cool,' echoes Sachkova's findings when describing further sustainable purchases;

I also have two T shirts from a brand called Piilgrim. I didn't actually know they were sustainable till I like looked at their Instagram afterwards. Like, I can just go on their Instagram now. They only have like 10,000 followers, they're not like a massive brand. Yeah 'British design Earth conscious vegan apparel' ... it does make me respect the brand more – Owen.

This shows that for Gen Z, the meaning of cool can be described as 'understated good,' and that sustainable brands, such as Patagonia, often have very complex value layers (Sachkova, 2018). It must be noted that like fashionability, cool is a system of value that can promote wasteful forms of consumption. Certainly, many people will not buy sustainable clothing if it isn't cool, but that doesn't mean that they will buy less clothing if it is. The subjective nature of this debate can be linked to earlier discussions in Chapter 6 surrounding whether it is the trend cycle system which causes garments to fall out of fashion, or the individual consumers changing preferences. In both examples mentioned above, subjectivity adds to the complexity of the debate.

7.11.3 Garment types and sustainability

A further key code identified through primary research analysis was how participants were willing to buy certain types of sustainable garments (such as jackets and shoes) but less willing to buy others (such as t-shirts). A link can be identified here with the brand Patagonia,

whose bestselling items of clothing include the 'micro puff' hoodie and down sweater-jacket (Uyehara, 2021). Ella, a female young adult, described how she would be happy to pay more for sustainable versatile garments which keep fitting her and looking good, and gives the example of an oversized black dress. However, she states,

'I'm still a bit reluctant to buy sustainable basics, which I know is not ideal.'

Mary, a female student, held similar opinions when asked if she would be willing to pay more for a garment which had been sustainably produced;

It depends on the garment to be honest. If it's a blouse, or t-shirt, I feel like I'm not ready to pay for it, but if it is maybe a jacket or some shoes, that I know are going to last longer, that I'm already willing to pay more for, I wouldn't mind paying a little bit more for sustainability. Even within shoes, because I know that shoes are harder to make in a sustainable way. So, for sure, in terms of shoes and jackets yes, but not like shirts or t-shirts. I feel like I'm not there in the mindset. Although, it doesn't sound good in my mind what I'm saying, but that's what I really feel like – Mary.

Matthew, a male young adult, was also reluctant to pay a premium for sustainable basics:

I probably wouldn't pay more for a t-shirt. If like a jacket or a pair of shoes or something that I would, you know wear time and time again. Then I probably would pay it, especially because it you know, it's very hot the moment, the kind of sustainability of everything – Matthew.

Several clear similarities emerge from these responses, which indicate as to why participants are generally reluctant to buy sustainable basics. The first code identified is the perception that a jacket or pair of shoes are more of a substantial items of clothing than a t-shirt. Therefore, the user believes that they will be getting better value for money when investing in these items, as they are expected to last longer. It may also be the case that consumers are more willing to purchase items which are perceived to be special, rather than basic.

Both Mary and Ella acknowledge that it is not good shopping practice in terms of sustainability to avoid buying basic sustainable items, but this is not enough for them to change their consumer behaviour. Matthew notes how the sustainability of everything is 'very hot at the moment.' These findings connect back to the previous discussion regarding sustainability and cool. It may be the case that for sustainable basic items of clothing, such as t-shirts, socks and underwear, it is more appealing for millennials to 'discover' brands who offer these options in a subtle way. This is as opposed to actively seeking out sustainable options for these garment types. This leads onto a further key finding, as it emerged that

several participants were willing to pay a premium for good quality items, but this did not necessarily mean purchasing from sustainable brands:

Yeah, to me sustainable clothes means clothes that will last longer, if it is going to last longer, then I will happily pay double, maybe triple what you would pay on the high street, just to know that it is something which you can keep for ages, and not throw away – Owen, a male student.

I think the difference is like I would pay more for something that I know was quality, so it would last, so therefore is sustainable. Rather than something that screams and shouts it's sustainable because like in like in H&M, they've got their own like sustainable lines or whatever – Ivy, a female young adult.

I think I'm more interested in like, the quality of the material – Theo, a male young adult.

These viewpoints are interesting as they provide insight into how participants define sustainability. Understanding how the consumer defines sustainability is important, as it can help to deepen knowledge of the motivations and attitudes of these young fashion consumers. This study's data shows how participants' definition of sustainability can be linked to the slow fashion experience. This is where the consumer experiences enjoyment through the garments design, and in this case the quality of design, as opposed to through the process of shopping (Zarley Watson and Yan, 2013). The consensus amongst these participants is that longevity equates sustainability. Indeed, the definition of sustainability can be seen as being multi-dimensional, and longevity may be part of this. There is however a misconception when consumers associate fast fashion, longevity and sustainability together. Monique, a female student, describes her £9 new jacket from ASOS during primary research wardrobe studies; *'It looks like it will last long so I think it's sustainable enough.'* Relating to the earlier discussion surrounding accidental classics, some items of fast fashion may indeed possess qualities of longevity, but this must not detract from the unsustainable system in which they have been produced. Sustainable fast fashion can be described as an oxymoron. *'There would seem to be irreconcilable differences between this notion of fashionable products and the principles of sustainability'* (Marriot and Clayton, 2006, p.71). Although, it must be noted that Monique is a student, and that her life stage may dictate her budget when shopping for new garments.

The majority of garments owned by participants in this study were from fast fashion brands, with some vintage and designer exceptions. A further incorrect consumer assumption identified through primary research is the perception that designer clothes which cost more

automatically equal sustainability. When Matthew, a male young adult, was asked if he would be prepared to pay a premium for garment if it had been sustainably produced, he responded; *'Probably... I mean I'm just thinking about items that have cost a lot of money you know like for example I've got a Lanvin jacket that costs £6000, and you know I've probably worn that three times.'* While some luxury brands are sustainably conscious, and build their ethical reputations upon a long-standing concern for quality and craft, the majority of luxury brands are often tarred with the same brush as fast and disposable fashion (Joy et al., 2012). It is important to identify and address these incorrect assumptions, as education on consumer misinformation may be part of the solution for future change in the industry.

7.12 Analysing participants' experiences

Through a series of focus groups and wardrobe studies with both students and young adults, the study has examined opinions with regards to fast fashion and emotional durability, which has allowed for the analysis of a range of experiences. The range of experiences between participants identified throughout the study can be linked to their life stage. It was not surprising to discover that the difference in life stage and income between the students and young adults led to contrasting attitudes towards the consumption of fast and sustainable fashion.

From a student perspective, fast fashion provides an accessible means to the newest styles available at the lowest prices (Joung, 2014). Cost implications associated with being a student mean that fast fashion allows them to keep up to date easily with the latest trends, at an affordable price. Students are at a transformational point of their lives, where they may be experimenting with their identities, and the accessibility of fast fashion allows them to do this through their clothing. *'Multiple evolving selves are built on constantly evolving fashion styles created by fast fashion'* (Joy et al., 2012, p. 277). This research has shown that students and young adults approach fast fashion with contrasting mindsets and attitudes. When Elle, a female student, was asked if she would be prepared to pay more for sustainable fashion, her response below is reflective of her life stage;

No, I just find them really expensive, at least for myself, because I'm not earning that much – so I wouldn't go for them yet – Elle.

This can be compared to Otto's (a male young adults) response to the same question;

Recently, yes, because I have the ability to. But when I was a student, it wouldn't figure. The idea would be there, but in reality, it wouldn't actually happen – Otto.

It is clear here how there is a contrast in attitude between the two life stages, which is dictated by income. Sorensen and Jorgensen (2019) note that a low discretionary income means that students have limited choices in today's marketplace. However, students do have the ability to participate in alternative forms of sustainable fashion such as vintage and second-hand purchases. It is interesting to study the transition that students undergo when they leave university and enter young adulthood, and how this affects their clothing choices. Will, a male young adult, reflects how this life stage transition has altered how he presents himself, and also how he wishes to be perceived by others:

I think it's probably to do with transitioning out of university, maybe some lifestyle changes, in terms of how and who I socialise with, and obviously realising that I have high academic achievements. I'm getting a little bit older, going into my mid 20s, I guess it's just kind of a shift in my expectations for myself as well. Like, I should present myself a little bit better, a little bit more formally... I've got a job with a bit more responsibility now that's more full time. So I've just spruced myself up a bit – Will.

Viv, a female young adult, holds similar views to Will, in that she recognises how her style has changed as she has matured. For Viv, this transition involves a change in her shopping habits with regards to sustainability:

I used to be horrific and buy fast fashion all the time. I don't buy much at all now which I'm actually really proud about because I'm more aware of it now, and how bad it is... Younger me would have just bought something cheap and I would have thought, why, no I can buy it cheaper. But now I do think about it a bit more – Viv.

Arnett (2014) introduces the concept of young adulthood as a new stage of life between late teens through to an individual's twenties. According to Arnett (2014, p.8), there are five distinctive features of emerging adulthood: identity explorations, instability, self-focus, feeling in-between, and possibilities/optimism. It is possible to evaluate the above responses using Arnett's distinctive features. Will describes how shifting expectations of himself since leaving university and having more responsibility at work have led to dressing more formally. This can be linked to the qualities of self-focus and possibilities/optimism (Arnett, 2014). The goal of self-focus is self-sufficiency, which Will is working towards with his current job. He is also at a stage in life where many different futures remain open, which can lead to high hopes and great expectations (Arnett, 2014). This is reflected in his choice of clothing. Viv talks

about how she is now more mindful about what she purchases in terms of fast fashion, and that her clothes shopping experience has more of a thought process than when she was younger. This is again reflective of the self-focus feature. For Viv, this may be a focus on where to spend her income, in terms of sustainable fashion brands.

The above section has demonstrated how age, life stage and personal experience are significant factors to consider in conventions which govern clothing and fashion (Klepp and Storm-Mathisen, 2005). Identity formation plays an important role in terms of students' style, and experimentation with fast fashion. Findings have shown that young adults, who possess higher disposable incomes, are more willing to invest in sustainable fashion. In this sense, findings support existing knowledge. Although perhaps unsurprising, these findings are valuable when considering the sustainability implications of consumer behaviour. As previously discussed in Section 7.5, the value which students and young adults can place on fast fashion items, and in particular garments from Primark, brings new knowledge to the debate. This is an example of the importance of psychographics over demographic characteristics. This research has demonstrated that investigating the value system of each consumer has uncovered interesting insights into how these consumers are behaving and why.

Understanding the mindset of the consumer is important in order to make meaningful sustainable changes. 'Businesses must recognize these two generations' differences in perceptions, values, and priorities related to sustainability' (Manley, Seock and Shin, 2023, p.324). This could for example mean that students and young adults must be targeted in different ways by sustainable brands. It may also be the case that participants' values have developed with their age. Value priorities do undergo some change under an individual's lifespan, and the shift from being a student to young adult is particularly dynamic in terms of developing new social roles (Vecchione et al., 2016). Although not a comparative study, this research has explored how different experiences between student and young adults may affect their clothing consumption.

7.13 Gendered approach

Historical studies have demonstrated that women are more involved in fashion and clothing than men (O'Cass, 2003), and that women may thus have greater knowledge about clothing than men (Hansen and Jan, 2009). In terms of sustainability, research has shown that women

report stronger environmental attitudes (Zelezny, Chua and Aldrich, 2000), and are more likely to engage in ethical fashion consumption than men (Manchiraju and Sadachar, 2014) (Gazzola et al., 2020). This can be linked back to traditional caretaking roles associated with women, and the expectation that women are more likely to be concerned about environmental issues like climate change, whilst men are expected to be dismissive (Bloodhart and Swim, 2020). In addition to this, Schwartz's (2012) value system can be utilised to help analyse gendered attitudes towards sustainable consumption. Previous research has found that; 'Women are more likely to ascribe to self-transcendence values than men and are more concerned about social justice, unity with nature, and social and environmental accountability. Men are more likely than women to ascribe importance to self-enhancement values, being more worried about success, capability, and ambition' (Bloodhart and Swim, 2020, p.106).

Existing research does suggest a clear divide between both genders with regards to attitudes towards sustainability in general, and sustainable fashion. Divergent from the literature, this study has demonstrated that men and women view attitudes towards sustainable fashion consumption equally. As already mentioned, both genders had a high awareness of greenwashing practices, which reduced their willingness to purchase from sustainable brands. Men were not found to be dismissive of sustainable issues, and many male participants interviewed were willing to pay more for better quality clothing. Although men may not shop as often as women, it has been shown that they are likely to spend more money when they do (Pentecost and Andrews, 2010). This has been evidenced through this research. In the interview excerpt below, Harvey, a male student was asked how frequently he buys new items of clothing:

I'll do like an online shop maybe once every two or three months. I'm not a regular purchaser
– Harvey.

And what are some of your favourite brands? Where like where do you shop? – Interviewer.

My theory is because I don't do much shopping anyway, the times that I do go shopping I try and spend a bit more money on my clothes. So I buy brands like Carhartt and the North Face and Adidas and Nike – Harvey.

This was a common response amongst young male consumers, and can be compared to female responses, who often detailed making clothing purchases on a weekly, as opposed to monthly basis. This study does not align with the growing body of research which suggests that men are rejecting ethical behaviours, due to concerns that it threatens their masculinity

(Duckett, 2018). Although, it must be noted that these results could be determined by the composition of the relatively small sample size. Gendered research into sustainable fashion preferences utilising a larger sample size would be beneficial to further deepen this discussion.

Perhaps one of the most interesting findings to emerge from the gendered approach were gendered viewpoints on a sustainable brand named Olive. Olive are a British contemporary clothing brand, who 'take their responsibilities seriously,' stating on their website that they are, 'sensitive to the ethical considerations that preoccupy us and many of our customers alike' (Olive, 2022). Previous research has shown that little is understood in terms of men's perspective and their intention to purchase eco-clothing (D'Souza et al., 2015). Theo, a male young adult, was interviewed about his perceptions on sustainable fashion, and he responded that he didn't feel like he had enough experience to comment sufficiently as, '*there aren't many options for guys.*' Theo described how he finds looking for clothing '*tiresome,*' with limited options. He mentions how Olive have, '*really nice clothes, but there's barely any selection for guys, some of the clothes are just one size.*' Theo therefore feels like he often isn't given the choice to purchase sustainably. McNeill and Moor (2015) and Manley et al. (2023) both ascertain that there is a perceived lack of style associated with sustainable fashion, indicating that there is a lack of choice of stylish ethical fashion on the market. Interestingly, Ivy, a female young adult also mentioned the brand Olive in her wardrobe study:

So they say that they're sustainably sourced and they are a bit more expensive than I would normally buy. I do look at their clothes and quite often nearly buy them. But I don't, because I don't understand their sizing. And because it's online and it's a bit of a fuff... I don't know this brand like if it turns up and it doesn't fit, and it's quite expensive. So I'm like reluctant to purchase from them – Ivy.

These two primary research responses have raised significant consumer concerns relating to the purchase of sustainable fashion from the same brand. For males, the lack of choice and lack of sizing are issues. As a female, Ivy does have more choice on Olive's website, but sizing is once again problem, alongside cost and fear of having to return the products. Although this is one isolated example, it demonstrates how both genders are equally willing and often have the intention to purchase sustainable fashion, but that several barriers are stopping them from doing so. 'This perspective, in a phase of growing affirmation, reflects the need for fashion companies to redirect their strategic approach toward transforming social

responsibility and sustainability into a competitive opportunity to benefit both the individual companies and the overall sector' (Gazzola et al., 2020, p.15). This leads onto the final section of the analysis, 'opportunities for a more sustainable future,' which will consider how some of the barriers discussed might be overcome to support the sustainable development of the fashion industry.

7.14 Conclusion and opportunities for a sustainable future

The subsequent and final section of this analysis has explored sustainability, bringing together findings and discussion sections which have included the trend cycle, emotional attachment and garment types, in order to consider future opportunities for longevity. Several key findings have been discussed which present opportunities for a more sustainable future for the industry.

Discussions surrounding contradictions and complexities associated with greenwashing in the fashion industry have demonstrated how it would be beneficial for companies to increase supply chain transparency, in order to improve consumer trust. 'Given that fashion consumption appears set to grow with each new generation of consumers, the need to provide a regulatory system for sustainable fashion and to communicate that effectively appears to be essential' (Peirson-Smith and Evans, 2017, p.373). This quote was cited in the introduction, and research findings have shown that it will be indeed an essential requirement moving forward. Baram (2019) comments that it would be useful for brands and organisations to devise an industry standard, so that consumers could easily assess how sustainable a fashion company is. This leads onto the opportunity to market sustainable fashion as cool in the eyes of the consumer. Patagonia were investigated as a sustainable brand, which participants also considered to be cool. Although, it must be noted that the notion of cool is an elusive concept. This research has identified that consumers were reluctant to purchase sustainable options when it came to basic items of clothing, such as t-shirts, socks and underwear. This study correlates with Sachkova's (2018) findings that for sustainable basic items of clothing, it may be more appealing for millennials to 'discover' brands who offer these options in a subtle way. This is opposed to actively seeking out sustainable options for these garment types.

Incorrect consumer assumptions such as a direct link between fast fashion and sustainability, and the perception that designer clothes are automatically sustainable, were identified. It is important to address these incorrect assumptions, as education on consumer misinformation may be part of the solution for future change in the industry. Implementing

sustainability continues to be a constant work in progress, and informed and educated consumers are a key part of this improvement (Pereira et al., 2021). 'Sustainable fashion requires increased consumer awareness of the real meaning of sustainability and, moreover, businesses that combine ethical with circular bioeconomy practices' (Colasante and D'Adamo, 2021, p.1).

Age and life stage are significant factors to consider in conventions which govern clothing and fashion (Klepp and Storm-Mathisen, 2005). Identity formation plays an important role in terms of students' style, and experimentation with fast fashion. Findings have shown that young adults, who possess higher disposable incomes, are more willing to invest in sustainable fashion than students. This is again reflective of existing research (Manchiraju and Sadachar, 2014). Although perhaps unsurprising, these findings are valuable when considering the sustainability implications of consumer behaviour. Understanding the mindset of the consumer is important in order to make meaningful sustainable changes. This could for example mean that students and young adults must be targeted in different ways by sustainable brands.

Gendered approach findings identified that brands should pay greater attention to sustainable male segments, as a demand has been recognised for greater variety within this product category. D'Souza et al.'s (2015) research corroborated this, noting a specific gap in the market for eco-friendly high end male fashion brands, and the opportunity to use celebrity endorsements here as an effective form of promotion. Existing research suggests a clear divide between both genders with regards to attitudes towards sustainability in general, and sustainable fashion. Divergent from the literature, this study has demonstrated that men and women view attitudes towards sustainable fashion consumption in similar ways. This study has shown how both genders are equally willing and often have the intention to purchase sustainable fashion, but that several barriers are stopping them from doing so. These barriers include high price points, and lack of variety and confusing sizing amongst existing sustainable brands, which therefore presents further areas of development. In the context of behaviour change with regards to sustainable fashion consumption, it is important to understand both attitudinal and emotional orientations of consumers (McNeill and Venter, 2019). As already noted in the previous section, future sustainable opportunities can also lie within fostering emotional attachments to clothing. Niinimäki and Armstrong (2013) hypothesise that fostering deep attachments to clothing offers opportunities to extend the use time of garments, and postpone disposal.

Reflecting on what the data has shown overall, throughout both Chapter 6 and Chapter 7, it is apparent how attitudes and behaviours towards sustainability are often framed around the central concept of identity. Furthermore, it can be argued that existing knowledge surrounding the links between sustainability and identity have been underexplored. Over-consumption amongst younger generations has been blamed partly on the pursuit of ideal identities, particularly in periods of heightened awareness of identity development (McNeill et al., 2020). Links between sustainable fashion and the concept of cool have been identified, as have the shifting relationships between style and identity as consumers mature. Goffman (2016) questions the idea of a fixed identity - rather than being, identity is realised through actions. The discussions on garments have drawn out the importance of identity. Identity can therefore be considered further in light of its connections to sustainability. Dobers and Strannegård (2005) argue that sustainability must be seen as intertwined with social processes such as fashion, identity and identity construction.

The concluding section of the analysis has identified multiple opportunities for improving sustainable practices within the fashion industry. These opportunities will be developed further in the final conclusion and will frame contributions towards knowledge.

Chapter 8 – Conclusion

This PhD set out to reveal new knowledge about sustainability in the context of fast fashion. The research has brought an original perspective to the field by exploring not only female attitudes towards clothing attachment, but also male views, which have been largely ignored in previous studies. Through a mixed methods approach the study has examined the workings of the fashion trend system in the context of sustainability and established new perspectives on the manifestations of trends and their impact on sustainability and consumers. The research focus on a specific demographic has enabled a nuanced study of fast fashion and sustainability, and in so doing has drawn out opportunities for working towards longevity in fast fashion.

8.1 Revisiting aim and objectives

To further frame the PhD's overall contribution to knowledge, the aim and objectives of this PhD will be revisited in this concluding chapter.

The research objectives were:

- To document reoccurring trends in fast fashion and examine the workings of the trend cycle using NTU's FashionMap collection to establish evidence of longevity and style obsolescence.
- To investigate student and young adults' opinions towards sustainability, emotional durability and fast fashion.
- To gain understanding of male and female attitudes and behaviours towards clothing ownership and style obsolescence, and identify opportunities for a more sustainable future.

The endpoint of this PhD study is a series of proposals to inform sustainable development within the fast fashion industry. By drawing from a unique trend-based garment collection, the notion of the fashion trend has been re-thought within the realms of sustainability and consumer behaviour. This study has created a new way for understanding the trend system

post 2020, which considers the lives of the individual consumer, and highlights the emotional attachment of trends. Gendered findings have revealed that while the male and female participants hold different reasons for attributing emotional attachment to items of clothing, they have placed equal importance on attitudes towards sustainable fashion consumption. This further reinforces the research significance for applying a gendered approach. This study has brought forth new knowledge of what fast fashion means to a young consumer in the context of sustainability and their own lives. Specifically, the fast fashion consumption behaviours of young adults and students have been explored in a different era and context to previous research. Section 8.2 will outline a detailed contribution to knowledge, which is categorised under key research findings, and will address the aim and objectives.

8.2 Contributions to knowledge

The following sections will flesh out the different areas that this PhD has contributed to.

8.2.1 Methodological contribution

The methodological approach which utilised a unique fast fashion archive in combination with qualitative approaches has brought an original approach for examining sustainability in fashion. Issues of fast fashion and sustainability have not been studied through the use of an archive before, and this is the first time that the FashionMap archive has been actively researched using a mixed methods approach. Combining focus group interviews with garments from FashionMap archive has brought a unique approach and methodological contribution to knowledge. Taking garments out of the archive and applying them to a focus group setting where individuals were asked to respond to them according to specific lines of questioning, was an original way of triggering different responses to trends, fast fashion and sustainability. Focus group respondents evidenced the value of the archive in highlighting the dynamics and complexities of the trend system in fashion. Given that most clothing archives are focused on preserving more expensive and historical clothing items, FashionMap's collection of cheaper, fast fashion-led items enabled an important contribution to the study of fashion trends and style obsolescence. This research therefore provides an original perspective on clothing studies and material culture.

Several UK universities also hold fashion archives, including, the Yorkshire Fashion Archive held at University of Leeds (Almond, 2020), The House of Fraser Archive, improved by the University of Glasgow (Paterson, 2009), Central St Martins Museum and Study collection,

Heriott-Watt University Archive, which focuses on Scottish textile heritage (Evans, 2011), The Textiles and Dress Collection at Falmouth University (TDC, 2023) and Westminster Menswear Archive (WMA, 2023). These archives evidence a growing interest in preserving clothing collections in a university setting, which FashionMap represents. However, FashionMap has been created through quite a different and distinctive curatorial process, as it has been constructed by fashion students, and is reflective of their perceptions of trends. None of the archives mentioned above have been curated in this way.

Analysing the fashionability of physical garments from the archive through a series of focus groups brings new knowledge to the field of material culture. The material culture approach has not been applied to the study of trends before. Using garments from the archive, a trend document and knowledge base of influential trends over an 18-year period has been created. This document (visible in Chapter 5) was then applied to an in-depth content analysis of trends and individual garments in the archive. A selection of these garments was then used to elicit rich and interesting discussions in the focus groups.

The archive and focus groups were linked to the corresponding wardrobe studies through the common theme of longevity in relation to the trend cycle. During the focus groups, clothing from the archive stimulated memories from the participants' teenage years, to similar clothing that they previously owned. This led to discussions surrounding why or why not this clothing might still be considered fashionable. If the clothing had fallen out of fashion, the specific reasons for this were discussed, allowing for an in-depth analysis. Wardrobe study discussions were further linked to trends in the FashionMap archive, which cemented the unique contribution of placing the archive at the centre of this methodology. This builds upon previous research which states that historically, the wardrobe has been neglected by dress and fashion theories (Cwerner, 2001), but the clothing that people already have in their wardrobes, and how this clothing is used, is central to understanding more sustainable consumption practices (Woodward, 2014). Using a fast fashion archive further enhanced this by questioning the 'fastness' of fashion, both within the archive and participants' wardrobes. The application of a unique archive has brought quite a different approach to how others have approached the study of fashion, sustainability and longevity.

Utilising FashionMap as a fast fashion archive brought a new perspective to clothing studies. Clothing studies are usually approached through qualitative methodologies, such as interviews or focus groups. While these studies, particularly in the context of material culture have focused on the communicative power of clothing, this study has applied a different

dimension through the use of a garment archive that is focused on trends. Because the archive is trend focused, this has enabled trends to be brought to the forefront of debates on fashion, sustainability and young consumers, which has permitted a new way of looking at the field. This study has combined qualitative methodologies with a static archive, of which the clothing has never been worn before. This has led to contributions to knowledge including the importance of considering the 'everyday life' of trends for students and young adults.

8.2.2 Re-thinking the trend cycle

This research has reconsidered the workings of the trend cycle and found new ways of understanding the dynamics of how it works. While existing theories used to explain the trend cycle remain relevant, this research is important because it sheds new perspectives on the study of trends, particularly in the context of sustainability. Previous research on the trend cycle has tended to focus on how the cycle begins and ends. This research has evidenced that trends can reappear and in so doing has found a new opportunity for applying trends to the field of sustainability, by demonstrating that trends can have longevity. This draws out a deeper understanding of how this impacts consumer behaviour in the context of fast fashion. In particular the research has found the emotional impacts that trends can have on young consumers.

Aside from Eundeok et al.'s (2021) literature, 'Fashioning Trends,' little academic knowledge has been documented about the study of trends. Woodward's (2009) article, 'The Myth of Street Style,' considers how styles change over time, and challenges the use of 'fast fashion,' through observing style on the street. Woodward (2009) notes how the rate of constantly changing styles does not determine the rate at which consumers replace their clothing. The following section will demonstrate how this research builds upon and brings forward new knowledge to the debate.

The archive has been significant in enabling a different level of analysis to trends which included a consideration of micro details as well as the macro influences. The research has demonstrated how trends are at the centre of the fashion system, but they also evidence the complexities of sustainability in fashion. When styles become out of fashion, old clothes are easily discarded, even if they are in perfect condition. This was often the case when reviewing participants' opinions on garments from the FashionMap archive. The research identified the

importance of what has been termed as 'incremental style differences.' This term has been formulated with specific reference to the trend cycle in this context and contributes to knowledge in the field. It has become apparent that incremental style differences are very important, as although they might only be a small deviance from the desired look (such as the colour of a button), these features mean that outfits become rejected and redundant.

Small, incremental style differences were broken down into three variances in Chapter 6. It is evident that for some styles in FashionMap, the whole outfit worn together becomes style obsolescent, but parts of the outfit remain in fashion. Perhaps it is the complete look which makes up a trend that falls out of fashion, and not the individual garments themselves. This shows how small, stylistic details are very important to the consumer, but also questions the speed of design obsolescence and the fastness of fashion. This research challenges assumptions that consumers are fickle, or that fashion is always 'fast,' when clothing is investigated through ordinary consumption practices (Woodward, 2014). It has also been demonstrated how certain styles remain timeless, meaning that they have achieved sustainability through style.

Creating a new way to understand the trend system, and in contrast to previous studies regarding trends, this research has considered the lives of the individual consumer. This consideration highlights the emotional side of trends. In this way, the theory of trends can be split into the surface level (what's in fashion) and the *feeling* of things. The emotion is in the feeling (uncovered through wardrobe studies where participants could discuss personal garments in detail). The trend is about the look not the feel, but the individual cares about *feel* and *memory*. The materiality of garments is important here, as primary research has demonstrated how materiality can be key to emotional durability (please refer to Chapter 7, Section 7.4). This can be linked to a further contribution to knowledge, the importance of identity, which will be discussed in Section 8.2.4. The six trends identified throughout the content analysis confirmed that there are 'feel good' trends (such as vintage, which can illicit happy memories) and more controversial trends (such as the sexualisation of fashion). Detailed analysis of the trend cycle uncovered the close links between trends and nostalgia. Trends are often nostalgic by nature in that the cyclical nature of the trend cycle frequently repeats past styles. For example, reviving aspects of 70s or 80s trends for the modern-day market. However, nostalgia can also be considered in the realms of the consumer through personal memories, which are linked to the attachment of items of clothing. This reiterates

the importance of the *feeling* of trends – this study has demonstrated how trends are much more than just surface level.

Utilising a trend-led fashion archive brings a unique perspective to this area of interest. FashionMap provides an original perspective on clothing studies and material culture, through focusing on ‘ordinary’ items of clothing. This study has explored the workings of the trend cycle from the mechanisms of a garment collection that has been drawn from research into historic seasonal fashion trends, to how individual consumers perceive and/or wear these trends. The archive is a record of trends that defined specific periods of time. Investigating how the consumer responds to these trends, through the archive and their own clothing collections, has enabled an analysis of the importance of following, or perhaps not following, trends and fashion. Links can be identified here between fashion and sustainability, and the role that individual style has to play in this.

8.2.3 Emotional attachment

This PhD has revealed how different kinds and levels of emotional attachment to clothing exist. There is the *personal* aspect, where key codes such as friends, family and youth have been identified. Further key codes which fostered attachments to items of clothing included: practicality, holiday memories, and as a result of making a significant financial investment in the item. In addition to this, there is the *material* aspect, where key code such as comfort and warmth are relevant. It may be the case that both the personal and the material can sometimes become interwoven. This shows different manifestations of what constitutes as emotional attachment. Emotional attachment is complex and goes beyond the *personal* aspect. New knowledge considers attachment in terms of materiality. The feeling of comfort through clothing, for example, is powerful as it can be linked to evoking feelings of attachment.

This builds upon previous studies which have considered emotional attachment, and in particular, Niinimäki and Armstrong’s (2013) investigation, ‘From pleasure in use to preservation of meaningful memories: a closer look at the sustainability of clothing via longevity and attachment.’ Existing literature states that certain items of clothing may be particularly susceptible to delivering evolving narrative emotional experiences. For example, several theorists have researched the relationship between consumers and denim jeans (Chapman, 2015), (Woodward, 2014) and (Townsend, 2011). This study shows how the

hoodie/jumper was particularly significant in demonstrating how material properties of the garment could lend themselves to developing emotional attachments. When worn, the hoodie encloses the wearer, fostering comfort, and this is also an item which can easily be shared between friends and family, encouraging connections.

When designing for emotional attachment, perceived irreplaceability is an important factor (Mugge, Schoormans and Schifferstein, 2005). Armstrong et al. (2016) argue that increasing the emotional and mindful experience with clothing are essential factors which can contribute to sustainable clothing consumption. Primary research has demonstrated that although not an initial priority of the consumer, sustainability can become an output of keeping clothing due to emotional attachment. Further contributions to knowledge include how the data has shown that emotion can be captured through wearing something, but also just by having something. Some participants stated how they were emotionally attached to items which they 'would never wear,' but also cannot throw away.

This data has revealed that fast fashion has the ability to stimulate emotional attachment, regardless of the fact that it may have initially been intended to lack longevity. This has brought an alternative way to thinking about fast fashion while not denying the challenges it presents to sustainability within the fashion industry. An exploration of accidental classics challenged perceptions that fast fashion is always negative. Primary research data revealed how young fashion consumers are behaving, and interestingly, a level of value had been placed on Primark garments, which had been kept and worn for an extended periods of time by multiple participants. Understanding how value is produced through clothing could benefit from 'deeper examinations of cycles of storage, maintenance, disposal, and re-circulation' (Hertz, 2011, p.16), which this study has built upon.

These findings can be interpreted as looking for 'good' in a 'bad system,' and it is important to note that this does not mean that fast fashion is sustainable. It does however bring an alternative viewpoint to the fast fashion debate, thus bringing new understanding to the workings of the fashion trend cycle. Existing literature had demonstrated that understanding how value is produced through clothing could benefit from 'deeper examinations of cycles of storage, maintenance, disposal, and re-circulation' (Hertz, 2011, p.16), and my study brings new knowledge to this field. It can be argued that it is too simplistic to state that the whole fashion system is 'bad', because the system itself is so complex. Fast fashion is accessible due to typically low-price points, the fashion industry contributes to livelihoods and communities and has a pivotal role in identity formation (Fletcher and Tham, 2019). This

viewpoint has been demonstrated through the surprising longevity that some participants experienced with their Primark garments, which can be described as ‘accidental classics.’

The use of garments from The FashionMap archive in focus groups triggered nostalgic responses for a selection of participants. For example, male focus group participants reacted to a pair of jeans from the archive, by communicating a consensus that they ‘would have worn them when they were younger.’ (See Chapter 6, Section 6.9). The triggering of nostalgic memories through the archive contributes to the field of emotional attachment. These findings show that feelings of attachment don’t just surface from garments which participants own. The archive can act as a ‘vessel’ which has the ability to trigger memories, and subsequently, this presents new findings about how attachment and memories to garments can surface.

8.2.4 The importance of identity

The study has drawn out the importance of identity. Findings have brought sustainability into the relationship between fashion and identity. Dobers and Strannegård (2005) argue that sustainability must be seen as intertwined with social processes such as fashion, identity and identity construction. In Chapter 7, Section 7.9, several sustainable contradictions were identified. A key contradiction within the sustainable fashion debate was highlighted: if sustainably produced clothing is bought, but not worn, does this therefore make it unsustainable? Drawing on findings relating to the importance of identity, clothing must reflect an individual’s identity, otherwise there is a significant chance that this clothing will not be worn, and potentially discarded. Fast fashion is typically seen as frivolous, but my research has contradicted this by evidencing how both attachments to clothing and longevity can be associated with fast fashion. Furthermore, it can be argued that existing knowledge surrounding the links between sustainability and identity have been underexplored. Further research development could consider new contributions to this dynamic field, based upon the findings of this study.

Building upon previous research, the important link between clothing and identity has been reiterated through several strands of this research, including attachment to clothing, keeping dormant items in the wardrobe, and participants’ relationship with sustainability. Schwartz’s (2012) theory has been utilised to show how it is clear that deep levels of attachment formed with clothing items are linked to a connection with the participants core values. The

attachment formed is not motivated explicitly by sustainability concerns. This shows that an individual's sense of identity in the context of clothing and sustainability within their wardrobe is complex. It must be acknowledged that these findings are applicable to my sample, and not generalisable to the whole population.

A symptomatic criticism of fast fashion is that it can often lack individuality, due to being mass produced, and rarely exclusive. Desire for individuality was a theme commonly found amongst my given sample (students and young adults). Younger generations search for individuality is a topic which has received previous scholarly attention (Dempsey, 2020). This study has shown that attitudes and behaviours towards sustainability are often framed around the central concept of identity. Over-consumption amongst younger generations has been blamed partly on the pursuit of ideal identities, particularly in periods of heightened awareness of identity development (McNeill et al., 2020). The shifting relationship between style and identity as consumers mature was identified. Goffman (2016) questions the idea of a fixed identity - rather than being, identity is realised through actions. Furthermore, Guy and Banim's (2000) research noted how the use of clothes maintains a continuity of identity. Clothes travel through the wardrobe over time, just as identity travels with consumers as they refine their clothes set (Guy and Banim, 2000).

8.2.5 Gender based contribution

This research has responded to the notable lack of studies focusing on male views towards fast fashion, as well as a lack of research on gendered attitudes towards sustainability. The methodology of this PhD has been framed around creating a gendered contribution to knowledge, specifically within the fields of emotional attachment, wardrobe studies and fashion and sustainability. This study is the first which has considered male views through this type of approach. Existing literature in the field of gendered studies notes how gender shapes social life, our understanding of our own experiences (Kimmel and Aronson, 2008), and remains a salient discriminator between young people (McDowell, 2016). Stereotypes about the way that men and women think and behave are widely shared (Ellemers, 2018). Chapters 6 and 7 included a gendered approach after each key theme which emerged from the findings and discussion. The following section will summarise this approach in terms of the contribution to knowledge which it brings.

With regards to the trend cycle, neither gender actively discussed following trends. Garments stored in the wardrobe reflected many influences, including fashion, function and emotion. A gendered approach revealed that males had a high awareness of placing fashion trends in recent history, which is contrary to the historical viewpoint that women may have greater knowledge about clothing than men (Hansen and Jan, 2009). However, it is also possible that males may have remembered the trends more accurately than females. This research does question gender norms traditionally associated with fashion, it is not the case that women 'care more' about fashion, simply because their decision making and purchasing behaviour is different to that of males. Similarly, it would be inaccurate to suggest that males are not affected by negative body image, just because they did not mention this as a factor when describing unused clothing.

When discussing garment types, and specifically denim jeans, both males and females struggled to find the 'perfect' pair of jeans, whereas previous research has tended to focus more on women (Woodward, 2007). This research has revealed that men may face equal issues to women when searching for the perfect pair of jeans, and that fit remains an issue for both genders. Previous research and development into improving the fit of jeans has focused solely on the womenswear market (Levi's®, 2010). This study has therefore identified a potential area of future development in the menswear market.

Gendered insights with regards to emotional attachment to clothing revealed that males often describe their reasons for attachment as being linked to practicality, whereas females were more likely to link attachment to friends and family. This is reflective of traditional gendered norms, indeed Csikszentmihalyi and Rochberg-Halton's (1981) research found that females are more likely to mention clothing as special objects. Males cherish objects of action more frequently, whereas females cherish objects of contemplation. This does not however mean that men cannot be *emotionally* attached to items of clothing. One key gendered finding uncovered was the strong link between youth and nostalgia amongst young men, particularly in relation to band t-shirts. When describing emotional attachment, several males described attachment to band t-shirts, which evoked memories of being part of a band in their youth. Unlike band t-shirts from FashionMap, these items contained lived-in authenticity. It may be the case that different genders place different levels of value on products which they consider to be important.

In relation to gendered attitudes towards sustainability, previous research has shown that women report stronger environmental attitudes (Zelezny, Chua and Aldrich, 2000), and are

more likely to engage in ethical fashion consumption than men (Manchiraju and Sadachar, 2014) (Gazzola et al., 2020). Divergent from the literature, this study has demonstrated that men and women view attitudes towards sustainable fashion consumption equally. Both genders had a high awareness of greenwashing practices, which reduced their willingness to purchase from sustainable brands. Men were not found to be dismissive of sustainable issues, and many male participants interviewed were willing to pay more for better quality clothing. This study does not align with the growing body of research which suggests that men are rejecting ethical behaviours, due to concerns that it threatens their masculinity (Duckett, 2018). Although, it must be noted that these results could be determined by the composition of the relatively small sample size. Gendered research into sustainable fashion preferences utilising a larger sample size would be beneficial to further deepen this discussion.

Previous research has shown that little is understood in terms of men's perspective and their intention to purchase eco-clothing (D'Souza et al., 2015) and my study has filled this gap in knowledge. This research revealed that both genders are equally willing and often have the intention to purchase sustainable fashion, but that several barriers are stopping them from doing so. For males, lack of choice and lack of sizing amongst existing sustainable brands are issues, and this highlights a competitive development opportunity for sustainable brands.

8.2.6 Bringing together of theoretical strands

This PhD has built upon and consolidated the work of several different theoretical frameworks. The bringing together of various theoretical strands is important as it has aided this study by adding to existing theory in fashion, sustainability and material culture. Established theorists usually focus their research in one particular area. Niinimäki, for example, has written extensively in the field of sustainable fashion. Her 2013 research into longevity and attachment as a method to extend the use phase of garments has been particularly influential in the development of this thesis (Niinimäki and Armstrong, 2013). Chapman (2005) discusses emotionally durable design as a counterpoint to our throwaway society, and Norman (2005) notes the importance of emotion of everyday objects. Fletcher (2012, 2016, 2014, 2019) is a leading theorist in the field of sustainability, who has written extensively about how the fashion industry can contribute to a more environmentally friendly future. Banim and Guy's (2001) and Woodward's (2007) methodologies have been influential in the use of wardrobe studies as a primary research method in this study. Miller's (2001, 2005, 2008, 2010) work on material culture has been key in informing the research

approach. Schwartz's Theory of Values (2012) has been used as a tool to analyse sustainable consumption and consumers who have displayed emotional attachment to their clothing. The theory of values does not include emotion, it can be used as a 'bridge' to explain the reasons or values which may motivate an individual to exhibit certain behaviours towards their clothing.

The theorists mentioned above bring different dimensions of their specialist research areas together. It can be argued that this is an emergent and additional contribution which demonstrates how it is the interplay of each factor which makes the overall difference. All the contributions to knowledge discussed in the above section (Section 8.2) have a bearing on sustainability. Chapter 7, Section 7.14, discusses how the sustainability findings can create opportunities for a more eco-friendly future.

8.3 Reflections and recommendations

Findings from this study have shown how certain design strategies can be followed which offer the opportunity to create extended use. This has highlighted the role of design for longevity. Encouraging emotional connections to garments suggests a pathway for disposable behaviour change, ultimately resulting in more sustainable behaviours (McNeill et al., 2020). Durability, classic styles and a strong person-product relationship (Niinimäki and Armstrong, 2013) are factors which can contribute to a fast fashion product becoming an accidental classic, in addition to the materiality of garments. It can therefore be argued that some garments are beyond trends as they have surpassed their intended lifespan within the trend cycle. This is an important reflection, which has wider implications when considering the longevity of garments. However, designing for emotional attachment alone is not enough. Fletcher (2012) notes that extending the life span of products, must be accompanied by a change in consumer attitudes, and patterns of consumption, to achieve optimal impact. 'Clothes must be suited for longer use by different customers, which implicates a high quality of the garments and a rather timeless design instead of low quality and rapidly changing trends.' (Piontek, Amasawa and Kimita, 2020, p.729)

However, rapidly changing trends are at the very centre of the fashion system. Consumption is driven by a need for 'newness.' Generally, consumers dispose of items which are considered to be 'out of fashion.' This is because people strive to maintain a positive self-identity, and 'un-trendy' garments are less valuable for maintaining a person's self, and

therefore, the experience of product attachment will decrease (Mugge, Schifferstein and Schoormans, 2014, p.464). This is the fundamental crux of the argument, as it describes how the fashion system works, and what drives consumption. Keeping up with trends means that our identity as consumers is constantly being brought into question. Novelty is seductive because it offers variety and excitement, helping to explore our dreams and aspirations, and escaping the harsh reality of our lives (Jackson, 2017). Connections can be identified here with retail therapy. 'And it is precisely because material goods are flawed but somehow plausible proxies for our dreams and aspirations that consumer culture seems on the surface to work so well.' (Jackson, 2017, p.117).

This research has questioned the perceived fastness of changing trends (Section 8.2.1). Although there may not be a straightforward solution to reducing consumer consumption, perhaps the consumers perception of the rapidness of trends needs to change. Brands can contribute positively by incorporating timeless designs, ensuring a high-quality standard of their products, and discouraging 'throwaway' fashion. Findings from this thesis have demonstrated knowledge, behaviours and attitudes of young consumers, which have been considered in the context of sustainable consumption. For example, this research revealed that both genders are equally willing and often have the intention to purchase sustainable fashion, which highlights a competitive development opportunity for sustainable brands.

8.4 Limitations

This PhD has faced several limitations, due to the scale of the research project. Firstly, it must be noted that garments in the FashionMap archive are solely representative of student and young people's tastes, as it is this demographic which has curated the collection. This means that there is a limitation in terms of the wider picture of trends that FashionMap covers between 2000-2018. However, the archive does resonate with the primary research sample, as it is this demographic choice who are the biggest consumers of high street fast fashion (Lam, Yurchisin and Cook, 2016).

This study was conducted in one geographical region in one country, which also possibly limits the representativeness of the sample. In addition to this, the sample size of this research must be taken into consideration. The sample used in small scale research, i.e., a singular group of people, can be used to facilitate an in-depth study (Hammersly and Atkinson, 2007). In total fifty-five participants were interviewed for the focus groups and

wardrobe studies (including the pilot studies). Although the viewpoints presented throughout the thesis are not generalisable to the whole of Millennials and Generation Z, or the whole male and female population, they are indicative of a feeling amongst that generation. Utilising a small sample size does however also provide an opportunity; 'Focusing upon a narrow sample defined by the life-stage of the participants provides an opportunity to better understand the holistic experience of decision making' (Ritch, 2014, p.1177).

8.4.1 Methodological reflection

A further limitation and difficulty of this study was the initial resistance and unwillingness of men to participate in the research. Male students in particular were hard to recruit. Through analysing other researchers work, it became apparent that this was not an isolated issue regarding this study. Grant McCracken (1997) studied the relationship between hair and identity, and also found that men were unwilling to take part in his research:

'There was one group who would not talk to me: men... After a couple of weeks of trying, I had proof. Men would not participate in the research. Oh, they would sit for an interview, but they'd reveal nothing useful. Apparently, there's a secret rule of masculinity that says, 'Hair and style are not guy stuff' (McCracken, 1997, p.18).

In a similar way, men were initially unwilling to talk about fashion in this study. There could be several possible reasons for this. It might be due to self-image issues, or a general resistance to the idea of perceived 'needless chat' regarding matters of fashion and style. It is possible that the subject area is the issue, and it would be interesting to see if the male participation rate would have been higher if the studies focus was technology, for example. Through the technique of snowball sampling, a sufficient number of male students were recruited for this study. For future projects regarding fashion with a gendered focus, specific wording could be changed when approaching male interviewees. It may be beneficial to use the word 'clothes' or 'look' instead of 'fashion.' This may reduce the gendered wording, as 'fashion' is commonly associated with traditional feminine stereotypes.

8.5 Future study development

As previously mentioned in Section 8.2.4 the links between sustainability and the importance of identity have been underexplored, and this could therefore be an area for future study

development. In addition to this, a limitation of snowball sampling is that only male and female participants were recruited for this study. This is despite the study not seeking to exclude other gender identifications. Moving forward, this research could expand recruitment to the wider university, in order to identify a diverse range of participants on the gendered spectrum. FashionMap commenced in the year 2000, and was split into male and female clothing categories. In today's society (2023), gender identifications are far more fluid, and future participants could be further reflective of this evolving dynamic field. Bloodhart and Swim (2020) note how there is limited research on individuals with queer and nonbinary gender identities in relation to patterns of sustainable consumption. 'Future research may be able to illuminate how current and changing gender identities interact with consumption and concerns about environmental sustainability' (Bloodhart and Swim, 2020, p.103).

8.6 Research outcomes and dissemination

In addition to this PhD thesis, several further academic projects have taken place alongside, including conferences and publications. A full list of research to date can be found below:

Journal Article

Marroncelli, R. and Braithwaite, N., 2022. #insta-fashion: how the digital revolution has affected celebrity culture and the British fashion retail landscape. *Fashion Practice*, 14 (1), pp. 124-150. ISSN 1756-9370

Book chapter

Marroncelli, R. 2024. Sustainability and the Fast Fashion Business Model. In: Verboven & Schramme. *Sustainability and the Fashion Industry. Can fashion save the world?* Routledge. ISBN 9781032641102

Braithwaite, N. and Marroncelli, R., 2021. [Too many shoes? An exploratory study of footwear and sustainability](#). In: N.F. NISSEN and M. JAEGER-ERBEN, eds., *Proceedings of the 3rd PLATE (Product Lifetimes and the Environment) Conference 2019, Berlin, Germany, 18-20 September 2019*. Berlin: TU Berlin University Press, pp. 91-97. ISBN 9783798331242

Conference contribution

Marroncelli, R. 2023. 'Denim jeans and the power of micro trends.' In: Dress Devolution. The Fashion and Textiles Institute at Falmouth University. 6-7 July 2023.

Marroncelli, R. 2023. 'The Emotional Durability of Fast Fashion.' In: Traversing the Fashion Landscape: A Research Symposium. Broadway Cinema, Nottingham. 19th April 2023.

Marroncelli, R. 2022. 'Identity Negotiation in the Context of our Climate Crisis.' In: UN75+2 at NTU: Living Together in the Future. Virtual. 22–24 November 2022.

Marroncelli, R. 2022. 'Shoes and the FashionMap Archive at NTU.' In: Shoetopia, Nottingham Trent University. 6th July 2022.

Marroncelli, R. 2021. 'How Fast is Fast Fashion' In: Responsible fashion series, University of Antwerp, 20-22 October 2021.

Marroncelli, R. 2020. 'Working from Home, Clothing Choice and Happiness' In: Home Renaissance Foundation: Happy Home, Happy Society? Virtual. 12-13 November 2020.

Marroncelli, R. 2020. 'The T-shirt: From Protest to Environmental Activism.' In: IFFTI 2020 Conference, Kent State University, Ohio. (Winner of the 'Doctoral Researcher Award').

Marroncelli, R. 2019. 'Fashionable Society in History – Exploring trends from 2000-2017 using the FashionMap archive at Nottingham Trent University.' In: Culture, Costume and Dress. Birmingham City University. 5-7 June 2019.

Marroncelli, R. 2019. 'The Sustainable T Shirt Paradox.' In: CAADH (College of Art, Architecture, Design and Humanities) Research Conference. Nottingham Trent University. 20-21st June 2019.

Print Media Contribution

Expert interview with Marroncelli, R. 2024.

<https://www.thesun.co.uk/fabulous/25785845/romwe-shein-cheap-dresses-disturbing-data-breaches-greenwashing/> *The Sun*.

Marroncelli, R. 2021. [Love Island ditches fast fashion: how reality celebrities influence young shoppers' habits \(theconversation.com\)](https://www.theconversation.com/love-island-ditches-fast-fashion-how-reality-celebrities-influence-young-shoppers-habits). *The Conversation*.

Marroncelli, R. 2020. <https://www.ntu.ac.uk/about-us/news/news-articles/2020/11/expert-blog-working-from-home-clothing-choice-and-happiness> *NTU Research News Expert Blog*.

Live Media

BBC Radio Nottingham – 10.04.21 – working from home and clothing choice

BBC Radio Nottingham – 06.09.21 – the environmental impact of fast fashion

Notts Tv – 10.06.22 – fast fashion and reality TV

The empirical focus of this thesis has been to investigate the emotional durability of fast fashion, considering this as a potential strategy for sustainability. By drawing from a unique trend-based garment collection, the notion of the fashion trend has been re-thought within the realms of sustainability and consumer behaviour. This study has created a new way for understanding the trend system post 2020. Considering the lives of the individual consumer has illustrated the emotional attachment of trends. It can be argued that some garments are beyond trends as they have surpassed their intended lifespan within the trend cycle. Gendered findings uncovered how males and females hold different reasons for attributing emotional attachment to items of clothing, but place equal importance on attitudes towards sustainable fashion consumption. This study has brought forth new knowledge of what fast fashion means to the young consumer in the context of sustainability and their own lives.

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Data Availability Statement

All primary and anonymised research data created during this research are available from Figshare under a CC-BY 4.0 licence at: [DOI] [10.6084/m9.figshare.22263928](https://doi.org/10.6084/m9.figshare.22263928)

List of Appendices

Please note: the volume of data produce over this PhD has been condensed here into a representative sample.

Appendix 1 - Example Project Information Sheet

PROJECT INFORMATION SHEET

Project Title: The Emotional Durability of Fast Fashion: Male and Female Perspectives

What is the project about?

The aim of this research is to conduct a gendered approach into the emotional durability of fast fashion. I will interview students and young adults, who are primary consumers of fast fashion. I will address the impact of new media technologies on the fashion sector through a series of focus groups and wardrobe studies. I will investigate gendered differences towards clothing attachment and sustainable fashion.

Who is running this project?

I am undertaking this project as part of my PhD at Nottingham Trent University. I have been trained and am being supervised.

Why have I been invited to take part?

You have been chosen to take part in this project as you are a student or young adult.

What do you want me to do?

Focus group – You will be required to take part in a group interview, where clothing habits and attitudes toward fast fashion will be discussed. This will last for around 45mins-1hour and will take place on campus at NTU – a Covid secure environment.

Wardrobe study - You will be interviewed for about an hour, in your own home, via Skype/Teams. It would be beneficial if the interview could take place near or in front of your wardrobe. It is expected that a follow up interview will also take place, at a later date (ideally 1 month after the first interview).

Do I have to take part?

You have the right to withdraw your consent and participation at any moment: before, during, or after the research has taken place - up to a period of two weeks. If you do wish to withdraw your consent please e-mail me at rose.marroncelli@ntu.ac.uk.

What data will you collect from me?

Data will be collected about attitudes towards fast fashion and emotional attachment.

Screenshots may be taken of outfits which are discussed during the Skype call, and I may also ask you to supply your own images, (which will be of better quality than a screenshot). Images may be taken during the focus group.

How will you protect my confidentiality and anonymity?

Your confidentiality and anonymity will be protected as your name and personal details will not be disclosed during this research. You will be referred to as 'Participant 1,' or will be given a pseudonym. All interviews may be recorded and transcribed into text form with identifying features removed (e.g. names and places). You will not be identifiable by any images used, as head shots will not be included.

What will happen to the results?

The results from this project will be used as part of my PhD research. The results may also be published anonymously in conference papers and academic journal articles.

How can I find out more about this project and its results?

If you wish to find out more about this project please contact myself, rose.marroncelli@ntu.ac.uk or my supervisor, naomi.braithwaite02@ntu.ac.uk

Appendix 2 - Example Consent Forms

NOTTINGHAM TRENT UNIVERSITY – Consent form

Please read and agree to the following statements:

| |
|--|
| I have read the project information sheet, and had an opportunity to ask questions about the research and received satisfactory answers to any questions. |
| I have had sufficient information to decide whether or not I wish to take part in the study. |
| I understand that I am free to withdraw from the research within a two week period after participation, by informing the researcher of this decision. |
| I understand that the information I give will be treated in the strictest confidence. |
| I agree to take part in the study. |
| I agree that this interview can be recorded. |
| I understand that quotations, which will be made anonymous, from this interview may be included in material published for a PhD thesis, and further future publications. |
| I am willing to participate in an interview as part of this research project. |

I confirm that data obtained from the study can be used in the final research report. I understand that the data will be used anonymously: names, places and identifying details will be changed.

Full Name _____

What gender do you identify as? _____

What is your age? _____

Date _____

If you have any questions please contact rose.marroncelli@ntu.ac.uk

Supervisor: Naomi Braithwaite naomi.braithwaite02@ntu.ac.uk

VISUAL CONSENT FORM

Project Title: **The Emotional Durability of Fast Fashion: Male and Female Perspectives.**

This form relates to images that you may supply of garments from your wardrobe, as part of the wardrobe study.

Please read and confirm your consent to supplying an image for this project by ticking the appropriate boxes and signing and dating this form.

1. I confirm that the purpose of the project has been explained to me and I have been given information about it in writing. I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the project and these have been answered satisfactorily.

2. I understand that my participation is voluntary, and that I am free to withdraw at any time throughout the wardrobe study without giving any reason and without any negative implications. I understand that after participation, I will have a two week time period to withdraw from the research.

3. I understand that the image(s) I supply may be used in the student's PhD research and future publications.

4. I wish for my personal data to be anonymised. My name will not be included alongside my image(s) in the study.

5. I give permission for my image(s) to be used for this project, and understand that I will not be identifiable.

Participant's name

Date

Signature

Researcher's name Date Signature

Contact: rose.marroncelli@ntu.ac.uk / naomi.braithwaite02@ntu.ac.uk

Appendix 3 - Online Focus group with students transcript – 03.03.21

24 participants

Activity 1 - responses to garment images from the FashionMap archive

1.



tacky, messy

I think the shoot itself is quite unprofessional/blurry, which matches the outfit

Not elegant

That's too much

dated

Grunge

Tacky

High Street

over done

looks cheap

hideous

Accessorising the jeans is quite interesting

the bleached jeans reminds me of the skin head movement in the 1980's (thats the first thing that comes to mind)

Maybe quite a trend lead outfit at the time the photo was taken

street wear

It reminds me of middle school, I feel many of us went through a 'grungy' phase

Innovative with the choice of chains/jewellery that are attached to the jeans

2.



Quite grunge/ rebellious

was going to say the same - outfit is grunge

photoshoot could have amore street-like appeal?

Same, Grunge

Defiant

Punk

Not a big fan of the ripped stockings

Rebellious

bold

Loud

makeshift

Drunk

Punk and we can still see this style now

Classic Rock

too cool for school

Halloween

punk

Outfit inspired by a past era of fashion

punk vibes - vivivine westwood kinda aesthetic

rebel

It doesn't look as dated, still relevant today

checks are always classic i think they fused it with retro with the round shape holes made on stockings

3.



Unprofessional shoot again and blurry

kinda old school, milk maid vibe

not a fan

It's like a traditional costume.

traditional

Bohemian

gypsy

cultural element

inspiration from Russian traditional wear

The hat is actually very on trend I think

Folky vibe, looks a bit like fancy dress

a little Bohemian style

native american

4.



the editing is quite bad, some features slightly cropped out

not good

Kind of like a "rich boy" vibe or at least trying to be

I like the cardigan on a short trend but this one does not tie in well

mediterranean

summer cruise vibes

St. Tropez

vacation vibes

odd

No point to wear it

The overall outfit is unbalance: Casual cardigan and bag with formal shirt?

work trip on a exotic beach location

don't like the cardigan with shorts

I know this wouldve been cool 2008-2010 for sure

strange combination

Kind of a bit "geeky"

Trying to be preppy, but something is off

5.



makes him look like a bit of a tourist? trying to fit in

Material looks sort of cheap

Cool Guy

Mashup style

Daring

wearable sci-fi

smart casual

out dated

not a fan of the hat. the rest of the outfit is just casual

cool, trendy

hipster meets greaser

casual street and it looks good. but I want to take the hat away from him.

mismatch hat

I know this wouldve been cool 2008-2010 for sure

strange combination

Kind of a bit "geeky"

Trying to be preppy, but something is off

Trying to look cool outfit

want to be cool dad

eastern european vibes

Playful, flashy, trying too hard

Activity 2 – questions regarding clothing habits

Do you regret throwing anything away from your wardrobe which has now come back into fashion? If so, can you explain what and why? Can you tell me the story about what happened?

regret throwing a pair of snake skin pattern pumps that I had a few years back, thought they were too much. My mom thought they were not classy so after them just sitting in my wardrobe for long, i had to throw them. Would honestly love to have them now!

I regret throwing away some of my oversized coloured jeans as they've seem to come back into fashion recently, I threw them away mostly because when I would wear them people would joke about them.

well, I don't throw my clothes away, I always pass them on to my cousins and family or to the people who may need or value them. No, I don't regret giving away anything. Nothing that I can remember.

I don't throw away clothes often, so I've never regretted it.

I don't regret throwing anything away from my wardrobe. Only thing I regret is the converse. When I threw it the trend is coming back

Which items of clothing have you owned the longest? And why?

pajamas is the longest, I still keep it because the quality is still good

I think a good pair of straight leg jeans - they don't wear off easily, they are durable, always in trend

I've owned a tie-dye hoodie the longest, as I got it while traveling and it has sentimental value, such as memories etc.

I remember keeping my school uniform as a keepsake. Apart from that, I remember keeping a pair of trousers from my teenage hoping one day I will fit into them. But my mom has given it away now.

The oldest clothes in my wardrobe is my primary school uniform. I cherish my childhood school life so much that I have kept it all the time.

Big size T-shirts: First of all, these T-shirts don't go out of fashion. Even if it's old and out of fashion, I can wear comfortable clothes or pajamas.

Do you own any particular items of clothing which evoke nostalgic memories? If so, can you describe these items and the associated memories?

My mother gave me a dress for my birthday. It was a long black dress with flowers on it.

I have a particular blazer which I like the most which I bought during my bachelor's. It's more of a fashionable blazer so whenever I used to go on special gatherings with friends I used to style it with any kind of outfit I'm wearing. Even though it doesn't fit me properly now I still have it in my wardrobe.

When I was in high school, I went shopping with my mother, and my mother bought me a coat. I wear it to go to school, the classmates said not good-looking, but I still like it very much, every day to wear it, it is dirty I will go to the laundry to clean up, usually with a hanger hanging on the wardrobe.

I would choose the uniform from my high school as my special clothing. Because I have worn the clothes for the last three years. It brought me a lot of memories, and also makes me think a lot about my classmates and life in high school.

Do you take any steps to maintain/look after/preserve your garments? If so, can you explain what?

Take care of my dress with a special dry-cleaning technique

Yes. I wash less frequently with my jeans to keep it in shape

There's no special care i take for my garments. But i always keep my wardrobe clean and clothes properly folded. I don't like much folds on clothes so maintain them in proper folding and never make my wardrobe messy. Even though am tired after a long day after reaching home i place my clothes in proper way.

I do not have special actions to preserve my garments. Just leave them. (cry)

Would you use or have you any experience of using a clothing rental service?

I would be open to using a rental service but that would be dependent on the price

I think it depends on the importance of the occasion

I had used clothing rental service before. However, I did not made any vintage fashion purchase.

Before i used to clothing rental service, when i was in Mongolia, but in the UK i didn't see any clothing rental service. Also, i do not know about this apps.

No, experience

No experience in renting but I would rent different outfits

no I haven't rented any clothes yet and I feel like I am still reluctant to rent clothes

I never used a clothing rental service before, but dont mind to try it to be honest. I think if something would be expensive and I couldnt afford it, but want to wear it for some occasion or something like that, the rental clothing would be great!

Have you made any recent vintage fashion purchases using the apps Depop or Vinted? If yes, why did you make this purchase and can you describe what you bought?

No I havent bought any vintage items from those apps

I have both apps on my phone but I haven't done any purchases in any of them. I think the algorithm for finding specific items is still not very accurate and it makes the shopping experience a bit frustrating. but maybe I will eventually buy something

No, not into vintage fashion.

I used Vinted quite a lot, but it was mostly for selling my own clothes that I didnt want anymore. I never bought anything there.

I bought a hat off depop (new era 76 hat) - this type of hat was really cool in the 2000's and its kind of making a come back (in its early adopters stage) and i use to always want one

when I was younger but could never afford it. So I went on depop and found one for a very very cheap price (used) and couldnt have been more happier with it. – Never used Vinted though.

Which fashion brands have you had experience with poor quality? If you did have an experience with poor quality, why was this, and what happened?

Palace. I bought a sweatshirt in the last lockdown just after my birthday in April & have only worn it a handful of times since then, but the stitching on the outside has started to come away all over. The sweatshirt itself is actually amazing quality, heavy and warm but the exposed stitching on the outside has meant the overall quality is fairly poor.

Shein, Pretty little thing, next the fabric quality was not good and the bralettes lacked structure

hm, forever 21- bought some clothes from Forever 21 before. I didn't wear them for many times before the seams came out.

I have experienced H&M, forever 21, Berska with poor quality. The material of their clothes are often not too thick, makes them easier to get damaged and ripped easily

hm, very poor quality jeans and i request a refund

for fast fashion brands like H&M, I could only wear for one season and it will appear to be old

ASYOU (By ASOS) - The style of the clothes they design are very fashion forward and current and the prices are cheap, yet this is reflected in the quality as the quality of the materials are poor. Next time i went to purchase from them I made sure to check the reviews to see if others experienced poor quality

Boohoo, item was horrible, see through I make an effort not to buy from them.

Shein- On Shein looking at reviews is very important because sometime what you see & get are two different things and this one time my sister ordered for me without checking and the dress was absolutely see through

Would you be willing to pay a premium for sustainably produced fashion?

I would be willing to pay a premium depending if it was a reasonable price

I would be willing to pay a price premium, however in the last year since I've been trying to change what clothes I spend my money on, I'm not willing to spend the price premium when the level of design I look for doesn't match with other garments available (from what I've seen so far).

If I knew the brand or the collection was serious about sustainability, I would accept a premium for it.

I don't think sustainable clothing should have a very high price. I will give preference to sustainable products if the price is moderate, but I will not buy them at high prices.

It depends on how much premium it is.

Appendix 4 - In person focus group with male's transcript – 16.08.21

6 male participants

(Intro) – spoken for 5mins – explanation of FashionMap archive and my PhD research.

Interpretation of trends: what do you think subcultural style might represent?

Like alternative, so I don't know if I'm right here but like goth and emo-ish. Not so much these days, but more like past goth I guess.

Yes, absolutely, so like punk, mods and rockers. Would you know or understand what kitsch means?

No, I was going to ask what that means.

Cheesy

It that sort of like vintage-ey? A bit like 50s style or something?

Yes, the term kitsch is the German word for trash, so basically meaning bad taste, but also kind of cool because it is bad taste.

So like so bad its good?

Yes, exactly.

Wearing curtains!

Yes. So these are the six trends that I have identified, and then I have been through the whole archive and found garments which link to all of these trends. I'm really interested in your opinions on the garments. Next I have a few slides which have images from the students final photo shoots, with the garments, and I also have the garments in front of me here. I'm really interested in what year you think these garments were bought, and also if you would wear any of these garments now, and if not why. The first trend is unisex..

Q 1 – Unisex



Guess the year... 2013, 2011/2012, 2015 maybe (the clue slide is shown, and it doesn't help anyone). The correct year is 2013.

Would you wear this?

Yeah, I like a floral shirt.

Yeah

No I don't think so

I wouldn't

If you wouldn't wear it, why is that?

Because its from Topman.

It looks a bit faded to me, I don't know whether its been done on purpose or just because it is old, but if it was new and like that I would probably feel that it looks old. Ok, this is exactly how it was bought, so it hasn't been washed. I don't usually buy clothes that look that that, don't like that it looks faded. Ok, you don't like the wash and fade.

I don't like short sleeve shirts.

Ok thank you, so that was the first one.

PHOTOSHOOTS



What do you think about this jacket, would you wear this?

No

This is from Zara man

Maybe a few years ago, not now.

The guy in the photo is rocking it, but I couldn't.

I'd probably wear it if it was a bit shorter, if it didn't look a bit more like a trench coat.

It kind of looks like a suit bag.

I think given my size as well, it would be a bit hugging.

Would you say that you think it is maybe a bit outdated?

I think that the length makes it outdated. But the style is pretty timeless.

I agree with that, I think if it was a jacket rather than a trench coat length, I wouldn't look at it and think, 'that looks weird.'

Do you think the length makes it more like a girls coat?

Yeah, I do.

I would say that it would be very hard for a man to pull that off now, but for a woman it would be a lot easier. When it was sold, not so much, I think its more timeless for a woman basically.

Guess the year... 2015/16, yeah I think about the same.

Spot on!

Wow, we're fashionistas!



Would you wear this? **Unanimous no.**

What do we think about this piece?

Straight jacket vibes.

A bit too baggy.

I'm not sure about the random tassels.

I think the concepts fine on the picture, but if you were to put it on, and you were walking around, those little tassel bits are just going to be flapping around.

Its not practical? Yeah!

In the photo, it looks quite nice, but if you were actually wearing it walking around, I don't like it.

It's the baggy t-shirt equivalent of an Ikea show kitchen.

That's a really good way of putting it!

OK great, (struggles to put back on the hanger)

That would bug me forever, if it doesn't stay on the hanger.

Guess the year... 2016, 2011, 2010, I think it's right at the end, 2017.

Correct year is 2016/2017.

Q2 - Kitsch

2011/2012 – S/S

Kitsch

The Tate defines the term kitsch as, 'the German word for 'trash', it is used in English to describe particularly cheap, vulgar and sentimental forms of popular and commercial culture' (Tate, no date).



Would you wear this?

I'd wear the shirt.

Yeah, the shirt would be nice actually.

I think I like the shirt.

I like the idea of it, but I'd probably look at myself in the mirror, and wouldn't like it.

Yeah, I wouldn't wear the full outfit.

The colour of the shirt is fine, the thing which puts me off is the sharpness of the colour of the buttons.

It does look a bit 'Ronald McDonaldy'

That's kind of the idea though isn't it? Its supposed to be odd..

It feels quite 70s.

The shirt and trousers are both River Island I think, would anyone wear the trousers?

I probably would with a black t-shirt, if they were the only bright part of the outfit. If that makes sense.

The trousers are just slightly too bright.

Guess the year... its hard to tell, because it is much more timeless. You don't really see it very often either. I'd say 2010. 2015. 2010-12.

So this is 2011-2012.

Q3 – Subcultural style

Subcultural Style



These styles are all punk influenced. The first one is this back t-shirt. Would anyone wear this?

Yeah I would.

Yeah, why not.

I think it's just a t-shirt with a print on it. I've got a few t-shirts with stuff on, and I probably don't even notice what's on it. It's just a t-shirt with a print on it really.

I only wear white t-shirts, so no.

Okay, (shows 2nd t-shirt) would you wear this one?

No. Not that one.

Would anyone wear this one?

Yeah, I probably would, wear something similar.

I'd probably have worn that when I was a bit younger.

Yeah, I was going to say that actually.

When I was at uni.

Why wouldn't you wear this one?

Well I can see its Topman.

It looks like they have ripped off a benefit gig as well, so that's just cheeky.

It's like a made up thing – if it was a real band that I liked maybe then yeah.

You feel like it's a bit fake?

Yeah, massively.

Why don't you like Topman?

Because the clothes don't last, they don't last at all. That top would probably just get a whole in it. Which would probably make this one look better. It's a bit too fast fashion I guess.

These boots are the last item.

I like the idea of those, but I don't think that I could pull them off.

Would anybody wear these?

I would be more likely to wear them if they were some sort of fancy dress item. Like a pirate.

I like the doc martin sort of style definitely, but not with the gold, its too much.

Its not too far off doc martains, I would wear doc martains as well, but not these.

Okay, and just finally any guesses for the years of the t-shirts?

2008, 2012, 2010, 2013.

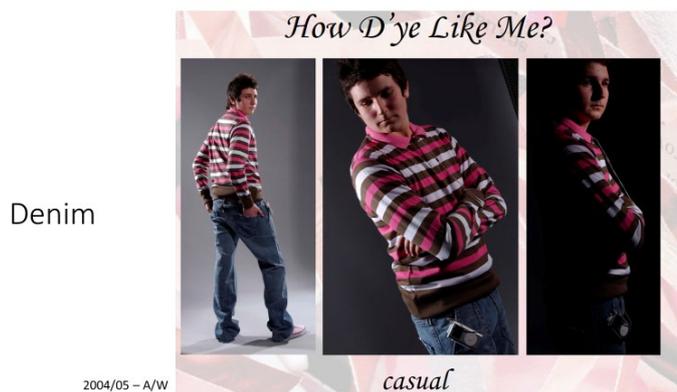
The correct year is 2003.

Somebody paid £80 for those shoes, what.

I thought they would be more than that.

The correct year for the shoes is 2005.

Q4 – Denim (Levi's jeans)



What do you think of these Levi's jeans?

Oh, those pockets!

I had a pair of jeans like that when I was a lot younger, quite revolting!

It's the kind of thing you would clear out of your parents house.

I've definitely thrown away a pair like that from when I was in my early teens.

Several pairs of those have gone to charity shops.

What's in the pockets, is that like magnets or something? It's a popper. Oh right okay – cool.

Why don't you like the pockets?

I don't know, the shape of them, they are just audacious. And the sideways angle of the pockets, things would be falling out.

What's that thing on the back about as well?

Oh god yeah. It's a style feature.

I feel like people would be grabbing it.

It reminds me of the pair of jeans that my mum would buy me in secondary school. I'd be like, 'thanks mum,' but I'd wear them and look back and think oh god.

Would the fact that these jeans are Levis make you hold on to them?

No, I don't think so.

I would probably hold onto them, because if they still fit me, were from 10 years ago, and were Levis, they are probably going to last, so I would use them to do old jobs and stuff in. Because Levis used to be pretty good. I think I had a pair of Levis for 10 years once, and they didn't really get damaged.

They have a weird vertical texture, they look like they have been made out of a blind.

And what year do you think these are from? (a big clue is the i-pod in the picture)

2004, 2006/7 correct year is 2004. You definitely know your ipod history! That was the Christmas that I got those jeans (laughter).

Q5 – Vintage

Vintage -
Men's 70s
wallpaper



What do you guys think of this outfit? Would you wear any of the pieces individually? Or together?

I might wear the shirt. I probably wouldn't wear the whole outfit.

I actually quite like the whole outfit.

I did own some awful waistcoat jumper type things like that back in the day.

Yeah I did as well.

But I would not put it on now.

For me, it is almost nice, but I dunno, there is something that puts me off it, I don't know what. But I do quite like it.

I think in the picture, the outfit looks alright. I wouldn't think that it looks really weird, but I don't think I would wear it myself.

It feels like it is consciously new clothing pretending to be old. That grates on me.

The waistcoat is from Primark, its not actually wool, it's not very good quality.

For me, if you are wearing vintage, it needs to be actually old.

And the reason it is still around is because it was good quality when it was made.

Do you have any guesses as to the year for this one?

2008, 2007, 2009. This is 2012/13. I remember owning a jumper around that time period of that exact style.

Q6

'We now live in a world where fashion is faster than ever, as lead times shorten, and the process of renewal of styles in the high street happens at an ever increasing rate.'

(Woodward, 2009:93)

By looking at how styles change over time, do you think this challenges the use of the term 'fast fashion?'

For me, I struggled to place any of them really. I'm not particularly fashion conscious myself anyway, but I don't look at these outfits and think that any of them look massively out of place. For me, it does challenge thinking about fast fashion.

Not liking Topman, I fell out with that stuff after it all, just having piles and piles of like really rubbish clothes that run out, they are not legitimate anymore because the style gets old, you just end up throwing it all out. I'd much rather just have one really nice jacket that will last for a while. It's interesting to see it all laid out like that on a timeline.

The thing which threw me off a little bit was the one with converse and band shirts, I think it was 2001, I guessed the timeline was 2012/2013. When I was at uni, there was a lot of people dressing like that, including myself. So obviously, it's come back around, so it made it hard for me to judge where it started.

Yes, so maybe it is a timeless style?

Or it has gone round the loop already.

Q7 - Which fashion brands have you had experience with poor quality?

If you did have an experience with poor quality, why was this, and what happened?

(I know you've already mentioned Topman).

The whole of the Arcadia group, Burton as well, I used to buy clothes from Burton, they have all become misshapen over the years.

There is loads of clothes from River Island that I have bought, that have broken within 2-3 months.

I was going to say the same thing, River Island.

H&M

I buy jeans from Next, probably every 4-5 months, because they break. I don't know if they break because I'm only wearing one pair, or because they are rubbish. I used to buy there because the clothes would last longer than most places, but I don't know if that's because I don't buy clothes all the time.

I feel like Next's quality has gone down quite a lot over the last few years. In my late teens I would buy from Next a lot, and then suddenly it was like the fabric wasn't good anymore.

I've got shirts and polos that I bought in Next 6/7 years ago, 8 years ago even, that are faded now, but the material is fine. If I bought one now, it probably wouldn't last a year.

You think the quality has gone down, and the prices have probably gone up a bit?

Yeah, I don't think it's a problem with just next, I think its all of them. I accept when I am buying something that it is not going to last, it is annoying but I don't know if there are any other options. Say if I bought a pair of jeans, and I knew they were going to last me two years, I would pay more. But you just kind of accept it, don't you?

Having said that, are there any brands which you feel have really good quality?

Classic high street, Levis, I do think their jeans are, especially hearing horror stories like that, I don't really wear jeans personally but thing like socks for example, I burn through socks, Levis seem to last longer for me, they are slightly thicker.

Doc Martins are really good, they last for ages.

I've bought shoes from Primark, like two pairs for £30, but they just fall apart.

Doc Martins has definitely started to go downhill the last few years I think.

I have recently heard people having lots of issues with them.

The original factory in Northampton, they still sell the original ones.

My dad's still got a pair of Doc Martins that he had when he was a teenager. He still cleans them and polishes them now. They were proper ones that would last you, older than I am. But I am not expecting my pair of Doc Martins to last 30 years.

Sometimes I will buy thing from a different kind of market, so the shoes that I am wearing are skate shoes, but I don't skate. But you know that state shoes aren't going to fall apart.

They can take a lot of abuse!

Yeah, for some reason, my shoes fall apart all the time. These ones have lasted for a while, and there is no difference to them.

Q8 - Would you be willing to pay a premium for sustainably produced fashion?

Recently, yes, because I have the ability to. But when I was a student, it wouldn't figure. The idea would be there, but in reality it wouldn't actually happen.

It depends as well how much you trust the company saying that it is sustainably produced. Because you've got some companies producing t-shirts for a higher price, but then their factories are illegal in countries where it is illegal to be LGBT. The t-shirts for pride might be made there, but it contradicts everything, so you think do you really trust the companies?

So the whole of the companies ethics is important to you?

Yeah, if I pay an extra 10%, is it actually going towards what I think it is, or would I be better off, if I was going to spend that money, putting it towards a charity that I know that would. So if you were going to think of it that way.

Yeah there is a lot of disparity, you get a lot of fast fashion now that have sustainable lines, but it is still fast fashion. It may be the equivalent that they are paying 10p extra per kilo of cotton or whatever.

Yeah, to me sustainable clothes means clothes that will last longer, if it is going to last longer, then I will happily pay double, maybe triple what you would pay on the high street, just to know that it is something which you can keep for ages, and not just throw away.

Q9 - Have you made any recent vintage fashion purchases using the apps Depop or Vinted?

If yes, why did you make this purchase and can you describe what you bought?

I've used vinted a few times, it's good. I've had to send one thing back, that came with a hole in it. It was advertised as new, and I was a little bit disappointed, because it was an expensive item.

And what do you buy from Vinted?

Mainly rugby style shirts that I wear, long sleeve, classic, rugby shirts. Ill just go on there and search for a brand I know, like the M&S ones, they always last forever, so I like to get those.

Okay, great, has anyone else used Depop or Vinted?

I haven't used the apps, but I do buy second hand clothing. Historically from places like COW. More recently, Instagram has got me with adverts to online equivalents.

Lulu's vintage fair when it comes to Nottingham is always a good place to go for that kind of thing as well.

Does anyone shop in charity shops?

Sometimes

I used to more, but I can't be bothered with the amount of effort that it takes to find the right thing now.

White Rose is good as well.

I wear a fair bit of quite old vintage stuff, but it is all hand me downs and things like that. So stuff that my dad would have worn in the 80s that he still has, because it lasted. He's got an old wardrobe, from my friend as well, his dad made clothes, and has loads of them. Every now and again I'll get some of those. I love that kind of thing. It's good quality because it's survived so long.

Do you feel like these clothes are also special because they have come from people that you know?

Yeah, definitely, I will put them in clothes bags, and brush them! And try to look after them and stuff.

Q10 - Which items of clothing have you owned the longest? And why?

My jackets – I usually spend a lot more on them. I have a couple of velvet jackets actually, which I don't tend to wear anymore, but they are still good quality, still fine.

If you no longer wear them, what is the reason as to why you have kept them?

It is because they are such good quality, and when I bought them, I spent quite a lot on them. I feel like if I do go back to wearing them in the future, I still could.

It's not that you would be able to replace it easily?

Yes exactly, so if I did want to wear it again it's not something that I would be able to find easily, as you say.

Do you have happy memories associated from when you used to wear them?

Yeah, I suppose that is true. My brothers 18th, family events, and things like that.

I've found that with things like ski wear or outdoor wear, that the companies making them still do make the distinction between quality and not. You know when you buy hiking boots, or a ski jacket, or things that are practical, there is an obvious element as to why you would want quality.

They are durable?

Yes, and it is present in the clothes. So I think things like that I have probably owned the longest, ive got loads of coats and boots and things like that. You know that if you buy them properly, because you want them to last if you are outdoors, doing whatever.

I think in a similar vein, probably the oldest thing in my wardrobe is two pairs of walking socks that I bought in Yeomans, in Beeston high street. For some reasons they have absolutely lasted.

How old would you say they are?

15 years old.

I've probably got ski socks from when I was about 13. It's a similar situation where you buy it from a local outdoor shop. They cost 3x as much as anything else, but they are really thick wool socks, I'd never wear them now, because they don't breathe, but yeah it's the same thing.

I've got a really nice old leather jacket, but it has aged really nicely, which you don't really see with any other clothes. Because its leather, the fade on it, or whatever, has aged really cool. I kind of want to see how it progresses almost.

I've got older clothing, but I think the oldest thing that I have got is a football shirt. From 2011.

It's the kind of thing that you will still keep for another 30 years as well, it's not like it's nearing the end of its life?

Oh that's true, I've got a basketball shirt, from the first basketball game that I ever went to, when I was about 5. It's still in my drawers.

Is that a nostalgic memory?

Yeah, I would never wear it because it is v-neck, but maybe if it was crew-neck I would wear it.

Do they do crew-neck basketball tops? (Laughs).

My oldest things in my wardrobe are probably a couple of leather jackets. They are just a useful thing to have, they are probably 10 years old. I still wear them.

Q11 - Do you take any steps to maintain/look after/preserve your garments? If so, can you explain what?

My Doc Martins, I treat every few months.

Okay, do you polish them?

Yeah, and every few years I re-waterproof and spray my waterproof jackets.

Yeah, I use a Nikwax wash. The main thing is I maintain my walking boots. Or smart shoes for work.

I think with a suit, if I've spent quite a lot on the suit, then I will get it dry cleaned. When it's been dry cleaned it stays in the plastic in the cupboard, or in a suit carrier. Like an overcoat or something for smart occasions, those things I would take most care over.

Would you, for example, wash your jeans or dark trousers inside out?

My girlfriend does all the washing.

I didn't know you were supposed to do that.

I will now haha

Yeah, I might start doing that.

Nobody has taught me how to look after clothes!

My jeans won't last long enough to fade anyway!

That's because you've been washing them wrong (laughs).

There is always a rip in my jeans before they would ever fade, the material is always fine. I've probably got a stack of old denim jeans with a rip in the seam, I wouldn't be able to fix them, but my girlfriend is good at sewing, she says you can't fix those, if you sew it, it is just going to rip more. So I've got a stack of them in the cupboard.

If you had a shirt with buttons, and one of the buttons fell off, would you mend it yourself, get somebody to mend it, or just throw it away?

I'd get someone to mend it.

Mend it myself.

To be honest it depends where the button is as to if I would even mend it. You can wear a shirt just open with a t-shirt. If its obvious where the button is missing I would mend it, but if not, I would just leave it.

Just on a side note, my dads got an old down jacket, as really cheap and basic one, but he just uses it for when he goes to have a fag in the garden at night, and that is literally held together by gaffer tape, because he doesn't care at all. There is no need for him to replace it, and he has literally cello taped it back together.

I regularly put extra buttons on my sleeves, because I like sleeves on buttons to be quite tight. So I do that kind of maintenance, and I've had quite a few things repaired as well.

I don't wash anything a certain way, it is just always on the eco setting. I wouldn't think to do it any other way, maybe I would split light and dark, but usually ill just throw everything in and press go.

That's what my brother does, he just chucks everything in and uses a colour catcher.

That's what I would do when I was living on my own, but now that I live with my girlfriend, I'm not allowed to do that. I've been educated now.

It's a lot of waste isn't it? A sheet of something?

It's just a sheet of paper. This is when I was living on my own, or living at uni. But then I hadn't really thought about it because I wasn't conscious like now about the environment, or sustainability, or where is it going, it was just I need to do a wash, and that's it.

That's part of the process.

Yeah.

Q12 - Do you regret throwing anything away from your wardrobe which has now come back into fashion? If so, can you explain what and why? Can you tell me the story about what happened?

I had a shirt that was never in fashion, and hasn't come back into fashion, but I still regret throwing it away. It was a dark purple, floral shirt, it was always an ugly shirt. There are not really memories attached to it, I just really like the colour. It got to a point where it didn't quite fit, so I though that's got to go, but now I think it would fit again.

I have a couple of emotional ones, that I wish I hadn't thrown out. But no, they haven't come back into fashion.

What did you get rid of and wish you hadn't?

I just had a couple of t-shirts at uni that I really liked. They were getting older, so I just got rid of them and replaced them, and now I look back and wish that I still had those t-shirts.

Because of the happy memories associated with them?

Yeah

I had a very similar experience as well, with old t-shirts.

You had a good time with them, and then you look back at a photo of yourself, and you think, 'oh god, I loved that t-shirt.' I tried to track it down, but I can't find it anywhere.

I gave someone a jacket, but I wish I hadn't. It was just really cool material, I seemed like one of a kind, I don't know where you would find it again.

Appendix 5 - In person focus group with female's transcript – 17.08.21

7 female participants

(Intro) – spoken for 5mins - explanation of FashionMap archive and my PhD research.

Interpretation of trends: what do you think kitsch/subcultural style might represent?

Everyone has an understanding of this. The meaning of kitsch is explained to the group. 'Kitsch is the German word for trash, so it's things which are maybe a bit gaudy. I have looked for things in the archive which have bright colours and maybe slightly bad taste.'

Q 1 – The sexualisation of fashion

The sexualisation of fashion



Guess the year...

I was going to say like 2005 2006, fashion became really cheap at that point. Because a lot of the things that were happening on the catwalks were these kind of like, like leathers, the wet look was really in like, you know, it was like through Julia Roberts was coming to fame, Kate Moss also. And actually, we can't reproduce that stuff on the high street. So everything went really nylon and really kind of like, fabrics that if you touched today, you'd be a bit like eww. That would be my take, maybe wrong don't know.

It's a bit saucy for Dorothy Perkins!

I had that Topshop all over.

I would have guessed maybe 2009 2010 times, similar but maybe a few years later.

I feel like you can still find that in the sale section of similar shops today.

I feel like Dorothy Perkins were selling that last year.

It's got that kind of like young Gweneth Paltrow about you. She used to wear all these things on the catwalk. It's like, you've got to have the body to wear that dress. But suddenly everybody can wear that dress. Because it's available in Dorothy Perkins.

Would anybody wear now?

No.

Never would have worn it then.

I actually quite like it minus the gold, I like the neckline.

I like the neckline and the back.

I think the spaghetti straps, that kind of thing dates it.

The correct year is 2000.

I was thinking that it looked early.

I couldn't decide.



Guess the year...

We used to sell these when I worked at Topshop.

2018, 2012, 2010.

See, I graduated in 2012. And I remember going to see Florence Walsh. And she was really into those things. And that was a bit earlier than that. That was like 2010.

Yeah, like festival. They fit a bit different in the photoshoot, to what I had thought.

Yeah, they look like granny pants!

I thought they would pull up higher and be like high waisted, like wear them over a leotard.

See also the way she styled them is not... (laughs)

It reminds me of Henry Holland, Cheryl Cole, I think 2010.

I feel like the hair is a bit 'scene kid.' I think the hair dates it to like scene kid, it's just post big fringe.

Would you wear this?

No, I didn't wear it back then.

I'd take a pair for a festival. It's the kind of thing that I might like last minute panic for a festival, go into TK Maxx, and get gaudy stuff, cheap.

Or are they the thing that you would buy at the festival, after a few wines, wear them the whole festival, see a picture later and go, gosh.

Okay, so these are 2008/09.

No, but it's like it's once you see the cut, 2012 is too late for that cut, it's too low.



Next, is these two corsets...

These are in fashion now.

Do you know what else this reminds me of? Do you remember Easy A?

Oh, yeah.

Again, at uni, I owned corsets that I went out in, that was like 2010-2011.

Yeah I would say 2009.

I think that the black one is a lot earlier, I would say 2004-2005.

I used to wear a corset like that with an exposed zip and a leather skirt. Mine was black, I wore it twice for Halloween, once as a witch and once as a cat.

These come in and out of fashion over and over again, I would say 2007, every year it comes back.

The grey one, one of my first years was doing an object analysis on one of their garments and painted a very similar talk to that grey one. And they were like, all talking about how cool they thought it was. You know when you're like, Oh, that's something that I have noticed coming back.

My sister used a dress like that, which makes me say 2007. The black one is definitely earlier.

Would anyone wear either of these now?

No

Yes, if it was fancy dress.

The black one reminds me of Victoria Beckhams wedding dress, they were the corsets that were in at the time.

Q2 - Unisex

Unisex



Those shoes are too big for her!

There is a lot happening.

She's very matching, with the shoes and bag, she's done amazingly well to match everything the same colour blue.

Would anyone wear this now?

I wouldn't wear it, but I don't know why, I kind of like it.

I don't think id wear it as an outfit, maybe separately.

Not that pattern.

I think I would wear it, but I would buy it in a size up.

I was going to say, I think for unisex now, we are more unisex than that, that is still quite feminine.

What year do you think this might be from?

I remember having a pair of shoes like that in 2013, I worked in Hackney, and remember running for the tube in them.

I remember shoes like that in sixth form, about 2012.

I think the start of the 2010s, that's when I wore shoes like that.

(Shows the clue slide)

Yes, that makes sense.

2012/2013.

It's the shoes which give it away.



Would anyone wear this coat?

I really like the styling in the shoot, but it's not the same as wanting to wear the outfit.

You can see from here, that the coat has a kind of nasty shine. It looks to me like a copy of something that Noel Gallagher would wear. It looks like a copy of that, but they've not quite hit the fabrics or maybe they can't make fabrics that well.

I've put on too much weight to be able to wear a coat like that.

I think the sleeve pockets are an unnecessary detail.

I feel like it's a bit odd without a hood as well, it's a bit like a parka, but someone has cut the hood off.

Its also doing that weird exposed zip thing, but the zip doesn't go all the way to the bottom.

With the flap under the zip, it looks like they've put a bit of effort into that detail.

I suppose the short, exposed zip situation is so that you can move.

Ok, so nobody would wear this coat, and what year do you think it might be from?

I think 2010.

The boots make me think that it might be a bit later, I do like the boots.

2015/16 is the correct year.



The final garment from the unisex trend is this white top.

That's very Kanye West, yeezy.

It's a bit unisex, because we're about to section you. (Laughs).

My friends always used to joke, whenever my clothes had holes in them, they would call me Yeezy.

I like the socks, I have those socks actually. This feels like a late thing as well. It's the socks which make me think it must be a bit later.

I have those socks, I got them late, my mum bought them for me, and I said, 'this trend has gone mum.'

My fashionable friend wore socks like that a couple of years ago.

I definitely had them in 2012, for fancy dress, from Primark.

So it's either 2012, or a couple of years ago.

I feel like that shade of pink was in a couple of years ago.

I'd guess 2013.

2017.

Would anybody wear this?

If you cut those things off, then yes.

I think that oversized t-shirts have a better cut now. But it is nice, thick fabric.

I'm wearing a sweater dress so yeah, I would wear something like that. But I don't really like the weird strap, and I don't wear white either. But I do think you get better cuts now, but I would wear something similar.

So this was 2016/17 – you are right later on.

Q3 – Kitsch

Kitsch The Tate defines the term kitsch as, 'the German word for trash, it is used in English to describe particularly cheap, vulgar and sentimental forms of popular and commercial culture' (Tate, no date).



The next trend it kitsch.

I don't like it. (Laughs)

It's got Chinese writing on it.

You'd definitely be sweating in that, I'm sweating just thinking about it.

This ribbed jersey gives me a throwback to when I started working, and we put jersey in everything.

It's very shiny, it's velour!

This reminds me of when Mary Katrantzou came out of nowhere, and everything was digitally printed.

Yeah, everybody was really excited about it.

Nobody likes this outfit?

No (unanimous).

Also has she gone into Chinese restaurant too for the shoot?

Well, I certainly hope not.

Behind her, it really looks like she has. I'm not okay with anything that's happening here. It looks like the students have added the birds to the PowerPoint.

2015

I think 2010

I don't remember anybody dressing like this.

This is 2016/17

I feel like we've had some conversations since then about putting random Chinese writing on garments.

That would not be okay now.

Would you say that this is verging on cultural appropriation?

I mean I think it is trampling.

Taking this outfit to a Chinese restaurant is terrible.

It's a British bird on the design as well, so none of it really makes any sense.

They took everything, they have the flowers, they have the snakes, the Chinese writing...

The rib at the top is so unflattering, it sticks out, compared to the velour.

Q4 – Subcultural Style

Subcultural Style



This is an H&M t-shirt, it's a copy of Vivienne Westwood's famous sex pistols t-shirt.

That t-shirt fabric looks like it's already been washed 100 times.

It's actually never been washed, it still has the label on it, so that's how it was bought.

I quite like the cut of it, I quite like those capped sleeves.

Would anyone wear this one?

I probably would have at the time. But I wouldn't now, I might wear it to bed now.

PJs for sure.

It's just so washed out with any of the kind of punk heritage that it's come from. It's so accessible, and 'H+M mmie.'

Yeah, even then I always felt really self conscious about really borrowed statements. It's a bit like the band t's that you'd get. It's like, yeah, it's too far removed from. It's like what? What is it now?

If you're buying yourself cultural stuff from h&m, it's not subculture.

Then what is it?

Is that another subcategory? it's a sub-subculture culture (Laughs) from the mass produced.

How much was it?

£9.99

They blew the budget of the leather jacket. (laughs).

I used to have some of those boots, with a zip up the back, you would always get your tights stuck on them.

And they would jingle as you walk.

What kind of year do you think this might be?

2008

2006, the shoes make me think 2006.

This was 2010/11.



She looks like Boy George!

Would anybody wear these?

Probably, I like the pattern. I don't like the cut, those trousers, with a different cut, I would wear.

I've got a pair of woven check trousers in a red, but they are a pin leg, high waisted. And it's woven, is that a printed check? Yeah.

I wouldn't wear them but I do like them like for example, I could see Tash (my friend) in them.

Yeah, I could totally see Tash in those.

I don't like the zips, no thank you.

I remember people having trousers with these zips on.

Also, they have a very low waist.

What year do you think these might be from?

I think 2008

Yeah, somewhere around there.

I'll be sad if they were after 2010.

I would say 2012/2013 – the heels are high but very square, I think that happened around this time.

The correct year is 2013/14.

That's impressive.

Q5 – Denim

Denim



So we have these jeans from Next...

I love these, these are Dolly Parton, and I would wear them all day. I'd have them like several sizes too big, I wouldn't want them cut like they were on her, I'd want them quite different, but I think they're tacky. And I like that. (Laughs). I would wear them with the denim jacket with the tassels on from the previous slide.

I think they are 2001 2002 they've got that sort of Julia Roberts look. Especially with the shoes as well.

The correct year is 2000-2001.

Ripped jeans...

You would have to be very brave to wear these, you would be very cold.

I feel like the cut out bits are too clean, now they would have ragged bits...

Correct year is 2014/15.

2014 makes sense because that's when this was coming in, but they haven't learned how to do it well yet.

Shiny jeans...

The shiny jeans, I was a student at that time, they were really popular, and I really wanted some, I think they are 2012. See I really want these shiny jeans.

I would not blink at a student wearing those now.

Correct year is 2015/16.

Q6 – Vintage



Vintage
(1920s)

2003/2004

The next trend is vintage – I chose this as vintage because the students had styled it on a 1920s look.

I used to have millions of those skirts, I had them in every colour, I thought they were fab. Mine wasn't Monsoon, it was a cheap version, and I was always worried that it was so static, and would get stuck in the tube doors.

I think I had the dark blue version of that, because we had the Monsoon outlet shop.

I kinda love that top.

My mum has skirts like that.

My version is a bit longer.

Mine are longer with an elastic waist.

I would say that was 2012, around that time.

So this is 2003.

2003! The photos look quite professional.

Of all the trends, I feel like that is one that has never gone away.

I'm surprised that that's so young, within the projects because that doesn't look like student photo shoots of the time.

Yeah, no, but I think it would be because of all the other photo shoots, I think it's probably the most like classically obvious. Yeah, I feel like a student now we think that wasn't clever enough.

I think it's a nice top, maybe with a different coloured bra underneath.



So this is the last trend garment, this is from Zara.

I kind of remember Zara doing that actually.

I don't like how they have styled it, I would wear it without the belt.

I wouldn't wear it with the belt either.

I would say 2009.

I think 2002.

This is 2008/2009.

Vintage is harder thought, right? Because it's not trying to reference necessarily the trend. Like, I can tell you what they're trying to reference in the vintage. But it is harder telling which version of that vintage reproduction this is.

They have definitely cut her out on paint, it's all jagged in between her legs.

Q7

'We now live in a world where fashion is faster than ever, as lead times shorten, and the process of renewal of styles in the high street happens at an ever increasing rate.'

(Woodward, 2009:93)

By looking at how styles change over time, do you think this challenges the use of the term 'fast fashion?'

It's the subtle things isn't it? Like, there's a lot of it where we were like we would wear it if it wasn't for these bits and this bit and that. Yeah. Whereas like some of them, like parts of it would work today.

The subtle differences mean that most of these outfits are not trendy now?

Yeah.

If you saw anybody wearing any of those things out in the street now, you wouldn't think oh, that's very 2003, 2004. Everybody would still look pretty normal in those things. Yeah, yeah. So I just think fast fashion is more ingrained in just habits, spending habits. That are now ingrained in society.

But what we have established is the chiffon-est pleated skirt has been for the past 20 years, and it's not going anywhere.

I think that for me fast fashion should refer more to the way that the company's doing business than to the garments themselves. So with particularly, as 'fashion gets faster' in inverted commas, you've got online retailers like boohoo doing 3000 styles a week, I read the other day. Like, even with the fashion map, which has a huge amount of garments, you're capturing kind of the same number each year. It might be showing things changing and the trends, but what it's not showing is like the sheer quantity of other stuff that's being produced.

I think a lot of it depends. It definitely depends what type of person you are. There's some things I think God you know, have had these a lot of years, but I used to wear them with heels, and now I would wear them with trainers, flat sandals, maybe a T shirt, whereas before I wouldn't wear those particular trousers with a blouse or a jacket.

On a side note, I would also say that children's clothing has become more fast.

I read something recently that it's like this 35 million pounds worth of unworn clothes just in the UK people's wardrobes. Now, if you're thinking about fast fashion, people aren't going back into their wardrobes, they're going back to the shops. So I think the 'fast' bit definitely applies to a kind of mindset, for some. For others, I think it's more about the quantity and the quantity in which things are produced.

I suppose the question I have is, if we were looking at a load of not fast fashion, and we had it spread across a similar number of years, apart from maybe like very specific observations about the very cheap polyester... They were operating under very similar trends. They were also doing different cuts of trousers. They were also you know what I mean? So I don't know if fast fashion has got anything to do with, I think fashion is its own. Like I think fast as you guys mentioned refers more to like the business practice.

The people that like shopping in designer shops are still wanting to like fit in with those trends, so they're still gonna have to move at the same speed. They just got more money to spend than someone that's maybe shopping at Topshop. It's still about quantity.

That's what I was trying to say, like, I don't think would be any different if I was looking at the wardrobe of somebody who had budget much higher than this.

What is the other option? That's a good point. Like, if you're not shopping fast fashion, like, are you going to like a tailors and getting stuff made for you? Is that the only other option like because everyone fits in with the same model? It's how they make money. Yeah, design is also following trends. Yeah. And often design that stuff's made at the same factories as

Yeah, like Paul Smith and Topshop making the same factories, they just put different buttons on.

Yeah want you to buy something else. They don't want you to buy it and keep it and then not go back. They want it to like not last or the trend to change so that you go back and you buy something new next season.

I feel like when people refer to as fashion and whenever they're talking about fast fashion, they're always talking about the cheaper brands.

I think when you talk about fast fashion, I it's more about the movement of information which is become really fast. I remember buying Elle collections, which was like a magazine of every single catwalk, it was like a bible. But now you can watch, anyone can watch, the Chanel couture show an hour after it's finished, sometimes live. So that information is already out there. It's practically already on the high street. So as soon as that's released, the design idea becomes old, because it has already been accessed. So I think for me the word fast is really to do with this kind of like, the accessibility of fashion and how actually, it's no longer exclusive.

It's the same with everything, though, isn't it we live our lifestyles faster, you've got more access to information because of the internet. And like we have, we do like hobbies and like, things come in and out faster. And like, it's not just a clothes, it's part of the way we live. No one has free time, we run around and then like, and you've got everything there at your disposal. But like, you could go onto the internet and be like, oh, what do people wear in the 80s? And you can see it. People wouldn't have been able to do that, like in the 80s however many years back.

(Some additional discussion around the customer feedback loop becoming faster, feedback becomes lost, and quality decreases).

Which fashion brands have you had experience with poor quality?

If you did have an experience with poor quality, why was this, and what happened?

I bought off Boohoo that one time, the leggings were very very thin. I was looking for a very specific something, and Boohoo had it so I bought it and I was like, 'You lied, you lied to me,' and I sent it back. I've bought off it like twice and then returned. I always said no more buying

from boohoo, also because their clothes don't fit my body shape. Because I don't know how to shop for my own body shape.

I bought one thing from boohoo once and it was like just completely see through and that's really horrible jersey that like clings to every bit of your body. I was like, okay, this is not for me.

Yeah. Although one of my T shirt dresses you know my little buddy she bought from boohoo it was a like a tent on her, but she couldn't be bothered to return it she gave it to me, I wear it all the time. I'll take free clothes!

I bought a shirt off ASOS recently from collusion. And the first time I wore it it was really fine sleeve and the sleeve cuff detail just pulled because the fabric was not a nice fine fabric. I didn't bother returning it because I had only worn it once, but I was like can't really be bothered for this go to landfill. So the choice is that I wear it and I could just sew it up myself, or I send this back to ASOS and they would just incinerate it.

I never considered that before because I bought a jumper off ASOS many many moons ago, and it's shed everywhere. Like you are itchy and you shed everywhere and I'd worn out and I was like I regret everything about this top. And I just returned it, I was like yes, I don't want it. So I did.

Yeah. I think if you're not going to where it's different. With mine, I was like, I like the shirt, and they will just send me another one of this shirt. Yeah, I roll the sleeves anyway. It's like a massive oversized kind of meant to be slouching, it doesn't really matter.

I feel like there are certain fibres that are so standardised that it's not likely that you are going to get really poor quality with them. So its like you're saying you've had bad leggings but like something that's a T shirt or Jersey is fine because that's really quiet like, 'we've got that down.'

Well they're not they won't if I'd had a smaller but yeah, probably would have been fine but I don't so it was not.

But I mean like I think that's why the cheaper retailers like the Primark or the Boohoo's jersey they can do fine because it's it's jersey and cotton is cheap and it should be like a cotton t shirt. They can do those things fine but I think it's just the other stuff probably like a fine woven, that's not quite so easy to produce.

Yeah probably why my boohoo baggy t shirts fine. Yeah.

And also if something's baggy, it doesn't get the same wear on it as shirts oversized but it's on the sleeves, which is a point of like wear leggings support, which is a point of Yeah. I think sometimes it's to do with not fit modelling things properly, and just going straight to production. Yeah.

Okay, would you be willing to pay a premium for sustainably produced fashion?

Probably, yeah.

If I believed it actually was sustainably produced.

I will buy things. Like I'll buy Levi's because, yeah, I trust them more. And they're trying to be more sustainable. And so I like Lucy and Yak. Yeah, I'll buy their recycled fleecy top, because that thing is wonderful.

Personally, like I guess for me that's m&s. They still produce way too much clothing, but I know that they do try. And so I am more likely to buy basics from from m&s, because I'm just like, they try. Yeah, have a good go.

I'm also happy to buy if it's like, like you said, Levi's jeans. I will buy. I'm happy to buy more expensive jeans because I'm like, I know. I will wear these. Yeah, until they are dead. I know that if I find more expensive jeans, they're gonna end up fitting my body better. If I buy the cheap, like, I've bought enough cheap ASOS jeans. They are like 20 quid, and they last two weeks like, I've started wearing Boden jeans.

Yeah. I think it's also an age thing, though, because I feel like I've outgrown certain qualities.

These don't feel that different to the ASOS jeans I used to buy though. Like they're just slim leg, there are a similar fit. And the fabric feels similar, but I think they wear better.

Better quality?

Well, I always get like the thigh, that's where my jeans go. And I've had these since the middle of the lockdown, and I've only had two pairs of jeans, I've worn them a lot. And these have shown no signs of wear on the thighs, whereas the ASOS jeans I was buying them every three months at one point. I only really have one pair at a time.

These jeans weirdly I have had for a really long time. They have lasted really well, and I didn't think they would cuz they're very thin.

Where were they from?

I think I bought them off ASOS, but they're that Bershka brand or whatever. But I like them. Because they're very stretchy. And I can squat.

Or like, no joke about oversized black dresses, but if it's gonna be something that's like, going to keep fitting me. Keep looking good. And something I can wear, like work and out. And then I'm happy to pay more. But I'm still a bit reluctant to buy basics sustainable, which I know is not ideal.

I think it's because it's also because I'm just so suspicious of brands that are like 'and we're sustainable.' And like, so But where? How far back? Is that money going? So you're saying X amount more? How far back? Is that going?

Also, Primark have one line of sustainable jeans with sustainably sourced cotton. So very specifically one part of the process. I've done quite a bit of research. They're sold as sustainable jeans. If that is sustainable, inherently, everything else that they do is unsustainable. So like, although it's nice that they're doing it. It's not an answer to the problem.

They aren't doing enough?

Yeah, yeah. And yeah, that wouldn't make me want to shop at Primark and spend a bit more. Like I think sustainable brand is more important to me than one single products because I think it's also about the cohesive way you're affecting fashion and the industry.

Yeah. Because like I used to really like h&m, and they were very early about their, like, conscious collection. But just the sheer volume of clothing that they produce means that no matter what they do, they'd have to reduce what they make by a significant amount.

Have you ever used the apps depop or vinted to buy second hand fashion?

Yeah, I have sold on depop.

Yeah, but unfortunately I had to return it because it didn't fit.

So I buy quite a lot of stuff from charity shops, and I went on Depop, and I really didn't like it for my body size. Because a lot of the plus size clothing, the larger size clothing, is modelled by really thin people, and sold as oversized. And if you're looking at like a really nice vintage blouse, but you're seeing it on a size eight, when you're 16 you're like, that top would not fit me in that way. And it just yeah, I found it a bit disheartening. And I also think it's really expensive. I think as someone who's always shopped in charity shops, it was I was really shocked at the price that they could sell secondhand clothing, and like relatively cheap

secondhand clothing was not like there were like online retailers that resell like branded fashion. And I can see that being expensive still, but like you're reselling something from h&m almost full price.

Yeah, yeah, yeah. No. So basically I bought Lucy and Yak before they had their imperfect Yaks on their website. They stole a lot of that on Deepop. And that is what I bought because it was a real store that I trusted. I thought that I would be able to return if it doesn't fit me.

I'm similar. I think buying on these apps, there is a size problem. Also just trawling pages and pages and pages of clothing, often I'm actually not interested in. I'd rather go into like a charity shop, see if they've got it, if they haven't, that's fine. If I really need a specific item, I tend to go new, I guess.

Which items of clothing? Have you owned the longest in your wardrobes? And why?

Oh, I just did a big cull of things that that don't fit me anymore. And I went I don't want you, make me sad.

Did you get rid of some of your oldest?

Yes, a lot of it my mum packs it up, and takes it to India. And so that happened December 2019, just before was for all hell broke loose mum took a range of stuff. Or actually weirdly, we give a lot of clothes to just people that at mosque, people that are younger than me, say if I've got a really nice, like, say Indian outfit. That will not fit me because I'm not 12. Pass it on, it's a good way to do it.

Um, I've put on too much weight to have really old things. But I do the same thing. My mom takes everything to South Africa. So I've just got a whole load of things.

Because it's normally not worn, like is not worn out.

Do you hold on to anything old, even if it doesn't fit you? But hold on to anything for emotional reasons? Like are you attached to anything?

Yeah. Like, I have a t-shirt from the Philippines that has this guy did a doodle of all of us, and then turned into a t-shirt, so I have that. I was volunteering with a group, and there for 3 months. I really enjoyed that time, so have kept it for sentimental reasons. My really old school jumper, my mum and dad won't let me get rid of it. It's got people's names on it, so it stays at their house. So yeah, stuff like that.

I've got a jumper that was my mom's in the late 80s. I have a photo of her with me as a baby, that I regularly wear. It's roll neck, bat wing sleeves and it's got these like 80s skiers on it. And when she had it was like a puff print, but they've washed and washed down. And I've done a couple of visible men's because the fabrics, like completely gone. So I've got a few things that were my mom's, I've got like a Victorian cape that apparently she tried to give it to me when I was a teenage goth, and I was like, why would I want that? And then I found it years later and was like, what's this? Yeah, and it's got like silver filigree work on the collar. But that stays in a zip locked bag. I've got a few kind of old things that were my mums. And some of them I've worn, like that cape I've worn to partys. But I wouldn't wear it in the daytime, it's so heavy as well because it's proper old crushed velvet.

I just realised I totally lied, I've got loads of my dads old jumpers. Yeah there are years where my dad buys, he has a lot of clothes, he likes clothes. He doesn't really wear anything other than either tracksuit bottoms or a suit.

Do you keep hold of them because they were your dads?

Yeah they're very comfortable and I will wear them. Yeah, this is really big Nike is yellow. And I wear it around the house. It's basically like wearing a blanket, and I wear it most evenings.

I don't get that emotionally attached to clothes. I have recently taken out an apron that was my grandma's, and I'll use that but other than that, no nothing. I don't keep things that are clothes.

This might be a bit of an aside, because it's not really Western clothing, but mum last time she went to India took a bunch of old saris from like her early days of marriage and stuff she turned them all into outfits. She's done a lot that with be re-purposing clothes it's quite nice. Gowns were the fashion when she went, so they're all basically like dresses.

Do you take any steps to maintain look after or preserve your clothes? (You've already mentioned how you keep your cape in a special zipped up bag).

Yeah, also I visibly meant a lot. I've just got for the first time my partner's asked me to visibly mend something of his, and I was really excited. Because usually if I try to like, start to darn his socks, and he's like, it's really weird. It's really weird that you're doing that and I'm like, I just want this thing to be wearable again. Yeah, but he finds it like very bizarre that I'm doing this kind of like he almost see it as like subservient and like being domestic and like he's like, why would you do that for me? I'm like it's not for you. It's because I don't want to put the socks in the bin. Yeah, I also try not to wash jeans very much.

Would you guys wash jeans inside out?

I just try not to wash them because I'm gross. That and I try not to wash my jumpers, so always wear a T shirt underneath and wash that instead.

When you do need to was your jeans, would you turn them inside out? Would you just put them in the washing machine?

I read the label, just do what the label says.

I've got I was speaking yesterday about I've got one very expensive pair of jeans that are raw denim, the company does a no wash club, and they don't fit now but when they fit, like I would have only cold wash them in cold water and then hand dry. Because they have this kind of culture attached to it and like part of what you're buying into with that brand is like this no wash kind of heritage denim brand. I think it's called Hiut, they are based in Wales.

No, I never. I am quite lazy washer and I will give things away because they're dry clean. Like I'm not interested in high maintenance. I try and look after my things because I want to keep them longer. I won't own anything that needs extra steps. But I will like bubble things off jumpers.

Would you clean/shine your shoes?

Yeah.

Yeah.

I only clean my walking boots. My walking boots I look after really, well my like casual shoes I'm not that bothered.

These trainers have been washed, and they're on their last legs but like if you wash them they look a bit better.

Do you whack them in the washing machine?

It depends on the shoe.

Lately, the only issues I have really cleaned are Oli's walking shoes and my wellies, because it was very muddy, and they needed bashing out and stuff. And my Timberlands, because I've got something on them, and thought that they needed cleaning. Disgusting.

I washed my white trainers, they are that kind of vintage style Pumas, and the black leather leaked onto the white. They looked worse than when they went in.

Did you wash them in the washing machine?

It was the fabric bit that needed cleaning. The leather was clean it was just that they put like a little window on the front that's fabric.

See in South Africa. It's here people have dirty trainers and it's fine. In South Africa the ground is dirtier, and people love having clean trainers. And there's just a big tradition like I grew up washing trainers, but by hand you get like a scrubbing brush. Yeah, get a little tub. Yeah, get some soapy water and you scrub it. And it washes fabric quite well like that.

because my mum has in the past her hand washed my trainers for me, when she wouldn't buy me another pair. I remember when I was a youth.

I'm always a bit scared of putting them in a washing machine.

Yeah, I don't recommend it because I have shrunk shoes during that.

If you had something say like a button fall off a shirt, it would you sew it back on?

Yeah

Yeah, I'll get my mum to do it.

I've got a pile of stuff, like a mending pile, when I do the washing I'll take out all the socks or the things that, that need mending.

Final question is do you regret throwing anything away from your wardrobe, which has now come back into fashion? or giving anything away, and you wish you hadn't?

The reason I've given stuff away is because it doesn't fit? And I've gone no more, I can't have these aspiration clothes in my wardrobe. Get out. Therefore I don't regret because there were clothes that didn't fit and they won't fit again.

I have clothes I wish I still fit into that I've had to let go. I had a couple of toast dresses, that I loved. I was like it's tough, but they don't fit. Yeah, they need to go, and new clothes will come to my life, that fit me.

Andy has just like, charity shopped like half of his clothes because he's got this wild amount of clothes from when his weights fluctuated. Yeah. I'm always like, you need to get rid of these because, they're making you sad.

Yeah I think men don't get it quite as much.

Do you regret throwing anything away?

I think I've had too many clothes to remember specific things I've had, I don't know I find the processes of throwing clothes away a very emotional process. And like, I do it quite a lot. Because otherwise, I know that I would hoard things forever. And yeah, I've got quite a lot of like, weird clothes where I'm like, you're very strange. I probably will never wear you. But I love you. My dad a few Christmases ago randomly bought me like a Western shirt, its black with hot pink Western detailing. And it doesn't fit at the moment but I'm like there's no way that's been thrown away, because it's ridiculous. But if I had thrown it away, I don't think it would pop up in my head. Again, like usually I'm done with my clothes. I don't think that that's trend related. It might be subconsciously. But I think it's, it feels more to me like a process of personal growth. Not to sound cliché.

Sometimes you just wear thing loads, and I feel like I wore you too much for too long. And then it goes to my sister. And then I see it and I go, I miss you. And then I go, sister, give it back.

This is a good way to do it. To give clothes to someone that you know.

If you look through my sisters wardrobe, there are a lot of my clothes.

One thing I like really regret is when I was I think I was like, maybe 14 or 15. And my mom was having a clear out. And she had this like, leather jacket from the 80s. And she was like asked me if I wanted it, when I was like 14, I was like, Oh, no, I do not want that. That's not cool. We gave it to a charity shop. A few years later, I was like, Mom, have you still got that leather jacket, she was like, No, you didn't want it. 14 year old me didn't understand how beautiful it was. Even now I think about it, wonder who bought that.

Appendix 6 – Wardrobe Study Interview Log

| | Male | Interview Date | Female | Interview Date |
|--------------------|---------|----------------|---------|----------------|
| Student | Eliott | 02.11.21 | Monique | 09.03.21 |
| | Owen | 02.11.21 | Elle | 15.03.21 |
| | Harvey | 02.11.21 | Bao | 15.03.21 |
| | Jacob | 01.11.21 | Mary | 10.03.21 |
| | Noah | 29.10.21 | Shauna | 16.03.21 |
| | Jake | 02.11.21 | Chen | 30.03.21 |
| Young Adult | Matthew | 09.10.21 | Viv | 13.10.21 |
| | Will | 05.11.21 | Ivy | 23.09.21 |
| | Charles | 23.09.21 | Kelsey | 26.08.21 |
| | Liam | 13.10.21 | Zelda | 31.08.21 |
| | Theo | 23.09.21 | | |
| | Otto | 31.08.21 | | |

Participants who have been interviewed more than once throughout focus groups and wardrobe studies are highlighted in red.

(Appendices 7 and 8 will detail one male and one female wardrobe study transcribe)

Appendix 7 – Male Wardrobe Study Transcribe

Liam – 13.10.21

How would you define your go to every day style items?

That's quite hard because if I dress very differently, depending on what I'm doing, I guess. I mean, it's really easy. Because I can go through here and pick something straight out. Because my sport and interest really do just sort of define it so straight to like a Red Bull top or something like that would be nice and easy for me. Yeah, if it's really casual, then sports wear is tends to be what I go to. Mainly f1 because that's my sort of thing. And my wardrobe is full of f1 tops. Yeah.

Ok, f1, sporty style. And then for work, what do you normally wear for work?

Something like this just a nice rugby style, old rugby style shirt. This is from well actually, I bought it on Vinted, but its from Marks and Spencer.

How often do you buy new items of clothes on average?

Every month I would say

Every month?

yeah buy something new every month but then rotate some things straight out. So yeah.

Okay. And what do you think of your own consumption of clothes? Do you think that you buy a lot? not that much? somewhere in the middle?

Probably somewhere in the middle, looking at it. I quite like going round white rose in town, looking on Vinted, and using stuff like that. But yeah, normally it's whenever there's a sale or a deal, I don't really buy a lot of things at full price. Like this formula one stuff I will buy maybe two shirts at the start of the season, that are full price. But then after that I'll wait for a sale towards the end of the season when they get rid of their stock.

What are some of your favourite brands?

Yeah, I like Hackett, I like Joules, I like fat face. I used to really like Burton but they've gone now, and towards the end, their quality went. Yeah, so I think joules, hacket and fat face are up there for me.

Okay. Do you buy them direct from the brands? Or do you buy them secondhand via vinted?

A lot of secondhand. But, again, it just depends if they're doing a sale, then happily. So yeah, I don't like paying too much, that's the thing really. So like with a standard formula one shirt would be about 50/60 quid depending, same with a football shirt. I've got a few football shirts. But other than that, everything else is bought sort of on the cheap to sort of balance it out. I mean, this was six quid from vinted. So again, it all just goes on the sale. I don't really see the point of buying something extremely expensive. When I'm not going to wear that much, especially with COVID over the last year.

Are there any impulse purchases within your wardrobe?

Yeah, actually, yesterday. Yeah, we was at Donington Park for the Touring Cars. And again, just an f1 hoodie that I saw missed out on when it was on sale. And then saw it there. So I was like, Well, I'm gonna get that now. Yeah, yeah. So a lot of the time when I buy stuff, I feel like it's quite impulsive. There have been things in the past where I've kept checking on it to wait wait for it to come on the sale. But a lot of it is just, oh, okay. I'll go in like that. Let's take it.



And are there any impulse purchases within your wardrobe that you regret buying?

I mean, there might be one. Oh, actually, yeah, I do regret buying that. This is from Burton. I walked in and saw it was like, eight nine quid. Thought it looked quite nice at the time, and now I look at it and I think, maybe not so nice. So it's not something that I would tend to wear. But I actually did wear it for work for quite a bit because it was just a little bit different. But yeah, I don't really wear it anymore.

Okay. Um, why? Why have you kept hold of that? Do you think you'll get rid of it?

I use it now just as something to knock around in. The other weekend we were decorating and so I wore that, you know, it's just there as a as an everyday pyjama top if anything really?

And which items of clothing Have you owned the longest? And why?

So this shirt is from United colours of Benetton. It was from Tenerife, where we holiday a lot. I bought it probably about 10 years ago, it still looks brand new, pretty much doesn't fit at the moment, but I'm not going to chuck it away. We went to the shop to buy it. I tried it on. And when my nan was alive, we went in, and she was like, I'm gonna buy it for you. She handed over 20 euro note, and the cachier gave her a change for 50. So they actually paid us for it! But yeah, so it's got good memories, I'd never want to throw away, and I do want to fit back into it. And then similar story as well from Tenerife, it's just a really old tillery football shirt from 2008/2009. It's very slightly cream, but I still wear it occasionally to play football. And so yeah, that one's quite a nice one.



So with both of those, you have quite happy memories?

Yeah, definitely. And other than that, it's all I don't want to say it's all fairly new. Because, I mean, I've put a little bit of weight on during lockdown. So some stuff is quite new. But yeah, certain things just stayed.

Would you say those two particular items? Would you say you're attached to them?

Definitely. Yeah.

Okay, um, next question is about jeans. Yeah. How many pairs of jeans Do you own?

And I think there's, I think I have five pairs. I have two pairs for work, which are both black because that's our dress code. And the other ones are just a range of blue.

I think I might have asked this question in the focus group, but do you do anything in particular to preserve your denim?

No, not really no. I mean, being quite big at the minute, I go through lot of jeans quite quickly, because they just wear out quite quickly. But again, I don't really pay a lot. It's another thing that I wait for a sale for. Every year Marks and Spencers do a sale. So I mean the jeans I'm wearing now, I got to have the exact same pairs just for work for like 20 quid, so yeah, and i know i'm going to go through them in about a year, year and a half, so I wait for the right time really.

Yes. Do you have any nostalgic memories associated with any of your jeans?

Not really. No, they don't last long enough for that. I don't think I did have a an old pair that I picked up from white rose. And I had them for quite a while, but then they just worn out. But yeah, they have nostalgic memories, but I had to get rid of them because it was ruined.

Okay. And was there any other items in your wardrobe, I guess aside from what you've already talked about, which evoke particular kind of nostalgic memories?

So this long sleeve top again, it's a it's got a little bit of Formula One branding on but I picked this up, when I went to Barcelona to the testing. And it was the second time I went with my uncle's father in law and his mates so a 68 and a 72 year old me at 23 in Barcelona was quite fun. Yeah, probably that. And then I have another top somewhere here. Yeah, this one. This one's a lot more recent. So this is from klinische distillery in Scotland. Oh, yeah. We went over the summer. And I picked that up from there. We did a tour and it was just like, yeah, so you know, it's nice to wear and remember how fun that was with my grandad, my fiance.

Do you have any items of clothing in your wardrobe? Which I guess you could describe as like an accidental classic. So I kind of mean something that maybe it was fast fashion, maybe it was quite cheap. But it's lasted longer than you thought it would? Kind of style wise or durability wise?

I mean, any of my sort of Ruby style tops I've had for quite a while now they seem to last forever. So yeah, I'd probably go like like this. I've got a few others in different colours and whatnot. They're just nice and easy to wear for work, and I've had them for years.

Are they a long sleeve?

Yeah, they're all long sleeves. Yeah. When it comes to these only wear long sleeves and like a shirt only like a long sleeve shirt, but I always roll the sleeves up. I don't know why I bother?

Yeah. Okay. And they all wash quite well?

Yeah. Yeah, really easy. Yeah. Okay, a lot of Marks and Spencers clothes that I've got wash really well and really easy to take care of.

So, in your wardrobe, would you say that you have a lot of clothing which is unused? Or would you say that you kind of wear and use most of it.

I would say I've got a lot of unused but mainly the football shirts. Because I am a fan of an obscure football team. It's Tenerife again, linked back to my childhood. I have a lot of football shirts that I don't use because I've just bought them all, and I slowly make my way through them. This one is used quite regularly but they all have like the name on the back and the right sponsoring. So yeah, a lot of these are unused a lot of the time because you can only wear one each match. But yeah, I try and sort of cycle through them at least once a year.



And do you wear them to football matches in Tenerife?

Yeah, definitely. Whenever we've been out we've gone to a match. I always take at least two shirts, and then I'll wear one and then my granddad will borrow one. So we all we sort of fit in. So yeah, definitely.

Okay again, you might have answered this in the focus group, but would you be prepared to pay a premium for something, if it says it has been sustainably produced?

Yes, and no, it sort of depends how much it would cost. And I like to think that whatever I buy will last a long time, though. So like my football shirts, they, I mean, sort of them go back to, like the early 2000s. Some of them are you know, quite recent. But, yeah, whatever I buy I know it's got to last a long time.

Yes, yeah. So you wouldn't necessarily go for the cheapest thing. You pay for something that she's maybe more you'd think it'd be more durable and last longer?

Yeah.

Okay. Um, how many? This is just a random question, how many Tenerife football shirts do you have?

I have not counted. But if I've got three a season, well just say from the last 10 years, there's 30. And the one thing I always do, so they always do a pink shirt. So this one's quite low key on the pink, but the new one, is pink. This is a pink one. And all the profits from this shirt. The pink third shirt goes to cancer research, which I always brought anyway, because I like bright colours and football shirts. It means a lot more now because my nan passed away earlier this year of cancer. So it's like, I going forward every year. That's the one shirt that I would, you know, invest in. And again, you know, it's always got to have the surname and the number on the back. Yes. Yeah, that's my that's my one go to football shirts.

Okay, can what is the team called, Tenerife?

Yeah. So it's called CD Tenerife, and they're in the second league. And we might get promoted this season if we carry on playing well. So but yeah, I've been to see quite a few teams there. Hopefully, I want to see FC Barcelona and play there one day, but that's quite hard. It is a championship equivalent. Forest was the first football stadium I ever went to. And then the next was Tenerife, and I fell in love with Tenerife. Not only as a child, was it more fun because if we're winning at halftime, you get a free Cornetto, but ah you know it's always sunshine.

So cool! Okay. I've just got a couple more questions. Is there anything in your wardrobe which is from a sustainable brand or has been made sustainably?

I'm not that I'm 100% aware I feel I think fatface advertises itself quite sustainable. And I've got quite a few of their stuff. They tend to make stuff that last for ages so I like to occasionally go in especially when they're again having a sale on Yeah, it's a quite an expensive brand. So at least for me, so yeah. The fatface stuff probably after that. There's not that much in there. That is probably like advertising itself as sustainable.

Okay, and next question is kind of about High Street, online shopping. Um, would you say you shop I know during COVID there was a period when you couldn't you know, actually could not get to shops. What would you say kind of post COVID do you shop more on the high street or online

I think it's a very 50/50 mix. I prefer to go in and try something on because it saves a lot of time and faff, but it is very convenient just to sit at home and be like oh I know and that size in that brand. I mean like for shoes, everything I seem to be a size 11 but for vans I'm a size 12 and it's just very strange, but I'm quite confident I can order a pair of docks tomorrow in an 11 and then come in they fit perfect.

Yeah, you'd say it was probably a 50/50 split between going into a shop, and buying online?

Probably from brands I trust. Yeah, and I've worn a lot. I know my size. Exactly. But like, certain brands, I wouldn't, and I would prefer to try it on.

This is the last question. My study is gendered focused. I can see on the consent for that you have identified as a male. Would you ever/ do you have any clothes which are from the female section?

Urm I did, it was a weird fish jumper. So I brought it and it was actually by accident, but it's not this one, but it was basically this but in blue. And it had pockets Yeah. And then I bought it, wore it for a few years and then realised actually, it was for a female I didn't ever realise I looked in the back and it said it always had a size 18 and I was like Oh okay, and again because it was unisex no one noticed. I'm not you know I'm not scared of wearing anything a little bit different so, and then once Kara my fiance realised that it was womens she stole it and I've not seen it since (laughs). But yeah. So yeah, I've had that i don't know i don't think there's anything else but jumpers and stuff are quite unisex anyway. I think the same sort of this day and age and football shirts. They're quite, you know, worn by either agenda. So yeah. I've never knowingly purchase something I think that was from the female section. But I have had, yeah, the other genders sizing.

Right. That's great. Thank you very much.

Appendix 8 – Female Wardrobe Study Transcribe

Viv – 13.10.21

How would you define your go to everyday style items?

How would I define them? And I'm just gonna say words if that's okay? I would say the first one is comfort. Colour, and also I'd say personality wise, I guess that comes out naturally? comfort, colour... and maybe dependent on the season, I would say.

How often do you buy new items of clothing?

oh it's not like there's not a set time, I would say approximately once a month, on average, once a month.

okay and what do you think your own consumption of clothes would you say you buy a lot? would you say you think you're buying not that much? I kind of what you think about what you consume?

Yeah, well I'm glad we're having this conversation now because I've actually been thinking about it loads recently and I'm proud, more proud of myself. I used to be horrific and I buy all the time like fast fashion. And I actually thought about this question just to myself, or whatever. I don't buy much at all now which I'm actually really proud about because I'm more aware of it now, and how bad it is. So not a lot at all. I'm glad that I don't, I try to do it sustainably so secondhand or from the better companies. So I forgot the question, but not not Did you say not? What was the question?

What do you think of your own consumption?

Oh, yeah, I'm more proud of it because it's not very much it's, it used to be a lot worse. It's not much at all. Now I try and do it less, but also more sustainably sourced secondhand.

When you do buy, I guess it's secondhand or new? Doesn't matter. But what are some favourite brands?

So the first thing that springs to mind would just be I like vintage secondhand so that's probably my favourite and so obviously it's not a brand as such but when I buy something from a charity shop and knowing that it's secondhand and it's old so something that has been yet that is old and that's been used before that's probably my number one. I think I get more excited by that because it's a one off it's a rare find and you know that somebody else has had it before that's not brand as such but then I guess linked on to that. I can think of like an old vintage brand would be St. Michael which is you know, old Marks and Spencers, St.

Michael. But then after that an actual like, current brand. Oh, just looking at the stuff definitely I just immediately say charity shop secondhand current brand. Oh my god, I'm looking at my stuff. Unfortunately, think thinking about what I like and what I can afford. I would say Zara is one and then I like designer brands, so I'll tell you these brands. I like one called Paloma wool, which is p a l o m a and then the word wool. And then I also like the brand called Regina po. I love to spell it for you. I think it's r e j y i n a and then p y o. But those last two, I'd say they're my favourite brands. But I don't own anything from them because I can't afford it. So I take inspiration from them?

They are aspirational?

Yeah, so style wise, I try and copy it with my cheaper clothes.

Okay. Okay, how did you find out about how do you know about those brands?

Um, probably just from having an interest in fashion and art. So Paloma wool is like an arty fashion house. It's like fine art crossed over with fashion. And then the other one is a like designer, designer, one in London. So it's just from other brands that I follow. I follow these brands from magazines and on Instagram, I like all of their promotions to their clothes, but I actually don't own any of it myself.

Um, are there any impulse purchases within your wardrobe?

Oh, I would say yes, definitely. But they are in my wardrobe, yes, but I wouldn't do it now. I think about it more now. So yes, I'll have impulse purchases in my wardrobe, but I wouldn't do it now.

Do you have like an example of something that was an impulse purchase and why you bought it?

So I went to a sample sale of a designer brand in Brighton and so it is an impulse buy. I'd never normally spend this amount of money. So it's definitely an impulse buy. But it's because it's an really really ethical brand. And like once I own it, like I'll keep it forever because the because of the price of it. And my boyfriend said to me, I'll buy it for your birthday if you want. So it's a crazy tie dye, oversized dress and this brand Rose is called Story Mfg. I'll show you the label...



just so cool!

This is definitely impulse because I was umming and arring, as in I went to the sale hoping to get a cardigan. That was my plan to get a cardigan, and there wasn't any and I seen these like amazing like fairy like dresses and was like, oh my god I'm getting a dress but also felt sick at paying it was 100 pounds and I felt sick paying it but so that was definitely an impulse. These are like the most ethical brand that I know stupidly priced, but it's because they pay their workers properly and it's all like naturally dyed they use natural dyes. I say that's my crazy dress and that was 100 pounds. So that's my impulse buy Yes.

Okay, have you worn it yet?

I have, I wore it once, I did plan to wear it for my birthday but didn't go out. We had a friend's like couples holidays in a cottage and we had a fancy dressing night and I wore that. So it will be like a special occasion one but also you can dress it down as well. Like layer jumper over.

Love it. Okay, are there any impulse purchases in your wardrobe which you regret buying?

I'm gonna say yes just because I know what I'm like and that would definitely be something but I might have got rid of them though saying that. So the answer would initially be yes. But then if there is, I then always get rid of them. Not bin, I will sell them so because of that I guess my answers changed. Yeah, so I've I have impulse bought stuff and regretted it. But because of that I don't have them anymore.

Yeah, that makes sense.

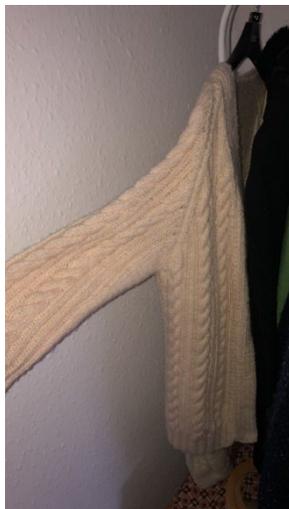
So there's nothing I can actually show you and say I regret buying this because I will have already sold it.

And what items of clothing have you owned the longest? And why?

I probably would say that would be the sentimental ones. I've got some of my Nana's old cardigans. Can you see on Oh, actually, that might be my great Auntie's cardigan like a knitted just a knitted cardigan. And my Nanas aran knit cardigans. Those two, because if they weren't sentimental, then I'd have probably got rid of them by now. That's why they're the longest because I know whose they were. I won't ever get rid of them.

And you'd say you're attached to those items?

Yeah, sentimentally.



Next question is about jeans. How many pairs of jeans, do you own?

Oh, that's a good question. Too many. Too many. And again, that's something I think about, I think because I've never found my dream pair. I have too many. So it's gonna be an approximate, I try and count now on my hand. But it's because I've got a handful in London and then still some here. So I'm gonna have a guest there's like there's too many Rose. I'll just have a wild guess. I would say about approximately 12. Okay, no, that's denim. I say let's say lets go 14.

Okay. And do you strive to preserve your denim? Once it's kind of reached an optimal state of aesthetic perfection. So do you do anything to kind of look after it?

I'm glad you asked that because I love this and I wish I had them here to show you but I haven't their in London. I've got a pair. Yes. Basically, I've got a pair of denim Levi jeans which

the bum bit has ripped, I've had them like patched over several times there's like three different sewing patterns all over the bum because I won't get rid of them because their a good pair of jeans. So yeah, if they're good jeans and they are worn, I will take them to Soul and Flare in Nottingham, i'll take them there and get them patched or my Nana will do it for me. So yes I will preserve them rather than get rid, I think that looks like it's more exciting as well.

When you like wash your jeans would you wash them inside out?

Ah that's a good question I don't but should I?

Its something I've always done because I feel like especially dark denim it might fade a bit less?

oh no I don't but I'm gonna start doing that now. Thank you Dr. Rose

(laughs) and are there any nostalgic memories associated with your jeans?

Oh I want to say yes but maybe not only maybe that one pair, nostalgia, that's a nice word. Maybe only what one pair that had been patched because my nan has done a lot on them though maybe it just reminds me of her, but not not as in a memory of... Do you mean somewhere have been maybe in them?

I guess either or really you know?

only I'd say out of all those 14 pairs of jeans that I've got only one because of the work that's been done does a sentimental there's a memory of them. I've had them so long family members and friends of like patch them.

all that you've kind of already mentioned this with your jumpers. But aside from those, and aside from jeans? Are there any other items in your wardrobe which might evoke nostalgic memories?

I'm sorry, because I'm special when you say nostalgic? Does that just mean like a memory?

Yeah, maybe like a happy memory? Maybe even not a happy memory?

Yes, but for me personally, it's the only really nostalgic ones are when it's like sentimental family related so I have some here's an example. I have some like old lady handbags and they were my Nana's so things like that. Yes, bags and scarves, handbags, scarves and cardigans and a dressing gown. Was my great Nan's, so only that. Other sort of modern contemporary clothes that I've got that I've worn to like places and events I don't actually have like I don't

attach the memory to them. Though it's only more stuff that is related to to somebody I've got I've got to show you this I've never shown you I've had it on most of the days well I should have kept it on for this interview. This is why great Nana's dressing gown which is button up, and my mom's like God sake, can't believe you still wear it but I love it it's a proper old lady. With buttons and like a frilly colour.



Like a house coat?

Yes, yes, yes, yes. quilted. Yeah. Only those things I'd say are nostalgia, anything else even if I've worn it to a wedding, I don't really feel nostalgia to them.

Um, do you have any items of clothing in your wardrobe? Which could be described as I guess like an accidental classic. I mean something maybe if she bought as fast fashion so maybe it was cheap. You know, you didn't expect it to last that long. But maybe it's had a good run. It's still going?

I will have, yeah. I'm trying to think it might be a coat. Yeah yeah, I'd say do you need to see them though?

It doesn't matter if you don't have it with you.

I've got coat which unfortunately I don't remember the last time I bought anything from Primark, but I have a green coat. Which I don't necessarily like, but I keep putting it on because it's still weirdly within it's still in fashion now and people do compliment it. So that's an accidental one.

How old is that?

Maybe two years. And I thought it would just be a short seasonal thing. It's a khaki green, knee length khaki green quilted coat, which, at the time I was looking for one and I thought

I'd only like it for a short amount of time but still get complimented on that. And then a blouse a Marks and Spencers white, frilly high neck blouse which I think is an Alexa Chung slash Marks and Spencers one with a friendly neck it's very similar to this it's not this blouse but it's very similar it's this in white basically. I again at the time really wanted it really loved it and thought that will just be something I'll probably because it was a while ago I'd say that's a bet that's nearly three or four years old and I thought that will just be a short trend, but I still wear that now and that's still like fashionable.



Would you say in your wardrobe that you have a lot of clothes which are unused or would you say you use and where most of it?

That's a really easy answer because I'd say I've got a lot to clothes that are unused. Half because I think I have a lot and half because I seem to seem to stick to the same things of like what what you know and I keep sticking to the same thing that I wish I did know how to wear the other ones.

Do you keep 1/2 your clothes in London and 1/2 in Nottingham?

Basically yeah I've just bought back a big bag of summer stuff with me because I don't need the summer stuff there now, bought some stuff back into might take a couple of jumpers back with me this time. but yeah, so I've brought shorts and summer dresses back. I'd say it's probably, actually rose, which is crazy I know. Probably is 60/40 probably got more there.

and a lot of it you don't you don't wear?

even that I'd say I don't wear it at all definitely.

I think you've kind of already answered this question but would you be prepared to pay a premium for a garment which has been sustainably produced?

Yes, so I wouldn't have in the past younger me would have just bought something cheap and I would have thought, why no I can buy it cheaper. But now I do think about it a bit more. And I'm surprised if you told your me that I owned a 100 pound tie dyed dress. And I've also

got a jumpsuit here in front of me which was 120 pounds. I would think that's insane. And I still do I still think that's a lot of money. I appreciate that a lot of money. But then really nice you can't get them everywhere else and it is a really small, sustainable company for both of them.

Where's your jumpsuit from?

I've got two actually there's one here and one over there, its a brand called peachy den so peachy and then D E N. They specifically just do the like tight fitting jumpsuits, very flattering. But they are expensive. That's because it's just one girl's company. And it's in London it's a small business but it's quite sustainable but definitely rose I'd recommend checking out just to have a read a story MFG is very like earthy they have a lot of they have ladies in India making their clothes but they go and visit them and the ladies are really happy and then looked after properly and everything like everything's just done well natural dyes as well so they're a good company to look at.

is there anything else do you have anything else from a sustainable brand that you've not already mentioned?

Peachy den, Story mfg, probably not, no. I've got a couple of designer things but that doesn't mean their sustainable. These two I would say are... yeah so I'll say soal and flare again which is just the Nottingham brand which I've got a shirt/blouse which has been made from old men's shirts from charity shops and they've been cut to the bottom and then but big collar has been added I've got one of those, so that's another sustainable brand much more reasonable than these are the ones I've mentioned just maybe because it is a smaller company. But yeah, I'd probably say what I own sustainability sustainable wise would be peachy den, story mfg and soal and flare i think.

When you do shop for new things, would do you say that go to the high street or you shop online or do both?

It used to be more high street, then a mixture, now I'd just say that I shop online, rose now.

Would you say that since Coronavirus?

yeah yeah more so online. Like 95% done and the 5% the only physical shop shopping that I do when it comes to clothing is charity shops. the last clothes shops I've been in and things I've bought have been charity shops and I don't feel bad about that.

Do you shop vintage online?

Not necessarily I shop in charity shops but then I'll go on depop and vinted but not necessarily looking for vintage stuff... sometimes I do so for example at the minute I want a vintage brown coat. I've just got one in my head a old wool one so I am looking on depop, eBay and vinted for a vintage one. I would only go and look online there and go charity shops specifically for vintage yeah but yeah when you asked about shopping online predominantly when I say online that would be secondhand still.

okay

do you think is there a reason your shopping's like shifted online is it like convenience?

It would firstly be because of the pandemic so just being at home COVID and then convenient and because of where I'm shopping Depop, vintage, e-bay, being more sustainable recycling buying secondhand yes, those those three I would say.

and this is my final question. What gender do you identify as?

Female

Do you ever shop in the male section?

Yeah, I have a lot of men's wear. I have a lot of men's wear and whether it isn't men's wear or unisex. I've got going when you asked me rose what my favourite brands are I think that was a question one that I forgot to mention which is definitely a favourite brand. I only own one of their things I treated myself and again I do the copying thing I will style things similarly but cheap version is a brand called Wales Bonner and I have a top of theirs and it's a men's top it's so it's a collaboration with Adidas and it's like a football top. And that's a men's top. So I will wear unisex things I've noticed more and more actually. If I like something, i'll buy it, it doesn't matter if it's a men's or females. So wondering whether this jumper I've got on now actually might even be a mans.

That's vintage?

Yeah that's from a secondhand shop and I do have a lot of baggy jumpers and baggy t shirts which are probably males but can be unisex. I guess because of my taste I go more to female stuff, but I don't specifically only go to female things I buy mens. I've got a lot of men's shoes actually, I say men's they're probably unisex but their called Novesta's and also the brand in Nottingham called universal works, that's men's wear, but also they don't specifically do females, but it can be unisex. And I went to their opening actually the other week and bought

a little gilet, and I've got an extra small so that's men's. So yeah no I wear men's men's things as well as long as I feel it it looks okay.

So it's kind of like a style thing? if you like the style it's okay?

Yeah, yeah I don't I mean I know there will be people who wouldn't do that but if I like what the garment is and I feel comfortable in it and I like it Yeah, then I will and I will wear it. Yeah, cuz I like sometimes I like the fit of them. They're less slim fitting and straight sometimes I like when it's baggy and round rather than slim fitting.

Thank you!



Appendix 9 – Coding

Consumer behaviour – unused clothing in the wardrobe / accidental classics

Accidental Classics

Ws with male students

Elliott – two or three things – pass me downs from his brother that have lasted a long time. 'norse projects' long sleeve t shirt.

Noah – a t-shirt from Primark – 3 or 4 years old - £7 – its lasted and he still wears it today.

Owen – doesn't buy cheap clothes – 'so I wouldn't say I do.'

James – a Gildan jumper bought off amazon '3 or 4 years ago, for £3 of £4... 'I wear this almost everyday because it's comfy.'

Jacob – a jumper from asos, 'I know it looks dead basic, but I absolutely love this jumper... most of the stuff that I've bought from asos has just deteriorated and died, but this still looks absolutely fine.' The jumper is 4 years old.

Harvey – cargo trousers – bought 4 or 5 years ago from H&M. 'And yeah, they, at the time, I think they were like fairly uncool, like cargo trousers weren't really in fashion. They're a good material, they've lasted a while and now at uni sort of cargo trousers are a lot more in fashion a lot more people wear them with the emergence of brands like Dickies, and Carhartt. A lot of people wear cargo trousers.'

Ws with female students

Elle – a shirt from m&s

Mary - Yes, for sure. For example, the pants that I'm wearing now, I love them. They are black, high waisted, they were an impulse purchase, but they have lasted for so long. People say all the time that they love the pants. So every time I wear it, I think that they were a nice purchase also. They were from like 5 years ago, so I would think that they might be off style, but they are not off style, so I would say that. Okay, are they jeans? No, they are more like trousers. They are a stretchy fabric, but no they are not jeans. From Zara. Most of my wardrobe will be from Zara, for sure.

Shauna - Yes, definitely this top.



It's Atmosphere, which is Primark I think. This top I had, it must have been since before I was a teenager, I'm gonna say 12. I'm not kidding, I've really not grown that much since I was 12 (laughs). Wow, and it's lasted and you still wear it now? Yeah, it is actually something that I regularly wear in the summer. It gets to the summer, and it's a nice stripe, it's got a nice bow detail on the shoulder. It's not really casual, but it's not too fancy, and it's a nice lightweight material, so I love wearing it in summer. I wasn't meant to keep it this long, but I have. As you have washed it over the years, how is the quality? It's exactly the same, it hasn't faded whatsoever, and it's from Primark! The stitching on the bottom of the sleeve, is only like a little bit coming out. It's pretty much looking the same, and it looks like it's never been worn, but I swear that I have worn it most days in the summer. That's really interesting, what is it made of? It fits me better than it did when I was 12 actually, most of my clothes have gone like that. It's 100% polyester.

WS with YA

Theo - I have like some t shirts for next that have lasted me years, just like a nice colour. they are plain, totally plain but quite nice colours. Oh, and this is kinda of like, a sports. T shirt/sweatshirt, that's lasted a long time... Oh, I've got some like FC UK trousers as well that they're like, **combat trousers**, whatever. They're quite nice quite a nice fit, oh they've got a big hole in now. But yeah, but I mean, I wouldn't call it an accidental purchase, I think. I think I was actually looking for combat trousers at the time. But yeah, they've lasted me a lot longer than they probably should have. Yeah.

Kelsey – a black roll neck, ‘my favourite urban outfitters Breton stripe, and also a stripy top from Topshop, ive had these since 2010.’ Both are quite casual, because they are a bit tired, but quality and style wise they have lasted.

Matthew – Egyptian shirt, 20 years old from Trespass. Plain white shirts from Primark, orange raincoat from Primark, £5, bought for a festival, but it has ‘become more of an accidental staple’ – wears every year at Halloween.

Liam – rugby style tops, have had for years, ‘they seem to last forever.’ Mainly from Marks and Spencer.

Viv – a green coat from Primark, two years old, ‘I thought it would just be a short seasonal thing.’ And a M&S Alexa Chung frilly white blouse, three or 4 years old. ‘I thought that would just be a short trend, but I still wear it now and it's still fashionable.’

Will – north face jacket, ‘whether it's forty years old, or four years old, or came out yesterday, it's still going to be cool, even if it's ugly.’ → brand power. A lot of his past fast fashion clothes haven't lasted.

Unused clothing in the wardrobe

Key themes – most participants do have some items of unused clothing. Covid is often mentioned as a key factor here. Participants ‘stick to what they like.’ – comfort in the ordinary/routine?

Ws with male students

Eliot – unused clothing in his wardrobe which was passed down from his brother. Unused t-shirts – tries not to wear his favourite t-shirt that often because ‘I’ve noticed the neck is getting stretched, and I want to keep it in good condition.’ It's an expensive brand called Folk from TK Maxx.

Noah – has some items which are unused, worn once or twice and then left – shorts fall into this category – ‘don't find them comfortable but might pull them out next summer.’

Owen – main stuff that doesn't get worn is formal clothing – ‘knitted jumpers and that's because I don't go to many formal occasions.’

Jacob – wears and uses most of his wardrobe – apart from polos and shirts for special occasions. Some t-shirts that have holes or are too small so don't get worn – he 'hasn't got around to selling.'

Jake – has a 'really small' wardrobe, and 'I probably wear like 15% of that.' Wears the same thing everyday, maybe 'switch it up a bit at the weekend.'

Harvey – wears most of his clothes – 'But I suppose there's a few things especially like, while I'm at uni, there's a few like formal shirts that I've got hanging up that probably get worn four or five times a year. Just because I at this stage of my life, I don't really go to many formal events or out for dinner or anything like that. So there are, there'll be a few items of clothing, like I've got a Tommy Hilfiger shirt that I haven't worn for a while.'

Not wearing formal clothes is a common theme here. Pandemic permitting is another key theme throughout.

Ws with female students

Monique – 'I wear everything because I don't like to waste things.'

Elle – 'Now because of lockdown, I have a lot of stuff that I haven't worn. But generally, there are a few things that I don't feel myself in, or if I've had a bad social experience/encounter in it, I tend to keep these things at the bottom of the pile, and then not go to them again. I have a few clothes like that. But mostly, I do wear everything.'

Chen – only wears everything once – likes the feel of fresh clothes – 'they make me feel happy and energetic.'

Mary – has worn every piece of clothing at least once. Some things have only been worn a couple of times, 'because they are not as comfortable, or because they are a certain colour, and I feel like I don't have other things to pair it up.'

Shauna – a couple of unused pieces. One she doesn't like, and they other hasn't been worn because of the pandemic. 'I want to get my money out of them, I hate throwing stuff away because I don't like it.'

WS with YA (Unused clothing)

Theo – ‘actually, there's probably quite a few t shirts that I barely ever wear. But they're kind of there, just in case, I don't really know why. But yeah, lots of plain t shirts. Maybe a couple of hats. I have like a stupid amount of sunglasses. I don't really know why. I think yeah, I think I probably only wear one pair of them. I probably have about 10 which seems like a lot to me. Maybe some people have a lot more. Yeah, not not much new though, I'd say everything is quite worn.’ [Link to fg data, ‘I like it but I wouldn’t wear it.’ Why? Links with the accumulation of dormant things here?](#)

Kelsey – probably only wears ‘about 5%’ of her wardrobe. Cycles through the same outfits which she ‘loves.’ Hardly worn some things because of the pandemic. ‘If you take out weddings and holidays I probably wear quite a small percentage of my wardrobe.’

Ivy – unused wedding dress due to covid. ‘but generally I don’t think there’s anything that I haven’t worn. Occasion things I wear less often. Like my blue dress, I won’t wear outside of Christmas.’ [Lack of confidence wearing ‘skimpy dress.’ This is a gendered difference? Body image?](#)

Charles – tries to ‘clear out’ the stuff that he doesn’t wear. ‘there’s a few bits that I have bought and then not had anywhere to wear them.’ No longer wear work shirts, as working from home since covid.

Matthew – ‘But yes I would say there is quite a bit that doesn't get worn throughout the year but I always make a conscious effort of pulling things out you know matching them up. You know, I haven't done that for a while and obviously with with COVID just happening I've hardly worn any of it because I've had nowhere to go. Funnily enough on the flip side of that after COVID I have thought to myself I really need to you know make the most of what I have because I have some beautiful items and just get out there make sure I get out and go places see things and dress nicely, yeah there's no excuse.’

Liam – a lot of unused football shirts. – ‘because you can only wear one each match, but I try and cycle through them at least once a year.’

Zelda - ‘I think I wear most of it... the winter and summer clothes get switched, so it does all get worn.’ 3 or 4 dresses bought for weddings don’t really get worn.

Otto - ‘I think I get through pretty much all of mine.’ Old jumpers are kept for back up. Outdoor walking shirts, ‘kept if I ever did a proper expedition.’

Viv – ‘That’s a really easy answer because I’d say I’ve got a lot of clothes that are unused.’ – ‘I have a lot of clothes, and I stick to what I like.’

Will – 'I wear and use most of it.' Similar response to Ed – doesn't over wear certain items of clothing, because he wants to preserve them.

Denim

Analysis of denim in the archive from focus group data, and denim questions from wardrobe studies.

Denim as a trend led garment?

Wardrobe study data

| No of jeans male | No of jeans female |
|------------------|--------------------|
| 3 | 6 |
| 1 | 6 |
| 8 | 14 |
| 5 | 4 |
| 1 | 1 |
| 3 | 7 |
| 4 | 0 |
| 3 | 7 |
| 8 | 7 |
| 2 | 12 |
| 1 | |
| 6 | |
| Av no: 3.75 | Av no: = 6.4 |

Jeans + poor quality

Now I wear the blue jeans and the black jeans to work but I kind of resent the blue jeans because I only buy new ones when they rip and they do rip frequently. Like they don't last that long, but then probably just because I have one pair that I wear all the time. – Charles

Charles – I could spend more on Levis jeans, but don't always have a spare £90 to spend when my jeans break... it's a false economy... cheap jeans are designed to break.

Jake - So yeah, I actually threw out like so many. I threw out like 12 pairs like maybe about six months ago that were like all just kind of like ripped. But yeah, I used to buy loads, I've spent loads on jeans over the years. I used to wear Levis quite a lot but I just kind of don't want to pay for them anymore.

Theo – 'I had some from Moogie that I just threw out because they like fell apart.'

Being quite big at the minute, I go through lot of jeans quite quickly, because they just wear out quite quickly. But again, I don't really pay a lot. Liam.

Jeans + nostalgia (Any nostalgic memories associated with jeans?)

Not really. No, they don't last long enough for that. Liam.

Not particularly because I'm kind of always wear them and so I can't say that can associate a memory with them. – Ivy

Ah, I'd say, probably not with the jeans, just because they're just such a everyday thing for me that I don't really associate them with anything. As opposed to clothes like jackets or something which might have a memory attached to them. – Elliott

No, sorry. I've you know, I've worn them so often that nostalgia doesn't really come into anymore. – Noah

With these jeans, nothing, they are not old enough. – Theo

Levis jeans associated with school – Charles

Kelsey – yes, the pair she bought with me!

Yeah, I think so when I think about, like I used to, have a lot of jeans. You know when like skinny jeans were cool. Or like I think a friend of mine found out skinny jeans were cool. Like before I did, or maybe before like a lot of people did. And his mom would like take him into like, the ladies jeans section to like, find like skinny jeans for him. He had a lot of skinnier legs than me. So I think I like tried this once and it was just a massive failure. That's quite a funny memory. – Theo.

only I'd say out of all those 14 pairs of jeans that I've got only one because of the work that's been done does a sentimental there's a memory of them. I've had them so long family members and friends of like patch them - Viv.

Um, I guess like, yeah, maybe the blue pair that I didn't pay for. I used to wear them a lot skating because like, I didn't, at the time didn't have any of the like, beater, you know, jeans I didn't care about or anything. So, just, I've been to a lot of skate events and stuff. And it just kind of takes me back to them. You know, like being with friends. - Will.

Mary - Oh, for sure. I can show you! I have this very very nice vintage pair that I bought in The Netherlands, in one of the trips that I went, they were also an impulsive purchase, but I love them, and everyone else loves them, and they are so in style now, those wide leg jeans. And yeah I love them, they remind me of that trip a lot.

1 pair of jeans my friends gave me, and I was so happy, because I didn't expect that get that one from them, also my friend designed them! The second one, I think are 10 years old, my mum and me bought them together, so I remember the memory of going shopping with my mum, so I think yes, those two pairs of jeans. – Chen

Looking after denim

Yeah, I wouldn't wash them very often, I guess. And just like hang them out, rather than wash them. Unless they got like really filthy or whatever. – Theo

Basically, I've got a pair of denim Levi jeans which the bum bit has ripped, I've had them like patched over several times there's like three different sewing patterns all over the bum because I won't get rid of them because their a good pair of jeans. So yeah, if they're good jeans and they are worn, I will take them to Soul and Flare in Nottingham, i'll take them there and get them patched or my Nana will do it for me. So yes I will preserve them rather than get rid, I think that looks like it's more exciting as well. – Viv

Yes, I've definitely fixed jeans. Whether that be you know, a tear, or I alter them to make them into shorts for holiday, or three quarters... And then there's a black pair which I recently dyed black again actually recently. – Matthew

I don't really wash them. I try not to wash them - Zelda.

I try not to wash them a lot, because the problem with washing them is that they get tighter, and I hate that when they get tight, and the colour fades. – Shauna

Yeah, I don't wash them that much – Mary

I probably wash it less than my other clothes, I also turn my jeans inside out when I wash them. – Chen

The illusive 'perfect pair' of jeans

I probably went through a lot of pairs of jeans then trying to find like the perfect pair. But I think I think I never wanted skinny jeans I think I just wanted like the ones that are a bit they finished a bit higher. Say like, like boot cut maybe it is, or whatever it is, what were they called short weekends or something like this where they kind of shorter... I think like some of my maybe musical idols would wear these, and that's what I wanted in reality. – Theo

I have too many pairs to jeans. And again, that's something I think about, I think because I've never found my dream pair. I have too many. – Viv

I have eight, eight pairs of jeans and two pairs of jean dungarees. And I probably wear two pairs of them because I mean I don't know if you have the same issue. I find trying to find a pair of jeans that I really like, really fit, really nice, comfortable and go with most things is really difficult. So I can tend to stick with my favourites basically. – Matthew

Gender – females keep 'old' jeans

Oh, I do have cleaning jeans. So they were jeans that I wore on the regs, and now they have paint all over them - Zelda

I've got a couple of pairs of jeans that I do gardening and stuff and they've got like ripped knees, ripped bum, like, got paint on them. So like I've just held on to them for like, work wear – Ivy

Males do have unused jeans - I've got four in my wardrobe, but I know I've got another four at home but I don't really like those. The ones that are left at home. – Jacob

Male students – trends – movement away from skinny jeans. Trend for 'workwear jeans.'
Popularity of the brands Carhartt and Dickies, link this to wanting to fit in, look the same as their peers. This can be linked to Simmel (fashion).

Will - I like hard wearing clothes, workwear style clothes, like Carhartt and Dickies. It's probably like a typical thing for someone that's interested in like alternate culture and skate

culture to say that. But you know you might pay a lot more money for it, but they do last a lot longer... One pair of my jeans is from the Tommy Hilfiger outlet store, about two years ago, but they're the like, vintage carpenter style. So they've got all the you know, they're kind of like wide leg baggy fit with all the pockets on the side and the loop for your hammer. So they're obviously like workwear inspired. I do like Tommy Hilfiger. It's a good brand.

Elliott – I own four pairs of jeans. Yeah. Although two of which, they're not really my style anymore. They're kind of skinny jeans and I tend to stick to like baggy jeans now. But yeah, I find the baggy ones more comfy and I kind of find them a bit more fashionable as well. I don't really like those kind of spray on type jeans anymore. I've grown out of that kind of fashion, I suppose.

Yeah, I cuz my one pair they just a bit too skinny, I wanted to get some baggier jeans. Just because I prefer how it looks. So I got some vintage Levi's from a thrift shop like a couple of weeks ago. – Owen

Jake – 'Yeah, they're like um, like dad jeans. So I have two pairs, which I guess are dad jeans, you know, you know for me, like baggy or so. Yeah, I used to wear like sort of Slim Fit ones.' (muscle legs and they ripped).

Harvey - Yeah, I mean, I've got a pair of like cargo trousers that I bought, like when I was again, like I was about 17. So four or five years ago, there or thereabouts. And yeah, they, at the time, I think they were like fairly uncool, like cargo trousers weren't really in fashion. They're a good material, they've lasted a while and now at uni sort of cargo trousers are a lot more in fashion a lot more people wear them with the emergence of brands like Dickies, and Carhartt. A lot of people wear cargo trousers.

Focus group data

Male Levis jeans from 2004. Male focus group. → a general feeling of distaste towards the jeans. Something that the group, 'would have worn when they were younger.' An item which has fallen out of fashion. Link to incremental style differences? The 'sideways angle of the pockets', the 'shape is just audacious,' 'people would be grabbing the style feature on the back,' 'they have a weird vertical texture, they look like they have been made out of a blind.'

Phyc workshop – same men's Levis jeans – 'if they were designed a bit different, my dad would wear them.'

'I don't see a comeback for them.'

Female focus group – similar trend that participants would have worn certain denim items, 'when they were younger.'

The shiny jeans, I was a student at that time, they were really popular, and I really wanted some, I think they are 2012. See I really want these shiny jeans.

I would not blink at a student wearing those now.

Emotional attachment

Four participants were asked the same question about emotional attachment to clothing a year apart (Aug 2020 and Aug 2021). For WFH – all answers are the same, the attachment is consistent?

Closely linked to nostalgia.

Code via particular garment types – function/memory/story

Ws with female students (all answers here are accompanied with a photograph).

Family and friends is a common theme.

An impulse purchase top worn to the Copenhagen fashion trade show ‘the best event I’ve been to in fashion’ – Monique

There is a blazer that I have that is really close to me, because it was one of my first blazers, and I went to buy it with my dad. It was a big thing, because it was when I was starting to go to work. Elle

Yes, this one I can show you. It's a black hoodie, and the image on the hoodie is very creative. My friend designed it for me, it was a birthday gift. And the friend is my best friend. When I go abroad to study, when I came to the UK, and I felt like I missed my friend and my family, I wear this hoodie, and I feel like I am not alone. – Bao

Grandma’s vintage Dior handbag – Mary ‘Of course it reminds me of my grandma, and I'm it's interesting to think what she might of worn it with first of all, her different outfits. The way I wear it for sure is different from what she wore. Also, in which locations, and it reminds me of her also, when she had the possibility to buy such a bag at the time. So yeah, it's a very nice item, it's kept here separated from the other bags, it has the special treatment.’

Shauna – memories associated with childhood - Yeah, because this jacket, I was obsessed, I’m not kidding I wore it every day for like a good few months, probably even a year. For some reason, I just can’t get rid of it, it doesn’t fit me anymore, you couldn’t sell it even if you wanted to, it’s just memory. I don’t know why, it’s not even a key memory, it’s just a time when I was obsessed with being a care worker. The dress is definitely sentimental, it wasn’t expensive, it was off the market, but it was a key memory for me, because I do really love that religious part of me, and it just reminds me of that. Yes, its part of growing up? Yes, it’s a right of passage sort of thing.

1 pair of jeans my friends gave me, and I was so happy, because I didn’t expect that get that one from them, also my friend designed them! The second one, I think are 10 years old, my mum and me bought them together, so I remember the memory of going shopping with my mum, so I think yes, those two pairs of jeans. – Chen

Ws with male students

Elliott - Um, I'd say I'm pretty attached to it. Because there's been times where I've thought about replacing it, especially because I've seen a lot of other people with the exact same coat on. But um, yeah, I've just, I just really like it. I've just had it a while so yeah, **it's quite convenient because it's warm enough on cold days as well. Even though it's a raincoat. Yeah, I am quite attached to it.** I really like the colour as well... Like I've had it, like, yeah, five, six years. And there's a photo of me on my wall right in front of me from quite a long time ago with it on so yeah good memories wearing it, definitely. It reminds me of the Sixth Form days.
– **practical**

Owen - Yeah. I'd say I'm attached to these trackies I'm wearing. My girlfriend got them for me for Valentine's Day. And it's one of those ones where it's like, you can't justify pay it for yourself, because they're quite expensive so I appreciate that. they are my comfiest trackies, they are the thickest, they are very stylish. And Yard Sale the brand I really like. I've also got some Adidas skateboarding, corduroy, trousers, which I liked just because they get a lot of compliments really. They are quite original. And that's the thing, like, these are quite original as well, which is again, why I like them, they stand out.

Practicality is a common theme here.

Place and family – Jacob - This Australia jumper. When I was five or six, my grandma bought me one back from Australia when she went. I always wore that, it was my favourite jumper. Obviously I grew out of it, but I managed to go to Australia. And I saw that jumper. And I thought, well, I need to get that no matter how expensive it is. Yeah, by far the most nostalgic piece in my wardrobe. Its probably one of my most worn jumpers.

Childhood - Jake - I bought this t-shirt when I was like college. So I guess I don't know. Maybe like, it reminds me of being like, younger than I am. At the moment. I don't know. Yeah, I've never really thought about that.

Attachment – **place** - Like, I bought this on asos like four years ago, but I went travelling in it. I took it travelling with me. Um so yeah, I actually did a clear out recently, like this was in like the maybe pile, but then I kept it. I think its because I went travelling in it, so I don't think I'll ever throw it away. Jake

Childhood and practicality – Harvey - And like my GCSE PE stuff, which I've, you know, they were decent items of clothing that I still have and still wear. I wear them for like, if I'm doing

like physical work, like DIY or something like that. But yeah, no, I do. I do still have clothing like that. And I also used to do, like springboard and high board diving. And I have like, T shirts from various competitions that I went to, from, I don't know 2014 to 2019. So they all they all still fit me pretty much. Say I suppose they bring they bring back a lot of good memories.

Family + personal - Noah - But it's the only kind of item of clothing I would say that there's a memory attached to it. It's a sport shirt. **What sports shirt is it?** It's a football kit for a team that doesn't exist. In case you can't tell by the great big flag and the pendant around the neck, I'm gay. There are no football teams, or at least there aren't many football teams, that you know are openly supportive of LGBT individuals. So there's this team, which is called Lovers United, it doesn't actually play, but this is supposedly their kit. They were just you know, created as a kind of to support LGBT peoples. And yeah, I told my brother I need to sports stuff on my birthday. He is very sporty and he's got me that, and I think that's quite a nice story.

WS with young adults – female

Not being attached to items worn at a wedding is a common theme.

Family - Viv - I've got some of my Nana's old cardigans. Can you see on Oh, actually, that might be my great Auntie's cardigan like a knitted just a knitted cardigan. And my Nanas aran knit cardigans. Those two, because if they weren't sentimental, then I'd have probably got rid of them by now. That's why they're the longest because I know whose they were. I won't ever get rid of them. **And you'd say you're attached to those items?** Yeah, sentimentally... Yes, but for me personally, it's the only really nostalgic ones are when it's like sentimental family related so I have some here's an example. I have some like old lady handbags and they were my Nana's so things like that. Yes, bags and scarves, handbags, scarves and cardigans and a dressing gown. Was my great Nanas, so only that. Other sort of modern contemporary clothes that I've got that I've worn to like places and events I don't actually have like I don't attach the memory to them.

Zelda - Not in this wardrobe. All the clothing which I am emotionally attached to is at my mums house. This is clothing from my childhood, which doesn't fit me anymore as I have put

on weight. I don't want to see it in my own wardrobe because it makes me sad/not feel good about myself. Male participant 10 has the same issue re weight and attachment (?) but this clothing stays in his wardrobe? Potential link to body image?

Kelsey – Family - this participant has a bag of 'memory clothes.' I can probably tell you memory for every item in here, I genuinely have memories for all of my clothes... Lots of this is from my grandma, she bought it for me. She bought me this dress, I feel like paisley is not trendy anymore, but I'd loved that dress again. I just didn't have the heart to throw that away.

WS with young adults – male

Otto – friends + youth - Got a shirt that I bought my last uni reminds me of a mate. Because Yeah, came to a vintage clothing fair with me to buy it. And convinced me to buy it. I was on the fence. This blue cord one. My socks remind me of field trips from my undergrad.

Family + youth – Will - I've got some other old clothes from my dad. They were his from when he was younger. I've got another shirt here. So this is like 30 years old. And guess I've held on to that for like the sentimental value, like he's still around. But yeah, I still see him every week. But like, it's the fact that it doesn't fit him. He passed it down to me, it's been floating around my bedrooms for like, since I was like 12 or something like that.... I do at home, like at my parents, I have a suitcase full of like my **band T shirts**. Because I've been in like a few different like, moderately successful bands like toured around Europe and things like that... Yeah, I'd probably say I'm attached to like 85% of my wardrobe. Like I do place a lot of value in things you know whether it was a gift or I bought it on a tour.

Practical reasons for keeping the oldest item – Charles - Just because it's a it's a good coat. I mean, it still works as a coat. Yeah, it's not offensive. I don't think I have anything against wearing I just have other coats now that I think I prefer. Kind of like a newer coats? Yeah, I mean, I can still put it on. It's still warm. It's still fine. But yeah, still fits. So I mean, why have I kept it? because there's nothing wrong with it. Maybe that's why I haven't got rid of it.

Practical reasons/friends/youth/family - Theo – oldest coat kept for practical reasons / old **band t-shirts** kept, 'I wore it during the time that I quite like, so it reminds me of it... this kind of thing is from my old band my friend designed it, that's pretty nostalgic.' 'oh and this I think was my granny's, its got like peacocks on it.'

Holiday - Matthew - Owned personally that I've worn you know for a long long time the oldest would have to be this shirt, which is a it's a trespass shirt and I remember I got it from trade x. I don't know if you even remember trade x. It was like a discount kind of clothes place you could buy electronics and things like that. I remember getting it for my first holiday abroad when I was 11 we went to Majorca, I was obsessed with Egypt at the time, still kind of am in a way, but this was just like everything to me because it had tutankhamun on it was blue you know and I absolutely love it, and I still wear it to this day it still fits me... I would say I was attached to it. Yeah, I wouldn't feel great about getting rid of it. **Also family – owns clothing that belonged to his grandad**

Holiday + family – Liam - So this shirt is from United colours of Benetton. It was from Tenerife, where we holiday a lot. I bought it probably about 10 years ago, it still looks brand new, pretty much doesn't fit at the moment, but I'm not going to chuck it away. We went to the shop to buy it. I tried it on. And when my nan was alive, we went in, and she was like, I'm gonna buy it for you. She handed over 20 euro note, and the cashier gave her a change for 50. So they actually paid us for it! But yeah, so it's got good memories, I'd never want to throw away, and I do want to fit back into it.

Female focus group (are you emotionally attached to anything in your wardrobe?)

t-shirt and holiday 'Like, I have a T shirt from the Philippines that has this guy did a doodle of all of us, and then turned into a t shirt, so I have that.'

Family – 'I have a jumper that was my mums in the late 80s, there's a photo of her with me as a baby wearing it, and now I regularly wear it.'

- 'I've got loads of my dads old jumpers'

'I don't get emotionally attached to clothes.'

Male focus group

General theme of practicality – longest owned items are durable/outdoor wear/high quality.
Ski socks and walking socks.

Velvet jackets – 'I spent quite a lot on them.' – also echoes by Henry (male student)

Sportswear – football shirt from 2011 / kept a basketball shirt from my 1st game, from when I was about 5 (a nostalgic memory)

Key codes identified through the student padlet:

- 'friends and good times with them.'
- Place – 'it reminds me of home.'
- No attachment - 'I wouldn't class any of my clothing as old, they are all around the same age (3-4 years old), so I don't really have an oldest item. I'm not that attached to them, they are functional for me. I just wear what I have; they don't evoke any memories.'
- Family – 'I have only had this for about 6 years but before it was mine it belonged to my mother and previously my father so its been around for over 30 years which is older than me! I seldom wear it outside as I feel it more of a house sweater however on the occasion I am seen with it, it never fails to get a compliment which I guess isnt surprising cuz its pretty cool and insanely comfortable. Easily one of my closet favourites.'
- Holiday – 'I've owned this oversized hoodie for a few years now, we got matching ones as a bunk at the start of camp America and we wore them pretty much the whole of camp, there's tonnes of memories embedded, including the ones after camp travelling ect. And I still wear it quite often now'
- Personal story (and practical) - I have had this Stone Island jacket for about 7 years. The reason for my attachment to this jacket is because I purchased it on eBay, in an intense bidding war. This jacket is also good for every season, light enough for summer and easy to wear a hoodie underneath it in the winter (although not waterproof).

Initial gendered thoughts... men mention practicality more often than women... 'band' t-shirts/sports clothing popular amongst men... friends and family are common reasons for clothing attachment amongst women(?) holiday is a key code for both? And youth?

Trends

Incremental style differences render certain garments 'outdated' or 'uncool' – YA focus group analysis

Key Codes – would wear part/parts of the outfit + I like it but wouldn't wear it + would wear if 'X' were different.

The sexualisation of fashion –

The sexualisation of fashion



Female - I actually quite like it minus the gold, I like the neckline.

I think the spaghetti straps, that kind of thing dates it.

Unisex –

Unisex



Female –

I wouldn't wear it, but I don't know why, I kind of like it.

I don't think I'd wear it as an outfit, maybe separately.

Not that pattern.

I think I would wear it, but I would buy it in a size up.

PHOTOSHOOTS



Fig 133- 135. Photoshoot
men images

Male - I'd probably wear it if it was a bit shorter, if it didn't look a bit more like a trench coat.

Female - I really like the styling in the shoot, but it's not the same as wanting to wear the outfit.

I think the sleeve pockets are an unnecessary detail.

I feel like it's a bit odd without a hood as well, it's a bit like a parka, but someone has cut the hood off.

Its also doing that weird exposed zip thing, but the zip doesn't go all the way to the bottom.

Analysis -females picked up on more features of the coat – but essentially both genders are making the same point.

2016/2017 – S/S



Male - A bit too baggy.

I'm not sure about the random tassels.

I think the concepts fine on the picture, but if you were to put it on, and you were walking around, those little tassel bits are just going to be flapping around.

In the photo, it looks quite nice, but if you were actually wearing it walking around, I don't like it.

Female – focus on greater detail, ie the socks in the outfit - I like the socks, I have those socks actually. This feels like a late thing as well. It's the socks which make me think it must be a bit later.

I have those socks, I got them late, my mum bought them for me, and I said, 'this trend has gone mum.'

My fashionable friend wore socks like that a couple of years ago.

Would anybody wear this?

If you cut those things off, then yes.

I think that oversized t-shirts have a better cut now. But it is nice, thick fabric.

I'm wearing a sweater dress so yeah, I would wear something like that. But I don't really like the weird strap, and I don't wear white either. But I do think you get better cuts now, but I would wear something similar.

Kitsch

2011/2012 – S/S

Kitsch

The Tate defines the term kitsch as, 'the German word for trash, it is used in English to describe particularly cheap, vulgar and sentimental forms of popular and commercial culture' (Tate, no date).



Male - I like the idea of it, but I'd probably look at myself in the mirror, and wouldn't like it.

Yeah, I wouldn't wear the full outfit.

The colour of the shirt is fine, the thing which puts me off is the sharpness of the colour of the buttons.

The trousers are just slightly too bright.

I probably would with a black t-shirt, if they were the only bright part of the outfit. If that makes sense. For some styles, the whole outfit has become style obsolescent, but parts of the outfit remain in fashion.

Subcultural style



Would anybody wear these?

Probably, I like the pattern. I don't like the cut, those trousers, with a different cut, I would wear.

I've got a pair of woven check trousers in a red, but they are a pin leg, high waisted. And it's woven, is that a printed check? Yeah.

I wouldn't wear them but I do like them – common theme

Subcultural Style



Shoes –

I like the idea of those, but I don't think that I could pull them off.

I like the doc martin sort of style definitely, but not with the gold, its too much.

Its not too far off doc martains, I would wear doc martains as well, but not these.

Denim

Denim



I love these, these are Dolly Parton, and I would wear them all day. I'd have them like several sizes too big, I wouldn't want them cut like they were on her, I'd want them quite different, but I think they're tacky. And I like that. (Laughs). I would wear them with the denim jacket with the tassels on from the previous slide.

Vintage



Vintage
(1920s)

2003/2004

the skirt –

My version is a bit longer.

Mine are longer with an elastic waist.

Vintage



I don't like how they have styled it, I would wear it without the belt.

I wouldn't wear it with the belt either.

Vintage -
Men's 70s
wallpaper



I might wear the shirt. I probably wouldn't wear the whole outfit.

For me, it is almost nice, but I dunno, there is something that puts me off it, I don't know what. But I do quite like it.

I think in the picture, the outfit looks alright. I wouldn't think that it looks really weird, but I don't think I would wear it myself.

Appendix 10 – FashionMap Photoshoots

FashionMap Photoshoots 2000-2017

2000-2001 Autumn/Winter

Little Black Dress – Topshop



Pucci Style Prints – Kookai



2000-2001 Spring/Summer

The Fifties – outfit Kookai, scarf Gap



Madonna – Topshop



Pop art – Top – Oasis. Skirt, belt tights and sweatband – Topshop. Shoes – Jade.



2001-2002 (no photoshoots in powerpoints)

2002-2003 Autumn/Winter

Folklaw spirit – Kookai



Folklaw – Newlook



Raw Glamour – Topshop



Tank Girl – Jacket and trousers, Warehouse. Tank top, Karen Millen. Shoes, Dolcis.

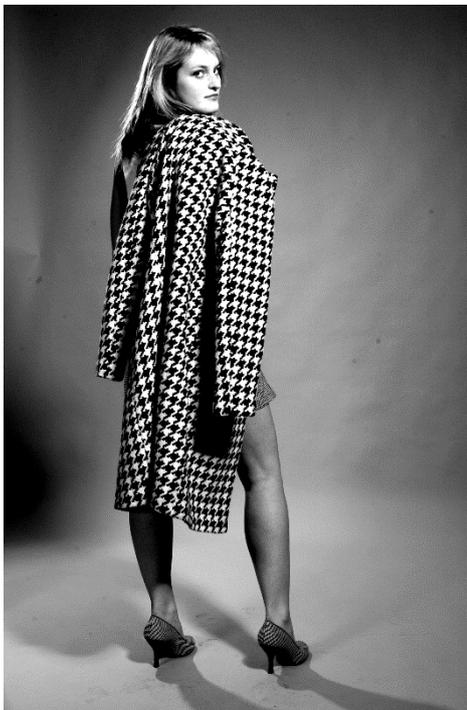
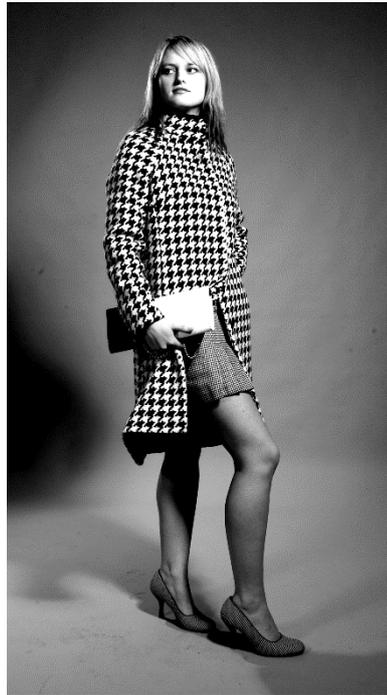


2003-2004 Autumn/Winter

60s – jacket, skirt and tights – Topshop. Polo, bracelet and earrings - Topshop. Boots – Faith.



Monochrome – jacket – Dorothy Perkins. Top – Zara. Skirt – Topshop. Shoes + bag – Barratts.



Rebel – skirt – Newlook. Top – Morgan. Bag + tights – Topshop. Jacket + belt – River Island.
Boots – faith.





Rural Life (Tweed) – Jacket + Bag – Next. Cardigan, Oasis. Necklace – H&M. Hat – Accessorize. Jeans – Topshop. Shoe – Ravel.



2003/2004 – Spring/Summer

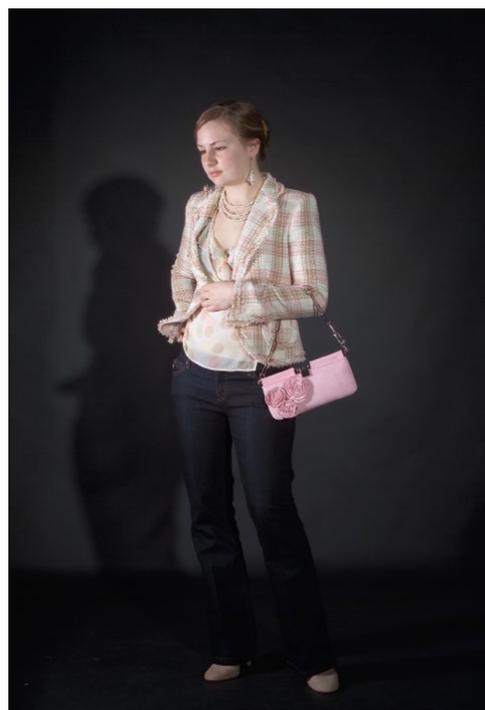
1920s



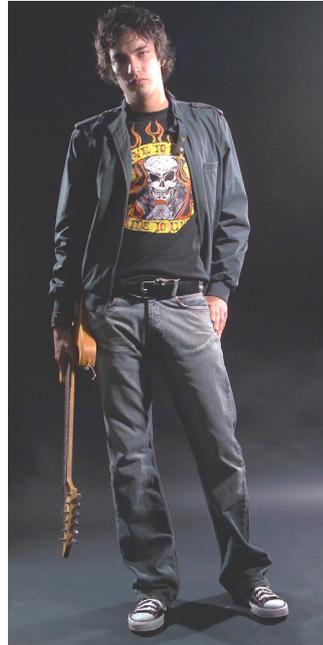
Cartoons - Minnie Mouse vest, Top Shop : £14. White linen Blazer, Oasis : £75. Red A line skirt: £25 . Red shoes with bow, Top Shop : £25. Denim handbag, Oasis : £18. Red plastic Hoops, Etam : £3.



Chanel



Men's – Indie Rock



Men's – Western - Diesel Jeans, Ted Baker t-shirt, USC shirt, Office Boots, Zara belt

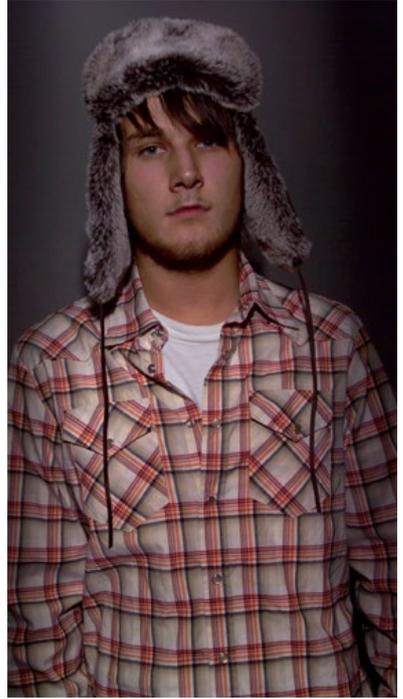


2004 – 2005 – Autumn/Winter

70s Bohemian—Brown polo neck: Topshop, Cream gilet: Etam, Cream cardigan: TopShop, Printed skirt: Warehouse, Wide plated brown belt: Oasis, Burgundy suede bag, Warehouse, Brown knee high boots: Faith, Assorted cuffs & jewellery: Freedom.



Outlander: Jacket: Next, Shirt: Topman, Trousers: GAP, Scarf: River Island, Hat: Next, Boots: CAT.



Tweed



Vintage English Eccentrics (no photoshoot)



Vintage glam (bling bling)

Skirt – Jigsaw £149 Cardigan – Marks and Spencers, The Limited Collection £39.50

Shoes – Marks and Spencers £45 Clutch Bag – Accessorize £8 Corsage – Accessorize £8

Earrings – Monsoon £18 Sequined scarf – Etam £15



Western Nomadic



Spring/Summer

Ethnic safari



Floral

Floral Outfit

Scarf: £45 – Jigsaw
Top: £25- Per Una @ Marks and Spencers
Skirt: £45 – French Connection
Shoes: £9.99- H+M
Brooch: £10- East
Hair clips: £8- Accessorize

Greek Chic



'How D'ye like me?'



smart



How D'ye Like Me?



casual

Nautical



2005/2006

Autumn/Winter

Cossack Chic



Hitchcock glamour



Modern Oriental



Sixties



Victorian



Necklace Bay Trading £10.00

Boots QUBE £90.00

Tights Dorothy Perkins £5.00

-Accessories like the necklace are somewhat necessary and important to this look but tend to go with all current trends.
-Knee high lace up boots are also very popular at the moment and imperative to the Victorian style.

Spring/Summer

Bold prints



Geisha



Jacket and J-shirt



Black Leather Jacket
All Saints £180



Black and Grey Stripped J-shirt
All Saints £45

Boots



Leather turn-over ankle boots

Office £79.99

Nautical

Final Look



Romance

Final Outfit

- Kurt Geiger - Shoes - £60.00
- Topshop - Leggings - £8.00
- Topshop - Shrug - £25.00
- Miss Selfridge - Under Dress - £55.00
- Miss Selfridge - Dress - £60.00
- Miss Selfridge - Underwear - £3.00
- Jigsaw - Belt - £39.00

Total: £250.00



2006/2007

Autumn/Winter - Back to school

FINAL SCHOOL OUTFIT...

Brought from..
MONSOON:
DRESS : £38
WHITE SHIRT :£30
Shoes from Office :
£49.99
Knee length socks
from TOPSHOP : £6



2 n O o P p 2 q R t U

Gold

Gold Trend- Final Outfit



Dress – Zara £29.99
Shoes – Faith £55.00
Bag – Dorothy Perkins £12.00
Bangles- Topshop £6.00
Headband- Topshop £2.00
Footless Tights - £5.00

Highland Fling

Final Tartan Garments



All Saints Skirt £70

Miss Selfridge Shirt £28

Faith Shoes £60

Tights H&M £4

Zara Jacket £60

Leopard Print

Chosen outfit



£28 New Look Dress

£2 Bay Trading

£15 Barretts

£50 Faith

£89.99 Next Coat

Mannish



Men's - Urban Freestyle



Spring/summer

80s elegance



Citrus



Final Outfit



Bag - £20
Miss Selfridge

Jeans - £19.99
H and M



Scarf - £12.99
River Island

Final Outfit



Shoes - £70
Kurt Geiger

Top - £10
Topshop

Necklace - £10
Oasis



TOTAL COST:- £217.97

Floral



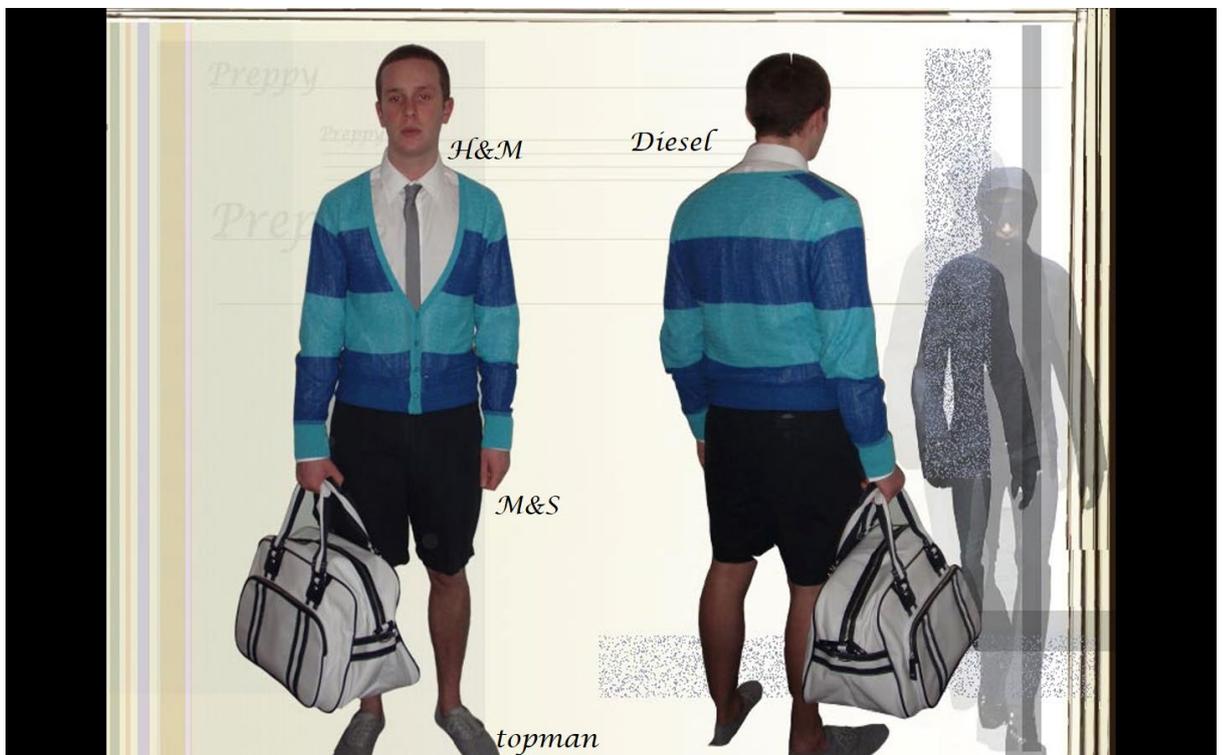
Legs



Men's formal sport



Men's – preppy



Men's relaxed neutrals



Monochrome



New Rave



Soft Volume



2007/2008 - A/W

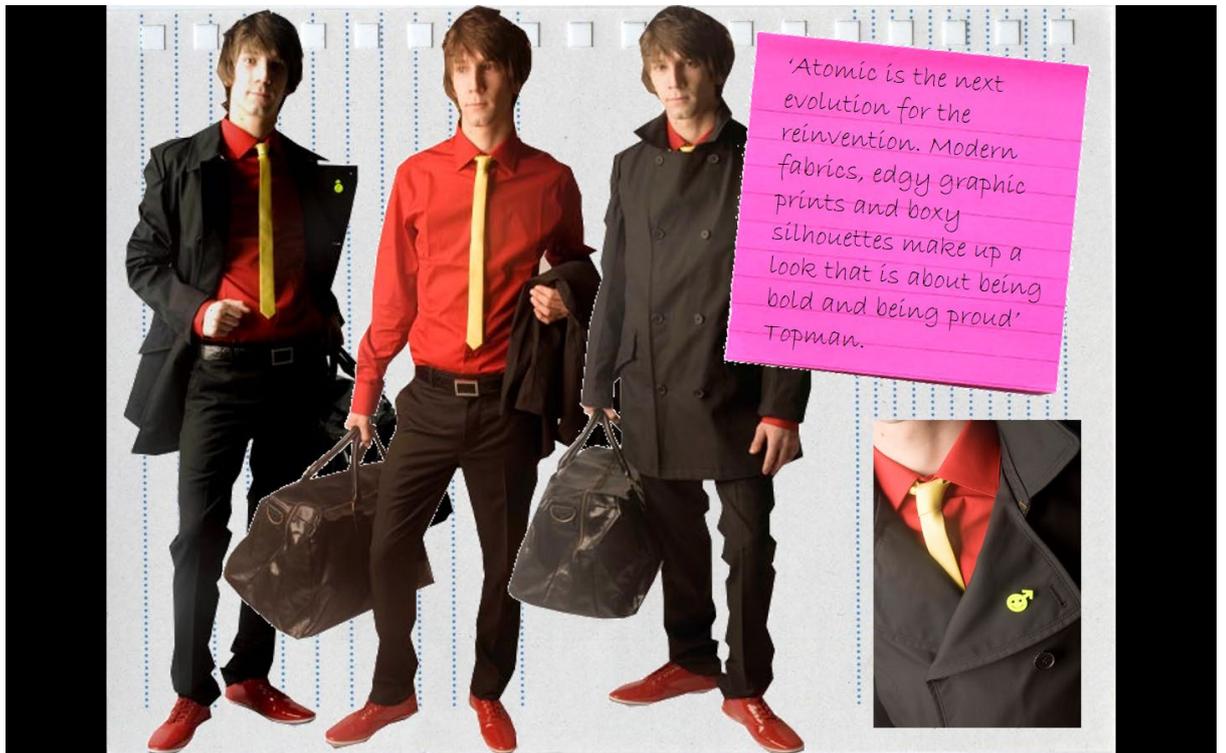
Big and bold



Dance in purple



Men's – slim him (1960s)



Skin on skin



Statement skirts



Warrior princess



Spring/summer

American parade



Art attack

Both outfits would be perfect to wear this summer. Outfit one would be suitable for a night out, whereas outfit 2 is more casual and better suited for daywear. They could be further styled using silver jewellery and an art attack inspired bag.

OUTFIT 1
£49.60

OUTFIT 2
£77.20

Both outfits would be perfect to wear this summer. Outfit one would be suitable for a night out, whereas outfit 2 is more casual and better suited for daywear. They could be further styled using silver jewellery and an art attack inspired bag.

OUTFIT 1
£49.60

OUTFIT 2
£77.20

Flower power

Floral High Street Outfit



Coast £95



Accessorize
£5 each



Topshop
£35



River Island
£34.99

Hippy-Floral High Street Outfit



New Look
£28



Topshop
£30



River Island
£34.99



Accessorize
£5 each

Men's – shine on



On safari

FINAL OUTFIT

FRONT STYLE



BACK STYLE



How to wear it:

Tan, sand and sienna—any colour that will make you blend in with the desert or bush—conjures the safari motif, especially when buttoned pockets and animal skin textures are thrown into the mix. Wear prints and cargo-like clothing with softer pieces to counterbalance the rough-and-tumble look, so that you resemble an African adventurer who has adapted to the concrete jungle, rather than the Crocodile Hunter.

Sheer romance



2008/2009 – A/W

Dark Romantic



Folklore



Men's – old English heritage



Minimalism



Peek a boo

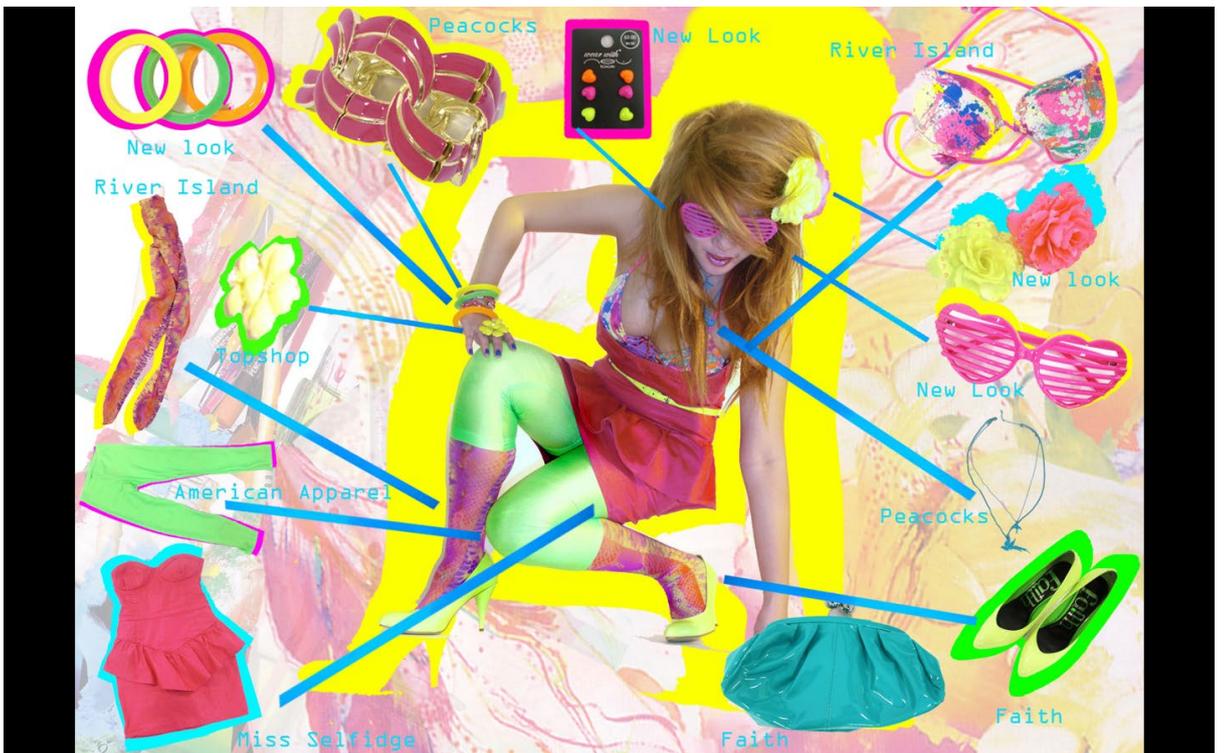


Wonderland



Spring/summer

Acid rain



African adventure

AFRICAN ADVENTURE

STYLING OUR TREND

BELT: £22.00, WAREHOUSE



BOLD AFRICAN PRINTS LAY AT THE CENTRE OF THE LOOK, ANCHORED IN WITH EARTHY BROWNS

ANIMAL PRINTS IN SMALL DOSES COMPLIMENTS THE LOOK

AN ACCESSORIES LEAD TREND...



DRESS
£65.00, WAREHOUSE



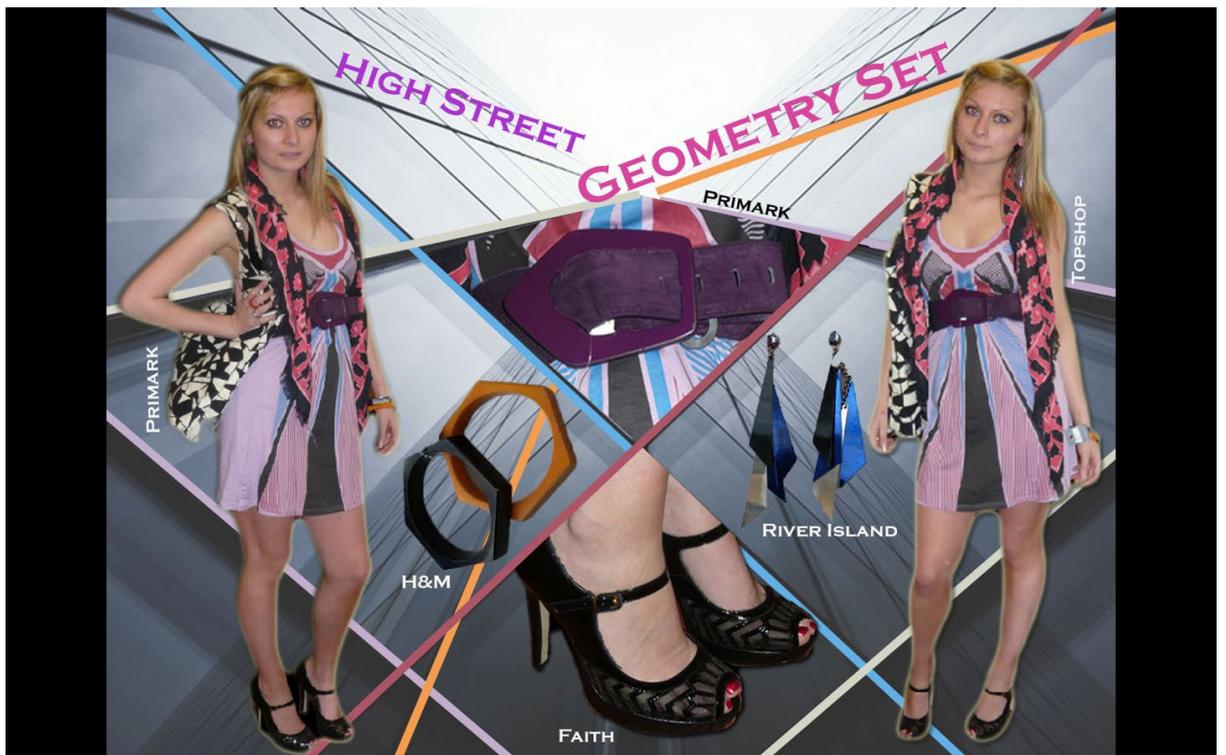
SHOES: £35 NEW LOOK

Darling buds



Outfit 1: Go all out with mixed up florals and clashing accessories keep it feminine with delicate lace leggings.

Geometrics



Men's – acid colours



New romance



2009/2010 – A/W

Antique opulence



Embellishment



Highland fling



Men's military

Drummer Boy
Military Coat
River Island
£59.99

Green Hoody
H+M
£24.99

T-shirt
H+M
£7.99

Wax Leather
Boot
River Island
£64.99

Two Pocket Satchell
River Island
£29.99

Aviators
New Look
(own pair)

OUTFIT

WANT THIS

WANT THIS

DESIGNED BY GW GRADUATES

Sharp shoulder

Sharp Shoulder

Autumn/Winter 2009-10

Our take on the Sharp Shoulder Trend...



Spring/summer – denim



Inside out



Men's – polished pastels

The Outfit



River Island £59.99



Topman £16



Zara £49.99



River Island £14.99



Ted Baker



New military



Print play

Photoshoot

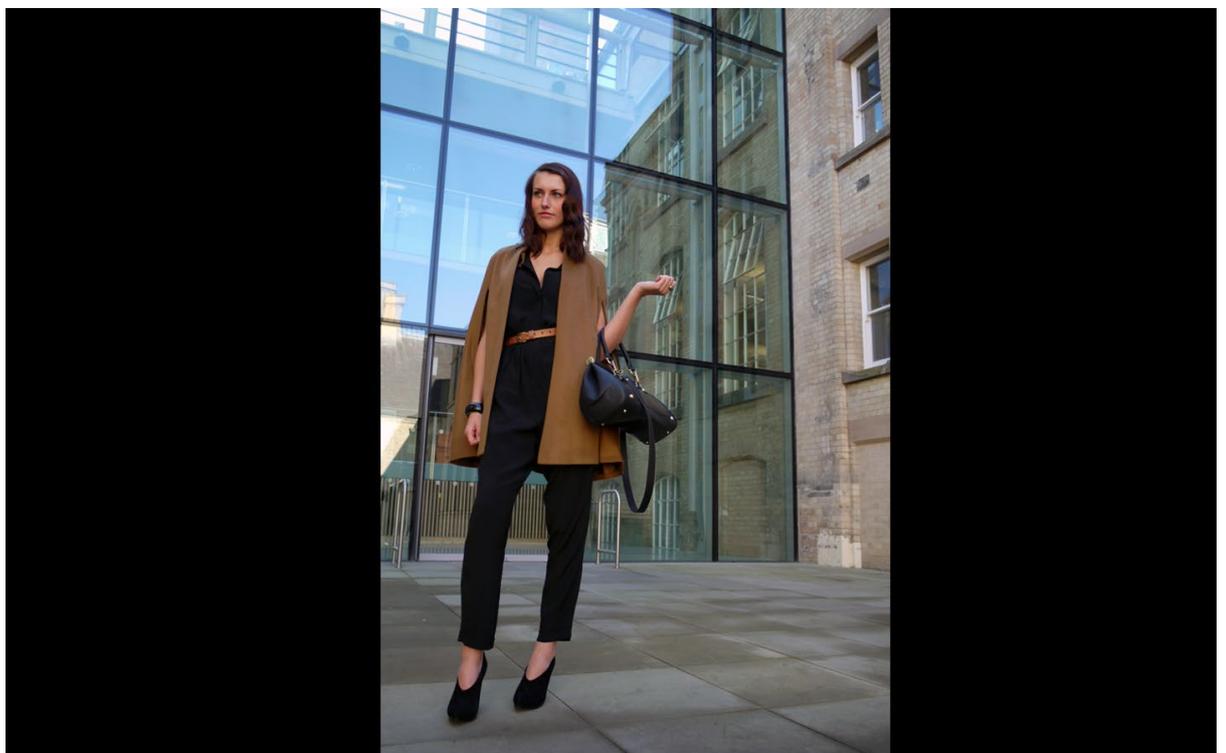


2010-2011 – A/W

Bumpkin chic



Italian glamour



Men's – all the queens' countryman

Scarf
H&M
£12.99

Flat cap
M&S
£16.00

Neckerchief
H&M
£4.99

Shirt
H&M
£14.99

Waistcoat
H&M
£19.99

Bag
Zara
£49.99

Jacket
River island
£49.99

Trousers
Topman
£36.00

Sock's
River island
£6.99

Boots
Next
£85.00

Total cost of outfit £296.93

Shaggy cuts

OUR FINAL SELECTION

ZARA
£69.99

TOPSHOP
£48

TOPSHOP £35

NEXT
£55

TOPSHOP
£12

TOPSHOP
£40

Sheer and lace



Spring/summer

70s vintage



Bad romance



Centre stage (ballet)



Colour pop

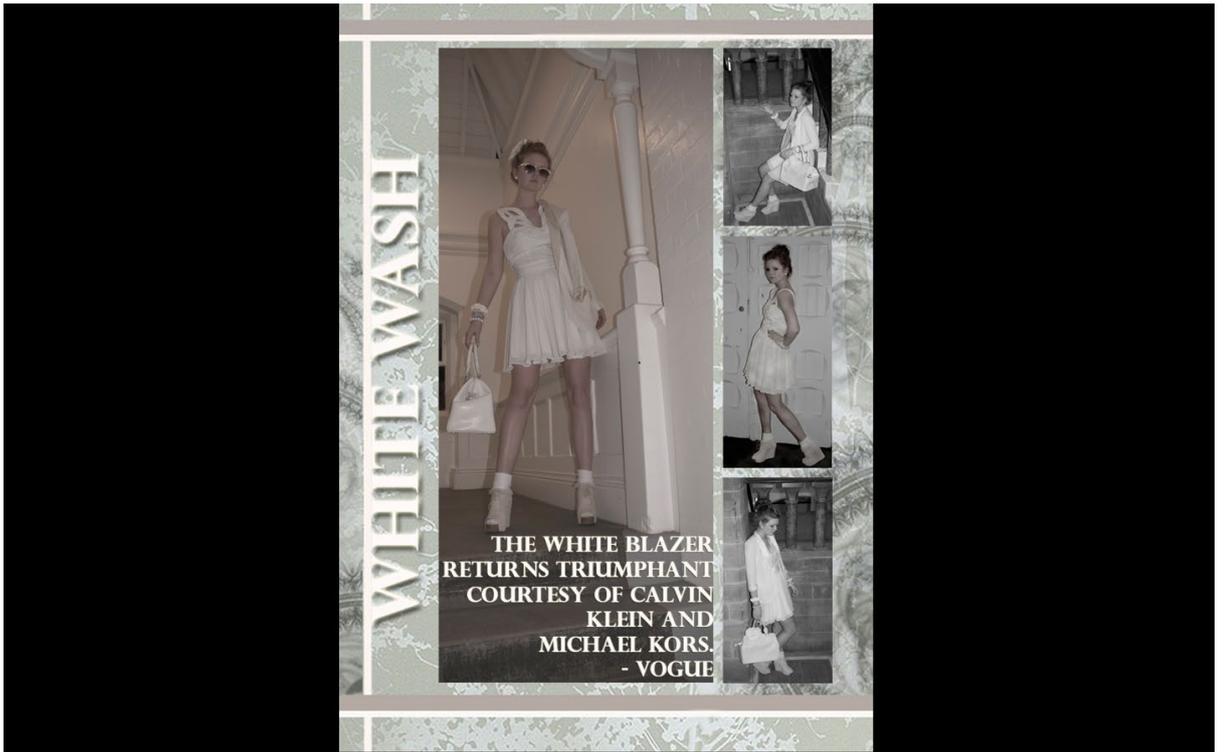
Colour POP



Men's – urban explorer



Whitewash

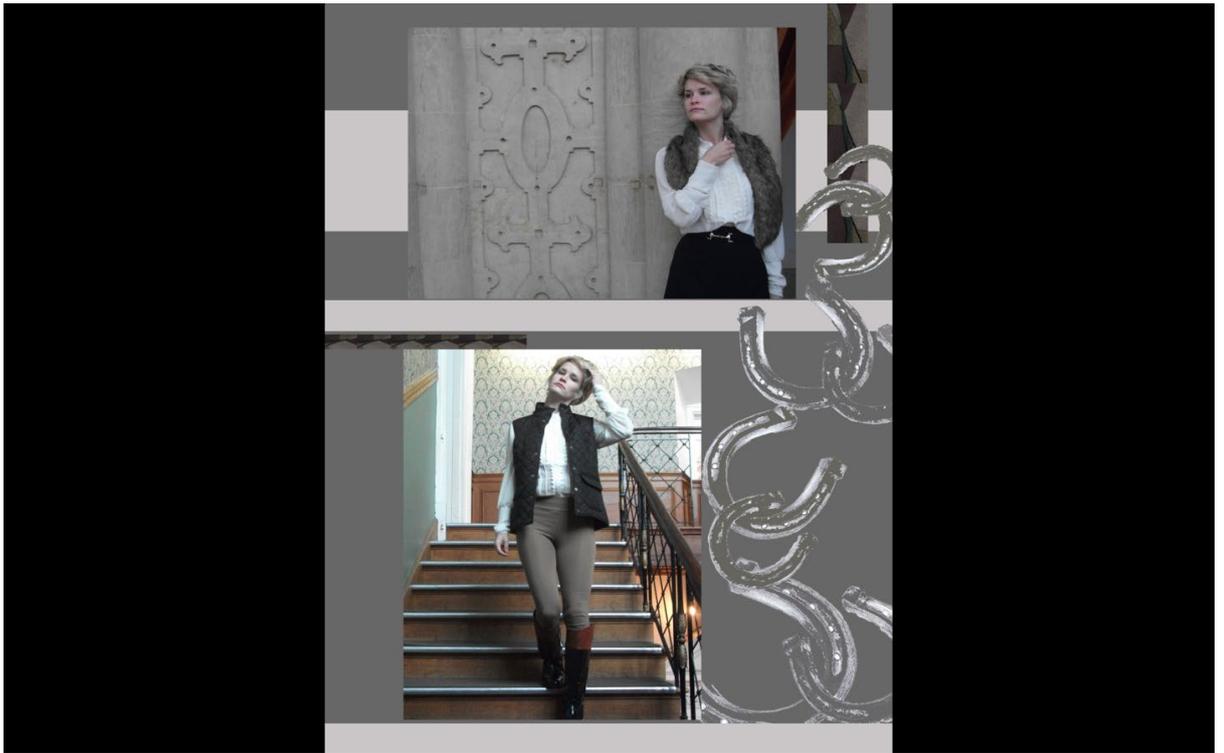


2011/2012 – A/W

Bad is the new black



Country heritage



Do it like a dude



Life of luxury



Men's – tailored to a T



We want quant

The Photo shoot



Coat , Skirt and Necklace – Oasis
Top – New Look
Ring – Reiss
Gloves – John Lewis
Earrings, Tights and Shoes - Topshop

Model: Steph Parsons
Make-up: Sally Light

Spring/summer

Darling buds



Men's – Mr Brightside



On track

The Final Look



Pastel perfection

Photoshoot



Shimmer and sheen

Final Outfit



2012-2013 – A/W

Baroque



Body doubles (matching)



Dare to flare



Glam-ma



Men's 70s wallpaper

Get the Look!



Shirt by **Topshop**, £28.99. Bag by **Next**, £80.00. Shoes by **New Look**, £24.99. Belt by **New Look**, £9.99. Bow Tie by **H&M**, £7.99. Jacket by **Zara** £69.99. Trousers by **H&M**, £19.99. Braces by **H&M**, £6.99. Tank Top by **Primark**, £10.00. Glasses by **H&M**, £6.99.

Textured new world



S/S – Lattice

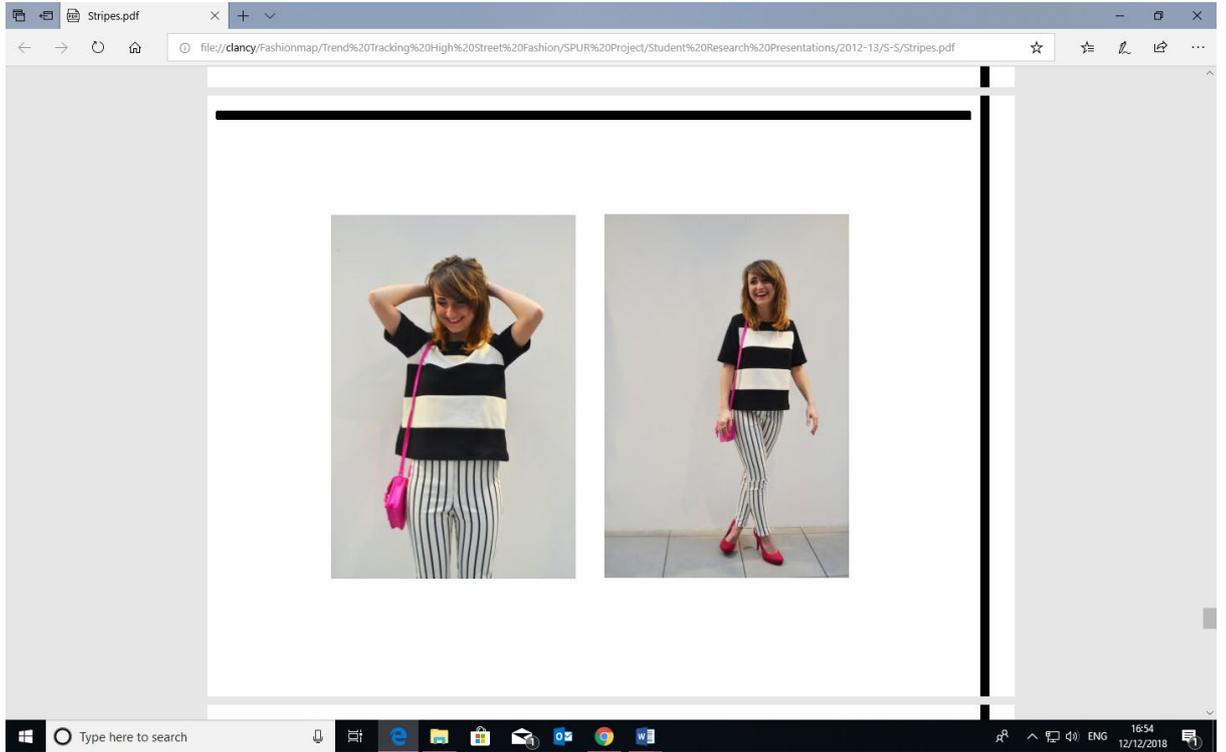


Sports luxe

Model: Laurie
Photographer: Harshita Pala



Stripes



Unisex – the future is floral



White



2013/2014 – S/S

Fondant fancies (pastel)

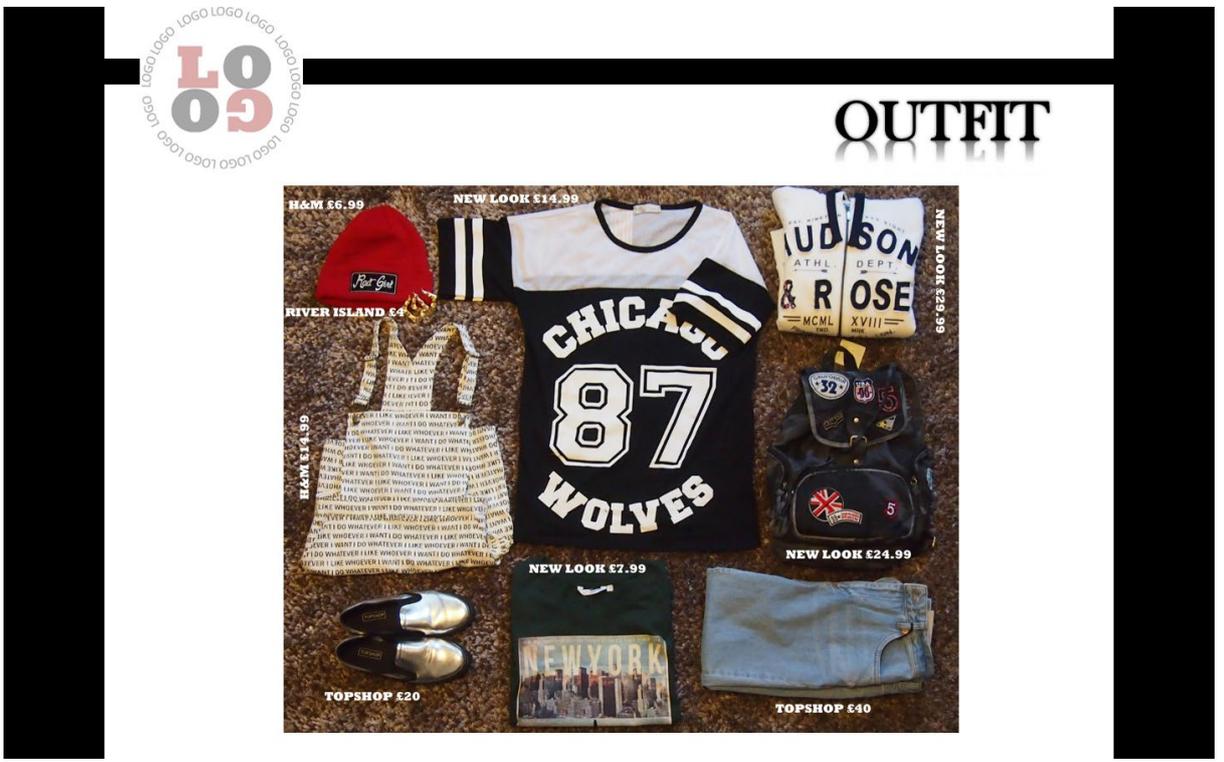
Final Photoshoot



Head to toe floral



Logo



Men's – in bloom

Final Outfit

Zara

- Chinos with Belt £29.99
- Tropical Print Jacket £79.99
- Velvet Moccasin Tassels £69.99

Topman

- Karmakula Hawaiian Short Sleeve Shirt £35.00

River Island

- Brown Tortoise Shell Retro Sunglasses £10.00

Total: £224.97



Men's segmentation – (Mondrian)



The long skirt



Autumn/Winter – Glam punk



Organic oriental



Oversized coats

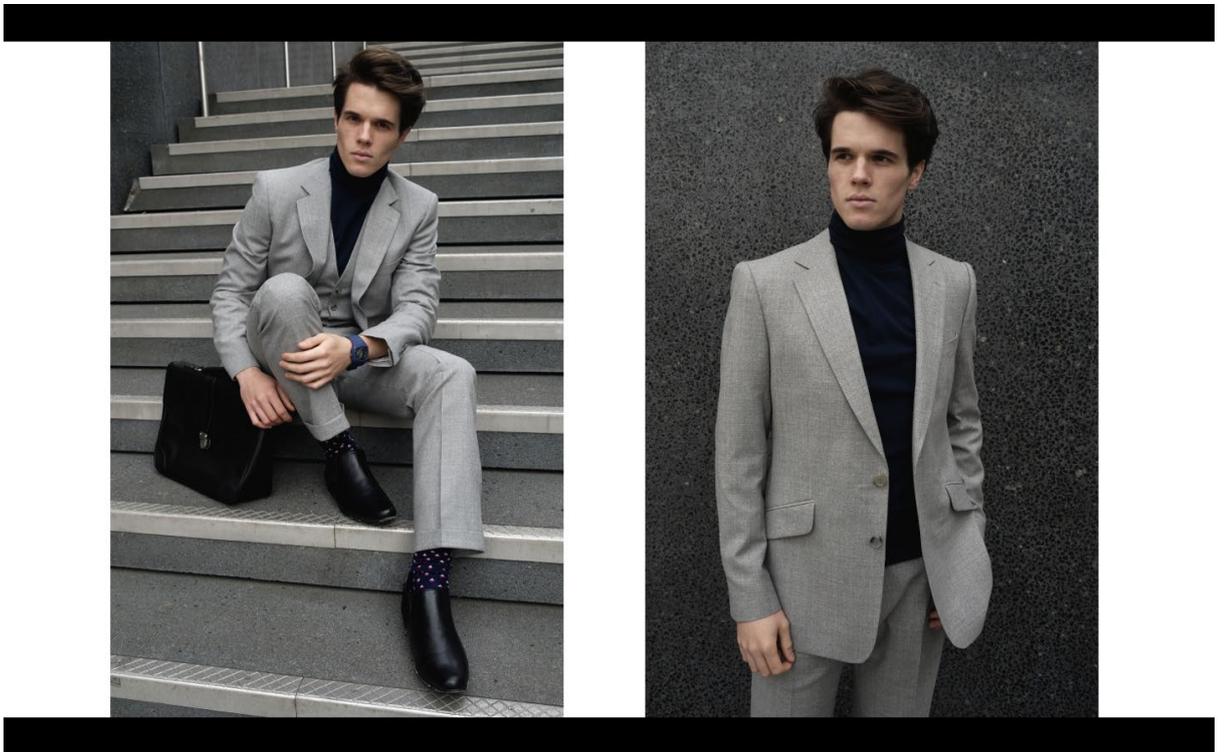




The dark arts



The Modern Man



The new look



2014/2015 – A/W – 50 shades of chrome



Photo
Shoot



Fuzz (fur)

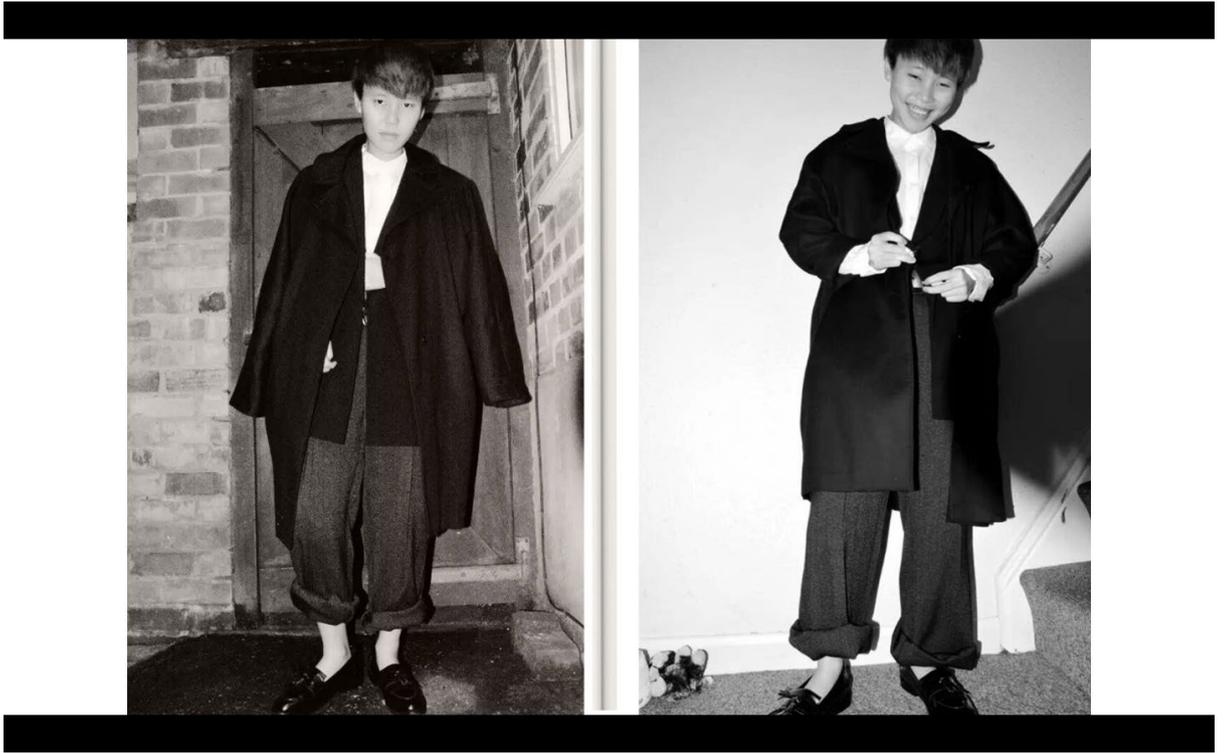
Photo shoot



Men's – sport lux



Tomboy



S/S – Active wear

Our final collection – Garment



RIVERISLAND



TOPSHOP



TOPSHOP



TOPSHOP

ACTIVE WEAR IN MOTION

DIY Denim

Jacket – Urban Outfitters (£70.00)
 Jeans – Urban Outfitters (£59.00)
 Top – Zara (£25.99)
 Shoes – JD Sports (£70.00)
 Bag- Topshop (£34.00)
 Socks – TopShop (£3.50)

http://magis.to/cHkxRgxcF1t-f38PYnZLAHk?l=vsm&o=i&c=e?utm_source=magisto&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=producer_shared_movie

Men's – denim



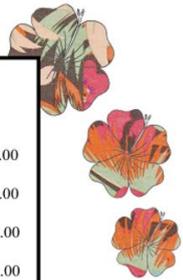
Men's – vivid print

Vivid Print

Spring/Summer 2015



| Vivid Prints | |
|----------------------------------|----------------|
| Topman Navy Coach Jacket..... | £40.00 |
| Vans Printed Shirt..... | £50.00 |
| River Island Chino Shorts..... | £30.00 |
| River Island Trainers..... | £32.00 |
| Topman Tube Socks..... | £3.00 |
| Vans Backpack..... | £30.00 |
| Urban Outfitters Sunglasses..... | £18.00 |
| | Total £ 203.00 |



Urban Jungle

FINAL OUTFIT



American Apparel £24.00

American Apparel £26.00

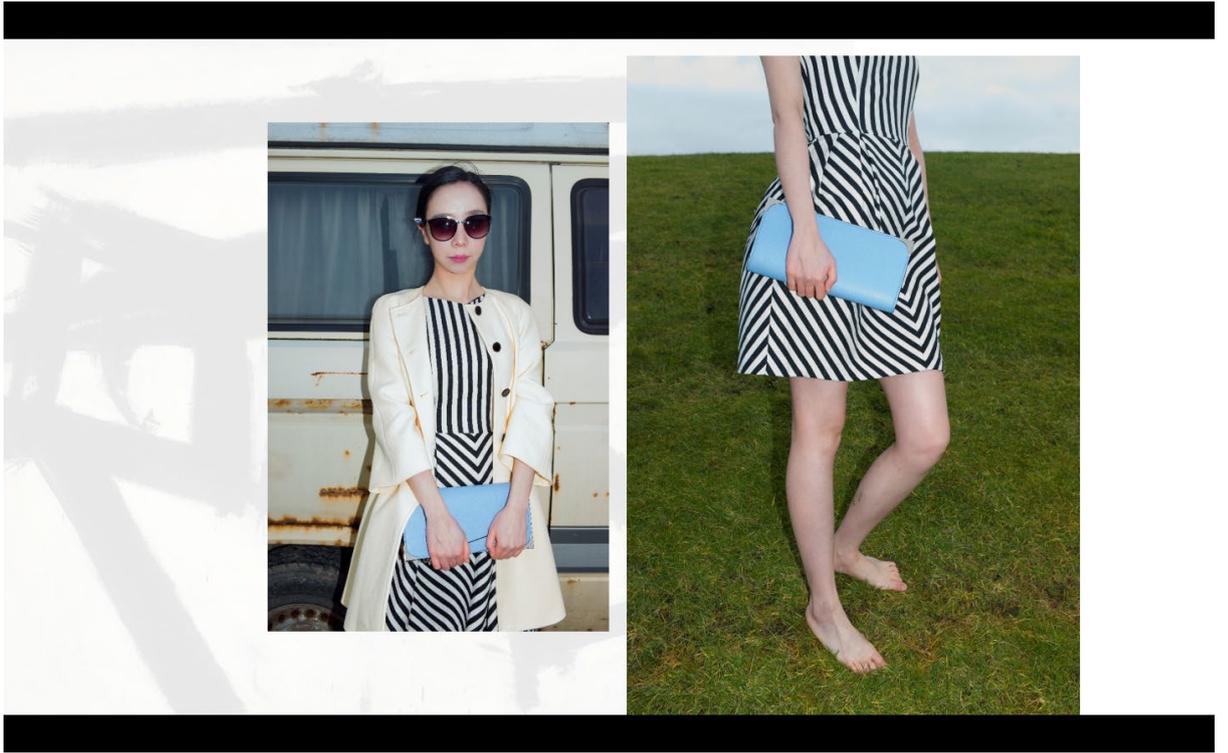


Vans £54.00



Topshop £16.00

Walk the lines (stripes)



2015/2016 – A/W – Animal Instinct



Fluffy love (fur)



Men's – active lifestyle



Men's – back to British



Monochrome floral



Unisex – utility

PHOTOSHOOTS



Fig 133- 135. Photoshoot images (2015) own images

2015/2016 – Spring/summer – Active glow



Chalk (white on white)



Men's – sneaker culture



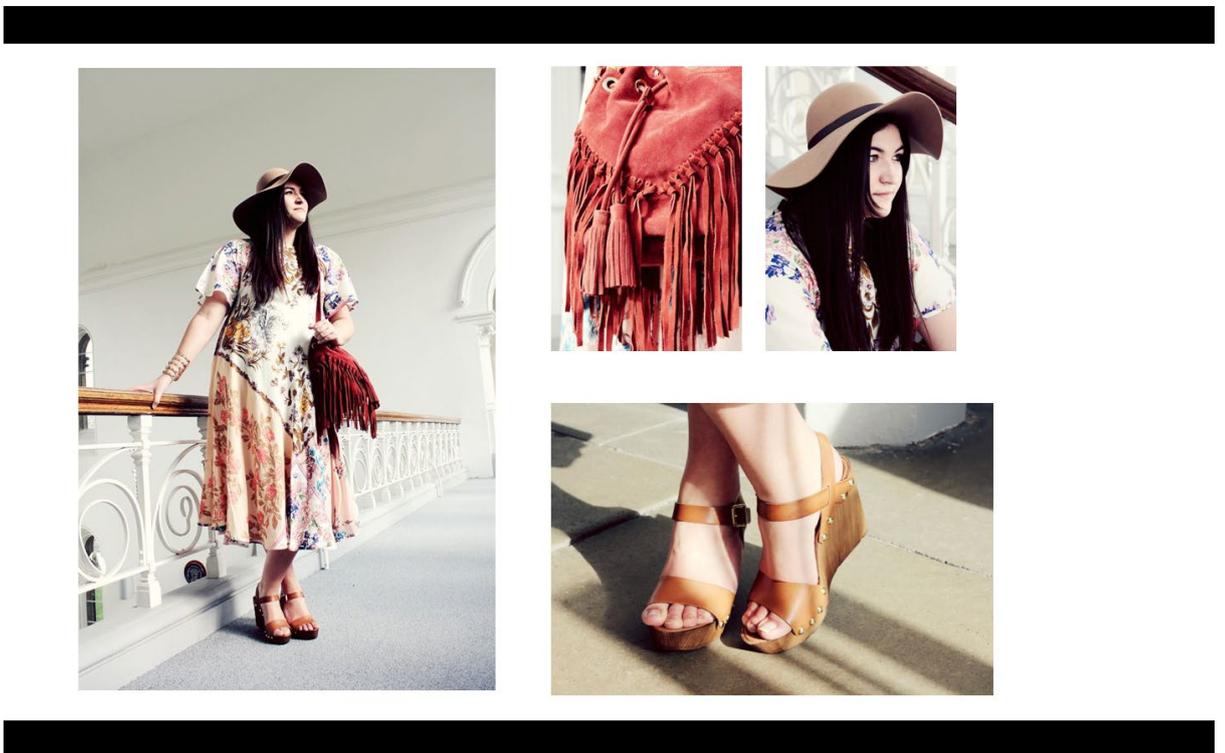
FINAL LOOK



Patch and attach



Retro remix



Space Odyssey



2016/2017 – A/W – Animal Print



Frills

Final outfit

Accessory £14

Accessory £6

River island £40

ZARA £25.99

New Look £24.99

New Look £29.99

Frontliners

FRONTLINERS GROUP 1

Zara £49.99

H&M £14.99

Zara £12.99

Zara £29.99

H&M £3.99

River Island £8

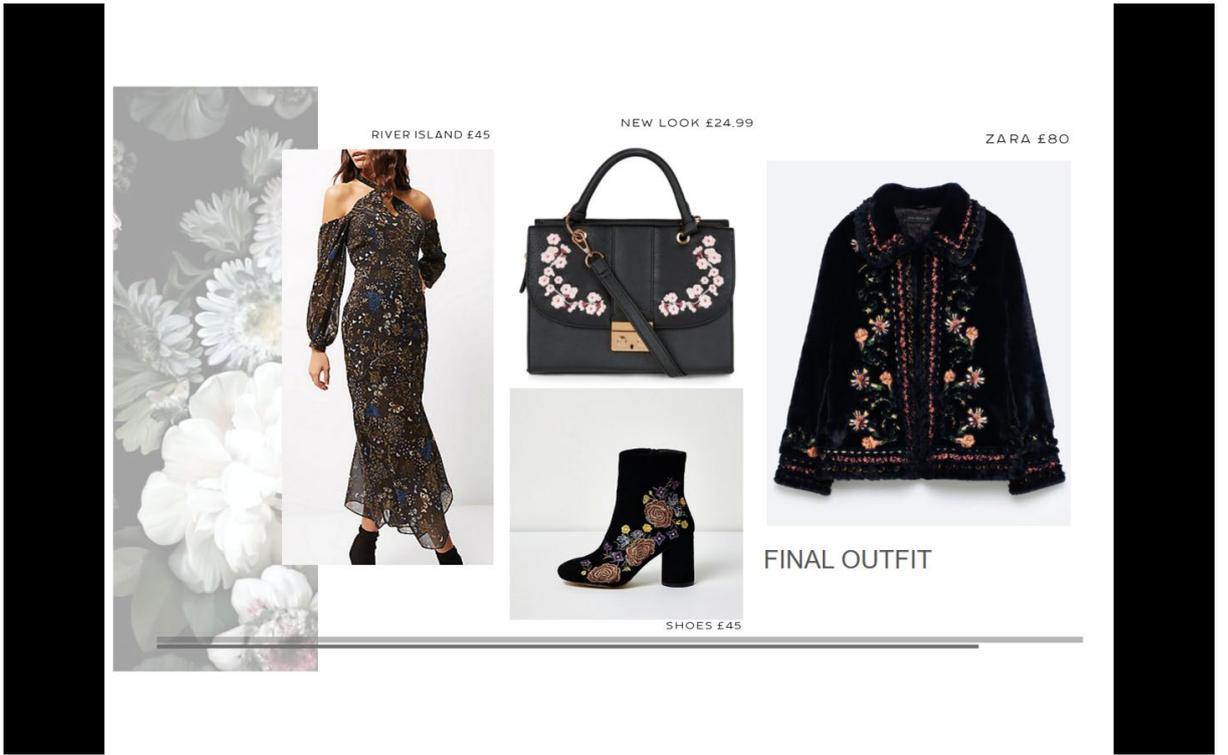
Topman £30

H&M £39.99

New Look £9.99

Zara £25.99

Modern floral



Oversized



Shine on (metallic)



- Zara 49.99
- Urban outfitters 25.20
- New Look 2.99
- Top shop 49
- River Island 26
- Reebok 69.99

S/S – Jasmine garden

Look 2

Topshop – £38

Topshop – £45

Topshop – £65

Men's – defining lines

FINAL OUTFIT



URBAN OUTFITTERS £89.00



NEXT £25.00



RIVER ISLAND £45.00



TOPMAN £28.00



ZARA £25.99



TOPMAN £10.00



RIVER ISLAND £28.00



OFFICE £75.00



Pretty in pink



Sew embroidery



Underwear as outerwear



Washed out

Photographer: JackLynn Bective Models: James Mendonca, ArcoJ Aftab

