

The values and motivations behind sustainable fashion consumption

Short Title: Motivations Behind Sustainable Fashion Consumption

Authors: Louise Lundblad & Iain A. Davies*

<p>Louise Lundblad Graduate Student School of Management University of Bath Bath BA2 7AY UK</p> <p>Phone: +44 (0) 7960350191 louise.lundblad@bath.edu</p>	<p>Dr Iain A. Davies* Senior Lecturer in Marketing School of Management University of Bath Bath BA2 7AY UK</p> <p>Tel: +44 (0)1225 386839 Fax: + 44 (0) 1225 386473 i.davies@bath.ac.uk*</p>
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* Author for correspondence

Biographies:

Louise Lundblad focuses her research in the area of sustainable fashion. She is a MSc graduate from The University of Bath, where was awarded the L'Oreal Prize for best dissertation. She also holds a BA in Business Management from The University of Exeter.

Iain A Davies specialises in the marketing fair trade and ethical luxury items. He explores the assimilation of ethics within business networks drawing on his experience working in the fair trade sector since the 1990's. His research is well read with most downloaded articles in Business History in 2013/14, Business Ethics: A European Review in 2010, Journal of Business Ethics in 2011/2012 and has published in Harvard Business Review.

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Abstract

The concepts of fashion and sustainability may seem like two inherently contradictory concepts. However, the growth of ethical consumption and behavior has become evident over the past decade. Values and motivators are important factors in the decision-making process and can give great insight into why people do what they do. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to explore the values and motivations behind ethical fashion consumption. 39 in-depth interviews were conducted with a sample of frequent eco-clothing consumers. The study follows a means-end theory approach linking purchased products back to personal values. Starting with behavior and working back to values, rather than starting with values and trying to predict behavior as typically done in the literature, allows us to better understand actual consumption behaviors. We find that consumers face a web of motivational complexities in their decision-making processes, that eco-clothing consumers consciously apply their values in various combinations to their decision-making. This study contributes to the overall understanding of sustainable fashion consumption and gives insights into actual purchasing behavior of ethical fashion.

Key Words: Sustainable Fashion, Ethical-Luxury, Sustainable Consumption, Ethical Consumption

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1. Introduction

At first glance, fashion and sustainability may seem like two inherently contradictory concepts; the former is defined by short product life cycles, having to produce new product lines at least four times per year, while the latter implies durability and the reuse of products (Cervellon et al. 2010). Nevertheless, the overlap of the two is not a new idea. The first anti-fur campaigns appeared in the 1980's and in the late 90's numerous sweatshop scandals surfaced, putting significant social pressure on fashion companies and retailers to implement better monitoring programs over their factories (BSR 2012) and the emergence of an ethical fashion consumer movement (Guedes 2011). Vogue, the American fashion and lifestyle magazine, acknowledged this increasing ethical awareness, labelling the environment as a trend in fashion.

The growing interest in sustainable fashion has been stimulating fashion houses and retailers to take action and in the early 2000s the movement started to take off. Stella McCartney, the British clothes designer who is known for refusing to use leather or fur in any of her designs, launched her first clothing line in 2001. Edun was co-founded by Alie Hewson and U2 singer Bono in 2005, with the mission to promote positive change in Africa through fair-trade based relationships (Edun 2013). In 2004, the first Ethical Fashion Show was held in Paris (Guedes 2011). Then in 2009, New York Fashion Week launched its first Eco Fashion Week, and one year later the first official sustainable fashion show took place at London Fashion Week 2010 (Streit and Davies, 2013). Even established powerhouses, like Louis Vuitton Moët Hennessy Group (LVMH), got involved by acquiring a 49% stake in Edun. Further, the trend towards sustainable fashion has also reached high street fashion brands, such as H&M with its organic Conscious Collection and MUJI's fair trade products (Shen et al. 2012). With the growth of online retailing, brands solely dedicated to sustainable fashion such as Komodo and People Tree have also emerged.

The sustainable fashion market has continued to grow even in times of economic downturn. In 2011, the ethical market in the UK was worth £47.2 billion, with ethical personal products including clothing and cosmetics being the fastest growing sectors. The sales of ethical

clothing peaked at £177 million in 2010 (up from only £5m in 2000) and second hand clothing to £330 million in 2011 (Co-operative Bank Ethical Consumerism Report 2012).

Our understanding of sustainable fashion consumption however is limited and the influence of morality in the decision-making process seems to be marginal (Joergens 2006; Carrigan & Attala 2001; Jägel et al. 2012; Shaw et al. 2006). However, the extensive research in the broader context of ethical consumption has given some insight into understanding the values underpinning sustainable fashion consumption. Whether from the socio-anthropological school or the rational information processing school of ethical consumption (Schaefer and Crane, 2005), personal values are considered to play a pivotal role in ethical decision-making (Tallontire et al. 2001). Values are closely related to motivations, and understanding the two can give insight into why people act as they do (Solomon et al. 1999). Therefore, the research objective of this paper is to explore the values and motivations underpinning frequent sustainable fashion consumption.

2. Fashion consumption

Fashion means different things to different people and some people simply place greater importance on it than others (O’Cass 2003). For example, individuals with materialistic values tend to be more involved as fashion consumers, relying on external cues to portray ‘acceptable’ images (Browne & Kaldenberg 1997).

Fashion is more than simply wearing clothes for the physical need of wearing clothes. Dittmar (1992) commented that modern societies hold strong beliefs that ‘to have is to be’ and Belk (1988) argued that one’s possessions produce images of the desired self, meaning that you show your identity through your consumption. This can be taken a step further by taking the view that achievement, satisfaction, and meaning of life is determined by the possessions that you have or have not acquired (Belk 1985; Richins 1994). The identity of an individual is influenced by the symbolic meanings of consumed items and the way in which an individual relates to them (Dittmar 1992). Levy (1959:93) agreed by commenting, “people buy products not only for what they can do, but also for what they mean”.

This is closely linked to hedonic consumption, which. Hirschman & Holbrook (1982) define as the multisensory, fantasy and emotive aspects of consumption. Hedonic products are

consumed for the possibility of self-enhancement (Mort & Rose 2004). This is especially important considering the significant position that fashion holds in today's society (O'Cass 2003). Many individuals purchase fashion clothing to fulfil their need of belonging, self-esteem, to demonstrate their social standing and gain acceptance from others (Easey 2002; Gabriel & Lang 1995). In essence people form an impression of others on the basis of the clothing brands they wear (Fennis and Pruyn 2007).

Fashion is also in a constant process of change, meaning that trends within fashion come and go. According to Hansen (2004) consumers want to keep up with what is in trend, so they can be "in style" (Hansen 2000:248). This is further explained as, once a consumer has acquired the product that he or she desires, the need for a "newer" product will occur (Shankar & Fitchett, 2002:502). But the constantly changing fashions, and consumers need to update their appearance, is contradictory to sustainable consumption (Niinimäki 2010). Fashion consumption belongs to a category of high involvement goods where the consumers purchase products aiming to portray a desired self (McCracken 1988). Once an item is acquired, the anticipation for another object will occur in order to achieve the lifestyle they may aspire to have. This tendency towards fast fashion is therefore often at odds with sustainability.

2.4 Sustainable fashion consumption

A single definition of sustainable fashion is difficult to pinpoint, as there is no industry standard. The concept of sustainable fashion encompasses a variety of terms such as organic, green, fair trade, sustainable, eco, etc (Cervellon et al 2010), all of which are used interchangeably. For instance Joergens (2006:361) define "ethical" fashion as "fashionable clothes that incorporate fair trade principles with sweatshop-free labor conditions while not harming the environment or workers by using biodegradable and organic cotton". In an attempt to formalize boundaries and clarify the concepts, Mintel (2009) proposed the following definitions under the "ethical fashion" umbrella:

"Ethical clothing refers to clothing that takes into consideration the impact of production and trade on the environment and on the people behind the clothes we wear. Eco clothing refers to all clothing that has been manufactured using environmentally friendly processes. It includes organic textiles and sustainable materials such as hemp and non-textiles

*such as bamboo or recycled plastic bottles. It also includes recycled products (clothes made from **recycled clothing** including vintage, textile and other materials and can also be termed **re-used**) and is not necessarily made from organic fibers. **Organic clothing** means clothes that have been made with a minimum use of chemicals and with minimum damage to the environment and **fairtrade** is intended to achieve better prices, decent working conditions, local sustainability and fair terms for farmers and workers in the developing world”.*

As clear as these definitions may be, they have not yet filtered into the vocabularies of consumers (Mintel 2009) or academic literature (Cervellon et al. 2010). However, consumers have shown growing ethical concerns in the context of fashion consumption (Niinimäki 2010). Dickson (2001) found consumer concerns regarding the social consequences of their purchases, especially when human rights in factories are violated. Sweatshop labour has been identified as the most important ethical concern when making clothing decisions (Tomolillo & Shaw 2004; Freestone & McGoldrick 2008) and Ha-Brookshire & Hodges (2009) found more than half of respondents would pay \$5 or more for organic, sustainable, and US-grown cottons shirts.

Yet research also shows that the attitude-behaviour gap exists in the sustainable fashion field (Davies, Lee and Ahonkhai 2012; Niinimäki 2010). Joergens (2006) notes that consumers have limited choice in sustainable clothing, as the prices are not comparable to the low-cost fashion available to them. She found that consumers consider the appearance and style of sustainable fashion unattractive and don't suit their wardrobe needs. Consumers also comment that product features such as price, quality, and appearance of clothing would trump ethics in making clothing decisions, which suggests that it is simply not enough for clothing to be sustainable but must also be appealing to the consumer's aesthetic needs (Beard 2008). Individuals may have increasing difficulty having to choose between their ethical values while simultaneously being tempted by the vast variety and high availability of low-cost clothing (Niinimäki 2010).

As an ethical consumer, one is faced with a wide range of motives influencing decision-making creating motivational complexities (Szmigin, Carrigan & McEachern 2009). It can be concluded that consumers of sustainable fashion are driven by “multiple end goals including

self-expression, aesthetic satisfaction and group conformity” (Kim & Damhorst 1998:132), ethical obligations (Shaw et al. 2006) and/or avoiding feelings of guilt (Ha-Brookshire & Hodges 2009). Values are also closely linked to motivation (Eccles & Wigfield 2002; Freestone & McGoldrick 2008), and both values and motivations can provide insight into why individuals behave as they do (Solomon et al. 1999). Values have therefore been used to understanding other forms of ethical behaviour such as recycling (Bagozzi & Dabholkar 1994) and preferences of organic food (Zanoli & Naspetti 2002; Baker et al. 2004). However despite these insights the values and motivations underpinning consumption behaviour still remains under-researched (Jägel et al., 2012).

Jägel et al. (2012) is a rare example of motivation driven research into sustainable fashion. However, they provide disappointingly little depth or interpretation alongside their list of motivations for sustainable consumption with which to unpick either theoretical or practical contributions for sustainable fashion marketers. They surveyed many self-reported low frequency sustainable clothes consumers and focused on hypothetical and future purchases covering a range of “sustainability” issues, rather than focusing on actual sustainable consumption behaviour. This has the propensity to encourage high rates of social desirability bias by encouraging people to present intentions and not focusing on specific behaviours. As Sheeran’s (2002) meta-study suggests intention can only explain ~28% of behaviour. In fact, Davies et al. (2012) noted there is minimal research observing actual buying behaviour in sustainable consumption research point-blank, questioning how much we genuine know about sustainable consumption practice. Hence, the aim of the study is an exploration of the values and motivations behind actual sustainable fashion consumption behaviour by frequent consumers.

3. Methodology

The research follows the means-end approach, which proposes that consumers use means (products) to achieve ends (states of being) (Gutman 1982). The theory proposes that consumers use their preferences towards products (attributes) based on the functional and psychological benefits or risks (consequences) they will acquire, in order to achieve underlying values (Gutman & Reynolds 1988). The theory also assumes that consumer decision-making is a form of problem solving (rather than cognitive rationalization), in the

sense that they will solve their problems engaging in various actions to maximize benefits and avoid negative outcomes (Olsen & Reynolds 2001).

[Insert figure 1 here]

The approach relies on understanding the hierarchical structure of consumers problem solving by investigating attributes of products, which lead to consequences for the self, which are underpinned by fundamental values (Gutman & Reynolds 1988) (see figure 1). Attributes can consist of both concrete and abstract features while consequences represent psychological emotional and social consequences (Olsen & Reynolds 2001). The framework that the means-end theory presents is suitable for the context of this study as it clearly outlines how the purchase of sustainable fashion is linked to an individual's values.

The means-end chain theory is closely related to the laddering technique. This refers to “an in-depth one-on-one interviewing technique used to develop an understanding of how consumers translate the attributes of products into meaningful associations with respect to self” (Reynolds & Gutman 1988:12). Soft laddering is used in this study so that the flow of speech is restricted as little as possible and the participants have more freedom of expression (Veludo-de-Oliviera et al. 2006), as opposed to hard laddering which refers to questionnaires with open-ended questions (Jägel et al. 2012). Soft ladder is most suited to exploratory studies but requires greater skill and time commitment on behalf of the researcher than hard laddering – which should be used when phenomena are already reasonably well understood and established.

The interviews are semi-structured, which allows for flexibility and ability of asking questions outside of the interview guide (Bryman & Bell 2011), while still being able to hold focus of the discussion. This is appropriate for the exploratory nature of the study, in the event of an interesting topic that is worth pursuing. The semi-structured interview guide also allows for the setup of defining different product attributes, from which the ladders of consequences and values can then be built. This is done by using “why is that important to you?” type questions, revealing the underlying motivations and values behind their perceptions of a product (Reynolds & Gutman 1988). The interview questions were structured in a progressive manner starting from questions about specific purchases of

sustainable fashion, into questions about why they purchase sustainable fashion, and then to their general understanding of sustainable fashion.

3.1 Sampling

For this study a 39 frequent sustainable fashion consumers were interviewed. Unlike Jägel et al. (2012) who relied on self-reported intention/behaviour covering a range of pseudo-sustainable consumption patterns, we focused only on those known to have undertaken the behaviour (through observation, and regular customers known to store keepers). Reynolds and Gutman (1988) suggest that at least 20 people be included in one sample. The individuals were approached in stores of brands solely dedicated to “eco-clothing” under the Mintel (2009) definition, Gudrun Sjöden and Braintree Clothing, as well as regular customers of these shops being contacted online.

According to market research, the majority of sustainable fashion consumers are female (Ethical Fashion Forum 2008). Several researchers on the subject have also argued that women are more important in fashion (Tigert et al. 1980) and ethical fashion (Zelezny et al. 2000; Parker 2002). The participants of this study are therefore all female and they are aged between 16 and 64 years old. In the context of this study, demographic characteristics such as age or nationality are not of any particular importance, rather the exhibition of sustainable fashion consumption behaviour.

3.2 Data analysis procedure

Reynolds and Gutman (1988) outlined three main steps to analyze laddering data. The first task is to perform a content analysis of the elements of the ladders produced in the interviews. A set of summary codes is produced, summarizing and reflecting everything that was mentioned. The importance is to create categories that are broad enough to include more than one respondent, yet representative enough so that meaning is not lost. The codes are categorized into product attributes (A), consequences (C) and values (V). The finalized codes are then assigned numbers. These numbers are used to construct the Implications Matrix and the Hierarchical Value Map (HVM).

The Implications Matrix aims to show ‘the number of times each elements lead to each other element’ (Reynolds & Gutman 1988). It is a square matrix combining between 30 to 50 elements. In the Matrix, there are two types of relationships: direct and indirect. Take for example a ladder of A-B-C-D elements. Direct relationships are between A-B, B-C and C-D.

Indirect relations are between A-C, A-D, and B-D. It is important to examine both types of relationships so that significant connections are not missed. This stage is what makes the laddering technique unique as the qualitative nature of the research crosses over to a quantitative way of dealing with the information (Reynolds & Gutman 1988).

In the next step the HVM is constructed, made up of chains derived from the aggregate data, showing the dominant perceptual patterns. (Reynolds & Gutman 1988). Adjacent relations are first considered (A-B, B-C, C-D) to form an A-B-C-D chain. It is important to note that there does not necessarily need to be a single individual with an A-B-C-D ladder for an A-B-C-D chain to become apparent. To reduce the complexity of the map Reynolds and Gutman (1988) propose a cut-off level, between 3 and 5 relations. A cut off level of 4 is used for this study, as results are the most retentive and representative at this level.

4. Findings

This section outlines the findings of the study in the form the HVM (see Figure 2), the Implications Matrix¹ (see Figure 3) and direct quotes from the respondents.

From the interviews, 10 attributes, 13 consequences, and 6 values are identified (see Table 1). Where possible we have used the same terms as Jägel et al. (2012) to allow for building on the knowledge in the field. However the lack of descriptive detail in Jägel et al. (2012) means we had to make some assumption about what their terms mean (most terms in that paper are only given a 1 line description and no data presentation). We also find many marked differences in interpretation of those terms (marked with a Δ in Table 1). We interpret those differences to be based on our more purposive sample and our greater concern for analysing the interconnectedness between constructs rather than listing potential motivators for sustainable fashion consumption as done by Jägel et al. (2012).

In the HVM (figure 2) the attributes, illustrated in white shapes, are on the lowest level of the HVM. Attributes include generic product attributes such as price and quality as well as environmental aspects like natural materials, environmentally friendly production techniques and being recycled. The next level on the HVM shows the consequences, represented by the

¹ The numbers in the Matrix are displayed in fractional form with the left of the decimal representing direct relations and the right of the decimal showing indirect relations.

lightly shaded ovals. They include a mix of functional, emotional and psychological perceived consumer benefits gained from purchasing eco-clothing; including ‘value for money’, ‘individuality’, ‘reduce waste’, and ‘guilt-free conscience’. Furthermore, eco-clothing buyers’ sustainable consumption behaviour is driven by six values: self-expression, self-esteem, responsibility, protecting the planet and sense of accomplishment, shown on the HVM by the darker green shaded ovals:

To most effectively discuss the findings, the HVM has been constructed to demonstrate six motivational patterns and each will be discussed in order from pattern 1 to 6 (see Figure 4).

4.1 Pattern 1: Less buying

Consumers perceive eco-clothing to be priced higher than average high street clothing (*premium price*). As price is higher, consumers also perceive that the purchased product is of higher *quality*.

“Yeah the clothes are a bit more expensive and sometimes it gets hard. But then you have to think about what you’re paying for. Someone has put more time and effort into it and just the quality, its better”

“I mean I’ve really only bought a lot of more expensive stuff anyways, but I do think you really do get what you pay for with eco”

In turn, *quality* is strongly linked to the product attribute *long lasting* with [9] direct relations (see Figure 3). Consumers asserted that one of the most important features they require from clothing is for them to be durable. They have a need to be able to rely on the clothes to last for frequent usage without losing shape.

“When I buy something I have to really like it and know I’ll wear it. And when I find something I often wear it again and again. So I need clothes to be good quality to last longer and eco does that”

“In my experience my purchases has lasted well and kept its shape after washing. I even think I still wear clothes that I’ve had for 3-4 years. More than that.”

A second dimension of *longer lasting* indicates consumers want their clothes to be able to last over more than one fashion season, which brings in the product attribute of *timeless cuts* into the chain, inferring the importance of simple and classic shapes and emphasizing a garment’s usability.

“It’s not just about durability but the general life span of the garment. It has to be able to survive through many seasons. If people don’t buy garments that do, they just end up in the dump.”

“I want timeless. I want classic. It just makes it more usable and reliable. I don’t usually buy things that are ‘fashionable’. I buy things that I know I can keep wearing”

Buying clothes that *last longer* and are of *better quality*, consumers express more positive links to personal finance. It seems that by being able to keep clothes longer they feel they get *value for money* (see Figure 4). As a result, consumers are also driven by the benefit of *buying less* in the long run.

“I like to keep wearing clothes over and over again and not have to buy new ones all the time [...] It does save you money in the long run even though in the beginning it is a bit more expensive”

“It’s not important for me to always have new clothes. I’d rather have some favourite pieces and be able to wear them all the time. That way it is also easier for me financially.”

The *timeless cut* also enables them to live an easier life in the sense that they do not have to always shop the current trends.

“It’s is just so much easier. You pull it over your head and there you go.”

“I won’t have to spend hours in stores which just has clothes matching the current trend and I can’t wear anything because they don’t suit my body shape. [...] I don’t have to replace my clothes all the time.”

Furthermore, the HVM shows that *natural materials* have an effect on perceived quality of the product (see Figure 3). They feel that natural materials may be more difficult to work with, but appreciate the work that has gone into them.

“I like bamboo. As a designer I know that this material is of great quality and I would be lucky to be able to afford to work with it”

“I guess natural also means less pesticides, which means that it is harder to take care of. I think I appreciate that more than some mass produced piece”

To summarize this chain, people are motivated to buy eco clothing due to financial benefits such as less buying and value for money in the long run. Consumers, therefore purchase eco due to attributes such as higher quality and longer lasting, both of which evidently meet the desired ends.

4.2 Pattern 2: The self

Self-esteem and *self-expression* are strong anchors with [16.37] total relations leading to them. While the consumers do not place great importance on looking good for others, more

concern was placed on how their clothing enabled them to be comfortable in their own skin and be able to express their opinions and values.

Self-esteem has a total of [8.19] relations leading to it, making it the third most influential value. Participants felt that they want to have confidence in who they are, with the main judge being themselves. The need for self-esteem is fulfilled through two chains; *comfort* and *looking good*.

Comfort relates to both the comfort and the feeling of confidence and happiness when wearing the clothing.

“I have a busy life style. I need to be able to be comfortable in what I’m wearing. I don’t want to feel like changing after just a couple hours of wearing something in an 8 hour work day”

“If you’re wearing something you feel comfortable in you also act more comfortable and you are more confident. That’s why I buy clothes. To make myself feel good about myself and to make myself feel happy”

In turn, comfort is supported by the *good feel of the material*, which customers feel is due to the use of *natural materials*. By being comfortable, they express that they feel they have less worries, also contributing to their self-esteem. However, a few customers also noted that the material’s good feel might simply be psychological.

“I never liked wearing synthetics. It just stuck to you and it didn’t feel nice. You also had to worry about silly things like sweat marks”

“Maybe it feels better because you know that someone in the world hasn’t suffered making the product that you’re carrying”.

The consequence of *looking good* shows consumers expressing that even though they do care about their appearance, it is not based on what others think of them.

“I value my appearance and I want to look nice. You buy clothes because you like them and you like yourself in them”

“My job requires me to look presentable. My friends are all models so that puts even more pressure on me to look good. But that isn’t what it’s all about. I want to just go out of my house and feel like I look good”

Looking good, in turn, is related to the consumers’ desire to be themselves. They express strong feelings of wanting to be able *to be an individual* because they believe the fashion and the people surrounding them have become too homogenous.

“Everyone wears the same dress they’ve seen in the magazines or copy the models. Sort of like Kate and William. She’s wearing a blue dress so

everyone has to buy the blue dress. Why? Why can't she have her style and you have your own style?"

"People tend to style things the same way so they automatically look like clones. Like that Urban Outfitters hipster look where you're putting so much effort into trying to be different, but if everyone is also doing it, how different are you really?"

The product attribute that allows for consumers to meet their end needs is *the unique style* [08.01] eco-clothing offers.

"There are some lovely colours and patterns used in eco. The colours are in a way unique. The prints and patterns are interesting and definitely not used anywhere else"

"Eco clothing brands are usually quite small which means that you're more likely to be able to find styles that won't be worn by everyone else"

The chain of *unique styles* and *sense of individuality* is also driven by a second value, namely that of *self-expression*, which has a total of [7.14] relations leading to it. The participants refer to self-expression as being able to voice their personality, values and opinions through their clothing.

"I dress certain ways because I want to show a part of who I am. I think that's important to make yourself stand out in that way. [...] Dress with a purpose"

"I want my clothes to reflect my personality, my values. It should reflect who I feel I am as a person. It's just my personal style, something which is very important to me"

To summarize, eco clothing consumption is driven by values closely related to the self. Consumers place importance on self-expression and self-esteem, which motivates them to purchase eco clothing with attributes like unique styles and materials to obtain ends such as a sense of individuality and comfort. Effectively, these ends strengthen the influence of the values on their consumption behaviour.

4.3 Pattern 3: Health

Similarly to pattern 1, this pattern does not reach higher-level abstractions or multiple ends. The individuals consider the use of *natural materials* in eco-clothing to be beneficial in that they experience *less health problems*. They specifically put emphasis on the wellbeing of their skin due to the use of less pesticides and chemicals throughout production of the garments purchased. When dealing with natural materials, individuals indicated materials and fabrics made out of bamboo, hemp, and organic cotton.

“I used to have really bad cases of eczema and I think it became less and less of a problem when I started to wear clothes that were made from natural materials”

“I know that less pesticides and fertilizers are used during organic cotton cultivation. You don’t have worry about reactions from these chemicals or about more serious problems like skin cancer”

In short, the consumers emphasize their concern for their own health and well-being. Therefore, they avoid health problems by purchasing eco clothing made out of natural materials.

4.4 Pattern 4: The environment

A significant motivational pattern in the HVM concerns the consumer’s will to address environmental concerns. The values that drive this chain are *responsibility* and *protect the planet* with [7.18] and [13.22] total relations leading to them respectively.

The consumers place great importance on taking *responsibility* for the way they consume, and feel a responsibly to change others consumption habits as well.

“We have to care about the world we live in and do what we can. If we don’t then it’ll lead to complete disaster. We’re all connected”

“I want to be part of the change. I want to motivate people. I want to educate people through my blog about the little things they can do without drastically changing something in their life”.

The respondents voiced the importance of *protecting the planet*, in terms of saving resources and keeping the planet healthy. This was especially evident when future family was considered.

“If I have children one day, I don’t want them to live in a world without nature, without animals, without nothing. The good thing being alive today is that we have a beautiful planet.”

“I love nature. I love the outdoors and I want future others to be able to enjoy that as well. If we don’t do anything we’d end up with a world like in Wall-E²”

² Wall-E is a Walt Disney Pictures and Pixar Animations Studios film about a robot designed to clean up a waste-covered Earth far in the future (Disney 2013).

Responsibility and *protect the planet* are the drivers of consumer's will to *support the environment*, which as a consequence has an aggregate [26.18] relations leading to and from it. The attributes that directly contribute to making people feel like they are making a difference include: *natural materials*, *environmentally friendly production techniques*, and *recycling*.

Buying clothes made from natural materials is considered as one of the smallest things that they can do to help the environment. Many consumers believe this has the least amount of change in habits. The connection has [26.23] relations leading from it, underlying its importance.

"I think buying eco where you know that they've used natural materials that do the least damage to the environment is important. It's the least thing you can do"

"I think it is hard to be completely eco-friendly in everything that you do. But if we can do something and there are options why not take them? Like simple things like buying clothes from natural materials. It's not so hard"

Participants also relate to clothes that have been made using *environmentally friendly production techniques*. Also shown to be a significant attribute with [26.18] relations leading from it.

"Maybe you can't stop using certain ways to travel like flying. But with clothing you do have a choice now. I chose eco because I know that the clothes have been produced with the least negative impact on the environment as possible"

"I know about how harmful pesticides and fertilizers and water wastage is on the environment. [...] So I want to know how my clothes are made and where they come from so I'm not being part of all those bad things"

Individuals express they feel they are *doing good* for the environment when they buy *recycled* clothes. This is especially true to individuals who buy choose to buy second-hand or create their own clothes, as a way to contribute to the *support of the environment*.

"I can't afford the branded eco stuff so to do my bit I buy all of my clothes second hand. [...] Old stuff is just as good as new stuff."

"Part of my ethos is that nothing should go to waste. If I have an item I don't particularly wear anymore it is not that difficult to make it into something new."

By purchasing *recycled* clothes, the participants also express the benefit they are experiencing in *reducing waste*.

“I feel like I’m almost saving the planet by not filling the planet with stuff that isn’t biodegradable. Think about all the landfills with all that stuff. It’s terrible.”

“I give all my throw outs to charity shops to encourage recycling. I feel it’s so wasteful to buy new when there is so much high quality second hand stuff out there.”

Protect the planet and *responsibility* are major motivational drivers behind eco-clothing consumption. Because of these values, the participants seek to contribute to the *support for the environment*. They consequently do so through purchasing eco clothing with attributes such as *natural materials*, *environmentally friendly production techniques* or *recycled*.

4.5 Pattern 5: Accomplishments

At the top is the life value of *sense of accomplishment*, which has [10.27] relations leading to it. The importance of this chain is evident in the HVM as there are five different cognitive and emotional paths where this value acts as a motivation for gaining benefits and avoiding risks when buying eco fashion.

The participants reveal they enjoy feeling they have done the ‘right thing’ and express the need for confirmation of having made the correct decisions. Additionally, they show pride in their actions. It should be noted that several individuals were hesitant to explicitly express this need.

“I want to feel like I am part of something bigger. That I’m doing something right. That my decisions and past sacrifices will be worth it. I want to think that I am doing something that is good for the world and that I’m not just one of those people who say I don’t care because none of this stuff will happen in my lifetime or in my own children’s lifetime.”

“I don’t know if this is the right thing to say. Is it bad to say that I feel proud of myself?”

Two benefits build on achieving a *sense of accomplishment*. The first is a *guilt-free conscience*. Participants mention that buying eco clothing is a benefit in the sense that they are able to do so without being burdened by a sense of guilt after their purchase. This was often insinuated by explaining situations of how they would feel if they did not buy eco.

“I never used to really buy a lot of clothes then one time I spent over £100 at a People Tree sample sale. At the till I felt shocked by the amount it came to, but the cashier reminded me that I can do it with a guilt-free conscience because I’m helping the environment”

“I used to buy a significant amount of non-eco clothing. The more I learned about the damages, the more guilty I felt after purchasing it. I would be lying if I said I went as far as saying that I immediately returned the clothes because of it, but I remember it was definitely a feeling I wanted to avoid.”

The second consequence is that of *good feeling*, which has a total of [22.19] relations. Consumers emphasize how much better they feel about their purchases and with themselves as eco clothing consumers.

“I feel so much better about myself and my purchase. I mean I feel it on a conscious level. Then when you wear your clothes you wear it with a sense of pride. Like I’ve done something good”

“I think it just makes me feel happier. I feel better when I buy it, so I also feel better when I wear it. Again I think it just makes me feel good.”

These two benefits are strongly related to two different product attribute categories: *availability* and *support the environment*.

Consumers have commented that eco clothing is not widely *available* and it has been difficult to find good brands with appealing designs. But the participants have revealed it is becoming easier to be an eco-clothing consumer with online retailing. However, they comment that they still put a lot of time into doing research, as they want a high level of transparency.

“I spend a lot of time researching online for eco brands to find things that suit my own personal style. Nowadays the choice you have is slightly greater choice so it’s become easier and there are really great things out there. But even now when I find a new brand I like I am so pleased and it’s something I always share on my blog to let other people know as well”

“I just feel so happy that I have found some really good eco brands. Sometimes you buy eco and you don’t even know. But then what’s the point in that? If it said on the label or something I’m sure more people would choose to buy it as well. If I find something that seems ethical but I’m unsure of trust, why should I support that brand?”

Support the environment, which was also outlined in Pattern 4, infers consumers benefit from believing they are supporting the environment, which in turn makes them feel like they have achieved something and that they have made the right choice.

“I can go home thinking that I’ve done something. And you know, I think positively. Maybe one day my actions will save the planet!”

“I always think if I’m missing out on fashion that my friends wear. But then I look back and think that I have made the right choice. It’s kind of like if you’ve given some money to charity. I just support the environment.”

Even though consumers show the importance of reaching a sense of accomplishment through buying eco, they also note that they do not have the need/want to push it onto others. While showing enthusiasm for sharing, they also comment that pushing feelings such as guilt onto non-eco clothing buyers is not in their life goals.

“I want to share with the world about eco. I don’t mind being like a walking, talking communication tools for eco clothing brands. I want to share on Twitter, Facebook, on my blog and everywhere!”

“Of course I would bring the eco part in if someone asked me where something was from. [...] I would never shove it into someone’s face though... make them feel guilty for not buying eco... It would just seem like I think I’m above someone for doing good, which I’m not. Yes I made that choice, but I’m not going to push someone to do it if they don’t want to.”

In summary, it is evident that consumers are driven by egoistic needs such as sense of accomplishment. Consumers want to feel pleased with their purchases and with themselves. They can do so by choosing to buy eco fashion and experiencing minimal feelings of guilt.

4.6 Pattern 6: Social Justice

The second most influential value that drives eco clothing consumption is found to be that of *social justice*. This refers to the importance of equality and human rights of the workers in the factories used by clothing companies. While the value has [7.18] relations to it, the elements building up to it are of great importance among consumers.

“I care how people are treated. I guess it makes me angry to see people coming out of Primark with 20 bags. The people who made them are not treated as humans should be treated”

“I am disgusted by some of the conditions that these people work in. You hear stories about them being chained to their sewing machines. You

hear about children working like slaves. And you hear about people dying from handling all those dangerous chemicals all day. What happened to human rights?"

The main product attribute consumers mentioned is the use of *no sweatshops*, with [17.26] relations leading from it. This attribute combines aspects such as workers in factories gaining fair wages and working in fair conditions.

"I don't like the idea wearing something knowing that some poor child, woman or man has worked so hard on a piece of item that ultimately doesn't mean anything and not gotten anything back from it."

"You just want to know that they are getting enough to live a life that is good for them and that what is happening in the factories like out in Bangladesh is not what is happening in ones from these eco brands."

A risk that consumers believe is avoided by purchasing eco that uses *no sweatshops* is that of *less exploitation*. The strength of this connection is high with [9.01] relations. This consequence also makes up for [21.12] total relations (see Figure 3). This is related to the consumers' wishes for workers and producers of the garments to be getting a fair amount of the profits and that they are not being taken advantage of.

"I went to Hungary once and met a woman who worked at one of the Primark factories. You could see that she wasn't happy... You could tell that she hadn't been treated well and the effect that had on her life. It isn't right or fair and it shouldn't have to be this way."

"You don't know the story behind it. These workers are paid nothing and get treated badly. They [fashion companies] say they don't do child labour but a lot of them do. And that is not okay. At least with eco you know that the workers are getting something and not being exploited."

In turn, the participants believe that by supporting workers they are also able to *support their communities*. The individuals expressed this by emphasizing helping independent sellers and backing brands that work with women in communities around the world. The participants also uncover a feeling of being very connected to the world and the people in it.

"Working with People Tree you see how much every single employee cares about the women making these garments. So by buying you're giving back and supporting a whole community, which is so rewarding."

"I bought cushions that were actually just re-sewn cushions. They were made by a single mother, I don't remember exactly where. I actually got to speak with her... it's quite emotional. These cushions became"

priceless. It's like it's your grandmas... you'll never throw it away because you have valuable memories attached to it."

While individuals do demonstrate care for society and its well-being, there is a connection between altruistic values and consequences and individual emotive drivers like a guilt-free conscience or sense of achievement. Although no participant explicitly expressed they feel better about themselves, there are [0.04] indirect relations between no sweatshops and guilt-free conscience, making it of significance.

5. Discussion

The HVM (see Figure 4) presents six motivational patterns identified from the interviews. The six values fall into categories defined by Stern et al. (1993): altruistic values, biospheric values and egoistic values. Ethical values like altruistic (social justice) and biospheric (protect planet and responsibility) are shown to be important (see figure 3) for this group of consumers, however, as argued by Kim and Damhorst (1988) the egoistic values (self-expression and self-esteem) should not be ignored when understanding sustainable fashion consumption. Benefits for the self in terms of sense of accomplishment, better health, self-esteem and value for money still add up to more ladders than responsibility, protecting the planet and social justice combined.

As shown in table 1, many of the motivations identified in this study were similar to motivations identified in Jägel et al. (2012). However whereas Jägel et al. (2012) found a juxtaposition at which less frequent consumers, or intended consumers, of sustainable fashion found a trade-off or even dualism between sustainability and fashion, our regular consumers were able to find holism in sustainable consumption. The nature of the altruistic or biospheric fed into the egoistic. The extra cost of the clothing and natural materials leads to the timeless cuts, durability and higher quality, the lack of availability, natural materials and “unfashionability” of the notion of sustainable fashion leads to unique designs, individuality and great comfort. Whereas Jägel et al. (2012) find a very top heavy biospheric motivation for hypothetical consumption through more structured and distant data collection, we find more nuanced and holistic motivation through an in-depth socio-anthropological approach – even though we each used largely identical theoretical approaches.

In fact we find that regular sustainable fashion consumers never expressed the need for one element to be sacrificed for another to be fulfilled. It can be reasoned that the HVM (Figure

4) is representative of the different values, perceived benefits and risks, and attributes that sustainable fashion consumers can choose to create a path to and from, almost ‘mixing and matching’, in order to meet their ends. This is supportive of Dickson and Littrell’s (1996) finding that dual pathways can lead to purchase.

The HVM reveals that consumers are driven by ethical obligation at a consequence level (Shaw et al. 2006). For example, consumers want to *reduce waste* and *support the environment*. Similarly, they are motivated by the knowledge that they are reducing risks for others members in society through buying products that have *not exploited* workers and *supporting communities*. Yet, the consumers may simultaneously seek individual benefits such as *comfort*, *individuality*, *looking good*, and various aspects of *design* in eco fashion, all of which are related to hedonic consumption (Hirschman and Holbrook 1982). This is evident in pattern 5 (see figure 4) where consumers seek *guilt-free conscience* and *good feelings*.

Grunert and Grunert (1995) suggest that HVM can be described using both a motivational view and a structural view. The motivational view unfolds consumer’s buying motives, while the structural view illustrates relevant cognitive structures. Structurally, the map shows a relatively equal number of relations between the patterns. While pattern 1 and pattern 3 do not reach higher-level abstraction, both are connected to the attribute natural materials, which acts as one of the most significant elements in the map, as it is linked to 4 out of 6 patterns. This also strengthens the previously mentioned finding, in which frequent sustainable fashion consumers express that their consumption does not result in “value trade-offs” (Jägel et al. 2012; Freestone and McGoldrick 2008), due to the high level of interconnectedness in the HVM. This element of interconnectivity is further illustrated by the number of elements leading to the value of sense of achievement. Out of 23 attributes and consequences, 20 of them have at least one direct or one indirect relation leading to it.

It becomes evident from the results that values have a conscious presence in sustainable consumers’ minds. This supports the body of research using values as an antecedent to behaviour in highly purposeful samples. Effectively, this is related to the regular consumers’ explanation that purchasing sustainable fashion is a decision they make consciously and put effort into making. However it would be highly unlikely that this could also be said for mainstream or occasional consumers, although further behaviour based research would be needed to make this assessment clearly.

9. References

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Figure 1. The means-end chain (Olsen and Reynolds 2001:13)

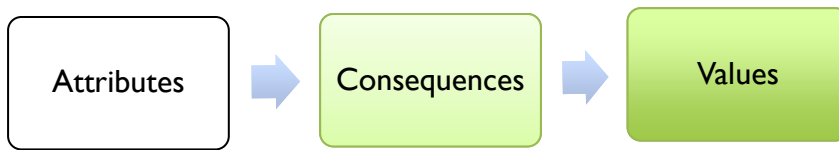


Table 1. Master content codes and assigned numbers

Attributes

- (1) Unique styles*
 - (2) Timeless cuts
 - (3) Quality*
 - (4) Premium price Δ
 - (5) Long lasting
 - (6) Availability*
 - (7) Natural materials*
 - (8) Recycled*
 - (9) No sweatshops
 - (10) Environmentally friendly production techniques*
-

Consequences

- (11) Material feels good
 - (12) Look good*
 - (13) Less health problems Δ
 - (14) Value for money*
 - (15) Less exploitation*
 - (16) Comfort Δ
 - (17) Reduce waste*
 - (18) Support environment*
 - (19) Support communities*
 - (20) Individuality Δ
 - (21) Less buying Δ
 - (22) Good feeling Δ
 - (23) Guilt-free conscience*
-

Values

- (24) Self-expression
- (25) Responsibility Δ
- (26) Social justice*
- (27) Protect the planet*
- (29) Self-esteem Δ
- (29) Sense of accomplishment*

* = *Synonymous with Jägel et al. 2012*
 Δ = *Similar topic but very different interpretation from Jägel et al. 2012*
= *Not identified in Jägel et al. 2012*

Figure 2. The Hierarchical Value Map for eco clothing consumption

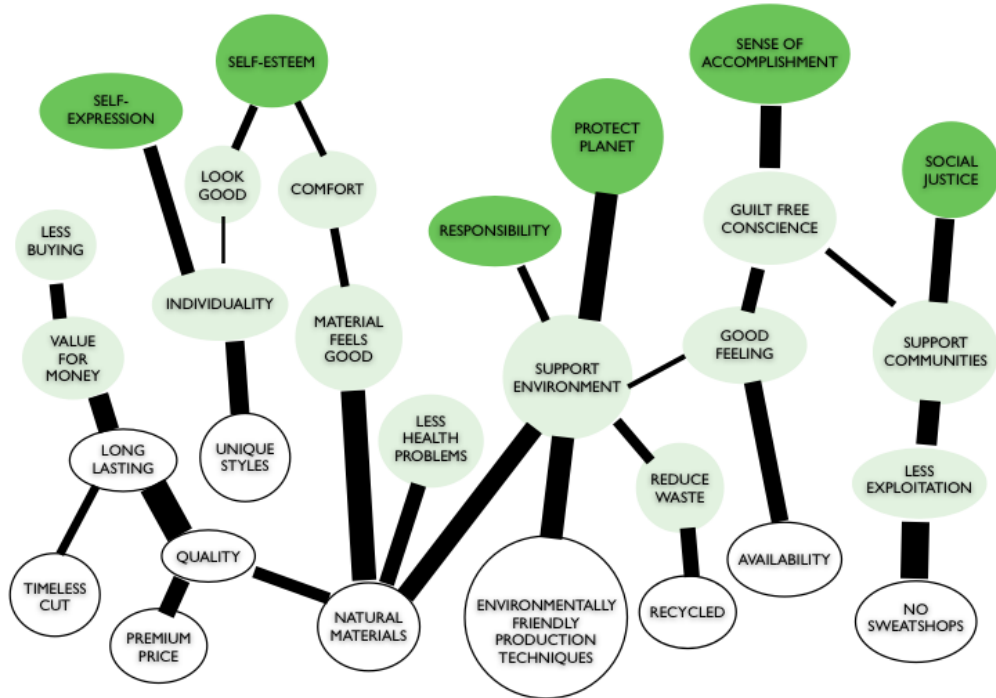


Figure 3. The Implications Matrix - There are no relations between attributes I and 6-I I

	2	3	4	5	X	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	To	From	Sum			
1							2.03																					11.20		
2		.01		2.01			1.00		4.00		.01				8.01	.01			1.07									0	11.20	
3	1.00		.01	9.01		2.01	.01	1.00	2.06		2.01	.03			.01	1.02	.01		.02								1.00	8.09	9.09	
4		5.00		.01		.01		.05		2.01						1.05		.01									10.01	28.23	28.23	
5		1.00	1.00				6.00			3.03		3.01				3.03	1.00	.01	.01								1.01	8.09	8.09	
6																5.00											0	6.01	6.01	
7		4.00		2.01		6.03	1.01	4.02	.02		3.03		6.00		.01	.01	.01	.02		.01		.01	.03				0	26.23	0	26.23
8												8.02	.05		.01	.04	.02	.02		.02		.04					0	8.22	0	8.22
9													3.04			.05	4.03			1.02	.07						0	17.26	0	17.26
10								.01								.04	.02		1.03			3.07	1.00				0	12.22	0	12.22
11							1.00	1.00	2.02		2.01				.01												11.05	19.12	19.12	
12											1.00				1.01	.01			2.01								7.05	14.10	14.10	
13						1.00			0.01								1.00	.01		1.00		.01					6.03	10.07	10.07	
14																2.00											2.00	17.16	17.16	
15													4.00		.01		.04	1.00		1.01	4.03						10.01	21.12	21.12	
16																											9.06	13.11	13.11	
17						2.00							4.01		1.00	1.00	3.01	1.01		.02		.03					13.07	22.16	22.16	
18														1.00			.02	2.00		1.05		5.02					17.08	26.18	26.18	
19																3.00	1.01	.01	.01	.01	2.03	1.00					8.05	16.22	16.22	
20																1.01	3.03					1.00	2.01				10.06	21.12	21.12	
21																											10.15	12.16	12.16	
22													1.00					2.00	1.00	.01	1.02	1.02					16.22	22.29	22.29	
23																3.00				2.00	1.00	2.01					12.14	23.17	23.17	
24																											0	7.14	7.14	
25																											0	7.18	7.18	
26																											0	8.18	8.18	
27																											0	13.22	13.22	
28																											0	8.19	8.19	
29																											0	10.27	10.27	

Figure 4. Dominant patterns in the HVM

