

Attitudes Towards the Sustainable Fashion Movement:

Fashion Consumption Tendencies in Slovakia¹

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Introduction

Expression of one-self has deep roots in our society, as Diana Crane states, outfits have been a certain medium for communicating social status, as well as a non-verbal message about one's personal character, all the way through the nineteenth century (Crane, 2012).

As Chira (Chira, 2016) says, clothing has a significant role in our self-expression, but she also sees the social aspect, the need of fitting to our environment, to create a sense of belonging to a certain group. That duality balance results in a personal fashion style, staying unique, yet within a desired social group.

¹ This research has been carried out in scope of the *ECOFASHION 4V4* project, led by the Budapest Metropolitan University and funded by the Visegrad Fund. More information can be found here:

<https://www.metubudapest.hu/ecofashion4v4>

This research has also been supported by volunteer work of Slovak Eco Quality (SEQ) members and aligns with the *4F - Fast Fashion? Fast Forward!* project carried out by a partnership led by SEQ, and funded by the Erasmus+ program. More information can be found here: <https://seq.sk/4f-fast-fashion-fast-forward/>

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Several authors agree that the fashion we dress ourselves in is indeed a communication platform, expressing our identity, or some of our character traits (Rosenfeld; Plax, 1977). Though, we can ask ourselves a question, at what cost?

As Francis (Francis, 2014) says, the fashion industry holds a place in the top three manufacturing industries, which consists of a massive yearly production. To keep up with the demand of a modern consumerism while holding the prices low, a fast-fashion business model came to life, answering that market need, encouraging over-consumption as result of its swift collection rotations. The catwalk styles were being copied as early as mid 1970s and at a much lower cost, available for masses, retailing markets within months (Tokatli, 2008), so the once luxury inaccessible fashion pieces were available to everyone, meaning sort of a revolution in the common clothing.

That demanding machinery could keep their markets profitable only by using cheap materials and using low-cost labor forces, especially from the East part of Asia, becoming a globalized business operation, moving goods throughout the world, multiplying its environmental damage, which was already enormous considering the frequency of new collections and amount of waste created in the process (Brewer, 2019).

The term sustainability can be dated back to 1987, being mentioned in Brundtland report as “satisfying the current needs without compromising the future generation’s needs” (Berkeley, Keeble, Topiol, 2003). Later literature does not lean far from the original phrase, describing the sustainable practices as those, that can be performed continually without harming the environment, or conditions where current generation needs are satisfied without compromising future generation’s needs (Fletcher, 2008).

The slow-fashion concept has developed as a reaction on the fast-fashion waste and pollution practices, as a sort of criticism of its production means, offering an alternative, ethical, and sustainable garments (Clark, 2008). The value of the clothes, their origin and practices behind the creation are being brought to light with a slow-fashion movement (Connel, 2010). Slow fashion pieces are sustainable in their design, moderate consumption, their durability, use and the way they are being produced (Craig; Parkins, 2006). Although, a change in the value means a change in the final price of the product.

Regarding the price of clothing and sustainability of the fashion industry, many variables come to the equation. As authors Zhang, Zhang and Zhou (Zhang; Zhang; Zhou, 2021) state, the fast fashion clothing garments are an economic goods on the market, where the basic economic principles apply, higher price means lower demand and vice versa. Also, the amount of income is in direct correlation with the demand of the market.

The current trend of acknowledging the environmental impact of the fast fashion industry, makes customers look for more sustainable materials, durable, bio-degradable, natural fibers, but those are more expensive, and the price may at the end lead the customers away, back towards fast fashion clothing, which is more affordable (Zhang; Zhang; Zhou, 2021).

The question of finances indeed holds a key position in the decision-making process, whether to choose sustainable, ethical fashion, or the fast fashion products (Wiederhold; Martinez, 2018). Bray et al. (Bray et al., 2011) state that if people know, their purchase will mean a positive influence on a change towards sustainability, they are more willing to purchase a sustainable garment, even at a higher price. Though we cannot forget about the economic group, that simply cannot afford it, whether they aspire towards sustainable fashion, or not (Wehring, 2021).

Codes with their interpretations

1. Source of information about sustainable fashion

Out of 20 respondents 19 have claimed to follow or search for information about the fashion industry and sustainable fashion news or practices. Only one of the respondents was not interested in looking up any kind of info regarding the sustainable fashion movement. All of those, who are getting in touch with information about the topic have claimed their source to be, among others, social media. All 19 respondents have mentioned some platform of social media, mostly Instagram, but also Facebook or TikTok, where they follow influencers, designers and organizations operating within the movement, bringing information, reports or inspiration. 3 of the respondents, from the groups of sustainable fashion line designers and customers and traditional designer, have identified a profile called Fashion Revolution as a valuable source of information and linkage to other organizations or activists within the spectrum of interest. In the group of traditional fashion designers there were three participants listing a concrete profile they find useful, Slovak Fashion Council, Remake Our World and eco influencers – Natália Pažická and Alex Vortex. Only two respondents from the designer's group of both sustainable and traditional fashion line have claimed to actively search for the information, putting effort into finding correct sources, reading books, following designers, read study reports, watch documentaries, or read books, to get deeper within the topic. The rest, 17 respondents from all the groups involved have stated having a more passive role of receiver, taking on the information from profiles they follow on social media or from suggested articles, that those platforms propose to them. Only two of the respondents from the groups of customers and designers of traditional fashion have claimed to put only a negligible interest into finding the resources and getting to know more.

SD1SK “Since I am involved with sustainable fashion, the information gets to me. Of course, in this era of social media, everything gets to us. Therefore, I don’t have to put extra effort into researching or studying of the topic. It is more about coming across something new, a new type of material, for example, coming from abroad on social media, so I follow that lead. If it catches my interest, I look up the manufacturer, there I search for info about what it is, how it is done and I wait until the product gets to our market, so I could try it out.”

SD2SK “At the moment, my main source of information is Instagram. A while ago it used to be maybe the Fashion Revolution initiative, though then I also follow via Instagram, so that is my primal source, or perhaps some articles online. I usually follow people involved with the topic and follow the information they share.”

SD3SK “We have plenty of influencers around here that are excited to do or join a promo action, not really knowing for who exactly. Often, perhaps not even by own fault, since they buy a product in good faith, that is had been made from recycled materials, only to find out it is originated in China, sold here under a different name. Pushed by Slovak companies and manufacturers, claiming it is recycled and EU origin. I am quite familiar with those materials, so I can find out the truth with the supplier, but those out of contact with it might get easily fooled.”

SD4SK “I read a lot of books, follow the global situation on the internet, search for articles. I also follow Slovak influencers involved with the topic and I gain sources from them. I try to follow multiple sources and go a little bit further.”

SD5SK “The most information I have come from Instagram or social media. I follow various artists, or people involved with sustainable fashion. I cannot say I put that much interest in it, but it occasionally pops up on me and I read it.”

SC1SK “I usually follow activists or eco-influencers on Instagram. There I stumble onto it passively, receive and internalize the information. In that case I feel no further need to search for more information, I try to rely on my moral compass rather than looking for concrete proofs.”

SC2SK “I like to check where the piece of clothing is coming from. If it is in second-hand shop, at least I know its sustainable to buy it from there, no matter the brand, since I am reusing it already after someone. I know few people interested in the topic, organizing interesting presentations and workshops. I value their work a lot, but mostly I follow social media such as Instagram, where I can watch users, for example “Impact”, with verified sources and trustworthy articles. From time to time I check an interview with some sustainable fashion designer published in newspaper Denník N.”

SC3SK “I think that Instagram is a great tool for that, because the accounts I follow, not only post their designs, but also share interesting information about the planet pollution, all the facts linked to it and suggestions on how to make a change.”

SC4SK “I follow accounts on Instagram like a Fashion Revolution, or similar ones, dealing with sustainable fashion. From there I have information about the topic, eventually if I come across an article there, I read it. I have attended few presentations and workshops about sustainable fashion, mentioning Rana Plaza, I think. I am also aware of the scandals happening in the fashion industry, for example HM presenting their sustainable collection, although the product and material is less than 10% sustainable. Also, celebrities are sourcing some information about that when they collaborate with the brands.”

SC5SK “I tend to spend time on social media platforms, where the information pops at me, or I try to deliberately follow those involved in the field and through them I get an easy access to the right sources. Much easier than if I ought to search for it on my own. So, when they recommend a documentary, I watch it and that broadens my perspective.”

TD1SK “I am aware of and following a few pages, like Fashion Revolution, organization streaming quite interesting info from the world of fashion. They also link different agencies, other organizations, that cover the research in the topic, producing reports and evaluations from the industry. I check that from time to time. Also, I follow Remake Our World, or different designers, they often post info from the field, as well. One of them is Natália Pažická, or other activists. I also listen to different podcasts from the world of sustainable fashion and on top of that I have studied a university in the USA for a year, where I have added on some subjects about sustainability, Sustainability Marketing and Foundation of Sustainable Business, where we have been dedicated quite a lot of time to sustainability in the fashion industry.

TD2SK “Since the end of last year, I have been following more profiles on Instagram, talking about the sustainable fashion. It is not something I would search for actively, but I have decided to add it to my spectrum at least a little bit.”

TD3SK “I do not pay much interest in the topic, but if I stumble onto an article on the internet, I read it.”

TD4SK “I follow Slovak Fashion Council; they have the habit of sending out news and updates.”

TD5SK “I am not really searching for info about the topic, though the information always somehow gest to me, which is great. I believe the major source for me are Instagram, TikTok or even Pinterest. I think that is a great source of sustainable fashion info.”

TC1SK “The only info I have comes from Instagram, or social media, or from talking to a friend.”

TC3SK “I do not have the habit of actively searching for the info, more that I happen to stumble on it on social media, that is it.”

TC4SK “I like to follow different flea markets, or linked groups on Facebook and Instagram.”

TC5SK “The first time I have heard the term, sustainable fashion, was on Instagram, I believe it was a profile of Alex Vortex. Where she would go deep into the topic, talking about second-hand shops, which actually made me go there, since I have never been to one before that. Then I have been following Natália Pažická, that is also talking about fast fashion. So, I usually watch these video and reels on Instagram and TikTok.”

2. Perception of the term - sustainable fashion

In the question of understanding and own interpretation of the term “sustainable fashion”, two significant groups have formed. One that was formed mostly by the designers of either fashion line see sustainable fashion as a synonym for a slow fashion movement, using origin-verified long-lasting materials, local production, create one’s own clothes and aiming for low or zero waste processes. The second group formed of mainly customers of both sustainable and traditional fashion lines recognize second-hand shopping as a way of participating in a sustainable fashion movement.

SD1SK “It certainly is a way to slow down the destruction of our planet, that is happening. How to slow down the massive consumption that is ruling the world. I also believe it could be a way to uplift the national economy situation. We could see it as tool for understanding the way we lived so far, how wrong that is, and see a path of change. Some people understand sustainable fashion as something, that must be done locally and that is enough. Others, I have experiences, go further, where we can trace the origin of the material, where and by whom is it made. I see sustainable fashion the way I do it. Using materials made in Europe, knowing where they come from, being able to say the conditions the workers are making them in, are fair. Then I try to work with natural material, or with blends, avoiding synthetic fabrics. I choose the material in order the make my clothes durable and long lasting. So, after few washing cycles it doesn’t fall apart or lose its shape/color.”

SD2SK “Maybe it is sort of a bubble in the big cities, or larger towns, where there is better economic situation for its habitants. I think people perceive the term sustainable fashion as the old school fashion, that used to be preferred by grandparents, or parents, which has changed now. But, in my opinion, it is great that it is having a comeback, people start to pay attention to it, I hope it could bring

harmony to the world of fashion. At the moment, I do have my own clothing brand, which I consider sustainable. It is being made in small quantities, basically only original pieces. It is being made in Slovakia by me and my tailor and we try to carefully consider the material, technology, the cut. Simply it is being made directly for a client, reducing the waste drastically.”

SD3SK “I tend to use materials made from recycled plastic. I care about my waste being recyclable, as well. I also use the print in businesses that are acting responsibly towards the environment and use green technologies. I also build on using quality material, originated solely in European union, coming from Italy, Czech Republic, or Slovakia, since I would love to support the local economics. I think certificates are important, so companies do not only talk about their sustainability, but can prove it, too. There are these companies entering the market, working in a way where you can verify the whole life of the product. That means, giving the customers proven overview of what they have bought. I want my customers to see the transparency and environmental responsibility.”

SD4SK “I shop mainly in second-hand shops, or I get a lot of clothes from friends, I swap them, make some, repair broken pieces and so on. And with the design brand I work for, I try to really create pieces that are zero waste, slow fashion, made from sustainable materials, upcycled or so on.”

SC1SK “At some point, I see sustainability also in a fast fashion stream, if you take care of the piece you already purchased, I can wear it for a long time, which I consider sustainable. And then there is the realm, where sustainable means slow fashion brands, upcycling or second-hand shopping.”

SC2SK “I think sustainable fashion is an amazing movement. We have started that way - our ancestors have been doing that. Now it is a last century phenomenon, that fashion is, suddenly, so easily accessible. There is too much of it. We have too many choices. And I feel we have lost the touch with the reality of the value that clothing has, what stands behind that piece. So, I am glad, sustainable fashion is having a comeback, starting to be “in” again.”

SC3SK “A lovely concept, that can be used also by people who love shopping itself. Not only are the clothes in second-hands cheaper, but they also will not end up on a pile of dirt somewhere. So, we try to use every piece to its maximum, since the process of its production is already heavy for the environment, costing a load of energy, so if it is not used to its maximum capacity, it would be a shameful waste”

SC4SK “I consider sustainable fashion to be something, that is correct to do, the way we should all buy our clothes. That fast fashion should cease to exist. I am totally pro sustainable ways in fashion. I try to shop my clothes in second-hand shops, or slow fashion shops. If that is not possible, I reach out for

shops, where I know high quality of clothing is granted, so those clothes will last a long time. I have some pieces made by a tailor, which is the ultimately a great choice, since it is tailor fit and sustainable.”

SC5SK “The first thing that came to mind is that sustainable fashion is that fashion that is fair. Fair for every single person entering the process since the beginning till the final one -the customer. That no one is fooled by a sky-rocketing prices when the actual costs are low. Also, I consider it being an opposite to fast fashion – a slow fashion. A quality piece, certified and in that way the price is adequate for the product.”

TD1SK “Since I was a child, I have always been fascinated by second-hand shops and repairing my clothes. I also used to wear my mother’s clothes, or clothes from my aunties, which I have considered so trendy, from their youth. So that’s sustainability for me and I am a big fan and supporter. I have this dormant project in mind, Game Over Bags, which would be a production of bags, purses, handbags and such from plastic caps and bottles. Made entirely from waste material. That is also sustainability from my point of view. Even raising the awareness about the unsustainability of today’s fashion, about our consumer behavior, which I perceive as unsustainable, too. I try to shop quality pieces, from local creators,

TD4SK “I adore old things, so I really try to give them a second life. In order to be sustainable I try to use materials at my work, which are easily accessible. For example, I use sheep wool, which is being discarded, there is simply too much of it now. People throw it out, burn it, so I see a sense in using that, giving a chance to this amazing material which is being wasted. I try to work with certified materials, that is sustainable for me.”

TD5SK “Sustainable fashion is one of the best trends of the contemporary world, I think. It is quite practical, nature saving and set for the future using. Talking about concrete sustainable pieces, they tend to be in neutral tones, made of long-lasting materials, with timeless shapes, so it can live with me for the next 20 years, while I wear it, easily.”

TC2SK “Sustainable fashion is a trend, that has a future, for sure since it is tightly linked with environmental changes. For me it means buying less of the cheap clothing and look more into used, second-hand options. Avoiding pointless purchases, buying things I do not need, caring more about the origin of the products I buy, the material used for it.”

TC5SK “I believe sustainable fashion is much more popular and present, than it used to be. But it is still not enough, I know only one store where I could buy slow fashion clothes, regarding the shops in Bratislava. So, I believe it should be more accessible and spread, it is beneficial, people should engage in it, try shopping sustainably. Prefer second-hand to fast fashion shops in shopping centers.”

3. Criteria for choosing clothes

Every single respondent stated that the main criterium for the decision-making process is whether they find the piece likeable, pleasing and fitting for their image or personal style. 8 of the respondents from all four groups have mentioned that the consideration if that particular piece would get used often enough in their wardrobe and therefore if it is really needed, is an important question to ask, too. Next in the criteria count was the material the desired items are made of. Ten out of twenty participants from all the groups have expressed the need to purchase clothing made of quality material, comfortable to wear and very closely linked criterium, made of long-lasting materials, worth of the investment. In terms of investment in the fashion and clothing, price of the product is also a significant factor for the respondents. 7 of the study participants have responded that the price plays a very important role in their decision making, these participants were mainly from the customer groups of both, sustainable and traditional fashion line. Opposite to that was the statement of three of the designers, from both sustainable and traditional fashion line, who do not mind paying extra for quality clothes of their preference, if they know the clothes are being made in a sustainable way. For both designers and customers in sustainable fashion line one of the criteria was that the clothing should not come from fast fashion shops.

SD1SK "First of all, I look at the material. With clothes, no matter if it is fast or slow fashion, it is always material. I try to avoid polyester, which I am sorry to find almost everywhere these days. I try to be a minimalist, even though I create clothing, my wardrobe gets underfed at times. I try to be aware of what I buy, not following trends. My clothes have to fit me perfectly, they have to be universal and durable."

SD2SK "I mostly think about if I am going to use this piece often enough. If I really do need it. If it is compatible with the rest of my wardrobe, that is crucial. Then I also consider the material and its quality, if I am to wear it for a long time, will it last?"

SD3SK "The two criteria I follow are quality and price, of course. I cannot really afford pricy pieces. Also, I do not shop in chains with bad reputation, such as Primark, where it has been proven their tailors are working in terrible conditions and so on. I try to shop responsibly. I also tend to make a lot of my clothes on my own, otherwise the things I buy must be functional, such as sporting clothes or shoes. Also, I want my clothes to endure, I don't want them to last one season and then fall apart."

SD4SK “First of all, I ask myself if I will put it on at least 30 times, then I consider its compatibility with my other clothes and time of year I could wear it. Second is the material. I prefer natural material that are pleasant to wear.”

SD5SK “The first criterium for me is always the price. Always the lowest, always the highest sale. And I do not really shop at fast fashion shops. I have maybe few basic pieces, from there, but those I believe I also got in second-hand shops.

SC1SK “The most important for me is, whether I actually need that piece or not. Then I consider the financial side to it and if I like that piece enough or not.”

SC2SK “If it is a piece, I intend to use several times a week, I search for a quality material, so it would be comfortable to wear. In that case, the sustainability of the piece is in the background. On the other hand, I also like to shop in second-hand shops, where I know I am reusing the clothes, giving them a second life, where I can donate it forward if I cannot use it anymore.”

SC3SK “I am a student, so the price is a key criterion for me. Then I have to decide whether the piece fits my style, if I do not own something similar already and if I could combine it with the rest of my wardrobe.”

SC4SK “I mostly think about if I really need it. Then I think whether it fits my wardrobe and my style and if I would use it often enough. “

SC5SK “I try to consider if I really do need that piece. Of course, the price plays a huge role in it, too. I tend to shop online, so I try to search for alternatives, local producers, Slovak or Czech ones, or online second-hand shops.”

TD1SK “I am interested in the place where the clothes are being made. I really love natural materials. I enjoy experimental materials, for example I own shoes made of seaweed, 100% biodegradable. So, material is quite important to me, if it has been made locally, the designer or creator behind it. Then when I feel like freshening up my wardrobe, I go for second-hand shops or swaps.”

TD2SK “The most important is whether I like it. Then the second part is whether it will last long enough.”

TD3SK “The price is on the top, for sure. It also must attract me visually - it has to match my fashion taste. Then I also consider the material, if it would be pleasant to wear, what is it made of, synthetic or natural fibers.”

TD4SK “Material. For me, certainly material. I prefer natural material, so when there is a synthetic, it is a no-go. That is a priority to me. Then I also like to know a little bit about the brand itself, not

shopping in a fast fashion chain. I like to know who made the clothing, where is it from, so it would not have to travel the whole world before coming to me. Then I am willing to pay extra for the piece. Also, I need to know the piece will endure for a long time, ideally with a timeless design.”

TD5SK “The quality of the material and a color of the piece, the cut, it has to be something I would want to wear for a long period of time. I do not really consider price at that point, even if it is higher, by a decent quality of the product, the cost comes back in the duration of the clothing, much better than in fast fashion pieces.”

TC1SK “Well, price is important and then also the design. I don’t really know a lot of sustainable fashion brands and they don’t seem to be elegant enough for me, which is what I prefer in clothing. At least I have not found the elegant style in sustainable clothing I have seen so far, so that is the deal breaker for me.”

TC2SK “The very first thing to consider should be whether one will actually use the piece enough, not just buying it out of whimsy and it ends up buried in the closet.”

TC3SK “I have to like the piece that I am buying. I do not really plan the shopping. It just sorts of happens.”

TC4SK “The price. Always the price. I don’t want to spend on clothes.”

TC5SK “First and foremost, if I really like that piece. That is the main aspect of my decision. Then I consider if I will use it often enough.”

4. Durability of the clothing

Each respondent of the study has in some form mentioned they would like their clothes to endure for a long time, including all groups, supporters of sustainable fashion, but also those preferring the fast fashion clothing, designers, and customers alike. Considering the designers, their statements show the need of durability from their own clothing wear, as well as from the products they offer, which need to last for a long time, as well. In case of 5 of the respondents, it was the key criterium to look for in their clothing choices. Four of the designers, two from sustainable fashion line and two from the fast fashion designer line and one sustainable consumer have described the relation between the price and the endurance of the clothes as a worthy investment they put into their wardrobes.

SD1SK “Coming back to the question of sustainability, I do believe the clothing has to last long, we have to be able to wear it for a long time, even if it is occasional wear, it stays with us, not being damaged after a year or so, losing its shape or degrading in quality.”

SD3SK “My designs have to last at least 5 to 10 years. I have been doing them for 14 years and those leggings I make do last that long. It must be worth the money investment, pleasant to wear and lasting more than one season. It makes me very glad, hearing from my customers, how long my pieces have lasted with them.”

SC4SK “I try to buy my clothes either in second-hand shops or sustainable fashion shops. If that’s not possible I reach out to shops with high-quality products, so I could wear it as long as possible, not throwing it away shortly after buying, because it gets damaged fast and then I would end up buying another piece again in a few months.”

TD4SK “I really try to create clothes that could be stylish even few years from now. Simple design, straight lines, because I know how the material behaves after some years. Can get a bit bigger after a few cycles of washing and hanging on the coat hanger. I aim for timeless pieces, that really last long, if you protect them with lavender bags in your closet, for example.”

TD5SK “That is the great thing about sustainable clothes, not only is it nature-friendly, also it is made to be used in future too. They are usually made in neutral tones, from a long-lasting fabric, using timeless designs, so when I buy that piece now, I can wear it in next 20 years.”

5. Affordability of sustainable fashion

Apart from a single respondent from the traditional customer group, all other participants of the study have mentioned they are buying sustainable clothing, or would do it, if had the financial resources for it. Twelve of the respondents, coming from each group has expressed that they feel the sustainable fashion, or slow fashion is pricy, hard to afford, unreachable for lower income individuals. Three respondents, all coming from the group of traditional designers have claimed to be contented with the prices of slow sustainable fashion pieces, since it is being set by the producers and designers of the products, knowing and setting their worth. Three of the respondents from the group of designers from both, sustainable and traditional lines have mentioned that even the material, that is certified and probably from trustworthy sources is a pricy purchase, which influences the price of their products significantly. One of the designers, from traditional fashion line claimed, she has to compromise her standards, in order to keep her fashion desires affordable enough, to keep up with the demand. Majority of the respondents turn towards second-hand shops rather than shopping at local slow

fashion producing businesses, but they would reconsider that being in the financial position to afford it.

SD1SK “Since I own a small brand of clothing, the finances are quite tight. The sustainable materials are much more expensive, so I try to find the middle path. Even though, the vision is to go towards better material, though with the amount of fabric I order for my small business, it is not that accessible. For example, alternative to viscose, like Tencel, are being usually sold in larger quantities and when sold in smaller quantity, the price goes up. So, it is always a hassle to find the middle way for me and the customers, staying in the field of sustainability.”

SD2SK “I think sustainable fashion has not reached many people. I guess it is sort of a bubble in the larger towns and cities, perhaps linked to people with higher income.”

SD3SK “I cannot really afford some expensive clothing and I don’t prefer to. It has to be a product worth the cost, that I will enjoy wearing, not really a one-season pieces. I am glad to hear from my customers, that their clothes are lasting years on end and so they know, the price they pay represents knowing who made it, quality, original design and functioning”

SD5SK “The price is an important criterium for me. Always the lowest, always the highest sales. So brand new I have very few basic pieces and the rest I try to shop in second-hand shops.”

SC1SK „I would certainly prefer for everyone to care more about sustainability of the fashion industry, but frankly that is not for everyone from the financial point of view. If I would have the opportunity of unlimited financial resources, I would buy only slow fashion clothes and clothes from designers, that are local. I would want to support their work”

SC3SK “I am a student and I have no income, so the price is a huge attribute to look at. Usually, I don’t go above 10 euros, only if it is some piece I really have to have and it is truly gorgeous. If I would know there is a good concept behind the clothes, helping the environment, I would be okay to pay higher price, if I could afford it.

SC4SK “Sustainable fashion is often, especially when it comes to new pieces, expensive, even in second-hand shops. Even there the really nice clothes are pretty pricy and non-affordable for a common folk with lower income. In that sense I cannot really imagine sustainable fashion as a mainstream. There are people buying up the great pieces from second-hand shops, selling it elsewhere for a higher price, on Instagram, bazars, and such. So, even the second-hand shops are not what they used to be, for people with lower income, who could not afford the fast fashion. Now it is a thing of

young hip trendy people, who could afford to pay more, pushing out those in need away from second-hand clothing.

SC5SK “Sometimes the price has played a role. If I imagine not having any financial restrictions, I would support with purchases of pieces I need local designers and producers, for sure. So, considering the slow fashion, I think the product should be fair and of high quality and certified. In that case the final cost of the piece is valid the way it is for me.”

TD1SK “I try to shop quality clothes from local creator. I care about what is it made from and who is tailoring it. I became a shopper not questioning the price of the product. And basically, I do not even ask about it anymore. If I do, only to know how much to pay, not to bargain in any way. I would dare to do that, because I want to support local business and the people behind it. And I want to do it in a way that they consider appropriate and needed for them.”

TD3SK “I would love to support the sustainable fashion and I try do some baby steps, but I have a student budget, so I cannot fully emerge in it.”

TD4SK “I prefer working with certified materials. I would love to eliminate any synthetic fibers from my offer, frankly, the customers would have to be willing to pay at least a little bit more for the products then. Unfortunately, that is not the case in Slovakia, just yet. Customers tend to say, it does not have to be sustainable as I intend to do it, they simply want the piece the way they want. I would prefer to work in an alignment with my beliefs, being 100% sustainable from my side. I often hear in my social circles that my clothes are too expensive, which I personally do not agree with. They rather buy 10 pieces with that amount of money and that lets me wonder, why? Those 10 things are of such low quality.”

TD5SK “When the piece is of a certain quality, I like the colors, design and cut, I can see I could wear it for a long time, then I wouldn't say I judge the price set by the author of the clothes. Even if it is a bit higher, in a longer view, it pays back by not needing to change it so quickly.”

TC1SK “I personally think, it is sometimes much more expensive than it has to be. Especially when you buy it brand new since I am not a second-hand shops supporter. So, it depends, but the price is important for my decision. If I find myself in a situation, that I could buy some sustainable fashion piece and I will like it enough, the price would be similar to the clothes I usually buy, then yes. I would buy it. But for now, I am more pro fast fashion.”

TC2SK “If I would have the resources for it, I would buy way more linen clothes for example. Or things I do need, not searching for a special suit or something, that is more reasonable to rent, but sustainable useful clothes.”

TC4SK “The price. It’s always about the price for me. I will not pay that much money for clothing. It also depends, I try to find the balance between quality and price, fitting it to my personal style, but the price has to be right for me. When it is more expensive, I really have to be persuaded I want it even for the higher price. If I would have unlimited financial resources, I would go more higher quality clothes, pricier I guess, but that seems a bit non-sense, since you can find clothing for lower price. Though I would definitely try to support local businesses and my favorite artists, not huge corporations.”

6. Frequency of using the clothes I own

Every single respondent mentioned in their answers, while buying clothes, they consider whether the piece would be worn by them often enough. All of them agree, only in theory though, we should not overload or clutter our closets. Personal execution of that theory differs from person to person and is significantly more present within the members of the sustainable fashion groups.

SD2SK „I really think, majority of people do not wear everything they have in their wardrobes. So, what if we took the pieces that we use the most, that we love and wear even whenever we feel down. How many would that be? I have a small amount of clothes in my wardrobe, but on the other hand, theoretically I could do with much less. So, where is the line, exactly?”

SC2SK “After one and half year living in dormitory shared room, minimalism has proven itself as a practical style of living. So, I have here around 20-30% of my actual wardrobe from home. And I realized I really do not need anything else. I tend to wear few pieces that I combine or change or swap if I need something fresh

SC4SK “I really do not have that many clothes. I don’t like to have too many. I would prefer to have few nice pieces that are matching together, combinable. Those I would rotate, create plenty outfits from a small amount of clothing.”

SC5SK “I have this pleasure, from a new piece arriving to my closet, feeling that I can now sort out my old clothes and move something out, to someone else. I am glad to have new things, to support local business, but I don’t need new clothes every week, to overload my closet, where I put it and that’s the end of the story for those clothes.”

TD2SK “In the past 50 years the production of clothes has sky-rocketed. Up until that point, we were doing fine with one closet each, even with half.”

TD4SK “We really should overload our wardrobes and try to keep only the pieces we actually use there. Which is all wearable, even the old ones, or we should give them another life and move them.”

TC4SK “I really have plenty of clothes, I like it all, but I don’t have time to wear it all. Having loads of clothes, some I get to wear once per year perhaps. I prefer those pieces of my closet I can use on daily bases.”

7. Tailor-fit fashion

One of the sustainable practices that the participants of the study have mentioned was a tailor fit execution of the clothes designs. Coming from both sides of the supply chain – designers and customers. Three of the designers, from both sustainable and traditional fashion line, produce their products specifically for an individual that ordered the piece, so the specifications are altered into the piece for securing the best fit possible and so forth ensuring maximal compatibility of the piece with its new owner.

SD1SK “Another thing I do with my customers, is that we communicate, I adjust my design in a way that would fit their proportions and preferences the best. That means, when my client buys the piece, there is 90% chance it will fit her body perfectly and she won’t be sending it back, being able to wear it confidently.”

SD2SK “We truly make the brand sustainable by thinking deeply about the production process, material, technologies and shapes. We create pieces for concrete clients, that means avoiding overproduction, we really consider the waste we create, trying to reduce it to a minimum. We would love to keep doing the tailor-fit styles if the clientele is there.”

SD3SK “It is the best thing if one is able to make clothes for himself, tailor-fit. That is something I would really like to incline to, but I am a bit clumsy with it still. But in the future, that is my goal for sure.”

SC4SK “I have a few pieces made by a tailor, where I can somehow design what I want on my own and it is tailor fit. Then I can wear it for the longest possible, to not waste the material. I don’t have that many, maybe one or two pieces per year, but I still wear them even after many years. I consider that a smarter choice than shopping in a fast fashion chain, trying to get a special piece I need, nowhere to be found, or that I buy anything I see there around me, and it falls apart pretty soon.”

TD4SK “I love to get clothes done by my seamstress, when I find some great material that I am certain about.”

TD5SK “We don’t really have a vast offer of clothes. Every piece I create, I start after the order is placed. That is when I start to look for material, so we do not do it in large numbers, but it is custom designed and made. The pieces then do not stay stuck somewhere, every creation has a personal owner.”

8. Clothing as a communication medium

The choice of one’s clothing has proved to be a powerful way of expressing their self in 18 of 20 respondents. They all feel that their clothes might be a non-verbal communicator for the way they feel that day, their current mood, what is happening within them and in what kind of state they might be. Twelve of the asked people have also stated that the clothes help them deliver a message about who they truly are to their environment. Showing their inner artist, elegancy, unique visions, playfulness, the inner world. The rest of the respondents, six of them, use clothes to express more of a momentarily state of being medium. One of the respondents, from the group of traditional fashion line customers do not see the clothing as any form of communication and do not care what people dress like or think of his way of clothing. Apart from that, most of the respondents believe in a strong statement power of their clothing and put effort into expressing what they need to say through their style.

SD1SK “I believe we have to find internally, who we really are. Because when I see a woman or a man on the street, dressed in an impressive style, I can really enjoy it and be wowed by it. Though, when I put on the same piece, I look horrible in it. So, I believe we have to find that own thing in fashion and express that through the clothes we put on. For sure we are able to communicate our daily moods through our clothes, too.”

SD2SK “I think that I want to look elegant every day, that is the way I feel the best. Even my designs, my brand Vivien Mihalish are elegant. I feel there is not enough elegancy in the streets, and I love it, I feel amazing in it, so I want to see more.”

SD3SK “We should be unique. I do not enjoy the herd mentality of trends. We should express ourselves each on our own. Not copying each other. I am a lively person and I love to express that vividness and energy with my designs, maybe sometimes more than is necessary. But I love to express the joy from living by the clothes I consider joyful and if it shines anyone’s day, wearing my designs, that is the sweetest reward for me. Every design that I wear or make is an expression of my feelings, of my inner world.”

SD4SK “My clothes are telling the others about my actual state of being that day. I express is mainly with colors of what I wear. Although I guess, not everyone will get it the way I intend them to... I am aware that I have a tendency towards judging people by their clothes sometimes, knowing that I should not. There are days, when I am dressed in a way I would not prefer to be seen or to present myself, too. Just sometimes I don’t have the capacity to do it otherwise.”

SD5SK “Maybe not everyone, but I think most people, who are into fashion and their clothing, always try to express something by the choice of their clothes. At least the things they like, with me it is showing what I adore, what I create and that I have some art background. I also express how I feel that day, if I want to look more extravagant and show off my personality, or I also have days when I feel low and it is visible in the way I dress.”

SC1SK “I only wear clothes that really fit me, I wear them, not the other way around. I think together with my personality with the clothes I wear, people around me can say from it, that I am laid-back, sometimes hippie – and that is what I want to say with my clothes. That I can be calm, loving and kind, but I can also be rough and strong. So, it depends on the daily mood I am in, I dress according to it.”

SC2SK “My clothes could tell the others that I had no time this morning, so this is what it looks like when I am in a rush, or when in time of special occasion or meeting with people I like, I let them say I care about what I wear, meaning I care for the company, I am happy to see, to meet them and I put effort into my looks then. I also like to express some funny slogans or anecdotes through my clothes, some funny pictures, I even like clothes with a deeper message included.”

SC3SK “My clothes should say who I am. Because many people, who see me for the first time, they notice me through the clothes I put on, through accessories I wear. And what I want to show them is who I am, hoping they would like my style of presenting myself – not only through my words, but body language, accessories, handbags, shoes, or piercings. Some people say that even with henna or tattoos. I think it’s the little details that say a lot about us. Clothes are important, they cover the biggest part of our body, but the accessories are like cherry on top.”

SC4SK “I would love my clothes to tell the others about who I am. Or maybe I would prefer to appear in a way I want to be. I think I am trying to paint an ideal picture of myself in my clothing, when I put on some gorgeous outfit, I probably want to look a bit cooler than I actually think I am. Apart from that I own few “statement pieces”, which are for expressing some part of me, for example music band T-shirts, since I listen to rock, metal, punk. I wanted a T-shirt that represents my inclination to this music, so people could see it.”

SC5SK “With my clothing I want to say that I can be sexy sometimes, or trendy. And that we do not have to be afraid, have prejudices, for example about second-hand clothes. Some people still see it as a lower-class wear, something inferior and I do not agree with that.”

TD1SK “My clothes would surely say that I am quite a laidback person, a bit less conventional, that I like to feel comfortable. Sometimes they will say that I am a beautiful woman and I present myself that way. For sure they can say that I love natural fibers, maybe sometimes they reveal my apathy for ironing. Also, I believe, the colors I put on communicate in a certain way. I choose the colors according to how I feel. For example, I feel perfect with the red that I am wearing right now. And the silk blouse is also maybe saying I want to draw attention right now.

TD2SK “When I am choosing my outfit, my goal is to impress the people around me in a way, but at the same time not causing a scene. I believe people interested in fashion would look at me and say that I want to present an interesting outfit, that I am a creative person.”

TD3SK “They express my mood, the way I feel. If I am being emotional that day, girly or I am in the “leave me alone” state of mind. The same goes for colors I choose - darker tones for darker moods, sometimes it pairs up with the weather, too. When I feel great, I go for skirts and dresses, in which I feel free. On the other hand, while being stressed, I pull out an oversized hoodie and jeans.”

TD4SK “My clothes will say I dress like a fashion designer. I don’t know why is it that way, but we love to wear black. It seems so inconspicuous. And that is the way I am. But of course, while having a day where I feel joyful, I need to put some colors on to express that.”

TD5SK “Depends on the day I am having. I wake up with a certain mood, so I dress up according to it and according to how I want to feel and where am I heading to.”

TC1SK “I enjoy more elegant clothing, so I guess my clothes would say I am elegant, that I don’t like too many colors, that I like simplicity, basic lines and colors.”

TC2SK “I believe the clothes should be a finishing touch to the personality. Giving a signal on a first sight, letting people know if we are conservative, more creative, or so. I believe the different personalities we have should reflect on the way we dress up. I want my clothes to say I am a laidback kind a guy, enjoying the comfortable quality clothing. That I am cool and chilled folk.”

TC3SK “I don’t really see my clothing as a communication medium.”

TC4SK “I want to give the impression of a good-looking, clean and well-taken-care-of person. I hope I do. I also enjoy comfort and I simply try to have my own style. I want my clothes to say I am no “social case” or unclean. I want to radiate quality.”

TC5SK “I believe the way we dress is a way of non-verbal communication. I think my clothes always reflect the way I feel that day, what mood I am in and my personality as well. I guess I could say my clothes are quite... different I would say and that says something about me.

9. Cultural influences

Amongst other influences, that shape the way the respondents dress, many have mentioned cultural influences, seven of which specified where they feel obligated to succumb the cultural norms applied to clothing. Respondents from all the groups have mentioned cultural events and gatherings of significance such as weddings, celebrations or visiting a country of a different culture to be the reason to consider taking the cultural context into consideration. All of the seven respondents feel the need to pay respect to the event or the culture by dressing accordingly to a standardized dress code, which they describe as more elegant in the case of events and body-parts-covering when considering religion and cultural background present.

SD1SK “In a way, when we attend some serious event, I believe honoring it means not coming wearing jeans, or sneakers or so. At least something in smart casual style, coming close to elegant style, the occasion calls for. If it is for example a theatre visit, or some important event, some place where dress code is applied, I should try to come close to the dress code at least. I consider it as showing a respect.”

SD2SK “I think special occasions call for dress code. Sometimes I feel that people stopped caring about looking appropriate even in places they really should. Like a theatre, or a nice restaurant. I think we can dress in a nice way there, to please the people around, too. Maybe I am too old school in this.”

SC2SK “During special occasions or whilst meeting with certain people I like to care about what I choose to wear. It is a way of expressing my interest and that I am glad to see them. Even on the university campus, I can see that some of the students are starting to put thoughts into what they put on for attending classes. But there are days some people show up in a pullover, so I guess it also depends on what they study.”

SC3SK “When there is a celebration, or event, I would say I try to dress up in an elegant way, which is unusual for me, I don’t dress that way, very rarely.”

SC5SK “I do not wear bras for medical reasons, for someone it can even seem offensive, which I am sincerely sorry about, I don’t try to be vulgar or anything. But when I put on some blouse or a piece

where it is “needed”, I put the bra on. Those are my own limitations though, that I have to wear it, for who knows what reason. But in most cases I don’t put it on.

TD1SK “I have witnessed this conversation lately, of two 60+ men, quite conservative from upper middle class, both university professors, discussing how much is the appearance important. How they can see the different students presenting themselves and what difference does it make to give a good impression by your look, because either you want or not, you put people in certain box according to it. And I see some logic in that, but that is not the way I want to live. I try to be not influenced by the way people express themselves, to be as accepting as possible, when it doesn’t harm anyone, I believe everyone should have an opportunity to present themselves in a manner they find fitting.

On the other hand, I have been in situations where I wanted to pay my respects to somewhat – in my external opinion – conservative society by dressing accordingly. Coming to Jordan I knew that despite being quite progressive, the Islamic religion has a strong presence, there is a local culture and so I wouldn’t dare to wear cleavage or tight clothes, at all. It was all natural to bring comfortable clothes harmless to the environment I am visiting. I wouldn’t want to wear anything in conflict with the culture and religion of the place I am going to, causing unpleasant feelings and tensed situations. We have to consider the context of places we go to. Same goes for a wedding invitation, if they express an expected dress code, I would try to dress within those boundaries. I don’t wish to be disrespectful in the cost of my own expression, although I try to stay myself even adhering to the conditions of the cultural context.”

TD4SK “I adore folklore and themes of the past. I would not wear the folk wear, but the style, the culture, that is awakening some connection to my roots within me. I think I will draw inspiration from that in my future work with fashion.”

10. Self-confidence, self-esteem

Thirteen respondents from all four groups have agreed that clothing is a way of connecting with their self-confidence, a way to lift it up or present it in a certain way they wish to. Compliments and positive feedback from the social environment play its important role in that process, even drawing attention by wearing striking outfits as mentioned by respondents from the traditional fashion line designers’ group. Although, twelve of those thirteen participants state that the sheer act of dressing up in a way they consider good-looking, attractive, sexy or creative is boosting the self-esteem and lifting their spirit and mood. Four of the respondents from groups of sustainable fashion line customers and designers

have pointed out that feeling comfortable in their clothes has a deep impact on the way they feel confident in their clothes and it is a key ingredient for a self-esteem lifting outfit.

SD1SK “I believe some people dress up as their idealistic version of self. They might be trying to create the person they want to be - they want to dress up as and maybe that way they could achieve at some point, actually. So, I do believe that clothing is a tool of self-expression, an interesting way of creating or shaping self-confidence. When I put something on, what I feel comfortable in, all of a sudden, I get this feeling or strong confidence, that this is really what I like.”

SD2SK “For sure, finding out one’s personal style is a huge step. Considering what fits me the best, what fits my body shape, what I feel comfortable and well in, that builds self-confidence.”

SD4SK “Sometimes we would need to shut our eyes and ignore the world around to step into our confidence more, to unite with the way we dress. I believe it is very important to be confident with our clothing, whether people around us like it or not. And we tend to forget that a lot and lose the self-esteem.”

SC1SK “I try to go out of my comfort zone, wearing skirts, for example, or dresses, because it is beautiful. Sometimes I lack confidence to do that, but people around me notice that and try to support me, which feels really good and that helps me open up.”

SC2SK “I think if we have the opportunity to experiment with what suits us the best, we should do it. I prefer to do that in the safety of home environment, with friends for example, talk it through, discuss and try different pieces that way. In privacy of the house, before entering to the public space.”

SC3SK “I have received many compliments so far and I am glad about each one of them, but I remember this girl, who I did not know personally, she walked up to me when I was buying an ice cream saying how much she loved my outfit. That lifted made my day so bright! I was smiling for another half an hour.”

SC4SK “In the past, I used to have these bad conditions, whenever I was in the changing room. The lights inside are extremely bad, not showing any good side to the body, you can see every little imperfection. Every time I had to get undressed and dressed again there, finding out the size is too small, or it simply doesn’t fit, I would get these panic attacks in there. Nowadays I want to feel good in my clothes, to feel myself. So, the clothes should be a representation of me, the version I identify with, not even the way people perceive me. Mainly I have to like myself in the mirror, I guess I might be putting out the idealistic version of me, wearing some outfits I like. Once a doctor told me that she

adores the way I dress, that it seems so unconventional. That is a compliment that you hear once and carry it with you in the heart for the rest of your life.”

SC5SK “When I feel great in the clothing I wear, that is amazing. Cause there are days, when I put something on, look in the mirror and say no. I am not going out like this, no way. I might even like the clothes, but I lack the confidence or mood to wear it that day. I think the confidence can be expressed through accessories, hairstyle, clothing, but I can see that with artists, mainly. My way of showing confidence could be that I don’t wear bras, since I don’t really stand out otherwise, I am more of a blend-in person. But that is my thing, someone notices it and that immediately differs me from the crowd, cause some woman might say she would not step into the streets that way.”

TD1SK “I want to look satisfied, happy, confident with myself, enjoying the way I look, enjoying the world. I want to radiate that, and the clothes play a supporting role to that”

TD2SK “Sometimes when I am choosing my outfit, I am thinking about which clothes would bring me the most compliments, because sometimes I really need that. I also believe people would be much happier in their clothes, if they would stop thinking whether they look bad in it. If we feel confident, we look confident and others will feel it.”

TD5SK “I like to feel confident in my clothes. Especially on days I lack confidence on my own. Those days I reach out for outstanding colors, attention drawing pieces, that always lifts my mood and self-esteem.”

TC4SK “I always feel beautiful after shopping.”

TC5SK “The way I see it, the most important is to be identified with the clothes you put on, not having any shame or doubts about it. Doesn’t matter what it actually is. We should wear it proudly.”

11. Social environment and family influences

Thirteen of the respondents have admitted they are being influenced by the social environment they are about to spend time in, but also the one they live in, family ways and what they see in their social bubble on social media. One of those opinions mentioned a wish to simply blend or fit in the society they are in, coming from a traditional fashion line customer. Another respondent from this group claimed that the environment she moves within has zero effect on the way she chooses her clothing. Out of those thirteen respondents shaping their looks according to where they are, eight from all four groups stated to be influenced by their friends and their style of clothing or overall image. One respondent from the traditional fashion line customer group changes her clothes according to a venue,

for example choosing an office look for working place. Three respondents from the sustainable fashion line customer group stated that they draw inspiration and got influenced by their families, either by borrowing clothes from their mothers, older sisters, aunts or getting fashion advices from them, or getting introduced to some sustainable habits, such as second-hand shopping or getting their clothes done by a seamstress. Compliments seemed to be a very powerful tool, shaping the likeness of one to adhere to the fashion style preferred in a certain social environment.

SD1SK “I try to choose the clothing... well, I do not follow trends for sure. Maybe sometimes when I admire something, or I notice something that catches my eye, usually it is some basic clothing. So, I choose what really fits me, it is universal, so I can use it for years to come. But with friends, we tend to give each other compliments on clothes, when we see one of us is really dressed well. I think I am getting a lot of compliments, but it is not a rule. Just when I really go for it, dress up, though that depends on a day and my mood, as well, if I want to dress up to impress a bit.”

SD3SK “It happens a lot to me, to hear – I wow, this looks amazing, have you done that yourself? Could you sell it as well? I would buy it, for sure. So, that pumps the process, and from a single piece for me it becomes a part of the offer in our brand. So, I have a positive feedback, which I enjoy, but those are friends, I am not sure whether they would say something negative, too. Maybe the critics would be softened by the friendly relations. I think I go by my own way, but it would be self-centered to say that the world around me does not influence me. I am being influenced by everything I see. Old fashions, retro style around me, nature. The inspiration comes, whether we are aware of it, or not and I do print that into my ideas and designs, too.”

SD4SK “I feel that people are always pleasantly surprised when they see me, and I get a lot of positive feedback regarding my clothes. Including the fact that it is handmade. Though I have negative experience too, mainly with older men being nasty. Some might say, it is our fault, standing on the way we dress. But my clothes are many times not tight at all, neither provocative, someone just needs to open their mouth and be rude. My close circle of friends is my inspiration for clothing, for sure. Their fashion sense influences me quite a lot.”

SD5SK “Regarding self-esteem, for me was really helpful to come to the high school environment. It was artistic school, where everyone minded their own business regarding clothes, and I could wear whatever I wanted. Not being afraid of judgement, nor anyone letting me know they dislike it. I think it started there for me and I believe that is the way to self-esteem, to get into a social group where you will not be judged for what you want to put on and you will be positively influenced, too.”

SC1SK “I think my closest social circle knows I have a certain style. I also think they would say it got better in the past years and they would say I look good. We often give each other compliments.”

SC2SK “I have heard an opinion from my community, that I dress in a comfortable-looking style. That is quite different from my mother’s style for example, so there we have a bit of a despair, she has her opinion on my clothing, that I don’t approve of. But when we are going out with friends, I care a bit more, it is a difference. I also like to check online on Instagram what my friends like to wear, from time to time.”

SC3SK “I am borrowing clothes from my mother, she has excellent fashion sense and style, so I always take it, even from friends. It depends on the friend, though, there are some that we share a style with.”

SC4SK “I got influenced by my mother, she often used to have tailor made clothes. So, she has taken me to the seamstress few years ago and since then I like it too. I also have an older sister, so I get a lot of clothes from both of them, handbags, shoes, accessories, so their style has shaped mine a lot. But I also like oversized fashion, or androgynous clothing, pieces from men collection, I took some clothes from my brother, too. And my mum can get quite critical about that, she does not like it at all, saying it is too baggy, too big, looking like a piece of cloth on me. That I could put a potato sack on me instead. But I feel great in it, I feel it supports the image of myself I am trying to project to the world. I feel like me. I guess the older generation just does not get it.”

SC5SK “While growing up, I used to have mostly hand-me-downs, so I was not that familiar with going shopping for clothes that often. That was rooted in me. But what can serve me as an inspiration is seeing someone wearing clothes I can relate to and find gorgeous, maybe unconsciously I try to get closer to that look myself, later on. So, I guess the people around me are my idols many times.”

TD1SK “For the past year I have been living in a specific community, returning back to my student life times, despite my current age now. I lived with 3 girls, same age as me and we were discussing clothes, how we present, what do we wear, sharing it amongst us and I felt they see me as a person who knows how to dress in a nice way, attractive and functional. At the same time, I have felt that they consider my clothing as something on lower level compared to them.”

TD5SK “When I go to work, I dress up in a way to fit the office environment. So, I guess it really depends where you would meet me, my clothes would express that mostly. And it happens to me quite often that my friends laugh at me, in a good sense, that they would never put on the piece I have just purchased or put on.

TC1SK “I buy things that I like, I don’t express anything by it. I simply like it on me, but I also care that the people around me would like it too. I want to look presentable in society, in a way I would like to see, too. I want to fit in, and I want to like my clothes.”

TC3SK “The truth is, I really don’t care what others think about the way I dress.”

TC4SK “If I am just home, with friends or family, I put on T-shirt and trousers, there I go for the comfortable choice. But going outside, I try to look spruce.”

12. Big fashion brands behavior influences

Nine of the twenty respondents have claimed that they like to follow the big fashion brands, drawing inspiration about what is modern at the moment or simply adoring the artistic performance of the fashion collections made by worldly designer artists. Two of them belong to a group of traditional fashion line customers and stated they mainly follow fashion influencers promoting the big fashion brands and communicating the trends. The rest, seven respondents are designers from both, sustainable and traditional fashion lines. Some of them truly value the artistic potential of the fashion shows and collections, others simply search for inspiration and way to stay close to the current trends, without necessarily purchasing any items according to that. One of the designers from traditional fashion line mentioned looking through online shops of big worldly clothing brands, just to stay on top of the trends, knowing what is being presented as modern, at the moment. Another designer, from the sustainable field expressed quite opposite feelings about the same big fashion brands and shared a disgust from the amount of clothes and production that is involved in the whole process.

SD1SK “I do enjoy following big world fashion brands, that really throw out a new collection 2 or 3 times per year. I still consider fashion as an art stream. The art of not creating only one piece of clothing, but the whole collection, fusing and matching together, linked by an idea. That I consider being an art. But in that case, the big brands need to be able to pay for all that, those collections, so they are being made in different ways, different amounts. So, in a way that it cannot match sustainability, but I admire it, for sure. Maybe if they would prefer more natural fibers and materials, or at least a bit more ecological, recycled or such, not only doing greenwashing from their side that could work. Even with a new collection twice a year, that would be doable.”

SD2SK “I do follow the ongoing trends, or at least I try to. When they are changing so fast these days, it is becoming nearly impossible to follow it. So, anyone dressing accordingly, cannot go with sustainable fashion practices.”

SD4SK “I adore various designers, mainly fashion stylists, those are the top inspirations for me.”

SD5SK “I guess we cannot avoid being influenced by trends that are around us. I follow the and always take a bit of the big brand fashion news, but I try to alter it according to me, to make it fit me.”

SC4SK “The shops of the big brands, like Zara, Mango or H&M, truly disgust me. When I see the enormous amount of clothes stocked up there in those huge rooms, changing it nearly every week or so. Seeing that amount of clothes of that low quality, faulty handled designs, with this question behind it – who actually made all these clothes – I get sick from it. I literally feel sick. Knowing that sustainable fashion can never do this, keeping up with the tempo of 50 collections per year, catching up with the changing trends in the fashion world. Everyone wants new clothes all the time. That’s impossible to keep up with.

I can get inspired by the trends sometimes when I like it, though. For example, I didn’t like the trend of skinny jeans, but when the baggy clothes came to play, or the high waist trousers, those I follow, apply them to my wardrobe.”

TD1SK “I cannot say I am not following anyone at all, I don’t think that is possible. There are influencers, leaders and trends, which I don’t follow, but from time to time I might open a website of a brand like Zara or H&M to get to know what is in at the moment, what is the trend they are pushing.”

TD4SK “Of course, I love fashion shows. I consider it art, as someone would go to the gallery, which I also love, I see fashion shows in that way. It doesn’t mean I have to have it, but it is a certain form of theatrical performance for me which I love to enjoy. To feel what the artist wanted to express through that, what they want their collections to speak of.”

TC3SK “I love to follow the fashion industry. I follow fashion influencers, advertisement for clothes and choose particular pieces that I like.”

TC5SK “I love to get inspired by fashion influencers. Following the big fashion trends, if I like it, I will wear it, I don’t have to copy someone, but I love to get inspired.”

13. Age and consumptions tendencies

Throughout the study, the connection between age and consumption behavior tendencies was prominent. The younger the respondent, stronger the consumption tendencies expressed in their statement, as opposite to respondents above 30 years old, where they claim their style to be more settled and express a lower need for excessive fashion consumption. Seven respondents from each of our four groups, have stated that earlier in their life they used to have a stronger desire for consumption and their shopping used to be desire driven, irresponsible, and frequent, often in attempt to determine their own style and indulging the joy of the purchases. They also claim that their behavior has changed with age and has settled in a more reasonable moderate manner. Six of the study participants of age below 22 years have stated, that if being offered with unlimited financial resources, their consumption would multiple excessively. They are from groups of both sustainable and traditional fashion line customers, but also two respondents are from sustainable designers' group. Most of them already fulfil their consumption desires by purchasing second-hand clothes in larger quantities, also in order to find their own style and support their self-expression.

SD2SK "If it would have been ten years ago, I would buy much more clothes. But now, living with a knowledge that it is not that practical to have loads of clothes, I am quite comfortable with what I have. I mean, I could go for spoiling myself, with an Italian handbag I adore, or shoes I like for a long time and cannot afford. But otherwise, even if I had more money, I would not shop more than I do now."

SD3SK "Being a bit older now, I think I can handle shopping more responsibly, than I did before in the past, I go after quality and price. I don't do impulsive shopping anymore, as I used to 10 or 15 years ago, when I was younger. Even the environmental responsibility came to place, with a mature overview, as I aged."

SD4SK "If I would have more money, I think I would buy a lot of clothes. Even better if the clothes would be eco-friendly. But I think I would have loads of clothes then, if I didn't have to think about money." (20 years old)

SD5SK "Well, when I go shopping, I tend to really buy a lot of clothes. But I have this vision of upcycling the clothes, remaking them as I want. And when I buy a lot of pieces in second-hand shops, that I have really been digging through the clothes there, I feel amazing after that." (19 years old)

SC1SK "If I would have money to buy all the clothes I want, I would have to fight with myself a bit, I think I could really go crazy and buy a lot of stuff." (21 years old)

SC2SK “When I went through my puberty, I used to go to the New Yorker, C&A or H&M, without giving it a thought, that was horrible! We all did it, feeling amazing after. When I look at it now, I certainly would not want to go back to that behavior, shopping so often, that way in those places.”

SC3SK “Knowing myself, if I would have limitless financial resources, I would go crazy and I would certainly have way more clothes than I need. Maybe I would even forget about half of them, after a short while.” (21 years old)

SC4SK “People going through the puberty are trying to find their style, together with trying to find out who they truly are, exploring their different aspects of being and that period is very vulnerable toward fast fashion trap. When they are trying to find their own style, they buy a lot of unnecessary clothes in the process. Maybe even becoming a bit addicted to the shopping itself, the pleasant hormone flush after buying something new. That is the problematic point, in my opinion, if their parents are conservative or a bit stricter, pushing them even harder to find their own style.”

SC5SK “Since my childhood, I was set on hand-me-downs, not being accustomed to frequent shopping, at all. At then, when I grew up, there was this period when I became driven by shopping, wanting to have something new all the time. Now as I grew older and became a mother of two, I realized I don’t really need that many clothes. And when I find myself in need of something new, I don’t go to the shopping mall, I support a local producer or go to the second-hand shop. Even if I would have limitless financial resources, I would not buy more, I know I do not need it, I would only buy more quality piece from the local businesses.”

TD1SK “I would not buy more clothes, even if I had the financial option for it. I have all I need in my life, even I would say more than I need, so I belong to that group of lucky people on the planet to have it that way. I shop intentionally. For sure, there was a phase in my life, when I would buy more stuff, dressing myself in piece not fitting me properly, trying to find myself, not even feeling comfortable in it. But today I have a different hierarchy. I have to feel comfortable and the rest is on the second place.”

TD4SK “I would be able to wear the same things, maybe in different color, all the time. I would prefer to put the money in a different part of my life nowadays. It is not a priority anymore.”

TC1SK “If I would have more money, I would engage with my need of exploration and experimenting. I would try out new trends from fashion influencers, or anything, just to find out what could really fit me, since now I am really tied by the finances.” (21 years old)

TC5SK “I have had this period when I would shop really a lot. A lot of clothes, that I would then put on once or twice and then give it to someone else. If I would have money for it, I would have a lot of clothes though. A lot a lot. I am that kind of person who like to change the clothes, the styles and

enjoys new pieces. If that would be possible while not putting a heavy toll on the planet, that would be amazing.” (19 years old)

14. Self-reflection of shopping behavior

All twenty respondents of the study consider their shopping as a thought-through activity with many steps of consideration of the purchase. Intensity and amount of those steps vary from respondent to respondent, but they all have in common a decision-making process based on assessing the actual need for a certain purchase they want to do. Each of our respondents think about whether that particular piece of clothing, whether it is a fast fashion piece from a mall, second-hand or a slow fashion or designer piece, will be used in their wardrobe, if it is really worth buying. Another example of those steps of consideration many participants listed is whether the piece fits their body shape, their style and the rest of their wardrobe, so they could combine it easily. Majority of the respondents are motivated to go shopping by the need of a certain clothing, not by a crave. Eighteen of the respondents have very moderate shopping behavior and strong crave control mechanisms to keep them from impulse shopping, evaluating the item for purchase properly. Money wise, quality and durability wise, necessity wise and also considering whether it will bring any joy to their lives. Despite the processes that go into their decision making, all of the respondents have claimed to feel at least glad or on some point of scale even happy, satisfied by supporting a local business, money well spent, having something functional, or owning a new piece of wear, boosting confidence or bringing a fresh breeze to their wardrobe.

SD1SK “Many times I try the things on in the shop, I consider whether it fits my body shape and so on, when it doesn’t, I do not buy it or at least I know to avoid that kind of style. I believe I am true to myself, knowing what works for me already and what does not, what cleavage, which cut and so on.”

SD2SK “I think a lot about whether I will use the piece often enough, If I really will not buy it pointlessly, I try to shop rarely, so each item is thought through. Even though, when I think about it, every single purchase, every wardrobe, each interest in fashion is not that sustainable, because we want to shop. It happens a lot that the greed takes over at least a tiny little bit.”

SD3SK “Since I want to go local, shopping is a bit of a tough process. 90% of the clothes I own are made by me and I shop in second-hand shops a lot. Even the functional clothes I need I try to get from responsible brands, which are lifestyle, truly living the sport. Those are young people, building the brands a while ago, such as Burton or Horsefeathers and so on. So, I try to choose responsible origin,

durable product. But I guess, we also like to just buy something pretty. As women we like to dress nicely, buy cosmetics, I guess everyone get a bit pumped with endorphins with that and get happy about it. So, a priori shopping brings me joy and I don't want to torture myself for purchasing something or spending money. So, I try to do it sustainably at least, to have the positive feeling from it."

SD4SK "I feel motivated to shop by the need of having a certain piece. After the act of shopping, if I know this piece will stay with me for a long time, I feel really good about spending my money well. I don't feel bad about investing into something of quality."

SD5SK "I rarely shop for clothes in the last period of my life. Almost all my clothes are second-hand or gifted by someone, but when I shop, I tend to go to second-hand shops."

SC1SK "Maybe three times a year I go to buy something in the fast fashion shops, if it is something that I really need and don't have it – like swimwear, or shoes. I use those to their maximum. But otherwise, I try to create my own clothes, for example I picked up crocheting. To be honest though, I rarely look at the origin of the wools I buy. I try to recreate the clothes I buy. I am also a customer at second-hand shops. What motivates me to purchase a piece is a need, most of the times and when I get this urgent need to buy some piece of clothing, I firstly try to find it in second-hand shops and if I fail there, then I move on to the shopping malls."

SC2SK "If I have to shop, I do it in second-hand shops. When I went through my puberty, I used to go to the New Yorker, C&A or H&M, without giving it a thought, that was horrible! We all did it, feeling amazing after. When I look at it now, I certainly would not want to go back to that behavior, shopping so often, that way in those places."

SC3SK "I shop in second-hand shops and I am a bit sorry that it doesn't move faster, that trend of shopping there, many of people still go for brands and costly options. And they might not even use it that much as I do those clothes from the second-hand shops. I guess it symbolizes poverty for them, but I see it differently. The price is lower yes, but also the thought behind it is important, together with the excitement that you never know what you will find there. Sometimes when I see these famous people online and their gigantic closets overloaded with clothes, I feel sick. I hope I will never reach this level."

SC4SK "I really think about whether I need the clothes I want to buy. Even when something draws my attention, I try to be really conscious about the purchase. I try to not buy it immediately, let it sit for few days to make sure, it's not just a fling but I really need it, it is compatible with the rest of my clothes and a sensible choice."

SC5SK “I am not really an impulsive buyer, that I shop out of boredom of lack of activities. I shop when I know I am missing something for a longer period of time, I think about it enough and then I make the purchase. Mostly I shop on the internet and clothes are not something I would be so passionate about buying, even though I like to dress up from time to time.”

TD1SK “My motivation to buy clothes can usually come from needing something, for example, something waterproof for when I am biking in rain. Or it can be a desire. I was longing for a jumpsuit, for some reason and I was sure I would feel comfortable and feminine in it, so that was a strong motivation, too. I feel great when I support small businesses, also while shopping in second-hand shops. And while sharing clothes in my social circles.

TD2SK “I shop mostly in second-hand shops and I try to not do it often. Only when I truly need something. I am not perfect, so I drop by the fast fashion shops occasionally. But I try not to. And I tend to care about the clothes I own, paying attention to the material instructions, washing it on a proper temperature and so on. After purchases I usually feel glad about having something new.”

TD3SK “I shop in second-hand shops and I tend to sell some of my clothes, too. I don’t like the fast fashion shops that much. It is not really up to my taste. It supports the economy but considering the ecology and nature it is not a good choice.”

TD4SK “I like to know a little bit about the brand that I am choosing. I don’t shop in fast fashion chain shops, at all. I like to know who made, where was it made, who designed it, if it had to travel half the world to get to me, or it was made locally. That matters a lot to me. I am willing to pay extra for that, if I am to buy something, it should be of high-quality.”

TD5SK “I shop for clothes when I for example know, that I have a specific occasion I need to attend and have nothing to wear. It doesn’t really happen for me that I would enter a shop and leave holding three bags of clothes. So, the need is my motivation. That I will use the piece, even when I was buying an outfit for Social Awards, recently, I have chosen something I would be able to use in my daily life, as well, or in the future, not just on that one occasion.”

TC1SK “I shop because of the need. I don’t buy stuff in a way that I would “feel like shopping”. And it doesn’t bring any kind of special feeling, it okay that I have something new to wear and I needed it, that’s it.”

TC2SK “The first criterium is whether I will actually wear it. Then it has to bring my joy, I have to feel happy after a purchase. Otherwise, I wouldn’t do it. When I buy something, it should be because I really need it, that is the motivation, not because it is trendy right now, so I have to have it.”

TC3SK "I am very bad at shopping. I cannot choose and usually I buy things when I don't plan it ahead. But the only motivation I have is need. When I don't have to, I don't shop. If I manage to get something great, I am thrilled, if not, I get frustrated."

TC4SK "I like to shop in second-hand shops. I go there quite often actually. Then I also like to shop online a bit, but I would prefer to get everything in the second-hand shops. But it is not always possible to find exactly what I want and sometimes I want a new piece, not a damaged one."

TC5SK "I have to consider whether I actually like the piece. Then if I would use it often enough. I feel glad about having a new member of my wardrobe, I immediately think how to pair it up with the rest of my clothes. So, I feel good about it, especially when I shop in second-hand shops. When I shop at malls, I get this negative feeling and regrets from spending that amount of money, for clothes that I might not even wear that much."

15. The act of shopping

Ten out of twenty respondents stated that the purchase of a desired, for some well thought through item, brings a sense of joy, happiness, and excitement for them. Though only two of the respondents, from sustainable fashion line customers group and traditional designers' group have expressed positive attitude towards the act of shopping. The rest of the answers obtained more conservative approach towards the act itself, or even misery and apathy coming from the obligation to shop. Five of the respondents, from groups of sustainable fashion line customers and traditional line of fashion, both customers and designers, have described quite negative feelings such as frustration or panic attacks attached to the idea of the shopping process. Connected to the crowded malls, unflattering mirrors and lighting in the changing rooms and smell of chemicals. These feeling though only adhere to shopping in fast fashion shopping malls, not to a purchase from a local producer crafting slow fashion clothing. Two of the respondents from the groups of sustainable fashion line customers and traditional fashion line designers prefer to do their shopping online to avoid the hassle of the real shops.

SD1SK "Usually the motivation to go shopping comes from not having clothes to wear. Of course, there are moments when I walk the shops and notice something pleasant. But I have this red flag in my mind, so I start to think it through, whether I truly need it or not

SD2SK "I buy only what I need and when I do so, I feel... Well, when I buy something I really need, I feel identified with the purchase, so it brings me joy."

SD3SK “Since I shop responsibly, I really do think it through, once I have some let’s say sneakers in my shopping cart. I put them back, revisit it several times, wait for a good sale or so. For example, now I am wearing a crop top from second-hand shop I paid one euro fifty cents for, that I hunted last week. And I felt really good about not having to go to a regular shop but recycling some piece instead. So that makes me happy, I have fed my shopping lust.”

SD5SK “Well, when I go shopping, I tend to buy a lot of clothes. But I have this vision of upcycling the clothes or remaking them as I want. And when I buy a lot of pieces in second-hand shops, that I have really been digging through the clothes there, I feel amazing after that.”

SC1SK “The shopping itself is exhausting for me, I want it over with as soon as possible. I don’t do it often. I get a great feeling though when I create some piece on my own, or find something nice in second-hand shop, that is a nice “aha moment” to have, to like how it looks on me, that is a fine feeling. But only after this kind of shopping I feel any satisfaction at all, I get regrets immediately if I buy more than I actually need.”

SC3SK “I enjoy second-hand shops in a sense that I never know what I will find there, even though I walk in with an idea at times, it usually changes into something I find there. And then I am really glad about the purchase, if it fits me, I already think that I need to wash it and where will I wear it. I immediately do, even few days in a row, combining it with my different older pieces. Then I feel really good about it.”

SC4SK “I don’t really enjoy the shops per se, I don’t tend to go there, to spend time in places where any fashion could meet my eye. Maybe once every 6 months I go to some second-hand shop to see what is new there, usually not buying anything, maybe one piece or something. Mostly is the shopping process a punishment for me. I don’t enjoy it at all. I feel it that way since I was a child, when I had to go shopping for clothes it was a punishment to enter the shopping mall. Physically. I feel sick from the space, the music, the crowds of people, the horrible lights there, climatization, I get easily overwhelmed there and it is exactly these fast fashion shops that I am talking about. Even the changing rooms have such a bad lighting there, that doesn’t show any pleasant side of your body, I used to get panic attack when I had to try things on there. On the other hand, when I find something fitting from sustainable fashion, or second-hand, I feel good about it. But mostly, I am glad its behind me.”

SC5SK “I don’t like the act of shopping that much, I usually do it online and there I search for fitting alternatives for me and search for local producers from Czech or Slovakia. Or I go for online second hands, there I find the piece I like and take my time to make the decision if I really need it, if to purchase right away, or set it aside for some time and think it through. And after that, I can honestly say that I feel pleasure, I feel good that I don’t shop in this greedy frenzy, I am simply glad for the new part of

my wardrobe. When I buy anything though, I immediately think about boiling it in water, to get rid of the chemicals that are in those clothes, if it is not from a sustainable brand. When I buy second hand, I also know I don't have to do it, that is a huge plus."

TD1SK "I don't visit the regular shops or shopping malls. I try to avoid those. Outlet center, that I don't even know when I have seen the last time. I check online shops, but only belonging to a small producer."

TD2SK "I am that kind of person who loves to shop. It is not something I am so proud of, but I love to get new things. If I wouldn't have any financial limits, I would buy a lot more clothes than I have now, for sure. I would pick a few styles I prefer and buy clothes of that type."

TD3SK "I usually shop out of boredom. I often don't have any goal, or vision what I want. Sometimes it is the case, that I need a specific piece, but mostly I walk around, and something draws my attention. Right after the purchase I don't feel any joy from it, but once I arrive home and try it on with some of my clothes, then I feel amazing."

TD4SK "To be honest, I hate the act of shopping. I adore craft markets, where I can buy some ceramics or so, handmade, which will be a memory of that event. That makes me much happier than shopping for clothes. So, I usually just exchange some clothes with fellow designers, and we support each other that way. Or I go to my seamstress, when I find a material, I feel good about."

TC3SK "I am really not into shopping as it is. I tend to last long with the clothes I already own, but I am not avoiding second-hand shops. Though it has been a long time since I have been in one, I generally avoid the act of shopping."

16. Sustainable practices in fashion

Nineteen in twenty participants has shown interest in engaging with slow or sustainable fashion practices. Only one respondent desired to shop only in fast fashion offering chains, since it is matching his style and favors his budget.

Visiting second-hand shops instead of choosing regular shops with fast fashion was the most listed sustainability reaching practice among the respondents. Some of the other practices mentioned by the respondents were SWAPs, in terms of exchanging the clothes between friends or during a community or public SWAP event. Upcycling old clothes into new items or upgrading them with personal touches in a creative way resulting in a unique fashion piece. Borrowing clothes from friends, family or roommates. Receiving hand-me-downs from family or members of the social circle. Creating their own

clothes – sewing, crocheting, hand-crafting accessories. Taking proper care of the clothes according to the needs of the material they are made of. Choosing local slow fashion producers and designers for purchasing their clothes.

SD3SK “Since I am in the fashion production world, I do make a lot of my clothes myself. I also like to shop in second-hand shops. But since I try to be local as much as possible, my wardrobe is 90% filled with clothes made by me.”

SC3SK “We do swap clothes a lot, or borrow clothes among us friends, maybe even forever. I do not mind the clothes being used before by someone else.”

TD1SK “When I want to freshen up my wardrobe, I go for second-hand shops, I give clothes away to people around me and take some from them, too.”

TD2SK “I shop in second-hand shops, rather than in fast fashion shops. I also try to reduce my shopping. Washing the clothes on a proper temperature to keep them as long as possible, too.”

TD3SK “I mostly shop in second-hand shops, then I also try to sell my stuff further. And I am making my own products – earrings, from recycled materials, as zero waste as possible.”

TD4SK “I adore old things, so I really try to give them a second life. I try to use materials at my work, which are easily accessible. For example, I use sheep wool, which is being discarded, there is simply too much of it now. People throw it out, burn it, so I see a sense in using that, giving a chance to this amazing material which is being wasted.”

TC5SK “I mainly shop in second-hands. Another thing I do is getting hand-me-downs from friends, or we swap clothes.”

17. Feeling of being unique and original

Thirteen of the respondents from all four groups have claimed the need to show their originality and radiate their unique personality via their daily clothing. They have described how their style is based on their personal preferences and even if influenced by fashion trends, influencers, or social environment, they always turn those inspirations into something they can truly own and shine their self through that, showing their creativity or personal style and preferences, even what kind of politics or music they prefer. Two of the respondents, both from the group of traditional fashion line customers have on the other hand stated that their clothes do not represent themselves at all. That it doesn't

serve as any medium of communication for their originality and it is simply a functional part of their lives covering their bodies. A necessity. The other thirteen respondents though, have expressed importance of the fashion expression and finding their own style they feel identified and comfortable with as a supporting role on a way towards finding themselves.

SD1SK “I believe we have to know who we are inside. If we are a romantic soul, or a strict one, perhaps. I have it somehow in me, some purity, clarity. In a way that I enjoy the minimalism, not using huge patterns or extravagant accessories. I go for the way of minimalism, that represent clarity for me, softness, simplicity.”

SD4SK “Many of my outfits are built on colors, I love to combine them, matching it with feelings, characteristics and such. I also like to wear extravagant pieces that are interesting in a way, or I combine clothes in an untraditional way.”

SD5SK „I take some inspiration from trends, but I always have to make it mine somehow. To add on, influence it by me, do it my way to express what is inside me. When you are creative, I think the possibilities are endless, to create your own style, express what you want. If someone doesn't like it, they can turn away, I believe everyone should wear what they want to. Either it is super creative and crazy, or not. If it fits the person, then perfect! I think people can really print themselves onto their clothes with a bit of creativity.”

SC1SK “For me its characteristic, that I have my own unique style of clothing. Really. What I create, or what I wear I want to bear a print of myself. To feel it is expressing my unique self.”

SC3SK “I own many pieces of clothing. I don't have a specific style, it is simple my style. One day its hippie, another day it is metalhead in black. People who know me just say, its Rebeka.”

SC4SK “Clothing is an important part of my self-expression or self-representation. I believe looking for your own style in clothing could help you find your inner self, too. Get to know different aspects of your personality. Especially when you are younger, in puberty.”

SC5SK “I consider myself original. I don't follow the trends, brings me no joy to do that and I have no time for it. I put myself out there with my clothing, I have to feel good with that and I work with the resources I have at home. I don't need to buy things I see on other people. I would say I don't really care if I am being trendy or stylish.”

TD1SK “I have my own way. I have materials that I like, pieces that I consider evergreen, I enjoy old school clothes, cotton-jean materials and so on. I enjoy unique interesting creations. Sometimes I like

to buy that kind of piece from a local designer, but it has to resonate with me. I have to feel myself in my clothes.”

TD2SK “I am not into a single style of clothing, the trends and genres, that’s quite restrictive for me, to pick one and stick with it. I try to avoid it and create my own style, I don’t want to be limited and labelled by any style.”

TD3SK “I try to show my creativity by the way I combine the pieces I wear, how I express my personality through that in a unique way. I want to radiate my openness. Usually I shock my vicinity, because when going to a social event I try to use it and dress in a bit of a outstanding way. Not in an ordinary way, I take joy in it.”

TD4SK “I really go my own way. When I need something new, I try to look in second-hand shops, but it is very hard to fit my style, I rarely see something that will draw my attention and fit me. Sometimes I even can’t find anything special enough.

TD5SK “I want my clothes to radiate that I am a creative person. I like to draw attention with my clothes, wearing outstanding colors, for example I was buying a suit the other day and I have chosen a pink color for it. Because it is unique, and it reflects who I am. Even when I perform as a singer, I tend to wear extravagant pieces to stand out.”

TC1SK “I say I am not a person expressing myself through clothing. I don’t understand people who dress a certain way and try to express anything by it. I consider clothes a purely subjective matter and I don’t think anyone cares what are the other wearing. I choose my clothes for me and do not give a don’t care what other say. I want to fit it, staying within my elegant style.”

TC3SK “For me the clothing is, let’s say a necessity. I cannot walk around naked. But the fashion does not influence me, at all. I don’t need to be unique or express myself through it.”

TC4SK “I consider myself being in this sort of a “grey zone”, since I try to follow the present modern styles and trends, but I try to do it my own way. I don’t wish to look basic I guess, I like to follow the fashion trends with the pieces I wear, but I bring my own personal touch to them to set myself apart, not looking alike with another 15 people standing next to me.”

TC5SK “I try to dress in a way that people would remember me and my outfits. That’s why I sometimes wear more extravagant pieces, as my mum says, many people wouldn’t even dare to put on. But I believe we want to be outstanding. I want to stand out, because of my outfits.”

18. Past and future of fashion

When it comes to opinions about the future of the fashion and whether sustainability and fashion are compatible, the respondents differ in their ideas. Eight respondents coming from all four groups believe that there is a path on which sustainability and fashion meet and become compatible in our future. They describe small changes they see in their environment moving towards that reality and are being optimistic that if more and more people join that movement, the future could be brighter for the environment in regards to the fashion industry. Most of them though state that there is certainly a long way to go and a lot of changes and policies that need to change before we get to that point in the future. A few respondents are finding hope and optimism in the past and history of the fashion world, pointing to the fact that a few generations back people lived with minimal amount of clothing, compared to this day and the society worked just fine with that amount. Five of the participants, coming from all four groups see a link between past and future and describe the way the clothes management has been done in their childhood, or family in the past, preferring hand-me-downs, home-made clothes, borrowing, sharing and second-hand shopping, all of which they also consider as sustainable ways of dealing with fashion. Four of the respondents, from the groups of sustainable fashion line customers, traditional fashion line customers and designers believe, that fast fashion will not cease to exist in the way the world work at the moment. Due to economic reasons, the demand and the standards people got used to, that would have to be compromised if things were to change towards sustainability. One of the respondents, traditional fashion line customer stated though, that the change in the industry is inevitable since it is so tightly linked to the environmental and climate changes on our planet, that we will have to face that challenge at some point and change our behavior.

SD1SK "I think fashion and sustainability are partly compatible, but it would have to be a long time till we tilt towards that compatibility. If the big brands would start to prefer natural materials, or more ecological, made differently, from recycled materials, not only greenwashing that could also be a way."

SD2SK "The term sustainable fashion, as people know it is an old fashion, the one preferred by our grandparents or even parents, it just has changed then. I think it is amazing, that it is having a comeback, people start to pay more attention to it, that it exists. It should bring back some balance in the world of fashion.

SD3SK "There is always space for improvement. There are plans, even for me. We will see how the implementation will go, but we would love to ask for these so called "tokens" from our producers, so we would add it to our blockchain, so that every single piece of clothing would have its own history, that is verifiable. So, the customers could see, how and where it has been made. Regarding the world,

we can see what is happening around us in these past years. Not really here, but in Asia, specifically, in China, too. It is horrible there and the whole world is taking the consequences, from the ways the production works there. I am quite sorry that a lot of brands, the world ones, are faking their environmental interests. They shoot videos of some factories of theirs, which are supposedly representative, but we all know that the clothes are being made in horrible conditions, including heavy metals, cheap coloring, which are getting to our bodies and the nature, as well. That is very unsettling to me, where all of that is going to develop.”

SD4SK “In the future I hope fashion and sustainability will be compatible. Now there is such a demand for the fast fashion, there is very little space for the sustainability. But in the future, in ideal situation, I think it is possible.”

SD5SK “I think people are trying more and more. To be sustainable. It is quite complicated, in times when fast fashion is so wildly spread, it is impossible to switch everything now to a sustainable mode, but in my opinion, we are on a good path. I do believe it will be only getting better.”

SC2SK “We have started that way - our ancestors have been doing that. Now it is a last century phenomenon, that fashion is, suddenly, so easily accessible. There is too much of it. We have too many choices. And I feel we have lost the touch with the reality of the value that clothing has, what stands behind that piece. So, I am glad, sustainable fashion is having a comeback, starting to be “in” again. Compared to 10 years ago, I know way more people that shop in second-hand shops today.”

SC4SK “In the contemporary way that world works, I don’t think fashion can be sustainable. There is such a wild consumerism, so the sustainable fashion cannot really catch up with that. There is no way of producing 50 new collections per year sustainably. The trends are changing so fast, everyone needs the new fashion pieces, so considering that, I don’t believe fashion can be sustainable fully. I can imagine a world where it would work, though. It is a beautiful idea, sustainability. Just by looking into the past, we can see there was no fast fashion, and it was made sustainably. A lot can be changed. Frankly, I can really see a way how it could be done. How to proceed to this change. I guess at least these second-hand shops became a trendy hit.”

TD1SK “I believe there is a path that would unite sustainability and fashion. Of course, the world works on a different principle now, it is fast and commercially focused, superficial, which does not support the sustainable ways. Despite that I believe a big job can be done in the fashion industry. Some has even been made already, it is an organic process though, opened, it is a long journey. But I have to admit, it is hard for me to see a point, where it all works out 100%, but I can see the path and I believe when we walk that path, we can make it.”

TD2SK “Considering the past century and the one before that, people really didn’t have that many clothes. But these past 50 years, the production of clothes have been developing rapidly. Before we were doing totally fine with one or half of one closet. Nowadays we shop immensely. But I do believe, fashion and sustainability are compatible since it used to be that way in the past.”

TD3SK “I don’t think fast fashion will ever cease to exist, for economic reasons. A solution might be to educate people to invest better in the fast fashion, to prefer quality materials, or some basic wear, or shopping second-hand.”

TD4SK “The situation now is that I am really grateful for each and every order I get. Unfortunately, as designers, we are having a rough patch period, feeling decline or sales and a lower interest in our products. I really hope people will educate themselves about sustainable fashion more, there will be a breakthrough and the situation will get better with time.”

TD5SK “The fashion trends are always coming back. It doesn’t even make sense to purchase the “microtrends” and then throw it away. So, I believe the future is in keeping the pieces I don’t use now, because they will have a comeback, I might like them again and wear them as new.”

TC4SK “During my times, the old times, we were exhilarated to buy anything new, because when I was young, we used to have only the “hand me down” clothes after older members of the family or community. So as a teenager, I grew up thinking it is a luxury to buy anything brand new.”

TC5SK “I believe sustainable fashion is much more popular and present, than it used to be. But it is still not enough.”

TC1SK “I don’t think it’s possible for fashion brands as H&M or H&M to work in the future when fashion is sustainable. If they were to work on those terms, I don’t think they could keep the prices that low and the people would not buy it anymore. Economy-wise, I don’t believe it’s possible for fashion to be sustainable. We are too far, there is too much of it, people got used to a certain standard, certain prices.”

TC2SK “Sustainable fashion is a trend that I can see having a future, for sure, since it is closely linked with the environmental changes happening on our planet. Clothes, all of that are recyclable materials. I believe that textile and this whole industry is one of those that are the easiest to be recycled. We just have to do it.”

TC3SK “In my times we were happy to buy anything new, since when I was a child, we used to have only hand-me-downs. So, as a teenager I grew up believing that buying anything new is a luxury.”

19. The place of contact with slow/sustainable fashion

The most significant and mentioned platform for contact with slow or sustainable fashion for the respondents were social media, mostly Instagram, through the profiles of different fashion influencers, it has been mentioned by members of all the groups involved. In the group of designers, of both sustainable and traditional fashion line, the most prevailing answer was the actual work they do daily with the fashion and their studies they have been through in order to create and produce fashion garments. Two of the respondents have stated they get involved in observing the big fashion brand trends and follow their new collections, either for artistic experience or for inspiration. Except from a single respondent, all other respondents have been in touch with more sustainable fashion through second-hand shops.

SD1SK "I have my own brand of clothing, which I would partially categorize as sustainable fashion. Also, I do enjoy following big world fashion brands, that really throw out a new collection 2 or 3 times per year. I still consider fashion as an art stream. The art of not creating only one piece of clothing, but the whole collection, fusing and matching together, linked by an idea. That I consider being an art."

SD2SK "At the moment, I have a fashion brand, which I consider being sustainable, since it is being made in small quantities of basically original pieces"

SD3SK "I am a fashion designer, the founder of Aidastyle brand. I do everything from marketing, through graphics, everything, it is a one woman show, this project of mine."

SD4SK "I work for a fashion brand as their designer, at the moment."

SD5SK "I work part-time in a second-hand shop. I also studied textile design. I take interest in the fashion on daily bases, also in the shops where I work, we have started to upcycle and create stuff. I tailor my own clothes and upcycle some, as well."

SD1SK "It is not something I am focused on directly, but I am aware of it and based on information I got about the topic I have decided to change my shopping behavior and patterns."

SC1SK "Usually I follow eco activists on Instagram, I create my own pieces of streetwear, I try to improve or upcycle my old clothes and I shop in the second-hand shops."

SC2SK "I follow some Instagram profiles, such as Impact, who are deeper in the topic. Second-hand shops are sort of a creative battle fields for me, where I can try out different stuff."

SC4SK “I shop in second-hand shops, or shops with sustainable fashion, if that is not possible then I choose shops with high quality clothes. I also have few pieces made by a seamstress, which I have designed on my own. I think I gained awareness of sustainable fashion about 4 years ago. I also follow Fashion Revolution or similar profiles on Instagram, to stay in touch with the topic.

SC5SK “I spend time on social media platforms, so when the info pops up on me, or I follow people involved with sustainable fashion, I get in touch with it through them more easily.”

TD1SK “I was always interested in the world of fashion and clothing, but in a bit of a different way. I remember I loved second-hand shops since I was a child, I also loved repairing my clothes, or wearing parts of my mother’s wardrobe. Also, the clothes from my aunts who I considered to be so trendy at that time. So, the sustainable fashion is in me, I am a big fan and supported, I follow several webpages and profiles, such as Fashion Revolution, releasing interesting information on the subject, linking you to different agencies and organization doing research in the field. Also, a page called Remake Our World is a contact for me with fashion, then I follow designers and listen to some podcasts.”

TD2SK Since the end of the last year, I have been following more profiles from the fashion field on Instagram. I am not actively searching for the info, but I said to myself, that checking it once in a while can only do me some good.”

TC1SK “I am not pro sustainable fashion at all. I prefer fast fashion.”

TC5SK “The first contact with sustainable fashion was on Instagram from Alex Vortex. That made me try second-hand shopping.”

20. Greenwashing

Two of the twenty respondents have described some form of contact or experience with the phenomena of greenwashing. Both respondents are from the sustainable fashion line group, one of which is a designer and the other one a customer. The designer of sustainable fashion describes also positive examples of good work and possibilities of eliminating the greenwashing phenomena in the future, by implementing so called “tokens” that track the life cycle of the product from the very seed or fiber all the way to the customer.

SD3SK “Of course we need to shop from certified producers that their certificates not only state that they are sustainable, but it is also verifiable. Since nowadays there are companies entering the market, where you can verify the whole life of the item you buy. So, the customer would have an overview of

the material coming from a certified producer, having ecological print on it and so on. To achieve that, the producers must have so called tokens to fit all that info about the item's history in the blockchain. I feel quite sorry when I see many world brands pretending to be environmental-friendly. Shooting videos from their supposedly real factories, which are set up in a way that it would all look okay, representative. But we all know very well that the clothes are being made in horrible conditions, it contains heavy metals, poor quality of coloring and all of that is getting into our bodies and into the nature, as well. That is especially unsettling, I have no idea how that can develop.

And then there are also these influencers, who love to do a promotion for any brand, not really knowing anything about it. Many times, they might not be even guilty, in good hope they buy some products trusting it was made from recycled material. Only to find out at the end, it comes from China's manufacturing plants, just the name has been adapted a bit and sold in Slovakia by certain companies, promoting it as an EU made recycled material. But I am quite aware of the materials, I found out one unpleasant issue of this kind with my supplier. But I take interest in it, I bet there are many producers that would not notice it. That is quite hard."

SC4SK "I am aware of these scandals going on. For example, when H&M claimed their new collections as sustainable, but the truth is that less than 10% of the material is recycled from that single piece. Or there are these celebrities getting contracts with H&M, doing promo for them, never mind the truth, that I have noticed a few times, too."

Discussion

The concluded research in this paper is trying to analyze customer behavior towards the products of the fashion industry, looking into inclination towards either sustainable or fast fashion movements, various purchase motivation factors, personal preferences, interpretations of the role of clothing and awareness of the practices present in the fashion industry. The discussion will therefore serve as an interpretation tool for our results. The limitation of the study will be addressed in this section, as well, together with recommended conclusions drawn from that base, for future research endeavor.

Main findings

Apart from one respondent, all the other participants of the study have claimed to source their information about sustainable fashion from the internet, especially social media, mentioning names of individual influencers or organizations involved in the fashion industry, featuring their contents on

a social network – Instagram. Only few participants mentioned any other source of information, such as books, magazines, documents, or presentations they have attended. Majority of the respondents have also identified social media platforms as their main channels for getting in touch with fashion, again through influencers, fashion brands, designers or organizations promoting sustainable fashion movement(s). We can clearly see the power of the social media platforms when it comes to sharing content and providing sources of information for people, who spend time engaging with them.

A greater number of the respondents have claimed not being thrilled about the actual act of shopping, despite their satisfactory feelings after the purchase. Mostly when describing a fast fashion clothing chain, the participants have negatively described the environment of the shops, the lightings, changing rooms, smell of chemicals and huge amount of clothes, rotating frequently. Slightly different experience was present in the group of sustainable shoppers, where they still described quite a neutral feeling towards the act of shopping, but joy from the purchase and positive feelings about supporting a local producer or designer. Very few respondents actually enjoyed the act of shopping, although many have briefly mentioned the excitement about second-hand shopping and the overall thrill of surprise purchases, they have experienced there, finding something unexpected they liked.

When it comes to decision-making process, most of our respondents consider the purchase of their clothes mostly based on whether they really need that particular piece, if it fits their body shape and style and whether it will fit the rest of their wardrobe. Material, which the item has been made of, was very important to the participants as well, together with the overall quality of the work done on that piece. Important part of the decision was also the price of the product and whether it would be a worthy investment.

Majority of the study participants have identified the price of the clothing, especially when it comes to sustainable and slow fashion items, as the most significant obstacle for purchasing it, even if they would prefer to do so, based on their morals and beliefs. Only three of all the respondents have no problem with paying the amounted price for the products of slow fashion, understanding the value behind the work and materials used in the clothing. Most of the respondents have tendency to find consensus between their financial options and beliefs in second-hand shopping, staying within the line of sustainable fashion and affordability.

The whole group, except two respondents, considered their clothing as a communication medium with the outer world. Expressing their daily moods, state of mind, period of life they find themselves in and their unique self that they would like to show to the world. Communicating their aspects of personality, setting them apart from the crowd, was important for the same number of participants. Expressing their creativity, unique style, making statements with their clothes or assimilation with a subcultural

group was an important role for the clothing they choose to put on. Closely connected to the topic of their self-esteem where over half of the respondents have claimed, the way they dress is in a close relation with their current self-confidence level, both being influenced by the other. Wearing bright and comfortable clothes bringing confidence when needed and at the same time communicating its presence, even lifting it higher, whereas baggy clothes, darker tones were mentioned as a representative of bad mood, lower self-esteem level during that day and a signal for the outer world, that the person wearing it has a darker day.

Apart from the significant influences of social media platforms, that our respondents have mentioned, another important role in shaping their own fashion style holds their society environment. The style of the group they wish to belong to, or to feel associated with, has been described as influential by 13 of the respondents. A strong fashion influence from family environment had been present throughout the study, as well. Mainly for women, borrowing clothes from their older relatives, following their sense of style and fashion habits.

Local cultural norms are also shaping the way our participants choose their garments, according to what is considered polite in the region, for an event or a gathering of some sort. Seven of the respondents feel the need to succumb to the social or cultural norm, applied mainly when attending celebrations, public events, legal services, or when visiting a region with specific cultural or religious norms regarding dress-code.

Opinions regarding the future of sustainable fashion, fast fashion and the actual compatibility of fashion and sustainability in a big picture varied from respondent to respondent, but majority cannot see them coexisting in the current consumption-oriented societies we live in now. Although, several respondents expressed an optimistic view on the future of fashion, linking it with the past, their childhood and lives of their parents, where clothing was present only in limited resources and sustainably made. Therefore, they can see a possibility of changes in society dynamics, influencing the whole environment, including the fashion industry, as the environmental and climate change topics are slowly and surely coming to the forefront of the society's interests, due to global warming and other changes occurring on our planet.

Limitations of the study

The study has been concluded with 20 participants from Slovakia, coming from two main fashion movements, sustainable fashion line and fast fashion line, each movement including ten participants connected to it, where five of each group represented the field of designers, producing fashion and

five of the ten were customers that had inclination towards said fashion movement. To begin with, as a first limitation of this study we have to look into the demographic structure of our study sample, where we can see a discourse in regional and age balance. When looking into the age spectrum of the respondents, we can notice that 70% of the sample is below 30 years old and 85% of the respondents are below the age of 40. For more representative results, speaking for a wider spectrum of the society, we might consider including more respondents from the age group between 30-40 years old, between 40-50 years old as well as the 50+ years old participants. Another demographic variable that could be improved is the regional factor. Over half of our respondents live either in the capital or in a close proximity to it, as well as majority of the sample is coming from the west part of the country, where the capital is based. For a clearer society sample, next time more participants from different regions of the country could be included, to capture the different economical statuses of the regions influencing their customer behaviors regarding fashion choices.

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