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The Effect of Storytelling Advertising on Consumer Evaluation of Green Fashion in the Online Shopping Environment

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Dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of requirements for the MSc in
Management with specialization in Strategic Marketing, at the Universidade
Católica Portuguesa, January 2020

Title: The Effect of Storytelling Advertising on Consumer Evaluation of Green Fashion in the Online Shopping Environment

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Abstract

In light of recent online marketing tactics, it is interesting to understand what contributes to a positive consumer evaluation of green fashion when shopping online. This dissertation examines whether advertisements, which use storytelling content, have a more positive effect on consumer evaluations compared to non-storytelling advertisement content when shopping for green fashion online. An experimental study was conducted to test for the impact of the type of online advertising message (storytelling versus non-storytelling) on consumers' evaluation of green fashion advertisements - advertisement appeal, trust, product purchase intention, brand purchase intention, and willingness to pay. Additionally, the time spent on the evaluation of the advertisements was tested as a moderator on this relationship. The mediation effect of the informational value provided by the storytelling advertisement was further tested when analyzing the relationship between the type of online advertising message and consumer evaluation. Overall, findings show that an online advertising message that uses storytelling has a greater impact on consumers' evaluation of green fashion advertisements versus one that employs no storytelling. Findings also demonstrate that the informational value of the storytelling advertisement fully mediates the relationship for all consumer evaluation factors. Yet, the time invested in the evaluation of a storytelling advertisement does not play a significant moderating role on the evaluation of the online advertisement.

Keywords: Storytelling Marketing, Green Fashion, Online Shopping, Advertisement Appeal, Trust, Product Purchase Intention, Brand Purchase Intention, Willingness To Pay

Título: O Efeito da Publicidade Contar Histórias na Avaliação do Consumidor da Moda Verde no Ambiente de Compras Online

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Resumo

À luz das recentes táticas de online marketing, é relevante compreender o que contribui para uma avaliação positiva sobre green fashion por parte do consumidor ao realizar compras online. A presente dissertação examina se, anúncios que recorrem à narrativa de histórias, têm um maior efeito positivo nas avaliações dos consumidores ao comprar produtos de green fashion, em comparação com anúncios que não recorrem à narrativa. Um estudo experimental foi realizado para testar o impacto do tipo de mensagem de publicidade online (narrativa de histórias versus sem narrativa de histórias) na avaliação por parte dos consumidores de anúncios de green fashion – atratividade do anúncio, confiança, intenção de compra do produto, intenção de compra da marca e disponibilidade para pagar. Adicionalmente, o tempo gasto na avaliação dos anúncios foi testado como moderador dessa relação. O efeito da mediação do valor da informação fornecida pelo anúncio de narrativa de histórias foi, também, testado ao analisar a relação entre o tipo de mensagem do anúncio online e a avaliação por parte do consumidor. No geral, os resultados indicam que, uma mensagem de publicidade online que usa narrativas tem maior impacto na avaliação dos consumidores de anúncios de green fashion, do que uma que não recorre a narrativas. Os resultados sugerem, ainda, que o valor informativo do anúncio de narrativa medeia totalmente o relacionamento para todos os fatores de avaliação do consumidor. No entanto, o tempo investido na avaliação de um anúncio de narrativa, não desempenha um papel moderador significativo na avaliação do anúncio online.

Palavras Chavre: narrativa de histórias, compras online, atratividade do anúncio, confiança, intenção de compra do produto, intenção de compra da marca, disponibilidade para pagar

Acknowledgements

With climate change becoming more apparent than ever before, I realize that a change in behavior with regards to sustainability cannot be taken for granted in today's world. During my academic studies I discovered my interest in sustainable business operations. This final dissertation, which rounds up my academic career, is an outcome that combines this interest with my passion for fashion-related topics.

First and foremost, I want to deeply thank Professor Vera Herédia Colaço for her support, patience and positive attitude throughout the development process of this dissertation. I had the chance to learn from her feedback and complete this big step of my academic path with her help.

Arriving at the finishing line of my academic career, I can reflect upon the past years of being a student and feel extremely thankful for the unconditional love and support I was lucky enough to receive from my family and friends, who always believed in me.

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1. Introduction

1.1. Problem Definition

In today's world, consumers are exposed to a remarkable number of choices when it comes to online shopping. This growing shopping opportunity has contributed to increases in consumers' consumption over the last few decades, which also brought less favorable consequences for the environment. A depletion of organic resources and damage to the environment are some of the results (Nace, 2019). These damages become more apparent during the outbreak of fires, hurricanes, storms, floods and droughts. Consequently, this leads to a reduction in quality of life for the world population, underlined by a reduction in air and food quality, contaminated drinking water, heat-related morbidity and many other negative impacts that undermine people's health conditions (Travers, Schenk, Rosa & Nicholas, 2019). Every year, the consequences resulting from climate change become more evident, leading to an emergence of consumers attempting to change their purchasing behavior (Joshi & Rahman, 2015). Amongst one of the industries with an increased supply and environmental impact is the fashion industry, which is not only being pressured by the governments but also by consumers to follow a more sustainable approach when sourcing and manufacturing apparel (Fortune, 2019). Specifically, the fashion industry has begun to offer sustainable clothing lines that are made of recycled materials, a term that is also known as green fashion (Henninger, Alevizou & Oates, 2016). For instance, this year fast fashion brand H&M has launched another Conscious Collection for its 10th year anniversary. The brand is able to market long-lasting designs that are simultaneously sustainable. This way, consumers do not have to face a tradeoff between design and sustainability (H&M, 2019). Prior work examined the sustainability congruency with hedonic products (Luchs & Kumar 2015), which suggests that more hedonic products are less congruent with sustainability. When facing a tradeoff between products with a hedonic character (e.g. aesthetics) and with a sustainable value, consumers are more likely to prefer the former. H&M, however, wishes to become a role model within this industry and suggests that sustainable fashion apparel can both look modern and be environmentally friendly (Scharf, 2019). The fashion brand sells and promotes its Conscious Collection both offline and online. Although green fashion is a more recent concept compared to regular fast fashion items, H&M and many other sustainable fashion brands use the same marketing strategies for both types of fashion. This is especially relevant when it comes to online shopping where people have to rely on and pay attention to visual and verbal product information only. That is, in the absence of direct contact with the materials and the clothing piece itself. Often, consumers tend to feel

overwhelmed by the information overload they face on a daily basis from online retail channels wishing to direct consumers to their shopping sites (Penz & Hogg, 2009). Due to an overcrowded fashion marketplace, many consumers divert interest and knowledge about green fashion (Shen, Richards & Liu, 2013). Amongst the tactical marketing strategies to catch consumers' attention toward online green fashion is the use of storytelling communication (Greene, Kho, Bonnici & Chase, 2015).

Storytelling is a marketing technique, which helps to inspire consumers through entertainment (Greene et al., 2015). Nowadays, people prioritize entertainment and a good experience over products and plain information (content-marketing.com, 2019). Storytelling helps to tackle this challenge by creating a feeling of engagement and interest in the story that is communicated to the consumer, since individuals tend to think in a narrative way, it aids the viewer to relate with the product (Woodside, Sood & Miller, 2008). The underlying reasoning is increased interest and engagement, which ultimately, enhances the likelihood of people wanting to explore more until they feel ready to move on to action and purchase. Thus, this research aims to analyze to what extent can storytelling be an effective online communication tactic that works as a catalyst for increasing interest and direct attitudes and purchase intention toward green fashion consumption.

1.2. Research Objectives and Questions

As aforementioned, storytelling may be an effective tactic to increase people's interest to bond with a topic or brand. This might be of particular interest for brands selling sustainable apparel, since green fashion is usually not considered as attractive as conventional fast fashion products (Wiederhold & Martinez, 2017). Further, it serves as an inspiration and education tool (Boris, 2019). The main goal of this research is to investigate whether a content-driven advertisement, more specifically, storytelling approach, increases people's evaluation of and intention to buy green fashion when shopping online.

Based on this research problem the following questions are addressed:

RQ1: Does the type of online advertising tactic, more specifically, storytelling, positively influence the evaluation of an advertisement for green fashion?

Furthermore, the question arises how online fashion shops can communicate their sustainable innovations more effectively in today's world which demands a more environmentally friendly drive with the time spent evaluating brand product offers being rather limited. Literature in the domain of online consumption, specifically online fashion consumption, lacks knowledge about what consumers truly value when shopping for green fashion.

RQ2: Can the time spent evaluating online advertising messages affect the strength of the relationship between the type of online advertising message and the evaluation of this message?

RQ3: Does the informational value of the content presented in the advertisement clarify the relationship between the type of online advertising message and the evaluation of this message?

2. Academic Literature Review

The fast fashion industry is a dynamic system, whose goal it is to mass produce clothes and sell it to the world market (Chang & Jai, 2015). Overall, success is measured by the extent to which costs are controlled, while consumers have the possibility to buy the apparel for inexpensive prices (Chang & Jai, 2015). This phenomenon leads consumers wanting to consume more than they actually need and dispose garments that they actually wear only a few times (Birtwistle & Moore, 2007). An additional driving force for buying fast fashion is the fact that it helps individuals with expressing their identity and creating an emotional connection to a place or time (Langdown, 2014). However, fast fashion also shows some downsides, especially when it comes to environmental damage, as a consequence of mass production and overconsumption. The waste of energy for the production of materials, the use and release of toxic chemicals in water, excessive water usage, and polluting CO₂ emissions are amongst some of the most damaging factors. All these factors can harm human health and therefore, serve as a trigger for a reduction in life quality on a global scale, which again diminishes the well-being of the wider population (Resta et al., 2014).

2.1. Sustainable Fashion

Green fashion in general, belongs to the slow fashion movement, which was “developed over the past decades, and used interchangeably with eco-, and ethical-fashion” (Henninger et al., 2016). The development process includes “fair working conditions, a sustainable business

model, organic and environmentally-friendly materials, certifications, and traceability” (Henninger et al., 2016). Overall, it promotes socio-economic and sustainable activities during the whole product lifecycle. Evermore so have both fast and slow fashion brands started to recognize the environmental and ecological costs associated with their business operations and are therefore, carefully exploring new strategies on how to operate in favor of the environment while still successfully competing in a highly competitive environment. The fact that the number of people who care about the environment is increasing, and that environmental awareness is growing, creates additional pressure for businesses to adapt their business models (Chang & Jai, 2015).

Still, the wider population repeatedly buys items that harm the environment and do not exploit the opportunity to purchase green clothing (Wiederhold & Martinez, 2017). According to Manaktola and Jauhari (2007), for sustainable products to be considered when shopping, they have to perform as good as conventional, non-sustainable products to satisfy the consumer and be accepted by them. Key factors for product evaluation include “functional performance, quality, convenience and price” (Manaktola & Jauhari, 2007).

Many times, consumers have the feeling that they have to face a trade-off between sustainability and functional performance or aesthetics. Some people are willing to accept a decrease in functionality if the product has an environmentally friendly characteristic (Manaktola & Jauhari, 2007). Still, environmental friendliness of the apparel is not considered to be the first motivator, or the primary benefit sought out when shopping. Specifically, it has been found that if a consumer experiences a performance gap because the experience with the product does not meet his or her expectations of the product’s performance, the product will be hard to accept. According to Luchs, Brower and Chiturri (2012), consumers usually prefer a product that scores higher on functional performance than on sustainability. A minimum threshold of functional performance needs to be ensured, depending on the importance of sustainability for the consumer, respectively. Beyond this, the authors also suggest that an attractive aesthetic design is an advantage for a sustainable product since it increases confidence in a product, which again increases the likelihood of buying the product. Taking all the aforementioned factors, it can be observed that consumers are often divided between self-benefits and benefits for the environment, which makes their decisions and sustainable consumption choices harder to accomplish. This is also known as the attitude-behavior gap (Wiederhold & Martinez, 2017). According to the attitude behavior gap, many people have good intentions when it comes to buying sustainable products, but when it comes to actual paying behaviors, people often refrain

from making sustainable consumption choices. One factor related with the attitude-behavior gap demonstrated by consumers is information overload, which may cause them to divert from making more sustainable consumption decisions.

2.2. Information Overload and Infinite Choices

The retail and distribution literature suggest that nowadays, consumers own more clothes than in the past, while at the same time, they keep their items for a shorter time frame (Birtwistle & Moore, 2007). The reasoning behind this phenomenon is that today, more than ever, consumers face rich information environments, which go hand in hand with consumers being exposed to many choices when it comes to shopping. Decision-making when shopping for a product has become a challenge that needs to be tackled. Numerous times, consumers feel overwhelmed by the number of choices they are presented with because they want to make the right choice. The overload of information and products triggers consumers to use heuristic evaluation techniques during the decision-making process, which again neglects the evaluation and comparison of all attributes different products may offer (Meyer & Johnson, 1989).

Holbrook and Hirschman (1982) support the view of consumers developing a heuristic decision-making approach. For many years, research has based consumer shopping behavior on bounded rationality models, like the information processing model (Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982). The assumption behind this model focuses on a consumer that makes rational choices because he or she is a logical thinker and wants to reach the goal of solving a problem when shopping. However, research in this domain has started questioning the information processing perspective, since it strongly neglects the irrational processing side. That is, it tends to disregard the emotional responses during a consumer's decision-making process (Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982). Just like Holbrook and Hirschman (1982), Alba and Williams (2012) support that this experiential perspective views consumption as a response that is based primarily on subjective actions, as every individual has individual preferences or aversions. Specifically, they address how subjective actions are manifested in hedonic responses, personal opinions about aesthetics or attribution to symbolic meanings to name a few. The authors argue that an essential factor of hedonic consumption is that it creates pleasure. Still, what accounts for pleasure depends on the individual.

2.3. The World Wide Web as a Communication Tool

The question that arises is how to engage consumers to adapt a more sustainable decision-making process. The web allows millions of people to enter into a communication network simultaneously with limited effort, and on a world-wide and daily basis. The shift from offline to online has made it possible for the audience to extend its size by the physical size of a space. Content is more accessible and easier to share than in the past, which can have a positive impact on the reach of a message (Lieberman & Schroeder, 2019). Moreover, the web allows people to save time while browsing or shopping, for example. Living in a time of intense digitalization, people spend a lot of time searching for information online before making a purchase decision. Time efficiency is one of the reasons why people shop online. On the one hand, consumers avoid the crowds they would have had to meet in an offline shop, and on the other hand, the online shopping service is available 24/7 (Moshrefjavadi et al., 2012).

2.4. The Importance of Inbound Marketing and Storytelling

There are two tactics that companies use in order to market the products they sell, namely inbound and outbound marketing. While inbound marketing is a rather modern technique, outbound marketing counts as a traditional method that has been used a lot in the past. Brands started to recognize that traditional marketing activities, such as outbound marketing, cannot reach consumers anymore in a way that newer strategies do. Outbound marketing is a push strategy, whereby the brand initiates a conversation with a (potential) customer through for example mediums of media such as TV commercials or e-mail spam (Patruti-Baltes, 2016). It is interruption-driven, meaning that the audience does not voluntarily engage with the brand but gets interrupted by a brand's content. Inbound marketing on the other hand, is content-driven, consumer-initiated, and more specifically, a very consumer-engaging paradigm (Patruti-Baltes, 2016). It connects customers through experiences they think are useful for them, as, for example, when they read blogs or become a member of a social network. Following this inbound technique, customers are pulled to and not pushed (outbound marketing) towards the business. The consumer voluntarily chooses in what direction he or she wants to proceed with and whether to enter into a conversation with the brand, depending on their attachment towards the content presented with.

As aforementioned, information overload can be both an opportunity and a barrier for businesses. Being successful means standing out from the crowd and leaving a positive

impression in the consumer's mind, which ultimately leads to increased shopping activity. Storytelling counts as an inbound marketing technique (Dakouan, Beneabdelouahed & Anabir, 2019) and underlines the focus of this research. It is a powerful tool which gives companies the chance to spread informative content in an entertaining way. Telling a story includes the application of theory to the real world and provides detailed information about a topic (Greene et al., 2015). In the past, the concept was used to educate, inform, and capture complex concepts since writing did not exist. It boosts the creation of mental images of the story in the audience's mind and can therefore, be used as a powerful communication strategy (Greene et al., 2015).

The goal of the storyteller is to evoke specific emotions to determine the audience's interest and to promote a learning activity at the same time. Moreover, it helps the audience to build a personal connection to the topic, which again actively integrates the consumer and increases interest. It helps with creating "a more visually/auditorily stimulating experience", which again makes learning or processing information easier for the observer (Greene et al., 2015). It reaches out to a person's brain in a more efficient way, meaning that storytelling makes the intake of information easier and more accurate (Boris, 2019).

Brands can, therefore, no longer only talk about product or service benefits or features in a common way. Consumers expect a more outstanding way of communication and information sharing if the goal is to remember a company's values and push sales. Kamleitner, Thürridl & Martin (2019) show that consumers consider products to be more special if there is a story behind it. More specifically, brands can utilize a product's (past) identity to create a story around it instead of crafting a new story that is based on brand values and product use only. Yet, limited research has looked into whether a more entertaining marketing technique, such as storytelling, has the power to increase the interest and motivation to inform oneself about green apparel. Also, it is less clear to what extent a consumer's perception of the value of the information presented with plays a role when evaluation a green fashion item. According to Boris (2019), information shared through stories helps with creating trust, which is strongly needed in regard to today's environment, which is endangered by climate change. Additionally, research lacks insights about whether it increases the chances of people actually buying green fashion products, given that consumers are often led on by productive mindsets and expect products to be immediately available, making the influence of time is an extremely important variable to look into.

2.5. The Influence of Time

Since green clothing is still a rather uncommon apparel choice and people are not familiar with the development and importance of sustainable apparel, time might play an important role during the online exploration and education about green fashion in order to gain attention on its environmental relevance. According to Punj (2012), the search, when shopping online, decreases if the time costs are high, while a search increases when time costs are low. More specifically, if time costs are low relative to the information gained, consumers tend to follow a more exploratory search (Punj, 2012). Sismeiro and Bucklin (2004) found out that online shoppers with a time constraint are both more efficient and more focused when searching for a product during their online shopping activity. Moreover, their findings suggest that the more effort and time a consumer invests in the web shop, the more likely he or she is to buy something in that shop. This research will take the potential influence of time into account when analyzing the evaluation of buying green apparel online.

2.6. Motivation for a Sustainable Future

More and more, negative consequences of operations pushed by the fast fashion industry come to light. These insights are increasingly shared by the media, leading the community to rethink the values of ethical consumerism (Wiederhold & Martinez, 2017). Slowly but surely the world is experiencing a social change, which promotes sustainable consumerism, which again entails an environmental purchasing decision that is least damaging for both the society and the environment (Chang & Jai, 2015). Some consumers are already aware of and conscious about the environmental damage the fashion industry causes. To slow down the environmental impact caused by the fashion industry, there is an increasing demand to actively stop destroying the environment and taking the lead to become a role model for many other fashion brands by offering more sustainable collections and tactical strategies to persuade consumers to consume more responsibly.

3. Conceptual Framework and Hypotheses

In alignment with the academic literature review provided earlier in this research, this part presents the conceptual framework, which consists of several hypotheses that will be tested for this study. This research paper analyzes the impact that types of online advertising messages

(storytelling versus non-storytelling) have on a consumer's evaluation of green fashion when visiting a fashion online shop. Additionally, this study tests the moderating role of time spent evaluating the advertisement and the mediating role of informational value on the hypothesized relationship between online advertising message type and consumer evaluations of online green fashion (willingness to pay, product purchase intention, brand purchase intention; advertisement appeal, and trust) (Figure 1).

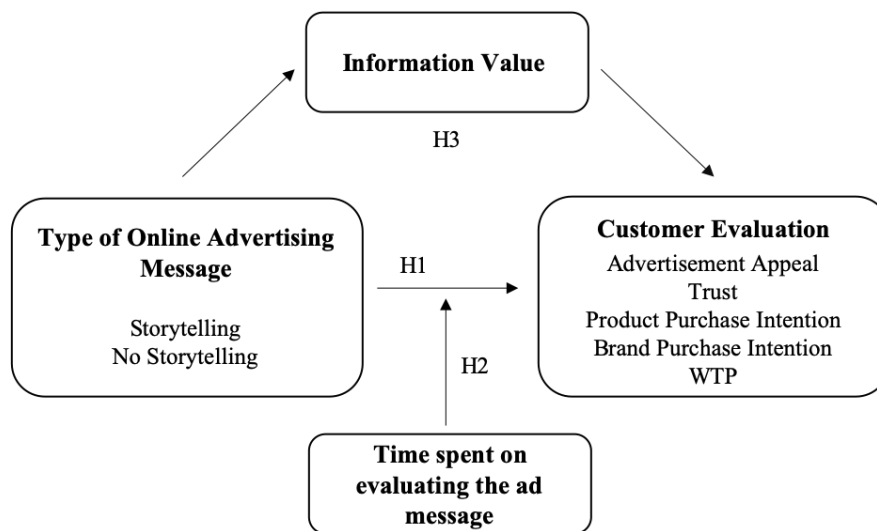


Figure 1 Conceptual Framework

3.1. Hypotheses

Prior research to this study suggests that storytelling reaches out to the emotional side of people by sharing information in a narrative way. It promotes the creation of mental images about a topic presented with, which is on the one hand more entertaining and on the other hand helpful during the information processing phase. This means that storytelling should affect a person's information processing motivation, which again can have an important and positive impact on the evaluation of products and services (Greene et al., 2015). The following hypothesis is suggested as follows:

H1: The type of online advertising message (storytelling, non-storytelling) will have an impact on consumers' evaluations (advertisement appeal, trust, purchase intention for product, purchase intention for brand, willingness to pay).

Prior literature suggests that in today's world people are exposed to a limitless number of information on a daily basis. This information needs time to be processed (Punj, 2012). This information overload pushes people to find ways how to time-efficiently filter and process the most relevant information for them in order to reach the best outcome possible. Consequently, the author hypothesizes that the time consumers spend on evaluating an online advertising message should moderate the relationship between the type of online advertising message and consumers' evaluations (Sismeiro & Bucklin, 2004). The second hypothesis, therefore, suggests the following:

H2: The time spent on evaluating the advertisement will moderate the relationship between type of online advertising message (storytelling, non-storytelling) and consumers' evaluations (advertisement appeal, trust, purchase intention for product, purchase intention for brand, willingness to pay).

As aforementioned, consumers want to extract the most important information from an unlimited pool of information that they are confronted with on a daily basis to expedite decisions since too much information might feel overwhelming for many individuals. Therefore, consumers strive to extract relevant information that adds real value to their choices, which, when used efficiently, will have consequences on the evaluations of a brand or product (Greene et al., 2015). The third hypothesis thus suggests that information value will mediate the relationship between type of online advertising message and consumers' evaluations. More formally, the third hypothesis is suggested, as follows:

H3: Informational value will mediate the relationship between type of online advertising message (storytelling, non-storytelling) and consumers' evaluations (advertisement appeal, trust, purchase intention for product, purchase intention for brand, willingness to pay).

4. Methodology and Data Collection

4.1. Research Method

The research was conducted based on two experimental designs, a pilot survey and a main survey. The data was collected through an online platform suitable for conducting online experimental studies - Qualtrics, which allowed for a collection of data at speed, with minimum

administrative cost, and from a large audience. Additionally, this method shows several advantages for the participants. Since the survey can be answered without temporal or spatial restrictions, this method enables a flexible and convenient participation through different types of internet-based devices. With the help of several survey online tools, the survey can be customized and analyzed according to the needs of the research (Evans & Mathur, 2005). These online based platforms allow for a random allocation of stimuli to two experimental conditions (Tingling, Parent, & Wade, 2003).

4.2. Sampling

The sampling approach was a non-probability sampling technique. This approach does not allow for an equal probability of being selected to participate in this study. Consequently, on the one hand, results of this study may be affected by uncertainties and hidden biases. On the other hand, advantages include low administrative costs and the elimination of troubles that might arise during the development of the sampling frame. In this study, a convenience sample technique was adopted in order to obtain data in a cost- and time-effective manner (Kothari, 2004). Participants were contacted via social media platforms (Instagram, Facebook, WhatsApp), mainly through the author's network and could access the survey, following an online link. The participants were informed that their responses would be treated completely confidentially to promote honesty. In return for the participation, participants were offered with the option to take part in a lottery in order to receive a voucher for an online shop.

4.3. Research Instruments

4.3.1. Pilot Study

To confirm that the questions developed for the main survey were understandable for the participants, a pilot study was conducted using the same questionnaire. Additionally, the pilot study helped in understanding whether the integrated manipulations performed according to the expectations of the author. Overall, the sample consisted of 20 participants. A univariate analysis (ANOVA) was used in order to check the significance between the independent and dependent variables. Results show a non-significant main effect of type of online advertising message on advertisement appeal ($F(1, 19) = 2.79, p = \text{NS}$), trust ($F(1, 19) = 0.04, p = \text{NS}$) product purchase intention ($F(1, 19) = 0.10, p = \text{NS}$), brand purchase intention ($F(1, 19) = 0.56, p = \text{NS}$), and willingness to pay ($F(1, 19) = 0.84, p = \text{NS}$) (see table 1).

Table 1: Pilot Study - Results for the One-way Interaction of Type of Online Advertising Message

Type of Online Advertising Message Main Effect	
	<i>F test</i>
Advertisement Appeal	2.79
Trust	0.04
Product Purchase Intention	0.10
Brand Purchase Intention	0.56
WTP	0.84

p < .05; **p < .01; *p < .001*

An independent samples' *t-test* was then, conducted to test whether the manipulation check has worked. The manipulation check tested the information level of the advertisements the observer was confronted with. The storytelling advertisement showed more information than the non-storytelling advertisement. However, results also show a non-significant effect between participants that experience the storytelling advertisement ($M_{storytelling} = 5.71, SD = 1.27$) versus other participants who observed the non-storytelling advertisement ($M_{non-storytelling} = 6.50, SD = .55$), $t(20) = -1.45; p > .05$ (see table 2). After analyzing the pilot study survey, edits were incorporated in the advertising story and survey for the main study to stress the story character of the advertisement in a clearer way (see Appendix A and B)

Table 2: Pilot Study - Independent Samples T-Test for the Manipulation Check for Information Value of Online Advertising Message

	Type of Online Advertising Message				<i>t-test</i>
	Storytelling		No Storytelling		
	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	
Information Value Manipulation Check	6.50	.55	5.71	1.27	-1.45

p < .05; **p < .01; *p < .001*

4.3.2. Main Study

The survey used in the main study was in English and available for participation from the 17th until the 25th of November 2019. It was distributed via social media platforms, as well as per e-mail, and accessible both via mobile phone and computer. Overall, the sample consisted of two hundred and nineteen (219) responses, two hundred and twelve (212) of them completed responses valid for running the statistical analysis. The survey included randomized

manipulations. Each cell of the two experimental conditions shows approximately 106 participants, which is in line with the recommended number of participants required in order to conduct an experimental research, which is both consistent and valid.

4.4. Design and Procedure

The goal of this study is to find out how the type of online advertising message (storytelling versus non-storytelling) impacts consumers' attitude towards advertisement appeal, trust, product purchase intention, brand purchase intention and willingness to pay for green fashion garments. Moreover, this study aims to explore in more detail the impact of the information value presented by the advertising message type. The study design followed a 2 (Type of Online Advertisement Message: storytelling, non-storytelling) x between-within subjects' design with Time spent evaluating the advertisement as a continuous variable, tested as a moderator. Additionally, informational value, also a continuous variable, was tested as a mediator. Advertisement appeal, trust, product purchase intention, brand purchase intention and willingness to pay served as dependent variables.

The main study is subdivided into four parts (see Appendix C for details). The first part consisted of introductory questions which included a scenario that asked participants to imagine to be shopping for a sustainable jacket consisting of a 100% recycled material at a fictitious fast fashion brand's online shop, called *Everline*. For better imagination, the landing page of the online shop was displayed to all participants (see Appendix C). With the help of the randomizer flow tool that Qualtrics offers, the second part of the study, served the purpose of randomly assigning each participant to a condition - one of the gender-adapted two types of online advertising message (*storytelling, non-storytelling*) (see Appendix A). Beforehand, the participant also selected whether he or she wanted to shop womenswear or menswear to ensure that the participant can have a more realistic experience while imagining visiting an online fashion shop. The data was aggregated since no differences were observed between males and females. Next, respondents had to answer questions about their attitude towards the advertisement, the product and the brand presented.

The third part of the study aimed to find out more about the participants' attitude and behavior towards sustainability in general and included seven questions. The questions were adapted from the green scale developed by Haws, Winterich & Walker Naylor (2014). Finally, the last part of the survey covered five questions that wanted to understand in which situations

participants shop online for clothes and seven questions with regards to demographics. The study ended by thanking the participant and presenting the option to enter the personal e-mail address in order to take part in a lottery, which gave away a €10 Amazon voucher.

4.5. Stimuli Development

To serve the purpose of exploring different scenarios, one stimulus was created for differentiating the online advertising message types. The non-storytelling scenario showed an advertisement, which only provided limited product details such as, the number of the jackets renewed plastic bottles used on the jacket's production and the name of the collection - *Conscious Collection*. The storytelling scenario included all information also stated in the non-storytelling scenario but, additionally, it provided participants with a background story of the product. It stated four key facts about the product, which gave insights about the recycled material (55 renewed plastic bottles), the producer (Unico Global VN Co., Ltd) and its expertise (high-quality workmanship) and the product's origin (Bac Giang, Vietnam). Moreover, it stressed the impact that the brand has created ("So far we have recycled 3 million plastic water bottles.") and invited the participant to become an active part of the sustainable movement by stating a question ("You want to wear outwear that benefits the environment?").

Since the study aimed to be as much customized for the two types of gender, participants that decided to shop womenswear were shown a female jacket, while participants that wanted to shop menswear were presented with a jacket for men.

4.6. Variable Descriptions

A *manipulation check* was conducted in order to check whether the participant was having a careful look at the advertisement and the information depicted on it. The storytelling advertising message listed some hard facts about the sustainable product and its development process, while non-storytelling advertising message stated much less information about it. The participant was asked to indicate his or her perceptual level of informational value of the online advertisement exposed to.

Independent Variable

Type of Online Advertising Message – this was operationalized as storytelling versus non-storytelling.

Moderator

Time spent evaluating the online advertising message – this variable was measured by Qualtrics by counting the number of seconds the participant took to evaluate the block, which represents the evaluation of the online advertising message.

Mediator

Information value - this variable was measured on a 7-point Likert scale, asking the participant to indicate how informative (from 1 = “*not informative at all*” to 7 = “*extremely informative*”) he or she perceives the advertisement to be (“How informative do you perceive this advertisement to be?”).

Dependent Variables

Advertisement appeal - this variable was measured using a 7-point Likert scale, asking the participant how appealing (from 1 = “*not appealing at all*” to 7 = “*extremely appealing*”) he or she perceives the advertisement to be.

Trust – to assess how much the respondent trusts the brand, he or she was asked how likely he or she was to trust the brand on a seven-point Likert scale (from 1 = “*extremely unlikely*” to 7 “*extremely likely*”).

Product purchase intention - in order to assess the likelihood of purchasing the product, the participant was asked how likely he or she would buy the product on a seven-point Likert scale (from 1 = “*extremely unlikely*” to 7 “*extremely likely*”).

Brand purchase intention - in order to assess the likelihood of purchasing from the brand in general, the participant was asked how likely he or she would buy from the brand on a seven-point Likert scale (from 1 = “*extremely unlikely*” to 7 “*extremely likely*”).

Willingness to pay - this variable was measured by asking the respondent how much he or she would be willing to pay (from 0 to 100 euros) for the product.

5. Analysis and Results

This chapter serves to carefully analyze the data in terms of descriptive statistics and the effect of the stimuli manipulation, along with the study's reliability and correlation analysis of the measurement items.

5.1. Sample Characterization

Overall, the sample consisted of two hundred and twelve respondents. Most of the participants were female (52.8%), the rest being male (47.2%). The majority of the participants, representing half of the sample, was between 25 and 34 years old (50.5%), followed by 19 to 24-year-olds (28.8%). The third largest age category was between 35 and 44 years old (9.0%). Most of the respondents were employed (51.4%) or university students (43.9%). This is in accordance with the sample's age distribution. Over half of the respondents are German (58.5%). The second and third largest nationality categories are Croatian (14.6%) and Singaporean (5.7%), respectively. Lastly, most of the respondents earn an annual income between €10,000 and €19,999 (14.2%), followed by an annual income of between €50,000 and €74,999 (13.7%), and between €20,000 and €29,999 (9.0%). Contrasting to this, there were also participants, who did not know their annual income (9.9%).

5.2. Manipulation Check

A manipulation check was conducted to test whether the researcher has effectively manipulated the advertisements (storytelling; non-storytelling). Results from the t-test with a 95% confidence interval show a significant difference between the informational value means. More specifically, the storytelling advertising message ($M_{storytelling} = 5.91$, $SD = .87$) is considered to be more informative than the non-storytelling advertising message ($M_{non-storytelling} = 4.99$, $SD = 1.53$), $t(212) = -5.49$; $p < .001$, validating the manipulation check.

Table 3: Manipulation Check for Information Value of Online Advertising Message

	Type of Online Advertising Message				t-test
	Storytelling		No Storytelling		
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
Information Value Manipulation Check	5.91	.87	4.99	1.53	-5.49***

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$

5.3. Main Results

Further analyses were conducted to test the three hypotheses. A one-way multivariate analysis (ANOVA) was used to first test the impact of type of online advertising message on the dependent variables, which focus on consumers' evaluations - advertisement appeal, trust, product purchase intention, brand purchase intention and willingness to pay. The second hypothesis tested whether the time spent evaluating the online advertising message serves as a moderator between the type of online advertising message and the dependent variables. For this, a regression using Haye's Process model 1. Finally, the mediation effect of informational value of the advertising message was tested by running another regression, however with Hayes' process model 4. Hayes' models help to understand the difference between the dependent variables' means (Hayes, 2013, 2015).

5.3.1. The impact of online advertising communication message on consumer evaluation

H1: The type of online advertising message (storytelling, non-storytelling) will have an impact on consumers' evaluations (advertisement appeal, trust, purchase intention for product, purchase intention for brand, willingness to pay).

To test hypothesis one, a univariate analysis (ANOVA) was conducted. Results show a significant main effect of type of online advertising message on advertisement appeal ($F(1, 211) = 9.99, p < .01$), trust ($F(1, 211) = 5.33, p < .05$) product purchase intention ($F(1, 211) = 16.73, p < .001$), brand purchase intention ($F(1, 211) = 4.22, p < .05$), and willingness to pay ($F(1, 211) = 7.35, p < .01$), respectively.

Table 4: Results for the One-way Interaction of Type of Online Advertising Message

Type of Online Advertising Message Main Effect	
	<i>F test</i>
Advertisement Appeal	9.99**
Trust	5.33*
Product Purchase Intention	16.73***
Brand Purchase Intention	4.22*
WTP	7.35**

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$

Further tests were conducted. Independent sample's t-tests were conducted on the five dependent variables. The means of the two independent groups, storytelling advertising message and non-storytelling advertising message observers, were compared. Results show that there is a significant difference in the means between the two types of online advertising message. Respondents perceive the storytelling advertisement to be more appealing than the advertisement without storytelling (Advertisement appeal: $M_{storytelling} = 5.16$, $SD = 1.27$, vs. $M_{non-storytelling} = 4.57$, $SD = 1.43$; $t(210) = -3.20$; $p < .01$). Also, the storytelling advertisement was considered to be significantly more trustful than the advertisement that was not based on the storytelling approach (Trust: $M_{storytelling} = 4.83$, $SD = 1.31$, vs. $M_{non-storytelling} = 4.42$, $SD = 1.30$; $t(210) = -2.31$; $p < .05$). The likelihood of purchasing the product was higher for the participants that viewed the storytelling advertisement than for the ones that saw the advertisement without the story behind it (Product Purchase Intention: $M_{storytelling} = 4.65$, $SD = 1.46$, vs. $M_{non-storytelling} = 3.82$, $SD = 1.43$; $t(210) = -4.10$; $p < .001$). The same effect can also be observed for the brand purchase intention (Brand Purchase Intention: $M_{storytelling} = 4.66$, $SD = 1.41$, vs. $M_{non-storytelling} = 4.28$, $SD = 1.27$; $t(210) = -2.10$; $p < .05$). When it comes to the willingness to pay for the product, a significant difference between the means can be confirmed as well (WTP: $M_{storytelling} = 131.23$, $SD = 66.35$, vs. $M_{non-storytelling} = 107.41$, $SD = 60.66$; $t(210) = -2.71$; $p < .01$), fully validating hypothesis 1.

Table 5: Results Independent Samples T-Test of Online Advertising Message on Dependent Variables

	Type of Online Advertising Message				t-test
	Storytelling		No Storytelling		
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
Advertisement Appeal	5.16	1.27	4.57	1.43	-3.2**
Trust	4.83	1.31	4.42	1.3	-2.31*
Product Purchase Intention	4.65	1.46	3.82	1.43	-4.10***
Brand Purchase Intention	4.66	1.41	4.28	1.27	-2.10*
WTP	131.23	66.35	107.41	60.66	-2.71**

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$

Overall, results show that consumers' evaluation (advertisement appeal, trust, product purchase intention, brand purchase intention, willingness to pay) increase when the consumer is confronted with an online advertising message that incorporates storytelling compared to non-storytelling, fully supporting hypothesis 1.

5.3.2. The moderating effect of time spent on evaluation

H2: The time spent on evaluating the advertisement will moderate the relationship between type of online advertising message (storytelling, non-storytelling) and consumers' evaluations (advertisement appeal, trust, purchase intention for product, purchase intention for brand, willingness to pay).

The second hypothesis suggests that the time spent on the evaluation of the online advertisement moderates the relationship between the type of online advertising message and consumer evaluation. The moderation is tested by assuming a continuous moderator (time spent on evaluation of the advertising message), continuous dependent variables (consumer evaluation: appeal, trust, product purchase intention, brand purchase intention, willingness to pay) and a dichotomous independent variable (type of online advertising message: storytelling, non-storytelling). If the regression coefficient for the interaction is different from zero between the Lower and Upper Level confidence intervals, the time spent for evaluation linearly moderates the effect of type of online advertising message on the dependent variables (Hayes, 2013, 2015).

Conducting a regression analysis with Model 1 by Hayes (2013, 2015) by analyzing the interaction type of online advertising message (storytelling, non-storytelling) x time spent on evaluating the advertising message shows no interaction effect on either informational value ($b = -.00$, $SE = .00$, $t(208) = -.36$, $p = .72$, 95% CI [-0.00, 0.00]), or advertisement appeal ($b = -.00$, $SE = .00$, $t(208) = -.01$, $p = .99$, 95% CI [-0.00, 0.00]), or trust ($b = -.00$, $SE = .00$, $t(208) = -.77$, $p = .44$, 95% CI [-0.00, 0.00]), or product purchase intention ($b = -.00$, $SE = .00$, $t(208) = -.52$, $p = .60$, 95% CI [-0.00, 0.00]), or brand purchase intention ($b = -.00$, $SE = .00$, $t(208) = -.58$, $p = .56$, 95% CI [-0.00, 0.00]), or willingness to pay ($b = -.08$, $SE = .06$, $t(208) = -1.29$, $p = .20$, 95% CI [-0.21, 0.44]) (see table 6).

Table 6: Results of the Moderating effect of time spent on evaluation

Outcome	Paths	β	SE	t	Lower CI	Upper CI
1	Type of Online Ad Message → Informational Value	-0.00	.00	-3.6	-0.00	0.00
2	Type of Online Ad Message → Advertisement Appeal	-0.00	.00	-0.01	-0.00	0.00
3	Type of Online Ad Message → Trust	-0.00	.00	-.77	-0.00	0.00
4	Type of Online Ad Message → Product Purchase Intention	-0.00	.00	-.52	-0.00	0.00
5	Type of Online Ad Message → Brand Purchase Intention	-0.00	.00	-.58	-0.00	0.00
6	Type of Online Ad Message → WTP	-0.08	.06	- 1.29	-0.21	0.44

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$

Overall, interaction between type of online advertising message x time spent evaluating the message shows no significant effect on dependent variables since we can observe the zero point between the lower and Upper Level confidence interval for the interaction variable. Hence, the time spent on the evaluation of the online advertising message cannot be counted as a moderator, rejecting hypothesis 2.

5.3.3. The mediating effect of informational value

H3: Informational value will mediate the effect between type of online advertising message (storytelling, non-storytelling) and consumers' evaluations (advertisement appeal, trust, purchase intention for product, purchase intention for brand, willingness to pay).

The third hypothesis tests for the mediation effect of the value of information presented on the relationship between the type of online advertising message and consumer evaluations (advertisement appeal, trust, product and brand purchase intentions, willingness to pay). To test for mediation, Hayes' (2013, 2015) regression test was performed with model 4. In case the confident intervals straddle zero, there is no mediating effect (Hayes, 2013, 2015). More specifically, there is 95% confidence that there is a mediating effect if the intervals do not contain zero.

The results show that the informational value of the advertisement mediates the effect of type of online advertising message on the advertisement appeal. Both the impact of type of online advertising message on informational value ($b = .92$, $SE = .17$, $p < .001$, 95% CI = [0.59, 1.25]) and the impact of informational value on advertisement appeal ($b = .61$, $SE = .06$, $p < .001$, 95% CI = [0.48, 0.73]) are significant. The results of the analysis, which are based on 5000 bootstraps, show that informational value fully mediates the effect of type of online advertising message on the advertisement appeal dependent variable (*indirect effect* = .56, $SE = .12$, $p < .05$, 95% CI = [0.35, 0.80]).

Table 7: Information Value as a Mediator on the Effect of Type of Online Communication Message and Advertisement Appeal

Outcome	Indirect Effect Paths	Indirect Effect	Lower CI	Upper CI
1	Type of Online Ad Message → Information value	.92***	.59	1.25
2	Information value → Advertisement Appeal	.61***	.48	.73
3	Type of Online Ad Message → Information value → Advertisement Appeal	.56*	.35	.80
Direct Effect Paths		Direct Effect	Lower CI	Upper CI
4	Type of Online Ad Message → Advertisement Appeal	0.3	-.30	.36

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$

Moreover, it was tested whether informational value mediated the relationship between the type of online advertising message and trust. Again, both the impact of type of online advertising message on informational value ($b = .92$, $SE = .17$, $p < .001$, 95% CI = [0.59, 1.25]) and the impact of informational value on trust ($b = .52$, $SE = .06$, $p < .001$, 95% CI = [0.39, 0.65]) show a significant outcome. This analysis, which is again based on 5000 bootstraps, shows that informational value fully mediates the effect of type of online advertising message on trust (*indirect effect* = .48, $SE = .10$, $p < .05$, 95% CI = [0.30, 0.69]).

Table 8: Information Value as a Mediator on the Effect of Type of Online Communication Message and Trust

Outcome	Indirect Effect Paths	Indirect Effect	Lower CI	Upper CI
1	Type of Online Ad Message → Information value	.92***	.59	1.25
2	Information value → Trust	.52***	.39	.65
3	Type of Online Ad Message → Information value → Trust	.48*	.30	.69
Direct Effect Paths		Direct Effect	Lower CI	Upper CI
4	Type of Online Ad Message → Trust	-.06	-.40	.27

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$

Further analysis tested if informational value mediated the relationship between the type of online advertising message and product purchase intention. Both the impact of type of online advertising message on informational value ($b = .92$, $SE = .17$, $p < .001$, 95% CI = [0.59, 1.25]) and the impact of informational value on product purchase intention ($b = .49$, $SE = .08$, $p < .001$, 95% CI = [0.34, 0.64]) show a significant outcome. Using bootstraps analysis, it is visible

that informational value fully mediated the effect of type of online advertising message on product purchase intention (*indirect effect* = .45, *SE* = .10, $p < .05$, 95% CI = [0.27, 0.66]).

Table 9: Information Value as a Mediator on the Effect of Type of Online Communication Message and Product Purchase Intention

Outcome	Indirect Effect Paths	Indirect Effect	Lower CI	Upper CI
1	Type of Online Ad Message → Information value	.92***	.59	1.25
2	Information value → Product Purchase Intention	.49***	.34	.64
3	Type of Online Ad Message → Information value → Product Purchase Intention	.45*	.27	.66
Direct Effect Paths		Direct Effect	Lower CI	Upper CI
4	Type of Online Ad Message → Product Purchase Intention	.38	-.01	.78

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$

It can be seen that the informational value of the advertisement also mediates the effect of type of online advertising message on brand purchase intention. Both the impact of type of online advertising message on informational value ($b = .92$, $SE = .17$, $p < .001$, 95% CI = [0.59, 1.25]) and the impact of informational value on brand purchase intention ($b = .49$, $SE = .07$, $p < .00$, 95% CI = [0.35, 0.62]) are significant. The results of the analysis, which are based on 5000 bootstraps, show that informational value fully mediates the effect of type of online advertising message on brand purchase intention (*indirect effect* = .45, $SE = .10$, $p < .05$, 95% CI = [0.27, 0.65]).

Table 10: Information Value as a Mediator on the Effect of Type of Online Communication Message and Brand Purchase Intention

Outcome	Indirect Effect Paths	Indirect Effect	Lower CI	Upper CI
1	Type of Online Ad Message → Information value	.92***	.59	1.25
2	Information value → Brand Purchase Intention	.49***	.35	.62
3	Type of Online Ad Message → Information value → Brand Purchase Intention	.45*	.27	.65
Direct Effect Paths		Direct Effect	Lower CI	Upper CI
4	Type of Online Ad Message → Brand Purchase Intention	-.07	-.42	.29

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$

Lastly, it was analyzed if informational value mediated the relationship between the type of online advertising message and willingness to pay. The impact of type of online advertising

message on informational value ($b = .92, SE = .17, p < .001, 95\% CI = [0.59, 1.25]$) and the impact of informational value on willingness to pay ($b = 14.74, SE = 3.47, p < .00, 95\% CI = [7.90, 21.59]$) show a significant outcome. This analysis, which is again based on 5000 bootstraps, shows that informational value fully mediates the effect of type of online advertising message on willingness to pay (*indirect effect* = 13.60, $SE = 3.58, p < .05, 95\% CI = [7.20, 21.32]$).

Table 11: Information Value as a Mediator on the Effect of Type of Online Communication Message and WTP

Outcome	Indirect Effect Paths	Indirect Effect	Lower CI	Upper CI
1	Type of Online Ad Message → Information value	.92***	.59	1.25
2	Information value → WTP	14.74***	7.90	21.59
3	Type of Online Ad Message → Information value → Brand Purchase Intention	13.60*	7.20	21.32
	Direct Effect Paths	Direct Effect	Lower CI	Upper CI
4	Type of Online Ad Message → WTP	10.22	-7.59	28.04

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$

Overall, these findings suggest that the informational value presented with in the online advertising message fully mediates the relationship between the independent variable (type of advertising message) and all dependent variables (consumer evaluation). Hence, hypothesis 3 is fully supported.

6. Conclusion and Implications

The main goal of this research was to investigate whether the type of online advertising message that a fashion online shop uses for tactical marketing reasons, more specifically whether storytelling, has an impact on the overall evaluation of a product or brand that sells sustainable garments.

Concerning the first research question (RQ1), the results and findings suggest that using storytelling as an online communication tool, compared to non-storytelling techniques, increases the overall consumers' evaluation of the sustainable product and brand. This evaluation was expressed by assigning significantly more positive ratings to storytelling in comparison to non-storytelling type of online advertisement messages with regards to the advertisement appeal, trust, product purchase intentions, brand purchase intentions and confirming a higher willingness to pay for sustainable fashion. These findings are in-line with

literature that suggests that inbound and more content-driven marketing, where storytelling belongs to, pull the consumer to the brand because interest arises (Patruti-Baltes, 2016).

With regards to the second research question (RQ2), this study indicates that the time invested on the evaluation of an online advertising message does not affect the strength of the relationship between the storytelling approach, compared to the non-storytelling approach, and the evaluation factors when it comes to green fashion.

Lastly, the third research question (RQ3) intended to investigate whether the value of information presented within the online advertising message sufficiently explains the reason behind the evaluation of a product and brand that use more versus less explicit information through a storytelling (vs. non-storytelling) technique. Indeed, the value of information presented during the evaluation phase of the green garment fully explained the relationship between the independent and dependent variables. More specifically, the value of information clarifies the nature of this relationship. It explains why storytelling leads consumers to finding sustainable fashion garments more appealing, the brand more trustworthy, and why consumers are more likely to purchase the product and the brand are more willing to pay a higher price for it. Although, not tested directly, Holbrook's and Hirschman's (1982) and Alba and Williams (2012) theory about a development towards a more heuristic decision-making approach and the emotional reach storytelling can have on individuals can partially explain some of the underlying processing mechanisms seen in this study (Greene et al., 2015).

6.1. Theoretical Implications

This study contributes to the literature in several ways. First, it supports that consumers' decision-making processes are not only driven by rationality but also by heuristics (Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982), which is underlined by higher ratings for the overall evaluation of the product when they are presented in form of a story (background of the garment and outlook of the impact it has). Second, it supports prior literature that suggests that storytelling helps with information value since the learning experience is supported by examples from the real world (Greene et al., 2015). Making use of background information that tells more about the creation and development of the product, underlining the impact it has on the environment, and making it more visual by the use of a picture as in this study, boosts motivation to process the information as seen in the positive impact on all the dependent variables – advertisement appeal, trust, product purchase intention, brand purchase intention, and willingness to pay. This is in-

line with prior research that suggests that storytelling is both entertaining and a powerful communication tool (Greene et al., 2015). Again, this is manifested in the higher rating of the informational value when being confronted with a storytelling-based online advertisement. Third, this study is in-line with literature that suggests that storytelling supports people when it comes to creating a feeling of trust, which is very much needed in today's world, since consumers are often skeptical about a company's good deeds promotion when it comes to environmental actions (Boris, 2019).

Overall, this study supports prior literature to the extent that storytelling is shown to be a very effective technique in order to create positive evaluations and information processing behavior towards a product or brand (e.g. increase in appeal, trust), which is needed in today's endangered environment. Additionally, it shows that it increases shopping/paying behaviors since consumers are willing to spend more money, buy green products, or buy from a green-based brand in general, if presented with a coherent storytelling. However, the most important contribution of this study is that it shows that the storytelling technique has a positive impact on sustainable fashion behaviors. More specifically, it underlines that using storytelling compared to non-storytelling online advertising messages can make a difference when it comes to choosing to buy green fashion. This is manifested in the paying and information processing behavior of participants.

6.2. Managerial Implications

The insights gained from this study have some useful implications for brands that operate in the e-commerce fashion industry. Brands that sell green clothes online need to find a way how to make sustainable garments more attractive for the population. As explained earlier, the biggest challenges include the lack of information which decreases trust, a mainstream advertising approach that does not stand out from the general content in today's information-overloaded environment, and a low entertainment level.

Therefore, marketers are advised to not only present a product or service, but to share the story behind the green concept so that people discover the meaning behind it and have the opportunity to create an emotional attachment towards it. The storytelling approach can be very value-adding because a story-driven marketing approach takes into account psychological factors, which is important for the evaluation of products, services or brands in general. Since nowadays, consumers are exposed to an information overload and therefore, follow a more

heuristics decision-making process, the goal should be to address a consumer's feelings in a positive way (e.g. through entertainment) to again increase interest. The narrative style of a storytelling approach helps in pulling consumers to the brand because information is processed easier, the educational value increases, and a positive image of a brand is established because of the feelings and emotions involved.

6.3. Limitations and Future Research

Several limitations of this study need to be noted. First, the sample was collected online through a survey and included mostly consisted of German participants (58.5%), which lacks a broader cultural comparison. Additionally, a non-probability convenience sampling method was used, which increases the probability of occurring biases. Consequently, the sample cannot fully represent the population. For future research it is advised to study a broader sample in terms of size and nationality.

Another limitation is represented by the fact that the number of people being exposed to a storytelling online advertising message is higher compared to the number of people that observed the non-storytelling scenario. This might have an impact on the significance level of the relationships tested. Moreover, this study may fall victim to the social desirability bias, which explains that a tendency towards participants presenting themselves in the best way possible exists. This might mislead results and be a particular case for the concept of sustainability because it deals with environmental issues, which have an impact on society.

Furthermore, the evaluation of the attractiveness level of the advertisements created for this study can be very individual-driven, since a specific type of fashion product (jacket) was chosen for the creation of ads. Participants might value or perceive the buy of a jacket for this winter season as more or less meaningful or important. Consequently, it would be helpful for future research to present the observer with different types of fashion items, which he or she can choose from and hence, evaluate it. Lastly, this study did not use an expert's knowledge when it came to the creation of the advertisement. Future research such include insights from an art director, who can create a more visually appealing advertising that at the same time bases the idea on the characteristics of a storytelling approach. The limitations show that room for improvement for future studies exist and that the limitations should be recognized and respected in order to be able to provide valuable insights about online communication types for sustainable fashion.

Appendices

Appendix A: Advertisements (Storytelling, No Storytelling) Pilot Study

EVERLINE

CONSCIOUS COLLECTION

DID YOU KNOW THAT THIS JACKET

- ...was made out of **55 renewed plastic bottles?**
- ...consists of **100% recycled polyester?**
- ...was produced in **Bac Giang, Vietnam?**
- ...was created by **Unico Global VN Co., Ltd.**, our expert in **high-quality workmanship?**

SO FAR, WE HAVE RECYCLED
3 MILLION PLASTIC WATER BOTTLES.

You want to wear outdoor that benefits the environment?

Click to shop.





Select a size

XS S M L XL

Size Guide

ADD TO BAG

DETAILS

- Model is 6'2" - Wearing size M
- 100% Recycled Polyester
Machine Wash Cold With Like Colors, Only Non-Chlorine Bleach When Needed, Tumble Dry Low, Cool Iron If Needed
- Made from 55 renewed plastic bottles.

EVERLINE

CONSCIOUS COLLECTION

DID YOU KNOW THAT THIS JACKET

- ...was made out of **55 renewed plastic bottles?**
- ...consists of **100% recycled polyester?**
- ...was produced in **Bac Giang, Vietnam?**
- ...was created by **Unico Global VN Co., Ltd.**, our expert in **high-quality workmanship?**

SO FAR, WE HAVE RECYCLED
3 MILLION PLASTIC WATER BOTTLES.

You want to wear outdoor that benefits the environment?

Click to shop.





Select a size

XS S M L XL

Size Guide

ADD TO BAG

DETAILS

- Model is 5'9" - Wearing size S
- 100% Recycled Polyester
Machine Wash Cold With Like Colors, Only Non-Chlorine Bleach When Needed, Tumble Dry Low, Cool Iron If Needed
- Made from 55 renewed plastic bottles.

EVERLINE



Select a size

[XS](#) [S](#) [M](#) [L](#) [XL](#)

[Size Guide](#)

[ADD TO BAG](#)

DETAILS

Model is 6'2" - Wearing size M

100% Recycled Polyester
Machine Wash Cold With Like Colors, Only Non-Chlorine Bleach When Needed, Tumble Dry Low, Cool Iron If Needed

Made from 55 renewed plastic bottles.



EVERLINE



Select a size

[XS](#) [S](#) [M](#) [L](#) [XL](#)

[Size Guide](#)

[ADD TO BAG](#)

DETAILS

Model is 5'9" - Wearing size S

100% Recycled Polyester
Machine Wash Cold With Like Colors, Only Non-Chlorine Bleach When Needed, Tumble Dry Low, Cool Iron If Needed

Made from 55 renewed plastic bottles.



Appendix B: Advertisements (Storytelling, No Storytelling) Main Study

EVERLINE

CONSCIOUS COLLECTION

DID YOU KNOW THAT THIS JACKET. . .

- ▶ was made out of **55 renewed plastic bottles?**
- ▶ consists of **100% recycled** polyester?
- ▶ was created by **Unico Global VN Co., Ltd.**, our expert in **high-quality workmanship?**
- ▶ was produced in **Bac Giang, Vietnam?**

SO FAR, WE HAVE RECYCLED 3 MILLION PLASTIC WATER BOTTLES.

Recycling with us is easy.
You want to wear outerwear that benefits the environment?



Select a size

[XS](#) [S](#) [M](#) [L](#) [XL](#)

Size Guide

ADD TO BAG

DETAILS

- Model is 6'2" - Wearing size M
- 100% Recycled Polyester
Machine Wash Cold With Like Colors, Only Non-Chlorine Bleach When Needed, Tumble Dry Low, Cool Iron If Needed
- Made from 55 renewed plastic bottles.

EVERLINE

CONSCIOUS COLLECTION

DID YOU KNOW THAT THIS JACKET. . .

- ▶ was made out of **55 renewed plastic bottles?**
- ▶ consists of **100% recycled** polyester?
- ▶ was created by **Unico Global VN Co., Ltd.**, our expert in **high-quality workmanship?**
- ▶ was produced in **Bac Giang, Vietnam?**

SO FAR, WE HAVE RECYCLED 3 MILLION PLASTIC WATER BOTTLES.

Recycling with us is easy.
You want to wear outerwear that benefits the environment?



Select a size

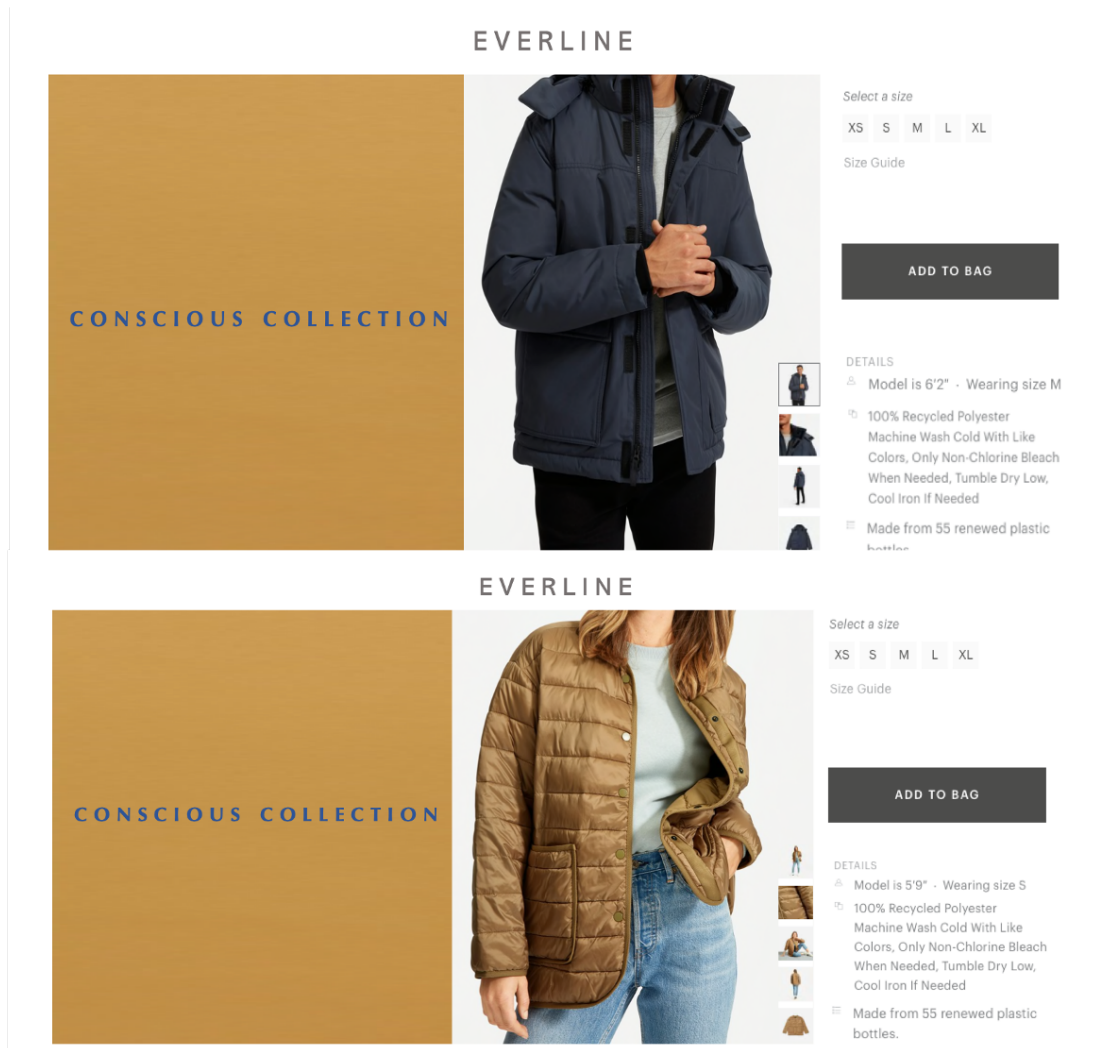
[XS](#) [S](#) [M](#) [L](#) [XL](#)

Size Guide

ADD TO BAG

DETAILS

- Model is 5'9" - Wearing size S
- 100% Recycled Polyester
Machine Wash Cold With Like Colors, Only Non-Chlorine Bleach When Needed, Tumble Dry Low, Cool Iron If Needed
- Made from 55 renewed plastic bottles.



Appendix C: Main Survey Questions

Introduction

Dear participant,

Welcome and thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. This survey is part of my Master thesis in its final stage. Your participation is very important and contributes to its completion. It will take you approximately 6 minutes to complete.

Participating in this survey, gives you the **chance to win a 10€ Amazon voucher.**

Herewith, I assure you that all data obtained will be used anonymously and treated with highest confidentiality. Therefore, I would like to ask you to answer honestly and

spontaneously. There are no right or wrong answers. If you have questions or feedback regarding the survey, please contact anadomazet@hotmail.de

Thank you very much in advance.

Best wishes,
Ana Domazet

You have entered the online shop of the fashion brand Everline, which is a fast fashion producer, following latest fashion trends. Imagine you are looking for a new winter jacket for the upcoming season.

Please have a look at the picture and follow the instructions.



What is Everline? Please click on the right answer.

- A fast fashion brand (1)
- A slow fashion brand (2)

Please select which type of clothing you want to shop.

- SHOP WOMENSWEAR (1)
- SHOP MENSWEAR (2)

Manipulations

Imagine you are looking for a new winter jacket for the upcoming season.

Follow the story behind this garment.

Please have a look at the picture below and - zoom in for better evaluation.

One of the advertisements is randomly selected and depicted

Q130 Timing

First Click (1)

Last Click (2)

Page Submit (3)

Click Count (4)

How informative do you perceive this advertisement to be?

- 1 - Not informative at all (1)
- 2 - Not informative (2)
- 3 - Slightly not informative (3)
- 4 - Neutral (4)
- 5 - Slightly informative (5)
- 6 - Informative (6)
- 7 - Extremely informative (7)

How appealing do you perceive this advertisement to be?

- 1 - Not appealing at all (1)
- 2 - Not appealing (2)
- 3 - Slightly not appealing (3)
- 4 - Neutral (4)
- 5 - Slightly appealing (5)
- 6 - Appealing (6)
- 7 - Extremely appealing (7)

How engaging do you perceive this advertisement to be?

- 1 - Not engaging at all (1)
- 2 - Not engaging (2)
- 3 - Slightly not engaging (3)
- 4 - Neutral (4)
- 5 - Slightly engaging (5)

- 6 - Engaging (6)
- 7 - Extremely engaging (7)

How enlightened do you feel by this advertisement?

- 1 - Not enlightened at all (1)
- 2 - Not enlightened (2)
- 3 - Slightly not enlightened (3)
- 4 - Neutral (4)
- 5 - Slightly enlightened (5)
- 6 - Enlightened (6)
- 7 - Extremely enlightened (7)

How emotionally touching do you perceive this advertisement to be?

- 1 - Not touching at all (1)
- 2 - Not touching (2)
- 3 - Slightly not touching (3)
- 4 - Neutral (4)
- 5 - Slightly touching (5)
- 6 - Touching (6)
- 7 - Extremely touching (7)

How sustainable do you perceive this product to be?

- 1 - Not sustainable at all (1)
- 2 - Not sustainable (2)
- 3 - Slightly not sustainable (3)
- 4 - Neutral (4)
- 5 - Slightly sustainable (5)
- 6 - Sustainable (6)
- 7 - Extremely sustainable (7)

How sustainable do you perceive the manufacturing process of this product to be?

- 1 - Not sustainable at all (1)
- 2 - Not sustainable (2)
- 3 - Slightly not sustainable (3)
- 4 - Neutral (4)
- 5 - Slightly sustainable (5)
- 6 - Sustainable (6)
- 7 - Extremely sustainable (7)

How likely are you to buy this jacket, on a scale from 1 (extremely unlikely) to 7 (extremely likely)?

- 1 - Extremely unlikely (1)
- 2 - Moderately unlikely (2)
- 3 - Slightly unlikely (3)
- 4 - Neither likely nor unlikely (4)
- 5 - Slightly likely (5)
- 6 - Moderately likely (6)
- 7 - Extremely likely (7)

To what extent do you agree with this statement?

"I believe I can make a difference on this planet when buying from Everline"

- 1 - Completely disagree (1)
- 2 - Disagree (2)
- 3 - Slightly disagree (3)
- 4 - Neither agree nor disagree (4)
- 5 - Slightly agree (5)
- 6 - Agree (6)
- 7 - Completely agree (7)

How much are you willing to pay for this jacket?

0 50 100 150 200 250 300



How likely are you to trust Everline, on a scale from 1 (extremely unlikely) to 7 (extremely likely)?

- 1 - Extremely unlikely (1)
- 2 - Moderately unlikely (2)
- 3 - Slightly unlikely (3)
- 4 - Neither likely nor unlikely (4)
- 5 - Slightly likely (5)
- 6 - Moderately likely (6)
- 7 - Extremely likely (7)

Overall, how likely are you to buy from Everline, on a scale from 1 (extremely unlikely) to 7 (extremely likely)?

- 1 - Extremely unlikely (1)
- 2 - Moderately unlikely (2)
- 3 - Slightly unlikely (3)
- 4 - Neither likely nor unlikely (4)
- 5 - Slightly likely (5)
- 6 - Moderately likely (6)
- 7 - Extremely likely (7)

You are almost at the end of the survey, please rate your level of knowledge about the following topics.

	1 - Not at all informed (1)	2 - Not informed (2)	3 - Slightly not informed (3)	4 - Neither informed nor not informed (4)	5 - Slightly informed (5)	6 - Informed (6)	7 - Very well informed (7)
Sustainable Fashion (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Environmental Sustainability (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

And again, please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements, on a scale from 1 (completely disagree) to 7 (completely agree).

	1 - Completely disagree (1)	2 - Disagree (2)	3 - Slightly disagree (3)	4 - Neither agree nor disagree (4)	5 - Slightly agree (5)	6 - Agree (6)	7 - Completely agree (7)
I would devote more time to environmental issues if I had more concrete information about it. (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Environmental concerns are exaggerated, since in the long run everything will balance out. (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I would describe myself as environmentally responsible. (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My purchase habits are affected by my concern for our environment. (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am concerned about wasting the resources of our planet. (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Demographics

To finalize, please answer a last few questions about yourself.

And again, please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements, on a scale from 1 (completely disagree) to 7 (completely agree).

Mostly I shop online for clothes when...

	1 - Completely disagree (1)	2 - Disagree (2)	3 - Slightly disagree (3)	4 - Neither agree nor disagree (4)	5 - Slightly agree (5)	6 - Agree (6)	7 - Completely agree (7)
I face a time constraint (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
offline stores are closed (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I want privacy (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I do not want to leave my home because I want to minimize effort (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I want to access many brands at the same time (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

What is your gender?

- Male (1)
- Female (2)

What is your age?

- Under 19 (1)
- 19 to 24 years (2)
- 25 to 34 years (3)
- 35 to 44 years (4)
- 45 to 54 years (5)
- 55 to 64 years (6)
- 65 years and over (7)

What is your occupation?

- High School Student (1)
- University Student (2)
- Employed (3)
- Unemployed (4)
- Retired (5)

What is the highest level of education you have completed?

- Less than High School (1)
- High School (2)
- Bachelor Degree (3)
- Master Degree (4)
- Doctoral Degree (5)
- Professional Degree (6)

Where do you come from?

▼ Please select below... (1) ... Other (195)

Where have you lived most of your life?

▼ Please select below... (1) ... Other (195)

What is your current annual income in Euros (€)?

- Under €10,000 (1)
- €10,000 - €19,999 (2)
- €20,000 - €29,999 (3)
- €30,000 - €39,999 (4)
- €40,000 - €49,999 (5)
- €50,000 - €74,999 (6)
- €75,000 - €99,999 (7)
- €100,000 - €150,000 (8)
- Over €150,000 (9)
- Don't know. (10)

If you would like to be added to the list of potential 10€ Amazon voucher winners, please enter your e-mail address below.

CLICK TO END THE SURVEY.

Thank you for completing this survey. Your help is very much appreciated. Please do not discuss the nature of this content with others, since it may bias future results. Please click on the button below to end the survey.

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