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CATÓLICA
PORTUGUESA

ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIORS OF CONSUMERS TOWARDS
SUSTAINABLE FASHION IN THE DIGITAL ERA: A SOCIAL COMMERCE
PERSPECTIVE WITH THE TIKTOK SHOP CASE.

Dissertation submitted to Universidade Católica
Portuguesa to obtain a Master's Degree in Communication
Studies: Communication and Digital Transformation

By:

Patrícia Lopes Castanheira

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Resumo

Este estudo investiga como é que a Transformação Digital, em particular o TikTok Shop, influencia as atitudes e os comportamentos dos consumidores em relação à moda sustentável. A indústria da moda, especialmente o “*Fast Fashion*”, é conhecida como sendo uma das indústrias mais poluentes, mas devido ao aumento da consciência ambiental, as marcas de moda começam a adotar práticas mais sustentáveis. Contudo, há uma disparidade entre as intenções dos consumidores e as suas atitudes, denominado de “*Attitude-Behavior Gap*”. A importância deste estudo reside em entender de que forma as plataformas digitais emergentes impactam este fenómeno, dado que conseguem fornecer informações às marcas de moda que procuram alinhar as suas estratégias à crescente procura por sustentabilidade.

A pergunta de investigação desta dissertação é “Como é que o *social commerce* influencia as atitudes e os comportamentos dos consumidores na adoção de moda sustentável?”. Tendo como principais objetivos examinar as perceções dos consumidores em relação à sustentabilidade na indústria da moda, e perceber como é que a Transformação Digital influencia as intenções e o comportamento dos consumidores em relação à moda sustentável, nomeadamente no caso do *social commerce*, em particular considerando a plataforma TikTok Shop.

Este estudo apoia-se na Teoria do Comportamento Planeado, que explica a relação entre as normas sociais, atitudes e o controlo percebido sobre a ação. Além disso, a análise da revisão da literatura aborda o “*Attitude-Behavior Gap*”, as preferências de consumo por moda sustentável e os obstáculos que as marcas enfrentam para preencher esse “*gap*” na era digital. O estudo também investiga a função de plataformas de e-commerce, como a TikTok Shop, que auxiliam na rápida divulgação de tendências, incluindo a moda sustentável.

O estudo utilizou uma abordagem qualitativa que se baseou em entrevistas semiestruturadas com 15 participantes, investigando as suas atitudes em relação à moda sustentável e à influência das plataformas digitais nas suas perceções. Os resultados revelaram que, mesmo com o aumento da preocupação dos consumidores com a sustentabilidade, persiste uma preferência pelo fast fashion, impulsionada por aspetos como o preço e a conveniência. Contudo, apesar do TikTok Shop ter demonstrado ser uma ferramenta que poderia contribuir para consciencializar e influenciar os consumidores a adotar mais moda sustentável, e constituir uma oportunidade para marcas sustentáveis atingirem um público maior, pode também

contribuir para estimular o consumo desmedido, contrariando os princípios da moda sustentável. Depreende-se que as empresas precisam de se concentrar em estratégias genuínas e claras para educar os consumidores, contribuindo assim para fomentar uma maior conexão entre as suas intenções e as suas atitudes de compras sustentáveis.

Palavras-Chave: Sustentabilidade; Moda Sustentável; Transformação Digital; Attitude-Behavior Gap; Fast-Fashion; Comportamento do Consumidor; E-Commerce; TikTok Shop

Abstract

This study investigates how Digital Transformation, particular TikTok Shop, influences consumer attitudes and behaviors toward sustainable fashion. The fashion industry, especially fast fashion, is known to be one of the most polluting industries, but due to increased environmental awareness, fashion brands are beginning to adopt more sustainable practices. However, there is a gap between consumers' intentions and their attitudes, known as the Attitude-Behavior Gap. The importance of this study lies in understanding how emerging digital platforms impact this phenomenon as they can, offer valuable insights for fashion brands seeking to align their strategies with the growing demand for sustainability.

This dissertation's research question is, “How does Social Commerce influence attitudes and consumer behaviors toward adopting sustainable fashion?” Its main objectives are to examine consumer perceptions of sustainability in the fashion industry and to understand how Digital Transformation influences consumers’ intentions and behavior towards sustainable fashion, namely in the case of social commerce, particularly considering the TikTok Shop platform.

This study is based on the Theory of Planned Behavior, which explains the relationship between social norms, attitudes, and perceived control over action. In addition, the analysis of the literature review addresses the “Attitude-Behavior Gap”, consumer preferences for sustainable fashion, and the obstacles brands face in bridging this gap in the digital age. The study also investigates the role of e-commerce platforms, such as TikTok Shop, which help to rapidly advertise trends, including sustainable fashion.

The study used a qualitative approach based on semi-structured interviews with 15 participants, investigating their attitudes towards sustainable fashion and the influence of digital platforms on their perceptions. The results revealed that even with consumers' increased concern for sustainability, a preference for fast fashion persists, driven by aspects such as price and convenience. However, TikTok Shop proved to be a tool that could contribute to raising awareness, influence consumers to adopt more sustainable fashion, and provide a chance for sustainable brands to reach a wider audience, it can also stimulate excessive consumption and, going against the principles of sustainable fashion. This results in a need for companies to focus on genuine and clear strategies to educate consumers and foster a stronger connection between sustainable purchasing intentions and attitudes.

Keywords: Sustainability; Sustainable Fashion; Digital Transformation; Attitude-Behavior Gap; Fast-Fashion; Consumer Behavior; E-Commerce; TikTok Shop

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Table of Contents

Resumo	3
Abstract	5
Acknowledgments	7
Index of Figures	10
Index of Tables	11
Index of Abbreviations	12
Introduction	13
Part I - Literature Review	15
Chapter 1 - Consumer attitudes and behavior toward sustainability in the fashion industry	16
1.1 Consumer attitudes and consumer behavior	16
1.2 Consumer attitudes and consumer behavior towards sustainability	21
1.2.1 Foundations of Behavioral Theories	27
1.3 Consumer attitudes and consumer behavior towards sustainability in the fashion industry	29
Chapter 2 - Consumer attitude-behavior gap towards sustainability in the Fashion Industry ...	37
2.1 Consumer attitude-behavior gap towards sustainability	37
2.2 Consumer attitude-behavior gap towards sustainability in the Fashion Industry	39
Chapter 3 - Consumer preference for sustainability in the fashion industry	44
3.1 Sustainable Fashion and Circular Economy	44
3.2 Attitude behavior gap towards sustainability in the Fashion Industry and consumer preference for Slow Fashion	46
3.3 Attitude behavior gap towards sustainability in the Fashion Industry and consumer preference for Fast Fashion	50
3.4 Motivations and Barriers to prefer Slow Fashion or Fast Fashion	54
Chapter 4 - Digital Transformation and E-commerce in the Fashion Industry: Evolution and Challenges	59
4.1 The evolution and challenges of e-commerce in the Fashion Industry	59
4.2 Digital Transformation in the Fashion Industry	62
4.3 TikTok Shop: The new social shopping Era	66
Chapter 5- Conceptual Framework	70
Part II – Empirical Study	72
Chapter 6 - Methodology	73
6.1 Research Relevance	73
6.2 Research Question and Research Objectives	73
6.3 Research Design	74
6.4 Study population and sampling procedures	75
6.5 Research strategy: semi-structured interviews	76

6.6 Sample and participants	76
6.7 Data collection procedures	77
6.8 Data Analysis Procedures.....	85
6.9 Ethical considerations	86
Chapter 7 - Results Presentation and Discussion	86
7.1 Results Presentation	86
7.2 Discussion	107
Chapter 8 - Conclusion, limitations, and future research suggestions	116
8.1. Conclusion.....	116
8.2. Limitations, and Future Research Suggestions	117
References	119
Appendixes.....	136
Appendix A – Informed Consent.....	136
Appendix B – Interview Script.....	138
Transcription of the Interviews.....	141
Appendix C – Transcription of the Interview 1	142
Appendix D – Transcription of the Interview 2	150
Appendix E – Transcription of the Interview 3	159
Appendix F – Transcription of the Interview 4	167
Appendix G – Transcription of the Interview 5.....	181
Appendix H – Transcription of the Interview 6.....	192
Appendix I – Transcription of the Interview 7	200
Appendix J – Transcription of the Interview 8.....	211
Appendix K – Transcription of the Interview 9.....	220
Appendix L – Transcription of the Interview 10	233
Appendix M – Transcription of the Interview 11	242
Appendix N – Transcription of the Interview 12	248
Appendix O – Transcription of the Interview 13.....	255
Appendix P – Transcription of the Interview 14.....	265
Appendix Q – Transcription of the Interview 15.....	273

Index of Figures

Figure 1: Stages in the Consumer Decision-Making Process (Source: Belch and Belch 2003).....	19
Figure 2: Theories of Fashion Movement (Source: Mohr et al., 2021).....	34
Figure 3: Triple-trickle theory (Source: Mohr et al., 2021).....	36
Figure 4: (a) Textile waste hierarchy for consumers; (b) Textile waste hierarchy for fashion companies. (Source: Kim et al., 2021).	46
Figure 5: Slow fashion mind map (Source: Domingos et al., 2022).	48
Figure 6: Conceptual Framework (Source: Elaborated by the author).....	71
Figure 7: Classification of marketing research designs (Source: Nunan et al., 2020).	75

Index of Tables

Table 1: Conceptual Framework (Source: Elaborated by the author) 77

Table 2: Characteristics of the participants 83

Index of Abbreviations

AR- Augmented Reality

CSR- Corporate Social Responsibility

DE- Drive for Environmental Responsibility

FF- Fast Fashion

FOMO- Fear of Missing Out

IT- Information Technology

PCV- Perceived Customer Value

SCI- Sustainable Consumption Intention

SDGs- Sustainable Development Goals

TBL- Triple Bottom Line

TPB- Theory of Planned Behavior

TRA- Theory of Reasoned Action

VR- Virtual Reality

Introduction

The Digital Transformation has changed industries globally and the fashion industry is no exception. This process known for the integration of digital technologies in every aspect of business and of daily life, has been reshaping consumers and business relationships. The rise of social platforms, such as social media and online shops, has been changing the way consumers make their choices, access information, and interact with brands. TikTok is no exception, it has created the perfect environment for brands to connect with their audience, and adapt to evolving consumer preferences, and the newest trends. This dissertation aims to understand how consumer attitudes and behaviors about sustainability in the fashion sector are influenced by Digital Transformation, particularly as it relates to platforms such as TikTok Shop.

The fashion industry, especially fast fashion, is known for being one of the most polluting industries, and with the increased concern and awareness regarding sustainability issues, consumers are more concerned than ever. To try to mitigate this, several brands have started to adopt more sustainable practices, producing sustainable fashion items promoting a circular economy, and investing in more sustainable supply chains. However, there is a gap between consumers' intentions and their actions, which is known as the “Attitude-Behavior Gap”. With these swift businesses now have both new opportunities and challenges in adjusting to the trend of sustainable fashion, which is being driven by customer preference for eco-friendly items and knowledge of environmental issues. This research explores the relationships that exist between consumer behavior, sustainability, and the Digital Transformation that has made it possible for innovative e-commerce platforms like TikTok Shop.

The central question of this research is “How does Social Commerce influence attitudes and consumer behaviors towards adopting sustainable fashion?” To answer this question, the main objectives are: (1) to examine consumer attitudes and perceptions toward sustainable fashion, and (2) to understand how Digital Transformation influences consumer intentions and behavior toward sustainable fashion.

This study contributes to the growing deepening of understanding of the “Attitude-Behaviour Gap” and adds to the expanding research literature on consumer sustainability habits and Digital Transformation in the fashion sector. Understanding the relationship between technology and sustainability is crucial as sectors strive to mitigate ecological footprints while preserving economic viability. This dissertation offers important insights into how innovative

digital platforms affect consumer purchase behavior by focusing on TikTok Shop, especially when comparing fast fashion to sustainable fashion.

This document is organized into several sections in order to facilitate the comprehension of the reader. The first four chapters provide a detailed literature review examining the main concepts and theories about consumer attitudes and consumption behavior, Digital Transformation, and sustainability in fashion. It focuses on some studies about the gap between attitude and behavior, highlighting the barriers and motivations that influence sustainable behavior. Chapter 5 describes the conceptual framework that was used in this study. Chapter 6 covers the research design, the sampling protocols, and the techniques for data collection and analysis. The research employs a qualitative methodology, utilizing semi-structured interviews to examine consumers' attitudes and behaviors around sustainable fashion. Then we have Chapter 7 which includes the results presentations and the discussion, identifying relevant insights obtained from the interviews. Finally, the last chapter synthesizes the main discoveries and conclusions, it also suggests directions for future research and the limitations.

Part I - Literature Review

Chapter 1 - Consumer attitudes and behavior toward sustainability in the fashion industry

1.1 Consumer attitudes and consumer behavior

Consumers are human beings who are confronted by the decision to purchase products or services (Ajzen, 2008). According to Solomon *et al.* (2006), a consumer is typically defined as a person who recognizes a need or want, purchases a product, and then discards it after using it.

According to Pande and Soodan (2015) an attitude, “is a pre-attained disposition of favoring or unfavoring a person, place, situation or an object” (p.284). These attitudes are the result of the evaluation of certain aspects in the consumer’s mind, which will lead to a positive or a negative image.

Attitudes are something that we learned, which means that attitudes are linked to the purchase behavior that people have as a direct consequence of their interactions with the product information, that is shared with others and their exposure to direct marketing through the media, internet, and other channels (Krasniqi & Krasniqi, 2014).

For Bizer *et al.*, (2003),

“An attitude is a global and relatively enduring evaluation (e.g. good or bad) of a person, object or issue. Attitudes can be based on affective, cognition, or behavioral information and can vary in their strength (e.g. how enduring, how resistant to change, and how predictive of behavior they are).” (p.247)

It is also important to consider the environment because attitudes are displayed in a given situation. That situation could be “different” with this saying that the consumer may behave inconsistently with his attitude (Krasniqi & Krasniqi, 2014).

Pande and Soodan (2015) state that consumer attitudes are the combination of three elements which are “(1) beliefs (2) feelings (3) and a behavioral intention towards a product or service which lies within the context of a variety of actions like a marketing program initiated by a company or includes a brand or retail store” (p.284).

According to Kapoor and Madichie (2012) , attitudes are things that remain over time, “the attitudes and opinions that we hold affect our behavior and our intentions” (p.87). Solomon *et al.*, (2006) refer that “Consumers have attitudes towards very product-specific behaviours (...) as well as towards more general consumption-related behaviours” (p.138). Customers' attitudes cover a broad spectrum of attitude objects, ranging from very product-specific behaviors like for example choosing to drink Pepsi over Coca-Cola, to more broadly consumed behaviors like the frequency that the consumer drinks soda over natural juices. The dating consumer choices, consumer musical tastes, and recycling habits are all influenced by consumer attitudes.

Our beliefs and attitudes influence our goals and behavior. According to McNeill and Moore (2015), consumer attitudes and behaviors are not static; instead, they evolve with time. Solomon *et al.* (2006) also state that “An attitude is lasting because it tends to endure over time” (p.138).

For Kapoor and Madichie (2012) an attitude has a tri-component model of attitudes, which is called the “ABC model of Attitude”. The “A” refers to the component of “Affect”, which refers to the consumer's feelings about a particular attitude object, the “B” refers to the “Behavior” component, which analyses the intentions “to take action” about a specific behavior, and the “C” refers to the component of Cognition, which takes into account his assessment of the attitude object's veracity.

On the other hand, Krasniqi and Krasniqi (2014), state that there are three elements, which are: the knowledge element, the emotional element, and the behavioral element. The knowledge element, which is influenced by knowledge from a variety of sources as well as first-hand experiences, reflects the consumer's faith in a good or service, which will lead to the formation of beliefs about a product. A consumer could have either positive beliefs and also negative beliefs about a product.

The emotional aspect is concerned with the feelings and reactions customers get from a product on an emotional level, which could be either happy or sad. Situational factors can also influence emotions, for example, caffeine in Cola Zero may be perceived as beneficial when someone has to stay awake for work, but negatively when they wish to sleep (Krasniqi & Krasniqi, 2014).

The last element is the behavioral element, according to Krasniqi and Krasniqi (2014), is how customers respond and use a product. It covers things like buying a product, telling

people about it, and taking part in other product-related activities. Although the particular circumstance may have an impact on the actions, consumer attitudes might affect their actual and intended behaviors.

Purchasing a particular item or service is the primary example of consumer behavior. For Ajzen (2008) “Consumer behavior refers first to the act of buying a certain product or service” (p. 525), but this is by no means the only behavior that consumer psychologists are interested in. They are also interested in the consumer selection of a retail location or service provider, as well as other activities taken both before and throughout the course of the purchase.

According to Ling (2015), consumer behavior is about how consumers react in different situations. The actions, the consequences that happen when the consumer goes through the decision-making process, the decision itself, and the chosen product's usage can be referred to as consumer behavior. Ling (2015) states that a more suitable definition that would cover different consumer situations would be, “Consumer behavior is about how consumers behave in situations involving goods, services, ideas and experiences” (p.7). Belch and Belch (2003) define consumer behavior “as the process and activities people engage in when searching for, selecting, purchasing, using, evaluating, and disposing of products and services so as to satisfy their needs and desires” (p.105). Consumers’ habits are constantly influenced by their family, friends, internet, celebrities, and social networks, in their purchase decision-making (Šostar & Ristanovic, 2023).

Consumers, before making a choice and buying a specific product, go through a path that covers some key steps. According to Palacio-Fierro (2020), the elements of consumer behavior include external influences such as marketing and sociocultural factors, psychological factors, recognition of a need, pre-purchase search, evaluation of the alternatives, post-decision behavior, and post-purchase consumer evaluation. Ajzen (2008) claims that all these steps will make the consumer choose a specific product from a specific brand; every behavior contains a choice, even when the option is to do nothing and keep things as they are, every conduct entails a decision.

Belch and Belch (2003), all purchase decisions are the outcome of an extensive, “detailed process that may include an extensive information search, brand comparisons and evaluations, and other activities” (p.105). However other buying decisions are not so complex or have an extensive decision process, such as the case of an item that is prominently displayed with a discount in a store (Belch & Belch, 2003).

Normally, the consumer “purchase decision process is generally viewed as consisting of stages through which the buyer passes in purchasing a product or service. This model shows that decision-making involves a number of internal psychological processes.” (Belch & Belch, 2003 p.107)



Figure 1: Stages in the Consumer Decision-Making Process (Source: Belch and Belch 2003)

According to Belch and Belch (2003) the first stage, shown in Figure 1, is “Problem recognition”. This stage illustrates the perception of a need by the consumer, and how he becomes motivated to address the issue. This stage will initiate the whole decision process. The second stage is “Information search”. Once the consumer identifies the need or the problem that the product or service can address, he starts searching for information needed to decide. The third stage is called “Alternative evaluation”, where the consumer searches for an alternative brand or service which are capable of solving his need or problem that started this whole process. The consumer gets to a point where he will have to stop looking up and analyzing details about competitive brands or services and come to a decision. As a result of the alternative evaluation stage, the consumer comes to a decision to choose a certain product or service from a specific brand. This will lead to the fourth stage of the consumer decision-making process, the “Purchase decision”. According to the authors, purchase intentions,

“are generally based on a matching of purchase motives with attributes or characteristics of brands under consideration. Their formation involves many of the personal subprocesses discussed in this chapter, including motivation, perception, attitude formation, and integration. A purchase decision is not the same as an actual purchase. Once a consumer chooses which brand to buy, he or she must still implement the decision and make the actual purchase.” (Belch & Belch, 2003, p.120)

This process doesn’t end with the purchase, but it does end with the “Post-purchase evaluation”, which is the final stage of the consumer decision-making process. After using the product or service the consumer will realize if the product fulfills his expectations and know if he will be satisfied or not. (Belch & Belch, 2003)

However, according to Ajzen (2008), it's important to recognize the difference between behaviors that center around a single option and behaviors that require deciding between two or more different options. The single option's behavior is an event that takes place in a specific environment at a certain point in time (Ajzen, 2008). The also author refers that, behavior is an observable activity that takes place in a particular context and at a specific moment in each unique occurrence. Specifically, purchase habits are directed toward a particular goal, which is frequently a brand or product (Ajzen, 2008).

There are four elements, which are action, target, context, and time. The four elements can be defined at various levels of generality or specificity. According to Ajzen (2008) it's

“useful to think of purchase behavior as comprised of four elements: the action performed (buying, searching for information), the target at which the action is directed (the product category or brand), the context in which it is performed (Sears, online retailer), and the time at which it is performed (...). Each purchase behavior's four elements can be defined at varying levels of generality or specificity.” (p.526)

In terms of choice behaviors Ajzen (2008) explains that “single options behavior can be studied at a high level of generality (...) In comparison questions about behaviors that involve a choice among two or more options are usually studied at a lower level of generality” (p.526). It means that the more options that there are available, the more specific information consumers will get (the choice will be made at a lower level of generality), and therefore if there is only one option, the less specific information the consumer will get (the choice will probably be made at a higher level of generality).

The choice behavior, which happens when the consumer has more than one option, is studied with “a lower level of generality” (Ajzen, 2008). This is considered relevant because it could be interesting to understand why the consumer chooses a specific brand of cookies instead of another cookie brand, or why they choose a type of transportation over another. All of this is related to the determinants of consumer behavior, which confront the consumer with a lot of different challenges.

Following the problem's structuring, the customers must analyze the information they have gathered, decide on a preferred plan of action, and carry out the decision. Lastly, customers may use the feedback they get after purchasing to reconsider their choice and even return it by returning a purchased item to the retailer (Ajzen, 2008).

In conclusion, understanding consumer behavior is a wide and difficult task, that entails identifying the several aspects that impact people's decisions when purchasing (Solomon *et al.*, 2006). Consumers, as human beings, navigate a decision-making process influenced by external factors, psychological elements, and social interactions. The stages of consumer behavior, from recognizing a need to post-purchase evaluation, involve a series of steps that ultimately lead to a decision (Ajzen, 2008). The difference between behaviors with single or multiple options adds complexity to the decision-making process (Ajzen, 2008).

Krasniqi and Krasniqi (2014) also point out that it is important to distinguish behavior from attitudes. For them, attitudes and behavior are not synonyms but “attitudes may result from behaviours” (p.99). Essentially, consumer attitudes are dynamic; they are influenced by a range of factors and influence decisions and actions concerning products and service dynamics (Bizer *et al.*, 2003; McNeill & Moore, 2015). Consumers' attitudes play a crucial role in directing consumer's preferences and actions as they proceed through the decision-making process. To fully understand consumer behavior, it is important to consider the complex interactions between psychological variables, environmental effects, and changing attitudes, all of which work together to impact the consumer's decisions in the marketplace.

When we analyze more deeply consumer behavior, it is essential to understand if these attitudes and decisions specifically manifest in the context of sustainability, where ethical and environmental factors have more than ever a relevant role in the creation of shopping behaviors and preferences.

1.2 Consumer attitudes and consumer behavior towards sustainability

The concept of sustainability is gaining a lot of attention around the globe (Pereira *et al.*, 2021), now more than ever, people are more aware and are changing their behavior and attitudes toward being more sustainable. According to the 1970 Brundtland Report publication by the World Commission on Environment and Development, sustainability is defined as meeting “the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (p.15).

As stated before, there is a greater awareness of the environmental and social impact of their consumption choices. Consumers are more than ever concerned regarding climate change, pollution, and social equity, which has led many consumers to prefer sustainable alternatives.

Everyone agrees that to reduce the impacts of overconsumption, drastic adjustments in cultural norms and human behavior are required. Consumers are becoming increasingly conscious that the period of unrestricted consumerism is drawing to an end and that each person's actions directly affect the environment and the lives of future generations (Kostadinova, 2016). The author also adds that “The growing concern about environmental issues is also reflected by an increase in demand for environment-friendly products and the pressure on companies to conduct their business in a socially and ecologically responsible manner” (Kostadinova, 2016, p.224). Across the world, companies and governments are educating consumers to adopt more sustainable lifestyle behaviors and promoting sustainable practices (Joshi & Rahman, 2017).

Consumers are becoming increasingly demanding of products; they look for brands and industries that are strongly committed to sustainability. Products with eco-friendly certifications and products made from recycled materials are some examples of products that fit this description. According to Camilleri *et al.* (2023), “sustainable products are evaluated by consumers based on functional values, such as price and quality, and symbolic values, such as appearance, emotional value, and social status” (p.3).

According to Wang *et al.* (2014), this preference for sustainable products is called sustainable consumption. They state that,

“Sustainable consumption is an umbrella term that brings together a number of key issues, such as meeting needs, enhancing the quality of life, improving resource efficiency, increasing the use of renewable energy sources, minimizing waste, taking a life cycle perspective, and taking into account the equity dimension.” (p.154)

According to Balderjahn *et al.* (2013), sustainable consumption is the goal of consuming in a way that improves life quality in terms of the social, economic, and environmental fields. So, by way of explanation, the purchase act considers the impact that a certain product will have on the planet, whether they are environmental, economic, or social. The main goal of sustainable consumption, according to Joshi *et al.* (2019), is to minimize the effect on the environment, society, and the economy by promoting more responsible purchases.

Since there is a growing concern about the burnout of the natural resources on Earth and due to the large quantity of waste that is caused by economic growth, sustainable consumption has gained attention from consumers and governments (Camilleri *et al.*, 2023). This is also because consumers are more informed than ever, thanks to the internet and social media. By

being sustainable, it will facilitate the consumers to make well-informed judgments about the company according to its sustainable practices.

A lot of consumers think businesses should be accountable for the social and environmental effects they have. If a company doesn't engage with sustainable practices or does greenwashing, consumers may boycott or do campaigns to raise awareness pressuring companies to adopt more sustainable practices. Creyer and Ross (1977) state that "unethical behaviour can simply be bad business" (p.423). The company or brand needs to have the trust of its stakeholders, if that trust is broken, it will have several painful consequences, such as "increased government regulations, confrontational suppliers, and disillusioned (...). For example, consumers have initiated boycotts to protest what they perceive to be unethical, or irresponsible, corporate behaviour" (p.423).

Camilleri *et al.* (2023) state that "consumers show an increased interest in sustainability issues and pay more attention to information" (p.14). There is an expectation for companies to be more environmentally friendly, so, to focus on sustainability in all of its forms, whether it is economic, social, or environmental (Vergura *et al.*, 2022).

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), is the obligation of for-profit and not-for-profit organizations to consider how their actions affect their stakeholders, the environment, and society at large. It focuses on transparency and making corporate actions accountable (Riena & Yakovleva, 2019). According to the World Business Council for Sustainable Development, CSR is "the ethical behavior of a company towards society. In particular, this means management acting responsibly in its relationships with other stakeholders who have a legitimate interest in the business – not just the shareholders" (2000, p.3).

According to Camilleri *et al.*, (2023), "Large and small businesses alike are adapting their manufacturing processes to supply the market with environmentally friendly products, driven by regulatory laws and renewed market need" (p.3). According to Park and Kim (2016), sustainability has become a crucial part of successful businesses in recent years. Many corporations have established a range of sustainability measures, from green marketing to a CSR program, in response to the social and environmental challenges generated by enterprises, which has led to the creation of the triple bottom line.

After the World Summit in 2002, the Triple Bottom Line (TBL) has been referred to as the balanced integration of economic, environmental, and social performance (Geissdoerfer *et al.*, 2016)", which is also known as the three pillars of sustainability: people, profit, and planet

that were the harmonious combination of social, environmental, and economic performance (Pereira *et al.*, 2021).

According to Niinimäki (2013), the TBL,

“means taking into consideration all three areas: people, planet and profit in a sustainable manner. Additionally sustainable design and business strategies today include ethical and value-based thinking. While true sustainable thinking is rather wide and needs a holistic understanding and approach on many levels, it is more common to focus on one narrower approach to eco-design and sustainability, for example focusing on the environmental impacts of manufacturing, substituting materials with eco-materials, or focusing on ethical issues in manufacturing (e.g. cSR, corporate social responsibility).” (p.16)

The tripartite description is sometimes depicted as three intersecting circles, signifying the economy, the environment, and the society. A lot of companies started to focus their business strategies around the creation of value in a sustainable manner, to achieve performance targets while upholding the rights of people and the environment (Hristov *et al.*, 2022). Sustainability is positioned at the junction of these circles, and it constantly influences the other two (Pereira *et al.*, 2021). According to Geissdoerfer *et al.* (2016), all three aspects were once thought to be equal and balanced, although actions should be prioritized under the many contextual variations. Nowadays, the TBL is seen as the new business paradigm that business has to adopt in their strategies (Geissdoerfer *et al.*, 2016).

The companies that adopt the TBL framework, are allowed to have an original interpretation of the results emphasizing the importance of each of the three sustainability dimensions for businesses that sell sustainable goods (Camilleri *et al.*, 2023).

After creating the Tripple Bottom Line, they also created the Sustainable Development Goals (or "SDGs") and the Sustainable Agenda for 2030. The "SDGs" and the Sustainable Agenda for 2030 were agreed upon by the United Nations and 195 countries in 2015 during the Paris Agreement (Geissdoerfer *et al.*, 2016). Spangenberg (2016) states that these represent the widespread agreement that something needs to change and that a new course for sustainability needs to be taken.

These days, consumers are more interested and pay more attention to how businesses are doing in terms of corporate social responsibility (CSR). It is no longer feasible for businesses to focus only on profit maximization without attending to their social duties because customers in the market are becoming more and more aware of the significance of

environmental conservation, safety, ethical considerations, and adherence to regulatory requirements (Yu *et al.*, 2021).

Many factors influence the consumer purchase decision, it is no longer only about the product characteristics and their individual characteristics, but it is also about the CSR (Yu *et al.*, 2021). The authors also add that when selecting products, buyers first take price into account, but in today's market, they also take brand recognition and popularity into account. The company's social responsibility efforts will, in part, influence how customers view its offerings, which in turn may impact their willingness to make a purchase. According to Sen (2014), customers' purchasing decisions can be favorably impacted by CSR actions.

Stakeholder theory emphasizes that a company's success and long-term sustainability are tied to its ability to meet the needs and expectations of these various stakeholders, not just maximizing profits for shareholders. In other words, businesses should aim to create value for all stakeholders and not just focus on financial gains for a select few. "Stakeholder theory emerged as an alternative to the orthodox view of corporate governance where corporations are essentially understood contractually in self-interested terms as instrumental relationships between shareholders and those appointed to manage the corporations" (Valentinov & Chia, 2022 p.762).

According to stakeholder theory, businesses have obligations to consumers, society, employees, and the environment in addition to making a profit and serving the interests of their shareholders (Yu *et al.*, 2021). The authors also add that,

"Consumers have the characteristics of "economic man" in the market, and the social responsibility behavior undertaken by enterprises can create tangible benefits for consumers or make consumers feel the transfer of benefits subjectively. Therefore, consumers have a positive response to CSR." (Yu *et al.*, 2021, p. 4)

According to Jamali (2008), the stakeholder theory has offered a fresh framework to organize organizational responsibilities and duties, "By suggesting that the needs of shareholders cannot be met without satisfying to some degree the needs of other stakeholders, it turned attention to considerations beyond direct profit maximization" (p.217). Valentinov and Chia (2022), state that the stakeholder capitalism narrative doesn't only focus on the interests of shareholders but also considers the vested interests of the larger social society, where the capability to do business legitimately is essential to its success.

Companies can improve their brand reputation and obtain a competitive advantage by giving sustainability a top priority in their supply chain and operations. According to Thorisdottir and Johannsdottir (2019), when it comes to corporate responsibility, businesses can positively influence stakeholders by, for example, putting sustainability measures into place, to address any environmental issues they may cause. These activities may provide businesses with a chance for expansion, a way to save expenses, or even a competitive edge. This could cause the fact that consumers would prefer a brand that is sustainably committed over a brand that isn't sustainably committed (Sun *et al.*, 2022).

While sustainability is a significant factor for many consumers, price and convenience still play a crucial role in their choices. Government rules and policies have the power to change consumer behavior in favor of sustainability, and tax benefits may encourage businesses and consumers to assume also a more environmentally friendly activity (Yu *et al.*, 2021).

People get more involved and their behavior improves towards better practices when they are better aware of the value of ethical consumer behaviors (Pereira *et al.*, 2021). Sustainability is typically given higher priority by younger generations, Millennials and Gen Z, than by previous generations (Petro, 2021). Consumer behavior may change as a result of this generational shift, increasing demand for eco-friendly goods and methods. Beyond the selection of products, being sustainable is also a way of living. This could influence lifestyle decisions about mobility (such as electric vehicles and biking), diet (such as vegetarianism or veganism), and energy consumption at home.

Consumers are becoming more and more demanding of products and simultaneously they look for brands and industries that are showing strong commitment to sustainability. This preference for sustainable products is called sustainable consumption (Wang *et al.*, 2014) that includes various key issues such as reducing waste and taking life cycle perspective.

Beyond minimizing the effect on society and the economy (Joshi & Rahman, 2019) its goal is also to contribute to reducing the impact on the environment through a more responsible purchase. We see mainly in the younger generations that are more informed due to the internet and social media, an increasing concern not only about the burnout of Earth's natural resources but also about the large amount of waste that's produced (Camilleri *et al.*, 2023).

According to Min and Arif (2022), CSR is one of the factors that influences consumer purchase decisions. Consequently, companies should make sustainability a top priority (Thorisdottir & Johannsdottir, 2019). We have seen that some consumer's beliefs and attitudes

may favor determined products based on the information that they have and that will influence their behavior (Pande & Soodan, 2015). Consumer behavior has changed, it's now more than ever influenced by the fact that a brand is sustainability committed or not (Panda *et al.*, 2020).

1.2.1 Foundations of Behavioral Theories

Many cognitive theories can help us understand and analyze human behavior in general and the several forms of ecological behavior. We choose to use the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) by Ajzen and Fishbein (1977), and the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) by Ajzen (1991) because according to Joshi and Rahman (2019) and according to Yusoff *et al.*, (2023), they are the most used in that kind of studies.

Ajzen and Fishbein's (1977) Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) is a psychological model that aims to explain and forecast behavior, especially concerning attitudes and social norms. According to Ajzen and Fishbein (1977), in the TRA individual behavior is determined by two factors, which are the individual's attitudes and social norms. For the authors, an attitude reflects their predisposition to participate in a specific behavior, which is influenced by their beliefs, perceptions, and knowledge. Social norms represent the forms that society is represented by the ideas and standards of experts as well as by the acts that are socially acceptable or unacceptable (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1977).

According to Ajzen and Fishbein's TRA (1977), a person's intentions, which are based on their attitudes toward the behavior and subjective norms, have an impact on their behavior. Numerous behavioral patterns, such as those related to health, purchasing decisions, and social interactions, have been predicted and understood by this theory.

The TPB was created due to the limitations that the original model had in handling behaviors that people can only partially control voluntarily (Ajzen, 1991). By adding perceived behavioral control as a third determining factor to explain people's behavior, the TPB expands on the TRA (Ajzen, 1991).

Like in the original TRA, a key element in the TPB is the individual's intention to engage in a specific behavior. Intentions are believed to represent the motivating factors that impact one's behavior because they indicate the level of determination and effort individuals are prepared to invest in carrying out a specific action (Ajzen, 1991). In general, the stronger the intention to engage in a behavior, the greater the likelihood of that behavior being executed,

and according to Ajzen (1991), “It should be clear, however, that a behavioural intention can find expression in behavior only if the behaviour in question is under volitional control, i.e., if the person can decide at will to perform or not perform the behaviour” (p.181).

The TPB according to Ajzen (1991) assumes “three conceptually independent determinants of intention” (p.188). The first one is the “attitude toward the behaviour”, and it relates to the extent of a person's positive or negative assessment or judgment of the behavior under consideration. The second predictor is the “social factor termed subjective norm” and it refers to the seeming social pressure to act in a certain way or not. The third predictor is “the degree of perceived behavioral control” which relates to how easy or challenging a person perceives the execution of the behavior to be and is thought to be influenced by past experiences and anticipated obstacles. In general, the more positive one's attitude and subjective norm are toward a behavior, and the higher the perceived level of control, the more robust their intention is expected to be in carrying out the behavior in question.

In this way, according to Ajzen,

“In combination, attitude toward the behaviour, subjective norm, and perception of behavioural control lead to the formation of a behavioural intention. As a general rule, the more favourable the attitude and subjective norm, and the greater the perceived behavioural control, the stronger should be the person's intention to perform the behaviour in question. Finally, given a sufficient degree of actual control over the behavior, people are expected to carry out their intentions when the opportunity arises.” (2008, p.538)

To help understand and analyze the attitudes and behavior of the consumers towards sustainability, the TRA and the TPB, help to know how people's attitudes, perceptions of social standards, and sense of control influence their intentions and actions with sustainable practices (Ajzen, 1991; Yusoff *et al.*, 2023; Joshi & Rahman, 2019).

According to Greene (2009), the TRA “has been applied to behaviors, such as smoking and blood donation, over which the person has some choice” (p.826). Even though it's recognized as a limitation of the theory, its emphasis on behaviors that individuals can willingly control is advantageous when designing interventions for behavior change (Greene, 2009).

The TPB introduced the concept of perceived behavioral control as an extra factor influencing intentions (Hagger, 2019). If individuals had a strong sense of control over their perception, they would be more inclined to follow through on their intentions.

Several authors have repeatedly observed that although customers have positive attitudes about sustainability, there is a disparity between these attitudes and actual sustainable purchasing behavior (Tanner & Wölfling Kast, 2003; Vermeir & Verbeke, 2006; Pickett-Baker & Ozaki, 2008, Joshi & Rahman, 2015). Many studies found a positive correlation between social groups or social norms and sustainable consumption behaviors, such as the intention and behavior of purchasing sustainable products (Gleim *et al.*, 2013; Joshi & Rahman, 2017).

For Joshi and Rahman (2017), an attitude towards a sustainable purchase “refers to consumers’ cognitive evaluation of sustainable purchase behavior. Attitude towards sustainable purchasing includes consumer attitude towards green and fair-trade purchasing” (p.112). In their study, Joshi and Rahman (2017), suggested that various contextual issues could be preventing consumers from engaging in sustainable consumption practices. Matharu *et al.* (2020) reported that three important factors have a positive effect on consumer’s buying intention for sustainable consumption, which are, subjective norms, attitudes, and perceived behavioral control.

It is also important to consider that the previous sustainable behavior also influences the intention of consumers to adopt sustainable consumption behavior according to Joshi and Rahman (2019). Their study is unique because it “establishes supportive behavior towards environmental organizations and DE (drive for environmental responsibility) as a predictor of future SCI (consumers' sustainable consumption intention) of consumers” (p.10).

In conclusion, behavioral consumer theories help us to understand how consumer attitudes and behavior towards sustainability are dynamic and multifaceted. Due to a greater understanding of the effects on the environment, consumers are changing their behavior and attitudes since sustainability gains attention on a worldwide scale (Pereira *et al.*, 2021). Sustainability today is a very important topic for consumers, they prefer and would choose a brand that supports a cause, compared to others that sell the same product but don’t support any cause (Kreicbergs & Pelse, 2019).

1.3 Consumer attitudes and consumer behavior towards sustainability in the fashion industry

In recent times, the notion of sustainability has gained significant prominence, mostly due to its capacity to impact consumers' opinions and, in turn, their purchasing decisions

(Ciasullo *et al.*, 2017). Customers are an essential component of sustainability implementation and have a significant role in it. They are the driving force behind businesses acting in particular ways. Customers may be becoming more conscious of unethical activity, but this awareness does not always result in a behavior change, this is typically due to a lack of awareness about the detrimental impacts of the fashion business (McNeill & Moore, 2015).

Customers' opinions regarding ethical fashion are not entirely clear. While they are aware of and sympathetic to the ethical concerns raised by this business, their intention to buy is more strongly predicted by a garment's appearance rather than its ethical standing (Gam, 2010).

The clothing business has a long history of negatively affecting society and the environment. The fashion business uses a great deal of chemicals for dyeing and fiber production, which are causing daily environmental and social harm. It also consumes an excessive number of natural resources (Pal & Gander, 2018), because millions of clothes are bought annually and are produced, manufactured, and transported across the globe, the apparel industry's greenhouse gas emissions contribute significantly to the world's carbon emissions. Those emissions are the result of a complicated supply chain.

Fletcher (2010) claims that fast fashion is designed to have rapid production, is cheap, uses low-cost materials, doesn't provide workers fair labor conditions, is designed to have a short life, and is produced in large quantities. The author also adds that fast fashion is meant to be created, distributed, and consumed in large quantities with a rapid market entry and price low. According to Fletcher (2010), "New styles, quickly copied from catwalks or high-end labels, are introduced into stores every few weeks, exploiting the consumer desire for novelty" (p.260).

Fast fashion is not defined by its speed but is defined by the system of business methods centered on obtaining sustained economic growth, which is the most common goal in the world (Fletcher, 2010). The lower price has led to a change in consumer usage and purchase habits. The clothing pieces are often bought with several other items of clothing and are thrown away sometime later due to their low perceived value. The fact that the quality of the fabric isn't good, makes the garment last less which will encourage the consumer to buy a replacement yet according to Fletcher (2010) this is a never-ending cycle, where "Unlimited wants, given succor by rapidly changing trends, are treated with unlimited production" (p.262).

In recent years, two factors have played a role in the changes we've seen in the fashion industry according to Jacometti (2019). The first is the relocation of production to economically disadvantaged or developing nations, driven by lower labor costs. The second is the rise of fast fashion, characterized by the consumer preference for inexpensive, "disposable" clothing (Jacometti, 2019). Additionally, as fast fashion has become a dominant trend and cycles have accelerated, consumer habits have shifted to include acquiring large quantities of clothing, which has led to amounts of waste and pieces ending up in landfills (McNeill & Moore, 2015).

According to Hirscher and Fuad-Luke (2013), the global economy is tightly connected with the fashion industry. The authors also add that,

“In the current economic system, the fashion industry plays an important role – driven by ever faster-changing production and consumption cycles. This system is complex, with many individuals involved in raw material harvesting, spinning, dyeing, weaving, cutting, sewing and global transportation, and there is potential for exploitation of humans and nature. It is obvious that this system, which looks difficult to sustain in the longer run, has to change. Currently easy disposal of cheap and low-quality goods is encouraged, resulting in a desire to consume more.” (p.176)

The market for ethical consumers is currently seeing rapid expansion nowadays (Joergens, 2006). Customers' purchasing habits and perspectives have been shifting, particularly concerning sustainability in the fashion industry. According to Gam (2010), “Consumers’ awareness of their environmental impact is growing, and green products are increasingly available in the marketplace” (p.178). Growing awareness of the environmental and social problems related to the production and use of clothing has made sustainability in the fashion industry a significant concern.

The fashion industry's adoption of sustainability is contingent upon several stakeholders' collaboration in its advancement. Nonetheless, some organizations struggle to include stakeholders in their processes for developing sustainable innovations, due to the pressure from laws and regulations, the need to cut costs, the pursuit of a competitive edge, technological leadership, and the demands of the consumer market (Todeschini *et al.*, 2020).

According to Borovskikh (2019), consumers are core stakeholders, so they become a critical dimension of sustainable businesses and circular economy. Consumers contribute financially to products and choose which ones to endorse with each purchase, thereby, becoming stakeholders. The shift from being unaware consumers to conscious consumers and

the responsibility for the ethical and environmental consequences of their actions should be considered the norm (Borovskikh, 2019).

More than ever, companies focus more and more on sustainability and make an effort to guarantee uniform standards and quality in the working and manufacturing environments across their supply chains due to economic, social, and environmental problems.

The detrimental effects of the fashion industry on the environment and society, including waste, water contamination, and unethical labor methods, are becoming more and more apparent to consumers. This has led to a greater awareness and a greater interest in sustainable fashion options. According to Seock and Shin (2020), these days, consumers and the fashion industry are both moving in the direction of more sustainable consumption. Against all of this, a movement has emerged that promotes slow values and culture in fashion. According to Fletcher (2010), slow fashion “represents a vision of sustainability in the fashion sector based on different values and goals to the present day” (p.262). Slow fashion is a clear departure from the standards and objectives of fast (growth-based) fashion, marking a radical shift in fashion industry norms. It is an alternative foundation for a vision of the fashion industry.

Nowadays, customers demand greater transparency from fashion brands about their manufacturing and supply networks. They are interested in the environmental impact, location, and method of clothing production (Balchandani *et al.*, 2019). A growing number of people are changing their purchasing habits to become more ethical and sustainable. When purchasing goods that support their ideals, such as fair-trade and environmentally-friendly apparel, they are willing to spend more money. There is a growing trend for slow fashion, which prioritizes quality, longevity, and classic design, as opposed to fast fashion, which encourages the quick turnover of inexpensive apparel. Customers are spending more money on longer-lasting, better products (Lundblad and Davies, 2015).

A circular fashion economy that incorporates upcycling, recycling, and secondhand shopping is becoming more and more popular among customers, which lowers the overall demand for the manufacturing of new apparel. According to Fletcher and Grose (2012), the issue of an unsustainable industry cannot be resolved by recovering textile waste or using more environmentally friendly production methods alone because these solutions do not address the fundamental issue of overconsumption, which is the quantity of clothing that is worn. In order to have a true change in the industry, the design must prioritize sustainable lifestyles instead of sustainable products (Rissanen, 2011).

But that is a challenge for designers, they have to explore how to enable customers to shift their behavior towards more sustainable lives without lowering their present levels of enjoyment and personal well-being (Hirscher & Fuad-Luke, 2013).

In the fashion industry, trends are frequently set by celebrities and influencers. Their endorsement of sustainable fashion brands or methods has the potential to greatly impact consumer behavior (Lindgren & Major 2021). Customer opinions toward sustainable fashion have been greatly influenced by the availability of information and education about the subject, in social media (McKeown & Shearer, 2019).

Although interest in sustainable fashion is rising, there are still difficulties. Access to sustainable solutions may be restricted in some places, and sustainable fashion might be more expensive. Often, consumers need to find a balance between their budgets and their values. The fashion industry is always changing, and in the years to come, it is anticipated that the sustainability movement will gain even more traction. It's expected that developments in environmentally friendly production methods and materials will keep influencing customer choices.

Achieving sustainability in the fashion industry is challenging due to the intricate nature of the textile supply chain. This complexity pertains to both the production of tangible goods and the creation of intangible content and brand values (Mora *et al.*, 2014). Hirscher and Fuad-Luke (2013), state that “to change lifestyles towards more sustainable behavior, we need to address the core of consumption, the desire to consume more” (p.176).

According to Ciasullo *et al.* (2017), the market is moving towards consumer behavior that is more mindful of sustainability. Consumers are searching more and more for brands and goods that align with their personal beliefs and are more sustainable (Haller *et al.*, 2022). In general, customer behavior and attitudes in the fashion business are shifting in the direction of increasing ethical and sustainable considerations. The fact that there is a growing consciousness, evolving ideals, and the desire for a more conscientious and environmentally sustainable approach to fashion purchasing are the main forces behind this change according to a survey conducted by YouGov, on behalf of Deloitte, (Deloitte, 2023). In this evolving market, brands that can satisfy these customer wants are probably going to do well, since consumers are more likely to select eco-friendly companies because they feel better about purchasing products from brands that are more beneficial for the environment (Pickett-Baker & Ozaki, 2008).

Numerous theories have been created to explain the adoption of sustainable fashion (Ray & Nayak, 2023). Historically, fashion diffusion was envisioned through hierarchical or horizontal frameworks, such as the trickle-down, trickle-up, or trickle-across theories. These trickle theories facilitate our understanding of how fashion moves through society, why fashion changes, and why a fashion trend becomes popular in a segment of society. According to Callery (2023), the Trickle-Down, Trickle-Up, and Trickle-Across all relate to the origin of the fashion item that is being diffused.

According to Mohr *et al.* (2021), the relationship between fashion products, consumption, and distribution is central to any characterization of fashion. In the past hierarchical or horizontal frameworks like the Trickle-Down, Trickle-Up, or Trickle-Across theories were used to understand how fashion spread (Mohr *et al.*, 2021). These theories help to understand the way fashion “moves through society, why fashion changes, and why a fashion trend becomes popular in a segment of society (Mohr *et al.*, 2021 p.650).” The authors also provide a figure to understand how each of them works (see Figure 2).

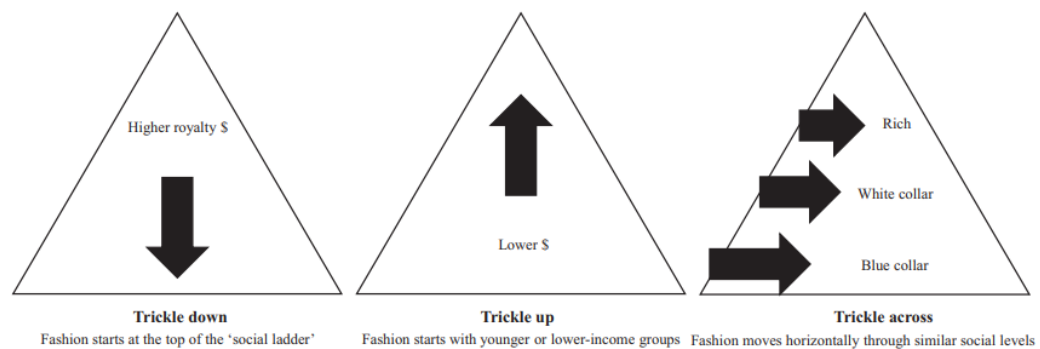


Figure 2: Theories of Fashion Movement (Source: Mohr *et al.*, 2021)

Trickle- Down Theory

For the Trickle-Down to happen, it needs a hierarchical society that wants to “**climb**” “**reach**” or “**belong**” to the upper social classes (Mohr *et al.*, 2021). According to this distribution model, there is a social hierarchy where individuals aspire to identify with the wealthy that are in the upper classes, and those at the top gradually pull away, and distance themselves, from those who are socially inferior. Therefore, when the lower class adopts the

fashion that is trending among the upper class, it normally gets rejected by the upper class and they adopt another (Mohr *et al.*, 2021).

So, the Trickle-Down Theory “posits a social influence pattern in which each social class is influenced toward the style adopted by the immediately higher class and influenced away from the style adopted by the immediately lower social class” (Miller *et al.*, 1993 p.153).

Trickle-Up Theory

In the Trickle-Up Theory, the new trends start in the lower classes and flow to the upper classes (Mohr *et al.*, 2021). The main point of this theory is that the adoption of trends doesn’t have to go through several social classes, from the bottom to the top. The upper-class opinion leaders initially embrace trends from the lower class, which is then further disseminated to the middle class (Mohr *et al.*, 2021).

Trickle-Across Theory

The Trickle-Across Theory is also named the mass-market theory and “The focus of this theory is on the horizontal flow of adoption within each social class” (Burns 1982, p.15). This means that fashion leaders in every class or segment of society become innovators and pioneers in initiating new fashion trends within their own social class due to mass production, marketing, and communication (Burns, 1982).

Triple-trickle Theory

According to Mohr *et al.*, (2021), the Triple-Trickle Theory englobes all the three theories explained above, as seen above in Figure 3. The authors used this theory while applied to the case of sustainable fashion, but it can be used to any fashion trend nowadays,

“Since social media use in the fashion industry has enabled consumers in all social strata, whether upper-, middle- or lower-social class, to have much more interaction with fashion designers, influencers and celebrities, and be exposed to luxury red carpet and runway looks.” (p.652)

With no question that the rise of social media has impacted the fashion industry (Callery, 2023), the author also adds that even though social media is mainly used as a platform for social interaction, it is also increasingly being used as the main search engine for new products and services. Mohr *et al.*, (2021) also state that “social media dramatically impacts how consumers interact with the fashion industry and adopt new trends” (p.652).

According to Mohr *et al.*, (2021), the Triple-Trickle Theory helps us understand how fashion trends spread in this technological modern age. The classical theories of fashion (trickle-down, trickle-across, and trickle-up) only represent and show how fashion trends are distributed from one social class to another, they lack “to incorporate technology for accelerating fashion adoption” (p.653).

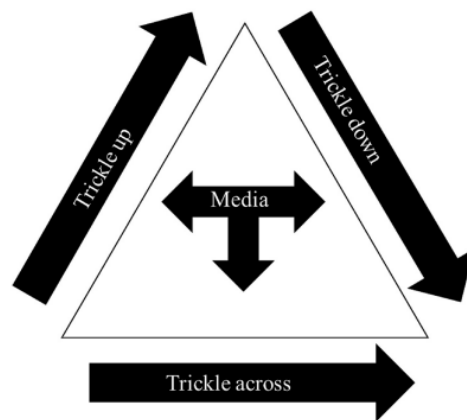


Figure 3: Triple-trickle theory (Source: Mohr *et al.*, 2021).

According to the study of Creyer and Ross (1977), consumers are more conscious and more concerned about sustainability issues. Consumers are paying more attention to the ethical corporate behavior of the companies, so therefore, consumers are more likely, according to Creyer and Ross (1977), to buy a product from an ethical company as a form to reward that company. For Pickett-Baker and Ozaki (2008), “Respondents said that they were more likely to choose brands which they knew were manufactured by companies whose products and processes were more environmentally friendly” (p.289).

The Triple-Trickle Theory explains how, today with technology, fashion spreads. The authors Mohr *et al.* (2021), state that the trend for sustainable fashion is spreading with the increased awareness of sustainability consumers becoming more conscious of environmental issues. For the authors (2021),

“While all three theories work together in the triple-trickle theory, in the case of sustainable fashion, it starts with trickle-up and with the concern for the environment and people, (...) spreading this information via social media, which in turn drives the fashion trend.” (p.652)

When people at the top of the social ladder, such as celebrities, wear sustainable brands, the trend eventually trickles down. Simultaneously, when sustainable fashion trends become more well-known through media, they spread to people at similar social levels. With the dissemination of knowledge, there is an increasing recognition and acceptance of alternative eco-friendly choices, as a result, the sustainable fashion movement also permeates comparable social strata (Mohr *et al.*, 2021).

The change in consumer attitudes and behaviors influences sustainability in the fashion industry more than ever. Nowadays, consumers search and inform themselves about the environmental impact of the way clothes are being produced by the clothing brand they want to buy from. To this end, the influence of social media has been undeniable (Callery, 2023).

Chapter 2 - Consumer attitude-behavior gap towards sustainability in the Fashion Industry

2.1 Consumer attitude-behavior gap towards sustainability

Consumers are having more pro-environmental behaviors, which include according to Connell (2010), a “wide range of actions, including (but not limited to) energy conservation, recycling and eco-conscious consumption of goods and services” (p.279). Goal conflicts are common among consumers who are concerned about sustainability, as they frequently must compromise on egocentric objectives (such as flavor, cost savings, or convenience) to diminish the harmful external repercussions of their consumption on other people, animals, and the environment (Hoffmann *et al.*, 2019).

According to Barber (2010), environmentally friendly conscious consumers are concerned with the environment and participate in some pro-environmental behavior. Even though a growing number of consumers are more willing to buy more sustainable products, several traders have made an effort to have sustainable products available at their businesses, but there is no evidence that consumers have bought more sustainable products (Wijekoon & Fazli Sabri, 2021).

According to Luchs *et al.* (2015), “consumer responsibility may be a better predictor of sustainable consumption behaviours than attitudes towards sustainability” (p.7). However, this is not always true because there is a gap between what consumers think and do.

Sustainable consumption decisions are indeed inconsistent, unpredictable, and, most of the time, contradictory since there is an inconsistency between the consumer’s positive attitude towards sustainable consumption and their actual behavior, which is often named the attitude-behavior gap (Vermeir & Verbeke, 2006; Joshi & Rahman, 2017; Pickett-Baker & Ozaki, 2008; Hoffmann *et al.*, 2019).

Many studies have discovered a weak correlation, sometimes referred to as the "attitude-behavior gap," between consumers' attitudes toward sustainable consumption and their actual consumption behaviors (Pickett-Baker & Ozaki, 2008; Tseng & Hung, 2013; Joshi & Rahman, 2017; Bernardes *et al.*, 2018; Bernardes *et al.*, 2019). According to Johnstone and Tan (2015), the “discrepancy between pro-environmental attitudes and actual purchase behaviour is perhaps not surprising because consumers may not be as ethically minded as we would like to believe” (p.805).

So, this proves that there is indeed a gap between consumers' thinking and the consumer's actual action in green purchase behavior (Gleim & Lawson, 2014). According to Wijekoon and Fazli Sabri (2021), “it means that consumers’ positive attitudes towards eco-friendly items do not always convert into actual behaviour” (p.3). Consumers might claim, for instance, that they are environmentally conscious and intend to adopt green practices, but they frequently don’t meet their goals, resulting in a discrepancy between their intentions and their actions (Pickett-Baker & Ozaki, 2008; Gleim & Lawson, 2014).

Many theoretical models have been developed to explain the gap between having environmental awareness and knowledge and acting environmentally friendly (Kollmuss & Agyeman, 2002). Even though the consumer wants to behave more sustainably, it doesn’t mean that he will act sustainably (Kollmuss & Agyeman, 2002). Multi attributes models such as the Theory of Reasoned Action (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975) and the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen 1991) have postulated that people's intentions influence their behavior and that their behaviors are influenced by intentions. However, according to Johnstone and Tan (2015), the relationship between sustainable attitudes and behavior has been controversial.

The oldest and one of the simplest models of “pro-environmental behavior” according to Kollmuss and Agyeman (2002), was based on a linear progression of having environmental

knowledge, that would lead to an environmental attitude and therefore to a pro-environment behavior. This model assumed that educating people about environmental questions would automatically result in pro-environmental behavior (Kollmuss & Agyeman, 2002). These authors state that this model “from the early 1970s was soon proven to be wrong” (2002, p.241).

2.2 Consumer attitude-behavior gap towards sustainability in the Fashion Industry

The fashion industry is one of the most polluting industries in the world. According to the European Parliament (2024), the fashion industry is responsible for about 10% of the world's carbon emissions and the pollution of 20% of global clean water (European Parliament, 2024). On average, Europeans each year, around 11 kg of textiles are discarded and nearly 26 kg are used, and 87% of the textiles end up being incinerated or end up in landfills (European Parliament, 2024). The value of the entire fashion industry in 2023 was 1.7 trillion dollars, and it is expected to reach 2 trillion dollars by 2028, according to Statista (2024).

The fashion industry's impact on the environment is becoming more and more recognized by consumers “as one of the most important risk factors for the global economy (Mandarić *et al.*, 2021, p.2).” These problems are addressed by the CSR, which according to Mandarić *et al.* (2021), “defines what are the responsibilities of companies in terms of their impact on society and the environment” (p.2). Companies should include in their strategies, in collaboration with their stakeholders, human rights, environmental, social, and ethical factors but also include consumer concerns (Niinimäki, 2013). Nevertheless, it is known that the way workers are treated in the supply chain doesn't necessarily change consumer behavior when it comes to buying fashion (Mandarić *et al.*, 2021). According to Paço *et al.* (2020), “Both the industry and consumer have a responsibility for the pollution generated” (p.2).

According to Mandarić *et al.*, (2021), state that “The high availability of fashion products increases the appetite of consumers, but also increases the gap between their attitudes about sustainable fashion and actual consumer behaviour” (p.2).

Several textile companies are very far from being sustainable due to the waste they create as a result of the various processes that producing a garment includes (Gomes *et al.*, 2024). The authors also adds that, in the textile processing process, all the stages involve an extensive consumption of water, chemicals, dyes, and energy. These procedures use large amounts of water and chemical loads, consume a lot of energy, and produce large amounts of

solid waste and air pollutants that contain a variety of chemicals that are harmful to the environment and human health (Gomes *et al.*, 2024).

Fast fashion is an industry that is focused on low-cost mass production that sells clothing pieces with not-so-great quality garments at low prices based on the latest fashion trends. This led to the increased consumption of the consumer, over the years, that have created environmental and social negative impacts (Zurga *et al.*, 2015). Since consumers purchase more and more clothing pieces, waste has become a very serious environmental concern since a great amount of clothing pieces end up in landfills every year. According to Paço *et al.* (2020), this “rapid growth in fast fashion retailing has led to the disposal and destruction of tones of clothing around the world, some of which are in very good condition” (p.10).

Harris *et al.*, (2016) state that the overconsumption that is seen in the fashion industry is due to the social pressures that are “perpetuated by the fashion industry and in the media for consumers to update and vary their wardrobe and not be seen re-wearing the same clothes” (p.11). It is important to mention that nowadays with social media, there is a bigger opportunity to influence consumers. It may be argued that these platforms, such as Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok, have replaced physical fashion magazines, making fashion trends spread faster (Mandaric’ *et al.*, 2021).

Because of this, it's important to consider how customers feel about the environment and how conscious they are of their wardrobe choices (Paço *et al.*, 2020). As was already established, the fashion industry is one of the most polluting industries and contributes to an enormous waste globally. These costs have generated a growing concern in society leading to the growing importance of sustainable fashion. The concept of sustainable fashion was created to reduce the negative impacts that fast fashion was and is having on the environment. Sustainable fashion also known as slow fashion, is the opposite of fast fashion, so it also aims to establish a healthier relationship between garments and consumers (Jeong & Ko, 2021). According to Paço *et al.* (2020), sustainable clothing consumption considers the environmental issues trying to reduce pollution that the fast fashion industry creates, respecting in this way, the use and the disposal of clothes.

According to Mandaric’ *et al.*, (2021, p.3),

“Sustainable fashion aims to avoid harm to the environment and to workers, it strives to use biodegradable and organic materials and environmentally friendly and/or recycled materials, and sustainable fashion items are designed for a longer period of use”.

To Mandarić *et al.*, (2021), while some fashion brands are making efforts to change their business and include sustainable practices, in fact, they conclude that “without the consumers, real change in the market is not possible” (p.2). Despite evidence that consumers are becoming more concerned about fashion businesses' unethical behavior, this concern it's not always evident in consumer behavior (Bray *et al.*, 2010). According to Jeong and Ko (2021), even though sustainable fashion has been studied since the 1990s, there hasn't been a change in consumer behavior despite their growing awareness over the years. Although consumers were aware of the moral dilemmas surrounding the production and consumption of clothing, this knowledge typically did not influence their purchasing decisions since they placed greater value on apparel style and cost, according, for example, to the study of Joergens (2006).

According to Jeong and Ko (2021), “Nowadays, consumers, corporations, and governments devote their attention to sustainability, and many corporates, regardless of brand type, include sustainability in their product and service” (p.512). Since consumers are more aware of the topic of sustainability and are getting a bit more aware of a sustainability topic in the fashion industry, consumption that was once only focused on the environment, it's is now also concerned about human rights and labor issues in third-world countries (Jeong & Ko, 2021). A growing number of consumers want to know if the company that is producing the product they are interested in, follows ethical and environmental standards and if the raw materials were obtained in a way that is both sustainable and acceptable in society (Paço *et al.*, 2020). According to Silva *et al.* (2022), consumers “have a strong preference for buying products from companies with social values similar to those they stand for, namely, equality in the workplace, human rights, and care for minorities, including children and women” (p.89).

Nevertheless, this environmental concern doesn't translate into sustainable behavior, including sustainable clothing consumption (Paço *et al.*, 2020). According to Joergens (2006), normally, consumers are interested in and care about sustainable fashion, but they don't often buy that; they prefer the convenience and the price of fast fashion. According to Paço *et al.* (2020), this may be caused by “limited knowledge of the environmental effects of apparel consumption and negative attitudes towards sustainable apparel” (p.3). Buying clothes from a sustainable fashion brand it's not something that consumers normally do, even if they share their concern about the environment (Mandarić *et al.*, 2021). Soyer and Dittrich (2021) claim that consumers are concerned about climate change and pollution that the fashion industry creates, but this doesn't help them to make sustainable decisions when buying clothing, which demonstrates a clear attitude-behavior gap.

The study by Paço *et al.* (2020) showed that there is a growing number of consumers who have expressed interest in sustainable fashion and are concerned about the environment, but it isn't a sustainable fashion that rules the market; fast fashion that offers lower prices still rules the market.

According to Jeong and Ko (2021),

“the existing gaps between consumer attitude and actual actions can be minimized by ensuring that sustainable fashion products satisfy the values of each consumer type and filling the knowledge gap on sustainable fashion.” (p.521)

According to the YouGov Fashion report from 2021, sustainability is perceived to be important for European consumers in the food and beverages sector (40%) and in the energy sector (38%). Fashion comes in 8th place with 12% of the European consumers finding sustainability important in that sector, most of which are between the age range of 18-24 years old (19%). The most important criteria for European consumers when purchasing clothes is the price with 68%, followed by quality with 61%, and fit with 56% (YouGov Fashion Report 2021). When consumers were asked how important it was for them to buy sustainable clothing, only 10% considered that important, putting that in another perspective, only 1 in 10 consumers consider buying sustainable clothing important, according to YouGov Fashion Report 2021.

According to Harris *et al.* (2016), several factors affect the consumer to choose to buy sustainable fashion. The factors are,

“the role of clothing in self-expression, changes in technology, rising affluence and lower prices, while barriers include competing consumer motivations, lack of information, consumption and obsolescence pressures created by the clothing industry and the limited range of sustainable clothing on offer.” (p.5)

However, consumers don't match their favorable attitudes toward sustainable fashion with their actual behavior (Bray *et al.*, 2010; Soyer & Dittrich, 2021; Jeong & Ko, 2021). In other words, this means that even though consumers may have a positive attitude toward sustainable fashion, they don't change their purchase choices and habits (Goworek *et al.*, 2012; Kong *et al.*, 2016; Wiederhold & Martinez, 2018).

Even consumers that are environmentally aware, according to Goworek *et al.* (2012), clothing purchases are mostly determined by “economic and personal factors, as well as being based on sustainability” (p.943). Whereas disposal behavior was influenced by “existing habits

and routines, which appeared to take precedence over awareness of sustainable practice” (Goworek *et al.*, 2012, p.943).

Some studies have suggested that consumers are increasingly concerned about fashion consumption more than ever (Niinimäki, 2010). Claudio (2007), claims that increasing consumer “awareness about the fate of clothing through its life cycle may be the best hope for sustainability in the fashion industry” (p. A454). According to Mandaric’ *et al.* (2021), previous research shows that the attitudes of consumers when buying sustainable fashion are “determined by their general level of concern for social and environmental well-being, perception of sustainable fashion, and their previous behavior related to ethical consumer practices” (p.5).

According to Cowan and Kinley (2014), American customers' intentions to buy sustainable clothing are driven by social pressure and environmental concerns, with guilt and knowledge about environmentally friendly clothing having a moderate influence.

According to Lundblad and Davies (2016), consumers are caught in a huge conflict, particularly in the sustainable fashion industry. Every time consumers go shopping, they are exposed to a range of influencing variables, all of which contribute to the purchasing choice. They see themselves trapped between their need to gain social approval and a sense of belonging and self-esteem, as well as between their desire to conduct themselves responsibly (Lundblad & Davies, 2016). However, sustainable fashion is far from being the first choice for consumers, compared with fast fashion options, which is seen by the attitude-behavior gap (Dhir *et al.*, 2020). The authors, found that the lack of correlation between green trust and environmental attitudes and concerns is likely the cause of the attitude-behavior gap. According to Jeong and Ko (2021), the generational way of life is changing, and as a result of generational changes that affect consumer consumption, mass-market clothing pieces are becoming less popular among consumers. Consumers “are now changing the system of apparel production, and companies are trying to develop plans to manufacture apparel with customized designs” (Jeong & Ko, 2021, p.512).

Over the years consumers have been putting more pressure on companies to adopt more sustainable ways of production that would reduce the environmental impact, that the clothing industry has (Gomes *et al.*, 2024). But simultaneously, the fact that they want to buy more and more clothes leads them to want to understand how their attitudes and behaviors influence the fashion industry, given that, despite having a positive attitude towards sustainable fashion, the majority do not change their choices and buying habits (Wiederhold & Martinez, 2018) but the

reasons behind the consumer choice for fast fashion will be multifactorial according to Bray *et al.*, (2010) it's not just a question of price, but also because consumers don't have as much choice in sustainable fashion and find their clothes less attractive (Jorgens, 2006).

Chapter 3 - Consumer preference for sustainability in the fashion industry

3.1 Sustainable Fashion and Circular Economy

The fashion sector is known to have enormous negative environmental impacts and to be a driver of overconsumption (Todeschini *et al.*, 2017). The lack of natural resources and growing population have made the sustainability idea considerably more significant. The notion of sustainability was ultimately seen favorably by nations, governments, businesses, and the consumer market since its primary goal is to satisfy the demands of the present generation without compromising those of future generations (Saricam & Okur, 2019). According to Huynh (2021), for the fashion industry to transition to the circular economy it must have sustainable innovations. This industry creates an enormous amount of clothing waste produced by industrial processes, unsold product inventories, and consumer throwaway culture. According to Huynh (2021),

“Fifty years ago, consumers preferred tailor-made garments, whereas consumers nowadays tend to buy cheap and low-quality clothes, use them only a few times before discarding them. This throwaway culture leads to massive amounts of consumer waste for which many countries struggle to provide waste treatment solutions.” (p.876)

Sustainable fashion represents a much-needed swift in the fashion industry towards a more responsible clothing production (Fletcher, 2014). According to Jung and Jin (2014), sustainable fashion first emerged in the 1960s, when consumers demanded changes and started to become more aware of the impacts that clothing production had on the environment. Carey and Cervellon (2014), state that the terms eco-fashion, green-fashion, and ethical-fashion are used interchangeably with sustainable fashion which is an aspect of the slow fashion movement that has grown over the past years.

According to Hilman (2021), sustainable fashion refers to long-lasting, high-quality clothing, while slow fashion promotes purchasing less frequently items that are more expensive but of higher quality. As we already see most of the time, sustainable fashion is falsely described

as the opposite of fast fashion. Saricam and Okur (2019) defined sustainable fashion as more environmentally friendly clothing that is meant to last longer due to the use of environmentally friendly materials and that is produced ethically, have been obtaining favor from consumers and experts in the fashion business.

Since communicating sustainability practices is getting more and more looked at by consumers, companies have been engaging more with greenwashing practices (Delmas & Burbano, 2011). One of the consequences of greenwashing is that any company that claims to be sustainable or claims a sustainable practice is treated with suspicion by the consumers (Henninger *et al.*, 2016).

Hugo *et al.* (2021) have explored the practices that are being used to promote the circular economy in fashion. They have highlighted minimizing waste, maximizing resource use, and extending product life cycles. They are divided into three dimensions, reuse, recycle, and reduction (Hugo *et al.*, 2021). Kim *et al.* (2021), has illustrated two different approaches to the textile hierarchy one that is aimed at consumers (a), and the other that is aimed at fashion companies (b), as seen in Figure 4. Both models follow a hierarchy where the reduction is at the top since it is the most sustainable action. In the consumer's case, this involves reducing buying new items and promoting the use of existing clothes. For the companies, the reduction at the source implies managing better their stock and adopting zero-waste designs.

Following this logic, both for consumers and companies, reusing and repair are encouraged, whether through repairs or second-hand markets. However, for companies, it is included an additional step, which involves redesigning old clothes to create new products of a higher value, before going to the recycling stage. The last stage is the disposal phase, which is seen as the least desirable, with an emphasis on minimizing the environmental impact associated with landfills and incineration. This figure helps to understand how the consumer and company's roles could complement in order to promote circular fashion efficiently according to Kim *et al.* (2021).

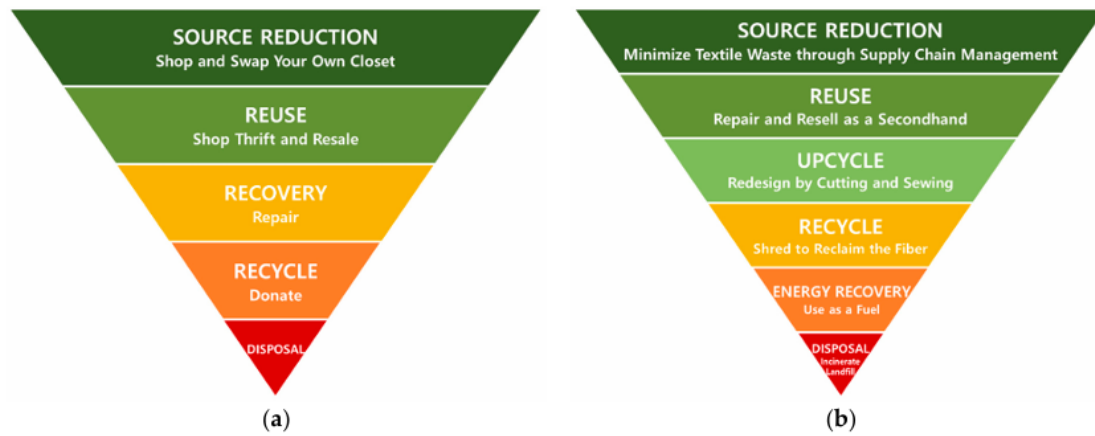


Figure 4: (a) Textile waste hierarchy for consumers; (b) Textile waste hierarchy for fashion companies. (Source: Kim *et al.*, 2021).

According to the study by Gazzola *et al.* (2020), younger generations are becoming increasingly interested in sustainability and the circular economy. There has been a growing interest in buying second-hand clothing in recent years. One of the apps that has been helping consumers to sell their non-used clothes or to buy second-hand clothes is Vinted. Vinted is an app that enables users to sell used clothes and allows users to buy those clothes, contributing to the circular economy in the fashion industry (Palomo *et al.*, 2023).

3.2 Attitude behavior gap towards sustainability in the Fashion Industry and consumer preference for Slow Fashion

According to Jung and Jin (2016), sustainability has become an important topic in the fashion industry. In the fast fashion industry, many garments are not consumed and are thrown away in landfills or destroyed by brands, and where most of the chemicals used in the process of making the fabric of the piece of clothing are bad for the environment (Jung & Jin, 2016).

Over the past few years, the concepts of "ethical fashion," "eco-fashion," and "sustainable fashion" have gained popularity in the media. However, as previously mentioned, it is challenging for fashion brands to maintain low costs, be sustainable, and provide goods of the highest caliber, particularly in the fast-fashion-driven sector. As a result, the "Slow Fashion" movement—a new movement that opposes the growing demand for rapid fashion—has gained momentum (Pookulangara & Shephard, 2013). Nowadays "Slow Fashion is a concept that

consumers and brands are now beginning to pay attention to (Domingos *et al.*, 2022 p.13).” Fashion brands have realized that consumers are more open-minded and will pay more if they change their business model from fast to slow fashion. Known fast fashion brands such as Mango and H&M have created products with high-quality materials and responsible supply chains, and more recently Zara is also implementing “classical and durable products at their stores, which carry a higher price” (Domingos *et al.*, 2022, p.13).

According to Fletcher (2010), slow fashion is a production model that aims to create small scales of clothing pieces with classic designs that use traditional production techniques. To be considered slow fashion, it requires that the entire production and the final piece are sustainable (Şener *et al.*, 2019). Usually, slow fashion pieces have a higher price than fast fashion pieces. These higher prices can turn into an obstacle for some consumers according to Moon *et al.* (2013) and Yang *et al.* (2017).

Fletcher (2007), stated in *The Ecologist*, that slow fashion is not contrary to fast fashion; rather, it is a distinct strategy where designers and customers take greater responsibility and are more conscious of the effects the business has on the environment. Although slow fashion is based on sustainability, it’s being questioned in its ability to make a profit, since the demand for slow fashion products may be insufficient to sustain the fashion brands due to the higher prices compared to the prices of fast fashion brands (Jung & Jin, 2016).

Niinimäki (2010) found that, in her study on sustainable consumption during the purchase journey, consumers take into consideration the environmental impacts of products however, these considerations tend to decrease at the moment of purchasing the actual product, which could be related to the consumer's personality and the actual commitment towards sustainability. According to Mandaric’*et al.* (2021), consumers that are concerned about the environment, have a bigger interest in purchasing sustainable products.

Domingos *et al.* (2022), in figure 5 presented a mind map that shows the five most used expressions related to slow fashion which were, “sustainable consumption”, “ethical values”, “consumer motivations”, “consumer attitudes” and “awareness of sustainability”.

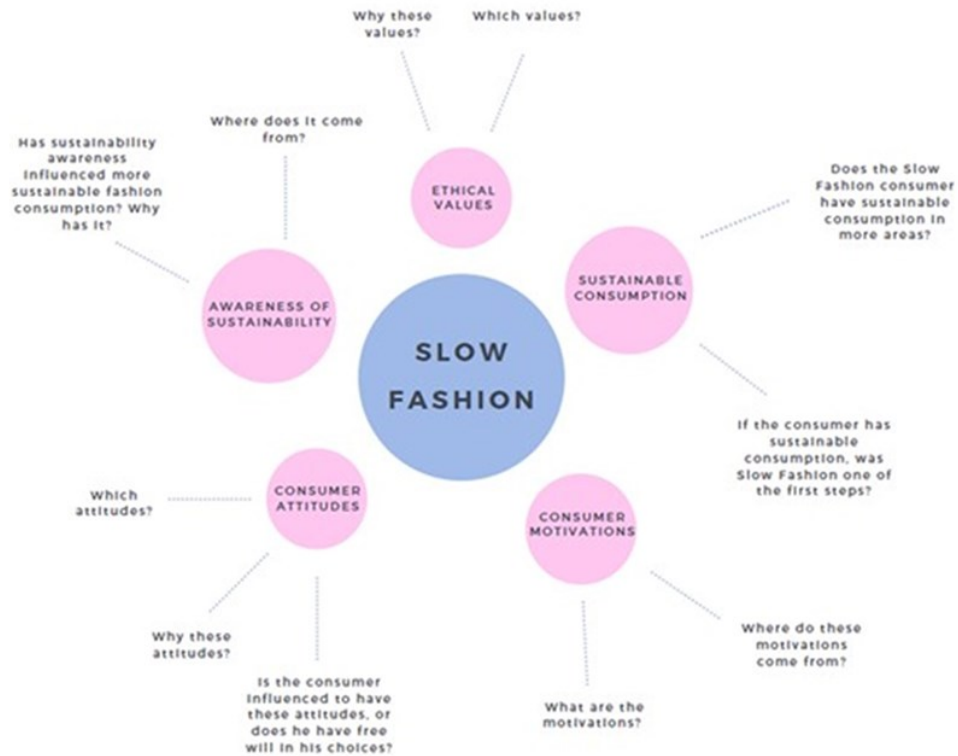


Figure 5: Slow fashion mind map (Source: Domingos *et al.*, 2022).

According to Domingos *et al.* (2022), customers are becoming more conscious about recycling and reusing products, they are attempting to make more sustainable purchases because they care about brands' transparency in communication, and their corporate responsibility, and are also concerned with their good environmental practices, and their community support. When consumers are buying slow fashion, they take into account where the journey that the clothing piece has made until it gets there, whether it is organic, fair trade, or sustainably produced (Domingos *et al.*, 2022). More than ever, slow fashion consumers are more inclined to buy clothing pieces that are more durable and that are not driven by the latest fashion trends (Domingos *et al.*, 2022).

The slow fashion movement pushes clothing brands to create designs that are ethical, ecological, and sustainable, they are also pushed to employ production techniques that demand skill, artisanship, and high-quality labor, and inform customers about making thoughtful clothing purchases” (Pookulangara & Shephard, 2013). Some fashion designers are starting to adopt a more sustainable way of designing and producing their clothing pieces. According to Clark (2008), “the slow approach offers more sustainable and ethical ways of being fashionable that have implications for design, production, consumption, and use” (p.428).

Slow fashion makes the mindset of the consumer shift into preferring quality over quantity, these consumers consider every contributor in the value chain, taking into account the environment and society (Jung & Jin, 2016; Domingos *et al.*, 2022). By encouraging consumers to buy fewer clothing pieces, at a better more durable quality, slow fashion aims to expand the lifespan of the clothing piece from the point of acquisition to disposal. Remarkably, "high quality" refers not only to the actual clothing but also to designs that are less impacted by the latest trends in the fashion industry. Consumers can have long-lasting, classic designs constructed of durable materials, which as a result, less clothing is wasted due to the extended product lifecycle (Jung & Jin, 2016).

According to Domingos *et al.* (2022) to increase slow fashion consumption, it should be promoted that sustainable consumption “leads to a very positive and effective image” (p.9). In their study, Jung and Jin (2016) looked at 221 US consumers and examined a structural model that outlined how consumer dispositions toward each of the five slow fashion dimensions shape how customers perceive the value of slow fashion. Their study indicated that the slow fashion consumer's view of value creation is influenced by the delivery of an exclusive product. Customized goods and slow fashion increase perceived value, which in turn influences consumers' inclinations to buy slow fashion and their willingness to pay premium pricing. Silva *et al.* (2022) also add that slow-fashion items take more time being produced so that's why it has to have small quantities of pieces.

According to Silva *et al.* (2022),

“To sustain profitability, slow fashion firms focus on high quality, thereby requiring high pricing. The high quality and high pricing strategy would make consumers perceive more value for what they pay, encouraging them to keep the item longer rather than discarding it shortly” (p.89).

Manufacturers should consider the social and environmental effects of the items they produce, and customers are urged to purchase higher-quality clothing pieces in fewer quantities by becoming more knowledgeable about the fashion pieces they use (Jung & Jin, 2016). The author also points out that the mainstream business media is also showing an increasing amount of interest in Slow Fashion. According to Domingos *et al.*, (2022), employee well-being in the fashion industry “has become a fundamental aspect for society, mainly due to news reporting unfair earnings and working conditions, child labor, and social inequalities” (p.10).

Consumers normally make purchase decisions not giving much attention to the consequences of their purchases for the environment. According to the KPMG survey conducted in 2019, consumers place little importance on environmental considerations while making decisions. In the fashion industry, a very tiny portion of customers respect environmental considerations. However, other variables such as price, value, size, quality, style, ease of purchase, and materials are given more weight (KPMG, 2019).

Despite these aspects, consumers would prefer that sustainable fashion have the same price as fast fashion according to the survey by KPMG (2019). When the respondents were asked about what would make them pay more for sustainable fashion, “the most popular factors everywhere are price/value followed by quality (KPMG, 2019 p.12).”

In conclusion, the fashion industry has contradictions, consumers express their concern about sustainability, but they continue to buy clothing pieces from Fast Fashion brands (Johansson, 2010). With this being said, Mandaric' *et al.* (2022) stated that “consumer sustainable product consumption behaviour is often not aligned with positive attitudes towards sustainable fashion” (p.14).

There are many behaviors related to buying a certain product. The complexity of the decision-making process associated with the purchase is significant. Consumer buying habits, as Šostar and Ristanovic (2023), point out, are influenced by various factors, from family to social networks.

3.3 Attitude behavior gap towards sustainability in the Fashion Industry and consumer preference for Fast Fashion

According to Clark (2008), technology has given the opportunity to make a faster retail turnover and allowed trends and clothing pieces to be produced faster than ever. The fast fashion industry is known for its cheap fabrics, poor working conditions, and low wages. Clark (2008) also adds that since the industry is functioning globally, these implications are developing a growing concern in the industry. The fashion industry knows that there is an urgency to change the processes of clothing production and creation, there is no doubt that these business models need to change to ensure a better future (Silva *et al.*, 2022).

Thanks to globalization, producers can get greater distances more rapidly, turning the whole world into a single fashion market. For Şener *et al.*, (2019), this phenomenon has led to

a change in the consumer's behavior, resulting in “a social and cultural similarity of consumers” (p.1548). Fashion brands, according to the authors, can quickly introduce their goods to a wide range of consumers worldwide, and regardless of cultural differences, customers from many nations tend to dress in similar ways, which has created the phenomenon of fast fashion (Şener *et al.*, 2019). The quick response to shifts in consumer demand is essential to the fast fashion business model, in order to keep up with this, they can create and refill the stores with new trendy styles since they use a fast response production method (Long & Nasiry, 2019).

Fast fashion has been criticized for being all against what sustainability is, yet there is a lack of consumer education and awareness regarding true sustainable fashion production methods. For instance, many fashion brands promote ethical work practices, reuse clothing, and employ sustainable fibres like organic cotton, bamboo, hemp, and recycled materials. Nonetheless, a lot of customers find it difficult to accept clothing made responsibly or are unwilling to support such initiatives (Mandarić *et al.*, 2021). Fast fashion brands such as Zara and H&M, have started to create lines that aim to change how fast fashion is seen and gain the lead by using innovative designs and quality (Silva *et al.*, 2022).

According to Chen and Chang (2013), consumers find it hard to trust the claims of sustainability of fashion brands and their green labels, because they can't validate the sustainable claims of the brand but Silva *et al.*, (2022) state that “new generations of consumers are becoming more interested in brands that embody sustainable practices as part of the brand's values” (p.89).

According to Watson and Yan (2013), the success of fast fashion is related to the fact that there is a stigma that slow fashion since producing long-lasting clothing pieces doesn't keep up with fashion trends. On the other hand, slow fashion is known for not producing clothing pieces that do not follow the rapidly developing fashion trends and that aren't produced under the ideals of the fast fashion business model (Watson & Yan, 2013).

Looking back in time, fashion runways were the core of the fashion industry, which were mainly restricted to fashion designers, and famous people according to Bhardwaj and Fairhurst (2010). However, starting in 1999, fashion shows and runways gained common attention. Pictures from the events could be found in fashion publications and online, which helped to explain the creative process and made fashion more approachable for all. This has allowed the opportunity to fashion-conscious consumers to see the exclusive designs that were exposed on the runways, and thanks to brands like Zara, and H&M they were able to choose

from a variety of runway-inspired designs and styles within three to five weeks in stores (Barnes & Lea-Greenwood, 2006).

Fast fashion, according to Li (2021), has some specific characteristics, which include providing consumers with fashion options several times throughout the year and neglecting the original and traditional seasonal fashion cycle. It follows the principle of rapidity, with the launch of different styles annually, and shipping time, it also keeps pace with the different social trends with a quick design replication. It also employs a price-parity strategy aiming mostly at the middle-class society. In order to establish a feeling of luxury and a "one-stop" shopping experience, suggest developing a "luxury brand" with an emphasis on celebrity influence (Li, 2021). According to Li (2021), "Fast-fashion consumerism makes people's daily life gradually enter the commercialization trajectory. If you don't pay attention to the way to catch up with the trend, you will be "rolled" by the fashion wheel" (p.354).

Nowadays the fashion market is very competitive since brands need to launch new designs due to the increased number of seasons. According to Bhardwaj and Fairhurst (2010), «With the emergence of small collections of merchandise, fashion retailers are encouraging consumers to visit their stores more frequently with the idea of "Here Today, Gone Tomorrow"» (p.166).

Mehta *et al.* (2022) have introduced the concept of conspicuous consumption, which for him applies to Fast Fashion. It applies since consumers buy in an ostensive way with the capacity to obtain fashion items while being trendy and in style. To Mehta *et al.* (2022), "Conspicuous consumption is claimed to boost one's reputation in society and can be accomplished by public displays that signify and convey wealth to others" (p.552). The authors also adds that conspicuous consumption is a way for people to "show off" their financial power, which is not only common to see in wealthy people (Mehta *et al.*, 2022).

According to Joy *et al.* (2015), the fact that fast fashion uses low manufacturing and reduced labor costs, will translate into cheaper products, making it possible for companies to produce higher quantities. Since the prices are lower, this means that consumers will buy clothes more frequently. Fast fashion has cheaper items which makes it possible for consumers to buy more than one item at a time. The fact that consumers are spending the least money possible, allows fast fashion shoppers to get the most value out of their purchases (Watson & Yan, 2013). Fast fashion consumers assume that they follow the rapid fashion trends and are aware that even if they buy a sweater for this winter, they're probably not going to wear it next winter since it's

no longer trendy (Watson & Yan, 2013). Most fast fashion consumers know that buying cheap will have its consequences. Fast fashion consumers expect that their clothing won't last a long time, so they don't get upset when that happens, since they already expect that to happen (Watson & Yan, 2013).

Watson and Yan (2013) also add that fast fashion consumers have "reported satisfaction likely in part because their performance/ expectation was met (the clothing will fall apart after a few wears)" (p.156). On the other hand, slow fashion consumers have continued "satisfaction through the purchasing stage and after consuming the product because it met their expectations to last several seasons" (p.156).

According to Joy *et al.*, (2015), fast fashion allows consumers to constantly emerging desires by having new styles and trends that replace the old ones. This business model is related to disposability, due to the speed of change of trends.

Consumers already expect that their products will last "ten washes", but consumers are aware of that and accept since the clothing piece was cheap and by that time, probably already gone out of fashion. Fast and slow fashion customers decide to donate, resell, give away, and reuse their goods. However, only consumers who shop fast fashion claimed they would discard their items, whereas those who shop slow fashion said they would retain them and never part with them (Watson & Yan, 2013).

Joy *et al.*, (2021), add that this,

"reference to ten washes is derived from fast fashion companies themselves, who openly proffer the number as a benchmark, after which an item will no longer be expected to retain its original value, due to poor-quality materials and manufacturing." (p.283)

Normally according to the study of Watson and Yan (2013), fast fashion consumers don't get buyer's remorse since they buy cheap clothing pieces, which makes the post-consumption guilt an acceptable level, since consumers think that they've not spent that much money on it. Buying cheap items appears to be the way fast fashion consumers counterbalance their impulsive impulses to avoid guilt (Watson & Yan, 2013).

With the increased awareness amongst consumers related to sustainability, consumers are very familiar with fast fashion items due to the large availability of fast fashion brands, but their increased concern about sustainability issues has an impact on their fast fashion consumption (Mehta *et al.*, 2022). Consumers, as was stated before, are more aware of the

fashion costs on the environment. However, there are still a lot of consumers who continue buying from fast fashion brands. According to Watson and Yan (2013), the term "buyers' remorse avoidance" refers to the strategies employed by consumers to try and prevent feeling guilty or regretful about their clothing purchases. One emotion that consumers feel in the post-consumption is the buyer's regret (Watson & Yan, 2013). Their study concluded that most of fast fashion consumers have "impulsive buying tendencies" (p.149). Cengiz and Şenel (2023) state that fast fashion consumers have the fear of missing out (FOMO) and "that consumers who experienced FOMO were more likely to engage in impulsive buying to avoid the fear of being left behind and to maintain their social standing" (p.416).

3.4 Motivations and Barriers to prefer Slow Fashion or Fast Fashion

Consumers have their motivations and barriers when it comes to choosing their clothing pieces. They have motivations and barriers that make them choose one type of fashion over another. According to Štefko and Steffek (2018), fast fashion has a good side and a bad side. The good side is the opportunity to offer consumers several new collections at low prices in a short period. The bad side is the poor conditions the workers have, low wages, and the waste it produces.

Within consumption, we have hedonic consumption which is when consumers make purchases for entertainment, pleasure, or emotional satisfaction. According to Watson and Yan (2013), "Two components of hedonic consumption are hedonic goals and hedonic products" (p.150). The need to pursue pleasure in any area is identified as a hedonic goal. When it comes to fast vs slow fashion, these objectives can be met by wearing hand-made apparel or by the atmosphere of the store during the purchasing process. The authors have found that fast fashion consumers, achieve these hedonic goals through their shopping experience, the atmosphere of the stores, and by «buying in large quantities, and «hunting» for goods» (p.150). Fast fashion consumers achieve this hedonic shopping experience with the excitement they feel from the store environment and from the clothing that they see and buy. According to Mehta *et al.* (2022), consumers who are fashion-oriented, and "perceive clothing as a means of achieving social positioning and status, might be more prone toward consumption of FF products" (p.550).

Fast fashion consumers have as their main motivation the fact that the clothing pieces are not that expensive; the clothing pieces are sold at cheap prices (Jacometti, 2019). With the attractive low prices, consumers are buying clothing pieces more frequently and have gained

the habit of buying ostensively to convey to society that they have the financial power to keep up with all the new trends (Joy *et al.*, 2015; McNeill & Moore, 2015; Mehta *et al.*, 2022). Consumers are aware that their fast fashion items are not going to make it into the next winter probably, it is something that they take for granted, they know it before buying it (Watson & Yan, 2013).

There is an increase in consumers who have become more concerned about the environment, which could impact their lifestyles and, as a consequence, their consumption behavior (Ionela-Andreea, 2021). By giving an alternative manufacturing method to minimize resource waste and identify alternative textiles with regenerable characteristics, slow fashion refers to the practice of producing and consuming fashion goods ethically and mindfully (Ionela-Andreea, 2021). slow fashion incorporates social responsibility, sustainability, transparency, and other core concepts to improve business practices as well as maintain profitability, it goes beyond simply adopting classics or physically slowing down the production process (Fletcher, 2010).

Even though consumers are not immediately impacted by worries about proper wages for workers and maintaining a safe working environment, therefore even though people are aware that slow fashion improves workers' welfare, this understanding does not help to create perceived value toward slow fashion products (Jung and Jin, 2016).

According to Jung and Jin (2016), it's hard for consumers to,

“connect the local concept directly to consumers in the case of apparel products because clothing is not related to freshness, and distinctiveness from locally produced raw material is not readily noticeable as it is in food.” (p.12)

Connell (2010) suggests that some barriers affect the consumption of sustainable clothing. These barriers include a lack of knowledge from the consumer, economic resources, societal norms, and the retail environment. Studies have shown that consumers have limited awareness of sustainable fashion consumption (Connell 2010; Goworek *et al.*, 2012; McNeill & Moore 2015).

Connell (2010) research identified the internal and external barriers that were keeping consumers from buying sustainable fashion. As internal barriers, the author identified as miscomprehension and lack of knowledge about the environmental effects of production and negative perceptions of sustainable clothing which were seen by the participants as less stylish,

less well-fitting, and less comfortable. External barriers that the author identified are the limited availability of sustainable clothing items, the lack of many offers in footwear and formal clothing, and economic resources since sustainable clothes tend to be more expensive. Participants also claim their concerns about society's expectations for their appearance.

Slow fashion makes a connection between environmental awareness, responsibility for the future, and by, "the satisfaction of getting and wearing attractive, well-realized, and long-lasting fashion items, contrary to the immediate satisfaction produced by fast fashion consumption" (Ionela-Andreea, 2021 p.1).

According to Pookulangara and Shephard (2013), slow fashion is not just about clothing pieces that respect the environment and that are ethical; it is also about being part of the process of "reusing, recycling, and repurposing existing clothing" (p.205). Compared to fast fashion consumers, slow fashion consumers increase the utility of their clothing pieces differently. Slow fashion purchases, according to Watson and Yan (2013), are experienced by buyers of well-fitting, versatile, consistent with their wardrobe, high-quality, and worthy investment clothing.

According to Silva *et al.* (2022), consumers' purchase decisions are increasingly influenced by ethics and moral ideals, which are becoming increasingly essential. More than ever, factors like the environment, sustainability, animal welfare, ethical labor and manufacturing methods, and positive community impact are all taken into account when purchasing products, and luxury items are no different.

Slow fashion consumers shop according to their style and wardrobe. Since slow fashion consumers buy items that are made with higher quality, they don't feel regret after buying and using their piece of clothing, because they can use it for a long period (Watson & Yan, 2013). According to Watson and Yan (2013, p.149), "slow fashion consumers avoid buyers' remorse by focusing on the concept of quality over quantity." According to Araújo *et al.*, (2022), slow fashion consumers are willing to pay more for an item that respects the environment, the employees working conditions in production, and animals. Even though there could be other factors influencing the slow purchase decision, such as income, normally still tend to buy slow fashion,

"since they consume in thrift stores and vintage stores, rent and exchange pieces, order clothes from home seamstresses and buy handicrafts, in addition to buying wild pieces and showing interest in social, environmental and labor issues." (Araújo *et al.*, 2022 p.629)

According to Wiederhold and Martinez (2018), the price is one of the greatest barriers for consumers to buy sustainable fashion. Their study also found that consumers want greater transparency and that companies should provide more information regarding ethical labels and a more detailed categorization of sustainable clothes (Wiederhold & Martinez, 2018). Participants of the study also claim that it is hard to find sustainable clothes in stores and that it is also hard to find sustainable clothes with trendy designs. This finding was also supported by the study of Lundblad and Davies (2016), that there isn't much availability of sustainable clothing. The study also provided the insight that consumers have a "preconceived opinion on sustainable fashion, attributing it as old-fashioned, alternative and boring" (Wiederhold & Martinez, 2018 p.426). Consumers justify their purchase inertia with sustainable clothing with the feeling that any difference will be made, they feel powerless, and they think that their actions aren't going to make a difference.

Even though the top barrier for consumers to buy sustainable products is the fact that it is more expensive than Fast Fashion clothing, Bray *et al.*, (2010), claim that consumers are "more fixed in their habitual purchasing than they were prepared to admit" (p.601). When presented with an imaginary scenario in which price was irrelevant, they did not instantly choose ethical products, contrary to what may have been predicted. Joergens (2006) states that one thing that may be keeping consumers from choosing from sustainable fashion could be the fact that they have limited choices and the prices are not compared to the fast fashion brands, which offer very low prices. The author also found in her study that one of the barriers to buying sustainable fashion for consumers is the fact that they find sustainable fashion pieces unattractive.

Creating exclusive clothing items that are enjoyable to wear and encourage uniqueness might be the most crucial need for slow fashion to succeed against the fast fashion market, slow fashion brands may make investments in creating distinctive designs and special styles to establish exclusivity (Jung and Jin, 2016). The author also adds that brands should continue to produce fewer quantities in order to maintain exclusivity, which will generate a superior value compared to fast fashion brands (Jung and Jin, 2016). According to Şener *et al.*, (2019), "Therefore, the expectation of differentiation and sense of feeling exclusive by standing out in society are significant positive consequences of slow fashion products towards perceived customer value" (p.1554-5).

Consumers feel the need to feel special and unique, and with the exclusivity that slow fashion offers, they can achieve that (Jung & Jin, 2016).

Magnuson *et al.* (2017), after analyzing several attributes that impact slow fashion buyers' decisions, such as environmental responsibility, employee welfare, animal welfare, slow fashion, costs, and physical and extrinsic attributes, the authors found that two of them influence consumers' attitudes towards slow fashion, which were, employee welfare, and cost. The fact that consumers are impacted by slow fashion creates an influence on their consumer attitudes proving that durable clothing influences buying slow fashion. Employee welfare is important to consumers it's a sign that consumers are more informed about human rights and ethical issues within the fashion industry. The cost has an impact on the consumer's attitudes toward buying slow fashion, so the lower the cost, the higher the positive attitude toward slow fashion is (Magnuson *et al.*, 2017).

Silva *et al.* (2022) found that a consumer who already has bought a slow fashion clothing piece it would have a stronger "inclination towards sustainability, slow fashion, PCV (perceived customer value), and other behavioral outcomes" (p.94). Pookulangara and Shephard (2013), also found that consumers feel that in order to buy slow fashion they would need to spend a larger amount of their income on clothing pieces that are not considered trendy. The authors Cavender and Lee (2018), discovered that if there is positive support for slow fashion, normally there is fast fashion avoidance.

In conclusion, despite slow fashion is sustainably committed (Sun *et al.*, 2022), allows consumers to wear well-realized and long-lasting fashion items (Ionela-Andreea, 2021 p.1), and to feel special and unique due to the exclusivity that slow fashion offers (Jung & Jin, 2016) there are also some barriers to choose slow fashion such as higher prices, unattractive pieces that don't keep up with fashion trends that need to be considered (Watson & Yan, 2013).

On the other side, there are several motivations for consumers to prefer fast fashion such as the attractive low prices that allow them to buy several items (Fletcher, 2010), the rapid production that provides consumers with several fashion options throughout the year (Li, 2021) in range with the ultimate collections seen in runways and those motivations overtake barriers such as the short life and production in large quantities (Fletcher, 2010), the poorly conditions of the workers have, low wages and the large amount of waste that is associated with and it's consequent effects on the environment.

Chapter 4 - Digital Transformation and E-commerce in the Fashion Industry: Evolution and Challenges

4.1 The evolution and challenges of e-commerce in the Fashion Industry

The fashion industry is more than ever connected to the digital world, with strategies and platforms becoming predominant. The emergence of new brands in the market is due to e-commerce, which allows brands to interact with consumers virtually (Gazzola *et al.*, 2020). Social media such as Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube have been growing over the years, which allows brands to develop a strategy that takes most of the advantages from those platforms (Gazzola *et al.*, 2020). The authors also add that “the fashion and online apparel industry is the one that marks the biggest growth concerning e-commerce sales” (p.4). According to Wonsunopparat and Shuyi (2023), e-commerce is any business transaction involving exchanging or selling goods or services over the Internet.

According to Wonsunopparat and Shuyi (2023), there is no doubt that after COVID-19, consumer shopping habits have changed. Because of the huge development of services and logistics, the companies can offer free shipping costs making e-commerce more appealing. According to Gazzola *et al.* (2020), numerous fashion brands were compelled by this trend to develop mobile applications, enabling users to access websites optimized for smartphones to be able to purchase there. Which makes it easier for consumers to purchase, only by downloading the brand app and thanks to online payment apps (Wonsunopparat & Shuyi, 2023). One of the reasons that companies are so interested in e-commerce is because it helps them boost their profits. Generally, if a company wants to reach a specific target, they could use different e-commerce channels to reach its specified target (Wonsunopparat & Shuyi, 2023). This new form of communication between consumers and companies through digital platforms has allowed an immediate and interactive way to interact with to the company (Figueiredo *et al.*, 2019).

According to Sisca *et al.* (2022), human behavior has changed due to the digital transformation in many areas, including consumer purchasing habits. Modern digital technology and convenient access to international markets have shifted consumer purchasing habits from conventional stores to online channels, bringing in the "industrial era 4.0 (Sisca *et al.*, 2022). Shopping has become an important part of our daily life; shopping is a method to

decompress, satisfy a desire, or infuse some personality into a routine lifestyle. Generally speaking, there are two categories of shopping: internet shopping and traditional shopping, also known as offline shopping (Sisca *et al.*, 2022).

Consumers tend to like online shopping because it provides them convenience with the purchase of an item that they want, but in some cases, it can cause obstacles, such as the fact that they cannot try before buying or see the quality of the product; this can't be done with fashion items. (Sisca *et al.*, 2022). For consumers, several advantages can be found when shopping online: greater convenience, greater amount of diversity, better price offers, availability of online stores at any time of the day, saving time, and it's not so stressful as the traditional shopping experience (Kavya, 2016; Sisca *et al.*, 2022). However, there are some downsides to online shopping, the lack of physical shopping experience, the shipping costs, unknown sellers in some cases, and the difficulty in making claims when something goes wrong (Kavya, 2016).

For Romano (2023) thanks to the emergence of social media, people are closer to each other. This also allowed the fashion industry to get closer to their customers, and to study the newest trends and fashion behaviors. According to this author, through social media, fashion brands can disseminate the word and attract attention to their product, allowing them to win over customers' hearts and upend the mass market. Successful promotion campaigns may be done for less money, and small businesses can benefit more when they reach their demographic target because of prospecting and analytical tools. The social media impact in the fashion industry includes the creation of online communities and direct communication between consumers and the leaders of those companies. With social media, a new fashion path has been raised, with the appearance of influencers, boosted by the high demand for videos, photos, and shared content (Romano, 2023). According to the author, "Social media influences fashion trends by offering a place for a trend to grow and then continuing its surge of popularity" (Romano, 2023 p.35).

Social media helps consumers "connect and share information with other customers and brand managers" (Thanasi-Boçe *et al.*, 2022, p.4).

According to Bilovodska and Poretskova (2023), the fashion industry e-commerce has been growing and changing in recent years. The authors refer to some barriers, that make consumers give up on their online purchases, and some consumers only opt for offline shopping. The authors identified some main barriers that could prevent consumers from buying online.

One of the barriers that they encountered was the technological barrier, which according to them is a significant barrier to some consumers. This includes difficulty in payment, websites that are poorly designed, long loading times, internet speed, and websites that are not updated to be used on every device (Bilovodska & Poretskova, 2023).

Online shopping presents various risks for consumers, including the possible loss of money due to faulty products, fraudulent activity, and damaged or lost deliveries. For fear of financial fraud, consumers may be reluctant to provide their credit or debit card information to online retailers. In addition, consumers' hesitation to make online purchases is further compounded by the privacy and security threats related to the illegal gathering and misuse of personal information (Bilovodska & Poretskova, 2023).

According to Bilovodska and Poretskova (2023), there are also some limitations to online shopping in the fashion industry, such as the fact that consumers can't touch or see the product before buying it, the inability to try on the product, the lack of advice from retailers, concern about potential item defects, and hesitation about the veracity of the product description.

According to the authors,

“These limitations can deter some consumers from making a purchase due to worries that the product's fabric, colour, or quality may not meet their expectations” (Bilovodska & Poretskova, 2023 p.107).

Additionally, some consumers may be hesitant to buy online due to the risk of non-delivery, product being lost, being damaged or difficulties in returning items may cause consumers to think twice before buying a product online (Bilovodska & Poretskova, 2023). To minimize this barrier, companies should provide consumers with constant and accurate updates on their orders (Bilovodska & Poretskova, 2023).

The authors also found that consumers' apprehension about ordering things that might not fit them and their worries about the return procedure comprise this collection of obstacles. Customers may choose not to buy from an online retailer if they don't have a reasonable return policy or forbid returns. They are unlikely to shop again, even if they purchase a thing and are unhappy with it and cannot return it. Returns are frequently made due to misrepresented products or sizes, incomplete or damaged delivery, and unfulfilled expectations (Bilovodska & Poretskova, 2023).

Understanding all these barriers is crucial for businesses to increase their sales and improve this way, their consumer's online shopping experience (Bilovodska & Poretskova, 2023).

4.2 Digital Transformation in the Fashion Industry

Throughout the years, digital technologies have made a more significant impact on the businesses of every industry (Rogers, 2023). The COVID-19 pandemic has created an acceleration in business changes that would take years to occur and that have taken weeks to happen, such as online learning, e-commerce, remote work, and streaming media (Rogers, 2023). These shifts in businesses are not going to slow down; they are continuing and faster processes. According to Rogers (2023) business leaders understand now that Digital Transformation “is no longer a question of “if” but of “how fast?” (p.5).

Rogers (2023) defines Digital Transformation as an activity that transforms a particular company to prosper in the rapidly evolving digital landscape. According to Vial (2019), Digital Transformation is a process that combines information, computing, communication, and connectivity technologies to alter a company's properties to improve it significantly. On the other hand, according to Lay (2018) Digital Transformation,

“is the means by which companies effect organizational change, manage reputational risks and close the gaps between customers’ expectations and the service and experience they receive. For a fashion brand this means re-imagining how shopping in a digital world should play out, rather than merely digitizing the shopping process for a physical world” (para 9).

It is clear that the fashion industry appears to be highly receptive to adopting these technologies into their production processes. Still, at the same time, companies are having difficulty adjusting the need for efficiency, transparency, and quality control with Digital Transformation (Bertola & Teunissen, 2018). The Industrial Revolution changed society and the manufacturing sector (Pucci *et al.*, 2022). The Fast Fashion business model, production, marketing, and distribution have been flourishing over the past years with their known ability to capture the newest trends (Brewer, 2019).

Thanks to these technological changes in clothing factories such as 3D printing, the creation and production of garments are getting faster. Apart from this productivity gains in

textile manufacturing facilities, 3D printing technology can make time a not-so-important component of the production process. Furthermore, a throw-away culture and an insatiable customer demand for the newest copies of the season's "it" pieces contributed to fashion's democratization, fueled by cheaper clothing (Brewer, 2019). This demand for "it" pieces is becoming more and more evident in the effects that these trends have on society and the environment (Brewer, 2019).

According to Colombi and D'Itria (2023), "the fashion industry is notorious for its high resource use and adverse environmental effects" (p.2). In the future, sustainability must prioritize people and give the same amount of concern to the environment. As a result of the digital revolution, the fashion industry will suffer some transformations towards having no season market, no gender, and no size. These changes will reduce the number of clothing pieces being produced and will lead the fashion industry to more adaptive clothing pieces that are long-lasting and that adjust to the person's changing body in the different life stages (Pucci *et al.*, 2022).

According to Bulović and Čović (2022), retailers may use digital technology to lower expenses, increase employee motivation, communicate with current consumers more effectively, and recruit new ones. Retailers can improve operational efficiency and customer centricity in their business models by embracing the digital age. Several companies are using digital manufacturing to speed up the sampling and prototyping processes within the production stage (Bertola & Teunissen, 2018). According to these authors, another example of the use of digital manufacturing is

"Internet of Things technology, is already transforming production in many advanced factories where sensors, robots and humans are exchanging data; but it is already finding application in retail, where sensors in spaces are communicating with customers' mobile devices or with respect to products, tracking their lifecycle." (Bertola & Teunissen, 2018 p.357)

One of the biggest challenges for fashion companies is keeping up with consumer demands and expectations (Lay, 2018). The consumer now plays an enabled dominating role instead of passively observing. The fact that they are now using digital technologies has grown exponentially, empowering consumers to do more than purchase stylish items; most consumers use digital channels before making a purchase, during, or after their purchase of a clothing piece. Consumers now want to engage, fit in, have an impact, and represent the companies they purchase (Lay, 2018). This makes them more informed and concerned with their appearance in

public and on social media and the perception of the products they purchase and own (Lay, 2018).

Bertola and Teunissen (2018), claim that adopting digital-driven technologies allows the production of new products, helps in the research of new processes, and allows quicker innovation in the company, which will lead to business growth. Due to the emergence of quick design processes and rapid production methods, especially when we consider 3D printing, it was possible to bring the latest trends to the masses since, back in time, it was only for the wealthiest (Brewer, 2019).

According to Brewer (2019), even though consumers have an interest in sustainable fashion, that doesn't necessarily result in changes in consumer behavior. By saying this, companies should communicate the true cost of fast fashion to show consumers more sustainable types of production, designs, sourcing, and marketing. The author also adds that stakeholders and government policies should work on highlighting the advantages of Slow Fashion while showing the downside of the Fast Fashion industry. Brewer (2019), brings up the topic,

“fashion paradox or the relationship between the fashion industry's imperative to continually evolve to satisfy consumers' insatiable desire to acquire the most exclusive, latest trends, and the consequent loss of exclusivity as consumers acquire the most popular garments, suggests that the fashion industry's very *raison d'être* is inherently diametrically opposed to sustainability.” (p.3)

In the fashion industry, sustainable Digital Transformation value chains offer a means of significantly altering business performance through long-lasting digitization strategies (Bulović & Čović, 2022). Within the fashion paradox Brewer (2019), also adds that there is a contradiction between having the latest styles versus sustainability. Since consumers are always looking for the newest trend, this makes it very demanding for companies to continually keep producing new trendy clothing pieces because, subsequently, the previous trend is no longer trendy due to the launch of a new trend.

According to Brewer (2019),

“Whether through globalization propelling ever-faster production cycles, the proliferation of online social media featuring the latest styles, internet influencers generating interest in new products, the burgeoning number of fashion shows internationally, or simply global economic growth, the public's addiction to ever-changing fashion fuels demand for higher carbon-producing modes of transport such as air freight, which often replace less polluting forms of transport such as shipping.” (p.3)

According to Pucci *et al.* (2022), managers and designers must have responsible manufacturing education and training. If the company accepts the adoption of new resources this will help businesses gain the trust of consumers, who like transparent brands. Applications for smart devices can captivate users by revealing the origins of garments and fabrics. According to the authors, big data can aid companies in finding more sustainable solutions, and Data mining could help companies get results and eliminate resources that came from unidentified sources (Pucci *et al.*, 2022).

Colombi and D'Itria (2023), state that sustainable business models “for the fashion industry can serve as a vehicle to coordinate technological innovations with circularity to reach sustainability” (p.2). With the aid of digital technologies, it is important to make a successful sustainable transition, helping with communication, transparency, digital device innovation, and traceability (Pucci *et al.*, 2022). Bertola and Teunissen (2018), describe the Fourth Industrial Revolution as a model that will transform industrial systems by providing new ways of production and consumption, which numerous government programs have aimed at as a way to reach a more sustainable future. According to Ustundag and Cevikcan (2018), the foundation of Industry 4.0 is the integration of dynamic value-creation networks concerning the integration of the software system and the physical fundamental system with other economic sectors and branches, as well as with different industries and industry types, in order to implement and transform the company into Industry 4.0.

To become more relevant to customers, Digital Transformation involves questioning and altering deeply held beliefs about who, what, and how a company operates in the industry. The majority of fashion revenue still originates from physical stores, especially with the rise of omnichannel; certain brands still rely on location to meet offline demand. Today, success depends on providing a unified omni-channel experience that seamlessly integrates virtual, emotional, and physical components at every process stage-from conversion to communication and more (Lay, 2018).

Since consumers are more than ever more demanding for sustainable products and for companies to act more sustainably (Kostatinova, 2016), companies have to change their processes in order to go with this position from consumers. With digital technologies, decision-makers may access more data regarding habits, behaviors, and trends (Bulović & Čović, 2022). The authors also add those digital technologies influence customer experience, operational

processes, and the integration of business and IT (Information Technology). This results in significantly higher productivity, cost reductions, and higher revenues. Enterprise integration and the shift from physical to digital media have an impact on how sustainably businesses operate (Bulović & Čović, 2022).

Moreover, Bertola and Teunissen (2018), show that Digital Transformation can really change the industry into a more sustainable path and more customer-focused. Pucci *et al.*, (2022), state that thanks to artificial intelligence tools, big data analysis, 5G mobile networks, 3D printing in manufacturing, sensor and driver nanotechnology, algorithms, the Internet of Things, AR (Augmented Reality), and VR (Virtual Reality), among other innovations, will bring about a new era of production and a new paradigm in the fashion industry.

4.3 TikTok Shop: The new social shopping Era

Given the context of the economic impact that COVID-19, in 2020, had on the global economy, epidemic prevention measures have increased the amount of people in need of home protection, which has significantly aided the growth of livestream shopping industry (Liu, 2022). The network platform's marketing models and business economies are constantly changing and improving thanks to the fast development of Internet Technology, e-commerce platforms have received a boost from new information communication media, which includes short videos, and live transmissions (Liu, 2022). Thanks to the latest Internet of Thinking, several platforms have been created and promoted the livestream shopping function, "making them quickly enter the explosive development stage" (Liu, 2022, p.434).

According to Liu (2022), livestream shopping,

"refers to a new type of service that uses live broadcast technology to display products at close range through some Internet platforms, and streamers with different identities provide online consumers with consultations, answers and shopping guides." (p.432)

Livestream shopping is a marketing strategy that consists of a host, which is normally a celebrity or an influencer who uses a live video to promote a product (Wang & Oh, 2023). According to the authors, "livestream shopping promotes and sells products via influencer streams on social media platforms" (Wang & Oh, 2023, p.1). Livestream shopping has become a trend in Internet shopping that includes e-commerce, entertainment, and social networking according to Liu (2022). This allows consumers to use social media platforms and shop directly

through them, allowing consumers to have a more immersive shopping experience compared to the traditional online shopping experience (Naceva, 2024).

The presence of live shopping on TikTok has, according to Lutviari *et al.* (2024), “created a new trend called impulse buying, where customers make purchases spontaneously and without prior planning” (p.403). This new trend has triggered an increase in impulse buying (Li *et al.*, 2023) because consumers are tempted to buy the product that they are viewing immediately. Due to their interactive features, and captivating and limited-time special offers, live shopping platforms are seeing an increase in the frequency of this problem (Lutviari *et al.*, 2024). These platforms offer a variety of advantages such as the possibility of seeing the products that are being displayed, making a purchase instantly during the live shopping transmission, interacting with the host, and asking questions and getting answers in real-time (Lutviari *et al.*, 2024).

As seen above, Fear of Missing Out (FOMO), according to Lutviari *et al.* (2024) means fear of getting left behind with everything that is occurring around you. FOMO is considered the desire to always be connected with what others around you are doing (Lutviari *et al.*, 2024). Individuals who experience FOMO may feel anxiety, stress, and dissatisfaction (Dinçer *et al.*, 2022). The FOMO could lead to impulsive buying, where consumers, before going to the store, didn't have any “plans or even thought about buying the product. However, after entering the store and being influenced by various factors, the consumer decides to make a purchase” (Lutviari *et al.*, 2024, p.408).

Impulsive buying on live-streaming platforms is a growing phenomenon that could affect both sides positively and negatively, according to Lutviari *et al.* (2024). As a benefit, impulsive buying can provide consumers a more easy and faster way of shopping, however, it could lead to negative impacts on consumers, such as regret after buying a product excessive spending, and could also lead to the growing accumulation of items they don't use (Lutviari *et al.*, 2024). But for live-streaming platforms, these impulsive purchases increase their revenue and volume of sales.

However, these life-streaming platforms need to also ensure that their business is ethical and that they safeguard users against careless, impulsive purchases (Lutviari *et al.*, 2024). According to these authors,

“For business people, impulse purchases can be an opportunity to increase sales and reach new consumers. However, business people also need to ensure the quality of their products

and services, as well as provide clear and accurate information to consumers.” (Lutviari et al., 2024 p.411)

TikTok is nowadays, one of the most popular social media platforms, among the younger generations (Dahniar *et al.*, 2023), it has reached over 100 million downloads on Google Play Store (Maulida *et al.*, 2022). Recently, the popular social media site TikTok unveiled the interactive TikTok Shop function, allowing users to make purchases straight from videos (Dahniar *et al.*, 2023). According to the website TikTok (2024), the TikTok Shop allows companies to display and market their products so that the TikTok community can find and buy them.

According to Maulida *et al.* (2022) social commerce (s-commerce) is a subset of e-commerce that turns around the idea of combining business and social activities. TikTok Shop is a new component in the business section of the TikTok social media network. Santos, (2022) stated that social commerce occurs,

”on a social media platform through price comparators, taking from the experience that the customer has on this platform and integrating a simplified purchasing process. It differs from e-commerce, which takes place on a company’s digital store, branded app, or in a marketplace.” (p.36)

TikTok Shop is a unique e-commerce platform that connects creators, consumers, and merchants to offer a purchasing experience. Because it gives sellers and brands the chance to promote their businesses through quick videos and the live shopping function on their individual TikTok profiles, the TikTok Shop buying and selling transaction system is extremely unique. They can also work together with other TikTok creators. When retailers advertise their goods via live shopping, customers can shop straight from the retailers and take advantage of a variety of promotions and appealing prizes (Maulida *et al.*, 2022).

This is also seen in TikTok Shop which is “an online store where users can generate promotional content while selling products on TikTok, similar to e-commerce, by displaying multiple product catalogs” (Rahmi *et al.*, 2024, p.2). TikTok Shop facilitates direct transactions for buying and selling within the TikTok app. To take advantage of live streaming or short videos, for marketing and selling purposes, a business needs to have a TikTok Shop account. Then, the TikTok Shop account will eventually show up during live streaming as an online shop, and “Potential customers can securely add products to their shopping cart and checkout without

leaving the TikTok app if they do not wish to proceed with the transaction” (Rahmi *et al.*, 2024, p.2). According to the “TikTok Marketing Science Global Growing TikTok in eCommerce Study (UK Results) 2022 conducted by Material” 1 in 4 TikTok users have shown interest in buying from Lives because they get to see the product rather than just seeing the picture. The authors Nst and Khairat (2023) stated that this new feature allows customers to make purchases directly from the app without having to launch a web browser and visit a different online retailer. According to Nst and Khairat (2023),

“TikTok Shopping is a series of solutions, features, and tools that give the opportunity to leverage the power of trading in TikTok. TikTok shop has a special shopping tab on its profile, represented by the shopping bag icon. Customers can then browse and select products in TikTok and then buy the product, either in TikTok or transferred to the online store for checkout.” (p.12)

According to “TikTok Marketing Science Global Shopping Ad Products Study 2022 (UK Results) conducted by Material”, 62% of regular weekly TikTok users have engaged in e-commerce behavior on TikTok.

The practice of social shopping entails leveraging social networks to speed up the online purchasing process. Customers may find, share, and buy goods and services straight from social media platforms like Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, and others thanks to the interconnectedness of networks and e-commerce (Eminence, 2023). Social shopping reinvents the traditional shopping experience, by turning it into a more engaging, interactive, and unified experience for the consumers. Which, on the other hand, allows businesses to boost sales and fortify their online presence by utilizing their community, and the influence of social networks (Eminence, 2023).

According to a study conducted by Material “The TikTok Marketing Science Global Retail Path to Purchase study 2021”, found that TikTok is a great platform for brands to be in. According to the study, consumers are 1.7 times more likely to use TikTok to discover a product than users from other platforms. It was also found that they are 1.5 more likely to immediately go out to buy something that they saw on the platforms. In the study, 37% of users said that they had discovered something and immediately went to buy it to try it. 35% of TikTok users purchase items they see on the platform, and 29% of users claim that because an item was sold out on the platform, they were unable to purchase it. According to TikTok, this is because customers see brands as being more genuine on the platform, which increases customer loyalty and trust in the company and, ultimately, drives up sales. To conclude, the dynamic nature of

TikTok Shop means that sellers need to stay informed of the newest trends, features, and audience preferences (Rahmi *et al.*, 2024).

Chapter 5- Conceptual Framework

Consumers' behavior has been changing thanks to climate change; more than ever, consumers are more aware of the topic of sustainability (Kostadinova, 2016; Camilleri *et al.*, 2023). Consumers who are more concerned about sustainability often tend to buy more sustainable products than others (Mandarić *et al.*, 2021). However, this tendency does not frequently relate to action, and even though these consumers claim to be sustainability aware and concerned, they don't always opt for sustainable products. Several authors have seen this phenomenon occur, where there is a gap between their attitudes and behavior, which they call "the attitude-behavior gap" (Vermeir & Verbeke, 2006; Pickett-Baker & Ozaki, 2008; Joshi & Rahman, 2017; Hoffmann *et al.*, 2019).

Some barriers make consumers not act according to their attitudes, such as the price of the slow fashion clothing pieces compared to the low prices of fast fashion clothing pieces, the availability, the offer of fast-fashion products isn't compared to the availability of the slow fashion products, and consumers' miscomprehension and lack of knowledge about the environmental effects that the Fast-Fashion industry has on the planet (Wiederhold & Martinez, 2018; Watson & Yan, 2013).

This conceptual model examines the connection between social shopping and the adoption of sustainable fashion focusing on the intermediary elements that affect this link. The model has six main components. The first one serves as the starting point of the model, which describes the actions that take place both online and offline, such as social media platforms or cooperative buying settings where consumers participate in socially influenced shopping experiences.

The second one examines the attitudes and perceptions of consumers regarding sustainability, considering factors such as personal beliefs, values associated with sustainability, and sustainability awareness. The third, identify and analyze the barriers to adopting sustainable fashion, which may include higher prices, limited availability of sustainable fashion clothing pieces, and lack of information regarding the benefits of sustainable fashion.

The model also focuses on the motivations that encourage the consumers to adopt sustainable fashion, as well as their desire to contribute to the protection of the environment, and their preference for quality products with an ethical production. These first three components influence consumers' intention to adopt sustainable fashion. With this intention, the model examines the role of social shopping that grows on social media, and finally, the model addresses consumer behavior in adopting sustainable fashion.

By examining attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control, the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) offers a comprehensive framework that is well-aligned with this study. The TPB allows for a nuanced understanding of how consumer preferences for sustainable fashion are impacted by digital transformation. This application addresses the factors driving the gap between consumers' expressed concerns for sustainability and their continued preference for fast fashion products, and, in the end, guides more effective strategies to promote sustainable fashion adoption among consumers.

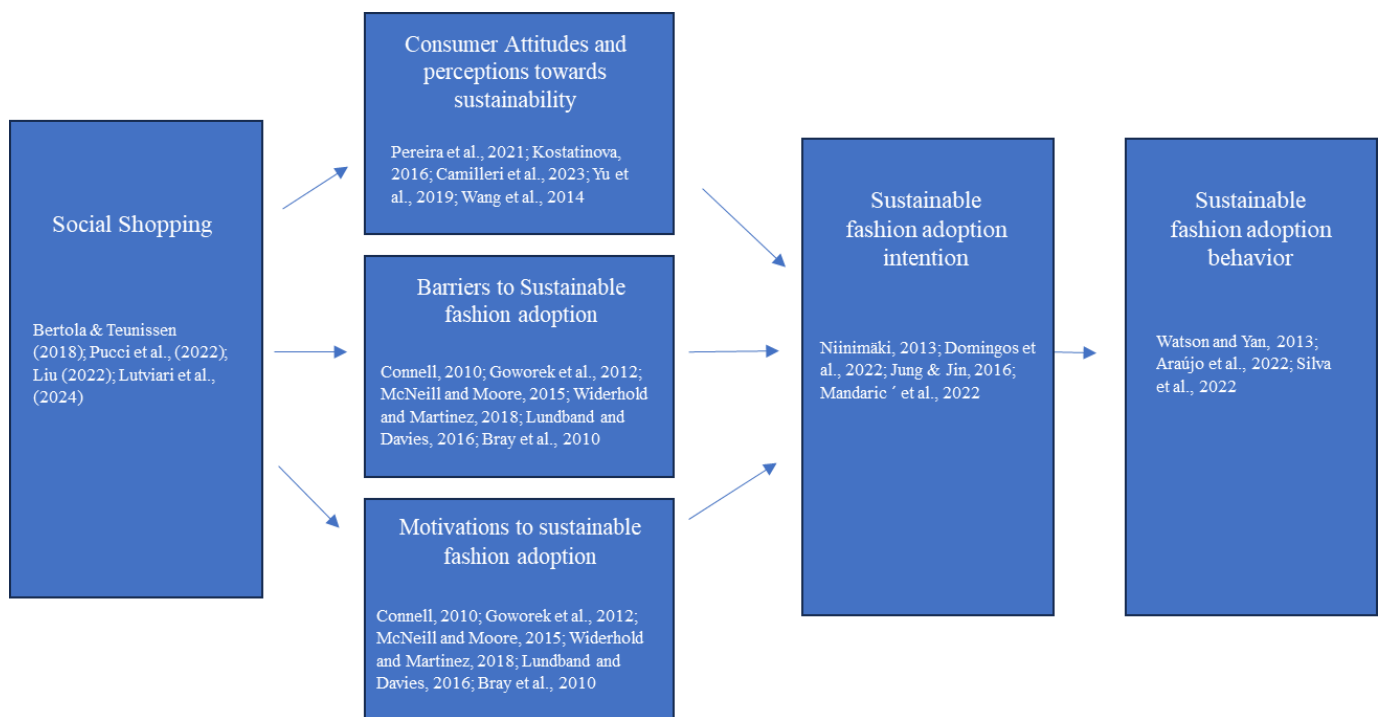


Figure 6: Conceptual Framework (Source: Elaborated by the author)

Part II – Empirical Study

Chapter 6 - Methodology

6.1 Research Relevance

This study is pertinent in an era where customers are being pushed to embrace more sustainable purchase habits, due to increased knowledge of climate change and the negative environmental effects of fast fashion. Although many people say they care about sustainability, there is a significant "attitude-behavior gap" between what they say and what they actually do.

Consumers nowadays are more aware of environmental issues; however, an attitude-behavior gap remains in the fashion industry. Consumers claim that they are concerned about the environment, but when it comes to taking action, they end up not buying clothing pieces from slow fashion brands but from fast fashion brands. Therefore, it is important and relevant to investigate this attitude-behavior gap, especially trying to understand the barriers and motivations that make consumers purchase clothing pieces from sustainable fashion brands.

To understand how these platforms can affect the adoption of sustainable fashion, it is relevant to investigate the effects of Digital Transformation on consumer behavior, through social shopping and social networks, particularly in TikTok Shop. This study can assist companies and policymakers in creating more successful strategies to promote sustainable fashion by addressing obstacles including cost, availability, and misinformation.

Ultimately, by utilizing the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), this study advances the field by providing fresh perspectives on buying behavior's social and psychological aspects and encouraging more conscientious consuming habits.

6.2 Research Question and Research Objectives

The research question that guided this study is "How does Social Commerce influence attitudes and consumer behaviors towards adopting sustainable fashion?", To answer this question this study presents the following objectives:

1. To examine consumer attitudes and perceptions towards Sustainable Fashion
2. To understand how digital transformation influences consumer intentions and behavior towards sustainable fashion.

- 2.1 To identify the main barriers preventing consumers from buying sustainable fashion.
- 2.2 To examine the consumers' motivations to adopt sustainable fashion practices.
- 2.3 To analyze the gap between consumers' intention to adopt sustainable fashion and their actual behavior.
- 2.4 To assess how social shopping platforms, particularly TikTok Shop, affect consumer attitudes and perceptions towards sustainability in fashion.

6.3 Research Design

To answer the research question, “How does Social Commerce influence attitudes and consumer behaviors towards adopting sustainable fashion”, a qualitative approach using semi-structured individual interviews was used.

According to Nunan *et al.* (2020), a research design is a framework or plan that details “the procedures necessary for obtaining the information needed to structure or solve marketing research problems” (p.56). One of the challenges that researchers face is balancing understanding study design from the viewpoint of decision-makers and comprehending possible participants' responses to topics studied using various practices in various settings.

Research designs could be classified as exploratory or conclusive studies (as we see in Figure 5. According to Nunan *et al.* (2020), the main exploratory research goal is to expand knowledge and to get insights related to a specific topic. On the other hand, conclusive research is used to test specific theories, quantify and characterize phenomena, and analyze specific relationships. And “conclusive research may be either descriptive or causal” (Nunan *et al.*, 2020 p.79).

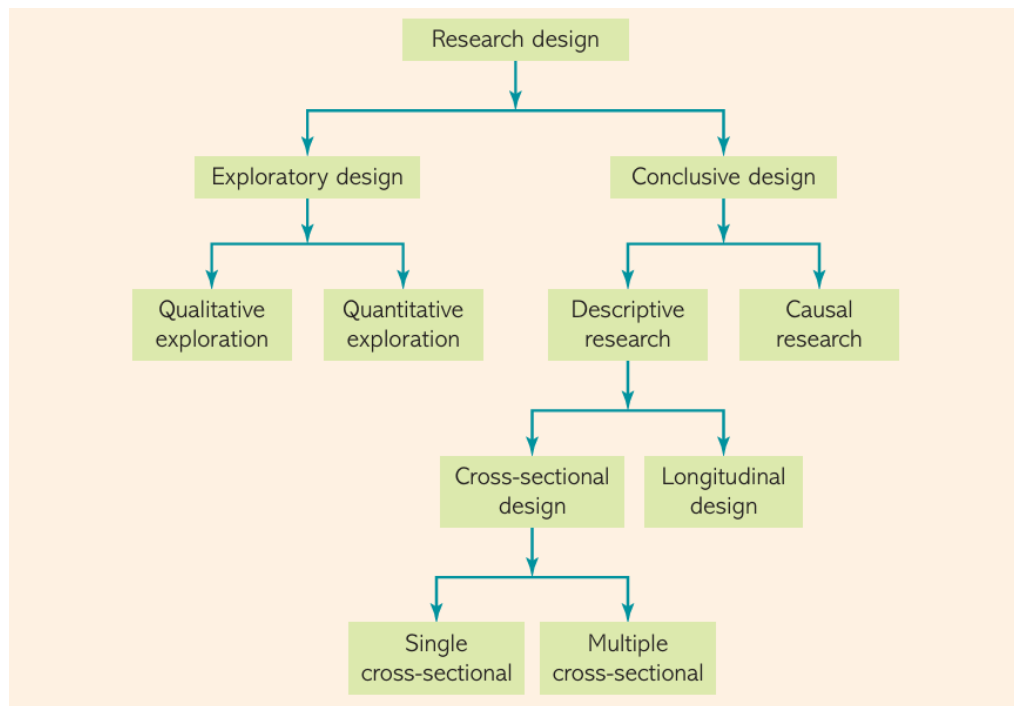


Figure 7: Classification of marketing research designs (Source: Nunan et al., 2020).

6.4 Study population and sampling procedures

Young consumers who are conscious of and concerned about issues related to fashion and sustainability constitute the target demographic for this study. The target audience is those who, in addition to being conscious of environmental issues, are interested in fashion and have made at least one online clothing purchase. This demographic target was chosen to examine the relationship between attitudes, behavior, and digitalization in the context of sustainable fashion, since it may be more likely to adopt sustainable consumption practices.

For this study, the researcher focused the study on the younger generations, which care more about sustainability than other generations, and that, according to Petro (2021). By saying this, the researcher, for this reason, selected consumers between 23 and 30 years old. The researcher decided to focus the research on the fashion industry, more specifically on sustainable fashion clothing pieces. The fashion industry was chosen since it is one of the most polluting industries in the world, so, it is important to understand the motivations and barriers that make sustainable consumers aware of choosing fast fashion over slow fashion clothing pieces.

The chosen sampling strategy was non-probabilistic and combined judgment, convenience, and occasionally snowball sampling techniques.

6.5 Research strategy: semi-structured interviews

For this study, semi-structured interviews were conducted. According to Bryman (2012), semi-structured interviews allow the interviewer to change the set of questions that are asked. Additionally, the interviewer has some flexibility to follow up with additional questions in response to important responses.

To Saunders *et al.* (2007), a semi-structured interview is an extensive “category of interview in which the interviewer begins with a set of interview themes but is prepared to vary the order in which questions are asked and to ask new questions in the context of the research situation” (p.611). This means that the researcher can change the order, and even omit certain questions depending on the flow of the interview (Saunders *et al.*, 2007).

The question's open-ended format clearly states the topic that is being studied while giving the interviewer and the interviewee the chance to go into further detail on certain subjects (Mathers *et al.*, 2002). The semi-structured interviews are the result of a rigorous and demanding preparation, that englobes the “development of the interview schedule, conducting the interview and analysing the interview data all require careful consideration and preparation” (Mathers *et al.*, 2002, p.3).

6.6 Sample and participants

The researcher's judgment determined the non-probability sample for the study. In this case, the participants are deliberately chosen by the researcher, who takes into consideration the themes or issues being studied, to best respond to their questions. The sampling tool used by the researcher was a mix between, convenience sampling, judgment sampling, and snowball sampling in some cases. The convenience sampling was chosen because it was easier for the researcher to recruit participants for the interview. The judgment sampling was also selected because the study solely focuses on young consumers who are already aware of sustainability issues and worried about and “bought at least one-time clothes online”, are “aware of

sustainability topics” and “interested in fashion”. Judgment sampling was chosen since the researcher needed to be certain that interviewees were, in fact, interested in fashion and environmentally conscious and concerned. Before taking part, interviewees were asked if they fulfilled the following requirements to make sure they satisfied the research criteria: they were interested in fashion, bought at least one-time clothes online, and were aware of sustainability topics. A judgment sampling was chosen in light of the inclusion/exclusion criteria to participate in the study. There was also the snowball sampling where the initial respondent type that the researcher selected will assist the researcher in finding other potential participants that are part of the sampling and include them in the research.

There are 15 participants in this study.

6.7 Data collection procedures

Before conducting the interviews, the researcher made an interview script with all the topics and questions being addressed.

Table 1: Conceptual Framework (Source: Elaborated by the author)

	Objectives	Concept	Authors	Questions in the Interview Script
"How does Social Commerce influence attitudes and consumer behaviors towards adopting sustainable fashion? "	To examine consumer attitudes and perceptions toward Sustainable Fashion	Consumer Attitudes and Perception of Sustainability and Social Shopping	Pande & Soodan (2015) Kapoor & Madichie (2012) Krasniqi & Krasniqi (2014) Belch & Belch (2003) Ajzen (2008) Kostadinova (2016) Joshi & Rahman (2017) Camilleri <i>et al.</i> , (2023) Wang <i>et al.</i> , (2014) Joshi <i>et al.</i> , (2019) Yu <i>et al.</i> , (2019) Yu <i>et al.</i> , (2021) Kreicbergs & Pelse (2019) McNeill & Moore (2015) Gam (2010) Bertola & Teunissen (2018) Pucci <i>et al.</i> , (2022) Liu (2022) Lutviari <i>et al.</i> , (2024) Kim <i>et al.</i> , (2021) Fletcher (2014)	- What do you understand by sustainability? - What's the importance of sustainability in your daily life? - Do you consider yourself to be interested in fashion? <i>"The fashion industry is considered one of the most polluting industries and contributes to an enormous waste globally"</i> - What is your perception of sustainable fashion within the fashion industry? - Have you ever seen reports or read about the topic on social media about sustainability in the fashion industry? - Can you identify some consequences of unsustainable consumption in the fashion industry? - Do you think fashion brands use social media effectively to communicate their sustainable practices? -Do you take into account the sustainability practices of brands in your purchasing decisions? - What is your reaction to seeing a fashion brand promoting its sustainability efforts on social media? Does this influence your trust in the brand? - Do you think fashion brands are doing enough to be sustainable? Why? - Do you think that social shopping platforms play a role in your perceptions of sustainability in fashion? -Can you identify any sustainable fashion brand?

Identify the main barriers preventing consumers from buying sustainable fashion.	Barriers to the adoption of Sustainable Fashion	Štefko & Steffek (2018) Watson & Yan (2013) Mehta <i>et al.</i> , (2022) Ionela-Andreea (2021) Connell (2010) Goworek <i>et al.</i> , (2012) McNeill & Moore (2015) Wiederhold & Martinez (2018) Bray <i>et al.</i> , (2010) Joergens (2006) Joung & Jin (2016) Kim <i>et al.</i> , (2021)	- Can you identify any barriers that prevent you from buying sustainable fashion? - How can brands and the fashion industry overcome barriers and encourage the adoption of sustainable practices? - Do you like or would you like to be able to buy sustainable fashion? - What would help you to consume more responsibly when it comes to fashion?
To examine the consumers' motivations to adopt sustainable fashion practices.	Motivations for adopting Sustainable Fashion	Watson & Yan (2013) Araújo <i>et al.</i> , (2022) Joung & Jin (2016) Şener <i>et al.</i> , (2019) Jung & Jin (2016)	- Have you ever had an experience where you chose sustainable fashion over conventional options? - Do your friends, family, digital influencers, or social shopping platforms influence or impact your sustainable fashion choices? How? Can you give an example? - Have you experienced any changes in your shopping habits due to becoming more aware of sustainable fashion practices?
To analyse the gap between consumers'	Intention to adopt Sustainable Fashion	Magnuson <i>et al.</i> , (2017) Silva <i>et al.</i> , (2022)	- What are the main factors that influence your decision to buy clothes, in general?

intention to adopt sustainable fashion and their actual behavior.	Cavender & Lee (2018)	- Do you intend to increase your purchases of sustainable fashion in the future? Why? - What more could be done to increase your intention to adopt sustainable fashion? -What are the main barriers that prevent consumers from turning their intentions into concrete actions to buy sustainable fashion? - How often do you buy clothes from brands that are considered sustainable?
To assess how social shopping platforms affect consumer attitudes and perceptions towards sustainability in fashion.	Social Shopping/ Sustainable fashion adoption behavior	Bertola & Teunissen (2018) Pucci <i>et al.</i>, (2022) Liu (2022) Lutviari <i>et al.</i>, (2024) - Do you ususally shop for clothes online? If so, where? - Do you think that the digital transformation has had any impact on your perception and knowledge of sustainable fashion? - Do you think brands are adopting more sustainable practices due to pressure from consumers on social media? - What role do you think e-commerce platforms play in the search for sustainable fashion brands? <i>“Through TikTok Shop is an online store incorporated into the app, users can produce promotional content and sell goods directly on the TikTok app. TikTok Shop lets retailers show different product catalogues and allow direct purchases without requiring customers to exit the app, much like e-commerce.</i> <i>Users can securely add items to their shopping cart through brief videos or live-streaming events and finish the payment process. With real-time interaction, product demos, and instant buy possibilities, this feature makes</i>

the most of TikTok's interactive and engaging qualities to improve the shopping experience. ”

- What do you think about the possibility of buying products directly in the TikTok Shop app during live broadcasts, without leaving the live stream or the app?
 - If you had access to the TikTok Shop, would you buy clothes there?
 - Do you think that digital innovations, such as shopping apps, e-commerce platforms, and social media, have influenced your sustainable fashion purchases? In what way?
 - Do you think the digital transformation initiatives encourage more people to adopt sustainable fashion more? Why? Can you provide an example?
 - What do you think are the biggest challenges and opportunities for social shopping platforms in promoting sustainable fashion?
-

The goal of the interviews is to understand the motivations and barriers that make consumers still choose fast fashion brands over sustainable fashion brands when they are aware of and care about sustainability. The interview was divided into four sections: The first section of the interview aims to ask the interviewee what are their perceptions and attitudes towards sustainable fashion, but also, for the researcher to understand if the interviewee sees themselves as a sustainable person or if they are concerned about sustainability, to be a part of this study. The second part aims to understand the barriers and motivations that the interviewee has for adopting sustainable fashion, as well as get insights into what would make the interviewee more responsible in her fashion purchases. The third part is for the researcher to understand the interviewee's motivations for adopting sustainable fashion practices. The fourth part is to analyze the gap between the interviewee's intention to adopt sustainable fashion and her actual behavior, and the last part of the interview is to assess how social shopping platforms, especially TikTok Shop, affect consumer attitudes and perceptions towards sustainability in fashion.

The idea of the interview is to be like a normal conversation to become a more fluid conversation. By memorizing the questions, the interviewer looked for a conversation that flowed naturally, allowing the ability to make follow-up comments and beliefs on participants. With this method, the questions were changed, either in order or in content, depending on how each interview went down.

Once the interview script was completed, the researcher did an interview test to make sure. On the 30th of July, the pre-test interview was conducted with one participant who satisfied the requirements to be part of this study, who was interested in fashion and concerned and aware of sustainability. The participant was a 23-year-old Master's student. The interview lasted 30 minutes and went well. With this pre-test interview, the researcher was able to confirm that the interview script was good, that it was comprehensive, and that the questions were straightforward. Before starting the interviews, the interviewees read and approved the informed consent form before the interview, which they received via email. (*Please see Appendix A for the Informed Consent.*)

At the beginning of each interview, the researcher explained to each participant the purpose of the study and asked her to be as sincere as possible, and that there weren't any right or wrong answers, that this study aims to understand how Social Commerce influence attitudes and consumer behaviors toward adopting sustainable fashion. Fifteen interviews were

conducted between the 30th of July and the 11th of August, lasting between 23 and 51 minutes. All the interviews were conducted in Portuguese.

All interviewees were Portuguese females between 22 and 30 years old, with a high education level. Some of the interviewees are doing their thesis sustainability-related and have an interest in fashion. All of them were concerned with sustainability topics and had at least bought online one time.

Table 2: Characteristics of the participants

Interviewee	Age	Sex	Profession	Interview date	Interview duration
1/ Interviewee <i>(Pre-test interview)</i>	23	F	Master's Student in Communication and Digital Transformation	30.07.2024	34 min
2/ Interviewee	24	F	Bachelor's degree in Marketing and Advertising	31.07.2024	45 min
3/ Interviewee	24	F	Working in the marketing department of a dental clinic	31.07.2024	43 min
4/ Interviewee	22	F	Master's Degree in tourism in the field of strategic management of tourist destinations	01.08.2024	51 min
5/ Interviewee	23	F	Master's Degree in Information System Management	01.08.2024	48 min
6/ Interviewee	23	F	Bachelor's Degree in Marketing and Advertising	02.08.2024	27 min
7/ Interviewee	23	F	Master's Degree in Communication, Marketing and Advertising	02.08.2024	32 min
8/ Interviewee	23	F	Master's Degree in	03.08.2024	29 min

Interviewee	Age	Sex	Profession	Interview date	Interview duration
			Communication and Digital Transformation		
9/ Interviewee	23	F	Master's Degree in Communication, Marketing and Advertising	03.08.2024	23 min
10/Interviewee	23	F	Bachelor's Degree in Marketing and Advertising	05.08.2024	37 min
11/ Interviewee	29	F	Master's degree in Education	05.08.2024	28 min
12/Interviewee	25	F	Master's Degree in Communication and Digital Transformation	06.08.2024	24 min
13/ Interviewee	27	F	Master's Degree in Environmental and Sustainability Studies	08.08.2024	45 min
14/ Interviewee	28	F	Master's Degree in Clinical Psychology	10.08.2024	29 min
15/ Interviewee	30	F	Master's Degree in Environmental Engineering	11.08.2024	31 min

All interviews were conducted and recorded in Teams. The transcriptions were made using the software Teams has, which transcribes the whole interview. The researcher had to listen to all of them again since it is software and it's not 100% accurate to make sure that the text of the transcription was the same as the audio.

6.8 Data Analysis Procedures

The researcher used the previously mentioned techniques to record each interview and afterward transcribe it. This data analysis procedure used was thematic analysis, which follows a structured and sequential method of interpreting the data (Naeem *et al.*, 2023).

The first step is the familiarization with the data acquired from the conducted interviews. According to Braun and Clarke (2006), the researcher needs to become fully immersed in the information so that you may comprehend its depth and scope; they also added, “It is important to be familiar with all aspects of your data” (p.88). The second phase involves coding interesting ideas that were raised from the interviews, to create codes (Braun & Clarke, 2006). After coding, it began the process of identifying themes for the analysis. The researcher sorted the various codes into prospective themes and compiled all the pertinent coded data extracts within the themes that have been identified (Braun & Clarke, 2006). After this, all the themes were revised to make sure that they made sense and that they were allied with the conceptual framework. The next stage involves redefining themes and creating names for these themes, making sure that they are clear (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The final step is to select pieces of the interviewee's answers that relate to the specific themes, and that are aligned with the topic producing, in this way, the analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

The findings are more consistent and reliable because of this structured approach, which also makes it possible to draw immediate connections between the facts, interpretations, and conclusions (Naeem *et al.*, 2023).

In the analysis of the interviews, the researcher did the analysis taking into account six specific codes. The first code was “*Consumer Attitudes and Perceptions of Sustainable Fashion*”, which focuses on the awareness consumers have regarding sustainability and their opinions and impressions about the brand's practices. The second code used was “*Influence of Digital Transformation on Intentions and Behaviors*”, addressing the motivations for the adoption of sustainable behavior, the barriers that prevent the adoption, and the gap between action and behavior. The third code “*Impact of Social Shopping Platforms*” studies how social media affects awareness regarding adopting sustainable behavior and their impact on excessive consumption. The next code “*Sustainable Fashion Adoption Behaviour*”, analyses the factors influencing the purchase decision and the frequency of sustainable purchases. The fifth code “*Digital Transformation and Sustainable Fashion*”, discusses the role of digital education on the topic and the obstacles to sustainable fashion brands. Ultimately, the last code “*Social*

Shopping and the Adoption of Sustainable Fashion” examines the social media impact, giving special attention to TikTok Shop challenges. These codes will establish a clear perspective of the digital influences on sustainable consumption in the fashion sector.

6.9 Ethical considerations

No major ethical issues were encountered in the study. The researcher took great care to remain objective during the study to avoid judging the interviewees based on their purchase habits.

At the beginning of each interview, the researcher explained that the focus on how Social Commerce influences attitudes and consumer behaviors toward adopting sustainable fashion. Since it was an interview, the questions came naturally as part of a friendly conversation. Additionally, the researcher took care to avoid influencing the interviewees' subjects by making suggestions while posing a topic. A consent was provided before the interview, was submitted to the participants ahead of time for consideration.

Chapter 7 - Results Presentation and Discussion

7.1 Results Presentation

In this section, results are presented according to the themes identified in the interview responses. *(See Appendix C-Q for all the detailed interview transcriptions)*

Theme 1: Consumer Attitudes and Perceptions of Sustainable Fashion

Subtheme 1.1: Sustainability Awareness

Definition of Sustainability and its Importance

At the beginning of each interview, the respondents were asked about what they understood by sustainability and the importance of sustainability in their daily lives. These questions were to understand how well they knew the topic of sustainability and whether they had any practices/behaviors related to it. It is important to highlight that the **interviewees have**

consciously approached sustainability, being aware of topics such as the **protection of the environment**, the **responsibility between generations**, and the **change in habits** to ensure a sustainable future. They understand **sustainability as a responsible use of resources that won't compromise future generations**, showing an ethical perspective on the environmental effect of their decisions.

"Sustainability is the way we fulfil our needs without compromising the needs of future generations." (Interviewee 5)

"Sustainability is about making decisions and caring about the environment, in other words, making decisions that are concerned about the environment and ensuring that these decisions and attitudes we take strengthen future generations environmentally, enabling them to live with all the natural resources available without jeopardizing their quality of life." (Interviewee 7)

"Sustainability, I would say, is a conscious attitude towards preserving the environment." (Interviewee 8)

"Sustainability is about ensuring that the resources we need and use are used so that they don't jeopardize the next generation's ability to use them too." (Interviewee 11)

"Sustainability would be people's way of making a transformative change in the world through their choices and perceptions, trying to transform their habits and rethink choices. Sustainability as a way of seeing processes differently." (Interviewee 13)

"Sustainability is the ability to meet our needs without compromising the environment and future generations." (Interviewee 15)

When the interviewees were asked how important sustainability is in their daily lives, the interviewees **gave several examples of how they have changed their behaviors**.

Recycling:

Most of the participants express an **evident compromise** in their daily lives **by recycling**. Several have cited the **habit of recycling at home** and have **manifested concern with the proper disposal of the products** they purchase, showing an ecological awareness that is deeply rooted in their daily actions.

"I recycle" (Interviewee 15)

"So every time I go to buy something I think about how I can dispose of it and sometimes it's complicated." (Interviewee 13),

"I recycle" (Interviewee 11), "I always try to recycle whenever possible" (Interviewee 9), "Here at home we recycle." (Interviewee 6),

“I recycle” (Interviewee 4).

Tote bags:

Some of the participants have expressed that **they use reusable bags**, such as **tote bags**, **to avoid buying and using plastic bags**.

“I use reusable mesh bags.” (Interviewee 15)

“Whenever I go shopping, I take a tote bag so I don't have to pay for a plastic bag. I've already bought this one and I've been using it a lot” (Interviewee 6).

Avoid/Reduce Plastic:

Several participants have shown **a strong commitment to avoiding using plastic in their purchases and daily habits**. They are interested in **avoiding buying products packaged in plastic and using recycled alternatives**, such as **reusable water bottles**.

“I try my best to avoid buying products packaged in plastic.” (Interviewee 15)

“I try not to use plastic and whenever I can” (Interviewee 11)

“Or the shopping I do, I try to make sure there's not too much plastic, which is also one of the things.” (Interviewee 4)

“for example, I don't use plastic water bottles, I have my own water bottles.” (Interviewee 1)

Preference for buying local:

Participants also have referred that **are given a greater opportunity to local businesses and prefer buying local**.

“I try to opt for more local products that are closer to my home, like in grocery stores or smaller shops to support the local economy.” (Interviewee 9)

“Try to make these choices to consume more local products.” (Interviewee 13)

Public transportation:

Interviewees have also pointed out that **they are more conscious about using cars. When they can, they walk instead of going by car. One of the interviewees also stated that switching to an electric car is a way to reduce pollution.**

“I have an electric car to try to reduce CO2 consumption” (Interviewee 15)

“I walk instead of using my car.” (Interviewee 11)

“I also walk more whenever I can. So, I only take the car when it's longer distances.” (Interviewee 9)

Perception of Sustainable Fashion

When asked about their perceptions about sustainable fashion, the interviewees have said different things, some of them have a perception of greenwashing when they think of sustainable fashion. Some of them, **claim that it is expensive**, and they also have referred to the **future path that needs to be taken in the fashion industry**. Interviewees also highlighted the fact **that most of the sustainable fashion brands are small brands**, and the insufficient communication from these brands was also highlighted.

Greenwashing:

“many cases of greenwashing” (Interviewee 4)

“I also think there's a there is a significant risk of greenwashing” (Interviewee 4)

Expensive:

“it's not accessible” (Interviewee 8)

“The first thing that comes to mind is being expensive” (Interviewee 5)

“is more expensive” (Interviewee 12)

“the feedback is that it's sustainable and expensive” (Interviewee 2)

The future path to be taken:

“I'd say it's the way forward, it's the future. There has to be this shift in the industry.” (Interviewee 6)

“It’s super important” (Interviewee 8)

“is a way of reducing environmental impact” (Interviewee 9)

“has been growing over time and is something that is increasingly important” (Interviewee 11)

“Sustainable fashion is a movement that has been gaining momentum in recent years in the fashion industry, with greater recognition in recent years” (Interviewee 14)

“needs to have a transition” (Interviewee 13)

“reduce impacts and also change people's views on how they can consume more consciously.” (Interviewee 13)

“fashion really needs to make this transition, this shift, to reduce its impact on the planet.” (Interviewee 13)

“it’s growing effectively and I think it's something that consumers have shown more interest in” (Interviewee 7).

Small brands:

“I'm thinking of Portuguese brands, smaller brands.” (Interviewee 6)

“they are very small brands” (Interviewee 10)

Communication:

“they don't publicize much or if they do, it's not enough to reach a reasonable number of people.” (Interviewee 10)

Environmental Impact of Fashion

When the interviewees were asked about the environmental impacts of the fast fashion industry, the most common answers were regarding the **extreme consumption**, the **waste** that is created, the **poorly conditions workers** have in the fast fashion industry, **the pollution** that this industry creates, **the excessive use of natural resources**, and the **clothing life span** that it is more reduced.

Extreme consumption:

“There are also impulse purchases” (Interviewee 2)

“extreme consumerism” (Interviewee 10)

“consumerism” (Interviewee 11)

Waste:

“lots of things are manufactured and then people use them and stop using them.” (Interviewee 6)

“waste” (Interviewee 10)

“ends up being a waste of textiles” (Interviewee 1)

Poorly working conditions:

“low wages, inadequate working conditions, exploitation, child labor” (Interviewee 15)

“of not being able to earn a minimum wage, not having health conditions or hygienic, sanitary conditions.” (Interviewee 13)

“there aren't good working conditions for all the workers who make these parts.” (Interviewee 9),

“child labour, low-paid jobs” (Interviewee 11)

“promotes precarious and slave labour and social inequality” (Interviewee 14)

Pollution:

“Pollution at various levels (water, land, air). It has negative consequences for fauna and flora and immense repercussions at a social level, in terms of the population's well-being and quality of life.” (Interviewee 15)

“We don't know where it's going to end up, but probably in a landfill, so those gigantic landfills” (Interviewee 4)

“an increase in pollution” (Interviewee 9)

Excessive use of resources:

“the waste of various natural resources” (Interviewee 9),

“Waste of materials” (Interviewee 11)

Clothing piece lifespan/Quality:

“the lifespan of the garment. I don't think it's very durable” (Interviewee 12)

Subtheme 1.2: Perception of Brand Practices

Trust/Scepticism in Sustainable Brand Practices

The interviewees **showed an increase in trust when they saw the brand's efforts on social media. However,** some interviewees were **skeptical due to the fear of being greenwashing.**

“is an increasingly deep-rooted aspect that influences my choices due to the increasing spread of knowledge and awareness on the subject. And the way I see advertising and what brands advertise makes me trust them.” (Interviewee 14)

“Yes, I think it usually increases my trust in the brand because it will demonstrate transparency and also a commitment to ethical practices” (Interviewee 9)

“It influences me, for example, there was a brand I really liked that claimed to be very sustainable and when I went to buy a dress I saw that it was 100% polyester, so it doesn't make much sense.” (Interviewee 12)

“Yes, but it's something I could look into a bit, given the various cases of greenwashing.” (Interviewee 11)

“It depends... A lot because of greenwashing. If it's a brand that, despite its advertising, continues to demonstrate the opposite practices, such as frequent new designs, short-lived materials and poor finishes, it only diminishes credibility and I avoid buying from them.” (Interviewee 15)

Effectiveness of Social Media Communication

When asked if the fashion brands are using their social media effectively to promote their **sustainable practices**, most of the interviewees **didn't think that the fashion brands were doing a good job.**

“Yes (...) Brands that strive to communicate in a transparent and impactful way manage to build a more positive advertising image that conveys greater trust.” (Interviewee 14)

“Yes, but I think it's still not enough. I don't think it's very common to see brands publishing about it.” (Interviewee 15)

“I feel it depends a lot from brand to brand” (Interviewee 9)

“I think it's grown a bit more now, but I feel that brands try to communicate, but they don't communicate very much and when they do, it seems like it's something that isn't real, it seems like it's just to say that it's sustainable.” (Interviewee 12)

“I don't think so... brands are trying, but many have been greenwashing and I believe that many people have lost confidence in this communication after several cases. On the other hand, I don't think they're communicating effectively either, because I haven't received much communication along these lines.” (Interviewee 11)

“I don't think most brands are doing a good job.” (Interviewee 3)

Theme 2: Influence of Digital Transformation on Intentions and Behaviors

Subtheme 2.1: Motivation to Adopt Sustainable Practices

When the interviewees were asked about their motivations, the **most common** one was the **motivation for environmental awareness**. They also mentioned the social influence that digital influencers and friends have; the fact that **sustainable fashion has more quality** was also mentioned as being a motivational factor to the interviewees, **the technical knowledge** was also pointed as a motivational factor, just like **social influence and awareness** and **responsible consumption**.

Motivation for Environmental Awareness

Interviewee 15 expresses her desire to embrace sustainable fashion in order to preserve the environment by saying, *“I try to make more conscious choices, such as avoiding brands that practice greenwashing”*.

Concerned about environmental effects, *interviewee 13* says, *“I try to make choices that reduce my ecological footprint”* such as buying from second-hand shops.

According to *interviewee 8*, *“I try to do my best, I know I have a lot of faults... like turning off the water and recycling”* expresses her worry about the environmental effects as a driving force behind her adopting more sustainable habits.

Quality and Durability

Interviewee 9 highlights durability as a reason for selecting sustainable fashion, saying, *“I prefer to buy fewer clothes and invest in quality pieces that will last longer”*.

Technical Knowledge

Driven by her technical knowledge of sustainability, *interviewee 7*, a textile industry worker, says, “*when I buy a sustainable product, I feel proud that I'm contributing to a better future*”.

Influencers and Quality

Interviewee 6 remarks, “*I bought the sustainable H&M trousers because Catarina Maia promoted this sustainable part*” and she also felt that “*Yes, I thought that the quality was better*” demonstrating how her decision to go with a sustainable alternative was influenced by the opinion of the quality and the influence of an influencer. *Interviewee 11* adoption of sustainable fashion can be attributed to social influences, as she was persuaded to “*buy fewer products and choose higher quality products*” by friends and digital influencers.

Social Influence and Awareness

Interviewee 14 acknowledges that her social circle and increasing awareness drive her to embrace more sustainable behaviors, saying, “*the choices I make on a daily basis are influenced by friends and publicity on social networks*”.

Responsible Consumption

In an effort to reduce her influence on the environment and society, *interviewee 12* says, “*I stopped shopping at Zara*”. This shows that she wants to consume more responsibly.

Subtheme 2.2: Barriers to the Adoption of Sustainable Fashion

When the participants were asked if they could identify any barrier that is preventing them from buying sustainable fashion, they stated several including:

High Price

One of the **most common barriers** for the participants **was the price**. Meaning that **all** of the participants **believe that sustainable fashion is expensive**.

“The price. I can't think of another example apart from the price” (Interviewee 8)

“I feel that the high price is a big barrier” (Interviewee 9)

“I think the first thing is the price, when we talk about sustainable fashion.” (Interviewee 12)

“The biggest barrier is the price” (Interviewee 11)

“Price really is one of the biggest barriers” (Interviewee 13)

Availability and Accessibility

Another common barrier was the fact that most of the participants **didn't think that there are sustainable brands in physical stores**, most are **only available online**, which **doesn't allow the participants to try the clothes before buying them**. And a **lack of sustainable brands in the shopping malls**.

“many of these brands, which are sustainable, are often only available online. And then you can't really try out the product” (Interviewee 9)

“that there aren't many physical shops to try out the products, which is something I like to do” (Interviewee 11)

“These sustainable brands don't even have a physical shop and there are many people who don't like to buy online, they like to try things on, they like to be sure of what they're buying and I think that can also be a big barrier.” (Interviewee 10)

“if you go to Colombo, there are no sustainable fashion shops there.” (Interviewee 13)

“the physical availability... I don't really like buying online because you can't try it on.” (Interviewee 15)

Some interviewees suggested a possible solution to overcome this barrier: creating **pop-ups from these sustainable fashion brands**. This would allow them to reach a larger target, and consumers who prefer the traditional shopping method of trying and touching before buying would appreciate this.

“If they had from time to time some pop-up stores I think that it could be really good for them, I definitely would take the chance to go there and try it probably.” (Interviewee 6)

“One possibility could also be they create pop-up stores, in crowded streets, or even in shopping malls, that would really make a difference I think.” (Interviewee 9)

“The sustainable fashion brands could also have some pop-ups in the shopping malls since they are mainly online, which could help consumers to get to know their brand and try on the products.” (Interviewee 11)

Lack of Communication and Promotion

Some interviewees also **mentioned the lack of communication from these sustainable fashion brands and the lack of promotion as well.** They don’t see any advertising or information from these brands, **which leads to a barrier for some participants.**

“there isn't much publicity for these brands” (Interviewee 13)

“their communication is very weak or the brand itself is very thin, it doesn't have strong enough communication to make it stand out.” (Interviewee 10)

“the lack of publicity for these brands too.” (Interviewee 8)

“And then there's also a lack of information and a lack of desire to seek out that information” (Interviewee 7)

“I lack more knowledge, which is also why brands need to communicate and shops need to inform people about the importance of buying sustainable clothes. And perhaps if they communicated more, I would choose to buy” (Interviewee 3)

Lack of Diversity and Visual Attraction with Limited Options

One of the **barriers that was also mentioned** was that some participants feel that there **isn’t a lot of diversity in the designs** of sustainable fashion brands, that **these brands have limited options**, and that they **are not very attractive.**

“And there's not as much diversity, like, these Instagram brands that are sustainable sell blazers and trousers and one type of dress, while ‘Zara’ has 10000 options.” (Interviewee 6)

“Because often what is sustainable isn't very colourful either, so it doesn't attract as much attention because of its colours and its lack of visual appeal.” (Interviewee 2)

“you don't have so much choice or so many options. I idealize something, I go to shops, and a shopping center and I have a lot of variety. Maybe if it's a sustainable brand, I have less choice.” (Interviewee 5)

Subtheme 2.3: Gap Between Intention and Behaviour

Purchase Intention vs. Actual Behavior

During the interviews, the **participants were asked about their intention to buy sustainable fashion and their actual behavior; a gap was seen in those answers.**

1st example:

Intention: *“Yes, I think all consumption should be as sustainable as possible.”*
(Interviewee 15)

Behavior: *“Rarely...”* (Interviewee 15)

2nd example:

Intention: *“I intend to”* (Interviewee 10)

Behavior: *“Never”* (Interviewee 10)

3rd example:

Intention: *“Yes”* (Interviewee 8)

Behavior: *“Not very often, I'd say never.”* (Interviewee 8)

4th example:

Intention: *“Absolutely. More and more, I want to increase more sustainable consumption.”* (Interviewee 13)

Behavior: *“I don't really know...”* (Interviewee 13)

Practical Challenges in Adopting Sustainable Fashion

After this gap had been seen, where the participants had **shown concern regarding the environment and the intention to buy sustainable fashion**, their **behavior didn't match accordingly**. The principal challenges seen were:

Lack of education and information

Participants feel that brands should communicate more to create more awareness and knowledge about **sustainable fashion**.

“there should be more communication about the brands, more knowledge, which I think is what is needed.” (Interviewee 7)

“There should be more awareness and communication.” (Interviewee 10)

“Promoting greater awareness and appreciation of sustainable brands” (Interviewee 14)

“Getting more information about the benefits of sustainable fashion, a greater availability of products (...) And also having more educational campaigns to make consumers aware and so it would also be important to introduce this now in schools, right from the start so that children also have, concern for this facet, let's say.” (Interviewee 9)

“The price, greater communication, would have an influence. Schools should address this issue of sustainability from a very young age, because there's nobody who talks about the importance or the consequences of the fast fashion industry. (...) I think that in all areas they could communicate and talk more about the subject, which I don't think they do at all.” (Interviewee 3)

Change in consumer habits

Some of the participants have stated that it is **difficult to change their consumption habits** and that sometimes they **see themselves struggling to keep up with those changes, including buying from sustainable fashion, stopping buying from fast fashion brands** such as Zara, and **buying impulsively**.

The interviewee 15 notes that *“I've stopped buying on impulse and only buy what I need,”* but recognizes that *“sometimes I still fall into the temptation of buying something I don't need,”* illustrating how difficult it may be to stick to the new, more thoughtful consuming behavior. (Interviewee 15)

Another participant says how hard it is to totally change her shopping habits saying *“I tried to stop buying from Zara and adopt sustainable brands”* but acknowledges that *“it was very difficult because sometimes there aren't many options and what there is expensive”*. (Interviewee 12)

Another participant points out that *“now I try to buy fewer clothes and invest in quality pieces”* but admits that *“it's still hard to resist fast fashion promotions”* indicating how hard and continuous it is to change her shopping habits. (Interviewee 9)

Another participant acknowledges that “I've been trying to buy less and opt for quality products” although saying *“I still shop at Zara and Salsa because it's convenient and I'm used to it”* which demonstrates how hard it is to completely give up from previous buying habits. (Interviewee 11)

Theme 3: Impact of Social Shopping Platforms

Subtheme 3.1: Effect of Platforms on Awareness and Motivation

When the interviewees were asked about the impact that social shopping platforms have on their awareness and motivation, the most common answers were an **increased awareness through social networks, the impact of influencers on their awareness and their motivation, and the fact that these e-commerce platforms have in the discovery on sustainable brands.**

Increased Awareness through Social Networks

Several participants claimed an **increased awareness of sustainable fashion through social networks.** This has helped them to get **more information about the topic, find sustainable brands, and somehow influence them** a little bit.

“I only link that part of sustainability because people are becoming more and more familiar with the subject and are talking about it. If you didn't have Instagrammers talking about it, I wouldn't see it. So without this digital transformation we have, I wouldn't have access to information so easily.” (Interviewee 6)

“Absolutely, because I've been able to consume more and do more research to make more conscious choices thanks to the Internet and the fact that I consume content that is more focused on environmental issues and social sustainability issues. So, of course, having the availability and variety of information at my fingertips helps enormously.” (Interviewee 13)

“Absolutely, because I think the only contact I ever had with sustainability was through social media. I think the only contact I've really had has been through social media, never in physical shops, never in the app, only through social media.” (Interviewee 10)

“Yes, and I think that, in a way, it has facilitated access to information about sustainable fashion and has also allowed me to discover new brands and products, as I said, and obviously in a more convenient way, because I can do it via my mobile phone” (Interviewee 9)

“Yes, it has helped to promote greater knowledge, which has been an important point in changing my behavior. Basically, I think the digital transformation has helped us all to be more aware and knowledgeable about this issue.” (Interviewee 14)

Impact of Influencers on Platforms

A few participants revealed that influencers influence them **in their choices of sustainable fashion**.

“I am, in a way, because I follow some of the influencers' brands. I don't follow fast fashion brands, but I do follow content from Portuguese brands that are sustainable.” (Interviewee 5)

“Yes, I try to look for feedback on comfort and durability combined with the sustainability of the brand, and I usually find this online on social media with influencers. I only buy when I need to, but I like to have references of where to look.” (Interviewee 15)

“I'd say more from influencers and friends when they advertise a product and say what they like about it and whether it's worth buying. I'd say they're the ones who end up having the biggest impact on me. It was when I saw influencer Mafalda Sampaio, the founder of the 'Empatia' brand, wearing the shirt that, when I needed to buy one, I opted for her brand.” (Interviewee 11)

Role of E-commerce Platforms in the Discovery of Sustainable Brands

Some participants considered that **there is great potential for the e-commerce platforms to get to know sustainable fashion brands**.

“I believe it helps these brands to promote themselves and show another way of producing and consuming responsibly so that they can reach a wider audience.” (Interviewee 13)

“I think e-commerce platforms play a crucial role in a way because they offer a variety of sustainable options, don't they? And they also make it easier to compare products and also provide information about the brands' practices, which I think is very important. And they also help promote the visibility of sustainable brands and educate consumers in terms of making more responsible choices.” (Interviewee 9)

“E-commerce platforms are important tools for sustainable fashion, making it more accessible, transparent to buyers, and informative. They allow consumers to have access to brands and products that align with their values and choices, creating an opening to change their choice towards more sustainable consumption.” (Interviewee 14)

Subtheme 3.2: Encouraging Consumerism vs. Sustainability

Contradictions Between Consumption and Sustainability

This topic illustrates the **conflict between the need to encourage more sustainable habits and the encouragement of consumption driven by digital change. Digital platforms, particularly social media and e-commerce, make it easier to consume things instantly, but they also frequently go against sustainability principles, which call for more thoughtful and restrained consumption. This disparity in viewpoints is reflected in the interviewers.**

“I wouldn't like [TikTok Shop] because I think it would encourage more consumerism.” says *interviewee 14*, expressing concern about the platforms' detrimental effects on sustainable consumption. According to her, these platforms promote impulsive buying, which is contrary to the concepts of sustainability and moderation.

The dichotomy between consumerism and sustainability is another point made by *interviewee 6*. She notes that although sustainable solutions may not always align with current trends, *“people are consumerists... they want to buy new clothes and they want the things that are fashionable.”* She makes the point that, in contrast to fast fashion-driven consumerism, which encourages constant novelty, sustainability frequently emphasizes classic pieces.

According to *interviewee 13*, *“the ease of making a purchase directly on the app can increase impulse consumption”* which is at odds with sustainability principles that encourage reflection before consuming. *Interviewee 13* notes that social networks and digital platforms frequently encourage quick and impulsive consumption.

Theme 4: Sustainable Fashion Adoption Behavior

Subtheme 4.1: Factors Influencing the Purchasing Decision

When the participants were asked about the factors that influence, or that would influence their sustainable fashion purchases the most common were about price as a decisive factor, the importance of quality and durability, and the preference for shopping in physical stores.

Price as a Decisive Factor

For some interviewees, the **price** was indeed a **decisive factor** in adopting sustainable fashion behavior.

“If the price were lower, it would undoubtedly help me to consume more responsibly.” (Interviewee 13)

“the price would have to be more ‘affordable’.” (Interviewee 7)

“have more affordable prices” (Interviewee 9)

Importance of Quality and Durability

To some participants, **quality** and **durability** were **decisive factors** in adopting sustainable fashion behavior.

“I think I prefer to buy from brands that I know will be more durable in this aspect, because I think that durability and sustainable practices are not always related, but I think they are. So, as I also have a great interest in having pieces that last longer, I think I'll inevitably end up having an interest in brands that apply sustainable practices.” (Interviewee 9)

“I don't like shopping in fast fashion, firstly because of the awful quality (...) For me, sustainable clothes have a lot more quality, which is much more important to me nowadays.” (Interviewee 12)

“I also try to buy pieces with higher quality so that they last longer and aren't those pieces that you buy and wash once and they're completely ruined.” (Interviewee 10)

Preference for Shopping in Physical Stores

To some participants, their **preference to shop in physical stores** instead of online was a **decisive factor** in adopting sustainable fashion behavior.

“there are sustainable shops with sustainable brands in shopping centres, for example... I've never seen one and if there was one I'd go in, try it out and maybe buy something. But many of them are only online... and that puts me off too.” (Interviewee 6)

“more physical shops to try out the products.” (Interviewee 11)

“there is a greater availability of sustainable shops in the usual places, i.e. shopping centres. Many of them are online-only and I like to try-on.” (Interviewee 15)

Subtheme 4.2: Frequency and Type of Sustainable Purchases

Frequency of Sustainable Purchases

When the participants were asked **how often they bought sustainable fashion**, most of the responses were that **they do not purchase sustainable fashion** or that **they buy very rarely**.

“Never.” (Interviewee 10)

“Very few indeed.” (Interviewee 2)

“Not often, I'd say never.” (Interviewee 8)

“Ah... I've never bought anything sustainable” (Interviewee 4)

“I buy sustainable clothing brands sometimes, not as often as I'd like, but a few times a year.” (Interviewee 9)

“Not often, but my consumption is about once a year, I'd say” (Interviewee 14)

“Very little... I'd say once or twice a year.” (Interviewee 11)

Buying Behavior on Digital Platforms

Regarding their buying behavior on digital platforms, **all of the interviewees** said that **they buy or have bought online, in the brands' apps, and on their websites**.

“Yes (...) I use the app, but if there's a website I use it, but I never buy on Instagram, I don't like it.” (Interviewee 12)

“When I do it, most of the time it's at “Vinted”.” (Interviewee 15)

“Yes, “Zara”, “Stradivarius”, the whole Inditex group. And I use the brand apps.” (Interviewee 6)

“Yes, I often shop for clothes online.” (Interviewee 9)

“Yes, at “Zara”, “Shein”, “Stradivarius”, “Mango” and that's it, through their apps.” (Interviewee 3)

“I often shop for clothes online in the “Zara” and “Mango” app.” (Interviewee 14)

Theme 5: Digital Transformation and Sustainable Fashion

Subtheme 5.1: Digital Awareness and Education

Access to Sustainable Information due to Digital Transformation

When the interviewees were asked if the digital transformation **has given them more information about sustainable information, the majority said yes.**

“No... I don't think it's had any impact, I think there's still a lot of work to be done. I don't think social networks have taken that step yet. Social networks have the factor of influencing your decisions. I think few are influencing sustainable fashion, because there's no interest in it.” (Interviewee 4)

“Yes, I had access to more and better information.” (Interviewee 15)

“Yes. (...) I only link that sustainable part because people are becoming more and more familiar with the subject and are talking about it. If you didn't have Instagrammers talking about it, I wouldn't see it. So without this digital transformation we have, I wouldn't have access to information so easily.” (Interviewee 6)

“Yes, and I think that, in a way, it's made it easier to access information about sustainable fashion and it's also allowed me to discover new brands and products, as I've already said, and obviously in a more convenient way, because I can do it via my mobile phone, can't I? And I'm also better informed because there are articles and various ways of checking whether or not a brand is really sustainable, even though sometimes we can be fooled. But I think so, I think it helps in the end.” (Interviewee 9)

“Yes, it has helped to promote greater knowledge, which has been an important point in changing my behavior. Basically, I think the digital transformation has helped us all to be more aware and knowledgeable about this issue.” (Interviewee 14)

“Absolutely, because I think the only contact, I ever had with sustainability was through social media.” (Interviewee 10)

Subtheme 5.2: Challenges and Opportunities for sustainable fashion brands in the Digital Age

Challenges of Greenwashing in Digital Environments

When the interviewees were questioned about **what they thought would be challenges for Sustainable Fashion Brands**, some talked about the challenge of **proving if it's not Greenwashing**.

“the biggest challenge I feel there is greenwashing, which is deceptive practices. Sustainability often leads us to believe that a brand is sustainable and then it's not.” (Interviewee 9)

“eliminate greenwashing cases” (Interviewee 11)

“one challenge would be to try to make consumers see that their causes are real, the causes of the brands, that it's not greenwashing, in other words, to gain the trust of consumers” (Interviewee 13)

“The challenges of the shopping platform include a lack of transparency, and although many platforms promote sustainability, the lack of detailed information can generate mistrust among consumers.” (Interviewee 14)

Market Opportunities for Sustainable Brands

Regarding their **marketing opportunities on digital platforms** for sustainable fashion brands, **all of the interviewees saw great opportunities.**

“the great visibility that brands gain with these platforms and the fact that consumers can buy on the platforms... which makes the whole buying process easier for the consumer.” (Interviewee 13)

“I think it's the fact that they work with influencers. They influence me to buy straight away, it's an opportunity.” (Interviewee 6)

“I think these are the biggest advantages: more information, easier and faster purchasing.” (Interviewee 7)

“brands could take advantage of the growing trend for sustainability and ride this wave and appeal to the influencers with the most followers to use it.” (Interviewee 3)

“Two opportunities now, I think the biggest of all, Instagram is a platform with millions of users and there's a huge opportunity for visibility, even more so now with this generation Z, I think there's a great opportunity and I think you can do different campaigns, for example, Tiktok shop, it's crazy, five years ago I never imagined you could buy something just by clicking on it and I think it's an opportunity.” (Interviewee 12)

“Then I'd say the opportunities, the promotion that these brands can gain, the possibility of greater awareness, and finally the proximity.” (Interviewee 5)

Theme 6: Social Shopping and the Adoption of Sustainable Fashion

Subtheme 6.1: Influence of Social Shopping

Role of Social Shopping Platforms

The participants revealed **how brands must adjust to the digital revolution** by utilizing **e-commerce and social media channels to contact customers, improve transparency, and successfully promote their sustainable practices.**

“E-commerce platforms are important tools for sustainable fashion, making it more accessible, transparent to buyers and informative.” (Interviewee 14) She draws attention to how brands can use various channels to inform customers and adjust to their consumer needs.

Social media is essential for company communication, according to (Interviewee 6) *“people are becoming more and more familiar with the subject and are talking about it. If you didn't have Instagrammers talking about it, I wouldn't see it.”* demonstrating how brands are embracing digital transformation to spread sustainability-related information.

Another interviewee mentions how important it is for brands to use social media and e-commerce effectively *“the digital transformation gives us access to information much more easily and quickly.”* (Interviewee 7) and that brands may use this to their advantage to more successfully reach consumers and promote sustainable products.

Another interviewee explains how the shift to digital media has made it easier to find information about sustainability. *“thanks to the Internet and to consuming content that focuses more on environmental issues (...) I'm able to do more research to make more conscious choices.”* (Interviewee 13) demonstrating how companies may use digital platforms to promote sustainable practices by adapting.

Subtheme 6.2: Challenges of Social Shopping in particular of TikTok Shop

Trust in TikTok Shop

When asked about the **possibility of buying clothes at TikTok Shop** some interviewees revealed some **trust issues**.

“No, because I don't think I'd have the confidence.” (Interviewee 5)

“No, because I wouldn't trust it.” (Interviewee 1)

“I don't know if I'd buy it because it doesn't inspire me with any confidence.” (Interviewee 14)

“I don't think so, I don't see myself at that moment, even if I had the chance I wouldn't buy. I also feel at these moments of buying in a Live... I don't feel so safe.” (Interviewee 13)

“No, never, because it automatically gives me the impression of zero quality. It doesn't inspire me with confidence, that feeling that I'm buying something that I'm going to get home and it's not going to be what I saw.” (Interviewee 10)

Risk of Impulsive Purchases

A few of the **interviewees revealed** some **concerns about impulsive purchases** when **they were confronted** with the possibility of **buying clothes at TikTok Shop**.

“I think it's good in the sense that it's easy and very practical. But to what extent wouldn't we consume even more unnecessarily? I think that this would greatly, greatly, greatly increase excessive and needless consumerism.” (Interviewee 2)

“I think it's an incentive to consumerism. I don't think it's a good option.” (Interviewee 15)

“But I think that at the same time it encourages a lot of unnecessary consumption, because it makes it much easier to buy, it gives a lot of visibility to the brands.” (Interviewee 12)

“But I also think that this has another negative consequence that I think increases overconsumption a little, doesn't it? Like overconsumption... because I think making it that easy, especially on a social network like Tiktok, which is highly addictive and addictive, I think it's going to skyrocket. It's good for brands because brands are looking to make a profit, but I think that on a social level it's going to have some implications.” (Interviewee 7)

“I think it's something that promotes consumption and can help sustainable brands. It's something that can help them a lot too, but it's because as consumption has increased for all brands, it will also increase for those that don't have this sustainable focus.” (Interviewee 8)

Willingness to use Tiktok Shop

However, **some interviewees were willing to use and to try TikTok Shop** if they had the chance. And **others revealed more willingness to buy if it's not clothes**.

“Yes, I think so. I'd like to try it.” (Interviewee 12)

“Yes, after a while, I'd end up joining in.” (Interviewee 3)

“I think I'd buy accessories and much more easily than clothes, yes.” (Interviewee 6)

7.2 Discussion

This section addresses the main results of the research question, “How does Social Commerce influence attitudes and consumer behaviors towards adopting sustainable fashion?”

The analysis's main focus is on the relationship between consumer awareness about sustainability, barriers, motivations, and real behavior within the context of digital transformation, highlighting the gap between attitude and actual behavior.

The results presentation shows that the interviewees have a strong awareness and comprehension of the topic of sustainability, often linking to the preservation of resources for future generations (*interviewees 5, 11, and 15*), as illustrated by *interviewee 5*, “sustainability is the way we fulfill our needs without compromising the needs of future generations.” This is aligned with the definition of sustainability established in the Brundtland Report (1987) and also mentioned by authors like Pereira *et al.* (2021), which highlights the need to balance the present needs with the future generations.

The participants also expressed the importance of sustainability in their daily lives through practices such as recycling; the reduction of the use of plastic was mentioned several times by the interviewees (*Interviewees 1, 13, and 15*). Although the literature, such as Krasniqi and Krasniqi (2014), suggests that conscious consumers tend to adopt sustainable behaviors, that study reveals an important separation. Even though consumers apply their sustainable practices daily, that positive thought and awareness doesn't apply to fashion consumption. In fashion consumption, it is less evident that this is happening. In this case, sustainability can be seen as a group of isolated actions in the process of purchasing fashion, which reveals a fragmentation in the consumer perceptions about what constitutes sustainable behavior as a whole. Joshi and Rahman (2017), emphasize that consumers, although aware of sustainability, don't often manage their perceptions with their actual actions.

The digital transformation has emerged as a significant factor in consumer intentions and behaviors regarding sustainable fashion. The interviewees have stated that social media, such as Instagram and TikTok, are crucial to get informed about sustainable practices and to discover new sustainable fashion brands (*Interviewees 6, 9, 10, 13, and 14*). *Interviewee 14* stated, “Yes, it has helped to promote greater knowledge, which has been an important point in changing my behavior. Basically, I think the digital transformation has helped us all to be more aware and knowledgeable about this issue.” Highlighting the idea that digital platforms are an easy way to access sustainability information.

However, even though these digital platforms greatly influence access to information and knowledge about sustainable fashion, the concern about greenwashing is repeated among the interviewees. According to *interviewee 11*, “many (brands) have been doing greenwashing

and I believe that many people have lost confidence in this communication after several cases.” Or the example of *interviewee 12* “for example, there was a brand I liked that claimed to be very sustainable and when I went to buy a dress I saw that it was 100% polyester, so it doesn't make much sense.” Which has led to a decrease in trust in these sustainable brands. These two examples highlight consumers' growing skepticism toward sustainable fashion brands. This is correlated with Chen and Chang (2013) that consumers struggle to trust sustainability claims from fashion brands and their green labels due to their inability to validate these claims. This draws attention to the lack of transparency in sustainable practices that could lead to a decrease in consumer trust. Nonetheless, social media could be a powerful tool when used transparently and ethically. As it was described by Ajzen (1991), the subjective norms, in the Theory of Planned Behavior, the digital influencers can impact the consumer's intentions, but only if the message seems genuine to the consumer. So, consumers, when this communication on social media is well done, it can reinforce the consumer's sustainable intentions.

The majority of the interviewees have shown the motivation to adopt sustainable fashion, so they have a positive influence on adopting more sustainable fashion. The interviewees have highlighted important motivations for adopting sustainable fashion, such as environmental awareness. *Interviewee 15*, mentioned that “I try to make more conscious choices, such as avoiding brands that practice greenwashing”. Whereas *interviewee 13* claimed that “I try to make choices that reduce my ecological footprint”. Nonetheless, as was indicated by the interviewee, the impact of social shopping platforms was one of the main drivers of the adoption of sustainable fashion. Many have reported that the shared experience of purchases on social media, as well as the advice from digital influencers and friends, have given them motivation to explore sustainable options. *Interviewee 6* stated, “I, for example, bought the sustainable ‘H&M’ trousers because Catarina Maia (digital influencer) promoted this sustainable part, so I think that helps a lot.” This shows the impact that social media campaigns can have on influencing consumers into adopting more sustainable behaviors if it is clear and with authentic communication. Digital transformation has certainly been playing an important role in the behavior of consumers, with social shopping platforms and social media as their main influencers. Nonetheless, the effectiveness of the digital transformation is uncertain, since sustainable fashion brands' communication doesn't reach or persuade the consumers.

The interview analysis shows a set of barriers preventing the interviewees from adopting sustainable fashion despite the growing awareness of the environmental and social impacts of

the fashion industry. Among the main barriers identified are the high price, limited availability, and lack of communication and promotion.

One of the most mentioned barriers was the high price of sustainable fashion items, which is similar to the study of Wiederhold and Martinez (2018). *Interviewee 9* stated, “I feel that the high price is a big barrier.” Almost all interviewees mentioned the high price as their greatest barrier (*interviewees 8, 9, 11, 12, and 13*) which is aligned with Watson and Yan (2013), who claim that sustainable fashion items are seen as more expensive than fast fashion clothing pieces, which leads to the consumer preference for fast fashion. The price difference between fast fashion and slow fashion reflects the business model of each one. While fast fashion depends on reduced labor costs, mass production, uses low-quality materials, and keeps their workers poorly paid, sustainable fashion brands, tend to use organic materials, and reduced production, which will inevitably increase the price. This contrast is seen for example with *interviewee 11*, who said “Yes, I'd like to be able to buy sustainable fashion.”, when asked what could help her to consume more sustainable fashion she said, “Mainly the reduction in prices”. The study of Bray *et al.* (2010) and Mandarić *et al.* (2021), confirm that even though consumers are aware of sustainability issues, they don't necessarily adopt these practices, contributing to the attitude behavior gap.

Additionally, the higher prices of sustainable fashion brands have been heightened by the lack of information about the long-term benefits of these purchases. For example, *interviewee 9* during the interview talked about buying bikinis from Cantê and shoes also from a sustainable brand, and that they were expensive but she's had them for five years and they're in excellent quality. “And then I also feel that these products turn out to be excellent, from my experience, in terms of quality and design. So I have a ‘Cantê’ swimsuit that has lasted me five years, and I feel that when I buy others that cost 10€ or 5€ or 20€ or whatever, they only last me a year. So I feel that there's also a bigger investment, but I feel that it pays off in the long run.”. This goes with what Fletcher (2010) and Jung and Jin (2016) argue, that there is a lack of understanding about the durability and the long-term value of sustainable clothes that contribute to the preference of fast fashion clothing.

These barriers contribute to the phenomenon known as the attitude-behavior gap, where the consumers who are sustainability aware don't act according to their values, which doesn't translate into sustainable fashion behavior (Joergens, 2006; Soyer & Dittrich, 2021). For example, although participants have manifested their desire to support sustainable fashion, they feel limited by the higher prices compared to fast fashion items (*interviewees 8, 9, 11, 12, and*

13). This result supports the conclusions of Fletcher (2010), who stated that the accessibility and the lower price of fast fashion overcome the consumer's concerns about sustainability.

The lack of availability and physical shops was also highlighted as a significant barrier to adopting sustainable fashion. Several interviewees have stated that the lack of physical shops makes access to sustainable clothing pieces difficult, and also limits the ability to see the quality and the fit of the pieces, critical factors that influence buying behavior. This addresses not only the consumer preference for traditional shopping experiences but also the operational limitations that sustainable brands have, by only being available online.

Interviewee 9 said “many of these brands, which are sustainable, are often only available online. And then you can't really try out the product”. *Interviewee 13* also added that “if you go to Colombo, there are no sustainable fashion shops there”. This reflects the reality that most sustainable fashion brands rely mostly on online sales. Despite the various advantages that e-commerce offers, some consumers still prefer to try on the pieces and touch them before deciding to buy, especially with higher-priced items. The Theory of Planned Behavior helps to explain this gap; although the interviewees have a positive attitude toward sustainable fashion and feel social pressure to adopt more sustainable practices, the perception of behavioral control, influenced by external factors such as the price and the availability, prevents the action (Ajzen, 1991). This model helps to understand why aware consumers may not consciously adopt sustainable practices.

In the interviews, it was clear that many interviewees still prefer the traditional shopping experience, provided by the physical stores. One solution that some interviewees suggested to overcome the lack of physical stores was the creation of pop-up stores, that offer a flexible and low-cost way for sustainable fashion brands to reach consumers in person. As *interviewee 11* mentioned, “The sustainable fashion brands could also have some pop-ups in the shopping malls since they are mainly online, which could help consumers to get to know their brand and try on the products.”

The lack of availability of physical stores is a critical barrier to adopting sustainable fashion, especially for consumers who value the traditional shopping experience and prefer to see and try on the product before buying it. The interviews revealed that fast fashion brands dominate the physical environment with stores in the main shopping malls, the sustainable fashion brands most of the time only operate online, which limits their reach and stops several consumers from adopting more conscious consumption practices. To overcome this barrier, it

will be necessary for sustainable brands to explore innovative alternatives, such as pop-up stores, to increase their visibility and offer an experience more reliable and engaging shopping experience.

The other barrier mentioned by the interviewees was the lack of effective communication and suitable promotion of sustainable fashion brands. Several participants have expressed that even though there are more sustainable options in the market, they are not sufficiently visible or promoted in an effective way to the public. This perception raises critical questions about how sustainable brands must position and promote themselves to the consumers. Most of the interviewees claim that they find it difficult to find sustainable fashion brands or that their information regarding their practices is not easily visible. *Interviewee 3* mentioned that “I lack more knowledge, which is also why brands need to communicate and shops need to inform people about the importance of buying sustainable clothes. And perhaps if they communicated more, I would choose to buy”, or for example *interviewee 10* “their communication is very weak or the brand itself is very thin, it doesn't have strong enough communication to make it stand out.” These show the limited promotion of these brands which most of the time can't compete with the presence of the big fast fashion brands.

Another important aspect that was raised by the interviewees was the lack of education and awareness by the consumer, due many times to the lack of information given by the brands. *Interviewee 3* said “Unfortunately, I think I do almost everything the same, I just buy less. I would say that there is still a lack of awareness on the part of the big fashion brands about the consequences. Even though we know about it, I think they'd need to launch a campaign by a brand with a big name in order to reach a lot of people and make them aware of it and start buying less.” This shows that consumers aren't educated enough about the benefits and the implications of sustainable fashion. This goes with what Mandaric' *et al.*, (2021) stated, that there is still a lack of education of consumers towards sustainable fashion. If consumers don't understand the actual benefits of buying sustainable fashion, they might not change their consumption habits. When companies can't explain their sustainable practices, they create a gap of knowledge that prevents consumers from making informed decisions. Which becomes a significant barrier to adopting practices of more responsible consumption.

One of the findings was the gap between the intention and the behavior of the participants. Several interviewees have shown strong intentions of buying sustainable fashion, but have admitted that their actual behavior didn't correspond with those intentions (*interviewees 8, 10, 13, and 15*). This gap is well documented in the literature, especially in the

context of sustainable consumption (Pickett-Baker & Ozaki, 2008; Tseng & Hung, 2013; Joshi & Rahman, 2017; Bernardes *et al.*, 2018; Bernardes *et al.*, 2019). Factors such as purchase habits and, convenience have an impact on the existing gap, it is hard for consumers to change their habits (Wiederhold & Martinez, 2018).

The attitude-behavior gap concept is key to understanding the discrepancy that is observed between what consumers claim to believe and what consumers actually end up doing. With these interviews, it was clear that even though consumers have shown a positive attitude towards sustainability in fashion, this attitude rarely translates into buying behaviors that are aligned with those initial attitudes. This disagreement between attitudes and behavior is highly documented in the literature regarding buying behavior in the context of sustainability.

Several interviewees have claimed to have concerns regarding the environmental impacts of the fashion industry, but only a few have claimed that those concerns influence directly their buying intentions. This goes with what the authors Wijekoon and Fazli Sabri (2021), who have explored how positive attitudes towards sustainability don't translate most of the time into a behavior.

The Theory of Planned Behavior of Ajzen (1991) explains this phenomenon, suggesting that behavioral intentions are influenced by three main factors: attitudes concerning the behavior, social norms, and perceived behavioral control. In the case of sustainable fashion, even though the attitudes about sustainability are positive, the perceived behavioral control, meaning the perceived easiness or difficulty of fulfilling the wanted behavior, it's most of the time low. Several consumers believe that buying sustainable fashion is financially hard or logistically inconvenient, as was mentioned in the interviews.

One of the interviewees mentioned that she tried to stop buying from Zara but it was difficult due to the lack of accessible options, "it was very difficult for me, because sometimes I wanted to buy something more sustainable and there wasn't much choice and what I did have was super expensive" (*Interviewee 12*). This behavior is supported by Goworek *et al.* (2012), that observe that consumption habits are hard to change, even when consumers are aware of the negative environmental impacts.

The attitude-behavior gap in sustainable fashion it's a multi-faceted phenomenon influenced by economic, social, and knowledge barriers. Even though consumers have a positive attitude towards sustainability, those attitudes rarely translate into concrete actions due to the combination of factors such as the high price, the social pressure to follow the newest

trends, and the lack of understanding about the impact of consumption choices. To reduce this gap, it will be necessary, not only to improve the accessibility and the convenience of sustainable options but also to promote a bigger consumer education and fight greenwashing.

In the past years, the social shopping concept has been emerging as a driving force in buying behavior, combining online shopping with social interactions and the influence of social media and influencers. In the context of sustainable fashion, social shopping represents a unique opportunity to increase awareness and promote more responsible choices. Nonetheless, this dynamic could also perpetuate the discardable and fast consumption, especially when platforms such as TikTok Shop offer easy and immediate access to trends and fashion products, often at a low price.

Social shopping allows consumers to have an interactive shopping experience, with instant feedback from influencers, friends, and even brands. This interaction between consumption and socialization remarkably affects how people identify and purchase sustainable fashion. As *interviewee 9* stated “But I do get to know new sustainable brands through Tiktok. There are lots of influencers doing hauls of sustainable brands and sustainable pieces that end up interesting me because I know that the piece will last longer.” This comment illustrates how social media has the potential to increase the visibility of sustainable fashion brands by raising awareness and educating customers about ethical and ecological behavior.

In the literature, Mandaric’ *et al.* (2021) have stated that nowadays, there is a greater opportunity for brands to raise awareness and educate consumers and that social shopping platforms could help with that (McKeown & Shearer, 2019). However, social shopping has two sides, a good and a bad one. Even though some influencers and brands promote sustainability and sustainability practices, the same dynamic that facilitates social shopping could drive overconsumption, more than ever today with social media, trends spread faster (Mandaric’ *et al.*, 2021).

For sustainable fashion, the TikTok Shop offers both a challenge and an opportunity. In a way offers sustainable brands the chance to reach a bigger audience. This integration allows sustainable brands to reach a target that already has concerns about sustainability, but that could still face availability and accessibility barriers. However, the TikTok shop could encourage impulse buying, which goes against the principles of sustainable fashion. The easiness of buying, aligned with the constant new trends promoted by the influencers, could encourage impulsive buying, with no consideration for the environmental impact of fashion choices.

Even though social shopping and platforms such as TikTok Shop pose challenges in excessive consumption, they also represent an opportunity for sustainable fashion brands to connect with consumers effectively and directly. The key to balancing this dynamic will be the capability of the brands to stay transparent and authentic with their practices, and of using technology to educate and engage consumers in a significant way. By adopting a digital strategy well thought out, focusing on education and transparency, the TikTok Shop could be a powerful platform to promote sustainable fashion, reaching millions of consumers who are already interested in discussions of sustainability.

This highlights the power that TikTok has as a powerful platform to influence buying behaviors, especially in the context of social commerce. The fact that consumers are 1.7 times more likely to discover products on TikTok than on any other platform, according to “The TikTok Marketing Science Global Retail Path to Purchase Study 2021” conducted by Material, says that this social media isn't just an entertainment space, but it also is a powerful tool to discover new products.

This analysis revealed a growing awareness of consumers towards sustainability in fashion, but it also identified a gap between attitudes and behavior. Even though digital transformations, through social media and shopping platforms, have spread access to sustainable fashion information, factors such as high prices, greenwashing, and the lack of physical stores continue to limit the adoption of more sustainable practices. The influence of digital influencers proved to be relevant, but the effectiveness depends on the message's authenticity. To overcome these barriers, it would be crucial that the brands improve consumer education on the topic, promote transparency, and explore innovative solutions, such as pop-up stores and digital campaigns, making it easier the access and sustainable fashion adoption.

If authenticity boosts trust and loyalty, sustainable fashion brands can take advantage of this scenario to educate and promote more responsible and sustainable purchases. Since TikTok Shop is part of this scenario, it could have a crucial role if the brands take advantage of the platform's power to not only sell products but also engage with consumers transparently and ethically.

Chapter 8 - Conclusion, limitations, and future research suggestions

8.1. Conclusion

This study aimed to understand how digital transformation affects consumer attitudes and behaviors towards sustainability in fashion, focusing on the recent TikTok Shop platform. Through the literature review and the analysis of the interviews, it was possible to answer the research question and research goals as well.

The research suggests that digital platforms, especially TikTok Shop, could have an impact on consumers' behavior and knowledge regarding sustainable brands since they stated that one of the opportunities for sustainable fashion brands while using TikTok Shop, would be the possibility to reach a greater audience, and increased awareness to consumers that don't know many sustainable fashion brands. However, even though there is a growing interest amongst consumers in sustainability, the study has shown that factors such as the high price of sustainable fashion products, the lack of physical store availability, and the lack of communication and education, limit these intentions. However, if organizations are open and consistent in their messaging and practices, digital platforms become an effective means of encouraging sustainable behavior.

The results have revealed that the TikTok Shop offers an environment that makes it easier to connect between brands and consumers, with many interviewees saying that they use the platform to discover brands and products. Nevertheless, sustainability rarely is a priority criterion during the purchasing process, which evidences the persistent attitude-behavior gap regarding sustainable consumption.

Based on these results, it is possible to make some recommendations. The brands of sustainable fashion must take advantage of the interactive and visual format of TikTok Shop to educate consumers about more sustainable and conscious practices in fashion, and the discovery of new sustainable fashion brands, using the authentic appeal that the platform offers. Besides that, the social commerce platforms could benefit from including functionalities that highlight sustainable products and help consumers make informed decisions.

This study contributes to the literature by deepening the understanding of the attitude-behavior gap in the context of sustainable fashion, highlighting the role of digital social

platforms in widening this gap. Although digital transformation offers new opportunities for consumer engagement, this study shows that it also facilitates behaviors that often conflict with the adoption of sustainable practices. The analysis of TikTok Shop, which is an innovative platform, expands knowledge about how these technologies can influence consumer behavior, both positively and negatively.

This research offers valuable insights into fashion brands and digital platforms. The brands should focus on strategies for marketing that combine education about sustainability and authenticity, meaning that platforms such as TikTok Shop, can play a crucial role in creating an environment that promotes conscious consumption practices. The creation of educational campaigns and the visibility of sustainable products are important steps to help reduce the gap between the attitudes and behavior of consumers. Professionally speaking, fashion brands and digital platforms stand to benefit greatly from this research. The conclusions will provide businesses with useful advice on how to match their production and marketing plans to the rising demand for sustainability from consumers.

Lastly, the study has pointed out that the high price, lack of education, and the limited availability of sustainable options continue to be critical obstacles for consumers to buy sustainable fashion. Brands should focus on making their products more accessible, educate consumers about the long-term advantages of purchasing sustainable fashion, and look into innovative options like pop-up stores and online educational campaigns in order to close the gap between attitudes and behavior. A balance between education, convenience, and accessibility is necessary for the digital transition to have the potential to promote more ethical and conscientious fashion consumption.

8.2. Limitations, and Future Research Suggestions

However, some limitations of this study can be noted. The 15 interviews give a detailed insight into consumer attitudes and behaviors, but they don't capture all of the diversity of opinions and practices among a broader demographic sample. Besides this, the exclusive focus on the TikTok Shop platform can limit the comprehension of how others, equally influences platforms, shape consumer behavior concerning sustainable fashion. Another limitation of the study is the fact that the study only has insight from the consumer perspective and not from the company perspective. It would be interesting to see what a responsible from the TikTok Shop would have said to some of the feedback obtained from the interviews. Lastly, the research

focused on only female consumers from a specific age group (22 to 30 years old), which means that the perceptions and behaviors of other age groups could not be represented.

Future research could expand the sample size to include a more diverse sample, covering different genders, age groups, and socio-economic groups, to obtain a broader view of consumer attitudes and behavior concerning sustainable fashion and Digital Transformation. In addition, studies that comparatively explore the impact of various social commerce platforms can provide a more comprehensive understanding of the role of social media in sustainable consumption behavior. Future research could also incorporate the company side in the study, interviewing social commerce platforms such as TikTok Shop to get more valuable insights. Finally, it would be valuable to further investigate how education and awareness campaigns within these platforms can influence the reduction of the ‘Attitude-Behavior Gap’, offering practical insights for brands wishing to improve the adoption of sustainable consumption practices.

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Appendixes

Appendix A – Informed Consent

Title of Study

How does Social Commerce influence attitudes and consumer behaviors toward adopting sustainable fashion?

Researcher

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Purpose of Study

You are being asked to take part in a research study. It is crucial that you comprehend the purpose of the research and what it entails before choosing to take part in it. Please take time to read the material below carefully. If anything is confusing or requires more information, ask the researcher. The goal of this research is to comprehend how does Social Commerce influence attitudes and consumer behaviors toward adopting sustainable fashion. This research aims to explore the motivations and barriers that are influencing buying decisions in relation to sustainable fashion and to evaluate the role of social shopping platforms in this process.

Study Procedures

The procedure of this study is an interview. You will be asked questions about how does Social Commerce influence attitudes and consumer behaviors toward adopting sustainable fashion, including consumer motivations, barriers to adopting sustainable fashion, and how social shopping platforms like TikTok Shop influence consumer perceptions and decisions. and you will be asked to answer as honestly and naturally as possible. 30 to 40 minutes is how long the interview should last. For the researcher to analyse the data, the interview will first be audio recorded using the Teams platform and then transcribed in text.

Risks

You have the option to refuse to respond to any or all of the questions and to end your participation whenever you'd like. There are no risks involved in taking part.

Benefits

You will not directly gain anything from taking part in this study. On the other hand, we hope that you found pleasure in discussing this subject with us and that the data we gathered will be useful for future research.

Confidentiality

Regarding this research project, your comments will remain anonymous, the researcher alone will manage the data collection.

Contact Information

If you have questions at any time about this study, you may contact the researcher whose contact information is provided on the first page.

Voluntary Participation

It is voluntary for you to participate in this study. You choose whether or not to take part in this study. If you choose to participate in this research, a consent form will need to be signed.

You may withdraw your consent at any moment and without explanation once you sign the consent form. Your relationship, if any, with the researcher won't be impacted by your decision to withdraw from the study. Your data will be erased or returned to you if you leave the research before all data collection is finished.

Consent

I have read the material, comprehended it, and had a chance to ask questions. I am aware that participation is completely voluntary and that I can end it whenever I want, for any reason, and for free. I am aware that a copy of this permission form will be provided to me. I willingly consent to participate in this research.

Participant's signature _____ Date _____

Researcher's signature _____ Date _____

Appendix B – Interview Script

Introduction

Hello,

Thank you for taking part in this interview. Your answers are extremely important for my research into how digital transformation is affecting consumer attitudes and behaviours towards sustainability in fashion.

The aim of this study is to understand how Social Commerce influences attitudes and consumer behaviors toward adopting sustainable fashion. Firstly, could you tell us a bit about yourself?

Section one: Consumer attitudes and perceptions towards sustainability and social shopping

(Social shopping combines e-commerce with social networks, allowing users to buy products directly on platforms such as Instagram, Facebook and Tiktok).

- **What do you understand by sustainability?**
- **What's the importance of sustainability in your daily life?**
- **Do you consider yourself to be interested in fashion?**

As you know, the fashion industry is one of the most polluting and wasteful on the planet.

- **What is your perception of sustainable fashion within the fashion industry?**
- **Have you ever seen or read reports on social media about the topic of sustainability in the fashion industry?**
- **Can you identify some consequences of unsustainable consumption in the fashion industry?**
- **Do you think fashion brands use social media effectively to communicate their sustainable practices?**
- **Do you take into account the sustainability practices of brands in your purchasing decisions?**
- **What is your reaction to seeing a fashion brand promoting its sustainability efforts on social media? Does this influence your trust in the brand?**
- **Do you think fashion brands are doing enough to be sustainable? Why?**

- Do you think that social shopping platforms play a role, or not, in your perception of sustainability in fashion?
- Can you identify any sustainable fashion brands?

Section Two: Barriers to the adoption of sustainable fashion

- Can you identify any barriers that prevent you from buying sustainable fashion?
- How can brands and the fashion industry overcome barriers and encourage the adoption of sustainable practices?
- Do you like or would like to buy sustainable fashion?
- What would help you consume more responsibly when it comes to fashion?

Section Three: Motivations for adopting sustainable fashion

- Have you ever had an experience where you chose sustainable fashion over conventional options?
- Do your friends, family, digital influencers or social shopping platforms influence or impact on your sustainable fashion choices? How? Can you give an example?
- Have you experienced any changes in your shopping habits due to becoming more aware of sustainable fashion practices?

Fourth Section: Intention to adopt sustainable fashion

- What are the main factors that influence your decision to buy clothes in general?
- Do you intend to increase your sustainable fashion purchases in the future? Why?
- What more could be done to increase your intention to adopt sustainable fashion?
- What are the main barriers that prevent consumers from turning their intentions into concrete actions to buy sustainable fashion?
- How often do you buy clothes from brands that are considered sustainable?

Fifth Section: Social Shopping/ Sustainable fashion adoption behaviour

- Do you usually shop for clothes online? If so, where?

- **Do you think that digital transformation has had any impact on your perception and knowledge of sustainable fashion?**
- **Do you think brands are adopting more sustainable practices due to pressure from consumers on social media?**
- **What role do you think e-commerce platforms play in the search for sustainable fashion brands?**

Through TikTok Shop, an online shop incorporated into the application, users can produce promotional content and sell products directly in the TikTok application. TikTok Shop allows retailers to display different product catalogues and enables direct purchases without customers having to leave the app, similar to what already happens in e-commerce.

Users can add items to their shopping basket and complete the payment process securely while watching short videos or live streaming events. With this interaction and real-time product demonstrations and the possibility of instant purchase, this new feature takes full advantage of TikTok's interactive and engaging qualities to improve the consumer's shopping experience.

- **What do you think of the possibility of buying products directly in the TikTok Shop app during live broadcasts, without leaving the live stream or the app?**
- **If you had access to the TikTok Shop, you'd buy clothes there?**
- **Do you think that digital innovations such as shopping apps, e-commerce platforms, and social media have influenced your sustainable fashion purchases? In what way?**
- **Do you think that digital transformation initiatives encourage people to adopt sustainable fashion more? Why?**
- **What do you think are the biggest challenges and opportunities for social shopping platforms in promoting sustainable fashion?**

Transcription of the Interviews

Appendix C – Transcription of the Interview 1

Interviewer - Hello! First of all, I thank you for your participation in this interview. Your responses are extremely important for my research on how digital transformation is affecting consumers' attitudes and behaviors towards sustainability in fashion. The objective of this study is to understand how does Social Commerce influences attitudes and consumer behaviors toward adopting sustainable fashion. Firstly, **could you tell me a little about yourself?**

Interviewee 1 – *I'm 23 years old and I'm doing my Master's in Communication Sciences in Communication and Digital Transformation, and I live in Barreiro.*

Interviewer - Thank you. Our interview will be divided into five sections. The first section is about consumer attitudes and perceptions towards sustainability and social shopping. Social shopping combines e-commerce with social networks, *i.e.* it allows you to shop, for example on Instagram, Facebook, directly. That said, **what do you understand by sustainability?**

Interviewee 1 - *In fashion? in clothes?*

Interviewer – In general.

Interviewee 1 - *In general. Environmentally friendly. Sustainable. Yes. I recycle. Yes, plastic and cardboard. I have the bags that you can reuse.*

Interviewer - That's right, reuse.

Interviewee 1 - *I also have some cloth ones, but I don't make these choices for sustainable purposes.*

Interviewer – And **what's the importance of sustainability in your daily life?**

Interviewee 1 - *I recycle and stuff, I don't stop buying, for example, a product that has plastic in it, just because it has plastic in it, but other things, I avoid, for example, I don't use plastic water bottles, I have those really proper water bottles, you know. But these are minimal things.*

Interviewer - Reusable so you can refill it later, right?

Interviewee 1 - *That's right.*

Interviewer - **Do you consider yourself to be interested in fashion?**

Interviewee 1 - *Yes, I love shopping for clothes!*

Interviewer - As you know, the fashion industry is one of the most polluting and wasteful on the planet. Therefore, **what is your perception of sustainable fashion within the fashion industry?**

Interviewee 1 - *I think it's becoming more common now. For example, sometimes I don't do my shopping in person, but sometimes, like, when I'm on the apps and I see a piece of clothing that I like, and there are lots of things there that are sustainable and they've done this, and they've done that, and they've used it this way and they start talking about it a lot, just to give it that kind of prominence.*

Interviewer - **Have you ever seen or read reports on social media about the topic of sustainability in the fashion industry?**

Interviewee 1 – *Yes, on LinkedIn, I've already read a post on the subject.*

Interviewer – **Can you identify some consequences of unsustainable consumption in the fashion industry?**

Interviewee 1 - *I think it ends up being a bit like the rest, it ends up being a waste of textiles, more pollution.*

Interviewer – **Do you think fashion brands use social media effectively to communicate their sustainable practices?**

Interviewee 1 - *I think they want to get that attention when a brand does something that is sustainable. They want that attention straight away, but they don't do it out of goodwill, just because they want to and because that's what people want too.*

Interviewer - **Do you take into account the sustainability practices of brand's in your purchasing decisions?**

Interviewee 1 – *Of clothes?*

Interviewer - Yes.

Interviewee 1 - *I see a piece of clothing and I like it. If it's sustainable, I buy it, if it's not sustainable, I don't stop buying it.*

Interviewer - **What is your reaction to seeing a fashion brand promoting its sustainability efforts on social media? Does this influence your trust in the brand?**

Interviewee 1 - *It doesn't influence my confidence, because there you go, that's like, they have to communicate that, isn't it, that's what people want, as a strategy.*

Interviewer - So you see, when they're publishing, that it's not real?

Interviewee 1 - *No, no, I'm not saying it's not true. I believe that they have this sustainable practice, but if there weren't so many concerns about the environment and all that stuff now, the brands wouldn't care, they would probably continue to do it, I'm not saying all of them, but the vast majority. For example, especially the big companies, they wouldn't want to know, they would continue to want to do what they produce more in that respect, I have more confidence in small companies that really dedicate themselves. And they've always been dedicated to it. The big brands, on the other hand, started doing it just for the sake of it.*

Interviewer - **Do you think fashion brands are doing enough to be sustainable. Why?**

Interviewee 1 - *Not entirely, I think they're making a start, but it's a long way off because they can't give up all the pieces they sell or change all the ways they produce them. I think it's a kind of transition and it's a slow transition. They could even be quicker, but it wouldn't be advantageous for them in terms of the profit available from that, so it ends up taking longer.*

Interviewer - **Do you think that social shopping platforms play a role, or not, in your perception of sustainability in fashion?**

Interviewee 1 - *Brands on social media. Repeat the question.*

Interviewer – No, social shopping platforms. **Do you think that social shopping platforms play a role, or not, in your perception of sustainability in fashion?**

Interviewee 1 – *No, I see it as that moment. It's like we're on the brand app, but we're on social media. I don't see.*

Interviewer - **Can you identify any sustainable fashion brands?**

Interviewee 1 – *100% sustainable or that has sustainable garments?*

Interviewer - You can give one of the two if you like.

Interviewee 1 - *100% sustainable. I can't think of any off the top of my head.*

Interviewer - Ok.

Interviewee 1 – *I know that “Mango” has some sustainable pieces that sometimes, when I order from them, come with the label.*

Interviewer – The second section is about barriers to adopting sustainable fashion. **Can you identify any barriers that prevent you from buying sustainable fashion?**

Interviewee 1 - *No. I know that for some people it might be the price, but not for me.*

Interviewer - **How can brands and the fashion industry overcome barriers and encourage the adoption of sustainable practices?** Because for you there are no barriers, but normally people would say the price or whatever, there's not much availability of clothes. So maybe it's what other people say, what you've heard from other people, isn't it? How can brands and the fashion industry overcome barriers and encourage adoption? Just so people buy more sustainably.

Interviewee 1 - *But there you go, I don't notice the price of sustainable pieces being more expensive, because I buy what I like, so I'm not noticing it in that sense, but if it's more expensive, of course, because there are also more production costs for companies, but I don't know, I don't know what to say. I think we have to wait. I think the price will drop when there are more of them. When there are more chances, the price will drop.*

Interviewer - **Do you like or would like to buy sustainable fashion?**

Interviewee 1 – *I like it.*

Interviewer - Because I liked it or would like to, but because you buy it and you only like it. Why is that? Why do you like buying sustainable things?

Interviewee 1 - *Because, for example, when the order arrives, I see that label, I think ‘ah I've done the good deed of the day, today I've contributed to the good of the world.’ That's it.*

Interviewer - Don't you feel, for example, now, just out of curiosity, do you feel that these pieces come, imagine, last longer or have more quality or not always.

Interviewee 1 - *I don't notice. No, because now if I look in my wardrobe, I can't remember what was sustainable and what wasn't.*

Interviewer - But you certainly paid more, but you don't remember. **What would help you consume more responsibly when it comes to fashion?**

Interviewee 1 - *For example. I don't... I believe that there are certain things and small attitudes that we can have, that help contribute to the good of the environment and all that, but the question of fashion purchases, of clothes, has a lot to do with my taste and I don't know, I think it would be for clothes to be... to give more chances to reduce the chances of others, to make the pieces they make without being sustainable, but with sustainable material.*

Interviewer - More options.

Interviewee 1 - *Give these alternative hypotheses. That's right.*

Interviewer - OK, now let's move on to our third section, which is the motivations for adopting sustainable fashion. So, **have you ever had an experience where you chose sustainable fashion over conventional options?**

Interviewee 1 - *I can't think of any. Because I've never opted for one piece over another, just because it's sustainable.*

Interviewer - In other words, you like it? And that's it.

Interviewee 1 - *That's what I like. That's right.*

Interviewer - **Do your friends, family, digital influencers or social shopping platforms influence or impact on your sustainable fashion choices? How? Can you give an example?**

Interviewee 1 – *No, no one has ever said to me, buy this, this is sustainable. No one has ever said that to me, or spoken to me about it.*

Interviewer - OK then the last one in this section, **have you experienced any changes in your shopping habits due to becoming more aware of sustainable fashion practices?**

Interviewee 1 - *No.*

Interviewer - Let's now move on to the fourth section, which is the intention to adopt sustainable fashion. **What are the main factors that influence your decision to buy clothes in general?**

Interviewee 1 - *I love shopping, it's good for the soul. That's why. It's a desire, isn't it? It's not out of necessity, it's a desire.*

Interviewer – **Do you intend to increase your sustainable fashion purchases in the future? Why?**

Interviewee 1 - *Not really. I like to buy clothes, if they're sustainable, great.*

Interviewer - **What more could be done to increase your intention to adopt sustainable fashion?**

Interviewee 1 - *Of course, ok, they do the campaigns and communication that fashion is sustainable and that, but it would be having the pieces that I like, that's it. I'm not just going to look if they're all sustainable. Fine, but I have to like it. And then OK, it's sustainable, I've bought more, I've increased my sustainable purchases, but if I need to next month, the other thing that's not sustainable to buy isn't like a direct awareness at the moment. I'm buying this because it's sustainable. No, I don't feel that this will increase in the future. Because I'm never going to stop buying what I like or buy something I don't like, just because it's sustainable.*

Interviewer - OK.

Interviewee 1 – *It seems bad.*

Interviewer - Now I know people who are going to buy sustainable, just because it's sustainable and you're not, imagine you buy it because you like it, if it's sustainable, OK, if it's not that's bad luck.

Interviewer – **What are the main barriers that prevent consumers from turning their intentions into concrete actions to buy sustainable fashion?** Imagine. A lot of people say I'm sustainable, I care a lot about the environment, but then when it comes to action, they end up choosing fast fashion instead of being sustainable. What do you think? Why do you think this happens?

Interviewee 1 - *I also think that, imagine, I'm talking more about the big companies now, because they're the ones I buy from, but the small sustainable fashion companies probably don't communicate as much, it's harder to find them. It's harder to find these garments and it's also more expensive. So if you go and buy something in a corner shop in Lisbon, you'll get a piece that you buy in “Mango” without being sustainable for half the price. People end up having it easy. They can order from their mobile phones at home, they have it in the big shops. I think it's all about that, I think it's also a bit about communication.*

Interviewer - **How often do you buy clothes from brands that are considered sustainable?**

Interviewee 1 - *Sustainable brands only?*

Interviewer - Considered to be sustainable.

Interviewee 1 – *I don't know if I buy any sustainable fashion, I only buy “Zara” and “Mango”, practically, for the rest, I can see it in a shop, see something I like and buy it, but I don't know the brand itself. I don't pay much attention to that.*

Interviewer - The fifth and final section combines social shopping with behavior and the adoption of sustainable fashion. **Do you usually shop for clothes online? If so, where?**

Interviewee 1 – *In “Zara” and “Mango”, in brand applications.*

Interviewer - **Do you think that digital transformation has had any impact on your perception and knowledge of sustainable fashion?**

Interviewee 1 - *Sorry, you can say it again, it's just that sometimes I get lost.*

Interviewer - Of course. Do you think that digital transformation has had any impact on your perception and knowledge of sustainable fashion?

Interviewee 1- *No. Because it's something I don't take much notice of. As I said, if I see a piece I like, I'll buy it, whether it's sustainable or not. Of course, if it is, it's better, but I don't take that into account yet.*

Interviewer - **Do you think brands are adopting more sustainable practices due to pressure from consumers on social media?**

Interviewee 1 – *I'd say yes, consumers have great power over brands.*

Interviewer - **What role do you think e-commerce platforms play in the search for sustainable fashion brands?**

Interviewee 1 – *I don't know.*

Interviewer - Now I'm going to read a text explaining what Tiktok Shop is, which doesn't exist here yet. Basically, Tiktok Shop is an online shop, incorporated within Tiktok, where users can produce promotional content and sell these products directly within the Tiktok application. Tiktok Shop allows retailers to show different product catalogues and enables direct purchases without users having to leave the application, similar to what already happens in e-commerce. Users can add items to their shopping basket and complete the payment process securely while watching short videos or live-streaming events. With this interaction and real-time product demonstrations, and the possibility of instant purchase, this new feature takes full advantage of TikTok's interactive and engaging qualities to improve the consumer's shopping experience.

That said, what do you think of the possibility of buying products directly in the TikTok Shop app during live broadcasts, without leaving the live stream or the app?

Interviewee 1 - *I found it interesting before you told me about it. Even then I didn't realize it could be done.*

Interviewer - **If you had access to the TikTok Shop, you'd buy clothes there?**

Interviewee 1 – *No, because I wouldn't trust it. I, for example, have even made those purchases on Facebook where the “Zara” advert appears. I don't know what, I don't know what else, but when it's really the shop that's on Facebook and you order from the person, no, no.*

Interviewer - **Do you think that digital innovations such as shopping apps, e-commerce platforms, and social media have influenced your sustainable fashion purchases? In what way?**

Interviewee 1 - *They didn't, because it's not something I'm looking for.*

Interviewer - **Do you think that digital transformation initiatives encourage people to adopt sustainable fashion more? Why?**

Interviewee 1 - *It might, it didn't influence me, but someone else might. Because those who are more interested in sustainable fashion will find it easier to find sustainable fashion brands, for example... which might make them buy them.*

Interviewer – **What do you think are the biggest challenges and opportunities for social shopping platforms in promoting sustainable fashion?**

Interviewee 1 - *The opportunities are that more and more people are interested. The challenges are that you still have to compete with other companies that have other options with much more diversity and are still in demand.*

Interviewer - Thank you very much for your time and your opinions!

Appendix D – Transcription of the Interview 2

Interviewer - Interviewer - Hello! First of all, I thank you for your participation in this interview. Your responses are extremely important for my research on how digital transformation is affecting consumers' attitudes and behaviors towards sustainability in fashion. The objective of this study is to understand how does Social Commerce influences attitudes and consumer behaviors toward adopting sustainable fashion. Firstly, **could you tell me a little about yourself?**

Interviewee 2 - *I'm 24 years old, I have a degree in Marketing and Advertising, I'm a make-up artist and I live in Lisbon.*

Interviewer - Thank you. Our interview will be divided into five sections. The first section is about consumer attitudes and perceptions towards sustainability and social shopping. Social shopping combines e-commerce with social networks, *i.e.* it allows you to shop, for example on Instagram, Facebook, directly. That said, I'd like to know **what do you understand by sustainability?**

Interviewee 2 - *For me, sustainability means being not only more economical, but also more environmentally friendly. In the case of digital shopping, I think sustainability is an added value on an environmental level, because everything is much easier. Digitally, there's no printing of exchange slips, there's less use of paper, everything is much more digital, much more sustainable. But for me, sustainability is about controlling what we spend and being more adept at the 3 Rs technique, so to speak, recycling and all that.*

Interviewer – What's the importance of sustainability in your daily life?

Interviewee 2 - *We recycle household rubbish, for example. And in terms of online shopping, when I make a purchase online, regardless of the type of product or service I'm buying, I really like the fact that it's all very digital, very practical and very easy, where you don't have to leave the house, there isn't that factor where you have to leave the house, bring the receipt home and if you need to, I lose the receipt and then the receipt even loses its ink over time and when it's online it's all much more practical. With one click we can make a purchase very quickly. And the level of sustainability that I practice most is that when I shop online I notice the ecological footprint a lot. For example, I'm a make-up artist and, in order not to spend money on new products all the time, I recycle what I use, I buy products to test, and so that I don't accumulate*

unused products, I sell these products, in good condition, so that I can then buy a new one for my professional kit.

Interviewer - Do you consider yourself to be interested in fashion?

Interviewee 2 - *Yes a lot!*

Interviewer - The fashion industry is considered one of the most polluting industries and contributes to a huge amount of waste globally. **What is your perception of sustainable fashion within the fashion industry?**

Interviewee 2 - *I know there's a brand that makes a lot of use of sustainability at really expensive prices, I can't remember the name of the brand, but I know they make sneakers from rubbish at very high prices and the feedback is that it's something sustainable and expensive. I think people look at sustainability in an expensive way. However, there are already brands demonstrating that sustainable can be beneficial as well as expensive. For example, I think it was "Nike" that created sneakers with plastic from the oceans. It was a good strategy for the brand, because it helped the brand to be associated with the sustainable movement in fashion and sport, and they put a fair price on a product that was and is useful. Of course there is fast fashion that tries to be sustainable, but not in the right way. I think that when people think about sustainability, they should think about making this product in terms of sustainable fashion. You should try to convince the customer to buy that product other than the fact that it's sustainable, in other words, explain to the customer what they're going to benefit from by buying a sustainable process.*

Interviewer - Have you ever seen or read reports on social media about the topic of sustainability in the fashion industry?

Interviewee 2 - *No, I've never had any information on the subject, even direct information.*

Interviewer - Can you identify some of the consequences of unsustainable consumption in the fashion industry?

Interviewee 2 - *If we consume a lot, we're constantly carrying labels on our clothes, and that alone is polluting the environment without meaning to. Then there are the vouchers - some shops even say they can send them by email. There's also impulse buying, mainly through online influencers, even if the person has no connection whatsoever with the product or the brand, they end up having a little curiosity that leads to a quick purchase without realizing what they're doing.*

Interviewer - Do you think fashion brands use social media effectively to communicate their sustainable practices?

Interviewee 2 – *No, I don't think so. I think it's a long way from brands thinking about how they can appeal to sustainable consumption in a functional way. I think there's a lot of lack of this on the part of brands that say they only care about being sustainable, but then you don't see the practice of sustainability.*

Interviewer - Do you take into account the sustainability practices of brand's in your purchasing decisions?

Interviewee 2 – *It depends. I'm also driven by the quick purchase, the influenced purchase, but when I make a purchase, I don't like lots of receipts, lots of paper bags, I try to avoid buying bags, I always take a tote bag or something. I don't really like physical shopping, I like it in the sense that I can see the product up close, but I don't like it in the sense that it's a lot of paper. Then I have to go back to the shop to change, I'm wasting petrol to go there, so I try to avoid it. If I know that a brand has a sustainable practice, for example, "Nike", maybe, I just didn't buy those sneakers because I don't run or do sport because I loved the idea. I also have my faults, I'm also a consumerist, but it was an action that led me to empathize more with the "Nike" brand. I used to be more of an "Adidas" fan and now when I go to buy some sneakers, I probably look at "Nike" with a different eye.*

Interviewer - What is your reaction to seeing a fashion brand promoting its sustainability efforts on social media? Does this influence your trust in the brand?

Interviewee 2 - *If I see that the brand really uses sustainability and practices it, it makes me empathize more with the brand, because the brand also empathizes more with the planet, but if I only hear about it and then don't apply it in practice, I lose confidence in the brand.*

Interviewer - Do you think fashion brands are doing enough to be sustainable? Why?

Interviewee 2 – *I don't think so. There's more and more online shopping, which is good because, you know, the paperwork and everything makes it much easier not to have that kind of pollution. But I think there's a lot of cheap shopping that doesn't even give people the option of thinking about sustainability. It's cheap in one shop and I'll see if I can find something cheaper. So people don't really care whether it's sustainable or not, and whether it's cheaper. The shops that are really more sustainable are a little lost in this competition from cheap fast fashion.*

Interviewer - Do you think social shopping platforms play a role in your perception of sustainability in fashion?

Interviewee 2 - *I think that social networks are an asset for raising awareness of various issues nowadays, because we're increasingly turning to digital media, and it's not just now. I think shops should create more sustainable content, but in a way that's easy for the consumer to absorb, because nowadays we don't want to waste time anymore, we want some quick and useful information and social media can be an asset in this sense.*

Interviewer - Can you identify any sustainable fashion brands?

Interviewee 2 - *I think "Tezenis" can be sustainable in the sense that the labels are made of recycled cardboard. And "H&M" has some clothes that are more sustainable, I saw some blouses made from organic cotton. I can't think of any others.*

Interviewer - Now let's move on to the second section, which is barriers to adopting sustainable fashion. **Can you identify any barriers that prevent you from buying sustainable fashion?**

Interviewee 2 - *The price. Often the price is quite high because of the way the product is made, but it has to catch the eye, it can't be, like, it's sustainable, it's all going to be brown or colorless or faded. Because sustainable products often don't have much color either, so they don't attract as much attention because of their colors and their lack of visual appeal.*

Interviewer - How can brands and the fashion industry overcome barriers and encourage the adoption of sustainable practices?

Interviewee 2 - *OK, first of all, I think it really should be a rule that the slips aren't printed and are all digital. What if I say, 'Oh, but I don't have an email?' Oh man, there are ways to control that, even if it's by SMS, for older people, there are ways around it. And as soon as I remember.... Oh yes, and lower prices.... To make them more affordable compared to what the minimum wage is in Portugal. No, it's because sometimes you're buying something sustainable that's very expensive... and that scares off a lot of potential consumers who might even want to be more sustainable and support this sustainable fashion industry, but who can't.*

Interviewer – Do you like or would like to buy sustainable fashion?

Interviewee 2 - *If it was more visually striking, and if the price corresponded to the use I'm going to make of it, yes. For example, before I buy any kind of garment, I see "Ok, this is 50€", will I wear it 50 times or more, is it worth it? Is it worth the money on what occasions I'm going*

to wear it? When will I wear it? Is it everyday, not occasional? Don't I have any similar items in my wardrobe? I think it is, it's very much that way.

Interviewer - What would help you consume more responsibly when it comes to fashion?

Interviewee 2 - *The price had to be more attractive, in short, there had to be more choice.*

Interviewer - The third section is about motivations for adopting sustainable fashion. **Have you ever had an experience where you chose sustainable fashion over conventional options?**

Interviewee 2 - *I never did it because there isn't much encouragement from brands to offer prices that are affordable for a Portuguese person. I don't know brands like "Zara," "Stradivarius," or "Mango," average brands in terms of prices that practice sustainability.*

Interviewer – Do your friends, family, digital influencers, or social shopping platforms influence or impact your sustainable fashion choices? How? Can you give an example?

Interviewee 2 - *I follow a girl, I can't remember her name right now, but she is an influencer, and she talks a lot about the 3Rs technique: reuse, reduce, and recycle. She gives examples of how this can be applied in everyday life. However, in terms of fashion, I have never seen anyone who influenced me, nor have I been swayed by any article on the subject, because I feel that it is not as explored for Fast Fashion brands.*

Interviewer - Have you experienced any changes in your shopping habits due to becoming more aware of sustainable fashion practices?

Interviewee 2 - *I always do market research before making a purchase. I also started selling my clothes on Vinted to give them a new life... and when I see that I need something, I try not to buy on impulse; I try to see and understand if I really need that item.*

Interviewer - Now let's move on to the fourth section, which is about the intention to adopt sustainable fashion. So, **what are the main factors that influence your decision to buy clothes, in general?**

Interviewee 2 - *So, first is the price, whether it has quality... in other words, if there is a good balance between price and quality. Later, I would discuss the attractiveness of the piece, whether it is impactful or not. Then, I also wonder if it will make any difference in my wardrobe if it's different from what everyone else has because I really don't like seeing other people when I go out wearing something the same as me! These days, I buy a lot into the capsule wardrobe*

concept. I used to buy everything I saw and liked. I would just buy it. Of course, I would ponder as well, but if I liked it, I would buy it.

Interviewer – That limits you.

Interviewee 2 - *Visually, I like that piece. Ah, textures and capsule wardrobe are part of the group that I like. For example, if the clothing has a bit of texture that feels different, or if it's a basic piece that can be paired with various items, I would much rather buy a basic piece a thousand times and have a wardrobe with one item that can create countless looks than have a fancy, elegant piece that I will only wear once in my life.*

Interviewer - **Do you intend to increase your sustainable fashion purchases in the future? Why?**

Interviewee 2 - *Well, I intended to, now let's see if the brands also intend to improve the visual aspect of the pieces and lower the price.*

Interviewer - **What more could be done to increase your intention to adopt sustainable fashion?**

Interviewee 2 - *Exactly, yes... that's what I mentioned earlier, improving the price and the visual appeal of the pieces.*

Interviewer - **What are the main barriers that prevent consumers from turning their intentions into concrete actions to buy sustainable fashion?**

Interviewee 2 - *I think we are not ready for what sustainable fashion is. We still don't quite understand what sustainable fashion is, and it makes us feel scared. It's not talked about enough, and when we hear about sustainable fashion, we immediately associate it with being expensive, so we quickly say we don't want to do research or understand what the price is or what materials are involved in that piece. I think it's the lack of knowledge that prevents the step towards sustainable purchasing from being taken.*

Interviewer - **How often do you buy clothes from brands that are considered sustainable?**

Interviewee 2 - *Very few times, indeed.*

Interviewer – We have now arrived at the fifth section, which is the last one that combines social shopping with the behavior of adopting sustainable fashion. **Do you usually shop for clothes online? If so, where?**

Interviewee 2 – *I usually shop at "Zara" and "Shein," although I look at the pieces from "Shein" and I think, "This is horrible." The quality isn't good... I don't like the quality, and then the sizes aren't accurate. I have also bought from "Pull and Bear". These days, there's a lot of fast fashion online; TikTok sales directly are where I probably buy most of my pieces. I'll tell you more like this: shops that are not well-known, that are owned by individuals rather than a famous store is much easier to buy from. If I see a direct recommendation through influence, that's it. Besides that, no, I don't buy clothes online very much.*

Interviewer - Do you think that digital transformation has had any impact on your perception and knowledge of sustainable fashion?

Interviewee 2 - *Yes, I think so, because with digital technology, we can have much more information quickly and that reaches every corner of the world. It's very easy to use the tool now; how and when should I use it? That's what brands need to know, how to handle things better.*

Interviewer - Do you think brands are adopting more sustainable practices due to pressure from consumers on social media?

Interviewee 2 - *I think brands are adopting more sustainable policies, but weak ones. As I mentioned, it's mostly about the plastic bag; now, I don't know, the receipt is going online, so these are small changes, and I feel it's not due to consumer pressure. I feel that it's due to society's pressure on the topic, but a pressure that society itself does not apply. In other words, we want things that we don't even apply ourselves. Because imagine if they ask me, "Hey, do you want a sustainable bag for €6 or do you want the plastic bag for 10 cents?"*

Interviewer - Exactly.

Interviewee 2 - *There isn't, we want, the brands do little because they also don't want to depend on the money they have, on profit for that. And what about us? Where is the practice? It's not happening because, perhaps, due to the prices, and because brands don't know how to present sustainable fashion in an appealing way...*

Interviewer – What role do you think e-commerce platforms play in the search for sustainable fashion brands?

Interviewee 2 - *No. I don't think so.*

Interviewer - Now I am going to read a text explaining what TikTok Shop is, which doesn't exist here yet.

Interviewee 2- *OK, all good.*

Interviewer - Now I will read a text explaining what TikTok Shop is, which does not exist here yet. Basically, TikTok Shop is an online store integrated within TikTok, where users can create promotional content and sell those products directly within the TikTok app. The TikTok Shop allows retailers to showcase different product catalogs and enables direct purchases without users having to leave the app, similar to what is already happening in e-commerce. Users can add items to their shopping cart and complete the payment process securely while watching brief videos or live streaming events. With this interaction and real-time product demonstrations, along with the possibility of instant purchase, this new feature makes the most of TikTok's interactive and engaging qualities to enhance the consumer shopping experience. That said, **what do you think about the possibility of buying products directly in the TikTok Shop app during live broadcasts, without leaving the live stream or the app?**

Interviewee 2 - *I think it's good in the sense that it's easy and very practical. But, to what extent would we not consume even more unnecessarily? I think that this would greatly, greatly, greatly increase excessive and unnecessary consumerism. That it was going to be easier, much easier. I didn't have to ask for references or comment on videos asking, "Hey, where did you buy that?", but it would end up significantly increasing excessive consumption.*

Interviewer - **If you had access to TikTok Shop, would you buy clothes there?**

Interviewee 2 - *It depends, it depends on the piece. I don't think clothing is really a topic for online. I think this is so cool, so different in terms of clothing, because I see many more people who are less digital, so, older, like in their 50s and 60s, being much more consumerist online when it comes to fashion than us young people. When I watch live broadcasts, it's just retired people or those over 50 who are all there.*

Interviewer - **Do you think that digital innovations, such as shopping apps, e-commerce platforms, and social media, have influenced your sustainable fashion purchases? In what way?**

Interviewee 2 - *OK, I think they allowed the information to be more accessible to everyone. But I feel that there is still a lack of information and visibility for these sustainable brands, because I don't know any.*

Interviewer - Do you think that digital transformation initiatives encourage people to adopt sustainable fashion more? Why?

Interviewee 2 - *Yes, I think so, because since digital is so widespread, I believe that if they invest in digital, people will also be easily influenced. Everything is so digital nowadays that it greatly facilitates the impact it has on the consumer or the future consumer, in this case.*

Interviewer - What do you think are the biggest challenges and opportunities for social shopping platforms in promoting sustainable fashion?

Interviewee 2 - *So, I think the biggest challenge is the way it visually impacts the person, right, the individual. The price, to what extent does the price justify the quality? Although it is an article made with sustainable materials, they are usually good, but to what extent is this clear and transparent on the part of the brands in terms of them actually mentioning that it is recyclable? To what extent is that credible? To what extent is a brand not lying just to gain fame? Where is the proof that this is really sustainable, you understand? I think there should be labels, like those for cruelty-free products, and I also believe there should be ones for clothing. An opportunity to grow in sustainable fashion online would be to invest in new sales techniques, such as taking clothes that aren't selling well or items that have been made and giving them a second life. For example, focusing on a piece that is currently in fashion, like jumpsuits, and appealing to the purchase of jumpsuits with a message like: "Have you thought about how many pieces are in your wardrobe?" You always have to wear 2 pieces a day. "A jumpsuit is much more practical; it will make your day because it's a single piece!" Or we could do it as a complement to the purchase... like, if you buy a sustainable item from us, you get a 15% discount on your next purchase. In other words, the item might be expensive, and we might look at it and think, "Am I really going to spend €50 on a T-shirt?" OK, I will give €50 for a T-shirt, but no other brand, even if it's not sustainable, if I give €20, it will give a €15 discount on a future purchase. In other words, I'm spending a little more money right now, but I'm already saving on a piece that I might buy next, and the brand is fostering loyalty by encouraging me to buy another item because I'll earn 15%, making it a sustainable impulse purchase. And it will not only offer customer loyalty because the customer will return to buy due to that discount. Therefore, impulse buying will also show the customer that the sustainable piece could be in their wardrobe and be good.*

Interviewer – Thank you very much! Thank you very much for your time and for sharing your opinions.

Appendix E – Transcription of the Interview 3

Interviewer - Hello! First of all, I thank you for your participation in this interview. Your responses are extremely important for my research on how does Social Commerce influences attitudes and consumer behaviors toward adopting sustainable fashion. The objective of this study is to understand how Digital Transformation is impacting attitudes and behaviors towards sustainable fashion. Firstly, **could you tell me a little about yourself?**

Interviewee 3- *I am 24 years old, and I have a degree in Marketing and Advertising. I am working in the marketing department of a dental clinic.*

Interviewer - Thank you. Our interview will be divided into 5 sections. The first section is about consumers' attitudes and perceptions regarding sustainability and social shopping. Social shopping combines e-commerce with social networks, meaning it allows you to shop directly on platforms like Instagram and Facebook, for example. That being said, I would like to know **what do you understand by sustainability?**

Interviewee 3 - *So, it's take advantage of what we already have and use applications, for example, like Vinted, to repurpose what we already own and use it again. Sustainability is now trendy, and there are more and more applications that people create and use to resell.*

Interviewer - **What is the importance of sustainability in your daily life?**

Interviewee 3 - *Only recently have I started to value this issue of sustainability more; in my childhood, it wasn't fully instilled in me, and it's only now that I'm gaining more knowledge and paying more attention to new applications for reselling clothes, for example.*

Interviewer - **Do you consider yourself a person interested in fashion?**

Interviewee 3- *Yes.*

Interviewer – The fashion industry is one of the most polluting and wasteful to the planet. So, **what is your perception of sustainable fashion within the fashion industry?**

Interviewee 3 - *I think that most of the stores I shop at are not sustainable, or I don't have the care and knowledge to be mindful of whether they are or not. I also think that sustainable brands, for example, some bikinis are much more expensive, they cost €80 or €90, so I end up not buying them. I also know that there are some stores like "ISTO," which is a Portuguese store*

that makes 100% sustainable clothing, but it is very expensive. Although it is a Portuguese store, and because it is very expensive, I end up not buying anything.

Interviewer - Have you ever seen or read reports on social media about the topic of sustainability in the fashion industry?

Interviewee 3 - I had a project about this company "ISTO," which is a Portuguese brand, and I had to read and gain some knowledge about it. I saw that their products were really expensive, making them inaccessible for most people, even if they wanted them badly. It wasn't worth it with the vast options available today for buying clothes and everything else.

Interviewer - Can you identify some consequences of unsustainable consumption in the fashion industry?

Interviewee 3 - Waste and excessive consumerism eventually lead to waste; it is one of the most polluting industries.

Interviewer - Do you think fashion brands use social media effectively to communicate their sustainable practices?

Interviewee 3 - No, at least the ones I visit the most, like "Zara" and "Stradivarius," I don't think so. The most expensive ones, when you enter the site, you don't see the clothes right away; you see the brand values, they promote sustainability, and it's different. A "Zara" quickly displays the clothes, but you don't really know what materials they are made of; you have to research. That's why I think most brands are not doing a good job.

Interviewer - Do you take into account the sustainability practices of brands in your purchasing decisions?

Interviewee 3 - Not really, I tend to go more for the price, but it depends; if the quality is good, for example, I have a bikini that is sustainable. I don't remember the brand, but I don't pay much attention to it because the price is a big factor.

Interviewer - What is your reaction to seeing a fashion brand promoting its sustainability efforts on social media? Does this influence your confidence in the brand?

Interviewee 3 - Yes, it influences, I think it's something that is very little communicated; at least I follow some stores on Instagram and social media, and I don't see them talking much about sustainability. Maybe now they talk a little more because it's a trendy topic, and since we had some videos from movements to save animals, like Cruelty Free, there has been some effort

from brands to inform that they do not engage in animal cruelty and that they are sustainable brands. I think from that point on they started to connect a bit more, but even so, from what I follow, it's mostly just to show off and they don't provide proof.

Interviewer - Do you think fashion brands are doing enough to be sustainable? Why?

Interviewee 3 – I think they communicate very little on social media; for example, the "Zara" website hardly mentions anything about sustainability. You have to look for the part of whether something is sustainable or not, and it's something that I think even the employees can't answer if you were to ask them. In almost every website I visit for the stores "Zara," "Mango," "Stradivarius," "Bershka," there is nothing on the main page stating that it is sustainable, so I don't think so.

Interviewer - Do you think that social shopping platforms play a role in your perception of sustainability in fashion?

Interviewee 3 - I don't think it has any effect at all.

Interviewer - Can you identify any sustainable fashion brands?

Interviewee 3 – Yes, "ISTO" is a Portuguese brand that is sustainable. There is a bikini brand that I can't remember the name of, but I don't think there is any sustainable brand that sticks in the consumer's mind.

Interviewer – Now let's move on to the second section, which is the barriers to the adoption of sustainable fashion. Can you identify any barriers that prevent you from buying sustainable fashion?

Interviewee 3 - The price, I lack more knowledge, that's why communication from brands is also important, and stores should inform about the importance of buying sustainable clothing. And maybe if they communicated more, I would choose to buy, even if it were a bit more expensive, but since I don't see any of that on social media, I end up not getting on board and then I think it's expensive.

Interviewer - How can brands and the fashion industry overcome barriers and encourage the adoption of sustainable practices?

Interviewee 3 - Improving communication, for example, I shop online a lot and when I go to the "Zara" website, there is nothing that indicates or catches my attention saying that it is sustainable. They could share something on TikTok, and the influencers could talk more about

this topic. They would have to change the price and attract different types of audiences, because those who are used to buying from fast fashion brands, how are they going to have something sustainable with quality? Therefore, they also need to try to change the consumer's mindset to invest in quality. I think the problem is really in communication; I don't see anything in the stores physically appealing to sustainability. For example, when the Barbie movie came out, and I'm not even a big fan of Barbie, but it made me want to buy some things because I saw that Zara had a specific Barbie section and it really caught my attention. That's why I believe that if they did something about sustainability, even if it were expensive but within reasonable limits, people would end up buying it. The Barbie items sold out, but it was something they invested in for communication; they were in various stores, with clothing pieces, it was crazy. That's why I think if there were something like that, maybe people would buy it.

Interviewer - Do you like or would you like to buy sustainable fashion?

Interviewee 3 – *Yes, I would like that.*

Interviewer – What would help you consume more responsibly when it comes to fashion?

Interviewee 3 - *The price mainly.*

Interviewer – Now let's move on to the third section, which focuses on the motivations for adopting sustainable fashion. **Have you ever had an experience where you chose sustainable fashion over conventional options?**

Interviewee 3 – *I already bought a bikini and I chose it for its quality! But I don't remember the name of the brand... it was a few years ago.*

Interviewer - Do your friends, family, digital influencers, or social shopping platforms influence or impact your sustainable fashion choices? How? Can you give an example?

Interviewee 3 - *No, I am not influenced by anyone. They were habits that were not instilled in us; for example, in my childhood, no one talked about sustainable stores. I think we didn't even talk about sustainability; it's a topic that's trendy now and is only just being introduced. No one paid much attention to it, nor was there any knowledge of which brands were or weren't sustainable. It was because of the price; if it had been cheaper and had a bit more quality, well, we would have chosen to buy it.*

Interviewer - Have you experienced any changes in your shopping habits due to becoming more aware of sustainable fashion practices?

Interviewee 3 – *Unfortunately, I think I do almost everything the same, I just buy less. I would say there is still a lack of awareness on the part of major fashion brands about the consequences. Even though we know, I think there was a need for a major brand to launch a campaign to reach many people, so they would become aware and start buying less.*

Interviewer - Now let's move on to the fourth section, which is about the intention to adopt sustainable fashion. So, **what are the main factors that influence your decision to buy clothes, in general?**

Interviewee 3 - *The relationship between quality and price. The price is thus the most important factor, and quality; if it doesn't have quality and is also very cheap, I don't want it either, and of course, the beauty of the piece. For example, the brand "ISTO" is a sustainable brand, the pieces were more geared towards the elderly, they were very basic items, and it doesn't influence various generations. I realize that the brand takes care to create pieces for people with more economic power and so on, but in that way, they don't influence us. I think the pieces are not very attractive, at least from that store.*

Interviewer - **Do you intend to increase your sustainable fashion purchases in the future? Why?**

Interviewee 3 – *Yes, I hope there will be more communication and that they change the design. It's just that sustainable fashion, at this moment, in my opinion, is very much aimed at a specific audience, which are people with more economic power; and for example, I think no one knows the brand "ISTO," which is Portuguese. I hope there will be a change in the brands we know and in others that will emerge.*

Interviewer – **What more could be done to increase your intention to adopt sustainable fashion?**

Interviewee 3 – *The price, along with better communication, would have an impact. In schools, this topic of sustainability should be addressed from a very young age, because there is no one talking about the importance or the consequences that the fast fashion industry has. Even in colleges, there is always something we can talk about; I believe that in all areas, they could communicate and discuss the topic that I think is not addressed at all.*

Interviewer - **What are the main barriers that prevent consumers from turning their intentions into concrete actions to buy sustainable fashion?**

Interviewee 3 - *The price, limited availability, and lack of communication.*

Interviewer - How often do you buy clothes from brands that are considered sustainable?

Interviewee 3 – *I only bought it once and because I liked the design. I think the bikini trend is changing; not that I have much knowledge about it, but I've noticed that bikini brands are really appealing to sustainability and always communicate a bit more than the others. But I don't have the habit; I bought one by chance.*

Interviewer - Fifth and final section that combines social shopping with the behavior of adopting sustainable fashion. **Do you usually shop for clothes online? If so, where?**

Interviewee 3 - *Yes, on "Zara," "Shein," "Stradivarius," "Mango," and that's it, through their apps.*

Interviewer - **Do you think that digital transformation has had any impact on your perception and knowledge of sustainable fashion?**

Interviewee 3 - *No.*

Interviewer - **Do you think brands are adopting more sustainable practices due to pressure from consumers on social media?**

Interviewee 3 - *I think so, but it's not very well communicated. There needed to be a much greater impact for there to be change and more communication right on the main site. As soon as you search for the name, I find it very difficult to know whether a brand is sustainable or not; sometimes, only through extensive research and looking around can you find out.*

Interviewer - **What role do you think e-commerce platforms play in the search for sustainable fashion brands?**

Interviewee 3 – *No, I think it has a negative impact. I think people don't seek out.*

Interviewer – Now I will read a text explaining what TikTok Shop is, which does not exist here yet. Basically, TikTok Shop is an online store integrated within TikTok, where users can create promotional content and sell those products directly within the TikTok app. The TikTok Shop allows retailers to showcase different product catalogs and enables direct purchases without users having to leave the app, similar to what is already happening in e-commerce. Users can add items to their shopping cart and complete the payment process securely while watching brief videos or live streaming events. With this interaction and real-time product demonstrations, along with the possibility of instant purchase, this new feature makes the most of TikTok's interactive and engaging qualities to enhance the consumer shopping experience.

That said, what do you think about the possibility of buying products directly in the TikTok Shop app during live broadcasts, without leaving the live stream or the app?

Interviewee 3 - *For now, I don't find it very reliable because there are a lot of scams, and many people are selling expensive brand bags and clothes, at least that's what I see on my TikTok. I would be suspicious; I would let a lot of people buy first, and then I would buy if it really works out for them, because there are many scams.*

Interviewer - If you had access to TikTok Shop, would you buy clothes there?

Interviewee 3 – *Yes, eventually, I was going to end up joining.*

Interviewer - Do you think that digital innovations, such as shopping apps, e-commerce platforms, and social media, have influenced your sustainable fashion purchases? In what way?

Interviewee 3 – *They don't.*

Interviewer - Do you think that digital transformation initiatives encourage people to adopt sustainable fashion more? Why?

Interviewee 3 – *No, because I think sustainable brands are very little known and do not make use of digital transformation initiatives, given that there is very little information available online. I think it will be very difficult to influence the majority of people as long as the most well-known brands don't take the step, because the most recognized brands should be the first to take action so that all the others follow. Now a very small Portuguese brand taking that step won't have much notoriety.*

Interviewer - What do you think are the biggest challenges and opportunities for social shopping platforms in promoting sustainable fashion?

Interviewee 3 – *One of the challenges is to encourage people to buy sustainable fashion and to slightly change their mindset regarding price, investing in quality that is also sustainable; I believe that will be one of the biggest challenges. Opportunities for brands to take advantage of the growing trend of sustainability and ride this wave by appealing to influencers with the largest number of followers and use them. For example, in the United States, if Kylie Jenner bought something sustainable, everyone would buy it; if Cristiano Ronaldo bought something sustainable, everyone would buy it too, and that influences people in general. For example, even people with less money have an iPhone because they see everyone with one and think, I*

want an iPhone. Therefore, I think we are very influenced by the digital world and that they could take advantage of influencers. If they appealed to sustainability, they would make a significant impact on social media and the promotion of sustainable fashion.

Interviewer - Thank you very much for your time and for sharing your opinions.

Appendix F – Transcription of the Interview 4

Interviewer - Hello! First of all, I thank you for your participation in this interview. Your responses are extremely important for my research on how does Social Commerce influences attitudes and consumer behaviors toward adopting sustainable fashion. The objective of this study is to understand how Digital Transformation is impacting attitudes and behaviors towards sustainable fashion. Firstly, **could you tell me a little about yourself?**

Interviewee 4 - *So, I am 22 years old. I am pursuing my master's degree in tourism with a focus on strategic management of tourist destinations at the Escola Superior de Hotelaria e Turismo of Cascais. And my thesis is about the contribution of eco-enterprises to the enhancement and promotion of sustainability in the tourist destinations of the Lower Alentejo.*

Interviewer - Thank you. Our interview will be divided into 5 sections. The first section is about consumers' attitudes and perceptions regarding sustainability and social shopping. Social shopping combines e-commerce with social networks, meaning it allows you to shop directly on platforms like Instagram and Facebook, for example. That being said, I would like to know **what do you understand by sustainability?**

Interviewee 4 - *So sustainability, at least from what I have studied, is a concept that is not recent; it is actually quite old. It's just that its implementation is very recent. Therefore, the impression I have of sustainability is that its implementation began in the early century, especially since the European Union and others started to incorporate the concept into reports, and it was from there that everything began.*

Interviewer - **What is the importance of sustainability in your daily life?**

Interviewee 4 – *I recycle, I know I have to turn off the water when I'm taking a shower or when I'm washing the dishes. In the purchases I make, I try to see if there isn't too much plastic, as that is also one of the concerns. For me, sustainability is very much driven by a certain standard of living for people in a specific type of market. I know this is a bit ugly. This goes a bit against my dissertation because tourism has to be sustainable, and perhaps fashion should be entirely sustainable as well. But I know that a sustainable hotel is really expensive. Sustainable clothing is really expensive...*

Interviewer - **Do you consider yourself a person interested in fashion?**

Interviewee 4- *Yes, I would say so. I like it.*

Interviewer - So, as you know, the industry is considered one of the most polluting and wasteful on a global scale. **What is your perception of sustainable fashion in the fashion industry?**

Interviewee 4 - *I think it gives the fashion sector a wash, and if you look at it this way, we have that concept called Greenwashing. Now it's not as common to see, but when the concept first started, there were many cases of greenwashing because it effectively had a label that said it was eco-friendly, the product claimed to be eco-friendly, but then if you looked at the company, it wasn't eco-friendly, or maybe it wasn't really that eco-friendly because it was produced in a country that didn't follow those rules. Therefore, I believe that sustainable fashion has brought a new image to the fashion industry, but I also think there is a significant risk of greenwashing, and this exists in all sectors. I think fashion is no exception because companies know that being sustainable is a marketing strategy, and that also poses a problem because either you are certified and have a certification, which means you know that the person with that sustainable label is truly sustainable, not just something they bought to show that they are sustainable, otherwise it all becomes a bit irrelevant.*

Interviewer - **Have you ever seen or read reports on social media about the topic of sustainability in the fashion industry?**

Interviewee 4 - *I don't think so. I don't think that shows up that much. I think that those who are interested, or who are studying the topic, know that it actually exists because they seek it out. This information doesn't get out. Imagine that the European Union has legislation, which are the rules that brands must follow in Europe, or that there is a global organization in the fashion industry that creates such legislation, which I don't even know if it exists. Soon, I think that if it were a large organization designing on Instagram, nowadays they would already be making those posts like "this sustainability plan has been released, you can check it out." Now I think it's so unknown that you can't even see it, honestly. It's not something you come across while scrolling through social media. Maybe it should show up, just like store recommendations do, and maybe filter the information that circulates on social media a bit better so that it's more sustainable and also features reliable content, because there's a lot of stuff you need to be aware of that isn't.*

Interviewer - **Can you identify some consequences of unsustainable consumption in the fashion industry?**

Interviewee 4 - *Of unsustainable consumption, that is, consuming brands like fast fashion, right?*

Interviewer – What's wrong with this? With the fact that we consume these brands?

Interviewee 4 – *So it's like this, we are fostering an industry, a part of the industry that has a significant impact; there are brands that create collections that are in fashion for a certain period and then, after some time, they are no longer in style. So, it's not timeless clothing, I think that's how you say it, meaning something you can wear anytime. Certain pieces are indeed timeless, which is why they are in higher demand, and this leads to greater consumption. I mean, when a new collection comes out, everyone rushes to buy it, but then there's the stuff that doesn't get sold. We don't know where it's going to end up, but probably in a landfill, so to those gigantic landfills.*

Interviewer – Exactly.

Interviewee 4 - *Exactly. Afterward, these brands and everything else don't really have rules that they might have to follow. Then, the fact that these large fast fashion companies pay their employees very poorly, with salaries so low that they can barely survive, not to mention their terrible working conditions.*

Interviewer - **Do you think fashion brands use social media effectively to communicate their sustainable practices?**

Interviewee 4 - *I don't follow any on social media, except for ours, so the Portuguese ones. Therefore, I don't follow the Fast Fashion ones; I have the apps. There was a time when I didn't even have them. I think people tend to install them when there are sales. So, there's this thing now on social media; I follow those, for example, the brands of Bárbara Corby and her sister Bruna, which are "The Almande" and "Brunet," and "Famm," the new brand by Joana Vaz. Therefore, they are not concerned with sustainability; they promote much more at the local level where they are produced. There they are, the ladies producing whatever it is, making the pieces, and they like to convey that image because I think they really go for the Portuguese seal. For being Portuguese, rather than for being sustainable. We don't know where the fabric comes from. I don't know if later, in the product description, you can see that in the product description, it mentions something like Portuguese fabric or something. And their clothes are already timeless, they have quality! You see the blazers, you see the dresses, you see the shorts, and the clothing has purposeful features that are in fashion. They're a pair of shorts you'll always use, yes, that might be a point in their favor. However, for example, I think they're not accessible to everyone, so I believe that's an issue. Then sustainability as also that...*

Interviewer – Yes.

Interviewee 4 - *Not being accessible.*

Interviewer - Completely.

Interviewer - **Do you take into account the sustainability practices of brands in your purchasing decisions?**

Interviewee 4 – *No, it doesn't even work. I think that in our country, or at least I speak for myself, it also has to do with the levels of living standards. There are people who can buy or aim to buy a blazer from "Empatia," the brand of Interviewee 4 Sampaio, because they can afford that price. In other words, they can have this awareness because they are able to afford it. Now I think that, for example, a person who doesn't have that much money, meaning someone with a minimum wage, will quickly go to "Bershka" or "Zara" and will find something because it's the shopping option they know; even so, it's not that cheap. A person may want to have the intention behind their purchases, such as, "I'm going to this store, not that one, because this one is more sustainable, the product here is better, it lasts longer." There are people who don't have that option and simply go for the brands that are more accessible to them.*

Interviewer – Well, unfortunately.

Interviewer - **What is your reaction to seeing a fashion brand promoting its sustainability efforts on social media? Does this influence your confidence in the brand?**

Interviewee 4 - *I think we have a better impression of the brand. For example, I remember that, I might be mistaken, because I often deceive myself, but I believe it's "H&M" that has a capsule collection that is sustainable, and the products really have a seal. They are expensive, but I believe the pieces will also last a long time. I think they create a good impression of the brand, but it doesn't make me want to buy. Maybe other people do it, but it doesn't make me buy; I usually only buy when I see that it's a good product. For example, that jacket I have from "Mango." What is tailor-made, that really big coat, it was extremely expensive, but supposedly it will last many years.*

Interviewer - But even so, you still don't make the click to take the step of "I'm going to start buying sustainable clothing" just because the brand is sustainable?

Interviewee 4 – *No, at least not me.*

Interviewer - **Do you think fashion brands are doing enough to be sustainable? Why?**

Interviewee 4 - *I don't think so. I don't think so. I think that if there were much stricter legislation, like having to pay a fine if they exceed a certain number of emissions per year, they would become more sustainable, not out of obligation or desire, but simply because they would be paying a fine, right? Or normally what you see is that new people, new brands become more sustainable, not because "Let's be friends with the environment," but because it enhances the perception that people have or even because they sell more, because I'm reaching another level of the market. Others are already buying, whether it is sustainable or not. If the other market, which is sustainable and takes care of sustainability, starts buying there, they will have more sales, so right there, it's a good thing. But... I think they are only sustainable, perhaps, because it suits them. There's a lot of this trend, sustainability has only been embraced at the marketing level because it helps them maintain a better image.*

Interviewer - Do you think social shopping platforms play a role in your perception of sustainability in fashion?

Interviewee 4 - *I believe that Instagram has had a tremendous power in making people, specifically those we consider influencers, become more prominent. This trend is that once you are already big on Instagram, you also start earning money through all the partnerships you create, building your brand. You don't see anyone creating their brand and then becoming known; it's always first becoming known and then a brand. This helped them to create their sustainable brands. And there's a very strange feature... where you need some sneakers, you mention it to someone, and suddenly you open Instagram, for example, and the ads are all about sneakers! There is much more to this, and we don't even know how it happens, than just the emergence of sustainable things. Because you don't want to, because you didn't look for it, and it appeared to you because you were looking for it. Of course they will show up, right? This later has to do with the codes.*

Interviewer – Can you identify any sustainable fashion brands?

Interviewee 4 – *H&M with its sustainable capsule collection, but at the same time, it's not exactly a sustainable brand, because I believe it has also polluted quite a bit*

Interviewer - Anything else?

Interviewee 4 - *There are the others on Instagram, "Empatia," "The Almande," "Brunet," and "Famm".*

Interviewer - In the second section, we now move on to the barriers to the adoption of sustainable fashion. **Can you identify any barriers that prevent you from buying sustainable fashion?**

Interviewee 4 – *The price.*

Interviewer – Anything else?

Interviewee 4 - *I think it's really just the price.*

Interviewer – OK. **How can brands and the fashion industry overcome barriers and encourage the adoption of sustainable practices?**

Interviewee 4 – *Could you explain it better?*

Interviewer - Make it so... to finally break down the barrier and get people to consume more.

Interviewee 4 - *It's like this... I don't know to what extent. In the end, this is going to be a knot in the brain, because I don't know to what extent if they increased production, they wouldn't cease to be sustainable, because I think they are sustainable, in a way, due to the small quantity they produce, you know? In other words, if they had to lower the price, they would have to produce double or triple to make up for the value they are not losing, right? But, for example, Ralph Lauren? It is a brand that is expensive; we don't know if it is sustainable, but, for example, when a brand is expensive, don't you immediately think that it is sustainable?*

Interviewer - Yes.

Interviewee 4 - *Exactly, isn't it?*

Interviewer - We end up with someone who has more quality and will last longer, but that's not always the case.

Interviewee 4 - *Exactly, so I think what they could do if they increased production?*

Interviewer - That's it, the price factor also makes you think that way, but imagine buying a pen, a phone for €50, or buying a phone for €200; you think the €200 one is better just because it's more expensive. It's the same with everything also with clothing it also affects consumer perception. So.

Interviewee 4 - *But, for example, do you have one? You have a "Ralph Lauren" polo and a blazer from "Empathy." Which one would you buy? Well, it has to be products that are exactly almost similar in terms of price.*

Interviewer – I don't know.

Interviewee 4 - *It's just that I don't know how to answer because I would probably much more quickly go for Ralph Lauren.*

Interviewer – Because you already know the brand, it has more recognition.

Interviewee 4 - *I think so, because this also relates to the projection they have now in terms of production—what they could do to counterbalance the price, in other words, to lower the price? I have no idea why, but I also think that this involves a bit of management, because if you increase your production, the price will drop, but then your level of sustainability won't be the same. Therefore, I think they have, they need, a good consulting firm to understand what is happening in their company.*

Interviewer – **Do you like or would you like to buy sustainable clothing?**

Interviewee 4 - *I liked a dress from "Famm." I think so. I would love to have a piece of theirs, because I think it then becomes a goal that the person sets for themselves. Since it is so expensive and you know you have to save up to have it, I think that becomes the person's own goal.*

Interviewer - **What would help you consume fashion more responsibly?**

Interviewee 4 - *I think they could create a community of sustainable brands in Portugal, where you could shop more easily while enjoying benefits, because when a customer has perks or is making a purchase, they effectively, and automatically, have a different impression and will want to return and buy again. Imagine, just like they (the brand influencers) usually do those sales events, like the one in Porto, they gather all the Portuguese brands and hold a fair. Why don't they create a community of Portuguese brands? And if you joined that community, it wouldn't be as a founder of a brand, but as a customer, you would already have a 20% discount, it would have to be something significant. Or you could create premium customers and know you had various packages. Other opportunities that others do not have because they do not belong to this community. I think a single brand might struggle, but if they all created a community and had these benefits, people would eventually end up buying. But I also tell you that those who are interested in buying it are not us. If they want to become more accessible, at least they should create a community and organize events and things like that. I think it's not because they lose a little bit that they wouldn't gain double or triple later on.*

Interviewer - Now let's move on to the third section, which is the motivations for adopting sustainable fashion. **Have you ever had an experience where you chose sustainable fashion over conventional options?**

Interviewee 4 - *I will be extremely honest, I like pieces that other people don't have.*

Interviewer - OK.

Interviewee 4 – *For example, I have a dress that I bought at "Famm," and a girl I don't know shows up wearing the same dress. Don't bother me too much because I know there won't be many more with it. Now at "Zara," you have a much greater chance of having and seeing someone with something just like yours... I don't know how many people have the same outfit as yours, that's why I really like more selective pieces. For example, this dress belongs to my grandmother.*

Interviewer - I adore.

Interviewee 4 – *I think that it is really cool. I like to use it for the feeling that belonged to my grandmother, but also because no one else has it or it's very complicated for them to have. Do you understand?*

Interviewer - You like that feeling of exclusivity, don't you?

Interviewee 4 - *Exactly, I think that's what makes people buy sustainable fashion; it's exclusive. Sustainable fashion is exclusive.*

Interviewer - But have you ever had a situation where you went shopping and thought, "Oh, I need a dress, for example, I need a red dress"? And you didn't choose Zara, you chose another brand, whether sustainable or not, you've never had one before.

Interviewee 4 - *At this stage, I still can't do that. Maybe once I have my job, I'll be able to go to a more exclusive brand, but not just yet. Now it's like, let's see what the offers are at all these stores, and which one I like the most, but I would love to go to those stores where you know there's only one or two pieces, so that no one else will have them.*

Interviewer - **Do your friends, family, digital influencers, or social shopping platforms influence or impact your sustainable fashion choices? How? Can you give an example?**

Interviewee 4 - *No, because that's not the advertisement. This advertisement still goes a bit unnoticed. I think it's because even the companies, the brands, are not that interested. Like, I*

saw the one from "H&M," because I was literally on the app checking out what they had. I was just scrolling through social media when a post popped up saying "H&M capsule collection".

Interviewer - OK. Exactly, were you looking for it? You didn't go looking for it, but it's in the app.

Interviewee 4 - *I think so. I think that when you go looking for something, you have a much better understanding of what exists, because information doesn't just appear out of nowhere. It doesn't show up.*

Interviewer - **Have you experienced any changes in your shopping habits due to becoming more conscious about fashion? Or do you feel like you're doing everything the same?**

Interviewee 4 - *I happen to be one of those people who want to buy everything they see, and you know me. Soon, I think that, due to my personality, I mean, there have been times when I bought more things, but I'm not someone who goes out to buy everything I like. I stand there, thinking I'm going to buy it, I'm going to buy it, I'm going to buy it, but I believe that regarding sustainability if you were to ask me this question in two years, when we already have a job, it would be completely different. But right now I still can't be sustainable or I don't plan to be sustainable in terms of fashion. Because I don't even have the purchasing power to make those kinds of purchases.*

Interviewer - Now we will enter our fourth section, which is the second to last, which is the intention to return to sustainable fashion. **What are the main factors that influence your decision to buy clothes, in general?**

Interviewee 4 – *Knowing whether I will use it many times or not, it's like this: I think the more often I plan to use it, the more that influences my decision to buy. Yes, I think I'm being sustainable there, or also because I really like it. The price also influences my choice of a piece.*

Interviewer – **Do you intend to increase your sustainable fashion purchases in the future. And why?**

Interviewee 4 - *Yes. Because I think... This, in a way, is also a bit bad... That social media, by promoting their sustainable brands, small short-production brands, let's say, they set the goal of having a piece from them. Like, this has nothing to do with social status, you have a piece of them, you're more, I don't know what else, it has nothing to do with that. They themselves have the goal of having a piece of them. So, I think social media is really influential; the way things*

are formatted, I know that one of these days they will influence me to buy a piece from a sustainable brand.

Interviewer - Because you have the intention, you say in the future, I want to buy more sustainable fashion. So, what needs to be done? For you to say, your intention is going to increase?

Interviewee 4 - *I think that all these brands lack storytelling, because usually people are more pragmatic, while others are more sentimental. The human being is a sentimental creature, so you really get into a story if it has a background to it. Therefore, if an article from the brand itself had a story, you would buy it much more quickly. I think they lack that. They only have a mark for having you. And I think there's a lot of storytelling missing in fashion. A "Zara," for example, is not designed to have storytelling. These are brands that sell and then let you to leave; even the employees of the brand and the stores are terrible. I don't like them; I think they are really rude. Now I think there's a lack of storytelling because you feel much more motivated to buy something when it has a story. Whether it's a blouse, a dress, or a cream... If you don't have storytelling, your brand will die. Soon, and I think that's what they're missing. I, for example, don't know what the storytelling of "FAMM" is. I don't know what the storytelling of "Craft" is. I don't know what the storytelling of "Empathy" is. The concept itself is to have empathy for others, but after that, it just stops there... so, I think that if you don't have storytelling, you have nothing.*

Interviewer - **What more could be done to increase your intention to adopt sustainable fashion?**

Interviewee 4 – *I think that the price... the fact that there is a lack of awareness regarding sustainable brands, the lack of storytelling that these brands have, and the limited choice in their collections, with only a few pieces.*

Interviewer - **What are the main barriers that prevent consumers from turning their intentions into concrete actions to buy sustainable fashion?**

Interviewee 4- *The price, the lack of storytelling... what applies to me, I would say, applies to others. It was what I said above.*

Interviewer - **How often do you buy clothes from brands that are considered sustainable?**

Interviewee 4 – *Ah... I have never, ever bought anything sustainable. No, actually I think it was just once, that really expensive coat.*

Interviewer - Let's move on to our fifth section, which is the last one that combines social shopping with the behavior of adopting sustainable fashion. So, **do you usually shop for clothes online? If so, where?**

Interviewee 4 – *I don't usually... I only bought something once, now that I remember, and it was a coat from "Mango," on the brand's app.*

Interviewer - Then, **do you think that digital transformation has had any impact on your perception and knowledge of sustainable fashion?** Or do you think it didn't happen? That didn't have any impact at all.

Interviewee 4 – *No... I don't think it had any impact at all; I believe there's still a lot of work to be done. I think social media hasn't taken that step yet. Social media has the power to influence your decisions. I think few are influencing sustainable fashion because there is no interest in it. There is no interest in you becoming more sustainable.*

Interviewer - **Do you think brands are adopting more sustainable practices due to pressure from consumers on social media?**

Interviewee 4 - *Yes, of course, because otherwise they will lose customers.*

Interviewer - **What role do you think e-commerce platforms play in the search for sustainable fashion brands?**

Interviewee 4 - *I think they might even have... But the way I see it, being already formatted is really just for you to buy a lot... And by buying, you're no longer being sustainable... For example, that platform, "AboutYou," could actually be good if they had sustainable brands there; they would be able to promote them, but they must charge a lot of money to these small brands to join the platform. Of course, they would have a much larger exposure and the sales level would increase, so the price would drop, but production would increase, which means they would no longer be sustainable. This is totally related.*

Interviewer - Now I will read a text explaining what TikTok Shop is, which doesn't exist here yet.

Interviewee 4- *Ok.*

Interviewer - Basically, TikTok Shop is an online store integrated within TikTok, where users can create promotional content and sell those products directly within the TikTok app. The TikTok Shop allows retailers to showcase different product catalogs and enables direct

purchases without users having to leave the app, similar to what already happens in e-commerce. Users can add items to their shopping cart and complete the payment process securely while watching brief videos or live streaming events. With this interaction and real-time product demonstrations, along with the possibility of instant purchase, this new feature makes the most of TikTok's interactive and engaging qualities to enhance the consumer shopping experience. That said, **what do you think about the possibility of buying products directly in the TikTok Shop app during live broadcasts, without leaving the live stream or the app?**

Interviewee 4 - *I think that, to be very honest with you, it would only increase consumerism. Wouldn't that increase sustainability? I don't think so... because I prefer to see the product in the store. I prefer to see the quality, and I think I don't know what level people are using the application for that. I don't think I can do it, I think not because I'm kind of Old School, I need to see the article and I like to have it in my hands. It's just that I already bought from "Shein" and now I don't buy there anymore. I really don't like it because it caused a lot of trouble. For now, the bikini didn't match the image, and the size didn't fit very well either. In other words, if I had seen that in hand, you have an idea of the type of product it is, but you can see what the product is like in terms of quality, shape, etc.*

Interviewer - **If you had access to TikTok Shop, would you buy clothes there?**

Interviewee 4 - *No.*

Interviewer - *Why? Because of that, you don't see it live, that's it.*

Interviewee 4 – *Yes, exactly!*

Interviewer - **Do you think that digital innovations, such as shopping apps, e-commerce platforms, and social media, have influenced your sustainable fashion purchases? In what way?**

Interviewee 4 - *I don't think so. I think they only have the availability of the information they have in a more direct way. Those who are already used to shopping online will continue to shop, and perhaps now they will even include sustainable items. Now, I, who am not really used to shopping online or looking around and whatnot, I don't think I'm going to buy much more just because there's the possibility. I think these applications are great for branding and for showcasing what they have because from the website, you can quickly see what they offer, like what types of items there are, and then when you get to the store, you can immediately look for*

the item you saw online. So now, to consume more sustainable fashion directly? I think so, perhaps in general, with other people, yes, as they have seen on the website, then they just need to come to the store and those from e-commerce, well, it has to do with the brand's promotion.

Interviewer - Do you think that digital transformation initiatives encourage more people to adopt sustainable fashion? Why?

Interviewee 4 - *I think so, because people can see the product. It exists, because in the past they thought it didn't exist, and perhaps if it's tucked away in a corner of the store, it still doesn't exist. I think there is a very important role here, which is that of influencers that cannot be denied. So, if there is a sustainable capsule collection from "Zara," they will invite about 10 influencers to check it out, give them a piece, and then the others will all buy it because they saw it on Instagram. Therefore, Instagram and all the other social networks play this role of promotion and sharing information, which leads people to make purchases influenced by others. It's not just because it's sustainable.*

Interviewer - What do you think are the biggest challenges and opportunities for social shopping platforms in promoting sustainable fashion?

Interviewee 4 - *It's like this: challenges make people believe that it's not greenwashing. Another opportunity is to introduce the brands.*

Interviewer – More easily?

Interviewee 4 – *Exactly! And I think that one of the barriers is that Instagram and everything else can play a very important role. But the brand needs to have a way to justify that it is sustainable.*

Interviewer – To prove it.

Interviewee 4 - *If you want to say that it is sustainable because there are people who say that just by buying local brands they are already being sustainable. So, this thought has been around for a long time as well. Therefore, they assist them in this part of promoting small brands. If social media didn't exist, half of them wouldn't have managed to reach where they are now—I mean the brands, I mean their founders, I mean everything. Therefore, they had these very important factors to promote sustainability. Now I think there comes a point where it's no longer about sustainability but about the brand itself and the person promoting it. Or normally, it was what I told you, people consume because they know that their social status will increase by having a piece from that brand. Sustainability should be at an environmental level, but often it*

is not; it's driven by sales and self-interest. One opportunity would be the ease with which brands can establish themselves, thereby gaining new customers and reaching more consumers.

Interviewer - Thank you very much. Thank you very much for your time and for sharing your opinions.

Appendix G – Transcription of the Interview 5

Interviewer - Hello! First of all, I thank you for your participation in this interview. Your responses are extremely important for my research on how digital transformation is affecting consumer attitudes and behaviors towards sustainability in fashion. The objective of this study is to understand how does Social Commerce influences attitudes and consumer behaviors toward adopting sustainable fashion. Firstly, **could you tell me a little about yourself?**

Interviewee 5- *I am 23 years old, I am from Lisbon, and I am pursuing my master's in Information System Management.*

Interviewer - Thank you. Our interview will be divided into 5 sections. The first section is about consumers' attitudes and perceptions regarding sustainability and social shopping. Social shopping combines e-commerce with social networks, meaning it allows you to purchase directly on platforms like Instagram and Facebook, for example. That being said, I would like to know **what do you understand by sustainability?**

Interviewee 5 - *Sustainability is the way we meet our needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.*

Interviewer - **What is the importance of sustainability in your daily life? It's something you take into consideration, isn't it?**

Interviewee 5 - *I would say that I have a good sense of practicality, meaning, for example, I use a mug in the office, I don't use a disposable cup, I use a ceramic coffee mug, for instance. For example, at home, I don't use cotton to remove makeup, I don't use disposable pads, and I use reusable pads. I have these small notes. I have reusable straws now, for example, what about recycling? No. Because the house is small and I do it when it's in large quantities, for example with cardboard, but I don't have that in my daily life; there are small things that I try to be aware of.*

Interviewer - **Do you consider yourself a person interested in fashion?**

Interviewee 5- *Yes, quite a bit!*

Interviewer - As you know, the fashion industry is one of the most polluting and wasteful to the planet. So I would like to know, **what is your perception of sustainable fashion within the fashion industry?**

Interviewee 5 - *The first thing that comes to mind is being expensive, then being handmade, and being something more personalized.*

Interviewer – **Have you ever seen reports or read about the topic on social media regarding sustainability in the fashion industry?**

Interviewee 5 – *No, I've seen a few, on Instagram, for example, when I was looking for information for my master's thesis and all that, and I found articles discussing it. But it's not something that comes to me very often.*

Interviewer - **Can you identify the consequences of unsustainable consumption in the fashion industry?**

Interviewee 5 – *Yes, the exploitation of child labor, which is quite well-known, the issue of consumerism, with various factors and impacts, but it's that thing... it's cheaper.*

Interviewer - **Do you think fashion brands use social media effectively to communicate their sustainable practices?**

Interviewee 5 – *It depends on the brands. Fast fashion brands, they don't have good practices, but I don't think they change the perception of the issue either. In other words, everyone knows, and they don't contradict that or try to show that they exploit and have factories here. However, we have an impact or work in another direction to try to maintain balance; I don't see that. But some mid-high-end brands are starting to have this kind of awareness, especially because I believe they are penalized and taxed since they operate at different financial levels. For example, a small brand may not have everything in place according to sustainability and regulations, but it is just starting out. In other words, they might need some time in the market to build their audience, and only then, when they start to see profits that justify it, will they begin to focus on sustainability.*

Interviewer - **Do you take into account the sustainability practices of brands in your purchasing decisions?**

Interviewee 5 - *No, it's not something I consider. For example, there's something I've already considered that is quite basic: let's say we're buying a toothbrush. There's a bamboo one and a regular plastic one; between the two, I would lean towards the bamboo one, but if you tell me one cost, I don't know, 2€ and the other costs 10€, I would choose the plastic one.*

Interviewer - Normally, what is your reaction when you see a fashion brand promoting its sustainability efforts on social media? Does this influence your confidence in the brand?

Interviewee 5 – *It doesn't influence. I think it always brings the consumer closer; it's like a company showing that its employees are satisfied and that it does this and that will awaken a feeling of closeness in you, like a connection.*

Interviewer - Do you think fashion brands are doing enough to be sustainable, and why?

Interviewee 5 - *I don't think so; for example, I heard that supposedly the "Inditex Group", "Zara", and the like are going to start being taxed. For example, in France, people who shop at this type of fast fashion stores will start to pay a fee, and I think that from there, they will begin to become aware, as will the consumers themselves, because in the end, it will always be the consumers who bear the costs of all the impacts that companies have. They will apply it to the products, and we will always be the ones who will bear the consequences. Now, I think that brands don't care because as long as they are selling, and as long as there are no sanctions, they will keep going. If they happen to impose sanctions and have to pay this and that and apply regulations, for example, to implement normal working hours, factories paying taxes, for instance, they deliberately place the factories' headquarters in areas of exploitation. If that happens, I believe so; until then, as long as they sell, what matters are the profits and the values.*

Interviewer - Do you think that social shopping platforms play a role in your perception of sustainability in fashion?

Interviewee 5 – *I would say that there is very little, and they are not, like, the well-known brands that you see in a shopping mall, but rather small brands, like "Giraças", which is a brand that has a physical store and is currently very trendy. They are constantly doing live streams with discounts, and they automatically make the purchases, like, you don't need to go to the cart because if you send a message, they immediately reserve the item and handle the processing for you; you just have to make the payment. Everything there is at the minute when you feel like I want this and you buy it. Now, let's say that ordinary stores or more recognized ones don't need that, either because they don't require it or because the brand speaks for itself, or the name speaks for itself.*

Interviewer - Can you identify any sustainable fashion brands?

Interviewee 5 - *Sustainable fashion brands, such as "Corby," "Brunet", "Flaire", and "Empatia". Now, for example, are they 100% sustainable? Do they meet all the requirements?*

Because I also don't have an understanding of what the requirements are and what is expected of them; the fact that it is only done in Portugal does not mean that they meet the requirements. The girl from "Flaire" started buying clothes and reselling them at a higher price, but with her own brand name. In the meantime, she began to see that it didn't make sense and that there was no sequence; it was a resale, not exactly her own brand and so on. So she started to invest in it, began to visit the factories. So much so that the costs of the products started to change, she began to look into things like budgets, cutting fabrics, choosing everything from the ground up; she handles the entire process of the brand.

Interviewer - Now let's move on to the second section, which is about the barriers to adopting sustainable fashion. **Can you identify any barriers that prevent you from buying sustainable fashion?**

Interviewee 5 – *Yes, the issue of price. I think it's the biggest factor; and then there's also the issue of waiting time. For example, the fact that you're going for sustainable fashion means you want a piece that is made, for instance, for a specific occasion or whatever it may be; you don't have as much randomness, nor as many choices, nor as many options. I envision something, I go to stores, a mall, and I have a lot of variety. Maybe if it's a sustainable brand, I will have fewer options to choose from, and it will increase the waiting time for what I want. I would say that these two are the major factors.*

Interviewer - How can brands and the fashion industry overcome barriers and encourage the adoption of sustainable practices?

Interviewee 5 – *It's like this, it was the best of both worlds. If there isn't such a big fluctuation in prices, and at the same time you can achieve good practices, I believe that just as there are these brands we talked about that influencers are currently promoting, the others that perhaps, instead of paying less per hour to exploit a child, if they pay more per hour and provide better working conditions, you'll be able to get closer to that, and it won't have such a big impact because they also produce so much. And I think that the issue of waste is also something these brands have; instead of taking leftover fabric, reusing it, and making scrunchies and things like that, like the small brands do, which make bracelets. From a swimsuit, you can make a scrunchie, a ribbon, create countless things that people will buy and want to use; it can also be a bag or a toiletry pouch. I don't think so, this fabric is for that piece and it will be discarded. I believe that reinventing this is what takes effort, but in the long run, it will be the best.*

Interviewer - Do you like or would you like to be able to buy sustainable fashion?

Interviewee 5 – Yes.

Interviewer - What would help you consume fashion more responsibly?

Interviewee 5- *If there were less price difference, I wouldn't think twice, but you can buy quite a few things, especially in Portugal, with that difference. I think that maybe abroad this mindset is much more ingrained in people's heads, but also because the salary gap is completely different. In Portugal, we know perfectly well that the price of things makes a difference; if we earn €10, it matters, but in another country where €50 is considered pocket change, I think that's where our difference lies.*

Interviewer – We are now entering the third section, which is about the motivations for adopting sustainable fashion. **If you have ever had one, can you share an experience where you chose sustainable fashion over conventional options?**

Interviewee 5 - *The dresses for first communions, weddings, and things like that, both mine and my parents', we sometimes buy in stores up north where they are produced and made, which there are probably about 10 of in the whole country. It's a piece that lasts a lifetime. You pay and you can use it a number of times. But when I bought it, it wasn't just for sustainability, because it is a sustainable brand, yes, but it's also about the durability of knowing that not everyone will have the same thing, that we are supporting something local that is produced there. It's very rare here in Lisbon for someone to intentionally go to a store like that, but up there it's different. And then there's that feeling of helping someone from the community, someone who is here, with a business, and we know it's going to be a lifelong investment.*

Interviewer - Are you influenced by friends, family, digital influencers, or social shopping platforms that impact your sustainable fashion choices? How? Can you give an example?

Interviewee 5 – *I am, in some way, because I follow some brands of influencers. I don't follow fast fashion brands, but I do follow content from Portuguese brands that are sustainable. It's the case of "Empathy", "Craft", "Brunet", "Flaire", I follow all of them and I see this.*

Interviewer - Have you experienced any changes in your shopping habits due to becoming more aware of sustainable fashion practices?

Interviewee 5 - *I would say in two factors, not directly related to fashion and shopping, but rather in lesser consumerism and having an awareness of what I buy, it's about having that mindset of, like, I go to the store and something is beautiful, but I'm not going to take it because I won't use it or I don't need it; I'm not going to accumulate. And the other part is decluttering,*

which is reselling used clothes and giving a new life to something that has come to revolutionize. This idea of selling and buying used items is a way to be sustainable, not consuming new things, sustainable brands, so to speak, because often we end up buying or selling fast fashion brands, but these items will have another life instead of ending up in the trash. If I sell this thing, that piece of clothing goes, and then there's a little space to buy another one, but there you go, a person isn't being consumerist, isn't accumulating, like you often see in the United States, where they buy and it's just, like, there.

Interviewer - Now let's move on to the second to end section, which is about the intention to adopt sustainable fashion. So, **what are the main factors that influence your decision to buy clothes in general?**

Interviewee 5 – *I would say the price. The occasion, that is, what I would use it for, whether it's a timeless dress, something for work, or, for example, for work, I make sure it's something of higher quality because I will be wearing it every day, whether it's a blazer or a suit. If it's something like a dress, for example, it's more or less if it's a dress for a wedding; I pay attention to both the price and the durability of the dress. Therefore, depending on the seasonal duration, the necessity, the quantity I have at home, if it is, for example, something immediate that has spoiled and I need to buy. And the brand, I think that would be it.*

Interviewer – **Do you intend to increase your sustainable fashion purchases in the future? Why?**

Interviewee 5 - *Yes, but I know that this won't happen; in the long run, I know that this won't happen, in the short to medium term.*

Interviewer - **What more could be done to increase your intention to adopt sustainable fashion?**

Interviewee 5 - *Everything will come down to the same thing, which is the value question, the price you will pay for the piece; I think it's a lot. And the issue of quantity, for example, whether it's sizes, because there are many people who, for instance, in these brands, you might have “S”, “M”, “L”, and “XL”, but very large or very small sizes are no longer produced because it's not that common for people to wear them. I think, for example, a person who fluctuates in weight or during a pregnancy will always choose to buy what is cheaper and more practical to use at that moment. Because it's going to be a seasonal thing and you will stop using it, then either you will throw it away or donate it, or now, well, you have the option of apps like “Vinted”*

and you will resell it. The fact that you resell, I think it's a good incentive for people to start paying for more expensive things and to choose more sustainable options in the sense that you will recover a good part of the value you invested, because that's a bit of what I think. In that sense, I buy something cheap, I go to a "Shein," or any fast fashion brand, and it will lose its monetary value, like, in the market right away. Like a car, I put the key in and it starts to depreciate even before leaving the dealership, and if I buy a good quality brand that has this sustainability index, when I go to resell it, I will recover a large part of the value I invested in that item, meaning that having this aspect is a plus factor. It's necessary to change mindsets and make it clear that, for example, you invested, but this brand gives you a quality and an image that you will regain later on, whereas if you buy something at Primark, you know it cost €5, and you won't sell it for more than €1.

Interviewer - Here you have, you have already finished now just respond. **What are the main barriers that prevent consumers from turning their intentions into concrete actions for sustainable purchasing?** I think you've already answered unless you want to add something.

Interviewee 5 – *Yes I think it was what I just said.*

Interviewer – **How often do you buy clothes from brands that are considered sustainable?**

Interviewee 5 - *I stop there twice a year, and I think that's already a lot. I think it's easier to change this chip, this mindset, in other industries than in fashion itself. I think fashion is still a very massive industry. I think, for example, that issue of trends, like cotton pads, is such a simple thing, but not everyone uses bamboo toothbrushes, reusable straws, or glass Tupperware, for sustainability reasons, for health reasons, because when you put plastic in the microwave, it starts to degrade. It's much easier to make these small changes than it is in fashion. I feel that with these, I pay for a glass Tupperware and I think it will last longer. In all sectors, it seems easier to me, but in fashion, I think it's a bigger step that we haven't taken yet.*

Interviewer - Fifth and final section that combines social shopping with the behavior of adopting sustainable fashion. **Do you usually shop for clothes online? If so, where?**

Interviewee 5 – *Yes, at "Shein", which is a store where I buy everything, from home goods to clothing, footwear, etc. I usually buy, for example, from "Adidas", I order sneakers online because it's much more convenient to use discount coupons, and everything has a variety that you don't always find in stores. Also on "AboutYou" and I can also mention "Vinted".*

Interviewer - Do you think that digital transformation has impacted your perception and knowledge of sustainable fashion?

Interviewee 5 - *Yes, but I think it's not the key factor; it influences.*

Interviewer - Do you think brands are adopting more sustainable practices due to pressure from consumers on social media?

Interviewee 5 – *Yes. It depends on the brands you are talking about, because if you are referring to those ordinary brands from the "Inditex" group, they don't care because news comes out every day and you don't see any news from them, like contradicting or making a proposal for improvement. People get offended and say that they are being enslaved and all that, but we all go there anyway. If everyone had a mindset of change and stopped buying because I don't agree with this and it goes against my values, then I believe they would care and make a change. But as long as people continue to choose the most obvious option because the prices are the most affordable... When those fees come into play and start to affect us, then yes, until then, no. Because if you go to Instagram or TikTok or whatever, you won't find anything promoting good practices with workers, or donations, or doing anything at all. No, even worse, I see things on platforms, like YouTube, where, for example, "Zara" and "Stradivarius" are being resold. For instance, "Zaful" manufactures pieces that are exactly the same, but they just switch the labels from one side to the other; which I find scandalous. In other words, the only difference is that they are cheaper because they don't have the costs of physical stores or employees, since the pieces are the same. But you're getting rid of jobs on one side to put in machines to help with sustainability, but you know that the first budgets they'll cut for that won't be for sustainability; people will disappear, and you'll be left in the same place.*

Interviewer - What role do you think e-commerce platforms play in the search for sustainable fashion brands?

Interviewee 5 - *I believe they can play a positive role, as they can show consumers sustainable options. So on, it allows for greater visibility for brands and makes it easier for consumers to see sustainable fashion items. And who knows, they might even become a fan of the brand later and come back to buy again.*

Interviewer - Now I will read a text explaining what TikTok Shop is, which doesn't exist here yet. Basically, TikTok Shop is an online store integrated within TikTok, where users can create promotional content and sell those products directly within the TikTok app. The TikTok Shop

allows retailers to showcase different product catalogs and enables direct purchases without users having to leave the app, similar to what already happens in e-commerce. Users can add items to their shopping cart and complete the payment process securely while watching brief videos or live streaming events. With this interaction and real-time product demonstrations, along with the possibility of instant purchasing, this new feature makes the most of TikTok's interactive and engaging qualities to enhance the consumer shopping experience. That said, **what do you think about the possibility of buying products directly in the TikTok Shop during live broadcasts, without leaving the live stream or the app?**

Interviewee 5 - *This is a great strategy because I've seen this happen before, which is what I was saying: the "Giraças" have TikTok, Facebook, and Instagram, and what they do with their constant live streams is that you can't make a purchase from Instagram without leaving the live stream. You can send a message saying what you want to buy, and it automatically generates the purchase for you? You don't have to go to the website; there is someone who is taking care of that, and you just have to pay, and it will arrive at home, the item you want, the size you want, and where you want it. For the consumer who has no control, it's terrible; however, as a brand, I think it's a top strategy. I think for what's trendy, not so much, but for what's in stock, it's the best there is, because I see people saying they want something and the person selling it live says it's no longer available, and people realize it's running out and it's at a good price, so I end up buying, and then you see you've spent 50 or 100€ and bought more than you need. But for the company, it's great.*

Interviewer - **If you had access to the TikTok store, would you buy clothes there?**

Interviewee 5 - *No, because I don't buy on impulse; that is, if it's not a brand or something that I really want and there are huge discounts, and it's something I was really looking for, I take a long time to process what I want to buy, especially if it's a high amount. I think and rethink and see if it really makes sense. It's not a frivolous purchase that I'm making; I believe that, for me, as a consumer, it doesn't fascinate me nor would it make me change.*

Interviewer - **How have digital innovations, such as shopping apps, e-commerce platforms, and social media, influenced your sustainable fashion purchases?**

Interviewee 5 - *I don't think it's really advertising; I believe it's more about the impact they leave on our consciousness. They gain a lot by showing what happens in the fast fashion industry compared to theirs. They go to the factories and show the workers and try to create empathy, and you think you are paying for the salary of that person who has a family. I think*

that's where they win, through the closeness to the consumer. While other brands don't, buying just for the sake of it, you don't know who's behind it. You don't buy it, and you'll weigh on your conscience; you'll think that you could have been helping that person. The fact that you buy from others will cause these factories to eventually close because they don't have the capacity to sustain or keep up. Many of them do not even have the financial capacity to keep up with technological innovations.

Interviewer - Do you think that digital transformation initiatives encourage more people to adopt sustainable fashion? Why?

Interviewee 5 - *I would say yes, only to the extent that there is a greater exposure to the impact on the environment, the repercussions of what is happening on the other side. Without social media, you lived in your own bubble and you didn't know what it was like in China, how the workers worked, how things were made. Now it is very visual, and now you see photographs of factories, photographs of trucks, of waste, of pollution, and of slavery. It makes what is happening feel more real and has a much greater impact than it did a few years ago.*

Interviewer - What are the biggest challenges and opportunities for social shopping platforms in promoting sustainable fashion?

Interviewee 5 – *So I would say the opportunities are the promotion that these brands can gain, the possibility of greater awareness, and lastly, the closeness.*

Interviewer - And challenges?

Interviewee 5 - *I would say challenges... making sure that, you know, making the price worth the investment. It's about showing that this piece is distinctive enough to make the buyer feel like, OK, this was an investment, not just, look, I paid and lost money. A challenge, I would say, is the technological aspect... we are young and we have the adaptability to access social media and create a card on "MBway" to make purchases, and that's it. This is very beautiful and we easily got there, but my parents, my grandparents, did not.*

Interviewer - Exactly.

Interviewee 5 - *My own brother? You no longer have that patience, nor will you have that skill. If you go after and try to buy virtually, you know, in other words, if it takes too much work, if it's not something intuitive and trustworthy, especially from a reliable brand, you will lose customers. In other words, facilitating processes and trust in the Internet is crucial, especially because if you are a platform or a company that operates solely through the Internet and social*

media, you will lose a lot because... you will have a young target audience. From around the thirties or so, you have, OK, consumerist people, but you also have people who aren't into that and don't want to be bothered. While if you had some physical stores, people would already say and think, "Oh, let me take a look!" For example, people want to experience.

Interviewer - Yes.

Interviewee 5 – *So I think that's it... I can't remember any more.*

Interviewer – Thank you very much! Thank you very much for your time and for sharing your opinions. Your contribution is crucial for understanding how digital transformation is affecting consumers' attitudes and behaviors towards sustainability in fashion.

Appendix H – Transcription of the Interview 6

Interviewer - Hello! First of all, I thank you for your participation in this interview. Your responses are extremely important for my research on how does Social Commerce influences attitudes and consumer behaviors toward adopting sustainable fashion. The aim of this study is to understand how digital transformation is impacting attitudes and behaviors towards sustainable fashion. Firstly, **could you tell me a little about yourself?**

Interviewee 6 – *I am 23 years old and I have a degree in Marketing and Advertising. And I live in Lisbon. At the moment, I don't have a job.*

Interviewer -The interview is divided into 5 sections. The first section is attitudes and perceptions of consumers regarding sustainability and social shopping. Social shopping combines e-commerce with social networks. In other words, basically an Instagram Facebook that you can buy, so, first question, **what do you understand by sustainability?**

Interviewee 6 - *I understand sustainability as being more friendly to the environment. Make more conscious choices, buy more clothes, like, second-hand. Not adhering so much to fast fashion, perhaps not using the car as much, and practicing recycling.*

Interviewer - **What is the importance of sustainability in your daily life? Are you considering something? No?**

Interviewee 6 – *Yes, here at home we recycle. Whenever I go shopping, I bring a tote bag so I don't have to pay for a plastic bag. I have already bought this and have used it quite a few times.*

Interviewer - **Do you consider yourself a person interested in fashion?**

Interviewee 6- *Yes! Immense, I love everything that involves this universe.*

Interviewer - Then, as you know, the fashion industry is extremely polluting and generates huge waste on a global scale. So, **what is your perception of sustainable fashion in the fashion industry?**

Interviewee 6 – *I would say it's the way forward, it's the future. There needs to be this shift in the industry. But it's still something very recent; there is still a long way to go until it becomes more familiar to everyone. When I think about it, I think of Portuguese brands, smaller brands.*

Interviewer - **Have you ever seen or read reports on social media about sustainability in the fashion industry?**

Interviewee 6 - *It has already come to my attention, and I even think it was relatively about the costs that fast fashion brings to the environment... there were statistics on textile waste, which is then thrown away, and there were also statistics regarding the environmental cost of producing 50 pairs of pants.*

Interviewer - But on which social media?

Interviewee 6 – *It was on Instagram, I don't remember the page.*

Interviewer - **Can you identify some consequences of unsustainable consumption in the fashion industry?**

Interviewee 6 - *As I mentioned above, the data I read indicates that water consumption is also required to produce a sweater. More pollution, but also more waste, since countless things are manufactured and then people use them and stop using them.*

Interviewer - **Do you think fashion brands use social media effectively to communicate their sustainable practices?**

Interviewee 6 - *No.*

Interviewer - Why?

Interviewee 6 - *I don't follow brands on Instagram, to be honest, but from everything I see, I never come across anything about the sustainability of the brands, especially because the brands that are under more pressure, like "Zara" and others, don't share anything regarding their greener or more sustainable data... at least, I've never seen it.*

Interviewer - **Do you take into account the sustainability practices of brands in your purchasing decisions?**

Interviewee 6 – *Some time ago, I would have said no right away, but nowadays I confess it's something I've been noticing more... but nothing out of the ordinary.*

Interviewer - **What is your reaction to seeing a fashion brand promoting its sustainability efforts on social media? Does this influence your confidence in the brand?**

Interviewee 6 - *I would say yes, if I see yes.*

Interviewer - **Do you think fashion brands are doing enough to be sustainable? Why?**

Interviewee 6 - *No, I don't think so. I don't think "Zara," for example, has any problem with that, since they make so much money and they don't even need to be sustainable, because people still shop there. They don't even try.*

Interviewer - It doesn't take a step for that, people continue to go there basically.

Interviewee 6 – *People will continue to buy, and they themselves need to produce in large quantities because they have numerous stores.*

Interviewer - **Do you think that social shopping platforms play a role in your perception of sustainability in fashion?**

Interviewee 6 – *I don't think it influences much, but there you go, this kind of information comes to me very rarely, but it's appearing to me more often now... it increases my knowledge about sustainability in fashion.*

Interviewer - **Can you identify any sustainable fashion brands?**

Interviewee 6 – *I remember "Almande", "Brunet", and "ISTO".*

Interviewer – The second section is about the barriers to the adoption of sustainable fashion. **Can you identify any barriers that prevent you from buying sustainable fashion?**

Interviewee 6 - *It's more expensive.*

Interviewer - That is to say, the price. Anything else?

Interviewee 6 - *And diversity, doesn't have that much diversity, like, these sustainable Instagram brands sell blazers and pants and one type of dress, while "Zara" has 10,000 options, right?*

Interviewer - Exactly between colors, shapes.

Interviewee 6 - *Exactly.*

Interviewer - **How can brands and the fashion industry overcome barriers and encourage the adoption of sustainable practices?**

Interviewee 6 - *I don't know, producing less. Producing in Portugal, for example, and not in factories in China and in large quantities, just that... if they produce less, they sell less, right? Increasing the diversity of products to provide more choices. Sustainable brands should invest in their communication and promotion, as there is still a lot of ignorance.*

Interviewer - Do you like or would you like to be able to buy sustainable fashion?

Interviewee 6 – *Yes, but it would have to be a lower price, have more options, and follow more trends. I feel that everything is very timeless... and I like to follow trends, and "Zara" allows me to do that.*

Interviewer - What would help you consume fashion more responsibly?

Interviewee 6 - *The price, the diversity, and having sustainable stores with sustainable brands in shopping malls, for example... I've never seen any, and if there were perhaps one, I would go in, try things on, and maybe buy something. But many of them are only online... and that also pushes me away. If they had from time to time some pop-up stores I think that it could be really good for them, I definitely would take the chance to go there and try it probably.*

Interviewer - After the third section, it is about the motivations for adopting sustainable fashion. **Have you ever had an experience where you chose sustainable fashion over conventional options?**

Interviewee 6 - *The only option I wanted, I chose sustainable, it was once that "H&M" had a section for sustainable fashion and the pants were practically the same, I chose the sustainable ones.*

Interviewer - Did you enjoy the experience? The quality of the pants and so?

Interviewee 6 - *Yes, I found the quality better; they didn't create any pills, for example.*

Interviewer - Do your friends, family, digital influencers, or social shopping platforms influence or impact your sustainable fashion choices? How? Can you give an example?

Interviewee 6 – *Yes... especially the influencers on social media talk a lot about it, almost making me feel bad for shopping at fast fashion.*

Interviewer - Last question of this section. **Have you experienced any changes in your shopping habits due to becoming more aware of sustainable fashion practices?**

Interviewee 6 – *Yes, buying second-hand items, for example. I've already bought several second-hand things, and it just so happens that it always goes well. I also sell clothes that I no longer wear or that I don't like anymore on Vinted.*

Interviewer – Now the fourth section is about the intention to adopt sustainable fashion. **What are the main factors that influence your decision to buy clothes, in general?**

Interviewee 6 - *Well... First, it has to be cute for me to take it. If it's in fashion and it's cheap. I would say that these are the main ones.*

Interviewer - **Do you intend to increase your sustainable fashion purchases in the future? Why?**

Interviewee 6 - *Only second-hand, because, in fact, you can buy new things, but, there you go, because in second-hand you can buy items from brands like "Zara" and so on. Exactly at good prices too. But regarding brands that are truly sustainable and made in Portugal and so on, I find it difficult because they always have to have a high price. There's no way to lower the price, so I find it difficult to increase my sustainable purchases. But I'd like to.*

Interviewer - **What more could be done to increase your intention to adopt sustainable fashion?**

Interviewee 6 – *They lowered the price, increased the diversity, and there are stores in the malls.*

Interviewer - **What are the main barriers that prevent consumers from turning their intentions into concrete actions to buy sustainable fashion?**

Interviewee 6- *Hmm... I would say the lack of sustainable store options in shopping malls, lack of promotion, and undoubtedly the price. The products are really expensive compared to the Portuguese lifestyle.*

Interviewer - **How often do you buy clothes from brands that are considered sustainable?**

Interviewee 6 - *Like once a year, at the "Stylista" markets, just the other day I bought a really nice dress at the little shop, very cute actually. Only in those "Stylista" markets that gather various Portuguese brands, well, only there... I would say about three times in an entire year.*

Interviewer – Last section that combines social shopping with sustainable adoption behavior. **Do you usually shop for clothes online? If so, where?**

Interviewee 6 – *Yes, at "Zara", "Stradivarius", all of that Inditex group. And I use the applications of the brands.*

Interviewer - **Do you think that digital transformation has had any impact on your perception and knowledge of sustainable fashion?**

Interviewee 6 - *Yes.*

Interviewer – Why?

Interviewee 6 - *I only bring up this part about sustainability because people are increasingly familiar with the topic and are discussing it. If it weren't for Instagrammers talking about it, I wouldn't see it. Therefore, without this digital transformation that we have, I wouldn't have access to information so easily.*

Interviewer - Do you think brands are adopting more sustainable practices due to pressure from consumers on social media?

Interviewee 6 – *Yes, without a doubt. Because as the topic is increasingly discussed, brands need to start taking action and showcasing it... of course, they can't claim to be making “worlds” and then it's a lie... because then, with greenwashing, people lose trust in the brand, and that's a very big risk for them. But brands know that consumers can boycott them if they want; they have that power.*

Interviewer – What role do you think e-commerce platforms play in the search for sustainable fashion brands?

Interviewee 6 - *I don't know if they look very much, to be honest. However, there was a time when they had a sustainable part, the "AboutYou." I think there is some role in how it is increasingly present in people's minds, and then they also seek out these things. If I had a platform with numerous brands, I would try to include a sustainable brand.*

Interviewer - Exactly because it is basically the future.

Interviewee 6 - *Yes, because people are also concerned about this, and it also helps the environment.*

Interviewer - Now I am going to read a text explaining what TikTok Shop is, which doesn't exist here yet.

Interviewee 6- *Ok.*

Interviewer - Basically, TikTok Shop is an online store integrated within TikTok, where users can create promotional content and sell those products directly within the TikTok app. The TikTok Shop allows retailers to showcase different product catalogs and enables direct purchases without users having to leave the app, similar to what already happens in e-commerce. Users can add items to their shopping cart and complete the payment process securely while watching brief videos or live streaming events. With this interaction and real-

time product demonstrations, along with the possibility of instant purchase, this new feature makes the most of TikTok's interactive and engaging qualities to enhance the consumer shopping experience. That being said, **what do you think about the possibility of buying products directly in the TikTok Shop app during live broadcasts, without leaving the live stream or the app?**

Interviewee 6 - *I have 2 points; I think it's good, but I also think it's bad because at the same time, I feel like everything is already done. In other words, we hardly need to move or do anything. We see what we want to buy, and we can purchase it right away. It doesn't hurt to go to the app next door and buy. But I think it's good because, there you go, the person is showing the article and you can also see more easily how things are. I would buy it, I think.*

Interviewer - **If you had access to TikTok Shop, would you buy clothes there?**

Interviewee 6 – *I don't know about clothes, because I buy clothes online at "Zara" because I try them on at home, and if I don't like them, I go to the store and return them. Now having to return to a store that isn't physical, I'm not such a fan.*

Interviewer – **Would you buy other things?**

Interviewee 6 – *I think I would buy accessories more easily than clothes, yes.*

Interviewer - **Do you think that digital innovations, such as shopping apps, e-commerce platforms, and social media, have influenced your sustainable fashion purchases? In what way?**

Interviewee 6 - *They influence because, there you go, it's easier, that is to say, I, for example, bought the sustainable pants from "H&M" because Catarina Maia promoted that sustainable aspect, so I think that helps a lot. Then it also appears in the app, I don't know what sustainable, it's much easier to have, like, the awareness and access, I think.*

Interviewer - **Second to last question, do you think that digital transformation initiatives encourage more people to adopt sustainable fashion? Why?**

Interviewee 6 – *Yes, yes, I think so, because, there you go, they make you aware, you have a better understanding and you are also more influenced. The fact that influencers, which is really their role, are saying that it's better to buy sustainably than from other brands, and that fast fashion is child slavery and so on, makes you want to buy more sustainably, I think. I would want to if it weren't for, like, the prices and everything else.*

Interviewer - In your opinion, what are the biggest challenges and opportunities for social shopping platforms in promoting sustainable fashion?

Interviewee 6 - *I think it's the fact that they work with influencers. They influence me right away to buy; it's an opportunity. Social media platforms have developed so much that it's always easy to promote everything that Bruna Corby says; it's almost as if people just do it. Helena Coelho, for example, they sell out products— I think that's it, it's a good opportunity. A challenge, there it is, are the prices. Many people in Portugal still earn the minimum wage and don't have the money to spend, like, €120 on a piece of clothing when Zara asks for €20, right? It's a challenge, the price. The diversity is there because I think these brands, all of them, launch one or two collections a year. They have no choice.*

Interviewer - But this is to fight consumerism.

Interviewee 6 - *That's it, people are consumers, that's the point. You want to buy new clothes and you want the things that are in fashion and so on. For example, right now leopard print pants are in style, and I already bought a pair at "Stradivarius" for €22. There aren't any sustainable brands that easily follow the trends.*

Interviewer - Many are more timeless pieces. Right?

Interviewee 6 - *Exactly, so I think this is also a big challenge. There it is to combat consumerism: to use more pieces with timeless designs that you can pair with more items. But at the same time, I think people sometimes really want to follow what's in fashion. I thought I would never wear leopard print again, but I will; they're cute, not too much leopard. And one more, exactly, one more opportunity. I don't know, I don't know about that, social media because I think it's an opportunity for all businesses.*

Interviewer - The ease, the visibility they gain.

Interviewee 6 - *Exactly the ease and the fact that the environment is getting worse, global warming, everything that makes people increasingly try to adopt more sustainable practices. Among them, buying more sustainable clothing, although I believe it's still a step that's very far away for many people.*

Interviewer - Thank you very much! Thank you very much for your time and for sharing your opinions.

Appendix I – Transcription of the Interview 7

Interviewer - Hello! First of all, I thank you for your participation in this interview. Your responses are extremely important for my research on how does Social Commerce influences attitudes and consumer behaviors toward adopting sustainable fashion. The aim of this study is to understand how Digital Transformation is impacting attitudes and behaviors towards sustainable fashion. Firstly, **could you tell me a little about yourself?**

Interviewee 7 - *I am 23 years old, I am pursuing a Master's in Communication Sciences, and at the moment I am working in the field of Marketing.*

Interviewer - Thank you. Our interview will be divided into 5 sections. The first section is about consumers' attitudes and perceptions regarding sustainability and social shopping. Social shopping combines e-commerce with social networks, meaning it allows you to purchase directly on platforms like Instagram or Facebook, for example. That being said, I would like to know **what do you understand by sustainability?**

Interviewee 7 - *For me, sustainability is about making decisions and being concerned about the environment, that is, making choices that take the environment into account, ensuring that these decisions and the attitudes we adopt strengthen future generations, environmentally speaking, allowing them to live with all the available natural resources without compromising their quality of life.*

Interviewer - **What is the importance of sustainability in your daily life?**

Interviewee 7 - *Well, I work in sustainability, so I work for a company in the textile industry in Northern Portugal that specializes in supplying fabrics, meaning textile products, but with some added technology, specifically technology related to sustainability. In other words, these are solutions that we have for the entire product lifecycle that can add or find solutions through more conventional products and processes that are more polluting. We sell products with these more sustainable, environmentally friendly options for all phases of the product. Therefore, I would say that I deal with sustainability, particularly sustainability in fashion, every day.*

Interviewer - **Do you consider yourself a person interested in fashion?**

Interviewee 7 - *I consider myself, even very much.*

Interviewer - The fashion industry is one of the most polluting and wasteful sectors for the planet. So, **what is your perception of sustainable fashion within the fashion industry?**

Interviewee 7 - *So, working in this industry, I might end up giving feedback more than just being a simple consumer. I think it's something that is effectively growing, and I believe it's something that consumers have shown more interest in, although that doesn't always translate into an actual purchase. It doesn't effectively translate into action, especially because there is that gap between intention and action, right? But I would say that there are several factors that influence this gap and these attitudes, particularly regarding sustainability in this industry. I believe it is a combination of several factors that will make it increasingly present and overshadow conventional methods.*

Interviewer - **Have you ever seen or read reports on social media about the topic of sustainability in the fashion industry? Or it has never appeared to you?**

Interviewee 7 - *Yes, I have read something, at least in relation to my work and because of my thesis, which also ends up being somewhat related to the same topic. There are articles on these social networks, but I haven't seen anything; it was me who went looking, and I subscribe to some newsletters, for example. One of them is "Business of Fashion" (BoF), which has some interesting articles. But, normally, I usually receive it through the newsletter, as I also follow the same page on Instagram. It's possible that in the past I accessed some article through a post I made on my Instagram story or something like that; that's the only example I can think of at the moment.*

Interviewer - **Can you identify some consequences of unsustainable consumption in the fashion industry?**

Interviewee 7 - *Yes, in terms of the environment or in general?*

Interviewer - **Yes, whatever you want.**

Interviewee 7 - *At the level of resources, I believe it is the emission of polluting gases, the consumption of more resources, and forest areas. Marine pollution is also due to water pollution and, at the same time, the excessive consumption of water in many textile processes. Energy consumption as well. Excessive pollution in landfills that never gets resolved, I think those are the ones that come to mind.*

Interviewer - **Do you think fashion brands use social media effectively to communicate their sustainable practices?**

Interviewee 7 - *I think it somewhat aligns with the brand's identity, because I see many brands, for example, fast fashion like "Zara" and "H&M", that by promoting this type of advertising and sustainable communication, I believe they are not doing it correctly and that they don't convince, so to speak, the consumer because it doesn't make sense. We see that these are false claims, which leads a bit to greenwashing. I also think that this type of communication doesn't instill confidence in the consumer. However, I see other well-known brands that have sustainability in their identity and that I think communicate perfectly on social media.*

Interviewer - **Do you take into account the sustainability practices of brands in your purchasing decisions?**

Interviewee 7 - *I will be honest, it's not the most decisive factor for me, but it's something I pay attention to. For example, because I have more knowledge, perhaps about the materials that textile products are made from, I am more aware when choosing a product. I often check the composition, observe the drape, enjoy trying on the piece, see how it fits, and feel the texture of the item, and so on. I think this is one of the most important things for me, and for example, when I'm deciding between two pieces with similar prices, similar cuts, and even similar materials and compositions, but one is made from more sustainable materials, then of course, since I seek out and look for that information and see that difference, I end up choosing the more sustainable product. However, I admit that it's not the first factor that influences my purchase.*

Interviewer - **What is your reaction to seeing a fashion brand promoting its sustainability efforts on social media? Does this influence your confidence in the brand?**

Interviewee 7 - *It depends on the brand, it depends on the brand identity and that perception I have of the brand itself. Therefore, if I see that it is a brand whose values already include sustainability, I think it influences me even more to buy from that brand. But if it's a brand that I associate with fast fashion and unsustainable practices, seeing this type of communication only increases my distrust, of course.*

Interviewer - **Do you think fashion brands are doing enough to be sustainable? Why?**

Interviewee 7 - *I think they are not doing enough. Of course, what the consumer wants and demands influences what brands do, but I believe it should be at a corporate level, and companies and brands should take the first step in becoming sustainable and creating that communication, that identity of sustainability. I believe they have a duty, considering the current*

times, to choose more sustainable materials and to be more aware of their consumption. For example, if now a "Zara" became more sustainable and changed its identity, I think people would continue to shop at "Zara". Of course, this would have other consequences, such as the increase in price and due to the technologies used. But even if the price were to increase, of course speaking in percentages, if it were a crazy percentage, I don't think so, but even if the price went up a little more because of that, especially since we have seen prices rise due to inflation and everything else, people continue to buy. Therefore, I think that if it were for these reasons, I believe that the loyalty and fidelity that customers have to the brand is very important, and I think that brands should take the first step; at least, that's my opinion.

Interviewer - Do you think that social shopping platforms play a role in your perception of sustainability in fashion?

Interviewee 7 - *It's a good question... I'll try, I'm trying to think of a specific case to use as an example, to understand if I have any impact. I believe that when used properly, any tool is beneficial for guiding consumers in their choices, and if this platform or tool is used to promote sustainable products, then I think it is indeed a good thing. As long as it's done the right way, I think it's beneficial and can indeed bring advantages, and it can influence my purchasing decision.*

Interviewer - You mentioned earlier the "BoF", which you follow on Instagram and that you might have seen some article about sustainability by following that account.

Interviewee 7 - *Yes, because of "BoF" posting on Instagram exactly, especially because a lot of advertisements appear to me when I'm researching a brand on Instagram. I use Instagram a lot to look for and check out brand profiles, and sometimes, while I'm scrolling, I can see that some have the functionality to buy directly on Instagram, which I find quite beneficial. Therefore, by taking advantage of this tool to promote a sustainable product, I believe it will only bring benefits.*

Interviewer - Can you identify any sustainable fashion brand?

Interviewee 7 - *The first one that comes to my mind is "Patagonia", and then "Pangaya" also comes to mind; I don't know if you're familiar with it. At the level of Portuguese brands, perhaps the one that comes to mind is "Conscious The Label", which is a bikini brand. These are the three brands that come to mind, with two of them being international and one Portuguese.*

Interviewer - Now the second section is barriers to the adoption of sustainable fashion. **Can you identify any barriers that prevent you from buying sustainable fashion?**

Interviewee 7 – *I know what the barriers are that influence my decision; now, as for whether they completely prevent me from making the purchase, I don't think there are any. However... because, you see, when the consumer, in this case me, makes a decision, there are several factors to consider that end up balancing each other out a bit. That's why I think there isn't anything that determines my decision 100%. But the factors I end up considering are the price and the quality of the materials used in the products; those might be the main ones. And then there is also a lack of information and a lack of willingness to seek that information.*

Interviewer - **How can brands and the fashion industry overcome barriers and encourage the adoption of sustainable practices?**

Interviewee 7 - *I believe that through communication. The secret lies in strategic communication and how they communicate and shape the relationship with the consumer. For example, as I mentioned earlier, in the case of "Zara", if it started to adopt more sustainable products, but with transparent communication, if the brand embraced this identity of sustainability and transparency, I believe it would lead, regardless of these factors and barriers, such as composition, price, etc., to consumers purchasing the product. But there it is, at this moment I think I can't see that happening, because every time they use sustainability in their communication it goes very badly, because the claims are unfounded and the communication they use is not cohesive, it's greenwashing, which is why I think it's not working.*

Interviewer - **Do you like or would you like to be able to buy sustainable fashion?**

Interviewee 7 - *I like it! I like to buy sustainable fashion; I think that when I purchase a product that I know has these benefits and that I know has sustainable compositions, processes, dyeing, etc., I feel better about myself.*

Interviewer - You are doing a good deed, it's what you feel?

Interviewee 7 - *I feel that I am contributing to something greater than us and to a good future. I think I feel proud of taking this step, even though I'm spending money.*

Interviewer - **What would help you consume fashion more responsibly?**

Interviewee 7 – *As I have already said, it is for companies to improve communication and address the issue of greenwashing.*

Interviewer – Now let's move on to the third section, which is about the motivations for adopting sustainable fashion. **Have you ever had an experience where you chose sustainable fashion over conventional options?**

Interviewee 7 - *I've had a few, the most recent one that comes to mind was a dress from "H&M". I had seen several that were on sale, I was scrolling through the sales at "H&M" and had come across various options that I liked. But then one of the options, which happened to be slightly more expensive than the other, caught my attention because it was made from recycled polyester. This stood out to me because it's something I usually work with in my job. It caught my attention for having this type of materials, so I went to check the compositions and noticed that the entire product was made with sustainable materials. In the end, I chose this option, ordered it online, and I really liked it; I ended up with the dress.*

Interviewer - You were satisfied?

Interviewee 7 - *I was indeed satisfied, I was happy, even though it was more expensive.*

Interviewer - **Do your friends, family, digital influencers, or social shopping platforms influence or impact your sustainable fashion choices? How? Can you give an example?**

Interviewee 7 - *I will be honest, not because of that. I follow several influencers on Instagram, but I think I end up being more influenced by the type of style they have; in other words, I follow them because of the style they showcase, that clothing style that I like. So I like to follow that person because of that, because I identify with them, and not so much because of the sustainability aspect. I think when it comes to informing myself or being influenced about more sustainable choices, I find that more technical information and seeking sources like "BOF" is where I end up learning more about the subject, rather than through that. In other words, I think that when it comes to influencers, I tend to turn to them more for inspiration and only on a visual level.*

Interviewer - And not so much to lead you to the act of buying that sweater.

Interviewee 7 - *Exactly.*

Interviewer - **Have you experienced any changes in your shopping habits due to becoming more aware of sustainable fashion practices?**

Interviewee 7 - *I think it's a job that is done every day. I feel that now that I am more aware and informed, I have been making better choices, and on top of that, I have been reducing my*

consumption of textile products, that is, clothing and fashion items. So, I think it's already a step; I'm far from the ideal, I believe, but, well, I think it's one small step at a time.

Interviewer – We are now entering the fourth section, which is about the intention to adopt sustainable fashion. **What are the main factors that influence your decision to buy clothes, in general?**

Interviewee 7 - *The color and model of the article, as well as the composition and materials.*

Interviewer - **Do you intend to increase your sustainable fashion purchases in the future? Why?**

Interviewee 7 - *I do intend to, because I am taking it step by step to become a more sustainable person, now that I am more informed and educated on the subject. I know it's a long road to travel and that I still make decisions that are not the most sustainable or sometimes act on impulse, but the goal is for all of us to become better and more sustainable people and to contribute to this so-called better and greener future.*

Interviewer - **What more could be done to increase your intention to adopt sustainable fashion?**

Interviewee 7 – *As I mentioned above, there should be more communication about the brands, more knowledge, which I believe is what is lacking. And of course, the price would have to be more "affordable".*

Interviewer - **What are the main barriers that prevent consumers from turning their intentions into concrete actions to buy sustainable fashion?**

Interviewee 7 - *I think that, looking at the overall picture, there should be more information and more willingness to seek out that information, which I believe is lacking on the part of most consumers. They can even consider themselves sustainable... but when they have to make a choice, they opt for the cheapest one... and not just that! In regular shopping malls, there are hardly any or virtually no stores with sustainable clothing. Therefore, perhaps there should be a greater openness for these stores to be in shopping malls, allowing consumers to try them out and have the option right in front of them.*

Interviewer - **How often do you buy clothes from brands that are considered sustainable?**

Interviewee 7 – *It's a good question why, in the example I gave earlier about "H&M", I'm buying a sustainable product, but from a brand that I don't consider sustainable. I know some*

sustainable brands, for example "Pangaia". I have bought a tracksuit from the brand, but it's more rare. In other words, what I end up buying the most are brands that increasingly have that sustainable concern, but they are not the top-of-mind brands when you think of sustainability; rather, they make choices with more sustainable materials and more sustainable products. In other words, it's not very often that I choose this type of brand.

Interviewer - Now let's move on to the last section, which will combine social shopping and social purchases with adoption behavior, sustainable fashion. The first question is: **Do you usually shop for clothes online? If so, where?**

Interviewee 7 - *I usually check the official websites of brands like "Zara", but also other brands. I would say I buy more online, but I really enjoy trying on and seeing the clothes. I order online because it's easier and the accessibility is better; then I try it on, and if I don't like the fit or the material or something like that, I end up returning it.*

Interviewer - **Do you think that digital transformation has had any impact on your perception and knowledge about sustainable fashion?**

Interviewee 7 - *Yes, I totally think so. Because digital transformation allows us to access information much more easily and quickly. It's like I said earlier, to consult an article on sustainable fashion that interests me, I just need to open Instagram, check the Instagram story of "Business of Fashion", and I see that the topic piques my interest. With such easy access to information, it ultimately makes me a more informed person.*

Interviewer - **Do you think brands are adopting more sustainable practices due to pressure from consumers on social media?**

Interviewee 7 - *It depends on the brands; I feel that there are brands that already grow and are born, so to speak, with these sustainable values, and the brands are created with this concern for sustainability. Therefore, I believe that this is not exclusively or directly related to consumer pressure. But, on the contrary or in parallel, I think that regular brands that do not have this concern for sustainability end up feeling a lot of pressure from consumers to choose sustainable products, and they end up introducing sustainability into their business because of this. So, yes and no, for these reasons.*

Interviewer - **What role do you think e-commerce platforms play in the search for sustainable fashion brands?**

Interviewee 7 - *I think they play an important role. For example, "AboutYou" and "Farfetch", because they are platforms that allow us to easily compare various products from different brands. It's possible to make this comparison between a regular product and another product with exactly the same qualities, but with the fact that it is more sustainable; I think that's great for that.*

Interviewer - Now I will read a text explaining what TikTok Shop is, which does not exist here yet. Basically, TikTok Shop is an online store integrated within TikTok, where users can create promotional content and sell those products directly within the TikTok app. The TikTok Shop allows retailers to showcase different product catalogs and enables direct purchases without users having to leave the app, similar to what is already happening in e-commerce. Users can add items to their shopping cart and complete the payment process securely while watching brief videos or live streaming events. With this interaction and real-time product demonstrations, along with the possibility of instant purchase, this new feature makes the most of TikTok's interactive and engaging qualities to enhance the consumer shopping experience. That said, **what do you think about the possibility of buying products directly in the TikTok Shop app during live broadcasts, without leaving the live stream or the app?**

Interviewee 7 - *Well, on one hand, I see certain advantages such as the usefulness in access, the ease of completing the purchase, which simplifies the entire process, making it easier for the consumer to make that purchase. But I also think that this brings another negative consequence that I believe slightly increases overconsumption, right? It's like excessive consumption... because I think making it so easy, especially on a social network like TikTok, which is highly addictive, is going to increase a lot the purchases. It's good for brands because they seek profit, but I think there will be some social implications.*

Interviewer - **If you had access to TikTok Shop, would you buy clothes there?**

Interviewee 7 - *Considering that he can, for example, buy directly from the brand through that, I won't be hypocritical and say that I wouldn't be influenced because, for instance, my TikTok feed has a lot of different things, but when it comes to the clothing that appears or clothing hauls, I think that when someone is showing a clothing haul or a brand showcases new items, etc. The fact that I can load it directly and make the purchase, I think so, I think I will use it. I hope I don't use it excessively, otherwise I'll have to uninstall TikTok. Especially because this already happens, but in an indirect way. Isn't it? For example, these hauls I just mentioned, not only in fashion but also in cosmetics, are often seen, especially among girls in their teenage*

years who are more impressionable, immediately leaving the TikTok app and going straight to the brand's app or to "Sephora" or "Zara," etc., to make a purchase right away. So, this is only making that process even easier.

Interviewer - Do you think that digital innovations, such as shopping apps, e-commerce platforms, and social media, have influenced your sustainable fashion purchases? In what way?

Interviewee 7 – *Yes! It makes my process easier, it facilitates a purchase, and I think that's just it in general.*

Interviewer - Do you think that digital transformation initiatives encourage people to adopt sustainable fashion more? Why?

Interviewee 7 - *Honestly, I suspect not, but we'll see. I believe that the fact of this digital transformation, as I mentioned earlier, allows consumers to access information more easily and quickly than before. This, in turn, helps consumers to be better informed. However, on the other hand, it also facilitates excessive consumption; the ability to shop online has made it so that we can buy more and more quickly and easily, and it's no longer even necessary to enter banking details. Just think about "ApplePay", which really makes the whole payment process easier and everything else... This leads to an increase in consumption.*

Interviewer - What do you think are the biggest challenges and opportunities for social shopping platforms in promoting sustainable fashion?

Interviewee 7 - *In the promotion and sale of more sustainable products, I believe that this digital transformation and the fact that accessibility brings ease to purchasing. I think the biggest advantages are more information, greater ease, and speed in purchasing. The disadvantage is that it leads to excessive consumption; I think that such ease in purchasing makes the consumer want to buy even more. For example, if the consumer were to exchange a non-sustainable purchase for a sustainable one, that would be a good step, but we must not forget that if only sustainable products are bought, but in excess, it still end up being unsustainable. Therefore, I think one of the biggest barriers must be this, that is, making more conscious choices, but not excessively, not buying too much. Because on the one hand, companies that want to sell and make a profit, by claiming to be sustainable, are offering a more sustainable solution, but they want people to buy more and more.*

Interviewer - And there you have it, it's done. Thank you very much for your time and for sharing your opinions. Your contribution is crucial for understanding how digital transformation is affecting consumers' attitudes and behaviors towards sustainability in fashion.

Appendix J – Transcription of the Interview 8

Interviewer - Hello! First of all, I thank you for your participation in this interview. Your responses are extremely important for my research on how does Social Commerce influences attitudes and consumer behaviors toward adopting sustainable fashion. The aim of this study is to understand how Digital Transformation is impacting attitudes and behaviors towards sustainable fashion. **Firstly, could you tell me a little about yourself?**

Interviewee 8 – *Sure, I am 23 years old. I am currently pursuing a master's degree in Communication and Digital Transformation.*

Interviewer - Thank you. Our interview will be divided into 5 sections. The first section is about consumers' attitudes and perceptions regarding sustainability and social shopping. Social shopping combines e-commerce with social networks, meaning it allows you to purchase directly on platforms like Instagram or Facebook, for example. That being said, I would like to know **what do you understand by sustainability?**

Interviewee 8 - *Yes, sustainability, I would say, is a conscious attitude towards the preservation of the environment.*

Interviewer – And **what is the importance of sustainability in your daily life?**

Interviewee 8 - *I am very aware that we are already living on credit on Earth, that we have taken a lot from the environment. So I try to have, I do my best, I know I have many flaws, I have very small actions like turning off the water when I'm brushing my teeth, recycling... But I feel that they are small actions, they don't have a big impact.*

Interviewer - But, it's already something!

Interviewee 8 – *Truth!*

Interviewer - **Do you consider yourself a person interested in fashion?**

Interviewee 8- *Yes, I love fashion! Since childhood.*

Interviewer - As you know, the fashion industry is one of the most polluting and wasteful to the planet. So, **what is your perception of sustainable fashion within the fashion industry?**

Interviewee 8 - *I think she is super important, but she is not accessible, which makes it a much bigger problem... because today, with social media, I feel that we have a much greater desire*

to consume. Mainly when we think about the "short forms" of content, when we enter TikTok, each person is showcasing a different product, demonstrating a different product, presenting a different style, a different trend, and people have a strong desire to consume. They end up being much more expensive products because they require much more care and very specific materials, with very specific maintenance that makes it impossible to maintain quality and an affordable price for us.

Interviewer - Have you ever seen or read reports on social media about the topic of sustainability in the fashion industry?

Interviewee 8 - For me, it has appeared very few times... but mainly in relation to the biggest Fast Fashion companies, "Shein" and "Zara", it is very much connected to the impact they have on the environment. But the ethical aspect of working conditions as well.

Interviewer - Can you identify some consequences of unsustainable consumption in the fashion industry?

Interviewee 8 - I would say that they end up having a snowball effect where the greater the consumption, the greater the production, and without sustainable care, this ultimately only affects the environment even more.

Interviewer - Do you think fashion brands use social media effectively to communicate their sustainable practices?

Interviewee 8 - I think that brands with a sustainable side do indeed become a very significant banner. Some try, right, but some brands end up being more of a greenwashing effort during specific times than anything else. But I feel that brands that lack this hide it, in the best way they can, by shifting the focus to something else, emphasizing the options they have more of, the new trends they are bringing. But I think that when the focus is on sustainability, they are quite transparent about it.

Interviewer - Do you take into account the sustainability practices of brands in your purchasing decisions?

Interviewee 8 - I do have that in mind, but I feel that I think much more about the working conditions and the quality of the clothing itself, because I also know that the industry has shut down; there are pieces made of good material and good quality as well. However, when I go to buy a piece, I also think a lot about the durability it will have.

Interviewer - What is your reaction to seeing a fashion brand promoting its sustainability efforts on social media? Does this influence your confidence in the brand?

Interviewee 8 - *I think I would say not really. Because that's how it is, no matter how much they show concrete evidence, I never know to what extent they are really being honest. And it's very much like that; I think a lot about when we studied communication and the spiral of silence, which shows one thing to hide another: "Are all of their practices sustainable?" "Do they show the sustainable side and for science show another?" Or even they have terrible working conditions for people. They always go to developing countries to find much cheaper labor, but they have a specific section or one that cares about sustainability... no, that doesn't inspire much confidence in me.*

Interviewer - Do you think fashion brands are doing enough to be sustainable? Why?

Interviewee 8 – *I don't think, I believe that the focus is too much on consumption and mass consumption, at least when I talk about fast fashion. And I also don't feel that commitment from luxury brands... I don't think they have that commitment. Obviously, they don't have the same mass impact as other brands do, but I also don't see it in a concrete way.*

Interviewer - Do you think that social shopping platforms play a role in your perception of sustainability in fashion?

Interviewee 8 - *I don't know, because I usually don't buy through platforms like this. I usually go to the official website. I never bought through Facebook, not even from TikTok Shop. It's something I've never done, but what I feel about this way of purchasing is very much that it's just a transfer, a transfer of the same product from the same brand to another space. No, I don't feel that they will have an impact on sustainability.*

Interviewer - And now the last question of this section, can you identify any sustainable fashion brand?

Interviewee 8 – *No... I don't remember any.*

Interviewer - Now let's move on to the second section, which is about the barriers to the adoption of sustainable fashion. Can you identify any barriers that prevent you from buying sustainable fashion?

Interviewee 8 – *The price. I can't think of another example besides the price. Aside from the price, I don't think I can come up with an example like that; perhaps, look at the lack of*

promotion on social media, because I feel that we have much more access to Fast Fashion. And finally, the main trends, when we talk about these more sustainable brands, what comes to my mind is this mass production and the very quick search for rapid results and trends. So I would say, perhaps the lack of promotion for these brands as well.

Interviewer - How can brands and the fashion industry overcome barriers and encourage the adoption of sustainable practices?

Interviewee 8 - I think the first step would be communication once again, perhaps even considering influencers and putting people as spokespersons for this cause to draw attention. I don't know, I also think about the idea that there should be public policies not only for decent work for the people employed in these companies, but also regarding the impact they have on the environment, and that they should be held accountable in some way. But thinking about our communication side, I believe it would be a good idea to start with, well, stronger promotions from environmental NGOs, but also from the more sustainable companies themselves. They will expand their platform through more concrete post influences, explaining in a practical and transparent way how their processes work.

Interviewer - And now do you like or would you like to buy sustainable fashion?

Interviewee 8 - Yes, I would like that! Finally, I have a lot of clothes. I'm going to check back here, but I don't know; I have clothes here that are over 40 years old because in my family it's a strong tradition to pass clothes from one person to another. And finally, I am the youngest granddaughter, so I have clothes from everyone. But I would indeed like to expand a little on this point, as I believe that our purchasing decisions say a lot about where we place our money, and we are impacting the world in some way.

Interviewer - What would help you to consume fashion more responsibly? That's why there was more communication, so the price would drop?

Interviewee 8 - I think that the issue of price is something very personal for me, and knowing that the quality of the product is very high, they are indeed able to bring durability to a sustainable product. I wouldn't mind paying a little extra, especially since we know there are certain brands that we buy and by the next year they are no longer usable; you only wore it this summer, and by next summer it can't be worn again.

Interviewer - We now enter the third section, which is about the motivations for adopting sustainable fashion. Have you ever had an experience where you chose sustainable fashion

over conventional options? Has it ever happened to you to think, I need a sweater, and instead of going to “Zara”, you went to a sustainable brand?

Interviewee 8 – *No, I don't think anything specific like this.*

Interviewer - **Do your friends, family, digital influencers, or social shopping platforms influence or impact your sustainable fashion choices? How? Can you give an example?**

Interviewee 8 - *I believe that our environment influences us; in fact, I think that social media has this impact. Yes, for example, a very specific brand, "Shein", is a brand I have never purchased from precisely because of how much I have seen about their exposure on social media regarding how they are much more polluting than "Zara", for instance. And I do think that it has that impact. I have Fast Fashion clothes, yes; I don't think it's something that has completely prevented me from buying from brands that aren't very sustainable, but it does help. Certainly, they help in a certain way.*

Interviewer - **Have you experienced any changes in your shopping habits due to becoming more aware of sustainable fashion practices?**

Interviewee 8 - *I think that lately, my biggest concern has been that I've reduced my consumption of some Fast Fashion brands a lot. I think that maybe I've developed a slightly more conscious consumption, but I believe that sustainability was just one of the factors. I don't know, it was a lot too... I feel that when we are teenagers, we have a bit more, more closeness to these trends. It's that thing that's a bit faster, and I don't know about us, we reach our mid-20s, and we also start creating our own style. And it's what makes sense to us beyond trends. But I think so, I believe that sustainability is one of the factors. It's something I have to be aware of, but I wouldn't say it was the main factor for this kind of change.*

Interviewer - Now let's move on to the second to end section, which is about the intention to adopt sustainable fashion. So, **what are the main factors that influence your decision to buy clothes, in general?**

Interviewee 8 - *Clothes in general?*

Interviewer - What do you take into account when you go shopping for clothes?

Interviewee 8 - *Regarding the material, it's something I pay a lot of attention to, the issue of durability. With the pandemic, I started doing more online shopping than I did before, gaining more confidence in buying online, which wasn't a habit I had before. I used to go to the store,*

check the sizes, and with the pandemic, I really started shopping more online. I would say that the material, the brand, as well as the overall quality of the brand, and depending on the item, the need I have for it.

Interviewer - Do you intend to increase your sustainable fashion purchases in the future? Why?

Interviewee 8 - *Yes, because I believe that, although the efforts of large fast fashion companies could save the world and the environment, it will be the efforts of those big fast fashion companies, I think that our small actions also matter a lot.*

Interviewer - What more could be done to increase your intention to adopt sustainable fashion?

Interviewee 8 - *I think there should be greater transparency from brands, especially sustainable brands. They should also make a greater effort, as I mentioned before, to really show what they are doing, and in the end, they need to promote themselves and put themselves more in the spotlight in this way.*

Interviewer - What are the main barriers that prevent consumers from turning their intentions into concrete actions to buy sustainable fashion?

Interviewee 8 - *Lack of information, lack of trust as well. I think that even the posts I've seen on social media talking about how some Fast Fashion brands are harmful to the environment, I don't know the impact they have. I think it's also a phenomenon of the social media algorithm. There isn't much we can do in that regard either. But I think that's it, and thinking about the consumer, very generally... I would also say it's the price. It's obvious that in Fast Fashion we can buy a sweater for €1, and it's very accessible for many people. Now you have to be very mindful to stop and think if it is €1, what kind of work was done? What type of material was it?*

Interviewer - Behind this, right?

Interviewee 8 - *Exactly.*

Interviewer - How often do you buy clothes from brands that are considered sustainable?

Interviewee 8 – *Not many times, I would say never.*

Interviewer – Our last section combines social shopping with the behavior of adopting sustainable fashion. **Do you usually shop for clothes online? If so, where?**

Interviewee 8 - *I usually do! The last purchase I made was at the British store "House of CB".*

Interviewer - In other words, you usually go to the brand's own website, or do you visit other sites that resell various brands in one place? On social media?

Interviewee 8 – *I usually go to the brand's own website. But with influencers, one thing I sometimes stop to look at is their Amazon storefront. But through social media, I've never done it.*

Interviewer - OK, do you think that digital transformation has had any impact on your perception and knowledge about sustainable fashion?

Interviewee 8 - *Yes, because I feel that without social media, these forms wouldn't be exposed in more traditional media; I don't think they would have the same circulation they do. But, I don't know, I feel that my algorithm also leans a bit more towards environmental causes and animal causes as well. So I would say that in my specific case, yes, but I can't say what it's like for everyone. I can only talk about myself, about my algorithm.*

Interviewer - Do you think brands are adopting more sustainable practices due to pressure from consumers on social media?

Interviewee 8 – *Some, I think so, because I believe that consumers put this pressure on brands, and the brands that have a greater capacity and don't produce as much in mass have this possibility, and some even show some efforts that are sometimes minimal, but they are something. But as for Fast Fashion, I've never seen "Zara" or "Shein", at least.*

Interviewer - What role do you think e-commerce platforms play in the search for sustainable fashion brands?

Interviewee 8 - *I think it's a way for them to have greater exposure, which is super important because I feel that here, especially when thinking about how we consume content... like on TikTok, the more they have a somewhat stronger presence on these platforms where there are many people, I believe that repetition creates a lot of curiosity and a strong desire to learn a bit more about the brand.*

Interviewer - So, I don't know if you know what TikTok Shop?

Interviewee 8 - *I have an idea, but. More or less I know, I know it would be a shopping platform through TikTok, but I'm not sure.*

Interviewer - Now I will read a text explaining what TikTok Shop is, which does not exist here yet. Basically, TikTok Shop is an online store integrated within TikTok, where users can create promotional content and sell those products directly within the TikTok app. The TikTok Shop allows retailers to showcase different product catalogs and enables direct purchases without users having to leave the app, similar to what is already happening in e-commerce. Users can add items to their shopping cart and complete the payment process securely while watching brief videos or live-streaming events. With this interaction and real-time product demonstrations, along with the possibility of instant purchase, this new feature makes the most of TikTok's interactive and engaging qualities to enhance the consumer shopping experience. That said, **what do you think about the possibility of buying products directly in the TikTok Shop app during live broadcasts, without leaving the live stream or the app?**

Interviewee 8 - *I think it's something that promotes consumption and can help sustainable brands. It's something that can help them a lot too, but it's because as consumption has increased for all brands, it will also rise for those that don't have this sustainable focus.*

Interviewer - **If you had access to TikTok Shop, would you buy clothes there?**

Interviewee 8 - *I think so. I think so, I think. I believe that the organization, at least from my understanding of TikTok Shop, allows for security, because I think that online shopping also involves the place where you are entering your data and, well, some concerns as well. I think so, I would.*

Interviewer - **Do you think that digital innovations, such as shopping apps, e-commerce platforms, and social media, have influenced your sustainable fashion purchases? In what way?**

Interviewee 8 - *I would say that they end up promoting these brands as well, so I would say that they also lead me to these brands. I ended up having greater access to information and the brand's products, and finally, the ease of shopping, of online purchasing also gives access to the product itself, because I think that, at least speaking for myself, before the pandemic, I was a bit more apprehensive about the size of things, and then as it became a safer alternative, I got used to it, and nowadays the store environment bothers me a little because I know there are fewer options than on the website. But I would say, I would say that there is an influence, yes. Not yet, it's not enough for all the reasons I mentioned, but yes, it does have an influence.*

Interviewer - Do you think that digital transformation initiatives encourage more people to adopt sustainable fashion? Why?

Interviewee 8 – *Yes, and I think that being in the master's program where we are, we really believe in these initiatives.*

Interviewer - These actions. Now the last question, what do you think are the biggest challenges and opportunities for social shopping platforms in promoting sustainable fashion?

Interviewee 8 – *In terms of opportunities, I would say that these platforms give brands a much larger audience and also ease, because I feel that when you enter a place like Colombo, for example, you come across many Fast Fashion brands. I feel that sustainable brands do not have a physical space with the same presence, size, and variety. So I think that expanding to an online format with this ease will attract more people who can buy from this brand.*

Interviewer - And what would the challenges be?

Interviewee 8 - *The challenges they already face, which is competing with much larger brands that have a lot of variety and many more resources to keep up with the latest trends. Yes, I think that, as this amplifies their voice, it will also amplify the voices of brands that already have a lot of power. So I believe one of the main challenges is also the issue of communication; they need to be very transparent and clearly show why their product has advantages that go beyond the others.*

Interviewer - Thank you! Thank you very much for your time and for sharing your opinions.

Appendix K – Transcription of the Interview 9

Interviewer - Hello! First of all, I thank you for your participation in this interview. Your responses are extremely important for my research on how does Social Commerce influences attitudes and consumer behaviors toward adopting sustainable fashion. The objective of this study is to understand how Digital Transformation is impacting attitudes and behaviors towards sustainable fashion. **Firstly, could you tell me a little about yourself?**

Interviewee 9- *OK, I am 22 years old, I am from Lisbon, and I am pursuing a master's degree in communication sciences at the Universidade Católica Portuguesa, more precisely in the Faculty of Human Sciences.*

Interviewer - Thank you. Our interview will be divided into 5 sections. The first section is about consumers' attitudes and perceptions regarding sustainability and social shopping. Social shopping combines e-commerce with social networks, meaning it allows you to purchase directly on platforms like Instagram or Facebook, for example. That said, I would like to know, **what do you understand by sustainability?**

Interviewee 9 - *Ok, so for me, sustainability is about finding a balance, let's say, in terms of taking care of the planet, the economy, and society. So, these 3 great facets will ensure that we can all live well, both now and in the future. Therefore, also save resources for later and not just think about the present.*

Interviewer - E **What is the importance of sustainability in your daily life, in your everyday routine? Is it something you take into consideration, or do you not?**

Interviewee 9 - *Yes, I feel that sustainability is important in my daily life. For example, I always try to recycle whenever possible, and I try to choose more local products that are closer to my home, like those from grocery stores or smaller shops, to support the local economy. Also, I walk more whenever I can. Therefore, I only take the car when it's longer distances. For example, when I was doing my internship, I always took public transport even though it was possible to go by car; I think that if we have the opportunity to use public transport, it's important. So, and I think I'm also trying to reduce plastic, which is something I also have. I do my part, but I've also noticed that several stores have adapted to this aspect as well. I believe that all these small actions ultimately make a big difference.*

Interviewer - **Do you consider yourself a person interested in fashion?**

Interviewee 9- *Yes, I consider myself. I really like fashion.*

Interviewer - The fashion industry is considered one of the most polluting industries and one that generates the most waste globally. So, my question now would be, **what is your perception of sustainable fashion in the fashion industry?**

Interviewee 9 - *I feel that sustainable fashion is a way to reduce the environmental impact of this industry, which is huge, one of the largest industries, by using eco-friendly materials and also sustainable and ethical practices. And I feel that this is essentially it.*

Interviewer - **Have you ever seen or read reports on social media about the topic of sustainability in the fashion industry?**

Interviewee 9 - *Ok, Sure, sometimes, for example, I also follow several influencers who have these more sustainable practices, and I end up learning about practices through them as well. Let's put it this way, it doesn't mean that I read newspapers or news, even on websites, but I end up knowing about things through what they publish and often reference in their stories or in posts that also have that concern.*

Interviewer - So you would say that you see more on Instagram, for example.

Interviewee 9 - *Yes, I feel like I see more on Instagram, but now I've also been seeing it on TikTok.*

Interviewer - OK.

Interviewee 9 - *I think that since I follow several influencers who have these environmental concerns, various brands that are also sustainable and produce ethically start to appear as well. So, it all ends up aligning a bit with what I'm interested in seeing.*

Interviewer - **Can you identify some consequences of unsustainable consumption in the fashion industry?**

Interviewee 9 - *Yes, I feel that, well, especially the increase in pollution and also the poor working conditions that exist. And, mainly, the waste of various natural resources. And also, the negative impacts on the health of local communities. But I feel that I should highlight here the poor working conditions, because when there is this unsustainable consumption that we have in the fashion industry, there must also be unsustainable production, and with this mass production, there end up being no good working conditions for all the workers who make these pieces. I think this is also one of the biggest problems that exist.*

Interviewer - Do you think fashion brands use social media effectively to communicate their sustainable practices?

Interviewee 9 - *I feel that it really depends a lot from brand to brand, but I sense that the brands that are emerging now, especially the more Portuguese ones. They usually use social media effectively to educate consumers about their sustainable practices and promote transparency, but I feel that this is more evident among Portuguese brands, perhaps because I also follow more Portuguese brands and am more aware of what they do. But for example, if we talk about fast fashion brands, perhaps there isn't as much concern, although I feel that there is starting to be more awareness. However, I don't think that's the main focus of these brands, while smaller brands always try to concentrate more on these issues. Now I'm remembering one that is "Ivory". I don't know if you know what it is?*

Interviewer – I know.

Interviewee 9 - *So, I feel that they, besides trying to convey the message about mental health, among other issues, are also very aware of sustainability and that they make all their pieces with that in mind. With great care and also ethical concerns. Therefore, I feel that this is also a brand that explores this sense a lot here. And then, perhaps, I also wanted to mention "Conscious The Label", which is a Portuguese brand as well, and I think it also shares this concern.*

Interviewer - Do you take into account the sustainability practices of brands in your purchasing decisions?

Interviewee 9 - *It's like this, I confess that I think I have more now. Therefore, I feel that I also like to buy things that I know will last longer and are of better quality. I also try to look for brands that are more sustainable or smaller, and I end up considering sustainability practices as well, because for an item to last longer, it is logically related to having sustainable practices in place. Therefore, I feel that I prioritize those who truly show a real commitment to sustainability. Yes, or I try.*

Interviewer - What is your reaction to seeing a fashion brand promoting its sustainability efforts on social media? Does this influence your confidence in the brand?

Interviewee 9 - *Yes, I think it usually increases my confidence in the brand because it will demonstrate transparency and also a commitment to ethical practices, as I mentioned before.*

Interviewer - Do you think fashion brands are doing enough to be sustainable? Why?

Interviewee 9 - *I think some brands are making significant progress, but I feel that many still aren't doing enough, let's say, also due to economic barriers and the pressure for low prices and fast production that we have nowadays. But I feel that there is and it feels more and more of this concern. But yes, we still have a long way to go; these brands still have a long way to go.*

Interviewer - **Do you think social shopping platforms play a role in your perception of fashion sustainability?**

Interviewee 9 - *I confess that I'm not very up to date, that is, I sometimes end up noticing stores where you can shop directly through Instagram, but I personally prefer to visit the website to check things out... I feel it's more reliable. If I go to the website and read about it, especially if it's a brand I'm not familiar with, I like to learn about the brand, understand what it is, and then eventually make a purchase. But I feel that I'm not very comfortable when I log into the social network, so to speak.*

Interviewer - **Do you think social shopping platforms play a role in your perception and knowledge about sustainability?**

Interviewee 9 - *I don't think so. I think I don't think it ends, or rather, what ends up playing a bigger role in my view is really going to the website to research, to understand how sustainable they say they are, and not just the products they present. I always end up going to the website because I always like to compare what's on the site with what's on social media. In this case, if I see a store on Instagram, I always like to go to the website and check it there to also confirm things.*

Interviewer - **Can you identify any sustainable fashion brand?**

Interviewee 9 - *The brand that comes to mind the most is "Patagonia," mainly because it's the one I've known the longest and I know that they are more up-to-date on these practices, so to speak, and not just following these practices because they are trendy. Let's say now, because now, there is a big wave of wanting to be sustainable, but it ends up being a bit of greenwashing, and I feel that they try to sell the message rather than the product. So, they try to convey a message, and their goal is not for people to buy as much as they can, is it? After all, they have a program that provides for us, meaning the people who buy; if the item breaks, they fix it, so they want to give a second life to the pieces instead of buying new ones.*

Interviewer - To give a new life.

Interviewee 9 - *Exactly.*

Interviewer - Now let's move on to our second section, which relates to the barriers to the adoption of sustainable fashion. **Can you identify any barriers that prevent you from buying sustainable fashion?**

Interviewee 9 - *It's like this: even though I already make more sustainable fashion purchases, I feel that since I don't receive a salary yet—well, I will start receiving it soon—but since I don't receive it yet, I feel that the high price is a significant barrier. Because sometimes I think, for a sweater, I can get one for €10 from a fast fashion brand, while a sweater that is more sustainable and that I will contribute to that side as well, but between giving €10 and €90, in my case, it makes a big difference. But what I feel is that when I start receiving, maybe then I'll begin to outline more and realize that it might be better to invest the money I have in those pieces. But for now, I think the high price is still a significant barrier; and then I feel that it's the limited availability, because many of these sustainable brands are often only available online. And then, it's not possible to really try the product, or they sell out very quickly, and so I feel that this sometimes let me go of this idea. In other words, I confess that sometimes, when there are those smaller, more sustainable brand markets, I enjoy it because I can try things on and see the pieces in my hands. But if I don't know the brand and only see it online, sometimes I might not feel comfortable.*

Interviewer - It is true, indeed.

Interviewee 9 - *I would like to try on first... for example, pants; it's something I always like to try on.*

Interviewer - **How can brands and the fashion industry overcome barriers and encourage the adoption of sustainable practices?**

Interviewee 9 - *I believe that brands can further educate consumers about the benefits of sustainable fashion. I feel that there is a lot of greenwashing now, and it ends up confusing consumers a bit. I think they can also increase the accessibility of sustainable products. I know this seems a bit contradictory, let's say, because sustainable products will inevitably have to be more expensive, precisely because of the materials used. And because, so, the workforce ends up not being massed like in others, but I feel that this would also be important. I believe that one can also invest in innovations. In other words, to make it possible to reduce prices and costs associated with sustainable production.*

Interviewer - Do you like or would you like to buy sustainable fashion?

Interviewee 9 - *I like to buy sustainable fashion, that is, even from smaller Portuguese brands, because I feel like I'm helping small businesses, and therefore, I feel good about buying sustainable fashion. And also because I know it will inevitably last longer, more time, right? But I would definitely like to be able to buy more. Sometimes I don't buy anymore because, well, there it is, economic power, and since I don't have my own salary, it ends up being complicated.*

Interviewer - What would help you consume fashion more responsibly?

Interviewee 9 – *Well, that was what I mentioned earlier: the availability and the price. I feel that sometimes we are also a bit misled by greenwashing. Therefore, having better education about the impacts of sustainable fashion and about sustainable brands, as well as greater availability of sustainable products, and more small markets with local brands and products for us to see in hand. One possibility could also be they create pop-up stores, in crowded streets, or even in shopping malls, that would really make a difference I think. And I also don't know how, but I feel that there should be more affordable prices that would help consume more responsibly, even if it's just sales, for example, that are coming to an end. A collection of these sustainable brands, even if it's just clearance sales at this stage of selling, let's say, but there should be innovative ways that brands could adopt to make an effort in this direction.*

Interviewer - Now let's move on to our third section, which is the motivations for adopting sustainable fashion. **Have you ever had an experience where you chose sustainable fashion over conventional options?**

Interviewee 9 - *I think I can talk about my bikinis... because almost all of my bikinis are sustainable, let's say, and the brand I buy the most from is "Cantê", which also has this concern for sustainability. But also in terms of shoes, there have been a few times when I ended up buying a pair made from recycled materials, from a brand that prioritized sustainability, instead of buying a pair that might have cost more than half the price, but then wouldn't last as long as these did, you know. And then I also feel that these products, speaking from my experience, end up having excellent quality and design. So, I have a swimsuit from "Cantê" that has lasted me for 5 years, and I feel that when I buy others that cost me €10 or €5 or €20 or whatever, they only end up lasting me a year. Therefore, I feel that there is also a greater investment, but I believe that in the end it pays off in the long run.*

Interviewer - You have a response.

Interviewee 9 – *Exactly.*

Interviewer - **Do your friends, family, digital influencers, or social shopping platforms influence or impact your sustainable fashion choices? How? Can you give an example?**

Interviewee 9 - *I think it's mainly because of digital influencers and the platforms, especially TikTok. I feel that TikTok is coming to an end for me, partly because my algorithm reflects that, but I do end up discovering new sustainable brands through TikTok. There are many influencers doing hauls of sustainable brands and sustainable pieces that end up catching my interest because I already know that item will last longer. I feel that since I am influenced in this way, I also have to follow more and more influencers who have this approach, which makes me see things, well, differently as well, and it ends up influencing my choices.*

Interviewer - **Have you experienced any changes in your shopping habits due to becoming more aware of sustainable fashion practices?**

Interviewee 9 - *Yes, I think that was what I was saying, I try to buy, I obviously try to buy less. Now, for example, there were sales, I didn't buy anything during the sales, for instance. Therefore, I feel that I try to buy less, and then when I do shop, I try to invest in pieces that I know I like and that will be of higher quality and last longer.*

Interviewer - Be more aware.

Interviewee 9 - *Exactly, so I think I prefer to buy from brands that I know will have more durability in that aspect, because I believe that durability and sustainable practices are related, not always, but I think they are. Therefore, since I also have a strong interest in having pieces that last, I think I will inevitably end up being interested in brands that apply sustainable practices.*

Interviewer – You don't you mind making that investment.

Interviewee 9 - *Yes, exactly.*

Interviewer - Now let's move on to our fourth section, which is the intention to adopt sustainable fashion. **What are the main factors that influence your decision to buy clothes, in general?**

Interviewee 9 - *OK, I feel that there is obviously quality, well, and the price too. And I feel that it greatly influences the brand. Therefore, I feel that I no longer look for mundane brands as*

much, but rather seek out different brands that stand out. That's it. Therefore, I think I would mention the brand, the quality, and the price, mainly. Ah, and the design as well!

Interviewer - You will say these 3.

Interviewee 9 - *Exactly.*

Interviewer - **Do you intend to increase your purchases of sustainable fashion in the future? Why?**

Interviewee 9 - *Yes, I intend to further increase my purchases of sustainable fashion, because, well, I believe in the importance of supporting these practices. It's not that they minimize the environmental impact, but I think it's very important to promote social justice in the promotion chain. In other words, I think that's it, and I believe it's something that still has a long way to go. Now, when I receive my money, I can support this sustainability cause, especially because, well, I think it's been more complicated until now because... So, we, since we are still studying, have to manage our money well, right? But I feel that I do want to increase my intention to make sustainable purchases in the future, yes.*

Interviewer - **What more could be done to increase your intention to adopt sustainable fashion?**

Interviewee 9 - *Obtain more information about the benefits of sustainable fashion, greater availability of products, and, as I mentioned earlier, more affordable prices. And also, to have more educational campaigns to raise awareness among consumers, and it would be important to introduce this in schools as well, right from the start, so that children also have, let's say, concern for this aspect.*

Interviewer - **What are the main barriers that prevent consumers from turning their intentions into concrete actions to buy sustainable fashion?**

Interviewee 9 - *No, I feel that the factor I believe is general is the price, without a doubt. Because I realize that the people around me, obviously, some have more economic power than others, but I feel that there is always a price to pay, both for those with economic power and for those without it. If they can buy 2 pairs of sneakers instead of one, people will prefer to buy 2 pairs of sneakers. So I feel that, exactly, it will always depend on the price. But pay attention, the people around me are also studying, so practically none of them receive their own salary yet. Therefore, comparing them to older people I know, the situation changes a bit, because I have friends who already know what it's like to have their own salary and who might prefer to*

buy a specific piece that is of higher quality, or a blazer that will be of better quality for work, or trousers that will last longer; so they take that care. Therefore, I think it also depends a bit on age, the barriers that will influence each consumer. But I feel that, I mean, I think it would mainly be the price, the lack of availability to see the products in hand, and the lack of information and understanding of what sustainable fashion is due to greenwashing.

Interviewer - How often do you buy clothes from brands that are considered sustainable?

Interviewee 9 - *I feel that, as I've already said, I buy sustainable clothing brands sometimes, not as often as I would like, but I do purchase a few times a year. However, mainly what I'm trying to do now is buy less clothing, so when I do buy, I make sure it will last and invest in pieces that I absolutely love; it's not just about picking something up, trying it on, and that's it. When I generally find good options that align with my purchasing criteria, I end up taking that into consideration and wanting to buy from more sustainable brands. So, I think this happens a few times, a few times a year, and when I don't buy, I try not to shop at other fast fashion brands.*

Interviewer - In other words, you avoid it; you'd rather invest in a brand that is more expensive, of higher quality, and more sustainable.

Interviewee 9 - *Exactly.*

Interviewer - Now we will enter our last section, which combines social shopping with the behavior of adopting sustainable fashion. **Do you usually shop for clothes online? If so, where?**

Interviewee 9 – *Yes, I usually shop for clothes online. I confess that I have been doing more in-person lately because, as I was saying, I prefer to experiment and so on. But lately, it hasn't been so much about clothes; what I've been ordering more is from Amazon, mostly personal hygiene products, creams, etc. So, when I used to buy clothes, well, that was some time ago, it was from “Zara”. I think it was where I did most of my online shopping, on the brand's app.*

Interviewer - Therefore, you were giving the application of the "Zara" brand app exactly.

Interviewee 9 – *Now I prefer to go to the stores and understand things in the store itself. Unless, of course, it's a brand that shows up on Instagram and I feel it will have quality, then I would order it, but I think it really depends a lot. Therefore, I would say no to clothing, but I use "Amazon" to quickly make my online purchases, various things. I used to use the "Zara" app a*

lot, but not so much anymore, and then sometimes when I want to buy something more sustainable or more durable, I end up ordering from that specific brand's website.

Interviewer - Do you think that digital transformation has had any impact on your perception and knowledge of sustainable fashion?

Interviewee 9 – *Yes, and I think that, in a way, it has made access to information about sustainable fashion easier and has also allowed me to discover new brands and products, as I mentioned, and obviously, in a more convenient way, because I can do it through my phone, right? And I am also more informed because there are articles and various ways to verify whether that brand is truly sustainable or not, even though we can sometimes be deceived. But I think so, I believe it ends up helping.*

Interviewer - Do you think brands are adopting more sustainable practices due to pressure from consumers on social media?

Interviewee 9 - *Yes, without a doubt. I think the pressure from consumers on social media has led many brands to adopt more sustainable practices. Also to meet the growing demand for transparency and environmental responsibility from the brands themselves, I believe that yes, there is increasingly more pressure from consumers.*

Interviewer - What role do you think e-commerce platforms play in the search for sustainable fashion brands?

Interviewee 9 - *I believe that e-commerce platforms play a crucial role in a way, because, well, they offer a variety of sustainable options, right? They also facilitate product comparison and provide information about the practices of brands, which I think is very important. They also help to promote the visibility of sustainable brands and educate consumers in terms of more responsible choices.*

Interviewer - Now I will read a text explaining what TikTok Shop is, which doesn't exist here yet. Basically, TikTok Shop is an online store integrated within TikTok, where users can create promotional content and sell those products directly within the TikTok app. The TikTok Shop allows retailers to showcase different product catalogs and enables direct purchases without users having to leave the app, similar to what is already happening in e-commerce. Users can add items to their shopping cart and complete the payment process securely while watching brief videos or live streaming events. With this interaction and real-time product demonstrations, along with the possibility of instant purchase, this new feature makes the most

of TikTok's interactive and engaging qualities to enhance the consumer shopping experience. That said, **what do you think about the possibility of buying products directly in the TikTok Shop during live broadcasts, without leaving the live stream or the app?**

Interviewee 9 - *I find it interesting. On one hand, because I believe it makes the purchasing process more interactive and convenient as it allows consumers to shop in real time, along with product demonstrations that take place at that moment. But I feel like I wouldn't buy anything during the live streams. I don't know why, also due to the perception of live streams here in Portugal, because I've seen several live streams of people selling those various products, right? And I feel that I'm not sure if I would feel very secure buying through live streams. Let's say that I also feel it's because of the concept we have here in Portugal. So I think that if the concept had been introduced differently... it would be a bit different. Therefore, I don't think I would be very curious about going through the process myself, but I believe there are people who find the interactive process convenient for them.*

Interviewer - **If you had access to TikTok Shop, would you buy clothes there?**

Interviewee 9 - *No.*

Interviewer - **Do you think that digital innovations, such as shopping apps, e-commerce platforms, and social media, have influenced your sustainable fashion purchases? In what way?**

Interviewee 9 - *I think that these innovations have obviously made it easier to access information about sustainable fashion and have also allowed for the discovery of new products, new brands, and provided a platform for consumers to share and recommend sustainable products as well. As I have already mentioned, I think it was quite important, and I obviously believe that it influences my sustainable fashion purchases.*

Interviewer - **Do you think that digital transformation initiatives encourage more people to adopt sustainable fashion? Why?**

Interviewee 9 - *Yes, I feel that way too. I believe that these initiatives, obviously from my perspective, will encourage the choice of sustainable fashion, because by making information more accessible and visible, and by connecting consumers with brands that prioritize these ethical practices, platforms like Instagram and TikTok, which are used to promote sustainable brands, will obviously influence consumers' choices, even for those who are already familiar with and follow this type of content, because the algorithm will bring information to them. As*

well as for those who do not follow and are not aware, because sometimes the algorithm also ends up bringing new information to that type of consumer. So, I think that in a way, it will always encourage, at least, the consumer to see... after that, I don't know if there is really practice, but I believe there is always an understanding of things, let's say, and a way of seeing things.

Interviewer - Now the last question, **what do you think are the biggest challenges and opportunities for social shopping platforms in promoting sustainable fashion?**

Interviewee 9 - *Mainly, the biggest challenge I feel there is greenwashing, which refers to deceptive practices. The sustainability that often leads us to believe that a brand is sustainable and then it turns out not to be. I also feel that maintaining transparency and ensuring that products are accessible is important. And I also feel that this aspect of greenwashing comes from the lack of education on the part of consumers, because I believe that if consumers cared more about understanding—obviously, sometimes we are truly deceived—but since there are so many articles and so much information on the Internet, I think we can increasingly develop a critical perspective and really understand whether that brand is sustainable or not, and whether we are truly ready to give a chance to a brand and invest our money in a brand that genuinely has ethical and sustainable concerns. Therefore, I feel that it also aligns with the fact that consumers are increasingly seeking to educate themselves, especially since, typically, on websites and with those brands that we know, there can always be a mistake. For example, it has recently come to light that "Nike" was engaging in practices that were not sustainable, even though the brand has always been known for its sustainable practices. Obviously, this won't be our fault, because if it was advertised to us that way, we had no idea... but I feel that nowadays, there are ways to effectively understand if various brands are truly sustainable and to do that research readily. If we are indeed misled by greenwashing, we should really change our attitudes and seek out more sustainable brands that promote that aspect. But I do feel that these are the biggest challenges, which are greenwashing and also maintaining transparency throughout the entire production process of sustainable brands. And I feel that opportunities include the possibility of educating consumers, especially since I believe this is very important. And also, more than what is already being done, promote more sustainable brands and make consumers more aware of sustainable brands. Because I feel that sustainable brands are very present online, I completely agree, but the problem is that many people who are not online and who do not use online platforms are unaware of these brands. Therefore, there ends up being*

no interest in these brands because they also lack knowledge about them. Therefore, I also feel that it is necessary to promote these brands not just online.

And for those who are not online, there it is, I think it would be good to start creating on Instagram now, I don't know, you must know what I'm talking about—those communities called broadcast channels that influencers create where they talk about things. These communities are important; at least I follow some influencers who have these communities and end up sharing sustainable things within them. Therefore, I feel that creating communities of conscious consumers will also have an impact, in a way, because we will have more information and will be more informed. I don't know if I can add the question of whether digital influencers have an influence. I just wanted to mention that there's a Portuguese influencer I follow named Salomé Santos, and I end up discovering many brands I now buy through her that I didn't even know were Portuguese or that existed. Therefore, she also does a lot of work in this regard, which is to promote brands, especially Portuguese brands, that she knows are of high quality and will have longevity. Obviously, she also introduces international sustainable brands from other countries, but she is always concerned with showcasing Portuguese brands as well, primarily to support her local community, because she is from Viseu, so she often references stores in Viseu. But, besides Viseu, since she now lives in Porto, I feel that she also does this work for the people of Porto, so she ends up mentioning many stores that are in Porto and that are sustainable. Not only clothing, but also food. She ends up influencing a certain type of people. I like to see it because I feel there is a concern and a commitment to not engage in greenwashing with the brands she introduces. I think this is also quite important. I feel that, as I was saying, I think she is very, very concerned about this, and obviously, more influencers of this kind are now emerging. But I feel that they are always smaller influencers. The other day I was even talking to a friend of mine, and I feel that when an influencer becomes a macro influencer, they end up losing a bit of that connection, you know? I think I feel that the influencers who address these crucial issues the most are micro-influencers, because, well, they have a loyal community that they speak to, which is smaller, and therefore, the message can be delivered more effectively. I think that when they become macro influencers, they stray a bit from that path. Therefore, I feel that influencers who have a smaller community end up conveying their messages more effectively and communicating what they want to share better.

Interviewer - Thank you very much. Thank you so much for your time and for sharing your opinions.

Appendix L – Transcription of the Interview 10

Interviewer - Hello! First of all, I thank you for your participation in this interview. Your responses are extremely important for my research on how does Social Commerce influences attitudes and consumer behaviors toward adopting sustainable fashion. The objective of this study is to understand how Digital Transformation is impacting attitudes and behaviors towards sustainable fashion. **Firstly, could you tell me a little about yourself?**

Interviewee 10- *I am 23 years old, I graduated in Marketing and Advertising, and I live in Sesimbra.*

Interviewer - Thank you. Our interview will be divided into 5 sections. The first section is about consumers' attitudes and perceptions regarding sustainability and social shopping. Social shopping combines e-commerce with social networks, meaning it allows you to purchase directly on platforms like Instagram and Facebook, for example. That being said, I would like to know **what do you understand by sustainability?**

Interviewee 10 - *In my perspective, sustainability means, for example, seeking more sustainable ways to manufacture clothing with materials that are more sustainable, that stray a bit from what is normal, that do not resort to slavery, and that do not use products that are harmful to the environment. I also associate it a bit with the way factories produce, not producing in excess. The other day, a news article appeared in the newspaper about what they did with the donated clothes. It is not donated to charitable institutions; it goes to less developed countries and ultimately ends up being unsustainable. Basically, that's it; it's up to the consumer to be responsible, not just in terms of demand, not to buy so much massively, because what happens is that social media makes us consumers. I feel that nowadays we are extremely consumerist. I also have that problem.*

Interviewer - **What is the importance of sustainability in your life? It's something you take into consideration?**

Interviewee 10 – *I feel that there must be something that makes me remember. If I'm out shopping, I don't even stop to think about this; for example, I've never used plastic bags since I was little because my mom is against plastic, so we carry the fruit in our hands, and then when we get home, we wash the fruit. We don't use water bottles; we have filters. The cotton swabs have to be made of paper so they can disintegrate in water. We don't buy Coca-Cola cans at home; we buy the glass ones because it's ultimately better for the environment. That's why we*

have a bit more awareness, but when it comes to clothing, to fashion itself, I feel that I'm very unconscious; if I like it, I just take it and that's it.

Interviewer - Do you consider yourself a person interested in fashion?

Interviewee 10- *Yes, I love fashion!*

Interviewer - As you know, the fashion industry is one of the most polluting and generates the most waste on a global scale. **What is your perception of sustainable fashion in the fashion industry?**

Interviewee 10 - *I don't have a great perception of things. I don't know of brands that are sustainable and make nice clothes at an affordable price, because that's unrealistic, it's completely unrealistic, and obviously, you wouldn't buy something sustainable like you would buy a dress from "Shein," it's just not realistic. I feel that if there are brands like that, they are micro-brands, very small brands. Perhaps in terms of communication, in terms of social media, they don't promote much, or if they do, it's not enough to reach a reasonable number of people. That's why I think these brands are good, because we will have to reach a point where all brands must be sustainable. If we continue like this, nothing will ever change.*

Interviewer - Have you ever seen or read reports on social media about the topic of sustainability in the fashion industry?

Interviewee 10 - *I don't think so on social media. I think the only thing I saw that was impactful enough was actually in the news, and it was that documentary. It was more about the mass consumerism of the fashion industry and how we are consuming things and where those things are going.*

Interviewer - Can you identify some consequences of unsustainable consumption in the fashion industry?

Interviewee 10 - *Yes, I think waste and extreme consumerism are related. But nowadays, the companies we all know are associated with the "Inditex" group; other stores like "Shein" and online shops claim that they were all made in the same factory. In other words, the same factory that produces clothing for a store at €1 also produces clothing for "Zara" at €30 or €40. I wonder how they manage to produce clothes and items at such low prices and how much they are paying the people working there, without any conditions; it's basically slavery.*

Interviewer - Do you think fashion brands use social media effectively to communicate their sustainable practices?

Interviewee 10 - *I think so, just imagine, I might not see it, but I am absolutely sure that there must have been a phase, it must have been around 2 or 3 years ago when brands really started to focus on the topic of sustainability. Therefore, it is absolutely certain that since the only way to communicate nowadays is through social media, they definitely use it that way. Now, whether it is effective, I don't know, but I don't think so. I think it should be a little more, because, you see, I don't see anything, and if I don't see it, it doesn't exist for me.*

Interviewer - Do you take into account the sustainability practices of brands in your purchasing decisions?

Interviewee 10 – *No I don't, at all.*

Interviewer - What is your reaction to seeing a fashion brand promoting its sustainability efforts on social media? Does this influence your confidence in the brand?

Interviewee 10 – *I think it influences us because we are impressionable; anything that appears on the Internet, most of the time, we are going to believe. We are impressionable, and whenever brands publish things related to the good they are doing for society and the community, etc., it always has a significant influence on the consumer. Even if you see the post and it stays in your memory, we will remember it, even unconsciously. I believe it has an impact and that it is important.*

Interviewer - Do you think fashion brands are doing enough to be sustainable? Why?

Interviewee 10 - *I believe that the vast majority are here focusing on the materials, on how they produce, etc., and that ends up being quite good. But if it's something that doesn't influence my day-to-day life, it's not something I'm looking for; I'm not in search of a sustainable brand. If only all brands were like this and did the same, I think then it would be possible to see that such a brand is doing much more than the others. It's not something I really notice, so it's hard for me to say if what they're doing is truly enough.*

Interviewer - Do you think social shopping platforms play a role in your perception of sustainability in fashion?

Interviewee 10 - *Honestly, I don't think so; I believe it has absolutely no influence, quite frankly, because it's practically the same. Everyone has the same; if it were on a website, I think if they*

were using greens and trees and things like that to show it's sustainable, it might attract interest, but now on social media, it's all the same.

Interviewer - Can you identify any sustainable fashion brand?

Interviewee 10 - *None that I know of, genuinely none.*

Interviewer - Now let's move on to the second section, which is barriers to the adoption of sustainable fashion. **Can you identify any barriers that prevent you from buying sustainable fashion?**

Interviewee 10 - *First, we don't even have access to these brands because they are tiny. These brands that are truly sustainable focus on this: the overall image of the brand is sustainability, it's brand image, but we don't even know who they are. I think their communication is very weak, or perhaps the brand itself is too subtle, lacking strong enough communication to gain recognition. Speaking of other aspects, it doesn't have much impact on me, but I know that there are many people who, because of the price, wouldn't buy it because, obviously, something sustainable comes at a cost; things aren't free, and I think that would also have a significant influence. These sustainable brands don't even have physical stores, and there are many people who don't like to shop online; they prefer to try things on, they want to be sure of what they're buying, and I think that can also be a significant barrier.*

Interviewer - How can brands and the fashion industry overcome barriers and encourage the adoption of sustainable practices?

Interviewee 10 - *I think that for this to work, all the brands had to align. I think it's very important; there can't be a brand here that says it doesn't want to participate, because people will always choose what is cheaper, unfortunately, as that ends up being the most important point. Brands need to reach a point where they are not promoting new clothes every week; for example, "Zara" promotes twice a week, which is completely unsustainable. I think that for them to operate at 100%, all the brands would need to come to an agreement with each other. I also believe that communication is extremely important; they need to communicate, and consumers must be educated in this regard, because there are many people who, unfortunately, lack the knowledge. Sustainable fashion brands need to start promoting and discussing this topic more, educating their consumers, because ultimately, if they buy, if they are the future, it is essential for this to happen in order to solve this problem.*

Interviewer - Do you like or would you like to buy sustainable fashion?

Interviewee 10 - *I would like to; I have a lot of interest. If it were beautiful, I would buy it. But I confess that I have a somewhat outdated thought, and it's a stereotype that we are placing on sustainable fashion, because if we think deeply about this issue, yes, when we think of sustainable fashion, I picture very simple things, colorless, dull things, more classic items, but more like naturalist styles, somewhat hippie, but not too hippie; basically, that's what I think. But it's a backward thought and it's completely stereotypical.*

Interviewer - **What would help you consume fashion more responsibly?**

Interviewee 10 – *It would be communication, having more awareness. I also think that these brands we consume should, I know it's a bit unrealistic to say, change everything overnight; that's not realistic. But, for example, starting with a project where, in the store, there was a small section with some products that were 100% sustainable. I think that, initially, it was something good for us to gain more knowledge, to see, and to handle with care. I think many stores are failing in this aspect because I don't even know which stores work with sustainability. I would have to walk around looking for it, and I would like to get there and already find a section where I could just go and check it out, but yes, I think that would be very important. I know that brands work with money, so they don't care about the customer; it's a truth, they only care about profit. We are already reaching a point where things are so bad; to what extent does money compensate for all the damage being done? I don't know to what extent it would be interesting if they created this sustainability section to see who would use it, and maybe it would even generate some revenue.*

Interviewer - We are now entering the third section, which is about the motivations for adopting sustainable fashion. **Have you ever had an experience where you chose sustainable fashion over conventional options?**

Interviewee 10 – *No, it has never happened, I have never had an experience like that and I will explain to you why, because I don't know those brands.*

Interviewer - **Do your friends, family, digital influencers, or social shopping platforms influence or impact your sustainable fashion choices? How? Can you give an example?**

Interviewee 10 - *I think so, if I saw an influencer I like using a sustainable brand and it was something beautiful that looked good, I would definitely follow suit. I've done this so many times; I'm very impressionable.*

Interviewer - Have you experienced any changes in your shopping habits due to becoming more aware of sustainable fashion practices?

Interviewee 10 - *Nowadays, I am more aware; I am much more conscious when I shop. I try not to jump on the microtrends that won't be in fashion in a week. I also try to buy higher quality items so they can last longer and not be the kind of piece that you buy, wash once, and it's already completely ruined. Nowadays, I am much more conscious. I think "Vinted" is fantastic in that sense; besides making money, the item gains a new life, goes to a new home, and is loved as if it were being bought for the first time.*

Interviewer - Now let's move on to the fourth section, which is about the intention to adopt sustainable fashion. So, what are the main factors that influence your decision to buy clothes, in general?

Interviewee 10 – *Ok, the quality of the piece, quality is the most important thing to me. Number 2, besides quality, is also whether the piece can withstand the test of time, meaning if a year from now I will still like the piece. There was a phase in my life when I would buy things without even thinking about whether they would be useful the following year, and nowadays I find that it's a concern I have. If the piece is going to remain a classic, we want our money to be well invested. Then the price in the end, but the price depends on what I am buying; there are certain things that are worth the price.*

Interviewer - Do you intend to increase your sustainable fashion purchases in the future? Why?

Interviewee 10 - *I intend to, but only if brands start to be a little more sustainable, because I think that's really important. If I can't even find a sustainable brand, there's a big problem. I believe that in the future there will be more sustainable stores, so I think that's the path we all will have to take.*

Interviewer - What more could be done to increase your intention to adopt sustainable fashion?

Interviewee 10 - *There should be more awareness and communication, I think that's it.*

Interviewer - What are the main barriers that prevent consumers from turning their intentions into concrete actions to buy sustainable fashion?

Interviewee 10 - *I think that, basically, if a person is in a sustainable store, why wouldn't they buy? I believe that price should be the only concern, but if I go shopping and I'm not buying sustainable items, it's because there aren't any sustainable clothing stores.*

Interviewer - **How often do you buy clothes from brands that are considered sustainable?**

Interviewee 10 – *Never.*

Interviewer - The fifth section is the last one that combines social shopping with the behavior of adopting sustainable fashion. **Do you usually shop for clothes online? If so, where?**

Interviewee 10 – *"Zara", "Massimo Dutti", and "Mango", and I usually use the apps.*

Interviewer - **Do you think that digital transformation has had any impact on your perception and knowledge of sustainable fashion?**

Interviewee 10 – *Without a doubt, because I think the only contact, I've ever had with sustainability was through social media. I think the only contact I've really had was through social media, never in physical stores, never in the app, just on social media.*

Interviewer - **Do you think brands are adopting more sustainable practices due to pressure from consumers on social media?**

Interviewee 10 - *I think so. I think consumers are putting a lot of pressure because, given the current state of the environment, protests, child exploitation, human rights, and so many related issues, we now have people who are educated and knowledgeable enough about these topics to bombard brands' social media. There was a controversy two years ago with "Balenciaga", and they were also boycotted; it had nothing to do with sustainability, but it shows the power that consumers have. If we all come together and decide that we will no longer buy anything from Zara because it is not a sustainable brand, we actually have the power to break their sales, because ultimately, we are the consumers, we are the ones in charge.*

Interviewer - **What role do you think e-commerce platforms play in the search for sustainable fashion brands?**

Interviewee 10 - *I don't think there is any role. Many of them have brands that are not sustainable, producing products that are not sustainable unless they decided to sell sustainable products, but that wasn't very realistic; they wouldn't even make money from that.*

Interviewer - Now I'm going to read a text explaining what TikTok Shop is, which doesn't exist here yet. Basically, TikTok Shop is an online store integrated within TikTok, where users can create promotional content and sell those products directly within the TikTok app. The TikTok Shop allows retailers to showcase different product catalogs and enables direct purchases without users having to leave the app, similar to what is already happening in e-commerce. Users can add items to their shopping cart and complete the payment process securely while watching brief videos or live streaming events. With this interaction and real-time product demonstrations, along with the possibility of instant purchase, this new feature takes full advantage of TikTok's interactive and engaging qualities to enhance the consumer shopping experience. That said, **what do you think about the possibility of buying products directly in the TikTok Shop during live broadcasts, without leaving the live stream or the app?**

Interviewee 10 - *Basically, I've heard about TikTok Shop, and I can see the benefits; I can see that it's an easier and more convenient way to shop. The person says this is the article and you buy it right away, but this is really bad for sustainability. We are once again promoting consumerism, and on top of that, most of the things they are selling are uninteresting products; these are impulse buys, basically promoting impulsive purchasing.*

Interviewer - **If you had access to TikTok Shop, would you buy clothes there?**

Interviewee 10 – *No, never, because it automatically gives me the impression of zero quality. It doesn't inspire confidence in me, that feeling of buying something that will then arrive home and not be what I saw.*

Interviewer - **Do you think that digital innovations, such as shopping apps, e-commerce platforms, and social media, have influenced your sustainable fashion purchases? In what way?**

Interviewee 10 - *They did not influence in any way.*

Interviewer – **Do you think that digital transformation initiatives encourage people to adopt sustainable fashion more? Why?**

Interviewee 10 - *I think there needs to be a significant change first, because at the moment, what is happening is that social media is promoting consumerism rather than sustainability, as they might think they are doing. And many brands I am not communicating enough about, I don't even know who they are, I don't know what they do, where to see them, where to buy them, or where to go, so I think in terms of communication, we've already seen that it's very little.*

Now, in terms of social media, I think that social networks promote consumerism, and we are constantly bombarded by people, influencers, and new things that have just come out. I don't want to say that we are forced to buy; no one is obligated, but we are very much pressured and constantly bombarded by social media, which promotes consumerism that goes completely against sustainability. I just think that social media is doing a terrible job. That's it.

Interviewer - What do you think are the biggest challenges and opportunities for social shopping platforms in promoting sustainable fashion?

Interviewee 10 - *I believe that a major challenge that can also be a great opportunity is communication. They need to start communicating more because it's a great opportunity; it's the only way they will gain recognition and knowledge from the clients. Therefore, communication can also be a great opportunity if it is well executed and utilized. Another big challenge will be changing consumers' perspectives because we have difficulty embracing change; we are very attached to what we know. I believe that this is a significant challenge—trying to convince customers that it is the right path, that it is the future, and that it is beneficial in the long run. I believe that the biggest opportunity is indeed communication and connecting with customers. Try to increasingly incorporate more information so that it is not a surprise, so that it is something gradual, allowing customers to have constant contact with this practice, and that's it. Brands need to embrace and make this change because we, as consumers, only have those options.*

Interviewer - Thank you very much! Thank you so much for your time and for sharing your opinions.

Appendix M – Transcription of the Interview 11

Interviewer - Hello! First of all, I thank you for your participation in this interview. Your responses are extremely important for my research on how does Social Commerce influences attitudes and consumer behaviors toward adopting sustainable fashion. The objective of this study is to understand how Digital Transformation is impacting attitudes and behaviors towards sustainable fashion. **Firstly, could you tell me a little about yourself?**

Interviewee 11 - *Well, I am 29 years old and I am a primary school teacher. I live in Lisbon.*

Interviewer – Thank you. Our interview will be divided into 5 sections. The first section is about consumers' attitudes and perceptions regarding sustainability and social shopping. Social shopping combines e-commerce with social networks, meaning it allows you to purchase directly on platforms like Instagram and Facebook, for example. That being said, I would like to know **what do you understand by sustainability?**

Interviewee 11 - *Sustainability is ensuring that the resources we need and use are utilized in a way that does not compromise future generations' ability to use them as well.*

Interviewer - **What is the importance of sustainability in your daily life?**

Interviewee 11 - *Over the years, I have tried to make it increasingly important in my daily life. I recycle, try not to use plastic, and whenever I can, I walk instead of using my car.*

Interviewer - **Do you consider yourself a person interested in fashion?**

Interviewee 11 - *Yes, I do.*

Interviewer - As you know, the fashion industry is one of the most polluting and wasteful to the planet. So, **what is your perception of sustainable fashion within the fashion industry?**

Interviewee 11 - *Sustainable fashion has been growing over time and is something that is increasingly important, but it still struggles to compete with the large fashion industry due to various factors such as price, quantities, the lack of physical stores, and product variety.*

Interviewer - **Have you ever seen or read reports on social media about the topic of sustainability in the fashion industry?** Or it has never appeared to you?

Interviewee 11 - *Yes, but I don't read or watch on social media, so I see more of the "advertising" directing me to a podcast.*

Interviewer - Can you identify some consequences of unsustainable consumption in the fashion industry?

Interviewee 11 - *The consequences of unsustainable consumption in the fashion industry that come to my mind right away are material waste, child labor, poorly paid jobs, various types of pollution, consumerism, and the compromising of future generations in terms of resources.*

Interviewer - Do you think fashion brands use social media effectively to communicate their sustainable practices?

Interviewee 11 - *I believe not... brands try, however, many have engaged in greenwashing, and I think many people have lost trust in this communication after several cases. On the other hand, I also believe that they are not communicating effectively because I haven't received much communication in that regard.*

Interviewer - Do you take into account the sustainability practices of brands in your purchasing decisions?

Interviewee 11 - *Whenever I can, yes.*

Interviewer - What is your reaction to seeing a fashion brand promoting its sustainability efforts on social media? Does this influence your confidence in the brand?

Interviewee 11 - *Yes, however, it is something I could investigate a bit, due to the various cases of greenwashing.*

Interviewer - Do you think fashion brands are doing enough to be sustainable? Why?

Interviewee 11 - *I believe that not yet, as it is still not profitable compared to the usual practices.*

Interviewer - Do you think social shopping platforms play a role in your perception of sustainability in fashion?

Interviewee 11 - *I think a little... because usually brands publish their practices on platforms, but they don't give me a global perception of sustainability in fashion, just a perception of what that particular brand does, which doesn't show the overall picture.*

Interviewer - Can you identify any sustainable fashion brand?

Interviewee 11 - *Yes, I remember "Empatia", "DoZero", "Paparina", and "Conscious The Label".*

Interviewer - Now let's move on to the second section, which is about barriers to the adoption of sustainable fashion. **Can you identify any barriers that prevent you from buying sustainable fashion?**

Interviewee 11 - *The biggest barrier is the price, but there's also the lack of variety and the fact that there aren't many physical stores to try out the products, which is something I like to do. I would say these.*

Interviewer - **How can brands and the fashion industry overcome barriers and encourage the adoption of sustainable practices?**

Interviewee 11 - *I think they could legislate and oversee to ensure that practices of child labor and very low wages cease to exist; to start having more offerings in fast fashion stores of sustainable fashion so that we, the consumers, can have better access. And trying to balance the prices, even though this last point is the most difficult due to the products and methods of production used. The sustainable fashion brands could also have some pop-ups in the shopping malls since they are mainly online, which could help consumers to get to know their brand and try on the products.*

Interviewer - **Do you like or would you like to be able to buy sustainable fashion?**

Interviewee 11 - *Yes, I would like to be able to buy sustainable fashion.*

Interviewer - **What would help you consume fashion more responsibly?**

Interviewee 11 - *Mainly the decrease in prices and the existence of more physical stores to try out the products.*

Interviewer - We are now entering the third section, which is about the motivations for adopting sustainable fashion. **Have you ever had an experience where you chose sustainable fashion over conventional options?**

Interviewee 11 - *Once I bought a shirt at "Empatia" because even though it was expensive, I really liked the design.*

Interviewer - **Do your friends, family, digital influencers, or social shopping platforms influence or impact your sustainable fashion choices? How? Can you give an example?**

Interviewee 11 - *I would say that it's more through influencers and friends, when they advertise a product and share what they liked and whether it's worth buying. I would say that they are*

the ones who end up impacting me the most. It was when I saw the influencer Interviewee 4 Sampaio, the founder of the brand "Empatia," wearing the shirt that, when I needed to buy one, I chose hers.

Interviewer - Have you experienced any changes in your shopping habits due to becoming more aware of sustainable fashion practices?

Interviewee 11 - Yes, by buying fewer products, I'm trying to choose higher quality items that are more timeless.

Interviewer - Now let's move on to the second to last section, which is about the intention to adopt sustainable fashion. So, what are the main factors that influence your decision to buy clothes, in general?

Interviewee 11 - Hmm... I would say comfort, how it feels on my body, and of course, the quality and the price.

Interviewer - Do you intend to increase your sustainable fashion purchases in the future? Why?

Interviewee 11 - Yes, because I believe we should all try to be more sustainable so that future generations can also have access to products and resources.

Interviewer - What more could be done to increase your intention to adopt sustainable fashion?

Interviewee 11 - Decrease in prices, the presence of physical stores for sustainable fashion, and an increase in the variety of products.

Interviewer - What are the main barriers that prevent consumers from turning their intentions into concrete actions to buy sustainable fashion?

Interviewee 11 - I consider the main barrier to be the price, but also the variety, the aesthetics of the products, the lack of many physical stores, and the lack of awareness about the importance of being sustainable.

Interviewer - How often do you buy clothes from brands that are considered sustainable?

Interviewee 11 - Very little... I would say once or twice a year.

Interviewer - Fifth and final section that combines social shopping with the behavior of adopting sustainable fashion. Do you usually shop for clothes online? If so, where?

Interviewee 11 - *Yes, at "Zara" and "Salsa".*

Interviewer – And do you use the brand apps? Are you going through the website? How are you doing?

Interviewee 11 - *Yes, through the applications!*

Interviewer - **Do you think that digital transformation has had any impact on your perception and knowledge of sustainable fashion?**

Interviewee 11 - *Yes, due to the fact that I can access information more quickly and videos on how sustainable fashion is made and its impact.*

Interviewer - **Do you think brands are adopting more sustainable practices due to pressure from consumers on social media?**

Interviewee 11 - *Yes, I believe it is one of the main reasons, as these practices are not very sustainable for the brands.*

Interviewer - **What role do you think e-commerce platforms play in the search for sustainable fashion brands?**

Interviewee 11 - *I think they play an important role as they promote brands and their practices, leading consumers to make purchases.*

Interviewer - Now I'm going to read a text explaining what TikTok Shop is, which doesn't exist here yet. Basically, TikTok Shop is an online store integrated within TikTok, where users can create promotional content and sell those products directly within the TikTok app. The TikTok Shop allows retailers to showcase different product catalogs and enables direct purchases without users having to leave the app, similar to what is already happening in e-commerce. Users can add items to their shopping cart and complete the payment process securely while watching brief videos or live streaming events. With this interaction and real-time product demonstrations, along with the possibility of instant purchase, this new feature takes full advantage of TikTok's interactive and engaging qualities to enhance the consumer shopping experience. That said, **what do you think about the possibility of buying products directly in the TikTok Shop during live broadcasts, without leaving the live stream or the app?**

Interviewee 11 - *Hmm... I don't know... it's an interesting feature. But I think it would lead to greater impulse buying.*

Interviewer - If you had access to TikTok Shop, would you buy clothes there?

Interviewee 11 - *No, because I don't think I would have confidence.*

Interviewer - Do you think that digital innovations, such as shopping apps, e-commerce platforms, and social media, have influenced your sustainable fashion purchases? In what way?

Interviewee 11 - *Yes. They influenced me because they make the process much easier, and I'm sure they have my size when I make the purchase.*

Interviewer - Do you think that digital transformation initiatives encourage people to adopt sustainable fashion more? Why?

Interviewee 11 - *I believe so, because people can understand the importance and how the product is made, and they become more influenced to buy this type of fashion. For example, from what I have seen, companies usually advertise a product, show the process, and in a way, the person understands why it has a certain price, perceives the quality of the product, and then it leads them to buy or consider the purchase.*

Interviewer - What are the biggest challenges and opportunities for social shopping platforms in promoting sustainable fashion?

Interviewee 11 - *I would say the challenges are lowering prices, increasing variety, having more physical stores, and eliminating cases of greenwashing. Regarding the opportunities, I would say demonstrating the production process, providing more information, and sharing genuine feedback.*

Interviewer - Thank you very much for your time and for sharing your opinions.

Appendix N – Transcription of the Interview 12

Interviewer - Hello! First of all, I thank you for your participation in this interview. Your responses are extremely important for my research on how does Social Commerce influences attitudes and consumer behaviors toward adopting sustainable fashion. The objective of this study is to understand how Digital Transformation is impacting attitudes and behaviors towards sustainable fashion. **Firstly, could you tell me a little about yourself?**

Interviewee 12 – *I am 25 years old, and I have been living in Lisbon for 6 years, and I am pursuing a Master's in Communication and Digital Transformation.*

Interviewer - Thank you. Our interview will be divided into 5 sections. The first section is about consumers' attitudes and perceptions regarding sustainability and social shopping. Social shopping combines e-commerce with social networks, meaning it allows you to purchase directly on platforms like Instagram and Facebook, for example. That being said, I would like to know **what do you understand by sustainability?**

Interviewee 12 - *I think that for me, sustainability is when there is a lesser impact on the world regarding waste production, energy, and so on.*

Interviewer - **What is the importance of sustainability in your daily life?**

Interviewee 12 - *Yes, I have given much more in the past; nowadays, not so much. Sometimes, there seems to be a lack of more sustainable options in general, but it's something I think about in my daily life. When I'm going to buy clothes, I consider that it's fast fashion, but I also don't want to spend 80€ on a pair of pants, for example.*

Interviewer - **Do you consider yourself a person interested in fashion?**

Interviewee 12 - *Yes, quite a bit! I have always liked it; at one point, I had an Instagram profile where I shared information about sustainable fashion. I love creating outfits, going shopping, everything.*

Interviewer - As you know, the fashion industry is one of the most polluting and wasteful to the planet. So, **what is your perception of sustainable fashion within the fashion industry?**

Interviewee 12 - *I think sustainable fashion is still very small compared to all this fast fashion, and it's more expensive. I went some time without shopping at Zara, and it was very difficult*

for me because sometimes I wanted to buy something more sustainable, but there weren't many options, and what was available was really expensive.

Interviewer - Have you ever seen or read reports on social media about the topic of sustainability in the fashion industry?

Interviewee 12 – *Yes. I even have a page that could help you with your work; I have an Instagram about sustainability, fashion, etc., but I stopped doing it. I used to read a lot, subscribed to several newsletters on the topic, but nowadays I don't see much content about it.*

Interviewer - Can you identify some consequences of unsustainable consumption in the fashion industry?

Interviewee 12 - *The production of waste is, for me, the biggest issue when we talk about sustainable fashion. I also think a lot about who is making the clothing, and for me, slave labor is something that is tied to that as well. And I think it's more about the lifespan of the piece of clothing. I think it's not something very durable when we talk about fast fashion, and that's a problem.*

Interviewer - Do you think fashion brands use social media effectively to communicate their sustainable practices?

Interviewee 12 - *I think it has grown a bit more now, but I feel that brands try to communicate, yet they don't communicate much, and when they do, it seems like something that isn't genuine; it feels like it's just to say that they are sustainable.*

Interviewer - Do you take into account the sustainability practices of brands in your purchasing decisions?

Interviewee 12 - *Yes, and many times when I go to buy from "Zara", I really like to check the material of the clothing item. I try to go for cotton or something with less polyester.*

Interviewer - What is your reaction to seeing a fashion brand promoting its sustainability efforts on social media? Does this influence your confidence in the brand?

Interviewee 12 – *Yes, it influences, for example, there was a brand that I really liked that claimed to be very sustainable, and when I went to buy a dress, I saw that it was 100% polyester, so it doesn't make much sense.*

Interviewer - Do you think fashion brands are doing enough to be sustainable? Why?

Interviewee 12 - *I think yes and no, because they claim to be sustainable, but deep down, they are not.*

Interviewer - **Do you think social shopping platforms play a role in your perception of sustainability in fashion?**

Interviewee 12 - *I think it influenced a lot, yes.*

Interviewer - **Can you identify any sustainable fashion brands?**

Interviewee 12 - *I really like "Everlane", "Cotton On", "Panties" and "Organic Basics".*

Interviewer - Now let's move on to the second section, which is barriers to the adoption of sustainable fashion. **Can you identify any barriers that prevent you from buying sustainable fashion?**

Interviewee 12 - *I think the first factor is the price when we talk about sustainable fashion. We can also talk about vintage things, second-hand clothes; I don't buy much, but I'm trying to change that. For example, I use "Vinted" to sell, but I don't use it to buy; I haven't taken that step yet.*

Interviewer - **How can brands and the fashion industry overcome barriers and encourage the adoption of sustainable practices?**

Interviewee 12 - *I think that, since the production of a sustainable piece is indeed more expensive, there could be some program for these sustainable brands, in collaboration with the government, to help reduce production costs. Another barrier is the lack of options; sometimes these sustainable brands create really cool things. Sometimes there are uglier things; they try to create more timeless pieces, and I actually like basic things, but at the same time, we want to follow a trend and not spend too much money.*

Interviewer - **Do you like or would you like to buy sustainable fashion?**

Interviewee 12 - *Yes, I would really like to if I had the money; I would only buy from sustainable brands, but for now, it's not possible.*

Interviewer - **What would help you consume fashion more responsibly?**

Interviewee 12 - *It's about lowering the price and having more choices, offering more options, creating more creative communication, more attractive pieces, more youthful and eye-catching.*

Interviewer - We are now entering the third section, which is about the motivations for adopting sustainable fashion. **Have you ever had an experience where you chose sustainable fashion over conventional options?**

Interviewee 12 - *Several times during that period, when I stopped shopping at "Zara," I turned to these sustainable brands, a white shirt and some jeans. It was difficult, and once again, it's a shame I can't continue, because these are brands that are currently in my closet, because they are of good quality, but they really were expensive.*

Interviewer - **Do your friends, family, digital influencers, or social shopping platforms influence or impact your sustainable fashion choices? How? Can you give an example?**

Interviewee 12 - *These days not so much, but when I had that Instagram account I sent you, I was very much in the loop on the subject. I followed several pages and people who talked about sustainability and read newsletters, and that influenced me a lot. So, I ended up learning a bit about this and developed a more sustainable awareness. These days, I would say that I'm not very influenced by influencers, but when I talk to my friends, we discuss not buying from fast fashion stores, yet it's very difficult.*

Interviewer - **Have you experienced any changes in your shopping habits due to becoming more aware of sustainable fashion practices?**

Interviewee 12 - *Yes, I have. I stopped shopping at "Zara", I only used bamboo toothbrushes, and I didn't use plastic bags, which I still don't use. Little by little, we start to understand and change our habits.*

Interviewer - Now let's move on to the fourth section, which is about the intention to adopt sustainable fashion. **What are the main factors that influence your decision to buy clothes, in general?**

Interviewee 12 - *I think that the brand comes first; if I want to buy clothes, I first think about the brand I want, and then, for example, about my needs. I have a wishlist, and it changes all the time. Every month, things come in and out of my wishlist, and if something stays there for more than 3 months or more than 6 months, I consider whether it's worth buying it. Otherwise, I won't buy it, but I think this is a good way for at least the more expensive things.*

Interviewer - **Do you intend to increase your sustainable fashion purchases in the future? Why?**

Interviewee 12 – *Yes, for sure, and also because I don't like shopping at fast fashion. First, the quality is terrible, and second, everyone ends up wearing the same thing. A basic piece of clothing often goes unnoticed, but when it's something more patterned, I feel like everyone is wearing the same thing. I also intend to earn more money in the future so I can buy higher quality clothes, because for me, sustainable clothing has much more quality, which is much more important nowadays.*

Interviewer - What more could be done to increase your intention to adopt sustainable fashion?

Interviewee 12 - *In addition to lowering prices, there should be more stores available.*

Interviewer - What are the main barriers that prevent consumers from turning their intentions into concrete actions to buy sustainable fashion?

Interviewee 12- *I would say that the lack of awareness and knowledge about sustainable fashion means that there are still many people who do not really understand what it is. The price, because they are expensive pieces and according to the Portuguese salary... there is a lot of temptation to fall into Fast Fashion stores.*

Interviewer - How often do you buy clothes from brands that are considered sustainable?

Interviewee 12 - *These days, I haven't been buying as many clothes; I've been trying to cut back, but I would say maybe once or twice a month.*

Interviewer – Fifth and final section that combines social shopping with the behavior of adopting sustainable fashion. **Do you usually shop for clothes online? If so, where?**

Interviewee 12 - *Yes, nowadays, unfortunately, I shop online at "Massimo Dutti" and "Everlane"; I think they have great basic pieces. I use the app, but if there's a website, I'll use that. However, I never buy through Instagram; I don't like it.*

Interviewer - Do you think that digital transformation has had any impact on your perception and knowledge of sustainable fashion?

Interviewee 12 – *I think so.*

Interviewer - Do you think brands are adopting more sustainable practices due to pressure from consumers on social media?

Interviewee 12 - *I think so, it doesn't seem very genuine; they want more consumers, and everyone will do what they need to in order to achieve that. If the consumer is dissatisfied, the consumer has that power.*

Interviewer – **What role do you think e-commerce platforms play in the search for sustainable fashion brands?**

Interviewee 12 - *I don't buy much on e-commerce platforms like that. I have shopped at "AboutYou" once, but I didn't pay much attention to the sustainability aspect. However, I believe they could have a huge impact. For example, when we search by placing the most sustainable brands at the top, I think they could really help with this issue.*

Interviewer – **Do you already know about TikTok Shop?**

Interviewee 12 - *Yes, there is in Brazil.*

Interviewer - **What do you think about the possibility of buying products directly in the TikTok Shop app during live broadcasts, without leaving the live stream or the app?**

Interviewee 12 - *Yes, I find that interesting. I discovered that this exists because one day I was in a store and a salesperson was doing it, but I think at the same time it encourages a lot of unnecessary consumption, because it makes purchasing much easier and gives a lot of visibility to brands.*

Interviewer - **If you had access to TikTok Shop, would you buy clothes there?**

Interviewee 12 – *Yes, I think so. I would like to try.*

Interviewer - **Do you think that digital innovations, such as shopping apps, e-commerce platforms, and social media, have influenced your sustainable fashion purchases? In what way?**

Interviewee 12 - *I think it was because of the ease. It makes things much easier; we can see if the item is sustainable or not. If there's a little text explaining it in a simpler way to visualize, it will obviously make my purchasing decision easier.*

Interviewer - **Do you think that digital transformation initiatives encourage people to adopt sustainable fashion more? Why?**

Interviewee 12 - *I think so, that sustainable brands that use these new digital innovations have an advantage. But it's like that, I think fast fashion brands use it much more, and they still benefit from reaching a much larger number of customers.*

Interviewer - **What do you think are the biggest challenges and opportunities for social shopping platforms in promoting sustainable fashion?**

Interviewee 12 - *I think the first challenge is to capture the consumer's attention in a different way, not like all the other brands. And another challenge is how to make this consumer interact with your brand, to know that the brand exists and is present, but also to visit the brand's profile, follow the brand, and eventually buy a piece. I think that's a challenge too, because there are many brands we are unaware of, yet we don't consume them. So I think it's a big challenge. Two opportunities now, I think the biggest of all, speaking of Instagram, is that it is a platform with millions of users and has a huge visibility opportunity, especially now with this Generation Z. I believe there is a great opportunity, and I think we can run different campaigns. For example, TikTok shop—it's crazy! Five years ago, I never imagined it would be possible to buy something just by clicking, and I think that's an opportunity.*

Interviewer - Thank you! Thank you very much for your time and for sharing your opinions.

Appendix O – Transcription of the Interview 13

Interviewer - Hello! First of all, I thank you for your participation in this interview. Your responses are extremely important for my research on how does Social Commerce influences attitudes and consumer behaviors toward adopting sustainable fashion. The objective of this study is to understand how Digital Transformation is impacting attitudes and behaviors towards sustainable fashion. Firstly, **could you tell me a little about yourself?**

Interviewee 13 - *Sure, I am 27 years old, and I am pursuing a master's degree in Environmental Studies and Sustainability at ISCTE. I strongly believe that sustainable ecological perspectives need to be implemented. I am someone who loves spending time outdoors, in parks and nature, so I think we share this vision and try to spread it from person to person, transforming each individual's mindset, and we can make a difference. I also enjoy participating in environmental ecological events, doing volunteer work; I've done beach clean-ups in parks and also attended urban gardening classes.*

Interviewer - Thank you. Our interview will be divided into 5 sections. The first section is about consumers' attitudes and perceptions regarding sustainability and social shopping. Social shopping combines e-commerce with social networks, meaning it allows you to shop directly on platforms like Instagram and Facebook, for example. That said, I would like to know **what do you understand by sustainability?**

Interviewee 13 - *You can address many topics... but I believe that sustainability is the way people can make a transformative change in the world through their choices, their perceptions, by trying to change their habits and rethink their decisions. Sustainability as a way of seeing differently in processes. I see how people are truly doing their part for greener choices, for more sustainable choices that help the planet, that help to change consumption habits a bit. And sustainability, in a broader sense, when we look at the business aspect, commerce, and trade, also plays a role in the way products are produced throughout their life cycle, producing in a more ecological manner, using fewer pollutants and with products that are biodegradable. So sustainability would be something important from both a micro-individual perspective and a macro, more global perspective of companies and businesses.*

Interviewer - **What is the importance of sustainability in your daily life?**

Interviewee 13 - *Yes, I try to make choices that aim to reduce my ecological footprint on the planet. So if I can make a purchase, for example, at a second-hand store instead of buying at a*

larger store. Do not leave food scraps and try to use everything in its entirety. Take public transport, walk instead of using Uber. Try to make these choices to consume more local products. I know it's a difficult thing; I won't always be able to make all the choices, both because of economic issues and having to choose between a product that's a bit cheaper, as I'm also a student trying to stick to a budget. But I try in these choices I make every day, to not have such a big impact, even in separating the trash and when I throw things away, I try to sort them properly and put them in the collection points, because in the building where I live, unfortunately, there isn't much of this separation. So every time I go to buy something, I think about how I can dispose of it, and sometimes it's complicated.

Interviewer - Do you consider yourself a person interested in fashion?

Interviewee 13 - *Yes, I consider myself interested in fashion.*

Interviewer - As you know, the fashion industry is one of the most polluting on a global scale and generates the most waste worldwide. **What is your perception of sustainable fashion in the fashion industry?**

Interviewee 13 - *I see that fashion really needs to undergo a transition because the production of pants, coats, shirts, and any type of products has a significant impact on water usage, waste, and chemical pollutants. So the more change there is, the better it will be to reduce the impacts and also to change people's perspective on how they can consume more consciously. So, I believe that a fashion trend that can also reduce, perhaps, the number of purchases per individual, would make people buy with an awareness of what type of material is not causing as much harm, how it is produced, and in what way it is resold. In other words, local producers, the types of materials, so I believe that fashion really needs to make this transition, this shift, to reduce the impact it has on the planet.*

Interviewer - There has to be a change.

Interviewee 13 - *Yes. For sure.*

Interviewer - **Have you ever seen or read reports on social media about the topic of sustainability in the fashion industry?**

Interviewee 13 - *On social media, it's not very common for these themes to appear when I'm researching, but on some of the pages I follow that discuss topics more related to the environment and social issues, they do come up. So some of them, when I research, they talk more about the negative impacts. If something about fashion comes up, it's not so much about*

the positive impacts of changes in people's behavior, it's more about... what the fashion industry is harming in terms of water, is polluting elsewhere, is actually creating.

Interviewer - The negative effects.

Interviewee 13 - *The negative effects of global transportation waste, including the disposal of clothes that people do not use instead of donating them, end up in large landfills. So, when I research more about this, both on social media and the Internet, it always leans more towards the negative impacts.*

Interviewer - And normally on social media, which one do you talk on, where do you appear the most?

Interviewee 13 - *It appears to me on TikTok and Instagram, but it's more on Instagram.*

Interviewer - Can you identify some consequences of unsustainable consumption in the fashion industry?

Interviewee 13 - *The issue of consuming more and more generates more and more waste. The volume of production of clothing and any manufacturing in the fashion industry, footwear, bags, I don't know, glasses and others. I see that the impacts of raw materials from resource extraction extend to social issues related to human rights and social rights, such as people not being able to earn a minimum wage, lacking health conditions, or facing inadequate hygiene and sanitary conditions. And in factories around the world, the chemical pollutants for the production of these clothes or other items.*

Interviewer - Do you think fashion brands use social media effectively to communicate their sustainable practices?

Interviewee 13 - *I think that on social media, companies often try to present a very positive image or scenario of what they do, or even resort to greenwashing. But, considering the entire life cycle and the whole production chain, they often end up hiding and lying...*

Interviewer - Do you take into account the sustainability practices of brands in your purchasing decisions?

Interviewee 13 - *I always try to think before I buy. If I really need it, being a quality product, whether I'm going to use it long-term or just occasionally, is really complicated, isn't it? When I try to buy, I would like to purchase this one, but it is way above my budget, or this one here is at a more accessible price, but it's also not a company that I believe is committed. So I try to*

make these choices, avoiding brands that are too fast fashion or that have, let's say, a bad reputation in the market, or that have had many practices exposed in the news. So I try to buy from the brands I trust the most. I've also been trying to shop more at second-hand stores in recent years. For example, here in Lisbon, I've been to "Humana" several times.

Interviewer - What is your reaction to seeing a fashion brand promoting its sustainability efforts on social media? Does this influence your confidence in the brand?

Interviewee 13 – *Influence does exist and depends a lot on the brand. I see, for example, cosmetic brands; I try to look deeper into whether their production practices are truly cruelty-free or vegan. And in terms of fashion, specifically clothing, I also try to make my choices based on that, but it's complicated.*

Interviewer - So, when you see them, don't you ever imagine that they post on social media saying, "We've reduced this and that"? Don't you feel that it doesn't really influence you much because you're always thinking, "Is it true?" Could it be a lie? Or not?

Interviewee 13 - *It's a bit of that feeling, because to be honest, I don't really follow fashion brands or clothing. And in general on social media, I even try to distance myself a bit, and when I need to, like, buy something, I go to the store's website. And I feel that what they promote the most is the new collection, the promotions, the discounts. I don't feel, at least from what I see scrolling through the feed very quickly, that there's much focus on showcasing sustainable practices or the internal practices of the company. It's always more about producing and consuming, instigating the consumer to buy. So it is, these practices will never disappear if the consumers themselves and the market as a whole in the industry do not also make this behavioral change.*

Interviewer - Do you think fashion brands are doing enough to be sustainable? Why?

Interviewee 13 - *I don't think they are doing enough, or if they were, perhaps they wouldn't have so many collections and so many new things coming out so quickly. In my view, there really needs to be a significant change this decade and in the years to come. Yes, it seems to me that it's always about money, profit, and the greed to want to increase, to want to produce, to want to earn more money. We, as a collective, can make a difference and not end the world... with increasing consumption, more production, and more natural disasters. And all of this is connected. It's not just the fashion company, but also the products it consumes and the raw*

materials of energy. Everything is connected, so I see that one industry depends on another, and everyone depends on the consumers, the people.

Interviewer - Do you think that social shopping platforms play a role in your perception of sustainability in fashion?

Interviewee 13 – *I think it influences in some way; I feel that even the question of influence can come gradually, often when we least realize it. But I try to create, let's say, a barrier so that I am not completely influenced. I don't think it's 100%, there is influence.*

Interviewer - Can you identify any sustainable fashion brands?

Interviewee 13 – *No... I remember one about footwear that a teacher of mine mentioned this year, but I can't recall the name.*

Interviewer - Now let's move on to our second section, which is the barriers to the adoption of sustainable fashion. **Can you identify any barriers that prevent you from buying sustainable fashion?**

Interviewee 13 - *The price is really one of the major barriers... I also believe that the material and the fact that there isn't much promotion of these brands... and if you go to Colombo, there isn't a single store there that focuses on sustainable fashion.*

Interviewer - How can brands and the fashion industry overcome barriers and encourage the adoption of sustainable practices?

Interviewee 13 - *This is a complicated question as well. Because I see that the larger industry as a whole does not encourage small competitors, small brands. They will want to attract consumers to their big brands. Another way they might change their behavior could be by not making so many collections throughout the year. They could use cotton products, for example, organic ones. And that would definitely be one of the points, but no, I don't think it would be that simple and feasible. It's because it's a model that is already established, and many people also don't question it. And so I think that for there to really be a change, perhaps with higher taxes or fees that would create certain barriers that might make people buy less. For me, this is what will make the change happen; if people feel it more in their wallets, they will end up making more planned purchases and perhaps opting for more sustainable brands.*

Interviewer - Do you like or would you like to buy sustainable fashion?

Interviewee 13 - *I would definitely like to buy sustainable fashion! For example, I have been using "Humana" a lot, which sells second-hand clothes, and I am enjoying it. I feel that I am helping and contributing in some way.*

Interviewer - **What would help you consume fashion more responsibly?**

Interviewee 13- *To have more options in shopping malls, for example at Colombo, of sustainable brands, and the price. The price, if it were lower, would undoubtedly help me consume more responsibly.*

Interviewer - Now let's move on to the third section, which is the motivations for adopting sustainable fashion. **Have you ever had an experience where you chose sustainable fashion over conventional options?**

Interviewee 13 – *I would say that it has never happened to me... what I try to do several times is that when I need something, I end up preferring local producers, the little street shops with less well-known brands, more family-oriented brands.*

Interviewer - **Do your friends, family, digital influencers, or social shopping platforms influence or impact your sustainable fashion choices? How? Can you give an example?**

Interviewee 13 - *I believe so, and I closely follow people, organizations, and institutions that address environmental issues, so I am more influenced by the environmental and ecological perspective that helps me understand why my decisions are important. Even being just one person, an individual as I am, how can I positively impact the world through my decisions? So, I feel that this influences me. But also, by my friends and family, I feel that when I go to buy something, I am more influenced by them.*

Interviewer - **Have you experienced any changes in your shopping habits due to becoming more aware of sustainable fashion practices?**

Interviewee 13 – *Yes, I already have. I feel that in recent years, especially after the pandemic, many of the views and practices I had have really been changing. I don't know if I really believe that I still need to improve. When I was pursuing my degree, I felt more influenced by my classmates and friends to buy things because I was seeing them and was in that environment. But then during the pandemic, as I stayed home without seeing them, I felt that this slowed down; in fact, now that I am pursuing my master's in sustainability, more focused on environmental issues, that has changed. I made this transition and started to make more assertive and conscious choices. I stopped shopping online so much because I feel that when*

we make an online purchase, it's much easier not to think about the money leaving the account. I prefer to go in person and not research too much on the Internet so I won't be tempted.

Interviewer - Now we are in our fourth section, which is the second to last, which is the intention to adopt a sustainable fashion. **What are the main factors that influence your decision to buy clothes, in general?**

Interviewee 13 - *OK, there are several factors. There's the issue, as I've already mentioned, of the price, the material, whether it's a material that will last, what kind of care it needs in terms of washing, the comfort I feel in the clothing, how it fits my body... if it aligns with my style. And in the versatility of the piece, if I can use it on various occasions.*

Interviewer - **Do you intend to increase your sustainable fashion purchases in the future? Why?**

Interviewee 13 - *Certainly. More and more, I want to increase my sustainable consumption. I want to make choices that are positive for the planet and that don't have such a big impact. I want to make better decisions, and that's the path I intend to follow.*

Interviewer - **What more could be done to increase your intention to adopt sustainable fashion?**

Interviewee 13 - *Research more about the brands and options I have. I have this difficulty. I think that, just as there are more sustainable brands, they end up being... I won't say just overlooked, but they aren't as prominent. It's when I'm researching to make a purchase that I need to spend a bit more time trying to find other solutions that aren't big brands. So they can be more visible or perhaps have platforms that showcase different brands, or that they can come together. No, for example, creating a website that featured more brands in Lisbon that focused on sustainable fashion. It's on Avenida da Liberdade, for example, when there are markets, those artisan markets, and in those moments or at events focused on sustainability or environmental issues that I end up discovering these sustainable fashion brands. But if I don't write down the name right away or follow their page on Instagram, I end up forgetting about them. Because, you see, there is a lack of visibility for those brands.*

Interviewer - **What are the main barriers that prevent consumers from turning their intentions into concrete actions to buy sustainable fashion?**

Interviewee 13 - *I believe that many people have a proactive sustainable mindset, but there is also a lack of interest because cheaper products are more accessible. The fact that they are not*

aware of other brands that might be better or more competitive, which have quality products or products they want to buy, I believe that this also poses some barriers.

Interviewer - How often do you buy clothes from brands that are considered sustainable?

Interviewee 13 - *Really... I don't know... But I think it's every 3 months, depending on the need.*

Interviewer - Now we are in our fifth section, which is the last one that combines social shopping with the behavior of adopting sustainable fashion. **Do you usually shop for clothes online? If so, where?**

Interviewee 13 - *My fashion consumption in a year is really very low. The last time I bought was in May for the Taylor Swift concert, and it was on the "Mango" app.*

Interviewer - Do you think that digital transformation has had any impact on your perception and knowledge of sustainable fashion?

Interviewee 13 - *Certainly, because through the Internet and by consuming content focused more on environmental issues and social sustainability, I am able to consume more and research more to make more conscious choices. So, having the availability and variety of information at my fingertips helps immensely.*

Interviewer - Do you think brands are adopting more sustainable practices due to pressure from consumers on social media?

Interviewee 13 - *I think they are moving towards trying to implement more sustainable practices. But I don't believe it's in a general way. Perhaps they have a segment of the company or a type of product that is considered the most sustainable, but not in a general way, because they can also claim that they are doing something. Having greener, more sustainable practices, but it's not really happening. It's much easier for brands to speak well of themselves, so that consumers believe that it's really being done. It is not about having concrete and effective actions regarding what actually happens, therefore, many news stories are negative. Brands face even more pressure from consumers afterwards. So I believe that consumers do have a great responsibility and importance. But just them won't be enough to make the change; we would need more than one issue, economic, financial, in other words, some more concrete barriers that could assist in this transition. Therefore, I believe that this is connected, and that consumers are becoming more aware. They are demanding, aren't they, more concrete measures, and really, if this transformation happens and these impacts occur, I believe that yes, consumers are important agents, but not the only ones.*

Interviewer - What role do you think e-commerce platforms play in the search for sustainable fashion brands?

Interviewee 13 - *I believe it helps these brands to promote themselves and to showcase a different way of responsible consumption, allowing them to reach a larger audience.*

Interviewer - I don't know if you know about TikTok Shop or not?

Interviewee 13 - *I really don't know.*

Interviewer - Basically, TikTok Shop is an online store integrated within TikTok, where users can create promotional content and sell those products directly within the TikTok app. The TikTok Shop allows retailers to showcase different product catalogs and enables direct purchases without users having to leave the app, similar to what already happens in e-commerce. Users can add items to their shopping cart and complete the payment process securely while watching brief videos or live streaming events. With this interaction and real-time product demonstrations, along with the possibility of instant purchase, this new feature makes the most of TikTok's interactive and engaging qualities to enhance the consumer shopping experience. That said, **what do you think about the possibility of buying products directly in the TikTok Shop app during live broadcasts, without leaving the live stream or the app?**

Interviewee 13 - *I find it an interesting solution, but I also wonder if it might not encourage consumerism by being something much more accessible. The person is watching and liked the product, and that also increases the purchase. So, I think that while it makes things easier for consumers, this facilitation also stimulates and increases consumption in general.*

Interviewer - If you had access to TikTok Shop, would you buy clothes there?

Interviewee 13 - *I don't think so, no, no, I can't see myself in that moment; even if I had the opportunity, I wouldn't buy it. I feel that way during those moments of shopping in a Live... I don't feel very secure.*

Interviewer - Do you think that digital innovations, such as shopping apps, e-commerce platforms, and social media, have influenced your sustainable fashion purchases? In what way?

Interviewee 13 - *They impact by the ease of everything, whether it's the ease of searching for information, shopping, or anything else.*

Interviewer - Do you think that digital transformation initiatives encourage people to adopt sustainable fashion more? Why?

Interviewee 13 - *I believe so... considering the fact that vintage is now in fashion, on social media influencers and celebrities say they bought X sweater at a vintage store, or that it is vintage... so this has made vintage trendy and many people have also adopted the trend of buying vintage and second-hand clothing instead of going to a "Zara". In other words, digital transformations can help consumers embrace sustainable fashion more.*

Interviewer - Finally, what do you think are the biggest challenges and opportunities for social shopping platforms in promoting sustainable fashion?

Interviewee 13 – *So, a challenge would be the attempt to make consumers see that their causes are real, the causes of the brands, that it is not greenwashing, in other words, to earn the trust of consumers... Another challenge... Perhaps consumer education for the cause of sustainable fashion. Opportunities would be the great visibility that brands gain with these platforms and the fact that consumers can purchase on these platforms... which makes the entire buying process easier for the consumer.*

Interviewer - Thank you very much for your time and for sharing your opinions. Your contribution is crucial for understanding how digital transformation is affecting consumer attitudes and behaviors towards sustainability in fashion.

Appendix P – Transcription of the Interview 14

Interviewer - Hello! First of all, I thank you for your participation in this interview. Your responses are extremely important for my research on how does Social Commerce influences attitudes and consumer behaviors toward adopting sustainable fashion. The objective of this study is to understand how Digital Transformation is impacting attitudes and behaviors towards sustainable fashion. Firstly, **could you tell me a little about yourself?**

Interviewee 14 – *So, I am 29 years old, I completed a degree in Clinical Psychology, and I live in Lisbon.*

Interviewer - Thank you. Our interview will be divided into 5 sections. The first section is about consumers' attitudes and perceptions regarding sustainability and social shopping. Social shopping combines e-commerce with social networks, meaning it allows you to shop directly on platforms like Instagram and Facebook, for example. That said, I would like to know **what do you understand by sustainability?**

Interviewee 14 – *For me, sustainability is about using the planet's resources in a thoughtful and intelligent way, without depleting them, so that future generations can also benefit from them. In other words, we should utilize resources without extinguishing them, so that our children, grandchildren, and so on can also make use of them.*

Interviewer - **What is the importance of sustainability in your daily life?**

Interviewee 14 - *Sustainability is central to the functioning of our daily lives and to ensuring a future for the next generations. The fact that previous generations made sustainable use of resources allows us to have access to them today.*

Interviewer – And how important is it in your life?

Interviewee 14 – *In my life, it holds some importance because I try to make choices and have sustainable behaviors, but there are certain things that are more difficult, so I wouldn't say it has great importance.*

Interviewer - **Do you consider yourself a person interested in fashion?**

Interviewee 14 - *Yes, I consider myself. I would say yes, it's something I enjoy even though I can't keep up with everything that comes out; I like to stay attentive and know what's being released.*

Interviewer - As you know, the fashion industry is one of the most polluting and wasteful to the planet. So, **what is your perception of sustainable fashion within the fashion industry?**

Interviewee 14 - *Sustainable fashion is a movement that has been gaining strength in recent years within the fashion industry, receiving greater recognition in recent times. It allows for the sustainability of resources, with these being used in a more conscious and responsible manner. In recent years, it seems to me that this has been growing; I have seen more people advertising and using sustainable fashion brands.*

Interviewer - **Have you ever seen or read reports on social media about the topic of sustainability in the fashion industry?**

Interviewee 14 – *Yes, sometimes some news articles come up for me, and I read them. It's not that I read all of them, but some have interesting topics.*

Interviewer - Where? Do you still remember?

Interviewee 14 - *Yes, it was on Instagram; it appeared in the stories of an influencer I really like and what she presents. I was curious to go read it.*

Interviewer - **Can you identify some consequences of unsustainable consumption in the fashion industry?**

Interviewee 14 - *Unsustainable consumption in the fashion industry has consequences for both the environment, such as the excessive use of limited resources and the spread of pollution. The same happens for society; the unsustainable fashion industry promotes precarious and slave labor as well as social inequality. These are the ones I remember right now, but if you want, I can think of more.*

Interviewer – No, thank you, it's great. **Do you think fashion brands use social media effectively to communicate their sustainable practices?**

Interviewee 14 - *Yes, currently social media is an important tool for communicating sustainability. Brands that strive to communicate transparently and effectively are able to build a more positive advertising image that conveys greater trust. And there you go, just as I said, there are some things about this subject that pop up on my Instagram.*

Interviewer - **Do you take into account the sustainability practices of brands in your purchasing decisions?**

Interviewee 14 - *Personally, my level of consumption is low, but I don't always take that factor into account.*

Interviewer - **What is your reaction to seeing a fashion brand promoting its sustainability efforts on social media? Does this influence your confidence in the brand?**

Interviewee 14 - *Yes, it is an increasingly ingrained aspect that influences my choices due to the growing spread of knowledge and awareness on the subject. And how I see advertising and what brands promote makes me gain trust in them, even if it might just be advertising, right!?*

Interviewer - **Do you think fashion brands are doing enough to be sustainable? Why?**

Interviewee 14 - *No, unsustainable fashion is the most common reality in the majority of the fashion industry. It is a system that prioritizes profit above all, disregarding the negative impacts it causes. They prioritize what is going well, meaning they sell what they are producing without incurring significant costs, and this continues to bring them money, so it doesn't "pay off" for them to change their behavior.*

Interviewer - **Do you think that social shopping platforms play a role in your perception of sustainability in fashion?**

Interviewee 14 - *Yes, they do influence. And social shopping platforms have been a valid resource for promoting sustainable fashion and for my perception of it, because as I mentioned, it's where I see most of the advertisements and so on.*

Interviewer - **Can you identify any sustainable fashion brand?**

Interviewee 14 - *I only remember "Tricae", but if you want, I can do a little research on the influencers I follow.*

Interviewer - No, it's not necessary; the goal is really to have your perception and what you remember because it also shows what the brand did for you to remember it. Now let's move on to the second section, which is about barriers to the adoption of sustainable fashion. **Can you identify any barriers that prevent you from buying sustainable fashion?**

Interviewee 14 – *Yes, the value and the fact that a large part of the stores presented to the consumer are actually unsustainable, they try to sell something that they are not.*

Interviewer - **How can brands and the fashion industry overcome barriers and encourage the adoption of sustainable practices?**

Interviewee 14 – *So let me think a little, it's not easy to answer everything all at once. I think they could break down barriers by raising awareness about the topic, improving marketing, and making prices more accessible.*

Interviewer - **Do you like or would you like to be able to buy sustainable fashion?**

Interviewee 14 – *Yes, because I wanted to be more sustainable in various aspects of my life.*

Interviewer - **What would help you consume fashion more responsibly?**

Interviewee 14 - *Besides the price, which would have to be lower, right?*

Interviewer – Well, it's something that would help.

Interviewee 14 – *Exactly, and also to have knowledge of more sustainable stores and for them to be more accessible, instead of everything being online.*

Interviewer - We are now entering the third section, which is about the motivations for adopting sustainable fashion. **Have you ever had an experience where you chose sustainable fashion over conventional options?**

Interviewee 14 - *Yes, I needed a new blazer and decided to buy it second-hand at a local market, as I prefer to purchase more sustainable materials, and I usually recycle clothes by making use of the materials.*

Interviewer - **Do your friends, family, digital influencers, or social shopping platforms influence or impact your sustainable fashion choices? How? Can you give an example?**

Interviewee 14 - *Yes, the choices I make daily stem from the influences of friends and social media advertising. I started buying less fast fashion clothing due to friends who promote greater awareness about the cause.*

Interviewer - **Have you experienced any changes in your shopping habits due to becoming more aware of sustainable fashion practices?**

Interviewee 14 - *Yes, in general, not only in relation to fashion, but also other aspects.*

Interviewer – Can you give an example?

Interviewee 14 – *For example, by not shopping at stores like "Shein" and such, it's not that the stores I go to are much better, but since the prices aren't as low and the quality is a bit better, I believe it's a little more sustainable.*

Interviewer - Now we go to the second to end section, which is about the intention to adopt sustainable fashion. So, **what are the main factors that influence your decision to buy clothes, in general?**

Interviewee 14 - *Generally, it is the materials used, the prices, and the ease of obtaining the product.*

Interviewer - **Do you intend to increase your sustainable fashion purchases in the future? Why?**

Interviewee 14 - *Yes, because I understand that if we continue to live in an unsustainable way, there will be no future resources, even though it is a bit difficult due to what I have already listed.*

Interviewer - **What more could be done to increase your intention to adopt sustainable fashion?**

Interviewee 14 - *I think there should be more promotion of greater awareness and appreciation for sustainable brands, and once again, make prices more accessible.*

Interviewer - The price is always one of the most talked-about points.

Interviewee 14 – *Well, I believe that's what makes people less inclined to adopt it, because it's still not affordable for most people. As a result, they prefer to buy something cheaper that will serve the same purpose, even if it may not have the same durability and quality.*

Interviewer - **What are the main barriers that prevent consumers from turning their intentions into concrete actions to buy sustainable fashion?**

Interviewee 14 - *Our society is characterized by high consumerism and a "fast fashion" mentality, which is why I believe the main barriers stem from the fact that sustainable fashion is less promoted, prices are higher, and it is not as readily available as unsustainable fashion.*

Interviewer - Just as you just said.

Interviewee 14 – *Exactly.*

Interviewer - **How often do you buy clothes from brands that are considered sustainable?**

Interviewee 14 - *Rarely, but I would say my consumption is about once a year, because although I like fashion, I try to think that it's something I really don't need, and again, there's the money aspect—if I don't need it, I won't buy it just for the sake of it.*

Interviewer - Fifth and final section that combines social shopping with the behavior of adopting sustainable fashion. **Do you usually shop for clothes online? If so, where?**

Interviewee 14 - *I usually shop for clothes online on the "Zara" and "Mango" apps.*

Interviewer - **Do you think that digital transformation has had any impact on your perception and knowledge of sustainable fashion?**

Interviewee 14 - *Yes, it contributed to the promotion of greater knowledge, which has been an important point for the change in my behavior. Basically, I think that digital transformation has helped us all have more awareness and knowledge about this topic.*

Interviewer - **Do you think brands are adopting more sustainable practices due to pressure from consumers on social media?**

Interviewee 14 - *Yes, I believe so, but there is still some unreliable marketing surrounding them. Many brands present themselves as "green" when they are not.*

Interviewer – Greenwashing?

Interviewee 14 - *Yes, exactly, I think that sometimes they use that marketing, but they lose credibility when cases of greenwashing are exposed. What leads me to believe that they only do it out of pressure and not because they genuinely want to implement more sustainable practices.*

Interviewer - **What role do you think e-commerce platforms play in the search for sustainable fashion brands?**

Interviewee 14 - *E-commerce platforms are important tools for sustainable fashion, making it more accessible, transparent to buyers, and informative. These allow consumers to access brands and products that align with their values and choices, creating an opportunity for a shift towards more sustainable consumption.*

Interviewer - Now I will read a text explaining what TikTok Shop is, which does not exist here yet. Basically, TikTok Shop is an online store integrated within TikTok, where users can create promotional content and sell those products directly within the TikTok app. The TikTok Shop allows retailers to showcase different product catalogs and enables direct purchases without users having to leave the app, similar to what already happens in e-commerce. Users can add items to their shopping cart and complete the payment process securely while watching brief videos or live streaming events. With this interaction and real-time product demonstrations, along with the possibility of instant purchase, this new feature makes the most of TikTok's

interactive and engaging qualities to enhance the consumer shopping experience. That said, **what do you think about the possibility of buying products directly in the TikTok Shop app during live broadcasts, without leaving the live stream or the app?**

Interviewee 14 - *I wouldn't like it because I think it would encourage more consumerism.*

Interviewer – Anything else? It seemed like you were going to say something else.

Interviewee 14 - *No, it's very much about consumerism; people buy on impulse and it seems they don't even have time to think. Moreover, as you said, they don't even have to leave the app; it's just a few clicks and they go back to what they were looking at.*

Interviewer - **If you had access to TikTok Shop, would you buy clothes there?**

Interviewee 14 - *I don't know if I would buy it because it doesn't inspire confidence in me.*

Interviewer - **Do you think that digital innovations, such as shopping apps, e-commerce platforms, and social media, have influenced your sustainable fashion purchases? In what way?**

Interviewee 14 - *Digital innovations allow for greater knowledge and dissemination about sustainability in fashion, and they have given me more access to this information and increased my understanding of these brands and their practices.*

Interviewer - And in what way?

Interviewee 14 – *Through advertisements, influencers giving their feedback on products allowed me to gather more information about the brands and what they stand for and sell.*

Interviewer - **Do you think that digital transformation initiatives encourage people to adopt sustainable fashion more? Why?**

Interviewee 14 - *Yes, digital transformation can be a way to promote sustainable fashion, making it more economically accessible, with greater transparency, reaching an increasingly larger target audience, which makes it easier for them to make their choices.*

Interviewer - **What are the biggest challenges and opportunities for social shopping platforms in promoting sustainable fashion?**

Interviewee 14 - *The challenges of shopping platforms are many, including a lack of transparency. Although many platforms promote sustainability, the lack of detailed information can lead to distrust among consumers. Another factor is the price, as sustainable fashion is*

generally more expensive than fast fashion. And finally, the lack of knowledge about sustainability in the fashion world. The potential of platforms lies in their ability to reach a wider target audience, promote online communities that can encourage the sharing of information, and the fact that shopping platforms can use algorithms and filters to personalize consumers' purchases.

Interviewer - Thank you very much for your time and for sharing your opinions.

Appendix Q – Transcription of the Interview 15

Interviewer - Hello! First of all, I thank you for your participation in this interview. Your responses are extremely important for my research on how does Social Commerce influences attitudes and consumer behaviors toward adopting sustainable fashion. The objective of this study is to understand how digital transformation is impacting attitudes and behaviors towards sustainable fashion. Firstly, **could you tell me a little about yourself?**

Interviewee 15 - *I am 30 years old and work as an environmental engineer. I live in the Lisbon area.*

Interviewer - Thank you. Our interview will be divided into 5 sections. The first section is about consumers' attitudes and perceptions regarding sustainability and social shopping. Social shopping combines e-commerce with social networks, meaning it allows you to shop directly on platforms like Instagram and Facebook, for example. That said, I would like to know **what do you understand by sustainability?**

Interviewee 15 - *For me, sustainability is the ability to meet our needs without compromising the environment and future generations.*

Interviewer - **What is the importance of sustainability in your daily life?**

Interviewee 15 - *Very high. I believe it is possible to have a comfortable and more sustainable life, and that this should be the goal. I recycle, and I have an electric car to try to reduce CO2 consumption. I am vegan and I try my best to avoid buying products packaged in plastic. It's difficult sometimes, but I try. For example, the fruit in the supermarket, I never put in those plastic bags they have available; I use reusable mesh bags.*

Interviewer - **Do you consider yourself a person interested in fashion?**

Interviewee 15 - *Yes, I consider myself.*

Interviewer - As you know, the fashion industry is one of the most polluting and wasteful to the planet. So, **what is your perception of sustainable fashion within the fashion industry?**

Interviewee 15 - *It is still the target of a lot of greenwashing. I believe it is possible to develop and invest in sustainable fashion; however, the consumption paradigm needs to change.*

Interviewer - Have you ever seen or read reports on social media about the topic of sustainability in the fashion industry?

Interviewee 15 - *Yes, many, because sustainability in fashion is a topic that concerns me. It appears a lot on my Instagram and LinkedIn.*

Interviewer - Can you identify some consequences of unsustainable consumption in the fashion industry?

Interviewee 15 - *Pollution at various levels (water, land, air). It has negative consequences for wildlife and flora and immense repercussions at the social level, concerning the well-being and quality of life of the population. Not only the population involved in production, the low wages, the inadequate working conditions, exploitation, child labor, etc. But also those who are located near production or waste disposal sites, bringing health risks due to pollution. Ah...*

Interviewer - Do you still remember any more?

Interviewee 15 - *Yes! The waste that this industry creates and encourages.*

Interviewer - Do you think fashion brands use social media effectively to communicate their sustainable practices?

Interviewee 15 - *Yes, but I think it's still insufficient. I don't think it's very common to see brands publishing about that yet.*

Interviewer - Do you take into account the sustainability practices of brands in your purchasing decisions?

Interviewee 15 - *Yes, whenever possible. If a brand is sustainable, it quickly rises in my esteem. I like and feel good about ...*

Interviewer - To support?

Interviewee 15 - *Yes, exactly, I feel good supporting those brands that make efforts or that are completely sustainable.*

Interviewer - What is your reaction to seeing a fashion brand promoting its sustainability efforts on social media? Does this influence your confidence in the brand?

Interviewee 15 - *It depends... a lot because of greenwashing. If it's a brand that, despite the advertising, continues to show opposing practices such as frequent new designs, low-quality materials, and poor finishes, it only diminishes its credibility, and I avoid shopping there. If I*

consider that they strongly support the fact that they call themselves sustainable, so they make it onto my list of brands to consult when I need something.

Interviewer - Do you think fashion brands are doing enough to be sustainable? Why?

Interviewee 15 - *Not yet. In most cases, at least. There is still a very consumerist view that encourages frequently buying new pieces, without promoting their repeated use or repair.*

Interviewer - Do you think that social shopping platforms play a role in your perception of sustainability in fashion?

Interviewee 15 - *I think so... that's where I sometimes find new brands and read about reports related to the topic of sustainability, as I mentioned above.*

Interviewer - Can you identify any sustainable fashion brand?

Interviewee 15 - *Yes, "Naz", "Nae", "Ablesia", "Vintage for a cause", "ISTO", "six", and everything related to swap markets and second-hand clothing stores.*

Interviewer - Do you usually go to those markets?

Interviewee 15 - *Yes, I have been and I liked it; I took some pieces that I no longer wore. I remember that I exchanged some pants for a skirt. I really like it because it also allows you to meet new people.*

Interviewer - Now let's move on to the second section, which is about the barriers to adopting sustainable fashion. Can you identify any barriers that prevent you from buying sustainable fashion?

Interviewee 15 - *The price and physical availability... I don't really like shopping online because you can't try things on.*

Interviewer - How can brands and the fashion industry overcome barriers and encourage the adoption of sustainable practices?

Interviewee 15 - *Support policies for repair, incentives for renting and exchanging parts, lower prices, which is perhaps the most challenging, and greater availability of sustainable stores in common areas, that is, in shopping malls. Many of them are only online, and since I like to try things out, this becomes a barrier for me; I'm sure it's the same for someone else too.*

Interviewer - Do you like or would you like to be able to buy sustainable fashion?

Interviewee 15 - *Yes, I try to do it whenever possible.*

Interviewer - **What would help you consume fashion more responsibly?**

Interviewee 15 - *It would be to have greater financial capacity, to better cope with high prices, and for the materials to be more durable.*

Interviewer - We are now entering the third section, which is about the motivations for adopting sustainable fashion. **Have you ever had an experience where you chose sustainable fashion over conventional options?**

Interviewee 15 - *I almost always buy second-hand. Not long ago, I bought shoes from vegan brands made with recycled materials. I usually also swap clothes with friends.*

Interviewer - **Do your friends, family, digital influencers, or social shopping platforms influence or impact your sustainable fashion choices? How? Can you give an example?**

Interviewee 15 - *Yes, I try to seek feedback on comfort and durability combined with the brand's sustainability, and I usually find that online on social media with influencers. I only buy when I have a need, but I like to have references for where to look.*

Interviewer - **Have you experienced any changes in your shopping habits due to becoming more aware of sustainable fashion practices?**

Interviewee 15 - *Yes, I've started to only buy what I need and to replace things when I can no longer repair them.*

Interviewer - Now let's move on to the fourth section, which is about the intention to adopt sustainable fashion. So, **what are the main factors that influence your decision to buy clothes, in general?**

Interviewee 15 - *Need, expected durability and material, sustainability, and price.*

Interviewer - **Do you intend to increase your purchases of sustainable fashion in the future? Why?**

Interviewee 15 - *Yes, I think that all consumption should be as sustainable as possible.*

Interviewer - **What more could be done to increase your intention to adopt sustainable fashion?**

Interviewee 15 - *Having greater transparency in production methods.*

Interviewer - What are the main barriers that prevent consumers from turning their intentions into concrete actions to buy sustainable fashion?

Interviewee 15 - *Awareness of impacts and empathy. I also believe that price is a significant factor, along with the lack of clear and easily accessible information.*

Interviewer - How often do you buy clothes from brands that are considered sustainable?

Interviewee 15 - *Rarely... but when I do buy, 80% is from brands that I consider more sustainable.*

Interviewer - Let's now move on to the final section that combines social shopping with the behavior of adopting sustainable fashion. **Do you usually shop for clothes online? If so, where?**

Interviewee 15 – *When I do it, most of the time, I do it on Vinted.*

Interviewer - Do you think that digital transformation has had any impact on your perception and knowledge of sustainable fashion?

Interviewee 15 - *Yes, I had access to more and better information.*

Interviewer - Do you think brands are adopting more sustainable practices due to pressure from consumers on social media?

Interviewee 15 - *Some, yes. But not all of them... there is still a long way to go until all brands are sustainable. A lot also due to the "fault" of the consumer, because if the consumer wanted to, they would act and put pressure on brands to become more sustainable.*

Interviewer - What role do you think e-commerce platforms play in the search for sustainable fashion brands?

Interviewee 15 – *They allow for more choices and greater possibilities to find information about the topic of sustainable fashion.*

Interviewer - Now I will read a text explaining what TikTok Shop is, which does not exist here yet. Basically, TikTok Shop is an online store integrated within TikTok, where users can create promotional content and sell those products directly within the TikTok app. The TikTok Shop allows retailers to showcase different product catalogs and enables direct purchases without users having to leave the app, similar to what already happens in e-commerce. Users can add items to their shopping cart and complete the payment process securely while watching brief

videos or live streaming events. With this interaction and real-time product demonstrations, along with the possibility of instant purchase, this new feature makes the most of TikTok's interactive and engaging qualities to enhance the consumer shopping experience. That said, **what do you think about the possibility of buying products directly in the TikTok Shop app during live broadcasts, without leaving the live stream or the app?**

Interviewee 15 - *I think it's an encouragement of consumerism. I don't think it's a good option. There is no encouragement for careful consideration, nor for responsible purchasing.*

Interviewer - **If you had access to TikTok Shop, would you buy clothes there?**

Interviewee 15 - *No.*

Interviewer - **Do you think that digital innovations, such as shopping apps, e-commerce platforms, and social media, have influenced your sustainable fashion purchases? In what way?**

Interviewee 15 – *Yes, they gave me more options to choose from sustainable brands.*

Interviewer - **Do you think that digital transformation initiatives encourage people to adopt sustainable fashion more? Why?**

Interviewee 15 - *It depends on the person's awareness. It can provide access to more information and thus lead to more conscious and sustainable choices and purchases, or it can encourage more intense consumption, due to how easy it is.*

Interviewer - **What do you think are the biggest challenges and opportunities for social shopping platforms in promoting sustainable fashion?**

Interviewee 15 - *I would say the biggest challenge is to develop business without encouraging rampant consumption and to gain the trust of consumers. In terms of opportunities, I think it is to contribute to the promotion of sustainable brands.*

Interviewer - Thank you very much for your time and for sharing your opinions.