Driving Green Consumption: Exploring Generation Z Consumers' Action Issues on Sustainable Fashion in China

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Abstract

Environmental pollution brought by the fashion industry are increasingly a cause for concern. The rise of Generation Z has significant implications for the sustainable fashion market in China. Previous studies found an attitude-behaviour gap among this population, they recognized the importance of sustainable fashion while not taking action. This study applied mix method in two phases to find out how Chinese Generation Z is influenced by environmental knowledge and corporate social responsibility (CSR) through social media, and other factors that influence attitude- behaviour gap in sustainable fashion consumption. With the online survey completed by 168 consumers and the semi-structured interview with six Gen Z consumers, there are four major finding of this study: 1) This study found that Generation Z consumers were more positive and aware of their attitudes and behaviour towards buying sustainable fashion than non-Generation Z consumers; 2) Generation Z consumers were more consistent in their attitudes and behaviour than non-Generation Z consumers; 3) Influenced by environmental knowledge factors and brands CSR through social media, Gen Z consumers are more likely to purchase sustainable fashion products than non-Generation Z consumers. 4) Other factors such as government promotion and school education helped to mitigate the attitude-behaviour gap among Gen Z. Therefore, this study provides applicable implications for fashion companies and government on the strategies to mitigate attitude-behaviour gap among Gen Z.

Keywords: sustainable fashion, generation Z attitude-behaviour gap, environmental knowledge, CSR in social media

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

The apparel and garment industry, as one of the main consumer product categories supplied and sold, has specific negative impacts on the environment at all stages of the apparel product life cycle. These stages include fibre growth and manufacturing, fabric and garment dyeing and printing, transportation to shops and sales, to disposal at the end of the garment's life (Hill & Lee, 2012). China is now one of the largest garment manufacturing industries. Sustainable fashion is gaining attention in Chinese fashion, with more designers and companies promoting sustainable lifestyles in China, proving that interest in sustainable clothing production and consumption is growing (Cerini, 2016; Song, 2017). A concrete expression of sustainable fashion is the slow fashion movement, which will impact fast fashion. Fast fashion promotes the launch of new products in the sales area within a short period of time, while less than 1% of materials in the clothing industry are recycled into new garments (Ertekin & Atik, 2014). Brands are increasingly supporting sustainable fashion in society and in the environment.

Fashion industries must ensure they maximise their investment in sustainable products that are aligned with consumer needs and expectations. With Generation Z expected to be the largest generation of consumers in the

future, it is essential for brands to keep up with the sustainability expectations of these young consumers and start strengthening their brands immediately.

Generation Z is the first generation to be born in the digital world, virtually interacting with their favourite brands (Bernstein, 2015). They have more power to redefine production and consumption than previous generations (Priporas & et al., 2017). Consumer expectations and consumer behaviour of Generation Z are influenced by opinion leaders and reference groups; mainly bloggers, peers, and occasionally older peers from their social networks. However, this may cause their attitude and behaviours to change rapidly, as well as the gap between their attitude and behaviour. Since Generation Z will be the largest stakeholder group in the coming years, it is important to understand their needs and behaviour towards the future of fashion consumption and to analyse how they differ from their predecessors.

This study aims to use mixed study methods to understand Generation Z's behaviours and attitudes when purchasing sustainable fashion products, and to investigate the possible factors that bridge the gap between their attitude and their behaviours. This study seeks to shed light on government policy in promoting sustainability, and to enlighten the fashion industry on their marketing strategy to increase people's behaviours when purchasing sustainable fashion products.

1.2 Aims and Objective

1.2.1 Aims

The aims of this dissertation are 1) understand attitudes and behavioural characteristics of sustainable consumption among Generation Z; 2) analyse the impact of environmental knowledge, brand building CSR through social media on the attitude-behaviour gap; 3) investigate which other factors may influence the attitude-behaviour gap. The research questions posed in this study are as follows. The research objectives posed in this study are as follows.

1.2.2 Objectives

(1) To understand the attitudes and behaviours of Generation Z when purchasing sustainable fashion products

(2) To discover when Gen Z already have the attitude to purchase sustainable fashion products, how environmental knowledge influence them to purchase sustainable fashion products

(3) To discover when Gen Z already have the attitude to purchase sustainable fashion products, how brand promotion (CSR) in social media influence their behaviour towards purchasing sustainable fashion products

(4) To identify when Gen Z have the attitude to purchase sustainable fashion products, what factors influence the behaviour of Generation Z when it comes to purchasing sustainable fashion products

2. Literature Review

2.1 Generation Z

According to the Institute for Emerging Issues (2012), the Gen Z population was expected to account for 32% of the 7.7 billion people around the globe in 2019 and is one of the mainstays of the consumer market. Gen Z are described as independent, confident and exude diversity in terms of culture, lifestyle and gender. Some are entering the job market and others are attending university. They are generally highly educated; gadget savvy and have a significant influence on household purchasing decisions (Van Loggerenberg, Lechuti & Thompson). Mihelich. (2013) explains that Generation Z is highly concerned about environmental issues and are aware of water and energy shortages through information such as transparent social media. However, a report by The Center for Generational Kinetics (2016) reveals that although Generation Z do have positive attitudes towards fashion brands that engage with sustainability issues, this does not necessarily translate into specific support behaviours to create a strong purchase intention for sustainable products. On this note companies and brands need to work to manufacture higher quality products, but at affordable prices, to increase positive consumer intention. (Ariker & Toksoy, 2017).

There are four possible goals for the Gen Z of consumers according to Wood (2013):

1) A desire to learn about new technology

2) An effort to make it easy to use

3) A wish to be protected from harm

4) They have a wish to temporarily escape the truths they are confronted with

In overall terms, Generation Z has the inclusive spirit of their time in their society and technology has brought them closer to each other than ever before. For companies developing sustainable fashion, remaining open and welcoming to the younger generation is the first step to seizing any opportunity.

2.2 Generation Z's Consumer Behaviour

The biggest challenge for the future of wholesale and retail appears to be Generation Z. This generation knows technology very well and take advantage of digital communication. Comprehending the customer action of the team and the media which affect them takes into account the need for sellers to devise suitable market exchanges. In terms of social interaction, Generation Z pays attention to its peer team and favours online social media. The larithmic team is more imaginary, more convinced, more positive and more lateral as well. Generation Z prefers engaging and making an effort to set up relationships. The generation is classified as a generation that has freedom of choice in terms of products and they have a tendency to become influencers of household disspation. Generation Z possesses more energy to redefine generation and disspation than previous generations. (Priporas & et al., 2017) They are the first to be born into a digital society that means virtual interaction with their favourite brands (Bernstein, 2015).

Generation Z consumers typically shop through their mobile devices (Chillakuri, 2020). Consumer expectations and consumer behaviour of Generation Z are impacted by a range of groups, including peers and bloggers. As the buying power of Generation Z grows, sellers request to understand their consumer behaviour in terms of the way they share information about brands and products, which is more likely to be digitally (Priporas & et al. 2017).

The behavioural issues of Generation Z have been taken into account and they catch the online probabilities to satisfy their demands. The interplay between companies and consumers promotes the omnichannel marketing strategy fulfillment, meeting existing expectations, requirements and needs as conveniently as possible. (Paul, J. & et al., 2016)

2.3 Drivers of Generation Z's Sustainable Fashion Consumption in China

As environmental awareness grows, more attention should be given to the sustainable fashionability of consumer behaviour and the importance of cross-cultural influences on sustainable consumption. In a survey of 18 countries, Chinese consumers ranked second in sustainable consumption; Koreans ranked third; and Japan ranked sixteenth (Greendex, 2014). The results reveal an important adjuster of commodity character. It is more beneficial to the present comprehension of how eco-labels is able to effectively convey the appeal of eco-friendly products to young consumers and why they differ from other advertisement media, as Chinese Generation Z consumers may see eco-labels as specifically appealing in relation to how products are processed and manufactured with environmental developments in mind. Chinese Generation Z consumers' eco-emotions are predicted through environmental attitudes and concerns. In other words, the purchasing behaviour of the young is more prone to be straight impacted by eco-feelings than the others. This result might be beneficial to a further comprehension of environmental consciousness and better availability of environmental consciousness in the background of the productive theory.

2.4 The Attitude-Behaviour Gap in Purchase of Sustainable Fashion

Since the COVID-19 epidemic began, 70% of consumers say sustainability has become increasingly significant when buying products, and when consumers choose to adopt a sustainable lifestyle, their purchasing behaviour is complicated by their decisions. (Mligue & et al., 2001) At the same time, the fashion industry is facing economic challenges. Fashion brands face strategic and operational barriers, and consumers want to be able to trust brands and understand what they are doing in terms of sustainability. Many luxury brands are trying to avoid the perception of greenwashing, with brands making their supply chains transparent and presenting industry reports to consumers. Consumers feel that these steps take the pressure off them and give them more confidence in the development of sustainable fashion. However, only 20% of shoppers actively compare the sustainability of brands. (Mligue & et al., 2001). In the face of this phenomenon, this paper examines the gap between attitudes and behaviours on a range of dimensions.

2.4.1 TPB (Theory of Plan-Behaviour)

Several researchers have applied the theory of intended action to understand indicators of customer purchasing action. The theory of planned behaviour (Ajzen, 1985, 1991 – Figure 1) suggests that an individual's action plans and their attitudes to an action count on being able to comprehend an individual's actional and prescriptive beliefs and the standards of the society in which they live.
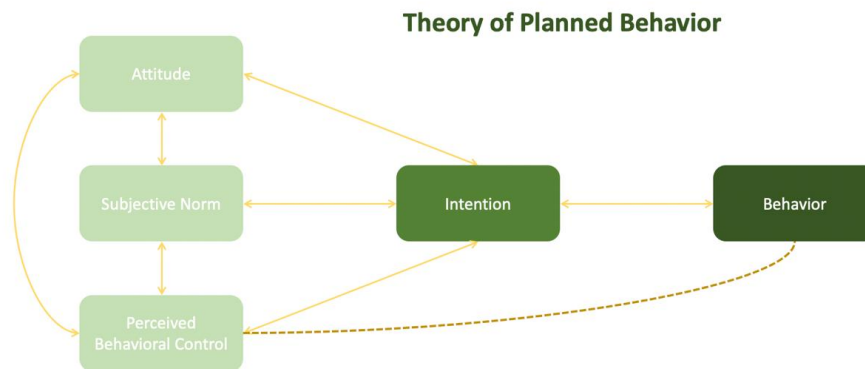
Theory of Planned Behavior

Figure 1. The theory of intended action (employed from "The Theory of Planned Behavior," by Ajzen, 1991, Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes, 50, pp. 179–211)

TPB applies to several related research questions, including behaviour, actional plans, viewpoints and beliefs (Ajzen, 1985). A viewpoint could be a symbol of a person's fixed thinking or feeling about something. For example, consumers of different ages have different outlooks and attitudes towards fashion, and Generation Z will be more receptive to new fashion products. Subjective norms can be a sign of the social pressure people feel to perform or not perform a behaviour. (social rules, legal regulations etc.) Whereas beliefs can be signs of how difficult or easy it is for a person to perform a particular behaviour, and those people's beliefs about factors can facilitate or hinder the performance of the behaviour. For example, fashion brands engage in a series of campaigns and celebrity endorsements to attract consumer interest in their brand and promote product awareness. However, when there is some negative press about the celebrity, it can instead negatively impact product sales.

Table 1. From (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2005)

Concept	Definition
Behavioral Intention	The perceived likelihood of a person carrying out this behavior. Are they likely or unlikely to carry out this behavior?
Attitude	A person's individual feelings and evaluation of the behavior. Do they see this behavior or action as a good or bad?
Subjective Norm	How others in society view this behavior. Do others approve or disapprove of this action?
Perceived Behavioral Control	The individual belief that one has control over a specific action or behavior. Do they believe that they can successfully carry out this behavior?

However, Blake (1999) points out that individual, social and institutional barriers are not considered in this behavioural model. Diverse researches have raised some amendments to the TPB to overcome such constraints. These amendments contribute to interpreting the scanning attitude-action inconsistencies in the background of green procurement.

2.4.2 ABG (Attitude Behaviour Gap)

Positive attitudes towards sustainable products are the starting point for stimulating sustainable consumption, as good attitudes are a good predictor of engagement in particular behaviours. However, empirical research in the field of environmental consumption confirms that purchase intentions do not translate into actual purchase behaviour (Vicki & et al., 2007). Despite surroundings attitudes, recyclable plans and a hope to pay more for environmentally friendly commodities, few customers express suitable green purchasing behaviour (Perera & et al., 2018). Most research has centered on a poor correlation between customer active attitudes buying green merchandises and their actual purchase action, invariably meaning leading to the attitude-action gap (Tanner and Wölfing Kast, 2003; Vermeir & Verbeke, 2006). Customers might reveal that they are significantly concerned about ethics and that they blame fast vogue enterprise, nevertheless, they don't think about their own responsibilities concerning unethical practices. In the event of unethically made garments, attitudes might be seen as passive, whereas behaviours do not respond to negative attitudes because people are consuming fast

fashion. (Sudbury & Böltner, 2011) Past research recognised (Auger & Devinney, 2007), the attitude-action gap needs a more integrated method which thinks about the leading factors that affect and hinder pro-environmental action complexly. Following the Anja and Julian (2002) structure, the leading factors impacting ethical action could be separated into outer and inner elements such as economy, society, institutional, environmental knowledge, motivation, attitudes and values (Figure 3).
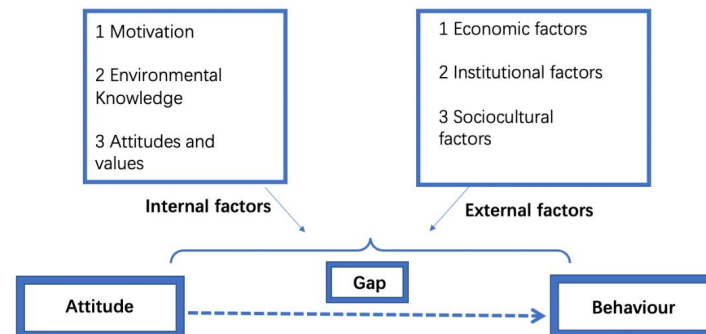

Figure 2. Factors that predict the attitude behaviour gap

2.5 Internal Factors that Influence Attitude Behaviour Gap

While increased consumer engagement with sustainable fashion is evident, research findings suggest that there is still a large rift between attitudes and behaviours, with actual shopping behaviour not reflecting attitudes towards environmental degradation such as fast fashion (Schill & Shaw, 2016). Attitudes are an important personal factor in sustainable fashion consumption, but do not explain why young consumers buy, or don't buy, sustainable fashion products. For example, internal factors include perceptions of practicality and usability, which have different levels of importance for different people, with Jacobs (2018) arguing that sustainability is weighed against these values when shopping. Other internal factors include motivation (trust), attitudes and values, and perceptions of environmental knowledge (Csutora, 2012). The study suggests that the factor of trust or scepticism in brands' motivation to produce sustainable fashion products is a negative influence in the attitude-behaviour relationship. Consumers' assessment of a company's intention to produce green products leads to conclusions about the company's efforts. The perceived intentions can be either beneficial to the cause or exploitative (Drumwright, 1996). Low levels of trust in an organisation's motivation to produce green products would apply particularly to younger generations of consumers, as this generation is more sceptical of business information than previous generations (Schmeltz, 2017). Low levels of trust are expected to have a negative impact on consumers' attitudes towards green purchasing behaviour. In the background of customer's green buying behaviour, low levels of trust can have a negative impact on the relationship between attitudes and behaviour. However, Yatish Joshi and Zillur Rahman, in their 2015 study, stated that customers' perceptive knowledge of environment problems might actively forecast green buying action in young customers. Also, according to the fatidic energy of buyers' green buying action, felt environment conditions followed social effects and attitudes to green buying. It supplements the consequences of diverse past researches that illustrated an active correlation between environment and sustainable vogue disspation (Mostafa, 2006; Young & et al., 2010), and that environmental knowledge will be one of the more important factors influencing the attitude behaviour gap as Generation Z consumers are generally educated to some extent (for example, environmental and socially responsible).

2.5.1 Environmental Knowledge Positive Behavioural Impact and Compensation for Gap

The Attitudinal Behavioural Gap is a consumer's purchase decision in buying sustainable fashion products, however active environment viewpoints don't transform into green purchasing behaviour. In general, environmental knowledge is one of the needs of consumers to translate information into facts about their consumer behaviour decisions during the sustainable consumption process. In the process of learning to change their attitudes to new things and their own behaviour patterns, consumers need access to relevant knowledge and information. Many studies on consumer environmental knowledge therefore acknowledge the positive impact of knowledge on consumers' purchase intentions and buying performance of green merchandises (Eze & Ndubisi, 2013), and Schahn and Holzer (1990) argue that knowledge is a variable that has a greater impact on environmental behaviour and is an important factor that influences consumer attitudes. Responsible consumption behaviour is only effective when consumers have appropriate environmental information. Granzin and Olsen (1991), in their study, state that consumers with recycling behaviour spend most of their time learning about the

environment in the past and those who were used to donating unused products did not use the information resources brought about by their workmates as their main reference knowledge.

Fraj-Andres & Eva (2006) studied the influence of surrounding condition of eco-customer action, and with a random sample of 573 Spanish consumers investigated if the level surrounding condition knowledge moderated the correlation between their viewpoint and behaviour, with the results of the research demonstrating that the surrounding condition possessed a profound influence on eco-action. The tentative was that customers with an advanced level of surrounding condition would have stronger ecological behaviour. Higher levels of ecological knowledge also proved to strengthen the relationship between individuals' emotional ecological behaviour and verbal ecological behaviour.

Long & Qing's (2017) empirical study of a sample of 558 typical consumers China showed that there was a positive effect of consumer-possessed sustainability knowledge on green consumption behaviour; consumers' perception of brand sustainability was a sustainability knowledge It fully mediates the effect of general and specialist knowledge on green consumption behaviour and partially mediates the effect of specialist knowledge on green consumption behaviour; consumers' general knowledge and specialist knowledge are not in opposition to each other and are highly interrelated. However, other researchers have disagreed, with Grunert and Juhl (1995) stating that environmental knowledge does not influence consumer behaviour as they do not perceive it to be a leading cause of ecological action, but rather a slow variable in the correlations between actions and attitudes.

Overall, previous research has confirmed that knowledge can have a positive impact on behaviour. However, previous research has not explored how environmental knowledge affects behaviour when attitude itself is positive or negative. Secondly, young consumers are known to be the most consumer-conscious generation and they have positive attitudes towards sustainability due to their increasing awareness of sustainability and previous education on environmental issues (Hume & Margee, 2010). Previous research has paid relatively little attention to this particular group of Generation Z. Therefore, the research in this paper is to discuss whether environmental knowledge still influences the gap between attitudes and behaviour when Generation Z is generally more educated.

2.6 External Factors that Influence Attitude Behaviour Gap

Outer elements might make a difference to consumers' sustainable purchasing decisions, including different factors such as economic, institutional, social and cultural influences. (Wiederhold & Martinez, 2018) In the light of an advisory by the Ellen MacArthur Foundation, apparel production has increased exponentially over the past 15 years in the context of a growing global population and increasing sales per capita in developed economies. In a study by Bray et al. (2010), when shopping, sustainability was a negative influence in the attitude-behaviour relationship when comparing sustainability to product value. The decisive factor for consumers when making purchase decisions is price. The reason for this is that consumers prioritise their own best interests when purchasing sustainable goods and they largely do not care about environmental protection in the first place, instead prioritising lower priced products that fit their budget (Balderjahn, 2013). Products are marketed by brands as being somewhat highly regarded in terms of sustainability, but sustainable consumers do not see significant tangible returns (no advantage in terms of price) – simply put, consumers cannot understand the rationale for the high price of sustainable products, and ethical alternatives do not offer tangible rewards, so they keep frequent purchase action (Bray & et al., 2010).

2.6.1 The Positive Impact of Social Corporate Responsibility on Sustainable Fashion in terms of Attitudes

Environmental and social factors have an equally important influence on the development of sustainable fashion, with most consumers (especially young Gen Z consumers) expecting brands to not just possess an active image, but also possess an active effect. Pertaining to the comprehension of CSR as getting sustainability by economic, social and environmental could interest each stakeholder (Ashrafi & et al., 2020). Fashion brands are actively involved in promoting their CSR activities using diverse medium systems. Presently, more than ever, shareholders and customers wish brands to be liable socially. It was discovered in the 2015 Global CSR research that 90 percent of customer was going to boycott an enterprise if it employed unbeneficial commerce practices, while 91% of worldwide customers need enterprises to perform trustworthily to resolve a large variety of environmental and social problems. Main vogue brands are taking note of this and are employing various communication technologies to improve their CSR activities.

Social media is also an important means of corporate communication in China, with social media platforms such as Xiaohongshu, TikTok and live streaming platforms already proving to be important mediums for young consumers to learn about corporate marketing. In addition, Yoo et al., 2021 empirically support a study on the mediating role of brand identity between consumers' CSR-related activities in social media and behavioural intentions such as eWOM. The results suggest that the more consumers engage in CSR communication through

social media, the more likely they are to generate positive eWOM about the brand, generate positive brand attitudes and increase purchase intentions due to increased brand identification. (Bhattacharya & Sen, 2003)

The operation and promotion of social media is one of the key ways in which contemporary apparel brands promote their CSR activities and is an important way for Generation Z to access information, allowing them to gain knowledge about apparel brands and about sustainable fashion. Previous research has mostly investigated the impact of social media on consumer attitudes to CSR, but not whether it affects people's behaviour and whether CSR images promoted through social media can be a factor in filling the attitude-action gap, so the research serves to comprehend the influence of efficient communication of CSR by means of media of society on the attitude-behaviour gap. Therefore, this study aims to understand the impact of effective CSR communication through social media on the attitude-action gap, especially on consumers' behaviour towards purchasing sustainable fashion products.

3. Research Method

3.1 Quantitative (Questionnaire)

The author focuses on the specific group of Generation Z (18 to 26 years old) in China. In terms of market size, the trend consumer market reaches 100 billion and is still in a rapid growth path; in terms of consumer distribution, Generation Z has become a strong driver of growth in the trend consumer market (Gazzola & et al., 2020). The questionnaire was translated into two languages; English and Chinese. An accurate translation of the questionnaire was carried out by the author to ensure that the survey instrument was conceptually consistent in terms of the meaning expressed in English and Chinese. The sample size from this thesis was (n=168), which is why quantitative research is also the most appropriate strategy for this sort of research (Saunders & et al., 2009). A sample of over 100 permits normalisation of the data, ensuring consistency (Kemp & et al., 2018). The questionnaire mainly covered 20 multiple-choice questions in five areas: basic demographic information (age, education, income etc.), green perceptions, CSR promotion by companies through social media, factors for purchasing sustainable fashion products, and attitudinal-behavioural gaps in sustainable fashion. The questionnaire was drawn from previous literature on sustainable fashion consumption, the New Environmental Paradigm Scale, which has been more widely used in research, and combined with the questions were designed with the characteristics of the Chinese Generation Z consumer group in mind. The Cronbach's alpha of this questionnaire in this study is 0.878, indicating a strong reliability. In addition, the KMO analysis shows that this questionnaire has strong validity, KMO = 0.928.

Table 2. Reliability and validity of the self-developed questionnaire

Factors	Items	Cronbach α	KMO
Environment knowledge	Q6 Q8 Q9 Q20 Q11		
Social Media	Q12 Q13 Q14 Q15 Q19	0.878	0.928

The questionnaire includes both multiple-choice and single-choice questions, some of which are based on a 5-point Likert scale (Nemoto & Beglar, 2014). In particular, this study focused on two knowledge points, namely, environmental knowledge and the impact of companies' use of social media to promote CSR on consumers.

In the environmental knowledge section, six articles were employed to check the context perceptions of Generation Z consumers. All of the articles were obtained from the Perceived Knowledge of Environmental Issues Scale (Mohr & et al., 1998), which is founded on the notion of a comprehensive action of context information (Ellen & et al., 1997).

In the section on reveal to surroundings information pathways by media, 5 articles were applied to estimate customers' reveal to surroundings condition. All of the articles were derived from Lee's (2010) medium mix estimation. Participators were required to illustrate the context information they were exposed to through the media.

The electronic version of the questionnaire system is maturing and people are moving away from the

paper-based survey format to a web-based electronic questionnaire that is more convenient for automated statistical analysis and evaluation (Beidleman & et al., 2007). Due to the wide distribution and large number of Generation Z consumers in China, in order to speed up data collection and obtain a large amount of data, this paper uses the online software Questionnaire Star tool to complete the questionnaire design and scan the QR code through the WeChat app to participate in the survey. The survey was conducted online over 5 days, with 168 questionnaires collected. After eliminating the invalid questionnaires with random and incomplete answers, there remained 168 questionnaires, with a valid return rate of 100%.

3.2 Qualitative (Interview)

The research will incorporate the qualitative research method of in-depth interviews with Generation Z consumers as it allows for a deeper dive into the facts, thus revealing the deeper complexities that influence each respondent's response to organisational behaviour (Wengraf, 2001). In this research, in-depth personal interviews were conducted to minimise the interference of respondents' self-presentation and pressure from those around them to walk the talk and to create a semi-structured interview format that encouraged respondents to express their thoughts in a more authentic manner. Eight individuals were invited to conduct the interviews, all of whom were undergraduate students from a major university in China, including international economics and trade, surveying technology and engineering, geophysics, logging, automation and chemical and pharmaceutical engineering. Each of the interviewees, with the exception of the international economics and trade majors, had environmental knowledge (a mandatory environmental course). As consumers aged 19-25 are the main target market for sustainable fashion consumption behaviour (Jung & et al., 2019), this sample could provide important indications about upcycled fashion consumption behaviour. The subjects in this study are sensitive to new fashion trends and belong to the demographic group that leads the Chinese consumer market. Two respondents were not included in the study because their interviews had to finish uncompleted due to unforeseen circumstances. Therefore, the final number of valid respondents was six, which also reached the theoretical sample size saturation. The interviews were conducted in mid-July 2021 and each interview lasted approximately 30 to 40 minutes.

For a qualitative study using in-depth interviews as a research method, the sample can be small but must be diverse (Dworkin, 2012). The specific interview steps in the study were as follows. First, in addition to collecting basic information about the respondents (age, gender, income, etc.), the respondents were asked very general questions about their usual shopping habits. Second, the respondents were asked whether they actively purchase sustainable fashion products and which purchasing factors are important for their consumption/purchasing decisions. Third, the researcher guided the respondents through the attitudinal behavioural gap. Fourth, consumers were asked whether environmental knowledge and corporate social media campaigns were factors in their purchase/non-purchase of sustainable fashion products, and were asked to give examples. Fifth, consumers were then asked what they expected from companies and governments in terms of purchasing sustainable fashion products, and were asked to give one or two practical examples. If a consumer has expressed an obvious interest or intention to buy, but cannot give an example of sustainable consumption, we will ask for as much detail as possible about the underlying reasons for this.

3.3 Data Collection & Analysis

3.3.1 Questionnaire

Since the study goal of the pilot study in this project is to reveal the consumer behaviour of Generation Z in buying sustainable fashion products, SPSS 25.0 was used to analyse the frequency, EFA (exploratory factor analysis), and reliability. It will be used to perform descriptive analysis, independent sample T test, correlation analysis, and linear regression in this study.

1) Descriptive Analysis:

An appropriate analysis can well serve to research data which is beneficial to depict, illuminate or sum up information validly in a helpful method so that modes may appear and accomplish each situation of the information. (Nowell & et al., 2017). It is a most essential action for executing statistical analysis of data. Depictive research contains recognising the location of a onefold value or its reaction pertaining to others as well. Measures are able to be very helpful in the domain of expertise. Through these advantages, descriptive analysis can help realise the goal to reveal the consumer behaviour of Generation Z in buying sustainable products.

2) Independent Sample t Test:

The Independent Samples t Test compares the means of two independent groups in order to determine whether there is statistical evidence that the associated population means are significantly different.

3) Correlation analysis:

Correlation analysis is a method of statistical evaluation used to study the strength of a relationship between two,

numerically measured, continuous variables (e.g. height and weight). This particular type of analysis is useful when a researcher wants to establish if there are possible connections between variables.

4) Linear Regression:

Linear regression analysis is used to predict the value of a variable based on the value of another variable. In this study, environmental knowledge and social media are the independent variables and the consistency between attitude and behaviour is the dependent variable.

3.3.2 Interviews

The primary focus of this study is to investigate the importance of environmental knowledge and CSR in mitigating the attitude-behaviour gap with one-on-one interviews. To achieve this study goal, content analysis and thematic analysis are utilised. Content analysis can be used to depict and classify ordinary vocabularies, phrases, and views in mensurable information (Elo & et al., 2014). By means of content research, researchers could analyse and quantify the existence, implications and correlation of such vocabularies, topics or notions. Thematic research is employed to identify and to interpret patterns and themes in qualitative data. According to Hsieh and Shannon (2005), thematic analysis can help interviewers to check the information and to recognise ordinary topics, including views, themes and modes of implication which emerge repeatedly. Therefore, thematic research can help the researcher to find out similarities between individuals and to uncover the core factor that can help mitigate the attitude-behaviour gap in Chinese Generation Z.

3.4 Methodology Limitations

Due to the limited time available to conduct this project, there are some limitations to the research methodology that should be considered.

First, the survey questionnaire was completed anonymously online by 168 respondents and the in-depth interviews were conducted with only six undergraduate students from the same university in Beijing, a modest representation of the small significant population of Generation Z consumers in China, and the analysis and results can only represent a small generalisation due to numerical and geographical limitations.

Secondly, the researchers in the section of the questionnaire attempted to address this issue by randomly dispersing the survey across different platforms. In this way, the impact of possible industry-based bias among professionals in the apparel industry is reduced. Online surveys on self-administration may have problems of cooperation and survey fraud due to a lack of accountability. There is always a chance of collecting negative or false answers.

In addition, as the data gathering in the interviews is on the foundation of the observations in body of the researcher, while the subjects are a particular team of individuals that perform in a particular condition, the conclusions drawn would not necessarily be representative of a population at large, while the objectivity of the detection would be constrained.

Finally, there is a potential bias where internal validity may be influenced by different interpretations of the concept of sustainability and because the popularity of sustainability in China is not deep and widespread enough, resulting in Generation Z consumers having limited experience of buying sustainable fashion products, only by focusing on common consumption phenomena such as sustainable fashion products in materials and supply chains, while ignoring labour, discrimination and other issues. This bias is limited by focusing on common consumer phenomena such as materials and supply chains, while ignoring less easily identifiable cases of sustainability definition issues.

4. Findings

4.1 Pilot Study: Online Questionnaire

4.1.1 Descriptive Analysis

From the 168 questionnaires returned, the results show that both Gen Z and non-Generation Z individuals are willing to buy sustainable products. The data shows that 92.73% of Generation Z are willing to buy sustainable fashion products, while 89.66% of non-Generation Z support sustainable fashion consumption.

Question 9: Are you willing to buy sustainable fashion products?

Table 3. Descriptive table of question 9

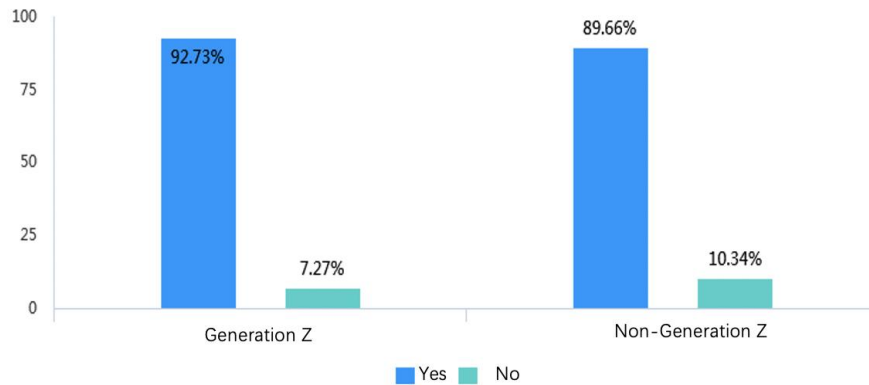| X\Y	Yes	No	Total
Generation Z	102(92.73%)	8(7.27%)	110
Non-Generation Z	52(89.66%)	6(10.34%)	58

Figure 3. Comparison between Gen Z and non-Gen Z

However, there are differences between the two groups in terms of the specific purchasing behaviour of consumers, influenced by different factors and conditions. The frequency of product purchases, the influence of social media on Generation Z and non-Z purchases, and the influence of knowledge on Generation Z and non-Z purchases.

Question 15: How often do you buy sustainable fashion products?

Table 4. Descriptive table of question 15

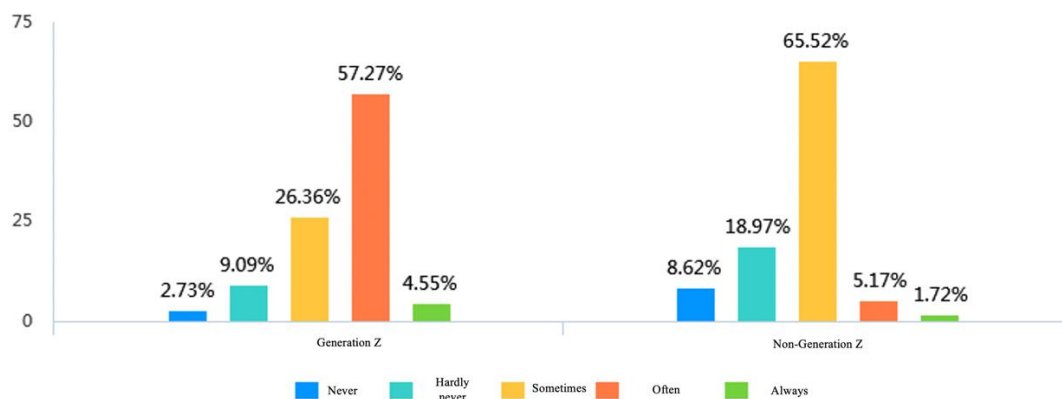| X\Y	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always	Total
Generation Z	3(2.73%)	10(9.09%)	29(26.36%)	63(57.27%)	5(4.55%)	110
Non-Generation Z	5(8.62%)	11(18.97%)	38(65.52%)	3(5.17%)	1(1.72%)	58

Figure 4. Comparison between Gen Z and non-Gen Z

The figure above shows the frequency of buying sustainable fashion products in Generation Z and non-Generation Z. Comparing to non-Generation Z, 57.27% of the 110 generation Z participants often bought sustainable fashion products. Only 2.73% never bought sustainable fashion products. While among the 58 non-generation Z participants, only 5.17% often bought sustainable fashion products, and 8.62% never did. Therefore, it is likely that generation Z intended to buy sustainable fashion products more frequently when compared to the other population.

Question 20: To what extent does environmental knowledge contribute to your behaviour when buying sustainable fashion products?

Table 5. Descriptive table of question 20

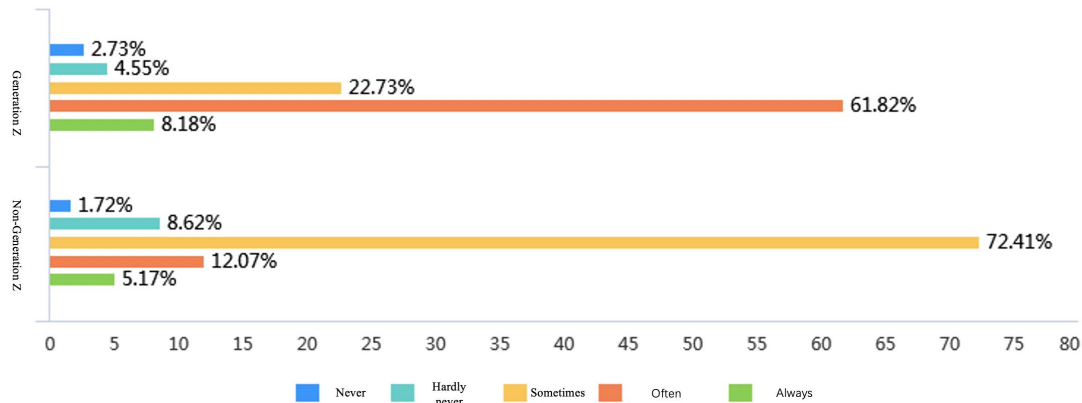| X\Y	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always	Total
Generation Z	3(2.73%)	5(4.55%)	25(22.73%)	68(61.82%)	9(8.18%)	110
Non-Generation Z	1(1.72%)	5(8.62%)	42(72.41%)	7(12.07%)	3(5.17%)	58

Figure 5. Comparison between Gen Z and non-Gen Z

Regarding the question of whether environmental knowledge influences consumers to purchase sustainable fashion products, Generation Z and non-Generation Z purchase intentions are represented in the figure 5. Unlike non-Generation Z who are rarely influenced by environmental knowledge to purchase products twice as often as Generation Z and sometimes purchase as much as 72.41% of the time, Generation Z are 61.82% of the 110 consumers who are willing to purchase sustainable fashion products because of their environmental knowledge. This indicates that Generation Z are more likely to purchase sustainable fashion products due to environmental knowledge.

Question 14: To what extent is your willingness to buy sustainable fashion products attracted by companies' use of social media (Xiaohongshu, TikTok, live streaming)?

Table 6. Descriptive table of question 14

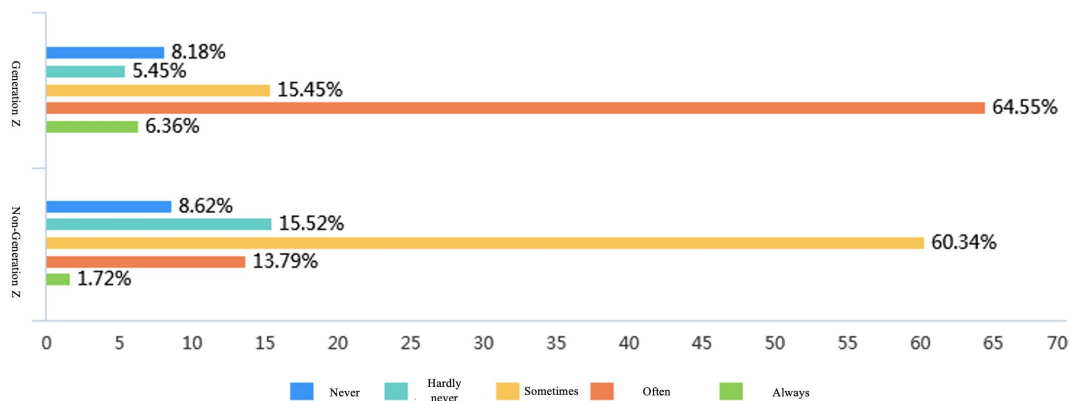| X\Y	Never	Rarely	Sometime	Often	Always	Total
Generation Z	9(8.18%)	6(5.45%)	17(15.45%)	71(64.55%)	7(6.36%)	110
Non-Generation Z	5(8.62%)	9(15.52%)	35(60.34%)	8(13.79%)	1(1.72%)	58

Figure 6. Comparison between Gen Z and non-Gen Z

Due to advances in technology, social media has become very popular as a media tool for brands to promote corporate social responsibility. The data above shows that only around 8% of Gen Z and non-Gen Z are never influenced by social media to buy sustainable fashion products. However, the degree of influence varies, with non-Generation Z's purchase of sustainable products being influenced by social media, with a fluctuating purchase attitude, sometimes up to 60.34%. Generation Z is 64.55% more likely to be influenced by social media to buy sustainable products, and three times more likely than non-Generation Z to always buy. Therefore, Gen Z may be more influenced by brands promoting sustainable fashion products through social media channels than non-Generation Z consumers.

Question 16: Which of the following factors lead you to want to buy sustainable fashion products?

Table 7. Descriptive table of question 16

X\Y	Product design	Product prices	Brand story and culture	The celebrity effect (Internet celebrity, live streaming with goods)	Environmental knowledge for social responsibility	Total
Generation Z	72(65.45%)	57(51.82%)	52(47.27%)	43(39.09%)	54(49.09%)	110
Non-Generation Z	38(65.52%)	35(60.34%)	27(46.55%)	7(12.07%)	32(55.17%)	58

A number of factors contribute to the purchase of sustainable fashion products by consumers, with the most obvious difference in the graph above being that 110 consumers of Generation Z are 39.09% more likely to purchase sustainable fashion products due to the celebrity effect (Internet celebrities live streaming with goods) than the non-Generation Z generation, which is three times more likely to do so. With social responsibility, the non-Generation Z consumers were 55.17% more likely to purchase products with environmental knowledge than Generation Z consumers at 49.09%. Similarly, the authors found that the cultural factors of product design and brand storytelling were the same factors influencing Generation Z and non-Generation Z.

Question 18: When you have the desire to buy sustainable fashion products, how often do you make consistent purchases?

Table 8. Descriptive table of question 18

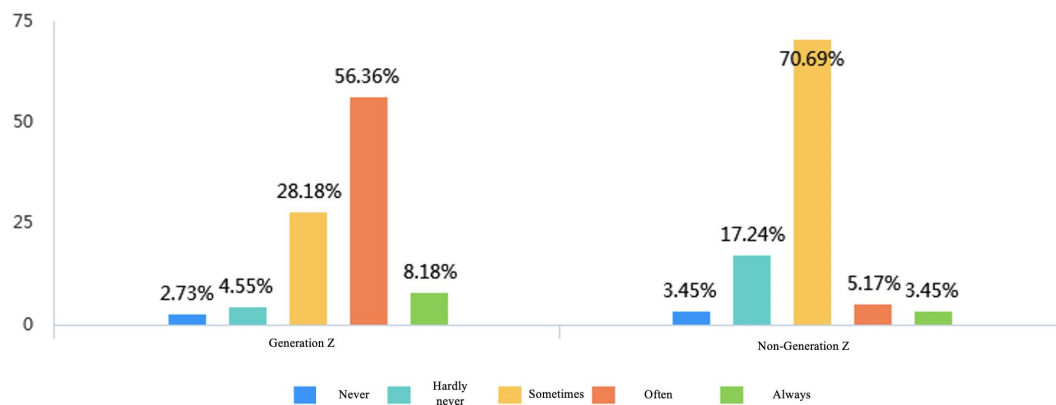| X\Y	Never	Rarely	Sometime	Often	Always	Total
Generation Z	3(2.73%)	5(4.55%)	31(28.18%)	62(56.36%)	9(8.18%)	110
Non-Generation Z	2(3.45%)	10(17.24%)	41(70.69%)	3(5.17%)	2(3.45%)	58

Figure 7. Comparison between Gen Z and non-Gen Z

The growing awareness of sustainable consumption and the increasing number of consumers who say they are willing to consume green products often differs in the way in which specific purchases occur. As can be seen in the graph above, Generation Z consumers are 56.36% more willing to buy and take action, and their attitudes and behaviours are more consistent than those of Generation Z consumers. Generation Z consumers are also twice as likely as non-generation Z consumers to always buy sustainable fashion products. Thus, it is clear from the data that Generation Z may be more likely than non-Generation Z consumers to be consistent in their attitudinal behaviour and reduce the gap in this phenomenon.

At the same time, there is also a significant difference between the influence of environmental knowledge and social media on Generation Z and non-Generation Z. Therefore, an independent sample t-test will be used to compare the differences between the two groups.

4.1.2 Independent Sample T Test

Table 9. Independent *t* test

	Q1: Are you between the ages of 19-25? (Mean±Std. Deviation)		*t*	*p*
	Generation Z (*n*=110)	Non-Generation Z (*n*=58)		
Q19: To what extent do social media campaigns promote your purchase of sustainable fashion products?	3.60±0.80	2.93±0.77	5.205	0.000**
Q20: To what extent does environmental knowledge contribute to your purchasing behaviour of sustainable fashion products?	3.68±0.80	3.10±0.69	4.869	0.000**
Q15: How often do you buy sustainable fashion products?	3.52±0.83	2.72±0.77	6.037	0.000**
Q18: How often do you make consistent purchases when you have the desire to buy sustainable fashion products?	3.63±0.81	2.88±0.70	6.212	0.000**
Product Design	0.65±0.48	0.66±0.48	-0.008	0.994
Product prices	0.52±0.50	0.60±0.49	-1.059	0.292
Brand story and culture	0.47±0.50	0.47±0.50	0.088	0.930
The celebrity effect (Internet celebrities, live streaming with goods)	0.39±0.49	0.12±0.33	4.248	0.000**
Environmental knowledge for social responsibility	0.49±0.50	0.55±0.50	-0.747	0.456

* $p<0.05$ ** $p<0.01$

Description: An independent sample t test was used to investigate the differences between generation Z and non-generation Z on how likely their buying behaviour can be influenced by social media. According to this table, generation Z is inclined to buy sustainable fashion products because of social media (t = 5.205, p = .000, MZ = 3.60, Mnon-Z = 2.93) (1 = never, 2 = rarely, 3 = sometimes, 4 = often, 5 = always).

Generation Z were also more likely to be motivated by environmental knowledge to purchase sustainable fashion products (t=4.869, p=0.000). A specific comparison of differences shows that the mean for Generation Z is 3.42 (3 = sometimes, 4 = more often), which is significantly higher than the mean for non-Generation Z of 2.72 (2 = hardly ever, 3 = sometimes).

The frequency of consistent attitudes and behaviours was also higher for Generation Z. This showed a 0.01 level of significance (t=6.212, p=0.000). A specific comparison of differences shows that the mean of Generation Z is 3.63, which is significantly higher than the mean of non-Generation Z (2.88).

Finally, when Gen Z and non-Gen Z were asked which factors they thought were more likely to align with their attitudes and behaviours, Gen Z and non-Gen Z did not show significance (p>0.05) for four items: product design, product price, brand story and culture, and environmental knowledge for social responsibility. However, the celebrity effect (including Netflix and live streaming) was significant at the 0.01 level (t=4.248, p=0.000). A specific comparison of the differences shows that the mean of 0.39 for Generation Z is significantly higher than the mean of 0.12 for non-Generation Z (1 = select the celebrity effect; 0 = do not select the celebrity effect).

4.1.3 Correlation Analysis

Table 10.

Projects	Average	Standard deviation	Q1: Are you between the ages of 19-25?	Q14: To what extent is your willingness to buy sustainable fashion products attracted by	Q18: How often do you make consistent purchases when you have the desire to buy	Q19: To what extent do social media campaigns promote your purchase of	Q20: To what extent does environmental knowledge contribute to your purchasing

			social media?	sustainable fashion products?	sustainable fashion products?	behaviour of sustainable fashion products?
Q1: Are you between the ages of 19-25?	1.46	0.50	1			
Q14: To what extent is your willingness to buy sustainable fashion products attracted by social media?	2.86	1.06	-0.067	1		
Q18: How often do you make consistent purchases when you have desire to buy sustainable fashion products?	3.06	0.74	-0.30*	0.53**	1	
Q19: To what extent do social media campaigns promote your purchase of sustainable fashion products?	3.14	0.81	-0.06	0.66**	0.63**	1
Q20: To what extent does environmental knowledge contribute to your purchasing behaviour of sustainable fashion products?	3.32	0.91	-0.15	0.47**	0.52**	0.67**	1

*$p<0.05$ ** $p<0.01$

Only being a Generation Z member was negatively correlated with the frequency of making consistent purchases ($r = -0.30$, $p < .05$). This suggests that Generation Z has a higher frequency of making behaviours consistent with attitudes.

However, there is no significant correlation between all other items and if the population is Gen Z.

4.1.4 Linear Regression

Table 11. Regression analysis (n=168)

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	P	VIF	R^2	Adj R^2	F
	B	Std. Error	$Beta$						
Constant	1.694	0.291	-	5.820	0.000**	-			
Q14: To what extent is your willingness to buy sustainable fashion products attracted by social media (Xiaohongshu,	0.564	0.051	0.660	11.127	0.000**	1.076	0.460	0.454	$F(2,165)$ =70.297, p=0.000

TikTok, Live)?					
Q 6: Do you actively participate in environmental protection activities and believe that it is everyone's responsibility to protect the environment?	-0.176	0.177	-0.059	-0.996	0.321	1.076

Dependent Variable: Question 18: How often do you make consistent purchases when you have the desire to buy sustainable fashion products?

D-W: 1.865

* $p<0.05$ ** $p<0.01$

In this study, social media and environmental knowledge were included as independent variables and frequency of attitude-behaviour congruence was included as the dependent variable. Regression analysis revealed a regression coefficient of b = -0.176 (t=-0.996, p=0.321>0.05) for environmental knowledge and b = 0.564 (t=11.127, p=0.000<0.01) for social media. Environmental knowledge and social media explained 46.0% of the frequency of consistent attitudinal behaviour.

4.2 Interview

Table 12.

Name	Age	Gender	Education level	Major
A	21	Male	Undergraduate	Logging
B	20	Male	Undergraduate	Survey Technology and Engineering
C	19	Male	Undergraduate	Automation
D	23	Female	Undergraduate	International Economics and Trade
E	19	Female	Undergraduate	Chemical & Pharmaceutical
F	19	Female	Undergraduate	Geophysics

Note: The above six candidates were all willing to buy sustainable fashion products.

4.2.1 Impact of Own Expertise on Sustainable Fashion

B: "I think because one of our electives is Introduction to Environmental Engineering, it's essential to learn about the environment, and oil is essential to the whole industry, because clothing is just basically piled up on oil, so we know a bit more about it probably."

"Because of the environment it's going to be very costly, sometimes above the dividend of the business. Because from my material point of view, the fashion industry definitely depends on our oil industry, it's raw materials are polyester fibres, just like nylon or whatever are like para-hydroxybenzoic and whatever, they kind of material decomposition is particularly difficult, taking decades to degrade. So that's the environment in that we have to understand and take into account factors."

C: "During that time in junior high school when we went on an exchange abroad, the people there would really recommend some of those sustainable developments to us, when we came back at that time we wanted to buy a scarf for my mother, then at that time we were more torn between two models, then he introduced a third model, then that was sustainable, but I purchased it."

"It would be, like the shop assistant before, he popularised it with me, he just similarly popularised my knowledge of the environment, so I went for a more environmentally friendly way of shopping."

D: "Our profession is not... other petroleum, environmental majors require environmental classes."

"First of all, because I didn't know this particularly well before, I didn't even know there was sustainable fashion, like the concept...I used to think that clothing, clothes I wore or didn't like, I just had to recycle it and he would be able to achieve the purpose of protecting the environment, but after watching Shake, Weibo videos I realised

that after clothing was produced The recycling rate is actually not as high as I thought, and the production process is also very polluting to energy and the environment, so I think it will trigger me to think about it, and then I will choose to reduce the quantity, and then buy better quality, and then also consider whether environmental protection this issue."

Analysis: The interviewees all possessed positive attitudes towards sustainable fashion consumption, while in terms of consumption behaviour, Chinese Generation Z consumers have different perspectives on sustainable consumption behaviour, influenced by environmental knowledge factors. Student B is a Survey Technology and Engineering major and has a strong expertise in understanding materials in sustainable fashion and can relate sustainable clothing materials to the oil industry. Student C was motivated to choose sustainable fashion consumer behaviour by the knowledge of sustainable materials provided by the brand's sales staff during an academic exchange abroad. However, student D, who did not have the opportunity to take the school's environmental course because she was an International Economics and Trade major, was not as active in her purchasing behaviour towards sustainable fashion products as the other two students with specialist knowledge. This shows that environmental knowledge has a positive role on sustainable fashion consumption, where consumers with environmental expertise are more likely to engage in sustainable fashion consumption behaviour.

4.2.2 Knowledge Dissemination and Awareness in University

B "There is a little bit of understanding, carbon emissions and carbon neutrality is basically like schools, like about carbon emissions, carbon neutrality it will have some activities, like old clothes recycling and so on, used books it will also do some environmental activities. But there are no specific activities to educate or influence us to expand our environmental knowledge, we also understand more because we have environmental courses."

C: "The University of Petroleum has only a little bit of it, but mainly in the area of energy, mainly fossil fuels, and some comparisons between these new sources of energy and solar energy will be a little bit more, or the understanding in the professional courses. But it really doesn't have much impact on the daily life aspect of sustainability or environmental knowledge."

D: "I don't think I've heard of any environmental activities in my major, and I've rarely heard of any lectures on environmental knowledge. We have a bulletin board with activities that students take part in, such as competitions and festivals, but I haven't seen any environmental knowledge presentations or activities in there either."

Analysis: Universities occupy an important role in the process of environmental literacy. Student B mentioned in the interview that the school would only have more general environmental activities, and that the knowledge of students on sustainable product development only stops at environmental activities such as recycling old clothes and second-hand books, and that there is no systematic education programme for students in terms of environmental knowledge. Student C, on the other hand, suggested that because his university is a petroleum university, he has knowledge of environmental issues between energy and new energy sources, which shows that the school does not connect theoretical knowledge with the real lives of consumers in order to spread environmental knowledge. Student D, who did not have a professional background in the environment, said that there was very little content on sustainable development in school. To sum up, in the educational environment (university) of Generation Z consumers in China, schools do not do a good job of promoting and educating their students, but rather provide them with environmental knowledge in a symbolic sense, and schools do not educate them deeply about environmental knowledge in terms of sustainable development.

4.2.3 Influence of Social-Media on Purchasing Sustainable Fashion Products

D: "Yes, I think for me social media is probably also a specific channel, for example, he is living with goods... but for example, the kind of anchor that I trust more, I have followed for a long time, or the kind of friends and family around me..., but I may have to look at the specific, and then social media it's also just said that companies use to spread social responsibility, it's also kind of a channel."

E: "I think social media has a big impact on the public's psychology, in terms of sustainable products and sustainable fashion, nowadays, if it's not more of a live broadcast... I think it will be much more popular. If some public figures are wearing sustainable fashion, I think it will be much more popular if there is a campaign through social media, I think it will make a lot of people want to get the same celebrity style."

F: "I think I think nowadays technology is very developed and the internet is spreading very fast, so the internet is social media is really a very important part then. You have for example like TikTok, Xiaohongshu around 10 people basically 9 people are using it, and then everyone likes these is software very much, on which you will see brands or companies promoting their products environmentally friendly and can make themselves understand sustainable fashion products a bit more, so I think the influence on them will be very significant."

Analysis: According to D, in order to promote more sustainable consumption among young consumers, Chinese brands have started to actively or passively market (live stream) and promote sustainable products on social media such as Weibo, TikTok and Xiaohongshu. This is one of the ways that the young people of Generation Z are living and consuming. China has the largest number of social media users in the world. This is something that made students E and F agree that it is very important for companies to use social media to develop the CSR impact of their brands. It is one of the best ways to get closer to young consumers. They feel that consumers generate emotions such as love and appreciation for celebrities, they have a keen view and unique way of thinking about fashion and therefore tend to imitate them more in terms of sustainable consumer behaviour. The celebrity effect has become a common phenomenon nowadays, with their high profile and the huge fan base attached to them, making celebrities even more influential for sustainable consumption.

A: "Actually it's not all from social media, I basically don't brush shake videos, so actually there's very little media attention, I'm mainly dealing with people through, for example, I play a game of basketball and then my ankle is prone to injury, others recommend me that one which environmentally friendly material shoes with ankle protection function better, I will try..."

B: "Social media basically doesn't influence me to buy sustainable fashion products, because I buy nothing, there is nothing credible about eco-friendly materials reported on social media, I don't know if it's really eco-friendly, or sustainable, I mainly still have my own subjective feelings if the product is suitable for me."

Analysis: Although many companies have started sustainable marketing efforts on social media, actively promoting sustainable fashion consumption, in Student A's opinion, social media marketing does not necessarily promote sustainable purchasing behaviour. He does not use social media as often as he would like, preferring to trust recommendations from people around him (family or friends) about sustainable consumption products. For Student B, Chinese Generation Z consumers on the one hand get effective information from green advertising to make decisions, but the prevalence of misleading social media green advertising and the use of social media greenwash marketing by companies makes Student B afraid of being deceived by false advertising in social media. Therefore, the use of social media by companies, when not properly regulated, can easily have a negative impact on Generation Z consumers.

4.2.4 Other Factors: (Corporate Government Promotion: Sales Channels)

B: "In terms of environmental knowledge, I think the government generally wants to control sustainability, to develop upwards towards sustainability and to maintain it, I think it is better to control it from the source, just like many enterprises have a carbon emission right, like the United States, they can do it in a more kind of way that he has not delegated the right, he thinks it can be given to those fast goods those cultural companies, you think if the government does not interfere with it, their kind of fashion brands from the business model is difficult to turn into a sustainable model. If the government doesn't intervene, it's very difficult for them to turn this fashion brand into a sustainable model in terms of their business model, that is, they have to have the government intervene in it, so they can restrict the production in terms of limiting its emission rights, and then the government can give a label type of thing to classify what kind of commodity it is."

C: "It is very important for companies to spread scientific knowledge through social media, and now I think they have to show that they have the credibility to explain this stuff from a scientific point of view, even if it means translating it into easy-to-understand language, so that we can understand the concept of the product and its production process, and for us to understand it. I think it's very useful to understand sustainable consumption of products. And then instead of this kind of uh, instead of a lot of marketing, we have this product that is sustainable, we have this product that the workers how is this kind of thing more general. I think it's better to go from a scientific point of view to market this product a little bit."

Analysis: In this interview survey, the authors found that in addition to the two factors of environmental knowledge and brands' use of social media to promote corporate social responsibility as influencing the phenomenon of the attitude behaviour gap, other influencing factors were expressed by Generation Z consumers. For example, Student B believes that more government policies are needed to promote sustainable consumption behaviour (management of carbon emission rights issues, etc.). Student C believes that in promoting sustainable consumption behaviour, it is very important for companies to promote sustainable fashion products to consumers through social media, so that sustainable consumer products can be regularly featured in the marketing of products and the general public can understand the importance of sustainability.

B: "To be honest, I don't think about these things first, because consumers generally only look at the price and the usefulness of the product..."

C: "I don't go out of my way to find a sustainable fashion product like this. But if it's similar to other products, in terms of price, quality and how good it looks, if it's similar, I would give it priority."

D: "Mainly first look at its style, see how it looks, then look at the price, value for money, and then there will be

consideration of whether it's environmentally friendly materials, that's probably in these areas."

E: "When I come across sustainable products, I think I would prefer to buy them. If it's a sustainable product, I think it's a good way to ensure that it's not too expensive and has aesthetic value, but it can also make a contribution to the environment. Then I think choosing him is the best of both worlds."

Analysis: Among the Gen Z consumers interviewed, regardless of gender or professional differences between the interviewees, the factors that drove their consumer behaviour more in their purchase of sustainable fashion products were the product design and price of sustainable fashion products. Matching the aesthetics of Generation Z consumers and the price they can afford to pay is also an important factor in closing the attitudinal behavioural gap.

5. Findings & Discussion

The findings of this study explore the attitudinal-behavioural gap in the purchase of sustainable fashion consumption among Generation Z. The results show that Generation Z consumers are more positive and aware of their attitudes and behaviours towards purchasing sustainable fashion than non-Generation Z consumers, and that Generation Z consumers are more consistent in their attitudes and behaviours than non-Generation Z consumers. With the influence of environmental knowledge factors, Gen Z consumers are more inclined to purchase sustainable fashion products than non-Generation Z consumers, with Gen Z's environmental expertise making them more likely to purchase. Under the influence of brands building CSR factors through social media, Gen Z consumers have a greater tendency to consume sustainable fashion products than non-Generation Z consumers, where the celebrity effect and social responsibility factors are confirmed in both qualitative and quantitative studies. In addition to the above two factors (environmental knowledge and social media), other factors were found such as government policies for the development of sustainable fashion products, increased efforts by companies to promote sustainable fashion products, and improved product design and price adjustments for sustainable fashion products.

5.1 The Attitudes and Behaviours of Generation Z in Purchasing Sustainable Fashion Products

To answer the first question "what are the attitudes and behaviours of generation Z in purchasing sustainable fashion products", this study found that Generation Z consumers are more aware and consistent in their attitudes and behaviours towards buying sustainable fashion than non-Generation Z consumers. This finding is aligned with previous studies. According to Tari (2011), generation Z is regarded as the most environmentally conscious generation. Williams and Page (2011) compared the sustainable products purchasing behaviour of generation Z with previous generations, finding that generation Z not only consider sustainable fashion as a tool for acceptance by the society, and they have tended to avoid buying fast fashion brands products as it is common around the peers. Vajkai and Zsoka (2020) examined sustainable fashion products purchasing behaviour in generation Z, finding that only 19% of the respondents would love to buy fast-fashion products. Therefore, in the consumer concept of Generation Z, the purchase and use of environmentally friendly products and the upholding of sustainable concepts are closely linked to social status.

5.2 Environmental Knowledge in Bridging the Attitude-Behaviour Gap on Sustainable Fashion Products Purchasing in Generation Z

The second research question asks "How does environmental knowledge influence Generation Z to purchase sustainable fashion products when they already have the attitude to purchase sustainable fashion products?" This finding is aligned with those from previous studies (Hiller, 2011), which suggest that Generation Z consumers are more likely to make sustainable fashion purchases when they already possess the attitude to purchase sustainable fashion products.

Findings from previous studies suggest that educated young consumers are chosen because they are more concerned about the environment, are more responsible and are in favour of supporting environmental issues (*ibid.*). Environmental knowledge makes them more likely to understand the concept and importance of sustainable consumption and its impact on the environment and society (Sliwka & et al., 2006). This study found that Generation Z consumers are more likely to make consumer behaviour in sustainable fashion product purchases than non-Generation Z under the influence of environmental knowledge factors due to Madan, K. and Yadav, R. (2016) findings found that young Generation Z consumers are environmentally knowledgeable and show empathetic sustainable fashion purchases with altruistic understanding. Similar observations have been made by previous researchers in the context of sustainable consumer behaviour.

The study also found that Gen Z consumers with environmental expertise were also more likely to make sustainable fashion purchases than non-environmental Gen Z consumers. For example, in the study by Mostafa (2006), consumers with increased awareness of resource and environmental and ecological crises had a greater interest in sustainable consumption. Another study found that the more general and specialist knowledge younger consumers had, the more consumption behaviour occurred. (Young & et al., 2010) Therefore, compared

to non-Generation Z, Generation Z with environmental expertise has high environmental sensitivity and their expertise can drive sustainable consumption behaviour among Generation Z consumers.

5.3 CSR in Social-Media in Bridging the Attitude-Behaviour Gap on Sustainable Fashion Products Purchasing in Generation Z

To answer the third research question "How does company promotion (CSR) in social media influence Gen Z's behaviour towards purchasing sustainable fashion products when they already have the attitude to purchase sustainable fashion products?", this study found that brands promoting CSR in social media have both positive and negative effects on Gen Z's behaviour towards purchasing sustainable fashion products. The study found that brands promoting CSR through social media have both positive and negative effects on Gen Z. On the one hand, Generation Z consumers are more likely to be influenced by social media campaigns by CSR for sustainable fashion products. This finding is aligned with Luke (2008, pp. 79-85), who provides suggestions that a generally effective marketing campaign in sustainable fashion marketing can be achieved through the use of social media influencers. Generation Z consumers are more likely to make sustainable fashion purchases due to social media factors. This is because it is good for companies to use influencers as a marketing tool in sustainability marketing due to the trust and personal relationships already there. Curiel (2017) indicate that when brands promote sustainability in social media through the celebrity effect, the positive and positive image of the celebrity coincides with the sustainable product, thus positively leading fans to sustainable fashion consumption. (Solomon, 2009)

On the other hand, in findings, the author found through interviews that when brands build CSR through social media, some companies engage in greenwashing, leading to a perception among Generation Z consumers that companies may be misrepresenting themselves and therefore not consuming sustainable fashion, increasing the gap in the attitudinal-behavioural gap and reducing consumption behaviour. This finding is in line with Ying., & Kim's (2018) study examining Generation Z's attitudes towards corporate CSR communication and branding due to a survey conducted by Ariker and Toksoy (2017) to discover the impact of CSR programmes on the purchase intentions of Generation Z of Turkish university students. The study used generational theory as a comparative approach to explain the interaction of Generation Z with generational trends based on the past, where CSR was positive.

5.4 Other Factors in Bridging the Attitude-Behaviour Gap on Sustainable Fashion Products Purchasing in Generation Z: Government Policy and Corporate Marketing, Design and Price of Sustainable Fashion Products

To answer the second research question "What are other factors that may influence Gen Z's behaviour in purchasing sustainable fashion products when they have the attitude to purchase sustainable fashion products?", this finding is aligned with Chen's study of Generation Z consumers, which found that in addition to the above internal and external factors, Generation Z consumers are more likely to make sustainable fashion purchases due to government policies on sustainability, increased promotion of sustainable fashion marketing by companies, and the design and price of sustainable fashion products themselves Chan & Wei (2015).

First, government policies are perceived to have some influence on Chinese consumers' environmental awareness and behaviour towards sustainable fashion consumption. This is because after the 2007 Plastic Restriction Order was issued, the study found that the reduction of plastic bags in supermarkets and hypermarkets was so significant, their usage almost stopped completely. Therefore, the policy and regulations have been able to gain popularity and benefits. In order to promote the concept of green consumption, China should provide appropriate legal backing for the promotion and dissemination of sustainable fashion consumption. Secondly, Chinese sustainable fashion brands are weak in developing awareness and have not integrated environmental awareness into their business philosophy. Even though some consumers have a demand for green products, they are unable to obtain strong support, which hinders product development and weakens the incentive for companies to invest in green products. As a result, the needs of environmentally conscious consumers are not being met (Mondon, 2006). Finally, there is the low value for money of sustainable fashion products. The value of green products is that they are less damaging to the environment and have high-value utilisation. The cost and time investment for companies to develop them is greater than that of ordinary products, and without government subsidy support, the pricing of green products will be more expensive than ordinary products, thus limiting the purchasing behaviour of low and middle-income consumers. (Yue & et al., 2020).

6. Limitations

There are several limitations to this study, but these can be addressed in future research. Firstly, when using the research instrument, the questionnaire was designed with questions that were not set under specific conditions, for example, terms such as social responsibility and corporate responsibility were not added with ethical terms, and the gap between the attitudes of Generation Z and non-Generation Z was so similar that it was impossible to do in-depth statistical comparisons. Also, especially in self-administered surveys, it is difficult for the surveyor

to understand the level of conscientiousness of the respondents, who do not understand the questions, are not clear about how to answer them, and do not receive guidance and clarification. However, in this study, the questionnaire was used as a pilot survey, a very quick and efficient approach, and the online completion of the questionnaire was able to break through geographical restrictions and survey a large number of respondents at the same time. Only correlation and regression analyses were used in this study, which could only expose a correlation between environmental knowledge and social media factors and sustainable fashion buying behaviour, but could not prove a causal relationship. Secondly, the semi-structured interviews where limited to being online due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The six subjects were all from a university in Beijing, and the small number of interviews and geographical homogeneity was a major problem for the qualitative study. During the interviews, some of the users were very talkative and instead of focusing on the questions presented, the interviewees kept talking about themselves, deviating from the original purpose of the survey. However, in this interview, respondents could describe the events or phenomena in a vivid and concrete way, stating their views and opinions truthfully and naturally, so more complex issues could be explored and new and deeper information could be obtained. Finally, this study only focused on environmental knowledge and brands building CSR factors through social media on the sustainable purchase attitude behaviour gap of Generation Z consumers. Future research could investigate in depth the impact of other factors on the attitude behaviour gap and in turn contribute to sustainable fashion.

7. Conclusion & Recommendations

Through a questionnaire survey of 168 people and interviews with six Generation Z consumers who have positive attitudes towards sustainable consumer behaviour, it was found that Generation Z consumers are more aware and hold more positive attitudes and behaviours concerning purchasing sustainable fashion than non-Generation Z consumers, and that Generation Z consumers have more consistent attitudes and behaviours than non-Generation Z consumers. Influenced by environmental knowledge factors, Gen Z consumers are more inclined to purchase sustainable fashion products than non-Generation Z consumers, with Gen Z consumers with environmental expertise being more likely to purchase than those with non-environmental expertise. Under the influence of brands building CSR factors through social media, Gen Z consumers have a greater tendency to consume sustainable fashion products than non-Generation Z consumers, where the celebrity effect and social responsibility factors are confirmed in both qualitative and quantitative studies. In addition to these two factors (environmental knowledge and social media), other factors such as government policies for the development of sustainable fashion products, increased efforts by companies to promote sustainable fashion products, and improved product design and price adjustments for sustainable fashion products were also found in the survey. The results show that the attitudes and behaviours of Generation Z are more consistent when it comes to purchasing sustainable fashion consumption. In response to the four conclusions above, this study makes the following recommendations.

7.1 Recommendations for Generation Z

As the future pillars of society, Generation Z consumers have an important responsibility and obligation to contribute to the sustainable development and building of society. Therefore, they should spontaneously broaden their access to information on sustainable fashion consumption, increase their level of awareness of sustainable fashion consumption and strengthen their attitudes towards it, too.

7.2 Recommendations for Targeting Universities

Universities are the main source of knowledge for Generation Z consumers, so they should provide lectures or relevant courses on sustainable fashion consumption to enhance their environmental awareness and attitudes, and to further promote their willingness and behaviour towards sustainable fashion consumption. At the same time, schools should set an example for their students by purchasing sustainable fashion products in terms of resources and equipment, so that Generation Z consumers can experience the value of sustainable fashion products in advance, which will have a positive impact on their future sustainable fashion consumption.

7.3 Recommendations for Companies

At present, the range of sustainable fashion products in China is relatively small and the prices are relatively high. Enterprises should strengthen the development and innovation of sustainable fashion products, improve technology and lower prices while increasing the range of sustainable fashion products. Secondly, companies have a role to play in guiding consumers' consumption patterns. They can guide consumers to consume sustainable fashion through marketing activities such as advertising or public relations, and they can also design sustainable fashion products to target Generation Z consumers; a consumer group with huge potential.

7.4 Target Government Policies

As market regulators, they should formulate fiscal and taxation policies to support and encourage companies to engage in research and development, innovation and promotion of sustainable fashion products, which will not

only increase the motivation of companies and stimulate consumers to consume sustainable fashion, but also have a positive impact on the upgrading and transformation of the industry.

Finally, future research could further explore the impact of environmental knowledge education in universities, the promotion of sustainable fashion marketing by companies and government strategies on sustainable development on the attitudinal behavioural gap.

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