

# INVESTIGATING YOUNG ADULTS' CONSUMPTION ON DISPOSABLE FASHION

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Group 11

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## INTRODUCTION



Nowadays, more and more young adults have been started to pursue beauty, new styles, and trends, but most of the people are not financially independent yet. Therefore, the rise of fast fashion brands, like Zara and H&M, has brought hope to less affluent people who want to pursue fashion based on the friendly prices and the variety of clothes styles.

However, many experts found that disposable fashion leads to many serious issues. One central issue is that the unsatisfactory quality or low practicality of these items may lead to disposable fashion that reduces environmental sustainability. In other words, discarded clothing that has been worn only a few times or even just once can put pressure on the environment, for example, dyes in clothing can contaminate waterways. (Claudia, 2017; Joy et al., 2012; Morgan, L. & Birtwistle, 2009; Hill, J., & Lee, H., 2015; Niinimäki, K., 2015)

Among the huge number of the fast fashion brands consumers, some of them might have a clear understanding about the harmful impacts that disposable fashion can bring to the environment, and some of them might know nothing; based on the different level of understanding, their consumer behaviors might be different. Therefore, our study aims to investigate those differences.

To be more specific, our research question is: **How do young adults' awareness of environmental sustainability influence their behavior to buy fast fashion brands?**

## AIMS AND HYPOTHESIS:



To explore how young adults' awareness of environmental sustainability influences their behavior to buy fast fashion brands, and to find how those differences affect environmental sustainability.



To encourage people to pay more attention to environmental protection based on their daily behaviors.



People who have more awareness of environmental sustainability will buy less stuff in disposable fashion brands.



## METHODS

### DESIGN:

We have conducted **8 detailed interviews**, nearly **15 minutes each**, with **Vant 149 students** who interested in fast fashion through the online tools such as WeChat, Zoom, etc. All interview transcripts were analyzed qualitatively by using **thematic analysis method**, which is to analyze both open codes and a priori codes. By including all female and similar age group's participants, we analyzed the major consumer groups of fast fashion. Meanwhile, through interviewing participants about environmental sustainability and fast fashion, we analyzed **the influence between young adults' awareness of a sustainable environment and their shopping behaviors.**

### MATERIALS:

#### For interviewers:

1. Telephones/Laptops – to interview participants through the apps on the devices
2. Voice Memos – to record interviews via Voice Memos, no additional software downloads
3. Microsoft Word – to transcribe the interviews

#### For interviewees:

1. Final version of Information, Consent and Debrief forms – to make sure the participants understand everything about taking part in our project, and to ask participants to sign the Consent form
2. Zoom, Jitsi and Wechat – Conducting interviews online (participants can choose the most suitable app for the interview)
3. Wechat and Google Docs – For group members to meet and discuss and to put our works together

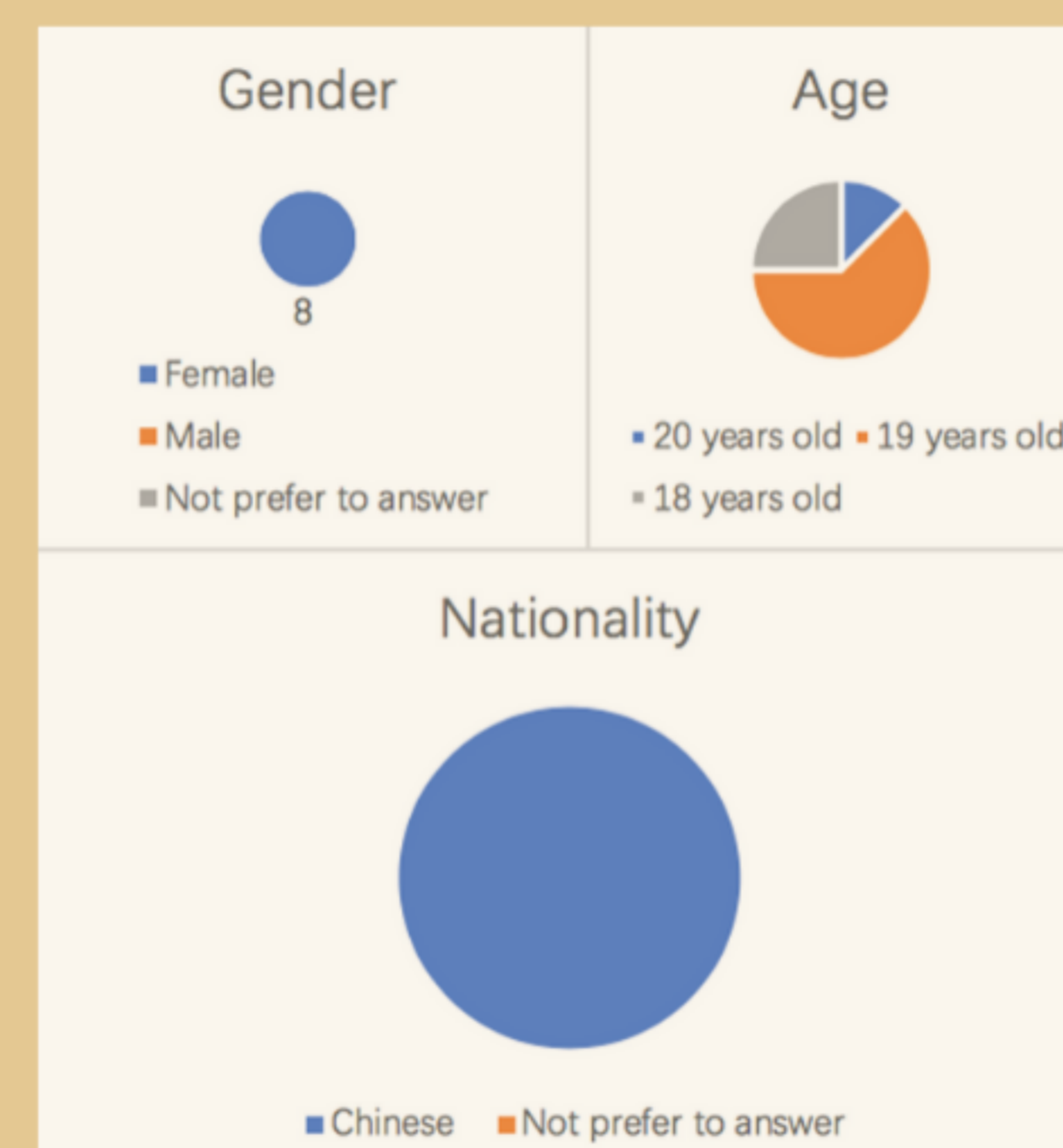
## PARTICIPANTS:

We have 8 Vant 149 female Chinese international students who interested in fast fashion or have the experience of purchasing goods from fast fashion brands, such as Zara and H&M to be the participants of our study.

## PROCEDURE

1. Participants received a copy of Information Form and Consent Form to read and sign, which to make sure that they are eligible for this study.
2. After the participants agreed to participate in our research, they could to choose which software they want to use; we gave the joining link to them.
3. Then, they answered interview questions and each interview last for nearly 10-15 minutes, which include demographic questions.
4. After finishing the interview, they received a copy of Debrief Form.
5. Last, researchers started to transcribe and analyze the data and information we got for the research topic.

## RESULTS



## THEMES

"Sustainable identity compartmentalization" – young adults do not think they have the identity of environmentalist, but they donate clothes to others.

"I think, em... I understand the importance of environmental production, but I think I still lacks of some knowledge about how to protect the environment in my life."

"I always wait for them to pile up and... and sell... but... sell them to recycle hours. In recent years, em... there has been a special place in the community to recycle the old clothes. So I just donate my old clothes there."

"Environmentalism is only for people with high incomes" – young adults normally have no income, which makes them feel expensive to buy sustainable products. Low or no income encourages the purchase of fast fashion products.

"I think it's very cheap."

"So, um... they are actually affordable... to me, so I shopping from these brands."

"Have clear sustainable awareness" – young adults are familiar with the concept of "environmental sustainability", but this is not taken into account when buying fast fashion products.

"I think maybe... the disposable fashion is bad for sustainability. Because, uh... disposable fashion will cause a lot of waste, uh... which is not conduct... uh... conducive to sustainable development."

"Ok... so when I buy the products from disposable fashion brands, like ZARA and H&M, I did not (pause) uh... think about the concept about disposable fashion. I just buy them because of the product in these brands are fashion and trendy. So I want to follow the trend. So I buy them. And they're also price friendly."

## DISCUSSION



The study aimed to investigate the influences of young adults' awareness of environmental sustainability on their consumption of fast fashion brands, and advocate them to promote environmental protection. The study explored that a certain awareness of environmental sustainability among young adults does not influence their consumption of disposable fashion because they do not consider the negative impacts of consuming these products on the environment when they are shopping. A combination of a priori and open coding is used in the study because the priori codes provide a clear direction of the study to the participants, so that they can have a general understanding before the interview, while the open codes display the participants' ideas directly. Also, the participants can discover some interesting ideas that they have never thought before through the open codes and help the researchers to discover some unforeseen and ignored details. The finding enables young adults to realize that their shopping behaviors unintentionally hurt the sustainable development of the environment, thereby may changing their future consuming behaviors. At the same time, the study may also potentially encourage young adults to appeal to the people around them to pay more attention to these environmentally unfavorable behaviors after they know the impacts. For the environmentalists who in this field will benefit from this study because they will have a clearer direction and plan for their future work based on the discovered results.

The existing research on disposable fashion mostly focuses on its impacts on environmental sustainability, but avoids discussing the young adults' awareness on this topic (Claudia, 2017; Joy et al., 2012; Morgan, L. & Birtwistle, 2009; Hill, J., & Lee, H., 2015; Niinimäki, K., 2015). Our study focuses on this specific group of people and discovers the relationship between their awareness of environmental sustainability and its impacts on their consumption behaviors of fast fashion. Thus, the existing research on this topic are advanced and have become more comprehensive. In the future, the studies can focus on the real changes of young adults' shopping behavior to see the effectiveness and value of the study. For example, exploring whether young adults actually stop or reduce consumption on fast fashion brands, or how do the changes influence environmental sustainability are possible further directions of contribution.

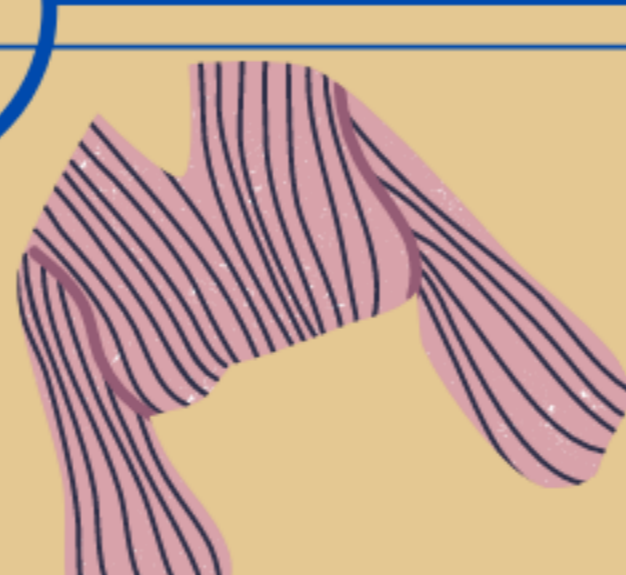
## FINDINGS:

Young adults who love to buy products in disposable fashion brands have a clear understanding of the harmful impacts which fast fashion influences environmental sustainability, but they still shop in those brands. Also, none of them identify themselves as an environmentalist, even though some of the actions they took are environmentally friendly. This further helped us to find that most of them are potentially willing to do more eco-friendly actions, but they may not notice. Therefore, the findings our interviews uncovered is that there are no direct facts that can approve that people who have more knowledge about environmental protection have more eco-friendly shopping behaviors, which means that their awareness level of environmental sustainability may not influence their consumption choice. When they are shopping, most of them do not have a consideration of the harm of disposable fashion to the environment.

## THROUGHLINE:

A certain awareness of environmental sustainability hardly affects young adults' shopping behaviors in fast-fashion brands.

	Assumed result	Actual analyzed result
Differences	<p>Consumption behavior will be influenced by the consumer's awareness of sustainability.</p> <p>People who have more awareness will buy less fast fashion products.</p> <p>As most of them are or want to be environmentalists, they will behave more ecofriendly.</p> <p>They know their awareness level towards the sustainability issues.</p>	<p>There is no direct link between the awareness level of environmental sustainability and consumption behavior.</p> <p>People who own awareness will still consider buying fast fashion brands.</p> <p>No one thinks they are environmentalists, and they will still shop fast fashion brand even though they want to be one of them.</p> <p>Most of them do not know that they have potential awareness of environmental sustainability, but they are still doing things like donating old/unused clothes instead of throwing them away, help improve sustainability.</p>
Similarities	<p>- Both the two have shown similar awareness level of environmental sustainability.</p> <p>- All have a brief understanding of the concept of "sustainability".</p> <p>- All participants have been bought something from disposable fashion brands.</p>	



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