

LEVEL 7 ASSESSMENT SPECIFICATION

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Submission method:	All written assessments, where practical and possible, must be submitted via Turnitin unless otherwise instructed by the Lecturer. (Please DO NOT put this assessment specification into Turnitin or it will match many similarities with other students' submissions.) Alternative submission method (if applicable): Late submission of the assessment will result in a late penalty mark. Work which is submitted up to 1 week late will be capped at 50% for the first attempt and will be awarded a mark of 0% for re-assessment. Late submission penalties may be lifted only if there is an approved extenuating circumstances claim. Work submitted more than 1 week late will be considered as a non-submission and will not be marked. The work may be considered as a submission for reassessment if offered by an Examining Board or if there is an approved extenuating circumstances claim.		
Academic honesty / referencing:	Academic honesty is required. In the main body of your submission you must give credit to authors on whose research and ideas your work is based. Append to your submission a reference list that indicates the books, articles, etc. that you have used, cited or quoted in order to complete this assessment.		

Summary of Research Proposal: Investigating the Influence of Sustainable Practices on Young Consumer Choices in the Fur Fashion Industry

1. Summary of Research Proposal

The research proposal aims to explore the relationship between sustainability practices and consumer behavior within the fur fashion industry, focusing particularly on young consumers (Millennials and Gen Z). With the increase growth of global concerns about environmental sustainability and where the fashion industry's significant contribution to pollution, this research targets to understand how sustainable practices can influence consumers purchasing decisions. As the United Nations has initiated the Sustainable Development Agenda for 2030 in 2016 (United Nations, 2025), which emphasizes the importance and urgency to adopt sustainable practices across various industries, which the fashion sector is one of the key focuses (Sachs et al., 2022).

According to Wong's (2018) research, the fur industry not only has a complex history, but also has an economic significance among the global market until this day (Wong et al., 2018). However, the fur industry had often been criticized for its environmental impact and ethical concerns regarding to animal welfare. With the growth of anti-fur movements and veganism, the fur industry is placed under the spotlight. (Wong et al., 2018; Faiers, 2020).

Animal welfare organizations held an important role within the reification for fur made products. WelFur and the Furmark® Program both aim to promote ethical treatment and welfare for animals involved in the fur industry through establishing welfare criteria and traceability for consumers (International Fur Federation, 2025).

2. Summary of Literature Review

The first part of the literature review highlights the fur industry's historical context from the work of Faiers (2020) and Ramchandani (2017), focusing on its evolution and the growing resistance from environmentalists and animal rights activists. The literature review identifies the significant shift in consumer attitudes (Gordon & Hill, 2015), especially among younger demographics, towards sustainability.

Moreover, the literature review has identified multiple scholars including (Burnasheva et al. (2019), Muralidhar (2019), Kapferer and Michaut-Denizeau (2020), Arta and Qastharin

(2022) and Cho et al. (2022), who mentioned in their research that Millennials (1981-2006) and Generation Z (2007-2012) will become the most significant consumer group for luxury fashion products within the next decades and showing higher inclination towards brands that are committed to sustainability simultaneously. Therefore, it is highly significant to understand the purchasing behavior of this age group.

The literature review delves into various theories relevant to both fur organizations and consumer behavior. First coined by Elkington (1997), The Triple Bottom Line (TBL) serves as a framework for measuring and reporting on sustainability performance of organizations in the fur industry across the three dimensions which are social, environmental, and economic dimensions (Gutowski, 2013). The Stakeholder Theory explores interactions between businesses and their stakeholders. Showing the importance to balance between economical factors and the operation strategies within the organizations (Elmendorf & Luloff, 2006). In consumer behavior stance point, the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) developed by Ajzen (1991) examines psychological factors influencing consumer behavior. It is divided into attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. This theory is served as a key Theoretical Framework in developing the proposed hypothesis. The Value-Belief-Norm (VBN) theory developed by Stern (1999) emphasizes the role of values, beliefs, and norms, which helps to explains how values shape and drive sustainable consumer actions.

3. Summary of Methodology

The aim of this research is to examine how various sustainability practices implemented by stakeholders in the fur industry influence consumer purchasing decisions. Deriving from the research objectives, three distinct phases of the research methodology have formulated through adopting a mixed-methods approach.

Phase one involves secondary data collection. Within this phase, existing data regarding to the fur industry's environmental impact, animal welfare policies, and market trends will be collected through industry federation, government reports and environmental agencies. The goal of this phase is to establish a foundational for readers to understand the current state of the industry.

In phase two, semi-structured key informant interviews will be conducted with managerial-level participants from different sectors and organizations within the fur supply chain. These interviews will explore how companies define sustainability, the measures they have implemented, and the barriers they face while implementing these measurements. This qualitative data will provide reliable and in-depth insights into the industry's current sustainability efforts.

In the third phase, consumer surveys targeting on young consumers will be distributed to evaluate their attitudes towards sustainability in the fur industry. It aims to establish a correlation between sustainability initiatives and purchasing intentions. Survey questionnaire will be developed based on questionnaires that have been published in other existing research studies and further modify in relate to this proposed research.

The integration of both qualitative and quantitative data collection methods provides a comprehensive insight into the research topic.

4. Strengths of Research Proposal

4.1. Relevance and Timeliness of the Research Topic

The proposal addresses a highly relevant and timely issue: sustainability in the fur fashion industry. As global awareness of environmental and ethical concerns rises, sustainability has emerged as a critical topic across various industries. This research is particularly relevant given the increasing consumer demand for transparency and ethical practices in the fashion sector. By focusing on sustainability, the study not only aligns with current global trends but also responds to the growing pressure on industries to adopt responsible practices. This relevance ensures that the findings will resonate with stakeholders, including consumers, manufacturers, and policymakers, making the research impactful and applicable in real-world scenarios.

4.2. Identification of a Research Gap

The literature review conducted within the proposal highlights a significant research gap regarding the sustainability practices of the fur industry and their influence on consumer purchasing behavior. While there is an extensive of literature on sustainability in general, the specific intersection of sustainability practices within the fur industry and their effects on

consumer choices has been relatively underexplored. By addressing this gap, the research contributes to the academic discourse on sustainability and consumer behavior, providing new insights that can inform both theory and practice. This originality enhances the value of the research, as it seeks to fill a gap in existing research.

4.3. Broader Implications for Related Industries

The implications of the research extend beyond the fur industry itself. Given that sustainability is a pressing issue across various sectors, the findings can inform practices in other animal-based industries and the luxury sector. By examining the fur industry's sustainability practices, the research can provide valuable insights that are applicable to other industries, such as animal-based products and the luxury fashion industry that are facing similar ethical and environmental challenges. This broader application enhances the significance of the research, as it can contribute to developing effective strategies that address sustainability concerns across multiple industries. Stakeholders in these sectors can leverage the findings to align their practices with consumer expectations, ultimately fostering a more sustainable market.

4.4. Mixed-Methods Approach

The proposal's adoption of a mixed-methods approach is a significant strength. This methodology combines qualitative and quantitative research methods, allowing for a more comprehensive exploration of the research questions. The qualitative method, involving interviews with industry stakeholders, provides rich contextual insights into the current state of sustainability practices within the fur industry. These interviews capture the perspectives of those directly involved in the industry, offering a nuanced understanding of the challenges and opportunities that they are experiencing.

On the quantitative side, surveys can gather a broader range of data from consumers, allowing researchers to identify trends and patterns in purchasing behavior related to sustainability. This combination of qualitative and quantitative data enhances the robustness of the research findings, as it allows for triangulation—validating results across different data sources. The mixed-methods approach ultimately leads to a more thorough understanding of the relationship between sustainability measures and consumer behavior.

4.5. Credibility of Qualitative Data

The qualitative interviews with industry stakeholders increase the credibility to the research. By collecting data from managerial participants who would provide first-hand experience and knowledge of sustainability initiatives within their organization. Therefore, the research can ensure that the information collected from these interviews is both accurate and relevant. These insights can reveal the motivations behind each sustainability practices, the challenges faced by organizations, and the effectiveness of various strategies in influencing consumer behavior. This fine qualitative data can reinforce the research's credibility and reliability, making the findings more persuasive.

4.6. Strong Theoretical Frameworks

The research proposal is established based on various theories and frameworks, such as the Triple Bottom Line Theory and Stakeholder Theory. These frameworks provide a structured the interplay between economic, social, and environmental factors in the context of sustainability of the studies organizations. The Triple Bottom Line Theory emphasizes the importance to balance profit with social and environmental responsibilities, while Stakeholder Theory focuses on the interests of all stakeholders affected by a company's operations. By grounding the research in these theories, the proposal ensures that the analysis is comprehensive and well-justified. Furthermore, the quantitative surveys are based on well-established theories like the Theory of Planned Behavior and Value-Belief-Norm (VBN) Theory. These theories help explain consumer attitudes and behaviors, providing a solid foundation for understanding how sustainability practices influence purchasing decisions. By integrating these theoretical frameworks, the research can offer a well-rounded analysis that connects consumer behavior with broader sustainability goals.

4.7. Integration of Qualitative and Quantitative Methods

The integration of qualitative and quantitative methods enhances the overall credibility and depth of the research. By combining insights from stakeholder interviews with data from consumer surveys, the research captures a holistic view of the sustainability landscape in the fur industry. This integration allows for a more comprehensive interpretation of the data, as qualitative findings can provide context to quantitative results and vice versa. The ability to draw connections between stakeholder perspectives and consumer attitudes enriches the analysis, leading to more informed conclusions and recommendations.

5. Weakness of the Research Proposal

On the other hand, the proposal has a few weaknesses that need to be addressed to enhance its effectiveness and credibility.

5.1. Lack of clarity in the research questions and objectives

One of the primary concerns, as highlighted by feedback from the research proposal presentation, is the lack of clarity in the research questions and objectives. When research questions and objectives are not well-defined, it can result in a lack of focus and direction, making it challenging to maintain a coherent research trajectory. Clear and precise research questions are crucial as they guide the entire study, from the methodology to the analysis and interpretation of results. Without this clarity, the research risks becoming too broad or veering off course, potentially leading to inconclusive or irrelevant findings.

5.2. Ambiguity of “Sustainability”

Another significant weakness is the ambiguity surrounding the definition of "sustainability." The term is naturally complex and multi-dimensional, as noted by Gordan and Hill (2015), who emphasize that sustainability can be interpreted differently depending on the context. This complexity is further compounded in the fur fashion industry, as pointed out by Wong (2018), due to the nature of supply chain's complexity. Such ambiguity can create challenges not only in framing the research but also in ensuring that interviewees of the stakeholder interview have a consistent understanding of what sustainability implies. If interviewees interpret sustainability in different ways, it may lead to inconsistent data that could weaken the study's validity.

5.2. Bias of Interview

Additionally, the proposal's reliance on interviews with managerial-level personnel might introduce bias. Managers may be inclined to provide responses that present their organization in a favorable means, potentially distorting the data toward socially more desirable outcomes rather than reflecting their true opinions or practices regarding sustainability. This could result in an incomplete or inaccurate picture of the industry's sustainable practices and challenges.

5.2. Narrow Scope Research

Moreover, the scope of the study, focusing specifically on the fur industry and young consumers, may limit the generalizability of the findings. While this focus allows for a detailed examination of this niche market, it may restrict the applicability of the results to other sectors or demographic groups. As this limitation should be acknowledged, this research should be made to contextualize the findings within the broader landscape of sustainability research.

5.3. Consumer Behavior

Lastly, while the proposal aims to explore consumer behavior, it could benefit from a more comprehensive examination of the factors influencing young consumers' attitudes. Other elements such as social media influence, peer pressure, and cultural trends play a significant role in shaping consumer behavior, particularly among younger demographics. By incorporating these factors into the research offer a more detailed insight into young consumers' perspectives on sustainability in the fur industry, thereby enriching the study's overall insights of the research problem.

6. Limitations of the Research Proposal

The research proposal presents several limitations that could affect the depth and applicability of its findings.

6.1. Narrow Focus on the Fur Industry

One of the primary limitations, sharing with one of its weaknesses, is its narrow focus on sustainability practices within the fur industry. While this focus allows for a detailed exploration of this specific sector, it may restrict the ability to collect insights into broader sustainability trends within the fashion industry as a whole. As the fur industry represents only a small segment of the larger fashion sector, and its practices may not be suggestive of those in other areas such as fast fashion, luxury brands, or sustainable clothing lines. This narrow scope could potentially limit the research's relevance to stakeholders interested in broader fashion sustainability issues.

6.2. Demographic Limitations

Furthermore, the concentrate solely on young consumers, specifically Millennials and Generation Z, while justified by existing research, may not capture the full range of consumer behavior across different age demographics. These younger generations although are indeed

important drivers of sustainability trends, but excluding older consumers could potentially miss out the understanding of the complete market dynamics. Older generations may have different motivations and barriers concerning sustainable purchasing, which could provide valuable insights into how sustainability can be promoted across the diverse consumer groups.

6.3. Reliance on Self-Reported Data

Additionally, as the research relies on self-reported data collected via consumer surveys facilitated by manufacturers and sellers, this approach presents challenges in terms of the generalizability and accuracy of the responses. Self-reported data often experiences biases, such as social desirability bias, where respondents may answer in a manner they perceive as socially favorable rather than truthful. This can lead to inaccuracies in understanding true consumer behaviors and attitudes. The sampling method might also limit the diversity of the respondent pool, thereby affecting the representativeness of the findings.

6.4. Rapidly Evolving Industry Dynamics

Given the rapid evolution of both the fashion industry and the concept of sustainability, the data collected in this study may quickly become outdated. Fashion trends and sustainability practices are subject to continuous change due to innovations, shifts in consumer preferences, and external influences such as economic conditions and environmental policies. Therefore, a longitudinal research approach, which involves repeated observations of the same variables over extended periods, could be more beneficial. This approach would allow the study to track changes and developments over time, providing a more dynamic and accurate picture of the changing trends.

6.5. Influence of External Factors

Moreover, the proposed research may not effectively account for external factors that could significantly influence consumer behavior. Cultural differences and financial barriers, for example, are critical elements that can shape purchasing attitudes and decisions regarding to sustainability. These factors can vary widely across regions and demographics, affecting how consumers perceive and engage with sustainable fashion. Ignoring these external influences may lead to an incomplete understanding of consumer behavior.

7. Alternative approach in Research design

7.1. Longitudinal Study

A longitudinal study is characterized by its ability to track changes over time, providing a dynamic view of how variables evolve (Moschis, 2007). This approach is particularly effective in addressing the limitations associated with the fast-paced changes in the fashion industry and sustainability practices. By observing the same subjects across different time intervals, researchers can identify trends and shifts in consumer attitudes that may arise due to new market developments, changes in environmental policies, or emerging social movements. This continuous data collection allows for the examination of long-term effects and causal relationships, such as how exposure to sustainable practices influences purchasing decisions over time. Moreover, it helps in distinguishing between short-lived trends and sustained changes in consumer behavior, offering a more reliable basis for predicting future developments. By capturing the temporal dynamics of consumer engagement with sustainability, a longitudinal study provides insights that remain relevant and adaptable to ongoing industry transformations.

For instance, if a certain fashion brand or products introduces a new sustainable clothing line or if there is a significant policy change in promoting eco-friendly practices, the research can analyze how it influences consumer attitudes and behaviors over time. The research may find awareness increases and sustainable options become more accessible, a larger portion of the demographic shifts towards eco-friendly purchasing or vice versa. This ongoing observation could allow the research to pinpoint factors contributing to these changes and provide a more accurate prediction of the future trends based on past data, addressing the limitation of rapidly evolving industry dynamics by providing a comprehensive understanding of long-term shifts.

7.2. Ethnographic Study

An ethnographic study offers understanding of consumer behavior within its natural context. According to Fletcher and Tham (2015), this method is particularly proficient at addressing limitations related to external factors such as cultural differences and financial barriers, which significantly impact sustainability perceptions and purchasing decisions. By engaging directly with consumers in their everyday environments, the research can observe and document the everyday experiences, social interactions, and cultural influences that shape

consumer's purchasing attitudes towards sustainable fashion. This approach would allow the research to reveal the complexities of consumer motivations, uncovering how factors like cultural norms, social pressures, and economic constraints affect decision-making processes. Ethnography study provides rich, contextual insights that is beyond quantitative data can offer (Fletcher and Tham, 2015), highlighting the diversity of consumer experiences and perspectives. Through detailed observations and in-depth interviews, ethnographic studies can identify even the subtle influences and barriers that might not be apparent in survey data, such as the role of community values or individual financial situations in shaping sustainable purchasing habits. By capturing the holistic picture of consumer behavior, ethnographic studies can enrich the research with a deeper context, making the findings more applicable and comprehensive.

For instance, sustainable fashion could be perceived as a luxury due to higher costs in certain context, influenced by economic barriers. In certain culture, it might observe that cultural traditions are more favor to locally made products rather than being sustainable. Through in-depth interviews, ethnographic study can uncover cultural traditions as motivations in supporting sustainable or unsustainable products.

7.3. Conclusion

In addressing the dynamic and multidimensional nature of consumer attitudes toward sustainable fur fashion, longitudinal and ethnographic research methods offer valuable solutions to the limitations identified. Through longitudinal studies, research can capture the evolution of consumer behaviors and attitudes over an extended period, providing a more extensive insights into how external factors such as market trends, policy changes, and social shifts influence consumer's sustainable purchasing habits. This method allows for the identification of longer-term patterns and causal relationships, overcoming the limitation of rapidly changing consumer landscapes.

Ethnographic studies, on the other hand, enables a deeper contextual understanding of cultural and social influences on consumer behavior. By engaging the research in the everyday lives of consumers, ethnography study uncovers the other motivations and barriers affecting sustainable fashion choices, addressing limitations related to cultural diversity and individual perceptions that the proposed research might neglected.

These approaches could enhance the strength and depth of research findings, offering a comprehensive view that connects the gap between theoretical understanding and real-world application. These two alternative research methods could potentially lead to more precise and accurate predictions of future trends, informing strategies that align with diverse consumer sectors, which as a result can enhance the effectiveness of promoting and adopting sustainable fashion practices for the fur industry.

8. Expected Outcomes

The expected outcomes of the research proposal investigating the influence of sustainable practices on young consumer choices in the fur fashion industry are multidimensional, offering significant contributions to both academic knowledge and practical applications within the industry. The research aims to establish a clear correlation between the implementation of enhanced sustainability practices and the purchasing attitudes of young consumers. By employing a mixed-methods approach, the research will provide strong evidence on how various sustainability initiatives—such as ethical sourcing, animal welfare certifications, and environmentally friendly production methods—can positively influence consumer behavior. This evidence will be crucial for stakeholders in the fur industry, enabling them to align their practices with the sustainability values of their target market. Furthermore, the study is expected to reveal insights into the specific sustainability practices that connect most with young consumers, so to guide the industry stakeholders in the development of targeted marketing strategies and product offerings that meet the evolving consumer expectations.

The study's findings on the factors that influence young consumers' purchasing intentions can provide valuable insights for marketers and policymakers. By understanding the relationship between attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control, industry stakeholders can develop effective marketing strategies that promote sustainable consumption and appeal to young consumers. Moreover, the research will contribute to the development of sustainable supply chain management in the fur industry, which can inform industry stakeholders on the most appropriate practices for sustainable supply chain management. This can lead to improved working conditions, minimizing environmental impact, and more humane treatment of animals involved in the fur industry. Additionally, the study's findings can contribute to the development

of sustainable fashion, which is a growing area of research and practice within the fashion industry.

The research will also identify barriers that young consumers may face when considering sustainable fur products, exploring factors such as perceived behavioral control, subjective norms, and attitudes towards sustainability. By understanding these complexities, fur businesses can address these barriers through the implement of educational campaigns, improving sustainable fur product's accessibility, and enhancing communication strategies that emphasize the environmental and ethical benefits of when making sustainable choices in opting for genuine fur products. The research's insights into the role of social media and peer influence in shaping consumer attitudes will be invaluable for organizations and luxury brands looking to engage younger customers effectively. Ultimately, the research poised to make a significant impact by not only advancing academic knowledge in the fields of consumer behavior and sustainability but also by equipping industry stakeholders with practical tools to promote sustainable practices that align with their consumer expectations.

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