

LEVEL 7 ASSESSMENT SPECIFICATION

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Research Proposal

“Investigating the Influence of Sustainable Practices on Young Consumer Choices in the Fur Fashion Industry”

1. Introduction

In recent years, organizations across various industries have been actively increase focus on incorporating and enhancing sustainability practices. With environmental sustainability emerging as a leading global concern (Li et al., 2020; Cai & Choi, 2020), there is a rapid growing urgency to promote environmental protection schemes. In 2016, the United Nations launched the Sustainable Development Agenda for 2030, urging the global community to adopt its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as a framework to take action. As the fashion and apparel industry is one of the largest contributors to environmental pollution, it is also one of the significant driver for unsustainable practices (Sachs *et al.*, 2022).

This research paper specifically examines the sustainability within the fur industry and how the application of sustainability policies affect its consumer behaviour. The fur industry is known for its complex history and significant economic influence. The fur trade has been a vital part of various cultures and economies for thousands of years, deeply embedded in the traditions of multiple societies around the world. Even today, fur trading remains a crucial trade for numerous indigenous groups, including Canadians, Alaskans, 'Cajun' Louisianans, and Siberians (Hong Kong Fur Federation, 2024). In addition to being a necessity item in cold areas such as Northen Asia and Northen Europe, fur garments are also worn as fashion statements and symbols of social status nowadays.

However in recent decades, the fur industry has faced significant criticism for its environmental impact and ethical concerns related to animal cruelty. The increasing influence of anti-fur movements and the growing popularity of veganism have escalated the criticism, as a result affecting the reputation of the fur industry. If stakeholders within the fur industry do not take proactive actions to improve environmental protection, the industry's future is at great risk. The recent trend in the fashion industry is shifting away from authentic fur towards faux fur, driven by increasing concerns about sustainability, animal welfare, and ethics. Many fashion

brands and designers has decided to opt for faux fur and other environmentally friendly materials in their products.

This research adopts a pragmatic approach to explore how various sustainability practices implemented by stakeholders in the fur industry influence consumer purchasing decisions and determine the effectiveness of these sustainable initiatives towards consumer purchasing attitudes. Given the complexity of consumer behavior in relation to sustainability, this study employs a mixed-methods strategy. The research aims to adopt an exploratory perspective to identify the most critical issues related to sustainability within the fur industry and also to identify the correlation between their consumers.

This study is divided into three phases to provide a comprehensive perspective on the research problem. Among the first phase, secondary data on current situation of fur industry and pollution data related fur manufacturing will be collected.

In the second phase, interviews will be conducted with participants in managerial positions within fur organizations to learn about each company's sustainability strategies and challenges on achieve sustainability. The combination of the these two stages will provide an overview of the fur industry.

The third phase aims to determine the relationship between the data collected in the first two phases and consumer purchasing behavior. The third phase of the research seeks to determine whether increased sustainability and environmental awareness in the fur industry influence consumer attitudes towards animal-made apparels. The goal of this study will be attempting to validate this phenomenon using various consumer behavior theories, such as the Theory of Planned Behavior and Value-Belief-Norm Theory.

The ultimate research goal of this research is to provide valuable insights for owners and policymakers within the fur industry, helping these organizations to increase the consciousness and assess the efforts required to achieve sustainability. Additionally, this research may provide insights and use as a fundamental for other related industries, such as other animal goods industries and the luxury industry, to comprehend the relationship between sustainability and consumer behavior.

2. Literature Review:

The fur industry has long been a subject matter of controversy among the society, particularly regarding to its environmental and ethical implications. There

were never lack of critics and attacks from environmentalist and anti-fur organizations. As sustainability becomes increasingly more important and noticeable to various consumers, especially among the younger demographics, it has become crucial to understand how these factors influence consumers' purchasing intentions. This literature review explores the sustainability challenges within the fur industry, the implications for young consumers' buying intentions and the theoretical frameworks relevant to consumer behavior.

2.1 Fur & Anti-Fur History

Historically, mink coats were regarded as symbolic item that depicts upper class and wealth. They were seen as valuable investments that could be passed down through generations for its timeless design and premium material (Faiers, 2020). According to Ramchandani (2017) research, Sojuzpushnina, a Russian fur historian noted that fur products were once utilized as a means of currency in the market. These fur made items had earned the name of "soft gold" and were often used as prestigious gifts and even as a means of bribery (Ramchandani and Coste-Maniere, 2017).

However in the 1980s, the fur industry faced significant opposition due to the rise of anti-fur campaigns, which protested and questioned vigorously against the ethics in using fur. Protesters used striking slogans such as "I'd rather go naked than wear fur" and "It takes up to 40 dumb animals to make a fur coat. But only one to wear it." Some activists even protested in the nude to stress their commitment in refusing the use of animal made products (Faiers, 2020). During the same period, organizations such as Trans Species Unlimited (TSU) and the Coalition to Abolish the Fur Trade (CAFT) initiated the world's first non-violent protest against animal made products at department store such as the Macy's in New York and Sacramento, which were the largest fur retailer during the era (Faiers, 2020).

Gordon (2015) in his book on sustainable fashion stated that "forswearing all animal products is the only true interpretation of sustainability" (Gordon & Hill, 2015 page). He emphasized that, from his perspective, completely avoiding animal products is the only genuine approach to achieving sustainability (Gordon & Hill, 2015). Despite the ongoing criticisms and setbacks from animal rights activists and anti-fur strikes, there are still luxury fashion brands that continue to include authentic fur as a symbol of luxuriousness and exclusivity. Even today, despite the negative connotations and ethical controversies surrounding fur products, they still remain

prominent within the fashion industry and retain their status as the ultimate luxury items (Wong et al., 2018). According to the International Fur Federation (IFF), it is reported that the fur industry still plays a significant economic role by providing jobs opportunities and the contribution to the gross national product (GNP) in multiple countries including Denmark and Finland (IFF,2024). Dating till 2018, the fur industry was estimated to provide over one million full-time jobs and numerous part-time positions annually, thereby contribute in maintaining a stable employment rate (Wong et al., 2018).

Nonetheless, the trend today in the fashion industry is shifting from using real fur to faux fur due to growing issues on sustainability and animal ethics. Consequently, the trend in fashion designers and brands are now shifting to using faux fur and other environmentally friendly materials in their products (Wong et al., 2018).

Despite the ongoing debates and criticisms from animal rights advocates and anti-fur movements, some luxury fashion brands still continue to use fur, viewing it as a symbol of opulence and high status. Even today, despite the negative perceptions and controversies associated with fur products, they remain a part of the fashion industry and continue to be valued as luxury items (Wong et al., 2018).

2.2 Animal Welfare

Different animal welfare has been established in the fur industry in order to promote sustainability in animal welfare and prevention of cruelty towards farm raised animals. There are two leading organizations have developed their own certification programs in aiming to enhance sustainability and ethical practices within the industry.

WelFur is a welfare assessment scheme that is founded and supported by the European Fur Breeders' Association (EFBA) targeting in raising farm animals ethically. This program aimed on the improvement of animal welfare based on four core principles: good feeding, good housing, good health, and appropriate behavior. These four principles are further detailed through 12 welfare criteria, which include the absence of prolonged hunger, the absence of thirst, comfort around resting, thermal comfort, ease of movement, absence of injuries, absence of disease, absence of pain induced by management procedures, expression of social behaviours, expression of other behaviours, good human-animal relationship, and a positive emotional state. The primary goal of the WelFur program is to assure the

welfare for farm raised animals that are used in the fur industry, and to address public concerns regarding to their ethical treatment (Mononen et al., 2012).

Furmark® Program is another certification program that is supervised under the International Fur Federation (IFF). This program is targets to promote responsible and ethical treatment of animals while enhancing sustainable practices within the fur industry. This program also includes education and providing support for fur animal farmers and fur related businesses by reinforcing both laws that are related to animal welfare and environmental protection. In addition, Furmark® has implemented a tracking scheme to increase the traceability of fur products. This scheme allows consumers to track the origin of the material from the farm to the final product, ensuring transparency and accountability. The importance of material traceability was highlighted by Achabou (2020), which found that traceability is a key factor for consumers when purchasing fur products (Achabou et al., 2020).

These certification programs play a crucial role in promoting ethical and sustainable practices within the fur industry. By setting standards and providing mechanisms for monitoring and improvement, they help ensure that animals are treated humanely and that environmental impacts are minimized. Additionally, by offering traceability, these programs address consumer concerns about the origins and ethical implications of their purchases, thereby fostering a greater trust and transparency in the industry.

2.3 Sustainability and Sustainable Supply Chain Management (SSCM):

The United Nations (UN) introduced the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in 2015, targeting to foster global prosperity and peace by promoting the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). These 17 goals address a wide range of global challenges, including poverty, hunger, health and well-being, quality education, gender equality, clean water and sanitation, affordable and clean energy, decent work and economic growth, industry, innovation and infrastructure, reduced inequalities, sustainable cities and communities, responsible production and consumption, climate action, life below water, life on land, peace, justice and strong institutions, and partnerships. According to Thakker & Sun (2023), the textile and fashion industry is central to the SDGs due to its significant contribution to global pollution, demanding for immediate actions to enhance sustainability in the industry (Thakker and Sun, 2023).

The definition of sustainability is varied based on different aspects. Ahi & Searcy (2013), explained that the term sustainability can be interpreted in a philosophical perspective, which focused on the needs of our future generations to a more sophisticated idea, which can be applied in today's business management (Ahi & Searcy, 2013). Gunder (2006) noted that to defining sustainability is challenging as many often struggle to translate it into actions even they claim to comprehend the term (Gunder, 2006). According to Gordon & Hill (2015) a more general definition of sustainability was concluded in their research. They defined sustainability as a ecological system, which purpose is to maintain the balance, where only necessary resources should be taken from the environment unless it can be renewed. They also argued that achieving true sustainability in the fashion industry is almost impossible due to industry's needs for rapid change in trends for the replacement of old styles (Gordon and Hill, 2015).

The definition of "sustainability" varies depending on the context and is highly correlated with education, language use, living standards, and health (Virtanen et al., 2020). Moore (2017) attempted to develop a comprehensive definition of sustainability, highlighting the challenge of selecting a single definition due to its application at various levels, such as the sustained delivery of clinical treatments or individual behavioural changes (Moore *et al.*, 2017). Therefore, it is essential to provide a clear and appropriate definition of sustainability for readers to understand in this study.

Due to the complex nature of the fashion industry, researchers have divided sustainability in fashion into several distinct dimensions (Wong et al., 2018; Choi et al., 2019; Skjold et al., 2018). For example, the processing of sustainable material involve including more eco-friendly materials into their production (Choi et al., 2019), whereas incorporating sustainable design emphasizes the redesign and reusing materials to create second-hand or reusable apparel (Wong et al., 2018). Additionally, sustainable cultural history encourage the preservation and reuse of clothing by connecting apparel to sentiment (Skjold et al., 2018).

The fashion supply chain is complicated due to its complex procedures and intensive manufacturing processes. Each year, the industry generates significant pollution, including excessive electricity use in machinery and water pollution from dyeing processes (Choi et al., 2019). As a result, many companies are now motivated to increase planning on sustainable supply chain management (Turker &

Altuntas, 2014). In their study, Turker and Altuntas (2014) examined 22 different definitions of Sustainable Supply Chain Management and coining from Ahi and Searcy (2013) a comprehensive definition was developed: “The creation of coordinated supply chains through the voluntary integration of economic, environmental, and social considerations with key inter-organizational business systems designed to efficiently and effectively manage the material, information, and capital flows associated with the procurement, production, and distribution of products or services in order to meet stakeholder requirements and improve the profitability, competitiveness, and resilience of the organization over the short- and long-term.” (Ahi and Searcy, 2013; Turker and Altuntas, 2014). Essentially, the objective is to establish sustainable supply chains that effectively balance economic, environmental, and social factors. The definition is crucial as aligns with the Triple Bottom Line theory, which will be employed as a benchmark when evaluating fur organizations. Sustainable chain management can also be understood as the integration of sustainability and supply chain management (Ahi & Searcy, 2013).

2.4 Millennials and Generation Z Consumers

Numerous studies and reports have highlighted that Millennials and Generation Z are poised to become the most significant consumer groups for luxury fashion products over the next decade (Burnasheva, GuSuh and Villalobos-Moron, 2019; Muralidhar, 2019; Kapferer and Michaut-Denizeau, 2020; Arta and Qastharin, 2022; Cho, Kim-Vick and Yu, 2022). Additionally, these generations are more inclined to favour brands that show a strong commitment to sustainability. This emerging trend presents both challenges and opportunities for not merely the fur industry but for the luxury product industry as a whole. Therefore, this study aims to explore the connection between the perceived sustainability of animal made products and the sustainable behaviours of Millennial and Generation Z consumers. This research will provide valuable insights into how fur companies can align with the sustainability values of these influential consumer groups.

2.5 Theoretical Frameworks

The third part of this research focuses on consumer behavior, which is essential for understanding how sustainability influences purchasing decisions. It is important to introduce and explain theories related to the impact of sustainability on consumer choices. Shaped by a varied psychological, social, and cultural elements, consumer attitudes towards fur products is especially complicated. By

comprehending these theories, stakeholders at various levels can gain valuable insights, enabling them to develop strategies that resonate with consumers' values and attitudes.

2.5.1 The Triple Bottom Line

The Triple Bottom Line (TBL) framework is a comprehensive approach that can be effectively assess an organization's commitment towards sustainability by evaluating its performance across three key dimensions: social, environmental, and economic. John Elkington introduced the concept of TBL in 1994 (Elkington, 1994), emphasizing a balanced focus is required on these three interconnected areas in order to achieve true sustainability. These dimensions are often referred to as the three Ps: people (social), planet (environmental), and profits (economic) (Gutowski, 2013). To fully understand an organization's sustainability performance, it is essential to consider each of these dimensions separately. Evaluating the environmental dimension involves examining practices related to fur sourcing, waste management, and carbon emissions, whereas the social dimension involves aspects such as animal welfare, labour conditions and community development. The economic dimension looks at the financial sustainability of eco-friendly fur production, including different potential business models (Skjold *et al.*, 2016). Arowoshegbe and Emmanuel (2018) highlighted that these three dimensions should be assessed independently, as they cannot be easily compared or combined in economic terms such as evaluating profit margins. This independent evaluation can pose challenges, particularly when trying to balance and integrate these diverse measurements. (Arowoshegbe and Emmanuel, 2018). Organizations aiming to achieve a sustainable supply chain must therefore consider all three dimensions of the TBL framework (Köksal *et al.*, 2017). According to Gutowski (2013), evaluating TBL involves three key assessments. First, the economic performance is measured through metrics such as revenues, costs, profits, and return on investment. Second, the environmental performance is assessed by analysing the organization's environmental footprint, often using Life Cycle Assessments (LCA). Third, the social performance is examined through reviews of corporate social responsibility (CSR) reports (Gutowski, 2013).

2.5.2 Life Cycle Assessment

Gutowski (2013) suggested that Life Cycle Assessment (LCA) is a crucial tool for evaluating environmental performance within the TBL framework. LCA is widely

recognized as a standardized method for providing a scientific basis for environmental sustainability in both industry and government contexts (Curran, 2013). According to Curran (2013), an expert in LCA and sustainability, this tool allows for the comprehensive analysis of the environmental impacts of a product, process, or activity from raw material acquisition through production and use phases to waste management (Curran, 2013). The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) also underscores the importance of LCA in assessing the environmental impacts associated with a product throughout its entire lifecycle, from raw materials to disposal, reuse, or recycling (USEPA, 2006).

In Wong (2018) research on “Sustainability in the Fur Industry,” life cycle assessment was applied to evaluate the sustainability of the fur industry supply chain and its environmental impacts. Their research begins with a concise introduction to the fur industry, followed by a comprehensive literature review that addresses various aspects, including sustainable luxury products and a comparison between the fur industry and the sustainable industry. Through their review, they discovered that research by DSS Management Consultants indicated fur products could have extended lifespans, often lasting through multiple generations, with an estimated 10% of used fur garments being reusable or recyclable even after their initial life cycle has ended. Wong and Cai’s literature review underscores the significance of employing Life Cycle Assessment (LCA) and highlights its importance in their study (Wong, Ng and Cai, 2018).

2.5.3 The Theory of Planned Behavior

The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), developed by social psychologist Icek Ajzen serves as a critical framework for understanding and predicting human behavior in various contexts, including sustainable consumption. According to TPB, a person's actions are guided by their intentions, which are shaped by three key components: their attitudes towards the behavior, the influence of social norms, and their perceived control over the behavior (Ajzen, 1985, 1991). The three components are further examined as below.

2.5.3a Attitudes Toward Sustainable Behavior

The concept of attitudes refers to individual’s favourable or unfavourable assessments of a particular behavior. In the context of sustainable consumer behavior, positive attitudes is often formed towards eco-friendly products as it aligns with their beliefs about their environmental advantages. Research suggested that

consumers who view sustainable products as beneficial to the environment are more inclined to develop positive attitudes towards buying them (Tanner & Wölfling Kast, 2003). For example, research indicate that customers who believe their buying choices can positively contribute to their environmental are more likely to demonstrate a greater intention to purchase of sustainable products (Bamberg & Möser, 2007).

Tanner and Wölfling Kast (2003) found that when consumers recognize the environmental benefits of sustainable products, such as reduced pollution and conservation of resources, they are more likely to hold positive attitudes towards these products. This positive attitude, in turn, influences their purchasing behavior, making them more likely to choose sustainable options over conventional ones (Tanner & Wölfling Kast, 2003).

Similarly, Bamberg and Möser (2007) conducted an analysis that revealed a significant correlation between environmental beliefs and pro-environmental behavior. Their research demonstrated that individuals who believe their actions can positively impact the environment are more likely to adopt sustainable consumption practices. This finding highlights the importance of fostering positive attitudes towards sustainability to drive behavioural changes. Therefore, raising awareness towards the benefits of sustainable consumption can increase favourable attitudes and enhance the chance of making these purchases. Educational campaigns, marketing strategies, and public policies that highlight the environmental benefits of sustainable products can play a crucial role in shaping consumer attitudes. By emphasizing how individual purchasing decisions contribute to broader environmental goals, these efforts can encourage more consumers to develop favourable attitudes towards sustainable products, ultimately leading to increased sustainable consumption practices (Bamberg & Möser, 2007).

2.5.3b Subjective Norms

Subjective norms refer to the perceived social pressure individuals feel to either engage in or refrain from a particular behavior. These norms are essentially the expectations that people believe others should have about how they should act. In the context of sustainable consumption, subjective norms can have a significant influence on individuals' intentions and behavioural. When consumers perceive that their friends, family, or other important social groups place a high value on sustainability, they are more likely to conform to these expectations by purchasing

sustainable products. This is because individuals often seek social approval and want to fit in with their social circles. If sustainability is seen as a valued attribute within their community, consumers are more inclined to adopt sustainable purchasing habits to gain acceptance and approval among their social group.

The research by Vermeir and Verbeke (2006) highlights the significant impact of social influences on sustainable purchasing intentions. Their findings indicate that the attitudes and actions of family and friends play a crucial role in an individual's decision to purchase sustainable products. These social influences can generate a sense of obligation or increase motivation in engaging environmentally responsible behaviours (Vermeir and Verbeke, 2006).

Additionally, different marketing strategies employed by organizations and support from social influencers can significantly increase the perceived importance of sustainability. When organizations actively promote their dedication towards sustainability, they can increase the awareness and appeal of sustainable products (Muralidhar, 2019; Cho, Kim-Vick and Yu, 2022).

Kumar (2013) suggested social influencers frequently have a significant impact on affecting consumer choices when promoting sustainability. These influencers tend to shape the perceptions of their followers and motivate them to make environmentally friendly purchasing decisions (Kumar and Shah, 2004).

2.5.3c Perceived Behavioural Control

Perceived behavioural control refers to an individual's belief in their ability to carry out a particular behavior (Balabanis, Stathopoulou and Chen, 2024). For instance, if consumers believe they have the resources and opportunities to buy sustainable products, they are more intended to make such purchases. Research by Saricam and Okur (2019) found that higher perceived behavioural control significantly reinforce the intentions to purchase sustainable fashion. In their study, Saricam and Okur examined consumer behavior towards sustainable fashion using the Theory of Planned Behavior. They conducted an online survey with 339 participants in Turkey and applied the TPB model to predict the participants' purchase intentions. The results highlighted the important roles of attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control in shaping consumer behavior towards sustainable fashion (Saricam & Okur, 2019). However, another study by Carrus et al. (2008) pointed out that certain obstacles, such as high cost in price, limited availability, and information inefficient on sustainability, can reduce perceived

behavioural control on the purchase of sustainable items (Carrus, Passafaro, and Bonnes, 2008).

The Theory of Planned Behavior provides valuable insights into understanding the reasons that influence consumer behavior in sustainable product purchasing. By collecting responses from fur consumers regarding their attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived control over their behaviour, a more comprehensive and understanding of their decision-making process can be achieved.

3. Hypothesis

In this study, the based on integration of VBN theory and TPB proposes and supports and three hypotheses as follow (Figure 1):

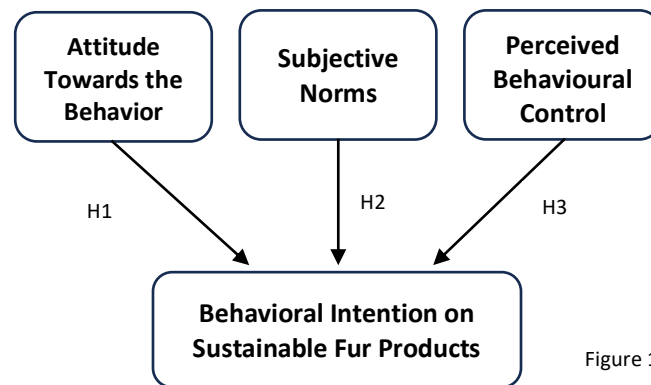


Figure 1

H1: There is a significant relationship between Attitudes Toward Behavior towards sustainable fur products and purchasing behaviour of Millennial and Generation Z consumers.

H2: There is a significant relationship between Subjective Norms towards sustainable fur products and purchasing behaviour of Millennial and Generation Z consumers.

H3: There is a significant relationship between Perceived Behavioural Control towards sustainable fur products and purchasing behaviour of Millennial and Generation Z consumers.

By integrating VBN theory with TPB, this research aims to provide a deeper understanding of the psychological processes that underpin sustainable consumer behavior in the luxury fashion market. VBN theory helps to explain the foundational values and beliefs that shape personal norms, while TPB elucidates how these norms, along with attitudes and perceived behavioural control, lead to specific

purchasing behaviours. This combined approach allows for a more holistic understanding of the factors driving sustainable fashion choices among younger consumers, highlighting the interplay between deep-seated values and more immediate behavioural intentions.

4. Methodology

This research will apply a mixed-method research, combining qualitative research from key informant interviews on the infrastructure and policies within the fur industry, and quantitative method through conducting survey on fur buying consumers to understand how reinforcing sustainability would affect their purchasing habit.

The research will be divided into three stages: The first part will be collecting secondary industry data, such as farming situation, current animal welfare policies, skin processing procedures and sales on current fur market. Also, recent environmental data, which includes various pollution index, including water and air pollution that is created by the fur industry will be gathered through various government reports and environmental organizations. Such information would provide a basic context for this research regarding to current situation of fur industry for a more solid understanding while reading this study.

The second part will involve semi-structured key informant interviews with stakeholders throughout different levels within the supply chain of the fur industry, from farming and skin production to the manufacturing end product and selling to consumers. These interviews will only be conducted with CEO/Managerial level interviewees, as according to Elmendorf & Luloff (2006), key informant interviews should involve knowledgeable individuals who can provide in-depth information. These participants are likely to offer well-rounded insights and are better suited to answering open-ended questions (Elmendorf & Luloff, 2006). Since supervisory level staffs are main the policy makers, and will possess a more comprehensive understanding of their organization, thus the insight gathered from their interview should provide a higher credibility and more comprehensive overview of each responding organization. These interviews are particularly meaningful to this research as their responses contribute to explain the rationale behind each decision, in this case how each organization work towards in becoming more sustainable.

The interviews will involve participants from all sectors within the fur supply chain, ranging from fur farms/sellers to garment manufacturing companies and fur

apparel sellers. Engaging with various stakeholders and policymakers will provide a comprehensive understanding of the challenges faced by different levels of fur organizations in improving sustainability. The collected information will be analysed using Elkington's Triple Bottom Line (TBL) framework to evaluate the extent of sustainability. In addition to the interviews, secondary data, such as market sales reports and CSR reports within the fur industry, will be gathered to support and quantify the collected information. Furthermore, data on environmental factors related to fur organizations, such as pollution reports, will be used to assess the effectiveness of the sustainable practices implemented by these organizations.

Table 1

Category	Organization/Company Name	Number of Interviewees
Animal Welfare Organizations	• International Fur Federation • Furmark®	2
Skin Auctions Houses/ Skin Processors	• SAGA Fur (Finland) • DSK Furs (Thailand)	2
Fur Garment Manufacturers	• Hong Kong Fur (Hong Kong) • Far East Fur (Hong Kong) • Mega Kingdom (Hong Kong) • To be confirmed • To be confirmed	5
Fur Garment Retailers/Sellers	• V Waredrobe (Hong Kong) • Ohlala (Hong Kong) • Jindo (South Korea) • Glyn's Collection (U.K.) • To be confirmed	5

*Worldwide regions may include: U.K., U.S.A., Europe, Korea, Hong Kong, China, etc. (will refine in final research)

The potential participants listed in Table 1 have all initially agreed to take part in the interviews for this research. Each participant has been carefully chosen based on their extensive expertise within the industry. All selected companies have been operating in the fur industry for at least 20 years or more. Therefore, they are expected to offer meaningful insights into the development and evolution of the fur industry over the past decades.

The interview will begin with broad questions regarding the company's background, such as the geographic distribution of their customers and their general observations and predictions about the fur industry. This information will help in comparing and defining the organization's and consumers' geographical variations. These initial questions will not only provide general information about each company but also help identify any regional differences in purchasing behavior.

The interview will then look into sustainability-related topics, asking how the organization defines sustainability and what sustainable measures they have implemented or are currently undertaking. Additionally, the interview aims to uncover the barriers and challenges they encounter in executing these sustainable practices. These questions will assess the organization's level of engagement with different sustainability initiatives among their organization.

As highlighted in the study by Wong (2018), the interview questions serve a vital role in assessing the level of sustainability within fur organizations. Wong classified these questions into three distinct categories: Industry, Product, and Demand (Wong et al., 2018). As the author suggested, the interview questions are classified based on the Triple Bottom Line framework proposed by Elkington. The categorization helps to evaluate various aspects of sustainability in systematic manner by first focusing on the broader industry context, and then progresses into specific characteristics of the products, and towards the market demand.

	Interview Questions
General Perspective:	1) How does your organization/company define/understand sustainability? 2) Does organization/company think sustainability is crucial for the industry's future? 3) How did the fur industry alter in the past decade in terms of consumer preferences?
Environmental Perspective (Planet):	4) How does your organization/company think sustainability has affect the fur industry? 5) How does your company/organization ensure the sustainability of its fur products? 6) Can you discuss any operations in your organization/company that have been initited to endorse the sustainability in the fur industry? 7) How do you measure and report on sustainability in your organization/company?
Society Perspective (People):	8) Are there animal welfare considerations that have included into your organization/company supply chain management? 9) That does your organization/company think of the fur industry in terms of ethical and sustainable operation? 10) Are there any legal policies applied with the operation within your company/organization? 11) What is your prediction in consumer behaviour affecting the future of the fur industry?
Economic Perspective (Profit)	12) What are the sustainable strategies affecting the sales in your organization/company? 13) What barriers does your company/organization have in the execution of sustainable strategies? 14) Can you predict on how would implementing legislative policies on sustainability affect the future of the fur industry?

Evolution and Future Prospects	15) What does your organization/company consider the most significant factors driving the change within the fur industry? 16) How would you define the future fur industry in the next 10 years, especially regarding to sustainability? 17) What would be the most effective strategies for the fur industry in order to remain competitive and sustainable in extended period?
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By categorizing the questions into three distinct groups, each group offers a clearer understanding for both the interviewee and the readers. This structured approach aligns with the Triple Bottom Line Theory, providing distinct explanations related to various organizational operations and their sustainability practices. Therefore, this method could offer a more comprehensive view of the entire organization. Wong (2018) also noted that by organizing the interview questions in this structure, it creates a better guide for the interviewee throughout the process, resulting in a clearer and more logical flow of the interview (Wong et al., 2018).

Furthermore, the first-hand information gathered from the interviews can be compared with secondary data, such as recent environmental reports that include various pollution and sales reports. This comparison aims to identify any correlations between the two sets of data. For instance, the data can help to determine whether changes in sustainable strategies have influenced pollution levels or if these strategies have had any impact on market sales within the industry. This approach allows for a deeper analysis of how sustainability efforts are affecting both environmental outcomes and economic performance in the fur industry.

In the third phase of the research, surveys will be conducted to gather data on consumer purchasing behaviours and attitudes towards the fur industry, particularly in relation to sustainability. The questionnaires will be created using Google Sheets and distributed by fur manufacturers and sellers to their customers. The objective is to assess the attitudes of consumers who have either previously purchased or are considering purchasing fur products. This approach is intended to narrow down and filter out the broader population of consumers who have never considered buying fur products, thereby focusing on a more relevant subdivision among the market.

As emphasized in the previous literature review section on the importance of the Theory of Planned Behavior, a theoretical framework has been developed. Figure 1 demonstrates how each element of the theory—attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control—contributes to the intention to purchase

sustainable luxury fashion products. The questions in the questionnaire are formulated to explore various factors on how sustainability affect consumer attitudes, social perceptions, and perceived behavioural control. This comprehensive approach, as highlighted by Saricam & Okur (2019), aims to provide an in-depth understanding of the factors that drive consumers towards making sustainable purchasing decisions, especially within the fur fashion sector (Saricam & Okur, 2019). This framework enables the survey questions to identify the key motivators and obstacles that affect consumer behavior, and thereby offering valuable insights for developing effective marketing strategies and promoting sustainable consumption.

The questions used in the survey for this study will be developed with reference to the research conducted by Wantara (2022) and Brandão & Magalhães (2023). Wantara's study utilized the Theory of Planned Behavior to examine purchasing behavior for luxury fashion goods, while Brandão & Magalhães focused on understanding how young consumers' attitudes towards sustainability influence their motivation to purchase fur products. The survey questionnaires employed in both studies are based on the work of multiple credible scholars, making them a reliable foundation for this research. By drawing on these established studies, the current research aims to build on proven methodologies to explore consumer behavior in the context of sustainable luxury fashion. Table 2 listed 27 questions that have been formulated base on taking reference from Wantara (2022) and Brandão & Magalhães (2023) research.

Table 2. Sustainable Fur Fashion and Consumer behavioural intention Questionnaire		
Demographic Questions	Q1	What is your gender?
	Q2	What is your age range?
	Q3	What is your education?
	Q4	What is your monthly income (HKD)?
	Q5	What is your current residency?
	Q6	What is the most recent fur product you have purchased?
	Q7	When was your last purchase of fur product?
Attitude Toward the Behavior	Q8	How important is sustainability to you when choosing fur product?
	Q9	I believe that fur product high quality.
	Q10	Sustainable fur product are more appealing to me than non-sustainable fur products.
	Q11	I think my purchases can positively contribute towards the environment.
	Q12	I think fur product are worth the investment.
Subjective Norms	Q13	My social group encourage me to opt for sustainable fur product
	Q14	There are social pressure when purchasing non-sustainable fur products.
	Q15	People in my social group value a lot in the sustainable fashion.

	Q16	I believe that the society is actively moving towards to choosing sustainable fashion.
	Q17	There are often discussion of sustainability in fashion with my friends.
Perceived Behavioural Control	Q18	I have the knowledge to choose sustainable fur products.
	Q19	I believe that sustainable fur product options are easy to access.
	Q20	I think that the price of sustainable fur products tends to be higher than non-sustainable fur products.
	Q21	I believe I have the knowledge in making decisions about sustainable fur products.
	Q22	I have confident to choose sustainable fashion options.
Behavioural Intention on Sustainable Fur Fashion	Q23	I am likely to purchase sustainable fur products for my next purchase
	Q24	I am likely to suggest sustainable fur products to others.
	Q25	I am intended to increase my knowledge on sustainable fur fashion.
	Q26	I feel comfortable in purchasing sustainable fur products in a higher price.
	Q27	I think that my purchasing decisions can positively influence the fur industry becoming a more sustainable industry.

The first seven questions are designed to collect respondents' demographic information, including their age and place of residence, to ensure they belong to the targeted age and demographic group. The subsequent three sets of questions, question 8 through 27, collect responses related to the three core components of the study by utilizing a 5-Point Likert Scale. These responses are crucial for understanding the respondents' attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control in the context of purchasing sustainable fur products.

The gathered data will be analysed using JAMOV Version 2.3. Reliability test will be conducted to determine the reliability of the variables by calculating Cronbach's α . Following this, linear regression analysis and ANOVA tests will be performed to examine the relationship between young consumers' behavioural intentions towards sustainable fur products (the dependent variable) and the independent variables: Attitude Toward the Behavior, Subjective Norms, and Perceived Behavioural Control. The p-value derived from the regression analysis will be used to determine and validate if the independent variables significantly forecast the dependent variable. This analysis will help in understanding the factors that influence young consumers' intentions to purchase sustainable fur made products.

5. Expected outcomes and contributions

The proposed research on the impact of sustainability on young consumer behavior within the fur industry is expected to generate several significant outcomes that can enhance to both academic understanding and practical applications in the industry. One of the primary expected outcomes is the identification of a clear

correlation between enhanced sustainability practices within the fur industry and improved purchasing attitudes among young consumers as multiple researches have shown (Chan and Wong, 2012; Pereira *et al.*, 2021).

By employing a mixed-methods approach that combines qualitative insights from industry stakeholders with quantitative data from consumer surveys, the research will provide strong evidence on how different sustainability initiatives influence consumer behavior.

It is expected that the findings will demonstrate that as the fur industry adopts more sustainable practices, such as ethical sourcing, animal welfare certifications, and environmentally friendly production methods, young consumers' purchasing intentions will positively shift. As the values of younger consumers are increasingly prioritizing sustainability in their purchasing decisions, this outcome is crucial for fur industry stakeholders who are seeking to align their practices with sustainability.

Aligning with previous studies that have indicated that sustainability can significantly impact consumer expectations and preferences, Chan and Wong (2012) showed that sustainable fashion can positively influence consumers' buying decisions. Also, as Pereira (2021) suggested that the increase of education and product transparency could contribute to the increase of consumers buying intention in pursuing sustainable luxury products (Pereira *et al.*, 2021).

However, research conducted by Chan and Wong (2012) also found out that despite of implementing sustainability within the products, the price of product remained as one of the main factor that affects the purchasing intention of fur products (Chan and Wong, 2012).

In conclusion, while existing research suggests that price and lack of education can diminish the impact of sustainability on purchasing behavior, this study predicts that increased sustainability efforts can lead to improved consumer intentions. By investigating the gap between sustainability practices and consumer behavior, the research aims to provide a refined understanding of how in enhancing sustainability can positively influence young consumers' purchasing attitudes towards the fur industry. Ultimately, the study aims to promote a more sustainable future for the fur industry and to act as an example for other sectors seeking to align with the values of environmentally aware consumers.

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