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1.0 Introduction

“I made this item you are going to buy, but I didn’t get paid for it.”(The Independent, 2017) this message was hidden in a piece of clothing and discovered by a shopper in Istanbul in a Zara store. This is just one recent scandal out of numerous scandals affecting the fast fashion industry in the modern world today.

As some argue that Zara laborers plea for help is a result of a fast fashion business model, it is no longer an issue that can be ignored. After this discovery consumers took to twitter to convey their disgust with this brand, and the exploitation of humans (Independent.com, 2017). Another recent scandal is the accusation of H&M burning 12 tonnes of new, unused clothes per year, even though they are trying to maintain a solid sustainability program, hence a sustainable image (Fashionunited.co.uk, 2017). As these are just few of many recent hot topics, it is apparent that the fashion industry has obtained a dirty price tag. This is the dark truth few retailers are willing to talk about.

Research shows (Martin, 2015) that the fashion industry is the second most polluted industry in the world, after the oil industry. The fashion industry obtained profits of about 1,5 trillion Euros annually in apparel as well as footwear in 2016 (BCG, 2017). ...Approximately 60 million people are employed within the value chain in this industry. According to the BCG report (2017) the world economy could gain 160 billion euros on annual basis if the industry addressed the environmental issue appropriately.

The scandals are not only linked directly to the retailer, but to the whole supply chain. Outsourcing has become the new mantra, it is the most profitable way of doing business, as this allowed each link to specialize and become more cost effective, and most importantly deliver the clothing from the runway to the market within weeks. The production process generates a high environmental impact, in particular the process of textile processes within the chemical industry and farming agriculture, with spinning and process for technical yarns. In addition, the use of fabrics in this process, requires a significant amount of water, and therefore considerable energy (Caniato, 2012) For instance, producing one single cotton t-shirt, requires over 2,700 liters of water (WWF, 2013). How is this

unsustainable? With regards to the amount of people that do not have clear drinking water, it is apparent how water could be distributed differently. This paper will unravish the mechanisms behind consumer consciousness and actual purchase intentions and behavior in the fast fashion industry.

2.0 Background

2.1 Fashion revolution:

At the beginning of the 19th century, fashion designers played a fundamental role in high fashion. Later on, industry and distribution played a bigger role in supporting and anticipating the development of the end consumer. A further dispatch of the fashion cycle took place in the late 1970s, which was the result of the emergence of “ready-to-wear” collections that bore the name of the designer on the label. Now, with the digital revolution in mind, the use of communication is vital for increasing consumers awareness. It allows for wider interaction and extended approach to a wider knowledge and to different cultures, “instant see and shop”, discuss and share news, chat and interact with brands and consumers.

Consequently, more and more consumers are interested in understanding how and where clothes are made. The fashion revolution movement has started to give a voice to consumers and invite them to actively question fashion brands information on their pipeline and the relative impacts it has on the environment. Having access to this information, is both beneficial to the consumer as well as the fashion brand. It has the ability to raise awareness in consumers, making consumers form information based decision and requiring an immediate response from corporations, which are otherwise faced with a very high reputational risk (Corbellini, 2009). However, the main issue with the fashion revolution today, consists of changes in the consumers mindset.

2.2 Development into fast fashion

Over the past two decades the fashion industry has evolved vastly. The rapid changes in the fashion industry have influenced the design, quality, and last but

not least the speed to market. The changing dynamics in the fashion industry have resulted in increased number of seasons. Structural characteristics in the supply chain have forced retailers to demand lower costs, faster speed to market, better quality and quicker delivery (Doyle et al., 2006). Looking back at the late 1980s, fashion retailers predicted the consumer demand and actual fashion trends in advance, in order to be competitive in the fashion industry. The fast fashion concept has emerged in recent years, and the retailers are milking the idea of seasonal collections, and increasing the number of collections per year. Hence, this has led to a shorter product life cycle for a garment, and higher profits for fast selling merchandise. In addition, low prices and variety motivates consumers in their purchasing patterns (National Post, 2009). To understand this more thoroughly, the fading of mass production must be discussed further. In the 1970s the fashion had not yet evolved, and basic garments such as jeans and white shirts were popular, hence mass production was utilized. Bailey and Eicher (1992) reported an increase in the import of fashion oriented apparel in the 1980s, hence consumers became more fashion conscious, and started purchasing more frequently. This resulted in retailers having to mark down garments, as clothing did not sell out like it used to. This proved to not be the key to profit in the industry.

2.0 Literature review

2.1 Fast Fashion

The phrase “fast fashion” refers to low-cost clothing collections that mimic current luxury fashion trends. Fast fashion helps sate deeply held desires among young consumers in the industrialized world for luxury fashion, even as it embodies unsustainability (Joy et al. 2012). Fast fashion retailers must take the “speed to the market” approach to show the fashion that is not yet in competitors stores. From 1999 and onwards, fashion shows and depicting the latest trends became a phenomenon. This eventually led to a normalization of the process. Large retailers such as Mango, H&M, Zara, Topshop and New Look adapted these processes, and had the opportunity of having garments in their stores within three to five weeks after they had been showed on the runway (Barnes & Lee

Greenwood, 2006). Hence, the fashion industry shifted from forecasting future trends to estimating real time data (Jackson, 2001).

There is a shift in the fashion industry from a production approach to a market demand. Retailers have started to understand how important flexibility and rapid responsiveness is in the market. In past literature, the coordination with suppliers and pressure on lead time reduction has increased pressure on the various players in the supply chain. In addition, it has resulted in several responses such as more flexible supply chain solutions (Fernie & Azuma, 2004), just in time (Bruce et al., 2004) and agile supply chains. This has further resulted in a vertical integration, meaning greater collaboration, information sharing and trust between the entities in the supply chain (Birtwistle et al., 2003). Little research has been done on fast fashion being a consumer oriented approach, hence this is an under-researched area. Since the internet era, information is spreading at a great speed, and consumers all around the globe obtain more options in their purchases.

Consumer knowledge

Multiple researchers have identified variables influencing sustainable clothing consumption. Stern (2000) have found that this behavior can be divided into four types; personal capabilities, attitudinal factors, contextual forces, and habit or routine. This can also include an individual's beliefs, values or general attitudes, including previous knowledge of sustainability. In addition, many researcher have initially found that environmental knowledge is an crucial predictor of sustainable behavior (Thøgersen, 2000). Environmental knowledge can be defined as “factual information that individuals have about the environment, the ecology of the planet, and the influence of humans actions on the environment.” (Arcury & Johnson, 1987). The lack of this knowledge is one of the main issues for why consumers do not make ecological decisions. The reasons behind lack of knowledge can be a vast majority. Firstly, it can be due to consumers unawareness of the particular behavior and what it is associated with. Second, consumers might be aware of the negative effect it might have, but uncertain of the exact impact it can have on the people and the planet, and therefore not understand the necessity of the need for sustainable changes. Lastly, even though some people may be aware, they simply do not care for the negative impacts, or do not know what

measures to take towards being more environmentally conscious (Thøgersen, 2000). However, in contrast to findings found above, Stern (2000) also found that an increase in consumers knowledge, does not necessarily results in modification of purchase behavior.

RQ1: How conscious are consumers regarding important issues in the fashion industry?

2.2 Fashion pipeline

The fashion pipeline is where the journey to sustainability begins, which was first defined in the Bruntland report (1987). The concept of sustainability can be defined in many ways. The Bruntland report defined sustainable as “being able to satisfy current needs without compromising the possibility for future generations to satisfy their own needs”. The definition was later adopted by the united nations’ world commission on environment and development (World Commission on environment and development, 1987). In sustainability, we can identify three crucial factors; planet, people, and profit. Moreover, this means producing fashion while having attention to our planet and its natural resources, respecting people operating at every stage of the fashion pipeline, and to increase profit due to stakeholder engagement approach (Corbellini, 2009).

The fashion pipeline identifies the vertical system that starts from the production stages of raw materials (fibres from the agricultural or chemical industries (see Appendix 1), to the manufacturing and distributive stages of the textile and clothing industries (Corbellini, 2009). Contrasting this to an “ordinary” value chain, the fashion pipeline is unusually long. Sustainability in the fashion pipeline plays an important role when managing the fashion and textile supply both upstream and downstream. Wankowicz (2016) states that ensuring environmental protection within supply chains, collaboration is required between suppliers and customers, which also creates an opportunity to develop new commercial and business relationship. To be able to move the industry towards sustainability and create the success for sustainable supply chains, as well as creating a circular economy, maintaining these relationships is crucial (Wankowicz, 2016).

Fashion companies often rely on others to produce their products. This phenomenon began at the end of the 20th century, with catwalk fashion becoming more apparent in the global picture. There was a shift from mass production to launching more frequent collections, and more specialized garments. As the market was changing the need for better supply chain management had arisen. Hence, outsourcing became the most profitable way of doing business, as this allowed each link to specialize and become more cost effective, and most importantly deliver the clothing from the runway to the market within weeks. Hence, outsourcing became the new mantra.

The main benefits for outsourcing is based on the tangible costs, which is outstandingly a smaller quantity of the money you actually pay (10 - 20% of the total cost). The total production cost has little impact on the final price. In the fashion industry, the weight of industrial costs (material and labor) rarely exceeds 15% of the final sales price. Choosing a poor quality fabric, which lowers the quality of the final product becomes a bigger cost saver for the brand rather than the consumer (Corbellini, 2009).

There is however little research on whether the distributor or the brand of the value chain that contributes mostly to the issues raised concerning sustainability. The issue may be whether consumers distinguish who is to blame for the environmental issues being caused, is it Zara or is it its cooperating vendors? As previously mentioned, the key factors towards sustainability in fashion are communication and control. However, when utilizing an *agile* supply chain with outsourcing in mind, it may be very difficult to gain control of the process, as well as communicating every activity of every step (Caniato, et al., 2012).

RQ2: In what part of the value chain do consumers place blame regarding ethical decisions of recent sweatshop scandals, and who is it to blame?

2.2.3 The sustainable impact of fabrics

Environmental changes associated with the production and processing of clothing and textiles, is a result of two important factors; The pollution and waste

generated by the production, and the amount of natural resources utilized in the consumption (Connell and Kozar, 2014). The textile/fashion industry, to which is mainly located in Asia, is one of the largest global industries, and is also one of the most polluting industries (Martin, 2013). The Global Fashion Agenda, in collaboration with The Boston Consulting group, have found that water consumption had the greatest impact on sustainable production. The choice of materials, especially the high water consumption used in the making of cotton are found to be the biggest drivers towards the high impact (BCG). With the production requirements to produce one single white cotton t-shirt, especially the use of over 2,700 liters of water, results in the release of harmful pollutants such as pesticides, heavy metals, and other harmful chemicals to air, water, and soil (Connell & Kozar, 2014). This has a great environmental impact, whereas the earth absorbs these harmful pollutants, and threatens the Earth's natural ecosystems. Therefore, as long as these unsustainable production processes of clothing and textiles continues, environmental changes will continue as well. It will not only require companies to produce more sustainable garments, but also require a change in the consumers mindset of clothing consumption behavior so that all consumers, suppliers, manufacturers etc., become more environmentally responsible and benign (Connell and Kozar, 2014).

To get an understanding of the effective impact of natural and non-natural fibres utilized the pipeline, MADE-BY, a profit organisation, has defined a benchmark offering a scale of the most to the least sustainable fabrics (Appendix 2). MADE-BY's mission is to "make sustainable fashion common practice". The benchmark has been realized considering greenhouse gas emissions, human toxicity, water, energy and land use linked to each fiber. The most common fabrics in fashion, such as wool, viscose, cotton and spandex are all in the bottom side of the spectrum, signaling how our current consumption model is still embedded in unsustainable practices (MADE-BY, 2017).

As noted previously, the use of fibres in clothing is one of the main drivers towards unsustainable production. This is in addition also an important driver for consumer engagement in environmental consumption (Connell & Kozar, 2014). For example, with the lack of information of the different sustainable and unsustainable materials, consumer make uninformed decisions, because they can

not compare the environmental impact between one fabric to another. There is however little research regarding a consumers' preference concerning choice of fabrics in the fast fashion industry, along with how much a consumer is willing to pay for a garment

Willingness to pay

There is some evidence that consumers do not always hold positive attitudes towards the characteristics of sustainable garments. Connell (2000) have found that many consumer find these garments less fashionable, very counterculture in style, not well-fitting, uncomfortable, and therefore prefer more mainstream clothing. Some research indicates that consumers are willing to pay for more environmentally sustainable clothing. Connell (2000) for instance found that consumers were willing to pay up to 25% more for an organic cotton shirt compared to a shirt made from conventional cotton from a brand that is already considered. An apparent gap however, is how people would perceive this, if the information comes from a fast fashion brand.

RQ3: How does the sustainability scale of the fabric quality from a fast fashion brand affect the willingness to pay?

2.3 Impact on sweatshops on clothing choice

One of the apparent reasons sweatshops and sustainability have largely received an increased focus in the media lately, is partly due to the fact that the Modern Slavery Act was passed in 2015. This act is considered as the first act in the 21st century, it was passed in order for companies to show more transparency in their supply chain methods. This act requires any company based in the UK, that retains profits above 36 million pounds, to disclose the steps they are making in their supply chain to be in line with the requirements of the modern slavery act. This enables all stakeholders, such as customers, investors, employees, the public to have access to this information. However, there is a drawback to this. There is no effective mechanism in place to determine which companies have to publish reports.

Crane (2013) states that slave and slavery like practises are the greatest challenge

being faces in an international setting. Modern slavery is defined as an attempt to underprice a key resource through illegitimate means (Crane 2013).

Despite recent media storms on this ongoing issue, consumer research has neglected this area. Consumers often find that they condemn sweatshop labour, and would not buy clothing made from such sweatshops. However, there are behavioral inconsistencies at the point of decision making. Dickson, 2001; Shaw & Duff, (2002) state that amongst ethical consumers the sweatshop problem is most apparent, and the issue that is important in the clothing industry. There are numerous definitions of sweatshops, it can be defined as “factories where employees are exploited by e.g. wages, excessive working hours, under age employees, often in underdeveloped countries”. As most consumers agree on the fact that they do not want to purchase from retailers practicing or facing links to possible sweatshops, there are several constraints (Shaw et.al 2006). Lack of information regarding the brands or retailers that are sweatshop free; difficulties in accessing ethical retailers; the limited range offered by ethical retailers; and the nature of ethically produced clothing. One cue of determining whether a garment stems from a sweatshop is to check whether it has been produced in a developing country, or whether it has been produced in a more developed country. However, this makes European countries a superior supplier, which is not always accurate. It also impedes the social change process for developing countries that want to develop their labor laws. The second cue is the reputation of the brand, however even though the brand has encountered scandals in the past, many consumers justify this by weighing up the price, or the availability. Larger luxury brands are also more associated with sweatshops, rather than smaller independent brands (Shaw et al. 2006).

2.4 Greenwashing

Recently, green consumers and activists have become concerned about what really goes on behind the scenes in big corporations. The term “greenwashing” and “bluewashing” have arisen due to large companies attempting to affect consumers' perceptions of stakeholders and mask the underlying sources of fault. There are numerous definitions on greenwashing, according to Terrachoice (2009)

“Greenwashing is disinformation disseminated by an organization so as to present an environmentally responsible public image.” (Ramus & Montiel 2005). Chen & Chang (2013) have found that exaggerated greenwashing has a negative effect on the company's image. There are countless of examples to illustrate the attempt of greenwashing; A petrochemical firm uses the waste from one polluting process as raw materials for another hazardous process, and boasts of an important recycling initiative. Another giant multinational cuts timber from virgin rainforest, replaces it with monoculture plantations and calls the project "sustainable" forest development." (Bruno, 1997)

There is little research on green washing as this is a relatively new phenomenon companies have adapted to promote the greenness of the organisation. This thesis will go more in depth on analyzing how greenwashing and scandals has an effect on the willingness to pay.

RQ4: How much more/less is a consumer willing to pay for a garment after being primed with an environmental scandal?

RQ5: How much more/less is a consumer willing to pay for a garment after being primed with greenwashing?

3.0 Methodology

3.1 Research design

In this research, we will firstly utilize an exploratory research design to gain more insight and understanding, define the problem more precisely, identify relevant courses to action, and to gain additional insights before an approach can be developed. We will utilize in-depth interviews, where the sample is selected to generate maximum insights, but is also small and nonrepresentative. The primary data is qualitative in nature and is analyzed accordingly. The results from the qualitative approach are to be taken into account as an input for further analysis. Moreover, we will utilize a descriptive conductive research design with a quantitative method approach, distributing a questionnaire (Malhotra, 2010). With the qualitative analysis as secondary data, it is crucial to use the quantitative

design to gain concrete data on what social causes businesses should address.

Therefore, the objective of the conclusive research is to answer specific research questions and examine relationships between variables, to further make managerial implications. Conclusive research design is usually more specific, and requires a large representative sample.

In the two separate methods, we will use two different samples, which indicates a between-subject-design as most suitable. A between-subject design will completely avoid this issue, because each score of the groups is completely independent from the other scores. This design however, will require a great number of participants, which can make it more difficult to conduct.

3.2 In- Depth interview

Malhotra (2010) defines a in- depth interview as “an unstructured, direct, personal interview in which a single respondent is probed by a highly skilled interviewer to uncover underlying motivations, beliefs, attitudes, and feelings on a topic.”

In order to get all primary information needed, we will conduct the depth-interview one-by-one, using approximately 30-40 minutes per participant. The interview will start off by asking general questions about fast fashion, such as “Do you know what the term fast fashion is?”, “Are you aware of what stores distribute fast fashion?, etc. Further on, the intention is to initiate a more free flowing conversation regarding what the participant is wearing, if he/she knows anything about the brands production, etc. before introducing a recent sweatshop scandal as well as a greenwashing issue within the fast fashion industry and evaluate attitudes and purchase intentions both before and after being exposed to the respective scenarios. The purpose of the discussion is to initially see the participants knowledge concerning the topic, how conscious the participant is about his/her own clothing and what issues might concern the company/brand, as well as initial purchase behavior, and willingness to buy.

Though the in-depth-interview will be semi-structured. It is of importance that the interviewer stresses the concept of relevant follow-up questions, and the use of “why” in order to gain all information needed. An answers such as “I don’t think about price when I shop”, should encourage the interviewer to pose a question

such as; “Why don’t you think of price while shopping?”. If the answer is too revealing, the interviewer could ask “Have you ever cared about price before? If so, why?”

The in-depth-interview will follow a laddering technique meaning, “the line of questioning proceeds from product characteristics to user characteristics” (Malhotra, 2010). This method provides a way to probe into consumers deep underlying psychological and emotional reasons that might affect their purchasing intentions. We use this technique because we want to know more information than whether just quality or price have an impact on the purchase of sustainable clothing. Our objective is to create a “mental map” of the consumer’s view, opinions, and beliefs regarding the fast fashion industry.

3.2.1 Depth Sample

This experiment will include participants from Norway, in the age of 18 - 50 years of age. Participants will be contacted directly by the interviewer. The sampling is more or less random, and invites other volunteers that can be friends, family, or acquaintances. The objective of the sample size is a minimum of 10 - 12 participants. The criteria is that they all fit within the preset control characteristics, such as age, sex and previous knowledge of shopping patterns.

3.3 Questionnaire

Jeff Miller, chief operating officer, Burke, Inc stated the following; “The key to good descriptive research is knowing exactly what you want to measure and selecting a survey method in which every respondent is willing to cooperate and capable of giving you complete and accurate information efficiently” (Malhotra, 2010).

Questionnaire design is a systematic process that requires the researcher to go through a series of decisions (Burns, A., & Bush, R.F, 2009). To prevent question bias, we will not include too many irrelevant questions consequently making the respondents lose focus and wrongfully answer the research questions, or worst case to accidentally create an additional moderator.

For conducting the questionnaire, we will utilize Qualtrics, an “all in one” platform to develop surveys, analyze data, etc.

This research is a 2x2 design, and four conditions can be identified; greenwashing, sweatshop scandal, price and fabric. A randomized group will be exposed to greenwashing, consumers will be asked to choose a price fixed alternative questions, following this they will be exposed to information regarding the fabric, one type will be a low sustainable fabric, whereas the other group will be exposed to information regarding a highly sustainable fabric. These two conditions will help us determine, how important of a factor fabric sustainability is in purchase intentions, and pricing. In the second conditions the respondents will be exposed to a specific sweatshop scandal in the fast fashion industry, following this they will have choose a price also from a fixed alternative question. They will also be exposed to a low sustainable fabric, as well as information about a high sustainable fabric. This contrast, will show how priming the respondents with greenwashing vs. a clothing sweatshop scandal affects their purchase intentions, and the monetary value of the actual clothing depending on the fabric sustainability

3.3.1 Questionnaire Sample

In this experiments our population will be citizens living in Norway. For the final sample to best represent and generalizable to the whole population, we will target people living in Norway, of both genders, in the age span of 18 to 50 years.. We will use a non-probability sampling technique, with a judgmental approach (Sekaran & Bougie, 2013), where we specifically target customers through social media where we can distribute the questionnaire, and collect the data. In this approach, the targeted participants, do not have any probabilities attached to being chosen as sample subjects (Sekaran & Bougie, 2013). In more detail, we aim to distribute the survey online to get the most active and accurate sample in order to learn more about the shopping industry and how the perception of shopping works.

With a total number of six conditions, and a minimum requirement of 50

participants in each groups, the study will require a total sample of at least 300 participants (6x50).

3.5 Validity and Reliability

In order to further secure for validity, we distinguish between internal, external and ecological validity. The validity of a scale may be defined as “the extent to which differences in observed scale scores reflect true differences among objects on the characteristic being measured, rather than systematic or random error” (Malhotra, 2010). In order to secure validity we have implemented several measures. To prevent for person confounds, individual differences that affect the DV are allowed to covary with the experimental treatment, and thus is a threat of internal validity, we randomized participants into separate experimental groups (Malhotra, 2010 pp. 248-277). This method disrupts the systematic relations between the extraneous variables, such as past knowledge, liking of the product, preference of the product, as well as the IV. In addition, it helps us control the multitude of all variables at one time. It does however not guarantee control of the groups; it only makes it more likely.

To secure external validity related to generalization of participants (Shaughnessy et al., 2012), we have a wide sampling design. This design is not too narrow, as we have included a wide specter of participants. The setting is not too specific, hence most people can relate to it. To secure for ecological validity, related to the setting of the study (chapter 2), we have intended to make the environment as realistic as possible, by choosing dilemmas and products that can be relatable for each of the participants.

Reliability refers to the extent to which a scale produces consistent results if repeated measurements are made. In order to check for reliability, we would have to post-test the survey, to see if the same results are obtained.

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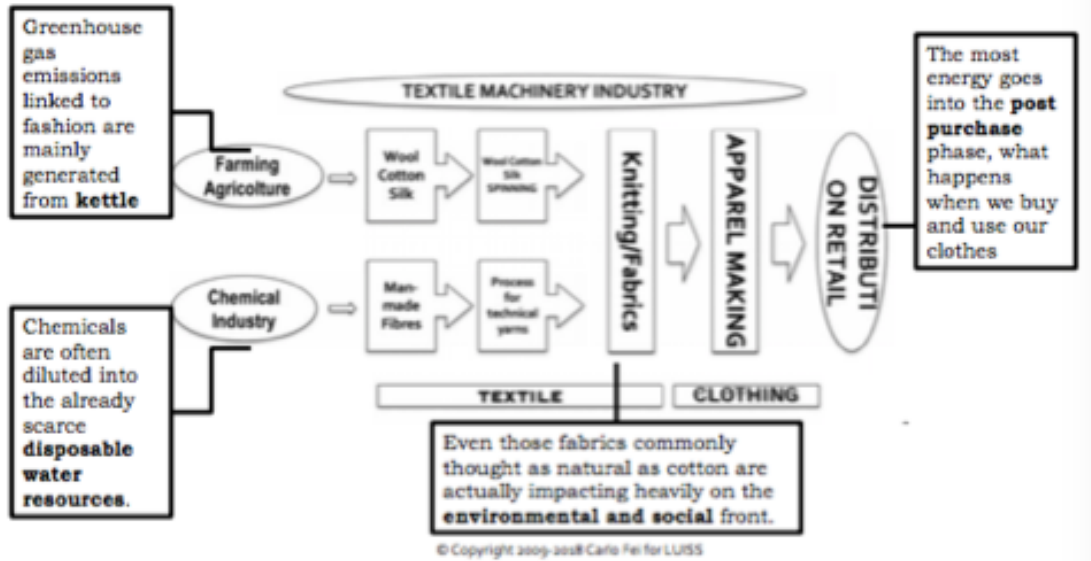
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Appendix

Appendix 1:

where in the fashion pipeline



Appendix 2:

MADE-BY ENVIRONMENTAL BENCHMARK FOR FIBRES



CLASS A	CLASS B	CLASS C	CLASS D	CLASS E	UNCLASSIFIED
Mechanically Recycled Nylon	Chemically Recycled Nylon	Conventional Flax (Linen)	Modal® (Lenzing Viscose Product)	Bamboo Viscose	Acetate
Mechanically Recycled Polyester	Chemically Recycled Polyester	Conventional Hemp	Poly-acrylic	Conventional Cotton	Alpaca Wool
Organic Flax (Linen)	CRAILAR® Flax	PLA	Virgin Polyester	Cuprammonium Rayon	Cashmere Wool
Organic Hemp	In Conversion Cotton	Ramie		Generic Viscose	Leather
Recycled Cotton	Monocel® (Bamboo Lyocell Product)			Rayon	Mohair Wool
Recycled Wool	Organic Cotton			Spandex (Elastane)	Natural Bamboo
	TENCEL® (Lenzing Lyocell Product)			Virgin Nylon	Organic Wool
				Wool	Silk
More Sustainable				Less Sustainable	

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