

Master Degree Project in Marketing and Consumption

How Consumers Mobilize Ethical Myths to Animate Moral Identity:

A study on consumers' moral action within ethical fashion

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Master Degree Project No. 2016:132

Graduate School

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Abstract

This thesis aims to explore the ethical fashion gap between moral thought and moral action. By doing so, it illustrates how consumers mobilize ethical myths to animate their moral identity. Previous research has focused on both moral identity and ethical myths, however, it has not been explored how ethical myths actually animate moral identity. The analysis and findings are based on a narrative design conducted on phenomenological interviews, on consumers of an ethical brand. Findings show the importance of ethical myths in the construction of one's moral identity and illustrate the conflict in moral thought and moral action. This can be used to understand how brands can mobilize myths to increase consumers' moral identity.

Key words; moralistic play, ethical fashion myths, moral identity

Introduction

Sustainability has proved to be key in recent years' corporate world of marketing and branding (Baptista, 2014). Several companies aim to adapt their processes in order to improve our society and world (Purser and Park, 1995; Carrington, Neville and Whitwell, 2010). This is very evident within the fashion industry, where retailers such as H&M have taken ethical fashion further with new marketing and branding strategies (hm.se). For instance, H&M has a sustainable collection and encourages customers to recycle (ibid). Although it has taken a more a central role within the fashion industry, it still seems to be a lack of ethical commitment from consumers (Sassatelli, 2015; Myers, 2003). Despite this lack of action, more consumers than before are claiming to be ethical (Baptista, 2014).

This thesis explores the gap in moral identity by illustrating how consumers mobilize ethical fashion myths to create

their moral identity. By doing so, this thesis will illustrate the moral identity between thought and action and how myths influence consumers' experiences and perceptions. In this investigation, three concepts are important: moralistic play, ethical fashion myths and moral identity. Beginning with moral identity, past research by Luedicke, Thompson and Giesler (2010) demonstrate how consumers' representation of lifestyles and brands are reflected by underlying ideologies of powerful symbols moralistic identity work. This view presents moralism as consumer fantasy, consumer brand relationship, service relationship, consumer resistance and social construction of a gift economy (Ibid). Moreover, Holt describes that (2004, p. 8) consumers can use brands as "symbolic slaves" and "grab hold of the myth as they use the product as a means to lessen their identity burdens". of thought suggests that This line consumers use marketplace myths as support in their personal or collective identity work and in relations to conflicts of

everyday life (Arsel and Thompson, 2011; Arnould and Thompson, 2005). For example, Luedicke et al. (2010) show how marketplace myths take a key role in the moral conflict arising in the case of Hummer drivers, where attributes such as status overrides the comsumption's ethical perspective. To approach such an issue. Holt (2004) focuses on how ethical myths can change consumers' moral perception. Present research can therefore be used to explain how myths play an important role in construction consumption in today's society (Holt and Thompson 2004) as well as in the negotiation of consumption power (Fitchett, Patsiaouras and Davies, 2014). Myths are hence powerful tools to communicate and construct values, morals and beliefs (Stenmark, 2015), knowledge of meaning in consumption (Coskuner-Balli, The notion that consumers' ideological beliefs are formed by morality myths (Luedicke et al., 2010) is therefore claimed to be concerned with myth-making. All of this takes a central role in this thesis.

Through this view the consumer's identity is acting to attain "moralistic quality by mobilizing particular mythic structures rather than reiterating any specific ideological content and rather structured by myths" (Luedicke et al p. 1028, 2010). Consumers' moral identity work can hence be displayed as moralistic play, since it serves many different cultural meanings formed by myths and identity. Some of those myths are ethical fashion myths. which can be described as "fashion with a conscious" (Shen, Wang, Lo and Shum, 2012), and defined as "fashionable clothes that incorporate fair trade principles with sweatshop-free labor conditions while not harming the environment or workers, by using biodegradable and organic cotton" (Joergens, 2006 p. 361). By this reasoning, involving ethical myths in consumers' moral identity will enhance ideological differences and allow consumers to build their own ideological beliefs and values

throughout consumption practices (Luedicke et al. 2010).

Although there have been previous studies conducted on moralistic play, there is still a lack of research showing how consumers are driven by ethical myths. This has become evident from previous research where ethical myths are indefinable, since there is no industry standard addressing it (Joergens, 2006; Lundblad and Davies, 2016), which contributes to confusion for the customer (Carey and Cervellon, 2014). It has also been implied that there is little evidence that ethical fashion has any effect in on consumers' action (Joergens, 2006). In other words, although consumers are interested in ethical fashion, it does not mean that it will actually translate into actions (Manchiraju and Sadachar, 2014). This has resulted in several scholars' acknowledgement of a gap between moral thought and moral action (Kang & Glassman, 2010), defined as the intentionbehavior gap (DeVinney, Auger, and Eckhardt, 2010; Carrington et al., 2010). This ethical purchasing gap is displayed by Cowe and Williams (2000), who claim that 30 % of consumers in UK say they are ethical consumers, but only 3 % act on it. From this, it is clear that consumers' mobilization of ethical myths needs to be further investigated in order to understand the moral gap.

This gap has been challenging to understand (Belk, 2005; Carrington et al., 2010), as it can be argued to be the conflict in consumers' moral identity that constructs this gap which can be highly complex. For example, Lundbland and Davies (2016) stress that there is a constant conflict between social capital that constitutes part of this complexity, as social capital is guided by values, norms and understanding in social settings and moral obligation, which can be difficult to grasp. In comparison, Stets and Carter (2011) show that this gap builds physiological tensions, as multiply identities like moral identity and

self-interest identity, are all working at the same time. This is one of the reasons to why the morality in fashion consumption can be considered an issue (Thompson and Haytko, 1997), as fashion is embedded in many symbolic settings and hence important for constructing one's identity (Lundblad and Davies, 2016). This suggests that consumers are rather purchasing objects to support social hierarchies (Sassatelli, 2015), which makes it evident that it is a conflict to follow the moral order or establish social capital. This can further be explained through the claim that consumers purchase fashion for belonging, self-esteem and also for showing their social standing (Belk, 1985), and hence also construct an ethical fashion identity by consuming ethical fashion (Coskuner-Balli, 2013) - embedded cues must therefore make ethical fashion desirable. It is therefore evident that ethical fashion can have a central impact on the moral identity gap. However, there is little evidence to show how these moral identity conflicts are created by ethical myths, making it hard to influence the consumption of ethical fashion.

Consequently, although previous research has been conducted on the intentionpurchasing gap in ethical consumption, little research has been done on the morality gap itself (Manchiraju and Sadachar, 2014). Several scholars have highlighted that consumer identity is acting on the moralistic play, where consumers are mobilizing myths to construct their moral identity. Consumer's intentions to buy ethical fashion are therefore undermined and ultimately influenced by their own moral identity and ethical myths, stimulated by their experiences and beliefs. Simultaneously, it is a constant moral identity conflict between social capital and ethical obligation. Moreover, adding to the complexity and relevance of this issue, is the vet hard to grasp connection between ethical myths and moral identity. The aim of this study is therefore to illustrate ethical fashion by exploring consumer's moralistic play, ethical myths, and moral identity.

Consequently, the following research question is formed; how do consumers mobilize ethical fashion myths to animate moral identity?

In order to answer the research question, three further concepts will be theoretically outlined: moralistic play, ethical fashion myths and moral identity. For this research, a narrative design will be used followed by phenomenological in depth-interviews that will complement and illustrate the theory. This was carried out with customers of Karün sunglasses. Karün is an ethical fashion brand that does not only sell sunglasses, but also visualizes the complex of problems around ethical consumption. They are a global company, and relatively new to the Swedish market. This research does not aim to provide a general picture, but rather an understanding of how consumers of Karün mobilize their ethical myths to animate their moral identity. This, to explore how ethical myths can create moral identity. This article will hence provide findings that will further seek to establish how consumers are mobilized in their ethical myths, and how these are animated in consumers' moral identity

Theoretical Framework Moralistic Play

Previous research has demonstrated the complexity of moralism in consumers' consumption (Luedicke et al., 2010). What we know is that morality can be explained by our action and manners in a context that is "regulated by nonconscious mechanisms that work to decrease friction between people" (Levy, 2014, p. 96). In this view consumers' nonconscious behavior can imitate others through social context (Ibid), as their moralistic identity work is formed interpretations, attributes, cultural meanings (Luedicke et al., 2010) and judged action, based on social context

(Kang and Glassman, 2010). Morality can be explained through our moral behavior that form guidelines and principles of what is right and wrong (McFerraiiy, Aquino and Duff, 2010; Niinimäki, 2015), and Brunk (2010) claims that there are two types of moral principles. One that describes moral judgment by evaluating one's action between right and wrong. The other moral principle is more rational, as it evaluates the consequences of action (Ibid). Brunk (2010) claims that consumers can mobilize both moral principles, meaning that their morality can act in different movements depending on social context. This clarifies why consumers mobilize different moralities depending on social context.

On the same note, it has been previously explored that consumers validate their own ideological beliefs and values based on the moralistic play (Luedicke et al., 2010). This allows for different ideological views that are represented through consumption practices that can be a threat to moral order (Luedicke et al., 2010). It suggests a morality based ideology, where myths are creating identity value from consumers' consumption practices (Arnould Thompson 2005; Luedicke et al., 2010). One consumption practice where ethical myths are highly relevant is for fashion consumption. Thompson and Haytko (1997, p.35) believe that "consumers make use of the ideological tensions among culturally available fashion discourses to articulate a personalized sense of fashion that runs against the grain of what they perceive as a dominant fashion orientation of their social settings". In this way consumers express their own view of the fashion world by different ideological meanings (Ibid). These are then determining consumers' moralistic identity maintaining class-based e.g. hierarchies of taste (Luedicke et al., 2010; Bourdieu, 1987). Because of mythically driven motivations, consumers therefore be more enthusiastic and identify

themselves with a certain brand (Luedicke et al., 2010). This is why the combination of myths and moral identity are so powerful; since the more consumers embrace the identity value of the myth, the more consumers tend to adapt to the mythical representation and are through this framing ideological differences (Arsel and Thompson, 2011). From these different views, consumers' identity work can be defined as moralistic play, since they serve multiply meanings that form one's mythical setting.

Hence, it is the morals that determine the functional setting and how these play out. Kang and Glassman (2010) argue that moralities serve two functions; moral action and moral thought. These functions only have small correlation to each other, although they are both features in one's identity (Stets and Burke, 2000). While Blasi (1984) suggests that the moral self is the missing link between moral action and moral judgment, other researchers like Levy, (2014) and Lundbland and Davies (2016) suggest that it is the consumers' desire, goals and beliefs that constitute the difference between thought and action. Building on that, it can be reasoned that there is a dualism working on different movements, where moral action creates differences and responsibilities, which is the outcome of moral thinking (Kang and Glassman, 2010). The moral thinking is in turn a separate activity that is opportunity to recognize and judge situations based on the social capital (Ibid). This highlights the complexity of morality. since it serves two separate activities that can impact the difference between one's ethical consumption.

Arguably, consumers' different identity goals are all invoked in a moralistic dichotomy play between those who follow the moral order and those who want to change these normative values and ideals (Luedicke et al., 2010). These are argued to be inbound, since they are a system of

preferences, judgments and moral obligations (Bourdieu, 1987). Ultimately, this means that the moral identity and the belief system are acting in different directions. Consumers moral identity work are displayed, Still, to be able to understand the moralistic play in ethical fashion, ethical fashion myths and moral identity need to be further highlighted.

Ethical myths

While the previous section offered an overview over moralistic play, this section explores this line of thought further with regard to ethical myths. Here, Van Laer, De Ruyter, Visconti and Wetzels (2014) argue that all parts of society are exposed to myths from the moment of birth. When consumers attain myths they loose themselves into the story and their attitude and intention changes to reflect that story. This can also explain the effect stories have on consumers (Van Laer et al., 2014). Stenmark (2015) suggests that myths can be so powerful because they are shaping consumers' perception and experience of the world and their action. This is why if myths are "profound enough, and widespread enough, they can have incredible staying power and a profound influence on how we approach the world and each other" (Ibid, p.924).

Therefore, can myth be defined as meaning in motion that forms ones' identity, this is also why the myth can be transformed into one's self-expression (Levy, 1981). This view suggests that consumers mobilize myths to construct how they perceive the world and how they identify themselves with the myth. This is also why brand myths the opportunity to mobilize consumers' identity work; since consumers can be more enthusiastic and identify themselves to a certain brand because of mythically driven motivations (Coskuner-Balli, 2013; Luedicke et al., 2010). On the same note, Arsel and Thompson (2011) suggest that myths can create a linkage between consumption and consumer culture. More specifically, the myths serve

functions, actions and discourses (Barthes, which will eventually 1975), consumer's attitudes. intention and behaviors (Ibid). This line of thought suggests that consumers' motivation towards the ethical myth is based on one's self-expression and marketplace consumption. Still, there is low availability of ethical fashion, which makes it difficult

for consumers to avoid consuming in an unethical manner and act on their self-expression (Joergens, 2006). It is also believed that lack of information concerning ethical consumption increases the difficulty for consumers to make ethical decisions and therefore act ethical on their self-expression.

However, sustainability has always lacked conceptual clarity since it is embedded in many different opinions, values, symbols, imaginaries, definitions and implications (Butcher, 2003: Baptista, 2014). Previous research has therefore stressed that ethical fashion needs to visualize the whole picture of ethical consumption (Carrington et al., 2010) and highlight challenges, risk of failures and the need for visions and processes (Frostenson et al., 2010). Others have also argued that brands have the opportunity to help consumers in ethical consumption (Myers, 2003) by providing consumers with more information, in order to be able to make consumers mobilize more ethical judgments (Joergens, 2006). For example, this can be mobilized by corporations' transparency, that enhance a better consumer perception that will build trustworthiness (Niinimäki, 2015) and promote better actions, motivation and judgment (Stenmark, 2015). This is why knowledge about ethical fashion will help shape consumers' purchasing behavior, since it is a major factor for ethical consumption (Shen et al., 2012). This is also reviled in a recent study by Reynolds and Sundström (2013), where it is evident how important the ethical fashion myth is. They propose that new

trends suggest that consumers are becoming more ethically concerned and therefore also demand more information and knowledge (Ibid). This show the power that the myths have and why it can be argued that brands have the opportunity to incorporate it in ethical fashion.

However, there are spread views on the matter, as Giesler and Veresiu (2014) in a recent study argued that myths do not serve as a shared problem-solving to be mobilized for identity construction. Likewise, the myths in consumer's identity work is believed to be overstated in comparison to other factors like status and social and cultural capital which also mobilizes consumer's identity work (Arsel and Thompson, 2011). Another reason for consumers not acting in accordance with their ethical myth is that consumers refuse to accept the facts addressing ethical consumption, ignore them or simply do not trust them (Stenmark, 2015). Similar, in a ten-year comprehensive investigation by DeVinney et al. (2010) about the myth of the ethical consumer, they displayed that the ethical consumer is a myth, in where the consumer is only striving to be ethical. They conclude that "the ethical consumer is perhaps doomed to fail despite the nobility of the cause" (p.4). However, Stenmark (2015) claims that myths are required when dealing with problems like sustainability, since it can be used in multiple dimensions, where they are complex enough to describe the story. This suggest that if myths are not communicated it will limit consumption (Bray et al., 2011), although there can be a difference in how powerful the ethical myth actually is.

Conclusively, it can be reasoned that myths are a powerful tool that communicate meanings, identities, attitudes, motivation and knowledge, but it is also forming the moralistic play that takes place in consumers' ethical fashion consumption. Although myths are a powerful tool, consumers will still be faced with a

challenging identity desire (Carey and Cervellon, 2014), which therefore makes a more thorough investigation of consumers' moral identity relevant.

Moral Identity

In order to illustrate consumers moralistic play in ethical fashion, this section will underline ethical consumers' moral identity further. It has previously been concluded that consumers purchase objects for social hierarchies that will provide them with an identity (Sassatelli, 2015), which is linked to consumer fantasies and desires (Arnould and Thompson, 2005). An identity can moreover be set by belonging to a social category or group that shares the same attitudes, beliefs and values (Stets and Burke, 2000), and the individual identity relies on the differences in perceptions and actions (Ibid), that are drawn from these myths (Arsel & Thompson, However, it is the moral identity that guides consumers' behavior (Stets and Carter, 2011). More specifically, "moral identity acts as a motivational force that translates people's' moral cognitions into behavior because of a desire for self- consistency" (McFerraiiv, Aguino and Duff, p.50, 2010). This indicates that all consumers mobilize moral identity, varying from high to low (Stets and Carter, 2011). This line of thought suggest that moral identity captures the real self since it is guided by the deepest principles (Stets and Carter, 2011).

Further, Stets and Carter (2011) have suggested that moral knowledge is a key to moral behavior. However, moral identity does not imply that it leads to moral behavior, since not all moral behavior is intentional (Carrington et al., 2010). One may therefore argue that some moral actions are more unconscious. Similarly, in a research by Levy (2014) it was concluded that consumers are not aware of their actions and therefore can not be blamed. Levy proposes (2014)that nonconscious attitudes are too thin to make ground for moral responsibilities

therefore we cannot be blamed for our actions. According to Evans (2004), it can be argued that social capital can make us free from our moral obligations. This highlights the effect and power that social capital enhances over moralistic play, in where consumers are not conscious over their own actions.

Furthermore, the morality of ethical fashion involves two important dimensions. The first one is the beliefs that the ideology is important for the moral self-definition and would not change regardless of the social consequences (Schlenker, 2008). The other dimension assumes that moral principles are flexible and argues that change for personal gain is justifiable (Schlenker, 2008). This explains how consumers validate their ethical fashion consumption based on different meanings and how complex the morality identity is. It hence suggests that consumers are imbedded in many different meanings, that can make it difficult to judge the context. This is the reason Devinney et al. (2010) suggest that consumers are "schizophrenic" since they might be socially concerned for some product but not sensitive to others. The ethical action of the individual consumer varies widely. It can be discussed that consumers are faced with channeling desires and identities through their choice and it is also therefore that a consumer can choose a Toyota Prius but still fly long distance on vacations (Holt. 2012). However, if consumer's commitment to ethics is high enough, they should be able to trade benefits, like higher costs and lower functionality (Holt, 2012). Nonetheless, consumers are rarely willing to trade benefits for ethical alternatives (DeVinney et al., 2010). Similarly, Joergens (2006) implies that when consumers purchase ethical fashion the only reason is for the desire and value of the object rather than social component. On the same theme, Bourdieu (1987) propose that morals are the invisible system, since it is evident that

social context is in power of the moral authority.

This interpretation suggests that moral identity is invoked in a conflict between what is right and what is wrong, where there is a channeling desire. Consumers' moral identity is therefore proposed as complex, since it is animated by many different interpretations and meanings, where one's moral identity can act on different movements depending on the social setting, and therefore even be seen as unconscious. This is why the ethical gap is in conflict, because of consumers "schizophrenic" behavior

Methodology

Narrative research of ethical fashion

The methodology used in this study builds on exploratory and qualitative research aiming to understand ethical myths from a consumers' perspective and how these myths are used in moral identity work. What remains hereto is relatively less well understood in this this area, the connection between ethical myths and moral identity. Additionally, a qualitative approach was selected, since the research was to deeply understand consumer's myths and morals to ethical fashion.

Specifically, the design of this study builds on a narrative approach, which Eriksson and Kovalainen (2008) explain as "the ideas of 'narrative knowing' and 'storytelling' as basic human activities" (p.76) and gives a context based on that the stories are richer and thicker. This Research design is suitable, because it allows to focus on consumer's stories, experience (Goulding and Shankar, 2001) and action (Eriksson and Kovalainen, 2008). It also taps into consumers' inner self, behavior and perception (Stern, Thompson and Arnould, 1998). Given the aim of this thesis to explore and illustrate how consumers mobilizes ethical myths to animate moral identity, this research design allows the

collection of relevant material such as consumers perception and experience to ethical fashion.

A narrative design allows to shows experience to one versions of a story. It understands life and social relations, but is not the objective truth (Arnould and Price, 1993; Eriksson and Kovalainen, 2008). However, Shankar and Goulding (2001) claim that narrative research can be criticized because of the truth can not be proven, since the goal is hermeneutic understanding. Rather, it is the narrative on one social and focus consumption. Although, this thesis aims to illustrate and explore ethical fashion, it is the individual's version of the myth that is the central. Although one must keep in mind that the individual version does not have to give the full truth.

The previous section highlighted the theoretical findings on moralistic play, myth and moral identity towards an ethical approach, which was necessary in order to get an understanding of the subject. this, the most important Through researchers in the field were identified. Nevertheless, the research question of this study aims to answer how consumers mobilize ethical myths to animate moral identity. Hence, in order to answer the question, consumers' behavior, perceptions and experiences needed to be investigated in detail. This was conducted through indepth phenomenological interviews which is an appropriate method for the why purpose (Stern et al., 1998; Eriksson and Kovalainen, 2008). However, since the interviews provided information that was guided by theory. This imply that after the interviews were held, the researcher went back to theory (Eriksson and Kovalainen, 2008). In this way the participant's stories, experience and perception illustrate the selection of theories that was underlined (Shankar and Goulding, 2001).

Further, to be able to understand consumer myths and morals towards ethical fashion, customers from Karün Sunglasses were selected as the primary source of empirical material. The participants that was selected, was the first customer in Sweden and was therefore a good fit. Since Karün has just entered the Swedish market they are still relatively unknown. In this way, the participants/consumers, are relatively new to the brand and can highlight the interest and motivation. Moreover, it can also be argued, that because of the relative unknown brand, the consumers most likely choose this brand for ethical reasons, which contributes to their insight into ethical consumption and the subject. In addition, since all of the participants have purchased the sunglasses, they have in fact once or more been involved in ethical fashion consumption. Due to the time and extent of this study, the research is limited to the Swedish market. Where only Swedish participants was selected. However, one must keep in mind that this narrative research only gives one side of the story. and can therefore not speak for the whole population.

Data Collection and Data Analysis

A common method in narrative research is in-depth interviews (Stern et al., 1998) based on phenomenological interviews (Eriksson and Kovalainen, 2008). This is since they are constructed on individual's experience (Eriksson and Kovalainen, 2008) that represents their view rather than the researchers (Thompson et al., 1989). It can be reasoned that this design approach is the most suitable, since this research aims to in depth illustrate consumers experience and perception to ethical fashion (Goulding and Shankar, 2001). The goal with narrative research is to attract different events of "reconstructed depictions of context" from the participants (Coffey and Aktinson, 1996). This suggests that the interviews are built on the participant's stories and the interviewer's role of "activator of narrative production" (Elliott, 2005).

In this research consumers from Karün were selected as participants and was chosen by the company to participate. Sixteen selected participants were contacted through email. Eight of them answered. There was a possibility to add participants, but after all the interviews were conducted, there was a saturation in the responses, indicating that more interviews were not needed. This was important in order to ensure the respondents diverse distribution (Eriksson Kovalainen, 2008). As seen in the table below, there was differences in ages and gender. Further, codename was also selected, so that the participants could be anonymous. The interviews were taking place separately through Skype, in this way it was possible to conduct the interviews in a relatively short period of time, without traveling. The interviews took between 30-60 minutes, where I started with the topic, but were later guided by the participants' stories. This was due to Sterns et al. (1998) suggestion that phenomenological interview gives participants stories and narratives that is not guided by the researcher. There was also not a set interview guide, rather topics that were aimed to be highlighted (Thompson et al.,1989). Before the interviews were conducted, test interviews were done in order to make sure of the topics and the depth of the questions. This should contribute to the participants wish to share their story.

Moreover, it was important to pay attention to the stories that the participants tell, since they were told from their own point of view and not from a point of hypothesis that needs to be tested (Eriksson Kovalainen, 2008). Since a narrative approach is more focused on the recipient's perspective is it important to pay attentions to the stories that later are the empirical material. However, during all interviews the participants were asked if they were available later if more questions would emerge. In addition, the result can be seen

as a more holistic understanding of consumer motivations and actions, since the data is analyzed by the interpretation of context, conditions and consequences (Shankar and Goulding, 2001). The Participants should be telling about their "relationship to others and the reasons behind them". (Stern et al., 1998). Where the researcher should focus on understanding their roles as heroes, villains or victims. In narrative approach consumers information of both structures and themes". that can be coded by events and the narrative structure (Stern et al., 1998). The were recorded and later interviews transcribed like suggested by (Stern et al., 1998) and the findings were then coded into different themes. Eriksson and Kovalainen (2008) suggest that the findings from the interviews should be coded and identified in themes in order develop an analysis. The themes that was identified was: visibility. brand myths, own interest and that ethical fashion is a trend. Eriksson and Kovalainen (2008) suggests that this ensures a better understanding of concepts and validity by matching the coded data with existing theory. Moreover, quotes were included to ensure validity to the arguments provided in the findings, which can be seen as an important part in narrative research (Ibid).

Age	Work occupation
35	Marketer
26	Student
55	PhD engineering and entrepreneur
26	Copy writer
40	Internal cultural communicator
43	Engineering
20	Student
57	Engineering
	35 26 55 26 40 43 20

Figure 1: Table on the participants

Findings

This section offers the analysis and findings from the interviews alongside the axis of moralistic play, ethical myths and moral identity. My findings and analysis reveal how consumers mobilize ethical myths to animate moral identity. This is done by unfolding the myth of ethical fashion and mobilizing it in moral identity.

Unfolding the ethical fashion myth

According to all respondents, there is a problem with today 's consumption and where ethical fashion can be seen as one solution for a more sustainable future. Respondents believe that ethical fashion is; the choice of not purchasing fashion, second hand or purchasing fashion that is made from sustainable material e.g good cotton and high quality. This suggest that there is some confusion of what ethical fashion actually is, that previous been highlighted by several scholars (Lundblad and Davies, 2016). Since ethical fashion incorporates sustainable materials and human rights (Joergens, 2006). It can therefore be empathized that the myth of ethical fashion needs to be clearer defined. This suggest that second hand and quality is not a part of the definition of ethical fashion. It can be shown as a gap of lacking information and myth of what ethical fashion is. Yet, questionable is that purchasing second hand fashion is still seen as an ethical choice since it is "fashion with a conscious" (Shen et al., 2012). This since, second hand recuse clothes rather than throw them away. Nevertheless, a clearer definition of the ethical myth can increase the knowledge of meaning in consumption (Coskuner-Balli, 2013), since it is complex phenomena (Stenmark, 2015). Moreover, it is underscored by respondents that if a fashion item is has high quality and is therefore ethical fashion. According to previous research, quality fashion is not a given part of ethical fashion. This is reflected in the answers of the respondents. who believe that a fashion item which lasts longer also has a less damaging effect on the environment than a garment that breaks after two usages:

"Haglöfs (casual wear) is one of my favorite brands because they have good quality in relation to the price, which indicates sustainability. However, Haglöfs has ended up in the spotlight by Greenpeace, since they have chemicals in some of their products. But generally they are doing good cloths. How did it make you feel when they were in trouble? Honesty, I did not think so much about it, in fact, I saw the article and then I hoped that they were doing the right thing."- Niclas

This suggest that the myth of quality is not always ethical. Consequently, this indicates that there is a need for an industry standard (Joergens, 2006) that will make it more clear what ethical fashion actually is. Similarity to previous scholars it is argued that there is a lack of information in ethical fashion (Carey and Cervellon, 2014) in where ethical myths can help us shape our experience and perceptions (Stenmark, 2015). This suggests that the ethical fashion myth is lacking, since the myth indicating that quality is ethical. It can even be argued that since myth shape our experience, which make consumers identify with them (Luedicke, et al., 2010), this can imply that consumer identity towards ethical fashion can be compromised. This since consumers is not acting ethical although they believe that from the myth. Therefore, myth about ethical fashion need to be clearer in order to prevent confusion what ethical fashion is.

Because of the complexity of the myth, all of the respondents also indicated difficulties with ethical fashion, in where all of the respondents argues that it can be problematic to find fashion that is ethical, since research is demanded before purchase. Similar, has previous research empathized that it is challenging to find ethical fashion (Bray et al., 2011) and where there is low availability (Joergens, 2006) low knowledge (Shen et al., 2012) and low transparency (Niinimäki, 2015).

"First I look for a company and then I hope that the item is well produced, I mean one

must do research about the company before purchasing, for example Filippa K is using tencel in their shirts. Tencel is better than organic cotton and do not use as large amounts of water and chemicals, but they are not informing customers about this "-Marcus

This implies that there is are a gap between what companies actually do and the myth that the consumers mobilize and an indication that consumers use brand myths as a part of their identity construction (Holt, 2004). This implies that the myth of the brand does not represent ethics – instead, it implies that one instead must do research in order to be ethical. Without the right information and knowledge, consumers are unable to mobilize the right myth. This can also be related to the ethical purchasing gap and Williams, 2000), consumers cannot make the right choice if information and knowledge is lacking (Shen et al., 2012). The respondents' claim that it should be as easy to find ethical fashion as it is to find the eco assortment in ICA. It is argued that brands should help consumers (Myers, 2003) and that they should think and act with them (Stenmark, 2015). This help can be embodying by companies using their influential power on consumers, based on the knowledge that brands also are the producers of valuable myths that consumers use in their identity work (Holt, 2004). This imply that brands have the opportunity to help consumers with ethical myths that can contribute to their identity work, since it is a powerful tool that communicates beliefs and values (Stenmark, 2015), which consumers use in their every-day life to animate conflicts (Arsel and Thompson, 2011). By this reasoning, brands have the opportunity to help consumers in ethical consumption, by displaying the ethical fashion myth.

"No it is not visible enough. It is far too anonymous, there should be signs above or a separate segment in a store with sustainable fashion, like they have begun to do with eco products in the grocery store. It must become clearer, with green marking label, since I do not always look that closely. It is not visible enough and do not get enough attention" -Niclas

This suggest that the ethical myth is not clear enough and that brands should visualize ethical fashion. Nevertheless, when brands show their stories, it is easier for the customers to mobilize ethical fashion (Van Laer et al., 2014; Stenmark, 2015). It also serves function, create action and change discourses (Barthes, 1975). On top of that it motivates the individuals (Stenmark, 2015).

"Belief is important; I mean people just need to know about this. When a brand serves a specific visuality and a story, for example like Karun sunglasses, a good design and background is what creates stories"- John

This indicated that visuality is important factor when mobilizing ethical myths. All of the respondents have purchased ethical fashion brand from Karün sunglasses, and they all stressed that they purchased them because of the story and vision towards sustainability. The brand visualizes information and knowledge, which makes the respondent understand why it is important. It is even stated that it was the ethical story to the brand that created the interviewees' interest for it. Moreover, it was emphasized that the brand was unknown before the purchase. This suggest that when a brand mobilizes ethical myth, the consumers can more easily identify with them, which contributes to motivation (Luedicke, et al., 2010) and better company vision (Stenmark, 2015). This line of thought illustrates how important it can be to mobilize ethical fashion myths.

Furthermore, can it be argued by the respondents that ethical fashion is a trend in

society. Where it is important to show that one cares for the environment. This indicates that it would be necessary to create a trend towards ethical consumption for it to reach sufficient impact.

"I think ethical fashion is a trendy in our society just because it is increasingly important to show that you care about the environment. Usually tend trends and sustainability drive in opposite directions but not now. I think it has to be trendy to be a part of everyday life" -Lisa

This implies that ethical fashion is becoming progressively higher valued. But it is also a belief that trends are the solutions for more ethical consumption. This since consumers then do not have to trade or choose between being ethical or self interest. Nevertheless, it can also be argued that this is only a trend that does not imply ethical behavior.

"Like talking about sustainability, it is because it is a status thing which I am tired of, sometimes it can feel that people talks about how sustainable they are, and then they went on eight trips, So, yes it feels like a status thing to communicate that one is sustainable" - Linda

It can imply that there is a conflict in the myth. In where it can be seen as a trend to communicate. Related to that, Holt (2012) suggests that consumers' choices can vary widely and where consumers' can be seen as "schizophrenic" (Devinney et al., 2010). Which indicated that the consumer chooses the alternative that best fit their identity and it can be argued that it is trendy to say that one is ethically concerned.

Conclusively, all respondents believe that ethical fashion is important. The myth of ethical fashion indicates that it is difficult to define, complex, needs to be visualized, brand myths can help consumers and are seen as a trend. It can be stressed that the

ethical fashion myths are rather unclear, which also makes respondents question the visibility of ethical fashion. It is evident that the myth itself was lacking based on low knowledge, difficulties to find and where research was demanded before purchase. This also implies that the myth of ethical fashion needs to be clearer, by visualizing and clarify what it is and why it is important. This will make it easier to prevent confusion what ethical fashion is, since it can be argued that there is no clear myth what it means to be ethical. Which also imply that it is a gap in the ethical myth. Without clear myths, individuals have difficulties to build experiences that mobilizes one's moral identity. Moreover, this could work to develop knowledge and facts that act as motivation for consumers to consume in a more ethical way. The ethical myth can be crucial, because of its powerful interplay. Further, the brands also have the opportunity to mobilize ethical myths to the consumers. This since consumers need more knowledge, in where the brands have the power to display ethical myths. Arguably, all respondents claim that they purchased the sunglasses because of the visual and clear information. This is then an evidence for the importance of a clear ethical myth. Nevertheless, it is stressed that ethical fashion can be seen as a trend, although it suggests that consumers talk about it but is not always following their thoughts in action.

Mobilizing moral identity in ethical fashion

The previous section underlined and clarified ethical fashion myths and suggested that is was complex, needs to be myths visualized. brands can consumers' and ethical fashion is a trend. However, since the myth is both complex and difficult to find, this has also limited how consumers are able to mobilize them in their moral identity. Through these myths the consumers build their moral identity, and since all respondents have mobilized ethical myths from Karün sunglasses, these will be used to understand how they animate their moral identity. This since their ethical myths represent moral action for the respondents. It is therefore important to explore how these myths animate their moral identity.

Firstly, to understand moral identity in ethical fashion, there is a need to recognize the difference between action and thought (Kang and Glassman, 2010) since it guidelines of what is right and wrong (Niinimäki, 2015) and are features in once one's identity work (Stets & Burke, 2000). Arguably, ethical fashion serves several moral identities, all depending on the moral intentions (Kang and Glassman, 2010). Their intentions can be different depending on situation, the moral identity it achieves awareness (Brunk, Nevertheless, all of the respondents has the same ethical myths based on their awareness to Karün sunglasses.

All respondents have moral identity; however, it can be seen as challenging to always have high moral identity, since it is not always possible to follow the moral identity. Because of the identity recognition from myths (Arsel and Thompson, 2011), lack of moral knowledge (Stets and Carter, 2011) or unconscious actions (Kang and Glassman, 2010), it can be argued that it makes moral identity difficult to follow. Brunk (2010) suggest that there are two types of moral identity, one that follows rational judgments and one that are capable of distinguishing right from wrong. However, although it is possible to find ethical fashion it is still a challenge. indicating that the ethical fashion myth is not provided at all, or openly enough. Hence, one needs to make "sacrifices" to animate a moral identity.

"I looked for winter shoes, but there was nothing I could easily get hold of. Neither the information or brand suited me. I wanted it to be produced in a good way, but there was no option for me because the shoes were difficult to obtain and/or to expensive"- Anna

This is an indication that there is a gap between thought and action. Previous research has stressed that if thoughts and action do not meet it is because our social capital is more important (Kang and Glassman, 2010). It seems like the respondent's' behavior is not based on morality believes or social context since there are no clear myth, information or resources to reward such a consumption. Where it can be argued that enough myths, information and resources are available to the consumers, they are acting on it. Still, several scholars argue that strong moral identity should indicate unbeneficial trade offs such as higher cost (Holt, 2012) and would not change regardless of the social consequences (Schlenker, 2008). Despite this, one may suggest that there is a conflict regarding how much consumers actually are willing to sacrifice to be ethical. Findings suggest that they have a moral identity, but that the cost of acting on it is too high. It can moreover be stated that the moral identity can change from high to low, which implies that one's moral identity will be adjusted dependent on the myths impacting the consumption, or the size of the potential trade-off that is offered instead. Therefore, the ethical myth of knowledge, information and visualization must help animate moral identity, stressing the consumer to act responsibly. If the myth had more information respondents the may understand why they should act (Stets and Carter, 2011).

This is also explaining why respondents have a belief that they think ethical fashion is important, although they are not always acting on the moral thoughts.

"Sustainability is really important and something that should permeate all levels, I am trying to act as responsibly as I can, I mean second hand is also a good option" Have you purchase any second hand cloths? "no not yet, the design need to be appealing and related a lifestyle that I feel comfortable in" - John

The ethical myths suggest that it is a struggle between social action and moral identity, in which it seems to change depending on the context (Schlenker, 2008) and where moral thoughts fail in action (Kang & Glassman, 2010). Moreover, this can suggest that the self interest and how one is perceived is more important than the ethical believes. Although it's a believe that ethical fashion is important, the fashion also needs to be appealing. While Stets and Carter (2011) have reasoned that moral knowledge is a key to moral behavior. It is proposed by Luedicke, et al. (2010) that consumers' identity goals are in a struggle between following moral orders changing values and ideas. The findings of this study suggest support for Arsel and Thompson (2011) as they show that ethical fashion need to have more values then only ethical in order to follow the moral order. Though, the identity of how one's wants to be perceived is more important than animating moral action.

Nevertheless, some acts can also indicate nonconsciousness, for example when acting, are some consumers not aware of the consequences (Levy, 2014). This means that the gap between thought and action can occur although one is not aware of this. This also imply how difficult it is to obtain moral identity. However, when consumers are acting on their moral identity, it is based on moral believes (Levy, 2014), which would then indicate that the respondents are aware of the moral consequences. Therefore, it can be stressed that it is a conflict between moral action and moral thought which in the end indicates that consumers do not act on ethical fashion, since their self interest identity is more important. Referring back to fashion as the main concern for myths building, this ethical fashion gap suggests that the fashion identity is built upon expression and self-esteem (Thompson and Haytko, 1997; Lundblad and Davies, 2016) as consumers purchase object for social capital (Sassatelli, 2015). It can therefore be argued that the self interest identity is more important than the moral identity. As Bourdieu (1987) once claimed, the social capital is in power over the moral authority, since it can make us free from our moral obligations (Evans, 2004). By this, it can be stressed that although one is aware of obligations ethical and are moral knowledgeable, the fashion identity is more important than moral identity. In other words, this implies that consumers in general desire a fashion identity to a higher extent than they desire a moral identity concerned with acting ethically.

Since all of the respondents have the same ethical conditions based on their awareness. it is their multi-channeling identity that are in power of the moralistic play. In where consumers are "schizophrenic" since they can both be ethical and unethical (Holt, 2012; Devinney et al., 2010). This implies that respondents' moral identity is in a dualism between those who follow the moral order and those who don't. It can even be suggested that even if all respondents have purchased ethical fashion. the outcome on moral identity differs. For example, one consumer following moral action but sees it as challenging, while another one do not follow action because of lacking myth, or that the self interest identity is more important. This suggest that even if they have mobilized the same myth from Karün sunglasses, their moral identity work in different movements. It can therefore be argued that ethical myths do not always animate moral action.

However, when the brand communicates ethical myths, the respondents are also believed to be talking about the myths, since they are good brand myths and, as suggested previously, ethical consumption can in some cases be viewed as a status symbol. Therefore, it can be stressed that a brand myth also provide more consumers that talk about their brand. This also suggest that when the consumer talks about the brand and share stories this indicates that their moral thought is animating their moral identity.

"When companies perform that little extra, I talk about them. For example, with the sunglasses where I have told everyone close to me what they are made of and why I bought them". What do you tell them? "I describe the sales pitch to them, that they actually pick up old fishing nets and use them in the sunglasses, they protect the environment and no other animals are then trapped in the fishing nets"- Niclas

This suggests that when a brand visualizes their story, consumers are inclined to mobilize ethical myth to animate the moral identity. This since consumers will be able to talk about it and share it to others. By sharing myths, it will not only increase knowledge, but myths will also help to create trust and better ethical judgments 2015). Nevertheless, (Stenmark, implies that by understanding the moral implications, the moral thought is able to animate moral identity and share stories with others. Then again, although they are not acting on the moral thoughts, they are sharing them. Which indicates that more individuals understand the moral implications.

Furthering, it can be argued by the respondents that ethical fashion myth is a trend in society, implying that it increases the social capital and communicates that one is socially concerned. Although it suggests that consumers talk about ethical fashion, it is not always following their thoughts in action. Which can imply that consumer increase their moral thoughts

because it "looks good". Despite that this indicated that ethical fashion can be seen as a trend, ethical fashion also enhances moral identity which may influence one's moral beliefs (McFerraiiy et al., 2010). This suggest that if ethical fashion is a trend it will increase one's social capital and moral identity, since consumers are more likely to identify themselves through mythically driven motivation (Luedicke et al., 2010). Implying that when ethical fashion is a mythical driven trend, consumers increases more value then only ethical and also are more likely to be motivated to act. This can moreover also indicate that since selfdefinition is an important part of consumer's fashion identity (Joergens, 2006; Schlenker, 2008), as this enhances the likelihood of consuming ethical fashion (Thompson and Haytko, 1997). It is suggested that if one start acting ethical it will increase the moral identity (Arsel and Thompson, 2011). Indicating that although consumers are motivated because of the driven trend, it can enhance for consumers to animate moral thought.

Consequently, it can be reasoned that it is a conflict between moral thought and moral action, in where it can have been seen as a challenge to animate moral identity. Although one is following moral action, it can be stressed as a challenge. Primarily this depends on the absence of ethical myths, it is also concerned with the argument concerning the price being is too high for having a high moral identity. This can be seen as a conflict in the moral intention gap. Moreover, when consumers mobilize the ethical myth it does not indicate that it animates the moral identity. Only because a consumer is acting one time does not mean that all of the choices are ethical. Specifically, consumers use the ethical myth when acting, which suggests that they need to be present during the act. This can be explained with arguing that consumer action can be described as unconscious (Levy, 2014). Nevertheless, it is stressed that conflict in the moral identity gap, suggest that one's fashion identity is more important than moral identity. This implies that ethical fashion can be deselected because of how individuals want to be perceived, which arguably seems very important. Although consumers are not acting on their moral thought, when brands mobilize an ethical myth, consumers tend to share this story with others. This suggests that they are animating their moral identity by thought. Nevertheless, it can be stressed that even if the ethical myth is a trend, it does not imply that the moral identity will be increased, rather that it is important for the self identity.

Conclusions

In this article, I have analyzed the moralistic play, ethical myths and moral identity in order to show how consumers mobilize ethical myths to animate moral identity. My discussion of the findings suggest that ethical fashion myths and moral identity are useful to explain moralistic play in the ethical fashion context. It can be stressed that consumers mobilize ethical myths through information, visualization, stories, brand myths, their own self interest to animate their moral identity. However, since the ethical fashion myth is rather unclear, this has also made it difficult to get a clear picture of how consumers animate moral identity. Although all of the respondents have acted on the ethical fashion myth, findings indicate that the myth was failing, since the respondents experienced difficulties of mobilizing ethical myths outside the Karün context.

Previous research by Giesler and Veresiu (2014) suggest that myths did not serve as a shared problem-solving to be mobilized for identity construction. However, consumers moralistic play in ethical fashion suggest that the construction between morality and myth is essential. Initially, it can be argued that there is a lack in the moral identity gap, where failing ethical myths can be the

reason. It can be suggested that the moralistic play cannot produce the myth if it is not provided. Therefore, it can be stated that the gap can be constructed because of lacking ethical myth. This suggest that the gap can occur and be magnified because of the missing myth. Holt's (2004) illustration ethical myths can of how change consumers' moral perception and experiences is therefore clearly relatable. As several scholars previously highlighted, the phenomena of ethical myth is highly complex (Joergens, 2006; Lundblad and Davies, 2016; Carey and Cervellon, 2014), where it can be stressed that the ethical myth is not as correct or informative in order to adapt to higher moral identity. This rather suggests that there is a gap between the ethical myth and moral identity in order to mobilize ethical fashion in moralistic play. Nevertheless, DeVinney et al. (2010) claim that the ethical consumer is a myth in herself. I suggest that it is not necessarily true. I rather believe that marketplace myths have made it challenging to be an ethical consumer and therefore difficult to animate a moral identity.

However, when consumers mobilize these ethical fashion myths it does not imply that they will animate moral identity, since consumers' moral identity works in different directions (DeVinney, Auger, and Eckhardt, 2010; Carrington et al., 2010; Cowe and Williams, 2000). Instead, I would like to adhere to arguments presented by Kang and Glassman (2010) who have suggested that consumers have two moral identities; action and thoughts. Moral thoughts are easier to animate, since they indicate that one starts thinking about what is right and wrong (Brunk, 2010), hence it does not indicate that these thoughts are followed. This is also why moral thought is the start of one's moral identity. mobilizing moral thoughts, consumers start understanding why it is important to consume ethically and therefore start to increase their knowledge on the matter. The more the myths communicate, the more the consumers are able to animate moral thoughts. This occurs when consumers start talking and sharing the myths among each other. Mobilizing the ethical fashion myth will be the first step to understanding why it is important. The more information that the myths animate the more moral thoughts are the consumers going to mobilize, which also will lead to increased moral identity work. Therefore, can it be claimed that ethical fashion myths are necessary in order to animate moral thoughts - hence very similar to Luedicke et als'. (2010) suggestions that marketplace myths take a key role in the moral conflict.

However, moral action can be more difficult to animate as consumers need to act on the thought to animate moral action. As Carrington et al. (2010) and Cowe and Williams (2000), have previously stressed, consumers are claiming to be ethical but do not always act on it. This is believed to depend on the matter that consumers have to make "sacrifices" like the cost of an alternative identity or feature which can make the experienced sacrifice too high and therefore act "schizophrenic" (Devinney et al., 2010). This indicates that the fashion myth needs to represent other values in order to increase moral action, where the fashion moreover needs to be appealing as consumers are motivated by self interest identity. This is hence in parallel to claims by Holt (2004) who suggests that consumers are symbolic slaves. Therefore, it can be argued that the ethical fashion myth needs to incorporate more appealing values since consumers' self interest identity is more important than their moral identity. This can also be one reason to why it can be seen as important that ethical fashion is a trend - since it enhance an additional value for the consumer

In addition, can it also be stressed that it is difficult to find ethical fashion, making it hard, sometimes even impossible, for

consumers to act in accordance with their ethical myths. Therefore, in line with previous arguments, ethical fashion myths needs be incorporated in brad myths. This is clearly shown by the Karün consumers, were they acted on the myth because of the visualization, information and story. Hence, this did not suggest that they acted moral after that purchase. This indicates that the myth does not necessarily change an individual's action for forthcoming, but rather changes the action for the moment. Conclusively, this suggests consumers have mobilized moral thoughts, a clear ethical myth can make them act. Specifically, consumers use the ethical myth when acting, which suggests that these myths need to be present during every act, because of the nonconsciousness of the action (Levy, 2014: Evans. 2004). Therefore, ethical myths can help consumers during the act of moralistic play.

Managerial Implications

In accordance with above outlines, my results illustrate the importance of an ethical brand myth in animating the moral identity. It can be suggested that ethical fashion myths are important factors in consumers' moral identity construction and it can be stressed that consumers use information, visualization, and their own social capital to animate moral identity. Brands should therefore have a distinct brand myth that visualizes the importance of ethical fashion. Doing this will facilitate for consumers to understand the importance of ethical fashion and how they should morally act on it. When consumers animate their moral identity they need knowledge in order to understand why it is important. It can therefore be concluded and recommended that the brands have an opportunity – and arguably also a responsibility - to mobilize these myths for consumer's moral identity work. Consumers will hence be able to talk about ethical consumption and share stories about the brand myth. In addition, since consumers are not willing to make sacrifices for having a moral identity, it is suggested that the myth should also incorporate other values for the ethical myth to become powerful. Therefore, brands should implement desire in the ethical myth, as this awakens desire and motivations within consumers to act in an ethical manner

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APPENDIX

Interview

1. Lifestyle:

- Tell me a little bit about you.
- How would you describe your lifestyle? (Inform of occupation, working conditions, housing, leisure time).
- What lifestyle would you like to achieve?
- How do you think others sees you?

2. Interests and goals:

- What interest/hobbies do you have?
- What is you goal in life?
- What do you like to achieve? (Dreams, vision)

3. Narratives of brands and fashion:

- What is your favorite fashion brand/s?
- What make the brand special?
- How do they communicate with you?

- What was your first impression of that brand/s?
- What kind of advertisement does/did it have?
- What make you try on a new brand?
- What makes your talk about a brand to your family and friends?
- Why do you think it makes you talk?

4. Sustainability:

- What is your thoughts about sustainability?
- Where do you think you got your values from?
- Do you consume sustainable products?
- Why do you think others purchase ethical fashion?
- Why should you purchase ethical fashion?
- What brand do you consume that is ethical?
- What would make you purchase more ethical fashion?
- What make you try a new ethical brand? And if, what makes you choice that brand?
- How does your family and friends think about sustainability?
- What makes you talk about sustainability to your friends?
- What makes you talk about an ethical brand?
- Why do you think you start talking about it?
- How does it make you feel to where a sustainable brand?

5. Karün

- How does it feel to wear the sunglasses?
- Would you choose a sustainable brand if it had the same price and quality?
- Does it matter what kind of material it has?
- Why did you buy them?
- How did you hear about them?