

PP - (21068) - TO BUY OR NOT TO BUY? YOUNG CONSUMER VIEWS ON FASHION PURCHASES AND MICROPLASTICS IN THE UK

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Research or practical problem and objectives

Fashion contributes to pollution worldwide. Synthetic microfibres are one of the major microplastics sources in European rivers and experts working in the field of plastic research rated textile fibres as one of the riskiest microplastics sources for the natural environment and human health. Additionally, fast fashion – which is mainly using synthetic fibres and harmful chemicals – has taken over the clothing market and young fashion consumers (Millennials and Generation Z) are a demographic with great spending power in this market. Hence, exploring their motivations in clothing purchases can be the first step to find behavioural intervention entry-points to mitigate microplastics pollution.

Methods and process (for empirical research)

Therefore, we conducted semi-structured interviews with $N = 17$ participants (aged 19-33) to explore, in-depth, the perceptions and motivations of young fashion consumers concerning their purchases as well as their awareness of the potential environmental impact of their clothing choices. We carried out the interviews in Plymouth, UK between November 5th and December 14th 2021. The interview guide was partly inspired by the stage model of self-regulated behavioural change and the interview transcripts are analysed with thematic analysis.

Main results preview and importance (or main arguments in the case of critical reviews)

Preliminary analysis reveals that contextual constraints such as price as well as emotional motives and their coping strategies communicated as “retail therapy” play a role. The final analysis will be completed by June 2022 in which we are categorising the consumer's perceptions towards their clothing purchases under consideration of sustainable purchase practices (e.g. reducing consumption, buying second-hand or purchasing recycled/ organic materials) and their thoughts on labelling as well as microplastics pollution.

The results can inform about young fashion consumers – psychological and contextual – drivers and barriers of sustainable clothing consumption and foster the development of behavioural interventions to increase sustainable purchase practices within this target group.

Palavras-chave : Clothing consumption, Fashion, Microplastics, Behaviour change, Sustainability, Thematic analysis