

INTRODUCTORY NOTES ABOUT THE SURVEY

“SUSTAINABLE BEHAVIOR OF FEMALE CONSUMERS IN THE AREA OF CLOTHING”

The **purpose of this brief research protocol** is to provide basic instructions and to synchronize research implementation among partners from different countries. Our intention is to conduct international comparative research and publish its results in reputable journal(s).

Context: Rapid economic growth and excessive consumption over previous several decades have caused environmental pollution, depletion of natural resources and climate change. These adverse effects of unsustainable consumption can be tackled by stimulating eco-responsible consumer behaviour. To promote eco-friendly consumption, marketers need to probe deeper into the driving factors of consumers' green behavioural intentions and the factors which facilitate or impede actual eco-responsible purchases.

The **main objective** of the study is to examine women's decision-making in the selection and purchase of so-called sustainable clothes, i.e. clothes produced and obtained in a sustainable way. The survey is focused on women, born between the years 1945 and 2005.

The study builds upon extant literature on consumers' eco-responsible behaviour and extend the established psychological model of explaining consumer decision-making process, **the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB)**, in order to provide a more thorough understanding of the formation and consequences of green behavioural intentions of female consumers from various generations. The Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) has been successfully applied in various settings within consumer behaviour research, including ethical and sustainable consumption, however, to a significantly lesser extent in the area of sustainable clothing. In general, **sustainable clothing includes** clothing items made up of eco-friendly or organic cotton, but sustainable clothing also includes clothes one can acquire during swapping events, clothes one can buy in second-hand shops, upcycling of your own previously worn clothes by yourself or a tailor, clothes made up of recycled fibers, renting of clothes instead of buying them via online platforms or buying upcycled clothes.

The survey is expected to be performed by means of **a structured questionnaire**. Due to pandemic situation, we have chosen to perform data collection online via Google questionnaire form, which has up to now resulted in good response of our respondents. Almost all of the items should be rated on a 7-point Likert-type scale. The questionnaire consists of 4 parts. The *first* part addresses the level of respondents' knowledge related to sustainable clothing, their most preferred clothing options, clothing involvement and consumers' perceptions of the presence of greenwashing in fashion marketing. The *second* part deals with various domains of sustainability issues related to clothing industry, such as environmental protection, animal welfare, well-being of clothing workers in developing economies, where still majority of clothes that we nowadays buy are produced. The *third* part includes the constructs of the TPB in the context of sustainable clothing and the *last* part contains demographic items. Demographic items will require the most adjusting, especially the items dealing with the regions in your country and net monthly income of households in your country.

Sample: Our plan is to collect 400 fulfilled questionnaires. Students from marketing oriented courses are helping as field researchers with data collection. The intention is to collect 100 responses from each previously mentioned generational cohorts (Baby boomers, Generation X, Generation Y, Generation Z).

Analysis: Relationship among the constructs will be examined by the application of structural equation modelling and regression analysis. Anderson and Gerbing's (1988) two-step approach will be applied, which implies examination of a measurement model and constructs' convergent and discriminant validity, followed by the examination of structural relationship among constructs, upon the confirmation of constructs' validity. Moderating effects on the relationships towards green behavioural intentions will be examined by the application of multi-group structural equation modelling (Byrne, 2004).

This study is expected to be performed anonymously, in order to restrain as much as possible the issue of social desirability, which has appeared to be common in ethics research. **Institutions interested in taking part in this study are expected** to translate the survey, with necessary modifications taking into account specificities of clothing market in their own country and/or available options of sustainable and fast fashion retailing in their own setting (e.g. Sumne and Nosene are sustainable clothing retailers operating in Slovakia), but preserving as much as possible the equivalence of the survey instrument with the English version of the questionnaire. We are aware that some of sustainable clothing options which are already available in Slovakia might be unknown in some other countries and that female customers in other countries might have on their disposal some options of sustainable and fast fashion clothing which are not yet available on the Slovak clothing market. Therefore, some modifications of the survey will be inevitable.

The questionnaire is expected to take cca 20 minutes of respondent's time and it is necessary to inform the respondents that it is not possible to fulfill half of the questionnaire and continue with it later, as once the questionnaire form is exited prior to its submission, all entered responses will be lost. Therefore, respondents are expected to fulfill the questionnaire when they have time for this activity. Please, take care in the process of adjusting the English version of the questionnaire to your own language that almost all questions (with the exclusion of several socio-demographic items) must be questions with a necessary response, as this is important for statistical analysis.

Further steps: We have planned to conduct also following second survey to address actual buying behaviour after some time (at least one month), and address typical determinants of customer loyalty. Contrary to our initial expectations, sustainable clothing is not so widespread among our respondents, due to which the structure of the second survey is still under consideration (motives, barriers, change in consumer behavior due to pandemic situation.. etc).

For the **institutions that would be interested to participate in our study**, we will organize online meeting in a short time during which we will explain and clarify all details, share our experiences with this research (we are already in data collection stage) and answer all questions. In case of your interest, please, respond to: janka.taborecka@umb.sk till 15th March, 2021.

We are looking forward to our mutual co-operation.