UNDERSTANDING ONLINE FAST FASHION EVALUATIVE CUES

USED BY GENERATION Y AND Z CONSUMERS

by

Emilie Chan

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ABSTRACT

Fast fashion and online retailing are growing at incredible rates. Simultaneously, Generation Y and Z consumers are becoming increasingly important generational cohorts to understand due to their population size and growing spending power. This quantitative research study explores the salient apparel and key online retailing cues used during decision-making by a Canadian consumer sample of 416 individuals, from both generational cohorts, when shopping online for fast fashion. Data collected is also used to make preliminary findings on online promotional and advertising cues used by both generational cohorts. Shopping behaviour is clustered to provide actionable insight, and retailer recommendations are made based on data collected from this study. An online questionnaire survey has been used to collect data, and IBM Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software was used to analyze all data sets.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

North American fast fashion retail is increasing in popularity, bolstered by an inflow of online fast fashion players in the market. The accelerating pace in production and consumption is causing waves of change throughout the fashion marketplace and the platforms in which consumers search, browse, and purchase products.

Online Retailing

Consumers are increasingly shifting their place of purchase from physical stores to online retail platforms, facilitated by increasing internet accessibility—87.4 percent of Canadians had access to the internet at home by 2016, and 87.9 percent owned a cell phone (Statistics Canada, 2017). Online, retailers can offer a broader range of products compared to brick and mortar stores (Ha et al., 2007). With an internet connection, consumers can now access online stores at any time, from any geographic location. Consumers are offered more product choices, with greater ease in switching between retailers (Ha et al., 2007). Although Canadians have been comparatively slower adopting online shopping compared to the United States, there has been continuous observable adoption growth (IbisWorld, 2018). According to eMarketer's report (2018), Canadians spend almost $60 billion (CAD) online annually.

Fast Fashion

Fast fashion garments are highly trendy, inexpensive and "in-fashion" products that are quick to manufacture (Cachon & Swinney, 2011). The fast fashion business model promotes "rapid acquisition and disposal of apparel by consumers" (Tokatli, 2008), so industry players design and manufacture garments to be worn a limited number of times (Fulton & Lee, 2010), sometimes replicating styles from high-end designers and fashion shows (Fletcher, 2010). Within the fast fashion marketplace, retailers compete for speed to market, low costs, and sales.

Generation Y and Z

Consumers often display similar shopping behaviour to those with similar values or lifestyles (Becker & Murphy, 2000). These similarities can be used to create generational cohort groups for analysis. Currently, the children of Baby Boomers are known as Echo Boomers, Millennials, or Generation Y. According to Statistics Canada, this cohort was born between 1972 to 1999 (Statistics Canada, 2018); however, some consider this cohort as beginning the year 1981 (Bolton et al., 2013). Generation Y represents approximately 31 percent of the total Canadian population (Statistics Canada, 2019) and their spending power is steadily increasing as many enter into adulthood (Nielsen, 2018); thus, it is crucial to gain a deeper understanding of this consumer group. Generation Z, the youngest population cohort, is born between 1993 and the present (Statistics Canada, 2019), but some consider this cohort as beginning the year 2000 (Iorgulescu, 2016). Currently comprising of approximately 38.7 percent of the Canadian population (Statistics Canada, 2018), this growing cohort has high disposable income relative to their overall income and therefore, Generation Z is another crucial cohort to study.

Both generational cohorts are not only growing in size but also in purchasing power, representing a large target market for fast fashion sales (Hill & Lee, 2012). In general, they comfortably and intuitively engage with brands and organizations through technology such as social media platforms, e-commerce websites, and other third-party websites (Bolton et al., 2013; Turner, 2015). Social media and other information sharing platforms are also becoming significant information sources for many online shoppers (Turner, 2015). Fast fashion has changed consumer shopping habits by offering a greater variety of garments at compelling low prices, convincing consumers to purchase more items.

Purpose of Study

Although fast fashion and impulse purchase behaviour are commonly associated, consumers still undergo a decision-making process (Court et al., 2009). This exploratory study serves as a starting point for future studies regarding Generation Y and Z consumers, and their decision-making process when shopping for fast fashion online. The purpose of this study is to identify and assess salient cues used by Canadian Generation Y and Z consumers when shopping online for fast fashion apparel. Within this research study, salient cues are defined as product, retail platform, or advertising and promotional attributes (or indicators) that are important or perceptible to online fast fashion consumers. The primary objectives of this study are fivefold:

1. assessing the effect of salient apparel cues;
2. assessing the effect of salient online retailing cues;
3. forming initial assessments of the effect of salient online promotional and advertising cues during the decision-making process;
4. assessing significant correlations between different cues; and
5. identifying the primary differences in evaluative cues used between Canadian Generation Y and Z consumers when shopping online for fast fashion apparel.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Significance of Apparel Cues

Consumers use multiple evaluative cues before the purchase of apparel and footwear products (Eckman et al., 1990; Rahman et al., 2017) during the active evaluation stage of the consumer decision journey, many of which influence consumers' shopping and buying behaviour. These cues can be categorized into extrinsic and intrinsic natures (Rahman et al., 2017). Extrinsic cues are external characteristics of a product, whereas intrinsic cues are directly related to the physical characteristics of a product (Hines & Swinker, 2001; Ranganathan, 2012). According to Rahman et al. (2017), there are 12 significant evaluative cues often used by apparel consumers, including brand name, price, and country of origin which are extrinsic cues; and style, colour, fit, comfort, fabric, durability, ease of care, wardrobe coordination, and quality of workmanship which are intrinsic cues. Ranganathan (2012) argues that "extrinsic cues tend to reduce information asymmetry [between consumer and merchant]…[which works to] minimize uncertainty and mitigate perceived risks" (p. 55), therefore extrinsic cues may be most salient to consumers shopping online due to the lack of tactile judgement of the physical product (Ranganathan, 2012). However, extrinsic and intrinsic cues offer more information and exert greater influence when used concurrently (Ranganathan, 2012). A typical example to illustrate this viewpoint is the relationship between premium product pricing (extrinsic), and product characteristics such as quality of materials and durability (intrinsic). In fast fashion evaluation, price is observably the salient extrinsic factor, paired with selected intrinsic cues.

General consumer evaluative cues can be separated into rational and emotional advertising appeals. Rational advertising appeals include factual information that can be objectively verifiable, with a focus on product utility and attributes (Blanco et al., 2010). Emotional advertising appeals tend to be subjective (Blanco et al., 2010; Drossos et al., 2007) and are commonly used amongst consumer products. However, studies have shown that factual information elicits more positive attitudes and purchase support than emotional cues (Blanco et al., 2010). Although rational appeals may logically include price, colour, fit, and fabric cues, there is overlap and interconnective relationships between rational and emotional appeals. However, rational appeals can also elicit emotional responses, as illustrated in a study by Rahman et al. (2010). Ultimately, the effectiveness of both rational and emotional appeals depend on consumer goals and motivations, which dictate salient product features, benefits, and information sought online (Blanco et al., 2010).

Sustainability

Sustainable consumption and production meet both material and other current and future needs "without causing irreversible damage to the environment or loss of function in natural systems" (Birtwistle & Moore, 2007). With a growing movement towards sustainable efforts amongst consumers (conscious consumerism) and corporations within the apparel industry, there is increased awareness towards factors such as raw material sourcing, ethical production, and environmentally friendly (eco-friendly) processing (Allwood et al., 2006).

Many consumers perceive themselves as environmentally conscious and have concern for the well-being of others (Hill & Lee, 2015). Consumers tend to look for tags or labels that indicate products as the "better" or "best" choice (Fuentes & Fredriksson, 2016), especially relevant for consumers actively looking for sustainable products. However, studies show that many of these consumers display limited actions representing this stance (Hill & Lee, 2015; McNeil & Moore, 2015). It is therefore unlikely for fast fashion consumers to actively consider and act upon sustainability related concerns, in-part attributed to the limited awareness of the current unsustainable fast fashion business model and production methods. Although Bly et al. (2015) suggest that the internet has changed the way consumers engage with sustainable fashion consumption, sustainable consumption behaviour is still largely dependent on habits and routines (Yang et al., 2017), and sometimes social pressure (Bong & Jin, 2017). Hence, consumers' decision-making is often uncertain and uses heuristics due to the limited information about sustainable fashion production, and the relevance of this information to themselves (Ritch, 2015). Observably accessible heuristics presented to online consumers include "eco-friendly" clothing styles and designs, sustainable brand visions, use of sustainable materials, clothing recycling services, ethical or eco-friendly work environments, and overall environmental impact. In light of this, there is an increasingly recognized number of conscious consumers who include sustainability as a critical determinant when shopping for apparel (Ulasewicz, 2008; Dach & Allmendinger, 2014). Sustainability is not only an apparel cue, but also a factor within some of the following evaluative cues.

Brand

From a consumer's perspective, a brand is the "perception of a product, service, experience or organization; a commercial reputation" according to Marty Neumeier, a leader in business strategy, design, and innovation (Ritchie, 2018). Therefore, branding frames the understanding and evaluation of other apparel cues (Carrigan & Attalla, 2001). Branding plays a vital role within the consumer decision-making process (Ladik et al., 2015; Ranganathan, 2012).

Brand recognition can serve as a guarantee to consumers' pre-perceived product quality and therefore set a consumer-established benchmark for other fast fashion competitors consumers may visit, based on the "brand effect" theory (Gabrielli et al., 2013). Branding and brand awareness directly affect consumers' perceived value and quality of a product, and brand loyalty (Su, 2016). It provides a base of trust for product quality and reduces perceived risks, therefore simplifying the purchase decision-making process. Thus, branding is particularly useful for online shoppers due to the inability to examine many physical product attributes (Parment, 2013). Consumers may also form connections between a product's physical properties with "higher or abstract values such as social, psychological and sensorial benefits or pleasure" (Rahman, 2012, p. 11). Rahman (2012) suggests that affective and cognitive processing co-exist within the evaluative process. However, both brand and product evaluations are influenced by a consumer's personal preferences (Cachon & Swinney, 2011) and habitus (Méndez, 2007). It is also important to note that consumers, made powerful through their purchase decisions, can be loyal to more than one retailer.

Large corporations are typically heavily ridiculed for their mistakes (Mensah & Osman, 2018). Based on the attribution effect, consumers typically focus on the internal characteristics of a brand instead of external factors when searching for the cause of mistakes (Ross et al., 1977). A brand's "personality" and values, internal characteristics, often become key factors when consumers evaluate negative brand news and face purchase decisions. This effect is exemplified by the H&M "Coolest Monkey" 2018 advertisement scandal (Mensah & Osman, 2018)—consumers ridiculed the ethical and social stance of H&M for the racially charged advertisement.

Branded fashion products can also play essential roles in a consumer's sense of self. Fournier (1998) suggests that brands provide psychological and sociological meanings within a culture and context—branding helps consumers develop deeper relationships with their purchased products, including apparel and footwear. To better understand the effects of branding, these relationships should be further examined during the evaluative and decision-making processes.

Some consumers examine brand reputation in tandem with its sustainability representativeness (Ritch, 2015; Fuentes & Fredriksson, 2016). Previous knowledge and attitudes towards a brand's sustainability practices may affect consumer decision-making (Hill &

Lee, 2015). While some consumers tend to favour brands that are perceived as socially or environmentally responsible (Dach & Allmendinger, 2014), others may rely on the perceived "naturalness" of a brand and its style when engaging in the consumer decision-making process (Fuentes & Fredriksson, 2016). The environmentally friendly "style" or "look" of a garment refers to colours, shapes, and style of a garment, but can also include marketing props and sales spaces used to sell sustainable products (Fuentes & Fredriksson, 2016). A consumer's willingness to pay a premium is greatly affected by their knowledge and attitudes towards the products and brands under evaluation (Yang et al., 2017). Increasingly more Generation Y and Z consumers are reportedly willing to pay extra for products from sustainable brands (Nielsen, 2015).

Price

Fast fashion appeals to consumers by offering affordable price points, staying on trend, and replicating some styles from high-end designers and fashion shows (Fletcher, 2010). When consumers shop online, Scarpi et al. (2014) suggest that price consciousness is higher, which contributes to lower retailer loyalty but higher word-of-mouth (WOM). Low price points commonly offered by fast fashion retailers, offset by ecological and social costs, have changed consumption behaviours and perceptions (Fletcher, 2010). Lower prices commonly lead to an association of lower product quality due to the intended disposable nature of fast fashion garments. However, luxury branded products priced at a premium may not reflect an equal level of quality than assumed (Audrin et al., 2017); therefore, price is no longer a reliable evaluative cue when used alone, even though many people perceive a strong correlation between price and product quality. Fast fashion consumers will likely purchase a product with little regard to quality in exchange for a lower price (Gabrielli et al., 2013). This trade-off illustrates a primary part of fast fashion's appeal—myriad choices that attract consumers' attention, and a continuous inflow of new garments at low price points (Gabrielli et al., 2013).

The price of a product can also be associated with visual cues upon examination of a garment (Rahman, 2012). In a study about jeans, price was associated with colour, fabric, stitch, and style, respectively (Rahman, 2012).

Consumers who are aware of apparel manufacturing and production practices tend to associate cheap fast fashion with exploitative worker conditions (Ritch, 2015). However, higher prices have found to be deterrents of purchase when there is a lack of understanding for the benefits of sustainable practices within the fast fashion industry (Ritch, 2015). This demonstrates the importance consumers place on product pricing when evaluating a garment.

Country of Origin

Fast fashion relies on quick production at a low cost to maintain its low prices and high speed to market, which is sustained by outsourcing production to countries with inexpensive labour such as India, Bangladesh, and China (Allwood et al., 2006; Tokatli, 2008; Triemstra-Johnston, 2013). Walker (2006) suggests that this physical separation from production disconnects consumers with the materials, makers, and skills involved in product creation. This disconnect coupled with the already low emotional and monetary investment placed in this type of apparel results in a reduced desire to maintain, alter, or preserve fast fashion garments (Walker, 2006).

The country of origin can directly influence apparel purchase intentions (Garrett et al., 2017) and is commonly used to predict product quality and performance (Tjandra et al., 2015). They suggest that this evaluative cue is more useful to a consumer when unfamiliar with a product or its brand, or if other cues are unavailable. Country of origin, in an apparel context, therefore acts as a cue to help reduce risk when evaluating a product (Garrett et al., 2017). On the other hand, strong brands can act as a protective barrier against countries of origin with negative associations (Ar & Kara, 2012). However, it is important to note that "country of origin" can also refer to the origin of garment design and any technology incorporated (Garrett et al., 2017; Ar & Kara, 2012).

Unfavourable perceptions of the country of production may influence consumer evaluation of a brand, and can negatively affect perceived product quality (Ar & Kara, 2012). However, in combination with brand trust, country of production as a cue can increase perceived quality and purchase intentions (Ar & Kara, 2012). Ultimately, Tjandra et al. (2015) suggest that branding is still more salient when compared to a garment's country of origin. How a brand communicates this evaluative cue depends on branding strategy, the company's mission, values, and vision. Industry perceptions associated with specific country of origins relating to emotional values, heritage, or history, can be leveraged (Triemstra-Johnston, 2013). However, it is evident that the majority of fast fashion retailers and media outlets do not actively communicate this cue to consumers, thus, affecting the importance consumers may place on it.

Consumers with the intention to purchase sustainable goods look at product tags (Ritch, 2015). However, this requires consumers be conscious about the sustainable and ethical aspects related to fast fashion production before this product cue may create a significant impact on the decision-making process. Generation Y consumers often prefer products produced in advanced economies (Tjandra et al., 2015) but there is insufficient research to support this observation when examining fast fashion purchase behaviour.

Style and Colour

In a study by Rahman (2012), style is associated with abstract values and descriptors such as “classic,” and “flattering,” whereas price and quality are associated with concrete values and descriptors such as “good deal,” and “high quality.” Generation Y consumers desire newness—this is satisfied by fast fashion’s continuous production of new styles and trends (Fletcher, 2010; Tjandra et al., 2015), and by discourse found in media. For example, Who What Wear, a leading digital fashion publication, publishes articles every day on the newest garment trends and styles. Each article discusses the “must have,” “wanted,” and “latest” styles of the moment, ranging in patterns, garment design, silhouettes, fabrics used, and colours (Who What Wear, 2019). Major fast fashion competitors, such as Zara, refresh store merchandise extremely frequently to ensure the constant availability of new product choices for consumers (Tokatli, 2008; de Jorge Moreno & Carrasco, 2016). The trickle-down theory, coined by Simmel, outlines how high fashion and haute couture styles become mass consumed (Simmel, 1957). In a modern day context, mass production fast fashion companies replicate high-end designer pieces from the catwalk (Fletcher, 2010) as a form of style consumption dissemination. These imitated styles and colours are marketed as the "necessities" of a particular moment.

In a study of jeans conducted by Rahman (2012), colours were used to infer the price and quality of apparel products. Specific denim colours promoted psychological comfort and social acceptance. Within this study, colour was the most frequently used cue for visual judgements of products (Rahman, 2012). Further, colours can play an important role in sustainability. The colour pigment and method for dying garments can affect its overall environmental impact (Fletcher & Grose, 2012). Certain colours, including bright blues and turquoise, are more resource intensive and harmful to the environment than others (Fletcher & Grose, 2012). Therefore, colours of clothing may affect the decision-making process of consumers and those who are more conscious about sustainability.

Generation Y is sensitive to social information and continually looks for the best methods to fit into each situation (Loroz & Helgeson, 2013). This idealistic and consumption oriented generation dress how they please but ultimately seek the approval of their respective social groups (Parker et al., 2014). With a high degree of image-awareness (Parment, 2013), Generation Y consumers place significance in selecting the right clothing styles in order to fit in with social norms (Valaei & Nikhashemi, 2017). They are keen on evaluating multiple options in search of the best choice (Parment, 2013), a practice further enabled by the internet. Generation Z sometimes uses technology to distract from emotions, avoid difficult behavioural situations, or to feel belongingness to certain social groups or communities (Turner, 2015). Although there is limited research regarding Generation Z fashion consumption behaviour, both generations desire belongingness and approval from social groups, that fashion can partially fulfill.

Fit and Comfort

Apparel fit can be defined as the "visual and physical satisfaction of garments and its function on the body" (Shin, 2013, p. 24). Shin (2013) suggests examining fit under two categories—aesthetic and functional. Aesthetic fit refers to the appearance of a garment in relation to the body and social norms (Shin, 2013). Functional fit refers to the comfort and performance of a garment due to its fit against the body (Shin, 2013), and can therefore be influenced by a garment's fabric (Chang et al., 2014).

Since fast fashion is highly trendy and relatively inexpensive (Cachon & Swinney, 2011), its value likely lies in its aesthetic fit. Various businesses, such as triMirror and Zeekit, are capitalizing on the importance of this apparel cue by offering virtual try-on technologies. On these platforms, consumers can view digital visualizations of personalized apparel fit from various online retailers. This technology is already explored within the fast fashion industry—Zeekit features products from fast fashion brands such as H&M and Topshop (Zeekit, 2018). Ultimately, what consumers consider as aesthetic fit depends on individual preferences, discourse in media, and norms set by social groups and communities.

Fabric

The *Comprehensive Dictionary of Textile* defines fabric (or textile) as "a manufactured assembly of fibres and or yarns…commonly woven or knitted, but [can include] assemblies produced by lace making, tufting, felting, net making, and the so-called non-woven process" (Brown, 2010, p. 92). Materials in fast fashion garments observably range from blends of cotton and other cellulose fibres, to synthetic materials such as polyester and nylon. From a consumer perspective, fabric can be used to infer price and quality of apparel as illustrated in a study by Rahman (2012). Often, it is the most identified quality when evaluating apparel products (Rahman, 2012) which reflects a considerable importance placed on this cue. This evaluative cue can also be associated with shape retention and ease of comfort—physiological and psychological aspects of a garment (Rahman, 2012).

Large fast fashion competitors such as H&M have launched product lines that use arguably sustainable materials (such as organic cotton), and programs that recycle, reuse, or re-sell textiles and clothing (H&M, 2018). However, many consumers often seek personal and direct benefits in sustainable fabric options even though the benefits are often less observable to consumers (Ritch, 2015). For example, organic foods provide clear health benefits, but the benefits of organic cotton may not be equally salient to consumers. Consumers who actively search for sustainable products tend to place more weight in sustainable materials during their decision-making process (Ritch, 2015).

Quality and Workmanship

Quality, assessed differently amongst individuals, is the "standard of something as measured against other things of a similar kind; the degree of excellence of something" ("Quality," 2018). Fashion consumers are generally unable to understand or define quality from a single perspective— it often depends on the consumer's needs, wants, perspectives (Hugo & van Aardt, 2012), knowledge, and experience. Workmanship refers to the "degree of skill with which a product is made" ("Workmanship," 2018). The level of industry quality and workmanship standards for fast fashion are declining; as a result, lower quality garments are increasingly accepted by Generation Y cohorts specifically (Cline, 2012; Tjandra et al., 2015). This contributes to the lowered understanding and assessment of workmanship and quality (Cline, 2012).

Quality and workmanship involve visual inputs of apparel products (Rahman, 2012), but can be connected to the country of origin, price, and durability from consumer attitudes and existing knowledge. Consumers who actively seek and learn about the manufacturing process are more likely to examine product quality and workmanship (Hines & O'Neal, 1995).

Durability and Ease of Care

Triemstra-Johnston (2013) outlines three primary types of durability—physical, emotional, and potential. Physical durability refers to the functional components of a garment (Fletcher, 2012), such as a zipper's ability to zip. The physical durability of a garment relies on its workmanship and the quality of materials used (Fletcher, 2012). Post-purchase, a consumer's laundering procedures, wearing habits, and general wear and tear affect the overall durability of a garment (Triemstra-Johnston, 2013). Pilling, stretching, stain, fraying, and fading are common attributes of general wear and tear (Laitala, 2012). Emotional durability, first discussed by Chapman (2009), refers to the relationship between user and product, supported by shared experiences, that gives a product a deeper meaning and therefore works to extend its lifespan. Similarly, a garment's potential durability includes its potential for aesthetic alterations, maintenance, and different forms of sharing with others (Triemstra-Johnston, 2013).

Fast fashion garments are disposable by design. Since garments for the fast fashion market are purposely designed to be disposable to accommodate the short product lifespan, there is little design for durability, and products typically involve little maintenance and care. Fast fashion garments do not maintain their physical properties after limited laundering, becoming difficult to care for (Triemstra-Johnston, 2013). Consumers have voted with their dollars, reflected in the popularity and sales in fast fashion, that the physical durability of a garment may be of low importance. Most fast fashion items are worn a low number of times before they are disposed (Fulton & Lee, 2010). This implies that fast fashion consumers may not consider the ease of care of a garment when shopping online because they are bought with the intention of limited wears. Consuming disposable fashion is a willing loss of quality and physical durability in order to construct and change fashion styles every day (Bhardwaj & Fairhurst, 2010). However, this does not equate to a lack of value placed towards emotional durability that can be forged between fast fashion garments and consumers.

Wardrobe Coordination

Fast fashion has changed the way consumers shop and fill their wardrobes—consumers are buying more garments than ever before due to the enticing variety of garments available at relatively low prices (Gabrielli et al., 2013). Consumers are stimulated to purchase pieces that align with personal taste, or feel encouraged to buy unusual styles outside of their usual aesthetic (Gabrielli et al., 2013). Wardrobe coordination can refer to how well a garment can be incorporated into and matches with a consumer's existing garments in order to reflect their lifestyle, personal style, and preferences. This cue relates to visual inputs of apparel products, linked to social appropriateness, appearance, and body image (Rahman, 2012), implying that fast fashion products must not only be trendy but be desirable to the consumer. Although the fast fashion business model promotes frequent consumption, it is unclear whether Generation Y and Z consumers purchase garments primarily based on wardrobe coordination, or novelty.

Significance of Online Retailing Cues

Consumers rely on signals and cues to help assess products online (Ranganathan, 2012). Researchers argue that shopping and communication channel characteristics perceived by consumers affect shopping attitudes; however, perceptions may vary across different channels (both online and offline) (Wang et al., 2016). It is therefore important to recognize various online retailing cues that may affect consumer perceptions, experience, and purchase intentions during the customer decision journey. Understanding the perceived differences between various shopping channels will help businesses curate and implement effective marketing strategies (Krbová & Pavelek, 2015). Many Generation Y and Z shoppers have now moved a large portion of their shopping activity online, including product information search, evaluation, selection, and purchases (Krbová & Pavelek, 2015). Lee et al. (2000) outline four key online retailing cue categories: product assortment, shopping metaphors, merchandising methods, and website design features.

Product Assortment and Shopping Metaphors

Online retailers must ensure that product assortment displays appeal to online consumers (Lee et al., 2000). The overall assortment is particularly important within an online retail space because of the narrowed focus on a screen compared to the multisensory environment of a physical store (Kahn, 2017). The use of mobile phones further intensifies focus and assessment (Kahn, 2017). Through "micro-moments" within the consumer decision journey, consumers will automatically and instantaneously form perceptions of a brand and its products (Kahn, 2017). Retailer provided product recommendations are a form of product assortment and are observably common amongst online retail websites.

Product assortments organized for easy mental processing will evoke positive effects on consumers when compared to complex organizational methods (Kahn, 2017). Tools and structures, such as website filters and categories, need to be made readily available to online shoppers to help process product assortments (Kahn, 2017). Eye tracking study results have revealed that the relative salience of objects, their position on the screen, and the number and size of appearances influence involuntary consumer attention (Kahn, 2017). Online retailing techniques such as colour blocking and vibrancy are used to heighten this (Milosavljevic et al., 2012). Online displays at the centre of the screen have found to be most salient and re-examined more often (Chandon et al., 2009; Atalay et al., 2012). Based on the "gaze cascade effect," the more an individual looks at a stimulus (in this case, a product assortment), the more positive the affect and in turn, the more attention given to the stimulus (Simion et al., 2003). The number of products within a display, such as a product recommendation footer, will also affect the salience of each product—the higher the assortment, the lower the individual product salience (Rosenholtz et al., 2007).

Attention to product assortments can also be self-directed. Consumers may choose to focus on familiar products and purposely ignore the unfamiliar (Kahn, 2017). This finding may be particularly true amongst the Generation Z cohort since these consumers place great importance on the interaction and handling of products during evaluation, thereby impacting their perception of online shopping as a whole (Boulay et al., 2014). Ultimately, product assortments affect consumer purchase choice and consideration, particularly during rapid decision-making (Milosavljevic et al., 2012). Depending on the assortment displayed and number of product choices, certain products may become more salient and appeal to consumers. Within the fast fashion marketplace, rapid decision-making is often initiated by time-sensitive offers.

Shopping metaphors refer to the methods, such as searching and browsing, in which online shoppers use to find products of interest (Lee et al., 2000). These can be affected by the structural elements (cues)—organizational structure, categorization and website filters, and product images and information—within online retail spaces that affect the consumers' ease of processing product assortments, perceived product variety, and positive attitudes towards the products (Kahn, 2017). Online shoppers expect various aspects of service quality; this is part of the holistic experiential quality of shopping (Ha & Stoel, 2012). Liu et al. (2017) suggest that consumers with high awareness towards a brand tend to conduct greater product evaluation when shopping online under time pressure, compared to consumers of lower awareness towards the same brand (Liu et al., 2017). It is important to note that browsing online retail platforms positively affects impulse purchase behaviour (Zhang et al., 2018). The Generation Y cohort often visits stores without a real need or intention to purchase—they merely want to browse new product offers and determine whether they are the right fit for the right price (Parment, 2013). Therefore, online retailers often leverage shopping metaphors, coupling them with other online retailing cues such as product recommendations and reviews, to influence the consumer decision journey.

Merchandising Methods

Product images and information. Existing literature discuss two primary forms of online product presentations—visual and textual (Blanco et al., 2010; Floh & Madlberger, 2013)—both of which can affect online purchase intentions (Ranganathan, 2012). Visual presentations can include website interface cues, product images, images and videos of a product in-use (Ranganathan, 2012), image interactivity, graphical information, and animations (Floh & Madlberger, 2013). Textual presentations include product information, and other text that offers additional details and characteristics about a product (Blanco et al., 2010). Online retailers often use a combination of both visual and textual methods of communication since different forms of presentation generate different effects on consumers (Blanco et al., 2010). A common example of this includes high resolution product images coupled with clear product descriptions (Floh & Madlberger, 2013). These effects affect consumer information processing and decision-making (Blanco et al., 2010).

Generation Y was raised during a time of transition from analog to digital technology (Loroz & Helgeson, 2013). Consequently, Generation Z is now immersed in a digital environment (Boulay et al., 2014). It is evident that both generational cohorts are accustomed to learning, processing data and information, and acquiring goods through digital technologies and platforms. Reducing the need to physically visit retailers, consumers can now search and browse for products online, relying on online retailing cues such as product images and product information.

Interactivity. Attracting and retaining consumer attention is imperative in online retailing (Ha et al., 2007). Product presentation interactivity can increase two-way communication. It can also provide consumers with customized product information and allow for image manipulation, both of which provide consumers with a high level of control (Fiore et al., 2005; Wu, 2014), beneficial to the consumer decision journey. Interactivity coupled with high-quality product images can increase consumers' shopping enjoyment and understanding of products (Fiore et al., 2005; Ha et al., 2007); it is reasonable to assume that this combination of tactics is valued by consumers as they navigate online retail spaces and make purchase decisions. Major fast fashion competitor, Zara, now offers high quality, close-up images of products to communicate fabric and other physical characteristics, simulating in-person interaction. Data collected from shopping sessions is therefore important to retailers' strategies for creating entertainment value and consumer shopping experience improvements (Wu, 2014).

Website Design

Website "style or "look." Consumers primarily engage with two types of online environmental aspects: interface features (website "style" or "look") and functional website characteristics (Prashar et al., 2017). This interface feature and cue can be easily manipulated; it can include colour, text size, font, music (if any), and media placement (Prashar et al., 2017, Lee et al., 2000). Davis et al. (2008) suggest that these cues can heavily elicit emotions—an automatic and subconscious effect within consumers. Products are partly evaluated and selected emotionally, whereas retailer selection is more rational (Ranganathan, 2012). The type of information provided by the retailer and how it is presented is significant in the consumer decision-making process (Prashar et al., 2017)—the "style" or "look" of a website can communicate brand identity.

Website atmospherics relates to the "conscious [design] of web environments to create positive effects amongst users in order to increase favourable consumer responses" (Dailey, 2004, p. 796). This can be reasonably influenced by a website's "style" or "look." Prashar et al. (2017) suggest that the effects of store surroundings and atmospherics can be more persuasive than the products themselves. Therefore, it is important to examine the role a website's "style" or "look" plays in consumer product evaluations and purchase decision-making.

Both atmospheric and overall experience are critical and valued during the development of online customer evaluations when shopping for apparel (Ha & Stoel, 2012). Hedonic (pleasurable or pleasant) online experiences increase WOM (Scarpi et al., 2014). Certain positive events and evaluations can also encourage impulsive purchase behaviour (Chih et al., 2012); however, these cues may not be identifiable by the consumer (Ha & Stoel, 2012). Shopping can be omnichannel, both online and offline; online searching can also have a complementary effect on in-store and online shopping and purchases—researchers have found positive shopping impacts on both retail platforms (Cao et al., 2012).

Website filters. Functional website characteristics involve subconsciously assessing the informativeness and effectiveness of an online platform and its design quality. A primary functional website cue is website filtering (and categorization)—toggling filters that affect perceived product variety (Kahn, 2017). Website filters commonly allow online shoppers to sort and view products based on specific styles, colours, price ranges, and functional purposes. Both interface and functional website characteristics (such as product categorizations and filters) may affect website purchase intentions, revisiting and future purchase intentions, and affects the evaluative stages of the consumer decision journey (Ranganathan, 2012; Prashar et al., 2017). Both functional features (such as the availability of product categorizations and filters) and hedonic features of online retailers contribute to perceived product value and purchase experience, facilitating positive affects towards the retailer (Ha & Stoel, 2012).

The selection of online content and information on a retail website is critical—consumers may subconsciously ignore certain marketing content or products (Blanco et al., 2010). Ultimately, the salience and value of cues vary depending on what is made available to each consumer, and how well they are used in cohesion to influence the consumer decision journey (Ranganathan, 2012).

Significance of Online Promotional and Advertising Cues

It is important to consistently connect and build relationships with consumers, which can be achieved through the use of online marketing cues. Media coverage on new fashion trends, celebrity outfits and styles, and runway "looks" are exponentially increasing consumers' shopping frequency through a growing interest in fashion, self-appearance, variety of garments available to wear, and the desire for newness (Barnes & Lea-Greenwood, 2010).

Although commonly understood as visual merchandising methods, online content including product images, media of products in-use, and product information are not exclusive to retail websites (Floh & Madlberger, 2013; Lamberton et al., 2013); they can also be found in online advertisements and social media content. Product reviews and recommendations can be integrated into the consumer social media experience. Therefore, how a product is photographed, displayed, portrayed, and reviewed across multiple online channels can affect a consumer's likelihood of purchase.

Social Media and Third-Party Sites

Fast fashion advertisements (often involving price incentives), product recommendations, product reviews, and consumer product engagement (textual or visual) can be found on social media platforms such as Instagram, YouTube, Facebook, blogs, review websites, and forums. Social media helps drive brand consumption (Ruane & Wallace, 2013) through the display of lifestyles and social norms of different social groups. These platforms support and facilitate information sharing through virtual networks and communities. Information can be presented in the form of visuals (pictures, videos, animations, symbols) and text. The number of users, content, and platform popularity is continuously evolving, with the rise and fall of platform fads. Product and brand news can be disseminated at incredible speeds through social media platforms, which can be both positive and negative for fast fashion industry players (Mensah & Osman, 2018). Demonstrated in the social media attack on Kanye West for his involvement in political affairs, perceptions of his brand were quickly and negatively impacted, affecting apparel sales (Nittle, 2018). However, social media can also be used to repair stakeholder trust (Mensah & Osman, 2018), as observed from most businesses with online presences.

Framing products in a benefit-based approach encourages consumers to relate to abstract constructs, such as aesthetics and feelings, versus simply stating attributes of a product (Lamberton et al., 2013). Popular social media platforms such as Instagram and Facebook are structured to place value on visual content such as pictures, videos, GIPHYs, and boomerangs—visuals and movement. Many large fast fashion players leverage these platforms to convey style aesthetics and emotions to their followers. Curated content and user engagement on these accounts create branded communities where consumers can find inspiration and aspirations. The communities satisfy needs of belongingness and attempt to satisfy self-actualization. Consumers within this space "work within the staging that brands and companies have built" (Cova et al., 2007, p. 10), adding, manipulating, and blending these brands into their own lives (Cova et al., 2007).

Online shopping, fast fashion, and social media are extensively studied. However, both fashion and technology industries are continuously changing, altering consumer interactions and experiences.

Platform functions. Goffman (2008) suggests that face-to-face interaction offers opportunities for both receiver and communicator to experience the opposite party's "naked senses," such as facial expressions and body language. With increasingly improving technology and adoption, social media can offer opportunities to experience an individual's "naked senses," but often in an asymmetrical arrangement (Tseëlon, 2012). Instagram stories and live streams exemplify this—followers and viewers experience the Instagrammer's "naked senses" while communicating very little back, usually in the form of online presence, and potentially typed comments and symbols.

Word-of-mouth (WOM). Motivations and attitudes influence purchasing behaviour. These can be influenced by WOM and recommendations from others (Puwalski, 2010). It is important to note that WOM—the passing of information from person to person (Kozinets et al., 2010)—can occur both offline (such as in-person) and online (such as social media).

Fast fashion is an exciting topic of discussion, information exchange, play, and imitation (Gabrielli et al., 2013). Social media encourages these conversations and "[serves] as a conduit for person-to-person buzz" (Funk, 2013, p. 65). However, everyday consumers are beginning to trust fellow consumers more than they trust the aggressive marketers behind products and companies (Funk, 2013). Through WOM on various social media platforms, including Instagram, YouTube, Twitter, and Facebook, everyday consumers can share product experiences, images, reviews, ratings, and recommendations with anyone they choose. The fashion industry has reacted to this by leveraging online brand ambassadors, now more commonly known as social media influencers, to sell and promote their products and brands. These sales can often be made directly within these social media platforms.

Sponsored content. This can include product reviews and recommendations created by social media influencers sponsored by online retailers. As suggested in multiple studies, how information is communicated and framed directly impacts consumer perceptions and behaviours (Thaler & Sunstein, 2008; Kawaf & Tagg, 2017; Michon et al., 2007). Similar to a sales pitch for a product, the same task can be performed through both sponsored (paid) “influencers” and consumers on social media platforms, such as Instagram. McNeill and Moore (2015) suggest that even the importance of fashion can be reinforced by a consumer’s network of friends and media.

While some influencers receive monetary compensation, others receive compensation in the form of apparel products. Many of these influencers will post videos of products in-use, or images of the garments themselves, expressing their opinions or including descriptive words in the caption; followers often have the option to comment on this content. Both sponsored content and follower engagement can be considered as a form of product review. Depending on the capabilities of individual social media platforms, influencers can verbally discuss product details, review retail brands, and recommend products and brands to social media users. However, it is important to note that sponsored content may not reflect accurate opinions about the products advertised due to the nature of the relationship between influencers and sponsoring companies.

Customer engagement. Customer engagement can include comments, “likes,” shares (forms of WOM), blogs, and media posted onto social media platforms. As Cova et al. (2007) suggest, consumers work within the brand identities retailers create, individualizing and manipulating it to fit into their lifestyles. Consumers observably place importance in seeing others doing this, hence the forming of online groups and communities.

Price Incentives

Price incentives differ from price as an apparel cue—focused more on purchase motivation and behaviour, there is less emphasis on the value of each product. They are often used as marketing tactics to increase purchase intention and encourage product sales (Ranganathan, 2012; Floh & Madlberger, 2013). These may include price promotions, limited time offers, and special offers (Floh & Madlberger, 2013). Product sales can therefore be encouraged utilizing the "framing effect," also known as "loss aversion" found in human behaviour. Consumers tend to avoid risks when outcomes are presented as a gain (Tversky & Kahneman, 1991)—this is used to influence purchase decision-making. Hence, the popularity and success of sales and discounts (or the perception of having them) presented as opportunities to save, which are very appealing offers to consumers.

Advertisements

Using algorithms and data tracking, retailers can recommend products to relevant internet users through online advertisements. Products consumers have previously viewed online are often further recommended through advertisements after the consumer leaves the retail website. These advertisements are often product images and textual price incentives observed in third-party website sidebars, headers, or as integrated in-content banners. However, they can also disrupt consumers within social media platforms to push product images and increase familiarity of the products, based on the "mere exposure effect" (Zajonc, 1968; Bornstein, 1989). This will therefore directly impact the decision-making process of online fast fashion shoppers.

Behaviourally targeted advertisements can drive up sales, but can also represent broader social labels (Summers et al., 2016). They can work to adjust a consumer's self-perceptions to match its implied target market label, with the caveat that the label be moderately accurate and plausibly connected to prior behaviour (Summers et al., 2016). These labels can impact shopping behaviour and purchase intention for advertised products (Summers et al., 2016) through algorithms designed for various consumer shopping attitudes and behaviours (Ahmeda et al., 2015). With these powerful algorithms, online advertisements (which can include images, videos, and text) can now be customized and relevant to every user, while appearing at the most strategic times (Tuten, 2008) on any online platform such as online publications, magazines, and blogs. This form of customization can potentially gain website traction and increase consumer reach (Funk, 2013). Such advertisements are instrumental within the fast fashion industry that is guided by consistently changing trends. In combination with price incentives, product recommendations (a form of advertisements) from both online and offline sales can also positively affect purchase behaviour (Floh & Madlberger, 2013).

Gap in Literature

There are limited studies conducted regarding the holistic consumer decision-making experience within the context of online fast fashion. There is a need to research and identify key decision-making cues used by Generation Y cohorts because of their growing spending power; and Generation Z because of their growing population size and comparatively different shopping values and behaviours. This study will examine the behavioural economics of Generation Y and Z cohorts by examining the importance of apparel cues (sustainability, brand, price, country of origin, style, colour, fit, comfort, fabric, quality, workmanship, durability, ease of care, wardrobe coordination) and key online retailing cues (product recommendations, product information, product images, media of products in-use, product reviews, website filters, the number of product choices, website style) within the online fast fashion decision journey. The data collected is also used to make preliminary findings regarding online promotional and advertising cues (social media, price incentives, advertisements) used by Generation Y and Z when shopping online for fast fashion.

CHAPTER 3: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

When evaluating products, consumers move through a consumer decision journey, a conceptual model (Fig. 1) introduced by McKinsey and Company (Court et al., 2009). First, consumers consider an initial set of brands and products (Court et al., 2009). Consumers will then actively evaluate the brands and products that are relevant and interesting to them. This active evaluation will continue until a single brand and (possibly set of) products will be selected for purchase, marking the "moment of purchase" (Court et al., 2009). Consumers can choose to abandon brands and products during evaluation, or leave the active evaluation process at any point.

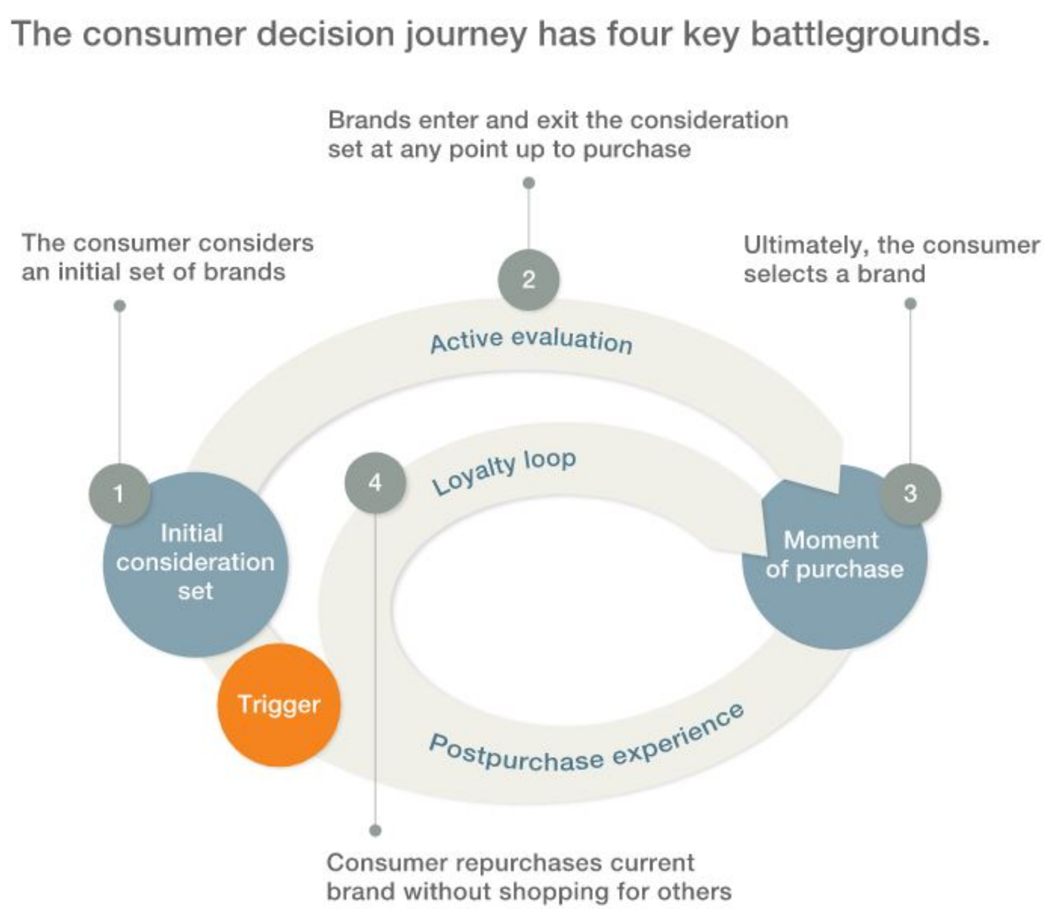

Figure 1. The consumer decision journey framework. *McKinsey and Company*. Retrieved from https://www.mckinsey.com/business-functions/marketing-and-sales/our-insights/the-consumer-decision-journey

Following the purchase of goods is the consumers' experience with both brand and products. Post-purchase evaluation is not only conducted by the individual, but can involve and be influenced by social networks, WOM, and social media; especially since fast fashion is an exciting topic of discussion, information exchange, play, and imitation (Gabrielli et al., 2013). Positive post-purchase evaluations (including experiences) can activate the loyalty loop—the repurchase of products from a brand without evaluating other options. A trigger, which can include advertisements, the need for replenishment, or product wear-and-tear, will prompt the start of a new process of consideration for brands and products (Court et al., 2009). This research study focuses on the active evaluation process experienced by online fast fashion consumers.

The proposed conceptual model (Fig. 2) expands the active evaluation process of the McKinsey and Company consumer decision journey framework (Fig. 1) in a fast fashion industry perspective.

The Fast Fashion Consumer Active Evaluation Process

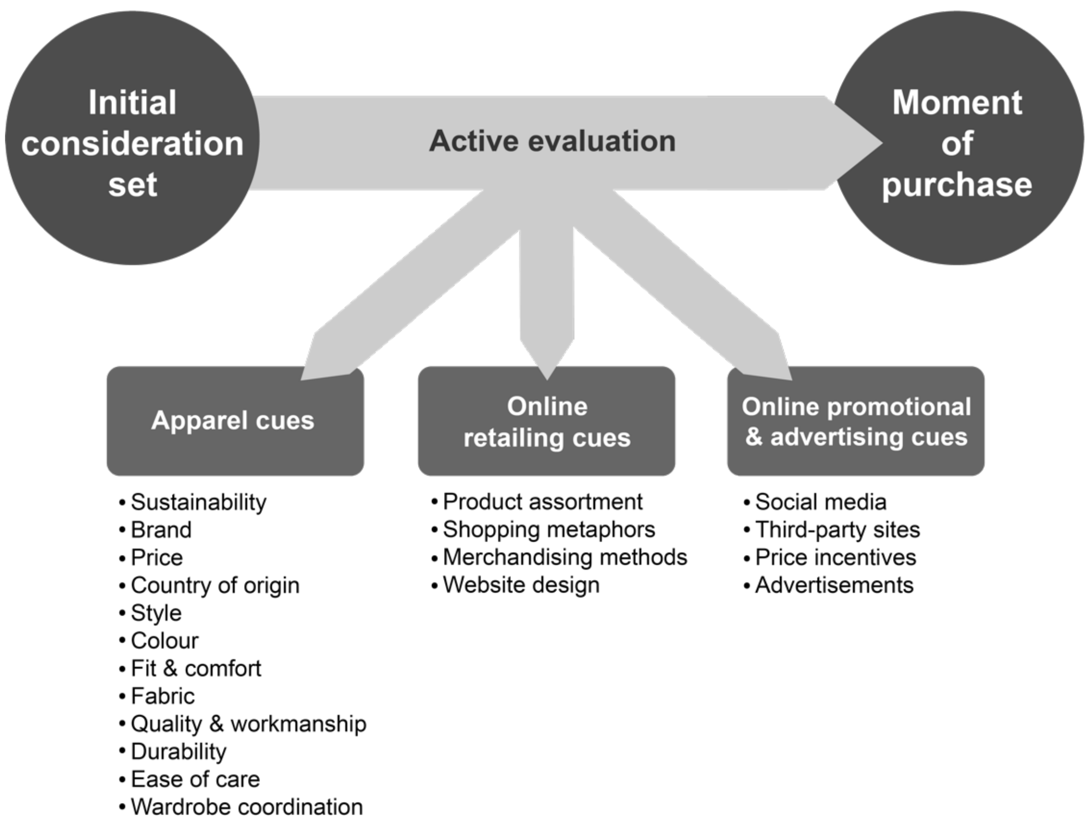

Figure 2. Conceptual framework of this study: the online fast fashion consumer purchase decision journey. *Created by Emilie Chan, based on studies by Rahman et al. (2017), Eckman et al. (1990), Ulasewicz (2008), Dach & Allmendinger (2014), Lee et al. (2000), Puwalski (2010), Floh & Madlberger (2013), Ranganathan (2012), and Summers et al. (2016).*

It incorporates salient apparel evaluative cues from multiple studies (Rahman et al., 2017; Eckman et al., 1990; Ulasewicz, 2008; Dach & Allmendinger, 2014), the online retailing analysis framework by Lee et al. (2000), and numerous studies discussing online advertising and promotion (Puwalski, 2010; Floh & Madlberger, 2013; Ranganathan, 2012; Summers et al., 2016). This framework places little focus on offline experiences by consumers in the omnichannel fast fashion marketplace to stay within the scope of online decision-making.

This explorative research study is not driven by hypotheses but rather, serves as a starting point for future research studies. It focuses on common apparel cues, some key online retailing cues, and touches upon a few online promotional and advertising cues used by online fast fashion Generation Y and Z shoppers. The following research questions serve as a guide for this research study:

- What cues affect Canadian Generation Y and Z online fast fashion shopping decision-making?
- What is the level of importance of each cue affecting Canadian Generation Y and Z online fast fashion consumers?
- What are the relationships and influences of each cue in relation to another, between Generation Y and Z consumers when shopping online for fast fashion?

CHAPTER 4: METHOD

Through this study, the use, value, and relationships between salient apparel and some key online retailing evaluative cues used by Canadian Generation Y and Z consumers when interacting with online retail spaces are examined. Data collected from apparel and online retailing cues have been used to make preliminary findings and assumptions for the importance of online promotional and advertising cues.

Research is quantitative in method, using standards of reliability (Creswell, 2003). Although quantitative data diminishes human nuances (Creswell, 2003), it offers an unbiased approach to understanding different variables. This research uses and compares patterns and links derived from data collected from individual consumers and consumer groups.

Online Questionnaire

A self-administered online questionnaire (survey) was developed for this study, consisting of three sections (Appendix 3). The first section focuses on the selected 20 apparel evaluative cues and eight online retailing cues to better understand the level of importance of each cue. Data was collected using a five-point Likert response scale (5 = very important, to 1 = very unimportant).

The second section focuses on consumers' shopping behaviours—online shopping process, frequency, expenditure on apparel, proportion of income spent on fast fashion, and choice of retailers. The third section of this survey collected demographic data including age, sex, annual income, employment status, and city of residence.

Administering an online survey facilitates and accommodates a wide audience otherwise more difficult to reach in person, such as elementary and high school students, while offering convenience (Wright, 2005). Respondents feel less pressure while completing the survey from lack of formal time constraint, and data can be transmitted to the researcher almost immediately via the survey platform used (Wright, 2005). This method also reduces coding time and error, and maximizes privacy (Kang & Park-Poaps, 2010). However, online surveys lack the level of face-to-face stimulus found in methods such as in-person interviews and guided tours (Leeuw, 2005). To offer a higher level of stimulus, written encouragement was strewn throughout the survey, and a progress bar was visible at all times.

Data Collection

Questionnaires were administered online through Qualtrics. Prior to survey data collection, the questionnaire was pre-tested with 10 participants to identify and revise question ambiguity. A convenience and snowball sample (*n*= 477) was recruited via social media networks and word-of-mouth. The survey asked that only individuals that were between 13 to 37 years of age at the time of recruitment, who had at least one previous experience shopping online for fast fashion products, and reside in Canada, participate. Setting the minimum age of participation at 13 years of age allowed for some of Generation Z to participate without parent or guardian consent. Requiring at least one previous experience shopping online for fast fashion ensured that participants have experienced the fast fashion purchase decision-making process, and the evaluative cues potentially involved.

Data collection took an oversampling approach, collecting as many survey responses possible since collected data is not always usable, with an ideal sample size of 230 participants per generational cohort for a total of 460 participants. This sample size would align with a similar research study (Rahman & Kharb, 2018). Only data from participants who fell within the sample criteria was used.

Data validity. The questions in the first section of the survey are designed to measure the importance and attitudes towards various online shopping cues in a clear manner (Appendix 3). Cues used were based on findings from existing studies, as outlined in the literature review and conceptual framework. Data collected in the second and third sections of the survey serve to enhance the researcher's understanding and analysis of data collected from the first section of the survey. Therefore, data collected achieves both content and criterion validity.

Data reliability and generalisability. The total number of participants for this study was 477 individuals, but after data cleaning and screening, 61 surveys were deleted, resulting in a usable data sample size of *n*= 416. Surveys from evidently unengaged respondents (low standard deviations amongst responses and impossibly short completion times), or did not complete the evaluative cues section were deleted. Some participants chose not to respond to shopping behaviour and demographic questions (*n*= 7). The data analysis of this study uses a margin of error of *E*= 0.05. Based on the approximate population size of Canadian Generation Y (N= 10.9 million) (Statistics Canada, 2019) and Generation Z (N= 13.6 million) (Statistics Canada, 2019), the data analysis therefore has a confidence level of 95 percent.

Data Analysis

Quantitative data collected from questionnaire surveys and experiments were analyzed using the IBM Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software. Spearman's rank-order correlation was used to identify significant correlations between ordinally rated apparel evaluative cues. One-sample *t*-tests were used to determine whether there were significant differences in means between generational responses. Multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was used to identify statistically significant relationships between apparel and online retailing cues, and consumer shopping behaviour. Tukey HSD, Scheffe, and Bonferroni post hoc tests were run on statistically significant relationships flagged by MANOVA. Finally, two-step cluster analysis was performed to group shopping behaviours together, and to outline group differences between cue valuation.

CHAPTER 5: FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

Survey Sample Demographics

Participants in the sample (*n*= 416) are between the ages 13 and 37; however, the distribution is slightly skewed towards the younger half (Fig. 3)—94 percent of participants are under the age of 27. As defined by Bolton et al. (2013), the Generation Y population is comprised of individuals born between 1981 to 1999. Therefore, the Generation Z population is comprised of individuals born beginning the year 2000 (Iorgulescu, 2016). Using these definitions, the sample size is therefore evenly divided between Generation Y and Z, with 50.6 and 49.4 percent respectively. The sample consists of 75.5 percent females, an imbalance in distribution Quigley and Notarantonio (2009) suggests is because of higher fashion engagement. However, fashion is observably a growing importance to males, reflected in the 21.2 percent portion of male participants. It is important to note that the remaining 1.9 percent of the sample identify as "other," such as non-binary, gender queer, or gender fluid. An additional 1.4 percent did not disclose their sex. Further, 72 percent of the sample resides in the province of Ontario near large urban areas.

The apparel and online retail cues reported as most important only vary slightly between generational cohorts during active evaluation of fast fashion apparel products. Participants reportedly use a combination of cues when making fast fashion purchase decisions online. When comparing both generations, larger variances are found between cues with reportedly lesser significance.

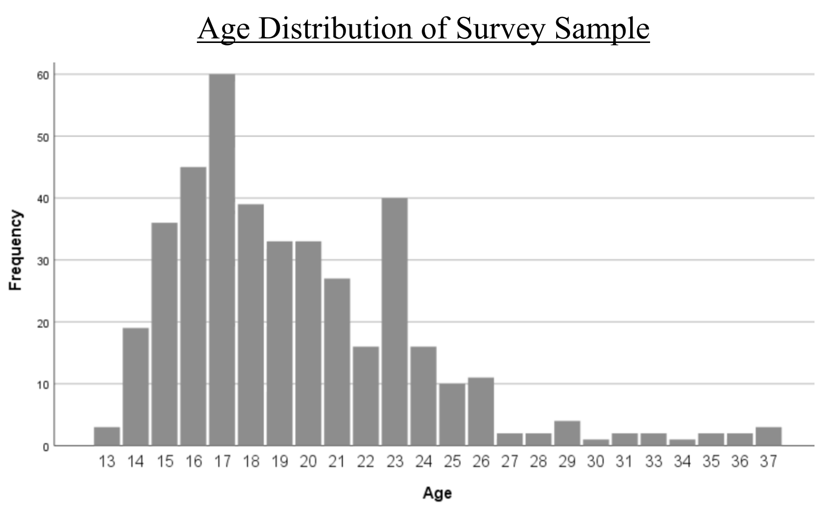

Figure 3. Age distribution of survey sample.

Online Apparel Cues

Brand

When shopping online for fast fashion apparel, the majority of both Generation Y and Z participants considered the brand of a garment as important during their product evaluation (Table 1). Consumer evaluations of other cues will be influenced by the brands they select, based on the "brand effect" (Gabrielli et al., 2013), even though other apparel cues may be considered to be more important.

There is no statistically significant difference between the mean responses of both generational cohorts. Though both generational cohorts have similar response means (Table 1), there is a different distribution of responses. While the majority of Generation Z respondents value apparel branding (more than 50 percent), only approximately 12 percent of those respondents perceive this apparel cue as very important (Table 2), which indicates that they may be slightly less brand conscious when shopping for fast fashion online compared to Generation Y. The "neutral," "important," and "very important" responses from Generation Y have a relatively normal distribution, with approximately 45 percent (the majority) indicating branding as important, and almost 22 percent indicating branding as neutral or very important (Table 2). This finding suggests that the brand of fast fashion apparel will not only frame the perceptions and therefore evaluation of other apparel cues (Gabrielli et al., 2013), but may be a pivotal decision-making factor for many Generation Y consumers.

Generation Y consumers are driven by two primary motivations: finding self-identification (Loroz & Helgeson, 2013; Valaei & Nikhashemi, 2017), and the idea of freedom (Noble et al., 2009). Both of these motivations can be divided into various sub-motivations, including blending in or out of certain social groups, the practice (or lack of) fashion knowledge, seeking value, interacting with and finding comfort in brands (Noble et al., 2009). Generation Y consumers find comfort in brand identities (Noble et al., 2009; Loroz & Helgeson, 2013; Valaei & Nikhashemi, 2017). They tend to consume brands that have similar or idealistic personalities—brands are used as a signalling device for purchase (Loroz & Helgeson, 2013), which somewhat aligns with findings from this study.

Table 1.

The significance of apparel evaluative cues. *

Evaluative Cue	Generation Y (*n*= 207)					Generation Z (*n*= 202)				
	n	$\bar{x}$	***s***	**M**	**Mode**	***n***	$\bar{x}$	***s***	**M**	**Mode**
Brand	416	3.74	0.990	4	4	416	3.72	0.782	4	4
Price	416	4.48	0.723	5	5	416	4.40	0.735	5	5
Style	416	4.56	0.714	5	5	416	4.51	0.656	5	5
Trendy "Look"/Image	416	3.64	0.949	4	4	416	3.58	0.922	4	4
Colour	416	3.98	0.859	4	4	416	3.76	0.836	4	4
Fit	416	4.51	0.730	5	5	416	4.43	0.731	5	5
Country of Origin	416	2.68	1.068	3	2	416	2.56	1.021	3	2 & 3
Comfort	416	4.09	0.786	4	4	416	4.02	0.733	4	4
Durability	416	3.87	0.821	4	4	416	3.76	0.820	4	4
Ease of Care	416	3.54	1.027	4	4	416	3.45	1.022	4	4
Fabric	416	3.46	1.023	4	4	416	3.09	0.960	3	3
Quality of Workmanship	416	3.86	0.884	4	4	416	3.76	0.917	4	4
Wardrobe Coordination	416	4.03	0.997	4	4	416	3.79	1.146	4	4
Sustainability	416	3.18	1.034	3	3	416	3.25	1.016	3	3
Brand	416	3.14	1.010	3	3	416	3.19	0.945	3	3
Workplace	416	3.30	1.008	3	3	416	3.36	0.974	3	4
Materials Used	416	3.23	0.971	3	3	416	3.28	0.970	3	4
Environmental Impact	416	3.33	1.024	3	4	416	3.44	1.046	4	4
"Look"/Image	416	2.40	0.975	2	3	416	2.63	0.990	3	3
Recycling Services	416	3.21	1.049	3	3	416	3.33	1.024	3	3

*(1= very unimportant to 5= very important)

Table 2.

Frequency comparison between Generation Y and Z on brand.

Rating	Generation Y		Generation Z	
	n	**%**	***n***	**%**
Very Unimportant	6	2.9	2	1.0
Unimportant	18	8.7	11	5.4
Neutral	45	21.7	53	26.2
Important	93	44.9	112	55.4
Very Important	45	21.7	24	11.9
Total (*n*)	207		202	

Data collected does not explore the driving motivations of Generation Z but reports that branding, and consequently a brand's identity, may influence their behaviour. Consumers who find commonalities and similarities between themselves and the products have increased purchase intentions (Valaei & Nikhashemi, 2017). Generation Z respondents reportedly frequent retailers that fall within similar brand identities; this is consistent with Generation Y findings from Loroz and Helgeson (2013). Those that reported shopping at Fashion Nova, also reported shopping at Sirens and Pretty Little Thing (Table 12), all of which have observably similar brand identities, product styles, and product presentation. Data collected from Generation Y respondents reflect the same findings, which is also consistent with the work of Loroz and Helgeson (2013).

Various brands target different age and consumer groups which is reflected in the data collected. A high percentage of Generation Z consumers reportedly shop at Forever 21, a retailer whose name indicates a younger brand identity. In contrast, a higher percentage of Generation Y consumers reportedly shop at Zara and ASOS, retailers that observably market towards a comparatively older demographic. Some researchers argue that the primary reason for brand consumption is for a desired social image, profile, and product quality while maintaining low retailer loyalty (Parment, 2013). However, within the online fast fashion industry, this data shows that Generation Y and Z consumers tend to have high retailer loyalty—almost all respondents from both generations reportedly browse and purchase from the same few (between one and four) retailers. This finding may be in part due to past experiences; hence an understanding of a brand's apparel fit, comfort, typical fabrics used, quality of workmanship, general style, and the connection formed between consumer and brand identity, as Gabrielli et al. (2013) and Su (2016) suggest. Selecting familiar brands reduces risk, especially since shopping online limits the ability to examine physical attributes of apparel products (Parment, 2013).

Price

One of the primary value propositions of fast fashion is its trendy styles sold at low costs (Fulton & Lee, 2010). For both generations, the modes indicate that most of these participants consider the price of a garment as a very important factor when making online purchase decisions for fast fashion (Table 1)—the data collected reflects the importance of this proposition. Data collected from both generational cohorts are similarly distributed, suggesting that price is of equal significance between the groups.

Consistent with Tjandra et al. (2015), Generation Y demands competitive pricing, often comparing and weighing the values of a product between the advertised price, and products offered by different competitors. Based on a study by Boulay et al. (2014), the older end of the Generation Z spectrum is price sensitive and aware of online and offline market prices. Further, data collected exhibits a statistically significant relationship between the perceived value of price as an apparel evaluative cue, and dollars spent ($r_S = 0.133$, $df = 410$, $p = 0.007$). Consumers from both generations who indicated spending more money shopping online for fast fashion, place great importance on the price of a garment, spending an average of $50 to $99 per order.

It is important to note that a higher percentage of Generation Y shoppers spend over $100 per order yet spend a lower percentage of their overall income compared to their younger counterparts. Their average employment status —many still full-time students, some with part-time jobs—potentially indicates an overall higher income and therefore increased discretionary income. Parment (2013) suggests that appealing to consumers requires a brand provide strong value for a product's price. "Value" is not limited to quality, but also extends to include style (Parment, 2013), relating to social norms.

Style

Many Generation Y shoppers consistently demand the latest trends, attributing to the popularity of fast fashion amongst these consumers (Yarrow & O'Donnell, 2009). Trends can consist of varying styles, colours, and styling combinations. Based on data collected, style is reportedly very important for the majority of Generation Y and Z cohorts (Table 1), and responses are similarly distributed. This finding is consistent with existing research on the value of style (Parment, 2013; Loroz & Helgeson, 2013; Parker et al., 2014). However, both generations place less value on a garment's trendy "look" or image (Table 1). Though the mean and mode ratings are equivalent, it is important to note that over 30 percent of the sample population are disinterested in this apparel cue. There is only a weak correlation between style and the desire for staying up to date on trends ($r_S = 0.225$, $df = 414$, $p < 0.001$), which suggests that the majority of both generational cohorts place more value on their social group or personal style preferences compared to general trends in the marketplace when evaluating fast fashion apparel online. However, style preferences can be influenced by members within social groups and by discourse found in media—styles, colours, and silhouettes considered as flattering or desirable can be changed.

While style and apparel pricing are commonly paired together within the fast fashion value proposition, their salience amongst Generation Y and Z respondents are weakly correlated (r_S= 0.103, *df* = 414, $p < 0.001$). Therefore, although price and style are very important to most Generation Y and Z consumers (Table 1), either cue may be more salient when evaluating fast fashion apparel online. Cue salience will depend on the individual's evaluation of price and style, and the salience of other apparel, online retailing, and promotional and advertising cues. Consumers may also form evaluations of pleasure, social, psychological and sensorial benefits with a product's physical or functional cues (Rahman, 2012), which can relate to apparel style.

Colour

Building on findings by Rahman (2012), colour is commonly used by consumers when evaluating jeans, but is also salient during online fast fashion shopping. Majority of both Generation Y and Z respondents place importance on the colours of garments when shopping online for fast fashion apparel (Table 1). However, there is a statistically significant difference in means between the generations (t= 2.08, *df*= 201, $p < 0.039$). Upon examining response distribution, colour as an apparel cue is, on average, of lesser importance to Generation Z compared to their older counterparts (Table 3). This finding suggests that the average Generation Z consumer is less sensitive to the variety and availability of apparel colour compared to their older counterparts when evaluating a fast fashion garment online.

Table 3.

Frequency comparison between Generation Y and Z on colour.

	Generation Y		**Generation Z**	
Rating	***n***	**%**	***n***	**%**
Very Unimportant	2	1.0	2	1.0
Unimportant	6	2.9	11	5.4
Neutral	48	23.2	55	27.2
Important	89	43.0	99	49.0
Very Important	62	30.0	35	17.3
Total (*n*)	207		202	

When examining the relationship between ratings from both generations, there is only a weak correlation between colour and style (r_S= 0.187, *df* = 414, $p < 0.001$). Based on the mean and mode of both evaluative apparel cues, style remains more important for both generations.

The lack of a statistically significant correlation between colour and garment trendiness further suggests that neither cohort places great importance on trendy colours during the decision-making process. There is also no statistically significant correlation with the eco-friendliness and the impact of production waste, and colour. This finding suggests that these consumers are unaware of the impact different colour dyes can have on the environment, or that this fact does not play a significant role in their evaluation process.

Fit and Comfort

The perceived fit of fast fashion garments is very important for both Generation Y and Z (Table 1). Perceived comfort of a garment, although important to the majority of both cohorts, is of lesser importance compared to perceived fit (Table 1). It should be noted that there is a slightly higher percentage (approximately 8 percent) of Generation Y consumers who place more importance in apparel comfort, which suggests that some consumers from the older cohort will place great importance on perceived comfort when evaluating a garment online. This may be due to greater shopping knowledge and past experience compared to their younger cohorts.

There is a weak correlation between fit and comfort apparel cues (r_S= 0.226, df = 414, $p < 0.001$), and a weak correlation between fit and style (r_S= 0.180, df = 414, $p < 0.001$) found within the data sample. The data shows that most respondents value style regardless of the perceived fit or comfort of a garment. Both of these correlations suggest that Generation Y and Z consumers value their perceptions of a garment's aesthetic fit over its functional fit. Since a slightly greater percentage of Generation Y value fit and comfort (with equal weight) when evaluating a garment online compared to their younger cohort, this suggests that some of these consumers also place value on the functional fit of a garment.

Fabric

Data collected shows that over 50 percent of Generation Y value the types of materials used to compose a garment's fabric. Conversely, the majority of Generation Z respondents (almost 70 percent) are indifferent or disinterested in materials used to construct a garment (Table 4). This is reflected in a statistically significant difference in means (t= -5.42, df= 201, $p < 0.001$). However, there is a moderate-strong correlation between fabric and quality of workmanship from both Generation Y and Z, (r_S= 0.395, df = 414, $p < 0.001$) and (r_S= 0.474, df = 414, $p < 0.001$) respectively. This result aligns with the association between quality of clothing and fabrics used, as Rahman (2012) suggests. There is also a moderate correlation between fabric and durability from both Generation Y and Z, (r_S= 0.310, df = 414, $p < 0.001$) and (r_S= 0.397, df = 414, $p < 0.001$) respectively. Based on these findings and the overall means of these cues, some consumers who value quality of workmanship and durability may use fabric (and comprising materials) to support the former cues, while simultaneously considering other cues such as price and brand when evaluating fast fashion apparel online.

Table 4.

Frequency comparison between Generation Y and Z on fabric.

	Generation Y		Generation Z	
Rating	***n***	**%**	***n***	**%**
Very Unimportant	9	4.3	7	3.5
Unimportant	25	12.1	46	22.8
Neutral	65	31.4	87	43.1
Important	78	37.7	45	22.4
Very Important	30	14.5	17	8.4
Total (*n*)	207		202	

Ease of care

The majority of Generation Y and Z reportedly consider the ease of garment care as important (Table 1). However, more than 45 percent of both generational cohorts are indifferent or disinterested towards this apparel cue. Within the context of fast fashion, ease of care relates to the unessential laundering and storage requirements due to the disposable nature of its garments, in which most fast fashion garments fulfill. Both generational cohorts consequently place more importance on other apparel cues.

Durability and Quality of Workmanship

Perceived durability of a garment is reportedly an important cue when evaluating online fast fashion for both Generation Y and Z (Table 1). It is unlikely that respondents consider emotional or potential durability during purchase evaluation because of the (disposable) nature of the garment and the stage within their consumer decision journey (Fig. 1). Only approximately 30 percent of each generation is indifferent or disinterested in durability. Therefore, unlike the fast fashion business model that promotes limited uses before disposal, this data suggests that most fast fashion Generation Y and Z consumers value durability. This study, however, does not explore the length of time and number of wears these consumers desire from fast fashion products, in relation to price paid.

A majority of both sampled generations consider quality of workmanship to be important, with over 20 percent placing great importance on this cue. Both generations have similarly distributed responses. The physical durability of a garment is typically dependent on the quality of workmanship and materials used (fabric) (Fletcher, 2012)—this understanding is reflected in the moderate-strong correlation with both cues, (r_S= 0.450, df = 414, $p < 0.001$) and (r_S= 0.423, df = 414, $p < 0.001$) respectively.

Data shows that Generation Y and Z, the driving consumers behind fast fashion, value durability and quality of workmanship, yet remain price sensitive. Therefore, there is a discrepancy between Generation Y and Z consumption values (Table 1), and the fast fashion business model which offers consumers with garments of lower quality of workmanship and durability produced at a fraction of the time and cost (Cachon & Swinney, 2011; Fulton & Lee, 2010). Researchers suggest that fast fashion consumers willingly trade quality and durability for lower prices and new styles (Bhardwaj & Fairhurst, 2010; Cline, 2013), likely due to high price sensitivity. Despite this, data collected from this sample suggest that Generation Y and Z are shifting their values towards a more balanced value system. Emotional durability forged between garments and consumers may also be a factor influencing this shift, thus the value and desire for increased physical durability. However, the elasticity of price as an apparel cue is unclear since Generation Y and Z consumers concurrently weigh the importance of durability and quality of workmanship along with price. Based on data collected, both generational cohorts still generally value price over quality of workmanship.

Country of Origin

Canada is a developed economy with high humanitarian and ethical standards.
A product's country of origin may be used as a cue by Generation Y to judge the quality, price, and ethical stance of an apparel product (Tjandra et al., 2013). Existing research suggests that Generation Y consumers prefer products produced domestically, and often associate lower production quality and ethical issues with emerging economies (Tjandra et al., 2013), the country of production of most fast fashion garments. Within the fast fashion marketplace, the majority of Canadian Generation Y and Z respondents are reportedly indifferent or disinterested in a product's country of origin, reflected in the lower means compared to other cues (Table 1). Further, there is only a moderate correlation with quality of workmanship as a cue (r_S= 0.314, df

= 414, $p < 0.001$). These findings indicate that many consumers from both cohorts place little value in a garment's country of origin, regardless of how they value quality of workmanship. Both generational cohorts only moderately associate quality with where a fast fashion garment is made.

Findings are consistent with Tjandra et al. (2015), confirming that a garment's country of origin is not a primary consideration for Generation Y and Z consumers, placing more salience on branding. Brands can help protect unfavourable associations with a garment's country of origin (Ar & Kara, 2012), and potentially unsafe or environmentally unfriendly workplaces in the fast fashion supply chain. Since fast fashion is typically connected to low-cost labour in countries such as India, Bangladesh, and China (Allwood et al., 2006; Tokatli, 2008; Triemstra-Johnston, 2013), this is significant. It is also important to note that the (approximate) 17 percent of respondents who rated a garment's country of origin as important or very important, also value safe and eco-friendly workplaces when evaluating fast fashion apparel online (Table 5). Although not a significant number of respondents, they represent the growing population of conscious consumers (Ulasewicz, 2008; Dach & Allmendinger, 2014).

Table 5.

Cross-comparison between rating distributions for country of origin, and safe or eco-friendly workplaces.

		Safe or Eco-Friendly Workplace					
		Very Unimportant	Unimportant	Neutral	Important	Very Important	**Total (*n*)**
Country of Origin	Very Unimportant	11	18	21	10	1	61
	Unimportant	0	35	60	34	5	134
	Neutral	2	11	47	57	16	133
	Important	1	3	12	39	17	72
	Very Important	1	0	2	6	7	16
Total (*n*)		15	67	142	146	46	416

Large brands, such as Zara, have skillfully shifted consumer focus away from product country of production—this apparel cue is often presented alongside campaigns such as "Join Life," part of which supports community development and social welfare (Zara, 2019). Development projects such as this not only work to improve and enrich communities, but also help build a strong ethical and inclusive brand image. In this sense, brands can help manage their products' country of origin image. Components of country of origin, including origin of technology and design, are not currently relevant to the fast fashion industry because of the lack of salient consumer-facing technology, and the shared designs amongst competitors.

Wardrobe Coordination

Based on the data collected, both Generation Y and Z, with similar distribution in ratings, value wardrobe coordination when evaluating a new garment for purchase (Table 1). However, there is a weak-moderate correlation with style as an apparel cue ($r_S = 0.248$, $df = 414$, $p < 0.001$)—most of the respondents value style more than wardrobe coordination. These findings, in part, align with the work of Gabrielli et al. (2013) who suggest that wardrobe coordination is important but not imperative. Fast fashion allows consumers to buy unusual styles outside of their typical aesthetic because of the low price tags. Although the rating medians and modes of both generations are equivalent, more Generation Y respondents value wardrobe coordination than their younger counterparts; the results of a *t*-test indicates a statistically significant difference in means ($t = 3.52$, $df = 206$, $p = 0.001$). This finding suggests that Generation Y consumers are slightly less likely to try styles or colours outside of their preference or aesthetic (since style is very important to them) when evaluating fast fashion garments online. This finding is further supported by Generation Y's higher sensitivity towards garment colours compared to their younger counterparts (Table 1).

Sustainability

Over 40 percent of respondents from both generations reported feeling indifferent towards overall garment sustainability when shopping online for fast fashion (Table 1). The fast fashion business model itself is currently neither environmentally nor ethically sustainable. It is reasonable to suggest that if consumers are passionate about sustainable consumption, they may not be interested in consuming fast fashion. However, the major fast fashion retailers, such as H&M, are striving towards ethical and environmentally sustainable supply chains (H&M, 2019), and conscious consumers who enjoy the concept of fast fashion may still have options for consumption.

Ritch (2015) suggests that sustainable shopping is often coupled with uncertainty and heuristics. Approximately 35 percent of Generation Y and Z respondents reported valuing sustainability as an apparel cue when evaluating products. This finding represents the increasing awareness towards cues such as raw material sourcing, ethical and eco-friendly production processes like Allwood et al. (2006) suggest. However, consumers are still relatively under-educated about sustainable initiatives, including the potential benefits of garment recycling programs. These sustainability cues can be considered as sustainability heuristics observably commonly available to consumers.

Environmentally friendly "style" or "look." The majority of both generations are neutral towards a garment's overall eco-friendly "style" or "look," reflected in the response modes (Table 1). However, the median for Generation Y responses indicates that there is little regard for this cue, also reflected in a statistically significant difference in means (t= -3.38, df= 206, p= 0.001) compared to Generation Z. This means that a higher number of respondents from the younger cohort are interested in this cue. Therefore, it is more likely for a Generation Z consumer to consider the eco-friendly "style" or "look" of a garment when evaluating it for purchase.

There is a moderate correlation with sustainability as an apparel cue (r_S= 0.395, df = 414, p < 0.001). The majority of respondents who indicate importance in sustainability as a cue do not place the same importance on the eco-friendly "style" or "look" of a garment (Table 6). This finding indicates that the driving factor for most conscious consumers from both generations does not include a garment's eco-friendly "look." There is also no statistically significant correlation between style or wardrobe coordination, and a garment's eco-friendly look. This finding suggests that consumers who value style and wardrobe coordination do not place the same value in a garment's eco-friendly "look."

Table 6.

Cross-comparison between rating distributions for sustainability, and eco-friendly "look" or "style."

		Eco-Friendly "Look" or "Style"					
		Very Unimportant	Unimportant	Neutral	Important	Very Important	**Total (*n*)**
Sustainability	Very Unimportant	12	7	2	0	0	21
	Unimportant	19	34	15	3	0	71
	Neutral	20	66	71	13	2	172
	Important	10	23	47	18	4	102
	Very Important	5	8	19	11	7	50
Total (*n*)		66	138	154	45	13	416

Sustainable brand. Data collected shows that the majority of both generations are indifferent towards a brand which presents itself as sustainable (or eco-friendly), with similar response distributions. There is a moderate correlation with an eco-friendly "look" as a cue, and a sustainable brand ($r_S = 0.394$, $df = 414$, $p < 0.001$). Respondents reportedly care more about the sustainability of a brand than the eco-friendly "look" of its products—this implies that conscious consumers tend to trust a brand's name and its associations. However, the majority of both generational cohorts do not use the sustainability of a brand as a key decision-making factor when shopping online for fast fashion.

Sustainable or environmentally friendly materials. When shopping online for fast fashion apparel, the majority of Generation Y respondents are indifferent towards sustainable or eco-friendly materials used, reflected in the response mode, and supported by the response mean and median (Table 1). Respondents who do place value in this cue also tend to think materials used within the fabric of a garment are important, reflected in a moderate correlation between the two cues ($r_S = 0.305$, $df = 414$, $p < 0.001$). There is some evidence to suggest that this portion of Generation Y consumers care about garment sustainability, or have strong material and fabric preferences with conscious consumption intentions.

The majority of Generation Z respondents consider the use of sustainable or eco-friendly materials as important when evaluating fast fashion garments, reflected in the response mode (Table 1). However, approximately 30 percent of the cohort sample are indifferent. A moderate correlation between this cue and materials used in the fabric of a garment ($r_S = 0.357$, $df = 414$, $p < 0.001$) indicate that there is a relationship between the two cues. The majority of respondents who perceive sustainable or eco-friendly materials to be important in their evaluation are indifferent about materials used in the fabric of the garment, while many others value both cues equally (Table 7). This suggests that the majority of Generation Z consumers who value sustainable or eco-friendly materials want to be conscious consumers and are flexible in regard to fabric composition. However, it is important to note that the data collected does not exhibit actions that support conscious consumerism, rather, only reflects conscious consumerism intentions, a discrepancy multiple researchers (Hill & Lee, 2015; McNeil & Moore, 2015) call attention to.

Conscious consumers tend to look for indicators such as tags or labels when searching for sustainable products (Fuentes & Fredrikson, 2016). In the context of online fast fashion shopping, this would involve product information on retail websites. However, based on the data collected, there is only a weak correlation between sustainable or eco-friendly materials and product information ($r_S = 0.180$, $df = 414$, $p < 0.001$). This is because product information is important to most consumers from both generations, regardless of their attitudes towards sustainable materials (Table 1).

Table 7.

Cross-comparison between rating distributions for sustainable or eco-friendly materials, and fabric.

		Fabric					
		Very Unimportant	Unimportant	Neutral	Important	Very Important	**Total (*n*)**
Eco-Friendly Materials	Very Unimportant	3	1	1	1	0	6
	Unimportant	0	16	16	7	0	39
	Neutral	3	16	35	9	3	66
	Important	1	10	32	23	8	74
	Very Important	0	3	3	5	6	17
Total (*n*)		7	46	87	45	17	202

There is also a weak correlation between sustainable or eco-friendly materials as an apparel cue, and recycling programs or services available ($r_S = 0.192$, $df = 414$, $p < 0.001$). Many consumers from both generational cohorts who reportedly value sustainable or eco-friendly materials are indifferent towards the availability of recycling services. This may indicate a gap in awareness for the disposal or re-use of garments; however, further research is required.

Recycling services. Based on the data collected, both generations are neutral towards the availability of recycling services, reflected in the equivalent response modes, medians, and similar means (Table 1). There is a strong correlation between the availability of these services and sustainable or eco-friendly materials used, in addition to a garment's environmental footprint, ($r_S = 0.538$, $df = 414$, $p < 0.001$) and ($r_S = 0.563$, $df = 414$, $p < 0.001$) respectively. These findings suggest that most Generation Y and Z consumers who value sustainable materials used in a garment and its environmental footprint also value the availability of recycling services when evaluating apparel online.

Ethical or environmentally-friendly workplace. Reflected in the mode, most Generation Y respondents are indifferent about garments made in ethical or eco-friendly workplaces, whereas most of Generation Z respondents reportedly value this cue when evaluating apparel online (Table 1). However, the percentage of respondents who are either neutral or value this cue from both generations are similar (Table 8). These findings indicate that the majority of both generational cohorts are generally conscious of this cue, and salience may depend on branding and the value placed on other cues, such as price. There is a very strong correlation between valuing garments made in ethical or eco-friendly workplaces, and sustainable brands ($r_S = 0.806$, $df = 414$, $p < 0.001$). Consumers who value the former cue, also tend to value the latter.

Between a garment's country of origin and the ethical or eco-friendliness of a garment production workplace, there is a moderate correlation ($r_S = 0.474$, $df = 414$, $p < 0.001$). This finding is consistent with the work of Tjandra et al. (2013)—consumers who value the condition of production workplaces may also take country of origin into consideration.

Table 8.

Frequency comparison between Generation Y and Z on ethical or eco-friendly workplace as an apparel cue.

	Generation Y		**Generation Z**	
Rating	***n***	**%**	***n***	**%**
Very Unimportant	10	4.8	5	2.5
Unimportant	30	14.5	36	17.8
Neutral	78	37.7	63	31.2
Important	66	31.9	77	38.1
Very Important	23	11.1	21	10.4
Total (*n*)	207		202	

Environmental impact. Respondents from both Generation Y and Z report that apparel made with less waste and impact on the environment is important, reflected in the median and mode of their ratings (Table 1). However, it is important to note that almost 30 percent of each generation remains indifferent towards this cue. There is a strong correlation between a garment's environmental impact and sustainability as a cue (r_S= 0.619, *df* = 414, $p < 0.001$), and a very strong correlation with the use of eco-friendly materials (r_S= 0.825, *df* = 414, $p < 0.001$). Respondents from both generations who value garments made from eco-friendly materials and have little environmental impact also value overall sustainability. However, many respondents who are indifferent towards sustainability still indicated the importance of a garment's environmental impact when evaluating fast fashion apparel online. These findings suggest that consumers value knowing specific heuristics that identify products as sustainable, consistent with the work of Ritch (2015). Such heuristics can include the use of eco-friendly materials and impact, rather than an overarching label of "sustainability."

This data analysis offers a general insight regarding the value placed on various apparel cues by both Generation Y and Z consumers shopping for online fast fashion. It also serves as a guideline to examine retailers' own sales and performance data.

Retailer Recommendations

Based on the data collected in this study, retailers should continue to compete for superior pricing, apparel fit, and styles because both generational cohorts rated these cues the highest. This may consist of competitive pricing strategies to indicate various levels of value (highlighting important cues such as quality or comfort). Offering close up images of fabrics and how they fit against the body will help retailers communicate and enhance a garment's apparel fit. Providing different sizing charts and garment measurements for specific types of garments that involve different body measurements (such as shoulder-less tops and deep V-necks) will reduce consumers' uncertainty during their decision-making process. Retailers should continue to recommend (and push) new product styles similar to consumers' browsing and searching data to leverage the value Generation Y and Z consumers place in style as an apparel cue.

Additional apparel cues retailers can selectively continue to compete for superiority include product trendiness, colour, comfort, durability, fabric, quality of workmanship, wardrobe coordination, a garment's ease of care, and branding. Depending on a retailer's positioning within the fast fashion marketplace and target demographic, retailers can strategically choose to place focus on specific cues, using the values Generation Y and Z place on various apparel cues as a reference. For example, if a product (such as a sweatshirt) is of visually lower quality compared to similar products offered by competitors in the marketplace, the retailer may choose to use product images and information to emphasize superior comfort and potential wardrobe coordination.

When targeting Generation Y consumers, many of which place value in wardrobe coordination, online retailers should leverage individual customer accounts (or forms of identification) and browsing data collected to display and recommend products that fit within each consumer's style and aesthetic preferences on their websites. This tactic will act as a form of wardrobe curation. It will minimize the consumers' need to browse retail competitors, ultimately streamlining their decision-making process and encouraging sales.

Indicating the safety or eco-friendliness of the production facility and process, the sustainability of materials used to construct a garment, and the overall environmental impact of each garment online will help streamline decision-making for some Generation Z consumers. This tactic will aid consumers who value the aforementioned cues reduce decision-making uncertainty and leverage common consumer heuristics used during conscious consumption. It will also work to support the social movement towards conscious consumerism.

Online Retailing and Promotional Cues

Website Design

Website "style" or "look." Both Generation Y and Z consider the "style" or "look" of a website, connected to atmospherics and experiential factors, as an important factor when making a purchase decision online (Table 9), consistent with the work of Prashar et al. (2017). These factors can influence purchase behaviour (Ha & Stoel, 2012). Based on the data collected, there is no significant difference in means between both generational cohorts.

Table 9.

*The significance of online retailing cues. **

Evaluative Cue	Generation Y (*n*= 207)					Generation Z (*n*= 202)				
	n	$\bar{x}$	*s*	M	Mode	*n*	$\bar{x}$	*s*	M	Mode
Product Recommendations	416	3.42	1.075	4	4	416	3.46	1.003	4	4
Product Information	416	4.02	0.794	4	4	416	3.97	0.863	4	4
Product Images	416	4.48	0.696	5	5	416	4.50	0.648	5	5
Product In-Use	416	4.05	0.893	4	4	416	4.02	0.917	4	4
Product Reviews	416	4.25	0.867	4	5	416	4.21	0.832	4	4
Website Filters	416	4.23	0.968	5	5	416	4.28	0.888	4	5
# of Product Choices	416	3.75	1.001	4	4	416	3.88	0.917	4	4
Website Style	416	3.83	0.908	4	4	416	3.80	0.883	4	4

*(1= very unimportant to 5= very important)

Website filters. Participants were also asked to rank the importance of website filters; a website interface feature commonly used by online retail websites. Website filters allow consumers to customize information and products relevant to their preferences when shopping online (Fiore et al., 2005; Wu, 2014). The majority of both generational cohorts consider website filters as very important when evaluating the generally large selections of fast fashion apparel online (Table 9), both with similar response distributions. The majority of both Generation Y and Z respondents who place value in the number of product choices available, also tend to value website filters (Table 10). These findings support the findings by Kahn (2017)—website filters need to be available to help consumers assess what is available and relevant.

Table 10.

Cross-comparison between rating distributions for website filters and the number of product choices available.

		Number of Product Choices					
		Very Unimportant	Unimportant	Neutral	Important	Very Important	**Total (*n*)**
Website Filters	Very Unimportant	1	0	4	2	1	8
	Unimportant	3	6	0	3	1	13
	Neutral	0	8	20	20	5	53
	Important	0	11	35	71	16	133
	Very Important	1	12	38	70	88	209
Total (*n*)		5	37	97	166	111	416

Product Assortments and Shopping Metaphors

It is important to both generations that online retailers offer a high number of product choices (Table 9), complimenting the findings of Kahn (2017). Since fast fashion retailers frequently refresh products and styles offered, this satisfies desires for newness; the responses collected from this sample aligns with the target fast fashion consumer. Data collected shows that more than 50 percent of Generation Y and Z respondents shop over three times per week. This self-reported shopping behaviour indicates their desire for a constant abundance of new apparel products. Generation Y consumers enjoy browsing for new product offerings (Parment, 2013), which the data reflects. Generation Z seems to follow the same behaviour, based on the responses collected, which aligns with the study by Boulay et al. (2014)—these consumers are sensitive to product variety and availability. However, the number of product choices plays a lesser role compared to other evaluative cues during the overall product evaluation process of both consumer cohorts when shopping online for fast fashion.

Merchandising Methods

Product information, images and interactivity. Both generational cohorts place importance on product information available on retailer websites (Table 9), with similarly distributed responses. This cue is related to many other apparel cues because it represents a textual form of apparel cue information. There is a moderate-strong correlation between product information and product images ($r_S = 0.452$, $df = 414$, $p < 0.001$) indicating a statistically significant relationship between the two cues. While textual representations of cues are important, product images allow consumers to examine a garment visually—both generations consider product images to be very important (Table 9). Product images and visual representations, therefore, act as an evaluation tool simulating offline shopping and reducing online shopping risk. Product images can also convey information about apparel cues. For example, product images, human models and their poses, product styling, and overall presentation of products can represent brand identity.

Majority of Generation Z respondents reportedly place more value on product images—visual information provides a direct opportunity for individual discernment— even from respondents who are indifferent towards product information. Although an internet generation, this may be due to their distrust in online stores that can be mitigated when purchasing offline—avoiding potential processing errors and misguided information (Boulay et al., 2014). Generation Y reported similar behaviour based on the data collected. In response to this distrust, fast fashion retailer websites are observably increasingly including high-resolution close-up images of fabrics used to compose each garment (that can be further enlarged), which is a very important cue to both generations (Table 9). This form of interactivity provides consumers with increased confidence in their understanding of the product when evaluating a garment online.

Images and videos of products in-use. With a high degree of image-awareness (Parment, 2013; Parker et al., 2014; Loroz & Helgeson, 2013), many Generation Y consumers value and aim to fit within social norms (Valaei & Nikhashemi, 2017). This image awareness, in part, is fueled by images, videos, and discourse from online platforms and communities. The context within product images or videos, the brand it presents, and the model wearing the product, can represent the ideal or appropriate social groups a consumer may desire membership to. Although there is currently less research regarding the psychological motivations behind Generation Z consumers, existing research suggests Generation Z places great importance in the interaction and handling of products during evaluation, thereby impacting their perception of online shopping (Boulay et al., 2014). Media presenting garments in-use give these consumers a sense of physical interaction and greater confidence in online decision-making. The two generational cohorts reportedly behave similarly—both cohorts value images or videos of products put into use (Table 9).

The data collected also shows a moderate-strong correlation between media of products in-use and product images ($r_S = 0.462$, $df = 414$, $p < 0.001$), and a weak-moderate correlation with product information ($r_S = 0.241$, $df = 414$, $p < 0.001$). These findings suggest that both Generation Y and Z consumers place great value in the availability of product images and media of a product in-use, and use textual product information as support for their image discernment.

Product recommendations. Both generations value product recommendations when evaluating an online fast fashion purchase decision (Table 9), with similar response distributions. These recommendations can stem from retailers, WOM, or online influencers. Product recommendations can favourably affect shopping decision-making (Chen et al., 2019; Husnain et al., 2019). Based on the data collected, however, the level of importance a consumer places on product recommendations does not significantly affect the number of dollars or percentage of income spent per consumer, per order. This being said, there is insufficient data to support this finding because the majority of the sample studied values product recommendations, therefore skewing the results.

Product reviews. Similar to recommendations, product reviews can also impact consumer decision-making. Most Generation Y and Z respondents considered product reviews as important; this is reflected in the response medians (Table 9) from an almost equal number of respondents from both generational cohorts (Table 11). Upon further examination, Generation Z respondents place slightly less value in product reviews (Table 11), which suggests that although it may be important to include product reviews on a retail website, some of these consumers will consider cues with more salience when evaluating a garment online. However, it is safe to assume that both Generation Y and Z consumers place value in product reviews.

Table 11.

Frequency comparison between Generation Y and Z on product reviews.

Rating	Generation Y		Generation Z	
	n	**%**	***n***	**%**
Very Unimportant	3	1.4	1	0.5
Unimportant	6	2.9	9	4.5
Neutral	22	10.6	20	9.9
Important	81	39.1	89	44.1
Very Important	95	45.9	83	41.1
Total (*n*)	207		202	

There is a weak correlation between the salience of product reviews and product recommendations ($r_S = 0.167$, $df = 414$, $p < 0.001$). The sample shows that majority of respondents from both generations considered product reviews as valuable, regardless of how they valued product recommendations. This may be because consumers are trusting of fellow consumers (Funk, 2013). Therefore, positive reviews will favourably affect consumers' evaluations of a product and potentially the social media presence of a retailer.

Retailer Recommendations

Retailers should continue to improve product images provided on their online platforms particularly because this online retailing cue is very important to both Generation Y and Z, and arguably imperative to online fast fashion shopping. Most online retailers support simple image manipulation—image enlargement and toggling between product colours—as a form of interactivity. These forms of manipulation have been ingrained into the online shopping experience and are relatively common. As technology progresses and becomes more accessible and cost-effective, it may be feasible to apply 360 degrees images of products on-figure. Alternatively, all angles of products on-figure can be displayed in video. Both tactics will increase consumer interactivity and opportunity for product discernment, highlight apparel fit, and minimize online shopping uncertainty, therefore aiding consumer decision-making. Retailers can begin by incorporating these images or videos for product commodities (products that are continuously sold throughout the season) and track key performance indicators before assessing whether implementation to all products is strategic.

Website filters are rated as very important to both generations. Therefore, retailers should continue sorting products into functional categories (a form of website filtering), labelled by nature of use such as "wear to work," and style such as “luxe.” This tactic will not only leverage the value both generation cohorts place in website filters, but also increase product accessibility and help consumers conceptualize and visualize the products in-use. To improve the shopping experience for consumers who are either browsing or searching for products, and increase product accessibility and salience for interested shoppers, retailers should enhance website filters and search functions by displaying both relevant and similar (or related items) within search or filter parameters. This can be achieved by increasing the number of associated identification tags for each product. Related or similar items to each website filter can be presented to consumers, as demonstrated by retailers such as Zara and Forever 21 (Fig. 6 & 7).

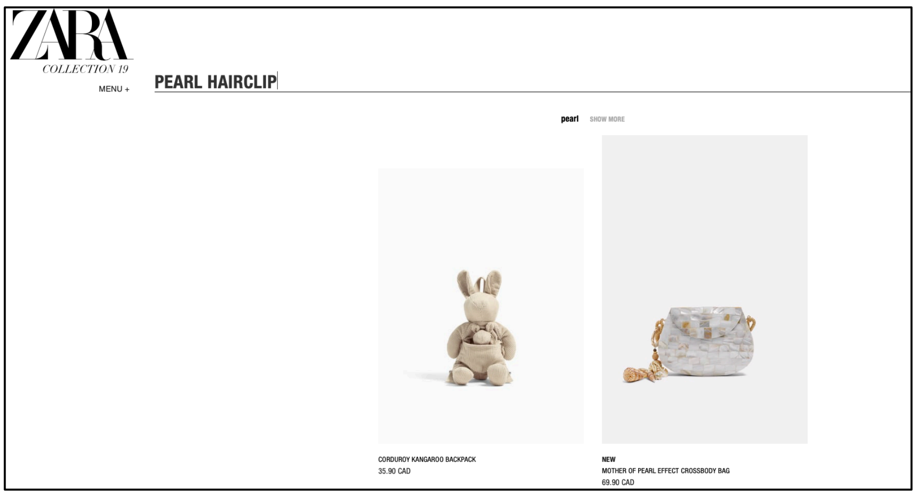

Figure 4. Related products recommended from search bar, 2019. *Zara.* Retrieved from https://www.zara.com/ca/

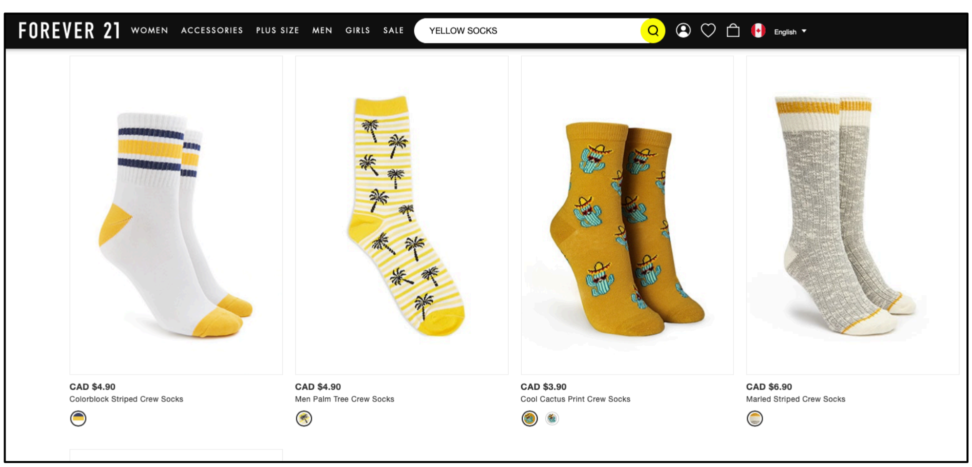

Figure 5. Related products recommended from search bar, 2019. *Forever 21.* Retrieved from https://www.forever21.com/ca/shop?lang=en-ca

Data collected from both generational cohorts indicate the importance of product discernment, but also the need for multiple sources to verify (or refute) information collected. Incorporating social media reviews and recommendations into online retail platforms will help consolidate product information and therefore give consumers more confidence in their purchase decisions. Leveraging retailer hosted accounts, collected user information, and tracked shopping behaviour, retailers can individually customize the order of relevant reviews for each customer, similar to what Wu (2014) suggests. For example, if a customer typically shops in the petite section, visually prominent reviews should be from fellow petite shoppers. This tactic will not only further customize consumers' shopping experiences, but also maximize the strength of product reviews and recommendations during online product evaluation. Continuing to encourage customer account registration will help better gain user information and track shopping behaviour. With this data, retailers can continue to improve individually customized recommendations using artificial intelligence (AI) software.

It is essential to group cues that Generation Y and Z consumers value together when presenting them online. Therefore, online retailers should use text and images on website platforms to not only emphasize key apparel cues such as price, style, and fit, but other cues that Generation Y and Z consumers also value, such as durability, comfort, and trendiness of a garment. Although the latter cues are not amongst the most significant attributes used by these generational cohorts, they are important and may be the pivotal cues that can favourably influence product evaluation.

Online Promotional and Advertising Cues

Although participants were not asked about online promotional and advertising cues, data collected from apparel and online retailing cues have been used to make preliminary findings and assumptions for the importance of online promotional and advertising cues.

Price Incentives and Advertisements

Since price is one of the most salient cues used by both Generation Y and Z consumers when evaluating fast fashion apparel online (Table 1), it is therefore reasonable to assume that both generational consumers value price incentives offered by retailers.

Based on the "mere exposure effect," consumers are more likely to develop favourable evaluations towards heavily advertised products because of their consistent exposure to product images, therefore gaining product familiarity (Zajonc, 1968; Bornstein, 1989). Generation Y and Z consumers place importance on product images (Table 9), and great importance on product price (Table 1), which suggests that online targeted behavioural advertisements featuring both elements will likely influence online fast fashion purchase decisions.

Social Media and Third-Party Sites

Advertisements within platforms. The great importance placed on price (Table 1) and product images (Table 9) from both generational cohorts suggests that this tactic, incorporating both cues, will likely offer potential benefits that can be explored and tracked. These benefits may include higher brand awareness and propensity to purchase products advertised.

Sponsored content. Generation Y and Z place great value on product reviews, product images, and consider available product information, product recommendations (Table 9), and product brand names (Table 1); this suggests that sponsored content can potentially create favourable evaluations toward retail products and brands. This demonstrates the value and trust found between consumers' experiences, and aligns with the work of Puwalski (2010), Funk (2013), and McNeil and Moore (2015).

Customer engagement. With the importance consumers place on fitting into groups and communities (Cova et al., 2007), the data collected suggests that this finding is very relevant to the fast fashion industry. Specific groups and communities tend to shop from similar retailers and brands, aligning with consumers' sense of self as Fournier (1998) suggests.

Sirens targets consumers who identify or strive to be fashion forward "it girls" that look trendy every day (YM Inc., 2019). Based on the data collected, respondents who reportedly shop at Sirens also shop at Fashion Nova, Pretty Little Thing, Boohoo, and Dolls Kill (Table 12)—retailers that observably target the same or similar demographic with similar branding and products. Images, comments, reviews, and recommendations from fellow consumers within the same groups and communities are therefore likely to create favourable evaluations towards retail products and brands, leveraging the importance Generation Y and Z place in these cues.

Table 12.

Sirens consumers and patronage of similar retailers.

Retailer	*n*	%
Sirens	35	100
Fashion Nova	16	45.7
Pretty Little Thing	8	22.9
Boohoo	1	2.9
Dolls Kill	1	2.9

Retailer Recommendations

Although retailers cannot reasonably control consumer product reviews, recommendations, and engagement, the amount of this online content can encourage further evaluation of fast fashion apparel products online. Fast fashion retailers should continue to encourage consumers and influencers to produce content online.

Aside from incorporating stimulating product images and videos to product commodities as an initial test run, retailers should also experiment with dynamic videos of key product styles on-figure and in movement. These videos can be incorporated into online retail platforms and retailer-run social media accounts. Doing this will not only provide consumers with increased product understanding but also encourage brand engagement.

Since price incentives across fast fashion retailers are often similar throughout the year, there is a need for an incorporation of movement and interactivity in order to retain consumers' attention. This has been capitalized by Fashion Nova and Ardene who have included "spin to win" interactive wheels with additional discounts upon entering their online retail spaces. There, online shoppers have the opportunity to gain additional price incentives before viewing products (Fig. 4). This tactic is particularly strategic since both generational cohorts place great importance on product price and price incentives. Retailers should implement similar tactics to increase consumer engagement through interactivity, and therefore work to decrease the number of retailers visited prior to purchase.

Figure 6. "Spin to Win" wheel, 2019. *Fashion Nova.* Retrieved from https://www.fashionnova.com

The use of moving sales timers highlighting time-sensitive price incentives placed directly on a webpage can increase product evaluation. Consumers face “loss aversion,” reluctant to lose the opportunity presented, in case offers that may follow pale in comparison (Tversky & Kahneman, 1991). Fashion Nova observably uses this visual and interactive tactic online (Fig. 5). During these purposefully produced time-sensitive decision-making situations, consumers are further affected by product assortments (Milosavljevic et al., 2012). Combining time sensitivity with price incentives will favourably affect consumer evaluations of a product, particularly since Generation Y and Z place importance on the number of product choices available or remaining, and are price sensitive. Retailers can confirm the effectiveness of this tactic by measuring sales and using online tools to track consumer webpage movement and hotspots.

Figure 7. Sale timer, 2019. *Fashion Nova.* Retrieved from https://www.fashionnova.com

Shopping Behaviour Clusters

Although both generations place relatively similar value on each evaluative cue explored in this study, respondents can be clustered into various groups based on key differences in shopping behaviour. These include online fast fashion shopping frequency, percentage of income and dollars spent, and number of retailers visited before making a purchase. Three cluster profiles were created using reported shopping behaviour (*n*= 409), key differences in apparel and online retailing cues, and some assumptions. The cluster ratio of sizes is 1.59.

Cluster 1: The Selective Shopper (*n*= 99)

These consumers occasionally shop, willing to restrictively purchase garments that fit their needs and wants (found via website filters) (Table 13). They carefully examine product images available and consider key product cues including price, style, and fit. The Selective Shopper prefers to shop from their usual selection of online fast fashion retailers. Some may be more price sensitive than others.

Table 13.

Cluster 1 shopping behaviour.

Shopping Behaviour	Cluster 1: The Selective Shopper			
	n	$\bar{x}$	*s*	Mode
Shopping Frequency	99	3.36	0.814	3
Dollars Spent	99	2.68	0.531	3
% of Income Spent	99	1.00	0.000	1
Visit Pre-Purchase	99	1.56	0.574	2

*(Table 14 for value labels)

Table 14.1

Shopping frequency per week.

Value Label	Frequency
1	Never
2	Not often, 1-2 times
3	Sometimes, 3-4 times
4	Frequently, 5-6 times
5	Very often, 7 or more times

Table 14.2

Average dollars spent per order.

Value Label	Frequency
1	None
2	Less than $50
3	$50 - $99
4	$100 - $199
5	More than $200

Table 14.3

Average % of income spent.

Value Label	Frequency
1	Less than 20%
2	20% - 39%
3	40% or more

Table 14.4

Average # of retailers visited pre-purchase.

Value Label	Frequency
1	1 – 2 retailers
2	3 – 4 retailers
3	5 or more retailers

This cluster is mostly made up of the older spectrum of Generation Z (15 years of age or older), and the younger tail of Generation Y (under 27 years of age). It is also important to note that there is a significantly lower percentage of males in this cluster compared to the other two. The majority of Generation Y respondents within this cluster reportedly visit one to two retailers before making a purchase decision, whereas the majority of Generation Z respondents reportedly visit three to four retailers. However, there is insufficient evidence to deem this finding as generalizable because of the small cluster sample size (n= 99).

Cluster 2: The Spontaneous Shopper (*n*= 153)

Consumers in this cluster are easy-going shoppers who search and browse online fast fashion retailers whenever they please. Though they do not shop often, they purchase relatively liberally (Table 15)—they seemingly buy what they want. Spontaneous Shoppers place trust in most online retailers and the information presented to them, reducing the number of retailers visited before making a purchase. Absorbing information about products they have seen online or heard from others, they are confident in their understanding and self-formed opinions about products online.

Table 15.

*Cluster 2 shopping behaviour. **

Shopping Behaviour	Cluster 2: The Spontaneous Shopper			
	n	$\bar{x}$	s	Mode
Shopping Frequency	153	1.97	0.178	2
Dollars Spent	153	2.54	0.787	3
% of Income Spent	153	1.00	0.000	1
Visit Pre-Purchase	153	1.58	0.604	1

*(Table 14 for value labels)

This gives many of them the confidence to explore and purchase from new retailers, lowering their overall retailer loyalty. The Spontaneous Shopper may be willing to sacrifice the quality of a garment for other intrinsic and extrinsic cues such as price, style, and fit.

This cluster is relatively evenly distributed between both generations. It consists of Generation Z consumers between 15 to 18 years of age, following a normal distribution curve with a slight skew to the right (older respondents). Generation Y consumers within this cluster largely consist of respondents under the age of 26. The majority of this cluster consists of university or college students (40 percent), and 30 percent high school students. Most of them are loyal to the retailers they frequent. However, almost 20 percent do not usually purchase from the same retailers—this suggests that they are open to browsing and searching within retail websites found through platforms such as social media and online advertisements. Thus, some consumers within this cluster are more willing to purchase fast fashion apparel without comparing products between retailers in comparison to consumers within other clusters.

Based on a test between subjects, Cluster 2 behaviour has a statistically significant effect on the value of brand as an apparel cue ($F= 6.434$, $df= 2$, $p= 0.002$). Post hoc tests show that the mean rating for the importance of a brand is statistically significantly different between Cluster 2 behaviour, and behaviour from the two other clusters: Cluster 3 ($p= 0.003$), and Cluster 1 ($p= 0.019$). Compared to the other clusters, significantly fewer Spontaneous Shoppers consider brand as very important (Table 16), reflected in their reportedly lower retailer loyalty.

Table 16.

Cross-comparison between rating distributions for brand and all clusters.

Rating	**Brand**					
	Cluster 1		**Cluster 2**		**Cluster 3**	
	n	**%**	***n***	**%**	**n**	**%**
Very Unimportant	3	3.0	4	2.6	1	0.6
Unimportant	5	5.1	15	9.8	9	5.7
Neutral	17	17.2	43	28.1	37	23.6
Important	54	54.5	78	51.0	74	47.1
Very Important	20	20.2	13	8.5	36	22.9
Total (*n*)	99		153		157	

There is also a statistically significant effect on the value of product information from Cluster 2 behaviour, based on a test between subjects (F= 3.442, df= 2, p= 0.033). Post hoc tests show that the mean rating for the importance of product information as an online retailing cue is statistically significantly different between Cluster 2 and Cluster 3 (p= 0.025). Fewer consumers classified in Cluster 2 reported placing value on this online retailing cue—consumers in this cluster are less sensitive towards product information compared to Cluster 3 (Table 17).

Table 17.

Cross-comparison between rating distributions for product information and Cluster 2 & 3.

Rating	**Product Information**			
	Cluster 2		**Cluster 3**	
	n	**%**	***n***	**%**
Very Unimportant	1	0.7	0	0.0
Unimportant	6	3.9	7	4.5
Neutral	39	25.5	19	12.1
Important	73	47.7	80	51.0
Very Important	34	22.2	51	32.5
Total (*n*)	153		157	

Based on the test between subjects, Cluster 2 behaviour has a statistically significant effect on the value of images or videos of a garment in-use (F= 3.291, df= 2, p= 0.038). Post hoc tests show that the mean rating for the importance of viewing garments in-use is statistically significantly different between Cluster 2 and Cluster 3 (p= 0.037). The Spontaneous Shopper is slightly less sensitive towards the need to view images or videos of a garment in-use, compared to consumers in Cluster 3 (Table 18).

Table 18. *Cross-comparison between rating distributions for product in-use and Cluster 2 & 3.*

Rating	**Product In-Use**			
	Cluster 2		**Cluster 3**	
	n	**%**	***n***	**%**
Very Unimportant	3	2.0	1	0.6
Unimportant	11	7.2	5	3.2
Neutral	32	20.9	21	13.4
Important	59	38.6	72	45.9
Very Important	48	31.4	58	36.9
Total (*n*)	153		157	

Cluster 3: The Fashion Enthusiast (*n*= 157)

These respondents enjoy staying up to date with current styles, frequently shopping for fast fashion online. They enjoy the online shopping experience facilitated by their favourite brands. Fashion Enthusiasts spend relatively more money on online fast fashion compared to other clusters (Table 19), and are seemingly willing to spend as much money required to obtain the garments they want. They may also place more value on how well a garment is constructed and fits on-figure.

Table 19.
*Cluster 2 shopping behaviour. **

Shopping Behaviour	**Cluster 3: The Fashion Enthusiast**			
	n	$\bar{x}$	***s***	**Mode**
Shopping Frequency	157	3.38	1.003	3
Dollars Spent	157	3.59	0.913	3
% of Income Spent	157	1.96	0.485	2
Visit Pre-Purchase	157	1.75	0.715	2

*(Table 14 for value labels)

This cluster consists of the older spectrum of Generation Z (14 or older), and the younger spectrum of Generation Y (under 24 years of age). Almost 50 percent of this cluster are reportedly full-time students and part-time employed, the highest percentage compared to the other clusters. This offers a partial explanation as to how some consumers have the capability to spend higher dollar amounts than others. Further, since 63 percent of Canadians 24 years of age or under live with their parents (Statistics Canada, 2019), they may be capable of spending a higher percentage of their income on discretionary goods such as fast fashion. Students, with generally more leisure time than most consumers in other stages in life, have the capability to browse online retail stores frequently.

Generation Y consumers have been found to visit stores without a real need or intention to purchase—they simply want to see new product offerings and assess whether available products are worthy of purchase (Parment, 2013). Based on the data collected, it seems as though the Generation Z sample behaves the same way; however, their true purchase intentions remain unclear. Fashion Enthusiasts from both generational cohorts are also keen on evaluating multiple options in search for the best choices online—they tend to evaluate the same number of options online (between one and four retailers) before purchasing (Table 20). However, they are generally loyal to their favourite retailers, reportedly visiting the same few retailers each time.

Table 20.

Frequency comparison between Cluster 3 Generation Y and Z on # of retailers visits pre-purchase.

# of Retailers	Cluster 3: # of Retailers Visited Pre-Purchase			
	Generation Y		Generation Z	
	n	%	*n*	%
1 – 2	37	45.7	28	37.3
3 – 4	31	38.3	35	46.7
5 or more	13	16.0	12	16.0
Total (*n*)	81		75	

Based on a test between subjects, Cluster 3 behaviour has a statistically significant effect on the value placed on garment quality of workmanship (F= 3.439, df= 2, p= 0.033). Post hoc tests show that the mean rating for the importance of quality of workmanship is statistically significantly different between Cluster 2 and Cluster 3 (p= 0.048). More Fashion Enthusiasts (Cluster 3) place a great amount of importance on this cue compared to Spontaneous Shoppers (Cluster 2) (Table 21). This partially explains the higher amount of dollars spent, on average, per order (Table 22).

Table 21.

Cross-comparison between rating distributions for quality of workmanship and Cluster 2 & 3.

Rating	**Quality of Workmanship**			
	Cluster 2		**Cluster 3**	
	n	**%**	***n***	**%**
Very Unimportant	2	1.3	4	2.5
Unimportant	13	8.5	4	2.5
Neutral	37	24.2	29	18.5
Important	76	49.7	78	49.7
Very Unimportant	25	16.3	42	26.8
Total (*n*)	153		157	

Table 22.

Cross-comparison between rating distributions for quality of workmanship and average dollars spent in Cluster 3.

		Quality of Workmanship					
		Very Unimportant	Unimportant	Neutral	Important	Very Important	**Total (*n*)**
Avg. Dollars Spent	Less than $50	1	0	3	7	7	18
	$50 - $99	2	1	16	26	12	57
	$100 - $199	1	3	6	29	15	54
	Over $200	0	0	4	16	8	28
Total (*n*)		4	4	29	78	42	157

Cluster 3 behaviour also has a statistically significant effect on the value of safe or eco-friendly workplaces (F= 4.064, df= 2, p= 0.018). Post hoc tests show that the mean rating for the importance of this cue is statistically significantly different between Cluster 3 and Cluster 2 (p= 0.031). Consumers in Cluster 3 tend to be indifferent towards this cue, whereas the majority of Cluster 2 place value in safe or eco-friendly workplaces when evaluating fast fashion garments online (Table 23).

Table 23.

Cross-comparison between rating distributions for safe or eco-friendly workplaces and all clusters.

Rating	Safe or Eco-Friendly Workplace					
	Cluster 1		Cluster 2		Cluster 3	
	n	**%**	***n***	**%**	***n***	**%**
Very Unimportant	4	4.0	3	2.0	8	5.1
Unimportant	17	17.2	19	12.4	30	19.1
Neutral	30	30.3	47	30.7	63	40.1
Important	39	39.4	67	43.8	38	24.2
Very Important	9	9.1	17	11.1	18	11.5
Total (*n*)	99		153		157	

Based on a test between subjects, Cluster 3 behaviour has a statistically significant effect on the value of a website's style (F= 9.602, df= 2, p= 0.033). Post hoc tests show that the mean rating for the importance of quality of workmanship is statistically significantly different between Cluster 2 and Cluster 3 (p< 0.001). More than 32 percent of this cluster place a great amount of importance on this cue compared to Cluster 2 (Table 24), hence their reportedly high retailer loyalty.

Table 24.

Cross-comparison between rating distributions for website style and Cluster 2 & 3

Rating	Website Style			
	Cluster 2		Cluster 3	
	n	**%**	***n***	**%**
Very Unimportant	5	3.3	3	1.9
Unimportant	13	8.5	4	2.5
Neutral	37	24.2	29	18.5
Important	82	53.6	70	44.6
Very Unimportant	16	10.5	51	32.5
Total (*n*)	153		157	

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

Generation Y and Z consumers are increasingly growing in financial strength and population. With the rapid growth of the fast fashion industry and online retail marketplace, there is growing importance in understanding the value of evaluative cues used when shopping online for fast fashion from both generational cohorts' perspectives. With no surprise, the majority of both generational cohorts reportedly place the most significance in price, style, fit, product images, website filters, and product reviews. These cues are a reflection of the fast fashion value proposition and consumers' need for online product discernment.

The most important findings are not necessarily the cues that Generation Y and Z consumers identify as the most important, since they are commonly understood. Instead, this data illuminates the evaluative cues that fall second to important—they are the factors that place integral roles in whether a product is "added to cart." Reportedly less important but still valued are apparel cues including brand, trendiness, colour, comfort, durability, fabric, quality of workmanship, wardrobe coordination, and a garment's ease of care, playing substantial roles during a consumer's evaluation process. Online retailing cues in this category include product information and recommendations, images or videos of a product in-use, abundant product choices available, and a website's "style" or "look."

Based on results of *t*-tests between both generational cohorts, Generation Y consumers are less likely to try styles or colours outside of their preference or aesthetic, indicated in a greater importance placed on wardrobe coordination. They also indicated less interest in considering the eco-friendly "style" or "look" of a garment. In comparison to Generation Y, Generation Z consumers are less sensitive to colour selections offered by online retailers, and are largely indifferent towards materials used to construct a garment, compared to their older counterparts. It is important to note that many consumers from Generation Y and Z claim to value sustainability-related cues such a sustainably sourced material used, ethical or environmental workplaces, and environmentally friendly impact from production.

Although both Generation Y and Z tend to value similar apparel and online retailing cues when evaluating fast fashion online, individual participants reported varying shopping behaviour. Shopping behaviour collected from both generations can be grouped into three clusters: "Spontaneous Shoppers," "Selective Shoppers," and "Fashion Enthusiasts." However, the majority of Generation Y and Z respondents from each cluster indicated high retailer loyalty—it is therefore important to instill brand loyalty amongst consumers from both generations.

Contributions and Implications

This study illuminates the key cues that Generation Y, and the growing population of Generation Z, consumers value when shopping online for fast fashion. It explores the relationships between each cue, and identifies which cues help these consumers evaluate fast fashion apparel products online. Shopping behaviours are clustered together to provide a guideline for marketers and retailers to examine their sales data. Data collected can also be beneficial to start-ups and small businesses seeking to better understand the fast fashion industry or these generational cohorts. This exploratory study serves as a starting point for future research regarding Generation Y and Z consumers, and their decision-making process when shopping online for fast fashion apparel.

Limitations and Future Directions

There are some limitations to this study. Data regarding evaluative cues only represent the level of importance both generations place on individual cues. Missing are the specific prompts that cause salience towards individual cues, and a qualitative exploration of purchase behaviour. Face-to-face stimulus, found in methods such as ethnographic studies or guided tours, will be a beneficial step towards understanding these things. Further, there needs to be dedicated studies towards online retailing, and promotional and advertising cues used by Generation Y and Z online fast fashion consumers.

The sample size for Generation Y (*n*= 207) and Generation Z (*n*= 202) are not large enough for all findings within this study to be generalizable to either population, particularly regarding responses indicating a cue as “unimportant.” Further, 72 percent of the study sample resides in the province of Ontario near large urban areas, and is therefore not representative of the Canadian Generation Y and Z populations.

Since most of the data collected in this study is ordinal, some ratings were treated as continuous variables when using MANOVA as a tool of analysis. Future studies should consider collecting scale and interval data for higher accuracy in data analysis. Studies should also consider asking participants for the average cost of items purchased for further clustering.

Final Remarks

The fast fashion landscape is noticeably shifting. Some fast fashion retailers are observably raising price points, and consumers are reactively demanding more. Generation Y and Z consumers are increasingly placing importance in the quality of apparel products and are valuing the usability of clothing. Since the salience of cues can vary depending on what is made available by retailers to consumers (Ranganathan, 2012), this study illuminates apparel and online retailing cues that Generation Y and Z consumers value so that marketers and retailers may better understand these generational consumers and improve online retail strategy. This study also outlines online advertising and promotional cues that may be salient to these consumers, guiding hypotheses for future studies. With expanding accessibility and improving AI capabilities, marketers and retailers can continue to better understand group behaviour. This will also help understand individual consumer behaviour to design products and platforms to better serve their needs and wants, and to improve shopping experiences.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1. Research Ethics Board Approval

To: Emilie Chan, Fashion

Re: REB 2018-392: Understanding Online Fast Fashion Evaluative Cues Used by Generation Y and Z Consumers

Date: November 30, 2018

Dear Emilie Chan,

The review of your protocol REB File REB 2018-392 is now complete. The project has been approved for a one year period. Please note that before proceeding with your project, compliance with other required University approvals/certifications, institutional requirements, or governmental authorizations may be required.

This approval may be extended after one year upon request. Please be advised that if the project is not renewed, approval will expire and no more research involving humans may take place. If this is a funded project, access to research funds may also be affected.

Please note that REB approval policies require that you adhere strictly to the protocol as last reviewed by the REB and that any modifications must be approved by the Board before they can be implemented. Adverse or unexpected events must be reported to the REB as soon as possible with an indication from the Principal Investigator as to how, in the view of the Principal Investigator, these events affect the continuation of the protocol.

Finally, if research subjects are in the care of a health facility, at a school, or other institution or community organization, it is the responsibility of the Principal Investigator to ensure that the ethical guidelines and approvals of those facilities or institutions are obtained and filed with the REB prior to the initiation of any research.

Please quote your REB file number (REB 2018-392) on future correspondence. Congratulations and best of luck in conducting your research.

Dr. Patrizia Albanese, PhD
Chair, Ryerson University Research Ethics Board

Appendix 2. Online Questionnaire Consent Form

Consent Agreement
(Online Questionnaire Survey)

You are being invited to participate in a research study. Please read this consent form so that you understand what your participation will involve. Before you consent to participate, please ask any questions to be sure you understand what your participation will involve.

Please read and acknowledge the following consent agreement.

Title of Study:
Understanding Online Fast Fashion Evaluative Cues Used by Generation Y and Z Consumers

Research Investigator:
Emilie Chan, School of Fashion, Ryerson University

Research Supervisor:
Professor Osmud Rahman, School of Fashion, Ryerson University

If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact Emilie Chan at emilie.chan@ryerson.ca.

Purpose of this Study
The purpose of this study is to identify and investigate the various website and fast fashion product attributes that influence shopping decisions. This study consists of an online questionnaire that is intended to collect quantitative data about each participant's online fast fashion shopping behaviours, preferences, and personal information (such as age, employment, sex, etc.). Data collected will contribute towards Emilie's MA Fashion major research paper.

There will be approximately 350 participants recruited for this study.

What You Will Be Asked to Do, and Costs to Participation
If you volunteer to participate in this study, you will be asked to complete an online questionnaire, that will take approximately 15-20 minutes to complete. You will be asked to answer two questions prior to the questionnaire to determine your eligibility to participate. If you meet the three participant requirements, you will be asked to proceed to the online questionnaire. Within the questionnaire, you will be asked questions about how important various product and website attributes are to you, and your online shopping behaviour. These questions will be asked in the form of rating scales (e.g. Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Agree etc.), yes or no questions, and multiple choice. The questionnaire will include questions regarding your age, sex, city of residence, level of education, and, employment status. Participation requires no monetary costs. You will only require a digital device to access to the internet, and internet connection. Participants will be able to find a copy of the research results by June 2019 by searching "Understanding Online Fast Fashion Evaluative Cues Used by Gen Y and Z Consumers" in the Ryerson Digital Depository (https://digital.library.ryerson.ca).

Participant Requirements: Eligible participants must between 13-37 years of age, living in Canada. They must also remember having at least one online fast fashion shopping experience from a fast fashion retailer. Fast fashion may be considered as highly trendy, inexpensive and "in-fashion" products that are quick to manufacture.

Estimated Time Required for Participation: 15-20 minutes

Voluntary Participation and Withdrawal
Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. You can choose whether to be in this study or not. If any question makes you uncomfortable, you can skip that question. You may stop participating at any time. Only eligible individuals may participate in this study. All submitted responses will be included in research analysis, and cannot be removed at any point in time. This is because your responses will be anonymous, and we will not know which responses belong to you. Complete withdrawal from the online questionnaire (eg. closing the webpage) will not remove previously submitted responses. Your choice of whether or not to participate will not influence your current or future relations with Ryerson University, the research investigators (Emilie Chan), or the research supervisor (Osmud Rahman).

Potential Benefits of Study
There are no expected, anticipated, or direct benefits to the participants. Potential indirect benefits may include (1) increased awareness of purchasing behaviour, and (2) being mindful of the various attributes used for product evaluation. If you are a Ryerson student, please note that your choice of whether or not you choose to participate in this study will not affect your academic performance, nor your future relations with Ryerson University.

Potential Risks to You as a Participant
The potential risks from this study are very low. Participants may feel uncomfortable answering the demographic questions regarding age, sex, city of residence, highest level of education, and employment status. Participants can leave any question unanswered, or withdraw from the study at any point. The Research Investigator will know the email addresses of participants that choose to enter the lucky random draw. However, the Research Investigator will not have the names of the participants, and all identities will remain confidential. Participants who feel uncomfortable with providing any of this data can choose not to provide any or all data during the survey. If any participants who entered the lucky random draw no longer want to be identifiable via email address, they can email emilie.chan@ryerson.ca and their lucky random draw entry will be withdrawn.

Confidentiality and Anonymity
You will not be asked to provide your name or any personal contact information for the participation of the survey. If you choose to enter the optional lucky random draw for a $50 Starbucks e-gift card, you will be asked to provide your email address so that the researcher can email your prize (if you win) and therefore forfeiting anonymity. However, all responses submitted from your questionnaire will be stored separately from your lucky random draw entry email, and there will be no connection between the two sets of responses. The researchers may share and spread the research data for academic purposes, through methods such as conference presentations and publications related to the topic of consumer behavior, online shopping, and fast fashion consumption. You will be given an opportunity to have access to the general results of this study when available. Participants will be able to find a copy of the research results by June 2019 by searching "Understanding Online Fast Fashion Evaluative Cues Used by Gen Y and Z Consumers" in the Ryerson Digital Depository (https://digital.library.ryerson.ca). Participants who email the researcher (regarding eg. questions about the study, research results etc.) will also forfeit anonymity. All personal contact information and disclosed identities will remain confidential.

Incentives for Participation
Participants of the study will be offered entry into a lucky random draw administered by the researchers, for a chance to win a Starbucks e-gift card valued at $50.00 CAD. The probability of winning is approximately 1/350 chances. **Only individuals who meet all the participant requirements may participate in this study, and therefore participate in this lucky random draw**. Entry into the lucky random draw is optional and voluntary. Participants can withdraw from this voluntary study at any point of the survey. However, participants who withdraw from the study before reaching the last survey page will not be eligible for the lucky draw. Only participants who reach the last page of the online questionnaire, no matter how many questions were answered/unanswered, will be eligible for the lucky random draw. Unanswered survey questions will not affect a participant's ability to enter the lucky random draw. Entry into the lucky random draw will require participants provide an email address and thereby forfeit anonymity. To enter the lucky random draw, you will be required to enter an email address into the lucky random draw webpage that will immediately appear upon completion of the online questionnaire. You can withdraw from the lucky random draw by emailing emilie.chan@ryerson.ca.

The lucky draw will be administered on March 31, 2019 at 3pm EST, a date after the survey has been closed. An email will be randomly selected, and the Starbucks e-gift card will be emailed to the email address on March 31, 2019.

Data Storage
All questionnaire responses will be stored in a secure and encrypted Ryerson Google Drive for five years, after which all files will be destroyed by permanently deleting the file off of the Ryerson Google Drive. Emails submitted for the lucky random draw will be destroyed on March 31, 2019 by permanently deleting the file off of the Ryerson Google Drive after the lucky draw has been administered. All emails collected for the lucky random draw will be stored on the Ryerson Google Drive in separate document and folder from all questionnaire responses. There will be no connection between emails collected and submitted questionnaire responses. Only the Research Investigator (Emilie Chan) and the Research Supervisor (Osmud Rahman) will have access to the Ryerson Google Drive in which all data files (questionnaire responses and lucky draw emails) will be stored.

Additional Notes
This online questionnaire will be hosted on the Qualtrics server, located in the United States. Please note that survey data may be accessed by the U.S authorities under strict policies (namely the USA Freedom Act).

Questions about the Study
If you have any questions about the research, you may contact:

Emilie Chan
School of Fashion
Ryerson University
Email: emilie.chan@ryerson.ca

This study has been reviewed by the Ryerson University Research Ethics Board. REB file #: 2018-392. If you have questions regarding your rights as a participant in this study, please contact:

Research Ethics Board
c/o Office of the Vice President, Research and Innovation
Ryerson University
350 Victoria Street
Toronto, ON M5B 2K3
416-979-5042
rebchair@ryerson.ca

Confirmation of Participation Agreement

Clicking the boxes below indicates that you have read the information in this agreement and have had a chance to ask any questions you have about the study. Clicking the boxes below also indicates that you agree to participate in the study and have been told that you can change your mind and withdraw your consent to participate at any time. You can request for a copy of this agreement by emailing emilie.chan@ryerson.ca. By acknowledging this consent agreement, you are not giving up any of your legal rights.

After clicking all the boxes below, you will be directed to the online questionnaire survey. You will be unable to proceed to the survey without checking off all boxes. *If you do not want to participate in this study, you can close this page.*

[ ] I have read the information in this agreement and have had a chance to ask any questions I have about the study.

[ ] I am between 13-37 years of age.

[ ] I live in Canada.

[ ] I have at least one online fast fashion shopping experience.

[ ] I would like to participate in this research study.

Appendix 3. Online Questionnaire

Please indicate how important the following things are to you when making an online purchase decision for fast fashion clothing.

	Very Unimportant	Unimportant	Neutral	Important	Very Important
Brand					
Price					
Style					
Trendy Image/"Look"					
Colour					
Fit					

Please indicate how important the following things are to you when making an online purchase decision for fast fashion clothing.

	Very Unimportant	Unimportant	Neutral	Important	Very Important
Country of Origin (where the clothing was made)					
Comfort					
Durability					
Ease of Care (how easy it is to take care of the clothing)					
Materials Used					
Quality and Workmanship (how well the clothing was made)					
Wardrobe Coordination (how well the clothing fits in with your other clothes)					
Sustainability or Eco-Friendliness					

Please indicate how important the following things are to you when making an online purchase decision for fast fashion clothing.

	Very Unimportant	Unimportant	Neutral	Important	Very Important
1. A sustainable or eco-friendly brand	○	○	○	○	○
2. Clothing made in a safe or eco-friendly workplace	○	○	○	○	○
3. Clothing made with sustainable or eco-friendly materials	○	○	○	○	○
4. Clothing made with less waste or impact on the environment	○	○	○	○	○
5. Clothing with an eco-friendly image/"look"	○	○	○	○	○
6. Clothing recycling program/service	○	○	○	○	○

Please indicate how important the following things are to you when making an online purchase decision for fast fashion clothing.

	Very Unimportant	Unimportant	Neutral	Important	Very Important
a. Product recommendations	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
b. Product information	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
c. Product images or visual representations	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
d. Images and videos of product in use	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
e. Product reviews	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
f. Website filters (eg. sorting products by price, colour, style etc.)	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
g. Many product choices	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
h. Website style/"look"	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

How much money do you usually spend on fast fashion websites?

- ◯ None
- ◯ Less than $50
- ◯ $50 - $99
- ◯ $100 - $199
- ◯ Over $200

How often do you usually browse for clothing on fast fashion websites?

- ◯ Never
- ◯ Not often, 1-2 times per week
- ◯ Sometimes, 3-4 times per week
- ◯ Frequently, 5-6 times per week
- ◯ Very often, 7 or more times per week

What percentage of your income do you usually spend on online fast fashion shopping?

- ◯ Less than 20%
- ◯ 20% - 39%
- ◯ 40% or more

Do you usually browse from the same few websites every time you shop online for fast fashion?

Yes	No
○	○

Check all online fast fashion stores you browse and/or shop at:

- ☐ H&M
- ☐ Stitches
- ☐ Zara
- ☐ ASOS
- ☐ West 49
- ☐ Wish
- ☐ Fashion Nova
- ☐ Pretty Little Thing
- ☐ Zaful
- ☐ Meshki
- ☐ Forever 21
- ☐ Old Navy
- ☐ Urban Planet
- ☐ Other ______
- ☐ Sirens

How many online fast fashion retailers do you usually visit before making a purchase?

- ○ 1-2
- ○ 3-4
- ○ 5 or more

What is your sex?

- ◯ Male
- ◯ Female
- ◯ Other (specify):

What is your age?

Age

Do you usually make purchases from the same online fast fashion websites?

Yes	No
◯	◯

Which of the following describes your employment status?

- ◯ Part-time employed
- ◯ Part-time employed, and a student
- ◯ Full-time student
- ◯ Self-employed
- ◯ Full-time employed
- ◯ Other:

What is your city of residence?

- ◯ Toronto
- ◯ Vancouver
- ◯ Montreal
- ◯ Ottawa
- ◯ Calgary
- ◯ Edmonton
- ◯ Other:

What is the highest level of school you have completed or the highest degree you have received?

- ◯ Less than elementary school
- ◯ Elementary school certification
- ◯ High school degree or equivalent
- ◯ College diploma
- ◯ Bachelor degree
- ◯ Graduate degree
- ◯ Doctoral degree

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