



Living Green

Fall 2021 Sustainability Report

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What is Sustainability?

- Sustainability in fashion is being involved with pieces that are created and brought to a consumer while being environmentally conscious.
- Microtrends that fit into the sustainable macrotrend are thrifting, eco-friendly fashion and greenwashing, to name a few.



History of Sustainability

1. Sustainability, first used in German as *Nachhaltigkeit*, meant “sustained yield,” where it was used in a handbook of forestry in 1713 as meaning to not harvest more than the forest can create.

2. Ecology took the term over and made the term also refer to all biological systems. In the 19th Century, this sustainability meant the ability of an ecosystem to maintain its functions over time.

3. In the 20th Century, use of the term sustainability referred to fossil fuels. In the ‘80s, sustainability began to be used more in terms of how humans live on the planet.

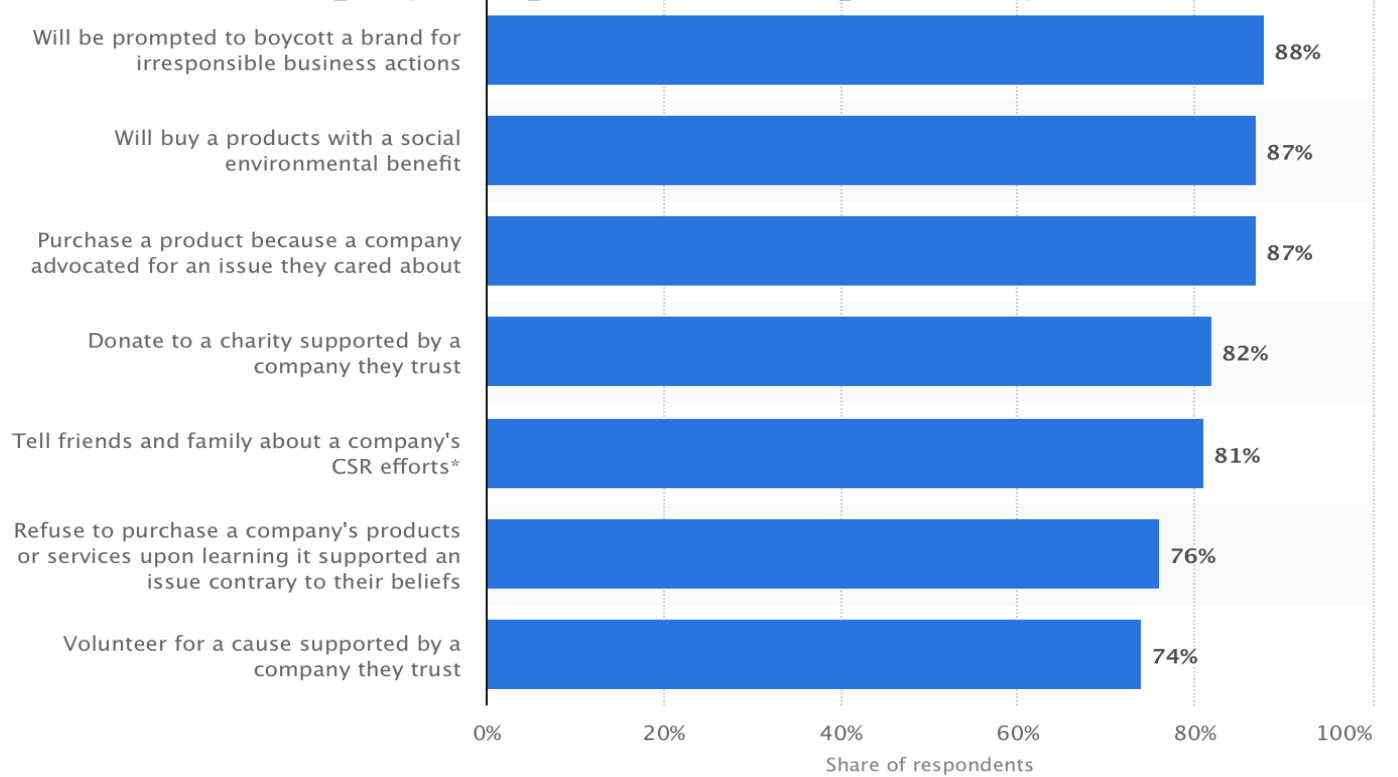
4. Now, sustainability mainly refers to “sustainable development,” meaning the “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations.”

5. In 2005, the World Summit on Social Development created three goals: economic development, social development and environmental protection. This would ensure that we take only what we need.



Statistics

Common ways U.S. consumers will change their behavior based on a company's corporate social responsibility 2018



Sustainability in Consumerism

- Based on my interviews for my microtrend on thrifting, consumers who engage in thrifting are directly engaging with sustainability because they are helping to reduce the amount of new clothing being made.
- The second consumer group is still a large range of people. Forbes states that it is mainly the empowered consumers who are trying to make a change who interact with sustainability the most. They are shopping more at eco-friendly stores and are changing their work and lifestyle to be more sustainable.





Consumers in Real Life

- On thrifting: “It was based on the fashion of the moment looking for certain. In the 80s, when I was in my 20s.” - Shari, 55
- On store sustainability: “Well, I believe they can always make sure that they’re utilizing clothing manufactures that are of good standard. If I’m not mistaken, plastic is used in clothing. So if were reusing plastic, are we using it to reform material? I don’t know if that’s true. I think stores like that should promote, as in marketing campaigns, that they do use sustainable materials and manufacturers that have good standards instead of advertising the latest, hot ticket item of a t-shirt that has holes in it but everyone wants one because an online influencers said “I love this t-shirt, you should too” so everyone runs out to go get this \$150 item. Or maybe, social media influencers, since they’re influencers, could promote some things that are second hand or sustainable.” -Shari, 55



Consumers in Real Life

- On sustainability: “I like nature. I like the environment. I want to see nature prosper as much as possible. However, I know the consequences of me using plastic bags in stores or buying gasoline for my car. The thing is, I simply don’t have enough money to go around and live an eco-friendly, eco-perfect lifestyle. If I had enough money, yeah, I’d buy a tesla, I’d buy bamboo paper, I just can’t. But, with that being said, I would like to help our environment grow and help stop it from being diminished by other like-minded people.” –Joey, 19
- On different generations: “I feel the older generations don't really care what brand they're buying as long as they get the clothes that they like and they want and they wanna wear, they're going to buy it. And I feel like with the younger generations it's all about being like in the now and associating yourself with clothing brands that are popular which I find super stupid but whatever.” –Joey, 19



Bigger Picture: UK

- The UK has been working on their amount of fast fashion, as seen with their local stores Primark and Topshop. Erijio states that "UK politicians have called on the Government to change the law to require fashion retailers to comply with environmental and social standards." They are three key ways they are making change.
- Longevity: The Clothing Sustainability Research Group at Nottingham Trent University states that articles of clothing should be made to last long. They have seen the fashion industry adapting this slowly.
- Reusing: Brands are beginning to re-use damaged fabrics for new production of clothes. Erijio states that "upcycling garments can reduce clothing and textile waste by reusing deadstock or gently used fabrics," which can "divert 85% of textile waste."
- Celebrity Encouragement: During the 2020 BAFTA ceremony, the organizers encouraged celebrities to re-wear previous items. For example, Saoirse Ronan and Kate Middleton both re-wore their previous gowns from other events.

Fast Fashion

- Conscious Life & Style states that “Fast fashion is trendy, cheap fashion that is produced very rapidly in large quantities.”
- Examples of fast fashion include H&M, Forever 21, Zara, Pretty Little Thing, Shein, Primark, GAP, Fashion Nova and ASOS, to name a few.
- Fast fashion has not only harmed the US’s ecosystem but is has majorly affected the countries where clothes are made, such as Bangladesh and Ghana.
- A documentary titled “The Machinists”, made in 2010, follows the lives of three different people/families who work at garment factories in Dhaka, Bangladesh. They experience low wages and terrible working conditions. The film also focuses on the president of the National Garment Worker’s Federation who is trying to make sure these workers are given fair and equal pay and working conditions. These garment factories provide articles for fast fashion places such as Primark and H&M.



Fast Fashion



- In an article by CBS, “Fast fashion in the U.S. is fueling an environmental disaster in Ghana,” they go over the immense amount of donated clothes that the US sends to Ghana. Many Americans will put their used clothes in donation bins or give them to charities so that they can be reused. But now, due to a lot of fast fashion, these items are being discarded quicker because the quality is poor and less can be resold.
- What can't be sold in a thrift store is put into the salvage market, which is “a long and complicated supply chain that is completely invisible to not only the average person, but even to the people participating.” In Ghana, there are only 30 million people. Their market has about 15 million used clothing from Western countries every week. The main Western country creating this amount is the US.
- As well, upcycling clothing has become very difficult because of how poor the quality of these fast fashion pieces are. “Before they used to have good quality clothes, but now there's a lot of trash.” “In the end, people wear clothes for just like two weeks, and then just discard them. The waste doesn't end up in America. Ultimately it ends up here in Kantamanto.”

PESTLE

- **Political:** An article by the Business of Fashion states three rules that the government can follow to work on sustainability: Clear, Relevant, Common and Transparent Accounting; Target Setting; and Mandatory Due Diligence.
- **Economic:** A Pulse Report suggests that “addressing environmental and social problems created by the fashion industry would provide a \$192 billion overall benefit to the global economy by 2030. The annual value of clothing discarded prematurely is more than \$400 billion.”
- **Sociological:** Fast fashion consumption and the need to make more has put major stresses on production resources that directly affect human welfare. Garment workers in Bangladesh make only \$96 per month, where it should be about 3.5 times more to live a decent life. In 2018, the U.S. Department of Labor found that forced and child labor was prevalent in many Eastern countries, such as Argentina, Bangladesh, Vietnam, and many more.
- **Technological:** 3D Look presented seven new technology creations for sustainable fashion, which include: 3D Virtual Sampling, Alternative Textiles, Automation and Fashion on Demand, Mobile Body Scanning, Virtual Dressing, Making Fashion Circular, and Re-commerce: Everything Old is New Again.
- **Legal:** The textile industry in the US has laws that limit the environmental impacts of factories and water treatment plants. This helps to protect consumers and reduce waste. As well, Americans can receive a tax deduction for donating clothes, which go to lower income communities in other countries.
- **Environmental:** Creating apparel affects resources and emissions. When making one pair of jeans, it creates “as much greenhouse gases as driving a car more than 80 miles.” Products made from non-biodegradable fabrics can last in a landfill for up to 200 years. As well, about 2,700 liters of water is used to make one cotton shirt, which is “enough to meet the average person’s drinking needs for two-and-a-half years.”





Designer in Sustainability

- Eileen Fisher, above center, is a sustainable garment designer. She creates pieces from organic, recycled materials and natural dyes. She creates pieces for all woman's body sizes that crave a minimalistic style. According to an article by The Good Trade, Fisher wants to "disrupt the linear production model touted by most luxury fashion brands." She creates luxurious and sustainable clothes made from recycled garments that she paints on.
- Her brand is a certified B Corp that includes many sustainable plans, such as having sustainable secondhand shops entitled Renew and Waste No More. Her team also works with environmental conservation organizations, she supports artisans, and works to empower women via the Eileen Fisher Leadership Institute.



What is Happening to Help

- In an Instagram post that followed an interview with Vogue Scandinavia in August 2021, Greta Thunberg discussed her thoughts of mass-produced fashion and sustainability.
- Thunberg, who last bought clothes three years ago, states that many people make the fashion industry seem that they are beginning to take responsibility in sustainability because their campaigns are making them seem “sustainable”, “ethical”, “green”, “climate neutral” and “fair,” but, Thunberg states that “This is almost never anything but pure greenwashing. You cannot mass produce fashion or consume ‘sustainability’ as the world is shaped today.”
- People are also using social media platforms, such as Instagram, to share sustainable tips. Instagrammer @tribubylafs shares a five-point post that includes tips from exploring the depths of your closet to watching what items you should and should not wash.



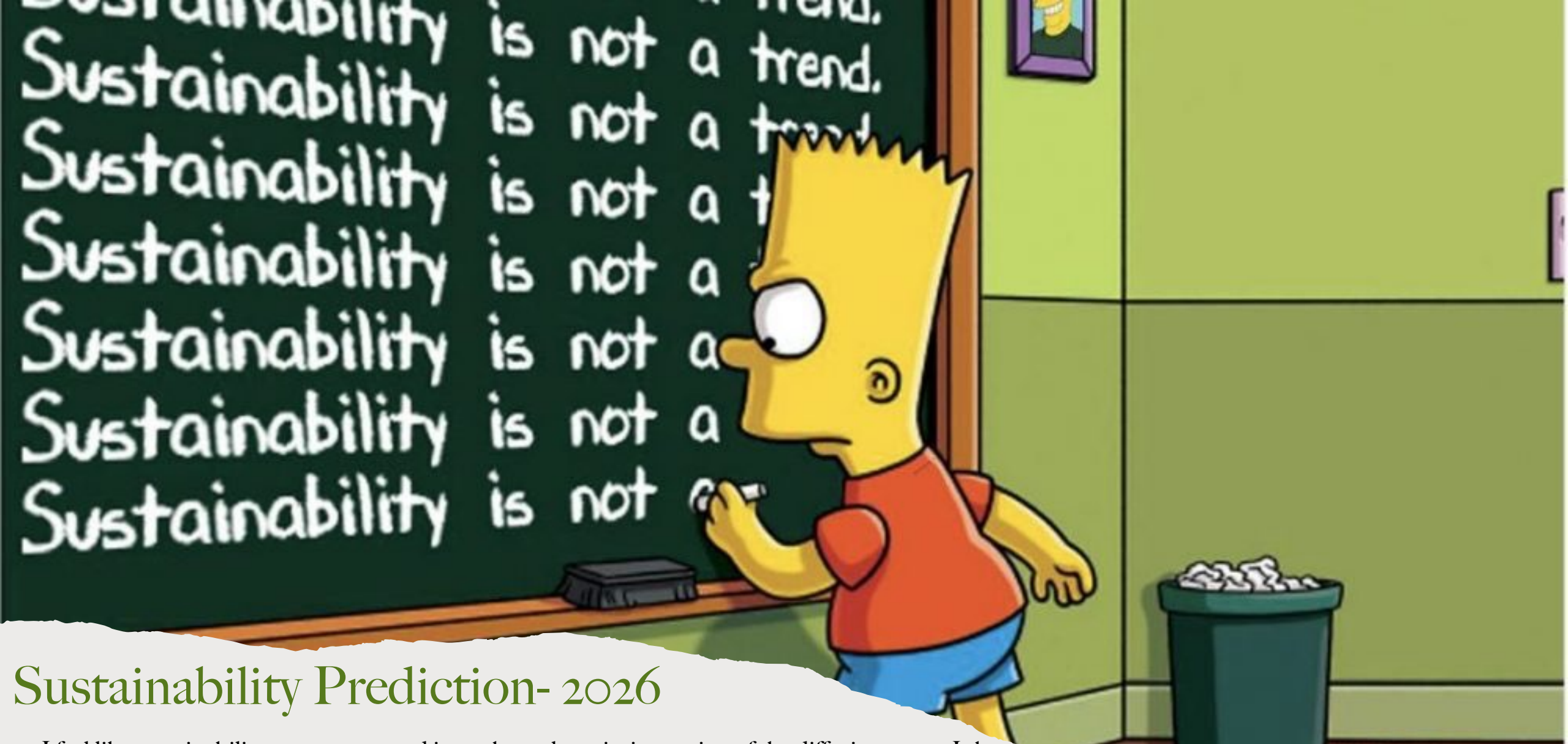
A Store that is Trying

- H&M is creating a new line for the holiday season where they marry fun and unique colors and patterns with sustainable materials. They are showcasing their ongoing sustainability efforts and trying to reframe the conversation on sustainable fashion.
- Abigail Kammerzell, H&M's Sustainability Manager, states that "It's not necessarily what you think of when you think of sustainable materials. These collections are really a celebration of fashion and fun and joy, and also showcase the potential of sustainable processes and fabrics."
- However, social media activists, such as TikTok user @sustainableoutfits, have been trying to get H&M to own up to their greenwashing, as Greta Thunberg states. @sustainableoutfits recorded tags on different pieces at H&M and stated "H&M really using their entire advertising strategy on violating advertising guidelines in multiple countries."



My Assumptions

- In my microtrend on thrifting, I stated that I did not like the resale market where people would go to thrift stores, buy items that could be put to good use by other consumers, and then they sell it online for much higher. I still hold true to this opinion in fashion. My opinion about my research topic has changed due to learning more about what thrifting is doing for our environment and other things in sustainability that we need to keep working on.



Sustainability Prediction- 2026

- I feel like sustainability as a macrotrend is on the early majority section of the diffusion curve. It has enough attention and general knowledge in the media and within experts, but those who want to focus on it will now. In 2026, this idea will hopefully still be present and larger than it is now because we'll be learning more and working towards better working conditions and lowering fast fashion. I hope that sustainability is more than a trend and will be here for my entire life and the future.

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Interview

- What is your name, age and where are you from?
 - Shari Schroeder, 55, Waukegan, IL
- Tell me about your relationship to clothes when you were younger compared to now.
 - I liked clothes very much. I tended to like to shop in boutique style clothing store as opposed to big department stores. Name brands were important. I like comfort and price, meaning affordable.
- Tell me about a typical day in your life.
 - Well, I walk our dog every morning. And then I work in an office and then I come home and eat dinner. And enjoy watching TV at night.
- What is something you do every day that you would like to change to be more sustainable?
 - I don't know if I want to change anything. I'm already buying clothes that I can only hope they are not made in sweatshops, which are bought by places like Walmart and Target, which is where I like to shop now. The water thing, I probably waste a lot of water. And I use a lot of paper towels and plastic, like plastic cups. The items that are recyclable in our area are paper, plastic, aluminum and glass.
- What do you know about sustainability?
 - I think, and I thought, that sustainability is how to get the most out of something. Like not to buy tennis shoes every week, use the same ones. Drive a car for a long time. Doesn't sustainability mean to pro-long and stay? That's what I thought.
- Have you ever gone thrifting or shopped at a secondhand shop? What was the experience like?
 - Yes! [The experience] was very good. It was based on the fashion of the moment looking for certain. It was mainly outerwear, like jackets. In the 80s when I was in my 20s.
- Why did you get into sustainability? OR Where did you learn about sustainability?
 - It was a trend. It was cool to do. So, it was more about, like the movie Pretty in Pink, it was pop culture. Molly Ringwald's character took clothes and made something out of it. It got rich kids to also do that in real life. I learned probably from pop culture, TV shows and movies.
- What are your opinions on fast fashion brands like Forever 21 and Shein?
 - They're convenient and affordable, just like fast food. Which isn't really considered affordable anymore. Because it's cheaply made in big quantity, it doesn't last as long and so it'll fall a part.
- How often do you shop for new clothes? Is that at big brands or smaller shops?
 - I would say probably, in my life right now, twice a year. It is at the big places.
- What have you noticed about yourself that differs from younger generations when you go clothes shopping?
 - I am looking for more comfortable clothing instead of fashionable clothing. She doesn't see that other kids by comfortable clothes for regular clothes, except for kids who wear pajama pants in public.
- What do you feel about the younger generation who specifically go thrift shopping?
 - I'm thinking they're very interested in saving money or spending money responsibly. They're not going out buying a trendy, \$400 jacket. So I could say they're really watching their money. And they're really making a point of reusing something.
- Tell me about specific ways you have seen your community be more sustainable.
 - Well, we recycle. Yard sales or garage sales. If this makes sense, a lot of people do reach out to neighbors and ask for things, like a used crib. Instead of going out to target to buy something new, they're reaching out to a neighbor. Definitely like a reuse repurpose mentality.
- What do you think a company like Target or Kohls could do to be more sustainable?
 - Well, I believe they can always make sure that they're utilizing clothing manufactures that are of good standard. If I'm not mistaken, plastic is used in clothing. So if were reusing plastic, are we using it to reform material? I don't know if that's true. I think stores like that should promote, as in marketing campaigns, that they do use sustainable materials and manufacturers that have good standards instead of advertising the latest, hot ticket item of a t-shirt that has holes in it but everyone wants one because an online influencers said "I love this t-shirt, you should too" so everyone runs out to go get this \$150 item. Or maybe, social media influencers, since they're influencers, could promote some things that are second hand or sustainable.
- Do you think that other countries have an effect on the U.S.'s sustainability? Explain.
 - Yes because other countries are older than the United States and I think that older countries believe in utilizing things. We're all about new and the older countries are more deeply rooted in old.
- What do you think sustainability will look like in the future?
 - I think it's going to be great because I think were really headed to being much more aware of how we can better the environment and treat humans more humanly.

Interview

- What is your name, age and where are you from?
 - Joey Diamond, 19, Gurnee, IL
- Tell me about your relationship to clothes when you were younger compared to now.
 - When I was younger, I didn't care about clothing, nor did I need to. Because when you're young, life is just an imaginary bubble. Like I would wear, I would look like a crayon. I would have red shirt and red sweatpants. I would have like knock-off Walmart shoes. And I just, generally lower-class clothing, you know? However now, as I've grown up, I feel like fashion to me has reinforced my confidence with like self-identity and it also helps establish a like a persona and style in the in public where you can look presentable.
- Tell me about a typical day in your life.
 - I wake up at 1:00 PM. I eat waffles. I watch YouTube for a couple of hours. I go to class. I come back to play video games for another couple of hours. I eat dinner. I do homework for a couple of hours. That's it.
- What is something you do every day that you would like to change to be more sustainable?
 - Nothing. I feel like I'm pretty good with keeping my costs low. Except I like to take long showers. But that's OK.
- What do you know about sustainability?
 - Not much. You should help the environment as much as possible like paper straws and such. Here's the dealio alright, I like nature. I like the environment. I want to see nature prosper as much as possible. However, I know the consequences of me using plastic bags in stores or buying gasoline for my car. The thing is, I simply don't have enough money to go around and live an eco-friendly, eco-perfect lifestyle. If I had enough money, yeah, I'd buy a tesla, I'd buy bamboo paper, I just can't. But, with that being said, I would like to help our environment grow and help stop it from being diminished by other like-minded people.
- Have you ever gone thrifting or shopped at a secondhand shop? What was the experience like?
 - I have gone thrifting like once or twice and I don't know what a secondhand shop is, but if it's like a Goodwill then I have gone many times. I love Goodwill. The experience and all was pretty fun, pretty good, you walk in with not much, nothing to lose you only go in there to gain stuff and it's for cheap. So it's very nice and it's kind of like hit the jack-pot honestly.
- Why did you get into sustainability? OR where did you learn about sustainability?
 - Yeah I've seen many many ads about sustainability, like instead of paper from wood you get paper from bamboo or like you know paper straws compared to plastic straws. And reusable bag which I do have by the way for Target. And you know like reusable straws like metal straws most part of the question. I don't know I'm an environmentalist I suppose, I like nature.
- What are your opinions on fast fashion brands like Forever 21 and Shein?
 - I didn't even know that Forever 21 was fast fashion. Now I'm a little sad but from I've been told, fast fashion is not very good. I forget why.
- How often do you shop for new clothes? Is that at big brands or smaller shops?
 - I'm usually like every other season. Like I shop for winter clothes every year and a shop for summer clothes every single year and it's usually from like big brand shops I don't go to like local shops as often as I probably should but that's OK, maybe, I don't know.
- What have you noticed about yourself that differs from older generations when you go clothes shopping?
 - I feel the older generations don't really care what brand they're buying as long as they get the clothes that they like and they want and they wanna wear, they're going to buy it. And I feel like with the younger generations it's all about being like in the now and associating yourself with clothing brands that are popular which I find super stupid but whatever.
- What do you feel about the younger generation who specifically go thrift shopping?
 - I think it's pretty cool they're purposely trying to get away from fashion norms which I like. And also local shops and thrift shops just kind of have like some sick ass clothing sometimes, that you can't find as cheap at popular name brand stores. So it's kind of a win-win honestly making the best of both worlds.
- Tell me about specific ways you have seen your community be more sustainable.
 - I have no idea, I don't like keep up with my community so I do not know.
- What do you think a company like Target or Kohls could do to be more sustainable?
 - I don't actually know.
- Do you think that other countries have an effect on the U.S.'s sustainability? Explain.
 - Probably. I know for sure that China is the main importer of silk. Whereas we don't have the same materials.
- What do you think sustainability will look like in the future?
 - Probably worse than it is now. We're probably going to run out of renewable resources like oil and gasoline. Here's the thing, I don't think of sustainability in terms of fashion and clothing. Which is a weird point of view I never thought about until now. With machines taking over, especially in America, I feel like sweatshops will grow less and less, and grow more and more in foreign countries, which sucks a lot.