Fast and Slow Fashion as Seen Through the Millennial Mindset

Thesis

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The term “slow fashion” was coined by Kate Fletcher (2008) to counter the growing trend of the “fast fashion” industry. In recent years, the clothing industry has been dominated by fast fashion that has spurred overconsumption whereby people buy more than they need. This study aimed to develop a critical-creative thinking framework based on the understandings and insights of how Millennials view apparel consumption. Lynda Grose and Kate Fletcher’s chapter “Transforming Fashion Product” from their book *Fashion & Sustainability: Design for Change* (2012) provided useful information regarding the fashion cycle, helping to reveal new approaches to frame how participants of this study viewed apparel consumption. This research investigated the ways in which consumers viewed material, consumer care, and disposal of their clothing.

In order to understand the millennial mindset with regard to apparel consumption, responses were collected from over a hundred millennials through an online survey (Phase One), where they discussed their reasons for placing themselves along a scale from slow to fast fashion. The findings uncovered a new group of consumers, the undecided+exploring, who identified with both slow and fast fashion. The Undecided+exploring consumers are considered to be “intermediates” on the fashion scale. Valuable insights extracted from the survey informed the development of a research toolkit for a series of participatory workshops (Phase Two) with the goal to construct a Framework for Millennial Apparel Consumption Mindset. This framework provided an effective approach to look at the findings from the different apparel consumption levels and stages of fast, intermediate, and slow. The perspective gained on fast and
slow fashion, as seen through the millennial mindset, will guide future research and inspire
designers, manufacturers, and consumers to make more sustainable decisions when developing,
marketing, and buying clothing items.

*Keywords: Slow Fashion, Fast Fashion, Sustainability, Millennial Generation, Apparel Industry*
Dedication

To my parents, Norma Hernández & Juan Dario Hernández, who have loved me unconditionally, and sacrificed so much to give my siblings and I a better life. While it hasn’t always been easy, your efforts weren’t in vain. This thesis is dedicated to you.
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Fields of Study

Major Field: Design
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1.1 The Fashion Problem

In 1992, before the internet was as important and ingrained in everyday life as it is today, before there were online stores that sell clothes at the click of a button, before there were fashion bloggers who inspired millions of consumers to follow their styles and seek the newest trend, sociologist Fred Davis predicted that the increased speed of information, compounded by affordable clothing prices and increased expendable money would dramatically shorten the fashion cycle. In his book *Fashion, Culture, and Identity*, Davis explained how the fashion cycle was getting shorter by breaking down the two widely used scholarly forms of writing about fashion, the fashion *cycle* and the fashion *process*. He compared the fashion cycle to the waves of the sea. The cycle is defined by the time between the introduction of a fashion item, when the wave comes in and quickly disappears due to its displacement by another ‘newer’ look, when the wave goes back out to sea. The fashion process makes reference to the intricate web of influencers, manufacturers, and retailers involved in the production and execution of the cycle.

“Intensive capitalization and rationalization of the apparel industry, consumers’ affluence along with democratization and a loosening of class boundaries, and a greatly quickened flow of information via the electronic media are cited typically as factors accounting for the progressively shortened span of the fashion cycle” (Davis, 1992, p. 107).
While he observed the influence of technology and consumer expenditures on shortened fashion cycles before his passing in 1993, it would have been hard to imagine exactly how short the cycle would get.

Elizabeth L. Cline (2013), the author of *Over-Dressed: The Shockingly High Cost of Cheap Fashion*, explains that the rate at which the fashion cycle changes is engrained in the industry, “The fashion industry relies on change. It always has. What is so astonishing today [emphasis added] is the breakneck pace of change, which has shifted from seasonal and focused to constant and schizophrenic” (p. 103). Cline (2013) continues, “The Internet age and the dissemination of information through blogs, social networking sites, and tabloids is pushing fashion forward at great speeds” (p. 103), which ultimately drive the prices down to a point where clothing becomes expendable. Twenty-six years after Davis wrote his observation, his words ring truer than ever. Who’s partially to blame for the increased speed, larger volume of sales, and drop in prices? The millennial generation, born between 1977 and 2004 (Mak, 2016). Understanding this generational group and how their consumption habits have fueled the fast fashion industry is important in order to find solutions to the fast fashion problem. The fast fashion problem consists of quickly and cheaply constructed clothing items that do not last which are made in sweatshops with poor and unsafe working conditions for the garment workers who spend long hours making the clothes with little pay. On April 24th, 2013, more than 1,100 garment workers died and thousands more injured when the Rana Plaza building in Savar, Bangladesh collapsed (Lavergne, 2015, p. 150). The fast fashion industry is built on cheap labor, where garment workers have died, and others put themselves at risk in order make a living and provide for their families in order to produce millions of clothing products that are so
inexpensive, they are likely to be thrown away and ending up in landfills (Lavergne, 2015; Cline, 2013).

1.2 Objective and Research Questions

The objective of this research study was to get a deeper understanding behind the thought processes of millennial apparel consumers when it comes to their clothing tendencies. In order to understand the millennial mindset, participatory design research methodologies were used to allow participants to creatively express themselves and reveal their deeper tacit thinking (Sanders & Stappers, 2012). Since “making generalizations about millennials is inherently difficult” (Cramer, 2014), this study applied a co-designing approach to engage a diverse group of millennial consumers in various participatory workshops to explore different levels and stages of their fast and slow fashion consumption. The questions that guided the research design of this study are:

- How can co-designing tools help millennial apparel consumers understand their consumption habits when it comes to buying, caring, and discarding clothing items?
- How can co-designing tools extract the deeper, subconscious thinking behind the motivation of millennial apparel consumers?
- How can co-designing tools be used to inform the creation of a critical-creative thinking framework developed with millennial consumers?

This research study developed participatory design research toolkits to gather rich data from different groups of millennials of various ages, gender and different life stages. When talking about the differences between millennials Cramer (2014) writes, “There are many economic and
cultural crosscurrents in play, and there will necessarily be different experiences among any twenty-year age group that includes those entering high school as well as full adults already parenting teens” (p. 12). Unearthing those different experiences would allow this study to discover patterns and frame insights when disseminating the data. The hypothesis for this research study is:

There will be a different mindset between younger millennial consumers towards the way they buy, care, and discard their clothing items than that of older millennials.

The hypothesis guiding this study is based on literature reviews concerning fast and slow fashion consumption and user behaviors which showed a difference in attitude towards the acquisition and discarding of clothing products (Watson & Yan, 2013).

1.3 Significance

The development and use of a critical-creative thinking framework model would be useful to consumers who want to gauge their consumption habits and want to become more sustainable in the way in which they shop, care, and dispose of their clothes. This critical-creative thinking framework model could also be useful to designers, manufacturers, distributors, and retailers from the fashion industry who want to market themselves to the millennial population. Designers can use the framework to understand the needs and aspirations of millennial apparel consumers. Industry leaders can utilize the model to think about alternative ways to produce clothing items for a more particular consumer base, millennials.
Chapter 2: Literature Review

In this chapter, information from books, academic journals, and informal popular media scans and retail websites was reviewed to gather background information about the apparel industry, millennial consumers, and design research methodologies. The review of the apparel industry literature was focused on the fast and slow fashion. The review of literature and research documents on millennials, one of the largest groups of apparel consumers, provided a broader understanding of their characteristics and clothing consumption habits. Zaltman & Zaltman’s (2008) Deep Metaphors were examined and applied as a viewing lens to reveal millennials’ rational and emotional states of mind on fast and slow fashion. Lastly, generative participatory design research methods were explored to understand their effectiveness in gathering rich data from participants in this research study.

2.1 The Fashion Industry

This thesis research investigated the global fashion industry, with emphasis placed on the tendencies of millennials from the United States, where this research was conducted. This research study was particularly interested in the growth of the American apparel industry and how it has influenced the way in which the rest of the world produces, sells, and discards apparel items. This section breaks down the growth of the fast fashion industry and its dominance of the world apparel markets. It will discuss the emergence of the slow fashion movement, (Fletcher, 2007) which counters the traditional methods and practices utilized by the fast fashion industry by emphasizing the quality of working conditions, fair wages, and a respect for the environment
(Fletcher, 2008).

2.1.1 Fast Fashion

To understand how the fashion industry has grown in the states and has transformed to the behemoth it is today, driven by the growth of the fast fashion industry, it is important to understand the apparel industries’ beginnings. In the early eighteenth century, the ready-to-wear (RTW) clothing industry was created by making garments for sailors, minors, and slaves out of the scrap materials from custom suits (Burns, Mullet, & Bryant, 2011). The fabrics were cut in “slop shops” a term that “later became a standard term for cheap, ready-made clothing” (Burns, Mullet, & Bryant, 2011, p. 6) and then sewn at home by women. As the RTW industry continued to grow, consumers “wanted good-quality apparel but did not want to pay the high prices associated with the custom-made clothing” (Burns, Mullet, & Bryant, 2011). That sentiment is still shared today by some consumers, including millennials, who struggle with the idea of purchasing more expensive custom-made higher quality clothing versus cheaper fast fashion RTW clothing items (Wasilak, 2016).

With the development of a range of clothing patterns and size standardization, and the mechanization of apparel production, clothes could be produced for a wide variety of customers’ body types. Standardized patterns were first developed for men, then children, and finally women (Burns, Mullet, & Bryant, 2011). Due to how labor intensive RTW was, “ready supply of immigrant workers spurred the growth of the mass production of apparel” (Burns, Mullet, & Bryant, 2011, p. 10). With the popularity of the shirtwaist clothing product for women, sweatshops, initially “referred to as the system of contractors and subcontractors whereby work
was sweated off” (Burns, Mullet, & Bryant, 2011, p. 11), grew in scale and numbers. The term sweatshop would later be “associated with long hours, unclean and unsafe working conditions, and low pay” (Burns, Mullet, & Bryant, 2011, p.11), problems that can still be found in clothing factories today where employees experience “physical and verbal abuse and egregiously excessive working hours of 19 hours a day or more” (Lavergne, 2015, p. 68).

Most of the clothes in the US are no longer produced domestically, since most of the industry, and the jobs, have moved overseas. The US apparel industry only accounts for about “2% of the clothing consumers purchase, down from about 50% in 1990” (Cline, 2013, p. 5). China now makes about 41% of clothes (Cline, 2013). The manufacturing process has shifted to other factories overseas in developing countries because labor cost is significantly lower and because unions that protect against child labor (Bureau of International Labor Affairs, 2016), fight for living a wage, and safe working environments are harder to find (Lavergne, 2015). These factories have grown vigorously in scale and numbers today because fast fashion companies are constantly producing new clothing items to sell to consumers, and are not concerned with traditional seasonal selling cycles (Cline, 2013).

The secret to fast fashion’s success is in the selling of unprecedented amounts of clothing items (Cline, 2013). The current fast fashion industry has grown exponentially between 2012-2017 and is expected to continue to grow and double compared to 2012 (Singh, 2017). One of the reasons for such growth can be attributed to technological progress, where supply chains “depend on a constant exchange of computerized information and phone calls” (Cline, 2013, p. 98) in order to avoid creating a product that will not sell.
Fast fashion has not only increased the speed and amount of clothing produced, but has made “quality and craftsmanship obsolete” (Cline, 2013, p. 116). The amount of fashion produced has also created a disconnect between “expanding wardrobes and the additional demands of fossil fuels, energy, and water” (Cline, 2013, p. 122). The commoditization of apparel, increased production speeds, and environmental resources needed to produce such clothing items has created a wicked problem (Rittel & Webber, 1973). As product demand continues to go up, the amount of natural resources needed to produce such items has also increased to “approximately 145 million tons of coal and somewhere between 1.5 trillion and 2 trillion gallons of water” (Cline, 2013, p. 125). The current fast fashion industry, built on a history of quantity over quality and the depletion of natural resources, is simply not sustainable. There is an alternative to the fast fashion industry that encourages consumers, designers, manufacturers, and retailers to slow down in terms of both consumption and production speeds. In slow fashion, an awareness of environmental and societal impacts of producing clothes is not hidden in the background, but rather brought to the forefront (Fletcher, 2008).

2.1.2 Slow Fashion

In her book, Sustainable Fashion & Textiles: Design Journeys (2014), Kate Fletcher introduces readers to the concept of a new, more sustainable approach to apparel construction and care, slow fashion. Slow fashion was inspired by the slow food movement. “Founded by Carlo Petrini in 1989, Slow food links pleasure and food with awareness and responsibility” (Fletcher, 2014). Building off of the theme of awareness and responsibility, Fletcher states that slow fashion, “is about combining ideas about a sense of nature’s time (of the value of traditions and wisdom), as
well as the more common timeframes of fashion and commerce. Its emphasis is on quality (of
is about a heightened awareness about the fashion cycle by consumers and a deeper
understanding about quality, as well as the “relationship between designer and maker, maker and
garment and garment and user” (Fletcher, p.173).

Kate Fletcher and Lynda Grose’s (2012) book *Fashion & Sustainability: Design for
Change* stresses the importance of looking at aspects of the cycle of clothing production and
consumption in order to positively affect change towards a more sustainable future reflecting a
way of thinking which sees each part of the fashion industry’s products, systems, and practice as
a whole fashion cycle that has to undergo improvement and not just a few isolated parts (2012, p.
11). They pose a critical question: “Are there principles and metrics we can agree upon that are
key to a world that is not only sustained, but also actually restored? Second, with these shared
principles, can we create a framework for change that guides business activities in the fashion
industry, a framework that is practical, scientific, and economic?” (Fletcher & Grose, 2012, p. 4).

Fletcher and Grose have used their Transforming Fashion Products Concept to explore
and also focus “on opportunities to influence the environmental and social impact of garments in
their design and development across the entire product life cycle – that is, from fibre to factory
and onwards to consumer, point of disposal and potential reuse” (2012, p. 11). The Transforming
Fashion Products Concept was developed to help consumers understand the current apparel
industry, and what it could be. Fletcher & Grose (2012) write, “Yet before we work to reshape or
revolutionize solutions, we have to get to grips with what they are already and, indeed, what they
could be” (p.11). The Transforming Fashion Products Concept is comprised of five main parts: Material, Processes, Distribution, Consumer Care, and Disposal.

When looking at the first part of the Transforming Fashion Products Concept, Materials, the authors write, “Materials are critical to fashion: they make fashion’s symbolic production real and provide us with the physical means with which to form identity and to act as social beings and as individuals” (Fletcher & Grose, 2012, p. 13). The basis for most fashion products start with material, and whether it’s a fast fashion or slow fashion product, all companies in the apparel industry produce physical items. Fletcher & Grose (2012) describe the next step of the concept, Processes, as “an essential part of converting raw fibre to fabric to fashion garment” (p. 33). Whereas Material is concerned with growing and producing, Processes is focused on converting and transforming the materials into fashion objects.

The next step, Distribution, moves away from the production of garments to concerning itself with the delivery or shipping of the clothing items. Fletcher & Grose (2012) write, “tracing the shipping routes of any garment and its components through sourcing and production, reveals an astonishing mass of intersecting transportation lines” (p.54). Fletcher and Grose are exposing consumers to the ways in which clothing items are not only produced, but shipped around the world before they end up in the retail stores where consumers purchase them, or have them shipped to their house. Which leads to the next step, Consumer Care. When it comes to Consumer Care, “the resource consumption associated with the use patterns dominates all other life-cycle stages” (Fletcher & Grose, 2012, p. 60). The Consumer Care step of the Transforming Fashion Products concept teaches the consumers that once they acquire clothing items, the way in which they wash and care for the item could have even more negative environmental impact.
than its creation and distribution combined (p. 60). Not only that, but the consumer is also in charge of the final step in their Transforming Fashion Products Concept: Disposal, which Fletcher and Grose discuss as the end of the life for many textile products which ultimately is the landfill (2012, p. 63). This study adapted the Transforming Fashion Products Concept to develop the mapping process of current and ideal clothing journeys of apparel during the participatory workshops with millennials (as described in detail in the next two chapters).

### 2.2 Millennials

While the definitive age of the millennial generation is difficult to come by due to the constant shift throughout the years, this study looks at the earliest year they were born, from 1977 (Fromm & Garton, 2013), to the latest, 2004 (Horovitz, 2012). With a population of over 80 million, the millennial population is one of the leading forces in consumer spending in the United States (Fromm & Garton, 2013). Millennials are one of the largest populations to shop at fast fashion brick and mortar retail stores including Zara, H&M, and Topshop (Kestenbaum, 2017), and online at sites like Amazon.com and Nordstrom where sales have from increased year-over-year (Rey, 2017). Millennials spend $600 billion on clothes each year, but their rationale and decision-making processes are rarely studied or understood (Kestenbaum, 2017). While innovation in clothing production speed in the fast fashion sector has decreased the price of clothing and made it accessible to most of the population, it has also created a throw away economy where inexpensive clothing products can be easily discarded (Pookulangara & Shephard, 2013).
In *Marketing to Millennials: Reach the Largest and Most Influential Generation of Consumers Ever*, Jeff Fromm and Christie Garton view the millennial population as one of the most actively engaged consumers when it comes to brands they trust (2013, p. 8). From a random panel sample of 4,259 millennials, the authors were able to find patterns on consumption habits, to social media usage, to decision making when purchasing a product (2013, p. 3). The authors compare personality traits of millennials by placing them alongside other generations, including the Baby Boomers (born 1946 to 1964), and Generation X (born 1965 to 1976) (Fromm & Garton, 2013). Older generations grew up in a hierarchal tradition where the ideation and creation processes were left to the design “expert” who worked for a company (Sanders, 2008 p.9), but those traditions are shifting as new methods emerge that blur the line of the “expert.” The millennial population differs from previous generations because they are not simply willing to be passive consumers, but rather want to “actively participate, co-create, and, most importantly, be included as partners in the brands they love” (p. 8). Fromm and Garton highlight that in the “past, consumers were rarely part of the product development and marketing process” (p. 9), but as the millennial population has grown in scale and influence, compounded by advancements in digital and mobile technology, “consumers of all ages can participate in these closed-door processes, and many are accepting, if not demanding, the invitation” (p. 9).

Fromm and Garton also counter the ideology of the ‘old model’ of developing and marketing products by employing a new way of thinking about millennials as consumers, and the way in which they market themselves in the new economy, the Participation economy (p. 8). The ‘new model’ argues that in order for millennials to feel a part of a brand, or to show brand loyalty, the marketing has to engage them because traditional functional and emotional benefits
will not be enough for a brand to thrive in the new economy. This distinction is important in setting up the argument that taking the word of millennials at face value isn’t enough to actively engage a consumer base that is ever changing and adapting. The older model was based on “interruption, reaction, heavy users, big promises, and passive consumers” (p. 10), whereas the new model encourages engagement, interaction, engaged participants, personal gestures, and active co-creators (p. 10).

Generalizing the millennial population is not only irresponsible, but a failed opportunity to properly understand them as a population with unique characteristics and distinctions. To better understand the traditional “old model” compared to the “new model” of the participation economy, Fromm, Lindell and Decker published a paper titled American Millennials: Deciphering the Enigma Generation, in 2011, that breaks downs key characteristics of the millennial population. They broke the millennial population down to six distinct segments including: Hip-ennial, Old-School Millennial, Gadget Guru Millennial, Clean and Green Millennial, Millennial Mom, and Anti-Millennial (pp. 39-46). The individual groups have their own characteristics: the Hip-ennial are “cautious, global, charitable, and information hungry” (p. 40); the Old-School Millennial are “disconnected, cautious, and charitable” (p. 41); the Gadget Guru are “success, wired, and free-spirited” (p. 42); the Clean and Green Millennial are “impressionable, cause driven, healthy, and Green” (p. 43); the Millennial Mom are “wealthy, family-oriented, and digitally savvy” (p. 44); and finally, the Anti-Millennial are “locally minded and conservative” (p. 46). Due to the variety of subcategories of millennial consumers, Fromm and Garton caution brands against creating products or services that target all the millennials
simultaneously, as it could end up doing something that does not appeal or is at cross-purposes to a key segment.

Millennials are not only different when it comes to the segmentations previously described, they are also different when it comes to gender (p. 47). Compared to previous generations, not only are more millennial women seeking higher educational degrees, earning “60 percent of Master’s degrees, about half of all law and medical degrees, and 42 percent of MBAs”, they are also holding more managerial and professional jobs, 51.4 % up from 26.1 % in the 1980s (p. 48). While millennial women are progressing, and growing in academic and professional environments, there are still discrepancies in the amount of money women earn in the workforce compared to men. Although women earn “77 cents to every dollar paid to men” (p. 48), with greater transparency and legislative laws, we could see this changing in the near future. Iceland has recently enacted equal pay laws that hold companies accountable for paying their employees equally (Domonoske, 2018), where women on average earn “14-18 percent less than their male counterparts” (Tarr, 2018). Demanding more transparency may have a ripple effect, whereas equal pay for women, fair living-wages, and child labor is still an issue in developing countries (Laverge, 2015). In order to understand what millennials think about the apparel industry, tools that allow them to openly express their thought processes are important in order to unearth their subconscious thinking.

2.3 Participatory Design Research

In the last few decades, there has been an evolution in the way in which people conduct design research. When it comes to generative design research methods, participatory workshops not
only serve as a tool of gathering information from participants, but they also serve as connection points between the designer and the user. In order to understand generative design research and its practices, it must first be agreed upon that all people are creative, but not all people are designers (Sanders & Stappers, 2012). This distinction is important in understanding the ways in which generative design research methods can create opportunities within the apparel industry, a place where opportunities to work with the end user in the front end is not often found (Kim, 2017).

When looking at the “evolving map of design practice and design research” (see Figure 1) created by Elizabeth Sanders, there are various ways of seeing how fashion designers, or designers in the apparel industry would fall within the grid (Sanders, 2008).

Figure 1: ‘Map of design research – underlying dimensions’ (Sanders, 2008, p. 2)
The bottom left corner of the map, (i.e., research-led with expert mindset) is how the majority of the fashion industry currently operates (Burns, Mullet, & Bryant, 2011). This bottom left corner of design research fits well with fashion design because it encompasses traditional traits of the designer who designs for their muse, or clientele (Agins, 1999). In the traditional method, there is no input in the front end from consumers to the designer. The chain only goes one way, from the design and crafting of the garments by the designer and their team, to manufacturing and marketing by buyers (Burns, Mullet, & Bryant, 2011), to the eventual purchasing of the items by the consumer (Simmel, 1957). The traditional method of research-led with expert mindset is the opposite of the right side of map (i.e., research-led with participatory mindset) which views the end user as a partner and active co-creator (Sanders, 2008).

In their book *Convivial Toolbox: Generative Research for the Front End of Design* (2012), Elizabeth Sanders and Pieter Jan Stappers describe the three perspectives of co-creation as a mindset, method, and tool or technique (see Figure 2).

Figure 2: The Three Perspectives on Co-creation. (Sanders & Stappers, 2012, p. 31)
The first perspective is of a co-creation mindset that concerns itself with the larger societal context. In the second perspective, co-creation as a method, Sanders and Stappers (2012), view “co-creation as a set of methods that is used mainly during the design exploration and design phases.” Here, co-creation is more focused on use and experience. In the final perspective, co-design as a tool or technique, it is used in the later stages of the design and development process. The final perspective is focused on using co-creative tools and techniques to make money (Sanders & Stappers, 2012, p. 31). Since this study seeks to get a deeper understanding of the way consumers think, the focus is on the first perspective of co-design, co-design as a mindset.

When Sanders and Stappers (2012) elaborate on co-creation as mindset, they write, “This is the broadest and most long-range of the three perspectives and the one that has the most potential to have a positive impact on the lives of people” (p. 30). Therefore, co-creation as a mindset is where this study positions itself. To get a deeper understanding of millennial mindsets though, new ways of gathering data about the deeper understanding of people is important.

This research looks for an innovative way to examine the familiar approach of fashion design and production, which could change the current location of how fashion works within the map of design research created by Sanders (2008). Instead of a ‘research-led with expert mindset’, the fashion industry can start to think about a ‘design-led with participatory mindset’ perspective. With the advent of technology, the way information is spread between designer and consumers has dramatically changed. Instead of having an archaic system in which fashion designers are designing without the feedback of consumers, there are now possibilities to use generative design research tools to invite the feedback of consumers and create active
engagement with them. This approach is innovative for the apparel industry because it changes
the traditional apparel design and manufacturing cycle to one that is more inclusive, where
designers no longer design for the end user, but with them at beginning of the design process.

Fletcher & Grose in *Fashion & Sustainability: Design for Change* (2012), discuss how
co-design has the ability to disrupt the way in which the fashion industry normally operates.
When discussing the way fashion works today, it is the opposite of co-designing, Fletcher &
Grose write,

“Elite designers, high street retailers and global brands cement and even augment their
positions by protecting their concepts and product. Select ‘auteurs’ hold knowledge in a
secretive system closed to outside. Information flows one way down the hierarchy from
top to bottom, as decisions about design direction, finish, fabric, and cost are handed
down to producers, supply chains and consumers.” (pp. 144-145)

The ‘traditional’ way the fashion industry operates can be closed off, secretive, and not
welcoming or inviting to the end user, the fashion consumers. Not only that, but consumers are at
the end of the cycle. Generative design research has the ability to change that.

In co-design, “the design process is turned out on itself. Here, the concern is less about
producing rarefied objects and more with building capacity in the user population” (Fletcher &
Grose, 2012, p. 145). Building “capacity in the user population” helps create more informed
consumers, who can then share their knowledge with other consumers, as well as designers.
Fletcher & Grose call this expansion of knowledge and experience “collective understanding” (p.
145). Generative design research embraces the exchange of knowledge in order to build on a
collective understanding, and has the ability to connect end-users with designers, and designers with end-users.

2.4 Deep Metaphors

This study utilized Gerald and Lindsay Zaltman’s metaphors from their book *Marketing Metaphoria: What Deep Metaphors Reveal about the Minds of Consumers* (2008) as a viewing lens to reveal millennials’ rational and emotional states of mind on fast and slow fashions. Deep Metaphors as described by the Zaltmans are “enduring ways of perceiving things, making sense of what we encounter, and guiding our subsequent actions” (Zaltman & Zaltman, 2008, p. xv). The seven universal deep metaphors in *Marketing Metaphoria* are: 1) Balance, “how justice, equilibrium, and the interplay of elements affect consumer thinking”; 2) Connection, “how the need to relate to oneself and others affects consumer thinking”; 3) Container, “how inclusion, exclusion, and other boundaries affect consumer thinking”; 4) Control, “how the sense of mastery, vulnerability, and well-being affects consumer thinking”, 5) Journey “how the meeting of past, present, and future affect consumer thinking”, 6) Resource, “how acquisitions and their consequences affect consumer thinking”, and 7) Transformation, “how changes in substance and circumstances affect consumer thinking” (Zaltman & Zaltman, 2008). While the Zaltmans’ Deep Metaphors were originally geared towards marketing, the seven universals metaphors were used in this research to better understand the thinking of millennials with regard to fast and slow fashions.

To successfully utilize Deep Metaphors, one must practice how to “think deeply by applying disciplined imagination to deep insight from consumers” (Zaltman & Zaltman, 2008, p.
2). Deeper thinking seeks out new knowledge and understanding about consumers through the 
“use of empirical, rigorous, and relevant information, also called workable knowledge, to 
challenge our assumptions and to engage in disciplined imagination” (Zaltman & Zaltman, 2008, 
p. 10). To gather the deep insight from consumers, the researcher has to go beyond their surface-
level thinking and try to understand the behavior in the consumers’ unconscious minds (Zaltman & Zaltman, 2008). This is done by the researcher who is seeking the insight in order to place 
themselves in the shoes of consumers, in order to learn “from their perspective why and how they 
think and do what they do” (Zaltman & Zaltman, 2008, p. 11).

In order to successfully understand and interpret metaphors, thorough background 
research in terms of what signifies metaphors and how to spot them is especially important. As 
one of the leading pieces of literature on the matter (Gross & Hogler, 2005), George Lakoff and 
Mark Johnson’s *Metaphors We Live By* (1980) was used to understand what metaphors are and 
how individuals use them. To Lakoff and Johnson, “Metaphor is principally a way of conceiving 
of one thing in terms of another, and its primary function is understanding” (1980, p. 36). To 
Lakoff and Johnson, as well as Zaltman and Zaltman, metaphors are capable of giving the 
researcher a new understanding of consumer mindsets when it comes to the consumers’ past, 
daily activities, and what they know and believe in (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, p. 139). Metaphors 
deal with both reason and imagination because “reason, at the very least, involves categorization, 
entailment, and inference. Imagination, in one of its many aspects, involves seeing one kind of 
thing in terms of another kind of thing—what we have called metaphorical thought. Metaphor is 
thus imaginative rationality” (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). Understanding what millennials think, 
say, and do when they shop for clothing items is absolutely connected to imaginative rationality
because it is important to put one’s self in the shoes of the participants. It is important to understand that metaphorical thought “is normal and ubiquitous in our mental life, both conscious and unconscious” (Lakoff & Johnson, p. 244). Unearthing the unconscious mindset patterns that drive participants to buy, use, and discard clothing items can highlight, or bring to the forefront, what consumers think consciously.
Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1 Approach

The research consisted of two phases, the survey and participatory workshops, conducted over
the span of a year and a half. This study utilized both quantitative and qualitative research
methods (Sandelowski, 2011). The quantitative data were collected from online surveys (phase
one) of over 100 respondents from all generational groups including Boomers, Gen-z, and
millennials. Gathering data from multiple generational groups was done for the purpose of
examining the differences between millennial consumption habits and those of other generational
groups. In phase two, the study gathered qualitative data from participatory workshops because
“typical survey approaches with closed-ended questions are ill-suited to provide sufficient depth when data must reflect ideas, emotions, values, themes, thoughts, and feelings” (Wilson & Elliot, 2016). Four participatory workshops were conducted. Each session incorporated preliminary group interviews and a series of co-designing activities—preliminary positioning, deep metaphor exercise, journey mapping, and post-positioning (see Figure 3).

3.2 Participants

For the first phase of this study, the online survey was sent out to the researcher’s personal network. While the survey allowed the collection of a diverse collection of information from the different generational groups, the demographic that this study was particularly interested in is that of the millennial generation. Since the exact age of millennials is hard to pinpoint due to constant shifting, this study utilized the earliest and latest known year of birth, between 1977 (Fromm & Garton, 2013) and the 2004 (Horovitz, 2012).

The participants for the second phase of this study were recruited from the researcher’s personal network, responses from the survey, as well as through the use of fliers that were posted around campus that were used as a recruitment tool for the phase two participatory workshops (see Table 1).
Table 1: Demographics of Participants for Phase Two, the Participatory Workshop.

The median age for the participants of the second phase was 28 years old, the youngest participant was 24 years of age while the oldest was 38 years of age. Overall, the participants for the second phase were mostly male, making up 10 out of the 17 participates. The participant makeup for the four groups consisted of two mixed groups of both male and female participants, an all-female group, and an all-male group.
3.3 Research Design

3.3.1 Survey

The first phase of the research consisted of an online questionnaire that would take between 15-20 minutes of the participants’ time to fill out. The survey invitation (see Appendix A) was sent out online and open to all generational groups for the purpose of examining the differences between millennial consumption habits and those of other generational groups. While this research was particularly interested in the thought process of millennial users, the diverse sampling allowed the researcher to find traits of each group. The format of the survey consisted of closed, open, and dichotomous questions, as well a slider scale (Law, n.d.) that was used to understand where participants viewed themselves in terms of fast or slow fashion data.

Participants were asked about their clothes shopping and washing habits. Questions included:

What’s the average amount you spend on clothing items? Where do you currently buy most of your clothes? How often do you shop for new clothes? How often do you wash your clothes? What do you do with your old clothes when you’re done using them? A slider scale was used to see where participants perceived themselves to be on a scale from one – signifying slow fashion to five –signifying fast fashion.

The open-ended questions asked participants, based on their positioning from the slider scale question, to provide a brief statement describing why they placed themselves where they did. The data from the survey helped identify patterns amongst the different millennial apparel consumers. The survey was also utilized as a recruitment tool for millennials who would be willing to participate in the second phase of the ongoing research, the participatory workshops.
3.3.2 Participatory Workshops

3.3.2.1 Preliminary Interview

The participatory workshops began with a brief interview. The interviews were conversational, focusing on personal questions about shopping, use, and discarding of clothing items (see Appendix B). Questions ranged from: where do you like to shop? Do you do any of your shopping online? On average, how much do you think you spend on clothing items? Do you shop at thrift/second stores? Since the interview was conversational, the researcher would change the direction of the conversation depending on the participants’ responses.

3.3.2.2 Preliminary Positioning Activity

Figure 4: Preliminary Positioning Activity
The next step in the participatory workshop consisted of a preliminary positioning activity, where participants were asked to mark on a line where they currently see themselves in terms of fast or slow fashion. Each participant was asked to mark their perceived location on a large sheet of paper on the wall that read FAST on the left side and SLOW on the right side with a line connecting the two ends (see Figure 4). The preliminary positioning activity were used to document where participants viewed themselves prior to collaborating on the participatory workshop in order to see if there would be any change in their positioning at the end of the activity.

3.3.2.3 Deep Metaphor Mapping

Figure 5: Seven Blank Universal Deep Metaphors Posters
Gerald and Lindsay Zaltman’s “Deep Metaphors” concept was used as a viewing lens to reveal millennials’ rational and emotional states of mind on sustainable fashion. The seven Deep Metaphors—Balance, Transformation, Journey, Container, Connection, Resource, and Control—are universal drivers of human behavior that shape what people think, hear, say, and do (Zaltman & Zaltman, 2008). After the Preliminary Positioning Activity, participants were presented with the seven metaphors and a brief description of each on seven posters. They were given a toolkit to use and were asked to fill the posters with visual and written statements regarding fast or slow fashion (see Figure 5).

Figure 6: Deep Metaphor Mapping Activity with an Example Page of the Toolkit Images
The toolkit (see Appendix C) included visual materials such as an assortment of photographs, post-it notes, paper shapes, as well as tape, and markers to help participants express what they were thinking and feeling (see Figure 6). The four to six participants at each session worked simultaneously on the metaphors mapping activity and shared their results with each other in storytelling and reflection format.

3.3.2.4 Current Journey Mapping

After the Deep Metaphor Mapping Activity, the participants were asked to work together on creating a current journey map (see Figure 7) for a clothing item utilizing the Transforming Fashion Product Concept (Fletcher & Grose, 2012). The five steps listed in the journey consist of: Materials, Processes, Distribution, Consumer Care, and Disposal. Fletcher & Grose state that in order for change to be possible and to find solutions, people must understand the current
process and what it can be. In order to document the journey mapping activities, one participant from each group volunteered to record the responses from the group’s other members. The participants were again given access to the toolkits if they desired to use the components to express what they were thinking. The participants then presented the current journey map they had created.

3.3.2.5 Ideal Journey Mapping

Once the participants completed the five steps of the current journey mapping activity, they were then instructed to work together on creating the ideal journey map for a clothing item utilizing the Transforming Fashion Product Concept (Fletcher & Grose, 2012). The five steps again consisted of: Materials, Processes, Distribution, Consumer Care, and Disposal. The same
participant who had volunteered to record the previous responses did so again. The participants were given access to the toolkit if they desired to use it to express what they were thinking. The participants then presented the final journey map they created. They discussed their observations from the current and ideal journeys (see Figure 8).

3.3.2.6 Post-Positioning Activity

Figure 9: Participant Working on the Post-Positioning Activity

To conclude the participatory workshops, participants were asked to again mark on the line where they saw themselves in terms of fast and slow fashion at the end of the participatory workshop session (see figure 9). This was used to document any changes in perception from the beginning of the session to the end.
Chapter 4: Analysis & Findings

In this chapter, the results from the online survey (phase one) and participatory workshops (phase two) are described and analyzed. The summary of the online survey consisted of both quantitative and qualitative results. The quantitative data came from the closed, dichotomous, and slider scale questions from the survey. The qualitative data came from those questions that asked participants to elaborate on their self-perception in terms of being a fast or slow fashion user. The participatory workshop data was transcribed and sorted in order to find patterns. The participatory workshop data was first analyzed individually by each group, then the data was analyzed by all four groups combined.

4.1 Survey

The online survey results were gathered from over a hundred respondents from various generational groups including Baby Boomers (born between 1946 and 1964), Generation X (born between 1965 and 1977), and millennials (born between 1977 and 2004). The data collected from non-millennial population group were used to see if there were any differences or similarities between various generational groups. From the survey respondents, 88 identified themselves to be part of the millennial generation.

The data from the online survey was then filtered and analyzed by age, positioning on the slider scale in terms of fast or slow (one meaning fast and five signifying slow), washing habits, and how long participants held onto their clothing items. The survey data were analyzed through
summary graphics that were created to find any patterns between the different age groups. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize the findings in the patterns.

With the use of descriptive statistics, patterns of consumption tendencies and rationale for purchasing clothing items emerged that were related to past research studies on fast and slow apparel consumption, particularly Watson & Yan’s *An Exploratory Study of The Decision Processes of Fast Versus Slow Fashion Consumers* (2013). In their study, Watson & Yan found similarities in consumer habits of this study when it came to fast and slow fashion users: fast fashion consumers tend to seek out trendy and lower quality clothing items, which leads the consumer to dispose of or donate their clothing item at higher rate. They also found patterns between the amount of time consumers hold on to their clothing items, stating that slow fashion consumers generally hold on to their clothing items longer because their shopping tendencies are not based on trends, but rather quality (Watson & Yan, 2013, p. 149).

### 4.1.1 Fast Fashion Consumers

From the responses to the survey, it appears that fast fashion consumers were younger than both the undecided+exploring and slow fashion consumers, being between the ages of 18 and 25 years of age. The patterns show that they spend less money on their clothing items and do not hold on to their clothing items for long. When asked to write their rationale and decision-making process behind the way they shop, fast fashion Respondent 2 wrote, “I sacrifice quality material for affordable prices.” This was shared with Respondent 41 who also wrote, “The fast (fashion) one can always provide me more options and it is cheaper.” It appeared to be a sentiment shared by other respondents as well, especially Respondent 51 whom wrote, “A lot of times when I go
shopping, I find myself trying to find the most stylish but least expensive piece of clothing. I don't necessarily think about having that item of clothing for a long period of time, I just want it to serve the purpose of satisfying my immediate need.” This relates back to Watson & Yan (2013) where they also found that by consumers seeking out trendier, cheaper clothing items, they were more likely to get rid of them quickly. Fast fashion users appear to be interested in satisfying their current needs and not thinking about holding onto the clothing items for a long time.

When thinking about the way in which fast fashion clothing items were produced, it appeared that fast fashion respondents were aware that by purchasing “cheaper” clothes they were sacrificing quality. Respondent 50 wrote, “I usually shop online or at a mall. I perceive those things to be more correlated with fast fashion because they are likely mass produced and more cheaply made than something sold from a more independent source.” By shopping online or at the mall, Respondent 50 is giving himself the benefit of the doubt that the inexpensive clothing items will not last a long time. It seems that other participants agree with the sentiment that new inexpensive clothing items lack quality and may not hold up to normal wear and tear. For example, Respondent 20 wrote, “Unfortunately, I cannot always afford to buy high price clothing items and most of the time have to resort to purchasing lower quality "fast-fashion".” It appears he understands that by buying fast fashion clothing items, he may be sacrificing the quality. It also appears that economic factors, in connection with trendy clothing options, influence the decision-making process of fast fashion users.
4.1.2 The Undecided+Exploring Consumers

While looking for patterns in the survey responses, a new group of consumers emerged: these users are identified as the undecided+exploring (Hernández, 2017). The new consumer group, the undecided+exploring exist between fast and slow. Respondents who placed themselves in between fast and slow can also be considered as intermediate or neutral consumers. Reading through the qualitative data gathered from their responses allowed the researcher to get a deeper understanding of this new consumer group. The undecided+exploring have, in the past, shopped at fast fashion stores or still do, and make calculated decisions based on economic and personal factors (Mak, 2016). In the survey, Respondent 48 who placed herself right in between fast and slow, wrote,

“I admire and love the concept of slow fashion, but in recent years I have gone through physical transformation and economic transformation that has not made it easy to keep the kind of clothes I would like to have that fall into the slow fashion category. Also, I have items from the fast fashion industry that I would like for them to last longer and enjoy them, but when I try to clean or repair it would not hold. So, I put myself in neutral ground because I would like to transition more and more towards slow fashion supporter but find it difficult to do so completely right now.”

In her statement, Respondent 48 epitomizes some of the characteristics of undecided+exploring consumer as someone who could be going through a personal transformation, is knowledgeable about construction quality of clothes, and is willing to repair clothing items to keep them out of the landfill and is moving towards or is aspiring to become a slower consumer.
These sentiments were also shared with other undecided+exploring users, including Respondent 74 who wrote,

“I say I am neutral because I do love slow fashion and the quality, thought, and time that goes into them. But being a recently graduated student, I don't have the money to buy them often yet, especially since slow fashion items are more expensive. So, a good amount of clothes I own do end up being fast fashion items. But in the future, I plan to try and buy more slow fashion clothing.”

He understands that slower fashion clothing items may cost a little more than fast fashion items because of the higher construction quality. He is also in an economic transitional period in his life, being a recently “graduated student” who may be continuing his education or entering the professional workforce. While he aspires to become a slower consumer in the future, other undecided+exploring consumers are comfortable balancing between fast and slow consumption habits.

There were some undecided+exploring consumers who make calculated decisions about where to buy their clothes. When it comes to deciding how to buy slow and fast clothing items, Respondent 90 wrote, “For longer-wear items like jackets, shoes, sweaters, denim, athletic wear I tend to spend more and shop at slow fashion retailers. For casual wear, t-shirts, swimwear, socks, "going-out" clothes I tend to shop at fast fashion retailers.” When it comes to varying her shopping style, she wants slower fashion items that will be used more often to be made of higher construction quality, while her casual items and basics clothing essentials like t-shirt, swimwear, socks, and “going-out” clothes can come from fast fashion retailers. This sentiment was also shared with Respondent 85 who wrote, “Certain pieces I spend more and buy more slow fashion.
I buy fast fashion for things like tops that I replace often.” These undecided+exploring consumers are facilitating their budgets to meet a particular purpose, spending more for items that will last a long time and less for items that will be worn more often.

4.1.3 Slow Fashion Consumers

When it comes to slow fashion consumers, it appears that they are not necessarily interested in buying more inexpensive clothing items but fewer higher quality clothing items that they feel will last a long time. This appears to be the sentiment shared by many of the respondents from the online survey who placed themselves as slow consumers. When it comes to the way they shop, it seems that they view clothes as an investment, where they spend more in acquiring fewer higher quality articles of clothing so that they do not continue to buy the same clothing time and time again. Respondent 86 wrote,

“I view clothing as an investment in quality. Even if it costs more, if it is ethically made, and constructed with more care and with better quality materials, then it hopefully will last longer, and I will not need to purchase clothing as frequently. Also, I am very tall, and I have needed custom clothing-- particularly shirts. So, in many cases, I have no choice if I really want something to fit. So, it is an investment in a good fit above all else.”

He is not only saying that he is investing in quality, but he is also buying the clothing items because they are “ethically made” which shows a sensitivity to the working conditions of laborers who help construct clothing pieces. Respondent 88 also shares similar feelings when acquiring clothes but was also willing to wait to acquire the right article of clothing. In her
response she wrote, “I emphasize buying fewer, higher quality and timeless pieces. I also have uniforms, with few exceptions. I also research and plan before I make new purchases -- sometimes for months, even, to make sure I'll still want to wear an item later.” She is not only willing to wait but is also willing to do the research to make sure the clothing item is something she will continue to wear many years after purchasing it.

The idea of longevity and quality seems to be a pattern amongst the slow fashion respondents of the survey, which ties back to Watson & Yan’s findings that slower apparel consumers’ shopping habits are based not on trends but rather quality, and that slower consumers tend to hold on to their clothing items longer (p.149). Respondent 92 wrote, “I believe in timeless elegance, and hate to go clothes shopping. I want my garments to be relevant for 10+ years after I buy them.” While quality clothing items utilize more durable construction techniques that allow them to last longer, proper care is equally important. Respondent 101 wrote, “I rarely buy new clothes except when my current ones get ripped or torn or if there is a stain that I cannot remove. I try to wear my clothes for as long as possible and air dry them when I can and take good care of them to preserve the material.” Proper care of clothing items is important for the integrity of the material, as over washing clothes tends to damage them sooner (Levi, 2015). Seeking out quality materials and constructed garments and minimizing their wardrobe size appeared to be a pattern amongst the slow fashion consumers.

4.1.4 Fast Fashion, Undecided+Exploring, and Slow Fashion Consumers

Looking at the three groups of apparel consumers separately allowed for individual tendencies to emerge, whereas looking at them collectively reinforced some of those patterns and differences.
The summary graphics created from the results of the survey shows differences between the three. In terms of the amount of time participants held on to their clothing items, it appeared that slow fashion users were more likely to hold on to their clothing items for five to ten years, and ten plus years than both fast fashion and undecided+exploring users. The summary graphics appeared to show that fast fashion consumers were more likely to hold on to clothing items five years and less. It also appeared that the undecided+exploring was moving towards increasing the amount of time they held on to their clothing items (see Figure 10).

![Figure 10: Summary Graphic of the Amount of Time Millennials Hold onto Clothing Items](image)

When it comes to properly caring for clothing items, it is important for the longevity of the garment that proper washing and caring techniques be utilized. Over washing garments causes items to be more prone to fading and tearing (Levi, 2015). When it came to taking care of their clothing items, patterns between how often each of the three consumer groups laundered their clothes were mixed. Fast fashion consumers were more likely to wash their clothes
frequently compared to both the undecided+exploring and slow fashion consumers. The undecided+exploring consumer said that they washed their clothes less than the fast fashion consumer, but more than the slow fashion consumer who appeared to be more likely to launder their clothes once a month (see Figure 11).

Figure 11: Summary Graphic of Number of Washes for Fast, Undecided+exploring, and Slow Fashion Millennials

The survey results appeared to show that most fast fashion millennials shop more often for clothing while spending less per clothing items than the undecided+exploring and slow fashion consumers. The fast fashion consumers also seemed to value the ability to buy inexpensive clothing items, especially since they do not appear to be concerned with owning an article of clothing for a very long time. It did not appear that they felt guilty about their overconsumption of inexpensive clothing items. It seemed they were interested in following trends or saving money rather than dressing in a timeless manner (Hernández, 2017). The practice of over laundering also seemed more prevalent amongst the younger fast fashion
millennials, therefore increasing their carbon footprint by consuming more natural resources such as water and energy (Levi’s, 2015).

4.2 Participatory Workshops

In the second phase of this study, there were four groups made up of a total of 17 millennial participants including seven females and ten males. The youngest participants were in their mid to early twenties and the oldest was in his late thirties. The combined average age of the participants was 28 years old. The participants were guided through five steps in the workshop that allowed them to share their opinions regarding their shopping, caring, and discarding habits about clothes. They were allowed to express themselves freely with the toolkits that were provided.

4.2.1 Interview

The first step in the participatory workshop was a short conversational style interview. The purpose of the interview was to gather background information including participant’s names, ages, and shopping habits. The interview also served as an icebreaker to get participants to get to know one another before they collaborated on the participatory workshops. Since the interview was conversational, the researcher navigated the responses by asking questions to get information out of the participants. The recording of the conversation was then transcribed (see Appendix B) in order to see if there were any patterns between the participants. The interviews found that many of the participants shopped online, were loyal to particular brands, and where transitioning into professional or academic careers. The findings from the interview also
reviewed that participants were mixing and matching their wardrobe, combining clothing items from second hand thrift stores and consignment shops with new purchases from retailers or websites.

4.2.2 Preliminary Positioning

The next step of the workshop was the preliminary positioning activity where the participants were asked to mark on a piece of paper where they perceive themselves to be in terms of fast or slow consumption (see Figure 12). Many of them fell into the middle, or the undecided+exploring section. The participant who placed himself in the slowest section was an older millennial. In the undecided+exploring section, it was found that a majority of the female participants placed themselves towards slower consumption, while the men positioned themselves towards faster. The data gathered from the preliminary positioning activity was important in establishing a baseline to see if participants’ attitudes towards their consumption habits shifted in any way through their participation in the co-creation activity.

Figure 12: Summary Graphic of Fast and Slow Positioning Activity.
4.2.3 Deep Metaphor Mapping Analysis

Following the preliminary positioning activity in the participatory workshop was the deep metaphor mapping activity. The metaphor mapping activity allowed the participants to collaborate on filling in the seven metaphors posters (see Figure 5) that were hanging on the wall. The seven metaphors included: balance, transformation, container, connection, resource, control, and journey. The participants utilized the toolkits that were provided to them which allowed them to collaborate and express themselves freely (see Figure 13).

![Deep Metaphor Mapping Activity Examples from the Participatory Workshops](image)

Figure 13: Deep Metaphor Mapping Activity Examples from the Participatory Workshops

The generative design research tools allowed participants to communicate their subconscious level of thinking when talking about the metaphors. The findings from the deep metaphor mapping activity from the four groups combined revealed that most participants gravitated towards three of the seven deep metaphors when thinking about the fashion cycle (see Figure
14). Once the qualitative data were gathered from the co-creating deep metaphor mapping activity, they then organized and coded to see if any patterns emerged in the analysis. The data were organized by individual participant through their tracking number, then separated by group number. The individual tracking allowed the researcher to follow the activity of each participant, while analyzing the data by groups allowed the researcher to see if there were any overarching themes amongst the four participatory groups. While there have been “few cases” of utilizing generative tools to understand fashion needs (Kim, 2017), the rigorous analysis of the participatory workshops provided a roadmap to the key findings (see Figure 14).

![Figure 14: Deep Metaphor Mapping Analysis, Amount of Activity per Metaphor. The Black Dots Represent Statements Written by Participants, and the Boxes Represent Images from the Toolkits.](image)

Through the analysis of the data from the deep metaphor mapping activity, it was found that three metaphors resonated most with the participants in this study; balance, resource, and
journey. The findings showed that the three most targeted metaphors were unique in that they uncovered specific deeper feeling about the fashion industry that discussed the life cycle of clothes, environmental effects, and personal consumption and acquisition of apparel. The data from the three most targeted metaphors were then placed into a grid to observe any patterns.

![Figure 15: Deep Metaphor Activity, Mapping Data of the Three Targeted Metaphors](image)

The grid (see Figure 16) consisted of columns representing the stages of consumption (fast, undecided+exploring, and slow) and rows representing the three most popular metaphors (balance, resource, and journey). A visual summary of the images that were used from the toolkit was created on the grid to uncover patterns between the groups. Once the visual summary was created, what participants wrote in the mapping activity was also inserted into the same grid. The findings are discussed by stages of consumption, starting with fast, followed by
undecided+exploring, and ending with slow. Each of the stages of consumption has three columns signifying the three most popular metaphors.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stages</th>
<th>Fast</th>
<th>Undecided+Exploring</th>
<th>Slow</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Balance</td>
<td><img src="image1.png" alt="Image" /></td>
<td><img src="image2.png" alt="Image" /></td>
<td><img src="image3.png" alt="Image" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resource</td>
<td><img src="image4.png" alt="Image" /></td>
<td><img src="image5.png" alt="Image" /></td>
<td><img src="image6.png" alt="Image" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journey</td>
<td><img src="image7.png" alt="Image" /></td>
<td><img src="image8.png" alt="Image" /></td>
<td><img src="image9.png" alt="Image" /></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 16: Visual Summary of Deep Metaphor/Mapping Activity Showing all the Images the Participants Picked
4.2.3.1 Deep Metaphor Mapping Findings: Fast

In the first block of the grid, the findings correspond to the fast stage of consumption and the balance metaphor (see Figure 17). The images that participants most often selected had to do with the negative effects of manufacturing and acquiring clothes. For example, Participant 14 posted the image of the t-shirts hang drying and discussed how he “doesn’t feel great” about
acquiring mass produced clothing items that may have been made through sweatshop labor. This sentiment was also found to be true for Participant 9 who posted the image of the women in the factory image and explained how they weren’t sure what the working conditions for garment workers is like. Participant 9 also felt conflicted about having more than they need when other don’t have much. She posted the image of the homeless man with the women walking by to visualize it. When it came to their personal balance of buying clothing items, Participant 16 posted the image of the winter sale sign and discussed how he acquires more than he needs because of the cheap seasonal sale that encourages him to buy more clothes.

When looking at the fast stage of consumption and the resource metaphor, it was found that participants were thinking about the societal and environmental effects of the fashion industry. Participant 8 discussed how “most performance apparel” utilize a lot of natural resources because they have to be frequently laundered after use. Building on Participants 8’s comment about performance apparel, Participant 6 also discussed how the image of the workout clothes made him think about “shopping for conditions,” which forces consumers to acquire more clothes for specific needs, therefore utilizing more natural resources in the buying and caring phase. Not only were participants thinking about how shopping for fast fashion clothes forces them to acquire more, but how it can alter their mood. Participant 11 pasted the image of the messy closet, and the image of a fashion retailer display, with a paper cutout of a man drawn with a frown in between the two images to show that having too many clothes and constantly shopping was causing her distress. The guilt associated with over consuming and utilizing more than is needed was also shared with Participant 13 who placed the image of the brain graphic and the image of the homeless man changing. These images made him think about the ways in which
he was utilizing more than he needed and becoming desensitized to the problems of others who have fewer resources available to them.

In the final fast stage of consumption under the journey, the findings show that participants were thinking about both the physical journey from production, selling, and buying, and the life cycle of clothing products. Participant 10 posted the image of the logos of some fast fashion retailers to discuss the “epic journey” clothes have to go through to get to consumers. The epic journey for the retailer ends in their stores, where they market and sell the clothes. Participants 14 and 15 both selected the image of the inside of a shopping center and how when they were younger they would visit the malls to shop for clothing items, but as they have gotten older they no longer shop at them. This sentiment was also shared with Participant 1 who wrote, “God, I hope this is the only time I come here this year.” As they have gotten older, the idea of visiting a large shopping center to find clothes was less attractive to the participants.
4.2.3.2 Deep Metaphor Mapping Findings: Undecided+Exploring

Figure 18: Deep Metaphor Mapping–Undecided+exploring

In the undecided+exploring stage of consumption under balance, it was found that the deep metaphor mapping activity made participants think about the way in which they do or do not
control the amount of clothing they have. In terms of thinking about the various ways in which people dress, Participant 7 expressed self-control when balancing his closet when he wrote about the way in which his closet is setup for “different setting/different levels of professionalism.” For example, a section of his closet is comprised of t-shirts that he uses for printing posters, while another section is focused on professional attire like dress-shirts and suits from his time working in a professional setting. It was found that some participants struggled to balance their wardrobe. Participant 15 included the image of the messy closet to discuss his struggle of finding balance by writing, “All clothes fast or slow sometimes end up like this. This is a struggle to maintain and can reflect personal struggles in life.” By placing the image and comment in between fast and slow he is acknowledging that even keeping the right amount of clothes is a struggle that can be shared by either fast, undecided+exploring, and slow consumers.

The findings from the undecided+exploring stage of resource shows that participants were interested in learning about the material usage between fast and slow fashion brands, and how consumers from other countries around the world care for their clothing items, and whether or not that leads to the use of less natural resources. The findings also showed that participants were interested in learning more about how fast fashion and slow fashion consumers share responsibility for the sourcing of natural materials for their clothing products. Participant 11 posted the image of the clothes hang drying to convey her curiosity about the way in which other countries care for their clothes and how many resources and how much energy they utilize in caring for them. The curiosity about the amount of resources used was also shared by Participant 17 who included the image of the rolls of fabric to question that way in which clothing producers
source their materials. The findings showed that in this stage, participants were quite curious about the materials and natural resources usage and were interested in learning more about them.

In the findings of the undecided+exploring stages of consumption for journey, participants were interested in both outside influences, and personal factors that affect their decision-making process when thinking about clothes. Participant 11 discussed the influence of online bloggers and how it altered her customer journey experience when seeking out new clothes because she was starting to emulate the styles presented. To her, seeing what other women were wearing inspired her to seek out more professional well-made attire for both work and going out. While Participant 11 was thinking about how outside sources were influencing her personal apparel journey, Participant 9 was thinking about the undecided+exploring stage of journey as a transformational one driven by personal realizations. She was thinking about her personal journey from over consuming and buying lots of fast fashion clothing items, to simplifying her wardrobe and lifestyle, as depicted in her selection of image that shows the cluttered mind facing the simplified mind. To her, the images represent where she used to be in her personal journey to where she is wanting to go.
4.2.3.3 Deep Metaphor Mapping Findings: Slow

In the findings from the final slow row of stages of consumption, participants were starting to think about ways in which to improve their personal wellbeing and how they can become more well balanced. While discussing the balance of their wardrobe, it was found that participants wanted to have fewer clothing items in order to declutter their lives and improve their emotional
balance. Participant 8 selected the image of the minimal closet to visualize his personal aspiration to have a “small, well-curated quality wardrobe that improves feng shui in my home.” This sentiment was also shared by Participant 11 who also selected this image and wrote “minimalism” to express her personal desire to have fewer clothing items. For Participant 14, the sentiment of creating a well-curated wardrobe to improve his personal balance was conveyed through his selection of the image of the thrift store façade and writing, “To balance, I shop at thrift stores for sweaters, coats, long sleeves, button ups. Used things that aren’t as common.” The finding shows that as participants refine their wardrobe and aspire to become minimal, they are stepping away from the clutter they have collected over the years, as shown by Participant’s 5 marking an “x” over the image of the messy closet and writing “Becoming minimalist.”

In the slow stages of consumption under resource, the findings show that most participants were thinking about the ways in which they utilize different resources in order to hold on to clothing items for a longer amount of time. Participant 14 selected the image of the seamstress sewing to symbolize his desire of “repairing and keeping clothes for a long time.” Taking care of clothing items to make sure they last was also brought up by Participant 12 who wrote, “Don’t need a lot…just keep what you have nice.” Her opinion was also shared with Participant 1 who wrote, “The process of taking care of a piece valuable (to you) makes it a very engaging, intimate experience, might not think too much about resource then.” The idea of laundering and repairing a personal piece of clothes in the slower section forced participants to think about how to extend the life of the clothing item. The philosophy of repairing, keeping fewer clothes, and holding on to personal “valuable” clothing items was important to participants, but they were especially interested in minimizing their dependencies on natural
resources. The most popular image in this cell of the grid, of the clothes hang drying signified that they aspired to be more aware of their consumption habits and utilize less water and energy to wash their clothes.

In the final slow stage of consumption under journey, the findings show that participants are thinking about different ways of extending the life of their quality clothing items, so that they may hold on to them for many years. When it comes to thinking about quality and longevity, Participant 8 selected the image of the elderly couple and wrote, “Garments that are made to last a long time, and the commitment to maintaining and valuing garments.” Building on the resource metaphor mapping where participants discussed repairs and proper washing techniques, here participants were thinking about finding the right piece of clothes that fit them well so that they might want to keep it for a longer amount of time. The findings show that as participants seek out more quality clothes, they are likely to hold onto them longer. Participant 15 selected the image of the blue dress shirt and wrote, “Adjusted buying behaviors to look for more ‘tapered’ shirt, then just a regular shirt from anywhere” so that he can wear and keep it for a longer amount of time. Participants were interested in finding the right clothing item, made of higher quality materials so that they might own and use them well into the future.

4.2.4 Journey Mapping Analysis

The next step of the participatory workshop was the analysis of the journey mapping activities where participants collaborated on both the current and ideal journeys of a clothing product that utilized Fletcher and Grose’s Transforming Fashion Products Concept which include: material, processes, distribution, consumer care, and disposal. The goal of this activity was to allow the
participants to feel comfortable making decisions together while also bouncing ideas off of each other in the ideal journey. These collaborative activities allowed the researcher to gather rich qualitative data from both the current and ideal journeys. The data analysis for the journey mapping activity was conducted individually by group, then the findings from all four groups was combined to find patterns. The analysis of the journey mapping activity was based on what participants wrote and said from the notes taken. The findings show opposing ideas between the current journey model and the way they envision the ideal journey.

4.2.4.1 Journey Mapping Findings: Current

![Figure 20: Current Journey Mapping Findings from the Participatory Workshops](image)

In the current journey mapping activity, the groups are empathetic to the well-being of people working in the garment industry. The participants were curious about the environmental effects of the clothing production cycle. Not only did they show compassion when expressing their feeling about the possible poor working conditions of fast fashion garment workers, they were also concerned about the lack of transparency in the fashion industry. Working through the
multiple stages forced the participants to think about their personal habits when it came to consumer care and disposal.

When the participants collaborated on the current journey map of a clothing item, the elements that dealt with the material, processes, and distribution were all viewed in a negative light. The groups started to think about the toxic materials that may be used in the manufacturing of a clothing product, including the bad dyes that pollute the earth. The groups also started to think about the people that were producing the garments overseas and what the workers creating the clothes have to deal with in terms of emotional or physical abuse. They were concerned that their own clothes could have been created by child labor in a sweatshop and they wouldn’t even know.

The groups were also worried about the amount of pollution created from the processing and distribution of cheaply made clothing products that may be damaging the soil where the products are grown. The groups all talked about the carbon emissions created from shipping the apparel products around the world. They discussed the global system of distribution and how the products are distributed around the world because the materials are grown in one place, woven in another place, then shipped and constructed in various countries before being shipped to the final selling point.

The discussion in the consumer care stage shows that as the participants started to realize that they knew very little about where exactly their clothing items are coming from, they realized that they knew even less about their personal carbon footprint. By discussing the use of natural resources and chemicals in the production of their clothes by manufacturers, it forced them to
think about their own use of natural resources like water, and chemicals like detergents to care for their clothes.

In the final step of current journey mapping, the groups thought about the disposal of their clothing products. Most of the participants perceived damaged clothing items as trash, which would make them more likely to be thrown away and end up in the landfill. Since the finding show that most participants viewed the current disposal of apparel products as the end of the life of clothing items, the current journey could be viewed as a closed cycle.

The key findings from the current journey mapping activity of clothing items show that there was a lack of transparency in the production of many clothing items. The participants felt that they just were not aware of where, when, and how their clothing items were produced, and whether or not there was any risk of supporting child labor by buying these clothing items from fast fashion retailers. The findings also show that participants were curious about their personal environmental impact, from laundering their clothes to where the detergent runoff ends up. The findings also show that for the current journey, most participants viewed damaged clothes as trash. Since they were cheaply made and inexpensive to buy, the clothing items were more likely to be thrown away than donated, closing the lifecycle of the clothing item.
4.2.4.2 Journey Mapping Findings: Ideal

When the groups finished the current journey mapping activity, they were instructed to collaborate on an ideal journey map of a clothing product. Here it was observed that the groups wanted more natural materials that were organic and locally grown. Whereas the idea of where the materials were coming from was unknown, the groups wanted more transparency so that consumers would be more informed. The findings show that not only did they want more natural materials, they were also interested in having manufacturers use less chemical dyes in the production to minimize the environmental impact of the clothing item. By being transparent in the growing or sourcing of materials, manufacturers can share the information with their customers to ensure there is no negative impact to the environment.

The findings also show that when it came to the process of constructing clothing items, transparency was again important. They wanted the peace of mind that their clothing items were...
not coming from a sweatshop overseas where the clothes could have been constructed by child labor. The participants also wanted to see the creation of more local jobs that would have better working environments for workers that provide a fair (living) wage and healthcare. One way that one of the groups thought about lowering the cost of locally producing clothing products was to utilize more technology over manual labor.

In terms of distribution, participants were interested in garments that are shipped by freight that utilizes renewable energy like wind and solar energy. The findings show that they were thinking about ways to minimize the carbon emissions of the clothing products by relying on more sustainable methods to move the packages around the world. They were also interested in eliminating distributors altogether and creating printable clothing, whether it’s shoes or clothes. They were thinking about innovative clothing items that could be made locally, therefore minimizing the overall carbon footprint created from producing and shipping them.

In consumer care, the findings showed that the participants were thinking about innovative materials that don’t need to be laundered frequently. They also wanted more sustainable label instructions, so that consumers could minimize their carbon footprint and take care of their clothing items for a longer amount of time. The groups were also interested in the option of local repairs of their clothing items from retailers.

In the final section of the ideal journey mapping activity, participants did not include throwing away clothes as an option for disposal. Instead, the findings show that participants wanted a closed lifecycle where old materials and garments would be reintroduced into the manufacturing process. The groups were also interested in thinking about repurposing, recycling
and up-cycling. When the material was no longer able to be reintroduced into the cycle, it would then be turned into compost.

The key findings from the ideal journey mapping activity was that the participants aspired to create products that are transparently produced, where the garment instructions educate the consumers about techniques to make them last longer and where the life cycle of the clothing item is closed so that no materials are wasted or thrown away. The groups wanted more transparency when it comes to knowing how the materials are grown and processed, and how the workers who produce the clothing items are treated. The groups also wanted to educate and nudge the consumers towards more sustainable care techniques that encourage product longevity. The groups were interested in the creation of future innovative materials that utilize less natural resources in the care of the garment to minimize the dependency on natural resources like water for cleaning. The last key finding is that consumers would like closed looped lifecycle.

### 4.2.5 Post-positioning Activity

The final step of the workshop consisted of the post positioning activity where the participants were again asked to mark where they perceived themselves to be at the end of the participatory workshop. It was found that many of the participants repositioned themselves. Through their interview, conversations and interactions in the participatory design workshops with other millennials, the participants found that their initial positioning didn’t accurately convey where they perceived themselves to be in terms of fast or slow fashion. The recalibration (see Figure 22) shows that by putting the participants through such a workshop, the collaboration and conversation allowed them to fine tune their positioning. For example, Participant 7 who initially
positioned himself as fast realized, from learning about the tendencies of other fast and slower participants, that although he may occasional shop at fast fashion store for basic clothing items such as t-shirts and pants, the way in which he cares for and extends the life of his products describes someone who is a slower consumer, so he moved his positioning to the middle. Participants 5, 6, 12, 15, and 17 also shifted from their original slow fashion position towards the middle undecided+exploring section.

![Figure 22: Repositioning Results from the Post-Positioning Activity](image)

Out of the 17 participants, only Participant 13 moved his positioning towards fast. His rational for recalibrating his positioning had to do with his constant acquisition of specialized synthetic clothing items and materials for outdoor activities including motorcycling, rock climbing, kayaking, and physical health activities like agro yoga (acrobatic yoga) and running. While he doesn’t necessarily consider himself a shopper of fast fashion, the amount of natural
resources he utilizes in acquiring and caring for his specialized clothes decreased his personal perception as a slower user since he has a higher carbon footprint when caring for his clothes, which is found to be one of the most polluting stages of the clothing cycle (Levi’s, 2015; Fletcher & Grose, 2014).
5.1 A Framework for Millennial Apparel Consumption Mindset

A Framework for Millennial Apparel Consumption was developed to organize and present the findings uncovered from the survey and participatory workshops. The proposed framework was organized by three levels of conceptual themes—Awareness, Assets, and Access, intersecting with three stages of apparel consumption style—Fast, Intermediate (the middle ground where the undecided/exploring users exist), and Slow (see Figure 23). Each of the nine cells within the
framework contains a key visual image and written statement collected from the Deep Metaphor Mapping activities during the participatory workshops (see Figure 24). The content within the framework can be read by row or column to gain meaningful perspectives from each level of conceptual theme or each stage of consumption. This modeling process offered a structured approach for extracting key insights and revealing the millennial mindset regarding the fast and slow fashion.

Figure 24: Visual Summary, Framework for Millennial Apparel Consumption Mindset
5.2 The Three Levels of Conceptual Themes: Awareness, Assets, and Access

The first level of conceptual theme is Awareness, which has to do with personal feelings regarding the balance between having too many clothing items versus just enough. The second theme, Assets, has to do with thinking about the amount of resources we spend on clothing items from both a monetary (e.g., US dollar) perspective and natural resources such as materials used in the construction of clothing products. The third theme, Access, has to do with obtaining information about the apparel industry in order to understand both the physical journey of manufacturing and distributing of clothes, to the psychological journey relating to the quality and proper care instructions of clothes in order to extend the life of the items (see Figure 25).

Figure 25: Levels in Framework for Millennial Apparel Consumption Mindset
5.2.1 Awareness

The awareness level reveals very different feelings about the balance between too many and just enough clothing as one moves from the fast to slow fashion stages of consumption. Fast fashion participants mentioned feeling guilty and conflicted about having more than they need. They expressed that they didn’t want to have so many clothes in their closet.

The intermediate stage participants expressed thoughts about their own biases. They mentioned wanting to consume less but still wanting to have a closet full of clothing items. The image that resonated most in this stage was the overfilled closet. Participants were thinking about how some of the clothes they currently have in their closets may have come from sweatshops overseas. In this stage, participants both see and ignore the problem of buying and keeping too many clothing items. However, they questioned how many clothes that they actually need in their closet, and began to wish they could afford more high-quality clothes.

The slow stage participants gravitated towards the image of the minimal closet because it was what they were personally aspiring to achieve. They wanted to be informed about where they are getting their clothing items and wanted to minimize their shopping habits and carbon footprint by washing less. These participants were envisioning their future selves having fewer material possessions.

5.2.2 Assets

The Assets level refers to both material (e.g., apparel) and monetary (e.g., US dollars) factors. Fast fashion participants were interested in getting the most apparel for their dollars when shopping for clothing items. They were aware of their full closets but continued to buy new
clothing items from fast fashion retailers anyway. Their sense of guilt was conveyed through the use of the image of the overfilled closet. They not only felt they were using a lot of natural resources in the amount of clothes they have, but also using a lot of their financial resources.

Intermediate participants were curious about the amount of resources both fast and slow fashion companies use. They were starting to think about the environmental cost of taking part in the apparel industry for both fast and slow companies. One of the images that stood out to these participants was the image of the stacked rolls of fabrics. Their curiosity wasn’t limited to fabric, but also to how other countries around the world care for their clothing items. They were interested in the emotional and physical effects of the apparel industry on workers including the “depressed farmer” who may be working in fields under difficult conditions where they may be handling toxic materials.

For the slow fashion participants, the main theme that emerged was a heightened concern of their utilization of natural resources. The most selected image was of the t-shirts on the clothes line because participants discussed not washing their clothes as often in order to minimize their dependence on natural resources like water and energy. To minimize their carbon footprint, the slow fashion participants hang dry their clothes after washing. They were also interested in holding onto clothing items longer by repairing and mending them, another element of the care of their clothing items.

5.2.3 Access

In the Access level, fast fashion participants were intrigued by the sheer scale of not only the buying stage of apparel through visiting brick and mortar stores, but also the journey a clothing
item has gone through to make it to the storefront. The image that resonated most with these participants was of the large shopping retail mall. Participants talked about the physical transport of apparel, how clothes travel thousands of miles across various countries and seas, and the environmental effects of all the carbon emission in shipping.

The Intermediate participants were thinking about their personal transformation journeys from not knowing a lot about fast fashion to become more informed about the journey of apparel. The Intermediate stage participants were introspective, as they questioned their own thought processes in terms of fast and slow apparel consumption. They are thinking deeply about their past and current consumption habits. The image that stands out the most for these participants is of the left busy mind and the right clear mind. Participants discussed going from the fuzziness of fast to the more simplified, ideal version of slow consumption.

The Access theme of slow fashion participants reveals thoughts about longevity. Participants selected the image of the elderly couple and explained that it conveyed the passage of time. They connected the image with the idea of longevity by thinking about it metaphorically, how articles of clothing can grow and age with people. The thinking also has to do with maturity and experience because as the participants learn about quality and the proper care of clothing items, they felt that they would be more able to hold on to them for a longer amount of time.

5.3 The Three Stages of Consumption: Fast, Intermediate, and Slow

The framework presented the three stages of apparel consumption style—fast fashion, Intermediate and slow fashion (see Figure 26) as columns. These three columns summarized the
three conceptual themes (levels) of the millennial apparel consumption mindset. Fast fashion participants were conflicted about their participation in the fast fashion industry. They liked the journey of going to the store and finding a cheap clothing item at the local mall or shopping center for cheap, but said they felt guilty for having so much clothes in their overfilled closets when others, including the disenfranchised, have so little.

![Figure 26: The Three Stages of the Framework for Millennial Apparel Consumption Mindset](image)

The idea of being self-critical continued in the intermediate stage column where participants were thinking about their personal journey of why they shop the way they do and becoming more aware of alternative approaches of having less. The participants were curious about the allocation
of materials and natural resources used in producing clothes for fast fashion and slow fashion apparel companies. They were self-critical when discussing their own closets and talked about wanting to find a balance between not having too much clothes and having just enough. This sentiment was important to the slow fashion participants who were starting to think about their future consumption and the impact to the environment. They had started to think about having too much and what they could do to change it. They not only wanted to minimize their closet size, but also the amount of natural resources they used when laundering and caring for their clothes so that they may have them for a long time.

The Framework for Millennial Apparel Consumption Mindset was a useful tool to organize data, synthesize concepts, and extract valuable insights. It provided an effective approach to look at the survey and participatory workshop findings from different angles. The clear perspective gained from this study will guide future research and inspire designers, manufacturers, and consumers to make more sustainable decisions when developing, marketing, and buying clothing items. As the workshop participants collaborated with the other participants, they began to think deeply, and subconsciously, about their own personal impact on the environment as consumers of the fashion industry. They reflected on their own consumption habits in the participatory workshops, including the heightened awareness of their environmental impact and use of natural resources. This allowed the participants to refine their apparel consumption mindsets and gain a broader perspective on the impact of fast and slow fashion.

Engaging the groups of millennials in a less than 2-hour long co-designing workshop led many of the participants to learn from each other, which ultimately led to a recalibration of their positioning. For participants who did change their positioning, they were motivated by the
activities, conversations, and knowledge gained about the way in which fellow millennial participants buy, care, and discard their clothing items. For participants who didn’t change their positioning, it confirmed their prior knowledge and self-perception when it comes to the way in which they buy, use, and discard clothing items.

5.4 Limitations

There were several limitations to this study that need to be discussed. First, while this study gathered data from various millennial participants, a larger, more representative, sample of apparel consumers, including more female consumers would have been better. But since this was a qualitative exploration, the sample size was adequate for the conclusions made. Second, since Watson & Yan’s (2013) research only looked at female participant’s shopping habits in terms of fast fashion and slow fashion, more data of both female and male participants is necessary. Third, the study was conducted in Columbus, Ohio, a city that is not ranked amongst the top fashion cities in the United States (Litz, 2017; Rogers, 2017). Lastly, the sample of participants for this study derived from the researcher’s personal network and consisted of people he knew.

5.5 Future Research

Although new insights were gathered from this study, further conversations with the participants after the participatory workshop would have helped to gauge the amount of information they retained from the workshop. Further studies could be conducted to see if there was any change, no change, or little change in the way participants buy, care, and discard their clothing items after they participated in the workshops.
With the self-awareness and the recalibration that participants experienced in the span of the one and a half to two-hour long workshops from this study, other opportunities for future research could include the creation of a fifteen-week-long course that expands on the various steps of the participatory workshops by allowing students to dig deeper into their personal shopping habits and self-positioning.

This research can also target other groups of potential participants and stakeholders including:

- Junior high school age participants: Thinking about the ways in which younger participants buy, care, and discard their clothes.
- Parents with young children: Looking at the ways in which parents make decisions for their children when purchasing, caring, and discarding their clothes. How can the workshop be tailored to understand their decision-making process when buying clothes for someone other than themselves?
- Manufacturers: Looking at ways in which the Framework can be adapted to understand the way in which manufacturers buy, produce/sell, ship, and discard their clothing scraps.
- Retailers: How can the Framework proposed in this study be tailored to help retailers make decisions in terms of marketing and selling their clothes to their customers?
- Governments: How can the Framework influence legislation to encourage and embrace more transparency and accountability in the fashion industry?
References


Sanders, E. B.-N., & Stappers, P. J. (2012). *Convivial toolbox: Generative research for the front end of design*. Amsterdam, NL: BIS.


Appendix A: Survey
Online Survey

Question List:

1. What is your gender?
   - Woman
   - Man
   - Or ___________ (type in box)

2. What is your age?
   - 18-25
   - 26-30
   - 31-40
   - 41 year or older

3. What type of clothes do you like to wear?
   - Athletic
   - Casual
   - Formal
   - Professional
   - Semi-Professional

4. What’s one of your favorite clothing items?
   - Shirt
(Type item into a blank box)

5. How long have you owned your favorite clothing item?
   - <1 year
   - 1-2 years
   - 2-5 years
   - 5-10 years
   - 10+ years

6. What’s the average amount you spent on clothing items?
   - $1 - $10
   - $10 - $20
   - $20 - $50
   - $50-$100
   - $100-$200
   - $200-$500
   - $500-$1000
7. Where have had your most memorable shopping experiences?
   - Mall
   - Boutique
   - Large Retail Chain
   - Online
   - High-End Retailer
   - Other _________

8. Has the way you find out about new clothing store/brands changed throughout the years?
   - Yes   Please describe __________
   - No

9. How do you find out about new clothing brands?
   - Family
   - Friends
   - Co-workers
   - Social Media
   - Advertisement
   - TV
10. Where do you currently buy most of your clothes?
   - Retail Store
   - Online
   - Thrift Store
   - Consignment Shop
   - Other ________

11. Does cost effect your decision to buy or not buy clothes?
   - Definitely does
   - Sort of does
   - Neither does or doesn’t
   - Doesn’t
   - Not at all

12. What percentage (%) of the your wardrobe do you wear?
   - <10%
   - 11-20%
   - 21-30%
   - 31-40%
13. How often do you shop for new clothes?
   - Daily
   - Weekly
   - Monthly
   - Seasonally
   - Yearly
   - Other_______

14. Do you visit a tailor for any alterations or repairs?
   - Yes, I do
   - No, I don’t

15. Do you wear second hand clothes?
   - Yes, I do
   - No, I don’t
16. Do you have any new clothes with tags still on them in your closet?
   o Yes, I do
   o No, I don’t

17. How often do you wash your clothes?
   o Once a week
   o Biweekly
   o Three or more times a week
   o Monthly

18. Do you dry your clothes in a dryer, or hang dry them, or both
   o I use a dryer
   o I hang dry them
   o Both

19. Do you follow any fashion blogs on social media?
   o Yes, I do
   o No, I don’t

20. What do you do with your old clothes when you’re done using them?
   o Throw them away
Definitions

Fast-Fashion- a time based economic selling model for new clothing products that focuses on quick production, distribution, lower quality and price of clothing items.

Slow-Fashion- a slower consumption model for the apparel industry that focuses on design, sustainability, and quality of apparel products over quicker cheaper products found in fast-fashion. It is about buying new or used garments for longevity.

Source: (http://study-ny.com/slow-fashion/)

21. After reading the definitions provided for fast and slow fashion, can you please mark where you perceive yourself to be below

| Fast | o------------------o------------------o------------------o------------------o | Slow |
|------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|------|
| Neutral |
22. Would you be interested in participating in a focus group to understand the consumption patterns of people with fast-fashion and slow fashion mindsets? (Only applicable to people currently living in Ohio)

- Yes Great! If you could please provide me with your email, I will give you more information about participating in the focus group.

- No Thank you for taking this survey. Your participation is appreciated!
Appendix B: Participatory Workshop Interview Notes
Participant #1 (Group #1, Female, Age 24, Positioning: Pre- 4, Post: 4)
In terms of the three most popular metaphors that came out the metaphor activity, she was most motivated by Journey. To her, the deeper subconscious thinking was influenced from her persona journey, the fact that she travels from one place to another, India to the US. In the current journey of clothes, she was very knowledgeable about where products are created and how they make their way into global markets. In the ideal journey segment, she made recommendation that looked at fair treatment of workers. This sentiment was shared in the participatory workshop where she wrote for the metaphor Journey, attached to photo #21-man-running-a-loom: “I like to know I’m wearing hand-made or ethically designed clothes: Expresses where I come from, the physical & artistic journey from India —> USA.” From the beginning of the participatory workshop, participant 1 was very knowledgeable about the apparel industry as a whole.
For Journey, she again added: “Helping an ethnic weaving group? –Support the education of some kids?” To her, the metaphor is a lot deeper than the journey of the clothing product, she is asking questions that go beyond just buying clothes, she is interested how the industry may support the community she is familiar with. To her, it isn’t of question of, can apparel companies empower the community and invest in fair labor groups and education? To her, it is whether they are doing it or not. She is quite familiar with the idea of sweatshops and hopes the journey of the clothes she buys didn’t come from them. Under the metaphor journey, she wrote: “Are they coming from sweatshops” While she is away from home (India), she still stays connected to her heritage and culture. The journey of the apparel isn’t just metaphorical, but it is physically shipped from India. When it comes to buying her clothes, she said, “I, generally have a mix of things I do, so, I shop here, I shop some online because I’m interested in mixing stuff up. So, I get stuff that is Indian from India, like I buy it from Amazon and that gets shipped here. So, I get my tank tops and t-shirts and all that here, but like fun skirts and jackets are all from India so they get shipped here so I mix the two together and wear them with some accessories that I may find online.” This can also explain why the second metaphor, most popular metaphor to her, was connection. She not only wants to stay connected to her culture, but the products and culture that comes with it. She is still thinking about the local artisan designers and makers from home where she wrote, “Connected to the artisan designer.” She buys more clothes when it is cheaper, usually in November when it is on sale. “When there is like Thanksgiving (sales), I buy a lot more than I generally do. Especially because it’s much cheaper. She doesn’t like to spend too much money on clothes, averages about $10 to $20 dollars.”
In terms of type of the type of clothes she wears, she has a range of both traditional Indian pieces and other styles. “I have the whole range. I have Indian wear, ethnic Indian wear. I wear saris sometimes when I’m really cold, I wear saris to parties instead of wearing dresses but I wear dresses too. I wear shorts, I wear jeans, I wear skirts. I do have like a business suit which I’ve never worn in my life.”

As she is assimilating to American culture, she is also starting to notice the differences, from sizing to access to quality artisan clothing. She talked about the different between the sizes of clothes from India and the US. She bought a vest from Amazon that didn’t quite fit and she said, “There is this size problem that happens here (in the United States), apparently here I’m a small size, in India I’d be medium, and if you’re buying from different countries, every single country and sometimes brands have different sizing.”

When she went shopping on Thanksgiving, her sister took her to a mall and she, “Remembers this place called Rue21. I went to that place a lot. I went there, actually, sometimes recently as well just to check out what they have. That place seems to have nice stuff.” Since she has limited access to quality artisanal traditional clothing, she is starting to find herself visiting fast fashion stores more often.

The generative tools used in this research helped the researcher to understand the way in which a consumer’s cultural background and access to quality clothes can affect the way in which they participate in the fashion process. When it comes to the three most utilized metaphors from all the participants, Journey really resonated with her because of personal reasons, her journey of moving away from India and assimilating to a new culture with different sizing standards and more fast fashion brands and less artisanal clothes. Her journey has strengthened her need for transparency within the clothing industry as she hopes the journey of the clothes can be tied to ethical labor that support her community back home.

Participants #2 (Group #1, Female, Age: 25)

When she is shopping, the location is important to her because she doesn’t drive. The fact that she doesn’t drive means she is trying to pick a location that are closer to her. She shops at Urban Outfitters because it is the closest to her in terms of proximity or walkability. She used to shop at Marshalls because “price was kind of” important to her before.

Since price is important to her, she tries to shop from discounted or sale sections of the store. She doesn’t shop online because the sizing. She can’t make sure the clothes are going to fit her. For shoes, she sometimes buys online.

Comfort is really important to her. She likes to wear sportswear. She has shopped at Marshalls for to buy tights and sportswear. While she owns dresses, she seldomly wears them. She mostly wears “pants and shorts and comfortable t-shirts”.

For inspiration, she visits Instagram. And is inspired by people she sees in the streets.
“Price is really important” to her. She doesn’t pay a lot for clothing items. She is willing to spend maximum $15 to $20 dollars.

**Participant #3 (Group #1, Male, Age: 34)**
When it comes to shopping for clothes, he said, “Shopping wise, I don’t do a lot of it. If I go, I go to the outlet malls, or Kohl’s, or I’ll borrow my brother’s clothes because he wears nicer things than I do.”
When talking about the much he’ll spend on clothes he said, “I’ll spend more on like, my only brand that I’m really into is like Levi’s jeans. I exclusively buy Levi’s, and will always go to Levi’s stores, somewhere to get those, and I’ll spend up to I don’t know, $60 (USD) bucks or so on that.”
When it comes to shirts, he said “From super cheap, I’ll go clearance at Kohl’s and get them for a couple bucks a piece to I don’t know, probably $30 (US) dollars is probably my ceiling on a shirt.”
He does a decent amount of shopping online, but does not buy clothes online unless he is absolutely sure it will fit. He has bought clothes online (Amazon) but it is limiting because the size may not be right.

**Participant #4 (Group #1, Male, Age: 26)**
He shops online a lot. He gets inspiration from what other people are wearing. He is particularly interested in street wear. Brands include John Elliott, really comfortable clothes and casual.
Doesn’t like to be too dressed up or “flamboyant”. His main idea for buying clothes is geared around comfort. His range of clothes in his closet consist of mostly jeans, joggers, tank-tops. He wears a lot of simple muted color clothing including black, blues, greys. When it comes to price point, the design and quality affects his decision to buy a clothing item. He would buy a $5-dollar shirt, or pay premium price.

**Participant #5 (Group #2, Female, Age: 28)**
She usually shops for clothes online, and it’s rare that she shops in store. When she shops online, it is from stores she familiar with. She tends to buy clothes that she is going to wear for a long time and does not shop at fast fashion stores. When it comes to buying clothes, she doesn’t look for the cheapest. She goes for brands that are made of good quality, she “prefers to buy one good thing than 10 of that same thing, or that same thing that is (made) of lower quality.”
She does not shop at second hand store including consignment and thrift shops because there is a cultural stigma (Latin America) around it for her. Her mother didn’t want her to “borrow clothes from anyone” or “use clothes from anyone.” She has never worn second hand clothes.
**Participant #6 (Group 2, Male, Age:28)**

He considers himself a bad shopper, “I’m a really bad shopper, I hate it.” He also has a hard time shopping online, “From my experience, when I shop online I fail even worse than when I go to the store, so I usually go to a store.”

He hasn’t bought a lot of clothes in the last couple of years because he was living in Japan, “and the cuts in Japan are completely different for Japanese men who are very trim and slim, I’m not trim and slim.”

When he worked in the Washington, DC, in the United States, he would shop at brands like H&M or Uniqlo. He “found that the fabric at Uniqlo was getting worse and worse, they just didn’t feel right and Uniqlo is a Japanese brand, actually, and so their cuts were a little funky, even here in the states.”

When it comes to his personal style, he said, “I’m pretty simple in my wardrobe, I like jeans, I like t-shirts. I have like 10 of the same Adidas t-shirt.

When he was working in a corporate office in Washington D.C., he “hated the business casual attire.” He would get away with no dress pants by wearing, “Khaki colored jeans, and like black jeans, and go in there (the office) with like my plaid shirt and do my job.”

In terms of how much he spends, he said, “I don’t like paying full price for anything, I very rarely, rarely, do that. Unless it is something I want, something that I’ve been looking at and I’ve done the research. So like, uh, I pretty much exclusively buy Levi’s jeans. I find that they fit my butt the best.”

He “tries to stick under $40 dollars for a pair of jeans.” When it comes to shirts, he wears them for a couple years so he doesn’t “mind spending $20-$25 (US dollars) on them.”

**Participant #7 (Group 2, Male, Age 38).**

He shops 50/50 online versus in store. He shops at fast fashion stores including H&M and Old Navy. Online shopping has been a “fairly recent thing that he has been doing in the last year or two,” especially when buying shoes.

He associated buying shoes with having to try them on, but has shifting his thinking because he has come to find that if he buys shoes from a specific maker the size usually runs the same. “A heightened awareness of consistent size within a brand because of online buying. So, if I buy an 11 (American shoe size) Puma, I know that (size) 11 Puma (shoe) is going to fit these days.”

When it comes to buying other clothes, he is particularly interested in vintage track jackets, but finds them hard to find. He looks for non-branded ones.

He is “very sensitive about wearing branded”. When it comes to shoes, he says, “shoes are almost impossible to get non-branded.” He is always “Looking for things that don’t have brand call outs on them and I don’t like messaging on clothes, although occasionally I’ll wear a t-shirt that has something on it, but for the most part, I wear no graphic elements on my body.”
He buys “$5 dollar t-shirts and wears them almost exclusively”. He “has been able to pull that off” because he is in “grad school.” He has a large collection of dress clothes when he use to work in an office environment. He wears clothes “as cheap as possible, $5 dollar t-shirts” which he will “probably wear hundreds of times” because “they are easy to wash and do laundry with.” He wears his t-shirt to do almost everything, some of which involves working with ink (he is trained in letter press printing). If he ruined a $5-dollar shirt while doing things, including printing, it is acceptable. As the price point of the clothing item goes up, it is “not acceptable” for him to ruin $125 (US) dollar shirt.

Participant # 8 (Group #2, Male, Age: 33)
He shops for his clothes “almost exclusively at a consignment store, one called Buffalo Exchange.” He goes to Buffalo exchange 3-4 times a week. If he wants something new, mostly a dress up basic like a woven button up shirt, he will go to H&M or Topman. He prefers Topman because the “quality is a little better, or the craftsmanship is a little better. I don’t know that the fabric is any better, or that it is more, huh, humanly produced if you will.” He is conflicted over buying a suit from at H&M, because although they have modern cut (silhouettes for suits) and that he could “buy a suit off the rack and get away with wearing it, looking tailored without having to go to a tailor for like a $100 (US) dollars.” He says, “First, I would go to a Buffalo Exchange, and I would look for a high-quality suit that is not too worn.”

When it comes to inspiration, he “spends a lot of time online, not shopping, but window shopping if you will.” He goes to “street style blogs, um, and I look for what people are wearing then I gain inspiration from that, then I go look for it.” He also said about working on his own clothes, “I also look for things I can tailor myself relatively easily, so I’ve been working on those skills. To be honest with you, I spend a lot of time and a lot of energy obsessively trying to fine tune my wardrobe. I also just love the experience of trying to find high quality, well-made garments for an extremely low price that are not soiled, if you will, or cleanable in terms of like, restoring to feeling like they are almost new.”

In terms of how much he spends, he said, “That varies, I will spend as little as I possibly can, for example, you know, my goal is to find the best thing I can for, you know, a dollar but that almost doesn’t exist.”

He is willing to spend more money for new items that are on sale. He had recently (at the time of the participatory workshop) bought an expensive pair of shoes from a brand called Common Projects, “that’s a hand-made shoe made in Italy, very minimal, very streamlined-sleek.” He talked about the versatility of the shoe, it “can be worn with a suit without looking dressed-down in particular.” The shoes cost him “like $275 (US) dollars..but were originally $459 (US dollars). So that is where I found the value, I found the value in the sale price, but also because (it’s) hand-made in Italy and the craftsmanship, and the quality of material is built to last.
He also mentioned that he is “susceptible to trends” and that he “is not bragging about that by any means, but the images of that, make him feel a certain kind of pride and attractiveness to, you know, that I’m looking for.”

**Participant #9 (Group #3, Female, Age: 26)**

“No that I have a full-time job, I feel like my shopping styles have changed from when I was in college. So, I look for more quality…I stay away from Forever 21 and H&M and those, um, stores because I want my clothes to last longer. And typically, when I’m shopping I need it to be appropriate for work, and then also, I would hope it can work for going out on the weekend as well, so it’s professional but not too bad. It might have a business casual, I can wear jeans to work but it still needs to be professional looking.”

When asked about sportswear, she said, “I, once again, will spend money on something that I think will last longer so do go to Lululemon in terms of leggings because I care that they are not see-through and good quality, but in terms of tops, I’m not picky about that.”

When it came to buying tops, she wasn’t picky about where she was purchasing them from. “My main store that I love right now is Nordstrom rack, where I feel like I’m getting the quality but I’m getting some kind of discount on it, more affordable.”

She doesn’t shop at thrift shops because she said she doesn’t like “searching for what I want.” She continues, “I love T.J. Maxx, I know that a lot of people love that (searching for clothes), and like Marshalls but that effort that I have to put in (to shop), I don’t want to do it, um, because I don’t really like shopping. So, when I want to go do it (shop), I have to be in the mood and it needs to be easy to find.

**Participant #10 (Group #3, Female, Age: 24)**

Her shopping habits were similar to participant 9 because once she graduated from college and got an office job, she changed the way she dressed. She started to wear clothes from “The Limited, Express, (and) Ann Taylor for work. But now I work from home, and then I travel like one week a month so it shifted to straight pajamas and sweatpants, all day.”

When discussing her clothes for work, she said, “When I travel, I want to be comfortable because I’m on like cross-country flights, and trains, and all this stuff but you still have to be professional.

When talking about how much she spends, she said, “I’ve started spending a lot of money on work clothes but I’ve had the same stuff since I was 22 (years old) and I still wear it all every day and it’s held up well. In terms of casual clothes, I don’t really buy them until, like, there are holes in the current ones I’m wearing.”

When talking about finding new clothes, she said, “I don’t like the search either. I’ll shop online and hope for the best and return if I have to. Or, I’ll like carve out a day and just go to T.J. Maxx, Marshall, Nordstrom, and get it done.
When asked to elaborate on what she would do if she did get a tear on an article of clothing she said, “It depends on where the tailor is and how much I like the article of clothing. If it’s like a zipper issue, I’ll get it repaired or I have a friend who does it for me, um, buttons, I fix myself, but if it is not on a seam or something, I get rid of it. If it’s on a seam in like a shirt like this (a dark shirt) or something, I’d fix it because it is darker. But if it is lighter or patterned that you’re like going to see a pucker, I don’t, but usually I will sew it myself.

When asked about shopping at thrift stores, she said, “Not for clothing, no, because I don’t like to dig (through the racks to find clothes). And I’m (a) very common size, so, I don’t find a lot of stuff that I like.

She did mention that she buys shoes at the thrift store. “Shoes I get there (at the thrift store) because I wear a (shoe size) 5½ or 6, so I can score like a bandit.”

Participant #11 (Group #3, Female, Age: 26)
“I care a lot about shopping, I’m very specific in what I want. If I’m going to get something that, like a shoe, or a pair of pants, I always go for quality. Anything trendy, anything more like a shirt, I’ll go more Forever 21, H&M because my mind changes on stuff like that.

When talking about her style, she said, “I feel like my style is more, like, casual lately. I like jeans, not as much of a dress person, shorts, things like that.”

When asked whether she shops at thrift stores, she said, “Kind of, I feel like I have been more lately because I’ve been taking stuff to thrift stores (to donate), and then I’ll just kind of wonder around and look at a couple things. But, I feel like I don’t find myself seeking them out to shop for the same reasons (as Participants 9 and 10), it’s just hard to dig through.”

Participant # 12 (Group #3, Female, Age: 26)
When she shops for clothes, she usually gets them from “places that sell casual clothes...because I work at a school, so it’s probably going to get dirty, or gross. Unless it’s jeans, then I like to spend more money on jeans.”

Casual stores to her are from brands like “Old Navy, or H&M, Target.”

When it comes to sportswear (athletic wear), she gets her clothes from Target or Lululemon.

When asked about her rational for shopping at Target she said, “The price, even though sometimes it’s not as cheap as I think it is.” She adds, “And, the clothes are comfortable.”

When asked about how the quality matches up with the price, she said, “It depends on what it is...I think I rather get my athletic clothes from places like Lululemon because I am wearing them more. But, like a blouse (at Target, Old Navy, or H&M), I think it is fairly priced for its quality.”

When asked about whether she shops at thrift stores or second-hand stores, she said she not only shops but also sells some of her clothes at a local consignment shop in Columbus, OH, “where it is a more high-end thrift store.” When asked why she likes shopping there, she said, “I think it’s
cool to find different types of t-shirts that you wouldn’t normally find, like concert t-shirts, or like vintage (clothes).

**Participant # 13 (Group #4, Male, Age:30)**

He started to talk about the type of clothes he buys which are tailored to certain activities he participates in. “I guess when I shop for clothes, I kind of buy as needed. I do a lot of specialized sports so between motorcycle riding, I have high end gear for that, I can be a be a brand snob, making sure I’m getting some quality.

When it comes to working out, he loves to run, skateboard, and hike. “For just like running or training, you know, I’ll change out my shorts and just find tees (t-shirts) for that. I shop on clearance a lot with like skate wear, um, so I can be a little bit of a brand affiliated, kind of brand loyal, to vans and some other companies that make skate wear, sportswear, outdoor wear.

He continues to talk about what he means when he says specialized sport, “I hike a lot, and again, so you know, having a good like topper, you know shell for like rain and climate, I think all that is important.

When thinking about longevity he says, “But aside from that, I keep my clothes for a long time.”

**Participant # 14 (Group #4, Male, Age: 30)**

“I do a lot of online shopping, I usually stick to plain t-shirts. I shop for Hanes, just get five of the same color and just wear them until they are stained or torn up, then I get more shirts. I do the same thing with pants, um, I recently just bought three (3) pairs of the exact same pants because I liked them and I know they won’t be here next year, so I bought them all and keep them in my closet until they wear out.

He mentioned doing minor repair on his jeans. “I do make minor repairs, but most of the time I wear things until they are almost non-repairable, and then I have to completely replace them.

When asked about where he bought the pants from, he said, “Pants were from Target, shirts are usually from Hanes, shoes are from Keds. They discount them usually. I would consider that I’ll probably have fast fashionable clothing.

When asked to elaborate on the brands of the jeans he said, “Their Denizen, so I think it’s Levi’s (sold exclusively at Target), um, and when I find something I like I just try to buy a whole bunch of them and then that way I can keep wearing them because I know the next year, the next season they won’t be there anymore.”

**Participant # 15 (Group #4, Male, Age: 28)**

“In terms of buying behaviors when it comes to clothes, I’m kind of all over the place. I’m pretty flexible when it comes to different things. I definitely, uh, comfortability comes to mind when it comes to actually making purchases when it comes to clothes. I like to have clothes that last for the duration, um, but at the same time, you know, I can’t be cheap. I like to look for the deal and
things like that, so I’ll spend time before I buy things mostly looking at things online. I do like to
go into the stores before I make purchases to make sure the fit is right for me. I find often times
that it’s pretty difficult to find that right pair of jeans, or that right shirt before I make the
purchase and can get pretty frustrated if I buy something, spend the money, and it doesn’t fit
well.
To him, “Quality, um, fit is really important to me. I’d like to say, I can be loyal to different
brands, so if it is a shoe, whether it’s (a pair) a Vans (shoe), Converse, or Chuck Taylor, I can
use those types of shoes and kind of, you know, get me through the day and then also if they get
old, turn around and use them for work shoes and different things like that. That’s pretty
common for me.
He talks about how the clothes he finds are versatile, “I’m pretty basic so I like to use like, you
know, v-neck and tees that I can kind of dress up or dress down. So, it is something that I can do,
you know, I can put a jacket on, or I can just wear it plain, be comfortable. (Being comfortable)
Is a high priority to me as well.”
His age is making him think more about quality. “I am 28, so I’m getting a little older so I’m
looking more into quality and things like that. You know, when it comes to suits. Something that
will last longer or something that you know I can dress, you know, but still be flexible with, with
different types of tops or bottoms or things like that. So, the bang for your buck is a must for me
when it comes to shopping.
When told to elaborate on brand loyalty, he talked about new apparel companies and why he like
to shop at them. “Actually, to kind of give you a little more specific on that, I’m actually
exploring different types of apps online on my social media thing. For example, like a Trunk
Club, or like a Bombfell, those are Stitch Fix (another online brand) that I’m kind of playing
around with right now where they give you a consultant that will talk to you about different
brands that I may or may not have the time to actually introduce myself to.”
When talking about trying new style of clothes, for example, jeans that may be made with both
cotton and a synthetic fabric. “Right now, when it comes to jeans, Mavi jeans are the ones I’m
kind of looking at right now. A pretty flexible type of jean, I’ve actually never worn a jean kind
of like that. I’ve been pretty traditionalist with Levi’s, or just whatever type of brand jeans I can
just get my hand on. And so, they are a little more expensive but I’m liking the quality, so I’m
probably going to stick loyal to that jean for a while, and buy the house (all the jeans in the store)
for my particular size.”

Participant # 16 (Group #4, Male, Age: 26)
“Probably a little bit of both fast fashion and slow fashion. I do some of my own clothes repair,
like jeans, or shorts, or I reuse old shoes for like mowing the lawn and stuff, so I try not to buy
too many clothes if I can help it. And when I do, they are usually second-hand clothes.”
When asked if he shops at new stores instead of thrift shops, he said, “The only real new stores I shop at are like at Old Navy to get my jeans, or black t-shirts for work. Or I’ll just go to Goodwill just to get some regular t-shirts, or, like I have t-shirts that are like 10 years old, so, I keep a lot of old stuff too.

**Participant # 17 (Group #4, Male, Age:28)**
“I dress comfortably because I am in the military full time, so I wear uniform. So outside of the uniform, I just wear sweats and shorts unless I’m going out somewhere, then I’ll wear pants. When asked to elaborate of where he buys his clothes from, he said, “It depends, if I see something that I like, I’ll just buy it then and there. It doesn’t matter if it’s Wal-Mart, or if it’s at like Finish Line, whatever.”
Since he wears sweats and buys clothes at Finish line, he was asked to elaborate on how many products he owns, asked if he had more than one pair of sneaker he said, “No, I only have one pair of sneakers, that’s running.”
When asked about other shoe styles, he said, “Boots and loafers…I have some from Banana Republic, some from Steve Madden, some named Mezlan.”
He is not necessarily interested in specific brands, just what catches his eyes. When asked about seasonal clothes like winter wear, he said, “Really, it just depends. I’ll just go to the mall, walk by a store and if I like it, I’ll just buy them.”
Appendix C: Toolkit Materials
Figure 27: Tools for the Participatory Workshops Consisting of Post-it Notes, Markers, and Paper Cutouts.
Appendix D: Images from the Toolkit in the Participatory Workshops