

**Revolutionizing Storytelling: Releasing the Power of AI-Generated Product Narratives  
by ChatGPT on Consumers' Sustainable Fashion Behavior**

Adopting the Narrative Transportation Theory and the Theory of Planned Behavior

Student Name: Simona Šimkutė

Student Number: 523435

Supervisor: Dr. Alexandra Sierra

Master Media Studies - Media & Business

Erasmus School of History, Culture and Communication

Erasmus University Rotterdam

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REVOLUTIONIZING STORYTELLING: RELEASING THE POWER OF AI-GENERATED  
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PLANNED BEHAVIOR

## ABSTRACT

*Due to the fashion industry being among the largest markets globally, it is highly important to address the sustainability issues embedded in fast fashion in a timely and systematic manner while it is not too late. Considering the growing importance and public demand for sustainable practices in the fashion industry, the slow fashion movement commenced. Slow fashion refers to sustainable fashion consumption which predominantly aims to substitute constantly changing fashion trends with timeless and high-quality garments with longer life cycles. Furthermore, this research focused on the power of AI-generated narratives in persuading people, specifically enhancing their Narrative Transportation and sustainable fashion behavior. Thus, considering the demand for sustainability, yet the increasing impulsive purchasing among consumers, the key objective of this research is to examine which product description of the slow fashion item increases Narrative Transportation, Attitudes, Perceived Behavioral Control, Purchase Intentions, and Purchase Behavior most successfully among Lithuanian consumers. Hence, the study utilizes both the Theory of Planned Behavior and the Narrative Transportation Theory. It is essential to guide the fashion industry towards a shift to slow fashion and provide small and sustainable businesses with effective measures to increase their sales while simultaneously spreading the message of sustainable fashion and encouraging consumers to quit its fast counterpart. To generate the narratives, a recently developed AI chatbot, ChatGPT, was utilized to create history and sustainability narratives. Although multiple research questions are addressed in the current research, the most fundamental research question is: "To what extent do the AI-generated Narrative Types of a slow fashion garment description influence Lithuanian consumers' Purchase Intentions and Purchase Behavior of a product?" To investigate the desired phenomena, a quantitative quasi-experiment was conducted, namely a 2 x 2 between-subject factorial design using an online questionnaire. Each participant randomly received the manipulation, which was followed by a set of different questions, relating to the theories. In total, N = 220 valid responses were collected with the Lithuanian sample being relatively young (M = 24.34) and the majority of the respondents being women (78.2%). As a result, it was found that no significant differences existed across four conditions in influencing consumers' purchase intentions and behavior. However, the significant and positive relationships between the Narrative Transportation Theory and people's purchase intentions and purchase behavior demonstrate the power of engaging AI-generated narratives that have the capacity of persuading readers to purchase sustainable fashion items. Additionally, the sustainability narrative performed most successfully in creating a positive attitude toward the slow fashion item as well as in transporting consumers to the narrative world. This finding reaffirms the immense importance of implementing an engaging (AI-generated) narrative about a product's sustainability rather than merely presenting factual information which potentially fails to engage the consumers, and thus encourage their action.*

**KEYWORDS:** *Slow Fashion, AI-Generated Narratives, History Narrative, Sustainability Narrative, Narrative Transportation Theory, Theory of Planned Behavior*

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## 1. Introduction

While praised and loved by many, the fashion industry has been recently condemned by both environmentalists and the public for its lack of attentiveness to societal and environmental problems (Niinimäki et al., 2020). The combination of the immense usage of water in clothes production, water pollution due to chemical treatments of the textile, and an extensive amount of textile waste that “ends up in landfill” (Niinimäki et al., 2020, p. 189) contribute to the detrimental environmental impact. While the fashion industry is among the largest markets globally, with the revenue predicted to rise to roughly 2 trillion U.S. dollars by 2026 (Smith, 2023), it also contributes to approximately a tenth of greenhouse gas emissions globally (UNFCCC, 2018). Hence, the fashion sector is accountable for considerable environmental harm that threatens our planet.

Accordingly, tackling the sustainability issues embedded in the fashion industry in a timely and systematic manner is fundamental. The notions of fashion consumption and sustainability became increasingly challenging to relate considering their inherently conflicting ideas (Lundblad & Davies, 2015). While the former implies garments’ short life cycles, hedonism, people’s desire for convenience, low price, and trends, the latter aims to maintain the durability and “better quality of life” of a product by reducing the detrimental environmental effects (Ertekin & Atik, 2014, p. 53; Lundblad & Davies, 2015; Niinimäki et al., 2020). Thus, sustainability disrupts entrenched readily available practices present in the fashion sector.

Following a global interest in sustainability caused by the struggle to sustain environmental welfare, sparked by “non-ethical fast fashion practices” (McNeill & Moore, 2015, p. 212) that depend on quick production, inferior quality materials, and immoral labor (Fletcher, 2010), the slow fashion movement commenced (Chi et al., 2021). Slow fashion relies on leading sustainability pillars, namely minimizing environmental pollutants, harnessing an ethical working environment, and maintaining balance (Chi et al., 2021). Therefore, slow fashion is a sustainable fashion consumption, aiming to substitute fast fashion trends with classy, timeless, and high-quality garments (Štefko & Steffek, 2018) with longer life cycles.

Considering the growing importance and prospects of slow fashion, this research aims to help the fashion industry shift its focus toward sustainable business practices and specifically assist smaller environmentally-friendly fashion brands to efficiently convey sustainable ideas. To shift consumers’ understanding of fashion towards functionality instead

of pleasure or entertainment (Niinimäki et al., 2020), the fashion industry must be provided with scientific evidence of the importance of implementing slow fashion in their daily routines (Štefko & Steffek, 2018) and the effective means, encouraging people's Purchase Intentions (PI) and Purchase Behavior (PB) of slow fashion products. Hence, the current research intends to help marketers working in the fashion sector understand what kind of product description of a slow fashion garment affects consumers' sustainable behavior.

To generate different narratives for the product descriptions, this research utilizes ChatGPT, a highly advanced and developed chatbot that has been gaining immense popularity since its launch in November 2022 by a sophisticated research laboratory OpenAI (Hisan & Amri, 2023; Lund & Wang, 2023). ChatGPT is a language model that internalizes "conversational" texts from an extensive amount of available data, facilitating the generation of "human-like" answers through Natural Language Processing (NLP) (Hisan & Amri, 2023, p. 2; Lund & Wang, 2023). NLP utilizes algorithms that examine and "interpret human language" to derive beneficial information (Lund & Wang, 2023, p. 1). ChatGPT can comprehend and decode virtually all human requests while generating a natural human-like reply (Hisan & Amri, 2023). By examining the effects of ChatGPT-generated narratives, this research contributes to the exploration of the latest innovation.

Due to ChatGPT being a new trend that is continually present in people's lives, understanding the effects of AI-generated narratives on the public's engagement in the story and their sustainable behavior is crucial. By utilizing one of the key storytelling theories, namely the Narrative Transportation Theory (NTT), this study initially intends to examine which of the three narratives, namely the History Narrative (HN), Sustainability Narrative (SN), or perhaps the combination of both History + Sustainability Narrative (HSN), is the most successful in transporting individuals into the narrative world (Neimand, 2018; Wang & Calder, 2009). Hence, the following research question is posed:

*RQ1: "To what extent do the AI-generated Narrative Types of a slow fashion garment description influence Lithuanian consumers' Narrative Transportation?"*

Furthermore, the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) is adopted in this research (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1973). TPB has been widely applied not only in the pro-environmental individuals' behavior scientific literature (Gao et al., 2017; Yuriev et al., 2020) but also in the fashion apparel industry to comprehend consumers' sustainable Attitudes (AT), PI, and PB (Ajzen, 1991; Chi et al., 2021, p. 103). TPB is among the most widespread theories that

examine human behavior in a variety of diverse areas, yet primarily utilized in pro-environmental people's behavior (Gao et al., 2017). Thusly, such a theory is highly suitable for the current research to examine consumers' sustainable fashion behavior.

Although AI-generated narratives are used in legal practices (Lam, 2021), only several studies were found that examine their influence on people's PI and PB (Braddock & Dillard, 2016). Thus, this study further examines the effect of AI-generated narratives, on people's PI and PB and two sub-categories of the TPB, namely AT and Perceived Behavioral Control (PBC), to understand which AI-generated narrative can drive people's sustainable behavior most successfully. Hence, this study addresses some additional research questions:

*RQ2: "To what extent do the AI-generated Narrative Types of a slow fashion garment description influence Lithuanian consumers' sustainable Purchase Intentions and Purchase Behavior of a product?"*

*RQ3: "To what extent do the AI-generated Narrative Types of a slow fashion garment description influence Lithuanian consumers' Attitude toward a slow fashion garment and Perceived Behavioral Control (i.e. sub-categories of the Theory of Planned Behavior)?"*

*RQ4: "What are the relationships between the Attitude toward a slow fashion garment and Perceived Behavioral Control (i.e. sub-categories of the Theory of Planned Behavior), Purchase Intentions, Purchase Behavior, and the Narrative Transportation Theory in the context of slow fashion among Lithuanian consumers?"*

## **1.1. Societal Relevance**

This study holds social significance as it helps brands and marketers understand the power of AI-generated narratives on people's sustainable behavior. Indeed, targeting consumers with compelling messages that elicit their PI and PB is crucial for marketers (Chi et al., 2021). Additionally, considering the "overexploitation of natural resources" and the constantly increasing danger of environmental disaster (Castro-López et al., 2021, p. 1), both businesses and society must alter their daily unsustainable practices to minimize the risk of ecological destruction. Furthermore, the fashion industry must improve its sustainability practices and understand how to transition toward a sustainable business model (Niinimäki et al., 2020). It is, therefore, of immense importance to help the fashion industry shift the focus



away from fast fashion while increasingly implementing slow practices in their daily routines (Chi et al., 2021; Štefko & Steffek, 2018). Consequently, this research specifically focuses on highlighting the importance and relevance of sustainable fashion for society and brands.

Moreover, as this research focuses on HN and SN that were generated by ChatGPT, understanding its effects on consumers' sustainable behavior is pivotal, considering it is a recently developed phenomenon (Hisan & Amri, 2023). Hence, this research investigates the recently launched tool whose influence and enduring consequences are yet to be discovered. While examining which AI-generated narrative is more convincing when enhancing consumers' sustainable behavior, this research intends to discover which narrative resonates with the audience most effectively and meaningfully.

This research intentionally explores Lithuanian shoppers' sustainable behavior due to several reasons. Firstly, Lithuanians enthusiastically utilize sustainable ways of shopping, such as thrifting second-hand goods, becoming an increasingly popular means of leading an environmentally-friendly lifestyle in Lithuania (Nikolova, 2021). Secondly, hardly are there any other countries in Europe that embrace the "zero waste" movement as eagerly as Lithuania does (Nikolova, 2021a, para. 12). Out of the three Baltic countries (Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia), Lithuania has integrated sustainability in business and society to the greatest extent in 2023, with 71% of citizens prioritizing sustainability in their regular purchasing decisions (Sustainable Brand Index, 2023) with multiple local boutiques and sustainable retail stores emerging annually (Nikolova, 2021a). However, Sustainable Brand Index (2023) discovered that the interest in sustainability among Lithuanians had decreased between 2020 and 2022, currently accounting for 54%, as compared to 67% in 2020. Regardless of this drop, incorporating sustainability in fashion purchasing, such as acquiring second-hand and slow fashion items, remain commonplace in Lithuania.

Despite the popularity of sustainable practices in Lithuania, no prior academic peer-reviewed literature was found, focusing on AI-generated narratives in the slow fashion context and its effects on NTT and consumers' sustainable behavior. By investigating the Lithuanian public, this research bridges the gap in the literature regarding sustainable fashion adoption beyond the context of the US (Chi et al., 2021; Kim et al., 2021). Thus, this research contributes to addressing the gap and exploring the power of AI-generated narratives on Lithuanian consumers' NTT and sustainable behavior, specifically in the slow fashion sector.

## 1.2. Scientific Relevance

In the context of academic relevance that this research holds, scientific literature about sustainable fashion consumption is both insufficient (Chi et al., 2021; Grazzini et al., 2021) and conflicting. On the one hand, some studies found inconsistencies between sustainability and fashion (Griskevicius et al., 2010) and that incorporating sustainability, specifically in luxury fashion, may detrimentally affect consumer preferences and PB (Achabou & Dekhili, 2013). Conversely, Ertekin and Atik (2014) found that fashion and sustainability can be harmonious. Thus, understanding consumers' sustainable behavior and addressing these inconsistencies in the academic literature is essential.

Similarly, scientific research is scarce in exploring the effects of AI-generated narratives on people's narrative transportation and behavior. Only several studies were discovered that examine transportation caused by AI-generated narratives in comparison with human-generated ones (Chu & Liu, 2023; Messingschlager & Appel, 2022). Moreover, while Braddock and Dillard (2016) explored people's exposure to AI-generated narratives and their effects on individuals' behavior, Hisan and Amri (2023) examined if experts could distinguish AI-generated texts from human-generated ones. Importantly, only two studies (Chu & Liu, 2023; Hisan & Amri, 2023) scrutinized ChatGPT-generated narratives. Hence, it is academically relevant to contribute to the existing small-scale amount of literature about ChatGPT-generated narratives and further explore its effects on narrative transportation and consumer behavior, specifically in the slow fashion sector.

While no prior research investigated the two types of AI-generated narratives, namely HN and SN, in a slow fashion context, a few studies exist examining the effect of human-generated HN on people's PI of (second-hand) apparel (Gilliam & Zablach, 2013; Kim et al., 2021). Besides, Kim et al. (2021) stressed the importance to investigate how the effects of the history of the product can be maximized in future research, by examining other product-oriented variables. Thus, the current research adds the SN as an additional narrative.

Due to the importance and success of eco-labeling in the environmental sector achieved at unprecedented rapidity in the past decades (Henninger, 2015; Iraldo et al., 2020), a body of literature was found that centers on eco-labels, yet not on the sustainability narratives. Indeed, no prior research was found that explores the presence of SN in the product description and its influence on consumers' sustainable behavior, making it a valid rationale to address the mentioned gap in the literature. Therefore, this research is among the

first studies to observe the power of AI-generated narratives, specifically by ChatGPT, on consumers' narrative transportation and their sustainable behavior.

### **1.3. Research Outline**

This quantitative research about AI-generated narratives and their effects on Lithuanian consumers' sustainable fashion behavior and Narrative Transportation exhibits a cohesive structure that helps answer the proposed research questions. Firstly, the theoretical framework provides the existing literature about slow fashion, AI-generated narratives, and the mentioned Theory of Planned Behavior. Furthermore, the methodology section elaborates on the research design, by offering a comprehensive description of the sampling method, employed primary measurements, and their operationalization. The methodology section is followed by the results of the conducted online quasi-experiment where each proposed hypothesis is answered. This study is finalized with the discussion and conclusion, summarizing the central research findings while presenting limitations, and offering implications for future research.

## 2. Theoretical Framework

This section elaborates on the primary concepts and theories employed in this study. Initially, this section outlines the transition from fast fashion to the rise of the slow fashion movement. This is followed by an explanation of AI-generated narratives, their limitations, and ethical concerns, further investigating the distinction between the two narratives, namely HN and SN. Then, NTT explores the importance of storytelling. Lastly, TPB and its key sub-categories that guide this research are meticulously described and then connected to the NTT. At the end of the chapter, all hypotheses are proposed.

### 2.1. Sustainability in the Fashion Industry: Fast vs. Slow

In this fast-paced world, the word *fast* has become almost like a norm. Mass production and standardization have become the main pillars of fast fashion; designed to be cheap due to constantly changing trends, traded in immense quantities, “globally ubiquitous” and “homogeneously [...] styled” (Fletcher, 2010, p. 260). Since the fast fashion industry promptly reacts to persistently changing trends that shift harmoniously with customer demands (Long & Nasiry, 2022), these brands are bound to utilize the mentioned unsustainable practices to keep pace with the tendencies. Fast fashion labels, such as H&M and Zara, exploit economies of scale, with minimal costs and rapid operation and production rates (Chi et al., 2021; Fletcher, 2010). Following the success achieved by the mentioned brands, the fast fashion business model has gained immense popularity and is progressively being adopted in the worldwide “retail market” (Cavender & Lee, 2018, p. 90; Long & Nasiry, 2022). In turn, this allows the fast fashion sector to thrive while continuously being preferred by global consumers.

Although fast fashion has been recently fostering sustainable practices in their garment production, like H&M’s “Conscious” collection, introducing sustainably made apparel (Hackett, 2016), these practices are highly misleading. They overshadow the central pillars that render fast fashion unsustainable – “speed and volume” (Cavender & Lee, 2018, p. 91; Hackett, 2016). Considering these hardly fruitful efforts of fast fashion brands to preserve the environment, slow fashion emerged as a “counter movement” to the fast fashion industry’s production and consumption practices (Cavender & Lee, 2018, p. 91; Fletcher, 2007). Hence, the unsustainable practices in fast fashion have finally been confronted.

Slow fashion is regarded as an alternative to low-quality garments produced in mass quantities under the intense exploitation of natural resources and labor (Ertekin & Atik, 2014;

Fletcher, 2007). Slow fashion encompasses multiple sustainable practices, such as decelerating consumers' consumption and clothing production and preserving the employees' and communities' welfare and environment generally (Cavender & Lee, 2018; Ertekin & Atik, 2014). Consequently, a slow fashion garment is an investment piece that remains fashionable for an undefined period (Ertekin & Atik, 2014). Furthermore, the slow fashion movement encourages people to question, examine, and challenge their worldviews, values, and daily routines that promote impulsive fashion consumption and unsustainable production (Cavender & Lee, 2018). Hence, slow fashion is not only about the transformation in the fashion industry but also represents a crucial component of a larger movement toward sustainability (Fletcher, 2010). Thus, slow fashion serves as a versatile sustainability agenda that transcends the boundaries of the fashion industry.

## **2.2. AI-Generated Narratives**

While a substantial body of research exists about human-generated narratives and their power to transport readers (Gerrig, 1994; Green & Brock, 2000; Schweitzer & Van den Hende, 2017; Wang & Calder, 2009), knowledge is scarce about AI-generated texts. The origins of AI can be discovered in the 1940s, in a short science fiction story "Runaround," revolving around a robot (Haenlein & Kaplan, 2019, p. 6). Following this narrative, multiple articles were written about AI where famous scientists, like mathematician Alan Turing, explained the creation of "intelligent machines" while assessing "their intelligence" (Haenlein & Kaplan, 2019, p. 7). A successful example of one of the first AI computer programs is called ELIZA which is a NLP tool that can simulate the interaction between a human and a computer (Haenlein & Kaplan, 2019). AI, particularly, chatbots, were intentionally developed to last and they are rapidly being integrated into society's routines (King, 2022). Such developments come in congruency with new affordances that affect and transform society in numerous ways.

After some decades and multiple developed chatbots, ChatGPT was launched back in November 2022, and since then gained immense popularity (Hisan & Amri, 2023). "ChatGPT is a machine learning model" (Lund & Wang, 2023, p. 1) that utilizes an "unsupervised pre-training" during which the chatbot was initially trained on an extensive dataset where it learned and internalized "conversational text" which continuously helps the model to "generate natural language" through the identified patterns in the dataset (Hisan & Amri, 2023, p. 73). After the model is pre-trained, it is constantly being adjusted and improved to

better perform NLP tasks, namely answering questions, translating languages, and summarizing (Hisan & Amri, 2023). Since ChatGPT is planned to be constantly refined by OpenAI, numerous AI experts believe that such a chatbot can ultimately substitute search engines (Metz, 2022). Hence, ChatGPT has a significant potential to revolutionize and facilitate AI-conversational interactions with humans, information processing, and reception.

Regardless of its benefits, ChatGPT poses multiple societal hurdles (Staff, 2023). Firstly, bias is often named as one of the key problems related to AI, and thus, ChatGPT (King, 2022; Lund & Wang, 2023). This largely depends on the data that AI is trained on; if the data has prejudicial accounts, the AI will also have partiality, making the NLP inaccurate and unfair (King, 2022; Lund & Wang, 2023). Moreover, ChatGPT poses security and privacy concerns (King, 2022; Lund & Wang, 2023). To specify, AI has access to an extensive amount of sensitive personal data which, if not correctly preserved, may result in various security and privacy threats, such as fraud or deception (King, 2022; Lund & Wang, 2023). “Over-reliance” is yet another threat of AI chatbots, as too much trust in AI may lead to inferior decisions or incorrect and illogical claims (Hisan & Amri, 2023; King, 2022, p. 294). Although ChatGPT has multiple capabilities in assisting people in various tasks, academics have yet to determine its possibilities which makes it an interesting and important topic to be investigated, especially considering its recency.

Regarding the outlined obstacles and prospects of ChatGPT, this research intends to explore the power of ChatGPT-generated narratives. Chu and Liu (2023) discovered that human-written narratives transport people more than those generated by ChatGPT, consistent with the previous findings (Messingschlager & Appel, 2022). However, in both studies, participants were aware of the authorship of the narratives (Chu & Liu, 2023; Messingschlager & Appel, 2022). Additionally, Hisan’s and Amri’s (2023) study examined whether medical experts could identify academic study abstracts generated by ChatGPT. The experts indeed struggled to recognize abstracts generated by ChatGPT as the writing bore a close resemblance to that of a human (Hisan & Amri, 2023). As such, ChatGPT has great potential to assist marketers and brands in the future to an even more significant extent. Therefore, this study utilizes ChatGPT-generated texts to examine if such narratives can transport readers and influence their sustainable behavior. Subsequently, two AI-generated narratives are utilized in the current study, namely sustainability and history, explored in the following paragraphs.

### 2.2.1. Sustainability Narrative

The fashion industry has been undergoing significant changes in the past decade, one of them being notable attention paid to sustainability and the “circular economy” (Evans & Peirson-Smith, 2018; Gazzola et al., 2020, p. 3; Ritch, 2015). Sustainability is of pivotal importance in the decision-making process of contemporary consumers (Gazzola et al., 2020), with numerous purchasers expecting fashion industry marketers to raise awareness about the increased dangers of climate change (Ritch, 2015). Due to the exponential growth in the world’s population, resulting in the consequences of climate change and increasing scarcity of water and land resources (Gazzola et al., 2020), transparency in product production has become unprecedentedly relevant (Gazzola et al., 2019). Not only are consumers increasingly expecting to be acquainted with the products’ origins but also “the quality of materials” that the garment is produced from (Gazzola et al., 2020, p. 3). Consequently, fashion brands are required to transparently communicate about their products’ manufacturing processes.

Although consumers are getting increasingly immersed in sustainability (Ritch, 2015), they still struggle to associate fashion with sustainability (Clark, 2008; Ritch, 2015). The confusion caused by the lack of understanding of sustainability was corroborated by Evans and Peirson-Smith (2018) who investigated the “green words” in the product descriptions and their impact on consumer environmental concerns (p. 253). Evans and Peirson-Smith (2018) discovered that consumers fail to comprehend sustainability terms as they lack clarity, hence, confusing consumers. Thus, brands must develop a “messaging narrative” that is framed in a manner that aligns with consumers’ knowledge (Evans & Peirson-Smith, 2018, p. 267). Such a narrative could be delivered through numerous communication platforms, allowing consumers to choose the desired channel, supporting and systematically increasing the level of their sustainability knowledge (Evans & Peirson-Smith, 2018). Ultimately, this would result in consumers being more engaged with the narrative (Evans & Peirson-Smith, 2018) and potentially more willing to act upon it.

These findings address the necessity of delivering the message of sustainability in fashion consumption comprehensibly, enabling consumers to understand the key message. Therefore, it is crucial to contextualize SN and create a transparent AI-generated narrative that resonates with consumers’ sustainability values and expectations to understand if it effectively conveys the sustainability message and manages to transport the consumers while examining its effect on their sustainable behavior.

### **2.2.2. History Narrative**

The history of the product is an essential asset to include in the product description not only in second-hand items but also in new sustainably produced garments. While Wuestefeld et al. (2012) discussed the importance and necessity of the well-established brand history and the positive influence that it exerts on brand identity, it is highly essential and beneficial to communicate the history of the products that brands sell too. Admiring the history of the produced garments incites the desire of an individual to live in an age when one was not yet born (Machado et al., 2019), and thus, relive the period by wearing a certain piece of clothing. It reinforces nostalgia and acknowledgment of the garment (Machado et al., 2019). The appreciation for nostalgia and history is manifested in consumers' desire to get access to "authentic products with genuine history" (Wuestefeld et al., 2012, p. 58). And even when the history of the product proves negative at times, it does not hinder the willingness to purchase the product, as the history carries a symbolic and sentimental value (Machado et al., 2019). Moreover, conveying the historical narrative of the product serves a central function in evaluating and increasing the "customer-perceived value" of the second-hand product (Sihvonen & Turunen, 2016, p. 292). However, time may alter how consumers perceive the product as it may carry a specific meaningful history (Sihvonen & Turunen, 2016). Although the study by Sihvonen and Turunen (2016) focused on the pre-loved fashion items that were sold on second-hand online platforms, it is crucial and simultaneously interesting to investigate if the history of the new and sustainable garments is successful in transporting the readers and ultimately enhancing consumers' sustainable behavior.

### **2.3. Narrative Transportation Theory**

NTT indicates the power of storytelling (Gilliam & Zablah, 2013) and explains that effective stories can persuade, engage, and transport readers (Escalas, 2004; Neimand, 2018; Wang & Calder, 2009). People empathize with the narrative of the story, facilitating their interpretation of intentions embedded in narratives (Kim et al., 2021). Thus, while storytelling is a powerful tool to convey messages (Kim et al., 2021), it can influence people's beliefs, change their behavior and encourage better information acquisition (Neimand, 2018). NTT outlines the effects of the stories, experienced by people who are "caught up in the flow of the story" (Wang & Calder, 2009, p. 547). Since people experience stories differently (Malthouse et al., 2007), depending on the extent of transportation, individuals can feel "absorbed into the story" to a varying degree (Green & Brock, 2000, p.



701; Schweitzer & Van den Hende, 2017). When experiencing transportation, consumers can develop a realistic image of a situation that they read (Gerrig, 1994; Green & Brock, 2000; Schweitzer & Van den Hende, 2017), making them “lost in a story” (Green & Brock, 2000, p. 701; Van den Hende et al., 2012). Hence, transportation heavily relies on immersion in the narrative.

Narratives can also persuade people. Narrative processing influences “persuasion through transportation” (Escalas, 2007, p. 422; Gerrig, 1994; Green & Brock, 2000), suggesting that narrative transportation affects people’s persuasion in a story that may translate into intangible and ultimately tangible actions. To illustrate, the more participants were transported by the narrative and their “self-referencing” based on the narrative, the more they liked the fictitious brand used in the experiment (Escalas, 2007, p. 425). Also, transportation is likely to lead to a reduced “negative cognitive” response, resulting in readers being less prompted to distrust or disagree with the claims rendered in the story (Green & Brock, 2000, p. 702). Thus, narrative transportation may substantially influence consumers’ perceptions and behavior.

Regarding the transportation caused by AI-generated narratives, the level of transportation in human and AI-generated narratives differs based on the genre of the story (Messingschlager & Appel, 2022). While transportation was higher in the human-generated contemporary fiction story, it was comparable in the science fiction tale between AI and human-generated narrative (Messingschlager & Appel, 2022). Hence, connecting these findings to the slow fashion context, and considering the scarce evidence of the influence of HN and SN on people’s transportation, and the capacity of different narrative genres to transport readers to varying extents (Messingschlager & Appel, 2022), H1 is proposed (in section 2.6, accompanied by all hypotheses).

## **2.4. The Theory of Planned Behavior: Shifting away from the Theory of Reasoned Action**

The *Theory of Reasoned Action* (TRA) elucidates on predicting human behavioral intentions in a specific situation when individuals’ behavior is “under volitional intention,” affecting their overt behavior (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1973, p. 42). Two major elements influence “behavioral intentions,” namely personal, and social (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1973, p. 42). Hence, TRA is composed of two main pillars, namely Attitude (AT) and subjective norm, influencing PI and PB (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1973). Although TRA predicts human behavioral

intentions, this theory is flawed and raises doubts about its applicability as human behavior might also be affected by “non-volitional” factors, namely one’s (in)ability to accomplish a behavior, such as the availability or a shortage of resources (Han et al., 2010, p. 326).

Therefore, TRA lacks sufficiency when explaining human behavioral intentions.

After almost two decades of introducing TRA, Ajzen (1991) extended the theory with yet another construct, namely Perceived Behavioral Control (PBC). Hence, the new and slightly adapted theory is known as the *Theory of Planned Behavior* (TPB) (Ajzen, 1991). Although TPB has been largely applied in well-being behavior (Godin & Kok, 1996), like exercising (Godin et al., 1993) and weight loss (Schifter & Ajzen, 1985), the theory is most commonly utilized in sustainable apparel or green product consumption (Chang & Watchravesringkan, 2018; Chi et al., 2021; Halepete et al., 2009; Nam et al., 2017). TPB constitutes of “three conceptually independent determinants of intention,” such as *Attitude* (AT), *subjective norm*, and *Perceived Behavioral Control* (PBC) (Ajzen, 1991, p. 188). TPB explains that three factors influence people’s behavioral intentions and actual behavior (Chekima et al., 2016). To illustrate, when consumers have at least one of the following: a favorable approach toward a product, perceived social pressure from their social network when considering the product, and assume simplicity in product acquisition, they ultimately become more eager to purchase the product (Ajzen, 1991). Importantly, the three mentioned constructs that constitute TPB are empirically independent due to their low intercorrelations (Bamberg & Möser, 2007). Thus, the constructs are treated as separate from one another in the current research.

The significance and influence of the three segments in forecasting individuals’ behavioral intentions may range depending on the situations and people’s behavior (Ajzen, 1991). Hence, only one of the three predictors, or conversely, all three constructs “make independent contributions” when influencing people’s intentions (Ajzen, 1991, p. 189). Fashion companies should encourage the audience to cultivate slow fashion by effectively targeting consumers with appealing messages (Štefko & Steffek, 2018), yet both brands and marketers must initially understand the motivations behind people’s sustainable behavior.

#### **2.4.1. Issues with the Theory of Planned Behavior**

Although TPB has been commonly utilized when investigating people’s behavior, this theory is criticized by some scholars for its lack of explanatory capacity in diverse research situations (Armitage & Conner, 2001; Paul et al., 2016). One of the fundamental problems with TPB is its dependability on “self-report” by the research participants which is usually

affected by “self-presentational biases,” and therefore, lacking reliability (Armitage & Conner, 2001, p. 475). Moreover, since “self-efficacy” and PBC are synonymous constructs, they tend to be utilized interchangeably (Ajzen, 1991, p. 184). However, while the former construct entails the “internal control factors” that determine whether one can successfully execute a task (Armitage & Conner, 2001; Lunenburg, 2011, p. 476), the latter describes the external assets. Therefore, self-efficacy and PBC cannot be used interchangeably as they are intrinsically different concepts. Additionally, some scholars identified that TPB lacks the consideration of “self-predictions when predicting behavior” which makes the construct of behavioral intentions unreliable at times (Armitage & Conner, 2001, p. 477; Sheppard et al., 1988). Nevertheless, this study utilizes TPB as it is one of the key theories that help understand consumers’ behavior.

Importantly, only a part of the theory is utilized in the current research. Specifically, the subjective norm is not considered in this study due to its lack of suitability for the used method, namely, quasi-experiment. Subjective norm encompasses “perceived social pressure to perform or not to perform the behavior” (Ajzen, 1991, p. 188). This construct suggests that the influence of one’s social network plays an integral role in one’s sustainable behavior (Chi et al., 2021). It is, therefore, virtually impossible to examine the influence of one’s social network on respondents’ behavioral intentions to purchase the shown product in the experimental manipulations as one cannot predict its network’s opinion about the behavior.

Additionally, out of the three pillars that constitute TPB, the subjective norm has the weakest relationship with people’s intention, thus, it only seldom predicts behavioral intention (Armitage & Conner, 2001; De Lenne & Vandenberg, 2017). Due to the lack of capacity to predict human intentions, subjective norm tends to be eliminated from quantitative analyses (Sparks et al., 1995). Likewise, the current study dismissed the subjective norm. Consequently, this research examines two key pillars of the theory, namely AT and PBC, described in the following sections.

#### **2.4.2. Predicting Consumers’ Purchase Intentions and Purchase Behavior**

PI and PB are highly interconnected concepts (Ajzen, 1991). On the one hand, PI refers to people’s “motivational factors that influence” their behavior (Ajzen, 1991, p. 181). PI demonstrates individuals’ willingness to try and perform the behavior and the extent of efforts that consumers are willing to invest in executing the behavior (Ajzen, 1991). Therefore, the higher the PI to execute the behavior, the higher the likelihood that the behavior will be performed by an individual (Ajzen, 1991). On the other hand, PB explores

actual people's PB, thus, their preferences to perform the behavior and the actual purchasing of the items (Lee, 2008; Peña-García et al., 2020; Rausch & Kopplin, 2021). As stated by Ajzen (1991), consumers' intention to execute the behavior is the key indicator of their actual PB. Hence, this perspective of PI and PB is utilized in this research while focusing on sustainable consumer behavior.

Furthermore, PI has been extensively utilized in the academic literature for numerous decades, with several authors aiming to establish a link between PI and PB (Morrison, 1979). The concepts of PI and PB are continuously utilized and examined in various marketing fields (Peña-García et al., 2020), like online purchasing (Sundström et al., 2019), and sustainable marketing (Nguyen et al., 2016). Thus, both terms have become key in marketing when establishing consumers' willingness to perform the behavior (Morrison, 1979).

In connection to the previously discussed AI-generated narratives, one could assume that consumers' PI and PB may differ when exposed to diverse AI-generated narratives. To be exact, only a handful of literature focuses on the narrative, more specifically HN, and people's PI and PB. Kim et al. (2021) were among the first ones to empirically find that the HN of a second-hand product enhanced people's intention and trust to use the circular fashion service, increasing people's appreciation of the product. Hence, well-constructed stories can foster positive relationships with brands and/or products, leading to a greater inclination to purchase and pay for the items (Lundqvist et al., 2013). Furthermore, Gilliam and Zablah (2013) found that the "stories told from a business" viewpoint effectively increased people's PI "in one-time sales encounters" (p. 493). Consequently, brands that provide stories about their products are more successful as product marketers (Kim et al., 2021). Thus, exposing consumers to powerful brand/product stories may lead to closer association with the brand/product, potentially enhancing consumers' PI and PB; hence H2a and H2b are posed.

### **2.4.3. Attitude**

AT toward an action relies on people's approach toward executing a particular behavior under the provided circumstances (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1973). AT about a specific action consists "of beliefs about the particular behavior" which may either be negative or positive (Chang & Watchravesringkan, 2018, p. 150). Importantly, AT is acknowledged in cognitive psychology as one of the fundamental pillars, guiding people's behavior (Chi et al., 2021). Regarding the attitudes toward sustainable consumers' behavior, they can be classified into two key categories that were proposed by Stephens (1985) and further applied by Butler and Francis (1997), namely, "general environmental" attitudes and "clothing-specific

attitudes” (Butler & Francis, 1997, p. 77). Therefore, this study focuses on the latter type of AT as it considers people’s AT toward the depicted slow fashion item in combination with the AI-generated description of the garment.

Considering AI-generated narratives and their influence on people’s AT, Chu and Liu (2023) found that the labeled ChatGPT-generated narrative was not as successful as its human-generated counterpart to encourage people’s positive AT toward the behavior. While the comparison was made between the AI-generated narratives and their human-generated counterparts (Chu & Liu, 2023), no prior research was discovered that explores different AI-generated narratives in the slow fashion context, comparing distinct product descriptions. Therefore, there is a valid reason to believe that different AI-generated narratives affect people’s AT toward a slow fashion item to varying degrees. Therefore, H3a is proposed.

#### **2.4.4. Perceived Behavioral Control**

PBC refers to the perceived level of simplicity or difficulty to complete the behavior, based on prior consumers’ experience and expected barriers (Ajzen, 1991). The resources and possibilities available to individuals dictate the extent to which an individual is likely to perform the behavior (Ajzen, 1991). PBC include consumers’ perception toward access to their financial means, time, information, skills, and their confidence to execute the behavior (Hosta & Žabkar, 2021; Nam et al., 2017). Consequently, multiple investigations demonstrated that consumers’ behavior is highly affected by their self-assurance in their capabilities of accomplishing the intended behavior (Ajzen, 1991). Since scientific literature is scarce in explaining how and why people hold different PBC (Chang & Watchravesringkan, 2018), and as PBC is a construct, implemented later than people’s AT, there is a reasonable motive to conduct more contemporary research about PBC. While no research was discovered that investigated the effect of AI-generated narratives on PBC due to the recency of both constructs, specifically the former one, one may assume that the nature of the AI-generated narrative will assist in contemplating how easy or difficult it is to purchase the product (Ajzen, 1991); hence H3b is proposed.

## **2.5. Possible Relationships between The Theory of Planned Behavior and the Narrative Transportation Theory**

### **2.5.1. Attitude, Sustainable Purchase Intentions, and Behavior**

Considering the relevant findings about consumers' AT toward purchasing sustainable products, some studies exist that explored such a relationship. Paul et al. (2016) found that positive people's AT toward green products influenced their PI of the mentioned products, however, this relationship interacted with prior people's environmental knowledge. Likewise, it was concluded in multiple academic research papers that if consumers have positive AT toward sustainable attire, they are more enthusiastic to purchase it (Chang & Watchravesringkan, 2018; Chi et al., 2021; De Lenne & Vandebosch, 2017). These findings were supported by Halepete et al. (2009) who established a positive relationship between people's AT toward personalizing attire and their intention to acquire "personalized fair-trade apparel" (p. 154). Additionally, in the meta-analysis, Bamberg and Möser (2007) established that AT is a significant predictor of "pro-environmental behavioral intention" (p. 14). In line with the existing literature, H4a is posed.

Considering people's AT and their connection to PB, the relationship varies depending on the studied phenomenon, and is therefore, "inconclusive" (Moser, 2015, p. 168). Contrary, some studies found a positive relationship between people's AT and PB. To illustrate, when researching sustainable food consumption, Tanner and Kast (2003) found that consumers' ATs exhibit strong predictive potential for environmentally conscious purchases. Furthermore, Amoako et al. (2020) established that there was a positive relationship between youth's green AT and their PB. Hence, these findings prove consistent with prior literature (Ebreo et al., 1999; Mainieri et al., 1997), investigating environmental attitudes and sustainable PB and recycling behavior.

Oppositely, some studies found an insignificant relationship between one's AT and PB. Moser (2015) established that individuals' AT on environment preservation failed to significantly impact sustainable PB. Furthermore, Bamberg and Möser (2007) concluded that AT only influenced behavior through consumers' intentions to engage in the behavior. According to Moser (2015), these findings imply "the attitude-behavior gap" which is extensively examined in the academic literature (p. 171). Likewise, Gupta and Ogden (2009) addressed the "attitude-behavior dilemma" and inconsistency between consumers' AT and their actual PB, claiming that people tend to behave in a manner that is incompatible with their AT (p. 377). Gupta and Ogden (2009) found that other multiple factors exist that shape people's ATs, namely "trust, in-group identity, expectation of others' cooperation and perceived efficacy" that play an essential role in determining "green" and "non-green" buyers' PB (p. 386). Since the mentioned findings are relatively dated and inconsistent, a more recent and relevant examination of the proposed relationship is highly necessary. To

address the mentioned inconsistencies and investigate the link between one's AT toward the sustainable garment and PB in the context of slow fashion, H4b is posed.

### **2.5.2. Perceived Behavioral Control, Sustainable Purchase Intentions, and Behavior**

Prior scholarly literature found that consumers have higher PI toward sustainable products when they perceive that purchasing a specific product is relatively easy, based on their resources and perceived barriers (high PBC) (Chang & Watchravesringkan, 2018; Chi et al., 2021; Nam et al., 2017). Similarly, in the research about PI for "organic personal care products," Kim and Chung (2011) found that PBC positively affects consumers' PI of organic products (p. 40). Likewise, Han et al. (2010) indicated that PBC positively correlates with people's intention to stay at a sustainable hotel. Thus, if individuals have easy access to slow fashion considering their financial recourses, time, and other possibilities, it can be assumed that they will be more enthusiastic to purchase it. In agreement with prior findings, H4c is proposed.

Furthermore, both PBC and intentions to complete the behavior can notably contribute to predicting actual behavior (Ajzen, 1991). However, in any given situation, one of the predictors may be more successful and meaningful, or only one may be needed (Ajzen, 1991). Ajzen (1991) proposed that PBC may indeed have a direct influence on consumers' PB. However, although Ajzen (1991) indicated the potential direct relationship between PBC and PB, a scarce body of literature investigates such a connection. Hence, it is crucial to consider the relationship between PBC and PB and examine if PBC has a significant impact on consumers' PB in the context of slow fashion.

Some existing literature determined the positive effect of PBC on PB, again in the sustainable context, but not necessarily in the slow fashion purchasing setting. Chang and Watchravesringkan (2018) discovered that PBC positively affects the actual PB of environmentally-friendly apparel. Thus, consumers who perceived high control over their sustainable PB were more eager to acquire sustainable products (Chang & Watchravesringkan, 2018). Furthermore, Hosta and Žabkar (2021) established that PBC had a positive relationship with "socially responsible sustainable consumer behavior" (p. 273). The authors also claimed that PBC is an essential construct that may directly explain consumer behavior, supported by their research (Hosta & Žabkar, 2021). Considering the aforementioned findings, H4d is posed.

### **2.5.3. Interplay between the Theory of Planned Behavior and the Narrative Transportation Theory**

Although both theories used in the current study, namely TPB and NTT, focus on different aspects, they can accompany each other in comprehending human behavior and serve as a connection between human cognitive and emotional thought processes. While TPB aims to understand human decision-making processes through their “psychological/cognitive” activity (Paul et al., 2016, p. 124), NTT describes an emotional aspect that a human undergoes when being transported (Green, 2021; Lundqvist et al., 2013). Hence, TPB explains cognitive processes that an individual goes through when considering a purchase, such as one’s AT towards the behavior and PBC and NTT focuses on emotional ones.

Emotion plays an integral role in narrative processing (Murphy et al., 2013). When people are transported by the narrative, they are more eager “to adopt beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors” that are indicated in the story (Green, 2021, p. 87; Murphy et al., 2013). It was found by Green and Brock (2000) that the transportation into the narrative is positively linked to receiving and trusting the values and beliefs depicted in the story (Green, 2021). Likewise, in the study about the consumers’ emotional responses and involvement in the television drama show, Murphy et al. (2011) identified transportation as one of the most powerful predictors of change in viewers’ AT, behavior, and knowledge. This finding corroborates Green’s (2004) study where it was discovered that transportation encouraged “behavioral outcomes” besides AT and beliefs (Murphy et al., 2011, p. 424). Not only do these findings suggest that narratives may influence people’s behavior if they successfully transport the audience but also that narratives are likely to alter people’s AT.

While no prior research was found that explores the synergy between the two theories, especially in experimental research in the context of slow fashion, both theories can accompany each other. According to Braddock and Dillard (2016), narratives are successful instruments that can stimulate people’s behavior, namely their beliefs, AT, and intentions. Thus, considering the nature of TPB and NTT and their intention to understand human behavior through different perspectives, namely cognitive and emotional, both theories combined can provide an inclusive explanation of consumers’ behavior. Braddock and Dillard (2016) indicated that a positive correlation exists between exposure to the narrative and AT. Furthermore, transportation may produce strong feelings and possibly a connection with the characters in the story which, in turn, affects readers’ opinions and beliefs (Green & Brock, 2000). Likewise, by transporting the readers into the different narratives (HN, SN, HSN), one can assume that the audience will have enhanced AT toward the advertised



product (H4e) (Green, 2004; Murphy et al., 2011) and that it will be positively correlated with people's PBC (H4f).

The more the narrative about the product elicits transportation, the more consumers are encouraged to substitute an old item with the new product that was advertised (Van den Hende et al., 2012). Similarly, in the meta-analytical study about the effect of narratives on people's behavior, Braddock and Dillard (2016) established a positive relationship between narrative exposure and people's intentions and behavior. Thus, by utilizing the power of narratives and their ability to transport the readers through their absorption in the stories (Green, 2021; Green & Brock, 2000; Wang & Calder, 2009), it can be predicted that NTT enhances people's PI and PB, caused by the immersion in the stories (H4g-h).

## 2.6. Proposed hypotheses

Considering the gathered insights, the current study examines the following hypotheses (hypotheses were created in line with Chowtanapanich and Chaipoopirutana (2014) formulations):

*H1: There is a statistically significant difference in the Narrative Transportation score of the slow fashion garment description when examined by AI-Generated Narrative Types (History, Sustainability, History + Sustainability, Control Group).*

*H2a: There is a statistically significant difference in the Purchase Intention score of the slow fashion garment when examined by AI-Generated Narrative Types (History, Sustainability, History + Sustainability, Control Group).*

*H2b: There is a statistically significant difference in the Purchase Behavior score of the slow fashion garment when examined by AI-Generated Narrative Types (History, Sustainability, History + Sustainability, Control Group).*

*H3a: There is a statistically significant difference in the Attitude toward the shown slow fashion garment score when examined by AI-Generated Narrative Types (History, Sustainability, History + Sustainability, Control Group).*

*H3b: There is a statistically significant difference in the Perceived Behavioral Control score of the slow fashion garment when examined by AI-Generated Narrative Types (History, Sustainability, History + Sustainability, Control Group).*

*H4: There is a positive relationship between a) Attitude and Purchase Intentions, b) Attitude and Purchase Behavior, c) Perceived Behavioral Control and Purchase Intentions, d) Perceived Behavioral Control and Purchase Behavior, e) Narrative Transportation Theory and Attitude, f) Narrative Transportation Theory and Perceived Behavioral Control, g) Narrative Transportation Theory and Purchase Intentions, h) Narrative Transportation Theory and Purchase Behavior.*

### **3. Methodology**

This chapter thoroughly elaborates on each aspect concerning how the study was conducted. Firstly, this section explains the method that was utilized in this research and the motivation as to why it is relevant for the present study. This section is followed by a description of the measurements used in the quasi-experiment and their operationalizations. Then, the data collection procedure, the obtained sample, some data assumptions, and, finally, the validity and reliability of the research are thoroughly discussed.

#### **3.1. Method Description**

A quantitative approach was employed to investigate the multiple effects and relationships between the variables (Babbie, 2015). Quantitative research enables the identification of causal relationships and allows one to systematically gather and record information, and ultimately identify patterns in the population (Babbie, 2015). Hence, as this research aims to test the effects of AI-generated narratives accompanying the visual imagery and relationships among the variables, the quantitative approach is most suitable.

Additionally, this research simultaneously relies on both the deductive approach which allows one to test theories and generalize the findings, and partly on an inductive approach (Newman, 2000). While prior literature exists on the effectiveness of narrative on people's PI and trust toward a service (Gilliam & Zablah, 2013; Kim et al., 2021), a new theory may be generated (inductive) (Newman, 2000), as no research was found to test the HN in contrast to and in combination with SN.

Furthermore, this research relies on a quasi-experimental study, namely a 2 (history narrative: included vs. excluded) x 2 (sustainability narrative: included vs. excluded) between-subject factorial design using an online questionnaire. The factorial design allows the researcher to use "two or more independent variables in combination" (Neuman, 2014, p. 296). Therefore, since this research aims to test both HN and SN in combination in influencing the variables and theories, outlined in Chapter 2, besides the effects individually, factorial design proves suitable (Neuman, 2014). Moreover, a survey is an appropriate method to systematically collect structured data that is not only factual but also based on people's opinions, attitudes, and ideas (Matthews & Ross, 2010). Hence, a quasi-experiment employing an online survey is the most suitable approach for the current study that aims to assess participants' Narrative Transportation and sustainable behavior based on manipulations received.

This research relied on an online questionnaire created on Qualtrics. While all the subjects were exposed to the same visual imagery of the slow fashion jumper, there were four different experimental treatments with subjects being randomly assigned to one of the following four conditions: (1) History Narrative (HN), (2) Sustainability Narrative (SN), (3) History + Sustainability Narrative (HSN), and (4) control group (Table 1; Figure 1).

**Table 1**

*2x2 factorial design explanation*

History Narrative (HN)	Sustainability Narrative (SN)	
	Included	Excluded
Included	(3) History + Sustainability Narrative (HSN)	(1) History Narrative (HN)
Excluded	(2) Sustainability Narrative (SN)	(4) Control group

All narratives were generated by ChatGPT on the 10<sup>th</sup> of March (Appendix A). The first and second conditions included either the HN or the SN. The third condition incorporated both HN and SN, accompanying the imagery of slow fashion apparel. Lastly, the fourth condition only included the visual imagery of a slow fashion garment, without any description of the product. The latter condition refers to the control group which did not include any of the manipulations (Neuman, 2014). This condition helped assess if the presence of the AI-generated narrative had a significant effect on the primary variables as compared to the absence of the narrative. Random assignment of the subjects helped ensure the unbiased allocation of participants to diverse manipulations where groups do not have fundamental systematic differences (Neuman, 2014) as all the subjects are allocated to manipulations solely based on chance (Bloom, 2008); hence reducing any possible prejudice.

## Figure 1

*Four experimental conditions, manipulated by the different AI-generated narratives*

### 1) AI-generated History Narrative



#### FLEECE JUMPER IN BLACK

The black fleece jumper has a long and storied history in fashion. Originally a utilitarian garment worn by athletes and laborers, it gained popularity in the 20th century as a versatile and comfortable item of clothing. In the 1960s and 70s, black fleece jumpers became associated with counterculture movements, and were often worn by artists and musicians. Today, the black fleece jumper remains a staple of casual and athletic wear, prized for its simplicity, warmth, and timeless style.

### 2) AI-generated Sustainability Narrative



#### FLEECE JUMPER IN BLACK

Our black fleece jumper is made from 100% organic cotton, ensuring that it is free from harmful chemicals and pesticides. We work with Fair Trade certified factories that provide safe and fair working conditions for workers. We also prioritize minimal waste in our manufacturing process, using only eco-friendly dyes and recycling excess materials. By choosing our sustainable black fleece jumper, you're making a positive impact on the environment and supporting ethical fashion practices.

### 3) AI-generated History + Sustainability Narrative



#### FLEECE JUMPER IN BLACK

The black fleece jumper has a long and storied history in fashion. Originally a utilitarian garment worn by athletes and laborers, it gained popularity in the 20th century as a versatile and comfortable item of clothing. In the 1960s and 70s, black fleece jumpers became associated with counterculture movements, and were often worn by artists and musicians. Today, the black fleece jumper remains a staple of casual and athletic wear, prized for its simplicity, warmth, and timeless style.

Our black fleece jumper is made from 100% organic cotton, ensuring that it is free from harmful chemicals and pesticides. We work with Fair Trade certified factories that provide safe and fair working conditions for workers. We also prioritize minimal waste in our manufacturing process, using only eco-friendly dyes and recycling excess materials. By choosing our sustainable black fleece jumper, you're making a positive impact on the environment and supporting ethical fashion practices.

### 4) Control group – no narrative



#### FLEECE JUMPER IN BLACK

*Note.* Group 1 observed the AI-generated History Narrative, Group 2 saw the AI-generated Sustainability Narrative, Group 3 was exposed to the combination of both History +

Sustainability Narrative, Group 4 was exposed to the control group with no narrative.

Sustainability Narrative, and Group 4 saw only the visual without any product description.

All conditions were accompanied by the visual of the slow fashion jumper.

## 3.2. Measurements and Operationalizations

This section provides the operationalization of the key concepts used in the study. To test the hypotheses posed previously (2.6), this study used five key scales that were modified and revised from multiple sources. To keep the answer categories consistent throughout the questionnaire, all the below-listed items were measured on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from (1) strongly disagree to (5) strongly agree (Appendix B).

### 3.2.1. Theoretical Concepts

**Narrative Transportation Theory (NTT).** NTT was measured on a 7-item scale that was taken from Wang and Calder (2009) and modified. To exemplify, statements, like *“I felt caught up in the content of the product description”* and *“I lost myself in the content of the product description while reading it”* helped measure to what extent participants were transported by the narrative (HN, SN, HSN) they were exposed to (Wang & Calder, 2009, p. 554). The 7 items that measured NTT were entered into confirmatory factor analysis, using Principal Component extraction with Direct Oblimin rotation based on Eigenvalues ( $> 1.00$ ),  $KMO = .82$ ,  $\chi^2 (N = 220, 21) = 394.53$ ,  $p < .001$ . The resultant model explained 59.1% of the variance in Narrative Transportation Theory. However, the model did not confirm the existence of the loading on the single factor as two factors were extracted. Since only a single item was extracted in the second factor, namely *“I lost myself in the content of the product description while reading it,”* based on its theoretical contribution, it was decided to keep the item included in the scale. The internal consistency of the scale was more than acceptable ( $\alpha = .76$ ) and proved higher than in the original study (Wang & Calder, 2009) (Appendix C1). Hence, a new variable was computed out of the 7 items that measured the average NTT ( $M = 2.99$ ;  $SD = .69$ ).

**Attitude (AT).** A 5-item AT scale was adapted from Chi et al. (2021) and Maloney et al. (2014). To illustrate, statements, such as *“I like the idea of purchasing slow fashion apparel”* (Chi et al., 2021, p. 106) and *“Buying the shown slow fashion jumper instead of fast fashion jumper would feel like the morally right thing to do”* were used to measure people’s attitudes toward the shown slow fashion jumper. All 5 items were included in factor analysis and subjected to Principal Component extraction with Direct Oblimin rotation. As

the scale comprised of multiple items adapted from two different studies, factor analysis established the loading on a single factor,  $KMO = .74$ ,  $\chi^2 (N = 220, 10) = 533.23$ ,  $p < .001$ , explaining 61.4% of the variance in people's attitudes. Reliability analysis indicated a high internal consistency of the scale ( $\alpha = .84$ ) (Appendix C2); the new variable was computed that measured the average of AT ( $M = 3.91$ ;  $SD = .75$ ).

**Perceived Behavioral Control (PBC).** A 5-item PBC scale was adapted and revised from Chi et al. (2021), De Lira and Da Costa (2022), and Zheng and Chi (2015). PBC was assessed by using statements related to one's perception of how easy or difficult it is to purchase the shown slow fashion garment, like "*Purchasing slow fashion apparel is entirely within my control*" and "*I have complete control over the number of slow fashion jumpers I will buy for personal use*" (Chi et al., 2021, p. 106). All items of the scale were added to factor analysis, using Principal Component extraction with Direct Oblimin rotation. Confirmatory factor analysis revealed a single factor with Eigenvalue  $> 1.00$ ,  $KMO = .77$ ,  $\chi^2 (N = 220, 10) = 419.26$ ,  $p < .001$ . The model explained 58.9% of the variance in Perceived Behavioral Control. The internal consistency of the scale was high ( $\alpha = .82$ ) (Appendix C3); therefore, a new variable was calculated that measured the average of PBC ( $M = 3.91$ ;  $SD = .72$ ).

**Purchase Intentions (PI).** A 4-item PI scale was modified and combined from both Baker and Churchill (1977) and Bues et al. (2017). The items, such as "*Given the shown slow fashion jumper, there is a strong likelihood that I would purchase it*" and "*I would buy the shown slow fashion jumper if I happened to see it in a store*" helped assess people's Purchase Intentions. 4 items were entered into confirmatory factor analysis, using Principal Component extraction with Direct Oblimin rotation. Factor analysis revealed the loading on a single factor,  $KMO = .81$ ,  $\chi^2 (N = 220, 6) = 358.81$ ,  $p < .001$ , explaining 68.3% of the variance in people's Purchase Intentions. Reliability analysis indicated a high internal consistency of the scale ( $\alpha = .84$ ) (Appendix C4); therefore, a new variable was created that measured an average score of people's PI ( $M = 3.39$ ;  $SD = .88$ ).

**Purchase Behavior (PB).** A 4-item scale was adapted from both Lee (2008) and Rausch and Kopplin (2021). To exemplify, the PB scale was measured with statements, namely "*I choose to buy exclusively slow fashion jumpers*" and "*I prefer slow fashion jumpers over fast fashion jumpers because their quality is better*" (Rausch & Kopplin, 2021, p. 8). All items of the scale were entered into factor analysis, using Principal Component extraction with Direct Oblimin rotation. Factor analysis revealed the loading on a single factor,  $KMO = .69$ ,  $\chi^2 (N = 220, 6) = 191.46$ ,  $p < .001$ , explaining 55.4% of the variance in

people's Purchase Behavior. Reliability analysis demonstrated an acceptable internal consistency of the scale ( $\alpha = .73$ ) (Appendix C5). Thus, a new variable was computed, measuring an average score of PB ( $M = 3.50$ ;  $SD = .78$ ).

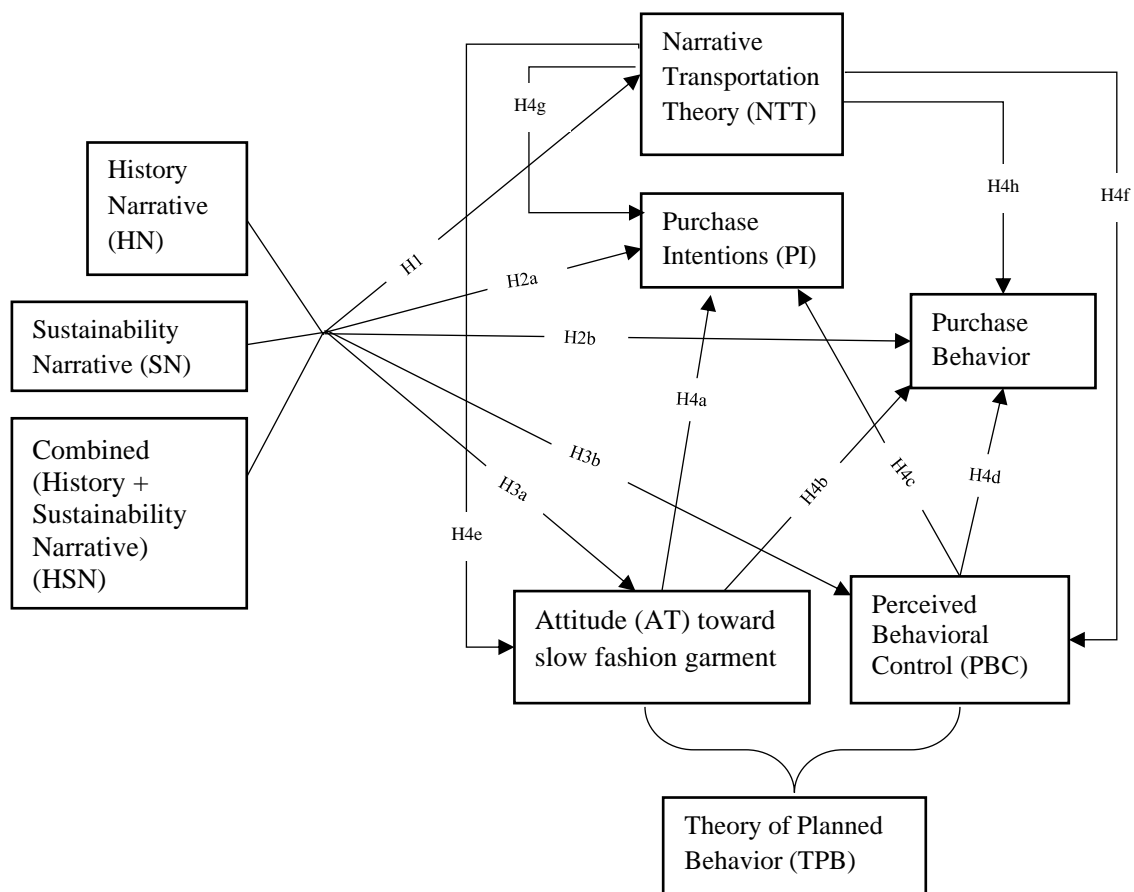
**Table 2**

*Descriptive statistics for computed variables that measured the average score*

Variable	N	Mean (M)	Standard deviation (SD)
Narrative Transportation Theory (NTT)	220	2.99	.69
Attitude (AT)	220	3.91	.75
Perceived Behavioral Control (PBC)	220	3.91	.72
Purchase Intentions (PI)	220	3.39	.88
Purchase Behavior (PB)	220	3.50	.78

**Figure 2**

*Conceptual framework*





*Note.* This conceptual model represents the key theoretical concepts and hypotheses proposed in the theoretical framework.

### **3.2.2. Demographic questions**

***Demographic questions.*** One of the demographic questions asked how many fast and slow fashion items participants bought within the last 30 days. The scale measuring participants' frequency of buying clothes was taken from Rausch and Kopplin (2021) as it was a suitable measurement to assess participants' buying behavior.

### **3.2.3. Manipulation Check**

A manipulation check is a "separate measure" that aims to verify the validity of the measurement and usually follows after the experimental manipulation (Neuman, 2014, p. 304). Manipulation check is necessary to ensure that the conditions of the experiment reached the "intended effects," eliminating the "threats to internal validity" (Neuman, 2014, p. 304). Manipulation check is a common procedure for experiments, helping researchers monitor if the manipulations performed as intended (Neuman, 2014). However, Hauser et al. (2018) discussed that manipulation checks may affect respondents in multiple ways, namely undo, enhance, or interact with the participants. For instance, it may affect how the respondents conduct their thoughts and inform the participants about the researcher's aims (Hauser et al., 2018). Thus, manipulation checks may occasionally hinder the intended objective of the study.

Two questions were asked after showing different manipulations to assure respondents' awareness of the manipulation received. The first question aimed to check if the respondents noticed the slow fashion fleece jumper that was present in all four conditions. Therefore, the question indicated: "*When looking at the picture, I observed the fleece jumper in black.*" The second question aimed to understand if the participants noticed a specific number that was mentioned in the product descriptions (narratives) that they observed. Hence, the statement read: "*Please indicate if the jumper's description that you read (above) includes*" and four answer categories were listed, namely "*The year of 1960s,*" "*The fact that the jumper is made from 100% organic cotton,*" "*Both of the above,*" and "*None of the above*" out of which one was true for each condition received. Hence, manipulation check questions ensured that participants indeed recognized the manipulation.

### **3.3. Procedure**

#### **3.3.1. Pilot Study**

The pilot study was conducted prior to distributing the survey to test if the treatments were effective and reached their intended results for the target audience (Hauser et al., 2018). A pilot study entails a scaled-down version of the extensive research, wherein participants' feedback is collected, recorded, and incorporated into the final large-scale survey (Van Teijlingen & Hundley, 2001). Participants of the pilot study must closely resemble the intended target audience (Van Teijlingen & Hundley, 2001). During the pilot test, the respondents were asked to fill in the questionnaire and indicate all the misunderstandings or troubles with the questions (Neuman, 2014). "Experimental debriefing" followed after the pilot study where participants were briefly interviewed about their experience when filling in the survey (Neuman, 2014, p. 304). These measures assured the questionnaire's comprehensibility, thus, successfully reaching the target audience.

Since the pilot study was a small-scale study, 11 participants who met the criteria for the target audience filled in the questionnaire while outlining key points for improvements in a short interview, namely, to provide a clear definition of slow fashion. Additionally, participants expressed the need to clarify the two questions in the manipulation check to align them to different descriptions that participants received rather than the visuals (the slow fashion garment). For example, one of the statements in the pilot study utilized for the manipulation check was as follows: "Please indicate if the picture you observed included" where participants had to mark the observed facts in the product description. However, this seemed vague and confusing for most testers, as the statement referred to the description below the visual, and not to the picture per se. Therefore, this statement was modified: "Please indicate if the jumper's description that you read (above) includes." In addition to these minor modifications, some items within the PI scale were changed from questions into statements to correspond to the provided answer options. Once all the refinements were carefully integrated, the questionnaire was distributed.

#### **3.3.2. Questionnaire Structure & Data Collection**

The data collection procedure started on the 24<sup>th</sup> of March 2023 and lasted until the 17<sup>th</sup> of April 2023 when enough valid responses were collected. The questionnaire was divided into 11 blocks (Appendix B). The first block presented the participants with the consent form, introducing respondents to the objective of the research, assuring that there

were no risks included, the expected time involved to finish the questionnaire, participants' rights, and the researcher's contact information for further inquiries, as outlined by the Code of Ethics (Fisher & Anushko, 2008). To avoid disclosing too much information about the purpose of the experiment which may potentially lead to biased responses, the information about the experiment was only briefly mentioned in the consent form, as indicated in the ethical recommendations (Fisher & Anushko, 2008; Rosnow & Rosenthal, 2011). Also, participants were informed about the possibility to win a €15 voucher at the end of the questionnaire by voluntarily indicating their e-mail address. Participation in the lottery was optional and primarily utilized as an extra motivation to participate in the study and finalize the survey. Although the "postpaid incentives" only minimally affect the participation rate in surveys (Porter & Whitcomb, 2004, p. 53), the possibility of the slightest incline deserved an attempt. The chance to win a €15 voucher was also advertised when distributing the questionnaire in multiple Facebook groups, on Instagram, and LinkedIn.

Furthermore, some filtering questions were present. The second block asked whether participants were currently living in Lithuania which was followed by a question about their English proficiency (since the survey was in English). The third block provided a brief definition of slow fashion, as compared to fast fashion, aligning with the feedback given by the pilot survey participants. Subsequently, participants were subjected to random assignment to one of the four conditions (HN, SN, HSN, control group), receiving one of the four blocks where only the manipulation differed. After being allotted to the treatment, participants received two manipulation check questions and a list of questions about the NTT. These questions were intentionally positioned in the same block to provide participants a chance to observe the visual and read the AI-generated narrative repeatedly.

The fifth and sixth blocks concerned the concepts within the TPB, namely some questions about their attitude toward the shown slow fashion garment (AT) and the extent to which the participants believed it was easy or difficult to purchase the product (PBC), respectively. Next, the seventh block included several questions about respondents' intention to purchase the shown product (PI) which was followed by the eighth block, where a list of questions examined respondents' actual purchase behavior of the shown product (PB). The ninth block consisted of only one question where participants were asked about the price, they would be inclined to pay for the garment.

Demographic questions were asked at the end of the survey (tenth block) to assure that such questions do not interfere with respondents' decision to participate in the study. Demographic questions pertained to participants' gender, age, and educational background,

as well as how many fast and slow fashion items participants bought within the last 30 days and how much money they spent on clothes.

To ensure that participants finalize the survey fully, almost all the questions were made compulsory to answer, by choosing the “force response” function on Qualtrics. As an exception, the final block of questions about respondents’ feedback and participation in the lottery as well as the question in the ninth block about the potential price to be paid for the product were not compulsory. While the former set of questions was “optional,” the latter question about the price was only “requested.”

### **3.4. Sample**

The sample of this research posed only a few quotas that helped achieve the key purpose of the study. Firstly, this research focused on Lithuanian individuals who were living in Lithuania at the time of the study and considered themselves fashion consumers. While the respondents were required to be at least 18 years old, there were no maximum age limitations. Also, this research simultaneously targeted multiple genders (female, male, third gender/ non-binary). Therefore, this study encompassed a wide-ranging Lithuanian demographic group with diverse educational backgrounds, ages, and purchasing habits. The key purpose was to understand Lithuanians’ slow fashion purchase behavior generally, regardless of their gender or specific demographic categories, primarily due to insufficient academic focus on the Lithuanian population regarding their slow fashion behavior.

Furthermore, this study aimed to collect a maximum of 250 valid responses through an online questionnaire. Such a large-scale survey allowed the researcher to generalize the findings to the entire Lithuanian population (Matthews & Ross, 2010). The between-subject design and randomization, facilitated by Qualtrics, enabled equal distribution of participants to each experimental condition with minimal differences between the groups (Neuman, 2014), which was of utmost importance to achieve.

A total of 443 responses were collected. After careful data cleaning,  $N = 220$  were included for further analyses due to incomplete responses from the study participants. In the data cleaning process, participants who rated their English proficiency as extremely bad ( $N = 4$ ) or somewhat bad ( $N = 5$ ) were removed from further analyses. Subsequently, all four conditions had 55 respondents. In the final sample, 78.2% were women, 20.5% were male, and 0.9% preferred not to disclose their gender. The remaining 0.5% ( $N = 1$ ) identified as non-binary or third gender. Respondents’ average age was 24.34 ( $SD = 6.09$ ) with the min.

age being 18 and max. 52 years old. Out of all the respondents who answered the questionnaire, half of them rated their English proficiency as somewhat good, 32.7% as extremely good, and the remaining 17.3% ( $N = 38$ ) as neither good nor bad. Regarding participants' educational background, while Bachelor's degree and a high school diploma were among the most popular choices, accounting for 45.9% and 43.2% respectively, a Master's degree was selected by 8.2% of the participants, and the remaining 2.7% indicated "other." Interestingly, Doctor's degree was not selected by any of the participants.

Regarding participants' fashion purchasing habits in the last 30 days, 46.4% of the participants did not buy any fast fashion clothing items, 37.7% bought 1-2 garments, 13.6% purchased 3-5 garments, and the remaining 0.9% and 1.4% acquired 6-7 and more than 7 garments, respectively. Likewise, considering slow fashion purchases in the last month, 65% of the respondents did not purchase any sustainable clothing items, roughly a fourth (27.3%) of the sample bought 1-2 garments, 5.5% purchased 3-5 garments, and 2.3% acquired 6-7 slow fashion items. Regarding respondents' expenses on clothes in the last 30 days, the most popular category was €0-49 (47.7%) which was followed by €50-99 (23.6%) and €100-199 (20.0%). The answer categories with the highest amount, namely €200-299 and €300+ comprised of 5.0% and 3.6%, respectively.

### **3.4.1. Sampling strategy**

To recruit participants, this research primarily employed non-probability sampling which is usually based on the researcher's judgment about the required population (Babbie, 2015; Vehovar et al., 2016). Although it may prove problematic, especially in quantitative research, to ensure a sufficient level of randomization, the non-probability sample was spread across various platforms "as broadly as possible" (Vehovar et al., 2016, p. 330). Furthermore, this study predominantly employed convenience, and snowball sampling techniques. The convenience sampling was achieved by sharing the questionnaire on social media platforms, like LinkedIn, Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp among large groups. This also involved participating in survey exchanges where other Lithuanian researchers were seeking more responses to their own surveys. Distributing the questionnaire to multiple social media groups where people with diverse backgrounds are present ensured that a wide range of demographic characteristics was present in the sample.

Additionally, through the snowball method, the researcher enticed its social network to distribute the survey among their acquaintances (Vehovar et al., 2016). Besides, the researcher reached out to Lithuanian slow fashion micro-influencers on Instagram and

requested them to share the survey on their Instagram stories, however, this proved unsuccessful. Although these techniques may face criticism for potential biases, they are cost-effective, and time efficient which is highly valued for a master thesis (Vehovar et al., 2016). Besides, the researcher of this study ensured that the survey is shared among various online groups on multiple social media platforms to avoid seeking responses from a specific social background.

### **3.5. Data Preparation in SPSS**

Some alterations in the initial dataset were made to prepare the data before exporting it to SPSS. Firstly, all the answers to the items that made up scales were recoded to numerical data to be capable of performing analyses on SPSS. Then, the labels, values, and measures of each item were revised to align with the original questions in Qualtrics. This was followed by computing new variables, after conducting factors analyses, that described the average score of each scale. Lastly, since the between-subject design randomly assigned participants into one of the four groups, a new variable (Narrative Type) was created that specified which group respondents were assigned to (1 = History Narrative; 2 = Sustainability Narrative; 3 = History + Sustainability Narrative; 4 = Control Group). This significantly helped to categorize the respondents into different manipulations when performing further analyses.

### **3.6. Assessing Manipulation Check**

This study included two manipulation check questions to ensure that participants paid careful attention to the manipulations received (as described in section 3.2.3). Therefore, the Chi-square test for independence was utilized to examine to what extent the Narrative Types and manipulation check questions were associated accordingly. In the first manipulation check question, some participants indicated not having seen a slow fashion jumper, in the History Narrative group ( $N = 5$ ), the Sustainability Narrative ( $N = 2$ ), the History + Sustainability Narrative group ( $N = 1$ ), and the control group ( $N = 5$ ). Therefore, these participants were excluded from further analyses. However, such an exclusion resulted in an unequal number of respondents in each experimental condition, namely in the History Narrative ( $N = 59$ ), the Sustainability Narrative ( $N = 67$ ), the History + Sustainability Narrative group ( $N = 58$ ), and the control group ( $N = 55$ ). In line with the recommendations to keep each experimental group equal in size to maintain sample efficiency (Neuman, 2014; Singh & Masuku, 2014), all the experimental groups were adjusted in size to align with the

lowest group size  $N = 55$ . To achieve this, every fourth response was deleted from the experimental groups which required only minimal reductions in responses in History, Sustainability, and History + Sustainability Narrative groups.

Furthermore, the second manipulation check question included four answer categories and asked to indicate what participants read in the garment description. The Chi-square test for independence revealed a significant association between the narrative type and different manipulation check categories ( $\chi^2 (9, n = 220) = 307.46, p < .001$ ). Hence, the answer categories among the four groups were significantly different, meaning that the majority of participants were capable of identifying the manipulation correctly.

While participants who failed to answer correctly to the first manipulation check question were excluded, those who incorrectly marked the second question were retained for further analyses. This was decided due to unequal sizes among the four experimental groups if the incorrect responses to the second manipulation check question were deleted. Moreover, since some valid answers were already randomly deleted, due to aiming to achieve equal experimental group sizes and avoiding deleting more valid responses, it was decided to treat the second manipulation check question as unreliable.

### **3.7. Checking Assumptions for (Non-)Parametric Statistics**

#### **3.7.1. Assumptions of ANOVA**

Some data assumptions exist that must be examined before continuing to perform one-way analyses of variance on SPSS (Pallant, 2016, p. 226). Firstly, the level of measurement of the dependent variables must be interval or ratio (Pallant, 2016). Since all the dependent variables are measured in Likert scales, they can be treated as interval, especially after computing the means of all the items within the scale. Furthermore, the population under study should be normally distributed in each of the dependent variables (Pallant, 2016). Each dependent variable's distribution was carefully checked in graphs (histograms). Although not all the dependent variables had normally distributed data, with some data skewed to the right or left, the majority of parametric techniques are relatively tolerant of such violations (Pallant, 2016). Lastly, groups within each dependent variable must have relatively equal variances (homogeneity of variance), so it could be assumed that scores for each group vary similarly (Pallant, 2016). Hence, Levene's test for equality of variances was performed on SPSS to examine if the four Narrative Types had equal variances in NTT score, AT score, PBC score, PI score, and PB score.

Firstly, Levene's test for equality of variances demonstrated that the variances between the four Narrative Types were equal in Narrative Transportation Theory,  $F(3, 216) = .22, p = .884$ , thus retaining the null hypothesis. Secondly, Levene's test for equality of variances showed that the variances between the four Narrative Types were equal in Attitude,  $F(3, 216) = .54, p = .653$ , thus retaining the null hypothesis. Thirdly, the same test was performed to examine the equality of variances in Perceived Behavioral Control. Levene's test for equality of variances showed that the variances between the four Narrative Types were not equal in Perceived Behavioral Control,  $F(3, 216) = 6.48, p < .001$ , thus rejecting the null hypothesis; equal variances could not be assumed. Fourthly, Levene's test for equality of variances demonstrated that the variances between the four Narrative Types were equal in Purchase Intentions,  $F(3, 216) = .25, p = .861$ , thus retaining the null hypothesis. Finally, Levene's test for equality of variances demonstrated that the variances between the four Narrative Types were equal in Purchase Behavior,  $F(3, 216) = .14, p = .935$ , hence the null hypothesis was retained. Considering that five out of four variances were equal, except for the Narrative Type and Perceived Behavioral Control, violating the assumption of homogeneity of variance, analysis of variance is fairly "robust to violations" of this particular assumption (Pallant, 2016, p. 228). Therefore, it can be deemed that the dataset meets the assumptions of analysis of variance (with some exceptions); hence, further analyses can be performed.

### **3.7.2. Assumptions of Pearson's Correlation**

It is equally important to address key assumptions of statistical techniques that examine relationships between variables. Firstly, the level of measurement of both variables must be interval or ratio (Pallant, 2016). Indeed, the variables added in SPSS to explore the relationships were measured in Likert scales, thus an interval measurement scale, especially after computing the means of all the items within the scale. Secondly, the pairs were related as the participants provided the scores on both dependent and independent variables. Similar to non-parametric assumptions, the scores on each variable must have normality (Pallant, 2016). Although some variables had scores skewing toward left or right, as mentioned before, most parametric statistics are fairly robust to such violations. Additionally, it could be assumed that the scores for dependent and independent variables had relatively similar variability (homoscedasticity). Lastly, no missing data was found in the final dataset as it was removed in data cleaning. As the data mostly aligns with the mentioned assumptions, Pearson's Correlation tests can be performed.



### 3.8. Validity and Reliability

Several measures were implemented to ensure that the study attained an appropriate level of validity and reliability. The validity of the study was established in multiple ways. Firstly, the questionnaire items that measured the concepts were previously pre-tested in the pilot study and validated by the authors, specified in section 3.2.1. (Boynton & Greenhalgh, 2004). Although the same validated items were used, only one of them related to slow fashion consumption (Chi et al., 2021). Hence, significant modifications and revisions of the items were implemented to adapt them to the slow fashion context, specifically to the fleece jumper, advertised in the experimental visuals. Therefore, the questions were re-formulated in a way that appealed to the target audience and included information that was relevant to the nature of the study (Boynton & Greenhalgh, 2004). Additionally, the pilot study and debriefing (Neuman, 2014), performed before the full-scale study, assured that the scales were valid enough, and therefore, the questionnaire was suitable for further usage and distribution.

Likewise, multiple actions were taken to ensure the questionnaire's reliability. To test the reliability of the scales, the present study conducted confirmatory factor and reliability analyses that helped identify the internal consistency of each scale and check if any items must be deleted to reach higher reliability (Pallant, 2016). Although the NTT scale extracted one item that performed worse than the other ones in the scale, it did not significantly afflict the reliability of the NTT scale. Besides, all the scales used in this research already had an acceptable value of Cronbach's alpha, established in the original studies. As recommended by Nunnally (1978), to meet scale reliability requirements, the minimum value of Cronbach's alpha of the scale must be above .7 (Pallant, 2016). In the current research, all scales had acceptable or high values in internal consistency, namely between  $\alpha = .73$  and  $\alpha = .84$  (Appendix C), which translates to the high reliability of the scales.

## 4. Results

This section outlines the outcomes of the analyses performed in SPSS. Firstly, the random assignment to experimental conditions is explained which helped assess the suitability of the dataset before the analyses. Then, the relevant analyses that test the proposed hypotheses are thoroughly described.

### 4.1. Validating Random Assignment to Experimental Groups

The Chi-square test for independence was utilized to establish that different experimental groups are not significantly different (Neuman, 2014). This test assists in identifying if the proportion of certain sample characteristics, such as age, gender, or educational background is similar among the groups (Pallant, 2016). The Chi-square test for independence revealed no significant association between four different conditions (Narrative Type) and gender ( $\chi^2(9, n = 220) = 6.72, p = .67$ ), educational level ( $\chi^2(9, n = 220) = 10.70, p = .30$ ), English proficiency ( $6, n = 220) = 1.08, p = .98$ ), and average expenditure on clothes in the last 30 days ( $12, n = 220) = 7.90, p = .79$ ). Additionally, one-way analysis of variance revealed an insignificant main effect for Narrative Types on participants' age ( $F(3, 216) = .20, p = .899$ , partial  $\eta^2 = .00$ ), thus no significant differences regarding age among four groups existed. Therefore, results indicate that the proportions of females and males, age, educational level, participants' English proficiency, and expenditure on clothes were not significantly different among the four experimental groups. Hence, the sample is suitable for further analyses.

### 4.2. Hypotheses Testing

#### 4.2.1. Narrative Types and Transportation

To test which Narrative Type had a significant effect on the Narrative Transportation score among Lithuanians (H1), a one-way ANOVA test was conducted on SPSS with four types of narratives (History, Sustainability, History + Sustainability, and Control Group) as an Independent Variable (IV), and Narrative Transportation score as Dependent Variable (DV). A one-way ANOVA revealed a significant main effect for Narrative Type on the Narrative Transportation score,  $F(3, 216) = 10.25, p < .001$ , partial  $\eta^2 = .13$ . Tukey post-hoc test revealed some significant comparisons between the Control Group and three types of narratives. Firstly, participants who were exposed to the History Narrative reported a significantly higher level of Narrative Transportation ( $M = 3.09; SD = .62$ ) than respondents

who were in the Control Group ( $M = 2.57$ ;  $SD = .66$ ),  $p < .001$ . Moreover, participants who were exposed to the Sustainability Narrative reported a significantly higher level of Narrative Transportation ( $M = 3.17$ ;  $SD = .66$ ) than respondents who were in the Control Group ( $M = 2.57$ ;  $SD = .66$ ),  $p < .001$ . Lastly, respondents exposed to the History + Sustainability Narrative had a significantly higher level of Narrative Transportation ( $M = 3.11$ ;  $SD = .64$ ) than respondents who were in the Control Group ( $M = 2.57$ ;  $SD = .66$ ),  $p < .001$ . No other comparisons reached significance. Therefore, H1 is accepted; there are significant differences across the four groups of Narrative Types in Narrative Transportation score (Figure 3).

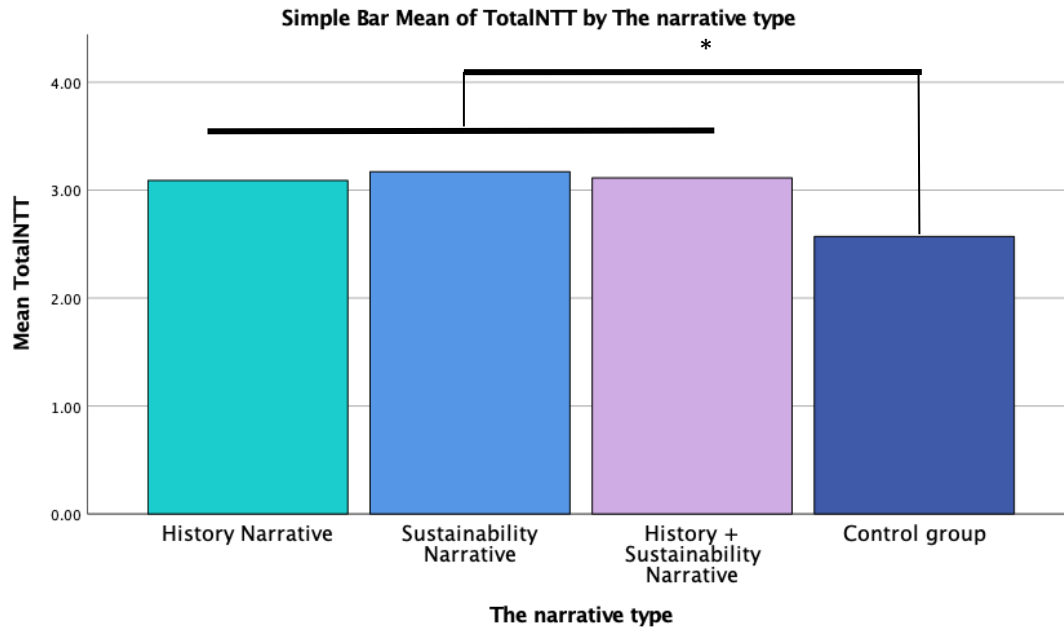
**Table 3**

*Descriptive statistics for Narrative Transportation with scores for AI-Generated Narrative Types (History, Sustainability, History + Sustainability) and Control Group*

<b>Experimental condition</b>	<b><i>N</i></b>	<b>Mean (<i>M</i>)</b>	<b>Standard deviation (<i>SD</i>)</b>
Control Group	55	2.57	.66
History Narrative	55	3.09	.62
Sustainability Narrative	55	3.17	.66
History + Sustainability Narrative	55	3.11	.64

**Figure 3**

Bar chart with Narrative Transportation scores for AI-Generated Narrative Types (History, Sustainability, History + Sustainability) and Control Group



*Note.* \*Indicates a significant effect. Tukey post-hoc test revealed significant comparisons between the Control Group and History Narrative ( $p < .001$ ), Sustainability Narrative ( $p < .001$ ), and History + Sustainability Narrative ( $p < .001$ ).

#### 4.2.2. Effect of Narrative Type on People's Purchase Intentions and Behavior

To examine the differences in Purchase Intention scores among people exposed to different types of narratives (H2a), a one-way ANOVA test was conducted with four types of narratives (History, Sustainability, History + Sustainability, and Control Group) as IV and Purchase Intention score as DV. ANOVA identified an insignificant main effect for Narrative Type on the Purchase Intention score,  $F(3, 216) = 1.61$ ,  $p = .187$ , partial  $\eta^2 = .02$ . Tukey post-hoc test revealed that none of the comparisons reached significance. Therefore, H0(2a) is accepted and H2a is rejected; the differences in Purchase Intention scores are not statistically significant among the four groups of Narrative Types.

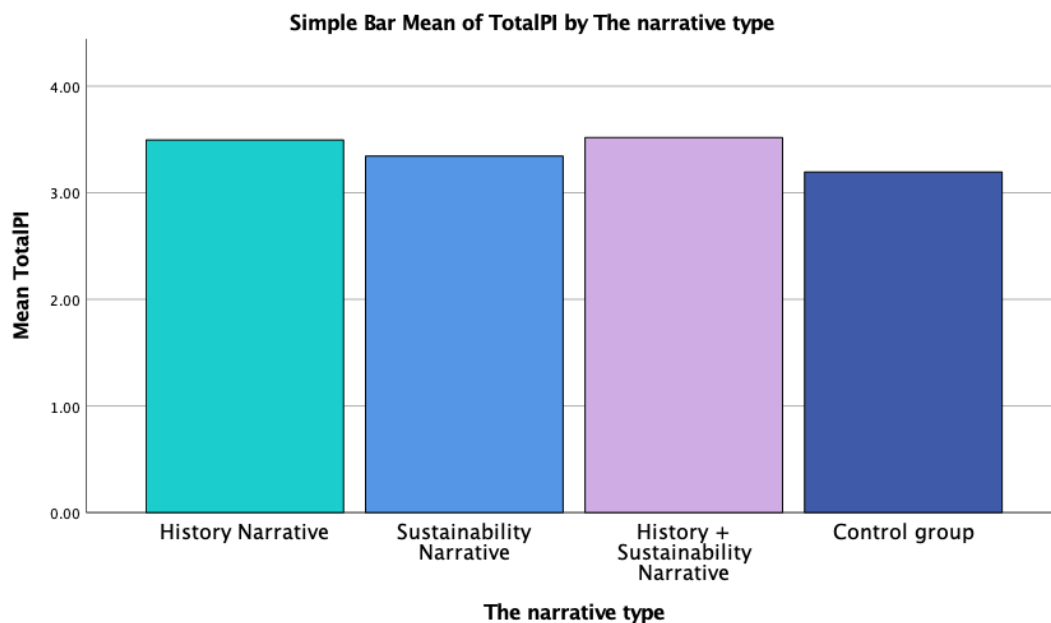
**Table 4**

*Descriptive statistics for Purchase Intentions with scores for AI-Generated Narrative Types (History, Sustainability, History + Sustainability) and Control Group*

<b>Experimental condition</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean (M)</b>	<b>Standard deviation (SD)</b>
Control Group	55	3.20	.86
History Narrative	55	3.50	.87
Sustainability Narrative	55	3.35	.89
History + Sustainability Narrative	55	3.52	.87

**Figure 4**

*Bar chart with Purchase Intentions scores for AI-Generated Narrative Types (History, Sustainability, History + Sustainability) and Control Group*



*Note.* Tukey post-hoc test revealed no significant comparisons.

Likewise, a one-way ANOVA was conducted to test if people's Purchase Behavior scores among four Narrative Types significantly differed (H2b). Four types of narratives (History, Sustainability, History + Sustainability, and Control Group) were included as IV, and the Purchase Behavior score as DV. A one-way ANOVA showed an insignificant main effect for Narrative Type on the Purchase Behavior score,  $F(3, 216) = .88, p = .453$ , partial  $\eta^2$

= .01. Hence, Tukey post-hoc test revealed no significant comparisons among the four groups. Therefore, H0(2b) is accepted and H2b is rejected, no significant differences in Purchase Behavior scores exist across the four groups of Narrative Types.

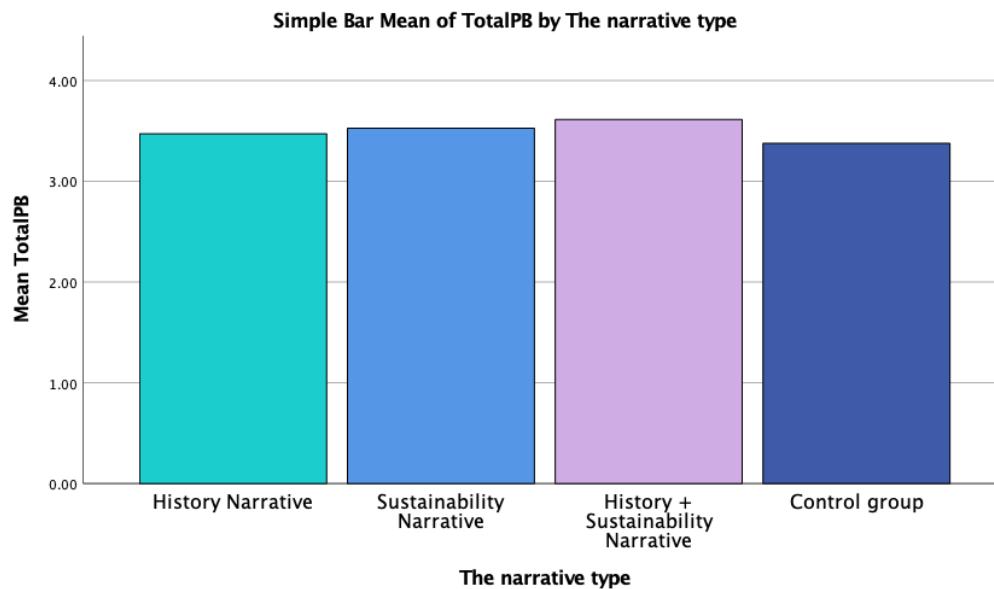
**Table 5**

*Descriptive statistics for Purchase Behavior with scores for AI-Generated Narrative Types (History, Sustainability, History + Sustainability) and Control Group*

<b>Experimental condition</b>	<b><i>N</i></b>	<b>Mean (<i>M</i>)</b>	<b>Standard deviation (<i>SD</i>)</b>
Control Group	55	3.38	.80
History Narrative	55	3.47	.80
Sustainability Narrative	55	3.53	.75
History + Sustainability Narrative	55	3.61	.78

**Figure 5**

*Bar chart with Purchase Behavior scores for AI-Generated Narrative Types (History, Sustainability, History + Sustainability) and Control Group*



*Note.* Tukey post-hoc test revealed no significant comparisons.

### 4.2.3. Effect of Narrative Type on Attitudes and Perceived Behavioral Control

To investigate which Narrative Type achieved the highest Attitude score (H3a), a one-way ANOVA test was conducted on SPSS with four narrative types (History, Sustainability, History + Sustainability, and Control Group) as IV and Attitude score as DV. ANOVA revealed a significant main effect for Narrative Type on the Attitude score,  $F(3, 216) = 6.10$ ,  $p < .001$ , partial  $\eta^2 = .08$ . Tukey post-hoc comparisons revealed several significant outcomes between the Control Group and two types of AI-generated narratives. Firstly, participants exposed to the Sustainability Narrative reported a significantly higher level of Attitude toward the slow fashion garment ( $M = 4.15$ ;  $SD = .70$ ) than respondents who were in the Control Group ( $M = 3.59$ ;  $SD = .75$ ),  $p < .001$ . Moreover, participants who were exposed to the History + Sustainability Narrative had a significantly higher level of Attitude toward the slow fashion garment ( $M = 4.03$ ;  $SD = .75$ ) than respondents who were in the Control Group ( $M = 3.59$ ;  $SD = .75$ ),  $p = .009$ . No other comparisons reached significance. Hence, H3a is accepted; there are significant differences across the four groups of Narrative Types in Attitude scores (Figure 6).

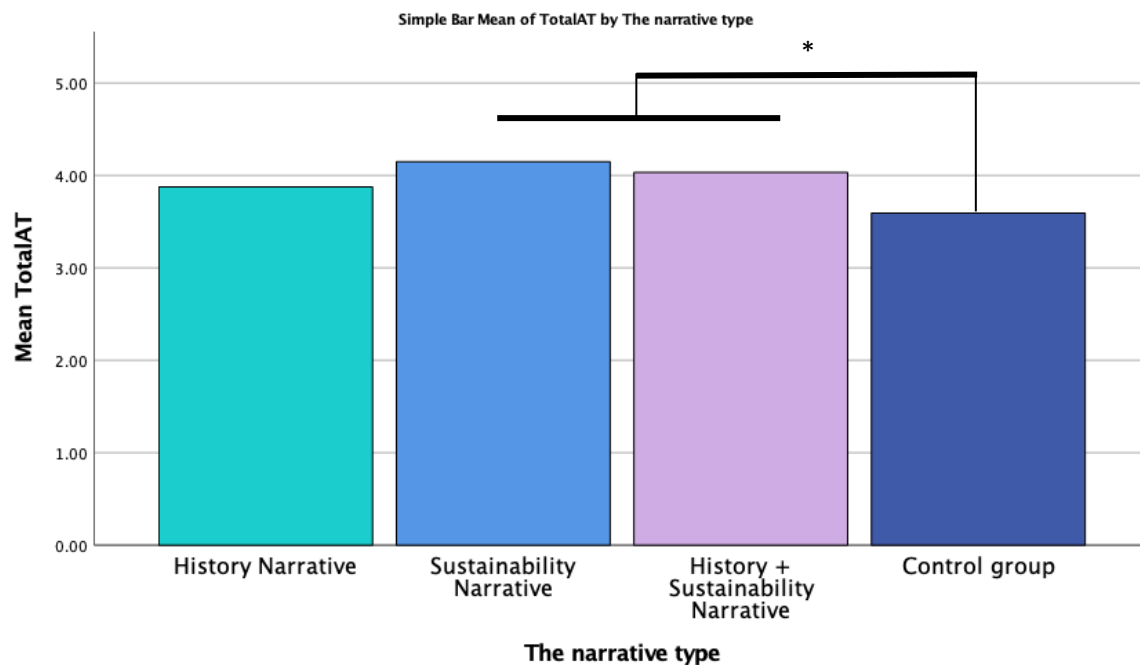
**Table 6**

*Descriptive statistics for Attitudes with scores for AI-Generated Narrative Types (History, Sustainability, History + Sustainability) and Control Group*

<b>Experimental condition</b>	<b><i>N</i></b>	<b>Mean (<i>M</i>)</b>	<b>Standard deviation (<i>SD</i>)</b>
Control Group	55	3.59	.75
History Narrative	55	3.88	.70
Sustainability Narrative	55	4.15	.70
History + Sustainability Narrative	55	4.03	.75

**Figure 6**

Bar chart with Attitudes scores for AI-Generated Narrative Types (History, Sustainability, History + Sustainability) and Control Group



Note. \*Indicates a significant effect. Tukey post-hoc test revealed significant comparisons between the Control Group and Sustainability Narrative ( $p < .001$ ) and History + Sustainability Narrative ( $p = .009$ ).

To examine which AI-generated Narrative Type achieved the highest Perceived Behavioral Control score (H3b), a one-way ANOVA test was conducted on SPSS with four types of narratives (History, Sustainability, History + Sustainability, and Control Group) as IV and Perceived Behavioral Control score as DV. A one-way ANOVA indicated an insignificant main effect for Narrative Type on the Perceived Behavioral Control score,  $F(3, 216) = .25, p = .862, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .00$ . Thus, Tukey post-hoc comparisons failed to demonstrate significant outcomes when comparing the Perceived Behavioral Control scores among the four groups. Hence,  $H_0(3b)$  is accepted and H3b is rejected. There are no significant differences in Perceived Behavioral Control scores across the four groups of Narrative Types.



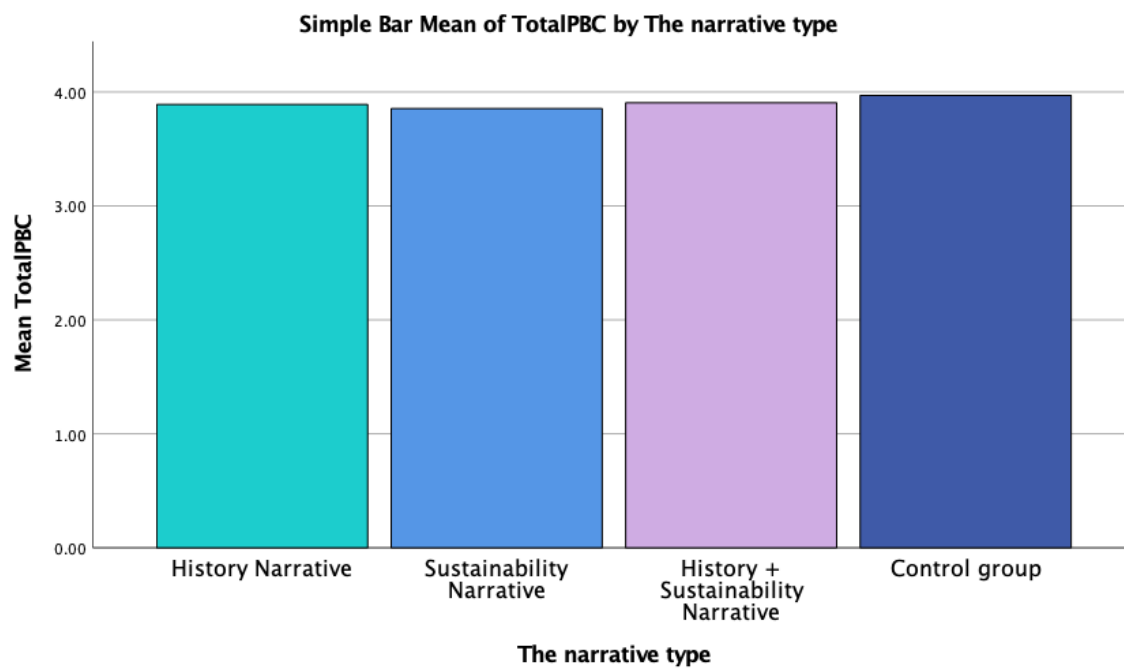
**Table 7**

*Descriptive statistics for Perceived Behavioral Control with scores for AI-Generated Narrative Types (History, Sustainability, History + Sustainability) and Control Group*

<b>Experimental condition</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean (M)</b>	<b>Standard deviation (SD)</b>
Control Group	55	3.97	.52
History Narrative	55	3.89	.68
Sustainability Narrative	55	3.85	.79
History + Sustainability Narrative	55	3.91	.86

**Figure 7**

*Bar chart with Perceived Behavioral Control scores for AI-Generated Narrative Types (History, Sustainability, History + Sustainability) and Control Group*



*Note.* Tukey post-hoc test revealed no significant comparisons.

#### **4.2.4. Relationships between the Variables of the Theory of Planned Behavior and the Narrative Transportation Theory**

All the relationships presented in this section were examined using Pearson's Correlation test. Firstly, the relationships between the variables of the Theory of Planned

Behavior, Purchase Intentions, and Purchase Behavior were tested. There was a strong, positive correlation between the Attitude toward the slow fashion garment and people's Purchase Intentions,  $r = .51$ ,  $N = 220$ ,  $p < .001$ . Therefore, the more positive the Attitude toward the slow fashion item, the more willing people are to purchase it; hence, H4a is accepted.

Next, a medium positive correlation between people's Attitudes toward the slow fashion garment and Purchase Behavior was found,  $r = .49$ ,  $N = 220$ ,  $p < .001$ . The higher the positive Attitude toward the slow fashion item, the more people are convinced to actually purchase the product. Therefore, H4b is accepted.

Furthermore, a small and positive correlation between Perceived Behavioral Control and Purchase Intentions was found,  $r = .25$ ,  $N = 220$ ,  $p < .001$ . Therefore, H4c is accepted, the more people perceive their control over the purchase of the slow fashion item, the higher their Purchase Intentions.

Moreover, a medium and positive correlation between Perceived Behavioral Control and Purchase Behavior was established,  $r = .30$ ,  $N = 220$ ,  $p < .001$ . Hence, H4d was accepted; the more people perceive their control over the purchase of the slow fashion item, the higher their actual Purchase Behavior.

Furthermore, the relationships between the Narrative Transportation Theory and Purchase Intentions, Purchase Behavior, and the variables of the Theory of Planned Behavior were examined. There was a strong and positive correlation between the Narrative Transportation Theory and people's Attitudes toward the slow fashion garment,  $r = .51$ ,  $N = 220$ ,  $p < .001$ . Thus, H4e was accepted; the higher the score in Narrative Transportation, the more positive people's Attitudes toward the shown slow fashion item.

Surprisingly, no significant correlation was found between the Narrative Transportation Theory and Perceived Behavioral Control,  $r = .13$ ,  $N = 220$ ,  $p < .058$ . Therefore, H4f was rejected; the level of Narrative Transportation does not correlate with Perceived Behavioral Control.

Lastly, medium and positive relationships between the Narrative Transportation Theory and the following: people's Purchase Intentions,  $r = .43$ ,  $N = 220$ ,  $p < .001$ , and Purchase Behavior,  $r = .39$ ,  $N = 220$ ,  $p < .001$  were found. Hence, both H4g and H4h were accepted; the higher the score in Narrative Transportation, the higher the Purchase Intentions and Purchase Behavior of the sustainable garment (Table 8).

**Table 8***Pearson's Correlations between Attitude/ Perceived Behavioral Control and Purchase**Intentions/ Behavior and Narrative Transportation Theory*

<b>Scale</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
1. Attitude	–				
2. Perceived Behavioral Control	.32**	–			
3. Purchase Intentions	.51**	.25**	–		
4. Purchase Behavior	.49**	.30**	.40**	–	
5. Narrative Transportation Theory	.51**	.13	.43**	.39**	–

\*\*  $p < .001$  (2-tailed).**Table 9***Results of all Hypotheses*

<b>Hypotheses</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>
H1	Accepted
H2a	Rejected
H2b	Rejected
H3a	Accepted
H3b	Rejected
H4a	Accepted
H4b	Accepted
H4c	Accepted
H4d	Accepted
H4e	Accepted
H4f	Rejected
H4g	Accepted
H4h	Accepted

## **5. Discussion and Conclusion**

The final section of this study interprets the results in connection to the existing scholarly literature, discussed in the theoretical framework. It adds unique contributions and addresses the gap in the literature about AI-generated narratives and their effects on consumers' Purchase Intentions, Purchase Behavior, Narrative Transportation Theory, and the concepts of the Theory of Planned Behavior, specifically among the Lithuanian public. The end of this section provides a concise conclusion with some crucial limitations and future research directions.

### **5.1. Main Findings and Theoretical Implications**

Before delving into the main findings of this research, it is essential to consider the sample's representativeness. The obtained results demonstrate Lithuanians' tendency to purchase fast fashion items more often than their slow counterparts, yet, the difference is marginal. This finding corroborates Nikolova's (2021; 2021a) claims that sustainability in Lithuania has been increasingly more integrated into society although the involvement in sustainability has decreased in the past years (Sustainable Brand Index, 2023), possibly reflected in the current study's findings. This potentially emerged due to slow fashion items being of higher value and quality, thus more expensive (Fletcher, 2007; Fletcher, 2010; Štefko & Steffek, 2018) which may be challenging to acquire for young Lithuanian citizens in a country with relatively low average income. Hence, it is essential to note the lack of popularity of slow fashion purchasing habits among the respondents.

#### **5.1.1. Achieving Narrative Transportation**

The current study investigated which of the four experimental conditions achieved the highest score in Narrative Transportation (RQ1). It was indicated that the AI-generated narrative type had a significant effect on the Narrative Transportation Theory with significant differences across four AI-generated narrative types. To illustrate, three manipulations, containing the narratives, namely history, sustainability, and the combination of both, had significantly higher scores in Narrative Transportation Theory than the control group. Hence, as expected, the absence of the narrative failed to successfully transport the readers. Interestingly, the Sustainability Narrative had the highest score and thus proved the most successful in Narrative Transportation, followed by the combination of both narratives. This finding is inconsistent with Clark's (2008) and Evans and Peirson-Smith's (2018) studies

which claimed that sustainability terms lack clarity, and therefore, confuse consumers. However, as outlined by Evans and Peirson-Smith (2018), sustainability statements in a narrative format convey the message more comprehensibly which was verified by this research. Furthermore, these findings illustrate that diverse narrative content can indeed transport readers to different extents (Messingschlager & Appel, 2022). Hence, the content of the AI-generated narratives, thus narrative type, plays an integral role in the level of Narrative Transportation.

The current findings demonstrate people's increasing interest and investment in sustainability (McNeill & Moore, 2015; Ritch, 2015), especially among Lithuanian shoppers (Nikolova, 2021a; Sustainable Brand Index, 2023). The growing interest in transparency in the product's manufacturing process has become unprecedentedly relevant (Gazzola et al., 2019). This potentially elucidates why the sustainability narrative performed the most successfully in Narrative Transportation where being engaged and lost in the story are the key pillars of the theory (Green & Brock, 2000; Neimand, 2018; Wang & Calder, 2009). Furthermore, the findings of the current study support Escalas's (2007), Gerrig's (1994), and Green and Brock's (2000) research which demonstrated the power of stories in engaging people through transportation. To answer RQ1, it can be concluded that the presence of the AI-generated narrative exerted a significant impact on Narrative Transportation in the slow fashion context. Each AI-generated narrative evoked varying levels of Narrative Transportation with Sustainability Narrative being the most successful in transporting the readers into the narrative world.

### **5.1.2. The Influence of Different Narratives on Consumers' Purchase Intentions and Behavior**

The power of AI-generated narrative types on people's Purchase Intentions and Purchase Behavior was examined (RQ2). In general, the narrative type had an insignificant effect on people's purchase intentions and purchase behavior, and therefore, none of the four conditions differed significantly in affecting consumers' intentions and behavior. Interestingly, while four conditions had comparable scores in Purchase Intentions and Purchase Behavior, the third condition, the combination of History and Sustainability narratives, generated the highest score in both variables. Hence, the longer the description of the slow fashion product, intertwining History, and Sustainability narratives, the higher consumers' Purchase Intentions and Behavior.

Accordingly, the findings suggest that AI-generated narratives lacked efficiency in influencing people's Purchase Intentions and Purchase Behavior. Although the control group did not significantly differ from the three groups, where narratives were present, in explaining Purchase Intention and Purchase Behavior, it produced the lowest score in both variables. Hence, although the differences between the groups were insignificant, even the slightest increase in Purchase Intentions and Purchase Behavior is worth achieving. As such, the combination of both History and Sustainability Narratives is repeatedly among the most efficient narratives to be practiced. Although Kim et al. (2021) found a significant effect of history narrative on people's intention to use the service, there was no comparison between multiple narratives, thus only limited implications can be drawn from the literature.

Nevertheless, since both models appeared insignificant, doubts arise concerning the capacity of AI-generated narratives in influencing people's Purchase Intentions and Purchase Behavior. Generally, AI-generated narratives are hardly investigated and only several studies discussed their effects and similarities with human-generated texts (Chu & Liu, 2023; Hisan & Amri, 2023; Lund & Wang, 2023; Messingschlager & Appel, 2022), while only Braddock and Dillard (2016) found a positive and significant relationship between the narrative exposure and people's intentions and behavior. Thus, this study demonstrates that further research must be conducted, examining the effects of AI-generated narratives on sustainable consumers' Purchase Intentions and behavior to verify the current findings. Hence, to answer RQ2, it can be concluded that the presence of the AI-generated narrative type failed to differ in Purchase Intentions and Purchase Behavior from the control group where the narrative was absent. Although the presence of the AI-generated narrative failed to be a crucially important asset to maintain in influencing people's Purchase Intentions and behavior, there is potential for a slight enhancement in both variables if the AI-generated narrative exists in the product description.

### **5.1.3. The Influence of the Narrative Types on the Variables of the Theory of Planned Behavior**

Additionally, the current study explored the AI-generated narrative types and their effects on the sub-categories of the Theory of Planned Behavior (RQ3). Significant differences in people's Attitudes toward the slow fashion product emerged between the control group and two AI-generated narrative types, namely Sustainability and the combination of History and Sustainability, with the former type achieving the highest score in people's Attitudes toward the slow fashion garment. Hence, the presence of the narrative is

essential in enhancing people's Attitudes toward the sustainable product (Green, 2004; Murphy et al., 2011), with the Sustainability Narrative being the most successful in terms of affecting people's Attitudes.

Moreover, the model that investigated the differences across the AI-generated narrative types in Perceived Behavioral Control was found to be insignificant, with all conditions having almost equal scores in Perceived Behavioral Control. This illustrates the insignificant role of different types of AI-generated narratives in people's understanding of their perceived control over purchasing the slow fashion garment, based on the available means, such as time and financial resources (Ajzen, 1991; Hosta & Žabkar, 2021; Nam et al., 2017). Interestingly, although none of the comparisons between the groups reached significance, the control group had the highest score in Perceived Behavioral Control. Thus, the presence of the narrative is less successful in increasing people's Perceived Behavioral Control in comparison with the absence of the narrative.

To summarize and answer RQ3, while the presence of the AI-generated narrative type is highly effective in enhancing people's Attitudes toward the slow fashion item, with the Sustainability Narrative being the most successful, the AI-generated narrative types performed worse than the control group in Perceived Behavioral Control. Thus, AI-generated narrative types, specifically Sustainability and History + Sustainability are essential in increasing people's Attitudes toward the slow fashion garment, yet they play a detrimental role in enhancing Perceived Behavioral Control.

#### **5.1.4. Relationships between the Variables**

Regarding the relationships between the sub-categories of the Theory of Planned Behavior, Purchase Intentions, Purchase Behavior, and the Narrative Transportation Theory (RQ4), almost all the proposed relationships were positive, yet with varying strengths. Firstly, while consumers' Attitudes toward the slow fashion garment strongly correlated with Purchase Intentions, its relationship with Purchase Behavior was medium, although the difference was marginal. Hence, the more positive the Attitude toward the slow fashion garment, the higher the Purchase Intentions and Behavior of the product.

These findings correspond to the conclusions proposed in multiple studies. Firstly, a well-constructed story has the potential to increase the willingness to purchase the product by creating a positive association or attitude with the product or brand (Lundqvist et al., 2013). Furthermore, the current findings support several studies that found a positive relationship between Attitudes and people's Purchase Intentions toward sustainable products (Bamberg &

Möser, 2007; Chang & Watchravesringkan, 2018; Chi et al., 2021; De Lenne & Vandenbosch, 2017; Halepete et al., 2009). Thusly, establishing a favorable Attitude toward the product is crucial when enticing consumers to purchase sustainable fashion products.

Importantly, the positive relationship between Attitudes and Purchase Behavior of a slow fashion product addresses the attitude-behavior inconsistencies discussed in the academic literature. While this study corroborates the findings of Amoako et al. (2020), Ebreo et al. (1999), Mainieri et al. (1997), and Tanner and Kast (2003) who indicated a positive relationship between the two variables, it contradicts Gupta and Ogden (2009) and Moser (2015) who demonstrated an insignificant association between Attitudes and Purchase Behavior of sustainable products. Contrary to Gupta's and Ogden's (2009) claims that people's Attitudes conflict with their behavior, the current study proposes that consumers' Attitudes toward the slow fashion product are indeed consistent with their behavior. Thus, these two positive relationships highlight the importance of establishing a positive Attitude toward the product, guiding people's behavior (Chi et al., 2021), and thus encouraging consumers to purchase the sustainable product.

Furthermore, while the association between Perceived Behavioral Control and Purchase Intentions proved positive, yet small, the relationship between the former and Purchase Behavior was medium. Hence, the perception of the action being relatively easy to perform results in a (slightly) higher likelihood to purchase the product, as proposed in the prior academic literature (Chang & Watchravesringkan, 2018; Chi et al., 2021; Han et al., 2010; Nam et al., 2017). Similarly, the perception of the behavior being easily performed, results in a (moderately) higher actual purchase of the product (Chang & Watchravesringkan, 2018; Hosta & Žabkar, 2021). Thus, the positive relationships between Perceived Behavioral Control and both variables pinpoint the importance for marketers to demonstrate that consumers have the control to complete the behavior, based on their available resources (Ajzen, 1991). While slow fashion brands do not have the power to control people's financial means, time, or skills that contribute to consumers' perception of their control over the purchase, brands can facilitate Perceived Behavioral Control by including more (transparent) information about the product which may in turn increase consumers' confidence in executing the behavior (Hosta & Žabkar, 2021; Nam et al., 2017). Hence, sustainable brands must prioritize the facilitation of consumers' Perceived Behavioral Control to encourage their Purchase Intentions and subsequent Purchase Behavior.

Lastly, it is crucial to reflect on the relationships between Narrative Transportation, Purchase Intentions, Purchase Behavior, and the sub-categories of the Theory of Planned



Behavior. Firstly, Narrative Transportation strongly correlated with consumers' Attitudes toward the slow fashion item, supporting Braddock's and Dillard's (2016), Green's (2004), and Murphy's et al. (2011) conclusions. Thus, a higher Narrative Transportation has the power to increase and stimulate consumers' favorable Attitudes toward sustainable products (Green & Brock, 2000). However, the relationship between Narrative Transportation and Perceived Behavioral Control was insignificant; hence, no connection exists between the engagement in the story and perceived consumers' difficulty to execute the behavior. The absence of a relationship between the variables suggests that transportation fails to alter consumers' perception toward access to their financial means, time, or skills to execute the behavior (Ajzen, 1991; Hosta & Žabkar, 2021; Nam et al., 2017), serving as a valid and logical reason to explain such a phenomenon.

Considering the relationships between Narrative Transportation and Purchase Intentions and behavior, both were positive and medium. Hence, the more consumers are transported by the narrative, the higher their Purchase Intentions and Purchase Behavior of the slow fashion product. These findings suggest that there is indeed a connection between the level of transportation that is experienced by the readers of the slow fashion product description and consumers' Purchase Intentions and Purchase Behavior (Braddock & Dillard, 2016; Escalas, 2007). The more the product evokes transportation, the more consumers are willing to substitute an old item with the advertised slow fashion garment (Van den Hende et al., 2012). This connection is likely caused by the engagement in the narrative which generates positive feelings toward the product, and thus, leads to tangible actions, such as purchasing the sustainable product.

## **5.2. Conclusion**

This research aimed to determine the power of AI-generated narratives on the Narrative Transportation Theory, Purchasing Intentions, Purchasing Behavior, and the Theory of Planned Behavior that assisted in understanding people's cognitive and emotional behavior in the context of sustainable fashion. An online quasi-experiment was conducted while manipulating the type of AI-generated narrative of the slow fashion item in terms of its (1) sustainability, (2) history, (3) sustainability + history, and comparing it to the lack of narrative (4) control group. The central discovery of this research is that the AI-generated Sustainability Narrative was the leading narrative in Narrative Transportation and the creation of a favorable Attitude toward the slow fashion item, reaffirming the tremendous

global interest and importance of sustainability and the power of implementing an engaging Sustainability Narrative into the product's description rather than merely presenting facts. Such product description demonstrates the meaningful and sentimental value of a piece of slow fashion clothing while conveying a critical message of integrating sustainability in the fashion industry. The positive correlations between Narrative Transportation and consumers' Purchase Intentions, Purchase Behavior, and Attitudes demonstrate an integral value and potential of an engaging AI-generated narrative that transports the readers and, in turn, alters consumers' sustainable purchase habits and behavior. Hence, the power of AI-generated narratives must be explored in future research, focusing on other types of AI-generated narratives and comparing those with human-generated ones.

### **5.3. Managerial Implications**

One of the key goals of this study was to investigate what strategies may help the fashion industry, specifically smaller and sustainable retailers to spread the message of sustainable fashion more efficiently, and ultimately, boost their sales. It was discovered that compelling messages in sustainable fashion garments' descriptions are essential in enhancing people's Purchase Intentions and behavior (Chi et al., 2021). Although significant differences across four narrative types failed to emerge, the presence of the narrative had higher scores in Purchase Intentions and Purchase Behavior, translating to the need of implementing engaging (AI-generated) narratives in product descriptions that could successfully transport the readers.

The great success of the Sustainability Narrative in enhancing Narrative Transportation and Attitudes suggests that the fashion industry must implement sustainable practices in their daily routines while openly communicating about them to increase people's Purchase Behavior of the product (Štefko & Steffek, 2018). Integration of the Sustainability Narrative in the product description must be transparent and honest, as opposed to highly misleading sustainability claims that fast fashion brands eagerly utilize to resonate with their customers and gain untrustworthy admiration (Cavender & Lee, 2018; Hackett, 2016).

### **5.4. Limitations & Future Research Directions**

The present study poses some limitations. Firstly, although this research bridges the gap in slow fashion adoption beyond the context of the US, as recommended by Chi et al. (2021) and Kim et al. (2021), the findings of this research can only be generalized to the (relatively young) Lithuanian population, providing a fairly limited scope. Hence, researching

other regions within Europe and Asia, for example, is crucial to comprehend if the same findings can be obtained in populations with different demographic characteristics.

Secondly, the subjective norm was removed from the current study due to its lack of suitability for the quasi-experiment and its weak relationship with Purchase Intention (Armitage & Conner, 2001; De Lenne & Vandenbosch, 2017; Sparks et al., 1995). However, since this variable is a crucial part of the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991), people's behavioral intentions cannot be fully predicted, as social networks' influence is ignored.

An additional limitation must be acknowledged in the sample and sampling methods. The convenience and snowball sampling methods were utilized in this study as they are cost-effective and time-efficient (Babbie, 2015; Vehovar et al., 2016). To obtain a diverse sample regarding its demographics, the questionnaire was distributed among multiple platforms and social media groups. However, the sample resulted in being largely female-dominated with the majority of the participants having either a bachelor's degree or a high school diploma. Furthermore, although there is a relatively high English proficiency among Lithuanians, it is predominantly prevalent among younger generations; hence, participants of higher ages were unintentionally excluded from the study due to a lack of language understanding which explains a relatively low average age of the participants. Consequently, a comparatively young sample may have affected people's interest in sustainability and their slow fashion purchasing habits. Subsequently, the results of this survey may not be sufficiently representative of the entire Lithuanian population.

As for future research directions, some venues exist that must be further explored. Importantly, since the current study generated the narratives by utilizing a recently developed chatbot, ChatGPT, it is essential to further research the power of creating narratives through ChatGPT by, for example, creating a different type of narrative and comparing its effects with History and Sustainability Narratives. Moreover, further examining the effects of the narratives generated by AI in comparison to humans is crucial to understanding if the human touch makes a significant difference in consumers' Purchase Intentions and Purchase Behavior, or perhaps AI-generated storytelling can outperform human writing.

Furthermore, the same study could be replicated in a different population, for instance, a country where sustainability is still not widely considered or implemented in daily society functioning. In turn, this may yield some crucial insights into available implementable actions to raise awareness about sustainability, specifically in the fashion industry. Moreover, while this study only focused on the different types of AI-generated narratives, other manipulations could be integrated, such as price, information on product's materials, or the

explanation of the production and distribution processes to investigate which condition enhances Narrative Transportation, Purchase Intentions, Purchase Behavior, and the sub-categories of the Theory of Planned Behavior most successfully in the slow fashion context. Lastly, since the current study did not consider people's existing environmental knowledge and interest in sustainability (Paul et al., 2016), future research could include such a variable as a mediator in the relationships between the Narrative Transportation Theory, Purchase Intentions, Purchase Behavior and the sub-categories of the Theory of Planned Behavior.

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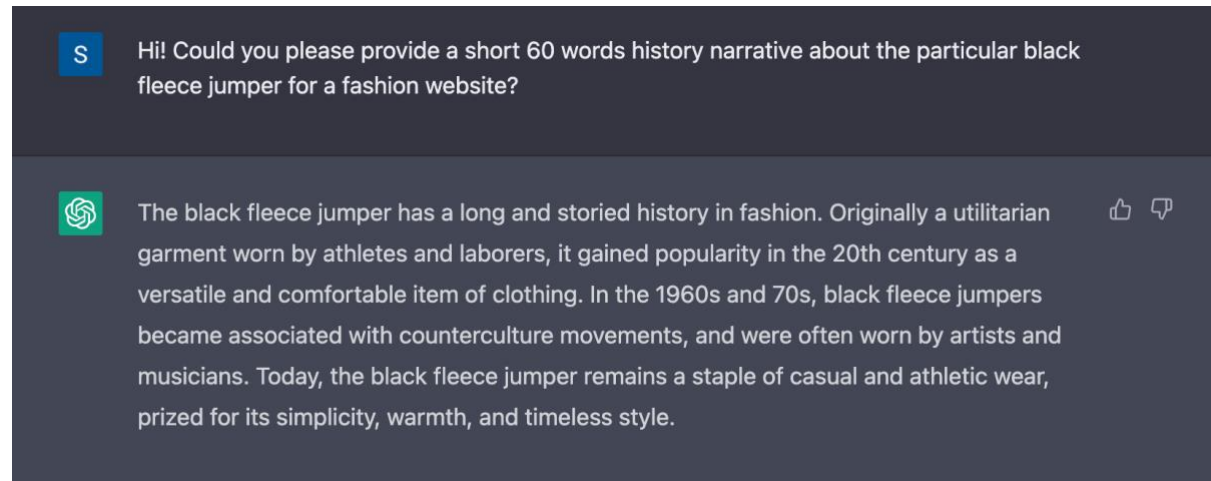
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## Appendix A – History and Sustainability Narratives Generated by ChatGPT

### Appendix A1

*History Narrative generated by ChatGPT*



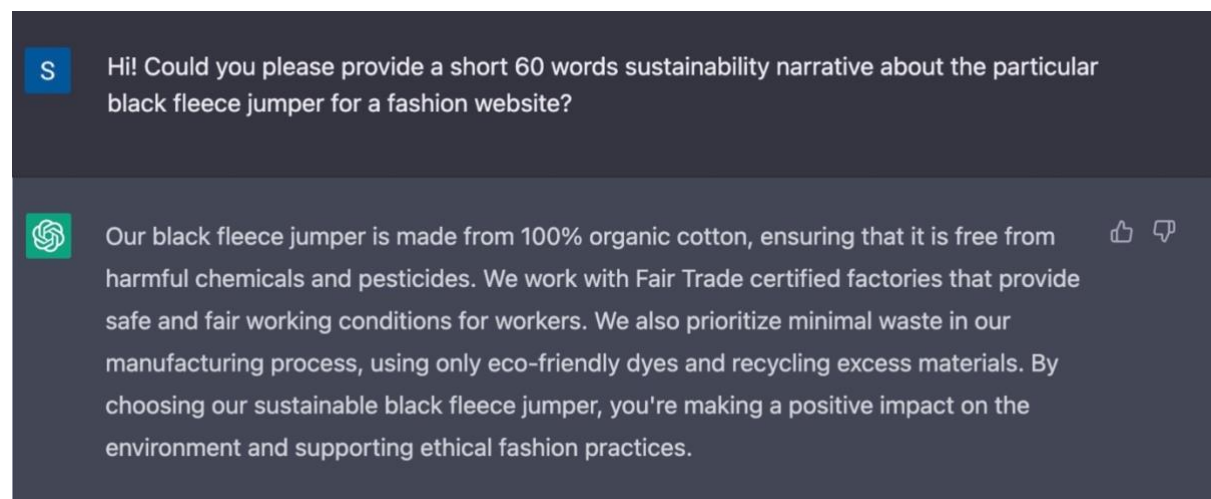
The screenshot shows a chat interface with a dark background. The user's message is in a blue box on the left, and the AI's response is in a dark grey box on the right. The AI response includes a green OpenAI logo icon and two small icons (thumbs up and thumbs down) on the right side.

**S** Hi! Could you please provide a short 60 words history narrative about the particular black fleece jumper for a fashion website?

The black fleece jumper has a long and storied history in fashion. Originally a utilitarian garment worn by athletes and laborers, it gained popularity in the 20th century as a versatile and comfortable item of clothing. In the 1960s and 70s, black fleece jumpers became associated with counterculture movements, and were often worn by artists and musicians. Today, the black fleece jumper remains a staple of casual and athletic wear, prized for its simplicity, warmth, and timeless style.

### Appendix A2

*Sustainability Narrative generated by ChatGPT*



The screenshot shows a chat interface with a dark background. The user's message is in a blue box on the left, and the AI's response is in a dark grey box on the right. The AI response includes a green OpenAI logo icon and two small icons (thumbs up and thumbs down) on the right side.

**S** Hi! Could you please provide a short 60 words sustainability narrative about the particular black fleece jumper for a fashion website?

Our black fleece jumper is made from 100% organic cotton, ensuring that it is free from harmful chemicals and pesticides. We work with Fair Trade certified factories that provide safe and fair working conditions for workers. We also prioritize minimal waste in our manufacturing process, using only eco-friendly dyes and recycling excess materials. By choosing our sustainable black fleece jumper, you're making a positive impact on the environment and supporting ethical fashion practices.



## **Appendix B – Online Survey**

Dear respondent,

You are invited to participate in an experiment about your slow (sustainable) fashion purchasing habits, intentions, and behavior. This research aims to understand how the provided product description of a slow fashion garment influences your willingness and intent to purchase the product. You will be given one of the four different scenarios based on which you will be asked to answer the following questions.

### **RISKS AND BENEFITS**

There are no risks associated with participating in this research. Your name or other identifying information [such as your gender or age] will not be used in the study.

### **TIME INVOLVEMENT**

Your participation in this study will take roughly 5 minutes. There are no right or wrong answers and you may interrupt your participation at any time.

### **PARTICIPANTS' RIGHTS**

If you have decided to accept to participate in this project, please understand your participation is voluntary and you have the right to withdraw your consent or discontinue participation at any time without penalty. Your individual privacy will be maintained in all published and written data resulting from the study.

### **CONTACTS AND QUESTIONS**

Should you have any questions or concerns about this research, before or after filling in the survey, do not hesitate to contact – anonymously, if you wish – the responsible researcher, Simona Šimkutė, by e-mail: 523435ss@student.eur.nl or the Master thesis supervisor, Alexandra Sierra, by e-mail: 88224asi@eur.nl.

### **PRIZE**

If you would like to participate in the lottery for a chance to win a €15 voucher, at the end of

the survey you will be asked to enter your e-mail address. The winner will be selected randomly at the beginning of May 2023.

Thank you in advance and hopefully, you will enjoy participating in the experiment!

**If you have read the information above and freely consent to participate in this study, please click on “I agree” button below to start the experiment**

- I agree
- I disagree

**Firstly, please answer a few short questions.**

**1. Do you currently live in Lithuania?**

- Yes
- No

**2. In the scale from 1 to 5, how would you rate your English proficiency? (1 = Extremely bad; 5 = Extremely good)**

**\*Kaip įvertintumėte savo anglų kalbos žinias pagal skalę nuo 1 iki 5? (1 = Labai blogos; 5 = Labai geros)**

	1 = Extremely bad	2 = Somewhat bad	3 = Neither good nor bad	4 = Somewhat good	5 = Extremely good
English proficiency (*Anglų kalbos žinios)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**In the context of this study, slow fashion is defined as an alternative to fast fashion where garments are produced in mass quantities and made of low-quality materials. Slow fashion aims to minimize environmental pollutants, focus on ethical working**

**conditions, and balance. Because slow fashion garments are made of high-quality materials, they are durable and timeless.**

**Take a look at this picture of a slow fashion garment and carefully read the description**

*One of the four manipulations is shown*

**3. When looking at the picture, I observed the fleece jumper in black**

- Yes
- No

**4. Please indicate if the jumper's description that you read (above) includes**

- The year of 1960s
- The fact that the jumper is made from 100% organic cotton
- Both of the above
- None of the above

**5. After seeing the visual of the slow fashion jumper and reading the description, to what extent do you agree/ disagree with the statements below? (1 = Strongly disagree; 5 = Strongly agree)**

	1 = Strongly disagree	2 = Somewhat disagree	3 = Neither agree nor disagree	4 = Somewhat agree	5 = Strongly agree
I felt caught up in the content of the product description	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Reading the product description was relaxing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My mind was only on the product description and not on other things	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The product description improved my mood, made me feel happier	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I lost myself in the content of the product description while reading it	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I thought the product description was entertaining	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The product description captured my attention	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

6. After seeing the visual of the slow fashion jumper and reading the description, to what extent do you agree/ disagree with the statements below? (1 = Strongly disagree; 5 = Strongly agree)

	1 = Strongly disagree	2 = Somewhat disagree	3 = Neither agree nor disagree	4 = Somewhat agree	5 = Strongly agree
I like the idea of purchasing the shown slow fashion jumper	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The shown slow fashion jumper is a good idea	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Buying the shown slow fashion jumper instead of fast fashion jumper would feel like the morally right thing to do	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Buying the shown slow fashion jumper instead of fast fashion jumper would feel like making a personal contribution to something better	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Buying the shown slow fashion jumper instead of fast fashion jumper would make me feel like a better person	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

7. After seeing the visual of the slow fashion jumper and reading the description, to what extent do you agree/ disagree with the statements below? (1 = Strongly disagree; 5 = Strongly agree)

	1 = Strongly disagree	2 = Somewhat disagree	3 = Neither agree nor disagree	4 = Somewhat agree	5 = Strongly agree
Purchasing the shown slow fashion jumper is entirely within my control	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have the resources and ability to acquire the shown slow fashion jumper	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have complete control over the number of slow fashion jumpers I will buy for personal use	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am confident that I can buy the shown slow fashion jumper	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
If I wanted, it would be easy for me to buy the shown slow fashion jumper	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

8. After seeing the visual of the slow fashion jumper and reading the description, to what extent do you agree/ disagree with the statements below? (1 = Strongly disagree; 5 = Strongly agree)

	1 = Strongly disagree	2 = Somewhat disagree	3 = Neither agree nor disagree	4 = Somewhat agree	5 = Strongly agree
Given the shown slow fashion jumper, there is a strong likelihood that I would purchase it	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I would like to try the shown slow fashion jumper	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I would buy the shown slow fashion jumper if I happened to see it in a store	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I would actively seek out the shown slow fashion jumper in a store in order to purchase it	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

- 9. After seeing the visual of the slow fashion jumper and reading the description, to what extent do you agree/ disagree with the statements below? (1 = Strongly disagree; 5 = Strongly agree)**

	1 = Strongly disagree	2 = Somewhat disagree	3 = Neither agree nor disagree	4 = Somewhat agree	5 = Strongly agree
I choose to buy exclusively slow fashion jumpers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I prefer slow fashion jumpers over fast fashion jumpers because their quality is better	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I purchase slow fashion jumpers even if they are more expensive than fast fashion jumpers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
When buying slow fashion jumpers, I pay attention that they are sustainable	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

- 10. How much would you be willing to pay for the shown slow fashion jumper (in Euros)?**

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**You are nearly done! I have a few more short questions for you.**

**11. What is your gender?**

- Male
- Female
- Non-binary / third gender
- Prefer not to say

**12. What is your age?**

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**13. What is your highest obtained educational level?**

- High school diploma
- Bachelor's degree
- Master's degree
- Doctoral's degree
- Other

**14. How many fast fashion clothing items have you bought in the last 30 days?**

- Less than 1 garment
- 1-2 garments
- 3-5 garments
- 6-7 garments
- More than 7 garments

**15. How many slow fashion clothing items have you bought in the last 30 days?**

- Less than 1 garment
- 1-2 garments
- 3-5 garments
- 6-7 garments
- More than 7 garments

**16. How much did you spend on clothes in the last 30 days?**

- € 0-49
- € 50-99
- € 100-199
- € 200-299
- € 300+

**17. If you have any questions, concerns, or observations, do not hesitate to express them down below (optional)**

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**18. If you would you like to enter the lottery for a chance to win a €15 voucher, please indicate your e-mail address below. The winner will be selected randomly at the beginning of May 2023 (optional)**

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## Appendix C – Factor and Reliability Analyses

### Appendix C1

*Factor and reliability analyses for Narrative Transportation Theory scale (N = 220)*

Item	<i>Narrative Transportation 1</i>	<i>Narrative Transportation 2</i>
The product description captured my attention	.83	
I thought the product description was entertaining	.80	
Reading the product description was relaxing	.70	
The product description improved my mood, made me feel happier	.68	
My mind was only on the product description and not on other things	.63	
I felt caught up in the content of the product description	.61	
I lost myself in the content of the product description while reading it		.95
Eigenvalue	44.2%	15.0%
Cronbach's $\alpha^*$	.76	

*Note.* \*Both factors were included in one reliability analysis. Deleting an item “I lost myself in the content of the product description while reading it” improved the reliability of the scale, however, not significantly.

## Appendix C2

*Factor and reliability analyses for Attitude scale (N = 220)*

Item	<i>Attitude</i>
Buying the shown slow fashion jumper instead of fast fashion jumper would feel like the morally right	.81
Buying the shown slow fashion jumper instead of fast fashion jumper would feel like making a personal	.81
The shown slow fashion jumper is a good idea	.81
Buying the shown slow fashion jumper instead of fast fashion jumper would make me feel like a better	.75
I like the idea of purchasing the shown slow fashion jumper	.74
Eigenvalue	61.4%
Cronbach's $\alpha^*$	.84

### Appendix C3

*Factor and reliability analyses for Perceived Behavioral Control scale (N = 220)*

Item	<i>Perceived Behavioral Control</i>
I am confident that I can buy the shown slow fashion jumper	.83
If I wanted, it would be easy for me to buy the shown slow fashion jumper	.80
I have the resources and ability to acquire the shown slow fashion jumper	.79
I have complete control over the number of slow fashion jumpers I will buy for personal use	.71
Purchasing the shown slow fashion jumper is entirely within my control	.69
Eigenvalue	58.9%
Cronbach's $\alpha^*$	.82

## Appendix C4

*Factor and reliability analyses for Purchase Intention scale (N = 220)*

Item	<i>Purchase Intention</i>
I would buy the shown slow fashion jumper if I happened to see it in a store	.88
Given the shown slow fashion jumper, there is a strong likelihood that I would purchase it	.83
I would like to try the shown slow fashion jumper	.80
I would actively seek out the shown slow fashion jumper in a store in order to purchase it	.79
Eigenvalue	68.3%
Cronbach's $\alpha^*$	.84

## Appendix C5

*Factor and reliability analyses for Purchase Behavior scale (N = 220)*

Item	<i>Purchase Behavior</i>
I purchase slow fashion jumpers even if they are more expensive than fast fashion jumpers	.79
I prefer slow fashion jumpers over fast fashion jumpers because their quality is better	.78
I choose to buy exclusively slow fashion jumpers	.76
When buying slow fashion jumpers, I pay attention that they are sustainable	.65
Eigenvalue	55.4%
Cronbach's $\alpha^*$	.73