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Sustainable actions before profit?

The effects of sustainability efforts on the brand experience in the clothing industry – exemplary represented on Patagonia

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Abstract

Background: In today´s world, experiences play an important role for the customers to build loyalty and long-lasting relationships. Brakus et al. (2009) developed one of the most cited scales for measuring brand experience. Especially the clothing industry has a higher interest to create an overall experience since they are operating in different markets. Moreover, sustainability became a huge trend pushing companies to implement sustainable practices. This trend can also be recognized in the clothing industry which makes up 8.1 % of the whole greenhouse gas emissions globally and customers are more and more aware of this. Companies need to change their overall approach to how they produce and how they communicate, to avoid being labelled as a greenwashing company. In the outdoor-clothing industry, Patagonia is one of the most successful brands – heavily focusing on sustainability. Their brand experience could be one factor for their success, which makes this brand an interesting case to further study this concept. Yet there is limited research on this topic in the literature, no study applied the BXS to one specific company nor into the context of sustainability in the clothing industry.

Purpose: The purpose of the study is to investigate and analyse the brand experience of the outdoor-clothing brand Patagonia with the aim of identifying the effects of sustainability efforts on the brand experience.

Method: To investigate the research question appropriately a qualitative research has been conducted by interviewing 13 customers of Patagonia. To structure the study adequately, we relied on the brand experience scale of Brakus et al. (2009) referring to a deductive approach. Nevertheless, inductive elements influenced our sampling process and the data analysis to develop the new model green brand experience by considering the sustainability efforts of Patagonia.

Conclusion: The findings revealed that the brand experience scale by Brakus et al. (2009) is applicable, and all dimensions are influenced by the brand experience. Furthermore, two additional dimensions were identified: green brand trust and green brand image. In the end, a new model named green brand experience is presented. It consists of 6 dimensions which are described through items that show the strongest influence in each dimension. As a conclusion, recommendations for strategies and tools for sustainable companies are given to create a green brand experience. Aside from honest and clear communication, the mission to act sustainable should be in the focus of the experience ahead of promoting their own products.

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List of Abbreviation

Brand experience	BX
Brand experience scale	BXS
Corporate social responsibility	CSR
Word-of-Mouth	WoM

1 Introduction

Since the beginning of the 21st century, when the experiential economy emerged, consumers have expected more from a brand than just a service. They seek memorable experiences with the brand, which are emotional, physical, and even on a spiritual level. The focus switched away from just the functionality of the product and the service to a distinct experience with the brand (Pine et al., 1999). Supporting this statement, a survey of by PwC found 65% of US-customers claim, a positive experience has a bigger impact than just advertising, while in a global study, 73% of all people state, the experience counts as an important factor when making a purchase decision (Puthiyamadam & Reyes, 2018).

Triggering a specific brand experience (BX) is done through brand-related stimuli which are different elements of the company, such as the overall design, advertisement and marketing efforts; basically, anything that stimulates different senses, emotions, and behaviours of the customer every time he encounters the brand directly and indirectly (Brakus et al., 2009).

Accordingly, the rise of new technology and social media platforms gives marketers a new field to create experiences in an online environment to strengthen the BX. This could happen through more engagement by providing interesting stories on social media channels like Instagram or by developing an appealing website.

An industry where the brand experience plays an important role is the clothing industry. Since the clothing industry operates in the retail and ecommerce market it is necessary to combine both into one overall concept to create a consistent image and experience (Orendorff, 2021). Despite this fact, the clothing industry is a huge contributor to the world economy, by producing an export value of 22.9 billion dollars in 2016 (Fashion United, 2021). However, this industry is ranking among the world´s most polluting sectors, with 8.1% of the world´s greenhouse gas emissions (Quantis, 2018). It further not only has to face environmental-questioning issues, but also the social ethical context. Multinational companies are taking advantage of the workers in the manufacturing sector and creating a modern-slavery environment (Hult International Business School & ETI, 2016).

Through increased imports and overall globalisation, consumers are more questioning of the origin of clothing products. This leads to consumer´s increased awareness of social issues and environmental problems occurring from production processes and purchasing clothing. Therefore, the ethical and environmental responsibility in the clothing markets has increased during the last years (Carlile, 2018).

To be competitive in the future, companies need to react by implementing sustainability strategies. Patagonia as an outdoor brand recognized this from the beginning. Their brand experience could be one factor as to why they are so successful.

Buy less, demand more is the philosophy of Patagonia, which in turns means: Buy only what you need and demand more from other clothing companies to push them more into sustainable behaviours (Patagonia, 2021a). The founder´s aim from the beginning was to work as sustainably as possible and to improve their footprint constantly (Patagonia, 2021b). Over decades they built a strong brand, connected to sustainability and long-lasting quality. Additionally, a reason for this success could be their communication efforts, in which they embed their social and environmental efforts. This can lead to a distinct BX of the brand, which creates perception, feelings and experiences of the brand to the customer to gain trust and a long-lasting relationship (Brakus et al., 2009; Cavanaugh, 2021). Furthermore, they position themselves against mass-consumption and for the re-use of their products. Yet, with this position, they were able to make a significant amount of sales and build a big following of fans (Blakely, 2018) and therefore set themselves apart as one of the most successful outdoor-clothing brands in the market (Blakely, 2018; Clement, 2018).

1.1 Motivation and Problematization

Brakus et al., (2009) developed a brand experience scale (BXS), which is the most cited scale for measuring BX. The scale consists of 4 dimensions: sensory, affective, intellectual and behavioral, which describes the different stimuli associated with the brand (Brakus et al., 2009). Since then, research has been conducted examining the broader dimensions of BX, such as the influence

between BX and brand loyalty (Iglesias et al., 2011), sensory marketing (Hultén, 2011) or a deeper understanding of BX and the effects on customer loyalty (Sahin et al., 2011).

Furthermore, the scale itself has been applied to different categories, such as service organizations (Nysveen et al., 2013), tourism-industries (Khan & Rahman, 2017) or in retail environments (Khan & Rahman, 2016).

However, there are a lot of industry segments that have not yet developed and applied adapted brand experiences scales (Khan & Rahman, 2015). For instance, the clothing industry has been examined in the context of BX, but literature provides only little insights in applying the BXS itself on to clothing companies (Han et al., 2017; Phillips & McQuarrie, 2010).

Referring to this a study conducted by Saari et al. (2017), examined the BX of three tech-companies and how eco-friendliness is affecting it and indeed found a new dimension in the BXS as well as positive influences to the sustainability field (Saari et al., 2017). Their focus lay on more than one company and on a cross country context. This study was for us an additional motivation to further design a study where BX is examined in the context of sustainability, since due to this study, positive results can be expected.

Moreover, due to today's evolving challenges in the clothing industry and the rising voices of acting more sustainably, clothing companies are pushed towards a more environmentally and ethically responsible way of thinking and acting. Therefore, they are trying to implement sustainable marketing policies (Statista, 2020). This leads to an even more important interest in investigating the BX in the clothing industry.

To date, no study has applied the BXS to one specific company or in the context of the clothing industry to examine the effect of sustainability and the possible influence it brings. The study of one company in detail could reveal new insights and could help other companies of the same industry and scholars to better understand the BX in general.

Accordingly, we focused on the company Patagonia. Patagonia is a clothing brand, which produces outdoor, lifestyle clothes, and tools for several outdoor

sports or activities. Their effort to be sustainable, with partly activist's and a radical way of working distinguishes them from other competitors (e.g., publishing a campaign and stating not to buy a product to position themselves against mass consumerism). About 70% of their products are produced with recycled materials (Patagonia, 2021c). Additionally, they engage in social and environmental projects by joining the 1% for the planet alliance (Patagonia, 2020). In general, Patagonia receives good feedback from externals, which is due to their high transparency (Fashion Revolution, 2020) or awards given by respected organizations like the UN (Rukikaire, 2019). Overall Patagonia can be seen as a sustainable company. A way Patagonia communicates their sustainability efforts is through their brand experience.
For instance, Patagonia uses many naturalistic pictures to connect themselves to the outdoors and might create the connection to sustainability but also point out through stories their activists work in terms of environmental and ethical protection.

By identifying how Patagonia creates their specific BX, companies and scholars can get a better understanding of the concept, especially within the context of sustainability. It can further give more insights on how to shape a brand and build trustworthiness among the consumer through the right experience, which is essential when building a brand around sustainability.

1.2 Purpose and research questions

Focusing on the BXS by Brakus et al. (2009) gives us certain advantages in comparison to other brand theory models and frameworks, such as brand personality, brand love, brand trust or brand image.
First it gives us a more holistic view of their communication strategy and perceived views about the company. Concepts such as brand personality would only focus on the characteristics transferred to the brand and would not examine specific communication efforts and how they are perceived (Aaker, 1997).
Furthermore, a concept such as brand love fosters to make a brand so desirable that the consumer gets strongly attached to it (Batra et al., 2012; Carroll & Ahuvia,

2006). This fact could imply consumers to consume products without being aware and conscious of what they are buying, which is partly contrary to the sustainability concept and philosophy of Patagonia (Shobeiri et al., 2016).
While brand image represents the associations with a brand relying on the perception of the consumer´s, BX considers brand related stimuli to shape the experience of a consumer (Brakus et al., 2009; Khan & Rahman, 2015).

Referring to this, this master thesis aims to contribute to the emerging BX literature by further develop the BXS by Brakus et al. (2009) in the context of sustainability in the clothing industry.
Therefore, Patagonia provides a lot of opportunities to analyze their experience for instance the great amount of content on social media and their website.
Furthermore, Patagonia is a good example for representing similar popular outdoor brands such as The North Face, Columbia or icebreaker, since their product range, the concepts and the sustainability approaches are the same or even copied from Patagonia (Meyer, 2021).

Accordingly, the purpose of this study is to investigate the effects of sustainability efforts on the BX, by focusing on Patagonia. Additionally, we want to explore if the four dimensions of the BX are applicable and can be adapted referring to the sustainable context. With the development of the BXS Brakus et al. (2009) we hope to contribute to literature in order to provide a BX embedded in sustainability. Thus, we want to analyze the following research questions:

RQ 1: How is the brand experience of Patagonia?
RQ2: What influence have the sustainability efforts of Patagonia had on the brand experience?

To evaluate this question an investigation of the BX of Patagonia needs to be done. Therefore, we developed a study, to find out how customers of Patagonia experience the brand, within the context of sustainability. To collect the data, we conducted semi-structured interviews with customers of Patagonia.

As a target group we identified central European customers, who are familiar with Patagonia. Furthermore, we focus on millennials, since 35% prefer to buy sustainable clothes (Arsenovic, 2021). The gathered data helped us to cross-check already existing theories and to further develop the BXS.

2 Theoretical Background

In this chapter, we discuss different topics around the concept of BX. First, presenting the meaning of experience and BX leading to how it distinguishes itself from other brand constructs as well as how BX is built. Afterwards introducing the BXS by Brakus et al. (2009) and several studies that have been made applying and developing this scale. The second part of this chapter focuses on the BXS by Brakus et al. (2009) in relation to sustainability while firstly introducing the reader into the context of sustainability in the clothing industry to, secondly, connecting the BXS to sustainable consumption in the clothing industry and how it could be applied in the manner of this study.

2.1 Brand Experience

The following section provides a clear understanding of the term BX which is implemented in the brand management of a company (Iglesias et al., 2011)

2.1.1 From Experience to Brand Experience

Research illustrates that customers are moving from focusing on the purchase of products and services towards the experience around the product or service (Morrison & Crane, 2007). Due to this, the customer and BX gained increased interest in marketing literature but not only these concepts have been studied. In the context of marketing the notion of experience is well discussed as consumer experience, service experience, product experience, shopping experience (Nysveen et al., 2013; Wall & Envick, 2008).

"experience is (the process of getting) knowledge or skills from doing, seeing or feeling things" - (Cambridge Dictionary, 2014)

The first researchers who mentioned an experiential dimension in consumer behavior theory were Morris & Elizabeth (1982). According to them the experiential consumption process includes fantasies, feelings, and fun. Thus, they define experience as a personal incidence, often with emotional connotation relying on the interaction with products or services.

Building on this B. Schmitt (1999) indicates sensory, emotional, cognitive, behavioral, and relational values as central elements for the creation of experiences. Accordingly, he defines experiences as private and personal events, that evolve through the stimulation as a result of participating and observing the event (Nysveen et al., 2013; B. Schmitt, 1999; B. H. Schmitt, 1999). Moreover, he introduced a concept, where he points out, that the goal of experiential marketing would be to "build holistic experiences that integrate individual experiences into a holistic Gestalt" (B. Schmitt, 1999 p. 53).

Further an experience provides sensory, affective, intellectual, and bodily stimulation by creating experimental value which increases the perceived value of a brand to a consumer in comparison to another brand (Pine et al., 1999; Pine & Gilmore, 1998). Familiarity and knowledge of a brand or brand category also refer to the experience with a brand (Alba & Hutchinson, 1987). By the same token Braunsberger & Munch (1998) describe experience depending on the degree of familiarity with a special field, which is achieved through some type of exposure.

Another description of experience comes from Bowen (1989) and Lewis & Chambers (1989) who see the experience as being a total outcome of the combination of the environment, goods and service that are purchased by the customer.

According to Zarantonello & Schmitt (2010) the BX is the broadest conceptual experience in the context of marketing, describing it as the umbrella concept. Other experience terms are more specific and refer to a particular phase in the consumer life cycle.

Contributing to this Duncan & Moriarty (2006) mention that the experience process occurs regardless of the consumers active search behaviour. Equally Heinonen et al. (2010) characterizes experience not only as a result of the activities proposed by the company, rather something beyond direct interactions between the company and the customer. Every time a consumer interacts with the brand, he can either have a positive, negative or neutral experience (Naidoo, 2011) Consumption experience of the consumer, contact and communication with the brand are essential elements that are creating an experience in the mind of the customer (Klaus & Maklan, 2008). Allozo (2008) agrees with this by describing BX as the perception of the consumer, at every moment of contact with a brand, whether it is the brand image in an advertisement, during personnel contact with service personal or the level of quality regarding the personal treatment the consumer receives (Alloza, 2008). Accordingly, anything that can be perceived, sensed or recognized also unconsciously is an experience clue leading to a perception or impression of the brand (Berry et al., 2002; Chinomona & Maziriri, 2017)

In regards to these rational and emotional aspects of customer value need to be considered as part of the experimental perspective of consumer behaviour and marketing (Schmitt & Rogers, 2008). Supporting this statement, Gentile et al., (2007) recognized experiences likewise as a combination of an emotional response and a holistic approach by identifying affective, cognitive, and behavioural processes. Overall, it is a subjective impression, that is created by the holistic offer of a brand in the minds of their customers (Iglesias et al., 2011; Kierkegaard, 2009)

Thus, multidimensionality is expressed in several formal definitions of BX (Akin, 2016; Brakus et al., 2009; Gentile et al., 2007)

The definitions mentioned above vary depending on context and focus but common aspects can be identified as follows:

1. Experiences are subjective and internal
2. Resulting from multiple touchpoints between brand and the consumer
3. Touchpoints can be direct, indirect, manageable and unmanageable
4. Experience might involve various types of relations (e.g. familiarity)
5. Multidimensional construct involving different perspectives

This leads to the definition of BX by Brakus et al. (2009) that conveys dimensionality describing BX as:

> *"subjective, internal consumer responses (sensations, feelings, and cognitions) and behavioural responses evoked by brand-related stimuli that are part of a brands design and identity, packaging, communications and environments" (Brakus et al., 2009) p. 52*

With this said, BX is assigned to the research field of brand-theory and brand-management, aiming for improving the customer-brand relationship.
To separate the BX from other concepts, the next chapter should help to give a clear understanding of the differences.

2.1.2 Brand Experience versus other Brand Constructs

The concept of BX is related but distinct in itself from some well-known concepts or frameworks in the branding literature, such as brand image, brand personality or brand identity (Nysveen et al., 2013). Literature provides various brand constructs and some of them are more commonly used and discussed such as brand Equity and brand personality while others are more recent constructs such

as brand love and brand passion. To get a broad overview, the following table provides a list of the traditional brand constructs and how they differ from BX. All constructs are highly cited among the brand literature and are related with the BX.

Brand Concept	Definition
Brand Image	Perception about a brand as reflected by the brand associations held in consumer memory, consists of various associations in consumers mind namely attributes, benefits and attitudes (Keller, 1993)
Brand Personality	Brand characteristics associated with the brand based on inferential processes (Aaker & Fournier, 1995; Aaker et al., 2004; Aaker, 1997)
Brand Identity	Unique set of brand associations that a firm can create or maintain, involve value-proposition with functional, emotional or self-expressive benefits (Alsem & Kostelijk, 2008)
Brand Equity	Set of brand assets and brand liability related to a brand its brand name and symbol (Aaker, 1991)
Brand Loyalty	Brand loyalty is often seen as the brand equity of the customer base and refers to the degree to which customers are loyal to a brand (Bruwer et al. , 2014)

Table 1 Brand concepts

The **Brand image** comes along with different forms of brand associations (Aaker, 1997; Keller, 1993). It is automatically formed depending on customer experience with the brand. Thus, BX partly influences the brand image.

Brand personality in general is based on reasoning processes in which consumers solely transfer personality traits onto brands (Aaker et al., 2004; Aaker, 1997). BX on the other hand wants to achieve actual sensations, feelings, cognitions and behavioral responses (Brakus et al., 2009).

With the concept of **brand identity**, marketers try to build a set of special associations of the brand (Aaker, 1996; Keller, 2008). It has its roots in the

concept of brand image, however, within this concept, the uniqueness of the brand is the aim (Harris & de Chernatony, 2001). Often the visual identity (e.g., symbols and logos) of a brand catches the eyes of the consumer.
Another brand construct is **brand equity** which displays the values a customer relates to the brand and describes a set of brand assets (Aaker, 1991; Keller, 1993). Referring to this it can be said, that BX is one of the main drivers for brand equity (Boo et al., 2009; Khan & Rahman, 2015). The experience a consumer witnesses leads to emotions, which has an influence on the brand equity (Boo et al., 2009).

These concepts are focusing on reaching either brand loyalty or a long-lasting brand relationship or both, which BX is aiming for as well (Aaker, 1997; Brakus et al., 2009). Additionally, they all include the aspect of the perception of the brand towards a customer but examine this field from different stages and perspectives. These concepts are focusing on reaching either brand loyalty or a long-lasting brand relationship or both, which BX is aiming for as well (Brakus et al., 2009). Additionally, they all include the aspect of the perception of the brand towards a customer but examine this field from different stages and perspectives. Brand experience combines several aspects of the traditional brand concepts by having a holistic view on the brand.

2.1.3 Creating Brand Experience

The customer can experience the brand in various settings because of the appearance in different media. The experience can be formed by direct interaction with a product or during the shopping experience while interacting with the staff (Hoch, 2002). Moreover, other brand related stimuli, which trigger the BX, can be evoked through communication tools, both below-the line tools or above-the-line communication tools (Duncan, 2002; Schmitt et al., 2014). Through those brand-related stimuli, the brand has the ability to trigger specific feelings, sensations, behaviors, cognitions and influence how the customer

perceives and experiences the brand (Harris et al., 2017). Thus, BX is shaped whenever customers interact with brand related stimuli.

Brand-related stimuli are cues on which consumers rely to evaluate which emotions they feel. These cues are coming from the characteristics of the brand and the presentation of the brand (Morrison & Crane, 2007). Brakus et al. (2009) explains that these stimuli are rooted in different aspects of the brand such as the design, communication, and identity. The composition of all brand-related clues make up the whole experience of the brand Berry et al. (2002). The experience is grounded in the evolving of emotions through these stimuli.
There are two schools of thoughts on the existence of emotions. On the one hand scholars state emotions are based on the person's history and mindset, which is interpreting the stimuli (Lazarus, 1984; Morrison & Crane, 2007). On the other hand, emotions are based on a physiological response which occurs through stimuli and create cognitions which are leading to emotions (Morrison & Crane, 2007; Zajonc, 1980). Both views, however, are stating, that a stimulus is the factor which leads to emotions. In this case brand-related stimuli lead to certain emotions which are shaping the experience (Brakus et al., 2009). Thus, identifying and managing these stimuli are crucial to manage the overall BX.

In recent years, scholars identified specific tools and concepts in marketing which can have an influence on how the customer experiences and perceives the brand (Keller, 2009; Khan & Fatma, 2017). One of these concepts is sensory marketing which plays an important role for building an emotional BX. Moreover, marketing communication tools of a brand trigger and shape the experience and perception of a consumer towards the brand.

Today companies are focusing on the desires and needs of the customers who are seeking enjoyable experiences. To be able to fulfill the consumers' needs and interests **sensory marketing** became a concept of higher concern (Moreira et al., 2017). Sensory marketing tries to strengthen the relationship of a brand to their customers by involving human senses to connect on a deeper level (Moreira et al., 2017). It is a dominant factor for building BX by following a multisensory

approach. This marketing concept focuses on all the 5 senses of the consumer and tries with these stimuli to affect emotions, perceptions and behavior towards a specific brand and product (Krishna, 2012). The senses can be triggered by certain colors, pictures, sounds, smells, taste, vision or material which feels special (Krishna, 2012). Using sensory appeals stimulates consumer interest, increases the momentum behind purchase behavior and allows emotional reactions to influence and shape consumers rational thinking and experience. Each sense has slightly different effects and outcomes. However, all senses are either linked to specific emotions or feelings when they are triggered (Hultén, 2011; Krishna, 2012). The sense of sight happens to be the most common one, when perceiving a product, good or brand (Hultén, 2011). Sensory and especially multi-sensory experiences directly affect the BX and the perception (Hultén et al., 2009). Following a multisensory approach is important to reach several senses in combination, since this can have an even stronger effect instead of reaching each of them alone (Spence et al., 2014). According to Chattopadhyay & Laborie, (2005) the point-of-sale is the most effective of the brand contacts in regards to a multisensory experience. Sensory stimuli can help to create a deeper sensory, behavioral and cognitive value of a brand (Hultén, 2011). Hultén (2011) created a multi-sensory brand-experience concept, where he decided to examine the experience in different categories: sensors, sensations, and sensory expressions. These three parts make the experience based on sensual stimuli´s, expressing the identity of the brand and directly affects the brand image. Thus, sensual marketing is a crucial marketing concept for shaping the BX creating a certain perception (Hultén, 2011; Hultén et al., 2009; B. Schmitt, 1999).

Companies communicate to remind customers of their products in a direct or indirect way. Many tools, such as event marketing, advertising or the selling point can be used for marketing communications (Keller, 2009). Digital communication tools were more and more implemented into the mix of marketing communication and can play a dominant role in shaping the experience (Chen & Xie, 2008). Digital communication tools for instance Instagram can help to engage with the customers by providing content that is relevant for the consumer. Moreover, the

brand is in direct contact with their customers and influences them with firsthand information.

Furthermore, **storytelling** is part of the communication strategy of a company which can create a highly experiential atmosphere. It helps the audience to relate to something, since people can better imagine and feel what someone wants to communicate and is mostly more efficient than rational numbers and facts (Kaufman, 2003). A story can communicate values and is seen in the literature as “value statements” (Jensen, 2001, p. 52)

When telling stories, it is important to catch the attention from the beginning. The message of the story should be clear to the audience (Peracchio & Escalas, 2008).

Brands can use this tool to show the audience what the brand stands for and what values they are representing (Fog, 2010). Using this tool can trigger positive feelings and lead to a multiple storage in the consumers’ minds, through visual, factual and emotional ways (Mossberg & Nissen Johansen, 2006).

Storytelling enables the brand to reach the emotions of the customers and can strengthen the brand itself (Fog, 2010). This in turn can shape the BX.

Studies concluded that storytelling can create positive associations towards the brand and can therefore be an important tool to manage the experience and give it a meaning (Lundqvist et al., 2013).

To shortly conclude brand-related stimuli through the design, packaging, or communication of the brand and especially the sensory stimuli’s impact the BX directly. The combination of different communication tools can, when strategically applied correctly, lead to an emotional and positive BX. Since experiential Marketing gained higher interest in literature Brakus et al. (2009) developed, so far, the most cited scale for the BX.

2.1.4 Brand experience scale

Brakus et al. (2009) defined 4 dimensions of the BX, by first reviewing literature of cognitive science, philosophy, and applied marketing literature about experiences. In the first stage they identified five dimensions: sensory, affective, intellectual, behavioral, and social. After several studies they dismissed the social dimension and reduced the scale to 12 items, 3 in each dimension (Brakus et al., 2009).

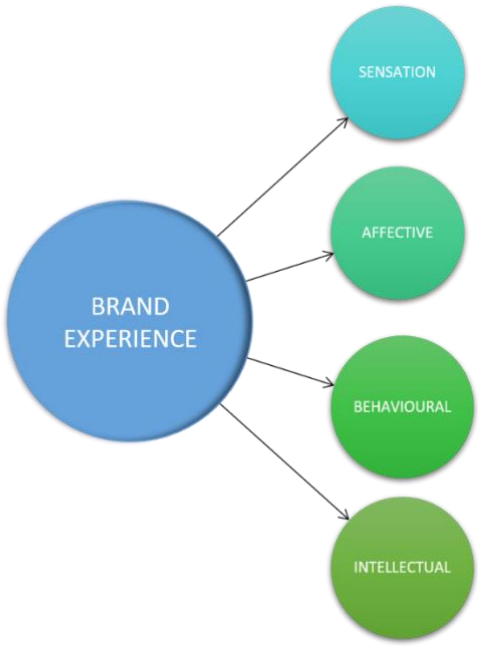

Figure 1 Brand experience scale (Brakus et al., 2009)

As Figure 1 shows Brakus et al. (2009) relied on the four dimensions sensory, affective, behavioral and intellectual.

The **sensory** dimension should be perceived with all five senses and refers to the visual, auditory, tactile, gustatory and olfactory stimulations provided by the brand. The perception with the senses has an effect on the rational decision-making process (Pinker, 2003; B. Schmitt, 1999).

The dimension **affective** is triggered through feelings and emotions based on certain stimuli of the brand (Brakus et al., 2009; Shobeiri et al., 2016). In general, while consuming products a variety of emotions can appear: from love to excitement to fear and even to anger. Furthermore, emotions can influence the

purchasing decision as well as how a product will be consumed. However, a BX should aim for genuine positive feelings and moods to extraordinary strong emotions such as pride and joy.

A **behavioral** dimension of the BX includes interactions with the brand, lifestyles and bodily experience. Consumers, triggered by certain brand-related stimuli, tend to act and experience the brand physically which can lead to an alternative lifestyle or other role models (Brakus et al., 2009; Shobeiri et al., 2016).

Moreover, a BX should encourage a “creative and cognitive thinking” of the consumer representing an **intellectual** dimension (B. Schmitt, 1999, p.61). The more creative and divergent a communication effort is, the better it is stimulating the cognitive and affective response, which leads to a stronger thinking (Smith & Yang, 2016). The intensity and number of dimensions evoked are resulting in a more or less intense BX (Zarantonello & Schmitt, 2010).

After validating the scale referring to the four dimensions, the scholar team tried to find out if the BXS can predict the consumer behavior by examining the effect of BX and brand personality to customer satisfaction and loyalty. The results showed that brand personality is in general stronger in predicting in consumer buying behavior (Brakus et al., 2009).

Since Brakus et al. (2009) published their development of the BXS, studies about BX increased the years following. Some studies tried to develop different dimensions; others focused on adapting the BX to a specific industry.

Many studies have been published about the effects of BX on brand loyalty in which scholars are agreeing on the fact, that BX is positively affecting brand loyalty and satisfaction (Brakus et al., 2009; Iglesias et al., 2011; Sahin et al., 2011; Zarantonello & Schmitt, 2010). However, all scholars have slightly different approaches and conclusions on how it affects brand loyalty.

For instance, Iglesias et al. (2011) confirmed in their study that BX led to brand loyalty when the consumer developed affective commitment, which means emotional attachment to the brand. Moreover Sahin et al. (2011) revealed in their study the direct effect on brand loyalty instead of brand personality

Brakus et al. (2009) connected BX and brand personality to see if an effect on satisfaction and brand loyalty appears. In their study BX has a higher direct effect on brand loyalty, than brand personality, but that brand personality has a higher effect on satisfaction which leads to brand loyalty. While Zarantonello & Schmitt, (2010) described different types of consumers which attach differently to the BX. It shows that holistic consumers are more likely to build brand loyalty, because of the BX.

A second field in the BX literature is the application and adaption of the BXS to other industries.
Scholars focused on the service industry, more especially on the hotel and tourism industry and developed a scale, based on Brakus et al. (2009), for a hotel BX. The scale has five dimensions, with 17 items, coordinated to the specific requirements of the hotel and tourism industry (Khan & Rahman, 2017).
The same scholar team developed further a scale for the retail industry. With 7 dimensions and 22 items, the scale is larger than the other ones. Within their study, they concluded some other outcomes of the BX, such as word-of-mouth (Khan & Rahman, 2016).

Even though the scales are based and influenced by Brakus et al. (2009), none of the scales uses any original dimension. Instead, they developed their own dimensions based on the literature. Likewise, the following chapter tries to set the BXS of Brakus et al. (2009) into the context of sustainability in the clothing industry.

2.2 Brand experience & sustainable consumption in the clothing industry

Since the study aims to find out the impact of sustainability efforts of a company on the BX a definition of sustainability is given as well as how sustainable consumption is handled in the clothing industry. Afterwards a short overview about the current state of BX and the BX in context of sustainable consumption is presented.

2.2.1 Sustainable consumption in the clothing industry

Since the topic of sustainability has gained a lot of attention over the last years the population and the companies focus more on ecological aspects and sustainability has become a key element for organizations. Correspondingly sustainability has also been a research topic in the clothing industry, where it has been explored from different perspectives (Gilg et al., 2005; Han et al., 2017; Schaefer & Crane, 2005)

To come to a clear understanding of what sustainability refers to in this study, a short discussion of the term will follow.
Sustainability refers to the **economic**, **social** and **environmental** factors that must be viewed, synchronized and addressed to ensure the long-term viability of our community and the planet. At its core it is about the responsibility of each individual towards the environment, the fellow beings and the following generations. Accordingly, sustainable development is described as a progress of the generation of today, which tries to meet their needs without affecting the ability of the future generations to achieve their own needs (Klaus, 2011; Lorek & Spangenberg, 2014). The three dimensions of sustainability, namely economic development, social development and environmental protection, are interdependent and mutually reinforcing components of sustainable development (Purvis et al., 2018). **Ecological sustainability** aims to connect human needs and ecosystem services. **Economic sustainability** tries to ensure that current economic activities do not disproportionately burden future generations. **Social sustainability** focuses on the growth of values in the society by supporting credibility, respect, and sincerity between each other and in business context towards employees, deliverer, customers, and stakeholders (Purvis et al., 2018; Zulkifli, 2020).

Sustainable consumption as an important factor of sustainable development is defined as the consumption of goods and services that have minimal impact upon

the environment, are socially equitable and economically feasible whilst satisfying the basic needs of humans (Vermeir & Verbeke, 2006; Vermeir et al., 2020). During the decision-making process, the consumer tries to satisfy the individual needs like taste, price or convenience while considering social responsibility in relation to animal welfare, the environment or fair trade (Ingenbleek et al., 2015; Riemsdijk et al., 2017). Consumers are largely influenced by ethical and environmental concerns in their consumption behaviour.

When talking about sustainable consumption and the concept of **sustainable fashion in the clothing industry**, it is mostly related to organic production, less harmful processes, and fair working conditions for the employees (Schaefer & Crane, 2005). Supporting sustainable design means supporting an efficient usage of materials leading to less waste production and less textile consumption (Goworek, 2011). According to Tischner and Charter (2001) four approaches to sustainable design contain repairing, refining, redesigning and rethinking, which are essential to be innovative leading to new business models as well as fulfilling consumers needs in a more sustainable manner. Moreover, recycling and up-cycling methods and the creation of a garment from pre- or post-consumer textile waste are also important tools regarding the sustainable fashion trend (Goworek, 2011).

Several studies of sustainability evaluate the consumer behaviour regarding their consumption patterns and awareness about the topic of sustainability and have shown that consumers have a positive attitude towards sustainable fashion but lack transferring acting on this through their purchase decisions (Helm & Subramaniam, 2019). This phenomenon is known as the intention-behaviour gap and describes the gap between the intention to act sustainably and their actual behaviour (Vermeir & Verbeke, 2006).
However, since consumers are becoming more conscious of their purchase decisions and consumption patterns, they have a huge impact on companies pushing them to establish sustainability activities into their concept of corporate social responsibility (CSR) (Goworek, 2011). CSR indicates that all aspects of the

company performance are sustainable, from the behaviour of individual employees to performance throughout the supply chain.

An often-used term or strategy is green marketing which refers to the practice of developing products and advertising them based on their real or perceived environmental sustainability (Jason, 2021).

Companies can use certain tools to influence the attitude and the buying behaviour towards the product. Overall, it is important to provide clear information, that shows the environmental benefits of the product or promoting a sustainable lifestyle (D'Souza et al., 2007). Messages that are not clear and easy to understand can lead to an information-asymmetry which has negative influence towards the buying decision (Rademaker et al., 2015).

Promoting sustainability and trust of the company or the brand are highly connected, due to the concept of **greenwashing**. This negative notion, describes companies who show no responsibility in their environmental performance, but advertise a positive picture of their actions (Dangelico & Vocalelli, 2017) and make therefore untruthful environmental claims (Yadav & Pathak, 2013). Moreover, they can arrange their company according to sustainability requirements and export socially irresponsible practices to countries with looser regulations and less stakeholder pressure. Thus, this might lead to mistrust on the consumer side since companies are more likely to hide their noncompliance. Furthermore, consumers may not trust those companies if they lack clear and comprehensible product information regarding the eco-friendliness of their products and services (Davis, 1993; Hartmann & Apaolaza-Ibanez, 2013; Saari et al., 2017).

Taking this into account, environmental claims should be understandable, easy to remember and have emotional attachment to the target group (Bickart & Ruth, 2012; Hartmann & Apaolaza-Ibanez, 2013). When the message is vague, the effectiveness is not as high (Davis, 1993).

Only if the companies show **real commitment to sustainability** in their whole processes through **open and transparent communication**, they achieve reliability on the consumer side and avoid titling of greenwashing. This means establishing sustainable requirements into corporate social responsibility activities of a company by transforming sustainability into the company values.

Going with this trend, a lot of companies started reporting sustainability actions and adopting sustainable standards such as the global reporting initiative (Goworek, 2011). Such reports can show the transparency of a company. The more transparent a company is perceived, the more trust consumers are bringing towards the company (Vaccaro & Patiño Echeverri, 2010), which can positively influence the buying behaviour.

To summarize, sustainability in the clothing industry is a big and complex topic. For companies it is important how they communicate it, that it´s transparent, clear and not mis-understandable. The BX therefore plays a big role, since it is part of the holistic communication and appearance of the company and can provide a clear and persistent perception of the brand. The following section will put the BX into the context of sustainability and outline some assumptions as to how both fields can influence each other.

2.2.2 Brand experience scale in the context of sustainable consumption

In recent studies scholars examined the effects of the BX on sustainable consumption.
Shobeiri et al. (2016), for instance, studied the effects of sustainable consumption on B. Schmitt (1999) 5 dimensions of the experiential marketing concept (B. Schmitt, 1999). Their results show that all dimensions have a positive perception on sustainable consumption. More particularly, the act dimension has been perceived as being the strongest dimension in consuming sustainably (Shobeiri et al., 2016).
Further studies have shown that the experience of certain product consumptions can raise the awareness of climate-related issues on the planet (Eiseman & Jonsson, 2019). This can have effects on different dimensions of the BXS such as the behavioral or the affective dimension.

Accordingly, in the following section the BXS of Brakus et al. (2009) is applied in the context of sustainable consumption and Patagonia. To date not that many

studies and literature can be found about sustainable consumption and the experience that emerges from that. Applying the BXS in the context of sustainability and Patagonia should give a better overview on how sustainability efforts affect the BXS.

Sensation

As mentioned under 2.1.4 this dimension relies on all 5 human senses. Referring to this Hartmann & Apaolaza-Ibáñez (2008) developed a framework in which they concluded, that warm-glowing environments such as pictures from nature, green and naturalistic landscapes can foster a sustainable consumption.

Moreover, different forms of the brand can be perceived through the senses and could trigger a motivation to act more sustainable (Shobeiri et al., 2016).

Further literature recommends using a full scope of all senses in order to effect sustainable consumption (Gębarowski & Cholewa-Wójcik, 2015).

Patagonia´s experience is dominated by nature and environmental pictures and videos (Patagonia, 2021d). These green and naturistic scenes could be an important factor in the experience, since they highly triggered the visual sensations. This could affect the perception of the company being perceived as a sustainable, naturalistic company. Furthermore, the brand logo, which shows the outlines of the Patagonian mountains, and is therefore connected to the brand name, could trigger the visual sense.

Affective

Since affective relies on the emotions created by a brand, the brand has to trigger specific emotions through the BX considering sustainable consumption patterns. In this field, positive as well as negative emotions can appear, such as pride, respect, guilt and anger (Wang & Wu, 2016). All aspects have a positive impact on the intention of consuming sustainable (Wang & Wu, 2016).

However, the BX should elicit positive feelings towards sustainable consumption (Shobeiri et al., 2016). Emotions that occur through the BX can lead to a feeling of being against mass consumption which is caused by advertisement and the pressure of society (Özçağlar-Toulouse, 2009), which can lead to a positive feeling of pride and joy (Pinto et al., 2011).

Patagonia offers a variety of storytelling marketing communication efforts, which could lead to certain feelings and emotions. Patagonia makes videos about the gear and the clothing of Patagonia and lets professional athletes talk about their experiences, stories and why they wear it (Patagonia, 2014).
Another notable section on their website is indeed real stories about environmental and social activism, change and new discoveries (Patagonia, 2021e). These communication efforts have a high potential to trigger special emotions and feelings, towards the brand as well as to more responsible consumption.

Behavioral

The behavioral dimension as mentioned in 2.4.1 describes the interaction between a brand and a consumer. Thus, the BX could lead to a stronger effect of acting and behaving in a sustainable way, through stimuli, that can create awareness of acting more responsible in their consumption. An outcome could be to recycle products or the general reduction of buying new products (Durif et al., 2011). Furthermore, the experience could bring the consumer to educate others about the effects of unsustainable consumption (Schaefer & Crane, 2005). The education could be done by the company through the BX.
Patagonia integrates in their experience specific options, which could stimulate the behavior of the consumer. On the one hand, they bring the awareness to the products, which are to a certain extent made of recycled materials (Patagonia, 2021b). This could influence people to engage more in recycling. On the other hand, they provide a worn-wear section, which is basically a thrift-shop (Patagonia, 2021f). The experience customers have in this section could push people´s decision to buy more from thrift-shops.

Intellectual

Especially sustainable consumption demands a higher level of cognitive thinking and creativity and well thought-through buying decisions to act more responsibly (Schaefer & Crane, 2005). The experience provided by the brand, can stimulate mindfulness thinking which is positively associated with sustainability and responsible consumption (Helm & Subramaniam, 2019). Furthermore, stimuli can

trigger environmental concerns which can lead to a mindful consumption of products (Helm & Subramaniam, 2019). Consumers, which are already shopping responsibly, are known for gathering more information than regular shoppers (Shrum et al., 1995). Such information can be transparency, material-information and the general reputation of the company (Shrum et al., 1995).
For this experience dimension, one advertisement is an exemplary example. The “Don´t Buy This Jacket” Campaign showed a picture of one of Patagonia’s products with the headline “Don´t Buy This Jacket”. The campaign launched right before black-Friday and Patagonia wanted to bring awareness to the mass-consumption and to act responsible when buying and consuming products (Allchin, 2013). Advertisement such as this campaign, could highly trigger the cognitive thinking and are creative in its own way. Consumers who are exposed to this part of the BX might think about the brand and its environmental and societal efforts afterwards.

Overall, in theory sustainability can have different influences on the BX and their different dimensions. Many touchpoints can include sustainability efforts and transport this important topic towards the consumer. To have empirical evidence for these theoretical assumptions, we will apply and explore the BXS on Patagonia. The method we used, will be explained in the following chapter.

3 Methodology

In this chapter we elaborate on the chosen methodology to conduct the research and collect the primary data needed to meet the objective as well as to answer our research question appropriately.

3.1 Philosophical approach to the research

The following section provides an overview of the philosophical approach to the research and explains the chosen method used to investigate the influence of sustainability efforts on the brand experience.

The philosophical approach helps to develop knowledge about the author's view of the world to underpin the methodological choice, research strategy and data collection technique. To elaborate the most suitable option for the primary data collection, the onion by Saunders et al. (2016) has been used. Within this model, Saunders portrays research philosophies as part of the outer layer, making philosophical considerations the first stage of the research process. An overview of the research onion is shown in figure 2 (Saunders et al., 2016).

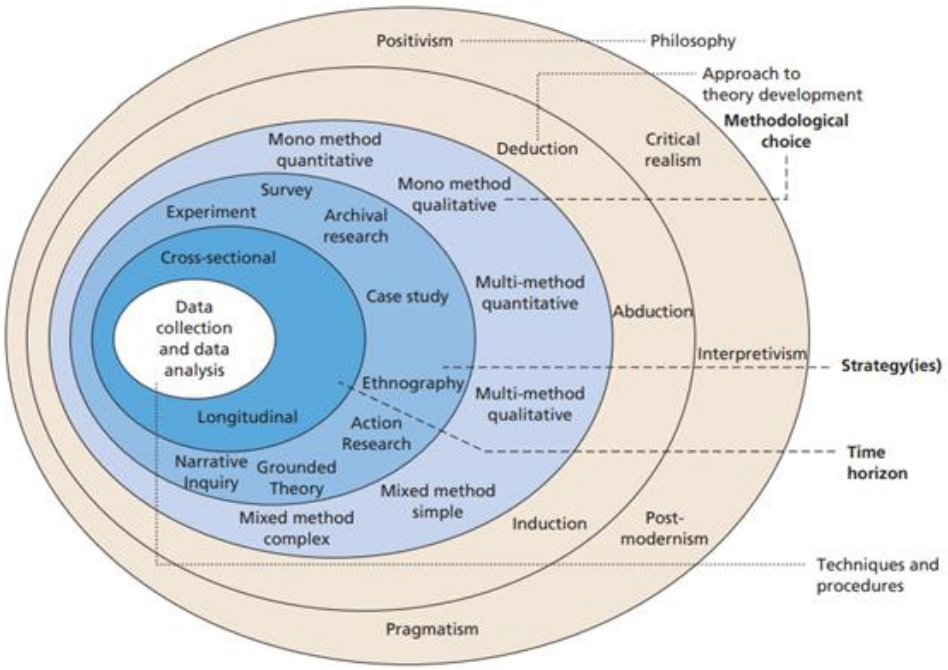

Figure 2 Research Onion by Saunders et al. (2016)

In theory there are two common philosophical approaches: positivism and interpretivism. While positivism is observing the facts of society and makes generalisations which are law-like, interpretivism counters this approach by saying that human beings are creating meanings and are apart from phenomenon's which are of physical nature (Saunders et al., 2016).

Interpretivism is all about the interpretation of the participants' lived experience and recollections of those experiences. Stories, perceptions and narratives are in the focus of this approach and helps to get new understandings and worldviews (Saunders et al., 2016). Researchers who follow this approach want to

understand from the individual point of view why someone is behaving or perceiving in a specific way (Weber, 2009).

BX is more about individual perceptions, thoughts and feelings that emerge through the brand. These responses are connected to the past experiences of each consumer and what he associates it with.

The interpretivist view, follows a relativist perspective, which views that no one shares their own reality (Ritchie et al., 2013). This further leads to the assumption that the meanings are defined by the individual's perceptions (Krauss, 2005). Every customer of Patagonia has a different view on the brand and experiences it differently. Moreover, culture, history and memories influence this experience. To understand these meanings, we decided to conduct semi-structured interviews, to deepen our understanding of their experience with Patagonia, which is based on their own views and meanings. A smaller sample size with 13 respondents, enabled us to dive deeper into an individual's experience of the brand.

According to Creswell & Creswell (2017) and Tuli (2010) the advantages of implementing interpretivism is the possibility of exploring hidden reasons behind complex social processes and studying context-specific processes. It can help uncover interesting and relevant issues or topics for follow-up research. It is helpful for theory construction in areas with no or insufficient research. It is more about understanding the complexity of a phenomenon without generalising for the whole population. It gives the researcher the opportunity of diverse experiences related to the phenomena (Saunders et al., 2016). By conducting the interviews, we were able to understand the phenomena of the BX of Patagonia within the context of sustainability. Even though we are guided by the BXS, we in fact further adapt and extend the model, building on our elaboration and the conclusions that respondents provided. By following this philosophical approach, it enables us to involve all answers in their full complexity to adapt the model.

Therefore, it can be said that an interpretivist approach is the right way, even though we are following a specific model throughout the whole thesis. By following this approach, we are not encouraged to make law-like assumptions and conclusions, but rather interpret the findings and the results in their full

complexity and conclude how Patagonia's BX is perceived, especially in the sustainability context.

3.2 Research approach

The research approach suggests the way of data collection for the researcher and answers the research question. There are two key approaches identified: deduction and induction, which are often associated with qualitative and quantitative research.

A deductive approach is associated with building hypotheses on existing theory to falsify or verify the hypotheses and in the end create general characteristics (Wilson, 2014). Furthermore, an instrument is used or developed to further examine the issues. The answers of respondents are logical and lead in their conclusion to an acceptance or rejection of the assumptions assumed based on the theory (Malhotra et al., 2012).
The inductive approach on the other hand searches for specific observable patterns which can be developed into a theory (Bernard, 2017). The field of research gives limited to no theory and leaves the scholars freedom to decide with frameworks they might want to use to narrow it down (Malhotra et al., 2012). However, the scholars still can use theory to come up with the right research questions (Saunders et al., 2016). The data leads to discussions about observations and patterns to elaborate the nature of the issues. In the end a new theory or a specific conclusion can be developed through the observations of the patterns (Malhotra et al., 2012).

In this thesis, we followed mainly a deductive approach. The whole thesis is built and structured on the BXS. We rely on this literature intensively through using the scale to explore the BX of Patagonia in the context of sustainability. Furthermore, almost all our literature is based around this brand concept.
This can be seen in the interview guide, where we used the 4 dimensions to structure our interviews; see chapter 3.4.2. Additionally, during the coding

process we used the dimensions of the BXS to structure and categorizes our codes under those.

However, we also have an inductive influence which can be seen in several sections of the thesis. We did not create any hypothesis, which we test throughout the thesis. Instead, we developed two open research questions which we answer at the end of this thesis. The influence of the sustainability context is loose from the actual BXS and is free of literature which stands in direct context to the BXS. Even though we structured the interview guide according to the scale, we used open questions to explore the opinions, thoughts, and perceptions of how the respondents experience Patagonia and asked open questions according to sustainability. The coding process has inductive influences since the original scale does not provide any predefined codes. This can be also seen in our analysis. To get to a conclusion we use our own interpretation of the answers. These interpretations are based on the findings and the theory out of which we develop a new adapted model.

Even though this thesis seems to be evenly influenced by both approaches, it can be said, that this thesis is more guided by the deductive perspective. Due to the fact, that we structured and built the whole thesis on one specific model overweight other influences from the inductive approach. However, the advantage we have with a mixture of both approaches is on the one hand a specific freedom of exploring the BX in a new context, and on the other hand it gives us a direction and safety, since we rely on approved literature.

The following table provides a better overview of both approaches in this study:

Thesis	Deductive	Inductive
Structure of the whole Thesis	Structure throughout the whole report is based on the brand experience scale	
Basis of the thesis	Based on the brand experience scale	
Research Question		No hypothesis, open research questions
Interview Guide	Structure and question are orientated on the brand experience scale	
Interview Questions		Open questions to get the full range of opinions and thoughts
Coding	Coding based on the brand experience scale	No predefined codes
Analysing	Analysis based on existing literature	Interpretative analysing of the answers

Table 2 Research approach

The approach has an influence on the research design which will be explained more in detail in the next section.

3.3 Research design

A research design is considered as a framework that gives an overview of the research process and which information needs to be obtained to structure or solve marketing research problems. It must determine the sources of information, the design technique, the sampling, the schedule, and cost of the research. Research designs are clustered into two main categories: exploratory research and conclusive research (Malhotra et al., 2012).

Exploratory research is a flexible and open approach, which does not naturally give a concluding evidence, however, helps to better **understand** the marketing problem which the study is examining (Malhotra et al., 2012; Saunders et al., 2016). This research design does not provide conclusive answers to the question but can form a basis for conclusive research and investigates the problems on topics where limited to no research has been done before (Brown & Brown, 2006; Singh, 2007).

The aim of the study is to examine the effects of the sustainability efforts of Patagonia has on the BX, for which insights of the customers` thoughts, feelings and perceptions are needed. Since we chose a deductive approach as our main string, it could be assumed to follow only a conclusive and quantitative approach. However, we are also partly influenced by induction, as we are open to new discoveries and to extend the original model. In order to follow our purpose, we need to know the meanings of the customer and how they experience the brand. Furthermore, we do not have any hypothesis to test but rather open research questions, which we want to answer. Therefore, we need a certain degree of flexibility to make a conclusion about BX and how the sustainability context plays a role in it. Thus, we have to follow an exploratory research.

Within the exploratory approach we are following qualitative methods. A qualitative approach has mainly an unstructured exploratory design and aims for insights, depth and understanding based on a small sample (Malhotra et al., 2012). This approach can be further used to understand complex issues, to understand people's behaviours and views as well as giving depth and detail to understand the research issue (Hennink et al., 2020). Along with our arguments above, we follow this approach to deeper understand the experience through our respondents. A qualitative approach is most likely followed, when decided to follow an exploratory design.

By using this approach, a common technique are semi-structured interviews.

Semi-structured interviews enable us to dive deeper into social and personal matters (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006), which is essential for us to explore and understand the BX. As actually following a deductive approach, the semi-

structured interviews, with open questions are our main inductive influence in the whole study.

This interview-style follows an interview-guide with a pre-set of questions, to have a certain systematic approach and to follow a specific direction. However, follow-up questions can be asked to further explore the topics (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006). We have to use the 4 dimensions of the scale to explore to what extent they are applicable to Patagonia, however, we get enough freedom to explore upon these 4 dimensions, which is necessary to involve the sustainability context.

Compared to other qualitative methods, interviews give us the advantage of getting more insights than for instance with focus groups. Since the interviews were conducted in a one-to-one situation, we had the opportunity to focus more on the individual answers, which helps us to better understand their individual meaning. In a focus group it is more difficult to focus on one individual response. (Malhotra et al., 2012).

One disadvantage that should be considered, is that the researcher could be biased in the way they design the interview-guide and later on analysing the data (Malhotra et al., 2012). We try to counteract this by orienting the interview guide upon the 4 dimensions of the original scale, which gives us to a certain degree an orientation to follow a specific direction.

Furthermore, it has been said that sensitive topics might not be openly discussed, due to being ashamed or not ready to talk about (Saunders et al., 2016). Sustainable behaviour can be seen as a sensitive topic for some respondents to talk about, especially when it comes to their own sustainable behaviour. However, we do not see this issue as a big risk. In general, we discuss how our respondents experience the brand Patagonia in the context of sustainability, which generally should not touch any sensitive topics. Still, we considered this in our interviews and later in the analysis.

3.4 Data collection

The sources of data in this thesis are primary and secondary data. The primary data was collected through semi-structured interviews. In the following section

the sampling process, interview guide, data analysis as well as reliability and validity are described.

3.4.1 Sampling process

The sampling process focuses on how we chose the elements of the target population to get sufficient data.

For the sampling technique we followed the judgemental sampling method. With this method the researchers are choosing the elements to be included in the sampling size (Malhotra et al., 2012).

The target population for the semi-structured interviews are millennial customers of the brand Patagonia since they can provide information about their BX from purchasing to wearing the products and using their support services. In total we interviewed 13 respondents. To select the right respondents, we made sure that they at least bought one product of Patagonia in the last 3 years and were aware of the brand, as well as follow their activities either through Instagram or their website during the last year. The latter ensured us, that the respondent has enough knowledge about the brand and its activities to answer our questions in the interview. If both criteria were fulfilled, we considered the person as a suitable respondent.

However, due to time and capacity constraints we were also influenced by the convenience sampling method, in which the samples of the target population are chosen by the most accessible elements (Marshall, 1996). This technique brings some disadvantages, since selection bias can occur, often resulting in data that is not as representative or of poorer quality. (Malhotra et al., 2012; Marshall, 1996).

Due to our limits as master students, our sample represents only German citizens, except for one respondent from Denmark. The age of the respondents was also limited (between 21 and 28) excluding all other age groups, which would have been interesting for this study. However, these limitations don´t limit us in analysing their answers to find out how sustainability is affecting the BX of Patagonia.

In our analysis we will include if there are differences between genders and if there are different opinions between the two countries represented.
Furthermore, the fact that we weren´t able to conduct all interviews in person, but instead 5 via the online-communication tool Zoom, could be assumed as a limitation, due to technical issues or less commitment of the respondents due to the online barrier (Deakin & Wakefield, 2013). All online interviews were successful in engaging with the respondent and no lack of connections were experienced. Therefore this limitation had no real impact on our study. Due to the video-function, we were able to analyse specific gestures and emotions of the respondents during the interview.

Respondent	Age	Gender	Interview	Country	Profession
Respondent 1	24	Male	Live	Germany	Student
Respondent 2	26	Female	Zoom	Germany	Full-Time Job
Respondent 3	28	Male	Zoom	Germany	Full-Time Job
Respondent 4	26	Male	Live	Germany	Full-Time Job
Respondent 5	24	Male	Zoom	Germany	Full-Time Job
Respondent 6	26	Male	Live	Denmark	Freelancer
Respondent 7	23	Male	Zoom	Germany	Student
Respondent 8	24	Female	Live	Germany	Student
Respondent 9	22	Female	Zoom	Germany	Student
Respondent 10	23	Female	Live	Germany	Student
Respondent 11	21	Female	Live	Germany	Student
Respondent 12	24	Female	Live	Germany	Student
Respondent 13	24	Female	Live	Germany	Student

Table 3 Demographics of respondents

We conducted the interviews in a time frame of two weeks. The first one happened on the March 17th, 2021 and the last one was conducted on March 29th, 2021.

The interviews were recorded via smartphone to better transcribe it afterwards. An interview guide was beforehand created and used during the interviews.

3.4.2 Interview guide

To follow the concept of a semi-structured interview, we developed an interview guide with a total of 35 questions.

By following a deductive approach, we build the interview-guide based on the BXS and their 4 dimensions. The influence of the inductive approach can be seen by the open questions we created. To structure the interview and better analyse the data later, we developed in total 6 sets of questions we wanted to discuss with the interview partner. All questions were developed by us, however orientated and based on literature.

We chose the everyday words of our target group for the questions, but had to adapt the wording slightly after the first interview (Newcomer et al., 2015).

First, we started with broad and general questions about the interview partner and their general relationship to Patagonia, to have an easy start into the interview for the respondents. Secondly, we investigated how they perceive the company and what makes it special in their point of view.

Then we dived deeper into each dimension of the BXS and asked open questions for every dimension. With these questions, free answers from our respondents were possible (Newcomer et al., 2015). The fifth set focused on the sustainability context within this topic we chose three different pictures of Patagonia which they used for their communication on different communication channels.

With these three pictures, we wanted to see how specific strategies they use are perceived and influenced their BX. It gave us the chance to discuss topics more deeply in relation to Patagonia and support the previous responses of our respondents. For more details, see Appendix 1.

To have a reliable and accurate interview-guide, we discussed the questions with our supervisor and as already mentioned, made some adaptations in the wording of the questions after the first interview, based on the feedback of respondent 1.

3.4.3 Data analysis

Before analysing the gathered and transcribed interviews a specific coding technique needs to be applied. We analysed the data individually to reduce the workload as well as to avoid bias and increase the credibility of our study (Bell, 2009). For the coding process thematic and framework analysis were applied.

Before starting the coding process, we read our transcripts carefully and thoughtfully to understand the meaning of the responses and to ensure to be fully aware of the content and provide a solid analysis (Rivas, 2012). With coding and organizing our qualitative data we wanted to identify different themes and their relation to be able to summarize the results of the entire research. According to literature we found two coding techniques which seem suitable for our analyses. Thematic analysis refers to categorizing common themes as well as uniting and reducing the data by covering the essential ideas of the data (Vaismoradi & Snelgrove, 2019). Structuring the codes according to a specific framework introduced in the literature is defined as framework analysis. Both types of analysis influence our coding system. Firstly, we structured the categories and codes according to the 4 dimensions of the BXS. Secondly, the pictures we use in the interviews were assigned to identify codes which were structured under the dimensions. By following an inductive coding system, the codes were based on the qualitative data and directly arising from the interview responses. In our study we followed an inductive coding approach since the framework by Brakus et al. (2009) does not provide any predefined codes except the four dimensions itself. In every dimension we identified codes and categories based on the responses of our respondents. Thus, manual content coding was applied to structure the transcribed data. Moreover, we decided to use the digital software MAXQDA, which allowed us to analyse all interviews digitally. This gave us certain advantages, especially in efficiency, since analysing it without digital support, would have cost us many more hours.

The codes which did not fit into one of the given dimensions, were collected and further on assigned to a newly created category based on similarities according

to the thematic analysis. We started by creating different codes which in the end formed our subcategories. Based on the different subcategories, we could identify overlaps and were able to define two new groups.
Applying mostly thematic analysis with parts of the framework analysis, we were able to find 553 codes which we could assign to 46 categories with 13 subcategories. These categories and subcategories were grouped under the 4 dimensions of the BXS as well as the two newly created groups.

To get a good overview of how much each dimension was mentioned, we counted each code assigned to a dimension. This lets us see which dimension is quantitative the strongest and enables us to see what similarities were said during the different interviews. Later in the discussion chapter, we will go more in detail and weight the strength of the given answers, to further analyse each dimension and the new findings. Respondents were not only counted once, but every time they stated something related to the categories they were considered.
To assure high-quality of the codes we tried to cover as many interview responses as possible (Mehra, 2015; Michael & Tami, 2019)**.** Likewise, we tried to avoid commonalities with having similar codes/categories/subcategories with the same purpose. Moreover, to avoid cognitive biases both researchers coded by themselves and merged their structure and categories in the end while discussing discrepancies (Bergen & Labonté, 2020; Borowska-Beszta, 2017).

To support and prove the coding and structure of our findings the categories as well as subcategories are explained and adequately supported with quotes to underline the meaning. Moreover, the usage of citations shows the relevance and importance of a subcategory or category. By providing the reader with the total number of codes in each category we want to underline the relevance for the respondents. Furthermore, during the process of analysing we restructured and partly renamed our subcategories by checking the relevance of each code to the data set and the relation between the subcategories, categories, and dimensions (Bell, 2009; Bergen & Labonté, 2020). Since we conducted semi-structured interviews, based on the BXS, some codes were expected according to the literature and the framework of Brakus et. al (2009). Furthermore, our interview

guide included sustainability topics in regards to Patagonia, which assured us answers in regards to this topic. Thus, we assumed to get data in terms of sustainability.

3.4.4 Reliability and Validity

Reliability and validity are crucial to judge the quality of a research and have to be considered while designing the study as well as analysing the results (Golafshani, 2015; Kirk et al., 1988).

Internal reliability and external reliability are the two sections of **Reliability**. Internal reliability refers to ensuring consistency during the research whereas external reliability focuses on the technique of data collection, providing consistent findings and if they are replicated by another researcher (Golafshani, 2015; Leung, 2015). To ensure reliability in a qualitative research, the trustworthiness of the data is essential (Kirk et al., 1988; Morse et al., 2002). To assure **internal and external reliability,** the whole process of data collection and data analysis is described in-depth to retrace every step of the study and be transparent in the results. Additionally, the interview guide gives a better understanding of the structure of the research. Moreover, the written notes and interview records as well as transcripts of the interview were kept. Even though depending on how deep the knowledge of the respondent is, questions could not be answered properly. For example, not everyone followed them permanently on social media like Instagram and their website, which is why we could not ask those questions to every respondent. Nevertheless except for one interview partner, all respondents were able to answer 90 -100% of the questions and therefore gave us enough data to analyse.

Validity is divided into internal and external validity. Internal validity occurs when the research illustrates a causal relationship between two components. External validity proves if a study can be generalised to other settings or companies (Leung, 2015; Morse et al., 2002). To ensure **internal validity** the whole process of conducting the interviews, coding the transcripts as well as confirming or

further developing the framework was handled all by us to be consistent with the data usage. **External validity** is difficult to achieve due to the small sample size with 13 respondents and the short timeframe of this master thesis. The interviews were conducted within two weeks, predominantly with German citizens regardless of their gender. Because of the purpose of our study, we were limited to people who already know Patagonia and purchased at least one product from them. Patagonia is chosen as an example representing other companies. Furthermore, subjective opinions of the respondents and personal opinions of the researchers influence the results and the analysis as well as affect the generalizability of the study.

3.5 Ethical consideration

Throughout the research the ethical concerns need to be considered. Therefore, ethical principles like respect for others, avoidance of harm, privacy of those taking part or integrity and objectivity of the researcher should be observed. Since the researchers are responsible for protecting their respondents, every respondent received a number, and none of the respondents are mentioned by name in this study.

By saying this, three ethical principles were considered before starting our interviews: Autonomy, beneficence, and justice (Arifin, 2018; Parveen & Showkat, 2017)

Autonomy is about the autonomous acting of a person in making his or her own decisions. Therefore, we informed the respondents about their rights. The respondents freely decided to be part of the interview and had the chance to withdraw at any time without penalty. They voluntarily participated in our study.

Beneficence refers to preventing harm by protecting the respondents identities which we fulfilled by using pseudonyms. Furthermore, we informed our respondents about the purpose of our study and asked them to read and agree to our consent form (GDPR) before conducting the interview, to act confidentially, see Appendix 3.

Justice refers to equal share and fairness by avoiding exploitation and abuse of participants. This can be demonstrated by recognising the vulnerability of the

participant's and their contributions to the study. The researchers should request permission to use such a concept or at least discuss the issues with the respondent.
Researchers have to take care of various ethical issues at different stages of the research process. With this paragraph the study tries to ensure an ethical research approach to contribute to an understanding that ethical responsibility is an ongoing process.

4 Findings

Since the aim of our study is to investigate the effects of sustainability efforts on the BX of Patagonia, we conducted 13 interviews. Thus, we gathered data of the peoples experience with the brand.
We used the 4 dimensions of the BXS to categorize all codes and those which could not fit into the pre-set dimension, were assigned to two new categories, which we created and named trust and perception.
By evaluating and analysing the answers, we were able to collect 553 codes. For each dimension we created categories and partly subcategories to classify the codes. If the answers of different respondents had the same meaning, we sorted them into the same category. The following figure gives an overview of the dimensions and their categories. Furthermore, in the appendix a more specific table is provided to get a better understanding of the structure (see Appendix 4).

Sensation	
Categories	**Subcategories**
Seeing	Brand Logo, Visual appearance Webpage Naturalistic pictures Colours Patagonia's Instagram Advertisement Products Documentaries
Touching	
Multisensory	

Affective
Categories
Supportive/proud
Nature/travel/outdoor
Happy
Emotional attachment
Confidence
Community feeling
Freedom
Confusion
Guilt

Behaviour	
Categories	**Subcategories**
Positive behavioural influence	Purchase behaviour General behaviour
Engagement	
Recommending	
Purchase as gifts	
No engagement	

Intellectual	
Categories	**Subcategories**
Sustainability	General sustainability Projects and Actions
Thinking triggered by seeing	
Word-of-Mouth	
Critical thinking	
Nature/travel/ outdoor	
Overall impression	
Rethinking purchase behaviour	
Production process	
No triggered thinking	

Trust
Categories
Projects and actions
Communication
Sustainable impression
Recycling
Mission before profit
Service communication
Scandal handling
High quality
Word-of-Mouth

Perception
Categories
Sustainable
Positive image
Nature and outdoors
High quality
Fashionable
Expensive
Up to date
Functional
Responsible
Price performance
Innovative

Figure 3 Categories and subcategories

Three out of four dimensions had a similar weight of codes. Sensational 92, affective 93 and intellectual 100. Only the dimension behavioural reached less with 40 codes. Codes from the affective dimension were collected from all respondents, while sensational and intellectual codes were mentioned from 12 respondents and behavioural codes from 11 respondents. In total 236 codes did not fit into one of the prescribed dimensions and were organized into two new created groups: trust (106) and perception (130). To get an orientation of how many mentioned each category, we provided the number

in brackets (e.g. (8/5) means that 5 respondents mentioned 8 times this category or subcategory in total).

4.1 Sensation

The first dimension we coded, was the sensational dimension, which originally represented all five senses. Our findings showed that we were able to categorize the answers from the respondents into three different categories, of which all cover a different sense. Within the seeing category, which was in terms of frequency the strongest, we were able to identify 9 subcategories:

Sensation	
Categories	**Subcategories**
Seeing (72/12)	Brand Logo (23/10) Visual appearance (13/9) Webpage (12/8) Naturalistic pictures (8/4) Colours (7/5) Patagonia's Instagram (4/4) Advertisement (2/2) Products (2/2) Documentaries (2/2)
Touching (8/4)	
Multisensory (8/4)	

Figure 4 Sensation categories and frequencies

The **Brand Logo** is the most recognized visual element of our respondents. Especially the design and the mountains in the logo, the brand name Patagonia, and the colors blue and black make the logo recognizable and memorable. One respondent (R12) even describes the logo as a bit crazy. However, most of the respondents had answered in a similar fashion to the answer of R 4:

> *"Patagonia is quite easy to remember and the different colors in the logo also quite remarkable." (R4)*

Nine respondents connect the seeing sense with Patagonia, because their appealing **visual appearance**. Most of them find the brand itself quite recognizable. One respondent even describes the brand as artsy, mainly because of the pictures they have (R1). Additionally, the look of the stores (R5) seemed appealing for the respondents.

The **naturalistic pictures** are the main reason for the appealing visual appearance of Patagonia. The respondent state, that these pictures are connected to products and the brand since they sell outdoor clothes. Respondent 1 especially emphasized the pictures presented on their website. The respondent stated that before he looks for products, he first checks the pictures on the website.

Furthermore, the **website** as a visual element was mentioned. Mainly the structure, the design and how they organized the website stayed in their minds and made them favor this visual element. Further the design brings the customer closer to nature, as R1 explains, which is mainly because of the naturalistic pictures.

With less mentions than the other categories, the **advertisements** (2/2) of Patagonia – especially the “don´t buy this jacket” campaign and the **documentaries** (2/2) they publish about their sustainable projects, were recognized and mentioned. However, these two codes are in a direct context to sustainability since they represent sustainable activities of Patagonia and is therefore important to mention here in this context.

A second category we found was **multisensory** (8/4). This category includes experiences with several senses. The variety of answers are broad and reach from the sustainable packaging, which is sensed good (R12), to the overall campaigns they have (R13) and the multisensory experience of the store (R8). However, none of the respondents stated more in detail which senses they most recognized in these experiences. It was more the combination of several senses such as visual, touching or smelling, especially in stores and when opening their packages.

Another sense which respondents connected with Patagonia was the **touching** sense (8/4). All of them explained, that they feel the clothes and products, when wearing them and especially the good quality. R1 stated that the products feel quite comfortable. R13 gave the following comment on the touching sense:

> *"Good fit when you try them on. And it's always like, nice to have them on your body." (R13)*

Noticeable is that this dimension had no direct connection to sustainability topics. Only the documentary and the advertisement had this connection. All the other categories are more connected to nature and the outdoors.

4.2 Affective

The dimension affective consists of 93 codes, divided into 9 categories. We were able to categorize several emotions, which can be seen in the following figure:

Affective
Categories
Supportive/proud (18/10)
Nature/travel/outdoor (16/10)
Happy (22/9)
Emotional attachment (15/9)
Community feeling (6/3)
Confidence (4/3)
Freedom (4/2)
Guilt (4/2)
Confusion (1/1)

Figure 5 Affective categories and frequencies

Ten respondents feel **supportive and proud** when interacting with Patagonia. They emphasize that Patagonia contributes to their values by supporting social and environmental projects as well as producing sustainably.

Referring to this most of our respondents describe the purchase of Patagonia equipment as a good buying decision and are proud when wearing the clothes. One respondent pointed out that she wore the products on “Friday for futures” protests in Germany because it perfectly fits the purpose of these demonstrations. Moreover, this feeling was triggered through the advertisement “Don’t buy this jacket” which was shown to the respondents during the interview. Especially the fact of being against mass consumerism, pointed out in this advertisement, makes the respondents feel connected and triggered the feeling of supportiveness and proudness. Likewise, Picture 2 (Instagram post) triggered those feelings in representing their consumers with their second-hand approach and making clothes reusable.

> *“I think it's cool. Like, if I wear it, I feel like I'm proud of that. And that is cool. “(R11)*

The category **emotional attachment** mostly relies on memories respondents have with the brand like vacations or the purchase process. The mountains in the brand logo trigger this feeling as well as their personal experiences. The naturalistic presented during the interview reminded the respondents of traveling and their past hiking experiences. Moreover, they feel emotionally attached because they feel connected to the sustainable thinking of Patagonia and their vision for the future. One respondent specifically mentioned, because of her attachment to the brand, she would not change to another brand.

> *“The sustainable thinking and outdoor connection attach me to the brand, since both are important to me.” (R9)*

Furthermore, they feel **happy** and have a good feeling when they buy Patagonia products. Happiness is mostly triggered through the thoughts of contributing to something good and better, then with other companies. Especially the good and positive feeling when wearing the clothes has been mentioned several times in

the answers. This mostly relies on thoughts of not harming the environment when they buy products of Patagonia. Referring to this, the respondents do not feel guilty, instead they are in a positive and good mood.
They further connect this emotion with going out into **nature, travel and outdoors**; this is also supported mainly through Picture 1. All the respondents love the mountains, hiking and traveling. In this category predominantly the connection or memory of nature related activities and the sustainable production process as well as values of Patagonia are contributing to the feeling of happiness.

Contrary to that, two respondents mentioned the feeling of **guilt** especially when being confronted with picture 1 (naturalistic picture) and 3 (advertisement). It reminds the respondents of how they behaved in the past and how they could have acted in a better and more sustainable way. When asking them if they feel more connected to the brand because of these specific pictures their answers were:

> *"Yes, definitely more connected, but also like the feeling of guilt, I would say." (R12)*

Only three respondents feel **confident** because they are feeling empowered and comfortable when wearing the clothes.
Both the feeling of guilt and confidence was mentioned only by women.
Moreover, a **community feeling** is raised by being part of a sustainable community and identifying people who also wear the clothes. For a few of our respondents this is a sign of having the same mindset or mentality when it comes to sustainability topics but also being part of a hiking and climbing community.
Freedom is a smaller category relating to how the respondents feel in nature and when thinking of Patagonia and their outdoor activities.
Only one respondent was **confused** when talking about picture 3 (advertisement) because he did not directly get the message behind it.

In general, the respondents connect Patagonia to **nature, travel, and the outdoors,** especially mountains and hiking. The feeling of going outdoors into nature and traveling again was mainly mentioned by the respondents who were exposed to picture 1, the naturalistic picture. They were reminded of their own outdoor experiences, getting wanderlust, and wanting to travel there.

Almost every category with its emotions is related to the sustainability efforts of Patagonia. The respondents are supportive, proud, happy and confident because of the sustainable production process and the overall sustainable contribution of Patagonia. The emotional attachment partly refers to this as well. Especially the community feeling predominantly rises because of the connection to sustainability, the values and mindset of the people wearing Patagonia clothes. Furthermore, guilt relates to sustainable consumption patterns. Only the category nature, travel, outdoor and freedom could not be related to sustainable practices of Patagonia; they rather connect to components of an outdoor brand in general.

4.3 Behaviour

11 out of 13 respondents stated answers which could be assigned to the behavior dimension and therefore had a behavioral influence on each respondent. However, only 40 codes could be found in all the interviews, which were assigned to 6 categories:

Behaviour	
Categories	**Subcategories**
Positive behavioural influence (28/11)	Purchase behaviour (16/8) General behaviour (6/4)
Engagement (7/5)	
Recommending (2/2)	
Purchase as gifts (1/1)	
No engagement (1/1)	

Figure 6 Behaviour categories and frequencies

Answers which were assigned to the category **positive behavioral influence**, were answers that showed an influence towards a sustainable or responsible behavior of the respondents. Within this, two subcategories emerged. However, since we weren´t able to prove their actual change, all the codes rely on the answers the respondents gave us.
In total eleven respondents recognized a positive influence of Patagonia on their **purchase behavior** (16/8). Most of them said that through the rising awareness on sustainable topics of Patagonia, they try to be more conscious when they buy new products, buy less products or repair it to reuse the products. Respondent 10 buys sustainable products, because of Patagonia. However, she sees that it is still sometimes difficult to distinguish between brands who are sustainable and those who just pretend to be by using greenwashing terms.
The respondents stated that Patagonia was not the main influence towards this behavior, but had an influence in this direction, as R11 shows with her answer:

> *"I think it's one of those brands that has had an impact on my purchase behavior, (…). (…) and sense of trying not to buy so many new clothes, (…)" (R11)*

Additionally, respondents were influenced by Patagonia in their **general behavior** (6/4) towards a more sustainable and eco-friendly way. Two respondents mentioned that for them it happened quite unconsciously. Respondent 6 mentions explicitly the documentaries, which triggered an unconscious influence in him. Other answers state that their sustainable behavior is definitely shaped by Patagonia and the efforts they put into sustainable responsibilities.

For the answers relating to picture 2 and 3, which we showed at the end of each interview, we were able to find codes, which could be assigned to the same category. One respondent (R12) mentioned, when seeing Picture 2, that she wished it would trigger something that changes her behavior, but unfortunately it does not.

Another respondent (R4) showed a willingness to change his behavior towards more recycling and repairing, when being exposed to the recycling post. Respondent 13 however, stated that she doesn´t change her behavior because of the post, but indeed thinks about buying more worn-wear clothes.
When exposing picture 3, only one respondent was talking about a change in her behavior. She said, she would buy less and be more conscious because of this campaign.

Another category we found within the behavioral dimension was **engagement**. In total 5 respondents are engaging actively with the brand. All the engagement is happening online. 4 of them are following Patagonia on Instagram, seeing, and engaging with their content. One other (R6) is actively watching the documentaries on their YouTube channel. Through watching them the respondent is interacting with the brand actively.

In contrast to that one respondent explicitly mentioned that he **does not engage** with Patagonia at all. This can be explained by the fact he does not use social media that often. However, the fact that he talked with us in the interview about it, made him curious to check their Instagram-page.

Overall, the BX has a major influence on the behavior that is connected to sustainability. This could manifest itself in in ways ranging from a more conscious purchase behavior to engaging with environmental posts Patagonia published on their social media.

4.4 Intellectual

The dimension intellectual consists of a total of 100 codes which are divided into 9 different categories, see figure below.

Intellectual	
Categories	**Subcategories**
Sustainability (33/9)	General sustainability (21/8) Projects and Actions (12/4)
Thinking triggered by seeing (18/11)	
Word-of-Mouth (15/8)	
Critical thinking (14/7)	
Nature/travel/ Outdoor (8/7)	
Overall impression (5/4)	
Rethinking purchase behaviour (4/2)	
Production process (2/2)	
No triggered thinking (1/1)	

Figure 7 Intellectual categories and frequencies

Many respondents mentioned that Patagonia triggers their thinking especially when it comes to **sustainability (33/9)**. This category was divided into 2 subcategories**.**

Sustainability has a huge influence on the thinking process of the respondents. On the one hand the thinking is triggered by **sustainability** aspects **in general**. The respondents mentioned that Patagonia triggers their thinking according to environmental questions or issues, climate change, circular fashion, and likewise environmentally friendly production methods. Furthermore, long lasting products, buying sustainable products, questioning themselves if sustainable production always stands in relation to expensive products. Moreover, one respondent mentioned the broadness of sustainability, not only facing environmental issues.

> *"(…) mostly I think about circular fashion and sustainability because that's what they're all about." (R12)*

On the other hand, specifically the **projects and actions** trigger the thoughts of the respondents. For example, actions like cleaning the rivers or a more sustainable cotton production as well as actions against deforestation or racism. Almost all respondents had heard about Patagonia's sustainability activities. The ones who did not know about it showed higher interest and directly had a look at it during the interview and were quite impressed.

The **sustainability** thinking was supported through pictures 2 and 3 which were shown during the interview aiming for a change in the consumers purchase behaviour.

Moreover, a lot of respondents started thinking about Patagonia when they talked about the brand (**Word-of-Mouth**). Some mentioned they are talking about it with their family, some mentioned they already talked to others because they were wearing the clothes. Only one person mentioned that she would not talk about Patagonia in general but:

> *"(…) when the discussion comes up, and we're talking about outdoor clothes, or jackets, (…), then I would definitely mention Patagonia." (R13)*

Furthermore, Patagonia leads to **critical thinking** (14/7) supported through Pictures 1,2 and 3 (8/6). When talking about critical thinking respondents mentioned greenwashing, in relation to when a brand counts as sustainable. They are always critical about sustainability claims and are aware of its meaning. Moreover, the respondents questioned the sustainable purchase behaviour of others and themselves, as well as searched for other sustainable alternatives. Picture 1 supports this thinking in reminding the respondents of the beauty of nature and how people can protect it. Picture 2 shows options for sustainable consumption in recycling old clothes and Picture 3 leads to a critical thinking of consumption patterns. All in all, respondents start to rethink their purchase behavior. The citations underline the many different critical topics the respondents mentioned.

"(…) still have to be critical, even if companies seem to be perfect and doing everything right." (R8)

Another category which received a lot of codes was **thinking triggered by seeing** (18/11). This category explains if an advertisement, a documentary or general the visual appearance triggers the respondents thinking. This category was mainly supported through the Pictures 2 and 3 (11/5) and when they saw an advertisement or post on social media or watched a documentary. More particularly with picture 3 (advertisement) Patagonia creates awareness about Black Friday and the respondents started thinking about their purchase behavior on Black Fridays. Moreover, it is an advertisement people remember and questions the mass consumerism of the society.

"Yes, (…) through documentaries, and because they talk not a lot about the brand themselves, but about the topics. (…), they get you thinking." (R8)

Only one respondent mentioned that the advertisement of Patagonia does not trigger his thinking in a way of rethinking his purchase behaviour or behaviour in general he rather buys the products because he thinks that it is environmentally friendly.

To conclude, the whole dimension intellectual is connected to sustainability. From critical thinking to WoM and Patagonia's projects and actions, all respondents heavily start thinking about topics surrounding sustainability and are triggered by Patagonia's approach "buy less demand more".

4.5 Trust

Codes which did not fit into the other dimensions, were assigned into a new group, which was named Trust. The term trust implies that one party in a relationship has the confidence to get the desired result instead of having a fear

towards the party (Delgado-Ballester & Munuera-Alemán, 2005). A trust in a brand means then therefore, that a consumer thinks there is a high expectation that the outcome will be positive when interacting with the brand (Delgado-Ballester & Munuera-Alemán, 2005; Deutsch, 1973).

All the codes in this category represent such a meaning, which led us to create this group. All categories in this group represent reasons, from where the respondents got the trust in Patagonia. The answers were triggered either through question 5.3 or through answers from other questions.

105 codes could be assigned to this category from all respondents. 11 categories emerged in this group. All of them describe why the respondents trust Patagonia in their actions and especially in their sustainability efforts.

Trust
Categories
Projects and actions (31/9)
Communication (21/9)
Sustainable impression (16/6)
Recycling (10/8)
Mission before profit (8/5)
Service communication (9/3)
Scandal handling (6/4)
High quality (4/4)
Word-of-Mouth (1/1)

Figure 8 Trust categories and frequencies

Mostly, they trust Patagonia because of their **Projects and Actions** to support sustainable issues and topics. The general effort Patagonia puts in, to change the world is for many respondents something that they really support and give them a reason to have a certain level of trustworthiness. 4 respondents found it remarkable that they tax themselves with 1%, which they donate. They

emphasize that they take actions instead of just talking about it. However, most respondents just know that they take actions but are not able to state specific projects. The actions they knew about were tax-activities and a rescue project in Albania (R7). Respondent 6 knew the projects through documentaries he watched but could not name any projects specifically either.

> *"(…) But I feel like having them engaging in political activism and stuff, running campaigns about the environment makes them more trustworthy." (R1)*

R5 and R6 found the advertisement shown in **picture 3** offensive and provocative. That a company has the courage to publish such an advertisement, showed these two respondents that behind their message is a willingness to make a change. To say not to buy a product of a company is something these two respondents valued.

Their communication is for 9 respondents an important element to trust in the brand. The respondents find in general their whole **communication** (21/9) trustworthy. For the respondents it´s mainly open and content-wise - they communicate more about their support to causes and actions than their products - a communication which makes Patagonia believable. Respondent 6 sums it up, with the phrase of "pushing-in-your-face" branding, which means that they do not push the customer to buy their products through aggressive branding. He furthermore emphasizes, that they do not use any greenwashing terms.
Respondent 11 builds her trust on the fact that they show the bad impact climate change has and that they do not want to hide this from the consumers. They communicate in an unfiltered way.

Honesty and transparency come from revealing which factory they are producing in, to publicly communicating which sustainable projects they are supporting and that they do not want to manipulate people to buy products from them. This

induced the respondents to believe in the brand. All respondents had slightly different reasons, why they think that they are honest and transparent.

> *"Yes, I trust them because they say (…) that their products are from organic cotton and most of their products have a fair-trade label." (R3)*

For 8 respondents the fact, that they use **recycled material**, shows that Patagonia takes their mission and efforts seriously. At the same time, they prove that their actions can be trusted. One respondent (R5) explicitly says that it represents the brand even better through this fact. Furthermore, they value that they repair the products to use them longer, instead of buying new products.

Another 5 people emphasize, that they take their **mission** seriously, which they prove through their actions. This attitude makes them even more trustworthy and is for those them an important aspect to believe the brand. Especially the philosophy "buy less, demand more" resonates in an important statement to the respondents, which Patagonia is representing. That they care more about the mission than to make profit through their products.

> *"I feel it's more about their mission and I thought this buy less demand more I feel it's more about the lifestyle and how they want to change the world for the better (…)." (R12)*

4 respondents trust Patagonia because of their general **sustainable impression** of the brand, which is enough for them to believe in the brand. This impression of the brand comes mainly from the mix of information they are providing and what they have heard from the brand.

Pictures 1 and 2 lead for two respondents to a more trustworthy impression of the brand by either showing it a naturalistic picture or that they take their mission seriously and promote to reuse their products.

Furthermore 3 respondents value Patagonia´s **scandal handling**. One respondent referred to a human slave issue of one of Patagonia's second tier suppliers and how they changed it (Hensel, 2015). They reacted quite well to different scandals, which they showed through not defending themselves, but rather trying to change what they have done wrong. Their handling with scandals was perceived as so effective, that respondents did not even notice any scandals, which had such an impact on them, that they had to mention it in the interview.

> *"I like that they not trying to defend themselves, but they actually change the actions and through this they gain trust from me." (R8)*

The **service communication** which includes basically the service they encountered either in the shop or online, was for 3 respondents an indicator for acting in a trustful way. Within this context, Patagonia showed the respondents again, that they do not push the customer to buy any expensive products, but instead give helpful support in their buying decision.

> *"They really did not try to sell me something that was more expensive. They (…) focused on what I wanted which made them trustworthy." (R10)*

For 2 respondents the fact, that they are one of the first companies acting sustainably since they were founded, is an aspect that makes them believe in the brand. Respondent 10 believes, that because they are one of the first companies implementing such strategies, they must not have any greenwashing actions.
Furthermore, R9 sees Patagonia as a trustworthy company, because of **Word-of-Mouth**. He heard it from friends and family that he can trust this brand, which he does.

Overall, the findings showed that most of the trust related codes and likewise categories are emerging from the sustainability efforts Patagonia is showing.

Only the service communication can be seen as not directly connected to sustainability.

4.6 Perception

All respondents mentioned codes in relation to their perception of the brand, which did not fit into one of the other dimensions. In total our 13 respondents mentioned 130 codes in relation to their perception of the brand. Those were divided into 12 different categories:

Perception
Categories
Sustainable (42/13)
Positive image (32/13)
Nature and outdoors (17/8)
High quality (15/9)
Fashionable (9/5)
Expensive (4/3)
Up to date (4/2)
Functional (2/1)
Responsible (2/1)
Price performance (2/1)
Innovative (1/1)

Figure 9 Perception categories and frequencies

In general, our respondents perceive the brand as **sustainable** (42/13). This heavily relies on the sustainable production processes, fair working conditions, the documentaries the respondents watched and Patagonia's mission to influence or to change the purchase behaviour of their consumers or consumers in general. All respondents perceive Patagonia as the following:

"(...) brand for outdoor clothing with a special focus on sustainable production." (R9)

Furthermore, almost all respondents have a **positive image** of the brand (32/13) which is supported through P2 (10), P3 (9) and P 1(1). They are describing Patagonia as sympathetic and as a good company which they really like. Moreover, the values Patagonia is representing including their reusable approach with promoting recycled clothes is shaping the respondent's positive image of the brand. Likewise, their general appearance focused on sustainable orientation is influencing the respondent's positive perception.

The **high quality** (15/9) of the products was mainly mentioned in context of the question what their general perception of the brand is and is further related to feeling on their body and the colours that do not wash off quickly.

"*You can feel from the materials that the products are good quality." (R8)*

In relation to high quality, they are perceived as **expensive** (4/3) but seen as worth the money (**price performance** (2/1)).

Moreover, a few respondents connect Patagonia automatically with **nature and the outdoors** (17/8) since Patagonia is an outdoor brand. It reminds them of outdoor activities. This is supported through picture 1 (naturalistic picture), describing exactly what the respondents connect to Patagonia.

"(…) Patagonia is famous for (…) the outdoors and a lot of nature." (R4)

With **fashionable** (9/5) the respondents referring to the trendy clothes, **up to date** (4/2) comes along with this stating Patagonia as modern and hip brand as well as trying to go with the time in various areas. According to this the category **innovative** (1/1) underlines the character of Patagonia by describing them as

one of the first companies being sustainable and always improving their production processes. In addition, Patagonia is perceived as a **responsible** brand since they care about the environment and not only focus on their profit. Furthermore, Patagonia is perceived as **functional** (2/1) which refers to the materials used for clothes.

Almost every category is related to the sustainable character of Patagonia which generates a positive image of the brand in the respondent's minds. The respondents appreciate the high quality even though the clothes are expensive they still perceive it as value for money that is offered. Trying to be on time in various areas of their company in particular in the production process supports this. Only the category nature/outdoor, fashionable, and functional do not support the sustainable perception of Patagonia but are not counteract this image.

5 Analysis

The following chapter discusses and analyzes the findings mentioned above and begins first with the four dimensions of the BXS. Afterwards we present the new dimension trust and brand image. In the end a new framework suggestion is given.

5.1 The four dimensions of the BXS

What we can observe from the answers collected, is that all dimensions are applicable and shaped by the BX. All dimensions are influenced by sustainability efforts of Patagonia. With that said, some dimensions appear to be stronger than others.

5.1.1 Sensation

The findings suggest that the dimension sensation especially seeing is important for shaping a BX and to show sustainability efforts.
As described in the literature sensory marketing is an important tool for shaping an experience with a brand, as seen with it is for Patagonia (Hultén et al., 2009).

Mostly our respondents recognize Patagonia through seeing according to it is visual appearance. Those stimuli trigger their awareness the most. Almost all our respondents mentioned the brand logo, describing it as recognizable and memorable because of its colours and the mountains. Thus, the logo of a brand has a big influence on how the consumers react and connect with the brand (Hultén et al., 2009; Moreira et al., 2017). Apart from that none of the respondents mentioned anything about their sustainable appearance.

Nevertheless, since seeing is the strongest sense the communication throughout all communication tools is important and should be consistent (Alden et al., 2011; Finne & Gronroos, 2017). Patagonia communicates solely through their online presence including social media tools like Instagram, Facebook and YouTube as well as their own website. Focussing on online communication underlines their sustainable character by not wasting paper or water for printing flyers. Through their website the naturalistic pictures remind the respondents of traveling, being outdoors and doing outdoor activities. Even though the naturalistic pictures are stimulating the visual sense they do not trigger any sustainable perception of the brand. Likewise, almost none of our respondents mentioned a commercial or promotion activities - two respondents being the exception (R6, R8). Moreover, this shows that Patagonia does not want to create an overload of ads and promotions pushing their consumers to purchase their products instead they are promoting their sustainable clothes in a reasonable manner which makes their sustainability efforts more trustworthy. Referring to this Patagonia does not claim to be a sustainable company while using typical buzz words like *100% sustainable*. They are taking actions and communicating as transparently as possible which prevents them from being accused of greenwashing (Alden et al., 2011; Antonino & Dalia Patiño, 2010; Dangelico & Vocalelli, 2017).
They provide pictures and content for example on their Instagram page and website thus the followers need to have interest into their content and must check by themselves if they posted something new. Accordingly, they do not overload the consumers with Instagram-stories, to prevent the consumer feeling overwhelmed.

Nowadays all information can be found online and might be the first touch point with a brand thus the visual appearance is really important to be appealing for potential customers. Additionally a sustainable brand needs to create a common understanding of sustainability to be able to fulfil and satisfy the consumers' needs (Saura et al., 2020). Especially seeing is important to engage with the customers and triggers the dimension intellectual. Only if consumers see and understand the content Patagonia is publishing, they start thinking of the information provided.

Through touching and unpacking the clothes and feeling them on their bodies the respondents feel more connected and perceive the brand as a touching brand (Heiltjes, 2014)
It shows the high quality of the products and underlies that Patagonia selects their materials carefully which justifies the price of the products. Moreover, the consumer gets the feeling that the products are long-lasting which supports the sustainable character of the brand. Products that are long-lasting often do not end up in landfills (Katherine et al., 2019; Skard et al., 2020). Moreover, a consistent corporate social responsibility in combination with a sustainable product can lead to higher perceived quality (Doorn et al., 2020). For the respondents, high quality is an indicator for sustainable materials and production, likewise literature can prove this (Danso, 2018).

As mentioned in literature a combination of all senses is beneficial for a value-added BX (Hultén, 2011). Likewise, the respondents mentioned various factors forming their experience and triggering different senses. Most of the time a multisensory experience happens when a respondent visits a store or receives a package from Patagonia. Thus, it implements when just visiting their website or passing their social media channels they do not have the possibility of perceiving a multisensory experience that cannot be given at any point of the BX. Despite this fact Patagonia only has two stores in Germany and 70 stores in total internationally which implies that most of their selling takes place online. Still some respondents were able to talk about their shopping experience. They predominantly mentioned the trustworthy service because the staff advised and

helped them to find the perfect solution instead of advising them to purchase the more expensive products. This shapes the BX, also mentioned by Chattopadhyay & Laborie (2005), who pointed out that the point-of-sale is the most important brand contact a customer can have.

Our respondents did not mention the hearing sense at all, which leads probably back to the fact that Patagonia does not use any typically sound branding connecting the brand. They rather connected it with the action of having WoM, while talking about the brand with friends and family. However, audio branding could be an important factor to amplify the brands characteristics and image, which could have an even stronger impact on the customers (Minsky & Fahey, 2017).

5.1.2 Affective

In general, the whole BX triggers positive emotions. Respondents are feeling happy, free and confident. Referring to Shobeiri et al. (2016) a BX should exactly trigger such emotions and feelings. Furthermore Wang & Wu (2016) mentioned in their study, strong emotions, triggered by certain stimuli, which are connected to the sustainability efforts, are having a positive impact on the sustainable purchase behaviour. With our findings we can assume, that because of positive emotions, their purchase behaviour changed too. All respondents who connect positive emotions like pride or happiness with the brand, changed their purchase behaviour because of the brand. The affective dimension has an impact on the general behaviour which shows R 11 for instance, who wears Patagonia´s products during environmental protests, because she is proud of the brand and what it stands for.

The feeling of pride, which is not often an obvious feeling when interacting with a brand, shows that the consumer develops a strong emotion through the sustainability efforts. The clear communication and proof that Patagonia takes their mission seriously, leads to these strong emotions. Here for example the promotion of recycling and repairing products triggers this pride feeling.

Furthermore, the feeling of guilt, mentioned by two respondents, supports that the BX of Patagonia is even stronger. Even though this emotion can be seen as negatively connotated, it is a convenient indication, that their sustainability efforts have an impact on the emotions. The feeling of guilt appears from respondents´ thoughts on how they behaved in the past and how they could have done it better.

Both emotions, have been already discussed in literature and can be witnessed also within the BX of Patagonia (Wang & Wu, 2016; Özçağlar-Toulouse, 2009). Furthermore, pride and guilt, can be assigned to the self-conscious emotions, which roots from individual thoughts about themselves and how maybe others see them (Ding & Tseng, 2015). By thinking about how they could have done it better (R12) or that they are doing something positive by supporting a sustainable brand (R11) they develop these feelings, which shows the connection between the affective and intellectual dimension.

For two respondents both emotions evoked also from the advertisement Patagonia used to support their position against mass consumerism. It seems for those two respondents the campaign triggered these emotions, to make a change. Which shows that controversial, but clear statements in the BX can have strong impacts on the emotions of the customer.

However, the fact that 11 respondents do not really develop any emotions when seeing the advertisement, demonstrates that a single advertisement has not a big impact towards the consumers, even though the message can be seen as strong. One respondent had a confused feeling when seeing the ad, which means that without having any background information to this ad the message might not be as clear as first anticipated.

The positive emotions are triggered through the overall sustainable brand image, that Patagonia created in the respondents' minds. The respondents stated (e.g., R8, R9, R11), they feel proud or happy because they are supporting a sustainable brand. Which means again, they perceive Patagonia like that and therefore have these special emotions. Furthermore, this emotion is strengthened through the fact, of feeling to be part of a community, especially in terms of sustainable actions. To reach this emotion, the respondents must have had a strong

emotional connection to the brand and the topic of sustainability to feel being in a community, sharing the same mindset and mentality.

Accordingly, literature describes emotions as an effect of the consciousness and occurs from sensational stimuli (Sieb, 2013). The trigger can be internal or external and creates a change in the organism (Lewis et al., 2010). However, with our findings it can be said, that emotions occurred rather through the sustainable brand image they have than through specific visual elements like naturistic pictures or advertisements. This shows the small amount of people who had emotions after being exposed to the advertisement and no reactions to naturalistic pictures for instance, that can be connected to pride or happiness, but rather to an outdoor feeling.

Our findings revealed that only women had the feeling of guilt and confidence. This goes along with several studies, since these emotions are typically easier and more expressed by women (Fischer et al., 2004; Lewis et al., 2010). However, since this was the only difference in gender, it does not have any further impacts on the whole model.

5.1.3 Behaviour

The behaviour dimension presented by Brakus et. al (2009), is identified as the one with less codes in comparison to the other three dimensions, this could be perceived as not as strong. This is reasonable because a customer must put more effort into a behavioural change than just starting to think about a certain topic. In general, it is easier to think about sustainability than behave in a certain way.

This can not only be observed in regards to sustainability topics but also in the daily life of consumers (Gilg et al., 2005; Nguyen et al., 2019; Vermeir & Verbeke, 2006). When observing literature, a lot of studies discussed the intention behaviour gap of actual purchasing green sustainable products which describes the dereliction to translate intentions into action. On the one hand when consumers have confidence that they can make an environmental difference with

their green consumption, they are more likely to act in accordance with their intention or attitude (Peattie, 2001)

On the other hand, if consumers are confused or sceptical about the green claims, they can be scared away from the offerings (Davis, 1993; Peattie, 2001).If the consumers have the feeling to actually achieve something and be effective in their green consumption, they perceive that they can control the goal of bringing welfare to society by improving the environment with their green consumption. This might lead to a behaviour in accordance with their intention (Atkinson, 2015; Katherine et al., 2019; Lin & Niu, 2018). Still, as respondents mentioned that Patagonia really changed their behaviour shows that Patagonia has a huge positive influence on their customers. Moreover, it shows that the customers trust their actions and feel that they are contributing to an environmentally friendly world. None of the respondents directly pointed out that trust is an indicator for a behavioural change, but we can assume referring to the wording and setting that subliminally it partly influences their purchase intention. Accordingly, the respondents have a more favourable attitude toward environmental responsibility which increases their intention to engage in environmentally responsible behaviour (James et al., 2014) However, it cannot be proven that they actually changed their purchase behaviour and behaviour in general thus we have to rely on their feedback and trust in their words.

Apart from that most of our respondents Patagonia was not the main reason for changing their behaviour towards sustainable consumption but part of their decision-making process and supported them in their decision towards a change following Patagonia's approach to *buy less and demand more*. This implements that the respondents are already aware and open towards a sustainable approach of consumption. Patagonia influences the behaviour in a way that the customer wants to buy less products and therefore more high quality with the aim to purchase less over the time. By following a reusable approach, producing long lasting products, and offering recycling options for the customer Patagonia is appealing for their customers.

Instagram in particular is an efficient tool to engage with the brand through the content they are providing. Instagram is a fast-growing social media site which is essential to promote brands and maintain the relationship between the brand and the customers (Rachmah & Mayangsari, 2020). Referring to this Muntinga et al. (2011) identified information and entertainment as the primary motivation factors for online engagement towards the content of a brand. Whereas the information should satisfy the users or consumers needs and the entertainment is related to the enjoyment, admiration, and emotional release. Moreover, inspirational content creates the highest brand engagement (Eriksson et al., 2019). Patagonia provides their followers and customers with both beautiful naturistic pictures triggering the memories and providing information about their actions. Moreover, they inspire their consumers to try something new in reusing something old. The respondents got inspired and childhood memories were triggered. Furthermore, this is shaping the perception and likewise the behaviour. Additionally, if the consumer perceives functional value through evaluating rational and economics factors while reflecting the quality of using a product it increases the purchase intention (Ceyhan, 2019). Likewise hedonic perceived value increases the purchase intention by providing the consumers with amusing and exciting content and further leads to positive feelings towards the brand. This shows that engagement is highly influenced by the dimension sensation, especially online communication.

As identified through the finding's documentaries are a less efficient tool for engagement and achieving behavioural change. Many respondents, except for two, are not aware of the documentaries. Nevertheless, documentaries are a tool for creating awareness to the consumers and society. Producing such documentaries shows Patagonia's real interest in improving the world and making it less harmful. Otherwise sponsoring is a marketing tool to transfer the image onto the brand. This normally leads to a specific perception in the head of the consumers (Gwinner & Eaton, 1999).

Noticeable is, that our findings don´t show any influences the behaviour has on other dimensions. The behaviour is the only dimension, that is influenced while not affecting other dimensions. None of our findings indicates such an effect.

5.1.4 Intellectual

The findings showed that the intellectual dimension is heavily influenced by the sustainability efforts of the brand. Sustainability and the responsible and activist behaviour of Patagonia dominantly triggered the thoughts of our respondents.
The fact that respondents are also starting a conversation with friends and family about Patagonia and their actions showed the impact on their thoughts. The respondents care about it and want to spread the information.
Since dealing with sustainable consumption patterns demands a higher level of cognitive thinking, it further shows that all respondents are open to sustainability (Schaefer & Crane, 2005). In turn it means that the respondents reflect about their behaviour and the whole topic itself (Helm & Subramaniam, 2019).
The study by Smith & Yang (2016), states that the more divergent and creative the communication effort is, the better it is stimulating the cognitive response. The advertisement by Patagonia against mass consumerism, shows that it is the perfect example for this statement. It is quite controversial (R5), provocative and creative (R6) at the same time. Such statements can trigger a mindful thinking with which the respondents see the sustainability topic in a positive way (Helm & Subramaniam, 2019). It further allows the consumer to start thinking about a sensitive topic and a general behaviour we do on a daily basis. Several respondents (R7, R9, R12), show evidence for even more positive thoughts about sustainability through this advertisement.
Additionally, the activism they communicate through the projects they are supporting helps them to think about sustainable topics and further on about how they can change their behaviour, which again shows they are reflective about it.

Helm & Subramaniam (2019) also stated in their study that consumers, who are reflective and mindful about sustainability topics, are more likely to change their

behaviour. The fact, that the respondents think critically about sustainability and do not trust every company who is claiming to be eco-friendly, shows that they are reflective about it. The connection to the affective dimension, in which the two respondents developed feelings of guilt, is another evidence for being reflective. Further on this reflective thinking, leads indeed to a change in their behaviour, especially in their consumption patterns. Being exposed to the recycling posts or the advertisement makes them think about consuming less and more been conscious (e.g., R11), which they already do or try to change in their behaviour in the future.

Patagonia triggers their thinking mainly through their clear communication, projects and activist's work. People react to this and think more deeply about environmental and social responsible topics.

Since the respondents are having thoughts about these topics when they are exposed to content like informative texts, pictures or controversial advertisement claims, it can be assumed that the visual senses have a direct effect on the intellectual dimension. However, even if it is not about specific designs or colours Patagonia uses, which could shape the rational thinking and experience as Krishna (2012) stated in her study, they in fact take the information through the seeing sense. Therefore, it can be said that this dimension has a direct effect on the intellectual experience.

Especially provocative and controversial statements like the “don´t buy this jacket” campaign triggers such thoughts even more. This effect stated in the study of Helm & Subramaniam (2019), triggers a mindful thinking and the respondents associate sustainability in a positive way. Even though one respondent could not be reached by the message, the majority of the respondents had specific thoughts about it.

The intellectual dimension has therefore a special and highlighting role in the BX of Patagonia, since it triggers almost only thoughts, that relate to the topic of sustainability. The respondents are not primarily connecting the brand with their products but rather with their efforts in environmental and social responsibility. This shows that the BX is built around sustainability.

5.2 Further development of the framework

When analysing the respondents' answers, additional themes were mentioned, not fitting into the BXS presented by Brakus et al. (2009). Therefore, we are proposing a potential fifth and sixth dimension: green trust and green brand image.

5.2.1 Green Trust

Next to the four existing dimensions we also created a category named trust. Since trust was mentioned by all our respondents in various settings it can be interpreted as meaningful in building a relationship towards a brand which also influences the BX. Trust is defined as a belief in the reliability, ability, or truth of someone or something - in this case the brand Patagonia - and therefore can be described as the key element for building a relationship (Widyastuti et al., 2019). Referring this into the context of sustainability literature provides the term green trust. According to Yu-Shan (2010, p. 309) green trust is defined as "*a willingness to depend on a product, service, or brand based on the belief or expectation resulting from its credibility, benevolence, and ability about its environmental performance.*"
Since the trust of respondents is based on the environmental performance and the responsibilities Patagonia is taking, we continue to use the term green trust to describe the relation of the respondents towards the brand.

This dimension is mainly influenced through the sensational dimension in particular through online communication. Through the content Patagonia is providing on their website and on social media our respondents are always up to date about the firms' sustainable actions. The communication about the actions is transparent and furthermore they take the customers with them on each journey, also by showing their production process or their support of activism.

Putting their mission in focus of their communication, instead of concentrating on promoting their own products further underlines their sustainable character.

Moreover, their advertisements support their beliefs and make them even more trustworthy. By standing out and positioning themselves against mass-consumerism they validate their philosophy: *buy less demand more*. It shows that they definitely keep their promises and not behave in an opportunistic manner (Kim et al., 2015).

Patagonia's actions and transparent communication gives the company its perceived value from the consumer side. Furthermore, they do not use any buzz words on their website or social media such as 100% sustainable, water saving or free climate shipping. Otherwise, literature suggests the usage of specific, real, and useful environmental claims (Chen & Lee, 2015; Urbański & Haque, 2020). Patagonia for example states the percentage of recycled materials processed in their products. Patagonia herewith avoids an information-asymmetry by giving clear and easy to understand messages (Rademaker et al., 2015).
Through showing commitment to their mission of acting sustainably they actively prevent being accused of greenwashing (Goworek, 2011).
The quality of the products is a leading factor to trust on the consumer side. According to Ganesan (1994) and Hart & Saunders (1997), trust heavily relies on the expectation the customers have of the company and its products as well as ability, reliability and benevolence. Since Patagonia’s promise or statement can be relied on because the expectations are held, all our respondents trust them in their quality and sustainability efforts (Rotter, 1971; Schurr & Ozanne, 1985). By feeling the high quality gives them a good feeling when wearing it and shows that they trust Patagonia with their production processes which are less harmful for the environment.
These examples showed clearly that a big impact on this dimension is based on sensations the respondents have from the brand and is therefore heavily relying on the brand´s sensational stimuli.

According to the literature, the perceived value of the company plays an important role. It can increase post-purchase confidence of the product. Since the perceived value is mostly created through sustainable actions the right term to use in this context is green perceived value. This notion has been introduced by Patterson & Spreng (1997). Green perceived value describes a costumers overall evaluation of the entire benefit of a service or product between what is received and what is given based on the environmental aspirations, sustainable anticipations, and green needs or desires of a customer (Patterson & Spreng, 1997). With this in mind, some respondents mentioned that they just have a general sustainable impression of Patagonia. Moreover, the service communication adds value to Patagonia's overall brand presentation since they are not pushing their customers to more expensive solutions or products. Instead, they are giving honest advice and help their customers to find the best and most suitable product (Peter & Ryan, 1976).

Green perceived value correlates in a positive relation to green trust and green purchase decision (Yu-Shan & Ching-Hsun, 2012). A study found out that green perceived value is an important determinant for maintaining long-term relationships as well as affecting green trust. Referring to this, Patagonia is creating green value through their open communication and projects as well as sustainable actions. Thus, they help their consumers to develop sufficient green trust to build long-term relationships. Compared to this green perceived risk should be reduced by the brand to continuously raise green trust and green purchase intentions. Green perceived risk means the combination of negative consequences and uncertainty (Aaker, 1996; Peter & Ryan, 1976; Stone & Grønhaug, 1993). Mitchell (1999) states that consumers are more likely to minimize their perceived risk rather than to maximize their perceived benefit.
When looking at their scandal handling one can see that they do not feel ashamed to admit their faults and try to do better. Likewise, a lot of our respondents did not even know that they had a scandal. Thus, they successfully reduced the perception of green risk and prevented decreasing green trust and green purchase processes (Yu-Shan & Ching-Hsun, 2012).

Another important factor for building trust is Word-of-Mouth. A few respondents mentioned that they are talking with others about the brand, their sustainable actions and how they produce. WoM strongly shapes consumers attitudes towards the brand and their purchase intentions (Murtiasih & Siringoringo, 2013). WoM as well as the reduced perceived risk the respondents have, shows that the intellectual dimension has an influence on the green trust, since they use their cognitive thinking to spread the word and think critically about the brand and the perceived risk they might have.

As described in the behaviour dimension, behaviour and trust slightly depend on each other according to the interpretation of the findings. If a person does not trust a brand, it implements a more critical perception and feeling towards the brand. If a company is seen as trustworthy the consumer has a positive attitude towards the company or brand which also influences purchase behaviour (Ballantyne, 2005; Payne et al., 2009; Widyastuti et al., 2019).

5.2.2 Green Perception

Next to trust the perception of Patagonia is another category, which emerged out of our research about Patagonia´s BX. Noticeable is that all respondents have a positive and sustainable perception of Patagonia. Referring to this, the brand image is described as the composite of the consumers meanings towards the brand, and what connotations they associate with it (Padgett & Allen, 1997). Literature states that the perception of a brand or the brand image, is formed through its offerings and attributes, consumers get through the experience with a brand (Keller, 2008). Accordingly. Patagonia implies a sustainable and responsible meaning towards the consumers. Thus, we conclude that another dimension of the BX is the brand image.
A study by Yu-Shan (2010, p 309) introduces the term green brand image, which is defined as a “set of perceptions of a brand in a consumer’s mind that is linked to environmental commitments and environmental concerns”. Since all respondents described Patagonia either as sustainable, responsible or with a

general positive image, because of their sustainability efforts, we conclude, that the perception of Patagonia is more specified as a **green brand image**.

This green brand image is seen as an outline of the consumers direct or indirect BX, which is based on sensory, affective and intellectual aspects of the experience they have with the brand (Cho, 2011; Roberts, 2005). The lovemarks theory, sees three different components that lead to specific brand images. The affective side stimulates through the mystery concept, which implies that the company is building on inspirations of the consumer, tells great stories and combines the past, present and future in their communication (Roberts, 2005). Patagonia builds on the inspirations of the respondents, of whom most already had the thought of acting sustainably. Through clear and honest communication, while telling stories about sustainable projects and caring especially about the future, Patagonia builds a green brand image towards our respondents.

Furthermore, the sensation stimuli, as well as building intimacy through the consumers commitment and the company's empathy towards the customers, which influences the affective experience, shapes the brand image as well (Roberts, 2005).

The seeing sense leads to the green brand image because of the usage of the stories they share and information they are providing. Next to that the touching sense, while feeling the products leads to the image of high quality and long lasting, which also implies a sustainable image.

Even though the theory states, that emotions are shaping the brand image, our data proves rather the opposite. The green brand image itself is shaping the emotions of pride or guilt, which was already explained in chapter 5.1.2.

Moreover, Patagonia shows further empathy through putting their mission in front of profit gaining – which is what the respondent’s value and expect of a brand who claims to be sustainable (e.g., R6, R11, R12) and strengthens this brand image.

In addition, the thoughts, are shaping the brand image. For the most part WoM has a positive influence on the brand image, which is also mentioned by (Romaniuk & Sharp, 2003). Discussions with friends and family about Patagonia and their sustainability efforts (e.g., R8, R12, R13), are actively shaping a green brand image.

Additionally, the study of (Yu-Shan, 2010) found out that a green brand image shapes the green trust a consumer has in the brand in a positive way.
This can be seen in our data, when the respondents talked about the fact that they trust in the brand because they perceive them as green and sustainable (R4, R12, R13). Thus, a connection between the green brand image and green trust is also observable.
Through respondent 9, we have loose evidence that the green brand image is shaping the behaviour as well, since she stated that she changed her behaviour because Patagonia has a sustainable brand image. However, it is not a strong connection since no other respondent gave a similar statement.
Overall, it can be said, that the BX is actively contributing to a green brand image and especially seeing and cognitive thinking shapes this image.

During our analysis we did not find any significant differences between genders and nationalities. Furthermore, we could not recognise any gesture and facial expressions, which go beyond the ordinary. All interviews run as a usual talk. Emotions like anger or passion when talking about the topics can not be reported.

5.2.3 Framework suggestion

As a conclusion of our findings and analysis, we created a new model for the BX that consists of the 6 dimensions.
Since we focused on the BXS by Brakus et al. (2009) within a sustainable context we renamed the model into **green brand experience** according to our results. For each dimension we highlighted items, which were strongly and directly connected to such an experience.

Sensational experiences are mainly influenced by seeing and touching. Within the **seeing** sense it is important to understand that it is not about specific design elements or colours, but rather the information and stories about the projects and sustainable actions within the company which are provided and taken through the

visuals. By **touching** the products, they experience the high quality of the materials, which they transfer to a sustainable production process and a long product life-cycle underlining the sustainable character of the brand.

Emotions such as **pride, emotional attachment, happiness**, and a **community feeling** occur according to the perception of the respondents. These emotions show the commitment towards the brand and only appear in the context of sustainability. The items in this dimension are heavily based on the sustainable values of Patagonia.

For a brand like Patagonia, which is aiming for a change towards a more sustainable world and a change of the consumption patterns of their customers, the highest achievement is to have an actual impact. Therefore, the change towards sustainable consumption is the most important behaviour a green BX can affect **(sustainable consumption patterns)**.

Within the intellectual dimension, respondents show, that they are reflective about sustainability and about themselves. It shows their awareness, which the green BX fosters. **Critical thinking** as well as thoughts about how to act more responsibly in their purchasing behaviour is crucial for an environmentally responsible change. When a company has a mission such as Patagonia´s, critical and reflective thoughts as well as cognitive thinking about their own purchase behaviour **(sustainable consumption),** is one of the main goals a company can achieve through a green BX.

The trust dimension is influenced mainly through **sustainable involvement,** which a brand can show through actively communicating and proving that they are doing something for environmental and ethical issues. Furthermore, this can be supported by putting the **mission** of being sustainable in the focus of the experience instead of their own products. A good risk management in terms of **scandal handling** is also a factor which contributes to this dimension. Overall, the green trust dimension itself is highly important for Patagonia to be perceived as a sustainable brand and therefore being believable. If a consumer has no

green trust in a brand, the brand itself cannot make a change in the customers and therefore not achieve their mission.

The green brand image is completely based on the sustainable values of Patagonia described through the perception of acting responsible and sustainable **(sustainable responsibility)**, further having a high and long-lasting quality for a valid price **(price performance)**, as well as being **innovative** by improving for instance their production processes continuously.

Hence, we suggest the new model green brand experience:

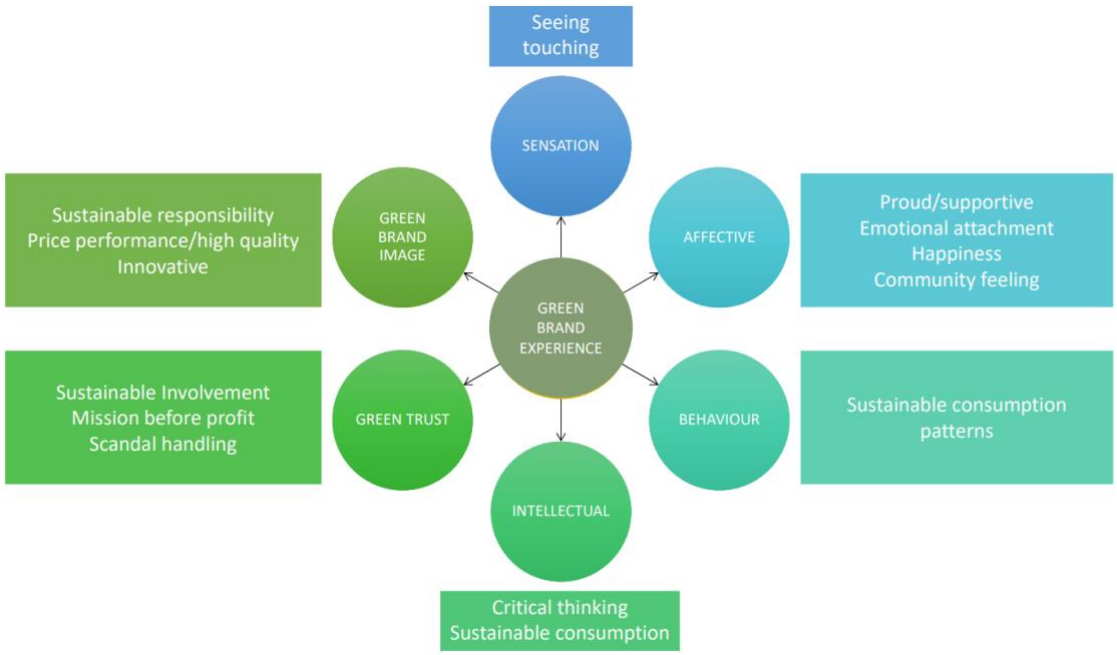

Figure 10 Model of the green brand experience

6 Conclusion

With this master thesis we wanted to investigate the potential effects of sustainability efforts on the brand experience represented on Patagonia. With the help of the BXS by Brakus et al. (2009) and the data of 13 interviews, we were able to get sufficient information to answer our research questions.

R1: What is the brand experience of Patagonia?

Overall, it can be said that the BXS by Brakus et al. (2009) is applicable to Patagonia and all original dimensions are affected. Additionally, we were able to identify two new dimensions: green trust and green brand image.

However, the intellectual dimension appeared to be the strongest since all respondents had been influenced in their thought and that this dimension also influences most of the other dimensions. We found evidence that other dimensions are influencing each other, which is important to keep in mind. It shows that each dimension does not have to be viewed alone, but rather in correlation with all other dimensions. Patagonia uses this synergy to make different dimensions even stronger.

Overall, Patagonia makes efficient use of information and statements they publish about sustainability and the issues this topic brings along, but also approaches how to solve and counteract them. The BX of Patagonia is shaped through the sustainable actions and projects they are supporting. Patagonia is putting this in the middle of their experience and builds a large part of the experience around that. Additionally, they use clear and honest communication without using greenwashing buzz words. Since they do not put their products or the brand in the focus while concentrating on making profit, rather focusing on their sustainable mission they are not pushing consumers to buy their products. This appears to be one of the main reasons why the respondents trust them.

Along with the focus of sustainability we can answer our second research question:

R2: What influence have the sustainability efforts of Patagonia had on the brand experience?

In general, the sustainability efforts lead to specific thoughts and a rethinking of the purchase behaviour of the customers. It contributes to the awareness of the consumers about sustainability topics in the clothing industry. More specifically strong emotions, like pride or confidence, directly rooting out of these efforts. All the consumers were able to build a green brand image as well as green trust, which is the basis of a long-lasting relationship.

The fact, that they put their mission in the foreground instead of promoting their own products, would assume that they cannot be successful. However, they achieve exactly the opposite. With such a strategy they were able to make it as one of the most successful outdoor clothing brands worldwide with the tendency to grow even bigger.

6.1 Managerial implications

A company which wants to build a green BX, should consider the intellectual dimension, green trust, and behavior as important. Since the intellectual dimension is the first step to changing the customers purchase intentions and green trust supports the credibility the brand can achieve a change in the consumer´s consumption patterns as well as in their general behavior. Furthermore, the visual sense is a key to build a sustainable BX. Through the seeing sense the consumer can recognize and perceive that the company is acting in a sustainable way through which again green trust can be built.
Additionally, a company should consider the following strategies and tools: Instead of promoting their own products, they should **focus on their mission** to be sustainable and put this into the **foreground of the experience**. If this is communicated in a **clear, honest,** and **trustful** way that **avoids pushing customers** to buy products they do not really need or want, consumers will build green trust and will increase the sales through a long-lasting relationship. To have clear communication, **greenwashing and buzzwords should be avoided.** Instead, it should be clearly shown what the product is made of or where it is

from. The combination of these tools can lead to a highly positive BX and can lead to success for the brand.

6.2 Limitations and further research

Like other scientific papers, this master thesis has its limitations. As already mentioned in the method chapter, principally the sample size and the lack of heterogeneity is a limitation, which should be considered. Other sample sizes (e.g., a different age structure or diversity in the origins) could lead to different results.
Both, the sample and how we assigned the codes into the categories in the coding procedure, was justified by us. Here we were biased in the way of missing samples and how we assigned the codes into the categories.

For further research scholars can focus more on offline and live experiences with the brand (e.g., the store). In our study we did not exclude offline experience, however, a large part of the data we gathered was focused on content that was visible online. Scholars could interview customers directly at Patagonia's stores. Other dimensions could be affected through that. For instance, the sensational dimension could be affected by smell or hearing through music in the stores.
Furthermore, interviews with Patagonia itself could reveal, if our results are overlapping with their intention, when designing their BX. Differences here could give further insights about how a BX is planned and, in the end, perceived and experienced.

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Appendix 1 – Structure of the interview guide.

For each dimension we created a set of open questions (e.g., for the intellectual dimension we asked the following question: “Does the brand influence your thinking about specific topics?”). With these questions, free answers from our respondents are possible. The other three dimension were structured accordingly.
The fifth set of questions we created focused on the sustainability topic. Here, we asked about their sustainable consumption patterns, the influence between the brand efforts within sustainability and the BX afterwards about specific communication strategies of Patagonia.
In relation to their communication strategy, we mainly focus on the naturalistic pictures, authentic communication through fostering recycling and repairing Patagonia´s products and a specific advertisement Patagonia published, where Patagonia position itself against mass consumerism. The choice of pictures was based on the literature we have found as well as the strength of the impact they might have on BX and the whole perception on the brand. Picture 1 had to be clearly naturalistic and at the time of the interview the latest which was shown on the website, to show actuality. Picture 2 needed clearly to indicate, that they foster recycling and repairing of the products. For picture 3, we researched the history of Patagonia´s advertisements. Besides that they have not many campaigns, the “don’t buy this jacket campaign” was the most recognizable in their whole history. Furthermore, the campaign shows a clear message and give viewers of the advertisement a lot of room for discussion.

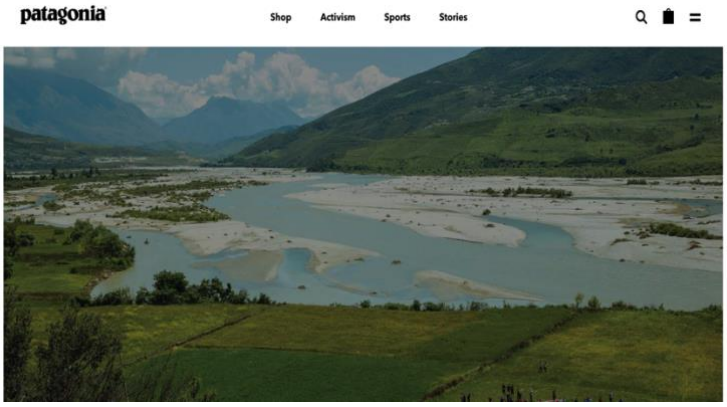


Figure 11 Picture 1 - Naturalistic Picture

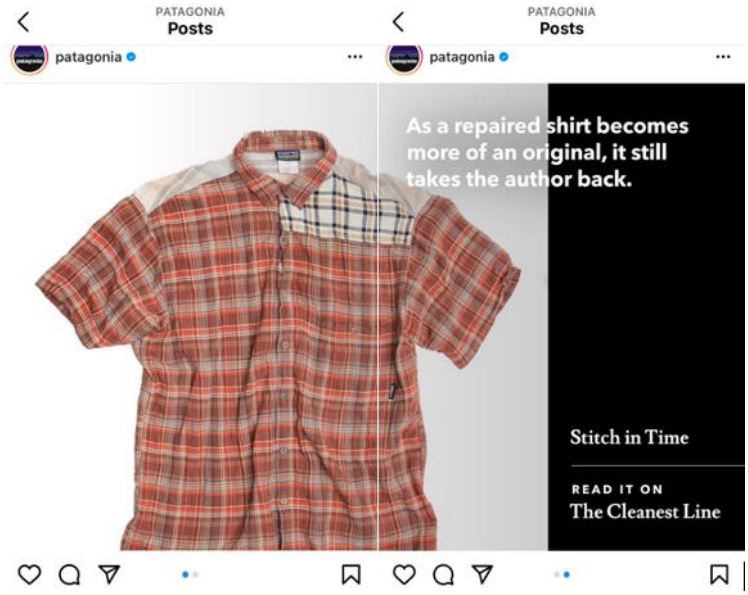


Figure 12 Picture 2 - Recycling and Repairing

Figure 13 Picture 3 - Campaign against mass consumerism

Appendix 2 – Interview Guide

General Questions

- ☐ **1.** For how long do you know Patagonia? Where did you recognize Patagonia in the first place?

  A:

- ☐ **2.** Do you own products of Patagonia?

  A:

  - ☐ a. How many? A:
  - ☐ b. How often do you purchase? A:
  - ☐ c. Is there something special? A:

- ☐ **3.** What is your motivation to buy from Patagonia? Or what influenced your purchase decision?

  A:

- ☐ **4.** Is the whole experience of brand including service, communication, content etc. important to you?

  A:

- ☐ **5.** How would you describe Patagonia? What is your general perception?

  A:

  - ☐ a. Name three key-words which describe Patagonia the best

    A:

- ☐ **6.** Do you follow them on social media (Instragram, facebook etc.) or their website?

  A:

  - ☐ a. Why do you follow them? Do you like the content they are providing?

    A:

INTERVIEW GUIDE
PATAGONIA

PART 1 - Sensational

- ☐ **1.** Through which senses (seeing, hearing etc.) does Patagonia make an impression on you?

  A:

  - ☐ a. Which sense is the most important or stongest to you?

    A:

  - ☐ b. Which senses do you feel most connected to Patagonia and why?

    A:

- ☐ **2.** Are their certain triggers in their communication or their appearance which stimulates your senses? *(With triggers we mean specific colours, design, pictures, or words they use)*

  A:

- ☐ **3.** Are the webpage and social-media pages appealing to you?

  A:

  - ☐ a. What is your impression? What do you like about it?

    A:

INTERVIEW GUIDE
PATAGONIA

PART 4 - Intellectual

- ☐ **1.** Does the brand influence your thinking about specific topics?

  A:

- ☐ **2.** Which aspects (general appearance, Projects, Content etc.) trigger your thinking the most?

  A:

- ☐ **3.** What are your first thoughts when encountering Patagonia and what are your thoughts nowadays?

  A:

- ☐ **4.** Do you talk with others about your thoughts triggered by the brand ?

  A:

- ☐ **5.** Do you know what projects they are supporting? What do you think about them?

  A:

INTERVIEW GUIDE
PATAGONIA

PART 3 - Behavioral

- ☐ **1.** Does this brand influence your (general/purchase) behaviour and why?

  A:
- ☐ **2.** How does the brand engage with you and through which marketing channel?

  A:
- ☐ **3.** Additonal question: How does the brand engage with you through social media channels? (Only if following them on social media)

  A:
- ☐ **4.** How did you experience the service and support on their website? Is their something special about it?

  A:

INTERVIEW GUIDE
PATAGONIA

PART 5 - Sustainability

- ☐ **1.** Do you consider yourself as a sustainable consumer?

  A:
- **2.** Do you perceive the brand as sustainable and which aspects make you think that the brand is sustainable?

  A:
- ☐ **3.** Do you think the brand is trustworthy and why? Why do you trust them in their actions?

  A:
- ☐ **4.** Does the brand make you think about the environment?

  A:
- ☐ **5.** Does the brand make you behave in an eco-friendly way?

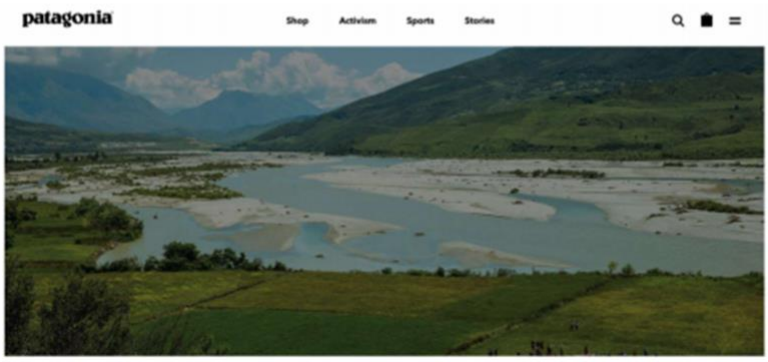
  A:
- ☐ **6.** Does the sustainability efforts of the brand arise any specific emotions or feelings to you? Do you feel more connected to the brand?

  A:

INTERVIEW GUIDE
PATAGONIA

Marketing Communication Website

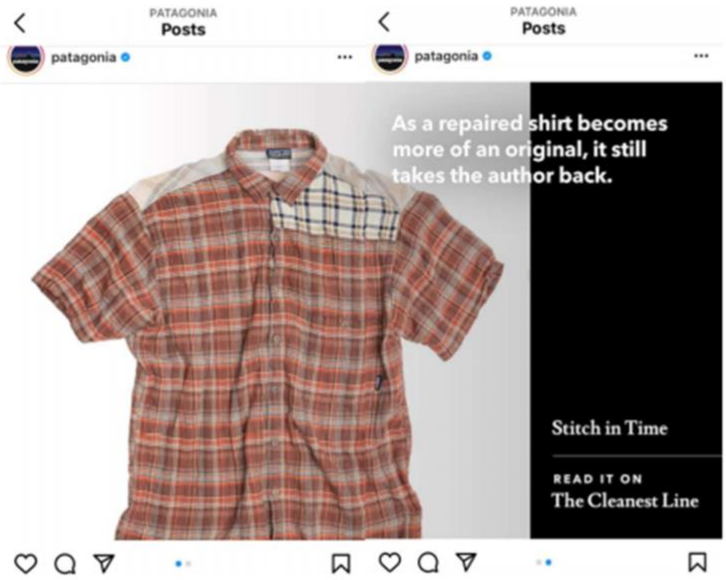
- ☐ **Naturistic Pictures on the website (below)**
  - ☐ a. When looking at this picture, what thoughts come up to your mind and why?
    A:
  - ☐ b. Does this picture make you act in a certain way?
    A:
  - ☐ c. Does this picture influence your perception on the brand?
    A:



INTERVIEW GUIDE
PATAGONIA

Marketing Communication Instagram

- ☐ **The Cleanest Line – post on Instragram (below)**
- ☐ **1.** What thoughts come up in your mind when looking at this post and why?
  A:
- ☐ **2.** Does this post influence your preception of the brand?
  A:



INTERVIEW GUIDE
PATAGONIA

Marketing Communication Advertising

- ☐ **This advertisment was published days before black-Friday. Patagonia wanted to position themselves against mass-consumerism and to encourage people only to buy what you need.**
  1. What are your general thoughts about this advertisment?

     A:
  2. Does this advertisment let you think more about sustainability?

     A:
- ☐ 3. Leads this advertisment to a more positive perception of Patagonia?

     A:

THANK YOU FOR PARTICIPATING IN OUR INTERVIEW! TIM & CELINE

Appendix 3 – GDPR

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Business School

GDPR Thesis Study Consent Form

GDPR Consent for – The effects of sustainability efforts of Patagonia on their brand experience

Please tick the appropriate boxes	**Yes**	**No**
Taking part in the study I consent to JIBS processing my personal data in accordance with current data protection legislation and the data delivered.	☐	☐
I consent voluntarily to be a participant in this study and understand that I can refuse to answer questions and I can withdraw from the study at any time, without having to give a reason.	☐	☐

My signature below indicates that I choose to take part in the thesis study and consent to JIBS treating my personal data in accordance with current data protection legislation and the data delivered.

Name of participant (IN CAPITALS) Signature Date

Thesis contact details for further information
Celine Staufenberg – stce20bp@student.ju.se
Tim Bischoff – biti20gp@student.ju.se

JÖNKÖPING UNIVERSITY
Jönköping International Business School

Participant Information Sheet

You are being invited to take part in a thesis study. Before you decide whether or not to take part, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully.

What is the purpose of the study collecting personal data?

Patagonia is one of the most successful outdoor-clothing companies. They distinct themselves from other competitors in claiming to be really sustainable. In today's world, where sustainability got into the focus of almost every company, it is important to communicate this properly.
One strategy could be through the right brand experience. With this study we want to find out how customer of Patagonia experience the brand Patagonia in many aspects.
The duration of the study began in January 2021 and will run until the end of May 2021. The interview will contribute to our Master thesis study through gaining better insights and understandings of how customer experience the brand Patagonia.

Note:

It is entirely up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you decide to do so, you will be given this information sheet to keep and will be asked to give your consent.' All the information that we collect about you during the course of the research will be kept strictly confidential. You will not be able to be identified in any ensuing reports or publications.

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Under GDPR you have the following rights over your personal data:

- ***The right to be informed**. You must be informed if your personal data is being used.*
- ***The right of access**. You can ask for a copy of your data by making a 'subject access request'.*
- ***The right to rectification.** You can ask for your data held to be corrected.*
- ***The right to erasure**. You can ask for your data to be deleted.*
- ***The right to restrict processing**. You can limit the way an organisation uses your personal data if you are concerned about the accuracy of the data or how it is being used.*
- ***The right to data portability**. You have the right to get your personal data from an organisation in a way that is accessible and machine-readable. You also have the right to ask an organisation to transfer your data to another organisation.*
- ***The right to object**. You have the right to object to the use of your personal data in some circumstances. You have an absolute right to object to an organisation using your data for direct marketing.*
- ***How your data is processed using automated decision making and profiling**. You have the right not to be subject to a decision that is based solely on automated processing if the decision affects your legal rights or other equally important matters; to understand the reasons behind decisions made about you by automated processing and the possible consequences of the decisions, and to object to profiling in certain situations, including for direct marketing purposes.*

***You should also know that you may contact the data protection officer if you are unhappy about the way your data or your participation in this study are being treated at** dpo@ju.se*

Thank you for reading this information sheet and for considering whether to take part in this research study.'

Contact details for further information

Thesis supervisor: Tomas Müllern** **E-mail** **always tomas.mullern@ju.se

Thesis student: Celine Staufenberg** **E-mail.** **always stce20bp@student.ju.se

Thesis student: Tim Bischoff** **E-mail.** **always biti20gp@student.ju.se

Appendix 4 – Overview Dimensions with Categories and Codes

Dimension	Category	Sub-category	Respondent	Example Code
Sensation (92/12)	Seeing (72/12)	Brand Logo (23/10)	1, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9,11,12,13	*"Patagonia is quite easy to remember. And the different colors in logo also quite remarkable." (R4)*
		Webpage (12/8)	1,2,7,8,9,10,12,13	*"I think the design of the webpage is pretty good it is pretty state of the art." (R 7)*
		Visual appearance (13/9)	1,4,5,6,8,9,11,12,13	*The visuals of Patagonia are really important for me (R1)*
		Advertisement (2/2)	8,12	*"They do a really good job especially with their advertisement (…)" (R12)*
		Patagonia´s Instagram (4/4)	10,11,12,13	" I see them mostly on Instagram (…)" (R13)
		Products (2/2)	10,13	*" The products have a nice look." (R13)*
		Colours (7/5)	8,10,11,12,13	*" I like the colourful clothes." (R11)*
		Naturalistic pictures (8/4)	1,2,7,11	*" I like the pictures, they are bringing the nature closer to you." (R1)*
		Documentaries (2/2)	1,6	*" I saw some documentaries from them" (R6)*
	Multisensory (8/4)		2,8,12,13	*" the packaging was fine, it was just paper no plastic which was great." (R12)*
	Touching (8/5)		1,8,11,12,13	*"(…) I love wearing the clothes because they are really high quality." (R11)*

Dimension	Category	Picture	Respondent	Example Code
Affective (93/12)	Happy (22/9)		1,2,4,8,10,12,13	*"Happiness, I guess and if I feel happier about that I can contribute and do something good." (R8)*
	Supportive/proud (18/10) 3x pic3 / 2x pic 2	2 (2x), 3(3x)	1,2,3,4,7,8,9,11,12,13	*"(...) feel comfortable that you're supporting something in what you believe in (..)" (R8)*
	Nature/travel/outdoor (16/10)		1,2,4,5,7,8,9,10,11,13	*"the images make me feel the freedom of traveling (…)" (R2)*
	Emotional attachment (15/9) 3x pic 1		1,4,5,7,9,10,11,12,13	*"The sustainable thinking and outdoor connection attaches me to the brand, since both are important to me." (R9)*
	Community feeling (6/3)		2,8,11	*"(…) you feel like more part of (…) a sustainable community, being included and supported." (R8)*
	Confidence (4/3)		8,11,12	*"(…) sometimes I feel more confident when I wear it." (R11)*
	Freedom (4/2)		2,5	*" I have the emotion of freedom (…)" (R5)*
	Guilt (4/2)	1,2	12,13	*"(…) I also feel bad because it's not good to, to buy all the stuff, which you don't need (…)." (R13)*
	Confusion based on the advertisement (1/1)		4	*" I am quite confused when I see this ad because its unusual." (R4)*

Dimension	Category	Subcategory	Picture	Respondent	Example- Code
Behaviour (40/11)	Positive behavioural influence (28/11) 6x pic	Purchase behaviour (16/8)	1 (1x), 2(4x), 3(1x)	1,5,8,9,10,11,12,13	*"In general, buying sustainable products trigger you towards buying more conscious and also not buying too many products that you don't need instead only buying a few products that you really need." (R1)*
		General behaviour (6/4)		6,7,8,11	*"(..)I mean, I watch lots of documentaries. And yeah. I mean, I guess they do shape you a little bit every time you watch a documentary, in a different way." (R6).*
	Engagement (7/5)			6,7,11,12,13	*"They produce a lot of documentaries (…). A one-and-a-half-hour documentary and I kind of like that. It's like they don't force it. It's just one logo in the start. And they also have it on their YouTube page. I think they have lots of produced documentaries. You can watch that." (R6)*
	Recommending (2/2)			11,13	*" I would recommend the brand to others." (R13)*
	Purchase as gift (1/1)			12	*" I have purchase products as gift for friends (…)" (R12)*
	No engagement (1/1)			1	*"The brand doesn't engage with me in anything. Because I'm not that much on social media. But I'm curious about what they do now. I will check. "(R1)*

Dimension	Category	Subcategory	Picture	Respondent	Example Code
Intellectual (100/12)	Sustainability (33/9)	General sustainability (21/8)	2 (1x), 3(5x)	1,5,6,7,10,11,12,13	*"(…) pretty much all the topics that we've talked about, (..) like climate change, (…) the working environments, cleaning rivers (…)" (R11)*
		Projects and actions (12/4)		8,10,11,12	*"(…) definitely that they are taking actions to clean the rivers (…)." (R11)*
	Thinking triggered by seeing (18/11)		2 (1x), 3 (11x)	1,2,4,5,6,7,8,9,11,12,13	*"(…) documentaries (..) do raising awareness on different topics. Makes you think about them. Wearing clothing does not make me behave more sustainable. "(R6)*
	WOM (15/8)		3(1x)	1,6,8,9,10,11,12,13	*"I talked with my family about it like with my mom, my brother because they are also really excited about it". (R12)*
	Critical thinking (14/7)		1 (3x), 2(1x), 3(4x)	1,6,8,9,10,11,12	*"(…) still have to be critical, even if companies seem to be like perfect and doing everything right." (R8)*
	Nature / Travel / Outdoor (8/7)		1 (4x)	1, 4, 5, 8, 9, 11, 13	*"When I think about Patagonia, I always want to my next hike or do something in the outdoors" (R 1)*
	Overall impression (5/4)			4, 9, 10, 13	*"I would say it´s just their general appearance and message that they try to bring abroad" (R 10)*
	Rethinking purchase behaviour (4/2)			8, 12	*"it definitely makes you think more about what kind of purchase decision you take in your everyday life (…)" (R 12)*
	Production process (2/2)			9, 10	*"It gives the impression to produce more sustainably" (R 10)*
	No triggered thinking (1/1)		3	4	*"No it didn´t make me think about it, I rather bought this product, because it is environmental friendly" (R4)*

Dimension	Category	Picture	Informants	Example Code
Trust (106/13)	Project and actions (31/9)	3 (2x)	1, 2, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12	*"I saw a video of them trying to rescue a natural river in Albania. I am always supporting green actions, wherever they come from, that why I really like what thy do" (R 7)*
	Communication (21/9)		1, 2, 3, 6, 7, 8, 11 ,12, 13	*"They have a really good Instagram page and a good website were they explain everything they do and being very transparent about it" (R 11)*
	Sustainable impression (16/6)	2 (1x)	2, 4, 10, 11, 12, 13	*„They are trustworthy, because they are really acting sustainable" (R13)*
	Recycling (10/8)		1, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, 12	*"I think it represents the brand even better because they do recycling as well" (R5)*
	Mission before profit (8/5)		6, 8, 10, 11, 12	*"It feels like its more about their mission and I thought this buy less demand more I feel like its more about the lifestyle and how they want to change the world for the better (…)" (R12)*
	Service communication (9/3)		10, 12, 13	*"they really did not at all try to sell me something that is more expensive (…). They really focused on what I really need" (R10)*
	Scandal handling (6/4)		4, 8, 12, 13	*"I like that they not like trying to defend themselves, but they actually change the actions and through this they gain trust from me. And then it makes them trustworthy." (R8)*
	High quality (4/4)		6, 9, 12, 13	*„I think the quality is very good, so they don´t only promise, it actually is" (R12)*
	WoM (1/1)		9	*"I think it´s trustworthy. I guess, because of word-of-mouth from friends and family" (R9)*

Dimension	Category	Picture	Respondent	Example Code
Perception (130/13)	Sustainable (42/13)	2 (1x)	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13	*"I perceive them as sustainable" (I 6)*
	Positive image (32/13)	1 (1x), 2 (10x), 3 (9x)	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13	*"My perception of the brand is very, very positive" (I 12)*
	Nature and outdoors (17/8)	1 (3x), 2(1)	1, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 12, 13	*"I perceive them as a nature and outdoor clothing brand " (I 12)*
	High quality (15/9)		2, 4, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13	*"The products have a good quality" (I 2)*
	Fashionable (9/5)		6, 7, 9, 10, 11	*"They are fashionable and I like the bright colour" (I 11)*
	Expensive (4/3)		4, 7, 11	*"In my opinion they are expensive" (I 7)*
	Up to date (4/2)		12, 13	*„they really try to go with the time" (I 13)*
	Functional (2/1)		11	*„It doesn´t only have to look nice also has a lot of functions" (I 11)*
	Responsible (2/1)		6	*"But they seem to care about other things than making money" (I 6)*
	Price performance (2/1)		12	*„I think the price for this value is really good" (I 12)*
	Innovative (1/1)		12	*"I think they are quite innovative" (I 12)*