A new player in the accelerating textile industry – upcycled textile products

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Abstract

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Today, textile products are designed with a “built-in obsolescence” to only last for a short time. The intention of this is to allow or even to encourage the customer to get rid of it as soon as possible and buy a new item. This has led to the discussed matter of increase in demand and hence overconsumption of textiles causing a lack of raw materials. Upcycling of textile materials is a possible solution to this problem, where textile waste is re-used to make a new product. The purpose of this thesis is to view the penetrating power of upcycling of textile materials and to define the potential of solely selling upcycled textile products. Up-to-date theoretical data has been collected together with three qualitative interviews with retailers and a manufacturer, all selling upcycled textile products. The potential of solely selling upcycled textile products lies in the mind of the consumer and the dedication of the vendor. The younger generation makes a challenging potential and the emotional attachment to the products generated by story telling and surprising factors contribute to this potential. The fact that the textile industry is facing severe challenges is also seen as a potential to cover new and substantial market shares.

Key words: upcycling, textile, environment, environmental awareness, consumer attitudes, price, story, emotional attachment, innovation.
Sammanfattning

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1. Introduction

This initial section will make as an introduction to the identified problem and the background to the subject of the thesis. A problem discussion followed by the purpose will result in the presentation of the research questions forming the study. A delimitation of the study will end the introduction.

1.1 Background

Europe and the world are facing a series of challenges including resource degradation, climate change and a global economic crisis. As there is an inclination towards a more eco-efficient society, in those countries with ability to take measures, environmental topics are relevant and highly discussed today. Europe has taken the lead and contributes guidance to the rest of the world concerning climate change mitigation commitments (Nilsson, et al., 2009). There has been an increase in searching for eco-products among consumers the past decade and in pace with the continuous increased information flow about eco-products and projects, the interest is foreseen to continued growth (Morgan & Birtwistle, 2009). Strategies towards a surviving planet require policy actions and behavioural responses by companies and consumers – globally. The textile industry is one of the villains of the piece, and also one of the industries facing hazardous consequences. The limited supply, strong demand and low level of uncommitted cotton have caused an incredible increase in cotton prices, as one example of a scarce raw material in the textile industry (Barraco, Roberti & North, 2010). This negative trend in supply requires the demand for cotton yarns and fabrics to decrease.

In Europe, people buy more clothes and other textiles per capita than anywhere else in the world. Between 2004 and 2008 Belgium had the highest per capita consumption (ReportLinker, 2010). Many brands have gone from seasonal commodity to new items every day. The demand for cheap fashion is high, and the fast-fashion clothing market has grown significantly in response to this trend. Today’s consumption carries more wear and tear, interchangeable and insignificant garments. Where the prices are lower – and thus maybe also quality – the customer’s expectations are sometimes wrong from the beginning, as she does not expect the garment to last. These circumstances contribute to the increasing textile waste and the future decreasing textile supply. Mankind has created an abundance of clothes through textile manufacturing, and only mankind can bring an end to this. It is our responsibility to get the abundance under control and eliminate it as soon as possible (Morgan & Birtwistle, 2009).

This is an up-to-date issue that has really caught my interest, as well as many others, the past couple of years, and as a student at The Swedish School of Textiles, I doubtlessly engage in the problems caused by the textile industry in this matter. The problems are many and in some cases quite severe. This leads to many ways to approach this fact, and I have chosen to focus this thesis on one possible solution to a part of the big problem, namely upcycling of textile materials. Upcycling is a process where waste or useless products are converted into new
materials or products of equal or better quality or a higher environmental value (Wang, 2006, pp. 15). As opposed to recycling which, compared to upcycling, is defined as “downcycling”, upcycling sublimes the waste. An example of recycling as downcycling is writing paper that cannot be recycled into more of the same material, but downcycled into for instance toilet paper. There is recycling where products can be remade into the same product and quality, but requiring use of chemicals to do so. Hence upcycling is a more environmentally friendly way of re-using material as no chemical processes are required, and better products can be made. As the concept is rather unknown there are still many processes and products that are called recycled, but that might actually be upcycled. The distinction between these terms is not yet commonly known and therefore misconceptions and unawareness exists.

It is a system that fascinated me during a course in Environmental Sustainability where it was brought up as a relatively new way of tackling the overconsumption of clothes. It exists today, mainly in small projects and competitions mounted by schools, shops, communities, and private initiatives etcetera. But there are also companies taking action. One example is the airline company KLM who re-used discarded uniforms to run a project proving that it is possible to transform old textile into new raw materials that can be used to manufacture new products, saving water, CO$_2$ and natural gas (Zero Waste Europe, 2010).

So there exist projects and actions regarding upcycling, but it seems that there is not enough to make a change. There is still little information about the subject and the term is not very well known yet. Despite this, upcycling has seen an increase in use due to its marketability and in some cases by the lowered cost of the final product. It is the idea of bringing something from lower down and elevating it – a solution to the future scarcity of raw materials in the textile industry and a way of meeting the emerging need of environmentally friendly products coming from the final consumer (Fletcher, 2008, p.99).

1.2 Problem discussion
The identified problem in this study, based on personal interest and the previous background discussion is hence the scarcity of raw materials in the textile industry, partly caused by overconsumption of clothes and other textiles (Wang, 2011). The impact of this problem is more expensive products, less supply and the need for innovative alternatives. Recycling and collecting of second-hand clothes goes to charity organisations, second hand shops and recycling centres where the material is split up and degraded. But there is another alternative for these materials that I would like to look into and focus the objective of my thesis on, namely upcycling of textile materials. It is the beginning of a process where already produced materials are not discarded, but re-used. The materials are made into something of equal or better value or quality. By unitising two materials for instance, one can make a new material stronger than the two original materials, making a product of better quality (Wang, 2006, pp. 14-15).

A reason to overconsumption is the constant need of new items. The buyer is looking for satisfaction when shopping. By offering upcycled products the consumer will have the
satisfactory feeling, but caused by a product that has once before already brought on that feeling to someone else. Thus, upcycling procreates one material to satisfy more than one buyer, more than once (Braungart & McDonough, 2002, pp. 102-103). Today’s textile industry is a hard business with extreme competition (Mirasol, 2008). Selling upcycled textile products therefore appears as less risky than selling traditionally manufactured textile products due to the scarcity of raw materials, as the idea of upcycling is based on already manufactured waste of products. Hence, offering upcycled and refined products, on a market withholding a growing interest in environmentally friendly products, is a business idea that needs to be further reviewed. This is the potential that I see in upcycling and would therefore like to study the benefits and drawbacks of it, as an offset to analysing its potential on the future market. There are various companies selling upcycled textile products as a part of their product assortment today. What made them incorporate this concept in their business, and is there a reason to why these products do not make out 100 per cent of their total range of products? Do upcycled textile products have what it takes to make out for a shop’s entire assortment, or is a combination with other products and concepts necessary? A successful brand is highly dependent on its customers (D’Alessandro, 2001); do the “right” customers exist for these kinds of products to succeed? The identified problem founding this research is an enormous challenge and the broadest insight this study will give to the reader. But the aim is not to find a measure to block the fast-fashion culture or stop consumers from consuming, but to narrow it down to finding out what the prospects are to sell a remake of already produced textile materials, separated from other products. The theoretical focus of this thesis will be on the potential of the new concept of upcycling from a company’s perspective and on the attitudes of the consumers towards upcycled textile products. Hence, the thesis will take on a marketing approach looking into the potential of selling solely upcycled textile products as well as the impacts consumers’ attitudes have on that, along with studying companies’ motive to selling these products.

1.3 Purpose
The purpose of this study is thus to view the penetrating power of the relatively new concept of upcycling of textile materials to be able to define the potential of solely selling upcycled textile products. As an offset to accomplish achieving this purpose, the following research questions will be the basis of this study:

1.4 Research questions
What is the potential of selling solely upcycled textile products, from a company’s point of view?

RQ1 Why do companies choose to offer upcycled textile products as a part of their product assortment?

RQ2 How do consumers’ attitudes towards upcycling impact the prospects of selling solely upcycled textile products?
1.5 Delimitation
Firstly, upcycling is a wide concept with several directions to study deeper. But to narrow this research and to get the best out of it I have chosen to delimit the research by looking past the way of upcycling where material is degraded back to fibre level. It is a step further in the upcycling process that I feel does not comply with the standpoint taken in this study with regard to environmental value. Breaking down the material to make new products differs from this study’s view on upcycling, as there is a vast difference between re-using and re-producing. In this essay upcycling will only involve textile material that can be re-used as they were originally produced. Secondly, the study will be performed on the Belgian market, based on the conditions and possibilities found there. I therefore move away from drawing a general conclusion about the potential of selling upcycled textile products. Finally, there are many alternative solutions to the problem founding this report; smarter design, education, substitute materials etcetera. Upcycling is not to be claimed to be the solution, but other contributing ways will not be mentioned further.
2. Methodology

In this chapter the choice of methods founding the empirical and theoretical information collection will be presented and motivated. The purpose is to clarify the scientific methods that have been chosen to accomplish a reliable research of the subject of this thesis. A presentation of deliberation and implementation of the methods will also be introduced. The chapter will end with criticism of references.

2.1 Scientific approach

In social science researches the goal is to integrate theory and empirical findings to study the deviation between them (Johannessen & Tufte, 2003, p. 35). With this reasoning as a benchmark, the study will start out with a deductive approach that is to emanate from the theory and see if the empirical findings confirm it or not. The emphasising on words rather than quantification in the collection and analysis of data guides this study to a qualitative approach. When conducting a qualitative research there is an embedded purpose to gather a different and deeper knowledge than the fragmentised understanding that is often received in quantitative researches (Patel & Davidson, 2003 p. 23). According to Bryman (2008, pp. 6-23), a qualitative method is more relevant when the study deals with an issue that has not yet been carefully researched. Upcycling is unquestionably a topic that has not been carefully studied and therefore a qualitative method is more suitable. To address the research questions in a qualified manner the information gathering should presuppose non-numerical data, qualitative interviews and an interpretive stance. In this research the interpretive stance will involve a hermeneutic approach where the central idea is to bring out the meanings of the chosen literature from the perspective of its authors. A study based on this approach belongs to the scientific research where the author is participating in the reality of the research. This strategy has the potential of analysing texts as well as documents, social actions and other non-documentary phenomena (Bryman, 2008, pp. 6-23). As the study is based on questions concerning the understanding of human behaviour rather than the explanation of human behaviour, and the empiricism is based on qualitative interviews, hermeneutics will be a suiting choice for this qualitative research. Another purpose of the hermeneutic philosophy is to create an understanding of actions in reality, which is critical in this study where one aim is to learn why the respondents have chosen to do what they do. I also choose to follow this approach by reason of the focus on wholeness rather than the parts of the theoretical framework, which this approach requires. I consider a hermeneutic approach best suited for this study due to the understanding and explaining nature of the research questions. The stance allows for interpreting of the empirical findings where further discussion leads to a conclusion.

2.2 The research process

As indicated earlier, a deductive approach is the start to this study. However, the relation between empiricism and theory is a complicated matter and will have to be adjusted to each case (Johannessen & Tufte, 2003, p. 35). Once the theoretical reflection on a set of data has been carried out, there might be a need for further information collection, which is possible
when dealing with a qualitative research (Bryman, 2008, pp. 6-23). But in that case, the study will take more of an abductive approach, rather than a strictly deductive one. In this study I have had to go back to the theoretical framework after gathering empirical findings to find information to support or reject those unplanned findings. Thereafter additional questions have been issued to the respondents to get a clear understanding of the matter. The importance of the younger generation as a group with great potential to the respondents was an unexpected angle that appeared to be relevant for my study, so after gathering the empirical information, additional research had to be carried out. This cycle of analysis has been necessary to be able to comprehend the views on this subject and to distinguish the vital parts to get to a conclusion delineating the research questions, hence it strengthens the interpretation and understanding of the subject.

2.3 Deliberation of potential respondents
It is impossible to interview all relevant companies or people for the research, and therefore a selection has to be made to bring out a representative sample of the total quantity of significant objects. Qualitative researches are characterised by selective samples. When choosing the selection of interviewees I started out by questioning the research questions; what do I want to know and who can provide this information? There is obviously a need for people with a qualified knowledge about the subject. However, the respondents were not chosen based on the potential answers they were expected to provide, but based on their subject area to make the results as credible as possible (Patel & Davidson, 2003).

To get a broad view of the concept of upcycling from a narrowed perspective I wanted to collect primary data from different actors with similar relations to the concept. The aim of this thesis is to bring up the factors that make potential for upcycled textile products on the market. As upcycling is still a novel concept and not well represented it is difficult to find relevant key persons to give the essential information for the study. A few contacted potential respondents who sold recycled products did not even know what upcycling was, and much less where to find it. Larger companies who engage in the subject by different projects and competitions were not even keen on replying to inquiry of information. Ultimately it was decided that the best information that could be derived for a relevant reasoning to the research questions was to come from interviewing people who themselves chose to sell upcycled textile products as a part of their product assortment. As the contacted bigger companies already turned down the request, I chose to focus on smaller companies that might be more willing to cooperate and share their experience of upcycling. I also think that talking to someone from a smaller company where the interviewee is presumably a founder of the company, there is a fire and a passion for the brand and what they stand for and therefore a desire to spread this passion. The risk when interviewing larger companies is to be appointed an intern or an information officer who does not have the spirit behind the concept. Thereby started the searching for small companies in Belgium selling upcycled textile products.

2.3.1 Chosen respondents
Through a friend I found out about the shop HADHI in Antwerp who sells upcycled textile
products among other upcycled and recycled things. I contacted one of the two owners of the shop, Isabelle Baele, and she was enthusiastic about my subject and did not hesitate to put up an interview as soon as possible. Through the interview with Baele further information was given about other potential interviewees of which one who replied was Hanne Beutels, a designer of bags and purses made from old leather jackets and furniture. Rewind Design is the third shop that gave an interview. The two owners replied quickly and seemed even keener than the previous to inform about their experience with upcycling and why they chose to invest whole-heartedly in it.

I have tried to get in contact with several more potential respondents but without success. Hence, I have chosen these three vendors, with the purpose of my thesis – upcycling - as a common denominator. The interviews with Baele and Beutels were performed in person and were computer-assisted. By using the computer the answers from the interviewee can easily and quickly be noted down (Bryman, 2008 p. 199). The interviews were semi-structured where the sequence of questions varies and attendant questions can be brought up. The interview with Rewind Design was conducted by email due to lack of time from their side. However, there was emailing back and forth to clear some answers from the respondent and to ask further questions due to the abductive approach mentioned earlier.

2.4 Collection of theoretical framework and empirics
The chosen literature for the theoretical framework is selected due to its current and up-to-date nature. As frequently mentioned upcycling is a topical issue where the little information that exists is foremost recent. Thereby new thinkers and challengers are the creators of the collected data, resulting in innovative viewpoints founding this thesis. In conducting this research, mainly primary data will be collected and analysed, but also a small variety of secondary data collected by Synovate. Secondary data is hence data that has been collected for a different purpose than my study. The advantages of using secondary data are the ease of access of data and the increase in time for the researcher to focus on the analysis of the thesis, as the time consuming activity of collecting primary data is decreased or eliminated. One drawback however, is the uncertainty of credibility and quality of the data, which calls for the researcher to interpret the information deliberately. The complement of primary data where new material is collected is therefore a necessary contribution to present essential information. As the subject of this thesis is not yet well discussed there is a dominating quantity of collected primary data founding this research. Primary data is the information gathered specifically for the problem investigated (Andersen, 2009, p. 150), and in this study the primary data will come from qualitative interviews with people from relevant organisations (HADHI, Hanne Beutels and Rewind Design) and from selected researched theoretical information vital for the aim of the essay.

The qualitative interview is characterised by a dialogue with a structure and a purpose where the structure is tied to the roles of the participants in the interview. The purpose of a qualitative interview is to collect descriptions from the respondent’s life, experience and knowledge of the studied subject to interpret the meaning of the described phenomenon
(Johannessen & Tufte, 2003, p. 96). The reason to why I have chosen to use qualitative interviews is because of the importance of obtaining reliable information about this novel subject. A quantitative method would have required much knowledge beforehand about the selection of respondents as to guarantee that they knew anything about upcycling at all. The aim with a qualitative approach is the gathering of thick descriptions to acquire a deeper understanding of the problem, hence it is more suitable for questions about a new subject where the interview gives room for discussions and possible attendant questions.

The collected data will then be analysed. The empirical study against the theoretical framework where the purpose is to find an answer to where the potential for solely selling upcycled textile products lies. The result from the interviews will be used together with the theoretical reasoning to discuss possible oppositions around the research questions.

2.5 Validity & reliability
An important criterion of the research’s quality and trustworthiness is its validity, which counts for that the subject investigated is the one intended. It is a measure of the relevance of the data and how well it represents the researched subject. I have chosen to focus on the potential and the reasons to why companies choose to sell upcycled textile products and have chosen companies based on my question formulation. Due to the topical nature of my subject and the aim of researching future development of the concept it is important to have updated theoretical data that is current and relevant for the study (Johannessen & Tufte 2003 p. 47). Only up-to-date information has been collected for this study, not only because it is of better value for the study, but also because there is not much “old” literature discussing upcycling. Another essential matter in research is the reliability of the data, which concerns the quality of collecting, processing and analysing the data. The interviewed vendors in this study are all owners of the shop or brand. I therefore dare to believe that the sources of the empirical data are reliable, as no one would be able to answer the questions better than the interviewees themselves. However, to measure reliability is not possible in qualitative research methods like this one. Good reliability is when the same or very similar result is achieved when the same survey is repeated with the same tools (Johannessen & Tufte, 2003 pp. 28-29). In qualitative research methods the author and interviewer is the tool, and the respondents will not have the same opinion and answers as the first time, as new experiences develops new opinions and knowledge.

2.6 Reflection of chosen methodology
A drawback with email interviews is the ease for the interviewee not to answer certain questions or to present inadequate answers. This could depend on incomprehension or averseness to answering the questions. But in the email interview with Rewind Design there were possibilities for further emailing to follow up questions or to clear out misunderstandings, if any. However, there lies a risk in not meeting the one you are interviewing as it could be someone lacking the competence that is vital for the study. Interns or information officers sometimes correspond in the name of the CEO. But in the interview
with Rewind Design I know for sure from whom the answers came after visiting the shop personally, and since there are only the two founders working there it simply cannot be someone else answering their email. Concerning the personal interviews a common problem is that the interviewee and his or her answers are characterised by the presence and impression from the interviewer (Bryman, 2008, p. 198). In the two personal interviews both respondents were confident and eager to inform about their work. There was no disturbance in power configuration and no one felt disrespected. The interviews went smoothly and resembled a dialogue more than a strict interview, hence both parts were comfortable. Therefore I have reason to believe that there was no or very little influence in answers caused by my presence. To do a personal interview can also be time consuming, costly, call for travelling etcetera., but as this study only carried out two personal interviews, this did not disturb the quality of the thesis.

A difficulty when conducting a qualitative research is the subjectivity of the researcher as the findings can rely too much on the researcher’s view on what is essential information and important angles for the study (Bryman, 2008, p. 391). This difficulty might become even more distinct as I am writing this thesis by myself, not having a qualified second insight in the relevance of certain information and choice of angles. But with the help from my mentor this will hopefully not become more of a problem than for anyone else. However, the theoretical and empirical findings of this study have worked as supporting parties and basis for reflection. Another concern in the methodology is the risk that the empirical data does not provide sufficient material for the study. In this thesis only three interviews have been conducted. But the relevance of the people interviewed will shine through and eventually show that they were sufficient enough for the purpose of this study.

Patel & Davidson (2003) write about criticism of the sources as a necessity to be able to evaluate the quality of the collected data. The quality and credibility of the data make up the validity and reliability of the study. It is therefore important to determine whether the sources and references are original or false, with which aim the author published it, when and where the information became available etcetera. I have critically studied the content and time consistency of the used literature and documents and thereof find the chosen data for this study to be relevant as it contains essential facts that has contributed to the knowledge obligatory to write this thesis. However, there are not enough scientific articles used as reference to say that the theoretical part of this study is based on information written for educational purposes, reviewed by researchers and editors. This is a result of choosing such a new and narrow subject as upcycling of textile materials. This is however the reason to why the theoretical part is based on the book Cradle to cradle (2002), which founds the concept. Except from that, many sources are from websites, blogs, newspaper articles etcetera. where there is a risk that the information is angled and I as a reader become unconsciously misled. I have tried to be as indifferent as possible to these phenomena, but one can never control one’s perception. The fact that many theoretical references are websites and such also contradicts the hermeneutic approach as it presupposes a deep understanding of the initiative of the author. When the author is an organisation it can be difficult to bring out the meaning of the
information or literature, so there is a probability that misinterpretations have taken place, but I am in that case unaware of them.

Another difficulty when choosing theoretical data is the uncertainty of credibility and quality of the secondary data used. There is not much further information about the secondary data used in this thesis than what is mentioned in the text, but I consider the author of the article in where the data was referred to, to be valid and reliable.

The interviews were conducted in English, as it is the only common language between the interviewer and the interviewees. All respondents had qualified English skills, but while being interviewed in a second language one might feel stressed to find the right words, causing confusion. But with the Dutch I know I could ask them to say the word that they could not find in English, in Dutch, and I would say it in English and they confirmed whether it was the word they were looking for or not. Obviously, if the interviews had been carried out in their native language it would have been easier for them to express themselves in a more precise way. An option could then have been to perform the interviews by email in Dutch and then have the answers translated. However, I believe that the chosen method was the better because of the physical encountering and as the participants of the interviews were all familiar with the subject. If a third party, most probably without knowledge about the subject, had translated the communication, risk of misinterpretations would have been highly possible.

Finally, the purpose of my empirical findings is not to provide a truth, but rather to increase the knowledge and understanding of the dilemma.

2.7 Interview details
To get a clearer view of how and when the interviews were conducted a table of details is here presented:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interview Details</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isabelle Baele, HADHI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stijn Gilles, Rewind Design</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3. Theoretical framework

As previously mentioned, not many studies have been made in the area of upcycling of textile materials. Nevertheless, the majority of the researches and debates that has been expressed are of a resembling direction – upcycling is good. This part will present the views on the subject that are relevant to understand the hidden opportunities of upcycling. Crucial attitudes and approaches to the subject will here be illuminated, to later on be contrasted to the empirical findings on the same matter. The authors of the book “Cradle to cradle” (Braungart & McDonough, 2002) were of the first to use this term. In their book they enlighten upcycling and different aspects of it, hence the literature reviewed will emanate from this book. That is, literature advancing the theories and opinions of the book, as well as contradicting literature to get as much of an objective insight to the topic as possible.

3.1 Upcycling

Upcycling is a process where waste or useless products are converted into new materials or products of equal or better quality or a higher environmental value. It is taking waste and maintaining or improving the quality of it by making something new. The goal of upcycling is to prevent the wasting of potentially useful materials by making use of existing ones (Smusiak, 2010). Supporters of the environmentally friendly practice of upcycling claim that developing countries have been upcycling for years, re-using packaging and old clothing in new ways, although more concerned about their own need than the environment. Now upcycling is taking off in developed countries as well, reflecting an increase in interest for eco-friendly products. Particularly successful are the products proving profitable for the manufacturer and with a reasonable price to the customer (Goldsmith, 2009).

3.1.1 Upcycling of textile materials

Upcycling of textile materials is the focus of this thesis and denotes the re-making of textile materials to something new of equal or greater use or value.

3.1.1 Why upcycling?

Upcycling is necessary as a substitute to producing new things to meet the increasing demand mentioned in the introduction. If the demand will not slow down it has to be met. And since new production will only support the evil cycle of overconsumption and all its problems, the demand has to be met in a different way, in this case by new products made of already existing materials. This problem is particularly evident in the textile industry. The concept is increasing in popularity among those concerned about climate change. Upcycling is to say that recycling is great, but it requires energy and resources to gather, sort and process the waste only to make something less out of it. Hence, upcycling is an even greener way of recycling, and better environmentally. Moreover, by making use of already existing materials the consumption of new raw materials for new products is reduced which can result in a reduction of energy usage, air pollution, water pollution and CO₂ emissions. For vendors and consumers concerned about the environment, upcycled products are therefore a way for the vendor to make business and for the consumer to keep shopping, hence the purpose of business is not changed (Upcycling, 2011). Zero waste is a philosophy that encourages the re-use of materials where any trash sent to landfills is minimal. It is seen as an ultimate goal, and
it means an end to recycling. Upcycling is an incremental step towards achieving zero waste (Zero Waste International Alliance, 2010).

3.2 Cradle to cradle
Cradle to grave is according to the architect-and-chemist duo William McDonough and Michael Braungart (2002) when all kinds of waste end up in the landfill; clothes, old furniture, carpets, televisions, shoes, paper, food wastes and much more. Some of these things could be decomposed, other recycled – and some even upcycled. Today, products are designed with “built-in obsolescence” to only last for a short time. The purpose of this is to allow or even to encourage the customer to get rid of it as soon as possible and buy a new item. This is common in the fashion industry. What most customers do not know is that once the product becomes garbage, it is just the tip of a material iceberg since the product itself only contains of five per cent of the total raw materials included in the process of making and delivering it (Braungart & McDonough, 2002, pp. 27-28). Economic growth is the main goal of today’s industrial infrastructure, at the expense of the world’s health. The damage is definite and severe. The world is waiting for manufacturers or designers to decide that this is a strategy that can no longer be supported and maintained, the strategy of tragedy. People choosing to deal with upcycling instead join the implementation of strategy of change, towards the concept cradle to cradle (Braungart & McDonough, 2002, pp. 42-44). A key step in the cradle to cradle practice is consequently upcycling where closed-loop cycles arises from the theoretical possibility of producing an unlimited number of products from the same resources (Mahoney, 2005).

Most recycling is actually downcycling as it reduces the quality of a material over time. Recycling of textile takes place on a level where it goes to charities, downgrades to other materials or people re-use it, but in any case, the quality of the material will decrease over time. Hence, despite the good intentions, the creative use of recycled products can be misleading. Most products are not designed for recycling, which results in recycling not being ecologically benign. Hence, recyclable products ought to be recyclable from the beginning, already decided at the design stage, otherwise the iceberg referred to earlier will never decrease. Upcycling is the idea that will decrease the iceberg by re-using its content. Downcycling is not a strategy for success in the long run. Upcycling is, as long as there is an abundance of waste (Braungart & McDonough, 2002, pp. 56-59).

The constant need of new items that characterises today’s fashion industry is the reason to overconsumption. The satisfactory feeling the buyer is looking for when shopping can be illustrated as a metaphorical defloration where the buyer feels that the product is hers, for the very first time and when she is finished with it, everyone is. It is history. A contributing factor to the overconsumption is consequently that the fashion industry designs products according to this mind-set of the consumer. What is recognized here is the importance of feeling special and unique, and that is the founding idea of upcycling; to give the satisfaction of buying something new, caused by a product that has once before brought on that feeling to someone
else. Upcycling celebrates the sameness and unity that permit people to enjoy a material more than once (Braungart & McDonough, 2002, pp. 102-103).

3.3 The textile industry
Textile industries rise and fall, partly in relation to factors in their home country but particularly in relation to worldwide factors as of today’s globalised fashion market. An increase in demand and decrease in supply is therefore a factor that makes out a challenge for the textile industry independently on where it is situated. This problem is world-devouring. The production of a textile involves a number of activities. It starts with harvesting the fibre, then cleaning, spinning, unifying the material to a fabric that is bleached, dyed and processed with other treatments to finally be made up into a textile product (Singleton, 1997). This process leaves a pollution footprint where each step generates potential environmental hazards. After production the products are transported all over the world, causing additional pollution. Once the product is bought, it is in many cases piled up and contributing to the growing storage in homes, a final destination that seems deplorable. Textiles are a necessity, but the overconsumption causing future environmental damage and scarcity of raw materials is not (Claudio, 2007).

3.3.1 The ways of fashion in textile
Yurchisin & Johnson (2010, p. 1-13) state that fashion is a way of behaving. But for behaviour to become fashion it must be accepted by a group of people (a group of friends, a society, a country – any kinds of groups). Fashion is also short-lived as the majority first accepts it, but only to later on reject it. The end of a fashion however, is the beginning of waste and the possibility of upcycling. Fashion represents social copying, which begins with a new style or way of behaving being brought into a group. Other members then observe it and decide whether to accept it or not, that is whether it should become a fashion or not. If it becomes a fashion it will ultimately be rejected to make room for the next innovation. Thus, fashion is ever changing. It has occurred since the beginning of time, but the process from introduction to rejection has accelerated and is today shorter than ever (Yurchisin & Johnson, 2010). When buying clothes and other textiles consumers are far more fashion-savvy and demanding today than in the past, which has resulted in concepts like short lead-times, quick response and fast fashion (Hayes & Jones, 2006). Upcycling of textile materials receives much praise by addressing the many social challenges faced by the fashion industry. An increase in upcycling is necessary as the market spend has more than quadrupled in the past five years, and eco-fashion still only holds 0.04 per cent of the global fashion market. But the ways of fashion as a behaviour can stand as a threat if upcycling would only be a hype. It is impossible to know now as it is still in the starting phase. But Nin Castle at Goodone, an upcycling fashion label, sees upcycling as the future. She argues that the problems of fast fashion cannot be ignored anymore and therefore upcycling will continue growing, as it is a truly sustainable solution to one of the fashion industry’s biggest issues (Marsden, 2010).
3.4 The vendors’ motive

For upcycling of textile material to thrive there must be vendors willing to sell the re-used waste. According to a survey by Synovate, 88 per cent of the people surveyed feel that companies have a responsibility to help reduce climate change. The study surveyed over 13000 people in 18 countries about attitudes towards climate change (Synovate, 2010). Worn again (n.d.), argue that an upcycling brand uses textile waste as a resource to create new products, green jobs and good growth. But there are also certain benefits for the vendors themselves of selling upcycled textile products. For instance, they help decrease the textile waste and turn it into new income streams, and since upcycling is a business, a growing interest for the products will create new jobs. They help reducing CO2 emissions by using already existing materials rather than virgin materials for products. And as it is a profit-driven enterprise there is naturally money to be made by selling the products on to their customers. Cost reductions and marketing benefits are other advantages that can be attained when selling upcycled products. The vendors also promote sustainable innovation and education within the company and to customers. These elements help the vendor to build brand value through differentiation and sustainability orientation. Conclusively, the beauty of upcycling is its utter simplicity.

3.5 Challenges facing upcycled textile products

3.5.2 Trademark infringement

Waste does not belong to anyone, but brand names do. Even the most eco-conscious brand owners therefore has the right to be alarmed by the uncontrolled use of their names passed on to upcycled products. High street brands that are positioned in the consumers’ minds mainly by their brand name might not want their name associated with upcycled products that could be in a different category, like outside furniture made from a famous tennis racquet-brand where the trademark is highly visible. When consumers buy a branded product they associate the brand name with certain features. Hence, if they buy upcycled products where a brand name is still visible it could be misleading as the consumers may believe that they were produced under the authority of the brand owner and complies with its quality standards. Or the features associated with the brand are applied on to the new product, which could be far separated from the original product. It is this probability of confusion or deception that creates liability for trademark infringement. What companies can do if they find an upcycled product too encroaching is to file a lawsuit or negotiate a licence with the upcycler to be able to control the use of its brand and insure that any upcycled products are consistent with its brand image. Or they could just ignore it (Anderson, 2009).

3.5.3 Labelling

Customers today are well informed. They want to know what products that they buy are made of, where and how they were produced etcetera. When assembling upcycled products it is not always possible to keep track of the content of each section. But for some customers it can be vital to know due to allergies or preferences. Therefore the unawareness of product content in upcycled textile products could lead to loss of potential customers. (Duhbe, 2010). Labels on
textile products should include the material composition of the product and an ID-number of the manufacturer (European consumer centre in Spain, n.d.).

3.6 The consumers

3.6.1 Consumers’ attitudes
The green wave of environmentally living is far beyond political rhetoric and environmental standpoints and is today spreading to the heart of pop culture, fashion and business. As economic growth is the main goal for all economies in the world and therefore a dominating part of our lives, a greener environment craves a greener economy. Upcycling in business is the trend where a green intersection of pop culture and fashion produces an interest from consumers to buy and even wear rubbish. The right influence helps convincing consumers that trash is trendy. A survey conducted by Boston Consulting Group reports that one third of the people surveyed would pay more for green products if they were convinced they offered direct benefits. Hence, the proving of environmental genuineness is vital in gaining the consumers’ trust (Cosper, 2011). The young fashion consumers today are more concerned with trends than any other age group. It is with them the bigger part of the problem with overconsumption lies. Fashion press and media influence them heavily and fast-fashion retailers attract these consumers by competing for the lowest price for their products - products coined as disposable fashion (Morgan & Birtwistle, 2009). Even though there is a questioning view on the link between low fashion prices and unethical working conditions, there is still little knowledge of the high volumes of textiles being disposed every year and its consequences (Birtwistle & Moore, 2007). In their study about young fashion consumers’ disposal habits Morgan and Birtwistle conclude that young consumers are unaware of the need for clothing recycling and re-using because of the lack of media coverage about the issue. However, the participants of the study stated that were they more aware of the social and environmental consequences they would modify their clothing consumption and disposal behaviour. Hence, a growing interest in the lifecycle of textiles would favour the prerequisites of, and the attitude towards, upcycling (2009). To sell upcycled products there has to be a change in attitude, so that people move from a disposable mind-set where the landfill is the end stop for the products and the customers’ responsibility ends there, into a constant re-use mind-set where they want to get the materials back because they are valuable (Gardiner, 2010). Justin Gignac, founder of the NYC Garbage project, sees a different state of mind on the upcycling market. According to him it is the already changing of consumer attitudes that is contributing to the upcycling boom. People’s awareness of waste contributes to the appreciation of the ingenuity of creating new stuff from old (Wang, 2011). To further mention the influences of media there is a trend today where environmental debates, melting glaciers and natural disasters affect us both consciously and at an unconscious level. It is therefore self-explanatory that fashion and interior designers absorb the issues and express them through their collections. Many designers have thus been inspired by the ways of upcycling and offer various innovative versions of it. The mentioned fashion consumers’ source of inspiration is hence starting to emphasise upcycling, resulting in an accelerating interest from the consumers as well (Swanberg, 2011).
3.6.2 Environmental awareness
All human activities have an impact on the environment. The environmental degradation makes a great danger to man’s own survival and it is becoming obvious to people that conservation and improvement of the environment are vital for the survival of mankind and the earth (Richards, 2001). According to Zsóka (2006) environmental awareness contains of five components:

- Environmental knowledge
- Environmental values
- Environmental attitudes
- Willingness to act
- Actual action

The environmental knowledge plays a determining role in shaping individuals’ thinking, attitudes, values and behaviour – that is all the above mentioned components. It influences consumers’ values and attitudes of which the environmental values are a part of and these guide the consumers’ decisions. Three different value types can be distinguished; values toward others, values toward the environment and values toward ourselves. Environmental attitudes differ from values in the way that they refer to a subject or situation where the emotional component is the most important one. Willingness to act in an environmentally oriented way can be considered as an outcome of values and attitudes, and as a step toward actual behaviour. The actual action taken in the end is a result of which knowledge, revealed attitudes and values are reflected in the actual behaviour. The components of environmental awareness are clearly closely related to each other where positive attitudes create willingness to act which leads to actual action.

3.7 A summarised view
In a society facing consequences from the overconsumption of textile materials, upcycling brings hope as a fresh idea and possible solution to many environmental dilemmas. It is getting people excited about waste diversion. The concept of taking waste and reimagining, reusing and reinventing it is a new-fangled idea as the materials are free and in frightening abundance, the aftereffects on the environment are minimal or none and consumers gain the satisfaction of buying and using something potentially wasteful in a new and thrilling context – again and again (Wright, 2005).
4. Empirical findings

This chapter will present the chosen respondents’ experiences and views on upcycling of textile materials. They are two retailers and one manufacturer – all three selling upcycled textile products in Antwerp and online. Each part will commence with a presentation of the company and its philosophy and end with what the representatives believe to be the future aspects of upcycled textile products.

4.1 HADHI

4.1.1 Philosophy

HADHI is a brand in search for beautiful and unique products from the world. They offer a selection from functional products to pure decoration – as innovative gifts or as a treat for the shopper himself, from tables made out of old magazines to lamps consisting of denary lightbulbs. The assortment is directed to customers who enjoy beautiful things and appreciate the good feeling that comes with buying things at HADHI, as nothing beyond fair trade is coming out of that shop. The shop is situated in the area of famous fashion designers in the heart of Antwerp. The shop gives an inspiring environment for the customer where each product gets a chance to tell its story. This is of major importance for the owners; that there is something, except from the price, to tell about the products. HADHI is Swahili for “dignity”, conducing the vision of “design with dignity” where the products are nice on the outside and more importantly, beautiful on the inside. Regardless of where they come from, the products are chosen based on principles about fair trade. The owners conform to these principles by consistently doing business with and choosing suppliers and producers that comply with fair trade regulations. They believe in the power of strong human stories associated with the products and that by selling them everyone in the process from production to final customer is a winner (HADHI, 2010).

4.1.2 Interview with Isabelle Baele

Baele is one of the two founders of the shop. They started this shop coming from areas of marketing- and advertising agencies, with no experience within the area of retail, upcycling, interior or fashion. The idea was to build an own brand offering something new. Since the fashion- and interior business is challenging in competition they wanted to differentiate through thoughtful products where fair trade of human values behind the products in combination with nice things would put them on the map. They wanted to build their own catalogue where the origin country of the products was not in focus, but rather the origin of the material and production process. The most important factor in the product assortment is the undertaking of fair trade. Baele tries her best to assure that as much as she can control is fair trade; this is the number one criterion for each product in the shop. The product assortment of the shop is today exactly what they had in mind when still being in the planning
phase. They cannot yet say whether a certain kind of material or story sells better than any other, and therefore the assortment stays the same.

4.1.3 Positioning
HADHI would like to be positioned in the customers’ mind as a nice shop offering tasteful things – and then discover that it is fair trade. They want them to understand that the products are modern with a story behind, to tell their friends that they “have to go to HADHI!” It is important that after visiting the shop the customer understands that there were only contemporary products with human values and a production story in there, which ought to give the customer a good feeling. And when purchasing something, the customer should benefit in two ways; the satisfaction of buying a nice new product and the good feeling about knowing the story behind it – and knowing that it is a fair story.

4.1.4 Upcycled textile products
Approximately 40 per cent of HADHI’s product assortment consists of products by upcycled textile material. They choose to sell this because of the fair trade conformity that those products usually bring. They have no special desire to have a definite percentage of the assortment as upcycled textile products, but they are common in this business and overlap with the other products, hence the supply in the shop is of this current size. As long as the products coincides with the business idea and do not look misplaced in the shop they meet the requirements of being part of HADHI’s product assortment. When asking about the actual control of material composition and production process Baele says that there is never a way to be sure. They never go to factories for instance. She says that the only guarantee she can give the customers is the guarantee of her suppliers. When it comes to upcycled textile products she knows that most materials have not been used, but are materials with defaults that instead of being disposed of they are bought by companies who make things out of them and then benefit through the notion of upcycling. Therefore she believes that textile waste will somehow always come into existence and enough supply for upcycling of textile material will prevail. She cannot tell how the wasted material, that in this process make the raw materials, has been produced, but she can tell the story from when the waste is gathered to when it arrives in the shop. Of the upcycled textile materials currently sold in the shop Baele could specify the entire material composition of each product. But it is not displayed in all products. In the upcycled textile products there are no visible trademarks from original materials.

Baele is doubtful whether selling solely upcycled textile products would work in this extremely competitive business. It needs a lot of research and product development which is time consuming and expensive despite the cheap raw material. But as long as there is a good design and someone devoted behind it, it could possibly work. She says that there is no way back to an industry without these products, the planet cannot allow it. Awareness will go on so there must be a great future for upcycled products, as long as there are people willing to invest in it.
4.1.5 Consumers’ attitudes
Baele thinks that consumers’ knowledge about upcycling is increasing by the day. According to her own observations, the consumers are highly aware of the problems humanity is causing by overconsumption of basically everything. The concept of selling fair trade products is not new, but it is the creativity in the upcycling idea that attracts the customers’ interest and fascination. It is a creative industry where one can surprise the customer with the story behind the product or with the captivating way of which the material is re-used. On the other hand, Baele thinks that there is only an interest for these products because everyone thinks that they can save the world by buying them. They throw away garbage and then think that they can save the environment by buying something new but eco-friendly. With the recognition the environmental problems get in media people are aware of it, but according to Baele they have to start earlier by decreasing their consumption and waste. Buying eco-friendly products is evidently a good thing, but the thought in the back of the consumers’ mind that they help “saving the world” is not entirely justified.

4.1.6 Future aspects
Baele thinks that there is enough interest from consumers for an upcycling brand of textile products to succeed, but the younger generation (people in their 20’s) do not have the budget for it. And the young consumers are the most active consumers. It is difficult to make them prefer creativity instead of the low price. At HADHI the typical consumer of upcycled textile products is 40 to 60 years. They would like to attract more of the younger generations but it is hard when there are similar products in IKEA, HEMA etcetera. for a lower price, but without the story behind the products.

4.2 Hanne Beutels

4.2.1 Philosophy
Hanne Beutels is a brand that offers handbags and purses made from upcycled materials like leather from old leather jackets or pants and wool or cotton from old furniture. Every bag is handmade with a unique design that is playful, female and elegant. Functionality and sustainability combined with exclusivity in design and an environmental concern centring the concept are the cores of the brand.

Source: Beutels, 2011

4.2.2 Interview with Hanne Beutels
Beutels works a couple of days a week at HADHI. The rest of the week she works in her home on her bags. She is self-employed. The concept started six years ago when she let loose her passion for handbags and started making them from any material she could find. Eventually she realised the beauty and strength of old, used leather and heard about a designer in Ghent who made bags from second hand leather, hence she discovered the possibility of
turning her passion into a profession. She studied to become an interior designer and initially knew very little about sowing, but she is autodidact and soon learned the ways of making fashionable bags. The bags are sold online, on markets and at trade shows. *De Invasie* is an online platform where young designers from Belgium and The Netherlands are united to expose their products and that is where she got her initial recognition. Beutels buys the material for her bags in second hand shops or she receives them as gifts from friends. However, leather is an expensive material and that in combination with the time spent on each bag results in high prices on the end products; between 100 – 400 euros per bag.

### 4.2.3 Positioning

Beutels wants to position her brand as stylish, contemporary and eco-friendly. It is important that her customers understand that the products represent what will have to come in the future at the same time as they reflect the present time. It is also important for Hanne to promote handcraft and for her customers to appreciate the work that has been put in to each detail of every product. Finally, she values when her products can surprise the customer when revealing the story behind it and she hopes that in the future one does not have to surprise people – they will come look for it themselves.

### 4.2.4 Upcycling

Beutels has always been environmentally conscious and for her it is the best solution to use second hand material as it is cheaper, gives interesting patterns and assembled shapes, nicer appearance when used and it is eco-friendly. Using unique material for each product is also part of her business idea, and using new material would result in more products ending up with similar designs and patterns. She does not have control of the material composition in the second hand material that she uses. Sometimes in jackets there are labels, but she does not forward the information to her own products or put other labels on them, except from the name Hanne Beutels. If there are brand names on the second hand products that she uses, she avoids to use those parts to avoid confusion for the customer.

### 4.2.5 Consumers’ attitudes

Beutels believes in her customers. She thinks that to buy her products they need to have the right attitude. Sometimes her bags are too expensive so she tries to lower her price to increase the interest from the younger generation (people in their 20’s). But still there are people paying a higher price for the bags because they value the upcycled materials and because they get a unique design from it. She also says that there is an interest in upcycled products today simply because people have to. The environmental problems are constantly exposed in the media because it is an urgent matter, and people are finally starting to understand that they and previous generations are the cause of it. She thinks that upcycling is here to stay and that it is only in its starting phase yet. Peoples’ consuming habits have to change and it takes time, hence upcycling is according to Beutels facing a flourishing future. What could increase the interest for upcycling though would be more marketing and especially marketing to younger people, as they are the ones being educated about this matter in school. They are receptive for new information; hence upcycling should be marketed like any other fashion brand with celebrities and other pimp-ups.
4.2.6 Future aspects
Beutels believes in the idea of solely selling upcycled textile products. She is doing it at the moment but not with enough product assortments to live from it. But she says that it takes much creativeness and it is important that the final products are beautiful or it will not make up for the fact that the material used is actually waste.

4.3 Rewind Design

4.3.1 Philosophy
Rewind Design is where ecology and aesthetics come together. The company brings a concept around eco-design with an emphasis on re- and upcycling. They work with around sixty designers and artists from all around Europe who makes a wide range of products, like “fatboy-bags made from re-used materials and bags made of old tires. On each product there is a label with Rewind Design’s eight founding values; Re-use, Well managed resources, Recyclable, Locally sourced, Low waste, Low energy, Fair trade and Rethink. On each product one can see to which values the products comply. They all differ, but one thing they all have in common is the rethink-philosophy. The company’s philosophy is based on a quote by Albert Einstein saying: “The world will not move beyond its current state of crisis using the same thinking that got us there in the first place” (Rewind Design, 2010).

4.3.2 Interview with Stijn Gilles
Gilles seemed happy to share his experience and knowledge about the subject, but only had time for an email-interview. He is together with Liesbeth Wouters the owner of the concept and the shop in Antwerp. They were both graduated psychologists after which they worked with journalism and fashion design. The initial idea of Rewind design was to have a clear concept about eco-design where all products in the shop were to be strictly bound to rules where the products had to fulfil a minimum of the eight values brought up initially. The products had to be available in series and be reproducible with short notice. The design had to be design and no cheap second hand fiddling. Rewind Design’s initial idea never changed.

4.3.3 Positioning
Rewind Design wants to be positioned as a unique brand in the field of eco-design. To them it is important that the customer see their concept as an eye-opener and a surprise as to what there is to do with materials that were already used as something else. They also want to work as an educational function where the customer sees the shop as a place to take knowledge of the possibilities that waste actually offers, and bring that inspiration back home and rethink their daily habits.
4.3.4 Upcycled textile products
Gilles thinks that there is an interest for upcycled textile products because of their uniqueness and the story behind the products that comes with them. Those are relevant factors in order to differentiate towards traditionally produced textile products. Approximately 15 per cent of Rewind Design’s product assortment consists of products by upcycled textile material. The choice of bringing in textile material lied within the diversity of products that according to Gilles is important in a shop like theirs, where they want to surprise the customer with the innovativeness of re-using material. The more different materials they offer, the better they can surprise the customer. Still, upcycled textile products are everywhere and a lot happens around that area, but as of now they only offer a small selection of it in their shop. When asking about the control of production of the upcycled textile products Gilles says that they do not have control of anything as they work with external designers and their suppliers, but they have access to gathering information if necessary. And they do know where each product was made. The material composition is marked on all upcycled textile products, either as a standard label or, where standard information is not available, as a note where as much information as possible about the original material is presented. They focus more on their eight values and see them as sufficient information. When it comes to visible trademarks in upcycled textile products Gilles assures that only their own brand name or the designer’s name is visible on the product or on the label. They never came across the necessity of taking into consideration the use of other trademarks in their sold upcyled textile products. The upcycled textile products offered at Rewind Design are very expensive so their typical customer is interested in design and creativeness and has a high income.

4.3.5 Consumers’ attitudes
Since Gilles started working with upcycling he has seen a tendency towards a difference in the way people think about it. In the beginning people thought that since products are made from waste they should be cheaper than other products. But in a shop where products have a label explaining the process, production and the whole story behind it they start to understand the value of the textiles. That is why Gilles thinks it is important to label your products correctly, with a little bit information that brings something extra to the relationship between customer and product.

4.3.6 Future aspects
When asking about the possibility of only selling upcycled textile products Gilles states a clear negation. In their shop they are too dependent on the diversity of materials and products in their shop. However, using upcycled textile materials is a great source of innovation and makes a possibility for different business ideas than Rewind Design. As an example he mention “Ta Daa” where upcycling of textiles make children’s clothes. Gilles does not think that upcycling of textile material is a way of fashion as it has existed since mankind started wearing textiles. It is nothing new, but the many different ways of bringing it to the customer makes it new, hence there is a fashion as within the traditional textile industry – in the design and use of material, but not in the way of upcycling itself. To increase the interest for upcycled textile products Gilles finds it important to present the products in the right setting, a setting that tells the customer that even though the products are of re-used material they are
new. Therefore the surrounding should be clean and highlighting each product. He also emphasizes the magnitude of making the customer feel comfortable and not forced to buy because it is for a good cause. It should be a pleasure to buy the product, not an obligation.
5. Analysis

Here, a collocation of the respondents’ views in relation to each other and to the theoretical framework will be presented together with an analysis of the most significant areas of the subject, derived from emphasized mentions from the interviewees.

5.1 Correlation

Upcycling of textile materials is still a new matter, especially within business. But the consequences of overconsumption of textiles is leading us into a dead end where the increasing demand has to be met in a different way than with constantly new production. The new thinking ways of the authors in the theoretical framework discusses the opportunities as well as drawbacks of upcycling of textile materials. Can these stances be applied to the empirical findings of this study where three companies selling upcycled textile products show their opinions and experiences about this phenomenon based on the real-time picture? The companies also take into consideration all the vital aspects of selling upcycled textile material, as opposed to the authors of the theoretical framework where the subject is often discussed from one perspective at a time.

5.2 The significance of price

Goldsmith (2009) argues that upcycled products prove to be successful when the price to the end customer is reasonable. Gilles, Beutels and Baele all underscore the impact that the price has on who their customers are, and Baele along with Beutels clearly see the challenge of meeting the younger population’s demand with their current price range. Baele underlines the difficulty in bringing a preference for creativity rather than low price among the younger consumers. A price that is reasonable to the customer is evidently vital, but reasonable is an ambiguous word with different meanings to different people. As Baele expresses it, many people think that the prices in IKEA are reasonable for instance, but when the customers come to her shop, a higher price should be accepted as reasonable because of the story behind the products as they bring a higher environmental and emotional value. At Rewind Design and Hanne Beutels the upcycled textile products are expensive. But Gilles and Beutels argue that their customers come looking for design, and in that target group people are keener on spending, as the products are unique. Gilles also emphasizes the importance of informing the customer about what fuels the high price. By enlightening the heritage of the material, the production process and the innovativeness of the product it is possible to create a relationship between the customer and the product, and the higher price will seem more justified.

According to Morgan and Birtwistle (2009) the lower price that many fashionable textile products have today bring about low expectations of the product and creates less emotional attachment which makes it easier to throw away too soon. The upcycled textile products of HADHI, Rewind Design and Hanne Beutels were not made in mass production in a low-wage country and therefore cannot be sold at discount prices, which is not at all the goal. These products are not supposed to be wear and tear. The challenge is to make the customer take this value of each product for granted. Gilles claims that for the upcycled textile products to be
accepted as reasonably priced an increase in demand for design combined with eco-friendliness is necessary. Baele accentuates that the price for upcycled products should be seen as reasonable for what the customer actually receives, not compared to similar-looking products sold in discount stores. According to Baele it is the creativity in upcycling that makes the concept interesting and popular, and together with Beutels and Gilles she is convinced that it is the surprise in the products that attracts the interest and also makes the extra incitement towards bringing out the wallet. It is exciting, unknown and new.

5.3 Strategy of change
The desire to see more companies take responsibility to help reduce climate change is met by upcycling of textile materials because of the use of old material, creation of green jobs, decrease in waste, reduction of emissions etcetera (Cosper, 2011). Braungart and McDonough (2002) construe the importance of companies choosing to sell upcycled products as they contribute to the strategy of change where closed-loop cycles are of common goal. Baele, Beutels and Gilles are all consistent in their product assortment where strict rules reign over which products will make it to their collection or not. They fully take on the business responsibility of reducing climate change where their goals are concepts like fair trade, eco-design and sustainability. Their business ideas presuppose this responsibility in the hope of enough customers demanding these prerequisites. As these companies follow the closed-loop abundantly it instils a trust from the caring customer, knowing that everything in the shop or from the designer is of eco-friendly nature.

5.4 Uniqueness
The satisfaction of buying something new, caused by a product that has once before brought on that feeling to someone else is according to Braungart and McDonough (2002) the founding idea of upcycling. The importance to the customer of feeling special and unique is often reflected in her purchases. The story behind each product at HADHI, Rewind Design as well as Hanne Beutels has the potential of providing that feeling, as they are all unique products. No one else will have the same product. All three companies strive for unique design and for being a unique brand, as they believe the uniqueness to be the key to succeeding with these kinds of products. The stories behind the products also contributes to the creation of emotional attachment, and HADHI believes in the power of the stories associated with the products as each sold product makes everyone in the process, from producer to final customer, a winner (HADHI, 2010). Baele, Beutels and Gilles add the meaning of surprising the customer with the stories and the creativeness of re-using materials. The surprising effect they have on the customers arouses interest and will bring about the satisfactory feeling of buying something new, made of something old.

5.5 Upcycling as fashion
Fashion is a way of behaving, and behaviour becomes fashion after being accepted by a group of people (Yurchisin & Johnson, 2010). Upcycling is on the market and is going with success so far, which means it has been accepted. Customers’ attitudes towards the subject will
determine whether upcycling of textile materials will prove to be a way of fashion or not, if it will be short-lived or face a brighter future. According to Marsden (2010) it is impossible to know as it is still in its starting phase, but she believes together with Wang (2011), Swanberg (2011) and Wright (2005) that there has to be a future for upcycling of textile materials due to its sustainable solution to the fashion industry’s scarcity of raw materials. Baele, Beutels and Gilles are also of shared opinion that there is no way back. Gilles says that upcycling of textile material is not even something new, it is the way you present the product that is new. Thus, there is an indication saying that upcycling of textile materials is not a fashion and that it is becoming a necessity on the textile market, however, the way the products are designed and presented could just as any other textile products become victims of fashion.

5.6 The difficulty of trademark infringement and labelling
Anderson (2009) discusses one drawback with upcycling arising when visible brand names from the original material are used in upcycled products. It could cause lawsuits, complications and confusion for the customer. None of the upcycled textile products at HADHI, Rewind Design or Hanne Beutels have this. Beutels, who is in control of the production process herself, removes brand names if there are any, so the consideration is there, but more in concern of the design. Because of the absence of visible brand names the interviewed companies never encountered any problems with the manufacturer of the original material and the customers never had to be mislead by reason of this. Nevertheless, Baele and Gilles do not know whether their suppliers already faced these problems or if they already have set up deals with the original brand owners, leaving the retailers with no concern in this matter.

Duhbe (2010) and Hayes & Jones (2006) write about the customers’ increasing enquiry of information regarding products’ heritage, production, material composition and such. Hence, the importance of labelling is accentuated. Beutels gives no information about the material in her products, but neither does she get any requests for it. She therefore considers it adequate to tell the customer from what kind of item the material comes from, if desired. At Rewind Design material composition is presented to the extent that is possible with upcycled textile products, but they put more focus on their own criteria, arguing that customers find that more interesting. At HADHI there is knowledge about the material composition in the upcycled textile products, but it is not always available to the consumer. At HADHI as much information as possible about the manufacturer is published in their labels to add extra value to the product. Information about the production of bags from Hanne Beutels is available on her website, as all products are made from the same creator. At Rewind Design however, information about manufacturing is not displayed in the shop. But they claim to be able to receive information about it if required by the customer.
5.7 Customers’ attitudes

5.7.1 Benefits
According to Cosper (2011) there are people who would pay more for green products if they were convinced that they offered direct benefits, indicating the importance of the seller to emphasize the advantages of upcycling of textile products to gain the customers’ trust and will to spend more. Baele, Beutels and Gilles all verify this theory by focusing on telling the story behind the products and their benefits compared to traditionally manufactured textile products. Rather than just labelling the products as “green” they communicate a more thorough explanation of the environmental value an upcycled textile product brings to the market.

5.7.2 The younger generation
Baele and Beutels both mention their wish for younger customers to find their way to upcycled products. Morgan and Birtwistle (2009) conclude that an increase in awareness of textiles’ lifecycles would favour the attitudes towards upcycling. The younger generation needs more attractive reasons to look for upcycled products and the study suggests more media coverage as a way of communicating these reasons. Baele and Beutels also believe in media as the strongest way to reach the younger customers. The younger generation makes a great potential target group as they are the ones obtaining education in school about this issue in contrast to the older generations, and therefore Baele and Beutels wish that their knowledge could turn into interest and action. But they also believe that it is a target group that is difficult to reach as they are not as keen on spending due to student budgets, unemployment, low salaries etcetera. Still, Baele believe them to be the most active consumers and thus she sees potential in them. Gilles on the other hand considers their upcycled textile products to be too expensive to allure the younger customers, but other products bring them to the shop and therefore they are still potential customers even for the upcycled textile products.

5.7.3 Attitudes
As opposed to Morgan and Birtwistle’s (2009) findings, Wang (2011) writes about the current changing of consumers’ attitudes towards upcycling. There is awareness about waste and its effects. Baele, Beutels and Gilles have also acknowledged this awareness but as Beutels puts it, the awareness has to be pushed and enlarged at the same time as it has to come naturally in the customers’ own pace. The results from the interviews and from the theoretical framework are harmonised in believing that there is enough knowledge and interest amongst people and that it is increasing in time, simply because there is no way back. With the attention environmental debates get in the media it is according to Swanberg (2011) inevitable that people get influenced in their mind-set, resulting in a rise in consciousness. That is the proof of a future where the concept of upcycling has a chance to expand and succeed.

5.7.4 Environmental knowledge
Zsóka divides environmental awareness into five components. One of them is the environmental knowledge. Without the knowledge, there will be no action taken to help maintaining the nature. A person’s environmental knowledge determines how the other components will be shaped. As Baele, Beutels and Gilles argue, education and
communication is therefore important to increase the knowledge and consequently the actions taken by consumers. Emotional values are another important element to affect within the customer, as it influences the attitudes. HADHI, Hanne Beutels and Rewind Design have in common that they sell upcycled textile products with characters appealing to the customer on more than the levels of price and design, as well as putting an effort in telling the story about the product to reach the customer on an emotional level. They wish to be able to influence and guide the decisions of more than their current consumers, but there is not yet enough environmental knowledge communicated to make up for the fact that the products are made of waste, and still they sometimes cost more than similar products made from new material. However, they do take responsibility of educating, themselves. In the shops and on their websites they inform the customer about the heritage of their upcycled textile products which gives an explanation to why they are sometimes more expensive. Hence, the interviewed companies do not rely entirely on the world and media to lead the customers to them, but they also choose to educate them and to inspire them to bring a new way of thinking back home and to keep in mind next time they go shopping.
6. Discussion

This chapter contains a discussion based on the analysis in the preceding chapter. I will here discuss the analysis together with the research area to draw my own conclusions with the aim of reaching a result to this thesis.

As there is an increase in interest for eco-friendly products, an evident demand for environmentally responsible companies coming from the consumers and a change in customers’ attitudes towards the re-use of waste, there lies a prominence in consistency within the companies selling upcycled products. HADHI, Hanne Beutels and Rewind Design all work 100 per cent with “green” products as they believe the importance of consistency as being vital in instilling trust to the customer who cares. Customers finding their way to a shop offering upcycled products will expect the total assortment to be of environmentally friendly nature. So for a brand offering upcycled products to succeed, the environmental values and the consistent product assortment has to be critical factors to both company and customer. Selling upcycled textile products alone calls for the same prerequisites where the customers’ and the company’s goals interlaces. The difference is that the product assortment is less diverse in material, but innovation is still easily accomplished.

The discussion about ways of fashion was brought up to introduce an understanding of how waste emerges from the mind-set that fashion brings to the consumer. But more importantly, it was mentioned to raise the question whether upcycling could just be a fashion, a way of behaviour that will ultimately be rejected. It is impossible to know, but theory together with empirics correspond that there must be an absolute future for upcycling instead of it being a way of fashion. As the textile consumption is bigger in Europe than elsewhere in the world the low prices and thus insignificant items fuels obliviousness where rejecting items do not arouse guilt. The “built-in obsolescence” described by Braungart & McDonough (2002) aims to avoid any affectionate connection to the product. To offer upcycled textile products for the same discount prices would contradict the purpose of the concept, as the reason to why upcycling is necessary is overconsumption and the preterm rejection with no emotional attachment to the items. By selling upcycled textile products with a contributing story and a unique design for a justified price it brings a larger emotional feeling to the product and the wear and tear spirit diminishes. As can be seen, the consumer’s attitude towards upcycled textile products is very dependant on the price. As a vendor you cannot change the customer’s access to money, but the products can attract the customer on a level where the importance of price is lessened. Price also seems to be the most critical variable when discussing the prospects of only selling upcycled textile products. Whether a product will make it or not will depend on the reasonableness of the price where the customer is willing to pay for waste. It is also clear that there is a belief in a bright future for upcycled textile products, but to move away from the risk of falling into a fashion fad it is necessary for the vendor to vary within the concept of upcycling. Textile materials are made for variation, as it is a flexible material to work with. Well-known fashion designers who make creations from upcycled materials will charge huge amounts, but mainly due to their brand names. To overcharge people for
waste might just be a trend that eventually will pass, but upcycled textile products sold at reasonable prices do not have to be a fashion as vendors and manufacturers can adapt the products to trends and offer changing innovative collections. But as mentioned earlier, the different collections and way of designs of the products might join other textile products in becoming victims of fashion. The use of upcycled textiles in famous fashion houses inspires trendsetters and designers worldwide. Even if these initiatives are just temporary, they affect attitudes and increase the awareness of upcycling among fashion-conscious consumers.

Despite contradicting opinions, the results of this study indicate that there is enough knowledge and interest about upcycling for the concept to survive, as long as the price is reasonable. However, it is agreed that environmental knowledge needs to increase further. And the prerequisites are supporting the concept since overconsumption of textile materials is only increasing; hence raw material founding the industry is still in abundance. In contrast to the industry using traditionally manufactured materials, who will face major challenges due to the scarcity of raw materials, vendors selling upcycled textile products are facing a future with great potential where market shares may be easier to get hold of as other companies are looking for alternative solutions. Therefore, companies find selling upcycled textile products as a way of sidestepping the hurdles that the textile industry will encounter.

As brought up earlier, the increasing demand for new textile products must be confronted, and as seen in this thesis, upcycling is a way of doing that without using new raw material. Since a large part of the textile products that are victims of overconsumption are clothes derived from cheap, fast fashion – clothes made from upcycled textile materials are the most pertinent items to meet the demand in focus of this thesis. In there lies an already discovered potential within upcycling. The interviewees did not sell clothes themselves, but in the interviews they showed a positive view about the notion of solely selling upcycled textile products, taking clothes as an example.

HADHI, Hanne Beutels and Rewind Design have all chosen to sell upcycled textile products as a part of their assortment due to the vision and philosophy of the company. They take a clear stand in what they wish to offer and they are not afraid of being critical when choosing suppliers. They want to be able to answer all questions regarding the products and to be proud of the answers in order to demonstrate their genuineness. Upcycled products are in contrast to recycled products designed to decrease the iceberg of waste, by using the waste as raw material for something else, and that is why these companies are attracted to the concept. Companies interested in the concept of upcycling in the first place, are companies with a high degree of environmental awareness, so for them upcycling fulfils the requirements of their eco-friendly philosophy. But the environmental genuineness can be difficult to communicate, as humans are selfish in nature. The aim of selling upcycled products is not to try to convert people into not thinking about themselves. Instead it is about seeing the opportunity in turning the selfish thinking of the consumer into the action of buying re-used material, where the environmental thinking is included in the selfish behaviour.
Since the interviewed companies had no experience with the problems of trademark infringement, and the theoretical discussion about it did not bring any examples within the area of textiles; I draw the conclusion together with Beutels that trademarks are easier to avoid and remove when dealing with textiles. What is not possible to disregard in this study though, is the possibility that the interviewee’s suppliers have encountered problems and solved them prior to the delivery to the vendors, leaving them with no concern. Regarding the difficulties of labelling upcycled textile products there appears to be little or no need for information about material composition. There is more interest in need for information about the heritage of the product or the material. The interviewed companies put much effort in informing the customer about these things in particular, but there is still a risk that someone someday require the material composition and if it is of vital importance for that customer, the unbeknown retailer could loose that potential customer. However, this risk does not seem to be alarming.

A potential that is seen as notable for the survival of upcycling of textile products is the younger generation’s environmental awareness. People in intermediate school, upper secondary school, university etcetera are being educated about environmental effects and measures and thereby receive an environmental knowledge that is the perfect base for environmental action. Despite the fact that they are also the most active consumers when it comes to fashion, they still have not found their way to upcycled textile products. But as they are more in to fashion, and the uniqueness, story and innovativeness of upcycled products give an extra incentive, clothes could be the place to start, as a way of inviting the younger generation to the world of upcycling. The findings also suggest a more thorough way of communicating upcycling to younger consumers; similar use of media as conventional products, but with a focus on conviction of the direct benefits. The idea of upcycling would be unbeatable if the people who are the biggest contributors to overconsumption of textile material would learn about the consequences and have the determination to change it. A way of changing it would then be to buy something new, achieving the same satisfactory feeling of shopping, made of material that has previously given that feeling to someone else.

Baele, Beutels and Gilles value the capability of surprising the customer with their upcycled products. Baele and Gilles agree on the vantage it brings compared to other products in their assortment. Since upcycling is still something new, the element of surprising lies within the concept itself, but the more common it gets, the more difficult it will be to keep surprising. So even though the possibility of offering the customer something unforeseen makes an initial potential for upcycling, it will take much innovativeness to keep it up as more upcycled products enter the market.

The identified problem of overconsumption of textiles and its consequences that is the origin of this thesis is a major problem and too big to solve with just one measure. Obviously, to prevent this badness from continuing it is not enough to start with the waste. Measures must be taken much earlier where there is a chance of changing the shopping pattern and mind-set among consumers. But as people’s state of mind is probably one of the most difficult things to
control there is still no limpid solution. The concept of upcycling of textile materials though, is a proof that there is some kind of change in attitudes with the consumers. So, since there are yet no successful steps towards reducing the overconsumption, and the fast fashion industry is working hard and completely against the hope of reducing it, upcycling of textile materials is simply a new and alternative way of confronting the problem. And regardless of whether it is too late or not, it makes a difference that is better than nothing.
7. Conclusions and further research suggestions

The following chapter will present the conclusions drawn from this research. The research questions stated in the introductory chapter will here be answered based on the results from the interviews supported by chosen viewpoints from the theoretical framework. The final part will thereafter discuss some areas where the results from this study are not enough to get to a conclusion, hence further research will there be suggested.

7.1 Conclusive answers

To get to an answer to the principal question founding this study I will first discuss the results of the two underlying research questions. In the first one I was wondering why companies choose to offer upcycled textile products as a part of their product assortment?

Companies choosing to offer upcycled products in general are companies with a strong aim towards being an absolute environmentally friendly business. They have a passion for sustainability and hold an urge to educate their customers about their vision. By selling upcycled products they can also contribute to the environment on the behalf of the customers, hence they want to assist the customer in her environmental action, where she can keep satisfying her own needs, but with a built-in environmental concern. Why they choose to sell upcycled textile products as a part of their product assortment is because of the just mentioned opportunities upcycled products offer, and because upcycled textile products are very common in this concept. Textiles are flexible, easy to work with, exist in great variations, spur innovation, exist in an incredible abundance and therefore make an available and cheap raw material. So in the typical company dealing with upcycling there is an initial interest for eco-thinking. Why they choose to sell upcycled textile products is thus based on the decreasing effect on textile waste that it brings, together with the new job opportunities the business creates, the reduction of CO₂ emissions, the fact that no new material production is needed for their products, marketing benefits, sustainable innovation etcetera. The beauty of textiles is also the diversity in material and design, and when using leather the benefit lies within the graceful ageing of the material. The uniqueness of each product also brings an opportunity to brand building due to differentiation towards traditional textile products. Selling upcycled textile products can also be seen as a safer assortment than traditionally produced textile products because of the future scarcity of raw materials like cotton. The raw material needed to make upcycled textile products is waste and there is more than enough of that to found an industry of upcycling. Because of these challenges faced by other companies, selling upcycled textile products is thereby seen as an opportunity to take more space on the big textile market as other companies might fail in retaining their low price, mass production and quality. And due to the increasing interest and demand for eco-friendly products, the extra value incorporated in upcycled textile products is starting to become a reason to buy those products instead of one without. From such a company’s perspective it is also important to give a good feeling to the buying customer, caused by a product that is contemporary with human values and a story behind it.
The second underlying research question asked was how consumers’ attitudes towards upcycling impact the prospects of selling solely upcycled textile products?

Due to the increase in environmental awareness and knowledge among consumers today, there is a chance for the business of upcycled products to survive. The slow acceptance of waste as new and modern is contributing to achievement of selling upcycled products. The insistence of creating more environmentally conscious companies that take responsibility for their products and their lifecycle show a change in consumers’ attitudes towards an approval of eco-friendly products and the higher price it sometimes provides. However, the attitudes are still very dependent on the price. But with upcycled textile products, the innovative, unique designs and the story behind the product can attract the customer on a level where she might look past or accept the higher price. The crucial factor in whether consumers’ attitudes favour the prospects of solely upcycled textile products or not is the convincing power of the concept of the store and the product itself; where the product’s features make up for the fact that the material used is actually waste. The use of upcycled textiles at the top of the fashion industry is an inspiring prevalence to many and they affect attitudes and awareness about the area, mainly in the apparel industry. They also inspire companies who in turn inspire consumers; the more companies that choose to work with upcycled textile products, the more aware the consumers get, and the option to ignore the concept becomes harder. The evident interest that consumers have in buying textiles, proved by the extreme overconsumption, also works as a confirmation that there is a need for textile products. With the changing attitudes towards upcycling and the increased need for textile products, the prospects seem to be supported by the consumers’ attitudes.

Finally, the purpose of this thesis was to ascertain the potential of selling solely upcycled textile products from a company’s point of view:

The potential of selling solely upcycled textile products lies in the mind of the consumer and the dedication of the vendor. Starting with the consumer, there lies a potential in selling upcycled textile products to the younger generation, from intermediate school and forward, due to their environmental awareness and their substantial tendency of shopping for fashion. Thus, because of the increasing demand for fashion items, clothes made from upcycled materials particularly make a great potential to this concept. Another potential that upcycled textile products have over traditionally manufactured textile products is the emotional attachments a product can evoke through its uniqueness, innovative design, surprising effect and story. A company offering solely upcycled textile products with an emotional attachment, a story behind it, a uniqueness and a possibility of giving the customer the satisfactory feeling of shopping – only caused by textiles that have already fulfilled that function at an earlier stage. Through this, upcycled textile products meet the consumers’ demand for textiles at the same time as the consumer is steered into environmental action. When it comes to the dedication of the vendor it is about believing in the concept and keeping a consistent product assortment where the customer develops a trust for the brand. To only sell upcycled textile products the products have to be trendy, innovative and beautiful to make up for the fact that
they were made from textile waste – and if the products can do that, together with a confidence-inspiring vendor, the chances of succeeding are good. Because of the enormous abundance of textile waste there is much potential to accomplish the innovativeness and uniqueness of the products, as the selection is still unlimited. To achieve these success factors within the upcycled textile products, the vendor should see the significance of labelling the products with the essential information coming from this concept, such as where the material comes from, what it was originally, how the product was made, who made it etcetera as well as communicating the genuine environmental values. That is, information creating the story behind the product which makes another incentive to purchase, hence another potential.

7.2 Theoretical and managerial implications
As a contribution to the theoretical knowledge and understanding of this debate, I can, based on this study, enhance the importance of the younger consumers in this matter. They make a potential for upcycled textile products that might not yet have been identified. To get the concept of upcycling going and gather further popularity, vendors selling upcycled textile products should target the younger population to a larger extent than is done today. They should also identify the consumers possessing the environmental knowledge that make a potential customer to their products. Another important factor worth adding to the theoretical understanding is the value of communicating the purpose with the products and the story behind them. It is also worth mentioning that the vendor’s motive in this process goes one step further than just doing business. To convince the customer of the value of the products the vendor has to believe in them and stand 100 per cent behind them.

7.3 Further research suggestions
During the work for this thesis some additional questions that I find interesting for further research aroused. Although I find my conclusion adequate, there are other approaches to this subject and its problems.

That the younger generation was about to have such impact on the potential of solely selling upcycled textile products was not expected in this thesis. Therefore no definition was made to clear out exactly who they are. Neither was there enough discussion about how to attract this target group, as that did not lie within the focus. Therefore I recommend further research about how to communicate these environmental issues to this generation and how to create that extra incentive towards purchase. A quantitative research specifically among younger consumers about their opinions and awareness would add an interesting input to this subject.

Another suggestion would be to study the potential of selling solely upcycled textile products entirely from the consumers’ perspective through customer surveys at the few companies who already do it. As this study came to a conclusion where clothes made of upcycled textiles made up a potential, it would be interesting to look further into how far that concept could go and if it could come close to competing with the bigger fashion chains.
Since there is a lack of literature about upcycling of textile materials, a suggestion for further research is also to make a more quantitative study and involve more companies to get a more generalizable result.
7. Reference List


APPENDIX 1

Questions Hanne Beutels

1. Please tell me a little bit about who you are and about how you started this brand. When did you start?
2. What material do you use and where does it come from?
3. Is all material in the bags from old, used material?
4. Why did you choose to make the bags out of upcycled textile material instead of new material?
5. How do you want to be positioned in the customer’s mind (environmental, trendy)?
6. Do you have full control of where the material you use come from and where it was produced?
7. Is the customer able to receive information about the material in the product (material composition)? How are they labelled?
8. Are there visible trademarks/brand names in your products (like in Terracycle’s products)?
   - Do you have to take into consideration the use of trademarks in bags?
9. Do you think that consumers have the right attitude towards upcycling for an upcycling brand (like yourself) to succeed and stay profitable?
10. Why do you think there is an interest for upcycled textile products?
11. Do you think that solely selling upcycled textile products (could also be clothes) would be possible (like a shop only with that)? Why/why not?
12. Do you think that upcycling is a way of fashion (a short-lived phenomena that will ultimately be rejected)?
13. Is there enough interest from consumers for an upcycling brand to succeed?
   - What do you think could increase the interest in upcycled textile products?
14. How would you describe the typical customer of your products? (Gender, age, occupation etc.)
APPENDIX 2

Questions HADHI & Rewind Design
Please keep in mind that the study is about upcycling of textile materials. However, where I do not mention textile materials, the question is more general.

1. Please tell me a little bit about who you are and about your connection to HADHI/RD.
2. What was the idea from the beginning, how did you want the product assortment in the shop to look like? (100% environment.)
   Did it change since the initial idea, and if so – how and why?
3. How do you want to position HADHI/RD in the customer’s mind (environmentally friendly, trendy, innovative..)?
4. Approximately, how many of your sold products are upcycled textile products (in %)?
5. Why do you choose to sell upcycled textile products?
6. Do you have full control of where the upcycled textile products come from and where they were produced?
7. Is the customer able to receive information about the material in the textile product (material composition)?
   How are they labelled?
8. Are there visible trademarks/brand names in your offered upcycled textile products (like in Terracycle’s products)?
   Do you have to take into consideration the use of trademarks in your sold upcycled textile product?
9. Do you think that consumers have the right attitude towards upcycling for an upcycling brand to succeed and stay profitable today?
   Do you see a difference in attitudes towards upcycled textile products as opposed to other upcycled products (more or less interest)?
10. Why do you think there is an interest for upcycled textile products?
11. Do you think that solely selling upcycled textile products (could also be clothes) would be possible?
    Why/why not?
12. Do you think that upcycling is a way of fashion (a short-lived phenomena that will ultimately be rejected)?
13. Is there enough interest from consumers for an upcycling brand to succeed?
    What do you think could increase the interest in upcycled textile products?
14. How would you describe the typical customer of your upcycled textile products?
    (Gender, age, occupation etc.)