

FAST



MAPPING THE RHETORICS OF FAST FASHION ON THE WEB



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GROUP 4

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MA IN COMMUNICATION
DESIGN, A.Y. 2022/2023

ULTRA FAST

MAPPING THE RHETORICS OF FAST FASHION ON THE WEB

D E N -
S I T Y
G N +



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ULTRA FAST

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INTRO

The buzz around fast fashion retailers, how sustainable and ethical they are, has been circulating in the media for quite a while. The brands like Shein, H&M, Zara, Uniqlo, etc. are actively criticised by green activists and conscious consumers, especially of younger generations. However, the number of younger consumers does not fall down, yet remains the same. Surprisingly, one of the most important groups of customers of mass-market brands are teenagers and young adults due to the affordability of these brands and fast production of replicated catwalk trends in their new collections (Vox). According to Good On You, Zara developed a business model where it takes the company only 2 weeks to produce the clothes, while Shein cut this process down to 3 days.

In order to investigate and map down the current situation, the research on the fast fashion phenomenon was divided into 3 parts (research questions) that highlight 3 different sides of the issue. The first one is the analysis of Google research results with regard to the common perception of fast fashion online and fast fashion companies and what is the general tone of these Google results. The second one reflects the

transition in the approach of fashion retailers toward their sustainability policy on their official websites and how they change their visual and verbal rhetoric to follow contemporary sustainable trends. Finally, the third question is based on the analysis of thumbnails and titles on YouTube that have to do with the “fast fashion hauls” types of videos. The idea of the research is to make the study more diverse and candid by covering the issue from different perspectives (an overall perception of the fast fashion issue, the side of the companies, and the user-generated content).

As a result, a broader picture of the problem can be depicted by seeing what are the most discussed topics online on fast fashion and how often they relate directly to the biggest fast fashion retailers, how companies use very specific vocabulary and images to greenwash themselves for which they are being accused often by the activists and governments (The Guardian), and what YouTube user-generated content of fashion bloggers and fast fashion customer can tell us about the issue in general and consumer behaviour patterns.

Q1

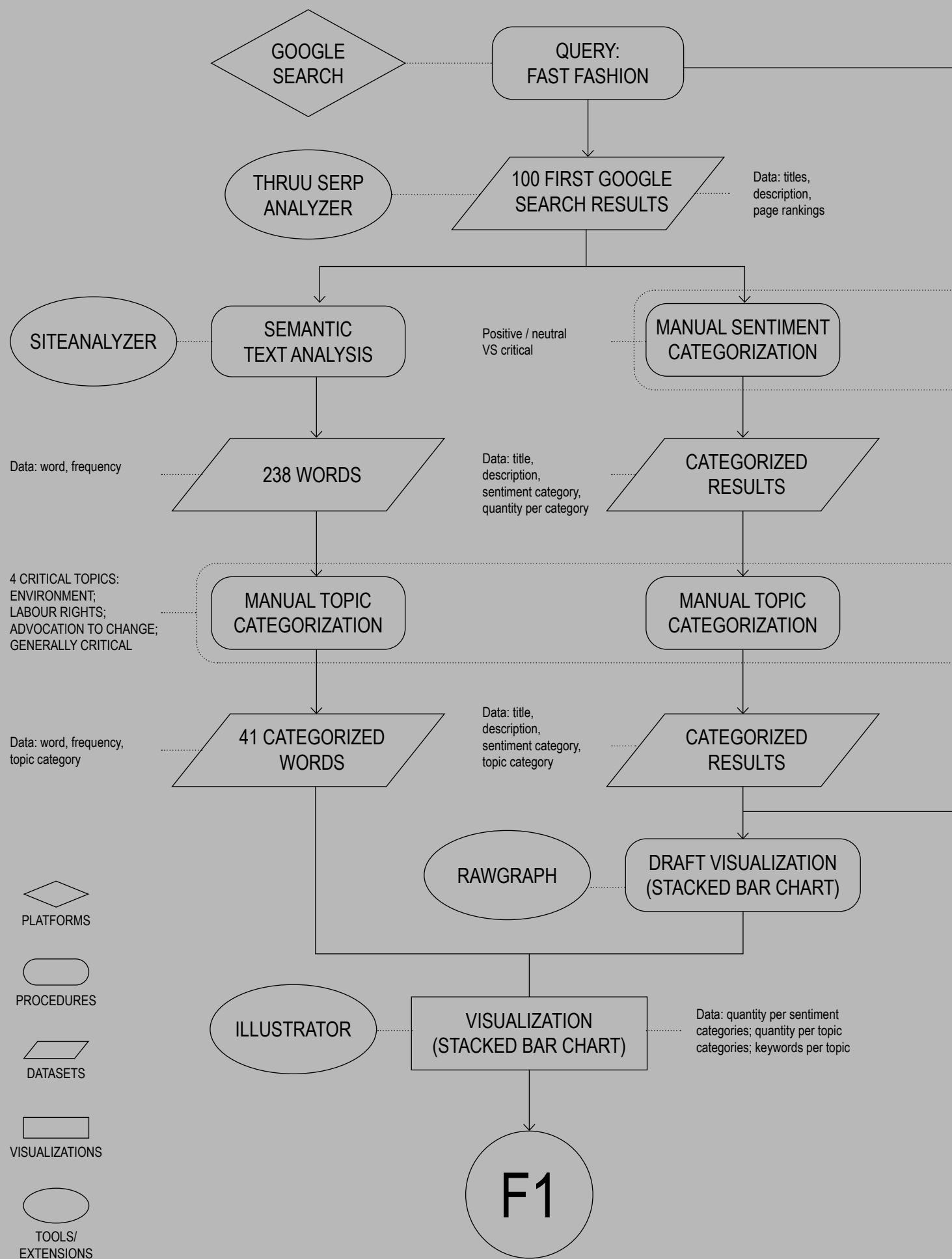
WHAT DO GOOGLE SEARCH RESULTS REVEAL ABOUT THE COMMON DISCOURSE ABOUT FAST FASHION AND FAST FASHION COMPANIES?

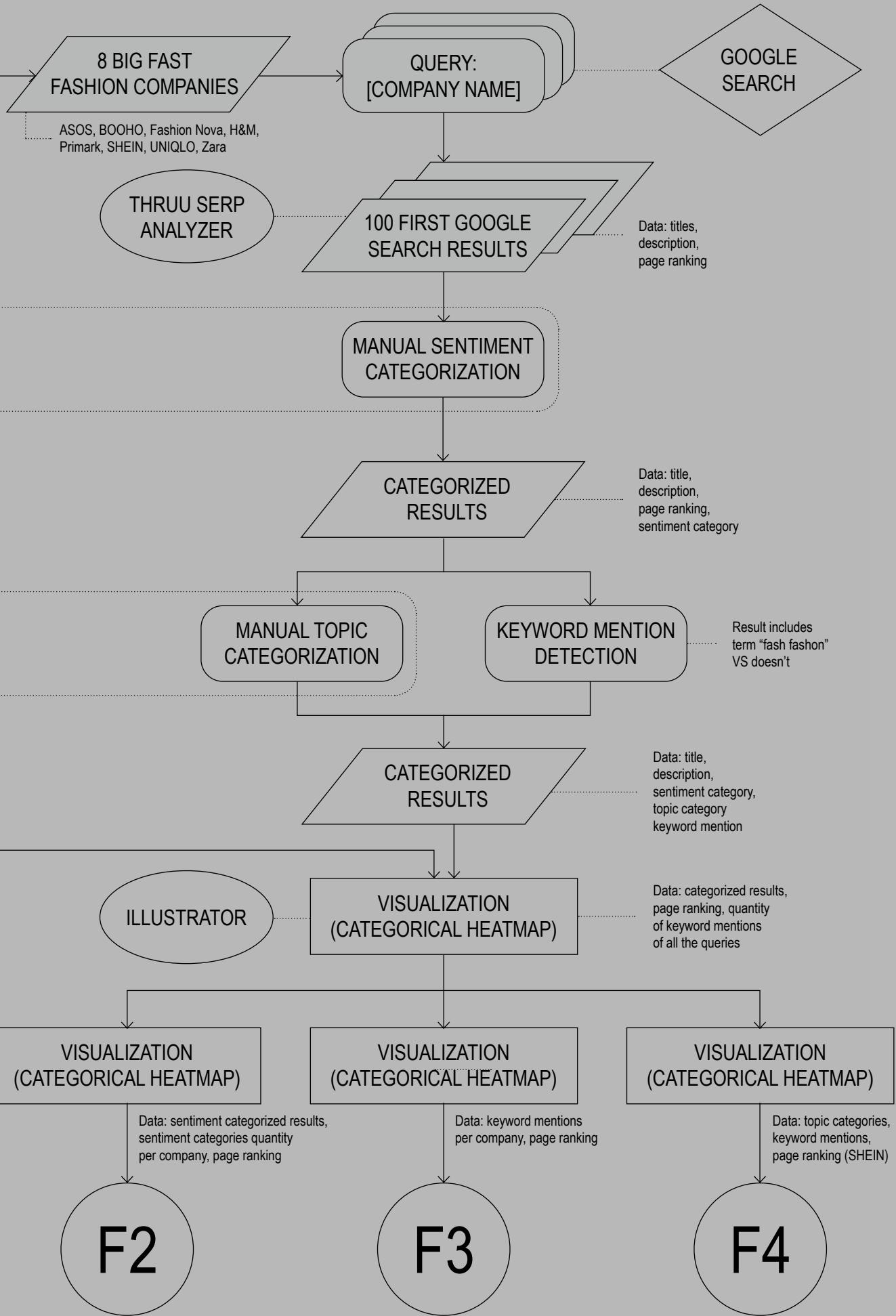
*The data employed for all the following evaluations were classified as relevant on Google Search on November 7th 2022 with the following settings: English language and United States as location.

Coined after the definition of “fast food”, the term “fast fashion” technically refers to “the reproduction of highly fashionable clothes at high speed and low cost” (Collins English dictionary). Such expression sounds neutral on its own as it refers to such generic and undeniable properties of a very popular sector and has been around since the 90s. Nonetheless, it was never as popular as in recent years, when concerns about the ethics of this industry quickly increased. The actual usage of the term seems to have become very specific to this kind of criticism, rather than neutrally addressing the whole sector.

Looking at search results returns a very valuable representation of the common perception around a certain topic. The Google Search results* for the keyword “fast fashion” were compared to the search results for the query of very big fast fashion brands: ASOS, Boohoo, Fashion Nova, H&M, Primark, Shein, Uniqlo and Zara.

The goal was to highlight the most common usage of the term “fast fashion” and what topics it was most linked to. Then we observed how involved were single fast fashion brands in the same topics and how often they were actually linked to the concept of fast fashion itself.



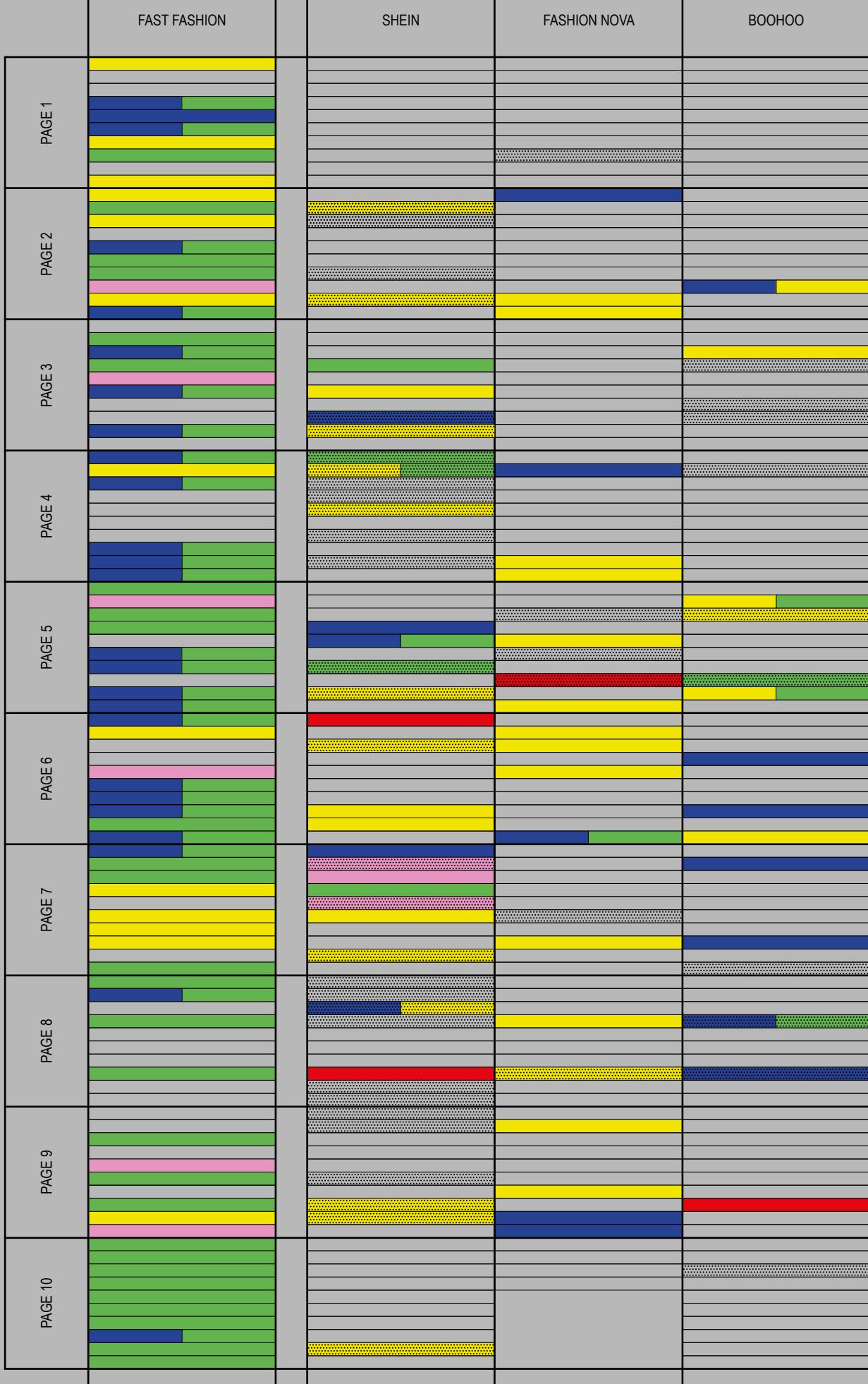


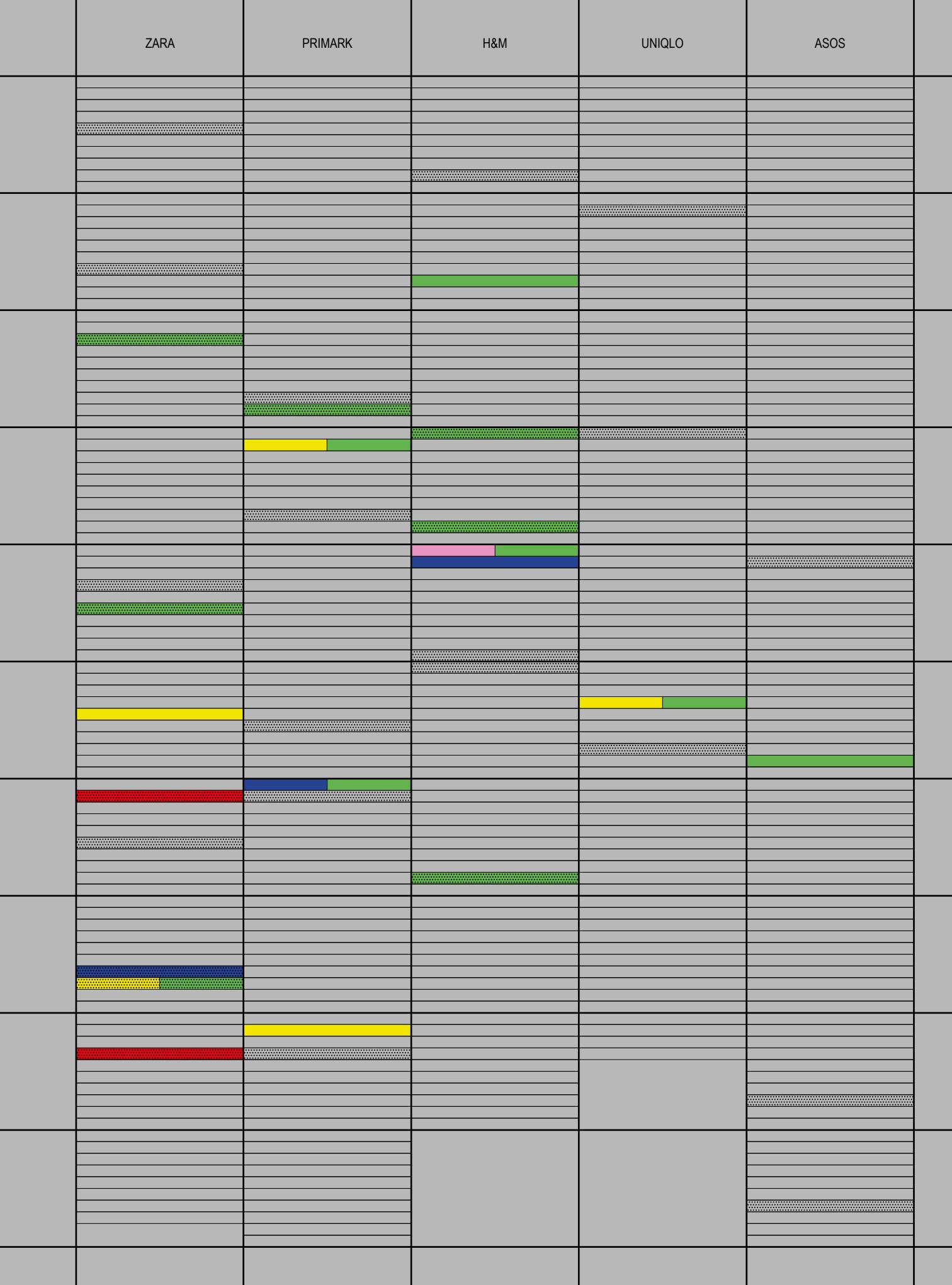
GOOGLE SEARCH RESULT
RESULT THAT MENTIONS
THE TERM "FAST FASHION"

ENVIRONMENT
LABOUR RIGHTS

GENERAL CRITICAL
DESIGN THEFT

ADVOCATE
FOR CHANGE





ENVIRONMENT

Sustainability
Impact
Environment
Climate
Planet
Waste

Greenwash
Earth
Damaging
Pollute
Destroy
Unsustainable

28 RESULTS

ENVIRONMENT + LABOUR RIGHTS

Problem
Cost
Shocking
Disadvantage
Pretend

Bad
Worse
Affect
Nightmare
Threat

13 RESULTS

Decelerate
Rethink
Slow down
Alternative

Ditch
Avoid
Change
Reject

ADVOCATION FOR CHANGE

6 RESULTS

NEUTRAL OR POSITIVE

28 RESULTS

F1

The majority of Google Search results to the query “fast fashion” talk about the phenomenon in a critical way.

QUESTION 1
→ FINDING 1

Looking at the titles and description of the first 100 Google Search results for the query “fast fashion”, 72% are critical. 52 results address environmental issues, 25 address the labour rights theme (in 24 cases these topics overlap), 6 refer to change or ditch fast fashion and 13 are generally critical. The most recurring words are “sustainability”, “impact” and “environment” (and derivatives of these words).

LABOUR RIGHTS

Injustice
Manufacturing
Laborer
Justice

1 RESULT

F2

The Google Search results about single fast fashion companies don't share the same tone, with an average 10% of critical results.

QUESTION 1

→ FINDING 2

Looking at the titles and description of the first 100 Google Search results for 8 big fast fashion companies (ASOS, Boohoo, Fashion Nova, H&M, Primark, SHEIN, Uniqlo and Zara), the average amount of critical results is 10%. These critical arguments never appear in the first page (that shows 10 results by default), they are most frequent in pages 6 and 7. In addition to the main topics emerging from the "fast fashion" query, another significant topic that recurs in reference to different companies is the design theft from other brands and independent designers.

[REDACTED] GOOGLE SEARCH RESULT

[REDACTED] CRITICAL TOWARDS
THE PHENOMENON

	SHEIN	FASHION NOVA	BOOHOO	ZARA	PRIMARK	H&M	UNIQLO	ASOS
PAGE 1								
PAGE 2								
PAGE 3								
PAGE 4								
PAGE 5								
PAGE 6								
PAGE 7								
PAGE 8								
PAGE 9								
PAGE 10								

F3

The term “fast fashion” rarely appears in the Google Search results page of the biggest fast fashion companies.

QUESTION 1
→ FINDING 3

Looking at the titles and description of the first 100 Google Search results for 8 big fast fashion companies (ASOS, Boohoo, Fashion Nova, H&M, Primark, SHEIN, Uniqlo and Zara), the words “fast fashion” only appear in 8% of the results on average, confirming that the term is barely linked to its actual actors in the public discourse.

[] GOOGLE SEARCH RESULT

[.....] RESULT THAT MENTIONS
THE TERM “FAST FASHION”

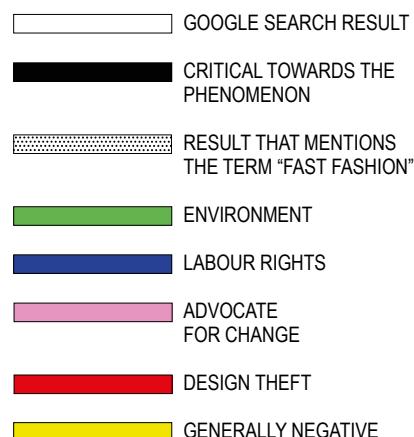
	SHEIN	FASHION NOVA	BOOHOO	ZARA	PRIMARK	H&M	UNIQLO	ASOS
PAGE 1								
PAGE 2								
PAGE 3								
PAGE 4								
PAGE 5								
PAGE 6								
PAGE 7								
PAGE 8								
PAGE 9								
PAGE 10								

F4

The company that returns the most critical Google Search results and is most linked to the term “fast fashion” is Shein.

QUESTION 1
→ FINDING 4

The brand with the highest number of controversial results is Shein (29%), and it's also the one that is most associated with the term “fast fashion”, which appears in 32% of Google Search results. It's also the brand returning the highest number of critical articles regarding the environmental issue.



SHEIN (29 critical results)

<p>https://www.nytimes.com/style/shein-clothing</p> <p>The People's Republic of Shein - The New York Times</p> <p>Sep 1, 2022 — But the pop-ups are part of an effort to make the Chinese fast-fashion company seem less mysterious. Shein — officially pronounced "she-in," ...</p>	<p>https://www.theguardian.com/fashion/apr/shein-th...</p> <p>Shein: the unacceptable face of throwaway fast fashion</p> <p>Apr 10, 2022 — Predicated on the "test and repeat" model, made famous by Inditex and H&M, just 6% of Shein's inventory remains in stock for more than 90 days.</p>
<p>https://www.thecut.com/2022/10/shein-is-treating-wor...</p> <p>Shein Is Even Worse Than You Thought - The Cut</p> <p>Oct 17, 2022 — A new investigation by the UK broadcaster Channel 4 has uncovered details about the business practices of Chinese fast-fashion company Shein ...</p>	<p>https://dailyhive.com/vancouver/shein-investigation...</p> <p>British investigation shows Shein is MUCH WORSE than you ...</p> <p>Oct 20, 2022 — Most people know that Shein, the Chinese fast fashion brand you cannot escape if you use the internet, is terrible for the planet.</p>
<p>https://www.vox.com/the-goods/shein-future-of-fast...</p> <p>Shein is the future of fast fashion. Is that a good thing? - Vox</p> <p>Aug 10, 2021 — Shein was first launched in 2008 under the domain Sheinside, as a site that sold wedding dresses and women's fashion geared toward US and ...</p>	<p>https://directory.goodonyou.eco/brand/shein</p> <p>SHEIN - Sustainability Rating - Good On You Directory</p> <p>SHEIN's environment rating is 'very poor'. It has fast fashion traits such as on trend styles, and regular new arrivals. It uses few eco-friendly materials.</p>
<p>https://www.wired.com/backchannel/longreads</p> <p>Fast, Cheap, and Out of Control: Inside Shein's Sudden Rise</p> <p>May 4, 2022 — Fast, Cheap, and Out of Control: Inside Shein's Sudden Rise. The Chinese company has become a fast-fashion juggernaut by appealing to budget- ...</p>	<p>https://www.bloomberg.com/opinion/articles/shein...</p> <p>Shein's Fast-Fashion Waste Problem Won't Be Fixed by Resale</p> <p>3 days ago — In 2012, a group of Chinese entrepreneurs with backgrounds in online search founded Shein. Rather than follow the fashion runways for hints as ...</p>
<p>https://www.just-style.com/news/shein-pilots-fashion...</p> <p>Shein pilots fashion resale platform amid documentary ...</p> <p>Oct 18, 2022 — The fast-fashion online retailer Shein is the latest brand to move towards a circular fashion model with the launch of its recent platform ...</p>	<p>https://www.panaprium.com/blogs/shein</p> <p>Shein Eco-Friendly Clothing Facts & Rating - Panaprium</p> <p>Shein is a Chinese online fashion retailer founded in 2008 in Nanjing, China, by Chris Xu. The multinational clothing-retail company creates fast fashion ...</p>
<p>https://boingboing.net/2022/10/21/ultra-fast-fashion...</p> <p>Ultra-fast fashion company Shein is 'even worse than you ...</p> <p>Ultra-fast fashion company Shein is 'even worse than you thought'. Jennifer Sandlin 4:54 am Fri Oct 21, 2022. Fastfashion. Screengrab: BBC.</p>	<p>https://www.voguebusiness.com/Sustainability/latest</p> <p>Shein's new resale programme won't make it any more ...</p> <p>Oct 18, 2022 — Shein launched resale on the same day a documentary was released about conditions in the fast fashion brand's factories.</p>
<p>https://www.greenbiz.com/article/shein-and-other-fa...</p> <p>For Shein and other fast fashion offenders, ESG-washing is ...</p> <p>Sep 10, 2022 — If reports are to be believed, Chinese fast-fashion behemoth Shein is trying to make amends, shifting its image to justify a steadily ...</p>	<p>https://www.sixthtone.com/news/the-shady-labor-pr...</p> <p>The Shady Labor Practices Underpinning Shein's Global ...</p> <p>Sep 17, 2021 — In July, Sixth Tone traveled to Guangzhou — Shein's main production base in China — and spoke with dozens of workers, factory bosses, and ...</p>
<p>https://nypost.com/2022/10/20/tiktoker-sweats-off-s...</p> <p>TikToker swears off Shein after she receives a beaten-up ...</p> <p>Oct 20, 2022 — A young woman ordered a top from Shein and was disgusted by the condition of her leather top — to the point she's sworn off buying from the ...</p>	<p>https://www.businessinsider.com/News</p> <p>Shein Factory Employees Work 18-Hour Shifts, Make 4 Cents ...</p> <p>Oct 16, 2022 — Workers who make clothes sold on Shein get as little as 4 cents for each item they make, according to a new investigation.</p>
<p>https://www.distractify.com/Home/Entertainment</p> <p>Why Is Online Retailer SHEIN So Suspiciously Cheap? We ...</p> <p>JUL 10, 2020 — SHEIN (previously known as Sheinside) is one of the fastest-growing e-commerce sites. It single-handedly revolutionized the way people shop ...</p>	<p>https://www.cnbc.com/2022/07/14/chinese-fast-fash...</p> <p>Chinese fast-fashion company Shein seeks U.S. IPO as ...</p> <p>Jul 14, 2022 — Shein, the Chinese fast-fashion giant, has faced criticism over how workers are treated at plants that manufacture apparel for the company.</p>
<p>https://nakedsecurity.sophos.com/2022/10/17/fashi...</p> <p>Fashion brand SHEIN fined \$1.9m for lying about data breach</p> <p>Oct 17, 2022 — SHEIN and ROMWE must button up their cybersecurity measures to protect consumers from fraud and identity theft. Frankly, we're surprised that ...</p>	<p>https://www.modernretail.co/retailers/thredup-is-telli...</p> <p>ThredUp is telling customers to boycott a Shein pop-up</p> <p>Jun 24, 2022 — Online clothing reseller thredUp is urging customers to boycott a pop-up shop by fast-fashion giant Shein.</p>
<p>https://think.kera.org/2022/06/07/unboxing-shein-t...</p> <p>Unboxing Shein: The real cost of cheap fashion - KERA Think</p> <p>Jun 7, 2022 — Wired contributing writer Vauhini Vara talks about Shein, a fashion brand that's part of an "ultra-fastfashion" market that negatively ...</p>	<p>https://www.technicianonline.com/opinion/opinion-thi...</p> <p>OPINION: Think twice before you buy Shein again - Technician</p> <p>5 days ago — Shein has become one of the largest e-commerce giants, surpassing both Zara and H&M. This past year, Shein passed Amazon as the most-downloaded ...</p>
<p>https://www.ask.com/News</p> <p>Fast Fashion, Explained: Here's Why Shein Clothing Is a Huge ...</p> <p>May 22, 2022 — Founded in Nanjing, China, in 2008, Shein is a relatively new entrant into the fast fashion industry. However, the company's approach allowed it ...</p>	<p>https://medium.com/age-of-awareness/heres-why-yo...</p> <p>Here's Why You Should Never Shop at Shein No Matter What</p> <p>Jul 14, 2021 — Shein is an online clothing retailer that everyone seems to shop at nowadays and their popularity is something no one can ever deny.</p>
<p>https://www.theverge.com/2022/10/12/shein-romwe...</p> <p>Shein's parent company will pay New York state \$1.9 million ...</p> <p>Oct 12, 2022 — New York Attorney General Letitia James announced a \$1.9 million penalty for Zoetop, the company that owns Shein and Romwe.</p>	<p>https://ag.ny.gov/press-release/attorney-general-jam...</p> <p>Attorney General James Secures \$1.9 Million from E ...</p> <p>Oct 12, 2022 — SHEIN and ROMWE must button up their cybersecurity measures to protect consumers from fraud and identity theft. This agreement should send a ...</p>
<p>https://indyweek.com/news/longform/sunday-read...</p> <p>Sunday Reading: The Insatiable Hunger of Shein - INDY Week</p> <p>May 15, 2022 — In a lengthy article published last week in Wired, writer Vauhini Vara goes behind-the-scenes of online fast-fashion retailer Shein, ...</p>	<p>https://www.dazedsdigital.com/fashion/article/inde...</p> <p>Knitwear designer Bailey Prado on having her 'whole life ...</p> <p>Aug 11, 2021 — Fashion watchdog Diet Prada, meanwhile, highlighted Shein's copying of a Maison Cléo blouse in August 2020, noting that the original €220 price ...</p>

FASHION NOVA (20 critical results)

	<p>https://www.theverge.com/news/ftc-fines-fashion-nova-all</p> <p>Fashion Nova first company required to pay FTC for blocking ...</p> <p>Jan 25, 2022 — The FTC says suppressing negative customer product reviews online deceives consumers. Fashion Nova says the allegations against it are ...</p>
<p>https://www.foxta.com/news/fashion-nova-to-pay-4-2</p> <p>Fashion Nova to pay \$4.2M to settle claims it blocked negative ...</p> <p>Jan 25, 2022 — Fashion Nova was launched in 2006 as a chain of stores selling low-price club wear and apparel in Los Angeles-area malls including Panorama City ...</p>	<p>https://www.dailnews.com/2022/03/21/las-fashion-</p> <p>LA's Fashion Nova to pay \$4.2 million to settle blocked web ...</p> <p>Mar 21, 2022 — The FTC said Monday that it has finalized an order settling allegations that Los Angeles online fashion retailer Fashion Nova blocked ...</p>
<p>https://emorywheel.com/the-hazards-of-microtrends-a</p> <p>The hazards of microtrends and unethical fashion industries</p> <p>Oct 29, 2022 — Luxury fashion brands are known for their gaudy, mercurial trends. Furthermore, fast fashion conglomerates such as Zara, Fashion Nova and Shein ...</p>	<p>https://dotla.fashion-nova-blocked-negative-reviews-</p> <p>Fashion Nova Fined \$4.2M by the FTC For Blocking ... - dot.LA</p> <p>Fashion Nova—the online apparel brand famous for affordable, skin-tight clothing endorsed by the likes of Cardi B and Kylie Jenner—has once again landed in ...</p>
<p>https://player.fm/series/nightly-pop/rhoc-madness-</p> <p>RHOC Madness, Fashion Nova Backlash & Michael B. Jordan</p> <p>Oct 20, 2022 — Listen to RHOC Madness, Fashion Nova Backlash & Michael B. Jordan - Nightly Pop 10/19/2022 and 530 more episodes by Nightly Pop, free!</p>	<p>https://people.com/Lifestyle/style/</p> <p>Fashion Nova to Pay \$4.2 Million for Allegedly Blocking Reviews</p> <p>Jan 25, 2022 — Fashion Nova continues to be an entrepreneurial led company solely focused on providing a great assortment of fashionable clothes at very ...</p>
<p>https://books.google.com/books</p> <p>Censored 2020 - Google Books Result</p> <p>Andy Lee Roth - 2019 - Political Science Fashion Nova saga, a flame war to end all flame wars. It all started when America's favorite</p>	<p>https://www.nytimes.com/2019/12/16/business/fashi...</p> <p>Fashion Nova's Secret: Underpaid Workers in Los Angeles ...</p> <p>Dec 16, 2019 — LOS ANGELES — Fashion Nova has perfected fast fashion for the Instagram era. The mostly online retailer leans on a vast network of ...</p> 
<p>https://www.ftc.gov/news/press-releases/2022/01/f...</p> <p>Fashion Nova will Pay \$4.2 Million as part of Settlement of ...</p> <p>Jan 25, 2022 — Online fashion retailer Fashion Nova, LLC will be prohibited from suppressing customer reviews of its products and required to pay \$4.2 ...</p>	<p>https://www.business-humanrights.org/latest-news/u...</p> <p>USA: Federal investigation finds garment workers producing ...</p> <p>Fashion Nova... is built to... mass-produce[cheap clothes]... made "in less than two weeks," often by manufacturers in Los Angeles...</p>
<p>https://www.ftc.gov/news/press-releases/2022/03/ft...</p> <p>FTC Finalizes Order with Fashion Nova Over Allegations It ...</p> <p>Mar 21, 2022 — The Federal Trade Commission has finalized an order settling allegations that online fashion retailer Fashion Nova, LLC blocked negative ...</p>	<p>https://books.google.com/books</p> <p>Sensitive Reading - Page 55 - Google Books Result</p> <p>Mal-Linh K. Hong, Chrissy Yee Lau, Preeti Sharma - 2021 - History 17. natalie Kitroeff, "Fashion nova's Secret: Underpaid Workers in Los Angeles Factories,"</p>
<p>https://news.yahoo.com/ftc-says-fashion-nova-suppres...</p> <p>The FTC Says Fashion Nova Suppressed Negative Online ...</p> <p>Feb 23, 2022 — FTC lawyer Amber Lee says she hopes the agency's review suppression complaint against Fashion Nova sends a message.</p>	<p>https://books.google.com/books</p> <p>Clothing Poverty: The Hidden World of Fast Fashion and ...</p> <p>Andrew Brooks - 2019 - Business & Economics The Hidden World of Fast Fashion and Second-Hand Clothes Andrew Brooks ... 341–2; 1–44</p>
<p>https://www.azcentral.com/consumers/2022/01/27/fa...</p> <p>Fashion Nova in trouble over reviews. Why other retailers may ...</p> <p>Jan 27, 2022 — Fashion Nova, which rocketed to Instagram fame with skintight, celebrity-endorsed apparel, is accused of manipulating customer reviews on....</p>	<p>https://goodonyou.eco/how-ethical-is-fashion-nova</p> <p>How Ethical Is Fashion Nova? - Good On You</p> <p>Sep 16, 2020 — Popular fast fashion brand Fashion Nova has a celebrity following for its line of women's clothing, but how ethical is it?</p>
<p>https://www.thelist.com/the-real-reason-fashion-nova-...</p> <p>The Real Reason Fashion Nova Clothes Are So Cheap</p> <p>Mar 3, 2021 — Fashion Nova was started in 2006, and today, this quick-to-market apparel and lifestyle brand has more than 25 million followers on social ...</p>	<p>https://cafemom.com/lifestyle/fashion-nova-knock...</p> <p>Black Designers Expose Fashion Nova For Knocking Off Their ...</p> <p>Apr 26, 2019 — Fashion Nova has ruled the fast-fashion business with double-take prices, massive inventory, and most important, relationships with nearly ...</p>
<p>https://www.rollingstone.com/culture/culture-news/</p> <p>Fashion Nova Reviews 2022: Company Fined by FTC for ...</p> <p>Jan 28, 2022 — Fashion Nova, Collab Haven to the Stars, Pays FTC Settlement for Concealing Negative Reviews. The e-tailer, who has released collaborations with ...</p>	
	<p>https://www.theverge.com/news/ftc-fines-fashion-nova-all</p> <p>Fashion Nova first company required to pay FTC for blocking ...</p> <p>Jan 25, 2022 — The FTC says suppressing negative customer product reviews online deceives consumers. Fashion Nova says the allegations against it are ...</p>
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<p>https://www.ftc.gov/news/press-releases/2022/01/f...</p> <p>Fashion Nova will Pay \$4.2 Million as part of Settlement of ...</p> <p>Jan 25, 2022 — Online fashion retailer Fashion Nova, LLC will be prohibited from suppressing customer reviews of its products and required to pay \$4.2 ...</p>	<p>https://www.business-humanrights.org/latest-news/u...</p> <p>USA: Federal investigation finds garment workers producing ...</p> <p>Fashion Nova... is built to... mass-produce[cheap clothes]... made "in less than two weeks," often by manufacturers in Los Angeles...</p>
<p>https://www.ftc.gov/news/press-releases/2022/03/ft...</p> <p>FTC Finalizes Order with Fashion Nova Over Allegations It ...</p> <p>Mar 21, 2022 — The Federal Trade Commission has finalized an order settling allegations that online fashion retailer Fashion Nova, LLC blocked negative ...</p>	<p>https://books.google.com/books</p> <p>Sensitive Reading - Page 55 - Google Books Result</p> <p>Mal-Linh K. Hong, Chrissy Yee Lau, Preeti Sharma - 2021 - History 17. natalie Kitroeff, "Fashion nova's Secret: Underpaid Workers in Los Angeles Factories,"</p>
<p>https://news.yahoo.com/ftc-says-fashion-nova-suppres...</p> <p>The FTC Says Fashion Nova Suppressed Negative Online ...</p> <p>Feb 23, 2022 — FTC lawyer Amber Lee says she hopes the agency's review suppression complaint against Fashion Nova sends a message.</p>	<p>https://books.google.com/books</p> <p>Clothing Poverty: The Hidden World of Fast Fashion and ...</p> <p>Andrew Brooks - 2019 - Business & Economics The Hidden World of Fast Fashion and Second-Hand Clothes Andrew Brooks ... 341–2; 1–44</p>
<p>https://www.azcentral.com/consumers/2022/01/27/fa...</p> <p>Fashion Nova in trouble over reviews. Why other retailers may ...</p> <p>Jan 27, 2022 — Fashion Nova, which rocketed to Instagram fame with skintight, celebrity-endorsed apparel, is accused of manipulating customer reviews on....</p>	<p>https://goodonyou.eco/how-ethical-is-fashion-nova</p> <p>How Ethical Is Fashion Nova? - Good On You</p> <p>Sep 16, 2020 — Popular fast fashion brand Fashion Nova has a celebrity following for its line of women's clothing, but how ethical is it?</p>
<p>https://www.thelist.com/the-real-reason-fashion-nova-...</p> <p>The Real Reason Fashion Nova Clothes Are So Cheap</p> <p>Mar 3, 2021 — Fashion Nova was started in 2006, and today, this quick-to-market apparel and lifestyle brand has more than 25 million followers on social ...</p>	<p>https://cafemom.com/lifestyle/fashion-nova-knock...</p> <p>Black Designers Expose Fashion Nova For Knocking Off Their ...</p> <p>Apr 26, 2019 — Fashion Nova has ruled the fast-fashion business with double-take prices, massive inventory, and most important, relationships with nearly ...</p>
<p>https://www.rollingstone.com/culture/culture-news/</p> <p>Fashion Nova Reviews 2022: Company Fined by FTC for ...</p> <p>Jan 28, 2022 — Fashion Nova, Collab Haven to the Stars, Pays FTC Settlement for Concealing Negative Reviews. The e-tailer, who has released collaborations with ...</p>	

BOOHOO (14 critical results)

	<p>https://www.scmp.com/.../Style/News-&Trends/</p> <p>Boohoo scandal unravelled – the billionaire Kamani family ...</p> <p>Jul 15, 2020 — Boohoo is the UK's fast-growing fast-fashion, now valued at more than US\$4.3 billion – but the camera-hungry founding family are being ...</p>
<p>https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-leicestershir...</p> <p>Boohoo starts production at new Leicester factory - BBC News</p> <p>Jan 26, 2022 — Retailer Boohoo, which faced allegations over poor pay and supply chain failings, has begun production at its first ever manufacturing site.</p>	<p>https://www.thefashionlaw.com/Latest-News</p> <p>Boohoo Reaches Settlement in "Fraudulent" Reference ...</p> <p>May 25, 2022 — Boohoo Group has reached a settlement in a consolidated class action lawsuit accusing it of engaging in a scheme to inflate its prices.</p>
<p>https://news.sky.com/story/boohoo-facing-possible-...</p> <p>Boohoo facing possible US import ban after allegations over ...</p> <p>Mar 2, 2021 — Boohoo, based in Manchester, has 14 million online customers and is thought to be the UK's fastest-growing fashion retailer. It sells clothes, ...</p>	<p>https://pagesix.com/2022/09/13/kourtney-kardashia...</p> <p>Kourtney Kardashian: Boohoo backlash was 'exactly what I ...</p> <p>Sep 13, 2022 — Kourtney Kardashian's "sustainable" collaboration with Boohoo launched September 13, and she responded to the backlash she's received for ...</p>
<p>https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/boohoo-fashion-gia...</p> <p>Boohoo: fashion giant faces 'slavery' investigation - The Times</p> <p>Jul 9, 2020 — Workers in Leicester making clothes destined for the fashion giant Boohoo are being paid as little as £3.50 an hour, an undercover ...</p>	<p>https://www.vogue.com/article/kourtney-kardashian...</p> <p>Kourtney Kardashian Barker on Her Boohoo Collaboration ...</p> <p>Sep 15, 2022 — Kourtney Kardashian Barker unveiled her conversation-sparking collaboration with Boohoo, a UK-based online apparel company that, on its ...</p>
<p>https://labourbehindthelabel.org/report-boohoo-covid...</p> <p>Report: Boohoo & COVID-19: The people behind the profit</p> <p>Jun 30, 2020 — Emerging evidence indicates that conditions in Leicester's factories, primarily producing for Boohoo, are putting workers at risk of ...</p>	<p>https://www.forbes.com/markfaithfull/2022/09/07</p> <p>Boohoo And Kourtney Kardashian Partner On "Sustainability" ...</p> <p>Sep 7, 2022 — Kourtney Kardashian has been named as a new ambassador for online fast fashion retailer Boohoo as the U.K. brand tries to reach new audience ...</p>
<p>https://www.fashionnetwork.com/news/Boohoo-link...</p> <p>Boohoo linked to more supply chain issues, suspends two ...</p> <p>Dec 23, 2020 — News industry: Fast fashion retailer Boohoo has been mired in yet more supply chain controversy with allegations that workers in Pakistan ...</p>	<p>https://wear-next.com/news/is-boohoo-ethical-and-s...</p> <p>Is Boohoo Ethical and Sustainable? - Wear Next.</p> <p>4 days ago — Boohoo is one of the biggest fast-fashion brands on the planet – but are they ethical?</p>
<p>https://www.nytimes.com/boohoo-labor-influencer-crisis</p> <p>The Boohoo Disaster, Explained - The New York Times</p> <p>Jul 8, 2020 — Boohoo was one of the fastest-growing retailers in Britain. Now the company is in trouble after revelations about working conditions in ...</p>	<p>https://www.buzzfeednews.com/article/adeonibada</p> <p>Fisayo Longe Accuses Boohoo Of Stealing Design</p> <p>Feb 24, 2021 — The retailer is part of the Boohoo Group, which is owned by British billionaire Mahmud Kamani alongside Carol Kane. The group owns nine market- ...</p>
<p>https://goodonyou.eco/how-ethical-is-boohoo</p> <p>How Ethical Is Boohoo? - Good On You</p> <p>Oct 14, 2020 — Environmental Impact: Boohoo's environment rating is "Not Good Enough": It uses few lower-impact materials and there is no evidence it has taken ...</p>	

ZARA (7 critical results)

	<p>https://wwd.com/Fashion/Fashion-Scoops</p> <p>Every Other Thursday Founder Takes Issue With Zara's Every ...</p> <p>3 days ago — Every Other Thursday has seen site traffic increase, after founder Ethan Glenn aired a grievance against Zara on TikTok.</p>
<p>https://www.bloomberg.com/news/features/h-m-za...</p> <p>H&M, Zara Fast Fashion Waste Leaves Environmental Impact</p> <p>5 days ago — Less than 1% of used clothing gets recycled into new garments, overwhelming countries like Ghana with discards.</p>	<p>https://www.racked.com/zara-labor-workers-turkey</p> <p>Unpaid Laborers Are Slipping Tags Into Zara Clothes - Racked</p> <p>Nov 3, 2017 — Zara, with more than 2,200 stores worldwide, might be one of the world's most successful fast-fashion companies, but it does not make its cash ...</p>
<p>https://fortune.com/2022/10/07/zara-marta-ortega-h...</p> <p>Fast-fashion giant Zara faces a huge sustainability challenge</p> <p>Oct 7, 2022 — Zara's Marta Ortega and H&M's Helena Helmersson could mark a changing of the guard as fashion faces environmental scrutiny.</p>	<p>https://www.docubay.com/zara-the-brand-and-its-stor...</p> <p>Watch ZARA THE BRAND AND ITS STORY Online at DocuBay</p> <p>Did plagiarism & fast fashion lead to Spanish apparel giant Zara's success? Is its business model worthy of being emulated?</p>
<p>https://www.dw.com/zaras-fast-fashion-problem-in-fo...</p> <p>Zara's fast-fashion problem in focus – DW – 01/27/2020</p> <p>Jan 27, 2020 — Climate activists are engaged in a fight against the throwaway mentality of the textile industry that Spanish fashion giant Zara has ...</p>	<p>https://www.vice.com/Home/Identity</p> <p>How Fashion Brands Like Zara Can Get Away with Stealing ...</p> <p>Jul 21, 2016 — When the trendy fast fashion retailer Zara released their Summer 2016 collection, which featured colorful, pop-y enamel pins and ...</p>

PRIMARK (4 critical results)

<p>https://thecentrelivingston.com › What's On › News</p> <p>Primark Cares - The Centre Livingston</p> <p>Oct 21, 2021 — Now Primark is aiming to make it possible to buy better – to give customers the opportunity to make more sustainable choices at a price they ...</p>	<p>https://www.quora.com › What-do-you-think-about-Prim...</p> <p>What do you think about Primark? - Quora</p> <p>Went to a Primark store in England and we have Penny's which sells Primark clothing here in the Republic of Ireland. Poor quality and over priced for the ...</p>
<p>https://www.ethicalconsumer.org › company-profile › p...</p> <p>How ethical is Primark?</p> <p>Primark Ethics: our research highlights several ethical issues with Primark, including climate change, environmental reporting, habitats & resources, ...</p>	<p>https://fashionunited.uk › primark-sustainability</p> <p>Case study on Primark sustainability, ethics, supply chain.</p> <p>Apr 20, 2017 — Primark, the Irish fashion retailer owned by Associated British Foods (ABF), is seen as one biggest fashion retail success stories of the ...</p>

H&M (6 critical results)

<p>https://www.fastcompany.com › hm-is-one-of-fashions-bi...</p> <p>H&M is one of fashion's biggest polluters. Now it's on a \$100 ...</p> <p>Jan 27, 2021 — H&M Group, the Swedish company that pioneered fast fashion, is partly to blame for this waste. It currently churns out 3 billion garments a ...</p>	<p>https://directory.goodonyou.eco › brand › h-and-m</p> <p>H&M - Sustainability Rating - Good On You Directory</p> <p>H&M is owned by Hennes & Mauritz. Its environment rating is 'it's a start'. It uses some eco-friendly materials including recycled materials.</p>
<p>https://www.law360.com › articles › h-m-greenwashing-re...</p> <p>H&M 'Greenwashing' Recycled Clothes, Class Action Alleges</p> <p>3 days ago — Fast fashion giant H&M illegally preys on shoppers' desire to buy sustainable clothing by advertising expensive "recycled" garments that are ...</p>	<p>https://www.bloomberg.com › news › features › h-m-za...</p> <p>H&M, Zara Fast Fashion Waste Leaves Environmental Impact</p> <p>5 days ago — "H&M will recycle them and create new textile fibre, and in return you get vouchers to use at H&M." The fashion press piled in. "Thanks to H&M, ...</p>
<p>https://books.google.com › books</p> <p>Global Practices of Corporate Social Responsibility</p> <p>Samuel O Idowu, Walter Leal Filho · 2008 · Political Science One key reason that explains why H&M adopts CSR is the consumers' increased interest</p>	<p>https://www.thehonestconsumer.com › blog › h-and-m-...</p> <p>5 Reasons I Still Won't Shop at H&M During Their ...</p> <p>May 21, 2019 — H&M's Business Model Does Not Support Sustainability. You have to understand that H&M's business model relies on consumers viewing clothes as ...</p>

UNIQLO (1 critical result)

<p>https://goodonyou.eco › how-ethical-is-uniqlo</p> <p>How Ethical Is Uniqlo? - Good On You</p> <p>Jan 19, 2022 — If you're in the market for affordable basics, chances are you've come across the fashion brand Uniqlo – but how ethical is Uniqlo?</p>

ASOS (1 critical result)

<p>https://directory.goodonyou.eco › brand › asos</p> <p>ASOS - Sustainability Rating - Good On You Directory</p> <p>ASOS's environment rating is 'not good enough'. It uses some eco-friendly materials including organic cotton. There is no evidence it minimises textile ...</p>

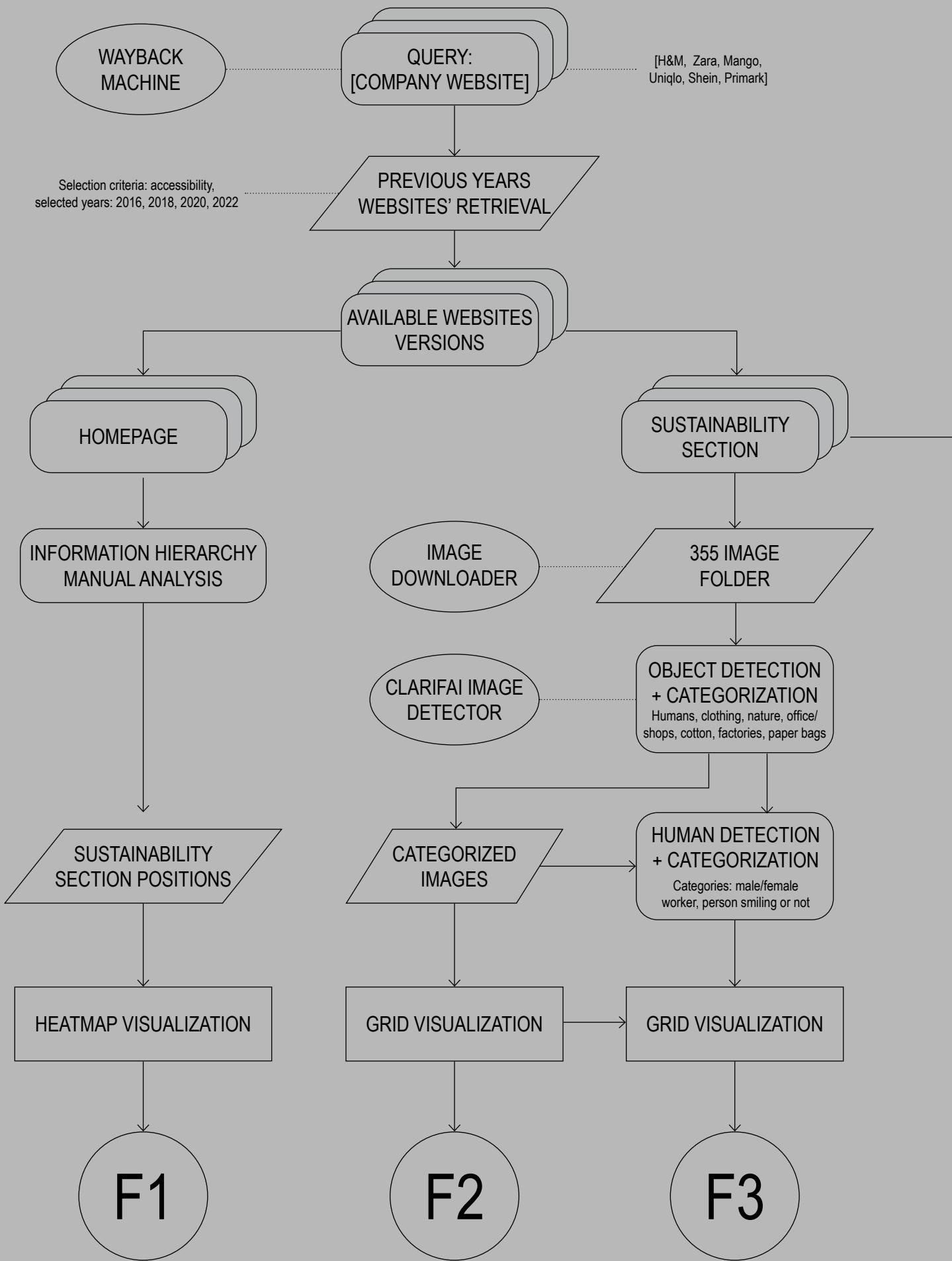
Q2

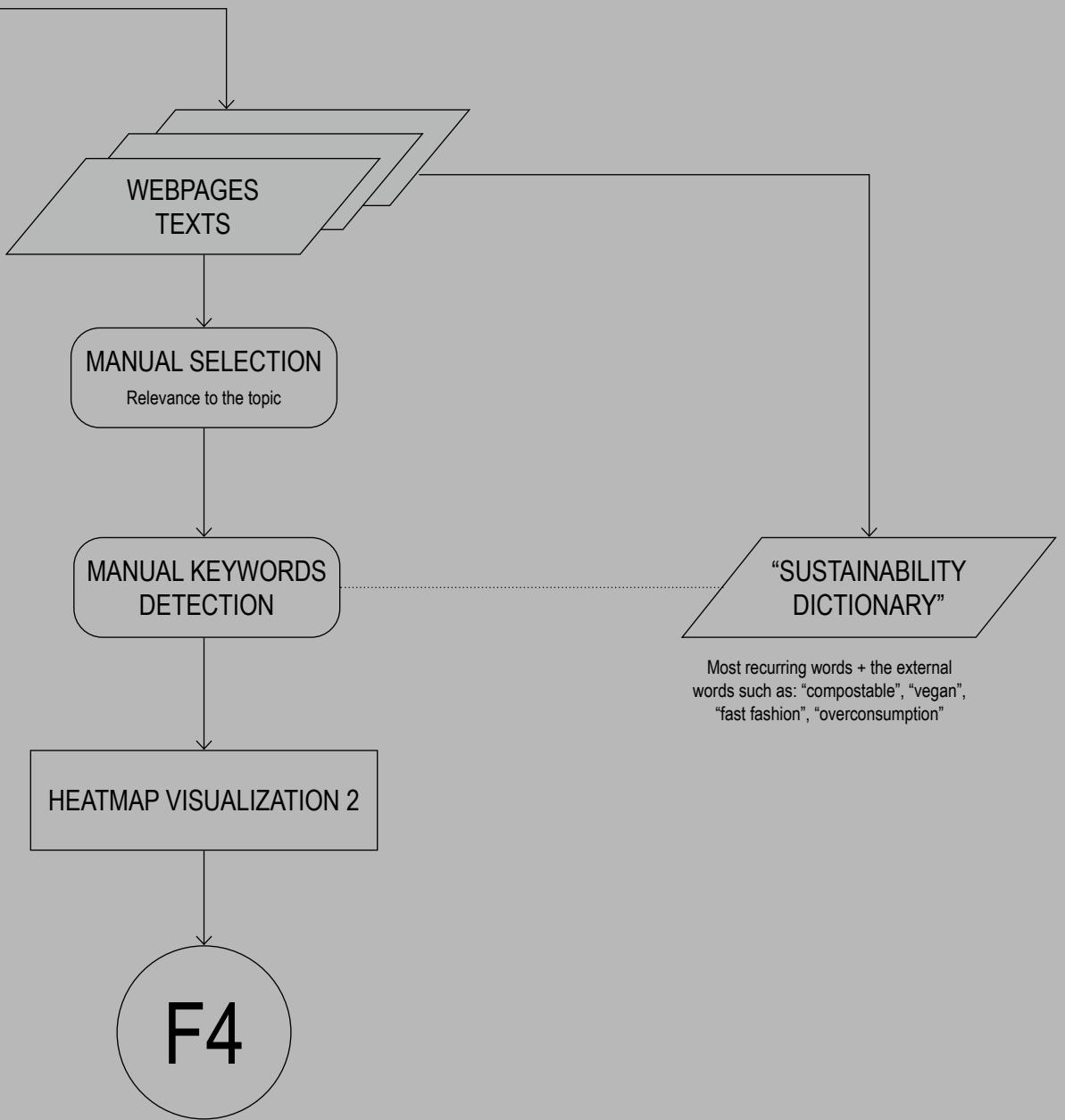
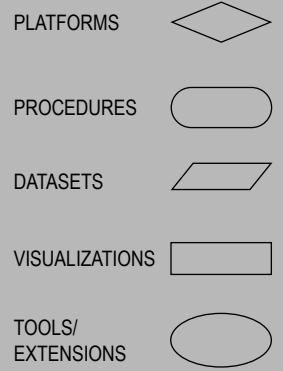
HOW IS THE APPROACH
TOWARD SUSTAINABILITY
REPRESENTED ON THE OFFICIAL
WEBSITES OF KEY FAST FASHION
COMPANIES IN THE TIME FRAME
OF 2016 / 2018 / 2020 / 2022?

The question of sustainable fashion is blooming not only with regards to climate change and a green future but also because it directly affects the sales and the reputation of fast fashion retailers since the public became more conscious about their choices and consumer behaviours. Therefore it is interesting to look at the companies' approach towards the topic and how it changed overtime. The analysed brands were H&M, Zara, Mango, Uniqlo, SHEIN, and Primark. These are among the biggest fast fashion players and also all belong to different retailers. This selective choice allows making the research less repetitive, since brands tend to have similar agendas when they belong to the same group.

3 main approaches were identified in order to conduct research, which are the sustainability section presence and placement, images, and vocabulary analysis. The latter is also filtered by a "sustainability dictionary" that was developed after figuring out which words are usually associated with sustainability in terms of fast fashion issues.

These 3 components were observed together in a frame of one brand and 4 years (2016, 2018, 2020, 2022). Then all the results were compared to see the differences among brands.

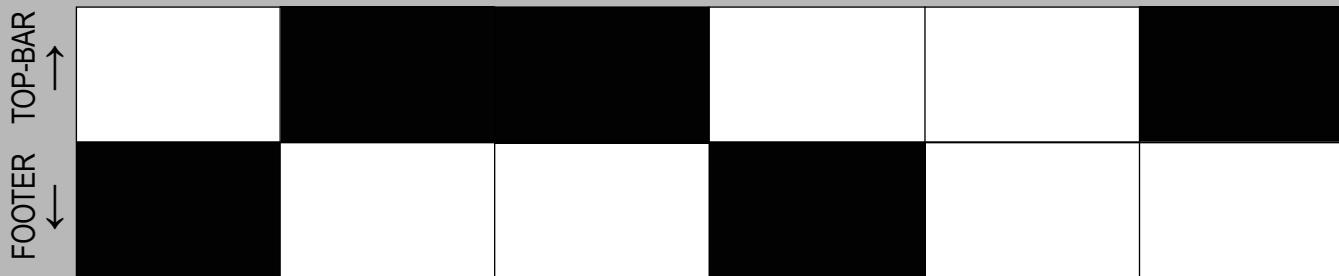




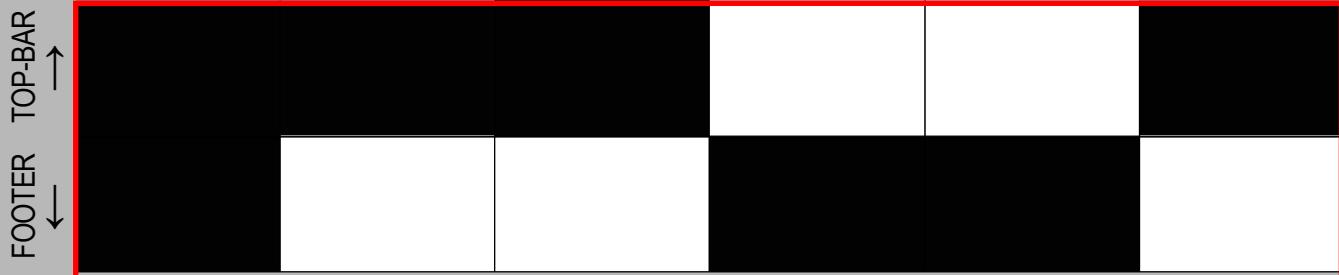
2016



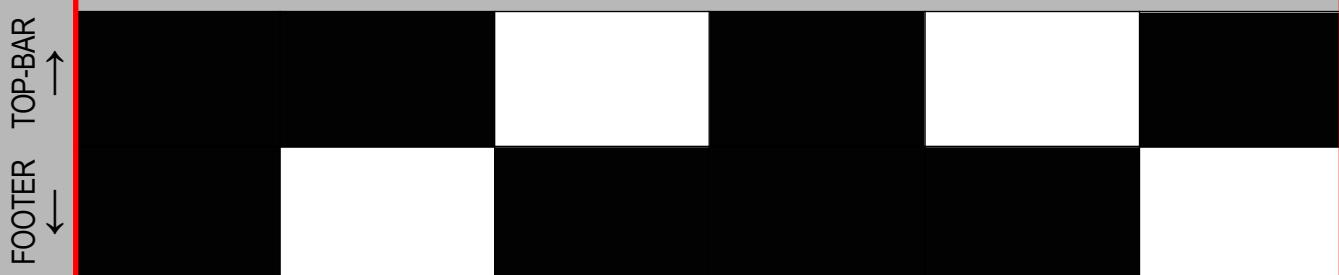
2018



2020



2022



H&M

ZARA

MANGO

UNIQLO

SHEIN

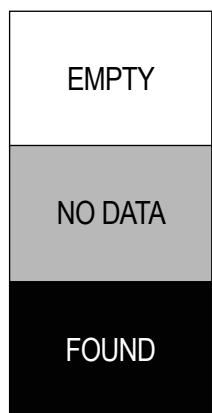
PRIMARK

F1

The sustainability section appears at least once in all the analysed brands' website homepages starting from 2020.

QUESTION 2
→ FINDING 1

The most accessible section (among all years and all brands) belongs to H&M in 2022. It can be found on the top bar menu, inside of the menu tabs, and at the footer.



	2016	2018	2020	2022
H&M				
ZARA	no data	no data	no data	
MANGO	no data	no data	no data	
UNIQLO				
SHEIN	no data	no data		
PRIMARK				

One of the most important aspects of the sustainability section is the pictures it is represented by. The images are the first thing that users pay attention to when opening a website, before starting to dive into reading the texts.

The visual representation is thoughtfully curated by the brands in order to create a certain image with regard to its sustainability policy, especially considering that many fast fashion retailers were involved in scandals in the past that had to do with sustainability and green future issues, work ethics, pollution, waste of clothes, etc.



F2

Among all the examined brands websites, humans have always been the most popular subject of the sustainability sections' images.

QUESTION 2
→ FINDING 2

- █ HUMANS
- █ CLOTHING
- █ NATURE
- █ MATERIALS
- █ OFFICES/SHOPS
- █ COTTON
- █ FACTORIES
- █ PAPER BAGS
- █ IMAGES WITH NO CLEAR CATEGORY



F3

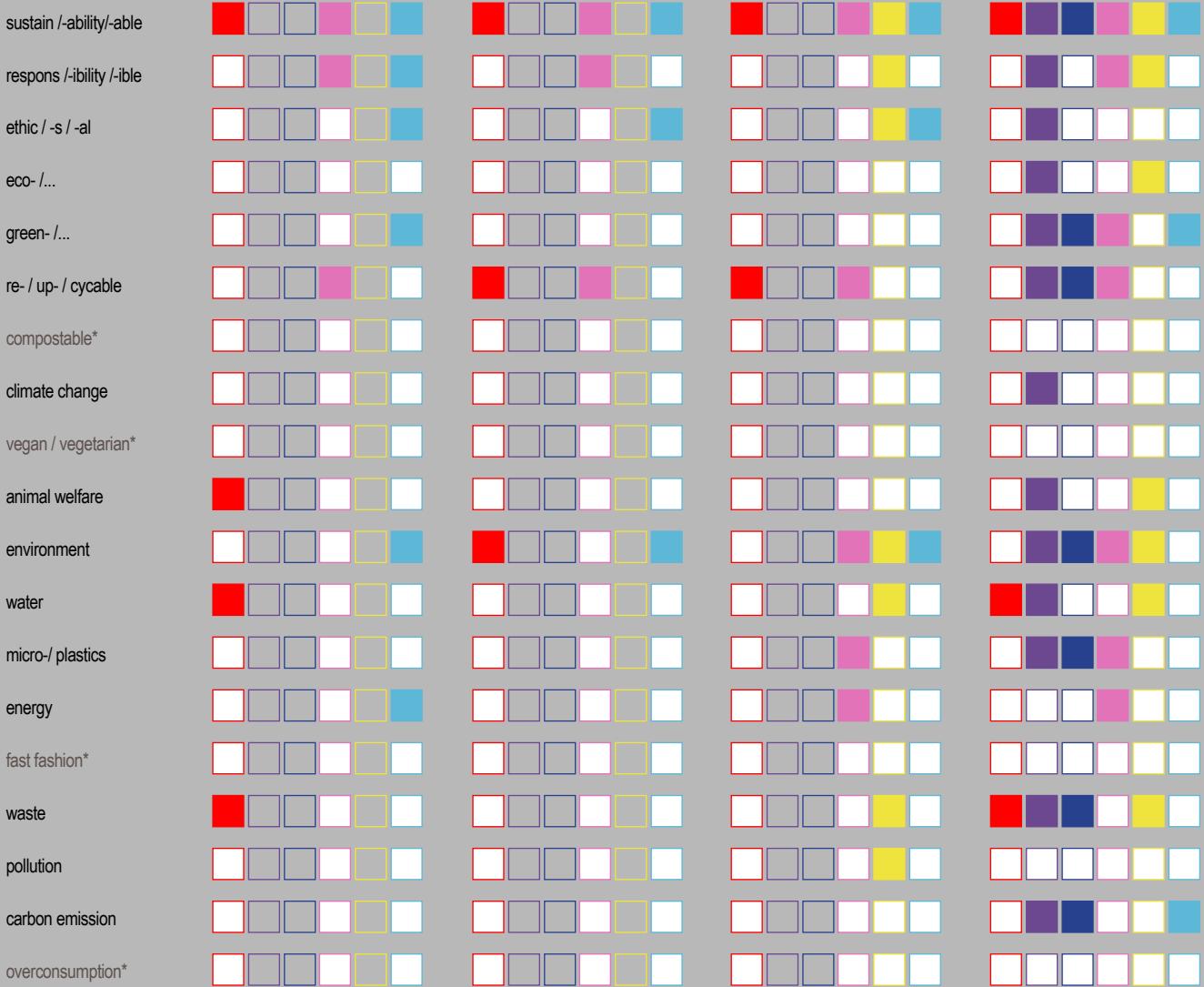
Of the people presented in the images of the analysed sustainability sections, 41% are workers; among them, 75% are female and 63% are pictured smiling.

QUESTION 2
→ FINDING 3

-  HUMAN IS NOT DEPICTED
-  HUMAN (NOT A WORKER)
-  FEMALE WORKER
-  MALE WORKER
-  WORKER SMILING

SUSTAINABILITY DICTIONARY

This is a list of 19 words that we developed ourselves and that are strongly associated with the topic of a green future in the context of fast fashion issues.



2016

2018

2020

2022

*word never mentioned

	H&M	ZARA	MANGO	UNIQLO	SHEIN	PRIMARK
FOUND						
EMPTY						
NO DATA						

F4

2022 is the year when all of the brands used more words from the sustainable vocabulary, compared to previous years.

QUESTION 2
→ FINDING 4

Also, in 2022 Zara was the brand that used most of them in all of the years among all the brands (13 out of 19 words from the sustainability dictionary).

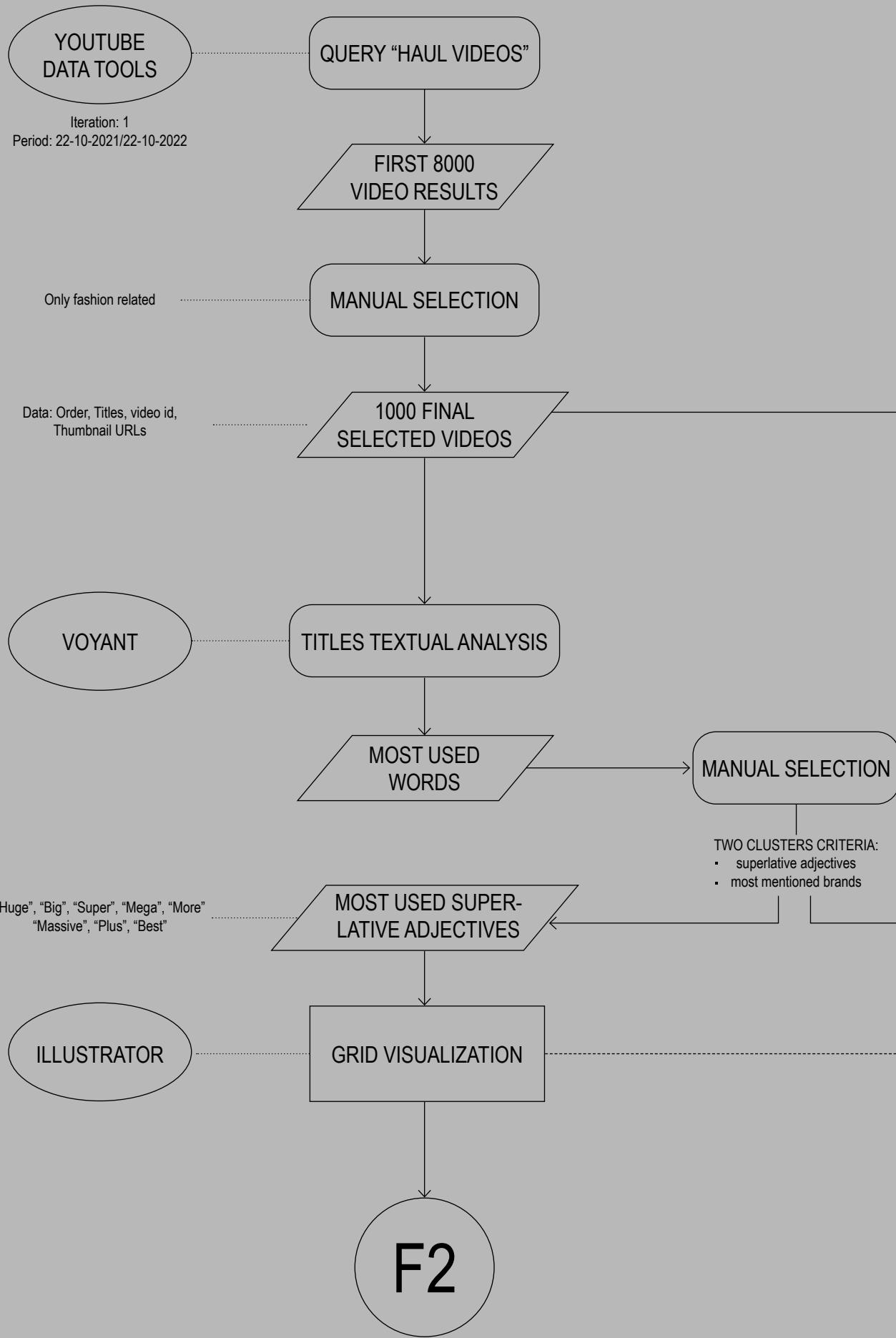
Q3

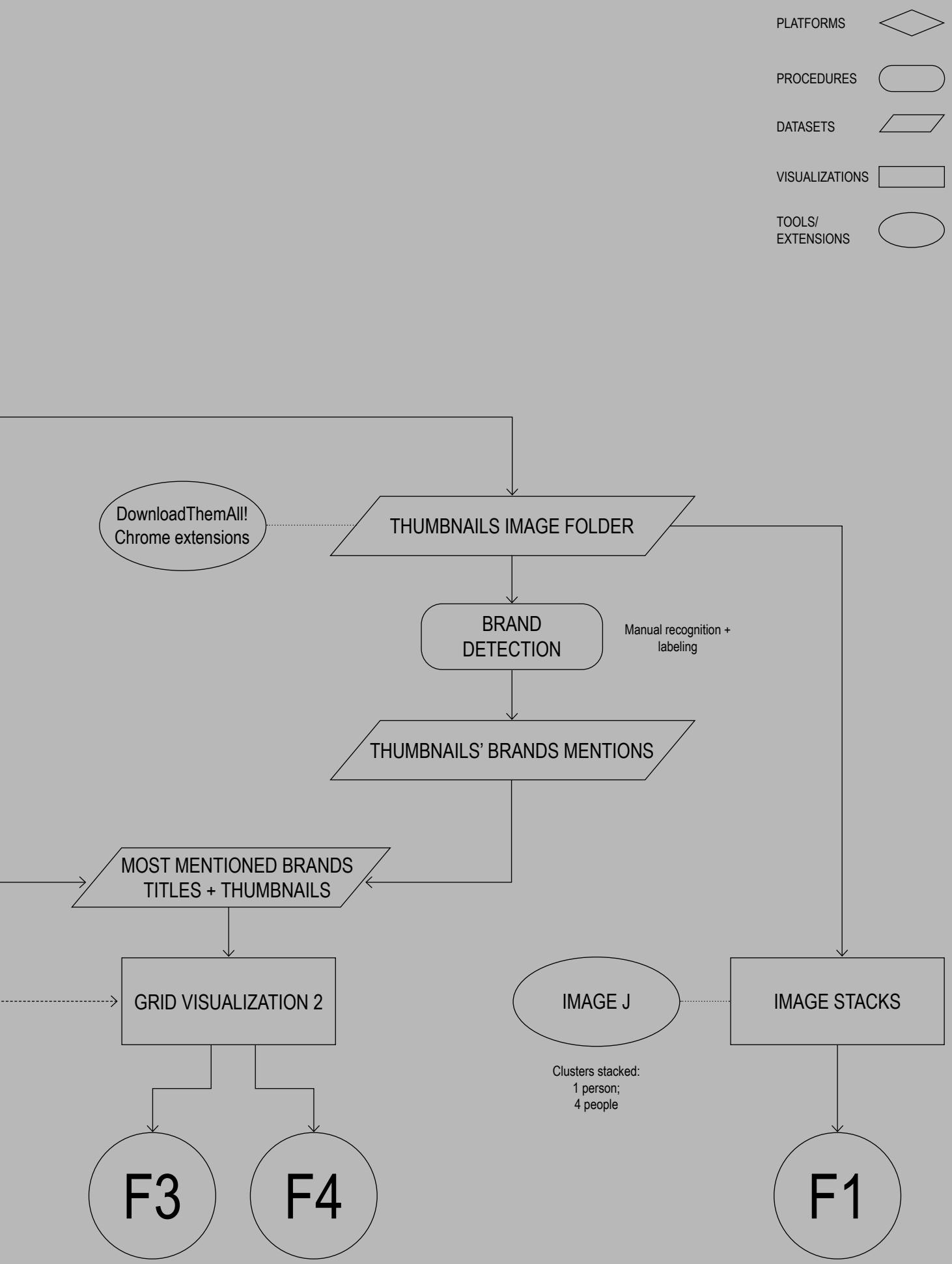
WHAT DO THUMBNAILS AND TITLES OF YOUTUBE HAUL VIDEOS TELL ABOUT THE FAST FASHION PHENOMENON?

Clients are an important stakeholder of the fast fashion phenomenon, whose point of view can be observed through User Generated Content on social media. Looking up the biggest fast fashion companies, such as Zara, Shein, or Bershka, on YouTube, the most frequent video formats coming up are fashion “hauls” that mention the brands in the thumbnail and/or in the title.

“Haul” is a synonym of the verb “throw” or “pull”, in fact the subject of these contents is usually big clothing purchases from online or physical fashion retailers that the creators “throw” in the eyes of the viewers. Through “haul” videos, users show their seasonal shopping sessions, suggest outfits, try on new clothes and often sponsor the brands they are buying from, offering discount codes to their subscribers and inviting them to buy, too.

So data from 1000 videos were collected, selecting them among the “haul” videos that were ranked as “most relevant” on YouTube everyday between 22/10/2021 and 22/10/2022, to find out what else they can reveal about users’ take on the fast fashion industry.







F1

From a visual point of view, haul videos' previews often present a chaotic and maximalist recurring format.

QUESTION 3

→ FINDING 1

96.9% of the “haul” video previews contain at least one person. Within these, 53.4% show a person holding bags and fashion garments, while the remaining 46.6% show collages of people posing with their new clothes. Analysing these two types, a strong visual component linked to overconsumption evidently emerges from the images and texts.

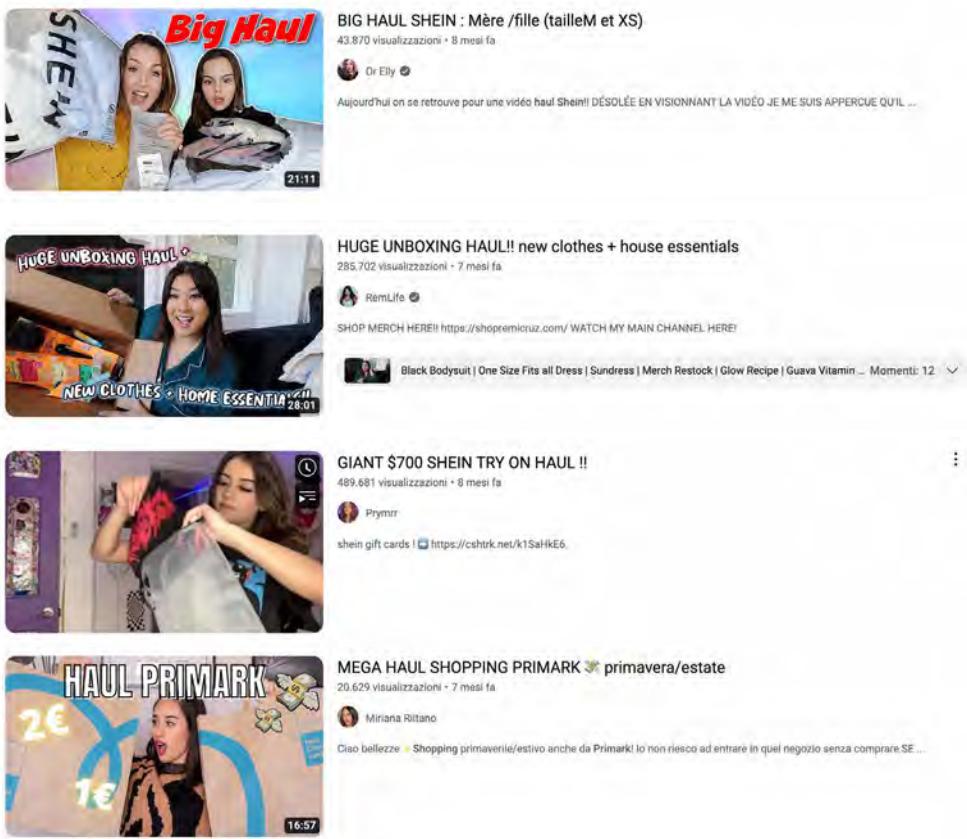
A large grid of video thumbnails from YouTube, showing a variety of content including hauls, reviews, and fashion tips. The thumbnails are arranged in a grid pattern, with many featuring logos like SHEIN, H&M, and ZARA.

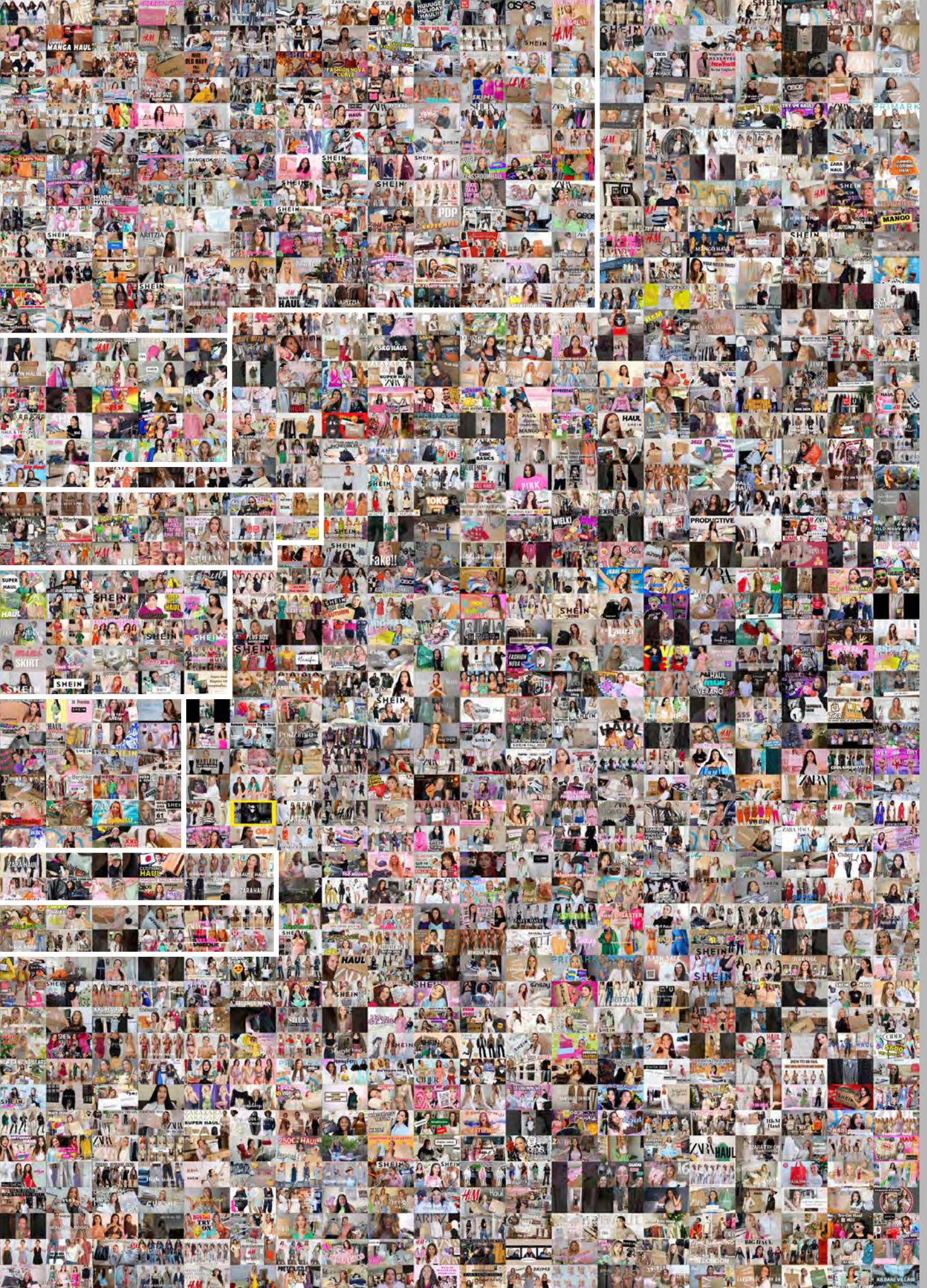
F2

From a linguistic point of view, haul videos' previews often contain superlatives and words that refer to big quantities.

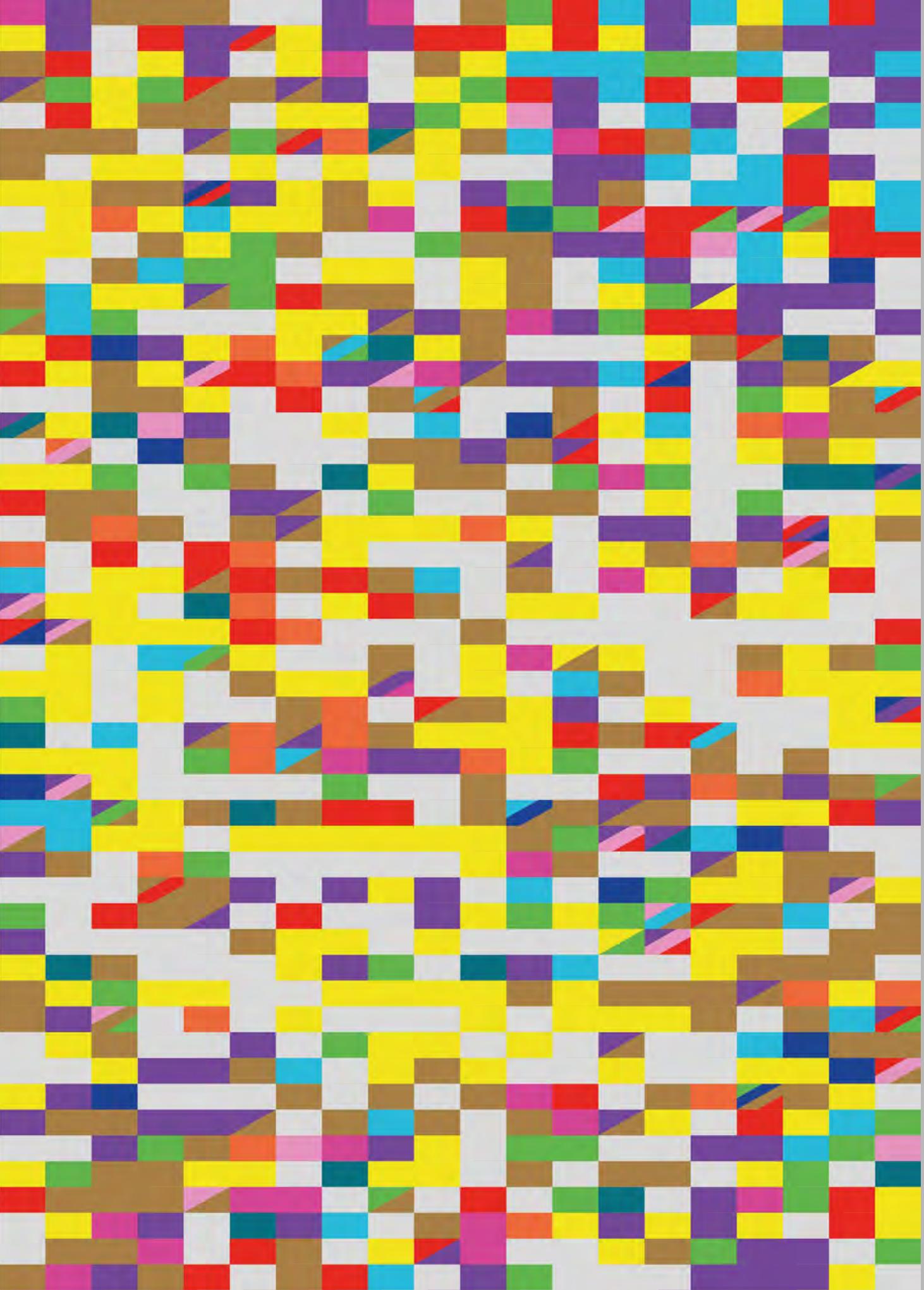
QUESTION 3
→ FINDING 2

Analysing the “haul” video titles, the tone of voice is consistent with the chaotic imagery and the drive towards overconsumption deduced from the thumbnails: 28% use superlative and quantitative words like “BIG” (2.7%), “SUPER” (2.5%) and “MEGA” (2.4%), insisting on the great amount of items bought and money spent. “HUGE” is the most used word (after the keywords “haul” and “try on”), appearing in 16% of the total results.





The page on the left displays all the thumbnails of the examined videos. The grid's organisation reflects the order generated by the clusterization of the previous finding (see pag. 47), which will be maintained in the next analyses.

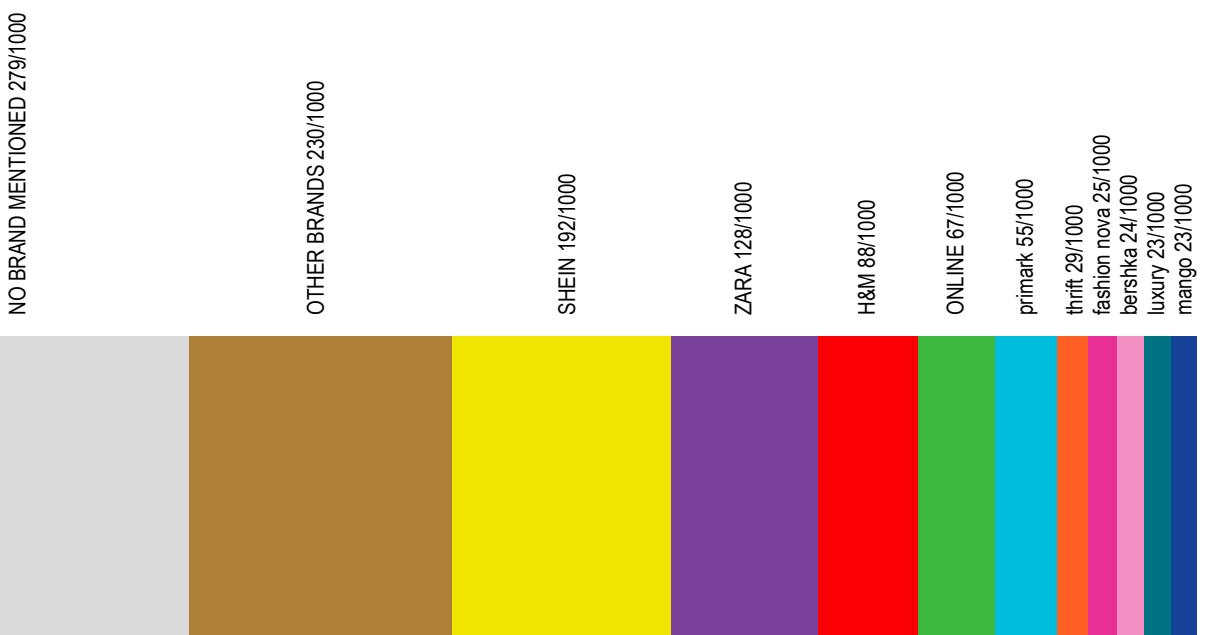


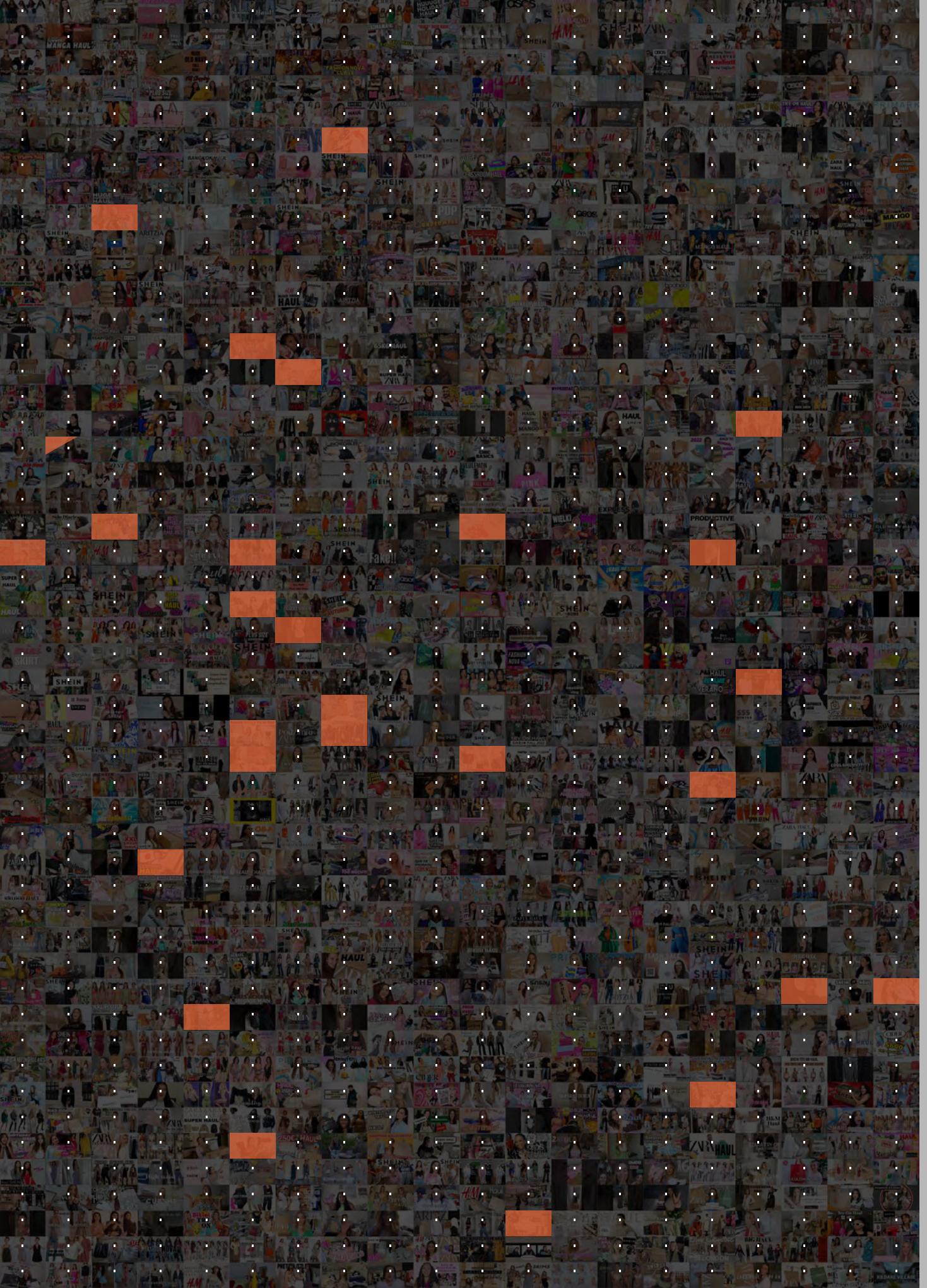
F3

Shein, Zara and H&M are the most mentioned brands in YouTube haul videos' previews.

QUESTION 3 → FINDING 3

The page on the left shows how many times each brand appears in the dataset videos, crossing the number of times the brands are mentioned in both titles and thumbnails (often using official logos in the latter). Although SHEIN has proved to be the most controversial brand among the fast fashion issues debate (see Q1, F4), it's also undoubtedly the brand that encourage this user-generated advertising model most and the one that benefits most from it, (19.2% of mentions), followed by Zara (12.8%) and H&M (8.8%).





F4

Thrift shop “hauls” are the only relevant expression of sustainable fashion in “haul” videos.

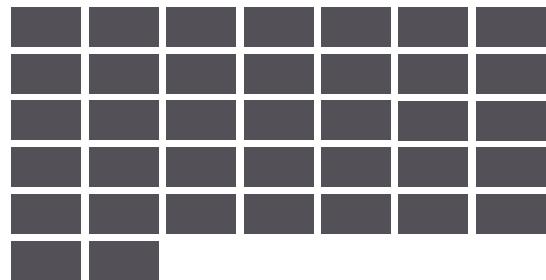
QUESTION 3
→ FINDING 4

Second-hand shopping haul videos are only 2.7% of the total analysed. It means that for every sustainable fashion video uploaded to YouTube, there are 37 videos that consume new products.

SECOND HAND
VIDEO HAUL



NEW GOODS
VIDEO HAUL



SOURCES

Vox (2021), *Gen Z doesn't know a world without fast fashion.* Available at: <https://www.vox.com/the-goods/2021/7/19/22535050/gen-z-relationship-fast-fashion> (Accessed 14 November 2022)

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The Guardian (2022), *This article is more than 7 months old Greenwashing UK fashion firms to be named and shamed by watchdog.* Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/fashion/2022/mar/11/greenwashing-uk-fashion-firms-to-be-named-and-shamed-by-watchdog> (Accessed 14 November 2022)

DATASETS



GROUP 4

GIOVANNI BONASSI
MARTINA BRACCHI

CECILIA BUONOCUNTO
SILVIA CASAVOLA
VLADISLAVA ERSHOVA
KATERYNA LAPSHYNA
MATTEO VISINI

FINAL SYNTHESIS
DESIGN STUDIO
SECT. C3
MA IN COMMUNICATION
DESIGN, A.Y. 2022/2023

FACULTY

MICHELE MAURI
ANGELES BRIONES
GABRIELE COLOMBO
SIMONE VANTINI
SALVATORE ZINGALE

TEACHING
ASSISTANTS

ELENA AVERSA
ANDREA BENEDETTI
TOMMASO ELLI
BEATRICE GOBBO
ARIANNA BELLANTUOMO