Use-oriented product service systems in the fashion industry: Understanding consumers’ perception - An exploratory study

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Abstract

This paper aims to explore how millennials perceive use-oriented product service systems in the fashion industry. As the fashion industry is widely criticized for its global pollution, it is found to be vital to study these services, which have been acknowledged as sustainable, in order to increase consumer adoption. As studies in this area have not been conducted on millennials, the researchers aim to contribute to this gap in the research. This research paper adopts an exploratory approach using a case study of a group of 12 students attending Copenhagen Business School. Qualitative non-directive and semi-structured interviews were conducted. The findings of this study showed that participants perceived clothing rental services: to be particularly useful for a specific occasion (whilst not for everyday clothing), to lack a financial benefit when renting everyday clothes (whilst being able to save money for specific occasions), to entail some risks including monetary consequences when damaging products and receiving unsatisfactory products, to have similar logistics to online shopping, to have sustainable characteristics, to have high standards for hygiene and to be a social trend. Moreover, participants did not perceive the sharing aspect to be problematic. The findings of this study aim to assist clothing rental services to better meet the needs of the millennial consumers. Due to the limited generalizability of the study's findings, the researchers suggest various hypotheses for future research which can be used to test the findings of this paper.

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1 Introduction

Through technological development and the emergence of new access-based business models, new means of consumption have been facilitated, which allows the consumer to share resources with strangers online. Such business models are established in industries such as car sharing, accommodation sharing and music sharing (Lee and Chow, 2020). However, more recently this trend has also become established within the fashion industry (Lee and Chow, 2020). Even though the renting platforms in the fashion industry are expanding and gaining attention, many are still lagging behind in popularity (Demailly & Novel, 2014). The US companies Rent the Runway, Chic by Choice and Le Tote are some of the main market leaders in the global online fashion rental market (Globe News Wire, 2018). In Denmark, this business model is also being explored by big fashion brands such as Ganni and Malene Birger who have started respectively Ganni Repeat and Rent the Look By Malene Birger, where they rent out the brand's clothing to consumers.

The concept of renting clothes has gained attention as a more sustainable option for obtaining clothes (Yang & Evans, 2019). The concept has gained attention since the fashion industry has been widely criticized for being one of the largest polluters globally (Sweeny, 2015). The precise environmental impact of the consumption of fashion in the EU has been estimated from between 2% to 10% of the environmental impact of all EU consumption (Šajn, 2019). The number of garments which are purchased by an average consumer has more than doubled in the past decade (Global Fashion Agenda & Boston Consulting Group, 2017). Hoffman (2007) explains how technology and the access to information and trends across the world has increased consumers' demand as well as their desire to shop more, which has fuelled the success of 'fast fashion'. Fast fashion enables consumers to continuously obtain new, improved and on-trend items all year around for low prices (Gabrielli, Baghi & Codeluppi, 2013). Therefore, it is imperative that the fashion industry becomes more environmentally friendly and for the industry to gain knowledge about how to drive consumers to choose more environmentally conscious options, such as renting. In order to understand how such services can gain more popularity, this study sets out to explore the perception which millennials have of online clothing rental services.

This research paper will seek to answer the following research question:

How do millennials perceive use-oriented product service systems in the fashion industry?

The study investigates product service systems (PSS) within the fashion industry. More specifically, this study investigates a type of PSS called 'use-oriented'. Within this subcategory, there are a number of services such as swapping and renting (Armstrong, Niinimäki, Lang & Kujala, 2016). This paper focuses specifically on the rental services for clothing, which functions on a business-to-consumer level. This means that the business owns the products and rents it out to the consumers for a one-time fee or subscription based payment. This should, therefore, not be confused with peer-to-peer rental services where consumers rent out clothes to each other with the use of a mediator platform. Furthermore, it is important to point out that only the businesses which function on *online* platforms are the ones studied. Moreover, this study aims to investigate the perception of the participants. The development of a "perception" is defined by Pickens (2005) as "a person is confronted with a situation or stimuli. The person interprets the stimuli into something meaningful to him or her based on prior experiences" (p. 52). Therefore, the paper explores how individuals perceive the service rather than how it operates. This is due to the fact that the research aims to get a deeper understanding of what thoughts the consumers have regarding this type of service. Thereby, this can assist in getting a deeper understanding of which factors need to be accommodated in order to increase consumer adoption of the service in the future.

Millennials are chosen as the target group of the research as this generation of young adults have many years ahead as consumers and, therefore, it is interesting to understand their perception of the service in question. There are a number of definitions of 'millennials' but the definition deployed in this research is by the Pew Research Center which defines it as anyone born between 1981 and 1996 (the age of 24 to 39 in 2020) (Dimock, 2019). In previous research, millennials are found to be tech savvy, use technology to stay connected and are involved and informed about global issues (Keeble, 2013). Moreover, millennials are found to be more empathetic than other consumer segments towards environmental issues (Hwang and Griffiths, 2017). Therefore, they are found to be relevant as the paper investigates services which function on online platforms and, which may have positive effects on the environment. Another important reason for looking at millennials is that they are found to be less interested in material goods and more receptive to exploring different means of ownership (Hwang & Griffiths, 2017; Rifkin, 2014). Moreover, Hwang and Griffiths (2017) stated that millennials are a consumer segment who find collaborative consumption most appealing by having access to resources without the necessity of ownership. Thereby, they are a generation which might have the potential to increase the adoption of online clothing rental services. Furthermore, the study specifically investigates a case study of students enrolled in Copenhagen Business School since they are expected to be aware of new technologies and business models. Therefore, they are a relevant source of data for this study.

A number of previous studies have investigated the consumer's view of PSS within fashion such as the following studies; Lang and Armstrong (2018), Lee and Chow (2020), Becker-Leifhold (2018). Even though there are a number of previous studies which seek to understand the consumer's perception of PSS, literature which specifically investigates millennials is limited. Additionally, as this paper specifically studies business-to-consumer online clothing rental services, it is found that millennials in this context are an unexplored niche in the current research. In light of this, this study investigates millennials by employing a case study of a group of 12 students within the age of 24 to 39. As this specific area of research is relatively unexplored, the study has an exploratory research approach. Therefore, the study is concerned with creating new insights and finding valuable concepts rather than having a high level of generalizability (Steenhuis & Bruijn, 2006).

Thus, the research aims to shed light on the unexplored topic of how millennial consumers perceive use-oriented PSS in the fashion industry, specifically by investigating services which rent out clothing to the consumer. This is explored by using a progressive case study, which combines elements of the inductive and deductive approach (Steenhuis & Bruijn, 2006). The data is collected with the use of qualitative interviews, which will be iteratively collected and analysed to shape the direction of the research. For the discussion, the results of the analysis will be presented, theorizing the main concepts and patterns which have emerged from the data. Finally, as the research design of the paper has limited generalizability, due to the exploratory research design, future research will be suggested where specific hypotheses are recommended in order to further explore this area of research.

2 Literature Review

The purpose of the following section is to give an understanding of previous research in the areas relevant to the research question; *How do millennials perceive use-oriented product service systems in the fashion industry?*

The focus of the literature review is to define the theoretical landscape surrounding PSS and to define the business model PSS itself. Moreover, the literature review investigates the use of PSS specifically in the fashion industry. Then, the discussion of whether this business model is sustainable or not is addressed. These initial sections are included for the reader to get a thorough understanding of the business model, which the study is focusing on. Subsequently, previous studies regarding consumer perception of PSS are presented. This will include both PSS in various industries as well as specifically in the fashion industry. This part is included to introduce the reader to previous research relevant to this paper. Thereafter, consumption behaviour and relevant psychological theories are explored. This is included in the literature review as these theories assist the researchers in understanding the perception of the participants of the study. Lastly, the researchers address how this study contributes to the relevant area of research. All the chosen topics of the literature review are included as they are assessed to be the most relevant areas which give both the researcher and the reader the imperative background knowledge surrounding the research question.

2.1 Business Models and Innovation

This section goes over the definition of business models and the emergence of new business models, known as business model innovation. This ensures that the reader understands why and how new business models come to exist, and why it is important to differentiate them as it enables the reader to better understand the business model which is being explored in this paper.

Over the years, as many new business models have emerged, many different definitions of business models have also appeared. As Zott, Amit & Massa (2011) argued that business models "have yet to develop a common and widely accepted language that would allow researchers who examine the business model constructed through different lenses to draw effectively on the work of others" (p. 1020). Nonetheless, for the purpose of this study, Timmer's (1998) definition is used, which defined business models as "an architecture of the product, service and information flows, including a description of the various business actors and their roles; a description of the potential benefits for the various business actors; a description of the sources of revenues" (p. 4). Ultimately, business models identify how a particular company provides consumers with a product, service or information while also shedding light upon how the company can profit from it and which actors are involved in the process.

When it comes to business model innovation, researchers have argued that new business models can emerge due to the introduction of new technology or by applying traditional business models in new contexts or a combination of both. Chesbrough (2010) argued that "The economic value of a technology remains latent until it is commercialized in some way via a business model" which means that managers have to find the perfect fit for the technology to bring it value (p. 354). Hence, as he explained "a potential new technology may have no obvious business model, and in such cases technology managers must expand their perspectives to find an appropriate business model in order to be able to capture value from that technology" (Chesbrough, 2010, p. 355). In order to truly create new business models, Chesbrough introduced the term 'open innovation' as an approach to innovation in which "firms, rather than relying on internal ideas to advance business, look outside their boundaries in order to leverage internal and external sources of ideas" (Zott, Amit & Massa, 2011, 2011, p. 1033). Zott et al. (2011) also argued that business models continuously interact with technology but that there is no necessity to have new technology to create a new business model. This study focuses on a specific business model (PSS) which emerged both by the use of technology and applying apparel retail in a new context. Since this paper is focusing on a business model which functions online, the section below explains more about business models which have become possible due to the introduction of the internet; also known as E-business models.

2.2 E-businesses Models

It is evident that when the Web was introduced in the mid 1990s, a new category of business models emerged (Zott, Amit & Massa, 2011). Pateli (2003) reports on this and states that thanks to the introduction and development of information and communication technologies there have been an increased interest in "traditional business models or developing new ones that better exploit the opportunities enabled by technological innovations" (p. 330). In other words, technology has enabled various ways of obtaining and selling products. Traditionally, e-commerce has mainly focused on businesses selling products to consumers or other businesses. Pavlou and Fygenson (2006) defined business-to-consumer (B2C) e-commerce as activities revolving around consumers buying products or services that are enabled by using the internet. Additionally, business-to-business (B2B) e-commerce was described as businesses buying the products or services by the use of the internet (Pavlou & Fygenson, 2006). However, in the last decade, there have been new developments in e-commerce business models. Instead of businesses being the main provider of products and services, consumers are taking control and becoming the providers. This is known as peer-to-peer (P2P) a.k.a. consumer-to-consumer (C2C) business models.

The company eBay is one example of a company which has this type of business model. EBay is a platform which has enabled consumers to buy and sell products from other peers/consumers. Datta, Hauswirth & Aberet (2003) explain that eBay is a platform that is centralized, which enables peers to make monetary exchanges between other peers who they are unknown to prior to the purchase. Ebay ensures that this exchange is conducted in a proper way and ensures that each party follows their rules, ultimately, to provide security for both parties (Datta, Hauswirth & Aberer, 2003). Usually, the items sold on eBay have already been worn, which results in the fact that the products' life cycles are extended and resources already available in the market are utilized which is why some claim that it is a more environmentally sustainable business model. Hence, this model incorporates a sustainable initiative which has further sparked an interest in the environmentally conscious consumers (Hamari, Sjöklint & Ukkonen, 2016). Furthermore, the P2P business model is seen across different industries. Another example is the accommodation renting platform Airbnb, which allows users to rent out accommodation to other users present on the platform. This platform has quickly proved to be a massive success while a couple of decades ago people never would have considered renting a room or a house for such occasions (Cohen & Kietzmann, 2014). Moreover, Kaplan & Haenlein (2010) explained that P2P business models have been enabled by the development of information technologies as well as the Web 2.0 as it enabled the creation of platforms where users could collaborate and share skills, content and knowledge. Additionally, it is also acknowledged that the success of P2P is also derived from the growing consumer awareness of environmental issues. This is also argued by Hamari et al. (2015) who stated that these platforms can improve social problems as they promote less consumption, pollution and poverty by providing consumers with lower prices. Moreover, Cohena and Kietzmann (2014) stated that consumers are starting to challenge traditional businesses and that major improvements are necessary to create a more sustainable future.

Ultimately, P2P or C2C business models are rapidly taking various industries by storm and showing a magnitude of successful business cases.

Due to the success that P2P businesses are experiencing, B2C businesses have started to see their potential when adopting P2P inspired business models as well. Researchers and experts predict that these business models will continue to grow in the future, as they stated that the success of P2P platforms are encouraging B2C businesses to adopt a similar business model (Provin, Angerer & Zimmermann, 2016). This is as P2P sharing platforms are disrupting industries and threatening traditional businesses, hence, in order for B2C businesses to stay competitive, they can apply the same business model to obtain the same benefits which P2P businesses are experiencing (Provin et al., 2016). This was acknowledged by several researchers including Mont (2002), Botsman and Rogers (2010) and Owyang, Tran & Silva (2013), who implied that P2P business models can be adapted for a B2C business. Such business cases have already been present in the market for a couple of years including the B2C car sharing platform Car2Go, and the clothing rental platform Rent the Runway. Another example is the company Lime, a platform enabling consumers to rent electric scooters for a fee. This service works by enabling consumers to access the scooters when downloading the Lime app, allowing them to unlock the scooter and use it to travel around the city for a fee per minute (Irfan, 2018). Not only are these platforms proving very successful, but they are expected to grow further in the next decade, as Provin (2016) forecasted the "sharing economy to increase to a global value of $335 billion in 2025 mainly driven by B2C sharing business models" (p. 1). The sharing economy term is a term which has been mainly associated with P2P businesses, but which is now also being applied to B2C businesses as more companies are adopting a sharing economy inspired system. There is a vast amount of literature on the sharing economy landscape, numerous definitions and explanations of what it entails as well as associated terms introduced to explain it. Hence, since the sharing economy is predominantly occupied by P2P businesses, the next section aims to identify, which category B2C companies fall under. These terms are reviewed in order to introduce the reader to the various relevant concepts which PSS falls under.

2.3 Collaborative Consumption and Sharing Economy

This section aims to explain the evolution of the terms Sharing Economy and Collaborative Consumption (CC), which have been used interchangeably, in order to explain the P2P and B2C sharing platforms. This assists the reader in gaining a thorough overview of these relevant concepts.

Zervas, Proserpio & Byers (2017) defined sharing economy platforms as a place which "has enabled people to collaboratively make use of underutilized inventory through fee-based sharing" (p. 2). Another definition of sharing economy was created by Santana & Parigi (2015) who explained it as ”the growing ecosystem of providers and consumers of temporary access to products and services" (p. 561). Moreover, another definition by Frenken & Schor (2019) defined the sharing economy as "consumers granting each other temporary access to under-utilized physical assets ("idle capacity"), possibly for money" (p. 123). As shown above, various definitions address different aspects of the sharing economy. It is evident Frenken and Schor's (2019) definition focused solely on P2P businesses while Santana and Parigi (2015) and Zervas et al. (2017) explained the term in a broader context which could include B2C businesses as well. Santana and Parigi (2015) state how both providers and consumers can grant each other temporary access, hence making the definition more applicable to B2C. As many new P2P and B2C businesses are emerging, increasingly more definitions of the sharing economy have been introduced, which has resulted in confusion regarding the concept. Researchers have introduced new definitions and analyses of what it entails which has created much turmoil regarding the term including which business models fall under it. Many blame this on the novelty of the term and its concept. Frenken & Schor (2019) also supported this claim regarding the confusion of the term. They stated that the confusion arose as many that participate in the sharing economy discussion refer to "its trendiness, technological sophistication, progress and innovation" which makes sharing economy hard to define and to fully understand (Frenken & Schor, 2019, p. 122). Moreover, they argued that the concept of sharing for humankind is not a novel idea. What is novel, however, is the concept of sharing with strangers, which is what the sharing economy business model is built upon (Frenken & Schor, 2019). Previously, sharing has been "confined to trusted individuals such as family, friends and neighbours“ whereas now, these new digital platforms have enlarged the scope of sharing and enabled it to take place across borders. Frenken & Schor (2019) also argue that term sharing can be used in a context where financial returns are involved. On the contrary, Belk (2007) highlights how critics in the past have argued that traditionally sharing has not involved any financial aspects or exchange. Hence, Frenken & Schor (2019) suggest a more representative term would be “renting”, which indeed does involve a financial remuneration (p. 123). Similarly, Billows & Mcneill (2018) also suggest another term to be more appropriate then ‘sharing’ which is ‘access’, by stating:

> “Sharing economy” has become the widely recognized term for market models, some suggest that “access economy” may be more appropriate, insisting that once sharing is market-mediated, it is no longer sharing at all[6]. Access, however, can be underlined by economic exchange and reciprocity, and thus access-based consumption has been defined as, “transactions that may be market-mediated in which no transfer of ownership takes place” ([6] p. 881). This is a more appropriate terminology for the examination of “shared” provider-generated services. (p. 3)

Another term, which has often been used in conjunction with the sharing economy is collaborative consumption (CC). CC is a term which covers businesses which enables underused resources to “be collaboratively shared between consumers” (Billows & McNeill, 2018, p. 1). Another scholar defined collaborative consumption as “The reinvention of traditional market behaviors – renting, lending, swapping, sharing, bartering, gifting – through technology, taking place in ways and on a scale not possible before the Internet” (Perlacia, Duml & Saebi, 2017, p. 9). Botsman and Rogers (2010) also described how CC enables consumers to shift from owning a product to just paying to access it. There are many studies that have been conducted on CC which look at the phenomenon from different perspectives including: sharing, charity, secondhand markets, sustainable consumption, borrowing and renting (Hamari, Sjöklint & Ukkonen, 2016).

To fully understand in which contexts CC can be applied in, it is important to understand the different categories that make up CC. In total, there are three different types which include; 1) redistribution markets, 2) collaborative lifestyles and 3) product service systems (DeFillippi, Rieple, & Wikström, 2016). Redistribution markets are based on peer-to-peer business models where peers are connected to enable the ownership of a product (with or without the exchange of money). Some examples of such businesses are eBay and thredUP.com (Matzler, Veider, & Kathan, 2014). Collaborative lifestyles involve people sharing interests or skills with each other. Moreover, Matzler et al. (2014) define it as people sharing and helping each other with “less tangible assets such as money, space or time” (para. 4). Some examples of businesses using this are: Taskrabbit and Happy Helper and other skills sharing platforms. The last type, which is product service systems (PSS), involves customers paying for using a product rather than paying for the ownership of the product (Baines, Lightfoot, Evans, Neely, Greenough, Peppard, Alcock & Wilson, 2007). Based on the definitions of the different types of CC above, it is evident that PSS is the only one which can be applied to both P2P and B2C business models (Talberg & Rasmussen, 2016). As CC is mainly associated with P2P businesses, the researchers argue that it would be more appropriate to place PSS under another term. This term is 'access economy', which is further explained below.

2.4 Access Economy

Due to the confusion surrounding the sharing economy and collaborative consumption explained above, this paper finds 'access economy' to be more an appropriate term for which PSS falls under, especially when referring to B2C businesses. In this section, it is highlighted why previous research has stressed that access economy is a more fitting term.

The term access economy covers various initiatives involved with "sharing underutilized assets (material resources or skills) to optimize their use" (Acquier, Daudigeos & Pinkse, 2017, p. 4). Another definition is that access economy "is one type of the economy that offers customers access to products or services when they want it" (Görög, 2018, p 182). Furthermore, it is argued to help customers who cannot afford to own a product but need it for short-term use (Görög, 2018). Acquier et al. (2017) pointed out that the access economy has materialized in the form of a growing number of companies offering services instead of products, such as product service systems (PSS). In many industries the products are increasingly being accessed temporarily instead of purchased, such as with cars, household appliances or luxury clothes (Acquier et al., 2017).

Eckhardt and Bardhi (2015) argued that the consumer is interested in the platforms within the sharing economy for economic reasons and not for social reasons. They therefore questioned the term sharing and instead suggested that the term access was more fitting. According to Bardhi and Eckhardt (2012) the terms access and sharing differs from each other since sharing indicates a perceived or shared sense of ownership. According to Bardhi and Eckhardt (2012) the term 'sharing' implies that joint possessions "are free for all to use and generate no debts" (p. 882). This entails that no fee or payment is required when sharing. Furthermore, the responsibilities of repairing or maintaining the item in question are shared (Bardhi & Eckhardt, 2012). On the other hand, with access there is no sense of joint ownership and joint responsibilities as the consumer simply gains access to the use of an object and it involves an economic exchange (Bardhi & Eckhardt, 2012).

Bardhi and Eckhardt (2012) outlined six dimensions of access-based services. These are temporality, anonymity, market mediation, consumer involvement, type of accessed object and political consumerism. Temporality refers to the temporary nature of the consumption which includes the duration of access and usage. Both of these vary between short-term to long-term. Anonymity is the relationship with the other consumers. This refers to both whether the context of use of the product is private or public and the spatial anonymity which is the flexible or fixed proximity between the object and the consumer. For the dimension of market mediation, the service can be either not for profit or for profit. Consumer involvement can also vary from the consumer having limited involvement as in traditional renting services or having more consumer co-creation such as preparing the product for the next customer. The dimension of type of accessed object refers to whether the object being accessed is experiential or functional and whether it is digital or material. Lastly, for political consumerism it depends upon whether the consumer uses access-based consumption to promote their ideological interests (Bardhi & Eckhardt, 2012). Ultimately, though some scholars, including Billows and McNeill (2018), stated that PSS falls under both sharing economy and collaborative consumption, this paper argues that access economy is a more appropriate term. This is supported by Bardhi and Eckhard (2012) who studied PSS under the term of access-based consumption.

2.5 Product Service Systems

As mentioned previously, this paper focuses on B2C businesses operating within a product service system (PSS) business model. Therefore, this section explains in-depth how this business model is defined.

Product Service System (PSS) are defined as “the customer pays for using an asset, rather than its purchase, and so benefits from a restructuring of the risks, responsibilities and costs traditionally associated with ownership” (Baines et al., 2007, p. 1543). Another definition stated that PSS are “Systems of products, services, supporting networks and infrastructure that are designed to be: competitive, satisfy customer needs and have a lower environmental impact than traditional business models” (Mont, 2002, p. 239). PSS allows “companies to offer goods as a service rather than sell them as products" which ultimately gives consumers the ability to rent products instead of purchasing them, which eliminates the aspect of ownership (Botsman & Rogers, 2010, para. 2). Furthermore, according to Tukker (2015) PSS are usually able to provide access to goods at a lower price than usual. Moreover, PSS can provide the user with the convenience and freedom to rent the exact equipment that is needed whenever it is needed (Heiskanen & Jalas, 2003). The business model of PSS has a broad definition which results in it representing a number of business types that operate within different industries. Tukker (2004) and Tukker and Tischer (2006) acknowledged that there are three main types within PSS; product-oriented services, use oriented services and result-oriented services.

1. The product-oriented services adds services to an existing product system (Tukker & Tischer, 2006). This could be when the provider of the product offers a service which is needed during the lifespan of the product (Tukker, 2004). Examples of this could be maintenance of the product, a tack-back agreement when the product is worn out or advice/consultancy related to the product (Tukker & Tischer, 2006).

2. The result-oriented services are according to Tukker and Tischer (2006) the ones truly oriented to the needs of the consumer. Tukker (2004) elaborated that this could be 'activity management' entailing when an activity at a company is outsourced to a third party, such as catering or office cleaning. Another type of result-oriented service could be when the consumer pays per service unit. Tukker (2004) gave the example of copier producers providing the service of keeping copying functions available in an office by providing maintenance, paper and toner supply etc. while the users of the copier pays per print which they use.

3. Finally, use-oriented services are intensifying the use of the products through use of either leasing, renting, sharing or pooling (Tukker & Tischer, 2006). Tukker (2004) explained that leasing the product entails that the provider has the ownership and the ownership does not change as the product is leased out. This entails that the service provider is responsible for maintaining the product while the lessee pays a regular fee. For leasing the lessee normally has unlimited and individual access to the product (Tukker, 2004). For product renting or sharing the product is also normally owned by the provider, who is again responsible for the

maintenance. As with leasing, the user pays for the use of the product. The difference from leasing is that the product will be accessed by the consumer for a limited period of time and the product will sequentially be accessed by other consumers (Tukker, 2004). Product pooling is similar to renting or sharing except the product is being simultaneously used by others (Tukker, 2004).

The focus of this paper is use oriented PSS business models, more specifically, B2C renting. The following section elaborates on how the different types of PSS are deployed within the fashion industry.

2.5.1 Product Service Systems in the Fashion Industry

This section gives an understanding of the different types of PSS which function within the fashion industry. This is done to further illustrate which specific type of PSS is studied in this paper and how it functions specifically in the fashion industry.

Different types of PSS business models can be used within the apparel industry. The product-oriented services sell a product together with other services that are product-related (Armstrong, Niinimäki, Lang & Kujala, 2016). This could be services such as repair/maintenance, return/exchange plans, or having the consumer participate in customizing the design (Armstrong et al., 2016). Next, there are the use-oriented services which enable the existing products to be used in new ways. This entails the products having a lack of personal ownership (Armstrong et al., 2016). The use-oriented PSS allows for clothing consultancy or renting/swapping of products while the service provider retains ownership of the products (Armstrong et al., 2016). The result-oriented services were not mentioned which could indicate that they might not have been adopted in the fashion industry (Armstrong et al., 2016).

Bardhi and Eckhardt's (2012) six dimensions of access-based services explained under the section 'Access economy' can be applied in order to illustrate the scope of which type of PSS is the focus in this research. The research looks into renting services in apparel with a business-to-consumer model. For temporality, the relevant services are usually quite short-term in access (days or weeks) but the usage can be both short-term and long-term as the services have different approaches as some do one-off fees while others use subscriptions. For anonymity, the context is private as the consumers are anonymous and there is a fixed proximity as the object comes directly from the business when delivered and goes back to the business after use. Furthermore, the service is for profit as the service makes a profit from renting out the clothes. The fashion rental services have limited consumer involvement as they are in charge of cleaning and preparing the clothes for the next renter. The type of accessed object is material and it can be both experiential and functional depending on the purpose of the consumer. For political consumption, it also varies depending on the motivations of the individual user. They could have an ideological reason for using the service such as environmental benefits.

In summary, the PSS business model studied in this research paper is the use-oriented services. This includes only rental services of apparel products which function on a business-to-consumer level. For these businesses, the company is the owner of the products and the customers do not interact with each other.

2.5.2 PSS and Sustainability

As the fashion industry has been widely criticized for being one of the biggest polluting industries globally, scholars have argued that PSS business models in the fashion industry is a step towards a more sustainable future. Whether or not the business model PSS is in fact sustainable has been widely discussed, having researchers argue both for and against it.

First of all, many scholars have argued that there lies a potential in PSS business models that both provide benefits to the consumers as well as to the environment (Yang & Evans, 2019). Moreover, Yang and Evans (2019) summarized the sustainable factors which have been related to PSS in previous research. These factors included; prolonged product lifecycle, increased energy efficiency, increased resource efficiency, increased reuse and longer product use. Prolonged life has been accredited due to the maintenance and repair that the company in question takes on when owning and renting out the products. Increased energy and resource efficiency is regarding the incentives that manufacturers and consumers have to make the most out of the rented product in order to increase efficiency and thereby also reduce costs. Moreover, Yang and Evans (2019) also mentioned that the increase in reuse refers to the PSS's ability to reuse the products as customers care less about the newness of the product since they don't own it themselves. Lastly, increased product use refers to the

PSS's ability to ensure that the product they own is used to its maximum ability, hence, "to ensure that products are used as intensively as possible" (Yang & Evans, 2019, p. 1158). Additionally, the 'utilisation of product is increased' as it is shared among consumers making sure the same product is used at a lower cost (Yang & Evans, 2019). Moreover, in another study, Armstrong and Lang (2013) stressed that the concept of PSS "emphasizes interaction with consumers to meet needs and a life cycle approach to reduce environmental impact" (p. 2). Furthermore, they stated that The United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP) perceived PSS to be a logical step to a cleaner model for production processes and products (Armstrong & Lang, 2013). Armstrong and Lang (2013) presented the argument that PSS are sustainable since the substitution of material consumption with services will increase the chances of using fewer material resources and less energy. Similarly, Camilleri (2019) pointed out that PSS providers can create systems which have lower impact on the environment by affecting the use and disposal of resources. Therefore, PSS could lead to minimizing material waste (Camilleri, 2019).

On the other hand, some scholars suggested that not all aspects of PSS are as sustainable as they might seem. Tukker and Tischner (2006) pointed out that PSS are not necessarily sustainable, but they do move away from existing product concepts, which enhances the opportunity to find sustainable improvement. Stål and Jansson (2017) argued that while some PSS's have little contribution to sustainable development others may contribute to reduced throughput of material and reducing waste. However, they point out that the effects will be greater for the products which are emission intense during production rather than during use (Stål & Jansson, 2017). Retamal (2017) emphasized that the notion that all PSS business models are sustainable is too simplistic and incorrect. Tukker and Tischner (2006) shed light on one of PSS's strengths which lies in the approach of businesses distancing themselves away from current common product concepts, while focusing and directing themselves towards demands and functions which have a current need to be fulfilled. Tukker and Tischner (2006) also stated that this would ensure that PSS business models direct themselves toward becoming environmentally sustainable businesses

2.6 Consumer Perception

As the research question seeks to understand how the consumer perceives PSS, this section explores previous literature in this area. This entails giving an overview of previous literature investigating consumer perception of PSS. However, as few studies investigated only PSS but rather a combination of different types of services, some of these studies with a broader perspective have also been included. The researchers in these papers refer to PSS under various terms, such as collaborative consumption. Therefore, some papers also include findings regarding peer-to-peer, yet, the focus of this section is on the findings which are relevant to PSS, and more specifically with a focus on use-oriented services. It is important to note that the studies included did not exclusively investigate perceptions but also other psychological terms like attitudes, subjective norms, personality traits and behavioural beliefs. However, as these findings all contribute to an understanding of the perception of consumers they are included. This section is divided into two main sections; 1) consumer perception of use-oriented PSS in various industries, 2) an in-depth look at consumer perception of use-oriented PSS specifically in the fashion industry.

2.6.1 Consumer Perception of PSS in Various Industries

Much prior research has investigated consumer perception of PSS in various industries. This section aims to give the reader an understanding of the relevant findings in this area of research.

Edbring, Lehner and Mont (2016) investigated the attitudes of young consumers in three alternative models of consumption (second-hand, access-based consumption and collaborative consumption). The study looked into underlying motivations and obstacles for the young consumers to use these three models. Edbring et al. (2016) studied this topic by conducting semi-structured interviews and surveys of young IKEA consumers. As defined by Edbring et al. (2016) access-based consumption includes “selling product use or its functions”. The category of access-based consumption is relevant as PSS would fall under this category. The study found that one of the motivations for using access-based consumption was the flexibility and convenience it offers to rent rather than own. Another factor was the economic benefit of not having to buy the product. Next, there was the temporary nature of use which was especially appealing to the youngest of the participants who stressed the convenience of renting a furnished house temporarily. Another motivation for the participant was the environmental aspect of renting rather than buying. Furthermore, it was also found that the participants liked that they were able to test a product when they rented it. Edbring et al. (2016) also found obstacles for using access-based consumption. One of these obstacles was the participants’ desire to own their own things. Another obstacle was their concern for hygiene since they feared that the products hadn’t been properly cleaned since it was with its previous renter. Being unfamiliar with the concept was another obstacle. If the participants weren't aware how the service worked, they could be concerned that it would be impractical and complicated. Moreover, some participants felt that the anxiety of breaking the rented product was an obstacle for them. Economic obstacles were found when the participants felt that there wasn’t an economic benefit to renting, especially for long term deals. Similarly, environmental obstacles were also found where the participants didn’t see how renting was beneficial to the environment (Edbring et al., 2016).

Catulli, Lindley, Reed, Green, Hyseni, and Kiri (2013) studied the interaction between business models which do not involve transfer of ownership (such as PSS) and consumer culture. The study used five focus groups and ten semi-structured interviews to investigate expecting mothers and mothers with young children in the UK. The study looked into the category of baby and nursery products. One of the findings was that some of the participants saw the use of access-based consumption as a projection of their self-image as a parent showing responsibility towards social and environmental issues. Moreover, it was found that the participants worried about the hygiene of the products especially concerning the more intimate products. The participants wanted to know the history of the product such as the age of the product and how many renters had it before. Another finding was that the social acceptability of access-based consumption from relevant peers could affect their use. However, ownership was not an issue for the participants possibly due to the temporary use that baby products generally have (Catulli, et al., 2013). Similarly, another study by Catulli and Reed (2017) explored how consumers perceive PSS for the supply of pushchairs using an online survey with 166 respondents. In this study, it was found that the participants preferred buying the pushchairs through ‘traditional’ retailers or online as the best option. This was due to factors such as hygiene and safety.

Rousseau (2020) studied the main factors shaping millennials’ willingness to lease a smartphone in Flanders, Belgium. This study was conducted with the use of discrete choice experiments (asking participants hypothetical alternatives in a survey) conducted on 325 respondents in the age range of 15-30 years old. The findings showed that slightly less than half of the participants were open to renting while the rest were not. The barriers for the respondents were that they worried about unexpected costs of repair, that phones would not be replaced if lost or stolen, that their privacy would not be protected or that they would not receive a trendy model. However, some of the motivators were environmental concerns, the financial upside and the wish to get the latest model (Rousseau, 2020).

Bardhi and Eckhardt (2012) explored access-based consumption through the context of car sharing. This is done with a qualitative study of Zipcar consumers. They conducted 40 semi-structured interviews with Zipcar users in Boston. This study found that the participants' reasons for using the service were reduced expenses and increased convenience for themselves. They did not feel any shared or individual ownership towards the car. The individual utility was more important to the participants than the collective utility such as reducing the carbon footprint. Furthermore, it was found that the participants did not have a feeling of mutual responsibility towards others and also expected other users to have only their self-interest at heart. This also resulted in their wish for the Zipcar organization to have a more regulatory role throughout the service (Bardhi and Eckhardt, 2012).

Rexfelt and Ornäs (2009) conducted a study using focus groups and individual interviews investigating which factors influence consumer acceptance of PSS. They found that personal interest and value for money were key motivators for the consumers. Based on this study by Rexfelt and Ornäs (2009) a subsequent study by Catulli (2012) aimed to investigate the topic further. Catulli (2012) studied consumer concerns within PSS. This was done by conducting four focus groups using 20 participants. It was found that respondents were concerned with hygiene, health and safety. The participants felt that they were taking a leap of trust in believing the product had not been abused. This worry could be helped by providing the necessary information regarding how hygiene, health and safety is insured. Another concern for the participants was the risk of the product not being available when needed. The participants were also concerned with the helpfulness of the supplier. Furthermore, the uncertainty regarding damage of the product was another concern of the participants. Moreover, it was also found that the environmental impacts seemed to have low priority for the participants (Catulli, 2012).

2.6.2 Consumer Perception of PSS in the Fashion Industry

A number of studies have looked into the consumers' perception of PSS within the fashion industry. These are reviewed below.

Lang and Armstrong (2018) studied the influence of personality traits on consumers' intention to engage in collaborative consumption (including renting) within the fashion industry. This was done by collecting surveys from 431 females from the US. They found that if the consumer cares about being a "fashion leader", which entails being a first mover when it comes to fashion, they will be more likely to use collaborative consumption. Furthermore, they found that the consumer's need for uniqueness in their clothing also makes them more likely to use these services (Lang & Armstrong, 2018). Furthermore, Lang and Armstrong (2018) found that if the consumer has a high level of materialism among their personality traits, they are less likely to use collaborative consumption to rent (or swap) clothing.

Mun and Johnson (2014) conducted 30 in-depth interviews in order to understand the experience of online collaborative consumption in apparel (this included renting). One of the motivations to use collaborative consumption within apparel found by Mun and Johnson (2014) was the economic benefit of spending less and saving more money. Another aspect was that it was found to be convenient and accessible at all times without location boundaries. Next, there was an environmental motivation since the participants felt they were helping the environment by reducing waste. The participants felt they could be entertained and that it was a way to stay up to date with the latest trends (Mun & Johnson, 2014). One of the concerns found was the performance of the product as touch, colour and fitting can be difficult variables to access over the internet. As the interaction takes place over the internet the renter could feel uncertain about the product quality (Mun & Johnson, 2014).

Lee and Chow (2020) studied the consumers' behavioural beliefs towards online fashion renting. This was investigated with the use of 200 participants answering online surveys. One of the things which they found was that utilitarian values such as saving money and maximizing utility were drivers for using the service. Moreover, the ecological aspect of the service was seen as another reason for using it. However, the consumers who had a strong sense of psychological ownership were less inclined to use it. It was also found that females are more inclined to use the services than men. Lee and Chow (2020) explained it by pointing out that females are more fashion and price conscious than men. Furthermore, there are more fashion renting services that target female consumers. Furthermore, Lee and Chow (2020) pointed out that the fashion renting market for men is an untapped opportunity as men are becoming increasingly interested in fashion.

In another study by Armstrong, Niinimäki, Kujala, Karell, and Lang (2015) they sought to identify positive and negative perceptions of renting clothing from PSS. This was done by the use of focus group interviews and subsequent surveys with the participants. The sample consisted of Finnish women in a wide ranging age group. One of the findings of the paper was that the participants had issues with trusting the provider of the clothing, including concerns regarding hygiene. The participants wanted information regarding the practicalities of the service and the guarantees. Contrarily, one of the consumers' most powerful motivations was that they saw the service as an opportunity to reduce consumption and support a sustainable initiative through product longevity. Furthermore, the financial benefit and the ease of use was also seen as motivators for use. The study found that renting services were perceived as best suited for the younger consumers. Furthermore, a study by Armstrong, Niinimäki, Lang and Kujala (2016) looked into how females in two countries (Finland and US) use use-oriented product service systems (including renting). This was studied with the use of focus groups and questionnaires. One of the findings from the study was that the participants saw the service as being able to satisfy their desire for change. This was relevant as they saw clothing as an instrument to form identity and lifestyle. Furthermore, it was found that an important aspect of renting for the participants was the opportunity to reduce consumption. The participants also saw renting as having financial benefit but only for clothing which was not for everyday use. Clothing for everyday use did not have a clear financial benefit. Some of the concerns found was the lack of trust in the provider in regard to for example hygiene and quality. It was important for the participants that the service provider handled cleaning and sanitation. Furthermore, other concerns regarded what happened if the rental was damaged and the availability of products from the service. The results showed that renting was seen as more relevant for a younger target group, specifically the people frequently using clothes as a means to adjust personal identity (Armstrong et al., 2016).

Becker-Leifhold (2018) conducted online surveys with over 1000 participants to investigate how attitudes, subjective norms and perceived behavioural control impact the intention to rent clothing. One of the things which was found in this study was that there was a need for a positive perception by a relevant peer for the consumer to be more inclined to rent. Furthermore, the lack of awareness of the service was found to be a barrier as the participants perceived it as difficult to use. Becker-Leifhold (2018) also found that a motivation to use the service was the opportunity to show social status by being up to date with the latest trends as well as wearing high-quality clothes. However, being materialistic was found to be a barrier. Moreover, the study found that sustainability was not a driver for using the service.

2.7 Drivers of Fashion Consumption

As the previous section investigated why consumers would or would not rent apparel products, this section aims to further understand the underlying factors which drive fashion consumption. This aids the researchers in putting drivers of fashion consumption into perspective with drivers of renting fashion items.

Overtime, researchers have been trying to understand the reason why people consume and what drivers impact consumers ‘shopping behaviour. However, since the fashion industry continuously has different styles and trends coming in demand and consumers quickly evolve their preferences and tastes, it has proven to be difficult to fundamentally understand why consumers buy clothing (Goldsmith, Flynn & Clark, 2012). Nonetheless, previous research has indicated that consumption is driven by a desire to “express meanings about oneself and create an identity” (McNeill & Moore, 2015, p. 212). Since fashion and clothing are always on display, the desire to continuously shop and develop one’s self-image becomes even stronger (McNeill & Moore, 2015). Belk (1988) explained how the consumer is using clothing items to express and communicate meanings about themselves to others around them, while also reinforcing meanings to themselves about wearing the items. Researchers including Thompson and Haytko (1997) and Murray (2002) also supported this by emphasizing the consumers’ desire to create a personal identity through fashion items that are also influenced by society itself. Moreover, other research has suggested that materialism plays another important role in influencing and driving consumer consumption (Goldsmith et al., 2012). Kasser (2002) among others, argued from another perspective stating that pop culture, media and other channels have a big influence on the concept of materialism and consumers desire to shop. Goldsmith et al. (2002) further explained this by stating how “Social comparison theories stress the influence of other people and the comparisons consumers make with their reference groups on encouraging materialistic tendencies” (p. 104). This literature enables the understanding of what consumers associate clothing with and which drivers are present in consumption.

When looking at the motivators of shopping online, Burke (2002) found that particular factors play an important role in influencing an individual's preference of shopping online. He mentioned that factors such as gender, age, education, personality and income can affect the behaviour of consumers online. He also stated that younger consumers are seen to be more interested in shopping online due to their interest in new technologies. Moreover, he stated that individuals with higher income generally spend more money online compared to people with lower income and lower educational background. Other researchers who contributed to this area of research are Wallace and Barkhi (2007) who expressed that some of the major components influencing consumers to shop online are the convenience, time saving, ease of accessibility and flexibility aspect. Lastly, Makwana, Pathak & Sharma (2018) found that "consumers' previous experience and the trust built up in online shopping affect their intentions to shop online" (p. 42).

2.8 Psychological Theories

In this section, the researchers explore theories within psychology to gain a deeper understanding of the psychological term of perception and other closely related relevant terms and theories. These theories are explored to gain a deeper understanding of the term perception as well as how one indicates the behaviour of an individual.

Pickens (2005) described what defines a person's perception. He explained that a perception is produced when "a person is confronted with a situation or stimuli. The person interprets the stimuli into something meaningful to him or her based on prior experiences" (Pickens, 2005, p. 52). Furthermore, Pickens (2005) pointed out that a person's perception may differ from reality. The process of creating a perception consists of four stages; stimulation, registration, organization and interpretation (Pickens, 2005). However, the receptiveness to the different stimuli vary based on a person's beliefs, experiences, attitudes, motivations and their personality (Pickens, 2005). Based on these factors, the individual can use "selective perception" to only select the stimuli which is congruent with the person's own beliefs, attitudes and so on. According to Pickens (2005) the individual person has what is referred to as 'perceptual vigilance' and 'perceptual defense'. This entails that the person will use the perceptual vigilance to select stimuli which are more in line with satisfying immediate needs while perceptual defence assists the individual in disregarding the stimuli which could make them uncomfortable or cause psychological anxiety (Pickens, 2005).

In relation to attitudes, Pickens (2005) stressed that attitudes are closely related to perceptions. He defined attitudes as “a mindset or a tendency to act in a particular way due to both an individual’s experience and temperament” (Pickens, 2005, p. 44). Attitudes are typically used to explain a person’s behaviour (Pickens, 2005). Attitudes consists of a complicated mix of a person’s personality, beliefs, values, behaviours and motivations (Pickens, 2005). There are three components which make a person’s attitude; a feeling, a thought/belief and an action. Therefore, attitudes can assist the researcher in understanding how a person sees a situation and how they behave in the situation. Moreover, Jobber (2007) defined an attitude as “an overall favourable or unfavourable evaluation of a product or service” which simply translates to what people think or feel regarding a product, brand, company or another individual (Jobber, 2007 as cited in BPP Learning Media, 2010, p. 25). These attitudes can be formed through various sources including; education, family environment, age, experience, financial circumstance and social background (Grant & Stephen, 2005). This paper looks mainly at the participants' perceptions as it is seeking to uncover how they individually interpret the situation of renting. As attitudes are more interconnected with behaviour, attitudes are not as relevant even though they are, of course, very closely related. Therefore, it is important to note that this paper seeks to understand how the participant perceives the service and not their actual behaviour towards it.

Another important aspect to consider when understanding an individual’s behaviour is the impact of social norms which are created by societal expectations and social pressures. Social norms have been proven to influence “way we dress, how we vote, what we buy, and a host of other behavioural decisions” (Manning, 2009, p. 649). However, another study showed that it is the individual perception of these norms that can affect behaviour rather than the actual norms (Cialdini, Reno & Kallgren, 1990). This is known as subjective norms, which have also been identified as significant factors influencing behaviour. A subjective norm reflects “the perceived opinions of referent others. A "referent other" is a person or group whose beliefs may be important to the individual” (p. 5). Moreover, it also includes the level of degree in which the person wishes to share the same belief as the important person. Mathieson (1991) explained this by stating “Motivation to comply is the extent to which the person wants to comply with the wishes of the referent other” (Mathieson, 1991, p. 5). In other words, the subjective norm is composed of the individual’s expectations of the belief an important person holds as well as the degree to which the individual wishes to agree with the belief of that important person. Moreover, Rhodes & Courneya (2003) stated that subjective norms and attitudes are “suggested to exert their effects upon behaviour through intention” (p. 129).

Additionally, another relevant theory is Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) which was developed by Ajzen and Fishbein (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975; Ajzen and Fishbein 1980). This theory aims to predict an individual’s behaviour (Silverman, Hanrahan, Huang, Rabinowitz & Lim, 2016). Madden, Ellen & Ajzen (1992) defined the theory by stating that it ”posits that behavioural intentions, which are the immediate antecedents to behaviour, are a function of salient information or belief about the likelihood that performing a particular behavior will lead to a specific outcome” (p. 3). Silverman et al. (2016) defined it in simpler words by stating that the theory suggests that “a person's behavior is determined by their intention to perform the behavior and that this intention is, in turn, a function of their attitude toward the behavior and subjective norms” (p. 9). In other words, this theory incorporated an individual’s attitude towards a behaviour and the subjective norms they have related to that particular behaviour. This theory aims to investigate a person’s attitude in order to indicate a person's behaviour. However, as Hale, Householder and Greene (2002) noted the theory only seeks to explain volitional behaviour and does not include other types of behaviour such as impulsive or habitual behavior. They explained that this is due to the fact that these behaviours might not involve a conscious decision (Hale et al., 2002). To give an example of how TRA has been used, Lee & Chow (2020) found that if a person has a strong sense to act more sustainably and believes their social peers also feel positive about sustainable initiatives, they would be more likely to introduce more sustainable habits such as recycling or reducing waste. In other words, by understanding a person's subjective norms and attitudes towards a behaviour, it can help to indicate the individual’s overall behaviour.

Within studying people’s attitudes and behaviours, it has prevailed that individuals often state certain things and explain certain attitudes, whilst having behaviours that work against what they previously stated. McEachern, Seaman, Padel, & Foster (2005) have explored this and stated that there is a gap between consumers' attitudes and their overall behaviour. This was seen in sustainable fashion products where consumers have stated they wish to shop responsibly and wish to purchase more sustainably, even though their actual behaviour does not represent the expressed attitudes. McNeill and Moore (2015) stated that though sustainability may be important, especially since the sustainable movement has gained increasing traction, consumers feel that the “drivers to be ‘fashionable’ often outweigh drivers to be ethical or sustainable" (p. 212). Hence, indicating that though sustainable alternatives are important, other factors are prioritized. Moreover, Terlau & Hirsch (2015) have defined this gap as the 'attitude-behaviour gap' while also explaining that this phenomenon is mostly influenced by the individual, their social surrounding and the situational context. Similarly, Carrigan and Attala (2001) found that why attitudes are not reflected in behaviour is due to factors such as price, value, trends and brand image, influencing their decision making. In other words, consumers may want to be more sustainable but may be influenced to buy a product due to reduced price, making them purchase less sustainable products.

2.9 How Can This Study Contribute to the Relevant Area of Research?

As the literature review illustrates there are a number of studies investigating consumer perception of PSS within the fashion industry. However, it became apparent that research in the specific area of millennials' perception of PSS in the fashion industry, was unexplored. As millennials were seen as an important group to gain more knowledge about, the researchers found this to be a relevant opportunity to explore and contribute to this area of research. On top of being an unexplored segment, millennials are also seen to be leading the sustainable movement, engaged in global and environmental issues, as well as being aware and up to date with new digital technologies (Hwang & Griffiths, 2017; Keeble, 2013), Therefore, they were thought to have the potential to increase the adoption of online clothing rental services. Thus, this paper looks into the area of millennials' perception of business-to-consumer online use-oriented product service systems (specifically within product renting) in the fashion industry. It is important to note that throughout the rest of these services will be referred to as *clothing rental services*

3 Methodological Approach

The next part of the paper describes the methodological approach employed to examine the research topic. This paper uses Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill's (2009) research onion to describe the various "layers" of the chosen methodological approach (p. 108), which can be seen in the picture below. Therefore, the methodology includes the following sections: research philosophy, research approach, research strategy, research choices, time horizon and techniques and procedures for data collection and data analysis. Furthermore, the section addresses ethical considerations and research quality.

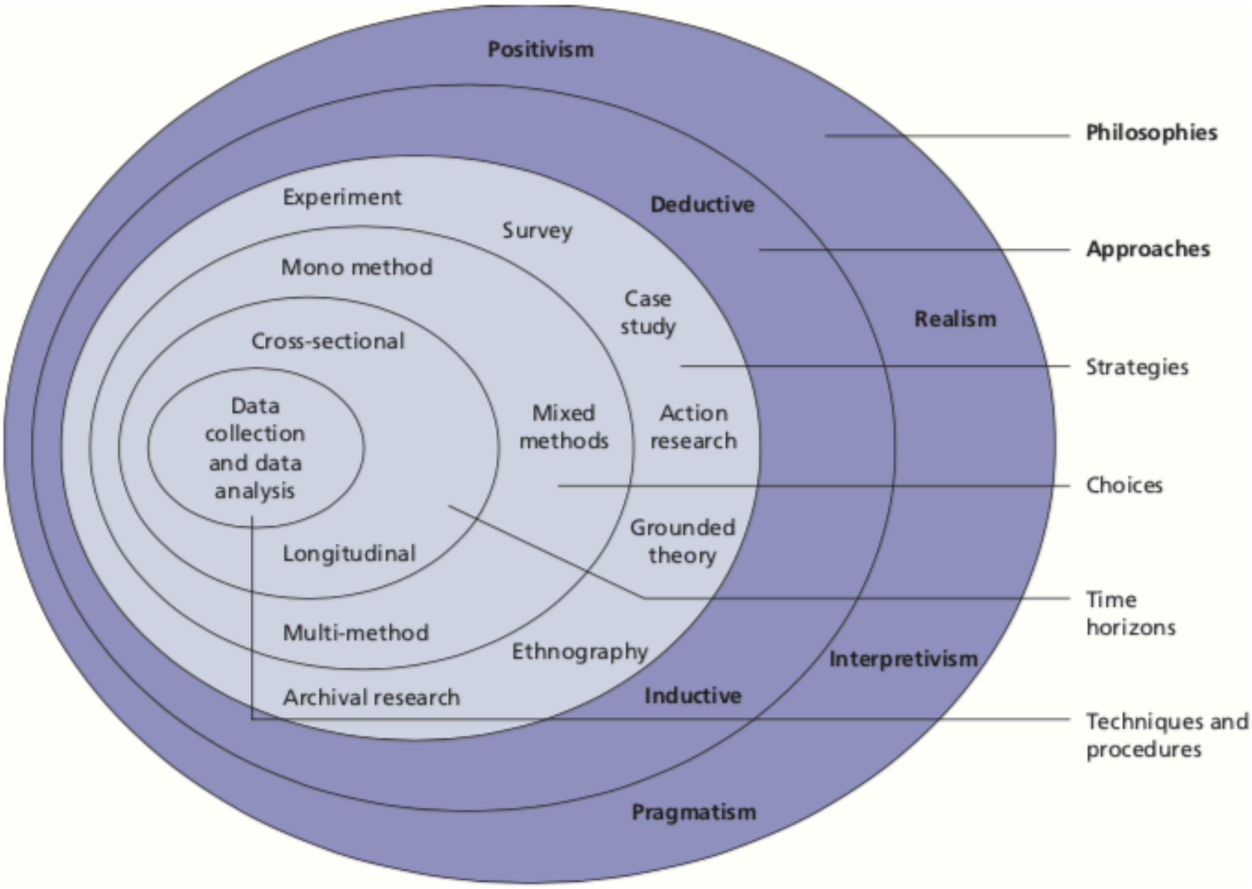

Figure 4.1
The research 'onion'
Source: © Mark Saunders, Philip Lewis and Adrian Thornhill 2008

The research 'onion' (Saunders et al., 2009, Fig 4.1, p. 108).

3.1 Research Philosophy

The ontological worldview of a study is concerned with the perceived nature of reality (Saunders et al., 2009, p. 110). There are two perceptions of this issue which is objectivism or subjectivism. Objectivism implies that "social entities exist in reality external to social actors" (Saunders et al., 2009, p. 111). This entails that social entities such as an organization or management are objective entities and can be studied through objective aspects. Contrarily, subjectivism implies that "social phenomena are created from the perceptions and consequent actions of social actors" (Saunders et al., 2009, p. 111). Using the same examples from before, of an organization or management, the subjectivist believes that in order to study these entities it is essential to understand the meanings which are attached to them by the social actors. The culture of the organization is a result of continuous social enactment (Saunders et al., 2009, p. 111). The ontological standpoint of this research paper is the subjectivist view as it is found that social reality should be understood by exploring the subjective meaning of the individuals' motivations in order to understand their actions. The ontological view is closely interconnected with the epistemological approach of the paper, which is explained in further details below.

Saunders et al. (2009) stated "The research philosophy you adopt contains important assumptions about the way in which you view the world" (p. 108). These assumptions of how to view the world are critical to make for the researcher as these assumptions will underpin the rest of the research strategy (Saunders et al., 2009, p. 108). The research philosophy and epistemological standpoint adopted in this paper is interpretivism (Saunders et al, 2009). The epistemological choice concerns what is regarded as acceptable scientific knowledge (Bryman, 2016). Interpretivism is an epistemology that differs from positivism and that has been developed as a scientific model to study the social world (Bryman, 2016). The interpretivist philosophy is developed from the idea that there is a difference between researching people and objects. The interpretivist worldview is that the study of the social world requires a different logic of research than the one of natural sciences, which is positivism (Bryman, 2016). Positivism entails that scientific findings must be conducted in a value free/objective way (Bryman, 2016). Whereas, interpretivism advocates that as 'social actors', humans need to be researched and understood as actors in a social environment who are interpreting their surroundings in their own unique and subjective way (Saunders et al, 2019). Human beings attribute meaning to the social reality around them and they act on the basis of these meanings (Bryman, 2016). According to interpretivism, the social scientist is to gain access to the human's 'common-sense thinking' and interpret the social world through their point of view (Bryman, 2016). As the research philosophy suggests the research explores the individual's point of view rather than searching for one objective and measurable truth. The interpretivist research philosophy fits this research as it sets out to understand how the individual consumer thinks about product service systems in the fashion industry.

3.2 Research Purpose

Saunders et al. (2009) explain that the purpose of the research can be either explanatory, exploratory, descriptive or a combination of these. The purpose of the research can even change as the research develops (Robson, 2002). The exploratory purpose, which is the one primarily employed for this research, is useful when the researcher is unsure of the exact nature of a problem (Saunders et al., 2009). Even though there has been a number of research papers investigating consumers' perceptions of product service systems within the fashion industry, this paper seeks to understand a new aspect of the topic while it specifically investigates millennials domiciled in Denmark. However, having the exploratory approach is not the same as having absence of direction. As Adams and Schvaneveldt (1991) pointed out, the focus of the research should be broad in the initial stages but as it progresses the focus should become more specific. Therefore, as the research progresses it adopts a more descriptive direction. Descriptive studies seek to give an accurate portrayal of a situation/person to give a clear understanding of a phenomena. However, the weakness of descriptive studies is that it can lack relevance to a 'bigger picture' and descriptive studies are, therefore, often combined with exploratory or explanatory studies (Saunders et al., 2009).

3.3 Research Approach

The approach to theory development of this paper is the inductive approach while also incorporating some deductive elements. Saunders et al. (2009) described the process of the inductive approach as first exploring the data, then developing theories and, thereafter, relating the theory to the literature. Saunders et al. (2009) stressed that the inductive paper has a clearly defined purpose and research question, but it does not set out to test predetermined theories or conceptual frameworks. The use of external theories in the inductive approach is to demonstrate how the findings and theories relate to what is already known about the research topic (Saunders et al, 2009). The inductive researcher finds out which issues to concentrate on through the process of exploring the data (Saunders et al., 2009).

Contrarily, for the deductive approach a measurable hypothesis is developed and tested (Saunders et al., 2009). One of the criticisms of the deductive approach is that it has a tendency not to permit alternate explanations for the findings due to the finality of the choice of theory and hypothesis (Sanders et al., 2009). Therefore, as the purpose of this research is to openly explore the topic, the inductive approach was found most fitting. However, it is important to point out that the inductive approach will have elements of the deductive approach. Saunders et al. (2009) pointed out that various of the inductively based analytical procedures do combine elements of both inductive and deductive approaches. Even though the researcher might begin choosing either an inductive or deductive approach, the reality is that the research in practice will combine aspects of both approaches in various levels (Saunders et al., 2009).

The inductive approach fits the research design due to the exploratory nature of what the paper seeks to find. The purpose of the research is not to test a predetermined hypothesis but rather to explore the research question with few limitations on which direction the findings might go. As the researchers collect data, there will be a portion of data analysis throughout the process. In other words, interviews are conducted and analyzed in order to guide the next set of interviews and their relative interview questions. This is as the emergent themes found in the previous interviews, guide the creation of new interview questions. This is inspired by elements in the grounded theory approach which is "based upon a continuous cycling between empirical data collection and data analysis to develop concepts through a coding process which allows the generation of theory" (Steenhuis & Bruijn, 2006, p. 5). Moreover, this approach enables the researchers to learn from each interview and implement it and use the insight in another interview (Steenhuis & Bruijn, 2006).

As the beginning of this section mentions, the approach of this study is not purely inductive. The deductive elements in this research involve the conducted literature review that guides the researchers to be sensitive towards relevant areas and topics (Steenhuis & Bruijn, 2006). Steenhuis and Bruijn (2006) stated that "the literature is not analyzed and used to generate a theoretical framework but it is read so that the author is sensitive to important areas" (p. 8). This theory development approach is inspired by the "progressive case study" which "combines the strengths of the inductive and deductive approach" (Steenhuis & Bruijn, 2006, p. 7). Their research is mainly inductive and inside the boundaries of an interpretivist paradigm. Steenhuis and Bruijn (2006) explained that their approach has been selected due to their wish to create "theory that should not be considered validated but rather it contains concepts and possible relationships which creates new insight [...] and that can be tested in subsequent research" (Steenhuis & Bruijn, 2006, p. 7). Moreover, they suggested that the mixed approach enables the research to incorporate the strengths of both the inductive and deductive approach.

3.4 Research Strategy

Saunders et al. (2009) defined different types of research strategies to adopt depending on the research itself. For this research, a case study approach is chosen. Baxter and Jack (2008) defined a case study as:

> an approach to research that facilitates exploration of a phenomenon within its context using a variety of data sources. This ensures that the issue is not explored through one lens, but rather a variety of lenses which allows for multiple facets of the phenomenon to be revealed and understood. (p. 1)

Moreover, As Saunders et al. (2009) pointed out; "the case study strategy is most often used in explanatory and exploratory research" (p. 146). This fits the approach of this research as it has an exploratory purpose. The exploratory case study is employed to explore the situations where the phenomenon being studied has no clear, single set of outcomes (Yin, 2003). Furthermore, Yin (2018) pointed out that the studies most suitable for using the case study are when "how"/ "why" research questions are being asked about a contemporary event (p. 13). These circumstances apply to this study as it is a contemporary study and the research question is asking a "how" question. Moreover, Yin (2018) pointed out that there are several different definitions of cases; definitions which cite: individuals, decisions, neighbourhood, processes and more. Hence, case study research can be applied to a variety of scenarios. For this study, the major focus is to try and explore a single holistic case being the perception a group of individuals hold. Lazar, Feng & Hochheiser (2017) stated that the single case study is appropriate if the research is not particularly concerned with generalizing but rather interested in conducting an exploratory case study which aims to build an initial understanding of the situation. As this research has the exploratory purpose, the single case study is found appropriate to generate useful insights about a single group of individuals.

Miles and Huberman (1994) defined a specific case used for a case study as “a phenomenon of some sort occurring in a bounded context. The case is, ‘in effect, your unit of analysis’” (p. 25). Baxter and Jack (2010) also pointed out that the researcher has to ask themselves ‘who/what do I want to analyze’. Hence, the unit of the analysis for this paper is to analyze the perception millennials students have of clothing rental services. Here, the bounded context is Copenhagen Business School which is the context which connects the individuals. Using Baxter and Jack’s (2008) thought process, this case study was chosen as the case itself was the perception of millennial students, but the case cannot be considered without its surrounding context. When conducting a case study, it is important to choose ‘the relevant social group’ (Crowe, Cresswell, Robertson, Huby, Avery & Sheikh, 2011), which in this case is identified as the millennial students, this will be explained in more detail at a later stage. As explained earlier in this research, this paper adopts the world view of subjectivism. Therefore, the case study seeks to answer the research question by understanding the topic from the point of view of each participant. As Yin (2018) stated, the researcher is; “attempting to capture the perspectives of different participants and focusing on how their different meanings illuminate your topic of study” (p. 16).

It is worth mentioning that though this approach might not reflect the traditional understanding of a case study, such as studying an organization, several studies have adopted a similar approach and used it in similar contexts (Baxter & Rideout, 2006; Vähäsalo, 2018). Taking Baxter and Rideout (2006) as an example, they conducted a case study to shed light upon the decision-making of nursing students. However, as Baxter and Jack (2010) pointed out, this case could not be studied without the context (the nursing school). Therefore, the case (the decisions) and the context (the nursing school) have to be considered and studied as a whole. Likewise, the perceptions of millennial students could not be considered without their context which is the educational institution, in other words, the bounded context of the study. For this paper, the chosen case could be categorized in Yin’s description of a “less concrete case”, such as studying decisions (Yin, 2018. p. 32).

For this paper, the research approach adopts a case study where the focus is to explore and understand the perceptions of millennial students at Copenhagen Business School (CBS). Therefore, the study looks into a group of millennials studying a technology-focused master at CBS. Therefore, in order to form a holistic description of the case, 12 interviews are conducted within the target group. CBS is chosen as it describes itself as “Denmark’s largest educational and research institution within business administration and economics in a wide sense. The university is committed to providing business-related education programmes and continuing education for the public and, in particular, the private sector" (Copenhagen Business School, 2018). Thus, CBS is specialised in the area of business, which makes it a prime location for seeking millennials who have a thorough understanding of emerging business models and innovative ideas while also being curious and up to date with new technologies. Moreover, the students enrolled in technology-focused master programs, which entails the study of technology and business, are expected to make appropriate considerations while also being familiar with the technology available. Ultimately, the students currently enrolled in a master study are argued to be a group of individuals aware of current technologies, emerging business models and aware of business trends, hence, are a suitable group to explore and extract relevant data from regarding their perception of clothing rental services.

The time horizon of the research deals with whether the research looks into a phenomenon at one moment in time (cross-sectional) or over a longer period of time (longitudinal) (Saunders et al, 2009). This case study takes the cross-sectional approach as the interviews are conducted over a couple of weeks. Therefore, the data will reflect a phenomenon at a particular point in time rather than the development of a phenomenon over a longer period of time (Saunders et al, 2009).

The research strategy of this paper is inspired by 'The progressive case study' developed by Steenhuis and Bruijn (2006). As Steenhuis and Bruijn (2006) expressed there are both deductive and inductive approaches to case studies. They provided examples of two 'extremes' which are Yin (1994) with a more deductive approach while Glaser and Strauss (1967) used Grounded Theory and, therefore, a highly inductive approach. Therefore, Steenhuis and Bruijn (2006) suggested a new approach called 'The progressive case study' which combined the strengths of the inductive and deductive approach (Steenhuis and Bruijn, 2006). This progressive case study is primarily inductive and is within the interpretivist paradigm. This is due to that fact that the outcome of using the approach is to generate theory which should not be considered validated but rather creates new insights by finding valuable concepts and relationships. These insights can be tested in subsequent research. In order to ensure credibility of the findings, Steenhuis and Bruijn (2006) suggested employing a continuous cycle between data collection and data analysis. The data which is collected will determine which data will follow. Steenhuis and Bruijn (2006) explained that at the beginning the researcher has a rough idea about what they want to discover. This will become more tangible as the researchers begin to interpret the data. Moreover, Steenhuis and Bruijn (2006) explained that the role of the literature review in the progressive case study entails that substantive theory is read with the purpose of understanding what is currently known in the field and the author can be sensitive towards important areas.

3.5 Research Choice

The methodological choice for the research is to use "mono method qualitative data collection and analysis" which entails conducting qualitative interviews (Bryman, 2016, p. 32). Qualitative research "usually emphasizes words rather than quantification in the collection and analysis of data" (Bryman, 2016, p. 32). The methodological choice of using qualitative data is taken as the researchers seek to get an in-depth understanding of the thoughts and actions of the interviewees. For the purpose of this study, qualitative interviews are regarded as the most appropriate. This is due to the fact that the research aims to get an in-depth understanding of the thoughts of the individuals. Thereafter, the researchers must find patterns by exploring each participants' words and detailed descriptions through qualitative data analysis.

3.6 Data Collection

The following section explains the methods and considerations behind the data collection. This entails the strategy for data collection, the development of interview questions, the sampling strategy and how the interviews are conducted.

3.6.1 Data Collection Strategy

For this research, qualitative data is gathered through 12 one-on-one interviews. Two out of the 12 interviews are non-directive and ten are semi-structured interviews. Saunders et al. (2009) stated that when the researcher has the interpretivist research philosophy, semi-structured and non-directive interviews are the most appropriate types. This is as it allows the interviewees to explain and build on their answers (Saunders et al., 2009). Additionally, Sampson (1972) stated that the non-directive and semi-structured interviews are the two types which are most often used in qualitative research.

The first interviews conducted are two non-directive interviews which focus on a few key areas including: fashion industry, online fashion shopping, relation to renting and other fashion alternatives. For the second phase of the data collection, ten semi-structured interviews are conducted. At this stage, the semi-structured interviews are guided by the themes which emerge during the analysis of the non-directive interviews, ensuring that the semi-structured interviews are guided by relevant focus areas. The semi-structured interviews are divided into two rounds of five interviews each. Similarly, the themes found in the first round of semi-structured interviews guide the questions posed in the second round of semi-structured interviews. Ultimately, the semi-structured interviews enable the researchers to guide and cover specific topics found in the collected data. In all rounds, the questions are open-ended, ensuring that "unexpected facts or attitudes can be easily explored" (Jarratt, 1996, p. 9).

3.6.2 Sampling Strategy

A non-probability sampling strategy is used for this research as it allows samples to be collected based on the researchers' subjective judgement (Saunders et al., 2009). Contrarily, for the probability sampling approach, which is typically used for quantitative research, the sample is chosen with the purpose of generalizing the findings to a larger population (Bryman, 2016). Saunders et al. (2009) wrote that non-probability sampling can be used if the researcher needs to "undertake an in-depth study that focuses on a small, perhaps one, case selected for a particular purpose" (p. 233). As this is the case for this research, non-probability sampling is the chosen approach.

The initial intention for the research was to use purposive sampling tactic. Purposive sampling is typically used for small samples when the purpose is to interview a particularly informative group (Saunders et al., 2009). This strategy aims to get an in-depth understanding of a particular sub-group, in this case students at Copenhagen Business School within the specified age range. This sampling tactic cannot be considered to statistically represent the total population (Saunders et al., 2009). However, the intention of using this approach is not to generalize to a broad population but to "advance theoretical arguments without making universalising claims" (Thompson and Arsel, 2004, p. 640). The intention was to go to the chosen context of Copenhagen Business School and ask people if they would be willing to participate. However, due to the COVID-19 outbreak taking place during the time this research was conducted, this was not possible to do. Therefore, snowball sampling is used instead. Snowball sampling is done by making contact to the first couple of cases and, thereafter, having these cases recommend other potential participants (Saunders et al., 2009). This tactic also fits well with the research as it is the sampling tactic suggested by Steenhuis and Bruijn (2006). According to them, the sampling should take place throughout the data collection when it is needed. Adding new cases should serve two purposes which are allowing for further development of insights and allowing replication of previous findings (Steenhuis and Bruijn, 2006). However, the reason for the reluctance of choosing this sampling tactic is due to the tendency to get a homogenous sample as respondents are more likely to choose people similar to themselves (Saunders et al., 2009). The way snowball sampling is used in practice is that two of the acquaintances, the first two participants from Copenhagen Business School, are asked if they could each ask one of their friends if they are willing to be interviewed for this research. This is done for each round of interviews.

There are two levels of sampling in qualitative research which includes sampling the context and the participants (Bryman, 2016). When sampling participants, the criteria is that the participants have to be from the generation of millennials (the age of 24 to 39 at the time the study was conducted). As Hwang and Griffiths (2017) pointed out, this generation is important for the growth of collaborative consumption: "Young consumers, particularly Millennials, are an important consumer segment spurring the growth of this trend" (p. 141). Gender does not play a role when sampling. These criteria are chosen as the research seeks to explore the point of view of the young adults in society. This is due to the fact that this generation has many future years of shaping society, as both part of the work force and active consumers in society. The chosen context for the data collection is the Copenhagen Business School campus. This context is chosen as it is anticipated that business students are highly aware of new business models and rising technological trends in society. The research seeks to explore the insights of this specific sub-group.

In regard to the size of the sample Saunders et al. (2009) argued that one way of knowing when enough participants for a study have been chosen, is when the data reach "data saturation" (p. 235). This means that any new data collected adds little or no new insights to the gathered data. Guest, Bunce & Johnson (2006) gave more tangible guidelines as they found that for a fairly homogeneous group twelve interviews are sufficient while for a heterogeneous group between 25 to 30 interviews are necessary. For this research, the target group is assessed to be fairly homogenous as they all have the same occupation (students) and are roughly around the same age. Furthermore, they are located in the same context, which is Copenhagen Business School. Therefore, twelve interviews are conducted.

3.6.3 Building Interview Questions

Bryman (2016) stated that the questions in qualitative research tend to be fairly general rather than specific. This is as it allows the researcher to find aspects of the participant's social world which was not predicted or known by the researcher (Bryman, 2016). Kvale (1996) developed some criteria to follow in order to be a successful interviewer for qualitative interviews. Some of the criteria include being structured as well as being able to steer the interview in the desired direction. This entails having an interview structure which is easily understood by the interviewee (Kvale, 1996). Also, the interviewer should be clear in their formulation by asking simple and easily understandable questions (Kvale, 1996). Furthermore, it is important to be gentle and sensitive with the interviewee which means letting them finish, tolerating pauses, listening actively and being empathetic (Kvale, 1996). Moreover, Kvale (1996) stressed the importance of interpreting. Interpreting means clarifying the interviewees statements during the interview without imposing meaning on their answers. Similarly, Sampson (1972) emphasized the importance for the interviewer to ensure that a ”relaxed, sympathetic relationship develops between the interviewer and the interviewee, and that probing does not cause bias in responses” (Sampson, 1972 as cited in Jarratt, 1996, p. 9). He also explained that the interviewer needs to ensure to redirect the conversation when it is headed to fruitless results and areas.

For this study, the non-directive interviews use a soft laddering inspired technique. Reynolds and Gutman (1988) stated that the 'laddering' technique can be used for the non-directive interviews. The laddering interview technique "develops an understanding of how consumers translate the attributes" of products and services into associations. The technique provides "a motivational perspective, in that the underlying reasons why an attribute or a consequence is important can be uncovered" resulting in "an understanding of the consumers' underlying personal motivation" (Jarratt, 1996, p. 12). Veludo-de-Oliveira, Ikeda and Campomar (2006) stated that a soft laddering technique "provides respondents more freedom of expression and is typified by the question 'why is this important to you?'" (p. 299). Ultimately, this technique allows the researchers to explore the emotion of the interviewees as well as their opinions. Taking use of directed probes, highlighted by Jarratt (1996), could be 'How is this important to you', which aims at understanding the connection between perceptions and a multitude of attributes and values the participant holds (p. 10). It encourages the interviewees to explore and analyze what is behind the choices they make based on their personal motivations. Moreover, the researchers adopt the idea of making the interviewee the 'expert' of the situation, ensuring that there are no wrong or right answers to the questions. The latter portion of the interview consists of having the interviewee visualize certain scenarios. Ensuring the atmosphere is relaxed and that the interviewee feels comfortable is essential to ensuring that the interviewee can visualize a context, critically think about their behaviour. Moreover, it is argued that the laddering technique is most effective when "respondents are providing associations while thinking of a realistic occasion in which they would use the product". (Jarratt, 1996, p. 10).

In regard to the semi-structured interviews, some aspects of laddering are also adopted such as making the participant the 'expert' and to make use of scenarios (Jarratt, 1996). Moreover, various guidelines from Saunders et al. (2009) and Bryman (2016) are used in this study to build the best interview questions. Bryman (2016) pointed out that the interview questions must cover the areas which allow the researchers to best answer the research question. At the same time, it must be considered not to make the questions too specific or leading. Additionally, Saunders et al. (2009) also stated that semi-structured interviews enable the researcher to add additional questions whenever it may be necessary depending on the various questions. Hence, the questions may vary from interview to interview in order to explore the research question itself. He also explained that semi-structured interviews enable the researcher to 'probe' for answers ensuring that the participant's answers are further elaborated and explained. He also stated that this is especially important in interpretivists studies as it seeks to understand the meanings "that participants ascribe to various phenomena" (p. 324).

Furthermore, Bryman (2016) stressed that the language used in semi-structured interviews should be easily understandable and without jargon. Additionally, the interview should start out by asking some general information about the interviewee such as occupation and age (Bryman, 2016). Moreover, Bryman (2016) pointed out that there are different areas of questions which the interviewer should try to vary between. These are areas such as; values, beliefs, behaviors, social roles, relationships and emotions (Bryman, 2016). These areas of questions can both ask about the interviewee themselves or about others, for example asking the interviewee about their own behaviour or how they perceive the behaviour of others (Bryman, 2016). Moreover, Bryman (2016) specified different types of questions which can be used when conducting semi-structured interviews. One of these types is the 'follow-up' questions where the researcher gets the participant to elaborate on their answer by using phrases such as 'What do you mean by that?' (Bryman, 2016, p. 473). Another type of questions is the 'direct questions' (Bryman, 2016). This type is used to ask the participant a direct question i.e. a question which can be answered with yes or no. Bryman (2016) pointed out that these questions should be left until the end of the interview, so they do not influence the direction of the interview. Additionally, 'probing' questions are done by "following up on what has been said through direct questioning" (Bryman, 2016, p. 473). This could be done by following up on something the participant mentioned earlier in the interview and asking an elaborative question about it. 'Ending' questions is another type mentioned by Bryman (2016). These questions are concluding questions which can be used to round off the interview, such as 'How far have your views about ... changed' (Bryman, 2016, p. 475).

3.6.4 Conducting Interviews

As mentioned in the section above, the circumstances at the time of this research regarding COVID-19, prevents the researchers from conducting face-to-face interviews. Therefore, the interviews are conducted online. Bryman (2016) discussed some of the benefits and limitations of online interviews. He stated that some participants might be more inclined to participate possibly due to the convenience (Bryman, 2016). Furthermore, Bryman (2016) pointed out that there is little evidence which suggests that the researcher's ability to secure rapport is reduced compared to face-to-face interviews. However, a limitation of the online interviews is that there is a possibility of technical errors such as a bad connection which can lead to loss of data and difficulty with transcriptions (Bryman, 2016). The researchers did not experience technical difficulties with the connection during the interviews but there were some instances where words on the recordings were inaudible and, therefore, challenging to transcribe. However, it was unknown if this had any correlation with the fact that the interviews were done online.

Bryman (2016) also stated some practical details the researcher should consider when conducting interviews. The researcher should make sure the interview takes place in a quiet setting (Bryman, 2016). Therefore, the interviews are conducted in a quiet place with no other people present. However, as the interviews take place online, the setting of the participants cannot be controlled by the researchers. Moreover, it is suggested that the researchers should conduct a pilot interview in order to test the interview questions. This is suggested so the interviewers can gain some experience and prepare themselves (Bryman, 2016). Since the first round of interviews are non-directive pilot interviews, it is not found necessary, whereas for the two following rounds of semi-structured interviews, pilot interviews are conducted. The pilot interviews are conducted on acquaintances of the researchers. Pilot interviews are done on acquaintances as the process of acquiring participants is very time consuming and, therefore, assessed that acquaintances are sufficient. The researchers are aware that the situation might differ for the real interviews as the interviewees are strangers to the researchers.

3.7 Data Analysis

The analytical approach best fitted for this research paper is the "data display and analysis" approach (Saunders et al., 2009, p. 503). This approach is based on the analysis process as described by Miles and Huberman (1994). In their book, they divided the process of the qualitative analysis into three parts; 1) early steps (data reduction), 2) data display and 3) drawing and verifying conclusions. Miles and Huberman (1994) referred to the analytical steps as 'the analytic progression' which goes from describing to explaining. This progression begins with first coding categories on the raw data, to identifying themes and trends among the codes and then testing the findings and integrating the data into an explanatory framework (Miles and Huberman, 1994). The software program which was used for coding the interview transcriptions was Atlas.ti (Atlas.ti., 2020).

3.7.1 Early Analysis

Miles and Huberman (1994) stressed the importance of the early analysis. This entails that the researcher cycles back and forth between gathering data and generating strategies for collecting new data. They pointed out that even for studies with one round of data collection early analysis is beneficial (Miles and Huberman, 1994). In this part of the process, the data is simplified, and the researchers can choose to focus on particular parts of the data (Saunders et al., 2009). Miles and Huberman (1994) described various methods which can be used for early analysis to help guide the research. Among these is the 'codes and coding' method (Miles and Huberman, 1994). This method can assist the researcher to avoid data overload and condensing unnecessary data retrieval. At this stage, the challenge for the researchers is "to be explicitly mindful of the purposes of your study (...) while allowing yourself to be open to and re-educated by things you didn't know" (Miles and

Huberman, 1994, p. 56). In an inductive approach, the data will form the codes creating empirically driven labels. This stands in contrast to the deductive studies where the researcher would make a list of codes prior to analysis (Miles and Huberman, 1994). The codes are labels which the researcher assigns to the descriptive information gathered (the data). Codes can be attached to different sizes of information; words, phrases, sentences or paragraphs (Miles and Huberman, 1994). The purpose of the codes is to retrieve and organize the data (Miles and Huberman, 1994).

Another approach to early analysis is 'pattern coding' (Miles and Huberman, 1994). This approach is a natural next step to 'codes and coding' as the codes describe the phenomenon while the patterns help the researcher move to a more general and explanatory level of the analysis. Some of the benefits of pattern coding are that it reduces the data into analytical units, and it assists with directing the research during data collection (Miles and Huberman, 1994). Pattern codes are usually either; themes, causes/explanation, relationships among people or more theoretical constructs. It is important that the researchers aren't set on the patterns as they should be able to change and reconfigure them to fit the data (Miles and Huberman, 1994).

3.7.2 Data Display

The use of data display methods is central to Miles and Huberman (1994). It is related to getting an overview of the data by organizing it in diagrams or visual displays as it is hard for researchers to get an overview of extended texts. Miles and Huberman (1994) argued that displaying the data assists the researchers with developing their analytical thinking by helping to identify and detect differences/similarities, key themes, patterns and trends (Miles and Huberman, 1994). Overall, there are two major categories for data display which are matrices and networks. The formats which are chosen to display the data should always be driven by the research question and the developing codes (Miles and Huberman, 1994). A matrix can be described as the crossing of two lists divided into rows and columns (Miles and Huberman, 1994). A network consists of nodes connected by lines. These displays are useful when the researcher has multiple variables at the same time (Miles and Huberman, 1994).

In regard to networks, the 'Cognitive Map' is found useful for the analysis (Miles and Huberman, 1994). The research aims to understand the thought process of the individual. This is fitting with the cognitive maps as it allows the researchers to explore the complexity of the person as it shows the person's representation of concepts within the topic. For the use of matrices, the 'Checklist Matrix' will be deployed. it is used to analyze one major variable or a general domain of interest (Miles and Huberman, 1994). The principle is that the matrix includes several components of the coherent variable. The checklist matrix works well for exploring a new domain. The checklist format helps the data collection to be more systematic, enable verification and enhance comparability (Miles and Huberman, 1994).

3.7.3 Drawing Conclusions

Miles and Huberman (1994) pointed out that humans are 'meaning-finders' and they can find meaning in the most chaotic events. The main question they stressed is if the meanings found are valid and repeatable (Miles and Huberman, 1994). For the part of the analysis where the researchers seek to draw and verify conclusions, Miles and Huberman (1994) suggested various different tactics for this process. The tactics employed by the researchers of this study are explored below.

One of these tactics used is 'noting patterns/themes' which entails finding evidence in the data of the same recurring pattern (Miles and Huberman, 1994). This method includes staying open to disconfirming patterns if the evidence points in this direction. The pattern type used is 'patterns of variables' which looks at the similarities and differences in the categories (Miles and Huberman, 1994). Another tactic is called 'seeing plausibility' where the researcher sees plausible explanations in the data that then have to be verified with the use of other tactics (Miles and Huberman, 1994). As humans are 'meaning-finders', researchers can often be quick to jump to conclusions, hence it is important that the conclusions drawn can be verified through other tactics (Miles and Huberman, 1994). A tactic used to verify plausible conclusions is the 'clustering' tactic. It involves creating categories of data which fit together in a group due to their similarities in patterns/characteristics (Miles and Huberman, 1994). Furthermore, another tactic used that Miles and Huberman (1994) suggested, which can verify plausible conclusions, is 'partitioning variables'. This tactic stresses the importance of 'unbundling' the variables found and thereby splitting it into more variables as it helps to uncover nuances and differences that were not there before (Miles and Huberman, 1994). Hence, it makes the researchers dig further into the nuances of one specific variable in order to shed light to other areas. Clustering and partitioning variables are other tactics used. These tactics can both be used on their own but also to verify any plausible conclusions made. Additionally, the tactic ‘counting’ is also of importance when trying to draw conclusions from the data, hence, also another tactic used in this study. Miles and Huberman explained that qualitative research “goes beyond how much there is of something to tell us about its essential qualities” (Miles and Huberman, 1994, p. 253). However, they further emphasized that once a theme has been identified, there is a necessity to count the number of times a certain theme appears and the consistency of it. Hence, composes a portion of why researchers are able to come to the conclusions to why certain themes are of significance (Miles and Huberman, 1994). Lastly, the tactic ‘making conceptual/theoretical coherence’ was used. Here, the researchers try to understand and pin down what the behaviour of an individual means. Miles and Huberman explained that the tactic involves “connecting a discrete fact with other discrete facts, and then grouping these into lawful, comprehensible, and more abstract patterns” (Miles and Huberman, 1994, p. 261).

3.7.4 Building Theory

Miles and Huberman (1994) discussed the importance of connecting empirical data with theory. Miles and Huberman (1994) especially celebrated Eisenhardt (1989) as “She emphasizes the importance of [...] sharpening constructs by careful connection to your data and looking in the literature for constructs that *conflict* with, as well as support, your emerging findings” (Miles and Huberman, 1994, p. 262). Eisenhardt (1989) investigated how case studies can be used to generate theory i.e. the inductive case study. One of Eisenhardt’s (1989) points is that an important feature of building theory from case studies is the frequent overlap of data collection and data analysis. Glaser and Strauss (1967) argued for a very high degree of overlap and while most researchers are not able to achieve this level of overlap most maintain some level of it (Eisenhardt, 1989). Furthermore, Eisenhardt (1989) stressed the difficulty of being transparent in the process of analysis; “Since published studies generally describe research sites and data collection methods, but give little space to discussion of analysis, a huge chasm often separates data from conclusions” (p. 539). Therefore, the researchers of this study strive to make the analysis process as transparent as possible.

3.8 Ethical Considerations

Saunders et al. (2009) stated that "In the context of research, ethics refers to the appropriateness of your behaviour in relation to the rights of those who become the subject of your work" (p. 183). As it is important for the authors of this paper to conduct research, which is ethically responsible and has research integrity, this section describes how the researchers strive to achieve this.

Copenhagen Business School supports and promotes the Danish Code of Conduct for Research Integrity (2014) published by the Ministry of Higher Education and Science (Copenhagen Business School, 2020). The Danish Code of Conduct for Research Integrity sets up three main principles for ensuring research integrity which are; honesty, transparency and accountability. These principles should be persistent in all phases of the research. The principle of 'honesty' ensures trustworthiness and entails honest reporting throughout the research. 'Transparency' ensures credibility of the research and requires openness and transparent reporting. The principle 'accountability' ensures the reliability of the research and entails that all involved parties of the research accept responsibility for their research (Ministry of Higher Education and Science, 2014). This research paper strives to follow these three principles throughout the research process.

Diener and Crandall (1978) broke research ethics into four areas which are; harm to participants, lack of informed consent, invasion of privacy and deception. 'Harm to participants' can be both physical and psychological, such as impacting self-esteem or inducing stress. Bryman (2016) stated that "One of the problems with the harm-to-participants principle is that it is not possible to identify in all circumstances whether harm is likely" (p. 127). However, he further stated that this should not stop the researcher from seeking to protect participants from harm (Bryman, 2016). For this research paper, the assessment is that the interview is not likely to harm participants in any way. This is due to the fact that the participation is voluntary. Moreover, in the beginning of the interview the interviewee is told that he/ she can stop the interview at any time if he/ she feels uncomfortable. Furthermore, the nature of the topic is not assessed to be controversial or likely to embarrass the interviewees. Lastly, the interviewee will be kept anonymous and it will be ensured that the participants are not identifiable. Therefore, a very limited amount of personal information is required from them (only gender, age and occupation). If the participant reveals more detailed personal information about themselves during the interview, such as place of residence or workplace, this information is excluded from the transcription.

Another of Diener and Crandall's (1978) research ethics is 'informed consent'. In order to ensure informed consent from the participants, the researchers can create consent forms which the participant signs prior to the interview (Bryman, 2016, p. 131). This helps the participant be fully informed before agreeing to the participation and it also gives the researchers some security if subsequent concerns arise from the participants. The disadvantage of the consent form is that it might raise the concern of the participant which can result in the participant declining to participate (Bryman, 2016, p. 131). However, for this research, consent forms were applied in order to ensure that the participants had been properly informed regarding their participation in the study.

The choice of using consent forms to ensure informed consent from the participants is also linked to the Diener and Crandall's (1978) remaining areas of ethics which are 'invasion of privacy' and 'deception'. Bryman (2016) stated that invasion of privacy is linked to informed consent because as the participant gives consent "he or she in a sense acknowledges that the right to privacy has been surrendered for that limited domain" (p. 131). Therefore, the consent forms are also used to ensure that the researchers are not invading the privacy of the participants. The consent form used for this study can be seen in appendix C. The last ethical area is 'deception' which occurs when the researchers present their work in an untruthful way (Bryman, 2016). This again can be prevented with the consent form as well as honest and transparent communication from the researcher. Of course, there are reasons for the researcher not to reveal every detail of their research prior to the interview as they do not want to influence the responses of the participant. Therefore, for the purpose of this research paper the researcher gives the participant a broad idea regarding the research topic prior to the interview and as the interview is completed the researcher gives the participant more details if they are interested in this information. Moreover, the participants are informed that they can stop the interview at any time or subsequently withdraw their consent.

3.9 Quality Assurance and Limitations

This section discusses the credibility of the research findings. In order to strengthen the credibility of the research findings, a good research design is imperative (Saunders et al., 2009). In order to reduce the chances of wrong findings, the researchers must be aware of the reliability and validity of their research design (Saunders et al., 2009).

3.9.1 Reliability

Reliability is described as; "the extent to which your data collection techniques or analysis procedures will yield consistent findings" (Saunders et al., 2009, p. 156). The reliability of the study can be assessed by asking three questions. Whether the results would be the same on other occasions, if similar results would be found by other researchers, and whether there is transparency in how the findings were made from the raw data (Saunders et al., 2009). To answer these questions several factors which affect reliability should be considered.

The first factor which might impact the reliability of the study is participant error. This factor is related to the variables which might affect the subject or participant. Saunders et al. (2009) gave the example of how employees might have different moods on the different workdays which can affect their responses. For this study, an example of a possible participant error is the online setting of the interview. This could have made the participants feel slightly uncomfortable during the interview while also giving space for misunderstanding and misinterpretation of the interview questions. Another factor which can affect the reliability is participant bias. Participant bias is related to whether the participant is feeling pressured to give certain responses. Therefore, anonymity can help prevent this problem. Saunders et al. (2009) gave the example of employees saying what they think their boss would want them to say. For this research participant bias could be present when the participants are asked questions about sharing or sustainability where they might feel that society expects them to have a certain opinion. The researchers strived to avoid this bias by ensuring the participants anonymity and reassuring them that there is no right or wrong answer to the questions.

Observer error is another threat to the reliability of the study. This error can occur when the interview process lacks structure and the questions are asked in different ways (Saunders et al., 2009). For the purpose of this study, the observation error was sought to be limited by having both researchers present for the interviews to ensure that both researchers would be aware of possible differences in interview structure and technique. Therefore, this could have created some observer error. Another factor which can affect reliability is the observer bias. Observer bias occurs when the researcher interprets the responses of the participants in different ways. To limit the observer bias, the data analysis of the interviews was conducted by the researchers together. Furthermore, the researchers focused on being critical and questioned each other's assumptions and findings.

3.9.2 Validity

Validity is described by Saunders et al. (2009) as; “whether the findings are really about what they appear to be about“(p. 157). Saunders et al. (2009) described various threats to the validity of a study. One of these threats is history, which entails how events in time might affect the results collected currently. An example of this could be that during the time of the data collection the COVID-19 crisis was taking place. This could have impacted the answers of the participants as they might have been more wary to use their money on trying out new business models which they are not very familiar with. Another threat described by Saunders et al. (2009) is that when the participants know they are being tested they might change their regular behaviour in a way which they believe benefits them. Even though this study is not conducting a test but rather conducting interviews, the principle still applies as the participants might alter their responses to fit how they believe the responses would benefit them.

3.9.3 Generalisation

In regard to the generalisability of the study, the researchers are aware that the findings of this paper do not have a high level of generalisability since it is a single case study which investigates a group of people from the same context. However, as Saunders et al. (2009) stated in cases such as this;

> The purpose of your research will not be to produce a theory that is generalisable to all populations. Your task will be simply to try to explain what is going on in your particular research setting. [...] In short, as long as you do not claim that your results, conclusions or theory can be generalised, there is no problem. (p. 158).

Therefore, as this quote explains, this study is not claiming to be generalizable to a wider population but is exploring the topic and finding important and interesting concepts and patterns. Similarly, Yin (2018) explained how generalizability of case studies varies from other types of studies:

> The short answer is that case studies, like experiments, are generalizable to theoretical propositions and not to populations or universes [...] in doing case study research, your goal will be to expand and generalize theories (analytical generalizations) and not to extrapolate probabilities (statistical generalization)" (Yin, 2018, p. 20-21).

Therefore, according to Yin (2018) the goal of generalizability for a case study is analytical generalisations and, therefore, varies from other studies which might seek statistical generalisation. Furthermore, Rowley (2002) explained that the generalisation of a case study can be found when the findings can be replicated in other case studies. Rowley (2002) stated; "The greater the number of case studies that show replication the greater the rigour with which a theory has been established" (p. 20). The discussion of this paper further elaborates on this and will suggest further research in order for the statistical generalisability of the findings to be tested in future research.

4 Analysis

This part of the paper is split up into three sections, which describe the analysis for each of the three iterations of data collection and data analysis done throughout this study. This is done to give the reader a thorough understanding of how the data collection and analysis influenced the direction of the findings. The researchers go in-depth with each iteration in order to ensure transparency in the analysis of the data. Lastly, the section explains which tactics were used in order to verify and draw conclusions from the data collected.

4.1 Non-Directed Interviews

The first part of the data collection consisted of two non-directed interviews with a male and a female millennial, both students at Copenhagen Business School. This analysis was done by first assigning codes to the transcriptions of the interviews, then grouping these codes into patterns and lastly, creating cognitive maps for the two interviews. These approaches were used to get an understanding of the most important emergent themes which were then used to guide and create the semi-structured interviews conducted in the subsequent rounds of data collection. For the non-directed interviews, a few key areas were selected which included: apparel industry, online fashion shopping, relation to renting and other fashion alternatives. Assigning key areas enabled the researchers to gather relevant data helping them answer the research question. Moreover, since the interviews were non-directed, no questions had been developed or phrased enabling the interviews to take a natural course highlighting important areas of the interviewees.

Codes are defined as “tags or labels for assigning units of meaning to the descriptive [...] information” (Miles and Huberman, 1994, p. 56). The codes were assigned by first uploading the transcripts of the interviews to the software program Atlas. Hereafter, the researchers were able to easily attach codes to different parts of the transcriptions using the tools of the program Atlas (see example in appendix G & I). The codes that were assigned were descriptive codes as they “entail little interpretation” and are more focused on “attributing a class of phenomena to a segment of text” (Miles and Huberman, 1994, p. 57). When the codes had been assigned, pattern coding was conducted. Pattern coding enables the researchers to group the codes together into smaller sets and themes (Miles and Huberman, 1994). The pattern coding made the researchers list and link all similar codes together, in other words, all descriptive codes created were gathered and linked based on their similarities (see example in appendix H & I). Thereafter, cognitive maps were created, for each interview, to show how the different components were interconnected for each individual (see example in appendix E) (Miles and Huberman, 1994). The cognitive maps "display a person's representation of concepts about a particular domain, showing the relationships among them" (Miles and Huberman, 1994, p. 134). As cognitive maps enabled the researchers to look into the complexity of an individual and his/her mind, it was concluded to be the best display of data (Miles and Huberman, 1994). Once both cognitive maps were created, the researchers analyzed them separately and highlighted any similar emerging patterns.

It was found that that participant 1 valued convenience as an important factor when online shopping. This was also seen as an important factor when considering rental services as he stated that he wanted it to be time saving, efficient, practical and involving low efforts. When speaking about his overall fashion habits and concerns, he stated "I'm kind of an impulsive buyer rather than someone that thinks a lot. Like when I shop it's more like I see something, like I'm out and I see something and I decide to buy. Rather than, it doesn't start from a need" (see appendix I). Moreover, once asked about the factors he thought were important, he explained "it must be fast, it must be practical. You really have to have the chance to send the product back in a matter of short time" (see appendix I). When asked about rental services, he expressed he was unfamiliar with the concept though he had heard it from one of his sisters. He also said that he did not know of any options of renting men's wear which might be why he was not very familiar on how it worked. Once the concept was explained, he expressed that he felt "weird" sharing clothes with other people, stating "I do feel that pieces of clothes are very.. very personal. So the first thing I would think is like sharing that piece of clothes with other people and I really don't like this idea" (see appendix I). He also expressed concerns regarding damages to the products which are rented and the consequences that might come with that. He questioned what the consequences would be by stating "what happens if I ruin the piece of clothes, do I have to fully pay it? And at that point it doesn't really make sense that I rent it. So it was like better if I was just going and buying it" (see appendix I). Furthermore, another concern involved the ease of use of the rental system including actions required from him, which he expressed by stating:

> Another concern would be if it's not efficient the service it would be like a pity if I have to go somewhere to send it back, I don't know, that is far away from my apartment. Or

> if I have to go there to pick it up which is far away from my apartment would be kind of annoying (see appendix I).

He further elaborated by stating that he would be more interested in the service if it would be practical and efficient, making him avoid any unnecessary or time-consuming activities. He also explained what the ideal service would consist of which he explained as followed:

> Every Monday morning, I wake up, open my main door of the apartment and outside the door there are five shirts that I only have to take them, bring them inside and I have to leave there the night before the five shirts of the week before. That would be like amazing" (see appendix I)

Overall, the participant was hesitant towards the concept at the beginning of the interview hinting that he was not comfortable sharing clothes. However, as he delved deeper into the topic, he expressed more interest in the service if it was convenient and would address his needs. These needs would mostly be surrounding providing workwear clothes which enabled him to avoid washing and ironing the shirts himself, while also not needing to pick up the package. Instead the package would be sent to his door. However, he did state that though he wished it was convenient, that the process would still entail him to carry out some actions. He stated "But uh probably it would be something like that you have to go to GLS to send it back and you are going to receive them at GLS as well" while also emphasizing that if GLS was far away it would prevent him from trying out the service (see appendix I).

On the other hand, participant 2 was very concerned with shopping sustainably, making each purchase "count", as it should only be purchases, she "needs" (see appendix J). Furthermore, she also wanted to support local and small businesses. When describing her relationship to fashion and shopping she stated "I would see it more as a hobby. I think it's fun to express your personality I guess" (see appendix J). She further emphasized "I enjoy sort of dressing a certain way or yeah, reflect how it reflects my mood. So yeah, I think it's fun" (see appendix J). However, she quickly introduced her way of shopping to involve careful consideration before purchasing. She stated "I try to be a bit more careful with how I shop and where I shop and sort of what I support and not support. More in terms of the whole environmental factor" (see appendix J). She also expressed that she likes to buy clothing with good quality and that are long lasting which ensures that she can keep the clothes for a long time. She also explained that she did not like to buy trendy pieces that would go out of style, which is why she prefers buying classic and timeless pieces. When asked why she included it in her purchasing decisions, she explained that she believed everyone should be more cautious when shopping so that they don't over consume, and that shopping should be done in a "moderate way" (see appendix J). Due to this, she also explained that she has recently started to take better care of her clothes and only buys new clothing if she really needs it emphasizing that she makes sure "I don't shop unless I feel like I really need it" (see appendix J). Moreover, when speaking about rental services she stated that she had considered using such services in the past but felt unsure about the concept of renting and not owning the clothes. She was not sold on the concept stating "I actually am not really sold on that business model because I, maybe I am old fashioned on that, but I really enjoy purchasing something for me and like as a gift for myself and just having it" (see appendix J). She stressed the importance for her to purchase clothing to invest in herself and saw it as a gift to herself which she valued. She expressed that when renting clothes, this aspect would be eliminated as she would not see it as a gift anymore due to having to return the item. She emphasized that while shopping she considers buying pieces that will last her a long time, ensuring that she doesn't need to throw clothes away or replace them with new items frequently. Hence, explaining "I buy pieces that I know I will want to wear for a long time, instead of just one party. So, I would rather invest in it myself rather than actually renting it and giving it away" (see appendix J). Lastly, it was also evident that she made considerations regarding what her peers would think of clothing rental services (see appendix K). She specified "I think a lot of my friends would find it cool and like see it as a good thing", which showed her belief of a positive reaction from her friends.

One theme that emerged in both interviews was that both participants wanted to purchase items of high quality and that would last them over a long period of time. Participant 1 stated "I prefer to buy like clothes that last over time rather than just having a very high turnover in my closet", similarly, participant 2 stated:

> For me, quality would be a good one, a major one. because again I don't want to buy things that I know will be ruined within a few wears but rather have something that I can wear for many, many years, which also means that I don't have to buy more clothes (see appendix I & J).

They also expressed the same hesitation regarding the rental service as both lacked the motivation to use it. However, the hesitation was rooted in different explanations from both participants. Participant 1 stated "Like I do feel that pieces of clothes are very.. very personal. So the first thing I would think is like sharing that piece of clothes with other people and I really don't like this idea" (see appendix I). Participant 2 also mentioned ownership to be a factor but explained it in other terms by mentioning that she wasn't interested since she enjoyed investing in herself and buying clothes as a gift to herself. Moreover, she confirmed that ownership was a big consideration for her while also emphasizing "And if I just rent it just wouldn't feel the same" (see appendix J).

The participants expressed different scenarios of when the clothing rental service would be beneficial to them. Participant 1 expressed that there was benefit using the service when renting workwear or expensive pieces. Participant 1 stated that expensive and unique pieces could be beneficial to rent. He expressed "there would be some other kind of clothes that I would rent rather than buying, because there are some stuff that I buy and then I use once and then I never use it again" while also saying "if it cost 1.500 that particular jacket I would use only once, I mean I would prefer to spend only 300 rather than.. and use it one time rather than spending 1.500 and use it one time in any case" (see appendix I). Furthermore, he saw a benefit in renting workwear clothes for the weekdays, as that would eliminate the need to wash and iron the shirts and any other time-consuming activity. On the other hand, participant 2 stated that rental services could be for "Maybe for a wedding or a special occasion party" while emphasizing that it was "not something I would do for a weekend" (see appendix J). However, she did not state that she saw a benefit in renting clothing for every day. She also added that statement pieces would be another time where renting would be ideal.

Overall, the emergent patterns found between the two interviews were: sustainability, concerns regarding lack of ownership, concerns with sharing clothes with other people, situations of use, social reflection and the process of obtaining items. More specifically, key themes for participant 1 included: concern with sharing clothes, situation of use (for workwear), and logistics of renting. For participant 2, the key themes were: sustainability, social reflection, and lack of ownership.

By identifying the themes emerging, the creation of semi-structured interview questions was possible. The identified emergent themes enabled the researchers to dig deeper into what was found in the non-directed interviews in the semi structured interviews. Hence, the semi-structured interview questions included questions understanding interviewees relationship to fashion and online shopping, to understand their consumption background, while also to research deeper on the themes found in the non-directed interviews. More specifically, question two to four, are questions regarding their relationship to fashion and online shopping. Question five to eight revolve around understanding the emergent themes more in depth in the following interviews (see appendix B). Question 5 was added to see if they were familiar with any alternatives, which could hint if they were already familiar with clothing rental services. Question 6 enabled the participants to guide his/ her thought process on how he/she thought the renting process would look like. It enabled the researchers to understand if there were any pain points or advantages they would mention. Moreover, question 7 addressed if the participant would link the use rental service for everyday clothing or other specific reasons. Question 8 explored how the participant expected their peers to perceive and view the service. Moreover, the questions were open-ended to prevent the questions from being leading, so the participants would bring up any thoughts they might have on the topic.

4.2 First Round of Semi-Structured Interviews

For the first round of semi-structured interviews, the collection of data involved five interviews with three females and two males currently enrolled and studying at Copenhagen Business School. The analysis of these interviews was similar to the non-directed interviews and consisted of assigning codes to the transcription of the interviews, grouping the codes into patterns and clusters as well as creating cognitive maps for each interview. On top of this, two checklist matrix tables were created to understand the emerging themes. This approach was used to help understand emerging themes as well as to guide the next round of semi-structured interviews.

As mentioned above, for the first part of the analysis of the semi-structured interviews, pattern coding was conducted, and cognitive maps were created. This was to illustrate and display the data gathered. Once these were done, a checklist matrix was created and filled out in order to identify the predominant themes (see appendix V). A checklist matrix is a useful tool to analyse a major variable or general domain and assists the researcher in enabling verification and enhancing comparability (Miles and Huberman, 1994). By analyzing each cognitive map and comparing them between each other, the first matrix table was created which included four different areas: fashion consumption, frequency of online shopping, consideration of online shopping and fashion alternatives (see appendix V). These were important as it allowed the researchers to understand the background experience the participants had in this area, which might impact their answers to questions regarding clothing rental services. Moreover, a second checklist matrix was created to understand the different factors which played a role in their perception of fashion rental services (see appendix W). Here, 10 factors emerged throughout the different interviews including: 1) situation of use, 2) enjoyment, 3) sustainability, 4) social reflection, 5) ownership, 6) costs, 7) delivery & return, 8) condition & hygiene, 9) time, and 10) risk (see appendix W).

The first matrix table aimed to display why and how participants shopped for clothes. All the participants' answers regarding their shopping habits were gathered in this matrix table (see appendix V). Here, it was evident that many of the participants' answers varied. Participant 5 identified shopping as a fun and social activity while participant 3 highlighted the motivation for shopping was to find good deals and cheap items. Participant 7 stated his shopping habits were motivated with the intention to express himself through clothes as well as trying to support independent, small boutiques and sustainable brands. Participant 7 explained that "In the big picture, it's a way of expressing who you are. You can get a lot from a person by looking at the way they dress the way they try to perceive themselves" (see appendix O). Moreover, when looking at the participants frequency of online shopping, it was evident that most of them rarely shop online except for participant 3 who stated that she is a frequent online shopper. In particular, participant 6 stated "I don't do a lot of online shopping, that's for sure" whereas, participant 3 stated "I actually shop more online now than offline" (see appendix K). In regard to the considerations of online shopping, there was a coherence in the participants' answers. Many participants were concerned that the product they ordered online might not fit. Participant 4 stated "But that's because it almost never fits. So, if I buy something online, it's often because I've tried it at home before. No I mean tried it at the store" with a similar answer from participant 5 (see appendix M). Likewise, participant 6 stated that he always needs to make sure that the measurements are correct before going through with an order as he dislikes "to go through the troubles of returning things" while also stating that he "definitely don't want to fail on my purchase", referring to the product not fitting (see appendix N).

Most of the participants also considered the return policies and the hassle of returning products when ordering online. Participant 6 explained that when he orders online, he needs to be sure that it fits, stating that "It really needs to be something that I'm safe like I know the measurements, making sure that it fits"(see appendix N). Similarly, participant 4 stated that she usually uses online shopping as a source of inspiration and then goes to the physical stores to try on the items as she doesn't want to risk ordering something that might not fit. She explained it by stating "I think sometimes I'll go online shopping in order to look for inspiration. And then I'll put a bunch of stuff in my like check out box and then I'll actually look for that in the store" (see appendix L). On the other hand, participant 7 explained that even though he is also concerned with fit, he feels that through online shopping he is able to more efficiently find brands which are involved in sustainable initiatives. He stated that his experience with online shopping;

> is quite small, to be honest. I prefer normally to find independent stores or smaller stores and go in person instead of going online. And the only thing that I actually go online for recently is actually shoes, to find more sustainable shoes and different smaller brands" (see appendix O).

Lastly, the fourth aspect concerned the participants' prior knowledge to fashion alternatives. Fashion alternatives were not explained or defined so it was open for interpretation by the individual participants, hence why a variety of answers were evident. However, there was a fashion alternative that was mentioned by three out of the five interviews which was second hand. Many of the participants seemed to be very aware of secondhand shops as a familiar fashion alternative. Interestingly enough, no one mentioned rental services as an option, which could ultimately show the unfamiliarity participants have with the concept.

For the next section, the findings of the second matrix are further elaborated. The second matrix revolved around the emergent themes that were found in the semi structured interviews regarding clothing rental services. In total, there were 10 themes including situation of use, enjoyment, sustainability, social influence, ownership, costs, delivery & return, condition & hygiene, time, and risk. Each theme will be elaborated below.

Situation of Use

When asked about using clothing rental services, it was evident that there was a coherence in the answers from the participants as many stated similar situations of use. Every single participant mentioned that the service would be particularly useful for special occasions, and all participants mentioned a wedding to be an appropriate and valuable occasion to use a clothing rental service (see appendix W). Participant 5 stated “I think it's a special occasion like, for example, now I'm going, or I'm supposed to go to a wedding in May, which I don't have a dress for” with similar answers from other participants (see appendix M). Moreover, three out of five participants mentioned that workwear or professional wear would also be a great opportunity to rent clothing (see appendix W). More specifically, participant 7 stated “I mean, if it would be for like those occasions that I'm talking about like wedding or professional work suits or anything like that, I think it would be super, super smart” (see appendix O). Moreover, in four out of five of the interviews, clothing rental services was perceived to be extra beneficial when considering buying expensive clothing (see appendix W). Most participants stated that instead of buying expensive clothes, renting clothes could be an option as it would be cheaper. In line with this, participant 3 stated “...some blazers that you only need for like a few meetings here and there and it’s just kind of expensive” (see appendix K). Lastly, in three out of five interviews, participants specifically mention that rental services do not seem attractive to them for renting everyday clothes (see appendix W). Participant 3 stated “I don’t think maybe it’s going to be big for everyday clothes” with a similar answer from participant 5 who stated “so maybe that'll be a specific occasion where I'll want something special, but not something I would wear, like on a normal or yearly basis” (see appendix K & M). Therefore, it was found that every single participant regarded the service to be particularly useful for special occasions.

Enjoyment

It was evident that the majority of the participants, three out of five participants, viewed renting clothes as a fun and enjoyable activity (see appendix W). Participant 4 mentioned how clothing rental services could enable her to wear different styles and clothes by stating “if you really go into it, I think it would be rather fun like don't always wear the same” (see appendix L). Similarly, participant 5 mentioned it would be particularly useful for more expensive pieces as it would be ”fun to be able to switch out those kinds of pieces" (see appendix M). Moreover, participant 7 highlighted the possibility of shopping every week without putting too much effort in it, stating “then you have this trade off where you get new clothing almost every week which feels super nice for yourself because it's like going shopping every week without shopping” (see appendix O). Overall, it was evident that from the answers gathered, the majority of the participants believed it to be an enjoyable activity.

Sustainability

Another theme which emerged was the sustainability aspect. This theme was significant as it was mentioned in four out of the five interviews (see appendix W). Participant 3 explained "I just think it's a genius concept that would save us money and the environment and like, it's a better way to use less or share the resources" and participant 6 stated "The sustainable aspect is the only benefit that I could see on renting a piece of clothing" (see appendix N). Moreover, participant 5 stated that people around him would see it as positive due to the sustainable aspect;

> I think a lot of people would see it as a positive move. Because you're kind of taking a step towards sustainability. And I think there's more and more people questioning the idea of these fast fashion brands where they're just pumping out clothes as fast as possible (see appendix M).

It was evident, the majority of the participants saw the rental service concept as a sustainable initiative due to the sharing of resources and the overall message of consuming less clothes.

Social Reflection

There were varied answers regarding the participants' expectations of how their social circle would react if they used clothing rental services (see appendix W). Participant 5 explained that "I think now that sustainability is becoming such a big focus and kind of more of a standard for most people. I think it's probably seen as a positive thing" and further explained that renting clothes is "a step towards sustainability" arguing that people would think it is positive as consumers are starting to "questioning the idea of these fast fashion brands where they're just pumping out clothes as fast as possible" (see appendix M). Similarly, participant 7 stated "I think they would look positively on it" also stating that she could not think of why they would not react positively to her using a clothing rental service (see appendix O). Participant 4 also stated that they would react positively but hinted that she would receive some questions from them asking how the service worked. She mentioned that some questions could revolve around asking if it wouldn't be convenient and about how the service works. However, she emphasized that they would still react positively, though, expressing some curiosity in understanding how it works. Moreover, participant 3 said "I think it's very cool. I would be proud" though she did state that some may think it could be embarrassing to admit that they rented clothes (see appendix K). Overall, four out of the five participants would believe it would receive a positive reaction, whilst one participant believed it would be perceived negatively (see appendix W).

This was participant 6 who did not believe that his peers would react positively to it as he did not think it was a trend, they would be aware about. This was seen as he stated “I don't think it's a trend. So probably people would judge it negatively” emphasizing his belief that he did not expect a positive reaction (see appendix N). Overall, the majority of the participants expected that their social circle would react positively if they rented clothes.

Ownership

When it came to the lack of ownership when renting clothes, there were varied answers (see appendix W). One participant did not mention any concerns or advantages of not owning the clothes. Participant 4 stated “I don't know if I would do it because I, the same way as I love when I read books. I really like to have them myself. And I think I feel a little bit the same with clothing” (see appendix L). A similar answer was given by participant 6 who stated “If I buy something, I want to keep it. I have no reason to give it out after two months. Or I don't, I don't see the benefit of doing that” (see appendix N). He also stated that he found it hard to see clothes “with an expiry date” and the idea that there is a limited time to keep the clothes which is something that prevented him from viewing the services as beneficial (see appendix N). Contrastingly, participants 3 and 7 both had a different view on the lack of ownership since they expressed the benefits of not having ownership. Participant 7 mentioned ”I like that it's a way to share clothes instead of like owning them” because it always made her feel bad when she saw her closet full of clothes that were “just sitting there” (see appendix O). Overall, it was evident that participants’ opinions were split regarding the lack of ownership, some saw more benefits than others.

Costs

Another significant theme that emerged was the participants thoughts regarding the associated costs involved when renting clothes. Three out of the five participants expressed the benefits that came when renting for special occasions & expensive pieces (see appendix W). A majority of the participants stated that with renting expensive pieces they could save money. Participant 3 said “like if you don't have like 3000 to spend on a gown, then you can rent it for 300 for just one night, it's better. I spend so much money on things that I use one time and it sucks” (see appendix K). She highlighted that because certain expensive items are just used once, renting them would be much more cost efficient. Moreover, participant 7 evidenced this benefit by stating “I don't have to spend the X amount of money for buying something that I would use maybe once a year, twice a year in like occasion of a wedding" (see appendix P). He also mentioned using renting for suits and workwear. He emphasized that he would be interested in using the service as he could save money while also having the opportunity to change his mind about the clothing since he would return it at the end of the renting period; "You can always change your mind change clothings well, since it's uhm you don't have to be stuck with the things you use once" (see appendix N). Lastly, participant 5 emphasized the benefit of being able to switch out different expensive pieces. She said "I think also like for more expensive pieces like bags or certain things that are obviously more pricey, it would be fun to be able to switch out those kinds of pieces" (see appendix M). Though, most comments were positive regarding the costs, participant 4 highlighted the negative costs she linked with clothing rental service. She believed rental services overall were quite expensive, which ultimately would result in spending more money. On several occasions, she pointed out that the service would result in being expensive by saying "I would think that would be more expensive than buying the actual clothes" as well as "I have some kind of feeling that it would be expensive"(see appendix L). Overall, the data showed that a majority of the participants felt they could save money when renting for special occasions or expensive pieces of clothing.

Delivery and Return

Every participant expressed the importance of being provided with a smooth delivery experience (see appendix W). Participant 4 emphasized the need for the process to be as easy and smooth as possible, including the return process of the items. Similarly, participant 3 emphasized that rental services could be more energy consuming as the user has to return the items by the end of the renting period stating it could be "more of a hassle because you have to turn it in, like not turn it in but like send it back" (see appendix L). Participant 5 was specific about wanting to know what the process looked like and how easy it would be to pick and send back the items when renting products. While participant 6 really put weight on his concerns regarding the change process and the actions needed. More specifically, participant 6 mentioned "my only concern is how does the change happen? In a sense, that means that I need to go somewhere, or I need to take action. And those are actions that maybe I don't want to take every month just for changing my clothing" (see appendix N). But he also expressed that it would be a "game changer" if someone would come and pick up the clothes, requiring the end user to take less action (see appendix N). Participant 7 supported this by stating that it would be great if the services included a pickup every Monday and that would entail an exchange between the clothes already rented and the new clothes he had ordered. The participant would be pleased with such a service as it would require little action from her side, while also making it feel like she was “going shopping every week without shopping" (see appendix O). Therefore, many participants wanted a convenient process that did not entail having them take much action.

Condition and Hygiene

Participant 5 expressed concern regarding the quality of the items available to rent. She stated that she needed to know whether the quality is good, expressing “Depending on the price to know obviously both the condition and what you're actually ordering more specifically, like with the fabric, what does it look like, feel like etc” (see appendix M). Moreover, participant 6 was keen on expressing that he wanted to feel fresh when buying new pieces of clothing and stated that renting clothes would lack that aspect. He stated;

> definitely you want to feel fresh when you buy a new piece of clothing and you want to have something that's you and your style. I think I would be afraid that the clothing would be used or dirty. So, I don’t think I would feel fresh when renting

while also saying that there was no need to rent clothing for this reason (see appendix N). A less prevailing theme was product assortment of clothing rental services was a topic brought up in two interviews (see appendix W). Participant 4 expressed unease when it came to the rental services as she believed that the sizes available would be limited and stated that the services may only provide items for “skinny, tall” individuals (see appendix L). Moreover, participant 3 stated “it's not for everyone. It's more like if you go in there and you have like a fat body and it’s only for skinny tall people” (see appendix K). From these interviews, it was found that some participants expressed concern in terms of hygiene, condition, assortment and quality of the rented product.

Time

Two participants highlighted time to be of consideration when choosing to use rental services (see appendix W). Participant 4 stated “Like if it was time consuming I think I would like be like, “ugh”, then I will just go to H&M and buy a T-shirt”, highlighting that if the rental service requires too much time and action users may be put off from using it (see appendix L). This is further supported by participant 7 who highlighted that even though clothing rental services would be beneficial as it would give them a new wardrobe every week, however that would “ require me to put in an effort of choosing clothing every week and that trade off I'm not willing to do and therefore I would like to own instead" (see appendix O). Therefore, the analysis showed that some participants thought that the service might be too time consuming.

Risk

The last theme which emerged concerned the risks that the participants saw when considering rental services. Three out of five participants mentioned that a perceived risk of renting clothes was the possibility to accidentally ruin the clothes when using them (see appendix W). This would ultimately result in financial costs for them in order to reimburse the company for the damages they made to the product. Participant 5 expressed this by stating "I would be worried about like, you know, if I get sent something that has a scratch or a rip and I don't realise and then maybe I would have to pay for damages" (see appendix M). Similarly, participant 4 mentioned being scared of spilling red wine and being concerned with what would happen if that was to occur. It was evident that the concerns revolved around the uncertainty of what the consequences would be when damaging a product. Participant 3 also acknowledged that she would feel more secure using the service if an insurance would be present when renting. She explained that if she would have spilled anything on the item rented, she would be less concerned of the consequences, hence lowering the risks associated with using the service. Majority of the participants felt that there was a risk using the service due to the possibility of damaging the rented clothes.

Once the interviews had been analysed and the themes were identified, the questions for the second round of semi-structured interviews were created. The researchers used the themes that were found in the first round of semi-structured interviews to guide the questions made for the second round of interviews. The purpose for this was to enable the second round of interviews to dig deeper and understand the themes found better. Once a theme was identified, a question was formulated ensuring that it wasn't a question loaded with any negative or positive connotation. This was done in order to make sure it wouldn't impact the participants' answers. For the first theme, situation of use, a question surrounding when they would use a clothing rental service was added (see appendix B, question 13). When exploring the sustainability aspect of using the services, a question surrounding how the participant considered sustainability to be impacting rental services was added (see appendix B, question 10). When exploring ownership as an important factor, participants were asked if they had any specific consideration about sharing clothes with other people (see appendix B, question 8). When looking at the costs, a question regarding their considerations of how their expenses would be impacted was included (see appendix B, question 9). When looking at delivery and risk, two questions were included referring directly to what considerations they would make in regard to those aspects. In order to address the assortment, time and enjoyment themes, a general question regarding general considerations the participants would make in regard to renting clothes from businesses was included. Overall, the themes emerge in the first round of semi-structured interviews enabled and guided the researchers with the formulation of the questions included in the second round of semi-structured interviews.

4.3 Second Round of Semi-Structured Interviews

For the final round of data collection, five additional semi-structured interviews were conducted. The participants were three females and two males from Copenhagen Business School. Similar to the previous round, the analysis was conducted with use of descriptive codes, cognitive maps and the use of checklist matrices. Cognitive maps were conducted for each of the participants (see examples in appendix F). A total of seven matrices were made (see appendix X-DD). These appendixes assisted the researchers in illustrating the relevant themes and patterns in the data (see appendix X-DD). Moreover, it gave the researchers an overview of relevant comments and quotes under each specific theme (see appendix X-DD). One of the checklist matrices visualized the shopping background of the participants. This matrix was used to understand the shopping background of the participants. The remaining six matrices visualize the data regarding different renting-related themes. These were; 1) situations of use, 2) product, 3) costs, 4) sustainability, 5) delivery and 6) social reflection (see appendix X-DD).

Situations of Use

For the first theme "situations of use", the data showed that there were three overall categories for situations when the participants were interested in using rental services. These were special occasions, seasonal wear and opportunities to explore their style in new ways (see appendix DD). All five of the participants expressed that they would use renting for special occasions. For example, participant 8 stated; "I think it can be useful for special occasions, let's say weddings. I don't know balls, proms. Where you have to wear a special kind of outfit that you usually don't wear" (see appendix Q). Two of the participants brought up the interest in renting for seasonal wear. Participant 11 said; "But sometimes I'm like it would be nice with a new jacket because I had the same for six years, I think. So that would be a thing I would rent, so the seasonal kind of clothing that you can only use for one like yeah period of the year" (see appendix T). The opportunity of exploring his/her style and trying out new things came up in three of the interviews. For example, participant 9 said;

> You can also try something new, which you wouldn't have done before, because this stuff would be obviously too expensive. Or you don't want to spend that kind of money on clothes. But when you rent, when you rent, it gives you a lot more options (see appendix R).

Furthermore, it was found that many participants did not want to use renting for everyday clothing. Participant 12 expressed this by saying; "So I can picture in my case that I would probably only rent for special occasions. Not for like, my daily life probably" (see appendix U). Similarly, participant 11 stated; "And so no, I don't think I would start to rent jeans or t-shirts as such, then it should be more like outstanding things like statement clothes so to say." (see appendix T). Therefore, the findings showed that the participants were interested in using rental services for special occasions, seasonal wear and to explore their style.

Product

Another overall theme of renting was named "product". This category entailed the participants considerations of the characteristics of the product such as the condition, potential damage and the sharing aspect. The condition of the product was found to be a consideration of some participants (see appendix CC). Some of the participants had the expectation that the service would allow them to choose the condition of the product they would rent. Participant 12 stated;

> So, you select something, you can look it up, maybe they have a section for, okay, this is maybe marks or things that the garment has. So, for example, the dress has a tiny dot on the bottom, or I don't know a stain here but it's barely visible or something so that you actually know what you're getting (see appendix U).

Moreover, the answers of the participants varied when it came to the concerns regarding condition (see appendix CC). Participant 10 did not seem to be distrustful of the provider stating; "I would assume that the company would ensure that the clothes are all right. And in perfect condition before they ship it to me" (see appendix S). However, participant 11 was more cautious stating; "I would stop using it if the clothes didn't fit or didn't match what you expected" (see appendix T). It was apparent that the condition of the rented clothes was a concern for some of the participants.

When it came to the potential of either getting a damaged product or damaging a product themselves, all participants expressed concerns similarly to the previous round of interviews (see appendix CC). Participant 12 was mainly concerned with getting blamed for the damage of others; "What I think could be an issue, if you get it and there is something wrong with it. And you can't prove it's not you who did it. So how does the company deal with that? Okay, because I don't want to be responsible or like, blamed to have ruined a dress and actually end up having to pay for it or something" (see appendix U). Participant 8 expressed concern of damaging the clothes himself;

> So, if I rent out a very expensive piece I might be a bit concerned for me, I don't know spilling red wine on it on these things and then I'm not able to return it and I have to keep it and that's maybe a completely out of my price class (see appendix Q).

However, four of the participants expected the service provider to offer some form of agreement that could cover them; "wearing it and then hoping that if I rip something apart, the liability is covered by the agreement between me and the platform." (see appendix R). Similarly, participant 10 said; "And then of course the entire agreement between the provider and myself. Like, what if I rip it? Do I have to pay for the entire thing or is there an insurance in place?" (see appendix S). Participant 11 pointed out that if she had to worry about damaging the product it would not be worth it for her to rent; "Because if you use a dress and you know you rented it, but you can't really party around in it for a wedding, for example, then why should I do it?" (see appendix T). Similarly, to the previous round of interviews, the participants felt that there was a risk in using the service due to the possibility of damaging the rented products.

When it came to the aspect of sharing, all of the participants shared quite similar thoughts. All the participants did not mind wearing clothes that had been worn by others as long as the hygiene was done properly by the service provider (see appendix CC). Participant 9 clearly stated this; "So if I would know that the platform has a guarantee that it's clean and is hygienic then I wouldn't mind" (see appendix R). On the same note, participant 10 stated; "Sharing clothes with others I think would be fine for me, because I would assume that the company would ensure that the clothes are all right. And in perfect condition before they ship it to me" (see appendix S). Participant 11 and 12 gave more concrete examples of their hygiene concerns. Participant 11 would not appreciate if the clothes still smelled of smoke or had spills on them from previous users (see appendix T). Additionally, participant 12 was worried about previous users having diseases or that she would find hair or sweat stains on the clothes; "Because I wouldn't want to wear a dress that has like sweat stains or where I don't know, I find hair on it. Yeah. Or yeah, I just feel like it smells odd. So that would make me feel very uncomfortable" (see appendix U). The participants were open to the aspect of sharing clothes if the clothes met their hygiene standards.

Costs

Another topic which was relevant to the findings was the participants' considerations on the costs of using renting. Interestingly, the data showed that three out of five participants expressed that they thought their costs would increase when using renting (see appendix BB). Participant 10 stated;

> I think it would increase the cost. I don't shop that often, but if I had a really good deal that I could just rent a lot of clothes and it also depends on like, what what I'm doing that month? But, I think it would increase, because from what I've seen from it, it's not that cheap, so, yeah, it would definitely increase (see appendix S).

Another point of view came from participant 11 who thought that her spending if renting would be around the same as if she was not renting. Participant 11 did point out that for some of her friends who had a higher level of clothing consumption, the service would save them money;

> But they have so much clothes in their closet it's like insane. So if they could rent that clothes then it would be better yes. But I know that many of them already now they buy used because it's too expensive to buy from new. But renting it if that's a better option and you can just have it I think that's good (see appendix T).

Contrarily, to the other participants, participant 12 felt that her spending would decrease due to renting on special occasions; "I wouldn't say that increases my average spending because if I didn't rent, then

I'd probably buy. So it might even decrease it a little bit for the special occasions" (see appendix U). Additionally, participant 9 had a similar perception as he believed he could save money when renting expensive pieces. He stated “But I am also thinking of, I don't know renting high fashion brands like Balenciaga, or Dior, which should be cheaper to rent than buy “ (see appendix Q). Ultimately, the majority of participants expressed that they thought their spending would increase when renting clothes.

Sustainability

Similarly to the previous round of interviews, it was found that the participants associated the rental services with being sustainable. The data showed that all the participants expressed that there were sustainable aspects of using clothing rental services (see appendix AA). However, the participants had differing perceptions of how the service was sustainable. Two factors were found which made the service sustainable to the participants which were; “reuse” and “lower consumption”. All of the participants brought up at least one of these two factors as to why they saw renting as sustainable. Participant 10 pointed out the sustainable benefit of both reuse and lower consumption; “I think it's a good idea that we can all reuse different pieces of clothes that don't go to waste and prevent people from keeping on buying more and more clothes all the time. So I think it's a really good concept” (see appendix S). Similarly, participant 12 stated;

> Also, because maybe you wear something and then you notice, oh, I don't really like it. And then instead of putting it back in your closet for ages, and then finally throwing it out, you just send it back to the company and then other people that actually like it can rent it. Use it. (see appendix U).

Participant 12 was the only one to question how the supply chain affects the sustainability of the service. She pointed out that the way the clothes were washed and the place it was shipped from also impacted the sustainability of the service (see appendix U). Another unique finding was that participant 11 said that she would be more inclined to use the service if the brand expressed that they had an environmental purpose; “Yeah if I can see that the purpose is not only like increasing profit but it's also for them to have an impact on the environment I would most likely also be more inclined to use it” (see appendix T). Furthermore, she would have liked to see statistics on the website which showed how much CO2 she was saving when using the service. Therefore, the second round of interviews showed that all of the participants expressed that they perceived rental services to have characteristics which were sustainable.

Delivery and Return

Another category which came up during the analysis was how the participants perceived the different aspects of the delivery and return (see appendix Z). Four out of five participants felt that this process of online shopping would be similar or identical to renting; “I could picture it quite easy to be honest. So, I mean, it probably wouldn’t differ so much from a normal online shop” (see appendix U). Therefore, the respondents' feelings towards online shopping was consistent with their feelings towards the renting process. This pattern was validated by creating a checklist matrix which tested the correlation between comfort with online shopping and attitude towards the renting process (see appendix EE). Indeed, Miles and Huberman (1994) point out that checklist matrices can assist in comparability of the data. For example, participant 10 who wasn’t very comfortable with online shopping said the following when asked about the *renting* process;

> For me in general, with online shopping. I don't like the fact that I need to go to the mailbox, pick it up. And if it doesn't fit, then I will have to send it back. I don't want to waste my time in doing that (see appendix S).

Participant 12 who had expressed that she was comfortable with online shopping didn’t express much concern with returning the items when renting: "And with it, you can probably just get the return label for sending it back or you can print the return label. So I think that like the returning process wouldn't matter much" (see appendix U). Contrary to this correlation, participant 9 who is a comfortable online shopper saw renting as a slower alternative as he thought the service would have a limited number of products and the service provider might make the consumer wait;

> And what we also want is speed, so to receive the order fast. I think that might be a problem with renting as the piece you rent might already be rented out and then it would have to be returned, cleaned etc so it might need extra time that we don’t want to wait for (see appendix R).

Hence, it was found that a majority of the participants shared similar attitudes regarding the logistics of online shopping and attitudes towards the logistics of renting.

Social Reflection

The last theme revolved around the reflection the participants made when considering how their relevant peers would react to renting. This theme entails both positive and negative perceptions as well as the participants' own feelings about telling others if they were renting (see appendix Y). Majority of the participants said that they were expecting a positive reaction from the people around them; "They would be positive, I think. Like, just like, "that's cool". And many of my friends, I think would be interested in knowing more" (see appendix T). "I would actually think that a lot of them would think that it is great" participant 10 similarly stated (see appendix S). The sustainability aspect was something the participants seemed happy to tell others about. One example of this was participant 12 who said; "Yeah, I think it's more like, I think you're proud of telling people that you're doing it because it is like really is also like a trend to be sustainable, right?" (see appendix U). Likewise, participant 11 said;

> I would actually think that a lot of them would think that it is great. And I would say in general, people that know or are becoming much more aware of being more sustainable and not just buying and using and throwing it away. So I definitely think that it can help people get more inspired to do the same. So yeah, I think it would be a positive reaction. (see appendix T)

However, participant 11 also indicated that some people would have a negative perception; "I also know some that will be like, "I don't want to wear clothes that others are walking around in."" (see appendix T). On the contrary, participants 8 and 9 thought that if they rented expensive clothing, people would perceive it negatively;

> I think some people would definitely be like, okay, now you're wearing those high fashion brands. And it's like, okay, you want to be someone you're not. And it's like, you usually wouldn't buy those. So, I think people could be a bit critical on that (see appendix R).

Even though some expressed some possible negative reactions when referring to renting expensive clothing, it was found that majority of the participants stated they could receive a positive reaction.

As the non-directive interviews were mainly used to guide the first round of semi-structured interviews, the findings from the first and second round of semi-structured interviews will be the ones explored in the discussion. The discussion will focus on the most dominant findings from the two last rounds of interviews. By comparing the overall themes from the two rounds of semi-structured interviews it was evident that some of the emergent themes were recurring while others were not. There were two themes in the first round which did not come up in the second round, which were "enjoyment" and "time". As they did not emerge in the second round of interviews, they were not included in the discussion. However, the additional themes were all present in both rounds of interview, which is why they ultimately shaped the dominant findings of the research. One of these was the theme "situations of use" where it was seen in both rounds of interviews that the participants had the perception that special occasions were the best situation to use renting. Furthermore, the second round of interviews also found other situations for use. Moreover, both rounds found that renting for everyday use was not a trend. Another theme was "sustainability" where it was evident in both rounds that a majority of the participants found aspects of clothing rental services to be sustainable. For the theme "social reflection" the findings were also similar in both rounds as a majority of the participants expected their relevant peers to react positively if they rented clothes. Another recurring theme was "costs", here the findings varied more as the participants in the first round saw a financial benefit when renting expensive clothes or clothes for special occasions, whereas most participants in the second did not claim to see a financial benefit. The next theme was "delivery and return" where the participants in the first round expressed that they wanted the process as convenient as possible. In the second round it was evident that many participants compared it with the process of shopping online and it was therefore seen that their attitude towards the process of online shopping was similar to their attitude for the process of renting. The next theme that the two rounds had in common was related to the "condition" of the rented product. For both rounds of interviews, the participants expressed some concerns in regard to conditions such as hygiene, quality and fit. Moreover, another theme was "ownership/sharing". In the first round the perception of the sharing aspect/lack of ownership was split whereas for the second round all the participants expressed that they were positive towards the sharing aspect as long as the hygiene of the rented product lived up to their standards. Another theme was the "risk of damaging a product" which came up in both rounds of interviews. For both rounds it was clear that a majority of the participants felt that there was a risk of using the service in regard to the possibility of damaging a product.

4.4 Drawing and Verifying Conclusions

This section will explain how different tactics were employed by the researchers in order to draw and verify conclusions throughout the analysis. It is important to note that even though the tactics are explained one at a time below, in practicality these tactics were intertwined with each other in a coherent process.

During each round of the data analysis, the researchers used the tactics "noting patterns/themes" and "seeing plausibility" (Miles and Huberman, 1994). This occurs when researchers find evidence of recurring patterns and see plausible explanations which emerge in the data (Miles and Huberman, 1994). An example of this was when it became evident that sustainability was a recurring pattern in the data. While conducting early analysis, the researchers saw it as a plausibility that the participants saw the rental service as a sustainable option for buying clothing. However, these tactics have to be backed up by other tactics for the researchers to draw conclusions. Therefore, the researcher stayed open to disconfirming the patterns found. One of the tactics used for confirming the findings was "clustering" the data (Miles and Huberman, 1994). This was done by creating categories for the data and grouping it together based on similarities in the patterns (Miles and Huberman, 1994). Using the same example of sustainability this entailed making a cluster called "sustainability" and gathering the comments and quotes of the participants to be able to verify their considerations regarding sustainability. During the clustering-process, the researchers used the checklist matrix which encouraged the use of another tactic which was "partitioning variables". Making a matrix can help this process along as described by Miles and Huberman (1994); "designing matrix formats; more differentiation lets you see differences that might otherwise be blurred or buried" (p. 255). This tactic is used when the researcher "unbundled" variables by splitting it into more variables. The purpose of this is to uncover nuanced aspects of a single variable (Miles and Huberman, 1994). Sticking with the variable "sustainability" as an example, this variable was split into; "reuse", "lower consumption", "supply chain" and "brand communication" based on what patterns were found in the data. Another tactic used was to check the meaning of outliers. As Miles and Huberman (1994) point out the researcher might be tempted to ignore the outliers, however they argue that including the exceptions “tests the generality of the finding but also protects you against self-selecting biases and may help you build a better explanation” (p. 269). An example of an outlier within the sustainability theme was that one participant questioned the sustainability of the service by pointing out that it would depend on different aspects of the supply chain (see appendix U). This made the researchers aware of the fact that the respondents were pointing out characteristics and aspects of clothing rental services which were sustainable but not necessarily saying that the whole business model was sustainable.

The tactic “counting” was used to assist the researchers in drawing conclusions. Miles and Huberman (1994) stress that even though qualitative research “goes beyond how much there is of something to tell us about its essential qualities” (p. 253), it is still useful for the researcher to understand the consistency of a finding. Using the prior example, counting was used to see the consistency of the unbundles variables. For example, four out of five of the participants in the last round expressed that “reusing” the clothes is a sustainable aspect of the service for them. Therefore, the variable “reuse” becomes easier to verify due to the consistency of the finding. Furthermore, another tactic employed was “making conceptual/theoretical coherence”. This tactic served the purpose of understanding the meaning behind the behavior of the individual. Miles and Huberman (1994) explain that the tactic involves “connecting a discrete fact with other discrete facts, and then grouping these into lawful, comprehensible, and more abstract patterns” (p. 261). These tactics were employed throughout the analysis, enabling the researcher to verify and form conclusions. This was further done in the following section where the findings are discussed and put into context with previous literature.

5 Discussion

In the following section, the main findings from the analysis are discussed and put into context with existing relevant literature in order to best answer the research question of how clothing rental services are perceived by millennial consumers. Furthermore, the limitations of the paper are reviewed, and further research is suggested.

5.1 Renting for Specific Occasions

The findings from the analysis showed that there were particular situations where the participants showed interest in renting clothes. However, most participants explicitly stated that they did not wish to rent for everyday use. It was a clear pattern in the findings that the participants were most interested in renting for special occasions. In the last round of data collection, all five of the participants specifically expressed this preference. Examples of the situations of use mentioned were weddings, galas or birthdays. One of the reasons behind this preference was the financial payoff. Some participants felt that renting had a financial benefit when renting clothes for special occasions as opposed to everyday clothing where they did not see that it would pay off financially. The findings are supported by Armstrong et al. (2015) who also found in their study that the participants did not see a financial benefit when renting for everyday use whereas they did for special occasions.

Another finding was that the participants were interested in renting 'seasonal' wear. Some participants were intrigued by the possibility of renting a piece of clothing for the season such as a winter or summer jacket. This would give them the option to rent a piece of clothing for an entire season which they would not otherwise have bought and might not have used the year after. This can be backed up by Lee and Chow (2020) who found that the clothing rental services should implement more flexible renting periods to attract consumers who do not find renting efficient enough. In the case of this study, longer rental periods could be more efficient for the participants interested in renting for the season. Moreover, another study conducted by Tunn, Fokker, Luijkx, De Jong and Schoormans (2019) emphasized that, within PSS business models, increasing the time the consumer spends with a product can ultimately influence the "product-consumer relationship" (p. 2). This is as consumers will grow fonder of the product if they spend more time with it, in this case, if they can rent it for a prolonged period of time (Tunn et al., 2019). It was apparent that some participants perceived the clothing rental services would be particularly useful for renting seasonal wear for a longer period of time.

Another pattern found was that the participants perceived renting as an opportunity to wear clothing that they would normally not purchase. Participants stated that renting gave them the possibility to rent expensive clothes they otherwise would not purchase or that they would be able to rent statement clothes that they would not normally buy. Thereby, rental clothing services enabled them to explore their style in new ways. Moreover, renting was seen as an option for exploring new ways of self-expression without the responsibility of ownership. Such findings can also be seen in the study by Armstrong et al. (2016) who state that "This service was also perceived by participants as a way to step out of their comfort zone and try something new, with less risk" (p. 27). Hence, their study found that renting was perceived to give the participants the opportunity to satisfy the desire for change, which is aligned with this study's findings. Overall, it was clear that the participants were finding renting services as an opportunity to rent 'atypical' clothes which they would not normally buy.

The findings also showed that the participants did not want to rent clothes for their everyday life due to various reasons such as lack of financial benefit, inconvenience and the expectation of the service being time consuming. However, multiple of the participants pointed out that the service would be more beneficial for their more fashion-oriented friends who spend more money on clothes than they do. This was due to the fact that the participants perceived the service to be more enjoyable and more financially beneficial for fashion- oriented people. This is similar to the findings of Armstrong et al. (2016) who found that "renting was seen as more relevant for a younger target group, specifically the people frequently using clothes as a means to adjust personal identity" (p. 29).

Overall, the findings showed that the perception of the participants was that renting was only relevant for certain situations. These situations were special occasions, seasonal wear and atypical clothes used for exploring style. It was found that the participants had the perception that there was a financial benefit when renting for specific occasions. Contrarily, it was evident that a majority of the participants were not interested in renting everyday clothing. However, they did perceive it to be beneficial for their more fashion-oriented friends.

5.2 Financial Benefit for Specific Occasions

As explored above, it was found that some of the participants felt that renting for some specific occasions, such as a party or wedding, had a financial benefit as they could save money on pieces they would wear once. However, in the last round of interviews, when the participants were asked directly about whether their overall monthly clothing expenses would increase or decrease when renting, a majority of the participants thought their spending would increase. This was found to be contradictory with the fact that many participants had expressed a financial benefit when renting for a specific occasion. This could be due to the fact that the participants were considering the question to imply that they would be renting for everyday clothes. This is in line with the participants expressing a lack of financial benefit when renting for everyday clothes. Findings in other studies, such as Armstrong et al. (2015), found that participants saw a financial benefit to renting by reducing the overall clothing purchases. This differs from this study's findings as multiple participants did express that they would expect an overall increase of spending when renting. Moreover, previous literature of PSS many studies including Edbring et al. (2016), Rousseau (2020), Bardhi and Eckhardt (2012), Rexfelt and Ornäs (2009), Lee and Chow (2020) and Armstrong et al. (2015) also found that the financial benefit was seen as a motivator for the consumers to use renting. For example, Lee and Chow (2020) found that utilitarian values such as saving money was one of the biggest motivators for the participants to rent clothing. On the contrary, this study's findings show that the participants did not perceive the service of renting clothes as having a financial benefit for them in their everyday life. However, they did perceive the service to have financial benefits when renting for specific occasions.

5.3 Risk of Monetary Consequences

In the analysis, it was evident that the participants worried about the consequences of damaging the rented products. Many considered the consequences of spilling red wine and staining a dress/smoking, emphasizing concerns of what the costs would be involved. They also highlighted that they would want to know if an insurance would be in place to make them more comfortable with using the service. Another concern was receiving a product that was already damaged and being held financially responsible. Such concerns have also emerged in other studies for both PPS in the fashion industry as well as in other industries. In a study conducted by Armstrong et al. (2016), it was evident that the participants worried about what would happen if the clothing rented was damaged. Moreover, in a study by Rousseau (2020), it was highlighted that the respondents were worried about the costs of the repair of a damaged product. Similarly, the uncertainty of the consequences when damaging a product was seen in Catulli's study conducted from 2012. Catulli (2012) found that the participants were worried about the implications of damaging a product and wanted to know if they would receive any penalties if products got damaged and whether there was an insurance in place that could help them avoid such costs (Catulli, 2012). Therefore, it was evident that similar findings have been brought up in other studies, emphasizing that these concerns are very present in consumers' mind when thinking of renting clothes online. Hence, it became clear that the participants perceived risks in terms of monetary consequences when considering using clothing rental services. This could ultimately signal that the potential risks associated when renting clothes could contribute to a negative perception the participants had of the service.

5.4 Risk of Unmet Product Expectations

It was evident that the participants also concerned with receiving a product which was not in good condition. In the analysis, it was evident that this was a concern for the participants. Many wanted to be aware of the quality, the fabric and the condition of the rented item as they wanted to know what to expect. Such findings can also be seen in Bauerly's (2009) paper, where he addressed how customers were perceiving renting clothes as a risk due to the possibility of receiving an item in an unexpected condition. Moreover, Niinimäki (2014) found that a major factor for user dissatisfaction was receiving clothes that were in low quality, which ultimately led the users to decrease their usage of the product itself. Additionally, such concerns have also been highlighted in Catulli's study (2012), where findings show that the participants felt they were taking a leap of trust in believing the product had not been abused. Hence, the users requested to receive more information regarding how the providers assured that the item was in good condition and had been appropriately treated before being rented out to the next user (Catulli, 2012). Such requests were also found in this study's findings, as some participants stated the need to understand how the quality and condition of the item was beforehand as it was necessary in order to make the decision of whether to rent the item. Moreover, such findings are also supported in a report by Tunn et al. (2019) who stated that the lack of available product information could become a barrier for consumers to use the service. However, if product information is made available, this can become an enabler. This implies that if little information about the product is available, it could create some concerns and hesitation for the user. Ultimately, it is evident that the participants perceived a risk of receiving a product in bad condition. In other words, receiving a product that does not meet the participants expectations and standards. Hence, the risk associated with the service could contribute to a negative perception of the service.

Apart from worrying about the product quality and condition, it became apparent that the users were concerned with ordering items that would not fit them. This was also found in Mun and Johnson's (2014) research, where they highlighted that users were concerned with the design and fit of the items which they could only interact with and see online. Such concerns can also be found in studies that explore online shopping vs offline shopping. A study conducted by Kim & Damhorst (2013), highlighted that the considerations made when shopping online vs. offline brought forward 7 dimensions however, two of the dimensions were concerns which emerged exclusively in relation to online shopping. The two additional dimensions for online shopping included inability of "imagining the fit and size and inability to try on in online shopping" (p. 2). Therefore, this shows that prior findings are aligned with this study's findings as it was found that some participants were uncomfortable shopping online as they were not sure of the fit of the product. What the participant did to overcome this was to try the clothes in a physical store before going through with the purchase online. Overall, it was evident that the participants were perceiving some risks with using the service in regard to receive an unsatisfactory product. The concerns that arose were related to the quality, condition, and unknown fit of the product.

5.5 High Standards of Hygiene from Service Provider

When it came to hygiene, it was evident that participants wanted the hygiene of the product to be of a certain standard. Examples of this was when participants mentioned that the products should exclude the possibility of receiving clothes that smell of smoke, receiving stained clothes or receiving unhygienic clothes. Many mentioned that they would use the service if the hygiene standard was met. Moreover, many relied on the company to be responsible for the clothing and its cleaning process, also stating that they trusted the company to provide the standard necessary for users to share clothes among each other. Hence, the hygiene aspect did seem to be a dominant concern for participants. Additionally, this showed that, though the participant believed hygiene to be an important factor, they trusted in the service provider to live up to their hygiene standards.

This finding is in contrast to prior research, where the hygiene factor has been found to be a recurring concern. Armstrong et al. (2015) mentioned that there the participants had concerns regarding hygiene. On top of that, findings suggested participants trouble with trusting the clothing rental service provider. Moreover, Edbring et al. (2016) also found their participants to be concerned with hygiene and stated that the participants feared that the products had not been properly cleaned after its previous renter. Once again, highlighting the trust issue the user had with the clothing rental provider. Additionally, similar findings were expressed in a study conducted by Catulli et al. (2013), which mentioned that participants worried about the hygiene of the products. Moreover, the study highlighted that the participants wanted to know the past history of the product they rented including: the age of the product and how many had had it before (Catulli et al., 2013). Moreover, Tunn et al. (2019) mention that "the reliability of the service providers and, the consumers' trust in the system" can both be barriers and enablers for users using access-based PSS (p. 2). In this study's findings, participants trusted the company and believed they would take responsibility for the hygiene of the products, hence, making hygiene less of a concern for participants and the trust in the provider more of an enabler. Ultimately, this study's findings showed that hygiene was an important factor for consumers, but they expressed trust in the service provider to meet their hygiene standards. Hence, these findings suggest that the participants perceive the service provider to be following procedures offering cleaned and hygienic products, highlighting the trust the participants seem to have for the services.

5.6 Positive Perception of Sharing

From the analysis, it was evident that the participants did not have a problem sharing clothes with others. Participants stated that sharing clothes with others was positive as it meant that renting clothes would maximise the use of resources available in the market. This is shown in other studies as well which highlight that the most prominent factor, for deciding whether to use clothing rental services online, is to maximize utility of the products themselves (Mohlmann, 2015). It can also be argued that the participants' positive perception of the sharing aspect can be due to them becoming more open to sharing products by challenging the traditional concept of product ownership. Previous studies conducted have highlighted millennials becoming more receptive to exploring different means of ownership (Hwang & Griffiths, 2017; Rifkin, 2014). Moreover, it can be argued that as consumers are increasingly more exposed to these business models and seeing PPS businesses becoming successful and establishing credibility, it is making consumers more receptive to the idea of sharing rather than owning products. In other words, existing businesses are proving to offer clean products and reliable services, making users have more trust in the service providers, which is also softening them to the idea of sharing. Therefore, the study's findings alongside previous research, it can be argued that millennials are open and accepting to sharing resources while being less concerned with product ownership. Overall, in this study's findings it is evident that the participants had a positive perception of the sharing aspect.

Though it was evident that the majority of the participants did not have a problem sharing clothes, some participants reflected upon the importance of actually owning the product that they purchase. This highlighted some of the participants' need for product ownership. Such findings have been evident in past studies as well, one being Catulli's (2012) study. Her findings showed that the participants held a strong emotional involvement to the products and emphasized that they felt possessive over the products (Catulli, 2012). She also mentioned that "Product ownership is a way of self-expression" (Catulli, 2012, p. 787). Her findings suggest that the participants did not want to share items as "Consumers were concerned not only about whether the products were hygienic and in good condition, they also wanted them to be 'shiny and new'" (p. 787). Additionally, Becker-Leifhold pointed out in her study that participants who are particularly materialistic are less inclined to use renting services (Becker-Leifhold, 2018). Similarly, Lee and Chow (2018) support this as they had similar findings in their study that suggest that consumers who have a strong sense of psychological ownership were less inclined to use renting. From the findings of this paper, it was clear that some participants valued ownership which is aligned with previous studies. However, this was not the majority of the participants as most were open to the concept of sharing.

5.7 Sustainable Characteristics of the Service

The environmental aspect of the service was found to be a predominant factor for the participants' perception of clothing rental services. A majority of the participants found that using the service would be a sustainable alternative to shop. This was due to the aspects of reusing the clothes (thereby, prolonging their lifetime), reducing waste and reducing overall consumption. These factors were also among the sustainable factors of PSS pointed out by Yang and Evans (2019) as 'prolonged product lifecycle', 'increased reuse', 'resource efficiency' and 'increased product use' were among these. In regard to reducing waste Camilleri (2019) pointed out that PSS can lead to minimizing waste. However, in this study's finding, one participant was more sceptical of the environmental benefits of the service pointing out that the environmental effect depended on different aspects of the supply chain such as shipping and transportation. Her point is in line with Retamal (2017) who stated that the belief that PSS business models are simply sustainable in themselves is too simplified and untrue.

In previous literature, the question of whether environmental impact is or is not a factor, which influences the consumers decision to rent, has contradicting results. For example, Becker-Leifhold (2018) and Catulli (2012) found that sustainability wasn't a major driver for renting, whereas Lee and Chow (2020), Mun and Johnson (2014), Armstrong et al. (2015) and Edbring et al. (2016) found that it was. Armstrong et al. (2016) found that an important aspect of renting for the participants was the opportunity to reduce consumption. Similarly, Armstrong et al. (2015) found that "one of the study's most powerful themes was the perceived environmental benefit associated with decreased material consumption via product longevity". The same was found in this study as many participants pointed out that renting gave the option to lower consumption. Moreover, Mun and Johnson (2014) found that the participants felt they were helping the environment by reducing waste, which was also a finding which emerged in this study.

Ultimately, it was found that the environmental benefits of the service were an important and positive aspect for a majority of the participants. This finding can be related to the fact that the researchers were interviewing millennials. It is believed that millennials might have a more positive perception of renting for environmental reasons than the older generations due to millennials being more exposed to the environmental crisis throughout their lives. This can be linked to a study by Rousseau (2020) who specifically studied millennials' willingness to rent smartphones and found that the environmental benefits of renting may be a motivator for the participants; "Looking at the main drivers, the perception of a positive environmental impact [...] may each be an important driver for the adoption of PSS in different markets". Rousseau (2020) pointed out that millennials are thought to be more concerned about the environment, which could contribute in explaining the findings of this study. An important finding from Lee & Chow (2020) found that consumers often feel that the sustainable aspects are more important than ownership of products. It was found that "consumers' ecological concerns on their attitudes toward online fashion renting often overshadows their perceptions of ownership" (p. 7). They also illustrated that consumers' awareness regarding "access-based consumption" are constantly increasing as they are seeing the environmental benefits that such services bring on. Therefore, the sustainable aspect of clothing rental services was found to be positively perceived by the participants.

5.8 Similar Logistics as Online Shopping

From the analysis, it became apparent that many participants saw the delivery and return process of renting clothes online as similar or almost identical to purchasing clothes online. Hence, both activities shared many similarities in terms of disadvantages and advantages. Therefore, comparing the participants' attitude to the logistics of online shopping with their attitude to the logistics of renting, it was found that many participants had correlating attitudes between these two activities. Moreover, Lee and Turban (2001) also stated that "consumer's previous experience and the trust built up in online shopping affect their intentions to shop online" which can also indicate that the participants' previous online shopping experience can affect their intention to rent online as participants linked them to be very similar.

It was found in the study that many felt that the delivery needed to be convenient, quick, secure, fast and have a smooth transition from the service provider to the users themselves. They specified that there should not be a lot of actions or energy required from them. Several participants highlighted this by stating that they would like their package to be left outside their door, illustrating that service should involve the least amount of effort. These findings can be supported by Wallace and Barkhi (2007) who stated that some of the major factors influencing consumers to online shop are: convenience, saving time, accessibility and flexibility. Hence, it can be argued that similar factors influence consumers when renting online as well as when shop online. These findings are supported in Armstrong et al. (2015) who highlight that a PSS needs to provide easy service for the users as consumers may be hesitant to try out the service if it requires too much effort and time from them. They also highlight that the ease of use of the service contributes to creating positive perceptions of such PSS.

Lee & Chow (2020) found, in their study, that functional performance of online fashion renting platforms is of importance to be able to make consumers want to use their platform. More specifically, they stated that "flexible arrangements for deliveries and returns" are necessary in order to "...attract more consumers who are sensitive about the efficiency of online fashion renting" (Lee & Chow, 2020). This is aligned with this study's finding as the participants emphasized that they would be willing to use a clothing rental service online if the deliveries and returns were simple, efficient and did not require a lot of energy. Overall, it was found that participants valued convenience as a key aspect of using rental services. It was also found that since many related renting clothes online to shopping online, participants which were more open and positive towards the logistics of online shopping would have a more positive perception of the logistics of renting clothes online.

5.9 Renting as a Social Trend

An overwhelming majority of the participants stated that they would receive a positive reaction from their peers if they were using clothing rental services. Some participants stressed that their peers might ask them questions regarding the service about inconvenience, ownership or hygiene. However, the participants did not seem to perceive these questions as negative as they were often stated as an extension of the positive reaction they expected from others. One of the recurring patterns of the expected social reaction from others was the sustainability aspect. The sustainability aspect was found to play a substantial role for the participants' expectations of their social circle's perception of the service. Therefore, it would seem that the sustainable aspect of the service contributed to the participants' expectations of a positive reaction from their peers. This can be supported by Rousseau's (2020) statement which explained that millennials are thought to be more concerned about the environment, which is why the participants might expect others to care about the environment as well. One example of sustainability playing a role was when participant 11 stated that she would expect a positive reaction from her peers. Afterwards, she also expressed that she would feel proud telling her peers due to the current trend of being sustainable. This could show that her perception of the service is influenced by what she thinks her peers think, this means she would feel proud telling them she is using it since she is expecting a positive reaction from them. This could be further emphasized by the concept of subjective norms influencing people's attitude. As subjective norms consist of an individual's expectation of other relevant peers' opinions and their willingness to comply with this. It can be argued that the participant's subjective norms in this situation was that their relevant peers would perceive the use of the service as positive and it is clear that the participant wished to comply with this attitude. Furthermore, Becker-Leifhold (2018) found that consumers are more inclined to rent if they believe relevant peers are positive towards the concept. In other words, if the participants believed their relevant peers feel positive towards the concept of renting and they had a desire to comply with this, the participants themselves would feel positive about renting as well. Moreover, the participants who expected a negative reaction from their peers and had a desire to comply with this, would most likely feel more negatively towards renting.

Though most participants expected to receive a positive reaction from their peers, some participants pointed out some negative reactions they could receive. Some expected a negative reaction if they were to rent expensive high fashion clothes which they would not be able to afford normally. This was due to the fact that they thought their friends would perceive it as them trying to be "someone you're not" (see appendix P). Contrarily to this, Becker-Leifhold (2018) found that "The renting model enables consumers to keep up with the latest fashion trends and to wear clothes of a high quality, which they may otherwise not be able to afford. Therefore, the renting model provides the opportunity to display a certain social status for people with a high need to show their status to others" (p. 788). Ultimately, this finding suggests that the participants did not see renting an opportunity to show social status. They believed that using the service for social status would be something their peers would frown upon; hence this showed the participants' subjective norm was that they think that their peers would be negative toward them using renting to show social status. Furthermore, other participants argued that they might receive a negative reaction, for example due to judgement concerning the sharing aspect or the fact that others did not see the service as a trend. However, despite these expected negative reactions the majority of the participants expected the reactions to be positive, as stated above. Therefore, this study found that the perception of clothing rental services was that the participants saw the service as a social trend due to their expectations of receiving positive reactions from relevant peers. Furthermore, it was found that the perceived environmental benefit of using the service made the perception of the service trendy.

5.10 Overview of Findings

This study found various aspects of the participants perception of clothing rental services. Therefore, the researchers have developed a model (see figure 1) to illustrate the most dominant findings of this study. Figure 1 illustrates the different perceptions which the participants have of clothing rental services. The circle in the middle illustrates the overall perception of the millennials. This circle incorporates the various aspects of the perception, which are illustrated in the various bubbles attached to the circle. Figure 1 can be seen below:

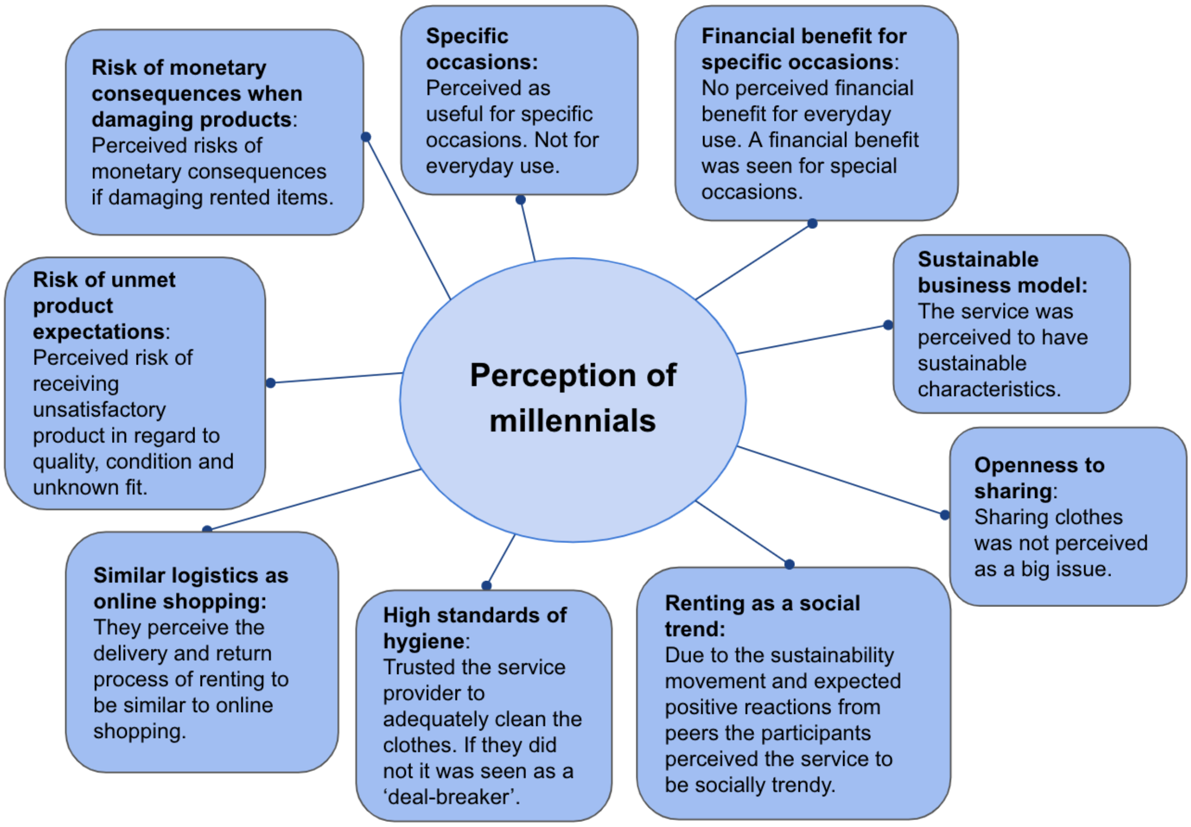

Figure 1: Perception of millennials

5.10.1 Overall perception

Using the findings of this study and applying it to the Theory of Reasoned Action, it can help the researchers to indicate the participants behaviour, which ultimately, can help them further understand the participants overall perception of the service. This is due to the fact that if the participants are more inclined to use the service it is suspected that the participants would have an overall positive perception of the service.

Overall, the theory suggests that if the individual has favorable attitudes regarding the behaviour itself, and subjective norms that are favorable for the behaviour, they are more likely to follow through with the behaviour (Silverman et al., 2016). Hence, applying this theory, it can be argued that participants who had positive attitudes toward the different aspects of the renting service and expected a positive reaction from their relevant peers, they would be more likely to rent clothes online. Similarly, participants who had a negative attitude towards the different aspects of renting service and expected a negative reaction from their relevant peers, would be less likely to rent clothes online. Looking at the findings, there seemed to be more positive aspects of the perception than negatives. This is due to the fact that a majority of the participants saw aspects such as sustainability, sharing, high standards of hygiene and the financial benefit of renting for specific occasions as positive, thereby having positive attitudes to the behaviour of renting. Moreover, more importantly, the majority of the participants expected their relevant peers to have a positive reaction and perception of the service, thereby having favourable subjective norms for the behaviour of renting. This is especially significant since subjective norms have a strong influence on an individual's behaviour. Ultimately, this implies that the majority of the participants would be more inclined to use the service, which the researchers use to argue that the majority of the participants had an overall positive perception of the service. It is, however, worthy to note that the indication of the participants behaviour cannot be concluded, hence, can only be viewed as speculations.

5.11 Limitations and Further Research

This section seeks to enlighten the reader regarding the limitations of the research approach of this study as well as its findings. This is done to give an understanding of the applicability of the findings for future reference. Furthermore, suggestions for further research are proposed in order to accommodate these shortcomings.

It is important to consider that even though some participants' may have indicated and expressed positive perception of aspects of the service, it might not be reflected in their behaviour. Multiple studies, including: McEachern, Seaman, Padel, and Foster (2005) and Boulstridge and Carrigan (2000), have explored the gap between consumers' attitudes and their behaviour. Within the apparel industries, prior research shows that consumers often state that they would choose a more sustainable product versus a non-sustainable one when shopping. However, often this attitude is not reflected in their behaviour. Terlau & Hirsch (2015) explained that this phenomenon is known as "attitude-behaviour gap" and is most often influenced by the individuals themselves, their "social and situational factors" (Terlau & Hirsch, 2015, p. 159). Ultimately, though participants expressed a positive perception of the service, it might not be reflected in their behaviour. Therefore, it is worthy to take into consideration as one of the limitations of the findings.

Another difficulty when theorizing the findings in the study was that the participants regularly expressed contradicting statements. One example of this was when many participants stated they would rent for special occasions as it had a financial benefit but also stated that they believed their spending would increase if they rented. Furthermore, another contradiction was that some participants believed that they would keep buying the same amount of clothes while renting but at the same time stating that renting would be beneficial to the environment due to lower clothes consumption. The presence of contradictory statements in qualitative research is not a new phenomenon. As El-Sawad, Arnold and Cohen (2004) wrote; "Those engaged in theorizing about and conducting qualitative research frequently acknowledge that contradictory stances are a common feature of qualitative interview data" (p. 1180). El-Sawad et al. (2004) presented the phenomenon "doublethink" to describe when people make logically contradictory statements. One consideration is that people have different identities for different 'roles' they take in their lives and vary depending on the attributes they perceive to share with social groups which are important to them (El-Sawad et al., 2004; Hewstone et al. 2002). Therefore, during the course of an interview, the participants can make frequent unannounced changes to their self-identity (El-Sawad et al., 2004). Therefore, an explanation for the contradicting standpoints of the participants can be caused by their shift in self-identity when reflecting on the different questions. An example of this is when the participants were asked about the financial side of renting. In this scenario, they might have identified with one side of themselves which intended to purchase the same amount of clothes as they currently do even when renting. This is perhaps due to the need to own the same amount of clothes or to stay trendy and up to date. Whereas, when asked about the environmental side of the service, they identify with an environmentally conscious social group and, therefore, give a contradictory response regarding the use of renting to lower their consumption. Ultimately, the contradictory findings of the study are important to take into consideration as one of the limitations of the findings.

Another limitation is that the study did not use triangulation which is stressed by Steenhuis and Bruijn (2006) as a valid approach to give case studies credibility; “Credibility [...] can also be achieved by following other techniques, in particular triangulation techniques in interpretivist studies” (p. 7). However, Vershuren (2003) pointed out the confusion in this area as some authors stress that any method can be used as long as it contributes to the knowledge of the case while others stress that either qualitative or quantitative is the correct approach. As this study chose to use only qualitative interviews it can be questioned whether a triangulation approach, including for example surveys or focus groups, would have improved the credibility and accuracy of the findings. The use of only qualitative interviews was chosen as the researchers found it to be the best way to answer the research question. This is as it allowed the researchers to get an in-depth understanding of the point of view of each participant individually.

Eisenhardt (1989) described some weaknesses of the inductive case study. When discussing this, he stated that the theory which is derived from inductive case studies “can yield theory which is overly complex” and due to the large volume of data “there is a temptation to build theory which tries to capture everything” (Eisenhardt, 1989, p. 547). This can lead to the creation of a theory which lacks simplicity and does not capture the overall perspective (Eisenhardt, 1989). Moreover, another weakness is the possibility that the theory can become too narrow; “The risks are that the theory describes a very idiosyncratic phenomenon or that the theorist is unable to raise the level of generality of the theory” (Eisenhardt, 1989, p. 547). Both of these weaknesses could have impacted parts of the theory generated in this study. Some findings included in the theory development may only have been made by a couple of participants, thereby raising the chance of making the theory too complex. Other areas of the theory could be too specific and miss generality as they might only be applicable for the context of this specific case study. However, even though the inductive case study approach has weaknesses it also has strengths. These strengths are the reason why the approach has been chosen for this study. Due to the fact that the approach allows for continuous data collection which supports the exploratory research purpose and the interpretivist philosophy the inductive case study approach, with use of elements of the deductive approach, has strengths and characteristics which outweigh the weaknesses for this study.

In continuation of this, a condition and possible limitation of the interpretivist research is the bias that the researchers might bring to the research. This difficulty can be explained by applying the phenomenon of double hermeneutics. This idea entails that the social researcher must on one hand interpret the world from the point of view of the participant but also use theoretical terms and ideas to reconstruct the participant's interpretations (Gilje & Grimen, 2002). Even though double hermeneutics is a condition for doing interpretivist research, it is still relevant to point out that the researchers have had an effect on the findings by using theories and "expert" knowledge to find meaning from the participant's own interpretations. Therefore, this phenomenon underlines the importance of transparency and cautiousness from the researcher to avoid interpretations of the data in wrongful and presumptuous ways.

In spite of the limitations of the research, the choices made for this research were taken as they were found most fitting for investigating the chosen research topic. This was due to the fact that there was no prior literature investigating the perception of renting services within fashion with a specific focus on millennials. Therefore, the research purpose was exploratory and thereby not focused on being generalizable. As Steenhuis and Bruijn (2006) pointed out, the progressive case study should be selected if the researcher wishes to create "theory that should not be considered validated but rather it contains concepts and possible relationships which creates new insight [...] and that can be tested in subsequent research." (Steenhuis & Bruijn, 2006, p. 7). The single case study was chosen to get an initial and exploratory understanding of the research topic. This is backed up by Lazar, Feng and Hochheiser (2017) who stated that the single case study is a useful choice if the study is concerned with building an initial understanding of a situation and less with generalizing.

Even though the research design was chosen to best answer the research questions, the limitations mentioned above can be addressed and overcome by future research. The future research should set out to test the findings of this paper with use of a more generalizable explanatory qualitative, quantitative or triangulation study. Another option could be to conduct another case study as the generalisation of a case study can be found when the findings can be replicated in other case studies (Rowley, 2002). Furthermore, another interesting aspect, would be to test the behavioural intent to use the service rather than the perception alone. This is as the researchers can only speculate the behaviour of the participants based on the findings of this paper. The researchers have highlighted certain areas of research that should be further studied to thoroughly understand and generalize the findings. Therefore, the researchers suggest that for further research it would be relevant to investigate whether the findings in this study can be generalizable for the population of millennials in a chosen country, preferably Denmark as it is the country where this study took place. This could either help confirm or disconfirm the findings of this research. Therefore, for future research we suggest the following hypotheses:

- Millennial consumers perceive clothing rental services as most useful for special occasions, seasonal wear and for exploring style
- Millennial consumers do not perceive clothing rental services to have a financial benefit for everyday clothes
- Millennial consumers perceive clothing rental services to have a financial benefit for specific occasions
- Millennial consumers perceive clothing rental services to have high standards for hygiene of their products
- Millennial consumers perceive a risk of receiving unsatisfactory products in regard to quality, condition and unknown fit when using clothing rental services
- Millennial consumers perceive a risk of the monetary consequences if damaging a rented product
- Millennial consumers' perception of the logistics of online shopping reflect their perception of the logistics of clothing rental services
- Millennial consumers have a positive perception of the sharing aspect of clothing rental services
- Millennial consumers perceive the clothing rental services to have sustainable characteristics
- Millennial consumers perceive clothing rental services to be a social trend mostly due to the sustainable aspect

6 Conclusion

This study set out to understand the perception which millennial students have of use-oriented product service systems (PSS) in the fashion industry, more specifically clothing rental services. The interest in this topic was sparked by the increase of existing use-oriented PSS business models in today's market, such as: Zipcar, Lime, Swapfiets, and Rent the Runway. Prior literature has investigated consumers' perception of use-oriented PSS. However, there was found to be a lack of literature looking specifically into millennials' perception of use-oriented PSS in the fashion industry. Moreover, the researchers identified millennials to be of particular importance as they have the ability to potentially increase the adoption of online clothing rental services due to their awareness of environmental issues and new technology.

The findings of this study showed that the participants perceived clothing rental services to be particularly useful for specific occasions. Many mentioned that they would use such services when needing clothes for special occasions (e.g. weddings), while also indicating some benefits when renting expensive clothes, seasonal wear and as a way to explore new styles. Moreover, they also expressed that renting for everyday use was not seen as beneficial when using the service. Additionally, it was found that most participants perceived a lack of financial benefit when renting everyday clothes. However, when renting for specific occasions some participants did perceive a financial benefit. More specifically, they perceived that they could save money when renting for a specific occasion as that would often entail a product they would use once or that it would be a particularly expensive product. In regard to the perceived risk, the participants were found to have perceived risks of the monetary consequences that could occur when damaging a rented product. Additionally, the participants had perceived risks of receiving unsatisfactory products in regard to hygiene, fit, condition and unknown fit.

The participants implied that their standards had to be met for them to continue using the service and ensure that they would not be disappointed by the product they rented. However, it was also evident that the participants perceived the service providers to have high standards of hygiene. It could be argued that the participants felt the service providers to be reliable as many trusted them to provide clothing of high hygienic standards. Hence, this indicated that the hygiene aspect did seem to be a dominant concern for participants. Moreover, it was also found that the participants had a positive perception of sharing which might be due to the fact that millennials are found to be particularly open to challenge the traditional way of ownership. The findings also showed that the participants perceived aspects of the service to be sustainable. This was a particularly important and positive aspect which a majority of the participants expressed. The participants mentioned that the service would promote less consumption, extend product lifecycle/reusing products and maximizing resources that are already available in the market. In regard to the logistics, the participants perceived the logistics of rental platforms to be very similar to online shopping. Hence, it was found that participants which were more open and positive towards the logistics of online shopping had a more positive perception of the logistics of renting clothes online. Similarly, the participants who were not comfortable with online shopping had a more negative perception of the logistics of rental platforms. Furthermore, the findings showed that the perception of the service was that it was a social trend to use it. This was found as most participants expected their peers to have a positive reaction if they rented. This was mostly as they believed their peers to perceive the rental service to be in line with the sustainable movement, hence that the service would be viewed as socially trendy.

The findings suggest various aspects of millennials' perception of clothing rental services. These perceptions, whether negative or positive, can assist platforms in moulding their offer to make the service more appealing to millennial consumers. It should be noted that since the researchers investigated the perception of how the service works rather than how it actually works. Therefore, the suggestions for the services focus on how the platform should address the negative and positive aspects of the consumers' perceptions to change their perception for the better. Moreover, by addressing the beneficial aspects expressed by the participants, the platforms can understand which communication efforts to focus on in order to drive more users to the website. Hence, taking into consideration the findings of this study, the platforms should focus more on marketing the sustainable aspect, eliminating perceived risk by implementing insurance policies and ensure availability of information regarding cleaning process, products and their condition, make logistic process as simple and convenient as possible (ensuring customers' actions are minimized), having clothes which match the situations of use mentioned in this paper to increase consumer acceptance of the platform. Moreover, offer flexibility in terms of payment (subscription or one-time payment) and rental periods (short vs long term) to increase the frequency of use and to make it more appealing to rent everyday clothes. Lastly, in order to validate that these findings are generalizable additional research is needed. Therefore, the researchers have suggested hypotheses to test if these findings can be generalized to a larger population.

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