Mirror, Mirror on the Wall, Wish That I Could Rent It All

- a case study on consumer adoption to fashion-rental services on the Swedish market

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Acknowledgements

Abstract

Although raised awareness of how excess consumption of fashion causes great environmental concern in society, changes in consumption patterns have been modest. It is therefore questionable whether reduced consumption is likely to happen, it might be better to envision equally compelling ways to address consumers' desire for fashion. The phenomenon of fashion-rental services seems promising to encourage resource efficiency in production and consumption of fashion. However, it necessitates changes in consumption practices. Previous research lacks deeper insights about consumers' participation and engagement in offerings that build on access to products in the context of fashion. Therefore, the aim of this study is to investigate and critically reflect on conditions that influence consumer adoption to fashion-rental services on the Swedish market. New approaches to the topic of consumer adoption to fashion-rental services have been taken, such as following a case study research strategy, where semi-structured interviews have been conducted with market experts within the area of fashion. Moreover, using the Consumer Culture Theory as the analytical perspective. This study shows that the conditions of experiment with style, identity and belonging, trend of services as well as changes in daily life and environmental values are perceived as drivers for consumer adoption to fashion-rental services on the Swedish market. It further shows that the conditions of emotional attachment, the "kick" of material things, ease of use, ownership, consumer mindset, and supply on the market are perceived to hinder consumer adoption to fashion-rental services on the Swedish market. The findings indicate that how fashion consumption is perceived by Swedish consumers determines whether a fashion-rental service is adopted and thereby diffused on the Swedish market. These findings further reflect the challenges of combining fashion consumption and sustainable development.

Abbreviations

Access-based consumption
A consumption mode where the consumer acquires consumption time with the item. Entails transactions that can be market mediated in which no transfer of ownership takes place (Bardhi & Eckhardt, 2012).

Adoption
That an individual does something different than what they had previously, i.e. use or purchase a new product, acquire and perform a new behavior (Rogers, 1995).

Alternative consumption mode
Opposite to traditional consumption mode where the consumer attains access to products rather than ownership of products (Edbring, Lehner & Mont, 2016).

Circular economy
An economy that systematically decouples economic activity from the consumption of finite resources, and design systems that keep products and materials in use (Ellen MacArthur Foundation, 2017b).

Circular business model
Business models that base on remanufacturing and reuse of materials which promise significant reductions in environmental impact (Linder & Williander, 2017).

Circular business model innovation
A novel way of how to create and capture value, through changes in one or multiple components in the business model. The transition process entails extending the use of current products and materials (Planing, 2015).

Circular offerings
Offerings provided by businesses that base on the principle of reuse of products (Camacho-Otero, Boks & Pettersen, 2018).

Collaborative consumption
Renting, lending, swapping, sharing, which can sometimes through technology, take place in ways and on a scale not possible before the Internet (Botsman & Rogers, 2010).

Consumption dynamics of circular offerings
The process of consumption in the context of circular offerings (Camacho-Otero, Boks & Pettersen, 2018).

Nature of consumption in circular offerings
What makes circular offerings different from traditional offerings (Camacho-Otero, Boks & Pettersen, 2018).

Meaning of consumption in circular offerings
How consumers understand consumption in the context of specific circular offerings (Camacho-Otero, Boks & Pettersen, 2018).

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1 Introduction

This introductory chapter lays out the empirical and theoretical background of this study, starting with a background of the chosen research topic followed by a problem statement that highlights identified research gap. This introductory chapter concludes with the aim of this study and research question followed by how this study will be focused and delimited.

1.1 Background

The fashion industry is one of the most polluting industries in the world (UNECE, 2018). The industry "*is responsible for producing twenty per cent of global wastewater and ten per cent of global carbon emissions – more than the emissions of all international flights and maritime shipping combined*" (ibid.). Considering that the fashion industry is also resource intensive and causes chemical pollution, it is evident that the fashion industry faces several challenges in terms of sustainability (Global Fashion Agenda, 2017). Consequently, there is a need to transform the dominant production and consumption pattern, to move away from a 'wear and tear' culture towards circular flows (Ellen MacArthur Foundation, 2017b). Continuing business as usual is therefore not a reasonable option for a sustainable future (Bocken, Short, Rana, & Evans, 2014; Boons, Montalvo, Quist & Wagner, 2012).

The phenomenon of 'fast fashion' explains why the fashion industry has gone through a revolution in recent decades (Ellen MacArthur Foundation, 2017a). 'Fast fashion' companies offer low prices and create collections more frequently than ever, which leads to a high turnover of items (Mintel, 2007 see McNeill & Moore, 2015). Consequently, business models of 'fast fashion' companies are based on selling massive quantities of newly produced items. Moreover, these companies thrive on consumers' desire of being fashionable and their mindset of 'wear and tear' (ibid.). An indicator of this mindset is that the amount of times an item is worn has decreased significantly in recent years (Ellen MacArthur Foundation, 2017a). Unwanted clothing is an increasing global concern as consumers throw away fully wearable items which in many cases end up in landfills due to lack of recycling methods (World Economic Forum, 2018). For example, in Sweden, the average person throws away approximately half of the textiles they buy every year (Naturvårdsverket, 2019). The rapid pace in which fashion is produced, used and disposed of explains why the fashion industry is one of the most polluting industries in the world (World Economic Forum, 2018).

Today, there are more people aware of environmental and social issues connected to the fashion industry, however, changes in consumption patterns have been modest (Global Fashion Agenda, 2017). Although, the steadily increasing trend of people who boycott 'fast fashion' companies could be an indicator that people are more intentional with their consumption and use it as a tool to demonstrate their purchasing power (The Guardian, 2019; Watkins, Aitken & Mather, 2016). Also, collaborative consumption such as second hand, redesigning clothes, clothing swaps and renting of fashion have become more popular (Armstrong, Niinimäki, Kujala, Karell & Lang, 2015; Belk, 2014; Botsman & Rogers, 2010; Edbring, Lehner & Mont, 2016). All these alternatives of fashion consumption are intended to maximize the usage of items and can be seen as a part of the circular economy (Botsman & Rogers, 2010). The circular economy, which the Ellen MacArthur Foundation (2017b) describe as an economy that systematically decouples economic activity from the consumption of finite resources, and design systems that keep items and materials in use, has been pointed out as a prominent path towards a sustainable future. Nevertheless, there is still a major problem with decoupling the

fashion market from over-consumption as many fashion items have a built-in obsolescence, which means that items either break after a short period of time or that new collections are offered which makes previous collections seem old (Szmigin & Piacentini, 2018).

There are insufficient regulations on the fashion industry and a lack of directives for consumption that stimulate more sustainable practices (Global Fashion Agenda, 2017). Therefore, it is up to the market to facilitate both production and consumption practices that promote sustainability (ibid.). There are fashion companies and startup businesses exploring possibilities of circular business models that are stated to promote sustainability (Perlacia, Duml & Saebi, 2017; Linder & Williander, 2017). This is because circular business models often are structured around offerings that involve elements like reuse, remanufacturing and recycling where the objective is to keep products and materials in use continuously (Linder & Williander, 2017). In some industries offerings based on having access to products, i.e. the element of reuse, have proven to be successful and applied more frequently, well known examples are Uber and Airbnb, that are peer-to-peer sharing-platforms (Perlacia, Duml & Saebi, 2017). Access-based services and consumption can therefore no longer be perceived as niche phenomena as both Uber and Airbnb have had a disruptive impact on their respective markets (Perlacia, Duml & Saebi, 2017).

Businesses in the fashion industry that provide access-based services have increased exponentially in recent years, mostly on the US, UK and Chinese markets (Lee & Chow, 2019). The most established example is the American fashion-rental company, Rent the Runway, which has been up and running since 2009 and was valued at $1 billion in 2018 (The Guardian, 2019; CNBC, 2019). The fast-growing trend of fashion-rental has drawn both attention and concern from established fashion companies as it may have the same disruptive effects that have been seen in the transportation and hotel industry (Lee & Chow, 2019). This is made evident by the decreasing sales that 'fast fashion' companies face which has made them rethink their business models, for example, three well-established companies, Gina Tricot, Scorett, and H&M will all launch their first fashion-rental service on the Swedish market during the fall of 2019 (Svenska Dagbladet, 2019). There are a few already operating businesses on the Swedish market that provide fashion-rental services, such as Klädoteket that has been operating since 2009 (Perlacia, Duml & Saebi, 2017), however, the practice of renting fashion is still not widely adopted by consumers in Sweden (Breakit, 2017). Interestingly, 24% of Swedish consumers declared that they will to a greater extent rent products the next coming year, compared to 10% the previous year (Svensk handel, 2018). Moreover, Svensk handel show in their report from 2018 that Swedish consumers place the fashion industry as the third most important industry to shop sustainably from (ibid.). The statistics of Svensk Handel combined with the knowledge that people to a greater extent seek other ways to consume fashion makes it interesting to further explore consumer adoption to fashion-rental services on the Swedish market.

1.2 Problem Statement

Research on the circular economy has mostly focused on the production side, addressing issues on how companies should innovate their business models (Camacho-Otero, Boks & Pettersen, 2018). A smaller set of articles provide insights into the role of consumers as participants in the circular economy (ibid.). Drawing on Camacho-Otero, Boks and Pettersen's (2018) literature review of 111 peer-reviewed journal articles on consumption and the circular economy, there is a lack of studies that provide insights about consumers' participation and engagement in the circular economy.

Companies that want to engage in circular business model innovation face an uncertain environment because of the unknown nature of consumers' behavior (Lahti, Wincent & Parida, 2018). Previous research points out that for circular business models to succeed, further research focusing on consumer adoption to circular offerings is needed (Lofthouse & Prendeville, 2017; Planing, 2015). Consequently, Lofthouse & Prendeville (p. 2, 2017) state "*If we do not understand users, how can we expect to design business models that they aspire to?*" Companies that implement circular business model innovation with an access-based service necessitates changes to individuals' consumption practices (Planing, 2015). Consequently, for access-based services to be adopted by individuals, it will require their acceptance of access as a consumption mode (Bardhi & Eckhardt, 2012; Edbring, Lehner & Mont, 2016). Although there is a growing amount of research addressing access-based consumption, on the business to consumer market, it is found that few empirical studies have been conducted in the context of fashion (Park & Armstrong, 2017; Lee & Chow, 2019). Given that consumption practices vary depending on the product group, there is a need to explore and obtain specific knowledge of access-based consumption across industries and products (Park & Armstrong, 2017; Baumeister, 2014). Also, as supported by Lang, Seo, and Liu (2019) and Lee and Chow (2019), there is a need to conduct studies in various cultural contexts as acceptance towards and adoption to access-based consumption of fashion may be influenced by culture.

The phenomenon of fashion-rental services is, in this thesis, defined as a circular offering that entails market-facilitated transactions and relationships between business and consumers, where fashion businesses give consumers access to fashion items while maintaining ownership (Perlacia, Duml & Saebi, 2017). A fashion-rental service can be perceived as an innovation on the Swedish market, when referring to Rogers (1995) definition of an innovation as an idea that is perceived as new by individuals, e.g. consumers. Since there is a lack of research addressing access-based consumption in the context of fashion, little is known of how fashion-rental services may be adopted by consumers and thereby diffused on the market (Park & Armstrong, 2017; Lee & Chow, 2019). Camacho-Otero, Boks, and Pettersen (2019) emphasize that researchers that previously studied fashion-rental services have used hypothetical cases due to the lack of real-life examples, which affect the exploratory value of prior studies. As businesses that provide fashion-rental services have emerged in recent years, there is a new basis for studying the topic and more knowledge concerning the phenomenon may be found (ibid.).

Most of the previous research on consumer adoption to circular offerings within the sustainable consumption field has used a quantitative research design and focused on identifying drivers and barriers of adoption by the individual consumer (Camacho-Otero, Boks & Pettersen, 2018). This is mostly the case for the few previous studies on fashion-rental services and consumer adoption to it as well. By applying Consumer Culture Theory as the analytical perspective, this study is conducted to further explore conditions for consumer adoption to fashion-rental services where the specific contribution is to deepen the understanding of access-based consumption of fashion and its nature, meaning, and dynamics and thereby reduce the gap that exists within the sustainable consumption research field today. Also, with a better understanding of conditions for consumer adoption of fashion-rental services, offerings can be developed by businesses that could facilitate more sustainable practices on the Swedish fashion market.

1.3 Aim & Delimitations

The aim of this study is to investigate and critically reflect on conditions that influence consumer adoption to fashion-rental services on the Swedish market. To address this aim the following research question will be answered:

- What conditions drive and hinder consumer adoption to fashion-rental services on the Swedish market?

There are several ways in which a study can be delimited, where the authors of this thesis have chosen to focus on fashion-rental services on the business to consumer market. Additionally, this study will be delimited to the Swedish market as the uptake in this particular market has been slow compared to the US and UK markets. Further, this study will center around fashion-rental services that offer rental of everyday wear. This is because these types of services have more recently emerged from the collaborative consumption trend compared with the rental of special occasion clothing that has been around for years (Lang & Armstrong, 2018). The phenomenon of fashion-rental services is interesting in the sense that they build on collaborative consumption, more specifically access-based consumption, which is claimed to be sustainably beneficial (Lang, Armstrong & Liu, 2016). However, this study is limited by excluding evaluation of the actual outcomes of a fashion-rental service in sustainable terms.

It is noted that previous studies have used various terms: acceptance, attitude, perception towards, intention to, when studying fashion-rental services and renting of fashion. All of these terms are perceived by the authors of this thesis to stand for different stages and are important parts of the adoption process by consumers. The definition of adoption that will be used in this thesis is defined by Rogers (1995) that an individual does something different than what they had previously. Thus, the focus is on the actual actions of consumers and this definition is chosen as the authors of this thesis believe that one could have a positive attitude and perception towards an innovation, such as fashion-rental services but still not adopt to it, there is a need to change actions as well.

2 Literature Review & Theoretical Framework

This chapter is divided into two major sections containing a literature review followed by the theoretical framework of this study. The first section provides a literature review that consists of previous research and knowledge that is relevant for this study. The second section introduces the theories that will be used in this study.

2.1 Literature Review

To give a background of existing knowledge and previous studies, this section consists of five subsections that all include relevant literature connected to the sustainable consumption research field, access-based consumption and how it differs from traditional consumption, fashion consumption, and fashion-rental models and its services. Lastly, a summary of the existing literature on consumer adoption to fashion-rental services is presented.

2.1.1 Sustainable Consumption Research Field

Consumption rose in the Western world particularly after the 1950s which consequently led to an expansion in consumption research (Baines, Fill & Rosengren, 2017). In the beginning, consumers were perceived solely as rational beings, only maximizing their satisfaction by comparing the functional benefits of an offering in relation to its cost (ibid.). Nowadays, it is known that consumers also weigh in emotional buying motives in the consumption process (ibid.). What drives consumption is a fundamental question that researchers within the research field of consumption are occupied with and try to unravel (Ekström, 2010). A conventional approach to consumption is that it satisfies human needs and improves the quality of life for individuals (Mont, 2004). There are two ways in which individuals can fulfill their consumption needs and wants, and these are referred to as consumption modes (Baumeister, 2014). To obtain ownership of products is referred to as the traditional consumption mode whereas access to products is often referred to as an alternative consumption mode (Bardhi & Eckhardt, 2012).

With current knowledge of consumption patterns, especially of how countries with a Western culture impact the environment negatively, it is difficult to justify the continuation of those patterns (Mont, 2004). Sustainable consumption research has emerged to investigate the relationship between consumption and sustainable development and how they can entwine (Camacho-Otero, Boks & Pettersen, 2018). A vision of the circular economy is to achieve sustainable development, accordingly, consumption in the context of the circular economy can be depicted as sustainable consumption (ibid.). Camacho-Otero, Boks, and Pettersen (2018) present an impressive overview and analysis of the existing literature addressing issues of consumption in the context of the circular economy. In that review, Camacho-Otero, Boks, and Pettersen (2018) have begun to describe how the nature and meaning of consumption in the circular economy are portrayed in the literature. Arguably, consumption will most likely change in the circular economy which will affect how it is perceived and how it evolves (ibid.). The nature and meaning of consumption in the circular economy can be characterized by four attributes, i.e., anonymity, multiple values, political consumerism and uncertainty (ibid.). Consumption is anonymous because consumers do not own products, they solely use them. There is also a multiplicity of values, as circular offerings are founded on functionality but cannot solely rely on it, they need to communicate symbolic value as well (ibid.). Consumption within the circular economy is also characterized by political consumerism as it can be seen as

a form of opposition towards traditional consumption and engaging in circular offerings is expected to reflect a certain political stance. The last characteristic of the nature and meaning of consumption in the circular economy reflect uncertainty as products are moved and shared between consumers through businesses. This gives rise to issues of trust, risk, and control. Regarding the dynamics of consumption, contributions of how consumers move from a traditional mode of consumption to an alternative, hence, how circular offerings attract, retain or impede engagement of participants have been provided (See; Bardhi & Eckhardt, 2012; Edbring, E. G., Lehner, M. & Mont, O., 2016).

2.1.2 Access-Based Consumption vs. Traditional Consumption

Access-based consumption is defined by Bardhi and Eckhardt (2012, p. 881) as "transactions that can be market mediated but where no transfer of ownership takes place." Access-based consumption is, as mentioned, referred to as an alternative consumption mode and the main difference between the traditional and access-based consumption for the consumer is the transfer of ownership (Catulli et al. 2013). When a consumer buys a product, they receive full control and responsibility, in other words, obtain ownership of the item (Baumeister, 2014). Historically, access has been perceived as an inferior mode of consumption compared with ownership, however, a shift in the sociocultural politics is changing these perceptions as access-based services are becoming more established (Bardhi & Eckhardt, 2012). Access-based consumption has emerged as a way to manage a more variable society (ibid.). In contrast to ownership, where solid emotional, social and property relations are embedded, access can be seen as a more transient mode of consumption. As access-based consumption enables flexibility and adaptability, it is suitable for a changeable society (ibid). However, traditional consumption is still the dominant consumption mode (Baumeister, 2014).

Bardhi and Eckhardt (2012) identify six dimensions of access-based consumption in their article that can make us understand the phenomenon better. These dimensions are temporality, anonymity, market mediation, consumer involvement, type of accessed object and political consumerism. First, the dimension of temporality involves the aspect that access-based consumption can differ in time of usage and access. Thus, access can be either short-term where one-time usage is normal or long-term access where usage of the product is more frequent. In the study of Bardhi and Eckhardt (2012), they found that consumers do not experience a sense of ownership when renting products for a short amount of time. Although, Bardhi and Eckhardt (2012) argue that the longer a consumer accesses and uses a product, the more ownership-like tendencies evolve. This means that items are more likely to become a part of the extended self if the consumer spends more time with it (ibid.). Second, anonymity, which is the extent consumers need to interact with each other while engaging in access-based consumption. Consumers use products that are shared with others, however, the extent to which consumers need to interact depends on whether they engage in a peer-to-peer or market-mediated access-based service. Third, within access-based consumption, services can differ in levels of market mediation, from non-profit to profit. The underlying motive of profit can shape how market mediated a business is. Fourth, the dimension of consumer involvement relates to how involved a consumer can be in the consumption experience. Lawson, Gleim, Perren, and Hwang (2016) state in their article that access-based consumption requires more from consumers, as they have to be more involved in the consumption process. While Bardhi and Eckhardt (2012) explained in their article that consumer involvement can stretch from full-service to self-service, with full-service meaning that consumers have little involvement and most of the responsibility lies with the business. Self-service then describes instances where consumers have extensive involvement, which could mean, self-pickup, delivering, reporting of damages and cleaning of

accessed products, much like the responsibilities of an employee. The fifth dimension of access-based consumption is the type of accessed product, which emphasizes that the type of product being accessed matters, it could have an experiential or functional value. Lastly, political consumerism represents the bargaining power that consumers have in terms of how they want to consume. Consumers may use this power to choose a mode of consumption that furthers their ideological beliefs.

2.1.3 Fashion Consumption

Consumers' desire for novelty and change result in a high level of fashion consumption (Lang, Armstrong & Liu, 2016). Fashion is purchased frequently and then disposed of, which consequently leads to a high rate of purchase frequency. Items are quickly forgotten as new styles are introduced to the market, further stimulating consumers' desire for novelty and newness (ibid.). A more sustainable state of fashion consumption requires consumers to either reduce their level of consumption or change how they consume (ibid.). Reducing the purchase frequency of fashion items or changing consumption mode, such as accessing fashion instead of owning it, could be a feasible approach to achieve a more sustainable consumption state (Armstrong et al. 2015). To achieve a sustainable state of consumption pertains not only to purchasing but also to activities in the postpurchase phase, which in the case of fashion-rental services involves returning and re-using items (Lang, Armstrong & Liu, 2016). Most consumers do not consider how and when they will dispose of items when purchasing them (Szmigin & Piacentini, 2018). However, disposal is something that needs to be considered, regardless of whether the item is broken or just unwanted. There are several ways in which a consumer can dispose of bought items including giving it to friends, family or charity or direct disposal i.e. throw it as general trash (ibid.). On the other hand, accessed products are included in take-back schemes, where the consumer returns items to the business after the usage period (Belk, 2014). Considering that fashion renting could increase the use intensity of items and reduce landfill waste it could take fashion consumption towards a more sustainable state (ibid.).

2.1.4 Fashion-Rental Models & its Services

Perlacia, Duml and Saebi (2017) present in their article different business models that build on collaborative consumption within the fashion industry (see Appendix 1), where The Fashion-Rental Model is explained as offering consumers fashion items through a rental service. In practical terms, businesses maintain ownership of the fashion items, and consumers are expected to return them after the renting period. Although, some businesses offer consumers the possibility to purchase the items after the rental period has expired. The Fashion-Rental Model can further be divided into two categories which Perlacia, Duml, and Saebi (2017) define as the 'fashion *Netflix*' model and 'fashion library' model. The characteristics of these two models are presented in Table 1 below. The examples represented in the table are businesses operating in the US, the UK and Portugal, the Netherlands, or Sweden. There are several similarities between the two models, however, a noticeable difference is that companies of the 'fashion *Netflix*' model more commonly use online services to reach consumers and rarely use physical stores which differs from the 'fashion library' model where physical stores and showrooms are more common (Perlacia, Duml & Saebi, 2017).

Table 1: Modification of Fashion-Rental Models (Perlacia, Duml & Saebi, 2017, p.17)

	The Fashion *Netflix* Model	**Fashion Library**
Examples	*Rent the Runway, Chic by Choice, LeTote, Tie Society, and the Black Tux*	*Lånegarderoben, Albright Fashion Library, Klädoteket, LENA, and De Kledingbibliotheek*
Value proposition	• Luxury, haute couture, accessories, jewelry or maternity clothing • Additional services as point-of-difference	• Clothes, shoes, jewelry, handbags, and accessories • Mix of second hand, vintage, sustainable, and new items from design collaborators • Luxury fashion
Customer segment	Women	• Young women interested in fashion and caring about sustainability • High-income women interested in luxury designer wear
Channels	Apps, physical stores, and website	Physical stores, showrooms, pop-ups, and other events
Cost / Revenue structure	• Revenue: Membership fees and subscription packages; additional fees: late fee insurance, cancellation fee; additional try-on service • Costs: Purchasing of fashion items from designers; dry cleaning services and shipping services; website and app management; salary	• Revenue: Membership fees and subscription packages; sponsorships and donations; penalty fees for lost, stolen, damaged, and delayed items; events • Costs: Purchasing of garments from designers and private people; rent; service fees for dry cleaning, repairing, and remaking; salary

Park and Armstrong (2017) have in their study identified two types of renting within fashion-rental models, short-term renting and subscription rental. Short-term renting entails a one-time transaction compared to the subscription model where the consumers do recurring transactions. As the consumer gets access to the product for a longer period in the subscription model, the potential for attachment to it is higher than in short-term renting (ibid.). Park and Armstrong (2017) further deepen the understanding of fashion-rental models by explaining that these models are most commonly market-mediated and for-profit today. However, some fashion libraries operate on a voluntary basis where the revenue covers the costs of the daily business (Pedersen & Netter, 2015). Park and Armstrong (2017) also affirm that fashion-rental models have a high level of anonymity, as the rental service is facilitated by businesses and consumers never know the identity of previous renters.

2.1.5 Conditions Influencing Adoption to Fashion-Rental Services

Research on fashion-rental services, more specifically consumer adoption to them, have identified conditions that influence the adoption process (See; Armstrong et al. 2015; Armstrong, Niinimäki, Lang & Kujala, 2016; Baumeister, 2014; Camacho-Otero, Boks & Pettersen, 2019; Lang, 2018; Lang & Armstrong, 2018; Lang, Armstrong & Liu, 2016; Lang, Seo & Liu, 2019; Lee & Chow, 2019; Park & Armstrong, 2017). A summary of these conditions is presented in Table 2 below. Camacho-Otero, Boks, and Pettersen (2019) suggest that research on consumer adoption to circular offerings can be grouped into five categories; economic,

psychosocial, cultural, socio-material and demographic and therefore the authors of this thesis have chosen to structure Table 2 according to these categories. To clarify, the conditions in Table 2 show what research, reviewed for this study, have identified on consumer adoption to fashion-rental services only. Also, as it is seen by the authors of this thesis that definitions such as acceptance, perceptions, etc. are important puzzle pieces in the adoption process, research using these various terms are included in this review.

What is common for the studies presented in Table 2 is that they mostly used individual consumers as the unit of observation. Moreover, the studies have been conducted on the US as well as on the Chinese, Finish and German markets. Also, some of these studies have focused on various circular offerings within collaborative consumption (See; Armstrong et al. 2015; Armstrong et al. 2016; Camacho-Otero, Boks & Pettersen, 2019; Lang & Armstrong 2018) and not fashion-rental services alone which is the focus of this study. From a methodological perspective, quantitative methods are overrepresented in these studies, where survey as the method of data collection is most common. Up to now, research has therefore tended to focus on finding causality between perceptions, attitudes, and variables such as functional performance and risks rather than taking a broader perspective to understand what conditions influence consumer adoption to fashion-rental services. Thus, none of these studies comprise Consumer Culture Theory as the analytical perspective.

Table 2: Conditions Influencing Consumer Adoption to Fashion-Rental Services

Category	Conditions	Literature
Economic	Costs	(Armstrong et al. 2015; Baumeister, 2014; Camacho-Otero, Boks & Pettersen, 2019; Lee & Chow, 2019)
	Offering	(Park & Armstrong, 2017; Camacho-Otero, Boks & Pettersen, 2019)
	Price	(Park & Armstrong, 2017)
	Risk	(Armstrong et al. 2015; Armstrong et al. 2016; Baumeister, 2014; Lang, Seo & Liu, 2019; Park & Armstrong, 2017)
	Gratification	(Lee & Chow, 2019)
	Performance	(Armstrong et al. 2015; Lang, 2018; Lee & Chow, 2019)
Psychosocial	Attitude	(Baumeister, 2014; Lang & Armstrong, 2018; Lang, 2018; Lang, Seo & Liu, 2019; Lee & Chow, 2019; Park & Armstrong, 2017)
	Environmental values	(Armstrong et al. 2015; Baumeister, 2014; Lee & Chow, 2019)
	Social risk	(Lang, 2018; Lang, Seo & Liu, 2019)
	Subjective norms	(Lang & Armstrong, 2018; Lee & Chow, 2019)
	Enjoyment	(Baumeister, 2014; Lang, 2018; Lang, Seo & Liu, 2019)
	Ownership	(Baumeister, 2014; Lee & Chow, 2019)
Cultural	Desire for change	(Armstrong et al. 2015; Armstrong et al. 2016; Baumeister, 2014)
	Experiment	(Armstrong et al. 2015; Baumeister, 2014)
	Uniqueness	(Lang, Armstrong & Liu, 2016; Lang & Armstrong, 2018)
	Fashion involvement	(Armstrong et al. 2015; Lang & Armstrong, 2018; Lang, Armstrong & Liu, 2016)
	Political consumerism	(Park & Armstrong, 2017)
	Product satisfaction	(Armstrong et al. 2015)
Socio-material	Daily life	(Camacho-Otero, Boks & Pettersen, 2019)
	Ease of use	(Armstrong et al. 2015, Armstrong et al. 2016)
	Legal	(Park & Armstrong, 2017)
	Trust of provider	(Armstrong et al. 2015)
Demographic	Gender	(Lee & Chow, 2019)
	Age	(Armstrong et al. 2015; Armstrong et al. 2016)

The first category, economic, contains the following conditions: costs, offering, price, risk, gratification, and performance. In the study of Lang, Seo and Liu (2019), they surveyed 412 consumers in the US and 301 consumers in China and the study shows that consumers, in both countries, have a perception of financial risk towards fashion renting. The study shows that consumers are concerned that fashion renting will lead to monetary loss as they rent for just a short period and do not own the items. By conducting online surveys with 300 US consumers,

Lee and Chow's (2019) study shows that the performance of the service is the dominant factor for consumers to engage in a fashion-rental service, followed by environmental concerns. This indicates that utilitarian interests, such as saving money, is the most important factor for consumers when deciding whether to engage in a fashion-rental service or not. In the study of Armstrong et al. (2015), where they chose to use a mix-method by combining focus groups and surveys with women in Finland, also shows that consumers have a concern of performance as issues regarding hygiene and quality of items were raised.

The second category, psychosocial conditions, refers to the attitudes and personal norms of consumers (Camacho-Otero, Boks & Pettersen, 2019). This category involves conditions that build on consumers' values, beliefs and past experiences of consumption (ibid.). Armstrong et al. (2015) study of consumers' perceptions of circular offerings shows that renting is perceived as a trial run of new styles before purchasing, thus, a method to avoid wrong purchases. The study also shows that consumers see reusing and extending the use time of fashion items were appealing features of renting as they perceived it to be environmentally beneficial. The respondents of Armstrong et al. (2015) study also interestingly expressed conflicting opinions when discussing the materialistic need of fashion items, where some expressed a concern whether renting would be able to substitute the "comfy feeling" of owning and where others could not see themselves wearing the same fashion items for years. In the study of Lee and Chow (2019), they investigated consumers' attitudes and intentions towards online fashion renting and the study shows that consumers with a strong attachment to ownership of items had a negative attitude towards fashion renting. On the other hand, the findings of Lee and Chow's (2019) study also shows that consumers' environmental concern overshadows the negative impact that ownership has on the intention to rent fashion. Lee and Chow (2019) therefore argue that as consumers get more involved in environmental issues, their attitude towards renting becomes more positive and the perceived inconvenience of not owning diminishes. Their study also shows that respondents saw a risk of engaging in fashion renting connected to embarrassment and disapproval of their social group. From the answers of the 300 surveyed US consumers, Lee and Chow (2019) concluded that consumers tend to gather information and rely on their social group when determining whether to engage in the often-unfamiliar practice of fashion renting (ibid.). The study of Armstrong et al. (2016) shows that female consumers in Finland and the US have little interest in renting everyday wear compared to special occasion wear. However, the respondents had the perception of enjoyment and positive connection to the feeling of being part of a community when engaging in fashion renting. Lang, Seo, and Liu (2019) found that perceived enjoyment was positively correlated to intention toward fashion renting among consumers in the US and China. The researchers further discussed this finding and argued that renting enables consumers to use fashion items for short periods without an "ownership burden" and that focus is on enjoying the usage of products, which may bring excitement.

The third category, cultural conditions, refers to how consumption activities help consumers build a sense of identity by experimenting and interacting with others (Camacho-Otero, Boks & Pettersen, 2019). Armstrong et al. (2015) found in their study that a motive for female consumers in Finland to engage in renting of fashion is getting access to the latest fashion at affordable prices, the possibility to update one's closet more frequently and to reduce the amount of unwanted clothing. To be a frontrunner in fashion and the need for uniqueness is also positively influencing the intention to rent (Lang & Armstrong, 2018). In the study of Armstrong et al. (2016) respondents frequently referenced to reduced consumption as one important argument for engaging in a fashion-rental service. The consumers explained that a fashion-rental service could alleviate the burden of unwanted clothing as they sometimes purchased items and then just watched them "gather dust" in their closets. The consumers also

saw positively on fashion-rental services' ability to better address their desire for change. Their want of changing their style was due to boredom or seasonal transition and the respondents saw that it was possible to update, without guilt, when using a fashion-rental service. They also perceived the service as a way to try something new and step out of their comfort zone, with less risk. Park and Armstrong (2017) suggest in their study that political consumerism is an associated motive that encourages engagement in collaborative fashion consumption. Hence, consumers make consumption choices based on personal ideologies.

The fourth category, socio-material conditions, relates to external circumstances that influence whether the consumer adopts to a fashion-rental service or not (Camacho-Otero, Boks & Pettersen, 2019). By analyzing customer reviews on three US based companies online, Camacho-Otero, Boks, and Pettersen (2019) found that the implications that the offering has on consumers' daily life impact their engagement with the circular offering. Camacho-Otero, Boks, and Pettersen (2019) found that one of the activities that the consumer needs to get involved in and highlighted as troublesome was remembering to return items. In the study of Armstrong et al. (2015), they explored consumers' perception of renting fashion and identified that lack of trust in the provider had a powerful impact. Concerns that were mentioned was whether businesses could provide correct sizes and expected quality, also whether the provider would go out of business. In the study of Armstrong et al. (2016), findings indicate that ease of use is mostly perceived as a negative condition that hinders consumer adoption to fashion-rental services. Many respondents were skeptical about their ability to care for the rented items, whether the availability of items in terms of size and variety would be sufficient and whether they would want to rent everyday wear.

The fifth and last category is demographic which encompasses gender and age (Camacho-Otero, Boks & Pettersen, 2019) In Lee and Chow's (2019) study, 51% of the sample were female respondents and the researchers found that gender significantly influences consumers' intentions to engage in fashion renting. The findings indicate that female respondents have a greater intention to rent fashion. Armstrong et al. (2015) compared two age groups of women in Finland, 24-39 and 40+ in their study and found that the younger group were more interested in renting since respondents in the younger age group think renting is more realistic than the older group.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

In this section, the two chosen theories, characteristics of innovation and Consumer Culture Theory, are subsequently introduced. The characteristics of innovation will be used to help guide the data collection in order to investigate what influences consumer adoption to fashion-rental services on the Swedish market. Consumer Culture Theory will be applied as this study's analytical perspective as it helps to contextualize investigated conditions of consumer adoption to fashion-rental services on the Swedish market. Lastly, a summary of the theoretical framework concludes this section and chapter.

2.2.1 The Diffusion of Innovation & its Characteristics

Rogers (1995) defines innovation as "an idea, practice, or object that is perceived as new by an individual or other unit of adoption" (ibid., p. 11). To clarify, the perceived newness of an innovation is contextually bound, meaning that an idea is an innovation if it is new to the individual. The theory of how innovation is diffused is described as "the process by which an

innovation is communicated through certain channels over time among the members of a social system" (Rogers, 1995, p. 5). According to Rogers (1995), characteristics of innovation is one of the main aspects that is a deciding factor in how an innovation is diffused on a market. Therefore, the characteristic of innovation will be used in this study as guidance for data collection to facilitate investigation of what influences consumer adoption to fashion-rental services in Sweden.

Rogers (1995) identifies five characteristics of innovation that influence individuals' adoption process. These characteristics are *relative advantage, compatibility, complexity, trialability,* and *observability* (ibid.). Rogers (1995) suggests that the attributes of *relative advantage, complexity,* and *compatibility* are the important characteristics as they account for most of the differences in justifying adoption decisions. The attributes of *trialability* and *observability* are considered not as important for the rate of adoption as they usually do not apply to all innovation types (Dearing, 2009). However, *trialability* is to be examined for innovations that are high risk and expensive as these types of innovations may require time to be experimented with first (ibid.) While, for innovations that are complex in nature and that involve high levels of ambiguity, *observability,* and visibility of the process and the results are of importance (ibid.). Further explanations of the characteristics of innovation theorized by Rogers (1995) are presented below:

Relative Advantage
Relative advantage is the extent to which an innovation is perceived as superior to the idea it replaces (Rogers, 1995). Important factors that measure the degree of relative advantage are social prestige, satisfaction, economic terms, and convenience. The relevance of these factors depends on the traits of the adopters and the nature of the innovation. Further, the greater the perceived relative advantage of an innovation, the faster it will be diffused on the market. Worth mentioning, most innovations' relative advantage is rarely noticed at the beginning which could restrain the rate of diffusion (Kincaid, 2004).

Compatibility
Compatibility refers to the degree that an innovation is in line with the needs of possible adopters, the current beliefs and values and past experiences (Rogers, 1995). An innovation that is incompatible with the dominant sociocultural context of the social system it tries to penetrate, will not be adopted as well or quickly as a compatible innovation. For an incompatible innovation to be diffused it often requires the social system to adopt a new value system.

Complexity
Complexity is the degree to which an innovation is perceived as being difficult or easy to understand (Rogers, 1995). If an innovation requires adopters to gain new knowledge it will take longer for that innovation to be diffused.

Trialability
Trialability is the degree to which an innovation can be tested and experimented with before being fully adopted (Rogers, 1995). If an innovation can be assessed before having to fully adopt it, it can lessen the element of uncertainty for the potential adopter and it may be adopted more quickly.

Observability
Observability is the degree to which an innovation is visible to others (Rogers, 1995). The more visible an innovation is, the greater the likelihood it will be adopted. Further, visibility also sparks peer-to-peer discussions.

2.2.2 Consumer Culture Theory

Consumer Culture Theory originates from traditional consumer research theories but is used to investigate experiential, social and cultural aspects that are connected to consumption (Arnould & Thompson, 2005). To apply Consumer Culture Theory in studies is to put a constant reminder that consumption is a sociocultural practice influenced by consumers' norms and values (ibid.). To be exact, Consumer Culture Theory is not a well-proven theory but rather a set of theoretical perspectives (ibid.). By combining theoretical perspectives from various research fields, researchers using Consumer Culture Theory tries to further explain what drives consumption. The Consumer Culture Theory perspective assumes that culture is the paramount determinant of consumers' desires, wants and behavior (Ekström, 2010). Hence, The Consumer Culture Theory assumes consumers' desires of material possessions as the main force of consumption (Arnould & Thompson, 2005). The values and norms of the culture determine how items and consumption behaviors of others should be valued. Hence, values and norms are perceived as guidelines that are used by consumers to select and justify their actions (Ekström, 2010). In the article of Arnould and Thompson (2005) they present four streams within Consumer Culture Theory, consumers' identity project, marketplace culture, mass-mediated marketplace ideologies and consumers' interpretive strategies and lastly, socio-historic patterning of consumption. The first stream of consumers' identity project entails that consumers are assumed to constantly rework their identities by consuming material things. The second stream of marketplace culture assumes that social status is obtained by having a certain level of knowledge and skills that are valued in social groups. The third stream of mass-mediated marketplace ideologies and consumers' interpretive strategies suppose that consumers are formed by normative messages from media. Media is depicted to provide consumers with images that nurture consumers' want for new items. The fourth stream of socio-historic patterning of consumption entails how the institutional and social structures, such as ethnicity, gender, status, and social class can influence consumption (ibid.).

A consumer culture emerges within societal structures where the marketplace is a 'smorgasbord' for consumers to fulfill any need or fantasy possible (Lury, 2011; Belk, Ger & Askegaard, 2003) The main attribute of the consumer culture is that possessions are being used by consumers to communicate symbolic value and to fulfill consumption fantasies (Lury, 2011). Hence, possessions can contribute to and reflect our identities (Belk, 1988). As the amount and accessibility to products have exponentially increased in recent decades it has become a more extensive project to select but also deselect items that the market enhances (Lury, 2011). This has also led to groups being formed around consumption, where a common sense of preferable and used items are important to achieve group membership (Arnould & Thompson, 2005). Hence, the group we belong to affects the way we consume and conversely the way we consume can be a way to find a sense of belonging (Belk, 1988). Thus, a consumer culture can be understood as a system that channels consumers' perceptions and actions in a way that reinforces established cultural values (Arnould & Thompson, 2005). The inherent values and meanings are socially constructed and could explain why some items are recognized as more desirable than others (ibid.). For example, it is likely to believe that most people rather desire a purse made by the fashion brand Prada than a purse provided by the local supermarket store (Lury, 2011). Further, in a consumer culture, consumers attempt to find meaningful ways of life through constant reworks of identities by acquiring material things (ibid.). Arnould and Thompson (2005) even make a parallel between the consumer culture and playing a game, since both provide constraints in the form of assumed rules and the imaginary expectations of others to follow them. For instance, how specific fashion items and colors are generally assigned to different genders (Lury, 2011). If this statement were to be true, one could say that the consumer culture frames certain rules of actions and thoughts for consumers to pursue, which makes

certain consumption patterns more probable. One of the most visible forms of consumption is the consumption of fashion as what we wear is highly perceptible to others (Crane, 2012).

Belk, Ger, and Askegaard (2003) discuss the phenomenon of consumer desire consisting of embodied passion, desire for otherness and desire of sociality. Desire is an embodied passion as consumers use material things to express their values, best selves and who they "want to be" (Belk, Ger & Askegaard, 2003). Possessions of consumers' extended selves can bear meaning and stories that make consumers attached to them (Belk, 1988). Likewise, the collection of possessions can act as a personal archive that allows the consumer to reflect on how they have changed (ibid.). This connects to the desire of otherness, which means that consumers use material things to place themselves, figuratively, in other states than they currently are in (Belk, Ger & Askegaard, 2003). Thus, a fundamental appeal of desiring material things lays in their promise of escape to the past, the future, or another place, all of which offer an escape from present conditions (ibid.). Consumers are inventive when it comes to producing fantasies of a better life and what possessions will fit into that life. Hence, desired objects bewitch consumers as they are projected as magical. It is seen that even Disney characters such as Snow White and Cinderella act as contributors to desires and therefore it appears, according to Belk, Ger, and Askegaard, that there is an attempt to recreate a prior state of bliss, often associated with childhood. Desires are cultivated by fantasies of a different self, nurtured by external sources such as advertising and films and consumption behavior of both known and unknown individuals (Belk, Ger & Askegaard, 2003). This connects to the desire of sociality, as consumers' fantasies often entail the will of impressing others. Hence, desire can only be realized in social contexts, meaning that consumers have a desire of being approved by others. Belk, Ger, and Askegaard (2003) use the term "mimetic desire" which entails that consumers observe others' consumption choices and either mimic or distinguish themselves from them. Also, desiring and having certain items can help to define our belonging to a certain group rather than another. In light of this, others' showcased material things alert desire in the consumer in a near rivalry sense. Hence, others' consumption patterns are frequently referenced to when consumers evaluate their desires. Also, various material things, moreover, ownership of them can act as a means of group identification (Belk, 1988).

Belk, Ger, and Askegaard (2003) also depict consumers' desire to be a cyclic process that entails longing, a desire to desire and a fear of being without desire. The cycle of desire follows a fixed course of; desire, acquisition, and reformulation of desire, and the process is never-ending. Once a product is purchased, it loses its magical touch. Arguably, to desire could be more pleasurable than possessing the object itself. Also, consumers tend to purchase material things to reward or comfort themselves in some sort of self-gift-giving (ibid.). The object is less of importance, however, as the consumer perceives it as a self-gift, it justifies the purchase as being needed and necessary. Hence, the line between need and desire can be rather fuzzy for the consumer. There is also a need for a desire to desire and Belk, Ger, and Askegaard (2003) refer to Gould (1991) who points out "postconsumption bliss" as the death of desire, leading to the desire of new material things. However, objects that are desired tend to be, when acquired, not as fantastic as they are imagined to be. It is therefore understood that consumers have a desire for desire and a fear of being without desire as it can be equalized with not having any meaning in life. Likewise, the consumer culture channels hope and desire onto material things that make not consuming or longing for them the same as not having a meaningful life.

According to Belk, Ger, and Askegaard (2003), desire could be understood as a state of "enjoyable discomfort" as it is a mix of feelings such as joy, affirmation, and excitement but also entail struggles with resisting and addiction of desire. Belk, Ger, and Askegaard (2003) further portray in their article how consumers' desires affect, not only consumption choices but

also the meaning of life. Belk, Ger, and Askegaard (2003) refer to Thompson, Pollio, and Locander (1994) who suggest that desire also should be referred to as a state between being in and out of control of consumption activities, which also contribute to an enjoyable discomfort of desire. In countries with Western culture, consumers' desires are often expressed through consumption, which consequently has led to the consumer culture that in theory exists today (ibid.).

2.2.3 Summary of Theoretical Framework

To address the aim of this study, the characteristics of innovation will be applied as guidance for data collection to investigate what influences adoption to fashion-rental services by consumers on the Swedish market. Since no studies like this have been conducted on the Swedish market before, the characteristics of innovation is of importance when attempting to understand consumer adoption to an innovation, such as a fashion-rental service, on that particular market. However, the characteristics of innovation, cannot fully explain the complex nature of consumers' acceptance and behavior (Kincaid, 2004). Hence, the characteristics of innovation do not fully account for how consumers act on a market and would only provide generic conclusions if applied as the analytical perspective. Therefore, Consumer Culture Theory will be applied as the analytical perspective to contextualize conditions investigated from a consumer culture perspective. To apply this theory will enhance critical reflection on conditions that influence consumer adoption to fashion-rental services on the Swedish market.

3 Method

In this chapter, the research philosophy that motivates the authors of this thesis ontological and epistemological positions is outlined. This chapter also includes clarification of and motivations behind methodological choices undertaken in this study.

3.1 Research Philosophy & Approach

Methodological choices are key to guarantee both quality of research and that research questions are being answered (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2012; Bryman & Bell, 2015). To ensure methodological fit while going from an abstract to a concrete level in this study, the structure of Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill's (2012) research onion was used as a reference and aid in that process (see Appendix 1). A fundamental aspect of studies is the author's approach to how reality is viewed and how it should be investigated (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2012). Therefore, research positioning will be clarified first as it shapes subsequent steps in the study process (ibid.).

As fashion-rental services are new phenomena, a view of reality as being subjective rather than objective came naturally to the authors of this thesis. Arguably, an objective view on reality in the chosen topic would have been problematic as the authors of this thesis believe that such a view prioritizes to reduce the complexity and thereby fail to provide in-depth insights. Therefore, an interpretivist epistemological position is taken on by the authors of this thesis. This entails the belief that the social world should be studied by interacting with the participants and by interpreting how they perceive the world (Bryman & Bell, 2015). Also, an interpretivist approach is suitable in this study since the aim of the study is to enrich understanding rather than give explanations (ibid.). An interpretivist is also conscious of their impact on the study, knowing that the study is subjectively constructed by them (Mackenzie & Knipe, 2006). Implications of this will, therefore, be further discussed in this chapter. The interpretivist epistemology position often represents a constructionist ontological position, which implies that the researcher has the belief that truth is constructed by participants through interactions and is ever changing, rather than being something "out there" for one to find (Bryman & Bell, 2015). This is evident as the authors of this thesis do not believe that structures within, for example, cultures are pre-given in an external reality. This is in line with Bryman and Bell's (2015) statement that the constructionist ontological position represents a belief that individuals construct and continually reconstruct what reality is.

Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill (2012) and Bryman and Bell (2015) refer to two main orientations that can be adopted when conducting business research; deductive and inductive approach. The interpretivist philosophy taken on by the authors of this thesis would traditionally suggest an inductive approach (Bryman & Bell, 2015; Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2012.) However, an abductive approach and reasoning were taken on by the authors of this thesis which Bryman and Bell (2015) also describe as a suitable approach and reasoning when researchers encounter an empirical phenomenon that existing theory cannot fully explain. An abductive approach means that most suited explanations in the eye of the researcher are being selected in the attempt to understand the phenomenon better (Bryman & Bell, 2015). Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill (2012) also highlight that the abductive approach and reasoning are suitable in exploratory research as new insights are likely to appear during the research process. As the topic of this study came about through a combination of personal interests and identification of a knowledge gap in the literature, the authors of this thesis tried to be pragmatic

by having an open mind and willingness to change directions as they saw fit to best understand the phenomenon of fashion-rental services. Therefore, an abductive reasoning approach was most suited in this study. Also, as Bryman and Bell (2015) state that abductive reasoning is used to turn abstract ideas into a matter of course, the authors of this thesis sought to investigate conditions that influence consumer adoption that would make the phenomenon of fashion-rental services less puzzling.

3.2 Methodological Choice of Research Design & Strategy

Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill (2012) emphasize that regardless of whether the research philosophy and approach is deliberately chosen or unconsciously applied it will influence the three subsequent layers in the research onion, in other words, the process of the study. These subsequent layers are connected to the chosen research design, where Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill (2012) state that the first methodological choice is whether a single or multi method, qualitative or quantitative research design will be applied. The specific methodological choice for this study will be presented below.

3.2.1 Research Design

The epistemological orientation of the authors of this thesis requires a research design that allows for the generation of in-depth insights by interacting with participants. Therefore, a qualitative research design makes a suitable choice (Bryman & Bell, 2015). This particular research design was a motivated choice, as the purpose of this study is to generate insights rather than give explanations (ibid.). A qualitative research design also implies certain flexibility (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2012). This means that the qualitative research design allowed for development and modifications to the study in ways the authors of this thesis deemed as appropriate to address the research question and aim which also in in line with the abductive approach taken on. Furthermore, this study builds on a qualitative single method, meaning that one technique was used to collect data (ibid.). This will be further discussed under section 3.3.2 Data Collection.

3.2.2 Research Strategy

An exploratory nature of the study was seen by the authors of this thesis as appropriate as the understanding of consumer adoption to fashion-rental services is in its earliest stages. The exploratory nature of the research design was also perceived to call for a research strategy that allowed the authors of this thesis to study the phenomenon of fashion-rental services in a bounded context. Therefore, a case study was chosen as the research strategy in this study. The case study research strategy enables a deeper analysis of a single case and is an appropriate strategy when the researcher wants to gain an understanding of a real-life phenomenon (Yin, 2009). The case study research strategy is also relevant as it is commonly used in exploratory studies where research questions are often formulated as "why?", "how?" and "what?" questions (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2012; Yin, 2009), where the latter formulation of "what" is true for this study. The case study research strategy requires boundaries in terms of scope and time (Yin, 2009). To define the case study research strategy further, a specific unit of analysis should be clarified (ibid.). The unit of analysis in this is study is Swedish consumers as the authors of this thesis wanted to explore their adoption to fashion-rental services. The market of Swedish fashion-rental services is still at an emergent stage. Therefore, the authors

of this thesis believe that a great deal of information about fashion-rental services and consumer adoption to access as a consumption mode lay among specific professionals, with varying perspectives on the market of fashion. Therefore, the unit of observation in this study is market experts within the area of fashion.

3.2.3 Time Horizon

Case study as a research strategy implies certain time boundaries as it is used to investigate a contemporary phenomenon within its real-world context at a specific point in time (Yin, 2009). Time boundaries are what, for example, differ cross-sectional studies from longitudinal studies (ibid.). As this study is a snapshot of the phenomenon of fashion-rental services at a specific point in time, hence, the interviews were conducted during a short period of time makes this study a cross-sectional study (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2012). This time horizon is often used when participating in an academic course where the time of study is limited (ibid.), which is the case for the authors of this thesis.

3.2.4 Literature Review

Interpretivists usually employ an initial literature review to gain a preliminary impression of the area they intend to understand through their study (Bryman & Bell, 2015). Similarly, the authors of this thesis conducted an initial literature review to get an understanding of the current knowledge of consumers' participation in the circular economy. More specifically, a narrative literature review was carried out, which Bryman and Bell (2015) describe as a wide-ranging and less focused search of the literature. However, as this research project has limitations in terms of time and scope, the authors of this thesis further narrowed down the literature review by looking at certain keywords such as access-based consumption, alternative consumption mode and fashion consumption. It was found that knowledge concerning access-based consumption in the context of fashion was limited, which motivated the authors of this thesis to research the topic further. Various sources have been used during this research process such as peer reviewed articles, books, and newspaper articles and even though a large amount of literature was read, it is impossible to review all written literature on a topic, specifically within the time limit of this thesis project. Consequently, this could have led to important literature being unintentionally left out of the study.

3.3 Research Techniques & Procedures

3.3.1 Sampling Techniques

To answer the research question in full, the authors of this thesis had the objective to find respondents that could contribute with varying perspectives on consumer adoption to fashion-rental services. The authors of this thesis, therefore, used a non-probability purposive sampling technique (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2012). The sample is non-probable as it is not possible to know how many market experts there are within the area of fashion, i.e. the total population. The sample is purposive as specific individuals, suitable for the study, were selected and contacted. This technique is sometimes called judgmental sampling as the researcher has to make their judgments of suitable respondents (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2012), as in this case, the authors of this thesis had to judge who is a market expert within the area of fashion. The authors of this thesis chose to select respondents solely based on their profession as this

was seen to be a measure of expertise. Hence, a vital choice to ensure that the findings of this study hold credibility. There was no established composition of respondents made at the outset, rather it was developed when the authors of this thesis searched for respondents via Google and LinkedIn using keywords such as fashion-rental services, sustainable consumption, and fashion consumption. All of the respondents were initially contacted through email were the authors of this thesis explained the purpose of the study and asked whether they were willing to participate. Those who responded that they were able to participate were then contacted further via email and thus a time for telephone interviews was set. The strategy of snowball sampling was also applied in this study, which means that a potential respondent recommended another that they saw as more suited for the project. This is perceived by the authors of this thesis to have improved the final sample of respondents in this study. These two sampling techniques ultimately resulted in eight market experts within the area of fashion participating in the study. The full list of respondents is included below in Table 3. All the interviews except for one were conducted via telephone, the interview with the co-founder and owner of a Swedish fashion-rental service was done face-to-face.

Table 3: Overview of the Respondents

Background	Interview date	Duration
Project manager for Textilsmart, Konsumentverket	2019-10-29	48 minutes
PhD researcher of consumer behavior with a specific focus on fashion consumption	2019-10-31	28 minutes
Co-founder and owner of a Swedish fashion-rental service	2019-10-31	31 minutes
Sustainability coordinator, Nudie Jeans	2019-11-01	25 minutes
Business policy expert of sustainability at Svensk Handel	2019-11-05	28 minutes
Sustainability and circularity consultant in fashion/apparel, Green Strategy	2019-11-05	35 minutes
Self-employed entrepreneur with specific focus on sustainable fashion	2019-11-07	36 minutes
Administrator, sustainability unit at the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency	2019-11-08	33 minutes

3.3.2 Data Collection

Semi-structured interviews were chosen as the method of data collection as this method allows for insightful answers and reflections from the respondents. According to Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill (2012), a common technique of data collection is semi-structured interviews when the qualitative research design is combined with the case study research strategy. The choice of semi-structured interviews was also motivated as it enables the respondents to reflect on how they perceive consumer adoption to fashion-rental services on the Swedish market. Bryman and Bell (2015) claim that open ended questions allow for responses that are not known to the

researcher in advance which helps in the discovery of respondent's opinions, views, and ideas. Another advantage with semi-structured interviews is the flexibility it gives the researcher; hence, the authors of this thesis could follow up on what the respondents said while at the same time being open to new insights that might not have occurred otherwise (Bryman & Bell, 2015).

Simultaneously, as the search for respondents took place, an interview guide in accordance with this study's empirical background, literature review and the characteristics of innovation was developed (see Appendix 2). This interview guide structure was done because the authors of this thesis wanted to grasp in which cultural context fashion-rental services are placed, moreover, understand how Swedish consumers perceive fashion-rental services in relation to the characteristics of innovation as they are stated by Rogers (1995) to influence adoption processes. Questions in the interview guide were drafted in an open-ended manner with the intention to get the respondents to discuss without guiding them in any specific direction. Nonetheless, the interview guide was not followed strictly as it was important to the authors of this thesis to attain a natural flow in the conversation. This was an advantageous approach as it allowed respondents to discuss freely within the frames of the research topic. One of the main critiques of interviews is that it is impossible to standardize them (Bryman & Bell, 2015). However, the interview guide ensured that the interviews followed a certain structure within the range of this study, making sure that data could be used to answer the research question and fulfill the aim of this study. The authors of this thesis also argue that if the interviews would have been structured more strictly to achieve standardization, valuable insights would not have been found in this study.

The authors of this thesis chose the technique of conducting telephone interviews as many of the respondents were not located near to the authors of this thesis. Therefore, telephone interviews were perceived as the optimal choice to reach these respondents. Also, telephone interviews were motivated as many of these market experts have limited time to engage in student projects and, therefore, it was beneficial to collect data in an efficient way which both Bryman and Bell (2015) and Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill (2012) claim that telephone interviews are. Face-to-face interviews are relatively time-consuming thus the study's sample of respondents would not be as rich as it ended up being. Although, telephone interviews have the disadvantage that the interviewer cannot see the respondent's reactions to questions such as body language and facial expressions (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2012). However, the choice of conducting telephone interviews, despite this disadvantage, was motivated because of the advantages clarified. As mentioned earlier, one of the interviews were conducted face-to-face. As the respondent that is referred to as the co-founder and owner of a Swedish fashion-rental service could not be contacted via email it was decided by the authors of this thesis to reach out to this respondent in person which successfully resulted in participation in the study.

All interviews were held in Swedish as this was perceived to be the language that would allow for the most natural flow in the interviews. At the start of every interview, the authors of this thesis asked for consent to record the interview which resulted in that all interviews were audio recorded. This is beneficial for the study as the human memory is an unreliable source in terms of remembering and it also distorts what has been said (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2012). Also, audio recording allowed the author of this thesis that interviewed the respondent to concentrate merely on asking questions and listening. Once an interview was conducted, it was transcribed shortly after. The techniques of audio recording and transcription are preferable when conducting interviews as they allow for repeated examination of data which enables a more thorough analysis (ibid.). Arguably, the conclusions made in this study would not be as reliable if audio recording and transcription would not have been included as research techniques.

3.3.3 Data Analysis

After all the data was collected and transcribed, it needed to be processed and interpreted. To have a significant amount of data while conducting qualitative research, more specifically a case study, is common for all researchers (Bryman & Bell, 2015). Moreover, there is no standardization of how to analyze qualitative data, but a key determinant is the research approach chosen (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2012). The authors of this thesis, as mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, have chosen an abductive research approach and this calls for an analysis technique that allows for interpretation rather than one that follows a strict structure. The authors of this thesis have therefore chosen what Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill (2012) call a generic approach, whereas, Bryman and Bell (2015) refer to it as content analysis. When using this technique, the researcher integrates related data from the transcription and traces out patterns and extract underlying themes (Bryman & Bell, 2015). By doing a content analysis, the authors of this thesis sought to uncover latent content in the data collected that can relate to conditions that influence consumer adoption to fashion-rental services on the Swedish market. As the authors of this thesis determined what is important and relevant to include makes it impossible for the authors of this thesis to deny that their subjectivity has not influenced the process of extracting data. Initially, the authors of this thesis chose to separately go through the transcribed data in an attempt to not influence each other on what was important. Thereafter, quotes from the transcribed interviews were inserted into spreadsheets to simplify the process of finding themes. When deciding themes, it was important that relevant terms had a frequency of appearance in the data. After the quotes had been examined and sorted, 11 themes that were perceived by the authors of this thesis to influence consumer adoption to fashion-rental services were set. Content analysis was used because it enables the authors of this thesis to find similar perceptions and ideas of the respondents which ultimately makes it possible to answer what drives and hinders adoption to fashion-rental services by Swedish consumer and thereby draw conclusions on conditions of consumer adoption to fashion-rental services on the Swedish market. It was decided to keep the transcribed data in Swedish for as long as possible, hence, the authors of this thesis decided to only translate the quotes that were chosen to be included in this thesis's text into English. This choice was made as the authors of this thesis wanted to have data that was indistinguishable from what the respondents said during the interviews when analyzing the data. The choice of not translating the transcriptions into English at an early stage can be seen as a measure to delimit the authors of this thesis subjectivity in this study, as it is noticed that translations to other languages come with limitations as the translator needs to interpret the text and embed meaning into it (Bryman & Bell, 2015).

3.4 Trustworthiness & Reflexivity

As mentioned earlier, different methodological choices are key to guaranteeing the quality of research. Choices taken need to be logical in order to arrive at trustworthy conclusions (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2012). In the article by Lincoln and Guba (1986) they present four criteria, credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability that can be considered to strengthen the trustworthiness of a study. These criteria will be presented and discussed in relation to this study hereinafter.

3.4.1 Credibility

The criterion of credibility refers to the extent to which research findings are consistent with reality (Bryman & Bell, 2015). Guba (1981) recommends the technique of triangulation to increase the credibility in studies that Bryman and Bell (2015), describe as incorporating several perspectives into the study. The measures that have been taken in this study concerning this were that several respondents occupying various positions in different organizations were interviewed. This was done as it was perceived as beneficial to obtain several perspectives on this study's phenomenon and the choice of interviewing market experts within the area of fashion could be seen as an attempt to increase the credibility in this study. Although, no matter how good the perceived quality of the data collected is, it cannot compensate for the sample size being small. Research should continue until no new information is given (Bryman & Bell, 2015). However, this is a requirement that this study was not able to meet. This was due to both the availability of contacted respondents within the time horizon and the time limit of this study. Another technique that Lincoln and Guba (1986) refer to as increasing credibility is audio recordings. Hence, the audio recordings of the interviews conducted in this study increase the credibility as findings and interpretations could be referred to the recordings and thereby be cross-checked (Guba, 1981).

3.4.2 Transferability

Transferability refers to the extent to which the findings can be generalized to other relevant settings (Bryman & Bell, 2015). Transferability is often criticized to be limited in qualitative research, more specifically, when implementing a case study research strategy (ibid.). However, the authors of this thesis believe and therefore argue that the studied phenomenon simply cannot be understood through statistics. Arguably, case studies are a feasible research strategy when entering new or theoretical areas as they can contribute to increasing knowledge of that specific context (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2012). Also, the purposive sampling of respondents was not intended to be representative but rather intended to maximize the range of information that could be given about the phenomenon of this study at a specific point in time (Guba, 1981). The exploratory nature of this study makes it difficult to repeat in its exact form as it is influenced by decisions made by the authors of this thesis throughout the process (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2012). A measure that Guba (1981) refers to when discussing transferability is that a researcher should with as much detail as possible give a thick description of how the study has been conducted. The authors of this thesis have attempted to provide the reader with a detailed account of the topic researched and descriptions of how the study was conducted and whether this study's findings are transferable to other contexts will be up to the reader of this thesis to decide.

3.4.3 Dependability

Dependability, which is the third criterion, represents the stability of the research and can be strengthened by including auditing processes (Bryman & Bell, 2015). The measures that the authors of this thesis have taken concerning this criterion is that a time plan was carried out at the beginning of the project. This time plan was regularly updated to ensure progression in the research process. Also, a method journal was kept by the authors of this thesis to keep track of which choices have been included or excluded in the process. Both the time plan and method journal served as running accounts of the process and could be thought of as what Guba (1981) states is beneficial to strengthening the dependability in studies.

3.4.4 Conformability

The last criterion, conformability, refers to the recognition that subjectivity is present in every business research and that full objectivity is impossible to achieve (Bryman & Bell, 2015). Hence, as interpretivists, the authors of this thesis are aware that this study was subjectively constructed by them. Guba (1981) refers to practicing reflexivity which entails that researchers reflect on how their epistemological philosophy, methods, decisions, and biases have influenced the research process (ibid.) To practice reflexivity is also to explicate to the reader of this thesis of preconceived opinions and assumptions so they can understand and judge the findings and conclusions presented in this thesis (Bryman & Bell, 2015). The authors of this thesis biases are unavoidable and will, therefore, be embraced as biases are a part of every business research (ibid.). Biases of the authors of this thesis will hereinafter be discussed as it is seen as paramount to depict to the reader. The authors of this thesis own interest in fashion, more so understanding how fashion consumption occurs in Sweden, which has inevitable effects on the study. Arguably, it was why the research topic was initially chosen. However, it can be argued that the authors of this thesis have a critical view of and question whether consumption can ever be sustainable at the current level of consumption. Although, it is perceived by the authors of this thesis that their interest in this topic was favorable for this study and has led to discussions that have been advantageous for the study. Worth mentioning, the authors of this thesis have not engaged in fashion-rental services themselves, hence, adoption to fashion-rental services has not been experienced by them. The Consumer Culture Theory was chosen as the analytical perspective for two reasons. Firstly, the authors of this thesis saw it as an appealing approach as the Swedish society is perceived to be characterized by a consumer culture. Therefore, the authors of this thesis see themselves as surrounded by the prevailing consumer culture in Sweden, however, have attempted to reflect objectively on it by discussing assumptions and preconceptions throughout the process. Secondly, as the authors of this thesis did not find any studies of consumer adoption to fashion-rental services that applied this perspective motivated this choice of theory further. By informing the readers of this thesis of this, it can contribute to a better understanding of the conclusions presented in this thesis.

3.5 Ethical Considerations

How data is gathered and how respondents and information are treated during the research process need to be considered from an ethical viewpoint (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2012). First of all, as recommended by Bryman and Bell (2015), the respondents that were contacted were informed about the purpose of this study and could thereafter decide whether they wanted to participate or not. Further, the questions in the interview guide were not designed to derive sensitive information from the individual respondent. Hence, the questions asked during the interviews pertained to the research topic only. However, as respondents were encouraged to share personal ideas, they were decided to be held anonymous. This is because the authors of this thesis thought it was of more importance that the respondents felt comfortable to share their ideas and reflections rather than revealing their names. In the coming chapters, the respondents are quoted as "RX", as the respondents are held anonymous. The codenames will not be connected to any specific background. It will therefore only be possible to know what the sample of this study consists of but not specifically who said what. The choice of keeping the respondents anonymous was considered to not affect the trustworthiness of this study, hence, the role of respondents is of more importance as this information legitimizes them as market experts within the area of fashion.

4 Findings

The following chapter includes empirical data that was collected from the interviews and is structured in accordance with the interview guide of this study (See Appendix 3). This is followed by a summary of key findings from the data collected.

4.1 Fashion Consumption in Sweden

All of the respondents in this study considered the consumption of fashion in Sweden to be unsustainable because of the mass consumption of newly produced fashion. When asking R1 about her view of fashion consumption in Sweden she pointed out that *"it is unsustainably large, we buy far too much and we reuse fashion in too small of a scale… we need to change and find a more sustainable way to relate to our fashion consumption."* R3 said that consumption is what drives our society today which she described as problematic as newly produced fashion negatively impacts the environment. She, therefore, argued that we need to find alternative ways to consume fashion. Several respondents (R1, R3, R4, R5 and R8) pointed out that consumers have gotten used to fashion being cheap and easily accessible. R1 argued that *"I think we do what we've always done, we do what is simple and we do what exists in largest supply of, what we see in front of us and that is the newly produced, 'fast fashion'."* When asking R8 about fashion consumption in Sweden he stated that it is clear that consumers in Sweden overconsume and that the main reason for this is that 'fast fashion' has contributed to a skewed perception of what items are monetarily worth. He stated that consumers have gotten used to the perception that fashion items do not have to cost a fortune and this perception is incorporated within us. R6 discussed that 'fast fashion' contribute to unsustainable habits as consumers get tempted by 'fast fashion' companies ever-changing offers and ongoing sales. She further believes that Swedish society is centered around consumption which contributes to people feeling stressed. She further discussed *"I believe that many feel that typical feeling when opening their closets, that it's filled with things and still feel like they have nothing to wear. That can contribute to a lot of stress, there are clothes everywhere and you wish that you didn't own that many things that you do not use."* R8 also discussed that it is difficult for the consumer to know what to do with unwanted fashion *"there is not really an infrastructure for recycling textiles in a proper way."* He further said that he believed that consumers today are willing to come to stores to leave fashion that they do not want or need anymore.

R3 expressed that she believes that not everyone might be willing to decrease their level of consumption of fashion as fashion items can be used as a marker for expressing oneself. She also believes that it is a part of one's identity creation and want of social status. R1, R4, and R5 also expressed that fashion is used by Swedish consumers as an identity marker where R1 specified that there is a social aspect embedded into fashion items where through fashion one can express which social group one wants to belong to. R8 also discussed fashion as an identity marker, even for those that do not have fashion as an interest. *"I believe that we identify ourselves so much with what we are wearing, even if we don't reflect on it. I believe that even people who claim that they do not care about what they are wearing do identify with what they are wearing."*

R1 discussed that consumers in Sweden are treating themselves with material things *"We treat ourselves if we think we can afford it… I also think it's a habit, but I also really think we do not have to think that's what we want, but right now in the culture we live in now with the marketing that we get fed with every day and like with social media and everything, we see it all the time."*

She further discussed how consumers are influenced by others' consumption behavior, especially when using social media *"We see people eating nice dinners all the time and there are people who are super beautiful and always dressed up and yes, you want to identify yourself with that so I think that we all are promoting this very huge consumption."* R7 also talked about social media and said that she noticed a consumer behavior that recently emerged which could be an opportunity for businesses *"There are several odd behaviors that didn't exist before, you borrow clothes or rather buy clothes, try them on during the weekend, take a picture for Instagram and have some fun in it and then you send everything back on Monday. That is no behavior that you want to encourage, but at the same time, you can note that it is there and perhaps it is possible to do something to address it."*

Both R3 and R7 talked about that women are the ones who consume the most and gave some explanation as to why. R3 said, *"women have overall throughout the years been shopping for clothes more and it has been an interest that has been assigned to women to a greater extent."* R7 argued, *"women want a greater variety ... it can be both fun and tough, but this does not deprive the desire."* R7 referred to research on consumer behavior and the transition towards a circular fashion economy which highlights that widely spread assumptions in society connected to gender contribute to the consumption of fashion, for example, that all women "should" have a pair of heels or that men "should" wear a tie. *"But it does not mean that we use those shoes, they are just in the closet ... so if we can break such myths and that also increases awareness and then maybe people could actually rent that stuff if they ever wanted to use it"* (R7).

R4, R5, and R6 also talked about the enjoyment that consumers can feel when acquiring material things *"We get dopamine from buying, it is different for different people, not everyone gets the same stimulus, something happens in our brain"* (R5). R6 expressed that she believes it is a rooted habit to buy things to feel enjoyment, *"One feels satisfaction, and that is again the behavior, you get used to it. It's so easy to say 'ah I buy this t-shirt' or 'I buy these jeans', 'it doesn't matter what I do'."* R4 mentioned that *"I think many people feel good about buying something new for themselves. However, afterward when it's yours you might not value it as much."* R4 also highlighted that it is common for people in Sweden to have shopping as interest and that people *"go on shopping trips and go shopping in stores together with friends"* as entertaining activities.

R1, R2, R4, and R6 all discussed consumers' perception of wearing pre-used fashion. R1 talked about the unfamiliarity of wearing pre-used fashion and state that it is a mindset and that consumers need to get accustomed to the practice. R1 stated that *"It's strange that we can't imagine buying recycled fashion when we think it's perfectly fine to sleep in hotel beds... that means it's not the sharing itself that we have a hard time with and it's not at all a hygiene factor that we have a hard time with, we are just not used to it, it is not habitual, so, therefore, we do not think about those alternatives, so we need to learn and re-learn."* R6 also talked about the perception and mindset of using pre-used fashion *"Some say they would never rent because they think it is unhygienic, but then they have the old second hand in mind,"* while R2 claimed, *"Realistically, some people will probably just want to own and not wear something that someone else has worn."* R3 discussed that second hand has existed on the Swedish market for years and consumers are now getting used to the practice of that way of consuming fashion. She further discussed that second hand is more familiar than renting fashion in terms of practice and that is why it is now becoming more widely adopted by consumers. R1 spoke in similar terms when saying *"I just think that renting is a little bit later on than some other circular options."* R7 stated that Swedish consumers have been quick in embracing second hand and pre-used fashion and that that market has grown in recent years. She further pointed out that second hand, however, *"it is still about buying and owning."*

4.2 The Fashion-Rental Market in Sweden

When asking the respondents about the fashion-rental market, many of them (R3, R5, R6, R7, and R8) depicted that a fashion-rental service could benefit many consumers, however, that the market of fashion-rental services will remain as a niche market. R5 said that she believes that renting fashion will likely be a complement to buying fashion. R7 believes that fashion-rental services will increase in the near future, but she also believes that it will be limited in terms of market share *"It will take a small part of the market, although still very, very small."* She also stated, *"We will probably want to own clothes in the future too, but as a complement."* This belief was also shared by R8 who said *"One wants to reach circularity in some way. Renting is one form, but I don't think it has to be the absolute solution."* R6 said that she has noticed that some people are very skeptical when it comes to renting fashion and others only want to rent for special occasions, *"There are different categories, some are super skeptical, and some just want to rent for a party and would never even consider renting for everyday wear because they want to shop those items."* R2 suggested that fashion renting could replace or complement certain fashion purchases but argued that it would not be the case for all consumers. She referred to younger people often being more open to these kinds of services *"Young people may be more curious to try it in the beginning and maybe lead the way."* R5 claimed that younger people perhaps have an easier time getting used to rental services, however, as a rental service might be costly, she pointed out that younger people might not be prepared to invest that money.

R2 discussed who could be interested in trying a fashion-rental service as she said *"I think it will work differently for different garments, different situations, and different people. Some people may think it feels unnatural to rent, they would like to own their things, they know their style and they have built up a closet that follows a certain pattern for them ... Therefore, they may not feel the need for renting clothes. But other people may want to vary or experiment with their styles more, for example, to show up in something new when they go out, attend formal events, or even for special trips."* R8 said that a fashion rental-service could fit for some product categories but argued that renting of everyday wear could be difficult, *"I think certain product categories, there are a lot of outdoor companies that invest in this stuff with clothes and hiking gadgets and all that stuff. I think there is a big market there and that people may not really feel that they have to own their gadgets if that is not something you do too often. If you were to look at ... more everyday fashion, then I think it is harder."*

R7 pointed out that considering that fashion-rental services have become more popular in the US, it is likely to have the same success in Sweden, *"It really feels like something that has become big in the US could be big here as well, we are a pretty alert market and it is quite common to test things, that this is used as a test market for Europe."* R1 said that she believed that consumers in Sweden are to a greater extent seeing the advantages of using services generally when stating that *"It will feel modern to use services rather than buying."* She also pointed out the development of rental services in other industries as something that can benefit the renting of fashion, as it could help to change consumers' perception of renting. *"To change a behavior, it is also good to rent your tools or electronics or something like that so that we change a behavior where we do not have to own everything ourselves. So that it is not status to have the gadgets at home, but it is status to have space and time and knowing what you want and what you need, that that is status rather than collecting stuff in a pile"* (R1).

4.3 Relative Advantages & Disadvantages of Adopting to Fashion-Rental Services

When asking R3 if she saw any advantages for the Swedish consumer to rent fashion, she said that a fashion-rental service could facilitate them to update their closet and have the latest fashion items. She also said that the need for storage would diminish which could be an advantage. When asking R5 the same question she said that if an individual feels the need for changing fashion items often, a fashion-rental service could be beneficial to use. R7 said that she believed that as consumers become more aware of climate changes, they could see a fashion-rental service as one way of diminishing their impact. R6 said that one of the motives that she noticed her customers refer to when renting was that they wanted to decrease their environmental impact. Although, R6 also said that she did not believe that it was their primary motive, it was rather that the fashion-rental service facilitated them to experiment with styles, *"that you dare to try something else ... It does a lot for one's self-confidence and self-esteem, if you are going to a meeting and you want something extra."* R6 further discussed her belief that customers environmental motives are not driven by them wanting to do something positive for the environment but rather that they want to be able to tell their friends that they do something for the environment. She also said that a motive for consumers to adopt to a fashion-rental service is time constraints. She explained that her customers have said that they felt that the fashion-rental service saved them time compared to shopping in traditional fashion stores. R6 discussed that consumers want "kicks" when consuming fashion and claimed that customers of the fashion-rental service said that they experienced this *"You still get this dopamine that you get when you shop often, this 'kick' that people want, you still feel that you have gotten something new."* R6 also highlighted that she noticed a change in behavior in her customers after they had used the service for some time *"When they've been here for a while, their need to shop to get this 'new' is reduced, and that's what a lot of people have said to me."*

R7 saw that the service could be convenient for consumers if additional services where to be included *"if laundry would be included and such things then you do not have to worry about that and it can be perceived as a convenience as well, plus that you do not need a lot of closet space."* R8 also saw an advantage for consumers to use a fashion-rental service *"A good argument for renting when it comes to regular fashion is that you may reduce the proportion of purchases which ultimately are regrettable purchases. The garment actually gets tested and the consumer feels sure about the garment."* R2 saw it as an advantage for consumers that wanted to test a style to use fashion-rental services *"if you want to try a new style, renting can be a good option if you are not sure that you will like the piece."* She also argued that consumers that want to experiment with styles would see the value of being able to try some new fashion and therefore would probably ignore that somebody else has used the item previously. R1 also expressed that a fashion-rental could be seen as a test run for the consumers and stated *"that you find out which garments you actually very much like and which ones did not fit you because it is a problem today that we buy the wrong option, make the wrong choice in stores. Then you can know 'ok, this item will be sent back and that it is not for me' but then maybe there are some garments you tested with a rental service that you actually choose to buy yourself and own because then you know that it is a long term garment for you."*

R1 and R3 talked about the value in the rental offering in monetary terms where R3 stated that *"It is so easy to compare with what we have instead of thinking, 'for 600 SEK, I get three new garments, I just send them back and then I get new ones', that you rather pay for the service. So, it is a change in one's mindset that you have to do."* R1 also talked about that consumers will compare a fashion-rental service with buying fashion items, *"We are so used to owning and we will compare the two, what does it cost to own a garment and what does it cost to rent?"*

She also argued that consumers most likely felt that they get more value out of owning fashion items today. R7 discussed the value of owning fashion items for consumers *"We are so used to buying things and we want them in our closet and we want to be able to improvise, or at least we imagine that we need to be able to improvise, and be able to use what we feel like."*

When asking R1 if she saw any disadvantages for the consumers to use a fashion-rental service, she highlighted *"I think pick up and returning the items might be a bit of an accessibility barrier."* R4 also discussed that consumers probably would need to plan their acquirements of fashion to a greater extent. R1 also pointed out that consumers probably have an easier time with consuming fashion by buying second hand and if they adopt to that, they will most likely not adopt to a fashion-rental service. *"I see that the option of second hand is a more easily accessible decision to make for someone who wants to change their habits because it is everywhere now, and if you are already a second hand customer and think it is okay with second hand then it will be a lot more expensive to rent"* (R1).

4.4 Compatibility

R3 believes that if consumers can reflect further whether a fashion item is purchased only for a specific moment or if they just feel like, it could lead to those items being rented instead. R3 further believes that there is a lack of this type of awareness today and that promotion by organizations and discussions among peers could lead to more conscious actions being taken by Swedish consumers. R1 talked about the barrier that arises for fashion-rental services when Swedish consumers have the mindset that they receive more financial value when owning fashion, and that this then requires consumers to adopt to a new value system, *"then the other drivers that are not economical need to weigh heavier and then it requires a pretty big, once again a behavior change."* Similarly, R7 stated that *"I think it is very much about behavior and mindset, to change one's way of thinking about consuming clothes or owning clothes or buying clothes."* R8 mentioned that ownership of things is deeply rooted within us and that Swedish people have a want of owning things. R4 similarly talked about the role of ownership *"I think it's a cultural thing, it's not just clothing we like to own, we like to have a lot of stuff. It doesn't matter if we know if it's good or bad it's like some kind of satisfaction."* When asking R4 whether she believed that renting fashion could compete with buying fashion she said: *"If we are going towards a scenario where it is more important to look good then I don't see any difference between owning and renting."*

R3 and R7 both highlighted that there often is an emotional attachment embedded into our fashion items, *"we get attached to things, we get attached to fashion"* (R7). R3 expressed the need to change our behavior, to not add emotional connections to fashion items when renting *"If I rent something for a month and then just give it back. Then we have to start thinking in a whole new way and not put that emotionality in clothes ... Of course, the consumers have to come up with this themselves ... or work with it and change that behavior to fully be able to rent everyday wear."*

4.5 Complexity

R3 stated that consumers in Sweden generally do not reflect on their consumption of fashion but that by strengthening Swedish consumers' knowledge and awareness it can become easier for consumers to adopt to renting fashion. She explained that it is *"Only when you actually start to think; 'what do I have in my closet really?' and 'how often do I use this stuff?' and only then*

you can feel that you could actually rent it." R2 spoke about the importance of making fashion-rental services easy and clear for consumers to understand. She believes that it could be difficult for most consumers to estimate which option is the most economical, i.e. to rent or to buy a new item. This is because a consumer needs to know, in advance, how many times the item should be worn to make it worthwhile to rent it, as opposed to buying it. A consumer could therefore according to R2 need calculation examples of how many times an item needs to be worn to be worth owning *"So you don't stand there as a customer in the store and try to calculate yourself."* R5 stated that renting fashion for everyday wear would *"require a certain dedication, you have to go to the store, pick up the garment and you need to return it"* which she does not believe to be very common. She further argues that if you as a person do not have an interest in fashion, you might not want to spend any time on it.

R6 could with her customers see that it does take some time before they got used to the fashion-rental service *"It takes 3-4 months until you have become accustomed to it... you have to get someone in, they have to become a member, they have to rent several times and so on."* R1 expressed the need for repetition in order for a practice to become a habit and that it is mentally challenging to do so, *"Making new decisions, creating new habits is very demanding for our brains, which means it will take many repetitions to build a new habit."* R7 also claimed that trying a fashion-rental service could be challenging for the consumer *"It has to be the right size, it should be clothes that you like, you must be able to find a style in this as well."* When asking R2 about the possible challenges for consumers to adopt a fashion-rental service, she discussed the possibility of consumers not understanding how a fashion-rental service would work practically, how they might be unsure of the quality of the fashion item and also if the item would show signs of previous usage.

4.6 Trialability

R3 said that she has the perception that consumers in Sweden are rather open to testing new services, however, when it comes to fashion-rental services she believed that few have ever even considered fashion renting as a possible way to consume fashion today *"I do not think people have taken a position as a consumer today to even consider those questions, 'no I do not want to rent', but that it is rather about the range of services."* R7 described that consumers in Sweden are rather trend-conscious and enjoy trying new things but she also highlighted the difficulty in changing habits of fashion consumption *"In the beginning, you can be conservative and want to stick to the old but then eventually you realize that something else can be better or more practical."* She also emphasized the difficulty to get consumers to try it for the first time. R1 discussed the importance of making fashion-rental services appealing *"We need to find ways to inspire people to test these things."* She also discussed the difficulties of getting consumers to try new offerings *"Then there are prejudices, habits, this is about having to re-learn and making it feel fun because we as consumers are very crass, we want the best, the nicest and we want to fit in."* Therefore, according to R1 enjoyment when using a fashion-rental service is necessary, otherwise, it will be seen as too tiresome and consumers will not adopt to it. R6 expressed that *"Once you have tested then you realize how easy it is when everything is in the same place, it is a win-win."* She further explained that fashion-rental services could easily be tested *"it is a huge advantage to be able to test. Then you can see 'ah this I like, this I don't like' and then it's not the whole world, it's two weeks that you have the garments."*

4.7 Observability

Three respondents (R1, R3, and R6) expressed a lack of observable examples of fashion-rental services for consumers on the Swedish market and R3 said, "*now it is the 'early adopters' who are testing this, and the large masses have not really gotten there yet.*" R4 discussed and said "*I think it's a lot of people who don't even know it's possible. I think there's a lack of knowledge about it because few people are doing it.*" R1 said "*The marketing together with the supply that exists today is not big enough … and it is not attractive enough to reach the larger scales of consumers.*" R6 expressed the importance of visibility from several sources such as media and people around us "*It requires that a lot comes from the external… that you have it everywhere, it is then one can start to think 'ok, perhaps renting is not so bad, seems new'.*" R1 also discussed the importance of more people talking and using fashion-rental services as she believed that consumers most likely will not adopt to fashion-rental services because of environmental reasons but rather because others use it. R6 did, however, say that more attention has been given to fashion-rental services over the past two years, "*about two years ago, more people at the same time started to write about it... then you see it from several places ... It is an advantage that H&M will start, then it will be written a lot about it, then it becomes a big thing which is positive in the long run. Then people will start to think 'ah but it might be okay, not so stupid after all'.*"

4.8 Summary of Key Findings

By executing a content analysis, the authors of this thesis sought to uncover latent content in the data collected that can relate to the aim of this study. Table 4 shows an overview of themes that represent the key findings extracted from the interviews and when a box is marked with an "X", it means that a respondent has, as inferred by the authors of this thesis, used relevant words and discussed around the theme.

Table 4: Summary of Key Findings

	R 1	R 2	R 3	R 4	R 5	R 6	R 7	R 8
Emotional Attachment			X	X			X	
Consumer Mindset	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
The "Kick" of Material Things				X	X	X		
Experiment with Styles	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Changes in Daily Life	X			X	X	X	X	
Trend of Services	X		X				X	
Ownership		X		X			X	X
Environmental Values				X	X	X	X	
Ease of Use	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Identity & Belonging	X		X	X	X		X	X
Supply on the Market	X		X	X	X	X	X	X

Table 5 shows and describes the identified themes that constitute the conditions that, according to the authors of this thesis, influence consumer adoption to fashion-rental services on the Swedish market. These conditions will be analyzed and discussed in the next chapters.

Table 5: Description of the Identified Conditions of this Study

Emotional Attachment	Swedish consumers have a tendency of forming emotional attachments to fashion items
Consumer Mindset	The mindset of negative perceptions of wearing pre-used fashion that exists among Swedish consumers
The "Kick" of Material Things	Swedish consumers use acquirement of fashion items to achieve "kicks"
Experiment with Styles	Fashion items are used by Swedish consumers to experiment with styles
Changes in Daily Life	The changes in daily life that could occur if adopting to a fashion-rental service, such as to pick ups and returns of fashion items
Trend of Services	Rental services are spreading on the Swedish market which could positively influence consumers' perception towards rental services
Ownership	Swedish consumers enjoy and want to own their everyday fashion
Environmental Values	Consumers are more aware of environmental issues connected to fashion and could see fashion-rental services as a way to diminish their impact
Ease of Use	Consumers could face uncertainties in terms of how fashion-rental services work in practical terms, such as finding the right sizes. Moreover, Swedish consumers generally do not reflect on the amount of fashion items they have or how often they are used
Identity & Belonging	Fashion items can be used by consumers as an identity marker and express in which social group one wants to belong to
Supply on the Market	The easiest way of acquiring fashion items today is by buying newly produced 'fast fashion', moreover, buying fashion second hand is becoming more popular

5 Analysis

In this chapter, empirical findings are analyzed using this study's analytical perspective. Hence, conditions are contextualized using the analytical perspective of Consumer Culture Theory.

5.1 Fashion as an Identity Marker & the Need for Belonging

According to R3 fashion is important for Swedish consumers as it can be used as a marker for expressing oneself and therefore, not everyone is willing to decrease their level of consumption of fashion items. This statement goes in line with Belk, Ger and Askegaard's (2003) explanation that consumers' desires drive consumption as they use material things to showcase their values, best selves and who they "want to be". To decrease or change the way one consumes could, therefore, be equal to altering the way one expresses oneself. R8 also discussed fashion as an identity marker, even for those that do not have fashion as an interest, *"I believe that we identify ourselves so much with what we are wearing, even if we don't reflect on it. I believe that even people who claim that they do not care about what they are wearing do identify with what they are wearing"*. Both R3 and R8 arguments relate to Belk's (1988) explanation that possessions contribute to and reflect our identities. This then indicates that regardless of whether individuals claim to care about what they do or do not wear, the fashion items they choose to wear will reflect a part of their identities. This further connects to the statement of Crane (2012) who states that fashion items play an important role as it is one of the most visible forms of consumption. Hence, no other type of possession showcases how an individual chooses to identify themselves as fashion does.

According to Belk, Ger, and Askegaard (2003), desires are cultivated by fantasies of a different self, nurtured by external sources such as advertising and films and consumption behavior of both known and unknown individuals. This argument is similar to what R1 discussed during her interview, that Swedish consumers are affected by seeing others on social media and want to identify with their lifestyles and because of it, Swedish consumers maintain a high level of fashion consumption. This also connects to Belk, Ger, and Askegaard's (2003) statement that others' material things alert desire in the consumer in a near rivalry sense. Therefore, what others wear is important for the Swedish consumer when creating their identity and deciding how to be their best selves. This also reflects that Swedish consumers are highly influenced by their surroundings and culture and that this drives the consumption of fashion.

R1 reflected upon how there is a social aspect embedded into fashion items, where she thought that Swedish consumers, through fashion, can express which social group one wants to belong to. This is supported by the idea of Belk (1988), that the group we belong to affects the way we consume and conversely the way we consume can be a way to find a sense of belonging. R1 further argues that Swedish consumers will not adopt to fashion-rental services because of concerns for the environment, rather they will adopt because others around them adopt to it. Similarly, R6 pointed out that consumers' primary motive for adopting to fashion-rental services most likely is not to decrease their environmental impact. It is more about being able to tell others that you are doing something good for the environment. This highly reflects Swedish consumers' want of belonging and desire of being approved by others but also that the choice of consumption mode is largely influenced by social groups. As R3 pointed out, the majority of Swedish consumers have yet to try a fashion-rental service, one reason for this could be that trying a fashion-rental service does not presently impress others. This is supported by

Belk, Ger and Askegaard's (2003) explanation that the desire of sociality is partly cultivated by the consumer's will of impressing others. This then suggests that if others around the consumer adopt to a fashion-rental service, the consumer would adopt to it as well in order to belong.

5.2 Emotional Attachment & Ownership

R7 pointed out that Swedish consumers get attached to things and more specifically get attached to fashion items. This connects to the statement of Belk, Ger, and Askegaard (2003) who point out that individuals embed meaning into material things. As individuals embed meaning into their fashion items, an emotional attachment can form, and this makes it difficult to disconnect from them. Hence, as possessions become a part of one's identity, leaving them behind would be like losing a piece of one's self. Belk (1988) also depicts that possessions of our extended self are a convenient way of preserving memories and feelings of the past. The accumulation of fashion items of our extended self provides us with an archive of items that allows us to reflect on how we have changed (ibid.). This could explain why individuals hold on to certain items, even if they are not worn by the individual anymore, in other words, items have no functional value to the individual but still hold emotional value. R3 discussed that if a consumer is going to rent items for a short period of time, they cannot form emotional attachments to the fashion items. R3 further discussed that this is a new way of thinking for Swedish consumers. As Swedish consumers are used to owning things, they are used to forming attachments to them and therefore, not getting attached to items can be seen as unfamiliar. R8 explained that he believes that consumers have a desire of owning things and that it is deeply rooted within us. This further reflects the difficulties for Swedish consumers to embrace access to products as a consumption mode. As possessions with embedded meaning are central in a consumer culture, individuals allow themselves to become emotionally attached to material things. Moreover, it is legitimized in Swedish society to habitually acquire possessions as it is seen as a social "interaction" and being without desire for material things can be perceived as not having any meaning in life. This can also be connected to Belk's (1988) argument that various material things, specifically, ownership of them can act as a means of group identification. Hence, owning and being attached to certain items, such as fashion items, are socially accepted and desired in Swedish society as it can justify in which group we want to belong.

5.3 Experimenting with Fashion & the "Kick" of Material Things

An important aspect of desire is based on the promise of otherness (Belk, Ger & Askegaard, 2003). To desire is to envision an ideal and transformed self and offer an escape from the person's current life conditions (ibid.). This reasoning by Belk, Ger, and Askegaard (2003) can be connected to a statement by R6 who said that putting on a new fashion item can do much for an individual's self-esteem, like give the confidence to perform better in a meeting. This reflects the notion that fashion can be used by Swedish consumers to fulfill their visualized ideal self. This is further strengthened by the point made by R7 who said that Swedish consumers want to have a lot of fashion items in their closets because they want to be able to improvise. The want of improvisation that R7 refers to could also be a reflection of Swedish consumers' desire of otherness. R6 mentioned that one of the primary motives for consumers to engage in a fashion-rental service is that it allows them to experiment with style. This is another indication that it is desired to update one's closet and test new styles as it could be perceived by consumers as a way to transform oneself and achieve otherness.

It was made clear from the empirical data that something happens in us when acquiring and buying things. R4, R5, and R6 pointed out that Swedish consumers can feel enjoyment when acquiring items and that consumers even get "kicks" from it. R5 argued that consumers get dopamine from buying and even if the feeling is different for different people and with different items, something happens inside of us. This connects to Belk, Ger and Askegaard's (2003) description of desire, where a mix of feelings can be felt by the individual when consuming, such as enjoyment and excitement. R6 also expressed that she believes it is a rooted habit to buy things to feel enjoyment and satisfaction *"One feels satisfaction, and that is again the behavior, you get used to it."* This indicates that Swedish consumers use material things, such as fashion items, as a means to get "kicks". Moreover, they do not reflect on their consumption of fashion, as their primary motive is to achieve "kicks" rather than needing the item. R6 said that she believes that consumers want to have "kicks" when shopping and argued that her customers got these "kicks" from the fashion-rental service as they felt they had gotten something new to wear. This further strengthens that the acquirement of fashion items is used to achieve these "kicks" and that can be seen from the empirical findings to be much wanted when consuming fashion. Moreover, the fashion item has to be perceived as new to the consumer for a "kick" to be attained.

Belk, Ger, and Askegaard (2003) discussed in their article that consumers reward themselves by purchasing material things. It does not matter exactly what object it is as long as it makes the consumer feel fulfilled. Similarly, R1 discussed this when she said *"We treat ourselves if we think we can afford it... I also think it's a habit..."*. This description could explain why some Swedish consumers shop fashion items that they might not use afterward. The item might, however, be perceived as needed at the time of acquirement as it is seen as a gift to reward oneself. This also follows the argument by Belk, Ger, and Askegaard (2003), that the line between need and desire can be rather fuzzy for the consumer. This points to that acquiring fashion items are and can be used as a reward even if the consumer does not have an intention to use the item or purpose for choosing a specific item. Arguably, if the main purpose of the acquirement is to self-reward oneself and to feel fulfilled for a moment, it could lead to that the consumer once again does not reflect on whether the item is needed, hence, if it will be used recurrently.

R4 said that she believed that Swedish consumers feel good about buying new things for themselves but also that the items might not be as valued after they are bought. This portrays the "postconsumption bliss" that Gould (1991) describes as a state where the desire of acquired goods is dead. As consumers have a fear of being without desire, it can be seen as a powerful force that leads to a desire for new things. This then suggests that consumers might have a closet full of fashion but as the state of "postconsumption bliss" and the fear of being without desire are powerful, Swedish consumers seek out new fashion items to desire. This also reflects how Swedish consumers' desire for material things is, as depicted by Belk, Ger, and Askegaard (2003), to be a cyclic never-ending process that follows a fixed course. Hence, once a product is acquired, it loses it magical touch. R1 explained that she believes that it is the culture that we live in that contributes to the way we act and behave *"I also really think we do not have to think that's what we want, but right now in the culture we live in now with the marketing that we get fed with every day and like with social media and everything, we see it all the time."* This further reflects how the culture influences Swedish consumers to constantly feel a desire for new items even if more often than not these items are not needed.

5.4 Cultural Context & Consumer Mindset

The empirical data clearly shows that Swedish consumers have gotten used to the market providing relatively cheap and easily accessible fashion. This could be related to Arnould and Thompson (2005) who depict that a consumer culture can be understood as a system that channels consumers' perceptions and actions in a way that reinforces established cultural values. Therefore, one can understand that the consumer culture of Sweden channels a perception that fashion should be cheap and easily accessible. R8 explained that he believes that 'fast fashion' has contributed to distorted perceptions of what fashion is worth and that this perception is incorporated within consumers. In this way, the consumer culture channels the notion that fashion should be cheap and that acquirement of it should be effortless. This also connects to the statement made by R1 who said that she believes that Swedish consumers do what they see as the simplest option and what there is the most supply of on the market, and today that is 'fast fashion'. Also, as stated by Lury (2011), it has become a more extensive project to find and sort through the excessive number of items that exist, like fashion, on the market. This could be an explanation as to why Swedish consumers settle on the simplest option when consuming fashion, moreover, adopt the mindset that fashion should be cheap and easily accessible as there is a 'smorgasbord' for one to choose from.

R3 and R7 depicted women to be more involved in fashion consumption, although this did not necessarily entail that they are more interested in it. This could be connected to Arnould and Thompson's (2005) illustration that the consumer culture is like a game with assumed rules and imaginary expectations of others to follow them. Hence, a probable reason why women to a greater extent engage in fashion consumption is that they are generally assigned fashion as an interest and, therefore, experience expectations from others to follow the "rules". As R7 argued *"women want a greater variety ... it can be both fun and tough but this does not deprive the desire"*, shows that women are perhaps more interested in fashion but whether this interest is inherent or socially constructed within the frames of the Swedish consumer culture can be further discussed. Regardless, it can be noticed that imaginary expectations of others contribute to fashion consumption and want of updating one's closet. Hence, imaginary expectations of others can create a feeling that one needs to update their closet to "follow the rules of the game". For example, if women feel that they "should" have a pair of heels and men "should" wear ties consequently contributes to the consumption of those products. This could also be connected to Thompson et al. (1994) argument that desire can be seen as an enjoyable discomfort. Hence, Swedish consumers want to belong even if it could be an extensive project to do so.

Belk, Ger, and Askegaard (2003) explain that both desiring and having specific items can contribute to defining what group an individual does and does not belong to. This can be linked to the empirical findings that a group of consumers has a mindset of not wanting to wear pre-used fashion. R1, R2, R4, and R6 all talked about Swedish consumers and that some have issues with wearing pre-used fashion, where R2 claimed that *"Realistically, some people will probably just want to own and not wear something that someone else has worn."* Arnould and Thompson (2005) state that the inherent values and meanings are socially constructed and could explain why some products are recognized as undesirable by individuals. This would then suggest that these individuals who have this mindset of wearing pre-used fashion belong to a group where the use of pre-used fashion does not exist. Also, R6 pointed out *"Some say they would never rent because they think it is unhygienic, but then they have the old second hand in mind."* The old second hand then points to the inherent values that exist, that using pre-used fashion is unhygienic or in other words, undesirable. This could then further be connected to the argument made by Arnould and Thompson (2005) that groups are being formed around a common sense of preferable items to achieve group membership. Hence, a group of consumers

form around the perception that using pre-used fashion is not preferable or even desirable and thereby will reinforce the consumption of newly produced fashion. Interestingly, R1 spoke about how Swedish consumers do not find it strange or undesirable to sleep in hotel beds even though the sheets most likely are pre-used. This can be understood as a "mimetic desire" which refers to the consumption choices that consumers make to either mimic or distinguish themselves from others (Belk, Ger & Askegaard, 2003). This then explains why Swedish consumers may not have a difficult time sleeping in sheets that others have slept in and why some, at the same time, have a hard time wearing fashion that others have worn. Like R1 further pointed out *"...it's not the sharing itself that we have a hard time with and it's not at all a hygiene factor that we have a hard time with, we are just not used to it, it is not in our habits..."* Arguably, Swedish consumers are able and want to sleep in hotels, where the sheets have most likely been used before, because others around them do it and it is an accepted practice but they also, interestingly, choose to not wear pre-used fashion because of hygiene concerns. This could be because they want to be included in their social group while at the same time distinguish themselves from other groups.

In the interview with R1, it was made clear that consumers' mindset matters as she believes that the development of rental services throughout several industries will positively influence consumers' general perception of renting. R1 said, therefore, that using services that entail renting will become more popular, *"It will feel modern to use services rather than buying,"* and that this could favor fashion-rental services. She also predicted that the trend of renting services could contribute to another trend where *"it is not status to have the gadgets at home but it is status to have space and time and knowing what you want and what you need, that that is status rather than collecting stuff in a pile."* Although material possessions are central in a consumer culture, there is no intrinsic "rule" that the items need to be owned by the individual. R1's above statement reflects an emerging shift, from gaining status by buying and accumulating possessions, to gaining status from the opposite. As consumers in a consumer culture seek to achieve the status and approval of others through consumption, they will justify perceptions and pursue the actions that they believe will make them belong. Hence, if it is status to have space in one's closet then that is what is going to be pursued by individuals. This once again shows that the consumer culture is a socially constructed system that can channel consumers' perceptions and actions in a way that establishes the values of the culture (Arnould & Thompson, 2005). Arguably, if it is perceived as modern and in line with the culture, Swedish consumers will most likely adopt to it. However, as possessions are central in a consumer culture it will still be important to choose "the right" items but it is likely that ownership of them becomes less important. R4 discussed in similar terms when saying *"If we are going towards a scenario where it is more important to look good, then I don't see any difference between owning and renting."* This statement indicates that if Swedish consumers' ultimate goal is to belong and be approved by others, it can even remove the want and need for ownership.

6 Discussion

In this chapter, this study's findings and analysis are related to the research question and discussed. The findings of this study will also be related to previous research. The chapter is divided into three sections, beginning with answering the research question of what drives and hinders consumer adoption to fashion-rental services on the Swedish market, followed by a critical reflection of the methodological choices taken in this study.

6.1 What Drives Consumer Adoption to Fashion-Rental Services

The conditions of *Experiment with Styles* and *Identity and Belonging* are seen as drivers for consumer adoption to fashion-rental services on the Swedish market. This is because a fashion-rental service can provide consumers with new fashion items regularly, thus fulfilling their need for change. An appealing feature found in this study is that fashion-rental services allow Swedish consumers to frequently update their style. Therefore, this study confirms the findings of Armstrong et al. (2015), that being able to experiment with fashion can be an influential condition for consumers to adopt to fashion-rental services. As fashion items can be used as a marker of identification and status as well as to identify which group one wants to belong to contribute to fashion playing an important role in Swedish society. Thus, create a want for experimenting with styles. Therefore, using a fashion-rental service can be seen as optimal when consumers want to continuously work on their identity project. It was also brought up in this study that Swedish consumers' desire for new items comes from social media as it provides them with images that facilitate them to envision a fantasized self. Seeing others showcasing their fashion items on social media alert Swedish consumers to experiment with styles that contribute to them consuming fashion. This can be seen to benefit a fashion-rental service as it allows consumers to constantly change fashion items frequently. This study also found that not all have the same interest in engaging in the consumption of fashion even though people most likely identify themselves with what they are wearing. When discussing consumer adoption to fashion-rental services, The market experts interviewed in this study made a clear distinction between those with a fashion interest and those who do not have an interest. An inference is, therefore, that to have an interest in fashion, moreover, to identify oneself as "fashionable" are seen as important determinants for consumer adoption to fashion-rental services.

Another reason why the condition of *Experiment with Styles* is seen as a driver for consumer adoption to fashion-rental services is that with a fashion-rental service, consumers can both test and use fashion items, moreover, avoid wrong purchases. Unwanted clothing is a major problem today and a probable explanation found in this study is that when consumers experiment with their style, they take chances and buy items that they later end up not using. This is in line with the findings of Armstrong et al. (2016) study where the respondents expressed that they occasionally bought items that were later not used and that not using the bought fashion items induced feelings of unease. In this study, it is also found that Swedish society is consumption centered and that this causes stress to people. This is an indication that excess consumption is not something that Swedish consumers strive for, but rather is a consequence of their continuous identity project. Hence, it is not desired to have a closet of unwanted and unused fashion items but rather to have a closet that best represents who they are and strives to be. With a fashion-rental service, the number of unwanted items could decrease considerably since consumers can, not only try on but also, wear fashion items for a specified duration of time and then return them. As Swedish consumers' desire for fashion items can be depicted as a cyclic process,

Swedish consumers will have a constant want of updating their closets, hence, continue to demand fashion items that are perceived as new to them. A fashion-rental service can, therefore, be an option for those who want to experiment but also act as a preventive measure since fashion items that would have otherwise become unwanted or unused can be returned. This would then minimize the risk that an item is left in the closet to "gather dust". Further, what is seen from the findings in this study is the existence of a behavior entailing buying fashion items, using them for a weekend and then returning them shortly after. Even if this can be seen as a concern from an environmental point of view, businesses should see this as an opportunity as this is an indication that an offering of fashion renting could be suitable in their business model.

The condition of *Trend of Services* is seen as a driver for consumer adoption to fashion-rental services on the Swedish market. Since rental services are spreading across several industries in Sweden, consumers' perception of renting will most likely change, which ultimately could favor fashion-rental services. As Swedish consumers get more accustomed to access as a consumption mode, they become more accepting of accessing products that they previously predominantly owned. This once again stresses Arnould and Thompson's (2005) argument that consumption is a sociocultural practice influenced by individuals' norms and values. Even if renting everyday wear is not common in Sweden today, it was found in this study that Sweden is a trend-conscious market that often follows the developments seen on the US market. This points to Sweden being a promising market for fashion-rental services. Moreover, the trend-conscious characteristics of the Swedish market indicate that Swedish consumers want consumption modes that enable them to easily adapt to prevailing trends where access-based consumption is suitable. This is supported by Bardhi and Eckhardt's (2012) argument that access-based consumption enables flexibility and adaptability and that is, therefore, suitable for a changeable society. Therefore, the trend-conscious characteristics of the Swedish market are beneficial for services that build on access-based consumption, such as fashion-rental services. This further supports the argument made by Lang, Seo & Liu (2019) and Lee & Chow (2019) that consumers' acceptance of access-based consumption may be influenced by culture.

The condition of *Changes in Daily Life* is seen as a driver for consumer adoption to fashion-rental services on the Swedish market. A reason for this is that fashion-rental services could free up time in consumers' daily lives by, for example, not needing to handle the wash and aftercare. Furthermore, it can be convenient with services that include take-back schemes as the consumer then does not have to consider how to dispose of fashion, which could otherwise be a troublesome process. Moreover, it is also found that fashion-rental services could aid to free up space in consumers' closets as the need for storage could diminish. The positive changes in daily life in terms of convenience that a fashion-rental service can offer could, therefore, be seen as beneficial for the consumer. However, this study also presents opposing views to the perceived convenience for consumers of a fashion-rental service because some consumers could see picking up and returning rented fashion items as more of a barrier. This study finds that adopting to fashion-rental services requires commitment, in that a consumer would have to both know and remember when to return fashion items. This supports the finding of Camacho-Otero, Boks, and Pettersen (2019), as they also depicted that remembering to return fashion items was seen as an inconvenience. This is a change in consumers' daily life since they do not have to do this when buying a fashion item. Consequently, this will require more involvement from the consumer. However, a distinction should be made between fashion-rental services online and in physical stores, also previously referred to as the 'fashion *Netflix*' model and 'fashion library' model (Perlacia, Duml & Saebi, 2017). Issues raised in this study concerning pick up and returns are probably not as applicable to companies of the 'fashion *Netflix*' model, which more commonly use online services as compared to 'fashion library' models that more commonly have physical stores. To approach this barrier both models of fashion-rental services

('fashion Netflix and the 'fashion library') should showcase and focus on including features of convenience into their services to attract customers.

The condition of *Environmental Values* is seen as a driver for consumer adoption to fashion-rental services on the Swedish market. However, in contrast to previous research that has identified conditions influencing consumer adoption to fashion-rental services, this study suggests that Swedish consumers' environmental concern as a motive is not as highly regarded as been shown previously. In contrast to Lee and Chow's (2019) study where the environmental concern is listed as the second most important factor for consumers to adopt to a fashion-rental service, this study shows a nuanced perspective to this condition. This study suggests that it is more the want of belonging and having the ability to impress others by saying that you are engaging in something environmentally beneficial that motivates consumers to adopt to fashion-rental services on the Swedish market. Fashion-rental services could be perceived as a way to prove to others that they are environmentally aware which indicates that the environmental aspect is of importance. As mentioned in the introductory chapter of this study, people nowadays are more aware of environmental issues connected to the fashion industry. Even so, this study shows that Swedish consumers' concern for the environment is not entirely all that will motivate them to engage in fashion-rental services. Moreover, fashion-rental services only have to be perceived by individuals and their social group, as environmentally beneficial to justify their adoption. An inference is, therefore, that the condition of *Environmental Values* is a driver for consumer adoption to fashion-rental services but not as strong a determinant and inherent as it can be perceived in previous research. Therefore, businesses with fashion-rental services should not rely on consumers' want to adopt to a fashion-rental service because of their want to pursue their environmental values. Arguably, the proposition made by Park and Armstrong (2017), that political consumerism is an associated motive to engage in collaborative fashion consumption is moderately shown in this study. Moreover, Camacho-Otero, Boks, and Pettersen (2018) describe that circular offerings cannot solely rely on functional values because they need to communicate symbolic value as well. It can also be argued that fashion-rental services cannot only be founded on symbolic values, such as environmental values, they also need to communicate functional values as well. Hence, businesses need to ensure that the fashion-rental service is appealing because of several reasons by incorporating a multiplicity of values into the offering.

6.2 What Hinders Consumer Adoption to Fashion-Rental Services

The condition of *Emotional Attachment* to fashion items is seen to hinder consumer adoption to fashion-rental services on the Swedish market. This is because it is found that Swedish consumers get attached to things, more specifically fashion items and having emotional attachments to fashion items makes it difficult to disconnect from them. To engage themselves in fashion-rental services of everyday wear, Swedish consumers would have to learn to not form emotional attachment into fashion items, moreover, disconnect from fashion items that they potentially have embedded meaning into and included in their extended selves. Since Swedish consumers are used to buying everyday wear, they are used to that an emotional attachment to the fashion item can evolve, even if it sometimes does not. This finding further strengthens the findings in Lee and Chow's (2019) study which shows that consumers with a strong attachment to ownership of items had a negative attitude towards renting. When engaging in a fashion-rental service, individuals have to accept that emotional attachment can only be temporary. Hence, a different approach towards items needs to be embraced. As this is unfamiliar to Swedish consumers it is seen as a barrier for consumer adoption to fashion-rental

services. Bardhi and Eckhardt (2012) argue that the longer a consumer has access and uses a product, the greater the sense of ownership becomes. Arguably, as consumers are used to owning fashion items, it is probable that consumers get attached to the items that they have had for a significant amount of time. Hence, a good strategy for businesses is to provide consumers the option to buy the rented products after the rental period so that the consumer who has become attached to the item and made the item a part of their extended self, so that the consumer could easily switch between the consumption modes of access and ownership.

The condition of *The "Kick" of Material Things* is seen to hinder consumer adoption to fashion-rental services on the Swedish market as it appears from this study that acquirement of fashion can be used by Swedish consumers to achieve "kicks" and as a form of self-gift giving. The motive to buy fashion can simply be because one wants to feel enjoyment and excitement for a moment. Hence, it is not about the fashion item itself, it is rather the feeling of getting something new for oneself. To achieve "kicks" is found in this study to be a reason why Swedish consumers buy newly produced fashion items. If "kicks" can only be achieved from buying, Swedish consumers will continue to buy their fashion items and this is, therefore, seen as a barrier for consumer adoption to fashion-rental services. What can be further discussed is whether consumers can achieve the same "kick" from renting as when they buy the items. From this study, there is an indication that this is possible as the consumers still feel that they get something new. However, what was also depicted in this study is that engaging in a fashion-rental service could require more involvement from consumers and could, therefore, not be perceived as an equally convenient way to achieve "kicks" as buying could. Either way, what should be underlined is that the "kick" is important no matter which of the consumption modes consumers engage in. Longing for fashion items can be more enjoyable than possessing the object itself because once a fashion item is acquired and "the kick" is achieved, it loses its magical touch. Therefore, a fashion-rental service should continuously allude to consumers' anticipation of the items by showcasing new items that the individuals can access through the service.

The condition of *Ease of Use* is seen to hinder consumer adoption to fashion-rental services on the Swedish market as this study suggests that fashion renting is perceived as rather challenging for Swedish consumers to understand. This is because it is difficult to know whether it is economically beneficial, how it works in practical terms and whether the service caters to individuals' sizes and styles. This supports Armstrong et al. (2016) study, where they also found that the uncertainty of availability of items in terms of style and size was of importance for consumer adoption to a fashion-rental service. The findings of this study and Armstrong et al. (2016) both indicate that there is skepticism among consumers towards changing the consumption mode of fashion to access because of the ease of use or lack thereof. Another finding of this study is that Swedish consumers generally do not reflect on the number of fashion items they have or how often they are used. The lack of this type of reflection makes it unclear to the consumer when it is beneficial to rent rather than to own and this could, therefore, be a barrier for their adoption to fashion-rental services. If Swedish consumers do not reflect on how many times items are worn, they will most likely never consider renting as an option. It is found in this study that imaginary expectations of others drive the consumption of particular fashion items, such as ties and high heels, and with raised awareness of how many times these fashion items are worn, Swedish consumers could to a greater extent rent these items if ever needed. Therefore, it is important to increase consumers' knowledge and awareness regarding their fashion consumption.

The condition of *Ownership* is seen to hinder consumer adoption to fashion-rental services on the Swedish market as it is found in this study that consumers have a want of owning everyday

wear. This study's findings indicate that there is a dominant norm of owning material things, like fashion items and, therefore, Swedish consumers will most likely want to own everyday wear in the future as well. However, how influential the condition of *Ownership* is can be discussed. This study's findings of consumers' conflicting ideas of whether fashion is a product that the consumer wants or needs to own corroborate the findings of Armstrong et al. (2015). The findings of this study indicate conflicting feelings in that consumers, on the one hand, want to own the items so they can experiment whenever, and on the other hand, feel a sense of relief to not have an "ownership burden" of fashion items. Moreover, this study indicates that the want of Swedish consumers to own fashion items highly depends on which occasions the fashion items are intended to be used. This is in alignment with the findings of Armstrong et al. (2016) study that shows that consumers have little interest in renting everyday wear compared to special occasion wear. Arguably, there is a significant difference in renting special occasion wear and everyday wear, as the intention of everyday wear generally is to be worn repeatedly. This study finds that if the primary motive of Swedish consumers is to look good, it will most likely not matter whether everyday wear is rented or owned. This strengthens the argument of Lang, Seo and Liu's (2019) study that renting can bring excitement as consumers can use fashion items for short periods, where the focus is on enjoying the usage of products rather than owning them. However, the condition of *Ownership* is still seen to hinder consumer adoption to fashion-rental services as it will require consumers to embrace new habits of consumption. As described by Bardhi and Eckhardt (2012), access to products can entail both short-term access, where one-time usage is common, or long-term access where the item can be used several times. To engage consumers in fashion-rental services, businesses should consider the temporality of their offerings, hence, provide flexible rental periods to get consumers who are skeptical about access as a consumption mode to test these kinds of services.

The condition of *Consumer Mindset* is seen to hinder consumer adoption to fashion-rental services on the Swedish market as there exist negative perceptions of wearing of pre-used fashion. This study suggests that hygiene concerns influence adoption to fashion-rental services by Swedish consumers, which was in the study of Armstrong et al. (2015) also seen when exploring Finish consumers' perception towards renting fashion. This also connects to the statement of Camacho-Otero, Boks, and Pettersen (2018) that consumption in the circular economy comes with uncertainties as products are shared between consumers through businesses. However, it is also predicted as a rather low barrier as Swedish consumers generally do not mind the hygiene factor of access-based consumption in other contexts. For instance, such as staying at a hotel which is seen as luxurious even if someone most likely has slept in the same, albeit, washed sheets before. It could be that fashion is special when relating to hygiene as it is worn close to the body, but the hotel reference suggests that there is something else that prevents individuals from using pre-used fashion. This suggests that the practice of sharing is not unfamiliar but rather that it is the negative perceptions of wearing something pre-used that needs to change. This study finds that there is a common mindset among Swedish consumers to prefer newly produced fashion over pre-used and this reinforces the continued consumption of newly produced fashion. Lee and Chow (2019) found that the respondents saw a risk of engaging in fashion renting as it could be associated with embarrassment and disapproval of their social group. The findings of this study combined with Lee and Chow's (2019) reflect the importance of consumers to belong. This suggests that it is not only the fashion items that are of importance but also how they are acquired i.e. which of the fashion consumption alternatives the consumer engages in. To attract customers with the "buy new" mindset, businesses with fashion-rental services need to focus on making their offerings appealing by, for example, making stores and online shops look similar to how traditional stores are displayed. How the offerings are presented can contribute to changing how pre-used fashion is perceived.

The condition of *Supply on the Market* is seen to hinder consumer adoption to fashion-rental services on the Swedish market as it was found that the supply on the market of fashion at this specific point in time shows that most fashion available is cheap and easily accessible, which has led to consumers being used to that. Arguably, it has been legitimized in Swedish society, by both companies and consumers alike, that fashion should be cheap and easily accessible. Anything that goes against this value system will face challenges when attempting to penetrate the market. As mentioned in the introductory chapter, there are limited regulations that could stimulate more sustainable practices, moreover, there are no restrictions on how much fashion one can buy. Hence, companies continue to thrive on consumers' desire for being fashionable and consumers simultaneously choose the offering that best allows them to show their best selves. Considering the supply on the market of fashion today, a fashion-rental service can to consumers seem like a relatively more expensive option for acquiring a fashion item, that they may not get the choice to own afterward. Moreover, this study finds that even if additional services were to be included in a fashion-rental service, Swedish consumers will compare the rental offering to buying fashion even if they are different offerings. This is an indication that consumers perceive that they still buy a product rather than a service. Seen in Lee and Chow's (2019) study, utilitarian interest is dominant for consumers when deciding whether to engage in a fashion-rental service or not. This study further shows that Swedish consumers will refer to what is already known to them, and today that is mostly 'fast fashion'. In other words, Swedish consumers will compare a fashion-rental offering with offerings that provide cheap and easily accessible fashion. Therefore, businesses with a fashion-rental service will have to offer competitive pricing and simultaneously offer a wide range of styles and sizes for consumers to choose access as the consumption mode rather than ownership.

This study finds that consumption of second hand has grown in recent years and constitutes a notable part of the Swedish market of fashion today which can be an indication that Swedish consumers are to a greater extent engaging in collaborative consumption. However, the rise of second hand consumption could be seen as a barrier for fashion-rental services because if Swedish consumers acquire fashion through second hand to a greater extent, they may not adopt a fashion-rental service as well. Consumption of second hand is seen as easier for Swedish consumers to adopt as it has a similar nature of consumption as buying newly produced items as it is still about owning. Therefore, if one routinely buys newly produced fashion and want to change this habit, adoption to the consumption of second hand may seem more feasible than adopting to a fashion-rental service. Thus, it could be seen as a barrier for adoption to fashion-rental services by Swedish consumers. However, there is a possibility that acquiring fashion items by buying them second hand and through a fashion-rental service attracts different consumer groups. This is because fashion-rental services are depicted in this study to attract rather niche consumer groups. However, as consumers can choose several ways to acquire fashion, there is a possibility that the rise of buying fashion second hand will affect the adoption to fashion-rental services by Swedish consumers.

6.3 Methodological Choice & Implications

The exploratory nature of this study combined with the choices made by the authors of this thesis inevitably leads to limitations. This can, however, develop into future research opportunities. This thesis project started with an interest in exploring the phenomenon of fashion-rental services, with a particular focus on consumer adoption and was designed to investigate and critically reflect on consumer adoption to fashion-rental services on the Swedish market. However, no distinction was made between fashion-rental services that operate online

or use physical stores. To make a clear distinction between them or to choose which one to focus on would have been beneficial when conducting this study as the dynamics of consumption differs, which became apparent when critically reflecting on the condition of *Changes in Daily Life*. Also, the choice to focus on everyday wear restricted the authors of this thesis as the newness of this on the market in Sweden became evident as the research went along. Although, the choice to keep this focus was motivated as this type of offering more recently have emerged from the collaborative consumption trend, even if it is not seen on the Swedish market yet.

The initial intention was to find respondents operating in businesses with a fashion-rental service, however, the lack of real-life examples on the Swedish market was soon apparent. Hence, getting access to viewpoints from people working in these types of businesses was challenging. However, what this study's sample of respondents ultimately constituted of, a mix of market experts is perceived to be one of the strengths since they have contributed with insightful reflections to this study topic. If this study is replicated it could be beneficial to include more respondents operating in businesses with a fashion-rental service, however, the authors of this thesis argue that various viewpoints are invaluable when attempting to understand a new phenomenon. The lack of real-life examples could although have affected the respondents' answers in that they could be in some instances rather theoretical.

As mentioned, to accommodate data collection, it was chosen to conduct interviews with market experts within the area of fashion. This was perceived to give a nuanced view of consumer adoption to fashion-rental services as these market experts can reflect objectively on the consumption of fashion, moreover, consumer adoption to fashion-rental services on the Swedish market. A possible choice would have been to choose the individual consumer as the unit of observation, however, as previous research of fashion-rental services and consumer adoption to them mostly used this unit of observation motivated the authors of this thesis not to make this methodological choice. This does not mean that using the individual consumer as the unit of observation is an unsuitable choice, however, the findings of those studies should be nuanced with other perspectives as it can contribute to new points of view. For example, by choosing market experts within the area of fashion as the unit of observation, findings such as environmental concern were shown to be not as a highly regarded motive to adopt to a fashion-rental service as seen in the existing literature. In a future study, a mix of data collection and unit of observation could be beneficial. This could, for example, be done by combining focus groups with individual consumers and interviews with market experts. This because it could be a means to achieve "triangulation", and thereby strengthen the credibility of the study. Also, the authors of this thesis chose Swedish consumers as the unit of analysis which inevitably leads to the conclusions holding fewer details. This is because consumers as a group are diverse and have different motives.

As fashion-rental services are a new phenomenon, the authors of this thesis chose theories that were perceived as suitable to encounter the empirical phenomenon. However, the choice of using the characteristics of innovation as guidance for data collection and Consumer Culture Theory as the analytical perspective has implications. The characteristics of innovation can be seen to have a more positivistic approach whereas the Consumer Culture Theory has a more constructivist approach, hence, the reason why it was chosen as the analytical perspective. It could be argued that a feasible approach in this study would have been to choose only one or the other theory to explore the phenomenon. However, as it was perceived by the authors of this thesis that the Consumer Culture Theory could not provide any framework for data collection, the characteristics of innovation was chosen to guide data collection in an attempt

to investigate what influences consumer adoption to fashion-rental services. Therefore, it was perceived that both theories were needed to encounter this phenomenon.

The Consumer Culture Theory suggests that material possessions are central in individuals' lives but does not specify if there is a distinction between possessions. This makes it debatable whether this theory can be applied to fashion items. It is however perceived as an appropriate analytical perspective, according to the authors of this thesis, when aiming to make sense of conditions that influence consumer adoption to fashion-rental services on the Swedish market.

7 Conclusions & Further Research

In this chapter, a summary of this study's main outcomes is presented. Suggestions for further research and possible research angles in connection to the studied subject are also highlighted.

7.1 Conclusions

Excess consumption of fashion causes great environmental concern in society. Fashion-rental services are predicted as potential solutions to reduce excessive fashion consumption by shifting consumers' focus from consuming fashion as a product to consuming fashion-related services. However, it necessitates changes to individuals' consumption practices. As there is limited research on access-based consumption in the context of fashion, little is known of how fashion-related services, such as fashion-rental services may be adopted and diffused on the market. Therefore, the authors of this thesis chose to investigate and critically reflect on conditions that influence consumer adoption to fashion-rental services on the Swedish market. It was found that the conditions of experiment with style, identity and belonging, trend of services, changes in daily life and environmental values are perceived as drivers for consumer adoption to fashion-rental services on the Swedish market. The conditions of emotional attachment, the "kick" of material things, ease of use, ownership, mindset, and supply on the market are perceived to hinder consumer adoption to fashion-rental services on the Swedish market.

When exploring conditions that influence consumer adoption to fashion-rental services on the Swedish market, it was made clear that the nature, meaning, and dynamics of access-based consumption of fashion is different from traditional consumption. What can be understood from this study is that for access-based consumption of fashion to become widely adopted, consumers will have to adopt a different mindset towards material possessions, more specifically fashion items. Access-based consumption of fashion is hampered by the want of owning fashion items and the emotional attachment consumers form to fashion items. Also, consumers' engagement and participation in the circular economy is affected by the mindset that exists among consumers of not wanting to wear pre-used fashion. By investigating and critically reflecting on conditions that influence consumer adoption to fashion-rental services on the Swedish market in this study, knowledge regarding access-based consumption, moreover, consumers' engagement and participation in the circular economy have been expanded.

These conclusions are of societal importance as they further portray the complexity of combining fashion consumption and circular offerings that are pointed out to contribute to sustainable development. Therefore, businesses need to be creative in the process of changing consumers' mindsets and engage the fashion industry, policymakers, academics and NGOs in the search of innovative solutions. Another conclusion is that there are too few fashion-rental services on the Swedish market for consumers to fully participate and engage in, in other words, to get consumers to adopt to them. Although, the findings of this study indicate that the market of fashion-rental services for everyday wear in Sweden will develop in the future but will remain limited. A fashion-rental service will more likely act as a complement for consumers and will be adopted by those who have a high fashion interest and need for change. A feasible approach is, therefore, to develop fashion-rental services to serve as a complement to other circular offerings. Also, as the nature and dynamics of access-based consumption of fashion is rather unfamiliar to consumers, businesses have to develop offerings that have a sense of

familiarity to diminish the uncertainties that comes with going from the traditional consumption mode of ownership to the alternative consumption mode of access.

7.2 Further Research

While contributing with insights of access-based consumption, the findings in this study are steered towards the context of fashion. Therefore, future research could recreate the same study by using other empirical contexts, to find additional insights of access-based consumption. The authors of this thesis also suggest that analytical perspectives other than Consumer Culture Theory should be taken on to explore access-based consumption of fashion such as Institutional Theory or Practice Theory. This could further develop the knowledge of consumers' engagement and participation in the circular economy. Lastly, as businesses that provide fashion-rental services most likely will develop on the Swedish market in the future, it will be a new basis for studying the topic further at an additional point in time. In addition, the authors of this thesis have the belief that the consumer culture is in a continuous state of construction and therefore this study could be replicated. Conclusions in this study are based on a single case study and represent a specific point in time, while the reality is in constant change. The authors of this thesis hope that the findings and conclusions presented in this thesis can function as a grain of interest for further discussion of access-based consumption and its applicability in the business to consumer market. Moreover, how consumers can participate and engage in the circular economy.

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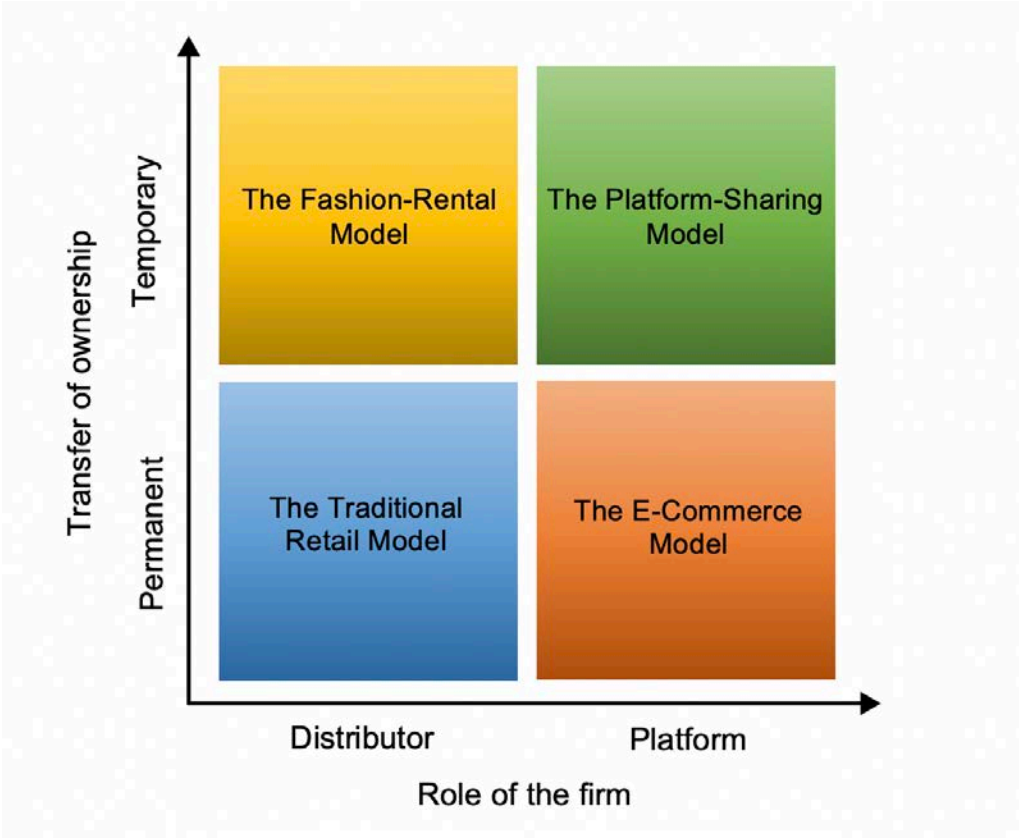
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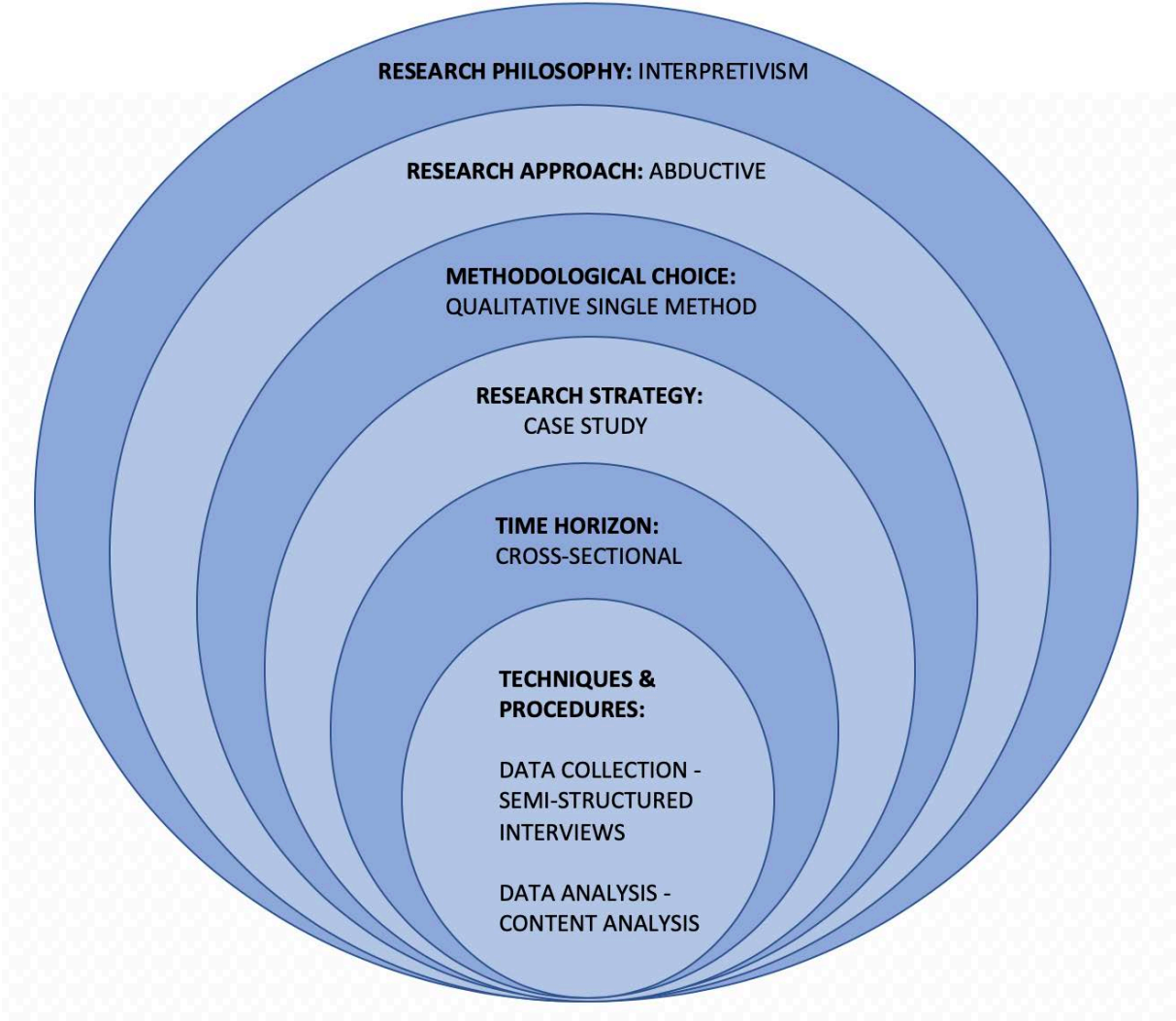
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Appendix 1: Fashion-Sharing Models

Appendix 2: Research Onion

RESEARCH PHILOSOPHY: INTERPRETIVISM

RESEARCH APPROACH: ABDUCTIVE

METHODOLOGICAL CHOICE:
QUALITATIVE SINGLE METHOD

RESEARCH STRATEGY:
CASE STUDY

TIME HORIZON:
CROSS-SECTIONAL

TECHNIQUES &
PROCEDURES:

DATA COLLECTION -
SEMI-STRUCTURED
INTERVIEWS

DATA ANALYSIS -
CONTENT ANALYSIS

Appendix 3: Interview Guide

Start every interview with:
- Giving the respondent a further explanation of the purpose of this study.
- Information that the study is focused on fashion-renting of everyday wear and not special occasion wear.
- Asking for consent to record the interview.

Fashion Consumption in Sweden
1. What is your view of fashion consumption in Sweden today?
    a. Why, in your belief, do Swedish people mostly buy newly produced fashion?
    b. Do you believe that Swedish people want to change the level of their fashion consumption?
2. What is your view on the role of consumers to attain more sustainable fashion consumption?
3. How do you believe the consumption of fashion in Sweden will change in the future? Why?

Fashion-Rental Market in Sweden
4. What is your view of the Swedish market of fashion-rental?
5. How do you believe the Swedish market of fashion-rental will develop in the future? Why?
6. Do you believe that having access to fashion will be able to replace having ownership of fashion items? Why/why not?

Relative Advantage
7. Do you see any advantages for consumers to rent fashion?
8. Do you see any disadvantages for consumers to rent fashion?

Compatibility
9. In what way do you believe that consumers are influenced by peers and media when it comes to the consumption of fashion?
10. How do you believe consumers perceive the renting of fashion?
    a. Is it compatible with how consumers want to consume fashion?
11. Do you believe that renting of fashion can become a norm in Sweden? Why/why not?

Complexity
12. How do you believe consumers perceive the process of renting fashion? Why?

Trialability
13. To which degree do you perceive that fashion-rental services can be tested before being fully adopted?

Observability
14. How do you perceive the visibility of fashion-rental services on the Swedish market?