Department of Cultural Studies

From Fictional Character to Fashion Influencer

How the styling of *Emily in Paris* influenced the *Loavies in Paris* collection.

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1 – Introduction

From fictional character to fashion influencer

How the costuming of Emily in Paris influenced the Loavies in Paris collection.

In 2020, Netflix debuted an American romantic drama series titled *Emily in Paris*. The series tells the story of Emily Cooper (played by Lily Collins), who is an ambitious American marketing executive. She unexpectedly gets her dream job in Paris when the American company she works for, acquires a French luxury marketing firm. She is instructed to renew the French social media strategy. Emily's life in Paris confronts her with cultural differences and the difficulties of making new friendships and discovering love. What immediately stands out while watching the series is the distinctive clothing style of the characters, especially that of the protagonist Emily. The show has two costume designers, Field and Fitoussi (Netflix), which is suggestive of the fact that very conscious choices are made for the costumes of the characters. According to creator, writer, and executive producer Darren Star "Emily's fashion sense is unapologetic and original with a sense of humor" (Yotka). He says that "She is only interested in being herself and maintaining her individuality" (Yotka).

Various (online) media pay attention to the costumes of the series. People have been posting on Instagram accounts, telling their followers where the items worn in the series are sold, and articles appear in major (online) fashion magazines, such as ELLE and Harper's Bazar, about the styling in the series. The fashion style from the new Netflix series is also being picked up by fast fashion brands, such as Loavies and My Jewellery, which are capitalizing on it. Both brands released collections inspired by *Emily in Paris* and used the series for promotional purposes. With so much attention paid to the characters' wardrobes, during the production of the series, in the media and the fashion industry, it is interesting to see how the viewer's buying behavior and the fast fashion industry are reacting to this.

This state of affairs makes me curious as to how the emergence of fast fashion collections based on the Netflix series *Emily in Paris* came into being. In order to make the research feasible, I will focus on one case study, namely the *Loavies in Paris* collection. *Loavies* is an online fashion shop that exclusively offers its own-label products (Emerce). The research question for my bachelor thesis is:

RQ: "How did the clothing style from the Netflix series *Emily in Paris* inspire the *Loavies in Paris* fast-fashion collection?".

To obtain the answer to the research question, I will provide a theoretical framework (chapter 2) based on various scientific studies and academic theories on the influence of film on fashion and the identity of the viewer, and studies related to Bourdieu's concept of cultural intermediaries. This theoretical foundation will then help me analyze the findings of my empirical research. This empirical research will consist of several methods: 1) a visual analysis of the costumes in the series and garments of the Loavies collection, 2) a visual analysis of a commercial from Loavies, and 3) first-hand observations and interviews with three young women of 22, 23 and 24 who have bought items from the Loavies collection. These are all qualitative methods, providing in-depth information about the costumes used in the series, and the motivations, thoughts and expectations of viewers. The empirical research will therefore help me to examine whether the interpretations that emerge from the literature are applicable to the way in which the fast fashion collection *Loavies in Paris* was conceived. A concise description of my working method for each part of the empirical research follows.

Chapter 3 will consist of two visual analyses. The purpose of these analyses is to describe the value transfer that takes place as Loavies translates Emily's costumes into its fashion collection. In section 3.1, I will make an analysis of the series costumes and the Loavies garments that derived from these costumes. I will first identify the characteristic fashion items from the series, confirm the connection with the Loavies collection and say something about the fashion style that emerges from the visual analysis and its significance for the series and the fashion collection. To gather some information about the launch of the *Loavies in Paris* collection, I will have a brief conversation with Karin Douma, (now former) Junior Social Marketer at Loavies.

In paragraph 3.2, I will bring forth an analysis of an internet commercial from Loavies, based on Bordwell's visual analysis. I examine what the possible value transfer from *Emily in Paris* to the items of the *Loavies in Paris* collection looks like. I will observe various elements of the commercial, both on external diegetic and nondiegetic level and mainly focus on the visual elements that might make the viewer of the commercial draw a connection to the *Emily in Paris* series. I will briefly touch upon the film and editing techniques and their effects on the commercial. Also, elements of the mise-en-scene do appear in my commentary, which are part of the film style. The film style concerns elements that help to shape the story, and gives the "look and feel" to a video (111). The mise-en-scene refers, among other things, to costume and setting (113).

In chapter 4, I will address three semi-structured interviews with the intent of mapping out the consumer perspective. The interview questions will be based on the findings from the theoretical framework. During the interviews, I investigate A) whether the value transfer by Loavies of the series on the fashion items was successful and B) whether wishful identification is a buying motive for consumers of the *Loavies in Paris* collection. The population of the research

concerns three young Dutch women aged 22, 23 and 24 who bought an item from the *Loavies in Paris* collection. All three women are part of my own network. I approached them because I knew they own an item from the Loavies collection. After conducting the interviews, the data analysis follows, which consists of two successive steps: transcribing and deductive coding. This means that I will transcribe the audios made during the interviews and then encode the data. Coding helps me to uncover patterns in the collected data (Saldaña 5). If a transcript fragment matches a code, the relevant code will be assigned. Coding deductively will allow me to answer the research question, because it helps me to filter the relevant information from the interviews. In Chapter 5, I will write a conclusion and discuss the answer to my research question.

2 – Theoretical Framework

In this chapter, I will explore the position of the topic of television costumes and fast fashion

collections in relation to the established literature and the research field. This desk research will

contribute to answering the research question, which is as follows: "How did the clothing style

from the *Netflix* series *Emily in Paris* inspire the *Loavies in Paris* fast-fashion collection?". In this

theoretical framework I will briefly discuss the term fast fashion and then go into more detail on

cultural intermediaries and wishful identification.

2.1 Fast fashion

The research question contains the term fast fashion. I will briefly explain this term using

academic literature, starting with the terminology of the marketing and business fields. Fast

fashion is a strategy whereby retailers are "democratizing couture and bringing trendy, affordable

items to the masses" (Sull and Turconi 5). Fast fashion has three characteristics, namely

trendiness, periodic change, and affordability (Caro and Martínez-de-Albéniz 7). "The fashion

principle is that all products are to be renewed frequently through the cycle of fashion so that the

market is rejuvenated and grows" (Atik and Fırat 839). Hence, new collections are created on a

regular basis.

Fashion literature is often more critical of fast fashion than literature from the marketing

and business fields. Maynard states that the phenomenon of fast fashion emerged around the end

of the 1990s and is characterized by rapid change and stylish attire (Maynard 542). Fast fashion is

an important aspect of capitalism with the aim to make a profit through the consumption of ever

new products (542). She comments on the fact that the rapid changes in fashion keep the sector

going but are detrimental to sustainability in the fashion industry (542). Elizabeth Wilson, like

Maynard, states that fashion is clothing of which the main characteristic is that its style changes quickly and constantly. In other words, fashion is change (Wilson 3).

It is evident that change is what keeps the fashion industry profitable and ensures business continuity. As a result, the industry must constantly come up with new styles and collection themes. Yet what is it that inspired the creation of *Loavies*'s collection themed on the Netflix series *Emily in Paris*? In this theoretical framework I will attempt to expose this process with data from the perspective of both producers and consumers.

2.2 Cultural intermediaries

To uncover which underlying phenomena led to the *Loavies in Paris* collection, I make use of the ideas of French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu. I do so because his work is considered valuable to academics in the fields of culture and the sociology of consumption (Smith Maguire and Matthews 15), as well as fashion studies (Rocamora 44). The key concept from Bourdieu's legacy that is most relevant to the Loavies case is cultural intermediaries. In order to properly understand and substantiate Bourdieu's theory relevant to this thesis, I will first provide a brief summary of his broader thinking, partly based on Bourdieu's own writing and mostly based on a literature review of secondary sources. I then outline the significance of his theory for the *Loavies in Paris* case.

In order to establish the importance of Bourdieu's thinking for fashion and thus for the Loavies case, I will first briefly elaborate on his understanding of taste. Smith Maguire and Matthews argue that according to Bourdieu, taste is a social construction and is shaped by educational capital and social origin, but that taste is experienced as natural and personal (Smith Maguire and Matthews 16). What constitutes "good taste" is determined by the dominant group.

The periphery tries to distance itself from the taste of the dominant group, in order to maintain or advance their social position, which makes taste subject to negotiation (16). According to Bourdieu, cultural goods are the emblems of distinction between classes (Bourdieu 141). The expression of taste is achieved through cultural goods, as for example fashion (Smith Maguire and Matthews 16). This means that the items in the Loavies collection can be used by consumers to express their taste and therefore their social position.

Now that it is clear what Bourdieu's definition of taste is, I will explain that consumers need assistance to obtain these cultural goods that reflect their social position. Hence, I will first introduce the concept of cultural intermediaries. Smith Maguire and Matthews write that according to Bourdieu, in the twentieth century two developments - namely the extension of higher education to all genders and classes, and the emergence of a new economy generating not only products but also needs and consumers - gave rise to a new professional group: cultural intermediaries (Smith Maguire and Matthews 18). In the new economy, there was a need for merchants and tastemakers, which jobs could be filled due to the overproduction of qualifications offered by the changed education system (18). The gathering of two developments created a profession that mediates between the fields of production and consumption (19). According to Smith Maguire and Matthews, Bourdieu describes cultural intermediaries as any authority involved in presentation and representation, or all institutions that provide symbolic goods and services (17). Cultural intermediaries are all occupations who provide goods to bridge the gap between 'what is' and 'what should be' (Bourdieu 153).

The fashion field consists of various institutions and agents, such as magazines, journalists and stylists who are all involved in shaping the definition of what is fashionable (Rocamora 305). Smith Maguire and Matthews write that Bourdieu argues that cultural

intermediaries are responsible for the creation of tastes, because their profit and power depend on the production of needs (Smith Maguire and Matthews 19). However, these cultural intermediaries cannot enforce needs, instead they create the conditions for consumers to identify their tastes in goods (20). By giving symbolic value to commodities, cultural intermediaries frame goods in such a way that they seem to coincide with the consumer's taste (20). For the *Loavies in Paris* case, this means that cultural intermediaries, by which I mean the various institutions and agents involved in the fashion collection, offer consumers the conditions to be able to express their taste.

McCracken argues that value attached to consumer goods is extracted from the 'culturally constituted world' (McCracken 72). The 'culturally constituted world' refers to the world as experienced by an individual on a daily basis, through their own senses and as constituted by their culture (72). Cultural intermediaries derive value from the 'culturally constituted world', link it to commodities and transfer this value to the individual consumer (72). According to McCracken, a common strategy of value creation is through the assumption of a similarity between the dream world of the consumer and the relevant consumer good, through marketing communication (75). The role of advertising is to attach symbolic characteristics to a consumer good (75). The use of movie stars can also help to attach value to certain products (76), as their prestige gives them the authority to become the "personification of the consumer's dream" (Lonergan et al. 2053).

With the aim of extracting the most relevant information for answering the research

question from the findings above, I will now present the most significant lessons from Bourdieu's

theory for the Loavies case. Loavies' consumers can express their position in society through

fashion items, such as those from the *Loavies in Paris* collection. The fashion items they use for

this purpose are offered and assigned a symbolic value by cultural intermediaries [contributors to

the collection], who derive value from the culturally constituted world and link it to the fashion

items with the help of advertisements. In order to present these findings clearly and
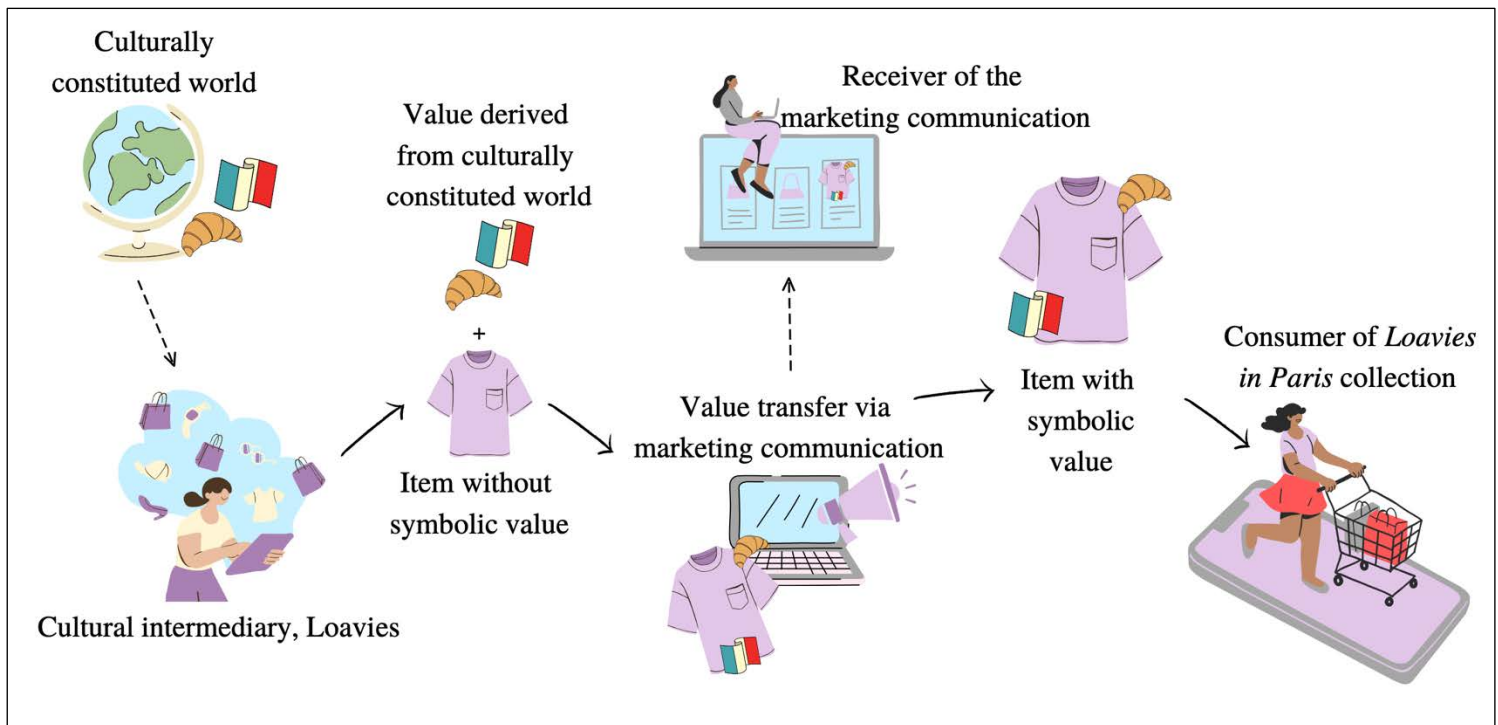
schematically, Figure 1 follows.

Figure 1 - Value transfer by cultural intermediaries for the *Loavies in Paris* collection.

2.3 Wishful identification

As became clear in paragraph 2.2, fashion items serve as a tool for consumers to realize a

certain position in society. Clothing is a means of communicating social identity (Noesjirwan and

Crawford 156). Anneke Smelik writes that the relationship between fashion and identity is complicated (Smelik 7). For this reason, I will now elaborate on the concept of identity in relation to fashion. As I study the trickle down of costumes from *Emily in Paris* into the world of fast fashion, I subsequently discuss processes of identification through fashion, based on film or television costumes.

Smelik defines the term identity as "an idealized construction of certain characteristics that change over time" (Smelik 6). Nevertheless, she also identifies the problematic aspect of the term identity by pointing out the various possible interpretations of it (6-7). To avoid this confusion of understanding, Smelik brings to our attention that Brubaker and Cooper introduced the term identification, which suggests that identity should be placed in relation to others (7). Identity is something that concerns the individual, but always in relation to 'the other' (7).

Of interest for this thesis is what role costumes of television characters [the other] can play in identification processes. The appearance of characters in television shows, including their way of dressing is chosen as a method for character development (Hoffner and Buchanan 329). However, the creation of media characters goes far beyond the cinema and influences the consumer behavior of viewers (Stacey 202). Costume in film and television not only functions as costume, but also as inspiration for the way the viewing public thinks about and consumes fashion (Stacey 170). Consumers claim a personal identity or a certain role by choosing a certain style of clothing (Smelik 8). In this choice of clothing, the costumes of a television series can play an interesting role. According to Gaines, the television screen acts as a display window on society and television characters are the mannequins who show the items they use and wear to the public (Gaines 16).

Using Hoffner and Buchanan's theory, I would argue that the phenomenon that leads viewers to consume simulacra of television costumes is wishful identification. The term wishful identification derives from Hoffner and Buchanan's research into media psychology. Wishful identification is the desire or attempt to be like, or act like a media character (Hoffner and Buchanan 325). The most common form of attachment to popular figures, according to Adams-Price and Greene, is the desire to look like or to become this character, which they call "identifying attachment" (Adams-Price and Greene 192). To be more in tune with their favorite media character, viewers are willing to change their physical appearance (Boon and Lomore 435). Copying the clothes of a media character helps the consumer to form identity (Russell and Puto 402). Jackie Stacey wrote that viewers of Hollywood films of the 1940s and 1950s already felt a connection with their favorite characters by buying and wearing a garment that was characteristic of the character (Stacey 200). But also more recently, we see the influence of costuming on fashion trends. For example, Rachel, from the *Friends* series, once set the trend for the 'Rachel haircut' (Russell and Puto 402), while pencil skirts and two-button suits became cool again among the *Mad Men* viewing public (Stoddart 5).

Using the writings of Stacey, I will now explain what this wishful identification process looks like. Stacey wrote an in-depth essay on the relationship between film characters and viewers, and on the identity formation of women through film (Stacey 126). To address these issues, she uses the term 'cinematic identification' (126). Like Smelik, Stacey acknowledges that the term identification is difficult to define (127). She, likewise, refers to the relationship between the self and the other, and therefore argues that the phenomenon of cinematic identification centers on the recognition of similarities and differences between the viewer and the character (128). Stacey argues that viewers appreciate differences between themselves and the character, as

this helps them escape the daily grind and fuels dreams and desires (128). On the other hand, according to Stacey, viewers would like to be able to recognize similarities with themselves in a character to enable them to recognize qualities they already possess (128). The viewer often identifies the similarities with a character through the similarity of its physical appearance (129). In order to reduce the differences between the celebrity and the viewer, and to get closer to the romanticized life of the cinematic character, the viewer undergoes a self-transformation (129). Stacey reports that "Stars are consumable feminine images which female spectators then reproduce through other forms of consumption" (168). Viewers adopt part of a character's identity by buying and wearing clothes that identify their favorite character, making it part of their own (170). An important motive for this self-transformation of a viewer is the need for recognition by others (173).

The theoretical framework highlights how female viewers seek to imitate their favorite film or series character outside the cinematic context to help form their own identity. They do this by imitating external features, often through clothing, in order to reduce the differences between their own appearance and that of their idol. My presumption is that Loavies, as a cultural intermediary, adds value to the *Loavies in Paris* fast fashion collection through marketing communication, providing consumers with a means of realizing their wished identity [Emily]. In the following chapters, I will use empirical research to examine whether these claims are true.

3 – Visual analysis: *from television costume to fashion item*

3.1 Costume analysis: *the Preppy Paris style*

Loavies translated Emily's costumes into fashion items. In this paragraph I will analyze

the costumes and the fashion garments and make use of the Preppy style that seems to underlie

the costumes and consequently the Loavies collection. At last, I will try to come to a deeper

meaning of the choice of the costumes and subsequently of the results for the fashion collection.

In season 1, consisting of 10 episodes, Emily wears 3 to 8 different outfits per episode

which makes a total of dozens of costumes. By listing all her outfits from season 1 in a tabular

form I have identified common styles and items (appendix 1). The visual analysis shows that the

Preppy style from America can be recognized in the costumes and may be the underlying

inspiration for Emily's outfits. The Preppy style has parallels with the French BCBG style (bon

chic, bon genre) and was originally the emblem of good taste, worn by the upper classes of

society to distinguish themselves from the plebs (Mantoux 2). In the second part of the twentieth

century, the style became trendy among the mainstream audience (Shearer 219). *The Official*

Preppy Handbook was published in 1980 edited by Lisa Birnbach and in 1985 Thierry Mantoux

published an equivalent for the French BCBG style. Mantoux writes in his handbook that BCBG

fashion is simple and chic, without "aggressive presentation, no inappropriate exhibitionism: we

are in Paris, not in Miami or Los Angeles" (Mantoux 18). Emily's costumes tend more towards

the American Preppy style, as the costumes are quite garish. She wears showy outfits, with many

colors, prints and textures, which seems to emphasize her American roots in the Parisian setting

of the series.

In *The Official Preppy Handbook*, Birnbach writes (in a laconic way) that the clothing of

the American Preppy style must comply with several fundamental principles, characterized by

conservatism, attention to detail (Birnbach et al. 121), classic English features such as the tartans and regimental ties, and bold color combinations with primary and pastel colors (122). Especially the color combination of green and pink is described by Birnbach as the straightest method of identifying with the Preppy style (156). The visual analysis shows that these features are incorporated in Emily's costuming, since a lot of color (explicitly green and pink) is involved, and the aforementioned, somewhat conventional garments are used. Characteristics that come from the handbook and can be found in Emily's costumes are: the more the merrier when it comes to accessories (135), the Preppy kilt (132), the bucket hat, which Birnbach calls the tennis hat (144), and the tyrolean jacket (149).

To keep the analysis concise, I focus on three fashion characteristics that return throughout the series. Three elements frequently worn by main character Emily in the series are: (1) a checkered, plaid or pied de poule print - In Preppy terms also known as madras print (Birnbach et al. 120); (2) berets and bucket hats; (3) mao/tyrolean jackets or blazers with matching skirts, kilts or shorts (figures 2, 3 and 4).

Figure 2 - outfit Emily S1.A3
Emily is wearing a chequered blazer with matching shorts and a red beret.

Figure 3 - outfit Emily S1.A5
Emily is wearing a green mao jacket, mini skirt, top and bucket hat with madras print.

Figure 4 - outfit Emily S1.A6
Emily is wearing a pied de poule print jacket with chequered skirt and bucket hat.

The garments in figure 5 are from the Loavies website and show that the fashion characteristics from the *Emily in Paris* series, and by extension the Preppy style, are clearly being used. These items are a small selection from the *Loavies in Paris* collection, which consists of a total of 90 fashion items, released in two drops. This was confirmed via personal communication by Karin Douma, (now ex) Junior Social Marketer at Loavies.

Figure 5 - Loavies in Paris collection

In Emily's costuming, the Preppy style seems to refer to her American roots and the fact that in the series, she is an outsider in Paris and is considered to be garish by the Parisians. The costume designers seem to be playing with the differences between the Parisian BCBG style and the American Preppy style, and the criticism the Parisians have of the 'exuberant' Americans. As for the fast fashion collection, I find the use of the Preppy characteristics fascinating because of the underlying meaning of the style and therefore the popularization of the 'good taste' that was once a symbol of the upper class. Fast fashion, characterized as easy to obtain, uses the upper-class aesthetics, which makes this elevated identity accessible to everyone.

3.2 Commercial analysis: *the transfer of value*

In the theoretical framework I have shown that fashion brands attach symbolic value to garments through advertising. In order to find out if and what value Loavies attaches to its *Loavies in Paris* collection, this chapter presents a visual analysis on an advertisement for this collection. Namely a promotional video on Loavies' YouTube account, posted on 3 March 2021. I chose to discuss a promotional video because this advertising medium is closest to the medium of the series, which increases the chances of finding any similarities.

When I watch the Loavies commercial, there are several things that strike me on an external diegetic level in relation to the *Emily in Paris* series. The setting of the commercial is similar to the setting used in the series. Both take place in the public space of Paris. In addition, the patio of the office space of *Emily in Paris* is featured in the Loavies commercial (figure 6). The casting and performance also show a clear resemblance between the advertisement and the series. The two models in the Loavies commercial resemble the main characters of *Emily in Paris*. Besides matching costumes (as I discussed in section 3.1), there are additional external features that are imitated. Model 1 resembles Emily; they both have long brown hair, Preppy style costumes and they both vlog (figure 7). Model 2 resembles Mindy, Emily's best friend in the series, due to their relationship with the main character and their Asian looks (figure 8). Moreover, some scenes from the series are used in the commercial, such as the scene where Emily buys pink roses from a flower stall in the street (Season 1, Episode 4) (figure 9).

The Loavies video also contains nondiegetic elements that are similar to nondiegetic elements of the *Emily in Paris* series. The commercial starts with the Loavies logo on screen, after which the title "Elena and Valeri in Paris" is shown. The font used for the title is the same as used in the introduction of the *Emily in Paris* series (figure 10). The conversation the model of

the commercial is having in her vlog appears on the screen in the form of subtitles (figure 11).

The subtitles seem to refer to *Emily in Paris*, as subtitles are a feature of the medium of this

series. In a split screen (Bordwell et al. 455), the left half of the screen shows a poll from the

Loavies Instagram account. The poll asks the question "Do you recognize this place? Oui or

Non?" (figure 12). On the right-hand side of the screen, we see Model 1 in the setting of the

series, which the text of the poll tends to emphasize. Several Instagram post from Loavies appear

on screen showing the two girls in their *Loavies in Paris* outfits (figure 13). These Instagram

posts seem to refer to the series because Emily shares her adventures in the series on social media

as well. In addition, the importance of the outfits for the commercial is emphasized by

highlighting them in the Instagram posts. The video ends with a fade out with the Loavies logo

on a black screen, just as the series ends each episode with a fade out to a black screen. *The*

corresponding figures can be found below. the left images are from the Loavies promotional

video and the right image are from the Emily in Paris series.

Figure 6 – Office patio
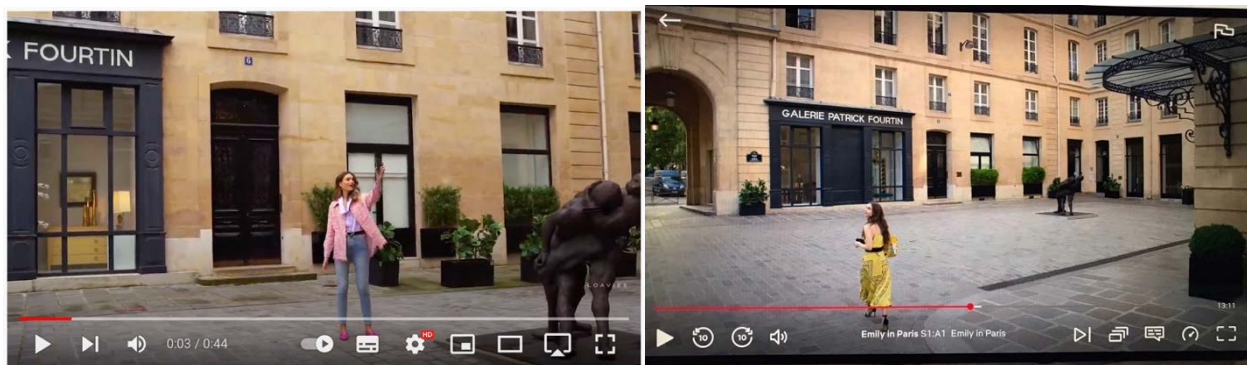
Figure 7 – The resemblance between Loavies model 1 (left-hand image) and Emily (right)

Figure 8 – The resemblance between Loavies model 2 (left-hand image) and Mindy (right-hand image)

Figure 9 - The scene with the pink roses (S1.E4)

Figure 10 - Title font

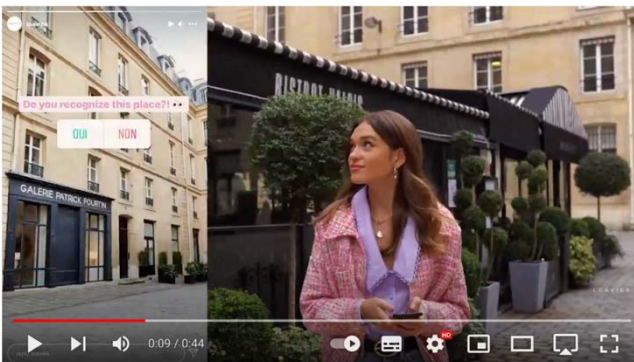*Figure 11 – Video advertisment Loavies, subtitles*

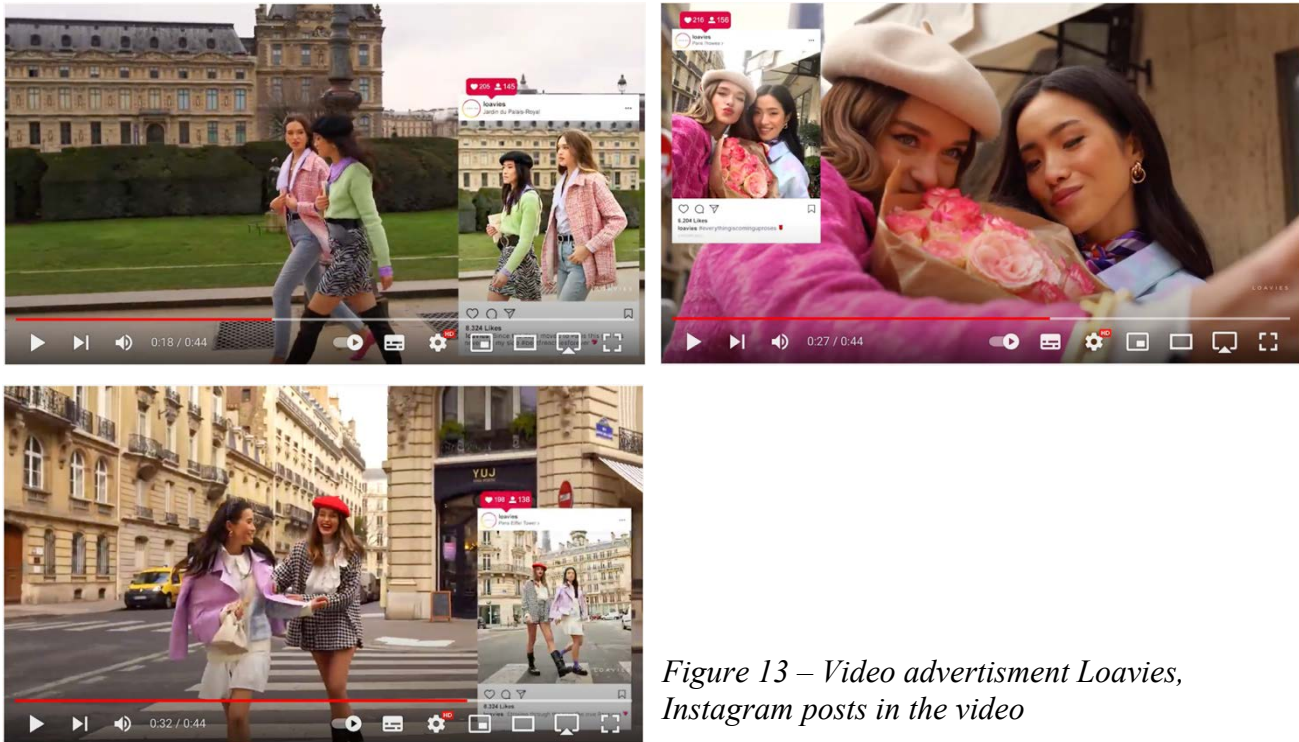*Figure 12 – Video advertisment Loavies, Instagram poll*

*Figure 13 – Video advertisment Loavies,
Instagram posts in the video*

For my analysis there are several things to note about Loavies' commercial. Firstly, that there is a strong focus on the outfits worn by the models. The outfits are changed several times and by using editing techniques such as adding Instagram posts or split screens, the viewer's attention is deliberately drawn to the fashion items. The relatively short shots and fast editing allow for a quick rotation of outfits. The viewer will therefore get a good idea of the collection in just 44 seconds and the fast pace of the video ensures that the viewer's attention is maintained. The video contains almost exclusively frontal camera shots, in which the models are visible from the front. Frontality of a character ensures that the viewer will focus on this character (Bordwell et al. 152). Because the commercial uses mainly (medium) long shots [either from feet or knees up (Bordwell et al. 189)], the clothing of the characters is constantly visible in the frame. This combination of film techniques emphasizes the importance of the clothing worn by the models. The second striking point of the video is the similarity of the setting, cast and costumes with

Emily in Paris. It is noticeable that the series was used as inspiration for the video. Loavies chose to base its style decisions on the choices made by Darren Star and his team for their series.

The visibility of the fashion items and the references to *Emily in Paris* bring me back to the findings of the theoretical framework. As became clear in the theoretical framework, an advertiser links consumer goods to a representation of the culturally constituted world by bringing them together in the frame of the advertisement. In this way, the commercial maker suggests an essential similarity between the two (McCracken 75). By using elements from the culturally constituted world in an advertisement and combining them with the consumer product under sale, the value of the elements from the culturally constituted world is transferred to the product in question (75). In the case of Loavies' video, the value is derived from the *Emily in Paris* series by using characteristic elements of the series and linking them to the fashion collection.

In summary, Loavies wants to transfer the value of *Emily in Paris* to their fast fashion collection through advertising; using cunning production, editing and filming techniques, so that the garments and the series appear together in the commercial frame. The value of the costumes in the series can be found in their inspiration from American Preppy style. The costumes emphasize how the Parisians in the series see the American Emily. These connotations with the Preppy style are carried through to the items in the Loavies collection. What is striking here is that the Preppy style was originally the symbol of status of the upper class, but since the Preppy style is now linked to Emily and Loavies translates this style into fast fashion, the symbolism of rich and powerful seems to have changed into the characteristics of the outspoken Emily. In the next chapter, I will examine whether Loavies has succeeded in transferring value in the eyes of consumers.

4 – Interviews: *Loavies in Paris in the eyes of the consumer*

In this chapter I discuss the outcomes of the interviews with consumers of the *Loavies in Paris* collection. The interviews provide a method to establish the buying motives of these consumers. As previously described, I suspect that wishful identification plays a role in the buying motives consumers of the *Loavies in Paris* collection. From my theoretical framework and visual analysis, it appears that Loavies has taken symbolic value from the Netflix series *Emily in Paris* and transferred it to the items in the *Loavies in Paris* collection, whereupon they transferred this value to consumers through marketing communication. Through the interviews, I want to find out whether Loavies' value transfer from the series to the fashion collection was successful, and thus whether consumers make a connection between the two.

4.1 Operationalization

To make sure that I answer the research question with the aid of the interviews, it is important to first establish what information I intend to obtain from the interviews. The interviews are conducted with the aim to find out whether wishful identification is a buying motive for items from the *Loavies in Paris* collection. The theory established in this thesis shows that there are two important conditions for the consumers' wishful identification process through the Loavies collection. First, the question is whether Loavies as a cultural intermediary, through its commercial, has succeeded in transferring the value associated with the series to the items in the collection. Secondly, the question is whether the consumer actually wants to identify with Emily and therefore buys the items.

Whether Loavies' value transfer from the series to the fashion collection was successful, I discover by asking the respondents what associations they have with the *Loavies in Paris*

collection. When the association between the series and the collection is unaided confirmed by the consumer, it is called top-of-mind awareness. Top-of-mind awareness is an important indicator of how consumers develop their attitudes towards a brand (Hakala et al. 441). When the *Emily in Paris* series is not mentioned by the respondent, the transfer of cultural value from the culturally constituted world to the items of the fast fashion collection of Loavies was not successful. If the *Emily in Paris* series is only mentioned after help from me as interviewer (aided awareness) (Isaacson and Botner 699), the transfer of cultural value from the culturally constituted world to the commodities was only partially successful.

Next, I want to examine whether wishful identification plays a role among consumers of the *Loavies in Paris* collection. If I were to ask a consumer directly whether she bought the items in the *Loavies in Paris* collection to look like Emily, it is plausible that she would give socially desirable answers, for example out of embarrassment. Therefore, I operationalized the term wishful identification in order to identify the relevant indicators of the wishful identification process and to be able to interview the respondents in an honest manner. These indicators are taken from an existing study on wishful identification by Hoffner and Buchanan, and (as the theoretical framework revealed) relate to the similarities and differences between the viewer and the television character (Hoffner and Buchanan 347). Hoffner and Buchanan formulated the following indicative statements to investigate whether wishful identification plays a role in consumers' buying motives: [Name endorser] is the type of person I want to be like myself; Sometimes I wish I could be more like [name endorser]; [Name endorser] is someone I would like to emulate; I'd like to do the kind of things [name endorser] does; I would never want to act the way [name endorser] does on the show (Schouten et al. 266). I have converted these indicators into open-ended questions in order to influence the consumers' answers as little as

possible. The interview guide can be found in appendix 2. Below you can find Table 1 with the

concepts and indicators used to analyze the interviews.

Table 1 - *Interview codes. Note: if an indicator is found during the analysis of the interviews,*

the corresponding concept is proven.

Concept	Indicator
Value transfer	Top-of-mind awareness
Wishful identification	[Name endorser] is the type of person I want to be like myself;
"	Sometimes I wish I could be more like [name endorser]
"	[Name endorser] is someone I would like to emulate
"	I'd like to do the kind of things [name endorser] does
"	I would never want to act the way [name endorser] does on the show

In total, for reasons of feasibility, I conducted three interviews with three young, Dutch

women of 22, 23 and 24 who have bought items from Loavies. Based on these three interviews, I

want to investigate whether the findings from the theoretical framework can be applied to these

consumers of the *Loavies in Paris* collection.

4.2 Interview findings

First of all, I want to find out whether the value transfer by Loavies from the *Emily in*

Paris series to the items in the *Loavies in Paris* collection was successful. I determine this by

asking the respondents about their associations with the *Loavies in Paris* collection. For all three

respondents, the connection between the collection and the series is rather obvious, hence they have a top-of-mind awareness, and they all cite the series in their answers.

> *Respondent 1: "Well, I am a big fan of the Emily in Paris series anyway. So, I think they [Loavies] based the clothes [Loavies in Paris collection] on that. And I think they did that very cleverly, because I think there are a lot of girls like me who can identify with Emily, the main character".*

> *Respondent 2: "Yes, that [Emily in Paris and the Loavies fashion collection] is definitely one thing! Also because of the name of the collection, which of course is very similar to the series. The series is also very popular. So, I think that link is made very quickly".*

Respondent 3 even mentions the *Emily in Paris* series before I ask her about her associations with the Loavies collection. She indicates that she drew inspiration from the series for her clothing choices. Since all three respondents have top-of-mind awareness with *Emily in Paris* when I ask them about the Loavies collection, I can say that in these cases the value transfer by Loavies was successful. Loavies has succeeded in framing the fashion items in combination with the series in such a way that their garments represent the series to the consumer. This representation also becomes apparent in the following quote from respondent 2. Here it becomes clear that the consumer's need for the clothing from the *Emily in Paris* series is fulfilled by the *Loavies in Paris* collection.

Respondent 2: "I bought a set, of a plaid skirt with a cropped blazer, because I had already

seen that outfit in the series [Emily in Paris] and I partly watched the series because I liked

the way she [Emily] was dressed. So, it's really nice that you can sort of play into that with the

[Loavies] collection.".

Furthermore, I want to find out whether wishful identification and wanting to be like

Emily is a buying motive for the fashion from the *Loavies in Paris* collection. First of all, it is a

prerequisite for wishful identification that the consumer/viewer appreciates Emily. Hoffner and

Buchanan write that women identify with female characters they consider successful, intelligent,

attractive and admired (Hoffner and Buchanan 325). Emily is positively portrayed by the

respondents as a creative, eccentric and steadfast woman with a distinctive clothing style that

reflects her personality. Respondent 2 states the following:

"I like her [Emily]. She also gets a lot of criticism, I think. Also in the series itself. But I can

appreciate her creativity. And the fact that she perhaps doesn't care that what she is wearing

is crazy, or colorful, or cheesy Parisienne".

However, not only the appreciation of Emily is sufficient to establish wishful

identification. Stacey also taught us that similarities between the viewer and the celebrity play a

role in the identification process. The theoretical framework showed that viewers value

similarities between the character and themselves, because this allows them to recognize likeable

qualities that they already own. All respondents indicate that they recognize themselves in Emily

in some way. This is mostly in the area of a similar work life. In this regard, respondent 2 states:

"I also work in a somewhat commercial field, so in that respect - I would like to think that we could be a bit alike".

Two out of three consumers share Emily's love of fashion and the urge to dress differently from the norm. Respondent 2 states:

"But I think I also [like Emily does] try to experiment with clothes - that I also like to be engaged in fashion. So, in that respect, I recognize myself in her".

Viewers also like to see differences between themselves and a series character, because these differences make them escape the daily grind and stimulates their dreams (Stacey 128). An additional requirement for the phenomenon of wishful identification is the desire to be more like Emily, or to wish for Emily's life, as Hoffner's research showed. In line with this, all three respondents indicate that they feel inspired by Emily to some extent and see her as a role model. This mainly concerns being impressed by the way Emily deals with difficult situations, and the fact that she remains so much herself despite environmental pressure, both in her attitude and her style of dress. Respondent 1 narrates:

"Well, I think I am more of a person who would personally be affected if someone acted so negative towards me, (…). So, in a way, I could take an example from her [Emily] in how she deals with certain situations".

Likewise, the life that Emily lives in Paris is highly valued by the respondents. Respondent 2 explains this in the following words:

> *"(…) going out in cool clubs, and the series has a scene where they have dinner with a table on the street between all the beautiful little neighborhoods, so I think they really create an image with that series - a kind of dream life in Paris - and what a lot of girls would like and would expect if they went to Paris". "(…) I do think that this is a life that I would like".*

Respondent 3 acknowledges: *"I think it's quite a life I would like to have myself".*

In order to reduce the differences between the celebrity [in this case Emily] and themselves, the viewer makes changes to her clothing style. That is why I also wonder to what extent the respondents' appreciation of Emily played a role in their buying motives for the *Loavies in Paris* collection. It appears from the interviews to be a significant role, as the following quotations illustrate.

> Respondent 1: *"I think these items are also something she could wear in the series, so that makes it extra cool. That when you wear it, you go "Oh, now I'm just like Emily". I think that's great".*

> Respondent 2: *"(…) That it gives you a kind of connection with a character you would like to be". "(…) maybe it's just that I do aspire to live her life, and want to get closer to it by behaving more like her [Emily], or dressing more like her".*

Respondent 3: *"(…) She [Emily] is portrayed as a person who wants to make an effort for others and who sticks very much to her own character, and I find that very impressive. I have less of that myself, so in that respect I would like to be like her. And I think that's also why I made this choice of clothes, because then I look a bit more like her and maybe I can take on a part of her personality in that sense".*

For respondent 2, appreciation by the people around her also proves to be a positive side effect of wearing the Loavies collection. This is very much in line with Stacey's theory on cinematic identification, in which she pointed out that an important motive for self-transformation of a viewer is the need for recognition by others (Stacey 173).

Respondent 2 says the following about this recognition: *"(…) it's also a popular series, so I think other people recognize the clothes as well. So they would point out to you, "Wow, you really look like Emily", or "Wow it really looks like you're from Emily in Paris". (…) I would take that as a compliment".*

The interviews show that for this threesome of consumers, wishful identification certainly appears to be a buying motive for the *Loavies in Paris* collection. This proves that the value transfer by Loavies has been successful for them and that these three consumers want to be like Emily and try to pursue this through clothing choices.

5 - Conclusion

In this bachelor thesis I posed the Research Question "How did the clothing style from the *Netflix* series *Emily in Paris* inspire the *Loavies in Paris* fast-fashion collection?". I did so because I am fascinated by the appearance of fashion items in the collections of fast fashion brands, which were originally costumes in the series *Emily in Paris*. In the introduction, I mentioned that fast fashion brands, including Loavies, inspired fashion collections on the series and I wondered how this inspiration process manifested itself.

In order to answer my question, I introduced the most important and relevant concepts and theories in the theoretical framework. I briefly addressed the concept of fast fashion, and then provided a more detailed description of the concepts of cultural intermediaries and wishful identification. I found that fashion helps women form their identity and that in the case of wishful identification with characters from film or television series, identity is based on similarities and differences between the viewer and the character. From the theory, the following plausible scenario for the *Loavies in Paris* collection emerged: The viewer of the series romanticizes the life of her favorite television character [Emily] and wants to create it for herself. She does this by reducing the differences between them through copying Emily's style of dress. Put differently, the viewer tries to mimic part of the identity of Emily by imitating the clothing style of this idealized person.

I found out that consumers themselves do not have the means to realize their wished identity, but need cultural intermediaries [those who add value to consumer goods] to derive value from the culturally constituted world, link it to commodities - in this case the items of the *Loavies in Paris* collection - and transfer this value to the individual consumer. This transfer of value can be done through advertising and identification with film or television characters.

I then proceeded to the visual analysis of the costumes in the series and the fashion collection, and the visual analysis of a commercial of the *Loavies in Paris* collection, before conducting interviews to find answers to my research question. The costume analysis showed that Emily's style of dress is American Preppy. This style is related to the French BCBG style, but is described by Thierry Mantoux as too garish. Emily is in the series also seen as too garish by Parisians, which suggests that her costuming refers to her character. Another remarkable point is the following. As I wrote in the theoretical framework, according to Sull and Turconi fast fashion is "democratizing couture and bringing trendy, affordable items to the masses" (Sull and Turconi 5). The Preppy style, which originates from the upper classes, is democratized through the translation into the fast fashion collection by Loavies.

In conducting the commercial analysis, I found two conditions that emerged from the theoretical framework for value transfer from *Emily in Paris* to the *Loavies in Paris* items. With the use of short shots and fast editing, different outfits appear in the commercial, which are represented by frontal shots, (medium) long shots and emphasized by pop-ups of Instagram posts or split screens. As a result of this filming and editing technique, there is a strong emphasis on the outfits of the models; the consumer goods [to which Loavies adds symbolic value] play a leading role in the commercial frame. The second leading role in the commercial frame is played by television series *Emily in Paris* [the object from the culturally constituted world, of which Loavies derives value]. Loavies has chosen to base the setting, cast and costumes of their commercial on the choices made by Darren Star. The theory set out in the theoretical framework helped me to place this analysis in a wider context and confirm that by using elements from the Netflix series in a commercial and combining them with the items from the *Loavies in Paris* collection, Loavies is trying to transfer the value of the elements from the series to the fashion

items in question. To examine whether, in the eyes of the consumer, the transfer of value through cultural intermediary Loavies from the *Emily in Paris* series to the fast fashion collection has actually occurred, I interviewed three consumers. My second aim of these interviews was to find out whether consumers buy the products from the *Loavies in Paris* collection because of wishful identification. And if this was not the underlying buying motive, whether that was the result of a failed value transfer by Loavies or the consumer's lack of desire to identify with Emily. These interviews revealed that consumers considered the clothes from the *Loavies in Paris* collection as a means of satisfying their need to resemble Emily. This means that, for these three consumers, both the value transfer by Loavies and wishful identification as a buying motive can be confirmed.

On the basis of the research I conducted for this bachelor thesis, the answer to the research question can be formulated as follows: The clothing style from the Netflix series *Emily in Paris* inspired the fast-fashion collection *Loavies in Paris* through a phenomenon that occurs among consumers and is termed wishful identification. Consumers want to reduce the differences between their own appearance and that of their favorite celebrity in order to enhance their own identity. However, without the participation of cultural intermediaries, the required fashion items are not available on the market yet and are therefore not available to consumers. Since consumers themselves do not have the means to fulfill their wished identification, they depend on cultural intermediaries. Loavies is such a cultural intermediary. In the case of the *Loavies in Paris* collection, the role of Loavies was to transfer the cultural value associated with the *Emily in Paris* series to the items of the *Loavies in Paris* fast fashion collection. Loavies transferred the cultural meaning through advertisements that suggest similarities between the fashion items and the series. Cultural intermediary Loavies offers the consumer a method to achieve the wished

identification through this value transfer. Consumers acquire the items of the *Loavies in Paris* collection, that are now associated with the *Emily in Paris* series, and in this way forms their own identity.

It is striking that the identity consumers derive from the items is no longer characterized by the value of the Preppy style. Besides offering the consumer a method of self-transformation through the value transfer performed, Loavies also transforms symbolic value in a larger context. By translating Emily's costumes, which are characterized by the Preppy style, into fast fashion, a democratization of the Preppy look occurs. The value of the Preppy style has shifted from 'rich and powerful' to 'a creative, eccentric and steadfast woman' [Emily's characteristics, according to the consumers interviewed], and due to the easy availability, this identity is available to everyone.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: costume analysis season 1 *Emily in Paris*

Emily in Paris outfits			
Season	**Episode**	**Outfit**	**"**
1	1	1	Yellow checkered puffer jacket Black sports leggings
1	1	2	Pink dress with black, white, red print Black belt Light pink blazer jacket
1	1	3	Red checkered shirt White cropped top Black jeans
1	1	4	Green miniskirt with snake print Shirt with photo print
1	1	5	Yellow maxi dress with spaghetti straps and black print Black belt
1	1	6	Short-sleeved satin pyjamas with glasses print
1	2	1	Black sports leggings White lace top
1	2	2	Turquoise mao jacket with glitter details Mix&match top and skirt
1	2	3	Black a-line tulle dress with heart-shaped neckline Statement bag
1	2	4	Beige a-line midi skirt Pop-art top with polka dot bow Jacket with Keith Haring print
1	2	5	White ruffle top Jeans Beach hat
1	2	6	Short-sleeved satin pyjamas with glasses print
1	2	7	Off shoulder dress with flower print
1	3	1	Black sports leggings White lace top

1	3	2	Red bathrobe with Chinese floral print Blue towel
1	3	3	Black and white chequered blazer with pearl buttons Shorts with matching print Red beret
1	3	4	Cropped top Black trousers with green and pink line along the side
1	3	5	Red bathrobe with Chinese floral print Blue towel
1	3	6	Off shoulder dress with flower print
1	3	7	White sleeveless top Pink pleated skirt Light pink bomber jacket
1	3	8	Light blue floral dress with turtleneck Ice blue leather jacket
1	4	1	Pink trench coat Multicolored tie dye jumper
1	4	2	Green metallic leather jacket Fuchsia scarf (neck) Pink and green pleated skirt
1	4	3	Pink and red a-line pleated skirt with matching top Bordeaux red velvet bomber jacket
1	5	1	Green mao jacket Scarf (neck) Checkered mini skirt Checkered top Checkered bucket hat
1	5	2	Yellow, black and red checkered blazer with matching dress underneath
1	5	3	Checkered shorts White blouse Mix&match cardigan jacket
1	6	1	Black leather blazer Black dress
1	6	2	Checkered bucket hat Red and white jacket with pied de poule print Checkered skirt High boots

1	6	3	Black and red checkered jacket
			Dress with lip print
1	6	4	White knitted turtleneck
			Turquoise mao jacket with glitter details
			Jumper with chequered pattern across the shoulders
			Mini skirt with flower print
1	6	5	Black off shoulder pleated dress
			Black fur jacket
1	6	6	Checkered trench coat
			Red blouse with ruffles
			Jeans
1	7	1	Black miniskirt
			Purple blouse with print
			White spencer
			Black mao jacket
			Pink bucket hat
1	7	2	Turquoise mao jacket with glitter details
			Multicolored pleated skirt
			Glitter top
1	7	3	Glitter dress
			Red trench coat
1	7	4	Green trench coat
			Checkered cardigan jacket
1	8	1	Checkered mini skirt
			Red corduroy jacket
			Blue turtleneck
			White high boots
1	8	2	Red glitter blazer
1	8	3	Multicolored knitted jumper
			Pink beanie
			Black jacket
			Black trousers
			Lilac sunglasses
1	8	4	Pink knitted jumper
			Jeans
1	8	5	White ruffle blouse
			Red checkered and cropped blazer
			Jeans

1	9	1	Pink miniskirt Black and pink checkered jumper Pink high boots Pink trench coat
1	9	2	Black, pink and grey trench coat
1	9	3	Red ruffle blouse Purple melange jacket
1	9	4	Glitter mini dress See-through trench coat with colored details
1	9	5	Pink turtleneck Multicoloured jacket Black skirt
1	10	1	Trench coat with pocket print Black dress Black glitter collar
1	10	2	Pink and white cap with pied de poule print White and grey checkered jacket Pink denim jacket with pied de poule print Matching skirt
1	10	3	Black and white tracksuit jacket Pink denim jacket Blouse dress white with black print Black and white beret with pied de poule print
1	10	4	Padded jacket with floral print Pink beret
1	10	5	Blue blazer jacket Brooch Red dress Blue beret with red pompom

Appendix 2: interviewguide

Date:	Gender:
Age:	Place of residence:

Part 1 - the first questions are about clothing and shopping in general:

1) On what basis do you make clothing choices?

Part 2 - the following questions are about the *Loavies in Paris* collection:

2) What associations do you have with the *Loavies in Paris* collection?

3) Which item from the *Loavies in Paris* collection did you buy?

4) Why did you buy an item from the *Loavies in Paris* collection?

Part 3 - the following questions are about the series E*mily in Paris*:

5) Have you seen the Netflix series *Emily in Paris*?

6) If so, what did you think of the series?

7) Can you tell me something about protagonist Emily cooper?

8) What do you think of Emily?

9) What do you think of Emily's social life?

10) What do you think of Emily's work life?

11) To what extent is this a life you would want to live yourself?

12) How do you see yourself in relation to Emily?

13) What do you think of Emily's clothing style?

14) How do you see your own clothing style in relation to Emily's style?

15) To what extent did your appreciation (or depreciation) of Emily play a role in your decision to

buy the *Loavies in Paris* collection?