

Sharing is Caring

How Collaborative Fashion Consumption encourage sustainable
fashion consumer behavior of Dutch female consumers

Radboud University



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Summary

Collaborative fashion consumption is an alternate form of consuming that aims to tackle the present difficulties of female consumers' impulse shopping and throwaway culture of clothing. The purpose of this master's thesis is to explore how this alternative consumption trend and Instagram initiatives contribute to more sustainable fashion consumer behavior among Dutch female consumers aged 18 to 25. To that end, a visual analysis of the Instagram platforms of five collaborative fashion consumption initiatives, as well as in-depth interviews with eleven Dutch female consumers aged 18 to 25, are conducted. The findings show that Instagram acts as an impulse on female purchasing behavior and can contribute to more sustainable consumer behavior. The interviews demonstrate female consumers' attitudes and motives for engaging in collaborative fashion consumption, such as trust, fashionability, quality, price, enjoyment, convenience, trends, hygiene, and knowledge. The research also highlights that there is still a gap between desire and actual behavior, known as the 'attitude-behavior gap.' Future research is needed to gain a deeper understanding of female consumers' motivations and attitudes, as well as how initiatives might convey knowledge and inspiration to contribute to more sustainable behavior.

Keywords: *Fast Fashion, Sustainable Fashion, Sharing Economy, Collaborative Fashion*

Consumption: individual ownership (gifting, swapping, secondhand) and Usage options (sharing, leasing, renting, lending) and, Consumer Behavior.

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Introduction

The clothing and textile industry is big business, but also a major contributor to environmental, social, cultural, and political problems, making it one of the most polluting industries in the world (Moorhouse & Moorhouse 4). Fashion is change, and one of its fundamental characteristics is the quick and continuous altering of trends (Wilson 3). The fast fashion sector, which began in the late 1990s with items from the Spanish corporation Zara and enterprises such as H&M or Mango, is a significant element of the apparel and textile industry (Maynard 548). The fast fashion industry, which is defined by rapid mass production of cheap and low-quality clothes based on trend spotting, assures that consumers are quickly bored of their clothes and have the desire to buy new pieces every month (Maynard 542). Fast fashion firms employ the 'quick response' method in communication technology developments to provide immediate access to the newest styles (Maynard 548). New, trendy apparel that represents the newest trends may be purchased at low prices and with minimal turnaround times, causing consumers to wear garments for a short period of time (Osbaldiston 36). Anneke Smelik argues the following: "Fashion is thus made of both material things and symbolic signs, produced by individual and collective agents, which all merge through practices of production, consumption, distribution and representation (5). This shows the force that fast fashion has on the consumers' psyche (Maynard 549). Also, consumers seek emotional highs by purchasing new clothes and this addictively search leads to impulse shopping (Niinimäki 15). This way of fashion consumption has been increasing all over the world and causes millions of tons of textile to be disposed of (Iran and Schrader 2017, 468). Consequently, this results in textile waste all over the world, which has major impact on the environment (WRAP, 2012). One-quarter of the carbon footprint of clothing comes from the usage phase and post-usage phase, which accounts for two-thirds of the lifecycle waste (WRAP, 2012). For this reason, the reduction of disposed textiles could be a great economic and environmental opportunity (Iran and Schrader 2017, 468). An increasing amount of fast fashion pieces leads to volumes of clothing accessible for

reuse (Maynard 543). Also, sustainable fashion helps to empower workers throughout the supply chain, the utilization of upcycling and recycling, and the use of organic and renewable resources as well as conventional production processes (Henninger et al, 2016, 3). Because of the COVID-19 epidemic, consumers from generation Z, consumers born between 1995 and 2010 (Djafarova and Bowes 1) are reconsidering their present practices and becoming more conscious of the influence of their clothing purchasing behavior on the environment (Henninger et al, 2021, 1). Alternative and sustainable approaches to fashion, such as the use of secondhand clothing, recycling, and even sharing have evolved (Maynard 550). As a result, new patterns of product usage and consumer behavior can aid in the transformation of lifestyles to become more sustainable (Iran and Schrader, 2017, 468).

My research focuses on the 'Collaborative Fashion Consumption' trend in the Netherlands. Collaborative fashion consumption is a subset of the 'sharing economy' or 'collaborative economy,' which is a global trend toward more sustainable consumption that benefits the economy, environment, and society (Ciulli 996). Trends such as "collaborative consumption" and the "sharing economy" have lately gained popularity in a variety of industries (Iran 190). By replacing ownership of commodities and services with access to and sharing of resources, goods, and services, the sharing economy encourages more effective use of resources (Nwaorgu 240). Collaborative fashion consumption is a development of the sharing economy that is connected to the circular economy, since it seeks to divert passive clothing, textiles, and accessories from garbage and extend their usefulness (Henninger et al, 2021, 2). Consumers thus get access to garments that already exist through individual ownership, such as gifting, swapping, and secondhand, or through usage options of fashion products, such as sharing, renting, leasing, and lending (Iran 190). Samira Iran and Ulf Schrader define collaborative fashion consumption as:

“a consumption trend in which consumers, instead of buying new fashion products, have access to already existing garments either through alternative opportunities to acquire individual ownership (gifting, swapping, or second hand) or through usage options for fashion products owned by others (sharing, lending, renting, or leasing)” (2017, 472).

Collaborative fashion consumption can help prevent purchases of new goods, thus addressing overproduction, throwaway culture, and resource exploitation within the fast fashion business (Botsman 32). Access to and sharing existing commodities and services helps provide social value since it creates trust, social connection, and solidarity among individuals, supports communal forms of consumption, and allows people who cannot buy it to participate (Ciulli 996). Individuals will cooperate to act in the common good and promising solutions of a long-term positive change are beneficial to assist groups of consumers in their willingness and motivations to trust and practice more sustainable consumption models (Botsman 22). This indicates that new product usage and consumer behavior patterns might aid in reducing material overconsumption (Iran and Schrader, 2017, 469). Collaborative fashion consumption may be a solution to make the fast fashion business more sustainable, as well as assisting consumers in being more conscious of their social obligations and concerns about the influence that their consumption behavior will have (McNeill and Venter 369).

Within this master thesis, I choose to research collaborative fashion consumption initiatives on Instagram that are focused on the usage options of fashion products, such as sharing, renting, leasing, and lending. I will focus on the Dutch initiatives LENA – The Fashion Library, The COLLECTIVES, Litchy, and MUD Jeans and the Lithuanian initiative Vinted. To be more specific, my master's thesis investigates how the consumption trend collaborative fashion consumption and the initiatives just mentioned contribute to more sustainable fashion patterns of Dutch female consumers between the age of 18 and 25 years that are part of

generation Z. In-depth interviews will provide me with answers about the consumption patterns of this target group and help me investigate how collaborative fashion consumption contribute to sustainable purchasing behavior. Consequently, I formulate my research question as follows:

“How does the trend of collaborative fashion consumption (and initiatives on Instagram) contribute to more sustainable fashion consumer behavior of Dutch female consumers between the age of 18 and 25 years?”

To make sure that the main research question can be answered, it will be divided into the following sub-questions:

1. “What is the trend of collaborative fashion consumption?”
2. “In what ways do collaborative fashion consumption initiatives, LENA – The Fashion Library, The COLLECTIVES, Litchy, Vinted, and MUD Jeans make leasing, sharing, lending, and renting of clothes more attractive, fashionable and trendier on Instagram to encourage more sustainable consumer behavior?”
3. “What are the attitudes of Dutch female consumers between the age of 18 and 25 years old (generation Z) towards the sustainable trend of collaborative fashion consumption?”
4. How do these attitudes relate to known motives of collaborative fashion consumption?”
5. “How do the findings of the collaborative fashion consumption initiatives and the interviews lead to more sustainable fashion consumer behavior among Dutch female consumers between the age of 18 and 25 years?”

This thesis consists of four chapters. In chapter one, I will give a theoretical introduction to introduce the key concepts of this research object within Fashion Studies. This theoretical framework addresses some of the referenced Fashion Theories, various views, and literature

about these concepts. The key concepts that I discuss are fast fashion, sustainable fashion, sharing economy, collaborative fashion consumption and consumer behavior. The theoretical framework helps to clarify the research field and to formulate interview questions. In the second chapter, I discuss what the trend of collaborative fashion consumption exactly is and explain the concept of individual ownership and usage options. To be more specific, I will discuss the various forms of usage options: sharing, leasing, renting, and lending in more depth and provide examples of Dutch collaborative fashion consumption initiatives and one Lithuanian initiative. The information of these initiatives on Instagram and their websites will be studied, analyzed, and explained in more detail. The third chapter addresses information about the motives and attitudes of Dutch female consumers between the age of 18 and 25 years old towards collaborative fashion consumption. To obtain information about these motives and attitudes, I will conduct empirical research and will interview eleven Dutch female consumers. The interview questions are based on the literature review of fashion theory from chapters 1 and 2. I will discuss the consumers' attitudes and motives and then connect those to already known collaborative fashion consumption motives. These findings will help to get knowledge about sustainable fashion consumer behavior among Dutch female consumers between the age of 18 and 25 years and how collaborative fashion consumption initiatives can lead to more sustainable fashion consumer behavior among this target group. Chapter 4, interpretation, brings together theory and the results of the empirical research from chapter 3. The theoretical concepts will help further interpret the empirical results and provide an answer to the main research question. In the conclusion, the main research question and sub- questions are answered.

Methodology

In my master thesis I will answer the following main research question: “How does the trend of collaborative fashion consumption (and initiatives on Instagram) contribute to more sustainable fashion consumer behavior of Dutch female consumers between the age of 18 and 25 years?”. To provide an answer to the main research question, I will employ different methods. In the first chapter, I will provide a literature review of relevant sources in Fashion Studies and clarify the key concepts. In the second chapter, I will introduce the trend of collaborative fashion consumption and different initiatives in the Netherlands and one Lithuanian initiative. The initiatives that I will focus on are LENA – The Fashion Library (lending), The COLLECTIVES (renting), Litchy (renting), Vinted (sharing, swapping), and MUD Jeans (leasing). I chose to investigate these initiatives, because when I was looking on Instagram pages myself these initiatives stood out to me the most. Also, because, MUD Jeans and LENA- The Fashion Library were one of the first initiatives in the Netherlands that are focused on leasing and lending, and the COLLECTIVES, Litchy, and Vinted are new initiatives in the Netherlands that are focused on renting and sharing. These initiatives try to ensure a positive change in the fashion industry, which is important to show a counter response to fast fashion chains. With the help of Instagram these initiatives try to make collaborative fashion consumption options more fashionable and trendier to encourage more sustainable consumer behavior to create a more circular fashion industry. I will describe these collaborative fashion consumption initiatives and analyze one Instagram post per initiative to find out how these initiatives raise awareness about sustainable fashion consumption on Instagram and how they make these options more fashionable and trendier. In the third chapter, I choose to use the in-depth interview method to investigate the attitudes of eleven Dutch female consumers between the age of 18 and 25 years old that are part of generation Z towards the trend of collaborative fashion consumption and how the target group perceives information of the collaborative

fashion consumption initiatives. It is important to understand consumer behavior, because this helps me understand what influences consumers buyers' decisions and how to change these into more sustainable decisions. For reasons of feasibility, I decided to only focus on eleven Dutch female consumers, also because most collaborative fashion initiatives focus on young, female consumers that are part of generation Z. I choose to focus on the age between 18 and 25 years old, because this age group is probably more open to new and innovative ideas and concepts, but also are influenced by fashion trends and are impulse buyers. I will interview respondents from my own personal environment, because I noticed that they are buy a lot of fast fashion clothes but are open to make more conscious and sustainable clothing choices. Moreover, for my master thesis I had to narrow the potentially large group down to a focus group of eleven people, because this qualitative research fits the time and scope of this research.

For the interviews I will ask the respondents questions based on the concepts from Fashion Theory that will emerge from the literature review. These questions are about their fashion consumption behavior in general, about the fast fashion industry and its issues, about sustainable fashion, about what collaborative fashion consumption is, and whether they already participate in collaborative fashion consumption. In addition, I will ask them questions about the information on the Instagram platforms of the collaborative fashion consumption initiatives that I am researching for this master's thesis. The answers to these questions should help me get insights in the fashion consumption behavior in general and the attitudes and motives towards collaborative fashion consumption of Dutch female consumers between the age of 18 and 25 years in order to determine whether the interviewees are willing to change their consumer behaviour. In-depth interviews will be conducted in a semi-structured manner for this study. This means that I will make a list of questions about my research object in advance. During these interviews, I am free to interrogate the respondents on what they think, feel, or act a certain way. In this way, I make sure that the respondents talk freely. I will record the

interviews, so that I can transcribe these into text. I will deduct the most relevant and important statements from the in-depth interviews and analyze them through open coding. Moreover, I will base the codes on the concepts from the theoretical literature. The codes are allocated to the most relevant elements of the replies that provide themes, allowing me to group statements from multiple interviews into one category. These various codes, as well as the relationships between them, provide a comprehensive view of whether and how the interviewees are willing to consume in a more sustainable manner. This clear overview will help me to draw some conclusions. The interview questions and codes will be added as an appendix of my master thesis. The following section will be a theoretical framework in which the key concepts, literature and theories are discussed.

Chapter 1. Theoretical Framework

1.1 Introduction

In my master's thesis, I will examine the trend of 'Collaborative Fashion Consumption' as well as initiatives centered on sharing, renting, leasing, and lending. To learn more about this topic and the link between sustainability and fashion, I will do literature research utilizing a variety of academic sources. There are five key concepts that are important throughout my master's thesis, and I will discuss theories, views, and literature of every concept separately to get more insight. The first key concept that I will discuss is fast fashion and the social, cultural, and environmental challenges that it creates. Then, I will explain the concept of sustainable fashion and investigate why the fashion business must become more sustainable, as well as why sustainable fashion initiatives are becoming increasingly relevant today. The third concept that I discuss is the concept of the sharing economy, because the trend of collaborative fashion consumption is part of this global trend. Then I will explain the concept of collaborative fashion consumption. This trend can be divided in two different parts: individual ownership and usage options. These two parts and the key concept are explained in more depth in the second chapter. The last key concept that I discuss is the concept of consumer behavior that is based on fashion consumption. This is an important key concept, because this research is focused on the attitudes of Dutch female consumers to change their consumer behavior and to become more conscious.

1.2 The concept of Fast Fashion

The first key concept that is important throughout this master thesis is fast fashion. Before explaining what fast fashion is, first the term fashion is defined. Fashion is a way of dressing the body, according to Joanne Entwistle (6). Moreover, in all societies the body is 'dressed, and dress play communicative, symbolic, and aesthetic roles (Wilson 3). Malcolm Barnard defines fashion as 'what people wear including all instances of what people wear,

from catwalk creations, through High Street and outlet purchases, to police and military uniforms' (3). At the end of the Middle Ages in the West with the growth of the European city and the mercantile capitalistic system, fashion was added to dress (3). The fashionable dress was something new and different and in modern West societies, fashion was a way for the elites to distinguish themselves from the lower classes (Welters and Lillethun 8). Haute Couture centered on Western women's clothes was preserved for the rich upper classes until the end of 1960s (Maynard 547). Also, Haute Couture products demonstrate the pursuit of individualistic styles, and the quality of this clothing and its glossy fashion images drives consumer desire (547). Malcom Barnard debated that fashion is ambiguous, it can be either 'one of the crowning achievements of Western Civilization or it is incontrovertible evidence of consumer's culture's witless obsession with trivial and the unreal' (2). Since the 1960s fashion consists out of many different categories, such as mass and volume fashion, prêt-à-porter, ready-to-wear, streetstyle, and fast fashion (Maynard 548).

A form of volume fashion, 'fast' fashion, differs from ready-to-wear and couture and is a phenomenon that emerged globally at the end of the 1990s (548). Fast fashion is characterized by rapid changes of stylish clothes, is more tangential, is based on demand-driven business models and clothes are sold in middle-range chain stores in malls or on high streets (25). The changing dynamics of the fashion industry, such as increase in number of seasons, short life cycle, and the fading of mass production force retailers to desire flexibility in design and low costs, cheap quality and delivery and speed to market (Bhardwaj and Fairhurst 165). Moreover, clothes and styles are produced with a shorter lifespan and made of cheap fabrics, which makes that apparel has become the cheapest of the cheap commodities (Schor 48). Fast fashion has become commonplace on the high streets, because of competing global brands such as Zara and H&M (Clark 428). Vertica

Bhardwaj and Ann Fairhurst state that “in order to survive the competition, fashion apparel retailers switched from product-driven to buyer- driven chains, developed alliances with suppliers in different markets, and promoted their distinctive brands” (167). In this way, the fashion apparel industry developed an infrastructure which emphasizes on promoting responsiveness through shorter processing times with supporting low costs (168). These companies try to forecast consumer demand and fashion trends to compete in the market (Bhardwaj and Fairhurst 165). Retailers use the ‘quick response’ method, which is the facilitation of rapid access to the newest styles by the help of communication technologies and digitalization (Maynard 548). Also, online marketing websites, such as ASOS are dispensers of trendy fashions. Margaret Maynard describes ASOS, the dispenser of trendy fashion, as follows:

“The ASOS website allows consumers to see the most popular outfits over the recent past, be part of a fashion community, upload a favorite photograph of themselves, express their own fashion personality and develop a style profile” (549).

This ‘quick respond method’ that is based on trendspotting ensures that consumers are quickly bored of their clothes and wear garments for a short period of time (Osbaldeston 36). According to Vertica Bhardwaj and Ann Fairhurst, fashion is in this way “considered to be a temporary phenomenon adopted by consumers for a particular time” (167). As a result, global fashion consumption has been increasing to an estimated of 62 million tonnes of textile products a year (Niinimäki, 2020, 189) and because fashion is considered as a temporary phenomenon millions of tons of textiles or unwanted clothing are disposed (Iran and Schrader, 2017, 1). This shows that the fast fashion industry produces fixed amounts

of textile waste: almost 92 million tonnes per year whereof much of unwanted- and unsold clothing end up in landfills or is burnt (Niinimäki, 2020, 189).

The fast fashion industry is a complex market with many actors and environmental, social, and cultural challenges. Not only, the enormous generated tonnes of waste are a problem, also the use of large quantities of energy, water, and chemicals and pollution are big challenges (Veldhoven 5). To be more specific, the apparel industry uses 1.5 trillion liters water per year, is responsible for 20% of water pollution because of textile dyeing and treatments, produces almost 10% of Global CO₂ emissions, and contributes to 35% of oceanic microplastic pollution (Niinimäki, 2020, 189). In the usage phase, the energy consumed in laundering during air heating and laundry heating also have environmental impacts (Defra, 2011). One factor of the shift in history from couture to low-priced clothing is therefore the failure to pay the ecological costs (Schor 49). The environmental impacts are ignored, and manufacturers do not pay for what they do to farmlands, local water supplies, climate, atmosphere, and worker and consumer health what manifests itself in offering clothes for low prices (49).

The fast-fashion system is not only polluting, but also has an impact on our society. To be more specific, the fast fashion industry exploits people working in the industry with bad working conditions and low wages (Schor 37). The shift of manufacturing and processes of fashion apparel from North-America and Western countries to lower-labour-cost countries became more popular (Bhardwaj and Fairhust 168). Developing countries, like India, China, or Bangladesh are competing by offering multinational fashion brands the fastest, most flexible production and the lowest costs (Schor 37). Most people (also children) working in these fashion fabrics work for long hours and for a minimum wage that only represents half to a fifth of their living wage (37). In addition, they also work in any working condition, while these are often unhealthy and dangerous (37). These workers

work for instance in unsafe buildings, without ventilation, inhaling fiber dust and toxic chemicals, and dealing with diseases, accidents, and fires.

Overall, the fast fashion industry functions globally on an increasing scale, which makes its enormous problems a growing cause of concern (Clark 428). Designers are beginning to take a more sustainable or 'slow' approach to design and producing garments (429). In this way sustainable fashion becomes more important everyday and different businesses, designers, consumers, producers and brands are taking more responsible and conscious steps to solve the enormous problems that the fast fashion industry causes.

1.3 The concept of Sustainable Fashion

Sustainable fashion is the second key concept that I will discuss. In 1972 with the *Limits to Growth* of the Club of Rome, there already was a sense of urgency to respond to many worldwide issues, such as resource consumption that worsen the conditions of humanity (546). The Club of Rome was an informal organization that consisted out of a group of thirty individuals from ten countries: educators, scientists, industrialists, economists, and national and international servants (Meadows et al. 9). The Club of Rome describes its purposes as follows:

“To foster understanding of the varied but interdependent components – economic, political, natural, and social- that make up the global system in which we all live; to bring that new understanding to the attention of policy-makers and the public worldwide; and in this way to promote new policy initiatives and action” (9)

In other words, the Club of Rome wanted to examine the major and complex issues that are facing mankind to show their concern about the future of the world. Many people believe that

the survival and future of human society depends on the speed and effective sustainable response to these worldwide problems (Meadows et al. 17). Sustainability then became an important key concept. In 1987, the famous report of the World Commission on Environment and Development, “Our Common Future” by the United Nations which was a global agenda for change, described sustainability as “meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs” (WCDE, 1987, 16). The focus on predicaments of the worlds included also concerns about excessive consumption, which is seen in the fashion industry (Maynard 546). Moreover, the report by the United Nations also focused on the Industrial growth and its impact and on strategies for sustainable industrial developments (WCDE, 1987, 7). The question of sustainability within the fashion industry is difficult, because of the complexity of the industry with its many cultural, social, political, and environmental issues as mentioned before (Maynard 544). In addition, there is only a small part of the world’s population that are concerned about these problems and who are seeking solutions (Meadows et al. 17). An increasing number of designers advocating for more environmentally friendly design, sourcing, and production methods (Kedron 3). Sustainable and slow fashion emerged as response to these problems.

Sustainable fashion is part of the Slow Fashion Movement and developed over the past decades. The Slow Fashion Movement is based on the philosophical ideal that centers on sustainable values within the fashion industry, for example improved, good working conditions and reducing environmental problems (Henninger et al, 2016, 2). This movement challenges the fast fashion paradigm by slowing down the production process, breaking down boundaries between the organization and stakeholders, and empowers workers by giving them a choice of change (Clark 429). Sustainable fashion considers the natural, social, and economic ‘price’ that is paid in the fast fashion industry (Henninger et al, 2016, 2). In the 1960, before the Club of Rome, sustainable fashion first emerged when consumers became aware of the big impact that

clothing production had on the environment and wanted that the fashion industry change its practices (3). Also, the direct action and non-violent NGO Greenpeace was founded in 1971 (Ortega-Egea and García-de-Frutos 39) and in 1981 anti-fur campaigns emerged (Maynard 546). At the time that the concept of fast fashion emerged as a commercial factor, the term sustainable consumption entered the common language in the 1990s (Maynard 546). In the late 1990s ethical clothing, which is associated with a sustainable business model, fair working conditions, certifications, organic and environmentally friendly materials and traceability, emerged (Henninger 2). Moreover, ethical fashion is clothing that is manufactured with high regard for environmental standards and fair-trade principles within the production process (Iran and Schrader, 2017, 3). In addition, sustainable fashion refers to apparel that is designed, produced, (re)used and disposed in a way that it is in line with the concept of sustainable development (3). From the early twenty-first century, wide ranging analyses of dress, textiles, and environmental sustainability increased (546). Margaret Maynard was one of the first fashion historians who questioned the ethical and environmental responsibility of the fashion industry in her chapter ‘Clothing: Is There a Responsible Choice?’ in the book *Dress and Globalization* (2004). From this moment on, more was published about the subject of fashion and social responsibility (Maynard 546).

Nowadays, designers are beginning to take a more sustainable or ‘slow’ approach to design and producing garments (Clark 429). These designers make use of a selection durable and lasting materials and design aesthetic clothes that are not trend-based (Kedron 15). The terms ‘sustainable’, ‘eco-friendly’ and ‘responsible’ appear in magazines, marketing materials, brand reports, and advertising (Kedron 3). Also, high-profile fashion magazines identified that designers and consumers shift into ‘green’ and ‘ethical’ clothing (Kedron 3). Hazel Clark writes the following:

“Sustainable or ‘slow’ fashion approach is introduced to identify sustainable solutions based on the repositioning of strategies of design, production, consumption, use, and reuse, which are emerging alongside the global fashion system and are posing a potential challenge to it” (428).

This demonstrates that a slow or sustainable fashion approach based on an alternative mode of production, as well as research focusing on consumer attitudes and perceptions of sustainable fashion, have become increasingly essential (Henninger et al, 2016, 2). Moreover, sustainability needs action from both consumers, producers, and businesses (Moorhouse and Moorhouse 4). Furthermore, the economic collapse in 2007 ended the staggering pace of consumer purchasing and also brought a sudden halt to the fast-fashion system (Schor 40). The attitudes towards consumption also changed, because of concerns about ecological impacts and attention to climate change (41). More important, a balanced approach to fashion production, which is focused on transparency, builds local production, and is fostered on long-term relationships within the supply chain is key to the slow fashion movement and sustainable fashion (Henninger et al, 2016, 3).

In addition, it is sometimes difficult for consumers to understand the range of meanings, practices, and associations that fall under the category sustainable fashion (Kedron 3). Organizations use words as environmentally friendly, eco, green, or organic in their marketing communications, which is beneficial in the fashion production process (Henninger et al, 2016, 4). In addition, this advertising is sometimes misleading, because of greenwashing (4). Henninger describes greenwashing as follows: “This implies that an organization knowingly has a poor environmental performance, yet communicates positively about it” (4). In this way consumers mistrust sustainability claims and are trying to make sense of what counts as sustainable and what and where they have to buy sustainable clothes (3). Furthermore, the

increased availability of clothes strengthens the attitude-behavior gap of consumers (Henninger et al, 2016, 4). Consumers who want purchase sustainable clothes, do not always show this within their behavior and they lack awareness or knowledge. This results in that it is important that designers, producers, and brands are transparent about what slow and sustainable fashion exactly is, where to buy sustainable clothes, how to become more conscious and, what different and alternative approaches to fashion there are. To be more specific, transparency refers to enterprises where the line between consumption and production blends (Clark 435). This transparency can result in the transformation of lifestyles of consumers to become more sustainable and conscious of the influence of their clothing behavior on the environment (Henninger et al, 2021, 1). This shows that consumers play an important role in decreasing the poor effects in the different phases of their consumption behavior on the environment (Iran and Schrader 3). Sustainability does not only refer to the production phase of clothes, but also the usage-phase and post-usage phase are important (3). Other sustainable approaches to fashion have emerged recently, “that do not fit with the received understanding we have of high or fast fashion” according to Margaret Maynard (550). These approaches are based on remaking, the use of secondhand clothing, recycling, and even sharing (550).

1.4 The concept of the Sharing Economy

The third key concept that is important for this master thesis is the sharing economy. Business models based on sharing are not new and have been part of the business environment for decades, but forty years had to past before this way of consuming gained a foothold in today's society (Kathan 3). Nowadays, a movement of young innovators changed the sphere of consumption with a vision that was centered on sharing, optimizing use of assets and, re-using (Schor 42). The sharing economy has a positive impact on the environment, society and, economy (Ciulli 996). Lately, the sharing economy gained popularity in a variety of industries

(Iran 190). The popularity of the sharing economy can be explained through various developments: the global economic crises, reurbanization, internet-based technologies that facilitate connectivity, sustainable consumption (Kathan 2). The development of internet-based technologies is important for the sharing economy as systems rely on new communication and information technologies, which makes shared consumption flexible, accessible, and easy to share (2). The internet or Web 2.0 brought new ways of sharing and ensured that older forms of sharing facilitate on a larger scale (Belk 1596). Markets make use of alternative ways of consumption that challenge own property as the dominant means of obtaining product advantages (Kathan 1).

In 1988, American business scientist and leading authority on consumption, sharing, consumer culture and consumer behavior, Russell W. Belk already argued that “you are what you own” (142). In addition, with the help of the internet and Web 2.0 we have different ways to express our identity without ownership (Belk, 2014, 1595). The emergence of the information and communication technology has facilitated the sharing of goods and services (Belk 1596). The idea behind this practice of sharing is to promote the notion of using (Iran and Schrader 5). By replacing ownership of commodities and services with access to and sharing of resources, goods, and services, the sharing economy encourages more effective use of resources (Nwaorgu 240). You are what you own, changes then in ‘you are what you can access’. Russell W. Belk defines sharing as follows: “the act and process of distributing what is ours to others for their use and/or the act and process of receiving or taking something from others for our use” (1596). There are related business and consumption practices that are described as sharing, such as ‘co-creation’, collaborative consumption’, ‘pro-sumption’, ‘the mesh’, ‘online volunteering’, ‘commercial sharing systems’, ‘access-based consumption’, ‘co-production’, ‘product service systems’, and ‘consumer participation’ (Belk, 2014, 1595). Also, numerous profit- and non-profit organizations are flourishing, because of the sharing economy

phenomenon (1595). Moreover, the sharing economy phenomenon is characterized by temporary access, non-ownership, and redistribution of material goods or less tangible assets (Kathan 1). The sharing economy tries to reduce the ecological footprint, save or make money, and strengthen social ties (Schor 42). It also creates economic value by introducing a new economic system which is an alternative to capitalism (Ciulli 996). Ciulli argues the following:

“This novel system relies on collaboration between peers, on non-monetized relationships and on the empowerment of ordinary people who can become micro-entrepreneurs and obtain extra income by offering their goods and skills’ (996).

Shared consumption comes in four different categories: building social connections, exchanging services, optimizing use of assets and, re-circulating or exchanging goods (Schor 42). Benkler sees sharing as ‘nonreciprocal pro-social behavior’ (278). In general people share for functional reasons, such as survival, or as a selfless concern, such as kindness, convenience, or courtesy which is expected behavior (Belk, 1596). Sharing is more common between friends, family or close relatives, which is called ‘sharing in’ (1596). Shareable goods are private goods that are controlled by their owner, but shared in broad social patterns among related individuals (Benkler 320). ‘Sharing out’ means that sharing involves dividing something between strangers (1596). This upholds communal forms of consumption and it promotes solidarity, trust and, social bonding between individuals (Ciulli 996). Sharing creates social connections and facilitate sharing social experiences with each other (Osbaldiston 46). Individuals who cannot afford certain products can get access to certain products, which creates social value (Ciulli 996). Sharing consumption ensures a local, small-scale economy based on person-to-person service, the use of existing assets, the re-circulation of goods and close social bonds wreak less devastation on earth than the way of consuming currently does (Schor 49). Sharing

consumption slows down the cycle of assets and waste that characterizes the fast fashion model (42). While the phenomenon of sharing is seen in a variety of industries, such as housing, transportation and, consumer goods, this phenomenon is now seen in the apparel business (Park 2). This ‘slow way of spending’ is also known as ‘Collaborative Fashion Consumption’ and there are a growing number of face-to-face and local clothing-exchange organizations and events (42).

1.5 The concept of Collaborative Fashion Consumption

In this section I will briefly discuss the fourth key concept: collaborative fashion consumption, because I will explain it in more depth in chapter 2. The worldwide increase in fast fashion production and consumption resulted in dramatically increased textile waste and resource depletion (Niinimäki, 2020, 194). This throwaway culture and clothing waste provide major environmental problems (Piscicelli 1). 60% of the environmental impact of products come from the consumption stage, from cleaning and fast replacement (Iran and Schrader 1). Moreover, the fast replacement and short garment lifetimes, led to 40% increase in landfilled textile waste in the USA (Niinimäki 195). Traditionally, Western countries transported old clothes to developing countries, such as Africa (194). Nowadays, these countries are banning the import of textile waste, because they want protect domestic clothing production, markets are overloaded with second-hand clothing and these clothes replaced local production (194). In addition, consumers are becoming more conscious of the environmental and social problems in the fashion industry, making new sustainable business models attractive (Henninger et al, 2021, 2). To overcome environmental and social problems, fashion consumption and production must decrease instead of producing more sustainable products. Laura Piscicelli argues the following: “A possible solution to prevent unnecessary use of resources and excessive waste is to reduce new purchases and promote the reuse of products” (1). The reuse of products and the reduction

of disposed textiles is thus a great economic and environmental opportunity (Iran and Schrader (1). In *Adorned in Dreams*, Elizabeth Wilson, argued that “clothes will not die” (2). The reuse of clothes can help reduce the need for new clothes and decrease waste (Becker-Leifold and Iran 189). This shows that clothes can be used multiple times and that there are alternative sustainable business models or consumption trends to help decrease waste.

Such an alternative consumption trend is ‘collaborative fashion consumption’, which is part of the global megatrend the ‘sharing economy’ that I discussed in the previous section. Researchers define collaborative consumption and collaborative fashion consumption in different ways. Already in 1978, Felson and Speath define collaborative consumption as “those events in which one or more persons consume economic goods or services in the process of engaging in joint activities with one or more others” (1978, 614). Three decades later Botsman and Rogers define collaborative consumption as: “the rapid explosion in traditional sharing, bartering, lending, trading, renting, gifting, and swapping through technologies and peer-to-peer communities” (2011). In addition, Belk defines collaborative fashion consumption as: “people coordinating the acquisition and distribution of a resource for a free or other compensation” (1997). Sharing goods and services is more sustainable than buying. Also, the fashion industry makes use of the fashion industry with swapping, resale and, renting businesses (Park 3). This is called collaborative fashion consumption, which Samira Iran and Ulf Schrader define as

“a consumption trend in which consumers, instead of buying new fashion products, have access to already existing garments either through alternative opportunities to acquire individual ownership (gifting, swapping, or second hand) or through usage options for fashion products owned by others (sharing, lending, renting, or leasing)” (2017, 472).

Collaborative fashion consumption emerged prior the development of Web 2.0, but technology is a key of its definition (Henninger, 2021, 4). The influential role of the information and communication technologies offered new opportunities (Iran and Schrader 5). There are hundreds of internet sites that facilitate the exchange of used goods (Schor 43). The existence of an online platform adds value to local collaborative fashion consumption markets by promoting it to a broader scale (Iran and Schrader 5). The growth of the internet, globalization and, access through smartphones provided new avenues for consumers to get access to unused clothing through renting, swapping, donating or, secondhand purchasing (Henninger, 2021, 4). In this way an enormous number of commodities can be traded, swapped or, purchased online using a variety of online exchanges sites or through general swapping (Schor 44).

The sharing of clothes differs from the sharing of houses, vacation spaces, toys and cars for example. Renting a car or bicycle is mainly driven by consumers utilitarian purpose, while renting designer shoes, clothes or, bags may be more emotional and driven by consumers hedonistic purposes (Park 3). This means that consumers form relationships with products based on their desires and consume products through possession. The importance and relationship with an object negatively influences non-ownership, which shows that consumers like personal ownership of clothes (7). In addition, according to Park ‘Sharing demonstrates pro-social intention and is characterized as love, caring, and a communal activity that links people to others’ (6). New patterns of product use and consumer behavior could change lifestyles to become more sustainable (Iran and Schrader 1). Collaborative fashion consumption can help consumers to make more sustainable choices, prevent the purchases of new goods and in this way addressing overproduction.

1.6 The concept of Consumer Behavior

The fifth and final key concept I will discuss is consumer behavior. Consumer behavior is important for my research because I want to examine how the trend of collaborative fashion consumption contribute to more sustainable fashion consumer behavior of Dutch female consumers between the age of 18 and 25 years (generation Z). Studying consumer behavior is important, because it helps understand what influences these consumers buying decisions. The study of consumers and the processes they use to choose, consume, and dispose products, services, time, and ideas that include mental, emotional, and behavioral responses of consumers is called consumer behavior (Hoyer, MacInnis and, Pieters 3). To be more specific, consumer behavior is more than only the way that a person buys a product (3). This means that consumers are constantly making decisions about products and services (Nelson 311). Consumer behavior reflects the totality of decisions what, why, how, when, where, how much, how long and, how often about the consumption of an offering by decision making units over time (Hoyer, MacInnis and Pieters 3). Nevertheless, how consumers buy, use and, dispose is important to understand how consumers make decisions. This consumption phase consists out of three important phases: acquisition, usage, and disposition (4). According to Hoyer, MacInnis and, Pieters “Acquisition is the process by which a consumer comes to own an offering (or sharing, renting, trading, leasing), usage is the process by which a consumer uses an offering, and disposition is the process by which a consumer discards an offering” (4). This means that in each phase consumers have to make choices: how they obtain goods and services, how and why they use certain products and services, and what they decide to do at the end of a lifetime of a product or service.

Emotions play a significant role in consumer behavior and is a crucial factor related to attitudes. Positive, negative and, specific emotions and general moods can affect how consumers think, the choices they make, what they remember, how much consumers enjoy an

experience and, how they feel after decision-making (Hoyer, MacInnis and, Pieters 9). One important emotion in consumer behavior therefore is enjoyment. Enjoyment highlights the importance of pleasure through consumption and generates a pleasant experience while consuming (Lang, Seo, and Liu 522). Personal values are a standard for influencing choices or evaluations of objects, services or, ideas which have a relationship with behavior (Vinson 45). Global values are enduring beliefs that guide actions and judgement across specific situations and domain-specific values reflects that consumer acquire values through experiences in specific situations and specific cultural environment (45). The cultural environment affect how consumers process information, what motivates them and what decisions they make (Hoyer, MacInnis and, Pieters 10). This means that families, friends, gender, age, social class, and also internet affect consumer values and lifestyles (10).

These consumer values are also seen within the fashion industry. Dress will have a certain symbolic value in society depending on gender, age, class or ethnicity of the consumers, according to Anneke Smelik (5). Young consumers from generation Z use fashion purchases and ownership of clothes to express themselves (Djafarova and Bowes 1). Following the latest trends are therefore an important motive for consumers to feel fashionable. Moreover, Patrik Aspers and Frédéric Godart argue that:

“Fashion represents the clearest sign of a ‘aestheticization’ of social life – both materials, including most consumer objects and the appearance of the body, and immaterial, including ways to talk and express oneself” (183).

Fashion consumption is relational, because the act of purchasing relates individuals to what other consumers think and do (Aspers and Godart 183). Nevertheless, fashion cements social solidarity and imposes group norms (Wilson 6). “Fashion is liberated to become both an

aesthetic form for experiments in taste and a political means of expression for dissidence, rebellion, and social reform” according to Elizabeth Wilson (8). Another important consumer value in fashion is enjoyment because shopping for clothing can be seen as a fun experience wherein consumers feel pleasure when buying a new fashion item (Lang, Seo, and Liu 522). In this way the practice of dressing is a form of behavior and consumers need to make choices among products based on emotions, personal values, cultural environments, and knowledge.

Because of the COVID-19 epidemic, some consumers are reconsidering their present practices and becoming more conscious of the influence of their clothing purchasing behavior on the environment (Henninger et al, 2021, 1). In addition, the demand for sustainable products is not as high as expected, because of the ‘attitude behavior gap’ of consumers (D’Astous & Legendre, 2008). This means that although consumers considers themselves as strong sustainable, conscious and, ethical consumers, the actual sustainable clothing purchases are not very high. This has to do with various factors, such as the consumption behavior of consumers in relation to clothes. Consumers are not always aware of the consequences of their behavior in terms of sustainability. They lack full information about the prices and quality of goods and this has impact on the environment (Nelson 311). The climate action NGO WRAP who wrote a major technical report in 2012 about the true cost of designing, using and disposing of clothes in the United Kingdom, found that the impact of products on the environment comes from the consumption stage by fast replacement of clothes and washing (WRAP 5). The reason behind this fast replacement is because consumers of generation Z have the desire for novelty and thrive on continuous fashion change, which is strengthened by trendiness, fashion ability, speed, and affordable prices of these fashion products (Bruce and Daly 329). Low prices of fast fashion clothing amplify the phenomenon of buying more and wearing items less (Niinimäki, 2020, 189). This results in that around 30% of clothes in wardrobes have been unused (5). In the USA, a consumer purchases one item of clothing every 5.5 days and between 1996 and

2012 a 40% increase of clothing purchases was seen in Europe (Niinimäki, 2020, 5). Also, at the end of life, 30% of apparel are disposed and goes to landfill (WRAP 9). This ‘throwaway’ culture is the result of lack of awareness, knowledge and, confusion of the intrinsic value of textiles (Fraser 37). Nevertheless, one quarter of the carbon food print of the clothing lifecycle comes from the usage phase and two third of the whole lifecycle waste comes from the post usage phase (WRAP 10). This shows that changing lifestyles of consumers to become more sustainable, requires new patterns of product use and consumer behavior (Iran and Schrader 1). Moreover, consumer choices and consumer behavior are very important to change environmental, social and, cultural issues within the fashion industry.

1.6 Conclusion

In my master thesis I try to provide an answer to the main research question “How does the consumption trend collaborative fashion consumption (and initiatives on Instagram) contribute to more sustainable fashion behavior of Dutch female consumers between the age of 18 and 25 years?”

To learn more about this subject and the link between sustainability and fashion, in this chapter, I did literature research utilizing a variety of academic sources. I discussed the five key concepts: fast fashion, sustainable fashion, the sharing economy, collaborative fashion consumption and, consumer behavior. The first concept that I discussed was fast fashion. The fast fashion phenomenon emerged globally at the end of 1990s and is characterized by the mass production of stylish, trendy and, cheap quality clothes that are sold against low prices in middle- range chain stores, such as Zara or Mango. Also, fast fashion is based on rapid change of styles, an increase number of seasons, short life cycle of clothes and make use of the ‘quick-response’ method. This quick response method that facilitates access to the newest styles by the help of communication technologies and rapid changes of trendy clothes ensures that

consumers have the urge to buy new clothes and wear their clothes for a short amount of time. This ensures that millions of tons of clothing are disposed and that the fashion industry produces a lot of textile waste. The fast fashion industry is complex and consist out of many environmental, social, and cultural issues. The fashion industry has to become more sustainable. In this way sustainable fashion becomes more important and consumers, designers, producers and, brands are taking more responsible steps to solve these problems.

Therefore, the second key concept that I discussed was the concept of sustainable fashion. Sustainable fashion emerged in 1960 when consumers became aware of the big impact that clothing production and consumption had on the environment. Sustainable fashion is part of the Slow Fashion Movement, which is based on the ideal that centers on sustainable values within the fashion industry and challenges the fast fashion paradigm by slowing down the production process, empowers workers and breaking down boundaries between the organization and consumers. Sustainable fashion considers the social, natural, and economic price that is paid in the fast fashion industry and refers to clothes that are designed, produced, (re)used and disposed in a way that it is in line with sustainable development. A balanced approach to fashion production focused on transparency, builds local production and fostered on long- term relationships with the supply chain is key to sustainable fashion. Also, alternative approaches to fashion emerged, such as remaking, the use of secondhand clothing, recycling, and sharing.

The third key concept that I discussed is the concept of the sharing economy. Models on sharing are not new, but nowadays a movement of young innovators changed the view on consumption with a vision that was centered on optimizing use of assets, re-using, and sharing. The internet and Web 2.0 brought new ways of sharing and ensured that forms of sharing facilitate on a larger scale. Sharing is the process of distributing what is ours to others for their use and reversed. Replacing ownership of commodities and services with temporary access to

and sharing of resources encourage more effective use of resources. The sharing economy tries to save or make money, reduce ecological footprints, and strengthen social ties.

The fourth concept I discussed is the concept of collaborative fashion consumption. Collaborative consumption in general is an explosion in traditional sharing, lending, bartering, trading, renting, gifting, and swapping through technologies and peer-to-peer communities. To be more specific, collaborative fashion consumption is a consumption trend in which consumers have access to already existing garments instead of buying new fashion products. They do this through alternative opportunities to acquire individual ownership, such as gifting, swapping, or secondhand, or through usage options for fashion products owned by others, such as sharing, lending, renting, or leasing. The growth of the internet, globalization, and access through smartphones provided new boundaries for consumers to get access to unused clothing. On the one hand, consumers have emotional and personal relationships with their clothes which negatively influences non-ownership, on the other hand sharing demonstrates pro-social intention and is characterized by caring, love, and links people to each other. Collaborative fashion consumption therefore can change consumer behavior in a more sustainable manner.

The fifth and last key concept that I discussed is the concept of consumer behavior. Consumer behavior is the process of how consumers use to choose, consume, and dispose products, time, services, and ideas. It reflects the totality of decisions of an offering by decision making. This process is important to understand how consumers make decisions. Due the COVID-19 pandemic, consumers are reconsidering their present practices and become more aware of their consumer behavior on the environment. The demand for sustainable products is not as high, because of the attitude-behavior gap which means that consumers considers themselves as conscious and sustainable consumers, but the actual sustainable purchases are not very high. They are not always aware of the consequences of their consumer behavior on the environment and lack full information about the quality and production of goods.

This research is going to examine attitudes towards the sustainable consumption trend collaborative fashion consumption and Dutch initiatives on Instagram. These concepts form the basis for my research and are important through the master thesis. Also, these concepts help me formulating interview questions and provide an answer on the research questions.

In the next chapter I will define what the trend of collaborative fashion consumption is and discuss the different forms sharing, renting, leasing, and lending in more depth. I will perform a visual analysis to determine how collaborative fashion consumption initiatives, LENA – The Fashion Library, The COLLECTIVES, Litchy, Vinted, and MUD Jeans could make leasing, sharing, lending, and renting of clothes more fashionable and trendier on Instagram. This allows me to demonstrate how these initiatives use their platform to promote the concept of collaborative fashion consumption to encourage more sustainable consumer behavior to female consumers in the Netherlands.

Chapter 2. What is Collaborative Fashion Consumption

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I define what the trend of collaborative fashion consumption is and provide an answer to the sub-research question: “In what ways do collaborative fashion consumption initiatives, LENA – The Fashion Library, The COLLECTIVES, Litchy, Vinted, and MUD Jeans make leasing, sharing, lending, and renting of clothes more fashionable and trendier on Instagram to encourage more sustainable consumer behavior?”

In the theoretical framework in the previous chapter, I already mentioned the trend of collaborative fashion consumption in general, but the second chapter delves deeper into this trend and examines the two components of collaborative fashion consumption: individual ownership and usage options. To be more specific, I will discuss the different forms of usage options, sharing, leasing, renting, and lending in more detail and will present examples of collaborative fashion consumption initiatives for each option. LENA-The Fashion Library, The COLLECTIVES, Litchy, Vinted, and MUD jeans will be the initiatives on which I will focus. I opted to explore these initiatives because I saw their efforts to demonstrate a counter movement and alternative consumption trend to fast fashion chains. Also, because MUD Jeans and LENA- The Fashion Library were one of the first initiatives in the Netherlands that focus on leasing and lending, and the COLLECTIVES, Litchy, and Vinted are new initiatives in the Netherlands that focus on renting and sharing. With the help of Instagram these initiatives try to make leasing, lending, renting, and sharing more fashionable and trendier to encourage more sustainable consumer behavior. As we have seen in the previous chapter, ‘fashionable’ and ‘trendy’ are important concepts for consumers when purchasing fashion items because they have the desire for novelty and thrive on fashion change which is strengthened by trendiness and fashion ability. This means that being able to follow the latest trends can be seen as a motive for consumers to engage in collaborative fashion consumption. As a result, I will analyze the

visual elements of an Instagram post of each initiative and will perform a semiotic analysis to understand the meaning of these visual elements to see how these initiatives make leasing, sharing, lending, and renting of clothes more fashionable and trendier to encourage more sustainable consumer behavior. To be more particular, I will describe each Instagram post and explain why I chose this photo, what can be observed in it, and what the underlying significance is. This analysis will look at how these initiatives use Instagram to make collaborative fashion more fashionable and trendier to raise awareness about sustainable fashion, as well as how they communicate the notion of collaborative fashion consumption to female consumers in the Netherlands.

2.2 Collaborative Fashion Consumption

As I discussed in the first chapter, the fast fashion industry has a big impact on the environment and deals with many environmental, cultural, and social issues. Many of these unsustainable effects occur in the purchase, usage, and post-usage phase of fashion consumption (Iran and Schrader 471). The fast fashion industry consists of the rapid mass production of cheap, trendy, and low-quality clothes, which assures that consumers are quickly bored of their clothes and have the desire to buy new clothes every month (542). As a result, worldwide fashion consumption has increased to 62 million tonnes of textile items each year (Niinimäki, 2020, 189). Consequently, the worldwide increase in fast fashion production and consumption, and the fast replacement of clothes and short garment lifetimes resulted in increased textile waste (194). To make a change and prevent unnecessary use of resources and fashion waste, fashion consumption must decrease, and the reuse of products must be promoted (Piscicelli 1). Consumers decide which fashion products they want to attain and what should be done with garments at the end of usage period (Iran and Schrader 470). A possible solution for consumers to show more sustainable consumer behavior is an alternative consumption model that is based

on the reuse of clothes instead of buying new ones. Collaborative fashion consumption refers to consumers having access to previously owned garments through alternative means, such as individual ownership or usage options, rather than purchasing new fashion products (Iran and Schrader 472): “The idea behind collective consumption models is to promote the notion of using, as opposed to owning products” according to Iran and Schrader (473). There are two forms of collaborative fashion consumption: individual ownership and usage options for fashion products owned by others. Individual ownership consists of gifting, swapping, or second-hand clothes (Becker-Leifold 191). Sharing, lending, renting, or leasing services are called usage options for fashion products owned by others (Becker-Leifold 191). Collaborative fashion consumption models are centered on co-creation and the integration of consumers in the closed-loop supply chains, which ensures value and decrease waste in the fashion industry (Henninger et. al, 2021, 5). This means that consumers become users of garments instead of owners. Collaborative fashion consumption provides a variety in wardrobe choices of existing garments in the supply chain allowing consumers to access a wide range of fashion products while experiencing an enjoyable consumption process (Lang, Seo and Liu). Enjoyment and trendiness could inspire consumers to participate in collaborative fashion consumption. The unused fashion items become part of the consumption process, allowing consumers to extend the useful life of their unwanted garments while also becoming providers of a new acquisition and disposal lifecycle (Henninger et. al, 2021, 8).

These collaborative concepts can flourish due to developments of new information and communication technologies, such as Web 2.0 (Botsman & Rogers 19). These technologies and the existence of online platforms add value to collaborative fashion consumption markets and make it easier for companies to reach out to customers. There are now hundreds of internet websites facilitating the exchange of used goods and services (Schor 43). This is called internet-facilitated sharing, such as the transfer or use of material goods between consumers. The

internet allows customers to discover what they need at all times, and the rise of the internet and smartphone access also provides new options for consumers to acquire unwanted clothing through renting, swapping, donating, or secondhand purchasing (Henninger, 2021, 4). As a result, a diverse number of commodities can be purchased, traded, or swapped online through a variety of online exchange sites or through in-person swapping (Schor 44). In this way consumers can actively engage in the process (Henninger et. al, 2021, 5). Online networks allow consumers to share everyday fashion items with strangers, which is known as sharing out, while normally sharing-in (sharing with family or friends) was associated with collaborative fashion consumption (Henninger, 2021, 4).

It is important to research what consumers want, where they want to consume fashion items, with whom, and under what circumstances, because acts of collaborative fashion consumption require cooperation with other persons (Felson and Spaeth 617). Social processes tend to bring people together at different times and affect the probability that people will engage in consumption activities with each other (617). This means that the development of collaborative fashion consumption has only been possible because it can be stimulated and organized by companies as Business-to-Consumer (B2C) and not only by restricted Peer-to-Peer (P2P) exchange (Iran and Schrader 475). Business-to-consumer (B2C) refers to the process of offering products and services directly from companies to consumers. The Peer-to-Peer (P2P) type includes forms of collaboration in which fashion products are passed on from consumer to consumer and could be organized by the peer themselves through online or offline platforms (476). For example, using a peer's social network to swap clothes through swapping parties, gifting unwanted clothes to local non-profit movements, lend clothing to other members or selling or buying second-hand clothes (476). Business-to-consumer (B2B) type consist of companies that offer services as substitutes for product ownership, such as renting, lending, leasing, or secondhand retail services (478). Participation in these services is often free but

combined with a monetary compensation applied for the fashion products that are rented or leased (478). I Customers are less engaged in this type of collaborative fashion consumption because the corporation provides the platform and items for collaborative fashion consumption and consumers can use their services (Iran and Schrader 478).

The different forms of collaborative fashion consumption are differently perceived and practiced by consumers of generation Z where factors as trust, lack of ownership, information, quality, trendiness, and hygiene play a role in consumers' acceptance (Becker-Leifold 191). There are also various motives for consumers to participate in collaborative fashion consumption, such as enjoyment, satisfaction, the hunting for treasures that are not available in mainstream markets, the need for change and variety without feelings of guilt, the need for individuality and uniqueness and the opportunity to engage in sustainable consumption of fashionable clothing (201). The consumers' acceptance of an alternative consumption pattern is important, because without it, collaborative fashion consumption cannot be successful (191). Companies must provide clear information on platforms about the benefits and procedures of collaborative fashion consumption, exploit consumer motivations to participate in collaborative fashion consumption, emphasize the sustainable features, and strengthen relationships with existing and new consumers (202).

Consumer views toward fast fashion are shifting, yet customers are not always making sustainable choices in their purchasing habits (Henninger et al, 2016, 4). Collaborative fashion consumption efforts must enhance their connections with present customers and expand their brand recognition to ensure that more consumers become more sustainable and change their existing consumer behavior. Companies can accomplish this by using online communication platforms such as Instagram. The usage of Instagram by consumers acts as a stimulus on impulse purchasing behavior, for instance with photographs and videos displayed on a brand's Instagram platform and promotional advertisements (Djafarova and Bowes 2). Instagram

platforms are a norm for generation Z consumers to seek for inspiration (2). Consumers may feel compelled to buy more used clothing because of other users' content. Also, individuals are connected to what other consumers believe, do, and buy through Instagram reposts (Aspers and Godart 183). This means that collaborative fashion brands must devise strategies to communicate the motives and values that are important to consumers of generation Z and in this way encourage more sustainable fashion consumption.

In the next section I will explore in further detail the various forms of usage options for fashion products owned by others, such as sharing, lending, renting, or leasing. Currently, there are few collaborative fashion consumption initiatives in the Netherlands and one in Lithuania that concentrate on sustainable fashion and offer fashion services through sharing, lending, renting, and leasing. I will discuss what the message of these initiatives is, how they convey their message, how they exhibit this message to consumers and how they strive to make leasing, lending, renting, and sharing more fashionable and trendier to encourage more sustainable consumer behavior.

2.3 Description of Dutch Collaborative Fashion Consumption Initiatives

2.3.1 Sharing: Vinted

One form of collaborative fashion consumption is sharing. According to Russell W. Belk sharing is: “the act and process of distributing what is ours to others for their use and/ or the act and process of receiving, or taking something from others for our use” (1596). Moreover, a distinction can be made between non-ownership-based sharing which can be done with a pro-social intention, such as sharing a clothing item with your siblings or friends, and the transfer of ownership and mutual exchange, such as marketplace exchange and gift giving (Belk 1596). This marketplace exchange involves a permanent transfer of ownership where a monetary compensation is applied for the fashion products. Some online websites offer goods for sale,

but other sites provide free goods with whoever responds to the offering (1598). Sharing involves the agreement in which both persons arranged the acquisition and distribution of the product (1598).

Vinted is an example of an internet marketplace exchange website. Vinted is a Lithuanian internet marketplace founded in 2008 by Justas Janauskas, Mantas Mikuckas, and Milda Mitkute (Vinted, 2008). The original concept for the Vinted website, of selling unwanted fashion items from their own wardrobe, was developed between 2010 and 2012. Thomas Plantega, a Dutchman, took over as CEO of Vinted in 2016 and turned the company profitable (Vinted, 2016). Vinted's mission is to make secondhand clothing the first choice and to assist people in reducing their carbon footprint by reusing fashion products rather than throwing them away. (Vinted, 2016). Vinted users can use their personal accounts to sell, buy, or exchange unwanted clothing (Vinted, 2016). It is a peer-to-peer website that allows users to pass on clothing and fashion items from one person to another and users can sell an unlimited number of items without paying a fee. Vinted tries to provide secure and additional payment alternatives to protect both transactions and customers (Vinted, 2016). Commercial and professional sellers are prohibited from selling clothing on Vinted, and the company has made no attempt to collaborate with fashion companies (Vinted, 2016). Vinted aims to provide a platform with attractive second-hand clothes at reasonable prices, allowing consumers to reuse clothing and extending the lifecycle of fashion items. With the help of television advertising and social media platforms such as Instagram, Vinted wishes to transmit this message and attempts to demonstrate that keeping up with the newest trends does not have to imply purchasing new garments but can be accomplished in a more responsible manner by purchasing second-hand clothing. Consumers then have access to the latest fashion trends, but this also increases consumer purchasing impulses and a lot of transportation, which is not particularly sustainable. To determine how Vinted wants to convey their message, how they convey their message, and

how this message is perceived by Dutch female consumers, I examine their Instagram platform and choose one post with a description that is related to the message that Vinted is attempting to convey. In this way I can find out if Vinted makes second-hand clothes more fashionable and trendier to consumers and if consumers perceive this message in positive or negative ways.

Vinted has an Instagram account where they share photographs, short videos (Instagram Reels), and texts about their platform. Vinted has 1.774 Instagram posts between 2013 and 2022. The mission of Vinted is to make second-hand first choice, therefore they use the hashtag #secondhandfirst to express their goal and sustainability to their consumers. The hashtag #vintedtreasures is linked to images that Vinted reposted of users who took photos of fashion products and garments they purchased on the platform. Vinted attempts to incorporate the voice of the customer in their brand content by making their users the protagonists of their brand story and attempting to persuade consumers to buy secondhand clothing. In order to analyze Instagram posts in relation to the mission of making second-hand the first choice and to sustainability, I first chose posts whose descriptions are directly linked to making second-hand trendier and encouraging sustainable consumption patterns by using the hashtags #secondhandfirst and #vintedtreasures. I observed about 75 posts between 2021 and 2022 which are linked to the two hashtags and fit the motives for consumers to participate in collaborative fashion consumption, such as the hunting for treasures, the need for change and the opportunity to engage in sustainable consumption of fashionable clothing. I chose to observe posts between 2021 and 2022 since they are more current and are tied to current consumer views to learn about

their attitudes toward collaborative fashion today. For reasons of feasibility, I selected the following photo for the analysis since this picture received the most likes (Figure 1.)



Figure 1: post of Vinted on October 15, 2021, with 1645 likes and 89 comments

Figure 1 displays a young white female model with short, brown hair who wears supposedly an outfit bought on Vinted. The description of this post is:

“Always on the way, always in style. An elegant and caring look to the world. @stuffes_ #vinted, #secondhandfirst, #vintedtreasure” (Vinted, 2021).

With this description, Vinted is attempting to demonstrate to their customers that caring about the environment does not prevent them from wearing attractive or fashionable clothing. This photo is a repost from a user of Vinted, indicating that more consumers are choosing second-hand clothes over new fashion items and becoming users of the Vinted platform. Vinted aims

to make purchasing used and secondhand items more visible in this way. The description only mentions that it is about elegant and stylish clothes bought on Vinted. There is no information given regarding the materials or why second-hand clothing is beneficial for the environment. Vinted attempts to demonstrate with this post that second-hand clothing is also fashionable, but the description does not inform consumers why they should buy more sustainable apparel and how they may do so.

When I take a closer look of the photo, the *mise-en-scene* is set against a grey, beige wall with the model standing in the right side of the photo frame. The model is photographed from a straight-on angle and wears a brown blazer, a white shirt with black stripes, and golden jewelry, holding up her handbag partly in front of her face. The camera position is a medium shot that shows the fashion items above the waist in detail as well as the setting's surroundings. The model looks straight into the camera with a confident look ensuring that the consumers are directly addressed. Her face is half covered by a white handbag, which she holds up in front of the camera. This ensures that the viewer's attention is focused to the clothes and handbag. The lighting in this photo is soft and creates a diffused illumination, which makes the photo natural-looking.

Looking at the comments on this Instagram post to observe how customers respond to this photo, a few things stand out. This post received 89 comments in different languages. Surprisingly, practically all comments are negative, for example about Vinted's poor customer service and the fact that Vinted can post photographs on Instagram but cannot address its customers' issues. What strikes me is that there is no single comment about the photo itself. One example of a negative comment is the following: "Cool that they keep posting but no one gets an answer".

The contrast between the likeable photo and the negative comments demonstrates that Vinted may attempt to convey the message that second-hand clothes are fashionable and

trendier, as well as encourage sustainable consumer behavior on Instagram, but that Vinted apparently fails to bring this message into practice. This is not the only post that received negative comments, which shows that their consumers apparently seem appear to feel ignored by the company. These negative comments suggest that Vinted fails in its communication strategy.

2.3.2 Renting: *The COLLECTIVES*

A second form of collaborative fashion consumption is renting. Jeffrey F. Durgee and Assistant Professor Gina Colarelli O'Conner described renting as:

“A transaction in which one party offers an item to another party for a fixed period of time in exchange for money and in which there is no change of ownership” (90).

This means that a product is delivered to a renter, and money is transferred from the renter to the provider. The renter gains from utilizing the goods, while the supplier gains from investing in and owning the product and receives credits (90). Rather than purchasing a fashion item, a consumer might obtain temporary access to clothes and fashion items (Belk, 2014, 1597). Pseudo-sharing is the term used to describe these short-term, accessed-based leasing activities (1597). Renting clothes gives customers access to a wide choice of designer brands at lower pricing (Lang, Seo and Liu 522). For an affordable monthly charge, a consumer can gain access to high-end fashion products and apparel, while purchasing and owning such items is prohibitively expensive (Belk, 2014, 1599).

One example of a fashion rental service is the Dutch initiative *The COLLECTIVES*. The COLLECTIVES was founded by Aarti O' Varma in Amsterdam in 2019 when she realized that women do not need to buy new clothing to be fashionable; instead, they only need to share their

wardrobes, because women's wardrobes are full of unworn clothes. The COLLECTIVES is a clothing rental network that allows customers to rent and share luxury clothing, bags, and accessories without purchasing them. Customers may also bring their own designer items to the COLLECTIVES and retain ownership of them. After a while, they can sell these items to the COLLECTIVES if they like. By incorporating consumers in their organization, they place the consumer at the center of their consumer communication. Customers can try on a variety of clothing, try on different designs, and determine which outfits best suit their personality at the physical store in Amsterdam. The COLLECTIVES attempt to make renting of reused clothes more fashionable and modify the purchase habits of female consumers. Customers can collaborate with the COLLECTIVES to decide which fashion pieces to rent and for how long. The COLLECTIVES also has an Instagram account, where they post photos of the designer clothes they rent out to consumers, as well as short fashion inspiration videos and messages about sustainable fashion solutions. I evaluate this Instagram platform and choose one post whose description is relevant to the message that the COLLECTIVES attempts to send to determine how they want to express this message and how their consumers perceive it.

The COLLECTIVES have 5689 Instagram followers, indicating that they are still in the early stages of their business and need to increase brand awareness to gain new customers. They use Instagram to persuade customers to buy more second-hand fashion items. The COLLECTIVES have 244 posts spread over the years 2019 to 2022. Their Instagram photos are highly aesthetic and appear these come straight out of a fashion magazine. The photographs visualize the clothing collections and focus on different outfits and on specific fashion items. The colors and lighting provide a sense of cohesion, and the clothes are photographed in a very detailed manner. As a result, their Instagram page has the appearance of a designer brand. Also, a variety of models are seen on the images, giving the impression that this is a true premium fashion brand for the display of slick photoshoots. The COLLECTIVES tries to make

secondhand clothes fashionable and trendy with their Instagram posts, which is, according to Park and Armstrong, important to engage female consumers in rental activities (476). I chose postings with the keywords fashionable and sustainable consumption to investigate how the COLLECTIVES express their message and how they aim to make renting more fashionable and appealing to consumers. I observed all 78 photos displaying models, because it allows customers to view the entire outfit. For reasons of feasibility, I selected the photo below since it is linked to the keywords and received the most likes (Figure 2).



Figure 2: post of the COLLECTIVES on February 26, 2021, with 111 likes and 7 comments

Figure 2 displays a black and white photo of a young white female model with long blonde hair who wears a blazer, showing a naked shoulder. The description of this post is:

“Love fashion, but care for the environment too? That’s why we’ve set up a rental platform to help you discover new ways of fashion without compromising on style or harming the environment. Follow the Collectives and get inspired in your journey to redefine your consuming habits. We got you!” (The Collectives, 2021).

This description demonstrates how the COLLECTIVES are attempting to communicate sustainability and fashionability to its consumers, as well as persuade them to rent rather than buy new trend goods. No information is provided regarding why renting is more sustainable. The model is photographed against a grey background from a straight-on angle, and she is staring directly at the camera, looking over her naked shoulder. The camera position is a medium shot showing the blazer above the waist in detail. In this way the model's clothes draw the viewer's attention immediately. This creates a bond between the model being photographed and the image's viewers. The facial expressions of the model are quite serious and confident, ensuring that the consumers are directly addressed.

A few things are notable when looking at the comments of this Instagram post. This post received a total of 7 comments. This low amount indicates that the COLLECTIVES are still in the early stages of their business. What strikes me is that all these comments are positive of both the concept and the photograph. One example of a positive comment is the following: “Now this is innovation. Sharing is caring, am I right?”. This comment implies that people value sharing clothes through collaborative fashion consumption choices such as renting. Other Instagram posts receive positive feedback about the outfits, concept, and brand as well.

2.3.3 Renting: *Litchy*

Litchy is another example of a Dutch rental initiative. The company was founded in 2019 by Lizzy Perridon in Amsterdam. The company's objective was: “the belief that rental is the perfect

fit for modern girls and boys navigating this ever-changing society” (Litchy, 2019). Consumers can use Litchy to rent clothes on a temporary basis, demonstrating to them how they can wear something new and unusual in a variety of situations. Litchy works together with different brands and designers, such as Gauge 81, Nué Studio, Rotate, and Alla Berman (Litchy, 2019). Consumers can rent designer garments on the Litchy website for a variety of occasions, including business, wedding, date, vacation, party, and casual. They can rent clothes for 4, 8, 12, 18 or 24 days and after the rental period they can return the clothes at a local delivery point. Litchy makes sure that the clothes are cleaned afterwards, and other people can rent the same item of clothing multiple times (Litchy, 2019). Litchy relates their concept to the consumer's desire for diversity and change without feelings of guilt and consumers can engage in sustainable consumption of fashionable clothes. Litchy cleverly engages with numerous Dutch influencers to persuade consumers to rent garments rather than buy them, as influencers have a big influence on the purchasing intentions of Generation Z consumers. I analyze one Instagram post which description is linked to Litchy's aim to determine how the company transmits this message and how this message is interpreted.

Litchy has an Instagram profile where they upload photographs and videos of new styles available for rent on their website. Between 2019 and 2022, Litchy gained 479.000 followers and shared 450 photos and videos (Litchy, 2019). The pink and purple colors, font styles, and photography style, ensures that the Instagram page provides a sense of cohesiveness. Litchy wants to demonstrate to customers that renting clothes can be stylish and fashionable, and that they do not need to buy new clothes for every occasion when they can share garments with others. The brand collaborates with influencers, who post photos of themselves wearing the borrowed garments on their own Instagram accounts as well as the Litchy account, using the hashtag #Litchygirls. Litchy also employs the hashtag #sustainablitchy to connect their posts to the topic of sustainability. To find out how Litchy attempts to express their message, I selected

posts that are linked to the keywords: fashionable, sustainable consumption, enjoyment, and influencers. I observed 70 photos that are linked to the hashtags #Litchygirls and #sustainablitchy. For reasons of feasibility, I selected the following photo since it received the most likes (Figure 3).



Figure 3: post of Litchy on December 10, 2019, with 1218 likes and 26 comments

Figure 3 displays a photo of a young white female model with blonde hair who wears a red dress. The description of this post is: “@vivianhoorn || #LITCHYGIRLS” (Litchy, 2019). In the description of this post consumers may only read the hashtag and see Vivian Hoorn in the picture, but no information about the brand of the garment, how much it costs to rent the

outfit, or how the rental process works is provided. Vivian Hoorn is a well-known Dutch influencer and photographer who promotes various fashion brands while also attempting to spread body-positive messages (Vivian Hoorn). She has 581.000 followers on Instagram, which makes her quite influential on social media. Figure 3 shows her standing in front of a giant mirror with the brand name and the words "Why should you buy?" written on it. This line appears in numerous Litchy Instagram pictures and urges the audience to consider why they buy new clothes. Vivian is dressed in a short red dress with black high heels that she rented from the Litchy boutique. With the help of the mirror, the observer may see both the front and back of the dress. The company's owner Lizzy Perridon is the photographer of this photo and is seen in the mirror in a pink suit. This gives the photo a more personal and trustworthy feel. Vivian Hoorn has her eyes closed with her mouth wide open as if in an enthusiastic laugh or shout, which demonstrates her enjoyment in renting this clothing and her sense of beauty. Lizzy Perridon photographed Vivian Hoorn from the front, giving her a confident appearance. The camera position is a medium shot, which shows both the details of the dress and the setting. The mise-en-scene is intriguing because of the double imaging using a huge mirror, that shows both the model's front and back. It is set in a store, supposedly the Litchy store in Amsterdam. The setting consists out of a big, grey room with clothes hanging on racks, with another woman standing among the clothes. The photographers' face is hidden by her camera/ phone: she is dressed in pink dungarees. Model Vivian stands with her hands on her sides, which shows that she feels safe and comfortable. The photo shows the model to have fun and confidence in the dress she is wearing, suggesting to viewers that they can feel confident and beautiful in a rented dress. The photo and post lend legitimacy to the concept of buying less and renting more effectively. This contributes to female consumers' more sustainable purchasing habits.

Looking at the comments of this Instagram post, a few things are notable. This post received a total of 26 comments. All comments are positive, paying compliments to Vivian and

the rental system. Consumers also respond with a variety of emoticons such as hearts. One example of a positive comment is the following: “Really a great concept!” and “I love that dress!”. These responses suggest that customers like the idea of renting garments rather than buying them. It probably helps that Litchy works together with influencers, like Vivian. Although, Litchy is in the early stages, the company gets positive feedback and shows consumers that renting clothes can be fashionable.

2.3.4 Leasing: MUD Jeans

The third form of collaborative fashion consumption is leasing. Leasing is a direct business-to-consumer service with companies that offer services as substitutes for product ownership (Iran and Schrader, 2017, 8). In this case a monetary compensation is applied for using the fashion products (8). Leasing differs from renting, because in the case of leasing a fix contract for some months is required and leasing is based on a membership (9). Consumers must pay for the contract period before they send the fashion items back to the company (9). Digital leasing platforms that offer sufficient cleaning services and check the condition of garments between lending times, can create trust among consumers to make use of its services (Niinimäki, 2021, 258). This is important because the shared use of clothes can feel unpleasant to consumers (260). Leasing can provide experiences related to the emotional side of fashion and can produce appealing allure (260).

One example of a leasing company is *MUD Jeans*. MUD Jeans is a Dutch circular denim brand that was established in 2012 by Bert van Son (MUD Jeans, 2012). He had worked thirty years in the fashion industry and had seen the cultural, social, and environmental problems that this industry causes. MUD Jeans started their business with a mission to change the fashion industry, according to the company. Because a pair of jeans is one of the most polluting fashion items in the fashion business, the company is built on a fundamental piece of apparel, a pair of

jeans. To be more specific, to produce a pair of jeans 7000 liter is needed, while a MUD Jeans uses 477 liters of water (Sustainability report, 2020, 42). MUD Jeans initiated a holistic approach, from linear to a circular economy, through the so-called MUD method (MUD Jeans, 2012). This is a framework with an objective of recycling wastage and has nine stages according to their website. MUD Jeans offers a Lease a Jeans model wherein consumers can lease a pair of jeans for a year and then return it. Consumers can lease a pair of jeans for €9.95 per month if they sign up for a year's membership. After this time, customers can retain their jeans or exchange them for a new pair. Customers who bring in a pair of unwanted jeans to MUD Jeans can receive a discount on a new pair of jeans.

I examined MUD Jeans' Instagram platform to learn how they intend to convey their mission, how they deliver their message, and how their message is viewed by their customers. I choose one post whose description is related to the message MUD Jeans wishes to express and connect it to consumer keywords and motivations for participating in collaborative fashion consumption, such as sustainability, fashion, enjoyment, or individuality. I will look at different hashtags associated with these keywords such as #consciousfashion, #circularity, #sustainability etc. In this way I can find out if MUD Jeans encourage more sustainable fashion consumption.

MUD Jeans has an Instagram account where they upload photographs and videos about their business, different pairs of jeans, styling videos, as well as messages and information about sustainability and the fashion industry. Between 2013 and 2022, they gained 529.000 followers and shared 1468 photos and videos. MUD Jeans' entire Instagram platform is made up of photographs with natural and earth tones like blue, grey, white, and green. Nature photos, such as plants, flowers, oceans, and trees, are also provided. These photos imply a link to nature, which is in line with MUD Jeans' commitment to circular and sustainable fashion.

For analyzing the Instagram posts in relation to the mission of leasing jeans instead of buying jeans and to sustainability and fashionability, I observed about 75 posts between 2021

and 2022 that are linked to the hashtags #sustainability, #circularity and the motives for consumers to participate in collaborative fashion consumption, such as the opportunity to engage in sustainable consumption of fashionable clothing. I chose to observe posts between 2021 and 2022 since they correspond to existing customer perceptions of leasing. For reasons of feasibility, I selected the picture below for the analysis since this photo received the most likes (Figure 4.).



Figure 4: post of MUD Jeans on September 7, 2021, with 227 likes and 8 comments

Figure 4 displays a young white female model with blonde hair who wears a white shirt, off-white blouse, and blue jeans, on a beach with rocks. The description of this post is:

“Saving water, CO2, and biodiversity has never been this comfortable. Discover the Sara Wyde in Strong Blue and Heavy Black Stone. #mudjeans, #consciousfashion, #co2, # emission, #biodiversity, #watersaving, #climatepositive, #circularity” (MUD JEANS, 2021).

This caption conveys a message about the positive effects when wearing a pair of MUD Jeans. The hashtags emphasize these positive effects on the environment. MUD Jeans attempts to promote awareness about sustainable fashion and persuade people to lease a pair of jeans in this manner. The mise-en-scene is set in nature with the model standing in the center of the composition, in front of rocks and the sea. The outfits are in harmony with the environment, and the color values are similar. This draws the viewer's attention to the garments, while the natural setting influences how viewers interpret the photos and brand's message. The young white woman wears MUD Jeans in blue, a white shirt, and a white top. The photo is a medium shot from a straight-on angle, resulting in sharp edges, and highlighting the textures of the clothing. The photo uses highlights, sidelights, and a high contrast which also articulates the texture of the clothes. The model looks down to the pair of jeans she wears, which ensures that the eye of the viewer is drawn to these jeans. This establishes a connection between the viewer and the model. The way in which MUD Jeans' Instagram platform is organized could convey messages about collaborative fashion consumption. Colors, compositions, and shapes are used to produce a natural and sustainable overview, which has an appealing allure and can help consumers connect with their brand story.

This Instagram post received a total of 8 comments. MUD Jeans receives minimal consumer comments on their Instagram platform, but this says nothing about how their message is interpreted. The comments are positive and are mostly about the shape and cut of the pair of jeans. Some consumers are thankful for MUD Jeans raising awareness about sustainable fashion

and the issues of the fast fashion industry. One example of a comment is the following: “Well done for raising awareness” and “This looks so good”. This indicates that most consumers are positive about MUD Jeans and their leasing concept.

2.3.4 Lending: LENA- Fashion Library

The fourth and final form of collaborative fashion consumption is lending. Companies can offer lending opportunities instead of selling fashion items (Iran and Schrader 8). This means that consumers can go to fashion libraries to lend various fashion items from other consumers. This is called peer-to-peer lending (Iran and Schrader 475). Consumers can share their clothes with strangers and clothes are being reused repeatedly, allowing them to spend less, and therefore less fashion items are produced. A fashion library allows customers to share their garments and have something new and unique to always wear. Consumers can become member of a fashion library and then lend a fashion item for a day, a couple of days, or even a year. Customers pay a fee for each day they lend a fashion item and can lend a fashion item for as long as they wish (LENA-Fashion Library).

One example of a fashion library is the Dutch *LENA- Fashion library*. LENA was established in 2014 and the idea came from three sisters and one friend (LENA, 2014). They had worked in the fashion industry, so they were aware of the harmful effects the industry has on people and the environment. LENA focuses on the life extension of clothes contributing to the transition to a circular fashion system. LENA was the first fashion library in the Netherlands. The fashion collection is for loan and for sale in their store in Amsterdam or online through their website. Their collection consists out of sustainable brands, new brands, and vintage items. LENA offers a pay-as-you-borrow-system, which means that consumers only pay for the days they rent a fashion item. Consumers must become a member of LENA fashion library where they pay one-time ten euros. Every fashion piece costs a few credits a day, 1

credit is 0,25 cents per day. For example, this means that a pair of jeans can cost three credits, and a consumer pays 0,75 cents a day. The minimum lending time is fourteen days. LENA monitors how many credits a consumer uses every day on a monthly basis to ensure that they pay the correct amount for the fashion products and days borrowed. Customers are given a care card that includes advice on how to wash the fashion item. This means that clothes items' lifespan can be extended. LENA is part of a consumer's wardrobe, which means they can alter their fashion pieces whenever they choose. Customers can experiment with their style to discover what best fits their personality.

To find out how LENA convey their message and how this is perceived by consumers, I analyze their Instagram platform and select one post. This allows me to determine whether LENA truly makes clothing lending more fashionable, whether customers perceive this positively or negatively, and whether LENA encourages more sustainable fashion consumption.

LENA has an Instagram account where they share films, photos, and messages about lending clothes, outfit inspiration, and informing people about the issues of the fast fashion business and how to become more sustainable. LENA has 9.272 Instagram followers and has shared 2.035 photographs on the platform between 2014 and 2022. 'Have less, live more!' #lenalibrary 'Hello #Instagram #sustainable #fashion,' LENA- the Fashion Library wrote on July 13, 2014, in their first Instagram post. Four women can be seen in the photo, pointing to the words stated in the description. They strive to express the notion of sustainable fashion in this first Instagram post. The overall Instagram platform of LENA is very colorful, expressing enthusiasm and containing a variety of important information that educates users. All these distinct colors and information clutter the page, making it difficult for customers to access the information they seek. LENA works together with various brands and designers and shows the newest styles and products they lend in their library. LENA displays its members' clothing on their Instagram platform and allows them to submit their opinions about LENA to demonstrate

consumers that a large number of other consumers are already lending garments at LENA. For analyzing the Instagram post in relation to the mission of LENA to expand the life extension of clothes which contributes to the transition to a circular fashion system, I first selected posts of which the description is linked to sustainability and that lending is fashionable. I observed 50 posts between 2021 and 2022 that are linked to these two keywords and fit the motives for consumers to participate in collaborative fashion consumption. I choose to observe posts between 2021 and 2022, because these are current and linked to contemporary opinions of consumers to find out their attitudes towards lending. For reasons of feasibility, I selected the following post for the analysis since this photo received the most likes (Figure 5).



Figure 5: post of LENA-Fashion Library on February 28, 2022, with 154 likes and 8 comments

Figure 5 displays a young female model with brown hair in bright yellow clothes, wearing supposedly clothes lend by LENA – Fashion Library. The description of this post is:

“Sharing clothes = less unused clothes. Because if you don't wear it, someone else will. In this way we reduce the need to keep buying something new, which ends up in the closet after wearing it three times. This means less production is required and fewer raw materials are needed. Good for the planet, good for you”.

In this text consumers can read that the sharing of clothes is a sustainable option because clothes are worn multiple times by different people instead of unworn clothes ending up in wardrobes. This message raises awareness that lending is a good option for consumers to show sustainable buying behavior. The description does not mention anything about the lending system itself or about the brand or materials of the clothes.

Figure 5 depicts a model standing outside in front of a house and grey stairs. The mise-en-scene is probably set in a city or village. The outfit of the model consists of a yellow shirt and a yellow suit which are supposedly lent from LENA- The Fashion Library. Slowness can suggest lending garments is more sustainable, which connects with the claim that lending items requires less manufacture. The colors of the garments stand out, causing the viewer's attention to be pulled to them right away. The photo uses a central composition, with the female model standing in the middle. The camera position is a medium shot taken from a straight-on angle, which integrates both setting and the clothes of the model. The woman looks straight into the camera with a big smile and confident look indicating enjoyment and self-assurance. These are two motives that are important for consumers to participate in collaborative fashion consumption. The combination of the facial expressions, clothing colors, and the caption beneath the shot connects with sustainability and is consistent with the motives mentioned above.

This Instagram post earned eight comments. The responses are all positive and are in response to the post's text as well as the clothes. Some customers are grateful to LENA for spreading knowledge about sustainable fashion and how to choose more environmentally friendly solutions. Others like the idea of lending garments and leave comments with heart emoticons. The following is an example of a comment:

“Oooh immediately want to borrow! Shall we do another swap?”, and “So cool that this is now available to borrow”, and “Omg you are divine’ Love your style!”.

These comments imply that the clothes available for borrowing from LENA- Fashion Library are appealing to these customers, as is the concept. Although LENA received limited comments on their Instagram postings, they were all positive, indicating that consumers are already willing to lend garments. Customers' comments on other Instagram postings about renting garments at LENA are likewise highly good.

2.4 Conclusion

In this second chapter, I attempted to answer in what ways collaborative fashion consumption initiatives LENA – The Fashion Library, The COLLECTIVES, Litchy, Vinted, and MUD Jeans make leasing, sharing, lending, and renting of clothes more fashionable and trendier on Instagram to find out if this encourage sustainable consumer behavior. To respond to this sub-question, I discussed the collaborative fashion consumption trend through a more in-depth look at this notion. I discussed individual ownership and the many forms of usage alternatives, including sharing, leasing, renting, and lending. I then illustrated each form using four Dutch collaborative fashion consumption initiatives and one Lithuanian initiative. I evaluate one Instagram post per project that earned the most likes from each brand to determine how these efforts express their message and how they strive to make leasing, lending, renting, and sharing more stylish and trendier in order to encourage more sustainable consumer behavior.

The alternative trend, collaborative fashion consumption embraces fashion consumption in which consumers instead of buying new fast fashion products, have access to already existing garments through individual ownership or usage options. Disposal forms become part of the consumption process, consumer extend the useful life of their unwanted garments and decrease

waste in the fashion industry. There are various forms of collaborative fashion consumption which offer consumers a wide range of existing clothes and try to inspire them to participate in collaborative fashion consumption through photos and videos on their Instagram platforms. Fashionability and trends are two concepts that consumers find important as seen in the previous chapter theoretical framework, therefore the initiatives try to make the different forms of collaborative fashion consumption more attractive using these two concepts.

The first initiative I analyzed was the Lithuanian brand Vinted. This initiative uses sharing, which is the process of distributing clothes to others for their use and receiving clothes from others for our use, such as marketplace exchange. Their mission is to make secondhand clothing the first choice and to assist users in reducing their carbon footprint by reusing items. Consumers can share stylish clothes with others, thereby inspiring them to engage in collaborative fashion consumption. My analysis of one Instagram post and its 89 comments, showed that Vinted fails in its communication strategy. Vinted tries to convey the message with their photos and models that second-hand clothes are fashionable, and consumers can thrive on fashion change. However, the difference between the likeable photo and the negative comments demonstrates that consumers appear to feel ignored, implying that Vinted appears to fail to put this message into practice and solely employs models dressed in used clothing as a marketing tool. There is a significant disparity between the mission that Vinted presents, how they demonstrate their message through their Instagram photographs, and how they attempt to put this into practice. This suggests that Vinted should be more transparent about the message they are putting into action, invest more in the story of how and why second-hand garments are a better alternative, and engage with their customers in this way.

The second initiative I analyzed is the Dutch initiative The COLLECTIVES. This company uses the form of renting, where one provider offers an item to a consumer for a fixed period in exchange for money and in which there is no ownership. The COLLECTIVES is a

clothing rental network that allows customers to rent a variety of designer things for one day or one month. Their objective is to make renting secondhand items more fashionable, so that women do not have to buy new clothes to feel smart, but instead share their wardrobes. They make their customers a part of their brand and story by allowing them to lend their clothes to the company. My analysis of their Instagram platform, one Instagram post, and seven comments revealed that the COLLECTIVES imply that they succeeded in putting their message, to make renting trendier, into practice. The small number of positive comments implies that the COLLECTIVES are still in the early stages of their business, but that consumers are enthusiastic about both the concept and the Instagram post itself. Other Instagram posts also receive positive comments about the clothes, the concept, and the brand itself. This indicates that their consumers find their rental platform a good concept and their clothes trendy and fashionable. In this way consumers are more open to rental activities and therefore the COLLECTIVES encourage more sustainable consumer behavior.

Litchy, a Dutch company, is the third rental initiative I examined. Litchy rents out a large variety of trendy products from various brands and designers. In an ever-changing culture, they believe that renting is the best option for consumers. Customers can satisfy their desire for novelty by wearing something new on every occasion without throwing away fashion products. The investigation revealed that Litchy collaborates with influencers such as Vivian Hoorn, which probably helps in transmitting their beliefs that renting may be trendy and fashionable. Customers get a personal feeling from the image because both Vivian and Lizzy are visible, and it provides the impression of two friends shopping for new clothes. The 26 comments of the Instagram post I analyzed, all are positive, paying compliments to the influencer, the clothes, and the rental system. This demonstrates that Litchy receives positive feedback from customers and may engage them in rental activities using Influencers. They should, however,

do more with the background of sustainability and connect their story with why, what, and how consumers could demonstrate more sustainable behavior by renting rather than buying.

The fourth Dutch initiative that I analyzed is the circular denim brand MUD Jeans, which uses the form of leasing. Leasing is a business-to-consumer service where companies offer services as substitutes for product ownership. The company initiated a framework, the MUD method, and invented Lease a Jeans, which means that consumers can sign up for a membership and lease a pair of jeans for a year. This signifies that the organization clearly describes their processes to its consumers. MUD Jeans' Instagram platform analysis revealed that their posts do not receive many comments and that they are still in the early phases. Most responses are positive regarding the design, cut, and shape of the jeans themselves, and customers appreciate that the brand raises awareness about sustainable fashion. This suggests that consumers find the items leased by MUD Jeans and shown on Instagram to be fashionable, and they would rent from the brand because they like the concept.

LENA- The Fashion Library, which operates through lending, is the final Dutch initiative I analyzed. Lending fashion products encourages buyers to spend less, resulting in fewer fashion items being manufactured. LENA- The Fashion Library focuses on extending the life of clothing by renting a complete fashion collection to members at a low cost. This shows that the pricing makes it appealing to a broad audience. The analysis of LENA's Instagram platform revealed that LENA raises sustainability awareness and provides a diverse choice of vintage, sustainable, and attractive clothing to their consumers. According to the analysis of the 8 comments, their customers prefer LENA- The Fashion Library because they like the concept of lending, the variety of garments, and the information on sustainable fashion. According to their comments, some customers wished to lend clothes at the clothing library. This demonstrates that customers are willing to lend clothes to LENA- The Fashion Library.

According to the results of the analysis, it is critical for collaborative fashion consumption initiatives to employ the concepts of fashionability and trendiness in order to engage consumers in collaborative fashion consumption activities, build relationships with existing customers, and increase brand exposure. Instagram has a significant influence on the purchasing habits of Generation Z. These collaborative initiatives aim to educate customers about the fashion business and to spread the word on Instagram that sharing, renting, leasing, or lending products is more sustainable than buying new clothes in order to encourage consumers to make more sustainable choices. There is a significant difference between the companies studied. Vinted receives negative comments, indicating a failure in their communication strategy. MUD jeans, LENA, and the COLLECTIVES prioritize customer communication by including them into their company and mission. They are honest and transparent about the statements they make about sustainability. Litchy uses Influencers to spread their message to a larger audience, allowing consumers to be easily influenced and modify their purchasing behavior. Influencers have a large audience reach. MUD Jeans stands out the most and shows a complete picture of the change they want in the fashion industry. They also continue to develop and also think about the photography and the theme that needs to be told. The analysis showed that the collaboration with Influencers probably might help influence the purchasing intentions of consumers and contribute to more awareness about sustainability. Still, collaborative fashion consumption initiatives are in their early stages, and it is still a new phenomenon as seen in the small number of comments at their Instagram posts. This indicates that Instagram could be a clever tool to encourage more sustainable fashion consumption, but that initiatives should create more awareness to reach their consumers.

In the next chapter I will discuss the general consumption motives and attitudes of Dutch female consumers between the age of 18 and 25 years old and discuss in what ways they perceive collaborative fashion consumption to find out what important motives are for them to

engage in this alternative consumption trend. I conduct results from in-depth interviews with eleven Dutch female consumers which helps me indicate in what ways collaborative fashion consumption initiatives could meet the consumers motives to change their consumer behavior.

Chapter 3. Results: Consumption Motives and Attitudes towards Collaborative Fashion Consumption

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I address information about the consumption motives and attitudes of Dutch female consumers between the age of 18 and 25 years old of generation Z towards collaborative fashion consumption and how these attitudes relate to known consumption motives of collaborative fashion consumption. To obtain information about these motives and attitudes, I conducted empirical research and interviewed eleven Dutch female consumers who are part of generation Z. I decided to focus on eleven Dutch female consumers between 18 and 25 to keep my research feasible and within the boundaries of a master thesis. Collaborative fashion initiatives focus mostly on young, female consumers and this age group is probably more open to new and innovative ideas and concepts, but are also influenced by fashion trends and are impulse buyers. I choose to use the in-depth interview method to investigate the attitudes of eleven Dutch female consumers towards this sustainable consumption trend. The interview questions that I asked are based on the literature review of Fashion Theory from chapters 1 and 2. I transcribed the interviews and deducted the most relevant and important statements and analyzed these through open coding. These various codes are based on the consumption motives for buying fashion items and to participate in collaborative fashion consumption. These codes and the relationships between them, provide a comprehensive view of the attitudes and motives towards collaborative fashion consumption. The various codes are: fast fashion, sustainability, price, trends, convenience, fashionable, trust, quality, hygiene, enjoyment, knowledge, and ownership. These findings help me to get knowledge about fashion consumption behavior in general and how collaborative fashion consumption and initiatives can lead to more sustainable fashion consumption among this target group. The interview questions and codes are added as an appendix of my master thesis.

3.2 Profile of the respondents

A total of eleven respondents participated in this research. I asked 20 people in my immediate surroundings if they would take part in my research. I asked these respondents questions because I expected them to be impulse buyers who are open to new, innovative, and sustainable purchasing behavior. Then I asked these respondents general questions about their consumption habits to see if they matched my assumptions. Finally, the respondents who matched my expectations actively participated in my study. All respondents are female consumers between the age of 18 and 25 years who live in the Netherlands. All of them are students. This age group is part of generation Z. Generation Z, considered as ‘digital natives’, is the first generation that grew up surrounded by digital communication (Djafarova and Bowes, 1). This group is highly exposed to social media and prefers to communicate through images (1). Generation Z engages with fashion purchases and use fashion items to express themselves. They have the desire to buy the newest items at a greater speed and therefore are often impulse buyers (1). The respondents that I interviewed all are impulse buyers, yet with the desire for more sustainable consumer behavior. With the issues of the fast fashion industry and the increasing fashion consumption, it is important to research what the attitudes and motives of this generation are against the alternative consumption trend collaborative fashion consumption to encourage more sustainable buying behavior.

3.3 Attitudes of the respondents towards general fashion consumption

To find out the current consumption motives of the target group, I first asked them questions about their consumer behavior in general. Prior to the purchase of fashion items respondents experienced certain feelings on why they have the desire to buy new clothes. This impulse is caused by different actors, such as occasions, trends, seasons, and external surroundings. The respondents buy clothes to look good, because they care about their physical appearance and want their external surroundings or friends to evaluate their clothing as nice and attractive. They

also feel the desire to buy new clothes because they are afraid that their external surroundings already have seen their older clothes. The respondents want to express themselves by often changing their styles:

“I think it is important to be able to express myself through my style, because I am never satisfied with how I present myself and I think I am always looking for new expressions in clothing”, according to a respondent.

The respondents buy an average of three to ten items per month and sometimes the respondents buy fashion pieces on a weekly basis. Purchasing behavior has to do with their financial status, seasons, and trends. The respondents mostly buy clothes in fast fashion stores such as H&M, Zara, Bershka, Stradivarius or online through Asos or Shein. They buy clothes at these stores, because they often sell a wide range of trendy, renewed, and fashionable clothes for affordable and cheap prices. One respondent said: “I buy clothes from these stores because they are cheap. I also think that these stores sell nice clothes for a nice price”. Because the majority of respondents are students with limited budgets, price is an important factor in their decision to buy at fast fashion stores. Respondents occasionally purchase more expensive clothing due of higher quality or for special events. According to the responders, quality is important since the greater the quality, the longer the garments last. One respondent gives the following reason for purchasing clothing from these stores:

“My number one favorite is Zara, because this store is inexpensive, depending on the product relatively okay quality and accessible. I also really like some more exclusive brands, such as Isabel Marrant. If I want to make a purchase here, I have to actually save

money for it and think very carefully about this fashion item. That makes buying the item even more fun in the end”.

Fast fashion stores show different styles in one store and Asos, for example, offers different brands on one platform. This makes it easier for respondents to purchase at these stores and less difficult for them to find something they desire. A respondent said that:

“The price-quality ration is very nice and because, in this case, Zara is very accessible. When I have a party and experience stress to choose an outfit, you quickly go into the city, and it is possible to leave within 10 minutes with a full outfit”.

This shows that convenience is an important motive for respondents to buy at fast fashion stores or online platforms. They like buying new clothes when fashion items are easily accessible and then this can give them an experience of enjoyment.

Another important motive for this target group to engage in fast fashion are keeping up with new trends. These trends are often displayed on social media platforms, such as Tik Tok and Instagram. Social media has a big influence on the buying behavior of the respondents, because this ensures that consumers continuously see when new clothing items are available. As one respondent says:

“Yes! Because I see a lot that I really like and when I like it, I will order this straight away. For example, when I want to order cowboy boots, I can look information about these boots on TikTok and then I read the reviews there. In this way you can order it right away. Haha so you can say that I am mainly influenced by social media and less

by shop windows. Uh, I am influenced very quickly. If there is 1 bad review, then I no longer want the product”.

And another respondent recounts:

“Yes, I have the desire to buy new clothes often. I follow many clothing brands on Instagram, so I continuously see when new clothing items are available. When I see that an influencer posts a picture with a nice piece of clothing, I am often inclined to search for this piece of clothing and also order it. I know it doesn't make sense and I really feel bad for myself, but I like to wear something different and buy something new every time I go out, go to a festival, or have some other special occasion”

This desire to change clothes often means that respondents quickly get tired of their clothes and want to wear the newest trends to feel fashionable and confident.

After the respondents purchase a fashion item, they mention a feeling of joy. Mostly they feel joy, because they buy a new clothing item that looks good on them, so that they can express their style. Style and physical appearance are important to the respondents because it gives them self-confidence. This feeling of self-confidence is strengthened when their external surroundings give compliments about their new clothes. According to one respondent: “I get a happy feeling when I buy something new. Usually, I want to wear it right away”. Another respondent says:

“Well, I feel happy of course, I think everyone always wants to show their new items to their friends and other people and it is always nice to get confidence out of wearing something new”.

However, this happy feeling does not last for a long time. Most respondents mention that these feelings of enjoyment and self-confidence last only the first two times that they wear a fashion item. After this time, they say that a clothing item is not special anymore. There are only some special fashion items or basics that can give the respondents a happy feeling that lasts. However, garments that respondents no longer consider special end up at the back of their wardrobes. They sometimes try to sell their unwanted items on marketplace platforms like Vinted, or they give them to friends, family, or charity in order to make other people happy with the clothes they no longer want.

3.4 Attitudes of the respondents towards sustainability

In general, the interviews show that trends, pricing, quality, enjoyment, and convenience are important motives for the respondents to buy new clothes. Yet, the respondents claim that sustainability plays a role in their consumption behavior, and they would like to make more responsible choices when buying a fashion item. They attempt to buy more consciously and consider their fashion choices. Some respondents buy clothes at vintage stores or online marketplaces such as Vinted because they wish to be more concerned about the environment. vintage shopping gives them a better feeling than buying at fast fashion stores. One respondent mentioned the following when I asked if she would like to make more sustainable clothing choices:

“Uhm yes, I would like to buy more consciously and not buy if it is not necessary. But I just think that I still have to get rid of that "shop therapy" feeling and get rid of only feeling good when you have something new”.

This quote shows the ambivalence: although the respondents want to become sustainable consumers by buying less, buying vintage, or buying more consciously, this is not always reflected in their behavior and purchases. This is typically called the attitude-behavior gap (D'Astous & Legendre, 2008). When asked, the respondents gave the following reasons: they feel the desire to follow the latest trends and always would like to buy something new; the happy feeling when they buy something new; fast fashion is less expensive than sustainable clothing; they lack knowledge about sustainable fashion, and they find it difficult where to find more sustainable options. This last reason is caused because the respondents suspect that companies are engaged in greenwashing practices. They stated that this is the reason they do not know what is sustainable and what is not, and that they find this confusing. One respondent mentions the following about sustainable brands and greenwashing:

“Uhm, also I think that we can and should look at clothes more like this: invest in your look, let it be of value, consciously made and sustainable. This already seems to be the trend; many companies are pretending to be sustainable, but this is called green washing. It's complicated and confusing for consumers nowadays because fashion stores say that the harmful products they sell, are sustainable”.

This answer shows that consumers are open to become sustainable consumers but find it difficult to change their consumer behavior into a sustainable consumption pattern, because they mistrust corporations of engaging in greenwashing methods. For this reason, they find it hard to distinguish sustainable brands from brands with unsustainable practices. Yet, the respondents could also pretend this is the reason why they do not buy sustainable fashion.

3.5 Attitudes of the respondents towards collaborative fashion consumption

Respondents want to become sustainable consumers, or so they say, because they do agree that current fashion system is unsustainable. The interviews show that they know certain issues that the fashion industry causes, such as poor working conditions and unsustainable production processes which are bad for the environment, but they do not know that the fashion industry uses 1.5 trillion liters of water per year, is responsible for 20% water pollution from textile dyeing, produces 10% of Global CO₂ emissions, contributes to 35% microplastic pollution in the sea, and that there is much textile waste.

I asked the eleven young women questions about the trend of collaborative fashion consumption, which is an alternative way of using fashion items and can contribute to more sustainable fashion behavior among Dutch female consumers. Five of the eleven respondents have heard of this consumption trend, but they are not familiar with it and are not yet participating in this alternative way of consuming fashion products. The respondents have heard about companies that rent or lease clothes from expensive brands or for special occasions, such as wedding dresses, party dresses, or luxury fashion items, but they never heard of renting, leasing, or lending options for clothes for everyday life. This is quite a significant finding, although the group of interviewees is admittedly small.

Because the respondents were unaware of this consumption pattern and had not yet participated, I explained the concept to them. As a result, the respondents' responses are ambiguous and demonstrate the gap between desire and behavior. When I explained the respondents about this consumption trend and the several collaborative fashion initiatives in the Netherlands, they all agreed that it was a good initiative. Some respondents remark that collaborative fashion consumption may be a good solution for events and special occasions, but they wonder how big the market is for everyday life clothing. They think consumers just prefer to wear and own their own clothes. The respondents indicate they could help each other with

new fashion items by swapping clothes between consumers. Enough beautiful clothing has been produced and can be used by several people, according to the respondents. Another respondent mention: “clothing should not be recycled until it is broken. If clothes are still good to use, clothes can always make someone else happy”.

When asked, most respondents say they would participate in collaborative fashion consumption. It seems that they do not yet participate, due to a lack of knowledge about collaborative fashion in general, as it is still a relatively new phenomenon. There are different motives for respondents to participate or not to participate in collaborative fashion consumption. The respondents mention trust as the first motive for engaging in collaborative fashion consumption. The respondents prefer to share clothes with people in their surroundings who they can trust instead sharing fashion items with strangers. According to a respondent: “I trust people more in my own environment that they will return it properly or compensate if something does happen with these clothes”. Some respondents see garments as personal belongings and are afraid that strangers are not careful enough with their garments and they run the risk of clothes getting broken. A respondent says:

“I would rather share with people in my surrounding who I can trust, because you still run the risk of clothes getting dirty or broken and I trust people more in my own environment that they will return it properly or compensate if something does happen with these clothes”.

Hygiene and quality of the clothing are also of importance to the consumer to engage in collaborative fashion consumption. Respondents find it difficult to evaluate the quality of the fashion products. This due the fact that items are rented or leased online, and respondents would not be able to feel the fashion item prior to the purchase. Hygiene and intimacy of pre-owned

clothes can be a reason for the respondents not to use collaborative consumption initiatives. Most respondents mention they find lending, renting, or leasing fashion items not the most hygienic idea and are afraid that they get louse or something else from it.

Convenience is another important motive to engage in collaborative fashion consumption. Convenience is about the cost and time saved by the consumer when using a collaborative fashion consumption initiative. The respondents find it important that collaborative fashion consumption initiatives are accessible, for example by offering rental, leasing, and lending opportunities in several places, and an easy returning service. It is important for the respondents that no extra costs, time, and trouble are involved and that renting, leasing, and lending are made very easy. One of the respondents says:

“I think it could be useful if it is offered in several places. I just find it hard to think about returning the clothes again. This is going to be a stumbling block for me. And if it has to be ordered, it costs extra delivery time and petrol so it must be nearby, I think. I don't quite see the idea yet, but maybe I just need to envision it”.

And another respondent says:

“Uhm if the options are not too expensive and accessible. If brands show clear photos and when it is easy to order or return fashion items. I also think it is important that these brands advertise online”.

According to the interviews, respondents desire to learn more about this consumption trend and sustainable fashion from collaborative fashion consumption companies. They stated that these companies must be clear about their service systems, provide knowledge about the

fast fashion industry's issues and collaborative fashion, and provide recommendations on renting, lending, leasing, and sharing of garments. The respondents mention they would like collaborative fashion consumption companies to promote this alternative consumption trend more on social media, let famous people post photos of clothes they rented, leased, or lend, and that these initiatives show consumers how important it is to reuse clothes instead of buying new ones. One respondent says:

“I do think that a lot more information needs to be given and more advertised about it. It must be presented attractively. These companies have to show why they do this, so why is it better for the environment and people. It doesn't matter where the clothes come from if you know what the initiative and purpose of the company is and how everything works”.

Trends, appearance and fashionability are important motives for the respondents if they want to engage in collaborative fashion consumption. The respondents find it important that the fashion items that are being reused, are trendy and fashionable. This ensures that the respondents can be fashion leaders who are the early adopters of new fashion trends. As one respondent says: “The clothes should be trendy, and companies should share the clothes in an attractive way on social media”. Being able to follow the latest trends is an important motive for the respondents to engage in renting and leasing activities. Renting would give them more access to fashion trends and seasonal clothes can be borrowed and then returned when the trend is over.

All respondents think that if companies make renting, lending, leasing, and sharing of clothes trendier and more fashionable on social media, they become more aware of this consumption trend and they be influenced to rent, lease, or lend from these companies.

Enjoyment is also an important motive for the respondents. The respondents enjoy hunting for reused fashion items and being surprised with a new piece of clothing. They get satisfaction out of looking for fashion treasures or finding a party dress for a low price. Renting, leasing, sharing, or lending are seen as possibly enjoyable experience in the eyes of the respondents. They potentially like the idea that they might learn that other clothing styles look good on them and match their identity.

Price is the last motive for respondents to engage in collaborative fashion consumption. Most of the respondents are students with a low budget, which means that they find it important that collaborative fashion items are not too expensive. The interviews show that respondents find it important that companies should offer good value for money and offer fashion items for a normal price. As we have seen in the previous chapter, durable items are usually more expensive than fast fashion items because it is a more just and fairer price. One respondent says:

“I think for me personally companies have to do something with the price. If sustainable fashion is unaffordable and very expensive, it's already off for me. If it is affordable, the process must be easy and reliable. Uhm then I would like to participate again”

As we have seen, most respondents only engage in rentals for special events, such as weddings. It also means that respondents can afford fashion items from luxury brands by renting these instead of buying. This ensures that consumers can save cost, which appears to be a key motive for respondents to feel satisfied with a collaborative fashion consumption option. Renting occasional fashion items can be seen as a solution to the respondents' limited financial resources.

3.6 Conclusion

The purpose of this third chapter is to find out the attitudes of Dutch female consumers between the age of 18 and 25 years towards the trend of collaborative fashion consumption. I conducted interviews with eleven young women to research what the consumer behavior of the target group is and what their attitudes are towards fast fashion. Studying consumer behavior helps me understand what influences these consumers buying decisions. It gives me insight in the motives of the respondents when buying fashion items. It helps understand if they are open to change their consumer behavior and if they are open to engage in collaborative fashion consumption. This helps to understand how consumers choose, consume, and dispose fashion products. From my rather restricted research I can draw some conclusions.

In general, the eleven respondents buy three till ten fashion items monthly, which indicates that they are impulse buyers. They have the desire to buy new clothes very often, which is caused by seasons, occasions, trends, and external surroundings. The code enjoyment was mentioned by the respondents when purchasing new fashion items. This feeling of joy does not last for a long time, which ensures that they often change styles and try new trends that fit their identities. I can connect this finding with the idea of Joanne Entwistle, that when women wear beautiful clothes, they feel at their best (31). This connects with the researched code physical appearance and that fashion items give response to the style, identity, and self-confidence of the respondents.

The new trends are often displayed on social media platforms, such as Instagram. Social media platforms have indeed a big influence on the buying behavior of the respondents. This finding is confirmed by Djafarova and Bowes, who argue that the usage of Instagram by consumers acts as a stimulus on impulsive purchasing behavior and consumers seek inspiration to express themselves on Instagram platforms (2).

The respondents indicated that they do not have a high financial status, which means that they purchase clothes at fast fashion stores offering a wide range of broad variety of stylish,

renewed garments at low prices. This particular financial position indicates that it is hard for this group to buy sustainable clothes, because these are often more expensive.

The respondents' views toward fast fashion are shifting, but they are not necessarily making sustainable decisions yet, according to research of Henninger (2016, 4). However, this is not evident from the data collected from the respondents in the interviews. The respondents said that they want to change into sustainable consumers, but only if these fashion items are less expensive, but still trendy. Moreover, respondents indicated that companies should become more transparent and provide knowledge about sustainable fashion and explain how to become a sustainable consumer. This indicates that consumers lack awareness and knowledge and strengthen the so-called attitude-behavior gap which is also seen in research of Henninger (2016, 4). This demonstrates that there is a gap between desire and actual behavior, and that respondents are extremely demanding. This makes it difficult to change their shopping behavior.

There are different motives for consumers to engage in sustainable and collaborative fashion consumption. These motives are related to the ones that I researched in the first two chapters, such as convenience, trust, quality, trendiness, hygiene, price, and enjoyment. It is important to understand these motives to find out in what ways consumers want to engage in renting, lending, sharing, and leasing activities. The consumers' acceptance of an alternative consumption pattern is of importance, because without it, collaborative fashion consumption cannot be successful, according to Becker-Leifold (191).

The respondents lack knowledge about collaborative fashion consumption. When informed by me, they remark that collaborative fashion is a good solution for events and special occasion, but they do not see a market for everyday clothes. The respondents see this alternative consumption trend as a solution to the fast fashion problems, but they need to get used to the idea of sharing and reusing owned fashion items. This shows again the gap between desire and

behavior. After I informed the respondents about this consumption trend, they think that enough beautiful clothing has been produced and can be used by several people. This connects with the idea of Lang, Seo, and Liu that collaborative fashion consumption provides a variety in wardrobe choices of garments allowing consumers to access a wide range of fashion products. Clothing items can be unique as they are not available in the mainstream market, and this can ensure that the respondents become early adopters of new fashion trends.

Trends, appearance, and fashionability are important motives for the respondents to potentially engage in collaborative fashion consumption. From the interviews I deduct that collaborative fashion initiatives should make renting, leasing, lending, and sharing of clothes trendier and fashionable, which is connected to the codes fashionability and trendiness. I can connect this finding with the idea of Djafarova and Bowes wherein they argue that young consumers from generation Z use purchase of clothes to express themselves and following the latest trends is therefore important for consumers to feel fashionable (1).

Trust is also an important motive, because fashion items are personal, and the respondents are afraid of running the risk of clothes getting broken. From the interviews I deduct that collaborative companies should give the respondents a form of guarantee within their service. The respondents are demanding and want collaborative fashion initiatives to give them a feeling of reliance.

The interviews deduct that renting, leasing, lending, or sharing of clothes is easily accessible, is offered in several places, and no extra time or costs are involved. Convenience is therefore an important motive according to the respondents to engage in collaborative fashion consumption. This shows that these female respondents have a lot of desires, before engaging in collaborative fashion. The respondents want to receive more information on social media, and that companies should show how important it is to reuse clothes instead of buying new fashion items.

The results of the interviews show that the eleven Dutch female consumers between the age of 18 and 25 years are extremely demanding. However, they have a lot of desires, they lack knowledge about sustainable fashion and fast fashion problems. They are also unaware of the impact of their consumption habits and the value of clothing. There are a lot of motives that are important to these respondents and that collaborative fashion initiatives should take into account, before these respondents engage in rental, leasing, sharing, or lending activities. Therefore, this research showed that it is difficult to change consumer behavior and that companies must overcome many stumbling blocks to encourage sustainable fashion consumption.

Chapter 4. Interpretation: bringing together theory and empirical research.

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter I delve deeper into the meaning, importance, and relevance of the results presented in the third chapter of my master thesis. I provide an answer to the sub-research question: “How do the findings of the collaborative fashion consumption initiatives and the interviews lead to more sustainable fashion consumption behavior among Dutch female consumers between the age of 18 and 25 years?”. In this chapter I will evaluate and elaborate on my research findings, explain what the results are and will discuss how these results relate to my theoretical framework and research questions. I will also discuss the significance and implications of my results. This will help to answer my research question, research aims, and will support my overall conclusion. First, I will restate my research problem and research questions and I will summarize the key findings. Then, I will interpret what these findings mean, connect these to known collaborative fashion consumption motives and will discuss what the implications are and explain the reasons why these findings and results matter. This could be useful to provide a clear answer to the main research question and this can stimulate consumers’ participation in collaborative fashion consumption. Finally, I will briefly acknowledge the limitations in which I will explain what the results cannot tell us.

4.2 Research problem, research questions and key findings

The purpose of this research is to investigate how the consumption trend collaborative fashion consumption and initiatives on Instagram contribute to more sustainable fashion patterns of Dutch female consumers between the age of 18 and 25 years and how this trend may be a solution to make the fashion industry more sustainable and assist consumers to be more conscious of their social responsibility. A shift towards alternative and sustainable fashion consumption patterns is important because the clothing and textile industry is a major

contributor to environmental, political, social, and cultural problems and counts as one of the most polluting industries in the world (Moorhouse & Moorhouse 4). The consumption of fast fashion is increasing, which causes millions of tons of textiles to be disposed all over the world (Iran and Schrader 2017, 468). This results in textile waste and this reduction of disposed textiles could be a great economic and environmental opportunity (Iran and Schrader 2017). One of the ways of decreasing the amount of waste from fast fashion is collaborative fashion consumption, which means that consumers can rent, share, lease, or lend clothes (Maynard 543). To find out how this new and sustainable trend is perceived by Dutch female consumers between the age of 18 and 25 years old, I formulated the main research question:

“How does the trend of collaborative fashion consumption (and initiatives on Instagram) contribute to more sustainable fashion consumption of Dutch female consumers between the age of 18 and 25 years?”

With the help of different methods, such as the literature review of relevant sources in Fashion Studies, a visual analysis of five collaborative fashion consumption initiatives, and in-depth interviews helped me to highlight some key findings which are related to the formulated research questions.

The main concept that I researched within my master thesis is the trend of collaborative fashion consumption. In the second chapter I explained what this entails. This alternative and sustainable consumption trend is defined by Samira Iran and Ulf Schrader as:

“a consumption trend in which consumers, instead of buying new fashion products, have access to already existing garments either through alternative opportunities to acquire

individual ownership (gifting, swapping, or second hand) or through usage options for fashion products owned by others (sharing, lending, renting, or leasing)” (2017, 472).

This means that consumers have access to commodities and services, which can help prevent the purchases of new goods, addressing overproduction, throwaway culture, and resource exploitation.

It is important to research if consumers accept this alternative consumption pattern, because without this acceptance collaborative fashion consumption cannot be successful. In the second chapter I therefore analyzed how collaborative fashion consumption initiatives LENA – The Fashion Library, The COLLECTIVES, Litchy, Vinted, and MUD Jeans - make leasing, sharing, lending, and renting of clothes more attractive, fashionable, and trendier on Instagram to encourage more sustainable consumer behavior. Social media platforms, such as Instagram can contribute to more sustainable and alternative consumption patterns, such as collaborative fashion consumption. From the literature I had learned that Instagram can indeed act as a stimulus for consumers on impulse purchasing behavior, with photographs and videos displayed on a brand’s Instagram platform and promotional advertisements (Djafarova and Bowes 2). This stimulated me to make a visual analysis of collaborative fashion initiatives on Instagram. The analysis showed that the initiatives have the mission to make the reuse of clothes fashionable, trendier, and the first choice with the use of their posts on their Instagram platforms. They try to encourage sustainable fashion consumption by providing consumers with knowledge on the fashion industry and strive to transmit the message on Instagram that sharing, renting, leasing, or lending activities are more sustainable options than buying new clothes at fast fashion stores. Some initiatives work together with influencers and models to promote the rental of clothes and strengthen their connection with their consumers. Through texts and images companies try to raise awareness about sustainable fashion, the problems of fast fashion,

and the opportunity of collaborative fashion. However, the analysis showed that rental, leasing, and lending activities are a new phenomenon to the consumers, as seen in the small number of 7 till 80 comments on their Instagram posts. The analysis also identifies that the photographs and descriptions of the initiatives on their Instagram platform mostly receive more positive comments, sometimes also receive negative comments. The positive comments indicated that consumers mainly pay attention to the look and fit of the clothes, if these are fashionable or trendy, and if the post raises awareness about sustainability. The negative comments indicated that consumers are not satisfied about their service and communication systems. However, there is a big difference in the various companies I have studied. Vinted fails in their communication strategy because they receive mostly negative comments about their service system. MUD Jeans, LENA, and the COLLECTIVES prioritize customer communication through involving people in their company and mission. They are also transparent about the messages they convey regarding sustainability. Litchy collaborates with influencers to spread their message to a larger audience, ensuring that consumers are more easily influenced to modify their purchase behavior. The analysis indicates that Instagram could be a clever tool to encourage more sustainable fashion consumption, but that initiatives should create more awareness to reach their consumers.

The analysis supports up the findings of the interviews, indicating that the motives fashionable, trendy, and Instagram use are significant for customers when purchasing fashion items. The literature review and the results of the interviews showed that many young consumers seek for inspiration on Instagram platforms, have the desire for novelty, and thrive on fashion change. The results of the interviews indicate that collaborative fashion brands should devise strategies to communicate the motives and values that are important to consumers of generation Z so as to encourage more sustainable fashion consumption.

In the next chapter I moved to empirical research of the consumers to find out their attitudes towards fashion, sustainability, and collaborative fashion consumption. To that end I conducted that data of the in-depth interviews are important to research the attitudes of Dutch female consumers between the age of 18 and 25 years old (generation Z) towards the trend of collaborative fashion consumption. To keep the research feasible, I interviewed eleven female consumers from the Netherlands.

The data suggest that there are different motives for consumers to participate in collaborative fashion consumption. The results indicate that the respondents are highly exposed to social media. In fact, social media play a huge role in the consumer's desire to buy the newest fashion items at a greater speed. This desire is caused by different actors, such as occasions, seasons, trends, and their external surroundings. This group values physical appearance because they wish to express themselves through their clothing. The respondents find it important that their surroundings evaluate their fashion items as attractive. All of this confirms that young consumers are very open, if not vulnerable, to social media like Instagram. Also, the interviews made very clear that the consumers are not necessarily interested in sustainable fashion.

Yet, when prompted, the respondents admitted they do want to buy more consciously and think about their fashion choices. They already do this through vintage shopping, but collaborative fashion consumption was very new to them. In fact, an important finding of my research was that most interviews had never heard of this new consumption trend.

When I informed the respondents with this new consumption trend, I found different motives that are important to the respondents to participate. The results showed that trust is an important motive and consumers prefer to share clothes with people in their surroundings. The interviews made clear that the respondents are idle and want collaborative fashion consumption initiatives to be easily accessible so that they save time and costs when participating in collaborative fashion activities. The findings also revealed that respondents are motivated by

trends, appearance, fashionability, and price, as well as awareness and information about the challenges of fast fashion, why sustainable fashion is a better option, and why collaborative fashion consumption could be a solution. According to the respondents, fashion items of collaborative fashion consumption initiatives need to be trendy and not too expensive. This may have to do with the fact that the respondents are all students with a low financial status.

4.3 Interpretation and Implications

This section analyses the findings from the primary research, combining it with motives and notions from the literature review. In this research the attitudes and the purchase intention of consumers towards collaborative fashion consumption were investigated to find out how this consumption trend is perceived by Dutch female consumers between the age of 18 and 25 years. Also, how collaborative fashion consumption initiatives can contribute to more sustainable fashion consumption.

The general consumption motives of the female participants indicated some patterns. The participants mentioned that they buy three till ten fashion items per month and sometimes they even buy clothes on a weekly basis. These results demonstrates that female respondents often have the desire to buy new clothes. The female respondents mentioned in the interviews that they buy clothes from fast fashion stores, such as Zara, H&M, or Asos, because these stores offer a wide range of trendy and fashionable clothes for cheap prices. In line is previous research of Margaret Maynard that showed that fast fashion is characterized by rapid changes of stylish clothes that are sold in middle-range stores for affordable prices (548). Price is an important motive to buy fast fashion since the female respondents argued that they are students and thus have less money to spend. They also mentioned in the interviews that fast fashion retailers provide a variety of styles and trends in one location, making it convenient for them to shop there. This indicates that new trends are an important motive for these female consumers to

engage in fast fashion. The female consumers mentioned that these trends are often displayed on social media platforms, such as Instagram. These results fit with the quick-response method that most retailers use, which is the facilitation of rapid access to the newest styles by the help of communication technologies and digitalization, according to research of Maynard (548). This quick-response method is based on trendspotting, which ensures that consumers are quickly tired of their clothes (Osbaldiston 36). According to the female respondents in the interviews, they can seek inspiration through Instagram and satisfy in their needs. On Instagram, the female respondents continuously see when new clothing items are available, which ensures they get inspired and want to purchase these fashion items. The findings could imply that Instagram acts as a stimulus on customers' impulse purchase behavior, which Djafarova and Bowes explain in their study as having to do with photographs and videos posted on a brand's Instagram platform, as well as promotional advertisements (2). However, based on the findings of the fashion study of Margaret Maynard, online marketing websites are also dispensers of trendy clothing and allow consumers to see the most popular outfits over the recent past and be part of a fashion community (Maynard 549). This is consistent with the findings of the interviews, which show that female consumers prioritize convenience when buying new apparel. Female respondents find it easier to buy new fashion items and less effort to locate something they like when stores display different styles in one location or on an online webpage.

The female respondents mentioned that they get a feeling of joy when purchasing a fashion item, because they bought something that looks good on them, and they can express their style. This builds on existing evidence of Djafarova and Bowes that young consumers from generation Z use fashion purchases to express themselves (1). The female consumers mentioned in the interviews that they find it important to be able to express themselves through their style and are looking for new expressions in clothing. In the study of Patrik Aspers and

Frédéric Godart they argue that fashion represents the clearest sign of aestheticization of social life, which means that consumers can express themselves (183). However, female respondents mentioned that this feeling of joy lasts for a short time. This finding met my expectations that fashion is a temporary phenomenon and consumers wear clothes for a short period. The respondents mentioned that the feelings of enjoyment and self-confidence only lasts the first two times they wear a fashion item. These results contribute to a clearer understanding of the reason why female consumers replace their clothes so fast and why they maintain fast fashion. Female respondents answered that clothes they no longer wear end up in the back of their wardrobes. These findings add to current evidence from Niinimäki's research showing 30% of garments in closets go unused (5).

However, an unexpected result is that all female respondents mentioned that they do prefer not to throw away fashion items, but give it to friends, family, or charity, or try to sell these clothes on marketplace platforms such as Vinted. Vinted provides a platform with fashionable second-hand clothes at reasonable prices, so that consumers can reuse clothes. While previous research of WRAP and Iran and Schrader focused on that when clothes are unused, apparel is disposed or goes to landfill (9), the results demonstrate that the female respondents find it hard and unnecessary to throw away clothes. Although, these female respondents find it hard to throw away clothes, previous research of Iran and Schrader stated that 60% of the environmental impact of products come from the consumption stage, cleaning, and fast replacement (1).

Trends, cost, quality, enjoyment, and convenience are major motivators for female responders to buy new garments frequently. This must change in order to change sustainable consumer behavior. The results of the interviews showed that respondents would like that more often sustainability plays a key role in the purchasing behavior, but the desire to become more sustainable is not seen in their actual purchasing behavior. This result contradicts the claims of

Henninger (2021) that some consumers are reconsidering their present practices and becoming more conscious of the influence of their clothing purchasing behavior on the environment (1). The female respondents mentioned in the interviews that they would like to take more responsibility for the environment but find it difficult to know how.

However, based on the findings of similar studies, a more plausible explanation is that the demand for sustainable products is not as high as expected, because of the attitude-behavior gap (D'Astous & Legendre, 2008). The results from the interviews show that female consumers have a lack of knowledge. This is confirmed by Fraser who states that a lack of knowledge, awareness, and confusion of intrinsic value of clothes results in a throwaway culture (37). In the interviews the female respondents mention they do not have knowledge about what sustainable fashion is and what the problems of fast fashion are. According to Henninger, sustainable fashion considers the natural, social, and economic price that is paid in the fast fashion industry (2). Although brands are beginning to take a greener approach, it is difficult for consumers to understand the range of meanings, practices, and associations that fall under sustainable fashion according to Kedron. This theory of Kedron is consistent with the findings that respondents have difficulty distinguishing between what is and is not sustainable and may also be related to the suspicion of greenwashing practices. A similar study from Henninger explained greenwashing implies an organization which knowingly has a poor environmental performance, yet communicates positively (Henninger, et. al. 4). These results should be taken into account by designers, producers, and brands to communicate in a transparent and truthful green way about sustainable fashion.

The interviews that I held contribute to a clearer understanding of the paradox that the female respondents all buy fast fashion on a regular basis but, are open to sustainable consumption and to alternative consumption patterns. Nine out of eleven respondents would participate in collaborative fashion consumption, but I was struck that none of them had heard

of these initiatives. Moreover, there are certain motives that are important to female respondents to participate, such as trust, fashionability, trendiness, convenience, hygiene, quality, price, and enjoyment. Despite the fact that the respondents had never heard of this consumption trend before I informed them, they would only engage if companies satisfied these motives. In the interviews the female respondents mentioned that they prefer to share clothes with people in their surroundings who they can trust, because they find this more hygienic and are less concerned that something happens with the quality of the clothes. This idea is consistent with Belk's hypothesis that sharing is more common among friends, family, or close relatives, which is referred to as sharing-in (1596).

Trends, appearance, and fashionability are important motives for respondents to engage in collaborative fashion. The interviews that I held contribute to a clearer understanding that collaborative fashion consumption initiatives should make renting, leasing, lending of clothes trendier and more attractive, as the female respondents find this important. The findings of the interviews build on research of Lang, Seo, and Liu that collaborative fashion consumption provides a variety in wardrobe choices of existing garments allowing consumers to access a wide range of fashion products, which is in line with the hypothesis that clothing items of these alternative consumption trend can be unique as they are not available in the mainstream market (1). Respondents mention that initiatives could make collaborative fashion consumption more attractive and trendier on social media. The findings of the collaborative fashion initiative analysis revealed that they use social media platforms such as Instagram to demonstrate that renting, leasing, or lending choices are stylish and can be fashionable. These initiatives show in the analysis that respondents get more access to a wide range of fashion items, thus be able to follow the latest fashion trends and seasonal clothes can borrowed and then returned when the trend is over. The analysis reveals that collaborative fashion consumption initiatives post fashion photographs on Instagram of models and influencers wearing reused clothing. They

aim to persuade people to participate in collaborative fashion consumption by using these fashion photographs. This builds on the observation of Margaret Maynard that the glossy fashion images of fashion items drive consumer desire (547).

When I explained the trend collaborative fashion consumption in the interviews, female respondents mention that they would like enjoy hunting for reused fashion items, being surprised with a new piece of clothing, and get satisfaction out of it when engaging in collaborative fashion activities. Renting, leasing, or lending are seen as a possibly enjoyable experience, which connects with research of Becker-Leifold who argued that motives for consumers to participate in collaborative fashion consumption are enjoyment, satisfaction, the hunting for treasures that are not available in mainstream markets (201). This also fits with the observation of Lang, Seo, and Liu that enjoyment highlights the importance of pleasure through consumption and generates a pleasant experience while consuming and the shopping for clothing can be seen as a fun experience wherein consumers feel pleasure when buying a new fashion item (522). However, in the research of Park & Armstrong they argue that saving time was identified as an important motive on why consumers engage in collaborative fashion consumption and the results of the interviews suggest that female consumers only sense pleasure when convenience is included. They find it important that collaborative fashion consumption initiatives are accessible, offered in several places, and the initiatives offer a good delivery and return system. This indicates that these female respondents have a lot of desires when engaging in collaborative fashion consumption.

In the interviews female consumers mention they find it important that information about this alternative consumption trend is given on social media platforms, such as Instagram. This demonstrates that respondents would like more information and are unaware of alternative fashion consumption trends. These findings are consistent with Henninger's research, which

found that the internet facilitates consumers' ability to find what they always need, and that access to unused clothing through renting, swapping, donating, or secondhand purchase (4).

The analysis of the posts and images of the collaborative fashion initiatives: Vinted, MUD Jeans, Litchy, the COLLECTIVES, and LENA- the Fashion Library showed that these initiatives provide knowledge to consumers through messages about sustainability, the problems of the fast fashion industry, and the reasons why the reusing of clothes is a good solution. However, my visual analysis showed that these initiatives fail to bring their message into practice, because they do not know exactly how to reach their consumers and strengthen their connection. This was furthermore confirmed by the interviews because none of the respondents had heard about these initiatives. Research of Felson and Spaeth argued that it is therefore important to research what consumers want, where they want to consume it, which whom, and under what circumstances (617).

4.4 Conclusion and limitations.

The purpose of this fourth chapter is to delve deeper into the meaning, importance, and relevance of the results presented in the third chapter. The results are connected to the literature review and the analysis of the first two chapters, to find certain patterns, correlations, and relationships among the collected data. I conducted qualitative research investigating a new alternative consumption trend, which is especially new to female consumers between the age of 18 and 25 years old. Interview questions were based on concepts and findings of Fashion Studies and studies on collaborative fashion consumption. This study conducts a sample size of eleven female respondents the Netherlands indicating this research group is small. The validity is low, considering that this research group is in practice much larger, and this research only can generalize this small group of people.

The results provide a relationship between existing motives of general fashion consumption, existing collaborative fashion consumption motives, and new motives for

consumers to engage in rental, leasing, lending, and sharing activities. These motives, such as trendiness, price, enjoyment, convenience, fashionability, and quality, indicate what consumers find important when purchasing fashion items. While these motives are important to customers' purchasing behavior, new motives such as trust, sustainability, hygiene, lack of ownership, and, most importantly, knowledge are also important. These motives tend to highlight the same problem: consumers acceptance of an alternative consumption pattern is not easy, but important, because without this acceptance, collaborative fashion consumption cannot be successful. The literature review, analysis, and in-depth interviews highlight that trendiness, fashionability, and knowledge are the most important. Collaborative fashion consumption gives the consumer access to a wide range of reused clothes, which give them the opportunity to follow the latest trends and give them the chance to find out which style fits their style. These initiatives should provide clear information on social media platforms, about the benefits of collaborative fashion consumption processes, foreground the motives that are important to consumers, and highlight sustainable aspects.

Consumer views toward fast fashion are shifting, however they are not always choosing sustainable choices due to a lack of knowledge and awareness. This disparity between desires and behavior is thus the most important finding of this study. These findings should be considered by collaborative fashion consumption initiatives in order to develop relationships with existing and new consumers.

Conclusion.

From my theoretical research, visual analysis, and ethnographic interviews, I can draw some conclusions to answer the research question how the trend of collaborative fashion consumption (and initiatives on Instagram) contributes to more sustainable fashion consumption of Dutch female consumers between the age of 18 and 25 years.

In the theoretical framework I researched the key concepts fast fashion, sustainable fashion, the sharing economy, collaborative fashion consumption, and consumer behavior within Fashion Studies. These key concepts provide me with information of the research problem, the research purpose, and the results.

The fast fashion industry is a big business with a growing impact on the environment and a contributor to social, cultural, and political problems. Sustainability became an important key concept which is meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs. Sustainable fashion approaches are introduced to identify sustainable solutions based on the repositioning of strategies of design, production, consumption, use, and reuse. Many brands are beginning to take a more sustainable or slow approach to design and producing garments. However, 60% of the environmental impact of products come from the consumption stage, from the usage and post usage phase. Research focusing on consumer attitudes and perceptions of sustainable and alternative ways of fashion consumption therefore are increasingly important. Consumers are sensitive to new trends and have the desire to buy new clothes very often at fast fashion stores. This is due to the quick response method that companies use to facilitate the rapid access to the newest styles by the help of communication technologies, such as Instagram. The findings of the interviews showed that prior to the purchase of fashion items female consumers have the desire to buy new clothes, caused by actors such as occasions, trends, Instagram, seasons, and external surroundings and therefore buy an average of three to ten items of clothing per month. Trends ensure that

consumers quickly become tired of their clothes and stop wearing them. Therefore, a new approach to fashion consumption, such as collaborative fashion consumption which is based on the reusing of clothes is important to change existing fashion consumer behavior.

To address the research problem and question, I employed a visual analysis and in-depth interviews with eleven female consumers between the age of 18 and 25 years old. This provided me with information why these female consumers buy fast fashion, if they are open to the trend of collaborative fashion consumption and what their attitudes towards this trend are.

After the literature review, in the second chapter I performed a visual analysis of Instagram posts of five collaborative fashion initiatives: Vinted, the COLLECTIVES, Litchy, MUD Jeans, and LENA- The Fashion Library. Results of this visual analysis showed that these initiatives should use the concepts fashionability and trendiness to engage consumers in collaborative fashion consumption activities, strive to build their relationships with existing customers and increase brand exposure. These initiatives could provide a solution for the attitude-behavior gap by giving consumers knowledge on the fashion industry and strive to transmit the message on Instagram that sharing, renting, leasing, or lending items is more sustainable than buying new clothes. The analysis showed that the collaboration with Influencers probably might help influence the purchasing intentions of consumers and contribute to more awareness about sustainability. Engaging customers in their organization and mission would also be beneficial. Still, these initiatives are in their early stages, and it is still a new phenomenon as seen in the small number of comments at their Instagram posts.

In the third chapter I conducted in-depth interviews with eleven Dutch female consumers. The findings of this research show that the eleven Dutch female consumers between the age of 18 and 25 years are demanding. They have the desire to buy new clothes often. This desire is mostly strengthened by trends displayed on social media platforms and the importance of physical appearance. This assures that they frequently change trends, and that the joy they get

when wearing new clothes lasts only a short period. Because the respondents indicated that they do not have a high financial position, the interviews revealed that they purchase mostly at fast fashion stores, which offer a broad choice of trendy, renewed clothes at low costs. However, the respondents said they would like to change their consumer behavior and buy more sustainable, they fail to bring this into practice. This indicates that consumers lack awareness and knowledge about sustainable fashion and fast fashion problems. They are also unaware of the impact of their consumption behavior and the value of clothing, indicating a gap between desire and actual behavior. When I asked the respondents about collaborative fashion consumption, I discovered that they were unaware of the trend. However, there are different motives for consumers to engage in sustainable and collaborative fashion consumption, such as convenience, trust, knowledge, trendiness, hygiene, price, and enjoyment, but these show the respondents are demanding.

It is critical to understand these motives in order to determine how consumers want to engage in renting, lending, sharing, and leasing activities and to provide an answer to the research question of how the collaborative fashion consumption trend (and initiatives on Instagram) contributes to more sustainable fashion consumption among Dutch female consumers aged 18 to 25.

Respondents are sensitive to trends displayed on Instagram platforms of brands and fashion items shown by various influencers and they have the desire to look nice. Because the respondents are students with limited financial resources, fashion products should not be prohibitively priced. Respondents want to purchase at fast fashion stores in order to keep up with the current trends while spending less money on clothing. These offer a diverse selection of stylish, fashionable, and reasonably priced clothing. Although, the respondents indicate they would like to make more sustainable fashion choices, they fail to bring this into practice. This is caused by a lack of knowledge about fast fashion problems and sustainable fashion. An

alternative fashion purchasing trend based on the reusing of fashion items instead of buying new ones, is called collaborative fashion consumption. Collaborative fashion consumption offers rental, leasing, lending, and sharing options for existing garments, to discourage a throw-away culture of clothes. A significant finding is that Dutch female consumers have heard of leasing choices from high-end brands or for special occasions, but have never heard of renting, leasing, or loan options for everyday clothing. However, while this may be a way to encourage sustainable consumer behavior, the interviews reveal that all respondents are unaware of this new and alternative fashion consumption trend.

When these respondents are informed about collaborative fashion consumption, they have numerous reasons to participate or not participate in this alternate method of consuming fashion items. The first and most crucial motive is trust. During this study, respondents reported that they like to exchange garments with others in their immediate surroundings, a process known as sharing-in. The Dutch female consumers are generally afraid that something will happen to their garments, that they will break, or that they will get louse or something else from these items. This shows that collaborative fashion consumption initiatives should give respondents a positive feeling, be reliable, and give the impression of security to build trust with its consumers, to overcome these concerns. If a working, well-controlled, and safe way of sharing, leasing, renting, and lending is developed, respondents would trust a company more. A form of guarantee, transparency, transparency, and a laundry service should be executed by companies and initiatives to connect the consumers to their company.

A second motive important to the respondents refers to trendiness and fashionability. During this research the respondents indicated that clothing contributes to their physical appearance, their style, and they want to look good for their external surroundings. When respondents feel that they look good, they gain self-confidence. According to the research, Instagram usage by customers acts as a stimulus on purchase behavior and is the standard for

generation Z buyers seeking inspiration. Also, consumers may feel connected to what other consumers believe and do and buy through Instagram reposts. This means that consumers may feel compelled to rent, lease, or lend used fashion items when these clothes are displayed more often on Instagram platforms. As a result, collaborative fashion consumption initiatives must collaborate with influencers and consumers to encourage clothing rental, leasing, and lending. Influencers can have a significant impact on the purchasing patterns of Dutch female consumers and assist collaborative fashion consumption initiatives in making collaborative fashion consumption more appealing. It is also critical that collaborative fashion consumption initiatives convey in Dutch female customers the notion that they may look good and fashionable in reused fashion items, and they can express themselves. These companies should match expectations about what is fashionable, trendy, and what fits the style of individuals. If these companies do not meet these expectations, female consumers will continue to shop at fast fashion stores rather than renting, leasing, lending, or sharing clothes. Collaborative fashion consumption initiatives thus need to investigate the expectations about fashionability of Dutch female consumers and how they reach their consumers in an attractive way. It could be of great value if these initiatives incorporate these trendies, fashion items in their collection.

Collaborative fashion consumption is a suitable solution for special occasions and events, and collaborative fashion consumption initiatives allow consumers to satisfy these feelings of necessity without spending too much money. Price is the third most important motivator for consumers to participate or not participate in collaborative fashion consumption. Dutch female consumers between the ages of 18 and 25 are students on a limited budget, so it is critical that renting, leasing, or lending clothes is not extremely expensive. Collaborative fashion consumption efforts can provide high-end brands and contemporary apparel that can be returned after the event. This ensures that consumers can save costs, because renting occasional fashion items could be a solution to their limited resources.

During this research a fourth significant finding is that convenience is an important motive for Dutch female consumers to participate in collaborative fashion consumption. This means that collaborative fashion consumption initiatives must be easily accessible, so that cost and time is saved by the consumers. Therefore, collaborative fashion consumption initiatives have to offer rental, leasing, and lending opportunities in several places and offer an easy returning service. The respondents are very demanding, and only want to engage in collaborative fashion consumption if options are made very easy and no extra costs, time, and trouble are involved.

The research indicates that knowledge is the fifth important motive to change consumer behavior. The respondents lack knowledge and awareness about the value of clothes, sustainable fashion, and collaborative fashion consumption. It is therefore important that collaborative fashion consumption initiatives advertise online and promote collaborative fashion consumption in an attractive way on social media. These initiatives must provide more information to female consumers about this consumption pattern, sustainable fashion, and the challenges of the fast fashion industry. Collaborative fashion consumption initiatives have to address the problems of the fast fashion industry to female consumers in a direct manner and fervid way. This can fill in the gap between desire and behavior.

According to this research, Dutch female consumers are quite demanding, and so this consumption trend cannot completely contribute to more sustainable fashion consumption among Dutch female consumers aged 18 to 25. Collaborative fashion initiatives have to offer trendy, accessible, and cheap clothes of high quality to ensure that consumers are engaging in collaborative fashion consumption. The findings revealed that consumers desire to become more sustainable and change their behavior. They strive to take more and more responsibility for their purchasing behavior, claiming that when they buy something, they do so more consciously and with long-term goals and objectives. However, this is not reflected in their

actual purchase behavior, which is related to the attitude-behavior gap. Moreover, sustainability needs action from both consumers, producers, and businesses to change the fashion system. Prices will have to go down for sustainable clothing, there must be more social media attention, and sustainability and problems of the fast fashion industry need to be discussed more often.

The gap between desires, knowledge, and action makes changing female consumer behavior between the ages of 18 and 25 challenging. There are ways for collaborative fashion consumption initiatives to contribute to more sustainable consumer behavior, but I believe that much more needs to change in order to shift from fast fashion to sustainable fashion trends. Fast fashion has become so embedded in society, and Dutch female consumers are used to purchasing new fashion items, making this transition difficult. Small measures can be taken to encourage sustainable consumer behavior through various forms of collaborative fashion consumption. But first, I believe the attitude-behavior gap must be addressed.

Limitations and suggestions for further research

This study relies on a limited number of motives to engage in collaborative fashion consumption and on a small group of participants between the age of 18 and 25 years. The study is primarily focused on the contribution of collaborative fashion in general and initiatives in the Netherlands on the sustainable behavior of Dutch female consumers and not concretely on the solution of this problem, therefore further studies would be necessary to investigate this in more detail.

From a general view possible motives analyzed in this research suggest that collaborative fashion consumption could have a positive impact on sustainable consumer behavior. The female respondents are very demanding and collaborative fashion consumption initiatives should include all motives to ensure that female consumers engage in collaborative fashion activities. However, some difficulties were identified in the third chapter, and these shall be

addressed. When renting, leasing, lending, or sharing clothes, certain barriers were identified. The respondents have a lack of trust in other participants, regarding hygiene or condition of reused clothes. To solve this problem, there are options such as the implementation of a control or security mechanism, transparency, and a laundry service. However, further investigations of this motive and possible solutions would be necessary to investigate in more detail.

Secondly this research showed that Instagram and the use of influencers, could act as a stimulus on the purchasing behavior of female respondents and make collaborative fashion consumption activities more attractive to engage in. Therefore, future research should investigate in what ways Instagram and influencers could act as a stimulus to change purchasing and how influencers and initiatives should address these female consumers.

Another problem identified in chapter three, was the provision of information for the respondents regarding the field of fast fashion, sustainable fashion, and collaborative fashion consumption. In this context collaborative fashion initiatives could inform the consumers in different ways. This shows that it is important that initiatives should create awareness about these subjects on social media and address female consumers in a direct manner. Future research could investigate in what ways these companies can inform these consumers and how they could raise awareness so that they would change their shopping behavior. It would therefore be necessary for further studies to investigate different ways to communicate and inform these respondents.

This research showed that the attitude-behavior gap is an important reason, why it is difficult to change consumer behavior. There is a gap between the desires, which means that consumers exhibit positive attitudes but fail to execute these attitudes in sustainable behavior. Thus, it is important to continuously encourage female consumers to buy less fast fashion products and invest more in renting, leasing, or lending of clothes. Future research should

investigate this attitude-behavior gap in more depth, to find out how this gap can be addressed to change consumer behavior.

Future research should investigate the barriers of the contribution of collaborative fashion consumption on sustainable consumption. My research relies on a small group of respondents, therefore future research could investigate the motives to engage in collaborative fashion consumption on a larger scale of consumers in society.

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Appendix

Interview questions.

1. *Do you buy new clothes often? How often do you buy new clothes? How much clothes do you buy per month?*
2. *Where/in which stores (or online) do you buy your clothes?*
3. *Why do you buy your clothes in these stores?*
4. *Do you feel the urge to buy new clothes often and why?*
5. *When you buy new clothes, what do you pay attention to when you buy a new item of clothing? (Quality, price, trends, sustainability, etc.) What do you find important?*
6. *Do certain information/photos/messages from companies or influencers on Instagram influence your buying behaviour? Why?*
7. *Do fashion trends influence your buying behaviour? Do you have the urge to buy these trendy clothes?*
8. *Alright, and when you buy a new item of clothing, what feeling do you get? And how long does this feeling last?*
9. *What is the amount of time that you wear your clothes? and are you tired of clothes quickly?*

10. *Do you also have a lot of clothes in your closet that you no longer wear? Why don't you wear these clothes anymore?*
11. *What do you do with your clothes when you no longer want them or when clothes no longer fits you? Why?*
12. *Do you also know where clothing is made / by whom / how and from what material it is made?*
13. *Do you know which cultural, social and environmental issues are associated with fast fashion? (The fashion industry uses 1.5 trillion liters of water per year, is responsible for 20% water pollution from textile dyeing, produces 10% of Global CO2 emissions and contributes to 35% microplastic pollution in the sea. In addition, many employees work under poor working conditions and against very low wages, etc.)*
14. *What do you think about these problems and how does this affect you? How would you tackle these problems yourself? What can you do about this problem yourself?*
15. *Do you know what sustainable fashion is? ("A sustainable or 'slow' fashion approach is introduced to identify sustainable solutions based on the repositioning of strategies of design, production, consumption, use and reuse, which are emerging alongside the global fashion system and posing a potential challenge")*
16. *Do you already consider yourself as a sustainable fashion consumer? Why?*
17. *Do you like to make more sustainable clothing choices why? And how would you do this?*

18. *Do you find it difficult to know where you can make more sustainable purchases?*
19. *Do you think there are other ways to exhibit more sustainable buying behavior or to become more sustainable?*
20. *Have you ever heard of the Sharing Economy and the Collaborative Fashion Consumption trend? (This is: “a consumption trend in which, rather than purchasing new fashion products, consumers have access to pre-existing garments, either through alternative means of acquiring individual property (gift, barter, or second-hand) or through usage options for fashion products owned by others. (Sharing, lending, renting or leasing)”*
21. *What do you think of this consumption trend in general?*
22. *Would you participate in Collaborative Fashion Consumption yourself and thus share clothes? Rent or lend clothes?*
23. *Would you share/rent/borrow clothes with strangers? Or would you only do this with people in your own trusted circle?*
24. *Could companies/brands/information on Instagram help you make more sustainable clothing choices? (Examples show these types of companies: Litchy, MUD Jeans, Vinted, the COLLECTIVES, FRENTS, LENA the fashion Library)*

25. *What should these companies do to persuade you to share/borrow/rent clothes? What kind of information should they show and what kind of messages should they share?*
26. *What would make your existing consumption behavior change into Collaborative Fashion Consumption behaviour/more sustainable buying behaviour?*
27. *Do you think Collaborative Fashion Consumption can make purchasing behavior of Dutch female consumers more sustainable or do you think more needs to change to ensure that purchasing behavior becomes more sustainable and that clothing is viewed in different ways?*

Codes.

Red = fast fashion

Green = Sustainability

Dark Blue = Price

Blue = Trends

Dark green = Convenience

Purple = Appearance/ fashionable

Yellow = Trust

Grey = Quality/ Hygiene

Pink = Enjoyment

Orange = Knowledge

Brown = Ownership