



**An Investigation into the levels of engagement of Gen Z in the
Collaborative Clothing Consumption Industry**

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Abstract

The fast fashion industry has fuelled a culture of overconsumption and waste and as a result has had detrimental effects on the environment. Collaborative clothing consumption is a viable alternative to the traditional paradigm of ownership-based fashion consumption, and it has the potential to decrease the environmental consequences of fashion by extending the life of clothing through clothing rental, swapping, or reselling. The focus of this research is to investigate the current engagement levels of Gen Z in the collaborative clothing consumption industry. It also examines the barriers and motivations that effect participation in collaborative apparel consumption, as well as measure the effects of personality traits on collaborative clothing consumption participation. This study employed a quantitative research method, surveying 158 participants. In comparison to the Millennial demographic, the results of this study show much higher rates of participation in the industry. Lack of reliability and hygiene concerns were found to main barriers that stopped Gen Z consumers engaging in the collaborative clothing consumption industry. Environmental concerns and better value for money for were identified as the key motivators for consumers to participate in the industry. The study also found positive correlations between the personality types of fashion leadership and need uniqueness and engagement in the collaborative consumption industry.

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Introduction

The sustainable living movement has been considered as a 'megatrend' in recent years, (Mittelstaedt et al., 2014). This is due to the expanding recognition by consumers of the unsustainable nature of existing production and consumption patterns. The increasing awareness has resulted in a unanimous agreement on the need to encourage a paradigm shift capable of averting the negative consequences of present trajectories, (Elhoushy and Lanzini, 2020). Countries on an international level are taking strides to reduce their carbon footprint and minimize the impact of climate change in line with the Paris Agreement. With the objectives to reach an universal peak in greenhouse gas emissions as soon as possible and to maintain the global average temperature rise to well below 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels, and pursuing efforts to keep the temperature rise to 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels. (UNFCCC, 2016).

Sustainable fashion consumption has risen to prominence in recent years due to an increased knowledge of the environmental effect of clothing production and heightened disdain for sweatshops and labour abuse. Consumers have grown more climate concerned and ethically oriented when it comes to the consumption of fashion, (Cavusoglu and Dakhli, 2016). Consumer perceptions among the younger generation, Gen Z, who were born between 1996 and 2012, have proven to be the most environmentally conscious. According to research, 19% of 'Gen Z consumers' had exhibited strong brand avoidance behaviour in relation to fast fashion companies (Vajkail and Zsoka 2020). This response would have a significant impact on the fast fashion sector, which mostly caters to these younger generations. This is an encouraging statistic for sustainable fashion businesses whose target market includes Gen Z, as this survey reveals obvious incentives to avoid the fast fashion sector completely.

However, despite significant consumer motives for a more eco-friendly and ethical approach to fashion, buying behaviour and statistics in connection to fast fashion starkly contradict current consumer perception research. Fast fashion is expanding at a faster rate than it has ever been, and consumers are spending more money on fashion than ever before. Since 2011, the global apparel industry has grown by 60%,

and this figure is anticipated to climb further (Knoková and Garasová, 2019). The average European consumes around 26kg of textiles per year, (European Environmental Agency, 2020). This demonstrates the increasing demand level and the velocity with which fashion continues to prevail.

Considering the current nature of the fashion industry, with continuously changing styles and trends, the industry faces significant obstacles in pursuing environmental sustainability. This is mostly due to the fast fashion business model that can be characterized as a strategy that includes three core components which are rapid response to high fashion trends, frequent changes and updates in to ever changing fashion collections; and stylish designs with affordable cost, which is the industries value proposition, (Caro and Martínez-de-Albéniz, 2015).

Current studies relating to overproduction of textiles and clothing wastage caused by the fast fashion industry have identified collaborative consumption as a possible solution, (Becker-Leifhold, 2018). Collaborative consumption may be defined as structured sharing, trade, loan, donation and exchange networks, (Botsmans and Rogers, 2010). Collaborative consumption is a business model that has the capability to minimize the negative environmental impact of fashion by extending the practical service life of clothing, (Zamani et al., 2017). Collaborative consumption provides individual ownership rights and relieves a level of financial burden. Time magazine named collaborative consumption one of the “10 Ideas That Will Change the World”, (Walsh, 2011). It is also an environmentally friendly alternative to traditional buying and owning methods, (Botsman and Rogers, 2010). A key issue for the development of collaborative consumption is to identify which of the values of consumers prevent and encourage acceptance and the purpose of taking part in such activities, (Becker-Leifhold, 2018). Online fashion marketplace platforms such as Depop, Vestiaire and Zalando allow users to satisfy levels of consumption in an environmentally conscious way.

Gen Z is now the largest population demographic in the world. In 2019, they surpassed millennials and Gen X to become the world's largest population demographic, accounting for 32% of the worldwide population, (Spitznagel, 2020). Understanding Gen Z consumption habits is essential for the sustainable fashion business to satisfy their needs and gain a competitive advantage. There is a significant gap in current academic literature surrounding the effect of collaborative consumption 'marketplace' online platforms on levels of fashion consumption on young people, Gen Z in particular. As a result, the aims of this research are to gain a thorough understanding of the changing behavioural trends and consumption of young people in Ireland toward the fashion industry, as well as to determine whether online marketplace or clothes sharing platforms positively influence sustainable fashion consumption levels through collaborative apparel consumption in young people.

Research Objectives:

1. Evaluate the impact of fashion leadership, materialism, and the need for uniqueness on the engagement of Gen Z consumers in collaborative clothing consumption behaviours.
2. Determine the motivations for Gen Z consumers to engage in collaborative clothing consumption practices.
3. Assess the impact of barriers to collaborative clothing consumption on Gen Z consumers.
4. Participation of Collaborative Clothing Consumption withing Gen Z and influence of online marketplace platforms.

Chapter Outline

The thesis structure was developed to guide the reader through the various stages of this research project. This thesis is divided into five chapters: an introduction, background theory, hypotheses and research questions, a demonstration of the work performed to achieve the study's objectives, analysis and discussion, and the conclusion.

Introduction:
The current chapter gives an introduction of the research field of study, highlights the gap and problem background, and defines important terminology utilized in this study's aims.

Literature Review: This chapter provides an in depth review of the current literature relating to the topic of collaborative clothing consumption

Methodology:
The methodology chapter describes the research technique and data collection tools, as well as the explanation for why the approach was chosen for the present study and ethical issues.

Findings:
The purpose of this chapter is to examine the whole questionnaire procedure and conclusions. It seeks to generate a conclusion of the results in order for the reader to have a better comprehension of the findings of the study.

Discussion: This chapter will analyse the information gathered and link the findings to the literature review. It will also validate prior research and the findings of the literature review.

Conclusion: This chapter seeks to present the general conclusion of the research, as well as a compilation of all preceding chapters, in order to achieve the study's objectives and goals. Recommendations for further study will also be provided within this chapter.

Literature Review

Introduction:

The literature review is a critical evaluation of relevant literature to the research objectives. This literature review first examines the current state of the fashion industry and introduces the concept of sustainable fashion. The chapter then goes on to evaluate consumerism and barriers to engaging in sustainable fashion. The chapter then goes on to introduce the concept of collaborative clothing consumption and the sharing economy, looking particularly at clothing rental, swapping and reselling. Motivations and barriers that influence engagement in the industry were then examined. Finally, this chapter then examines the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the fashion industry.

The Fashion Industry and Sustainable Fashion:

The fashion industry is the second most polluting business in the world, after oil, according to the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, (UN, 2019). The negative environmental and social effect within the fashion industry is a problem that is exacerbated by the rising unpredictability of trends and the growth of fast fashion (Fletcher, 2008; Niinimäki, 2009). The fashion industry has grown into a multifaceted and comprehensive structure built on the concept of continuous consumption of new and popular trends and discarding of the "last season", the fast fashion business model has boosted the introduction of trends, resulting in continuous product replacement and over consumption, (Kozłowski et al., 2012). A combination of localized manufacturing, advanced information systems that enable regular inventory assessment, replenishment and accelerated delivery techniques provide short lead times allow for the constant mass production of clothing by major fashion retailers, (Cachon and Swinney, 2011). The current fast fashion business model has allowed the fashion industry to rapidly grow into global markets by adopting new technologies and complex supply chains, as well as employ additional suppliers., (De Jorge Moreno and Carrasco, 2016).

It is impossible to ignore the impact of culture and trend in fashion and clothes purchasing habits, (Dodd et al., 2001). The modern fashion industry relies on the ever-changing trends based on the consumer's desires and aspirations and appeals to the consumers emotional needs, rather than just satisfying a functional or practical necessity. Overconsumption has led to the increased production within the fashion industry, and this has had serious negative effects on the environment. Every year, more than 80,000 million garments are sold worldwide, and more than 75% of discarded clothing ends up in landfills (Chavero, 2017). The textile industry, which consumes billions of litres of water to manufacture various sorts of clothing, is responsible for one-fifth of the pollutants released into the world's waterways, (Chavero, 2017).

Based on the current literature, the lasting impact the fast fashion industry will have on the planet is a major cause for concern. This resulted in a significant change in purchasing behaviour by many consumers. As the negative environmental impact of the fast fashion industry becomes increasingly apparent to consumers, it has resulted in the rise in popularity of sustainable fashion practices. Companies are continuously developing and upgrading their sustainability projects and strategies in order to adopt more environmentally friendly practices, (Joergens, 2006; Fletcher, 2008; Wang et al., 2019).

The concept of sustainable fashion falls under the slow fashion movement, it involves the development of a new attitude towards the fashion industry that incorporates accountability and awareness, it also reiterates the heightened necessity to transition to a more sustainable ideology and attitude towards the fashion industry and consumption as a whole, (Fletcher, 2012). Slow fashion seeks to combine the hedonic benefits of fashion consumption with a dedication to the equitable treatment of garment workers and improved environmental sustainability, (Lagere and Kang, 2020).

In order to properly grasp the present situation of the sustainable fashion industry, Consumer attitudes toward sustainable fashion and sustainable consumption must be examined.

Sustainable Fashion Consumerism

It is essential to shift the paradigm for sustainability through the promotion of sustainable fashion practices. This will then have an impact on consumer behaviour and consumption levels. This responsibility is shared by fashion businesses and governments, but consumers can also play an essential part by practicing sustainable purchase habits (Niinimaki, 2009; Rosa et al., 2015).

Motivations for ethical fashion consumption:

Motivation is defined as the forces that cause a behavioural change in order to meet a need, (Westbrook and Black, 1985). Consumers are increasingly expressing a strong desire for ethical consumption choices, (Bray et al., 2011; Carrigan et al., 2004; Kim and Chung, 2011; Vermeir and Verbeke, 2008). Perceptions have been changing, as consumers are becoming more conscious of the ethical consequences of the items they buy, so as a response, their shopping habits have been changing (DeAngelis et al., 2017; Gershoff and Frels, 2015). Consumer purchasing activity has been positively linked to the growth of the sustainable fashion sector; nevertheless, a shift in purchasing patterns will only be brought about by a cognitive adjustment in behaviour, (Zeng and Chen, 2020). As a result, improving sustainability education is essential, as it has the potential to directly influence purchasing habits. This has been supported by previous research as it was found that a growing awareness of sustainable consumption has led to a shift in consumer behaviour toward voluntary consumption reductions (Bly et al., 2015).

According to Joergens (2006), because there is no positive health or wellness benefits associated with the purchase of ethical clothing, the factors that convert customers to ethical alternatives in the food and cosmetic industries do not translate into the fashion industry, therefore sustainable fashion consumers are motivated by social and environmental factors.

Studies suggest that social and environmental consciousness affect consumption decisions, (Sreen et al., 2018). This is also relevant to clothing consumption, along

with other variables such as style and fit, (Gwozdz et al., 2017). According to Lundblad and Davies (2016), some of the main reasons for consumers to buy sustainable fashion are social justice, because many fast fashion corporations use sweatshops to manufacture their products, and environmental reasons, because some consumers believe they have a responsibility to help preserve the planet.

Conflicting research argues that the motivations of younger consumers for shopping second-hand online relate more to their own needs rather than social or environmental values. Studies have found, second-hand consumers of the younger generation tend to avoid the main market in order to get branded items at a lower price or to obtain high-quality products at a lower price, rather than for environmental reasons (Edbring et al., 2016).

Gen Z and Ethical Consumption

Individuals born between 1997 and 2012, known as Generation Z, have been found to be the most environmentally conscious and choose greener, more sustainable alternatives to traditional items, (Jain et al., 2014; Pasquarelli, 2019), even if it comes at a higher financial cost, as they value the satisfaction of knowing they have made a significant contribution to reducing pollution and protecting the environment (Kirmani and Khan 2016). This may be due to the fact that environmental pollution has been cited as one of the demographic's key concerns for their future, (Scholz, 2019).

Gen Z have been undoubtedly influenced by technology by being born in the age of the internet with the main distinguishing characteristics of Gen Z being freedom, individuality, technological dependence, and speed, (Berkup, 2014).

Francis and Hoefel (2018) argue that Gen Z is less concerned with product ownership than previous generations; they value consumption as access rather than possession, and consumption as an experience rather than a commodity. This demographic also values Individual identity expression and as well as companies with ethical reputations when it comes to what they consume, (Francis and Hoefel, 2018,).

Gen Z is more responsive to sustainable businesses and eco-friendly branding; perceived consumer effectiveness and product characteristics both positively correlate eco-labeling and environmental consciousness, subsequently affecting Gen Z customers' purchasing behaviour, (Song, Qin and Qin, 2020).

Gen Z and millennials are the most inclined to choose sustainable fashion practices, in particular purchasing second-hand apparel, (Price, 2019; Zaman et al., 2019). Millennials being individuals ages between 25-40. This generation also favours the use of online shopping platforms over physical shopping when buying second-hand clothing, with 90% of Depop's 30 million users are classed as Gen Z, (Neate, 2021). Currently, existing literature relating to Gen Z as consumers focus on their use of technology rather than their perceptions values and expectations of businesses (Ng et al., 2021; Ayuni, 2019). As Gen Z has now become the biggest demographic in the world, it is essential that more research is conducted to identify values and personality traits that influence individuals. Regardless of the fact that many individuals are motivated to make ethical decisions, consumers may face a variety of challenges when considering engaging in the sustainable fashion industry. Based on the above, a key area to be examined in the primary research is to determine whether values and perceptions of Gen Z influence participation levels in sustainable fashion practices.

Barriers to participating Sustainable Fashion Consumption Practices

Understanding the underlying motivations that explain why customers do not adopt sustainable consumption patterns is critical for influencing and increasing the adoption of sustainable alternatives. When it comes to appealing to customers that buy in the fast fashion sector, the sustainable fashion business has faced significant hurdles. Conflicting studies have found that despite their positive mentality toward environmental conservation, fashion shoppers are less inclined to purchase eco-fashion, (Joergens, 2006; Niinimäki, 2010; Ochoa, 2011).

Fast fashion appeals to this younger demographic since it can easily satisfy their needs. Sustainable fashion trends do not meet the demands of younger customers because the methods include purchasing less items and entirely changing one's connection with clothing and self-image. Because of their greater levels of fashion consumption and their need to build their self-identity via fashion, fast fashion caters to the demands of younger customers (Niinimäki, 2009).

Convenience, affordable costs, and style were determined to be some of the major characteristics that would motivate customers to buy sustainable fashion in a survey

conducted by KPMG (2019). Confirming that, despite consumer knowledge and motives, customers still desire the advantages of buying in the fast fashion sector. Consumers who want to buy sustainable apparel must forego demands that can only be met by buying in the fast fashion sector, (Szmigin et al., 2009). For sustainable fashion buyers, higher pricing, lower quality clothing, and reduced choice may be unavoidable (Song and Ko, 2017; Peattie, 1999; Stall-Meadows & Davey, 2013). Another study conducted found that sustainable fashion was associated with negative hedonic value for climate conscious consumers, (Greiger and Keller, 2018). Previous research has revealed that consumers viewed their growing need for excessive fashion consumption as the primary impediment to their connection with sustainable fashion consumption (Gwozdz and Reisch, 2015; Connolly and Prothero, 2008.). Some even go so far as to condemn the present unstable fast fashion model (Gwozdz and Reisch, 2015).

The problem of overconsumption may be viewed as both a physical and a philosophical one. Although there is a need for customers to stay current, they also need to be liberated of the stress of constantly upgrading their wardrobe and the trash that goes along with it, (Gwilt, and Rissanen, 2012).

Emerging business models that emphasize sustainable fashion consumption must fulfil the hedonic advantages sought by many customers through fashion consumption, particularly in terms of satisfying the emotional requirements of the fashion buyer, (Kim and Park, 2005).

The sustainable fashion industry has faced an almost impossible challenge from the younger, fashion-conscious consumer as despite their increasing awareness, they have no intention of changing their needs and ways of fashion consumption. The concept of collaborative consumption is one possible solution to this challenge. Collaborative consumption enables customers to consume fashion in a sustainable manner without having to lower their consumption levels by foregoing product ownership. This allows consumers to engage in sustainable fashion practices, without compromising their levels of consumption.

Collaborative consumption practices and the sharing economy

It's possible to define the concept of collaborative consumption as a structured network of sharing, lending and donation, (Botsman and Rogers, 2010). Collaborative consumption practices are part of the sharing economy. The sharing economy has previously been defined as “The use of online marketplaces and social networking technologies to facilitate peer-to-peer sharing of resources (such as space, money, goods, skills and services) between individuals, who may be both suppliers and consumers.” (Barnes & Mattsson, 2016). According to previous research, the sharing economy can improve sustainability by lowering consumption-induced resource scarcity when consumer goods are shared rather than owned independently (Bartenberger and Leitner, 2013). The sharing economy has been proposed as a means of transforming civilizations into a post-ownership economy (Belk et al., 2019). In Europe, Ireland has one of the highest participation rates in the sharing economy at 23% behind only the UK at 28.4% and France at 24.6% in 2017, (Andreotti et al.,2017). A study carried out by Matzletr et al., (2015) puts out that the sharing economy is rapidly growing and has since significantly changed consumers perceptions of ownership and consumption as consumers are increasingly paying to temporarily access or share items or services rather than owning them. Business models involving collaborative consumption can be described as hybrid market structures with several trade modalities that can operate both inside and outside of traditional markets (Scaraboto, 2015).

The majority of the existing literature on collaborative consumption and the sharing economy generally focuses on the sharing of accommodation or transportation, (Bardhi and Eckhardt, 2010; Huang et al., 2021; Belk, 2014, Strommen-Bakhtiar, and Vinogradov, 2019). As of 2019, accommodation accounted for 21.4% and Mobility 17.6% of the literature relating to collaborative consumption. According to Laurenti et al., (2019) additional research relating to collaborative consumption outside mobility and housing sector is required as it has the potential to disrupt various traditional business sectors.

Recent studies conducted have put forward that young, well-educated, and higher-income Europeans are the most inclined to participate in the sharing economy, with individuals aged 25- 34 being the most active in the sharing economy, (Andreotti et al.,2017, PwC, 2016; ING, 2015; Deloitte, 2015). This is likely due the lack of interest

younger generations have in product ownership, and their heightened interest in access based consumption. Although older participants are cognizant of the sharing economy, they do not participate (Andreotti et al.,2017) Previous research has demonstrated that sustainability and satisfaction levels are positively linked and statistically significant in determining attitude toward collaborative consumption in both the Gen Z and Millennial demographics, but only satisfaction levels have been able to influence behavioural intention, (Ianole-Calin et al., 2021).

There is limited literature on collaborative consumption in the fashion sector, accounting for only 2.2 % literature in 2019, (Laurenti et al.,2019). This lack of literature has not accurately reflected the growth of the industry, as the concept of the sharing economy has been vastly expanding in the fashion industry, (Choi and Shen, 2017).

Collaborative Clothing Consumption: Second-Hand Shopping, Swapping and Renting

Previous research has shown that reusing clothing can greatly help to reduce the environmental impact of clothing, (Farrant et al., 2010). The renting, borrowing, exchanging, collective ownership selling of purchasing second-hand including exchange for credit, of clothes all fall under the umbrella of collaborative clothing consumption, (McNeil and Venter, 2019). The key significance is the redistribution of used items, which occurs when two or more people reuse the same thing at various times, irrespective of whether ownership is exchanged or a monetary or non-monetary charge is imposed, (Iran and Schrader, 2017). The plethora of choices for collaboration consumption models accessible within the fashion consumption category are only limited by what is practical, easy, habitual, or desired to the consumer, (McNeil and Venter, 2019).

Online Second-Hand Shopping and Swapping

The concept of second-hand shopping has had a reinvention in more recent years with the introduction of online second-hand stores and marketplaces. Second-hand marketplaces on the internet are an essential element of the burgeoning "sharing economy," which is fuelled by advances in information technology (Hamari et al., 2016). The act of second-hand shopping has also been considered a form of 'clothing rental' as clothes are not permanently owned, but instead worn and resold or traded on, (Financial Times, 2021).

Customers who are well-informed and tech savvy have gravitated to online second-hand marketplaces for convenience and savings because it provides them with optimal economic benefits: purchasers obtain a product at a price that is several times lower than the market price, and sellers get greater profits, (Padmavathy et al., 2019). Peer-to-peer online marketplaces such as Depop and Vinted allow consumers to swap, sell and buy or sell unwanted clothing.

When second-hand shopping online, the age of a product has a significant impact on the consumer's perceived value. Older products produced by designer or luxury brands are more valuable owing to the perceived endured worth and the established brand legacy as they grow a 'patina of age', but fast fashion items lose value as they become out of style, (Sihvonen and Turunen, 2016).

Peer-to-peer online shopping platforms are the most common way users participate in collaborative clothing consumption platforms.

Depop is the tenth most frequented shopping site among gen Z customers in the United States, with merchants selling \$650 million in second-hand clothing and other fashion products in 2020, (Neate, 2021). On this platform consumers can resell as well as swap fashion items. Consumer behaviour in physical second-hand marketplaces is a multifaceted experience that includes browsing, bargaining, and socializing, (Sherry, 1990), one of the main challenges of online marketplaces is trying to translate these experiences into an online environment. In order to encourage online fashion consumption, online retailers need to ensure the content is relatable and desirable in order to create value for the consumer, (Salonen et al., 2014). Depop does this very successfully attracting a younger audience by tactically creating a gridded layout, similar to Instagram. With a such a high number of users, apps like Depop are very promising for the future of sustainable fashion. Although

they are growing increasingly in popularity, there is limited literature detailing how online second-hand marketplaces are affecting participation levels in collaborative consumption practices.

Clothing Rental Services

Except for product ownership, the methods for online fashion rental and online fashion purchasing are nearly comparable, individuals do not own items in the case of online fashion rental, but rather utilize them for a limited time, (Lee and Park, 2009; Lee and Huang, 2021). Clothing rental as an element of access-based consumerism, is anticipated to become a prominent fashion subculture by 2025, (Zhang and Lang, 2018). The clothing rental industry has been previously established as a major industry with the likes of men's suit rental retailers. The potential worth of the UK clothing rental industry has been estimated at around £923 million, (Braithwaite, 2018).

Consumers are becoming more interested in the concept of the experience rather than ownership. Online rental firms are especially useful for fashion-conscious consumers who wear stylish items on a short-term basis before discarding them and do not want to spend a lot of money. Customers may avoid issues associated with traditional purchases, such as care, and storage, by renting clothing, (Lang et al., 2020).

Fashion rental allows consumers to acquire the use of new fashion goods without the responsibility of ownership; however, ownership is a status symbol for many consumers, and as a result these consumers have negative perceptions of fashion renting, (Lang, 2018).

Some environmental experts are critical of the concept of clothing renting as an environmentally friendly alternative to purchasing and owning clothing. This is due to the level of emissions and energy usage comes from clothing rental operations, including the shipping, packaging and professional cleaning services, (Levänen et al., 2021). Some experts have stated that clothing rental is worse for the environment than throwing clothes away, (Levänen et al., 2021).

Influences in participation in the collaborative clothing sector:

Previous research argues that consumers who have a strong interest in the fashion industry, and therefore more to the wider ethical dilemma of fashion consumption are keener to partake in collaborative clothing consumption projects, (Lang and Armstrong, 2018; McNeil and Venter, 2019; McCoy et al., 2021).

Personality indirectly impacts the propensity to embrace collaborative consumption the inclination for individuals to participate in collaborative clothing consumption activities is substantially influenced by three personality traits: fashion leadership, desire for uniqueness, and materialism as well as through attitude, apparent behavioral control, and previous sustainable behaviour, (Lang and Armstrong, 2018; McNeil and Venter, 2019; McCoy et al., 2021).

Fashion leadership:

Fashion leadership is a very significant factor in the context of sustainability since the industry is known for promoting everchanging trends, generally for short periods of time, and therefore these short fashion trends contribute to a high amount of material consumption (Fletcher, 2012; Lang and Armstrong, 2018). A previous study has found a significant link between fashion leadership and environmental attitudes suggesting that customers with high levels of fashion leadership are more likely to engage in sustainable behavior, (Cho and Workman, 2014). This is a positive finding for collaborative consumption industry as if individuals who are considered 'fashion leaders' have the potential to influence others to adopt more sustainable practices. Fashion leadership has the potential to influence factors such as

Materialism:

Belk (1984 p. 291) defines materialism as 'The importance a consumer attaches to worldly possessions. At the highest levels of materialism, such possessions assume a central place in a person's life and are believed to provide the greatest sources of satisfaction and dissatisfaction'. Fashion consumption falls into the category of high-involvement commodities, in which customers acquire items in order to project a desired image of themselves (McCracken 1988). Currently clothing consumption can be a key social signal and determinant of ones self-esteem, (Gupta, Gwozdz and

Gentry, 2019). Young women, who buy fast fashion for enjoyment as well as to conform to cultural conventions, are one of the fastest growing customer sectors for the industry (McNeill and Venter, 2019). The materialistic tendencies of fashion consumers is one of the biggest challenges faced by sustainable fashion industry as it directly contributes to overconsumption, (Srikant, 2013). Because collaborative consumption prioritizes experience above ownership, those with materialistic personalities have unfavourable connotations with its practices because they refuse to relinquish ownership of their possessions, (Lang and Armstrong, 2018)

Uniqueness:

The desire for individuality in clothing as well as the use of local materials and labour in garment manufacturing have enhanced the perceived customer value of slow fashion apparel and were found to be key motivators for shopping in the sustainable fashion industry, (Sener et al., 2019). Vintage apparel is popular method for people to express their individuality rather than conforming to current fashion trends, (Gladigou, 2008). Consumers who have a strong demand for uniqueness are more prone to make non-standard shopping decisions, such as buying clothing at second-hand stores rather than popular fast fashion retailers, (Roux and Guiot, 2008; Guiot and Roux, 2010). Consumers are reluctant to showcase what they intend to buy on social media platforms due to the desire for individuality, (Kawaf, and Istanbuluoglu, 2019). Individuals who value uniqueness, are less likely to follow and keep up with fashion trends, therefore making collaborative clothing consumption a viable option for them.

Attitude: The likelihood of an individual participating in a specific behaviour increases when they have a favourable attitude toward the behaviour, (Lang and Armstrong, 2018). A previous study has discovered a positive link between attitude and collaborative consumption, showing that an individual with a favourable attitude toward collaborative consumption is more likely to participate in collaborative consumption, (Hamari et al., 2016). Previous research has also highlighted the desire to decrease consumption-related waste as a motivator for participating in sharing initiatives (Burgio et al., 2014).

Societal Norms:

Subjective norms are the perceptions of how significant a peer group's expectations of demonstrating a particular behaviour is. Maichum (2016) argues that an individual's sustainable consumption is impacted by social groupings as well as inner qualities. As collaborative clothing consumption can be considered an unconventional method of consumption, current research suggests that subjective norms may have a negative effect on participation levels. Fear of judgement, quality concerns, hygiene concerns and reliability concerns have all been identified as societal norms that have negatively impacted consumers participation in the collaborative clothing consumption industry.

Concerns regarding whether or not trading apparel with others instead of acquiring new goods may harm their personal image can also function as a deterrent for consumers to engage in swapping behaviour, (Lang and Zhang, 2019), in some cases lack of ownership clothes can have a negative impact on one's self-expression and social status, (Lee et al., 2021)

Research has also found that many consumers are reluctant to partake in collaborative fashion consumption online as they are hesitant to purchase second clothes online without having the ability to check product quality, consumers also had concerns surrounding the hygienic elements of second-hand shopping, (Iran, Geiger and Schrader, 2019). A previous study has found that consumers expressed stronger intention to shop in B2C settings with no direct contact with the previous owner, other than buying direct from the previous owner, in both rental and second-hand purchase circumstances, implying that consumers feel more unpleasant when there is increased physical contact with the shared clothing item, (Kim and Jin, 2021). Furthermore, a study carried out by De Medeiros et al., (2021) found that due to the Covid-19 pandemic, characteristics that had been previously identified as usage inhibitors appear to have grown in severity and in some cases may have also influenced consumers' emotions towards collaborative consumption practices, especially in relation to hygiene and sanitary concerns.

As this collaborative clothing industry is still relatively new, this has caused many consumers to have a lack of trust in the industry, (Becker-Leifhold and Iran, 2018). Size, variety, quality, and the ability to locate anything acceptable to exchange are all trust concerns in collaborative clothing consumption activities (Armstrong et al., 2015; Becker-Leifhold, 2018). Customers are also wary about the feasibility and

sustainability of collaborative clothing consumption business models (Armstrong et al., 2016).

Behavioural Control:

Perceived behavioural control refers to the individual's perception of their ability to perform a given behaviour. This indicates that the likelihood that an individual will engage in collaborative consumption behaviour such as renting or swapping is related to the perceived degree of difficulty in engaging in these behaviours, (Lang and Armstrong, 2018). The perceived lack of variety/style, budget restrictions, scepticism, lack of knowledge/skills, emotions associated with purchasing, perceived lack of availability, and consumers' self-indulgent behaviour are among the specific reasons for not engaging in sustainable clothing consumption practices, (Didi et al., 2019).

The effect of Covid-19 on the fashion industry and sustainable consumption:

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused a dramatic, and unprecedented shift in the attitudes of the general population in relation to consumption levels and behaviour. Following the COVID-19 pandemic, income loss and an increased availability external information and data availability are linked to a greater awareness of climate change. Furthermore, during the pandemic, a greater focus on climate change has been linked to plans to cut consumption even more. COVID-19 has had an extremely negative effect on the fashion industry, various public health measures put into effect by various governments on a global level forced fashion retailers to shut their doors, for weeks and in some instances, months.

Between January and March 2020, the average market capitalization of clothing, fashion, and luxury businesses fell about 40%. According to a McKinsey research, as retailers have been closed for several months, it is expected that 80 % of publicly listed fashion brands in Europe and North America will be in financial trouble, (Business of Fashion, 2020). However, the exact degree to which the Covid-19

pandemic has impacted the fashion industry has yet to be determined because it is an ongoing situation.

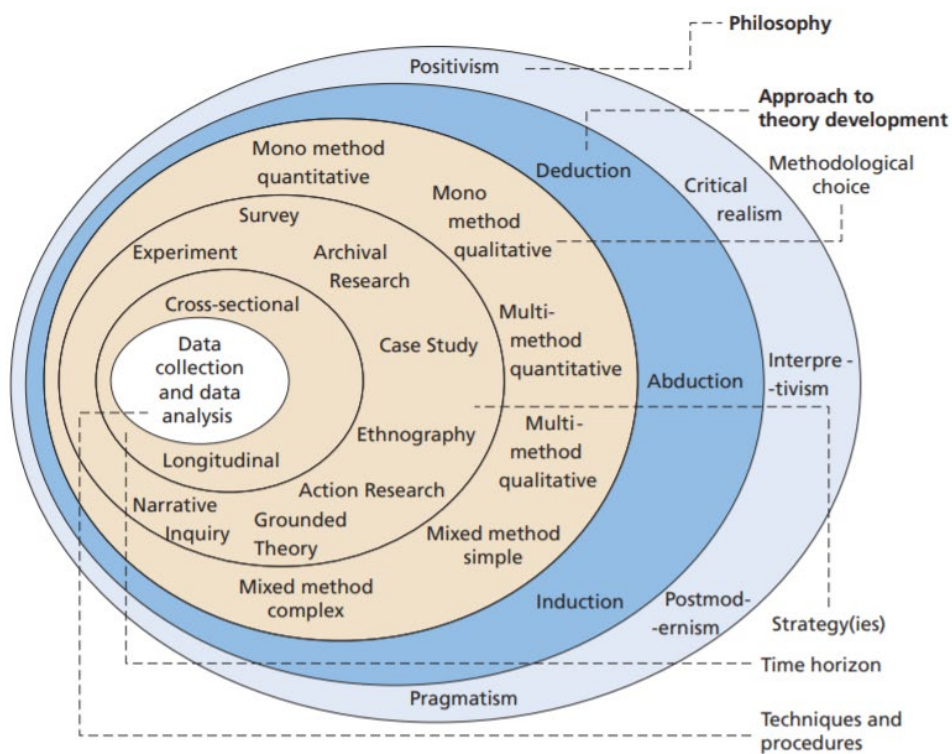
As well as affecting the consumers ability to shop for clothes, the Covid-19 pandemic has also had a major consumer behaviour and consumption levels. The pandemic could potentially have negative effects on the future of the sustainable fashion industry. Due to their heightened 'self-centeredness', a recent study on the influence of Covid-19 on sustainable consumption levels found that consumers' perceived threat of Covid-19 reduced their choice of sustainable items, individuals shopping for their own convenience. Consumers were confronted with negative thoughts as a result of Covid-19, they were more likely to prioritize themselves and care less for others or social problems, (Chae, 2021)

Based on the review of current literature, The objectives of this study are to gain a thorough understanding of young people's changing behavioural trends and consumption patterns in relation to the fashion industry in Ireland, as well as to see if online marketplaces or clothes sharing platforms have a positive impact on young people's sustainable fashion consumption levels through collaborative apparel consumption.

Methodology

Introduction

This chapter will outline the methodology and techniques used in this study. The research philosophy, the research design and methodology, the research strategy, and the research instrument utilized in this study will all be discussed. It will also justify the study's approach and provide details on the research instrument that has been utilized. The justification for the survey design, sample selection, ethical concerns, data analysis, and the approach's limitations will also be included.



The research onion (Saunders et al., 2007) comprises six 'layers', beginning with research theories and progressing through methodologies. The research onion depicts conflicting and complementary hypotheses, techniques, and timelines (Bryman, 2012).

The research onion was implemented as a guideline in this study in order to define the strategy that this research project would take by going through the layers of the onion and stating the rationale for selecting the most appropriate theories,

techniques, and timescales for the research project. This method is consistent with Saunders et al., (2012), who stated that researchers should begin at the outside of the onion and proceed inwards.

Objectives of the research project:

1. Evaluate the impact of fashion leadership, materialism, and the need for uniqueness on the engagement of Gen Z consumers in collaborative clothing consumption behaviours.
2. Determine the motivations for Gen Z consumers to engage in collaborative clothing consumption practices.
3. Assess the impact of barriers to collaborative clothing consumption on Generation Z consumers.
4. Participation of Collaborative Clothing Consumption withing Gen Z and influence of online marketplace platforms.

Research Philosophy

Researchers have always been interested in their surroundings and have attempted to comprehend them. Epistemology is a branch of philosophy that examines the nature of knowing and what constitutes adequate knowledge in a particular field of study (Saunders et al., 2007). Research philosophies are located on the outmost layer of the research onion. Positivism, realism, interpretivism, and pragmatism are four major concepts that academics use to better comprehend their surroundings (Bryman and Bell, 2011).

Realism

Realism is an academic viewpoint that recognizes an existence independent of perceptions and available to researchers' instruments and theoretical hypotheses, (Bell et al., 2018). Critical realists support the concept of epistemological relativism, which proclaims that knowledge is a product of its history and that social realities are constructed. This means that critical realism ideas of causation are not reducible to quantitative methodologies and statistics (Reed, 2005; Saunders et al., 2016). As a

result this philosophy would not be one that is suitable for this study as it will be using a quantitative approach.

Interpretivism

Interpretivism is similar to constructivism in that it believes that social reality is a subjective creation based on interpretation and interaction, (Quinlan, 2011). The objective of interpretivist research is to develop new, more nuanced understandings and interpretations of social environments and situations, (Saunders et al., 2016).

Pragmatism

The pragmatic worldview is implemented when the research issue is the most significant predictor of the epistemology one chooses. Pragmatism as a worldview develops through acts, situations, and outcomes, rather than prior circumstances, (Cresswell and Cresswell, 2018). Pragmatic research focuses on articulating and addressing the research question or problem, and it varies in its designs, data collecting and analytic methodologies, and results, (Cohen et al., 2018).

Positivist:

This concept is also often referred to as the "scientific approach" (Creswell and Creswell, 2018). This philosophy focuses on identifying the effect and consequence of causes identified in research projects. Positivists acquire knowledge through seeing and measuring objective reality (Phillips and Burbules, 2000). To promote replication, positivist researchers are likely to employ a highly organized methodology, (Saunders et al., 2016). The positivist philosophy is a conventional research paradigm, it is generally used with quantitative research methods, such as surveys and questionnaires, (Saunders et al., 2016). These data gathering tools are utilized to test the research objectives, (Heath and Tynan, 2010). With this research in mind, we will use a positivist approach represented by quantitative methodologies to attempt to quantify Gen Z's participation levels in collaborative apparel consumption.

Research Approach:

The research approach is the research strategies and processes that cover the phases from general assumptions to particular techniques of data gathering, analysis, and interpretation, (Cresswell and Cresswell. 2018).

The second layer of research onion takes account of the benefits of an inductive method which allows researchers to develop their study with an independent hypothesis versus a deductive approach, which occurs when the study is based on an existing hypothesis and creates a testing approach to existing theory (Silverman, 2013).

The most prevalent concept of the connection between theory and research is deductive theory, (Bryman and Bell, 2011). A deductive research approach includes progressing from the general to the specific, as in beginning with a theory, drawing hypotheses from it, testing those hypotheses, and updating the theory (Locke, 2007; Nola and Sankey, 2007; Woiceshyn and Daellenbach, 2017).

In the context of an inductive method, data is gathered and analysed, which helps to the development of a theory. An inductive approach is defined as a transition from granular to general (Bryman and Bell, 2011). While an inductive approach might uncover new theories, the data can also be related to pre-existing hypotheses.

This study has included an inductive research approach because the researcher believes there may not be enough current studies and literature on the specific subject surrounding collaborative clothing consumption that is currently being investigated. By developing a hypothesis for this study, the lack of sufficient theory and knowledge may render it invalid.

Research Methods:

The most practiced research paradigms in business research are qualitative and quantitative methods; which are general terminologies that define data collecting techniques (Smith, 2016; Denscombe, 2007).

Quantitative research investigates the linkages between variables, which are numerically measured and analysed using a variety of statistical and graphical approaches, (Saunders et al., 2016). The ideals behind quantitative research include neutrality, impartiality, and the collection of a broad range of information; this technique is typically suitable when your primary goal is to explain or evaluate the research subject, (Leavy, 2017).

The methodological research type included in this paper was quantitative research in order to obtain a general consensus of the current trends and attitudes toward sustainability and collaborative consumption among the chosen sample population rather than a more in-depth opinion from individuals within the chosen sample who have particularly strong opinions on the topic. This approach is more suited for generalizing data from a large population. (Denscombe 2007; Baydas et al., 2015). The researcher was able to evaluate the involvement patterns of Gen Z by using quantitative analytic tools such as statistics, graphs, and charts.

Data Collection Strategy:

According to Sekaran and Bougie (2009), primary data is information obtained by the researcher on the 'variables of interest for specific purpose of study.' Interviews, and questionnaires are the main examples of primary data to use while conducting research.

Research Instrument

As the results of this study would be examined statistically, the researcher used a formal, standardised questionnaire. A survey can be defined as a "structured data collection technique where each participant is asked the same questions" (Dawson,

2010) A survey can offer the research a quantitative depiction of a population's trends, and attitudes, or tests for correlations between variables in a population by analyzing a sample of that particular group, (Creswell and Creswell, 2018) The primary advantage of survey research is that they give information on vast groups of individuals with minimal effort and at a low cost, (Marczyk et al., 2005; Saunders et al., 2016). As of 2019, only 13.2% of research surrounding collaborative consumption used surveys, (Laurenti et al., 2019).

With the current uncertainty and health risks associated with Covid-19 pandemic, an online-based questionnaire proved to be the most suitable method to conduct this survey while also protecting the health and safety of the participants. The questionnaire template was from an online survey supplier; Google Forms, and it was disseminated online through social media platforms to the study sample participants. To ensure maximum participation, the number of questions was kept to a minimum.

The questions devised on this survey were based on a previous study (Lang and Armstrong, 2018). With the main themes of the questions being 'fashion leadership', 'need for uniqueness', 'materialism', 'past sustainable behaviour', 'attitudes' 'societal norms' and 'perceived behavioural control'. The latter three were also key themes of previous research relating to participation levels in collaborative clothing consumption practices, (Iran, Geiger and Schrader, 2018). The questions were modified in order to be more relevant to this particular research project, but the main concepts were incorporated in the design of the questions.

The survey being developed for the purpose of this research the Likert scales, a five-part scale starting with 'Strongly Disagree' and ending with 'Strongly Agree' was used, open ended questions will also be used for more complex and opinion-oriented questions. The Likert scale was included in this study as many previous studies involving sustainable fashion consumption and perceptions of collaborative clothing consumption have included the Likert scale, (Becker-Leifhold, 2018; Rosa et al., 2015; Chan and Wong, 2012; Geiger and Keller, 2018; Iran, Geiger and Schrader, 2018; Lang and Armstrong, 2018) proving it to be a suitable method. This method also enables the researcher to observe levels of differentiation of response whilst still being able to come to a conclusion, (Cohen et al., 2018).

There were three categorization questions at the end of the survey, which effectively provided information about the participant (Collis & Hussey, 2014). The questions related to respondents' age, gender, and employment status. These questions were presented at the end of the questionnaire, as respondents are more likely to complete questionnaires when more personal questions had been left to the end.

A pilot study of the questionnaire was carried out before the research commenced in order to amend or clarify any of the questions or instructions if needed in order to ensure for efficient and effective collection of data, (Kothari, 2009).

Sample Selection

This study will evaluate the consumption levels of sustainable fashion and collaborative consumption of the Gen Z population in Ireland. The sample that the study will be based on will be young people between the ages of 18-24 living in Ireland, this sample is the focus of the study the other sample will only be used for comparison reasons. When choosing a sampling strategy, it essential to choose whether the research will employ probability or non-probability sampling. Non-probability sampling is based on the researcher's own judgment, whereas probability sampling is based on chance (Malhotra, et al., 2012).

This study used non-probability or non-random convenience sampling as its approach. Participants who are easily available and willing to participate in the research are included in convenience sampling (Fink, 2002). Because the questionnaire will be distributed via the social networking site Instagram as well as emails, it will almost certainly be completed by a sample of friends, acquaintances, coworkers, and relatives.

The sample size in this study will be around 150 participants. According to Saunders et al (2016), the larger the study's sample size, the less probable it is that you will make a mistake when generalizing data to the target population within the research project.

Data Presentation and Analysis

Reliability

The reliability of any research project is determined by how comparable the results would be if someone else conducted a similar investigation. (Kirk & Miller, 1986). Initially, the researcher will perform a scale reliability test to obtain the Cronbach alpha, which should ideally be between 0.70 and 1.0. (Saunders et al. 2009). This provides an approximation of the reliability based on the intercorrelation of the stated indicator variable (Hair et al., 2014). A variety of circumstances might have an impact on the dependability of the responses supplied in the questionnaire, such as the respondent's willingness to provide accurate information, their enthusiasm in engaging as participants, and their connection with the researcher might all have an influence on the data's dependability.

Cronbach's alpha	Internal consistency
$\alpha \geq 0.9$	Excellent
$0.9 > \alpha \geq 0.8$	Good
$0.8 > \alpha \geq 0.7$	Acceptable
$0.7 > \alpha \geq 0.6$	Questionable
$0.6 > \alpha \geq 0.5$	Poor
$0.5 > \alpha$	Unacceptable

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Frequency Tables

A frequency distribution is a tabular display of data obtained from a questionnaire that is used to summarize the information (Lavrakas, 2008). Frequency distribution tables were used to visually display the data from the survey in order to properly analyse the results.

Cross Tabulations

During this research, a t test will be performed, which means that two sample groups will be included to verify that the findings obtained and analyzed are valid and draw fair conclusions, (Cohen et al., 2018). The sample that the study will be based on will be young people between the ages of 18-24 living in Ireland, this sample is the focus of the study the other sample will only be used for comparison reasons. This sample was chosen as this would be the age group most likely to consume high levels of fast fashion. Another sample will be used, which will be people ages between 25-40 also known as the millennial generation, then results will be compared to ensure the data collected is reliable. This data will be shown in crosstabulations in order to easily compare participation levels of both generations.

Spearman Correlation

A Spearman correlation test was used to identify a correlation between personality trait variables and behavioural control variables. According to the premise of a Spearman Rho rank correlation test, the data shows a monotonic connection, meaning that as one variable rises, the other decreases or vice versa (Laerd, 2013). If there were any significant correlations between the behavioural control and personality trait questions stated, this is utilized to compare ordinal data.

Ethical Considerations:

Consent: Before the participants were able to participate in this study, they were obligated to read a statement devised by the researcher outlining how the information they provide will be used and stored, the author will also highlight that survey responses will only be seen by the author and that it was approved by the ethics department in NCI.

Confidentiality: Participant confidentiality was maintained by completing surveys anonymously and only asking for minimal personal or sensitive information in order to make them feel more comfortable.

Sensitivity: Some ethical issues were taken into account to guarantee that this research is carried out in a suitable and acceptable manner. Topics such as climate change and labor exploitation can be difficult for many people; surveys must be

properly designed, and sensitive issues must be presented only when necessary and in a professional and sensitive manner.

Data Storage: After collecting the data, it was stored on a password encrypted software, SPSS 27, which only the researcher had access to. This was to ensure that the data was not shared to external bodies.

Limitations:

Quantitative research does not allow for an in-depth investigation of the opinions within the sample population we are examining. As the survey will take place solely online, participants may lose patience causing them to leave the survey uncompleted. This will result in a smaller sample size when measuring the study and will result in the study being less accurate. In order to prevent the occurrence of this, a clear straightforward survey will be devised, only the necessary questions will be asked to ensure that the survey is concise and straightforward.

Due to participants psychological state and other influencing variables such as worry stress and uncertainty, conducting this study during a global pandemic may have an influence on the responses given and cause them to be less accurate.

Findings

This chapter presents the findings of the quantitative survey questionnaire technique used for this research, as explained in the Methodology Chapter. The findings of the questionnaire were analysed using SPSS 27. The study focuses on respondents in the Millennial and Gen Z age groups. The participants were queried on their fashion consumption habits, motives, and behaviours. A demographic profile of the participants will be provided, indicating their age, gender, and employment status. In accordance with the study goals, a frequency analysis and cross tabulation of the data will be done.

Demographic Breakdown of Respondents:

Demographic Information	Frequency
Total Frequency	158
Gender	
Male	56
Female	100
Non-Binary	2
Age	
18-24	76
25-31	49
32-37	10
38-40	23
Employment Status	
Working	121
Unemployed	7
Student	28
Self-Employed	1
Home-maker	1

For data analysis, a total of 158 answers were analysed. Among the 158 participants, 100 were female, 56 were male, and 2 were nonbinary. 76 (48.1%) of the respondents were between the ages of 18 and 24, the Gen Z demographic, 49 (31.01%) were between the ages of 25 and 31, 10 (6.33%) were between the ages of 32 and 37, and 23 (14.55%) were between the ages of 38 and 40. 121 of the questionnaire's respondents were employed, 7 were unemployed, 28 were students, one was self-employed, and one was a homemaker.

Cronbach Alpha Reliability Test

A reliability testing was performed to assess the internal consistency of the data values gathered from 158 respondents using the Cronbach’s alpha test on the separate scales. Cronbach alpha is commonly considered as the most widely used tool for measuring reliability (Tavakol and Dennick, 2011). The Cronbach alpha value is represented by a number ranging from 0 to 1. The value of alpha indicates the degree of correlation between the test items. A low value of alpha suggests that the test items are not highly linked to one another, whereas a higher alpha score implies that there is a significant connection between the test items.

For the purpose of this reliability, each set of questions that were under the themes of personality traits, behavioural control and attitudes and societal norms were tested. The questions that related to personality traits had a score of .871 this is considered an acceptable score meaning the selected items on the survey are reliable. Questions that were related to societal Norms had a test score of .701, meaning the items were internally consistent and were deemed acceptable. The questions relating to behavioural control and attitudes had a lower score of .665, because the diversity in the patterns of replies to each question within this group suggests that the items are not closely linked.

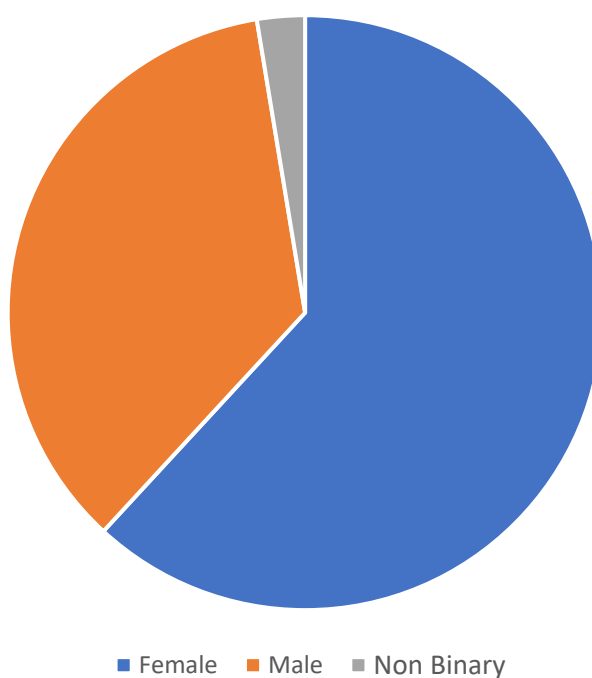
Items	Cronbach’s Alpha
Personality Traits (5 Items).	.871
Societal Norms (4 items).	.701
Behaviour Control and Attitudes (5 items).	.665

Gen Z Descriptive Statistics

Gender Breakdown of Gen Z Respondents

	Frequency	Percent
Female	47	61.8
Male	27	35.5
Non-Binary	2	2.6
Total	76	100.0

Gender of Gen Z Respondents

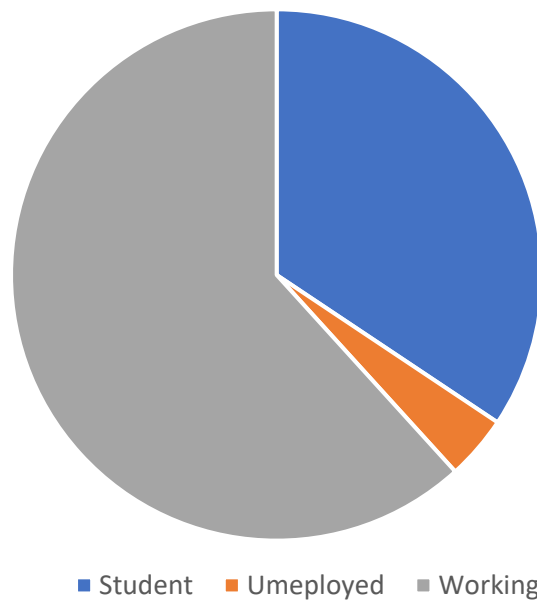


47 (61%) of Gen Z respondents were female, 27 (35.5%) of respondents were male and 2 (2.6%) were nonbinary.

Employment Status of Gen Z

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Student	26	34.2
	Unemployed	3	3.9
	Working	47	61.8
	Total	76	100.0

Employment Status of Gen Z Respondents



26 (34.2%) of Gen Z respondents were students, 3 (3.9%) respondents said they were unemployed and 47 (61.8%) respondents were working at the time they answered this questionnaire.

Frequency Distribution among Gen Z respondents

For the purpose of this research, frequency distribution tables will be devised for the questions relating to personality traits as well societal norms in order to analyse the data in depth.

Research Objective 1: Personality Traits effect of collaborative clothing consumption

Fashion Leadership:

Item 1:

Fashion and what I wear is important to me, I would find it hard to cut down on purchasing clothes.

	Frequency	Percent %
Strongly Disagree	1	1.3
Disagree	9	11.8
Neutral	17	22.4
Agree	37	48.7
Strongly Agree	12	15.8
Total	76	100.0

Mean	3.66	
Standard Deviation	.932	
95% Confidence Interval For Mean	Lower Bound: 3.44	Upper Bound: 3.87

As per the information above, the average answer for item one was 3.66, meaning most answers fell on the upper end of the scale. The standard deviation for item 1 was .932, answers were mostly concentrated at the middle to upper end of the scale. 48.7% of respondents agreed and 15.8% strongly agreed that they would find it hard to cut down clothes. Whereas 1.3% and 11.8% of respondents strongly disagreed

and disagreed with the statement respectively. The confidence interval shows that the true mean of the population falls between 3.44 and 3.87.

As per the results above it can be assumed that fashion overconsumption is prevalent within the Gen Z demographic.

Item 2:

I avoid sustainable fashion practices in order to keep up with current fashion trends

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Disagree	14	18.4
Disagree	32	42.1
Neutral	20	26.3
Agree	6	7.9
Strongly Agree	4	5.3
Total	76	100.0

Mean	2.39	
Standard Deviation	1.047	
95% Confidence Interval For Mean	Lower Bound: 2.16	Upper Bound: 2.63

The table above shows that the mean answer for item 2 was 2.39, meaning most answers were located at the lower end of the scale the confidence interval identified the true mean of the population being between 2.16 and 2.63. Item 2 had a standard deviation of 1.047. similarly, to the previous question answers were concentrated, however this time at the lower end of the scale. Only 7.9 percent agreed, and 5.3 percent strongly agreed, that they avoided sustainable fashion methods. Whereas 18.4 percent and 42.1 percent of respondents strongly disagreed and disagreed with the statement, respectively.

According to the data above, the overwhelming percent of of the Gen Z population is receptive to participating in sustainable fashion methods, a positive finding for the collaborative consumption industry.

Individuality

Item 3:

Buying second-hand clothing enables me to be more individual in my style.

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Disagree	16	21.1
Disagree	1	1.3
Neutral	14	18.4
Agree	19	25.0
Strongly Agree	26	34.2
Total	76	100.0

Mean	3.50	
Standard Deviation	1.501	
95% Confidence Interval For Mean	Lower Bound: 3.16	Upper Bound: 3.84

59.2% of people had either strongly agreed or agreed that second-hand clothes shopping allows for uniqueness in style. 3.50 was the mean answer for this statement as most answers were on the higher end of the scale. The standard deviation for this item was found to be 1.501, unlike the previous two questions, there was more of a spread in the distribution of answers. According to the confidence interval, the population mean lies between 3.16 and 3.84.

According to the data presented above, the majority of consumers saw a positive relationship between individuality and second-hand clothing, supporting previous research.

Materialism

Item 4:

I wear clothes and never wear them again.

	Frequency	Percent
Never	23	30.3
Rarely	23	30.3
Sometimes	12	15.8
Often	11	14.5
All the time	7	9.2
Total	76	100.0

Mean	2.42	
Standard Deviation	1.309	
95% Confidence Interval For Mean	Lower Bound: 2.12	Upper Bound: 2.72

The average answer for item 4 was 2.42, indicating that most of the participants disagreed with this statement, with 60.60% of participants stating that they would never or rarely only wear clothes once. The population mean is identified as being between 2.12 and 2.72 by the confidence interval, both located on the lower end of the scale.

As per the information above, it could be suggested that Gen Z re-wear their clothing more often than not. Nevertheless, 23.7 percent of Gen Z consumers in the sample indicated they would not re-wear their new items often or all of the time, indicating a sizable proportion of those who participate in harmful fashion overconsumption behaviours.

Item 5:

I prefer clothes I bought new myself for occasions like parties, weddings, occasions etc.

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Disagree	3	3.9
Disagree	12	15.8
Neutral	10	13.2
Agree	15	19.7
Strongly Agree	36	47.4
Total	76	100.0

Mean	3.91	
Standard Deviation	1.267	
95% Confidence Interval For Mean	Lower Bound: 3.62	Upper Bound: 4.20

Nearly half of all Gen Z respondents at 47.4% strongly agree that they would prefer to buy clothes for special occasions, rather than re-wear old clothes or purchase second-hand clothing. The mean answer for the sample was 3.91, and the confidence interval indicates the true population mean is found to be between 3.62 and 4.20, both located on the higher end of the scale as most answers are positive. As per the information above it can be stated that the major of Gen Z place significant value on product ownership and newly bought clothing.

Spearman Correlation

To determine the correlation between the above personality traits and behavioural control, a Spearman correlation test was carried out.

Fashion Leadership

Correlations

			I buy my clothing second-hand through online marketplaces in an effort to be more sustainable	I avoid sustainable fashion practices in order to keep up with current fashion trends
Spearman's rho	I buy my clothing second-hand through online marketplaces in an effort to be more sustainable	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.431**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.004
		N	76	76
	I avoid sustainable fashion practices in order to keep up with current fashion trends	Correlation Coefficient	.431**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.004	.
		N	76	76

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

From the data above, a correlation of .431 was found between the demand for fashion leadership and online marketplace involvement.

Need for Uniqueness

			I have a second-hand fashion marketplace account that I use regularly.	Buying second-hand clothing enables me to be more individual in my style.
Spearman's rho	I have a second-hand fashion marketplace account that I use regularly.	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.721**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	76	76
	Buying second-hand clothing enables me to be more individual in my style.	Correlation Coefficient	.721**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	76	76

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

From the table above it is evident that there is a significant correlation between the need for uniqueness and the participation in the collaborative clothing industry through online marketplaces, with a value of .721.

Materialism

Correlations

			I buy my clothing second-hand through online marketplaces in an effort to be more sustainable	I prefer clothes I bought new myself for occasions like parties, weddings, occasions etc.
Spearman's rho	I buy my clothing second-hand through online marketplaces in an effort to be more sustainable	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	-.284*
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.013
		N	76	76
	I prefer clothes I bought new myself for occasions like parties, weddings, occasions etc.	Correlation Coefficient	-.284*	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.013	.
		N	76	76

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

From the information above, a negative correlation between materialism and collaborative clothing consumption was identified with a value of $-.284$.

Research Objective 2: Motivations for participating in collaborative clothing consumption practices.

Concerns about the environmental impacts of the fast fashion industry were the most prevalent reason for Gen Z consumers participating in the fast fashion sector, with 25 (32.89%) respondents indicating it was their primary motivator.

Better value for money was the second most common factor, with 18 (23.68%) people citing it as their prime motivator.

Concerns about working conditions in the fast fashion sector was the third most common reason for participating in collaborative consumption, with 12 (15.79%) participants indicating it was their main reason for participation.

5 (6.58%) participants stated that all of these reasons were their motivations for engaging in collaborative clothing consumption

16 (21.05%) participants stated that they did not engage in collaborative consumption practices and felt no motivation to do so.

Research Objective 3: Influence of Societal Norms on Collaborative Clothing Consumption participation.

Item 6:

I would feel judged by my peers if I wore clothing that had been rented or was previously worn by another owner

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Disagree	30	39.5
Disagree	28	36.8
Neutral	5	6.6
Agree	9	11.8
Strongly Agree	4	5.3
Total	76	100.0

Mean	2.07	
Standard Deviation	1.193	
95% Confidence Interval For Mean	Lower Bound: 1.79	Upper Bound: 2.34

17.13% of participants agreed or strongly agreed that the fear of judgement would play a significant factor in their participation in collaborative clothing practices. The mean answer for the population sample was 2.07, as most participants selected answers at the lower end of the scale, the confidence interval indicates that the true mean population mean of this question is also located at the end of the scale between 1.79 and 2.34. This suggests that fear of judgement is not a major deterrent for Gen Z to engage in collaborative clothes consumption.

Item 7:

I would like to buy more second-hand clothing, but I am worried about the quality.

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Disagree	8	10.5
Disagree	15	19.7
Neutral	16	21.1
Agree	22	28.9
Strongly Agree	15	19.7
Total	76	100.0

Mean	3.28	
Standard Deviation	1.282	
95% Confidence Interval For Mean	Lower Bound: 2.98	Upper Bound: 3.57

48.6% of participants agreed or strongly agreed that product quality was a concern when buying second-hand clothing. The standard deviation for this question was 1.282, indicating that answers were distributed in an even spread rather than being concentrated at either end of the scale. As per the data presented above quality concerns are a prevalent barrier for Gen Z when attempting to engage in collaborative clothing consumption practices. Quality is a significantly larger issue for the industry than fear of judgement as indicated by the data.

Item 8:

I would like to buy more second-hand clothing online from other users, but marketplaces can be unreliable

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Disagree	6	7.9
Disagree	15	19.7
Neutral	15	19.7
Agree	18	23.7
Strongly Agree	22	28.9
Total	76	100.0

Mean	3.46	
Standard Deviation	1.311	
Confidence Interval	Lower Bound: 3.16	Upper Bound: 3.76

56.2% participants agreed or strongly agreed that marketplaces for pre-loved clothing can be unreliable. The standard deviation of 1.311 indicated that answers were spread along the whole scale rather than concentrated in one area. The mean answer of the sample questioned was 3.46, the standard deviation indicates that the true population mean was between 3.16 and 3.76. Out of all the barriers tested in the study, the data concludes that reliability is Gen Z consumer's biggest concern.

Item 9:

I have concerns surrounding the levels hygiene when buying or renting second hand clothing

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Disagree	3	3.9
Disagree	22	28.9
Neutral	17	22.4
Agree	16	21.1
Strongly Agree	18	23.7
Total	76	100.0

Mean	3.32	
Standard Deviation	1.235	
Confidence Interval	Lower Bound: 3.03	Upper Bound: 3.60

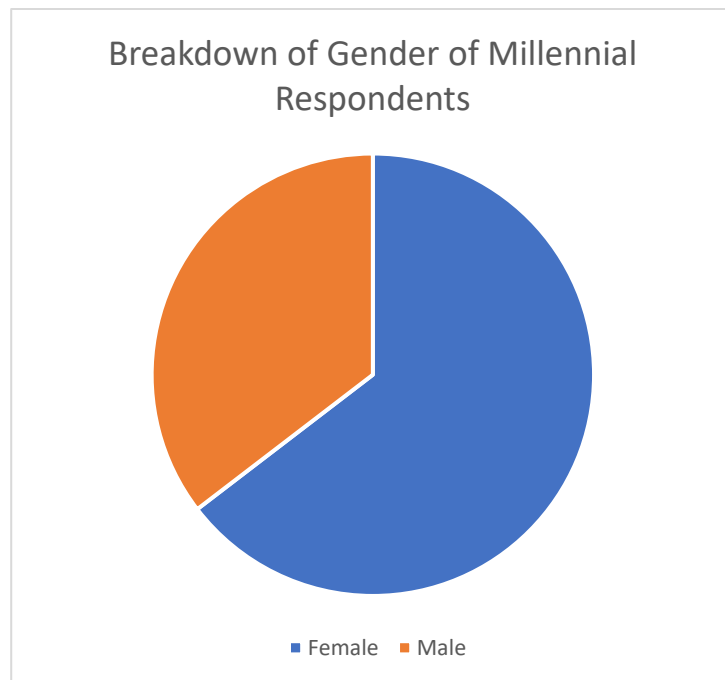
44.8% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that hygiene was a concern when considering clothing rental and second-hand clothing consumption. The mean response to this question was 3.32, suggesting a high degree of agreement with the above statement.

This may possibly have been influenced by the impact of the Covid-19 pandemics as individuals may feel unsafe at the thought of wearing clothing that had been previously owned or worn.

Millennial Descriptive Statistics

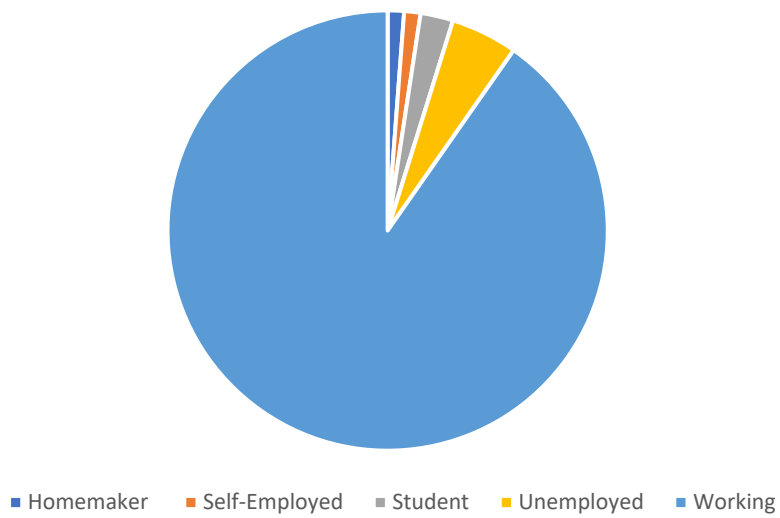
For the purpose of this research project, millennial participants were also needed in order to undertake a T test and display them through cross tabulations.

	Frequency	Percent
Female	53	64.6
Male	29	35.4
Total	82	100.0



	Frequency	Percent
Homemaker	1	1.2
Self-Employed	1	1.2
Student	2	2.4
Unemployed	4	4.9
Working	74	90.2
Total	82	100.0

Employment Status of Millennial Respondents



Cross Tabulations:

The quantity or frequency of respondents who exhibit the qualities specified in the table's cells is recorded in a cross-tabulation, which is a two- or more-dimensional table.

Research Objective 4: Participation of Collaborative Clothing Consumption with Gen Z and influence of online marketplace platforms.

A cross tabulation of age demographics ie Gen Z and millennials and the respondents level of agreement with behavioural control and attitude variables was done as part of this research project. This was done to test if the two age demographics differed in their levels of agreement with the following statements. Within the cross tabulations, the following assertions were examined:

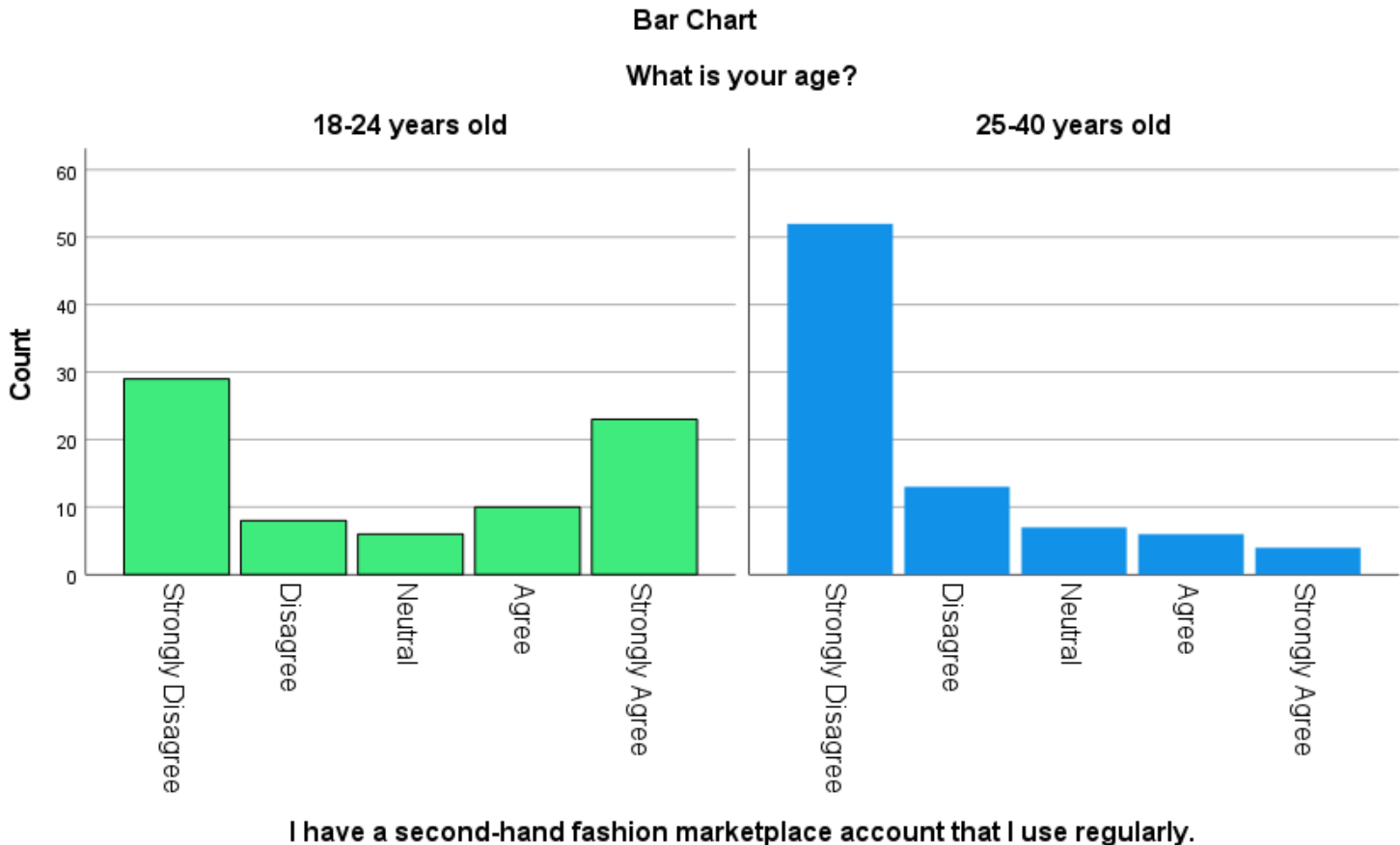
Cross Tab 1:

I have a second-hand fashion marketplace account that I use regularly.

			What is your age?		Total
			18-24 years old	25-40 years old	
I have a second-hand fashion marketplace account that I use regularly.	Strongly Disagree	Count	29	52	81
		% within age	38.2%	63.4%	51.3%
	Disagree	Count	8	13	21
		% within age	10.5%	15.9%	13.3%
	Neutral	Count	6	7	13
		% within age	7.9%	8.5%	8.2%
	Agree	Count	10	6	16
		% within age	13.2%	7.3%	10.1%
	Strongly Agree	Count	23	4	27
		% within age	30.3%	4.9%	17.1%
	Total	Count	76	82	158

As per the table above, out of the 76 Gen Z respondents, 43.4% of Gen Z agreed or strongly agreed to having an online second-hand fashion marketplace account compared to the millennial demographic with 12.2% agreeing or strongly agreeing with the statement. The data above shows a divergence between Gen Z and

Millennials in relation to collaborative consumption, with younger shoppers more likely to have a sustainable online account. This shows an increased propensity to shop sustainable amongst Gen Z consumers.



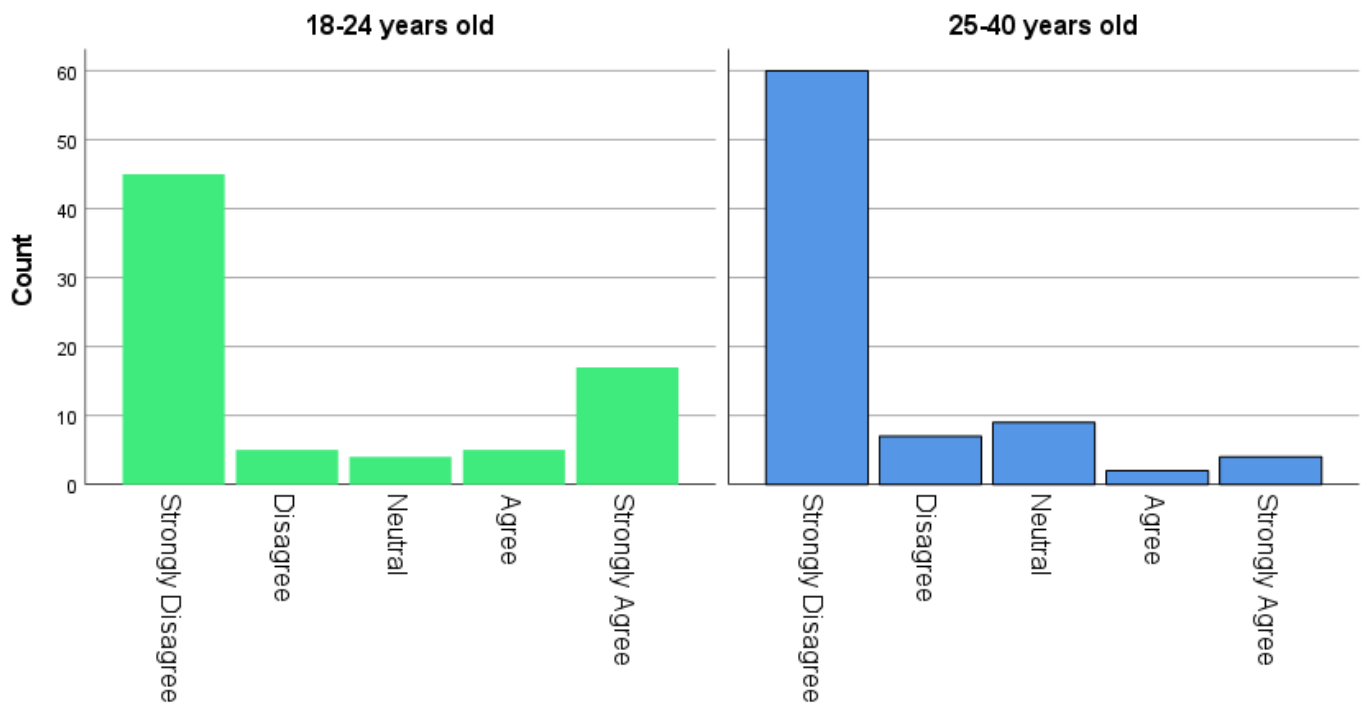
Cross Tab 2:

I swap my old clothes online with others in an effort to be sustainable

			What is your age?		Total
			18-24 years old	25-40 years old	
I swap my old clothes online through marketplaces.	Strongly Disagree	Count	45	60	105
		% within age	59.2%	73.2%	66.5%
	Disagree	Count	5	7	12
		% within age	6.6%	8.5%	7.6%
	Neutral	Count	4	9	13
		% within age	5.3%	11.0%	8.2%
	Agree	Count	5	2	7
		% within age	6.6%	2.4%	4.4%
	Strongly Agree	Count	17	4	21
		% within age	22.4%	4.9%	13.3%
Total			76	82	158

Clothing swapping is the least popular method of collaborative clothing consumption that was measured in the study, with 29% of Gen Z and 7.3% millennials agreeing or strongly agreeing to partaking in clothing swapping practices online.

What is your age?



I swap my old clothes online with others in an effort to be sustainable.

Cross Tab 3:

I sell my old clothing online in an effort to be more sustainable.

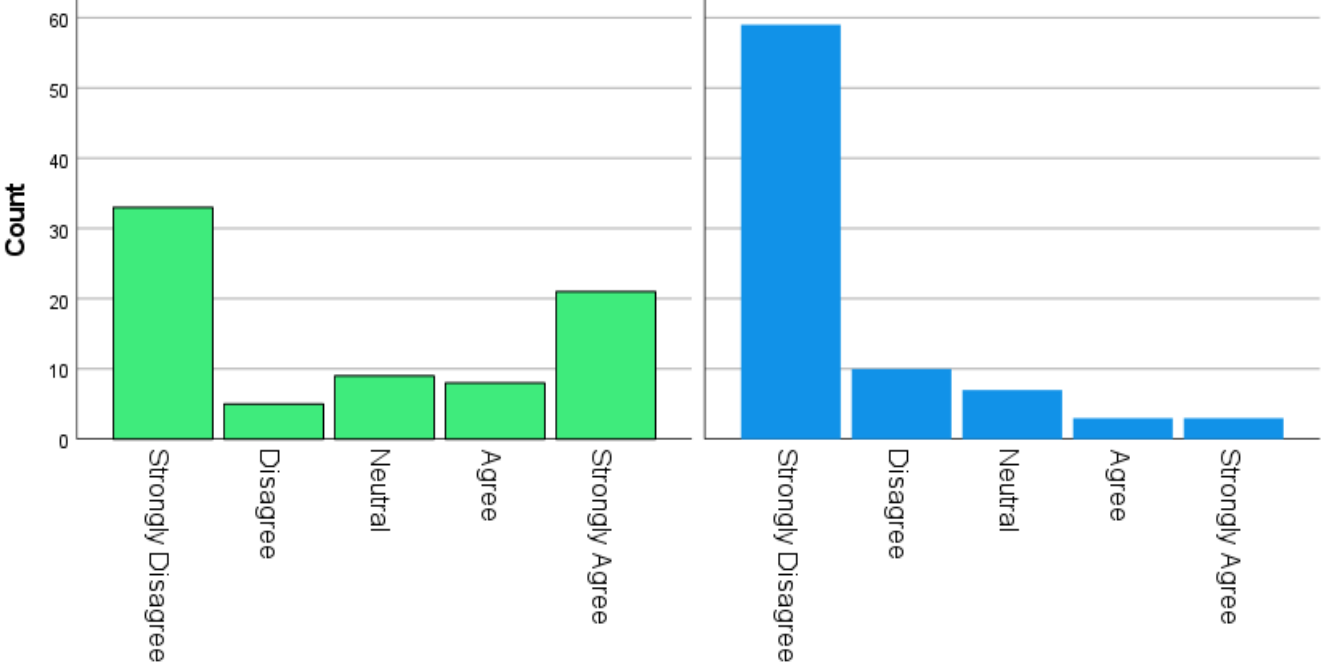
		What is your age?		Total	
		18-24 years old (Gen Z)	25-40 years old (Millennials)		
I sell my old clothing through online marketplaces.	Strongly Disagree	Count	33	59	92
		% within age	43.4%	72.0%	58.2%
	Disagree	Count	5	10	15
		% within age	6.6%	12.2%	9.5%
	Neutral	Count	9	7	16
		% within age	11.8%	8.5%	10.1%
	Agree	Count	8	3	11
		% within age	10.5%	3.7%	7.0%
	Strongly Agree	Count	21	3	24
		% within age	27.6%	3.7%	15.2%
Total			76	82	158

38.1% Gen Z respondents agreed or strongly agreed to selling their old clothes online, a significantly larger percentage compared to millennial demographics with only 7.4% engaging on online markets in order to sell their unwanted clothes. The data above demonstrates a disparity in collaborative consumption participation between Gen Z and Millennials, with Gen Z being more inclined to sell their old clothes online.

What is your age?

18-24 years old

25-40 years old



I sell my old clothing online in an effort to be more sustainable.

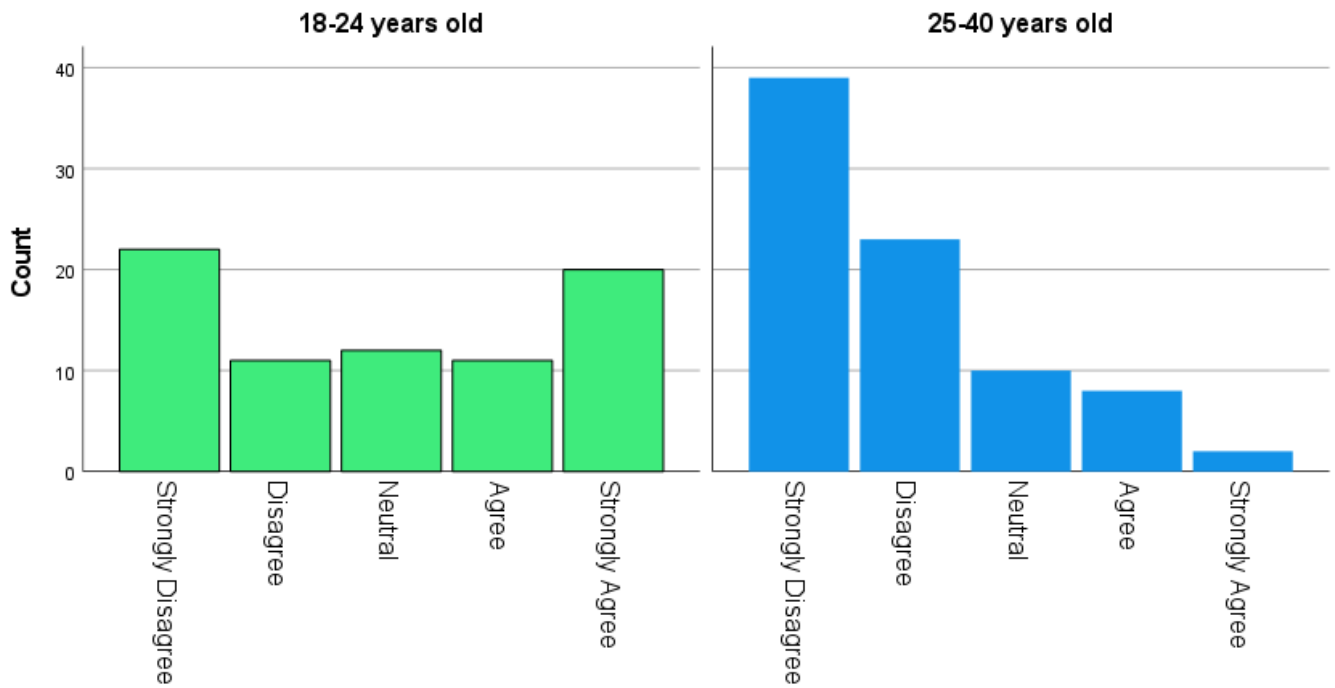
Cross Tab 4:

I buy my clothing second-hand through online marketplaces in an effort to be more sustainable

		What is your age?			
			18-24 years old	25-40 years old	Total
buy my clothing second-hand through online marketplaces	Strongly Disagree	Count	22	39	61
		% within age	28.9%	47.6%	38.6%
	Disagree	Count	11	23	34
		% within age	14.5%	28.0%	21.5%
	Neutral	Count	12	10	22
		% within age	15.8%	12.2%	13.9%
	Agree	Count	11	8	19
		% within age	14.5%	9.8%	12.0%
	Strongly Agree	Count	20	2	22
		% within age	26.3%	2.4%	13.9%
Total			76	82	158

According to the statistics presented above, buying used clothes is the most popular form of collaborative consumption among Gen Z consumers, surpassing techniques such as clothing swapping and selling. 40.8% of Gen Z participants agreed or strongly agreed to engaging in purchasing second-hand clothing online, significantly higher than the level of individuals that engaging in clothes swapping and selling.

What is your age?



I buy my clothing second-hand through online marketplaces in an effort to be more sustainable

Cross Tab 5:

I have or would consider renting clothes for occasions such as weddings, festivals etc in order to be more sustainable.

		What is your age?		
		18-24 years old	25-40 years old	Total
No	Count	18	24	42
	% within age	23.7%	29.3%	26.6%
Yes	Count	58	58	116
	% within age	76.3%	70.7%	73.4%
Count		76	82	158
% within age		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

As per the information above Both Gen Z and millennials were very willing to participating in clothing rental in the case of a more special occasion with 76.3% Gen Z's and 70.7% millennials stating they would be happy to participate in clothing rental.

What is your age?

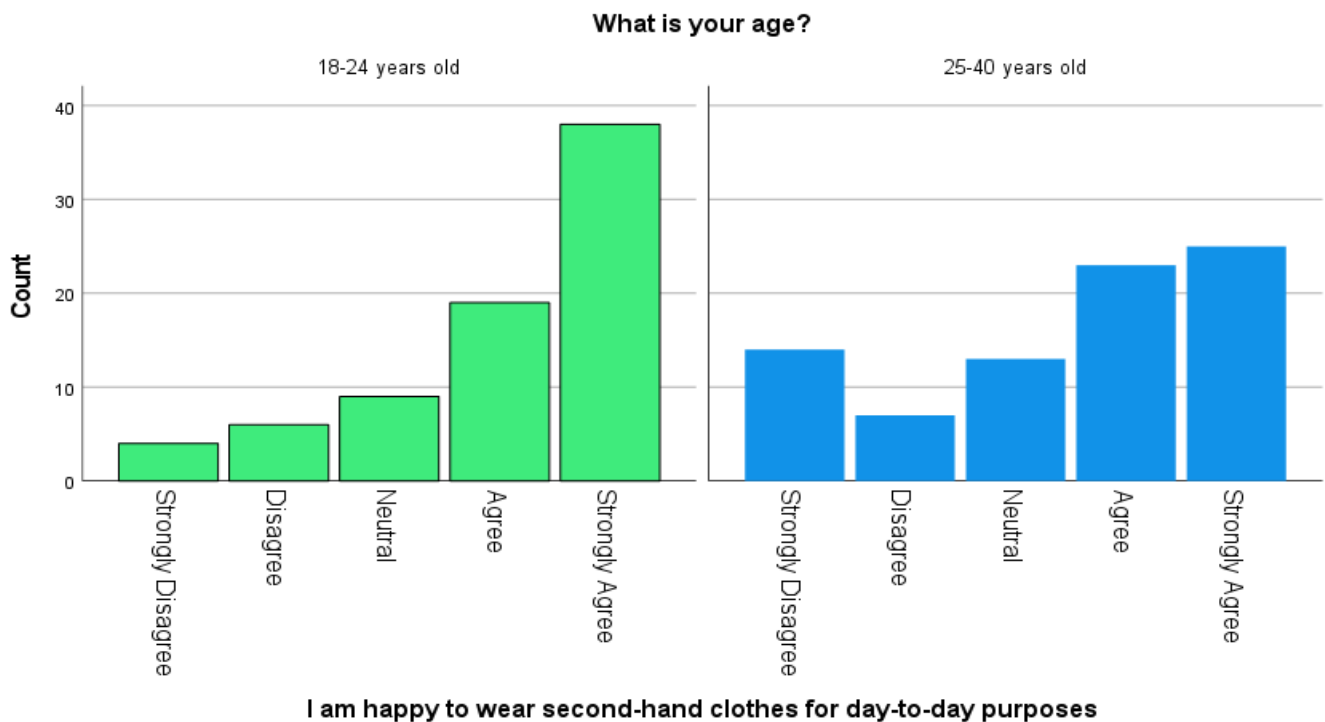


Cross Tab 6:

I am happy to wear second-hand clothes for day-to-day

			What is your age?		
			18-24 years old	25-40 years old	Total
I am happy to wear second-hand clothes for day-to-day purposes	Strongly Disagree	Count	4	14	18
		% within age	5.3%	17.1%	11.4%
	Disagree	Count	6	7	13
		% within age	7.9%	8.5%	8.2%
	Neutral	Count	9	13	22
		% within age	11.8%	15.9%	13.9%
	Agree	Count	19	23	42
		% within age	25.0%	28.0%	26.6%
	Strongly Agree	Count	38	25	63
		% within age	50.0%	30.5%	39.9%
Total		Count	76	82	158

Both the Gen Z and Millennial demographic had positive sentiments towards wearing second-hand day-to-day. Over half of Gen Z respondents strongly agreed that they would be happy to wear second-hand clothing on a day to day basis, considerably higher than Millennials with just over 30% strongly agreeing to the statement.



From analysing the data within the cross tabulations, it is evident that there is a considerably higher adoption rate from Gen Z of collaborative consumption practices compared to the Millennial demographics. This demonstrates that Gen Z customers have a greater proclivity to purchase fashion sustainably.

Limitations of Study:

As with any quantitative analysis, it's worth noting that statistical results aren't universally accurate, and that the conclusions are only valid within a certain range. Confidence intervals were used to determine the true mean of the population in order to be more accurate.

Conclusion:

The results of the quantitative analysis from the SPSS database were organized and presented visually in this chapter. The objectives of the study were investigated in order to better understand the motivations of the collaborative clothing consumption within Gen Z age cohorts.

The findings from this study will be discussed and interpreted further in the next chapter

Discussion

Introduction:

The goal of this chapter is to offer a more comprehensive interpretation of the findings by extensively discussing and analysing what was discovered in the previous chapter and connecting it to the literature review.

Research Objective 1: Effect of fashion leadership, materialism and need for uniqueness on participation levels of Collaborative Clothing Consumption

Previous studies had identified a positive link between fashion leadership and engagement in collaborative consumption practices, the result from this study endorse such findings. This study's findings support similar findings on collaborative consumption behaviours. The great majority of respondents were hesitant to avoid sustainable fashion methods in order to keep current with trends, with just 13.2% of Gen Z agreeing or strongly agreeing to this statement. However, the issue of conforming to current trends was mentioned as concerns by some participants in follow-up questions, some participants voiced concern about the scarcity of fashionable products on online sustainable marketplaces.

One participant said:

'I don't buy second hand because of inaccessibility and the style being too niche these days'

Another stated:

'Sometimes the selection on these marketplaces isn't great, not everything would fit my style'

A small portion of Generation Z still perceive these markets to be unappealing due to a lack of up-to-date styles and trends. Intense marketing on social media platforms such as Instagram may quickly influence these perceptions by highlighting the diverse selections available on these marketplaces through images and videos.

Materialism's adverse effects on clothes rental and exchanging have also been proven. Materialistic personalities have a negative connotation with its activities since they refuse to surrender ownership of their belongings (Lang and Armstrong, 2018).

This study found that just over 67% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they would prefer to buy clothes from when dressing for an important occasion, indicating the importance and value consumers hold on ownership.

In order to appeal to individuals who have materialistic personalities and dispel the desire for ownership, marketing teams that in collaborative fashion consumption services should create intensive campaigns that emphasize the positive attributes of the collaborative consumption business model and the benefits of non-ownership such as economic benefits and less of a need for storage in your wardrobe.

Uniqueness The study had further proved a positive link between the need for uniqueness and online second-hand shopping.

Gout and Roux (2008) had previously stated *'The distinctiveness of second-hand products gives the individual the means to differentiate him or herself by appropriating their unique character'*.

This study supports this concept, with just short of participants agreeing or strongly agreeing that second-hand clothing allows them to be individual in their style. One respondent further stated that they shop second-hand online due to the more extensive ranges of clothing:

You can find clothing gems that no one else has and that aren't being mass sold on the High Street.

This is an extremely positive finding for the collaborative conus,

Overall, from this study we can see the three personality types of fashion leadership, materialism and need for uniqueness had both a negative and positive influence on participation in collaborative clothing consumption practices. The findings of this study supported previous research which had previously found fashion leadership, and the desire for individuality along with environmental concerns contribute to positive Gen Z consumer attitudes toward the use of fashion rental services, (McCoy Wang and Chi, 2021). The results of this study indicate that these factors can also be applied to other collaborative clothing consumption activities such as clothes swapping and selling buying second-hand. The negative associations and influences of materialism on collaborative clothing consumption practices that had been

identified in previous studies, (Lang and Armstorng, 2019), were also further proved in this research project.

Research Objective 2: Motivations for participating in Collaborative Clothing Consumption

Previous studies have found that participation in the sharing economy is associated with both environmental and economic advantages. Lundblad and Davies (2016) stated environmental concerns and concerns of factory working conditions were key motivations for participating in sustainable fashion consumption. Edbring et al., (2016) stated many younger consumers partook in collaborative consumption practices in order to save money.

The outcomes of this study showed that comparable effects were consistent for users of collaborative clothing consumption platforms. The most common reasons for individuals to participate in collaborative clothing consumption was for environmental reasons with 32.89% stating this was their main motivation, better value for money with 23.68% of respondents citing this is their main motivator, and concerns for working conditions with 15.79% participants citing this is their main reason for engaging in the industry, corresponding with previous research.

Research objective 3: Evaluate effects of Barriers to Collaborative Clothing Consumption

Consumers' negative perceptions of collaborative clothing consumption habits continue to be a major deterrent for Gen Z. The main social concerns that had been previously mentioned in the literature review were hygiene concerns, quality concerns, reliability concerns and fear of judgement these barriers were tested as part of this study in order to measure the effects of these barriers to the industry.

As previously discussed in the literature review chapter, a lack of trust and information have been previously identified as barriers to collaborative clothing consumption, (Becker-Leifhold and Iran, 2018). This study revealed that 52.6% of Gen Z respondents had felt that online marketplaces were unreliable.

One respondent said:

'While I enjoy second-hand clothing I don't trust small private sellers. Another said I'm always worried I'll never receive the order and be scammed'.

This is a noteworthy finding, as more than half of respondents do not trust private merchants on these marketplace platforms. Reliability concerns was the biggest obstacle to collaborative consumption out of all the barriers that were examined. Companies like Depop have sought to address this by introducing a rating and review system for both vendors and consumers This is to ensure that frequent users of the platforms are encouraged to be reliable merchants and shoppers by building a reputation through reviews. However more may need to be implemented by these websites to ensure for a larger adoption of the Gen Z market to collaborative fashion consumption practices in order to change the perception that these marketplaces are untrustworthy.

48.6% of Gen Z respondents agreed that quality was a concern when shopping within the collaborative clothing consumption industry. This coincides with previous research that found many consumers were hesitant to rent or buy second-hand clothing online as they were not able to physically check the quality of the garments, (Iran, Geiger and Schrader, 2019).

One respondent said: *'Online marketplaces often selling clothes from fast fashion website for almost the same price, not always in good condition'*.

In most situations, marketplaces offer nothing to online merchants in terms of product quality assurance, although it is in the interest of vendors to provide an accurate description of each product.

Fear of judgement was another barrier to collaborative clothing consumption, in particular clothing rental that was previously mentioned in the literature review. These concerns pertain to fears of being judged for wearing rental clothing by peers as a lack of ownership can lead to concerns about a lack of self-expression and stigma for failing to appropriately display one's social standing, (Lee et al., 2021), making it a significant barrier to collaborative clothing consumption. In this research project only 17.1% of Gen Z respondents had agreed that they would feel judged by their peers for wearing rented or second-hand clothing, this indicates that fear of judgement does not seem to be a significant barriers for wearing. One respondent mentioned that it would feel embarrassing to wear clothing that had been rented. With this in mind its interesting to not that it was also found 47.4% strongly agreed and 19.7% agreed that they would prefer to buy and own things from new for special occasions. This shows while these respondents don't feel social pressure to wear new clothes, they none the less prefer new clothes for important occasions, proving that for many there is a strong correlation between ownership with perceived value.

44.8% of Gen Z respondents had agreed that they cited hygiene as a concern when considering buying second-hand clothing or renting clothes, as we know from previous studies that have been mentioned in the literature review section, the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic has made consumer's concerns around hygiene even more relevant, (De Medeiros et al., 2021).

One participant said:

'With covid I would feel very uncomfortable renting clothing, it would feel unsafe'.

This is an important finding; the aftermath of the Covid-19 pandemic will have major implications for the industry as consumers may feel as though they are putting themselves at risk by wearing rented or second-hand. Major actions will have to be

taken by marketplaces to ensure consumer safety, for example sellers could be asked to declare that any clothing they wish to sell had been thoroughly cleaned and safe to before allowing them to list it as for sale.

Time consumption was an additional barrier participants had brought up during the study that had not been identified as a major barrier in the literature review section. One respondent said:

'In order to buy used you have to create an account and then source the clothes that fit your style. Buying new is more streamlined and accessible'.

Another consideration for collaborative consumption platforms in the future is how to create a less time-consuming experience when shopping online such as optimising shopping platforms.

Societal norms appear to have a significant influence on perceived concept of collaborative clothing consumption. Furthermore, many respondents linked second-hand apparel with low quality, poor hygiene, and a lack of reliability. Despite this 75% of people said they would be happy to wear second-hand clothes on a day-to-day basis. It is evident by the findings that if these concerns were addressed the participation levels would be considerably higher among Gen Z. Collaborative clothing consumption will have to be reinterpreted in the mind of those who still perceive it as an unconventional method of fashion consumption.

Research Objective 4: Participation of Collaborative Clothing Consumption with Gen Z and influence of online marketplace platforms

Current attitudes of Gen z towards collaborative consumption practices are significantly positive. 75% of Gen Z respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that they were happy to wear second-hand clothing on a day-to-day basis. This is an extremely positive finding for the industry. In order to continue to expand the sector, it is now critical to understand how to translate these encouraging attitudes into behaviours.

Gen Z has considerably greater participation rates in the collaborative apparel consumption sector than the millennial generation. 46.7% of Gen Z respondents agreed that they had a fashion marketplace account that they used on a regular basis. This is evenly distributed by gender of Gen Z respondents 44.6% of females owning a fashion marketplace account and 40.7 males. This is considerably higher compared to the millennial demographic, with 12.2 % of millennials agreeing to having an online fashion marketplace account. This corresponds with the previous research, as previously stated 90% of Depop users are under the age of 26, (Neate, 2021). This may be related to the fact that Gen Z are said to be more technologically savvy and their inclination to choose sustainable alternatives as mentioned in the literature review.

This research also found that were much more likely to buy their clothes, on these fashion marketplaces rather than swap clothes or sell their own clothes. Some respondents had mentioned the reason for this is the lack of interest as well not wanting the responsibility of packing and shipping their old clothing to swap or be sold. Offering discount vouchers to sellers who meet specific goals when might encourage more individuals to exchange or sell their unwanted clothes on marketplaces.

Overall, the Gen Z population responded positively to the concept of clothing rental, with 76.31% of Gen Z respondents stating they have rented or would consider renting clothing for special occasions. This is quite a promising finding for the fashion rental industry, although it would seem to be one of the smaller methods of collaborative clothing consumption, Gen Z seem open to the prospect of rental for

occasions in order to meet the needs of Gen Z rental business could provide clothing for occasions such as festivals or parties as younger generations may not have a need to rent formal wear.

by focusing more on Gen Z consumers and their needs rather than the traditional occasions for clothing rental such as major occasions like weddings.

Ownership was one of the most prominent barriers that individuals encountered while partaking in clothing rental. With one participant stating:

I would not be interested in clothing rental because I would be too attached to give it back. Clothes hold a special place on my heart.

Individuals who place great value on ownership may be better suited to other practices such as buying second-hand, however this may not combat the problem of overconsumption.

Overall, attitudes and behaviours of Gen Z towards collaborative fashion consumption were very positive indicating that the industry is likely to further grow in the future as more people look for viable alternatives to shopping in the fast fashion industry. By leveraging social networking websites and apps that are popular among Gen Z, as well as aesthetically attractive images that showcase their unique ranges, collaborative consumption marketplaces can create good consumer views towards the industry.

Conclusion

Introduction:

This chapter summarizes the study by presenting the research outcomes and concluding with recommendations for future research.

The overconsumption of fast fashion with has been detrimental to our planet. In order to reduce the environmental impact of fast fashion, the fashion industry must undergo major changes and consumers must change their perceptions of conventional fashion shopping. One viable alternative to consuming fast fashion is adopting the notion of the sharing economy and collaborative clothing consumption. This study explored the concept of collaborative fashion consumption in more depth as the research project aimed to gain a deep understanding of Gen Z's changing behavioural trends and consumption patterns in relation to the fashion industry, as well as to determine whether online marketplaces or clothing sharing platforms have a positive impact on young people's sustainable fashion consumption levels through collaborative apparel consumption.

This research further supported previous research which had found positive correlations between the personality traits of fashion leadership and need for uniqueness and engagement in collaborative consumption practices as well as the negative influence of materialism and participation in the industry.

The second research objective aimed to determine the key motivators that influenced Gen Z to participate in clothing consumption practices. Concern for the environment, concerns for factory workers, and value for money were all recognized as motives for buying within the collaborative fashion consumption market, corroborating previous research.

The second research goal was to determine the effects that social issues have on Gen Z's perceptions of collaborative clothes consumption. The demographics' primary concerns were reliability and hygiene concerns.

The final research objectives aimed to examine current participation levels of Gen Z in the collaborative clothing consumption industry. Cross tabulations displayed the

disparity of participation levels of Gen Z and Millennials with Gen Z being much more engaged in collaborative clothing consumption practices. Current trends and participation levels appear to be optimistic for the future of the industry, with many Gen Z consumers selling, swapping, and buying clothing through marketplaces online and having an online marketplace account.

The findings from this research project suggests that the future looks promising for the collaborative clothes consumption industry, as participation levels are growing as consumers search for sustainable alternatives to the

Further research recommendations

It is worth noting that the conclusions of this research project are based on a relatively restricted set of data and are not general. As a result, the preceding results and conclusions can only be applied to the parties studied in the study and can only provide indications as to a general conclusion about collaborative garment consumption patterns. As a result, further study into the impact of stated on sustainability and sustainable consumption in the apparel business is required to go deeper into the topic.

From this research study it is evident that the influence of societal norms had a negative impact of consumer's perception of the collaborative clothing consumption industry. The researcher suggests further studies should be undertaken to better understand the barriers that consumers face when participating within this industry. Qualitative research may be more suitable to help researchers understand the true impact of these barriers.

This study was limited to the views and perceptions of the Gen Z demographic, as the collaborative consumption industry begins to grow the researcher suggests that it would be valuable to hold similar studies that undertake cross-generational research to explore the similarities and variations in attitudes and behaviours toward collaborative consumption practices among the various generations.

Due to the impact of Covid-19 online shopping has become increasingly more popular. The researcher proposes a future study to be conducted to explore the effects of online marketplaces on traditional brick-and-mortar shops after the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic.

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