



# Collaborative Conspicuousness

Examining the effects of conspicuity on  
sustainable clothing consumption decisions

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## ABSTRACT

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In the light of consumers' excessive consumption of *Fashion* goods, that is going over the limits of the Earth's capabilities, and immoderate unhuman working conditions of some garment workers, there is a need for behavioural change. It is critical to understand how that change can be turned into a reality, for corporate, public policy makers, and for the citizens themselves, so that a revolution in consumption patterns is made and a more sustainable society is created. With this in mind, new alternatives arise, such is the case of Collaborative Consumption, part of the so-called Sharing Economy.

The present dissertation aims to examine the effect of conspicuousness, an individual characteristic that is at the heart and center of mindless consumption, as a strong motivator for more sustainable consumption behaviors.

Based on a review of the academic literature on decision-making, conspicuous and status consumption, and Millennials, an experimental study design was used to test for the conspicuous effects on consumers' likelihood to engage in collaborative ways of consumption and their willingness to pay for designer clothes.

Results show, that high conspicuousness is an important enabler for the engagement in Collaborative Consumption. Thereby, the present dissertation makes a potential contribution on solutions to *Fashion*, by presenting alternatives to decrease extreme consumption and extending the life span of existing garments.

Above all, the present research holds important repercussions for the marketing literature and the Shared Economy consumption providers, in general.

## RESUMO

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Devido ao consumo excessivo de artigos de moda, que tende a ultrapassar os limites das capacidades da Terra, assim como as condições desumanas manifestadas por alguns trabalhadores de fábricas de vestuário, existe uma necessidade urgente de mudanças comportamentais. Para tal, o entendimento de como tais mudanças podem ser tornadas realidade é crucial para que se verifique uma revolução nos padrões de consumo, que conduza a uma sociedade mais sustentável. Atualmente, com o surgimento e procura de novos modelos de consumo, conceitos como Consumo Colaborativo e o seu conceito-mãe de Economia de partilha têm alcançado um destaque crescente.

O presente estudo tem como objetivo analisar o efeito da condescuidade, uma característica individual considerada “coração e centro” do consumo desmedido, como uma forte motivação para práticas de consumo mais sustentáveis, tal como é o consumo colaborativo.

Com base na literatura académica sobre tomada de decisão, condescuidade, *status* e a geração milenar, um estudo experimental foi realizado para testar os efeitos condescuidos na probabilidade de os consumidores aderirem a formas colaborativas de consumo, bem como a sua disponibilidade para comprar de roupas de estilista.

Os resultados mostram que, altos níveis de condescuidade são um importante facilitador na adoção de consumo colaborativo, especialmente quando os fatores monetários não estão envolvidos no processo de consumo.

Em suma, a presente dissertação contribuiu para a investigação de uma potencial solução para determinados problemas da indústria da Moda, através da apresentação de alternativas para diminuição ou erradicação do elevado consumo e aumento do tempo de vida do vestuário.

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

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## 1.1. Problem Definition and Relevance

The Fashion & Apparel Industry is the second most polluting industry after oil (Dolliver, 2016). Notably, this industry is going over the limits of the Earth's capabilities, including the aptness to take in dangerous chemicals, greenhouse gases and garment's waste. Additionally, the planet also encounters the exhaustion of resources such as soil and water (Greenpeace USA, 2016). Identically, reports from McKinsey & Company (2016) reveal that there is an increasing number of cases of clothing-factory workers who are exposed to hazardous working conditions, sometimes lethal. On the negative side, a great part of these workers is badly paid and, among them there are children. According to the Environment Agency (2013), it is estimated that the UK alone could have contributed to a total 173kg, of Nonylphenol ethoxylates (NPE), in the aquatic environment, in 2011. This is a consequence of the massive quantities of extremely toxic chemical that result from an excessive number of imported textiles from countries with no regulation on NPE (Greenpeace, 2016).

Furthermore, these alarming events also result from the rise of *Fast Fashion*, a very problematic industry due to its supply chain model. Truly, these two words symbolize a wider and more complex truth. Accordingly, reporters from the Huffington Post (Hall, 2017) define *Fast Fashion* as the translation of the modern society obsession with voracious consumption. Consequently, their relentless demands increase the harm of this unsustainable logistics network, due to the mass production that results in the creation of big quantities of clothing and accessories that are sold at cheap prices. To emphasize, this type of supply chain is designed to react rapidly to the most up-to-date trends by constantly upgrading and renovating the goods available at the stores (Byun & Sternquist, 2011; Moore & Fernie, 2004). Notably, some of the most popular *Fast Fashion* brands introduce a new collection every three to five weeks (Hu et al., 2014). Nevertheless, this industry' swiftly rhythm compromises the environment state, courtesy of chemical dyes and of the use of inexpensive and synthetic fibers, not to mention the social loss paid by garment workers (Hall, 2017). Be that as it may, the constant and quick changes in Fashion, leads to shorter clothes' lifecycles, also enhancing the decrease of the amount of time people make use of the garments and accessories they buy. On one hand, the clothing lifecycle is becoming extremely lower than the estimated technical lifecycle of the garments (how long they could be worn, even if they are no longer *in vogue*). On the other



hand, the problematic fast pace of this industry has lessened the attachment and care people have for their clothes, several individuals dispose countless sums of garments without much consideration (Roos et al., 2015). To enumerate, according to Greenpeace (2016) the average person buys 60 percent more than they would 15 years ago and keeps them for a shorter period. The same data suggests that consumer's treat their least expensive clothing items as nearly disposable, especially clothing stemming from *Fast Fashion* brands, discarding them after only seven or eight wears. For instance, the global average clothing consumption per person is equivalent to 5 kg. Only in 2014 the average North American consumer bought approximately 16kg of new clothes - the equivalent to 64 t-shirts or 16 pairs of jeans. The same year, consumers in China purchased approximately 6.5kg per person a number that is likely to increase, since the rate of disposable income occurring in the country is accelerating. Not to say that if this rate of clothing consumption continues it is expected that consumption weights between 11 and 16 kg per person by 2030.

Notably, the stated problems are a result of not only the challenges of the Fashion and Apparel industry, but also of consumer behaviour trends.

Thereupon, the *Fashion* industry has been suffering pressures from the European Union and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) along with the echoing voices of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) appeals such as Greenpeace and People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA), to become more sustainable. Also, strong regulation policies such as Chemical policies, Energy Union Package and Waste framework directives and, Circular Economy models have been put in place in the recent years to combat waste. Yet, the troubles of this industry go beyond the environmental ambit, being the scandals also related with social and ethical issues. For instance, in 1997, an inspection made by Ernst & Young, at the factory of a supplier of Nike, the famous sportswear brand, revealed that the workers were being exposed to hazard pollutants 177 times above the legal levels. This scandal damaged the brand's image and led to a downturn in the company, forcing the brand to change its strategy (Greenhouse, 1997). Forthwith, it can be strongly recognized that there have been ethical and sustainable forces revamping the industry and a new market opportunity has arisen as a response to the extreme existing problems in Fashion. In the last decade, the market for environmentally-friendly fashion grew, also because of the reactions and proactive approaches to the new needs of new consumers (Lejeune, 2016). More than ever, the

youngest generations are expressing their concerns and are stating it through their purchases and new consumption habits. Millennials, especially, crave for making a point: “looking good” is not only what they demand while shopping for clothes or fashion accessories. Instead, this generation (Generation Y) requests transparency and full information disclosure during their purchasing process, including at *Fashion* stores. To emphasize, they are aware of the consequences of their preferences and consumption and are demanding companies to adopt more sustainable production methods (Lipson, 2008; Yan, Hyllegard, & Blaesi, 2012). Also, their consumption patterns are different from the older generations and Millennials are more willing to pay a premium for fairer goods and, identically, more likely to engage in alternative ways of consumption (Gullstrand Edbring, Lehner, & Mont, 2016).

In reality, new consumption trends are rising as means to combat excessive waste and new conscious choices are taking place, especially amongst this generation. Even in China, the trillion-dollar garment market, there is an increasing number of consumers aiming for reducing the effects of their consumption habits and instead of buying, they decide to adopt substitute systems of consumption (Tindall, 2018). For example, a fairly new concept called Sharing Economy is bringing the attention of both Millennials and other generations as a means for accessing products, services and resources without the necessity of purchasing or owning them (Moore, 2012). This includes renting, swapping or exchanging products and services and thus, lengthening the lifecycle of the garments. In reality, Botsman and Rogers (2010) in their first book about the sharing economy, *What's Mine Is Yours* - the rise of collaborative consumption, define collaborative consumption as the adoption of traditional sharing, trading, renting, lending and swapping by way of technology devices and peer communities. Above all, the collaborative consumption enables access over ownership of goods and services. Even though, the sharing economy and collaborative consumption concepts are often confused, they are not the same. In fact, the sharing economy is an economic model based on sharing assets, from accommodation (e.g., Airbnb) to individuals' skills (e.g., groundskeeping, gardening, pet sitting, between others), for monetary or non-monetary advantages and simultaneously, it is the umbrella concept that aggregates different economic models, one of them being collaborative consumption (Selloni, 2017). In essence, this new way of consumption not only lowers the ecological footprint of *Fashion* but also reduces excess waste (Zamani, Sandin, & Peters, 2017). As a matter of fact, a form of collaborative consumption is clothing swapping, which is gaining global acceptance and popularity

(Caminiti, 2016; Hartmans, 2016; Tindall, 2018). Another, is the rental of *Fashion* clothing. Both, in what regards to *Fashion*, include the access to designer and non-designer clothing, accessories, or handbags. Contrary to the free of charge swapping, the most popular form of clothing rentals are subscription services, where users can access different items for instance for a monthly fee. These consumption systems are undoubtedly, revolutionizing the way consumers interact with *Fashion* and *Apparel* Retailers, many of them state that after experiencing these collaborative ways of consuming *Fashion*, they become more reluctant to return to traditional consumption (George-Parkin, 2017).

To illustrate, Pricewaterhouse Coopers foresees that by 2025, the Sharing Economy will generate \$335 billion in annual revenue. Also, according to Deloitte, in 2015 the worldwide investments in sharing start-ups totalled more than \$12 billion (Sherman, 2017).

There seems to be agreement in the literature that collaborative consumption models will transform society and reduce the environmental impacts of the Fashion industry (Agrawal et al., 2011; Botsman and Rogers, 2011; Gansky, 2010; Mont, 2002). Also, generations Y and youngers are considered the key drivers for the extension of collaborative consumption to the *Fashion* industry, due to the active role they play on seeking new trends and ways of purchasing in a greener manner.

Notably, Millennials are struggling to have their key needs satisfied and find it extremely difficult to translate their sustainable concerns into actual green purchases (Young et al., 2010). Above all, Millennials enunciate that eco-friendly brands often do not allow them to express their uniqueness and sense of self. Furthermore, luxury brands, that do not often offer sustainable solutions, still play a powerful role in Millennials minds. For them, consumption decisions are taken with strong knowledge about brands, including *Fashion* brands (Noble et al., 2009). However, they aim for authentic value in every product they intend to buy. In fact, they carefully choose items that are in agreement with their ideals, values and self-image (Noble et al., 2009). Therefore, there is undoubtedly a mismatch between consumers' expectations and behaviors, due to a lack of offer that could satisfy a large share of their demands.

## 1.2. Research Objective and Questions

As aforementioned, clothing excessive consumption causes severe hazards to the environment, as such there is a fundamental interest in the present study in developing an empirical analysis that allows to comprehend changing consumer behaviours in the *Fashion* industry, under the effect of strong individual characteristics. The present research intends to analyse the following main purposes:

***RQ1: How can collaborative consumption contribute to narrow the attitude-behavior gap in clothing consumption decisions?***

Whereas there is numerous research in the area of sustainable consumption, the research regarding *Fashion* goods and its consumption on a Collaborative Consumption context is still deficient, due to the novelty and still developing popularity of the subjects.

The primary objective of this research aims to provide an integral understanding of the contribution of collaborative consumption in consumers' actions towards more sustainable ways of consuming *Fashion*. Particularly, it reflects the initial instigation of the dissertation topic and gives purpose to the present study. Divergent theoretical principles and findings from former research and analysis on the subject are displayed and reviewed in the Literature Review section. Accordingly, solving this question paves the way for the subsequent research question:

***RQ2: What are the driving forces leading to the engagement in alternative ways of consumption?***

The second research question analyses how consumers' individual characteristics and their consumption behaviors can function as promoters for the participation in alternative ways of consumption, especially collaborative economy-based platforms in what regards to clothing consumption. As pointed out by Joergens (2006) personal needs tend to augment the attitude-behavior gap in the eco-fashion field. It is important to note here, that the present research focus on individual characteristics and behaviors that can narrow that gap, more in specific conspicuous consumption orientation.

Answering these research questions becomes fundamental to understand more about consumers behavioral and consumption patterns on the *Fashion and Apparel* industry and simultaneously on Sharing Economy-based business models, more specifically Collaborative Consumption.

Accordingly, the literature review together with the results and findings from former and current investigation will be used to build a more precise and abridged research model for this dissertation.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

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### **2.1. Attitude Behavior – Gap in Environmental and Ethical Fashion**

As claimed by Pattie (2010), consumption involves the overthrow of environmental resources, while green consumption entails the protection of those. In the recent year, the *environmentally-friendly Fashion* market has been growing at a global scale, due to the increasing consumers' awareness and progressing worldwide commitment of companies to appropriate more sustainable production processes (Lipson, 2008; Yan, Hyllegard, & Blaesi, 2012). Contrary to *Fast Fashion*, eco-clothing is designed for a long-lasting lifetime with minor influence on the environment, being produced in an ethical organization with eco-labelled or recycled materials (Niinimäki, 2010). Additionally, its aim is to maximize individuals and societal benefits while minimizing conflicting environmental impact (Claudio, 2007; Joergens, 2006).

This attitude-behaviour gap in the *environmentally-friendly Fashion* market is present in different research areas, such as aesthetics (Niinimäki, 2010) and the enhancement of one's self-image (Kang et al. 2013), product-attributes (Chan & Wong, 2012), brand influence (Yan et al., 2012) or personal needs (Joergens, 2006). Kang et al. (2013) emphasizes that young consumers are especially responsive to other's opinions and many times wear fashion clothes and accessories that are accepted by others or, opt for options that determine their status and association to determined social groups. According to Johansson (2010) eco-friendly garments and accessories are one of the top trends in *Fashion*. The youngest layers of the population, especially Millennials, are characterised for having been "born green" (Rogers, 2013), being environmental issues the "front-and-centre" during their upbringing. For that reason, Generation Y members are highly socially and environmentally conscious (Hume, 2010). However, in what regards to clothing consumption, sustainability has not been seen as a prime concern for clothing purchases, when compared to price or style (Solomon & Rabolt, 2004). Additionally, the

wish for improving one's self-image according to fashion trends is inconsistent with sustainable consumption (Niinimäki, 2010).

## **2.2. Collaborative Consumption Consumer Behaviour**

Collaborative consumption is an alternative way of accessing products and services, which has the potential capability of weakening the environmental effects of *Fashion* by extending the practical service life of garments, while reducing clothing and accessories withdraws and associated waste (Lamberton, 2016). This consumption approach is part of the so called Sharing Economy, even though there seems to be some indeterminateness regarding the definitions of the latter concept. Frenken and Schor (2017) describe it as a low-carbon, and clearer, socially-oriented and fairer economic system. Moreover, collaborative consumption has been outlined as “people coordinating the acquisition and distribution of a resource for a fee or other compensation” (Belk, 2014, p. 1597), which can involve the renting, trading, swapping and borrowing of products (Piscicelli et al., 2014). These sharing platforms which gather providers (the individuals willing to share) and consumers (the ones who swap or are willing to pay the access to certain goods or services) are mostly accessible online (Ranzini et al., 2017).

Collaborative consumption is a fast-growing movement that is embraced by millions of individuals worldwide, who share goods and services, such as clothing, apartments, cars, finances, services and skills (Ranzini et al., 2017).

Amongst the literature on collaborative consumption, authors suggest that the key for the success of this shared economy business concept is driven by the trust relationship between the provider and the consumer (Armstrong et al., 2015; Catulli et al., 2013; Raja et al., 2013; Schmidt et al., 2014;). Notably, Catulli (2012) stresses the concern of proprietorship on the way people take care of products acquired through alternative ways of consumption. That is, due to the temporary access to the products, people do not foster a sense of ownership to the goods (Bardhi & Eckhardt, 2012).

Accordingly, renting is defined as “a transaction in which one party offers an item to another party for a fixed period of time in exchange for a fixed amount of money and in which there is no change of ownership” (Durgee and O'Connor, 1995, p.90). Opposite to renting, swapping clothing entails the transfer of ownership, subject to the reallocation of no longer used and unwanted clothes, that are still in good conditions (Park & Joyner Armstrong, 2017).

Therefore, under these circumstances, consumers realize they have to be more cautious about products they do not own, being critical for this type of consumption to survive, the flexibility of access to goods and services (Bardhi & Eckhardt, 2012; Baumeister, 2014). In reality, people have always shared resources with each other throughout the ancient history of mankind, especially within the most intimate family members or friends. At the present time, those resources are even shared with strangers (Belk, 2010). As an example, it has been demonstrated by anthropologists that this form of sharing economy is highly connected with human survival, such as the collaborative sharing of food supplies (Belk, 2009). Individuals' motivations to engage in collaborative ways of consumption diverge meaningfully subject to whether the trades are monetarized or not. Regarding monetarized conditions, users of these platforms often see economic advantages on collaborative consumption over traditional ways of consumption. For instance, many users see the opportunity in collaborative consumption to earn additional income, or as a chance to cut costs (for instance, using Uber as an alternative to the use of regular taxis) (Ranzini et al., 2017).

Under non-monetarized circumstances, people who take part in, are captivated by the desire of affiliation with a community with reciprocal beliefs, but also for pro-sustainability reasons (McArthur, 2014). Another key driver is the willingness to diminish consumption's related waste. However, in sharing business platforms, participants are mainly motivated by financial concerns and convenience (Zvolska, 2015). Also, consumers' acceptance towards this type of business services that do not involve ownership of goods (hiring, renting or leasing) depend on the type of products being offered (Baumeister, 2014). Edbring et al. (2016) goes one step further in identifying additional incentives for sharing engagement and collaborative consumption and suggests the access to exclusive products that are expensive to buy, economic and environmentally-friendly.

Notwithstanding, there seems to exist a few barriers in what regards to the shift from trading of products' ownership to dealing product use or its functions (Mont, 2008). Starting with attributes such as the value of goods, studies demonstrate that there is complexity in comparing the price of buying a product to the total cost of renting it (Besch, 2005). On the other hand, concerns for hygiene, the desire to own and the lack of trust in others were also pointed out as obstacles to the adoption of this alternative way of consumption (Gullstrand Edbring et al., 2016).

### **2.3. Conspicuous Consumption, Status and Orientation**

According to Chaudhuri, Mazumdar and Ghoshal (2011) conspicuous consumption is an intentional engagement in emblematic and noticeable purchases, possession and usage of scarce products and services with the motivation to communicate a distinctive self-image to others.

In what regards to the *Fashion* industry, Shermach (1997) suggests that status brands are outlined as those that have intrinsic associations of high quality, prestige and luxury and are generally affiliated with the high class. The author determines that this sort of brands is generally acquired by individuals with the intent of displaying status and likewise of exhibiting their conspicuity as a noticeable statement of social standing. Identically, Goldsmith (et al. 1996, p. 309) defines status consumption as the acquisition and consumption of certain products, such as *Fashion* clothes, as a result of the longing for attaining status or social prestige. In the light of Eastman's (et al., 1999, p.3) research, 'the more a consumer seeks status, the more he/she will engage in behaviours, such as the consumption of status symbols, that increase their status'. In other words, consumers adopt this product category to express affluence and nobility, as a consequence it is relevant for them how they are seen by others (Eastman et al., 1999). Moreover, the consumption of status goods is an illustration of high-involvement decision making and of the pursue of conspicuous behaviour, once their purchase is occasional and it depends upon the degree of interest and familiarity with the product's category (Rossiter, Percy, & Donovan, 1991; Vigneron & Johnson, 2004).

In reality, status consumption has been deduced as "the motivational process by which individuals strive to improve their social standing through the conspicuous consumption of consumer products that confer and symbolize status both for the individual and surrounding significant others" (Eastman, Goldsmith, and Flynn 1999, p. 41), making clearer the differences between status and conspicuous consumption.

Interestingly, some consumers show to be more prone than others to behave conspicuously (Dubois & Duquesne, 1993) and to select goods based on their appearance and visibility shown to others. This individual difference is also called Conspicuous Consumption Orientation (CCO), as we review next.

#### *2.3.1. Conspicuous Consumption Orientation*

The term Conspicuous Consumption Orientation (CCO), originates from the aforementioned conspicuous consumption literature and is related to an innate individual



quality that stimulates consumers to adopt visible kinds of consumption in order to express their uniqueness, through their products and services choices. Not surprisingly, the majority of consumers with high conspicuity levels, regardless of their income level or social status, are willing to pay a premium for luxury products to enhance their social standing. Husic and Cicic (2009) suggest that with almost all luxury goods, consumers have similar principles and show this kind of consumption behaviour. The prevalent concept of luxury is linked to physical luxurious goods and brand consumption as a way for consumers to demonstrate their wealth, power, and status through extravagant spending (e.g., Kastanakis & Balabanis, 2014; O'Cass & McEwen, 2004; Okonkwo, 2007; Truong, Simmons, McColl, & Kitchen, 2008; Veblen, 1994/1899).

Whether consumers who possess this type of individual difference are more likely than others lower on this dimension, to engage in collaborative ways of consumption such as swapping or renting fashion goods, remains to be assessed. Due to the limited amount of research available and the importance of engagement on more sustainable ways of consumption to reduce environmental footprint, it is our goal to examine the relationship between, conspicuous and collaborative consumption and conspicuous consumption orientation, in more detail.

### *2.3.2. Conspicuous Consumption and Collaborative Consumption*

As aforesaid, conspicuous consumption, in particular, is associated with the notion of luxury, since it is also linked with aspirational, status and ostentatious consumption (Bourdieu 1979; Veblen, 1899). Individuals that aspired to buy conspicuous goods, but simultaneously cannot afford them see in collaborative consumption the opportunity to fulfil that wish. However, as a consequence, this access to conspicuous goods strengthens the tendency of the individuals to aim for more (Bardhi, 2012). On one hand, Collaborative Consumption fortifies the status of some users. On the other hand, gives to the ones, who are not extremely affluent, the access to upscale and high status goods since they may have a conspicuous consumption orientation profile (Binninger, Ourahmoune, & Robert, 2015). As indicated by Wilcox and Stephen (2013) the intense contact with technology, electronic word of mouth and social networks are motivating consumers' conspicuous orientation and increasing consumer's decisions to purchase exclusive products. For instance, the frequent use of online social networks is said to improve the users' self-esteem while changing their self-control, which has consequently led them to

more impulsive behaviour, especially in what concerns to shopping (Khan & Dhar, 2006; Wilcox, Kramer, & Sen, 2011).

#### **2.4. Clothing Consumption and Occasions**

Wu ( et al., 2017) defends that the conventional exertion of special clothing from luxury, conspicuous and designer brands takes place at remarkable occasions, as illustrations: attending a ceremony, a formal dress party or a wedding.

Notwithstanding, Land and Armstrong (2018) defends that even though renting designer clothes and accessories has progressively become famous among the population, it has been limited for special occasion clothing, while the market for casual clothing is still fresh. However, in what regards to swapping, there is no exclusiveness of the service to a specific clothing style.

Additionally, Nairn and Spotswood (2015) enriches the idea that the adoption of different styles of clothing, especially concerning casual and formal clothing, varies with the circumstance and the social group that people want to be identified with. To point out, in regular situations wearing “casual or normal clothes” (Nairn & Spotswood, 2015, p 1471), on the contrary dressing up that is associated with social elevation (Nairn & Spotswood, 2015, 1471).

#### **2.4. Millennials**

Millennials, also designated as Generation Y, are currently the largest population segment worldwide (Lancaster & Stillman, 2002; Nowak, Thach, & Olsen, 2006), and one of the most impactful cohorts due to their exceptional characteristics and consumption behaviors (Eastman & Liu, 2012; Gurau, 2012).

Among the literature there is a clear consensus that this population segment, born between 1980 and 2000, has unique behaviors, individualities, qualities and values with respect to their former generations (Eastman & Liu, 2012; Gurau, 2012). In particular, they are perceived by market analysts and by marketers as the band of the population with larger weights of spending power (Martin & Turley, 2004; Pokrywczynski & Wolburg, 2001). Even though, Millennials are not the central analysis of the current dissertation, this generation is often taken into consideration in this research, due to their powerful Marketing importance and high interest in Sharing Economy (Kats, 2017). Previous research has mainly concentrated on Millennials as opinion leaders and trendsetters, especially though their intense online activity (Eastman, 2014), as reviewed next.

Different from their prior generations, Millennials are the population segment more disposed to buy luxury clothing (Moore & Carpenter, 2008). As a matter of fact, previous research has proven that Millennials undoubtedly spend more on branded goods than older age segments (Chau & Schor, 1998). As a matter of fact, O’Cass and Frost (2002) in their studies have reached the conclusion that Millennials are more prone to be influenced by prestige brands and their symbolic meanings. On Millennials, status brands can arouse certain emotions when they identify their self-images with the brands’ image.

#### *2.4.1. Millennials and Technology*

Millennials are also described as digital natives (Bess and Bartolini, 2011) or as the high-tech generation (Norum, 2003), especially since their lives have been influenced by electronic devices from an early age and also due to their keenness to be constantly in contact with technological advances (Bess and Bartolini, 2011). As an illustration they are the earliest generation to have a technology-filled childhood, and under these circumstances Millennials became heavy users of technological and mobile devices for communication, entertainment and educational purposes on a regular basis (McMahon and Pospisil, 2005). Above all, the leading differentiator between Millennials and prior generations is the essential aim of technology in their everyday life (Pew Research Center, 2010).

#### *2.4.2. Millennials and Collaborative Consumption*

Some authors (Anderson & Rainie, 2010; Belk, 2014; Godelink, 2017) outline that the early purpose of the sharing economy, co-consumption, and its strong link with technology are the core of the association of this sharing-based business model to the Generation Y.

Correspondingly, previous research (Klein & Smart, 2017; Maycotte, 2015; Xu, Johnson, Bartholomae, O’Neill, & Gutter, 2015) has demonstrated that Millennials are less likely to be house owners and are more inclined to take public or shared transportation rather than owning their own car. In the light of Godelnik (2017) findings, Millennials express an optimistic outlook towards sharing-based business models.

Focus groups on Millennials from all over the world were conducted in six different European countries (Germany, Norway, the Netherlands, Switzerland, Italy and the United Kingdom) by Ranzini (et al., 2017). Their findings allow to reach the conclusion that the majority of Millennials are familiar with the concept of shared economy and have

made use of it in the past. However, it has been identified that Millennials generally associate collaborative ways of consumption with holidays and travelling, since that is the context where they primarily and generally access it.

Additionally, Ranzini (et al., 2017) draws attention to the incentives of Millennials to adopt this consumption style. Economic motives demonstrated to be a prevailing reason. It was revealed that this alternative way of consumption was described to be adopted as the first choice in their search for more affordable and sustainable services. The financial motivations also were proven to be an influencing factor on Millennials on the intensity of engagement in sharing-based business models. To demonstrate, the focus groups results evinces that many participants use these platforms to earn additional income.

Ranzini (et al., 2017) also identified convenience as a factor that contributes to foster Millennials engagement with the sharing-based platforms. The overall sample, indicated that when traveling they prefer to use familiar services, such as AirBnb, BlaBlaCar or Uber.

Strong evidence was found regarding the sense of community and social interaction influences on the adoption of alternative ways of consumption. Members of Ranzini's (et al., 2017) focus group highlighted how the sharing economy "human touch" adds value to it and makes these type of business models preferable to traditional ones. Likewise, reciprocity also cherishes individuals' involvement in this consumption systems, agreeable experiences have proven to enhance consumers' willingness to rate and review more assiduously and considerably their services' providers. Finally, Millennials state their preference for collaborative consumption platforms, provided that they can spend more time in gathering, filtering, and examining the information available.

Ranzini (et al., 2017) study has further strengthened Gullstrand Edbring (2016) assumptions regarding the obstacles to individuals' engagement in alternative ways of consumption. Like Gullstrand Edbring (2016), Ranzini (et al., 2017) investigation results points out the lack of availability of the sharing services or products as a factor that does not allow participants to increase their engagement in the sharing economy. For instance, when sharing platforms are not accessible in certain countries, similarly to Uber's case, due to opposing legislations. But also, when the availability of the services is not always congruent within the same country, being the differences most remarkable between rural and urban areas.

Respondents identified the lack of information about this alterative consumption approaches as a potential constraint to its adoption. However, recommendations from

social contacts and friends has proven to be essential in the decision of some regarding whether or not to sign up in shared economy platforms. Surprisingly, these types of endorsements can simultaneously be a solution and a drawback, since social connections can also provide information about simpler substitutes to the sharing platforms. To enumerate, some of the Ranzini (et al., 2017) focus group participants, stated that since they found informal alternatives to the collaborative platforms, they decreased their platform usage and started to share services or goods directly with their friends or relatives.

Identically, infringements to privacy were also identified as one of the key pitfalls of sharing economy platforms. This raised the question that some users desire to avoid the interaction with service providers on a personal level. Finally, findings seem to support that discrimination experiences plays a role in undermining Millennials participation in sharing-based platforms. Ranzini (et al., 2017) research appear to support that the assiduousness devoted in gathering, screening, and evaluating information, can lead to active race, gender, or sexual orientation discrimination, both of providers and of consumers.

Another key point raised by Ranzini (et al., 2017) is that most of the sharing economy Millennials consumers, do not tend to fully quit this type of platforms. Instead, some are likely to exit individual platform or simply switch, for economic motives, such as the increase of costs or decreased costs of a substitute.

### **3. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND HYPOTHESIS**

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Based on the literature review provided about consumers' perspective and consumption behavior regarding collaborative-based business models, conspicuous and status consumption, millennials and their relation with the mentioned, this chapter presents the conceptual model and the hypothesis tested in this research.

The current study analysis the impact of the type of collaborative consumption service (swapping versus renting) on consumers' likelihood to engage in collaborative ways of clothing consumption – LECC–, the main dependent variable. The independent variables are the type of service (rental versus swapping), the level of conspicuity of the individuals (high versus low) – CCO– and the type of occasion (special versus regular).

Existing research proposes the subsistence of an attitude behaviour gap, in what regards to consumers and clothing consumption preferences. According to Kang (et al. 2013), one of the barriers lays in consumer's desire to improve their self-image and also on the wish of showing others their status and distinctive taste, so that they can be associated with certain social groups. These strong wishes might even be influenced by social constructs, such as the dress code in specific circumstances. According to prior literature on conspicuous consumption (Binninger et al., 2015), there is an existent correlation between conspicuity and the likelihood to engage in alternative (collaborative) or traditional ways of consumption, especially when conspicuous reasons are involved. Therefore, the following hypotheses are suggested:

H1: People that engage in collaborative ways of consumption are more (less) willing to do so for ostentatious (modest) motivations.

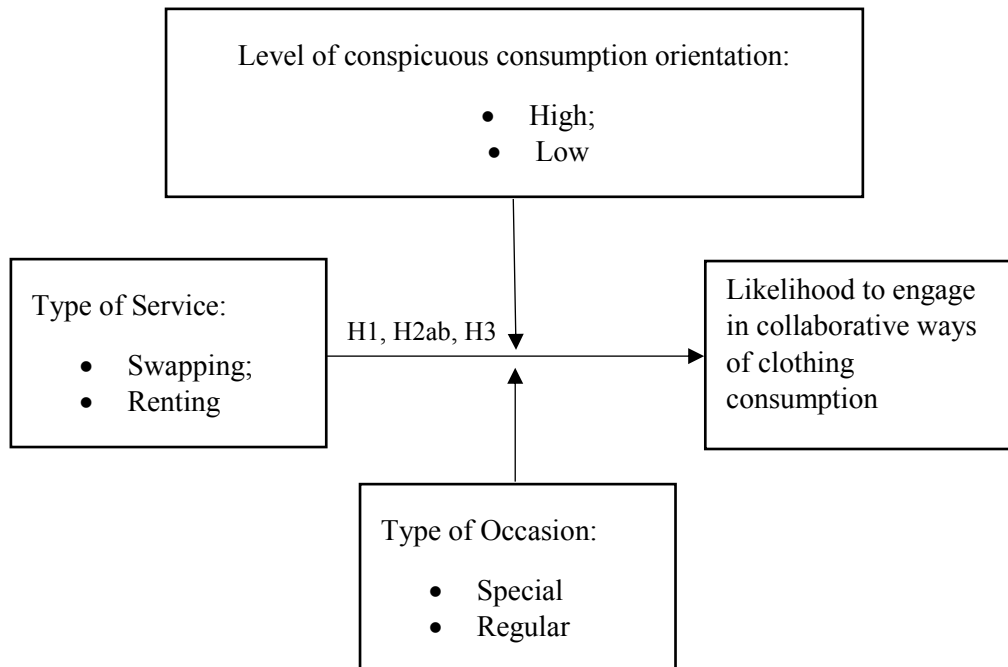
H2: The likelihood of engaging in collaborative ways of clothing consumption - LECC, namely through clothing rental or swapping services, will be moderated by an individual's conspicuous consumption orientation - CCO:

H2a: The higher the level of conspicuous consumption of an individual, the higher the likelihood to engage in collaborative ways of clothing consumption that involve renting than swapping services.

H2b: The lower the level of conspicuous consumption of an individual, the lower the likelihood to engage in either collaborative ways of clothing consumption.

Moreover, the different levels of conspicuity and response to different consumption scenarios are examined, to verify the effects of the moderator on the likelihood to engage in collaborative ways of consumption. While the field of social constructs, such as dress codes in formal versus regular situations has not yet come under sufficient exploration in literature, empirical evidence suggests that when individuals attend special events, specific dress codes are required, and they might induce the need to acquire new clothes.

H3: Consumers clothing alternative consumption decisions (swapping versus renting) will be moderated by both the type of occasion (special versus regular) and the individuals' conspicuous consumption orientation.



*Figure 1 Conceptual Framework*

The conceptual framework presented above proposes that conspicuous consumption orientation differences and type of occasion are likely to account for the moderating effects between the type of service and the likelihood to engage in collaborative ways of consumption (H1, H2ab, H3). These hypotheses are tested in the main study.

## 4. METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH FRAMEWORK

### 4.1. Research Method

Subsequent to examining secondary data, primary data was gathered to respond to the research purposes of the present study. The survey software used was Qualtrics, an online platform that enables to reach multiple individuals, with minor associated costs. Being extremely time efficient, this method of inquiring using an internet-based channel, allows instant access to a wide population. Correspondingly, it provides subjects with absolute

convenience and flexibility since they do not have to travel to a particular place and specific time to answer to the questionnaire. Likewise, it gives the participants equal chance to enter the survey and guarantees their privacy and personal boundaries, which is proven to optimise respondents' willingness to participate in online studies. However, there are risks associated with the use of online based surveys. In particular, the investigator cannot take control of the participants' focus and surroundings, either give very detailed directions. By the same token, this data-collection mechanism may frequently result in a sample of participants that is not archetypal of the target population (Ilieva et al., 2006).

To minimize these possible drawbacks on the survey used to carry on the present research, the questions were clear and focused precise arguments, to avoid misunderstandings and survey abandon.

#### **4.2. Sampling**

From all the sampling techniques available for the current study the convenience sampling method was adopted. Overall, it was especially selected due to the convenient approachability and to ease its accessibility to participants. This sampling procedure seemed also suitable since the analysis being conducted is a specific matter that are not yet expected to be generalized to the general population.

The survey was shared on social media apps and websites, including university Facebook and LinkedIn groups. Above all, because well-educated and tech-savvy people are assumed to be the ones more willing to engage in this type of consumption and shape the future patterns of consumption.

#### **4.3. Research instruments**

Two main studies were run using the previously mentioned online software, Qualtrics: a pilot and a main study. In both studies, subjects accessed the questionnaire either through an anonymous link or a QR code that was shared within different social media channels (Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter and blogs).

##### Pilot study:

Previous to the launching of the main study, a pilot study was tested to ensure that the manipulations and questions on the survey were properly understood by respondents. Also, due to the length of the survey, it was important to comprehend if subjects



maintained their focus and motivation throughout the entire questionnaire. This pilot study was simultaneously vital to verify if the flow of the survey was taken as planned for the various experimental conditions to be adopted in the main study: type of service and type of occasion. The pilot study included a total of 37 subjects, who did not participate in the main study.

#### Main study:

The main study gathered 270 responses, from which, 171 were fully complete. The completion rate is rather considerable, under the circumstances that participants get frequently interrupted and do not demonstrate sufficient commitment, while answering to online-based surveys (Reips, 2002).

The sample dimension was considered acceptable, with approximately 43 individuals participating in each cell of the four experimental conditions, following the required number of answers needed for a randomized experimental design-study (Maxwell & Delaney, 2004).

#### **4.4. Design and procedure**

All the data was gathered within the last two weeks of November, 2017. The 171 participants were firstly presented with a brief text clarifying the scope of the survey, however without revealing its main purpose and after they were randomly assigned to a particular condition. The study design followed a 2 (type of service: rental, swap) x 2 (conspicuous consumption orientation: high, low) x 2 (type of occasion: special, regular) between-within subject's design. Respondents were introduced to different manipulations that combined both service and occasion types, using fictional fashion service providers (BLAB and The Endless Closet), where the available clothing would be used on different occasions (being invited to a set of events in a month vs attending an Emmy's after party).

#### **4.5. Stimuli Development**

The stimuli used in this questionnaire were fictional fashion services' advertisement. Type of consumption (swapping versus rental) was chosen as it is of high importance to the current research and it is part of the sharing-based business model. In addition, a specific occasion (special versus regular occasion) was used since a large majority of people can personally relate to the topic due to its social nature.

Four variants of the advertisement were thus created to test four conditions: special x swapping; special x renting; regular x swapping; regular x renting, presented in a random order. In order to minimize differences between the groups, the advertisements had the same structure in common, the regular scenarios shared the same image and company's name, and so did the special occasions. However, the images and company names for the special and regular scenarios were divergent due to the contrasting nature of the occasions type (sophisticated versus regular), the information available was as similar as possible, since renting and swapping services share some differences.

#### **4.6. Variable Descriptions**

The great part of the dependent and independent variables was assessed after participants were exposed to the experimental manipulations, using a 7-point Likert scale (1- Not likely at all, 7- extremely likely), as described next.

##### *4.6.1. Dependent Variables*

*Likelihood to engage in collaborative ways of consumption - LECC*: was assessed by asking participants after seeing the fictional advertisement how likely they would rent or swap clothing to wear in the occasion they were exposed to.

##### *4.6.2. Independent Variables*

*Type of occasion - OCCASION*: this variable was divided into two categories, special versus regular occasion.

*Conspicuous consumption orientation – CCO*: was assessed by exposing consumers to conspicuous consumption orientation scale, adapted from Chaudhuri et al. (2011), using six items (e.g. I buy some products because, I want to show others that I am wealthy, and others enumerated in table 1, 1- disagree very strongly; 7- agree very strongly). A median split was performed to divide the sample in high and low conspicuous consumption orientation individuals (1 = high CCO; 0 = low CCO). The variable CCO was split for values below and above 3.83, the reported median value, exhibiting a total of 94 with low CCO and 74 with high CCO.

## 5. ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

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### 5.1. Sample Characterization

A descriptive statistical analysis was run with the intention of summarizing the attributes of the sample and check for equality among the four experimental conditions in terms of demographics.

The sample was composed of 171 participants, with a balanced number of women (53.2%) and men (46.8%). The citizenship distribution of the sample included subjects from more than 30 countries and displayed a majority of Portuguese participants (40.9%) followed by Germans (22.2%) and French (4.7%) subjects.

On the whole, age in the midst of participants ranged from 19 to 64 years old. The majority of the participants were between 19 to 24 years old (55.6%) and 25 to 34 years old (37.4%), which corresponds to approximately 93% of a sample comprised of Millennials. Concerning the educational level, the sample incorporates mainly individuals with an academic degree: the great majority of the sample holds a Bachelor's (52.6%) or a Master's degree (36.3%) and are currently studying (63.2%) or working (33.9%).

Finally, the annual income for most of the sample is below 10,000€ (42.1%), between 10,000 and 19,999€ (26.3%) or was indicated as unknown (10.5%). Please see appendix 3 for more comprehensive information and detailed graphics.

### 5.2 Data Screening Multivariate Outliers

A multivariate outlier analysis was performed to identify participants with unusual combinations in two or more variables. Correspondingly, a Mahalanobis distance was calculated for each respondent and responses in which this length was lower than a *p-value* of 0.001 were considered outliers. As a result, three multivariate outliers were identified among the participants and removed, leaving us with a sample of 171 subjects. Even though there is still debate within the literature regarding preserving or expunging outliers, the removal of these three participants from the study was considered the optimal solution for the current research (Barnett & Lewis, 1994; Judd & McClelland, 1989; Orr, Sackett & DuBois, 1991).

### 5.3. Scales Reliability

The conspicuous consumption orientation scale was adapted from Roy Chaudhuri, Mazumdar and Ghoshal (2011), however the Cronbach's alpha of each item was assessed

to assure internal accuracy of the scales with more than three items in specific context of the present study. Above all, this method was used due to its appropriateness to Likert-scales.

According to DeVillis (1991), Cronbach's alpha values lower than 0.6 are considerable unacceptable, being minimally satisfactory if they belong to the interval between 0.65 and 0.70. Additionally, alphas between 0.70 and 0.80 are considered good and values between 0.80 and 0.90 very good.

Chaudhuri, Mazumdar, and Ghoshal (2016) scale had a Cronbach's alpha between 0.80 and 0.90 (see table 1), however the results demonstrated that its alpha could be improved. For the purpose of obtaining an optimized internal legitimacy, the items 4 and 1 were deleted (see table 3). Similarly, Gullstrand Edbring, Lehner and Mont (2016) scale obtained a Cronbach's alpha equal to 0.823, which could be improved to a value equal to 0.852 if items 1 and 2 were deleted (please see tables 2 and 3)

**Table 1** *Conspicuous Consumption Orientation Scale Items*

| Item | Item description   |
|------|--|
| 1    | I buy some products because I want to show others that I am wealthy                        |
| 2    | By choosing a product having unique characteristics, I show my friends that I am different |
| 3    | I choose products or brands to create my own style that everyone admires                   |
| 4    | I always buy top-of-line products  |
| 5    | I want to show others that I enjoy being original  |
| 6    | I like to show others that I am sophisticated  |

**Table 2** *Reliability Test for Multi-Item Scales*

| Scale                               | Initial number of items | Cronbach's alpha | Cronbach's alpha if items deleted | Items deleted | Final number of items |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------|------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------|-----------------------|
| Conspicuous consumption orientation | 6                       | 0.853            | 0.8666                            | 2             | 4                     |

## 5.4. Main Results

### 5.4.1. The Conspicuity Effect

**H1: People that engage in collaborative ways of consumption are more (less) willing to do so for ostentatious (modest) motivations.**

To understand the effect of conspicuous consumption orientation – CCO – influence on the likelihood of engaging in collaborative ways of clothing consumption - LEEC, an independent samples t-test was performed. Results show that there were no statistically significant differences in the means, especially between low and high conspicuity individuals with regard to their tendency to undertake alternative ways of clothing consumption, such as, rentals and swapping services ( $M_{\text{High CCO, LEEC}} = 3.74$  vs  $M_{\text{Low CCO, LEEC}} = 3.48$ ;  $t(166) = -0.866$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ).

*Table 3 Results of the Independent Samples t-tests*

| Dependent Variable                                      | Low Conspicuity<br>n=94 |       | High Conspicuity<br>n=74 |       | t-test |
|---|-------------------------|-------|--------------------------|-------|--------|
|   | Mean                    | SD    | Mean                     | SD    |        |
| Likelihood to engage in alternative ways of consumption | 3.48                    | 1.796 | 3.74                     | 1.824 | -.866  |

Note: \*\*\* $p < .001$ , \*\* $p < 0.1$ , \* $p < 0.05$

Findings obtained from both sample *t-tests* were incommensurate to indicate that conspicuous motives are at the centre of consumers' incentives to engage in collaborative ways of consumption, leading to reject H1. Further analyses were needed to confirm and verify where exactly significant differences could be found, as such H2ab and H3 were conducted.

## 5.4.2. The Moderating Effect of Conspicuity

**H2: The likelihood of engaging in collaborative ways of clothing consumption - LECC, namely through clothing rental or swapping services, will be moderated by an individual's conspicuous consumption orientation - CCO:**

**H2a: The higher the level of conspicuous consumption of an individual, the higher the likelihood to engage in collaborative ways of clothing consumption that involve renting than swapping services.**

**H2b: The lower the level of conspicuous consumption of an individual, the lower the likelihood to engage in either collaborative ways of clothing consumption.**

**Table 4** Results from a Two-Way Interaction between Conspicuous Consumption and Service Type

|             | Low Conspicuity |                 | High Conspicuity |                 | Service type main effect | Conspicuous Consumption Orientation Main effect | Service type X Conspicuous Consumption Orientation |
|-------------|-----------------|-----------------|------------------|-----------------|--------------------------|---|--|
|             | <i>Swapping</i> | <i>Renting</i>  | <i>Swapping</i>  | <i>Renting</i>  | <i>F test</i>            | <i>F test</i>                                   | <i>F test</i>                                      |
| N=168       | n=62            | n=52            | n=25             | n=29            |                          |   |  |
| <i>LECC</i> | 3.52<br>(1.808) | 3.44<br>(1.798) | 3.08<br>(1.525)  | 4.31<br>(1.892) | 3.838                    | 0.535   | 4.880*   |

Note: \*\*\* $p < .001$ , \*\* $p < 0.1$ , \* $p < 0.05$

To test the hypothesis two where it is predicted that the likelihood of engaging in collaborative ways of clothing consumption (renting versus swapping), will be moderated by an individual's conspicuous consumption orientation, an analysis of variance (ANOVA) was carried out on both dependent variables.

A significant interaction effect between service type and conspicuous consumption orientation was found ( $F(1,64)=4.880, p<0.05$ ) suggesting the potential moderating effect of conspicuous consumption orientation.

While testing H2a, results indicate that participants with high conspicuity levels report a higher likelihood to engage in renting services than swapping services ( $M_{\text{HighCCO, Renting}}=4.31$  vs  $M_{\text{LowCCO, Renting}}=3.44$ ;  $t(79)=-2.045, p<0.05$ ;  $M_{\text{HighCCO, Renting}}=4.31$  vs  $M_{\text{HighCCO, Swapping}}=3.08$ ;  $t(112)=-0.218, p<0.05$ ), fully supporting H2a.

Further tests were conducted to analyze H2b and findings indicate that low conspicuity influences individuals' likelihood to engage in swapping services. Consequently, this result does not fully support H2b, which states that individuals with lower levels of conspicuity are less likely to engage in either ways of collaborative clothing consumption. In fact, they prefer a specific type of collaborative consumption as stated above. To clarify, differences were found between individuals with high and low conspicuity regarding the likelihood to engage in swapping alternatives ( $M_{\text{HighCCO, Swapping}}=3.08$  vs  $M_{\text{LowCCO, Swapping}}=3.52$ ;  $t(85)=1.062, p>0.05$  vs  $M_{\text{LowCCO, Renting}}=3.44$   $t(85)=1.062, p>0.05$ ). Results indicate that low conspicuity individuals are more willing to engage in swapping services than individuals with high conspicuous consumption levels. Additionally, regarding low conspicuity subjects these are more likely to engage in swapping than renting services.

Our findings suggest interesting opportunities for research since they show that individuals with high conspicuous orientation levels are willing to engage in renting services and swapping services are more likely to be engaged by people with low conspicuity levels, showing that conspicuity orientation is a relevant factor in people's resolutions and people with different conspicuous consumption orientation take different consumption decisions (see table 4).

According to Land and Armstrong (2018) a potential reason for why individuals with low conspicuous consumption orientation are not willing to engage in rentals might be the combination of different aspects that affects one's decision making, pointing out as an illustration the fact that consumers with low conspicuous consumption orientation do not desire to pay a fee and prefer to swap clothing items instead, contrary to individuals with high conspicuous consumption orientation.

## 5.4.3. The Moderating Effects of Conspicuity and Occasion

**H3: Consumers clothing alternative consumption decisions (swapping versus renting) will be moderated by both the type of occasion (special versus regular) and the individuals' conspicuous consumption orientation.**

In order to test hypothesis 3, a 2 (type of occasion) x 2 (type of service) x 2 (level of conspicuous consumption orientation) a multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was analysed. No significant three-way interaction effect was found on the likelihood to engage in alternative ways of clothing consumption, ( $F(1,1) = 0.003, p > 0.05$ ), not supporting H3.

Despite the non-significance predicted in hypothesis three, our results show a relevant finding related with people's individual differences, which is their conspicuous consumption orientation that is leading them to consider alternative consumption services as a potential and a substitute to actual purchases. Also, MANOVA results show that the type of occasion does not play a moderating role on people's decisions to engage in collaborative ways of consumption, an additional test was conducted to test this variable as an independent variable. According to the literature on conspicuous and collaborative consumption, sophistication is a driving force for consumers to engage in these alternatives (Niinimäki, 2010). Moreover, we wanted to explore more in depth the moderating role of conspicuous consumption orientation, testing this time its role as mediator variable. Additionally, we tested the mediation effect of conspicuous consumption orientation has on the relationship between the type of occasion has on people's collaborative consumption decisions.

**Table 5** The Impact of Conspicuous Consumption Orientation Level and Type of Occasion on Clothing Consumption Method Decision

|         | Occasion<br>Main<br>effect | Type<br>of<br>service<br>Main<br>effect | CCO<br>Level<br>Main<br>effect | Occasion<br>X<br>Type of<br>service | Occasion<br>X<br>CCO<br>Level | CCO<br>Level<br>X<br>Type of<br>service | Occasion<br>X<br>CCO Level<br>X<br>Type of service |
|---------|----------------------------|---|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------|---|--|
| (N=168) | <i>F test</i>              | <i>F test</i>                           | <i>F test</i>                  | <i>F test</i>                       | <i>F test</i>                 | <i>F test</i>                           | <i>F test</i>                                      |
| LECC    | 0.102                      | 3.830                                   | 0.394                          | 0.051                               | 0.003                         | 4.411*                                  | 0.707  |

Note: \*\*\* $p < .001$ , \*\* $p < 0.1$ , \* $p < 0.05$

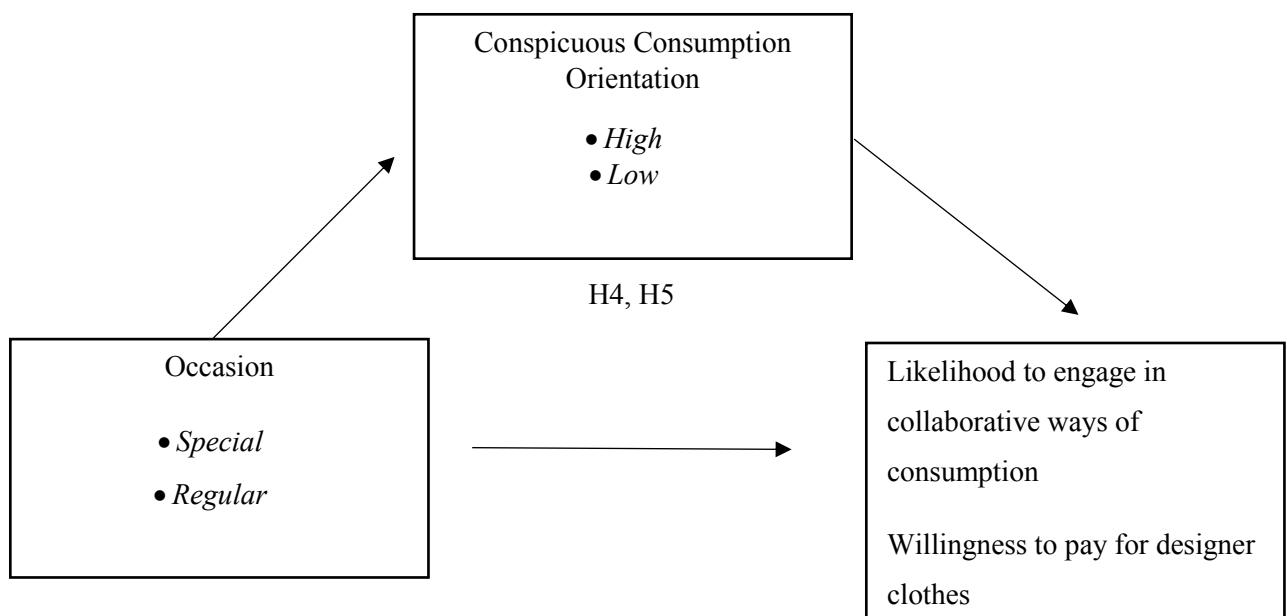


#### 5.4.5. Further Analysis

Further analyses were run to understand the relationship between occasion type and the likelihood to engage in conspicuous consumption through conspicuous consumption orientation. As such, a mediation analyses were performed to test the effect of conspicuity on: a.) the relationship between the consumption occasion (special versus regular) and b.) the likelihood to engage in collaborative ways of clothing consumption through conspicuous consumption orientation – our mediator. Further we tested the aforementioned mediation effect on a second dependent variable, namely on c.) on people’s willingness to pay for designer clothes.

More formally, two additional hypotheses are thus, proposed:

**H4: Individuals’ conspicuous consumption orientation levels will mediate the relationship between the consumption occasion (special or regular) and the likelihood to engage in collaborative ways of clothing consumption.**



**Figure 2 Conceptual Model 2**

The conceptual framework presented above proposes that in different occasions (special versus regular) the likelihood to engage in collaborative ways of consumption will be mediated by consumers’ conspicuous consumption orientation differences (H4).

**H5: Individuals' conspicuous consumption orientation levels will mediate the relationship between the consumption occasion (special versus regular) and their willingness to pay for designer clothes.**

Hypothesis 5 includes a dependent variable that was not introduced previously:

*Willingness to pay for designer clothes - WTP:* participants were asked how much they would be willing to pay for clothes, from 0 to 500€.

Accordingly, the conceptual framework presented on figure 2 suggests that in different occasions (special versus regular) the willingness to pay for designer clothes will be mediated by consumers' conspicuous consumption orientation differences (H5).

To test hypothesis 4, a simple mediation analysis was conducted (Hayes, 2013). Regarding H4, the bootstrap analysis ((Hayes 2013 2015), model 4) reveals that the conspicuous consumption orientation of individuals indeed mediates the effect of the consumption occasion on the type of clothing consumption method adopted. Testing of conditional indirect effects (based on 5000 bootstraps) reveals that conspicuous consumption orientation mediates the effect of the consumption occasion on the likelihood of adoption of collaborative ways of clothing consumption demonstrated to be significant (indirect effect = -0.1386, SE=0.0775,  $p < 0.05$ , 95% CI = [-0.3129, -0.0128]), proving statistical evidence consistent with H4.

Similarly, to H4, to test hypothesis 5, a simple mediation analysis was also performed (Hayes, 2013). A bootstrap analysis ((Hayes 201, 2015), model 4) was completed and revealed that the conspicuous consumption orientation of individuals also mediates the effect of the consumption occasion on people's willingness to purchase designer clothes (indirect effect= -9.0131, SE=5.3370,  $p < 0.05$ , 95% CI = [-21.1520, -0.7287]), fully supporting H5.

Accordingly, a potential reason for why individuals with low conspicuous consumption orientation are less willing to engage in rentals might be the combination of different aspects that affects one's decision making, pointing out as an illustration the fact that consumers with low conspicuous consumption orientation do not desire to pay a fee and prefer to swap clothing items instead, contrary to individuals with high conspicuous consumption orientation. These findings are in line with Niinimäki (2010) and Land and

Armstrong (2018) conclusions, regarding individuals with high conspicuity predisposition to access sophisticated products and to pay the premium for accessing it.

Our mediation results show interesting findings and directions for individuals with lower conspicuity levels. The results demonstrate that the lower the conspicuous consumption orientation, the lower will be their likelihood to engage in collaborative ways of consumption and, simultaneously, their willingness to pay for designer clothes.

*Table 6 Mediation Role of Conspicuous Consumption*

| <b>Outcome</b> | <b>Indirect effect paths</b>                             | <b>Indirect effect</b> | <b>Lower CI</b> | <b>Upper CI</b> |
|----------------|--|------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| 1              | Occasion → CCO → LECC                                    | -0.1386                | -0.3129         | -0.0128         |
| 2              | Occasion → CCO → Willingness to pay for designer clothes | -9.0131                | -21.1520        | -0.7287         |

## 6. CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

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The present research focused on new consumption patterns within the *Fashion* industry, recognized for enabling the access to goods without implying its ownership, more specifically collaborative ways of consumption, such as clothing swaps and rentals. In similar manner, individual traits' like conspicuous consumption orientation were carefully studied and demonstrated to be equally important for this research. Conspicuity has proven to be a powerful drive for enhancing the engagement of consumers in collaborative based business models.

The present paper findings suggest that conspicuity orientation can be a significant stimulus and play a mediation effect on the adoption of collaborative ways of consumption. This is to say, consumers with high levels of conspicuity see in collaborative consumption the opportunity to fulfil their ostentatious needs, especially because of the convenience and high accessibility to online sharing platforms, while simultaneously have the opportunity to access larger assortment of clothing with no significant costs, even though they are willing to pay a premium to access to renting services, contrary to low conspicuity individuals. This supports previous research on the relationship between conspicuous consumption orientation and the Sharing Economy (Veblen, 1899; Bourdieu 1979; Bardhi, 2012), especially, in what regards to Millennials consumers (Ranzini et al., 2017). In fact, particularly about the Millennials who grew up in the recession and are economically-minded, who increasingly value the experiences and access over the ownership of goods, some of these characteristics that explain their high interest in these consumption alternatives, that are often associated with free or low access fees services.

Further analysis was made to verify the indirect impact of social constructs on consumers decisions. In particular, concerning conspicuous consumption and regular and special events. In fact, the relation demonstrated to be strong, especially in what regards to the willingness to pay for designer clothes. These findings confirm previous research observations, in what regards to individuals' willingness to pay for designer clothes. Various authors (Fang et al., 2012; Power & Hauge, 2008; Escalas & Bettman, 2005; Belk, 1988; Richins, 1994a; Ger & Belk, 1996; Perez et al., 2010) suggest that this consumption pattern is a consequence of the conception of individuals self-concepts and identity. Brands are used to design, improve and preserve their identities (Phillips, 2003). Additionally, results not often were in line with the adoption of collaborative ways of

consumption, which can be explained by the importance inherent to the possession factor, which is supported by literature (Belk, 1988; Väistö, 2009). For individuals with high levels of conspicuousness, possessions tend to be important for the consumer's sense of self and become an extension on themselves.

### **6.1. Theoretical Implications**

The current dissertation contributes to literature on Conspicuous Consumption Orientation (Noble et al., 2009; Eastman et al., 1999), Collaborative Consumption (Gullstrand Edbing, Lehner, & Mont, 2016; Lejeune, 2016; Ranzini et al., 2017; Roos et al., 2015), and Consumer Behaviour (Ranzini et al., 2017; Moore & Carpenter, 2008), within the *Fashion* industry.

Mostly, the current study findings explore the connection between collaborative consumption and Millennials consumer behavior, even though the target of the present research was not a population segment in specific. Surprisingly, the extremely high response rate from Millennials (more than 90% of the random sample) adds contributions to previous research on this cohort consumer behavior. In fact, results suggest that Millennials are highly acknowledge about Sharing and Collaborative Economy platforms, being heavy users of technology and online platforms, which integrate this alternative business model. In this way, we add value to the literature about this digital native population segment regarding alternative ways of consumption (Bess and Bartolini, 2011; Norum 2003). As a matter of fact, results are in line with the previous research (Klein & Smart, 2017; Maycotte, 2015; Xu, Johnson, Bartholomae, O'Neill, & Gutter, 2015). Ranzini (et al., 2017) has demonstrated that Millennials are less and less likely to be good owners and are more inclined to take different alternatives than ownership.

Furthermore, the current research outcomes, that endeavors to understand the impact of collaborative consumption and conspicuous consumption orientation on consumers consumption decisions, go in line with the studies of Godelnik (2017), Kang (et al., 2013), Joergens (2006); Niinimäki (2010), Ranzini (et al., 2017) and Yan (et al., 2012).

## 6.2. Practical Implications

*“The end of conspicuous consumption is a false thing”*

*Richard Dobbs, senior partner at McKinsey & Company*

On balance, the key takeaways of this thesis are:

1. Conspicuous consumption orientation plays an important role in consumers consumption decisions;
2. Consumers with high levels of conspicuity are more willing to engage in monetarized collaborative consumption alternatives, such as renting clothes;
3. Consumers with low levels of conspicuity are more willing to engage in non-monetarized collaborative consumption alternatives, such as swapping clothes;
4. Individuals' conspicuous consumption orientation levels mediates the relationship between consumption occasions (special versus regular) and the likelihood to engage in collaborative ways of clothing consumption (renting versus swapping);
5. The majority of those consumers are the Millennials cohort;

Sustainability, undoubtedly, at the moment, plays a central role in almost every area of life, not only in the private context, but as well as in Business. Even though consumers are concerned with the social and environmental impact of *Fashion* mass producers, and the consequences of their excessive and mindless consumption, there is still a gap between their interests of becoming more sustainable and their personal needs. This study suggests sharing economy-based platforms as an alternative to narrow consumer's attitude-behaviour gap and as a substitute to conventional businesses for consumers who seek for low-pollution and more human oriented business models.

This study provides marketers and collaborative consumption platforms managers with important implications regarding the significance consumers give to their conspicuity orientation, on their clothing consumption decision making. As the present study indicates, the level of conspicuous consumption orientation is a favourably influential factor on the adoption of low-carbon and socially-oriented economic systems, to demonstrate findings suggest that there is a strong connection between the level of conspicuous consumption orientation and the type of collaborative service chosen. Indeed, individuals with higher conspicuous consumption orientation are more likely to pay a premium to access to rented conspicuous goods, contrary to low conspicuous consumption-oriented individuals who are more comfortable with swapping.

Therefore, economy and products with outstanding qualities and aesthetics, should be attributes taken into account when communicating to consumers, especially to Millennials. Greater attention should also be paid to collaborative consumption in the *Fashion* context, especially due to the predicted growth of shared economy-based business models. To emphasize, as aforementioned Pricewaterhouse Coopers predicts that by 2025, this business platforms will generate around \$335 billion in annual revenue (Sherman, 2017). Additionally, Millennials consumer behaviour is changing dramatically. Collaborative ways of consumption are becoming a preferable option to traditional buying, which deserves increasing attention due to the leading and trendsetting power Millennials have.

## 7. LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

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Even though the present research provides an essential understanding of the collaborative consumption platforms as an optimistic solution for closing the attitude-behavior gap in the adoption of sustainable consumption alternatives of consuming *Fashion* and how to possibly defeat the ethical and environmental problems generated by this industry, there are still limitations that need to be taken into account.

Firstly, the research instrument utilized, a questionnaire, was distributed on Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter and blogs, making it challenging for a researcher to control under what circumstances participants were responding to the survey (degree of focus, dedicated time, commitment to answer with honesty, etc.). Accordingly, the use of online surveys is supposed to give more privacy to the participants and with that they should be more suitable for intimate or sensitive topics (Evans & Mathur, 2005), however it is believed that intentions rather than actual behaviors are often stated (Carrington et al., 2010), what frequently suggests vulnerability to social desirability bias (Antonetti & Maklan, 2010; Martinho, Pires, Portela, & Fonseca, 2015). Even though, the questionnaire design already tried to reduce social desirability bias (e.g. by asking hypothetically how they would react), it still constitutes a limitation of the methodology used and might clarify the results. Additionally, the intense advertisement of the survey on online based platforms and the specialty of the topic might have caused lack of interest on participants, lead to a small sample. Indeed, a big sample could possibly improve the significance of the questionnaire.

A further limitation that deserves to be mentioned is the high level of Millennials participation on the survey (above 90%), which could represent a single-sided view regarding this generation on the topic of Collaborative Consumption in the *Fashion* industry. Even though, it is highly suggested by the literature and by market research that Millennials show great interest in these platform, consequently it is not possible to make broader conclusions for the general population.

Despite of the concentrated investigation and increasing interest in the topic of the Sharing Economy and Collaborative Consumption there is still lack of detailed research in what regards to the *Fashion* industry. In facts, previous research has not yet established



a profound understanding of the direct or indirect effects of conspicuous consumption orientation on specific collaborative consumption behaviour within the *Fashion* industry.

To conclude, these topics deserve undoubtedly special attention and further investigation due to their increasing expansion and their consequences in consumption patterns, since more than ever the contemporary society focus is being access-based, instead of owner-based.

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## 8. APPENDICES

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### Appendix 1: Stimuli

#### Appendix 1a: Swapping X Regular

Imagine that you are invited to a set of events in a month. You suddenly realize that you are in need of something to wear for the occasions. BLAB, is a clothing swapping service that offers a number of outfit options, which you can swap with your own clothes (exchanging at no cost). They also offer the possibility for you to buy the clothing. Check their AD:



Swap or buy clothing for women and men.  
Delivery in 1 to 2 working days.  
ALL INCLUDED SERVICE.


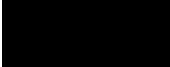


This section seeks to understand your opinion concerning your intentions and likelihood of swapping and buying Fashion Clothes and Accessories.

1. Are you into Fashion?
  - 1 = Not at all
  - 2
  - 3
  - 4 = Neither or in to Fashion
  - 5
  - 6
  - 7 = Very much

2. How likely would you swap clothing for the occasions from a clothing swap service?
  - 1 = Extremely unlikely
  - 2 = Moderately unlikely
  - 3 = Slightly unlikely
  - 4 = Neither likely nor unlikely
  - 5 = Slightly likely
  - 6 = Moderately likely
  - 7 = Extremely likely
  
3. How likely would you swap clothing with family or friends for the occasions (no swap service involved)?
  - 1 = Extremely unlikely
  - 2 = Moderately unlikely
  - 3 = Slightly unlikely
  - 4 = Neither likely nor unlikely
  - 5 = Slightly likely
  - 6 = Moderately likely
  - 7 = Extremely likely
  
4. How likely would you buy clothing for the occasions?
  - 1 = Extremely unlikely
  - 2 = Moderately unlikely
  - 3 = Slightly unlikely
  - 4 = Neither likely nor unlikely
  - 5 = Slightly likely
  - 6 = Moderately likely
  - 7 = Extremely likely

5. How much would you be willing to pay for clothing for the occasions? Express below the value in euros (€).

|                                      |   |  |      |
|--------------------------------------|---|--|------|
| Designer clothes (e.g. Ralph Lauren) | 0 |  | 500€ |
| Non-designer clothes                 | 0 |  | 500€ |

In this section we would like to know how frequently do you swap and buy products or services, in general? (For instance, swapping clothes with your simblings, exchanging language knowledge)

6. How often do you swap products or services with family or friends?

- 1 = Once a week
- 2 = Every two weeks
- 3 = Once a month
- 4 = Every two months
- 5 = Twice a year
- 6 = Seldom
- 7 = Never

7. How often do you swap products or services with strangers?

- 1 = Once a week
- 2 = Every two weeks
- 3 = Once a month
- 4 = Every two months
- 5 = Twice a year
- 6 = Seldom
- 7 = Never

8. How often do you swap clothes?

- 1 = Once a week
- 2 = Every two weeks
- 3 = Once a month
- 4 = Every two months
- 5 = Twice a year
- 6 = Seldom
- 7 = Never

9. How often do you buy clothes?

- 1 = Once a week
- 2 = Every two weeks
- 3 = Once a month
- 4 = Every two months
- 5 = Twice a year
- 6 = Seldom
- 7 = Never
- 

The following section was only shown to respondents that: answered above 5 (slightly likely) on questions 2 and 3 and to respondents that answered an option different from 7 (never) on questions 7 and 8.

10. Please let us know which sentence(s) describes you or your opinion(s) concerning swapping Fashion goods.

|            |            |            |           |         |          |          |
|------------|------------|------------|-----------|---------|----------|----------|
| 1=Disagree | 2=Disagree | 3=Disagree | 4=Neither | 5=Agree | 6=Agree  | 7=Agree  |
| very       | strongly   |            | agree or  |         | strongly | very     |
| strongly   |            |            | disagree  |         |          | strongly |

I trust the person  
that I am  
swapping  
with

I trust the  
company/platform  
I swap products  
with

Swapping is a nice  
way to access  
products that I  
don't have and are  
expensive to buy

I enjoy swapping  
products because  
it

does less harm to  
the environment

I enjoy swapping  
because I can  
access ethical and  
sustainable  
products

I enjoy swapping  
multiple articles,  
to  
communicate to  
others my  
distinctive taste,  
uniqueness and  
self-image

I enjoy swapping  
multiple branded  
articles

11. While swapping which factors are the most important to you: Please rank from the most important (1) to the least important (5)

- The access to a larger assortment of products
- For economic concerns
- For environmental concerns
- To access to a community of people with the same beliefs
- To show others my distinctive image

The following section was only shown to respondents that: answered below 5 (slightly likely) on questions 2 and 3 and to respondents that answered 7 (never) on questions 7 and 8.

12. Please let us know which sentence(s) describes you or your opinion the best, regarding your reasons for not swapping

|            |            |            |           |         |          |          |
|------------|------------|------------|-----------|---------|----------|----------|
| 1=Disagree | 2=Disagree | 3=Disagree | 4=Neither | 5=Agree | 6=Agree  | 7=Agree  |
| very       | strongly   |            | agree or  |         | strongly | very     |
| strongly   |            |            | disagree  |         |          | strongly |

I am concerned about the products' hygiene

I would never Swap articles

With someone I don't trust

I would never swap with a company, without clear rules associated with the swapping system

I prefer buying Something cheap in a Fast Fashion store

## Appendix 1b: Swapping X Special

Imagine that you are invited to an event such as the **Emmy's after party**. You suddenly realize that you are in need of something to wear for the occasion. *Endless Closet*, is a clothing swapping service that offers a number of designer outfit options, which you can swap with your own clothes (exchanging at no cost). They also offer the possibility for you to buy the clothing. Check their AD:



This section seeks to understand your opinion concerning your intentions and likelihood of swapping and buying Fashion Clothes and Accessories for special occasions.

1. Are you into Fashion?
  - 1 = Not at all
  - 2
  - 3
  - 4 = Neither or in to Fashion
  - 5
  - 6
  - 7 = Very much



2. How likely would you swap clothing for a special occasion from a clothing swap service?

- 1 = Extremely unlikely
- 2 = Moderately unlikely
- 3 = Slightly unlikely
- 4 = Neither likely nor unlikely
- 5 = Slightly likely
- 6 = Moderately likely
- 7 = Extremely likely


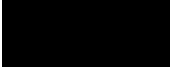
3. How likely would you swap clothing with family or friends for a special occasion (no swap service involved) ?

- 1 = Extremely unlikely
- 2 = Moderately unlikely
- 3 = Slightly unlikely
- 4 = Neither likely nor unlikely
- 5 = Slightly likely
- 6 = Moderately likely
- 7 = Extremely likely

4. How likely would you buy clothing for a special occasion?

- 1 = Extremely unlikely
- 2 = Moderately unlikely
- 3 = Slightly unlikely
- 4 = Neither likely nor unlikely
- 5 = Slightly likely
- 6 = Moderately likely
- 7 = Extremely likely

5. How much would you be willing to pay for clothing for a special occasion?  
Express below the value in euros (€).

|                                      |   |  |      |
|--------------------------------------|---|--|------|
| Designer clothes (e.g. Ralph Lauren) | 0 |  | 500€ |
| Non-designer clothes                 | 0 |  | 500€ |

In this section we would like to know how frequently do you swap and buy products or services, in general? (For instance, swapping clothes with your simblings, exchanging language knowledge)

6. How often do you swap products or services with family or friends?

- 1 = Once a week
- 2 = Every two weeks
- 3 = Once a month
- 4 = Every two months
- 5 = Twice a year
- 6 = Seldom
- 7 = Never

7. How often do you swap products or services with strangers?

- 1 = Once a week
- 2 = Every two weeks
- 3 = Once a month
- 4 = Every two months
- 5 = Twice a year
- 6 = Seldom
- 7 = Never

8. How often do you swap clothes?

- 1 = Once a week
- 2 = Every two weeks
- 3 = Once a month
- 4 = Every two months
- 5 = Twice a year
- 6 = Seldom
- 7 = Never

9. How often do you buy clothes?

- 1 = Once a week
- 2 = Every two weeks
- 3 = Once a month
- 4 = Every two months
- 5 = Twice a year
- 6 = Seldom
- 7 = Never

The following section was only shown to respondents that: answered above 5 (slightly likely) on questions 2 and 3 and to respondents that answered an option different from 7 (never) on questions 7 and 8.

10. Please let us know which sentence(s) describes you or your opinion(s) concerning swapping Fashion goods.

|            |            |            |           |         |          |          |
|------------|------------|------------|-----------|---------|----------|----------|
| 1=Disagree | 2=Disagree | 3=Disagree | 4=Neither | 5=Agree | 6=Agree  | 7=Agree  |
| very       | strongly   |            | agree or  |         | strongly | very     |
| strongly   |            |            | disagree  |         |          | strongly |

I trust the person  
that I am  
swapping  
with

I trust the  
company/platform  
I swap products  
with

Swapping is a nice  
way to access  
products that I  
don't have and are  
expensive to buy

I enjoy swapping  
products because  
it

does less harm to  
the environment

I enjoy swapping  
because I can  
access ethical and  
sustainable  
products

I enjoy swapping  
multiple articles,  
to  
communicate to  
others my  
distinctive taste,  
uniqueness and  
self-image

I enjoy swapping  
multiple branded  
articles

11. While swapping which factors are the most important to you: Please rank from the most important (1) to the least important (5)

- The access to a larger assortment of products
- For economic concerns
- For environmental concerns
- To access to a community of people with the same beliefs
- To show others my distinctive image

The following section was only shown to respondents that: answered below 5 (slightly likely) on questions 2 and 3 and to respondents that answered 7 (never) on questions 7 and 8.

12. Please let us know which sentence(s) describes you or your opinion the best, regarding your reasons for not swapping

|            |            |            |           |         |          |          |
|------------|------------|------------|-----------|---------|----------|----------|
| 1=Disagree | 2=Disagree | 3=Disagree | 4=Neither | 5=Agree | 6=Agree  | 7=Agree  |
| very       | strongly   |            | agree or  |         | strongly | very     |
|            | strongly   |            | disagree  |         |          | strongly |

I am concerned about the products' hygiene

I would never Swap articles

With someone I don't trust

I would never swap with a company, without clear rules associated with the swapping system

I prefer buying Something cheap in a Fast Fashion store

### Appendix 1c: Renting X Regular

Imagine that you are invited to a set of events in a month. You suddenly realize that you are in need of something to wear for the occasions. BLAB, is a clothing rental service that offers a number of outfit options. They also offer the possibility to buy the clothing. Check their AD:



Rent or buy clothing for women and men.  
Delivery in 1 to 2 working days.  
ALL INCLUDED SERVICE.  
Insurance for spills and minor damages.  
FREE dry cleaning.

GET YOURS TODAY


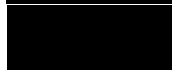
This section seeks to understand your opinion concerning your intentions and likelihood of renting and buying Fashion Clothes and Accessories.

1. Are you into Fashion?
  - 1 = Not at all
  - 2
  - 3
  - 4 = Neither or in to Fashion
  - 5
  - 6
  - 7 = Very much

2. How likely would you rent clothing for the occasions from a clothing **rental service**?

- 1 = Extremely unlikely
- 2 = Moderately unlikely
- 3 = Slightly unlikely
- 4 = Neither likely nor unlikely
- 5 = Slightly likely
- 6 = Moderately likely
- 7 = Extremely likely



3. How much would you be willing to **pay for the rental** of clothing for the occasions? Express bellow the value in euros (€).

|                                      |   |   |      |
|--------------------------------------|---|---|------|
| Designer clothes (e.g. Ralph Lauren) | 0 |   | 500€ |
| Non-designer clothes                 | 0 |  | 500€ |

4. How likely would you **buy** clothing for a special occasion?

- 1 = Extremely unlikely
- 2 = Moderately unlikely
- 3 = Slightly unlikely
- 4 = Neither likely nor unlikely
- 5 = Slightly likely
- 6 = Moderately likely
- 7 = Extremely likely

5. How much would you be willing to **pay** for clothing for the occasions? Express bellow the value in euros (€).

|                                      |   |  |      |
|--------------------------------------|---|--|------|
| Designer clothes (e.g. Ralph Lauren) | 0 |  | 500€ |
| Non-designer clothes                 | 0 |  | 500€ |

In this section we would like to know how frequently do you rent and buy products or services, in general? (For instance, paying your Netflix subscription or renting an Airbnb accommodation)

6. How often do you rent products or services?

- 1 = Once a week
- 2 = Every two weeks
- 3 = Once a month
- 4 = Every two months
- 5 = Twice a year
- 6 = Seldom
- 7 = Never

7. How often do you rent clothes?

- 1 = Once a week
- 2 = Every two weeks
- 3 = Once a month
- 4 = Every two months
- 5 = Twice a year
- 6 = Seldom
- 7 = Never

8. How often do you buy clothes?

- 1 = Once a week
- 2 = Every two weeks
- 3 = Once a month
- 4 = Every two months
- 5 = Twice a year
- 6 = Seldom
- 7 = Never



The following section was only shown to respondents that: answered above 5 (slightly likely) on questions 2 and 3 and to respondents that answered an option different from 7 (never) on questions 7 and 8.

9. Please let us know which sentence(s) describes you or your opinion(s) concerning swapping Fashion goods.

|            |            |            |           |         |          |          |
|------------|------------|------------|-----------|---------|----------|----------|
| 1=Disagree | 2=Disagree | 3=Disagree | 4=Neither | 5=Agree | 6=Agree  | 7=Agree  |
| very       | strongly   |            | agree or  |         | strongly | very     |
| strongly   |            |            | disagree  |         |          | strongly |

I trust the **person**  
that I am renting  
from

I trust the  
**company/platform**

I rent my products  
from

Renting is a nice  
way to access  
products that I  
don't have and are  
expensive to buy

I enjoy renting  
products because it  
does less harm to  
the environment

I enjoy renting  
because I can  
access ethical and  
sustainable  
products

I enjoy renting  
multiple articles, to  
communicate to  
others my  
distinctive taste,  
uniqueness and  
self-image

I enjoy renting  
multiple branded  
articles

10. While renting which factors are the most important to you: Please rank from the most important (1) to the least important (5)

- The access to a larger assortment of products
- For economic concerns
- For environmental concerns
- To access to a community of people with the same beliefs
- To show others my distinctive image

The following section was only shown to respondents that: answered below 5 (slightly likely) on questions 2 and 3 and to respondents that answered 7 (never) on questions 7 and 8.

11. Please let us know which sentence(s) describes you or your opinion the best, regarding your reasons for not swapping

|                                |                        |            |                                   |         |                     |                             |
|--------------------------------|------------------------|------------|-----------------------------------|---------|---------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1=Disagree<br>very<br>strongly | 2=Disagree<br>strongly | 3=Disagree | 4=Neither<br>agree or<br>disagree | 5=Agree | 6=Agree<br>strongly | 7=Agree<br>very<br>strongly |
|--------------------------------|------------------------|------------|-----------------------------------|---------|---------------------|-----------------------------|

I am concerned about the products' hygiene

I would never Swap articles

With someone I don't trust

I would never swap with a company, without clear rules associated with the swapping system

I prefer buying Something cheap in a Fast Fashion store

## Appendix 1d: Renting X Special

Imagine that you are invited to an event such as **the Emmy's after party**. You suddenly realize that you are in need of something to wear for the occasion. *Endless Closet*, is a clothing rental service that offers a number of designer outfit options. They also offer the possibility to buy the clothing. Check their ad:



**ENDLESS CLOSET**  
PREMIUM CLOTHING RENTAL

**Rent or buy** designer clothing for women and men.  
Delivery in 1 to 2 working days.  
ALL INCLUDED SERVICE.  
Insurance for spills and minor damages.  
FREE dry cleaning.

[GET YOURS TODAY](#)


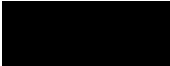
This section seeks to understand your opinion concerning your intentions and likelihood of renting and buying Fashion Clothes and Accessories.

1. Are you into Fashion?
  - 1 = Not at all
  - 2
  - 3
  - 4 = Neither or in to Fashion
  - 5
  - 6
  - 7 = Very much

2. How likely would you acquire rent clothing for a **special occasion** from a clothing **rental service**?

- 1 = Extremely unlikely
- 2 = Moderately unlikely
- 3 = Slightly unlikely
- 4 = Neither likely nor unlikely
- 5 = Slightly likely
- 6 = Moderately likely
- 7 = Extremely likely


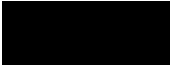
3. How much would you be willing to **pay for the rental** of clothing for a **special occasion**? Express bellow the value in euros (€).

|                                      |   |   |      |
|--------------------------------------|---|---|------|
| Designer clothes (e.g. Ralph Lauren) | 0 |   | 500€ |
| Non-designer clothes                 | 0 |  | 500€ |

4. How likely would you **buy** clothing for a **special occasion**?

- 1 = Extremely unlikely
- 2 = Moderately unlikely
- 3 = Slightly unlikely
- 4 = Neither likely nor unlikely
- 5 = Slightly likely
- 6 = Moderately likely
- 7 = Extremely likely

5. How much would you be willing to **pay** for clothing for the occasions? Express bellow the value in euros (€).

|                                      |   |  |      |
|--------------------------------------|---|--|------|
| Designer clothes (e.g. Ralph Lauren) | 0 |  | 500€ |
| Non-designer clothes                 | 0 |  | 500€ |

In this section we would like to know **how frequently** do you rent and buy products or services, in general? (For instance, paying your Netflix subscription or renting an Airbnb accommodation)

6. How often do you **rent** products or services?

- 1 = Once a week
- 2 = Every two weeks
- 3 = Once a month
- 4 = Every two months
- 5 = Twice a year
- 6 = Seldom
- 7 = Never

7. How often do you rent clothes?

- 1 = Once a week
- 2 = Every two weeks
- 3 = Once a month
- 4 = Every two months
- 5 = Twice a year
- 6 = Seldom
- 7 = Never

8. How often do you buy clothes?

- 1 = Once a week
- 2 = Every two weeks
- 3 = Once a month
- 4 = Every two months
- 5 = Twice a year
- 6 = Seldom
- 7 = Never

The following section was only shown to respondents that: answered above 5 (slightly likely) on questions 2 and 3 and to respondents that answered an option different from 7 (never) on questions 7 and 8.

9. Please let us know which sentence(s) describes you or your opinion(s) concerning swapping Fashion goods.

|   | 1=Disagree<br>very<br>strongly | 2=Disagree<br>strongly | 3=Disagree | 4=Neither<br>agree or<br>disagree | 5=Agree | 6=Agree<br>strongly | 7=Agree<br>very<br>strongly |
|---|--------------------------------|------------------------|------------|-----------------------------------|---------|---------------------|-----------------------------|
| I trust the <b>person</b><br>that I am renting<br>from  |                                |                        |            |                                   |         |                     |                             |
| I trust the<br><b>company/platform</b>  |                                |                        |            |                                   |         |                     |                             |
| I rent my products<br>from  |                                |                        |            |                                   |         |                     |                             |
| Renting is a nice<br>way to access<br>products that I<br>don't have and are<br>expensive to buy                               |                                |                        |            |                                   |         |                     |                             |
| I enjoy renting<br>products because it<br>does less harm to<br>the environment  |                                |                        |            |                                   |         |                     |                             |
| I enjoy renting<br>because I can<br>access ethical and<br>sustainable<br>products   |                                |                        |            |                                   |         |                     |                             |
| I enjoy renting<br>multiple articles, to<br>communicate to<br>others my<br>distinctive taste,<br>uniqueness and<br>self-image |                                |                        |            |                                   |         |                     |                             |
| I enjoy renting<br>multiple branded<br>articles   |                                |                        |            |                                   |         |                     |                             |

10. While renting which factors are the most important to you: Please rank from the most important (1) to the least important (5)

- The access to a larger assortment of products
- For economic concerns
- For environmental concerns
- To access to a community of people with the same beliefs
- To show others my distinctive image

The following section was only shown to respondents that: answered below 5 (slightly likely) on questions 2 and 3 and to respondents that answered 7 (never) on questions 7 and 8.

11. Please let us know which sentence(s) describes you or your opinion the best, regarding your reasons for not swapping

|                                |                        |            |                                   |         |                     |                             |
|--------------------------------|------------------------|------------|-----------------------------------|---------|---------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1=Disagree<br>very<br>strongly | 2=Disagree<br>strongly | 3=Disagree | 4=Neither<br>agree or<br>disagree | 5=Agree | 6=Agree<br>strongly | 7=Agree<br>very<br>strongly |
|--------------------------------|------------------------|------------|-----------------------------------|---------|---------------------|-----------------------------|

I am concerned about the products' hygiene

I would never Swap articles

With someone I don't trust

I would never swap with a company, without clear rules associated with the swapping system

I prefer buying Something cheap in a Fast Fashion store

**Appendix 2: Common sections to all the stimuli:**

Q1. How do the following sentences describe you and your beliefs?

|            |            |            |           |         |          |          |
|------------|------------|------------|-----------|---------|----------|----------|
| 1=Disagree | 2=Disagree | 3=Disagree | 4=Neither | 5=Agree | 6=Agree  | 7=Agree  |
| very       | strongly   |            | agree or  |         | strongly | very     |
| strongly   |            |            | disagree  |         |          | strongly |

I buy some products because I want to show others that I am wealthy  
 By choosing a product having unique characteristics, I show my friends that I am different  
 I choose products or brands to create my own style that everyone admires  
 I always buy top-of-line products  
 I want to show others that I enjoy being original  
 I like to show others that I am sophisticated

Q2. Next, you will be shown a series of products and services that are part of a shared based economy.

On a scale from 1 (very strongly unfamiliar) to 7 (very strongly familiar), please rate your level of familiarity with the following service:



|                      | 1=Very<br>strongly<br>unfamiliar | 2=Strongly<br>Unfamiliar | 3=Unfamiliar | 4=Neither<br>Unfamiliar<br>Nor<br>Familiar | 5=Familiar | 6=Strongly<br>Familiar | 7=Very<br>strongly<br>familiar |
|----------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------|--|------------|------------------------|--------------------------------|
| AirBnB               |                                  |                          |              |  |            |                        |                                |
| Uber                 |                                  |                          |              |  |            |                        |                                |
| BlaBlaCar            |                                  |                          |              |  |            |                        |                                |
| The Ms<br>Collection |                                  |                          |              |  |            |                        |                                |
| Rent the<br>Runway   |                                  |                          |              |  |            |                        |                                |
| Chic by<br>Choice    |                                  |                          |              |  |            |                        |                                |
| Spotify              |                                  |                          |              |  |            |                        |                                |

Q3. Have you ever used the services of the following companies? (You can select more than one option)

- AirBnB
- Uber
- BlaBlaCar
- The Ms Collection
- Rent the Runway
- Chic by Choice
- Spotify
- I haven't used any

Q4. Do you know what Collaborative Consumption (sometimes referred as Shared Economy - i.e.: Uber service) is?

- Yes
- No

Q5. To you Collaborative Consumption is:

(please select the option(s) that best describes the definition of Collaborative Consumption, sometimes referred as Shared Economy)

- An efficient model of matching supply with demand
- The sharing of unused or underused assets for monetary or non-monetary benefits
- Businesses built on distributed marketplaces or decentralized networks that create a sense of belonging, collective accountability and mutual benefit through the community they build.
- Renting, lending, swapping and sharing through technology
- Other \_\_\_\_\_
- I am not sure

Now, please answer some demographics about yourself.

Q6. What is your gender?

- Male
- Female

Q7. What is your age?

▼ Under 19 years (1) ... 65 years and over (7)

Q8. What is your occupation?

- High School Student
- University Student
- Employed
- Unemployed
- Retired

Q9. What is the highest level of education you have completed?

- Less than High School
- High School
- Bachelor Degree
- Master Degree
- Doctoral Degree
- Professional Degree

Q10. Where do you come from?

▼ Please select below... (1) ... Other (195)

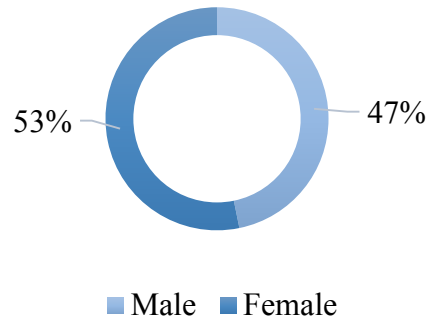
Q11. What is your current annual income in Euros

- Under €10,000
- €10,000 - €19,999
- €20,000 - €29,999
- €30,000 - €39,999
- €40,000 - €49,999
- €50,000 - €74,999
- €75,000 - €99,999
- €100,000 - €150,000
- Over €150,000
- Don't know.

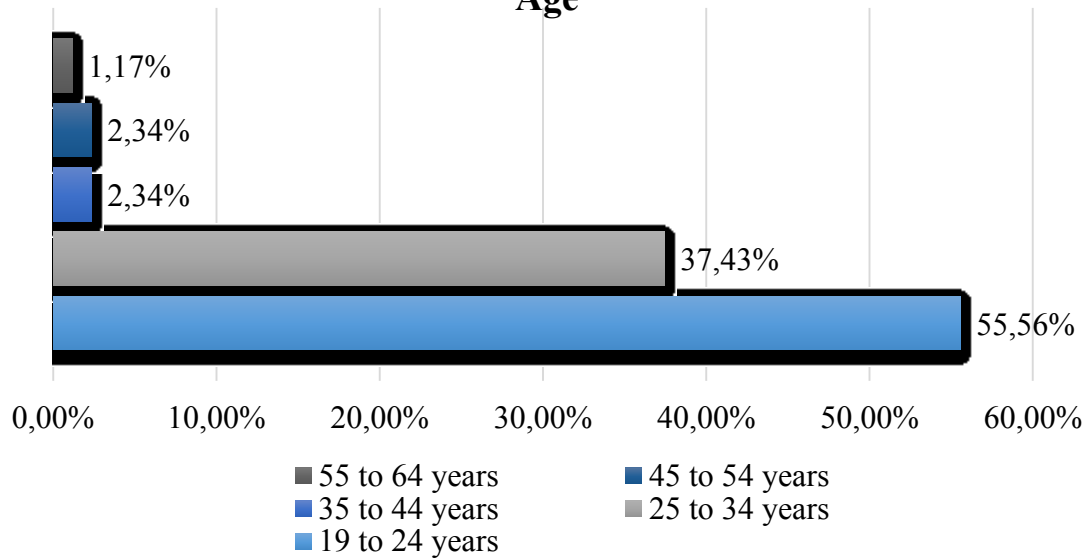
Q12. THANK YOU for participating in the survey today. The advertisement and the company that was shown to you is part of a fictitious scenario, being inexistent in the real world. Please do not discuss the nature of the study with any other participants, as it may bias future results. Please click on the button below to end the study.

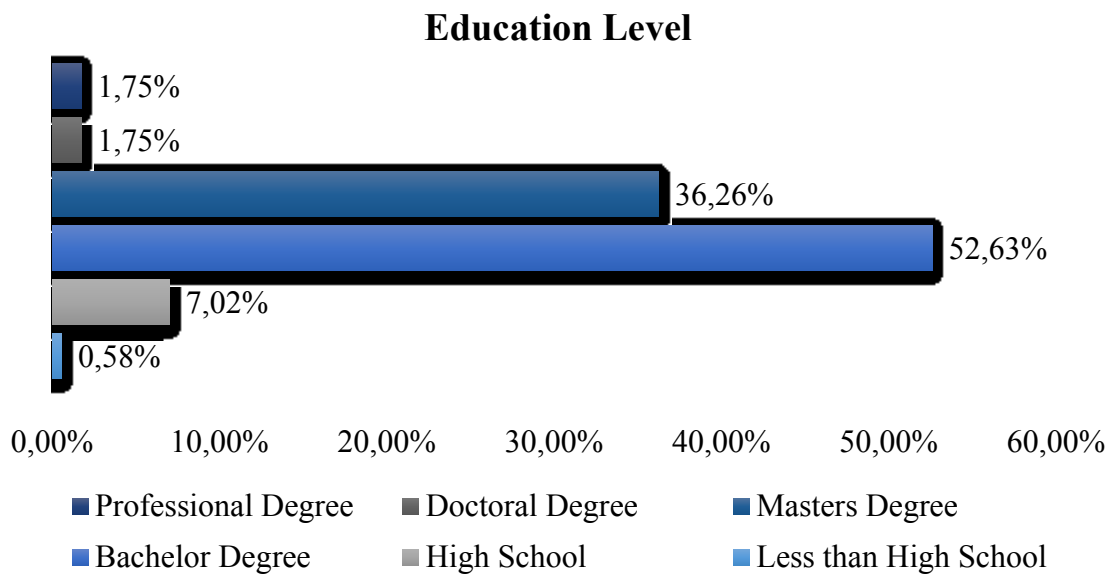
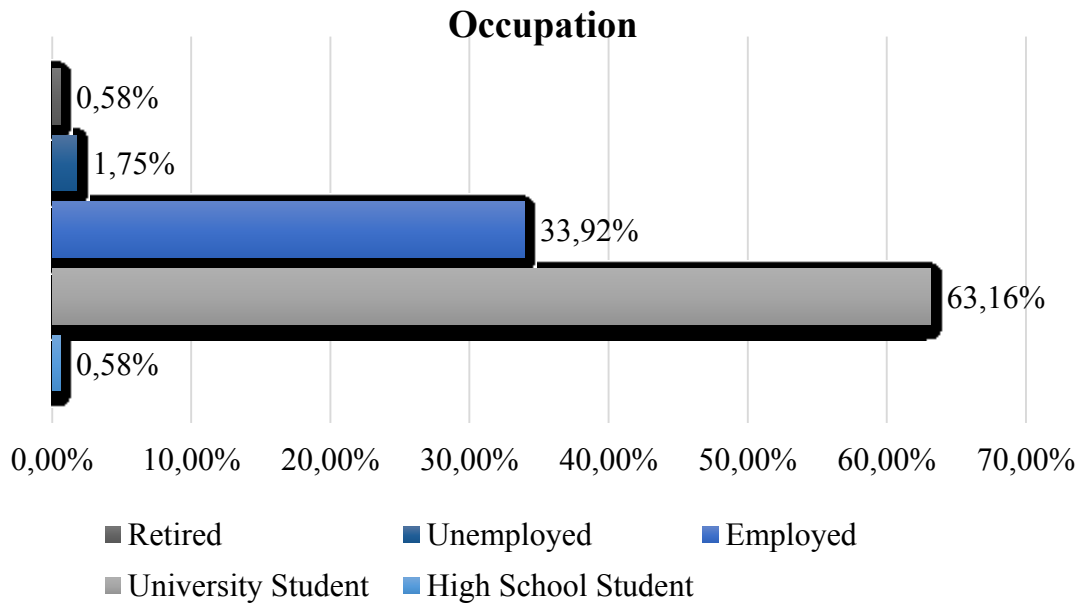
### Appendix 3: Demographics

#### Gender

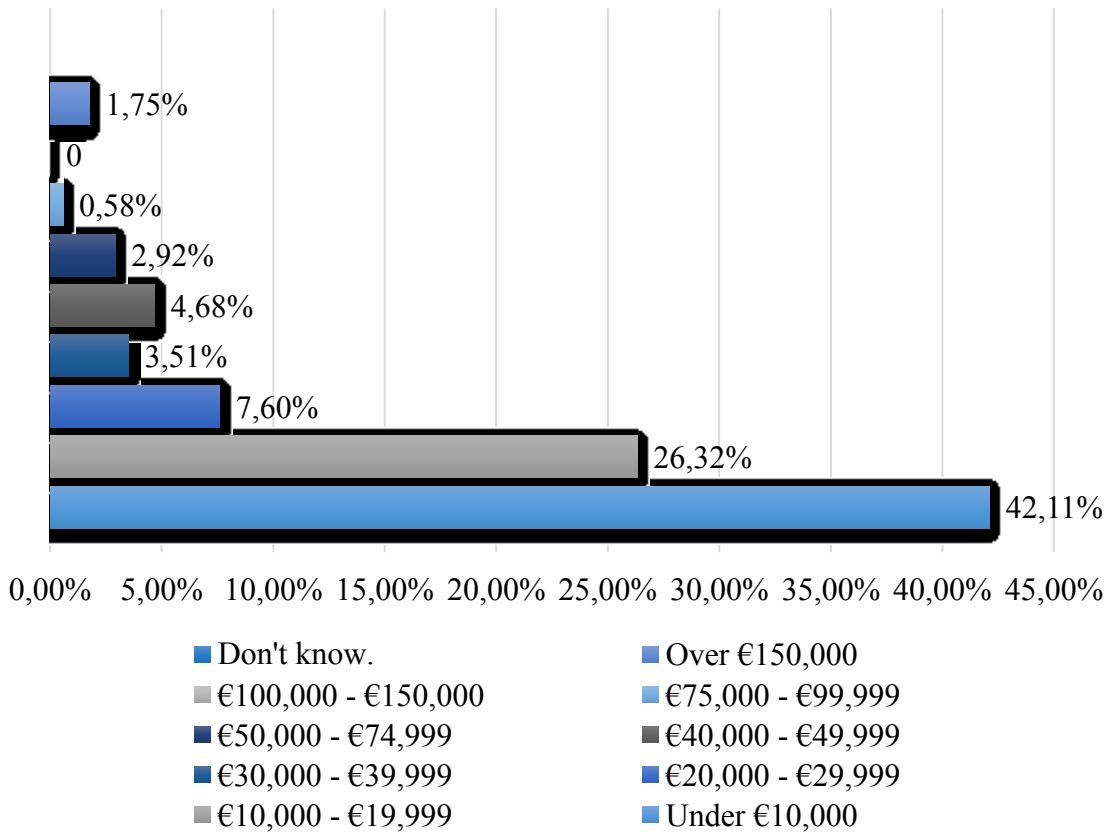


#### Age





### Income Level



| Nationality |        |                    |        |
|-------------|--------|--------------------|--------|
| Country     | %      | Country            | %      |
| Angola      | 1.17%  | Japan              | 0.58%  |
| Australia   | 0.58%  | Mexico             | 0.58%  |
| Austria     | 2.34%  | Morocco            | 0.58%  |
| Belgium     | 1.17%  | Mozambique         | 0.58%  |
| Bulgaria    | 0.58%  | Netherlands        | 3.51%  |
| Canada      | 0.58%  | Norway             | 1.75%  |
| Cape Verde  | 0.58%  | Paraguay           | 0.58%  |
| China       | 0.58%  | Portugal           | 40.94% |
| Croatia     | 0.58%  | Russian Federation | 1.75%  |
| Estonia     | 0.58%  | Spain              | 2.92%  |
| France      | 4.68%  | Sweden             | 1.75%  |
| Germany     | 22.22% | Switzerland        | 1.17%  |
| Greece      | 1.17%  | Tunisia            | 0.58%  |
| India       | 0.58%  | United Kingdom     | 1.17%  |
| Italy       | 2.92%  | Other              | 1.17%  |

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