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The Circle of Life: The Future of Fashion

A qualitative study of Swedish fashion consumers' attitudes towards circular fashion and the inhibiting factors preventing consumption of circular fashion

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Abstract

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Key Terms: Circular Economy, Circular Fashion, Consumer Behaviour, Sustainability

Background: The clothing industry harms the environment with its chemicals, cheap labour and waste usage. To protect the world's limited natural resources, it is essential to focus on sustainable consumption. A circular economy revolves around prolonging the use of products and materials, which will help decrease waste and pollution and generate a more natural system. This is a more sustainable consumption option, and consumers need to engage in the circular movement.

Purpose: The purpose of this thesis is to gain a greater understanding of Swedish fashion consumers' attitudes towards circular fashion and what consumers feel prevents them from consuming circular fashion.

Method: This thesis had an interpretive approach, and the researchers conducted the findings through semi-structured in-depth interviews. Eight participants interested in both the environment and fashion were interviewed. The questions surrounded the participants' viewpoints on circular economy and circular fashion.

Conclusion: The findings discovered different attitudes towards circular fashion depending on how knowledgeable the participants were about circular fashion and how much they consumed it. It was found that the more knowledge the consumers had about circular fashion, the more they consumed it. Knowledgeable consumers also had an attitude that was more open towards circular fashion than unknowledgeable participants. Further, the findings identified price, lack of knowledge and perception as inhibiting factors that affect Swedish fashion consumers' consumption of circular fashion. The research continued analysing why the inhibiting factors affected Swedish fashion consumers' consumption of circular fashion. Each inhibiting factor had multiple sub-categories explaining why it affected Swedish fashion consumers. The research had similar conclusions to previous research in some areas, while other conclusions differed from earlier literature. This thesis has implications from a theoretical, managerial and societal perspective.

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1. Introduction

The following chapter will introduce the reader to the topic of this research. A description of the context relating to the subject will provide details to help grasp the problematization. The purpose of this study and the research questions will also be provided in this section as well as the delimitations.

1.1 Background

The European Commission (2020) estimated the global annual waste generation to increase by 70 % by 2050. During the next forty years, the global consumption of raw material such as metals, minerals, and fossil fuels is projecting to double (European Commission, 2020). Clothing firms have faced severe and lengthy scrutiny for the use of cheap labour, chemicals and water excesses, and pushing for increased consumption (Allwood, Laursen, Russell, de Rodríguez, & Bocken, 2008). To make one cotton t-shirt, 26 000 litres of water is used, and the garment is usually worn only a few times. Therefore, garment production's environmental and social footprint is considered to be wasteful (WRAP, 2015).

60 % of the world's ecosystems are today exploited in an unsustainable way (Naturvårdsverket, 2020). To preserve the limited natural resources and avoid climate change, sustainable consumption and production are essential. Due to the current dominance of fast-changing and affordable fashion, consumption in the textile sector is increasing. This has resulted in a significant number of textiles going to waste both from companies who overproduce and consumers who overconsume (Elander & Palm, 2015). Both fibre production, textile consumption, and the number of textile waste are constantly rising (Dahlbo, Aalto, Eskelinen, & Salmenperä, 2017). As the clothing industry offers consumers more styles in shorter time cycles at lower prices, consumers constantly desire to change their style (Cao et al., 2014). Several seasons are used in the fast fashion industry, which differs from the traditional two collections per year, and companies are creating cheap throwaway goods at low costs (Birtwistle & Moore, 2007). Clothing currently stands for a substantial amount of waste, and this is expecting to increase globally. In Europe and North America, around 15 million ton of clothing ends up in landfill every year. There is also an increase in production costs and a decrease in clothing prices. This has caused a price war among the competitors for the lowest price (EMF, 2013a).

According to NRDC (2016), the production of textiles is one of the industries that is polluting the world the most (Natural Resources Defence Council, 2016). According to Naturvårdsverket (2020), society in the coming decades is anticipated with an increasing population with higher incomes, resulting in increased global demand for goods and services. They continue to explain that today's resource allocation for textiles is not sustainable, and based on projections of the future, there needs to be a change. Suppose society can extend the use of clothing and textile, such as purchasing second hand, repair, remake, and overall taking care of the clothes. In that case, the fabrics will be used longer, reducing the environmental impact of that industry. Consumers have a great power to reduce the environmental impact made by the clothing and fashion industry by reusing, remaking, swapping and repairing clothes (Naturvårdsverket, 2020).

Circular Economy (CE) revolves, according to EMF (2013a), around the principle of prolonging the use of products and materials, which will help to construct out waste and pollution and generate a more natural system. Societies today use a linear model when products are produced, meaning that resources are manufactured, the product is purchased and used, and when the product is not wanted anymore, it is thrown away. The circular model focuses instead on keeping materials and products in use for as long as possible. This means that a circular model can create a thriving economy that helps the environment (EMF, 2020). Most of the clothing industry is currently operating in the linear model, and a large amount of the clothing items ends in landfill (EMF, 2013b). The European Union declares CE as a front-runner to get economic players to make contributions towards more climate neutrality. The linear manufacturing pattern produces products that are difficult to reuse, recycle and restore, and it is challenging to make these products circular (European Commission, 2019). The goal is for the clothing industry to develop a system that is more sustainable. This can be executed by closing the loop through reused and recycled garments that later can be developed into new fibres and textiles. When sustainable development moves toward a more holistic and systemic understanding and the expertise in CE models arise, the fashion industry will face new challenges that the industry needs to overcome (Niinimäki, 2017).

In 2015, the European Union implemented a 54-point CE action plan to improve and increase jobs, growth and investments. The action plan was also created to help develop a more carbon neutral and resource-efficient competitive economy. In 2019, the European Union monitoring framework indicated that the actions to make the economy more circular helped increase job

creation and business opportunities (European Commission, 2019). Some benefits that a CE can create are land productivity, soil health, and potential for job creation. It would also increase innovation, leading to higher rates of technological development, improve efficiency in terms of material, energy and labour, and more opportunities for profits (EMF, 2013b). The European Commission states that one of the vital factors to succeed for a more sustainable product policy framework is to empower consumers. By providing cost-saving options, consumers engagement for circular products will increase (European Commission, 2020).

1.2 Problem Discussion

One industry that affects the environment in a negative way is the clothing industry with its chemicals, cheap labour and water usage (Allwood et al., 2008). By producing and purchasing more sustainable options, there can be a preservation of the limited natural resources and a decline in climate change (Elander & Palm, 2015). A more sustainable option is circular products and using a more circular model instead of a linear model have benefits both for the environment and the economy (EMF, 2020). To succeed and become a more circular society, there needs to be an empowering engagement from the consumers (European Commission, 2020). Consumers' interest has enhanced for sustainable solutions, and they are aware of climate change and the constrained natural resources (Vehmas, Heikkilä, Harlin, & Mensonen, 2018).

There is an expectation in society that there is a high demand for sustainable products from consumers, increasing the innovation efforts to create sustainable products. However, the consumption of sustainable products is not meeting this high expected demand, indicating that there is a gap between consumers' intentions and their behaviour towards sustainable products (van Trijp & Fischer, 2010). People want to be more environmentally friendly, yet why do consumers not choose that alternative when the option exists? CE is also a highly discussed subject, and it is something the European Commission is focusing on (European Commission, 2019). Many studies have been made focusing on the best business models for various companies and industries, but there are not many research studies focusing on understanding consumers' attitudes towards circular fashion.

1.3 Research Purpose

Previous research has focused on investigating various circular business models that would suit different companies the best, as well as drivers and barriers of circular methods (Testa, Iovino, & Iraldo, 2020). The majority of scientific work on CE and circular solutions for consumption has concentrated on identifying factors that drive or prevent consumption of circular solutions. A smaller portion of the literature within the CE field has focused on providing insights into the essence, purpose, and dynamics of consumption, but this kind of literature is a field that is currently growing (Camacho-Otero, Boks, & Pettersen, 2018).

This research will give insights into consumers attitudes towards circular fashion and the factors that inhibit consumers' consumption behaviour of circular fashion. This study will help gain awareness and information about what circular fashion is and the inhibiting factors that affect Swedish fashion consumers' consumption habits of circular fashion products.

The purpose of this research is to gain a greater understanding of Swedish fashion consumers' attitudes towards circular fashion and what consumers feel prevents them from consuming circular fashion. This study has an exploratory purpose. The ambition is to comprehend both how Swedish consumption habits of circular fashion products look like and discover why their patterns look like they do.

Further, two research questions were created to accomplish the purpose of this study:

RQ1. What are Swedish fashion consumers attitudes towards circular fashion?

RQ2. Why are the inhibiting factors affecting Swedish fashion consumers' consumption of circular fashion?

This study can help gain more knowledge and clarity of the CF market and provide theoretical managerial and societal implications to support economic growth in the CF industry. The possible valuable information that this study could contribute with can help the growth of CF products and make a sustainable change for the future.

1.4 Delimitations

This research will focus on studying fashion consumers in Sweden and their consumption habits of circular fashion. When using the term “fashion industry”, the definition will include clothing and apparel items. The study will mainly concentrate on brands and retailers in the fashion industry rather than the producers. When discussing circular fashion in this study, the definition includes both remanufactured circular fashion made from recycled materials and second hand. The data collection is based on individual consumers that have environmentally friendly intentions and an interest in fashion. Further, since the European Commission is currently focusing on CE, there is an interest in understanding consumers’ behaviours regarding CE in Europe (European Commission, 2019). As a result, the authors agreed to concentrate on one European Union member in order to conduct a systematic and comprehensive analysis of consumers in that specific country. It was therefore decided to make a study based on Sweden.

1.5 Definitions/Abbreviations

Circular Economy (CE): Aims to create an economy focused on decreasing waste and pollution and generating a more natural system. By designing out waste and pollution, keeping products and materials in use for as long as possible, and generating natural systems, the economy can become more circular.

Circular Fashion (CF): Focuses on creating fashion products and an industry where the production and a product’s end of life are equally important. The circular fashion industry value products that are used during an extended period of time. They are produced so that the materials can be used in a new production again and that the products are made of safe, reusable and recycling materials.

2. Literature Review

This part of the thesis provides the reader with relevant literature to understand the foundation of the research. Past research is evaluated critically to provide support for the findings in this study. The chapter will begin with general research regarding CE and CF. Later, the chapter will review research surrounding sustainable consumption and consumers behaviour towards CE and CF.

2.1 Circular Economy

The CE concept is commonly used by scholars and practitioners, but there is little consensus about what it means (EMF, 2013a). Boulding (1966) argued that the future of the earth required new economic principles suitable for a more “closed” planet and economy rather than principles that have been used in the past when the earth’s resources were “open”. He called a closed economy a “spaceman economy” since the earth has become a single spaceship with limited resources (Boulding, 1966). Stahel & Ready (1976) explained certain features of the concept CE. They discussed an economy that contains loops and the life extension of products. Later, Stahel (1982) described the core concept of CE principles. Extending a product’s lifespan optimizes the total lifespan usage of a product, which increases the reduction of natural resources. The longer a society can use products, the more sustainable the society will become, which also will increase wealth (Stahel W., 1982). CE is constructed on natural laws that emulate natural cycles (Gullingsrud & Perkins, 2015). When it comes to resources, societies and the environment, CE is regenerative and restorative (Leonas, 2017).

Kirchherr, Reike and Hekkert (2017) explained that the key in a CE is that materials and items should be reused, recycled, and recovered instead of discarded. Firms that are aiming at being circular should provide solutions that are focusing on such operations. They further argue that a trending concept generally makes it hard to establish a correct term since the definition is expressed in various ways. Although the CE model for businesses should be a fundamental system change, many reports indicate that small changes towards reusing and remanufacturing can make a company circular. This can result in companies applying minimal changes to their business model and argue that they are circular. CE operates at different levels (micro, meso and macro), and the goal can be achieved with responsible customers and novel business models (Kirchherr et al., 2017).

The definition established by the Ellen MacArthur Foundation (EMF) is one of the most commonly used definitions in literature (Geissdoerfer, Savaget, Bocken, & Hultink, 2017; Kirchherr et al., 2017). The definition made by the EMF (2021a) states that the CE model is based on three principles that help to build capital socially, naturally, and economically. The three principles are designing out waste and pollution, keeping materials and products in use, and regenerating natural systems. This model is a systematic shift that generates businesses and economic opportunities and, at the same time, can provide environmental and social benefits. EMF (2021a) states that there are two cycles in the CE model. The first cycle is the technical cycle, where products, components and materials become repaired, restored, remanufactured, or recycled. The second cycle is the biological cycle which refers to the consumption of a society. Food and biologically based materials such as cotton are designed to feed back into the system. This is also called “the cradle to cradle” framework (EMF, 2021a).

The definition of CE differs in literature where some focus only on the 3Rs (Reduce, Reuse, Recycle), and some incorporate a fourth R into the definition (Recovery). There are also a few definitions of CE, mainly focusing on recycling or reusing. Although the 4Rs perspective is seen as the official European Union policy framework for CE, the 3Rs is most commonly applied in the literature (Kirchherr et al., 2017). The reduction and recovery can sometimes be left out of the definition. This could be explained by the interest companies have to continue consumption (Lacy, Keeble, & McNamara, 2014).

2.1.1 Circular Economy in Businesses

The focus of literature within CE has been concentrating on the production side. Circular business models have been explored (Rizos, Tuokko, & Behrens, 2017) strategies of how to develop circular value propositions (Lewandowski, 2016) and the advantages of such models (Wijkman & Skånberg, 2015). Less attention in the literature has been on the effect or impact that CE have on consumers and their consumption (Kirchherr et al., 2017). CE has started to be incorporated into businesses’ sustainable plans, and companies have started a journey towards implementing CE in their operations (Stewart & Niero, 2018). Stahel (2016) reports that firms can use two different approaches to incorporate CE principles in their business models. These are either extending the product’s life or recycling and regenerating the product’s components (Stahel, 2016). Although the literature has focused on exploring circular business models, Stewart and Niero (2018) found that businesses lack implementing CE-

related activities throughout their operation. Companies have not focused on consumer engagement, material quality or business models but have mostly worked with making the main product or the packaging circular (Stewart & Niero, 2018).

Throughout the years, different business models for circularity have been proposed. In 2015 five types of circular business models were suggested by Lacy et al. (2014). The various models are called the Circular Supplies business model, the Product Life Extension business model, the Resource Recovery business model, the Sharing Platforms business model and the Product as a Service business model (Lacy et al., 2014). Bocken et al. (2016) continued to provide several business models. Lewandowski (2016) extended the EMF (2013b) ReSOLVE framework (“regenerate, share, optimize, loop, virtualize, and exchange”) and presented over 25 different circular business model strategies (Lewandowski, 2016). Similar to the ReSOLVE framework, van Renswoude, Wolde and Joustra (2015) recognized ways of generating circular value related to the short cycle in which goods and services are preserved, repaired and adapted. They also identified cascades that focused on developing new combinations of resources and components of materials and the procurement of upcycled waste streams. Pure circles in which resources and materials are 100 % reused are also a part of how circular value can be generated. This can be done through dematerialized services offered instead of physical services and products, as well as production on demand (van Renswoude et al., 2015).

2.2 Fashion Industry

Due to numerous shifts in the market climate, the fashion sector has undergone profound transformations (Bhardwaj & Fairhurst, 2010). Until the late 1980s, the structure of the fashion industry was based on retailers of fashion apparel who used their ability to predict customer preferences and fashion trends. To compete in the market, they anticipated customer demand and fashion patterns well before the consumption took place (Guercini, 2001). During this time, the fashion industry revolved around mass production of standardizing styles produced at low costs, with the exception of the rapid changing haute couture (Brooks, 1979). In 1992, a sudden increase of imported fashion apparel for women were reported by Bailey and Eicher (1992), which differed from the standardized clothing in the 1980s (Bailey & Eicher, 1992). Consumers started to be more conscious about fashion, and the demand for simple and classic apparel was reduced (Bailey, 1993). However, during recent years, fashion retailers have been competing against each other by keeping up the fast pace of the market. This has been possible through the retailer’s ability to quickly produce the fashion trends that fashion shows and runways have

recently shown (Bhardwaj & Fairhurst, 2010). To raise the variety of fashion apparel on the market, the idea of incorporating more seasons in the fashion calendar started to be seen. Three to five mid-seasons were added which pressured suppliers to produce and deliver fashion products fast and in smaller batches (Tyler, Heeley, & Bhamra, 2006). The fashion industry moved from predicting future trends to using real-time data to grasp consumers expectations and preferences (Jackson, 2001).

The fast fashion industry is a part of the linear economy model. Customers get motivated to purchase more clothes because they are affordable, and later when the season is over, the clothes are thrown out. The fast-fashion system is low quality, fast-changing and encourages consumption. One of the biggest problems that fast fashion creates is the negative impact on the environment (Rathinamoorthy, 2018). The fast-fashion model is a response to the accelerating speed of consumers lives. This includes their aspiration of greater versatility among apparel companies, timely delivery, and new items to a reasonable cost. It is also an enticing business model that has led to the success of several clothing brands. This model is based on consumption that follows trends and is intended to address the customer's existing needs as quickly as possible. It heavily relies on artificially generating these needs and stimulating the market for disposable goods that can be consumed immediately (Remy, Speelman, & Swartz). The "take, make, dispose" mentality of the business world that the linear model is based on have been challenged since 2010 by EMF. In many sectors, the idea of CE has been increasingly influential, including the textile and fashion industries (EMF, 2021a).

2.2.1 Circular Fashion

Earley & Goldsworthy (2015) argue that distinguishing between short life fashion and long-life fashion is significant. Items focused on longevity and quality output are subjects for reuse, reselling, upcycling, and remanufacturing methods. Garments manufactured in quick processes with poor quality often do not have enough value to be repaired or resold, which should therefore be taken back for recycling (Earley & Goldsworthy, 2015). Gullingsrud and Perkkins (2015) explained that to achieve a real improvement in the fashion industry, it is not enough to reduce consumption or the use of resources. These actions are only a short-term solution that will not result in a fundamental change (Gullingsrud & Perkkins, 2015). In comparison, products made of materials that can be continuously transformed and reused must be produced, improving the final product at all times (Twigger Holroyd, 2016).

Rathinamoorthy (2018) explains that one way to extend the lifetime of clothing is through CF. Creating CF means closing the loop where products and components are designed to be remanufactured, used, and recycled. The implementation of CF means that society can have a maximum usage of garments. This can be created through the following steps: Firstly, the product design should allow consumers to renew, repair and perhaps disassemble the product to make them easily recyclable. Secondly, the production should not contain any harmful chemicals, ensuring a safe recycling process. Thirdly, there should be a system where products at the end of their usage can be collected, sorted, and recycled. This is something businesses cannot do alone and need involvement from consumers. Lastly, there should also be a mechanism for redesigning and repairing clothes to extend the product's lifespan. This includes a proper procedure for second hand materials related to sorting, selling, and recycling (Rathinamoorthy, 2018). When circularity is applied to the clothing and textile industry the whole value chain is incorporated and the production is reconsidered (Ræbild & Bang, 2017).

2.3 Research in Sustainable Consumption

The issue triad of population, climate, and growth has been joined by the addition of consumption, resulting in a surge in studies on sustainable consumption. From environmental policy to interdisciplinary and multi-industry partnerships, a wide variety of issues aimed at facilitating the transition to post-fossil-carbon societies have been addressed in sustainable consumption research. Studies on sustainable consumption have developed from a single practice-oriented research subject to a set of topics examined systematically, encompassing key factors such as sustainable consumption behaviour, energy use, and environmental impact (Liu, Qu, Lei, & Jia, 2017). From 2010 to 2014, the research on sustainability in textile, apparel and fashion increased gradually, and from 2015 it accelerated further, reflecting the topic's increasing academic knowledge and interest (Islam, Perry, & Gill, 2020).

2.3.1 Consumer viewpoints on Sustainable and Circular Products

CF was by the participants in the study made by Vehmas et al. (2018) associated with the reuse and return of old garments. In their research, it was clear that, even though the participants were unfamiliar with the concept of CF as new production, they described an interest in these products when they understood what it entails. The authors identified that consumers are more

willing to purchase remanufactured CF than second hand. Although consumers are interested in the idea of CF, they are requesting more information regarding circular products. The biggest concerns involving circular clothing was the quality, style, and comfort of the clothes (Vehmas et al., 2018). When mapping out the main factors that influence consumers' acceptance and tolerance of purchasing repaired mobile phones, van Weelden, Mugge and Bakker (2016) found that consumers do not consider repaired phones when wanting to purchase a phone. The study concluded that consumers' lack of awareness and misunderstanding of what repaired and refurbished phones means makes consumers reject these kinds of products since their perception of the product is negative (van Weelden et al., 2016).

Baier, Rausch and Wagner (2020) made a study to understand consumers consumption behaviour when it came to sustainable clothing and footwear. They found that price and knowledge are two factors constraining purchases of sustainable clothing and footwear. The authors also concluded that the participants linked sustainable consumption to purchasing environmentally friendly, durable, and repairable products. Participants in the study liked the idea of discounts for returning products and sustainable purchases overall. They also liked the idea of using labelling of traffic lights on the packaging, which means that the products are being classified with one of the three colours on a traffic light to indicate the sustainability level of the product (Baier et al., 2020).

Another study was made by Saricam, Erdumlu, Silan, Dogan and Sonmezcan (2017), who researched Turkish consumers. They acknowledged through their quantitative research that the level of awareness among Turkish consumers regarding ethical fashion is low. The study could also reveal that with a higher level of education and income, the awareness increased. The respondents in this study perceived the sustainability concept in the fashion industry as limited to the usage of organic materials and recycling (Saricam et al., 2017).

Park and Lin (2020) identified that consumers generally have a positive perception of circular products such as recycled or upcycled goods. Unlike other consumption behaviour, the authors could reveal that consumers attitudes are a weak or insignificant predictor of green buying. Over 35 % of the respondents exhibited positive purchase intention but failed to engage in purchasing these products. The authors also revealed that consumers were willing to purchase second hand goods when they believed they could contribute to solving environmental problems. In the study, the participants indicated that when the recycled products had a high

level of functional risk, they had a much lower purchase intention. Consumers expect a significant price discount compared to buying new or conventional products (Park & Lin, 2020). This result was in line with what Hamzaoui Essoussi and Linton (2010) previously found in their research. The authors studied how much consumers are willing to pay for new or recycled products, and they provided evidence that consumers have different perceptions depending on the product category. Consumers were willing to, for example, pay more for recycled paper and single-use cameras than for toner, cell phones and auto parts. The authors thereby suggested that consumers might have a general positive feeling about green products, but they consider the recycled aspect differently depending on the product category (Hamzaoui Essoussi & Linton, 2010).

Research has shown that although consumers have the intention to purchase more environmentally friendly products, their behaviour does not always reflect their attitude, values and beliefs (Kollmuss & Agyeman, 2002). To make purchasing decisions in line with consumers' personal beliefs, it is essential to seek information surrounding circular features (Testa et al., 2020). Younger people have been found to consume fewer ethical products despite having the highest level of awareness of ethical fashion. This was presented by Sudbury and Böltner (2011), and they explained in their study that younger people do not yet consider ethical clothing as a viable alternative to cheap throwaway fashion as they perceive fashion from the price-quality range (Sudbury & Böltner, 2011).

2.3.2 Consumers' Barriers to Purchasing Sustainable and Circular Products

In 2006, the appearance and quality of clothing had higher importance for consumers than the ethical factor (Joergens, 2006). Consumers find sustainability significance as minimal compared to other factors such as appearance, comfort, and quality, which is still predominant for consumers (Baier et al., 2020). A significant barrier consumers have when it comes to purchasing green products was explored by Pickett-Baker and Ozaki (2008). They discovered that consumers are concerned about green products' performance (Pickett-Baker & Ozaki, 2008).

Both internal and external factors affect consumers' behaviour towards sustainable products (Guagnano, Stern, & Dietz, 1995; Stern & Oskamp, 1987). External factors create barriers to sustainable clothing consumption. One example could be that sustainable production is often seen as producing smaller product ranges and fewer collections, which does not meet the

demand from consumers (Connell, 2010; Pookulangara, 2013). It could also be the perception of sustainable clothing being unfashionable (Beard, 2008; Connell, 2010; Harris et al., 2016). Since environmentally friendly clothing can be made from natural materials, consumers express their worry about the lack of aesthetic appearance from sustainable clothing (Lundblad & Davies, 2016). The external factors such as inconvenience, expensiveness or time-consuming can make consumers behaviour deflect their internal factors (attitudes, values and beliefs) when consuming (Stern & Oskamp, 1987; Guagnano et al., 1995). Ozturk and Engizek (2017) conducted a study in Turkey on generation Y consumers. It was identified that one of the most significant barriers for ethical fashion consumption is the lack of awareness (Ozturk & Engizek, 2017).

Kirchherr, Piscicelli, Bour, Kostense-Smit, Muller, Huibrechtse-Truijens and Hekkert (2018) studied the different barriers in the European Union for CE consumption. The findings suggest that the most significant barriers affecting the consumption of CE were cultural, market, regulatory and technological. The lack of consumer interest and awareness and other cultural barriers ranked high in the study, whilst technological barriers did not appear to be vital barriers (Kirchherr et al., 2018). Research has shown that factors and conditions such as economic (Armstrong, Niinimäki, Kujala, Karell, & Lang, 2015; Armstrong, Niinimäki, Lang, & Kujala, 2016; Gopalakrishnan & Matthews, 2018; Matthews & Hodges, 2016; Pedersen & Netter, 2015; Petersen & Riisberg, 2017), cultural (Armstrong et al., 2015; Armstrong et al., 2016; Akbar et al., 2016; Gopalakrishnan & Matthews, 2018), psychosocial (Armstrong et al., 2015; Akbar et al., 2016; Gopalakrishnan & Matthews, 2018), demographic (Armstrong et al., 2015; Gopalakrishnan & Matthews, 2018; Pedersen & Netter, 2015;) and socio-material (Armstrong et al., 2015; 2016; Park & Armstrong, 2017; Pedersen & Netter, 2015; Petersen & Riisberg, 2017) have an impact on consumer acceptance of circular clothing offerings and further adaption of sustainable consumption patterns. The socio-material category includes ease of use (Armstrong et al., 2015; Armstrong et al., 2016; Pedersen & Netter, 2015) and legal (Park & Armstrong, 2017; Petersen & Riisberg, 2017). Hamzaoui Essoussi and Linton (2010) found that consumers indicated that they evaluate recycled goods differently than new/conventional equivalents. This was also true between various types of product categories of recycled products. It was found to be due to a lack of familiarity with the use of recycled material in such products and/or a lack of knowledge of the impact of the materials on the product's functionality (Hamzaoui Essoussi & Linton, 2010).

There is also the importance of sustainable corporate performance. Collins, Steg and Koning (2007) found that companies can increase responsible buying behaviour by providing reliable information about the environmental and social factors of the products (Collins et al., 2007). Hazen, Mollenkopf and Wang's (2016) research showed the significant impact that micro-level factors have on consumers' purchasing behaviour towards circular products. Businesses producing circular and remanufactured products should focus on forming consumers attitudes towards the products since this is a crucial factor in switching to circular alternatives. The study also found that macro-level factors influence consumer behaviour since they can affect micro-level factors. Macro-level factors such as price, government incentives and environmental benefits still influence consumer behaviour towards circular products (Hazen et al., 2016).

2.3.3 Consumers role in a CE

Chung-Wha, Sangsoo and Jung (2020) made a study where they addressed the issue with the strong societal need of fashion businesses to move towards a CE. This was the first study that informs how fashion practitioners can create CF together with their customers. Using customers, the research provides empirical evidence showing three morally grounded traits perceived by customers regarding CF. They are particularly worth noting when encouraging consumers to take part in CF offerings made by fashion companies. The traits that showed empirical evidence consists of perceived corporate moral responsibility, perceived consumer moral responsibility, and perceived corporate hypocrisy. Consumers interpret corporate hypocrisy as a negative and morally based feeling when they perceive a disparity of apparel corporations claiming to be circular when they are not (Chung-Wha et al., 2020).

Koszewska (2018) proposed a framework of the consumers' role in a CE and explained that the CE model would be primarily determined by consumers behaviour. To help close the loop and move towards a CE, consumers' engagement may have a significant influence. A few fundamental aspects of direct and indirect impacts were proposed in the framework, supporting the transformation toward a CE. The implications of consumers' behaviours were active engagement in the product design and production process, conscious behaviour in the use phase, dealing with the used products and reducing waste. Other behaviours will exert indirect impacts, such as openness to new business models and conscious and rational purchasing behaviour. Decisions and actions made by consumers indirectly influence companies' behaviour, causing them to adjust their business models or production and distribution

strategies. Koszewska (2018) also states that by collecting and sorting used clothes and creating positive changes in this field, the consumers can help. However, for it to work, it is depending on creating an effective system for sorting textile waste and on technologies that can recover raw materials (Koszewska, 2018).

Ki, Chong and Ha-Brookshire (2020) found that internal stakeholders in fashion businesses see CF as an opportunity and are therefore driven to adopt CF to the companies. Consumers and the government were the most significant external fashion stakeholders in affecting the implementation of CF. The study further explained that consumers' awareness towards sustainability and governments applied laws and regulations were key drivers for fashion businesses to implement CF. Both the drivers and barriers for CF were connected to society and the government, which indicates that practitioners need to focus on getting the general public to be more supportive of CF and make them accept CF in their purchasing choices (Ki et al., 2020). Consumers need to re-orient their thinking to alternative products that are more circular (Sauvé, Bernard, & Sloan, 2016).

3. Methodology

The following chapter will introduce the philosophical approach taken to conduct the research. Thereafter, the research design, research approach and research strategy are presented with justifications of the chosen methods. This chapter will also describe how the data was acquired, analysed and how the quality is assured.

3.1 Research Philosophy

This thesis will use an interpretive approach, which will help gain a more developed and deeper insight into consumers' attitudes and feelings towards CF products. Nunan, Birks and Malhotra (2020) explain that interpretivism focuses on the evolving nature of reality and has empathized with the dynamic and participant-constructed realism. Researchers of this philosophy understand that it contains multiple views and interpretations in a society and that there is a wide range of thoughts and opinions in the world. While positivists see participants as objects, interpretivists view participants as partners and companions. This implies that interpretivists must interact with the participants enough to gain access to information. Another difference between positivism and interpretivism is that instead of removing any potential bias, interpretivism understands how their values affect their observations, questions and interpretation. Interpretivism aims to understand the nature of various influences. They seek a more detailed explanation for a specific individual case and compare it to other unique circumstances. This will further help an interpretivist to fully understand consumer behaviour (Nunan et al., 2020).

The research in this thesis will not create a theory including all perspectives and beliefs of the society, rather the researchers seek a more detailed conclusion of this individual case. This indicates that an interpretivism approach will be suitable for this study.

3.2 Research Design

Nunan et al. (2020) explain that an exploratory research is appropriate when little is known about the problem situation and when the topic has a nature that cannot be measured in a structured and quantifiable manner. This type of research design often expects to be built around qualitative techniques, but it could work well with both a qualitative and a quantitative exploration. An exploratory design is meaningful in any setting where the investigator does not have sufficient understanding to continue with the research project. This type of study has the

primary objective of providing insight and to understand a phenomenon (Nunan et al., 2020). Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2016) continue to explain how qualitative research forms a significant role in supporting marketing decision making. Research with a qualitative nature is commonly used to generate hypothesis and identify variables that should be included in quantitative approaches. This type of study may be used after or in conjunction with quantitative approaches where illumination of statistical findings is needed and used in isolation (Saunders et al., 2016).

As the purpose of this research is to gain a greater understanding of Swedish fashion consumers' attitudes towards circular fashion and what consumers feel prevents them from consuming circular fashion, the subject of this study cannot be measured in a quantitative manner. Therefore, an exploratory study will be appropriate for this thesis. As the interpretivist research philosophy and exploratory research are closely connected with qualitative studies, the decision for this thesis fell on using a qualitative approach.

3.3 Research Approach

When conducting a study with an interpretivist perspective, a researcher uses an inductive approach where they seek to establish legitimacy through a type of reasoning that typically includes the assumption that it is possible to uniformly generalize an instance or repeated combination of events (Nunan et al., 2020). When using inductive reasoning, a researcher's role is to try to make sense of the gathered data from interviews. Inductive reasoning goes from individual observations to a general statement (Saunders et al., 2016). With an inductive approach, the relationship between theory and research is that theory is an outcome of the study. As this thesis is based on the interpretivist perspective, inductive reasoning will be adopted.

3.4 Research Strategy

To conduct primary data, the research strategy in the thesis was done through in-depth interviews. Nunan et al. (2020) describe in-depth interviews as a qualitative technique that is direct and personal, where deep information is collected surrounding motivations, beliefs, attitudes, and feelings towards a topic. Deep information includes understanding a participant's thoughts about an everyday topic, uncover hidden views, understanding the multiple perspectives on a topic, and be aware of interviewers' assumptions and ways of thinking. In-depth interviews can help researchers interview specific individuals who uphold certain

qualities that are considered essential for the research objective. This can be executed in a greater depth than in other qualitative techniques such as focus groups (Nunan et al., 2020). This thesis objective for the primary data is to collect information involving consumers' beliefs, feelings, opinions and overall thoughts towards CF products. Due to the purpose of this thesis, in-depth interviews were the best suitable option to collect data. This helped gain deep information concerning the topic where individuals with specific qualities were interviewed in-depth to get more knowledge about their views and perspectives.

3.5 Data Collection

The following section presents how the selection of participants was made in this research, the design of the interviews, how the empirical data was collected, and how the participants' personal information was stored following the General Data Protection Regulation.

3.5.1 Selection of Participants

Researchers may use sampling techniques to minimize the amount of primary data obtained by only considering data from a subgroup rather than all potential components. These strategies are essential because it is often difficult to collect and analyze all available data due to constraints such as time, finances, and access (Saunders et al., 2007). The interpretive approach aims to obtain deep insights from the cases within the sample rather than selecting an unbiased sample (Collis & Hussey, 2014). When selecting participants taking part in this research, a traditional sampling approach was used in which the entire sample was chosen before any data was collected (Nunan et al., 2020). This decision was made since it helped this research to have all the preparations ready before any data was collected.

Nunan et al. (2020) explain that the non-probability sampling technique refers to a method that relies on the individual judgement of the researchers when deciding which participants to use (Nunan et al., 2020). Since this research wants to evaluate Swedish fashion consumers interested in the environment and fashion, it was decided to use a non-probability sampling technique. Further, this study used a non-probability technique called judgemental sampling. They further explain that judgemental sampling is based on the researchers' judgement when selecting a sample as the researchers can be seen as experts and representatives of the population in interest (Nunan et al., 2020). Using judgemental sampling made it easier for the

researchers in this study to find suitable participants with the correct characteristics needed to match the target population.

Following the judgemental sampling technique, the participants were selected based on their interest in the environment and fashion. When finding participants with the right qualifications for this study, the first step was to conduct information from potential participants. The researchers started selecting participants by contacting people in their network who met the criteria for having an interest in the environment and fashion. After asking potential participants to confirm this, the final eight participants were determined. Essentially, these individuals were vital to contribute to relevant data needed to address the research questions.

Table 1: Participant Overview

Participant	Age	Gender	Length	Interview type
1	25	Male	40 Minutes	Digital
2	25	Female	44 Minutes	Digital
3	24	Female	53 Minutes	Digital
4	24	Female	45 Minutes	Digital
5	24	Male	40 Minutes	Digital
6	24	Female	41 Minutes	Digital
7	23	Male	42 Minutes	Digital
8	25	Female	43 Minutes	Digital

3.5.2 Interview Design

This study had a qualitative nature and in-depth interviews were conducted. Nunan et al. (2020) explain that in these types of interviews, single participants are encouraged to uncover underlying motivations, beliefs, attitudes and feelings of a topic in an unstructured and direct manner. Most qualitative interviews have the purpose of deriving meaning through interpretations and not necessarily facts from participant talk. In-depth interviews involve a particular style of social and interpersonal interactions between the interviewer and the participant (Nunan et al., 2020). Semi-structured interviews consist of some planned questions, but other questions can still be created during the interviews (Collis & Hussey, 2014). Nunan et al. (2020) describe that consistent and highly structured questions are used in parts of the interview with set response categories. It intersperses with open-ended questions that involve

probes that suit the nature of the participant (Nunan et al., 2020). Researchers using the interpretivist perspective are concerned with exploring underlying explanations for the participants' decisions, attitudes, and opinions and they use either the unstructured or semi-structured format (Collis & Hussey, 2014). Bryman (2016) clarifies that when the fieldwork in a qualitative study is supposed to be carried out by more than one person, semi-structured interviews are usually preferred. It is a way to ensure comparability of the interviewing style. In semi-structured interviews, a list of issues to be addressed is conducted and it is crucial that the participants give space and flexibility in the interviews (Bryman, 2016).

As the interpretivist perspective was used in this study and it was decided that both the authors of this research will execute the interviews with the participants, semi-structured interviews were deemed most suitable. This will provide both relevance and depth to the collected data. It allowed the researchers to remember to bring up fundamental concepts and to ask spontaneous questions that could help to gain a deeper understanding of the underlying meaning of the respondents' answers.

Throughout all of the interviews, an interview guide was used to ensure that all areas of relevance for the topic were covered. As Collis and Hussey (2014) explained, semi-structured interviews consist of some planned questions but during the interviews, other questions can still be created (Collis & Hussey, 2014). While the questions were not always asked in the same order, the interview guide provided guidance and some questions were developed beforehand. The interview guide was divided into four different parts and the questions related to each area were provided in appendix 1.

3.5.2.1 Sections in the Interview Guide

The first part of the interview guide was based on introductory questions mainly focusing on the participants' age, gender and demographic to build trust between the interviewer and the participant. The other three sections in the interview guide were based on questions related to the purpose of the study.

The second section concerned the participants' clothing consumption, their objective of purchasing clothing, and which thoughts the participants have in mind when deciding upon a purchase. These kinds of questions were asked early in the interviews so that the participants

could explain their consumption behaviour before the concept of a CE and CF was introduced. This section was aiming to get a general overview and understanding of the participants' relation to fashion.

In the third section, the focus was on questions interrelated with the environment and CE. Here the participants were asked to explain their view on the environment, environmentally friendly products and what they knew about CE. The idea was to get insights from the participants about their viewpoint of the environment and their existing knowledge. Open-ended questions were used to leave the participant with room to express things in their own words and develop them further. Nunan et al. (2020) described the importance of using probing when conducting in-depth interviews, as it is a way to uncover hidden issues and obtain meaningful responses (Nunan et al., 2020). Therefore, the participants were asked these kinds of questions during their interviews to ensure that all valuable information was expressed and understood correctly.

The last part of the interview guide covered questions linked to the research questions. Questions were asked regarding the participants' attitudes toward CF, how they perceive the term CF and their inhibiting factors surrounding the consumption of CF. In this research, a decision was made to explain the definition of CE and CF to the participants. After the participants had answered questions about what they thought CE entailed, the interviewers then explained the correct definition to the participants. The same was done with the definition of CF when the participants had answered questions about what they thought was CF. The decision to explain the definitions helped the interviewers to provide a unanimous definition which continued to be followed in the interviews. This implies that everyone was on the same page regarding what CE and CF were. This helped to collect answers where the participants could explain their thoughts surrounding the concept instead of guessing what it meant. All sections in the interview guide were equally important for this research and had different purposes, although the last part was most linked to the purpose of this thesis. Throughout the interview guide, a funnel approach was used. This meant that for each section, the interview came closer to answering the research questions of this study.

3.5.3 Collecting Empirical Data

When collecting data with in-depth interviews, it is suggested to conduct the data physically since it will help attain as much information from the participant as possible (Troost, 2010). As

this thesis was conducted during the world pandemic Covid-19, it was decided to hold as many interviews as possible through video calls. The Public Health Agency of Sweden recommends limiting the number of encounters (Folkhälsomyndigheten, 2020). Due to the ongoing pandemic, it was decided that the in-depth interviews should primarily be held through video calls. In-depth interviews have the purpose of deriving meaning through interpretations. It does not necessarily have to be interpreted based on the participants' talk but rather their actions should be considered (Nunan et al., 2020). The authors are aware that not having the interviews in physical form could potentially affect the outcome of the data. However, it was decided that it is more important to take the proper precautions during the pandemic.

Interviews with the participants were scheduled to be executed for two weeks. On the 11th of March 2021, the first interview took place and the last one was held on the 23rd of March 2021. All the interviews began with an explanation of the purpose of the interview. Information about what the process will be like, the participants' privacy rights regarding GDPR and an explanation of the different sections in the interview were provided. The participants were also informed that there are no right and wrong answers. They were asked to answer as true to their heart as possible without considering others opinion reflecting their answers. As Saunders et al. (2016) suggested, at any time during the interview, the participants were allowed to abort and/or retract their given answers (Saunders et al., 2016). The participants were also asked whether it was okay to document the interview for transcription purposes. The recording began only after permission was granted and the interviews lasted between 40 and 53 minutes. Altogether, the recorded material from the interviews resulted in around 5,5 hours. Each interview was transcribed and sent to the individual for a member check after it was completed. The transcript became eligible for a full review after it was returned and accepted by the participant.

As the participants and the researchers in this study have Swedish as their native language, it was decided to conduct the interviews in Swedish. This allowed the interviewees to talk openly without the constraints that come with speaking a second language and avoiding any possible language barriers. Since the interviews and transcriptions were conducted in Swedish, translating the written answers into English was needed. As Nunan et al. (2020) explain, accurate translation of interview material can be tricky and can negatively affect the validity and accuracy of the data and results obtained. Therefore, the translation had to be treated with caution (Nunan et al., 2020). As a result, one of the researchers got the task to translate the

quotes from Swedish to English to ensure that the translation was accurate. After that, the other researcher in this study looked over the translation, compared it to the original Swedish edition, and made some necessary changes. Finally, after a discussion between the authors, the final translated material was identified. This method was thought to improve translation efficiency and trust in their accuracy.

3.5.4 General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)

The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) is a binding EU law that came into force on the 25th of May in 2018. It regulates how personal data may be processed within the EU to protect individuals' rights when processing, obtaining, holding and destroying personal data (Sveriges Riksdag, 2021). According to Article 30 of the Data Protection Regulation, the data controller is obligated to keep a register of the processing of personal data. Before each interview, a form was filled in confirming that the information from the interviews could be used in this research. The semi-structured in-depth interviews were introduced with information about the participants' rights and consent was always filled in before any questions were asked. In this thesis work, only the necessary data was kept. The gathered information was handled following the Jönköping International Business School (JIBS) guide for storing personal data and it was safely stored on the home folder on OneDrive provided by Jönköping University. The information was not transferred to a third party other than JIBS. When the thesis work was completed, personal data, including names and other identifying information, was deleted to anonymize superfluous data.

3.6 Data Analysis

When it comes to analysing qualitative data, there is no homogeneous approach that each study always uses. The approach applied to a study can vary depending on the research type and the most suitable for that specific case (Saunders et al., 2016). The structure of this analysis was somewhat structured. The data was analysed from an inductive based approach, meaning that it was less structured and relied more on interpretations than a deductive base (Saunders et al., 2016).

The fundamental analysis approach for this research was thematic analysis. This is effectively done through analysing and report themes within the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The themes were essential findings in the data in relation to the purpose of this research. To properly

analyse the data based on a thematic method, this research implemented the step-by-step guide created by Braun & Clarke (2006). The process began with becoming familiarized with the data. This is a vital step in analysing the data in order to understand the data's depth and breadth (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The data analysis started as soon as the collection began. The in-depth interviews were recorded and thereafter transcribed as quickly as possible. Although transcribing the recordings was time-consuming (Saunders et al., 2016), it helped understand the data better and to analyse the data further. After transcribing the recordings, the participants were able to read the transcript from their interview to confirm that the information in the transcript was correct. A problem that can occur from giving the participants the transcripts, is that they will want to correct their grammar or language (Saunders et al., 2016). Though this problem can occur, it felt more vital that the data used in this research was trustworthy and therefore, the transcripts were shown to the participants. After the transcripts were confirmed to be correct, the authors of this research were able to go through each transcript and re-read them multiple times thoroughly. This helped to become more familiar with both the participants' answer and the overall discussion of the data collection.

The next step is to generate initial codes from the data that could be interesting for the research (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Saunders et al. (2016) explain the importance of categorizing qualitative data because it will help with a relevant structure to further analyse the data (Saunders et al., 2016). Therefore, this thesis used codes based on the research questions to find relevant initial codes that could help the data to answer the purpose of this research. After finding multiple codes, it was time to search for relevant themes and reviewing them. This was done by combining similar codes and finding various levels of themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This research has a focus on finding themes through the initial codes that help explain the research questions and research purpose. This means that some themes became main themes and others became sub-categories. Some themes were also discarded because they were not suitable for the purpose of this research. The reviewing of the themes was done through both analysing based on the codes and based on the entire data set. The last steps were to define and name the themes and start to write the findings down. This overall step-by-step process helped to analyse the data collection and understand the findings in a more in-depth and thorough manner.

3.6.1 Quality of data

Guba and Lincoln (1985) argue that it is necessary to evaluate the data quality in qualitative research. Trustworthiness contains four parts, each of which is a criterion with equal importance to qualitative research. The four parts are credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Guba & Lincoln, 1985). It is not social scientists' role to conduct the absolute truth about the world, rather it should be viewed as a world where more than one possible outcome can occur (Walliman, 2006).

3.6.1.1 Credibility

Credibility refers to how well the result of the data can be interpreted by individuals with similar experiences and the representation of the participants by the researcher (Cope, 2014). To establish the credibility of a research, there needs to be an assurance that the research was carried out of principles of good practice. This can be done by offering the findings to the participants to gain confirmation that the collecting of data was correctly made (Walliman, 2006). In this research, there was a focus on creating credibility through displaying the whole process and the methods used during the data collection so that it became apparent how the study was conducted. There was also a focus on making sure the information collected was credible. This was done by involving the participants in reading the transcripts from the in-depth interviews to ensure that the information collected from the interviews was correct.

3.6.1.2 Transferability

Qualitative research is usually done through a concentrated and more profound study on a small group or specific individuals with similar characteristics. By producing a so-called "thick description" through qualitative research, there can be a more detailed explanation of a culture which can then be used to assert transferability to other cases (Walliman, 2006). In this thesis, the "thick description" was included in Chapter 1, where there is a thorough description of the research subject. Chapter 3 further gave an in-depth explanation of how, when and where the interviews were held.

When it comes to this research being transferable, the question of how transferable it needs to be was discussed. Graneheim and Lundman (2003) explain that the readers need to decide if the research is transferable or not to other settings as well. Guba (1981) also states that it does not have to be transferable at all times and places but it can be transferred if the amount of

which it exists. Therefore, it can be argued that the findings in this research do not have to be transferable to every case in the future. Transferability in this research had more to do with the readers' feelings of recognition when reading the research.

3.6.1.3 Dependability

Dependability refers to the idea that researchers should be able to ensure that the records are complete throughout the research process (Walliman, 2006). The research needs to be consistent, and dependability becomes a fundamental part of developing a stable research (Guba, 1981). This can be done by using an auditing approach to ensure that all the phases of the study were done properly (Walliman, 2006). Guba (1981) explains an auditing trail where the procedure of collecting and analysing the data is described in detail. In this research, an auditing trail has been made in two parts. The first part is the explanations made in Chapter 3. In this chapter, the collection process and the analysing procedure was thoroughly explained. This will help readers evaluate how this research was executed and then decide whether it is valid. The second part of the auditing trail is making sure that the ongoing process of making this study was executed correctly. This was done through our peers, who reviewed and commented on the research during the execution. The students helped gain more objectivity and dependability. Having the process explained and having people examine the work during the process, helped increase the dependability of this research.

3.6.1.4 Conformability

Confirmability focuses on the researcher's ability to be unbiased in the research and that they have reacted in good faith throughout the process. It should be evident how the researchers' views and theoretical predispositions affect the study's outcome (Walliman, 2006). There should be a demonstration in the research that the findings and the conclusion that were determined are based on collecting data directly and not through the researchers' viewpoints (Cope, 2014). Although there is an importance in the research being made without the authors' opinions and perspectives, it should also be noted that qualitative research is not usually made to be entirely replicable because of alterations in context (Saunders et al., 2016). However, there still needs to be a confirmability where the research can be recreated. In this research Chapter 3 will again be a vital part in giving a lot of information regarding the process behind the interviews to be objective in the research. Further, all the conclusions made in this research are drawn based on the findings presented in Chapter 4.

4. Findings

The following chapter will present themes and explanations identified in the empirical findings from the conducted interviews. Citations from the participants' responses are also provided to support each theme and explanation.

The purpose of this research is to gain a greater understanding of Swedish fashion consumers' attitudes towards circular fashion and what consumers feel prevents them from consuming CF. To fulfil the purpose, two research questions were formulated, and they lay the base for the analysis of the empirical findings. Research question number one is “*What are the Swedish fashion consumers attitudes towards CF?*” and research question number two is “*Why are the inhibiting factors affecting Swedish fashion consumers' consumption of CF?*”. To create a more thorough analysis of the data collection, this study also analysed the amount of knowledge the participants had regarding CE and CF. This helped draw more comprehensive conclusions. When analysing what the participants' attitudes were towards CF, everyone liked the idea of CF and was interested in purchasing it. Depending on how familiar they were with the concept, the reason behind the willingness to purchase CF differed. However, many stated concerns regarding CF, specifically participants who currently did not know much about the concept. The analysis also revealed three themes that inhibited Swedish fashion consumers' consumption of CF and the reasons why the inhibiting factors affect Swedish fashion consumers. The three themes of inhibiting factors were in this research found to be (1) price, (2) lack of knowledge and (3) perception. These factors were further analysed into sub-categories that helped explain why they affect Swedish fashion consumers consumption behaviour of CF.

4.1 Swedish Consumers' Knowledge about CE and CF

To understand the participants' viewpoint of CF, they were first asked about their knowledge of CE and CF. This helped to gain an enhanced understanding of their familiarity with the concepts and their views and opinions about them. It also gave the researchers a chance to explain the definition of both concepts to those who did not know what CE and CF was or what it contained. When analysing the interviews, some of the participants had heard about CE before and understood the concept.

“CE for me is about getting materials back into the society again after it has been used, instead of the straight line with raw materials that turns into products that is being used and then thrown away. After the product is being used you want it to return to the process of being a raw material or to be recycled. That is in short what CE is for me.” (P5)

Others had heard the word CE before but did not know what it entailed, and some did not have any knowledge about it.

“Yes, I have heard about it but now we need to make sure I say it correctly here. Hm, CE, doesn’t it have to do something with that it goes around like in an ecosystem?” (P3)

“Circular ergonomic, economy haha, no that I can’t really say what it is.” (P2)

After the participants had described what they believed CE was, the interviewers explained the definition to everyone to create a unanimous understanding of what it entailed. Before explaining the definition of CF, the participants were asked to explain what they believed CF was and what they associated the concept with. Similar to CE, some participants knew about CF and had examples of CF brands. Many participants had some ideas of what the CF industry could include. Some participants were at first relating it to second hand.

“I then think of recycling, second hand and secondary markets.” (P3)

“[...] but then also that it becomes a circular thing like when you sell clothes further or give it away so that it doesn’t just get thrown into garbage cans so that you clean out and like buy new.” (P7)

“[...] I think very much about taking back old clothes, like buying very much second hand, build outfits from there, taking back old trends that only can be found in second hand stores.” (P8)

Many also mentioned recycled materials and products.

“Well, when you explain it, then I think about some kind of company that makes a fabric out of recycled pet bottles or something, that you reuse some kind of material or a clothing item.” (P2)

“I think it is really interesting when there are bikinis being made out of old pet bottles that they have found in the ocean, it is supercool, keep it up!” (P6)

“It is possible to reuse fabrics, to make new clothing items and old things like only look at Podin, Bode, like those clothing brands, they take like ancient objects that they make into new clothes, that is very cool.” (P7)

In conclusion, there were some variations in terms of how much knowledge each participant had regarding CE. After the definition of a CE was explained, most participants could give various examples of what the term CF included. Even some of the participants who were unfamiliar with CF or CE described ideas of what they believed to be CF which was very similar to the definition itself. This can conclude that although not everyone was familiar with the concepts of CE and CF, they knew products that would be a part of the concept. After this section in the interview, the interviewers explained the entire definition for the participants in order to have a unanimous definition of CF for the continuation of the interview. In this way, everyone understood what CF included, which helped to get more thorough answers from the participants.

4.2 Swedish Consumers’ Attitudes Towards Circular Fashion

The participants were asked about their views and opinions about CF products in order to answer research question number one: *“What are the Swedish fashion consumers attitudes towards CF?”*. This section will discuss both the attitudes of knowledgeable participants who already purchase CF, and unknowledgeable participants. The unknowledgeable participants were then divided into participants who purchase CF and participants who do not.

4.2.1 Knowledgeable Participants

Two of the participants knew about CF before their interviews and explained that they would usually purchase CF products. One of them expressed an interest in purchasing CF clothing due to the uniqueness of it.

“It is all I want, really! I think it is partly because it is more of a unique clothing item. It is not mass production that everyone on the street has and it is more fun to stand out a little.” (P7)

The participant’s feelings of wanting to have rare clothing can be resolved through purchasing CF. The two participants who usually purchase CF products explained that the reasoning behind purchasing more remanufactured CF products and second hand is because they found it to be better for the environment.

“It is why I also purchase a lot of vintage but also because it is more sustainable and better for the environment.” (P7)

“[...] and then I try as much as possible to purchase clothes that are at least recycled, especially if it is polyester but I try to avoid that material as it comes from plastic.” (P6)

One reason for the participants’ interests in CF products was caused by their awareness of it being better for the environment. The participants want the fashion products to be environmentally friendly, making CF products an alternative for them. Not only did the participants that already purchased CF mention positive experiences from previous purchases of both remanufactured CF and second hand, they also spoke very positively about future purchases as well.

“[...] as long as it still suits me and that it is still my style, I do not see any downside with it.” (P7)

“I try to purchase as much as possible from circular brands already, and I am very interested to see more of this.” (P6)

There is an overall liking in remanufactured CF and it is seen as something fun and futuristic. They enjoy purchasing both remanufactured CF and second hand and are already very interested in the concept. Both the participants who had knowledge about CF and usually purchased CF products explained that they put a lot of time and effort into seeking information about the environment, the fashion industry, and what the companies express on their websites regarding sustainability.

“I am reading a lot about the industry and I like to look at webpages about which circular brands that exists and how I can match the clothing with things I have in my wardrobe.” (P7)

“I would say that I have got a broad understanding about the environment through my education regarding, social, ecological and sustainability and I have a very big interest in it. I read a lot myself.” (P6)

“If it's a new brand that I have not seen before, I usually go in and check where they are from and if they have any webpage where it says about their brand and ethics. I think that if it says nothing about it, it is probably not so good. I think those who work with this simply write about it and I try to find out as much as possible.” (P6)

When discussing remanufactured CF, one participant (P7) who already purchased CF and who overall declared that they had a huge interest in the fashion industry, argued that remanufactured CF is the future of the fashion industry.

“I think that remanufactured CF is only the beginning of a new type of fashion-construction. It will arise more brands providing the consumers with remanufactured CF, this will lead to lower prices of these garments that is better for the environment and it will be easier to shop these kinds of products. I think that CF and circular textiles really is the new thing in the fashion industry and it is something that will grow and become even bigger in the future.” (P7)

The participants who knew about CF and already purchased it had much knowledge about CF overall. Their interest in fashion stretches both from wanting to consume fashion and learning

as much as possible about the industry. However, though they contain much knowledge about CF, it does not mean that it is always easy to consume. One of the participants who usually purchased CF products and specifically second hand explained that sometimes stores do not have the supply that the participant is looking for.

“I love to shop in second hand stores, but it is just that Jönköping has lousy supply, we just have Erikshjälpen and I am there and check sometimes as well but then in Stockholm it is much better. Then they are divine in the U.S.! Damn, I have shopped so much there!” (P7)

The participants who were aware of CF and usually purchased CF mentioned that they try to prioritize it while shopping for clothes. They also mentioned that their experiences with remanufactured CF and second hand purchases had only been positive. These participants’ attitudes were to consume CF in order to fulfil their desire of doing better for the environment. One of the participants described that the main reason for consuming CF is that it provides unique clothes different from what everyone on the street wear. They also described that they devote a significant amount of time to read about the environment, sustainable fashion consumption, and CF brands. Both participants expressed an interest in purchasing these type of fashion products in the future as well. However, it was also mentioned that second hand stores sometimes had a lack of supply which was a concern for the participant.

4.2.2 Unknowledgeable Participants

Of the participants who were unknowledgeable about CF, two groups of people were identified. Those who purchased CF without knowing about the concept and those who did not know about CF and did not purchase it either. Therefore, it was decided to divide these two groups of individuals and investigate the findings of them separately.

4.2.2.1 Consumers of CF

Some participants did not know about the concept of CF before the interview. Still, after explaining the concept to them, they realized that they already do purchase either remanufactured CF or second hand occasionally.

“Yeah right, it has opened a lot of nice second hand stores in Stockholm that I have enjoyed to purchase from as it feels like walking into a store with brand new clothes but it is second hand.” (P4)

“[...] but both H&M and Åhlens has like “made from recycled material” collections and I think that it is super fun to purchase clothes that are like that because the feeling it gives me is more special. I enjoy to say “this is an old plastic bag that I am wearing.” (P8)

They purchased CF products without knowing about the term before the interview, which indicates that the consumption is not connected to the concept itself but rather connected to their need and want of that specific fashion item. Their attitude is that they like CF products when it meets what they are searching for in a fashion item. However, concerns about second hand were expressed, indicating that the willingness to purchase second hand depends on what kind of second hand store it is.

“Yes if it is a bit more nicer place to go to, I have a hard time going to “Myrorna” for example. I go there to purchase books, but clothes feel hard in that kind of place, so for me it has to be a more nice store if I am going to purchase from there. Then it will be fun!” (P4)

This participant continues to explain that second hand stores need to be more luxurious for them to purchase second hand. This indicates that the second hand stores need to have a certain aesthetic and atmosphere that will make consumers interested. It is not enough to only sell second hand clothes; it needs to be a store where the consumers enjoy shopping. Further, these participants revealed that they like remanufactured CF because they enjoy the feeling of wearing a garment that used to be something else in the past. However, some also stated concerns about remanufactured CF being unclean. One participant mentioned they would purchase remanufactured CF, but it depends on what it has been before.

“But if the products that was handed in and recycled is remanufactured and used in a new production, I don’t mind what kind of product it used to be. As long as it is not dirty boxers or something like that, that have been remanufactured.” (P3)

When it comes to participants who purchase CF without knowing what the concept entails, they show a willingness to purchase CF products because it gives all the benefits and characteristics that the participant is looking for in a fashion item. Their consumption of CF products focuses on a search for a product they want and suits them, which in the end happens to be circular rather than searching for CF products. They explained interest in both remanufactured CF and second hand, but they also stated concern surrounding what type of second hand stores to purchase and what the remanufactured CF has been in the past.

4.2.2.2 Non-consumers of CF

Some participants did not know what CF was and currently do not purchase these kinds of clothing items. Although a purchasing behaviour is not executed from these participants, they all indicated that it sounds great and could potentially purchase CF in the future. This implies that they are potential consumers of CF, and therefore, it is important to understand their attitudes towards it. One participant described a want to explore CF and was interested in purchasing CF clothes.

“I think that it is great, and it is something, like you become more familiar with it now here with you, but it is something I have thought about that I want to find brands who thinks of this but as a consumer you have to dig into it yourself and really find brands that actually thinks of this” (P2)

Another participant expressed that as long as the characteristics and benefits that the participants were looking for in a fashion item do not decrease, they would purchase remanufactured CF.

“It is a good concept. I would say that if I have an item that is made out of remanufactured CF and one from traditional fashion, I would, assuming that it is not a super big price difference, I would buy CF then.” (P1)

There is an importance for the price point of the CF clothing to not exceed the price range that the participants usually pay for their clothing. Similar to unknowledgeable participants who consumed CF, participants who did not purchase CF expressed that it would be fun to wear a

clothing item that once used to be something else. As long as the item still was in the right style and suits them well.

“Sure, had I gone to a store or seen online that it is a recycled item that once was a suitcase that had been made into a sweater then it is very fun as long as I still find the sweater nice to wear.” (P3)

“I think that if the fit does not suit me, I will not buy it because then I won’t use it and then it becomes an item that will just stay in my wardrobe” (P5)

The concern regarding the need for the CF item to still have all the characteristics and benefits that the participants were looking for was something multiple participants expressed. One participant stated that if an item were more environmentally friendly, it would be more of a bonus but other characteristics that the participant was looking for was more important.

“Yes well, I think it’s still quite important, that it needs to suit me and unfortunately the environmental aspect only becomes a bonus.” (P2)

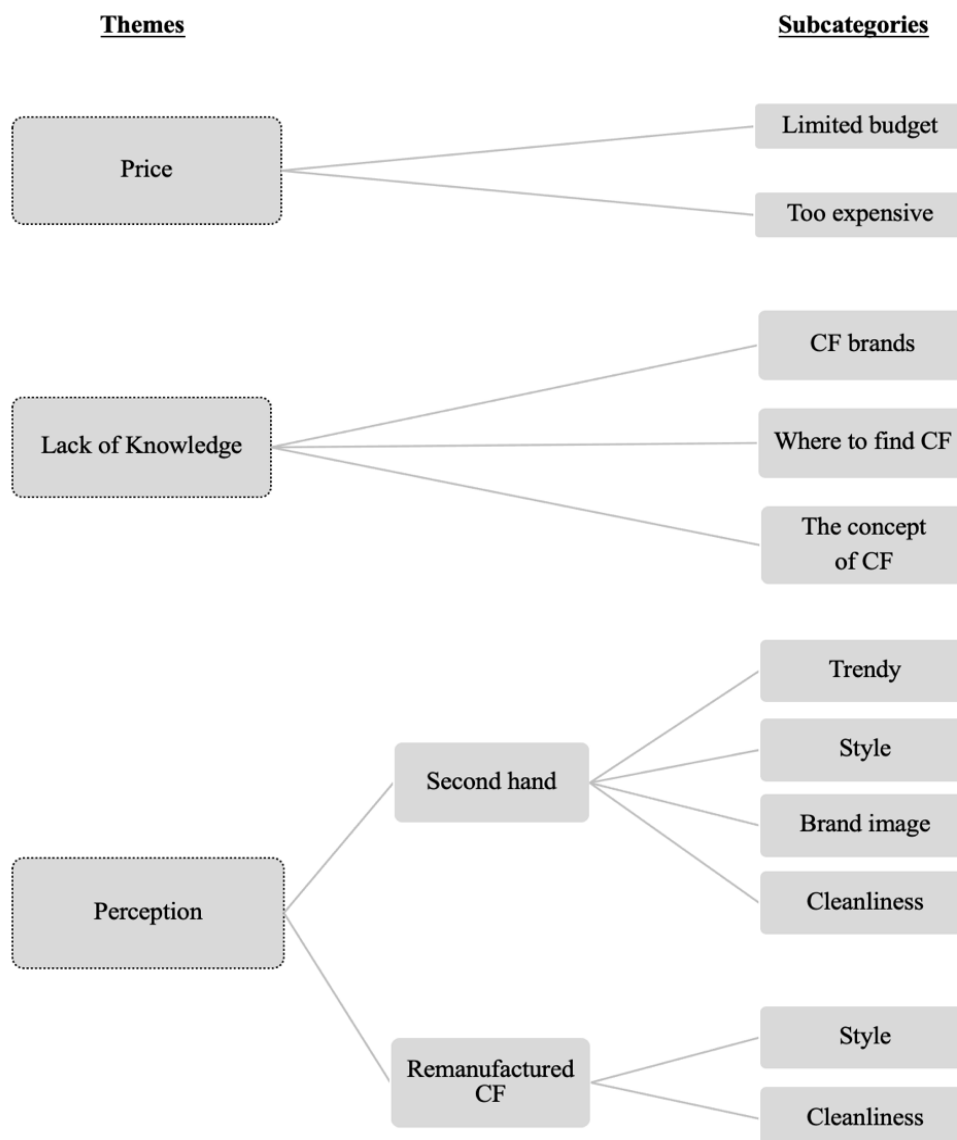
The participants that were non-consumers of CF describes an interest in consuming CF in the future. CF products, specifically remanufactured CF is seen as something exciting and a fun idea. This confirms that although some participants do not consume CF currently, they are potential consumers of CF in the future. Non-consumers of CF express a liking for CF overall, but they also have some concerns about it. There is a significant importance that a fashion item has all the characteristics that the consumer is looking for. Some participants voiced their worries that CF products would not have all the traits they were looking for. Further, it was found that the environmental aspect becomes more of a bonus rather than a characteristic that the consumer is looking for.

4.3 Inhibiting Factors of CF Consumption

Research question number two is *“Why are the inhibiting factors affecting Swedish fashion consumers’ consumption of CF?”*. After analysing the empirical findings, it was found that price, lack of knowledge and perception were the main inhibiting factors affecting Swedish fashion consumers’ consumption of CF. Although participants had various experiences of

consuming CF, they were all interested in the concept for future purchases. This implies that their answers gave important insights into what and why some factors would inhibit their consumption of CF. The reasoning explaining why these themes affect Swedish fashion consumers consumption behaviours will be clarified in the following sections. The three themes of inhibiting factors affecting Swedish fashion consumers' consumption of CF products and their sub-categories are displayed in table 2.

Table 2: Inhibiting Consumption Factors



4.3.1 Price

Throughout the interviews, the concern of price was brought up multiple times. The data collection shows that the participants see price as an inhibiting factor for consuming CF. Findings can conclude that the reason why price affects CF's consumption is that many participants see CF as expensive while others express that they do not have the budget. It was also found that price becomes an inhibiting factor depending on their view of CF. These reasons will be further discussed below.

4.3.1.1 Too Expensive and Limited Budget

Many participants mentioned that they were scared that CF was too expensive. It should be noted that when discussing a too expensive price, it differs with each participant. The participants who already purchased CF products and the participants who currently did not purchase CF voiced their worry about a too high price compared to their usual price range and how much they usually spend on clothing. However, the price range varies depending on what the participants are used to purchase a fashion item for. This indicates that there is no unanimous price range that would be seen as a too high price for everyone but rather that the opinion most participants have about CF is that it will be a too high price compared to what they would normally spend.

One participant who did not already purchase CF mentioned that they would purchase CF unless the fashion item were too expensive for them.

"If I decide between an item that is made out of CF and one from traditional fashion I would, assuming that it is not a super big price difference, buy CF." (P1)

Similarly, another participant who did not purchase CF stated that the price range affects their consumption behaviour.

"The price range of the garment also matters, that is something that could make me decide to not purchase that specific clothing item. " (P5)

This shows that the participants' that currently are non-consumers of CF feel price inhibits them because CF is seen as too expensive. Further, the participants who already purchase CF

products also expressed price as an inhibiting factor for consuming CF. However, the price is not described as too expensive rather as a price that does not fit their limited budget. They have the attitude of wanting to purchase CF products but does not always do it because it does not fit their current budget.

“I already do it. It is just moneywise I cannot always afford brands like Bode.” (P7)

“[...] then I could purchase for the reason that it is a cool company that invests in CF but then to not purchase a t-shirt from H&M for 50 SEK will take some time before I am there, it all depends on what kind of wallet you have, for a student like me it is hard to prioritize to pay higher prices” (P8)

This indicates that a product needs to have a price suitable for the consumers' budget. The price point is essential for many of the participants. One participant also states that they purchase CF products in the capacity they can afford even though they might not always have the budget for it.

“ I really don't have the possibility to do it because I am still a student but in a way it feels more justified to put more money when I know it is a good clothing item...then price has an important part but I still feel like purchasing one good thing rather than three bad then I would buy the good one. I am that interested in the subject so that goes before the price really.” (P6)

The price of CF is an inhibiting factor for Swedish fashion consumers' consumption of CF because it is seen as too expensive, and participants feel that they have a limited budget. The findings indicated that depending on how much the participants already purchased, the price will inhibit the participants' consumption of CF differently. Non-consumers of CF were more concerned about CF being too expensive. Knowledgeable consumers who purchased CF and unknowledgeable consumers who purchased CF were more concerned about their limited budget. However, it should be noted that there is a difference between participants who already purchase CF and participants who do not purchase CF currently. Some of the participants who already purchased CF expressed their thoughts about why price inhibits them based on previous experiences. Some participants had not purchased CF before and stated concerns about price based on their viewpoint of CF. This indicates that some participants only assume that the price

is too high for them without any actual knowledge of CF prices. Nevertheless, it creates an inhibiting factor because of their viewpoint of CF prices.

4.3.1.2 Viewpoint of CF

To continue these observations, participants viewpoint of CF was shown to be an important topic when discussing price. Depending on how they viewed CF, the participants were willing to pay more or less for CF. The viewpoint differs depending on if the product is remanufactured CF or second hand. When purchasing CF products in terms of second hand, another participant mentioned that price is important as the garment is being compared to a new one and the price point of it. The decision is then based on whether it is worth purchasing a used garment than a brand new one.

”The price is still important for me when thinking about second hand clothing but often these garments are a lot cheaper than what I usually spend on brand new clothing so of course the price is of importance as you are thinking of if it is more worth to purchase a new garment. So, the price will affect my decision but more in terms of that I will compare for example a used blouse for 200 SEK, that is what a new one costs at H&M, is it then worth to purchase the used one or should I buy something brand new?” (P4)

The findings show that participants wanted second hand to be cheaper than a new CF garment. Their viewpoint of second hand and remanufactured CF affects how much they are willing to purchase CF for.

In conclusion, a too expensive price and a limited budget inhibit Swedish fashion consumers’ consumption of CF. Consumers who already purchase CF express their concerns about price based on previous experience, while consumers who do not purchase CF express their concerns based on their view of CF. It is also important to note that a consumer wants second hand to be cheaper than remanufactured CF Overall, participants in this study want to purchase CF, but price inhibits this desire because of expensive prices and limited budget. Price also inhibits participants based on what their viewpoint on price compared to what type of CF product it is.

4.3.2 Lack of Knowledge

During the interviews, questions about the knowledge the participants had about the clothing industry, environmentally friendly brands, and the environment were asked multiple times. The interviews revealed that the lack of knowledge inhibits consumers from consuming CF. This was further analysed into three sub-categories that explain why the lack of knowledge affects Swedish fashion consumers' consumption of CF. There was a lack of knowledge about CF brands and where they could purchase CF. There was also a lack of knowledge about the overall concept of CF. When analysing the data, the findings also explained how potential consumers lack knowledge about CF. It was explained that laziness and the social and cultural surroundings affect potential consumers' lack of knowledge about CF. This will be further explained below.

4.3.2.1 Why Knowledge Inhibits Consumption

Multiple participants explained that the most significant reason they do not purchase CF products was their lack of knowledge. However, the data collection indicates that there are different reasons why knowledge becomes an inhibiting factor. Firstly, one participant explained that they did not have enough knowledge about what brands that produce CF.

“The biggest reason is probably that I don't know producers or like which brands who sell CF or not.” (P5)

The lack of knowledge that the participant had about CF brands inhibits the consumption of CF because, without this knowledge, it becomes hard to know what to look for. Even though this participant has expressed an interest in CF earlier in the interview, it became clear that the lack of knowledge about CF brands prevented this participant from consuming CF. Secondly, another participant expressed a lack of knowledge about where to find CF.

“Yes, but I could probably purchase clothes, jeans, pants. It is probably more that I have never done it before and I don't really have that much knowledge about on which platforms you can buy it.” (P3)

The participant expressed that they would consume CF clothes, but their lack of knowledge about where to find CF inhibits their consumption. This confirms the importance of having

enough knowledge about CF to be able to consume it. Lastly, the data also showed that there is not just a lack of knowledge about what brands produce CF or where to find CF. There is also a lack of knowledge about the concept of CF. One participant mentioned not knowing the concept of CF when asked why they do not purchase CF.

“Eh, because I’m not aware that it exists.” (P1)

Although all participants expressed an interest in CF earlier in their interviews, some participants lack knowledge about the concept of CF, which inhibits Swedish fashion consumers from consuming CF. Without knowing that CF exists, potential consumers are not aware of the environmental benefits that CF could make. Though participants in this study are interested in the environment, the participants who did not know about CF are not aware of the environmental benefits of CF.

The findings show the importance of knowing about CF. Without knowing what brands to look for or where to find CF prevents potential consumers from consuming CF. Further, the findings show the vital importance of knowing the concept of CF. Some potential consumers do not know about CF, but they express an interest in CF products when learning about it. Therefore, the lack of knowledge becomes an inhibiting factor for Swedish fashion consumers’ consumption of CF.

4.3.2.2 Potential Consumers Lack of Knowledge

Previously in the findings, it was explained that participants who knew much about CF and already purchased CF put much time and effort into seeking information themselves. They search for knowledge about the environment, the fashion industry and what companies are expressing regarding sustainability. However, this is not the case when it comes to participants with a lack of knowledge. Some participants explain why they do not know more about CF products, and the different reasons the participants were mentioning varies. One participant explained that not having enough knowledge about CF products was due to lethargy.

“I think that it is because people are lazy, you don’t have the energy to search and dig into it and yeah, laziness and being unknowledgeable prevents people from purchasing CF.” (P2)

Potential consumers are lazy, which means that they will not search for information or find knowledge about CF themselves. This could explain how many potential consumers lack knowledge about different aspects of CF. There were also statements about the social surroundings being a reason as to why they do not know about CF. One participant describes the environment around them as a reason for not knowing what CF products are.

“Or it’s because I haven’t hanged out in those forums so circular conversations have never been part of my surroundings. It has never been the talk around the table with those I have been hanging out with. If I think about commercials or so, then it isn’t until currently that commercials about circular product have started to be presented in the feed. I haven’t had it my everyday life before.” (P3)

In conclusion, the findings suggest that the participants who already knew about CF and already purchased CF products did not express knowledge as an inhibiting factor. However, the participants who had not heard about CF before stated that lack of knowledge was the main reason why they did not consume more CF. The lack of knowledge about CF differs individually, and it can affect consumers in different ways. It can inhibit Swedish fashion consumers’ consumption of CF, based on how much knowledge they have of brands, platforms or even the concept of CF overall. This further indicates that consumers do not have enough information about where to purchase, what to look for, which brand is circular, and how beneficial CF can be for the environment. The participants explain that the lack of knowledge could have been generated from laziness or not having a social and cultural environment around them where this subject was discussed. Nevertheless, this creates an inhibiting factor for Swedish fashion consumers consumption behaviour towards CF.

4.3.3 Perception

The findings in this thesis also found an inhibiting factor based on a cultural aspect. The analysis of the data shows that perception is an inhibiting factor for Swedish fashion consumers that affects their consumption behaviour of CF products. Depending on how their viewpoint of CF is, it will affect their consumption behaviour of CF products. What was also found in this research is that the participants have different perceptions of second hand and remanufactured CF. The following sections will therefore be divided into second hand and remanufactured CF to explain why perception affects Swedish fashion consumers consumption of CF. It should be

noted that perception was not an inhibiting factor for knowledgeable participants. Even if some of them were more willing to purchase remanufactured CF than second hand, it never affected their consumption behaviour towards CF. Therefore, it can be concluded that consumers with more knowledge about CF, had a better perception of CF overall.

4.3.3.1 Second Hand

As mentioned above, many viewed CF as second hand, and it was the first thing many thought about when learning what CF was. Their perception of second hand affects their consumption behaviour of CF. There were concerns regarding how trendy it was, how the style of the clothes was, if it had the right brand image and the cleanliness of the products.

One participant explained that they did not purchase second hand because they had the perception that second hand was not a trend in the society. However, they also mentioned that they believed second hand is starting to become more of a trend, making second hand more enjoyable. This has resulted in the participant being more interested in the idea of consuming second hand.

“It is really positive but I have experienced before that maybe it has been non-trendy to wear reused clothing but now it starts to become much more trendy to reuse clothing. Now clothing is supposed to be used for a long time and you are supposed to mend your things. It feels like it is starting to become more trendy again. I feel that second hand needs to be trendy in order to make it work.” (P3)

Another participant expressed an increased interest in second hand since it has become more of a trend. However, participants are also particular about what places they would purchase second hand from. Not only do the clothes need to be trendy, participants also expressed the importance of the stores having a trendy feeling.

“I think about how trendy it has become with second hand, like Vinokilo, that kind of second hand where you weigh the clothes and other places where they sell well-chosen and trendy second hand clothes.” (P8)

This shows the cultural importance of second hand being trendy in terms of the clothes, the store and the brand image overall. A trend can make a consumer more willing to purchase second hand. This also indicates that it is not the clothing item that prevents the consumer from purchasing second hand, but rather how trendy it is and the perception of second hand overall. However, when discussing the trendiness of second hand, the need for second hand clothing to have the right style and brand image was mentioned. It shows the importance of the perception of second hand in terms of the right style and right brand image. This was further found in other parts of the interviews as well.

“Ehm but sometimes I feel that it is hard to find clothes that matches my style...absolutely if purchasing something new that is made from recycled materials, like then you could probably find something, but if I only go for reusing someone else’s, then I believe that it’s hard to find just because of that reason, it is not garbage I would say, but it is a lot of stuff that you cannot use. It is clothes, but not necessarily clothes that is my style.” (P8)

“I think I purchase from my favourite brands because of the image of the companies. That is something that you do not get from second hand stores, for example, “Myrorna”. I think partly I don’t think they have as much fun things if I can be honest. But also that everything is just thrown up, it just hangs there and it is so messy.” (P4)

It is essential for the participants that the clothes that they purchase have the right style and image. This is a requirement for most participants, whether it is a CF product or not. Without the right style and brand image, the consumer will not purchase second hand. It is also important to note that there is a perception that second hand does not have their wanted style or right brand image. Due to the perception of second hand not being trendy, not having the right style, and not having the right brand image inhibits the consumption of CF. Another category affecting the Swedish fashion consumers’ consumption behaviour towards CF is the perception that second hand is unclean. Participants expressed concerns regarding the cleanliness of the items of second hand. The participants explained that they did not like the idea of wearing someone else’s old clothes. They additionally explained that it felt unclean to purchase second hand clothing.

“Oh I don’t know, like with second hand I have not been so keen on wearing something that somebody who I don’t know have breathed in.” (P3)

“I have sold some items on marketplace, like outdoor furniture and that kind stuff but when it comes to clothes it doesn’t feel very fresh... and you do not know who has worn it before.” (P4)

There is an overall concern that second hand clothing is filthy and unclean. This kind of perception prevents the consumers from consuming CF because they do not like the idea of wearing someone else’s clothes.

The perception of second hand creates an inhibiting factor for Swedish fashion consumers’ consumption of CF. The most important viewpoints that affect the consumption of second hand are trendiness, style, brand image, and cleanliness. Depending on how the consumer views these perceptions, it will affect their consumption of second hand and, therefore, their consumption of CF overall. It is also worth mentioning that with second hand being the first idea many of the participants thought about, indicates that the perception of second hand can affect how most consumers perceive CF overall. Therefore, it inhibits consumption of CF based on the perception of second hand.

4.3.3.2 Remanufactured CF

Although many participants first thought about second hand when hearing about CF, another part of the concept is remanufactured CF. During the interviews, it was clear that the participants also had a particular perception of remanufactured CF that inhibits the consumption of CF. After analysing the data from the interviews, it can be concluded that although there was a better perception of remanufactured CF than second hand, some viewpoints inhibited Swedish fashion consumers from consuming CF. Style and cleanliness were again essential factors that could inhibit the consumption of CF. However, contrary to second hand, the participants did not mention any concerns about remanufactured CF being not trendy or not having the right brand image. This indicates that the remanufactured CF is seen as a fashionable alternative, and this could also explain why more participants have better perceptions about remanufactured CF than second hand.

When hearing about the concept of CF, some participants firstly thought about remanufactured CF. They continued to explain that this is something they would enjoy purchasing and would be interested to further look into.

“If you know that a product comes from a good producer like, that it is made out of recycled material or similar, and that it is produced in a good way but also the recycling process is good as well, then I don’t see anything negative with purchasing remanufactured CF.” (P5)

“Yes, well a big reason as to why I purchase from Nu-In is that they focus a lot on this, partly with recycling materials and also that they have started a production that will be able to take old clothes, tear it down and make it into new products and this is something I want to see more of.” (P6)

Overall, there was more acceptance to consume remanufactured CF than second hand. The perception was better for remanufactured CF than for second hand. However, some participants had concerns regarding remanufactured CF, which created a perception of remanufactured CF that inhibits them from consuming it. Similarly, to second hand there was a concern for the remanufactured clothes not having the right style.

“CF can provide me with clothes, but maybe not the type of clothes that I want. So that can be a reason why I search for traditionally produced clothes that I think is nicer and that suits me, because it is easier to find traditionally produced clothes than something that is reused or recycled.” (P8)

The perception that it will be hard to find remanufactured CF with the right style inhibits the consumer from consuming CF. They would like to purchase more CF, but they are concerned that the clothes will not have the same style as they would get from traditional brands. Another participant stated concerns about the cleanliness of the product as well.

“But if the products that was handed in and recycled is remanufactured and used in a new production, I don’t mind what kind of product it used to be. As long as it is not dirty boxers or something like that that have been remanufactured.” (P3)

The perception of remanufactured CF is an inhibiting factor for Swedish fashion consumers' consumption habits of CF. If they perceived remanufactured CF as a product with the wrong style and as an unclean product, the participants would not purchase it. There is more openness towards remanufactured CF than second-hand, and the perception of the two still plays a role in Swedish fashion consumers consumption behaviour. The participants' perceptions of CF overall have an impact on the consumption of CF. With a perception that describes CF in more negative lighting, will make the participants unwilling to purchase CF.

5. Analysis

In this chapter, the empirical findings from the semi-structured interviews will be interpreted and compared with the examined literature to make credible conclusions. Based on previous research presented in the literature review, both similarities and differences will be illustrated. The chapter begins with summarizing the findings regarding the participants' attitudes towards CF products. It further continues by summarizing why the three identified themes affect consumers' consumption behaviour of CF products.

The gathered empirical data aided in discovering insights into this research's purpose, which was to gain a greater understanding of Swedish fashion consumers' attitudes towards CF, and what consumers feel prevents them from consuming CF. Some participants already purchase CF while others did not currently purchase it, but all the participants expressed a liking and an interest in CF. There were different reasons as to why they purchase CF or why they would like to purchase it depending on how familiar they were with the concept and their usual consumption habits of CF. Many explained some concern they had about consuming CF. The concerns the participants had were also different depending on how familiar they were with CF.

The inhibiting factors preventing Swedish fashion consumers consumption of CF were divided into three themes: price, knowledge and perception. Further, the different reasons as to why it affects consumers' consumption behaviour were explored. There are some parallels between the findings in this study and previous literature on consumers' behaviour regarding sustainable fashion. However, some observations have not been identified in the literature before, and others are incongruent. The analysis of the empirical findings will be further discussed below.

5.1 Participants' Attitude towards CF

When analysing Swedish fashion consumers attitudes towards CF, it was found that all the participants expressed a liking and an interest in purchasing CF. Some participants already purchased CF regularly, while others did not. However, participants also stated different reasons why they were interested in CF, which could be linked to how familiar they were with CF. Participants who know about CF and purchase it regularly were motivated by the uniqueness and environmental benefits of the clothing. Participants who purchased CF without knowing about the concept purchased it because they found an item that suits them, and it

happens to be CF. This can conclude that depending on how familiar consumers are with CF, the motivation as to why they purchase CF will be different. The more a consumer knows about CF, the more they know about the benefits with it, which makes it easier to make a more comprehensive purchasing decision.

The participants also had different concerns surrounding consuming CF. Their attitudes differed depending on how much they currently are consuming CF and how much knowledge they have about the CF industry. Knowledgeable participants had concerns about the supply. Unknowledgeable participants who purchased CF without knowing had mostly concerns about second hand. Lastly, unknowledgeable participants who did not purchase CF were primarily concerned about not finding items with all the qualifications they were searching for. This shows that the more knowledge a participant had about CF, the more focus it was on finding CF rather than having concerns about the product. When they did not know anything about CF, the concerns were on a basic level, stating that they needed clothes with all the benefits they were looking for. When some participants had more experience with CF, they were not concerned about the benefits of the clothes but rather about where to find clothes that they liked. They know that CF items can have the right style for them, they just need to find it. Participants who had much experience with CF knew where to purchase items that they like and that match their needs, but they were more concerned about the supply of CF. This concludes that the more a consumer knows about CF, the more information they have about where to find what they are searching for, making it easier to find suitable items.

Knowledgeable participants never stated a problem of finding CF clothing that they like, nor have they had problems with finding clothing with the right qualifications. This further indicates that it has nothing to do with CF not having various brands and styles that would suit many different people. However, it has more to do with the perception the consumer has about CF. When they believe CF does not have all the qualifications or find items that suit them, they will not search for further information about it because they believe their perception is the truth.

Vehmas et al. (2018) conducted a research where all participants liked the idea of CF and could see themselves purchase it, even though not everyone purchased it currently. This is also comparable to Park and Lin (2020), who identified that despite people in their study had a positive perception about circular products, not all of them purchased it. The research in this thesis found similar findings to previous literature. All the participants in this research stated

that they liked the idea of CF and are interested in purchasing it. They saw themselves as potential consumers of CF. However, it was also clear that most participants did not act on this kind of attitude when consuming clothing. This concludes that many like the idea of CF, but that concerns prevent them from consuming CF. Sudbury and Böltner (2011) explained that younger people do not yet consider ethical clothing a viable alternative to cheap throwaway fashion as they perceive fashion from the price-quality range. Although this thesis did not specifically focus on younger people, the findings in this research are somewhat contractionary to what Sudbury and Böltner (2011) concluded. The findings in this study imply that the participants actually view CF as an alternative for their clothing as long as the item has all the qualifications they are looking for in a fashion item.

An interesting similarity between previous research and the findings in this study is that despite that all the participants in this study are interested in the environment and in clothing, few knew much or any about the CF industry. This is in line with what Saricam (2017) identified about consumers and their low awareness of ethical fashion. In previous literature, Testa et al. (2020) recognized the importance of individuals seeking information on their own regarding the circular feature. The findings in this study showed that the participants who knew about CF had also been searching for information themselves. They were also the ones who purchased CF products the most. Further it was discovered that the less knowledge the participants had about CF, the less they purchased. All participants were interested in the idea of CF when they got to know about it. Still, as they are not seeking information themselves, they choose the fashion items that they already know can provide them with what they are searching for. As a result, it makes them less likely to consume CF products.

Vehmas et al. (2018) presented in their findings that consumers are interested in the idea of CF but are more willing to buy remanufactured products than second hand. This is similar to this research where many participants expressed a better liking in remanufactured CF than second hand. Many participants stated concerns for both second hand and remanufactured CF, but they also made more positive descriptions of remanufactured CF than second hand. This was especially true for unknowledgeable participants who purchased CF. This gives the conclusion that there is a more liking towards remanufactured CF than second hand.

This study also showed that the participants who today did not consume CF products expressed concerns about not finding CF products with all characteristics and benefits that the participants

were searching for in a clothing item. This indicates the great importance of fashion items having all the qualifications that a consumer is looking for. Multiple studies have identified the quality of circular clothing as a big concern for consumers (Baier et al., 2020; Joergens, 2006; Vehmas et al., 2018). The comfort (Baier et al., 2020; Vehmas et al., 2018) and the appearance (Baier et al., 2020; Joergens, 2006) of the clothing have also been identified as concerns consumers have regarding circular clothing. In this study, other similar worries have been revealed by the participants. There is a need for clothes to be trendy, stylish and having the right brand image. Concerns about CF not having these qualifications is something the participants are expressing. This implies that although all the participants describe an interest in CF overall, many have concerns about the products, which declines their chance to purchase CF. There is higher importance for them to have trendy, stylish clothes and the right brand image than a more environmentally friendly clothing item. It should be noted that although previous literature has expressed quality and comfort as concerns regarding CF, it has not been identified in this thesis.

5.2 Inhibiting factors

The following section will investigate further why the three themes of inhibiting factors affect consumers' consumption behaviour of CF products. The themes that have been identified in the findings are Price, Lack of Knowledge and Perception.

5.2.1 Price

Previous literature has described the price as one of the main inhibiting factors for consumers' purchasing of sustainable goods (Baier et al., 2018). Other literature has also mentioned price as an inhibiting factor for circular products (Hazen et al., 2016). When analysing the findings in this study, it can be concluded that the price was one of the most prominent factors that inhibit Swedish fashion consumers from consuming CF products. All the participants in this study explained that price becomes an inhibiting factor for consuming CF. Still, each participant had different reasons why this became a factor for them. Participants explained that a too high price compared to what they normally purchase for could prevent them from purchasing CF products. Other participants who already purchased CF products stated that they could not afford to purchase as much CF as they wished to due to their budget. This is similar to Baier et al. (2018) findings that too high prices constrain consumers purchasing behaviour towards sustainable clothing and footwear. This indicates that when the price point of a CF

product is higher than what a person usually spends on a fashion product, it either inhibits the person from consuming as much as they desire, or it will inhibit them from consuming CF at all. It should be noted that when discussing a too high price, that price range differs for each participant. The price range varies depending on what the participant is used to spend on a fashion item and what a participant believes is a too high price. It was also found that consumers of CF are more likely to know more about CF prices, and they explain their concerns based on their experiences. Non-consumers of CF describe their concerns based on their viewpoint of CF prices. This indicates that non-consumers believe CF price does not necessarily need to be accurate. Nevertheless, it still affects their consumption CF.

The analysis of the findings showed that participants want second-hand products to be cheaper than a traditionally produced fashion. This is similar to what Park and Lin (2020) found. They concluded that consumers expect a large price discount when purchasing second hand compared to purchasing fashion items from new production. In this thesis, the need for second hand to be cheaper than remanufactured CF could be explained by the viewpoint consumers have on second hand. In conclusion, the viewpoint of CF affects consumers' opinion on how much they are willing to pay for CF.

5.2.2 Lack of Knowledge

Baier et al. (2020) found that one of the two main factors constraining consumers to purchase sustainable clothing and footwear is knowledge. Further, Ozturk and Engizek (2017) made a study where they identified lack of awareness as one of the most significant barriers for ethical fashion consumption. This is similar to the findings in this thesis where it is suggested that lack of knowledge becomes an inhibiting factor for Swedish fashion consumers' consumption of CF products. Many participants stated that their lack of knowledge about CF affected their consumption behaviour of CF products. Although knowledge becomes the overall theme of this inhibiting factor, it affected the participants in different ways. Some had a lack of knowledge in what brands produced CF, and others did not know where to find CF. There were also findings suggesting that there was a lack of knowledge about the concept of CF. Lack of knowledge becomes an inhibiting factor because not knowing CF brands, where to find CF and not knowing what the concept CF is, makes it hard to consume CF products.

The findings in this thesis also explain how there is a lack of knowledge of potential consumers of CF. According to the findings in this thesis, the reason behind potential consumers' lack of

knowledge about CF is due to their laziness to seek information. Previous literature has found similar results that external factors such as inconvenience and time-consuming can make consumers deflect their attitudes, values and beliefs (Stern & Oskamp, 1987; Guagnano et al., 1995). Therefore, consumers' laziness and lethargy to seek information themselves result in a lack of knowledge regarding CF products.

Another reason why potential consumers lack knowledge was about the cultural and social surroundings where CF never was discussed. Previous literature, such as Kirchherr et al. (2018), found that lack of consumer interest and awareness and other cultural barriers ranked high as barriers for CE consumption which is similar to what the findings suggest in this thesis. It can be determined that what cultural potential consumer surround themselves with can affect their ability to receive information regarding CF. When potential consumers are lazy about seeking information themselves and when there is a lack of CF discussions in their social and cultural surroundings', it creates a lack of knowledge about the concept of CF.

Earlier literature has suggested the importance of consumers seeking information themselves (Testa et al., 2020) and the importance of consumer engagement in general (Koszewska, 2018; Ki et al., 2020). The study made by Vehmas et al. (2018) further concluded that consumers request more information about circular products. There have also been studies explaining the importance of companies' role in providing knowledge to consumers (Collins et al., 2007) and how crucial it is to form consumers' attitudes when producing circular alternatives (Hazen et al., 2016). The findings in this research cannot conclude that it is consumers' responsibility to seek information or companies' responsibility to provide information. However, the findings suggest that the participants who knew more about CF and the fashion industry also consumed more CF products. It was also found that all the participants who did not know much about CF beforehand were interested in the concept when knowing more about it. Therefore, it can be concluded that there is a link between the consumption behaviour of buying CF products and the amount of knowledge a potential consumer has. This further indicates the importance of more potential consumers getting knowledge about CF. This study does not suggest that it matters if the information comes from consumers seeking information themselves or CF companies. The study rather explains the crucial importance of potential consumers receiving valid information about CF.

5.2.3 Perception

The perception of CF products was identified as an inhibiting factor for the Swedish fashion consumers' consumption of CF. Depending on whether the participants viewed CF as second hand or as remanufactured CF, they were more or less willing to purchase them. Park and Lin (2020) found that people are willing to purchase second hand when they believe that it could help solve environmental problems. The findings in this research do not indicate that environmental benefits increase the participants' willingness to purchase second hand. However, the research does find that the participants' perception of second hand is decreasing their willingness to purchase it. The findings suggest that there is an importance for the clothes to be trendy, the right style, and the right image when discussing second hand. There was also a perception that second hand clothes were unclean. Further, participants expressed a better perception about remanufactured CF, but there were still concerns about how stylish and clean the products were. However, many participants perceived second hand as clothes that did not have these characteristics.

There was a perception of second hand that participant would not be able to get all the qualifications they were looking for in a fashion item. Second hand needs to be trendy, stylish, have the right brand image and be viewed as clean for the participant to purchase it. In previous literature, consumers have expressed concerns regarding the appearance of sustainable clothing (Lundblad & Davis, 2016) and that the appearance of clothing is more important than the clothes being sustainable (Joergens, 2006; Baier et al., 2020). There is also literature stating that consumers perceive sustainable clothing as unfashionable (Beard, 2008; Hiller, 2010; Harris et al., 2016). This is similar to what the findings in this study found. Participants were concerned that second hand products not being trendy enough and that they do not have the right style and image that the participants want from fashion items and brands. They have a perception that they will not be able to find trendy, stylish clothing from second hand stores with the right image and that second hand clothing is unfashionable. This thesis also found that it is important that the second hand clothes are viewed as clean. The perception of second hand gets affected by how the participants viewed the cleanliness of these products, which inhibits them from purchasing it. In conclusion, all these sub-categories affect the consumption of CF.

The participants in this thesis had a better attitude towards remanufactured CF than towards second hand, but that is due to their perception of what second hand entails. Another part of CF is remanufactured CF, which the participants in this study had a better attitude towards than

second hand yet stated some concern about. The main concerns were again the style of the clothes but also the concern of the cleanliness. The concerns indicate that their perception of remanufactured CF products will not meet their wants and needs, in the same way, a traditionally produced fashion item would. This is similar to a study made by Hamzaoui et al. (2010). They found that consumers evaluate recycled goods differently than new/conventional equivalents due to a lack of familiarity with recycled materials. The concerns regarding CF products made the consumers view the products differently from regular fashion items that they are more familiar with. This makes the perception an inhibiting factor because the viewpoint of CF products prevents Swedish fashion consumers from consuming CF. Another finding was that trendiness and brand image were not reasons why perception is an inhibiting factor. This implies that remanufactured CF is seen as something trendier where you can find the right brand image compared to second hand.

Van Weelden (2016) explains that when studying the main factors that influence consumers' acceptance and tolerance of purchasing repaired mobile phones, consumers lack of awareness and misunderstanding of what it is, affects consumers consideration to purchase these products. This is also recognized in the findings in this study where consumers perception prevents them from consuming CF products. The consumers' perception might not always be accurate, but their viewpoint will still affect their consumption habits. Further, this research indicates that the more knowledge a participant had about CF and the fashion industry, the better perception they had about CF overall. This can conclude that the lack of knowledge enhances a more cautious and worried perception about CF.

6. Conclusion & Discussion

In this last chapter, the researchers will use the obtained research insights from previous chapters to address the two research questions and conclude the results. Furthermore, there will be a review of the findings in the study and a discussion on how the results can be implemented in theoretical, managerial and societal contexts. Finally, limitations of this study will be discussed as well as recommendations for future research.

6.1 Conclusion

The purpose of this thesis was to gain a greater understanding of Swedish fashion consumers' attitudes towards CF and what consumers felt was preventing them from consuming CF. By conducting eight in-depth interviews with Swedish fashion consumers, the researchers answered the research questions that this thesis is based upon. The first research question was as stated as follows:

RQ1: *“What are the Swedish fashion consumers attitudes towards CF?”*

The empirical findings showed that all the participants expressed an overall interest and liking in CF but described some concerns and worries about purchasing CF. Some of the participants were familiar with the concept and regularly purchased it. Their motivation to consume CF was based on the environmental benefits and the uniqueness of the items. Their biggest concerns were about lack of supply when it came to second hand. Some participants purchased CF without knowing about the concept. They purchased because the item suited what they wanted, and the benefits of CF were never a reason for the purchase. Their concerns were based on their worries of not finding CF items with the right style and brand image. Lastly, some participants had never heard of CF and did not purchase it either. They expressed an interest in purchasing CF in the future. Still, they were worried about not finding items with all the qualifications and benefits they were looking for in a clothing item. The second research question was stated as follows:

RQ2: *“Why are the inhibiting factors affecting Swedish fashion consumers' consumption of CF?”*

During the analysis of the findings, it was found that price, lack of knowledge, and perception were the three main inhibiting factors that affected the Swedish fashion consumers' consumption of CF. These three themes were then further analysed to explain why they affect Swedish fashion consumers. Firstly, it was found that price mainly inhibits consumers because it is seen as too expensive compared to what they usually spend on a fashion item. Price also inhibits consumers due to their limited budget. Secondly, lack of knowledge becomes an inhibiting factor for consumers when they do not know what brands produce CF, where to find CF, or even what the concept CF entails. Lastly, perception became an inhibiting factor based on consumers' view of second hand and remanufactured CF. The perception of second hand that affects CF consumption is based on how trendy and stylish they believed second hand to be and how they viewed the brand image and its cleanliness. Consumers' perception of remanufactured CF and its effect on consumption of CF was also based on style and cleanliness but not how trendy it was or how the brand image was viewed. The findings overall indicated the importance of the familiarity consumers had with CF. It could be further concluded that some findings in this thesis have been found in previous literature whilst other findings in this research were different to what has been explored earlier.

6.2 Theoretical Implications

The conclusions drawn from the empirical findings in this research have contributed to multiple implications that can be applied in theory development. The researchers of this thesis propose three main aspects in which this study contributes to further theoretical implications. Firstly, this thesis makes important contributions that potential consumers are interested in consuming CF in the future. Still, inhibiting factors that create concerns prevents them from engaging in the consumption of CF. The findings in this research are somewhat contractionary to previous literature that states that younger people do not yet consider ethical clothing as a viable alternative to cheap throwaway fashion (Sudbury & Böltner, 2011). Instead, this research shows that Swedish fashion consumers are interested in CF products and are willing to purchase it if the product still meets their personal wants and needs. There is an attitude of wanting to consume CF. However, what prevents Swedish fashion consumers from consuming CF products today, revolves around the inhibiting factors and concerns found in this research.

Secondly, this thesis supports price and knowledge as huge barriers that inhibit consumers' consumption of overall sustainable goods (Baier et al., 2020). The findings in this study can

conclude that price and lack of knowledge are significant inhibiting factors for Swedish fashion consumers' consumption of CF products. It is crucial that the product's price fits the consumers budget and that it is not too high price compared to what they usually spend on a similar fashion item. It is also of substantial importance that the consumer knows the different CF brands, where they can find it and about CF overall. The amount of knowledge the consumer has affects their perception and their approach towards price and thus, their overall attitude towards CF products. Knowledge is key to get potential consumers engaged in CF.

Thirdly, it contributes to acknowledging that perception is a significant inhibiting factor for Swedish fashion consumers' consumption of CF products and in the nuanced aspects in which they affect participants attitudes towards CF. In this study, there was a more in-depth analysis of the different perceptions of second hand and remanufactured CF. The findings in this research are similar to previous literature in that consumers are more willing to purchase remanufactured goods than second hand (Park & Lin, 2020). This research further contributes to a more profound clarification of why consumers' perception and concerns affect their consumption of second hand and remanufactured CF. Their perception of second hand makes their willingness to purchase remanufactured CF products greater than to purchase second hand.

6.3 Managerial Implications

In addition to contributing to the theoretical area of consumer behaviour, the findings in this study have various managerial implications for brand managers and advertisers. Valuable customer insights are presented in this study which can support fashion brands marketing strategies.

All participants in this research considered price a main inhibiting factor that affects their consumption behaviour of CF products. The importance of price is therefore fundamental for fashion companies to realize. The participants in this study have different reasons why the price is an inhibiting factor for them. If the price of the CF product is too high compared to what they normally spend on clothing, consumers will not consume CF. Some participants who already purchased CF products stated that they could not afford to purchase as much CF as they wished to due to their budget. All participants mentioned that they were affected by price, but they expressed different reasons why it affected them. With these specific reasons,

managers can be more prepared for how consumers will react to the prices of their CF products. Therefore, a first managerial implication is that the price of the CF products needs to be competitive with the prices that consumers usually spend on their clothing. It is also of high importance that the companies who work with CF are clear in their communication about why they charge a specific price on a specific item. When consumers are informed about how the product is better for the environment and the reason behind the price point of the garment, the consumers will be more willing to pay a higher price and help the consumers make circular choices.

The participants also indicated lack of knowledge is a broad factor that inhibits them from consuming CF products. Without the information about what brands are circular, where to find CF products and what CF entails overall, it will be hard for consumers to consume CF. This indicates another managerial implication as there is a need for CF companies to provide information about themselves and CF that is easy to understand. To be transparent about their supply chain and other sorts of valuable information can help consumers understand how to make more circular decisions. Companies also need to be clear and communicate why the circular model will be better for the environment and how consumers can help. With this information, consumers will gain more knowledge, which is an important piece in making consumers more aware of CF.

The participants in this study revealed information regarding their want and need for second hand to be trendy, stylish, have the right brand image and that the items are clean. Therefore, another managerial implication for second hand is to create a good image of their brands, the stores, their web page and other communication channels. It is an important part of the work moving towards CF and a CE.

Although the participants indicated a greater willingness to consume remanufactured CF than second hand, participants had concerns about remanufactured not being stylish and unclean. Hence, it is important to understand that remanufactured CF is seen as a trendier option where consumers can find brands with the right image. However, managers need to be aware that consumers perceive remanufactured CF as unstylish and unclean. Therefore, it is important to promote their brands showing that consumers can find clean and stylish clothes. Arguably, if managerial actions are applied, it could reduce the barriers consumers have toward CF products and help to move towards circular consumption and a CE.

6.4 Ethical and Societal Implications

The findings in this research have given both theoretical and managerial implications. This research further provides ethical and societal implications that have emerged from the findings. Firstly, one implication is how to engage more consumers in CF. To succeed in implementing more CE in a society, it is important to engage consumers in the implementation. The European Commission has a great focus on CE (European Commission, 2019). This implies that it is equally important for Sweden to create a more circular society, which cannot be done without Swedish consumers. The research in this study helps society to understand how to engage Swedish fashion consumers in CF and help Sweden become a more circular society.

Secondly, purchasing remanufactured CF and second hand should be perceived as a great way to help the environment and the society. It should be normalized by society to enable a change for the future to come. By continuing consumption of fast fashion, those companies have no incentives to make a change for a more sustainable society. By the conducted research, society can gain insights about CF and the closed loop system where garments that are being reused and recycled can be developed into new fibres and textiles. Consequently, this research serves as a tool to enlighten the reader with insights about CF. By consuming CF, customers will help in the transition towards a CE.

Thirdly, this research shows the vital importance of knowledge. The key to consuming more CF is knowing what brands are CF, where to find CF, and what CF is. This further implies the importance of having a society where CF is discussed and talked about. Having social surroundings where people are knowledgeable about CF will help create a more engaged society in CF. It will also help CF be a more mainstream option when consuming clothing.

6.5 Limitations

The authors of this research are fully aware that it includes various limitations despite careful preparation of this study. To begin with, one limitation is that the focus was only on Swedish fashion consumers with both an interest in fashion and who wanted to be more environmentally friendly. Without any decision to focus on a specific age group, the participants were aged between 23 and 25. This might not reflect the general attitudes Swedish fashion consumers have towards CF products. A wider variety in the ages could also have resulted in other main inhibiting factors that affect consumers' consumption behaviour of CF products.

Another limitation of this study is that the consumers' attitudes towards CF products do not reflect any of their intentions or their actual behaviour, which results in that no distinct conclusion can be drawn on whether they will purchase CF or not. The authors of this research cannot confirm that all participants will start buying CF products even though they all expressed a liking and interest in purchasing CF in the future. From a theoretical perspective, there would be an increase in consumption of CF products if the inhibiting factors were to decrease. However, this research has not been executed in a practical sense, and it cannot be concluded from this research that it will be the case. This implies that it needs to be further studied to be confirmed.

The researchers of this study are conscious of the potential shortcomings of the participants' responses, as they could be influenced by the interviewer's social desirability bias, which may lead to either conscious or unconscious lying. This research was also limited because the interviews were conducted during the world pandemic Covid-19, which led to the in-depth interviews being conducted through video calls. This could potentially have influenced the findings, but this was a circumstance that was outside the authors' control.

6.6 Future Research

When executing this thesis, multiple directions and areas surrounding CF that the study could have focused on. Although there were many interesting areas that this thesis could have investigated further, choices had to be made to thoroughly examine and explore one or a few directions to its full potential. This entailed that some directions and areas that could have been interesting to unfold in this study were neglected. Although it was decided in this thesis to not research more in these directions, it is still areas that could be interesting and important to investigate further. One interesting topic for future research could be to focus on either people who already consume CF or people who did not purchase any CF as of today. In this research, the findings included participants with various knowledge about CF and different consumption behaviours of CF. This helped this study analyse the difference between different groups where everyone was still a potential consumer for CF. Future research could then focus on one group and investigate more in-depth the behaviour of the said group.

Another area that could be investigated in future research is the difference between CF products such as second hand and remanufactured CF. The research suggested that there is a difference

in willingness to purchase remanufactured goods rather than second hand and the different perception consumers have about them. This could be further researched and the different approaches to increase the consumption of different CF products.

Future research could also go into a more in-depth investigation of the inhibiting factors found in this thesis. Although price and lack of knowledge have been found in previous literature, it was also found in this thesis that perception affects Swedish fashion consumers' consumption of CF. Therefore, it has the potential for future research to make a deeper investigation into one specific inhibiting factor and why it affects consumers. It would also be interesting to evaluate whether these inhibiting factors prevent consumers in the CF industry and other CE industries.

In this research, there has been a continuous discussion about the importance of seeking information and knowing about CF. The discussion has also been revolved around who has the responsibility to make the consumer more knowledgeable about CF. Therefore, it would be interesting for future research to study how to increase consumers knowledge about CF and who has the responsibility to make consumers more knowledgeable.

Lastly, it should be noted that since this research was conducted through an exploratory design, it could be interesting to investigate this topic in a more quantifying manner. This could help justify and support the findings in this thesis and give a better insight into Swedish fashion consumers' consumption behaviours towards CF.

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Appendices

Appendix 1 – Interview Guide

Sektion 1 – Generell information

Namn

Ålder

Stad

Yrke/Sysselsättning

Bor du ensam eller tillsammans med en/flera personer?

Sektion 2 – Klädkonsumtion

Hur ser du på din klädkonsumtion? Hur skulle du beskriva den?

Hur skulle du beskriva din klädstil?

När du ska handla kläder, vad är det du tänker på då? Hur ser processen ut?

Vad är det viktigaste att ett klädesplagg har enligt dig? Varför då?

Vad får dig att avstå ett från ett köp?

Sektion 3 – Miljöfrågor + CE frågor

Hur skulle du beskriva din syn på miljön?

Hur har din syn på miljöproblem ändrats genom åren?

Hur ser ditt intresse ut för miljön? Vad gör du i vardagen för att vara mer miljövänlig?

Hur ser du på din kunskap inom miljön?

Vad är din syn på miljövänliga produkter?

Har du hört talas om cirkulär ekonomi?

Vad tänker du på när du hör ordet cirkulär ekonomi?

Nu när du förstår lite mer utav vad det innebär, vad får du för bild av cirkulära produkter?

Varför/varför inte tror du att en cirkulär ekonomi skulle fungera i Sverige?

Sektion 4 – Cirkulärt Mode

Nu när du fått en inblick i vad cirkulär ekonomi är, vad tänker du på när du hör ordet cirkulärt mode?

Vad associerar du med cirkulärt mode?

Efter att ha hört definitionen av cirkulärt mode, vad tycker du om det?

Vad är anledningen till att du köper/inte köper cirkulärt mode?

Hur ser du på cirkulärt mode i jämförelse med andra aspekter som du tidigare nämnde att du va ute efter när du köper nya klädesplagg?