

Online or Offline? Understanding Consumers' Experiences and Perceptions of
Collaborative Fashion Consumption Channels. A Black Female Perspective

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ABSTRACT

Excessive consumption is evident in the fashion industry with fast fashion contributing to a rapid cycle of consumer acquisition and disposal of apparel products. Collaborative fashion consumption opposes conventional views of consumption, which is dominantly inclined toward purchasing new products. The aim of this study was to understand the lived experiences of collaborative fashion consumers and explore consumers' personal experiences with second-hand shopping using online and offline channels. In addition, the study examined consumers' perceptions of the attributes of online and offline second-hand shopping channels that either encourage or deter their decision to engage in collaborative fashion consumption. Questions developed to address the research objectives were as follows: 1) What are second-hand consumers' experiences with shopping clothing items using online and offline channels? 2) What are second-hand consumers' perceptions of the attributes of online and offline second-hand channels? 3) What incentives drive second-hand consumers to patronize one channel over the other? The study adopted a qualitative approach using phenomenology to collect data from black female participants who engage in collaborative fashion consumption using online and offline second-hand shopping channels. Themes that were generated from the interviews were discussed. This work contributes to the existing literature on consumer behavior and collaborative fashion consumption. Limitations and suggestions for future studies were discussed.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This study explores the experiences of collaborative fashion consumers. It examines consumers' perceptions of the attributes of online and offline second-hand shopping channels that encourage or deter consumers' decision to engage in collaborative fashion consumption. This chapter provides an overview of the context and background of collaborative consumption. The purpose and significance of the study are also discussed.

Background

Collaborative consumption (CC) is a term that has been coined to refer to the socio-economic movement of sharing, bartering, lending, or swapping individuals' assets including space, products, time, and skills (Botsman & Rogers, 2010). In Belk (2014), the term CC was defined as "people coordinating the acquisition and distribution of a resource for a fee or other compensation" (Belk, 2014, p.1597), which can include the renting, trading, swapping and borrowing of goods (Piscicelli et al., 2015). Botsman and Rogers (2010) reported that while the 20th century was defined by hyper-consumption, the 21st century will be defined by collaborative consumption.

Sharing, or practices by which individuals use, occupy, or enjoy something with others, is long-standing (Schor & Fitzmaurice, 2015). Literature shows that scholars have previously studied sharing in close-knit farming towns in the U.S. (Merrill, 1977, as cited in Schor & Fitzmaurice, 2015), however, new forms of sharing have emerged in recent years, which in part is as a result of the internet (Schor & Fitzmaurice, 2015).

This contemporary sharing economy is a market form in which strangers rather than kin and communities exchange goods and services thereby creating new ways of provisioning goods and services as well as opportunities for CC (Schor & Fitzmaurice, 2015). Sharing is therefore an alternative to private ownership (Belk & Sobh, 2007) and has also been described as the most universal form of human economic behavior (Price, 1975). Furthermore, the idea of sharing-use of underutilized apparel products is the foundation for collaborative fashion consumption (CFC) that encourages consumers to focus on product usage rather than ownership (Botsman & Rogers, 2010).

During the past decade, researchers' attention has been drawn increasingly to CC. Specifically, CFC has gained an increasing amount of attention from consumers, society, and academia (Lang et al., 2019). In fact, Time Magazine listed CC as one of the 10 ideas that will change the world (Schor & Fitzmaurice, 2015). One source published ten years ago indicated a rapid expansion of CC of tangible products (Gansky, 2010). Recently, a market research report showed that the global second-hand apparel market is anticipated to be contributed by dresses and tops as compared to other products, which is expected to reach \$67,522.9 (market value) by the end of 2027 (Future Marketing Insights, 2020). The resale sector is reported to be growing 20 times faster than traditional retail and 5 times faster than off-price retail (Weinswig, 2017).

Apparel rental is also expected to reach \$1.8 billion in sales within the next few years (Chen, 2018). This growing interest in CC has flourished with the growth of the digital sharing economy in a variety of industry sectors (Park & Joyner Armstrong, 2019). Technology is playing a role in making sharing resources much easier by

combining the basic components of e-commerce with social networking (Barnes & Mattsson, 2017). This growth has also been facilitated by technological advances that have made connecting a vast number of resale customers much easier and less costly (Barnes & Mattsson, 2017). For example, ThredUp, the largest online and consignment thrift store predicts that the secondhand apparel market will become a \$51 billion industry by 2023. The total secondhand market is projected to grow to almost twice the size of fast fashion by 2029 (ThredUp, 2020).

Excessive consumption is evident in the fashion industry with fast fashion contributing to a rapid cycle of consumer acquisition and disposal of apparel products (Schor, 2005). Major retailers, for example, H&M and Zara, have adopted fast fashion by introducing new clothing designs to stores every three to five weeks (Hu et al., 2014). With these rapidly shifting fashion trends, the practical service life of clothes (how long they are actually worn) is short, well below the technical service life (how long they could be worn, even if they are no longer in fashion) (Zamani et al., 2017). This process enhances the excessive accumulation of apparel and textile waste because fast-fashion products are sold at cheaper prices.

Furthermore, excessive consumption in the U.S. is also evident due to the growth of the self-storage industry. According to the Self-Storage Association (2015), there are approximately 48,500 primary storage facilities which amounts to 2.5 billion square feet of storage space representing a \$27.2 billion-per-year industry in the United States. Despite the prevalence of overconsumption and consumerism culture in the United States, CC is gradually transforming the way people consume, value, and

interact with goods (Botsman & Rogers, 2010). CC is based on the idea that people will pay for the benefit of having access to products and services and reduce the burdens of ownership on consumers (Cherry & Pidgeon, 2018).

Collaborative Fashion Consumption

The practice of engaging in CFC disagrees with conventional views of consumption, which is dominantly inclined toward purchasing brand-new garments (Lang et al., 2019). In Machado et al. (2019), it is reported that while on the one hand, the fashion industry started looking for alternatives to recycle their products and receive used products, on the other hand, consumers became aware of their own behavior, beginning to pay attention to how to dispose of their used clothes and reduce their fashion consumption. Consumers choose ways to dispose of used clothing including donating or selling to thrift stores, swapping or giving to close friends and family, recycling, and selling through alternative channels such as garage sales, flea markets, and internet platforms (Xu et al., 2014). Currently, as CFC has become ubiquitous due to the advancement of internet-based technology, many more consumers have access to CFC (Lang et al., 2019).

Research identifies that CFC serves to not only reduce waste and negative environmental impact (Gopalakrishnan & Matthews, 2018) but increase sustainability in the apparel industry (Geissdoerfer et al., 2017) and be a compelling alternative to traditional forms of buying and ownership (Vehmas et al., 2018; Machado et al., 2019). In opposition to big retailers' fast fashion, "slow fashion" has received attention through moving mindsets from quantity to quality (Vehmas et al., 2018). Iran and Schrader

(2017) state two concepts of CFC ownership-based, using pre-owned apparel items including swapping, gifting, or second-hand, and access-based, focusing on the usage of fashion products, such as renting or sharing. Durgee and O'Connor (1995) described renting as a transaction in which one party offers an item to another party for a fixed period of time in exchange for a fixed amount of money and in which there is no change of ownership. Renting, therefore, emphasizes the use of products over ownership (Bardhi & Eckhardt, 2010). For example, an individual who cannot afford to buy luxury goods can rent various fashion items at lower prices. In the apparel industry, CFC also enables consumers to have access to new fashion and special fashion products that would not be accessible otherwise, achieving more variety in apparel choice (Balck & Cracau, 2015). Examples of leading resale sector players include thredUp, a managed marketplace for all brands, The RealReal, an online and brick-and-mortar marketplace for authenticated luxury consignment, and Poshmark, a peer-to-peer marketplace focused on social commerce. Other prominent fashion renting businesses include: Rent the Runway, an online service that provides designer dresses and accessory rentals; Gwynnie Bee, provides trendy plus size clothing rentals; Bag, Borrow or Steal, offers a rental service for designer accessories including bags, jewelry, sunglasses, watches, and vintage items. Renting clothing permits consumers to obtain satisfaction from the usage of products without the burden of ownership (Moeller & Wittkowski, 2010).

As the resale market and more sustainable shopping practices become increasingly appealing to consumers, retailers are recognizing the great potential in the second-hand fashion market, therefore, expanding their businesses. James Reinhart, the

Co-founder, and CEO of thredUP, reports that even traditional retailers are starting to embrace secondhand, and as the line between new and used apparel blurs for consumers, a powerful transformation in retail will unfold. In May 2020, retail giant Walmart entered into the fashion resale market through a new online partnership with e-thrift store, ThredUp (Walmart, 2020). Walmart's Head of Fashion, Denise Incandela reported that all second-hand clothing, shoes, handbags, and accessories deemed 'like new,' 'gently used,' and 'new' are inspected by thredUp to verify their condition (Walmart, 2020). Furthermore, shoppers can add items to their cart to reach Walmart's free shipping threshold of \$35 and thredUp will ship products directly from its warehouses, however, customers will be able to return items at Walmart stores or online via ThredUp (Fashion Network, 2020).

According to Forbes, thrift stores are no longer viewed as a place where low-income people shop. Now, thrift stores also attract more middle-class consumers in search of vintage and one of a kind items (Forbes, 2020). The increase of online thrift shops and social media communities, which sell products to individuals of all social classes, reinforces this trend. Consumers from higher social classes buy these products because they want exclusive items, while lower social class customers have financial motivation (Turunen & Leipämaa-Leskinen, 2015). In ThredUp's 2020 annual resale report, 70% of consumers have bought or are now willing to buy second hand (ThredUp, 2020). The second-hand market is therefore expected to keep increasing as more consumers are becoming more open to patronizing already used fashion goods.

Purpose of the Present Study

Considering clothing is a tangible product, this study investigates the online and in-store experiences of consumers who engage in purchasing second-hand clothing (thrifting). Despite rising CC practices and research, little is known about the experiences and perceptions of second-hand consumers about the channels through which they engage in CFC. With increasing access to smartphone technology, the potential for online collaborative consumption continues to grow in the United States. However, online collaborative consumption still remains underexplored in the consumer behavior literature (Becker Leifhold & Iran, 2018).

To date, some researchers have examined consumer motivations for engaging in CC (Becker-Leifhold & Iran 2018), the influence of personality traits on consumers' intention to engage in collaborative consumption (Lang & Armstrong, 2018), consumer outcomes for CC (Barnes & Mattsson, 2017), online and store patronage of grocery shoppers (Harris et al., 2017), and comparing online and in-store shopping behavior towards luxury goods (Brun et al., 2013). However, there limited information about the attributes of online vs. offline second-hand shopping environments from the consumer's perspective. Also, many questions still remain unanswered. For example, what are the unique experiences of online and offline second-hand shoppers? What characteristics of online and offline environments influence consumers' behavior towards engaging in second-hand shopping? What are the different perceptions of consumers towards online and offline second-hand channels? Are there other incentives that motivate consumers

to patronize one channel over another that has not been previously recorded in literature?

This study was designed to investigate the phenomenon of CFC through the experiences of consumers using online and offline channels to engage in CFC. The study aims to explore consumers' views based on their lived experiences, the drivers and barriers of CFC channels as well as their perceptions of the benefits and costs of using each channel. The study, explores CC in the fashion industry by qualitatively evaluating collaborative consumers about their perspectives of the two main shopping environments, online and offline. This study adopts a phenomenological approach where the unique experiences of consumers are explored through semi-structured in-depth interviews.

Significance of the Present Study

The study contributes by providing different consumer views within the context of second-hand fashion items. It provides highly relevant insights for the retail industry, marketers, academia, and consumers who seek a more sustainable fashion lifestyle. In Particular, this research fills a void in retailing and consumer behavior literature as few studies have examined consumers' attitudes towards online and offline environments for engaging in CFC. It provides a better understanding of how online second-hand consumers differ from offline second-hand consumers. Specifically, it reveals the perceptions of collaborative consumers towards online and offline CFC channels including factors that influence consumers' continued use of a preferred channel of choice. This study also takes into account consumers' experiences that encourage or

deter second-hand consumers' decisions to continue or desist from future CFC practices. Knowledge of these drivers and barriers of second-hand shopping channels from consumers' perspective could provide some practical implications for retailers interested in developing new business opportunities through CC.

The result of this study could be applied to create useful and efficient solutions for consumers and retailers engaged in the business of alternative fashion consumption. For instance, the findings of this research could provide second-hand marketers with ideas on how to adapt to consumer preference and shopping behavior to promote better engagement with consumers. Furthermore, a better understanding of previous and current experiences of collaborative fashion consumers is vital and could be indicative of the future behavior of consumers. In line with the goals of this study, the knowledge generated offers new insights into the world of contemporary consumers, which could contribute to theory building and provide avenues for enhancing the consumer experience, particularly with the prevailing technologically driven U.S. culture.

Definitions of Key Terminology Used

Collaborative consumption (CC) - a socio-economic movement of sharing, bartering, lending, or swapping individuals' assets including space, products, time, and skills (Botsman & Rogers, 2010).

Collaborative Fashion Consumption (CFC) - a consumption trend in which consumers, instead of buying new fashion products, have access to already existing garments either through alternative opportunities to acquire individual ownership

(gifting, swapping, or secondhand) or through usage options for fashion products owned by others (Iran & Schrader, 2017).

Second-hand clothing - is fashion apparel or an accessory that once belonged to someone else (Machado et al., 2019).

Second-hand shopping - acquisition of second-hand objects through methods and places of exchange that are distinct from those for new products (Guiot & Roux, 2010).

Peer-to-peer collaborative consumption - encompasses forms of collaborative fashion consumption in which fashion products are passed from one consumer to another and could be organized by peers themselves either through online or offline platforms or by a company in a service-based form (Iran & Schrader, 2017).

Business-to-consumer collaborative consumption - described as companies offering either service as substitutes for product ownership (renting and leasing) or second-hand retail service to make the purchase of new products dispensable (Iran & Schrader, 2017, p. 474).

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

This research aimed to explore consumers' perceptions, experiences, and attitudes towards the channels (online versus in-store) of engaging in collaborative fashion consumption. In order to understand this phenomenon, this chapter reviews previous literature on collaborative consumption (CC). This chapter begins by defining the meaning of CC. Then, the characteristics and three systems of CC are discussed. Next, related literature regarding collaborative fashion consumption (CFC) focusing on motivations, benefits, and costs are presented. Finally, online and offline shopping environments are discussed.

Collaborative Consumption

Over the last two decades, several terms and concepts have been used to describe the forms of consumption such as 'collaborative consumption' (Botsman & Rogers, 2010; Rifkin, 2014), 'sharing' or 'sharing economy' (Lamberton & Rose, 2012), 'access' or 'access-based consumption' (Bardhi & Eckhardt, 2012). Other concepts describing forms of CC in the literature include 'commercial sharing systems' (Lamberton & Rose, 2012), connected consumption (Schor & Fitzmaurice, 2015), 'prosumption' (Ritzer & Jurgenson, 2010), and 'the mesh' (Gansky, 2010). Becker-Leifhold and Iran, (2018) report that although all of these concepts promote alternative consumption patterns, they are characterized by minor differences. For instance, with 'connected consumption' the emphasis is put on the social aspects of the sharing economy, the term 'prosumption' assumes an active role of consumers and promotes

their integration in the process of making the products, and ‘access-based consumption’ promotes the idea of ownerless consumption as used fashion items are transferred to another consumer such as in a clothing-swapping event (Becker-Leifhold & Iran, 2018).

In the book ‘What’s mine is yours: The rise of collaborative consumption,’ the term collaborative consumption is defined as “traditional sharing, bartering, lending, trading, renting, gifting, and swapping, redefined through technology and peer communities” (Botsman & Rogers, 2010, p. 15). Other researchers refer to CC as the consumption of goods and services involving consumers in activities such as rent, loan, trade, barter, and exchange of products (Gopalakrishnan & Matthews, 2018). The emergence of information and communication technology has facilitated the sharing of goods and services. As an implication, sharing practices have been scaled up to an extent that was unimaginable before (Botsman & Rogers, 2011; Belk, 2014). CC is not a new concept, however, it has recently come to enjoy growing popularity in different industries (Becker-Leifhold & Iran, 2018). CC has been practiced by families, between friends, or in flea markets (Iran & Schrader, 2017). While it is true that many CC activities are performed by close family members, with the continuous development of the internet, consumers are now actively engaged in sharing their possessions, information, views, and experiences online with other consumers about almost everything. Sometimes, people are more willing to share their personal secrets and information with strangers online than with their family members (Belk & Sobh 2007).

Forms of Collaborative Fashion Consumption

CFC embraces fashion consumption where “consumers, instead of buying new fashion products, have access to already existing garments either through alternative opportunities to acquire individual ownership (gifting, swapping, or secondhand) or through usage options for fashion products owned by others (sharing, lending, renting, or leasing)” (Iran & Schrader, 2017, p. 472). CFC, therefore, presents consumers with an opportunity to make their personal and used items available to others.

Iran and Schrader (2017) broadly categorized CFC practices into peer-to-peer (P2P) and business-to-consumer (B2C) types. The P2P type encompasses forms of CFC in which fashion products are passed from one consumer to another and could be organized by peers themselves either through online or offline platforms or by a company in a service-based form. In P2P, Iran and Schrader (2017) introduced six different subtypes namely; swapping parties, gifting, sharing, lending, borrowing, and buying secondhand clothing. On the one hand, each of these practices could be carried out offline among a group of friends, colleagues, or family. On the other hand, using social networks such as Facebook broadens users’ networks and promotes the practice of CFC even with total strangers. For instance, swapping parties can be organized by the consumers themselves (P2P). Retailers also play vital roles in facilitating P2P consumption on a larger scale such as Facebook Marketplace, Poshmark, and eBay, all online platforms where individuals can be buyers and sellers.

The second type of CFC is business-to-consumer (B2C). Iran and Schrader (2017) describe this form of CFC as a medium whereby companies offer either service

as substitutes for product ownership (renting and leasing) or second-hand retail service to make the purchase of new products dispensable. Research shows that over the years, consumers' preferences have changed. Many consumers are becoming more open to renting and thrifting and as a result, businesses are adapting by making the shift from not only selling products but also offering subscription services. Therefore, consumers enjoy the opportunity to easily access multiple accessories and clothing styles in different sizes and price ranges. For instance, Armoire is a clothing rental subscription that provides consumers with access to high-end styles for one flat monthly price with items ranging from cozy cashmere designer jeans to tops for conference calls, as well as luxe athleisure (Armoire, 2020). Besides the traditional second-hand shops, there are online second-hand markets such as The Real Real, Etsy, Vestiaire Collective, and Tradesy. For example, Tradesy offers modern second-hand designer clothes online as well as customization of customers' personal taste. With the option for consumers to create a personalized style feed, consumers receive suggestions based on style and previous search or purchase history (Tradesy, 2020).

Models of Collaborative Consumption

Botsman and Rogers (2010) introduced three models of CC namely: product-service systems (PSS), redistribution markets, and collaborative lifestyles. In the first model, the basis for product-service systems was described as 'pay for the benefit of a product, not the ownership'. This system disrupts the traditional models of individual private ownership by enabling multiple products either owned by companies or individuals to be shared or rented peer-to-peer. A key advantage of this system of CC is

from an environmental perspective whereby an individually owned product with often limited usage is replaced with a shared service for more people to maximize its utility. For consumers, PSS is beneficial in two ways. First, consumers have the option of not paying for products thereby removing the burdens associated with ownership (maintenance, repair, and insurance) and enabling them to utilize the assets they own to the maximum. Second, when consumers' relationship with things moves from ownership to use, options to satisfy their needs change and increase (Botsman & Rogers, 2010). In the fashion industry, PSS has been adopted by many retailers with websites for clothing and accessories rentals including Rent the Runway, New York & Company Closet, Fashion Hire, Rainey's Closet, and Girl Meets Dress.

The second model, redistribution markets, refers to social networks that enable used or pre-owned goods to be redistributed from where they are not needed to somewhere or someone where they are needed (Botsman & Rogers, 2010). Since the increased purchase of fashion products results in higher numbers of garment disposals (Birtwistle & Moore, 2007), rather than storing products that have either not been used or barely used, redistribution provides an opportunity for others who need these products to utilize them. Regardless of the specificities of an exchange (free, sold for points, or paid for in cash), redistribution markets promote reusing and resale of items (Botsman & Rogers, 2010). This CC model, therefore, challenges the traditional relationship between producers, retailers, and consumers because it disrupts the doctrines of 'buy more' and 'buy new' (Botsman & Rogers, 2010). Some examples of

fashion redistribution markets include ThredUp, Swapstyle, SwapSimple, Fashion Reloaded, Covert Candy, and Big Wardrobe.

The third model of CC, ‘collaborative lifestyles’ entails “people with similar interests banding together to share and exchange less tangible assets such as time, space, skills and money” (Botsman & Rogers, 2010, p. 73). Since the internet plays the role of enabling people to coordinate, scale, and transcend physical boundaries, it serves as a medium through which collaborative lifestyle exchanges thrive. In this model, a high degree of trust is needed because human-to-human interaction is the focus of the exchange rather than a physical product. This interaction results in a myriad of relationships and connectivity with examples such as peer-to-peer lending (Zopa, Lending Club) and travel (Airbnb, CouchSurfing) (Botsman & Rogers, 2010).

Second-hand clothing is fashion apparel or an accessory that once belonged to someone else (Machado et al., 2019). Clothing items may either have already had several years of use or may have been recently produced (Cervellon et al., 2012). Clothing has been a part of secondhand markets, and costume renting has been a form of business for decades (Becker-Leifhold & Iran, 2018). Second-hand markets represent an interesting and advancing platform for consumers to buy and sell brands especially as online fashion markets continue to increase in terms of both B2C and P2P. What makes CFC nowadays an interesting topic of research mainly is that technological advancements have decreased transaction costs and facilitated sharing practices via digital platforms (Barnes & Mattsson, 2016). This enables consumers to share a broad range of products and services with others irrespective of where they reside globally.

An advantage of CFC is that when it comes to sharing, geographical distances, today, are not as important as they were in the past (Becker-Leifhold & Iran, 2018).

Motivations for Engaging in Collaborative Fashion Consumption

Motivations for second-hand shopping refer to the psychological and material motives that orient consumers toward second-hand products and/or channels (Guiot & Roux, 2010). According to Westbrook and Black (1985), shopping motivations consist of three dimensions namely: the wish to acquire a product, the desire to satisfy needs not linked to the product, and the goal of achieving certain ends independent of the actual purchase. Research supports this claim as many studies have indicated that different consumers engage in CFC for diverse reasons. With an increase in online thrift websites and social media communities that provide products to consumers from different social classes, this trend is reinforced.

Some studies report that the main motivations for the purchase of used clothes are economic, hedonic, and recreational (Bardhi & Arnould, 2005; Guiot & Roux, 2010; Ferraro et al., 2016). In Arnould and Bardhi (2005), they reported the drivers for engaging in second-hand consumption as a combination of utilitarian needs and hedonic motives. Furthermore, they argued that in second-hand shopping, both motives, more than any other kind of shopping, are knit together. On the one hand, studies report that utilitarian needs mainly entail prices, frugality, and smarter purchasing (Isla, 2013; Xu et al., 2014). On the other hand, studies show that hedonic motivations drive consumers to engage in CFC. For instance, treasure hunting is a concept related to the pursuit of items that are unavailable in the market (Machado et al., 2019). Hedonic motives

include fun, satisfaction, uniqueness, hunt for bargains and items that are not mass-produced, the possibility to acquire rare items that are unavailable in mainstream markets, satisfying the need for variety and change without feelings of guilt (Guiot & Roux, 2010; Yan et al., 2015; Becker-Leifhold et al., 2018). When consumers find collectible items (Bardhi & Arnould, 2005; Turunen & Leipämaa-Leskinen, 2015) or products that are not available in the market (Edbring et al., 2016), they experience emotions of pleasure and amusement (Machado et al., 2019).

Studies show that consumers benefit from engaging in CFC including the opportunity to combine garments, engage in social interactions, and engage in environment-friendly consumption of fashionable clothing. Since the idea of collaborating gives people the benefit of sharing the cost of products and reducing the burden of ownership (Botsman & Rogers, 2010), an individual who cannot afford luxury goods can now rent them or buy at a lower price. In the apparel industry, CFC enables consumers to have access to fashion products that would not be accessible otherwise, achieving more variety in apparel choice (Balck & Cracau, 2015).

Concerning economic motivation for engaging in CFC, many studies attribute consumers' main decision for engaging in second-hand consumption on economic factors. The second-hand clothing market is powered by the low price of clothing (Farrant et al., 2010). Price consciousness has been defined as "the degree to which consumers focus exclusively on paying low prices" (Lichtenstein et al., 1993, p.235). Price is attributed as one of the most important factors influencing consumer behavior, especially the patronage of a retailer and purchase decisions on products and services

(Moore & Carpenter, 2006). In one study, participants mentioned that ‘saving money’ could be a motive to acquire used clothes (Iran & Geiger, 2018). In another study with an objective to measure motivations for second-hand shopping, participants also noted that financial reasons motivate second-hand buying because it is a way to obtain a fair price (Guiot & Roux, 2010). Furthermore, Cervellon et al., (2012) argue that frugality is a financial reason, as long as it motivates the search for low prices and cheap products. Saving money is therefore an important driver for consumers with limited financial means, consumers who want to curtail spending, and those who thrive on bargains. Thus, low prices exert a major influence on consumers’ willingness to purchase second-hand goods (Cervellon et al., 2012; Guiot & Roux, 2010; Isla, 2013). However, in another study, consumers from higher social classes are reported to buy second-hand products because they want exclusive items, while lower social class customers have a financial motivation (Turunen & Leipämaa-Leskinen, 2015).

A bargain is related to the gratification of price and treasure hunting (Bardhi and Arnould, 2005; Cervellon et al., 2012; Guiot & Roux, 2010). The satisfaction and pleasure of getting a good bargain and the best value for the least amount of money are also key drivers for consumers engaging in CFC (Waight, 2013). Guiot and Roux (2010) described four types of motives that relate to price: the wish to pay less, the search for a fair price, bargain hunting, and the gratifying role of the price (budgetary allocation that consumers must make across different kinds of expenditures, which often lead to priority management and price appraisals). For example, Chi (2015) found out that the price and quality of a garment are significant factors for making a purchasing

decision. With some fashion libraries carrying popular fashion brands and designer labels, (Pedersen & Netter, 2015), consumers enjoy not only the chance to experiment with new styles without paying full cost but also access to high-fashion goods that would be otherwise unaffordable (Armstrong et al., 2015).

Sustainability is attributed to being a vital driver for engaging in CFC. The fashion industry is faced with multifarious environmental issues due to existing fast-paced fashion fads and trends. For example, in the textile sector, the increased consumption is mainly due to fast-changing, affordable fashion that results in an increasing amount of textile waste (Palm et al., 2015). The global textile fiber production, consumption of textiles, and amount of textile waste are constantly growing (Dahlbo et al., 2017). The clothing industry offers more styles at lower prices in shorter time cycles and the consumers desire to change their style (Cao et al., 2014). However, in the last decade, concerns about the impact of industrial production (including fashion) on the environment have increased considerably (Machado et al., 2019). Consumers have become increasingly interested in the environmental and social consequences associated with their consumption patterns (Harrison et al., 2005). For example, in a study conducted by Vehmas et al., (2018) on consumer attitudes and communication in a circular fashion, they found that consumers' interest in recycling and sustainable solutions have increased. Consumers are also asking for more visible and concrete information about reusable clothing and how their behavior has affected the environmental aspects of textile production (Vehmas et al., 2018). Cao et al., (2014) found out that consumers would keep and use adaptable garments for a long time and

buy fewer new ones when they were able to utilize the same garments in different ways. Sustainable fashion consumption, therefore, emerged as a megatrend that responds to fast fashion cycles and traditional business models (Machado et al., 2019).

Beard (2008) reported consistent growth in the second-hand market triggered by consumers' interest in environment-friendly consumption in recent years. According to Botsman and Rogers (2010), sustainability is often an unintended consequence of CC. It is unintended in the sense that the initial or driving motivation for a company or consumer may not be about 'being green'. Therefore, these unexpected consequences happen because sustainability and community are an inherent and inseparable part of CC and not an afterthought or add-on (Botsman & Rogers, 2010). Advocates of CFC argue that sustainability is beneficial because reuse decreases the environmental burden of a garment's lifecycle by helping to prevent the production of new garments, (Hu et al., 2014) thereby causing a reduction in the number of disposed-off garments sent to landfills (Gill et al., 2016). In fact, Waight (2013) argued that reuse may even be the best consumption model for a greener economy as it leads to a reduction in the environmental burden compared to buying new clothing made from virgin materials. These new systems provide significant environmental advantages by reducing waste, increasing use efficiency, encouraging the creation of better products, and wiping up the surplus created by overconsumption and overproduction (Botsman & Rogers, 2011). Therefore, reuse is considered a valuable alternative to the wasteful consumption of fashion and it contributes to the trend of socially responsible and sustainable fashion consumption (Isla, 2013).

Barriers to Collaborative Fashion Consumption

Despite the motivations for engaging in CFC, there are some barriers that are attributed. From a consumer perspective, the most salient problems include hygiene and health concerns, lack of trust and information, lack of ownership, and consumption habits (Becker-Leifhold & Iran, 2018) and the removal of personal ownership. For instance, ownership is linked to social status and a sense of control (Joung, 2013), and it serves as a means for memory keeping and self-expression (Catulli, 2012).

While CFC can satisfy a variety of emotional needs, such as uniqueness, transitioning toward sharing, and ownerless consumption of fashion calls for much more comprehensive change in society (Mont, 2004). These challenges affect consumers' adoption of CFC as identified in the research. For example, consumers' concerns about hygiene are particularly evident in the case of goods worn close to the skin (Catulli, 2012; Armstrong et al., 2015). In their study, Iran and Geiger (2018) reported hygiene as a major issue for consumers, specifically if the previous owner of the clothing is unknown. Paying attention to their own health can also be seen as an egoistic motivation that prevents people from CFC (Iran & Geiger, 2018). With rentals, Armstrong et al. (2016) found that participants' concerns pertaining to bugs and mites, the overall cleanliness of clothes, and how the service provider can guarantee satisfactory sanitation. Similar feelings of discomfort were reported by Perry and Chung (2016). They found that their participants were worried about bacteria from pre-owners, the transmission of diseases, odor, and dirtiness. These findings are in line with Fisher et al. (2008) who argued that the stigma associated with second-hand clothing, even

when the products are used for redesign, might additionally complicate the adoption of CFC.

Online/Offline Shopping

Currently, as CFC has become ubiquitous due to the advance of internet-based technology, a great number of consumers have access to and thus participate in CFC. Furthermore, as CFC has become more extensively accepted as a compelling business strategy, fashion companies have implemented the CFC model in order to promote business-to-consumer relationships (Iran & Schrader, 2017). Under those circumstances, both technology-based and brick-and-mortar CFC platforms have become more popular, drawing increased attention from diverse consumers (Iran & Schrader, 2017). Consumer behavior research suggests that consumers behave and perceive value differently in an online environment than in an offline environment because of the consumer to consumer interactions (Chan & Li, 2010) and the task-specific use of online shopping (Overby & Lee, 2006). Previous research concerning shopping in an online environment has typically stressed the relevance of the functionality and accessibility of the online platform and website (Jiang et al., 2013) and e-trust (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001; Ha, 2004), as well as an online shopping convenience, such as operability of delivery (Beauchamp & Ponder, 2010). The internet has revolutionized marketing thus internet shopping has become a well-accepted way to purchase many kinds of products and services (Donthu & Garcia, 1999). Furthermore, they reported that some factors that aid the development of the internet market are related to technological advances, the way the corporate world has changed its

perceptions, and to changing lifestyles of consumers. The increasing number of companies that offer internet access is providing consumers with a convenient and inexpensive way to become members of the internet community (Donthu & Garcia, 1999). The development of better navigation software and search engines are making Internet visits a more pleasant and exciting experience. The increase in the quantity and quality of the available information on the internet and the presence of well-known corporations and brands on the internet also generate higher interest among consumers. In addition, the development of secure systems that allow secure monetary transactions to accelerate internet shopping (Donthu & Garcia, 1999).

Ease of accessibility to fashion has broadened in many ways ranging from the use of mobile technology to social media. The internet has contributed immensely to this new form of commerce. Through online stores, retailers are capable of marketing and selling products from any part of the world. Virtual points of sale differ from traditional ones, especially with regard to their emphasis on visual perception, as the shopper cannot touch the product to appreciate its tactile qualities (Sihvonen & Turunen, 2016). In online markets, consumers have to rely on extrinsic cues such as brand name, store name, price, and country of origin (Teas & Agarwal, 2000). Moreover, prior literature suggests that trust plays an important role in online shopping (Dennis et al., 2009). Donthu & Garcia (1999) compared purchase motivations of internet and non-internet shoppers and discovered that internet shoppers are more innovative and impulsive with a higher desire to seek variety and a more positive attitude towards online shopping. Another study tested shopping attitudes using a

sample of mall shoppers which revealed that online shoppers demonstrate a more positive attitude towards online purchases than non-internet shoppers (Eastman et al., 2009). Their finding is consistent with that of Xu & Paulins (2005), who found out that online consumers display a positive attitude towards shopping apparel online. In addition, according to Monsuwe et al., (2004), intention to shop on the internet is also affected by other factors, such as easy use of technology, consumer traits, and product characteristics.

Previous researchers have examined how shopping motivations can affect consumer purchase behavior (Tauber, 1972; Westbrook & Black, 1985). Tauber (1972) maintained that many variables influence shopping motives and that some variables have nothing to do with the purchasing behavior. So it was proposed that consumers derive satisfaction not only from the product utilities but also from the shopping activities. His exploratory study concluded that both personal and social motives play an influential role in shopping behavior. More recently, a study by Lang et al. (2019) observed that American consumers' intention to rent clothing was significantly influenced by perceived enjoyment. Americans enjoy self-gratification and seek stimulation and emotional enjoyment from the shopping process. The study also showed that among Americans, perceived enjoyment was found to be higher, which indicates that American consumers perceive that it is interesting and fun to find unique or new fashion products through renting (Lang et al., 2019).

CHAPTER III

METHODS

The purpose of this qualitative study is to further understanding of CFC by investigating the experiences, motivations, perceptions, and behaviors of a purposive sample of consumers who shop online and offline for second-hand clothing. This chapter describes the research methodology utilized for this study and includes discussions of the following: (a) an overview of qualitative research, (b) rationale for the selected research approach, (c) researcher personality, (d) sample selection and participant recruitment, (e) data collection procedure, (f) interview protocol, and (g) data analysis and coding.

Overview of Qualitative Research

A qualitative approach was used to investigate consumers' experiences of CFC. In Creswell & Poth (2018), qualitative research is described as beginning with assumptions and the use of interpretive/frameworks that inform the study of research problems addressing the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem. Qualitative research is a systematic approach to understanding qualities or the essential nature of a phenomenon within a particular context (Brantlinger et al., 2005). It is therefore an approach that probes individual as well as group experiences (Creswell, 2003). The goal of qualitative research is to produce descriptive or procedural knowledge, that is, answering questions about what is happening and why (Shavelson & Towne, 2002). This type of research approach involves developing questions, collecting data in the participants' setting, building inductive data analysis to

generate themes, and interpreting the meaning of the data. Qualitative research emphasizes discovery and description that attempts to achieve a holistic understanding of a phenomenon (Schram, 2003).

Qualitative research is usually conducted for many reasons; because a problem or issue needs to be explained because a complex and detailed understanding of an issue is needed, to empower individuals to share their stories, and because there is a need to understand the contexts or settings in which participants address a problem or issue (Creswell & Poth, 2018). When researchers undertake qualitative research, they make philosophical assumptions (Creswell & Poth, 2018). They are beliefs about ontology (the nature of reality), epistemology (what counts as knowledge and how knowledge claims are justified), axiology, (the role of values in research), and methodology (the process of research) (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 20). From an epistemological position, qualitative researchers adopt subjectivism. Epistemology represents how you define the nature of 'knowing' (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). Epistemology consists of two contrary positions: objectivism and subjectivism. On the one hand, objectivism proposes that there is a concrete reality that exists independently from your own thinking processes or interpretations; therefore, the task of a researcher is to discover the reality without influencing it. On the other hand, subjectivism assumes that there cannot be the reality completely separated from a researcher's thinking processes or interpretations because all knowledge is filtered or influenced by a researcher's cognitive lens.

Qualitative research is rooted in constructivism, the researcher seeks to understand the world where people live (Creswell, 2013). Participants construct

subjective meanings of their experiences, and these meanings can be varied and multiple. Researchers ask open-ended questions to allow participants to share their experiences in their specific context. As the researcher is a tool for analyzing the data, the interpretations of the research findings are influenced by the researcher's own experiences and background. Researchers should position themselves in their research to recognize that their interpretations are shaped by their personal and cultural backgrounds (Creswell, 2003).

Table 1 Qualitative Approaches by Creswell (2003)

Approach	Purpose	Data Collection Procedure
Narrative	Study the lives of people and ask them to provide stories about their lives chronologically.	Primarily conducted through interviews and documents.
Phenomenology	Descriptions of the lived experiences of people around a phenomenon described by participants.	Primarily through interviews, supporting documents, and observations.
Grounded theory	Develop an abstract theory about a process, action, or interaction grounded in the views of participants.	Multiple stages of interviews with about 20-60 participants.

Ethnography	Studying shared patterns of behavior and language of a cultural group in a natural setting.	Primarily through observations and interviews.
Case study	In-depth analysis of a case	Multiple sources including interviews, observations, and documents.

The Rationale for the Chosen Methodology: Phenomenology

To address the proposed research purpose, a qualitative method was appropriate. Within the framework of a qualitative method, the proposed study was well-suited for taking a phenomenological approach. A phenomenological study describes the common meaning for several individuals of their lived experiences of a concept or phenomenon (Creswell & Poth, 2018). It focuses on describing what all participants have in common as they experience the phenomenon. In Van Manen (1990, p.177), the basic purpose of phenomenology is to reduce individual experiences with a phenomenon to a description of the universal essence.

According to Creswell (2007), among five qualitative approaches (i.e., narrative research, phenomenology, grounded theory, ethnography, and case study), the only phenomenology is specifically designed to study the essence and meaning of experience. The distinctive features of phenomenological research are to “employ description within the attitude of the phenomenological reduction, and seek the most

invariant meanings for a context” (Giorgi, 1997, p. 235). Another distinctive requirement of phenomenological research is for researchers to set aside their experience and not adopt any position on the correctness or falsity of a participant’s claims regarding their experiences with the phenomenon under examination (Giorgi, 1997; Ashworth, 1999).

A phenomenological inquiry does not aim for empirical generalizations, the establishment of functional relationships, or the development of theory, instead, it makes it possible to generate probable insights and bring in direct contact with the phenomenon (Van Manen, 1990). Therefore, by using a phenomenological approach, the researcher is able to understand and describe CFC in-depth and arrive at the essence of the experience of collaborative consumers.

Researcher Positionality

This research adopts a qualitative research approach, focusing on phenomenology as a methodology. While I am quite conversant with qualitative and quantitative approaches, the research questions of the current study are best explored through a qualitative approach. Since the philosophical stance of a qualitative study is constructivism, I position myself as the researcher of this study. While I seek to accurately record and deliver participants’ experiences, I acknowledge that my analysis will be influenced by my own experiences and personal and cultural backgrounds. I, therefore, need to be aware of different experiences participants discuss to ask the appropriate follow-up questions on different aspects of CFC I have not experienced or become aware of. Therefore, I set aside my experiences, values, beliefs, and

assumptions toward the phenomenon to create accurate and meaningful conclusions from the data.

Sample Selection and Participant Recruitment

In order to achieve the essence of lived experiences of consumers who engage in second-hand consumption, a purposive sampling method was employed to recruit participants. Purposive sampling refers to the deliberate choice of participants who appear to be representative of the desired population (Nachmias & Nachmias, 2008). In addition, snowball sampling was adopted. Snowball sampling is especially useful to study either sensitive topics or when it is difficult to reach populations (Berg & Lune, 2012; Creswell, 2013). Therefore, by using snowball sampling, people who are interested in participating in the research acted as links by identifying other potential participants (Richie & Lewis, 2003).

Invitation emails including the information about this study were sent to potential participants. McCracken (1988) proposed that eight respondents are sufficient for capturing relevant themes and meanings of a phenomenon. Therefore, with regards to sample size, a total of 10 participants were recruited. While conducting interviews, the researcher adopted the concept of data saturation (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Data saturation refers to gathering new data until the data set reaches a point of diminishing return (when no new information is being added). Theoretical saturation entails the point at which no new insights and themes are obtained and no issues arise regarding a category of data (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). This also means sampling to the point of redundancy (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Therefore, when the researcher noticed that the

information received from the participants became repetitive and the conversations did not yield any new information, the researcher stopped collecting data.

Participant Characteristics

All ten participants in this study were female and were either part-time or full-time employed. The education of the participants ranged from high school to master's degree and all participants were of black descent. All participants shop for second-hand clothing items frequently.

Table 2 Participant Characteristics

Participant Pseudonyms	Gender	Age	Education	Ethnicity
Kate	F	38	Bachelor	Black
Lisa	F	28	Bachelor	Black
Susan	F	30	Bachelor	Black
Lydia	F	29	Masters	Black
Briana	F	32	Bachelor	Black
Jane	F	22	Highschool	Black
Ebony	F	26	Masters	Black
Joleen	F	33	Bachelor	Black
Grace	F	22	Highschool	Black
Priscilla	F	36	Bachelor	Black

Data Collection Procedure

Data were collected from participants using semi-structured, in-depth interviews. This method is useful for exploring details and more elaborate reasoning behind behaviors. The semi-structured interview style uses a set of predetermined questions based on the research question and literature review (Creswell & Poth, 2018). It allows participants to speak freely in response to the questions and gives the interviewer the freedom to ask for follow-up responses. The interviews were conducted online (Zoom). The length of each interview was approximately 40-50 minutes. The interviews were recorded using a cell phone as well as the researcher taking notes (documenting nonverbal expressions such as body language, tone of voice as well as follow up questions). Interviews were then transcribed verbatim and reviewed by reading while listening to recording for accuracy and completeness.

Interview Protocol

Prior to conducting the interviews, the researcher received approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB), an administrative body established to protect the rights and welfare of human research subjects recruited to participate in research activities. Next, potential participants who met the criteria (collaborative consumers) to participate in the study were contacted. Next, participants were asked to review and sign consent forms. The researcher also read through the information on the consent form to ensure understanding and asked for verbal confirmation that the information was well understood by the participants before conducting the interviews. At the end of each

interview, participants received 20 dollars as appreciation for their time and contributions. Interview questions included:

1. What type of items do you usually buy when you shop second-hand? What channel (online or in-store) do you use while shopping second hand?
2. What inspired you to adopt this channel as a means to purchase second-hand items? What factors encourage or deter you from using this channel?
3. Describe your experience when shopping online and in-store?
4. Why did this channel become your preferred means of purchase? What standards did you use when you evaluate your alternatives in choosing your preferred second-hand shopping channel?
5. What differences do you notice between these second-hand shopping channels?
6. What are your opinions on the advantages and disadvantages of these channels?
7. Can you explain how technology has impacted your second-hand shopping behavior?
8. What factors influence engaging in second-hand shopping? Explain how shopping for second-hand clothing online or offline influences the type of clothing you buy.
9. What are the incentives that motivated or changed your attitude towards the usage of your preferred channel over the other?

Data Analysis and Coding

The interviews were transcribed verbatim along with any noticeable aspects of nonverbal communication that the researcher recorded in the notes. The researcher created Microsoft Word files for the transcriptions which were saved in the researcher's computer and were password protected. Each transcript was read and reviewed many times to ensure an in-depth understanding of the data. The data were analyzed using three steps based on Moustaka's (1994) model. First, the text from each participant interview was coded. A code in qualitative research refers to a word or phrase that represents a summary or attribute for language-based data (Saldana, 2015). Coding is a system of classification, identifying different segments of the data, and labeling them to organize the information contained in the data (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008). The data can include interview transcripts, journals, field notes, videos, and email correspondence. Interview transcripts will be broken down into pieces of text, closely examined, and compared using initial/open coding (Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

First, the researcher developed a list of significant statements, sentences, or quotes that provided insights into the phenomenon. Every statement was given equal value and weight, a process referred to as horizontalization of the data, and each non-repetitive, non-overlapping statement was listed in order to develop the structure of the data. Second, these significant statements were grouped into larger units of information, called 'themes'. Some codes were reworded as the analysis progressed through multiple readings. Next, the best quotations illustrating each of the themes were extracted and documented. This process of interpretation was repeated for data relevant

to each of the research questions. Finally, each participant was given a pseudonym for anonymity and relevant quotes describing the participants' experiences with the topic.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

This chapter presents the key findings obtained from conducting in-depth interviews to answer the research questions: (a) What are second-hand consumers' experiences with shopping clothing items using online and offline channels? (b) What are second-hand consumers' perceptions of the attributes of online and offline second-hand channels? (c) What incentives drive second-hand consumers to patronize one channel over the other? By adopting phenomenology, second-hand clothing consumption was described through the lived experiences of the research participants. Thus, this chapter summarizes the characteristics of participants in this study and discusses their experiences and perceptions with respect to the research questions. Each participant was given a pseudonym and one theme was extracted when at least 7 of the 10 participants shared similar ideas.

Table 1: Themes

Research Questions (RQ)	RQ 1 Consumers experience shopping online/offline.	RQ 2 Consumers perception of channel attributes	RQ 3 Incentives that drive channel choice
Themes	Impulse/unplanned purchases	Organization	Lack of choices

	Environment	Search/navigation	Deals
	Expectation vs. reality		Leisure time
	Senses		
	Distraction vs. no distraction		
	Time saving/convenience		

Consumers Experiences

To fully explore and understand the participants' experiences, questions about their history, and general behavior towards second-hand clothing consumption were asked. Almost all participants reported that their second-hand shopping experience began from their childhood years as they were influenced by their parents/guardians. For instance, Ebony stated that "I remember shopping with my family and we would buy a lot of stuff from thrift stores ranging from clothes to electronics to books and toys." Another participant, Susan, reported that she has always been a second-hand shopper for as long as she can remember. For Lisa, she remembers growing up watching her mom patronize thrift stores. She stated:

My mom used to take me second-hand shopping when I was a kid because we had one that was nice in our area. For a long time, since high school and in

college too.... so that's 15-20 years of second-hand shopping experience for me.

For Jane, she stated that while she had shopped second-hand in the past, she became an ardent second-hand shopper about seven years ago when she got her first job at Goodwill as a salesperson. She stated that "this experience opened my eyes to a new world of shopping as I was both the consumer and the salesperson." Similarly, another participant, Lydia reported that not only did her family influence her second-hand shopping behavior but also her becoming a Savers employee where she worked for about eight years. She shared:

From my freshman year in high school until the day I completed my bachelor's, I worked there.... So it made me fall in love with fashion and design, clothes and yeah. Oh yeah, a lot of my clothes even now, people ask, where did you get this from? Oh, I say, Savers, I used to work there.

Furthermore, the researcher asked participants to share what they usually purchase as well as where they purchase second-hand clothing items. On the one hand, participants mentioned offline channels including Salvation Army, My Thrift Stores, Once Upon a Child, Savers, Hidden Treasures, and Goodwill. On the other hand, participants mentioned online channels such as ThredUp, Poshmark, OfferUp, Mercari, TheRealReal, and Facebook Marketplace. For instance, Kate mentions purchasing a lot of children's clothing items. She shared:

Living in Minnesota with three little kids, you know I have to shop for all the winter gear. I buy hats, mittens, jackets, snow boots, socks, gloves, sweaters. So

I do a lot of that.... toys also from My Thrift Stores and Salvation Army. I feel like I find a lot of very good quality items that if I were to purchase in stores would be very pricey, you know.

For Susan, she enjoys shopping for bags and claimed she could never have enough of them because in her opinion a good bag could elevate a very simple attire. She stated:

I really love unique bags and I am a smart shopper so I visit different sites and stores to get what I want. My regular thrift store would be Salvation Army, Sabre's, Facebook Marketplace, and Goodwill. To tell you how smart I shop, sometimes I go to the Goodwill outlet, the one at St. Paul, I find brand new stuff, like really nice things there.

Furthermore, Susan, exuding excitement shares her latest acquisition from Facebook Marketplace. She runs off camera to grab a Micheal Kors handbag which retails for about \$140 but she got on Facebook Marketplace for \$50. She states:

Facebook Marketplace, that's where I usually get my designer bags. You would see me with those designer purses like Michael Kors, Coach.... Imagine this! 50 bucks! For this bag. I also buy dresses on ThredUp and in Goodwill stores.

For Lisa, choosing where to buy depends on what she is looking for "sometimes it's like church clothes and sometimes it's stuff to wear around the house." For example, she stated that this summer after the lockdown, she needed to buy some shorts for herself and decided to visit Goodwill a lot of times because she could not try them

on in the store due to the pandemic. However, when shopping for her two kids, she patronizes online thrift stores, particularly ThredUp.

Lydia, another participant who loves “finding treasures” buys dresses, skirts, shorts, jackets both online and in-store. She reported shopping on OfferUp and Savers, where she purchases both mass-market and luxury brand items. She stated that “I would find nice new Coach bags or any kind of nice brands like Zara Or H&M. Sometimes people just donate brand new, so I would sometimes get a nice treasure too.”

Jane, a fashion design student, visits thrift stores for the purpose of finding pieces she can refashion to her taste. She stated:

I love to refashion clothes. I used to take some of my mom’s clothes that she doesn’t wear and then I re sew them to fit me, basically. And sometimes I do recreate the outfit just to make it popping.... I now shop second-hand and always try to find items that inspire me to recreate. Recently, I go to the jeans section and just shop there more than I would with tops and stuff like that. And also just because there’s so much with jeans, you can literally style them, like anyhow, basically.

With regards to shopping second-hand clothing using Facebook Marketplace, participants consider it to be a blend of both online and offline shopping. This is because as potential buyers, the item is first viewed online, next, contact is made with the seller online where both parties settle for a price and delivery option or a convenient time for pick-up. Almost all the participants stated that they preferred picking up clothing items in person so they could have the option of making the final decision.

Impulse/Unplanned Purchases

All ten participants mentioned making unplanned purchases while shopping for second-hand clothing. Participants noted that this behavior usually happens almost every time they shop second-hand but that this particularly occurs when they shop in-store. Participants described scenarios where they created a shopping list before visiting thrift stores, however, while shopping, they made impulse purchases. For instance, Kate shares:

This happens to me a lot of times. I don't think I've ever gone to a thrift store and not come out with something extra. So even if it's a garage sale or a thrift store and stuff, there's always that something extra. I would walk into Salvation Army with a plan to purchase this and that but end up leaving with things I didn't plan to buy. If I see something really rare or something unexpected I mentally update my shopping list.

With Priscilla, she also stated that when shopping for second-hand clothing, she buys more items on impulse than she would when shopping for grocery or clothing items in non-secondhand stores. She reports:

I've always come out with something extra. I would say to myself, I need this, probably because it's beautiful, has a nice color, it's affordable, or I have been looking for a certain item. So when I find such an item, I mean, it's right there in front of me.

Grace also describes her experience with unplanned purchases when shopping in thrift stores. She shared the following:

It's not on my list but I just have to get it. Or I would say wow, this is so antique and oh, it is so beautiful and it's just \$6. Oh, okay. Why not? But in a regular store, I would have to pay perhaps like \$20, it'll make me think twice. For sure, I always come out of the thrift store with more than I anticipate to buy.

For Susan, she shares an experience where she went to Goodwill to buy a dress but while shopping, she found and bought matching shoes and a bag for the dress. Similarly, Lydia shares how she buys many unplanned items because they complemented the items she initially wanted to buy. Furthermore, Lydia highlighted that since making unplanned purchases at thrift stores has become unavoidable to her that she now budgets for impulse buying. She shares:

There have been countless times where I'm just looking for this... Maybe there's one hat or there's one belt to go with that and then I'll see something else or a bunch of things, I'll just spend all my money there and get a bunch of different things. So I decided to budget something extra just in case I see something that I like, which I always do.

For both online and offline second-hand shoppers, accidental finds that capture the consumer's attention seem to be a driving factor in promoting unplanned/impulse purchases. For example, while the previously mentioned participants made unplanned purchases offline, Ebony and Joleen shared their unplanned purchasing experiences while shopping online. Ebony reported buying a dress on Poshmark by accidentally clicking on a new listing that popped up while she was scrolling through the webpage. She states:

I did not even plan on getting a dress on that day but I mistakenly clicked on a new listing and voila, this beautiful red dress was there.... I found and paid for a dress that I was not even looking for.

Joleen also shared a similar experience. She states:

I needed a black and white blazer so after searching on a couple of sites, I went on Mercari and found the perfect Christian Dior jacket. In the image, the jacket was paired with a white dress. I inquired from the seller if I could also get the dress and was glad that it was available.

Environment

Participants revealed their experiences with second-hand shopping environments. Participants claim that the general ambiance of thrift store environments feels different compared to other types of stores. To support this claim, they attribute nostalgia as a type of feeling they experience when present in a physical thrift store. Because many of the participants remember thrifting with their family from childhood, they reported that they experience feeling nostalgic. For example, Priscilla stated that when she visits thrift stores, it reminds her of home and shopping with her grandma. Lydia also indicates that shopping in second-hand stores reminds her of shopping with her family when she was in elementary school. Another participant Kate stated that “sometimes the items displayed on the shelves are from way back, so it makes me feel like, wow, this was available when I was a kid. It brings back memories of my childhood.’

Furthermore, participants attributed thrift store environments with vintage ambiance and the environment serving as a form of escapism. For instance, Lydia describes a “vintage feeling” and “an intimate and homey environment with less of all the fancy and flashy stuff.” Kate reports:

So yeah, sometimes I want to experience that quietness, just to be away from everything, kids, work, and all the bustling. I’ll be feeling like oh, I just want somewhere to calm my head, just a little bit old school, so I go to the thrift store and it feels nice.

Kate continues,

Salvation army! I love the antique feel of the place, the old-school feels. They have this old-school feel somehow, most thrift stores tend to be like that. So that is attractive to me.... as investment time for myself, I mean to just walk around the store compared to online, you don’t really have scenery that’s drawing you in.

Lydia also states a similar feeling “it gives me an escape.” She further states that “I hear the music playing and I see the clothes arranged nicely, and I see workers may be hanging up clothes.... It makes me feel somewhat peaceful. Like it looks calm and it looks good.”

For Briana, she shared “I can take off and leave the world behind, you know! I get lost in this space I want to be in, to explore.” Jane indicated that sometimes she wants to be away from people so she visits the thrift store. She shared the following:

I'm not someone who likes hanging out with a lot of people all the time.

Because I like having my own time, so just having that opportunity to be alone while shopping or simply looking at stuff is always a nice advantage for me.

Expectation versus Reality

For many of the participants, they had experiences to share with shopping second-hand clothing online and offline. Participants mostly shared their experiences by comparing both channels. Most were in favor of offline shopping because of some circumstances they had previously encountered including sizing issues, stained clothing, and the hassle associated with returns. For instance, Lisa shares her experience with shopping on ThredUp. She stated the following:

Part of my struggle with buying things for myself online that are secondhand, I don't know what sizes. Every company's sizing is so different. And so if I know it's a company where I know like, oh, this is a size that fits me for this company, then I'll buy it online. But sometimes it's kind of hit or miss.

Lisa continues:

I shop on ThredUp a lot and I have been pretty pleased with some items I received. However, I haven't always been lucky. They have a program where you can tell them what you're looking for and not really pick it out yourself and they'll send you a box of things. And that I haven't been super impressed with. I tried it and you can send things back if you don't like them, but it was like almost everything in the box wasn't really what I had asked for.... Like it's got

discoloration, wrong sizes, some were frayed or something. I had to return the whole thing.

Ebony also narrated her experience with shopping on ThredUp. She notes:

When items appear on the listing page, information about the sizes is usually below it. Based on that info, you decide on that dress or whatever. One time, I wanted a pair of jeans that showed a waist measurement of 27 inches, but when I clicked on it to read more details, I saw another waist size of 30 inches for the same pair. It was so confusing.

Lydia also shares:

The major concern for me is when I receive my package and the clothing doesn't look good on me. Or doesn't look as it looked online. Or it could be just like broken or ripped. I would have wasted time waiting for that order.

Briana discussed purchasing a dress online that was described as "like new with very minor discoloration on the sleeve." However, when she received the dress, she stated that it was far worse in the discolorations and the descriptions did not match the dress, thus, leaving her very disappointed. She further shared her feeling of anger as she had to pay to return the dress. This experience according to Briana "dissuades me from going back to such sites."

Senses

Due to the above-mentioned experiences, the participants shared their preference for physically shopping for second-hand items to avoid unnecessary issues. Clothing is an experience good (Peterson et al., 1997) and clothing products may also differ

extensively according to price, quality, body fit, and the like. For such differentiated products, consumers will often perceive great variations in quality and therefore perceive shopping online as riskier than offline purchasing (Grewal et al., 2004). Participants described their desires to see, touch, and feel clothing items before making their purchase decisions. Again, similar to the previous theme (expectation vs. reality), the participants compared both channels as it relates to the use of senses when deciding on what to purchase. Kate shares:

I prefer to shop in-store any day because it gives me the opportunity to test what I'm buying, to see if it really fits. Because sometimes the size might be my size but it might not fit as I would like. Or, sometimes the shade. Online it may look black but when you see it in-store, you find out that it's not this jet black or it's some other shade of gray, something like that. That's the reason I would rather shop physically so that I can see it rather than thinking about what I thought it was in the picture.

Joleen shares how she prepares to see clothing items physically in order to decipher the true condition. She reports:

When I buy stuff for my kids online, we realize that sometimes it's more worn than we thought cos online, I might not be able to see how worn the item is, maybe the hem of the jeans are already beginning to fray or there's a tear in one hiding place that the camera did not photograph online. Being able to see the item for me and see if it's still worth anything or if it's still good I think is an advantage of going into the store.

Lydia and Lisa shared thoughts on the ease of making a faster decision to purchase when shopping offline because they can try clothes on. Therefore, with offline shopping, consumers have an advantage to not only see, but also try out the clothes and see how it looks on their bodies. Lydia shared “the thing with offline shopping is that you can always go and try it on, that’s the thing but online you can’t do it.”

Lisa shares the following statement:

It’s easier to know if you’re going to like something if you buy it in the store. I can hold it and look at it in the mirror or try it on. Sometimes it doesn’t look as I thought it would so I will drop that item immediately.

Susan also reports:

.... there’s variety and I can see these things visually. I could see them. I could touch them. I can try them on. Sometimes you see it, you’re like, this dress is really cute. And you try it on. And you just say, no it’s not for me or yes, I like that. Online I could fall in love with the print or design but the fabric and finishing may not be what I envisioned. But in the store, you’re able to tell, oh yeah, this is for sure cotton, or silk or whatever it is..... For sure, you can tell the quality, just touching, feeling, looking, and wearing. But online it’s just, it is what it is and yeah, it might not be what you’re expecting.

Distraction/No Distraction

Regarding this theme, participants narrated their experiences with shopping in second-hand environments. On one hand, some participants shared that they preferred shopping in an environment where they could relate with other shoppers. On the other

hand, some participants prefer second-hand shopping environments that are free of distractions. For instance, Lisa describes her distraction-free experience. She shares:

If you go to Goodwill, you know, it's Goodwill. It's like a training program for people to work. It's not like you're expecting super stellar customer service or fancy store decorations or whatever, you know. I prefer to be left alone when I'm shopping in the store. I just want to be alone with myself. In that respect, I really prefer going somewhere like Goodwill because not a whole lot of people are going to be asking you what you're looking for. You can just look on your own.

Lisa however acknowledges that with online shopping, there is usually no interaction with anyone. She further stated "what's nice about online shopping is that I'm not interacting with the salesperson unless I have a question and I reach out to them. I think it just depends on what I'm looking for." She continues:

But if I'm looking for something that's for a wedding or a funeral, and I don't find it in a thrift store, I might go to a consignment store, that's a little fancier. And that usually involves more people asking me how I'm doing, which I'm like, I'm fine. Can I just look, can I just see ... I just want to look on my own. But the quality of the items is sometimes nicer. It's sort of a trade-off.

Grace also shares that "for the most part, I just want to go anywhere I can shop on my own without being pestered by salespeople." Similarly, Briana reports:

I enjoy shopping when I am left alone because most times it's a form of escape for me. That's why I currently like to visit My Thrift Stores on Rice Street. They

recently introduced self-checkout so now I can practically shop from start to finish with my headphones on, without interacting with anyone.

However, other participants enjoy communicating with others while shopping. For example, Susan states how she enjoys interacting with store personnel as well as other customers. She further states:

Sometimes I meet people and make new acquaintances. I like that. With online shopping, I can't be friends, just because I don't see the other shoppers. But here, I like the fact that I can also take my time to go around and see what other things they have and ask the store personnel questions.

For Lydia, she describes getting to meet people with "really cool style" as well as interesting people that she wouldn't normally meet in her day to day life. From her experience with working at a thrift store, she stated that generally, the elderly people she has come in contact with like to have conversations with other shoppers and spend a lot of time shopping. As a result, she tries to say hello to more elderly people compared to others.

For Priscilla, she has mixed feelings about distraction/no distraction when shopping. She shares the following statement:

I remember trying on a jacket while standing in front of a mirror and some old lady told me, "oh that's cute on you." That's a fun part about shopping, you meet interesting people and also get to interact with fellow thrifters. However, on the flip side, sometimes I don't want to talk to anybody and they're trying to talk to me while I'm trying to shop.

Time Saving/Convenience

The participants reported their experiences with time management and convenience when choosing where to shop for second-hand clothing items. Eight participants discussed and compared online and offline channels with almost all of them attributing saving time and convenience with online shopping. Kate shares:

Online shopping means I don't want to dress up. I just want to get something quick. And then another thing with online is that I am not in a hurry. Also, if it's something that is not so critical as in terms of sizing, fit, and all of that, I could do that online. But, when it comes to shopping in-store, if I have the time, I would like that better because as you're just walking in, walking by, you see items and you have more time to be there, or you feel more relaxed to go around.

Lisa shares that "with online shopping, it can be any time of the day. It can be during the afternoon or before we go to bed. That's really helpful because I don't have to schedule shopping around Brian's work time". She further stated that "I can go on to ThredUp or I could go to Poshmark or I could go to a number of different second-hand platforms online. And in that way, it's a lot easier to find what exactly I'm looking for without having to drive around to lots of different stores around the whole Metro area."

Susan shares why she chooses online shopping during the winter season:

Online shopping helps a lot in the winter. When I look out the window and see all that snow and then imagine driving out there, Oh my God! Yeah, that's discouraging. I would actually shop and have them delivered to me. Just like I

said, online is shopping at your convenience because you can do it sitting down in your house. The only downside is that I have to wait for that delivery and hope that everything fits right.

Briana also reported that online shopping saves time. She shares that “You have to dress up and drive over there and start looking and whatever, but online you can just see the item. That’s an advantage. It saves you a lot of time and the stress of going down there.”

Perception of Channel Attributes

Based on the perceptions of participants regarding the attributes of online and offline second-hand shopping channels, these themes emerged - organization of the store/website, ease of use when searching, and navigating the shopping environment.

Organization

With regard to online thrift stores, participants discussed their perceptions of visual elements that are unique to the online environment. With physical thrift stores, participants shared their thoughts about how inventory display and arrangement influence their perception of the shopping environment.

Kate describes her perception of the organization of some brick and mortar thrift stores:

I like how Salvation Army, Arc, and some Goodwill stores organize their merchandise. I say some, not all, because they have some that do not sort items, they just display piles of clothes, shoes, bags on tables or hang them anyhow for the customers to sift through. For example the Goodwill in Brooklyn Park, their

things are not organized. Everything is just thrown. I mean, the clothes are kind of hung but they're not hung in any specific order, and some clothes aren't hung, just tossed on the table, so you have to search through to find what you want. But with the Arc and Salvation Army, things are organized, so baby's clothes are here, toddlers' clothes are here. Some are arranged according to age which makes it easy for you to find what you want....

Jane shared her thoughts on how organized stores makes her feel less pressure by finding what she is looking for. Briana also spoke about how thrift stores are organized. She shares:

When I went to Clothes Mentor, I liked the store because it's organized, so it doesn't feel exhausting to shop there. I once went to this store, Once Upon A Child, I ended up not buying anything there because the whole place was too chaotic. I can talk about Clothes Mentor because it's organized and even Salvation Army and Goodwill, they are more organized with signs.... as opposed to like what I went through at Once Upon A Child. There, you had to dig in a basket, which to me was too overwhelming and I just could not deal with that.

Briana went further to describe that "when the environment is clean and well organized, it makes me feel like I'm not buying somebody's waste. The more organized the place the more likely it is for me to stay longer and purchase more stuff."

When the researcher asked the participants about their perception of the general attributes of online second-hand websites, the most common response among

participants also revolved around the organization. Participants highlighted that organized websites are those that present just enough details without coming off as chaotic, easy to use, and accurate descriptions. In addition, such websites use multiple high-quality images that show different angles of items. For instance, Grace shares how the organization of a second-hand website influences her perception and intention to purchase. She stated the following:

To begin with, an organized display makes me continue with my search. Then, a detailed product description and good photos help me picture how that product would look at me. I like to also see those clothes on real people so I can picture it on me, instead of clothes photographed on hangers or those placed on flat surfaces.

Priscilla shares the following statement:

When the design of a site is well put together, it definitely catches my attention especially when there is a flow, it's almost like I am being drawn in. I would say that definitely makes me feel excited.

Ebony highlighted her expectations:

The minute I open a web page to shop, I want to see the home key, I want to see a clean, well organized, and labeled product description that allows me to easily read and find the information I need.... With online shopping, I feel like a unique attribute would be the ability to customize my shopping preferences.

Lisa shares her perception of online environments with regard to product sizes, styles, brands, and product descriptions. She states:

On ThredUp, everything is pretty streamlined. You can search for specific brands if you want and specific sizes. And it's harder to tell exactly what the quality is going to be, but there's usually a description, so it'll usually say this is new with tags or this is pretty used or whatever the used quality is.

Similarly, Jane shared:

A good example is Poshmark. I like the organization of that site. I use the heart button a lot because I can always go back to view all the items I previously liked. That way I can see if there is a price drop or something. I also like reading the information of the seller, comments from other people, and the number of listings by the seller. Yes, another feature that I like is the 'people also searched' feature at the bottom of the page.

Search and Navigation

Another theme that emerged as a result of participants sharing their views regarding second-hand channels were search and navigation. Participants describe their perception of search and navigation when using both online and offline channels. When shopping online, consumers typically begin by typing a keyword into a website's search bar before navigating and exploring the search results. Participants mentioned the utilization of sorting options, enabling browsing enhancements, and optimization of search features. These help consumers with sorting product types by brands or colors. Joleen shared "I want an engaging experience whether I am searching to buy or simply browsing.... I like functional sites that are easy to customize and navigate." Another participant goes further by stating her preference for wanting to see only a handful of items at a time rather than 'scrolling through hundreds of images at a time'. Lisa shares:

I know most online clothing stores in general and second-hand businesses have tons of stuff, this huge inventory that I am expected to go through as a customer. I know that I can select any category of products I want, like women, then bags, but, I don't want to see all your bags in my face. I just want to see a minimal number with an option to go to the next page if I want. It's really exhausting when I have to keep scrolling and scrolling. I'm like, when does it end?

Lydia states her perspective:

I'll say a quick search is everything. I would immediately know if what I want is available or not. With online, you can add filters, low price to high price, or whatever you're looking for.... If you're looking for shirts or pants. So you can filter that way to make your shopping experience easier all without having to leave your home.

Participants compared searching and navigation within online and offline second-hand shopping environments. For example, Jane states:

So online, you are basically looking at one thing at a time, but when you're in-store, there's a rack. So you could literally scan through and look out for what stands out and then just go straight to it because your eyes can see so many things at once which you can't really do if you're online. Because you have to scroll obviously.... However, with online shopping, you could be looking at five stores at once to find an item versus being in only one store trying to find that item. So in-person shopping can sometimes be more tasking because you're limited to the one store you're at.

Similarly, Ebony shares:

I feel like shopping second-hand online is more specific because if I go to Poshmark, I can search for, let's say yoga pants from Old Navy, or maybe a Zara dress and it will pop up, or at least something similar. But in a store, I would have to physically search through the dress aisle and hope to find it. Kate also shares her perspective on online versus offline attributes.

When shopping online, sometimes you might not even be able to really see anything beyond what you're looking for. If I'm looking for jeans for example, so I'm going to boys, and if I go into boys jeans section, that means I would not see anything on the girls' section, whereas in the store I might have walked by the girls' section and then there's a skirt there, it's like, oh, this looks nice. I can give it as a gift, or I can buy this for my daughter.

Incentives that Motivate Prioritization of Online Second-Hand Channels

During the course of the interviews, participants were asked to describe incentives that motivate them to patronize one second-hand channel over the other.

Lack of Choice

Participants mentioned that as a result of the restrictions put in place by the government due to the current Covid-19 pandemic, their shopping behaviors changed significantly. One participant, Jane, stated that while she prefers to shop in physical stores, the lockdown left her with no choice than to shop online. She reports:

I had no choice but to consider online thrift shopping. Even though I was happy to save some money, I feared the items could be exposed to the virus.... I had to

sanitize, air dry, or leave the packages outside for a while to reduce my chances of contracting the virus.

Deals

Other participants shared that they found very good deals online. Susan shares:

I got very cheap bags, shoes, and a lovely Ikea shelf on Facebook Marketplace. As usual, I always bargain with sellers so I can get a good price. However, I was so surprised she agreed to sell at that price. I guess with people losing their jobs because of this pandemic, some people just want to raise cash....

Other participants shared that purchasing second-hand items online was the only affordable option they had compared to buying brand new items online or from the few stores (Target, Walmart) that were open. Lydia shared that she purchased loungewear and yoga pants that were listed as brand new on ThredUp.

Leisure Time

Another group of participants described that they spent time on second-hand shopping apps for leisure purposes, Ebony stated how she would spend hours on The RealReal browsing for items “I know that I can’t afford right now.” Priscilla also reported shopping online to “simply while away time.” Jane also shares that:

Sometimes, I browse these online websites not really because I want to purchase something but just to occupy my mind with something different. You know it’s really been difficult with this pandemic. I can’t go out and when I switch on the

tv, it's mostly Covid-19 updates. Social media is also the same. So, I would rather occupy my mind with something else, that's shopping or browsing in this case.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore collaborative consumers' experiences with second-hand clothing consumption, their perceptions of the attributes of online and offline second-hand shopping channels, and incentives that motivate them to patronize one channel over the other. Using semi-structured in-depth interviews, 10 second-hand clothing consumers were asked open-ended questions to understand their experiences with shopping second-hand clothing items using online and offline channels. A number of insights can be drawn from the results that have important theoretical and managerial implications. This chapter, therefore, discusses the implications of the findings, limitations of the study, and suggestions for future research.

First, based on participants experiences with second-hand shopping, six themes emerged: (a) impulse/unplanned purchases, (b) the environment of channel, (c) consumers expectation for the products versus the reality of those products, (d) the use of senses to shop, (e) distraction/no distraction, and (f) time saving and convenience. Second, with regards to consumers' perceptions of the attributes of online and offline second-hand channels, two themes were identified namely: (a) organization of the store or website and (b) the ease of search and navigation. Finally, the incentives that drive second-hand consumers' to patronize online channels over in-store were: (a) lack of choices, (b) deals, and (c) spending leisure time.

Theoretical Implications

The findings of this research, specifically examining a system of collaborative consumption ‘redistribution market’ (Botsman & Rogers, 2010), provides insights into consumers’ experiences and perception of online and offline second-hand clothing channels. It contributes to the multichannel and collaborative fashion consumption literature by providing the views of second-hand consumers based on their contrasting perceptions of the advantages and disadvantages of shopping online and in traditional thrift stores as well as their relating approach and avoidance behaviors (see Mehrabian & Russell, 1974 for more).

In this study, almost all of the participants associated their second-hand shopping behaviors with influences from family during their upbringing. Thus, the practice of second-hand shopping has not only evolved with them but has also become a part of their shopping routine. This suggests that consumers who have previously engaged in second-hand consumption are more likely to continue the practice. This result is similar to Lang and Armstrong’s (2018) study which reported that consumers who have engaged in CC may develop a positive perception of their behavior that might lead to the intention to get involved in similar behavior in the future.

Our findings show that while personal motivations for engaging in CFC are important, the experiences of consumers while engaging in CFC shape their perception and in turn their behavior towards CFC. In Albinsson and Perera’s (2012) findings, one of the benefits of participating in collaborative consumption was developing relationships and socializing with like-minded strangers. In our study, some participants

attributed meeting people in a thrift store as an advantage while others preferred not to mingle with others. It is therefore important to note due to the experiences of different consumers, what one consumer would regard as a benefit, another would consider it a cost.

Participants reported that engaging in second-hand shopping creates positive emotions. Findings, therefore, suggest that participants' emotional benefits were centered on personal pleasure. For in-store second-hand consumers, the shopping activity serves as a form of escape while others experience nostalgic emotions. For participants who reported exploring online thrift stores for leisure purposes, they attributed the activity to having fun and experiencing excitement. Some people might take part in CC simply because it is fun and provides a meaningful way to interact with other members of the community (Brun et al., 2013). To satisfy their personal desires, our findings show that consumers would visit second-hand shopping channels even when they were not interested in actually buying anything.

The study also reveals consumer's experiences with obstacles related to CFC. With online shopping, participants shared their concerns regarding trust issues especially as it relates to clothing sizes and quality. Our findings suggest that as consumers gain experience with CC using second-hand channels, they develop behaviors on how to engage in this type of consumption. For example, due to low levels of trust when shopping for apparel online, consumers would rather buy fashion products that are not size specific. Thus, experience plays a vital role in behavior formation.

Previous studies have explored consumers' motivations for engaging in CFC.

For example, the most frequently cited motivation among users of both online renting and resale platforms are saving money (Park & Joyner Armstrong, 2019). Cervellon et al., (2012) also reported that low prices serve as a strong influence on willingness to purchase second-hand goods. This is consistent with our results as participants mentioned price as a driver for engaging in this type of consumption. Furthermore, Park and Joyner Armstrong (2019) reported that money as a constraint was found in the users of resale as participants frequently commented that they looked for moderate or luxury brand names online.

While this study did not exclusively focus on consumers' motivations for engaging in second-hand consumption, during the course of the interviews, participants shared some motivations not previously recorded in literature. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, non-essential physical stores (including thrift stores) were closed to reduce the congregation of people within a space. Thrifters who usually patronize physical second-hand stores became limited in their ability to shop for second-hand clothing in-store. As a result, participants who had never shopped second-hand clothing online as well as those who sparingly did became more frequent online thrifters. They attribute this new shopping behavior to being solely caused by the restrictions put in place due to the coronavirus outbreak. We, therefore, deduce that for typical in-store second-hand shoppers, the adoption of online thrifting is triggered by unusual and unavoidable circumstances. We infer that when consumers are faced with little or no choice, the less desired means becomes quintessential.

Participants also reported other drivers for choosing online second-hand

channels which are linked to the closure of physical stores. They reported searching CC sites to not only buy what they needed but to also find deals for random items. In addition, participants mentioned browsing second-hand sites to simply 'while away the time' thereby implying hedonic motives. It supports Bardhi and Arnould's (2005) study which reported that the motives for engaging in second-hand shopping are not exclusively financial, rather, patronizing second-hand also provides sources of direct interest to shoppers. Participants also reported that price serves as a major driver for switching to online thrift shopping because they could acquire items online for cheaper prices compared to buying new items in the few stores that were open. It indicates a hedonic-economic link that shows how economic and recreational motivations are interwoven in relation to second-hand shopping (Guoit & Roux, 2010). Our findings also corroborate Park and Joyner Armstrong's (2019) study indicating that seeking bargains is described by consumers as common practice on resale websites.

This study contributes to the literature in three important ways. First, it uncovers the unique experiences of long-time second-hand shoppers, thereby offering valuable insights regarding consumers' engagement in this form of apparel consumption. Second, by understanding participants' perceptions of second-hand shopping channels, it exposes consumers' thinking processes as it relates to two distinguishing CFC channels, online and offline. Third, the study provides a better understanding of the phenomenon of CFC, especially in relation to new motivations.

According to Harris et al's (2017) research on grocery shoppers and their perceived advantages and disadvantages of shopping online and in traditional

supermarkets, their findings suggest a complex mental balancing process. Similarly, our results suggest that for collaborative fashion consumers, choosing a channel to shop seems to be the outcome of weighing a combination of the positive and negative characteristics of channels. Consumers approach behavior occurs as a result of the expected advantages from a particular choice; while avoidance behavior results when channel choice is fully or partially motivated by the desire to avoid the disadvantages expected from the alternative channel (Harris et al., 2017). Therefore, when second-hand consumers make decisions to purchase clothing items online, it demonstrates approach behavior, caused by the anticipated advantages of saving time, shopping ease, and convenience and positively reinforced by the attainment of such advantages. However, when typical in-store shoppers buy online, Harris et al., (2017) reported that they do so to avoid the perceived aversive consequences (length of time) of shopping in-store.

Managerial Implications

Our results reveal the experiences and perceptions of consumers towards second-hand shopping channels. Findings suggest that managers can use this knowledge to address consumers' concerns and provide practical solutions to obstacles that deter consumers from engaging in CFC. To minimize consumers' concerns which results in avoidance behavior, managers should make a more concerted effort to tackle directly the concerns and the perceived costs associated with second-hand shopping.

The study provides an understanding of consumers' emotional experiences which can be used to enhance their shopping experiences. In addition, the findings

provide insight into typical offline shoppers' attitudes towards engaging in second-hand activities online. This knowledge is useful in creating attributes that will be beneficial to consumers, to retain new online thrifters, and to attract more customers as well.

Also, the study provides insights into consumer differences which will help researchers and marketers better understand their customers. Furthermore, this study provides relevant implications for CFC retailers and marketers to design their marketing strategies based on different consumers with characteristics corresponding to the clusters identified in this study. CFC retailers should also emphasize features of channels that are designed to attract and satisfy consumers' expectations such as ease of use (search and navigation), personalization settings, and advanced search engines with multiple filters. Finally, it is suggested that the providers of CFC channels and services should pay close attention to consumers' emotional needs because enjoyment is seen to be an important factor in this study.

Limitations/Suggestions for Future Research

This study has some limitations that could be addressed in future research. First, the narrow geographic location of participants in the study could have developed limited CFC experiences and themes (all participants reside in the Twin cities, Minnesota). This result might be different in other parts of the U.S. Second, the cultural range of participants was limited - all ten participants interviewed in this study were black. Third, all participants were female and below the age of forty. Fourth, this study used the word 'clothing' to describe everything worn on the body including hats, jackets, shoes, dresses, jewelry, and bags. Fifth, all interviews were conducted online.

As a result, the researcher was not able to vividly capture other aspects of the participants behavior such as body language during some of the interviews.

Future studies should recruit participants of different age groups, wider geographic regions, sex, and cultural range in order to learn more experiences and perspectives. Future research could also focus on one type of clothing item. This could produce different results as consumers may prefer to purchase different clothing items using different channels. Furthermore, the themes generated from this study could be used as variables in a quantitative study to ensure better reliability. Based on the findings of this study, researchers may investigate consumers' experiences for each CFC mode to provide a holistic understanding. For example, researchers could explore consumers' approach and avoidance behavior for each CFC mode. Future studies could explore consumer loyalty for typical offline shoppers who are new to shopping online and have enjoyed successful shopping experiences. Future research should investigate if second-hand consumers' positive and negative experiences could influence their perception and behavior towards engaging in future CFC practices.

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APPENDIX A

Participant Recruitment Email

You are invited to participate in a study that aims to get a better understanding of people's second-hand shopping experiences. We appreciate you volunteering to participate. This is a study conducted by a graduate student, Carmi Bobwealth Omontese as a part of her thesis research at the College of Design, University of Minnesota. The faculty advisor of this research is Dr. Hye-Young Kim.

If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to sign a consent form and be interviewed by researchers. The researchers will ask your honest opinion about second-hand shopping behavior and consumption. It will take about an hour to complete the interviews. Please answer each question with the answers that best apply to your individual situation. There are no correct or incorrect answers. We are interested in your opinions. After completing the interviews, you will be compensated with \$20 for participation.

The records of this study will be kept private. In any sort of report, we might publish, we will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a subject. Research records will be stored securely and only researchers will have access to the records.

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with the University of Minnesota. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question(s) and you can opt out of

the survey at any time without affecting those relationships. We would appreciate your participation.

APPENDIX B

Consent Form

You are invited to be in a research study that aims to get a better understanding of people's second-hand shopping experiences. You were selected as a possible participant because you are above the age of 18 years. We ask that you read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study. This study is being conducted by: Hye-Young Kim, Ph.D. and Carmi Bobwealth Omontese (Department of Design, Housing, and Apparel), University of Minnesota.

Procedures

If you agree to be in this study, we would ask you to do the following things: You will be asked to be interviewed by the researchers. The questions require your opinions about second-hand shopping and purchase behavior. We expect that it will take you about one hour to complete the interviews.

Confidentiality

The records of this study will be kept private. In any sort of report we might publish, we will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a subject. Research records will be stored securely and only researchers will have access to the records.

Voluntary Nature of the Study

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with the University of

Minnesota. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time without affecting this relationship.

Contacts and Questions

The researcher(s) conducting this study are: [Hye-Young Kim, Ph.D] and [Carmi Bobwealth Omontese]. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, you are encouraged to contact them at the Department of Design, Housing and Apparel, College of Design, Saint Paul, University of Minnesota.

This research has been reviewed and approved by an IRB within the Human Research Protections Program (HRPP). To share feedback privately with the HRPP about your research experience, call the Research Participants' Advocate Line at (612) 626-5654 (Toll Free: 1-888-224-8636) or go to <https://research.umn.edu/units/hrpp/research-participants/questions-concerns>. You are encouraged to contact the HRPP if:

- Your questions, concerns, or complaints are not being answered by the research team.
- You cannot reach the research team.
- You want to talk to someone besides the research team.
- You have questions about your rights as a research participant.
- You want to get information or provide input about this research.

APPENDIX C

Interview Questions

1. What type of items do you usually buy when you shop second-hand? What channel (online or in-store) do you use while shopping second hand?
2. What inspired you to adopt this channel as a means to purchase second-hand items? What factors encourage or deter you from using this channel?
3. Describe your experience when shopping online and in-store?
4. Why did this channel become your preferred means of purchase? What standards did you use when you evaluate your alternatives in choosing your preferred second-hand shopping channel?
5. What differences do you notice between these second-hand shopping channels?
6. What are your opinions on the advantages and disadvantages of these channels?
7. Can you explain how technology has impacted your second-hand shopping behavior?
8. What factors influence engaging in second-hand shopping? Explain how shopping for second-hand clothing online or offline influences the type of clothing you buy.
9. What are the incentives that motivated or changed your attitude towards the usage of your preferred channel over the other?