Do you even fashion, bro?

– A descriptive study on millennial men and their relationship to fashion and the online environment.

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Abstract

Background: Historically, fashion was not always gendered. After the Great Masculine Renunciation however, men relinquished their rights to excess of physical aesthetics and being ‘beautiful’. Cultural masculinity and gendered norms have since impacted male fashion and constrained the western male look to being understated and practical. Recently, new male icons have surfaced. Certain celebrity appearances have received coverage by popular media, since they are exhibiting a more androgynous and diverse take on masculinity than what is normally presented in the public sphere. There is a hype surrounding this, displayed online. Increasing sales of menswear also indicates that this hype surrounding men’s fashion might be spreading to the general public. This phenomenon inspires speculation about whether or not the average western millennial man actually adopt this new trend they are said to be the leaders of.

Purpose: The purpose of this thesis is to examine and describe the relationship that the millennial men have with fashion, with regards to attitude, subjective norms, and behaviour.

Methodology: The research builds on a pragmatist philosophy which allows both interpretivist and positivist positions. This allowed a quantitative method to be conducted, using an abductive approach. The data was collected through a survey, using quantitative questions. The acquired data and was analysed through descriptive statistics.

Findings: The main findings show that millennial men should not be treated as a single homogenous cohort in research surrounding fashion. The findings also demonstrate a clear shift in men’s attitudes towards shopping and fashion, showing that it is not a feminine activity. However, the attitude towards “the new style of men” is quite scattered. Thus, it seems that this hype around changing male fashion has only started trickling down from the niche community that is considered to be leading this change. Regarding their behaviour, most men still prefer buying clothes from a brick-and-mortar store and do not use the online environment actively to seek out and consume fashion.
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1. Introduction

The first chapter of this thesis provides the reader with background information about the main topic. After that, the chapter leads the problematization of the topic and presents the relating purpose as well as two main research questions. The chapter closes after the research delimitations are presented.

1.1 Background

The Great Masculine Renunciation and the neglect of men in fashion contexts

In academic fashion research, the representation of men is sparse. English psychologist and academic Carl Flügel (1930) gives a clue to why this is, by first addressing the historic connections to how gender became a key function in dressing. Before the French revolution, fashion had long been a luxury good, accessible only to nobility and the bourgeoisie. The late 1700’s culminated in a bourgeois revolution which abolished the feudal system, and resulted in a capitalist social class system where social mobility was possible and working became respectable (Skocpol & Theda, 1979). In his book on the psychology of clothes, Flügel (1930) describes how men symbolically relinquished their right to excess of physical aesthetics after political power had shifted in favour of the middle- and upper middle classes. Working and breadwinning became masculine functions and over time, menswear became more practical and understated (Peacock, 1996; Stevensson, 2011). As women were considered the consumers of the family, fashion thereafter became a feminised phenomena (Flügel, 1930). Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion professor Ben Barry’s article on masculinity (2018) aligns with this, by stating that Modern Western society framed fashion in opposition to Hegemonic Masculinity¹. He also clarifies that fashion still worked as a function by which men could establish themselves as not only different from women but also from other men (Barry, 2018).

¹ Hegemonic masculinity is defined as a practice that reinforces men’s dominant position in society and justifies the marginalized ways of being a man.
Flügel (1930) refers to the 1800’s phenomenon as one of the most remarkable events in history regarding apparels and men. He noted that the effects from what he named “the Great Masculine Renunciation” still had a substantial effect and could be observed in modern western society. Carl Flügel himself, was an active member of the Men’s Dress Reform Party [MDRP], which advocated for men’s dress to become less dull, between 1929 and 1940 (Burman, 1995; Bourke, 1996). Burman quoted several members of the group in the beginning of her article from 1995 on the MDRP. The first quote by Edward Carpenter states that “one [as a man] might almost be in one’s coffin as in the stiff layers of buckram-like clothing worn these days. [...] Who could be inspired under all this weight of tailordom.” (qtd. in Burman, 1995, p. 275).

The quotes show a unique, historic example of a group of men who during this time, sought more freedom of dress for the larger population of men. The party was of the opinion that the democratic movements of the French revolution had resulted in a duller look for men which still lingered in the early 20th century Western world, since men had tried to escape the guillotine by dressing less flamboyant (Bourke, 1996). More contemporary works demonstrate that those effects are still influential, years after Flügel published his remarks (i.e. Riekkinen 2012; Zayer & Neier, 2011; Thompson & Hirschman, 1998; Greener Brown, 1973), even though men’s fashion naturally has become more relaxed compared to the norms in 20th century Western European.

The changes which affected men’s dress during the Great Masculine Renunciation deeply impacted the average man’s involvement in fashion, and the cultural remnants still restrict the view on what place fashion has in men’s lives today. That is not to say that examples have not existed since, of more expressive groups of men who were freer in the use of fashion and clothes. Most examples are, however, restricted to time-specific movement groups like the hippie- and punk movements (English, 2007), and specific subcultural groups like the dandies (Glick, 2009). Little attention has been given to men’s relationship to fashion on a more general level. This is important to keep in mind, when discussing any possible changes and trends in men’s fashion.

\[^2\] A man, (especially in the past) who dresses in expensive, fashionable clothes and cares for his own appearance (Cambridge Dictionary)
Signs of a new hype

One of the biggest fashion events of the year, the Met Gala, introduced ‘Camp’ as the theme in 2019. Camp stems from queer culture and refers to styles which are so full of ironic value, humour, and “being extra”, that it is considered fashionable (Fisher, 2019). Camp has further been connected to dandyism and associated with homosexual aestheticism (Glick, 2009). The attendees of this year’s gala present an especially relevant example which demonstrates how the modern man is split between a more globalised and accepting world (English, 2007), and the prevailing standards which still seem to compartmentalise the relationship between men and fashion.

Many of the male guests dressed up in androgynous, colourful, and expressive styles, all in accordance with the theme. These flamboyant looks were actively celebrated and praised by popular media, following the red carpet appearances (McDermott, 2019; Schube, 2019; Newbold, 2019). The positive media coverage and the surrounding hype, shows that men are more allowed to reclaim and embrace their right to excess of physical aesthetics. Despite that, a large proportion of the male attendees still came dressed in classic suits and simple styles, despite the event having a fashion/costume-driven theme. They were later criticized by popular media for being too boring and not enough daring with their all-black suits and only minor embellishments (McDermott, 2019).

Popular media’s infatuation with ‘flamboyant’ men

Globalization and digitalization are considered to be the main enablers of the attention men’s fashion is getting, as they make the world increasingly interconnected (Grau, 2018; Maoui, 2018). The popular media was already reporting on new trends in men’s fashion and speculating about styles and aesthetics changing and diversifying before the Met Gala was held. This has lead to an increasing amount of hype around famous men who are breaking the mainstream perception of masculinity (Chitrakron, 2019). Celebrities such as Ezra Miller, Jaden Smith and Timothee Chalamet are considered to be changing the male fashion with their example of what fashion can be for men, and by making it more acceptable to dress more expressively (Maoui, 2018; Pentelow, 2019; Chitrakorn, 2019; Lubitz, 2016). Their
examples are reposted through easily available social media platforms and reaching millions of men, as fashion is considered to be one of the hottest topics on these platforms (Grau, 2018). This behaviour is especially evident among younger men and utilized by fashion brands (Kelly, 2017; Kestenbaum, 2017; Bain, 2018; Chitrakorn, 2019). Celebrity stylist Ilaria Urbinati notes that the standard black tuxedo that men have worn to awards for decades is becoming an outmoded uniform (Rosemberg, 2019). The norms set after the Great Masculine Renunciation and its standing influence are therefore being challenged.

Even though the new trends are visible on the catwalks, fashion shows and social media platforms, it is unclear whether it is being adopted by the average man. Statistics show that although women’s clothing still outsells mens’, the sales of menswear has seen an incremental rise since 2009 (Rabkin, 2018; Statista, 2019). Sidney Toledo, CEO of LVMH fashion group, believes it to be more due to the popularization of streetwear and a shift towards more casual clothing, also in the luxury fashion segment (Adegeest, 2019).

The global interconnectivity has enabled a small proportion of the population to get more media coverage and the previously marginalised groups of men are now gaining a wide public representation. The previous examples are indications of two things; on one hand, the norms in society could still be largely shaped and kept intact by what caused and followed the Great Masculine Renunciation. On the other hand, it indicates that there could be a shift emerging that is pushing the boundaries of the more stereotypical frames that were set for masculine expression at the end of the 18th century.

According to a male fashionista Skylar Bergl (2017), even though the “modern man” is becoming more in touch with his fashionable side, the really fashion conscious males are still a niche community. Chitrakorn (2019) further believes that media and marketing are more infatuated by the shift, than any kind of new man, no matter how varied the concept of masculinity for them might be. Therefore, this change within male fashion may be fake news as no academic research shows yet, whether a shift exists on a more general level.
1.2 Problem Discussion

Since the Great Masculine renunciation men’s fashion has been relatively stable and resistant to change since the Great Masculine renunciation (Mak, 2015). Since then, the academic research has rarely been treating men as active or engaged consumers of fashion (Bourke, 1996), and little research exists within the field that address them as such. Fashion research that has addressed men, largely divides them into two distinct groups. One is formed by marginalised variations of masculinity or subgroups, who are interested in fashion. The others regarded as hyper masculine and “breadwinner” stereotypes who stand in opposition to fashion consumption. This creates an issue in the academic field of men’s relationship to fashion as the fashion perception of general male population remains unknown.

Both Fischer and Sunduk (2017), and Koski (2017) address men’s fashion relationship from the first angle, using small samples, and qualitative methods to establish patterns among marginalised men. Their studies conclude in patterns among millennial men, but the findings are restricted by the sample size and cannot be applied to the general public. Koski (2017) states in their conclusion, that the sample respondents do not represent the average consumer who brings in the majority of the profit for brands. This hinders the need for knowledge about whether the general male consumers are affected by the hype, presented by the popular media and social media channels.

The current depiction of male fashion by the mainstream popular media suggests an emerging shift on a wider scale. According to the popular media and previous studies (Fischer and Sunduk, 2017), men are starting to move away from the traditional masculine utilitarian way of fashion consumption, and are adopting a fashion behaviour traditionally considered to be feminine. Simultaneously, less traditional male aesthetics are hyped up popular media sources and the online. The cohort currently leading this behaviour are the millennial men, because they are spending more money on clothes than previous generations of men and are both receivers and creators of online media (Mastrolia & Willits, 2013). In addition, Kraljevic & Filipovic, (2017) consider millennials to be trendsetters across different industries. This makes them additional drivers for fashion spending of other male groups (Torres et al. 2001).
Studies regarding millennials and their fashion behaviour are still relatively limited. Though research addressing surrounding topics exist, there is a clear gap when it comes to millennial male fashion behaviour. The online environment is especially relevant, as it has been part of enabling the possible shift. Benson, 2018 found that millennials interact more on online platforms than in real life and therefore are more affected by it. Nash (2018) proposes studying the use and adoption of social media in relation to fashion among millennials as an interesting area of development within the research field. He states that it has changed the dynamics of gender where men are becoming increasingly extroverted in their fashion expressions and views it as a market that, to date, has not been extensively researched (ibid.). Fischer and Sunduk (2017) support this, and also suggest studying millennial men and their fashion behaviour. This demonstrates a good place to start the investigations surrounding the shift. Therefore, this thesis aims to form a generalizable understanding whether the possible shift has trickled down to the masses, with a focus on millennials, and how the online environment is part of this change.

1.3 Purpose and Research Questions

The purpose of this thesis is to investigate male fashion behaviour and whether the hype, depicted by the popular media and some recent researches, is being adopted by the general population of men. This will be explored both in terms of aesthetics and consumer behaviour. The problem discussion chapter indicates that there is a possible shift in male fashion behaviour that has not been extensively studied nor confirmed.

In order to address the purpose and gain deeper insights regarding the topic, two main research questions were formulated. First of all, the research needs to examine whether or not men consume fashion in a less “stereotypical masculine” way in order to see if there is a change within their consumer behaviour. This means finding out are they now more want- and desire driven, and less functional and utilitarian. The second question will determine what role of the online environment has for millennial men’s fashion consumption. Thus, the research questions are:

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3 The word “style” is used synonymously with “aesthetic” throughout the research.
(1) Are millennial men now consuming fashion in a less “stereotypical masculine” way?
   (a) How is it visible in terms of fashion behaviour?
   (b) How is it visible in terms of style?
(2) Is the online environment enabling the possible shift?

1.4 Research Scope

This thesis focuses on male fashion behaviour. Although, gendered identity construction, sexual orientation, and the ambiguity of masculinity are all linked to this topic, the thesis is not focusing on how men use fashion in that sense, but how a general person who regards themselves as a men, currently perceive and participate in fashion. These aspects did not receive heavy focus also due to the lack of research connecting them and their relationship to a fashion context. This thesis focuses instead on male fashion behaviour and their attitude towards it. It will consider if the hype, depicted by the popular media, is real and if it is trickling down to the general male population. The three influencing factors were still regarded and the survey did not limit anyone based on their sexuality or gender identity. However, no clear discrepancies came across from these minority groups, thus they were not more specifically analysed. Furthermore, as the chosen focus of the thesis is to study whether men are consuming fashion in a less traditionally stereotypical masculine way, the frame of reference had to focus mainly on masculine consumption patterns. A clear definition of feminine fashion consumption was therefore not prioritised, and any references to female fashion shopping behaviour was of a gender differences nature.

The cohort currently leading this change are the millennial men (Mastrolia & Willits, 2013). The millennials in general are widely known as technical natives, and they show more interest towards fashion and increased fashion consumption compared to the previous generations of men (Koksal, 2014; Sarpila, 2008). According to Koksal (2014), millennial men’s shopping tendencies now resemble their sisters’ more than their fathers’, where the focus of utilitarian aspects of the clothing is shifting towards hedonistic factors. Furthermore, Mauoi (2018) and Hobbs (2015) considers that the more gender fluid, flamboyant and
expressive styles are what the Insta-generation is after. Therefore, it is only natural to take millennials as the target for this research, even though the target sample could have been any other cohort as well. Also, as the authors belong to the millennial group, it made requiring the respondents easier.

The previous research regarding similar topics has mainly had qualitative approach and limited samples, and therefore, cannot be generalised to the larger millennial population. This thesis aims to witness whether the hype is real and trickling down and therefore used a quantitative approach. The aim of the study is to gather past information and combine it with the new data, which leads to updated information that will therefore help also with future research.
2. Frame of Reference

The frame of reference is divided into two sections. Previous research is presented first and addresses the academic landscape surrounding the fields present in the thesis. Following this, a conceptual framework is developed, which is based on both literary findings and existing theories.

2.1 Previous Research

Despite the increased interest in male fashion behaviour over the past years, Koksal (2014), Barry (2018), and Ourahmoune (2016) state that male fashion behaviour has not been explored extensively enough in literature and the previous research on men and their fashion consumption has only been limited to specific areas and contexts. The following sections provide an overview on the previous research areas and main themes that have been contributing to the understanding of male fashion behaviour.

2.1.1 Masculinity

Flügel’s (1930) take on the psychology of clothes was the first major academic portrayal of factors constituting the communicative aspects of fashion in the field of sociology. Since his initial contribution, more specific studies of male fashion and its cultural meanings have been made (e.g. Barry 2018; Breward, 1999; Lehtinen, 2016; Sarpila, 2008). These studies consider male fashion as a separate research area, explore the communicative aspects of fashion and tie them to concepts of status, identity creation and masculinity. Both Connel (1995) and Beynon (2002) addressed masculinity and culture. They agree that masculinity is an ongoing accomplishment, which is uniquely located in different societies and times. The authors both discuss contemporary implications of hegemonic masculinity, which are understood as the dominant perception of what masculinity is, and what forms contemporary cultural expectations (Lehtinen, 2016). The findings of Barry’s (2018) study support this by showing that dress is used by men to reinforce hegemonic masculinity and gain social advantage.
Men dressing their bodies furthermore assists the construction of different desired selves as well as the expression of cultural meanings regarding gender and identity (Zayer & Naier, 2011). This is a clear example on how this field treats fashion primarily as, what Breward (1995), Barnard (2002) and Johansson and Warkander (2017) define as a communicative medium. Despite that there are studies regarding fashion and masculinity, there is still a gap concerning how the ideology of masculinity is changing in the western society and how traditionally feminine spaces are adapting to the changing of masculinity (Ourahmoune, 2016). As the contemporary western man is portrayed in various forms, dominant masculine roles now coexist alongside minor ones, which are the ones influencing the society as a whole and inspiring the markets (Ibid.).

2.1.2 Men and Fashion

Studies concerning men and their relation to fashion are often addressed through industry driven research in fashion consumer behaviour, where applications have a more managerial purpose in the field of marketing (Zayer & Neier, 2011). Though there are academic studies regarding gender differences regarding shopping behaviour, there are only a few addressing men and fashion.

The beginning of a more comprehensive research of the male shopper dates back to the 1980’s, where the focus of their shopping behaviour was on mundane products and services, for example housing or cars (Banytė, Rūtelionė & Jarusevičiūtė, 2015). Prior to that, the consumer behaviour research focused on females and made general comparisons to the males. (Banytė, Rūtelionė & Jarusevičiūtė, 2015). In the 1990s, men were introduced as a separate consumer segment in research (Banytė, Rūtelionė & Jarusevičiūtė, 2015). It was first addressed in Piper and Capella’s research in 1993 on male grocery shopping, that focused on attitudes and demographics (ibid.). Around the same time, Torres et al. (2001) and Otnes and McGrath (2001) were among the first few authors to address male consumer behaviour within fashion. Bakewell et. al. addressed the same shortage in 2006, by affirming that the field of fashion consumer behaviour studies continuously neglect men and put more emphasis on the female consumers.
Since then, more examples have appeared where the fashion consumer behaviour research meets the field of male fashion (i.e. Zayer & Neier, 2011; Sarpila, 2008; Riekkinen, 2012; Koksal, 2014; Banytė et al. 2015, 2015; Fischer & Sunduk, 2017). The studies address shopping orientation, fashion leadership, brand relationships and awareness, as well as male shopper satisfaction when buying clothes. Academic attention has also been given to the impact of gender within consumer behaviour (E.g. Kraljevic & Filipovic, 2017; Zayer & Neier, 2017; Wang & Kim, 2019; Herter, Pizzutti dos Santos, Costa Pinto, 2014). A number of prominent differences among male and female shoppers were identified within these studies. The previous research agrees that shopping is considered as a feminine activity which is enjoyed more by women than men (Herter et al., 2014; Ourahmoune, 2016; Banytė et al. 2015; Riekkinen, 2012; Koksal, 2014). However, since the traditional conception of men being producers and breadwinners has started changing, an increasing amount of research is focusing on men as shoppers (Ourahmoune, 2016; Coulter, 2014). The interest is more relevant since men’s shopping has increased and evolved, especially during the 21st century (Herter et al., 2014; Shephard, Pookulangara, Kinley, & Josiam 2016).

Consumer behaviour research frequently treats men as a homogenous group and identifies them as utilitarian shoppers (e.g. Banytė et al. 2015; Ourahmoune, 2016; Workman, 2010; Chang, Burns & Francis, 2004). However, Herter et al. (2014) argued that women and men can share similar levels of hedonic motivations when shopping. Ourahmoune (2016) identified several male archetypes within fashion brands; the traditional man, the melancholic man, the tough guy, the effeminate man (non-utilitarian) and the Postmodern man. He found that most of the fashion brands identify their male customers as Postmodern men, who are a mixture of utilitarian and effeminate man. In addition, Otnes and McGrath (2001) discovered different concepts for male shopping behaviour: “grab and go”, “whine and wait” and “fear of the feminine”.

Rahman and Mannan (2017) note that the change in behaviour might come from how in contemporary society, individuals are evaluated by their possessions, such as fashion clothing. Sarpila (2008) agrees by stating that younger generations are more aware of their clothes as they identify the importance society puts on appearance. However, Riekkinen
(2012) states, that men shy away from the term shopping. Therefore, if in fact their shopping behaviour is changing they might not refer to it as shopping.

2.1.3 Online Consumption

According to Reimers, Chao and Gorman (2016), online shopping has received a steady stream of research attention since the Internet became the fastest growing host of marketplaces in the late 20th century. In 2013, Cummins et al. made a comprehensive literature review, with a sample of 942 articles within the field of marketing, covering consumer behaviour in the social- and online media context. The review found that the online consumer behaviour research is extensive, but not as comprehensive as traditional offline consumer behaviour research. According to them, the current online consumer behaviour research can be categorised into eight distinct areas: cognitive issues, user-generated content, Internet demographics and segmentation, online usage, cross cultural, online communities and networks, strategic use and outcomes and consumer Internet search.

The majority of the published research is in the ‘cognitive approach’ category which covers the topics of purchase motivation, consumer attitudes and decision making processes (Cummins et al., 2013). Cummins et al. (2013) state that the fast technological development and the creation of novel online and social networking platforms leave researchers with a plethora of possibilities to study their behaviour. In 2018, for instance, Dr Jill Nash of Bournemouth University studied how social media influences the fashion consumer decision journey within high street retailers. She found that social media is not the only motivator, but it is having an increasing impact on consumer decision-making, especially on the online environment (Ibid.) However, this study was limited to the UK market and did not cover any gender discrepancies.

2.1.4 Research Gap

The previous research unravels that, the majority of the studies regard men as a homogeneous and utilitarian consumer group who avoid shopping due to its possible denotion to femininity. The majority of the previous research in fashion has had its main focus on females. The more contemporary research has started to pay more attention towards men and has identified
different types of shopping behaviours among them. Due to the noveltiness of online mediums, the research there is largely industry driven, managerial and general. Though, there has been a steady and increasing amount of academic studies concerning online and consumer behaviour, it has rarely been tied with fashion and men. Similarly to the previous offline consumer behaviour research, the online has its focus on women. Furthermore, the studies that have merged the topics of online, men and fashion, are mainly focusing on defined subgroups or comparing men to women. This demonstrates the research gap the Authors aim to contribute to. A gap where average men are rarely addressed as avid fashion consumers in the research. The aim is to contribute to knowledge of male fashion behaviour and see if the mens’ increased interest in fashion, depicted by popular media, has trickled down to a wider population.

2.2 Literature Review

2.2.1 Fashion as a feminised phenomenon

As working and breadwinning have long been masculine functions in society, fashion and consumption are unanimously feminised phenomena (Breazeale, 1994). Due to this, Sarpila (2008) states that the majority of academic fashion studies primarily target females. This has made the research field highly gender embedded (Sarpila, 2008). Previous research confirms that men differ significantly from women regarding decision making rationale; from motives and values to shopping preference, perception, and general behaviour (Zayer & Neier, 2017; Kraljevic & Filipovic, 2017; Wang & Kim, 2019; Herter et al., 2014). Regarding the consumption differences in gender, females are considered to be “collectors” who pick several interesting items, whereas men are “hunters”, who aim to “grab and go” (Riekkinen, 2012). According to Zayer and Neier’s (2011), Ourahmoune’s (2016) and Barry’s (2018) research, traditional masculine and feminine values have not lost their meaning, but have been updated and are now portrayed in new ways and becoming more varied. Men are culturally more vulnerable in terms of identity and dress (Zayer & Neier, 2011; Bakewell, 2006). This is tied to past masculine concepts being stereotypical and that shopping for clothes has long been considered feminine.
2.2.2 Defining the traditional Masculine way of consuming fashion

According to Riekkinen (2012), though emotion plays an important role in the decision making process, men are said to be more rationally driven as consumers and the male consumer journey is more derived from a utilitarian need. Riekkinen (2012) attests this to society’s emphasis on rational behaviour and both him and Sarpila (2008) state that men often feel the need to defend emotionally driven purchases by using rational reasoning. Men start their consumer journey with the initial need recognition, followed by an information search among different weighed options that leads to the most rational outcome (Riekkinen, 2012; Jūratė, Aušra & Agné 2015).

Ourahmoune (2016) identified five different male archetypes used by brands to target the variety of contemporary masculinity. As Barry (2018) found out that the masculinity is multifaceted and dependent on identities and contexts, Ourahmoune (2016) found that brands are trying to target those identities also. The archetypes discovered were: “traditional man” (utilitarian and functional), “melancholic man” (focused on aesthetics), “tough guy” (anti-femininity), “effeminate man” (non-utilitarian) and “postmodern man” (aesthetic and utilitarian). Although the archetypes are somewhat present in the retail environment, Ourahmoune (2016) discovered that the brands are still mainly relying on the traditional utilitarian representation of masculinity.

Men with flamboyant styles have been of interest for academia. However, these studies agree that this kind of behaviour and use of expressive clothes is most seen with men of colour and gay men (Barry, 2018; Bakewell, 2006). Mass globalisation has brought on more liberalised attitudes towards homosexuality and multiculturalism, and the recent global shift and increased acceptance has altered how all men perceive fashion today (Bakewell, 2006). However, it is not known whether this is more attitudinal instead of behavioural, as it is not evident regarding the styles of hetero white men. Bakewell’s study (2006) argues that although mass globalisation has brought on more liberalised attitudes towards fashion and shopping, there is still fear to move too far from the male gender-role stereotypes.

Barry (2018) presents a concept of unmarking and marking the body. Unmarking the body, through understated dressing and boxy silhouettes, reinforces masculine performance.
Marking the body however, is a means of being more expressive, and denoting marginalized gender performance (Ibid.). Men have historically shifted between marking, unmarking, and re-marking their bodies with clothes based on the interplay between their social identities and settings (Ibid.). Contemporary research suggests that men continue to shift their gender performances through dress according to their social identities and contexts because fashion still creates an ambiguous space for them (Barry, 2018).

According to Zayer and Neier’s (2011) and Ourahmoune’s (2016) there now is a wider range, referred to as a “polyculture”, of masculine identities. As a result, men from different masculine identities are more free to express themselves through clothes without being labeled gay or feminine (Ibid.). Barry (2018) found that the choice of clothes, used to express masculinity, is highly flexible in today’s western societies and is dependant on social contexts, yet still constrained by societal gender norms. Also, Otnes and McGrath (2001) noted the problematization of straying too far from traditional male gender-roles by stating that men who see shopping as unmasculine, only participate in it to fulfill utilitarian needs. According to their theory, men must experience “gender-role transcendence” and rise above culturally rooted notions of masculinity in order for shopping to have a deeper meaning than just the simple act of purchasing goods (Otnes and McGrath, 2001).

2.2.3 Online

Digitalisation and online technologies have had a lasting effect on how most people consume. At present, many authors agree that online marketing communication is one of the biggest strategic priorities for companies (Kulmala, Mesiranta & Tuominen 2014; Tankovic & Benazic, 2016; Hall, Towers & Shaw 2016). This majorly impacts the fashion industry since purchasing decisions are influenced by social media, peer reviews and influencer marketing (The state of fashion 2017). The digital adoption of the contemporary mainstream consumer has led the global retail and fashion industry into a new paradigm (The state of fashion 2017). In order for fashion clothing brands to be successful it is required of them to expand from the traditional marketing mix and integrate online marketing activities (Rahman & Mannan, 2017).
Social and online media have been a major driver for men’s increased interest towards fashion in the latest years, which makes those platforms important parts for brands’ online communication (Biron, 2017). Otnes & McGrath (2001) found that the Internet also has a special role in men’s goals to win. It enables them to distance themselves from the feminine area of the market and use it as a tool for achievement (e.g., shopping for the best value or most feature-laden items) (Ibid.). Mauoi (2018) and Hobbs (2015) considers that the more gender fluid, flamboyant and expressive styles are what the Insta-generation is after, therefore it is only natural to take millennials as the target for this research.

2.2.4 Millennials the technical natives

The millennial cohort has been addressed differently in various researches. The authors of this thesis have taken the definition of millennials from Kraljevic & Filipovic’s (2017) study on millennial gender differences. Millennials were born between 1980 and 1999 and are characterised as young adults in their 20s and 30s (Kraljevic & Filipovic, 2017). The cohort is currently considered to be the largest consumer group and their spending power in the US alone is 200$ billion (The state of fashion, 2017). Recent studies have shown that younger males are more fashion oriented and shop to a greater extent than their older peers ever did (Koksal, 2014).

Millennial men do not buy things solely because they need it but, are more driven by their emotional wants (Koksal, 2014). Some of the findings, however, show that millennial men are less impulsive and more prone to making online purchases (Kraljevic & Filipovic, 2017). According to Koksal (2014), millennial men’s shopping tendencies now resemble their sisters’ more than their fathers’, where the focus of utilitarian aspects of the clothing is shifting towards hedonistic factors. Mothers and wives used to be the active shoppers of the family, but millennial men now prefer to purchase their own apparel (Zayer and Neier, 2011). According to Riekkinen (2012) men still care about the opinion of their spouse but they are more independent in their decisions.

According to Lehtinen (2016) they are also more considerate about the origin of their clothing and make decisions based on ethicality. In order for the millennial man to get interested in a piece of clothing, it needs to look good, but also be produced in an interesting
manner (Bradford, 2015). The story behind the product indicates that the purchase is not an impulse decision or just a current trend, but rather a decision made with rational consideration. (Bradford, 2015). Therefore, there seems to be incongruity where millennials seem to have utilitarian approach, but also a less stereotypical masculine behaviour regarding their fashion shopping.

Millennials are often referred to as digital natives, since they have grown up with the internet and social media (Kraljevic & Filipovic, 2017). A Business Insider report by M. Schlossberg (2016) found a trend driven by millennial male consumers where 40% of respondents would ideally buy everything online. Studies on millennial consumer behaviour and decision making processes have found that millennials have the ability to use multiple online devices simultaneously and utilize them in their complex decision making processes (Hall, Towers & Shaw 2016; Benson, 2018; Styvén, Foster & Wallström 2017). For instance, Hall, Tower and Shaw (2016) found that millennial purchase decision making processes and information exchanges are largely taking place in online environments like Whatsapp or Messenger. Interestingly, despite having an almost constant online presence, only 1% of Millennials say they are influenced by advertisements from brands (Sorilbran, 2018). Instead, they make their purchase decisions based on independent research, online reviews, and user-generated content (Ibid.). 52 percent of millennials identify with this behaviour, whereas with baby boomers it is 41 percent and in generation Z it is 45 percent (BoF and McKinsey & Company, 2019). This has led them to perceive online channels as more genuine and efficient than traditional ones (Hall, Towers & Shaw 2016; Benson, 2018).

Hall, Towers and Shaw (2016) found social media to be the preferred platform used by millennials as a source of information, leisure, entertainment and socialising. Of the 33 hours per week that is on average spent on the Internet by millennials, 83% is occupied by different social networking sites (Kraljevic & Filipovic, 2017). According to Nash (2018) social media also influences acceptance and adoption of fashion behaviour among millennials. This clearly shows how millennials share and communicate their lifestyles, facilitated by the connectivity of the internet (Kraljevic & Filipovic, 2017). Due to social media making millennials a generally more homogeneous as a consumer group (Kraljevic & Filipovic, 2017).
2.2.5 Society’s Pressure

Outi Sarpila (2008) believes that one reason millennials are more fashion conscious is due to them recognising the importance that appearance holds in today’s society and how it can influence individual success. Koksal (2014) agrees by stating that millenial men are more fashion conscious because they feel more pressure to be socially accepted. In accordance with what Riekkinen (2012) stated about men in general, millennial men often purchase clothes that bare resemblance to their friends’ styles, as they are susceptible to the feeling of belonging to certain groups (Thomas, n.d.). In Thomas’ (n.d.) research, this behaviour is recognised in social identity theory and illustrates how men seek assurance and belonging. Even though men mostly imitate styles by paying more attention to what others are wearing, media has become a major influence on millennial men’s purchasing behaviour as well (Riekkinen, 2012). Thus, creating another platform for men to seek acceptance and finding social pressure.

Due to the more rational consumer behaviour of men, Wang and Kim (2019) found that it is easier to establish brand loyalty among them as it can be facilitated by factors such as easy usability and trust. Despite this, men show lower levels of involvement than women do and do not form as deep interpersonal relationships with brands (Kraljevic & Filipovic, 2017). In attempting to contextualise the contrasting statements, Riekkinen (2012) showed that men prefer buying brands known to them which are used among their peers, as they do not want to differ from them too much. Almost all brand conscious men believe that wearing branded clothes improves their appearance in others’ as well as their own eyes (Riekkinen, 2012). Thereby, they also seem to be less sensitive to price compared to females (Kraljevic & Filipovic, 2017).

2.3 Theoretical Overview

2.3.1 Trickle Down Theory

It has been discussed whether fashion is an elite phenomenon or a mass phenomenon (Ragone, 1996). When it is considered as an elite phenomenon, it is a process that starts with, or is introduced by, privileged social groups, after which it starts flowing onto other
social strata (Ibid.). Therefore, when it is considered as a mass phenomenon, it does not have this ‘trickling down’ effect, instead it invades an entire population at once (Ibid). This idea came from Veblen (1949) and Simmel (1985), when they suggested that every social innovation is introduced by dominant classes and later they drop this innovation in favour of a new one (Ibid.). In other words, they considered that it is always the elite who makes fashion innovations from where it trickles down to other social classes. However, recently this idea has been challenged, for example, with the emergence of street wear we have witnessed trickle up effect as well. Furthermore, in today’s society status is not conveyed in the same manner as it was when Veblen (1949) introduced this theory (Trigg, 2001). However, the trickle down theory can still be useful when considering how trends move across different social groups.

2.3.2 The Theory of Reasoned Action

To study the millennial male consumers of fashion, Martin Fishbein’s and Icek Ajzen’s (1975) Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) was taken as the main theoretical basis to explore their attitudes and perceptions. The theory of reasoned action is mainly used to predict an individual’s behaviour through examining their basic motivations to perform a given action (Ibid). TRA’s fundament is largely derived from previous research in social psychology, attitude theories and persuasion models. It suggests a relationship between an individual’s attitudes and behaviours (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975).

TRA states that behavioural intentions, which are prerequisites for the final behaviour itself, are a function of prominent information and beliefs about the likelihood of a particular behaviour leading to a specific outcome (see Figure 1.) (Madden, Ellen and Ajzen, 1992). According to the model, the prerequisite beliefs to behavioural intention are further divided into two distinct sets of concepts: attitude towards behaviour and subjective norms (Ibid). Together with the behavioural beliefs and outcome evaluation, they form an underlying influence on a person’s attitude towards the action or behaviour. On the other end of the model, the normative beliefs and the motivation to comply, together influence the subjective norms about the action (Ibid). In general, TRA is based on motivation to perform a behaviour. The two fundamental variables, attitude and subjective norms, focus respectively on thoughts
Figure 1: Theory of Reasoned Action (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975)
Before presenting the model, Ajzen and Fischbein (1975) addressed the complexity and ambiguity surrounding their chosen definition of an attitude. According to them, most social scientists harbour consensus toward the definition of an attitude being “a learned predisposition to respond in a favourable or unfavourable manner with respect to a given object” (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975, p. 6). The discussion addresses some detail disagreements surrounding the definition including: the nature of predispositions, different interpretations of the term consistency, predispositions being either general or specific questionable linkage to certain behaviour, coordination of response consistency and dispositional specificity, and what different experiences should be considered relevant for the formation or learning of a disposition.

Despite these differences, predispositions are defined as “an enduring organisation of motivational, emotional, perceptual, and cognitive processes with respect to some aspect of the individual’s world” (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975, p. 9). This statement supports the argument that predispositions are assumed to be the result of past experiences and that attitudes are therefore learned. This will result in varying attitudes among people (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). With regards to the online context, more modern examples like browsing the internet for fashion inspiration, and researching various brands or products also help to form the attitudes of an individual about said brands or products (Kim, 2014). This is a part of the learning which results in positive or negative behaviour towards said elements (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1975; Kim, 2014).

A person’s attitudes towards a behaviour or an object are therefore one of the key elements in the theory of reasoned action (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). They determine the behavioural intention of individuals. The attitudes themselves are formed by two important key factors: the strength of behavioural beliefs and the evaluation of those beliefs (ibid). The behavioural belief shows an individual’s motivation to behave in a given way and the evaluation of said beliefs shows how they perceive the given behaviour or object (ibid). The evaluation can be positive, negative or neutral. Therefore, the beliefs, their strength and the evaluation of said beliefs form an individual’s overall attitude towards an object or a behaviour (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975).
4. Methodology

The chosen method and methodology will be presented and discussed in this section. It will provide motivations for the research choices made in the context of fulfilling the purpose of the thesis, explain the data collection and method of analysis. The chosen method will be critiqued and the quality of the research will further be discussed.

4.1 Research Philosophy

The research questions of this thesis can be approached both quantitatively and qualitatively. The previous studies on topics regarding men and fashion have been primarily addressed qualitatively through in-depth interviews. The choice of research philosophy for this thesis was first surrounded by a level of ambiguity. The authors decided to adopt a pragmatist research philosophy, since it takes the research questions into the main focus and considers them the most important determinants of what research method is adopted (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2012). Pragmatist approach combines both interpretivist and positivist positions within a single research (ibid.), where the opposing philosophical concepts can be combined or adopted differently (Andrew, Pedersen & McEvory, 2011; Saunders et al., 2012). This meant that the Authors were able to integrate abductive reasoning to find answers to the research questions (Andrew et al., 2011).

This was particularly important since the previous research from an interpretivist point of view, deals with social constructs, considers social meanings and appreciates differences between people (Fisher & Sunduk, 2017; Lehtinen, 2016; Riekkinen, 2012). They mainly gathered qualitative data within smaller samples through interviews and content analysis. As the goal of this thesis was to explore whether a hyped phenomenon has touched a broader/general population, having a larger sample was necessary. A strictly positivist approach would normally allow for this kind of quantifiable observations that leads to statistical analysis and focusing on facts (Andrew et al., 2011). However, the use of a purely positivist philosophy would not be satisfactory for the purpose and research questions of this study due to the need for also making interpretations from the results.
The philosophy allowed the authors to take a practical approach by integrating different perspectives in order to collect and interpret data and apply it to the social phenomenon (Saunders et al., 2012). It further led to taking on a quantitative approach (ibid). The pragmatic philosophy allowed the Authors to remain independent and objective from the research while still aiming to increase the general understanding of the male fashion behaviour.

4.2 Research Approach

The research approach needs to correlate well with the aim and framework of the thesis. The existing literature surrounding the topic of the thesis has not yet reached saturation. Thereby, developing previous propositions or testing hypotheses derived from existing theories is not possible and a purely deductive research approach is not appropriate (Robson, 2011). The findings and theories of the theoretical framework did provide a direction for the study. Working purely inductively would thereby not be feasible either, as the knowledge contribution is not solely generated from empirical data (Dubois & Gadde, 2002). So in order to hinder the limitation related to these more usual approaches stated by Alvesson and Sköldberg (2009), another approach needed to be introduced to the research - an abductive approach.

As a research approach, abduction has both deductive and inductive qualities (Saunders et al., 2012). It aims to explain existing understandings, but also to identify new patterns in the empirical data (ibid.). This takes shape in this thesis as most survey questions were derived from previous understandings, which were then confirmed or denied, in which case the understanding was updated according to the current state of the results. According to Bryman and Bell (2015) abductive reasoning is based on the pragmatist perspective where the problem is derived from a puzzle, or a surprise which is then sought to be explained. As they suggest, the Authors encountered an “empirical phenomena which existing theory cannot account for” (Bryman & Bell, 2015, p. 27), when first encountering the hype in media surrounding men’s fashion. This phenomenon inspired the research questions and was found puzzling since it aligns with certain previous research findings, but contradicts others.
The main purpose of the abductive approach used in this thesis, is to include patterns in order to explain understandings (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2009). It allows both social constructs and previous theoretical findings to inform the researchers and is appropriate in order to find the most probable answer to the research questions (Bryman & Bell, 2015). This was particularly important as the researchers were allowed to move between empirical data and existing literature during the entire research process while comparing and interpreting the findings to one another and to the previous literature.

4.3 Research Purpose

With regards to the research purpose of an investigation, there are three differentiating categories; descriptive research, exploratory research, and explanatory research (Saunders et al., 2012). Through the use of a descriptive research purpose, this thesis can shed light on current issues through the process of data collection. According to Grimes and Schulz (2002), descriptive studies commonly represent the initial “scientific toe in the water in new areas of inquiry” (p. 147). The main objective of this approach is to gain a detailed image of people, events, or of a situation and in this study that is implemented through the use of a survey (ibid.). The survey method gives the investigation a broader reach, which was needed as the more recent studies within the topic showed in depth findings from small and more closely defined samples. This gave the authors a chance to demonstrate what findings and statements apply to the larger target cohort.

The descriptive approach can be considered a forerunner to exploratory research where the use of open ended questions seek to clarify previous understandings about a problem (Saunders et al., 2012). By the use of a few concluding open ended question, the survey gives an initial take on a research purpose that is more exploratory. That is not the main goal of the thesis however, and the answers to the open ended questions were handled equally, as the rest of the quantitative data. The answers were clustered and categorised, by which the authors could gain an understanding of how many respondents belonged to the different end categories observed.
4.4 Research Method

In order to fulfil the purpose and answer the research questions of this thesis, a quantitative method design was adapted. The method involves a survey research, where the emphasis is on objective measurements and statistical analysis (Bhattacherjee, 2012). The survey allowed the Authors to collect data about a population that is too large to observe directly, and was a good tool for measuring a variety of unobservable data, like people’s preferences, traits, attitudes, beliefs, behaviors, and other factual information (Ibid.). As the goal of this thesis is to gain insights about the state of a larger cohort, which has previously been studied in smaller specified groups, the quantitative research method was a good option because it aided the data collection process and generated more respondents. This later correlated to an analysis process which yielded larger generalisation opportunities (Hanson et al., 2005; Bryman & Bell, 2015). Within the quantitative method, the thesis follows a descriptive design which aims to describe the current state of men’s fashion consumption behaviour and aesthetic appearance (Bernard & Bernard, 2012).

4.5 Data Collection

The research data for this thesis was collected through a self-administered questionnaire. In a self-administered questionnaire, respondents answer questions by filling out the questionnaire themselves (Bryman, 2012). It is similar to a structured interview but, with the advantage of being cheaper and quicker to administer, has no interviewer variability and is more convenient for the respondents (Ibid). It enables collection of quantitative information from a wide sample, without having to talk to every respondent (Walliman, 2006). As the research aim for this thesis is to find out whether the hype, depicted by the popular media, trickles down to average men, a self-administered survey was the preferred option since it enables to obtain quantifiable data in a shorter time-frame and excludes the possibility of the interviewer affecting the outcome of the results (Ibid). The presence of an interviewer increases the likelihood of respondent bias to social desirability (Ibid). Furthermore, online-administered surveys show the least amount of proneness to social desirability bias (Ibid) In addition, previous research that has studied similar themes have been collecting smaller samples and
relied more on qualitative data. Therefore, this data collection provides a better tool for analysing the shared sentiment of millennial men.

The survey of the thesis was administered via the Internet using Survey Monkey (www.surveymonkey.com) questionnaire platform. The internet-administered surveys have become a preferred choice due to several advantages over other self-administered surveys done on paper or through E-mail. The software programs are easily available for everybody and they provide the ability to target a wide sample for example through computers or mobile devices (Bryman, 2016). The internet-administered surveys also offer various filters, for example they are able to prevent the respondent to inadvertently miss a question or it can be set that questions appear one at a time, thus avoiding response errors. Furthermore the answers of a survey can be automatically downloaded to a data analysis program.

The survey featured both closed- and open-ended questions. The open-ended questions were gathering additional detailed information surrounding the topic of the thesis. Moreover, it gave the respondents a chance to elaborate on their answers. All of the question had a quantitative approach, as the aim was to understand the fashion behaviour among millennial men within a larger sample. Therefore, the open-ended questions were clustered into categories based on their similarities. This enabled the authors to measure the answers but also provided a more detailed understanding of the answers.

3.5.1 Survey Construction

The current state of research and what needed to be explored was established before the survey construction. Questions were constructed to support and inform the research questions in relation to the existing literature, the questions are all shown in Appendix 1 in order of the survey distributed online. The questions were primarily derived from the Literature Review. The literature review was divided into topic specific sections where previous findings relevant to the topic of the thesis were gathered. The connections between the questions and the topic sections are shown in Appendix 2. Three questions were derived from the author's own experience, that were considered to help to answer the research question. However, in the
questions. However, in the analysis, these questions lacked academic validity and provided somewhat less significance to the thesis.

As the data was collected with a self-administered survey through the Internet, the survey needed to have a very clear covering letter (Bryman, 2016). This helped the respondents to understand the research topic and guide them through the survey with clear instructions. Questions were formulated using simple and clear language that would be understandable for a wider sample from different nationalities (Bryman & Bell, 2012). Different sections of the questions had instructions for how to respond to e.g. the Likert scale questions which instructed the respondent to choose their level of agreement with the statements. The authors made the questions short and easy to answer, to increase the survey response rate (Ibid.). The anonymity of the respondents was also taken into consideration. Therefore, no identifiable personal data was collected from the respondents. The only demographic data collected, was age groups, nationalities, sexual orientation and occupation. All of the responses were used in generalisations.

The close-ended questions of the survey included three different types of questions; five-point Likert scale-, multiple choice-, and dichotomous variable questions (yes or no). The majority were Likert scale questions. According to Walliman (2006) Likert scale questions are effective when measuring beliefs and attitudes as internal drivers of behaviour. These types of questions were therefore highly relevant, regarding the research question, as it demonstrates the respondents attitudes towards fashion behaviour. The second type of questions were in multiple choice format, which measured the external influences, such as drivers for men’s fashion consumption, and personal factual information of the respondents (Ibid.). The multiple choice questions were formulated differently, in order to make the question more understandable for the reader and ease their choice of answers for certain questions. The last type of questions were two-variable (yes/no). They were used to get an overview and quick information about the respondents (Ibid). These types of questions are also easier to code and decode (Bryman, 2012). However, the survey results could have shared the same coding metrics if all questions were of the same type. This might have made comparisons easier and further relationships could have been identified.
sampling enabled the Authors to attract respondents outside of their immediate circle (Bryman, 2016).

If a population is very heterogeneous, a larger sample will be needed to reflect the varied population. If it is homogeneous the sample can be smaller (Bryman, 2012). Since the sample was millennial men it was neither very hetero- or homogeneous. The respondents were from different countries and occupations as to ensure that the findings be more generalizable to the population of millennial men in western societies. However, getting mostly Northern European answers was to be expected, as the authors themselves are all from Nordic countries. The authors aimed to get 150-200 respondents to ensure that the findings would be accurate regarding the shared sentiment of the millennial men in the sample. However, this was not fully achieved and the survey yielded with 116 respondents.

3.5.4 Errors

When a survey is open for everyone, as this one was, sampling errors may occur (Bhattacherjee, 2012). This is due to the lack of opportunity to control all answer, and that way there is no knowing whether all answers truly came from the intended sample, in this case men aged 20-39 (Ibid.). In addition a non-sampling error occurred, as the authors did not limit the country of origin for the respondents. Therefore, after closing the survey, the decision was made to rule out any responses from outside the European Union. This was done to strengthen the population validity. The majority of the respondents were from Sweden, Finland and Estonia, which was due to the survey distribution approach through Facebook sharing and direct messaging. This resulted in the majority of the survey respondents being of the same nationalities as the authors of this research. This was tried to be relieved through the snowball method, directly targeting other nationalities, distributing the survey in international facebook groups and survey exchange sites online.

3.5.4 Secondary Data

According to Bryman (2012) and Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2012) it is beneficial to combine primary data with information gathered from existing sources. By re-analysing existing, secondary data, the authors got access to relevant information that helped create a
foundation for the research in this thesis. The main secondary data was collected among academic journal articles, books and case studies written in English. The primary source for finding the secondary data was through the Authors’ university library database (available online at: https://www.hb.se/en/University-Library/) this yielded with the majority of the found articles hosted by the Emerald Insight online database where a further keyword search was conducted. Emerald Insight was chosen as the database of choice since, it encompasses a wide selection of full text, peer-reviewed publications world-wide in multiple disciplines, including marketing and sociology. The search was implemented through a keyword method, where the database was fed with specific terms and their potential presence was identified in keywords, abstracts and titles of the publications. The main keywords used, were: millennial, men, fashion, clothing, consumer behaviour and attitudes. The keywords were used both separately and in combination with the others. The relevant books were found in the universities library.

Relevant material from the popular media was found through a similar keyword search, utilising the Google search engine. The authors handled the articles from the popular media with source-criticism and tried to establish the credibility of the author or the publishing website. This was mainly done through reviewing the other works from the given author or publishing website. The credibility of the information was also evaluated through checking the existence of similar information available in other sources. None of these sources were used as academic footing in the research. This type of source was carefully constricted and used within the introduction chapter only. More specifically, they were used with the purpose of providing the reader with background information, in showcasing the ongoing narrative within the media surrounding the topic.

3.6 Method of Analysis

The data analysis followed the theoretical framework presented in Chapter 3. The analysis is examining the relationship between the three key dimensions of the framework with a descriptive focus. The focus of the analysis is on current state of respondents’ attitudes, subjective norms and behaviour regarding fashion. The analysis follows the same concepts in a descending order by topic. According to Hanson et al. (2005), data analysis usually
involves coding the data, and integrating it during the data analysis stage. These designs are useful for gaining a broader perspective on the topic at hand and for studying different groups, or levels, within a single study (ibid). The quantitative data, received from the survey was coded into representing numerical values. The ordinal variables from Likert scale did not require extensive coding. An assigned value from 1-5 was respectively given to the corresponding agreement level of the statement: 1= completely disagree and 5= completely agree. The dichotomous variable questions had assigned values from 1 to 2. The data from the open ended questions was coded into clusters based on their similarities. Therefore all of the variables in the created clusters resemble each other.

The received data was analysed in two phases. Firstly, descriptive statistical analysis was used to analyse the received sample data without external influence. Descriptive statistics include descriptive coefficients that measure and summarise a certain data set, incorporating bivariate correlation, mean, variance and standard deviation (Bernstein and Bernstein, 1998). The received data was analysed using Microsoft Excel. Secondly, the data was analysed in correlation with the findings from previous research in accordance with the conceptual framework, presented in Chapter 2, and the theoretical framework, presented in chapter 3.

3.7 Method Critique

There are some disadvantages which come with conducting descriptive research (Grimes and Schulz, 2002). Firstly, there is no scope to learn cause as the research purpose focuses on “what” instead of delving into questioning “why or how” (Bryman & Bell, 2012). The Halo Effect occurs if the data observer has any potential bias towards certain responses or to the topic in general (Ibid.). This might render findings invalid or untrue. Another disadvantage relates to respondents’ level of truthfulness in answering questions confidentially (Ibid). This was avoided by using a self-completion, anonymous survey with sensitive questions being optional.
3.8 Research Quality

Quality and trustworthiness are major challenges involved in any research process (Bryman & Bell, 2015). When it comes to addressing quality criteria in mixed methods, there is no real consensus among scholars of a set standard or framework for what to include as it is heavily context-dependent (Fàbregues & Molina-Azorín, 2017). In order to ensure both within this thesis, two main concepts; validity and reliability, along with a few others were considered throughout the process. There are several ways to utilise these concepts in order to better the quality. While most aspects are determined once the data has already been collected, some can be tested and ensured in advance (Ibid.). The aspects of validity and reliability utilised in this study are presented in the following subsections.

3.8.1 Reliability

Reliability is concerned with the degree to which the measures of a construct are dependable and consistent (Bhattacherjee, 2012). In other words, using the same measures for the same construct multiple times should yield close to the same result each time, assuming the underlying phenomenon remains constant (Ibid.). The questions of the survey, which lay as the basis for the data collection, were based on academic findings from the field and taken from valid and reliable research papers. The results were then reflected through a stable, generally accepted theoretical framework within the field of psychology, and compared to their conceptual base during the analysis process. This increases reliability, since the techniques used for data collection and analytical procedures determine whether or not results stay consistent if the same research were to be repeated by other authors on another occasion (Saunders et al., 2012). With higher replicability, this research is more reliable (Ibid.).

Another measure taken to ensure the reliability, was keeping the focus of this study, though sociological in nature, on the quantitative data set. This benefits the descriptive research purpose as well as the reliability of the findings, as purely qualitative research sometimes leads to less trustworthy findings (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). Furthermore, since the adopted mixed method could affect the findings, a concurrent method was used. This allowed all data to be collected within a single phase, which helped to cancel out the method effect, and
whether or not the findings will be generalisable over time (Bryman & Bell, 2015). The topic arose from a perceived paradigmatic shift happening, and from many contrasting findings arising over the recent years. This is an indication that the findings of this thesis will not be stable and generalisable over time.

Dependability is also worth mentioning as a criterion, as it was fulfilled by not only using several data sources, but also since the research was conducted by multiple researchers (Strauss & Corbin, 2008). The empirical data and results were coded and analysed jointly by the authors, which enhances discussions and interpretations of the findings, increases theoretical sensitivity, and enables the authors to better guard against bias (Ibid.).

3.8.2 Validity

Validity, often referred to as construct validity, explains how the research is founded and how well the intended questions are answered (Bhattacherjee, 2012). It deals with how well the authors identified correct measurements for the concepts being studied (Bryman & Bell, 2015). Survey research is cross-sectional and as a result, it is low in internal validity but high in replicability (Bhattacherjee, 2012). Usually, quantitative studies revise internal validity through statistical measurements, but since the study does not rely on hypothesis testing or other in depth statistical analysis, it is more important to consider other techniques mentioned by Bryman and Bell (2015).

In a study, the face validity addresses to which extent measurements within the study seem to be effective and match the aim of what the researchers looks to capture (Bryman & Bell, 2015). To help increase the face validity of this study, the authors reviewed previous studies made with similar research aims and strategies to make sure those studies were effective in fulfilling those aims. Furthermore, the authors continuously revisited the research questions throughout the process, so that the focus of the study would not sway from the the declared intent. Validity was further achieved, partly by examining multiple sources of evidence before choosing to reference specific ones, and moreover by having key informants review the study (Ibid.). These key informants included a few of the authors educational peers, the supervisor assigned to the thesis writing process, one other professors at the university, and a few outside people who fulfil the sample-criteria. As mentioned in the survey construction, some
4. Results

This chapter presents the results which the survey yielded. First, it describes the demographic data of the respondents. Then, through descriptive analysis, it describes the answers of the three survey modules of shopping attitude, online and style. All percentages have been rounded to the full number.

4.1 Sample Characteristics

The survey yielded with 116 completed responses during the timespan of 17 days (14.04.2019- 28.04.2019). Out of the 116 responses 108 were deemed suitable for further data analysis. This was due to the survey distribution where answers were also given by respondents from outside of Europe: both The United States of America and Bangladesh yielded 2 respondents and Argentina, China, Brazil, Ethiopia yielded with one respondent individually. In order for the data to carry demographic validity, the authors decided to further analyse only the answers given by respondents from European nationalities, since they bare more demographic similarities in relation to each other. This yielded in a samples distribution to 34.3 % Swedes, 26.9 % Finns, 24% Estonians, 3.7 % Germans and 2.8% British. Respondents from Belgium, France and The Netherlands were responsible for 5.56 % of the responses, yielding with two responses individually. Poland, Latvia and Spain each contributed with one respondent, yielding in 0.93% of the entire European sample individually.

The age group distribution results of the sample were as expected due to the survey distribution methods. A majority of the respondents (48%) were in the youngest age group of 20-25 years old. The second age group of 26-30 year olds was represented by 40 % of the respondents with 43 people. The age groups of 31-35 and 36-39 were represented by 11 (10%) and 2 (2%) respondents respectively. Similar age distribution applies for respondents with same nationalities, where the majority of the answers were given by men falling under the age group of 20-25 or 26-30.

The occupational representation within the sample showed that 44% (48) of the respondents are currently enrolled in a higher educational program at a university and 54% (58) are
more inclined towards shopping being more of a fun and not a feminine activity. 19% (20) of the respondents completely agree and 41% (44) of them partly agree that shopping for clothes is a fun activity. 15% (16) are neutral, 19 % (20) partly disagree and 7% (8) completely disagree with the statement that shopping is a fun activity. 56 % (60) of the whole sample completely disagree with the statement that shopping is a feminine activity. 23% (25) disagree partly and 9% (10) are neutral regarding the statement. 11% (12) of the respondents partly agree and one of them (1%) completely agrees that shopping is a feminine activity. This shows that the millennial men in the sample tend to find shopping a fun and not a feminine activity (See figure 2).

Figure 2: Millennial men’s attitudes towards shopping.
Source: Authors’ Survey (Appendix 1)

The next statement targeted respondents’ attitudes towards the available variety of different clothes for men. 24% (26) of the respondents completely agree and 33 % (36) partly agree with the statement that there is enough variety of clothes for men. 8% (9) have a neutral opinion about the matter. 24% (26) and 10% (11) of the respondents respectively partly disagree and completely disagree with the statement and find the variety of clothes insufficient. The previous statement was followed up with another statement regarding the available variety of clothing in their personal lives: “I often feel like I have nothing nice to
wear”. 6% (7) completely agree and 32% (35) of the sample partly agree with the statement and often feel like they have nothing nice to wear. 14% (15) neither agree or disagree with the statement. 33% (36) and 13% (14) partly- or completely disagree with the statement respectively. Although the majority of the respondents believe that there is enough variety of clothing for men, they have mixed feelings about having something nice to wear themselves (see figure 3).

![Figure 3: Variety in clothing](image)

Source: Authors’ Survey (Appendix 1)

The next attitudinal statements focused on the level of utilitarianism within men and shopping. The first statement focused on the importance of functionality of clothes for millennial men. The statement was: “The functionality of clothes is very important to me”. 21% (23) of the respondents completely agree and 46% (50) partly agree with the statement and find the functionality of clothes important for them. 18% (19) neither agree or disagree with the statement. 13% (14) of the sample partly disagrees with the statement, only 2% (2) completely disagree with the statement and would say that the functionality of clothes is not important for them at all. Therefore, the current sample of millennial men find the functionality of clothes important to them.
usually look up information about a garment before i purchase it (e.g. materials, country of origin etc.)” and “I usually compare different options before choosing what to buy. The arithmetic mean of the first statement (2.3) shows a slight inclination towards the respondents usually not looking up that kind of information before the purchase. This is shown by the fact that 38% (41) and 23% (25) of the respondents respectively, completely- or partly disagree with the first statement. 13% (14) neither agree or disagree with the statement. 19% (21) partly agree and 6% (7) completely agree that they usually look up information of the garment before purchasing it. Interestingly, the next statement showed a 25% (27) “completely agree” and 50% (54) “partly agree” response rate of the sample, indicating that millennial men tend to compare different options before making the final purchase. 9% (10) had a neutral feeling towards that statement. 10% (11) and only 6% (6) of the respondents respectively, partly- or completely disagree with the statement.

Figure 4.: Weighing information before purchase
Source: Authors’ Survey (Appendix 1)

The next section of the millennial men’s shopping attitudes focused on the subjective norms and to what degree they agree with the following statements. The first statement wanted to know the respondents degree of comfortability in buying clothes that they do not see their
friends wearing. 58% (63) of the respondents completely disagreed and 23% (25) partly disagreed with the statement: “I’m uncomfortable with buying clothes I don’t see any of my friends wearing”. 6% (7) are neutral, 9% (10) of the respondents partly agree and 3% (3) completely agree that they are uncomfortable with buying clothes that they do not see any of their friends wearing. The results and the statements mean (1,75) show that the majority of the respondents are very comfortable with buying different clothes than their friends (See figure 5).

![Bar chart](image)

**Figure 5.:** I’m uncomfortable with buying clothes I don’t see any of my friends wearing

Source: Authors’ Survey (Appendix 1)

The statements: “I feel pressure to wear different clothes every day” and “I feel pressure from society to dress a certain way”, focused on the perceived pressure that the respondents have from the society regarding how they dress. The first statement (mean 2.6) shows an inclination towards the respondents not feeling pressure to wear different clothes every day. 29% (31) of the respondents completely disagree and 21% (23) partly disagree with the statement, while 19% (21) feel neutral. 22% (24) and 8% (9) of the respondents respectively partly agree and completely agree with the statement. Although millennial men do not feel the pressure to dress differently every day, the second statement (mean 3.04) shows that they...
are split between feeling pressure to dress according to social norms in certain contexts. This is shown by 5% (5) and 41% (44) of the respondents respectively completely- and partly agreeing to the statement. A relatively large amount of respondents, 22% (24) do not agree or disagree with the statement. Whereas, 19% (21) and 13% (14) of the respondents respectively, partly- or completely disagree with the statement (see figure 6). The medium correlation (3.5) between these statements shows that when the perceived pressure from the society increases, it will likely increase the pressure to dress differently every day.

![Figure 6: Perceived social pressure](source: Authors’ Survey (Appendix 1))

Respondents were further asked about how much they discuss fashion and style with their friends, and how important they consider others’ opinions about their clothes. The answers for the first statement, “I discuss fashion and style with my friends” were split, showing a mean of 2.9. 43% (46) of the respondents completely- or partly agree with the statement whereas 41% (44) of them completely- or partly disagree with the statement. 17% (18) of the respondents remained neutral regarding the statement. Although the respondents are divided in discussing fashion with their friends, they tend to agree that others’ opinion about their clothes is important to them (See figure 7). This is shown by 5% (5) and 44% (48) of the
In relation to the previous statements, the participants were also asked to what degree they usually look up information about a garment before the purchase and do they compare different options before they buy a garment. This was addressed through two statements: “I
and the medium correlation of 0.31, between the statements shows that millennial men have intertwined hedonistic and utilitarian intentions towards buying garments (See figure 8.)

![Figure 8: Rational and hedonistic buying intentions](source)

Source: Authors’ Survey (Appendix 1)

The next statements focused on how often millennial men buy different clothing items compared to what they already own or usually buy. The statement: “My purchases are often similar to things I’ve owned in the past” (mean 3.7), shows that 12% (13) and 61% (66) of the respondents respectively completely agree or partly agree that their purchases are similar. While 16% (17) remain neutral, only 11% (12) of the respondents partly disagree with the statement and none of the respondents disagree completely, showing that millennial men often buy similar garments to what they have owned in the past (See figure 9). This is partly supported with the second statement: “I often buy garments that are unlike anything I currently own”, where 11% (12) and 43% (46) of the respondents respectively completely- or partly disagree with the statement. 33% (36) of the respondents are neutral or do not have an opinion regarding the statement whereas, only 11% (12) and 2% (2) are respectively partly- and completely disagreeing with the statement (See figure 9). The result that millennial men
tend to purchase similar clothing compared to what they have owned in the past is further supported by the medium strength negative (-0.36) Pearson’s correlation coefficient.

Figure 9: Similarities to past purchases  
Source: Authors’ Survey (Appendix 1)

The respondents were also asked how often they purchase new clothes and how avid shoppers they are. This was firstly targeted with the statement: “I update my wardrobe when the new season starts”. 47% (51) and 31 (34) of the respondents respectively completely- and partly disagreed with the statement. 6% (6) were neutral and 15% (16) and 1% (1) of the respondents respectively partly- and completely agreed with the statements. The statements mean (1.9) also supports that the millennial respondents tend to not update their wardrobe based on seasons. This statement was later followed up with a question on how often do the respondents buy clothes. The responses show that 51% (55) of the respondents do it every few months. 19% (21) of them do it more frequently and buy new clothes every month. One of the respondents buys new clothes every week. 24% (26) of them do it less frequently and mostly buy something once in every six months. 5% (5) of the respondents tend to buy new clothes once in a year (See figure 10).
respondents respectively completely- and partly agreeing with the statement. While 17% (18) are remaining neutral, 25% (27) and 9% (10) would partly- or completely disagree with the statement respectively.

Figure 7: Peer opinions
Source: Authors’ Survey (Appendix 1)

The final segment of the statements regarding millennial men’s general shopping and fashion was focusing on the behavioural intention and behaviour itself. This was first targeted with the statement: “I often make impulse purchases”. The responses show that 14% (15) and 31% (33) of the respondents respectively completely disagree or partly disagree that they often make impulse purchases. Respectively 32% (35) and 7% (8) partly agree and completely agree with the statement. Whereas 16% (17) of the respondents remain neutral, the answers show a small inclination (mean 2.8) towards millennial men not making impulse purchases too often. This statement was later followed up with a post-purchase statement: “I feel guilty after purchasing clothes I do not need”. 14% (15) and 39% (42) of the respondents respectively completely- and partly agree with the statement that they feel guilty. While 12% (13) remain neutral, 16% (17) and 19% (21) of the respondents partly- and completely
5.2.2 Online environment and fashion

The following section of the survey focused on the online environment regarding millennial men and fashion. It aimed to find out the millennial men attitudes, subjective norms and behaviour towards fashion and to what extent they utilize it within their fashion consumption. Relying on the previous research which states that millennial men are avid online shoppers (Fischer and Sunduk, 2017) The online fashion consumption of millennial men was first targeted with the question: “I prefer buying my clothes from an online store rather than a physical store”. 31% (33) of the respondents say that they prefer the online store to the physical ones whereas 69% (75) of the sample still prefer to make their clothing purchases in a physical store.

![Pie chart showing preference between online and physical stores](image)

Figure 11: I prefer buying my clothes from an online store rather than a physical store
Source: Authors’ Survey (Appendix 1)

Although the majority of the sample still prefers physical stores to the online, the following section targeted the role of the online environment regarding fashion and clothes. The first statements focused on their attitude creation and information seeking. The statement: “I browse online shops for fashion inspiration”, reveals that 17% (18) and 32% (35) respectively completely agree and partly agree that they browse online shops for fashion inspiration. While 14% (15) remain neutral, 14% (15) and 23% (25) respectively partly- and completely disagree that they browse online shops for fashion inspiration. The second statement: “I read online reviews about a garment before buying it”, interestingly shows that 40% (43) and 18%
To understand where the respondents get their fashion inspiration from, they were asked if they follow any non-fashion related influencers who might influence their style. 68% (73) of the respondents say that they are not following any fashion related influencers. 32 % (35) say that they do follow other influencers who influence their style (See figure 15).
The respondents who answered “Yes” were asked to specify their answer. The results reveal that the respondents are mainly following lifestyle influencers, athletes and artists with some exceptions to people finding their influence from business men, such as, Elon Musk. The respondents were then asked how many male fashion influencers are they following (See figure 16). 67% (72) of the sample responded that they are not following any male fashion influencers. 26% (28) are following up to five influencers while 3% (3), 2% (2) and 3% (3) are respectively following 6-10, 11-15 and 16 or more influencers.

![Figure 16: How many male fashion influencers do you follow](source: Authors’ Survey (Appendix 1))

The respondents are slightly more following other fashion related accounts on social media. Although, 56% (61) of the respondents say that they are not doing it at all, 26% (28) follow 1-5, 7% (8) 6-10, 6% (6) 11-15 and 5% (5) of the respondents follow 16 or more fashion related accounts on different social media channels (See figure 17).

![Figure 17: How many other fashion related accounts do you follow on social media](source: Authors’ Survey (Appendix 1))
Although, the findings show that the respondents tend to not follow different fashion related-accounts on social media for inspiration, they were asked to name the platforms where they mostly find or experience fashion related content and inspiration. They were able to select multiple options and add their own. 29% (31) of the respondents of the whole sample said that they do not find fashion inspiration online while 71% (77) are seeing it somewhere. The most dominant platforms for finding fashion and fashion related content and inspiration is Instagram (56%), followed by Youtube (22%), Facebook (21%), Ads on webpages (11%), 6% (7) online fashion magazines, 6% (6) E-newsletters, 4% (4) Pinterest and 3% (3) Blogs (See figure 18).

The following statements further focused on, how has the online environment affected the respondents fashion behaviour. The statement: “I pay more attention to fashion due to social media” (mean 2.7), shows that 27% (29) of the respondents completely disagree and 16% (17) partly disagree with the statement. 21% (23) are neutral. 30% (32) of the respondents partly agree, 6% (7) completely agree (See figure 19). Furthermore, the statement: “I am buying more clothes because online shops have made buying fashion easier” (mean 2.5),

Figure 18: Online platforms used
Source: Authors’ Survey (Appendix 1)
shows that the respondents are inclined towards not perceiving a major increase in shopping due to online shopping availabilities. 35% (30) of the respondents completely disagree with the statement and 19% (20) partly disagree. While 13% (14) are neutral, 20% (22) of the respondents are partly agreeing and only 12% (13) of the sample are completely agreeing that social media has increased their fashion consumption (See figure 19).

![Figure 19: The effect of the online environment](source: Authors’ Survey (Appendix 1))

Although the results are split, the findings show that the respondents’ consumption has not increased very much due to social media. 45% (49) of them have bought something they saw on social media and 52% (52) have discovered a brand or a store from online that they now actively buy from.

As the final part of the online segment, the respondents were asked if they post outfit/style related content on their social media platforms. 81% (87) completely disagree with the statement and 11% (12) partly disagree. While 4% (4) remain neutral, only 4% (4) of the respondents partly agree and 1% (1) of them completely agree that they post outfit/style related content on their social media profiles. Furthermore, 76% (82) of the respondents say that they also do not save inspirational images from online while only 24% (26) dot it.
season, mood and even a country where they are going out. For example, one respondent
answered: “In Sweden: White shirt, classic shoes, blazer. In Belgium: tight jeans, white shirt,
pullover on top, white sneakers”. 2% (2) respondents prefer a suit at their night out and 1%
(1) describes their outfit as “swagmonster”.

Few of the respondents mentioned also a belt and a watch as an essential element of their
outfit. This is somewhat supported by a previous statement in the survey: “I wear jewellery
(earrings, bracelets etc.)”, where 46% (50) of the respondents completely disagree and 16%
(17) partly disagree with the statement. While 5% (5) remain neutral, 25% (27) of the
respondents partly agree and 7% (8) completely agree with the statement that they wear
jewellery. Although there are people who wear jewellery, it is not considered as a part of an
outfit.

To see how has the millennial men’s interest in fashion has changed over the past few years,
they were asked to describe it in their own words. This open-end question yielded in a
response rate of 88% (95). 39% (42) state that their interest in fashion or their fashion
consciousness has increased over the past few years. They describe it, that they have become
more aware of colours and materials. They further describe their increased interest as more
specific and individual, it has changed due to their work, girlfriend or being able to afford it
more easily (See figure 21).
They are suggesting that men should have more diversity and available variety regarding dressing, styles and colours. This also applies to them wanting to see more men expressing themselves through clothing. For example: “More colours, too much black, white and gray these days”, “We still need more colour, prints, interesting cuts and shapes in the everyday clothes, not only in high fashion”.

At the same time 9% (10) respondents say that they would like to see more classic masculine styles and less femininity within male fashion: -“I want the classic male fashion to return”, “Go back to normal! No random homeless person clothes and designer clothes that look like a 4 year old painted on it. Suit up!” and “less girly stuff”. 6% (7) would like to see more acceptance and less pressure regarding meeting the social standards. That people would dress in a more individual way that is comfortable to them: - “More diversity and forget about how a man should look like. There is no right way to dress up as a man or as a woman. It's all about individuality & personality”. 6% (6) of the sample would also like to see more emphasis on the sustainability through less wasteful production and consumerism. A minor portion (3%) of the sample said that men should just dress better (-“That it be adopted by more guys, everyone around me looks like shit”), The clothes should be of better quality (3%) or they should just be more comfortable (1%). 5% (5) of the respondents said that the current
state of male fashion is sufficient. While 15% (16) of the sample said that they do not know what to change, one respondent (1%) related the necessary change to advertisements and stated: "I would like advertisements to disappear and stop manipulating people's minds".
6. Analysis and Discussion

This chapter analyses and discusses the findings from the previous chapter. The analysis is guided by the Theoretical Framework (Chapter 3) and cross referenced with relating statements from the Previous Research and Conceptual Framework (Chapter 2). The analysis concludes by addressing the research questions directly.

6.1 Attitude Towards Fashion

One of the most prominent findings in the previous research characterises shopping as a feminine activity, that women enjoy more than men (Herter et al., 2014; Ourahmoune; Riekkinen, 2012; Koksal, 2014). According to the survey findings, that statement is not as relevant among millennial men. The majority of the millennial men seem to enjoy shopping, and disagree with shopping being a feminine activity. Furthermore, 44% of respondents find that buying clothes makes them feel good. These findings contradict Riekkinen’s (2012) statement that men shy away from the term shopping, as the majority of millennial men seem to enjoy taking part in it.

A few things can be said about the idea of gender relationships influencing males’ attitude to fashion (Sarpila, 2008). Firstly, majority of all the respondents own a unisex garment, and secondly, 51% could consider wearing something from the women’s department. When seen from this angle, the data could indicate one of two things. Either that gender roles have become less relevant to this generations’ fashion related self-expression, or that the gender relationships within this cohort are more equal than others in the past. On the other hand, if viewed from the opposite perspective, the data shows that close to half of the men might still suffer from what Otnes and McGrath (2001) named “the fear of the feminine” when it comes to their fashion shopping, as not all have or will abandon the utilitarian and traditional approach (Banytė et al. 2015; Ourahmoune, 2016; Workman, 2010; Chang, Burns & Francis, 2004). 45% completely or partly agree with buying clothes for their functionality and the majority still shops clothes to fulfill a need, which is in relation to the previous research where men are said to be more rationally driven, but not the the extent that could have been expected (Riekkinen, 2012; Sarpila, 2008). In addition, 15% did not know or care what
changes they would like to see within male fashion. Therefore, there seems to be hedonistic as well as utilitarian shopping behaviours among the millennial men and they are strongly divided when it comes to attitudes regarding fashion.

Millenial men are said to be making decisions based on online reviews and user-generated content (Nash, 2018). This was examined in the survey and addresses attitude creation through the online environment. It was found that though Nash (2018) most probably is right in his findings, however, they do not apply to fashion in the case of millenial men. According to the findings, the majority of the millennial men do not agree with the statement regarding reading reviews about clothing before a purchase. Majority (75%) of the millennial men however, compare different options before purchasing, but many of them also buy on impulse. They also don’t seem to follow or create fashion related user generated content on social media.

In the past, millennial men have been said to be more considerate about the ethicality of clothes (Lehtinen, 2016). This statement is supported within this research as well. First by several respondents mentioning, in the open ended question about the future of male fashion, that they would like to see more sustainable solutions, better quality, and less impact on the environment. Secondly, 53% of the respondents either completely or partly agreed that they feel guilty when purchasing clothes they do not need. This can be seen as caring for sustainability and overconsumption.

5.2 Subjective Norms

According to previous research, dressing is used to express cultural meanings, such as gender and identity (Zayer & Neier 2011). It has also been said that men have more varied concepts of masculinity now that they are allowed to express themselves more freely with clothes (Ourahmoune, 2016; Zayer & Neier, 2011), but some authors such as Bakewell (2006) believe that there is certain fear to move away from the traditional male gender-role stereotypes. This is somewhat evident with the survey results. The majority of respondents consider gender neutral styles, and men being allowed to be more expressive with their fashion as a positive and encouraging change. However, when asked about what they want to see change within men’s fashion, 9% of the respondents stated that they would like men’s
fashion to go back to classic styles and for it to being less feminine. This indicates that millennial men cannot be stereotyped into one single cluster and the remnants of Flügel’s (1930) Great Masculine Renunciation are still present. Millennial men need to be considered more as individuals and a diverse group of people with individual views and preferences. Even though millennial men have previously been regarded as a homogeneous cohort, due to their immersed use of social media (Kraljevic & Filipovic, 2017).

The previous research regards millennials as fashion conscious due to their perceived pressure from society and their peers (Koksal, 2014; Riekkinen, 2012). On this note, the respondents were asked to evaluate their extent of agreement in regards to the perceived social pressure. Results showed that 45% of them do feel this pressure, whereas 32% do not. On a similar note, Riekkinen (2012) stated that men prefer buying brands known to them, and clothing styles similar to what is worn among their peers. The reason being that they do not want to stand out. Interestingly, the majority of millennial men do not feel uncomfortable with buying different clothes than what they see their friends wearing. Also, when asked if they care what others think about their clothes, near half of the millennial men consider others’ opinions important, but some also pointed out that they don’t care that much about what others think about their clothes because they dress for themselves. Riekkinen (2012) noted that men prefer buying brands known to them and that men believe that wearing branded clothes improves their appearance in others’ as well as their own eyes. However, 44% of the millennials prefer buying a cheaper t-shirt over a more expensive branded one, whereas 38% admitted preferring a branded t-shirt. Yet again, we can see contradictory and a split view among the millennials. The results also showed half of the respondents talk about clothes and fashion with friends. Which also proves that the millennial cohort is very diverse, and the perceived pressure from society is not felt equally by everyone. Some of the men feel more free to dress only for themselves, whereas others are more considerate of what their peers and the society thinks of them.

When it comes to the perceived pressure coming from social media sources and the Internet, it appears millennial males do not identify it as a social pressure or as pressure for them to dress a certain way. Instead, it is described mostly as a form of inspiration. This is demonstrated by the majority agreeing that the use of social media gives them a wider view
6.3 Behavioural Intention and Behaviour

As of now, menswear brands are mainly targeting “the traditional man”, meaning the focus still lies in the utilitarian aspect of mens consumer behaviour (Ourahmoune, 2016). However, in light of these findings and recent related societal developments, all archetypes presented by Ourahmoune (2016) should be more acknowledged. The archetypes discovered were: the
traditional man (utilitarian and functional), the melancholic man (focused on aesthetics), the tough guy (anti-femininity), the effeminate man (non-utilitarian) and the postmodern man (aesthetic and utilitarian). The majority of millennial men fall under the categorization of the “postmodern man”, as they consider both the aesthetics and also the utilitarian functions of their clothing. There is also a considerable amount of “tough guys” who want less emphasis on the feminine, as well as “traditional man” who are more focused on the utilitarian but do not have a strong opinion about clothes.

The results from the statements “My purchases are often similar to things I’ve owned in the past” and “I often buy garments that are unlike anything I currently own” show that millennial men still prefer buying something they already know is working for them, and that they are not so willing to try new things when it comes to clothes, which support their need of unmarking their bodies through dress. Furthermore, the majority of the millennial men do not update their wardrobe based on seasons but on average they are buying something new every few months. This includes impulse purchases, where millennial men are, again, split in the matter.

Social media and the online environment is said to be strongly used and influential among millennial men (Nash, 2018). However, when it comes to fashion they seem to not use it to the extent that could be expected. Most of the respondents (69%) still prefer buying clothes from brick and mortar stores, even though it has been previously stated that 40% millennial prefer buying everything online (M. Schlossberg 2016). Only 36% of them believe that they pay more attention to fashion due to social media, and the majority do not believe that they are purchasing more clothes due to the easy availability of online stores. Furthermore, most of the men are not actively following fashion related content on social media. Nor do they share outfit or fashion related posts, although it has been said that millennials share their lifestyles on social media (Kraljevic & Filipovic, 2017), which makes us wonder who is behind the user-generated content millennials base their purchase decisions (Sorilbran, 2018). This indicates that the elite and the niche community of fashion enthusiasts are still behind this hype, and that the trickling down has not happened yet.
As Nash (2018) states, social media is influencing acceptance and adoption of fashion behaviour among millennials, it might be influencing them unconsciously, and this is evident as some respondents admitted it may have a possible unconscious effect on them. This can be explained by 37% of respondents saying they encounter fashion related content online multiple times per day. 52% further say they have found a brand online that they now actively buy from, and 45% have bought an item of clothing they first saw on social media. Even though, they did not consider social media as a strong influence when it comes to fashion they did identify the platforms which inspire them the most; Instagram, Youtube, and Facebook, results which could be expected from a group of millennials. This clearly shows that, though the online environment might not be among the greatest influencers of male style and fashion preference, it does bring a new level of awareness to the cohort as a whole. It also seems to have an effect on increasing acceptance of varied masculine expressions through dress and at least to some extent informs, reinforces or inspires millennial men in terms of their personal style.

5.4 Research Questions and Answers

Are millennial men now consuming fashion in a less “stereotypical masculine” way?

(a) Is the possible shift visible in terms of fashion consumer behaviour?

(b) Is the shift visible in terms of style?

The survey results suggest that millennial men are largely divided within their fashion consumer behaviour. Some in fact do consume in a less “stereotypical masculine” manner, and their behaviour consist more of hedonic behaviour than utilitarian principles, which has previously been considered the dominant behaviour. Both consumer style and behaviour have been affected. Although fashion and shopping for clothes is not considered feminine by the millennial men, they are still not as passionate about clothes and shopping as women. There is a slight increase within traditionally feminine behaviour types, such as impulse buying, but the majority of millennial men are rather rational with their decisions about clothes. As mentioned before, they are split when it comes to the style factor. However, most men have noticed the shift, but not all care for it, and some would even like it to return to the way it
used to be. Majority still consider that it is nice that men’s fashion is becoming more varied, and many wish it would become more “fun” and less pressure to try to fit a certain model. This could mean that the trickling down has slowly started, but not all are ready to adopt this change yet.

*Is the online environment enabling the shift?*

The online environment is part of the change, but not to the extent that was previously expected and suggested by the previous research. The online and social media enables a global reach that foremost has broadened millennial men’s perspective on fashion, thus making them more open towards different people, cultures and styles. However, men do not actively use the online environment to purchase fashion, nor are they actively seeking out fashion online, but they are consuming it subliminally in terms of being inspired by different people across the globe.
Therefore, the findings of this research can be implemented to fashion marketing strategies, in order to better target millennial men as fashion consumers. In addition, these results could be utilised with trend forecasting. For example, bringing up more colors and quality clothes, that are ethically produced, as suggested by the results.

7.2 Limitations

Due to the newliness of the addressed shift there is lack of saturation in the previous research. The research involved many different fields, such as consumer behaviour, anthropology and psychology. This limited the formulation of the research aim and objectives, and limited the research from gaining very detailed and specific set of data. As the research emanated from previous findings in the field of male fashion, other themes which might impact the phenomenon might have been missed or not thoroughly explored in this investigation. However, the research provides a base for future researchers to narrow the focus down and gain more specific results.

Even though, the survey gained many respondents, in order to get more generalizable data of the population, more respondents could have resulted with more accurate results. Although, the survey reached people from all over Europe, it did have a strong emphasis on three specific countries. Therefore, it would’ve been beneficial to gain respondents more evenly from even more european countries. Furthermore, the millennial cohort is very diverse, maybe too diverse, to find major unifying tendencies among them regarding fashion consumption. Thus, the data was limited, in the sense that it did not give any clear results that would indicate a strong shift or a change.

The survey was based on previous research, but due to the newliness and lack of some specific topics, the question formulation turned out to be a difficult process, and few question resulted in less relevant data that was hoped for.

It would have been beneficial to further test the findings by collection of related data of their “pathways” online. As respondents tend not to provide personal information by filling out surveys (Jain, Rakesh, Nabi & Chaturvedi 2018). Nor, do they always respond in a fully honest manner. Due to the fact that this type of data often is private and difficult to acquire, it
limited this research from gaining that data. Furthermore, as the research is of descriptive nature, it is limited to findings surrounding “what” is true, whereas no information is provided with respect to cause or reason.

7.3 Suggestions for future research

A more detailed research regarding a certain male cohort and fashion, that is built on the findings of this research, would be beneficial in understanding men and their fashion behaviour. For example, research on how men see the changing gender roles and how it influences their behaviour, and relationship to fashion. Research on how masculinity will be expressed through fashion in the near future will also be insightful. What would have been helpful for this research would have been more detailed and specific research on related topics, such as sexuality and gender and their influence on fashion. Therefore, these would also be an interesting field for future research.

Future research should focus also on generations succeeding millennials. The views of Generation Z are critical as they alone will account for 40 percent of global consumers by 2020 (The state of fashion, 2017). They are also said to be more fashion forward and experimental with their styles. Therefore, a similar research but aimed at the generation Z would be interesting, and possibly show more varied answers and a more united front. This could further the understanding if the addressed shift.
7. Conclusions

This chapter gives a brief summary of the research, with a focus on the findings and analysis. If further discusses the fulfillment of the research purpose and answers the research questions.

Fashion and shopping has been considered a feminine activity ever since the Great Masculine Renunciation. Recently however, male fashion has been evolving and the sales of menswear have increased. A changing society is strongly responsible for this change. For example, the contemporary gender relationships have made it more acceptable for men to dress with a more expressive flare than what more traditional standards would allow. The increased connectivity, globalisation, and the emergence of social media has made it easier to find inspiration all over the world. It has brought more liberalised attitudes towards marginalised people and diversified cultural expressions. This has had a great impact on fashion. Millennials, who are said to be digital natives, are considered to be leading the change of male fashion as well as broadening the concept of masculinity. They also consume more fashion than previous generations of men. The purpose and problematization of this thesis centered around better understanding a possible shift in terms of the relationship millennial men have with fashion, regarding their attitudes, subjective norms, and behaviour.

The purpose of this thesis has been fulfilled by gathering and analysing data from a larger sample of millennial men. The main findings are that millennial men should not be treated as a single homogenous cohort in research surrounding fashion. The survey data collected rather scattered among the respondents’ answers, in order for them to justifiably be deemed as like-minded enough. Researchers should therefore opt for either smaller groups of millenial men, or have a narrower research focus in terms of the topic. Nevertheless, many of the findings proved insightful in terms of forming a more updated description of the millennial male cohort with regards to the addressed phenomenon. Which, ultimately, was the aim of this study.

Overall, the observed hype seems to have manifested more in the minds and attitudes of millennial men, and less in their direct behaviour or personal style preference. They are more
open minded when it comes to diversity, but the shift is still highly limited when it comes to consumer behaviour within this generational cohort. Regarding the online environment, it surprisingly did not seem to have as much of an impact as was expected. Though, it certainly has an influence on how much men come in contact with fashion, the online is not used actively to consume it. The influence of social media and the Internet on this generation is still highly unconscious and figurative, where fashion is concerned. This could mean that the changing gender relationships in society are impacting men more in this regard, therefore this might more evident within the next generation of men.


Chitrakorn, K. 2019. Men are changing. Are brands keeping up? The Business of fashion. [Online] Available at:


Mak, P. 2015. Gender-Bending Style: How Androgynous Men's Fashion Translates Into Mass Markets. Huffington post. [Online] Available [https://www.huffingtonpost.ca/2015/07/14/mens-fashion-androgyny_n_7795758.html?guccounter=1&guce_referrer=aHR0cHM6Ly93d3cuZ29vZ2xlLmNvbS8&guce_referrer_sig=AQA AADw2WnUsjI1AGGF1OF0oyGm0hKySmq3rWOP6mfxxwvrh28bhHroltT49dTyJi3B7Z6G G394Ve6qL9TN7HCgT7iteBES6TmuzaPMpsNvbAGZXs0g03DME1nLKqK6QahFH WZyxEmPpQAQLA7hRGq9MyirK7kJtdgl0H11BBk0N--](https://www.huffingtonpost.ca/2015/07/14/mens-fashion-androgyny_n_7795758.html?guccounter=1&guce_referrer=aHR0cHM6Ly93d3cuZ29vZ2xlLmNvbS8&guce_referrer_sig=AQA AADw2WnUsjI1AGGF1OF0oyGm0hKySmq3rWOP6mfxxwvrh28bhHroltT49dTyJi3B7Z6G G394Ve6qL9TN7HCgT7iteBES6TmuzaPMpsNvbAGZXs0g03DME1nLKqK6QahFH WZyxEmPpQAQLA7hRGq9MyirK7kJtdgl0H11BBk0N--)


9. Appendices

Appendix 1: Authors’ Survey

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demographics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20-25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What is your nationality?

Estonia - Finland - Sweden - Belgium - Dutch - France - Germany - Spain - United Kingdom - Other (Please Specify)

What is your occupation?

Student (Higher education) - Student (Vocational school) - Unemployed - Employed (Please specify)

What is your sexual orientation?

Heterosexual - Homosexual - Bisexual - I’d rather not say - Other (Please specify)

General fashion consumption

I consider shopping for clothes a fun activity

○ Strongly disagree ○ Partly disagree ○ Neither agree or disagree ○ Partly agree ○ Completely agree

I consider shopping for clothes a feminine activity

○ Strongly disagree ○ Partly disagree ○ Neither agree or disagree ○ Partly agree ○ Completely agree

I think there is enough variety of clothes for men

○ Strongly disagree ○ Partly disagree ○ Neither agree or disagree ○ Partly agree ○ Completely agree

I often make impulse purchases

○ Strongly disagree ○ Partly disagree ○ Neither agree or disagree ○ Partly agree ○ Completely agree

I buy garments because they make me feel good

○ Strongly disagree ○ Partly disagree ○ Neither agree or disagree ○ Partly agree ○ Completely agree

I only buy clothes when I need to (E.g. because I’m lacking something, or something broke etc.)

○ Strongly disagree ○ Partly disagree ○ Neither agree or disagree ○ Partly agree ○ Completely agree

The functionality of clothes is very important to me

○ Strongly disagree ○ Partly disagree ○ Neither agree or disagree ○ Partly agree ○ Completely agree
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Partly Disagree</th>
<th>Neither Agree or Disagree</th>
<th>Partly Agree</th>
<th>Completely Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>My purchases are often similar to things I’ve owned in the past</td>
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<tr>
<td>I often feel like I have nothing nice to wear</td>
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<tr>
<td>I’m uncomfortable with buying clothes I don’t see any of my friends wearing</td>
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<tr>
<td>I discuss fashion and style with my friends</td>
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<tr>
<td>I feel pressured to wear different clothes everyday</td>
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<tr>
<td>I feel pressure from society to dress a certain way (E.g when I go to work or to university, or to clubs etc.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>I update my wardrobe when a new season starts</td>
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<tr>
<td>I feel guilty after purchasing clothes I don’t need</td>
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<tr>
<td>Others’ opinions about my clothes are important to me</td>
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<tr>
<td>I often buy garments that are unlike anything I currently own</td>
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<tr>
<td>I usually look up information about a garment before I purchase it (e.g. materials, country of origin etc.)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>I would rather buy a more expensive shirt from a known brand than a similar but cheaper one from an unknown brand</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statement</td>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>Partly disagree</td>
<td>Neither agree or disagree</td>
<td>Partly agree</td>
<td>Completely agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>I wear colourful clothes</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>I wear jewellery (earrings, bracelets etc.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>I have bought a unisex garment?</td>
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<tr>
<td>I could wear something that is bought from the women's department</td>
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<tr>
<td>I prefer buying my clothes from an online store rather than a physical store</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>How often do you buy clothes?</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Online focus</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>I browse online shops for fashion inspiration</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>People on social media influence my style</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I post outfit/style related content on my social media</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>The online environment gives me a wider view of how men dress around the globe</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel inspired by how other people across the globe dress</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>I read online reviews about a garment before buying it</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I pay more attention to fashion due to social media</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
I am buying more clothes because online shops have made buying fashion easier

- Strongly disagree
- Partly disagree
- Neither agree or disagree
- Partly agree
- Completely agree

I save pictures I see on social media for style inspiration

- Yes
- No

I have bought a garment I saw on social media

- Yes
- No

I am influenced by sponsored online content regarding clothes (Clicked an ad about fashion, started following a brand after seeing an ad, etc.).

- Yes
- No

I follow non-fashion related influencers who inspire my style (E.g. Gamers, business men, politicians, athletes)

Yes - No (if Yes, please specify)

I have discovered a brand/a store online that I now actively buy from

- Yes
- No

I find fashion inspiration via (Choose one or more)

- Facebook
- Instagram
- YouTube
- Ads on webpages
- Blogs
- Online fashion magazines
- E-newsletters
- I don't find fashion inspiration online
- I don’t find fashion inspiration online
- Other (Please specify)

I encounter fashion related content online

- Multiple times per day
- Once or twice a day
- A few times in a week
- I rarely encounter them

How many male fashion influencers do you follow?

- 0
- 1-5
- 6-10
- 11-15
- 16 or more

How many other fashion related accounts do you follow on social media?

- 0
- 1-5
- 6-10
- 11-15
- 16 or more

Open Ended questions

- Describe your typical outfit for a night out
- How has your interest for fashion changed over the past few years?
- What changes would you like to see within male fashion?
Appendix 2: Survey Construction Details

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question Type</th>
<th>Related Survey Questions</th>
<th>Connection Specification</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Likert Scale</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes-or-No</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiple Choice</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open Ended</td>
<td></td>
<td>Derived from authors own experience, (lacks academic ground)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Part of Literature</th>
<th>Related Survey Questions</th>
<th>Connection Specification</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>History of fashion seen as feminine phenomena</td>
<td>1, 2, 3, 9, 14 &amp; 22:</td>
<td>feminised phenomenon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I consider shopping for clothes a fun activity</td>
<td>feminised phenomenon</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I consider shopping for clothes a feminine activity</td>
<td>feminised phenomenon</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I think there is enough variety of clothes for men</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How has your interest for fashion changed over the past few years?</td>
<td>shift manifestation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I update my wardrobe when a new season starts</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I wear jewellery (earrings, bracelets etc.)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Define “Traditional masculine way of shopping” (the utilitarian/functional aspects + archetypes?)</td>
<td>4, 5, 6, 7, 17, 19 &amp; 20:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I often make impulse purchases</td>
<td>utilitarian, millennial (Krajovic &amp; Filipovic, 2017)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I buy garments because they make me feel good</td>
<td>utilitarian (necessary evil)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I only buy clothes when I need to (E.g. because I’m lacking something, or something broke etc.)</td>
<td>utilitarian - grab&amp;go/hunter (male archetype)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The functionality of clothes is very important to me</td>
<td>functionality/tough guy (male archetype)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I often buy garments that are unlike anything I currently own</td>
<td>functionality, social pressure/straying too far from traditional (Barry, 2018)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I wear colourful clothes</td>
<td>Marking/Unmarking (Barry, 2018)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have bought a unisex garment</td>
<td>fear of the feminine</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Describe your typical outfit for a night out</td>
<td>Marking/Unmarking (Barry, 2018)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What changes would you like to see within male fashion?</td>
<td>Marking/Unmarking (Barry, 2018)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How often do you buy clothes?</td>
<td>shift manifestation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>