

To Share or Not to Share?
Differing Motivations and Deterrents in Two Collaborative Consumption Modes

Naeun Lauren Kim, University of Minnesota
ByoungHo Ellie Jin, North Carolina State University

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Background and Objectives

Collaborative consumption (CC) or *sharing economy*—where consumers share access to cars, clothes, lodging, and other commodities—has gained tremendous popularity in recent years. CC involves a market in which strangers, as opposed to kin or acquaintances, exchange goods and services via information technology (Schor & Fitzmaurice, 2015). Companies such as Uber, ZipCar, and Airbnb are major players in the current CC market.

In the fashion industry, the CC market is manifested by two distinct modes of exchange: *access-based ownership* and *transfer of ownership* (Park & Armstrong, 2017). The *access-based ownership* format encompasses short-term rental services (e.g., Bag Borrow or Steal, Rent the Runway) and subscription-based rental services (e.g., Stitch Fix, Trunk Club). The *transfer of ownership* format entails the swapping (e.g., Swapstyle, Listia) and consignment of secondhand fashion goods (e.g., Poshmark, thredUP). Although the business models of the two modes are different, most prior research has not distinguished between the two exchange contexts. In order for CC companies to develop more finely-tuned strategies, the purpose of this study is to explore consumers' motivations for and deterrents against participation in collaborative fashion consumption across the two sharing modes, as well as to investigate consumers' experiences with each mode.

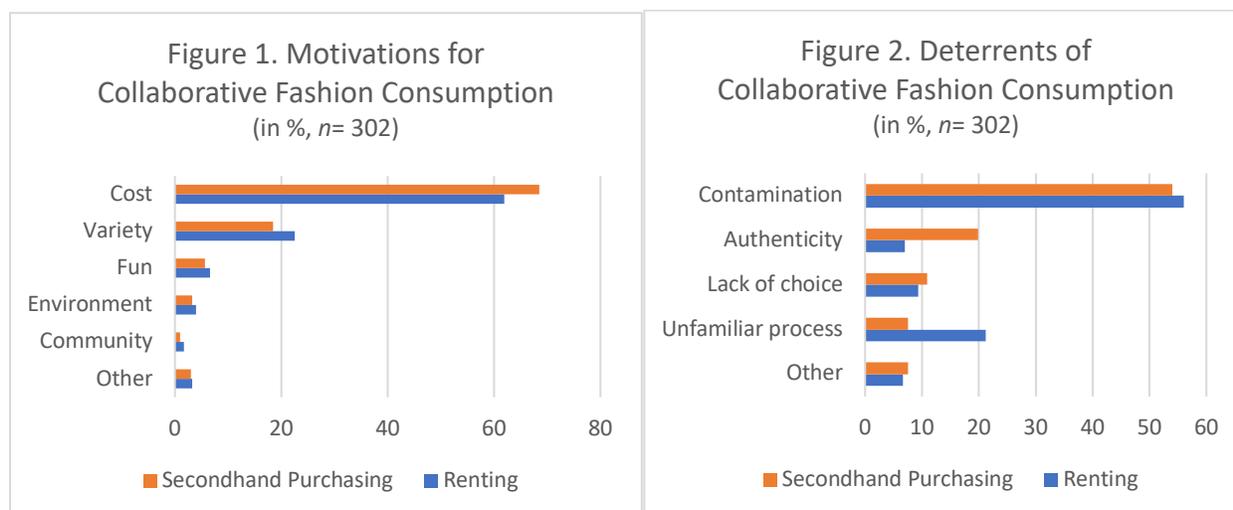
Literature Review

Several research gaps have been observed in the CC literature. First, while a number of studies have attempted to uncover consumers' *motivations* for engaging in CC (e.g., convenience, concern for sustainability, community belonging), very little is known about the *deterrents* against participating in CC. Perceived risk and trust issues have previously been identified (Dall Pizzol, Ordovás de Almeida, & do Couto Soares, 2017), but other factors that make consumers feel reluctant to participate in CC need further examination. Second, studies have yet to distinguish between the two sharing modes – access versus transfer of ownership. People may have different motivations or concerns when renting goods for a short period of time (possibly lower risk) or purchasing a secondhand product (potentially higher risk). Therefore, it is necessary to examine the motivations and deterrents unique to each exchange context. Third, most research has been conducted in car or accommodation sharing contexts (Möhlmann, 2015; Tussyadiah, 2015), which warrants an examination of CC in the fashion context, as the nature of consumption in this venue may be entirely different.

Method & Results

Data from 302 participants were collected from female US consumers ages 19 to 69 via Amazon Mechanical Turk. Participants were asked whether or not they have rented or purchased secondhand fashion goods, and if so, how often and which platforms they have utilized. Participants were also asked what primarily motivates (or would motivate) them as well as what primarily discourages (or would discourage) them from renting or purchasing secondhand fashion items. The motivation and deterrent options were chosen from previous studies on CC and were presented in a selected response item format. The questionnaire also included an open-ended question in case none of the options were applicable. Out of the 302 participants, 235 (77.8%) had purchased secondhand fashion goods in the past. Among these, the majority (43.8%) purchased secondhand fashion goods one to three times a year, and 35.3% purchased secondhand fashion goods more than 4 times a year. eBay is by far the most popular CC platform (46.4%) with Poshmark (17.9%) and thredUP (7.9%) leading as the second and third most popular choices. Other less popular CC platforms for secondhand fashion include the RealReal (2.3%), Swapstyle (1.3%), and Tradesy (1.0%). In terms of fashion renting, only 40 (13.2%) out of the 302 participants had engaged in this activity. Among them, 50% rent fashion goods 1-3 times a year, and 40% rent fashion goods less than once a year—far less frequently than secondhand shoppers. Rent the Runway (47.5%) and Stitch Fix (37.5%) were the most popular rental platforms, and other options included Bag Borrow or Steal (5%) and Trunk Club (2.5%).

The findings revealed different motivations and deterrents for CC according to the two sharing modes (Figure 1 and Figure 2).



Discussion and Implications

Our findings showed that first, the primary motivation for CC was the ‘economic reason,’ followed by the possibility to ‘access a variety of products and brands.’ This ‘access to variety’ reason was slightly more prevalent for the renting context as compared to secondhand

purchasing. Other reasons such as ‘fun,’ ‘concern for the environment,’ and a ‘desire to join a like-minded community’ were also observed. For the deterrents against fashion CC, the issue of ‘hygiene or contamination’ was the most significant concern for both renting and secondhand purchasing. This is a noteworthy discovery, as contamination has not been reported as a major deterrent against participating in CC in previous studies. Interestingly, the second most observed concern was the ‘unfamiliar shopping process’ for renting, which is explained by consumers’ inexperience and slow acceptance of the renting format. On the other hand, ‘fear of inauthentic products’ was the second most observed deterrent against secondhand purchasing. This may be the case because renting often involves the presence of an intermediary (e.g., Rent the Runway) to manage products, but for secondhand markets, consumers often interact directly with one another without an intermediary to inspect the product. Fashion companies that are currently in or considering entering the rental or secondhand market should leverage the observed motivations (e.g. cost, variety, fun, etc.) and address the key deterrents (e.g., contamination, authenticity, lack of choice, etc.) to attract consumers.

References

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