Opportunities and Challenges of the Sharing Economy
Using the Example of Online Business Models in the
German Apparel Industry

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Abstract
The following mixed-method study is intended to elaborate the opportunities and challenges of
the sharing economy in the apparel industry and, in the context of this, on the one hand to show
the current situation of sharing concepts in the apparel industry and on the other hand to reflect
the characteristics, the motives and barriers as well as the requirements of the target group.
The key findings of the study show that the sharing economy represents a niche market in the
apparel industry as a whole, with a long-term establishment opportunity for sharing concepts
limited to individual price segments.
Influenced by the strong competition of the low-priced fast fashion chains, as well as by the
requirements oriented towards the established online stores, the establishment of the concepts
is made more difficult, especially in the low-price segment.
On the other hand, due to the higher financial value of the goods, a chance for the long-term
establishment of the sharing concepts is noted especially in the high-price and evening wear
segment. Accordingly, in these segments, renting brings a personal financial added value
compared to buying. In addition, especially in the case of evening wear, the frequency of use is
often so reduced that, in a cost-benefit comparison, the use of the less expensive rental concept
appears significantly more attractive. In the case of luxury articles, it is even possible to serve
a completely new target group of those who gain new access to luxury brands due to the lower
rental prices.

Keywords: fashion, mixed-method, online, e-commerce, sustainability