Reinventing the Customer Shopping Experience:
Value (co-)creation, Shopping Motivations and Typologies in Curated Fashion Retailing

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Because they always understood
This dissertation is dedicated to you – with much love and thanks!
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**Notes**: The research achievements listed above were all done during my doctoral studies from September 2015 to September 2018. However, only the articles highlighted in grey are included and examined in this dissertation. Since, according to ESCP Europe Business School’s doctoral regulation, a cumulative thesis consists of a total number of three articles. Another criterion is that the sum of the three selected articles must be weighted with the inverse of the total number of authors, and must then be at least equal to 2.0. Furthermore, the overall calculation of points is also based on the ranking of the journals in which the articles have been submitted. For the purpose of the calculation, the major German journal ranking ‘VHB-JOURQUAL3’ is used, which subdivides academic research journals in four categories: A, B, C and D. On the basis of these journal ranking categories, points will be allocated accordingly in the following way: A – 3.0 points, B – 2.0 points, C – 1.5 points and D – 0.0 points. Finally, out of the three selected articles, one article must achieve the status ‘conditionally accepted’, another must earn the status ‘revise and resubmit’, while the third must at least overcome ‘desk reject’.
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<td>ANOVA</td>
<td>analysis of variance</td>
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<td>CEO</td>
<td>chief executive officer</td>
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<td>CFA</td>
<td>confirmatory factor analysis</td>
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<td>EFA</td>
<td>exploratory factor analysis</td>
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<td>GDL</td>
<td>goods-dominant logic</td>
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<td>SDL</td>
<td>service-dominant logic</td>
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<td>Sig.</td>
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<td>SL</td>
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1. Introduction

1.1 The emergence of curated retailing

"Today the world of fashion is scattered across thousands of websites around the globe. The opportunity is to create a curated customer experience for shoppers, where they can find all the things they love in one place."

— Chris Morton, Co-Founder & CEO of Lyst (Forbes, 2016) —

Retailing is currently facing one of the most fundamental transformations in its century-long series of changes. Multiple large-scale dynamics, such as advances in new technologies, the power of big data and the integration of different channels are shaping the broader retail landscape, putting traditional business models under constant pressure. At the same time, e-commerce in retailing is rapidly growing (Doherty and Ellis-Chadwick, 2010), leading to traditional retailer losses since more and more consumers are using the Internet as additional purchase channel with increasing regularity (Lissitsa and Kol, 2016).

In Europe and North America, e-commerce is considered to be the fastest growing sector in retailing. For instance, while the European retail market as a whole is largely stagnating, with an average increase of 1.4% in 2017, its online sector has recorded annual growth rates of 14.2% in 2017 and increases of 13.8% are forecasted for 2018 (Centre for Retail Research, UK, 2017).

With online shopping becoming more and more prevalent, the increasing digitalization of traditional retailing has blurred the line between online and offline (Blázquez, 2014). This has resulted in significant changes in consumer shopping behaviors and retailer-shopper interactions (Pantano, 2010). As a consequence, a new omnichannel consumer has emerged expecting a seamless shopping experience across all digital and physical channels, anytime and anywhere. In this new omnichannel environment, characterized by intensified competition, many retailers are thus forced to add online channels to their business (Bernstein et al., 2008). However, to further sharpen their competitive edge, new entrants and established retailers need to rethink how they can create value and adapt to the changing demands on customer shopping experience.

In fact, over the last decade, the shopping experience has previously been optimized due to a number of technological innovations; for instance, while self-service technologies, informative touch points or in-store mobile apps have been employed at traditional sales points (Browne et al., 2004; Pantano and Timmermanns, 2014), recommender systems or
avatars already operate as virtual salespeople in e-commerce (Baier and Stüber, 2010). These innovations are likely designed to enable consumers to receive faster service, to make better informed decisions and to receive more targeted product information and offerings with less time pressure (Grewal et al., 2017) - both offline and online.

Yet in this modern, omnichannel environments, the issue of information overload remains, especially in e-commerce. The impersonal nature of the Internet constitutes another severe disadvantage for those consumers who seek physical consultation (Holzwarth et al., 2016). This is particularly the case for consulting-intensive areas such as the fashion and apparel industry, in which products are largely standardized in size and shape and trends change many times a year (Rajamma et al., 2007). Thus, consumer demand for individual advice is generally high and consumers begin to value personalized and curated product recommendations.

All this opens up new opportunities for retailers to develop business innovations with the common goal of reinventing the customer shopping experience. In recent years, the creation of a superior customer shopping experience has become a key factor in business success whether it be offline or online (Verhoef et al., 2009). In the literature, various definitions of customer experience exist (e.g., Carbone and Haeckel, 1994; Lemon and Verhoef, 2016; Meyer and Schwager, 2007; Verhoef et al., 2009). For the retail context, Verhoef et al. (2009, 32) specifically define customer experience as a holistic, multidimensional construct that “… involves the customer’s cognitive, affective, emotional, social and physical responses to the retailer,” in all phases of the purchase process (e.g., search, purchase, consumption and after-sales) and across multiple retail channels.

One of these retail innovations aimed at enhancing the customer experience is curated retailing. There are currently various different curated retailing services active mainly in consultation- and inspiration-driven areas, such as fashion, cosmetics, home furnishings or food. As for fashion, where curated services have particularly surged in popularity worldwide, Chris Morton, Co-Founder and CEO of Lyst, sees great opportunities for retailers to generate a curated customer shopping experience. In view of his quote at the beginning of the introduction, the future of retail will be less about offering customers the largest possible number of products (as was done in the past), but rather about providing carefully curated product recommendations and thus about shifting from product to solution selling. While Lyst is a global fashion search platform that allows shoppers to purchase daily curated styles from different brands at a single, unified checkout, there are also retailers that
This dissertation will focus on the latter type of retail curation since in contrast to curation platforms it shows a higher degree of curation in that it resembles traditional shopping with salesperson advice (hereinafter referred to as the ‘stylist’).

Originating in the United States, Stitchfix and Trunk Club are well-known examples for such curated retailers that offer clothing solutions through stylists. In Germany, not only young startups (e.g., Outfittery and Modomoto), but also large established firms have started curated retail services (e.g., Zalando, Europe's largest pure online fashion retailer has started Zalon). All these retailers aim at reinventing the customer shopping experience by combining the best of both online and offline worlds – namely, convenient online shopping and personal consultation. For instance, consider fashion and apparel, consumers are assisted in their shopping by receiving tailor-made product selections online from stylists. Shoppers hold to the maxim “do it for me” instead of “do it yourself”. For this purpose, stylists use customers’ personal preferences as previously specified in the online registration and create a customized box of outfits for the customer.

Despite their popularity and the generally favorable market outlook for online apparel shopping in Germany (Brandt, 2018), many curated retailers are yet still struggling to reach profitability. To differentiate in competitive retail environments, creating a superior customer experience needs to be at the heart of all retailing (Grewal et al., 2009). The decision whether a shopping experience is to be positively received by consumers commonly depends on how well the retailer can meet their unique motivations. Thus, critical to delivering a satisfying customer experience in retailing is a comprehensive understanding of diverse consumer segments and their specific characteristics (De Keyser et al., 2015). Moreover, the consumers’ satisfaction concerning important shopping motivations substantially contributes to the value perception of the overall worth of the retailer’s offering (Davis and Hodges, 2012). For curated retailers, this implies a powerful need to understand both customer value (co-)creation and shopping motivations, so that they can target their consumer segments more successfully.

1.2 Research gap and dissertation structure

Despite its growing popularity and the recognition by practitioners of its potential for reinventing the customer shopping experience, curated retailing represents a largely under-researched field of retailing. To date, information on curated retailing can be found mainly
in newspapers or on various blog sites that primarily focus on practical insights, managerial recommendations and consumer benefits (e.g., CMS WiRE, 2017; Frankfurter Allgemeine, 2015; Guided Selling, 2016). By contrast, scientific research investigating the novel retail trend is still scarce. Only a few conceptual studies (Eisenwicht, 2017; Gyllensvärd and Kaufmann, 2013; Möhlenbruch et al., 2014, 2016) exist, but none of them explores how curated retailing creates value for the consumer, thereby specifying the role of the retailer and the consumer within the scope of value (co-)creation. Moreover, motivational reasons for and against adopting curated retailing remain unclear, and above all little is known about which curated retailing-specific consumer segments exist and how these should be best targeted. In addition, there is still a lack of information as regards to actual consumer purchase behavior.

Taken together, this knowledge would be substantial for curated retailers. It helps them serve their consumers tailored shopping experiences based on their individual preferences and thus maintain a profitable business model in the future, since today such retailers are often not yet profitable. Whilst, on the one hand, their customers’ average shopping basket values and order frequencies are still relatively low, there also exists resistance on the part of many potential consumers to adopt the service.

In the service literature, value (co-)creation has evolved into a well-established research field (e.g., Grönroos and Voima, 2006; Vargo and Lusch, 2004). At the same time, shopping motivations and typologies in traditional and online retailing have become commonly investigated concepts in marketing-oriented consumer research (e.g., Arnold and Reynolds, 2003; Ganesh et al., 2010). All these research fields could provide theoretical and practical guidance here. However, given the questionable transferability of their previous research results to curated retailing, only a poor reliability is evident.

On the one hand, in spite of various application areas within the scope of value (co-)creation, uncertainty continues to persist as regards curated retailing. On the other hand, even though curated retailing constitutes a hybrid between offline and online, simply transferring previous results from offline and online research to this novel retail trend might ignore crucial motivations and typologies specific to it. Despite certain overlaps that can be expected with both channels, delivering scientific and reliable assessments on motivations and typologies in curated retailing is difficult. For instance, the interaction with salespeople during sales consultation may have a different importance to the consumer in curated retailing than in traditional retailing. It has not yet been answered why consumers who
prefer face-to-face salesperson advice when in-store shopping still use curated retailing. Furthermore, and surprisingly enough, there are many online shoppers that usually appreciate convenient and time-saving shopping experiences, but nevertheless do not adopt curated retailing. This implies the existence of shopping motivations and typologies which have previously remained unexploited in research.

In order to become successful co-creators of value, curated retailers must above all develop a thorough understanding of their consumer segments and motivations. In particular, the significance of shopper adoption for the success of new retailing technologies demonstrates this need (Inman and Nikolova, 2017). For those purposes, theoretical and empirical investigations are needed to conceptualize, explore, quantify and validate curated retailing for the first time. In this way, a novel research field is opened up for retailing so that we can gain a better understanding of where the retailing landscape might evolve in the future. Hence, with a strong focus on the individual consumer, this dissertation will address the following questions:

1. How can customer value (co-)creation in curated retailing be conceptualized based on the service-dominant logic and service logic?
2. What are the motivational reasons for and against consumer adoption of curated retailing in e-commerce?
3. What shopper segments can be identified in curated fashion retailing based on shopping motivations?
4. How can these segments be profiled in terms of demographic and transactional data?

In addressing these questions, this dissertation makes several contributions to marketing theory and practice. First, it describes an emerging retail trend, relating especially to the necessary clarification of the roles and activities of the consumer and curated retailer that enable value (co-)creation. Second, it expands the extant knowledge of shopping motivations and typologies in consulting-intensive retail and online sectors to curated retailing. In particular, the findings add several heretofore undiscovered motivational reasons and consumer segments in curated retailing, whilst confirming prior research results. Contrary to common practice in shopping motivation literature, consideration will thereby be given also to reasons against the adoption of curated retailing and to contextual factors influencing shopping motivations. Besides, a validation sample provides evidence of the predictive power of the motivational factor structure derived. In addition, segment profiles
are enriched by actual purchase data which represents an important but still too rarely applied managerial variable in research. From a managerial perspective, practical guidance includes improving the interaction with the consumer, better responding to consumer requirements and creating segment-specific offerings.

The structure of this dissertation is as follows: Chapter 2 provides an overview of the theoretical background on solution selling, value (co-)creation, shopping motivations and shopping typologies. This is followed by the introduction to the manuscripts, including their specific research objectives and research questions as well as their underlying philosophical foundation and research approach. Thereafter, chapter 4 presents the three manuscripts in detail. The dissertation concludes with a discussion of implications, limitations and future research.

2. Theoretical background

2.1 Solution selling

The provision of tailor-made solutions based on the customer’s preferences represents a crucial differentiating factor from common online retailing, and thus constitutes a decisive factor governing the success of curated retailing. As a pioneering approach in retailing, stylists become personal consultants in that consumers do not shop fashion but rather solutions to the challenge of dressing both conveniently and fast, but also individually to their style and personality. Thus, the underlying notion is to assist consumers in their shopping process by providing curated product selections. For the stylists, this involves working closely together with the consumer to interactively create such solutions.

In offering solutions, curated retailing applies the central idea of solution selling to the business-to-consumer market. Until today, the term “solution” has mainly been used in the business-to-business context and a number of different definitions has emerged. Following the traditional product-centric and provider-driven view, solutions are commonly defined as tailor-made and comprehensive bundling of products and services for solving a customer (organizational) problem (e.g., Nordin and Kowalkowski, 2010; Stremersch et al., 2001). By contrast, according to the more recent process-centric and customer-driven perspective, solutions integrate customer resources and processes, and focus on customization and the relational co-creation of solutions (e.g. Evanschitzky et al. 2011; Mcdonald et al., 2016; Storback et al. 2013; Tuli et al., 2007). For instance, taking the view that the objective of a solution is to fulfill customers’ needs, Tuli et al. (2007, 5) call for adopting a customer
perspective by defining a solution as “(...) a set of customer-supplier relational processes comprising (1) customer requirements definition, (2) customization and integration of goods and/or services and (3) their deployment, and (4) postdeployment customer support, all of which are aimed at meeting customers’ business needs”. While Tuli et al. (2007) focus on relational processes, Evanschitzky et al. (2011) rather emphasize the added value of solutions which they therefore specify as “individualized offers for complex problems that are interactively designed and whose components offer an integrative added value by combining products and/or services so that the value is more than the sum of the components.”

Despite their different degrees of emphasis, both above-mentioned definitions embody a customer-driven solution view and thus fit very well with curated retailing. Consequently, the dissertation draws on both definitions since together they perfectly allow accounting for the relational development and customization of curated retail solutions through customer involvement in the value-creation process. Such trend toward providing solutions in retailing reflects the consumers’ shift to transfer tasks and competencies to the retailer, and in return, to access its knowledge (Lovelock and Gummesson, 2004). Through their emphasis on customization through customer co-creation, solutions also represent the new service-dominant logic (Vargo and Lusch, 2004), thereby illustrating the need to examine the value that specifically emerges from customer’s usage processes (Baines et al., 2007).

2.2 Value (co-)creation

The service-centered perspective is particularly evident in manuscript 1 which reflects on how the provision of solutions can create value for the customer. The service-dominant logic (SDL) and service logic (SL) thereby provide a useful lens for value (co-)creation and thus the integration with the customer, as explained next.

Vargo and Lusch (2004; 2008; 2016) formulated the SDL as a new economic perspective on markets and exchange which initiated a paradigm shift in marketing – moving away from the traditional goods-dominant logic (GDL) with its focus solely on the provider delivering value. In this context, characteristic for the SDL is the shift from value-in-exchange, as typical in the GDL, to value-in-use. According to SDL, service is the key basis for exchange and value is co-created through customers and providers by deploying and integrating resources. In this regard, a distinction is made between tangible operand resources (e.g., assets), on which an operation is performed, and intangible operant resources (e.g., skills,
knowledge), which are employed to act upon other resources (both operand and operant) in order to create value through service provision (Lusch and Vargo, 2009). Unlike the premise of GDL where value creation is based on the exchange of goods with the provider (value-in-exchange), value in SDL is perceived as value-in-use because it arises in the customer’s usage process and resource integration process. Moreover, the SDL implies that value co-creation is “inherently customer oriented” (Vargo and Lusch, 2008, 8) since co-created value always depends on customer experiences.

Alternatively and as a further specification of the SDL, Grönroos (2006) introduced the SL which further specifies the role of the customer and provider and their form of mutual interaction within the scope of value creation. In contrast to SDL, the customer and the provider do not always represent co-creators of value in the SL (Grönroos and Gummerus, 2014). Instead of seeing value creation as encompassing process as proposed by SDL, a distinction is made between three value creation spheres in SL: the provider sphere, the joint sphere, and the customer sphere (Grönroos and Voima, 2013). Consequently, value creation in SL does not always require constant interaction among all actors involved. In the customer sphere, value creation takes place independent from any provider. In the provider sphere, the provider can only facilitate value creation by making resources available that have potential value-in-use for the customer. Yet, it is only in the joint sphere that value co-creation occurs. After gaining access to the closed customer sphere, the provider and customer become value co-creators through direct interaction. However, the customer still takes the leading role in this joint sphere. Co-creation occurs in this joint sphere only through dialog and interaction with the provider who can then influence the customer’s value creation process.

In sum, and as outlined above, in SDL value is always co-created, whereas in SL value can only be jointly created in the joint sphere. To illustrate this difference, the ‘(co-)’ is placed in brackets throughout the dissertation whenever referring to value (co-)creation generically without distinguishing between the two service logics.

In order to become a co-creator of value, according to Grönroos and Voima (2013), the provider must gain a thorough understanding of the customer to be able to respond to its needs. In the same vein, only retailers who recognize the complexity and variety of shopping motivations can create value for customers (Rintamäki et al., 2006).
2.3 Shopping motivation in retailing

Since Tauber’s study (1972) on why consumers shop, shopping motivation has evolved into a well-established and researched concept in the field of marketing-oriented consumer research. In the literature, shopping motivations are usually described as “forces investigating behavior to satisfy internal need states” (Westbrook and Black, 1985, 89). In the light of this, the concept also attracts continuing managerial interest given its high relevance for market segmentation or the adoption of new retail strategies. The multitude of motivations identified in previous research suggests that shopping behavior is of a complex nature (Davis and Hodges, 2012). Motivational reasons range from very abstract to specific ones (Wagner and Rudolph, 2010) and, as recent research summarizes (Kabadayi and Paksoy, 2016), can be characterized as being either utilitarian vs. hedonic, intrinsic vs. extrinsic, product vs. experiential or price-oriented vs. advice-oriented.

Reviewing the literature, the distinction between hedonic and utilitarian shopping motivations constitutes the most widely applied classification today (e.g., Arnold and Reynolds, 2012; Babin et al., 1994; Jones et al., 2006). Whereas utilitarian shoppers appreciate an efficient, non-emotional and task-related shopping outcome, hedonic shoppers value entertainment and a pleasurable shopping experience accordingly. Of these two types, particularly hedonic reasons have received much attention in retailing in the last several years since they have increasingly been recognized for their fun and emotional worth for creating unique shopping experiences (Arnold and Reynolds, 2003). In this line, Arnold and Reynolds (2003) developed a six-factor scale, including adventure, social, gratification, idea, role and value shopping motivations. Hence, it may be concluded that shopping is influenced by reasons that go beyond the mere acquisition of products and services (Davis and Hodges, 2012). This conclusion may be supported by the fact that hedonic and utilitarian reasons can occur separately, but also appear simultaneously (Westbrook and Black, 1985).

Induced by the popularity and the continued growth of the internet, an increasing body of literature has examined differences between traditional retail and online shoppers (e.g. Alba et al., 1997; Evanschitzky et al., 2004; Mathwick et al., 2001; Srinivasan et al., 2002). In connection therewith, convenience, perceived risk, possibility for product and information search as well as price have been identified as the most important discriminators (Ganesh et al., 2010). Accordingly, online shoppers value convenience and time-savings, and demand more personalized products as well as more product and information variety compared to
offline shoppers (Brashear et al., 2009; Szymanski and Hise, 2000). Some online shoppers also look for enjoyment and escapism during their online sessions (To et al., 2007). By contrast, offline shoppers mostly seek immediate product possession, social interaction, haptic experiences and sensory stimulation from the retail environment (Balasubramanian, 1998; Rohm and Swaminathan, 2004). Additionally, offline shoppers who demand sales people advice commonly require personalized information in order to reduce purchase uncertainty (Pieters et al., 1998; Ponder et al., 2006). The findings of a more recent study by Haas and Kenning (2014) confirm that consumers seek consultation to reduce purchase uncertainty, but also vividly point to the insufficiency of this predominant view. In particular, the authors reveal three further motivational reasons for seeking sales people consultation: (1) the utilitarian efficiency orientation as well as (2) shopping enjoyment and (3) the disposition towards sales people, which are both hedonic in nature.

In this context of online and offline shopping motivation, a number of studies has illustrated that gender has a moderating impact (e.g., Hansen and Jensen, 2009; Hart et al., 2007; Torres et al., 2001). Traditionally, female consumers are more driven by hedonic reasons such as shopping enjoyment and social interaction than men. Moreover, women also display higher shopping confidence and value unique assortments more than males do (Seock and Bailey, 2008). Instead, men are more prone to utilitarian reasons by placing great emphasis on convenience, time-saving and easily available information (Diep and Sweeney, 2008; Noble et al., 2006). In addition, men have more trust in using the internet with regards to privacy and security reasons (Garbarino and Strahilevitz, 2004) and consequently experience greater convenience online than women do (Ong and Lai, 2006; Venkatesh and Morris, 2000). Finally, with regard to fashion and apparel shopping, women are stereotypically described as the more fashion-alert gender, however, today’s men increasingly become more fashion-conscious and selective in their demand, too (Torres et al., 2001).

As shown above, online and offline as well as female and male shoppers do not constitute a homogeneous group, thereby assigning varying degrees of importance to different shopping motivations. To address this market heterogeneity, shopping typologies based on shopping motivations have become an important device for retailers and a well-researched retail stream (Ganesh et al., 2010).
2.4 Shopping typologies in retailing

For retail practice, shopping typologies on the basis of shopping motivations exhibit a high managerial relevance. The identification of distinct consumer segments or, respectively, shopping typologies provide solid guidance for targeting profitable consumers more effectively with tailor-made offerings and marketing strategies (Neslin and Shankar, 2009; Rohm and Swaminathan, 2014). Consequently, implementing a segmentation strategy may enable retailers to maintain their business model in future (e.g., Frasquet et al., 2001; Kabadayi and Paksoy, 2016). Since shopper types provide information concerning the different motivational reasons for channel choice and thereby help uncovering consumer patterns and purchase intentions, shopping typologies also exhibit high relevance and potential to many researchers.

The existent shopping typologies established by academic literature reveal a variety of variables to assign consumers into homogenous segments, such as shopping motivations (Westbrock and Black, 1985), retail attribute importance (Bhatnagar and Ghose, 2004) or shopping orientations (Gehrt et al., 2012). Among these segmentation bases, particularly shopping motivations have been attracting growing attention in recent years (e.g., Arnold and Reynolds, 2003; Ganesh et al., 2010; Kau et al., 2003). However, as a result of the numerous retail formats, product categories and cluster algorithms these studies used for segmentation, a whole range of shopper types has emerged (Mehta et al., 2013).

When applied to fashion and apparel, for instance, four fashion consumer groups have been identified based on problem recognition styles: While (1) fashion innovators are among the first consumers to shop and wear new clothing, (2) fashion opinion leaders exert influence on others to go along with their fashion recommendations. (3) Innovative communicators have characteristics of the two above indicated types, and are imitated by (4) fashion followers (Hirschman and Adcock, 1987; Workman and Studak, 2006). Further types have been revealed concerning store patronage preferences and attitudes toward store environment among female consumers: (1) decisive, (2) confident, (3) highly involved bargain, and (4) extremely involved appearance-conscious shoppers. The decisive shopper buys with no hesitation, the confident apparel shopper is confident with shopping for clothing whereas the bargain shopper seeks bargains and the appearance-conscious shopper attaches the greatest importance to dressing well (Moye and Kincade, 2003).

Moreover, from a more general and thus less product-specific point of view, most past research has stated that typologies on online shoppers differ from shoppers in traditional
Theoretical background

retail formats (e.g., Evanschitzky et al., 2004; Rohm and Swaminathan, 2004). To elaborate on the most common shopper types in more detail, several authors are worth mentioning as follows.

Developing a typology based upon online shopping motivations, Rohm and Swaminathan (2004) propose the existence of four shopper types: (1) convenience shoppers are highly motivated by online shopping convenience which they derive from time and effort savings, (2) variety seekers attach more importance to variety seeking across retail channels, brands and product types than to convenience, (3) balanced buyers are close to variety seekers in their demand for convenience, but seek variety only to a moderate extent, and (4) store-oriented shoppers score lowest on online shopping convenience but highest on physical store orientation due to their strong desire for immediate product possession and social interaction.

Moreover, and aside from the (1) Information surfer which corresponds with the variety seeker described above, Kau et al. (2003) suggested five additional shopper types: (2) comparison, (3) dual, (4) e-laggard, (5) on-off, and (6) traditional shoppers. Of these largely self-explanatory shopping type names, on-off shoppers prefer to shop offline, but like to surf and compare products online in search of the best deals. Dual shoppers are also those that like to get product information online, but they are less deal prone than on-off shoppers.

As unique for the online environment and also based on motivations, Ganesh et al. (2010) further identified (1) interactive shoppers who, although not being the trendiest, are predominantly driven by individualism, personalized services and online bidding. They also added (2) e-window shoppers who on the contrary rank highest on stimulation as they are more interested in discovering and visiting websites than in negotiating the lowest price.

Beyond that, their typology comprises shopping enthusiasts, bargain seekers, apathetic, basic and destination shoppers (Ganesh et al., 2010); interestingly, these five types are quite similar to traditional shopper types that are categorized by previous research into: apathetic (e.g., Stone, 1954), recreational (Bellenger and Korgaonkar, 1980), process involved (Westbrock and Black, 1985), enthusiasts (e.g., Arnold and Reynolds, 2003), brand conscious (Korgaonkar, 1984), destination and bargain seekers (Ganesh et al., 2007). Therefore, unlike more previous research (e.g., Evanschitzky et al., 2004; Rohm and Swaminathan, 2004), but as Levy et al. (2005) already did before, Ganesh et al. (2010) concluded that more similarities in shopping behavior exist than once thought. In this regard,
they therefore suggested that, irrespective of any retail settings, a core set of common denominators for both online and offline exists.

Similar to shopping motivations, shopper typologies in both online and offline have seen increasing interest from scholars; however, to date, no empirical studies of curated retailing exist, and simply transferring previous results to this novel retail format may disregard crucial consumer motivations and segments specific to it. The following three manuscripts aim to fill this gap.
3. Introduction to the manuscripts

3.1 Manuscript overview

This cumulative dissertation consists of three manuscripts: Manuscript 1 and 2 have both already been published in peer-reviewed journals. Manuscript 3 has passed a journal’s desk reject and is currently under review. Table 1 gives an overview of the manuscripts and contains additional publication information. All three manuscripts are grounded in curated retailing research, but represent separate stand-alone pieces of research, each consisting of an abstract followed by the article itself. Literature references, tables and figures contained therein consequently apply to the respective manuscript only. Any stylistic and linguistic differences originate from the specific and differing requirements of the particular journals. Chapter 4 reveals all manuscripts in their entirety. Before that, though, the research objectives and questions, as well as the research approach and context are presented.

Table 1: Overview of manuscripts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nr.</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Authors</th>
<th>Publication Type</th>
<th>VHB</th>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Curated Shopping: Value Creation durch Beratungsservice</td>
<td>Sebald, A.K. &amp; Jacob, F.</td>
<td>Journal article</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>Published in: Marketing Review St. Gallen</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Help welcome or not: Understanding consumer shopping motivation in curated fashion retailing</td>
<td>Sebald, A.K. &amp; Jacob, F.</td>
<td>Journal article</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>Published in: Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services</td>
<td>0.75</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sum</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>2.75</td>
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</table>

3.2 Research objectives and research questions

Overall, this dissertation comprises four research objectives integrating different perspectives on curated retailing. The first objective is to achieve a better understanding of costumer and retailer participation respectively interaction during value (co-)creation in curated retailing. As a second objective, the thesis aims at identifying curated retailing-
specific motivational reasons and addressing the influence of contextual factors on these reasons. The third objective is concerned with the development of a typology of curated retail fashion shoppers based on their motivational reasons. Lastly, the identified consumer segments should be profiled and validated by incorporating actual purchase and demographic data. To achieve these four objectives, each manuscript addresses one or, as in the last manuscript, two of the resultant research questions which are presented in the following Table 2.

**Table 2: Research objectives and research questions of the manuscripts**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Manuscript</th>
<th>Research objectives and research questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1. | 1. Research objective: Understand customer and retailer participation during value (co-)creation in curated retailing  
   How can customer value (co-)creation in curated retailing be conceptualized based on the service-dominant logic and service logic? |
| 2. | 2. Research objective: Identify curated retailing-specific motivational reasons and address the influence of contextual factors on these reasons  
   What are the motivational reasons for and against consumer adoption of curated retailing in e-commerce? |
| 3. | 3. Research objective: Develop a typology of curated retail fashion shoppers based on their motivational reasons  
   What shopper segments can be identified in curated fashion retailing based on shopping motivations? |
| 4. | 4. Research objective: Profile and validate the identified consumer segments by incorporating demographic and actual purchase data  
   How can these segments be profiled in terms of demographic and transactional data? |

All these four research objectives and related questions contribute to the description and examination of a novel retail trend from an integrated one-to-one (customer-retailer) solution perspective. Even though the research objectives and questions are closely connected, however, each manuscript centers on a specific research focus. In view of the above, manuscript 1 aims at the initial conceptualization of curated retailing by investigating value (co-)creation in this novel retail context. Since curated retailing offers solutions for individual customer problems in interaction and integration with the customer and his resources, added value particularly emerges in the customer’s space and usage processes. To become solutions oriented, retailers need to “understand how value is created through the
eyes of the customer” (Brady et al., 2005, 362) and to account for curated-retailing specific particularities.

Since value-in-use is generally known as context-dependent (e.g., Le Meunier-FitzHugh et al., 2011; Mcdonald et al., 2011; Vargo and Lusch, 2004), identifying customer needs enhances value (co-)creation – both from the provider and the customer point of view. It enables the provider to better understand his role in delivering solutions and can help the customer in becoming more aware of his particular problem and needs (Petri and Jacob, 2016). Particularly from the perspective of a retailer, the identification of shopping motivations forms an important basis for sustained value creation (Rintamäki et al., 2006) because it help retailers to better tailor their solution offerings to the requirements of the individual customer. With these preliminary considerations in mind, manuscript 2 explores the motivational reasons for and against adopting curated retailing.

In order to provide a quantification and confirmation of the motivational factors gained, manuscript 3 thereafter develops and validates a shopping typology, which is the first time this has been done in a curated retailing context. In all manuscripts, implications are drawn from research findings and recommendations for retailers are demonstrated. Figure 1 illustrates the integration and positioning of the manuscripts within the thesis. Such a three-fold perspective on curated retailing has more explanatory power than a singular perspective which focuses on one introduced research aspect only.
This diverse nature of research problems being addressed in the respective manuscripts has influenced the choice of research approach and thus the selection of the suitable research design and methods in this dissertation (Creswell, 2009).

### 3.3 Philosophical foundation and research approach

According to Crotty (1998), these research decisions are also fundamentally affected by the philosophical foundation of the research work. Philosophically, the researcher’s perception of the social world is shaped by ontological and epistemological assumptions. Ontology is defined as “(…) the study of being” (Crotty, 1998, 10), whereas epistemology is “(…) a way of understanding and explaining how we know what we know” (Crotty, 1998, 3). From an epistemological stance, and thus covering the relationship between research and theory, an inductive approach is concerned with drawing generalizable inferences out of specific observations, whilst a deductive approach involves theory and hypotheses derived from it which advance the process of collecting data (Bryman and Bell, 2011). From an ontological viewpoint, constructivism and positivism form two frequently referred positions. Constructivism emphasizes ‘(…) the active role of individuals in the social
construction of social reality’ (Bryman and Bell, 2011, 22), with the researcher focusing on the specific contexts of participants and generating subjective meanings in social interaction with a human community. In positivism, in contrast, the development of numeric measures of observations becomes crucial in order to reveal and examine the causes of certain outcomes (Creswell, 2009). Consequently, research is conducted from an objective viewpoint in positivism, while being interpretative is indicative of the constructivist position.

With this philosophical background, and as will be explained later, several ontological and epistemological viewpoints are covered here. In this regard, the overall dissertation is also conducted on the assumption that the collection of different types of data and the application of various methods best contribute to a comprehensive understanding of curated retailing, which little previous research addresses. This triangulation of data sources and methods produces richer data on the same phenomenon. Here, it enables both developing a detailed view of curated retailing and generalizing results to a broader population. At the same time, it can help to neutralize or even rule out potential methodological limitations and biases (Creswell, 2009; Jick, 1979).

Adopting a sequential mixed methods procedure, the cumulative dissertation involves starting with a purely descriptive and inductive approach for exploratory purposes in manuscript 1. As previously mentioned, value (co-)creation and the one-to-one interaction between customers and stylists are addressed by applying the SDL and the SL in order to construct and initially conceptualize the novel curated retailing phenomenon. The findings from manuscript 1 help identify the participants to study for manuscript 2, with the aim to collect more exploratory detailed views by investigating curated retailing from different perspectives.

For this purpose, manuscript 2 conducts qualitative semi-structured interviews with consumers, non-consumers and stylists as a means for identifying the different motivational reasons influencing individual customer adoption decisions on curated retailing. Thereby, data collection focuses on the specific contexts of the interview participants. Apart from consumers, non-consumers are included in the purposeful sample especially for highlighting the motivations behind the non- adoption of curated retailing. This inclusive approach is recommended by several authors (e.g., Faqih, 2016; Hernández-García et al., 2011; Iglesias-Pradas et al., 2013) who criticize that, to date, there is insufficient empirical research on the adoption of Internet shopping from the non-consumers perspective, even if the few previous
studies have shown observable differences as compared to active online shoppers (e.g., Soopramanien and Robertson, 2007; Swinyard and Smith, 2003). Stylists are covered as third perspective in the sample since they can best sense those shopping motivations consumers cannot express or of which consumers are unaware (McFarland et al., 2006).

The subsequent data analysis inductively builds from specifics to common themes (Creswell, 2009). Following Mayring’s (2000, 2014) qualitative content analysis approach for inductive category creation, interview data is coded to generate categories of similar meanings out of the interview transcripts. Inspired by the Gioia methodology (Corley and Gioia, 2004; Gioia et al., 2013) in order to enhance qualitative rigor and transparency in inductive coding, the identified codes are first organized as 1st-order concepts, then further distilled into 2nd-order themes, and finally into aggregate dimensions – thereby becoming gradually more abstract in subsequent states. Since the research focus is therefore on individual meanings constructed by the interaction with multiple participants, a constructivist approach is taken. The generation of motivational variables is considered as a preparatory step for prospective confirmatory research in manuscript 3.

Hence, in developing a shopping typology based on shopping motivations for adopting curated retailing in fashion and apparel, manuscript 3 honors a deductive and positivist approach. Therefore, a quantitative survey is conducted with the intent to further validate and generalize the results from manuscript 2 with a large sample. The cross-cultural sample is subdivided into a main sample of 388 German consumers and a validation sample of 218 consumers in four other European countries (Austria: 63; Belgium: 36; Netherlands: 43 and Switzerland: 76). Using multi-item scales from previous studies on traditional and online shopping that captured the motivational reasons as identified in manuscript 2, the data analysis followed several steps: First, exploratory (EFA) and confirmatory (CFA) analyses are conducted consecutively to assess the factor structure. Then, cluster analysis is applied to the survey data in order to identify segments. Chi-square analysis and analysis of variance (ANOVA) are used to profile the segments in terms of their demographic characteristics and actual purchase data. Finally, the cross-cultural validity of the factor structure as identified in the main sample after CFA is tested by repeating a post hoc CFA with the validation sample.

Table 3 provides a summary overview of the research design and the methods of the three manuscripts explained above. Further and more accurate details are provided in the complete manuscript texts as referenced in Chapter 4.
**Table 3: Research design and methods of the manuscripts**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nr.</th>
<th>Research method</th>
<th>Sample</th>
<th>Data collection</th>
<th>Data analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Manuscript 1</strong></td>
<td>Conceptual (using SDL &amp; SL)</td>
<td>Conceptual preparation for manuscripts 2 &amp; 3 (Call for eliciting context-dependent motivational reasons for and against adapting curated retailing)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Manuscript 2</strong></td>
<td>Semi-structured interviews (exploratory)</td>
<td>Interviews with 21 consumers, 21 non-consumers and 12 stylists*</td>
<td>2017 (3 months)</td>
<td>2.1 Qualitative content analysis 2.2 Krippendorff's Alpha reliability test</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Manuscript 3</strong></td>
<td>Online survey*</td>
<td>Main sample: 388 German consumers Validation sample: 218 consumers (Austria: 63; Belgium: 36; Netherlands: 43; Switzerland: 76)</td>
<td>2017 (1 month)</td>
<td>3.1 Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) 3.2 Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) 3.3 Cluster analysis 3.4 Chi-square analysis 3.5 Analysis of variance (ANOVA) 3.6 Cross-cultural validation analysis (Step 3.2 with validation sample)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Notes: *To tap into the insights of stylists and to conduct the survey, we collaborated with a single German curated fashion retailer.*
3.4 German fashion retailing as research context

All three manuscripts are positioned in the context of fashion retailing, to be more precise in the German curated fashion retailing market. Germany is well-suited for this area of research because curated retailing has recently gained in popularity here, following the trend from the United States. Particularly in the area of fashion and apparel, it quit its former niche existence in Germany. Thereby, curated fashion retailers have benefited from the increasing shift to online shopping in times of omnichannel retailing and from the consumers’ growing demand for personalized retail solutions.

According to the Bundesverband E-Commerce and Versandhandel (Brandt, 2018), fashion and apparel account for the largest e-commerce retailing category in Germany with about 20% of total e-commerce sales in 2017 (11.8 out of 58.5 billion euros). Furthermore, in terms of sales, the growth potential of online fashion retailing continues to be significant in Europe, with a compound annual growth rate of 8.7% by 2022 (Wegener, 2017). As more and more consumers consider online shopping as a valid alternative to offline shopping for evaluating and purchasing products, the fashion retail landscape is set to be transformed further.

Due to the ongoing popularity of e-commerce and the growing digitalization of traditional retailing, also in other retail categories, omnichannel retailing has already become a growing global phenomenon. Over the recent years, this has subsequently led to the emergence of a new shopper type who seeks a seamless retail experience across digital and physical channels.

As a hybrid between both channels, curated retailing complies with the new requirements of omnichannel shoppers by combining the advantages of both offline and online. This becomes very prevalent in consulting-intensive areas, such as fashion and apparel, which have traditionally been marketed offline. Here, trends change many times a year and products are largely standardized in size and shape (Rajamma et al., 2007). Consequently, shopper demand for individual consultation is generally high (Brito et al., 2015). Though e-commerce provides customers with a convenient shopping experience, it lacks personal interactivity and causes information overload (Baier and Stüber, 2010).

To compensate for both problems, curated retailing goes beyond traditional online shopping. It provides customers with unique and tailored shopping experience by offering personalized retail solutions in the form of product and outfit recommendations. Yet, even though the demand for personalization and curation is apparent, many curated retailers are
still struggling to reach profitability (Fröhlich, 2017). In addition, fashion retailing is characterized by fierce competition and growth will be mainly achieved through the steady shifting of the existing offline consumer base to online channels (Wegener, 2017). Therefore, a competitive advantage over competitors is critical.

A central perquisite for this is a thorough understanding of the motivational reasons for and against adopting curated retailing. Fashion products appeal both to utilitarian and hedonic shopping motivations (Workman and Studak, 2006), thus making them ideally suited for empirical research into individual motives in curated retailing. Building on this, precise targeting of consumer segments represents a further key to retaining customers and achieving long-term profitability in fashion retailing. The following three manuscripts have dedicated their research efforts to this.
4. Manuscripts

4.1 Curated Shopping: Value Creation durch One-to-One Beratungsservice

Manuscript 1

The manuscript is published as:


Manuscript is available from the authors upon request.
4.2 Help welcome or not: Understanding consumer shopping motivation in curated fashion retailing

The manuscript is published as:


DOI: 10.1016/j.jretconser.2017.10.008
4.3 Who needs help? A typology of curated fashion shoppers based on shopping motivations

The manuscript has passed the desk reject and revision has been requested:

1. Discussion and conclusion

5.1 Key findings and theoretical contributions

The following sub-chapter summarizes the key findings and theoretical contributions from the three individual manuscripts shown in the previous chapter, and is structured according to the four research questions investigated.

Research Question 1:
*How can customer value (co-)creation in curated retailing be conceptualized based on the service-dominant logic and service-logic?*

In order to better understand the specific characteristics and the unique selling propositions of curated retailing in comparison to offline and online, the topic was initially approached in manuscript 1 with the objective of understanding value (co-)creation in this novel retail context. Owing to a lack of comprehensive sources and literature on the topic, manuscript 1 thereby takes an exploratory and conceptual stance. The theoretical conceptualization of value (co-)creation in curated retailing is based on the service-dominant logic (SDL) and service-logic (SL).

According to SDL, consumer and curated retailer resources are value-creating antecedents (Vargo and Lusch, 2004; 2008; 2016). As illustrated in Figure 2, particularly operant resources both on the curated retailer side (e.g., stylist knowledge and expertise) and on the consumer side (e.g., consumer requirements) take a key role in value co-creation.

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**Figure 2:** Value co-creation and resource integration in curated retailing according to SDL
Consequently, curated retailing greatly reflects the shift in SDL from tangible operand resources to more dynamic, intangible operant resources in order to create value through service provision. In doing so, curated retailing transforms the traditional sales experience by introducing personal consultation and interaction into the predominantly impersonal, but convenient online retail environment. Fashion items serve only as operand resources of the curated retailer’s process of co-creating value. However, the decisive factors in the conceptualization of value co-creation in curated retailing are the one-to-one interaction between retailer and consumer and the associated resource integration between the two actors. Thus, in line with Vargo and Lusch (2004), retailers alone can only create a value proposition. They support consumers in their value-creating usage activities, but it is always the consumer that determines value.

Drawing upon these findings, it has been shown that curated retailing constitutes an appropriate contextual setting for applying SDL in order to analyze value (co-)creation. Like in consulting which has become the “epitome of knowledge-based” service (Anand et al., 2007, 407), the key asset of curated retailers are their consultants respectively their stylists, in particular their knowledge and skills. Operating similar to consultants, stylists develop solutions together with consumers, including the exchange and integration of resources. However, as Breidbach and Maglio (2016) highlighted for the consulting context, the consumers’ unwillingness or their inability to forward information are major factors that hinder resource exchange and value co-creation. That has been proven in curated retailing value conceptualization, too, and also applies to value (co-)creation under the SL perspective.

In line with SL, the joint sphere and the consumer sphere are therefore of major importance in curated retailing. Particularly in the joint sphere, the integration of retailer and consumer resources determines the creation of person-, context-, and situation-specific value. Depending on the spheres illustrated in figure 3, the curated retailer can take over different roles in the value creation process. While he can take over the role of the value-creator only in the joint sphere, where direct interaction with the consumer occurs, he can otherwise act as value facilitator by assembling and providing entire outfits tailored to the consumer’s requirements.
Though the conceptualization of value in manuscript 1 fulfills the theoretical assumptions of both the SDL and the SL, stronger and more appropriate references can be made to SL. The decisive point is that SL more clearly emphasizes that the resource integration between stylist and consumer is the perquisite for customizing solutions, and thus for (co-) creating value in curated retailing. Above all, while both SDL and SL acknowledge the role of the consumer’s usage processes, the SL better reaffirms the importance of the consumer for solution development in the curated retailing joint sphere, given that “the very nature of the solution is jointly designed and evolved through the joint resource integration process” (MacDonald et al., 2016, 112). Several other researchers also attach great importance to co-creation and resource integration with the provider for achieving the best possible solution (e.g., Payne et al., 2008; Le Meunier-FitzHugh et al., 2011; Tuli et al., 2007). In line with this, the consumer’s role in curated retailing is not simply to wear the stylist’s product selection, but rather to work closely together with the stylist to interactively create solutions to fulfill his needs. Such solutions are then subsequently quality-assessed by the consumer, and in this process, the value-in-use influences and mediates the assessment of the consumer shopping experience.

Additionally, while broadening research on value within the context of SDL/SL, the conceptualization of value in curated retailing specifically contributes to the expanding research on technology-enabled value co-creation where the boundaries of service interactions are expanded from physical interfaces into virtual realms (e.g., Bitner et al., 2000; Breidbach and Maglio, 2016; Davis et al., 2011; Makarem et al., 2009). In this context, this conceptualization also illustrates as to what extent curated retailing provides new opportunities for value co-creation in retailing. Whereas nowadays information technologies and retail innovations commonly substitute face-to-face interaction and direct resource exchange, curated retailing serves as counterexample of how innovations can
change the way retail services are designed today and value is delivered online - namely through the renaissance of personal consultation in the online context.

Finally, the conceptualization of value in curated retailing offers an appropriate basis for further studies. Above all, researchers recommend to providers the development of an in-depth understanding of their consumers in order to become co-creators of value (e.g., Grönroos and Voima, 2013; Payne et al., 2008; Rintamäki and Kirves, 2017). In fact, curated retailers still need to understand what drives consumers to adopt their service and, consequently how contextual factors influence their consumers’ value perception and adoption behavior. Hence, the next research question covered in manuscript 2 will deal with this issue in greater detail.

Research Question 2:
What are the motivational reasons for and against consumer adoption of curated retailing in e-commerce?

Answering this research question extends the understanding of curated retail shoppers in that it provides insights into their motivational reasons for and against adopting curated retailing, which has previously been unaddressed in the literature. Whilst shopping motivation in retailing has become an established research field, literature on curated retailing is relatively sparse. As a hybrid between offline and online shopping, some motivational overlaps with both channels can be assumed. However, the present knowledge on shopping motivations is not sufficient to make reliable predictions concerning curated retailing, without neglecting important motivations specific to it. Hence, to fill this gap, qualitative content analysis of interview data obtained from consumers, non-consumers and stylists was used. A wide range of specific motivational reasons for (MFA) and against (MAA) adoption resulted from the interviews (for details see figure 2 in manuscript 2). These 1st-order concepts were then used to establish the following three aggregate dimensions of motivational reasons: (1) web shopping environment, (2) customized solution, and (3) trust and purchase uncertainty.

In light of the findings, effort savings and time savings represented top motivational reasons for curated adoption, and thus confirmed motivational parallels to online retailing. Previous research on online shopping behavior has already emphasized convenience and time efficiency as key motivators in the web shopping environment (e.g., Childers et al., 2001; To et al., 2007). In addition to being in line with extant studies, the interview results extend the knowledge of online shopping motivations in consulting-intensive retail sectors.
In doing so, they enrich the previously limited understanding of curated retail consumers. For them, especially customized solutions, and trust and purchase uncertainty represent distinctive and predominant motivational reasons.

In particular, customized solution is a hitherto undocumented, but predominant motivational reason in curated retailing. The focus on tailor-made solutions reflects a pioneering approach in retailing, and thereby transforms the fundamental idea of solution selling to the business-to-consumer market. In addition, this finding is an important step towards broadening the growing literature on personalized online shopping (e.g., Pappas et al., 2017). For curated retailing, the interviewees disclosed that consumers seek stylist advice for one or more of the following customized solution reasons: product search, interest in product combinations, or desire for change and willingness to innovate. This implies that the solution provision can vary depending on the consumers’ individual problems and requirements.

Stylists have a crucial role to play in flexibly designing tailored solutions. As the primary contact point in providing solutions, they thus influence, but also control the level of retail service quality. In this regard, the findings additionally provide new evidence for the discussion on trust and uncertainty reduction in the context of salesperson consultation. Importantly, past empirical research has consistently shown close links between the lack of trust in the salesperson and less favorable attitudes toward the salesperson (Crosby et al., 1990) or toward buying and future interactions with the salesperson’s firm (Kennedy et al., 2001). As the interview results show, trust represents a strong reason affecting the adoption of curated retailing, too. Concerning trust and purchase uncertainty, product performance uncertainty, consumer confidence, product selection support and willingness to pay were frequently mentioned in interviews to be key reasons for and against adoption. This confirms previous studies on information search and consultation (e.g., Haas and Kenning, 2014; Mortimer and Pressey, 2013), which suggest that purchase uncertainty is a crucial consumer motivator in relational sales settings.

Interestingly, the interviews indicate that consumer confidence strongly impacts stylist-consumer relationships. Specifically, many curated retail non-consumers stated that they have higher confidence in their own fashion taste, whereas existing consumers have more fear of lacking control of stylist selection. However, the data analysis in manuscript 2 points out that not a single stylist mentioned these two particular reasons against adoption. This gap between stylist perceptions and actual consumer needs appears critical, particularly as both
reasons might lead to mistrust in the stylist’s abilities and competences, which can finally reinforce or result in non-adoption.

So far, only few researchers have explicitly addressed the negative factors impacting the adoption of innovations (e.g., Kleijnen et al., 2009; Lian and Yen, 2014; Moldovan and Goldenberg, 2004). In addition, only limited research investigates non-consumer perceptions of online shopping (e.g., Faqih, 2016; Iglesias-Pradas et al., 2013). Instead, most studies in the field of adoption persistently reveal a pro-change bias and thus assume that consumers are open to change and new products. This assumption is striking since innovations generally call for change in consumers’ behaviors and attitudes. Accordingly, resistance to change constitutes a regular consumer reaction (Talke and Heidenreich, 2014). To address this gap, not only consumers’ perspectives but also non-consumers’ and salespeople’s (referred to as “stylists” henceforth) perspectives were included in manuscript 2 in order to better account for such traditionally neglected motivational reasons against adoption.

In this context, this research also contributes to extant research investigating the influence of contextual factors on shopping motivation and adoption intentions (e.g., Talke and Heidenreich, 2014; Wagner and Rudolph, 2010; Westaby, 2005). Accordingly, the consumer’s adoption decision is dependent on factors related to the situation, innovation and person.

Figure 4: The influence of contextual factors on motivational reasons

As shown in figure 4, the 1st-order concepts from the web shopping environment were correspondingly conceptualized as situation-specific reasons, from customized solution as innovation-specific reasons, and from trust and purchase uncertainty as adopter-specific
reasons. While the situation-specific web shopping environment does not represent a unique differentiator from online retailers, the customized solutions, and trust and purchase uncertainty reasons merit more attention. Being a strong reason for adoption, customized solutions are innovation-specific and thus under retailers’ control. This implies the importance for retailers to identify consumer reasons and problems at an early stage in order to assess their role in the solution development. In contrast, the trust and purchase uncertainty dimensions are particularly important to understand the non-adoption of curated retailing. Since such reasons reflect enduring consumer characteristics, they are adopter-specific and difficult to influence. This finding once again highlights the importance, but also stresses the difficulty of cultivating trust in stylists.

In addition to the evidence concerning the influence of contextual factors on shopping motivations, the above stated findings overall enhance knowledge of online shopping motivations in consulting-intensive retail sectors. Moreover, the findings demonstrate that shopping motivation theory provides a useful lens for developing a better understanding of curated retail shoppers’ adoption and consultation decisions. More reliable information, however, can only be presented by further quantitative studies, which are not yet available. In that sense the results obtained substantially contributed to developing the first curated retail typology, as discussed subsequently.

**Research Question 3:**
*What shopper segments can be identified in curated fashion retailing based on shopping motivations?*

Indeed, in order to answer research question 3, the motivational reasons identified in manuscript 2 were used for creating a questionnaire-based online survey. The aim of the survey was to better assess the multiplicity and heterogeneity of the consumers’ motivational reasons identified, in an attempt to develop a typology. This was done by first reducing an initial set of motivational items into a smaller set of factors, and by subsequently using those factor scores as input for cluster analysis. The underlying sample for these analyses was earlier subdivided into a German main sample and a validation sample that comprises consumers in four other European countries.

Before turning to the actual cluster analysis for typology development, the scale was created for data collection. For that purpose, multi-item scales from previous studies on offline and online shopping were used in manuscript 3 to capture the motivations as determined for curated retailing. The scales were slightly modified to ensure contextual fit
with curated retailing, if necessary. Moreover, four original product presentation items were developed in order to acquire knowledge about the consumers’ reactions to the curated retailer’s outfit box. Following the standard procedures for EFA and CFA to reduce and assess the items’ factor structure, the consumer responses from the main sampling to the motivational items were first factor analyzed. The resulting 11 factors matched quite well with the original list of reasons as adapted from manuscript 2, and thus were named accordingly. Consequently, the obtained factor structure validates the motivational results from research question 2. Besides, it proves the adequacy of the qualitative approach in manuscript 2 to elicit relevant motivational reasons in curated retailing, and thus offers an appropriate scale basis for further quantitative studies. To further test the stability of the factor structure in the main sampling, a post hoc CFA was applied to the validation sampling. The results provide evidence for the cross-cultural validity of the motivational scale. Therefore, it can be conceived as appropriate measurement instrument for follow-up cross-cultural segmentation studies in the future.

Applying cluster analysis to online survey data to the German main sample, four consumer segments were identified for curated retailing: (1) the store-oriented online customizer, (2) the fashion-conscious changer, (3) the choice support seeker and (4) the independent apathetic (segment-specific details on motivational reasons can be found in table 4 in manuscript 3).

Overall, one or more motivational characteristics from previous research could be found across all segments. This demonstrates the validity of the use of shopping motivations for shopper description, while providing support for prior research on offline and online typologies. To illustrate this point one might take the example of the store-oriented online customizers. Since scoring low on web shopping convenience and variety seeking but high on product performance uncertainty (e.g., examining clothes before purchase in the store), this segment has similarities with the previously classified traditional (Kau et al., 2003) and store-oriented (Rohm and Swaminathan, 2004) segments. Moreover, the fashion-conscious changer parallels the fashion innovator segment identified by Workman and Studak (2006) due to the consumers’ strong desire for change and innovation. The choice support seeker segment is a further example as it resembles previously identified variety seeker segments (Kau et al., 2003; Rohm and Swaminathan, 2004. Lastly, the independent apathetics contain parallels to the apathetic segments found by Ganesh et al. (2010) and Westbrook and Black (1985) in the sense that these shoppers lack strong shopping motivation.
Surely, as a hybrid between online and offline shopping, consumer segments in curated retailing can be reasonably assumed to unite and reflect both online or offline characteristics. However, as can be seen from these similarities, none of the previous shopping typologies alone can explain the existence of the four segments in all their facets. Much rather, it can be expected that shopping types explicitly for curated retailing exist, depending on the value consumers attach to either online or offline characteristics. Most notably, customized retail solutions (e.g., specific product search, interest in product combinations, desire for change and innovation) represent a key motivational reason for adopting curated fashion retailing. Based on these heretofore undiscovered motivations, the findings in manuscript 3 add three distinct consumer segments in curated retailing. Such solution-driven segments (store-oriented online customizer, fashion-conscious changer and choice support seeker), together with the idea of solution selling, have not been documented in the shopping literature before.

Thus, the findings provide evidence for the existence of shopping types that current retail channels cannot fully satisfy, and imply that shoppers' demand for consultation service persists in the online context. In doing so, this research extends the extant knowledge base of consumer typologies in consulting-intensive retail and online sectors to curated retailing. Answering research question 3 thus broadens the understanding of the key motivations and unique characteristics that differentiate distinct segments in curated retail, which is vital for delivering a tailored consumer experience from a managerial perspective.

**Research Question 4:**
How can these segments be profiled in terms of demographic and transactional data?

To enhance the depth of the segmentation results, the four segments were profiled by incorporating transactional data (total number of orders, average net basket value and average number of items kept per order) and demographic data (gender, age, marital status, children, residence, education, net income and total orders).

Apart from education and net income, demographic differences between segments did not prove to be significant. Hence, it can be concluded that the segments are rather stable and homogenous in the demographics covered, with only small differences. However, the significant result for net income is particularly interesting here since it suggests potential differences in consumers’ purchasing power across segments. Interestingly, the indifferent apathetic segment comprises the largest number of shoppers with a net income of €3,000–€3,999 or €4,000 or more. Since, however, net income represents a sensitive issue across all the segments, the number of shoppers in the two highest income categories might be
significantly higher for all segments. Because it is not foreseeable at the present status of research which segment is highest in income and thus promises the greatest profitability, the independent apathetics should not be overlooked from the very beginning without any further investigations.

Though there are no significant differences for the four segments for all transactional data variables, there is some evidence suggesting that the independent apathetics might be a promising segment also in terms of average net basket value per order. Aside from this finding, the segments are relatively homogenous with respect to purchase behavior, and thus no reliable conclusions can be drawn at the present time concerning the profitability of the segments. Nevertheless, the use of such data represents an important study component in manuscript 3 as this approach emphasizes the importance of integrating transactional data into future shopping segmentation studies for the purpose of predicting the profitability of segments. Until now, retail expenditure data represents an important, but still too rarely used managerial variable in the literature. This gap is addressed in manuscript 3 by establishing a link between this type of data and the segments identified, which still offers considerable untapped research potential in curated retailing.

5.2 Implications for retail practice

Based on the results gained from the three manuscripts, implications and potential courses of action for retail practice will be shown now. The following areas are of particular interest not only for curated retailers, but also for traditional and online retailers who intend to penetrate the curated retail market

*(Co-)create value through one-to-one solution selling*

One-to-one solution selling constitutes a characteristic feature of curated retailing and opens up new ways of creating value in retailing. As such, it represents a pioneering and new sales approach that promises differentiation and competitive benefits for retailers. Along with the provision of curated product selections, consumers can enjoy the full benefits from personal sales advice in form of curated product selections, without having to renounce any convenience of shopping online. Correspondingly, curated retailers need to ensure in one-to-one solution selling that they shift their focus from merely selling products to offering tailor-made solutions. Additionally, in view of value (co-)creation, stylists have to make sure that they work closely together with the consumer since curated solutions are designed best when reached interactively. To start the value creation process, it is therefore
necessary for the stylists to first accurately assess the consumer’s problem and needs so that they can specify the solution deliverables. Consequently, the integration with the consumer plays a crucial role in customized retailing solutions.

*Reshape the stylist role and implement sales trainings*

To provide value to their consumers, curated retailers need to be flexible in their solution approach and need to reshape the role of their stylists accordingly. Consider fashion and apparel, for instance; while many consumers are interested in outfits or have a desire for changing their clothing style, others only want stylists to find them specific products. Furthermore, not all consumers actively seek contact with stylists to maintain a constructive exchange of information; a not inconsiderable number is also reluctant to share personal information with salespeople. Sensitivity and flexibility are thus needed in the consumer dialogue to ensure that individual solution-related needs are met and that the sales interaction with consumers does not inhibit the creation of value. The impact of perceived sales person contact on value-in-use demonstrates that the key to success will be to establish stylists as trusted partners and consultants without inconveniencing the customer. Through training and experience, stylists need to be sensitized for this role view and learn how to adjust their sales tactics to consumers’ individual reasons for adopting their service. Reshaping the stylists’ role and their sales activities is a long-term investment. However, thoroughly trained personnel form an integral part in the curated retailing shopping experience, as they are the ones who create individual solutions that meet the requirements of each consumer.

*Understand the consumer*

To improve consultation and sales performance, curated solutions should center on the factors that are most important to consumers. Accordingly, the consumer motivations and characteristics serve as a guide here. Only retailers who understand the complex nature of consumer motivational reasons will generate sustainable profit because consumer requests and needs can differ considerably. The results presented in manuscript 2 provide first indications about what consumers value in curated retailing. For instance, consumers that are motivated primarily by convenience appreciate receiving the right products with as little time and as little cognitive and physical effort as possible. Those who demand personalized service instead value outfit inspiration and styling advice most in curated retailing. In addition to the reasons for adoption, retailers must also particularly acknowledge motivations against adoption and take the necessary actions to mitigate them rather than
bowing down to consumer resistance. For example, consider consumers who indicate that they have little courage to wear the stylist’s fashion selection. In order to keep them, it should be clarified that outfits are tailored to individual needs, and that they thus do not always include the latest fashion pieces. In this context, though not explicitly investigated in this dissertation, it is important to take account of potential gender differences as well. Interview insights from manuscript 2 and current curated retailing practice suggest that gender might play a moderating role on the adoption behavior of consumers. In its early days, curated retailing started as an outfit service for men. The most prominent curated retailers, first targeted men only (e.g., Modomoto, Outfittery, Stitch Fix, Trunk Club), and only the latter two retailers have now broadened their service to both genders. Thus, a more profound knowledge of gender-related differences may additionally help retailers target their consumer more effectively in the future.

*Generate segment-tailored offerings*

Like every other retail innovation, segmenting and assessing potential target segments right from the beginning are essential for maintaining the curated retail business model. To this end, the results of the survey in manuscript 3 provide retailers a lens through which they can better address market heterogeneity and select attractive target segments. In particular, the obtained shopping typology on the basis of shopping motivations constitutes a helpful device for retailers to assess the factors that motivate their different consumer segments. On this basis, retailers can better differentiate between the segments and generate more targeted service offerings. Whereas, for instance, the store-oriented online customizer segment should be targeted by customized solutions in the form of individual outfits, the choice support seeker might be best served by focusing on product variety and product selection support instead of outfit inspiration. Generating tailor-made offerings in this way allows retailers to deliver a satisfying shopping experience to these heterogeneous segments, while simultaneously allocating their corporate resources more effectively. However, in order to obtain an appropriate positioning outside Germany, more wide-ranging cross-cultural segmentation studies are needed. A first step in this direction has already been taken with the post hoc cross-cultural validation analysis, which provided preliminary evidence of similar shopping motivations that exist in different countries. Such findings can contribute to the debate about global standardization and adaptation to local consumer needs. Furthermore, additional studies might thereby facilitate the feasibility and development of international segmentation strategies that combine the advantages of standardization (e.g., lower costs).
with the advantages of adaptation (e.g., response to consumer needs). Establishing target segments, whether national or international, represents a critical step in ensuring that the correct marketing communication strategies are being applied.

**Align marketing communications to consumer motivations**

The knowledge of distinct curated retailing motivations and segments also provides helpful implications for retailers seeking to improve the success of their marketing communication strategies. To successfully compete on the retail market, the specific added value of curated retailing has to be communicated to consumers. In doing so, retailers should align their value propositions, and consequently their marketing communications to consumer motivations since value creation is context dependent. Consequently, a one-size-fits-all communication approach for all identified segments does not exist. Instead, retailers should put segment-related motivational reasons in the focus of their communication. For instance, to attract consumers from the fashion-conscious changer segment who want to go with the latest fashion trends, marketing communication should emphasize and build on spotting the latest trends and providing stylish outfit inspirations. In contrast, consumers that are less stylish and trendy (e.g., the store-oriented online customizer) should be addressed by communicating less on fashion trends, but instead more on personalized fashion solutions. Despite the diversity in their motivational reasons, consumers usually want to feel understood and identify with the retailer’s communication offensives. If consumers feel they are being addressed personally, it is more likely that they do not just use the curated retail service themselves, but that they also recommend it to others. Cultivating trust and unique shopping experiences therefore appear to be critical for stimulating positive word-of-mouth.

**Cultivate trust and experience**

In curated retailing particularly, trust represents an important barrier to adoption. As witnessed in the interviews, this is potentially because a large number of consumers has higher confidence in their own fashion taste or fears lacking control over the stylist selection. It is therefore highly important to sensitize stylists for these confidence-related reasons so that even critical shoppers might overcome their inhibitions about the novel curated retailing service and subsequently seek stylist advice. As the primary point of contact for the consumer, stylists are especially positioned to promote trust, service quality and shopping experience, with the objective of attaining long-term customer loyalty. Here, a consumer-centric focus within retailing commonly facilitates the development of an
appealing customer experience that focuses on value creation for the consumer. From a competitive advantage perspective, decisions on what kind of experience is offered has become a top strategic priority for retailers because, in contrast to mere product and service offerings, experiences are less likely to be copied by competitors and are thus less available everywhere. However, at this time, curated retail management still faces the challenge to improve the consumers’ perception of the novel retail experience as compared to the known offline or online ones. Therefore, in line with the above mentioned consumer-centric orientation, retail managers should establish an experience-oriented mindset among employees, particularly among stylists. From a competitive advantage perspective, this focus on both consumer experience and orientation can also benefit traditional brick-and-mortar retailers if they succeed in redefining their stores for the digital age. Their strength lies in visual navigation and tactile experience that are both hard to replicate online. But more importantly, big data analytics offer enormous opportunities to leverage the benefits of personal consultation and to personalize the customer journey – not only in curated retailing. In all retail formats, the key to the future of retailing will be personalized experiences and customized solutions.

*Leverage consumer data and grow*

For retailers to remain competitive in the future, they need to understand consultation and curation more broadly so that they become assortment analysts, too. The winners will be those retailers that manage to leverage data and technology in a way that increases the relevance of their product recommendations. Technological developments and consumer data entail lots of strategic potential to support a personalized consumer experience as retailers are provided with real-time feedback about their consumers and their purchase patterns. To further grow and, above all, to be able to deliver curation at scale, curated retailers need to intensify the analysis of their consumer data (e.g., order history, feedback). This will provide crucial actionable insights for their stylists. In this context, for instance, it would be of great interest for stylists to gain knowledge of their customer’s wardrobe. The recently launched app ‘Zalando wardrobe’ could solve that problem not only for the fashion online retailer Zalando, but also for the curated retailer Zalon belonging thereto. As a digital wardrobe, ‘Zalando wardrobe’ helps shoppers to keep an overview of their fashion items, to receive outfit inspiration from other app users, and to sell items to the app community or to Zalando itself. In this way, detailed insights into consumer preferences and shopping behavior are gained in a playful way that might also provide valuable support for the curated
retailer Zalon. If ‘Zalando wardrobe’ app users agree to have their personal wardrobe data shared with Zalon in the future, stylists will use the obtained data for the purpose of optimizing the provision of tailored outfit and product recommendations. It remains to be seen, though, how and to what extent curated retailing has to be extended or adapted to the ever-changing customer requirements and market trends in order to keep on growing and to generate sustained earnings.

5.3 Limitations and future research

Despite the above-mentioned theoretical and managerial implications, and while efforts were undertaken to ensure that all manuscripts are conceptually and methodologically as precise as possible, their results are not without limitations. At the same time, however, each manuscript provides individual avenues for a number of future research opportunities. Given the cumulative nature of this dissertation, some of the opportunities for future research presented in one manuscript have already been addressed in the subsequent manuscripts. For instance, manuscript 1 proposes to conduct first empirical studies in order to determine factors in curated retailing with the potential to create substantial value. Manuscript 2 follows this call by identifying motivational reasons through semi-structured interviews, and manuscript 3 subsequently validates the previously identified motivational results by conducting an online survey. Yet, several additional research areas might be of further scientific and managerial value in the future:

Add new product categories

As this dissertation represents an initial exploration and quantification of fashion-related curated retailing, the external validity of the empirical results requires additional research because they are based on interview and survey data linked to a single product category, namely fashion and apparel. Although fashion and apparel is apparently the most popular category in curated retailing, the category choice might have influenced the findings. Earlier research has already indicated that product category affects the customers’ intention to purchase (e.g., Brown et al., 2003; Girard et al., 2003; Scarpi et al., 2004). In addition, shopping motivations are commonly considered to be a widely situational phenomenon (Kaltcheva and Weitz, 2006). Thus, using other categories, such as cosmetics or home furnishing, might increase the extent to which the findings can be generalized and additional shopping motivations and types may yet come to light.
Discussion and conclusion

Increase the cross-cultural generalizability

Second, the data for the manuscripts 2 and 3 were only collected from German participants. Although the post hoc cross-cultural validation in manuscript 3 provides solid evidence for the predictive power of the identified motivational factor structure, there may be some previously undiscovered social and culture influences on shopping motivations that can vary between different countries. For instance, considering Italy which has been a synonym for fashion and style ever since due to the country’s various glamorous fashion brands. Here, the stereotypical Italian consumer is usually known for a distinctive sense of fashion and style. A cross-cultural investigation of consumers’ shopping motivations and typologies in countries like Italy, where fashion seems to play a far greater role in defining one’s self-image than in Germany, might be an interesting research avenue to pursue. On this basis, one might assume that the resistance to adopting curated retailing is higher in Italy than in Germany since Italian shoppers are traditionally classified as particularly fashion conscious and selective in fashion demands. In addition, to further enhance the cross-cultural generalizability of the results provided here, research in curated retailing needs to be intensified through studies outside the European retail environment.

Improve the sample composition

Another potential limitation is the qualitative nature of manuscript 2, due to semi-structured interviews. Indeed, qualitative methods are highly suitable for exploring and obtaining depth of understanding (Palinkas et al., 2015) such as, for instance, in manuscript 2 for revealing motivational reasons for and against curated retailing adoption. In addition, the chosen purposeful sampling strategy yields cases that are information rich (Patton, 2001), knowledgeable about and experienced with the phenomenon of interest (Creswell and Clark, 2011). However, this qualitative and exploratory approach not only limits the generalizability of the findings, but also includes the potential for bias in participant selection due to the purposefully selected sample. To address this limitation, adding more and even older randomly selected interviewees would be appropriate to improve the sample composition, and should thus be adapted for any future qualitative studies considering other curated product categories, for example.

Additional room for sample composition improvement also exists in manuscript 3. Here, the online survey sample comprises only shoppers of one retailer for whom the majority of its consumers are women. Consequently, this sample composition risks leading to a self-selection bias since shoppers who stopped using curated retailing, shoppers of other curated
retailers or male shoppers may have different motivational reasons. For that reason, it would be worthwhile to include consumers of other curated retailers and more male shoppers in future research. Besides, it would be beneficial to broaden the existing validation sample of 218 consumers in four countries (Austria: 63; Belgium: 36; Netherlands: 43 and Switzerland: 76) in order to test not only the factor structure, but also the typology identified in the main sample. Further evidence from a larger and thus more reasonable number of consumers per country would allow more generalization.

Account for potential gender differences

Testing for the moderating impact of gender in curated retailing is another interesting topic for future research, particularly in view of better customer targeting. Both the main and the validation sample in manuscript 3 have an uneven gender distribution, with nearly 90% women. Therefore, they do not allow making reliable inferences about differences in shopping motivations and typologies among women and men. Though female shoppers significantly outnumber male shoppers also at the cooperating retailer and though this female-dominated customer base is not uncommon for shopping typology studies (e.g., Ganesh et al., 2010; Rohm and Swaminathan, 2004), the representativeness of the sample with regard to the relevant target population still has to be strengthened. In fact, looking at the curated retailers currently operating on the German market, most of them target only one gender, particularly men (e.g., Modomoto, Outfittery). This might suggest that gender plays a moderating role in the adoption of curated retailing what remains to be empirically proven in the future.

Assess and align the customized solution approaches of stylists

A final suggestion for future research, which goes beyond the focus of this dissertation, is to identify optimal sales and communication strategies to better appeal to the proposed segments in curated retailing. Similarly, given the importance of customized solutions in curated retailing, analysing the differing solution approaches that stylists individually adapt to each consumer segment might be very insightful in both a theoretical and managerial sense. Interviews with stylists will represent an initial step toward a better assessment and alignment of solution approaches to the respective consumer segments.

On the basis of the above, the vast set of opportunities for future research holds promise for further deepening and broadening the understanding of curated retailing, while simultaneously helping to overcome the most crucial research limitations.
5.4 Concluding thoughts

Although shopper behaviour has been studied in a variety of different retail formats for a long time, curated retailing constitutes in this regard a widely unknown research field that is still in its infancy. The present dissertation was thus directed at describing and examining this novel service innovation from various theoretical angles, including the SDL and SL, solution selling as well as the shopping motivation and typology literature. Along the three manuscripts, especially the provision of customized solutions has been revealed as a hitherto undocumented but distinct motivational reason in curated retailing. In addition, the findings add three heretofore undiscovered and solution-driven consumer segments (store-oriented online customizer, fashion-conscious changer and choice support seeker) that suggest the increasing importance of customized solutions in retailing.

Since this shift toward creating retail solutions for the individual shopper is expected to gain even greater significance in the future, the need to comprehend its impact on shopper behaviour is likewise increasing. The findings presented here provide a first solid beginning, but should be treated preliminary. Potential limitations concerning their generalization beyond the German fashion retail context open multiple avenues for further research. Moreover, curated retailing is a dynamic and multidisciplinary topic which requires the deployment of various methods in attempting to examine it in a holistic way. The time has now come to strengthen theoretical understanding and practical recommendations in this critical area of retailing.

As the idea of curated solutions is currently on the rise, retailers who want to thrive in the next decade need to redefine their role and the way how they (co-)create value for shoppers. Tomorrow’s winners will be those who will be able to reinvent the retail experience by seamlessly blending physical and digital environments instead of just selling the right product. Their competitiveness will depend on constant innovation that goes beyond the dualism of offline and online channels, and that combines technology driven personalization with a human touch. This renaissance of personal consultation not only benefits curated and online retailers but also traditional retailers. To achieve this, traditional retailers need to transport the online world into their stores in a way that leverages their advantages of direct tactile perception, visual navigation and in-person consultation – all experiences that are still hard to replicate online. This applies not just for fashion and apparel, but also for electronics or other consulting-intensive product categories.
In the past, retailers decided on what shoppers should want to purchase, and where and how they should shop. Today, it is the consumer who defines the shopping experience and whose purchase decisions set the future retail tone more than ever before. Retailers who do not anticipate the necessary adjustments to today’s consumer driven, omni-channel retailing will run the risk of losing their competitiveness; but those who do anticipate them can benefit from new, untapped growth opportunities to a much greater extent. So to conclude with the words of Phil Chang (2018), retail industry expert, speaker and consultant:

“While the transitioning to the next generation of commerce can be a challenge, embracing the shift to a curated future represents the chance for retailers to create true engagement with customers and set themselves up for a sustainable future.”

It is now up to the individual retailer to step forward into this unknown, but promising future!
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