Fashioning a Knowledge Intensive Entrepreneur?

Erik Gustafsson

GÖTEBORGS UNIVERSITET
HANDELSHÖGSKOLAN

Institute of Innovation and Entrepreneurship
Department of Economy and Society
School of Business, Economics and Law
University of Gothenburg
Gothenburg, Sweden

Creativity is the power to reject the past,
to change the status quo,
and to see new potential

\- Ai WeiWei

Acknowledgements

To write a PhD dissertation is not something that you do all on your own, even though it at times may feel like it. There are so many I would like to thank personally but I will try to keep it short, for everybody's sake.

First of all, I would like to express my gratitude to my supervisor, professor Maureen McKelvey. Your support and encouragement throughout the years, even before I had obtained my master's degree, has been invaluable. Thank you for pushing me, believing in me, and continuing to support me, even when we might not have been entirely on the same page of what needs to be done and why. Thank you also to my assistant supervisors, associate professor Daniel Ljungberg and associate professor Astrid Heidemann Lassen. Your input and encouragement over the years has helped me to take my research to the next level. Daniel, thank you for always having an open door when my thoughts go astray. Astrid, thank you for encouraging me in my choice of topic and for inviting me to visit you in Denmark to widen my horizons and get new perspectives.

My colleagues at the Institute of Innovation and Entrepreneurship, thank you for your support and curiosity when it comes to my choice of topic. I would specifically like to mention my dear fellow PhD students over the years: Ethan Gifford, Snöfrid Börjesson Herou, Karin Berg, Linus Brunnström, Daniel Hemberg, Tanja Stefanía Rúnarsdóttir, and Viktor Ström. I have been lucky to have such smart, funny and caring people to share this experience with.

This research would never have been realised without the input of the former students in fashion design at the Swedish School of Textiles, University of Borås, who, to my great fortune, agreed to sit down and talk to me for hours on end. My amazing informants, thank you for joining in on this journey and opening up about your thoughts, worries, and ideas; it has been truly invaluable.

While a great deal of the process of obtaining a PhD degree of course is centred around one's academic environment, none of this would have been possible without

the extensive safety net that is my family and friends. Mum and dad, thank you for always being their when I need you, regardless of whether I am happy or sad, frustrated or proud. Emil, my dear brother, thank you for somehow miraculously managing to always be present and available, even though you live on the other side of the globe. Emma, my lovely sister, thank you for all the phone calls, dinners, sleepovers, comfort and support. Emily and Johan, I am so happy to have you as my in-laws and thereby as part of the support system that is my family. I love you all so much; this dissertation would never have seen the light of day without you.

Though I would like to mention all my friends by name to personally thank them, I think it would be rather unorthodox to have acknowledgements that are longer than the dissertation itself. That being said, you know who you are, you know what you mean, and you know that I would never have been able to do this without you. Research is fun, but it is also really hard at times. Thank you for always making me smile, sing, and laugh again.

Abstract

This PhD dissertation explores fashion design graduates as potential knowledge-intensive entrepreneurs through the relationship between knowledge and other resources, and different pathways post-graduation. Explorative qualitative studies are used to analyse how fashion designers reflect and act after graduating from fashion school, applying theories about knowledge-intensive entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial intentions. Recent graduates from the BA and MA programmes in fashion design at the Swedish School of Textiles, University of Borås, were interviewed in order to gain insights on their initial choice of pathway, as well as how their acquisition and development of new knowledge and other resources affects these choices over time.

Findings from this case study show that fashion designers commonly express entrepreneurial intentions at the time of graduation; however, they have low levels of perceived feasibility of being able to realise the intention, which initially also leads to low levels of actual venture creation. Hence, the fashion designers take different pathways, specifically 1) KIE venture creation; 2) enter existing fashion firms; 3) continue in academia; and 4) leave fashion.

Through follow-up interviews after two years, I can observe that the acquisition of knowledge related to market, business, and creativity, as well as changes in the perception of how to access resources necessary for venture creation, leads to higher levels of perceived feasibility. Furthermore, a desire for creative freedom, as to apply one's creative knowledge more extensively, increases these fashion design graduates' perceived desirability of becoming entrepreneurs. This research extends and gives further insights to results from existing literature on knowledge-intensive entrepreneurship and creative industries, where it has been shown that entrepreneurs within this sector have less industry experience, depend more on private funds in financing the venture creation, and that the ventures in general stay small in size.

The PhD dissertation concludes by suggesting a dynamic conceptual model for the relation between knowledge acquisition, perception of accessing resources, and founder characteristics in affecting entrepreneurial intentions over time, thereby shaping future pathways for fashion designers.

Keywords: *knowledge intensity, entrepreneurship, fashion, higher education, creative industries, creative knowledge, entrepreneurial intentions*

Sammanfattning på svenska

Svenskt mode har under en lång tid framhållits som en viktig del av den svenska ekonomin och har fostrat internationellt erkända företag såsom H&M, Filippa K, Acne Studios och Nudie Jeans. Alla dessa märken är idag väletablerade på marknaden och kan anses höra till kärnan av den svenska modeindustrin.

För industriers överlevnad krävs kontinuerlig förnyelse, ett fenomen som extra tydligt framgår inom mode med dess snabba cykler och höga trendkänslighet. En viktig del av denna process är framväxten av entreprenöriella aktörer som bringar nya idéer och produkter till marknaden och genom denna innovationsprocess fortsätter att få industrier, och därmed ekonomier och samhällen, att utvecklas.

De plagg som konstituerar det vi kallar mode och stil är i sin tur utkomsten av modedesigners kreativa process. För att förstå mer om modets framtid, och möjligheterna och hindren som finns för att lyckas med affärsskapande inom denna industri är modedesigners i sig en viktig aktör att observera och analysera.

Denna avhandling bidrar till forskningen kring entreprenörskap inom kreativa näringar med ett särskilt fokus på vilken roll (kreativ) kunskapsintensitet spelar för denna typ av aktörer. Forskningen som ligger till grund för avhandlingen har utgått från explorativa, kvalitativa studier kring mode och entreprenörskap genom att fokusera på individer med hög kreativ kunskap renderad genom högre utbildning i modedesign. Genom intervjuer med nyutexaminerade modedesigners från Textilhögskolan vid Högskolan i Borås har frågor gällande entreprenöriella intentioner och syn på olika vägar för framtiden efter examen avhandlats vid två tillfällen, ett i nära anslutning till själva examenstillfället och ett andra två år senare. Materialet har analyserats med hjälp av teorierna kring så kallat kunskapsintensivt entreprenörskap och entreprenöriella intentioner och resultaten faller väl i linje med tidigare forskning kring denna typ av entreprenörskap i just kreativa industrier gällande karaktäristika som exempelvis kortare arbetslivserfarenhet vid grundandet av det egna företaget, ett i större utsträckning beroende av privat finansiering för förverkligandet av affärsidén, samt en i större utsträckning småskalighet av den verksamhet som bedrivs, även över tid.

Resultaten från denna avhandling ger djupare förståelse kring de ovan nämnda i tidigare forskning observerade karaktäristika för entreprenörskap i kreativa industrier och dess koppling till en vilja av högre grad av kreativ frihet för den egna designprocessen samt en känsla av att inte komma till sin rätt som anställd inom redan existerande modeföretag i relation till den kreativa kunskap som utvecklats under åren av universitetsstudier. Resultaten utmynnar i en dynamisk konceptuell modell som visualiserar relationen mellan tillskansandet av kunskap; förändringar i synen på tillgång till nödvändiga resurser för affärsskapande; samt entreprenörens karaktärsdrag, och hur dessa tre element påverkar entreprenöriella intentioner och följande vägval för utbildade modedesigners efter examen.

Preface

Why write a dissertation about fashion and entrepreneurship? An underlying personal reason for my research focus is that I wonder why Swedish fashion seems to be largely concerned with plain and high street aesthetics rather than boundary-breaking and forward-thinking ones. At the same time, there is plenty of creative energy, as when considering the output of fashion school graduation shows, where the designs are anything but mundane. Why is this creative energy not transferred from the school setting to the general fashion scene, and how does this lack of transfer affect the aesthetic and artistic development, and freedom of fashion creation in Sweden? These are questions I have been thinking about ever since my interest in fashion as a form of expression crystallised into one of my greatest passions in life.

Personally, I will always care about fashion; some pieces of clothing are among my most precious belongings, though this is beside the point in this context. Is there anything we can learn from analysing this specific subset of creative industries? My firm belief is that, yes, there is. Having studied business and economics for more than a decade, I have always noticed the disconnect between the theories and discussions presented in class and the more artistic world that constitutes an important part not only of my life, but of our societies as a whole. Creative people are often portrayed as unwilling entrepreneurs, refusing to transform their artistic output into something that can also be a commercial good. At the same time, to maintain a cultural and creative sector, we must somehow create value that can also be understood in economic terms. What constitutes this value? Can it even be measured? Is it possible to be highly creative and at the same time actually earn a living off one's output? Is there room for creativity in our society and, if not, are there ways in which we can create this room or expand it?

Some readers are probably asking why this even matters. If the sector is not self-sustaining, is it even necessary? My answer is, bluntly, of course it matters. By pushing our creative boundaries, we can also drive society forward. Creative industries play a crucial role in that advance, so better understanding creativity means that we better understand how we can move into the future. A utopian view? Maybe, but then again, what would research be without a hint of the utopian?

Table of Contents

List of Figures

List of Tables

Chapter 1

Introduction

In this PhD dissertation, I explore the field of fashion from an entrepreneurship perspective. More specifically, I am interested in how design graduates think and act when it comes to their future in such a creative industry – that is, whether they consider starting their own businesses; whether they instead opt to enter an existing firm as part of a larger design team; or whether they choose other pathways. In doing so, I explore how a selected set of Swedish fashion design graduates reflect about the relationships between knowledge, innovation, and entrepreneurship, in relation to different pathways for their future.

1.1 Swedish fashion: a knowledge-intensive entrepreneurial wonder?

Sweden represents an interesting empirical context in which to study fashion. The country is known as the home of internationally successful firms such as fast fashion giant H&M, shirt specialist Eton, the sleek Scandinavian designs of Filippa K, and the sustainability-focused denim company Nudie Jeans. These are but a few examples of established firms that have existed for many years, and that constitute the core of the country's fashion industry. At the same time, ongoing renewal and adaptation to future trends and needs are always important issues, as industries are in constant change; without ongoing renewal, current success can easily give way to future demise. The development of established industries is reliant on existing actors' ability to adapt as well as on the emergence of new knowledge-intensive firms, using knowledge and creativity in innovative ways. In this PhD dissertation, I examine the role of a specific type of individual helping to drive this future change, namely, fashion design graduates. I do so with the goal of better understanding what underlies the pathways chosen by these designers after graduation, focusing on the decision to become an entrepreneur or on other options to apply the creativity and creative knowledge developed during their years of study. Creative fashion entrepreneurs are

important for the future of the Swedish fashion industry, securing its further development and survival.

Fashion has for long been an important part of the Swedish economy, albeit in different shapes over the years. Historically, the country was a great textiles producer, with the Borås region at the heart of its operations. With globalisation, great change took place and nowadays, the before so vibrant textile production has more or less entirely moved overseas, with a majority of production being moved to South East Asia. That being said, it did take time for Sweden to fully adjust to this change, and governmental plans in terms of financial aid for textile production companies were in place until the early 1990's (Sundberg, 2006). In other words, from being a country that traditionally had an industry structure centred on fabric and garment production, more recently, this Swedish industrial structure has changed drastically due to globalisation. Little production still occurs domestically. Therefore, the focus is now on the design of fashion goods, the most obvious example being industry powerhouse H&M, whose company headquarters and design offices are situated in the capital, Stockholm. Furthermore, Sweden has become known as a centre for minimalist and pop-culture–referenced fashion, with brands such as Acne Studios showing at Paris Fashion Week, the most prestigious fashion arena in the world.

Around 2000, Sweden started to attract attention as fertile ground for new, interesting fashion brands. "The Swedish Fashion Wonder" started to be mentioned in media reports and, all of a sudden, clothes by Swedish designers were spotted in the trendiest stores in the world, including influential Colette in Paris and 10 Corso Como in Milan (Lantz, 2013). H&M also entered a new phase of its international expansion, leading to its current position as one of the biggest players in fashion globally (Ericsson, Wärn 2012). At around the same time, the Swedish Ministry of Culture gave fashion designer and editor Göran Sundberg the assignment of analysing the Swedish fashion industry, and of coming up with public policy recommendations to strengthen the industry (Sundberg, 2006).

In his report Mode Svea from 2006, Göran Sundberg gives a thorough account of the Swedish fashion industry, and argues that what it is lacking is more of an arena for outliers on the more artistic side of fashion, as to push the industry as a whole further, setting the bar higher and higher as time passes. He stresses the importance – and struggles – of designers in the context of the Swedish fashion industry:

"The dominance of the good, Swedish middle fashion should also be regarded for other reasons, not least from the perspective of being a potential role model. If high quality fashion with a high level of ideas is missing, so does any clear alternative to the middle fashion. In that case, the designers have nothing to compare themselves to. This also means that there are no clear examples that can help raise the bar and level of the common fashion discourse in media and at cultural institutions. (…) [I]f the idea is that the Swedish fashion culture also should include uniqueness and artistic quality, conceptual features and a high level of ideas, a lot is missing in the current state. If the middle fashion and clothes from high street fashion stores are allowed to be the sole norm, it also becomes harder to create common awareness about good quality in fashion design. This also threatens the preservation and passing on of the knowledge of high artisanal quality in making clothes."

(Sundberg, 2006, p.42, translation by author)

Sundberg's view of the Swedish fashion industry, as expressed in the report, was not nearly as positive as the picture painted in the media. He noted difficulties faced by young designers starting their own firms, as the domestic market was largely, and increasingly, dominated by major retail chains with integrated internal design offices, making market entry difficult. He further argued that authorities and agencies did not put adequate effort into solving these problems (Sundberg, 2006).

Sundberg's report can of course be considered somewhat dated; a lot can happen in ten years. However, his main identified issue remains urgent and important, namely, the importance of young designers for the renewal of the Swedish fashion industry, for both the survival and development of existing firms, and for the successful creation of new ventures.

This raises a number of interesting questions for further exploration. How can the Swedish fashion industry internally use the available knowledge to foster this change? Furthermore, who is willing and able to apply this knowledge, moving from the conception to the creation of new fashion design ventures for the future? Who provides resources to foster entrepreneurship?

In a theoretical sense, entrepreneurship plays an important role in renewing economies and promoting development, in line with the above reasoning about the future challenges facing the Swedish fashion industry. By expanding our knowledge of entrepreneurship as a field, we can gain important insights into the evolution of existing industries and into the creation of new ones, both of which are crucial to the further development of economies and societies (Shane & Venkataraman, 2000). Entrepreneurship is a broad and complex phenomenon, centred on economic activity created and performed by individuals bringing new ideas to the market under conditions of uncertainty, either by creating new ventures or working in existing

organisations (Carlsson et al., 2013). This activity can be performed both individually and within organisations. It encompasses factors such as geographical location, the use and acquisition of necessary resources, the design of goods to be traded and the profits thereby earned, and the opportunities and challenges arising from the interaction with the socioeconomic environment (Carlsson et al., 2013; Davidsson, 2004).

Entrepreneurship has grown into a research field in its own right, though also with input from other research areas, including business, economics, and psychology (Carlsson et al., 2013). The nature of the concept means that multiple strands of literature have gradually developed to address various aspects of the overall field that is entrepreneurship (Shane, 2012). In a review of the domain of entrepreneurship research, Carlsson et al. (2013) propose a visualisation of the research field, as depicted in Figure 1.1 below.

Figure 1.1
The domain of entrepreneurship research
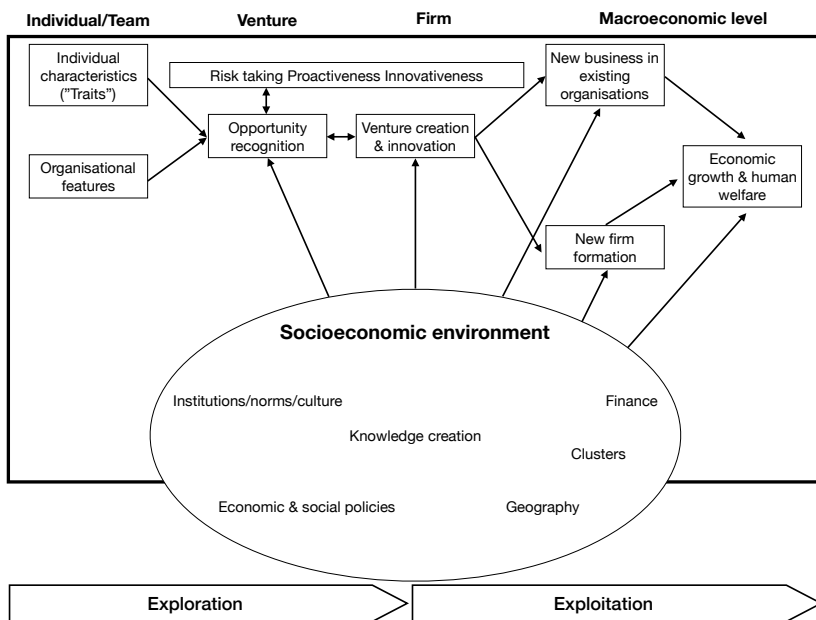
(Carlsson et al., 2013)

Figure 1.1 thus illustrates the range of topics covered in entrepreneurship research. As is displayed at the top of the figure, entrepreneurship addresses issues from the individual level to the macroeconomic level. As depicted by the thick arrows at the bottom, Figure 1.1 visualises aspects leading up to the actual venture creation (exploration), as well as questions regarding how to sustain and grow these new ventures over time (exploitation), and how these different steps are interlinked.

Figure 1.1 further provides a visualisation of how to consider the individual entrepreneur as being linked to phenomena and changes in the surrounding socioeconomic environment. In relation to Figure 1.1, my PhD dissertation addresses one specific part. I explore how and why individuals with a specific type of knowledge reflect upon their decision to (not) become an entrepreneur in terms of developing a venture and a firm. In doing so, I am particularly interested in relating their decisions to their socioeconomic environment, here articulated as the fashion sectoral innovation system in Sweden.

One of the main theoretical debates in entrepreneurship research in recent decades has centred on the concept of opportunity, and whether and how opportunities are discovered or created (Shane & Venkataraman, 2000). This debate in turn relates back to two fundamentally different theoretical views of the nature of entrepreneurship and, consequently, of the economy as such. On one hand, there is the strand of research following the ideas of Kirzner and the view that opportunities are discovered, the effect being that entrepreneurship seeks to move economies towards equilibrium. On the other hand, the Schumpeterian tradition argues that opportunities are instead created, the view being that entrepreneurship creates a needed disequilibrium in the economy, pushing it forward through creative destruction and the rise of new standards and routines (Carlsson et al., 2013). In contrast to the ideas of neoclassical economic theory, where the economy is considered to constantly be striving towards a state of equilibrium, the Schumpeterian view makes the assumption that the economy is constantly striving for change. While the common notion may be that these individuals engage in entrepreneurship with the aim of earning profits, the reasons underlying the decision can also be related to lifestyle, necessity, and urge for creative processes.

In this dissertation, I follow the definition provided by Zaring & McKelvey (2016), who define entrepreneurs in a Schumpeterian tradition as:

> "Having the ability to realise new combinations of knowledge, as well as economic and organisational resources, in a pioneering way. Thereby, they are key actors in the innovation processes that renew the economy and society, by making older, predominant combinations of knowledge and resources obsolete."
>
> <div align="right">(p.22, translation by author)</div>

My dissertation should be broadly categorised as aligned with the Schumpeterian theoretical framework, especially regarding unfolding processes of creating opportunities, and especially economic processes as being linked to creativity. I follow the literature emphasising the particular role played by the entrepreneur as an individual in channelling creativity to come up with ideas, taking risks, combining knowledge, and developing new (ways of using) technology, thereby having an impact on the economy (cf., e.g., Fagerberg 2003). Not everyone becomes an

entrepreneur, but previous research suggests that some factors make becoming one likelier. These are linked to the individual's ability and desire to take the risk involved in pursuing her or his ideas, and to amass the resources necessary to realise them. That entrepreneurs are willing to take this risk is in turn a crucial aspect in challenging the equilibrium of the economy in order to move it forward (Schumpeter, 1934). A key aspect of the Schumpeterian tradition within innovation and entrepreneurship is the importance of knowledge in stimulating renewal, and as industries and economies continue to evolve, so do the amounts and types of required knowledge (Metcalfe, 2002). To continue to challenge the equilibrium of the economy, new knowledge as well as new ways of combining existing knowledge are needed (Fagerberg, 2003).

The outcome of this process is innovation, that is, the successful commercialisation of new ideas, products, and processes to the market (Schumpeter, 1947). Many steps together lead to innovations, meaning that what is studied can be seen as both outcome and process (Dodgson et al., 2013). Most innovations are incremental, meaning that they are based on the further development of existing elements, products, and technologies, while a small fraction constitutes radical departures that can completely revolutionise industries and markets by introducing something unknown, creating a need that did not exist before (Salter & Alexy, 2013).

Above, I have introduced the concepts knowledge, innovation, and entrepreneurship as relevant aspects for this dissertation. To address this, I position my dissertation within the emerging tradition of knowledge-intensive entrepreneurship (KIE). (Malerba & McKelvey, 2018a) theoretically define KIE firms as "new learning organizations that use and transform existing knowledge and generate new knowledge in order to innovate within innovation systems" (p.6). Malerba & McKelvey (2019) develop a conceptualisation of this theory as a synthesis of the Schumpeterian, evolutionary economics, and innovation systems approach. Their synthesis broadens the analysis to encompass not only venture creation as such, but also how such venture creation is facilitated or hindered by the surrounding innovation systems structure, including the role of public policy, opportunities, and knowledge structures (Malerba, 2002).

The conceptualisation of KIE is applicable across all types of industries, including mid- and low-tech ones, the centre of attention being that of knowledge and how it can be used to advance industrial and societal development (Malerba & McKelvey, 2018a). This broad applicability raises interesting research questions to investigate as to what types of knowledge are being used, as well as how potential entrepreneurs access and apply this knowledge in relation to other necessary resources obtained through the innovation system in question. I propose that a better understanding of KIE entrepreneurs in the Swedish fashion industry will also improve and deepen our understanding of the knowledge economy in general, fostering insight into how our economies and societies can develop to meet future needs.

One stream of empirical and conceptual work on KIE identifies creativity and creative knowledge as key aspects contributing to KIE venture creation, aspects of great relevance and interest when considering creative industries more specifically (Malerba & McKelvey, 2018a). Creative industries have also been paid increasing attention in the emerging KIE literature, with a call for further studies to improve our knowledge of how these industries work (cf., e.g., Lassen et al., 2018; Malerba & McKelvey, 2018a).

Creative industries can broadly be defined as "industries supplying goods and services that we broadly associate with cultural, artistic, or simply entertainment value" (Caves, 2000, p. 2). Creative industries arguably play a crucial role in the ongoing development of modern economies (cf., e.g., Konrad, 2013; Kohn & Wewel, 2018). At the same time, some of the literature argues that creative industries have drivers of entrepreneurship and business development that differ from those in the traditional view of economic value creation, the emphasis instead being on intrinsic, artistic motivation, as well as on peer and critical appreciation (cf., e.g., Potts et al., 2008). Therefore, creative industries constitute an interesting empirical context in which to study entrepreneurship in that they likely require combinations of both commercial and creative knowledge for venture creation, and involve new types of innovations in this process.

Given that creative industries as such encompasses many different industries with different structures and foci, in-depth studies of specific industrial settings are necessary to explore (cf., e.g., Albinsson, 2018; Hermanson et al. 2018). My dissertation, which concentrates on fashion design graduates as potential KIE entrepreneurs, thus contributes to this set of literature through its analysis of the Swedish fashion industry.

Individuals studying fashion design at the university level undergo a rigorous application process in which their creativity is first assessed through the evaluation of a submitted portfolio, and then further assessed through interviews. As fashion schools concentrate on developing the students' own creativity and creative knowledge, it can be assumed that these individuals have a higher ability to better apply this creative force. This means that the selected individuals possess high levels of creativity and creative knowledge, both of which are important factors for successful KIE venture creation (McKelvey & Lassen, 2013). To capture the interrelationship of creativity, creative knowledge, and potential entrepreneurship, a preferred period to study is the transition phase when an individual makes the decision to (not) become an entrepreneur, in this case, the transition from higher education to pathways to the future. This leads to the overall purpose of my dissertation:

Purpose

Using the theoretical framework of knowledge-intensive entrepreneurship, explore how fashion design graduates perceive and act regarding accessing resources and ideas necessary for venture creation, in order to understand their pathways to become potential KIE entrepreneurs in the context of the Swedish fashion industry

To address the purpose, I propose two research questions (RQ), adding to the KIE literature by exploring how the concept of entrepreneurial intentions at the individual level can help explain how fashion design graduates reflect about accessing the resources and ideas necessary for KIE venture creation, and how this affects their future pathways.

RQ1

What affects the level of entrepreneurial intention for fashion design graduates as potential KIE entrepreneurs?

This RQ arises from a discussion on what precedes the act of starting a KIE firm. Theoretically, the KIE concept is intended to illuminate the factors important in order to succeed in this specific type of entrepreneurship and, furthermore, how the resulting ventures can be developed and sustained over time, taking into consideration the effect of the surrounding innovation system. McKelvey & Lassen (2013) describe and analyse the process of forming, managing, and evaluating the performance of KIE firms, addressing factors of importance for each phase of the venture. As I in this dissertation focus on fashion design graduates as *potential* entrepreneurs, the formation phase of accessing resources and ideas necessary for the venture creation is of central interest. At the same time, not everyone becomes an entrepreneur. The entrepreneurial intentions literature helps address this, the centre of the analysis being what triggers entrepreneurial behaviour (Ajzen, 1991; Krueger et al., 2000). Two key aspects put forward as affecting this intention and behaviour are the perceived desirability and perceived feasibility of entrepreneurship (Krueger et al., 2000; Liñán & Fayolle, 2015). Regarding KIE, entrepreneurial intentions expands the analysis of what facilitates access to resources and ideas for venture creation (i.e., perceived feasibility), and what precedes the act of realising the actual venture creation (i.e., perceived desirability).

RQ2

How do post-graduation pathways affect fashion design graduates' perceptions of the relevant knowledge and resources needed for KIE venture creation?

This RQ is related to the effect of acquiring new knowledge over time and how this changes the perception of what factors are necessary to succeed with the intention of starting a KIE firm. McKelvey & Lassen (2013) identified three types of knowledge

of importance in succeeding with the KIE venture: 1) *scientific*, *technological*, and *creative knowledge* concerning that which creates novelty and new opportunities, often based on extensive educational efforts and experience; 2) *market knowledge* meaning insights into and experience of the market in general, as well as customers and users in particular; and 3) *business knowledge*, relating to firm operations in terms of management and organisational structures. The Schumpeterian perspective also stresses the importance of time and that knowledge changes as individuals gain experience. Adding a time dimension permits a more dynamic analysis of the effects of different types of knowledge and perceptions of resources, as well as the acquisition of new knowledge. This enriches the discussion of the overall purpose of this research in the sense of the interrelationships between knowledge and entrepreneurship in fashion.

Thus, these two research questions focus my study of fashion design graduates as potential KIE entrepreneurs on how they reason about their choices in relation to entrepreneurship, asking about their ability to access resources; their view of the feasibility and desirability of entrepreneurship; the impact of their fashion design education; and the impact of different types of creative, market, and business knowledge on their choices. In view of the exploratory nature of the research and the individual as the level of observation, I use qualitative methods, specifically semi-structured interviews, complemented with secondary data sources to develop a case study, including background description and understanding of the context within which these informants act.

To capture potential KIE entrepreneurs in fashion, emphasising creativity and creative knowledge, I interviewed students and alumni of the Swedish School of Textiles at the University of Borås, the only university in Sweden offering fashion design education at all academic levels, including the doctoral level, and one of only a handful of domestic universities/colleges from which fashion designers enter the Swedish fashion industry. The fact that the Swedish School of Textiles offers education at all academic levels facilitates better understanding of the importance of a well-developed knowledge base for deciding whether or not to become an entrepreneur.

1.2 Main contributions

My PhD dissertation makes two main contributions. First, I propose an extended conceptual framework for KIE in the context of creative industries. I do so by enriching the conceptual model for KIE venture creation, combining it with the theories of entrepreneurial intentions. The phase of accessing resources and ideas is expanded to highlight how the acquisition and perception of different types of knowledge and resources affects the level of entrepreneurial intention, and thereby the decision of whether or not to start a KIE firm.

Second, my PhD dissertation extends the emerging KIE literature by applying the theory to another empirical context, in order to understand pathways to potential KIE entrepreneurship in creative industries in general, and the fashion industry more specifically.

1.3 Dissertation outline

Following this introduction to my research, below I will briefly introduce the different chapters of my dissertation.

Chapter 2. What is fashion? The Swedish fashion innovation system has three main sections. The chapter begins with a discussion around what the term fashion actually means and how it can it be defined. Following this, I explain the development of fashion as an industry, both from an international perspective, as well as more specifically for the Swedish context, including industry facts and figures. Finally, the fashion industry in Sweden is put into the perspective of the theoretical concept of sectoral systems of innovation, a key aspect of the KIE literature.

Chapter 3. Knowledge-intensive entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial intentions: proposing a conceptual framework introduces the theoretical approach of this dissertation, that is, knowledge-intensive entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial intentions. This is followed by a review of entrepreneurship research in relation to creative industries and what lessons can be learned from this. The chapter is concluded with a proposed conceptual model.

Chapter 4. Constructing the study: research design and methods choices outlines how the qualitative study was constructed and what methods have been used for data collection and analysis. The chapter begins with outlining the overall research design as a single phenomenon case study. I continue with an introduction to the Gioia Methodology (Gioia et al. 2013) and how it can be used for this type of explorative qualitative research. The following sections give a detailed account of how this methodology has been used for the purpose of the research presented in this dissertation.

Chapter 5. The formation of a fashion designer: a closer look at the Swedish School of Textiles at the University of Borås describes the setting for this research and has two main sections. First, the Swedish School of Textiles and its activities are introduced, including its historical development and research focus. Second, the BA and MA programmes in fashion design are described, including details on overall programme goals and course structure.

Chapter 6. Fashioning a venture: recent alumni and entrepreneurial intentions presents the findings from the first round of interviews. Using the conceptual model developed in Chapter 3, I explore what parameters have affected the fashion design graduates' entrepreneurial intention and consequent initial pathways. This is illustrated by mapping the informants in accordance with a typology of entrepreneurs, as introduced by Fitzsimmons & Douglas (2011). The typology is made up of a matrix based on their perceived desirability and feasibility of becoming an entrepreneur.

Chapter 7. Analysis of creative knowledge, business knowledge, founder characteristics and access to resources in impacting levels of entrepreneurial intentions gives a more in-depth analysis of the findings presented in Chapter 6, in relation to the perception, acquisition, and access to different types of knowledge, resources, and founder characteristics, and its effect on fashion design graduates as potential KIE entrepreneurs. Following this analysis, a refined conceptual model for RQ1 is proposed, including different post-graduation pathways.

Chapter 8. Living the fashion dream or not: (changes in) pathways for fashion design graduates focuses on the findings from the second round of interviews. Four illustrative narratives of the fashion design graduates' chosen pathways are presented, followed by a general presentation of the informants' (changes in) intentions over time.

Chapter 9. The effects of knowledge acquisition over time: a further exploration of entrepreneurial intentions and KIE analyses the findings from the second round of interviews, specifically with regards to what effect initial post-graduation pathways has on the fashion design graduates' perception of what knowledge and resources are necessary for venture creation. Following this analysis, a conceptual model for RQ2, illustrating the findings, is proposed.

Chapter 10. Conclusions and implications for future research has two main sections. In the first section, I give a summary of the findings and analysis in relation to the two research questions outlined above. This leads to an extended conceptual framework for fashion design graduates as potential KIE entrepreneurs based on the results from my study. The second section consists of three suggestions for future research.

Chapter 2

What is fashion? The Swedish fashion innovation system

This chapter describes and discusses fashion, and thereby aims at contextualising the fashion industry as the broad empirical context of this dissertation. I do so by providing a more thorough account of the phenomenon that is fashion, both from the perspective of the term as such, as well as a historical account of the industry and its development till today in Sweden. The chapter has three main sections. First, fashion as a concept and phenomenon is discussed. Second, the fashion industry is explained as a highly global one, meaning that some generic trends in relation to broad historical changes are presented, which are relevant to understanding fashion. Third, some trends and facts about the Swedish fashion industry are introduced, organised through the elements of a sectoral system of innovation. The concept of knowledge-intensive entrepreneurship draws heavily upon the sectoral systems of innovation approach, and therefore, this provides a relevant framework for presenting the empirical context as a fashion sectoral system of innovation.

2.1 What is fashion?

> fashion /ˈfaʃ(ə)n/
> noun
> **1.** a popular or the latest style of clothing, hair, decoration, or behaviour: the latest Parisian fashions.
> ■ [mass noun] the production and marketing of new styles of clothing and cosmetics: [as modifier] : a fashion magazine.
> – origin Middle English (in the sense ''make, shape, appearance'', also ''a particular make or style''): from Old French façon, from Latin factio(n-), from facere '' do, make''.
>
> <div align="right">(Oxford Dictionary of English, 2010)</div>

Fashion is a word that pops up more or less everywhere. While the term can be used to describe the manner in which things are done, often with a connotation of it being

the latest trend within the field, what we most often think of when hearing the word is the way in which we dress, be it clothing, shoes or accessories. In this context it is important to highlight the difference, but also difficulty in fully making this distinction, between fashion and clothes. Clothes essentially refer to objects worn as a means to cover the body in one way or another. This includes all types of workwear and also more specialised garments such as activewear, and even pyjamas. Clothing is a prerequisite for fashion, but not all clothing is fashion.

What distinguishes fashion from general clothing is the idea that the new designs aim at discovering novelty, mainly from an aesthetic point of view (Sundberg, 2006). Fashion is part of greater social structures and identity creation. Sundberg (2006) states that:

> "One could say that the fashion activity, at its core, deals with a continuous act of change and the seeking for an updated expression of the social reality. In other words: a kind of research."
>
> (p.10, translation by author)

Sundberg's approach to fashion design takes its departure in Blumer (1969) and Kawamura (2004). Though Blumer (1969) approaches fashion in a much broader sense than merely that of its applicability to fashion design, his ideas are of great interest, not least seeing his links to innovation. He suggests six prerequisites for fashion to be in play:

1. The area in which fashion operates must be one that is involved in a movement of change, with people ready to revise or discard old practices, beliefs, and attachments, and poised to adopt new social forms; there must be this thrust into the future.
2. The area must be open to the recurrent presentation of models or proposals of new social forms.
3. There must be a relatively free opportunity for choice between the models. This implies that the models must be open, so to speak, to observation and that facilities and means must be available for their adoption.
4. The pretended merit or value of the competing models cannot be demonstrated through open and decisive test.
5. The presence of prestige figures who espouse one or another of the competing models.
6. The area must be open to the emergence of new interests and dispositions in response to
   a. the impact of outside events,
   b. the introduction of new participants into the area, and
   c. changes in inner social interaction

(Blumer 1969, pp.286-287)

The ideas of Blumer (1969) can in many ways be linked to the reasoning in innovation and entrepreneurship literature in that he highlights the importance of different actors for the advancement of new ideas – to create new fashion is by no means a one-man show. However, he also goes on to discuss societal structure, from a more sociological perspective. Blumer (1969) rejects the ideas of Simmel (1975), who mainly had focuses on fashion partly from the perspective of clothing, but also as a form of class distinguisher, where the upper classes are always in lead in terms of proposing new fashion, and lower classes aspiring to achieve this form of style. Once the style had been adopted by the lower classes, a desire among the higher classes arise to look for something new as to be able to distinguish themselves from others. Blumer (1969) acknowledges the at least partial truth in this, but also points to the fact that the upper classes by no means are alone in setting the new trends. Rather, he points at the importance of actors such as buyers from the main retailers and their role in highlighting what they find interesting from the vast array of new designs being presented by the designers each season. Things have of course changed in the structure of the industry since the late 1960's when Blumer presented his theories, but the reasoning put forward is still very much so valid, especially in the industry today when the amount of designers, not to mention actual designs, are so vast that it is impossible for everything to be sold, let alone become in style or fashion.

From an innovation perspective, the ideas of Blumer (1969) and Sundberg (2006) are interesting and, I believe, also very applicable. The way Blumer (1969) reasons around fashion as something not only applicable to clothing and other types of adornments, but rather as a wider concept that deals with how collectives of humans constantly search for the next "it" thing is very similar in many ways to what is a core piece of innovation. Inventions come in plenty, but only the ones that are capable of being commercialised can become actual innovations. Furthermore, the incremental innovations follow a logic of refining what we already know and have, but the disruptive ones in one way also deal with being able to foresee what will be desired in the future – to understand what people want before they themselves have understood that this is the case. This is also the case of fashion. It is one thing to understand what is in fashion at the moment and capitalise on that, and a completely different thing to be able to see what may be in fashion in the future, and thereby be part in creating the new fashion. Like Blumer (1969) argues that we oftentimes question the fashion of yesterday and also may find it absurd or hard to understand that this was once the "big thing", when disruptive innovation has taken place, we can also see that what used to be the standard over time becomes obsolete. Influences from the past may very well play an important role, in fashion as well as for innovations, but the original idea or product no longer possesses the same value it used to. At this abstract level, there are grreat similarities between fashion and other types of technological and product innovations, leading to interesting questions to explore. To talk about fashion could, I believe, be seen as talking about innovation.

Moreover, one can think of the fashion industry as an excellent example of where the theories of Schumpeter (1934) can be clearly observed, and for that matter also at a very high pace. A fashion cycle may last a year or two, but everyone is very well aware of the fact that what is desired is soon to change, meaning that the search for the new is constant. With the development in the world and the increasing awareness of the full costs of fashion production, both from an environmental as well as a societal perspective, innovation has even further been brought to the forefront of fashion companies' agenda, albeit in new ways. To come up with new designs as well as to grow as a company today also means to take significantly more variables into account, including sustainability and ethical aspects. The industry is switching gears, however in which direction depends on what angle you are observing it from. While the pace needs to go up in terms of coming up with new technological solutions for a more sustainable production chain, at the same time there is a call for the industry to slow down in terms of the amount of designs coming out.

When looking closer at the phenomenon, one soon realises that setting boundaries for what to include in the term fashion, and even more so the fashion *industry*, is in fact very complicated. Kawamura (2004) explains this complexity, stating that:

> "Clothing production and fashion production are both collective activities which require large numbers of people to produce the finished product. (…) The fashion designers work in the center of a network of cooperating people, all of whose work is essential to the final outcome. (…) Similarly, there is a group of people, whom I call fashion professionals, who make a contribution to not only the production but also to gatekeeping and distribution of fashion."
>
> (pp.50-51)

The work of Kawamura is carried out from a fashion studies point of view, however the same type of complexity has been identified and analysed by researchers also within other disciplines (cf., e.g., Hauge et al., 2009). What is pointed at here is the fact that in order to understand fashion as a concept, one must be familiarised with its complexity through the network of actors. While some may be considered crucial for the advent of the creations that constitute fashion as such, without all other actors, these individuals' creative process would not be possible. In a broader sense, Kawamura (2004) maps out this complex network of actors, pointing to the importance of actors such as stylists, editors, buyers etc.

Previous research enables us to interpret the word fashion in many ways. In this dissertation, fashion is an interesting context to explore how the relationships between knowledge, innovation, and entrepreneurship emerge and change over time. I propose that fashion should be seen as the conceptualisation and production of new types of clothing that do not follow the current norm or standard, and which is part of pushing the aesthetic boundaries for how we dress forward.

2.2 From made to measure to industry: a brief historical take on fashion

Fashion as we know it today is in many ways a fairly new concept, and therefore it is relevant to see how fashion has been interlinked with design and production. The emergence of the phenomenon as such can be traced to the royal courts of the late Middle Ages onwards, a boom being seen in the extravagant days of the French court in the 17th and 18th centuries. While much faith today is put in the designers of the major fashion houses to discover the next big trend, the trendsetter of the early days were rather royals, with dressmakers obeying to their wishes. As the upper class grew through centuries, the industrial revolution playing a key role, so did the demand for fine clothing. The industrial revolution not only increased the number of clients desiring luxury ware, but also introduced the flying shuttle and Spinning Jenny – two inventions crucial in facilitating greater production of fabric and thereby also clothing. Come the late 19th century the first couturiers, meaning makers of the finest of dresses, established their fashion houses in Paris, marking the beginning of a new era. Through extensive marketing of their garments, these designers managed to create such high demand that larger scale production became a necessity (Kawamura, 2004).

Though the designers and fashion houses from the early 20th century and onwards came more into the spotlight, clothing was very much still made to order, meaning that the total quantities still were fairly small, and indulging in seasonal updates of one's wardrobe still remained an activity exclusive to the upper class.

Come mid-1900's, a change in the structure of so-called cultural labour, to which fashion can be considered to belong, took place. As put by Overdiek (2016):

> "From being the task of individuals, cultural production moved into the hands of project teams which are typically composed of six functions: owners/executives, marketers, technical/ craft workers, unskilled workers, symbol creators and creative managers. Symbol creators are those who conceive new and original texts, they are (at least perceived as) the true creatives. Creative managers are those who mediate between the owners/executives and these creators."
>
> (p.30)

The 1980's is often talked about within fashion as a time in which the industry and the focus on designers and fashion houses clearly took off, much in relation to the economic state of the time and the emergence of a new, more elaborate form of luxury consumption. While this can be seen as one reason for the rise of the magnitude of the fashion industry, what is focused on here is still the high price segment. Coinciding with this focus on things luxurious and "beautiful" was the rise of the ability to outsource production to low-cost countries. Lower production costs

meant a possibility to produce greater quantities traded at a lower price, thereby opening up the world of fashion and trends to the greater masses – the transformation into the industry as we know it today took off (Hauge, 2007).

Fast fashion, or even throwaway fashion, arose as a term for cheaply produced clothing in the 1990's. With developments in supply chain management, it soon became possible to quickly transform ideas and trends from the catwalks in the fashion capitals to actual garments in stores within no time (Hauge, 2007). The fashion houses no longer held an exclusive position in putting the trends out on the market and the elite were no longer the only ones able to sport new styles throughout the year.

The development of the market to what it is today has not only opened up for the commons to access high-end fashion – it has also created an increased demand for new trends at an ever-increasing pace. What used to be a business with a biannual cycle for seasonal shifts has today turned into an industry where new collections are delivered at least four times a year for major fashion houses, through the introduction of so-called resort collections, and more or less every other week among fast fashion retailers such as Zara and H&M.

More recently, the expansion of the fashion industry and the value created by it has also given rise to a completely different landscape in terms of investors and owner structures of the brands that constitute the centre of the circus. So-called fashion conglomerates have emerged, taking control over more and more of the old established fashion houses, as well as investing in young up and coming designers.

Thus, the empirical context of fashion is interesting and relevant for studying innovation and entrepreneurship. The changing dynamics of the international fashion industry includes specific trends of faster pace, higher volumes and concentration of ownership. These trends are relevant also to the pathways chosen by Swedish design graduates, because these changes will also likely impact the role of designers in the international production, consumption and industrial context.

2.3 The Swedish fashion innovation system

Sweden is known world-wide for its fashion industry. At the same time, this fame is made up by the reputation of greater firms mainly within the fast fashion segment, such as the H&M group and brands included therein.

I have chosen to present an overview of the Swedish fashion industry in relation to some industry facts and figures, and an interpretation of the Swedish fashion sectoral innovation system. The reason is that an integral part of the theories on knowledge-

intensive entrepreneurship (KIE) is that entrepreneurs are heavily influenced by their sectoral systems of innovation. Malerba & Adams (2013) define a sector as:

> "A set of activities which are associated with broad and related product groups, address similar existing or emerging demands, needs and uses, and share common knowledge bases."
>
> <div align="right">(p.188)</div>

The concept of sectoral systems of innovation is relevant here because, as with any industry or sector, the fashion system consists of many different intertwined actors, jointly working as a system moving forward. The concept of systems of innovation is one way of viewing these structures in looking at and industry from an innovation and entrepreneurship perspective. Malerba & Adams (2013) propose three main aspects that affect innovative behaviour, namely:

Knowledge and technology refers to the specific knowledge base and technologies that unite the different actors that belong to a certain sector and which is central for the actors' operations.

Actors and networks points at the variety of players that make up the basis for an innovation to come into existence. This includes such varied things as other firms, organisations, institutions (such as universities and industry organisations), as well as consumers and important individuals.

Institutions in this context refers to for example norms, habits, standards, rules, and laws, that is, ways in which the actions within the sectoral system are carried out. These institutions can be both formal and informal, of national or more global character, and may be something that is imposed from above (such as laws) or more of agreements between actors per se.

Figure 2.1 visualises this interaction through a framework for sectoral systems of innovation as proposed by Malerba & Adams (2013).

Figure 2.1
Sectoral systems of innovation: a framework
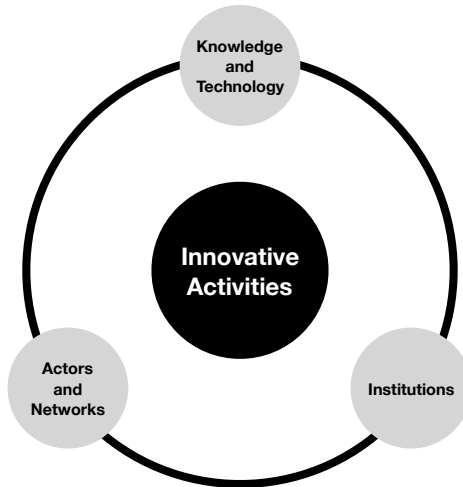
<div align="right">(Malerba & Adams, 2013)</div>

To understand the phenomenon at hand and how innovative activities, which are a central part/the outcome of KIE, can be promoted, one needs also to understand the greater sectoral system of innovation. Therefore, in introducing the empirical context for my PhD dissertation, I am following these theories that suggest that one cannot only look at the sole entrepreneur in trying to understand the underlying reasons for the current situation. It is also important to see the entrepreneur and the innovations in relation to the greater innovation system that they are part of. Below follows a brief account of the Swedish fashion industry in accordance with these categories as introduced in Figure 2.1 above.

2.3.1 Knowledge and technology
For the fashion industry, or rather the subset of the greater industry that is analysed in this PhD dissertation, the central knowledge is that of design skills. While there is a big component here that is related to phenomena such as style and trend, which then refers to the ability of creating new pieces of clothing that are desired in the coming seasons, there is also an important, more technical part that deals with the actual construction of garments. This includes for example pattern cutting and tailoring, skills which are highly important in that production to a great extent takes place overseas, meaning that the communication with the producers has to be extra clear, seeing that you cannot always be on site to oversee the actual making of the garments. Moreover, the Swedish School of Textiles has a role not only as an education unit, but also as a research hub as well as a centre for discussions on the future structure of the fashion industry through initiatives such as re:textile (for a discussion of the Swedish School of Textiles, please see chapter 5).

2.3.2 Actors and networks

The actors and networks of fashion cover a great variety of firms, as well as other actors and networks relevant to fashion. Sweden has over the years become known as the home of brands such as H&M, Cheap Monday and Acne Studios, and the country has a long history related to both textiles and fashion. Swedish fashion has come to grow into something highlighted as a wonder and sales numbers have steadily increased, both domestically and from an exports' point of view. At the same time, when looking closer at the numbers, one can also see that a handful of large players, led by H&M, account for a vast majority of the total sales. Furthermore, the total number of companies active within the industry in Sweden has actually decreased in recent years (see below for more details).

The view of what Swedish fashion is and represents has over the years varied to some degree, however a common notion is that it is rather simplistic, practical and functional. Ericsson Wärn (2012) summarises this well, stating that "[t]he beautiful, pleasurable, decorative, as well as the experimental, has had to stand aside for the practical. Our clothes should, as the city of Stockholm, first and foremost be functional" (p.12, translation by author).

The way of making clothing seen today in companies such as H&M, that is to be heavily inspired by, and in some cases straight off copying, already existing designs is something that in one way has a long tradition in the industry in general, not least in Sweden. Some of the earliest big names within Swedish fashion, such as Augusta Lundin in the late 19th century, did exactly this, where existing designs and patterns were altered slightly and then made to measure for the customer (Ericsson Wärn, 2012).

Ericsson Wärn (2012) makes a historical account in explaining the short-lived nature of what is called cutting edge or avantgarde, that is, the designs that push the boundaries of what we consider beautiful and in trend forward. In a constant search for what is new, as well as through a desire to not resemble one's parents and their friends, customers continuously seek new aesthetic expressions, which in turn renders styles, and sometimes entire fashion brands, obsolete – if one does not manage to follow the new trends and restructure the image of the company, there is a great risk of going out of business.

Moreover, the term the Swedish Fashion Wonder is something that has been discussed, not least in media, since the early 2000's. When looking in to the matter, it soon becomes clear that a distinct definition of the same is not that easy to find. Falk (2011) explores the concept in depth in her book and concludes that in fact, there is no one way to address the matter. Rather, she claims that the term can be considered to address the quick development of the Swedish fashion industry that begun at the end of the 1990's and which to a certain degree is still in place. This

includes both clothing from actors such as H&M, that are considered to be part of fast fashion or the value segment, as well as more high-end designs. Falk (2011) nevertheless sees certain characteristics that has come create the basis for the discussion around Swedish fashion, stating that:

> "From a design perspective, much of Swedish fashion refers to (…) simple designs with clean lines that are made to fit with everyday life and that are fashionable as well as wearable (…). To be able to leave your kids at kindergarten in the same clothes that you wear for a business meeting is one of the criteria a garment should fulfil."
>
> (Falk, 2011, pp.13-14, translation by author)

In more detail, it is impossible to talk about Swedish fashion without taking H&M into account. What is now one of the world's leading players within the fast fashion segment started off as a small boutique in the city of Västerås in the 1940's. In fact, the company's founder, Erling Persson, was by no means a designer, or even interested in fashion as a phenomenon. He did however have a great entrepreneurial mind and realised that in Sweden at that point in time, clothing, and especially clothing for people with lower financial assets, was something that still to a very large extent was either homemade or inherited. There is much that can be said about the company and how its current business model came in place, but in short, their idea could be summarised as delivering clothing that is in fashion, however at a much lower price range than the competitors. By buying garments in bulk, the company set up a strategy where the garments were to be at least 30% cheaper than in other stores. In the globalised world of today, buying garments from producers abroad is taken for granted, however at the point in time when H&M was founded, Sweden still had a lucrative domestic production of both fabrics and garments. As H&M continued to take market shares from other established apparel stores in the country, local producers, who oftentimes also had tight bonds to department stores and the likes, were reluctant towards selling garments to this newfound competitor. H&M therefore early on started to import garments from for example Germany and Switzerland (Ericsson Wärn, 2012).

H&M is a success story however, the company has had to go through many changes over the years, not least when it comes to what clothes to purchase and how their designs are to be made. In the early days, products were acquired that were designed as well as produced elsewhere – the company itself had no role in the creative work. Over the years, the critique for plagiarism and straight off copying has hit the company on a regular basis, in fact up till this day. That being said, H&M is today the biggest employer of fashion designers in Sweden, with an impressive inhouse team working on the coming collections (hmgroup.com[1]). In fact, the company has been the starting grounds for many of the current Swedish fashion scene's big names,

---

[1] https://hmgroup.com/about-us.html

such as Whyred and Hope. The lead words are however still the same, as pointed out by the founder's son, the current chairman of the company, Stefan Persson: "We are to follow what is in fashion, not create it" (Ericsson Wärn, 2012, p.133, translation by author).

H&M is by no means the only Swedish fashion firm following the logic of capitalising on the fashion and trends created by other designers within the system. In fact, a vast majority of the country's fashion market is made up of these actors, including big players such as Lindex and KappAhl, and smaller ones, such as Twist&Tango. Ericsson Wärn (2012) reflects on this development of the Swedish fashion scene, stating that:

> "According to the law of how the surroundings affect us, it is safe to assume that the consumer is raised to not wanting to pay more for fashion than the price level at the fast fashion chains. What this has given us is a consumer that turns its back on the unique, sufficing with the mass produced, and which has lost the understanding for the actual cost of small-scale production. A behaviour that makes it hard for those designers who desire to go their own way, exploring the outskirts of fashion and create new, bold design solutions, or for that matter those who desire to produce sensible classics at a manageable scale."
>
> (p.160, translation by author)

Thus, the commercial success of the Swedish fashion industry has been immense and from a strict business perspective it can be considered a winning concept. At the same time, the current structure has been under heavy critique, not least from fashion critics and scholars, regarding the ability to renew itself in the future, and to promote cultural and economic entrepreneurship.

In recent decades, the industrial activities related to the Swedish fashion industry have changed dramatically. A vast majority is now made up by retail (42.5%) and wholesales (41.8%). With annual sales of nearly SEK 326 billion (2017) the industry is of significant size, with a division of 68% exports and 32% domestic market sales respectively. This also makes fashion account for 11% of Sweden's total exports (Sternö, 2018; Sternö & Nielsén, 2016).

Table 2.1
Annual turnover for Swedish fashion industry (in billions SEK), including annual growth rate

Whole Swedish fashion industry

Year	Domestic	Growth	Export	Growth	Total	Growth
2017	104.7	2.1%	221.0	5.8%	325.7	4.6%
2016	102.5	6.9%	208.9	6.1%	311.5	6.4%
2015	95.9	6.5%	196.8	19.3%	292.8	14.8%
2014	90.0	2.0%	165.0	17.1%	255	11.3%
2013	88.3	-1.1%	140.9	0.9%	229.2	0.1%
2012	89.3	9.6%	139.7	17.5%	228.9	14.3%
2011	81.5		118.8		200.3	

Swedish fashion industry: excluding H&M

Year	Domestic	Growth	Export	Growth	Total	Growth
2017	96.5	2.2%	29.3	18.0%	125.7	5.5%
2016	94.4	6.9%	24.8	5.1%	119.2	6.5%
2015	88.3	6.6%	23.6	13.8%	111.9	8.0%
2014	82.9	1.5%	20.7	9.2%	103.6	2.9%
2013	81.7	-1.2%	19.0	0.6%	100.7	-0.9%
2012	82.6	10.6%	18.9	21.4%	101.5	12.4%
2011	74.8		15.5		90.3	

Swedish fashion industry: excluding major retail chains

Year	Domestic	Growth	Export	Growth	Total	Growth
2017	85.1	2.2%	26.7	19.5%	111.9	5.8%
2016	83.3	7.7%	22.4	5.6%	105.7	7.2%
2015	77.4	7.1%	21.2	16.0%	98.6	8.9%
2014	72.2	2.5%	18.3	11.2%	90.5	4.2%
2013	70.5	-1.5%	16.4	0.9%	86.9	-1.0%
2012	71.5	12.9%	16.3	27.3%	87.8	15.4%
2011	63.3		12.8		76.1	

(Sternö, 2018)

The industry has showcased significant growth over the last 5 years with a 50% increase in total revenues, nearly doubling its exports. Looking closer at the numbers, studies have however showed that up to a third of all companies despite these overall increases are still facing net losses, something that highlights small margins (Sternö & Nielsén, 2016).

Taking a closer look at company size and division, fashion follows the same structure of the Swedish industry in general, with 96.1% micro sized firms, 3.7% small/medium sized firms and 0.2% large firms. It employs approximately 60,000 people, making it about the same size as the Swedish forest industry and

approximately half the size of the Swedish automotive industry (Sternö & Nielsén, 2016).

While these numbers themselves are impressive, one has to bear in mind the structure of the industry as a whole. H&M, as the biggest player in this field, accounts for 59% of the sales, meaning that the industry in fact is heavily dominated by one big player. This, in combination with the fact that 96% of H&M's market share consists of exports, means that one also need to look at the figures excluding this player to get a more accurate picture of the market structure. By doing this, it instead becomes evident that a vast majority, 74%, in fact is domestic market sales, meaning that the Swedish market is by far the most important one (Sternö & Nielsén, 2016).

Looking at the industry structure and its development in recent years, one can see a small but clear trend of number of companies decreasing, especially among micro-sized firms (Sternö & Nielsén, 2016).

Important lobby and industry organisations include the Swedish Fashion Council, TEKO, and Habit. These organisations not only fill the function of lobbying for their specific causes, but some of them also act as for example organisers of competitions for up and coming designers.

Table 2.2
Swedish fashion and textiles organisations

Association of Trade Partners Sweden
Föreningen Svenskt Mode
Svensk Form
Svensk Handel Stil
Sveriges Textilhandlare
Swedish Fashion Council

TEKO, Sveriges textil- och modeföretag

The Swedish Fashion Council hosts Swedish Fashion Talents, something that best can be described as a combination of an incubator programme and a fashion competition. Firms active within menswear, womenswear or accessories can apply and 8 applicants are chosen by a jury, consisting of well-known people within the industry. The chosen firms take part in a one-year programme where they, in addition to visibility through fashion shows and exhibitions, are offered help and guidance in further developing their businesses, through help with for example further development of business plans as well as downright feedback on design output. At the end of the one-year incubation programme, the jury reviews the participants and hands out two awards, Swedish Fashion Talent of the Year and Swedish Fashion Talent Accessory. The prizes are awarded to firms that have "shown a high degree of perspicuity, uniqueness, creative height, vision, product offering, design quality,

contemporary relevance, fashion degree, business concept and business sense" (swedishfashioncouncil.se[2]). The list of previous participants includes well-known actors on the Swedish fashion scene such as House of Dagmar, Ida Sjöstedt and Stutterheim, as well as more up and coming, and much talked about in fashion press in recent years, designers including Altewai Samoe, Lazoscmhidl, and Swedish School of Textiles alumnus Ida Klamborn.

Show Up Fashion Award (SUFA) is another national competition run by TEX! by Marketplace Borås, a platform for the further development of the Swedish fashion industry based in the city of Borås in the western part of Sweden (also the home of the Swedish School of Textiles). Unlike Swedish Fashion Talents, SUFA is more of a pure competition. Here it is instead the winner that gets access to an incubator, as well as a prize sum to further develop the firm. The purpose of the competition, as stated by the organisers, is to "help designers build a profitable fashion company and continue to establish one's brand on the market (texsweden.se[3], translation by author).

Not only national competitions play an important role, there are also numerous international ones. In this context I have chosen to focus on two, Designers Nest and H&M Design Award, the reason being that they have obvious links to the Swedish fashion system. Designers' Nest is a competition taking place during Copenhagen Fashion Week. Contestants are students from fashion schools in the Nordic countries, and the aim of the award is to "rewarding particularly talented and promising design students with recognition from the established world of fashion and provide them with professional support" (copenhagenfashionweek.com[4]). H&M Design Award has been handed out since 2012 and has quickly become both much talked about and well sought after. The award, which in addition to a substantial prize sum also includes a paid internship at H&M's headquarters in Stockholm, Sweden, is given out once a year to a newly graduated student from a selected group of fashion schools internationally. The international jury consists of both H&M internals as well as power players in the industry which are appointed on a yearly basis. Previous winners include for example Richard Quinn who has received much international acclaim in the last years, including being awarded the first ever Queen Elizabeth II Award for British Design in 2018 (hm.com[5]).

In terms of important individuals in the Swedish fashion sectoral innovation system, it is impossible to give an account of Swedish fashion without mentioning Margareta van den Bosch, who through her work for H&M has become a central figure also for the Swedish fashion scene in general. Working as chief designer for the company for

---

[2] http://www.swedishfashioncouncil.se/swedish-fashion-talents-en (accessed September 13, 2018)
[3] http://www.texsweden.se/sufa/ (accessed September 19, 2018)
[4] https://copenhagenfashionweek.com/designers-nest (accessed September 23, 2018)
[5] https://designaward.hm.com (accessed September 23, 2018)

some 20 years, van den Bosch was an integral part in making the company what it is today (Ericsson Wärn, 2012). Well into her 70's, she still plays an active role within the company, nowadays having the title Creative Advisor, an assignment that among other things means that she still oversees the company's international designer collaborations. Her importance, as well as continued presence becomes evident in looking at for example the juries of the above-mentioned fashion awards; van den Bosch is a member of three of them.

2.3.3 Institutions
In dealing with fashion, one thing that sticks out in relation to for example hi-tech industries is the lack of IP rights, or rather an efficient way of using it. Fashion, as most creative industries, struggles when it comes to protecting designs that are made public. While some bigger players make attempts at hindering the production of fake versions and copies of their goods which is sold on the black market, a different side of the story is that of designs being more or less copied and sold by other firms in the industry, especially by firms dealing with so-called fast fashion, where prices are a lot lower and the idea is to switch designs in the stores at an extreme pace.

In terms of habits and norms, fashion can be considered as still being very hierarchical in its structure, not least when it comes to the design process. So for example, young designers with a fashion design degree regularly do unpaid internships for major firms, and entrance salaries for paid positions are in general low.

In concluding, my interpretation is that the empirical setting for sourcing my informants for this study can also be considered part of the Swedish fashion innovation system. My focus will be primarily in exploring how a selected set of Swedish fashion design graduates reflect about the relationships between knowledge, innovation, and entrepreneurship. Hence, the design graduates are asked to place their intentions in relation to their interpretations of accessing relevant resources and the changing value of different types of knowledge over time, which links them directly to the Swedish fashion sectoral innovation system.

Chapter 3

Knowledge-intensive entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial intentions: proposing a conceptual framework

This chapter presents the main theoretical foundation of the overall research presented in this PhD dissertation. Given the exploratory qualitative structure of the research, the aim is to give an introduction to key concepts on which the overall purpose and research questions were founded, namely knowledge-intensive entrepreneurship (KIE), and entrepreneurial intentions. This chapter further explores knowledge and innovation through a limited literature review of entrepreneurship in fashion, as well as in creative industries more generally, which leads to the identification of five key themes, in the specific context of KIE entrepreneurship within the fashion and creative industries. Finally, a conceptual model, bringing together the different strings of literature, is proposed.

3.1 Knowledge intensive entrepreneurship: an introduction

> "In a sense, knowledge-intensive entrepreneurship represents a capability of integrating the developments in knowledge with the reconfiguration of resources, organizational skills and external links."
>
> (Malerba 2010b, p.7)

As touched upon in Chapter 1, entrepreneurship is considered a key mechanism for industrial development, thereby also playing a crucial role in how we can push societies forward when facing changes to current structures (Schumpeter, 1934). This role of entrepreneurship is captured well by Shane & Venkataraman (2000) who define the wider field as:

"[T]he scholarly examination of how, by whom, and with what effects opportunities to create future goods and services are discovered evaluated, and exploited. Consequently, the field includes the study of sources of opportunities, the processes of discovery, evaluation, and exploitation of opportunities; and the set of individuals who discover, evaluate and exploit them."

(p.218)

The importance of entrepreneurship for the further development of economies is an opinion widely accepted in society today, and increasing focus is also being given to this area in public policy and research. At the same time, scholars also address the importance to better understand the processes behind successful entrepreneurial activities, as the action per se involves great risk for the entrepreneurs personally. Through increased knowledge, not only could the positive effects for the economy as a whole be increased, but also the risks for the individual entrepreneur could be lowered (Hao Zhao et al., 2009).

A more recent addition to this field of study, with great influences from the Schumpeterian, evolutionary economics, is that of knowledge-intensive entrepreneurship (KIE). KIE firms are theoretically defined as "[n]ew learning organizations that use and transform existing knowledge and generate new knowledge in order to innovate within innovation systems" (Malerba & McKelvey, 2018a, p. 6). The definition highlights three main concepts of importance: 1) knowledge; 2) innovation; and 3) innovation systems.

KIE is distinguished by the fact that it does not solely focus on high-tech industries or high levels of R&D. Instead, the concept has been developed to address entrepreneurial firms from all kinds of industries, the common denominator being that of the intensive use of knowledge for innovation. As described by Malerba et al. (2015):

"These firms do not operate only in high tech sectors but also in services and in particular in knowledge intensive business services (KIBS), and low tech industries; their activities focus not only on science and R&D based knowledge but also in new knowledge stemming from professional and business practice. In terms of innovation, they include design and other formal and informal types of innovative activities."

(p.2)

As displayed by the quote above, knowledge in this context entails many different aspects. McKelvey & Lassen (2013) highlight three types of knowledge that are of importance for KIE:

1. *Scientific, technological and creative knowledge* that leads to new ideas and opportunities,
2. *Market knowledge* as related to the market and to customers and users
3. *Business knowledge* as related to how to manage and structure internal firm processes

(p.2)

Though KIE is a fairly new field within entrepreneurship research, it is drawing attention increasingly, not least through a number of greater projects administered by the European Union/Commission, namely *Knowledge-Based Entrepreneurship: Innovation, Networks and Systems* (KEINS); and *Advancing Knowledge-Intensive Entrepreneurship and Innovation for Economic Growth and Social Well-being in Europe* (AEGIS) (cf. Malerba et al., 2015). The concept, and the consequent data collected in relation to it, spans many different types of industries, from high- to low- and mid-tech.

KIE firms have four main characteristics, namely that they are/have:

1. New firms
2. Innovative
3. Significant knowledge intensity, and
4. Exploiting innovative opportunities.

(Malerba & McKelvey, 2015)

By *new firms*, the KIE literature wants to highlight that what should be analysed are firms no older than 8 years and which are not part of already existing organisations.

To be *innovative* means that the outcome of the firm should not only be novel, but there should also be a goal to make economic profits out of it.

To have *significant knowledge intensity* refers to the fact that knowledge should play a key role in the firm and its activities. Knowledge is here not exclusively referring to science and technology; rather, KIE takes on a broad definition of knowledge that also includes design and creativity. Furthermore, the term includes what Malerba et al. (2015) refer to as application knowledge, meaning the ability to deal with for example industrial problem solving through, among other things, market knowledge. What makes these firms stand out is their ability to combine these different types of knowledge in new ways, as well as to render new knowledge, and through that create innovative output, whether it is product, service or process innovations.

To *exploit innovative opportunities* brings in the final part of the definition of KIE, namely that of innovation systems. It is not enough to come up with new ideas or inventions; in order to be able to capitalise on these ideas, the entrepreneur also needs to understand the innovation system of which it is part, and what opportunities arise therein due to changes from the status quo. In order to spot an innovative opportunity, three factors are held forward as crucial: 1) a perceived economic value for someone; 2) a perceived possibility that the resources needed to realise the opportunity can be mobilised; and 3) a possibility that at least some part of the generated economic value can be appropriated by the actor pursuing the opportunity (Malerba et al., 2015).

Equally important to explain what a concept entails, is to define what it does not include. Malerba et al. (2015) state that KIE as a concept excludes:

- Firms that sell standardised goods and services
- Firms based upon repetitive and routinised activities or established technologies
- Firms with products with no improvements
- NGOs, lifestyle firms and other organisations without profit motives

(p.24)

Malerba & McKelvey (2018b) discuss KIE both in terms of definitions of the concept, as well as future research possibilities in using the theoretical framework. One such possibility is that of expanding the understanding of KIE in relation to creative industries, for example from the perspective that these industries oftentimes are held forward as being different from science-based industries, where most research so far has been focused. Recent adaptations have also seen the concept being used in analysing creative industries (cf., e.g., Albinsson, 2018; Lassen et al., 2018). In their article, Lassen et al. (2018) make a comparison of data on firms in creative industries and manufacturing respectively. They conclude that educational levels among the founders are in general higher in creative industries. Furthermore, own savings as opposed to venture capital or bank loans is more prevalent as means of funding, and the ability to keep costs low, as well as marketing and promotion activities are more important for market success. Lassen et al. (2018) provide a specific definition for KIE firms in creative industries as having "a high degree (intensity) of knowledge seen through employees; depend upon external sources of knowledge; focus on service innovations; and remain small but are, relative to their size, more profitable than KIE firms in manufacturing" (p.291).

As explained in Chapter 1, the focus of my study lies in the interrelatedness between knowledge and entrepreneurship in the fashion industry. The KIE literature points out three main types of knowledge considered to be of high importance for venture creation and successful maintenance of the business: 1) scientific, technological and creative knowledge, 2) business knowledge, and 3) market knowledge (McKelvey & Lassen, 2013). Seeing that the research at hand focuses on activities within the

creative industries, and furthermore that the individuals, or potential entrepreneurs, are fashion school graduates, creative knowledge is of special interest for the analysis. While McKelvey & Lassen (2013) discuss the use of this type of knowledge in relation to for example designers bringing new creative ideas to the table and building business ideas on high levels of creative knowledge, the concept as such is not defined in any clear-cut way. In Section 3.3 below, I elaborate on this discussion in relation to entrepreneurship and creative industries.

McKelvey & Lassen (2013) propose a conceptual model for KIE venture creation, which further places the individual and venture in relation to the sectoral system of innovation. The authors state three phases as crucial in discussing this type of venture creation:

1. *Access resources and ideas (Input):* A focus upon inputs and 'endowments' that already exist in the ecosystem. The entrepreneur and founding team may bring these with them into the start-up phase.
2. *Apply these resources and ideas into the actual venture creation (Development):* How to organise and structure internal processes once the company is started and how to balance multiple objectives.
3. *Evaluate the performance of the venture (Output):* How to measure and evaluate performance over time.

<div align="right">(McKelvey & Lassen 2013a), p.15)</div>

The purpose of the model is to highlight the dynamism that is at the core of this type of process, where feedback loops are important as to reach the desired end result. Each phase has a number of second-order variables of importance. My study deals with the first phase, i.e. *Accessing resources and ideas*, in that what I study are individuals about to enter industry. This type of focus, on the antecedents of the actual entrepreneurial action, is also called for in the discussion of KIE (cf. Malerba & McKelvey, 2015).

In their analysis, McKelvey & Lassen (2013) focus on the origin of the actual entrepreneurial venture when discussing sources of knowledge inputs. The authors put forward three main types of origin: 1) corporate spin-offs; 2) university spin-offs and academic spin-offs; and 3) independent start-ups. I here relate these types of origin to the fashion industry.

Looking firstly at corporate spin-offs, while the concept of diversification is common within the fashion industry through the instalment of so-called sub-collections, it is questionable whether this can be seen as any greater source of entrepreneurship as such within fashion design. Furthermore, the focus of my study lies with students or recent alumni, meaning that they as of yet have had little time to indulge in work for already existing firms, let alone achieved such a position as to be able to suggest the

launch of new sub-collections for which to take on the helm as chief designer. Corporate spin-offs can therefore be considered redundant in this case.

University or academic spin-offs are commonly seen as the commercialisation of research results by researchers, however McKelvey & Lassen (2013) point to the fact that the term also covers the direct commercialisation of ideas by students. The authors further bring forward the common notion that this type of spin-offs mainly linked to high-tech ideas, stating that previous research shows that mid- and low-tech firms are also represented within the group.

The third and last category brought forward, so-called independent start-ups, deals with ventures that are set up by people who rather than being affiliated to an already existing corporation or academic institution, use their accumulated knowledge from previous work experience for venture creation.

Malerba & McKelvey (2018b) present results from earlier, greater studies on KIE. In discussing knowledge characteristics of the firm, the authors report that work experience in the current activity field; market knowledge; technical/engineering knowledge in the field; and networks built during previous career were considered very/extremely important for the firms in terms of knowledge that was valuable in acting upon opportunities.

Helfat & Lieberman (2002) bring focus to capabilities and resources in organisations, and the importance of pre-history in setting up a new firm, regardless of whether it is a completely new firm or a spin-off/joint venture etc. The authors find that pre-knowledge of the founder and its match, both in terms of resources and capabilities, with the industry or market of entry also affects the results of the new venture. Likewise a mismatch, explained as a resource gap, affects the entry negatively. As argued by the authors "(…) if we are to understand market entry, we need to understand the organizational capabilities and resources that preceded and precipitated entry" (p.753). The authors continue their reasoning, concluding that:

> "The impact of pre-entry resources and capabilities on subsequent firm performance does not imply that performance is completely predetermined, since firms adapt and change in response to their environment. But firms, and the markets in which they participate, are strongly influenced by their resources and capabilities at the point of market entry"
> (Helfat & Lieberman, 2002, p.754).

The authors make a division into four categories in discussing resources and capabilities. First there are core resources and capabilities, explained as knowledge required to create a product or service. This is contrasted by complementary resources and capabilities, explained as what is needed in order to profit from the core resources and capabilities. The third category is specialised resources and

capabilities, considered the ones that are more specialised to particular things. This is to be contrasted by the generalised resources and capabilities, seen as those that can be applied in a broad range of settings (Helfat & Lieberman, 2002).

A central point for discussion in entrepreneurship is that of the entrepreneur itself and what the reasons behind the entrepreneurial mind-set and action might be. This is often referred to as characteristics of the founder or founder traits. McKelvey & Lassen (2013) map what makes entrepreneurs within KIE stand out from regular entrepreneurs, and conclude that while commonly known traits such as risk-taking and overconfidence are prevalent also in these cases, there are three points that stand out: 1) networks, social capital to access market and technological opportunities; 2) in specific cases, experience and education matter; and 3) designing the venture, done by relating the founder's ability to perceive opportunity recognition with external factors such as luck, technology, market growth etc. (p.60).

McKelvey & Lassen (2013) mention three different roles that are commonly identified within KIE: 1) *the entrepreneurial*, focusing on flexibility and access to new ideas, requiring adaptability and creativity; 2) *the managerial*, focusing on coordination and usage of already existing resources to deliver goals, requiring conceptual, inter-personal and political competence; and 3) *the technical-functional*, focusing on what technologies and functions are needed in commercialising the idea, requiring knowledge on how to apply tools and procedures specific to the field (pp. 57-58). Studies have shown that while successful entrepreneurs often also are generalists, bringing in competences from all the three categories in one person, to be able to upscale the company and take it to the next phase, hiring specialists within the different areas becomes necessary.

Ruef et al. (2003) explore the composition of founding teams and how these are affected by phenomena such as homophily, strong ties, and isolation. This is linked to characteristics of the founders themselves. The authors build on previous theory regarding group composition and find five areas/theories that help generate general claims, and hypotheses, corollaries, and assumptions on the topic. These are: homophily, functional, status expectations, network, and ecological. By conducting hypothesis testing, the authors come to the conclusion that human beings not necessarily act in a rational way expected from theory when it comes to group composition. Rather than setting up diverse teams in terms of skills and characteristics, the study shows that, at least in the early stages of firm creation, there is a tendency to rather group with people similar to yourself (gender, race etc.). As concluded by the authors, "[j]ust as in other areas of economic life, commercial exchanges involved in organizational foundings are strongly influenced by socially embedded patterns of associations" (p.217).

Beckman (2006) studies firm formation and the impact the founders' previous experience has on the firms' activities, more specifically prior company affiliations,

concluding that 1) founding teams with common prior company affiliations are likely to engage in exploitative behaviours, 2) founding teams with diverse prior company affiliations are likely to engage in explorative behaviours, and 3) firms whose founding teams have both common and diverse prior company affiliations will have higher levels of performance.

Above, the main parts of the theoretical definition of KIE have been discussed. The definition does however entail one more key parameter, namely that of innovation systems, a concept that encompasses a broad and very rich literature, and field of research in itself. The KIE literature focuses on three specific types of innovation systems: the national, regional, and sectoral (Malerba 2010a). In Chapter 2, I introduced the concept of sectoral systems of innovation in relation to the Swedish fashion industry. The following paragraphs extend this discussion theoretically, specifically in relation to KIE.

Previous research on innovation and entrepreneurship has pointed to the importance of understanding and analysing the firm not only on its own, but to also view it in relation to surrounding structures. This is further emphasised in the theorising on KIE, something that is well described by Malerba & McKelvey (2015) who state that:

> "This conceptualization considers entrepreneurs as agents involved in generating and using knowledge, and emphasizes the fact that their resources and capabilities are conditioned by their linkages and networks with society through innovation systems, institutions and the broader development of knowledge."
>
> (p.29)

This engagement with surrounding actors and society can be seen as the core of the innovation systems concept. Through these interactions, entrepreneurs gain access not only to knowledge, but also human capital, financing and support systems necessary for successful venture creation (Malerba, 2010a). This continuous process is visualised by Malerba & McKelvey (2018a) who propose a stylised process model of KIE, where the entrepreneurial venture is put in relation to the innovation system as a whole.

Figure 3.1
Stylised process model of KIE
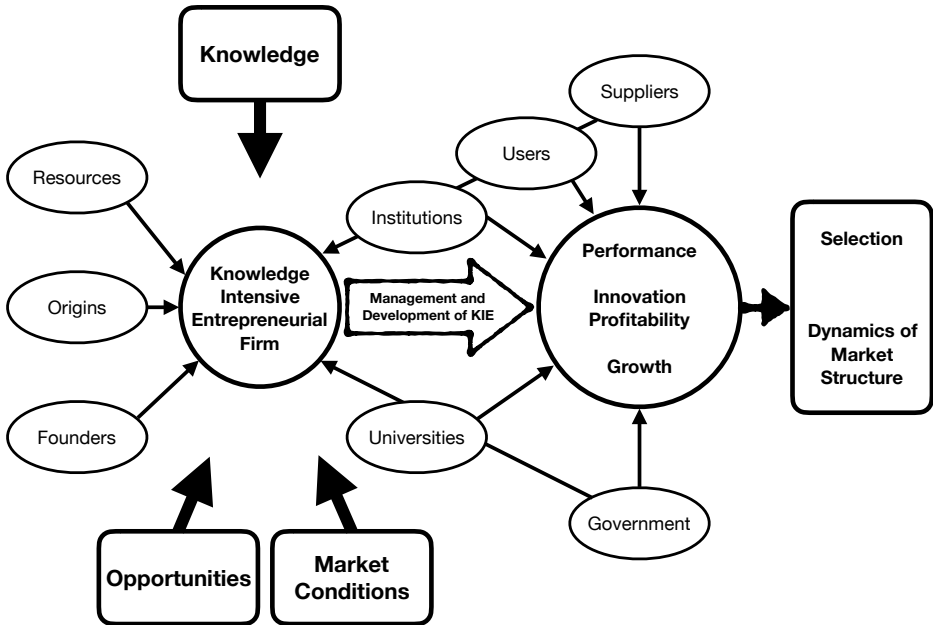
(Malerba & McKelvey, 2018a)

Above, I have given an introduction to KIE as a concept. Figure 3.1 above gives an overview of the complexity of this concept and how it relates to its surrounding sectoral system of innovation. Because my study focuses on fashion design graduates as potential KIE entrepreneurs, it is centred around the factors displayed at the far left hand side of Figure 3.1. More specifically, the factors of knowledge, resources, and founders are what is of interest. Figure 3.2 below shows an adapted model for this purpose.

Figure 3.2
Factors affecting potential KIE entrepreneurship in fashion
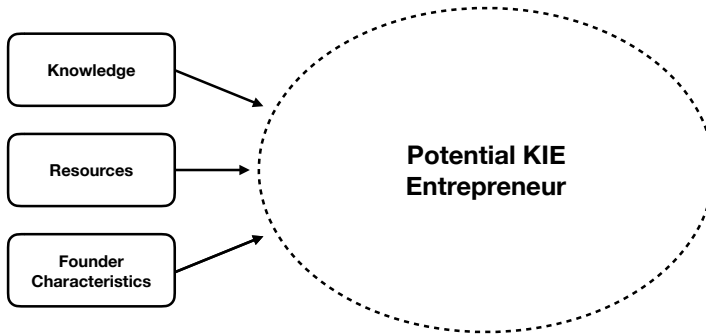
Knowledge should here be interpreted as including the three main types of knowledge highlighted by McKelvey & Lassen (2013): 1) scientific technological and creative; 2) market; and 3) business. This means that aspects of opportunities and market conditions as shown in Figure 3.1 in one way also are covered.

Resources deals with matters of funding for the KIE firm, as well as other types of resources such as networks and access to necessary equipment.

Founder characteristics considers aspects such as self-confidence and risk aversion.

3.2 Before the venture creation there was what? Entrepreneurial intentions and its linkages to KIE

A continuously reoccurring theme when discussing new venture creation is that of entrepreneurial intention. It is argued that entrepreneurial behaviour is in fact an intentional one, and hence, to understand this behaviour, it is important to look at what factors affect this intention (H. Zhao et al., 2005). As put by Liñán et al. (2010):

> "A narrow relationship would exist between the intention to be an entrepreneur, and its effective performance. Intention becomes the fundamental element towards explaining behaviour. It indicates the effort that the person will make to carry out that entrepreneurial behaviour."
>
> (p.199)

Below, some key models and theories linked to this theoretical concept are presented, complemented with examples of how these have been used in entrepreneurship research, in order to help develop a framework, thereby enriching the KIE literature.

In discussing entrepreneurial intentions, the theory of planned behaviour, introduced by Ajzen (1991) plays a key role. This theory is the result of research within social psychology, the idea being that actions in fact are generally planned as opposed to happening out of coincidence. Furthermore, actions are preceded by intentions, which in turn are based on attitudes.

Figure 3.3
The theory of planned behaviour
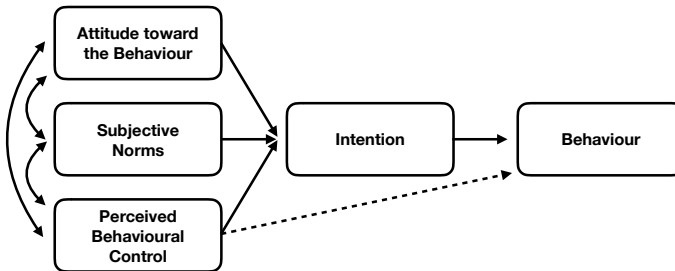
(Ajzen, 1991)

Ajzen (1991) claims that intentions say a great deal of whether or not we are likely to behave in a certain way; the stronger our intentions of doing something, the greater the probability that it will actually happen. This further tells us that a good way of estimating actual behaviours is to investigate the intentions.

What then affects our intentions? Ajzen (1991) introduces three main components for this, namely:

1. *Attitude toward the behaviour*, explained as "the degree to which a person has a favourable of or unfavourable evaluation or appraisal of the behaviour in question"
2. *Subjective norms*, explained as "the perceived social pressure to perform or not to perform the behaviour", and
3. *Perceived behavioural control*, explained as "the perceived ease or difficulty of performing the behaviour (…), assumed to reflect past experience as well as anticipated impediments and obstacles"

(Ajzen, 1991, p.188)

It is further argued that perceived behavioural control in combination with behavioural intention can be used to predict behavioural achievement.

In applying the model, three conditions need to be met in order for the relationships to work. First of all, the measures of intention and of perceived behavioural control must correspond to, or be compatible with, the behaviour that is to be predicted.

Second, intentions and perceived behavioural control must remain stable in the interval between their assessment and observation of the behaviour. Third, prediction of behaviour from perceived behavioural control should improve to the extent that perceptions of behavioural control realistically reflect actual control.

The model has been empirically tested, not least in the original study in which the framework was proposed, where 16 empirical studies were analysed. Both there, as well as in later applications, it has been shown that the factor subjective norms has weak effect on the actual intention. However, Ajzen (1991) proposes not only direct effects of the three attitude variables on intention, but also interactions between these three, meaning that while the direct effect on intention is not as high, subjective norms can still play an important role on the overall intention through its effect on attitude toward the behaviour and perceived behavioural control.

Though Ajzen (1991) comes from the field of social psychology, his theory has spread far outside the original field of study, not least to entrepreneurship studies. Krueger is one of the more cited scholars in this perspective, with numerous articles explaining the importance of understanding entrepreneurial intentions for entrepreneurship studies as a whole (cf. Krueger et al., 2000; Krueger & Carsrud, 1993; Krueger & Brazeal, 1994).

While initially proposing a direct adaptation of the theory of planned behaviour, over time Krueger came to advocate an alternate version of the model, namely the Shapero model of entrepreneurial event (Krueger & Brazeal, 1994; Krueger et al., 2000).

Figure 3.4
The Shapero-Krueger model of entrepreneurial intention
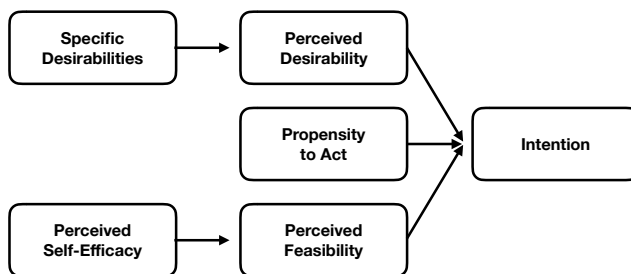
(Krueger et al., 2000)

The framework is explained as an intention model specifically adapted for the field of entrepreneurship. As shown in Figure 3.4 above, alternative terminology is used and the parameter subjective norms has been deleted. Krueger et al. (2000) explain the model as built on the assumption that that our behaviours stay more or less the same until something specific happens which interrupts or changes this inertia. This is illustrated through the introduction of the parameter *propensity to act*, explained

as "the effect placed by the personal disposition to act on one's decisions, thus reflecting volitional aspects of intentions" (Krueger et al. 2000, p.419). Liñán et al. (2010) expand this reasoning, saying that:

> "The entrepreneurial event theory considers firm creation as the result of the interaction among contextual factors, which would act through their influence on the individual's perceptions. The consideration of the entrepreneurial option would take place as a consequence of some external change—a precipitating event."
>
> (p.198)

How one chooses to act based on this event is the result of one's perceptions of the desirability ("I want to act upon this opportunity") as well as feasibility ("I am able to act upon this opportunity) of doing so.

Krueger et al. (2000) apply the suggested model to an actual data set. As in the original study by Ajzen (1991), it is found that the direct effect of subjective norms on intention is hard to verify. The authors conclude that while there is an even better fit to the Shapero model, the theory of planned behaviour can be seen as an equally good tool in understanding more about the process leading up to the decision of venture creation.

Through several studies, Liñán and colleagues have contributed to the work on entrepreneurial intentions, attempting at further developing the frameworks set up by Ajzen and Shapero. A mixture of the terminology from the work by Ajzen and Shapero is used, and the authors also explain the links that can be made between these different theoretical frameworks, not least when it comes to perceived behavioural control and perceived self-efficacy/perceived feasibility. In his work, Liñán has also introduced the effect of some external factors, however not directly on the intention itself, but rather on the attitudes. This is explained by Liñán et al. (2010), stating that:

> "External circumstances would not determine firm-creation behaviours directly, but rather they would be the result of the (conscious or unconscious) analysis carried out by the person about the desirability and feasibility of the different possible alternatives in that situation."
>
> (p.198)

Liñán et al. (2010) discuss entrepreneurial intentions in relation to education, arguing for changes to be made to educational activities as to further enhance the will and act of entrepreneurship. They examine what can be considered as most valuable in encouraging entrepreneurial behaviour, concluding that the two seemingly most important factors in explaining entrepreneurial intention are personal attitude and perceived behavioural control. They further argue that this points to the belief that

entrepreneurial intention is not only something inherent, but indeed something that can be trained if the right measures are taken throughout education. Also, role models and a positive attitude towards entrepreneurship in general in society are highlighted as important factors.

Fitzsimmons & Douglas (2011) further analyse the work of Ajzen (1991). They explore whether there are connections between the different parameters of the model, more specifically between perceived desirability (i.e., attitude toward the behaviour) and perceived feasibility (i.e., perceived behavioural control). Business students are the object of study, more specifically MBA students from four different countries.

What they find is that there is a negative interaction effect between perceived feasibility and perceived desirability. Furthermore, they showcase that a high value in one of the factors compensates for a low value in the other, that is, entrepreneurial intentions can still be high even if for example perceived desirability is low, if instead the perceived feasibility is high. The authors show that there is no significant difference in intention to act entrepreneurially between these cases (Fitzsimmons & Douglas, 2011). The results are used to create a typology of entrepreneurs, as showcased in Figure 3.5 below.

Figure 3.5
Typology of entrepreneurs

	Low — Perceived Desirability — High	
High Perceived Feasibility	**Accidental Entrepreneur** *(sufficiently high intention)*	**Natural Entrepreneur** *(very high intention)*
Low	**Non-Entrepreneur** *(low intention)*	**Inevitable Entrepreneur** *(sufficiently high intention)*

(Fitzsimmons & Douglas, 2011)

The four types of entrepreneurs require some more explanation.

Accidental entrepreneur: This category is one out of two hybrid cases (high/low), explained by Fitzsimmons & Douglas (2011) as an individual who "does not start out with any strong desire to become an entrepreneur, but forms the intention to become one after recognising the high feasibility of entrepreneurial action" (p.437).

Non-entrepreneur: In line with the theories of entrepreneurial intentions, the authors argue that for individuals where both perceived feasibility and perceived desirability are low, entrepreneurship is not a viable route forward.

Inevitable entrepreneur: The second of the so-called hybrid cases (low/high) is explained by Fitzsimmons & Douglas (2011) as an individual who "has a strong and ongoing desire to become an entrepreneur and may explore many entrepreneurial opportunities before ultimately forming the intention to act entrepreneurially" (p.437).

Natural entrepreneur: These individuals, as the terminology suggests, know that they want to become entrepreneurs, and furthermore also know how to go about in doing so – entrepreneurship falls naturally.

In summary, entrepreneurial intentions should be seen as dynamic and non-binary, the two main factors affecting the level being the perceived desirability and perceived feasibility of becoming an entrepreneur. These are also the key aspects of interest for my study of fashion design graduates as potential entrepreneurs, as is visualised by an adapted model in Figure 3.6 below.

Figure 3.6
Adapted model: entrepreneurial intentions for potential KIE entrepreneurs
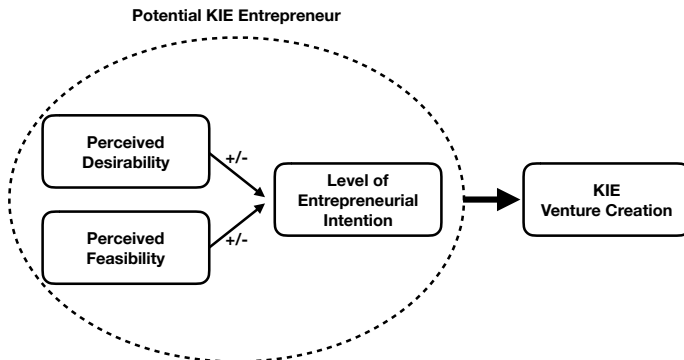
3.3 Entrepreneurship in fashion and the creative industries

This section focuses upon key findings and interpretations of entrepreneurship in creative industries, given the importance of further developing KIE to better understand the relevant types of knowledge in this context. Few studies of KIE have focused on the creative industries, and so instead, I performed a focused literature overview, in order to get a better understanding of how creative industries have been approached in entrepreneurship research in general. It immediately became apparent

that the terms creativity and culture are used in a variety of ways in research that does not relate to creative industries per se. I engage in this literature review, in order to identify key themes, which can be used to enrich the KIE literature and entrepreneurial intentions, in this specific empirical context of fashion.

3.3.1 Entrepreneurship and fashion

In searching for previous research on entrepreneurship and fashion, it soon became evident that little research had addressed this to date, something that is also highlighted by several researchers (cf., e.g., Malem, 2008; Entwistle, 2002). The research that has been done so far is often exploratory in its format, mainly through qualitative case studies (Malem, 2008; Entwistle, 2002; Bridgstock, 2013). Much focus also lies on survival of entrepreneurial ventures within this context (cf., e.g., Potts, 2011; Malem, 2008). While many similarities to traditional entrepreneurship literature can be found, such as focus on finding one's market place and unique contribution, the application of entrepreneurship to creative industries also focuses on the balance between creative identity and business consciousness.

A general theme is that of how to properly value the goods produced and thereby monetise it. Malem (2008) looked into what strategies fashion brands in London applied as to survive within the industry, concluding that in setting up business within fashion, there are four key factors:

1. The owners' own philosophical approach,
2. The emphasis on innovation and creativity,
3. The importance of their business approach, and
4. Their understanding of their "perceived value" in the market place

(p.403)

The point of understanding the value of one's goods is further emphasised by Entwistle (2002), who discusses fields dealing with aesthetic commodities, taking the example of fashion modelling. The author claims that while normal commodities in general can be calculated on using economic calculations, when it comes to aesthetic commodities, it needs to be complemented by cultural calculations. The basis for these lies in "…categories of culture, such as cultural prestige, and depend upon a highly attuned aesthetic sensibility and an acquired cultural capital" (p.337). Entwistle further argues that while similar types of knowledge can be found in any type of industry, focus normally lies at a more basic level of market understanding and consumer demands. Within the aesthetic economy, the knowledge has to be more refined, going deeper both in terms of general knowledge and networking.

Overdiek (2016) discusses fashion companies where fashion designers have teamed up with a business partner, and how this combination can create a dynamic duo balancing the acts of creativity and commercialisation. The phenomenon is well

known within fashion, with classical examples such as Yves Saint Laurent and Pierre Bergé; Rick Owens and Michelle Lamy; and Miuccia Prada and Patrizio Bertelli, to mention but a few. Overdiek (2016) argues that this combination of designer and business partner is the best route forward in creating a business with stability and revenues over time, perhaps even more so in cases where the designer's education has been conceptually focused. The ambidexterity in this case refers to the ability to balance creative exploration with the exploitation of the same, as to make sure that a crowding-out effect of either of the two components does not occur. The results from the study makes it evident that there is great difference in what is considered a business partner as opposed to an investor. The fashion designer and business partner can be seen as almost working in symbiosis, with daily contact on how to take the company forward by combining the duo's skillsets. While discussions on most details are common, there is also a great mutual trust inherent in these relations, meaning that the business partner trusts the designer's aesthetic vision, and likewise that the designer trusts the business partner's market ideas. It is common that the business partner holds some type of design degree as well, however not necessarily in fashion. This artistic background combined with business experience, and sometimes an additional business degree, creates a good basis for both understanding the creative vision of the fashion designer, as well as having deeper knowledge on how to proceed with the commercialisation of the ideas. Here, creativity becomes a leadership skill in its own right, something that the author highlights as being neglected in previous research, referred to only as an add-on skill.

Looking at literature on creativity and creative individuals, another important parameter comes into play, described by Overdiek (2016) as the "non-monetary psychological motivation of cultural creators". The author draws this terminology based on the reasoning of Menger (1999) who claims that artists first and foremost see the realisation of oneself, artistic integrity, and recognition from one's own community, and that sales and commercial success is something that is not part of the original thought.

3.3.2 Entrepreneurship and creative industries

In looking at literature regarding entrepreneurship in relation to creative industries, it soon becomes evident that this is an area where research is still lacking (cf., e.g., Chaston & Smith, 2012). Entwistle (2002) points out that more studies, within different fields of cultural production, are needed as to better understand how cultural value is created, and economically valued, and how it differs between different fields. At the same time, it is also pointed out that creatives industries form an interesting and important part of the modern economy and that further knowledge about it therefore is of highest interest. Potts (2011) takes an evolutionary economics approach in analysing creative industries and their importance for the economy as a whole. In doing so, he focuses on:

"[W]hat the arts, cultural and creative industries do best, as they have throughout history: namely they drive, facilitate and engender the origination, adoption and retention of new ideas (the innovation process) into the socio-cultural and economic system. From this perspective, the prime economic value of the arts, cultural and creative sectors is not heritage or entertainment, or the like. Rather, these are spillovers from the deeper contribution of this sector to the processes of economic dynamics. The arts, cultural and creative industries sectors are economically significant and interesting because as part of the innovation system they are a mechanism of economic evolution."

(Potts 2011, p.2)

This view of creative industries as creating value other than actual economic returns, but which nevertheless plays an important role in driving the economy forward is a central aspect of the discussion of entrepreneurship in creative industries.

It is further important to acknowledge that creative industries are not to be considered as a homogenous sector, meaning that research focusing also on specific sub-categories within this broader concept is of great interest; trying to generalise results on creative industries risks giving wrong implications (cf. Chaston & Smith, 2012).

To understand entrepreneurship within a field, one first needs to understand what type of market these enterprises act within, as well as the individuals behind these businesses. Entwistle (2002) studied fashion modelling as an example of an actor active in what is described as an aesthetic economy. The term is explained as:

"One in which aesthetics is a key component in the production of particular goods and services within a particular industry, organization or firm, and one in which aesthetics are central to the economic calculations of that setting."

(p.321)

Entwistle (2002) points at the fact that the most prestigious work is also oftentimes more or less done for free, highlighting the importance of striking a balance between on the one hand being selected for these types of shoots and thereby increase one's possibilities of being signed for high profiled campaigns, and on the other hand to take on commercial jobs that render profits, but which could also potentially harm your chances of being offered more prestigious types of work. Similar aspects are addressed by Aspers (2001) in analysing fashion photography. Clear links can here be made to the ideas of hierarchies as playing an important role in the structure of fashion as a phenomenon – it is important to position oneself at the desired hierarchical level, and stepping outside the same risks making you falling in rank, and thereby also lose influence (cf. Bourdieu, 1995; Simmel, 1975).

This line of reasoning also addresses the type of value creation that is at the centre of the venture creation. While economic value is one side, and also a commonly used one in measuring the success of ventures, the literature on creative industries points out that this in many cases comes in secondary in this context. Rather, it is the focus on the creative or artistic value that is put at the centre of attention. This becomes evident not least when looking at the concept of cultural entrepreneurship. Swedberg (2006) states that:

> "[E]conomic entrepreneurship primarily aims at creating something new (and profitable) in the area of the economy, while cultural entrepreneurship aims at creating something new (and appreciated) in the area of culture. While moneymaking is often a crucial component of cultural entrepreneurship, it does not constitute its primary focus. Cultural entrepreneurship, as I see it, may therefore be defined as the carrying out of a novel combination that results in something new and appreciated in the cultural sphere."
>
> (p.260)

This importance of hierarchy and getting to know the right individuals can also be related to the ideas brought forward by Bridgstock (2013) in discussing skills necessary for contemporary artists and designers in entering work life. The author's literature review shows that creative industries are dominated by smaller firms, where networks are crucial in making business, including when applying for a job, and where many actors choose to keep their own firm regardless of whether they also start working for a greater firm or get longer contracts. Bridgstock (2013) focuses on four main areas of competence, namely:

1. Career self-management
2. Enterprise and entrepreneurship
3. Transdisciplinarity
4. Social networking capability

Career self-management deals with the fact that artists and designers act in a world focused on portfolio career patterns, meaning that it is not so much your academic skills etcetera that matter, but rather your previous achievements (both in terms of assignments and awards), as well as your network that decides whether you will get the job or not. This structure forces the workers to be self-reinventive and adaptive in their career identities as to meet the requirements/needs of the market (Bridgstock 2013, p.180). Entwistle (2002) deals with a different perspective of the topic, pointing to the insecurity of the market, and how it can be that a model one day is the most sought-after face in the entire industry, and the next day is barely able to land any jobs. As put by the author:

"Fashion commodities, such as models or clothing, have a high aesthetic content and are particularly 'unstable' in that their aesthetic value is subject to constant fluctuations that are temporal (and, to some extent, spatial) in nature"

(Entwistle, 2002, p.317-318).

Enterprise and entrepreneurship is explained as "the skills associated with the application and distribution, as opposed to the generation of making, of creative work"(Bridgstock, 2013, p.181). The author points to the need of artists and designers to not only be creative, but also to reach out to the surrounding world and look for opportunities. Malem (2008) goes more into detail regarding setting up a business, and proposes ten key strategies for survival, where the results from her study show that all are important and should be implemented simultaneously as to obtain a sustainable business. These are:

1. Understand your business
2. Manage a slow and sustained growth
3. Consultancy from other brands
4. Consolidate contractual agreements
5. Retail and wholesale balance
6. Control every aspect of your business
7. The importance of building relationships
8. Communicate effectively with chosen markets
9. The international dimension
10. Role models

(p.403)

Bridgstock (2013) acknowledges the traditional tension around applying entrepreneurship to, specifically, art in that it is often seen as something that is strictly centred around profit-making, but also highlights that research has started to deal with other aspects of value derivation, such as social, cultural or environmental. The results from the study point at the balancing act of on the one hand being internally motivated, and on the other to be driven by outer demands as a success factor for artists and designers (Bridgstock 2013, p.182). The same aspect is brought up by Malem (2008) who points at findings from previous research regarding creative people and the intrinsic as opposed to financial values being the driving force behind setting up business. The author puts forward the following explanation in defining a creative person:

"The one consistent quality I detect amongst creative people is that they seek opportunities to exercise their creativity. If they can find these opportunities by becoming free agents they will do so, and if they can find them by joining a firm and staying with it for a good while, they will do that."

(Malem 2008, p.401)

The author further argues for the balance between creative and business mind-sets in obtaining a sustainable fashion enterprise. This theme comes back throughout the literature on entrepreneurship in creative industries, pointing at the management style of these venture as something different and of interest due to for example complexities in the thoughts of the creative minds at the top of the management chain, and with a mix of rationality versus non-rationality, intuition etc. (cf., e.g., Chaston & Smith, 2012).

The topic of *transdisciplinarity* is explained as the "synthesis and integration of knowledge and perspectives from multiple disciplines" (Bridgstock, 2013, p.182). The author points to the importance of learning how to combine different skillsets in order to make it in creative industries today, comparing it to learning new dialects or languages in order to make oneself understood across disciplinary boundaries. Greenman (2012) forms a discussion along the same lines in many ways, but with slightly different wording. The author uses a pragmatist-inspired view on entrepreneurial activities, explaining that since these activities require that people make use of already existing knowledge but in new or different ways, and in doing so also reach for future things and realities that are currently unknown, entrepreneurial activities can be seen as acts of creativity. The author goes on by discussing occupations as social boundaries, and how occupation as a viewpoint can help in "examining how people evaluate their expectations against existing knowledge and create alternative projected uses for such knowledge" (Greenman 2012, p.118).

Social networking capability highlights the fact that social capital is crucial for succeeding within the creative industries. Bridgstock (2013) outlines three main ways in which creative firms rely on these social networks: 1) fostering creativity through exposure to new people and new ideas; 2) providing a uni-disciplinary powerhouse of strong-tie relationships, ensuring that creative ideas are integrated, implemented and brought to fruition; and 3) finding opportunities for enterprise (p.184).

Entwistle (2002) also points to the importance of networks, explaining how individuals/institutions in many ways are dependent on one another to stay at the top of the game in the industry, exemplifying it with a new model being found by a scout, then shot by a prominent photographer and styled by a prominent stylist who thereby can stay up to date in the type of work s/he does. The photo shoot consequently gets featured in a prestigious magazine that, through this new cutting-edge model, also can stay at the top of the game.

Greenman (2012) takes more of an institutional theory perspective in analysing venture creation within cultural industries, looking at how occupational boundaries affect how people view and act upon entrepreneurship. Greenman (2012 states that:

"Entrepreneurial activities are defined as a type of human activity that requires creative projections and commitments to developing organizations against an uncertain future. As these activities are partially shaped by institutions, the knowledge circulated within an occupation will affect people's expectations about the plausibility and legitimacy of committing to such knowledge."

(p.119)

Bergamini et al. (2017) discuss entrepreneurship in the performing arts, analysing the entrepreneurial processes of a number of performing arts companies in the Flanders region. The authors find both similarities and opposing logics between this group and more general entrepreneurship. The similarities lie in the foundation of the entrepreneurial venture as being founded in a strong vision by the founders, and that markets are in fact created, seeing that the goods offered do not fit in to the already existing market structure. Likewise, the initial stages of the process of reaching market follows the same logic, with high dependence on networks and key actors as to draw attention to the goods that are being offered and consequently attract enough funding as to be able to produce the suggested goods and reach market. Where the authors see that the logics differ is rather the next stage, that is, the second round of producing goods. While reaching high profile individuals and important voices in the field one operates within, such as critics and connoisseurs on the topic, is an important step in order to draw attention to one's operations and thereby also gain recognition for it, this is not where the big bucks lie – in order to profit off the goods a bigger audience needs to be attracted (in their case, audience for the performances). A market-based logic would then suggest to fine tune the innovation that has been launched in line with the public opinion as to obtain a greater spread.

What Bergamini et al. (2017) instead observe is that the initial logic from the innovative stage, that is the internal driving force of the founder (the artistic vision) remains at centre stage. What this means is that rather than using the public acclaim achieved from the initial act that then could be considered to be more artistically innovative, but only possible to reach out to a limited audience due to its complexity, and branch out in a more broadly accepted direction with the artistic output, the founders' artistic vision continues to set the agenda, leading to limited market success. The authors compare this to entrepreneurship in general, pointing out that this in one sense would mean that new innovations would be the central goal continuously, as opposed to profiting off the one already launched. This desire and drive to remain artistically innovative for each new production leads to limited market success, and consequently a reliance on other types of revenue streams, such as public funding for artistic activities. The way to obtain this funding in turn is related to the acknowledgement of being artistically innovative (referred to as appreciation and legitimation), creating a loop where commercial success is neither obtainable, nor desired.

In my interpretation, fashion design shows great similarities to the actions explained by Bergamini et al. (2017). In order to reach out with one's designs, appreciation and legitimation is of outmost importance, and not just any acclaim, but from the "right" people. This includes fashion critics, influencers, buyers at the more high-end stores, and stylists. While this can create attention, in terms of for example publicity, it is not synonymous with commercial success. At the same time, the commercial success appears to come in secondary. The value proposition rather lies in being able to create new, challenging pieces of clothing that does not replicate what has already been made. The inner drive lies not in continuing along the path of what you may receive attention for, but rather in being able to continue your artistic process in whichever direction it leads you. At the same time, fashion is very much so a commercial good and does not fall into the category of artistic expressions that also receives public funding for its survival. Internationally, philanthropists appear to take on this position to a certain degree, the likes of Isabella Blow or Mihelle Lamy investing in young up-and-coming designers by buying their graduation show collections, just to mention a few examples.

Kohn & Wewel (2018) analyse the start-up process of ventures in the creative industries in Germany, using a large-scale survey data set on entrepreneurship, focusing on three main issues: 1) personal characteristics of creative entrepreneurs; 2) their use of labour and capital as input factors; and 3) start-up success (p.295). They find that entrepreneurs in the creative industries are comparatively highly educated and younger to entrepreneurs in general. This goes in line with the results of Lassen et al. (2018) who in their comparative study of entrepreneurship in creative industries and manufacturing find that entrepreneurs in creative industries have comparatively higher education, and furthermore that their industry experience, measured in number of years, is significantly lower. Kohn & Wewel (2018) further observe that entrepreneurs in the creative industries more extensively rely on private capital and funds from friends and family as compared to entrepreneurship in general. The ventures are also relatively smaller in scale in terms of number of employees, where most are run by the entrepreneur alone. This leads to assumptions that important factors to look into in analysing the entrepreneurial intentions of fashion design graduates lies in founder characteristics, levels of knowledge, the drivers for becoming an entrepreneur and sources of financing, or rather the access to resources, both for the initial starting of the venture, but also for the consequent maintenance of the same.

I would like to interpret how Potts et al. (2008) can be aligned with the ideas suggested by Bergamini et al. (2017). The links are in fact very straight-forward, in my reasoning. Potts et al. (2008) argue in their definition that creative industries are focused on social networks and that the choices, and thereby the goods you present to the market, are rooted in those social networks, including the value of such goods. As Bergamini et al. (2017) point out, artistic entrepreneurs are dependent on the

appreciation and legitimation of other actors in putting their goods out on the market. While this follows general logic of innovation, that is the successful commercialisation of completely new or altered versions of goods/services/business models, in that this is a first necessary step in order to reach full commercial success, where the artistic entrepreneurship seems to differ is that innovation, in the sense of commercialisation of the good for economic profit, is not always the case, and could in fact be debated as to whether or not it is the ultimate desire. Potts et al. (2008) do point out value creation as a key component, however the concept is here not stated as economic value per se, but rather value in relation to networks.

The discussions put forward by Potts et al. (2008) and Bergamini et al. (2017) further point at the aspect of networks as an important resource in being able to both create and sustain a venture within the creative industries. Networks is further highlighted in the KIE literature as a key aspect of the resources needed for venture creation, both in the creation of the business, as well as the development of the same (McKelvey & Lassen, 2013).

An interesting contribution from a Schumpeterian perspective in relation to creative industries is that of Potts (2011), and specifically his creative instability hypothesis. According to this hypothesis, organisations dealing with creative matters generally go through three different phases linked to their creative output: 1) mainstream; 2) edgy – pushing the envelope; and 3) experimental. What is meant with these stages is that as creatives build up a consumer base, they move towards a more stable point of business, where goods in one sense become mainstream in that they meet the demands of a particular group which then continues to buy into it. The creative output is over time likely to face competition, meaning that something needs to be changed as to keep the attraction – the creative moves into the second phase of challenging what is already there and hence becomes more edgy. While this may open up new markets and paths, the action is also more risk-taking, in turn making the business as such more instable. Pushing this even further, Potts (2011) argues that creatives can come to a point where market sensitivity is more or less lost, basically creating for the creation itself as opposed to making business – the market has been overshot. This is something that to begin with might not become so evident to the creators themselves, but rather the change is first noted by their financiers. The end result is deemed to be collapse, with customers likely not only repelling the latest creative addition, but also previous ones. While this becomes the fall of some, in line with the theories of Schumpeter, the destruction also creates space for new entrants to shape the future, a link held forward by Potts (2011), stating that:

> "The Schumpeterian economy is thus creatively unstable. It has a tendency, under competition, to overinvest in creative input, which is destabilizing at the level of the organization, although for the whole economy, this mechanism will also tend to accelerate the rate of economic evolution."
>
> (p.65)

Potts (2011) further argues that while the common result is for market players to disappear more or less entirely, there are also examples of creatives who manage to catch the new waves coming in constantly, thereby succeeding in sustaining a creative business over a vast time period. The discussion above on the one hand clearly highlights how a Schumpeterian viewpoint efficiently can be applied to creative industries. At the same time, it also points to the importance of creatively pushing the boundaries in moving these types of industries forward.

Finally, creativity is a concept widely used within many different academic fields, not least in business. Creativity itself constitutes an extensive field of research, predominantly within psychology and sociology. While the research in my PhD dissertation deals with an industry heavily influenced and affected by creativity, the purpose is not to indulge in the discussion on creativity per se to any greater extent. That being said, a definition of the concept, as related to creative industries, needs to be clarified.

Jones et al. (2015) define creativity as "a process of generating something new by combining elements that already exist" (p.3). Kaufman & Sternberg (2015) expands this reasoning, stating that three key components are present in most theories of creativity, namely "first, creative ideas must represent something different, new, or innovative. Second, creative ideas must be of high quality. Third, creative ideas also must be appropriate to the task at hand or to some redefinition of that task. Thus, a creative response is novel, good, and relevant" (p.33).

In her seminal article, Amabile (1983) discusses creativity as a process, highlighting three main components of creative performance, as illustrated in the figure below.

Figure 3.7
Components of creative performance

1 Domain-Relevant Skills	2 Creativity-Relevant Skills	3 Task Motivation
Includes: – Knowledge about the domain – Technical skills required – Special domain-relevant "talent" **Depends On:** – Innate cognitive abilities – Innate perceptual and motor skills – Formal and informal education	**Includes:** – Appropriate cognitive style – Implicit or explicit knowledge of heuristics for generating novel ideas – Conducive work style **Depends On:** – Training – Experience in idea generation – Personality characteristics	**Includes:** – Attitudes toward the task – Perceptions of own motivation for undertaking the task **Depends On:** – Initial level of intrinsic motivation toward the task – Presence or absence of salient extrinsic constraints in the social environment – Individual ability to cognitively minimise extrinsic constraints

(Amabile, 1983)

In looking more closely at these components, it becomes evident that in addition to intrinsic aspects such as talent and cognitive abilities, different types of knowledge play a crucial role for the creative performance, as well as education and training within the domain in which the creative act is to be performed.

3.3.3 Five key themes of entrepreneurship in creative industries

In summary of this section, what conclusions can be made from this brief literature overview? First of all, the field of creative industries in general, and the fashion industry specifically, is not covered to any greater extent in research so far, meaning that there is a lot to explore and that further research is needed as to broaden our knowledge of these highly important industries in the modern economy (cf. Bridgstock 2013). In looking at what differs between entrepreneurship in general and that of entrepreneurship in creative industries, a number of aspects stand out. Sources of financing appear to be more reliant on private funds and help from family and friends (Lassen et al., 2018; Kohn & Wewel, 2018). The value creation proposition is more focused towards social aspects as opposed to economic profit (Bergamini et al., 2017; Kohn & Wewel, 2018; McKelvey & Lassen, 2018). What this means in more detail can be related back to the discussion of Potts et al. (2008) and the reasoning around social network valorising. Furthermore, the entrepreneurs have relatively higher levels of education, meaning that their academic knowledge base is high. At the same time, the entrepreneurs are younger, suggesting that levels of market knowledge and business knowledge should be lower than that of entrepreneurs in general (cf. Kohn & Wewel, 2018; Lassen et al., 2018).

Based on this brief review of literature on entrepreneurship and creative industries, I have found five main themes of importance in relation to my study:

1. Importance of understanding value of culture (cultural calculations)
The literature clearly shows that in discussing output from creative industries, one needs to acknowledge value of culture as a separate aspect from that of economic value, but which nevertheless plays a key role in affecting the latter, at least in the long run. What creates this value and how can it be measured and observed? This is an important factor to bring into the discussion of KIE venture creation and the subsequent analysis of the output of these ventures.

2. Balance creative leader and business partner
A second point that is recurrent in the literature is the importance of business partners or founder teams with different backgrounds for successful venture creation, and perhaps even more so, sustained growth over time. This factor is in no way unique to creative industries, and the KIE literature highlights it too as an important aspect. What is perhaps of most interest here is how the composition of these groups or partners is discussed. It here becomes clear that the understanding of the value of culture is a key trait in working with creative individuals. To understand the balance

between monetary and aesthetic value creation is crucial in order to sustain a venture in creative industries over time. Previous research has also discussed how this combination can be potentially even more important if the artistic individual has a more conceptual educational background. Seeing the setting for my study, with alumni from a design education, this is something that should be borne in mind in conducting the analysis.

3. Importance of networks for succeeding
Both the literature on creative industries generally as well as that dealing with fashion specifically points at the importance of networks for succeeding with one's venture creation. Clear links can here be made to the KIE literature, which holds forward networks as extra important in relation to other types of entrepreneurship. For my study, it becomes evident that it is crucial to understand the sectoral system of innovation of fashion in order to make a correct analysis.

4. Importance of creative industries for further developing societies
In looking at this body of literature, it soon becomes evident that the reasons behind conducting research focused on creative industries has not only deals with a specific point of interest or the fact that little research to date has be done in relation to the topic; equally important, if not more so, is the belief in creative industries as an important factor in the further advancement of already developed economies and for society as a whole.

5. Hierarchies and positioning
Similar to that of networks, the literature examined here also points at the importance of understanding hierarchies and positioning when becoming an entrepreneur in creative industries. By positioning yourself in the wrong tier from the beginning, there is a risk of not being able to obtain the position or output you would want in the end.

3.4 Creating a conceptual model: entrepreneurial intentions as a complement to knowledge intensive entrepreneurship

The following section seeks to explore how the theories of KIE and entrepreneurial intentions are interlinked and furthermore, how they can be used in tackling the overall purpose and research questions of my PhD dissertation.

Krueger et al. (2000) argues that since entrepreneurial behaviour is a seemingly planned act based on intentions, a good way of understanding this behaviour is to look at what led up to the behavioural intention, that is to analyse what happens pre-firm creation. Krueger argues for the case of understanding this process rather than continuously focusing on results ex post; a method that also to a great extent relies on analysing only those individuals who have chosen to actually pursue the

entrepreneurial path, as opposed to having a mixed set of individuals, including those who end up not becoming entrepreneurs. This is further compared to studies in for example medicine, where in trying to understand a phenomenon, researchers have one group of individuals affected by the object of study, as well as a reference group of those not affected. The same is argued to be applied in dealing with entrepreneurship research. To understand what precedes the action of actually becoming an entrepreneur better helps us in understanding what measures can be taken as to encourage such behaviour (cf., e.g., Krueger et al. 2000).

As has been displayed above, the research on entrepreneurial intentions is constantly evolving, showing a continuous discussion among scholars on what parameters should be used to best explain what leads to an actual behaviour. On some points, the research is consequent and that is the role of the individual's desire to do something, as well as its view on whether or not this desire is also feasible to realise.

Section 3.2 above shows that in the work with entrepreneurial intentions, researchers have over time also expanded the original model. The work by Liñán & Chen (2009), Liñán et al. (2010) and Muofhe & Toit (2011), looks more specifically into the effect of education on attitudes, and furthermore adds external factors (economic, social and political) as a parameter having direct effect on intentions. An obvious link can here be made to the KIE literature and the discussion around the role of the sectoral system of innovation for stimulating venture creation by providing skilled individuals into the economy (cf. Malerba & McKelvey, 2018a).

The entrepreneurial intentions literature focuses, as stated above, on the perceived feasibility of and perceived desirability of becoming an entrepreneur and how these factors interplay in creating an intention and consequent behaviour. Fitzsimmons & Douglas (2011) introduce a typology of entrepreneurs related to this, as explained in Section 3.2. The typology provides a good tool for mapping the informants that are examined through this study, however, the wording used does not resonate well with results from previous studies on creative industries and KIE. I therefore propose an adapted typology of entrepreneurs as shown in Figure 3.8.

Figure 3.8
Adapted typology of KIE entrepreneurs

	Low	Perceived Desirability	High
High	Type 4 Path-Dependent Entrepreneur		Type 3 Inevitable Entrepreneur
Low	Type 1 Non-Entrepreneur		Type 2 Could-Be Entrepreneur

Perceived Feasibility (left axis)

I further propose an enrichment of KIE with the theories of entrepreneurial intentions, thereby focusing on the impact the factors highlighted in the phase of accessing resources and ideas (McKelvey & Lassen, 2013), have on the intention of becoming a KIE entrepreneur. In going through the literature on entrepreneurial intentions, it becomes evident that many of the factors highlighted therein, such as the effect of education, institutions, market possibilities, and the actor's own background, are in fact the same that can be found in the KIE literature. Malerba & McKelvey (2018a) highlight how the sectoral system of innovation for the industry examined affects venture creation, and that in order to understand KIE more thoroughly, we also need to take into consideration its surrounding structures and their effect.

Combining the two strings of literature therefore gives insights on how these factors affect fashion design graduates as potential KIE entrepreneurs. In Figure 3.2 and Figure 3.6, I have depicted the factors in focus for my study, for KIE and entrepreneurial intentions respectively. Figure 3.9 combines these two, providing a conceptual model to guide the analysis of the data collected for my study.

Figure 3.9

Conceptual model: entrepreneurial intentions for potential KIE venture creation
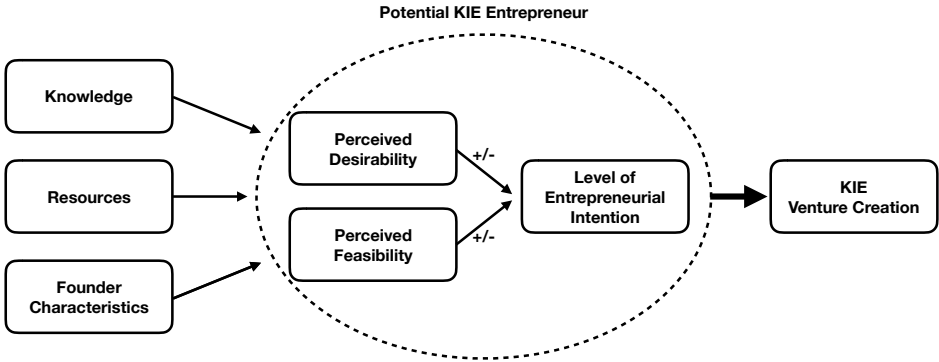
Figure 3.9 depicts how the perception and access to knowledge and resources, as well as founder characteristics, affects the perceived desirability and perceived feasibility of becoming a KIE fashion entrepreneur. This leads to a level of entrepreneurial intention which, if high enough, results in the creation of a KIE fashion firm.

Chapter 4

Constructing the study: research design and methods choices

As argued in Chapter 3, KIE is a fairly new addition to the broader entrepreneurship literature, and current studies using the concept deal both with theoretical development and refinement, as well as more applied tests of the theories per se (Malerba & McKelvey, 2018a). The wide applicability of KIE across sectors also means that there is a need for evaluating and exploring the theories in relation to many different industries as to see if variations might occur, and what in that case could be learnt from observing this for the overall development of the theoretical concept as such. This is also the goal with the research presented in this dissertation.

This chapter has three main sections. First, the general research design is introduced, arguing for the choice of conducting a case study in addressing the research questions at hand. Secondly, the choices of methods for data collection and analysis are presented, giving an introduction to the Gioia methodology and how it helps in ensuring qualitative rigour to the research performed (Gioia et al., 2013). Finally, the choices with regards to research design and methods for this specific research are presented in more detail, following the steps outlined by Gioia et al. (2013).

4.1 Research design: case study as a means for exploration

Seeing the nature of the object of study, where I aim at looking into the applicability and potential specific features of KIE as a theoretical concept when applying it to a new context, as well as enriching KIE with the theories of entrepreneurial intentions, this research takes an exploratory format (Eisenhardt, 1989). Research design literature suggests that qualitative research methods are well suited when attempting explorative research, in that they open up for the discovery of new ideas and concepts as opposed to focusing on affirming beforehand decided factors of analysis (cf. Eisenhardt, 1989; Gioia et al., 2013). Previous literature on KIE further points at the need of qualitative studies to further enhance the knowledge of different industries in relation to the concept, and also to start testing the applicability of the theories

proposed (Malerba & McKelvey, 2018b). Qualitative research methods therefore fit well with the purpose of this dissertation.

Because I am interested in what factors affect fashion design graduates with regards to their views of whether or not entrepreneurship could be a potential pathway post-graduation, this research takes on the format of a single phenomenon case study (Yin, 2003; Eisenhardt, 1989). The phenomenon to be studied is that of fashion design graduates as potential entrepreneurs in fashion. The single case study format is chosen as I seek to explore the applicability of a given theory, in this case KIE, in a specific context. Given the overall purpose and research questions, a single case study is also desirable due to the longitudinal aspect (cf. Yin, 2003). Below, I give a more detailed account for how the specific case to be studied was chosen.

In order to understand more about KIE entrepreneurship in fashion and whether or not it differs to any greater extent from the general view held forward in the literature so far, there is a need to explore these specific actors in more detail. This fills a purpose both from a perspective of testing and enriching existing theory, by exploring whether or not KIE is applicable across sectors and industries, as well as from a policy and industry perspective in creating plans and policies that are rooted in the specificities of the object at hand. One sector that has been highlighted in previous literature on KIE as being underexplored is the creative industries, to which the fashion industry belongs (cf. Lassen et al., 2018). While creative industries to date have received limited, albeit increasing, attention in entrepreneurship literature in general, they are also highlighted as both hosting great potential for future development of economies and societies, and also for traditionally being held forward as governed by other value propositions than the economic, not least from the perspective of creative entrepreneurs themselves (McKelvey & Lassen, 2018; Nielsen et al., 2018).

Chapter 1 gave an introduction to the phenomenon of interest for this research, namely that of understanding more about how creative individuals think and act in relation to entrepreneurship. Seeing the vastness of the so-called creative industries, a crucial aspect in order to get a feasible object of study was to narrow down the scope. For this purpose, I have chosen to focus on the fashion industry, which in my interpretation is an interesting fit for the question at hand as it relies on the creative output of designers and at the same time constitutes an industry structure with high pace of renewal. Though many different actors can attempt to become entrepreneurs within fashion, I argue that there is one group that possesses a special role, and which fits the purpose of examining creative individuals, namely fashion designers. When looking at already existing fashion companies, it soon becomes evident that the designers active are plentiful, and their backgrounds very different. To be able to narrow things down even further, some limitations as to what type of fashion designers to look at therefore needed to be made.

KIE focuses on ventures with high knowledge intensity, and consequently knowledge becomes a clear means of delimitation. Knowledge can be defined in many ways and deal with various aspects (cf. McKelvey & Lassen, 2013). However, when it comes to design, one type of knowledge stands out, namely the creative. Malerba & McKelvey (2018b) give insights on how to apply KIE as a concept in research. The authors point at the advantages of conducting case studies in capturing not only what happens after the actual formation of the new venture, but also what leads up to this point. They further point at results from previous research on entrepreneurship suggesting that founder characteristics and traits have effect not only on the actual formation of the new venture, but also on its further development. One interesting potential question they see based on this is that of what role the founder's educational background plays with regards to opportunity recognition.

Though knowledge can be acquired in many different ways, a means of delimitation, which also makes sure that all the informants have been given access to the same type of knowledge, is educational level. This also falls well in line with previous research on KIE, which points at higher education as an important source of knowledge for this specific type of entrepreneurs (McKelvey & Lassen, 2013). Consequently, I chose to focus on fashion design graduates, that is, individuals who have obtained a BA or MA in fashion design.

As explained in Chapter 3, for a venture to be classified as a KIE, there are four key characteristics that need to be fulfilled: 1) new firms; 2) innovative; 3) significant knowledge intensity; and 4) exploitation of innovative opportunities (Malerba & McKelvey, 2015). Below each of these characteristics is addressed in relation to the case at hand.

New firms: New firms are defined as firms that are younger than 8 years and which are not part of already existing organisations. This criterion can be considered to be met by default in that this study deals with individuals about to enter industry, meaning that the companies, if in existence, will only be in their cradle. In fact, most of the data deals with what precedes the actual venture creation, something that is also highlighted in previous research on KIE as an interesting and important point of analysis (Malerba & McKelvey, 2015).

Innovative: In terms of being innovative, this refers to the reasoning that the outcome of the firm should not only be novel, but there should also be a goal of making economic profits based on it. Seeing that this study focuses on fashion design graduates, the focus of innovation can be assumed to lie on aesthetics, the goal being to successfully commercialise new, boundary pushing designs.

Significant knowledge intensity: By significant knowledge intensity, it is meant that knowledge should play a key role in the firm and its activities. Knowledge is here not exclusively referring to science and technology, but also for example design and

creativity. The latter types of knowledge are also what is in focus in this study. Seeing the educational background of the interviewed individuals, it is safe to assume that their design knowledge base is high, and that this is also where they differ from other actors within the industry who lack this formal training. To successfully apply this knowledge in a business context would therefore be a good way of attaining the innovation goal stated above.

Exploitation of innovative opportunities: The exploitation of innovative opportunities relates to how the knowledge intensity, and thereby the potential for innovation, is actually adopted in the firm's activities, where the goal should be to have a business plan constructed in such a way that the goal for the firm is to work innovatively in the essence of the word innovation, that is, to reach successful commercialisation. In my study, this comes down to see whether the informants have the intention to bring new ideas to the market and also commercialise these, balancing the creative and monetary value creation in the design output.

4.2 Collecting and analysing data inspired by the Gioia Methodology

Having outlined the overall research design of this study as a single phenomenon case study, it is now time to look closer at what specific methods for data collection and analysis are suitable for the case at hand.

Careful consideration of methods for data collection and analysis are crucial aspects of the research process. Case studies are not limited to the application of any given methods as such, but rather that methods should be chosen in relation to the topic to be studied (Yin, 2003). Seeing the exploratory focus of the research and the phenomenon to be studied, insights and information from the individual designers are essential; to be able to know more about how they think, a conversation with said individuals is therefore crucial.

The Gioia methodology for qualitative research presents a methodical way of working with interviews as the main source of data. The methodology has been constructed as a means of approaching inductive, qualitative research, following the tradition of grounded theory (Gioia & Chittipeddi, 1991; Gioia et al., 2013). Given that the research performed for this dissertation seeks to explore an already existing theoretical concept applied to an underexplored setting, it should not be considered as attempting grounded theory (cf. Charmaz, 2014). Rather, the Gioia methodology should in this case be seen as an inspiration for how to systematically approach the data collection and consequent analysis. This section gives an overview of the methodology, with the following section outlining how it has been applied to the research at hand.

The Gioia methodology emphasises the role of each individual in an organisation and the knowledge these individuals possess. The term "knowledgeable agents" is used, explained as "[p]eople in organizations know what they are trying to do and can explain their thoughts, intentions, and actions" (Gioia et al., 2013, p.17).

This standpoint gives rise to a number of research design considerations. First of all, the authors argue that due to this rich knowledge pertained by the informants, one should early on in the research start the data collection, as opposed to creating too much of a theoretical basis for the work to be done. Furthermore, in writing up the results, the voice of the informants should be strong as the authors claim that the information given is likely to include new concepts. This way, new routes can be found instead of mainly looking at affirming already existing concepts and theory. To involve the informants early is also argued to be helpful in constructing an as good interview guide as possible. The reasoning behind this argument is that by talking to these knowledgeable agents, the proper phrasing and wording can be obtained, meaning that you can reach deeper and retrieve more information. This way, you can capture as much as possible of the knowledge and information, or in the words of Gioia et al. (2013), "[i]f we had designed our interview protocol around existing theory and terminology, we would have missed a key aspect of *their* sensemaking by imposing *our* preordained understandings on their experience" (p.17).

To increase the qualitative rigour of the research results from a study constructed in this way, the authors suggest measures to be taken when presenting the results, where the initial coding of the data stays very close to what was actually said by the informant, creating a 1st order analysis that is, as the authors put it, informant-centric. This is then followed by a 2nd order analysis where concepts and ideas from already existing research are brought in, functioning as a means to group the 1st order codes. As opposed to the informant-centric positioning of the 1st order codes, the 2nd order themes are what the authors call researcher-centric. As summed up by the authors:

> "The tandem reporting of both voices – informant and researcher – allowed not only a qualitative rigorous demonstration of the links between the data and the induction of this new concept (...) but also allowed for the kind of insight that is the defining hallmark of high-quality qualitative research."
>
> (Gioia et al., 2013, p.18)

Gioia et al. (2013) give a thorough account of the entire research design process as well as insights on what methods to use in constructing a good inductive, qualitative study. The features are summarised in Table 4.1 below.

Table 4.1

Features of the Gioia methodology that enhance grounded theory development

Step	Key features
Research Design	1. Articulate a well-defined phenomenon of interest and research question(s) (research question[s] framed in "how" terms aimed at surfacing concepts and their inter-relationships) 2. Initially consult with existing literature, with suspension of judgment about its conclusions to allow discovery of new insights
Data Collection	1. Give extraordinary voice to informants, who are treated as knowledgeable agents 2. Preserve flexibility to adjust interview protocol based on informant responses 3. "Backtrack" to prior informants to ask questions that arise from subsequent interviews
Data Analysis	1. Perform initial data coding, maintaining the integrity of 1st-order (informant-centric) terms 2. Develop a comprehensive compendium of 1st-order terms 3. Organize 1st-order codes into 2nd-order (theory-centric) themes 4. Distill 2nd-order themes into overarching theoretical dimensions (if appropriate) 5. Assemble terms, themes, and dimensions into a "data structure"
Grounded Theory Articulation	1. Formulate dynamic relationships among the 2nd-order concepts in data structure 2. Transform static data structure into dynamic grounded theory model 3. Conduct additional consultations with the literature to refine articulation of emergent concepts and relationships

(Gioia et al., 2013)

First of all, the authors point at the importance to lay a good foundation for one's work in terms of research question(s). Interviews are pointed out as the main source of data however, the authors also highlight the importance of complementary data in the form of for example documents, archives and observations.

Gioia et al. (2013) point at three lead words in moving forward with the data collected through interviews, namely diplomacy, discretion, and transparency. They suggest staying in close contact with one's informants throughout the process of the work, for example showing draft versions of manuscripts, data analyses, and models. An important detail from their perspective here is to promise anonymity to one's informants, however not to go as far as suggesting confidentiality.

Though Gioia et al. (2013) recommend that one tries to come as close as possible to one's informants, for example by using a language that suits the setting, the authors also admit the risks of this, namely of coming too close and thereby losing the necessary critical view as a researcher, and instead adopting the view given by the informants straight off. To deal with the problem, the authors suggest having someone in the research group acting as a form of devil's advocate in going through the analysis.

Linked to the importance of well-defined research questions is that of constructing a thorough interview guide/protocol. Gioia et al. (2013) here point at two important aspects. First of all, one should pay great attention to the initial construction of the

interview guide as to make sure that it covers all research questions that one sets out answer, and furthermore that the guide is not filled with leading questions, something that could have great negative impact on the actual results. Second, the authors point at the importance of adjusting the protocol as the interviews proceed. This can potentially even mean that the initial research questions are altered somewhat, depending on what one finds. As put by the authors

> "We follow wherever the informants lead us in the investigation of our guiding research question. Adhering to some misguided sense that the protocol must be standardized so that there is consistency over the course of the project is one of the reasons why traditional research sometimes is not very good at uncovering new concepts to develop. And part of their development occurs during the research that discovers them, so long as the researchers are sharp and prepared to adjust on the fly."
>
> <div align="right">(Gioia et al. 2013, p.20)</div>

In terms of the analysis of one's data, Gioia et al. (2013) point to the importance of staying close to the material and basically let the initial coding be as free as possible. The authors acknowledge that this may lead to a situation that feels hard to deal with, both in terms of number of codes and initial categories, and summarise the situation in that "you gotta get lost before you can get found" (Gioia et al., 2013, p.20). Based on these 1st order codes that have been constructed, the authors suggest a second step where the theory base of the researcher comes in. Here, initial codes are ordered into themes, both in relation to what is already known from existing literature, but perhaps even more importantly in terms of gaps identified as the collected data is put in relation to the theoretical foundation. This is a process that takes its due time to find a final structure, something that is concluded with a last stage of analysis where the 2nd order themes are, if possible, grouped once more into aggregate dimensions. This way, a three-level data structure is created through which it is easy to see the origin of the concluding dimensions suggested, showcasing both transparency and rigour in the work carried out. The next step of the analysis then becomes contrasting the findings from the data with already existing literature. The authors acknowledge that this way of going back and forth between data and literature rather suggests an abductive research logic as opposed to inductive.

A crucial part in the whole research process is that of writing up the results as to make sense of one's work. Gioia et al. (2013) point at a few points they believe to be extra important in this process. First of all, in terms of the themes and aggregated dimensions that are discovered through the data, a crucial aspect also becomes that of showcasing how these link to one another. The authors suggest the drawing of models where arrows introduce this interlinkage, thereby creating a dynamic feeling to the results. Furthermore, in order to give credibility to the results, it is also important to have a thorough discussion in relation to already existing theory and what links can be found and not. As put by the authors: "New concepts, insightful

ideas, and even grounded theories themselves have meaning only if they can be related to what we already know (existing ideas or theories)" (Gioia et al., 2013, p.24).

The research design and methodology for this dissertation has been inspired by this outline, as is further explained in the coming sections where each of the steps in Table 4.1 above will be addressed in relation to the study at hand.

4.3 Data collection

Given the type of research questions posed, exploratory research using interviews and secondary data sources as the main sources of information was a good fit (Creswell, 2014). With the research questions set for the initial round of data collection, the next step was to find a good object of study and delimitations that would render a sufficient size of potential informants. For this purpose, I set out to do pilot interviews with a number of individuals at one of Sweden's two fashion colleges, the Swedish School of Textiles at the University of Borås, through which I had conversations with a former student as well as a teacher. During the same time, I was also offered the opportunity of interviewing a Danish designer with a small entrepreneurial venture that had been up and running for a number of years. The pilot interviews confirmed my initial thoughts that KIE could be a good way in which to approach an exploration of entrepreneurship within fashion, and consequently, I could move on to constructing a more thorough interview guide for a first study. The interviews further helped in deciding on the delimitations of what individuals to contact for interviews and why.

The focus on fashion design graduates in a Swedish context limits the selection. Consequently, I had to find a good selection of informants that met the criteria set of having obtained a BA and/or MA degree in fashion design. In Sweden, only two schools issue such degrees: Beckmans College of Design in Stockholm and the Swedish School of Textiles at the University of Borås. Of the two, only the Swedish School of Textiles offers both a BA and MA programme in fashion design, and furthermore has a PhD education and extensive research within fashion design. Seeing the focus on knowledge intensity in my research, the Swedish School of Textiles therefore crystallised as the best fit in terms of environment from which to seek out informants. The fact that I want to investigate antecedents of entrepreneurship and the effect that knowledge, with specific focus on creative knowledge, has on this decision, a natural point of time to interview the fashion designers would be in close proximity to their graduation from fashion school, as the informants then find themselves in a position of choosing a future pathway to follow. In doing so, they will need to reflect upon their choices, and consequently also their perception of the same. Seeing the relatively small sizes of the groups of students graduating each year, I made the decision of contacting graduates from two

consecutive years. This meant that the informants either were just about to graduate or that they alternatively had graduated approximately a year prior to the interviews. The data collected would therefore come to include both perceptions and reflections prior to having continued down a new pathway, as well as after having been on said pathway for a year, thereby also being able to reflect back on the decisions made and how the initial view at the time of graduation matched with what was currently perceived.

A factor highlighted as important in conducting research in line with the Gioia methodology is that of being able to speak the language of your informants (Gioia et al., 2013). From this perspective, my knowledge of the fashion industry and great passion thereof has been a big advantage – to speak to fashion designers has at times been easier than addressing other scholars within my own field. The fact of being "fluent in fashion" has, I believe, helped me in coming closer to the informants, rendering more in-depth discussions, which in turn has given me richer data.

4.3.1 The interviews

For the purpose of my initial data collection, I picked two groups of students, one that at the point of the first round of interviews were in the process of graduating, and another group which had graduated the year before (for anonymity reasons, the exact years are not displayed). The students were found using the school's webpage, where online portfolios for each year's graduation show are displayed. In total, this rendered 37 potential informants: 27 BA students and 10 MA students. All students from the respective classes were contacted via email with a request for an interview. A reminder was sent to all who did not respond to the first email. 12 BA students and 8 MA students responded positively to the request, meaning that a total of 20 interviews were held. The distribution between the different classes is displayed in the table below.

Table 4.2
Overview prospective informants: round 1

Group	No. of performed interviews
BA ´1	5
MA ´1	6
BA ´2	7
MA ´2	2
TOTAL	**20**

All interviews were held either in person or via Skype and were recorded using a mobile phone. The interviews took place from May throughout August of the same

year. The informants were asked for a discussion of approximately one hour, meaning that the interviews could be seen as focused in their character (Yin, 2003). Furthermore, the informants were given the opportunity to comment on notes I had taken based on each interview, as to avoid misinterpretations of the data.

Table 4.3
Overview interviews: round 1

ID	Gender	Format of interview	Length of interview
DS1	Female	In person (private room)	0:48:42
DS2	Female	Skype	1:02:10
DS3	Male	In person (café)	0:59:31
DS4	Female	Skype	1:00:04
DS5	Female	Skype	0:55:58
DS6	Female	In person (café)	1:10:22
DS7	Male	In person (café)	0:45:58
DS8	Female	In person (café)	1:48:59
DS9	Female	In person (café)	0:40:16
DS10	Male	In person (café)	1:05:56
DS11	Female	In person (café)	0:51:39
DS12	Female	In person (café)	0:57:16
DS13	Female	In person (café)	0:58:30
DS14	Female	In person (café)	0:47:12
DS15	Female	In person (café)	1:13:59
DS16	Female	Skype	0:59:55
DS17	Male	In person (café)	0:52:37
DS18	Male	In person (private room)	1:26:58
DS19	Female	Skype	0:54:34
DS20	Female	In person (café)	0:46:11
TOTAL	-	-	20:07:47

The exploratory nature of my study also required as open as possible interviews as to not miss any important or interesting information (Gioia et al., 2013). When setting out for the first round of interviews, I had limited knowledge of the existing literature, both on KIE specifically, and entrepreneurship in creative industries more generally. This meant that I only had a handful of questions/ideas with me to guide the conversations, the steering point being my interest in exploring how this specific group of designers thought about and acted in relation to their future pathways post-graduation. The openness and freedom of what was to be explored also meant that I

was learning as I went on. Combined with the interviews, I continued to acquaint myself with the existing literature on the topic, and adjusted my questions and conversations with future informants in relation to this, as well as the discussions held in previous interviews. No direct backtracking to informants as to ask questions that were developed during subsequent interviews were made, in contrast to what is suggested by Gioia et al. (2013). While this could be considered to affect the validity and credibility of the research as a whole, the reason for not backtracking was due to the alterations of the questions asked merely being a matter of clarification as to simplify the interview process; the topics at large addressed in each interview were still the same.

The general questions guiding the interviews were the following:

- *What has been your route till where you are today? (Education, why these choices etc.)*
- *Why did you choose to study for a BA/MA/PhD degree? Why in Borås?*
- *What are your views on working in the fashion industry?*
- *Why did you decide to (not) start your own company? Are you able to live off this or do you have other assignments on the side?*
- *What's your view on fashion being a commercial good?*
- *How do you view the balance creativity-commercially viable?*

Though the full list of questions evolved following a number of initial interviews, all topics can be considered to have been covered for all informants as the new themes arose following the discussions held in the early interviews. This openness for new topics to arise also goes in line with the logic brought forward by Gioia et al. (2013) with regards to treating informants as knowledgeable agents, as well as preserving flexibility in relation to the data collected.

In accordance with the steps suggested by Gioia et al. (2013), an initial literature review was performed as to get a better sense of KIE as a theoretical concept, as well as entrepreneurship research in general with regards to creative industries, and especially the fashion industry. The outcome of this literature review is presented in Chapter 3. The literature review was carried out simultaneously with the data collection and was not used to create hypotheses, but rather as a foundation for my analysis. This way, the argumentation by Gioia et al. (2013) of "suspension of judgment about its conclusions to allow discovery of new insights" can be considered to be met.

As to be able to capture if and how intentions are realised, a longitudinal study would be preferable. This also opens up for retrieving new information and comments from informants in relation to the outcomes of the first data collection and the consequent theoretical testing/benchmarking. This in one way also follows the recommendations of Gioia et al. (2013) on backtracking to previous informants with regards to

questions or ideas that arise as more interviews are made. To complement the first set of data, and to be able to see how intentions from the first round of interviews actually played out, a second round of interviews was held two years later. The same group of individuals were contacted once more, again rendering a total of 37 potential interviews. As in the first round, the informants were contacted via email, with reminders sent out to those not replying to the initial message. This rendered a total of 17 interviews. The match between the two timepoints in terms of individuals interviewed is not full, however the data still becomes complementary and can be considered valid for analysis in that the individuals belong to the exact same group as addressed in the first round. Furthermore, the results from the interviews with informants that had not been part also of the first round did not differ or stand out when set in relation to the group as a whole.

Out of the 17 informants, 13 had partaken in the first round, while the remaining 4 agreed to an interview for the first time during this second round of data collection. The table below shows their spread between the different classes.

Table 4.4
Overview prospective informants: round 2

Group	No. of performed interviews
BA ´1	6
MA ´1	5
BA ´2	6
MA ´2	0
TOTAL	17

As for the first round, the interviews took place either in person or via Skype, with all the material being recorded using a mobile phone. The interviews were on average 1.5 hours, with the shortest one taking approximately 1 hour and the longest one lasting nearly 2 hours.

Table 4.5
Overview interviews: round 2

ID	Gender	Format of interview	Length of interview
DS2	Female	Skype	1:10:05
DS4	Female	Phone	1:08:39
DS5	Female	Skype	1:06:53
DS6	Female	In person (private room)	0:59:08
DS7	Male	Skype	1:11:23
DS8	Female	In person (restaurant)	1:42:58
DS9	Female	In person (private room)	1:10:12
DS10	Male	In person (private room)	1:36:40
DS11	Female	In person (private room)	1:15:55
DS12	Female	In person (private room)	1:33:28
DS16	Female	Skype	1:14:32
DS18	Male	Skype	1:22:04
DS19	Female	Skype	1:12:44
DS21	Female	In person (private room)	1:03:30
DS22	Female	In person (private room)	1:09:20
DS23	Male	In person (café)	1:21:27
DS24	Female	In person (café)	1:06:36
TOTAL	**-**	**-**	**21:25:34**

A new interview guide was created, linking back to the first round, but also with further developments based on the analysis that had been carried out with regards to the first set of data, following the logic of continuously developing both research questions and interview guides throughout the data collection as highlighted by Gioia et al. (2013). While some of the questions for these reasons were more specific in character, the interviews nevertheless followed a semi-structured format (Yin, 2003). The questions of the interview guide for the second round of interviews are displayed below:

- *What has happened since last time? Update of last two years (if applicable)*
- *What are your views on working in the fashion industry?*
    - *What's your view on fashion being a commercial good?*
    - *How do you view the balance creativity – commercially viable?*
- *Start firm – yes or no?*
    - *If yes – financing? Solely own firm or other jobs simultaneously?*
- *Intentions and Actions – what affects them (what has formed your career choice?*
- *Goal of making economic profits from own firm?*
- *What types of knowledge is important?*
    - *Where/how have you acquired it?*
    - *How have you applied it?*
    - *Business knowledge – do you have it and how does it affect what knowledge you think is important in moving forward?*
    - *How is the knowledge adopted in the firm's activities?*
- *Where do you see yourself in five years' time?*
    - *What knowledge will be important then?*
    - *What will your role in fashion be?*

For this round of interviews, I recorded a short memo after each session, stating the main points that came to mind when thinking about the conversation that had just taken place. These audio files have not been transcribed, but have worked as a means of recalling the feeling of the interviews held and the thoughts that arose in relation to that.

4.3.2 Additional data sources

While the main source of data for this work has been interviews, to increase the quality of the work, additional sources of data have also been used (cf. Yin, 2003; Gioia et al., 2013). Below follows an account of these and their relevance for the study at hand.

First of all, in addition to the official interviews presented above, a number of additional interviews were conducted, both formal ones as well as more informal conversations.

As earlier mentioned, a number of interviews were conducted as part of the early stages of this research as a pilot as to better define the core of what was to be investigated and how. They were three in total: 1) a former student from the Swedish School of Textiles but whom had several years of work experience at the time of the interview, including the start-up of an own fashion company, 2) a designer from a different Nordic country who had an own fashion company which at the time of the

interview had become fairly established, and 3) a teacher of fashion design from the Swedish School of Textiles.

In addition, informal interviews, or rather conversations, have taken place throughout the course of my work as to broaden my understanding, mostly in relation to the education offered at the Swedish School Textiles. This includes conversations with teachers as well as persons with more strategic roles for the educational offerings within fashion design in general. The insights from these interviews and conversations were of great help in formulating the research questions and foci of my study.

Throughout the years of my research, I have attended the annual graduation show at the Swedish School of Textiles as to get a sense of the output from the students, as well as the response from the surrounding community, not least in terms of what collections are awarded scholarships.

To get a better understanding of the education at the Swedish School of Textiles, as well as its development into its current format, and its status both within fashion press and general discussions on artistic and design education, numerous sorts of documentation have been collected. This includes programme syllabi, news clips, runway reviews, and historical descriptions of the Swedish School of Textiles as well as the Swedish fashion industry in general.

4.4 Data analysis

After the data collection, all interviews were prepared for analysis by being transcribed. The software NVivo was used as an aid in coding the transcribed material as well as for the consequent analysis of the codes. The interviews led to very rich data from which numerous interesting points of analysis could be drawn. In accordance with the Gioia methodology, the analysis process that followed the collection of the data took on an abductive format in which I went back and forth between my data and theory (Dubois & Gadde, 2002; Gioia et al., 2013). Apart from the transcripts, descriptive data (e.g. age, gender, degree level) were also added to the software.

According to the Gioia methodology, the first step in analysing the data is to create 1st order codes that are as close as possible to the material, using terminology that lies close to the language used by the informants. This goes hand in hand with the grounded theory method of coding word by word (Charmaz, 2014). Rather than coding word by word, I created codes line by line, alternatively phrase by phrase, using in vivo coding as a means to stay as close to the original wording of the transcription as possible (cf. Saldaña, 2106). This also meant that no categories of codes were pre-set. Following the initial coding, factors from the conceptual

theoretical framework presented in Chapter 3 were added to NVivo, structuring the codes in accordance with these as to look for patterns. This follows the structure proposed by Gioia et al. (2013), where first order codes are to be organised into second order themes which are theory-centric. Figure 4.1 gives an illustration of this coding strategy, including 2nd order themes and consequent 3rd order aggregated themes, in this illustration dealing with the informants' knowledge base.

Figure 4.1
Coding structure: different types of knowledge
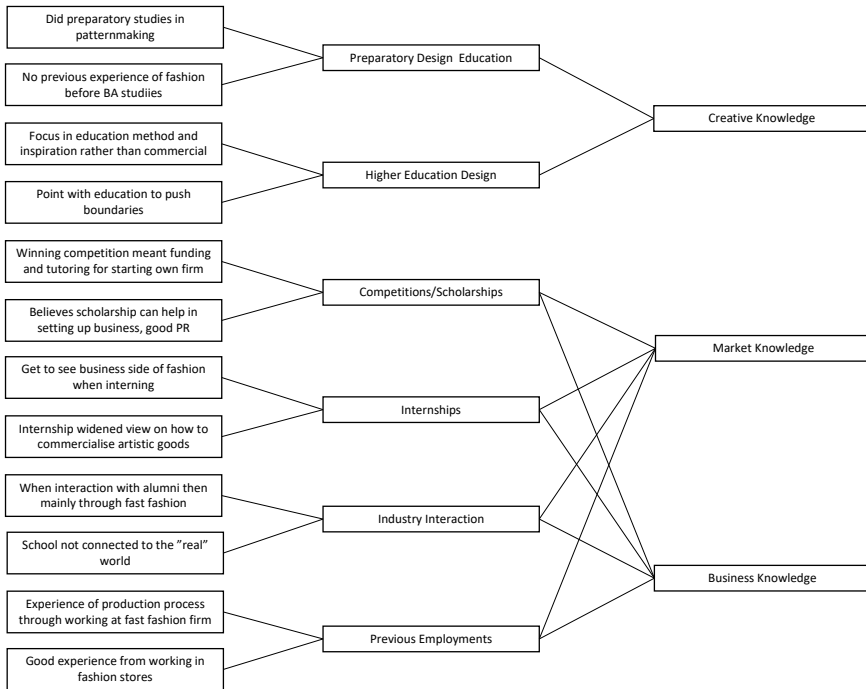
As the research as a whole followed an abductive logic of moving back and forth between theory and data collection, and furthermore that the interviews followed a semi-structured logic, much of the answers to the questions dealt with in this research were not the direct response to an actual question in the interview guide. Rather, the answers were to be found through the thorough analysis of the interview material as a whole (cf. Gioia et al., 2013).

When analysing the interviews in relation to theory, it became evident that certain parameters of interest also included some type of classification. Figure 4.2 below illustrates how the initial coding led to insights regarding perceived feasibility and perceived desirability of becoming an entrepreneur (for a discussion on the theoretical framework in relation to these factors, please see Chapter 3).

Figure 4.2
Coding structure: perceived feasibility and perceived desirability
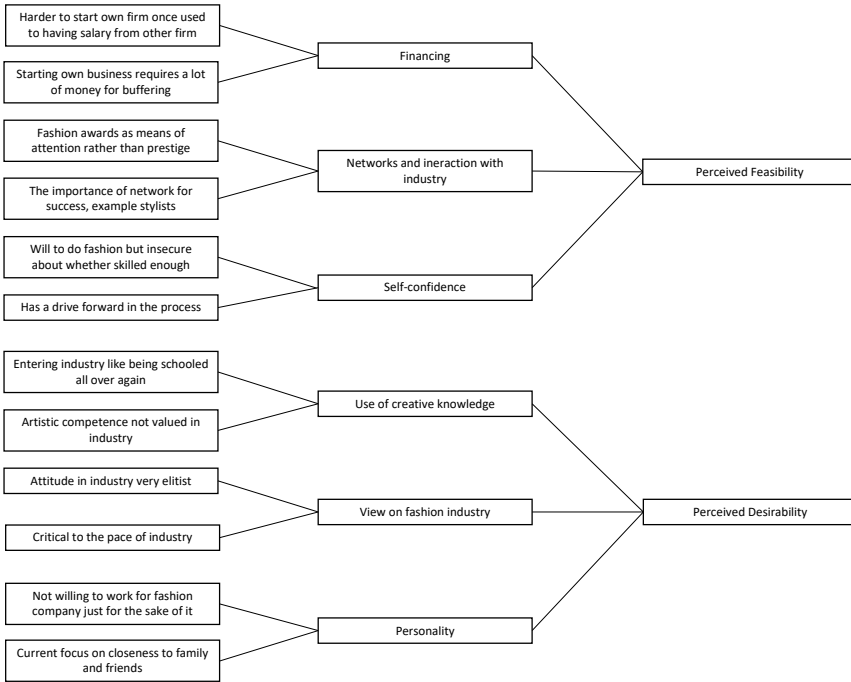
Previous literature has addressed these factors on a high-low scale (c.f., e.g., Fitzsimmons & Douglas, 2011), and consequently, as a means to showcase results comparable to other studies within the field, a similar classification for the data at hand in this research was beneficial. Table 4.6 below illustrates how the coding of the interviews was used in classifying the informants' levels of perceived feasibility and perceived desirability respectively.

Table 4.6
Classification of level of perceived feasibility and perceived desirability

Perceived feasibility

Illustrative quote	Code	Level
DS11: *And I guess that is partly how I feel too, that, you know, I don't have a clue as to how to go about doing it. How do you set up a business? I mean, how do you do it? So I guess it's mainly stuff like that. I don't know, it feels so overwhelming somehow.*	Doesn't know how to go about starting own company	Low
DS9: *Well, I don't know really. I mean, it's all the financial stuff of course, but you always start off small and then you learn. I took classes in business in high school (laughter). But I don't exactly remember that much of it, but I mean, it usually sorts out somehow. Then again, I haven't set up my own business yet so I don't really know if it will sort out.*	Starting company trial and error	Medium Low
DS3: *Right now I think it's pure lust of experimenting, and I think there's something to that. I think I see a plan in that I actually look forward to creating this, that I have some type of interest in entrepreneurship. I think that makes me feel quite comfortable because that means I got that part, and as soon as we sit down, you know, we will sort that part out too.*	Believes in his own entrepreneurial ability	Medium High
DS4: *I mean, we got 100,000 SEK as seed funding and heaps of consultation, and courses and educational offerings with regards to business making. And all of that has been really good.*	Winning competition meant funding and tutoring for starting own firm	High

Perceived desirability

Illustrative quote	Code	Level
DS19: *But I mean, I don't think I ever felt the urge to start my own business either. I mean, maybe I will at some point, you know, that I will feel that urge, but I mean when you here all these stories, with all this companies that you think are doing really well, but financially they're completely fucked. I don't know, I just think it sounds scary.*	Not interested in starting own firm	Low
DS17: *Well, I mean, of course I've felt that, you know, numerous times, that I would make really good collections. But no, honestly, I'm not sure I would actually want to go for it and do it.*	Had ideas of starting own firm but not into it anymore	Medium Low
DS13: *I think I've become a bit more careful over the course of these three years (…) Like two years ago, I think I would have been more confident and just gone with it. But now, for various reasons, I think, I've become a bit, like distant. You know, not just rush into things.*	Take time to let ideas settle before setting up business	Medium High
DS3: *Well, I guess it's something that has grown over time, but I think, you know, having had this freedom for seven years.. I don't know, all internships I've had have been at small firms that are struggling to make it work, but it's still been amazing. It's a very tough and still satisfying life. I think that's what I want. At least for now. So, I mean, try to have my own firm that works somehow, to have that freedom. Then again, it's almost impossible to make ends meet, but I mean, I guess that's sort of the main issue. But I still think I have to try at least.*	Will to start own company grown over time	High

As displayed by Table 4.6 above, four scale points were used in classifying the informants, as a binary choice of low or high did not give sufficient nuancing to what was expressed in the interviews. This is further showcased by the illustrative quotes for each level.

4.5 Theory articulation and summary of the steps taken

As explained in Section 4.2 above, unlike the Gioia methodology, my research does not follow the structure of grounded theory in that I already initially had a chosen both theoretical framework and a relation to how I wanted to approach it. At the same time, the questions posed in this research address hitherto underexplored areas of antecedents of KIE entrepreneurship, as well as the specific setting of the fashion industry. The process of summarising the results from the research therefore to a great extent resembles those suggested by Gioia et al. (2013) with showcasing how the 2nd order themes interrelate, articulated through a dynamic theoretical model. Furthermore, the continuous consultation with already existing literature has been a natural part of the abductive approach adapted in this research process.

In Section 4.1, a table of features of the Gioia Methodology to be used throughout the research process was introduced. Below follows a mapping of how these steps have been approached throughout this study.

<div align="center">

Table 4.7
Application of Gioia methodology

</div>

Step	Key features	Application
Research Design	1. Articulate a well-defined phenomenon of interest and research question(s) (research question[s] framed in "how" terms aimed at surfacing concepts and their inter-relationships) 2. Initially consult with existing literature, with suspension of judgment about its conclusions to allow discovery of new insights	1. How do trained fashion designers view and act upon their professional career? How does KIE play out in the case of fashion design? 2. Perusal of general KIE literature, entrepreneurship applied to cultural and creative industries
Data Collection	1. Give extraordinary voice to informants, who are treated as knowledgeable agents 2. Preserve flexibility to adjust interview protocol based on informant responses 3. "Backtrack" to prior informants to ask questions that arise from subsequent interviews	1. Open-ended interviews. General discussions as opposed to guided talks 2. Continuous feedback loop over the course of interviews. Interview guide developed after first, exploratory interview 3. Summaries of interviews sent to interviewees.
Data Analysis	1. Perform initial data coding, maintaining the integrity of 1st-order (informant-centric) terms 2. Develop a comprehensive compendium of 1st-order terms 3. Organize 1st-order codes into 2nd-order (theory-centric) themes 4. Distill 2nd-order themes into overarching theoretical dimensions (if appropriate) 5. Assemble terms, themes, and dimensions into a "data structure"	1. Coding in vivo, no guidelines 2. All coding done using software NVivo 3. Codes grouped in accordance with KIE and Entrepreneurial intentions literature 4. Overarching themes created in relation to theory and new patterns 5. Complete data structure constructed
Theory Articulation	1. Formulate dynamic relationships among the 2nd-order concepts in data structure 2. Transform static data structure into dynamic grounded theory model 3. Conduct additional consultations with the literature to refine articulation of emergent concepts and relationships	1. Relationships between aspects affecting entrepreneurial intentions and actions created 2. Conceptual model developed based on results 3. Constant further development of theoretical basis throughout the process

4.5 Seeking qualitative rigour: reflecting on the research process

In doing qualitative research, it is important to discuss the validity and generalisability of the results in a greater context, in that propositions made are based on input from a limited, and selected, group of informants as opposed to a sample. The research presented in this PhD dissertation is no exception. In this section, I reflect upon the choice of qualitative methods for the research carried out and what implications it has for the general outcome.

As a researcher, it is important to state any potential biases that may stem from your relation to the object of study (Suddaby, 2006). I should therefore here state that

fashion is more than an object of study for me; in fact, it is one of my greatest passions in life. This of course brings with it both pros and cons in conducting research. While my wide interest for the subject matter can help in retracting information regarding the matters that are to be researched, it could be questioned whether or not I approach the research objectively, or if I rather have ulterior motives that would risk creating an interpretation bias of the data. For this reason, I believe the research design chosen to be highly suitable in that it clearly encourages as in-depth explanations as possible of all steps of the research process, including the development of the analysis through coding and clustering. The theoretical framing, using KIE as a concept to analyse fashion is also something I believe helps in avoiding any bias in that it forces me to rethink and re-evaluate phenomena I consider to know by heart, but which now need to be put into the context of entrepreneurship and knowledge usage/creation. The pre-knowledge has made it easier for me to acquire sufficient information about the sectoral innovation system that is fashion. Furthermore, my personal consumption of information around the fashion industry as a whole, including reading fashion press and more in-depth industry analyses, has throughout the process been channelled also to my research.

As highlighted in Section 4.1 above, Gioia et al. (2013) point out the importance of ensuring the critical view of what is being observed, as to not risk to fully adapt to what the informants say. In order to deal with this, it is suggested to have colleagues taking on the role of the devil's advocate in relation to the results presented. Though I have worked on this project alone, as a PhD student, there is a continuous loop of feedback and critique from your supervisor(s) and fellow PhD students. This has been of great importance in making sure that the analysis performed has not become biased based on my own personal interest in fashion as a phenomenon. The continuous comments from people with less interest in, or experience of, fashion per se, and creative industries in general, have made me rethink my reasonings at times, thereby both sharpening the arguments, as well as avoiding biases based on personal opinions rather than actual research results.

As described in Section 4.3 above, the informants in the second round of interviews was not identical with those interviewed in the first round. The reason for this is that the same total group of individuals was contacted at both occasions, but different individuals responded to the request. It could be argued that this would mean that the material could not be used in its entirety to make an analysis of the effects that the two years that had passed had on the informants in relation to their potential desire of behaviour of becoming entrepreneurs. Seeing that the informants have the same background and furthermore that the interviews covered the same topics, the research can be considered valid. Furthermore, for the informants not included in the first round of interviews, basic questions to cover also their initial thoughts regarding entrepreneurship already at the point of graduation were included. As the most interesting data for the second round of interviews was that of what had happened in the last two years, that is the time from the first round of interviews onwards, I was

able to retract the same type of data from all informants. The study has further not included any type of intervention or test, meaning that all informants regardless of whether they were included in the first round or not still were able to give the same type of information.

All informants have the same academic background, meaning that the results presented essentially could be argued to only be valid for the specific setting of having obtained a BA and/or MA degree in fashion design from the Swedish School of Textiles. The fact that the informants for the two rounds of interviews were not identical could further be held forward as problematic in that the information regarding the initial intentions at the time of graduation could have been altered as they gained other experience over time. The same argument can be made with regards to the composition of the group of informants generally, as it contained two cohorts of graduates out of which one at the time of the first round of interviews already had one year of post-graduation experience. With regards to the second and third point made, two things should be noted. First of all, with regards to the group of informants not being identical in the rounds of interviews, a majority did participate in both rounds, creating a substantial overlap. Second, while it is true that all informants did not have the same amount of industry experience at the points of time for the interviews, the answers did not deviate and the conceptualisations are based on clear patterns that were valid for all the included informants.

In doing case study research, an important aspect is the question of saturation in terms of the data collected (Eisenhardt, 1989). No magic number in terms of informants exists for this, but rather it has got to do with the patterns that occur in the data as well as confirmation of already existing phenomena from the literature (Suddaby, 2006). To say that saturation has occurred is therefore difficult, and at the same time a necessity as to showcase that enough data to draw any conclusions has been collected. There is also the aspect of how many of the potential informants who actually agree to be part of the study. When analysing the coded material, clear reoccurring patterns with regards to the informants' intentions and pathways could be observed. Therefore, theoretical saturation can be considered to have been achieved (Eisenhardt, 1989). To further test the validity of the results, a suggested next step for future research would be a more largescale study of fashion design graduates.

As education plays a central role in this research, it is also important to take into consideration any national peculiarities. In Sweden, all education, including at university level, is free, that is, the students have no tuition fees. In addition, all students are entitled to grants as well as beneficial, state-subsidised student loans for a total of six years of higher education. While students in general do graduate with minor debts due to their student loans, by international comparison, higher education in Sweden is very advantageous.

The designers studied in this research all have the same educational background, and as explained in more detail in Chapter 5, the Swedish School of Textiles in itself has a very specific structure to its programmes. To test the results' generalisability, it would therefore be necessary to make comparative studies of graduates from other fashion schools. What this dissertation gives is that it proposes a framework to be further tested, in relation to fashion broadly, as well as other types of creative industries.

Through the interviews that form the basis of the research presented in this dissertation, I have been able to get qualitative understanding of fashion designers as potential entrepreneurs and the applicability of KIE as a theoretical concept in analysing the Swedish fashion industry. The data presented herein will give more in-depth discussions and ideas for further development in relation to the already existing literature, thereby contributing to the understanding of entrepreneurship in creative industries more generally.

Chapter 5

The formation of a fashion designer: a closer look at the Swedish School of Textiles at the University of Borås

As explained in Chapter 4, the research carried out for my PhD dissertation takes the format of a single phenomenon case study, exploring post-graduation pathways of fashion design graduates. Chapter 4 further explained the delimitations of the case, the main source of data being interviews with fashion design graduates from the Swedish School of Textiles at the University of Borås, Sweden. As to strengthen the analysis and widen the understanding, this chapter gives a description of the school. This is highly relevant as to understand the different types of knowledge, and resources and opportunities which the fashion design graduates are accessing and utilising in making choices about pathways for potentially becoming KIE entrepreneurs, as well as in their interpretation of their intentions.

The chapter has two main sections. First, I give a brief overview of the school as a whole, including its structure and research agenda. This is followed by a detailed account of the educational programmes in fashion design. This forms the foundation for my analysis of how the Swedish School of Textiles selects and trains fashion designers.

5.1 The Swedish School of Textiles at the University of Borås

In terms of higher education within fashion design, there are numerous educational offerings in Sweden. Preparatory education within for example pattern-making, fashion design, and portfolio work are offered by several institutions. When it comes to university degrees within the subject area, there are two main providers, namely Beckmans College of Design in Stockholm and The Swedish School of Textiles at the University of Borås. Out of the two, only the Swedish School of Textiles are authorised to offer MA as well as PhD education within the area of fashion design.

Borås, a city located in the western part of Sweden in close proximity to the country's second largest city, Gothenburg, was traditionally the centre of one of Sweden's main textile industry clusters. This means that there is a long tradition in dealing with textiles in general, and thereby also fashion, already in the era where Sweden more held the position of a country of production of textiles and garments. Traces of this can be found to this day, where the city has transformed to more being a centre for fashion logistics and e-commerce. Various actors, including the Swedish School of Textiles, focus on the development of textiles for the future, not least when it comes to so-called smart textiles, as well as on the increasingly important discussions on how to change the business model of today's fashion scene to become more sustainable (Hermanson et al., 2018). Borås as a city is trying to establish itself as an alternative fashion centre in Sweden, creating a different niche from that found in Stockholm, the current given centre of the country's creative industries in general. The focus on the major challenges of the fashion industry, through initiatives dealing both with the production side and environmental issues, as well as the more business-oriented part of business model changes, in combination with the strong focus and competence dealing with more technologically advanced applications of textiles and design knowledge makes Borås stand out as a location with good possibilities for fostering innovation within textiles and fashion (Hermansson et al., 2018).

The Swedish School of Textiles has roots all the way back to the 19th century, back then set up as a school for weaving. Over the years, the educational offerings changed and expanded, and in the mid 20th century, Textilinstitutet (the Textiles Institute) was formed. In the 1980's, its operations became part of the University of Borås, and subsequently also changed names to the Swedish School of Textiles (Textilhögskolan). It is also around this time that the educational offerings in fashion design see the light of day (hb.se[6]).

Over time, this has expanded to also include MA programmes in both textiles and fashion design (2007), as well as the right to offer PhD education (2010), something that makes the school unique from a Swedish perspective in that it is the only higher education unit in the country with education at these higher levels. Over the years, the school's position within the Swedish fashion scene has grown stronger and stronger, and reviews of its annual show at Stockholm Fashion Week are now featured on for example Vogue Runway, a power player within fashion press. Its strong position was further solidified in 2015 when the school received an honorary award at the Swedish Elle Gala, a major annual event within the Swedish fashion scene, with the motivation:

---

[6] https://www.hb.se/Textilhogskolan/Om-Textilhogskolan/Historia/ (accessed May 30, 3018)

"Technical knowledge and great creativity is an explosive combination. Through transparency, communication and highly interesting students, the School has made Borås a centre point of Swedish fashion."

(hb.se[7], translation by author)

Apart from the more art-based educational offerings in textiles and fashion design, the School also offers education within textiles engineering and textile management, creating a multifaceted environment. This has also given rise to the initiative Smart Textiles, a profiled research area for future innovation and use of textile techniques (hb.se[8]). It further means that the school houses technical equipment of highest standards, creating a laboratory like setting for the students to explore materials, techniques, and production ideas.

The Swedish School of Textiles has a strong environmental focus, something that also becomes evident in the courses offered its students, where sustainability is brought to the forefront as an important aspect of the design process and output. Its position on this topic was further strengthened in early 2018, when the Swedish government announced that the University of Borås, of which the school is a part, was given the task to establish a platform for "cooperation, collaboration and efforts for a sustainable development of the fashion and textile industries" (smarttextiles.se[9]).

The research at the Swedish School of Textiles has three main focus areas from which it springs: 1) design; 2) textile technology; and 3) textile management. As mentioned above, the school has been given a national responsibility for research within the field of textiles and fashion, something that entails both the more artistic perspective, as well as the development of the collaboration between science and art (hb.se[10]). The multidisciplinary format of the setting means that the research spans from that of focusing on the further development of design as a phenomenon and how we view and interact with fashion, to the more industry-like links of for example design output, and production and distribution.

---

[7] https://www.hb.se/Textilhogskolan/Om-Textilhogskolan/Historia/ (accessed May 30, 2018)
[8] https://www.hb.se/Forskning/Forskningsportal/Forskargrupper/Smart-Textiles/ (accessed May 15, 2018)
[9] https://smarttextiles.se/en/textile-fashion-2030/ (accessed October 30, 2018)
[10] https://www.hb.se/en/Research/Research-Portal/Research-areas/Textiles-and-fashion-Design/ (accessed November 3, 2018)

Table 5.1
Major research projects, Swedish School of Textiles

Project Name	Focus
ArcInTexETN	Examine the design of more sustainable ways of living and working through interdisciplinary research and education in the subjects of textile design and science, fashion, production and architecture.
Body and Space	Investigate and develop new types of clothes and models for design, expression, and functionality
Re:textile	Create a structure for circular flows in textiles for a more sustainable lifestyle through design development and the development of new business models.
Smart Textiles	Develop a driving and unifying force for the development of textiles with high knowledge content for intelligent and functional textiles through structured interaction between business-driven development projects and experimental research institutes, colleges, and universities.
SMDTex	Develop an interdisciplinary research and education programme within textile technology, textile design, textile chemistry and other areas, such as production, supply chain management, quality management, brand and fashion management, information systems, data mining, virtual reality and consumer studies

Through the project Body and Space, the researchers:

> "[I]nvestigate and develop new types of clothes and models for design, expression, and functionality. Through experimental artistic design, the research examines fundamental ontological, logical and epistemological questions to deepen knowledge about clothing in relation to body and space for new perspectives on fashion design and new ways of thinking about wearing."
>
> (hb.se[11])

This way of thinking and doing research is also something that is transferred to the BA and MA programmes in fashion design, as is further explained in Section 5.2 below.

Sustainability is prevalent in the research carried out at the Swedish School of Textiles. A good example of this is Smart Textiles, where researchers work with developing technologically advanced fabrics, to be used not only within fashion as we traditionally view it, but also within for example medicine. Re:textile is another good example of the same focus, where researchers from the design side as well as textile management work on the development of new design approaches, as well as new business models with the aim of creating a more sustainable way of textiles and fashion consumption through longer lifecycles of the products.

---

[11] https://www.hb.se/en/Research/Research-Portal/Research-areas/Textiles-and-fashion-Design/ (accessed November 3, 2018)

5.2 Educational programmes in fashion design at the Swedish School of Textiles

The fact that this research focuses on fashion designers who have attended higher education within the field makes it evident that they have acquired and developed high levels of knowledge. However, in order to make a proper analysis, it is important to specify what knowledge has been focused on, and furthermore, what implications this could have for the intentions of becoming an entrepreneur. To be able to get a better sense of the knowledge base acquired, all course curricula, as well as the overarching programme syllabi, within the BA and MA programmes in fashion design were screened in terms of content and overall goals (for full descriptions of the content and goals of all courses of the programmes, please see Appendix 1).

The education in Borås has gone through great change over time, not least under the influence of Clemens Thornquist, professor in fashion design. Rather than being primarily focused on wearability and the potential commercial value in an idea, the school emphasises the design theory behind making clothes. This gives rise to discussions along the lines of what a garment actually is, and when a piece of cloth goes from being just that, to being transformed into a garment. As put by professor Thornquist in an interview from 2015: "The way I see it, we engage in some kind of basic research: to define a garment" (hb.se[12], translation by author).

The current educational offerings in Borås in terms of fashion design have a strong artistic focus, both at BA and MA level. Theoretical courses on art and design as phenomena are mixed with continuous practical courses, where the knowledge acquired at a theoretical level is to be applied to actual design output. Students are encouraged to do internships, and some links to industry can be found throughout the educational programmes. Seeing that what is dealt with here are programmes leading to degrees in fine arts, it is expected that much focus also will lie on that of artistic development and the understanding of fashion design as an academic field. This also becomes evident in looking closer at the programme structures and the desired outcome of the students' educational process.

---

[12] https://www.hb.se/Forskning/Aktuellt/Magasin-1866/Personportratt/Modets-filosof/ (accessed May 15, 2018)

"What if degree shows instead of tradeshows would set the agenda for the development of fashion business? From what different perspectives might we then be entering the world? What different questions might we ask if we would be, really, dressing differently? What differences would this make to the world?

Dreams are powerful. They can blind people to reality. But, as someone noted, they can also inspire us to imagine that things could be radically different from what they are today. And even more importantly, they can convince us of how we can evolve towards that future.

Like with the dream, the important thing with a degree work is not to measure up to today's standards. The important thing is to act in a speculative, yet tangible dream, beyond the salesman's mere visions and strategies, with the power to demonstrate concrete possible and thinkable ways towards a future."

Professor Clemens Thornquist,
Introduction text, look book for graduation show EXIT16

This statement by Clemens Thornquist, professor in fashion design at the Swedish School of Textiles and a key player of the development of the educational programmes at the school, clearly points out the high ambitions set, as well as the role that these designers could play in the future of the fashion industry. It should also be noted that the Swedish School of Textiles over time has chosen to more actively profile their programmes towards sustainability and sustainable development. This is highlighted through specific courses at both BA and MA level, and at an aggregated level by specific learning objectives in the programme curricula categorised as Design Ethics.

In early June each year, the School hosts its annual graduation show EXIT. During this day, the graduation work by the students is being put on display, something that for the fashion design students means the staging of a full fashion show. The school has a strong academic focus in its educational operations, meaning that students are pushed to being able to explain their work from a design theory perspective. This further means that well thought through concepts are very important in the work process. Leading up to this show, the students' work has been examined both by internal, academic examiners as well as external opponents. The external opponents consist of a mix of people from industry, including well-known fashion designers, as well as scholars from other design schools. In order for the students to be allowed to participate in the actual fashion show EXIT, their work needs to have been approved by the examiner as to be of sufficient standard. The final graduation show premieres in Borås, with a mixed audience of relatives and friends, as well as representatives from industry. A number of scholarships are handed out from major players in the industry as well as trade organisations. In addition to the show in Borås, the students also show their work during fashion week in both Stockholm and London. As pointed

out above, recent years have seen these shows being covered in fashion press, meaning that the media exposure for the students' work has gone up. Several international celebrities have also been spotted wearing garments from the students' graduation shows, including Lady Gaga, Rihanna and Christina Aguilera.

5.2.1 BA programme in Fashion Design

BA programme description

In this programme, you learn to master the entire design process: from idea to finished fashion product, both traditionally and more experimentally. After graduation, you could start working directly at a fashion company. These students become the designers of the future with a full grasp on sustainability and how to develop and improve the field.

At the beginning of the education, the students learn what a traditional design process is like and how it is being done. How do you get ideas and how can you develop them?

Then, the experimental phase begins. This is where the students search for new methods and approaches. What are the restrictions? What does a traditional mannequin look like? Why? Which conditions and views of the body do this result in? How do we look at fashion in relation to these conditions?

This is also a matter of material knowledge, about learning to get the best out of a material, to see how a material works at a moving body, and knowing about which methods to use in order to succeed.

The Swedish School of Textiles has well-equipped laboratories staffed by skilled and experienced technicians, which gives you great opportunities to test and try to realise your ideas with the same types of machines as the industry. There are also well-lit and spacious studios for the students to work in. Each student has their own desk during the entire programme, which is another advantage that makes the work easier.

But fashion is more than just about making clothes. For example, it is important to know about and relate to political and social codes. Perhaps you could make different kinds of uniforms in alternative ways. What would they look like? The students works are based on a critical view of clothing and design, which is reflected in the collections that they exhibit in fashion shows during the education. Here, you can afford to go wild and be creative since the garments are not intended to be bought by fashion companies right away.

All degree projects are shown at an exhibition at the textile museum in Borås, at Stockholm fashion week, and London Fashion Week. In addition to this, many students participate in international competitions such as Design Nest and HM Design Award. Getting the opportunity to show your work to a professional and international audience gives positive effects, such as recognition, contacts, and constructive feedback.

After graduation, many students continue studying for a masters degree. Others start working for different fashion houses or start their own business. The internship during the third year often results in valuable contacts for future employments.

In the curriculum for the BA programme, its purpose is presented as:

"Aiming at developing the student's knowledge as a fashion designer in terms of artistic, technical, theoretical, and reflecting skills. The programme offers practice-based studies through a number of project courses with progressive development from year 1 to the final graduation work."

(hb.se[13], translation by author)

In order to fully understand the education given at the Swedish School of Textiles, it is also important to take into consideration the admission process to the respective programmes. While admission to most higher education in the Swedish system is

---

[13] https://www.hb.se/en/International-Student/Program/ (accessed November 14, 2018)

based on high school grades or SAT tests, educational programmes within the arts, including fashion design, follow a different structure. For the BA programme in fashion design, a number of formal requirements need to be met. In addition, prospective students submit an application portfolio, an application assignment, and a personal CV. The application portfolio should "demonstrate an ability to develop ideas from visual research (material gathering and working with source materials) into interesting finished work (composition and technical skill)" (hb.se[14]). A selected group, based on the assessment of the application portfolios, are then called to an assessment day after which the final selection and admission is completed.

The artistic focus of the BA programme in fashion design becomes clear already by looking at the overall learning objectives. These are divided into 6 categories: 1) Design; 2) Design Methodology; 3) Design Discourse; 4) Design Aesthetics; 5) Design Ethics; and 6) Materials and Techniques. While a majority of the goals deal with aspects related directly to the artistic output, it also comes across that the programme incorporates other aspects dealing more with the practical aspects of fashion as a commercial good.

Table 5.2
Learning objectives: BA programme in Fashion Design

Category	Learning objective
Design	a) Demonstrate basic skills and abilities in fashion design with regard to experimental and professional work. b) Demonstrate skills in developing an artistic language as a basis for an independent interpretation, and have the ability to express and interpret their ideas in a professional manner.
Design Methodology	a) Demonstrate skills and abilities in applying acquired knowledge in design methodology and design theory in both experimental and professional work. b) Demonstrate skills and abilities in collaborating with other professional groups in the design process, and carry out artistic tasks within given frameworks.
Design Discourse	a) Present, contextualise and critically discuss their own design work and that of others, with reference to a contemporary development of experimental and professional practice. b) Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of describing, analysing and interpreting form, technique and content and critically reflecting on their own artistic approach and that of others, within the field of fashion design.
Design Aesthetics	a) Apply their acquired knowledge of composition methods, form principles and design expression as a basis for developing their own language of design and individual product creation. b) Demonstrate basic knowledge and understanding of the theoretical and practical foundation of design work in artistic problems.
Design Ethics	a) Demonstrate basic knowledge and understanding of the interaction between the design, production, marketing and profiling of products and services in relation to design practice and its social implications. b) Demonstrate the ability to carry out independent and critical assessments of design work in relation to relevant cultural and ethical aspects, as well as questions of sustainability.

---

[14] https://www.hb.se/en/International-Student/Program/ (accessed November 14, 2018)

Category	Learning objective
Materials and Techniques	a) Demonstrate basic knowledge of and skills in textile techniques through experimental work. b) Demonstrate basic knowledge of textile materials, their properties and opportunities for expression through experimental work.

Going one step closer to the actual content of the programme, looking at the courses included, this view is further confirmed. The students are given a strong theoretical foundation of design through several courses in design methodology and design aesthetics as well as basic training in design. More focused course work is also spent on exploring textile materials and techniques and its effect on the design process. The courses mix more theoretical studies with practical experiments. This is further developed through extensive project work, where the students are to apply the theoretical knowledge and practical skills developed throughout the programme in their own design process.

Table 5.3
Course structure: BA programme in Fashion Design

Year	Course
1	Design Methodology 1: Design development (7.5 HEC) Basic Design 1: Body and structure (15 HEC) Design Aesthetics 1: Historical and contemporary aspects (7.5 HEC) Design Project 1: Body, structure and expression (7.5 HEC) Dyeing, Textile Printing and Preparation Techniques (7.5 HEC) Basic Design 2: Design experiment, knitting and tricot (7.5 HEC) Design Project 2: Techniques and expression (7.5 HEC)
2	Basic Design 3: Materials and expression (15 HEC) Design Aesthetics 2: Perspectives and principles (7.5 HEC) Design Project 3: Specialisation (10.5 HEC) Project Management and Production Technique (7.5 HEC) Design Methodology 2: Contemporary art and design methods (7.5 HEC) Design Aesthetics 3: Criticism and assessment (4.5 HEC) Sustainable Business Development and Product Development (7.5 HEC)
3	Design Project 4: Applied design (18 HEC) Design Methodology 3: Design research (4.5 HEC) Experimental Methods in Artistic Research (15 HEC) Documentation and Presentation of Design Research (7.5 HEC) Degree Project (15 HEC)

While much focus is spent on developing the creative knowledge of the students, the programme does also include courses dealing more with fashion design as a profession and industry. This is best demonstrated by the courses in Project Management and Production Technique; Sustainable Business and Product

Development; and Fashion Communication and Portfolio, together accounting for 22.5 HEC of the programme total of 180 HEC. To this should also be added a course of 18 HEC which entails an internship with a fashion firm of the student's own choice.

5.2.2 MA programme in Fashion Design

MA programme description
Want to educate yourself in fashion and textile design? Are you looking for an education that encourages an experimental and exploratory approach? Then the Masters Programme in Fashion and Textile Design might be the education for you. In the school's laboratories, you get the opportunity to test many of your design ideas.
The laboratories at the Swedish School of Textiles are well-equipped and staffed by highly skilled people with extensive experience in textile production. Here, the students work as independently as possible, and during the first semester of the programme optional introductory courses are given on how to handle the equipment.
Students apply to this programme by submitting an individual project, and then they work on developing that same project during the entire programme. The education places great emphasis on artistic work, and teachers as well as supervisors and technicians encourage experimental, investigating work that pushes the boundaries of the textile field.
The first half of the last year is devoted to a degree project, and after that there are three choices for the rest of the school year: further develop the degree project, take a preparatory research course, or internship.
Since the Borås region is a textile region, there are good opportunities to collaborations and internships at nearby companies, but many students seek out internships at companies and fashion houses around Europe.
The entire programme is based on research, and the students gain insights in current research in the field. Several of the lectures and workshops included in the programme are held by researchers and doctoral students associated with the Swedish School of Textiles. Through their projects and analyses, the students learn to relate to current research and what may develop the field.
Since Borås is a relatively small city, most of the students move there to study. This gives extra opportunities to bond with the classmates, which can also stimulate the creative work even further.
After graduation, many of the students move on to being employed at large or small-scale fashion companies in Sweden or abroad, while others set up their own freelance business or continue studying for a PhD.
The Masters Programme in Textile and Fashion Design has two specialisations: Textile design and Fashion design.

In the curriculum for the MA programme, its purpose is presented as:

> "Aiming at developing and deepening the student's knowledge as a fashion designer in terms of artistic, technical, theoretical, and reflecting skills. The programme offers in-depth practice-based studies through projects that the student progressively develops from an application project to the final degree project. Emphasis is put on the aim of the student at graduation being able to showcase excellence as a designer, artistic skills, as well as deepened ability for critical reflection vis avi these two components in relation to design as a broader phenomenon."

<div align="right">(hb.se[15], translation by author)</div>

---

[15] https://www.hb.se/en/International-Student/Program/ (accessed November 14, 2018)

The admission process to the MA programme in fashion design is similar to that of the BA programme. The formal requirement is to have obtained a Bachelor degree in Design (180 HEC), or equivalent. As for the BA level, prospective students are to submit an application portfolio where "artistic, experimental, technical, and critical reflection skills should, as far as possible, be able to be assessed through the visual material" (hb.se[16]). Furthermore, the portfolio should contain an application project that constitutes the foundation of the work that is to be performed and developed during the MA studies. Applicants are also to enclose a list of qualification, including previous education, work experience etcetera. After an initial selection process based on the application portfolio, prospective students are called for interviews as the last step of the admission process.

Looking closer at the MA programme in fashion design, the overall learning objectives follow the same categorisation as that of the BA programme. A clear difference in the programmes, which also can be related to the academic level of the studies, is the increased focus on critical assessment, not only of one's own work, but also that of others.

Table 5.4
Learning objectives: MA programme in Fashion Design

Category	Learning objective
Design	a) Demonstrate excellence in fashion/textile design with regard to professional and/or experimental work (artistic development/practice-based design research). b) Develop expertise in, and understanding of, design work and artistic issues in relation to undergraduate level education. c) Develop original ideas and apply them in a systematic way, transforming concepts into concrete design, to develop them to into researchable concepts.
Design Methodology	a) Develop and reflect on design methodology and design theory with respect to both experimental and professional work in relation to the undergraduate level education. b) Independently perform investigations of new and/or unfamiliar fields based on a design-oriented analysis under given conditions; develop projects that are characterised by problem solving and reflection. c) Develop an ability to carry out design work that contributes to the development of design practice in general.
Design Discourse	a) Present, contextualise and critically discuss their own and others' design work and artistic approach with reference to contemporary development of experimental and professional practice and practice-based design research. b) Lead discussions about design practice and design products at public events; demonstrate the ability to communicate the intentions of their own and others' work in seminars and workshops etc.
Design Aesthetics	a) Develop and reflect on the methods of composition, form principles, and design expression as the basis for practical design work. b) Use and develop their own design practice and initiate well-founded approaches to the development of design practice in general through the use of new expression.

---

[16] https://www.hb.se/en/International-Student/Program/ (accessed November 14, 2018)

Design Ethics	a) Develop and reflect on work processes and design management with reference to the cultural contexts and questions of sustainable development as ethical foundations for practical design work. b) Demonstrate the ability to apply a holistic perspective to the complex processes related to the interaction between design, production, marketing, and the branding of products and services related to design practice and its societal implications. c) Argue for and against products and services in ambiguous contexts and/or ethical discourses.
Materials and Techniques	a) Demonstrate advanced knowledge and skills in textile techniques through experimental work. b) Show advanced knowledge of textile materials, their properties and possibilities of expression through experimental work.

Looking more closely at the courses provided to the students, it becomes evident that the artistic focus is yet stronger at the MA level. Furthermore, the level of independence in workstyle is emphasised, with students expected to work independently in their artistic exploration of fashion design. This workstyle is contrasted with more in-depth studies of design methodology and what is jointly labelled as Aesthetic Theory. This brings the students in closer contact both with current research within the arts and design, as well as current trends and events in industry, with lectures and seminars by both researchers and fashion professionals. This part of the programme accounts for a total of 22.5 HEC out of the total 120 HEC. In addition, 22.5 HEC are devoted to elective courses, focusing on more in-depth studies of techniques and materials (15 HEC), as well as either more research oriented or practice/industry focused, allowing students to profile themselves for a future within academia or industry.

Table 5.5
Course structure: MA programme in Fashion Design

Year	Course
1	Aesthetic Theory – Design methods (7.5 HEC) Aesthetic Theory – Design seminars (7.5 HEC) Artistic Development – Advanced level (7.5 HEC) Design Project – Specialisation project (7.5 HEC) Design Project – Advancement project (15 HEC) Elective Courses (15 HEC)
2	Aesthetic Theory – Design seminars II (7.5 HEC) Design Project – Research project (15 HEC) Masters Degree Project (30 HEC)

The main part of the MA programme is however devoted to artistic design work, focusing on a design programme that each student creates. This is defined as:

"A thematic, overarching statement, that supports the focusing on certain design decisions central for how general design intentions can manifest in individual design projects. A design programme can, in very general terms, point out an ideologic path, or more concretely introduce new possibilities in terms of materials and/or techniques."

<div align="right">(hb.se[17], translation by author)</div>

The design programme runs like a red thread over the two years of studies, culminating in the final degree project. While the students create physical artefacts, the degree work also includes the writing of an academic report. This further points at the central role played by artistic research and exploration. Students are trained to both practically realising their design ideas, and at the same time give a thorough account of the process leading up to it, referencing and critically assessing its relation to artistic research and already existing design.

5.3 The knowledge intensity of the Swedish School of Textiles´ educational strategy

In this chapter, I have given an account of the Swedish School of Textiles in general, as well as the BA and MA programmes in fashion design more specifically.

As becomes evident from this description, the Swedish School of Textiles has undergone changes over time to become more centred around the development of creative knowledge through a focus on methods for design as well as fashion design as a field of research. This focus is highlighted not only by the course portfolio per se, but also from the overall descriptions of the programmes as given in programme syllabi and information material regarding the school. What does this focus on development not only of creativity, but also of creative knowledge mean for graduates from the school?

In Section 5.2 above, I presented a vision for the fashion design graduates as expressed by Professor Clemens Thornquist, who has had a central role in the development of the fashion design education at the Swedish School of Textiles to what it is today. This vision in many ways goes hand in hand with the central aspects of KIE as a theoretical concept and the use of new (combinations of) knowledge for the development of innovations (cf. Malerba & McKelvey, 2018a). The fact that this is the direction in which the school is striving with its educational programmes also becomes clear when looking closer at the structure and content of the courses included, as well as the learning goals set up for the programmes as a whole. While the students are trained in practical skills, such as sewing and knitting, the main focus falls on the development of the students' creativity and creative knowledge through

---

[17] https://www.hb.se/en/International-Student/Program/ (accessed November 13, 2018)

the focus on artistic, technical, theoretical and reflecting skills, as is stipulated in the purpose of the BA and MA programmes in fashion design. Set in relation to creativity as a concept, the structure of the educational programmes at the Swedish School of Textiles can be considered as facilitating the development of domain-relevant and creativity-relevant skills as argued by Amabile (1983). In doing so, it contributes to the development of the students' creativity and creative knowledge. Creative performance is not only a matter of talent and cognitive abilities, but also of education and training in order to make sense of said creativity and thereby successfully apply it.

Chapter 6

Fashioning a venture: recent alumni and entrepreneurial intentions

This chapter introduces the findings from the first round of interviews conducted with the fashion design graduates, conducted in close proximity to the time of graduation.

The chapter has two main sections. First, the findings are displayed by grouping the informants, following the structure of the adapted typology of entrepreneurs based on Fitzsimmons & Douglas (2011), introduced in Chapter 3. Second, I give an overview of the findings per informant, followed by a visualisation of their perceived desirability and perceived feasibility of potential KIE entrepreneurship as per the typology.

6.1 Taxonomy of potential KIE entrepreneurs

In Chapter 3, I proposed an adapted taxonomy of KIE entrepreneurs, based on Fitzsimmons & Douglas (2011). Table 6.1 below provides an overview of what these four types mean with regards to levels of perceived desirability and perceived feasibility.

Table 6.1
Overview typology of entrepreneurs

Type	Level of perceived desirability	Level of perceived feasibility
Type 1 *The Non-entrepreneurs*	Low/medium low	Low/medium low
Type 2 *The Could-be entrepreneurs*	Medium high/high	Low/medium low
Type 3 *The inevitable entrepreneurs*	Medium high/high	Medium high/high
Type 4 *The path-dependent entrepreneurs*	Low/medium low	Medium high/high

The following sections present the findings from the interviews for each of these categories.

6.1.1 Type 1: the non-entrepreneurs

Though the main focus of this research is to get a better understanding of how fashion design graduates who have the intention of becoming an entrepreneur also move from the idea stage to actual venture creation, an important factor in getting an as complete picture as possible is to also examine those for which this option more or less is completely ruled out. In mapping the informants' intentions, 5 out of the 20 were classified as non-entrepreneurs. These are in turn divided into two groups, the thing setting them apart being the level of perceived desirability of becoming an entrepreneur.

No, no definitely not
Two informants were analysed as having low levels of both perceived desirability and perceived feasibility. The reason for this position was however completely different for the two.

> *DS19:* "Honestly, I don't think I've ever had the urge to set up my own business. I mean, maybe one day I will feel it, but when hear about all these companies and it's portrayed as though they're doing well, and you know that the financial situation is just completely off. I just find it intimidating."

The quote above gives an example of how becoming an entrepreneur was never on the menu to begin with, but rather that the route set out already when entering fashion school was that of working for an already existing fashion firm. Looking closer at the discussion with the specific informant, a number of reasons for this standpoint crystallise.

First of all, the difficulty of attracting enough finances and make the business break even lowered both the informant's perceived desirability and perceived feasibility. This view of funding being seen as a major issue also relates to founder characteristics. Entrepreneurs are portrayed as risk-taking individuals with high self-efficacy, characteristics necessary in facing the uncertainty not least of being able to make the venture work financially (Malerba & McKelvey, 2019). The quote above clearly shows that these traits are missing, consequently also leading to a lack of entrepreneurial intention. Furthermore, opinions and positionings of people in one's surroundings had an indirect impact on the informant's perceived desirability and the perceived feasibility. This falls well in line with earlier research on entrepreneurial intentions (cf. ,e.g., Ajzen, 1991; Krueger et al., 2000; L. Zhao et al., 2018).

In examining the interview material closer, the position of not wanting to become an entrepreneur can also be linked to the informant's view on the education and the consequent knowledge development. As described in Chapter 5, the fashion design programmes at the Swedish School of Textiles put much focus on the development of creative knowledge through practical and theoretical studies of fashion design, design aesthetics, design methodology and so forth. While the informant did express appreciation of this to a certain degree, it also became evident that the focus was perceived as being too far away from the reality of the fashion industry. While this discrepancy potentially could create a desire to continue the artistic design process on one's own, the informant in question rather gives an example where entering industry and switching focus in the process of working with design was a preferred change. This was further strengthened by the fact that the informant felt no desire to continue with studies after obtaining a BA degree.

To have a set plan for entering an already existing fashion firm from the beginning is however not the only reason for showcasing low levels of both perceived desirability and perceived feasibility. This became clear when examining the interview of the second informant belonging to this group, as shown by the quote below.

> DS18: "I mean, seeing that I've had my own business before, I'm just.. I just don't feel like it."

Here it becomes evident that having experience of entrepreneurship at the time of entering fashion school in fact can also have the effect of refraining from the pathway when graduating; the door to entrepreneurship was already closed. What sets this informant apart is the view of the route forward.

DS18: "And at the same time, I mean.. what especially big companies do.. I mean, the business model is to sell as much as possible. And as a designer you don't have that much responsibility really, but it's rather carry overs from previous seasons. So, I mean, you update already existing garments, you move seams. It doesn't really fill a purpose, it's purely aesthetic. So it's a fairly limited work, which.. well, I had a different view on it before. And then when I started and actually worked with it, I just felt that, you know, this wasn't fulfilling, like, you can't see any development, at least not on the design table (…) So I think I'm more keen on, well, developing innovative material techniques and in due time do research in relation to that. So I guess I will.. well, I guess one shouldn't apply for a PhD straight away. You get so institutionalised, but I guess that is my plan."

Here, a strong desire for further education was instead held forward, with the potential of aiming for a PhD in fashion design. The focus in the use of fashion design as a field also differed. Rather than working more exploratory with the artistic side of design, the informant instead pointed at the potential of working with development of the materials used for design, pointing for example at the possibilities of activewear.

I've thought about it but…
Three informants were analysed as displaying low levels of perceived feasibility and medium-low levels of perceived desirability. The quote below shows how the responsibilities and pressure that comes with venture creation makes it unattractive; in fact, it becomes a definite deal breaker. Here, the desire for something else, in this case a wish to work in a creative team, makes the perceived desirability of becoming an entrepreneur lower.

DS20: "Honestly, I think I'd rather work for a company where you work as a team. I think I would have great difficulties with setting up my own business and have, you know, all that responsibility that comes with it. And if you want to keep control of everything, I think you would get quite lonely in setting up a business. So I think I'd rather work in a team where, you know, you can help one another. I think I would gain a lot from that."

As discussed previously, not strong enough self-efficacy, here displayed by a lack of belief in being able to run a business, affects both the perceived feasibility and perceived desirability, and consequently makes the informant opt for a non-entrepreneurial route.

This point of view was further tied to a belief that it is possible to seek opportunities within already existing fashion firms also outside the Swedish fashion industry. To apply for a position within the larger fashion firms in Sweden that mainly focus on so-called fast fashion, the vision was rather to aim for more artistically focused firms

abroad as to be able to better use one's creativity. This desire for focusing more on the creativity was further highlighted by the initial decision of continuing with studies at MA level.

> *DS20:* "And I guess it's also preconceptions one has beforehand. You think that, my God, three years, that's an eternity. But the thing is, it's not until the very end that you find something that you want to develop and research. That's when you find something that you're passionate about and feel that this is actually something that hasn't been done before, that hasn't been tested, and that you really want to do just that. And all of a sudden three years wasn't that long at all. And the master's is so different from the bachelor's in that you can dig really deep into it. So yeah, I mean, I could go on studying, because you're never really done. (…) And I don't feel that it has to be, you know, like this massive place and that you earn like heaps of money, but rather that it is a place where you are allowed to express your ideas, and that you're given the freedom to create something that you actually think is really, really good."

The use and exploration of one's creativity and creative knowledge is seen not only as a driving force, but also as a trigger for the need of breathing space. While the examples from the informants previously discussed point either in the direction of feeling that the creative knowledge obtained was enough or alternatively in the direction of wanting more time and space for exploring and further develop it, the second informant belonging to the group of medium-low levels of perceived desirability and low levels of perceived feasibility expressed a need for reflection and space.

> *DS17:* "Well, right now it's bit like being in limbo (laugh). I feel a bit empty, and it's difficult to know what, you know, what happens now. But I want to continue to move forward.. but I think I need like a year to just let it sink in. To, you know, work at like Lindex, H&M, just to feel that.. you know, this easily ends up taking over your entire life. And there are so many things in life that I truly cherish, so right now I guess I just want some time to think, and just be (laugh)."

The combined effect, that is of a low perceived feasibility of the action also lowering the perceived desirability, is even more clearly displayed by the quote below.

DS17: "I mean, of course I've had this desire to have my own business, and also that I feel that the clothes I would make would be good. But honestly, I don't know if I would want to do it. I mean, how do you even go about? How do you set up a business? It's seems like such hard work. I get this feeling that you would spend a majority of your time running the business, leaving very little room for the things that actually trigger you."

The view that the actual business side of things, in the sense of responsibilities that need to be dealt with and time that needs to be spent being a business person as opposed to a creative, is something that also makes the perceived desirability of venture creation drop to such a level that it is no longer considered an option.

DS14: "But it's also, you know, like when we've talked about it, and you talk about alumni who have set up their own businesses. I mean, I just get discouraged because, you know, it's not working. And why should I then..? I mean, in that case it would have to mean the world to me, you know, that I can't even consider doing something else, that this is my sole focus and I simply have to make it work. To really be that type of person. And I'm not. I mean, when I hear people who have their own businesses talk about, you know, how things are going, I just feel like I don't want to live like that. It's not worth it. I mean it's not that fun and I cherish life in general more than that. There are always other ways in which you can do that."

While the lack of perceived feasibility ultimately creates the intention of not becoming an entrepreneur, it also shines through that the urge for being able to use one's creativity, as well as questioning the current state of the fashion industry and its operations nevertheless increases the perceived desirability for entrepreneurship.

DS14: Well, in the long run.. I mean, I guess that's what I'm trying to figure out now that I've graduated. What is it that I want to do next? I mean, right now I just feel that, you know, I've graduated, I just feel empty. What am I going to do? Because, you know, I don't want to be at one of those big companies for all eternity. That's not my dream scenario. But then again, I want to try different things, to make an opinion with regards to what I actually want. And like, that's also the reason as to why I created this specific grad collection, that, you know, I just hate fashion and the world of fashion so much, and that everything nowadays is just.. it feels like designers aren't an as important player in forming fashion these days, but rather that stylists and editors have taken that role. And that type of stuff, I mean, that you can make out of second-hand garments, you know what I mean? And I feel quite frustrated about that. How am I going to deal with that? How is one supposed to make a living off that?"

6.1.2 Type 2: the could-be entrepreneurs

The informants categorised as could-be entrepreneurs showed medium-high to high levels of perceived desirability of becoming an entrepreneur, however with generally lower levels of perceived feasibility for this act. Reasons for lower feasibility varied, however two main themes occurred: 1) lack of business knowledge; and 2) lack of funding. The could-be entrepreneurs can be divided in three groups, each of which will be examined further below.

I mean it would be fun but…
The first group displayed medium-high levels of perceived desirability and low levels of perceived feasibility of becoming an entrepreneur and comprised one informant.

> *DS13:* "So my plan at the moment is, well, I mean, I would like to have my own brand in the future, and I mean, I can see the value of the commercial side of things, but still.. I think having an own company is also a way to be able to apply and spread what you did in school. I mean, the way we create collections here, they have a deeper meaning, or a deeper analysis than, you know, just a mood board, and it would be interesting to see if one can run a commercial business and develop collections, clothing, based on a deeper analysis. And with that deeper analysis you can engage in other projects that deals with different things. I mean, more collaborations and try to, you know, connect different settings and arenas. But for now I guess I'll just be unemployed for a while, work in fast fashion, figure out what I want to do, do an MA. Something like that."

The quote above points at a strong belief in using the creativity and creative knowledge developed in fashion school for venture creation. At the same time, the initial decision after graduation is that of starting working for an already existing fashion firm. As shines through, the informant feels a need to think through what lies in the future, meaning that the perceived desirability for entrepreneurship is not enough. In the interviews, it becomes clear that many feel a need for a break after graduation as to find their route. The reasons for this vary slightly, but a common factor is that of being creatively exhausted after finalising the graduation collection. This in combination with a desire for stability in the sense of a secure income leads to the decision to, at least for the time being, put the entrepreneurial dreams on hold. This feeling is also further enhanced by a notion of not having the practical skills necessary for venture creation, as exemplified below.

DS13: "I mean, the reason for not setting up a business straight away is partly that it's so scary. I think that's a major reason, you know, like how do you do it? How do you set up a business? What do I need? And I think it's a pity, because, you know, we're not trained how to do that, and then you know, you come to the point of, ok, does this mean I have to go back to studying something else to learn how to do that? Or is it rather something that I simply have to figure out on my own? I don't know. It's scary. I mean, how would I go about to set up a business at this point in time? So yeah, I think part of it has got to do with me not knowing how to do it. I mean, what do I need? And then there's also this fear of, you know, being the sole responsible for the whole thing. And you realise that more and more with, you know, creating the grad collection, because then you go through this process of, you know, you create a collection, you put it on display, and then it's supposed to, you know, find its way out into the world and be featured in editorials and what not. It's a lot to think about, and you realise that it comes with a lot of responsibilities, and it makes you start to, you know, question whether this is something you can stand for, and also whether or not this is something you want to do. It becomes this major thing. So I think that's also a scary part in having your own business, that you know, then it's you, it's your name. It all comes down to you. So I don't think I'm ready for it yet."

Is it really possible? I think so
The second category of could-be entrepreneurs, comprising three informants in total, were clear on their desire for venture creation. The low levels of perceived feasibility were however prominent, to the extent that also the desirability of becoming an entrepreneur began to be questioned.

DS11: "But in the end, I would like to have my own company, or if I start something together with someone. But then I also feel like, you know, how do you go about doing that? How do you start a business? I mean, how do you do it? It feels so overwhelming. Too overwhelming."

While earlier research on entrepreneurial intentions has shown that high enough levels of either perceived desirability or perceived feasibility can compensate for lower levels of the other (cf., e.g., Ajzen, 1991), the results presented here clearly displays the need for at least some threshold of the other to make this happen; having a high perceived desirability is simply not enough. This can of course play out in different way, as exemplified below.

DS15: "So I figured I was going to start my own brand, But I'm completely uninterested in running it. Or maybe not completely uninterested, but I'm not that.. I guess I realised it would require more of me, like my entrepreneurial side, and I'm not interested in developing that side. So therefore I didn't go for it."

The quote above adds a dimension to what affects the perceived desirability. While the main point of the discussion so far has been that of feeling a lack of business knowledge and market knowledge, as well as a lack of initial funding, the low perceived desirability can also be seen as linked to not being interested in venturing as such. The same informant gives further insights on how this situation could be tackled as to still obtain the desired creative freedom in one's work.

DS15: "I mean, I want to make clothes, I'm super interested in making clothes. I just want to make sure I'm doing it for the right reason, from the right angle or.. I mean, I've also become, I don't know, like this programme gives you so much awareness, so somehow I need to.. I need to put that aside as well, to be able to have a company that covers all the aspects that would make it good. I mean, also to make good clothing. (…) Honestly, I think the only way for me is to be self-employed. I think that's the only option. That, and teaching, to get some steady income. I mean, I still can't picture myself at one of the fast fashion companies, even if I understand that others are perfectly fine with that. I guess I've come to realise that others are fine with that and, I mean, there are so many different ways in which you can work with fashion, also meaning that you are able to choose between all these different routes to get to the point where you want to be. Part of that I guess also has to do with one's willingness to compromise too. (…) I guess this isn't a unique thing for designers, you know, that in the end you have to make money, but when it comes to fashion design, it's always rooted in a creative desire which doesn't necessarily stand in relation to a desire to make money. I mean, it might be that you're not interested in making money."

The focus on the creative vision in creating fashion is here explained as not rendering any greater economic value creation. Rather than changing the design output, alternative routes are explored in order to make a living. The role of academia here comes in a different light, in not only being a means to pursue a path of research and teaching, but also as a potential stable source of financial resources as to be able to use one's creativity and creative knowledge without the pressure of the output thereof also being a main source of income and consequently having to better adhere to general market conditions.

I want to, I really do

So far, all informants analysed have expressed general low levels of perceived feasibility of becoming an entrepreneur, the factor setting them apart being the perceived desirability of doing so. The last group within the wider category of could-be entrepreneurs differs in that ideas of how to practically approach the intention of becoming an entrepreneur and realising it through actual venture creation were further developed. A total of three informants fell into this sub-category, showcasing medium-low levels of perceived feasibility.

> *DS9:* "So me and a friend from school are planning to set up something together. And we're just hoping it'll work. (…) But then again, how? I mean, we'll probably have to work part-time or so with something else, but hopefully not. (…) But we feel like we're onto something new that could be interesting. (…) So we'll just start doing things, I mean, I don't think our first move will be to have some kind of production. But rather to spread what we're doing digitally. And lend things to magazines and stylists and stuff like that. I guess that won't render that much money but.. I mean, it shows that you exist. I think the smartest thing to do is to start quite slowly."

The quote above illustrates this in a good manner, where the informant on the one hand expresses the desire of continuing with the artistic exploration started during the studies, but where market knowledge and business knowledge for doing so is lacking. The creative knowledge and creativity for making something new is present, as well as the belief that this newness would also contribute with something to the already existing fashion scene. At the same time, the knowledge of how to transform this creative idea into an actual venture is not in place. The way of approaching this problem, by beginning with increased interaction with the fashion system can be seen as a means to render this necessary knowledge and also test whether or not there is a demand on the market for the types of goods suggested. This aspect of still wanting to try, albeit by having the own venture as a side activity whilst rendering one's financial resources through other positions within the industry.

The recurring theme of access to financial resources is once more held forward as a limitation. While the ideas of trying to establish oneself as a brand initially may be smart, there is still the lack of a clear route forward towards actual sales. A risk, which is also highlighted by numerous informants, is to get consumed by the jobs on the side necessary to pay one's bills and financing the setting up of a studio. This is further highlighted in the quote below.

DS10: "I would prefer having something own, of course. But then, I mean, I don't think that what I'm interested in, because I'm interested in the creation and the whole, you know, there is so much to keep track of and it's interesting at so many different levels, and when you're sitting at a company and it's fairly regulated, and not particularly creative.. So for that reason, I would prefer to have my own company where I decide how much, or how little, time I want to spend on that, and not having to have fixed hours for when to be creative. And I mean, I don't think that's being spoiled, it's just what I need. I think I would prefer having my own thing rather than work somewhere else, but it's also more difficult on your own, to do things from scratch, you know. I mean, it's easy to just get involved in something and then also have a life. There are many different parameters. Many just get a job in order to have a life, live in the same city as their friends and so forth."

The aspect of staying true to one's vision and at the same time make money off it is addressed repeatedly, from many different perspectives. The following quote brings one additional dimension to the matter in the sense of, on the one hand, a feeling that the industry workstyle goes against one's values, and, on the other hand, a feeling that working with something that is not fashion would feel more or less like a failure.

DS10: "I mean, I will never stop doing my own things. But I'm also very sceptic to how we approach fashion right now, I mean, with the environment and so forth, and I'm not really that interested in making money either, even though it's a must to survive. It's hard. But it would also be sad to work with something else."

6.1.3 Type 3: the inevitable entrepreneurs

The inevitable entrepreneurs have shown high levels of both perceived desirability and perceived feasibility of becoming an entrepreneur. In several cases, informants belonging to this category had already set up a venture at the time of the interviews. The general trend here is a high level of perceived desirability, however the perceived feasibility of becoming an entrepreneur varied somewhat. The initial analysis gave that the informants were categorised in three different groups, as will be further elaborated on below.

It sort of just happened
Though most of the informants categorised as inevitable entrepreneurs showed high levels of perceive desirability, one group within this category diverge from the general trend. This group comprised only one informant who showcased medium-high levels of both perceived desirability and perceived feasibility. The quote below showcases this in a good manner, where the corporate actions carried out by the person in question rather seem to come from the point of view of having fun, as

opposed to making business or conveying a specific desired design message with a new brand.

> *DS6:* "So.. and I got a lot of encouragement from this person that I worked closely with (..) so then I started to get some jobs. (…) And this person helped me and said that "you should contact these people" and stuff like that. (…) And then when studying, I started working with different types of projects. And then that has just kept on rolling (…) and for me that has been very good because I have a very short attention span so if I have several things running simultaneously that's always better. (…) I mean, I'm completely uninterested in money. I've never really taken that into account. So I mean, a lot of projects I've done, I've actually done for free because I found them interesting. And then that leads to paid jobs later. But I think, also, if you look at arts, people aren't driven by money in the same sense, and I think I mainly refer to their way of thinking and doing. I mean, I'd rather work for free if that means I'm allowed to do whatever I want than getting paid and then having someone telling me what to do. And if someone wants to pay me to do something they want me to do, I mean, then they could as might as well do it themselves."

The quote illustrates the behaviour well in that it is balancing on the line between inevitable entrepreneur and path-dependent entrepreneur. The impact of close collaborators led to initial job opportunities, thereby creating a form of path-dependence in relation to one's peers. At the same time, the continuation of the process leans more in the direction of the informant as an independent, inevitable entrepreneur. The fact that the levels of both perceived desirability and perceived feasibility are medium-high as opposed to high also appears to have the effect of the business being allowed to follow its own path without any clear relation to business knowledge or market knowledge, other than that of established connections leading to new jobs. As also discussed earlier, the view on value creation is not focused on economic aspects, but rather on taking on assignments in line with one's creativity and creative vision.

I'll do it but I'm not quite sure how
While the above was an example of how becoming an entrepreneur more or less happened by chance, most of the informants classified as inevitable entrepreneurs showed high perceived desirability of becoming so. Of those, three nevertheless still had medium-low levels of perceived feasibility for the act. Some already had a registered company, however the launch of a fashion brand in the sense of presenting own collections and starting up production was yet to come. An interesting aspect here was that of the view on how this was to be done.

DS8: "I think one has to be open to different types of routes and not just get stuck in this, which I think is what a lot of people think is the way one sets up a business, or a fashion business, that you know, ok, now I will create this amazing graphic profile, and then I will hire this PR firm that can communicate what it is that I want to do, and then I'm just going to produce all these amazing collections, just going with the flow, and the sales will kick off. I mean, even if that might be a really good idea, I think it's a good idea to be open-minded. I mean, oftentimes you have more than one skill so.. (…) I mean, I at least want to have tried it before I discard it. Also from a purely personal perspective, to see if I have the guts to do it. And after that I can choose. I mean, maybe I realise I want to take on a PhD or do something completely different."

To run with the common notion as seen in more established firms in the industry did not seem like the preferred option, but rather the desire was to do things differently. It is clear that the desirability of becoming an entrepreneur was sufficient; the lower levels of perceived feasibility was more a matter of finding a good enough solution as to dare pursue this desire. The example above highlights a common notion, namely that of doing different things simultaneously; the fashion output needed not be the sole way in which to make a living. Rather, many point at the importance of being willing to branch out in order to maintain a sufficient income. In certain cases, this could even come down to an idea that assignments other than the actual fashion firm were to be the main source of income, at least for some time. A struggle that arises from this, and which numerous informants point at, is to find sufficient time for one's creative endeavours. Combining the desires for venture creation and realisation with other positions, such as teaching or part-time positions at already existing firms appeared difficult, the end result in several cases being that the time spent in one's own studio left more to desire.

DS3: "Well, I mean, I guess it's something that has developed over time, but I think having this freedom for 7 years.. and, I don't know, all internships I've done have been at companies that have managed to make it work and which are still small sized, and it's been amazing. It's a lot of hard work and very fulfilling at the same time. I think that is what I want. At least for now. So yeah, to have a business of my own and try to make it work, and have that freedom. Then again, it's next to impossible to make it work, but I guess that's also where the problem lies. But I think I have to try at least."

The interviews clearly show how previous experience from industry can impact the perceived feasibility of becoming an entrepreneur in different ways. As the quote above highlights, working with already existing entrepreneurial ventures can be triggering in the sense of realising that there are individuals out there doing it. At the same time, the experiences also often highlight the difficulties in doing so, and the struggles entrepreneurs face in trying to make ends meet. This in combination with

lack of knowledge of venture creation, as touched upon earlier, can decrease the perceived feasibility of pursuing one's dream. An intricate balance here becomes evident in daring to still believe in venture creation being an option; a strong perceived desirability is crucial in order to move forward.

All is hunky-dory and good to go
The final group of informants classified as inevitable entrepreneurs expressed high levels of both perceived desirability and perceived feasibility of becoming an entrepreneur; in fact, three out of four informants belonging to this group had already started a fashion firm at the time of the interviews, the fourth one aiming at doing so within the coming months.

> *DS2:* "I have a lot of vision about the, like the environment, like of the future, how are we gonna improve? Like these things, so I really want to like.. focus on that. (…) I have my own label, but I'm also a bit lost with that, because like I'm so.. I think it's also like with.. with the industry, how it is right now, I just get sick of it. But I just need to find my own way, like my part there, which I'm happy with, that I can stand for. So I'm working actually with zero waste methods. And like second hand fabrics, but like good quality second hand fabrics. And I'm just, yeah, kind of developing that idea. (…) I was working a bar after I graduated because of course I have to like earn a living. But then it's also like, that's the tricky thing as well, a lot of my friends are working in this industry just because it gives them salaries. So like after that it was like, I thought it was like, I said like "it's a sign. Now I'm just gonna focus on my vision". Because it's also not really my interest to copy other designers into something more commercial. And yeah. (…) I would like to be within the industry, but I don't want to become this kind of obey, or just become a part of it. And I don't want to come in and be in a position of not changing it, and not change the industry but change the.. within the company. But.. I think it's kind of.. I think of this still, thinking, because no.. there's not.. because I still think that there's like, because for example some big fast fashion firms, they have a department about sustainability. But still what they're doing is not something that I accept. And then I don't want to work with them."

Reasons for being strong both in one's perceived desirability for venture creation as well as the perceived feasibility of actually doing so varied within the group. The above quote showcases a clear example where feasibility more or less comes in secondary – the belief in one's ideas is so strong that venture creation more or less falls naturally, or rather, one finds routes to be able to start a venture regardless. This confirms the results of Fitzsimmons & Douglas (2011) who state that a very strong perceived desirability or perceived feasibility will compensate for a lower level of the other, and thereby still lead to end result of an entrepreneurial behaviour.

As has been highlighted throughout this chapter, the feeling of not fitting in to the current fashion system, or not being willing to work in accordance with how the industry works, is expressed by many of the informants; it simply goes against one's own beliefs to be part of the system. This can be expressed in many different ways, the example above showcasing a strong environmental pathos. The common denominator with other informants becomes that of a desire to change the status quo and a firm believe that doing so is possible.

While the above example showcases how perceived desirability can trump concerns of how to make it work, the data also gives examples of perceived feasibility playing a key role.

> *DS4:* "And I really enjoy the whole business side of things. And then, last fall, me and my friend won this award. And through that, I mean we never thought we were going to win, but through that we were able to start up our own business. So we seized that opportunity. I mean we got some start-up funding as well as advice and courses in business planning, which was really good. In design school you only focus at the artistic aspect. So I guess you could say that now we have yet another year of schooling in how to set up a fashion business and so forth."

As this quote points out, serendipitous events, such as winning an award, can mean a drastic change with regards to the feasibility of moving forward with the intention of venture creation. The fact that the award meant access to resources, in terms of funding and business coaching, solved an otherwise clear deal breaker for many of the informants in the sense of not being able to find a way to attract seed funding as well as business knowledge and market knowledge. Both funding and support systems, such as incubators, are consistently pointed out as important in previous literature on KIE and hence, their effect on perceived feasibility comes as no surprise (cf., e.g., McKelvey & Lassen 2013a; Zaring & McKelvey, 2016). Awards and competitions are a recurrent theme in the data as a potential means for venture creation. The role these events can play varies, from that of offering market visibility to actual funds and other types of support.

What the example above further shows is the importance of an underlying desire for the event to take place. Here, other routes such as further studies or jobs at existing firms are set aside to make room for the dream of becoming an entrepreneur. Furthermore, accessing knowledge on business, that is a combination of business knowledge and market knowledge, is crucial in that it for most of the informants is a gap or deficiency at the point of graduation. This confirms results from previous research of business knowledge being an important factor in successfully attempting venture creation and maintaining the business over time (Malerba & McKelvey, 2019).

DS5: "It's.. I think first, when I came back, I wasn't too sure to only start relying on my own company. It seemed a bit too dangerous or scary. And then they had a job offering and I took it. So it seemed like a good way to start from somewhere and do my own thing on the side. Of course it's like evenings and night time that you actually have the time to do your own things. But the teaching thing is, that's actually something that I would like to do more so now we're actually going through some.. we're discussing to find a way that I could do more teaching for them so that I could substitute my work for the other company with the work at school, so I would have more time for my own things. (…) I wanted to know how it feels like when you're working with merchandiser, buyers, people who buy fabrics, buttons, the ones who are doing marketing and.. and the wholesale managing, and retail managing, and how does it feel to be a designer in that context, compared to being this God that you're being taught to be at school. So I mean, coming down from that school situation to that position in a company is a major, major change."

The discussion of not being interested in making money is recurrent in the interviews and confirms previous literature on artists as entrepreneurs (cf., e.g., Bergamini et al., 2017). The artistic freedom is more important than attracting new customers or projects. To get this type of setting to work full on, in the sense of actually getting a salary that you can live off, appears difficult. Informants point to teaching as a steady source of income in order to being able to maintain such a work style.

6.2 Overview of results: are the intentions realised?

DS18: "I mean, I might be wrong, but honestly, I don't think there is that much drive among the students to graduate and start their own businesses. Other might say "Yeah, I could see myself doing that", but how many actually realise that thought?"

This section gives an overview of the findings as a whole. As a first step in analysing the data collected, I mapped the informants with regards to their actual intentions and behaviours as to get an overall picture of the views on becoming an entrepreneur. As is displayed in Table 6.2 below, 17 out of the 20 informants state that they have thoughts of starting own firms.

Table 6.2
Intentions and initial moves of informants

ID	Degree	Perceived desirability	Perceived feasibility	Entr. intention	Entr. typology	Initial move
DS1	MA	High	High	Yes	Inevitable Entrepreneur	Start fashion firm
DS2	MA	High	High	Yes	Inevitable Entrepreneur	Start fashion firm + continued studies (teacher training)
DS3	BA	High	Medium high	Yes	Inevitable Entrepreneur	Continued studies (MA)
DS4	BA	High	High	Yes	Inevitable Entrepreneur	Start fashion firm + continued studies + teach + other jobs
DS5	MA	High	High	Yes	Inevitable Entrepreneur	Continue work with own firm + work for fashion firm + teach
DS6	MA	Medium high	Medium high	Yes	Inevitable Entrepreneur	Continued studies (PhD) + continue work with own firm
DS7	BA	High	Medium high	Yes	Inevitable Entrepreneur	Continue work with own firm + work outside fashion
DS8	MA	High	Medium high	Yes	Inevitable Entrepreneur	Start fashion firm + work for fashion firm + teach
DS9	BA	High	Medium low	Yes	Could-be Entrepreneur	Continued studies (MA)
DS10	MA	Medium high	Medium low	Yes	Could-be Entrepreneur	Uncertain, potential continued studies (outside fashion)
DS11	BA	Medium high	Medium low	Yes	Could-be Entrepreneur	Work for fashion firm
DS12	BA	Medium high	Medium low	Yes	Could-be Entrepreneur	Continued studies (MA)
DS13	BA	Medium high	Low	Yes	Could-be Entrepreneur	Work for fashion firm
DS14	BA	Low	Low	No	Non-entrepreneur	Work for fashion firm
DS15	MA	Medium high	Low	Yes	Could-be Entrepreneur	Continued studies (PhD)
DS16	BA	Medium high	Medium low	Yes	Could-be Entrepreneur	Continued studies (MA)
DS17	MA	Medium low	Low	No	Non-Entrepreneur	Work for fashion firm
DS18	BA	Low	Low	No	Non-Entrepreneur	Continued studies (MA)
DS19	BA	Low	Low	No	Non-Entrepreneur	Work for fashion firm
DS20	BA	Medium low	Medium low	Yes	Non-Entrepreneur	Continued studies (MA)

Following the adapted typology of entrepreneurs developed in Chapter 2, using the methodology explained in Chapter 4, each interview was analysed with the focus on perceived feasibility and perceived desirability. Figure 6.1 below shows a mapping of all the informants in relation to the typology of entrepreneurs.
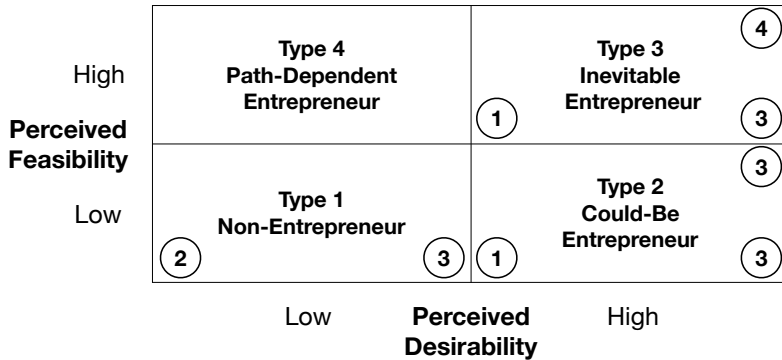
The circles in Figure 6.1 represent the groups of informants as presented in Section 6.1, the numbers being number of individuals at each scale point.

For Type 1, the non-entrepreneurs, the circle in the lower left corner refers to the group labelled as *No, no definitely not*, the lower right corner representing the group *I've thought about it but…*

For Type 2, the could-be entrepreneurs, the lower left corner symbolises the group *I mean it would be fun but…*, the lower right corner representing the group *Is it really possible? I think so*, and the top right corner being the group *I want to, I really do*.

Finally, Type 3, the inevitable entrepreneurs, are divided into the lower left corner as the group *It sort of just happened*, the lower right corner being the group *I'll do it but I'm not quite sure how*, and the top right corner representing the group *All is hunky-dory and good to go*.

As Figure 6.1 shows, a vast majority of the informants do have a desire to start a firm, albeit to a varying degree. What becomes clearer from this visualisation is how the view of the perceived feasibility of doing so is the main differentiating point between the informants. Noteworthy here is that the four individuals found at the top right corner of the typology all also had an own firm, either already established or in the making, at the time of the interview. As the perceived feasibility dropped, the more the informants were also focused on initially getting a job at an already existing firm. Only nine state that they have or are about to enter venture creation.

Chapter 7

Analysis of creative knowledge, business knowledge, founder characteristics and access to resources in impacting levels of entrepreneurial intentions

Chapter 6 gave a description of the findings from the first round of interviews with the fashion designers, conducted around the time of graduation from fashion school. In this chapter, I analyse the findings, focusing on the first research question of my PhD dissertation:

RQ1

What affects the level of entrepreneurial intention for fashion design graduates as potential KIE entrepreneurs?

The chapter concludes with an updated conceptual model for fashion designers as potential KIE entrepreneurs.

7.1 Enriching KIE through theories of entrepreneurial intention

My findings from the interviews both confirm results from previous research on the topic, as well as give interesting additions to the discussions on entrepreneurial intentions for potential fashion KIE entrepreneurship.

Looking first at the ways in which my study confirms previous literature, the answers given by the informants clearly point out aspects of lack of business knowledge and market knowledge as reasons for not becoming entrepreneurs, at least at an initial stage. This adheres well to the KIE literature and the discussion on the importance of not only scientific, technological and creative knowledge, but that this also needs to be complemented by market knowledge and business knowledge (cf. McKelvey & Lassen, 2013).

The answers given by the informants further adhere to previous research in that several express a desire to team up with someone in creating a venture, however the

type of partner does not necessarily follow the logic of that pointed out in the literature. Previous researchers have stressed the importance of having complementary skillsets, not least in relation to the three main types of knowledge highlighted in the KIE literature, 1) scientific, technological and creative knowledge, 2) market knowledge, and 3) business knowledge. From the interviews it becomes evident that among the informants the idea is rather that of teaming up, at least initially, with a friend, for example from fashion school to create a venture. This lack of understanding for the need of complementary knowledge bases is something that is recurring throughout the research, as explained more in detail below.

Looking more specifically at the entrepreneurial intentions, the perceived desirability of becoming an entrepreneur, and thereby create a venture, is in general high among the informants, though some exceptions exist. The levels of perceived feasibility is however to a great extent low for the informants, leading to a decision for a majority of them not to proceed with the entrepreneurial path. This both confirms and slightly opposes existing literature. It has previously been pointed at the importance of relatively high levels of both perceived desirability and perceived feasibility, however it has also been argued that a sufficiently high level of one of the two factors should lead to an entrepreneurial intention and consequent entrepreneurial behaviour (cf., e.g., Fitzsimmons & Douglas, 2011; Ajzen, 1991; Krueger et al., 2000)). The question then naturally becomes what a sufficiently high level of perceived desirability would mean, and likewise how low levels of perceived feasibility can be compensated for? As showcased in Chapter 6, even among informants choosing not to become entrepreneurs initially, the perceived desirability is very high, however the answers from the interviews give that the insecurity in pursuing that pathway is simply too high and consequently, venture creation is put on hold for the time being.

The perceived desirability of becoming an entrepreneur was in general high among the informants, though the levels did vary. The reasons for this high perceived desirability were multiple, however a key aspect that crystallised from my analysis was specific for the setting of the research, clearly tying on to the educational structure at the Swedish School of Textiles. The informants give reports about an educational structure with a primary focus on the further development of creative knowledge. The result of this appears twofold; on the one hand it leads to graduates feeling that their knowledge base is not compatible with that commonly used in industry, oftentimes being overqualified for the positions offered. Furthermore, this continuous exploration and development of one's creativity and creative knowledge throughout the education spurs a desire to continue along the same path also after graduation, nurturing and realising one's conceptual ideas into future creations and potential business ideas. This shows that the perceived desirability is routed both in a resistance towards current norms, as well as in a belief that the own creativity and creative knowledge is possible to transform into innovative ideas to be offered to the market.

Based on the answers from the informants, it is undisputable that a general relatively high perceived desirability of becoming an entrepreneur is present within this specific group of individuals, that is, designers with a higher education degree in fashion design. At the same time, the results show that an actual entrepreneurial behaviour, in the sense of moving forward from idea to venture creation, is not on par with the reported desirability of doing so. This naturally leads the discussion from that of the perceived desirability to the perceived feasibility of becoming an entrepreneur.

Perceived feasibility deals with an individual's perception of whether or not the desired behaviour can be realised, that is, if all necessary knowledge and resources are in place, in this case, for venture creation. It becomes evident that levels of perceived feasibility vary greatly among the informants of this study, however there is a higher representation of lower levels for the parameter. Through my analysis, a number of common reasons come forward, the most prominent one's being that of low market knowledge and business knowledge, as well as insecurities/lack of funding for moving forward with one's entrepreneurial ideas.

In terms of market knowledge and business knowledge, the informants state that interaction with industry has up to the point of graduation been limited, with most referring to their current knowledge base as being acquired through internships during the educational years. Few have previous industry experience and the curricula for the educational programmes witness of little industry interaction throughout the education. The results confirm previous research on KIE and the importance of multiple types of knowledge in succeeding with one's entrepreneurial idea (McKelvey & Lassen, 2013), as well as the fact that KIE entrepreneurs often have several years of work experience within the industry in which they start a venture (Malerba & McKelvey, 2019).

A further interesting point in relation to the discussion above is how the informants reason around acquiring the knowledge necessary to succeed with venture creation. While previous literature has pointed at the difficulties for one person to acquire all the necessary knowledge, meaning that the preferred way to go about in getting access to the knowledge is to employ different people with different areas of expertise (cf. McKelvey & Lassen 2013), several informants talk about collaboration with skilled market and business people as a later stage in the development of their venture. Initially the idea is to be in sole control and potential collaborations mentioned are rather with other creatives, such as former fellow students. This indicates that the knowledge of how to go about with venture creation, and furthermore how to acquire missing knowledge, is something that is lacking within the observed group. The low levels of industry experience is a probable at least part explanation for this, the informants not being acquainted enough with what it means to act within the industry as opposed to the protected environment of higher

education, where more or less the sole focus has been that of creative development and creative knowledge.

In addition to the lack of business knowledge and market knowledge, my analysis of the interviews further highlighted a lack of resources as a common factor lowering the perceived feasibility. Most informants report a lack of initial financing to start a firm. Few have savings to use or other alternative sources of funding, such as help from family and friends. My findings are much in line with previous literature on the topic in that funding is a difficult matter and sources other than own capital or that of family and friends are difficult to find and access (Kohn & Wewel, 2018; Lassen et al., 2018)). In discussing accessing financial resources, my analysis shows that the knowledge of how to go about is in general low, with few having heard of aspects such as venture capital. One way to go about, which is reported by several informants, is that of participating in competitions. Here, cases are present with informants who this way have acquired initial funding to start a business. The odds of actually winning are however low, and several also debate on value of the time and money invested in participating in the first place.

Furthermore, other resources that during the years of education could be taken for granted, such as studio space, professional sewing machines and other equipment, were at the point of graduation something that needed to be invested in. Many report the lack of affordable studio places as a drawback for continue one's creative process. This issue became even more prevalent among those relocating to Stockholm, a decision often based on the desire/need to be closer to the heart of the Swedish fashion industry (for a discussion on the structure of the Swedish fashion industry, see Chapter 2). My findings fall well in line with previous literature on the difficulties for actors in creative industries to access resources, not least financial (cf., e.g., Bergamini et al., 2017; Kohn & Wewel, 2018).

Taken together, the findings from my research in many ways confirm previous literature on entrepreneurial intentions. At the same time, the results partly reject previous research in that I can observe that even though informants showcase high levels of perceived desirability of becoming entrepreneurs, it is not enough to compensate for the low levels of perceived feasibility of doing so.

7.2 Analysing the KIE phase of accessing knowledge and resources

This section relates the KIE phase of accessing knowledge and resources to the informants' pathways of choice of becoming a KIE entrepreneur or taking other options. It does so by discussing creative knowledge, business knowledge, types of resources, as well as founder characteristics in relation to societal influences. This provides an exploration of the qualitative study, in terms of what these variables

mean for the informants in the context of this study, leading to a revised conceptual framework.

7.2.1 Creative knowledge

Seeing that the informants had chosen the path of undergoing higher education in fashion design, they are highly knowledgeable from this perspective. Through the interviews, I have gained a clearer view of what this actually means in this setting. The informants point out the specific character of their education, where a strong focus is towards the academic side. What this means is that the students are heavily trained in design theory and methods, and this is also a key aspect of the concluding graduation collection produced. The view on this profile differs, with some claiming that it gets almost too academic, with not enough focus being put on practical skills of actual garment making. At the same time, the academic profile is also held forward as an advantage in relation to other schools; the students are given a much deeper understanding of the process of fashion design and what it actually means. This duality towards the structure of the studies can clearly be observed as affecting both the perceived feasibility and perceived desirability of becoming an entrepreneur. The specific profile rendered through the educational programmes on the one hand gives a feeling of not being equipped for working in industry, with positions offered not being in line with one's knowledge. At the same time, it spurs a higher perceived desirability of continuing with one's design process independently – a sense of having something to say and contribute with is strong.

More or less all the informants have similar sources of knowledge input, namely preparatory education, university education, and internships. Few have previous work experience of any sort, meaning that their knowledge base is more or less entirely academic at the point of entering industry. In this context, many also point at the importance of choice of internship as to be able to also absorb business knowledge.

In line with previous literature on the topic, my study confirms that potential entrepreneurs in the creative industries have high levels of education (cf. Lassen et al., 2018). In fact, one reason held forward for not becoming an entrepreneur straight after graduation, and then especially after graduating from the BA programme, was a feeling of not being knowledgeable enough.

I have classified all informants as having relatively high levels of accumulated creative knowledge. This refers to the structure of the higher education in fashion design offered at the Swedish School of Textiles, where the main focus lies in the further development of the students' creativity and creative knowledge. This is also exemplified well by the quotes below:

DS13: "Yeah, I've actually been thinking about that, or like, reflected upon that. That, you know, what's been good for me with having studied here is that I've been pushed to develop my design even more, to develop my design aesthetics, to come up with something new, like, you pushed to do that here."

DS18: "But I think it's more art, design.. like, what do you call it? Scientifics, in relation to one another. And like, how you can implement scientific methods and models in the design process."

In my analysis, I have made a distinction in the level of creative knowledge between those who have obtained a BA degree in fashion design (classified as medium high creative knowledge) and those who have moved on to also obtain an MA degree (classified as high creative knowledge). The reason for this distinction is that with two more years of higher education in fashion design at MA level, the level of creative knowledge can be considered to be significantly higher than after graduation from the BA programme. This is further confirmed by the interviews, in which it becomes clear that the two years of MA studies both further developed the creative knowledge of the designers, as well as enhanced their ability to understand and utilise this acquired knowledge. As put by one of the informants:

DS20: "But yeah, it feels like a given to also do an MA, and especially in hindsight when you realise what it actually gives you. So that I am very happy about. (…) And the MA is so unbelievably different compared to the BA in that immerse yourself completely in what you're doing."

Previous research has pointed at universities as a potential source of KIE (cf. Malerba & McKelvey, 2018b). Seeing that my study deals with students, a lot of information and discussions have dealt with that of the university and its role. As discussed above in relation to the informants' knowledge base, there is slight ambiguity in the view of the Swedish School of Textiles and the knowledge it provides. The general view is that of the school producing knowledge that from a research perspective is of great interest, but which is difficult to transform into commercial goods. At the same time, my analysis of the individuals over the course of both BA and MA studies shows that with an increased theoretical knowledge also comes a stronger desire to actually become an entrepreneur, in the sense that industry does not offer stimulating enough positions that are on par with the educational level. Furthermore, the continued studies seem to give rise to a firmer belief in one's artistic output, and therethrough also an increased desirability of challenging the current state of the industry by introducing new concepts and ideas in the form of an own venture creation. My analysis further shows that the university is also seen as a source of income and stability, both through continued studies (MA/PhD), as well as through teaching. This brings forward an interesting aspect of pursuing, at least partially, an academic pathway, not necessarily as a calling in the sense of wanting to do research and further develop the field, but rather as a stable source of income that can lay the basis

of also being able to have a business of one's own without any pressure in terms of making profits off commercialised goods.

My findings show that for those where the intention is not realised into an actual behaviour of becoming an entrepreneur, characteristics also differ slightly. While the strong belief in one's designs is still there, there are also signs of what could be described as a fatigue, both mentally and creatively. This also leads to a desire and decision to seek more stability for some time, most often meaning taking on a position at an already existing firm. This is also linked to another characteristic of the group as a whole (i.e. both those going from intention to behaviour and those not doing so), namely the desire to increase and broaden one's knowledge base. My findings show that this takes the form both of taking on positions within already existing firms, in an attempt to gain business knowledge, but also through continued fashion studies. The latter is especially prevalent among BA graduates who simply do not feel that their creative knowledge is sufficiently developed – to pursue an MA degree is brought forward as a way of further develop the ideas you later want to commercialise. Previous research has shown that KIE entrepreneurs in creative industries are highly educated by comparison to other groups, such as KIE entrepreneurs in manufacturing (Lassen et al., 2018). My findings give further insights to why this might be the case, as further studies here is seen as a combination of wanting to further develop one's skills, and at the same time also have financial stability combined with artistic freedom.

7.2.2 Market knowledge

With regards to industry knowledge, it becomes evident that this is something that is lacking for a vast majority of the informants. This is further held forward as a key reason for taking on a position at an already existing firm whilst simultaneously working on the creation of a KIE fashion firm.

Throughout the interviews, the state of the fashion industry was discussed. Most informants, if not all, agree that the current structure leaves much to wish for, not least when it comes to pace. There is a common dislike with tempo as well as output in the industry, and several express a belief that this is also hampering for the creative output. My analysis shows that this view of the industry structure plays out in two ways. On the one hand it hampers the desire to become an entrepreneur in that the feasibility of doing so appears unreachable – the market is simply too tough. At the same time, the fact that the industry way of operating differs that much from the school way in many cases actually increases the perceived desire start a KIE venture as to not have to obey to current norms and standards.

My analysis shows that the informants' industry and market knowledge is to a great extent limited, something that also affects the view on users and suppliers. While many do express a desire to start a KIE firm, few have a specific target audience for

the products they want to create. Likewise, the knowledge of suppliers and production is very limited. In the cases where companies have been set up, I can observe that there is still a struggle in finding the right audience or market – the business has not been developed to such a stage initially that exact target markets have been set. Even in the cases where this is true, I can also observe the difficulty in reaching those markets, partly due to the threshold of being picked up by buyers at desired outlets.

Though the initial thought of user when discussing fashion perhaps is that of a general consumer of clothing, through my interviews, I have also come to observe that one way of easier reaching out with one's artistic work is to think outside of this specific box. Informants report theatre, dance and film production as arenas to work in and for. Likewise, the informants discuss matters of when their designs go from being commercial goods, in the sense of being sold in stores, to rather be objects more suitable for display in exhibitions, with curators at museums and art galleries coming in as the end customer.

Though many of the informants see the fashion world as highly competitive and crammed with different actors, recent changes in communication styles have opened up for new possibilities on how to reach out. The introduction of social media, and then not least Instagram, has opened up to an easier and less pricey way of at least having a platform for showcasing your work to the world – the issue then becomes how to get a big enough spread of the posts as to attract attention that also leads to some type of commercial transaction, either through the selling of garments or newfound collaborations.

While social media has opened up to possibilities of reaching out, my findings point out that stylists still play a crucial role in getting exposure for one's work. The relation to these individuals is split. The informants report that while stylists do possess the possibility of spreading their designs and therethrough also creating potential future jobs and sales, the fact that much of these collaboration lead to no actual compensation in the form of income creates mixed feelings towards the phenomenon as such. Through my analysis, I can observe that this working for free type of mentality, that has also been addressed in relation to internships, seems to be inherent in the industry, however that it is also something that fashion designers have increasing problems with – to not be compensated for one's work is not viewed as acceptable.

Much tied to the discussion above regarding market conditions, my analysis further shows that the views on opportunities are somewhat contradictory. The set-up of the industry, not least the Swedish context, makes many of the informants debate whether the market opportunity exists, even if they believe themselves to have a strong business idea that should be possible to realise. The Swedish context is here held forward as hindering for success; rather the opportunity is viewed from an

international perspective. Though this of course would be presumed to affecting the perceived feasibility of becoming an entrepreneur negatively, my findings show that it in fact it also has a contrasting effect in that it creates an increased perceived desirability of starting a KIE venture. The existing structure is not attractive enough – in some cases even appalling – creating an increased desire to become an entrepreneur as to be able to question and further develop the current system.

7.2.3 Business knowledge

My analysis shows that in general, to start a firm is also something associated with fear or insecurity. Many of the informants state a feeling of lacking the knowledge necessary from a business perspective – the creative ideas are there, but what does it really mean to transform this into a business? Through my analysis, I can further see that this insecurity is tightly linked a lack of financial resources, as well as lack of knowledge on how to attract those. Furthermore, few of the informants have clear business plans, but rather the idea of the firm is to continue to develop ideas sprung during the educational years.

Through my analysis, it becomes evident that apart from the mandatory internship period during the education, few of the informants have previous industry experience, meaning that the knowledge of how it is set up and operates is limited. While many point at the potential positive effects courses in business making during the education would have on their perceived feasibility of becoming entrepreneurs, at the same time they do not see what parts of the current educational set-up could be replaced with such modules; a duality arises in both appreciating the structure for what it is and at the same time wishing to expand it.

My analysis gives that for the informants who did not pursue their intentions of becoming entrepreneurs, but instead took on positions within an already existing fashion firms, two main reasons for such a decision are observed. On the one hand, the informants want to gain knowledge on how business works, and on the other, they want to get some rest after years of hard training in school. While most say that they are planning on taking on a position within a so-called fast fashion firm, they are also very clear in stating that this is something they will only do for a limited period of time – fast fashion in the long run is considered a no-go.

A common denominator for more or less all the informants with an entrepreneurial intention is that of wanting to change the fashion system. Dissatisfaction with pace and a too commercial focus is very common, as is a feeling of possessing knowledge and abilities to be part in changing this.

7.2.4 Accessing resources

Resources refers to a number of aspects, the most obvious one being that of financing. As with entrepreneurship in general, attracting initial funding for venture creation is hard, and perhaps even more so when it comes fashion. My analysis gives that a lack of knowing how to obtain sufficient financial resources to start a KIE fashion firm is something that lowers the informants' perceived feasibility of becoming entrepreneurs greatly. My findings show that the most common suggested potential financial sources, apart from private savings, is that of entering competitions and applying for scholarships. Few of the informants have sufficient private funds or other types of financial resources when graduating, meaning that alternative routes for acquiring these need to be found. I can here observe that a common way is that of taking on other types of employments aside from one's own entrepreneurial venture. Though the degree varies, my analysis shows that most have other employments of 50% or more, meaning that the amount of time that is freed up for the own company is limited. Also, the type of employment varies. Some take on a position at an existing fashion firm as their main source of income, while others take on positions completely outside the fashion system. A third route is that of continuing in academia in one way or another. Several report that they have part time positions as teachers, either within higher education or preparatory studies. Additionally, continued studies, both at MA and PhD level, is referred to not only as a means of further developing one's knowledge, but also as a source of secure income while further developing one's business ideas.

Other types of resources pointed at includes that of having an actual studio, as well as access to the equipment necessary in continuing one's design process. As explained in Chapter 5, and further confirmed by the informants, the Swedish School of Textiles possesses a great resource in its workshops and machines. The informants appreciate this environment and the possibilities it offers, and at the same time point to the problems that occur upon graduation, in that requiring the same standards on one's own is both difficult and expensive. Likewise, to acquire a studio place is highlighted as both difficult and, not least, expensive.

While my analysis shows that awards are something that has helped a few of the informants in receiving initial attention and recognition for their work, it is also discussed as a potential hampering effect in that it creates pressure to continue to perform at a certain level. Nevertheless, awards have given several informants possibilities of creating full collections, as well as receiving contacts to help out with the further development of their business ideas.

7.2.5 Characteristics of the founder

In terms of founder characteristics, I can observe traditional factors claimed as having a positive effect on the desire to become an entrepreneur, such as having parents or other people in one's close proximity who themselves are entrepreneurs. Interestingly enough, my analysis shows that the very same factor but in combination with the parent being active in creative industries seems to instead have a negative effect – having observed the struggle of making ends meet lowers both the perceived feasibility and perceived desirability of becoming an entrepreneur.

My analysis show that the intention of becoming an entrepreneur also often comes with a desire to do so together with someone. While previous literature points at the advantages of pairing up with someone with a slightly skillset from that of your own (cf., e.g., McKelvey & Lassen, 2013), what I can observe is rather that these desires are linked to personal ties, expressing a wish to start a KIE venture together with friends.

My findings give that the informants who become entrepreneurs showcase general founder characteristics such as self-confidence (cf., e.g., McKelvey & Lassen, 2013). This together with a reluctance towards working according to current industry routines and a feeling of not quite fitting into present standards makes becoming an entrepreneur more or less the sole option for many. The focus of the entrepreneurial idea does however vary across the group. While a few feel they have a new, unique style that they want to bring to the market, for some the reason for becoming an entrepreneur is also for example a strong environmental focus and a desire to contributing in pushing that agenda forward. There are also examples of individuals who use their fashion design skills in a broader sense, working with costumes and set designs for movies, theatres and dance productions.

In analysing the societal influence on the informants, my findings show that most informants feel that the surrounding society does not entirely understand what it is that they are doing, nor what they want to achieve. As mentioned earlier, a frustration over the current state of the industry is a driving force in actually becoming an entrepreneur. Many informants describe the Swedish fashion climate as being too focused on fast fashion and a strict design aesthetic – arenas for more boundary pushing output are few, if existent at all. That being said, my findings also give that many of the informants see a change coming, both through the digitalisation of the world, though this phenomenon is also being accused for making fashion systems even more conform, and that the market is becoming more interested in personalised style.

Through my analysis, I can observe that the pressure of standing out with one's designs and getting the right attention for it is high, something that is brought forward by the informants both as a trigger and a fear. To find the right balance between

creatively interesting designs that will catch the eye of stylists, PR agents and so forth, and at the same time making the designs commercial enough to be sold is a constant battle.

> *DS15:* "Well, I mean, what happens is that you don't get any money. And that's always the case. You have to do something really weird for people to notice you, and that's the paradox in fashion, that you have make super weird things to get noticed, but that's not what people buy, because they generally buy this boring stuff made by someone else. Which means they're not giving the money to the people in the fashion scene that they really appreciate, so I mean, the system in itself doesn't see to it to fund the one's that are considered progressive, within the system. And I mean, it's the same thing when you look at who gets hired by the companies. I mean, in one way I guess it's a good thing that the best and most intriguing ones don't get hired, but at the same time it's kind of sad that they maybe rather take in someone without all this educational background, but rather, you know, a blogger or teenager who's interested in fashion."

My findings give that parents that have creative professions, as well as parents or relatives who are entrepreneurs, is fairly common among the informants, something that can have a positive effect in that they have seen what they get into before actually doing it themselves. At the same time, my analysis gives that family background can also be something that hampers the wish of becoming an entrepreneur, as showcased in the example below.

> *DS19:* "I mean, with my family background too, where everyone are academics, and you know, I'm the second child so the pressure is somewhat off, so I was able to choose to do whatever I wanted instead of, you know, what I should have done, if you know what I mean. For me it then feels completely illogical to take that leap of setting up my own business. I mean, all the insecurity, it just wouldn't be wise."

Through my analysis, I can observe that the informants, in line with previous research on founder characteristics of KIE entrepreneurs, showcase risk propensity as well as strong belief in themselves and their actions (cf. Malerba & McKelvey, 2018a). In addition, my analysis gives that the informants have a common characteristic of a view of a need for change, and a possibility to contribute to this; being part of industry according to current norms is not considered an option.

7.3 Where do they go? A further developed conceptual model for RQ1 for pathways of fashion design graduates

In the discussion above, I have analysed how fashion design graduates think about KIE entrepreneurship as a potential pathway, what factors affect these intentions, and furthermore, what alternative pathways they consider apart from that of starting up their own firm.

In Chapter 3, I proposed a conceptual model for these actions. Through the analysis of the interviews, I have been able to highlight four main pathways for this group: 1) KIE venture creation; 2) enter existing fashion firm; 3) continue in academia; and 4) leave the fashion. Given these insights, I propose an updated conceptual model, as shown in Figure 7.1.

Figure 7.1
Updated conceptual model: RQ1
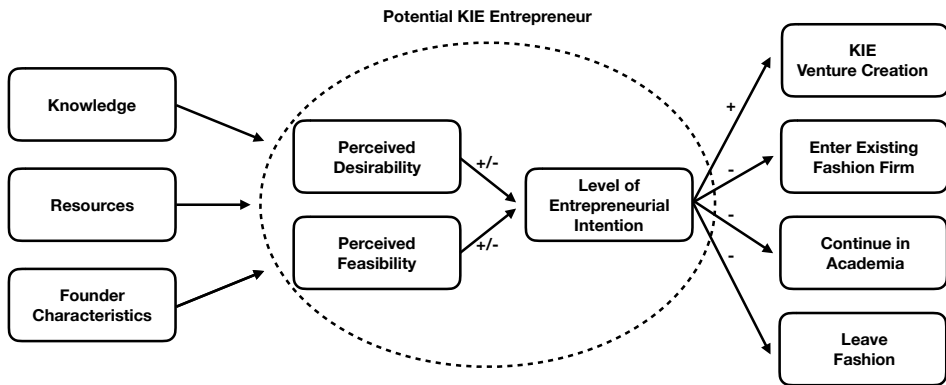
Figure 7.1 visualises how aspects of accessing resources and ideas affect the perceived desirability and perceived feasibility of becoming an entrepreneur. Based on the level of entrepreneurial intention this renders, fashion design graduates either pursue KIE venture creation or, if the level of entrepreneurial intention is too low, choose one of the three additional pathways, illustrated at the far righthand side of the model. As has been shown throughout Chapters 6 and 7, pathways may also be combined.

Chapter 8

Living the fashion dream or not: (changes in) pathways for fashion design graduates

This chapter introduces the findings from the second round of interviews, where I did a follow-up with the fashion design graduates two years later. I describe how the choice of initial pathway post-graduation leads to acquisition of knowledge and changes in perceptions on the ability to access resources necessary for venture creation.

The chapter has two main sections. First, four illustrative narratives are presented, each representing different ways in which post-graduation experience has affected the perception of KIE venture creation as a potential pathway (or not). This is followed by a general description of what had happened to the fashion design graduates' views on potential pathways for the future, specifically in relation to entrepreneurship.

8.1 As time Goes by: narrating the effect of post-graduation experiences on KIE venture creation

This section consists of four narratives, illustrative for the fashion design graduates' pathways over time and how these relate to the informants' perception of the importance of, as well as the access to, resources and ideas necessary for KIE venture creation. The informants for which narratives were created were chosen in that they combined give an overall view of the role post-graduation experience has had for the total group of informants, and what has led to the decision of both continuing on the same pathway, as well as changing pathways over time.

8.1.1 Staying true to the dream: the inevitable entrepreneur

The first narrative follows informant DS5. Her story gives a good illustration of how a strong entrepreneurial intention also lead to KIE venture creation post-graduation, and how this venture has been sustained over time, including the access to necessary resources and knowledge.

DS5 has an MA in fashion design from the Swedish School of Textiles, having received her BA from a fashion school outside Sweden. Becoming a fashion designer was not initially the dream, but rather to work with other types of design, however, due to not being admitted to the desired educational programme, after a number of years she reconsidered and started studying fashion and textile design. Upon the completion of her BA, DS5 still felt that there was more left to learn and consequently, she applied for MA studies. The reason for ending up at the Swedish School of Textiles partly had to do with a desire of changing environments after her BA, but also a feeling of wanting to do studies with a more specific focus, something that she felt was offered there. Though DS5 believes an MA is not necessary for a career in the fashion industry, she would still recommend BA students to also pursue an MA as it offers more time to continue one's experimental process and build one's own design identity. DS5 further saw a different aspect of being enrolled in education in it being a time of safety, where it is acceptable to make mistakes, not least given that time and money constraints are not present in the same way as when working professionally.

In discussing the education at the Swedish School of Textiles, DS5 held forward that students are taught to think in terms of full processes as opposed to sketching. She further saw the education as not being commercially focused, but rather taking a more artistic stance, and with strong focus on the individual. This in turn made the education more targeted towards research, something she believed makes the school stand out, both by domestic and international comparison. Seeing that DS5 received her BA from another university, she could reflect upon the studies at the Swedish School of Textiles in a different way. Her belief was that the education stood out from that of other fashion schools internationally, not least due to its strong focus on artistic development of its students. She saw focus as being more towards methodology for design as opposed to practical skills. While DS5 believed this to be good for the artistic development of the students, she also acknowledged that the strong artistic focus mainly seemed suitable for pursuing a career within academia as opposed to entering industry; the school way of working did not match the standard in industry. This was also held forward as something potentially problematic for graduates from the school in that the transition from studies to working in industry could be difficult. At the same time, the way of working at the Swedish School of Textiles gave her knowledge on how to have a freer design process, for example with regards to how to approach different types of materials. This way of thinking and approaching design she also believed could be a good

starting point for questioning current industry standards. At the same time, the designs coming out of the process seemed more to fit an art perspective, including working with performative arts such as dance and theatre. Talking more generally about the school's attitude towards industry, she believed this to be skewed with a too negative take on current modes of fashion in industry. Throughout her years of studies, DS5 had two internships abroad, gaining experience from both a smaller design studio as well as a bigger fashion firm.

Already during her studies, DS5 participated in design competitions and also set up her own firm, mainly focusing on jewellery design, but also making and selling garments. After graduation, the work with the own firm continued and DS5, who is non-Swedish, moved back to her home country to pursue a career in fashion. There were multiple reasons for this move, however she did hold forward a sense of it being problematic to establish yourself as a designer in Sweden if not originally from the country. Furthermore, having established her own brand in her home country already during her BA years meant that she had gained some level of knowledge of the local fashion industry and the system surrounding it, as well as having an established network through which continuing along this pathway would be easier. This was further discussed, with DS5 pointing at the fact that her home country, unlike Sweden, has a fairly limited fashion industry in the sense of major fashion firms based in the country. This fact in itself, she believed, could have a hampering effect on Swedish students in that the established structure available here posed both greater possibilities for getting a job as a designer at an already existing firm, as well as that the competition on the domestic market was fiercer.

Simultaneously, DS5 started teaching at fashion school, as well as took on a part-time position at an already existing fashion firm, focusing on high street designs. The reasons for taking on these additional positions were multiple. On the one hand, the decision was based on being able to make a living; to make profits off the own firm straight away did not seem feasible and no additional funds in terms of scholarships of start-up funds were available. At the same time, the decision to start working for an already established firm was also rooted in a feeling of wanting to learn more about how the industry works. DS5 had a feeling of not agreeing with current ways of working and doing business in fashion, and at the same time felt that this feeling needed to be tested by actually experiencing it in real life. While working for a more commercial firm could be seen as a way of gaining experience, DS5 believed there to be limited use of it in working with her own firm in that the type of design in focus was so different. She clearly stated that she had no interest in the long run of working in this way in that it was of little interest to her. If continuing to work for an already existing firm in industry it would have to be something where the design process was closer to that which she had developed herself over the years of education. The workstyle she experienced was described as very regulated in terms of the designing, and with only a small fraction of the total output per season being completely new designs. At the same time, there were also positive effects of taking on the position.

Seeing that the firm she worked for was relatively small meant that she got to know more about the whole operations. Also being able to work in a team was held forward as a positive change after years of studying where the design process was to a great extent individually focused.

The decision of taking on other positions outside the own firm also meant that the time left to focus on the own designs through her own venture was limited, something DS5 expressed as a continuous inner struggle with being able to create a professional life that also left sufficient time for focusing on her own creative process. She therefore constantly debated whether or not it was feasible to have a firm of her own. That being said, she did see potential in the firm that she had set up, and this in combination with disagreeing with the general workstyle in more established fashion firms made the entrepreneurial path more or less necessary.

Over time, the initial feeling regarding the industry way of working grew stronger as experience thereof increased. Consequently, DS5 chose to leave the position as design assistant within the already existing fashion firm to solely focus on teaching at fashion school and run her own firm. DS5 expressed that she found it difficult to apply the design knowledge developed in school if working in industry. This was also tied to a general feeling of not being happy with how industry works. That being said, she believed working for established firms as being good for designers who did not feel a desire of being in contact with the full process, from design to production. This further came across in DS5 view on design as a concept, seeing it as a complex one where the actual design is but one part of a more complex structure, including aspects such as ethics and sustainability.

Teaching at fashion school had over time developed into taking a significant role of her professional life, and was also something she enjoyed, at least for the time being. DS5 saw teaching as a means of being able to use the knowledge acquired and developed during fashion studies. For the time being, this was also a solution she felt was good, that is to teach and run her own firm simultaneously. The teaching served several roles, being a way to maintain a social life in an otherwise fairly lonely life as a designer seeing that her firm was so small in scale and run independently. Likewise, she saw teaching as a means to stay focused and continue to develop. The fact that DS5 also had some industry experience she believed was an asset in working at fashion school in that she could also bring in reflections on industry into her teaching.

The jewellery production was doing fairly well, being sold in multiple stores within the country of residence as well as in selected stores in other parts of Europe. The amount of garments that were designed and sold was however limited, working on a made-to-order basis. In doing so, she chose projects where being given freedom from the clients in what is to be designed, this as a way of staying true to her design process.

DS5: "So quite many stores now, and I actually feel a bit weird.. although it was my decision, but now people are knowing me more as a jewellery designer, which I'm not (laugh). I don't even have an education in it, but I'm doing it.(…) So that's been doing quite well, and I'm just hoping to grow it as much so that I can slowly start working with fabrics and garments again. Besides making some small orders, which I'm also doing. But.. but maybe in a bigger series, or I mean not a big series, but like a small collection. (…) But I figured that also with the jewellery that are so many like mixed design stores now, and all these like small design stores field is really developing, that even if like I get my leg in between the door with jewellery, then it will be much easier afterwards to get in with like a selection of garments as well so, I also find this to be a way how to somehow build my market, or understand my market as well."

In discussing the own firm, it became evident that DS5 also over time had the vision of keeping the business fairly small; to be in contact with the entire design process as well as the production of the garments was held forward as an important factor, and also a feeling that had grown stronger during the time working as design assistant within an already existing firm, as work tasks there were highly divided between different individuals, also meaning that each individual only was in contact with a limited part of the design and production process.

Resources for running the company did not come across as ever having been a central question or issue. Rather, DS5 found ways around it by taking on other types of jobs as to make a living. The switch from having worked both for an already existing fashion firm and teaching at university, to only focusing on the teaching part was however put forward as a means of being able to do things that felt more "right" in that the position as designer was neither challenging nor developing enough to feel a long term purpose.

In discussing the long-term access to resources in terms of finances, DS5 was open to bring in investors over time. That being said, to do so was not something seen as a short-term solution. Rather, DS5 expressed the need for establishing the identity and designs of the firm, setting a clear direction for it before doing so. To bring in investors was also something she saw as a great responsibility. Therefore, the structure of the firm and its operations was seen as crucial cornerstones that needed to be in place before making such a decision. Furthermore, she expressed a need for being solely devoted to the own firm before considering such a move; to work only part-time with the own firm and at the same time expand through external investments was not desired. Having seen bad examples of taking in investors also increased the hesitation. In general, DS5 signalled a desire to let operations grow slowly and organically, reinvesting any profits made back into the firm. Likewise, taking loans to facilitate quicker expansion was not seen as an option.

In terms of other types of resources, such as networks and support systems, DS5 pointed out that her native country is beginning to create more support systems for people in fashion, including business coaching and stipends to be able to showcase one's designs internationally. At the same time, at the second interview, she still felt a need for more support in developing the business side of her firm. DS5 has all throughout her work with her own firm received both help and inspiration from her family, with regards to the production of pieces of jewellery as well as in terms of inspiration for types of materials to use. This inspiration was further held forward in her views of the importance of working cross-disciplinary with design as well as collaborating with others in doing so.

Reflecting upon fashion in general, DS5 believed it to be important not only to see the local market where one operates, but rather to see fashion as a global phenomenon as markets differ greatly in terms of what is desired. In discussing Sweden, she believed there to be great potential, not least seeing the magnitude of other creative industries such as music, through which designers could reach publicity and collaborations. At the same time, she believed Swedish customers to in general not being willing to pay for design, drawing links to the country's vast array of fast fashion firms with low price ranges.

This narrative has shown how an individual with a strong entrepreneurial intention also makes venture creation and consequent sustaining of the business possible by finding alternative ways in which necessary resources can be acquired.

8.1.2 An offer you can't refuse: the inevitable entrepreneur changing pathways

The second narrative follows informant DS21. Her story highlights how experiences over time can lead to changes in one's entrepreneurial intention, as well as behaviour, based on alternative opportunities, resulting in a change of pathway.

DS21 received her BA from the Swedish School of Textiles and also began MA studies at the school. In discussing her educational years and the knowledge developed there, DS21 holds forward that the Swedish School of Textiles has high focus on design methods and techniques. She believed the school to be very hands on in the sense of working with materials and garments, skills that have come in handy also when beginning her professional career. Most importantly, she held forward the school's way of teaching how to find solutions for creating patterns of a desired design, as well as the focus of applying garment ideas directly to the body, both which have been approaches that have been helpful in her career as a designer so far.

After graduating from the BA programme in fashion design, she participated in a competition together with a friend. The duo was successful and won, meaning that they were granted initial funds for developing their fashion venture idea, as well as business coaching and courses in venture creation. DS21 initially continued with her MA studies but eventually dropped out to fully focus on the venture created with her friend. Though they had received some initial funding, this was not enough to also cover salaries and all costs involved in running the firm, and consequently, DS21 always had other jobs on the side to both cover ongoing costs, as well as to be able to put some money aside in the unlucky event of being unemployed for periods of time. One of the jobs DS21 had was a freelance position as designer for an established firm.

Working with the own venture was rewarding but also tough, and sales did not kick off as planned, leading to discussions of whether or not to continue, as they had a hard time seeing where the venture would go in the future. When DS21 was given the opportunity to go from freelance designer to a full-time contract as chief designer for the firm she was consulting for, they decided to put the own firm on hold for the foreseeable future. Having had her own venture with her friend was however something DS21 cherished a lot, and also something she believed would be an asset if trying to launch a brand anew in the future as she already had the awareness of multiple potential problems along the road in the initial phase of venture creation.

DS21 sees herself as driven by questioning fashion. Like many of her old classmates, DS21 pointed out that the transition from school to industry was tough, with the logic in how work is to be performed and the pace of the industry being main factors. In discussing possibilities for fashion design graduates to become entrepreneurs, she also pointed at the common practice among established firms to have non-competing clauses, meaning that designers are not able to take on employments if also wishing to set up a venture of their own. This is something that has affected DS21's decisions over the years, where she has turned down job offers due to not being able to negotiate this kind of clause. In accepting her current position, this was also a deal breaker that, due to her having been employed as a freelance designer for some time and the company wanting to keep her, she was able to negotiate. Consequently, she was still allowed to have a firm of her own, operating within the field of design. Had this not been the case, DS21 says she would probably have declined the contract offer and continued working freelance.

In discussing resources necessary to succeed in industry, DS21 points out networks in combination with timing. Related to her own pathway after fashion school, this was a key factor in getting the position she currently holds. The job started out as a freelance position, which she got through close contacts in her own network. DS21 expressed great contentment with the position. The company offered access to an atelier as well as seamstresses.

In working with developing the designs for the company DS21 is employed for, she believes that what is most valuable from her educational years is that of being able to think in concepts, to critically asses one's work, as well as the ability to work directly on the body as opposed to only using sketches. That being said, most of the design work is now carried out on the computer with little hands on work with fabrics and physical garments. When visiting the atelier, she does however also work by showing her ideas to the seamstresses on existing garments. This process is something that has developed over time, being a learning process in relation to the other employees of the company with regards to the designs that are to be made and the process leading up to them. The company for which she is working is currently doing well and consequently, DS21 has also been given more creative freedom in developing designs, not least for smaller capsule collections. That being said, the initial stage of starting to work for the company was tough in that the designs fall quite far from her own style. She does however feel close relation to the type of clothes that are produced and has over time found a good way of being able to work with it. Another big change was that of moving away from the school's more experimental focus to now work for a fully commercial company where mood boards are central to the design process, always with the customer and trends at the centre of attention. The fact that the design process is so different from her initial workstyle also means that keeping her own firm with the possibility of doing smaller projects on the side has been seen as an essential part as to be able to experiment freely.

The current position means a great deal of responsibilities for DS21 as she is in charge of the general design process of all collections for the company, including the work done by freelancing design assistants in her team. The job further challenges her in that the company brand has offerings in several different segments, from basic products to more design and trend sensitive capsule collections. A great responsibility also lies in maintaining the hype that the brand has received in recent years; to stay in trend and style is crucial. Part of her success, and the consequent position as chief designer for the company, DS21 relates to the fact that she came in as a freelance designer as opposed to design assistant. While freelance work can be volatile, it also meant that she was put at the centre of the design process straight away. After having proved her design capabilities for some time, this consequently also lead to the offer of being employed full-time by the company and the possibility of negotiating the terms of that contract in her favour as to be able to keep her own firm on the side.

Being responsible for the entire design process of her current employer is also something DS21 believes is beneficial for her if she were to start designing under her own brand again in that she has learnt how to take into consideration market demands, branding and the full identity of designs and brand combined. Both her current position at the established fashion firm as well as the firm she set up together with her friend has taught her the importance of finding the niche for your designs

rather than focusing on your own aesthetic vision fully; without a market place for your designs, the business is doomed to fail.

Though her professional life initially involved a lot of consideration being taken to saving money for a potential lack of job in the future, her current position has switched this focus a great deal. Seeing that she is chief designer, and thereby the sole responsible for all collections presented by the company, her current situation more deals with making sure to regularly take time off from work as to be able to rest. The tough climate in the industry was also something that early on in her professional life had negative effects on her health. This experience has also made her cautious about her working hours, trying to make sure to make use of periods where the workload is slightly lower as peaks are regular in relation to the release of the next collection.

DS21 was happy with her current position and her plan was also to stay with the company for as long as she found it fun and challenging. That being said, she does miss working with her own label, and the long-term goal/wish is still to have some type of own project through her own venture again. Though DS21 did not have any own operations aside of the position at the established fashion company at the moment, she still had a small atelier at home. Apart from using it at times to make corrections to garments for work, she also did minor projects for herself and friends on the side.

This narrative has given insights on how difficulties in accessing resources necessary in order to sustain a KIE venture combined with the rise of alternative opportunities connected to an already existing fashion firm can lead to a change in pathway.

8.1.3 When reality hits: the birth of an inevitable entrepreneur

The third narrative follows informant DS22. Her story is a good illustration of how industry experience can lead to both a re-evaluation of one's knowledge base, as well as one's ability to access resources needed for KIE venture creation, therethrough changing pathways as to become an entrepreneur.

DS22 has had an interest in fashion since childhood and also found encouragement for her interest from her family. In fact, it was her mother that introduced her to fashion school. DS22 sees fashion as a broad phenomenon with many different areas to which it can be applied, for example through art and theatre. She also expresses a feeling of individualism being the future of fashion.

Like many of her fellow students at the Swedish School of Textiles, DS22 attended preparatory education in textile and fashion design before applying the BA programme at the school. After having completed her BA studies, DS22 applied also to the MA programme, not as an active plan but because friends of hers did the same.

She was accepted and consequently went straight from BA to MA within the same school. Though she enjoys the academic structure and way of being able to work with design within this specific setting, she still feels dubious towards also enrolling as a PhD, though she plays with the idea, saying that maybe it could be a route forward in the future.

When discussing the education at the Swedish School of Textiles, it soon becomes evident that DS22 believes it to stand out by comparison to other fashion schools, not least in Sweden. Compared to Beckmans School of Design, which she believes is much more focused on a teaching model that falls in line with industry and where she also believes there to be more natural contacts with industry during the studies, not least given that the school is situated in Stockholm, the education at the Swedish School of Textiles is very academic. The interaction with industry during the educational years was considered to be very limited, with only rare examples where this type of interaction was part of the courses taken. This was also further shown in the process leading up to the graduation show, where external opponents had been invited and where the views very much parted between the academic stance of the school and that of industry actors as well as the audience. This discrepancy DS22 felt created a difficult situation for the alumni in entering industry after graduation in that the workstyle developed during the studies differed substantially from that used professionally. The education, DS22 believed, was more formed as a preparation for a continued career in academia, doing artistic research. That being said, her views on the education was slightly torn in that she also appreciated the approach; the fact that the end result did not always reach the goal was what became problematic.

The way DS22 experienced the education, she believed it to be a way of questioning current modes of working with fashion, and while she saw it as difficult to apply to the already existing industry structure, she believed it to have potential for triggering innovation and thereby change in industry. For these reasons, she could also see potential in the output from school being used for entrepreneurship with a focus on achieving change in industry. So for example, she held forward that the school does not work with trends and inspiration as concepts in the design process, but rather that focus is put on more academic design methodologies and experimental ways of working with design. During her studies, DS22 had two internships, both at fast fashion firms. In discussing internships more generally, she holds forward that it is difficult to find ones that are paid and the periods offered are generally short.

DS22 has participated in competitions with her graduation collections both from BA and MA level with great success. Both collections were awarded scholarships, and her BA collection won 1st prize. In discussing competitions, she holds forward that they are a potential good way of attracting initial funding for starting a venture, as well as a means of getting attention for one's work and in certain cases a way to get a paid internship with a firm. At the same time, the process of participating is time

consuming and in certain cases also fairly expensive, seeing the logistics surrounding it as well as participation fees in some cases.

Seeing that DS22 has worked in industry for a number of years, as well as having had summer jobs at fashion firms, she believes she has gained experience and knowledge in relation to what it is like to work with sales in focus as opposed to the strong design focus in school.

Networks is held forward by DS22 as crucial to reach out with one's designs. This involves both knowing people in industry as well as being present at fashion platforms such as fashion weeks. Though platforms are seen as important, they also come at a fairly high price in many cases, meaning that it is hard to get in without having initial funds. These problems are also discussed among her old classmates, trying to find new ways in which one can reach out with one's designs. A different angle on networks is that of one's alma mater, that is the Swedish School of Textiles. From this perspective, DS22 talks about it in terms of being able to access equipment at the school to be able to develop one's design ideas also after graduation.

DS22 has been working for fast fashion firm for some time on short term contracts. Upon the expiration of her latest contract she was offered a prolongment which she declined. For the time being she was therefore unemployed, mapping out how to set up her own firm as to be able to focus more on her own creative output.

> *DS22:* "And then I felt that, you know, this isn't what I want to do at all. So, I turned downed an offer for continued employment. So, at the moment I'm doing nothing really. Making plans for the future. (…) Because what I've been aiming at is to incorporate textile design into fashion design, seeing that it is the materials that I'm actually interested in. To work with my hands, experiment. And that disappears completely when you're just sitting in front of a computer screen. So now I'm trying to find a way where I can actually work with my hands. And for the time being, the route forward is to start my own firm and do freelance work. (…) And having worked in fast fashion, I know that these companies buy a lot of prints from people outside their own company. And there's a fair amount of money to make off that. And seeing that I've been there and I know what they're looking for, I mean, they've even explicitly said that they would be interested in buying prints from me if I don't want to take on an actual employment. So then that could be.. because it's really difficult to set up something where your aim is to work creatively and with your hands, and make that profitable. But to take on these types of consultancy-based projects that generate more money, I mean, that would be the ideal, and then, you know, be a lot freer when it comes to your own stuff."

A crucial part of this is to work freelance for other fashion firms, a solution she came to realise was possible when working on short-term contracts at her previous

employer. Her current five-year plan is to have her own business up and running, combining her own artistic design output with freelance assignment for already existing fashion firms. The decision to go freelance and not continue as an employee at a fast fashion firm was rooted in a feeling of not wanting to pursue a career in this segment. If no other options were to arise, she would rather work with something completely different than continuing along the same path. At the same time, DS22 acknowledges that fast fashion does offer some stability for young designers, a reason she believes also contributes to the fact that so few of her fellow alumni from the Swedish School of Fashion have ended up working for more high-end brands; the amount of paid positions at such companies are very limited in relation to the number of graduates from fashion schools worldwide. While DS22 does not want to build her career on working in fast fashion, she does acknowledge the value of taking freelance assignments for such companies, and that the workstyle offered by not being an employee making the assignments more interesting with regards to what you can do.

In planning the setup of her own venture, DS22 has also given financing a lot of thought. The way she sees it, consulting for already existing fashion firms is a necessity to make the business work; by taking on assignments, she would be able to cover the costs for her own creative work. Other ways to do this were also considered, such as applying for grants or taking in investors. In terms of grants, she believed there to be a limited amount of those available in industry, and hence also difficult to access. With regards to investors, her view was that allowing for external inflow of money also means that one has to balance their demands and one's own vision for the venture. Summing up, she believes that taking in investors also comes with the risk of losing part of the joy in the free creative work. As for other resources needed in running a fashion venture, DS22 points at the need of equipment such as machines. Seeing that the Swedish School of Textiles has vast laboratories, students also get used to being able to use this type of infrastructure in their work. Consequently, she was looking into possibilities of accessing such resources, both through contacts at the school as well as ideas of establishing a studio together with friends in order to be able to share the costs. In general, she believed sharing studios with other creatives to be a good idea.

DS22's view of the fashion industry is torn. Having worked for a fast fashion company for a number of years, she has gained experience and also a sense of what knowledge is applicable. Seeing that DS22 has been working for a fast fashion company, she has also learnt the way in which they work with the design process. Though it is not something she would want to do in the long run, she is still able to appreciate the workstyle. A major difference from the way she was taught to work in school is that most firms have their designers and design assistants use computers for their work as opposed to work hands on with the materials in the design process. The fact that she has held a design assistant position also means that it has been limited in the extent to which she is allowed to use her creativity. As compared to

the workstyle in school, the company she worked for focused little on experimentation in the design process, with little use of other equipment than computers. These things combined triggered a feeling and need of creating space for her own creative process. At the same time, DS22 acknowledges that there is a discrepancy between what is requested in industry and her own preferred way of working. Nevertheless, she wants to create space for herself to explore, where the creation need not be limited only to fashion. She appreciates being in contact with the whole process, from design to finished product, and aims at creating one of a kind pieces to sell. That being said, she is also aware of the difficulties for an unknown name in the industry to charge a desired price for her items on the market as the willingness to pay for designs in general is conceived as fairly low. Though she has a desire to work in a more experimental way, she does acknowledge that she is given satisfaction by seeing people wear her designs. She wants to go back to working more with her hands again, appreciating a more artisanal approach to the design process.

Though she believes the industry can be inspiring at times, she also feels that the pace and the lack of creative space, not least in fast fashion, makes it challenging. The creative and design knowledge developed during the years of studies has not to any greater extent been applicable during her years in industry, and she feels that fast fashion does not promote creativity and that it is bad at valuating design knowledge. In discussing her own knowledge in relation to the types of positions she has held so far, she has always felt overqualified for the work. This has been further confirmed by other people at the companies who find the discrepancy between competence based on education and positions held confusing.

In general, she feels there is a lack of understanding of design knowledge in industry and she believes it to be difficult for established firms to change their way of working. She also believes it difficult to use the knowledge developed in school to change these firms, as they in general do not seem open to new types of knowledge. Rather that this knowledge could be applied to form new types of firms questioning the current structure. At the same time, the fact that competition is fierce, with low prices on fashion goods from big players, makes it difficult to enter the market. That being said, if finding one's space, she is confident that launching a new fashion brand is possible.

Though many express a desire to start a fashion firm of their own after graduation, DS22 says that she only knows of few examples where this has actually been the case. As for herself, this was not an initial desire, but rather something that developed over time. That being said, she still has no clear plan for how to go about in doing so, but she is still very much so in a planning phase. A reason for having been hesitant towards starting an own company is that she has little to no interest in actual production. This view is something she still holds on to, meaning that starting a firm

of her own also entails having an open mind for how to go about in making business off her ideas.

This narrative has given insights on how the experience rendered by entering an already existing fashion firm post-graduation can lead to a re-evaluation of one's ability of becoming an entrepreneur in the sense of perception of resources, as to be able to change pathways in order to obtain more freedom in relation to the use and application of one's creative knowledge.

8.1.4 Let knowledge govern: academia as a substitute for inevitable entrepreneurship

The fourth narrative follows informant DS8. Her story is a good illustration of how the experience of testing a multitude of pathways combined, including KIE venture creation, can lead to the choice of one focus with more stability, but where one's knowledge comes to use and is an important asset, leaving KIE entrepreneurship as a potential pathway for future consideration.

DS8 has both a BA and an MA degree in fashion design from the Swedish School of Textiles. Though she initially did have thoughts of studying fashion design abroad, having spent time abroad for preparatory education, she eventually decided that going back to Sweden for her studies was a better option and fit. After finalising her BA, DS8 began an MA in fashion design immediately as she did not feel ready yet; there was more to explore and develop. Her graduation collection caught attention and she participated in competition with some success, albeit not winning.

In reflecting upon her studies, DS8 concluded that having done an MA is not something that prepared her better for working in industry. She felt that the studies made her more specialised and closed in her process, meaning that approaching industry upon graduation was harder. The education, she believed, rather proposed different ways of approaching design as a means of expression. With this also came a feeling of needing some time to gather her thoughts after graduation. In discussing her years as a student, DS8 believed the school to be its own closed world, far from that of the fashion industry. Her feeling was that the students were very competitive and that there was high pressure to perform, both due to the actual outline of the courses and the demand set there, but also seeing that the students felt a need to prove themselves good enough as the competition to be admitted was fierce already to begin with. Though the tough climate meant that they learnt a lot, she also reflected upon what type of knowledge that was conveyed. Seeing that the school over time had gone through major changes in its educational structure, this also meant that focus was much more on the academic knowledge regarding design, meaning that a big discrepancy arose in relation to industry. Also, the fact that the students were taught to experiment in relation to their design process was something she believed made it difficult to convey the end result to the industry. Furthermore, as a student,

she felt that she became used to having subsidised costs for materials etcetera, meaning that at the point of graduation it was difficult to realise the actual cost of constructing and producing the type of designs that she had grown used to be able to do during her studies. Another big difference she felt was the fact that the school taught the students to work physically with their designs, using actual materials. Once having closer contact with industry, DS8 realised that this was far from the world that is the fashion industry in that a majority of the work instead is carried out using computer programmes.

When discussing internships as part of the education, DS8 believes these to be importance, and also that there are great differences in the lessons learned depending on whether it is a conceptual or commercially driven company. The way she sees it, if you have not interned with a more commercial company, entering industry will be difficult as you have no experience of what lies ahead and is expected of you as a designer. DS8 further sees that internships should be seen from two angles; on the one hand, the intern gets to learn what the fashion industry really looks like, and on the other hand, big companies can use interns as an influx of creativity at a much lower cost.

DS8 received a fair amount of attention for her graduation collection, something she reflects upon as both positive and negative. While it gives you publicity and attention, she believes it also creates a lot of pressure in terms of performing and potentially setting up a venture within fashion. Though the encouragement to do so can be seen as positive, DS8 also believes it to be potentially hampering for the creativity, something she also believes she has observed among her friends.

DS8 has considered PhD education as a potential route forward, and offers of such position have also been available. However, she decided not to pursue this route immediately. Instead, she set out to take on several different roles simultaneously. On the one hand, she decided to start her own venture, getting a studio and buying equipment to be able to continue her creative process. At the same time, DS8 started working for a small start-up in fashion and joined their team part-time in developing the business. Furthermore, DS8 started teaching at fashion school.

In terms of her own business, DS8 started out with trying to find a focus point where it was not only about publicity and reaching out, but also about starting to render clients and therethrough sales. Previously, the designs had been lent to stylists etcetera, meaning that it had not been produced for actual sales. That being said, she also acknowledged the importance of PR in the early stages as to create an identity for the brand to be built upon. In starting to work with her own firm, DS8 came to realise that the design process needed to become more efficient; the style taught in school was simply not applicable straight off in industry. DS8 was yet to set the full business plan and idea for her venture. While designing and putting out collections would be one part, she also saw potential in consulting with regards to technical skills

in relation to fashion design. This way she would create a business where she could use different knowledge sets to make a business out of. DS8 held forward that she wanted to start in a more conceptual manner, moving towards the more applied over time. She also expressed a desire to work with full visual concepts. That being said, DS8 also acknowledged the importance of compromising if wanting to be part of the fashion scene.

In setting up her own business, DS8 initially did not have any funding. To finance the acquisition of equipment and the setting up of her studio, she used a loan from a bank. The idea with the venture was to continue explore and develop her design ideas before doing collections that were to be sold. That being said, DS8 did design jobs by appointment, for example for artists in creating their tour costumes. Seeing that she was working both for another start-up and was teaching, DS8 had little time left to spend on her own venture, something she also held forward as problematic as the time to settle in to working with her own designs once she finally had time for it also meant that little time was left to work with the actual design development.

In terms of necessary resources in order to succeed with the idea of a venture in fashion, DS8 pointed at networks as a key aspect, both in terms of knowing stylists, curators and others who make one's designs visible, but also from the perspective of collaborating on projects, be it in terms of designing specifically for someone or for that matter joining forces on a project. As DS8 was interested in more conceptual designs when it came to her own creative output, she had also come to appreciate curators from museums and galleries as prospective individuals who can render both jobs and visibility. The fact that they both appreciate and understand the need of a free creative space, the creative boundaries are much looser, and from this perspective she believed art galleries to play an important role in promoting more conceptual fashion. In terms of financial resources, DS8 believed it hard to be able to save up the capital necessary whilst still in school, meaning that starting a venture directly upon graduation was also difficult. An important aspect of succeeding as a fashion designer is to also have the money to endure the initial period as well as getting the attention in the press.

The part-time position consulting for a fashion start-up included many various work tasks. Though the mix at times could be frustrating, she also appreciated being part from the very beginning in building something new, and she saw the job very much as a learning process, as well as a valuable and rewarding experience. By working for the company, she got to learn a lot about what the fashion industry is like, and the fact that the company was so small meant that the work tasks differed a lot, rendering her different types of experience valuable in the future.

At fashion school, DS8 taught several different courses, meaning that the workload at times was extensive, while as certain periods were left without more or less any

teaching. This was also a structure she hoped would become even clearer over time as it meant that she could have more concentrated time for her own venture.

The fact that DS8 had several jobs at the same time was not only seen as rewarding; to change from one position to the other also required transition phases before feeling that she was completely into the next thing, not least in relation to working on her own design process for her own firm. Consequently, the long-term goal was to be able to focus on one thing, preferably her own firm and her own designs. In the meantime, an important aspect was that of trying to find an as good balance as possible between the different positions as to feel that her own design process is moving forward. Thinking about her own career development over time, DS8 held forward that it is of importance for her to be acknowledged for the work that she does.

Following up two years later, a lot had changed. DS8 was no longer working for the start-up at all, and the own venture was more or less completely resting even though she had some plans with regards to projects for artists. Instead, DS8 was now working full-time at fashion school, with teaching as well as other tasks. Though her desire in the long run still was to work with her own venture and her own designs, she also appreciated the work at the fashion school. To be able to work with students, helping them to develop their creativity and creative knowledge was something she cherished and continuing along the same path was the plan at least for the foreseeable future. The decision to stay in academia and teach is by no means a sole matter of convenience for DS8; she does enjoy teaching and believes it to be a good way to stay close to creativity as a professional.

> *DS8:* "I really enjoy teaching, I think it's very stimulating. (…) And I think the students really like me too, which of course is nice. But that's not the driving force for staying in academia, it's more.. this is gonna sound so corny, but I think I really like having a job where the outcome of what you do is larger than yourself. (…) I think one of the biggest reasons for me not working commercially and instead teaching is that I get to be close to creativity. When I was working commercially, I could just feel my brain cells dying for each day that past. It sounds horrible, but I just couldn't deal with it."

DS8 admitted that she was interested in building a career within academia, her initially plan being to stay within higher education for a number of years to begin with and then re-evaluate.

DS8 says that taking on a position at a fashion firm after graduating from fashion school is more or less like being schooled all over again in that the way of working is so different from the methods taught in school, something that became a bit of a wakeup call, not least in realising how little understanding there is with regards to

garment construction. That being said, entering industry she believes is a necessity in learning how fashion really works, as the school is such a closed environment. From this perspective, she still feels like a novice in that there is so much left to learn before she can analyse the industry to any greater extent. To enter industry, she believes, is a matter of compromising, both regarding one's creative vision but also in some cases in relation to the working conditions one desires. In general, she feels that the industry has reached an untenable tempo with regards to the amount of designs that are produced continuously; a change is both necessary and probable.

DS8 enjoys hard work and learning processes, something that also becomes evident when discussing her life both in school and the years that have followed since graduation. DS8 is fascinated by fashion as a phenomenon and an industry, as well as by the amount of attention one can get over the fact that one is making clothes. In approaching fashion as an industry after many years of studies, she feels that it is almost overwhelming, and difficult to navigate and find one's place in. In discussing fashion as a phenomenon, DS8 holds forward that she feels as though there is too little conceptual fashion present nowadays, something she finds problematic in that this type of output is important for the further development of fashion in general. In discussing the development of fashion for the future, not least in relation to the sustainability debate, DS8 believes that there will always be an ongoing discussion about the forces in fashion and the balance between the sustainable and the commercial. In many ways she also feels that fashion is lagging behind from a development perspective, not least by comparison to other types of design and the use of technological solution and possibilities in creating new advents both for the design process and for the consequent production and follow-up.

Based on the experience she had rendered over the last two years, DS8 was also able to reflect upon the industry as well as fashion education in new ways. Her view of their being great discrepancy between school and industry still remained. The experience of teaching also made DS8 even more so aware of the difficulty in combining the artistic vision of the education and at the same time prepare students for what is to come when they enter industry. That being said, she does see examples of where these issues are being addressed more and more. Though DS8 believes it difficult to apply the knowledge that is developed in fashion school to work life in industry, she does acknowledge that it is possible to sustain and further develop it if continuing within academia and taking on a PhD. In terms of continuing within academia, DS8 is in one way already doing so in that she is teaching at fashion school. At the same time, she has not continued with preparations for becoming a researcher in the sense of doing a PhD. This is a path she does express some interest in, however in that case at a later point in her career.

Over the course of time, DS8 has come to more or less put her own firm resting for the time being. In discussing what resources would be necessary to acquire in order to succeed with the own venture, she first and foremost holds forward that of having

a business partner of some sort, as to be able to work in a team as opposed to alone. Though many famous designers are being held forward as sole geniuses, DS8 points at the team that more or less always stands behind them and supports them, and furthermore that there are key individuals in those teams that make the success possible. Furthermore, comparing to the years in school, she feels a need to have someone to run ideas by and to have a discussion throughout the design process.

In general, DS8 has a fairly negative view of the current state of the fashion industry and the possibilities for a young designer to succeed therein. The fact that the industry to a large extent is governed by fashion conglomerates and that salaries are on average low makes it unattractive to work with fashion. She also thinks that the poor working conditions are a contributing factor to few of the graduates from the Swedish School of Textiles taking on positions internationally. The structure she believes kills creativity, and thereby also the talents that one can spot during the years of studies. That being said, she does acknowledge the odd case of individuals making it as designers. All in all, she believes entering industry being like a new type of schooling right after graduation. Her generally negative feeling about the current structure of the industry also makes her feel that going all in on her own firm is not something that she wishes to do at the moment. The desire is definitely still there, but the harsh reality and a wish for stability weighs heavier for the time being, something that also makes her feel a bit like being in limbo in relation to her own future and career. Entering industry has also given her new perspectives on how to approach the design process. Having worked with specific projects for artists, she has been able to apply a freer design process, meaning that she has also been able to channel her creativity better, in that no consideration needs to be taken to market and sales. To have this free design process is also something she cherishes, saying that one way of approaching design could be to find other outlets for it, in that the industry structure as such is not stimulating at all.

This narrative has given insights on how the struggle to acquire necessary resources for venture creation, combined with a desire to gain industry experience, can lead to a situation where the own venture is eventually given low priority due to both money and time constraints. The narrative further illustrates how the desire of being able to use one's creative knowledge also can be fulfilled through a continued pathway within academia, however that the dream of the own venture still lives on.

8.2 The greater picture: mapping of the informants' changes in entrepreneurial intention

Section 8.1 above presented four illustrative narratives for the effect of initial post-graduation pathways on the informants' perception of resources and knowledge necessary for entrepreneurship, and how the acquired experience may have affected their pathways over time. This section gives an overview of all the informants'

entrepreneurial intentions at the time of the second interview, as well as an account of (changes in) pathways.

In line with the structure displayed in Chapter 6, I mapped the informants participating in the second round of interviews based on the reported perceived feasibility and perceived desirability of becoming an entrepreneur, using the adapted typology of entrepreneurs as presented in Chapter 3.

Figure 8.1
Mapping of informants' entrepreneurial intentions: two years later
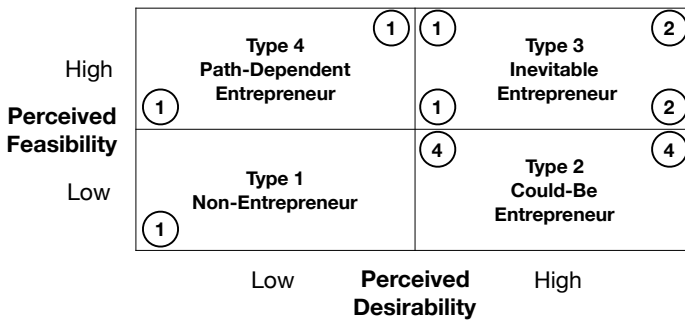
When comparing the mapping to that presented in Chapter 6, one can see that there is a trend of especially increased levels of perceived feasibility. Seeing that the informants were not identical for the two rounds of interviews, the findings were further examined as to verify this presumed result, focusing on the informants' reports on the experience from the last two years and the role that had played for their current intentions. This is illustrated in Table 8.1 below.

Table 8.1
Changes in perceived feasibility and perceived desirability

Change in perceived feasibility	Change in perceived desirability	No. of informants
No Change	No Change	8
No Change	Increase	
No Change	Decrease	1
Increase	No Change	1
Increase	Increase	5
Increase	Decrease	
Decrease	No Change	
Decrease	Decrease	2
Decrease	Increase	

Table 8.1 gives that the informants can be divided into three groups: 1) No changes; 2) Decrease in perceived feasibility and/or perceived desirability; and 3) Increase in perceived feasibility and/or perceived desirability. Approximately half of the informants remain relatively stable over time, six report a positive development, and three a negative. Table 8.2 gives a further overview of the informants, including their current positions and plans for the future.

Table 8.2
Intentions, current position and plan for future

ID	Degree	Perceived desirability	Perceived feasibility	Entr. intention	Entr. typology	Current position	Plan for future
DS2	MA	High	High	Yes	Inevitable Entrepreneur	Own fashion firm (with friend) + extra jobs (outside fashion)	Same path + potential continued studies (other topic)
DS4	BA	Low	Medium high	No	Path-Dependent Entrepreneur	Teaching + business coach + entr. ideas (outside fashion)	Same path, probably not moving back into fashion
DS5	MA	High	High	Yes	Inevitable Entrepreneur	Own fashion firm + teach	Same path
DS6	MA	Medium high	High	Yes	Inevitable Entrepreneur	Continued studies (PhD) + own fahion firm	Same path (academia + own firm)
DS7	BA	High	Medium high	Yes	Inevitable Entrepreneur	Continued studies (MA)	Start working on own firm again
DS8	MA	Medium high	Medium low	No	Could-be Entrepreneur	Work in academia	Same path + own firm over time
DS9	MA	High	Medium low	Yes	Could-be Entrepreneur	MA graduate	Start own firm + work for fashion firm
DS10	MA	Medium high	Medium low	Yes	Could-be Entrepreneur	Continued studies (outside fashion)	Continue in academia (PhD) + potential own firm
DS11	BA	Medium high	Medium low	Yes	Could-be Entrepreneur	Work for fashion firm	Start own firm + potentially leaving fashion
DS12	BA	Medium high	Medium low	Yes	Could-be Entrepreneur	Continued studies (MA)	Uncertain (own firm OR work for fashion firm OR PhD)
DS16	MA	High	Medium low	Yes	Could-be Entrepreneur	MA graduate	Work for fashion firm + start own firm (over time)
DS18	BA	Medium high	Medium high	Yes	Inevitable Entrepreneur	Work for fashion firm + own fashion firm	Switch firm OR Continued studies + own firm (small size)
DS19	BA	Low	Low	No	Non-Entrepreneur	Work for fashion firm	Work for fashion firm
DS21	BA	Medium low	High	Yes	Path-Dependent Entrepreneur	Work for fashion firm	Work for fashion firm OR start own firm again
DS22	MA	High	Medium high	Yes	Inevitable Entrepreneur	Quit fashion firm	Start own firm (incl. consulting)

ID	Degree	Perceived desirability	Perceived feasibility	Entr. intention	Entr. typology	Current position	Plan for future
DS23	MA	High	Medium low	Yes	Could-be Entrepreneur	MA graduate	Start own firm + work for fashion firm
DS24	MA	High	Medium low	Yes	Could-be Entrepreneur	MA graduate	Start own firm + work for fashion firm (short term)

Given the results presented in Chapter 6, a majority of the informants were classified as either could-be entrepreneurs or inevitable entrepreneurs. Following up two years later, I could see that few had pursued these intentions. Only three firms, where the aim was to produce clothing under one's own brand, had been set up. In addition to the brands that were already started, the second round of interviews also included three informants that at the time were in the process of doing so at varying degrees. One reason for not having come further with this, which will be discussed more in-depth in Chapter 9, is that of having continued with further studies of fashion design.

Chapter 9

The effects of knowledge acquisition over time: a further exploration of entrepreneurial intentions and KIE

In Chapter 8, I presented the findings from the second round of interviews, using four illustrative narratives to describe the effect of post-graduation experience on the fashion design graduates' pathways over time, followed by an overview of all informants. This chapter analyses these findings to address the second research question of this dissertation:

RQ2

How do post-graduation pathways affect fashion design graduates'
perceptions of the relevant knowledge and resources needed for KIE
venture creation?

This chapter has three main section. First, I analyse the interviews in relation to the fashion design graduates' (changes in) pathways. Second, I go more into detail with regards to the effect of acquisition of different types of knowledge, as well as changes in the perception of resources needed for KIE venture creation. Third, based on the analysis from the previous sections, I propose an updated conceptual model for RQ2.

9.1 Analysing the (changes in) pathways

From the first round of interviews, I have identified the following four main pathways for the informants, post-graduation:

1. KIE venture creation
2. Entering existing firm
3. Continue in academia
4. Leave fashion

In this section, I analyse the group of informants as a whole in relation to their choice of pathway. I do so, based on the updated conceptual model for RQ1, as visualised in Figure 7.1 in Chapter 7. Specifically, my analysis focuses upon how the initial pathway chosen by the fashion designers, post-graduation, affects three elements of the KIE venture creation, from the perspective of these fashion designers as potential KIE entrepreneurs. The three elements are 1) acquired knowledge; 2) perception of resources; and 3) founder characteristics. Furthermore, I evaluate how the combination of these three elements, in turn, lead to an increased or decreased level of both perceived desirability and perceived feasibility of becoming a KIE entrepreneur in fashion.

9.1.1 KIE venture creation

My findings give that only a few informants reported having attempted venture creation. In discussing this matter, it is important to make a distinction with regards to what types of firms have actually been created. Several informants had their own firms through which they did freelance work, as opposed having their own brands in the sense of trying to launch their designs under an own label.

In terms of actual fashion brands started, that is, firms where the founder create a fashion design output in own regime, two such firms were still up and running. The informants behind these brands were observed already in the first round of interviews as having started their own ventures and showcased high levels of both perceived feasibility and perceived desirability of becoming entrepreneurs. All still worked in small scale, with the firms having been active for 2-4 years. The success varied, but none had reached a level of both covering the costs of the firm operations as well as salaries.

An interesting aspect was that of the focus of the designs; both combined fashion design, as related to clothing, with other types of design output, such as accessories. The whole idea of branching out to other types of design products was reported as a means to actually sustain the business as well as build a brand and an image to then later on build on when focusing more on clothing.

DS2: "Yeah, so I started a design studio with my friend. I kind of.. yeah so we actually kind of started from a different, or like the same concept that I had started but kind of different perspective. We, like our first project we did was like a mirror, jewellery made from discarded mirrors from a mirror factory. And from that we developed that to buying like second hand clothes and second hand fabrics from like thrift stores and we made a clothing line from that. And then we went to Berlin, to the ethical fashion show I think it's called, with that line. And it went really well but we kind of, there we kind of saw that it doesn't, you can't really go and sell your stuff when it's upcycle because you only have like one garment of it. So we kind of like went back and, because we had a really good, what you say, like a.. like people are really liking what we're doing and at that stage the concept and everything, so we kind of figured that we were on the right track, but we just needed to rethink how we could like sell to like other stores and go into production. So we went more into looking for old stock that kind of I had been doing before as well. And also in the meantime, we decide to also do like a small collection that we could just produce. So we did like a blanket collection. Like a woven blanket, but that's just produced like not from waste material. We just decided to add a little bit just so we could sustain our business. But still kept the concept, like it's really in a, produced in a small amount. Like in an ethical production company and everything, but we couldn't use like organic cotton or anything. But, we still tried to do our best with those. So we did that and then we started just to continue making like jewellery. We opened a store (laugh)."

While this branching out on the one hand was seen as a positive thing in being able to sustain and expand the business, the informants also reported that it made them go somewhat astray from their original plan of working full on with fashion design in the sense of making garments. The success of the other products had in some cases lead to a situation where what the person in question was known for in fact was not the garment designs, but rather other things such as jewellery. The fact that the informants chose to also including other types of products in their design ventures points at increased market knowledge, in the sense of opportunity recognition (Malerba & McKelvey, 2019). At the same time, the worries expressed by the informants in terms of becoming more known for their jewellery designs as opposed to being able to focus on fashion design in terms of garments falls in line with previous research on creative industries with regards to market positioning, and the difficulties that can arise if establishing yourself within a niche that is not necessarily the desired one in the long run (cf., e.g., Entwistle, 2002; Aspers, 2001).

The informants have had difficulties in solely focusing on their own ventures and the subsequent fashion labels; both had other positions on the side to have a steady income. While the ventures were able to cover their own costs, the informants had to have additional jobs as a means to make a living.

DS2: "No, I have other jobs (laugh). Like I teach yoga, I clean, I do smaller projects, like yeah, just like whatever. But it's like we, we don't have to put our own money into the products and we are getting like money in to produce again so it's still like, we didn't have to put any, like I didn't have to take a loan or put some money to it, so it's kind of.. it's still sustaining in that way but we still have extra jobs."

Previous literature has pointed at the difficulties for KIE entrepreneurs in creative industries to attract enough funding for the financing of their ventures, and that the problems are even greater than for KIE ventures in for example manufacturing industries (cf. Lassen et al., 2018). While the difficulties on the one hand are further confirmed by my findings, what the interviews further point at, is a reluctance from the fashion design graduates to let external funders into their ventures. While the interview material has included designers who have set up clear goals on how to expand and by when, also having access to seed funding and business coaching for creating a business plan and setting up production at external factories, the more common notion is rather to apply a slow, organic growth strategy, keeping production in-house and more or less made-to-order. This was also reflected in the overall goals of the firms in the long run, with no clear ambition of growing to any significant size over time. Rather, the small format with also being able to stay in control of all operations over time was part of the target. My findings give an interesting dimension to the research presented by Lassen et al. (2018), who through their quantitative analysis observed that KIE ventures in creative industries in general are smaller in size than KIE ventures in manufacturing industries. While it at first glance could come across as being a sign of it being difficult to grow the ventures, my research suggest that this could rather be a deliberate choice and specific feature of the venture per se. This focus on keeping the ventures small, and growing organically over time, could also be part of the explanation as to why these informants also at the second round of interviews showed high levels of both perceived desirability and more importantly so perceived feasibility. To have other jobs on the side as to cover living costs was not reported as a problem, but rather seen as stimuli. Furthermore, the fact that the production of goods was kept at a small scale and in-house, spreading the designs mainly in the local communities where the informants were based, created a completely different outline for what needed to be feasible.

In addition to those that had started a venture with the main focus on fashion brands of their own, my findings also included a group of informants that had started up businesses but rather from the perspective of doing different types of freelance work, mainly with short-term contracts for established firms, but also other types of assignments such as costumes for dance and theatre, as well as teaching. As for the informants who focused on producing designs under their own brand, also within this group it was common to have an employment aside from the own venture, either at

an already existing fashion firm or within academia. The own venture was then rather seen as a means of being able to take on side projects with a different focus than the everyday job.

> *DS6:* "I mean, it's been going well. I guess I'm not that interested in, or like I don't really feel like I have to make money off my company. And I've always been working extra meaning that I've never had any pressure on the company to start making a lot of profit. So, I mean, therefore it feels ok."

This way of working falls well in line with previous research on creative industries and the value proposition governing the entrepreneurial ventures, where my findings confirm the idea of being governed by other values than monetary (cf., e.g., Bergamini et al. 2017).

In discussing venture creation, one aspect that is addressed is the difficulty of doing so if working for an already existing firm, in that most firms have strict non-competing clauses, here meaning that employees are not allowed to have an own firm that operate within fashion. Several report that this fact has led to individuals they know having to shut down their own businesses in order to keep their employment. A way of getting around this was to full on do freelance work, an option that is also brought forward especially by informants with a few years of work experience; a potential change in intention and behaviour is underway. This focus on freelance assignment in one way could be argued as falling in line with Lassen et al. (2018), who observed that KIE firms in creative industries to greater extent based their ventures on service innovations. The type of ventures that the fashion designers here set out to do build on this idea of how to provide their knowledge intensity to already existing actors on the market through the creation of their own venture.

Figure 9.1 visualises how KIE venture creation as initial pathway post-graduation affects perceived desirability and perceived feasibility of KIE entrepreneurship as potential continued pathway.

Figure 9.1
**Effects of initial pathway on perceived desirability and perceived feasibility:
KIE venture creation**
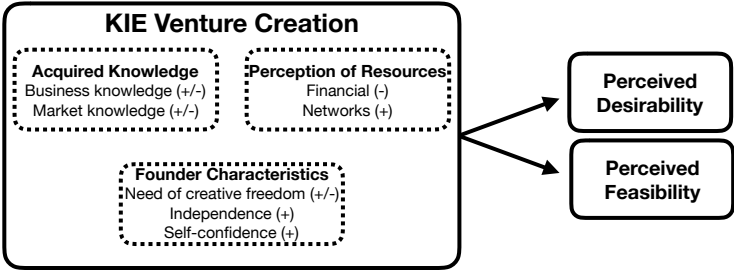
As visualised in Figure 9.1 above, my analysis of those who start a KIE venture as their initial pathway post-graduation indicates that this choice had a generally positive effect on the informants' perceived feasibility and/or perceived desirability in the two years that had passed since the first round of interviews. With regards to the *acquired knowledge*, while increased business knowledge and market knowledge rendered through the interaction with the fashion system would be assumed to have a positive effect of the perceived feasibility of becoming an entrepreneur, what I further observe here is that this interaction also functions as a catalysing effect for a change in behaviour. The knowledge base is broadened, however being part of the already existing industry structure also created an increase in perceived desirability for venture creation, as a means to also open up time and space to further focus on one's creativity and creative knowledge. The business knowledge and market knowledge are then used to set up a strategy for how to attract enough funding through other projects as to be able to sustain this creative space. Hence it can be argued that the acquisition of knowledge and a broadening of the knowledge base gives rise to new perspectives on opportunity recognition. In terms of the *perception of resources*, my analysis shows that the informants who choose to become KIE entrepreneurs still struggle with accessing enough financial resources, and financing consequently remains as being perceived as hindering. What I further find is that this choice of pathway also expands the informants' networks, thereby giving a positive effect on their perception of how to access resources. Finally, my analysis shows that with regards to *founder characteristics*, for the informants who had become KIE entrepreneurs, this pathway further strengthened their need for independence and creative freedom, however that, depending on the success of the venture, self-confidence could be strengthened or weakened. Taken together, I interpret that these three elements generally can lead to an overall positive effect on perceived desirability and perceived feasibility of KIE entrepreneurship also as a continued pathway.

9.1.2 Entering an already existing firm

Out of the full group of informants, five had moved on to take on positions at already existing firms. In a majority of the cases, a main reason for this decision was to have some stability in life, mainly from a financial point of view. That being said, another main reason was that of acquiring business knowledge as a complement to the artistic knowledge accumulated during studies. Several informants expressed a dissatisfaction with their work situation, both from an artistic as well as economic perspective. Though being highly educated, my analysis gives that it is difficult for the fashion design graduates to get a position that matches their skills. Rather, most end up at positions as design assistants, meaning that the majority of the work carried out deals with corrections and alterations of already existing garments and sketches.

> *DS18:* "I mean, it's a bit of both, because I'm mainly sitting there being, well I shouldn't say grumpy, but I find it very hard to go all in with doing things if I feel it's something I can't support, or that goes against my values. And I don't put that much pride into my work (…). I'm assisting this designer, and our views on how to construct a garment and sell it are very different. And seeing that this is a big firm with high profit goals (…) at the end of the day, it's all about selling as much as possible to as many as possible. And that's something you of course could question, but this is where I'm at, and this is what I get payed to do, so then I do it."

The quote above illustrates well the sense of not being driven by the same value proposition in relation to the designs produced, an aspect that has been discussed extensively in the literature on entrepreneurship in creative industries (cf., e.g., Bergamini et al., 2017; Potts et al., 2008). What the analysis of the interviews from my study adds is an aspect of how this different, and to a certain degree opposing, view on value creation in itself also over time can function as a catalysing effect for a change in perceived desirability of becoming an entrepreneur, making designers who initially did not see entrepreneurship as a potential pathway post-graduation to re-evaluate their choices. Several report taking on other tasks to deal with this dissatisfaction, one way being to starting a venture in addition to having an employment at an existing fashion firm. Another observed route was that of taking on alternative or additional work tasks in addition to the main focus of one's position as to make the work situation more interesting.

In discussing the use and impact of the creative knowledge developed during the educational years and its applicability in working in industry, a majority of the informants who have taken this route says that it to a great extent is not; the solid theoretical base with tight links to design research from their education is not valued or used.

DS19: "I was talking to a colleague the other day, and said that we were gonna have this interview and discuss what you're taught in school and what you then do in your professional life. And she was like "God, I basically don't use any of that knowledge". I mean, you have it on paper, but yeah. But then of course there are the small things, like how to sew and that you have deeper understanding for fits and patternmaking, but I mean the more advanced design courses that I took, those I don't feel that I use at all. (…) And I mean, that feels both good and bad. But for the job that I have in fast fashion that's not necessary. It's more that, that it's abundant. But if I make something for myself at home, which very rarely happens, then I like drape and stuff like that, and of course then it's really fun to know that you can do stuff like that. But I mean, at work you mainly sit in front of the computer and make sketches."

This generally shone through with a sense of bitterness or hopelessness in that they despite their knowledge level in a vast majority of the cases were employed at low, fairly unqualified positions. The bitterness was further strengthened by the fact that seniors within the fashion firms were lacking fashion education more or less completely; rather they had acquired their positions by climbing the internal career ladder, from working on the floor in one of the company's stores to now finding themselves as part of, or even managing, a design team.

While the discussion so far mainly has dealt with those not feeling content with the situation of working for an already existing fashion firm, the opposite was also present in my findings. Two informants reported a sense of satisfaction with their current positions, with no immediate plans to make any changes. The reason for this satisfaction was however quite different. On the one hand, one informant was employed as design assistant within a bigger fashion firm and had been so more or less since graduation from fashion school. This was a conscious and desired decision; the stability of the position and the potential development related to this type of position were fulfilling, and the low levels of both perceived desirability and perceived feasibility of becoming an entrepreneur already reported in the first round of interviews remained stable. This can be linked to the discussions of founder characteristics for entrepreneurs and the importance of self-confidence and a will to take risks (McKelvey & Lassen, 2013). On the other hand, the data also gave an example of a relatively uncommon path, namely that of having achieved a position as chief designer for an already existing fashion firm. The informant in question had initially set out by creating a fashion firm and fashion label. When the freelance work, initially meant as a means to render funds to the own firm, gave the result of being offered a fixed position, a change mainly in perceived desirability of being an entrepreneur was observed. Though the informant held forward that the idea of having an own fashion firm still was there, albeit latent, the stimuli and opportunities connected to the role as chief designer were too big to turn down. The informant reported that the way of designing in fashion school was not the main approach in

the work as chief designer, however it became evident that the creativity and creative knowledge developed during the educational years still was seen as a major asset and help in approaching the work tasks given. This combination of creative stimuli together with the security of a fixed position and income jointly meant that the dreams of being an entrepreneur were put on hold for the foreseeable future. This falls well in line with the entrepreneurial intentions literature and the argument that a strong intention also is dependent on high levels of both perceived desirability and perceived feasibility of becoming, and in this case remaining, an entrepreneur (cf. Krueger et al., 2000; Fitzsimmons & Douglas, 2011).

Figure 9.2 visualises how entering an existing fashion firm as initial pathway post-graduation affects perceived desirability and perceived feasibility of KIE entrepreneurship as potential continued pathway.

Figure 9.2
Effects of initial pathway on perceived desirability and perceived feasibility:
entering existing fashion firm
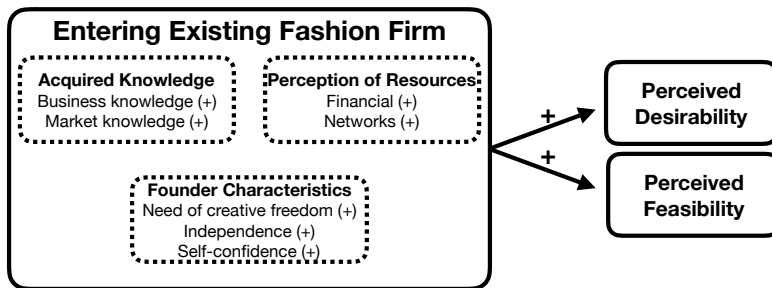
As shown in Figure 9.2, my analysis indicates that entering an existing fashion firm had impact with regards to acquired knowledge, perception of resources, and founder characteristics. For *acquired knowledge*, this pathway increased the fashion design graduates business knowledge and market knowledge. Furthermore, in relation to *perception of* resources, having taken this pathway gave the fashion designers insights on alternative ways to access financial resources necessary for KIE venture creation, as well as expanded the informants' networks within fashion, leading to an overall positive change in perception of resources. Finally, I could observe effects upon *founder characteristics*, in that their perceived lack of creative stimuli in this pathway due to, in general, junior positions within the fashion firms, increased the fashion designers' expressed need of creative freedom, as well as need of independence. These changes in turn gave increased self-confidence for becoming an entrepreneur. Taken together, I interpret that these three elements thereby can lead to an overall positive effect on perceived desirability and perceived feasibility of KIE entrepreneurship as a potential future pathway.

9.1.3 Stay in academia

As a first move post-graduation, several of the informants had continued with further studies in fashion design at MA or PhD level. For this reason, they were just about to actually enter industry for the first time, or for that matter were still in the education system, at the time of the second interview. A vast majority also chose to stay at the Swedish School of Textiles for this process, with only two switching academic environment for MA studies.

The reason the fashion designers give for continued studies was in general related to a feeling of having more to give and explore, as well as a feeling of not being fully ready to work as a designer. The openness of the academic system to this type of endeavours was therefore seen as attractive. As already explored in Chapters 6 and 7, staying in academia was held forward as a good option for several reasons. On the one hand, its exploratory nature opened up for a process where the informants could continue to follow their own creative vision, thereby exploring one's aesthetic output. On the other, the system also allowed for this type of exploratory focus without having to think about earning an income off the designs, in that MA students had access to student loans and PhD students were employed by the fashion school. From the interviews, it was further held forward that students also get substantial discounts on fabrics and other materials, such as buttons and zippers, necessary for their work during their educational years. This combination of access to resources and relatively free creative workspace made academia highly attractive.

Their continued focus on their own creativity and creative knowledge also appears as a driving factor not least for an increase in the perceived desirability of becoming an entrepreneur. The reason is twofold: on the one hand it comes as a response of feeling that industry will not be able to offer a position that is stimulating enough, and on the other, the high levels of creative knowledge also renders the feeling of having something new to say and express with one's own designs. These observations offer further insights to the results presented by Lassen et al. (2018) and Kohn & Wewel (2018) of KIE entrepreneurs in creative industries in general also having high degrees of university education. From my analysis, this fact can be seen as rooted in three main aspects: 1) a desire to continue the development of one's creative knowledge before aiming at venture creation; 2) higher education as a means to have secured financing for one's creative work process; and 3) the levels of creative knowledge rendered through this process leading to a higher degree of perceived desirability of becoming an entrepreneur based on a will to apply and further develop one's creativity and creative knowledge also post-graduation.

Despite this strong desire to pursue venture creation as to be able to focus on one's own designs, few see this as the primary route forward to begin with. Rather, focus was put on finding a job within the already existing fashion industry, slowly setting up one's venture on the side and figuring out its focus. The process of doing so did

however differ, mainly adhering to the informants' perceived feasibility of becoming an entrepreneur. One informant reported to have been in contact with a business coach as to set up a business plan and move further with the ideas of realising a fashion firm. Lack of resources and the need to establish a customer base and presence on the market nevertheless meant that this process was to be complemented with other jobs, initially outside the fashion industry and in the longer run by applying for positions at firms in line with the own label idea as to gain specific both creative knowledge as well as business knowledge and market knowledge.

Apart from continued studies, there were also individuals who, at various degrees, had chosen to stay within the academic system as teachers, without pursuing a career as a researcher by also enrolling for PhD studies. In observing these informants holding long-term positions at fashion schools, it also became evident that this was a desired complement to working with one's own designs through an own venture, as opposed to earning an income by working at an already existing fashion firm. To teach thereby became both a desired pathway after completing studies in fashion design, as well as a means to access resources in order to sustain one's own venture.

Figure 9.3 visualises how continuing in academia as initial pathway post-graduation affects perceived desirability and perceived feasibility of KIE entrepreneurship as potential continued pathway.

Figure 9.3
Effects of initial pathway on perceived desirability and perceived feasibility: continue in academia
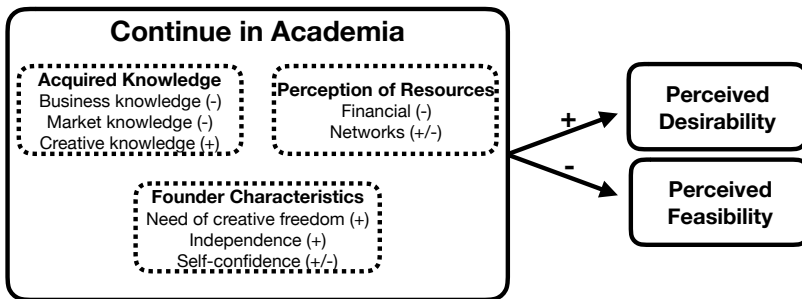
As illustrated in Figure 9.3 above, my analysis gives that those who continue in academia as their initial pathway have a different impact in relation to acquired knowledge, perception of resources and founder characteristics. For *acquired knowledge*, the informants choosing this pathway continue to develop their creative knowledge. At the same time, continuing in academia means that the informants do not develop their business knowledge and market knowledge. This in turn has effects on their *perception of resources* in that they do not find or explore ways of attracting funding, nor expand their networks to any greater extent. With regards to *founder*

characteristics, the continued focus on developing their creative knowledge also increased their perception of the need for creative freedom and need for independence. At the same time, the lack of interaction with the fashion system meant that their self-confidence could both increase and decrease. Taken together, these three elements had the effect of the fashion designers perceiving higher levels perceived desirability, but lower levels of perceived feasibility of KIE entrepreneurship as a potential future pathway.

9.1.4 Leaving the fashion industry

The discussions above have dealt with the informants who, in one way or another, have continued along the path of their studies, that is to work with fashion design. While few, at the second round of interviews, there was one group of informants for which the pathway in the two years that had passed had changed in a new direction, more or less leaving fashion design behind, at least for the time being. This group consisted of two informants for which the routes also differed greatly.

The first of the two informants was already at the time of the first interviews debating what route to take, though at that time, becoming an entrepreneur, working as a fashion designer, was part of the plan forward. Two years later, a new pathway had both crystallised and realised, namely to enter higher education again, this time outside the fashion field. Though this move initially seemed as leading away from fashion completely, throughout the interview it became clear that an underlying factor partly was a desire to broaden the academic knowledge-base to, in the future, be able to combine different types of knowledge sets, fashion being one of them. This in turn pointed at a continued academic pathway, for example by applying for a PhD position.

The second informant had previously run a fashion firm, which at the point of time for the second round of interviews had been put on hold. The process leading up to this decision was tightly linked to other opportunities for pathways forward arising.

> *DS4:* "I was offered this 70% employment outside fashion and that gave me a lot of energy. I was super happy for that because it gave me an opportunity to work with entrepreneurship and help others. And that's always been there, because when I was working as a designer and also as a teacher, I've always had this desire to help people. You know, help them in their process towards becoming design students and so forth. So all of a sudden everything just fell into place. (…) I still have my own business, but I don't do fashion design. Through this journey I came to realise what it actually is that I want to work with, which is to help others run their businesses and help others with entrepreneurship. (…) And then I also work 30% with my own company."

162

An interesting aspect was the fact that the informant continued with entrepreneurial ideas, but left the fashion system more or less completely. Here, a competing perceived desirability trumped that of working with fashion.

The examples of informants that have moved on to taking on paths outside fashion point at one main factor, namely that of finding other passions in life that weigh stronger than that of the desire to create clothes.

9.2 Further exploring the meaning of creative knowledge

To further explore the findings from my research, the relation to creative knowledge is an important addition to the overall understanding of KIE entrepreneurship and its applicability to creative industries. In the second round of interviews, part of the discussion was more explicitly focused on what knowledge means to their potential KIE venture, as well as what knowledge the informants believed themselves to bring with them from their educational years of studying fashion design at university level.

A recurring theme, or rather way of viewing what they had learnt, was that of a specific mindset or methodology in working with design. The informants point at the fact that the Swedish School of Textiles takes much of a research approach for how the students are to work with design – rather than applying models of working with inspiration and mood boards, the students work with specific concepts or aspects they want to explore from a design methodology perspective. The collections focus on the concept as opposed to the more traditional way of putting together a collection, and trend is not something that is focused upon. This difference was shown even clearer in interviews with individuals who had gone on to further education at other schools. As one student stated, it was difficult to explain to the teachers at the new school how her design process worked in that she in general started off with draping on a manikin as opposed to creating a general theme or sketch book for her work. Though it was difficult initially, she also came to realise that the combination of the two ways of working was something that took her design process even further – the new school's way of thinking and working opened up for a more applied way of working, while as the skills from the Swedish School of Textiles gave other dimensions to the design process. As already discussed in Chapter 5, the knowledge acquired and developed throughout the education falls well in line with what Amabile (1983) defines as domain-specific skills and creativity-relevant skills, two key components of creative performance. The analysis of the interviews further suggests that these skills can be strengthened if complemented with similar training and education in a different setting.

In interviewing the informants again, when most of them had moved on from school to actually work in industry, I could observe that a majority claimed their skills or knowledge acquired in school not to be applied in "real life". Many found themselves

in junior positions at fashion companies, such as design assistants, where the main focus of the work rather was on following orders from superiors, and in doing so mainly working with the correction of already made garments, or to sketch in 2D digitally, a way of working more or less not applied at all in school. These illustrations give interesting indications about the applicability of the knowledge acquired throughout the education. This raises new questions: Is it the case that the knowledge in itself is not possible to transform into actual entrepreneurial ideas, or for that matter in to desired industry knowledge in already existing firms, or is it rather the fact that the fashion design graduates lack the knowledge of how to make the transformation and create desired business ideas?

The discussion above regarding the applicability of the knowledge acquired in school connects to one of the main factors for increased desirability in that the informants found it less intriguing to enter industry over time, as the design output and creative knowledge that they had gained throughout their education positioned them further and further away from that commonly practiced in industry, not least within the big firms with a more fast fashion approach. The fact that the positions offered to a great extent are at a significantly lower competence level further enhanced this feeling of discrepancy. Consequently, becoming an entrepreneur was seen as the only pathway in the long run, in order to be able to continue with one's desired creative output. The details of getting there seemed downplayed, that is, the level of perceived feasibility went up without the informants necessary having acquired new knowledge to account for it; it simply had to work out, one way or another. Previous studies have shown that entrepreneurs in creative industries are generally younger and have less industry experience prior to attempting venture creation (Lassen et al., 2018; Kohn & Wewel, 2018). My findings give new insights on why this might be the case. The fact that the informants are willing to move forward towards venture creation with a knowledge base primarily based on that of creative knowledge indicate that yet another round of interviews would be interesting as to see whether this knowledge base is sufficient to succeed in becoming an entrepreneur, and furthermore how the individuals choose to tackle the issue of low levels of market knowledge and business knowledge.

9.3 Developing business knowledge and market knowledge through interaction with industry

A majority of those who had started their own firm already at the time of the first set of interviews were still in business. The years that had passed had given the informants increased business and market knowledge, and based on this also changes in view on how to take the firm forward. Though there were rare examples of ventures that had been shut down or put on hold for the time being, a majority of the informants belonging to this group were using the business and market knowledge that they had gained over the years that had passed to make alterations to their

operations as to be able to move forward in a desired direction. An interesting finding from my study was the view on how to develop and grow the ventures over time. While examples of clear business plans with a set growth strategy did occur, most informants who had started firms approached business development as something that should not be forced, but rather the main idea was a slow and organic growth, with the own creative control as a key aspect. This falls well in line with previous research on creative industries with regards to growth strategies and goals of such firms (cf., e.g., Bergamini et al. 2017; Kohn & Wewel, 2018). It can further explain results from previous research that has pointed out entrepreneurial ventures in creative industries as being smaller in scale (Kohn & Wewel, 2018). The findings from my research suggests that this in fact could be a conscious decision as to maintain creative control rather than a sign of not being successful in growing the business over time.

Looking more closely at the informants who at the time of the first round of interviews had made the decision of entering an already existing fashion firm as a first career step, a clear pattern could be observed in terms of changed attitudes and consequent intentions and behaviours over the two years that had passed. The industry experience on the one hand increased the informants' business knowledge and market knowledge in that they, through their work, became an active part of the industry structure and thereby got to learn how the companies worked, as well as how established, and in general big, firms approached the market in everything from trend analyses to actual production chains. The increased business knowledge and market knowledge within this group of informants furthermore gave a partly unexpected result. Instead of playing out as a point of security that further decreased the desirability of becoming an entrepreneur, the increased knowledge base in fact triggered a higher perceived desirability for venture creation. The market knowledge and business knowledge also increased the perceived feasibility for venture creation, meaning that several individuals who at the point of time of the first set of interviews had expressed low entrepreneurial intention in fact were now actively discussing venture creation. The role of industry experience has been highlighted in previous research, not least in relation to KIE and the fact that most KIE entrepreneurs do have significant industry experience before aiming at venture creation (cf., e.g., Malerba & McKelvey 2019). My findings give further insights of what effect industry experience can have, apart from increasing business knowledge and market knowledge, in that it points at dissatisfaction with current industry structures as an important trigger for venture creation within fashion. This can further explain observations in earlier studies with regards to KIE entrepreneurs in creative industries having relatively little industry experience before attempting venture creation (Kohn & Wewel, 2018; Lassen et al., 2018).

9.4 Accessing resources

The informants report that in order to run their own ventures, it is also a necessity to have other jobs that financially helps them make ends meet. One specifically interesting case here is the view on academia and what role it can play. Lassen et al. (2018) showed that founders of KIE firms in creative industries have higher educational levels compared to other KIE founders, where in their comparison, these firms were active in manufacturing.

In interpreting my findings in relation their results, I find that, in my case study, a partial explanation to this in that informants who have chosen to continue down the academic path (either MA degree or PhD degree), as one of the reasons for doing so report the fact that it means stable funds for some additional time, as well as extended access to university premises, and therethrough also access to all necessary equipment and studio places. This finding may have to do with the specific nature of graduate education in Sweden, where students obtain loans as MA students and are often employed as PhD students. There are further other ways to interact with academia. Several also report employment in academia as a stable source of income from the perspective of taking on teaching responsibilities part time and combine this with running their own business.

Specifically, and as documented numerous times above, the informants give the impression of wanting to keep their businesses free from the pressure of making economic profit, at least during an initial phase. Their desire for not making economic returns goes hand in hand with them expressing that they want to be able to let the artistic vision govern the route forward. Many express the hopes of attracting a big enough following of customers and influential players in fashion over time as to make a breakthrough, which could lead to them only working on KIE venture, as their sole focus. This both confirms and gives more detailed insights to the view of entrepreneurship in creative industries as being governed by other types of value creation than the economic (cf., e.g., Bergamini et al., 2017; Kohn & Wewel, 2018).

9.5 A concluding conceptual model for RQ2

In this chapter, I have analysed the second round of interviews collected for this research, focusing on the second research question of my PhD dissertation. Based on this analysis, I propose a new conceptual model for RQ2. This model illustrates changes in intentions and potential pathways over time, as shown in Figure 9.4.
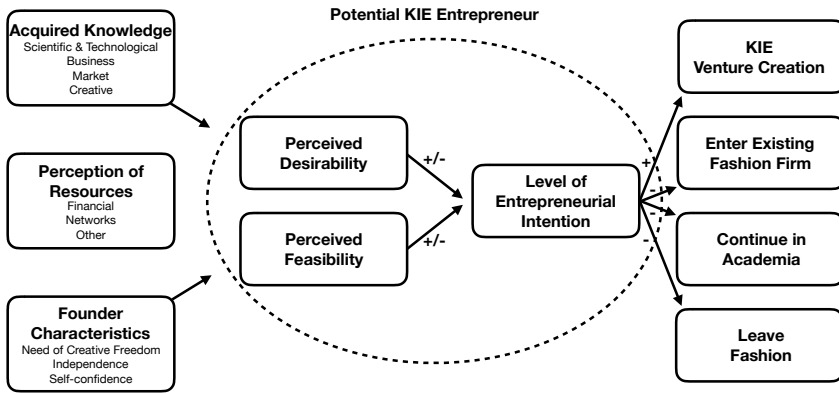
Figure 9.4
Conceptual model: RQ2

Figure 9.4 visualises the details of this process. As compared to Figure 7.1 in Chapter 7, I have further specified the elements knowledge, resources, and founder characteristics to correspond to the specific focus of RQ2 of the effect of post-graduation pathways, here illustrated at the far left hand side of the model as the boxes *acquired knowledge*; *perception of resources*; and *founder characteristics*. Through the analysis in previous sections of the fashion design graduates' different pathways, I have been able to demonstrate how initial pathways post-graduation affects the levels of perceived desirability and perceived feasibility of potential KIE entrepreneurship through the acquisition of different types of knowledge, and changes in the perception of resources necessary for venture, as well as founder characteristics. This in turn leads to changes in levels of entrepreneurial intention, resulting in a potential change in pathway for the future.

My analysis this provides a more dynamic perspective on these processes of potentially becoming a KIE entrepreneur in fashion. In the first phase, as analysed in Chapter 7, there were what appeared to be four separate pathways that fashion design graduates could choose between upon graduation. What I have shown is that, in fact, over time, the fashion designers could be both combine pathways to reach their goals, and also change from one pathway to another. Through my case study, I have shown the importance of the changes in different types of acquired knowledge; perception of resources; and founder characteristics, elements that I have identified as depending on the experience and knowledge that the informants acquired through their initial pathway.

Chapter 10

Conclusions and implications for future research

The purpose of my PhD dissertation has been to:

Purpose
Using the theoretical framework of knowledge-intensive entrepreneurship, explore how fashion design graduates perceive and act regarding accessing resources and ideas necessary for venture creation, in order to understand their pathways to become potential KIE entrepreneurs in the context of the Swedish fashion industry

This chapter is divided into two sections. First, I explain how I have fulfilled my purpose, summarising the dissertation as a whole in relation to the two research questions outlined in Chapter 1. In doing so, I propose an extended conceptual framework in order to further analyse fashion designers as potential KIE entrepreneurs. In the second section of the chapter, I outline a series of topics for future research. These topics have been developed as the result of reflections about my current research results.

10.1 Key findings leading to an extended conceptual framework for fashion designers as potential KIE entrepreneurs

This section summarises the key findings from my PhD dissertation and how they address the two research questions outlined in Chapter 1.

As I have focused on fashion design graduates at their entry into the fashion industry, my results mainly concern the identification of factors preceding venture creation, including the perceived ability to access the necessary resources and ideas. Because the research has focused on fashion designers during their first years following graduation from fashion school, in earlier chapters, I give detailed accounts of how fashion design graduates reflect and act upon KIE entrepreneurship as one of several potential pathways. Furthermore, I use a longitudinal case study in order to observe whether their reflections and actions may change over time through acquisition of

new knowledge and related changes in perceptions of resources; as well as how the fashion design graduates reason about how this forms their pathways as fashion designers. A more detailed account can be found in Chapters 6 and 8, where I presented the findings from the interviews that form the basis of this research, in relation to the respective research questions; and Chapters 7 and 9, where I explored what we can learn from these interviews in relation to KIE as a theoretical concept, its applicability to creative industries in general, and the Swedish fashion industry more specifically.

Let us now turn to how the key findings of my PhD dissertation answer the research questions introduced in Chapter 1, starting with the first research question:

RQ1
What affects the level of entrepreneurial intention for fashion design graduates as potential KIE entrepreneurs?

As shown in Chapters 6 and 7, the level of entrepreneurial intention is a combination of the individual's perceived desirability and perceived feasibility of becoming an KIE entrepreneur (cf., e.g., Krueger et al. 2000). My results are in line with previous studies of entrepreneurial intentions in that they indicated that strong perceived desirability is not enough to actually attempt venture creation (Fitzsimmons & Douglas, 2011); rather, it is the combination that is crucial, that is the designers also had to have a strong enough perception of the feasibility of becoming an entrepreneur.

More specifically, I find that the main reasons given by the fashion design graduates for wanting to start a KIE fashion firm deal with a need for creative freedom, self-governance, and being able to apply one's creativity and creative knowledge in new ways. In this way, my results show that the fashions designers initially expressed a relatively high perceived desirability of becoming entrepreneurs, but their lack of business knowledge and lack of understanding of how to reach the market (i.e., market knowledge) lead to low perceived levels of the feasibility of doing so. Consequently, venture creation did not occur.

My results show that one major concern in relation to perceived feasibility expressed by the fashion designers was the difficulty of accessing the financial resources needed for starting and developing a KIE firm. Previous research has noted strategies of having employment outside one's own venture as a means to amass the financial resources needed both for venture creation and for ongoing sustaining of the business created, not least in creative industries (cf., e.g., Kohn & Wewel, 2018). My results show an additional reason for this way of working. From the interviews, it became evident that having several jobs simultaneously is in fact seen as a way to maintain creative freedom and latitude. By taking on other types of jobs, such as consulting for existing fashion firms, teaching at fashion schools, or for that matter part-time

assignments outside the fashion world, the interviewed fashion designers acquired enough capital to cover living costs and other expenses. This was further said to be a way of making sure that one was not put in a position where need for profits trumped creative freedom. Entrepreneurship in creative industries has, throughout the literature, been stated as driven by other types of value creation than the merely economic (cf., e.g., Bergamini et al., 2017; Overdiek, 2016; Menger, 1999). My findings confirm this. While critical acclaim and commercial success are certainly welcome business results, they are not the only goal of venture creation for the studied fashion designers. Rather, the decision to become an entrepreneur is to a large extent based on a desire to be free in one's creative process and output.

To summarise, regarding the findings for RQ1, I found four main factors from my analysis affecting the fashion designers' perceived feasibility of becoming KIE entrepreneurs: 1) accessing financial resources, 2) market knowledge, 3) business knowledge, and 4) self-confidence. These factors are in line with those highlighted by McKelvey & Lassen (2013) in the KIE creation model. Furthermore, through my analysis of what affects the perceived desirability of starting a KIE fashion firm among the fashion design graduates, I found three main factors: 1) creative freedom, 2) independence, and 3) potential to apply creativity and creative knowledge.

Let us now turn to the second research question:

RQ2
How do post-graduation pathways affect fashion design graduates'
perceptions of the relevant knowledge and resources needed for KIE
venture creation?

The answer to RQ2 can be found in Chapters 8 and 9. My study shows how fashion design graduates' entrepreneurial intentions are affected by their acquisition of new knowledge over time. In studying fashion designers during their transition from being students to working in industry, my interpretation is that gaining industry experience, and through that gaining market and business knowledge, often leads to changes in entrepreneurial intentions and consequent venture creation over time.

In the two years that passed between the rounds of interviews conducted for this research, I observed that post-graduation, the fashion designers expressed increases in both entrepreneurial intention and entrepreneurial behaviour. As the first round of interviews was carried out soon after the informants' graduation, they had a maximum of three years of work experience by the second round of interviews, at which point they had started considering venture creation. Earlier contributions to KIE theory have identified different knowledge bases as important in establishing ventures (McKelvey & Lassen, 2013), and previous empirical work on KIE has furthermore showed that successful ventures also possess access to various knowledge sets, preferably attained through the recruitment of individuals with

specific knowledge (Malerba & McKelvey, 2019). My research gives new insights into this matter, in that it shows that the acquisition of new knowledge can change an individual's entrepreneurial intentions and consequent entrepreneurial behaviour.

Previous empirical studies of KIE firms have pointed out that the founders of such companies have extensive industry experience (Malerba & McKelvey, 2019). At the same time, looking more specifically at actors in creative industries, Lassen et al. (2018) found that levels of industry experience were generally much lower. The results from my research give further insights to the difference. My analysis shows that many of the fashion design graduates quickly came to consider starting a KIE fashion firm as a potential future pathway, mainly due to a desire for creative freedom.

On entering the industry after graduation, the fashion designers soon gained both business knowledge and market knowledge; furthermore, they fairly soon felt that their knowledge base regarding the business and market was sufficient, increasing the perceived feasibility of becoming entrepreneurs. Many reported that the work they were assigned did not correspond to their level of competence, nor was it open to application of the creative knowledge acquired in fashion school. The informants further explained that in bigger, more established firms, it is also common to have a contract clause stating that the designers are not allowed to maintain any type of independent studio or design-related business in addition to their everyday job at the firm. This dissatisfaction triggered their expression of an increased need for creative freedom and independence, and gaining additional industry experience by continuing to work for an existing firm was not seen as valuable enough to pursue. Venture creation therefore did not primarily spring from opportunity recognition, but rather from an urge for freedom in relation to one's creativity and from dissatisfaction with the current corporate structure of the industry. When the levels of both perceived feasibility and perceived desirability were high enough, the designers manifested intentions strong enough to be transformed into actual entrepreneurial action (Fitzsimmons & Douglas, 2011).

As briefly described above in relation to RQ1, through my study, I was able to show that there are interdependencies between the different pathways, specifically as a means to access financial resources for KIE entrepreneurship. My results show that this solution for accessing financial resources necessary for creating a KIE firm increases over time. The fashion designers report that they come up with new business ideas for how to obtain creative freedom in relation to their fashion designs, while having enough work to earn an actual income by taking on various assignments, either as consultants through their own companies or by taking additional employments.

To summarise, regarding the findings for RQ2, my interpretation is that an increasingly varied knowledge base (which encompasses realms outside the artistic)

and a desire for artistic innovation (through the further development of one's own designs) in combination lead to the intention of becoming a KIE fashion entrepreneur. My interpretation of these results is that while creativity and creative knowledge play leading roles in exploring the possibilities of becoming an entrepreneur, it is the combined knowledge base, that is, having acquired both business knowledge and market knowledge in addition to creative knowledge, that in general facilitates the move from entrepreneurial intention to starting a KIE fashion firm.

Figure 10.1 below visualises my proposed extended conceptual framework for fashion designers as potential KIE entrepreneurs. This framework is based on Figure 3.9 introduced in Chapter 3, which was used to interpret and analyse the data from my study. Later chapters enriched this figure, specifically Figure 7.1 in Chapter 7, responding to RQ1; and Figure 9.4 in Chapter 9, responding to RQ2. Here, I put them together into my final, concluding model.

My enriched conceptual framework, as depicted in Figure 10.1 below, is based on a combination of factors from the KIE literature as well as entrepreneurial intentions. focuses upon the first phase of the McKelvey & Lassen (2013) KIE creation model, namely accessing knowledge and resources. I add the discussion of individuals' decisions and behavior through the theories of entrepreneurial intentions. Figure 10.1 should be interpreted as dynamic in the sense that the far righthand pathways feed into a new iteration of the model from its starting point at the left. The dynamic iterations mean that the figure should be interpreted as showcasing how levels of entrepreneurial intentions may change.

Figure 10.1
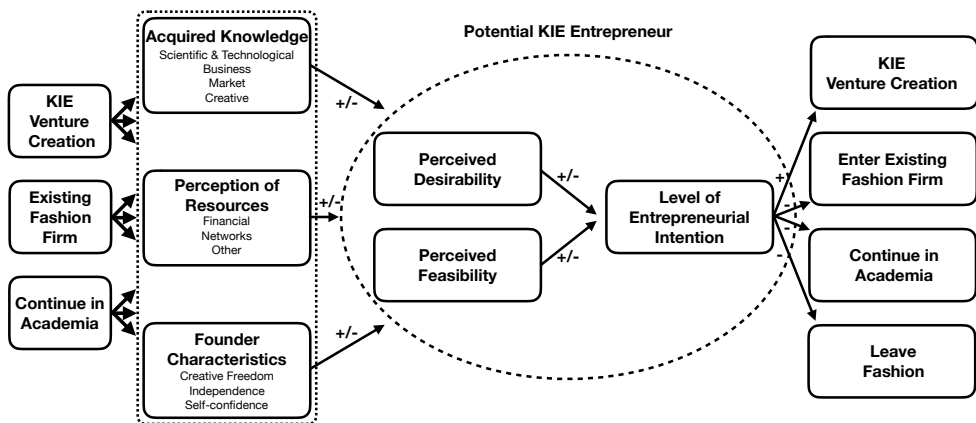**Conceptual model: fashion designers as potential KIE entrepreneurs**

Figure 10.1 provides a visualisation of this process of potentially fashioning KIE entrepreneurs as follows. The three boxes on the far left, *KIE Venture Creation*; *Existing Fashion Firm*; and *Continue in Academia* represent initial pathways of fashion design graduates who choose to stay within the field of fashion in one way or another. The subsequent arrows lead to the three boxes included in the large dotted box, representing one part of my findings. This should be interpreted as key factors observed as affecting the perceived desirability and perceived feasibility of becoming a KIE fashion entrepreneur, relating to the phase of accessing resources and ideas as highlighted by McKelvey & Lassen (2013). *Acquired knowledge* refers to the types of knowledge the fashion designer accesses through the chosen pathway, divided into the main types of knowledge important for successful KIE venture creation as highlighted by McKelvey & Lassen (2013). This includes scientific and technological knowledge, business knowledge, market knowledge, and creative knowledge. *Perception of resources* depicts how the fashion designers, through the choice of pathway, come to re-evaluate and alter what resources they consider necessary for becoming a KIE entrepreneur, and furthermore how they would go about in accessing said resources. This deals mainly with aspects of financing and networks, but also other types of resources such as access to machines and equipment as well as an atelier. *Founder characteristics* refers to how the initial pathway affects the fashion designers' perception of themselves in relation to their creative output. Central aspects here are general traits for entrepreneurs as individuals, such as self-confidence and independence (cf. Carlsson et al., 2013), together with the fashion designer's need for creative freedom.

The large dotted box leads to the middle oval, representing the potential KIE entrepreneur. Thus, I visualise the impact of initial pathways on decisions and actions related to potential entrepreneurship. This is represented by the set of three arrows, marked with both pluses and minuses, leading from the large dotted box to the oval. As represented by the next set of arrows, at the middle of the oval, the changes in perceived desirability and perceived feasibility in turn affect the level of entrepreneurial intention. My interpretation of the oval is that the fashion designer once more evaluates the pathway of becoming a potential KIE entrepreneur based on these changes. The acquired knowledge; and change in perception of resources, and founder characteristics increase or decrease the fashion designers' perceived desirability and perceived feasibility of becoming a KIE entrepreneur.

Given this new situation, the fashion designer makes a new decision for a future pathway, showcased in Figure 10.1 by the four arrows exiting the oval. The four boxes at the far righthand side of the figure, *KIE venture creation; Enter existing fashion firm; Continue in academia; and Leave fashion*, also represent the four main pathways for fashion designers observed through my research. The framework should be seen as iterative and dynamic. Hence, this decision for a future pathway also marks the beginning of a new iteration.

In summary, Figure 10.1 visualises how the acquisition of different types of knowledge, as well as changes in perceptions of how to access necessary resources, combined with the development of founder characteristics affect the levels of perceived desirability and perceived feasibility of becoming an entrepreneur. This in turn together renders a change in level of entrepreneurial intention. Over time, the iterations lead to different choices and pathways. Specifically, in the first iteration, the fashion designer chooses an initial post-graduation pathway; a pathway that can also consist of a combination of choices, such as both attempting KIE venture creation and working in academia. Based on the pathway chosen, the fashion designer will acquire new knowledge, re-evaluate the perception of necessary resources, and further develop founder characteristics, leading to a dynamic process of constant changes in the levels of perceived desirability and perceived feasibility of becoming an entrepreneur. If sufficiently large changes occur to these levels, the iteration leads to a change in pathway.

10.3 Topics for future research

Having conducted this research, I have reflected upon many topics for future research, as my PhD dissertation has implications for further analysing post-graduation pathways of fashion design students in Sweden, and for the factors affecting their intentions to (not) become entrepreneurs. My research is explorative, yielding insights into antecedents to KIE in the Swedish fashion industry, with a specific focus on the role of knowledge in intentions to become an entrepreneur.

I outline three main avenues for future research, which, in different ways, would further extend the contributions presented in previous sections of this chapter: 1) continue to focus on the same questions by widening the scope; 2) expand the analysis by enriching the KIE literature with insights from sociological theory of fashion; and 3) conduct a more thorough examination of the fashion entrepreneurial ecosystem. The following sections give a brief account of each of these avenues.

10.3.1 Expanding the current study: a thorough mapping of fashion design graduates in Sweden from a long-term perspective

In relation to the results and the qualitative explorative nature of the existing body of research, including the present study, a logical next step would be to expand the present study to include a larger group of informants with education in fashion design, to test both the validity and applicability of the present results for fashion design graduates in Sweden in general. The idea is to use the results of this research and see whether they are applicable and valid at a larger scale. By mapping all fashion design graduates of the Swedish School of Textiles from the last 10 years, it would be possible to get a better sense of how common entrepreneurship is in this group and, furthermore, to determine what these KIE ventures are like. For the

purpose of this proposed study, the social media platforms Facebook and LinkedIn would be used in mapping the graduates' current work situations as well as previous employment. Based on the results of this initial mapping, specific cases of graduates moving on to establish KIE ventures would be highlighted for in-depth interviews, to further our understanding of KIE in fashion specifically and creative industries more generally. By focusing on graduates who have de facto set up KIE ventures in fashion, the study would expand our understanding to encompass the creation and maintenance of the ventures, and not only the antecedents of venture creation, as has been the focus so far.

Seeing that I have focused my research on individuals with a degree in fashion design from the same fashion school, that is, the Swedish School of Textiles, questions can of course be raised as to the generalisability of the results even in the Swedish context. A natural step in expanding the existing study would therefore be to include graduates from Beckmans College of Design in Stockholm, the only other higher education institution in Sweden offering programmes in fashion design. By also looking at this group of graduates, it would be possible to better understand the roles of fashion design education and its structure, as well as of local networks and industry structures.

I therefore suggest the following research question to be investigated:
How does acquisition of knowledge and experience over time affect KIE as a potential pathway for fashion design graduates?

10.3.2 Sociology as a means to understand entrepreneurship in creative industries

Throughout the work on this dissertation, I have come in contact with the vast literature discussing creative industries in general, and the fashion industry more specifically, from a sociological point of view. Perusing selected parts of this literature has made me realise that the theories this literature presents could enrich the discussion and analysis of KIE in these industries, specifically concerning the role of market positioning in applying creative knowledge when establishing a KIE venture.

The KIE literature identifies the importance of finding the right market space for the proposed entrepreneurial idea in order for the entrepreneur to succeed in venture creation (McKelvey & Lassen, 2013). Similar aspects are discussed in detail in sociological research on creative industries, using the concept of hierarchies. Hierarchical structures are established based on the status of the creative product on the market, a good example being that of fashion, where haute couture and avant-garde fashion are found at the top and high-street and fast fashion are positioned towards the bottom. Historically, this is seen in relation to which customers are able

to buy certain goods, making them symbols of social status (Bourdieu, 1995; Simmel, 1975). Aspers (2001) describes how producers – in his case, fashion photographers – constantly find themselves caught in a tension between establishing a position in the hierarchical structure, for example, by shooting editorials for highly regarded fashion magazines, and finding enough work to earn a living, which could very well be done a lot easier by taking on less prestigious assignments, such as shooting commercials and catalogues. However, such less prestigious work is often avoided by those in the hierarchy with higher ambitions, because the two streams of work are not seen as compatible by the "knowers" on the market, for example, high-profile editors and stylists. What happens if there is no high-profile market, or if it is too small? Could it be that what is lacking in the Swedish fashion market is in fact a group of people interested in pushing the market forward? Are there structures in fashion concerning who one can work for/collaborate with and how that affects one's future position in the hierarchy? This view of hierarchies as an important factor shaping future KIE potential and the use of creative knowledge could bring about a completely new analysis of the state of the Swedish fashion market as a whole. With few high-profile fashion brands at which to start one's career, it can be difficult to create a path leading upwards in the hierarchy by simply staying within the boundaries of the Swedish fashion market. The idea of different hierarchical segments of the fashion market and their interdependence in some type of constant dynamic power relationship/struggle for further development highlights the importance of the independent fashion creator for the development of the industry.

By acknowledging the hierarchical structures of a market or field, one can argue for the importance of the output of those at the "top of the chain" creatively in affecting the market, and furthermore the industry, as a whole: without something to aim for, stagnation sets in. It could further be argued that by strengthening the position of the top tier, or rather widening the possibilities for people therein to evolve without such great pressure for economic output and the ever-accelerating creation of more and more collections, change in the fashion industry as a whole is likelier, following the logic of influence from higher hierarchical levels (cf. Simmel, 1975; Bourdieu, 1995).

Using sociological theory in relation to KIE in fashion, the development of fashion as an industry and phenomenon could be discussed at greater depth, not least from the perspective of developing the fashion industry more sustainably, from both the environmental and artistic perspectives.

I therefore suggest the following research question to be investigated:
What role does the market positioning play in applying creative knowledge in KIE venture creation?

10.3.3 The fashion industry as an entrepreneurial ecosystem: a thorough analysis

A third way to build on the results of the research presented here would be to examine the entrepreneurial ecosystem of the Swedish fashion industry. So far in my research, I have conducted an initial mapping of the Swedish fashion industry using the theories of sectoral systems of innovation, as these theories are considered a key point of reference for the emerging KIE literature (Malerba & McKelvey, 2019). The role of sectoral innovation systems in KIE is captured well by the stylised KIE process model of Malerba & McKelvey (2018); however, to fully understand the KIE venture, we also need to understand the environment in which it exists. A concept tightly linked to these theories, and that is receiving increased attention in research and public debate, is that of entrepreneurial ecosystems. Here, the entrepreneur is at the centre of the model, which captures the industrial, policy, and network structures needed to create a good entrepreneurial ecosystem (Stam, 2015). The analyses within the entrepreneurial ecosystems literature are industry specific and, as the name of the theory suggests, point to the importance of the interplay between these factors in order to have a good entrepreneurial climate. As with biological ecosystems, imbalance in the entrepreneurial system leads to dysfunction, and for entrepreneurship to blossom there needs to be good balance and interaction. The research I suggest has two main parts. First, to understand the entrepreneurial ecosystem in Sweden, this ecosystem needs to be mapped thoroughly. Consequently, using the theoretical boundaries of what such an ecosystem contains, secondary data could be used in mapping it. Such data include information on networks, leadership, finance, talent, knowledge, support services/intermediaries, formal institutions, culture, physical infrastructure, and demand (Stam, 2015). Following this mapping and analysis of the entrepreneurial ecosystem of fashion as such, a second part of the research would be to investigate what role KIE entrepreneurs play in such a system, and likewise, how the entrepreneurial ecosystem affects/supports KIE entrepreneurs in being able to use their high knowledge intensity in terms of creativity and creative knowledge.

I therefore suggest the following research question to be investigated:
What role does the entrepreneurial ecosystem play in promoting KIE in Swedish fashion?

References

Ajzen, I., 2002. Perceived Behavioral Control, Self-Efficacy, Locus of Control, and the Theory of Planned Behavior. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, 32(4), pp.665–683.

Ajzen, I., 1991. The theory of planned behavior. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 50(2), pp.179–211.

Albinsson, S., 2018. Sing it out loud! The entrepreneurship of SME opera enterprises in Scandinavia. *International Journal of Entrepreneurship and Small Business*, pp.1–24.

Amabile, T.M., 1983. The Social Psychology of Creativity. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 45(2), pp.357–376.

Aspers, P., 2001. *Markets in Fashion*, Stockholm: City UP.

Beckman, C.M., 2006. The Influence of Founding Team Company Affiliations on Firm Behavior. *Academy of Management Journal*, 49(4), pp.741–758.

Bergamini, M. et al., 2017. Organizing artistic activities in a recurrent manner: (on the nature of) entrepreneurship in the performing arts. *Creativity and Innovation Management*, 27(3), pp.319–334.

Blumer, H., 1969. Fashion: From Class Differentiation to Collective Selection. *The Sociological Quarterly*, 10(3), pp.275–291.

Bourdieu, P., 1995. *Sociology in Question*, London: Sage Publications.

Bridgstock, R., 2013. Professional Capabilities for Twenty-First Century Creative Careers: Lessons from Outstandingly Successful Australian Artists and Designers. *International Journal of Art & Design Education*, 32(2), pp.176–189.

Carlsson, B. et al., 2013. The evolving domain of entrepreneurship research. *Small Business Economics*, 41(4), pp.913–930.

Caves, R.E., 2000. *Creative Industries*, Harvard University Press.

Charmaz, K., 2014. *Constructing Grounded Theory* 2nd ed., SAGE.

Chaston, I. & Smith, E.S., 2012. Entrepreneurial cognition, entrepreneurial orientation and firm capability in the creative industries. *British journal of management*.

Creswell, J.W., 2014. *Research Design* International Student Edition, Los Angeles: SAGE.

Davidsson, P., 2004. *Researching Entrepreneurship*, Boston: Kluwer Academic Publishers.

Dodgson, M., Gann, D.M., Phillips, N., 2013. Perspectives on innovation management. In M. Dodgson et al., eds. *The Oxford Handbook of Innovation Management*. Oxford University Press.

Dubois, A. & Gadde, L.-E., 2002. Systematic combining: an abductive approach to case research. *Journal of Business Research*, 55(7), pp.553–560.

Eisenhardt, K.M., 1989. Building Theories from Case Study Research. *Academy of Management Review*, 14(4), pp.532–550.

Entwistle, J., 2002. The Aesthetic Economy The production of value in the field of fashion modelling. *Journal of Consumer Culture*, 2(3), pp.317–339.

Ericsson Wärn, K., 2012. *Modebibeln*. *Den svenska*, Stockholm: Bonnier Fakta.

Fagerberg, J., 2003. Schumpeter and the revival of evolutionary economics: an appraisal of the literature. *Journal of Evolutionary Economics*, 13(2), pp.125–159.

Falk, K., 2011. *Det svenska modeundret*, Stockholm: Norstedts.

Fitzsimmons, J.R. & Douglas, E.J., 2011. Interaction between feasibility and desirability in the formation of entrepreneurial intentions. *Journal of Business Venturing*, 26(4), pp.431–440.

Gioia, D.A. & Chittipeddi, K., 1991. Sensemaking and sensegiving in strategic change initiation. *Strategic Management Journal*, 12(6), pp.433–448.

Gioia, D.A., Corley, K.G. & Hamilton, A.L., 2013. Seeking Qualitative Rigor in Inductive Research. *Organizational Research Methods*, 16(1), pp.15–31.

Greenman, A., 2012. Entrepreneurial activities and occupational boundary work during venture creation and development in the cultural industries. *International Small Business Journal*, 30(2), pp.115–137.

Hao Zhao, Seibert, S.E. & Lumpkin, G.T., 2009. The Relationship of Personality to Entrepreneurial Intentions and Performance: A Meta-Analytic Review. *Journal of Management*, 36(2), pp.381–404.

Hauge, A., 2007. Dedicated Followers of Fashion: An Economic Geographic Analysis of the Swedish Fashion Industry. *Growth and Change*, 39(1), pp.123–143.

Hauge, A., Malmberg, A. & Power, D., 2009. The Spaces and Places of Swedish Fashion. *European Planning Studies*, 17(4), pp.529–547.

Helfat, C.E. & Lieberman, M.B., 2002. The birth of capabilities: market entry and the importance of pre-history. *Industrial and corporate change*, 11(4), pp.725–760.

Hermanson, I., McKelvey, M. & Zaring, O., 2018. The evolution and embeddedness of knowledge- intensive entrepreneurial firms in creative industries: contrasting experienced and non- experienced entrepreneurs in the Swedish fashion industry. *European Planning Studies*, 0(0), pp.1–20.

Jones, C., Lorenzen, M. & Sapsed, J., 2015. Creative Industries: A Typology of Change. In C. Jones, M. Lorenzen, & J. Sapsed, eds. *The Oxford Handbook of Creative Industries*. Oxford University Press, pp. 1–33.

Jonsson, S. & Lindbergh, J., 2013. The Development of Social Capital and Financing of Entrepreneurial Firms: From Financial Bootstrapping to Bank Funding. *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, 37(4), pp.661–686.

Kaufman, J.C. & Sternberg, R.J., 2015. The Creative Mind. In *The Oxford Handbook of Creative Industries*. Oxford Handbooks, pp. 1–19.

Kawamura, Y., 2004. *Fashion-ology*, Berg Publishers.

Kohn, K. & Wewel, S.A., 2018. Skills, scope and success: An empirical look at the start-up process in creative industries in Germany. *Creativity and Innovation Management*, 27(3), pp.295–318.

Konrad, E.D., 2013. Cultural Entrepreneurship: The Impact of Social Networking on Success. *Creativity and Innovation Management*, 22(3), pp.307–319.

Krueger, N.F. & Brazeal, D.V., 1994. Entrepreneurial Potential and Potential Entrepreneurs. *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, 18(3), pp.91–104.

Krueger, N.F. & Carsrud, A.L., 1993. Entrepreneurial intentions: Applying the theory of planned behaviour. *Entrepreneurship & Regional Development*, 5(4), pp.315–330.

Krueger, N.F., Reilly, M.D. & Carsrud, A.L., 2000. Competing models of entrepreneurial intentions. *Journal of Business Venturing*, 15(5-6), pp.411–432.

Lantz, J., 2013. *Trendmakarna*, Stockholm: Atlas akademi.

Lassen, A.H., McKelvey, M. & Ljungberg, D., 2018. Knowledge-intensive entrepreneurship in manufacturing and creative industries: Same, same, but different. *Creativity and Innovation Management*, 27(3), pp.284–294.

Liñán, F. & Chen, Y.-W., 2009. Development and Cross-Cultural Application of a Specific Instrument to Measure Entrepreneurial Intentions. *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, 33(3), pp.593–617.

Liñán, F. & Fayolle, A., 2015. A systematic literature review on entrepreneurial intentions: citation, thematic analyses, and research agenda. *International Entrepreneurship and Management Journal*, 11(4), pp.907–933.

Liñán, F., Rodríguez-Cohard, J.C. & Rueda-Cantuche, J.M., 2010. Factors affecting entrepreneurial intention levels: a role for education. *International Entrepreneurship and Management Journal*, 7(2), pp.195–218.

Malem, W., 2008. Fashion designers as business: London. *Journal of Fashion Marketing and Management: An International Journal*, 12(3), pp.398–414.

Malerba, F., 2010a. Knowledge-intensive entrepreneurship and innovation systems in Europe. In F. Malerba, ed. *Knowledge-Intensive Entrepreneurship and Innovation Systems*. Abingdon: Routledge, pp. 3–27.

Malerba, F., 2002. Sectoral systems of innovation and production. *Research Policy*, 31(2), pp.247–264.

Malerba, F. & Adams, P., 2013. Sectoral Systems of Innovation. In M. Dodgson et al., eds. *The Oxford Handbook of Innovation Management*. Oxford University Press.

Malerba, F. & McKelvey, M., 2015. Conceptualising knowledge intensive entrepreneurship: definition and model. In F. Malerba et al., eds. *Dynamics of Knowledge-Intensive Entrepreneurship*. London: Routledge, pp. 19–47.

Malerba, F. & McKelvey, M., 2018a. Knowledge-intensive innovative entrepreneurship integrating Schumpeter, evolutionary economics, and innovation systems. *Small Business Economics,* pp.1–20.

Malerba, F. & McKelvey, M., 2018b. Knowledge-Intensive Entrepreneurship and Future Research Directions. In J. Niosi, ed. *Innovation Systems, Policy and Management*. Cambridge.

Malerba, F. & McKelvey, M., 2019. Knowledge-Intensive Innovative Entrepreneurship. *Foundations and Trends® in Entrepreneurship*, 14(6), pp.555–681.

Malerba, F. ed., 2010b. *Knowledge-Intensive Entrepreneurship and Innovation Systems*, Abingdon: Routledge.

Malerba, F. et al. eds., 2015. *Dynamics of Knowledge-Intensive Entrepreneurship* 1st ed., Abingdon: Routledge.

McKelvey, M. & Lassen, A.H., 2018. Knowledge, meaning and identity: Key characteristics of entrepreneurship in cultural and creative industries. *Creativity and Innovation Management*, 27(3), pp.281–283.

McKelvey, M. & Lassen, A.H., 2013. *Managing Knowledge Intensive Entrepreneurship*, Edward Elgar Publishing.

Menger, P.-M., 1999. Artistic Labor Markets and Careers. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 25(1), pp.541–574.

Metcalfe, J.S., 2002. Knowledge of growth and the growth of knowledge. *Journal of Evolutionary Economics*, 12(1-2), pp.3–15.

Muofhe, N.J. & Toit, Du, W.F., 2011. Entrepreneurial education's and entrepreneurial role models' influence on career choice. *SA Journal of Human Resource Management*, 9(1), pp.1–15.

Nielsen, S.L., Norlyk, B. & Christensen, P.R., 2018. "Salesman? Hell no!" Identity struggles of nascent design entrepreneurs. *Creativity and Innovation Management*, 27(3), pp.358–369.

Overdiek, A., 2016. Fashion designers and their business partners: Juggling creativity and commerce. *International Journal of Fashion Studies*, 3(1), pp.27–46.

Potts, J., 2011. *Creative Industries and Economic Evolution*, Cheltenham: Edward Elgar.

Potts, J. et al., 2008. Social network markets: a new definition of the creative industries. *Journal of Cultural Economics*, 32(3), pp.167–185.

Ruef, M., Aldrich, H.E. & Carter, N.M., 2003. The structure of founding teams: Homophily, strong ties, and isolation among US entrepreneurs. *American sociological review*, 68(2), p.195.

Saldaña, J., 2106. *The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers* 3rd ed., London: Sage Publications Ltd.

Salter, A. & Alexy, O., 2013. *The Nature of Innovation*, Oxford University Press.

Schumpeter, J., 1947. *Capitalism, socialism and democracy*, Harpers & Brothers.

Schumpeter, J., 1934. *The Theory of Economic Development*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Shane, S., 2012. Reflections on the 2010 AMRDecade Award: Delivering on the Promise of Entrepreneurship As a Field of Research. *Academy of Management Review*, 37(1), pp.10–20.

Shane, S. & Venkataraman, S., 2000. The Promise of Entrepreneurship as a Field of Research. *Academy of Management Review*, 25(1), pp.217–226.

Simmel, G., 1975. *On Individuality and Social Forms*, Chicago: Chicago UP.

Stam, E., 2015. Entrepreneurial Ecosystems and Regional Policy: A Sympathetic Critique. *European Planning Studies*, 23(9), pp.1759–1769.

Sternö, J., 2018. *Modebranschen i Sverige*. Volante Research.

Sternö, J. & Nielsén, T., 2016. *Modebranschen i Sverige*, Volante Research.

Suddaby, R., 2006. From the editors: What grounded theory is not. *Academy of Management Journal*, 49(4), pp.633–642.

Sundberg, G., 2006. *Mode Svea*, Stockholm: Rådet för arkitektur, form och design.

Swedberg, R., 2006. The cultural entrepreneur and the creative industries: beginning in Vienna. *Journal of Cultural Economics*, 30(4), pp.243–261.

Yin, R.K., 2003. *Case Study Research* 3rd ed., Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

Zaring, O. & McKelvey, M., 2016. Forskningen om innovation och entreprenörskap ur ett kunskapsperspektiv. In M. McKelvey & O. Zaring, eds. *Sveriges entreprenöriella ekosystem*. Inspirerat av Schumpeter ocg evolutionär ekonomi. Stockholm: Esbri, pp. 22–35.

Zhao, H., Seibert, S.E. & Hills, G.E., 2005. The Mediating Role of Self-Efficacy in the Development of Entrepreneurial Intentions. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 90(6), pp.1265–1272.

Zhao, L., Davis, L. & Copeland, L., 2018. Entrepreneurial Intention: An Exploratory Study of Fashion Students. *Journal of Enterprising Culture*, 26(01), pp.27–50.

Appendix 1

Course content and goals for educational programmes in fashion design at the Swedish School of Textiles

BA programme in Fashion Design

Year	Course	Content	Goals
1	*Design Methodology 1: Design development* (7.5 HEC)	• Identify and develop design methods • Apply design methodology in projects • Digital visualisation, technical description with specification as well as presentation skills • Different design methods regarding ethics and environment	1. Show basic skills and abilities regarding design methodology 2. Show basic knowledge and understanding of the role of design methodology for design development 3. Describe and analyse the design process of one's own work 4. Show basic knowledge and understanding of the role of design methodology for quality, ethics and environment
	Basic Design 1: Body and structure (15 HEC)	*Design exercises regarding:* • Lines, direction, volume, form, texture, colour, tone in relation to body and space • Geometry, perspective and scale in 2D and 3D *Theoretical and practical studies in:* • Contrasting, nuancing, colours, symbolism, effect and the industrial preconditions of colours • The physical, thermal and chemical properties of textiles and the materials' industrial preconditions based on manufacturing and norms regarding quality	1. Showcase the ability of designing by applying basic knowledge of textile form, colours and materials 2. Showcase knowledge regarding different types of textile materials, fibres and their properties and suitability for different areas of use, as well as different testing methods for textiles 3. Showcase knowledge regarding chromatics and the ability to identify, analyse and describe colours for a design purpose
	Design Aesthetics 1: Historical and contemporary aspects (7.5 HEC)	• Textile, costume and dress history from ancient times to present day • Western dress and textile design from the 18th – 21st century • Contemporary fashion and textile design, arts and crafts • Form and construction analysis of textiles or garments • Sketching and reconstruction of textiles or garments • Information seeking	1. Describe, relate and reflect upon the silhouette, materials, patterns, colours and the development of form for different epochs in writing and through images, as well as through practical design work 2. Showcase interdisciplinary knowledge regarding the history of textiles, garments and design 3. Identify the expression of different epochs and designers, as well as independently study and analyse design through design practice, sketching, concept studies and reconstruction
	Design Project 1: Body, structure and expression	• Practical and theoretical exploration of theories and definitions in architecture • Study structural principles through architectural modelling	1. Showcase understanding for basic theories and definitions in architecture as well as the ability to relate these to clothing through experimental design development

Year	Course	Content	Goals
	(7.5 HEC)	• Reinterpret the body through structural material experiments with the body	2. Showcase the ability to reinterpret and apply structural principles of function and expression using body and space 3. Showcase basic knowledge for selected basic architectural construction principles
	Dyeing, Textile Printing and Preparation Techniques (7.5 HEC)	• Textile preparation processes such as pre-treatment, dyeing, printing and final preparation • Coating, laminating, and special treatments for functional applications • Material, colours, chemicals and their role in achieving desired characteristics of the textile, as well as its environmental impact and cost • Colours as theory, communication and application in industry	1. Account for the industrial production of textiles 2. Describe the impact of dyes, chemicals and processes on the properties of the textiles, aesthetically as well as practically 3. Describe the effect of the choice of dyes, chemicals and processes with regards to the environment, economically, as well as the lifespan of the product
1	*Basic Design 2: Design experiment, knitting and tricot* (7.5 HEC)	*Demonstration and training in:* • The most common knitting techniques • Basic tricot techniques for weaving tricot machines, round knitting and flat knitting *Introduction to:* • Environmental and quality aspects of tricot production • Theoretical foundations of tricot machines and tricot products • Current developing trends in the construction of products regarding warp tricot and warp tricot machines *Experimental work and development of:* • Technical research on tricot and knitting • Different techniques and structures • Basic design ideas	1. Show the ability to independently work with experimental design using knitting, both by hand and using industrial processes 2. Showcase basic knowledge of tricot techniques, weaving techniques, and tricot materials 3. Showcase knowledge regarding structure and construction of knitted fabrics
	Design Project 2: Technique and expression (7.5 HEC)	• Creating a collection, from the design and construction of the knitted material to the finalised product • Aesthetic possibilities based on in-depth studies of experimental knitting • Introduction to the production of knitted materials using industrial machines, flat knitting, and round knitting • Sketching techniques in 3D, modelling and development of a collection • Presentation of a collection and argumentation	1. Showcase the ability to develop new artistic expressions through development of technical skills 2. Showcase the ability to create garments and a collection using tricot and knitted materials 3. Showcase individually developed designs 4. Develop and implement design ideas and prototypes using a hand knitting machine
2	*Basic Design 3: Materials and expression* (15 HEC)	• Traditional and cultural materials • Combinations of materials, processing and textile techniques • Digital techniques, composites, new materials and textile techniques • Principles of composition, patterns, structures and colouring • Materials and textile production processes • Weaving techniques and weaving tests	1. Showcase design abilities by applying and using the further developed knowledge of materials, textile techniques, colour and shape 2. Showcase knowledge regarding different types of materials, their properties and suitability for artistic expressions and design properties 3. Identify, analyse and describe weaved materials in relation to design properties 4. Showcase understanding for how design affects the living environment and the people working and living in relation to the materials and products
	Design Aesthetics 2: Principles and perspectives (7.5 HEC)	• Introduction to aspects of fashion studies • Review, discussion and presentation of the relation between the body and garments, using global and local, historical and contemporary perspectives on fashion, clothing and body, applied through practical design work • Studies of form and concepts through representations and reconstructions using practical design work • Interpretation and figuration of independent design work referencing contemporary experimental and professional practices and presentation forms	1. Show basic knowledge and understanding regarding dominating international, as well geographically specific fashion traditions using theoretical, artistic, and practice-based perspective in practical design work 2. Analyse one's own work, as well as that of others, using specific perspectives regarding fashion design, showcased through practical design work and written text 3. Position and reflect upon one's own design in relation to experimental and professional design practices and their societal implications

Year	Course	Content	Goals
2	*Design Project 3: Specialisation* (10.5 HEC)	• Aesthetic possibilities based on the choice of material and/or technique • Development of materials and techniques as a means of expression in fashion design • Sketching techniques, modelling, and the development of collections • Documentation, presentation and critique of artistic design development work	1. Showcase individual design skills regarding one of the areas materials and textile techniques; prints, dyeing and processing; construction and cutting 2. Use materials and techniques in relation to artistic expression 3. Showcase abilities regarding composition, arrangement and presentation of a collection 4. Showcase independently developed designs
	Project Management and Production Technique (7.5 HEC)	• Main concepts and theories regarding project management in design • Leadership and planning from a design perspective • Exhibition and show production • Product specifications and technical descriptions of garments	1. Account for qualifications, possibilities and costs regarding issues related to production technique, orally and visually 2. Account for professional and experimental design work through presentation and exhibition, orally and visually
	Design Methodology 2: Contemporary art and design methods (7.5 HEC)	• Art theory for contemporary art • Methodology within contemporary art • The historical development of contemporary art • Individual exploratory design work using chosen methods	1. Showcase knowledge and understanding for the methods, theories and design of contemporary art 2. Identify links between contemporary art and fashion design 3. At a general level be able to described specificities and trends in art history from the 20th century onwards 4. Account for a number of concepts of art theory in relation to contemporary art 5. Showcase the use of information seeking processes 6. Apply the methods of an artist of choice and using these, perform individual artistic work 7. Value one's own creative process and artistic development
	Design Aesthetics 3: Criticism and judgement (4.5 HEC)	• Presentation and discussion of concepts for critical assessment of design work • Critical assessment and deconstruction of one's own and others' design work • Practical application of experimental design work • Collating, editing/styling, construction and documentation of a collection	1. Be able to critically assess one's own and others' fashion designs 2. Possess knowledge of and be able to apply skills of editing and developing formative parts of the design work 3. Possess knowledge of and the be able to apply formative parts of design work
	Sustainable Business and Product Development (7.5 HEC)	• Design and sustainable development • Environmental impact of textiles from a life cycle perspective • Sustainable product development from a consumption perspective • Human rights in working life • Codes of conduct and fair trade • Corporate social responsibility • Sustainability and marketing • Product development and entrepreneurship	1. Account for the concepts sustainable development and corporate social responsibility applied to the textile value chain 2. Analyse the environmental impact of textile products from a life cycle perspective and be able to make suggestions for sustainable options 3. Discuss problems related to working conditions in the textile industry and make suggestions as to how these can be addressed through the purchasing and design processes 4. Create an environmentally, socially and economically sustainable textile product concept in cooperation with students from different professional orientations
3	*Design Project 4: Applied design* (18 HEC)	Internship with the goal to develop: • Design methodology • Design development • Setting an assortment • Design critique • Ethics and environment • Design management • Materials and techniques	1. Showcase knowledge of and understanding for organised professional and experimental design work based on its given preconditions regarding expression, functionality, environment, technique, ethics and market
	Design Methodology 3: Design research (4.5 HEC)	Presentation and discussion of: • Concepts and methods in design research • Traditional and new problem areas in clothing and fashion Definition, motivation and documentation of:	1. Showcase understanding for basic concepts and methods of design research 2. Showcase the ability to define relevant problems for the subject area and formulate a research project

Year	Course	Content	Goals
3		• Relevant problem areas and questions using examples • Methods and experimental research through practical investigations	3. Showcase understanding for experimental research methodology
	Artistic Development (15 HEC)	• Creative exercises, literature studies and study visits for inspiration and exchange of knowledge • Further studies and development in experimental artistic design research, focused on a topic chosen by the student and supervisor • The work process – knowledge regarding design methods, choice of design method as well as application and reflection regarding different experimental design methods • Design ethics: the design process in relation to sustainable product development	1. Present, analyse and critically discuss design development projects and their working process 2. Perform an independent design development project with an experimental, explorative and researching character 3. Develop and further deepen the individual artistic, design ability and put one's own design process in relation to sustainable development
	Fashion Communication and Portfolio (7.5 HEC)	• Fashion photography; theory, history, the present and development • Practical image analysis • Portfolio construction • Collection construction and collating • Styling, reactionary fashion and dealing with the press • Construction, sewing, styling and photographing	1. Knowledge of possibilities and problems regarding the communication of clothes and fashion 2. Critically evaluate the design work of others and contribute with constructive criticism for the continued work process 3. Deconstruct and reconstruct alternative development for a collection based on already existing pieces of work
	Degree Project (15 HEC)	• Abstraction of principal results from given design experiments • Applied design based on given design experiments • Interpretation, analysis and critical discussion of one's own and others' abstraction and application • Realisation of a series of examples and prototypes as a demonstration of results for exhibition and show	1. Implement and analyse design projects based on the preconditions and possibilities that the professional field of fashion design gives and offers 2. Showcase basic knowledge of scientific methods for design investigations 3. Showcase knowledge of and practical skills for the complete artistic and scientific content of the educational programme

MA programme in Fashion Design

Year	Course	Content	Goals
1	*Aesthetic Theory – Design methods* (7.5 HEC)	• Reflective experimental design work • Different ways of working with textile design and fashion design	1. Identify and explain basic concepts used in constructing given common models and methods 2. Identify and describe central selection points where analysis is turned in design (synthesis) for typical examples of design processes 3. Develop, and reflect upon, the design process in a systematic manner with regards to experimental work
	Aesthetic Theory – Design seminars I (7.5 HEC)	The course introduces the student to research and professional development, especially with regards to sustainable development in textile design and fashion design. Through lectures, seminars and meeting with representatives from fashion and textiles, and related areas, the student is being introduced to different scientific and artistic perspectives, the purpose being to develop the student's understanding of his/her own design work as well as that of others. The student gets to train his/her analytical and judgment skills through seminar discussions and individual written assignments.	1. Critically analyse one's own design work as well as that of others, referencing current developments in textile design and fashion design, regarding experimental and professional work 2. Form an independent approach regarding ethics and sustainable development 3. Identify and problematise competing perspectives and goals regarding ethics and sustainable development in textile design and fashion design
	Artistic Development – Advanced level (7.5 HEC)	The course consists of theoretical and practical experimental artistic work where the student develops an individual artistic project. Through lectures, workshops and seminars, the student's own artistic ideas and methods as well as methods and ideas in contemporary art and design in general are studied, processed and discussed. Different pieces of work within art and design, current exhibitions and art and design related literature creates the knowledge base for this.	1. Reflect upon, as well as describe and present one's artistic processes in the context of design 2. Showcase functioning methods regarding how the student systematically develops and strengthens his/her artistic processes and judgment, relating to different aspects of design practice 3. Showcase the ability to relate one's artistic processes to existing modes of working within the fields of art and design
	Design Project – Specialisation project (7.5 HEC)	• Planning and development of a design programme • Experimental work in the studio, workshops and labs	1. Develop and make an initial decision as well as exemplify a design programme based on a project brief of one's own choice (what) 2. Develop and make initial reflections regarding methodology and working processes, referencing the planning and decision making of a design programme (how) 3. Present, motivate and critically discuss one's own suggested design programme (why)
	Design Project – Advancement project (15 HEC)	• Working with design examples in order to further develop a suggested design programme • Experimental work in the studio, workshops and labs	1. Further develop and critically view a given design programme through clear design examples 2. Analyse and critically reflect upon a given design programme, particularly focusing on cultural, economic, ethical and environmental issues 3. Present, motivate and critically discuss a given design programme in relation to the contemporary context
	Elective Courses (15 HEC)	The student can choose introduction courses and advanced courses in textile techniques, the purpose being to gain knowledge of and skills in different techniques, e.g. dyeing, textile printing and processing, weaving, tricot and knitting, pattern making and textile materials.	
2	*Aesthetic Theory – Design seminars II* (7.5 HEC)	The course aims at giving a further orientation and currents streams and events within contemporary art and design and give a continued introduction to research and professional development within textile design and fashion design. The course also fills the purpose of putting one's own work, as well as that of others, in a historical context, primarily in relation the streams in art, design, architecture and pop culture of the 20th century. Scientific and artistic perspectives are addressed through lecture and seminars, the purpose being to develop	1. Relate to and discuss current practice-based design research 2. Analyse one's own design work, as well as that of others, independently and critically, referring to current development in textile design and fashion design, regarding experimental and professional work 3. Contextualise one's own work, as well as that of others, from a historical perspective

Year	Course	Content	Goals
		knowledge and understanding of own's own work, that of others, as well as current research. Seminar discussions and independent written assignments are used in order to further develop analytical skills and judgment.	
2	*Design Project – Research project* (15 HEC)	• Further development of the suggested design programme through experimental design work • Experimental work in the studio, workshops and labs	1. Further develop a given design programme through experimental work 2. Showcase the ability to develop one's own design practice using an experimental work style 3. Independently develop and reflect upon methods for composition, principles of form and design expressions
	Elective Courses (7.5 HEC)	The student gets to pick courses of his/her choice after consulting the programme coordinator.	
	Masters Degree Project (30 HEC)	• Independent work to in a clear way exemplify, present and critical discuss a suggested design programme • Experimental work in the studio, workshops and labs • Compilation of the work done for an MA degree by manifesting the programme learning objectives	1. Show and exemplify a design programme through a number of design examples in a show or exhibition or similar 2. Show artistic skills and excellence as a designer through a show, exhibition or similar 3. Present and discuss a design programme and showcase the ability to critically reflect upon design methods, design discourse, design ethics and design aesthetics in the form of a seminar, nationally as well as internationally 4. Present and discuss a design programme and showcase the ability to critically reflect upon design methods, design discourse, design ethics and design aesthetics through a documented artistic project

Appendix 2
Overview informants: round 1

ID	Highest Degree Obtained	Industry Experience	Accumulated Creative Knowledge	Accumulated Market Knowledge	Accumulated Business Knowledge	Perceived Desirability	Perceived Feasibility	Fashion Entr. Intention	Fashion Entr. Behaviour	Entr. Typology	Entering Existing Fashion Firm	Continuing in Academia	Source of Financing	Initial Move
DS1	MA	No	High	Low	Low	High	High	Yes	Yes	Inevitable Entrepreneur	No	No	Savings + Family	Start fashion firm
DS2	MA	Yes	High	Medium low	Medium low	High	High	Yes	Yes	Inevitable Entrepreneur	No	Yes (other)	Other employment (non-fashion)	Start fashion firm + continued studies (teacher training)
DS3	BA	No	High	Low	Low	High	Medium high	Yes	No	Inevitable Entrepreneur	No	Yes (MA)	-	Continued studies (MA)
DS4	BA	No	Medium high	Medium high	Medium high	High	High	Yes	Yes	Inevitable Entrepreneur	No	Yes (MA + teach)	Competition + other jobs	Start fashion firm + continued studies + teach + other jobs
DS5	MA	No	High	Medium low	Medium high	High	High	Yes	Yes	Inevitable Entrepreneur	Yes	Yes (teach)	Fashion firm + teaching	Continue work with own firm + work for fashion firm + teach
DS6	MA	No	High	Medium high	Medium high	Medium high	Medium high	Yes	Yes	Inevitable Entrepreneur	No	Yes (PhD)	PhD (mainly)	Continued studies (PhD) + continue work with own firm
DS7	BA	No	Medium high	Low	Medium low	High	Medium high	Yes	Yes	Inevitable Entrepreneur	No	No	Other employment (non-fashion)	Continue work with own firm + other work
DS8	MA	No	High	Medium high	Medium low	High	Medium high	Yes	Yes	Inevitable Entrepreneur	Yes	Yes (teach)	Loan + Teaching + Fashion firm	Start fashion firm + work for fashion firm + teach

ID	Highest Degree Obtained	Industry Experience	Accumulated Creative Knowledge	Accumulated Market Knowledge	Accumulated Business Knowledge	Perceived Desirability	Perceived Feasibility	Fashion Entr. Intention	Fashion Entr. Behaviour	Entr. Typology	Entering Existing Fashion Firm	Continuing in Academia	Source of Financing	Initial Move
DS9	BA	No	Medium high	Low	Low	High	Medium low	Yes	No	Could-be Entrepreneur	No	Yes (MA)	-	Continued studies (MA)
DS10	MA	No	High	Medium high	Medium low	Medium high	Medium low	Yes	No	Could-be Entrepreneur	Yes	Yes (other)	-	Work for fashion firm (quit) + potential continued studies (other topics)
DS11	BA	No	Medium high	Low	Low	Medium high	Medium low	Yes	No	Could-be Entrepreneur	Yes	No	-	Work for fashion firm
DS12	BA	No	Medium high	Low	Low	Medium high	Medium low	Yes	No	Could-be Entrepreneur	No	Yes	-	Continued studies (MA)
DS13	BA	No	Medium high	Low	Low	Medium low	Medium low	Yes	No	Could-be Entrepreneur	Yes (?)	No	-	Work for fashion firm
DS14	BA	No	Medium high	Low	Low	Low	Low	No	No	Could-be Entrepreneur	Yes (?)	No	-	Work for fashion firm
DS15	MA	No	High	Low	Medium low	Medium high	Low	Yes	Yes	Could-be Entrepreneur	No	Yes (PhD)	Company resting	Continued studies (PhD)
DS16	BA	No	Medium high	Low	Low	Medium high	Medium low	Yes	No	Could-be Entrepreneur	No	Yes (MA)	-	Continued studies (MA)
DS17	MA	No	High	Low	Medium low	Medium low	Low	No	No	Non-Entrepreneur	Yes	No	-	Work for fashion firm
DS18	BA	No	Medium high	Medium high	Medium high	Low	Low	No	No	Non-Entrepreneur	No	Yes	-	Continued studies (MA)
DS19	BA	No	Medium high	Low	Low	Low	Low	No	No	Non-Entrepreneur	Yes	No	-	Work for fashion firm
DS20	BA	Yes	Medium high	Medium high	Medium high	Medium low	Medium low	Yes	No	Non-Entrepreneur	No	Yes	-	Continued studies (MA)
DS21	-	-				-	-	-	-		-	-	-	-
DS22	-	-				-	-	-	-		-	-	-	-
DS23	-	-				-	-	-	-		-	-	-	-
DS24	-	-				-	-	-	-		-	-	-	-

194

Appendix 3
Overview informants: round 2

ID	Highest Degree Obtained	Industry Experience	Accumulated Creative Knowledge	Accumulated Market Knowledge	Accumulated Business Knowledge	Perceived Desirability	Perceived Feasibility	Fashion Entr. Intention	Fashion Entr. Behaviour	Entrepreneurship Typology	Entering Existing Fashion Firm	Continuing in Academia	Source of Financing	Current position	Plan for future
DS1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
DS2	MA	Yes	High	High	High	High	High	Yes	Yes	Inevitable Entrepreneur	No	Yes (other)	Other employment (non-fashion), Business self-sustaining	Own fashion firm (with friend) + extra jobs (outside fashion)	Same path + potential continued studies (other topic)
DS3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
DS4	BA	Yes	Medium high	High	High	Low	Medium high	No	No	Path-dependent Entrepreneur	No	Yes (teach)	-	Fashion company on hold + teaching + other work + entr. ideas (outside fashion)	Same path, probably not moving back into fashion
DS5	MA	Yes	High	High	High	High	High	Yes	Yes	Inevitable Entrepreneur	No	Yes (teach)	Teaching	Work with own firm + teach	Same path
DS6	MA	Yes	High	High	High	Medium high	High	Yes	Yes	Inevitable Entrepreneur	No	Yes (PhD)	PhD (mainly)	Continued studies (PhD) + continue work with own firm	Same path (academia + own firm)
DS7	BA	Yes	Medium high	Medium low	Medium low	High	Medium high	Yes	Yes	Inevitable Entrepreneur	No	Yes (MA)	Studies	Continued studies (MA)	Start working on own firm again
DS8	MA	Yes	High	Medium high	Medium low	Medium high	Medium low	No	No	Could-be Entrepreneur	No	Yes (teach)	Company resting	Academia	Same path + own firm over time
DS9	MA	No	High	Low	Low	High	Medium low	Yes	No	Could-be Entrepreneur	Yes	No	-	MA graduate	Start own firm + work for fashion firm
DS10	MA	Yes	High	Medium high	Medium low	Medium high	Medium low	Yes	No	Could-be Entrepreneur	No	Yes (other)	-	Continued studies (psychology)	Continue in academia (PhD) +

195

ID	Highest Degree Obtained	Industry Experience	Accumulated Creative Knowledge	Accumulated Market Knowledge	Accumulated Business Knowledge	Perceived Desirability	Perceived Feasibility	Fashion Entr. Intention	Fashion Entr. Behaviour	Entrepreneurship Typology	Entering Existing Fashion Firm	Continuing in Academia	Source of Financing	Current position	Plan for future
DSI1	BA	Yes	Medium high	Medium high	Medium high	Medium high	Medium low	Yes	No	Could-be Entrepreneur	Yes	No	-	Work for fashion firm	Start own firm + potentially leaving fashion
DSI2	BA	No	Medium high	Low	Low	Medium high	Medium low	Yes	No	Could-be Entrepreneur	No	Yes (MA)	-	Continued studies (MA)	Uncertain (own firm OR work for fashion firm (activewear) OR PhD)
DSI3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
DSI4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
DSI5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
DSI6	MA	No	High	Low	Low	High	Medium low	Yes	No	Could-be Entrepreneur	Yes	No	-	MA graduate	Work for fashion firm + start own firm (over time)
DSI7	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
DSI8	BA	Yes	Medium high	High	High	Medium high	Medium high	Yes	Yes	Could-be Entrepreneur	Yes	No	Fashion firm	Work for fashion firm + own firm	Switch firm OR Continued studies + own firm (small size)
DSI9	BA	No	Medium high	High	High	Low	Low	No	No	Non-Entrepreneur	Yes	No	-	Work for fashion firm	Work for fashion firm
DSI20	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
DSI21	BA	Yes	Medium high	High	High	Medium low	High	Yes	No	Path-dependent entrepreneur	Yes	No	Company resting	Work for fashion firm	Work for fashion firm OR potentially start own firm again
DSI22	MA	No	High	High	High	High	Medium high	Yes	Yes (?)	Could-be Entrepreneur	Yes	No	Under development	Quit fashion firm	Start own firm (incl. consulting)
DSI23	MA	No	High	Low	Low	High	Medium low	Yes	Yes	Inevitable Entrepreneur	Yes (?)	No	Other employment (non-fashion)	MA graduate	Start own firm + work for fashion firm
DSI24	MA	No	High	Low	Low	High	Medium low	Yes	Yes (?)	Could-be Entrepreneur	Yes (?)	No	Under development	MA graduate	Start own firm + work for fashion firm (short term)